

Emails show Trump Tower meeting follow-up

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Story highlights

- The emails from Rob Goldstone were discovered by congressional investigators
- Donald Trump Jr. was asked about these emails during his classified interview Wednesday

Washington (CNN) The British publicist who arranged the June 2016 meeting with Russians and Donald Trump Jr. sent multiple emails to a Russian participant and a member of Donald Trump's inner circle later that summer, multiple sources told CNN, the first indication there was any follow-up after the meeting.

The emails raise new questions for congressional investigators about what was discussed at Trump Tower. Trump Jr. has for months contended that after being promised he would get dirt on Hillary Clinton, the brief meeting focused almost exclusively on the issue of Russian adoptions, saying there was no discussion with the participants after that session.

The emails from the publicist, Rob Goldstone, were discovered by congressional investigators and raised at Wednesday's classified hearing with Trump Jr., who said he could not recall the interactions, several sources said. None of the newly disclosed emails were sent directly to Trump Jr. They are bound to be a subject during Goldstone's closed-door meetings with the House and Senate intelligence panels, which are expected to take place as early as next week.

Trump Jr. says he communicated first with Hope Hicks, not his father, about Trump Tower response

An email from Goldstone to senior Trump aide Dan Scavino, now the White House director of social media, reveals a previously undisclosed topic that was discussed at the meeting. It encourages Scavino to get candidate Trump to create a page on the Russian social networking site VK, telling him that "Don and Paul" were on board with the idea -- a reference to then-Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort and Trump Jr.

One source says Goldstone pitched the idea to Scavino as a way to connect with the many Russian-Americans who use the site. Another source said Goldstone presented it as a "cute marketing idea" and was passing along the idea for an acquaintance at the Russian social media site. That source also said Goldstone mentioned the idea at the end of the Trump Tower meeting, as everyone was leaving, though Goldstone continued to push this proposal in emails in the weeks following.

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A source familiar with the matter says Goldstone did not talk about the meeting with Trump Jr. after they left Trump Tower. Trump Jr. has said he did not follow up on the meeting.

Goldstone's lawyer, Bob Gage, declined to comment. The White House also declined to comment for this story.

Congressional Russia investigators to interview British publicist who set up Trump Tower meeting

A CNN search of VK pages could not find any indication that such a page was ever set up.

In one email dated June 14, 2016, Goldstone forwarded a CNN story on Russia's hacking of DNC emails to his client, Russian pop star Emin Agalarov, and Ike Kaveladze, a Russian who attended the meeting along with Trump Jr., Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and Manafort, describing the news as "eerily weird" given what they had discussed at Trump Tower five days earlier.

One of the sources familiar with the content of the email downplayed the interaction, saying news of the DNC hack was surprising because in the run-up to the Trump Tower meeting, the Russian participants had promised information on illicit Russian funding of the DNC. But that dirt was not provided to Trump Jr., Kushner and Manafort during the meeting, according to accounts from the participants.

The DNC hacking was not brought up at the meeting, another source said, explaining it would not be 'oddly weird' if the topic had been broached.

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Scott Balber, the attorney for Kaveladze, confirms his client received the email but viewed it as odd because hacking was never discussed in the meeting and it was not consistent with what was discussed.

The disclosure of the Trump Tower meeting in a New York Times story earlier this year caught the attention of the son of Kaveladze, according to another email turned over to congressional investigators. Ike Kaveladze attended the meeting on behalf of the Russian billionaire who initiated the session, Aras Agalarov.

When Trump Jr. posted his full email exchange with Goldstone on Twitter showing he was promised the meeting would produce dirt on the Clinton campaign, George Kaveladze emailed his father asking why Trump Jr. was admitting "collusion," two sources with knowledge of the email told CNN. It was not clear whether the younger Kaveladze was joking, and the attorney for his father declined to comment on the exchange.

More charges could be coming against former Trump aide in Russia probe

Trump Jr. was asked about these emails during his classified interview Wednesday, though he said he was not aware of them or could not recall the contents, sources said. In his statement to the Senate Judiciary Committee in September, Trump Jr. said the meeting was only 20 to 30 minutes and "Rob, Emin and I never discussed the meeting again. I do not recall ever discussing it with Jared, Paul or anyone else. In short, I gave it no further thought."

Asked this summer by Fox News host Sean Hannity whether there was any follow-up, Trump Jr. said: "There wasn't really follow-up because there was nothing there to follow up. You know, as we were walking out, [Goldstone] said 'Listen, I'm sorry for that. ... There was some puffery to the email, perhaps to get the meeting, to make it happen, and you know, in the end, there was probably some bait and switch about what it was really supposed to be about. And so, you know, there is nothing there.'"

CNN's Pamela Brown contributed to this report.