



## All Russiagate Roads Lead To London As Evidence Emerges Of Joseph Mifsud's Links To UK Intelligence

Contributors: Elizabeth Vos, Kenneth Whittle

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Photo: Joseph Mifsud.

Over the last few months, Professor Joseph Mifsud has become a feather in the cap for those pushing the Trump-Russia narrative. He is characterized as a “Russian” intelligence asset in mainstream press, despite his declarations to the contrary. However, evidence has surfaced that suggests Mifsud was anything but a Russian spy, and may have actually worked for British intelligence. This new evidence culminates in the ground-breaking conclusion that the UK and its intelligence apparatus may be responsible for the invention of key pillars of the Trump-Russia scandal. If true, this would essentially turn the entire RussiaGate debacle on its head.

To give an idea of the scope of this report, a few central points showing the UK connections with the central pillars of the Trump-Russia claims are included here, in the order of discussion in this article:

Mifsud allegedly discussed that Russia has ‘dirt’ on Clinton in the form of ‘thousands of emails’ with George Papadopoulos in London in April 2016.

The following month, Papadopoulos spoke with Alexander Downer, Australia’s ambassador to the UK, about the alleged Russian dirt on Clinton while they were drinking at a swanky Kensington bar, according to *The Times*. In late July 2016, Downer shared his tip with Australian intelligence officials who forwarded it to the FBI.

Robert Goldstone, a key figure in the ‘Trump Tower’ part of the RussiaGate narrative, sent Donald Trump Jr. an email claiming Russia wanted to help the Trump campaign. He is a British music promoter.

Christopher Steele, ex-MI6, worked as an MI6 agent in Moscow until 1993 and ran the Russia desk at MI6 HQ in London between 2006 and 2009. He produced the totally unsubstantiated ‘Steele Dossier’ of Trump-Russia allegations, with funding from the Clinton campaign and the DNC.

Robert Hannigan, the head of British spy agency GCHQ, flew to Washington DC to share ‘director-to-director’ level intelligence with then-CIA Chief John Brennan.

Each of these strands of UK-tied elements of the Russiagate narrative can be **substantially dismantled** on close inspection. This untangling process leads to the

surprising conclusion that UK intelligence services fabricated evidence of collusion in order to create the appearance of a Trump-Russia connection.

This trend begins with Joseph Mifsud, a Maltese scholar with an eclectic academic history who *Quartz* described as an “enigma,” while legacy press has enthusiastically characterized him as a central personality in the Trump-Russia scandal. *The New York Times* described Mifsud as an “enthusiastic promoter of President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia”, citing his regular involvement in the annual meetings of the Valdai Discussion Club, a Russian-based think-tank, as well as three short articles he wrote in support of Russian policies.

Mifsud strongly denied claims that he was associated with Russian intelligence, telling Italian newspaper *Repubblica* that he was a member of the European Council on Foreign Relations and the Clinton Foundation, adding that his political outlook was “left-leaning.” Last month, *Slate* reported Mifsud had ‘disappeared’, as did some of the other figures linking the UK to the Trump-Russia scandal. This aspect will be discussed in more detail below.

To contextualize Mifsud's eclectic academic career in terms of intelligence service, it is helpful to note that research undertaken by this author and Suzie Dawson as part of the Decipher You project has repeatedly shown the close ties – an outright merger in many cases – between the intelligence community and academia. This enmeshment also takes place with think-tanks, NGOs, and in the corporate sphere. In this light, Mifsud's brand of ‘scholarship’ becomes far less mysterious.

Mifsud's alleged links to Russian intelligence are summarily debunked by his close working relationship with Claire Smith, a major figure in the upper echelons of British intelligence. A number of Twitter users recently observed that Joseph Mifsud had been photographed standing next to Claire Smith of the UK Joint Intelligence Committee at Mifsud's LINK campus in Rome. *Newsmax* and *Buzzfeed* later reported that the professor's name and biography had been removed from the campus' website, writing that the mysterious removal took place after Mifsud had served the institution for “years.”

WikiLeaks Editor-in-Chief Julian Assange likewise noted the connection between Mifsud and Smith in a Twitter thread, additionally pointing out his connections with Saudi intelligence: “[Mifsud] and Claire Smith of the UK Joint Intelligence Committee and eight-year member of the UK Security Vetting panel both trained Italian security services at the Link University in Rome and appear to both be present in this [photo].”

The photograph in question originated on Geodiplomatics.com, where it specified that Joseph Mifsud is indeed standing next to Claire Smith, who was attending a: “...Training program on International Security which was organised by Link Campus University and London Academy of Diplomacy.” The event is listed as taking place in October, 2012. This is highly significant for a number of reasons.



Claire Smith (third from left) standing with Joseph Mifsud (fifth from left), back row.

