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ASPEN SECURITY FORUM

“Taking Our Fate Into Our Own Hands” (Part 2)

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Melissa Goodall: My name is Melissa Goodall, and I am a graduate student in the security studies program at George Town University's School of Foreign Service. I am honored to be a part of this year's scholarship cohort with the Aspen Security Forum scholarship program.

I am delighted to introduce our next session, which is titled Taking Our Fate Into Our Hands, Part Two. Where we have the opportunity to further this morning's stimulating discussions on concerning developments and growing challenges throughout Europe.

Moderating this session is Ms. Courtney Kube. Ms. Courtney Kube is an NBC national security and military reporter, who regularly breaks exclusive reporting on the Trump administration. In just the last months, Kube was the first to report on White House Chief of Staff John Kelly, eroding morale in the West Wing, Chinese spying ahead of the Singapore summit, multiple details surrounding the Nigeria ambush, new CIA reporting, concluding North Korea does not intend to denuclearize, and Russia jamming US drones over Syria.

For the past decade, Kube was NBC news's Pentagon producer, covering wars in the Middle East, and Libya, Syria, Afghanistan. She also reported from the US military bases around the world. She's been embedded with troops across all branches of the government, and traveled alongside secretaries of defense, secretaries of state, vice presidents, and other senior US military officials.

Courtney joined NBC news in 2000, working in the Washington bureau as a researcher, production assistant, and associate producer. She holds degrees in political science and psychology from the University of Michigan, and resides in suburban Maryland with her husband and two twin boys.

I will let Courtney introduce our wonderful and distinguished panel that's joining us this afternoon. Thank you.

Courtney Kube: Thank you very much. I wasn't expecting a long intro, thank you very much. I'm also delighted to be here today, with what I think will be a very different look at Russia then what we've been having here at the fascinating several days of the Aspen Forum.

We've heard a lot about the Russian relationship with the United States these past couple of days. But today we're going to ... Or, right now we're going to talk about how Russia is operating around the world, and not specifically just the relationship with the US.

These individuals and their nations have been uniquely impacted by the way Vladimir Putin is operating around the world. In fact, we were all meeting right before this, and we decided to nickname this the victim panel. They have direct experience with Vladimir Putin's government, and critical insight into what the

US needs to know about him and the way that the Russian government operates.

First, we have at the far end, Andy Pike, who is the International Communications Director at 10 Downing Street, and the former director of communication at GCHQ. Next to him we have Vadym Chernysh, who is the Minister of Temporarily Occupied Territories for the Ukraine. And I'm going to give him a moment to explain what that is a little later. Next, we have Bill Browder, who is financier and CEO of Hermitage Capital Management. Aka Putin enemy number one. And then we have here Mikk Marran, who's the Director General of the Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service.

Welcome all.

I need to start with you please, Bill Browder, because you were the subject this week of what President Trump called an incredible offer in their Helsinki meeting. Of course, everyone knows President Trump and President Putin spoke about the possible deal to allow Russian authorities to interrogate Americans, in exchange for letting Robert Mueller sit in on the questioning of 12 intelligence officers who were indicted for 2016 election hacking. And after, of course, calling it an incredible offer, the White House is now saying that President Trump disagrees with the proposal.

Have you been contacted by anyone in the US government about this offer, or about anything in their discussions?

Bill Browder: Well, before I answer that question, let me just say that I'm delighted to be here. Six weeks ago I was arrested in Madrid on a Russian Interpol arrest warrant. And earlier this week, Donald Trump thought for a few days about whether to hand me over to Vladimir Putin. So, I genuinely am delighted to be here.

On Monday, I was not actually watching the press conference. I was actually working on my second book, and I was hoping to have some peace of mind and peace of quiet to work on it, but my phone started vibrating violently, and just started burning up. And then I looked on what it was, and I realized that I was the topic of Putin and Trump's discussion. And everybody started calling in from everywhere in the world. I got calls from republican senators, from democratic senators, from members of the House of Representatives, from think tanks, from lawyers. But the one place I didn't get any calls from was the US administration.

Courtney Kube: And you've spoken out several times this week and said that you don't believe that President Trump is actually going to turn you over to the Russians. Is that still true?

Bill Browder: I don't know what he's going to do, but what I can say is that I don't think the American justice system would turn me over to the Russians. It's not as if the president, I don't think that Donald Trump, whatever his intentions would be, could come around personally with handcuffs and cart me over to the Russian FSB, in their embassy, or to their plane.

What would happen is, the justice department would have to get involved, and then they would have to look at the rule book and see whether the Russian's request satisfied the laws of the United States of America. And I don't believe they do. And if they believe they did, then they would do whatever they were going to do to me, and then it would be subject to the courts of the United States. Which are entirely, judges are independent here. And I'm 100% sure that no judge would have me to my death in Russia. So, I don't think that in the end I would go to Russia.

Having said that, I do believe that Vladimir Putin, when he comes back in the fall for his second summit, will make a second attempt to try to get Trump to hand me over. I'm almost certain that that's going to happen.

Courtney Kube: I'll put you on the spot, do you think if he legally could do it, President Trump would hand you over to the Russians?

Bill Browder: Oh, you don't want to put me on the spot.

Courtney Kube: No.

Bill Browder: I have no idea. It looked like he was kind of thinking that that was an incredible idea. It took three days to decide that it wasn't, after a vote ... After learning that there was going to be a unanimous vote of the senate. So, I don't know what his psychology is. I think that this would have been the straw that broke the camel's back on the Russian ... A lot of people are uncertain, is there collusion, or is there not collusion?

