

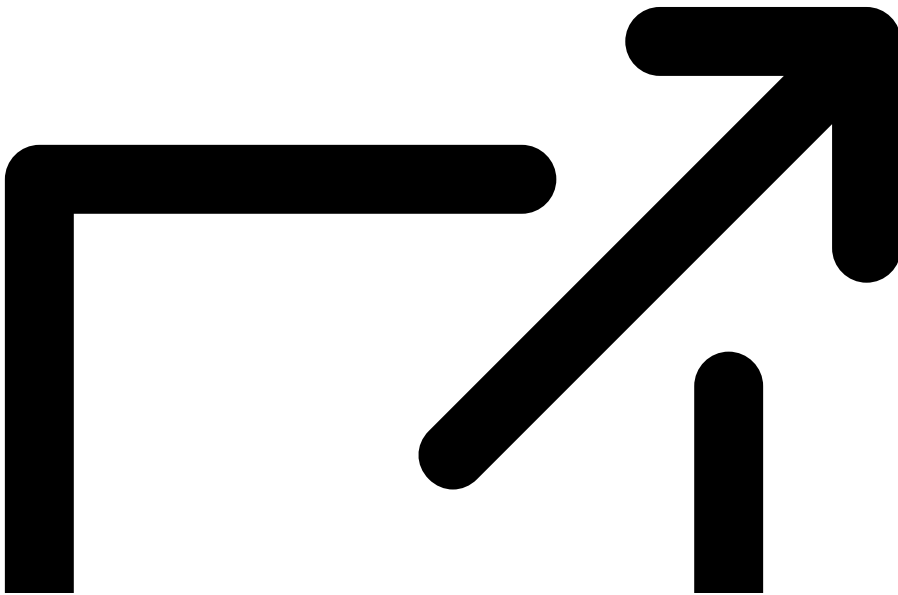
## Russia: Trump & His Team's Ties

Image

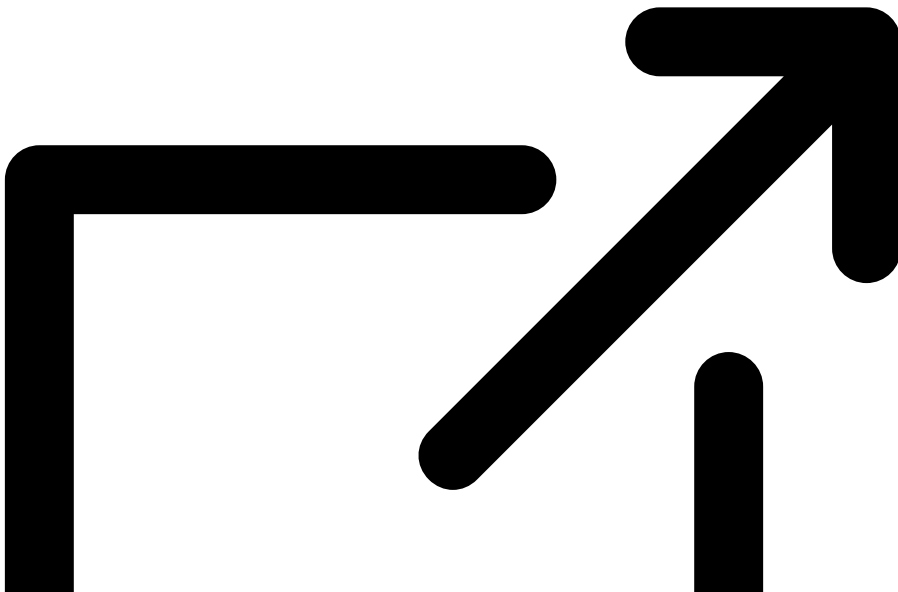
### RUSSIA: TRUMP & HIS TEAM'S TIES

Despite Russia's harmful national interests against the U.S., and its human rights violations around the world, **President Trump and his team are directly and indirectly tied to Russia.**

Throughout the 2016 presidential election, President Trump not only refused to criticize Russian President Vladimir Putin, but was even friendly and accommodating in his remarks. In his own words, President Trump called President Putin "[highly respected](#)"

