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Subject: The D.C. swamp hides behind military to get omnibus passed

Did the GOP establishment and Democrat party sneak one by the President?

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All The News That Doesn't Fit the Page

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The D.C. swamp hides behind military to get omnibus passed

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Disappointed over Trump signature on omnibus

Americans for Limited Government President Rick Manning: "The President's signature on the \$1.3 trillion omnibus spending bill accepts Congress' verdict that buying military material to be sent around the world is more important than defending our own border. It's clear that the President understands the bad bargain he was given, and the staff responsible for negotiating it should be fired because they failed."

The D.C. swamp hides behind military to get omnibus passed



By Printus LeBlanc

If you haven't heard, President Trump signed a horrendous \$1.3 trillion omnibus bill on Friday. The bill funded the military, but that's about all of President Trump's priorities it funded. Leadership in the House and Senate used the military as a hostage to get the funding for their pet projects through and convince the President he must sign the bill if he wanted to fund the military. Did the GOP establishment and Democrat party sneak one by the President?

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer voiced his approval of the spending bill stating, "Overall, we Democrats are very happy with what we have been able to accomplish on a number of very important priorities." He should be happy, he is getting the rest of the country to pay for the gateway project, a tunnel between New Jersey and New York that is likely to become the Big Dig 2.0.

Schumer added, "we're able to accomplish more in the minority than we were when we had the presidency or even were in the majority."

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi also gloated about the spending bill, calling it, "a tremendous victory for the American people," noting the bill doesn't fund the promised border wall. She continued, "if you want to think you're getting a wall, just think it, and sign the bill."

Dara Lind of the uber progressive publication Vox is bragging about the omnibus writing, "Trump wanted 1,000 new ICE agents; he's getting barely 100, and *none* of them are the field agents responsible for arresting unauthorized immigrants. (Instead, ICE is getting more staff for investigations and mission support.) And when it comes to immigration detention, Congress isn't just refusing to give the White House the 20 percent increase in detention Trump asked for — it's

rebuking ICE for overspending and expecting Congress to bail it out.” The bill decreases the ability of ICE to deport criminal illegal aliens. I don’t remember any Republican running on reducing the number of criminal illegal aliens deported.

Many people will remember just a short time ago President Trump was touring the new prototypes of the border wall. The prototypes looked nice and impressive, but that is all they will ever be, prototypes. While many will try and save face proclaiming this budget funds the wall, that is not simply true. The budget funds some fencing, but it specifically prohibits the funding of any of the prototypes. The bill states, “The amounts designated...shall only be available for operationally effective designs deployed as of the date of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017...such as currently deployed steel bollard designs that prioritize agent safety.”

That means Republican leadership let President Trump go down to the border and tour the new prototype walls, knowing the wall would not be funded. Did they intentionally try to embarrass the President?

Rep. Mark Sanford’s (R-S.C.) tells a story of Rep. Maxine Watters (D-Calif.) bragging in the elevator to the Republicans, “I’m so happy that you all put all the things I wanted in the omnibus!” If Watters got everything she wanted, did Republican leadership even put up a fight? Besides defense spending what did they get?

In what is probably the most insulting aspect of the omnibus, the U.S. taxpayers are borrowing money from China, only to send millions back to China for developmental aid, only to have China charge U.S. taxpayers interest on the free money we gave them. This omnibus created a new level of asinine that was previously unthinkable.

The House of Representatives did its job, why didn’t the Senate? The House passed all its appropriations bills, but the Senate passed none. This is why there was an omnibus instead of individual appropriations bills. The Senate refused to put appropriations bills together so it could use the military as cover for funding non-essential projects.

