

## **(U) Chapter 4 - Campaign Links to Russia**

*Key Question #2: Did the Russian active measures include links between Russia and individuals associated with political campaigns or any other U.S. persons?*

(U) A key focus of the Committee's investigation was whether Russian active measures directed at the 2016 U.S. election (see Chapter 3) "include[d] links between Russia and individuals associated with political campaigns or any other U.S. persons."<sup>1</sup> The first part of this chapter reflects the Committee's answer to that question with respect to the Trump campaign. The second part of this chapter addresses the Clinton campaign.

(U) The "links" between individuals associated with the campaigns and Russia have often been publicly described as inquiries into whether there was "collusion" between individuals associated with either candidate Trump or Clinton and the Russian government. One challenge with describing potential "links" with the Russian government as "collusion" is that the term "collusion" may mean different things to different people, as exemplified in witness testimony before the Committee. Particularly in light of Special Counsel Robert Mueller's continuing criminal investigation—which has a different focus and the Committee agreed not to impede—it is important to note that the term "collusion" does not, by itself, describe a criminal offense. Unlike the closely-related concept of "conspiracy," there is no applicable statute that sets out the elements of "collusion." "Collusion" is

therefore an ambiguous term, not a precise legal one.

### Trump Campaign

(U) The Committee cast a wide net, generally asking each witnesses whether they had evidence of any "collusion," "coordination," or "conspiracy" between Russia and candidate Trump or any of his associates. The Committee also investigated potential Trump campaign links with Russia, focusing on credible allegations within the scope of the agreed-upon parameters. Matters investigated by the Committee include allegations pertaining to:

- candidate Trump's business dealings;
- the campaign's policy positions and personnel;
- involvement in or knowledge about the publication of stolen emails; and
- meetings with Russians.

(U) In the course of witness interviews, reviews of document productions, and investigative efforts extending well over a year, the Committee did not find any evidence of collusion, conspiracy, or coordination between the Trump campaign and the Russians. While the Committee found that several of the contacts between Trump associates and Russians—or their proxies, including WikiLeaks—were ill-

advised, the Committee did not determine that Trump or anyone associated with him assisted Russia's active measures campaign.

**DIRECT EVIDENCE OF COLLUSION, CONSPIRACY, OR COORDINATION**

**(U) Finding #25: When asked directly, none of the interviewed witnesses provided evidence of collusion, coordination, or conspiracy between the Trump campaign and the Russian government.**

(U) The Committee interviewed high-ranking current and former government officials, along with numerous Trump campaign members, Trump administration officials, and other Trump associates. None of the witnesses testified they had evidence of collusion between the campaign and anyone affiliated with the Russian government. In most of the Committee's witness interviews, the witness was asked directly for any evidence of "collusion, coordination or conspiracy" with any element of the Russian government to influence the outcome of the 2016 U.S. presidential election. This question was asked with respect to the witness' own actions; the actions of candidate Trump; the actions of anyone officially affiliated with the campaign; or the actions of anyone unofficially affiliated with the campaign, defined as including "wannabes,"<sup>2</sup> "hangers-on,"<sup>3</sup> and "people who represented themselves as being part of the campaign."<sup>4</sup> Each witness was given wide latitude in answering these questions, but none produced any evidence. For example, Trump's son-in-law and senior advisor Jared

Kushner stated categorically that the Trump campaign "did not collude, cooperate, whatever other 'C' words you used, with any foreign governments."<sup>5</sup>

(U) Several former government officials testified that, even though there was no evidence of collusion between Trump campaign associates and the Russian government, they were aware of contacts and interactions of potential concern. For example, former CIA Director John Brennan stated in open session, "I encountered and am aware of information and intelligence that revealed contacts and interactions between Russian officials and U.S. persons involved in the Trump campaign that I was concerned about because of known Russian efforts to suborn such individuals, and it raised questions in my mind. . . whether or not the Russians were able to gain the cooperation of those individuals."<sup>6</sup> Brennan continued, however, "I don't know whether or not such collusion . . . existed."<sup>7</sup>

(U) Similarly, former DNI James Clapper stated that he was aware of the same information to which Brennan referred, "that my dashboard warning lights were on just because of that."<sup>8</sup> However, reaffirming his prior public statements, he told the Committee that, "I didn't have any evidence—I don't care how you want to caveat it—of collusion."<sup>9</sup>

**BUSINESS DEALINGS**

**(U) Finding #26: The Committee found no evidence that President Trump's pre-campaign business dealings formed the**



**basis for collusion during the campaign.**

(U) As a political outsider who had never run for office, Donald Trump did not have a political record to analyze, criticize, or rely upon during the 2016 campaign. Therefore, his long and varied business career garnered significant attention from supporters, opponents, and opposition researchers alike. Eventually, as described in the second half of this chapter, candidate Trump's pre-campaign business dealings with Russians became a subject of significant opposition research.

(U) As noted above, the Committee's investigation was focused on the time period of the 2016 election. Trump's pre-campaign dealings were within scope only to the extent they formed the basis for, or were otherwise linked to, improper conduct during the elections. As one of the Committee Members said during an interview, the key question was if any business "relationships, whether directly or indirectly or just by some other means, had the effect that there was a preexisting relationship with Russia, and that that preexisting relationship may have in some way inspired the Trump campaign to have a contact with the Russian Government to coordinate, collude, or conspire to help them win the election over Hillary Clinton."<sup>10</sup>

(U) The Committee focused only on any potential financial improprieties relating to the election. In particular, the Committee examined the Miss Universe pageant in Moscow in 2013; the Trump Organization's

unsuccessful efforts to build a Trump Tower in Moscow in late 2015 and early 2016; and other assorted claims of Russian financial ties to the Trump family. The Committee did not uncover any evidence that any of those matters formed the basis for collusion, coordination, or conspiracy between Trump or his associates and the Russian government during the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

(U) **Miss Universe 2013:** Before he was a political candidate, Trump owned the Miss Universe Organization. The decision to hold the 2013 Miss Universe annual pageant in Moscow was a unanimous one made by representatives of the Trump Organization and NBC—the event's broadcaster—with approval of the president of the Miss Universe organization.<sup>11</sup> Michael Cohen, an attorney and former Executive Vice President of the Trump Organization, told the Committee 50 percent of the fees earned for the pageant went to NBC.<sup>12</sup> "[O]f the \$12.2 million in foreign income that [the Miss Universe pageant] earned [in 2013], a substantial portion of it was attributable to the Moscow event."<sup>13</sup>

(U) The 2013 pageant's hosts were Aras and Emin Agalarov, father and son of a wealthy Azerbaijani-Russian family in Moscow. The Agalarovs' company, Crocus Group, owned the venue where the pageant was held.<sup>14</sup> The Agalarovs and Crocus Group wanted to host the event in Moscow because they wanted to have the pageant in their company's building, Crocus City Hall, and it was a way to promote Emin's music

career, who performed at the pageant.<sup>15</sup> The Agalarovs have connections with senior individuals and elements of the Russian government,<sup>16</sup> and Aras received the Order of Honor from Vladimir Putin.<sup>17</sup> The decision to hold the pageant in Moscow originated from an “off-the-cuff” discussion between Emin Agalarov, his manager, and a representative from the Miss Universe pageant.<sup>18</sup>

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**EMIN AGALAROV AT THE 2013 MISS UNIVERSE PAGEANT IN MOSCOW**



Source: The Atlantic

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(U) The Agalarovs first met Trump in person in 2013 in connection with the Miss USA pageant in Las Vegas.<sup>19</sup> The Agalarovs and Trump signed the contract to hold the pageant in Moscow during the weekend of the Miss USA pageant in January 2013.<sup>20</sup> At the conclusion of the 2013 Miss USA pageant, Trump and the Agalarovs announced on stage that the Miss Universe pageant that year would be held in Moscow.<sup>21</sup> In a June 18, 2013 tweet, Trump publicly asked, “Do you think Putin will be going to The Miss Universe Pageant in November in Moscow – if so, will he

become my new best friend?”<sup>22</sup>

(U) Leading up to the Miss Universe pageant, the issue of President Putin possibly attending came “up a number of times” among those planning the pageant.<sup>23</sup> Emin’s manager Robert Goldstone and the head of the pageant organization had “casual” conversations with one another, but every time Goldstone asked Emin about it, Emin replied the pageant would have had to go through “official channels” to make the request, indicating that the event was not officially related to the Russian government.<sup>24</sup> At the time, according to Goldstone, Emin cast doubt on whether President Putin would attend, stating “if this was in America, would Barack Obama attend? Probably not. It’s a beauty pageant. But there is a chance, maybe, of some kind of meeting.”<sup>25</sup> Before the pageant, however, President Putin’s press secretary called and told Trump and others that President Putin would not attend the pageant, and he did not.<sup>26</sup>

(U) While in Moscow, Trump, along with his head of security, attended the pageant and several pageant-related events.<sup>27</sup> For example, Trump attended an event hosted by the Agalarovs at a well-known restaurant with local businessmen.<sup>28</sup>

(U) Although there were allegations in the Steele dossier that Trump engaged in illicit activities with prostitutes in the presidential suite at the Ritz-Carlton hotel, the Committee found no evidence to support these allegations. Trump’s former head of security, [REDACTED], testified that



although somebody during a meeting in Moscow [REDACTED] did not know who— “mentioned sending women to [Trump’s] room,” [REDACTED] responded “absolutely not, we don’t do that.”<sup>29</sup> [REDACTED] told the Committee he advised Trump of the comment, and they both laughed about it. [REDACTED] also testified he walked Trump to his room that night, remained for a few minutes, and did not observe anybody enter the room.<sup>30</sup>

