

# Russiagate and Russophobia: Where Law Ends, Tyranny Begins

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Region: [Russia and FSU, USA](#)

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Recently, George Packer has [written a review](#) [1] of Andrew Weissmann's book *Where Law Ends: Inside the Mueller Investigation*. Weissmann was one of Robert Mueller's top deputies in the special counsel's investigation of the 2016 election, and he is about to publish the first insider account of the Mueller Investigation.

In a peculiar sensationalist manner that characterized the news coverage of the Russiagate investigation of **Robert Mueller**, George Packer writes:

"Only the Special Counsel's Office—burrowing into the criminal matter of Russian interference in the 2016 election, a possible conspiracy with the Trump campaign, and the president's subsequent attempts to block an investigation—offered the prospect of accountability for Trump.

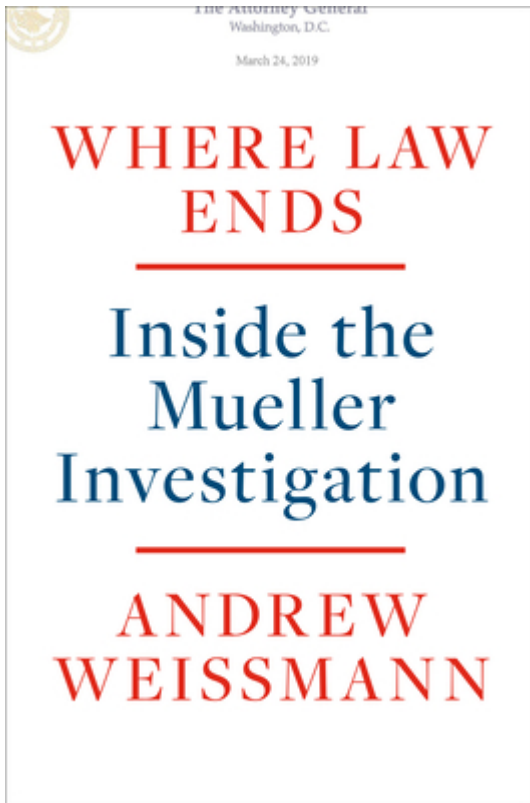
"Suddenly, in March 2019, the Special Counsel's Office completed its work. A report, hundreds of pages long, with many lines blacked out, was delivered to the attorney general. Before releasing it to the public, **Attorney General William Barr** pronounced the president innocent, in a brazen mix of elisions, distortions, and outright lies—for the report presented extensive evidence of cooperation between the Trump campaign and Russian assets, and of the president's efforts to obstruct justice.

"Weissmann also came close to establishing a conspiracy between the Trump campaign and the Russian government. On August 2, 2016, Manafort dined in New York City with Konstantin Kilimnik, a Ukrainian-born business associate with ties to Russian intelligence and oligarchs.

"Manafort, a lavishly compensated hired gun for some of the oligarchs, had been sharing campaign strategy with Kilimnik, including sensitive polling data. Over dinner, Manafort described Trump's strategy in four battleground states; Kilimnik in turn presented for Trump's approval a Russian 'peace plan' that would amount to the annexation of eastern Ukraine.

"Last month's Senate report, going further than the Mueller investigation, named Kilimnik as an actual Russian intelligence officer and revealed his likely connection to the 2016 election-interference operations. 'This is what collusion looks like,' the committee's Democratic members wrote in an appendix.

"Weissmann and his colleagues were thwarted by chance—Manafort's No. 2, Rick Gates, arrived late for the dinner with Kilimnik and was subsequently unable to tell investigators all that was discussed. They were hamstrung by Mueller's decision not to look into Trump's financial dealings with Russia, which might have established a source of Russian leverage over Trump, but which the president had declared a red line not to be crossed."



It's pertinent to point out here that not all Russians visiting the United States for traveling, education and business are "secret agents," nevertheless even if we assume for the argument's sake that **Konstantin Kilimnik** was an intelligence officer, he allegedly offered "a Russian 'peace plan' that would amount to the annexation of eastern Ukraine" for Trump's approval in 2016. It's been four years since Trump was elected president. Forget about letting Russia annex eastern Ukraine, he didn't even recognize Russian annexation of Crimean peninsula in 2014 yet.

Only two conclusions can be drawn from this fact: either Trump didn't keep his end of the bargain, or there was no collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign. The demonstrable fact is that when it comes to the rivalry between the Cold War-era foes, the Trump administration appears to be on the same page as the US national security establishment.

Lamenting the apparent absence of rule of law and checks and balances in the American so-called democracy, George Packer narrating the insider account of Andrew Weissmann further observes: "Where Law Ends describes numerous instances, large and small, when Mueller declined to pursue an aggressive course for fear of the reaction at the White House. For example, the special counsel shied away from subpoenaing Don Trump Jr. to testify about his notorious June 2016 meeting in Trump Tower with a Russian lawyer offering dirt on Hillary Clinton.