If Donald Trump were to turn over the largest Putin critic, who had launched the Magnitsky Act in seven countries around the world to Putin for punishment, I think that that would have sent a pretty clear signal about where Donald Trump stood on the issue of Russia.

Courtney Kube: Are you concerned that you could still be targeted though, by the Russians? Is that a ... Are you worried about your safety every day?

Bill Browder: Well, I've been targeted by the Russians for five years. So, my problems with Vladimir Putin are not new. His speaking out about me is not new. The only thing new is the fact that he had this conversation in a highly visible format, which was at Helsinki. The Russians have been chasing me for a long time. Seven Interpol arrest warrants. 12 requests of the British government to hand me over, and mutual legal assistance. Numerous lawsuits around the world. Six

movies, six one hour movies they've made about me, and Russian propaganda movies about Russian TV. They're on my ass.

Courtney Kube: Yeah. You probably don't get any of the money off those movies either, do you?

Bill Browder: I don't think anyone makes any money off those movies.

Courtney Kube: Yeah. I want to move on to Andy, who knows full well what it's like to have a citizen who's targeted by the Russian regime. The UK government has charged that Russia is behind at least one nerve gas attack in England. Former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia, who were poisoned in March, which was the first chemical attack in peace time that we're aware of, correct?

Andy Pike: That's correct, yeah.

On the 4th of March this year, reports began coming in to our emergency services of two people who were profoundly ill in the beautiful cathedral city of Salisbury. They were found on a park bench, taken to hospital. I think they seemed initially to be people suffering from overdose of regular drugs. Became very clear within 24 hours or so, that this was not regular drugs. And the proximity actually of the hospital to our research facility for these weapons helped in this case, because there were medical professionals who thought something was very odd.

Within a few days, we had identified that the Russian produced drug novichok had been used on these two individuals. I think as soon as we focused out on what was happening, memories of Mr. Litvinenko in 2006, the grim reality dawned that this was a rubicon crossing moment in terms of our relationship with Russia.

Nevertheless, unlike our opponents in Russia, we followed due process and wanted to be very sure indeed. First concerns of course, were for public safety. The mechanisms for handling major instance in the UK cranked into life, and cobra mechanism was set up. When we were able, after about a week, to say not just that it was novichok, but to put the pieces together and to say that the Russian state was highly likely responsible, we did that.

And that set off a chain of events that we might come on to, but it did elicit the biggest response towards Russia in memory, and the effect of that was that 28 countries expelled 153 illegal or undisclosed Russian intelligence officers. In the UK, we expelled 23 people. We think that just about cleans out their official operation there. Will most certainly do them damage for some years to come.

And we have entered a different phase of our relationship with Russia. It is fair to say it has not been good for a while. But the audacity of this attack, the sheer recklessness of it, is something which places us now into a different zip code in the way that we are handling our relations with Russia.

Courtney Kube: And then of course, since then there's been a second person who was poisoned, and in fact died from the poisoning, which was Dawn Sturgess. Can you tell us where ... There were some reports, I think it was yesterday, there was CCTV video that may have showed the perpetrators, it was believed to be Russians. Where is that investigation, and is there a link? Have you drawn a direct link between the two attacks?

Andy Pike: We are trying very hard to be evidence based, and also it's quite hard for me to talk about investigatory detail. But what I can say, is of course, we are in investigating at the moment how this second poisoning occurred. We do not believe that the second victims were connected to the Skripals in any way. As I said, we're following that evidential lead at the moment. We have not said that it is definitely the same batch of the drug as in the first attack, but that of course must be the key line of inquiry at the moment.

I think what that does is, it underlines the recklessness. We don't know exactly where it came from. But if you think about even the first attack, it was found on the door handle of the Skripal's house, the biggest concentration of the drug. The drug, by the way, is so strong that it burns through regular HAZMAT gloves. It was found there in high concentration.

You know, the postman might have come along, for example, the next one, whatever quarrels there were with the Skripals and so on. So, we are not easily shocked in the United Kingdom, but I must say, we were rather shocked by the audacity of these crimes.

Courtney Kube: Does the fact that they may not be related turn this entire situation in a different dynamic? Does it mean that it has the potential for someone to weaponize this in a larger scale, and attack larger populations? Is that anything that you're concerned about? Or do you still believe that this is the Russians targeting individuals for the most part?

Andy Pike: It is too early to say, but it is likely that that is the scenario. We're not pursuing hard the possibility that this was a second targeted attack, for example, but we are trying. The investigation is like three dimensional chess, really. It's incredibly complex. One of the most complex things we've done in peace time, I think, in our country. Just on the second wave we have 100 detectives working on that. The work to actually detect where novichok is really hard. With Litvinenko you can buy a 50 pound Geiger counter and work out where the radiation is. This drug has to be tested.

Our emergency responders have been beyond magnificent because this is dangerous work. They, when they looked at the Skripals in March, were able to do six hours in one go at searching these properties. But we've had warm weather in Britain, which is sort of quite a shocking thing for us really. And they've been ... At one point they were able to do 15 minutes only at a time

because of the heat. So, the work has been painstaking. But we thought it was important to get it right, rather than fast.

