

## **Russia, Among the Most Corrupt Countries in the World, Now Using It as a Weapon against Others**

### **Opinion**

Posted by:

Posted on : 2018/2/27 13:31:44

**Using corruption, Nemets says, the Kremlin between 1992 and 2013, disordered the ruling stratum in Ukraine, openly the way for Putin's Crimean Anschluss and his hybrid war against that country. But now, he continues, the Russian leadership is going after even bigger fish: searching for and finding figures in the US elite ready, willing and able to be corrupted. The Russian commentator cites an article by US-based Russian historian Yury Felshtinsky that Moscow has funneled dirty Russian money into the US "via the Trump organization," an action that at a minimum suggests the Russian side has leverage over parts of it.**

By Paul Goble for "Window on Eurasia": February 25 – Transparency International has just published its Corruption Perception Index, long one of the most useful measures allowing for evaluating how much corruption exists in various countries around the world and ranking them accordingly ([transparency.org/news/feature/corruption\\_perceptions\\_index\\_2017](https://transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017)). Russia is not only near the bottom – it stood at 135th out of 180 countries rated – but its position on this measure has been falling over the last decade. However, as Russian commentator Aleksandr Nemets points out, that is not the worst news about corruption in Russia which now costs each Russian 10,000 US dollars a year ([kasparov.ru/material.php?id=5A914E88B74EC](http://kasparov.ru/material.php?id=5A914E88B74EC)). The worst thing about Russian corruption – or at least the feature other countries should be worried about in the first instance, he suggests – is that Moscow is now not really opposing this plague as it is part and parcel of the Putin system but rather deploying corruption "as its chief instrument in 'the outside world' as a dangerous (lethal) weapon of aggression." Using corruption, Nemets says, the Kremlin between 1992 and 2013, disordered the ruling stratum in Ukraine, openly the way for Putin's Crimean Anschluss and his hybrid war against that country. But now, he continues, the Russian leadership is going after even bigger fish: searching for and finding figures in the US elite ready, willing and able to be corrupted. The Russian commentator cites an article by US-based Russian historian Yury Felshtinsky that Moscow has funneled dirty Russian money into the US "via the Trump organization," an action that at a minimum suggests the Russian side has leverage over parts of it ([gordonua.com/publications/pole-chudes-v-strane-durakov-tramp-v-pogone-za-russkimi-dengami-rassledovanie-istorika-felshtinskogo-230326.html](http://gordonua.com/publications/pole-chudes-v-strane-durakov-tramp-v-pogone-za-russkimi-dengami-rassledovanie-istorika-felshtinskogo-230326.html)). The Kremlin's access to massive amounts of money – more than a trillion US dollars abroad – is something new and allows it to use funds to corrupt politicians abroad. Indeed, the amount of money it would need to gain influence over many Western figures would be less than a rounding error given that sum. The past few days has brought fresh evidence of the corruption which now infuses Russian foreign policy in the form of reports about cocaine shipments from a Russian embassy in South America, something that could give the FSB and the Kremlin money even less trackable for possible nefarious use ([forum-msk.org/material/news/14383674.html](http://forum-msk.org/material/news/14383674.html)). Reflecting on this, another Russian commentator, Alfred Kokh concludes a discussion of all this with the question: When will the fools in the West begin

to understand with whom they are dealing?&rdquo; Putin&rsquo;s regime is not a state like any other, he suggests. &ldquo;It is the most ordinary mafia&rdquo; and plays by mafia rules &nbsp;

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The commentary above is from Paul Goble&rsquo;s &ldquo;Window on Eurasia&rdquo; series and appears here with the author&rsquo;s permission. Contact Goble at: [paul.goble@gmail.com](mailto:paul.goble@gmail.com)

Editor&rsquo;s Note: Some of the information that points to the criminal connections of the Putin regime came in the Wikileaks material as reported by the Guardian:

[https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010 ... -russia-mafia-kleptocracy](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010...-russia-mafia-kleptocracy)