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Did Epstein's Knowledge of Trump Become Putin's Most Dangerous Weapon Against Ukraine?

From the halls of Mar-a-Lago to the ruins of Ukrainian hospitals, the toxic bond between Trump, Putin, and Epstein may have reshaped the world and cost the lives of countless children...

By Thom Hartmann
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"Russia unleashed a massive combined attack on Kyiv" last night, The Guardian reports. "Five people were hospitalised, including one man in critical condition and a pregnant woman, after a series of powerful explosions sounded in the city and air defenses were activated. ...

"Pictures posted on social media showed different sites in flames and residents gathering in rubble-strewn streets outside apartment buildings."

The child victims of Jeffrey Epstein's crimes are apparently not the only ones who've paid the price for Donald Trump's long relationship with that notorious pedophile.

Epstein's "partying" with Trump has apparently also led to thousands of civilian deaths abroad, the collapse of America's credibility around the world, and a serious threat to the future of democracy in Europe.

Trump's coverup may well represent a form of treason, the aid and comfort to an enemy attacking an ally during time of war. It should lead, at the very least, to impeachment.

Right now, the largest nation in Europe, a democracy and an ally, is under violent attack by a brutal dictator intent on reestablishing the Soviet empire. In a threat to European democracy itself, Ukraine is getting pummeled every day because Donald Trump refuses to respond in a meaningful way.

But why?

In Epstein's emails, he boasts of offering to advise Russia's senior-most officials about how to manipulate Trump:

"I think you might suggest to putin that [Russian Foreign Minister Sergey] lavrov can

get insight on [Trump by] talking to me...”

Consider Trump’s secretive and beta-submissive behavior toward Vladimir Putin, especially in Helsinki when he trashed our intelligence agencies and sucked up to Putin, and more recently with his red carpet in Alaska, and it’s impossible to ignore what this newest Epstein revelation implies.

If Trump’s betrayal of Ukraine is a direct or indirect result of things Trump did with Epstein, it’s naked treachery. Consider the pattern: ever since Trump came back into the White House, Russia’s attacks on Ukraine have exploded in their ferocity and brutality.

Recently, a missile strike by Russian forces hit the city of Kryvyi Rih in Ukraine and killed at least 20 people including nine children. Apartments collapsed around weeping parents who pulled bodies from the rubble; a baby only a few months old was among the victims.

In another attack, a children’s hospital in southern Ukraine was struck, shattering windows, strewing blood-soaked medical stretchers across the grounds, all while about a hundred people were inside.

Schools, kindergartens and residential buildings have been leveled in multiple towns, as the Russian military targets civilian infrastructure with vicious abandon. They’re daily destroying Ukraine’s fuel and electric grids with the goal of freezing that country’s people into submission as winter approaches.

These are not accidents of war. They’re the deliberate targeting of civilians, children, doctors, classrooms, apartment buildings, homes, and hospitals. Russian drones hunt civilians down the streets of Ukrainian cities, sometimes smashing the windows of their homes as they chase people indoors to kill them.

And all of this — the horror of what’s happening in plain sight that’s the clear result of Trump’s repeated and pathetic kowtowing to Putin — appears, from the Epstein emails, that it may be getting so much worse over the past 10 months because Putin took Epstein’s advice and threatened Donald Trump with exposure.

We still don’t know what was said in that room in Helsinki because Trump covered it up, making sure we’d never know. He ordered his American interpreter to move away from his private conversation with Putin, and afterward seized and destroyed her notes.

Similarly and more recently, in Alaska, Trump dismissed his aides and rode with Putin privately in his car where they engaged in another lengthy, secretive conversation.

That's the behavior of a man with something to hide, who's terrified by some horrible secret; it's not the behavior of a leader defending the national interest of the United States or our European allies.

On top of that, Trump has been placing private phone calls to Putin repeatedly ever since he was reinstalled in the Oval Office.

No previous American president throughout our 249 year history had ever conducted such meetings and repeated communications in secret with the murderous leader of a hostile foreign power. None has ever tried to cover up meetings with such men.

When we place Trump's bizarre, unprecedented secrecy next to Epstein's emails in which the billionaire pedophile tells European and Russian contacts that he could offer "insight" into Trump, the outlines of a deeply troubling possibility emerge.

At this moment, it's only speculation, but it's one hell of a big if. Because Trump himself keeps doing things — including trashing NATO and betraying Ukraine in ways that only benefit Putin — and therefore demand a serious, honest investigation.

We now know — from the emails released this week — that Epstein wrote that Sergei Lavrov could "get insight" from him and that Russian Ambassador Churkin "understood Trump" after their talks.

And the Russians, as the world knows, never, ever let such juicy material go to waste. Former KGB senior intelligence officer Vladimir Putin is a man trained to find the soft spot in any opponent and apply the exact right pressure to make them bend to his will, and it's looking more every day like that's exactly what's happening here.

