

PAUL MANAFORT SHARED THE TRUMP ENERGY SPEECH WITH TOM BARRACK

One of the earliest exchanges with the guy described as his handler, Rashid Al Malik, in the indictment against Tom Barrack involved his success at editing a Trump speech otherwise calling for energy independence to include a commitment to “work together with our supportive allies in the Gulf.” Karen DeYoung described the resulting effect as a “jarring” conflict with the rest of the speech.

When, as a candidate, Trump was preparing an early 2016 speech outlining his energy policy, Barrack allegedly prepared a draft for the campaign including a favorable mention of bin Zayed.

The proposal seemed jarring, since the speech was to outline Trump’s plans to build domestic energy production and end oil imports from countries such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia, both leading members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.

When he delivered the address, Trump confusingly followed a vow to “become, and stay, totally independent of any need to import energy from the OPEC cartel” with a promise to “work with our gulf allies to develop a positive energy relationship.”

The indictment doesn’t make clear which “senior member of the Campaign” Barrack worked with to include the language.

But Barrack’s December 12, 2017 interview with Mueller does. Close to the end of a long

interview that focused closely on Barrack's role in getting Manafort the job and his own role leading the Inauguration Committee (in which Barrack focused on his efforts to peddle influence with *other* countries besides UAE), Barrack described that he worked directly with Manafort on the speech (which makes sense, because he did not yet know Rick Gates).

BARRACK stated he contributed to portions of TRUMP's energy policy. BARRACK's idea was to create a broad energy policy. MANAFORT had sent BARRACK a draft of a speech TRUMP was to give on energy. BARRACK made notes on the speech and returned his comments to MANAFORT. BARRACK contended, however, his notes to the speech were ultimately thrown out. BARRACK added during this time the TRUMP campaign's view on Muslims was challenging. Moreover, the campaign seemed to have a negative view toward Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. BARRACK suggested the campaign needed to divide radical Islam from modern Islam. Before providing comments on the draft energy speech back to MANAFORT, BARRACK shared the draft with [line redacted]. BARRACK asked each about the tone and technical aspects of the draft speech. [four lines redacted]

Barrack's description that he moderated Trump's anti-Muslim bias is consistent with actions described later in his indictment, including his effort to distinguish Saudi Arabia and UAE from the countries banned by Trump. Depending on what appears behind those redactions, this explanation for his role in the speech might explain an oddity about the indictment.

The discussion of the speech is included in the section titled, "The Defendants' Actions in the United States as Agents of the United Arab Emirates," effectively showing evidence to support the charge *that* Barrack worked as a Foreign Agent for UAE. But the communications

surrounding the speech do not appear in the Overt Acts section describing the acts the defendants took as part of a conspiracy. And, as I noted yesterday, while DOJ included the speech in a list of lies Barrack allegedly told the FBI on June 20, 2019 in a detention memo (and vastly overstated the extent of Barrack's described edits), those lies are not charged as false statements in the indictment.

(1) writing a draft of a speech to be delivered by the Candidate in May 2016;
(2) reviewing a PowerPoint presentation to be delivered to senior UAE officials on how to increase the UAE's influence in the United States with his assistance;

There may be good reason for this. It may well be that Barrack denied any role in editing Trump's speech in 2019, after Al Malik had been interviewed by Mueller's team and subsequently fled the country. He certainly downplayed his role in his own interview with Mueller's team, which took place five months before Al Malik's own interview. But he did acknowledge that he attempted to draft the speech.

That is, Barrack may have told the truth in December 2017, when the issue was Manafort's foreign influence-peddling with Russia, but did not in June 2019, when the issue had become his own with UAE.