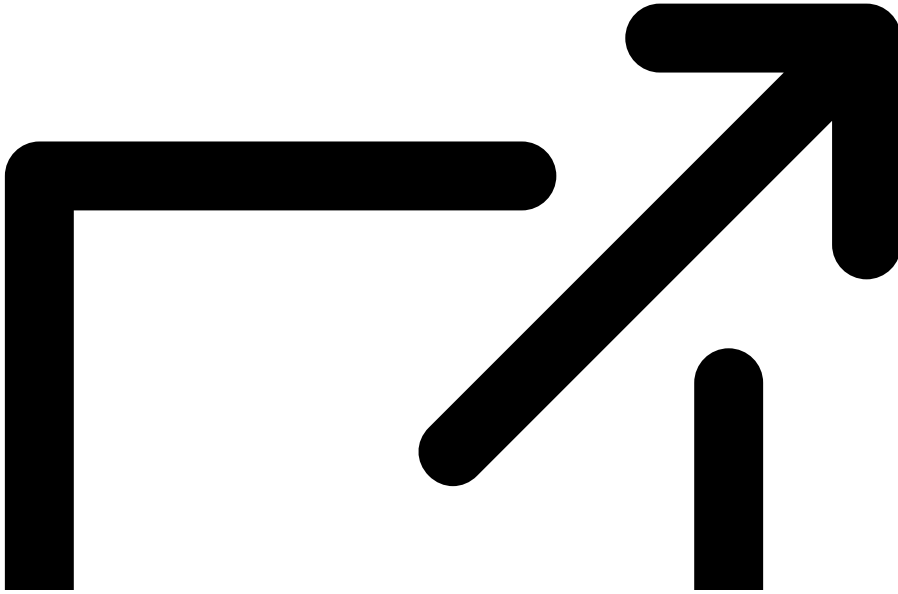


." More recently, [President Trump put the U.S. on equal moral footing with Russia](#)

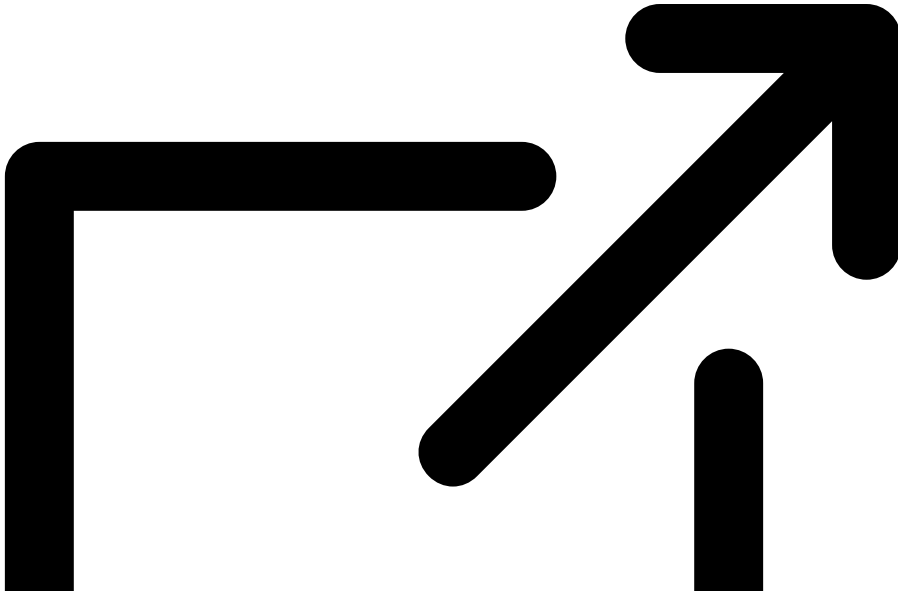


when responding to Bill O'Reilly's question about Putin being a "killer," saying "We've got a lot of killers... you think our country's so innocent?" This is absolutely false moral equivalence, and unheard of for the President of the United States to insult and demean the country he leads.

