

WHITE HOUSE

## The definitive Trump-Russia timeline of events

Follow our timeline of events on the Trump administration's ties to Russia.

By **MATTHEW NUSSBAUM** | 03/03/2017 07:30 PM EST | Updated 11/13/2017 10:26 PM EST



Major questions remain about the degree of interaction between Trump associates and Russian operatives. | POLITICO illustration/Getty and iStock

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Three Trump campaign officials have now been charged as a result of the special counsel investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election.

Moscow, at the behest of Russian President Vladimir Putin, allegedly waged a sustained influence operation in support of Donald Trump's campaign for president. Major questions remain about the degree of interaction between Trump associates and Russian operatives. Trump is now facing a special prosecutor — former FBI Director Robert Mueller — who is delving into the allegations of Russian meddling and possible collusion between Trump's campaign and the Kremlin.

Here's what we know so far based on news reports, public statements, court documents and the U.S. government's unclassified report on Russian election interference.

## **2013**

**June 18:** Trump writes on Twitter: "The Miss Universe Pageant will be broadcast live from MOSCOW, RUSSIA on November 9th. A big deal that will bring our countries together!"

Trump, who owned the pageant at the time, adds later that day: "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?"

**Oct. 17:** Trump says in an interview with David Letterman he has conducted "a lot of business with the Russians."

"Well I've done a lot of business with the Russians," Trump says. "They're smart and they're tough." Trump goes on to say that Putin is a "tough guy" and that he's met him "once."



The Miss Universe Pageant takes place Nov. 9, 2013, in Moscow. | Getty

**Nov. 9:** The Miss Universe pageant is held in Moscow. Trump attends.

**Nov. 10:** Trump writes on Twitter: "I just got back from Russia-learned lots & lots. Moscow is a very interesting and amazing place! U.S. MUST BE VERY SMART AND VERY STRATEGIC."

## 2015

**September:** An FBI agent informs a tech-support contractor at the Democratic National Committee that it may have been hacked. The contractor is not sure if the caller is really an FBI agent or if the call is legitimate.

**Oct. 14:** Trump appears to cast doubt on the intelligence community's assessment that Russian-backed separatists were behind the downing of civilian airliner, Malaysia Airlines Flight 17.

"That's a horrible thing that happened," Trump says. "It's disgusting and disgraceful but Putin and Russia say they didn't do it, the other side said they did, no one really knows who did it, probably Putin knows who did it. Possibly it was Russia but they are totally denying it. ... But they're saying it wasn't them. The other side says it is them. And we're going to go through that arguing for probably for 50 years and nobody is ever going to know. Probably was Russia."





Presidential candidate Donald Trump talks about Russia during the Republican presidential debate in Milwaukee on Nov. 10, 2015. | Getty

**Nov. 10:** Trump says at a GOP debate that he got to know Putin “very well because we were both on ‘60 Minutes,’ we were stablemates, and we did very well that night.” He adds: “If Putin wants to go and knocked the hell out of ISIS, I am all for it, 100 percent, and I can’t understand how anybody would be against it.”

**Dec. 10:** Michael Flynn attends Russia Today’s 10th anniversary dinner. He participates in a paid speaking engagement and sits just two seats from Putin.

**Dec. 17:** Russian President Vladimir Putin praises Trump, then the front-runner in the Republican primary, at his year-end news conference.

“He is a very flamboyant man, very talented, no doubt about that. But it’s not our business to judge his merits, it’s up to the voters of the United States,” Putin says. “He is an absolute leader of the presidential race, as we see it today. He says that he wants to move to another level relations, a deeper level of relations with Russia ... How can we not welcome that? Of course, we welcome it.”

Trump responds with praise of his own.

“It is always a great honor to be so nicely complimented by a man so highly respected within his own country and beyond,” Trump says in a statement. “I have always felt that Russia and the United States should be able to work well with each other towards defeating



terrorism and restoring world peace, not to mention trade and all of the other benefits derived from mutual respect."

## 2016

**Feb. 17:** "Putin called me a genius," Trump says at a campaign event in South Carolina. According to PolitiFact, Trump would repeat the claim "three times in April, in a May interview on CNN, at a June rally in California, twice in July, and at an August town hall in Ohio."

**March 6:** Around the time George Papadopoulos learns he will be a foreign policy adviser to the Trump campaign, he has a conversation with a supervisory campaign official. Papadopoulos leaves the conversation with the understanding that "a principal foreign policy focus of the Campaign was an improved U.S. relationship with Russia," according to a plea agreement.

**March 14:** Papadopoulos meets in Italy with a London-based professor who takes "great interest" in him after learning of his role in the Trump campaign, according to a plea agreement. Papadopoulos learns that the professor has "substantial connections with Russian government officials, which Papadopoulos thought could increase his importance as a policy advisor to the Campaign," the plea agreement says.



Many believe the hacking of John Podesta's email had a big effect on Hillary Clinton's campaign. | Getty

**March 19:** John Podesta's staff is told incorrectly by another Clinton campaign staffer that an email instructing him to change his password is legitimate. The action allows Russian hackers into Podesta's account.

**March 21:** When asked who his foreign policy advisers are (in an interview with The Washington Post), Trump names, among others, Carter Page and George Papadopoulos, who he calls an "excellent guy." Page is an American banker who had lived in Moscow for three years.

**March 22:** Billy Rinehart, a former DNC employee working for the Clinton campaign, receives what he thinks is a legitimate email telling him to change his password. He enters his information, unwittingly giving Russian hackers access to his account.

**March 24:** Papadopoulos meets in London with the professor, who is accompanied by a female Russian national, who is introduced as someone "with connections to senior Russian government officials," according to the plea agreement. Papadopoulos emails a campaign supervisor after the meeting, along with several members of the foreign policy team, and tells them he discussed arranging a meeting with Russian leadership "to discuss U.S.-Russia ties under President Trump." The campaign supervisor responds, "Great work," according to the plea agreement.



Paul Manafort is hired to help lead Donald Trump's delegate-gathering efforts. | Getty

**March 31:** Trump attends a meeting in Washington with foreign policy advisors, including Papadopoulos. Papadopoulos “stated, in sum and substance, that he had connections that could help arrange a meeting between then-candidate Trump and President Putin,” according to the plea agreement.

The White House later says it was the only meeting of the group to take place.

During his time in Washington, Papadopoulos worked with the professor and female Russian national to “arrange a meeting between the Campaign and the Russian government, and took steps to advise the Campaign of his progress,” according to the plea agreement. In early April, he sends multiple emails to campaign officials about his contacts with the Russians.

**March 28:** Trump hires Paul Manafort to help lead his delegate-gathering efforts. Manafort had worked recently as a senior adviser for pro-Russia Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich.

**April 18:** The professor introduces Papadopoulos to an individual over email who Papadopoulos is told has connections to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Papadopoulos and the individual go on to have “multiple conversations over Skype and email about setting ‘the groundwork’ for a ‘potential’ meeting between the Campaign and Russian government officials,” according to the plea deal.

**April 25:** Papadopoulos emails a senior policy adviser to the Trump campaign and says, according to the plea deal: “The Russian government has an open invitation by Putin for Mr. Trump to meet him when he is ready []. The advantage of being in London is that these governments tend to speak a bit more openly in ‘neutral’ cities.”

