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Trump's Reversal on Russia

By ELIZABETH BARRY
EDITOR IN CHIEF

After insisting for weeks that Russian intelligence operatives – under direct orders from President Vladimir Putin – were not responsible for the cyber attacks against the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and other organizations for the purpose of influencing the election, President-elect Trump altered his message. In his first post-election news conference, he stated “I think it was Russia” and that Putin “shouldn’t have done it” and “won’t be doing it” in the future.

Trump’s change of tune came on the heels of a security briefing in which top U.S. intelligence officials informed him of allegations that the Kremlin had indeed engaged in an extensive conspiracy with members of his team and employees of his company in order to help get him elected. Though Mr. Trump animatedly denies any such connection with Russia, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other intelligence agencies have been trying for months to substantiate these incendiary claims.

According to a report in the *Wall Street Journal*, claims that Trump’s campaign coordinated with Russian intelligence emanated from a dossier that British intelligence agent Christopher Steele compiled for Mr. Trump’s political opponents – both Republican and Democratic – last year.

Senior intelligence officials deemed the allegations contained in Steele’s dossier significant enough to summarize in an addendum to the classified briefing that the president-elect received on January 6. Their decision to share this unverified information stemmed from an abundance of caution, by which the incoming president should be made aware of accusations against him that could become public.

Director of National Intelligence James Clapper stated: “The IC [intelligence community] has not made any judgment that the information in the Steele

document is reliable, and we did not rely upon it in any way for our conclusions. However, part of our obligation is to ensure that policymakers are provided with the fullest possible picture of any matters that might affect national security.” President Obama received the same information.

In addition to claiming that the Kremlin colluded with Trump’s presidential campaign, Steele’s dossier also alleges that Russian officials have evidence of Mr. Trump’s behavior that

The incoming president should be made aware of accusations against him that could become public.

could be used to blackmail him, including sex tapes and bribes taken during business deals.

Since becoming president-elect, Trump appears to have skipped several intelligence briefings and national security meetings. Is it possible that he has only recently taken an interest in security briefings because his personal reputation is at risk? Could Trump’s reversal on Russia be an attempt to sweep evidence of his poor behavior and collusion

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The Peaceful Transition: An American Tradition

By FRED POLLEVICK
STAFF WRITER

As he gave his farewell address in Chicago on January 10, President Barack Obama suggested the importance of public acceptance of President-elect Donald Trump.

“In ten days,” he said, “the world will witness a hallmark of our democracy.” At which point the audience, now upset, began to boo.

Obama’s reaction to this showed great character and demonstrated one of the most important American principles. He spoke firmly, saying: “No, no, no, no, no -- the peaceful transfer of power from one freely elected president to the next. I committed

This Week's News in 140 Characters

EDITORIAL REPORT



Charlie Kirk @charliekirk11 · 11h
28 democratic lawmakers boycotting Trump's inauguration.

No mystery where the campuses leftists learn their tactics from.

128 412 1.2K



Charles C. W. Cooke @charlescwooke · 7h
I'm beginning to wonder if Twitter is a good place to discuss politics.

120 116 572



John Podhoretz @jpodhoretz · 22h
So the Republican president is for making nice with Putin and single payer. You Dems and liberals don't know how good you got it.

70 189 399



martha maccallum @marthamaccallum · 45m
BREAKING NEWS: @SenJohnMcCain tells me he will most likely support #Tillerson nomination after talking with him again today.

172 268 909



The First Lady @FLOTUS · 9h
Thinking of Dr. King and great leaders like @repjohnlewis who carry on his legacy. May their example be our call to action. -mo

1.3K 22K 60K

THE PEACEFUL TRANSITION *cont.*

to President-elect Trump that my administration would ensure the smoothest possible transition, just like President Bush did for me.” Though it is a concept often overlooked by the media, a peaceful transition of power is of utmost importance to the American presidency.

The first such peaceful transition between political parties occurred following the election of 1800. Even though this election was turbulent and hard-fought, President John Adams willingly relinquished his title to a bitter enemy, Thomas Jefferson. One can assume that some who opposed Jefferson were unhappy about this, but the new president noted the possibility of an even worse kind of alienation in his inaugural address, stating: “We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists. If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this Union or to change

“We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists.”

its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it.”

Making a point similar

Go to the Opera

By CLAIRE ANASTASIA KITZ
STAFF WRITER

Opera is a break from the daily slog; it is like the gift of seeing fireflies or hearing raindrops from a windowsill on a summer’s night. There is no material benefit, just the joy of seeing and listening.

Opera is unique. It is composed of many parts – singers, orchestra, and sets, elaborate details and moving pieces. The characters are never one-dimensional, and they emote passionately and dramatically through their solos, duets, and extravagant gestures. There is never a dull moment: mysterious spells, dreaded illnesses, dancing fairies, ill-advised marriages, magical forests, ice queens, unrealistic fathers, manipulative siblings, overbearing mothers, unexpected deaths, star-crossed lovers.

The costumes and sets are usually over-the-top as well – like eating a sprinkled or chocolate-covered doughnut. But who doesn’t love those? And the orchestras, they are magnificent -- always boisterous and raucous, constantly striving to not be overlooked. There are so many favorite characters and choruses. To name



under the Oval Office rug? What could the Russians possibly have on Trump that would make him change his tune and ultimately leave room for speculation that the Russians influenced the election – leading many Americans to question the legitimacy of his victory?