Courtney Kube: But if it turns out that the second attack against Dawn Sturgess is in fact the Russian state again, what does it say that they may have carried out yet another targeted attack, despite this broad international community response after the one in March? About deterrence. Does it say anything about the ability to actually deter Russia from doing [crosstalk 00:13:45]?

Andy Pike: As I said, we are excluding nothing, but it looks unlikely at the moment that it was a targeted second attack. More likely the byproduct of the first attack. Plus, I just want to stress that the police are very keen that we are meticulous in keeping all lines open.

What it does mean, of course, if it is connected, is that a death of a British citizen will have occurred. And that, again, moves us into a different place I think.

Courtney Kube: It crosses a new international norm.

We also have two people up here who are neighbors of Russia, who know very well about Russia, their firsthand, their aggression. In 2014, Russia of course, invaded part of Eastern Ukraine. Vadym, can you start off just by telling us a little bit about the ministry where you work, and your role there?

Vadym Chernysh: The ministry was created by the government, and I was elected by the parliament approximately two years ago. In order to formulate the governmental policy towards our Ukrainian population who live within occupied territories, Ukrainian, Eastern Ukraine. But at the same time, we have a nation-wide mandate on strategic issues, if they are related to IDPs, internal displaced persons, and nation-wide mandate to coordinate all efforts to confront Russian non-military means all around Ukraine in different areas.

For the government it's very crucial to understand that there are two demand when Russia is operating, military and non-military. And we have been trying to coordinate non-military efforts to define our own gaps, cracks, tensions among Ukrainian society. Not to allow Russians to influence on the process and make all our divisiveness bigger.

For the time being, we have ... Were even some foreign advisors from UK, for example, and from other alliance, and we have several strategic documents how to communicate with our population, how to win their minds and hearts. You know, this a very popular phrase that we have been trying to implement this, and to put this phrase into practice.

Courtney Kube: Can you update us a little bit just on the military situation on the ground there? The gray zone is the area that sort of separates the two sides. Has the Ukrainian military been able to make any inroads?

Vadym Chernysh: First of all, this is not ... Our conflict is not a frozen one. Every day is shadowing, shooting, casualties. Every day. And you know, Minsk agreements, limit using of heavy weapons, and a lot of snipers around the contact line, and counter snipers is in place. But very, very important to understand, and even two casualties, three casualties, several casualties per day, immediately amplified by media, especially Russian media. And even Ukrainian media within Ukraine, and no information about Russian casualties in Russian media. So, they use even theirs in order to destabilize, to traumatize Ukrainian society.

So, military and non-military go together in parallel in order to destabilize our country. And the Russian general approach, not only using propaganda, first and for all, many years ago they detected our so-called root causes. And for some politicians, even direct causes more important. Then they used fertilizers, bribes for example, to corrupt some politicians et cetera, et cetera, and propaganda. Russia is a doctrinal country, so they have doctrine, and they have a plan how to implement this. So, that's why they try to use, and in the end, they are trying to get fragile situation in the country, and then the country could be an easy prey for the military forces. So, that's the Russian strategic and tactical approaches.

Courtney Kube: Have you seen any change now that the US relationship with Russia seems to be confused? Well, there's so much uncertainty about the US relationship with Russia. How is that impacting the potential that the Minsk agreement could actually be implemented, and we may see an end to this conflict?

Vadym Chernysh: First of all, I took part in Minsk agreement more than one year ago, and I participated for approximately one year. It's not a strategic platform to find any solutions, because there is a Normandy format, and there is a United Nations Security Council resolution. And that means just to kind of implement and body to put some political solutions into practice.

But at the same time you ask, you know, a lot of Ukrainians, I don't know how many of them, but I think more than 60, 65 percent believe that the only country that can help us is the United States of America. So, it's very popular to think about the United States as a country that can guarantee our safety and security in our country, and confront with Russia.

Of course, not all politicians understand that in our country that Russia ... That the US is not going to use its military forces to protect Ukraine, but at the same time, lots of support to Ukrainian people comes through UN governmental agencies. And by the way, we think about the United States as a kind of very powerful country. I mean, Ukrainians think, and kind of a global security guarantor. And a lot of Ukrainians have been waiting for a status report from the United States.

Courtney Kube: I want to move on to Mikk. We're very fortunate to have Mikk, who is the Director of National Intelligence for Estonia. Estonia, of course, who has focused on Russia for 25 years or so in intelligence gathering. Can you talk to us a little bit about how you've seen the Russian strategic aims change in that time, or in your time since you've been in the ministry. And then, and new tools that they're using, you're seeing them use?

Mikk Marran: Thank you. So one, we're proud to be the representative of the dark powers in the panel.

Courtney Kube: Yeah.

Mikk Marran: I'm glad to be here, because summer time anyway, is a very ...

PART 1 OF 3 ENDS [00:21:04]

Mikk Marran: I'm glad to be here because summer time anyway is a very bad season for old school spying. So, I have nothing else to do anyway, so I'm glad to speak to you.

But I'm very proud to represent Estonia Foreign Intelligence Service and our people who are the first line of defense of Estonia because when we do not succeed, I think Estonia will have problems and the whole NATO will have problems. We are the borderline between NATO and Estonia, and it's also the border between NATO and Russia.

Stemming from the geographical location you mentioned, we haven't had any luxury to change our focus during the last 25 or 26 years. I know that many Western intelligence organizations have changed the focus to CT matters or to things going on in the Middle East. For us, it has only been Russia. So, when some intelligence organizations in the West are establishing or reestablishing Russia missions centers, I would say that the Estonia Foreign Intelligence Service is a Russia mission center, as such.