**April 26:** Papadopoulos meets the professor for breakfast at a London hotel. The professor says he has just returned from meeting with high-level Russian government officials in Moscow and that “he (the Professor) learned that that the Russians had obtained ‘dirt’ on then-candidate Clinton,” according to the plea deal. Papadopoulos would later tell the FBI that the professor also said the Russians had “emails of Clinton” and “they have thousands of emails.”

**April 27:** Papadopoulos emails a high-ranking campaign official and writes, according to the plea agreement, that he would like “to discuss Russia’s interest in hosting Mr. Trump. Have been receiving a lot of calls over the last month about Putin wanting to host him and the team when the time is right.” Papadopoulos also emails the senior policy advisor to say



he has “some interesting messages coming in from Moscow about a trip when the time is right.”

On the same day, Trump delivers his first major foreign policy address in Washington.

He calls for better relations with Russia in the speech: “We desire to live peacefully and in friendship with Russia and China. We have serious differences with these two nations, and must regard them with open eyes, but we are not bound to be adversaries. We should seek common ground based on shared interests. Russia, for instance, has also seen the horror of Islamic terrorism. I believe an easing of tensions, and improved relations with Russia, from a position of strength only, is possible, absolutely possible. Common sense says this cycle, this horrible cycle of hostility must end and ideally will end soon. Good for both countries. Some say the Russians won’t be reasonable. I intend to find out. If we can’t make a deal under my administration, a deal that’s great — not good, great — for America, but also good for Russia, then we will quickly walk from the table. It’s as simple as that. We’re going to find out.”

Russian ambassador Sergey Kislyak is seated in the front row.

**May 4:** Papadopoulos receives an email from individual with connections to the foreign affairs ministry, who says his colleagues are “open for cooperation” and offers to set up a meeting in Moscow. Papadopoulos forwards the email to a high-ranking campaign official, and asks: “What do you think? Is this something we want to move forward with?” according to the plea deal.

**May 5:** Papadopoulos and the campaign supervisor have a phone call, after which Papadopoulos forwards him the email from the Russian foreign affairs contact.

**May 14:** Papadopoulos reiterates in an email to a high-ranking campaign official that the Russian government is “interested in hosting Mr. Trump.”

**May 18:** James Clapper, the director of National Intelligence, says at a Washington event there are “some indications” of cyberattacks aimed at the presidential campaigns.

**May 21:** Papadopoulos emails another high-ranking campaign official to state that Russia “has been eager to meet Mr. Trump for quite sometime [sic].”

**Early June:** At a meeting of foreign policy experts with the Indian prime minister, Page praises Putin as a stronger leader than Obama, according to The Washington Post.

**June 14:** The DNC announces it has been the victim of an attack by Russian hackers.

**June 15:** A hacker going by the name Guccifer 2.0 posts documents stolen from the DNC, including the Democrats' plan of attack against Trump. Trump releases a statement accusing the DNC of being behind the hack "as a way to distract from the many issues facing their deeply flawed candidate and failed party leader."

**June 19:** Papadopoulos offers in an email to a high-ranking campaign official to travel to Russia to meet with officials if Trump is unable to. He states he is willing "to make the trip off the record if it's in the interest of the Mr. Trump and the campaign to meet specific people."

**June 21:** Guccifer 2.0 posts documents stolen from the DNC on Clinton's vulnerabilities as well as potential responses to lines of attack.

**July 7:** At a speech in Moscow, Page criticized the United States and other Western democracies. "Washington and other Western powers have impeded potential progress through their often hypocritical focus on ideas such as democratization, inequality, corruption and regime change," Page said.

POLITICO later reveals that Trump's former campaign manager Corey Lewandowski approved the trip.

**Week of July 18:** Three Trump national security advisers — Page, J.D. Gordon and Walid Phares — meet with Kislyak in Cleveland. They told him they hoped to see improved relations with Russia.

**July 18:** The Republican National Convention adopts the official Republican Party platform, with the following language on Ukraine: "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. ... We will not accept any territorial change in Eastern Europe imposed by force, in Ukraine, Georgia, or elsewhere, and will use all appropriate constitutional measures to bring to justice the practitioners of aggression and assassination."

The Washington Post reports the same day: "The Trump campaign worked behind the scenes last week to make sure the new Republican platform won't call for giving weapons to Ukraine to fight Russian and rebel forces, contradicting the view of almost all Republican foreign policy leaders in Washington."

Gordon, one of Trump's national security advisers, would later tell CNN that he opposed efforts to add language that was more aggressively pro-Ukraine because he believed that would have been inconsistent with Trump's public statements on the matter.

**July 20:** Sen. Jeff Sessions, an early Trump endorser who led his national security advisory committee, meets with Ambassador Kislyak and a group of other ambassadors at a Republican National Convention event.

**July 22:** WikiLeaks publishes about 20,000 emails stolen from the DNC. The emails appeared to show a preference for Hillary Clinton over Sen. Bernie Sanders among DNC leadership.

**July 24:** DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz resigns amid the controversial fallout from the email dump.

**July 25:** The FBI announced it was investigating the DNC hack and stated that "a compromise of this nature is something we take very seriously." That same day, The Daily Beast reported: "The FBI suspects that Russian government hackers breached the networks of the Democratic National Committee and stole emails that were posted to the anti-secrecy site WikiLeaks on Friday. It's an operation that several U.S. officials now suspect was a deliberate attempt to influence the presidential election in favor of Donald Trump, according to five individuals familiar with the investigation of the breach."

**July 26:** Intelligence officials inform the White House that they have "high confidence" that Russia is behind the DNC hacks.

**July 27:** Trump calls on Russia to hack Hillary Clinton's emails from the private server she used as secretary of state.

"I will tell you this, Russia: If you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing," Trump said at a news conference. "I think you will probably be rewarded mightily by our press."

Pence releases a statement the same day, which his staffers say was drafted before Trump's comments.

"The FBI will get to the bottom of who is behind the hacking," Pence said. "If it is Russia and they are interfering in our elections, I can assure you both parties and the United States government will ensure there are serious consequences." But he went on to say there



should be increased focus on the contents of the hacks and what they exposed about the Democratic Party.

Obama, in an interview with NBC, says of the DNC hacks: "I know that experts have attributed this to the Russians."

**July 31:** An interview airs on ABC in which Trump says of Russia's annexation of Crimea: "But you know, the people of Crimea, from what I've heard, would rather be with Russia than where they were. And you have to look at that, also." Trump also says in the interview that he was not involved in efforts to defeat an amendment to the Republican platform that would have added more aggressively pro-Ukraine language.

In an interview on NBC's "Meet the Press," Paul Manafort says that the effort to block the pro-Ukraine amendment "absolutely did not come from the Trump campaign. ... No one, zero."

**Aug. 8:** Trump ally and friend Roger Stone tells a group of Florida Republicans that he has "communicated with 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," Stone says.

**Aug. 12:** Guccifer 2.0 releases the cellphone numbers and email addresses of almost all of the Democrats in the House of Representatives, apparently with documents stolen from the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

The digital security firm ThreatConnect announces that day that another site posting leaked documents, DC Leaks, appears to be linked to Russian intelligence services. The site's documents also mostly targeted Democrats, but it also had emails stolen from campaign staffers for noted Russia hawks GOP Sens. John McCain and Lindsey Graham.