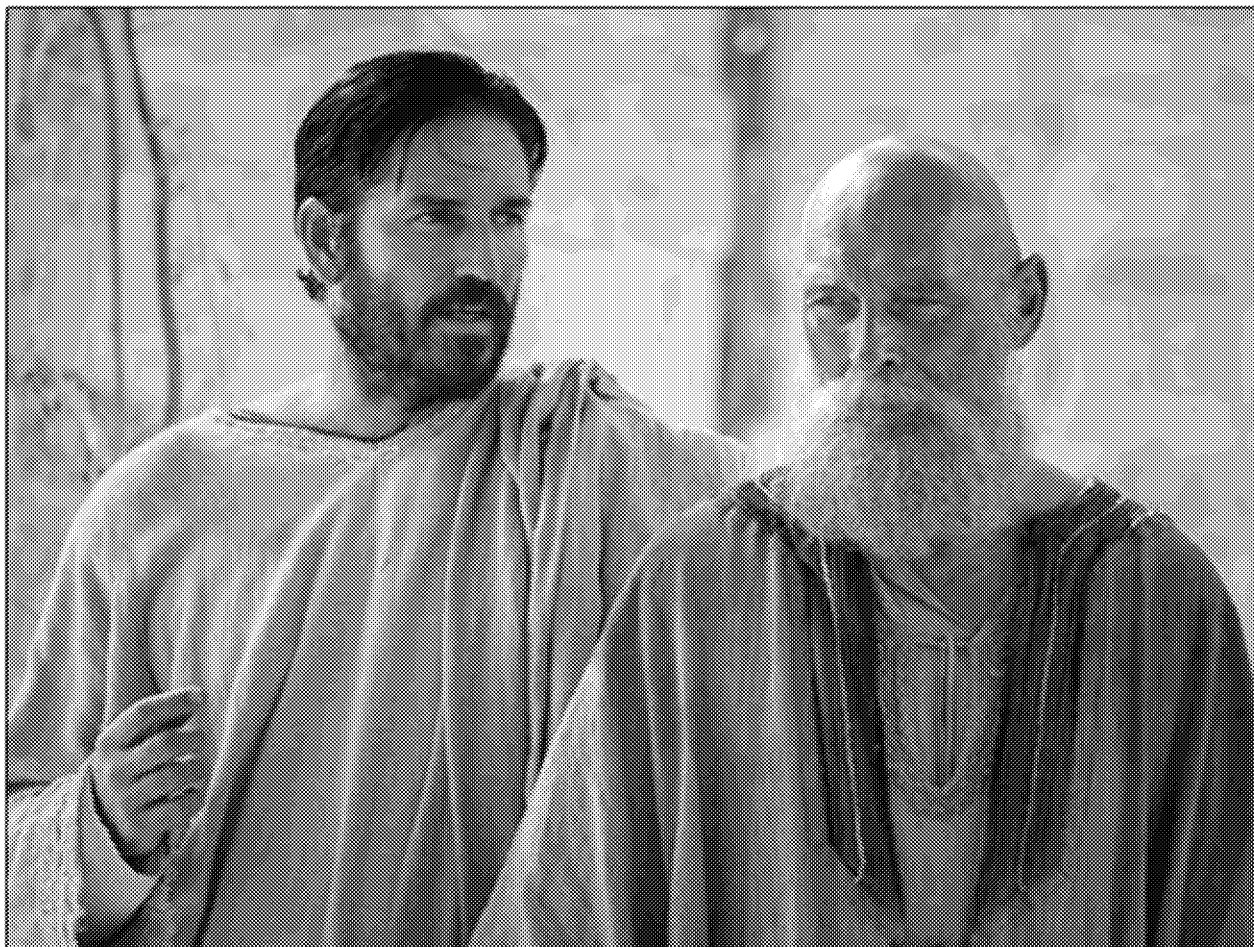
Passage of the omnibus means that for Trump priorities like building the wall, the September 30 deadline for the end of the fiscal year is probably the last chance to get it fully funded before the Congressional midterm elections.

Hopefully the Democrats taking victory laps and spiking the ball will wake the President up to the notion not all those around him are working for his agenda. The President now knows he cannot trust Republican leadership and must be more engaged. The President must put pressure on the Senate to pass appropriations bills and push his agenda through. If needs be, the President must get Senators on record as voting against the military and for wasteful spending projects. Finally, President Trump must be more willing to draw a line in the sand that will result in a veto when crossed. Veto threats have to be issued before votes, not after.

Printus LeBlanc is a contributing editor at Americans for Limited Government.

THE HILL

Paul: Apostle of Christ is a movie for the modern world



Source: *Affirm Films/Sony Pictures Entertainment.*

By Rick Manning

Today, persecution of Christians around much of the world from the Middle East to China is one of the silent shames of America's foreign and economic policy. But Hollywood is releasing a movie for Holy Week that might empower Christians around the nation to end this silence by reminding people of the 1st century Roman persecution that sought to snuff out followers of Jesus Christ from Rome and around the world.

The movie *Paul: Apostle of Christ*, is not a political film. It is an historic one. Different than normal Christian fare in that the Gospel is given through Paul's actions and words, but not by an overt, in your face, call for conversion. This might disappoint some, but it makes sense in the context of the movie and it is this difference which just might make it one of the most impactful films of this decade.

Filmed in a gritty style that makes the viewer feel and almost smell 1st century Rome, the story brings to life the Apostle Paul, the man whose letters make up much of the Bible's New Testament. Before anyone stops reading because this is just another preachy Christian movie, please know that the movie is faithful to the writings of Paul, but it is anything but preachy.