(U) **Trump Tower Moscow:** While in Russia for the Miss Universe pageant, Trump met with the Agalarovs and discussed a possible joint real estate development in Moscow.<sup>31</sup> The proposed project was a Trump Tower in Moscow adjacent to the Agalarov-owned Crocus City Hall; according to Donald Trump Jr., “it fizzled out” after a few months.<sup>32</sup>

(U) **Trump Organization lawyer Michael Cohen** was not involved in those original discussions regarding Trump Tower Moscow. In approximately September 2015, he received a separate proposal for Trump Tower Moscow from a businessman named [REDACTED].<sup>33</sup> According to Cohen, the concept of the project was that “[t]he Trump Organization would lend its name and management skills, but it was not going to borrow any money and it would not have any resulting debt for the purchase of the land and the building of the facility.”<sup>34</sup> Cohen worked on this idea with [REDACTED] and his company, the Bayrock Group, a real estate consultancy that had previously worked with the Trump Organization. [REDACTED]

has a unique and colorful background, and described for the Committee his path from Wall Street banker to white-collar criminal to government informant.<sup>35</sup>

(U) After signing a letter of intent with a local developer in October 2015,<sup>36</sup> Cohen and [REDACTED] exchanged a number of emails and text messages in late 2015 detailing their attempts to move the project forward. For instance, in December 2015, [REDACTED] tried to get Cohen and candidate Trump to travel to Russia to work on the project.<sup>37</sup>

(U) Several of [REDACTED] communications with Cohen involved an attempt to broker a meeting or other ties between candidate Trump and President Putin, and purported to convey Russian government interest in the project.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps most notably, [REDACTED] told Cohen in a November 3, 2015, email, “[b]uddy our boy can become President of the USA and we can engineer it.”<sup>39</sup> [REDACTED] continued that if “Putin gets on stage with Donald for a ribbon cutting for Trump Moscow, . . . Donald owns the republican nomination.”<sup>40</sup> This assertion apparently arose from [REDACTED] rather grandiose theory that cementing a deal with a hostile U.S. adversary would increase candidate Trump’s foreign policy bona fides.<sup>41</sup>

(U) [REDACTED] testified that his communications with Cohen regarding President Putin were “mere puffery,” designed to elicit a response from the Trump Organization to move the project along.<sup>42</sup> [REDACTED] explained that “[u]ntil the bank writes the check, it’s all salesmanship and promotion to try to get many, many,

many parties towards the center to try to get the deal done.<sup>43</sup> Cohen similarly characterized [REDACTED] as "a salesman" who "uses very colorful language."<sup>44</sup>

(U) When the project started proceeding too slowly for the Trump Organization,<sup>45</sup> Cohen and [REDACTED] began to exchange acrimonious text messages.<sup>46</sup> As part of those text messages, [REDACTED] told Cohen that President Putin's people were backing the deal, including "this is thru Putins [sic] administration, and nothing gets done there without approval from the top," as well as meetings in Russia with "Ministers" and "Putins [sic] top administration people."<sup>47</sup> [REDACTED] also mentioned Dmitry Peskov (President Putin's spokesman) would "most likely" be included.<sup>48</sup>

(U) Cohen thus attempted to reach out to members of the Russian government in an attempt to make the project proceed, but apparently did not have any direct points of contact. For example, Cohen sent an email to a general press mailbox at the Kremlin in an effort to reach Peskov.<sup>49</sup> Cohen's message notes that he has been working with a local partner to build a Trump Tower in Moscow and that communications have stalled with the local partner.<sup>50</sup> The email further seeks contact with Peskov so they may "discuss the specifics as well as arrang[e] meetings with the appropriate individuals."<sup>51</sup> Based on the documents produced to the Committee, it does not appear Cohen ever received a response from anyone affiliated with the

Russian government.

(U) [REDACTED] testimony likewise made clear that neither President Putin nor any element of the Russian government was actually directly involved in the project. For instance, in one exchange, [REDACTED] testified he was offering the Trump Organization access to one of [REDACTED] acquaintances. This acquaintance was an acquaintance of someone else who is "partners on a real estate development with a friend of Putin's."<sup>52</sup> [REDACTED] testified that he was unaware of "any direct meetings with any [Russian] government officials" in connection with the Trump Tower Moscow project.<sup>53</sup> In addition, neither candidate Trump nor Cohen traveled to Russia in support of the deal.<sup>54</sup>

(U) [REDACTED] was unequivocal in his testimony that none of the Russians affiliated with the Trump Tower Moscow project had any communications with him "in which [he] w[as] asked to do something on behalf of the Russian government that [he] knew was on behalf of the Russian Government" with respect to the U.S. election.<sup>55</sup> None of those communications "were intended for [REDACTED] to take action to have a communication with or take some action to influence the 2016 Presidential election."<sup>56</sup> The Committee therefore assesses that [REDACTED] was attempting to leverage political contacts for business purposes, rather than the other way around.

(U) It appears the Trump Tower Moscow project failed in January 2016.<sup>57</sup>



Trump Jr. testified that, as of early June 2016, he believed the Trump Tower Moscow project was dormant.<sup>58</sup> The project failed because “[t]he due diligence did not come through” and the Trump Organization’s representative “lost confidence in the licensee, and [he] abandoned the project.”<sup>59</sup> In fact, the Trump Organization did not have a confirmed site, so the deal never reached the point where the company was discussing financing arrangements for the project.<sup>60</sup> The Committee determined that the Trump Tower Moscow project did not progress beyond an early developmental phase, and that this potential licensing deal was not related to the Trump campaign.<sup>61</sup>

(U) **Other Alleged Financial Dealings:** In addition to the Miss Universe and Trump Tower Moscow projects, a number of witnesses were asked about Trump family financial dealings, sometimes stretching back decades.<sup>62</sup> For example, Trump Jr. was asked about Russians: buying units in Trump Tower in 1984 (when he was seven years old);<sup>63</sup> buying properties in southern Florida for which the Trump brand was a licensor;<sup>64</sup> being involved in the Trump International Hotel in Toronto for which the Trump Organization was the brand and not the developer;<sup>65</sup> and having unspecified involvement in a licensing project for the Trump Ocean Club in Panama.<sup>66</sup> The Committee does not have any evidence that there is a nexus between these activities and the 2016 campaign, or information that contradicts representations made in a

March 8, 2017 letter from Trump’s lawyers regarding his Russia-related financial dealings over the previous ten years.<sup>67</sup>

#### POLICY POSITIONS

(U) During the campaign, candidate Trump and several of his campaign advisors expressed policy views towards Russia quite different than those espoused by much of the Republican foreign policy establishment, including previous Republican nominee Mitt Romney, who labeled Russia “our number one geopolitical foe” during the 2012 election. In fact, a significant number of Republican foreign policy experts made statements during the campaign that they would not work for the Trump campaign. As a result, the campaign relied on many lesser-known—or in some cases unknown—advisors on foreign policy issues.

(U) Additionally, a plank of the 2016 Republican platform pertaining to the Ukraine has been the subject of substantial controversy. The question for the Committee was whether candidate Trump’s policy positions—and the campaign’s involvement in the debate over the Ukraine platform plank—reflected legitimate policy positions, or something more nefarious. The Committee found no evidence that the policy positions of the Trump campaign were the result of collusion, coordination, or conspiracy with the Russians. In the words of [REDACTED] Trump campaign policy official involved in the platform issue, “[t]here was no coordination or thought for coordination. The idea to have better relations with Russia was a Mr. Trump idea

that I thought was reasonable to support.”<sup>68</sup>

(U) Finding #27: The Republican national security establishment’s opposition to candidate Trump created opportunities for two less-experienced individuals with pro-Russia views to serve as campaign advisors: George Papadopoulos and Carter Page.

(U) The Republican foreign policy establishment was critical of candidate Trump, who had to turn elsewhere for support. On March 2, 2016, 122 self-described “GOP National Security Leaders” signed an “Open Letter to Donald Trump” refusing to support then-candidate Trump.<sup>69</sup> The next day, Trump announced Senator Jeff Sessions as chairman of his National Security Advisory Committee (NSAC). A few weeks later, following continuing media criticism of his failure to publicly name a foreign policy team,<sup>70</sup> candidate Trump named five foreign policy advisors in a March 21, 2016 meeting with *The Washington Post* editorial board: Walid Phares, Carter Page, George Papadopoulos, Joe Schmitz, and Keith Kellogg.<sup>71</sup>

(U) The opposition to Trump’s candidacy by the vast majority of the conservative national security establishment paved the way for lesser-known individuals, such as the then 28-year-old Papadopoulos, to join the Trump campaign. Page was another unknown brought into the periphery of the Trump campaign to fill the vacuum left by more experienced national security specialists who were unwilling to advise candidate

Trump. There is no evidence that anyone on the Trump campaign was aware of Page’s past ties to Russian intelligence services—or Papadopoulos’ more recent contacts with a Russian-connected professor—when these two individuals were included among the advisors that were publicly announced on March 21. In fact, as Kushner candidly put it, “we put together that list because we were getting a lot of pressure from the media to put out a list of foreign policy advisers.”<sup>72</sup>

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**GOP National Security Leaders  
Open Letter to Donald Trump**

STATEMENT BY FORMER NATIONAL SECURITY OFFICIALS

The undersigned individuals have all served in senior national security and/or foreign policy positions in Republican Administrations, from Richard Nixon to George W. Bush. We have worked directly on national security issues with these Republican Presidents and/or their principal advisers during wartime and other periods of crisis, through successes and failures. We know the personal qualities required of a President of the United States.

None of us will vote for Donald Trump.