**Aug. 14:** The New York Times publishes an exposé on Ukrainian documents that appeared to show that \$12.7 million in cash was earmarked for Manafort by the Russia-aligned Party of Regions.

**August 15:** The campaign supervisor tells Papadopoulos that "I would encourage you" and another foreign policy adviser to "make the trip...if it is feasible." The trip did not take place.

**Aug. 17:** Trump receives his first classified intelligence briefing. It is later reported by NBC that Trump received information at the briefing about "direct links" between the Russian

government and the email hacks. Trump names Kellyanne Conway as his campaign manager and Steve Bannon as campaign chief executive in a move that appears to push Manafort to the background.

**Aug. 19:** Manafort resigns.

**Aug. 21:** Long-time Trump friend and confidant Roger Stone writes on Twitter: “Trust me, it will soon be the Podesta's time in the barrel. #CrookedHillary”

**Sept. 5:** The Washington Post reports that U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies are investigating “a broad covert Russian operation in the United States to sow public distrust in the upcoming presidential election and in U.S. political institutions.”

Obama holds what he calls a “candid, blunt and businesslike” meeting with Putin at the G-20 Summit in China. The two meet for about 90 minutes, and Obama says afterward: “We’ve had problems with cyber intrusions from Russia and other countries in the past.” But he declines to comment on “specific investigations.”

**Sept. 7:** Clapper reiterates Obama’s point that experts believe Russia is behind the DNC hack.

Trump praises Putin at an NBC forum, saying Putin had an 82 percent approval rating in Russia and adding: “He’s been a leader far more than our president has been a leader.”

Trump also once again noted that Putin had complimented him.

“I think when he calls me brilliant I’ll take the compliment, but it’s not going to get him anywhere,” Trump said.

**Sept. 8:** Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov says Moscow is watching the presidential campaign closely and is willing to improve ties with the U.S. whoever wins, but says, in reference to Trump’s praise, that Russia will wait to see the winner’s rhetoric “after they are elected.”

“We hope that after the end of the [U.S.] election campaign, we will see Washington’s political will towards building good relations,” he said. The government-owned Russian News Agency TASS also reported on Peskov’s comments: “He also said the Kremlin paid more attention to the statements made by the candidates than to those of the outgoing president.”

Sen. Jeff Sessions, a prominent Trump surrogate, meets in his Senate office with Kislyak.

Trump tells the Kremlin-backed Russia Today in an interview that “it’s probably unlikely” Russia is interfering in the election.

“I think maybe the Democrats are putting that out,” Trump says. He adds that foreign interference in the election would be “inappropriate.”

In an interview with CNN, Pence says that “it’s inarguable that Vladimir Putin has been a stronger leader in his country than Barack Obama has been in this country.”

**Sept. 13:** Vitaly Churkin, Russia’s ambassador to the United Nations, lodged a formal complaint with the U.N. over one U.N. official’s condemnation of Trump and some populist leaders in Europe.

**Sept. 26:** Foreign policy adviser Carter Page steps down from the Trump campaign.

At the first presidential debate, Trump tries to cast doubt on reports that Russia was behind the DNC hacks. He says: “I don’t think anybody knows it was Russia that broke into the DNC. She’s saying Russia, Russia, Russia, but I don’t — maybe it was. I mean, it could be Russia, but it could also be China. It could also be lots of other people. It also could be somebody sitting on their bed that weighs 400 pounds, OK? You don’t know who broke into DNC. But what did we learn with DNC? We learned that Bernie Sanders was taken advantage of by your people, by Debbie Wasserman Schultz. Look what happened to her. But Bernie Sanders was taken advantage of. That’s what we learned. Now, whether that was Russia, whether that was China, whether it was another country, we don’t know, because the truth is, under President Obama we’ve lost control of things that we used to have control over.”

**Oct. 3:** Stone writes on Twitter: “I have total confidence that @wikileaks and my hero Julian Assange will educate the American people soon #LockHerUp”

**Oct. 4:** Julian Assange makes a 3 a.m. EST announcement via video saying WikiLeaks will publish new information on the presidential election “every week for the next 10 weeks.”

**Oct. 7:** WikiLeaks dumped a trove of emails hacked from Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta’s personal email account. The release came just hours after a tape emerged in which Trump bragged about groping women by the genitals. The emails were widely covered in the American media, and the Republican National Committee touted them as evidence of “who Hillary Clinton really is.”



The Obama administration accuses Russia of deploying hackers to interfere in the presidential election. A statement from Clapper, the director of National Intelligence, says hacked documents posted on DC Leaks, Guccifer 2.0 and WikiLeaks appear linked to Russian intelligence and accuses “Russia’s senior-most officials” of directing the hacks.

**Oct. 9:** Trump cites WikiLeaks in the second presidential debate to accuse the DNC of rigging the Democratic primary against Sen. Bernie Sanders. Clinton is also asked at the debate about purported excerpts from a paid speech she gave released by WikiLeaks.

Clinton responds, in part: “But, you know, let’s talk about what’s really going on here, Martha, because our intelligence community just came out and said in the last few days that the Kremlin, meaning Putin and the Russian government, are directing the attacks, the hacking on American accounts to influence our election. And WikiLeaks is part of that, as are other sites where the Russians hack information, we don’t even know if it’s accurate information, and then they put it out. We have never in the history of our country been in a situation where an adversary, a foreign power, is working so hard to influence the outcome of the election. And believe me, they’re not doing it to get me elected. They’re doing it to try to influence the election for Donald Trump.”

“She doesn’t know if it’s the Russians doing the hacking,” Trump responds. “Maybe there is no hacking. But they always blame Russia. And the reason they blame Russia because they think they’re trying to tarnish me with Russia. I know nothing about Russia. I know — I know about Russia, but I know nothing about the inner workings of Russia. I don’t deal there. I have no businesses there. I have no loans from Russia.”

**Oct. 10:** “I love WikiLeaks,” Trump says at a Pennsylvania rally. He specifically cites some of the hacked emails to attack Clinton.

**Oct. 11:** Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta warns there may be a tie between the Trump campaign and WikiLeaks.

“I think it’s a reasonable assumption to — or at least a reasonable conclusion — that Mr. Stone had advance warning and the Trump campaign had advance warning about what Assange was going to do,” Podesta tells reporters, referencing Trump friend and ally Roger Stone.

**Oct. 12:** Stone tells a Florida TV station that he has “back-channel communication” with Assange.

"I do have a back-channel communication with Assange, because we have a good mutual friend," Stone says. "That friend travels back and forth from the United States to London and we talk. I had dinner with him last Monday."

He denies ever having spoken to Assange himself, or having met with him.

**Oct. 19:** At the third and final presidential debate, Clinton comments that Putin backed Trump because he "would rather have a puppet as president of the United States."

"No puppet, no puppet, you're the puppet," Trump responds.

"It's pretty clear you won't admit that the Russians have engaged in cyberattacks against the United States of America, that you encouraged espionage against our people, that you are willing to spout the Putin line, sign up for his wish list, break up NATO, do whatever he wants to do, and that you continue to get help from him because he has a very clear favorite in this race," Clinton replies.