Instead it is a story about a man's real-life memories of the evil he has done in the past (persecuting Christians prior to his conversion on the road to Damascus) and his determination to not return evil for evil in the present.

With memories etched into modern America's collective consciousness of Christians beheaded on the beaches of Libya, children being crucified by ISIS for their belief in Christ and the on-going attempted destruction of the remaining Christians in much of the eastern Mediterranean where Paul established the first Christian churches, the movie provides a powerful message to America's leaders about love and prayer.

In a red carpet conversation with Jim Caviezel, who plays Luke in the movie, I asked what message he would like for people in D.C. to know about persecution around the world, exemplified by the "Paul" movie. His reply,

"You mean as far as the Chaldeans, Coptic and Syrian Christians that were crucified on Good Friday last year? I'd say, the United States, we've got to start, as Christians, not being afraid. Every man dies, not every man really lives and in this film what Paul says at the end is really powerful, 'to live is Christ, to die is gain.' We all die, man, its how you live your life and there are a lot of people out there that need our help... And I think modern day Christians really struggle with death, Billy Graham just died, he lived 99 years. A lot of people cried, but my God if you don't believe that man is with Jesus what kind of faith do you have?"

In "Paul: The Apostle of Christ," the history of Nero's violence against Christians is shown without some of the graphic visuals that dominate modern horror movies, but the impact is clear. The palpable fear amongst those who stood for Christ rings true throughout the movie. And in the context of the executions of Christians at the hands of Muslims in the Middle East, the destruction of churches and imprisonment of Christians in China, North Korea, Nigeria and elsewhere around the world, the movie should mobilize the Christian world to not meet hate with hate, but rather to meet it with love and an abiding faith that God is sovereign and in control.

Political leaders follow movements, and the first step in ending the evil of persecution is naming it. In Rome, it was Nero, but in the modern world it is China's totalitarianism, North Korea's evil Leader worship, and in Sharia Law practicing Islamic states it is those who see it as their duty to Allah to exterminate the infidel.

Paul: Apostle of Christ is not a movie about persecution, but instead one of the courage of people of faith in Christ who oftentimes died horrific deaths for the glory of God.

The movie is not a political manifesto, but instead a story of the triumph of love over hate, with 1st century Rome almost two millennia in the rear-view mirror, we know the rest of the story - that Paul's faith lived on, even as his body inevitably perished.

Modern Hollywood took the chance to tell Paul's story, because it is every bit as relevant today as it was in those ancient times. Paul was willing to stand and die for his faith as he wrote to the Philippians, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

In a modern world where evil seems be rampant, Paul and his devotion to Jesus Christ stands as a beacon of how humanity should be and what we still should aspire toward. And as Caviezel, the man who played Jesus in the "Passion of the Christ" reminded us, we all die, but do we all really live?

Christians are called to live for something bigger than themselves and bring glory to God by being Christ unto the world. Not to be conquerors but slaves to Christ who turn the other cheek to those who would be their enemies, but confront sin without fear.

Something to think about as the celebration of Christ rising from the dead on Easter morning approaches.

Rick Manning is the President of Americans for Limited Government.

'Lone DNC hacker' theory by Daily Beast contradicts multiple hacker report by CrowdStrike in 2016 that cited both Cozy Bear and Fancy Bear



By Robert Romano

The Daily Beast's Spencer Ackerman and Kevin Poulsen are reporting that the hacking of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) in 2016 was done by a "lone hacker" who worked for Russian military intelligence, the GRU, citing U.S. investigators.

“Guccifer 2.0, the ‘lone hacker’ who took credit for providing WikiLeaks with stolen emails from the Democratic National Committee, was in fact an officer of Russia’s military intelligence directorate (GRU), The Daily Beast has learned,” Ackerman and Poulsen write.

There’s only one problem. The claim contradicts one of the key findings from CrowdStrike, the firm originally hired by the DNC to investigate the hack in 2016 and to date the only group who ever actually got access to the server. Then, the finding was that there was more than one set of hackers on the DNC’s server.

According the Washington Post’s Ellen Nakashima, who broke the story on June 14, 2016, “The firm identified two separate hacker groups,” both of which were attributed to Russia but let’s leave the attribution aside for a moment.

The Post continues, “One group, which CrowdStrike had dubbed Cozy Bear, had gained access last summer and was monitoring the DNC’s email and chat communications, Alperovitch said. The other, which the firm had named Fancy Bear, broke into the network in late April and targeted the opposition research files. It was this breach that set off the alarm. The hackers stole two files, Henry said. And they had access to the computers of the entire research staff — an average of about several dozen on any given day.”

So, per Alperovitch, Cozy Bear was responsible for getting the DNC emails, which were ultimately published on Wikileaks, and Fancy Bear was responsible for getting the opposition research files, which were never published by Wikileaks.