Trump was "best friends" with Epstein for more than a decade. They lived near each other in both New York and Palm Beach, and partied publicly together. They traveled on Epstein's jet repeatedly. They allegedly shared women.

These don't prove blackmail, but the possibility that Epstein passed along compromising details to Lavrov or even Putin is staggering.

Imagine Putin, alone with Trump in Helsinki way back in 2018, quietly signaling that he

knew more about Epstein, Trump, and underage girls than Trump could survive being exposed.

A soft whisper. Perhaps simply sliding a note card to Trump with the words “Epstein, girls” on it.

And then Trump goes out to meet the press after their meeting, shoulders down looking beaten, and lavishes Putin with praise while trash-talking his own intelligence and military officials. What the hell?

Even former Harvard President Larry Summers was horrified, writing to his friend Jeffrey Epstein on July 16, 2018, moments after the Helsinki meeting:

“Do the Russians have stuff on Trump? Today was appalling even by his standards.”

Epstein replied to Summers the next day:

“My email is full with similar comments. wow. Im sure his view is that it went super well. he thinks he has charmed his adversary.. Admittedly he has no idea of the symbolism. He has no idea of most things.”

The idea that Putin threatened Trump in that first private meeting is only a hypothesis, of course. But the secrecy Trump immediately imposed — and his repeatedly whipped-dog-like servile behavior to this murderous dictator in the years since — makes such a moment impossible to rule out.

If something like that did occur, if Putin delivered even the hint of a threat and Trump immediately bent over and bowed down and has ever since, it would explain Trump’s world-changing behavior and why he’s so seriously damaged the interests of America while abandoning our European allies.

Is there anything else that could possibly explain why Trump has spent years refusing to confront Putin for anything, no matter how shocking or monstrous the Russian dictator’s behavior?

It would also explain his silence in the face of Russian assassinations, Putin’s bounties on American soldiers in Afghanistan, and now the horrific nightly devastation of Ukraine and Putin’s kidnapping of tens of thousands of Ukrainian children.

If Trump was intimidated in that private moment, if Putin used Epstein's information as a weapon, then the cost of Trump's fear of exposure has been measured in thousands of Ukrainian civilian deaths, including far more children than even Epstein himself victimized.

It's been measured in the suffering of the millions of Ukrainians now facing the possibility of freezing to death this winter without power, as Putin relentlessly and nightly targets their energy grid while Trump plays golf, bulldozes the White House, and throws elaborate parties.

It's measured in America's humiliation on the world stage and in the bone-deep terror felt across Europe as Putin tests the resolve of NATO and his officials explicitly threaten the Baltics.

The sheer scale of harm that could have flowed from this one corrupt, degenerate, perverted man's desperation to protect himself is absolutely breathtaking.

If it turns out that this is what actually happened, it would make historic betrayals like Benedict Arnold, Vidkun Quisling, Robert Hanssen, and even the petty treacheries that toppled ancient republics look small by comparison, because none of them placed the survival of modern, worldwide democracy itself at risk.

This isn't an accusation: it's the unavoidable suspicion forced upon us by Trump's own secrecy.

He hid his conversations with Putin from his own government and even from the American people. He created a vacuum where certainty should exist. And now, into that vacuum, flows Epstein's boast that he was willing to provide Russia with usable, exploitable insights into Trump's vulnerabilities and psychology.

Trump has refused the basic transparency required of every president who interacts with a hostile foreign leader. If he'd behaved like every president before him, we wouldn't be having this conversation.

But he didn't.

Instead, he has bizarrely, inexplicably kissed Putin's ass repeatedly and publicly in ways that have astonished and horrified our intelligence and military officials, as well as those of our allies.

And now he's in the process of purging any among our military ranks and intelligence services who he appears to suspect may not go along with his inexplicable behavior.

Because Trump's so frequently surrendered America's, Ukraine's, and NATO's best interests to Putin's desires — and now we learn Epstein offered to advise Putin on how to blackmail (or at last control) him — we must now investigate every plausible explanation for his actions, no matter how disturbing.

Just releasing Epstein's emails isn't even close to enough to answer these questions.

Congress, what's left of our independent media, and the FBI must investigate not only Epstein's crimes and connections but the terrifying possibility that American foreign policy has been warped by a president desperately trying to shield himself from the exposure of unforgivable behavior.

That investigation must be thorough, public, and relentless; it must meet the high standards of the internal and public investigations into Richard Nixon's criminality in 1974, at the very least.

If true, the possibilities raised by Trump's betrayal of Ukraine and kowtowing to Putin are far worse than anything Nixon could have conceived in his wildest fantasies.

If Republicans have an ounce of integrity left they'll not only sanction investigations that could lead to criminal prosecutions; they'll convene impeachment proceedings.

The American people deserve to know whether blackmail, intimidation, and Trump's personal vulnerability have cost thousands of Ukrainian lives and shaken the foundations of Western democracy. As well as ignoring — or participating in — the destruction of the lives of hundreds of young girls.

The stakes are too high, the damage too great, and the possible treason too severe to accept anything less.

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