



What has five eyes and wears fishnet stockings? The Australian link in the British intelligence operation to sabotage US-Russia cooperation

By Robert Barwick

After more than a year of so-called “Russiagate” hysteria failing to find evidence of collusion between Donald Trump’s election campaign and the Russian government, a new, “credible” source of proof has suddenly emerged—Australia. The *New York Times* broke the story on 30 December that Australian diplomat Alexander Downer’s May 2016 encounter with a Trump campaign booster in London was the source of the claim that Russia had hacked Hillary Clinton’s emails in collusion with the Trump campaign, which led the FBI to open the investigation in July 2016 that has dogged Trump throughout his short presidency. The involvement of Alexander Downer, however, destroys all credibility of this newly-revealed “evidence”. The former Australian foreign minister is deeply embedded in Britain’s Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), which has fabricated the key claims of Russian collusion in order to sabotage Donald Trump’s efforts to improve US-Russian relations, the greatest loser from which would be the UK’s imperial, pro-war Crown Establishment.

The essence of the story is that in May 2016, Australia’s High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Alexander Downer, then 65, arranged drinks with 28-year-old Trump campaign associate George Papadopoulos at London’s exclusive Kensington Wine Rooms, during which Papadopoulos boasted to Downer that Russia had thousands of hacked Hillary Clinton emails that would damage her campaign. After WikiLeaks released Hillary Clinton’s emails in July 2016, Downer reported his encounter with Papadopoulos in a cable to Canberra, which passed the information on to US authorities.

The *New York Times* emphasised the importance of Australia being the source of the claims that provoked the FBI investigation. “It was not, as Mr Trump and other politicians have alleged, a dossier compiled by a former British spy hired by a rival campaign”, the *Times* reported. “Instead, it was firsthand information from one of America’s closest intelligence allies.”

It is significant that the so-called newspaper of record, the *New York Times*, failed to properly identify Alexander Downer, referring to him first as Australia’s “top” diplomat in Britain, and then only as an Australian diplomat. That is either the height of ignorance, or intentional understatement to make the story more plausible. Downer is in fact Australia’s longest-serving foreign minister and a former leader of the Liberal Party, one of Australia’s two major parties; the flamboyant Downer once posed for a publicity photo wearing fishnet stockings—an image that stuck with him for the rest of his career. As foreign minister in the Howard government, Downer was on the global front lines of the biggest foreign policy issue of the 21st century, the 2003 invasion of Iraq, helping to make the fraudulent case for the Iraq war on the international stage. Through his efforts he doubtless ingratiated himself to the string-pullers of the British and American intelligence community who drove the war agenda. Downer’s pres-



Alexander Downer, seen here posing in his fishnet stockings and leopard print high heels in the 1990s, is reported as the credible source who confirms Trump’s collusion with Russia, but he is an agent of British intelligence, which on behalf of the British Establishment has directed a Five Eyes intelligence operation to derail the prospect of improved US-Russia relations. Source: Screen shot.

ent post of High Commissioner to London is the equivalent of Ambassador.

It is therefore curious that a dignitary of Downer’s standing would be winning a 28 year-old upstart attached to the Trump campaign, something the media coverage seems desperate to downplay. Following up the story for an Australian audience, who would find it curious, the 5 January *Sydney Morning Herald* reported telling details that it tried to spin as normal. *SMH* reporter David Wroe described Papadopoulos meeting a young woman in London who “happened to know” Downer as a “chance” encounter, except there was nothing chance about it. The *New York Times* had already revealed that an Israeli Embassy official had introduced Papadopoulos to the woman, who was in fact another Australian diplomat, i.e. she worked for Downer. According to Wroe, the young woman told Downer about Papadopoulos, and Downer, “being a canny diplomat”, arranged to meet him. To downplay all of this as run-of-the-mill, Wroe quoted Peter Jennings of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, perhaps

Australia's most rabid neocon warmonger, who advocates Australia's participation in every possible Anglo-American war provocation against Russia and China and who appears to be on familiar terms with Downer: "Alexander was doing what a High Commissioner should do, finding pathways into the campaign team", Jennings said.

