

“Honey Traps” and the Strauss-Kahn Affair: A Stealthy Coup d’état at the IMF?

By [José Miguel Alonso Trabanco](#)
Global Research, December 13, 2013

Region: [USA](#)
Theme: [Global Economy](#)

What power has law where only money rules?» -Petronius

French-born Dominique Gaston André Strauss-Kahn became the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) tenth Managing Director in November 2007.

Unlike most of his predecessors at the helm of the IMF, Dominique Strauss-Kahn -also known as DSK to his fellow Frenchmen- is not a banker and has no known affiliations to banking entities. Instead, he had worked as a politician and as a university professor. (Whitney, 2011).

His term was remarkable because of three different extraordinary facts, namely:

- 1. Less than a year after his arrival at the IMF, a worldwide financial crisis of considerable proportions took place. (Chossudovsky, 2011).*
- 2. As a member of the French Socialist Party, DSK was widely believed to harbor aspirations to run for the highest political office in France, i.e. the Presidency, in the elections that were scheduled for 2012. He was regarded as a competitive challenger who would contend against the then incumbent President Nicolas Paul Stéphane Sarkozy de Nagy-Bocsa, candidate of the conservative-leaning UMP Party -Union for a Popular Movement- (Weisenthal, 2011).*
- 3. His skill as IMF Managing Director was praised for being a “sagacious leader” (Stiglitz, 2011) and, replaying the role of the legendary Austrian Prince and statesman, DSK was described as “Metternich with a Blackberry” for his bright maneuvers to establish a “system of interlocking interests” in order to ensure that stability and balance, understood in both financial and political terms, could prevail (Johnson, 2010).*

A Sex Scandal at the Highest Levels



Nevertheless, DSK’s promising career, in both the IMF and French politics was abruptly undermined in New York, on May 14th, 2011 when he was arrested and charged with sexual assault and attempted rape of Guinean-born Sofitel Hotel

chambermaid Nafissatou Diallo. Shortly afterwards –on May 18th, 2011–, DSK tendered his resignation from the IMF. He was swiftly replaced by French Finance Minister Christine Madeleine Odette Lagarde. DSK pleaded not guilty and, eventually, all charges were dismissed (Los Angeles Times, 2011) after even public prosecutors became unable to believe the accuser’s words (BBC, 2011).

Was this incident just another high-profile sex scandal, similar to the ones involving former US President William Jefferson Clinton, former US Democratic Senator John Reid Edwards, former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, former Israeli President Moshe Katzav, former President of the World Bank Paul Dundes Wolfowitz, former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency David Howell Petraeus, et al. or... is there more than meets the eye at play? As an educated guess, this research paper is meant to provide a plausible answer.

Unanswered Questions and Reasonable Doubt

«Justice, and only justice, you shall follow... » –Deuteronomy 16:20

This section is neither a specialized forensic analysis nor is intended to be one. Instead, it is meant to highlight the correlation of political circumstances that, once encompassed together, turn out to be too disturbing and coincidental to be dismissed outright as a mere product of chance and, thus, they provide a plausible basis to raise more than reasonable doubts concerning the official version of events as described in the previous section.

In the hermetic jargon of intelligence circles, well organized setups involving sexual baits and specially designed to compromise high-value targets are euphemistically known as ‘honey traps’, i.e. operations which are “undertaken to ensnare an unwary target in a compromising sexual encounter that may leave the victim vulnerable to blackmail that might result in espionage” (West, 2007). In fact, an experienced analyst observes that “a useful rule of thumb in evaluating spectacular scandals around prominent public figures is to ask what and who might want to eliminate that person” (Engdahl, 2008).

Statesmen, military leaders, diplomats, strongmen, warlords, ministers, dictators, potentates, monarchs, lawmakers, government officials, spies, businessmen, corporate executives, merchants, bankers, media moguls, influential journalists and decision makers in general, like any other human being, have personal weaknesses and flaws that can and sometimes are indeed exploited by rivals willing to damage them.

Those are factors that are closely scrutinized by psychological analysts employed by several intelligence agencies specifically for that purpose. Those same agencies

“prepare sophisticated psychological profiles before they intervene. They know that the knowledge of the secret lives—and kinks— of public figures can easily discredit them. They specialize in foraging for dirt and can leak information or use it opportunistically [...furthermore,] sex scandals have become a staple of media exploitation with personal morality plays trumping political morality confrontations every time. They are both great distractions and effective tools of character assassination which are often more effective than more violent ways to neutralize people considered dangerous” (Schechter, 2011).



DSK was well aware of his personal traits which could be used by political opponents to damage his aspirations: “cash, women and being Jewish” (Harman, 2011). The latter could be exploited by vicious anti-Semites close to both extremes of the French political spectrum. Nevertheless, his reputation of being a seducer was a far more threatening vulnerability because he could be blackmailed if he were to contend against then incumbent French President Nicolas Sarkozy, as was discussed in French journalistic outlets (Bacqué, 2011).

Concerning more specific details, there are several conditions surrounding alleged victim, Nafissatou Diallo that question the truthfulness of her testimony. Prior to the incident, it has surfaced that the Guinean-born woman’s bank account had received 100, 000 dollars (Roberts, 2011). Even mainstream media published that

“little by little, her credibility as a witness crumbled — she had lied about her immigration, about being gang raped in Guinea, about her experiences in her homeland and about her finances, according to two law enforcement officials. She had been linked to people suspected of crimes. She changed her account of what she did immediately after the encounter with Mr. Strauss-Kahn. Sit-downs with prosecutors became tense, even angry. Initially composed, she later collapsed in tears and got down on the floor during questioning. She became unavailable to investigators from the district attorney’s office for days at a time” (Wilson, 2011).