First, the training program Smith attended with high-ranking members of the Italian military was organized by the London Academy of Diplomacy, where Joseph Mifsud served as Director, as noted by *The Washington Post*. That Claire Smith was training military and law enforcement officials alongside Mifsud in 2012 during her tenure

as a member of the UK Cabinet Office Security Vetting Appeals Panel, which oversees the vetting process for UK intelligence placement, strongly suggests that Mifsud has been incorrectly characterized as a Russian intelligence asset. It is extremely unlikely that Claire Smith's role in vetting UK intelligence personnel would lead to her accidentally working with a Russian agent.

The connection between Mifsud and Smith does not end at bumped elbows in a photograph. Mifsud's LinkedIn profile lists the University of Stirling as a place of occupation in connection with his service as Director of the London Academy of Diplomacy (LAD), where Claire Smith served as a visiting professor from 2013-2014 according to her LinkedIn profile. This adds yet another verifiable connection between a man who is at the center of already-flimsy Trump-Russia allegations and a high-ranking British intelligence figure.

Claire Smith's LinkedIn profile details her service on the Security Vetting Appeals Panel while also occupied as a visiting Professor at Stirling University

Claire Smith also hosted a seminar titled "Making Sense of Intelligence" at the University of Stirling. The event registration form describes her career, including her service as Deputy Chief of Assessments Staff in the Cabinet Office, as a member of the UK Joint Intelligence Committee and her completion of an eight-year term as a member of the UK Security Vetting and Appeals Panel.

A particularly compelling factor indicating that Mifsud's working relationship with Claire Smith suggests his direct connection with UK intelligence is Smith's membership of the UK's Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), a supervisory body overseeing all UK intelligence agencies. The JIC is part of the Cabinet Office and reports directly to the Prime Minister. The Committee also sets the collection and analysis priorities for all of the agencies it supervises. Claire Smith also served as a member of the UK's Cabinet Office.

In summary, Mifsud's appearance with Claire Smith at the LINK campus, in addition to her discussion on intelligence at yet another university where Mifsud was also employed, as well as her long-standing role in UK intelligence vetting and her position as a member of the UK Joint Intelligence Committee, would suggest that the

oving scholar is not a Russian agent, but is actually a UK intelligence asset. The possibility that such a high-ranking member of this extremely powerful intelligence supervisory group was photographed standing next to a “Russian” asset unknowingly is patently absurd. This finding knocks the first pillar out from under the edifice of the Trump-Russia allegations. It provides an initial suggestion of the UK's involvement in procuring the ‘evidence’ that fueled the debacle.

Claire Smith is not the only British official associated with Mifsud. He was a speaker at an event by the Central European Initiative alongside former British diplomat Charles Crawford, whose postings included Moscow, Sarajevo, Belgrade and Warsaw. Crawford is listed as a visiting Professor with the same London Academy of Diplomacy (LAD) where Mifsud served as Director, associated with Stirling University. This adds more weight to the idea that Mifsud is a familiar figure among the upper echelons of the UK intelligence and foreign policy establishment.

The final nail in the coffin of the theory that Mifsud is a Russian spy is this photograph of Mifsud standing next to Boris Johnson, the UK Foreign Secretary, as reported by *The Guardian*. The photograph, taken in October 2017 – nearly a full year after the US Presidential election and nine months after Mifsud's name appeared in newspaper headlines worldwide as allegedly involved in Russian meddling in that election – is either highly embarrassing for the hapless Mr Johnson, or it's not, because Joseph Mifsud is actually a valued and security-vetted asset to the United Kingdom.



Image via *The Guardian*: Boris Johnson (center) pictured at the dinner with the 'London professor', Joseph Mifsud (left) and Prasenjit Kumar Singh (right).

Another aspect of the RussiaGate claims tied to the UK includes the reported conversation between George Papadopoulos and Alexander Downer, Australia's High Commissioner to the UK who was based in London. The pair reportedly spoke about the alleged Russian 'dirt' on Hillary Clinton while they were drinking at a swanky bar in London. According to *Lifzette*, Downer is closely tied with The Clinton Foundation via his role in securing \$25 million in aid from his country to help the Clinton Foundation fight AIDS.

He is also a member of the advisory board of London-based Hakluyt & Co, an opposition research and intelligence firm set up in 1995 by three former UK

intelligence officials and described as “a retirement home for ex-MI6 [British foreign intelligence] officers, but it now also recruits from the worlds of management consultancy and banking”. Whereas opposition research group Fusion GPS has received all the media attention so far, *Lifetzette* states that Hakluyt is “a second, even more powerful and mysterious opposition research and intelligence firm... with significant political and financial links to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and her 2016 campaign”.