And just for your information, when we published one of our public threat assessments a year ago, Kremlin media made fun of us. They said that, "Well, in this report, it seems that Estonia Foreign Intelligence Service knows about the Kremlin's plans even before the Kremlin does." It was meant to hurt us, but I think that it's the best compliment you can actually receive from Kremlin. So right now we're thinking about actually making it an unofficial slogan of Estonia Foreign Intelligence Service. "Estonia Foreign Intelligence Service, a service that knows about Kremlin's plans before Kremlin does."

Courtney Kube: They aren't denying it.

Mikk Marran: Okay.

Courtney Kube: They aren't denying the information.

Mikk Marran:

But back to your question, has anything changed or what is Russian goal? I think the goals have not changed too much, actually, when you look back. Because I think that the main goal for President Putin, for Russia for the past few years has been to regain the superpower status, to be equal among equals, to be back at the big boys' table, to be a country that is respected. Of course, we have to know that the economy of Russia is the size of the economy of Australia or the economy of Spain. But still the first goal is to restore the superpower status of the country.

Secondly, what we see right now is the need and the will to break out of the international isolation. I think that they are exploiting every opportunity to do that and the summit between President Trump and President Putin certainly was one of his goals. Making problems inside different European countries is also his aim, because that makes us weaker, and when we are weaker, Russia is stronger.

Of course one of the aims that Russia has always had is to maintain its influence over the countries that are bordering Russia. I would actually exclude Baltic countries right now, because I think Baltic countries for Russia are gone. We are bit members of NATO, we are members of EU. The NATO deterrence I think is working, but Russia is very concerned about other countries around the corner, Belorussia, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, and they will do everything they can in order to make those countries unstable and to meddle in the affairs of those countries' international politics and certainly when they would like to become members of the Western community.

Of course, in addition to the things I mentioned before, we shouldn't forget the military power. Russia is very much focused on building up its forces, and especially in the Western military district that is bordering Estonia, Latvia. We see new weapon systems deployed to that region. We see annual large exercises that practice war against NATO slash United States, because to me the biggest enemy for Russia has always been the United States or NATO.

And the tools you mentioned, there are a number of tools. I would say that the toolbox of Russia is huge. They have practiced how to use those tools for the last 20, 30, maybe even 100 years. Different tools are designed to different countries. What might work in some country might not work in another country. But the thing we have detected during the last few years is the use of influence agents. And when you ask me to define who are influence agents, I would say that those are the people who use their status and accesses in order to promote Russia's agenda with the direction of Kremlin.

And we have detected a network of politicians, journalists, diplomats, business people who are actually Russian influence agents and who are doing what they are told to do by Kremlin. And it seems to us that Russia has invested a lot into those influence agents. They have made some bad investments, but they have also made some very good investments. So politicians that have been in the

margins of local politics some years ago are actually right now in national parliaments or national governments, and we see clearly that those people are pushing Russia's agenda in those parliaments or governments.

Courtney Kube: So these influence agents, these are people that Russia is recruiting, including politicians. Have you seen them recruit any Western politicians?

Mikk Marran: Oh yeah, definitely. Of course.

Courtney Kube: Anyone you'd like to talk about here in the forum?

Mikk Marran: Well, I know that this is a very, very small and friendly forum, but I would not mention any names. But I would just stress that they have found people who have been or who were in the margins of the political life in different countries in Western Europe. What they have provided to those people is media support, political support. They have proposed or provided some exclusive business opportunities, and in some occasions we have also seen that they have provided financial aid to those people. And then suddenly those people are in the positions who can actually change or they can try to change the political course of different countries.

Courtney Kube: How do they recruit them? Is there a standard tactic? Is it a promise of money or promise of helping them win election, or do they use blackmail?

Mikk Marran: No, it's a very practical way of doing things. When you are in the margins of the political life of a certain country, what you need, first of all, is media attention. The clips that you can use in your local news channels. You need financial support and whatever a young politician needs. And that is not only promised, but that is also provided by Russia to those people. And tit for tat, when we provide you these things, you have to provide us a few things when you get into the parliament or the local parliamentary government.

Courtney Kube: Wow.

Mikk Marran: It is working, in that sense.

Courtney Kube: You talked a little bit about influence operations. I want to open it up to all of you about Russia's cyber activities, which of course we've heard Dan Coats several times now in the last week talk about how Russia is the most aggressive actor in cyber. And we saw there was a DHS FBI report that was released in March that talked specifically about how Russian government hackers had infiltrated some critical infrastructure, and that they had used malware that was sitting on various U.S. utilities which was the same as what we saw in the Ukraine in 2015 and 2016 when they attacked your electrical grid.

When we're talking about Russian cyber attacks that could impact national security or could result in loss of life, critical infrastructure, should the international community come together and call that an act of war? Any of you?

Mikk Marran: Well, I think that ... just to kick off the discussion ... I think that in NATO forum, it has been discussed for many, many years. And it seems to me that in NATO we have decided that whatever is a problem to human life, it might come through kinetical attacks or from cyber attacks, it is a cause for Article 5, definitely. And I think that there's no need to actually fine-tune Article 5 to include the cyber attack or whatever. I think it's the prerogative of NATO to decide which one of those attacks is an attack against a nation state, be it cyber or something else.