**Oct. 31:** The New York Times publishes a story with the headline, "Investigating Donald Trump, F.B.I. Sees No Clear Link To Russia."

**Nov. 8:** Trump is elected President of the United States.

**Nov. 9:** The Russian parliament bursts into applause at news of Trump's victory.

**Nov. 10:** A senior Russian diplomat, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Rybakov, tells Interfax news agency that there "were contacts" between the Russian government and the Trump campaign during the election campaign. Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov later tells the Associated Press that the contacts were "quite natural, quite normal" and took place with both campaigns.

The Trump campaign issues a firm denial.

"It never happened," Trump spokeswoman Hope Hicks tells AP. "There was no communication between the campaign and any foreign entity during the campaign."

Obama meets with Trump at the White House. Obama warns Trump against hiring Flynn.

**Nov. 18:** Trump names Michael Flynn as his national security adviser.

**Nov. 28:** In an interview with Time magazine, Trump continues to express doubt that Russia attempted to interfere in the election. He says: "I don't believe they interfered. That became a laughing point, not a talking point, a laughing point. Any time I do something,

they say, 'Oh, Russia interfered.' Why not get along with Russia? And they can help us fight ISIS, which is both costly in lives and costly in money. And they're effective and smart. It could be Russia. And it could be China. And it could be some guy in his home in New Jersey. I believe that it could have been Russia and it could have been any one of many other people. Sources or even individuals."

**December:** Flynn and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner met with Kislyak at Trump Tower. The White House declined to provide POLITICO with the exact date of the meeting.

**Dec. 4:** Putin praises Trump again in a TV interview: "Trump was an entrepreneur and a businessman. ... Because he achieved success in business, it suggests that he is a clever man."

**Dec. 7:** The Time magazine interview is published.

**Dec. 8:** Former Trump adviser Carter Page appears in Moscow, The New York Times reports. Page tells a Russian state-run news agency that he is there to meet with "business leaders and thought leaders."

**Dec. 15:** Putin sends Trump a letter stressing that the U.S. and Russia play an important role "in ensuring stability and security of the modern world," and expresses his hope that Trump will "restore the framework of bilateral cooperation in different areas as well as bring our level of collaboration on the international scene to a qualitatively new level."

**Dec. 23:** Trump releases the Dec. 15 letter from Putin and says in a statement that the letter was "very nice" and that Putin's thoughts are "so correct." Trump adds: "I hope both sides are able to live up to these thoughts, and we do not have to travel an alternate path."

**Dec. 26:** Oleg Erovinkin, a former KGB official who was suspected assisting a former British spy in compiling a dossier alleging Trump ties to Russia, is found dead in the back seat of his car in Moscow.

**Dec. 29:** Obama orders the ejection of 35 suspected Russian intelligence operatives from the country and imposes sanctions on two Russian intelligence services as retaliation for the election-interference campaign.

Flynn has a series of phone calls with Kislyak. He would later acknowledge that it was possible they discussed the newly imposed sanctions, but he "couldn't be certain."

According to The New York Times, the phone calls came after Kislyak was brought to the



State Department and informed of the sanctions, and became “irate and threatened a forceful Russian response.”

**Dec. 30:** Putin announces he will not retaliate against the U.S. expulsions. His foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, had recommended Russia respond with similar expulsions.

Trump writes on Twitter: “Great move on delay (by V. Putin) — I always knew he was very smart!”

**Dec. 31:** Trump tells reporters at Mar-a-Lago that “hacking is a very hard thing to prove.”

“So it could be somebody else. And I also know things that other people don’t know, and so they cannot be sure of the situation,” Trump adds.

## **2017**

**Jan. 3:** Trump writes on Twitter: “The ‘Intelligence’ briefing on so-called ‘Russian hacking’ was delayed until Friday, perhaps more time needed to build a case. Very strange!”

**Jan. 4:** Trump writes on Twitter: “Julian Assange said ‘a 14 year old could have hacked Podesta’ - why was DNC so careless? Also said Russians did not give him the info!”

**Jan. 5:** Obama is briefed on the intelligence community’s findings on Russian interference in the election.

**Jan. 6:** Briefings begin with lawmakers on Russian interference in the 2016 campaign.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence releases an unclassified report expressing the conclusion of the CIA, FBI and NSA about Russian election interference: “We assess Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. presidential election. Russia’s goals were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency. We further assess Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump. We have high confidence in these judgments. We also assess Putin and the Russian Government aspired to help President-elect Trump’s election chances when possible by discrediting Secretary Clinton and publicly contrasting her unfavorably to him.”

The report concludes that DC Leaks, Guccifer 2.0 and WikiLeaks all obtained the hacked documents via Russian government-backed hackers.

That same day, Clapper, FBI director James Comey and CIA director John Brennan brief Trump at Trump Tower on the intelligence community's findings.

Trump tells The New York Times the Russia controversy is a "political witch hunt."

Trump releases a statement saying the hacks had "absolutely no effect on the outcome of the election" and says that "Russia, China, other countries, outside groups and people are consistently trying" to hack the government and other institutions.

He writes on Twitter later that night: "Gross negligence by the Democratic National Committee allowed hacking to take place. The Republican National Committee had strong defense!"

**Jan. 7:** Trump writes on Twitter: "Having a good relationship with Russia is a good thing, not a bad thing. Only 'stupid' people, or fools, would think that it is bad! We..... have enough problems around the world without yet another one. When I am President, Russia will respect us far more than they do now and.... both countries will, perhaps, work together to solve some of the many great and pressing problems and issues of the WORLD!"

**Jan. 10:** Sessions states under oath at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing: "I have been called a surrogate at a time or two in that campaign and I did not have communications with the Russians."

CNN reports that both Trump and Obama had been briefed on claims that Russia possessed compromising personal and financial information about Trump based on "memos compiled by a former British intelligence operative, whose past work U.S. intelligence officials consider credible."

Soon after, BuzzFeed publishes a dossier that was compiled by former British intelligence professional Christopher Steele with unverified allegations that Trump associates had colluded with Russian operatives and that the Russian government had compromising information about Trump. The implication was that Trump and Obama had been briefed about the information in the dossier.

Trump writes on Twitter: "FAKE NEWS - A TOTAL POLITICAL WITCH HUNT!"

**Jan. 11:** Trump writes on Twitter: "Russia just said the unverified report paid for by political opponents is 'A COMPLETE AND TOTAL FABRICATION, UTTER NONSENSE.' Very unfair! ... Russia has never tried to use leverage over me. I HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH RUSSIA - NO DEALS, NO LOANS, NO NOTHING! ... I win an election easily, a great "movement" is

verified, and crooked opponents try to belittle our victory with FAKE NEWS. A sorry state! ... Intelligence agencies should never have allowed this fake news to 'leak' into the public. One last shot at me. Are we living in Nazi Germany?"

At a news conference at Trump Tower, Trump calls the reports "fake news" but also says for the first time that he believes the election-related hacks were conducted by Russia. But he is quick to add: "And I have to say this also, the Democratic National Committee was totally open to be hacked. They did a very poor job."

