

## *No DeLay*

**A Blog Entry in GordonTalk,  
A Follow-Up to Tom DeLay, Russian Patsy?**

April 8, 2005

When last we left [our tale of international intrigue](#), House Majority Leader Tom DeLay was being wined and dined in Moscow at the expense of an obscure non-profit organization, the National Center for Public Policy Research, which was reportedly funded by Chelsea Commercial Enterprises Ltd., a mysterious offshore company, apparently fronting for NAFTA-SIB, the Russian energy conglomerate whose biggest clients are the Russian ministries of defense and intelligence.

Whew! And I thought the plots of those *Mission Impossible* movies were convoluted!

And just as a complex screenplay requires a crafty screenwriter, [The Washington Post investigation](#) published this week singled out one individual for particular scrutiny in this apparently illicit affair: A man who worked for one of the lobbying firms that arranged DeLay's trip for the NCPPR, who served on the board of the NCPPR, who also lobbied congressional Republicans to support Russian aid legislation on behalf of the mysterious Chelsea Commercial Enterprises, and who has been a bosom buddy of Tom DeLay and other top Repubs (including Geo. Dubya) for years—Jack Abramoff.

Jack who? Abramoff—you've probably never heard of him; but you've seen and felt his considerable influence, primarily as one of this nation's top GOP lobbyists, for years. Let me cite some highlights of [his résumé](#) ...

Abramoff is something of a paradox (to put it mildly). He is an orthodox Jew and yet he was a driving force behind the political power of the Christian Coalition. Abramoff wrote and produced the 1989 film [Red Scorpion](#), which depicted the heart-warming tale of a freedom-loving ex-KGB agent killing masses of black African communists; in 1994 he produced the sequel, [Red Scorpion 2](#), which depicted the heart-warming tale of freedom-loving men killing masses of white American militiamen.

In 1995, it was revealed that the International Freedom Foundation, which Abramoff had purportedly founded in 1985, was actually a front organization paid over a million dollars a year by the South African government for the unpalatable PR job (that no one else would evidently touch) of making apartheid seem less than contemptible and Nelson Mandela's African National Congress seem less than honorable.

Also about this time, as the GOP took over Congress, Abramoff became rich as a lobbyist for

Indian casinos. But the gambling business is indeed a gamble: In 2001, one of his partners in a riverboat gambling deal that went bust got run off the road and shot to death (The rumors are that it was a mob hit, but you didn't hear that from me).

In 1998, Abramoff successfully lobbied for the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in defeating a bill that would have revoked its exemption from U.S. minimum wage laws: "For \$100,000 a month, Abramoff helped block legislation to help women who make 'Made-in-USA' garments for \$3 an hour."

I'm sure it was just a coincidence that Abramoff and DeLay celebrated New Years 1998 together on a golfing holiday on those very same islands. (I wonder who made their golf shirts)

In 2003, Abramoff lobbied for Tyco, embroiled in charges of massive corporate fraud.

In 2004, the lobbying firm for which he worked on behalf of the Native American tribes fired Abramoff for engaging in "personal transactions" that were "unacceptable to the firm": a small matter of his having taken \$10 million in secret kickbacks without telling the tribes or the firm.

And from whom did Abramoff receive those kickbacks? From one Michael Scanlon, who with Abramoff had received a "staggering \$45 million" in fees from three Native American tribes, which had prompted the U.S. Senate to probe the transactions, which led to the firing of Abramoff.

And oh yes, that Mr. Scanlon was an ex-aide to our subject at hand, one Tom DeLay, who enjoyed some undoubtedly well-earned leisure time in 1998 at resorts run by the Choctaws—one of the tribes represented by Abramoff—after being successfully lobbied by Abramoff to kill legislation opposed by the tribe.

Now, [here's where the plot thickens ...](#)

The NCPPR, on whose board Abramoff sat, not only had funded DeLay's \$57,000 trip to Moscow in 1997 but also financed DeLay's \$70,000 trip with Abramoff to London and Scotland in 2000—whether that constituted yet another apparent violation of House ethics rules depends on the extent to which Abramoff, a registered lobbyist, rather than the NCPPR, a non-profit organization, paid for DeLay's expenses. And indeed, as evidenced by expense vouchers, Abramoff billed expenses for the trip—including four grand for the DeLay family's stay at the Four Seasons—to the lobbying firm for which he worked at the time. And by the way, the expenses were allocated to the account of—get this—the Mississippi Choctaws!

In 2002, Abramoff got the Choctaws and Coushattas to cough up a hundred grand to pay for another Scottish golfing junket, this time for House Administration Committee Chairman Bob Ney (R-Ohio).

Why in the heck have Native American resort owners resorted to courting U.S. Congressmen to visit Scottish golf resorts?

In any case, apparently the "non-profit" NCPPR, with Abramoff on the board, wasn't a front for funneling money to congressmen, in violation of House rules, just from powerful Russian interests but also from lobbyists representing Indian casino owners.

And let no one accuse our House Majority Leader of prejudice either: He has taken golfing vacations apparently illegally sponsored by Russian agents, Native American lobbyists, and oh yes, that little hundred thousand dollar trip to South Korea in 2001 officially paid for by a tax-exempt group—a transparent creation, however, of a lobbyist for a Korean businessman (thus being an apparent violation of both the ban on taking travel money from lobbyists and the ban on taking travel money from foreign agents ... I wonder if you get frequent flyer miles that way).

Well, to be perfectly accurate, I'm not sure if DeLay actually played golf in Korea.

And what does he have to say in his own defense? Well, on March 18, the Honorable Tom DeLay informed the noted evangelical group the Family Research Council that all the charges leveled against his apparent flouting of House ethics rules were something a tad bigger: "a huge, nationwide, concerted effort to destroy everything we believe in."

If you don't mind my saying so, Tom, you're beginning to sound a little, well, paranoid. I mean, you've got to watch what you're saying, especially after having recently made [such widely circulated pronouncements as this](#): "We have unaccountable, out of control judiciary. We

are after them." "The Constitution gives us [Congress] the responsibility to create courts. If we can create them, we can uncreate them."

Uh, OK ...

Well, yesterday we read that [the Veep didn't exactly endorse those sentiments](#); and today when pressed for his opinion on DeLay's attitudes towards the Judicial Branch of the Federal Government, [President Bush replied](#) that he supports "an independent judiciary."

Not exactly a ringing endorsement of the Constitution according to DeLay.

Coming on the heels of even [The Wall Street Journal asking for his head](#), I just have to ask you, Tom: Isn't that job of yours getting a little bit too "demanding"? Isn't it about time to spend more "quality time with your family"?

Or maybe you and Jack Abramoff could go golfing.