But what we've seen lately in cyber domain is that Russia is constantly scanning our networks. They're constantly scanning the software we are using in order to find out the vulnerabilities of specific systems, and in case there is a need to penetrate those systems, they are ready to do that. And in addition to that, of course, they use the very traditional cyber espionage. They steal emails, information from different networks, computers. They might not use that information immediately, that might be used in influence operations in the future, maybe in five years' time, maybe in ten years' time.

Courtney Kube: Do you think that your nations are prepared for an infrastructure cyber attack by Russia? Do you have the defensive measures in place?

Mikk Marran: Well, you can never be prepared enough, I think. That's a constant struggle.

Andy Pike: Well I can say that Russian attacks in cyberspace are nothing new. They have existed since cyberspace existed. We have been tracking these attacks for 20 years. I think certainly in the modern age they are probably one of the best equipped in the world, certainly one of the most aggressive. They do go after our critical national infrastructure. We have spent a lot of time, energy and money in recent years trying to protect ourselves as best we possibly can. So thankfully they've not had a significant success. We have invested several billion dollars in recent years in this area. We opened a one-stop shop a couple of years ago, the National Cybersecurity Centre, which is part of GCHQ and which works very closely with allies around the world. And we found that to be pretty effective, but we're not sitting on our laurels.

This is going to be something that's going to preoccupy us and we do need new mechanisms. We need even better sharing around our communities and new techniques, and we are looking right now at getting the technicals better, getting education better. And it will continue to be a focus for us certainly for the foreseeable future.

Vadym Chernysh: Ukraine has been working with our Western allies in order to build a very good system to protect critical infrastructure from mostly Russian attacks, but at the same time, we need more equipment, trainings for our personnel, and recently

Verkhovna Rada, our Ukrainian parliament, adopted new legislation on cybersecurity and on national security. And to [roles 00:33:18] were elaborated in close collaboration with specialists from the United States, from the United Kingdom and from even Estonia.

If I may, a couple of remarks about rational activities in the economic area. They use oligarchs widely, and even in the United States, one of them was questioned by special authorities. It's very easy for them, because all of them have legal business entity to enter into your economy in different sectors and then to influence on the situation using legally their business entity as a front entity for their malicious activity in the country.

Of course, Ukraine has a border with Russia and much easier for them to penetrate into Ukraine. But they have already reached the United States, from my opinion. And about the border between Russia and the West, they haven't been trying to build a blank wall. This is more sort of a membrane. Russian influence penetrates easily through this membrane, but Western democracy cannot penetrate with its values into Russian society. Even European services are prohibited in Russia. So can you imagine a wave of confrontation in Ukraine, in Western countries, in the United States, but not in Russia. So this is from my point of view Russian strategy to bring instability in other countries and to protect ... to build this kind of membrane and not to allow it to penetrate into Russian society with democratic values.

Speaker 1:

I just wanted to say one thing, which is that the size of the Russian military budget is ninety percent less than the U.S. So it's about ten percent of the U.S. military budget. And of the Russian military budget, I would estimate that 80 percent of it gets stolen. And if you take the Russian military budget and you put it on par, it's about equivalent to the U.K. military budget or the French or the German military budget.

And so, Vladimir Putin is quite clear and knows for sure that he would not win a military conflict with NATO, the West, even with one big member of the European Union. And so his only tactic to get a seat at the top table and to be an important player is to do these things where it doesn't trigger Article 5 of NATO, where there's plausible deniability. And so it comes to all these things that these gentlemen have been talking about, which is ... it doesn't cost very much to bribe a politician. And since I'm in the world of fighting Putin, I see how it operates and they basically just make offers to everybody, and depending on the country and depending on how corrupt the country is ... In some countries, nobody will take the offer and in other countries many people will take the offer.

There is one member of the U.S. Congress who I believe is on the payroll of Russia. It's a Republican Congressman from Orange County named Dana Rohrabacher who is running around trying to overturn the Magnitsky Act on behalf of Natalia Veselnitskaya, who is the person who went to Trump Tower.

There are the oligarchs who are active in all the countries, penetrating and permeating and doing things on behalf of the Kremlin. They're not FSB or KGB agents, they're oligarchs who are being asked to do stuff. It's all very informal.

And then of course there's the cyber, and the cyber is the greatest stuff for Putin because it's always plausibly deniable. They can do it and say, "It wasn't us. It wasn't us." And how do you trigger Article 5 when some people ... And then, when you try to trigger Article 5, there're the guys who are already paid inside all of these parliaments all over Europe are saying, "No, no, we must get along with Russia, this is an important country", et cetera, et cetera.

And so Putin is playing a very clever psychological game with a very weak hand and getting away with it in a very successful way.

Courtney Kube: So I just have to address what you just said, because it's a pretty strong charge, to say that Congressman Rohrabacher is an agent of the Russian government. Can you ...

Speaker 1: I didn't say he was an agent of the Russian government. I believe he's under some type of influence of the Russian government.

Courtney Kube: Do you have any evidence of that? Or is ...

Speaker 1: Well, his conduct. He went to Moscow ... Dana Rohrabacher went to Moscow and while he was in Moscow on a congressional delegation, he sat down with a number of members of parliament and they said, "Can you come away from this group and have a meeting with a person from the prosecutor's office?" And the person that Dana Rohrabacher met is the Deputy General Prosecutor of Russian, a guy named Viktor Grin, and Mr. Grin happened to be the person who is most intimately involved in the Magnitsky case and is on the U.S. sanctions list. And he met with this Mr. Grin, and Mr. Grin then gave him a bunch of documents to take back to Washington to try to stop the global Magnitsky Act from going through Congress.