Critically, Nakshima writes, “The two groups did not appear to be working together, Alperovitch said. Fancy Bear is believed to work for the GRU, or Russia’s military intelligence service, he said. CrowdStrike is less sure of whom Cozy Bear works for but thinks it might be the Federal Security Service, or FSB, the country’s powerful security agency, which was once headed by Putin.”

To put a fine point on this, there was always more doubt about who got the DNC emails, even from CrowdStrike, with the attribution being “less sure” and qualified with a “might.”

Nor was it clear how they did it: “CrowdStrike is not sure how the hackers got in. The firm suspects they may have targeted DNC employees with ‘spearphishing’ emails... ‘But we don’t have hard evidence,’ Alperovitch said.”

On Nov. 17, 2016 former National Intelligence Director James Clapper echoed that uncertainty, telling the House Intelligence Committee: “As far as the WikiLeaks connection, the evidence there is not as strong and we don’t have good insight into the sequencing of the releases or when the data may have been provided.”

Compare that to the certitude expressed now by the Daily Beast that “Security firms and declassified U.S. intelligence findings previously identified the GRU as the agency running ‘Fancy Bear,’ the ten-year-old hacking organization behind the DNC email theft...”

Again, CrowdStrike never attributed the emails to Fancy Bear. The DNC emails were attributed to Cozy Bear. To review the chain of events:

On June 15, 2016, CrowdStrike published its analysis of the DNC hack.

Guccifer 2.0 then suddenly appeared and began publishing documents, including an opposition research file on Trump, with Russian fingerprints.

The WordPress blog by Guccifer 2.0 appeared, taking credit for the DNC hack described in the Washington Post story. The blog posted some of the documents as proof of the hack. Critically, Guccifer 2.0 claimed, “The main part of the papers, thousands of files and mails, I gave to Wikileaks. They will publish them soon.” Here, Guccifer 2.0 associated itself with Wikileaks and was outing itself as Wikileaks’ source.

The same day, it was revealed that metadata in one of the files posted by Guccifer 2.0 was modified by a user whose name in Cyrillic was “Felix Edmundovich,” a reference to a founder of the Soviet-era secret police. This became confirmation for many that the Russians did it.

Meaning, if Guccifer 2.0 was Russian military intelligence agency, the GRU, as reported by the Daily Beast, and let’s say they were, it wanted the entire world to think it was responsible for the DNC hacks, all of them, and left a trail of breadcrumbs leading back to Russia on purpose. They wanted to be caught.

Or, Guccifer 2.0 could have possibly been taking credit for something he or she was not responsible for. The claims only appeared after the Washington Post had already published its story, revealing everything that had been taken from the DNC servers, and after Julian Assange appeared on ITV on June 12, 2016 stating he had emails related to Hillary Clinton that were to be published.

Guccifer 2.0 could have been responsible for taking the opposition research — the blog did post some of those documents after all — but not the emails, which it never posted. They really could have been separate groups, as CrowdStrike had found. We still don’t know.

Meaning, despite the open and shut nature of the Daily Beast story, we may be no closer to solving the mystery of who hacked the DNC emails and gave them to Wikileaks, which has to this day denied any connection to Russia. It might be easier to just say that Guccifer 2.0 was the “lone hacker,” but it still might not be true.

Robert Romano is the Vice President of Public Policy at Americans for Limited Government.



Disappointed over Trump signature on omnibus

March 23, 2018, Fairfax, Va.—Americans for Limited Government President Rick Manning today issued the following statement expressing disappointment in President Donald Trump signing the \$1.3 trillion omnibus spending bill:

"Disappointed. The President's signature on the \$1.3 trillion omnibus spending bill accepts Congress' verdict that buying military material to be sent around the world is more important than defending our own border. It's clear that the President understands the bad bargain he was given, and the staff responsible for negotiating it should be fired because they failed.

"Any reasonable observer of D.C. politics over the past decade can now predict that in September, Congress will present the President with a continuing resolution, which continues the exact funding priorities he is bemoaning in the current bill as not being fully met. If the President is to keep his

promise never to sign a bill like this again, he must demand full funding of the government on his desk by September 15 to avoid government shutdown drama. Funding the government at levels that Obama would never have dreamed of is not an option and a continuing resolution in September will merely continue the astronomical funding levels. Therefore, the President must insist Congress put 13 individual appropriations bills on his desk with the military funding first so we no longer have the extortion axe of not funding the military over the nation's head, or else veto it."

Permalink at <https://getliberty.org/2018/03/disappointed-over-trump-signature-on-omnibus/>

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