President Trump has harshly criticized NATO, and [exclaimed](#)

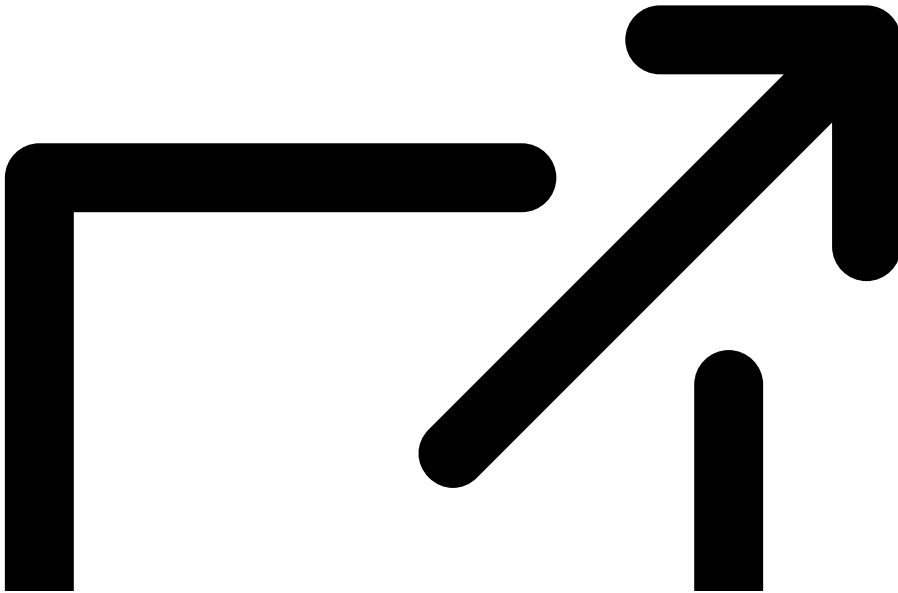


that only the NATO allies that paid equally to the alliance deserved protection from the United States. Though these remarks were [softened by](#)



British Prime Minister Theresa May, who claims that President Trump fully supports the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), it's still unclear how supportive he will be of NATO allies like the Baltic states in light of his relationship with Russia.

**President Trump has also surrounded himself with people who do business with and are sympathetic to Russia.** The *New York Times* reported that members of Trump's 2016 campaign and other Trump associates had [frequent contact](#)



Image

The diagram illustrates a network of connections between Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, and various intermediaries. Donald Trump is connected to a group of intermediaries (Alex Shnaider, Rex Tillerson, Tevfik Arif, Carter Page, Felix Sater, Paul Manafort, Wilbur Ross, Erik Prince, JD Gordon, Jeff Sessions, Michael Flynn, Jared Kushner, Roger Stone, and Donald Trump, Jr.) via blue arrows. Vladimir Putin is connected to the same group of intermediaries and to two interest groups, 'Russian Business Interests' and 'Russian-Affiliated Interests', via red arrows. The intermediaries are also connected to these interest groups via red arrows.