Downer is not just the High Commissioner and a former foreign minister, however. He is deeply connected into British intelligence. As foreign minister he had been in charge of Australia's MI6, the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS). ASIS agents, who are usually recruited from the diplomatic corps, where indeed Downer started his career, are known to refer to Canberra as "home office" and MI6 headquarters in London as "head office". ASIS and Australia's other intelligence agencies are part of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance with the UK, USA, New Zealand and Canada; the popularised terms "deep state" and "secret state" refer to these interconnected intelligence agencies. After leaving politics, Downer stayed involved in this intelligence world. In 2008 he joined the advisory board of secretive British firm Hakluyt & Co., a private intelligence company founded by "former" officers of MI6. This is a similar operation to Orbis Business Intelligence, the firm founded by former MI6 officer Christopher Steele, who fabricated the discredited Trump dossier for the Clinton campaign which the *NYT* is now keen to claim did not trigger the FBI investigation. Downer resigned

from Hakluyt & Co. when he was appointed High Commissioner in 2014, but has continued to attend group functions. Today the international advisory board of Hakluyt & Co. includes Sir Iain Lobban, the former director of GCHQ, the UK's top and most secretive intelligence agency.

The real story of Russiagate is not Russian interference in the US election, but British interference, through the British intelligence operation aimed at Trump. Ever since WWII, British strategy has hinged upon its "special relationship" with the USA, which to the imperial geopolitical mindset of the British elite depends upon an adversarial relationship between the USA and Russia (previously the USSR). From the outset of his campaign, Trump expressed a desire to change that adversarial relationship, in order to reduce the danger of war between the world's two nuclear superpowers.

Russiagate has revealed that as Trump emerged as a serious contender for the presidency, British intelligence mobilised an operation to derail the possibility of Trump achieving closer US-Russia relations. The timing of Downer's approach to Papadopoulos confirms it is part of that operation. He arranged the meeting just as Trump was sewing up the Republican Party nomination, and a few days after Papadopoulos, on behalf of the Trump campaign, had attracted attention in London from a clumsy interview with the 4 May 2016 London *Times*, which generated the headline that Trump was a risk to the US-UK "special relationship".

'Russiagate' conspiracy unravels

By *Elisa Barwick*

The plan to prevent US President Donald Trump from governing by embroiling the White House in the scandal known as Russiagate, is unravelling. The plan was always aimed at preventing the USA re-establishing cooperation with Russia, which together with US-China cooperation could lead to a three-way collaboration between the world's leading nuclear powers, allowing a new global economic and strategic framework to develop, potentially spelling the end of a century of geopolitical manipulation and war.

While Russiagate refers to purported collusion between the 2016 Trump presidential campaign and the Kremlin to bring about a Trump presidency, the real story is now beginning to emerge. Under the guidance of President Barack Obama's National Intelligence director James Clapper, FBI chief James Comey and CIA Director John Brennan, a cabal intersecting all three agencies and the US Department of Justice acted to prevent Trump's election and to create an "insurance policy"—a ready-made scandal to be pulled off the shelf in the unlikely event he was elected. That British authorities tipped off US agencies to the so-called Russian interference in the 2016 election and that former British MI6 agent Christopher Steele wrote the "dodgy dossier" presenting Trump's alleged indiscretions and dealings in Russia, indicates the seminal role of British intelligence, in particular Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) which oversees the entire Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance. (AAS, 22 Nov. 2017 "Evidence piles up: British Intelligence launched Russiagate".)

As International Schiller Institute Chairwoman, Helga Zepp-LaRouche told a webcast audience on 4 January, "The real story here is not that Russia was colluding with the Trump campaign; the real scandal, which all these question marks lead to, is if it turns out that the Obama administration colluded with British intelligence and the Hillary Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Com-

mittee (DNC), in order to conspire against an opponent candidate and after he won the election, against an elected President. That is a scandal which could totally dwarf the Watergate scandal and this is now the breaking story."

The Mueller investigation is a key part of the scandal. Former FBI director Robert Mueller was appointed special prosecutor by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to investigate the alleged Russian interference. AAS documented in the 11 October Washington Insider that Mueller is a hit man for the Anglo-American Establishment, his crimes including the cover-up of the Saudi role in the 9/11 terrorist attack.

