

Russia's State News Agency Drops Reuters Contract After Expose

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Vladimir Putin, Rossiya Segodnya director-general Dmitry Kiselyov, and editor-in-chief of RT (Russia Today) Margarita Simonyan walk during a visit to Rossiya Segodnya in Moscow, June 7, 2016 **Mikhail Klimentyev / Sputnik, Kremlin Pool Photo via AP**

Kremlin-owned news outlet Rossiya Segodnya is to halt a major deal with British news agency Reuters after the company implicated Russian state media in a plot to undermine US elections.

Rossiya Segodnya had been ready to sign a new contract to buy Reuters' video content from May this year. Now the Russian party is refusing the sign, RIA Novosti reported Friday.

In an [exclusive expose](#), Reuters revealed that "Putin-linked think tank," the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS), had planned how Russia could interfere in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections.

Unnamed U.S. intelligence officers said that one paper, published in March 2016, proposed a propaganda attack involving both state-owned news outlets and social media to promote a

more Russia-friendly candidate.

A second paper, allegedly released in October last year, advised the Kremlin to concentrate its propaganda efforts on undermining the legitimacy of the entire election system.

Rossiya Segodnya took umbrage when the Reuters' article named Kremlin-backed Sputnik and RT as being instrumental in the alleged plot.

Reuters' sources claimed that both media outlets would be tasked with "producing positive reports on Trump's quest for the U.S. presidency." In reality, RT took a more pro-Sanders stance in the earlier period of the 2016 elections campaign rather than [pro-Trump, like domestic Russian state media](#).

The Reuters article also provoked a sharp rebuke from the Russian authorities. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that he was unaware of RISS' reports and that Reuters' "seven anonymous sources weren't worth one real one."

Margarita Simonyan, the editor in chief of Rossiya Segodnya and RT, told RIA Novosti: "Western media have plumbed a new low again. Reuters says they talked to seven guys who swear they saw some secret Russian report. Or two. This definitely deserves an Oscar."

However, Rossiya Segodnya's decision to drop its Reuters contract might have more to do with the Russian agency's financial issues than the British news company's supposedly sensationalist coverage.

Last year, the newspaper Vedomosti [reported](#) that Rossiya Segodnya and several other state-owned outlets were facing budget cuts to "non-essential and redundant expenses."

Rossiya Segodnya's press representatives were not available for comment at the time of publication.

Related article: [Where Old Spooks Are Sent to Retire: Russia's Institute of Strategic Studies](#)

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