

Trump's Team Was in 'Constant Touch' With Russia Before Elections – Reports

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President Donald Trump speaks by phone with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Jan. 28. **Jonathan Ernst / Reuters**

Top members of President Donald Trump's campaign team were in “constant touch” with Kremlin officials before the U.S. elections, multiple U.S. media outlets have report.

[The New York Times](#) and [CNN](#) published reports on Tuesday claiming that top Trump aides were in contact with senior Russian intelligence agents in the year leading up to the Nov. 2016 elections.

Both news organizations reported that U.S. law enforcement agencies discovered the calls during a “routine intelligence collection targeting Russian officials.” Government sources told CNN that “communications between campaign staff and representatives of foreign governments were not unusual,” but that these communications had stood out due to officials' high-ranking status in the Trump team and the frequency of the calls.

Related article: [What Does Michael Flynn's Resignation Mean for U.S.-Russia Ties?](#)

Both publications also named Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort as being of particular interest to the FBI. Manafort, who previously worked as a political consultant in Ukraine, dismissed any allegations of impropriety. He said that he may have unknowingly come into contact with Russian intelligence agents while carrying out business in the country. "It's not like these people wear badges that say, 'I'm a Russian intelligence officer,'" he told The New York Times.

U.S. Presidential spokesperson Sean Spicer denied the allegations. President Trump also denied that his team had contacted Russian officials before the election several weeks ago.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov declined to comment on the claims. "It's the internal affair of the Trump administration. It has nothing to do with us. We have commented many times on this subject. We have nothing more to add," he said.

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.@PressSec Sean Spicer tells @jonkarl nobody on the Trump campaign had contact with Russia before the election <https://t.co/LBw3Bd5Htk>
pic.twitter.com/S9H8fgFA2j

— ABC News Politics (@ABCPolitics) [February 14, 2017](#)

The revelations follow the [resignation of U.S. National Security Advisor Michael Flynn on Monday](#) following allegations that he had secretly discussed sanctions with Russia's ambassador to Washington before the Trump administration came to power.

Flynn repeatedly told the press that he had not talked about sanctions with Russian Ambassador Sergei Kislyak prior to President Trump's inauguration, but then appeared to change his mind when confronted by the press.

In his resignation letter, Flynn said that he had "inadvertently briefed the Vice President-elect and others with incomplete information" on his phone calls with Kislyak.

The White House later said that Flynn's departure "came down to a matter of trust."

Politicians from both parties are now calling for an [independent investigation into](#) Flynn's communications.

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