Source: *The New York Times*

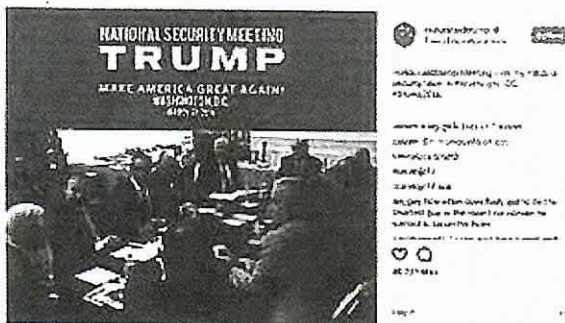
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(U) These five advisors were subsequently incorporated into the NSAC, which was part of the campaign’s D.C.-based policy shop.<sup>73</sup> The NSAC was chaired by Senator Sessions and directed by J.D. Gordon, a retired Navy officer and former Department of Defense spokesman.<sup>74</sup> Some members of the NSAC met with candidate Trump in Washington, D.C. on March 31, 2016. Page did not attend. Each advisor in attendance, including Papadopoulos, briefed the group on a topic of their choice. Papadopoulos spoke about Russia.



However, in the opinion of one advisor, Walid Phares, the primary purpose of the meeting was about optics rather than substance: "the meeting was about the picture and to send the message that: I have a foreign policy team."<sup>75</sup>

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**NSAC MEETING WITH**  
**CANDIDATE TRUMP**



State Twitter

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(U) Page was, according to NSAC director Gordon, "very loosely affiliated with the campaign and had really no roles or responsibilities."<sup>76</sup> The Committee assesses that Page played no major role in the campaign, and had no meaningful access to senior leadership.

(U) Page did not attend the March 31, 2016, NSAC meeting with then-candidate Trump, and has never met him.<sup>77</sup> Although members of the NSAC occasionally gathered for meals in the Washington, D.C. area, they never again met as a group with candidate Trump.<sup>78</sup> Kushner provided a blunt assessment of the role, or lack thereof, played by the individuals on the initial list of publicly-announced foreign policy advisors: "[T]he amount of interaction they had with

the actual campaign or influence they had on anything that happened in the campaign was virtually nonexistent."<sup>79</sup> Gordon testified to the Committee that he agreed with the assertion that the NSAC was minimally influential in the context of the broader campaign.<sup>80</sup>

(U) Finding #28: The change in the Republican Party platform regarding Ukraine resulted in a stronger position against Russia, not a weaker one, and there is no evidence that Paul Manafort was involved.

(U) It has been widely reported that the 2016 Republican Party platform was weakened with respect to Ukraine, perhaps as a favor to Russia or some other nefarious reason. After reviewing the Republican Party platform amendment process, interviewing those involved, and reviewing document productions, the Committee determined that the original plank was strengthened, rather than weakened—and there is no evidence that language advocating for the provisions of "lethal defensive weapons" was improperly removed.

(U) On July 11, 2016, the Republican National Committee Platform Committee met to discuss and debate amendments to the platform. As drafted, the platform referenced "a resurgent Russia occupying parts of Ukraine," but included no language about support to Kiev (see inset). [REDACTED] of Texas, a member of the National Security/Military Platform Subcommittee, offered an amendment that would "support

maintaining (and, if warranted, increasing) sanctions against Russia until Ukraine's sovereignty and territory integrity are fully restored."<sup>81</sup> [REDACTED] proposed amendment further called on the United States to provide "lethal defensive weapons to Ukraine's armed forces and greater coordination with NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] on defense planning."<sup>82</sup>

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**Original RNC Plank**

(U) In the international arena, weakness invites aggression. The results of the [Obama] Administration's unilateral approach to disarmament are already clear: An emboldened China in the South China Sea, a resurgent Russia occupying parts of Ukraine and threatening neighbors from the Baltic to the Caucasus, an aggressive Islamist terrorist network in Middle East. All our adversaries heard the message in the [Obama] Administration's cut-backs: America is weaker and retreating.

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(U) Much of [REDACTED] amendment was adopted, but—following debate among the delegates—the final version called for the United States to provide "appropriate assistance" rather than "lethal defensive weapons."<sup>83</sup> The Committee assesses that "appropriate assistance" provided flexibility, and could encompass lethal defensive weapons as well as humanitarian aid, medical supplies, and meals-ready-to eat. In any event, even without the words "lethal defensive weapons," the final draft of the platform "was tougher against Russia" than the original after incorporating

all but three words of [REDACTED] amendment.<sup>84</sup>

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**Final RNC Plank**

(U) We support maintaining and, if warranted, increasing sanctions, together with our allies, against Russia unless and until Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity are fully restored. We also support providing appropriate assistance to the armed forces of Ukraine and greater coordination with NATO defense planning.

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(U) The Committee also investigated what role, if any, Paul Manafort played in the Trump campaign's response to Denman's amendment. Manafort, a veteran of numerous Republican campaigns,<sup>85</sup> had long represented the government of Ukraine, the pro-Russian former president of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich, and Yanukovich's Party of Regions.<sup>86</sup> In late March 2016, candidate Trump hired Manafort to lead "delegate-corralling efforts at the Republican National Convention."<sup>87</sup> Then-campaign manager [REDACTED] testified that, when Manafort was hired, [REDACTED] made no attempt to vet him and was entirely unaware of Manafort's past work in Ukraine.<sup>88</sup> In May 2016, Manafort was promoted to campaign chairman and, after [REDACTED] was fired the next month, "evolve[d]" into the role of de facto campaign manager.<sup>89</sup>

(U) Manafort left the campaign in August 2016 following news reports that he



had received \$12.7 million in secret payments for his work on behalf of Yanukovich's Party of Regions; news reporting also alleged that Manafort and his aide Rick Gates had "directly orchestrated a covert Washington lobbying operation" on behalf of the party—while failing to register as foreign agents.<sup>90</sup> Campaign press secretary Hope Hicks recalled that, after receiving press inquiries about Manafort's "professional history," a major story broke on the evening of August 14, 2016.<sup>91</sup> According to Hicks, "Trump had made a decision to make a change in leadership on the campaign outside of Paul's issues that were being publicly reported," but those issues "certainly contributed to expediting and intensifying the way in which his role changed, and then ultimately he was fired at the end of that week."<sup>92</sup> Trump directed his son-in-law Jared Kushner to ensure Manafort departed the campaign on August 19, which he did.<sup>93</sup> As Kushner put it, "[t] here was a lot of news that was out there, and the decision was that it was time for

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**PAUL MANAFORT RESIGNS FROM TRUMP CAMPAIGN**



The departure of Trump's campaign strategist comes two days after the network aired the interview.

BY THE AP/WIDE WORLD

Source: AP/Wide

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him to resign."<sup>94</sup>

(U) Given Manafort's past work in Ukraine, if the Ukraine plank change was made as a favor to the Russian government, it seems likely that then-campaign chairman Manafort would have known about it. However, campaign records produced to the Committee show that Manafort had no role in, or contemporaneous knowledge of, the platform change. On July 30, 2016, Manafort sent an email, copying Gates, to Rick Dearborn, then a senior campaign policy official and Sessions' chief of staff: "I gather that there was a change in the platform that removed arming Ukraine. I don't know anything about this change. Who pushed for it and why was it done?"<sup>95</sup>

(U) In response, Dearborn generated a memorandum, dated August 1, 2016, outlining a detailed sequence of events that occurred between July 10 and 12, 2016.<sup>96</sup> As part of that memo, J.D. Gordon created a timeline that noted candidate Trump's policy statements—including at a March 31, 2016, national security meeting—served as the basis for the modification of Denman's amendment.<sup>97</sup> Gordon's timeline made it clear that the change was initiated by campaign staffers at the convention—not by Manafort or senior officials. Although Page expressed support after the fact, the Committee did not find any evidence that he actively participated in the modification of Denman's "red line amendment providing lethal assistance to Ukraine."<sup>98</sup>

**PUBLICATION OF STOLEN EMAILS**

(U) Finding #29: There is no evidence that Trump associates were involved in the theft or publication of Clinton campaign-related emails, although Trump associates had numerous ill-advised contacts with WikiLeaks.

(U) There is no evidence that Trump or anyone associated with him played a role in the hacking of emails from the DNC and Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta, among other entities and individuals, detailed in Chapter 2. As also discussed in Chapter 2, the Committee concurs with the IC's assessment that WikiLeaks was one of the vehicles for the public dissemination of emails stolen by Russians. As noted in Chapter 3, on October 7, 2016, the Department of Homeland Security and Office of the Director of National Intelligence released a public statement that "[t]he U.S. Intelligence Community is confident that the Russian Government directed the recent compromises of e-mails from US persons and institutions, including US political organizations."<sup>99</sup> The statement also specifically tied WikiLeaks to the Russian-directed disclosures.

