A Whistleblower’s story: Sergey Kolesnikov speaks to the Henry Jackson Society

The Russia Studies Centre, a new initiative at the Henry Jackson Society co-chaired by Michael Weiss and me—was pleased to host its second parliamentary event yesterday, with a lecture by the Russian businessman-turned-whistleblower, Sergey Kolesnikov. Dr Kolesnikov delivered a fascinating speech entitled “Putin and corruption in Russia: a whistleblower’s story” to a filled-to-capacity audience, recounting his personal experiences of high-level corruption in the Russian government.

Kolesnikov acquired a reputation as a whistleblower after he went public with evidence alleging that the Russian government diverted up to $1 billion in public funds towards building a lavish mansion for Vladimir Putin’s personal use on the Black Sea coast. Kolesnikov’s medical equipment manufacturing company was involved in high-level public health projects, and his lecture presented evidence that these funds were diverted into a series of off-shore companies towards the building of this mansion—all using public funds that should have been invested in the country’s decaying infrastructure or inadequate public health services. Kolesnikov explained how his disgust at this deep nexus of corruption impelled him to go public with his account, and how he has since had to live in exile and with threats that “traitors do not live long.”

http://henryjacksonsociety.org/2012/05/04/a-whistleblower%E2%80%99s-story-sergey-kolesnikov-speaks-to-the-henry-jackson-society/

http://skolesnikov.org/en/?page_id=141

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