

Idiom by Lon Yan

別有用心

bie2 you3 yong4 xin1

Allegations surfaced just before Donald Trump takes up presidency that Russia has compiled a compromising dossier on him that included evidence of perverted sex acts in a Moscow hotel room with women of dubious character.

Trump immediately dismissed that as “complete fabrication and utter nonsense”, tweeting, in capital letters: “Fake news - a total political witch hunt!”

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the allegations could be an attempt to rein in US politicians who want to improve ties with Russia, part of efforts to “keep harming relations.”

He was basically saying those who made the allegations were “別有用心” (*bie2 you3 yong4 xin1*).

“別” (*bie2*) is “other,” “some other,” “有” (*you3*) “to have,” “to exist,” “there is,” “用” (*yong4*) “use,” “to use” and “心” (*xin1*) “the heart,” “intention,” “mind.” “別有” (*bie2 yiu3*)

means “to have another,” and “用心” (*yong4 xin1*) is “motive,” “intention,” “attentively,” “diligently.”

“別有用心” (*bie2 you3 yong4 xin1*), literally, is “to have another motive.” The idiom means “to have ulterior motives,” “to have a hidden purpose,” “to have a hidden agenda.”

A friend who keeps treating you to dinner and asks you to bring along your pretty sister every time is clearly “別有用心” (*bie2 you3 yong4 xin1*).

The hotel room allegations could, indeed, destroy reputation, but for that to happen, one must have a reputation to be destroyed in the first place. As for Russia keeping dossier on people’s dirty secrets, “What’s new?”

One couldn’t help but wonder why the parties concerned would even bother responding at all, when the charade was really quite harmless.

Terms containing the character “共” (*gong4*) include:

共識 (*gong4 shi2*) – a consensus

共鳴 (*gong4 ming2*) – resonance; sympathetic response

公共 (*gong1 gong4*) – public

公共巴士 (*gong1 gong4 ba1 shi4*) – public bus