(U) Trump campaign communications made ample use of the publicly available emails, which were reported by virtually all major media outlets. Regarding WikiLeaks, Trump Jr. testified that "[a]t the time, I looked at them as essentially a media outlet" and an "opportunistic organization" that would have also put out negative information on Trump if it had it.<sup>100</sup> For Senator Sessions, reference to WikiLeaks

material in campaign statements was the product of deliberation: "And so, I remember making a decision that it [a trove of hacked emails] was in the public domain, and it would be silly not to use it. So I used it, although I could understand somebody else not wanting to."<sup>101</sup> For campaign press secretary Hope Hicks, use of emails published by WikiLeaks was uncontroversial because such information was available in the public domain.<sup>102</sup>

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**WIKILEAKS RELEASES CLINTON EMAILS**



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(U) Similarly, candidate Trump stated at a rally on October 10, 2016—three days after the release of Podesta's emails began and the IC publicly tied WikiLeaks' dissemination to "Russia's senior-most officials"—that "I love WikiLeaks."<sup>103</sup> Trump had earlier encouraged the Russians to "find the 30,000 emails that are missing" from Hillary Clinton's private server.<sup>104</sup> (These emails, which were the frequent subject of campaign talking points, should not be



conflated with the DNC emails. The Committee did not receive evidence that the emails from Clinton's private server were stolen by the Russians—or anyone else.)<sup>105</sup>

(U) Particularly in light of candidate Trump's expressed enthusiasm for WikiLeaks, the Committee examined the relationship between his associates and the stolen emails. The Committee did not find any evidence that Trump associates were involved in the publication of emails by WikiLeaks and other outlets—or had access to such emails or other stolen information prior to their becoming publicly available.<sup>106</sup>

(U) The Committee did find that multiple Trump associates went beyond mere praise and established lines of communication with WikiLeaks during the campaign. Such contacts were imprudent in light of WikiLeaks' role in disseminating stolen emails in line with Russian interests—and CIA Director Mike Pompeo's post-election characterization of WikiLeaks as a hostile non-state intelligence service that "overwhelmingly focuses on the United States, while seeking support from anti-democratic countries and organizations" such as the Russian military intelligence service (GRU).<sup>107</sup>

(U) **George Papadopoulos:** Foreign policy advisor Papadopoulos was told by Russian-linked academic Joseph Mifsud in April 2016 that the Russians had "dirt" on Clinton in the form of "emails of Clinton."<sup>108</sup> However, the Committee found no evidence that Papadopoulos obtained these emails or that the Trump campaign had a role in facilitating the Russian government's dissemination of

stolen data. Nor did any witness shed light on the provenance of the emails, or clarify that Mifsud was referring to emails actually stolen by the Russians (as opposed to, for example, emails missing from Clinton's private server.) The Committee also found no evidence that Papadopoulos told anyone affiliated with the Trump campaign about Mifsud's claims that the Russians had "dirt" on candidate Clinton.

(U) **Michael Flynn:** On July 15, 2016, retired Lieutenant General and Trump national security advisor Michael Flynn forwarded an email to communications advisor [REDACTED] in an attempt to connect a friend from the military with the campaign's social media operation. Flynn included the following editorial comment: "There are a number of things happening (and will happen) this election via cyber operations (by both hacktivists, nation-states and the DNC)."<sup>109</sup> This statement does not necessarily indicate non-public knowledge, and could have instead reflected commentary on then-current public events—including the mid-June attribution of the DNC hack to Russia by the security firm CrowdStrike, and the subsequent claim of credit by the then-unknown persona "Guccifer 2.0." (See Chapter 2.)

(U) **Donald Trump Jr.:** During the course of the Committee's interview with Trump Jr., a news report from CNN appeared online claiming he was given a pre-release notification of a WikiLeaks release of Podesta emails.<sup>110</sup> The article appeared at 1:01 p.m., while Trump Jr. was still being interviewed by the Committee behind closed doors, which concluded at 5:51 p.m.<sup>111</sup> CNN's initial report

claimed Trump Jr. received an email on September 4, 2016, alerting him to an upcoming release of hacked emails.

(U) The email in question was from an individual named [REDACTED], who sent a lengthy email to a number of individuals associated with the Trump Organization, including Trump Jr., providing access to hacked DNC emails.<sup>112</sup> The email was actually dated September 14, 2016, the day after WikiLeaks published a tranche of Podesta emails, and thus did not substantiate allegations of prior knowledge of the release.<sup>113</sup> CNN subsequently issued a correction, noting the error.<sup>114</sup>

(U) When asked about the email by the Committee, Trump Jr. testified that he did not have any recollection of the email, stating that he “get[s] stuff from people that – you know, people put my email address online every few months, and I get a bunch of people that do the same thing and then they start bombarding you with stuff.”<sup>115</sup> Trump Jr. went further to state that while he may have met a [REDACTED] at some point in time, he was not sure of the identity of this individual.<sup>116</sup>

(U) At the outset, Trump Jr. told the Committee that, although he was not aware of any coordination “between the Trump campaign and WikiLeaks to disseminate information acquired from the Podesta email or the DNC server,”<sup>117</sup> he did exchange Twitter direct messages with WikiLeaks beginning on September 20, 2016, and October 3, 2016.<sup>118</sup> WikiLeaks initiated both exchanges.<sup>119</sup> Trump Jr.

testified that he was not aware of the reasons why WikiLeaks decided to reach out to him directly, but hypothesized that such direct messaging was likely due to the fact that he “was retweeting a bunch of their stuff. . .” and that he has “a relatively formidable social media platform.”<sup>120</sup>

(U) In the first exchange, on September 20, 2016, WikiLeaks sent a direct message to Trump Jr. to alert him to a “PAC run anti-Trump site” that was about to launch. WikiLeaks “guessed the password” and sent it to Trump Jr. and asked for comments.<sup>121</sup> Trump Jr. responded the next day, “[o]ff the record I don’t know who that is but I’ll ask around.”<sup>122</sup> Trump Jr. subsequently logged into the site using the WikiLeaks-supplied password, which had also been made publicly available.<sup>123</sup>

(U) Following that exchange, Trump Jr. emailed some Trump campaign officials, to include Kellyanne Conway, Steve Bannon, and Jared Kushner to advise them of the contact and seek their advice.<sup>124</sup> In a follow-up email, Trump Jr. noted the WikiLeaks message intimated “some connection we [the Trump campaign] should be aware of.”<sup>125</sup> The Committee did not receive any documents or information that reflected a response to Trump Jr.’s email, although Hope Hicks recalled that—after being forwarded the email by Kushner—she “might have expressed concern to somebody about putting passwords in unknown websites, just as a general practice, not specific to WikiLeaks.”<sup>126</sup>

(U) On October 3, WikiLeaks passed



along a story reporting Clinton's comments about Julian Assange and noted "[i]t'd be great if you guys could comment on/push this story."<sup>127</sup> Trump Jr. responded about 90 minutes later: "Already did that earlier today. It's amazing what she can get away with."<sup>128</sup> Trump Jr. then wrote: "What's behind this Wednesday leak I keep reading about?"<sup>129</sup> Trump Jr. was seeking information on what was purported to be, another future leak of Podesta-related emails.<sup>130</sup> There was no response.

(U) After October 3, 2016, Trump Jr. received numerous messages from WikiLeaks that:

- suggest a website link to use if the campaign refers to WikiLeaks in a tweet and suggests having supporters search through the leaked Podesta emails, noting WikiLeaks "just released" "Part 4" of those emails;<sup>131</sup>
- seek then-candidate Trump's tax returns and suggests leaking them to "improve the perception of [WikiLeaks'] impartiality";<sup>132</sup>
- suggest challenging the results should Trump lose the election;<sup>133</sup>
- describe an election-night message of "[w]ow" and noting Obama administration will delete records as they leave;<sup>134</sup>
- suggest the President-elect push Australia to make Julian Assange that country's ambassador to the United States;<sup>135</sup>

- forward what appears to be a video with the caption "Fake News";<sup>136</sup> and
- on the date the news of the June 9, 2016, Trump Tower meeting broke, seek copies of Trump Jr.'s emails.<sup>137</sup> With respect to the latter, Trump Jr. published those emails himself on his Twitter account.

(U) Trump Jr. testified that he did not reply to any of these messages, nor did he have any communications with WikiLeaks before September 20 or after October 3, 2016.<sup>138</sup> He testified that the direct message exchanges discussed above "is a complete record of any communications [he] had with WikiLeaks."<sup>139</sup>

(U) **Cambridge Analytica:** In addition to Trump Jr.'s communications with WikiLeaks, Cambridge Analytica, a British firm the Trump campaign used for data analytics, reached out to Julian Assange in an effort to confirm whether WikiLeaks possessed the "missing" emails deleted from Clinton's private server.<sup>140</sup> That contact occurred in approximately June 2016,<sup>141</sup> between an employee of Cambridge Analytica and the speaker's bureau (a separate third party) representing Assange.<sup>142</sup> WikiLeaks replied through the bureau that "they did not wish to take a telephone call or otherwise engage with us [Cambridge Analytica]."<sup>143</sup>

(U) Trump campaign digital director ██████████ testified that he did not participate in, nor was he aware of, Cambridge Analytica's attempted outreach to Assange.<sup>144</sup> The Chief Executive Officer

(CEO) of Cambridge Analytica confirmed in his testimony that he “did not share this with anyone on the Trump campaign.”<sup>145</sup> In fact, the CEO testified that the outreach occurred before the company was even retained by the Trump campaign.<sup>146</sup>

(U) Roger Stone: Roger Stone has had a series of business relationships with Donald Trump dating back to at least 1981, and served as a paid campaign advisor for several months in 2015.<sup>147</sup> During testimony to the Committee, Stone addressed three public statements suggesting he might have important information about, and potentially advance knowledge of, disclosures during the 2016 campaign: (1) an August 2016 Twitter message regarding Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta, (2) an August 2016 public speech about purported contacts with Julian Assange, and (3) the March 2017 acknowledgement of pre-election direct communications with Guccifer 2.0.

