

U.S. Probes Russia's Sputnik News Agency for Foreign Agent Law Violations

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The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is looking into Russian state-run news agency Sputnik over suspected violations of a foreign agent registration law, Yahoo News [reported](#) on Monday.

A Russian think-tank [report](#) earlier this year named Sputnik alongside RT, another state-run outlet, as key media tools in Russia's alleged plot to undermine the 2016 presidential elections in the United States.

Andrew Feinberg, who served as Sputnik's White House correspondent this year, said an FBI agent and a Justice Department lawyer interviewed him for more than two hours in early September.

"They wanted to know where did my orders come from and if I ever got any direction from Moscow," Feinberg told the news website. He said the interrogators expressed interest in

examples of how he was “steered” toward covering certain issues.

The former Sputnik correspondent cited his senior editors and news directors as instructing him that “Moscow wants this or Moscow wants that” from his reporting.

Feinberg turned over a thumb drive containing internal Sputnik emails he downloaded before being fired in May, Yahoo said. The trove reportedly contained documents confirming that the Russian government is Sputnik’s main source of funding.

Another former staffer reportedly submitted a “big packet” of data to the Justice Department’s national security division asking it to investigate the news agency for similar foreign agent registration law violations.

Joseph John Fionda accused Sputnik of conducting an “information warfare program” over Russia’s campaign in Syria, censorship and “solicitation to espionage” during his brief stint there in late 2015.

Yahoo reports that Feinberg’s interview is part of an investigation into whether Sputnik violated the 1938 U.S. Foreign Agents Registration Act. The news website said, however, that it was unclear whether the FBI agent and Justice Department lawyer were acting as part of an investigation into Russia’s alleged interference in the U.S. election.

Sputnik’s D.C. bureau chief Mindia Gavasheli told Yahoo News that “any assertion that we are not a news organization is simply false.”

“Anything being related to Russia right now is being considered a spycraft of some sort.”

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