And so then Dana Rohrabacher went and for a brief period of time stopped the law from going through Congress. We then discovered it, we outed him. The rest of his congressional colleagues didn't want to be involved with Putin's favorite congressman and they put it through. He then tried to take Sergei Magnitsky's name off of the law that was going through. There was a vote, I think in the House Foreign Affairs Committee and it was something like 40 to one against him. And so on and so forth.

He was also entertaining Natalia Veselnitskaya at various occasions, she's the one at Trump Tower. And so, why does a person behave this way? Is it because in his heart he thinks that's the right thing to do? I don't believe so.

Courtney Kube: So basically you're saying you have a lot of what seems to be somewhat anecdotal evidence, but not necessarily-

Speaker 1: I don't have the bank transfers to prove it, but I believe that that's the case.

Courtney Kube: Have you ever been targeted specifically by the Russian government in cyber? Have you been a target of their disinformation campaigns online, anything you can talk about?

Speaker 1: Yeah, so I'm kind of the perfect case study in all bad actions of Russia, because every single bad thing they've ever done, they've done it to me. Propaganda? They've made six one-hour movies in Russian, one movie in English. They tried to make a movie in English ... I hope that some of you know the Magnitsky story. Sergei Magnitsky was my lawyer who was murdered in a Russian jail cell for uncovering a massive government corruption scheme. And the Russians hired a filmmaker to make a movie to say that Sergei Magnitsky wasn't murdered, he died of natural causes. He wasn't a whistle blower, he was a criminal, and that I was in contempt of Congress for getting the Magnitsky Act passed.

And they tried to get this movie shown at the European Parliament and on various European TV stations. I protested very violently and they ended up showing it in Washington. And it was actually shown in Washington one day after the Trump Tower meeting which Natalia Veselnitskaya was sponsoring the event ... the day after her meeting with Donald Trump Jr., with Dana Rohrabacher's staff organizing the showing.

Courtney Kube: I want to open up to the audience for a couple of questions. Kim Dozier, since you're sitting way up front, you get the first question.

Kim Dozier: Thank you very much. So, as promised, Courtney had me watching the wires to see what was happening. So, Kim Dozier from the Daily Beast. So while we've been sitting here, couple of things happened. The Russian Ambassador today said that a Ukrainian referendum came up in the conversation with Vladimir Putin. The White House has since said they don't support such a referendum. And then right afterwards the Pentagon came out announcing an additional two hundred million in aid to Ukraine, security cooperation funds for additional training, equipment, et cetera.

So, my first question is to Vadym. How does it feel hearing some things from the U.S. President, but other things from his national security team? Who do you trust? And also, I can ask that to everybody else.

Vadym Chernysh: We use ...

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Vadym Chernysh: We use your intelligence reports, public parts of it, in Ukraine as well. We believe in the information that your intelligent ... the intelligence agencies put in those reports. But at the same time, about referendum. It is unacceptable for Ukraine. It contradicts the Minsk Agreement. I can tell you, from my point of view, Mr. Putin does this in order to ... You know, this Gerasimov doctrine. The ratio of military and non-military means, like, four to one for non-military means and methods. The distraction of [inaudible 00:43:00] is a part for this doctrine, an essential part of this.

So if you tell someone secretly, "I offer you a referendum," and tell someone else, "I offer you another type of solutions," et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, no common ground for discussion at the same table. So the real goal of Russia in this, from my point of view, is to cause a mess among all stakeholders, giving different information and different ideas. And as I said, time is going on, and the state-building process supported by Russia is going on as well. So that's my answer about the reason of such actions from the Russian President, but at the same time, Ukraine is an independent state, and we will decide about the referendum as a state, not anyone else.

Courtney Kube: Sir.

Speaker 2: Thank you, Courtney. [foreign language 00:44:17]. Just to illustrate what Bill and Mikk said, I want to add that our investigation into the German AFD, we found that there have been many members of the leading circle of the AFD invited, been invited to Moscow, and some of the flights have been paid for by Russian businessmen, which illustrates how that works, that oligarchs are paying to groom politicians in Europe.

The other thing is that, in Germany, for example, an oligarch set up a little company that ... a media outlet that was starting to put out fake news propaganda targeting the Russian German population within Germany in order to manipulate their opinions. So those are the kinds of things, I think, Mikk and Bill were referring to. And I was wondering, John, this is a question to you. Is there any indication or could you imagine that the Skripal operation was meant to be a distraction from other things that the Russians were doing, including a huge influence operation in order to support the BREXIT referendum and funneling millions of dollars or Euros into the campaigns for BREXIT, as, for example, the Legatum Foundation did?

John: Well, you're doing the Russian's job for them there in that last question because that actually was one of the narratives that they propagated, so a very interesting case study in how ... a textbook case study in how Russia chooses to fight these things. Very soon after the Skripal poisonings, some narratives started to emerge. In that first phase, we counted 25 that we could attribute to the Kremlin or its acolytes, the state, possibly up to 38.

They were sort from the outlandish to the plausible. They pointed fingers at other countries: Sweden, Ukraine, and so on. My personal favorite was that we, in Britain, have a long history of poisoning Russians because we poisoned a Russian czar 400 years ago, and we managed to inveigle our British doctors then to fill him full of mercury. Ivan the Terrible. And further, there was another clue because we keep doing these things in March, and it was no accident at Skripal.