On the same day as his first post-election news conference, Russian officials denied that they had compromising material on Mr. Trump, calling the claim an “absolute fabrication” and an attempt to damage U.S.-Russian relations. Moscow also denied that it used cyber attacks to try to influence the election.

Recent intelligence reports suggest that Trump’s multiple GOP primary opponents, not the Russians, were the ones responsible for collecting dirt on him. But these rivals have denied they commissioned the Steele dossier. Tim Miller, a spokesman for Jeb Bush’s campaign who later worked for an anti-Trump group, is among those who denied any involvement. “It defies logic,” he said. “If we had it, why didn’t we use it?”

Though Trump switched his position on Russia’s involvement in the DNC leaks, he remains skeptical that Russia has been the only instigator of cyber attacks against the U.S. “I think we also get hacked by other countries and other people,” he noted. “And ... everything else that was hacked recently...that was something that was extraordinary. That was probably China.”

Trump makes a good point here. The United States has many adversaries abroad who have the motive and capability to initiate cyber attacks. I would certainly hope that the president-elect’s change of tune on Russia reflects his commitment to double-down on efforts to secure American documents from foreign threats.

THE PEACEFUL TRANSITION *cont.*

to the first part of Jefferson’s message, President-elect Trump recently said: “I pledge to every citizen in our land that I will be a president for all Americans.”

In addition, both he and Obama have commented favorably on their meetings regarding a peaceful White House transition. The most important part of such a transition, however, is not the people exchanging keys to the Oval Office but rather the American public.

Among the few elections that I have witnessed, this one appears to have drawn the most anger and the most protests from the losing side. Citizens are organizing and participating in marches to protest Trump’s inauguration, House members and other elected officials are refusing to attend the ceremony, and there are even rumors that

some groups will try to disrupt the events by smoking marijuana or harassing inauguration viewers in an attempt to lower attendance.

If the inauguration is seriously interrupted by protest in its various forms, a “hallmark,” as President Obama has called it, of our nation will be disrupted as well. A peaceful transition represents more than just a passing of the torch from one president to another. It shows the American people that they should accept the election’s outcome whether they agree with it or not.

January 20th will mark a substantial change in America. There will be a new president for the first time in eight years, and in this case one who is strongly opposed to much of what the

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outgoing president has done and advocated. On this date, as on every Inauguration Day, it is important to remember Jefferson’s words. We may not be Federalists and Republicans anymore, but we are Democrats and Republicans who want to better the Union that we live in. Let January 20th be a day of peace, free from partisan divisions. Let Mr. Obama and Mr. Trump carry on a long-lasting tradition, and let them show the American people that the United States can still be united.

GO TO THE OPERA *cont.*

just a few: Violetta in Verdi’s opera *La Traviata*, the unknown prince in Puccini’s *Turandot*, and the chorus in Verdi’s *Nabucco* when they sing “Va, Pensiero,” a haunting and captivating melody that one could also call a popular tune. Italians from all walks of life, as part of Verdi’s funeral procession, spontaneously sang it through the streets of Milan. They adored him, wanted to lament his passing, loved the politics the song represented (Italian unification), and knew great music when they heard it.

When Luciano Pavarotti played the unknown prince in *Turandot* and sang “Nessun Dorma” at the summit of his powers, there was no one his equal. After listening to him on iTunes, one understands how the audience reacted: Swoon! Bravo! None of the YouTube videos of “Nessun Dorma” sung by the most famous tenors in the last 50 years match Luciano; he was the master.

But iTunes, YouTube, or an iPad do not suffice; the revelation indeed happens when one attends an opera, even in the cheap seats. That visual and auditory experience can only be described

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as magical, a feast for the senses. It all comes together to cast an enchanting spell, like a fairy tale where the princess goes to the ball. It’s exciting to dress up, drink champagne, people-watch, take your seat in anticipation, and watch the thrilling scenes progress.

Do not listen to opera because it is viewed as sophisticated or for “keeping up appearances.” Listen to opera because it truly has a range, complexity, drama, and beauty that cannot be found anywhere else; it’s kismet! Sure, there is exceptional folk, pop, hip hop, jazz, rap, classical, rock n’ roll, blues, and swing music – all laudable -- but who can pass up a riotous thunderstorm? Plays are amusing; Shakespearean plays, such as *Taming of the Shrew*, are fantastic. Musicals, besides *Phantom of the Opera*, can be boring. But opera is the apex. It consists of incredible stories, lots of passionate singing throughout, expansive arm-waving, extravagant costumes, instances of over-acting, and a boisterous orchestra – the whole delicious éclair.

Opera is always surprising and vital, even when it was written two hundred years ago. It is a means of expressing in an exaggerated and intense way what it means to be human – in all its joy, despair, confusion, humor, sweetness, and power.

Opera covers the spectrum of emotions in four hours; it can make you sigh, shiver, smile, laugh, guffaw, or weep. One cannot listen to, or see, an opera and not be engaged and transfixed by its sublime nature. To appreciate opera is to see what waits just below the surface of things: truth, understanding, courage, love, sacrifice, anger, perhaps forgiveness – everything that makes life beautiful, all-too-human, and worth living. Don’t miss out on the spectacle.

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

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