

Politics

Prosecutors say longtime Manafort colleague has ‘ties’ to Russian intelligence

By **Rosalind S. Helderman** and **Spencer S. Hsu** December 4 at 7:02 PM

Federal prosecutors asserted Monday that a longtime associate of Paul Manafort, the former chairman of President Trump’s campaign, has been “assessed to have ties” to Russian intelligence — the first time the special counsel has alleged a Trump official had such contacts.

The statement came as prosecutors working for special counsel Robert S. Mueller III withdrew their support for a joint bail deal filed last week that would have released Manafort from home detention and GPS monitoring while he awaits trial on charges including money laundering and fraud.

Manafort, 68, and his longtime deputy, Rick Gates, 45, have both pleaded not guilty to charges filed Oct. 30.

In the four-page filing Monday, prosecutor Andrew Weissmann urged the judge to reject the bail deal, arguing that Manafort and a Russian colleague have been secretly ghostwriting an English-language editorial that appeared to defend Manafort’s work advising a Russia-friendly political party in Ukraine.

They said Manafort worked on the draft as recently as last week with “a long-time Russian colleague . . . who is currently based in Russia and assessed to have ties to a Russian intelligence service.” They indicated they would file further supporting evidence under seal.

The Russian colleague was not identified in court papers. However, Manafort has had a long-standing Russian employee named Konstantin Kilimnik who ran Manafort’s office in Kiev during the 10 years he did consulting work there.

Prosecutors said the editorial Manafort was writing violated a court order prohibiting the parties in the case from making public statements outside of court that could influence jurors.

The piece “clearly was undertaken to influence the public’s opinion of defendant Manafort,” prosecutors wrote, noting there would be no other reason for Manafort and the colleague to have it published under someone else’s name.

The allegation is the first time that prosecutors have claimed any former Trump campaign official has had contacts with a Russian tied to that country's intelligence services.

A spokesman for Manafort declined to comment.

Kilimnik has previously denied intelligence ties, telling The Washington Post in a statement in June that he has “no relation to the Russian or any other intelligence service.”

He did not respond to an email Monday about the prosecutors' allegation.

Kilimnik attended a Russian military foreign language university in the late 1980s that experts have said was a training ground for Russian intelligence services. He served as an officer in the Russian military for several years.

Manafort and Kilimnik were in contact during the months that Manafort ran Trump's campaign. They met twice in person, in May 2016 and then again in August 2016, when their dinner conversation at New York's Grand Havana Room included discussion of the presidential campaign, Kilimnik told The Post this June.

For a decade, Manafort and Kilimnik worked with then-Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, who was initially considered pro-Western but eventually became allied with Russian interests.

Kilimnik also served as Manafort's liaison to Oleg Deripaska, an aluminum magnate and ally to Russian President Vladimir Putin who employed Manafort as an investment consultant.

According to emails described to The Post, Manafort directed Kilimnik to offer Deripaska “private briefings” about Trump's campaign. A Deripaska spokeswoman has said he was never offered such briefings.

Manafort has previously denied knowingly communicating with Russian intelligence during the campaign. But he told the New York Times in February, “It's not like these people wear badges that say, ‘I'm a Russian intelligence officer.’ ”

Along with being under home detention and GPS monitoring, Manafort has pledged to pay \$10 million if he fails to appear in court.


Prosecutors had agreed to a bail deal in which Manafort would have secured his release with four properties worth \$11.6 million and a prohibition on foreign travel, as well as a limitation on his travels within the United States.

On Monday, the special counsel asked U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson either to reject the deal, keeping Manafort under home confinement pending further negotiations, or impose additional restrictions, including making the \$10 million forfeitable for other breaches of the terms and requiring Manafort to remain under GPS monitoring.

spencer.hsu@washpost.com

Tom Hamburger contributed to this report.

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Rosalind Helderman is a political enterprise and investigations reporter for the Washington Post.  Follow @PostRoz

Spencer S. Hsu is an investigative reporter, two-time Pulitzer finalist and national Emmy award nominee.

