

Russian Oligarchs Attend Closed-Doors Meeting at The Atlantic Council in D.C.

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Pyotr Aven, Mikhail Fridman / MT

Two Russian billionaires have held a controversial meeting at the Atlantic Council think-tank in Washington D.C. behind closed doors in what critics said were “friendly” talks with “oligarchic emissaries.”

Alfa Bank co-founders Mikhail Fridman and Pyotr Aven [featured](#) as guests at the off-the-record roundtable on Monday. Russian dissidents including former chess champion Garry Kasparov criticized the think-tank for not opening the talks to the public.

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At the discussion, the two businessmen said they expected Russia’s economy to continue to decline despite rising oil prices, the Ekho Moskvy radio station [reported](#) Thursday, citing unnamed sources familiar with the talks.

“The reasons for this are irreversible structural changes, a brain drain and Vladimir Putin’s extreme short-sightedness,” Ekho Moskvy wrote.

When asked about the meeting, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that neither Fridman nor Aven could be called “Putin’s emissaries,” citing a term used in a letter written by Russian emigres critical of the roundtable, the state-run TASS news agency [reported](#).

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