

THE MOSCOW PROJECT

What The Trump Campaign Knew and When They Knew It

The Mueller report is already a damning indictment of the President and the Trump campaign, detailing clear collusion with the Russians. But the conduct in the report is even worse when seen through the context of what the Trump campaign knew and when they knew it.

Throughout Volume I of the report, Mueller disaggregates and disassembles the Trump campaign's contacts. In doing so, Mueller leaves out critical context of what the Trump campaign knew about Russia's interference campaign while they were in contact with Kremlin-linked individuals. The Moscow Project has put together a timeline that provides that context, putting every revelation about Russia's attack during the election and transition side-by-side with the Trump campaign's contacts with Russia.

The context shows the Trump campaign knew about, encouraged, supported, and sought to cover up Russia's criminal attack on our democracy. The Trump campaign ran toward the crime. It is not simply that Trump's people were meeting with Kremlin-linked figures while Russia was engaged in a massive assault on our democracy. It is that the Trump campaign had these meetings and contacts despite knowing full well that Russia was committing this crime. The Trump campaign also clearly knew these contacts were incriminating, because they sought to *conceal each and every one of them*.

The Trump campaign [knew more](#) about Russian interference than anyone else. They also knew about it before anyone else.

- They knew from public reporting, which revealed that Russia was behind the hack and release of emails from Trump's political opponents.
- They knew from the intelligence community, which reportedly warned them about Russian interference efforts and told them to "alert the FBI about any suspicious overtures to their campaigns."
- And they knew from their Russian contacts, who told them before anyone else that the Kremlin was seeking to swing the election in Trump's favor.

Piecing these contacts and revelations together shows how damning the evidence is that the Trump campaign colluded with Russia.

April 26, 2016: RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE REVEALED TO THE TRUMP CAMPAIGN

The Kremlin-linked professor Joseph Mifsud [told Trump campaign aide George Papadopoulos](#) that Russia had "dirt" on Hillary Clinton in the form of "thousands of emails." He also previewed that the Russians could release the emails anonymously in order to help Trump. The next day, Papadopoulos emailed multiple senior campaign officials, reportedly [including](#) Trump's campaign manager Corey Lewandowski and top adviser Stephen Miller, about his meetings and contacts in Russia. The Trump campaign could have alerted law enforcement, the public, or both. They could have, at the very least, avoided having more contact with Russia.

Instead, they [kept meeting and kept engaging](#):

- Jeff Sessions, Jared Kushner, and Trump himself all [met with](#) Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak the next day;
- Papadopoulos, Mifsud, and Mifsud's contacts continued to [discuss](#) the possibility of Trump traveling to Moscow during the election to meet with Kremlin officials;
- and Russian President Vladimir Putin's top aide and press secretary extended [an invitation](#) to fly Trump to Russia as part of their negotiations over Trump Tower Moscow.

And they concealed and lied about these meetings:

- In October 2017, Papadopoulos [pleaded guilty](#) to lying to the FBI about his contacts with Mifsud and Mifsud's Russian associates. According to Mueller's report, the higher-ranking campaign officials whom Papadopoulos had emailed about those conversations repeatedly [said](#) they could not recall or remember their conversations with Papadopoulos.
- During his confirmation hearings, Sessions [made multiple false statements](#) to Congress claiming he had not contacts with any Russians during the 2016 campaign and was not aware of anyone else involved in the Trump campaign having done so.
- In November 2018, Trump's longtime lawyer and campaign adviser Michael Cohen [pleaded guilty](#) to lying to Congress about the extent of the Trump Organization's efforts to construct Trump Tower Moscow during the campaign, including about the efforts to plan a trip for Trump to visit Russia.

June 3, 2016: RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE REVEALED TO THE TRUMP CAMPAIGN

Rob Goldstone [sent an email to Donald Trump Jr.](#) in which he "offered to provide the Trump campaign with some official documents and information that would incriminate Hillary [Clinton]" as "part of Russia and its government's support for Mr. Trump." The Trump campaign could have alerted law enforcement, the public, or both. They could have, at the very least, avoided having more contact with Russia.