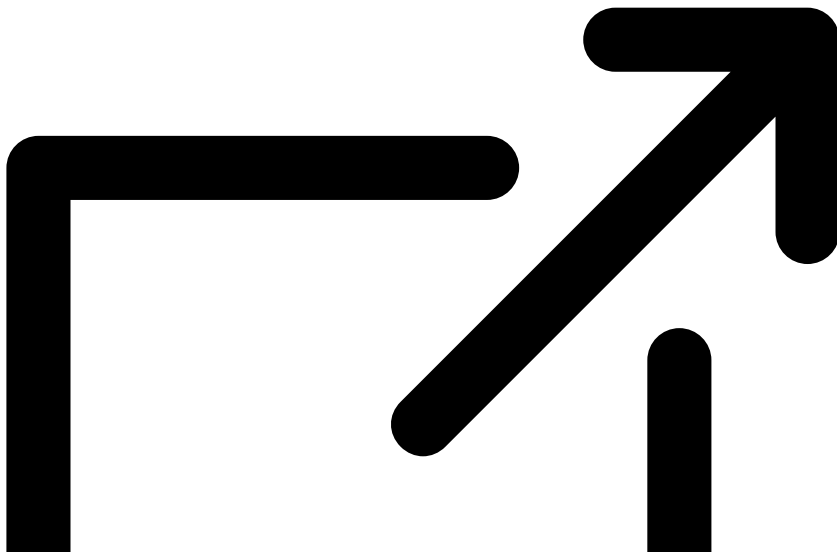






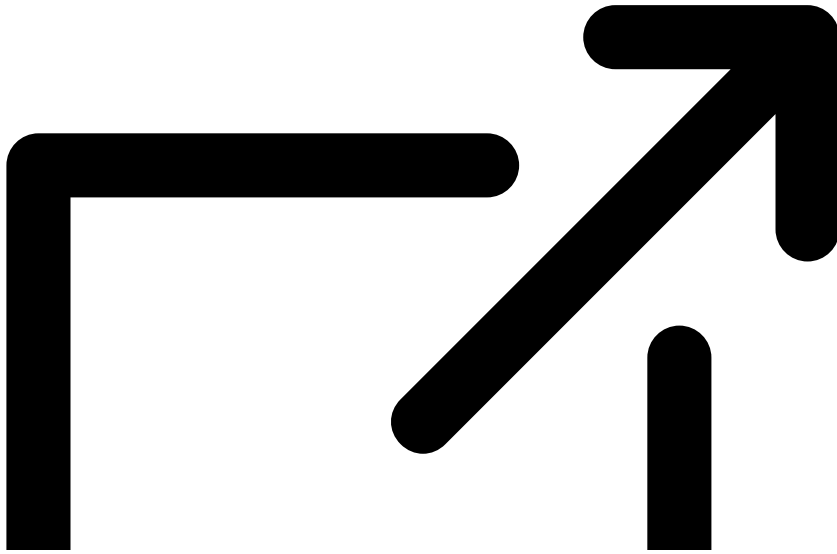
*Rex Tillerson with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Source: AP*

- **Rex Tillerson:** Tillerson, President Trump's former Secretary of State, worked on energy projects in Russia for two decades during his career at Exxon. He has publicly described his "[very close relationship](#)"

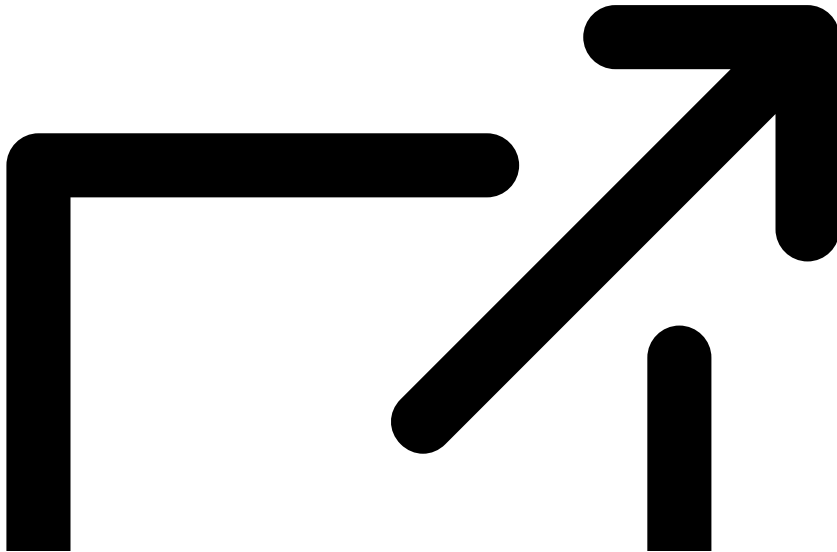


" with President Putin and was awarded Russia's Order of Friendship in 2013, the highest state honor possible for a foreigner.

