

Obama Official In Contact With Russian Embassy Month Before Trump Inauguration

Judicial Watch and The Daily Caller News Foundation released eight pages of State Department documents revealing that on December 23, 2016, 28 days before the inauguration of President Donald Trump, State Department Special Coordinator for Libya Jonathan Winer had a 10-minute phone call with Alexey Vladimirovich Skosyrev, the “political chief” at the Russian Embassy in Washington, D.C.

The documents also show that State Department officials continued to use unsecure BlackBerry devices for the transmission of classified material more than a year after Hillary Clinton’s use of an unsecure nongovernment email system had been revealed.

Judicial Watch obtained the documents in a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit filed on April 25, 2018 on behalf of itself and The Daily Caller News Foundation against the State Department after State failed to respond to three separate FOIA requests (*Judicial Watch v. U.S. Department of State* (No. 1:18-cv- 00968)). The lawsuit seeks:

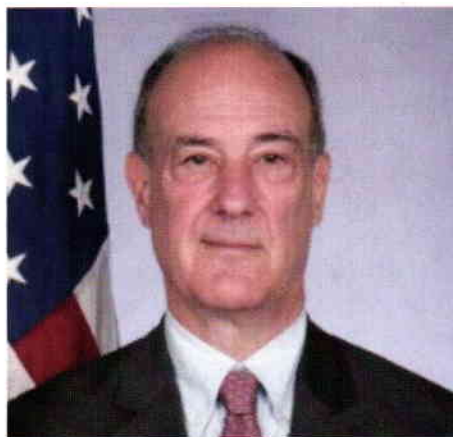
- All records of communications between State Department officials, including former Secretary of State John Kerry, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland,

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“The Kerry State Department and Jonathan Winer worked hand-in-glove with the Clinton Fusion GPS spy Christopher Steele.”

—Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton

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Former State Department Special Coordinator for Libya Jonathan Winer

on the one hand, and British national Christopher Steele and/or employees or contractors of Steele’s company, Orbis Business Intelligence, on the other hand.

- All records and/or memoranda provided by Christopher Steele and/or his firm Orbis Business Intelligence or by others acting on Steele’s/Orbis’ behalf, to State Department officials.
- Any and all records in the custody of the State Department related to the provision of documents to British national Christopher Steele and/or his firm, Orbis Business Intelligence, or the receipt of documents from Steele or his firm. Time period is January 20, 2009 through the present.
- All records created in 2016 by Jonathan M. Winer relating to research compiled by Christopher Steele.

Following Winer’s December 23 call with Russian political operative Skosyrev, State Department official Anne Sackville-West provides a “readout” of the call to department colleagues, in which she updates the



U.S. State Department, Washington, D.C.

“S-Lavrov points” (Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov). The body of the readout is entirely redacted as classified.

Despite the classification, Eric Green, then-director of the Office of Russian Affairs in the Eurasian Bureau of the State Department, forwarded the exchange via his unsecure BlackBerry to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs Kathleen Kavalec, to Obama Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Ambassador Victoria Nuland, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary John Heffern. Kavalec then responds, saying “Jonathan called me after first trying to get through to Toria and John. He relayed this readout, noting that Skosyrev emphasized that [redacted].”

“The State Department has still not fully explained its role in collecting and disseminating Christopher Steele’s false allegations about President Trump’s ties to Russia,” said Daily Caller News Foundation President Neil Patel. “The latest documents obtained by Judicial Watch on behalf of The Daily Caller News Foundation raise new and important questions about the role played by Jonathan Winer, who played a key role as

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Benghazi

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ment, under court order, finally provided Judicial Watch a previously hidden email, which shows top State Department officials used and were aware of Hillary Clinton's email account.

Judicial Watch's discovery over the last several months found many more details about the scope of the Clinton email scandal and cover-up:

- John Hackett, former Director of Information Programs and Services (IPS) testified under oath that he had raised concerns that former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's staff may have "culled out 30,000" of the secretary's "personal" emails without following strict National Archives standards. He also revealed that he believed there was interference with the formal FOIA review process related to the classification of

Clinton's Benghazi-related emails.

- Heather Samuelson, Clinton's White House liaison at the State Department, and later Clinton's personal lawyer, admitted under oath that she was granted immunity by the Department of Justice in June 2016.
- Justin Cooper, former aide to President Bill Clinton and Clinton Foundation employee who registered the domain name of the unsecure clintonemail.com server that Clinton used while serving as Secretary of State, testified he worked with Huma Abedin, Clinton's deputy chief of staff, to create the nongovernment email system.
- In the interrogatory responses of E.W. (Bill) Priestap, assistant

director of the FBI Counterintelligence Division, he stated that the agency found Clinton email records in the Obama White House, specifically, the executive office of the president.

- Jacob "Jake" Sullivan, Clinton's senior adviser and deputy chief of staff when she was secretary of state, testified that both he and Clinton used her unsecure nongovernment email system to conduct official State Department business.
- Eric Boswell, former assistant secretary of state for diplomatic security during Clinton's tenure as secretary of state, testified that Clinton was warned twice against using unsecure BlackBerrys and personal emails to transmit classified material. **JW**

Embassy

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Steele's conduit to U.S. diplomats."

"The Kerry State Department and Jonathan Winer worked hand-in-glove with the Clinton Fusion GPS spy Christopher Steele," said Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton. "It is suspicious, to say the least, that Winer was in contact with a senior Russian government official as the Kerry State Department was simultaneously pushing the Russia smear against then-President-elect Trump."

Judicial Watch uncovered State Department documents showing that Winer played a key role in facilitating Steele's access to other top government officials and prominent international business executives. Winer was even approached by a movie producer about making a movie about the Russia-gate targeting of President Trump. In September 2019, Judicial Watch released State Department documents revealing that former British spy and



Russian Embassy, Washington, D.C.

dossier author Christopher Steele had an extensive and close working relationship with Winer and Nuland dating back to May of 2014.

In July 2019, Judicial Watch uncovered a series of documents from the State Department that include a September 2016 email exchange between Nuland and Winer, discussing a "face-to-face" meeting on a "Russian

matter."

In December 2018, Judicial Watch released documents revealing that Nuland was involved in the Obama State Department's urgent gathering of classified Russia-investigation information and disseminating it to members of Congress within hours of Trump's taking office.

In May 2019, Judicial Watch's released documents showing a conversation between Kavalec and Bruce Ohr, discussing the targeting of Donald Trump with Steele dossier material. In discussing a meeting with the potential source for a *Mother Jones* article accusing the Trump campaign of taking money from a Russian-American oil magnate, as well as Christopher Steele's connection to that source, Kavalec emails Ohr citing the accusatory *Mother Jones* article. Ohr says, "I really hope we can get something going here." **JW**