The other one was that Yulia Skripal was targeted because her mother-in-law-to-be didn't like her. So we have not ... The Russians initially were using sarcasm and humor, and we've stayed away from that, from the gravity, but I can't resist pointing to the wank who said, "Well, if your mother-in-law has got access to industrial-grade nerve agent, you might want to go back to Tinder or Tindersky or whatever you have in Russia.

Courtney Kube: The old mother-in-law defense.

Male: I got the feeling that you might have gotten me wrong. I'm not suggesting that Britain was behind that operation. I'm suggesting that Russia resorted to old types, old methods, to create all the fuss about the Skripal thing, that all the attention was focused on this and was taken away from other huge Russian influence operations happening across Europe.

Male: Yeah. I've never heard that theory seriously explode. The answer is we probably will never know for absolute sure the reasons for it, but the reasons are probably much simpler, more straightforward than that. Putin himself has come out and talked about the fate of some people in Mrs. Skripal's position. Of course, this crossed another Rubicon because it hasn't been done in the circumstances where Mr. Skripal had been pardoned and all the rest of it. So the truth is probably simpler. There has been speculation in the media that it was done to send a message. I've heard a theory that it was done because, precisely because he wasn't extremely senior, to send a message that, "Look, we will get you. Litvinenko, of course, same thing, I mean, his death and so on. There was a theory that that was also a message.

Courtney Kube: And of course, we have seen Russia weaponizing disinformation for all intents and purposes.

Male: Yeah.

Courtney Kube: Even as recently as this week with Macedonia and Greece.

Male: And I would just add, Court, just on that ... So the narrative is actually, you know, the way that we came back at those, we found actually that sunlight is a very good disinfectant, so we didn't get drawn onto every provocation. But where these things were starting to get traction, we went out and told the truth. An example was the Porton Down facility where we do our research in this area. Russians took an overhead picture saying it was a new facility. I called

up the head of that facility. He said, "You know, that's for, actually for explosive testing. We submitted the plans to the local council a week ago. You can come, and you can see them."

So we had media in there and did that. So we found actually, sticking to the truth, although the asymmetry that was mentioned earlier, the Russians are not, in the main, obliged to stick to the rules that we do. Rules-based order is what this is all about for us and why we intend to continue to show leadership in this area because we're really worried about it. So the truth in terms of responses work quite well.

Courtney Kube: The truth and transparency, yes. Vadym, did you have any ...

Vadym Chernysh: About poisoning, it might be considered as a kind of Mafia-style message to its member. "Don't talk, and don't do anything wrong." You mentioned a situation in Macedonia. Again, a Russian oligarch was engaged in the process, in accordance with the UN official statement of the Macedonian prime minister. So again, the same approach all around the world.

Courtney Kube: Sir?

Rick Reese: Hi, Rick Reese. This question may be a little bit off, but I would just start by saying to Mr. Browder that your book Red Notice is probably one of the best books on value investing I've ever read. And my question really goes to you on that. What are your thoughts today about others investing in Russia? And, two, has recent activities on the part of Mr. Putin driven ... Do you think they've driven or in the process of driving people to rethink that, as to whether there's any credibility underlying the financial statements of Russian companies.

Mr. Browder: Well, I used to be the largest foreign investor in Russia, and I would not invest a penny of my own money in Russia today. The problem with Russia is that the level of risk is so high that you not only risk losing your money, but if you have any significant investment, you also risk having people arrested, tortured, and killed, as my own story plays out so clearly.

The amount of foreign direct investment in Russia since the invasion of Crimea has dropped by more than 95%. People basically ... Nobody who has ... People sometimes buy a Russian bond, or they might buy shares of a Russian company to speculate on some movement up or down, but anybody who has assets in Russia wishes they didn't have any assets in Russia, and nobody is committing any new money to Russia because it's a highly unstable place where there's no rule of law and no property rights. I have this really clear, inside view of all the victims because most people in corporations don't want to go to the front pages of the newspaper and talk about their ... how they've been victimized, but everybody needs some advice, and so they all come to me, and I hear it.

I don't think there is a single happy story of being a serious investor in Russia. Everybody gets ripped off. Everybody gets shaken down, and a lot of people end up getting criminalized, basically. In order to try to solve their problems, they make these compromises that people would not normally make in the West. And so you end up ... Some people end up paying bribes or extortion money and end up breaking the laws of the United States or the United Kingdom or other places in terms of foreign corrupt practices. And so my advice to everybody here is, if you have any feeling about investing in Russia, well, lie down for 15 minutes and wait till it passes.

- Courtney Kube: There is a lot for sale, actually, in Aspen that was \$27 million, so if you have any money that you want to invest, I highly recommend it. Sir?
- Steve Shapiro: Thank you. Steve Shapiro from New York. Just as a point of information, and this is ... I think this is still the law, and you gentlemen would know a lot better, but in 2006, and I'm reading from a BBC piece of paper here so I could refresh my memory. In July, the upper chamber of the Russian Parliament approved the law which permits the Russian President to use the country's armored forces and special services outside Russia's borders to combat terrorism and extremism through assassination.
- Terrorists or extremists were included ... In the definition of them, they were included: those who slandered the individual occupying the post of President of the Russian Federation. There are some technicalities. The President has to inform the Parliament that he ordered the killing, et cetera, et cetera, but apparently it is quite legal under Russian domestic law to assassinate someone abroad who slanders the Russian President. I just thought that would be an interesting piece of information.
- Courtney Kube: Are any of you aware of that? Is the international community doing enough to protect against ...
- Vadym Chernysh: Who cares about Russian domestic law? We should think about the international humanitarian law as well. And Russia breaches it every day.
- Steve Shapiro: I'm fully aware. I'm just saying that it's a remarkable thing to have a law in the books of a nation which allows the assassination abroad of someone who slanders your President. That's all.
- Courtney Kube: Are your nations ... Is the international community doing enough to protect defectors or people like Mr. Browder here who are speaking out against the Russian government?
- Vadym Chernysh: All judicial ... International judicial mechanisms, for the time being, are not very efficient and we should rethink the system, how to bring some people to the justice.

