

# THE MOSCOW PROJECT

## THE STEELE DOSSIER

### *An Assessment of Allegations*

Throughout the Russia investigation, the “Steele Dossier” has continued to command attention. The transcript of Carter Page’s testimony before the House Intelligence Committee on November 2, 2017 has refocused that attention where it belongs: on the substance of the report.

Since BuzzFeed published the Steele Dossier in January 2017, subsequent reporting has confirmed or substantiated many of Steele’s claims.

### What is the Dossier?

**The Dossier is a human intelligence, or HUMINT, report and therefore should be viewed not as evidence to be used in a trial, but as a road map for investigators.**

Christopher Steele, the author of the Dossier, is an experienced and well-respected former UK intelligence officer who has served not only as an MI-6 officer but also [worked on behalf of the FBI](#) in the successful FIFA corruption investigation. Steele and the Dossier were credible enough for former FBI Director James Comey and Director of National Intelligence James Clapper to [brief](#) President Obama and then-President elect Trump on its contents.

BuzzFeed’s decision to publish the Dossier has itself attracted a lot of attention. The Dossier is part of [ongoing lawsuits](#) filed by parties named in the dossier and may be part of [congressional investigations](#).

In analyzing the contents of the Dossier, it’s important to remember, as former CIA analyst John Sipher [explained](#), that Steele was writing it in real time beginning in June 2016. The dossier largely contains intelligence related to internal Russian efforts to interfere in the election, not intelligence about the Trump campaign. Though the Dossier’s accuracy is still treated as an open question, to date no allegations or assertions have been firmly disproven, while other allegations have been substantiated by subsequent reporting.



# The Allegations

**Dossier Allegation:** Russia sought the lifting of U.S. sanctions imposed in the aftermath of Russia's 2014 invasion of Ukraine. According to the Dossier, multiple Russian individuals discussed "lifting of western sanctions against Russia over Ukraine."

**Subsequent Reporting:** In January, Felix Sater and Michael Cohen [delivered](#) a plan to Michael Flynn under which the United States would lift its sanctions against Russia in exchange for Russia temporarily withdrawing its forces from Crimea pending a Ukrainian referendum on whether to "lease" Crimea to Russia. Sater has repeatedly declined to comment on the matter, while Cohen has stood by the endeavor, saying, "Who doesn't want to help bring about peace?" Furthermore, the Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya who attended the June 9 meeting in Trump Tower alleges that Donald Trump, Jr. [suggested](#) that a future Trump administration would consider lifting the sanctions placed on Russia under the Magnitsky Act. (Veselnitskaya has denied that she attended on behalf of the Russian government.) Since becoming president, Trump has repeatedly undermined U.S. sanctions against Russia, both by [questioning the utility](#) of sanctions already in place and by [delaying](#) the implementation of newly passed legislation.

## MOSCOW PROJECT ASSESSMENT: CORROBORATED

**Dossier Allegation:** Russia was behind the DNC hack. In July 2016, Steele reported that a source "acknowledged that the Russian regime had been behind the recent leak of embarrassing e-mail messages, emanating from the Democratic National Committee (DNC), to the WikiLeaks platform."

**Subsequent Reporting:** The U.S. intelligence committee publicly [detailed](#) its conclusion as to the provenance of the emails in January 2017, several months after Steele first reported on it.

## MOSCOW PROJECT ASSESSMENT: CORROBORATED

**Dossier Allegation:** One proposed quid pro quo for Russian email hacking was the Trump campaign's removal of support for lethal weapons to Ukraine in the GOP platform. Steele wrote that "the operation [to leak emails via WikiLeaks] had been conducted with the full knowledge and support of TRUMP and senior members of his campaign team. In return the TRUMP team had agreed to sideline Russian intervention in Ukraine as a campaign issue and to raise US/NATO defense commitments in the Baltics and Eastern Europe to deflect attention away from Ukraine."

**Subsequent Reporting:** In his recently-unsealed plea deal with the FBI, George Papadopoulos [says](#) that "the Professor" informed him that the Russian government possessed thousands of emails that would be potentially damaging to Clinton, a fact Papadopoulos relayed to multiple senior campaign officials. In his testimony before Congress, Carter Page appeared to [confirm](#) that the Trump campaign successfully lobbied to soften language in the Republican Party platform regarding lethal assistance to Ukraine, which the campaign had previously [denied](#). Trump, meanwhile, has repeatedly [questioned](#) the U.S.'s financial commitment to NATO both [during the campaign](#) and [during his administration](#).