"Mueller wanted, above all, to warn the American people about foreign subversion of our democracy, while the greater subversion gathered force here at home."

The most revealing disclosure in these excerpts is not the Trump's son meeting a Russian lawyer but the bottom line that while the American people have been indoctrinated to fear the foreign subversion of the American democracy, the greater subversion has gathered force at home. And that "subversive force" is certainly not the elected politicians but the

deep state which the likes of Packer, Weissman and the rest of mainstream shells are paid to serve and defend.

**Donald Trump's** unorthodox approach to the conduct of diplomatic relations has been a persistent thorn in the side of America's national security establishment for the last four years, and mainstream pundits often wonder why Washington's relations with traditional allies, including Britain, France, Germany and Canada, have soured during the tenure of the Trump administration.

The fact is that like a typical American, Trump regards America's allies, including **Boris Johnson, Emmanuel Macron, Angela Merkel and Justin Trudeau**, as subordinates beholden to him personally; whereas he treats adversaries, such as Russian President Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, as independent leaders deserving equal treatment and respect. Nevertheless, it's an inconsequential matter of interpersonal attitude and etiquette than anything having diplomatic repercussions.

The conspiracy theories perpetuated by the establishment-controlled media that Trump is Putin's "useful idiot" and alleged Russian interference in America's domestic politics are sheer fabrications reminiscent of the McCarthyism of the fifties.

Russian netizens indeed lent moral support to the Trump campaign in the run-up to the 2016 US presidential race but simply because they despised **Hillary Clinton**, who the Russians regarded as an interventionist hawk responsible for initiating proxy wars in Libya and Syria in 2011 as Obama's secretary of state, and also because she was the wife of former Democratic President Bill Clinton who was responsible for the break-up of former Yugoslavia in the nineties.

Despite the alleged Russian interference in the 2016 US elections, Trump lost the popular vote to Hillary by a margin of 2.87 million votes. Had it not been for the archaic electoral college system and **James Comey**, then the director of FBI, opening last-minute investigation into Hillary Clinton using personal computers for official communications, she was the favorite to win the elections.

According to Washington's own intelligence estimates, three powers are currently vying for interference in upcoming presidential elections slated for November 3. Two of those, China and Iran, favor **Joe Biden** because Trump initiated trade war with China and unilaterally annulled Iran nuclear deal in May 2018, whereas Russia allegedly supports Trump because Putin apparently has an unmistakable crush on Slovenian beauty pageant Melania.

Trump is reputed to be a staunch conservative, and it's a known empirical observation that conservatives typically are considerably more patriotic than liberals. Collaborating with foreign powers to undermine one's national interest doesn't appeal to the conservative mindset.

Throughout its four-year tenure, the Trump administration has continued with the policy of its predecessors. If anything, diplomatic relations between Washington and Moscow have significantly worsened during Trump's tumultuous four-year tenure and a New Cold War has begun between the arch-rivals.

Lastly, the impeachment proceedings against Donald Trump were nothing more than a show trial. One of the reasons the Democrats initiated the impeachment inquiry against Trump in

September 2019 was that after Special Counsel Mueller's investigation failed to establish collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign in March 2019, therefore the Democrats came up with a new hoax to discredit a Republican president in the election year.

Although the Democrats had the requisite majority in the House of Representatives to impeach Donald Trump, the Senate was clearly controlled by the Republicans. Besides, convicting a president of impeachment required two-third majority in the Senate that the Democrats never had. Then what was the purpose of initiating the proceedings if not to discredit an incumbent president in the election year

Leaving partisan interpretations of the US Constitution aside, an accused is presumed innocent until proved guilty, according to a fundamental axiom of modern jurisprudence. Then how can it be said that Trump is an "impeached president"? By such paradoxical legal interpretations, if a mala fide litigator maliciously accuses an innocent person of murder, could it be said that the person is a murderer simply because he was indicted of the offense but was never convicted of having committed a murder?

Ironically, while three US presidents have been accused of impeaching the Constitution for relatively insignificant offenses, including Bill Clinton for perjury and Donald Trump for using political influence to discredit opponents, no US president has ever been charged, let alone convicted, of waging devastating wars of aggression.

Unless impeachment proceedings are initiated against war criminals, including George Bush for invading Afghanistan and Iraq and Barack Obama for waging proxy wars in Libya and Syria, the impeachment provisions in the US Constitution would serve as nothing more than a convenient tool for settling political scores.

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## Note

[1] The Inside Story of the Mueller Probe's Mistakes:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/09/andrew-weissmann-mueller-book-where-law-ends/616395/>

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