

A CALL FOR TRANSPARENCY

Donald Trump still has not revealed to the American public his international business relationships, even as it becomes increasingly clear that his overseas ties could well constitute significant conflicts of interest when it comes to charting US foreign policy. This is unprecedented for a candidate for the nation's highest office. As such, we are calling on Mr. Trump to disclose, in full, the nature of his business relationships overseas -- to include specifically who his business partners are and what and where are his foreign investments. We also call on him to pledge that he will divest himself of his overseas business interests should he win the presidency.

According to an investigative article published September 15th by Newsweek, Mr. Trump has shown poor judgment with regard to whom he has associated with overseas in order to further his business interests. The Newsweek article reports that Mr. Trump courted Muammar Qaddafi, a dictator who murdered his own people and who once pursued nuclear weapons and conducted terrorism against Americans. Newsweek also asserts that Mr. Trump's other business partners have included Kremlin-tied oligarchs and Russians with mafia links, an individual accused of money laundering for the Iranian military, a Turkish media tycoon accused of running a fuel-smuggling ring, Indian companies that may have violated India's laws in their pursuit of business with Mr. Trump, and a South Korean company mired in scandal. Importantly, according to this news item, Mr. Trump's business partnerships owe millions of dollars to Chinese entities.

It's not hard to see why these reported relationships would be problematic. They could impact the foreign policy Mr. Trump would pursue as president, and they seem to have already influenced the policy positions he has taken as a candidate. We do not know whether all of the facts in the Newsweek article are accurate, and the best way to dispel any doubts would be with a full and complete disclosure. The issues are too important to leave them unanswered. It would be in Trump's own interest to resolve these potential conflicts before the election.

Russia offers the most clear cut example of where Mr. Trump's business interests may be influencing his policy positions. Mr. Trump's son has said, "Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section" of their assets and that they "see a lot of money pouring in from Russia." We also know from numerous reports - including from a May Politico piece - that Mr. Trump made millions in 2013 from a Russian oligarch close to Putin when he hosted the Miss Universe event in Moscow and that the two men sought Russian real estate deals together. And Mr. Trump has filled his campaign with top-level advisers with deep ties to Russia, including former campaign chair Paul Manafort, who resigned amid a cascade of revelations about the depth of his connections to pro-Kremlin individuals.

On the campaign trail, Mr. Trump has repeatedly praised Vladimir Putin's authoritarian leadership, while outlining policies that read like a Kremlin wish list. He has claimed that Putin would never invade Ukraine, suggested permanently ceding Crimea to Russia, and placed conditions on upholding our obligation to protect our NATO allies. He even encouraged Russian espionage to interfere with our election, a tactic Putin has deployed across Central Asia and Europe to boost his preferred candidates. In addition, he has floated lifting sanctions against Russia, which would benefit both Putin and the Trump Organization.

Our next commander-in-chief will inherit complex national security threats and complicated relationships with allies and adversaries alike. But our policies must be motivated exclusively by what is in America's best interest, not by the financial interests of our president. The onus is on Donald Trump to assure voters that this will be the case by disclosing the nature of his overseas relationships and committing to divest such assets.

Signed By:

Gen John R. Allen, USMC (Ret.), former Deputy Commander of the U.S. Central Command; former Commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces Afghanistan

Wendy Anderson, former Chief of Staff to the Deputy Secretary of Defense; former Chief of Staff to the Secretary of Commerce

Jeremy Bash, former Chief of Staff to the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency; former Chief of Staff to the Secretary of Defense

Rand Beers, former Acting Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security

Daniel Benjamin, former Ambassador-at-Large and Coordinator for Counterterrorism for the Department of State

Jarrold Bernstein, former Assistant Secretary of Intergovernmental Affairs for the Department of Homeland Security

Richard Betts, Director, Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies, Columbia University; Member, National Commission on Terrorism

Robert Blackwill, former Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Planning

David Buckley, former Inspector General, Central Intelligence Agency

Stan Byers, former Director for Afghanistan, National Security Council, the White House

Shamila N. Chaudhary, former Director for Afghanistan & Pakistan, National Security Council, the White House

Michael Chertoff, former Secretary of Homeland Security

Harry Clark, former Senior Counselor, U.S. Trade Representative

Jane Chapman Gates, former speechwriter for the Secretary of the Treasury; former Deputy Spokesman for U.S. Ambassadors to the UN; and former Senior Advisor to the President's Special Envoy to Sudan

Charles Dunne, former Foreign Policy Adviser to the Director for Strategic Plans and Policy at the Joint Staff in the Pentagon; former Director for Iraq, National Security Council, the White House

Evelyn Farkas, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia/Ukraine/Eurasia

Gerald Feierstein, Ambassador (ret.)

Thomas Fingar, former Deputy Director of National Intelligence for Analysis; former Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research

Michele Flournoy, former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

James K. Glassman, former Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs; former Chairman, U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors

Caitlin Hayden, former Spokesperson, National Security Council, the White House

Bruce Hoffman, former scholar-in-residence for counterterrorism, Central Intelligence Agency; former Commissioner, 9/11 Review Commission

Robert Kagan, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and contributing columnist for the Washington Post

Stephen D. Krasner, Professor of Political Science, Stanford University; former Director of Policy Planning, Department of State

Mark P. Lagon, former Ambassador-At-Large to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Department of State

George Little, former Press Secretary for the Department of Defense; former Spokesman for the Central Intelligence Agency

John MacLaughlin, former Acting Director and Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency

Anja Manuel, former Department of State official and Lecturer at Stanford University

James N. Miller, former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

Michael Morell, former Acting Director and Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency

Richard Nephew, former Principal Deputy Coordinator of Sanctions Policy for the Department of State

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John A. Rizzo, former Acting General Counsel for the Central Intelligence Agency

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Stephen Sestanovich, former Ambassador-at-large for the former Soviet Union

Andrew J. Shapiro, former Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs

Nick Shapiro, former Deputy Chief of Staff for the Central Intelligence Agency; former Senior Advisor to the Deputy National Security Advisor; and former White House Assistant Press Secretary

Wendy Sherman, former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

Steven Simon, former Senior Director for the Middle East and North Africa, National Security Council, the White House

Julianne Smith, former Deputy National Security Advisor to Vice President Joseph Biden

Alan Steinberg, former Region 2 Environmental Protection Agency Administrator

John Stubbs, former Senior Advisor to the U.S. Trade Representative

Eric P. Schwartz, former Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration; former Senior Director, National Security Council, the White House

(Hon.) Ellen Tauscher, former Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Affairs

Michael Vickers, former Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence

Samantha Vinograd, former Senior Advisor to National Security Advisor Thomas E. Donilon; former Director for International Affairs and for Iraq, National Security Council, the White House

Paul Wolfowitz, Chairman US - Taiwan Business Council; former Deputy Secretary of Defense; former U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia; and former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia & the Pacific

Philip Zelikow, former Counselor of the Department of State; former Executive Director of the 9/11 Commission; and former member of the National Security Council staff, the White House