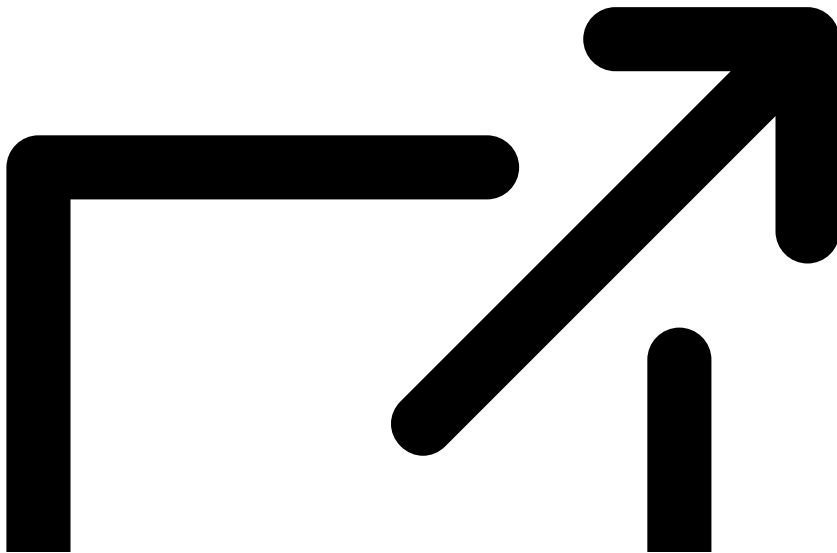
- **Jared Kushner:** Kushner is President Trump's son-in-law and current Senior Advisor. Along with Michael Flynn, Kushner [met with Ambassador Kislyak](#)



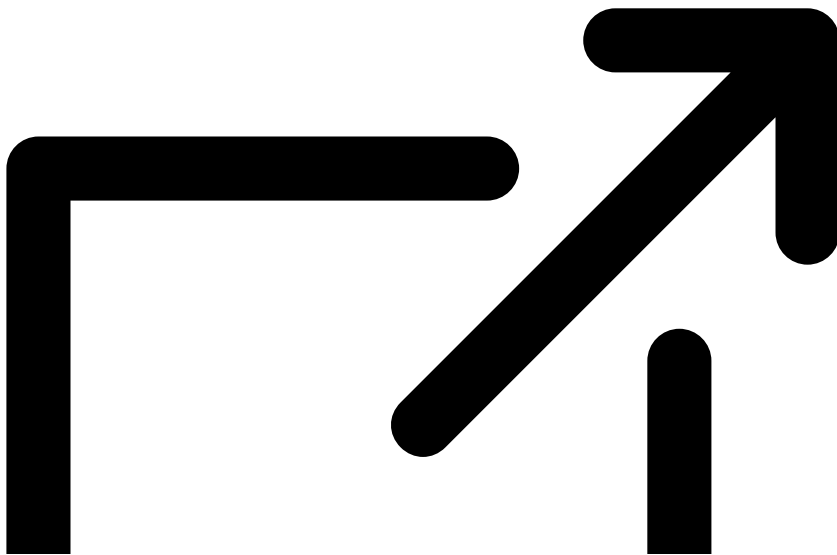
during the Presidential transition. The White House [later acknowledged](#)



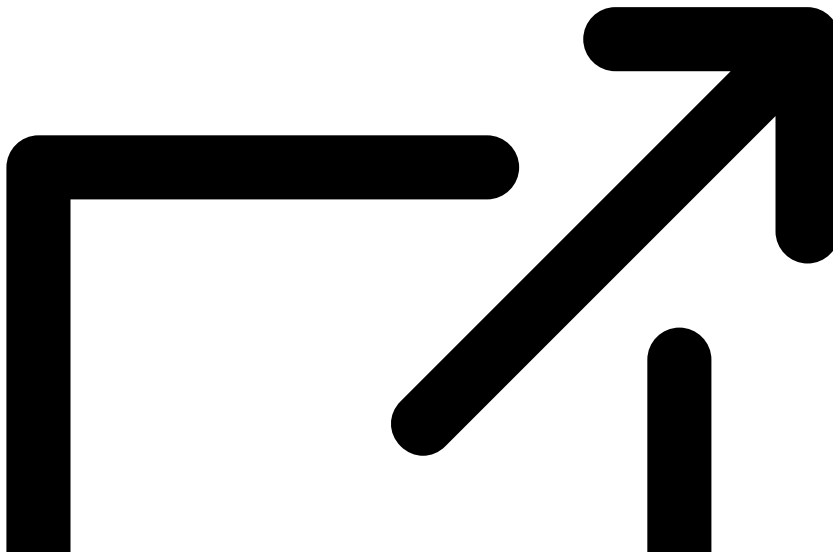
that following that meeting, Ambassador Kislyak requested a second meeting, which Kushner had a deputy attend. However, at Kislyak's request, Kushner [did later meet](#)



with Sergey Gorkov, the head of Russia's state-owned development bank, who has close ties to President Putin. The U.S. placed this bank on its sanctions list following Russia's annexation of Crimea. The Senate Intelligence Committee [plans to question](#)