## MOSCOW PROJECT ASSESSMENT: PARTIALLY CORROBORATED

**Dossier Allegation:** Carter Page met with an official in the Russian presidential administration. The dossier claimed that an official who was close to Sergey Ivanov told a colleague that Igor Diveykin, Putin's deputy chief for internal policy, had secretly met with Page in Moscow; the dossier alleges that during this meeting, Diveykin claimed he wanted to give the Trump campaign kompromat on Clinton.

**Subsequent Reporting:** In his testimony, Page [denied](#) meeting with Diveykin but did admit to a "chat" with a different high-ranking Russian official, the deputy prime minister Arkady Dvorkovich.

## MOSCOW PROJECT ASSESSMENT: PARTIALLY CORROBORATED

**Dossier Allegation:** The Russian government's efforts to cultivate Trump involved his business. Along with the offer of opposition research on Clinton, Steele reports that "The Kremlin's cultivation on TRUMP also had comprised offering him various lucrative real estate development business deals in Russia ... However, so far, for reasons unknown, TRUMP had not taken up any of these."

**Subsequent Reporting:** The *Washington Post* [reported](#) in August 2017 that the Trump Organization pursued a deal to develop Trump Tower Moscow during his run for president. According to The *New York Times*, Felix Sater [wrote](#) to the Trump Organization lawyer Michael Cohen, "I will get Putin on this program and we will get Donald elected." CNN later [reported](#) that the Trump Organization signed a letter of intent to develop the project, but ultimately pulled out of the deal. Cohen has acknowledged that he discussed the deal with Trump, and told Congress that neither the proposal nor the decision to abandon it was "related in any way to Mr. Trump's presidential campaign."

### MOSCOW PROJECT ASSESSMENT: PARTIALLY CORROBORATED

**Dossier Allegation:** Manafort and Page served as key conduits to Russia. The dossier notes that the "well-developed conspiracy of co-operation between [the Trump campaign] and the Russian leadership ... was managed on the TRUMP side by the Republican candidate's campaign manager, Paul MANAFORT, who was using foreign policy advisor, Carter PAGE, and others as intermediaries."

**Subsequent Reporting:** In July 2017, Manafort was identified as one of three high-level Trump campaign officials (along with Jared Kushner and Donald Trump, Jr.) to attend the June 9 meeting in Trump Tower, which was [described in an email](#) setting up the meeting as "part of Russia and its government's support for Mr. Trump." Page [has admitted](#) that he met with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich on his July 2016 trip. Manafort also reportedly [suggested](#) to his longtime deputy Konstantin Kilimnik that they set up secret campaign briefings for the Russian oligarch and known Putin associate Oleg Deripaska.

### MOSCOW PROJECT ASSESSMENT: PARTIALLY CORROBORATED

**Dossier Allegation:** Carter Page met with Rosneft. The Dossier claimed that a source close to Putin ally Igor Sechin [reported](#) on a secret meeting between Sechin and Page in July 2016, during which they discussed U.S. sanctions on Russia. It also [claimed](#) that Sechin offered Page the brokerage fee for the sale of 19% of Rosneft, in exchange for lifting sanctions.

**Subsequent Reporting:** Page [admitted](#) to having met with Andrey Baranov, the head of investor relations at Rosneft; he denied discussing sanctions with Baranov, but said that Baranov "may have briefly mentioned" the Rosneft sale. Page denies meeting with Igor Sechin and no further reporting has contradicted his statements.

### MOSCOW PROJECT ASSESSMENT: PARTIALLY CORROBORATED

**Dossier Allegation:** Along with Trump, the Russian government engaged with "several high profile US players, including [Jill] STEIN, [Carter] PAGE and (former DIA Director Michael Flynn), and fund[ed] their recent visits to Moscow."

