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Top Trump Official Priebus Denies Campaign Contact with Russia

February 20, 2017



U.S. President Donald Trump stands behinds White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus at the White House in Washington. **Carlos Barria / Reuters**

White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus has denied that top Trump campaign aides were in contact with Russian officials before the U.S. presidential elections in November.

Priebus called the allegations "complete garbage" adding that senior U.S. intelligence officials had already disproved the claims.

"I can assure you — and I've been approved to say this — that the top levels of the intelligence community have assured me that that story is not only inaccurate but it's grossly overstated and it was wrong," Priebus told Fox News host Chris Wallace on Sunday.

U.S. media outlets CNN and The New York Times first published the allegations last week, citing "former and current American officials."

Priebus criticized The New York Times for refusing to name their sources. However, he

refused to give the identity of the U.S. Intelligence officers who had allegedly disproved the claims.

"I didn't ask permission to use their names," he said, "But when I say top-level people, I mean top-level people."

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The Kremlin has also denied contacting the Trump campaign before the U.S. leader took office.

Speaking to reporters last week, Presidential Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said the reports were not "based on any facts, do not point to actual facts."

He refused to elaborate further, insisting that the allegations were "the internal affair of the Trump administration."

"It has nothing to do with us," Peskov said. "We have commented many times on this subject. We have nothing more to add."

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