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The Kremlin Doesn't Feel Guilty About Manafort Indictment, Says Putin's Spokesman

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Paul Manafort (Carlo Allegri / Reuters)

Russia has nothing to do with the sweeping investigations into election meddling in the U.S., Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday.

On Monday, U.S. special counsel Robert Mueller released three indictments in an ongoing probe into Russian interference in the 2016 election that saw Donald Trump elected president. Trump's former campaign manager Paul Manafort and his former business associate Rick Gates were charged with failing to disclose overseas payments from the pro-Kremlin Ukrainian Party of Regions and conspiring to launder money.

George Papadopoulous, a former foreign policy advisor, was also indicted after pleading guilty to lying to the FBI about contact with Russian officials.

"Any accusations made against American citizens within the framework of domestic U.S.

investigations do not concern us, it is America's internal affair," Peskov was cited as saying at a news conference Tuesday by the state-funded news agency TASS.

"But we are following them with interest."

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Peskov said media accounts indicated that "other countries and people" figured in the charges, but Moscow "hoped these processes did not enable the heightening of already rampant Russophobic hysteria."

"Moscow never felt guilty, so it feels no need for vindication now," added Peskov.

TASS said the indictment against Manafort and Gates was related to Ukraine, not Russia, but failed to note the Ukrainian Party of Region's ties to Russia and the mention of Russian officials in Papadopoulous' indictment.

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