

The Traitor-in-Chief Betrays Ukraine and His Own People

Since 2016, investigations and intelligence assessments have confirmed that Russia has a history of covertly funnelling money to influence U.S. politics, including attempts to support specific candidates and amplify domestic divisions. This often involves using "dark money" tactics, shell companies, and intermediaries to obscure the origins of the funds.

The U.S. electoral system is corrupt and needs a major transparency overhaul.

Key known aspects and allegations include:

Foreign Influence Operations: U.S. intelligence officials have determined that Russia engaged in "sweeping and systematic" interference in the 2016 election and also authorized campaigns to influence the 2020 and 2024 elections. A 2022 U.S. intelligence review found Russia secretly gave over \$300 million to political parties and officials worldwide.

Use of "Dark Money" and Cutouts: Russia employs various methods to hide the money trail, including using foundations, think tanks, shell companies, and even organized crime groups as "cutouts" to channel funds. This makes it difficult for the public to know the source of the money without law enforcement investigations.

Targeting of Influencers and Media: The Department of Justice has brought indictments against Russian individuals for allegedly funnelling millions of dollars to U.S. media companies and online commentators to spread pro-Russian propaganda and disinformation. In one September 2024 indictment, prosecutors alleged two employees of the Russian state broadcaster RT illegally funneled nearly \$10 million to a company (widely reported as Tenet Media) that hired prominent right-wing influencers who were unwitting participants in the scheme.

Specific Campaign Finance Allegations:

NRA Connection: The FBI has investigated whether a Russian banker with ties to Vladimir Putin used the National Rifle Association's (NRA) "dark money" arm to secretly spend money on the 2016 election.

Individual Convictions: In one documented case, political operative Jesse Benton was convicted in 2022 for a 2016 scheme to funnel a Russian national's \$100,000 to the Trump campaign. Benton was later pardoned by President Trump.

Oligarch Funds: Investigations have looked into whether Russian oligarchs, such as Viktor Vekselberg, funneled illegal donations to the Trump campaign or inaugural fund through American affiliates. Payments, including a \$1 million payment to then-Trump

lawyer Michael Cohen from an affiliate of a sanctioned Russian oligarch's company, were scrutinised.

Real Estate Links: Reports and investigations have highlighted numerous financial entanglements, including real estate purchases in Trump properties, that allegedly involved Russian individuals with ties to organized crime and the Kremlin, potentially serving as money laundering conduits.

The lack of transparency in the U.S. campaign finance system, particularly regarding "dark money" groups that do not have to disclose their donors, creates vulnerabilities that foreign actors easily exploit. There seems to be little interest at the moment in the US Congress to do anything about it.

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