(U) Stone denied that he “knew in advance about and predicted the hacking of . . . Podesta’s email,” notwithstanding his cryptic statement in an August 21, 2016, Twitter message—“Trust me, it will soon be Podesta’s time in the barrel”—that predated by several weeks the initial public release of Podesta’s hacked emails.<sup>148</sup> Stone noted that his Tweet “makes no mention whatsoever of Mr. Podesta’s email.”<sup>149</sup> Furthermore, it was posted “at a time that my boyhood friend and colleague, Paul Manafort, had just resigned from the Trump campaign over allegations regarding

his business activities in Ukraine. I thought it manifestly unfair that John Podesta not be held to the same standard” regarding his alleged business activities.<sup>150</sup> In October 2017, John Podesta’s brother Tony resigned from the lobbying firm the brothers co-founded amid revelations about the Podesta Group’s role in pro-Ukraine lobbying efforts that also involved Manafort and his associate Rick Gates.<sup>151</sup>

(U) Stone also addressed his August 2016 public statement that “I’ve actually communicated with Julian Assange. I believe the next tranche of his documents pertain to the Clinton Foundation, but there’s no telling what the October surprise may be.”<sup>152</sup> In his testimony to the Committee, Stone sought to “clarify that by saying the communication I refer to is through a journalist who I ask [sic] to confirm what Assange has tweeted, himself, on July 21st, that he has the Clinton emails and that he will publish them.”<sup>153</sup> He subsequently identified the intermediary, but denied any access to non-public information.<sup>154</sup> Stone further disputed, under oath, that he “had advance knowledge of the source or actual content of the WikiLeaks disclosures.”<sup>155</sup>

(U) In his testimony, Stone described a series of direct messages exchanged with Guccifer 2.0 in August and September 2016—which he first publicly disclosed in March 2017—as “innocuous,” and denied taking action in response to Guccifer 2.0’s messages.<sup>156</sup> He subsequently provided additional messages with WikiLeaks



extending from October 2016 to August 2017.<sup>157</sup>

(U) Despite these multiple contacts, the Committee did not find any evidence contradicting Stone's claim that "[a]ny information . . . disseminated via social media regarding the timing of the release of the DNC data or others was from publicly available sources" and "he in no way conspired, colluded, or coordinated with any agent of the Russian state."<sup>158</sup>

#### MEETINGS WITH RUSSIANS

(U) The Committee examined meetings between Trump campaign associates and Russians, to include both official and unofficial representatives. The Russians found willing interlocutors in foreign policy advisors ██████████ and Papadopoulos. These advisors, however, were peripheral figures, and neither was in a position to influence Trump or his campaign. The Russians engaged Trump associates via official channels and—more notably—used apparent cut-outs and intermediaries to make contact with senior officials. However, questionable contacts like the Trump Tower meeting resulted in no collusion, conspiracy, or coordination with the Russian government.

(U) Finding #30: ██████████ did not travel to Moscow in July 2016 on behalf of the Trump campaign, but the Committee is concerned about his seemingly incomplete accounts of his activity in Moscow.

(U) ██████████ traveled to Moscow in early July 2016 to deliver a commencement

speech at the New Economic School—the first American to do so since then-President Barack Obama in 2009. At the time, ██████████ served as a foreign policy advisor for the Trump campaign. The Trump campaign made it clear to ██████████ that the trip was not on behalf of the Trump campaign, a point ██████████ acknowledged in his testimony to the Committee.<sup>159</sup> J.D. Gordon, the NSAC director, strongly advised against the trip, calling it "a bad idea."<sup>160</sup> However, Trump campaign manager ██████████ authorized ██████████ to make the trip "out side of [his] role with the DJT [Donald J. Trump] for President campaign."<sup>161</sup> ██████████ mentioned the upcoming trip to Sessions at one of the occasional NSAC meals,<sup>162</sup> although Sessions did not recall the interaction.<sup>163</sup>

(U) On July 9, 2016, while in Russia, ██████████ sent an "executive summary" of "Feedback From Russia" that stated in part "Russian Deputy Prime Minister and NES [New Economic School] Board Member Arkady Dvorkovich also spoke before the event. In a private conversation, Dvorkovich expressed strong support for Mr. Trump and a desire to work together toward devising better solutions in response to the vast range of current international problems. Based on feedback from a diverse array of other sources close to the Russian Presidential Administration, it was readily apparent that this sentiment is widely held at all levels of government."<sup>164</sup> ██████████ admitted to briefly greeting Dvorkovich before or after one of their

speeches, but minimized the interaction in testimony before the Committee.<sup>165</sup>

(U) Ultimately, [REDACTED] failed to clearly explain whom he meant when he referred to sources close to Russian government in his executive summary. He denied having any private meetings with any senior Russian officials during his July 2016 trip, and stated that he mostly met with "scholars."<sup>166</sup> The Steele dossier, a document compiled by former British intelligence officer Christopher Steele, alleges that while in Moscow in July 2016, Page secretly met with Igor Sechin, CEO of Russian state oil company Rosneft, and Igor Diveykin, a senior Russian intelligence official.<sup>167</sup> Further, the Steele dossier claims that Sechin offered Page a brokerage fee in connection with the sale of 19 percent of Rosneft in exchange for the lifting of sanctions.<sup>168</sup>

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**CHRISTOPHER STEELE, THE MAN**  
**BEHIND THE TRUMP DOSSIER**



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(U) Since the allegation of meeting with Sechin and Diveykin was first widely reported in September 2016, [REDACTED] has

repeatedly and consistently denied meeting either Sechin or Diveykin, including under oath in testimony to the Committee.<sup>169</sup> The Committee has no information that confirms the Steele dossier's assertions regarding the purported meetings in Moscow, much less an offer by Sechin to [REDACTED] for such a role in a potentially lucrative transaction. After returning from Moscow, [REDACTED] took a "leave of absence" from the Trump campaign, and played no role in the transition or administration.<sup>170</sup>

**(U) Finding #31: George Papadopoulos' attempts to leverage his Russian contacts to facilitate meetings between the Trump campaign and Russians was unsuccessful.**

(U) Papadopoulos made minor contributions to the Trump campaign as a foreign policy advisor. He briefly served as a Trump campaign surrogate, a role cut short in May 2016 when he publicly insulted UK Prime Minister David Cameron.<sup>171</sup> He also—in an apparent effort to increase his standing within the Trump campaign—tried to insert himself into any number of international engagements. As described below, his particular focus was trying to broker meetings with foreign officials, but he often acted on his own without the official backing of the Trump campaign.

(U) On March 24, 2016, Papadopoulos sent an email to several members of the policy team pitching a "[m]eeting with Russian leadership—including Putin"—and also volunteered to travel to meet the "next prime minister of Vietnam" alongside Mifsud (whom he had first met just ten days



before but nonetheless described as a “good friend of mine”).<sup>172</sup> Campaign co-chair and chief policy advisor ██████ responded that “we probably should not go forward with any meetings with the Russians until we have had occasion to sit with our NATO allies, especially France, Germany and Great Britain.”<sup>173</sup> In the same exchange, Papadopoulos then immediately switched gears, indicating that “[i]f we need any assistance with setting up meetings here in London or Paris, I have some good contacts that can open doors immediately to the leadership.”<sup>174</sup>

(U) During the NSAC meeting with Trump on March 31, 2016—the only time Papadopoulos is known to have engaged directly with the candidate—Senator Sessions told the team that they were not authorized to speak for the campaign.<sup>175</sup> In his words “[t]his committee was not . . . a group of people authorized to speak for [candidate] Trump, and they absolutely weren’t authorized to go around the world pretending to represent him.”<sup>176</sup> That sentiment was, according to Sessions, “a good statement to make quite clear.”<sup>177</sup>

(U) When Papadopoulos offered that he could engage, and possibly travel to, Russia on behalf of the campaign, his suggestion was swiftly rebuffed by Sessions, who testified that “I felt like—and I’m the chairman of this group—I should not do anything that indicated to Mr. Papadopoulos that he was authorized to go to Russia or anyplace else to represent the Trump campaign and do some sort of

negotiations. So I pushed back pretty sharply on that.”<sup>178</sup> Sessions’ account of his response has been corroborated by another attendee, ██████.<sup>179</sup> ██████ also attended and similarly recalled that when Papadopoulos raised the issue of obtaining contacts with the Russian government on behalf of the campaign, Senator Sessions interrupted and began “talking about the Logan Act,” which criminalizes unauthorized negotiations with foreign governments.<sup>180</sup>

(U) Although the Committee has no information to indicate that Papadopoulos was successful in setting up any meetings between the Trump campaign and the Russian government, he worked with campaign chief executive Steve Bannon to broker a September 2016 meeting between candidate Trump and Egyptian president Abdel Fatah el-Sisi.<sup>181</sup> Trump was apparently pleased with the meeting, which he described in an interview as “very productive,” describing el-Sisi as “a fantastic guy.”<sup>182</sup>

(U) While on a trip to Athens, Greece in May 2016, Papadopoulos sent an email to Manafort stating that he expected to soon receive “an official invitation for Mr. Trump to visit Greece sometime this summer should his schedule allow.”<sup>183</sup> In the same email to Manafort, Papadopoulos also forwarded a meeting invitation from Ivan Timofeev, Director of Programs for the Russian International Affairs Council, and claimed that “Russia has been eager to meet Mr. Trump for quite sometime and have been reaching out to me to discuss. I

thought it would be prudent to send to you."<sup>184</sup>

(U) As of May 2016, Manafort had not yet been elevated to campaign chairman, but had a long track record of work abroad. Manafort forwarded Papadopoulos' email to his business and campaign deputy [REDACTED] [REDACTED] noting that "[w]e need someone to communicate that D[onald] T[rump] is not doing these trips."<sup>185</sup> Manafort and [REDACTED] agreed to assign a response of a "general letter" to "our correspondence coordinator," the person responsible for "responding to all mail of non-importance."<sup>186</sup>

(U) In June 2016, Papadopoulos sought a paid position and reimbursement for expenses from [REDACTED]—a Sessions aide, who along with [REDACTED], ran the Trump campaign's D.C. policy shop—for an upcoming trip "to DC for a high level meeting [with] the director of the Israel National Security Council" and past trips to "the UK, Israel and Greece over the past month engaging in some senior level meetings . . ."<sup>187</sup> [REDACTED] forwarded the message to Gordon and [REDACTED]. Mashburn then replied as follows: "He cost us a lot more in having to deal with what he said about [then-UK prime minister David] Cameron 2 months ago. . . he got no approval for the travel and did it on his own in[i]tiative . . . . Let him eat the cost and maybe he will learn to play nice with the team, not go off on his own. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] would never have approved his going off on world travels at campaign

expense without asking permission first."<sup>188</sup>

[REDACTED] replied to [REDACTED] with one word: "agreed."<sup>189</sup>

(U) [REDACTED] responded to Papadopoulos that he could take the meeting, but he "should do that as a private citizen."<sup>190</sup> Making the point explicit, [REDACTED] wrote: "You're not authorized to meet with him by [sic] the campaign, nor can you reflect the views of the campaign on security issues in that meeting."<sup>191</sup>

**(U) Finding #32: Donald Trump Jr., Jared Kushner, and Paul Manafort attended a June 9, 2016, meeting at Trump Tower where they expected to receive—but did not ultimately obtain—derogatory information on candidate Clinton from Russian sources.**

(U) In July 2017, the Committee became aware of a June 9, 2016, meeting in Trump Tower, which became a key focus of the investigation. The Committee's findings were informed by interviews with six of the eight participants in the meeting.