Instead, they [kept meeting and kept engaging](#):

- In the next six days, Trump Jr. [exchanged 14 more emails](#) with Goldstone;
- [had three phone calls](#) with Emin Agalarov, the son of the Kremlin-linked real-estate mogul Aras Agalarov;
- and [brought Jared Kushner and Paul Manafort to a meeting](#) with a Russian lawyer, a lobbyist with alleged links to Russian intelligence, and an alleged money launderer.

They concealed and lied about these meetings:

- When news of the meeting first broke in July 2017, Trump Jr.'s first response was to [release a statement](#)—later [revealed](#) to have been written by Trump and his team—that the meeting was not about "a campaign issue." Trump Jr. only acknowledged that it had been explicitly pitched as campaign assistance when he learned *The New York Times* [had obtained and was planning to publish](#) his emails with Goldstone.

June 14, 2016: RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE REVEALED TO THE PUBLIC

***The Washington Post* became the first news outlet to [report](#) that the Democratic National Committee's computers had been hacked by Russian government operatives. Over the next several days, multiple other outlets [published additional evidence](#) of Russian hacking. By now, the Trump campaign had known for almost two months that Russia was planning to release emails stolen from the Clinton campaign. The Trump campaign could have alerted law enforcement, the public, or both. They could have, at the very least, avoided having more contact with Russia.**

Instead, they [kept meeting and kept engaging](#):

- Campaign aide Carter Page—whom Russian spies had [tried to recruit](#) in 2013—[traveling to Moscow](#), where he met with Russia's deputy prime minister and the head of investor relations at Russia's state-owned gas company;
- Manafort [emailing](#) the suspected Russian spy Konstantin Kilimnik about giving private briefings to Oleg Deripaska, an oligarch who has financed Russian election-interference efforts and who at the time was suing Manafort for \$19 million;
- and Roger Stone allegedly [speaking on the phone](#) with WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who allegedly told him that, “within a couple of days, there would be a massive dump of emails that would damage Hillary Clinton's campaign.” (Stone denies that this conversation happened.)

And they deflected attention from Russia:

- The day after *The Washington Post* first reported on Russian hacking, the Trump campaign [put out a statement](#) asserting that the DNC “did the ‘hacking’ as a way to distract from the many issues facing their deeply flawed candidate and failed party leader.”

July 22, 2016: RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE IS REVEALED TO THE PUBLIC

WikiLeaks [began releasing emails](#) from the DNC. Within days, *The New York Times* [reported](#) that intelligence officials had concluded Russia was behind the release—which the Trump campaign had by now known for three full months. The Trump campaign could have alerted law enforcement, the public, or both. They could have, at the very least, avoided having more contact with Russia.

Instead, they [kept meeting and kept engaging](#):

- Manafort's deputy Rick Gates [shared internal polling data](#), with a focus on winning key midwestern swing states, with Kilimnik, in the understanding that Kilimnik would pass the information on to Deripaska and other Russian oligarchs. According to Mueller, Gates [believed](#) that Kilimnik was a Russian “spy”;
- a senior Trump campaign official [instructed Roger Stone](#) to establish backchannel contacts with WikiLeaks;
- Trump [asked](#) “individuals affiliated with his Campaign,” including Michael Flynn, to try to find emails they believed had been stolen from Clinton's private email server;
- and Trump [told Gates](#) that “more releases of damaging information would be coming” and asking for updates to help with “planning a communications strategy based on the possible release of Clinton emails by WikiLeaks.”

They concealed and lied about these meetings:

- Manafort's plea agreement was terminated because he [lied about](#) and refused to disclose information related to Kilimnik, which ultimately only became public because of [a redaction error](#) by his legal team.

And they deflected attention from Russia:

- Asked at a press conference on July 27, 2016, about the intelligence community's assessment that Russia was behind the leaks, Trump first questioned their conclusion, then [said](#), "Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing. I think you will probably be rewarded mightily by our press."
- In July 2016, Trump Jr., who had been personally told that the Kremlin was supporting Trump, [told CNN's Jake Tapper](#) that even suggesting Russia wanted to help the Trump campaign was "disgusting" and "phony." The Clinton campaign's attempts to bring the story to light, he said, "show you their exact moral compass ... I can't think of bigger lies, but that exactly goes to show you what the DNC and what the Clinton camp will do. They will lie and do anything to win."