Yet another UK link to a central pillar of the Trump-Russia narrative is British music promoter Robert Goldstone, who was reported to have organized a meeting between Donald Trump Jr. and Russian nationals in June 2016. In the email chain setting up the Trump Tower meeting, both before and after the meeting, the only real ‘evidence’ of collusion with Russia come from Goldstone’s own emails; none-too-subtle heavy hints about ‘Russian help’ dropped by Goldstone but later – after the emails became public – walked back by him as “hyping the message and... using hot-button language to puff up the information I had been given.”

Some have speculated that Goldstone was also involved with British or US intelligence efforts to concoct the RussiaGate narrative. As soon as his name emerged in the press, Goldstone – like Christopher Steele and Joseph Mifsud – went into ‘hiding’. Multiple press reports claimed he had done so out of fear for his safety, a claim also made about Christopher Steele when his name first became public. Indeed, the UK government issued a DA Notice (a press suppression advisory notice) to the British press to suppress the ex-spy Steele’s name. It is notable that, of all the people swept up into the ever-burgeoning RussiaGate investigation, it is only the UK-linked witnesses – Mifsud, Steele, Goldstone – who have felt the need to go into hiding when their role has been exposed.

*The New York Times* summed up the contents of Christopher Steele’s dossier: “Mr. Steele produced a series of memos that alleged a broad conspiracy between the Trump campaign and the Russian government to influence the 2016 election on behalf of Mr. Trump. The memos also contained unsubstantiated accounts of encounters between Mr. Trump and Russian prostitutes, and real estate deals that were intended as bribes.”



Press reports also relate that Steele was ordered by an English court to appear for a videotaped deposition in London as part of an ongoing civil litigation against BuzzFeed for publishing the unverified dossier, for which Steele was paid \$168,000 by Glenn Simpson's company Fusion GPS, who were in turn paid by Mark Elias of law firm Perkins Coie, lawyers to both the Hillary Clinton campaign and the DNC.

In his thread on the role of UK intelligence interference in the 2016 US Presidential race, Assange also noted how Christopher Steele used another former UK ambassador to Moscow, Sir Andrew Wood, to funnel the dossier to Senator John McCain in a way that moved the handover out of London, to Canada. It's often said that no one ever really leaves the UK security services when they retire – many 'former' MI6 or MI5 officers' private intelligence businesses are dependent on maintaining good contacts among their ex-colleagues – so it is interesting to note that Sir Andrew Wood says he was “instructed” — by former British spy Christopher Steele — to reach out to the senior Republican, whom Wood called “a good man,” about the unverified document.

Lastly, Robert Hannigan, former head of British intelligence agency GCHQ, is another personality of note in the formation of the RussiaGate narrative and its surprisingly deep links to the UK. *The Guardian* noted that Hannigan announced he would step down from his leadership position with the agency just three days after the inauguration of President Trump, on 23 January 2017. Jane Mayer in her profile of Christopher Steele published in the *New Yorker* also noted that Hannigan had flown to Washington D.C. to personally brief the then-CIA Director John Brennan on alleged communications between the Trump campaign and Moscow. What is so curious about this briefing “deemed so sensitive it was handled at director-level” is why Hannigan was talking director-to-director to the CIA and not Mike Rogers at the NSA, GCHQ's Five Eyes intelligence-sharing partner.



TWITTER: GCHQ ✓ @GCHQ, We're sorry to announce that Robert Hannigan, our Director since 2014, has decided to step down as head of GCHQ<https://www.gchq.gov.uk/news-article/director-hannigan-gchq-step-down> ... 123, 11:04 AM - Jan 23, 2017, 255 people are talking about this

The central supporting pillars of the RussiaGate allegations hinge on figures with close ties to British intelligence and UK nationals. Even establishment media like *The Guardian* reported that British spies from GCHQ were the first to alert US authorities to so-called Russian interference. Did the entire narrative originate with UK intelligence groups in an effort to create the appearance of Russian collusion

with the Trump Presidential campaign, much as the Guccifer 2.0 persona was used in the US to discredit WikiLeaks' publication of the DNC emails?

If it was not Russia at the heart of a complex operation to topple the Clinton campaign in 2016, then was British Intelligence responsible for creating false narratives and mirage-like 'evidence' on which the Trump-Russia scandal could hinge?

Put another way, if UK intelligence is responsible for manufacturing the Trump-Russia allegations, it suggests that the UK's efforts formed an international arm running concurrently with domestic US 'Deep State' efforts to sabotage Trump's presidential campaign and/or oust him once he had been elected.

Is British intelligence involvement in RussiaGate, as outlined above, the international version of CrowdStrike and former FBI figures manufacturing the Guccifer 2.0 persona specifically to smear WikiLeaks via false allegations of a Russian hack of the DNC? Have we been looking in the wrong place – at the wrong country – to unearth the so-called 'foreign meddling' in the 2016 US election all along?

Kenneth Whittle contributed to this report.

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