Trump also says during the news conference: "If Putin likes Donald Trump, I consider that an asset, not a liability, because we have a horrible relationship with Russia. Russia can help us fight ISIS, which, by the way, is, No. 1, tricky. I mean if you look, this administration created ISIS by leaving at the wrong time. The void was created, ISIS was formed. If Putin likes Donald Trump, guess what, folks? That's called an asset, not a liability. Now, I don't know that I'm gonna get along with Vladimir Putin. I hope I do."

Also at the news conference, incoming press secretary Sean Spicer calls the BuzzFeed report "highly salacious and flat-out false" and called BuzzFeed's and CNN's reporting "a sad and pathetic attempt to get clicks." Incoming Vice President Mike Pence labels the reports "fake news," and accused certain media outlets of an "attempt to demean the president-elect and our incoming administration."

**Jan. 13:** Spicer tells reporters that Flynn's conversations with Kislyak involved only the logistics of setting up an eventual call between Trump and Putin.

Trump says in an interview with The Wall Street Journal that he is open to lifting sanctions against Russia if the country proves helpful on other fronts: "If you get along and if Russia is really helping us, why would anybody have sanctions if somebody's doing some really great things?"

**Jan. 15:** Pence tells CBS News that, according to his conversation with Flynn, Flynn and Kislyak "did not discuss anything having to do with the United States' decision to expel diplomats or impose censure against Russia."

**Jan. 17:** Putin dismisses the dossier as "false."

**Jan. 22:** The Wall Street Journal reports: "U.S. counterintelligence agents have investigated communications that President Donald Trump's national security adviser had with Russian officials, according to people familiar with the matter."

**Jan. 23:** Spicer reiterates that Flynn's call with Kislyak did not touch on sanctions.

**Jan. 26:** Acting attorney general Sally Yates calls White House counsel Don McGahn and informs him they need to meet in person to discuss "a very sensitive matter." The two meet later that day at the White House and Yates warns McGahn that Flynn is making false statements regarding his calls with Kislyak.

**Jan. 27:** Papadopoulos agrees to be interviewed by FBI agents. During the course of the interview, he makes a number of false statements, according to the plea deal.

On the same day, Yates and McGahn meet again, at McGahn's request. Trump and Comey also dine at the White House. It is later reported that Trump asked Comey to pledge his loyalty to him; Comey declined. The White House has disputed this account.

**Jan. 30:** Trump fires Yates for refusing to enforce his travel ban, which is later blocked by federal courts.

**Feb. 2:** Nikki Haley, Trump's U.N. ambassador, condemns Russia's occupation of Crimea at the U.N. Security Council and pledges that the U.S. "Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia returns control over the peninsula to Ukraine." Haley also stated the U.S. wants better relations with Russia.

**Feb. 4:** Trump defends Putin in an interview with Fox News, saying, "I do respect him," and, when pressed on allegations that Putin has been behind certain atrocities, Trump responds: "What, you think our country's so innocent?"

**Feb. 8:** The Senate confirms Sessions as attorney general in a 52-47 vote.

**Feb. 9:** The Washington Post reports that Flynn did, in fact, discuss U.S. sanctions in his phone calls with Kislyak, contrary to Flynn's and the administration's previous statements.

**Feb. 13:** Flynn resigns.

**Feb. 14:** The New York Times reports that "members of Donald J. Trump's 2016 presidential campaign and other Trump associates had repeated contacts with senior Russian intelligence officials in the year before the election, according to four current and former American officials."

**Feb. 15:** CNN reports: "High-level advisers close to then-presidential nominee Donald Trump were in constant communication during the campaign with Russians known to US intelligence, multiple current and former intelligence, law enforcement and administration

officials tell CNN. President-elect Trump and then-President Barack Obama were both briefed on details of the extensive communications between suspected Russian operatives and people associated with the Trump campaign and the Trump business, according to U.S. officials familiar with the matter.”

**Feb. 16:** Trump again calls the Russia controversy “fake news” and said that the Times story from Feb. 14 was “a joke.”

Trump also states: “I have nothing to do with Russia. I told you, I have no deals there, I have no anything. Now, when WikiLeaks, which I had nothing to do with, comes out and happens to give, they’re not giving classified information.”

He also says: “I’m here today is to tell you the whole Russian thing, that’s a ruse. That’s a ruse. And by the way, it would be great if we could get along with Russia, just so you understand that. ... I didn’t do anything for Russia. ... If we could get along with Russia, that’s a positive thing. ... I would love to be able to get along with Russia. ... If we have a good relationship with Russia, believe me, that’s a good thing, not a bad thing.”

Asked if anyone who advised his campaign had contacts with Russia during the election, Trump responds: “No. Nobody that I know of.”

On the same day, Papadopoulos participates in another interview with the FBI.

**Feb. 17:** Papadopoulos deactivates his Facebook account.

**Feb. 20:** The Russian ambassador to the U.N., Vitaly Churkin, passes away in New York.

**Feb. 21:** Trump releases a statement praising Churkin and expressing “the condolences of the American people to the Russian people and government.”

**Feb. 23:** Papadopoulos ceases using his cell phone number and begins using a new number.

**Feb. 28:** The Washington Post reports that the FBI was prepared to pay the former British intelligence operative, Christopher Steele, to continue his work, indicating the Bureau found him credible.

**March 1:** The Washington Post reports that Sessions did speak with the Russian ambassador during the campaign, appearing to contradict his past statements.



**March 2:** As congressional Democrats call for Sessions to resign and even some Republicans say he should recuse himself from an investigation into ties between Russia and the Trump campaign, Trump announces he has “total confidence” in the attorney general.

Sessions announces he will recuse himself from any investigation into ties between Russia and the Trump campaign.

**March 3:** CNN reports on additional meetings that took place between Trump associates and Kislyak.

Trump posts an old picture of Sen. Chuck Schumer eating doughnuts with Vladimir Putin on Twitter and writes: “We should start an immediate investigation into @SenSchumer and his ties to Russia and Putin. A total hypocrite!”

Trump later tweets an article about Nancy Pelosi having met with Kislyak, who she said she hadn’t met, and writes: “I hereby demand a second investigation, after Schumer, of Pelosi for her close ties to Russia, and lying about it.”

Kislyak cancels plans to attend the March 4 Gridiron Dinner.

**March 4:** Trump accuses Obama of having ordered a tapping of the phones at Trump Tower during the campaign, writing in a series of tweets: “Terrible! Just found out that Obama had my “wires tapped” in Trump Tower just before the victory. Nothing found. This is McCarthyism! ... Just out: The same Russian Ambassador that met Jeff Sessions visited the Obama White House 22 times, and 4 times last year alone. ... Is it legal for a sitting President to be “wire tapping” a race for president prior to an election? Turned down by court earlier. A NEW LOW! ... I’d bet a good lawyer could make a great case out of the fact that President Obama was tapping my phones in October, just prior to Election! ... How low has President Obama gone to tapp my phones during the very sacred election process. This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!”

Obama denied the allegations through a spokesman. Comey asks the Justice Department to reject the claim, but no rejection is issued. The claims appeared to be based on a talk radio segment and a Breitbart article about the talk radio segment. The White House declines to offer any evidence to back up the claims, and the next day calls on Congress to investigate and says it will not comment further.