(U) Although they did not attend the meeting, the Agalarovs were the driving force to arrange it. As previously noted, the Agalarovs and Goldstone had gotten to know businessman Donald Trump when the Agalarovs worked with Trump to host the Miss Universe pageant at the Agalarovs' building, the Crocus City Hall, in Moscow in 2013.<sup>192</sup> The Agalarovs also had discussions with Donald Trump in 2013 to facilitate the possible development of a Trump Tower in Moscow.<sup>193</sup> The 2013 Miss Universe



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## PARTICIPANTS OF THE JUNE 9, 2016 MEETING AT TRUMP TOWER



**Paul Manafort**

Longtime Republican campaign advisor and international lobbyist, Manafort served as director of the Trump campaign.



**Donald J. Trump, Jr.**

Son of candidate Donald Trump, Trump, Jr. served as a senior advisor to the campaign running day-to-day operations from New York.



**Jared Kushner**

Son-in-law to candidate Donald Trump, Kushner served as a senior advisor to the campaign.



**Rob Goldstone**

London-based promoter who managed pop star Emin [Agalarov], the Vice President of the Crocus Group.



**Natalia Veselnitskaya**

Russian lawyer, who represented the Pravezin in a civil forfeiture case in the federal court in New York.



**Dae Kaveladze**

California-based manager of the Crocus Group.



**Rinat Akhmetdin**

Russian-American lobbyist.



**Anatoli Samorchnov**

Former employee at the U.S. Department of State, Samorchnov translated for Veselnitskaya at the June 9th meeting.

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pageant formed the basis of a casual friendship between the Trumps and the Agalarovs.<sup>194</sup> Trump appeared in one of Emin Agalarov's music videos with the 2013 pageant winner,<sup>195</sup> and Trump maintained a friendly correspondence with Aras Agalarov—including during the busy 2016 campaign.<sup>196</sup>

(U) Events leading to the meeting were set in motion by a June 3, 2016, email from Goldstone to Trump Jr., stating: "Emin just called and asked me to contact you with something very interesting. The Crown prosecutor of Russia [possibly referring to Russian Prosecutor General Yuri Chaika] met with his father Aras this morning and in their meeting offered to provide the Trump

campaign with some official documents and information that would incriminate Hillary and her dealings with Russia and would be very useful to your father. This is obviously very high level and sensitive information but is part of Russia and its government's support for Mr. Trump – helped along by Aras and Emin."<sup>197</sup> Trump Jr. replied to Goldstone's June 3 request by indicating "if it's what you say I love it especially in the summer."<sup>198</sup>

(U) This exchange indicates that Trump Jr. was open to discussing derogatory, information from Russian government sources that could be useful to candidate Trump. Goldstone proposed to deliver information concerning Hillary Clinton via a Russian government attorney.<sup>199</sup> Trump Jr. indicated that he had invited Kushner and Manafort,<sup>200</sup> underscoring his belief in the importance of the information.

with connections to the Agalarov family, was one of the individuals who attended the June 9 meeting at Trump Tower. The Committee discovered that the participants of the June 9 meeting did not all have the same understanding as to the reasons for the meeting, with [redacted] testifying that he thought it was odd that all three senior Trump campaign officials would be taking a meeting on the Magnitsky Act, a U.S. human rights law that imposes certain sanctions on Russian interests. Accordingly, [redacted] called [redacted], a close associate of Emin Agalarov based in the United States, to inquire about the purpose

of the meeting. [redacted] explained that he believed the scheduled meeting at Trump Tower was about providing negative information on candidate Clinton to the Trump campaign.<sup>201</sup>

(U) Based on Trump Jr.'s testimony and the documentary evidence received by the Committee, there is no evidence to support that there were any prior communications between the Trump campaign and the other attendees: [redacted]; Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya; Russian-American lobbyist and former Soviet intelligence officer [redacted]; or Russian-American [redacted] who served as a Russian interpreter. Furthermore, the Committee found no evidence that Trump Jr. knew the identities of these individuals before the meeting,<sup>202</sup> or that he discussed it with candidate Trump beforehand.<sup>203</sup>

(U) The Committee interviewed all attendees other than Manafort, due to the Special Counsel's ongoing investigation, and Veselnitskaya, who is a Russian national located overseas without a valid visa to enter the United States. Despite the pretext for the meeting, every person with direct knowledge of what occurred confirmed that there was no mention of derogatory or incriminating information directly relating to Hillary Clinton during the June 9 meeting. Goldstone testified that he had no evidence that the Russian government supported or favored Donald Trump, and admitted to embellishing the contents of the email solely for the purpose of gaining a response from Trump Jr., namely by using inaccurate



information.<sup>204</sup>

(U) Veselnitskaya, Samochornov, Kaveladze, and Akhmetshin met for lunch before the Trump Tower meeting.<sup>205</sup> During lunch, there was a discussion regarding the Trump Tower meeting. Veselnitskaya shared an approximately 10-page document in Russian to provide the lunch attendees with a synopsis of what would be discussed at the meeting, a summary that contained much of the same information as a similar document reportedly shared with Russian prosecutor general Yuri Chaika.<sup>206</sup> Based on this discussion, the lunch attendees believed the Trump Tower meeting was about the Magnitsky Act.<sup>207</sup> The lunch attendees then met Goldstone at Trump Tower shortly before the meeting.<sup>208</sup> They proceeded to the 25th Floor where they met Trump Jr., and he led the group to a conference room.<sup>209</sup>

(U) The June 9 meeting lasted as little as 20 minutes.<sup>210</sup> Kaveladze testified that he believed Trump Jr. started the meeting and then turned it over to Veselnitskaya.<sup>211</sup> Interviewed meeting attendees agreed that Veselnitskaya presented information concerning the Magnitsky Act and the Ziff Brothers, including their alleged role in evading taxes in Russia and political contributions to the DNC and/or Clinton campaign.<sup>212</sup> Several attendees also recalled discussion of Russian adoptions, which the Russian government suspended in retaliation for the Magnitsky Act.<sup>213</sup>

(U) Goldstone further testified that Kushner, Manafort, and Trump Jr. seemed

visibly uninterested in the Magnitsky Act briefing provided by Veselnitskaya.<sup>214</sup> Manafort, according to Goldstone, "never looked up from his cell phone from the moment we began the meeting until the moment we ended."<sup>215</sup> Manafort and Kushner complained to one another via text message during the meeting that the meeting was a "waste of time."<sup>216</sup> Kushner asked his assistants to call and give him and excuse to leave, which one of them did shortly after the text.<sup>217</sup> At the end of the meeting, Goldstone apologized to Trump Jr. for the "bait-and-switch talk about something which we knew nothing about, which was, again, Russian adoption and the Magnitsky Act."<sup>218</sup>

(U) Kaveladze testified that he received two calls from Aras Agalarov after the meeting. During the second call, Kaveladze explained that the meeting was a "complete loss of time and about nothing."<sup>219</sup> Aras Agalarov and Kaveladze did not discuss the "dirt" on Hillary Clinton.<sup>220</sup> Kaveladze also sent an email to his daughter after the meeting indicating that the "meeting was boring. The Russians did not have any bad info [o]n Hillary"<sup>221</sup>—a reference back to his conversation with Benjaminov, which he had apparently relayed to his daughter. The Committee received no testimony or documentary evidence indicating that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss WikiLeaks, Julian Assange, the hacking of DNC servers, and/or the John Podesta emails.<sup>222</sup>

(U) No witness, including the attendees,

testified that candidate Trump was aware of the meeting prior to its public exposure in June 2017. Steve Bannon, who had been previously quoted as saying “[t]he chances that Don Jr. did not walk [the meeting participants] up to his father’s office is zero,” conceded under oath that he had no evidence to support that claim.<sup>223</sup> The Committee also investigated a public statement made by candidate Trump during a speech after the final Republican primary contests on June 7, 2016, the same day as Trump Jr. exchanged emails with Goldstone regarding meeting attendees and logistics.<sup>224</sup> According to campaign press secretary Hope Hicks, Trump’s publicly stated intent “to give a major speech . . . next week . . . discussing all of the things that have taken place with the Clintons” did not reflect knowledge about the upcoming meeting; instead, it referred to a planned speech “that was an outline of the book *Clinton Cash*,” and was ultimately delivered approximately two weeks later after being delayed by a domestic terrorist attack.<sup>225</sup>

**(U) Finding #33: Donald Trump Jr. briefly met with a Russian government official at the 2016 National Rifle Association annual meeting, but the Committee found no evidence that the two discussed the U.S. presidential election.**

(U) In the weeks leading up to the National Rifle Association’s (NRA) 2016 annual meeting, there were a series of emails sent to a member of the campaign discussing Russian interest in the campaign as it related to the NRA meeting. Despite

the emails’ rhetoric about setting up a “back channel” between the United States and Russian governments, the relevant testimony obtained in the Committee’s interviews showed these email inquiries resulted in a brief meeting between Trump Jr. and a Russian government official that centered on shooting and hunting. It did not focus on the U.S. presidential election.