Mikk Marran: With just that, this situation in Salisbury definitely sparked many discussions in many countries and in many intelligence services, as well, how to protect your sources. But I would like to emphasize that it is a signal, a signal to possible people who might be ... who might start cooperating with Western countries. It was also a deterrent signal to Western countries, so don't even try to hire more of Russian people in order to inform you. So they sent a messaging, but probably an operation that went truly out of hand. Probably someone was too eager to implement the order that was given, maybe, many years ago, but still there was a messaging thing as well.

Courtney Kube: I want to take ... We only have a couple minutes left, so I just want to ask the whole panel here, Russia has tended to target inflection points on their disinformation campaigns, like the 2016 election in the United States, elections in western Europe. What do you see or what do you fear is the next inflection point that Russia could target, whether it be in your own individual nations or in the world?

Male: Let me just say something, that there's no inflection points. Vladimir Putin has an unlimited budget for this type of stuff, and he applies ... and he basically ... They run about a thousand different projects at any one time, expecting that 990 of them don't bear fruit. None of them are very expensive. Nobody gets in trouble for wasting money, and every once in a while, one of these things hits pay dirt. And they hit pay dirt pretty well in the United States. They hit pay dirt with BREXIT and all sorts of other places. But for every one that you know about, there's like 50 other ones that they've tried that haven't succeeded. And they're just rolling this stuff out every day all over the place all the time.

Courtney Kube: So they're in just a constant state of continuous attack, really, in cyber [crosstalk 00:57:00].

Male: Exactly and plausibly deniable attack.

Mikk Marran: I totally agree. I think that they are looking for every opportunity that might arise, be it in the margins of elections or some other possibility to create frictions inside the countries or between countries. But the term we use in Estonia's intelligence communities that I think that we shouldn't continue practicing figure skating when the opposite team is already playing hockey. So I think that the Western community should actually put our heads together and do everything we can in order to stop it.

I think that we need to educate our people that Russia is doing these kinds of things. I think that we need to expose Russian activities, because as my British colleague said, "Sun is the best disinfectant." If we talk about these cases in case we show that Russia is doing this or that, I think that we would be in a much better situation a year or two from now.

I think that we need to cooperate more. I think there is a space for western intelligence communities, agencies to share more information and share it more quickly. And last but not least, I think that we need to also concentrate on military signals. I think that we have to think about deterrence, whether deterrence works in NATO or not, and that's why it's so important to have allied forces in different regions and NATO to send a very strong message to Russia.

Courtney Kube: Do you think NATO is doing that right now, sending a strong message to NATO ... to Russia?

Mikk Marran: I think that NATO is doing that. We have a European Deterrence Initiative that was actually a U.S. initiative. The U.S. administration is backing that initiative. We have funding, so everything is pretty well on track.

Courtney Kube: Andy and Vadym?

Andy Pike: Well, I'd just say I would agree with those analyses, although we are talking about inflection points. Of course, we're not over the present one yet. We are in the middle of it in some ways, so we are prepared for all eventualities, including escalation from the Russian authorities, which we think is a pretty fair bet now that the World Cup is out of the way. So we are trying to maintain readiness on all fronts.

Courtney Kube: When there are major events like the World Cup, do you see any difference in Russia's activities in the cyber domain?

Andy Pike: We don't see a halting of activity. That's for sure.

Courtney Kube: They don't do anything that they ... When they have additional tension on them, they don't ...

Andy Pike: Yeah. I mean, it's probably not a very scientific measure, but when the Amesbury poisonings happened, which, I stress, we haven't yet attributed, but we saw an uptick then in activity again. There was a 4,000% increase in bot activity around the first one. But I talked about 25 narratives. So in Amesbury, there've been 12 so far, so it feels as though it's been sort of a less strong response, but nevertheless, plenty of response.

Mikk Marran: Well, I have an example about military activity, and my Ukrainian colleague can support me or deny it, but we saw very interesting signals. Before the Russian Presidential elections, there was a very low intensity in Eastern Ukraine, and it went straight up after the re-election of President Putin. And the same happened during the World Cup. Now it's going up again, I think.

Vadym Chernysh: We'll have three elections next year, Presidential, Parliamentarian, and local. We expect a lot of Russian active measures in our country, and I want to give you one example about Russian sophisticated software technologies. They use,

or seen, their own software. One title, Katyusha, as it were from World War II, and Russian civilian authorities use it not only in intelligence, so they detect and they train within their own country, and then spread it all over the world.

Courtney Kube:

Wow! I want to thank you all and especially because we sprang this panel on them sort of at the last minute, and they were all very good sports to come up here today. Can you give them a round of applause?

PART 3 OF 3 ENDS [01:01:10]