At this point, it is important to briefly examine a remarkable precedent. Back in 2008, it was leaked that then Governor of New York Eliot Spitzer had resorted to exclusive sexual entertainment services. The scandal was taken advantage of by Republican politicians willing to unseat the Democratic Governor and his political career was ultimately undermined.

Initially, Spitzer had inflicted a painful defeat on the Grand Old Party -GOP- when was elected Governor with close to 70% of the vote and, a few years later, he may have irrevocably sealed his own fate by being an outspoken opponent of the Bush Administration’s apparent criminal complicity with banking behemoths -“predatory lenders”- at the expense of common citizens, i.e. homeowners, taxpayers and consumers

(Spitzer, 2008). Also, as former Attorney General of the State which houses the very core of the US financial system, Spitzer even challenged powerful interests by looking deep into financial crimes, frauds and corruption by Wall Street investment banks in the early 2000's (Engdahl, 2008).

Interestingly, in an apparent attempt to further tarnish DSK's integrity, Kristin Davis, the Manhattan Madam of the prostitute who was involved in the Eliot Spitzer sex scandal, publically announced that "one of her call girls refused to service Strauss-Kahn a second time because he was too rough in the act" (Roberts, 2011).

So the possibility that Spitzer was overthrown by a cabal integrated by a combination of powerful financial interests and opportunistic political opponents must be seriously considered. The aforementioned raises an unavoidable question: Could something similar, although on a larger scale, have happened to Dominique Strauss-Kahn?

On the other hand, DSK had been alerted in advance that his political opponents back in France -the UMP Party- somehow had managed to gain access to his personal communications and, more amazingly, "he had already been warned by a friend in the French diplomatic corps that an effort would be made to embarrass him with a scandal" (Epstein, 2011). It is telling that DSK had previously anticipated that he would be the target of a conspiracy masterminded by political enemies and engineered to topple him through accusations of an alleged rape (Allen, 2011).

His suspicions could not have turned out to be more accurate given that he was well aware of his particular vulnerable points. It is even more revealing that the very first person to disseminate the news about the French FMI Managing Director was Jonathan Pinet, a politics student who also happens to be an activist in Nicolas Sarkozy's UMP party. That information was, in turn, spread by Arnaud Dassier, a spin doctor who had worked for Sarkozy's presidential campaign and responsible of orchestrating a campaign designed to discredit DSK's Socialist political position (Roberts, 2011).

Furthermore, Accor Group is the owner of the Sofitel hotel. Along these lines, it cannot be ignored that, at the time of the incidence, Accor's head of security was none other than René-Georges Querry, who had previously "worked closely in the police with Ange Mancini, who [was] coordinator for intelligence for President Sarkozy" (Epstein, 2011).

Sometimes, even silence is deafening. Dominique Strauss-Kahn could have been politically protected by prominent members of the US political establishment. He was not. Quite the contrary: DSK was charged with seven crimes -attempted rape, sexual abuse, forcible touching, among others- by Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr., son of former US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, whose Deputy Executive Secretary of State was former CIA official Frank G. Wisner II, who became Nicolas Sarkozy's stepfather in 1977 when he married his stepmother Christine de Ganay. Additionally, DSK was denied bail by Judge Melissa Jackson, who was politically sponsored and handpicked by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who also happens to be a powerful player in Wall Street. (Chossudovsky, 2011).

Moreover, the fact that DSK was arrested aboard an airplane shortly before it was scheduled to depart creates the "image of a man fleeing from a crime" (Roberts, 2011) even though he was heading to Europe in order to hold a meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and, afterwards, participate in a meeting of eurozone finance ministers in Brussels (Bucci, 2011).



Afterwards, it must not be forgotten that, when Strauss-Kahn was arrested, he was temporarily substituted by John Philipp Lipsky before Christine Lagarde was officially appointed as the next Managing Director of the IMF. During his career, it has to be pointed out, Lipsky had worked for banking corporations such as Salomon Brothers and JPMorgan Chase (Whitney, 2011).

By the way, Lagarde's candidacy to succeed DSK was promptly and enthusiastically backed by the US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner -himself a former Goldman Sachs man-, who somewhat prematurely argued that Dominique Strauss-Kahn was "obviously not it in the position to run the IMF" (Calabresi, 2011). Perhaps not incidentally,

"the report from the prosecutor proving DSK's innocence was released on the day following the IMF's executive board decision instating Lagarde as Managing Director of the IMF for a five year term [...] if this information had been revealed a few days earlier, Lagarde's candidacy as IMF chief might have been questioned" (Chossudovsky, 2011).

These surprising coincidences have led some analysts to assert the hypothesis that "regime change at the IMF [...had] been speedily implemented" (Chossudovsky, 2011). Was it? It is certainly a legitimate question that deserves careful attention. If so, who was interested in ousting him and, even more importantly, what were the motivations behind such move?

The above article is Part I of a longer essay forthcoming on Global Research

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[1]SDRs are supplementary foreign exchange reserve assets held by member countries and maintained by the IMF and their value is based on four international currencies: the US dollar, the euro, the yen and the pound and can be exchanged for freely usable currencies. They represent a potential claim on the freely usable currencies of IMF member states.

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