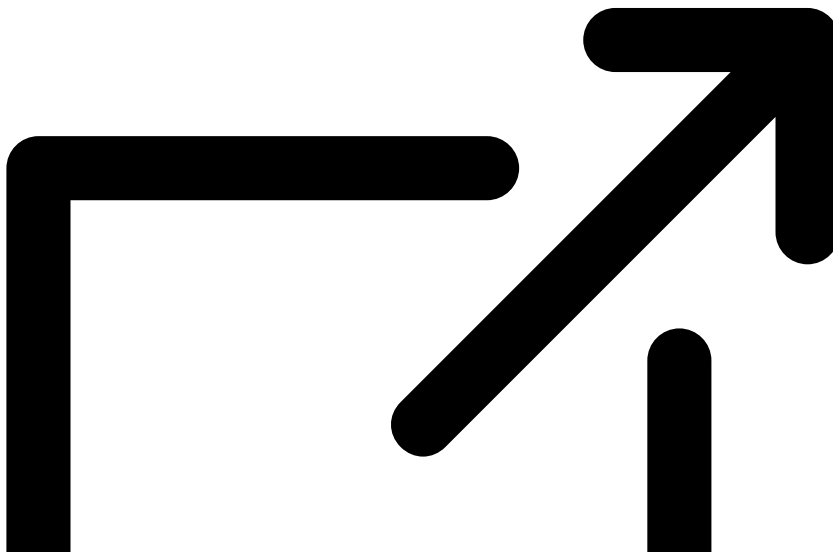


Kushner about his meetings with Russian officials. The New York Times recently [reported](#)



that Kuser failed to disclose dozens of contacts with foreign leaders on his application for top-secret security clearance -- one of those contacts being Ambassador Kislyak.

- **Donald Trump, Jr.:** Trump, Jr., President Trump's son, met with Fabien Baussart, a leader of a Syrian opposition group backed by the Russian government, and others about how the U.S. could work with Russia on the Syrian conflict weeks before Donald Trump was elected President. He has also been quoted saying that his father's businesses ["see a lot of money pouring in from Russia"](#)

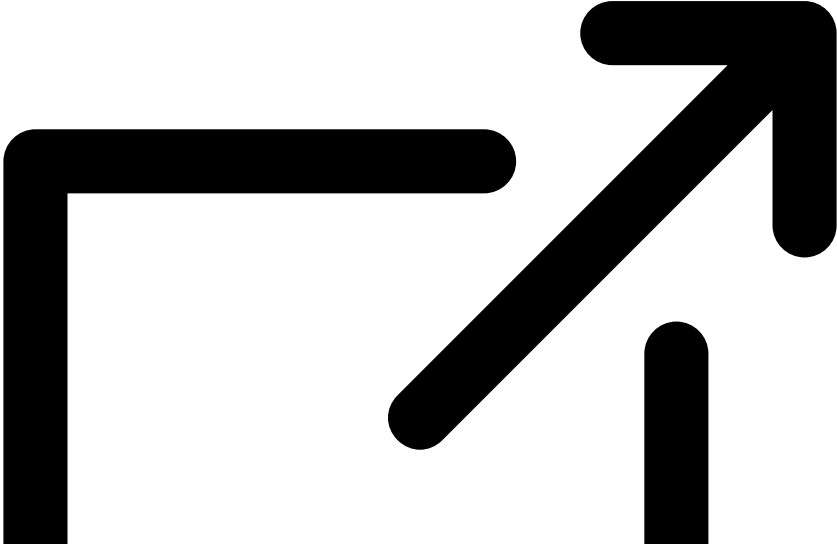


, and that [he had visited Russia on business](#)