August 17, 2016: INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY REVEALS RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE TO THE TRUMP CAMPAIGN

Trump [received his first intelligence briefing](#) as the Republican nominee. According to NBC, the briefing [included](#) a warning that "foreign adversaries, including Russia, would probably try to spy on his campaign," and advice that they "alert the FBI about any suspicious overtures to their campaigns." This made the U.S. government the third entity to alert the Trump campaign about Russian interference, after both the press and Russia itself. The Trump campaign could have alerted law enforcement, the public, or both. They could have, at the very least, avoided having further contact with Russia. They didn't report any of their 163 previous contacts with Kremlin-linked operatives.

Instead, they [kept meeting and kept engaging](#).

In fact, they had 88 more contacts, including 13 meetings with Kremlin-linked individuals after being briefed by the intelligence community. These include:

- Stone [repeatedly communicating](#) with Guccifer 2.0, including discussing turnout data Guccifer 2.0 had stolen from the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee;
- Stone [repeatedly asking Credico](#) to reach out to Assange on his behalf, which Credico confirmed he had done on multiple occasions;
- Donald Trump Jr. [repeatedly communicating](#) with WikiLeaks, including multiple conversations about how email releases fit into Trump's broader campaign strategy;
- and Trump campaign Director of National Security J.D. Gordon [meeting and emailing](#) with Maria Butina, who pleaded guilty in 2018 to acting as an unregistered agent of the foreign government.

They concealed and lied about these meetings:

- Stone was [indicted](#) in January 2019 for lying to Congress about his contacts with WikiLeaks. (He has pleaded not guilty.) He also appears to have misled or lied to Congress about his conversations with Guccifer 2.0.

And they deflected attention from Russia:

- On September 8, 2016, Trump [told](#) the Russian government-backed cable channel RT that he considered it “probably unlikely” that Russia hacked the DNC, saying he believed “maybe the Democrats are putting that out.”
- During the first presidential debate, Trump [questioned](#) the intelligence community’s finding that Russia was behind the hack, saying, “I don’t think anybody knows it was Russia that broke into the DNC ... I mean, it could be Russia, but it could also be China. It could also be lots of other people. It also could be somebody sitting on their bed that weighs 400 pounds, ok?”

October 7, 2016: RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE IS REVEALED TO THE PUBLIC BY THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

The Department of Homeland Security and Director of National Intelligence James Clapper [released a statement](#) formally accusing the Russian government of hacking the DNC. Later that day, WikiLeaks began publishing emails from Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta. Far from changing its behavior, the Trump team made WikiLeaks the centerpiece of its campaign—Trump himself [mentioned it 164 times](#), or more than five times per day, in the final month of the election—and team members continued their frequent contacts with Kremlin-linked operatives, including:

- both Trump Jr. and Stone [continuing to communicate](#) with WikiLeaks, which began offering advice not only on how to exploit the stolen emails but also on how Trump should contest the election and undermine American democracy if he lost;
- Manafort and Kilimnik [exchanging messages](#) about “the Yanukovich peace plan,” believed to be a plan by the disgraced former president of Ukraine (and [their former client](#)) to [turn parts of eastern Ukraine over to Russia](#);
- and Kushner meeting with Kislyak to [discuss establishing backchannels](#) between the Trump team and the Russian military using Russian diplomatic facilities, which would effectively conceal their communications from U.S. intelligence.

They concealed and lied about these meetings:

- Kushner initially [left all of his foreign contacts](#)—more than 100 in total—off of his security-clearance forms, only updating them several months into the administration after several of those contacts, including his efforts to build a backchannel and the June 9 meeting in Trump Tower, became public.

