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VERBATIM TRANSLATION

Participants:

[REDACTED]

Mariya Valeryevna Butina

Abbreviations:

SF RS RF Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation
TsB Central Bank

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[TN:

FOMIN, Alexander, whose real name was Aleksandr Semonovich FEKLIZOV, was the KGB Resident in Washington, DC at the time of the Cuban missile crisis. He contacted John A. Scali to ask whether President John Kennedy would follow through on his threat to retaliate against Moscow, not Havana, if a Soviet missile were fired at the United States from Cuba. According to Scali's friend Warren Rogers, Scali impulsively answered Fomin's question with the words, "You're goddamn right he would!" Then Fomin proceeded to lay out a plan by which the Soviet Union would dismantle the Cuban missile bases if the American government would pledge not to invade Cuba. Scali undertook to relay this message to the State Department.

SCALI, John A., was hired in 1961 from the Associated Press to serve as diplomatic correspondent for ABC News. Having been approached by Alexander Fomin about a Russian plan to avoid confrontation in Cuba [see above], Scali returned to the State Department press office and relayed Fomin's message. Some hours later, when the State Department had already instructed Scali to tell Fomin that the Kennedy administration saw possibilities in his proposal, Khrushchev, communicating through the US embassy in Moscow, made a similar proposal but stipulated that the United States abandon its missile sites in Turkey. However, the State Department did not cede to Khrushchev's demand and it continued to employ Scali as intermediary until the Cuban missile crisis was defused. Internet sources imply that Scali's communications with Fomin paralleled Khrushchev's communications with Kennedy but that the two channels were not initially coordinated.]

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Note on Forming a Channel of Informal Communication between Russia and the USA

Informal communication among states always plays an important role and organically supplements formal channels such as embassies, committees and commissions, and work in the framework of international organizations. Informal channels play a special role in forming a background for the work of formal institutions, but sometimes even a decisive role in resolving international conflicts (the author has in mind the meeting of Aleksandr Fomin with the American journalist John Scully at the time of the Caribbean crisis of 1962. Through those two citizens, informal talks between the USSR and the USA were held (the author harbors no illusions about Mr. Fomin's workplace, but the main point is the fact that the talks were of an unofficial nature at a time when neither party to the conflict was able, without losing face, to make concessions). Moreover, **informal communication serves to achieve such goals as forming relations of trust in the business milieu, developing a country's ability to attract investment and the dialogue of civic organizations, on the basis of communality of interests and similarity of cultures.**

Russia has more than once made attempts at establishing an informal agent of influence on US territory as, for example, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] **partly fulfilled that function;** however, given the exacerbation of relations, the public and close link of the institute to the Kremlin immediately placed the institute in a "non-grata" position that, in the last analysis, led to its liquidation because it could not fulfill the tasks set for it.

[REDACTED] **is also located on US territory:** a branch of it (now independent) is the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Moscow; however, as noted earlier, the head of the organization is now a US citizen and also a hired worker who directly depends on the American businessman [REDACTED] and (according to unconfirmed but plausible data) in undetermined relations with [REDACTED] [REDACTED], the former head of the [REDACTED] company. It would be strange to expect from this center a consistent policy of forming a positive background for work with the Russian diplomatic mission in the USA. Formally [REDACTED] declares a pro-Russian agenda in US foreign policy yet, last year, the banker financing the center, an investor in the now reorganized [REDACTED] may, in connection with events that occurred in the Russian banking system and the reorganization of his bank, either put an end to the pro-Russian line or close the center. The first prognosis is already confirmed in practice – on the center's website [REDACTED] there were previously pro-Russian materials supporting the policy of Russia, taking a neutral position and recommending that the US leadership cooperate with the RF. However, now (see illustration 1, dated February 26, 2016) the character of the materials has changed to a negative one. The author concedes that the change in rhetoric coincides with [REDACTED] failure in Russia. An organization like that is unlikely to become a channel of informal communication and a center for spreading dialogue between Russia and the USA.

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Pro-Russian cultural centers for developing literature and music no doubt play an important role in preparing the background and developing informal communication; however, they are, as a rule, unsystematic, and are not authoritative in political and business circles.

To a certain degree, support centers for immigrants from Russia further the attainment of these goals, inasmuch as new US citizens immigrating from Russia or the USSR maintain contacts with the country of their previous citizenship but they often strive to cut off interaction completely and to represent the country of their previous citizenship as a hateful place in which their previous life was, for one reason or another, unsuccessful, and that is why they came to the United States. That category experience natural nostalgia, as a rule towards the time of personality crisis at the age of 50, when they remember their youth and their negative memories are effaced, yet by that time their relations with Russia have already been broken off and their contacts are out of date. What is more, communities of immigrants represent haphazard entities, interest groups of a sort, and cannot become an agent of influence.