Other key players in the anti-Trump cabal were Deputy FBI Director Andrew McCabe, top FBI counterintelligence official and chief Russiagate investigator Peter Strzok, and Associate Deputy Attorney General Bruce Ohr. Ohr and his wife Nellie had previously worked as part of a CIA/FBI/DOJ organised crime taskforce with MI6's Christopher Steele and Fusion GPS co-founder Glenn Simpson, for a time under McCabe's direction. During the presidential campaign Nellie was employed by Fusion GPS which produced the Steele dossier, to help with research and analysis of Trump. According to MI6-connected journalist Luke Harding in his



Russiagate special prosecutor, Robert Mueller. Photo: Wikipedia

book, *Collusion: How Russia helped Trump win the White House*, Christopher Steele had also been a key part of preparing the 2013-14 Ukraine coup, intended to foster an image of Russia as an enemy state and create a pretext for world war. Steele drafted more than a hundred intelligence memos for Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland and Secretary of State John Kerry.

Insurance policy

In the name of so-called “opposition research” the DNC and Clinton campaign paid Fusion GPS’s Simpson, who hired Steele to discredit Trump, but the Anglo-American intelligence apparatus soon took over the operation. It appears that Strzok, under the direction of more senior figures in the bureau, dressed up the Steele dossier and likely used it as the basis of launching a counterintelligence operation against Trump’s campaign under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). When Trump was elected, the “insurance policy” was put into motion. Simpson told federal court hearings that at Bruce Ohr’s request, he met with DOJ officials just weeks after the presidential elections “to discuss our findings regarding Russia and the election”.

Despite FBI and DOJ witnesses stonewalling the several investigations of the House Intelligence Committee and the House and Senate Judiciary Committees looking into these charges, crucial elements of the real Russiagate story are coming into focus. Released on 12 December 2017 were ninety pages of text messages between Strzok and FBI Attorney Lisa Page, with whom he was having an affair, revealing overt political bias in favour of the Clinton campaign. Both had been prominent members of Mueller’s investigative team. The messages, which Mueller had been aware of since July, blatantly discussed the effort to keep that “menace” and “loathsome human”, Trump, from being elected, in order to “protect our country”.

FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe figured prominently in the correspondence. A 15 August 2016 text from Strzok suggested that anti-Trump plotting was taking place in McCabe’s office: “I want to believe the path you threw out for consideration in Andy’s [McCabe’s] office that there’s no way [Trump] gets elected, *but I’m afraid we can’t take that risk. It’s like an insurance policy* in the unlikely event you die before you’re 40.” Most believe the insurance policy to be the British-fabricated Steele dossier.

At this time Strzok was also FBI Director Comey’s lead case agent on the Clinton email case, in which capacity he changed the wording on the FBI’s final statement on Clinton’s conduct from “criminally negligent”, which is a felony, to the meaningless “extremely careless”, letting her off the hook with the stroke of a pen. He also played a key role in setting up Trump’s National Security Adviser Michael Flynn for his fall within days of entering the job (“To crush the assault on the presidency”, *Executive Intelligence Review*, 22 Dec. 2017).

The rats scamper

Mueller’s team reported that Strzok was removed from the investigation when his text messages with Page were discovered. Page’s work on the inquiry had concluded by that time; both were reassigned within the FBI. Bruce Ohr



Department of Justice attorney Bruce Ohr and his wife Nellie, who worked for Fusion GPS, which worked with MI6 officer Christopher Steele to fabricate the dossier that was used to justify an investigation of collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. Source: Screen shot

was demoted in early December. Judge Rudolph Contreras recused himself from the trial of Michael Flynn on 7 December—he was on the secretive FISA court when surveillance of Trump and Flynn was authorised.

James A. Baker, General Counsel to the FBI and a Comey confidant, who accompanied McCabe during his seven-hour grilling by the House Intelligence Committee on 19 December, was suddenly “reassigned” to a new post days later. Then, on 23 December the press reported McCabe had announced his resignation “under Republican attacks”. McCabe has a reputation as being “Comey’s right-hand man”.

Due to the myriad conflicts of interest in this nexus, which includes the Mueller campaign, there is a push for a second independent counsel to probe the MI6-FBI-DOJ-DNC-Clinton collusion. In addition, on 5 January Republican Senators Charles Grassley and Lindsey Graham, representing the Senate Judiciary Committee and a subcommittee, made a criminal referral to the DOJ regarding false statements made by Steele and whether they sparked the FISA action and Russiagate probe. House Intelligence Committee Chair Devin Nunes succeeded in enforcing a 3 January deadline for the DOJ to produce documents and witnesses relating to the Steele dossier, which it had held out on since last August; Nunes has also won a court battle to have Fusion GPS produce requested bank records.

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