

Dr. Haass:

Thank you for the kindness of your reply. However, we and the letter's signatories found it disappointing.

Our most urgent concern is this. You speak of the long-term impact of this donation. In our view, that impact extends far beyond the potential value of the money to future interns, beyond even CFR. That impact will touch upon the health of American democracy.

Blavatnik has mounted a longstanding effort to launder his image by linking himself to precisely the type of respected institutions you mention. That is his strategy. This effort is particularly sensitive now, one year before the next U.S. presidential election. In October 2016, he made major donations to political figures supported by the Kremlin. We have no doubt that certain campaigns are quietly testing the waters to gauge how far consensus has shifted as to the acceptability of Russian-linked money. By welcoming this contribution at this time, CFR bestows its blessing. The fact that Harvard or Yale's due diligence failed – in gifts related to science, not policy – does not excuse this more serious lapse.

- It is our contention, supported by a significant body of evidence, that Mr. Blavatnik should be considered, for all intents and purposes, a "government-controlled entity."
- The existence of internal processes consistent with "best practices" has failed to guard many an institution from actions that in retrospect proved unwise, damaging to their reputations, unethical, or criminal. Blavatnik's donation does indeed put CFR's reputation for integrity and independence at risk.
- We would certainly expect that CFR did not offer Blavatnik any say in its processes or research agenda. However, abundant social science research demonstrates that the desire to reciprocate is so deeply rooted in humans who feel beholden that they almost always do so, even unwittingly.
- The fact that some CFR members may be satisfied with this contribution does not absolve you and the directors from your own stringent responsibilities to consider its ramifications. (Some Skadden Arps partners or Sackler Gallery directors might today regret their earlier positive response to legal fees and donations now in the news. But in those cases, the fallout affected only the entities, not our nation as a whole.)

Nothing in our exchange with CFR over the last two weeks is to be construed as an allegation by any of the signatories of criminal malfeasance by Mr. Blavatnik. Such a determination can only be made by the courts. But criminal law sanctions only the most egregious violations of a society's ethical expectations. It is a floor, not a ceiling. It is our strong view, as stated in our letter of September 18 (attached with an expanded list of signatories), that CFR should uphold higher standards, and demonstrate the rigorous integrity that must be restored to America's public and private institutions in order for our democracy to continue to thrive.

Our request is simple and substantive: reverse your decision to accept Blavatnik's \$12 million. We consider this matter to be of grave importance and will continue working for a better outcome.

Sincerely,

Peter Reddaway, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, George Washington University

Sarah Chayes, Author of *Thieves of State: Why Corruption Threatens Global Security*

Ilya Zaslavskiy, Head of Research, Free Russia Foundation