

**Breaking Down the Mueller Report  
The Seychelles Trip**

([Mueller Report Pages 147-156](#))

**Toplines**

- Erik Prince, an influential but informal member of Trump's orbit, met with close Putin ally Kirill Dmitriev twice during the transition period in the Seychelles.
- These meetings, which were brokered by UAE advisor George Nader, were part of an effort to establish a secret backchannel between the Trump team and Russia.
- Meeting participants have conflicting accounts of who was involved and who knew. Prince and Nader have indicated Steve Bannon was involved – and there is some evidence in the report to support this – but he has denied this and refused to answer questions about it.
- Prince has been [accused](#) of lying to Congress about these meetings in a criminal referral from the House Intelligence Committee. His attorney [claims](#) the referral contains no new evidence.

**Key Facts from the Report**

- Erik Prince is a [businessman](#) and the brother of Trump's education secretary Betsy DeVos. Prince "had relationships with various individuals associated with the Trump Campaign," including Steve Bannon, Donald Trump Jr., and Roger Stone.
- Kirill Dmitriev is the head of the [sanctioned](#) Russian Direct Investment Fund. Dmitriev "reported directly to Putin and frequently referred to Putin as his 'boss.'" Dmitriev began pursuing meetings with Trump team officials soon after the election.
- Although Prince did not have a formal role on the campaign or transition, he "frequently visited transition offices at Trump Tower" and discussed foreign policy issues and recommendations for national security appointees with Bannon.
- The Seychelles meeting was arranged by George Nader, a lobbyist who has [longstanding](#) ties to Russia. Nader cooperated with the Mueller investigation and is described in the report as a "UAE national security advisor."
  - Nader bragged to Dmitriev: "[Prince] is designated by Steve Bannon to meet you!"
- Nader's patron, UAE Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, was also in the Seychelles at the time.
- Prince and Dmitriev met twice on January 11, 2017; both times, Nader was present. Their goal was to establish a [backchannel](#); Dmitriev was looking to "meet members of the incoming Trump administration." The Mueller report redacted much of the information about these meetings.
- Prince texted Bannon twice from the Seychelles after the meetings, but neither of the men could produce these texts for investigators and both claimed to not know where the texts went.
- Bannon and Prince have conflicting stories about the meetings. Prince led Nader to believe that Bannon knew about the meeting in advance, which Bannon denied. After the meeting, Prince told Nader he would debrief Bannon "and would convey that someone within the Russian power structure was interested in seeking better relations with the incoming Administration."
  - Prince claims to have later briefed Bannon on the meeting, but Bannon denies this.
- Prince later [described](#) these meetings to Congress "as a chance encounter," leading Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee Adam Schiff to accuse Prince of "knowingly and willfully" lying to Congress. Prince has denied doing so.

**Overview**

The Seychelles meeting was part of Kirill Dmitriev's efforts "to meet members of the incoming Trump

Administration in the months after the election.” On January 3, 2017, George Nader reportedly met with Erik Prince and informed him of Dmitriev’s interest. Nader suggested that they “meet to discuss issues of mutual concern,” and Prince said that he would “check with Transition Team officials.” Nader then told Dmitriev that he had met with Prince, who he referred to as a “key [person]” in the Trump “inner circle.”

Prince booked his ticket to the Seychelles on January 7, 2017, one day after the U.S. intelligence community [assessed](#) that Russia interfered in the election to help Trump. The next day, Nader told Dmitriev that he had arranged for the two men to meet. Dmitriev “was not enthusiastic about the idea,” and “sought assurance from Nader that the Seychelles meeting would be worthwhile.”

Prince and Dmitriev both arrived in the Seychelles on January 11, 2017. They met twice that day at the Four Seasons Resort, where the UAE Crown Prince was also staying. Their first meeting took place in Nader’s villa; much of the report is redacted on this meeting, but it asserts that Russian election interference was not discussed. After the first meeting, Prince “learned that a Russian aircraft carrier had sailed to Libya.” He then called Nader and asked for another meeting with Dmitriev. Nader quickly arranged one, where “Prince told Dmitriev that the United States could not accept any Russian involvement in Libya.” (According the report, Prince “denied that and recalled that he was making these remarks to Dmitriev not in an official capacity for the transition but based on his experience as a former naval officer.”)

Afterwards, Dmitriev reportedly told Nader that he was disappointed, believing “the Russians needed to be communicating with someone who had more authority” and “he had hoped to have a discussion of greater substance, such as outlining a strategic roadmap for both countries to follow.”

It remains unclear whether Prince told any transition officials about the meetings. The Mueller report indicates that he told Dmitriev that he would give Bannon a readout, “and that if there was interest in continuing the discussion, Bannon or someone else on the Transition Team would do so.” He texted Bannon twice from Seychelles following the second meeting. Close Kushner friend Rick Gerson, who later worked with Dmitriev on a U.S.-Russia relations plan, was also [reportedly](#) in the Seychelles at the same time, allegedly meeting with the UAE Crown Prince and Nader. Gerson denied attending the Dmitriev meetings, and his spokesperson claims he was “on vacation.”

In his November 2017 [testimony](#) before the House Intelligence Committee, Prince [discussed](#) only one meeting with Dmitriev and portrayed the meeting as an impromptu, unplanned occurrence. Schiff has since [accused](#) Prince of “knowingly and willfully” lying to Congress, and made a [criminal referral](#) to the Justice Department about these alleged falsehoods in April 2019 (Prince has denied wrongdoing).

### **Remaining Questions**

- What was discussed at each Seychelles meeting? Did [Michael Flynn’s “Middle East Marshall Plan,”](#) which also involved players from the US, Russia, and UAE, come up in discussion?
- Why did Prince allegedly mislead Congress about his meetings with Dmitriev?
- Who else on the Trump team knew about these meetings? Was Bannon informed about them?
- What did Prince text Bannon about from the Seychelles? Where are the text messages?
- Did Rick Gerson attend these meetings? Did anyone else?
- What was the UAE’s level of involvement? Why was Nader there? The Trump team was already in [frequent contact](#) with Russians and didn’t need a backchannel. Why involve a third party?