

Hillary Clinton and the real Russian collusion



What is the Russia-Clinton uranium deal?

What's the latest on a controversial uranium deal with Russia that was brokered during Hillary Clinton's tenure as Secretary of State?

You may have heard of the scandal brewing in Washington. Presidential advisers cutting sweetheart deals with a foreign power, signing million dollar lobbying contracts with that foreign power, bribes being proffered, and the foreign government gained unprecedented access to government agencies and crucial U.S. natural resources? And what if I told you that foreign power was Russia?

Collusion you say? Perhaps. Collusion with Trump? Nope.

I'm talking about a news story that fittingly is coming back from the dead just before Halloween to scare a lot of Democrats, Bill and Hillary Clinton and Obama administration officials. If you want to take a deeper dive on this issue, read the book "Clinton Cash," by Peter Schweizer, president of the Government Accountability Institute. But here are the basics.

A decade ago, a long-time Clinton Foundation donor, Frank Giustra, sold his uranium company to another firm, Uranium One. With that deal, Uranium One now owned uranium mines in the western U.S., including Wyoming, with about 20 percent of U.S. uranium production capacity, and about ten percent of the actual uranium mined in the U.S.

In 2009, Rosatom, Russia's nuclear agency, took a 17-percent position in Uranium One. A year later, in the summer of 2010, Rosatom bought majority control of the Uranium One, effectively giving the Russian government-controlled entity proprietary access to one-fifth of the U.S. uranium supply.

Consider this: Russia got its generous foothold in the U.S. uranium market in less time than it takes most 16-year-olds to get a driver's license.

All of this was taking place after years of what could best be categorized as challenging times in U.S.-Russia relations, as Russia attempted to annex Georgia, intimidated Ukraine and threatened the former-captive nations of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia with short-range nuclear weapons. In short, Russia was doing nothing that would indicate it was a country unwilling to build and potentially use nuclear weapons; the signs of aggression were everywhere.

Now there is a process that the U.S. government uses to ensure that any business deal that may include significant national security issues is given serious, in-depth and careful review and approval. That review is run through the Treasury Department's Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S. (CIFIUS), which includes representatives from Homeland Security, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Justice, and State, as well as the U.S. trade representative and director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and National Security Council. In addition, the director of national intelligence also has input to the review.

CIFIUS and Congressional reviews killed deals like the Rosatom purchase before. In 2006 it helped kill the deal by a Dubai owned company to buy U.S. ports, in part because of the national security risks it presented, and it killed multiple deals with Chinese companies as well in 2009 and 2010. Yet, between the first week of August 2010 and October 22, 2010, the Obama Administration in expedited time approved the sale of crucial national security resources to Russia by rubber stamping the sale of Uranium One to Rosatom. In 2015, Senator Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, noted the expedited time of the deal's approval in a letter to then

Attorney General Loretta Lynch, calling it a deal that was “apparently approved in record speed.”

According to most law firms that deal in such matters, CIFIUS reviews involving sensitive national security matters can take up to 120 days. The Rosatom deal took fewer than 90 days. More outrageous: it appears there were no Congressional oversight hearings. Even more outrageous - and puzzling - members of the CIFIUS review board were aware of attempts by Russian government efforts to bribe U.S.-based executives in the U.S. uranium industry at the time this deal was being approved.

This wasn't simply your typical Clinton back room deal. This was a deal that was reviewed by virtually every senior Obama administration official, many of whom were aware of the Clinton connection, the FBI bribery investigation, and Rosatom's history.

On October 5th of 2010, Republicans in Congress demanded that the Obama Administration review the Rosatom deal more closely, citing a host of national security issues. For example, one rationale cited by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for approving the deal was that Rosatom did not have an export license to sell or ship the U.S. uranium overseas. But as the Congressional letter noted, Russia's government-controlled nuclear companies had been sanctioned numerous times for breaking uranium import-export deals, particularly to the countries they aid in building nuclear capacity, such as Iran (yes, Rosatom helped build the Iranian Bushere nuclear plant and trained Iranian nuclear scientists). To paraphrase a pop culture reference Vladimir Putin would appreciate: “An export license? Russia doesn't need a stinkin' export license!”

Consider this: Russia got its generous foothold in the U.S. uranium market in less time than it takes most 16-year-olds to get a driver's license. Russia got its deal moved through the Obama Administration faster than it took the Obama Administration Department of Justice's Anti-Trust Division to approve **any** of the mergers of two U.S. companies it reviewed.

How is that possible? Clearly there were motivated folks to get the deal done. One of those was clearly Hillary Clinton, whose family foundation raked in millions from donors with ties to Russia, as well as the uranium industry. Some media outlets have pointed out that the total take for the foundation may have

been as “little” as \$4 million. But for a cash-starved foundation that can’t even afford to give back \$250,000 from serial sex-offender Harvey Weinstein, \$4 million is a decent cash reserve.

But let’s be clear, this wasn’t simply your typical Clinton back room deal. This was a deal that was reviewed by virtually every senior Obama administration official, many of whom were aware of the Clinton connection, the FBI bribery investigation, and Rosatom’s history. And let’s not forget either: controlling the global supply chain is the very obvious goal of Putin’s. To make matters worse, President Barack Obama reviewed the case.

Why would such a deal go through? Sometimes the easiest explanation is the right one: maybe it was nothing more than a payback to Democrat and Clinton donors. When nothing makes sense in Washington D.C., just follow the money.

While this scandal’s original focus was on Uranium One and the Clinton Foundation, it goes far deeper into a Democratic administration than anyone within the party wants to admit. Which is perhaps why President Obama seemed less than excited about pushing the Trump-Russia collusion narrative. Perhaps in a rare moment of self-recollection and awareness, he realized that eventually the breadth of this story would end up exactly where we are today, with all eyes looking at Obama’s appointees, wondering why they sold America’s national security for the uranium-market equivalent of 30 pieces of silver.

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