Trump ally Roger Stone writes on Twitter that he “never denied perfectly legal backchannel to Assange who indeed had the goods on #CrookedHillary.”

He later deletes the tweet.

**March 6:** In a press gaggle, Spicer declines to say what the source was for Trump's wire-tapping allegation and presents no evidence to back it up.

**March 8:** When asked if Trump is the target of a counter-intelligence investigation, Spicer responds: "I think that's what we need to find out." He later says: "There is no reason to believe that he is the target of any investigation."

**March 9:** When asked if Trump agrees with Sen. Ben Sasse's declaration that Assange belongs in jail, Spicer demurs and suggests reporters speak with the Department of Justice.

CNN reports that the FBI's counter-intelligence team continues to investigate "computer server connection between the Trump Organization and a Russian bank."

**March 10:** Senior administration officials discussing German Chancellor Angela Merkel's upcoming visit decline to comment on allegations that the Russians are interfering in European elections.

**March 20:** Comey confirms before the House Select Committee on Intelligence that the FBI is investigating possible links between Russia and the Trump campaign.

"The FBI, as part of our counterintelligence effort, is investigating the Russian government's efforts to interfere in the 2016 president election," Comey declares.

Trump writes on Twitter: "James Clapper and others stated that there is no evidence Potus colluded with Russia. This story is FAKE NEWS and everyone knows it! ... The Democrats made up and pushed the Russian story as an excuse for running a terrible campaign. Big advantage in Electoral College & lost! ... The real story that Congress, the FBI and all others should be looking into is the leaking of Classified information. Must find leaker now! ... What about all of the contact with the Clinton campaign and the Russians? Also, is it true that the DNC would not let the FBI in to look?"

**March 22:** The Associated Press reports that Manafort previously secretly worked on behalf of a Russian billionaire to enhance the image of Putin and the Russian government in the West.

At the White House, Spicer downplays Manafort's role in the campaign and declares: "And to be clear, the president has no personal financial dealings with Russia. His ties are limited to hosting a contest in Russia once, and selling a Palm Beach home to a businessman in 2005. That's it."

When asked if Manafort ever encouraged the campaign to take a more pro-Russia position, Spicer responds: "Not that I'm aware of."

CNN reports that night: "The FBI has information that indicates associates of President Donald Trump communicated with suspected Russian operatives to possibly coordinate the release of information damaging to Hillary Clinton's campaign, US officials told CNN. This is partly what FBI Director James Comey was referring to when he made a bombshell announcement Monday before Congress that the FBI is investigating the Trump campaign's ties to Russia, according to one source."

**March 23:** Spicer mocks the CNN report, saying the use of the term "associates" is too broad.

Trump writes on Twitter: "Just watched the totally biased and fake news reports of the so-called Russia story on NBC and ABC. Such dishonesty!"

**March 27:** Spicer reads a State Department statement condemning Russia's detention of peaceful protesters the previous day.

"The United States will monitor the situation, and we call on the government of Russia to immediately release all peaceful protestors," Spicer says.

Trump writes on Twitter: "Trump Russia story is a hoax. #MAGA!" He also questions why people do not focus on whether Hillary Clinton has ties to Russia.

**March 31:** Trump writes on Twitter: "Mike Flynn should ask for immunity in that this is a witch hunt (excuse for big election loss), by media & Dems, of historic proportion!"

**April 1:** Trump writes on Twitter: "When will Sleepy Eyes Chuck Todd and @NBCNews start talking about the Obama SURVEILLANCE SCANDAL and stop with the Fake Trump/Russia story? ... It is the same Fake News Media that said there is "no path to victory for Trump" that is now pushing the phony Russia story. A total scam!"

**April 6:** Rep Devin Nunes (R-Calif.) steps aside from the House investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election after an odd series of events in which he alerted the White House to potential unmasking of transition officials in intelligence reports before giving the news to his fellow committee members.

That night, Trump orders air strikes against Syrian forces following the chemical weapons attack. Russia denounced the strikes.

**April 13:** “We’re not getting along with Russia at all ... we may be at an all-time low,” Trump says during a press conference at the White House with the NATO secretary general. Tillerson and Putin met the same day in Moscow.

Trump later writes on Twitter: “Things will work out fine between the U.S.A. and Russia. At the right time everyone will come to their senses & there will be lasting peace!”

**April 25:** The Senate votes 94-6 to confirm Rod Rosenstein as deputy attorney general.

**May 2:** Trump writes on Twitter: “FBI Director Comey was the best thing that ever happened to Hillary Clinton in that he gave her a free pass for many bad deeds! The phony.....Trump/Russia story was an excuse used by the Democrats as justification for losing the election. Perhaps Trump just ran a great campaign?”

**May 5:** Hackers release a trove of emails purportedly from French presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron’s campaign. Intelligence experts link the hack to Russia.

**May 7:** Trump writes on Twitter: “When will the Fake Media ask about the Dems dealings with Russia & why the DNC wouldn’t allow the FBI to check their server or investigate?”

**May 8:** Former acting Attorney General Sally Yates and former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper testify before a Senate subcommittee on Russian interference in the election.

Yates confirms that she informed the White House that Flynn was “compromised” weeks before news broke that Flynn had misled the vice president and was fired.

Trump tweets: “Director Clapper reiterated what everybody, including the fake media already knows- there is ‘no evidence’ of collusion w/ Russia and Trump.”

Trump later tweets: “The Russia-Trump collusion story is a total hoax, when will this taxpayer funded charade end?”

**May 9:** Trump fires FBI Director James Comey. In the letter announcing his termination, Trump writes: “While I greatly appreciate you informing me, on three separate occasions, that I am not under investigation, I nevertheless concur with the judgment of the Department of Justice that you are not able to effectively lead the Bureau.”

The White House’s official explanation is that Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein recommended the termination in a memo dated May 9, and Sessions affirmed the recommendation in a letter to Trump.

The firing leads to outcry among Democrats and Republicans alike, with many renewing calls for an independent investigation into potential collusion between Trump's campaign and the Russian government.

**May 10:** Trump meets with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in the Oval Office. Lavrov met earlier in the day with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and joked about Comey's firing.

"Was he fired? You're kidding, you're kidding," Lavrov said sarcastically in response to a shouted question.

Trump denies that Stone encouraged him to fire Comey. He tells reporters he fired Comey "because he was not doing a good job."

The Russian government's Twitter accounts post pictures of Trump with Kislyak and Lavrov in the Oval Office.

It is later reported that Trump divulged classified national security information to Lavrov and Kislyak during the course of the meeting.

**May 11:** Trump writes on Twitter: "Russia must be laughing up their sleeves watching as the U.S. tears itself apart over a Democrat EXCUSE for losing the election."

Trump tells NBC's Lester Holt of his decision to fire Comey: "When I decided to just do it, I said to myself, I said you know, this Russia thing with Trump and Russia is a made up story, it's an excuse by the Democrats for having lost an election that they should have won."

**May 12:** Trump writes on Twitter: "Again, the story that there was collusion between the Russians & Trump campaign was fabricated by Dems as an excuse for losing the election. ... When James Clapper himself, and virtually everyone else with knowledge of the witch hunt, says there is no collusion, when does it end?"

