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New York, NY, June 6, 2014 – Simon & Schuster will publish a book by distinguished Russia scholar Karen Dawisha that exposes the origins of the St. Petersburg cabal, and its connections to organized crime, that brought Russian leader Vladimir Putin to power. *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* will be published on September 16, 2014. Alice Mayhew, Vice President and Editorial Director of Simon & Schuster, acquired world rights from Melanie Jackson at the Melanie Jackson Agency, LLC.

Dawisha expected to publish the book with Cambridge University Press (CUP), her publisher for seven previous books. Last month CUP declined to proceed with publication out of concern with the cost of defending libel accusations, however unfounded, in the U.K, where the libel laws lack the First Amendment protections afforded U.S. publishers. That decision has given the book an international profile, months ahead of publication. "In the light of the news from Ukraine, and the resulting sanctions recently imposed on some of what America now officially calls Vladimir Putin's 'cronies,'" *The Economist* wrote, "it could hardly be more timely and important."

In the book Dawisha exposes the origins of Putin's kleptocratic regime. She presents extensive new evidence about the Putin circle's use of public positions for personal gain even before Putin became president in 2000. She documents the establishment of Bank Rossiya, now sanctioned by the U.S.; the rise of the Ozero Cooperative, founded by Putin and others who are now subject to visa bans and asset freezes; the links between Putin, Petromed, and "Putin's Palace" near Sochi; and the role of security officials from Putin's KGB days in Leningrad and Dresden, many of whom have maintained their contacts with Russian organized crime. The book provides a strong evidentiary basis beyond any previously published account of Putin's rise and consolidation of power.

Dawisha spent five years researching and writing *Putin's Kleptocracy*. Her sources include Stasi archives, Russian insiders, investigative journalists in the US, Britain, Germany, Finland, France and Italy, and Western officials who served in Moscow. Most important she relied on the work of Russian journalists who wrote this story when the Russian media was still free. "Many of them died for this story, and their work has largely been scrubbed from the Internet, and even from Russian libraries" she says. "But some of that work remains, and many Russians still keep clippings. So I have had generous help." She intends to dedicate the book to free Russian journalism.

Karen Dawisha is the Walter E. Havighurst Professor of Political Science in the Department of Political Science at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and the Director of the University's Havighurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies. She received her Ph.D. from the London School of Economics in 1975 and taught at a number of British and American Universities before coming to Miami. In addition to establishing the Havighurst Center, she has written seven previous books and numerous journal articles, and continues to do research and teaching in the areas of post-communist transitions and Russian politics.

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