The fact that, on US territory, there are a certain number of opposition activists only aggravates the state of affairs. As a rule, these activists speak good English and take pleasure in actively transmitting their hatred toward the RF in the press, recounting tales about the terrible injustice done to them in Russia, the torture and the derision, obviously exaggerating the proportions of their misfortune.

In such a situation it is very hard to expect a positive background for official diplomacy and the existence of informal channels of communication.

However, in the USA there are groups of scholars, businessmen and politicians who entertain positive views on the outlook for interrelations between Russia and the USA. Many of them are found on the very highest rungs of the hierarchy inside the US establishment. These are the very groups with which it would make sense to build dialogue, supporting and warming their positive inclinations, providing support for those initiatives.

One such group is that of [REDACTED] In 2012, under the leadership of [REDACTED] adherents of such a position visited Moscow and met with several senators of the SF FS RF. Yet, having received no gesture of response from Russians, they shifted their attention to domestic US projects in subsequent years. Nevertheless, [REDACTED] did not change his position or lose faith in the possibility of cooperation between the countries, taking the position of waiting for a gesture of response on the part of Russia.

In February 2016 [REDACTED] met with [REDACTED] Deputy Chairman of the TsB RF and Maria Butina, founder of the Russian national civic movement Right to Bear Arms. The meeting took place at the Americans' initiative. [REDACTED] had met previously with [REDACTED] at the time of his trip to Moscow in 2012 and has a genuine and deep respect for [REDACTED] Ms. Butina is united with [REDACTED] by the presence of mutual friends in the [REDACTED], which in December 2015 made its first official visit to Moscow, where it met with, among others, S. Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, I. Shchegolev and Yu. Trutnev, Assistants to the President, and also D. Rogozin, Vice-Premier.

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Somewhat distraught by his unsuccessful attempt to establish informal communication with the Russian elite in 2012, ██████ nevertheless promised to think about the possibility of renewing his support for the project. As early as the next day he announced that the Americans would again take up the topic, provided he saw corresponding readiness for dialogue on the part of Russia.

A week later Ms. Butina visited the residence of the ██████. In the framework of the conversation still more trusting relations were established between the parties, and details of the Americans' first step towards setting up an informal channel of communication were discussed. **On the part of ██████ proposal was made to organize 3 events in Washington and New York May 23-25, 2016 for the purpose of gathering pro-Russian American politicians, scholars and business people and discussing how to set up an informal channel of communication on the basis of such regular meetings in the USA and Russia.**

It is noteworthy that, in spite of the fact that ██████ is a ██████ persons from the left and right wings of American politics and business will be present, who, nevertheless, concur on the position that cooperation between Russia and the USA is important. According to the organizer's conception, all the events will take place without press coverage. The organizer assumes this to be possible only if the Russians in attendance show signs of being ready for dialogue. As participants he above all sees ██████ and Ms. Butina, and **also presumes the participation of still another representative** of Russian business and politics, leaving the choice of the person to the Russians' discretion.

Provided there is corresponding interest on the part of Russia, ██████ plans include holding an analogous series of events in Moscow in October 2016. It is also noteworthy that ██████ enjoys proximity to the formation of the administration of the new White House (irrespective of which side wins) and for that reason presumes that those events must help experts in the White House to form the right relationship to Russia. In the capacity of attendees at the events there will necessarily be future representatives of the presidential administrations of both the Republicans and the Democrats

Furthermore, in the framework of the annual scholarly conference on foreign policy based at ██████ University, Washington, District of Columbia, in September, 2016, which ██████ is sponsoring, a special section on Russia will be opened, at which Russians are at liberty to propose the speakers.

In addition to the aforesaid ██████ sponsors the American journal, ██████ in which he is asking ██████ to write an article to consolidate his authority in US intellectual circles.

The indicated initiative may become the main channel of Russian-American informal communication mentioned at the beginning of the document, a platform for finding commonality among the interests of business, politics, culture and society, which will generate the necessary background for promoting pro-Russian sentiment in the USA. The special advantage of this proposal resides in the fact that the presence of bilateral interest will, on the one hand, cancel out

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the questions of American ill-wishers about “the Kremlin’s hand” in the organization and in attempts at propaganda and, on the other hand, will make it possible to exert the speediest and most effective influence on the process of making decisions in the American establishment. In connection with the aforesaid, the author assumes that it is possible not to impede the emergence of this channel, and also to facilitate its development by means of providing a platform for communication in Moscow and St. Petersburg in October 2016.

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