**May 16:** Trump writes on Twitter: "As President I wanted to share with Russia (at an openly scheduled W.H. meeting) which I have the absolute right to do, facts pertaining.....to terrorism and airline flight safety. Humanitarian reasons, plus I want Russia to greatly step up their fight against ISIS & terrorism."

**May 17:** Deputy attorney general Rod Rosenstein appoints former FBI Director Robert Mueller as special counsel to investigate Russia's interference in the 2016 election and possible collusion with the Trump campaign.

Trump releases a statement saying the investigation “will confirm what we already know – there was no collusion between my campaign and any foreign entity.”

**May 18:** Trump writes on Twitter: “This is the single greatest witch hunt of a politician in American history!”

He adds later: “With all of the illegal acts that took place in the Clinton campaign & Obama Administration, there was never a special counsel appointed!”

At an afternoon press conference he criticizes the appointment of a special counsel and declares: “there was no collusion.” He also denies telling Comey to drop the investigation into Flynn.

**May 31:** Trump writes on Twitter: “So now it is reported that the Democrats, who have excoriated Carter Page about Russia, don't want him to testify. He blows away their.... ...case against him & now wants to clear his name by showing “the false or misleading testimony by James Comey, John Brennan... Witch Hunt!”

**June 8:** Former FBI James Comey testifies in front of the Senate Intelligence Committee that he was behind the leaking of memos he wrote during his time as director to the media in order to prompt the appointment of a special counsel. He adds that he was worried the president might lie about their interactions.

**June 15:** Trump writes on Twitter: “They made up a phony collusion with the Russians story, found zero proof, so now they go for obstruction of justice on the phony story. Nice... You are witnessing the single greatest WITCH HUNT in American political history — led by some very bad and conflicted people!... Why is that Hillary Clintons [sic] family and Dems dealings with Russia are not looked at, but my non-dealings are? ... Crooked H destroyed phones w/ hammer, 'bleached' emails, & had husband meet w/AG days before she was cleared- & they talk about obstruction?”

Pence's office confirms that he has retained Richard Cullen to serve as his outside counsel during the Russia probe. Around that time, Cullen meets with Mueller at Pence's request to express Pence's intent to cooperate.

**June 22:** Trump writes on Twitter: “Former Homeland Security Advisor Jeh Johnson is latest top intelligence official to state there was no grand scheme between Trump & Russia.” Johnson had testified to Congress the day before that Putin directed Russia's interference in the 2016 election but that it did not alter the counting of ballots.



**June 23:** Trump writes on Twitter: "Just out: The Obama Administration knew far in advance of November 8th about election meddling by Russia. Did nothing about it. WHY?" Johnson had said Obama's response was limited by fear of "taking sides" in the race, particularly after Trump's warnings that the election would be "rigged."

**June 27:** Trump writes on Twitter: "Wow, CNN had to retract big story on 'Russia,' with 3 employees forced to resign. What about all the other phony stories they do? FAKE NEWS!"  
VeselnitskayaVeselnitskaya

**July 6:** Ahead of a planned visit with Putin, Trump says in Warsaw that "nobody knows for sure" whether Russia meddled in the election: "Well, I think it was Russia and I think it could have been other people and other countries. It could have been [that] a lot of people interfered."

**July 7:** Trump meets twice with Putin at the Group of 20 meeting in Hamburg, Germany. Only the first meeting was officially acknowledged until the New York Times revealed the second conversation on July 18.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who joined Trump for the first meeting, says Trump pressed Putin on election meddling and that the Russian leader repeated his past denials. Trump "pressed him and then felt like, at this point, let's talk about how do we go forward?" Tillerson said.

**July 8:** The New York Times breaks the story about Donald Trump Jr.'s June 2016 meeting at Trump Tower with the Russian lawyer. Trump Jr. provided the Times with a statement that the meeting was about an adoption program.

It is later revealed by the Washington Post that Trump himself dictated the statement on the flight home from the G20 meeting.

**July 9:** Trump opens the day with a series of tweets: "I strongly pressed President Putin twice about Russian meddling in our election. He vehemently denied it. I've already given my opinion.... We negotiated a ceasefire in parts of Syria which will save lives. Now it is time to move forward in working constructively with Russia! ... Putin & I discussed forming an impenetrable Cyber Security unit so that election hacking, & many other negative things, will be guarded.... Fake News said 17 intel agencies when actually 4 (had to apologize). Why did Obama do NOTHING when he had info before election?... Sanctions were not discussed at my meeting with President Putin. Nothing will be done until the Ukrainian & Syrian problems are solved!"

The Times reports that Trump Jr. "was promised damaging information about Hillary Clinton before agreeing to meet with a Kremlin-connected Russian lawyer during the 2016 campaign."

Trump Jr. releases a statement about his meeting with June 2016 Veselnitskaya, saying she had arrived offering "information that individuals connected to Russia were funding the Democratic National Committee and supporting Mrs. Clinton." But, he continues: "Her statements were vague, ambiguous and made no sense. No details or supporting information was provided or even offered. It quickly became clear that she had no meaningful information. She then changed subjects and began discussing the adoption of Russian children and mentioned the Magnitsky Act. It became clear to me that this was the true agenda all along and that the claims of potentially helpful information were a pretext for the meeting."

**July 10:** The Times reports that Trump Jr. was informed in an email that the information he would be provided at the meeting was part of the Russian government's effort to support Trump's candidacy.

Trump Jr.'s lawyer, Alan Futerfas, tells the Times in a statement that "Don Jr. had no knowledge as to what specific information, if any, would be discussed."

**July 11:** Moments before The Times published portions of Trump Jr.'s emails arranging the meeting, Trump Jr. himself tweets out the emails. In the emails, Goldstone promised "information that would incriminate Hillary and her dealings with Russia and would be very useful to your father." The information, Goldstone noted, "is part of Russia and its government's support for Mr. Trump."

"If it is what you say I love it especially later in the summer," Trump Jr. replied.

That evening, Trump Jr. goes on Sean Hannity's program on Fox News. He tells Hannity the meeting was "such a nothing," but that "In retrospect, I probably would have done things a little differently."

Pence's office releases a statement saying Pence is "not focused on stories about the campaign, particularly stories about the time before he joined the ticket."

**July 12:** Trump's lawyer, Jay Sekulow, tells CNN that neither he nor Trump were "involved in the statement drafting at all" for the July 8 statement which said the meeting had been about adoption.

Pence's press secretary, Marc Lotter, was asked three times on Fox News if Pence had met with any officials associated with the Russian government during the 2016 campaign. He declined to answer.

**July 13:** Lotter releases a statement saying, "The Vice President had no meetings with any individual associated with the Russian government during the campaign or transition."

**July 15:** Trump writes on Twitter: "Stock Market hit another all-time high yesterday - despite the Russian hoax story! Also, jobs numbers are starting to look very good!"

**July 16:** Sekulow repeats his insistence that Trump was not involved in preparing the original statement.

"I do want to be clear -- that the President was not involved in the drafting of the statement," he told NBC's Chuck Todd.