And they deflected attention from Russia:

- At the second and third debates, Trump once again [cast doubt](#) on whether Russia had been behind the DNC hacks, saying it was an attempt to “tarnish me with Russia” and that “our country” has “no idea whether it is Russia, China, or anybody else.”
- In a *Time* profile after the election, Trump [said](#), “I don’t believe [Russia] interfered ... It could be Russia. And it could be China. And it could be some guy in his home in New Jersey.”

On December 29, 2016: US GOVERNMENT REVEALED RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE

The U.S. government [sanctioned the Kremlin](#) in response to Russia's interference in the election and released a report [outlining technical details of that interference](#). That didn't stop Trump's team from having 25 more contacts before inauguration day, including:

- Flynn, whom Trump had by then named as his National Security Adviser, [speaking on the phone](#) five times with Kislyak to discuss sanctions, calling back to Trump transition headquarters at Mar-a-Lago in between phone calls;
- and Manafort, who was reportedly in repeated contact with the Trump transition team, [meeting](#) with a former Russian embassy official who now works for Deripaska, then discussing that meeting with Kilimnik.

They concealed and lied about these meetings:

- Administration officials, including [Chief of Staff Reince Priebus](#) and [Vice President Mike Pence](#), repeatedly denied in public that Flynn's phone calls with Kislyak had been about sanctions.
- In February 2017, after roughly three weeks on the job, Flynn [resigned](#) as National Security Adviser, ostensibly pushed out for lying to Pence about the calls.
- In December 2017, Flynn [pleaded guilty](#) to lying to investigators about his conversations with Kislyak just two days after he took office as Trump's first national security adviser.
- Trump transition team member K.T. McFarland also appears to have lied to Congress, falsely [claiming](#) that she had not spoken with Flynn during the transition about his contacts with Kislyak when he had in fact been updating her on those conversations as they were happening.

And they deflected attention away from Russia:

- At a press conference in Florida on December 31, 2016, Trump [expressed doubt](#) that Russia was behind the hacks, saying, "Hacking is a very hard thing to prove. So it could be somebody else. And I also know things that other people don't know, and so they cannot be sure of the situation."
- Trump also tweeted [siding](#) with Julian Assange over the U.S. intelligence community, saying, "Julian Assange said 'a 14 year old could have hacked Podesta'—why was DNC so careless? Also said Russians did not give him the info!"

On January 6, 2017: US INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY REVEALED RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE

Trump received his first intelligence briefing as president-elect. The briefing reportedly included "texts and emails from Russian military officers and information gleaned from a top-secret source close to Putin" that directly implicated Putin in the decision to hack Trump's opponents. The same day, the intelligence community [released a declassified report](#) on Russia's efforts to support Trump in the 2016 election. But, even with only two weeks before Trump took office, the contacts didn't end there:

- Cohen reportedly [met](#) with Russian billionaire Viktor Vekselberg in Trump Tower to discuss their "mutual desire to strengthen Russia's relations with the United States under president Trump;"
- and Erik Prince, who was advising Trump's transition team, [flew to the Seychelles](#) to meet with Kirill Dmitriev, the head of the sanctioned Russian Direct Investment Fund, where they discussed ways of improving relations between the U.S. and Russia under Trump.

They concealed and lied about these meetings:

- The House Intelligence Committee has [made a criminal referral](#) for Prince for having lied to Congress about his meetings in the Seychelles, which he claimed were unplanned encounters and had nothing to do with his role advising the Trump campaign. (Prince has denied that he lied to Congress.)

And they deflected attention from Russia:

- Though Trump appeared to accept that Russia had tried to interfere in the election after his January 2017 briefing, he still tried to sow confusion about the intelligence community's assessment, falsely [claiming](#) they had concluded that “there was no effect on the outcome of the election” and [saying](#) he thought “we also got hacked by other countries and other people.”

The Trump team never reported any of these contacts with Russia. They never ceased meeting with Kremlin-linked operatives. And they actively misled the American people, with Trump insisting on [at least 13 occasions](#) that Russia was not attacking American democracy—despite having more evidence than almost anyone else that the Kremlin was working in his favor.

There is no innocent explanation for their behavior.