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Russian Foreign Minister Calls Washington's Russia Scandal a 'Witch Hunt'

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov **Ivan Sekretarev / AP**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has harshly criticized the current focus on U.S. officials' contacts with the Russia's ambassador in Washington, describing the situation as a "witch hunt."

Lavrov went on to compare the discussions of the ambassadors contacts to "McCarthyism" — a reference to Joseph McCarthy, a U.S. Senator who spearheaded a deeply destructive investigation into the alleged communist sympathies of American public figures in the 1950s.

"If the same principle were applied to the activities of [U.S.] Ambassador [John] Tefft in the Russian Federation and his contacts, then I assure you, it would be a very funny picture, " Lavrov added.

Russian Ambassador Sergei Kislyak has become a central figure in the political scandal

surrounding the Donald Trump administration's contacts with Russia. Last month, Trump's national security advisor, Gen. Michael Flynn, resigned after it was revealed that he had concealed information about his communications with Amb. Kislyak during the election.

This week, the U.S. Justice Department announced that Attorney General Jeff Sessions failed to disclose two previous meetings with Kislyak in his confirmation hearing. During the hearing, Sessions told the Senate that there were no contacts between the Trump campaign and Russian officials.

Kislyak also met with Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and senior advisor. J.D. Gordon, the Trump campaign's director of national security, and Carter Page, who was on the campaign's national security advisory committee, also met with Kislyak. In September, Page left the Trump campaign following controversy over a speech he gave in Moscow.

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