(U) From May 19-22, 2016, the NRA held its annual meeting and exhibits in Louisville, Kentucky.<sup>226</sup> In an interview with the Committee, Trump Jr. testified he received an invitation from “[v]arious people at the NRA” to attend the 2016 meeting.<sup>227</sup> In addition to Trump Jr.’s invitation, there were several emails sent to [REDACTED] seeking to establish a connection at the NRA meeting between an emissary of the Russian government and candidate Trump.

(U) In the first email, dated May 16, 2016, a business executive emailed [REDACTED] with the possibility of candidate Trump meeting with Alexander Torshin, the Deputy Governor of the Bank of Russia, the country’s central bank.<sup>228</sup> The email mentions an “overture to Mr. Trump from President Putin.”<sup>229</sup> [REDACTED] responds he will be “[w]orking on this first thing in the am.”<sup>230</sup>

(U) [REDACTED] forwarded the email to Manafort, Gates, and Kushner, noting the “interesting request.”<sup>231</sup> [REDACTED] email highlighted the entrepreneur’s request that Torshin “meet with a high level official in our campaign” during the NRA meeting to discuss “an offer he [Torshin] claims to be



carrying from President Putin to meet with DJT." In response to that email, Kushner wrote: "Pass on this. A lot of people come claiming to carry messages. Very few we are able to verify. For now I think we decline such meetings," as well as "[b]e careful."<sup>232</sup> [REDACTED] replied to the executive seeking the meeting: "I've asked about a mtg but we are not able to accommodate it at that event in KY."<sup>233</sup>

(U) In addition to the emails discussing a possible meeting with Torshin, on May 10, 2016, [REDACTED], who had previously approached [REDACTED] about advising a prospective Trump transition,<sup>234</sup> sent [REDACTED] an email about meeting with Russians at the NRA event.<sup>235</sup> The email discusses [REDACTED] purported "back-channel to President Putin's Kremlin," that "Russia is quietly but actively seeking a dialogue with the U.S. that isn't forthcoming under the current administration," and that "the Kremlin believes that the only possibility of a true re-set in this relationship would be with a new Republican White House."<sup>236</sup>

(U) The email goes on to note that "President Putin's emissary" will be at the NRA convention and hopes to make contact with candidate Trump and present Mrs. Trump with a gift.<sup>237</sup> The email discussed Putin's desire to build a relationship with candidate Trump, to include extending an invitation to the Kremlin. The email also asked [REDACTED] to "talk through what has transpired and Sen. Sessions' advice on how to proceed."<sup>238</sup> When asked about this

email in his interview before the Committee, Attorney General Sessions testified he was not aware of this email.<sup>239</sup> [REDACTED] testified that he may have met [REDACTED] once, and did not remember replying to his email.<sup>240</sup>

(U) Although the campaign declined to hold a meeting, Trump Jr. was introduced to Torshin, at the request of an acquaintance, at a restaurant where they were dining separately.<sup>241</sup> During their brief introduction, they spoke about "stuff as it related to shooting and hunting . . . exchanged casual hellos" but did not exchange contact information.<sup>242</sup> In his brief exchange with Torshin and a subsequent exchange with Torshin's assistant, Maria Batina, Trump Jr. testified he did not recall any discussion of the upcoming U.S. presidential election.<sup>243</sup> No other witness provided a contrary recollection to the Committee.

(U) The Committee reviewed several emails discussing a meeting with Russians at the NRA meeting, an attempt to establish a back channel of communication between the U.S. and Russian governments, and a possible meeting between candidate Trump and President Putin. However, the Committee found that all of those email exchanges resulted in just one, brief meeting between Mr. Torshin and the candidate's son that did not include any discussion related to the U.S. election.<sup>244</sup>

(U) Finding #34: The Committee found no evidence that meetings between Trump associates—including Jeff Sessions—and

**official representatives of the Russian government—including Ambassador Kislyak—reflected collusion, coordination, or conspiracy with the Russian government.**

(U) Meetings between U.S. senators and foreign government officials are considered a routine part of the job. However, there have been multiple media articles raising concerns about contacts with former Russian Ambassador to the United States Sergey Kislyak, particularly those involving then-Senator Sessions.

(U) **Mayflower Hotel Speech:** In April 2016, Senator Sessions, an early endorser of Trump and later a key figure during the transition, attended a foreign policy speech by Trump at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C.<sup>245</sup> Kushner also attended and recalled meeting 20 to 25 guests, including Ambassador Kislyak for the first time.<sup>246</sup> Kushner stated that the conversation between him and Ambassador Kislyak mainly consisted of pleasantries, and concluded with an offer for Kushner to visit the Russian Embassy for lunch, which Kushner never attended.<sup>247</sup>

(U) Attorney General Sessions similarly described a pre-speech reception of maybe 24 people; immediately following the speech, he went to a media stakeout to answer questions about the speech.<sup>248</sup> Attorney General Sessions recalled “no . . . discussions with the [Russian] Ambassador or any other representative from the Russian Government or their surrogate” at

the Mayflower.<sup>249</sup>

(U) **Republican National Convention:** In July 2016, then-Senator Sessions attended the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio. Because he used his campaign funds to pay for his travel and lodging while in Ohio, his schedule focused primarily on his Senate campaign-related events.<sup>250</sup> For the five days that Sessions was in Cleveland, he attended numerous Trump campaign-related events.<sup>251</sup>

(U) Over 50 ambassadors to the United States also attended a reception associated with the 2016 Republican Convention.<sup>252</sup> Sessions addressed this group of ambassadors, as the keynote speaker, at the Heritage Foundation’s Embassy Row Ambassador’s Buffett Lunch.<sup>253</sup> According to Sessions, his interaction with Ambassador Kislyak following that speech was brief, unexpected, and occurred in the presence of several other people.<sup>254</sup>

(U) J.D. Gordon testified about briefly encountering Kislyak twice at convention events in July 2016, including a brief conversation that occurred during a networking event that was also attended by ██████████<sup>255</sup> ██████████ recalled seeing Gordon and chatting casually with Kislyak at the same event.<sup>256</sup> The Committee found no evidence that these brief public interactions related to the hacking of emails or collusion, coordination, or conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russia.

(U) **Senate Office Meeting:** On September 8, 2016, Senator Sessions met



Ambassador Kislyak in his Senate office.<sup>257</sup> As a Senator, such meetings in his Capitol Hill office are common. Notes of the meeting taken by Sessions' staff, and provided to the Committee, verified that the approximately 30-minute meeting was official in nature and not related to any role that Senator Sessions held with the Trump campaign.<sup>258</sup> Sessions testified that the conversation mainly revolved around Ukraine, and the two "had a little testy conversation" about Ukraine given Sessions' support for the Ukrainian cause.<sup>259</sup> The Committee's investigation did not uncover anything improper about Senator Sessions' meetings with the Russian ambassador.

**Finding #35: Possible Russian efforts to set up a "back channel" with Trump associates after the election suggest the absence of collusion during the campaign, since the communication associated with collusion would have rendered such a "back channel" unnecessary.**

(U) The Committee investigated meetings during the post-election transition period between Trump associates and Russians—with a focus on individuals who may have been acting as unofficial representatives of Moscow. In December 2016, Kushner met with the head of Russian bank VEB, Sergei Gorkov, at the urging of Russian Ambassador Sergei Kislyak, with whom Kushner and Flynn had met earlier in the month.<sup>260</sup> Kushner took the meeting partly because he had been told Gorkov could provide "insight into what Putin's thoughts were on a potential new

relationship" between Russia and the United States.<sup>261</sup> Kushner testified that the meeting primarily entailed Gorkov telling Kushner about VEB, with which Kushner was entirely unfamiliar, and "that was really the extent of it."<sup>262</sup> Gorkov gave Kushner two gifts, which Kushner registered with the transition.<sup>263</sup>

(U) In January 2017, businessman and former Navy officer [REDACTED] was introduced through Emirati associates to Russian investor Kirill Dmitriev in the Seychelles.<sup>264</sup> [REDACTED] had no official or unofficial role in the transition, but had met twice with Bannon at Trump Tower.<sup>265</sup>

[REDACTED] testified that his meeting with Dmitriev lasted 20-30 minutes and focused on "trade matters," and "how the United States and Russia should be working together to defeat Islamic terrorism."<sup>265</sup>

[REDACTED] stated that he and Dmitriev did not discuss sanctions, the Russian government's "desire to have a relationship with the Trump administration," or "any channel of communications between the United States and Russia."<sup>267</sup> [REDACTED] further stated that he had had "no communications or dealings with [Dmitriev] or any of his colleagues before or after that encounter last January."<sup>268</sup>

(U) The Committee did not find evidence that Kushner or [REDACTED] did anything inappropriate during or following their meetings with Gorkov and Dmitriev. To the extent that one or both meetings reflected an unsuccessful attempt by intermediaries of the Russian government

to set up a “back channel” to the incoming Trump administration, that purpose was not shared with or accepted by Kushner or [REDACTED]—and potentially reflected an absence of such channels during the campaign.<sup>269</sup> Kushner, who was connected to Gorkov by Kislyak, asserted that “the fact that we [we]re going through the normal channels during the transition hopefully serves to show that there were no existing channels through the campaign.” Similarly, [REDACTED] noted his meeting with Dmitriev “didn’t happen until . . . more than 2 months after the election. So if there was all this collusion [before the election], why would there even need to be any other followup meetings?”<sup>270</sup>

#### Clinton Campaign

(U) Using a series of intermediaries, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and Hillary for America (Clinton campaign) paid a research firm to conduct opposition research on candidate Trump and his ties with Russia. As part of this effort, research from numerous purported Russian sources was obtained and provided to the Clinton campaign, thereby constituting indirect, but substantial, links “between Russia and individuals associated with political campaigns” relevant to the 2016 U.S. election.

