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Former Trump Adviser Carter Page Dismisses 'Disturbing' Russia Links

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Carter Page, a former foreign policy adviser of U.S. President Donald Trump, speaks at a news conference at RIA Novosti news agency in Moscow, Russia, Dec. 12, 2016. **Pavel Golovkin / AP**

A top U.S. businessman accused of making contact with Russian officials for Donald Trump during his presidential campaign has dismissed the allegations as a plot led by Democratic Presidential Nominee Hillary Clinton.

Carter Page, an oil industry consultant who Trump identified as one of his foreign policy advisers, accused the Clinton campaign of targeting him for his "constructive personal working relations with Russian business and government leaders."

U.S. intelligence agencies are reportedly investigating whether Page's meetings with "high-ranking individuals" in Moscow in 2017 should be investigated as evidence of "significant and disturbing ties" between the Trump campaign and the Kremlin, U.S news site The Intercept has reported.

Multiple U.S. media outlets reported on Wednesday that they had confirmed claims that top members of President Donald Trump's campaign team were in "constant touch" with Kremlin officials before the U.S. elections. Page was not directly mentioned in the reports.

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In an open letter to the U.S. Department of Justice, Page said that the claims were part of an irrational Democrat smear campaign.

"Many reports alleging nefarious purposes of my lectures and my trips to Moscow were colored to an extent that seemed to mark the start of a Third Red Scare," he said.

Page did not deny evidence unearthed by the FBI that the Kremlin may have interfered in the U.S. election, but maintained that Clinton's campaign "clearly represented the biggest menace to the U.S. democratic process last year."

"Relatively speaking, anything that Russia may even conceivably or theoretically have done pale in comparison," he wrote.

He also defended Russian-state media from claims that they had favored Trump in the run-up to the election by portraying him as "an outsider victimized by a corrupt political establishment."

Page argued that the Russian media offered "a more accurate and honest portrayal of the activities of Mrs. Clinton than most mainstream media outlets in the United States."

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He was particularly taken with Dmitry Kiselyov, who hosts a flagship news show on the state-run Rossiya channel. Kiselyov is famous for his radical anti-American statements on air and outlandish conspiracy theories.

"Both as a world-class journalist and as a human being, Dmitry is an exceptionally competent, kind and fair individual with the highest level of personal integrity," he said.

"The summary description of some of his broadcasts per the editorial commentary included in this week's Intelligence Community Assessment closely aligns with the perspectives held by tens of millions of hard-working, patriotic Americans. Had they been Russian-language speakers, they too may have greatly benefited from and enjoyed his broadcasts."

Page worked in Moscow between 2004 and 2007. In 2016, he traveled to Russia to give a lecture at Moscow's New Economic School (NES), and was invited to give a commencement address at the same institute.

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