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Russian 'Agent' Butina Offered Job in Parliament Following Return Home

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Tatyana Moskalkova and Maria Butina **Maxim Shipenkov / EPA / TASS**

A controversial Russian lawmaker has offered admitted agent Maria Butina a parliamentary post, Russian news agencies reported Monday.

State Duma deputy Leonid Slutsky met Butina the day after she returned to Russia in October, saying that Butina "has many victories ahead." Butina served most of her 18-month sentence in a U.S. prison after pleading guilty to conspiring to act as an agent of the Russian government.

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"I learned that you received an offer from Leonid Slutsky to come work in the State Duma in his committee," Interfax quoted Tatyana Moskalkova, Russia's human rights ombudswoman, as telling Butina.

“It’s a very good and interesting offer in terms of your own professional experience,” Moskalkova said.

Slutsky, who chairs the Duma’s International Affairs Committee, was accused by several journalists of sexual harassment last year. He later apologized for the transgressions and the Duma’s ethics commission dismissed the accusations.

Moskalkova also offered Butina a position in her office to work on defending the rights of Russian nationals abroad, the state-run TASS news agency reported.

Butina pleaded guilty in December 2018 to charges of conspiring to act as a foreign agent for Russia by infiltrating a gun rights group and influencing U.S. conservative activists and Republicans. Her case put further strain on U.S.-Russian relations, with Moscow accusing Washington of forcing Butina to confess to what it described as ridiculous charges.

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