**July 18:** The New York Times reveals Trump's and Putin's undisclosed conversation over dinner, for which only a Russian government translator was present. Trump responds on Twitter: "Fake News story of secret dinner with Putin is 'sick.' All G 20 leaders, and spouses, were invited by the Chancellor of Germany. Press knew!" He later added: "The Fake News is becoming more and more dishonest! Even a dinner arranged for top 20 leaders in Germany is made to look sinister!"

**July 19:** The White House further downplays the July 7 dinner.

"I think that once again the Russia fever has caught up with the media," White House press secretary Sarah Sanders tells reporters. "It was a brief conversation, and certainly not an hour," Sanders later adds, but quips that she was not following Trump around "with a stopwatch."

Trump tells the New York Times he regrets appointing Jeff Sessions as Attorney General and calls Sessions's recusal in the Russia probe "very unfair to the president." Trump also contends that Comey only shared the famous dossier with him to gain leverage.

**July 20:** The spokesman for Trump's outside legal team, Mark Corallo, leaves his post after less than two months in the job.

**July 21:** Marc Kasowitz, Trump's top personal lawyer, is replaced by John Dowd.

The Washington Post reports that "Trump has asked his advisers about his power to pardon aides, family members and even himself in connection with the probe."

**July 22:** Trump writes on Twitter: "While all agree the U. S. President has the complete power to pardon, why think of that when only crime so far is LEAKS against us.FAKE NEWS.... My son Donald openly gave his e-mails to the media & authorities whereas Crooked Hillary Clinton deleted (& acid washed) her 33,000 e-mails!"

**July 23:** Trump writes on Twitter: "As the phony Russian Witch Hunt continues, two groups are laughing at this excuse for a lost election taking hold, Democrats and Russians!... It's very sad that Republicans, even some that were carried over the line on my back, do very little to protect their President."

**July 24:** Trump writes on Twitter: "After 1 year of investigation with Zero evidence being found, Chuck Schumer just stated that 'Democrats should blame ourselves,not Russia.'" ("People didn't know what we stood for [in 2016], just that we were against Trump," Schumer had told the Washington Post.)

Kushner testifies behind closed doors before the Senate Intelligence Committee."I did not collude with Russia, nor do I know of anyone else in the campaign who did so," he tells reporters.

Trump continues to harangue Sessions on Twitter, and also also takes aim at the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, Adam Schiff: "So why aren't the Committees and investigators, and of course our beleaguered A.G., looking into Crooked Hillarys crimes & Russia relations?" Trump tweets, adding: "Sleazy Adam Schiff, the totally biased Congressman looking into 'Russia,' spends all of his time on television pushing the Dem loss excuse!"

**July 25:** Trump writes on Twitter: "Ukrainian efforts to sabotage Trump campaign – 'quietly working to boost Clinton.' So where is the investigation A.G. ... Attorney General Jeff Sessions has taken a VERY weak position on Hillary Clinton crimes (where are E-mails & DNC server) & Intel leakers! ... Problem is that the acting head of the FBI & the person in charge of the Hillary investigation, Andrew McCabe, got \$700,000 from H for wife!"

The House passes sanctions on Russia by a vote of 419-3. The package was designed as retribution for Russia's meddling in the 2016 election and limits Trump's ability to unilaterally relax existing sanctions on Moscow.

**Around July 25:** FBI agents execute an early morning raid on Manafort's home in Virginia, collecting documents, computer files and taking photographs.

**July 26:** Trump writes on Twitter: "Why didn't A.G. Sessions replace Acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe, a Comey friend who was in charge of Clinton investigation but got... big dollars (\$700,000) for his wife's political run from Hillary Clinton and her representatives. Drain the Swamp!"

**July 27:** Papadopoulos is arrested at Dulles International Airport.

On the same day, the Senate passes the sanctions by a vote of 98-2 despite opposition from the White House, which argued that the measure improperly interfered with presidential diplomacy.

**July 28:** The White House announces Trump will sign the sanctions bill.

**July 30:** Putin orders the U.S. to reduce its diplomatic staff in Russia by 755 people.

**July 31:** The Washington Post reveals that Trump dictated Trump Jr.'s misleading statement about adoption.

**Aug. 1:** Sarah Sanders tells reporters that Trump "weighed in as any father would" on the statement, and defended its accuracy.

**Aug. 2:** Trump signs the sanctions into law. Russia's foreign minister says his country will respond "harshly," and Russian state media says that Trump has been encircled by Russia hawks in Washington.

**Aug. 31:** The State Department orders the closure of three Russian diplomatic compounds in the United States in response to Russia's move to remove U.S. diplomatic staff.

**Sept. 5:** Putin, at a press conference in China, says Trump is "not my bride, and I am not his groom."

**Sept. 15:** The Wall Street Journal breaks the news that Facebook has provided Mueller with "detailed records about the Russian ad purchases on its platform that go beyond what the company shared with Congress last week."

**Sept. 21:** Facebook agrees to provide congressional investigators with details about Russian ads purchased on the site that aimed to influence the 2016 election.

**Sept. 22:** Trump writes on Twitter: "The Russia hoax continues, now it's ads on Facebook. What about the totally biased and dishonest Media coverage in favor of Crooked Hillary?"

**Sept. 26:** Stone testifies before the House Intelligence Committee in closed setting. He tells reporters after that he believes the DNC hack was an "inside job."

**Oct. 24:** The Washington Post reports that the Clinton campaign and the DNC "helped fund research that resulted in" the production of the dossier. "Marc E. Elias, a lawyer representing the Clinton campaign and the DNC, retained Fusion GPS, a Washington firm, to conduct the research," the Post reports. The firm's research had previously been funded by a Republican during the primary campaign.

**Oct. 27:** Trump writes on Twitter: "It is now commonly agreed, after many months of COSTLY looking, that there was NO collusion between Russia and Trump. Was collusion with HC!"

**Oct. 30:** Manafort and a fellow former campaign aide, Rick Gates, turn themselves into the FBI after being indicted on 12 counts, including money laundering and making false statements. The charges are not directly connected to activity during the 2016 campaign. Both men plead not guilty.

The Papadopoulos plea deal is made public.

Trump writes on Twitter: "Sorry, but this is years ago, before Paul Manafort was part of the Trump campaign. But why aren't Crooked Hillary & the Dems the focus????? ... ..Also, there is NO COLLUSION!"

**Oct. 31:** Trump takes to Twitter shortly after 8 a.m., writing: "The Fake News is working overtime. As Paul Manafort's [sic] lawyer said, there was 'no collusion' and events mentioned took place long before he... ..came to the campaign. Few people knew the young, low level volunteer named George, who has already proven to be a liar. Check the DEMS! ... I hope people will start to focus on our Massive Tax Cuts for Business (jobs) and the Middle Class (in addition to Democrat corruption)!"

**Nov. 13:** Donald Trump Jr. confirms on Twitter that he had private conversations with WikiLeaks during the presidential campaign after the Atlantic publishes leaked excerpts. Vice President Mike Pence, who during the campaign dismissed any notion of the campaign being in cahoots with WikiLeaks, denies any knowledge of the conversations.

*Brent D. Griffiths, Cory Bennett, Kenneth P. Vogel, Isaac Arnsdorf, Michael Crowley, Edward-Isaac Dovere, Annie Karni and Shane Goldmacher contributed to this report.*