**Subsequent Reporting:** By the time of Steele's report, Michael Flynn and Jill Stein had already [attended](#) the RT Gala in December 2015, where they sat at the same table as Russian President Vladimir Putin; Carter Page's July 2016 trip to Moscow was also [public knowledge](#). Whether the Russian government paid for their trips remains unknown. Documents released to the public in March 2017 [revealed](#) that Flynn was paid by Russian government-linked entities in 2015. Stein also frequently [appeared](#) on the Russian propaganda news channel RT during the 2016 election.

### MOSCOW PROJECT ASSESSMENT: UNVERIFIED

**Dossier Allegation:** Russian President Vladimir Putin fired his chief of staff Sergei Ivanov due to Ivanov's "poor advice" regarding Russia's interference in the U.S. election. Steele writes that Ivanov "had advised PUTIN that the pro-TRUMP, anti-CLINTON operation/s would be both effective and plausibly deniable with little blowback." According to Steele, Putin's displeasure with Ivanov's advice "had been the catalyst in PUTIN's decision to sack IVANOV" and choose a successor who "had not been involved in the US presidential election operation/s."

**Subsequent Reporting:** There has been little subsequent reporting regarding Putin's reasons for firing Ivanov. At the time, *The New York Times* [described](#) the decision as part of "a series of high-profile Kremlin changes that have ushered out an older layer of Putin peers and replaced them with a younger generation of unquestioning loyalists."

### MOSCOW PROJECT ASSESSMENT: UNVERIFIED

**Dossier Allegation:** Michael Cohen met with Russian intelligence in Prague in August 2016.

**Subsequent Reporting:** This is the only allegation in the Dossier that the Trump team has sought to specifically disprove. The day after BuzzFeed published the dossier, Michael Cohen sought to prove that he had not been to Prague by [showing his passport](#) to BuzzFeed reporters. While his passport did not contain a Czech stamp, it did contain one for Italy, and since both countries are within the border-free Schengen Zone, where people can move between countries without going through customs, the lack of a stamp does not definitively prove that Cohen did not enter the Czech Republic.

### MOSCOW PROJECT ASSESSMENT: UNVERIFIED

**Dossier Allegation:** Trump has been providing information to Russian intelligence for at least five years. Steele reports that the Russian government "has been cultivating, supporting and assisting TRUMP for at least 5 years." Steele cites four separate sources—two within the Russian government and two Russian emigres—that allege that Trump had been reporting on the comings and goings of Russian oligarchs with property in Trump buildings for at least five years.

**Subsequent Reporting:** No reporting specifically validates this claim. However, Reuters has [reported](#) that "members of the Russian elite have invested in Trump buildings," and Trump has a questionable history when it comes to surveillance. In June 2016, BuzzFeed [reported](#) that, during the 2000s, Trump had a special telephone installed in his bedroom at Mar-a-Lago that enabled him to listen in on phone calls made on the club's landlines. (Trump's spokeswoman Hope Hicks denied the report.) Multiple Trump associates also told *Washington Post* that Trump frequently [records his phone conversations](#), which Trump himself has corroborated. Additionally, it is widely known that the Kremlin seeks to keep tabs on Russian oligarchs and business elites.

### MOSCOW PROJECT ASSESSMENT: UNVERIFIED

**Dossier Allegation:** The Russian government has compromising video of an encounter between Trump and Russian prostitutes. According to the Dossier, Russia sought to "exploit TRUMP's personal obsessions and sexual perversion to obtain suitable 'kompromat' (compromising material) on him" involving prostitutes "defiling the bed where [the Obamas] had slept" on a previous trip to Russia.

**Subsequent Reporting:** No reporting specifically validates this claim, which Trump has denied. However, acquiring kompromat on powerful and wealthy figures, especially foreigners, is a common Russian tactic. Trump's personal bodyguard Keith Schiller [testified](#) to Congress that, while Trump was in Moscow in 2013, a Russian offered to "send five women" to Trump's hotel room, but that Schiller rejected the offer. The Russian government is also [known](#) to create kompromat, sometimes of a sexual nature, on American government officials and businesspeople. Sergei Millian, who has been reported to be [source D](#) in the Dossier, told ABC's Brian Ross that Trump "likes Russia because he likes beautiful Russian ladies."

### MOSCOW PROJECT ASSESSMENT: UNVERIFIED