

Australia Says It's "Ready To Confirm" A Key Meeting That Led To The Investigation Into Trump's Russia Links

Heavily-redacted documents released to BuzzFeed News show Australia's former high commissioner wrote a three-page cable to the United States about his London meeting with a Trump campaign adviser.



A senior Australian diplomat has said the government is "now ready to confirm" a series of events in 2016 between the country's high commissioner to the UK and a Trump campaign adviser, which led to US authorities investigating Donald Trump's links with Russia.

The release of the Australian diplomatic documents comes as a redacted copy of the final Mueller report is expected to be released on Thursday.

The London meeting between former high commissioner Alexander Downer and Trump adviser George Papadopoulos [was first reported by the New York Times](#) in December 2017, reportedly revealing how Downer had been told by Papadopoulos that Russia had political dirt on [Hillary Clinton](#).

Until now, the Australian government and Downer have refused to confirm or give any details about the meeting central to the beginning of the Trump-Russia investigation, repeatedly [citing the need to preserve national security](#).

But in a letter sent to Australia's Information Commissioner after a 15 month-long FOI battle with BuzzFeed News, a senior foreign official said his department was ready to confirm the meeting and

release redacted documents, because Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation was now finished.

"I have again reviewed these matters and, while standing by the validity of the original decisions at the time they were made, the Department has reassessed its position in relation to Mr Di Stefano's three requests in light of the recent conclusion of the U.S. Special Counsel's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 Presidential Election," the official wrote.

"Notably, in light of the conclusion of that investigation, the Department is now ready to confirm that a meeting occurred between Mr Downer and Mr Papdopolous (sic), on 10 May 2016, whilst Mr Downer was High Commissioner to the United Kingdom."

Included in the documents released to BuzzFeed News is a calendar invite, and a diplomatic cable Downer wrote about the meeting. The senior foreign official said Downer's cable had been heavily-redacted because the full contents could "reasonably be expected" to damage Australia's relationship with the United States.