(U) Fusion GPS (Fusion) is the trade name of a Washington, D.C.-based company, Bean LLC, that conducts research primarily on behalf of corporate clients.<sup>271</sup> According to longtime Wall Street Journal

reporter and Fusion co-founder [REDACTED] Fusion “specialize[s] in finding records and reading things and digesting large volumes of information.”<sup>272</sup> Fusion’s general practice is to “do engagements on a 30-day basis, and at the end of the 30 days we write a report about what we found. . . . And if you think what we told you was interesting and you want more, we can sign up again.”<sup>273</sup> Founded and led by former journalists,<sup>274</sup> Fusion maintains relationships with numerous reporters, and provides information to news outlets on behalf of clients that include law firms, media organizations, and lobbying organizations.<sup>275</sup>

(U) As described below, Fusion was hired in spring 2016 by [REDACTED] [REDACTED], who represented the DNC and the Clinton campaign. Fusion was paid to conduct opposition research on candidate Trump. Fusion subsequently hired Christopher Steele as a sub-contractor to obtain information from sources purported to be current and former Russian government officials. The information Steele collected was reported back to the Clinton campaign via Fusion and [REDACTED].<sup>276</sup>

**(U) Finding #36: Prior to conducting opposition research targeting candidate Trump’s business dealings, Fusion GPS conducted research benefitting Russian interests.**

(U) Prior to conducting opposition research targeting candidate Trump’s



business dealings, Fusion conducted research benefitting Russian interests.<sup>277</sup> Specifically, in 2013, Fusion was retained by a law firm to assist with representation of a Russian defendant in a civil forfeiture case arising out of alleged money laundering activities uncovered by the late Sergei Magnitsky (whose name was subsequently given to the U.S. human rights law, the Magnitsky Act).<sup>278</sup> [REDACTED] acknowledged that the Kremlin's interests in the case were aligned with his client and against the U.S. government.<sup>279</sup>

(U) Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya hired the law firm for which Simpson was working, and that firm retained the services of Russian-American lobbyist Rinat Akhmetshin, both of whom attended a meeting at Trump Tower on June 9, 2016, described in the first part of this chapter.<sup>280</sup> During the litigation, Veselnitskaya received, via the law firm, memoranda summarizing [REDACTED] research.<sup>281</sup> Certain topics—including the Ziff Brothers (a venture capital firm specializing in capital investment)—were the subject of both (1) memoranda Veselnitskaya received from [REDACTED] and (2) the presentation Veselnitskaya made to Trump campaign officials.<sup>282</sup> [REDACTED] acknowledged being with Veselnitskaya at a court hearing in New York on the morning of June 9, 2016, prior to her meeting at Trump Tower.<sup>283</sup> He further recalled having drinks and dinner with her and others, including Akhmetshin, in Washington, D.C. a day or two later.<sup>284</sup> However, he denied

discussing the Trump Tower meeting with her before or after it occurred, and claimed not to have learned about it until 2017.<sup>285</sup>

(U) Finding #37: The [REDACTED] hired Fusion GPS on behalf of the Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee to research candidate Trump's Russia ties.

(U) [REDACTED] is longtime counsel to the DNC.<sup>286</sup> [REDACTED] also represented the Clinton campaign, from which it received \$5.6 million in 2015 and 2016.<sup>287</sup> Pursuant to that representation, during the 2016 campaign, "[t]here was an expectation that [REDACTED] would hire the consultants, including research consultants, necessary to enable us to provide services to the campaign."<sup>288</sup>

(U) In approximately March or April 2016,<sup>289</sup> Fusion principals [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] approached [REDACTED] "and indicated that they might be a good fit for doing work to support the legal efforts" of [REDACTED] clients.<sup>290</sup> [REDACTED] testified that Fusion "had been retained . . . by a wealthy Republican . . . to do research on then candidate Trump . . . and thought that if I was going to be looking to hire a consultant to help me advise the campaign on issues relating to Trump, that they would be a good fit."<sup>291</sup> [REDACTED] was looking for a consultant to, among other things, sort through the multitude of public records pertaining to Trump's business dealings.<sup>292</sup> Although he had not previously worked with Fusion, he chose to

hire the company based on its familiarity with Trump's dealings, including "his business holdings, his financial holdings, and the kinds of litigation he had been involved in."<sup>293</sup> [REDACTED] further testified that "[t]hey were recommended . . . [and] thought highly of in the community."<sup>294</sup>

(U) The Committee determined the "wealthy Republican" who funded Fusion's initial Trump Research was [REDACTED]. In September 2015, the *Beacon* retained Fusion to conduct opposition research on Trump.<sup>295</sup> [REDACTED] leadership have publicly stated they "had no knowledge of or connection to the Steele dossier, did not pay for the dossier, and never had contact with, knowledge of, or provided payment for any work performed by Steele."<sup>296</sup> [REDACTED] testified that—based on a careful review of the relevant documents—he had identified "zero overlap in the work product" between the dossier and what Fusion provided.<sup>297</sup>

(U) [REDACTED] sought and received "budget approval to be able to spend money in order for me to retain consultants," from Clinton campaign manager [REDACTED] but did not specifically identify Fusion to [REDACTED].<sup>298</sup> Fusion's Simpson was "definitely aware that [REDACTED] represented the DNC and that they were the client in this matter" based on a general understanding that [REDACTED] represents the DNC.<sup>299</sup> Fusion's expenses, including the hiring of Christopher Steele as a sub-contractor,

were passed on to [REDACTED],<sup>300</sup> and ultimately to the Clinton campaign and DNC.<sup>301</sup> In total, Fusion paid Steele (and charged [REDACTED]) approximately \$160,000; Steele's efforts were part of a larger opposition research project for which [REDACTED] paid Fusion over \$1 million.<sup>302</sup>

(U) [REDACTED] testified that Fusion began its opposition research work by "review[ing] what we had learned over the previous months," presumably including "information about candidate Trump's business ties in Russia," although [REDACTED] had not been aware of Russia-specific research at the time he engaged Fusion.<sup>303</sup> Fusion "began to develop more specific lines of inquiry," and eventually hired Steele, whom [REDACTED] had known since approximately 2009.<sup>304</sup> [REDACTED], signed off on the decision to hire Steele as a sub-contractor in June 2016—around the same time he learned that Fusion was beginning to focus its opposition research on Trump's ties to Russia—but was not aware of Steele's identity until July 2016.<sup>305</sup>

**(U) Finding #38: Christopher Steele claims to have obtained his dossier information second- and third-hand from purported high-placed Russian sources, such as government officials with links to the Kremlin and intelligence services.**

(U) Between June and November 2016, Steele produced sixteen reports for Fusion, which comprise what has become known as the Steele dossier, "concerning Russian efforts to influence the US Presidential



election and links between Russia and Donald Trump.<sup>306</sup> Steele did not travel to Russia to compile these reports.<sup>307</sup> Instead, Simpson stated that “[Steele] hire[d] people who can travel and talk to people and find out what’s going on.”<sup>308</sup>

(U) Of the separate claims the Committee identified within the dossier, almost all are attributable to Russian or Russia-based sources, such as: a “senior Russian government figure,” a “senior Russian leadership figure,” an “official close to [the] Russian Presidential Administration,” a “Kremlin insider,” a “former top Russian officer,” a “senior Russian financial official,” a “senior Russian Foreign Ministry figure,” a “Kremlin official involved in U.S. relations,” and a “former top level Russian intelligence officer still active inside the Kremlin.”<sup>309</sup>

(U) The Committee is concerned with the degree to which the Kremlin may have sought to influence information that was ultimately provided to Steele—through the potential provision of disinformation or otherwise—consistent with its ongoing efforts “to undermine public faith in the US democratic process . . . .”<sup>310</sup> In addition, the vast majority of witnesses the Committee interviewed, including [REDACTED], did not know the identity of Steele’s sources.<sup>311</sup> Steele declined to testify before the Committee, and the two witnesses who claimed to know some of Steele’s sources—Simpson and [REDACTED], a former U.S. Department of State official—declined to identify them.<sup>312</sup>

(U) Finding #39: Christopher Steele’s information from Russian sources was provided directly to Fusion GPS and [REDACTED] and indirectly to the Clinton campaign.

(U) Fusion began receiving written reports from Steele in June 2016.<sup>313</sup> At the same time, Fusion provided updates—approximately weekly and usually orally—to [REDACTED].<sup>314</sup> [REDACTED] recalled receiving some of the information later included in the dossier “maybe late June, early July.”<sup>315</sup> [REDACTED] exchanges with Fusion were not one-way communications: he specifically recalled directing follow-up work on information gathered by Steele.<sup>316</sup> Elias recalled personally being briefed by Steele on his findings during a late September or early October meeting at [REDACTED] office and formed the impression that “the Fusion folks thought it was important that Mr. Steele hear from me directly that I was aware of his work and was appreciative.”<sup>317</sup> The Committee requested [REDACTED] records related to this meeting, but the firm was not able to locate any.<sup>318</sup>

(U) [REDACTED] led regular briefings that contained Steele’s information for senior Clinton campaign staff, which included Clinton campaign manager [REDACTED] and campaign chairman John Podesta.<sup>319</sup> [REDACTED] also began “relaying . . . information received from Fusion GPS to the DNC . . . around . . . convention time.”<sup>320</sup>

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