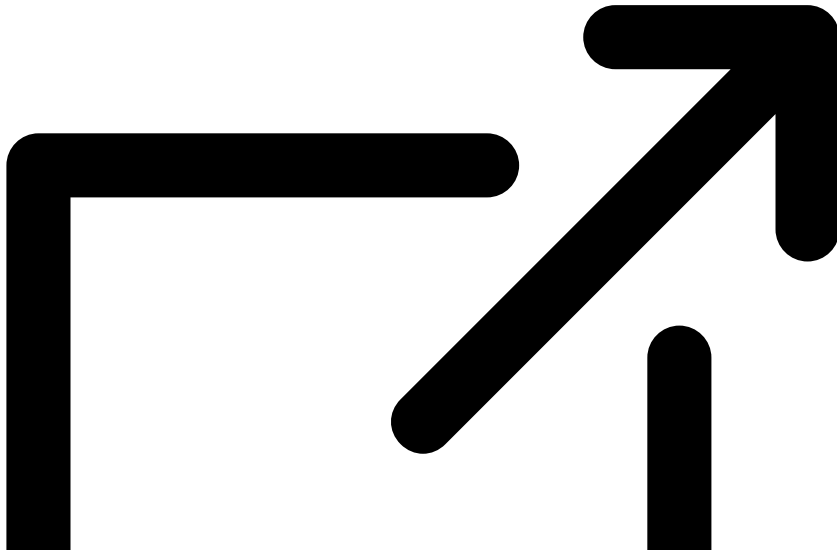


over a half-dozen times. In June 2016, he [met](#)

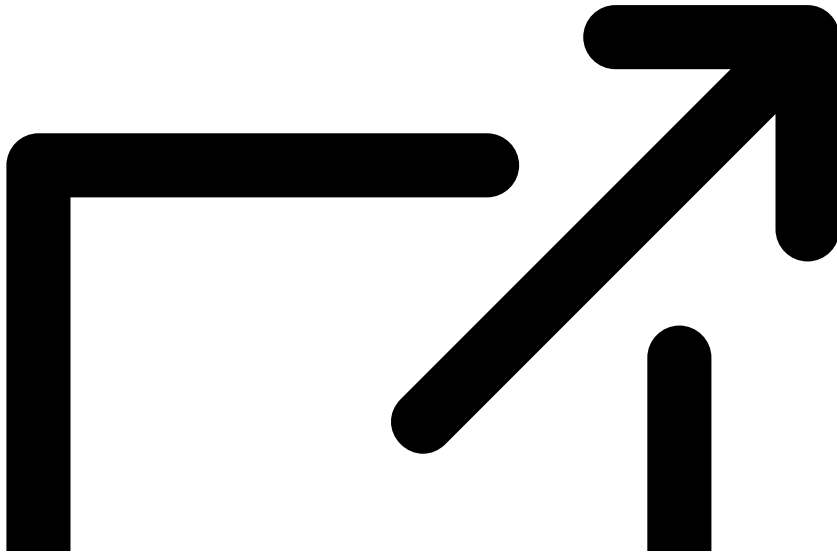


with a Russian billionaire, Emin Agalarov, under the premise that Emin had "official documents and information that would incriminate Hillary and her dealings with Russia" from the Crown prosecutor of Russia, and that this was part of "Russia and its government's support for Mr. Trump."

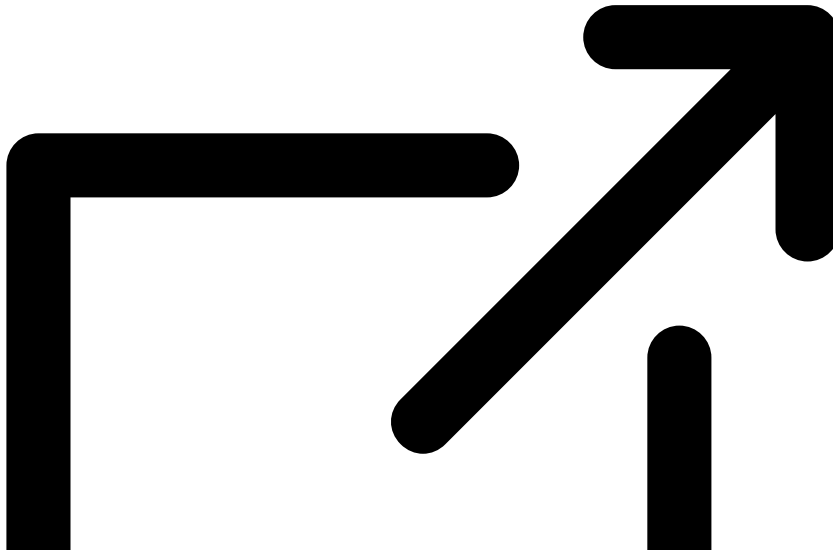
- **Paul Manafort:** Manafort, who has business connections to Russia and Ukraine, was hired as Trump's campaign manager in March 2016. He then resigned in August of the same year, after reports surfaced that suggested he had [received \\$12.7 million](#)



