

Republican Perspective
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by Ed Manning

THE SET-UP - PART 1

“Trump is a phenomenon that foreign countries haven't seen. So it is a shocking experience to them that he came in to office.” Henry Kissinger, American statesman

George Papadopoulos recently gave an interview to the Dan Bongino Show. Bongino is a conservative commentator and a former Secret Service Agent. Papadopoulos is a former adviser to President Trump who pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI as part of special counsel Robert S. Mueller's investigation. He is seeking a delay to his 14-day prison sentence scheduled to start November 26th.

The interview begs the question whether or not Papadopoulos was set-up by Western intelligence agencies including the U.S. According to reports by the main-stream-media, Papadopoulos had conversations with a professor in London in March, 2016. The essence was that Russia had dirt on Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton via thousands of emails. These meetings were part of the Department of Justice's counterintelligence investigation into the Trump campaign.

Joseph Misfud

Papadopoulos was working for the London Center for International Law Practice. Avinder Sambei, the FBI's counsel in London is a Director of this organization. When Papadopoulos tells her that he is going back to the U.S. to work in the Trump campaign, Sambei asks that he first meet with a Maltese professor in Rome. Papadopoulos agrees and meets with Joseph Misfud, a professor at the Link Campus University. This university is a training ground for Western operatives in Rome. David Ignatius of the Washington Post has written on this topic.

Misfud emails Papadopoulos a week after their meeting and says that he is in London and would like George to meet Putin's niece, Olga Vinogradova. Officials at the London Center for International Law Practice confirm to Papadopoulos that she is Putin's niece. This was far from the truth. Olga was a manager of a wine store. At the meeting, Vinogradova was mostly silent and spoke little English. Misfud told George that he had information that the Russians had thousands of Hillary Clinton emails. Papadopoulos thought Misfud was just “puffing himself up” to prove he had worthy Russia connections.

After this meeting, Vinogradova began texting Papadopoulos with perfect English. He texted back asking if she was the same woman that he met. He received no reply.

In a stunning revelation, Papadopoulos claims that Mifsud recorded their conversation and hopes the transcripts become public. He said the transcripts are exculpatory as he never requested access to Clinton's emails. Further, if Mifsud was working for the Russians, how did the transcripts get into the hands of Western intelligence? This would be a blatant admission by the Russians that they interfered in the 2016 election.

Bongino said that in the FBI's "Statement of Offense," that Mifsud had substantial connections to people in Russia. Bongino goes on to state that there has been no evidence presented that this is true. He believes that Papadopoulos was set-up by his own government.

Mifsud has not been seen since November, 2017. His lawyer, Stephan Roh has said that Mifsud has ties to Western intelligence. Per Papadopoulos: "If his lawyer's telling the truth, which there's no reason for him to be lying, especially given what we know about Mifsud's connections to Western intelligence, how my meeting with him was obviously orchestrated and how he actually really had no connections to Russia. He introduced me to the fake niece of Putin, who was probably working with Western intelligence, and a low-level think-tank analyst in Moscow, who I've never met to this day, over email. So it makes perfect sense."

Alexander Downer

The New York Times reported in December, 2017 that a drunken Papadopoulos told an Australian diplomat, that Russia had thousands of Clinton emails that would be shared with the Trump campaign. Downer was head of the Australian counterpart to the CIA for seventeen years. He now is Australia's High Commissioner to the UK. Downer later passed the Russia- Clinton email allegation to the FBI. This started the Trump-Russia investigation.

Papadopoulos disputes the drunken characterization. He said that the meeting with Downer was not random and had been arranged through intermediaries. Each had one drink.

The intermediaries were Christian Cantor, an Israeli diplomat; Erika Thompson, Cantor's girlfriend, an Australian intelligent officer and and assistant to Downer. Both were anti-Trump.

Thompson arranged the meeting for May 10, 2016. At the start, Downer pulled out his phone and held it up. Papadopoulos thought he was either taking a picture or filming and recording the conversation.

Papadopoulos said Downer did not discuss the U.S.- Australian relationship. Instead, he was there to pass along a message from the UK to Trump to stop supporting Brexit. And that Trump was a pariah. Papadopoulos claims there was never any discussion about Russia and Clinton emails.

In 2006, Downer authorized the Australian government to donate \$25 M to the Clinton Foundation. The money was to be used to fight HIV/AIDS in The People's Republic of China, The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Papua New Guinea and elsewhere. While the project won praise for helping thousands, The Hill reported it also received criticism from auditors about "management weaknesses" and inadequate budget oversight. The FBI is investigating.

More from the Papadopoulos interview next week.