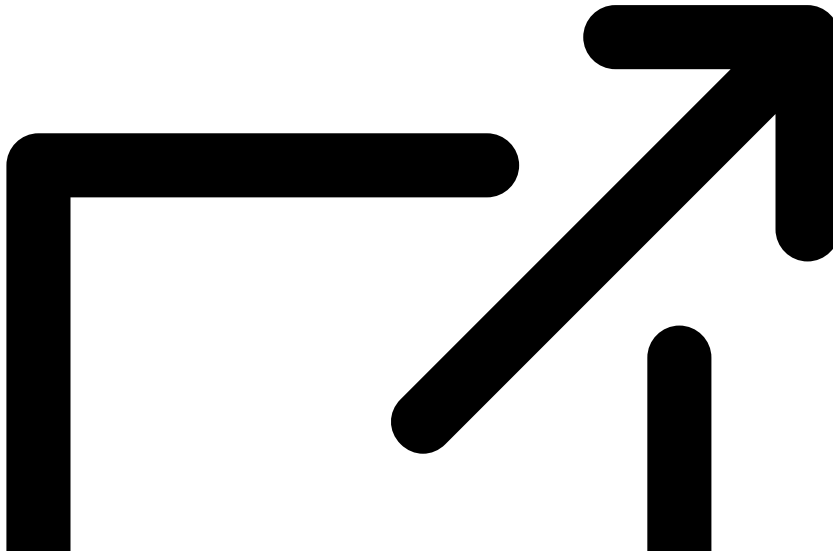
from Victor Yanukovich, Ukraine's pro-Russia former president. It was recently revealed by [AP](#)



that Manafort proposed in a strategy plan from as early as June 2005 that he would work to influence politics, business deals, and media inside the U.S. and Europe to benefit Putin. This plan [was pitched](#)

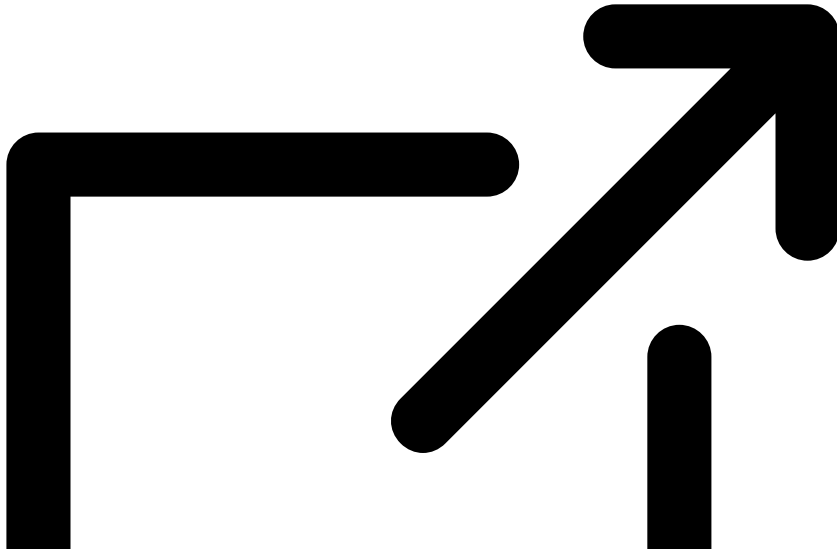


to Oleg Deripaska, a "Russian aluminum magnate" with close ties to Putin. Manafort eventually [signed](#)

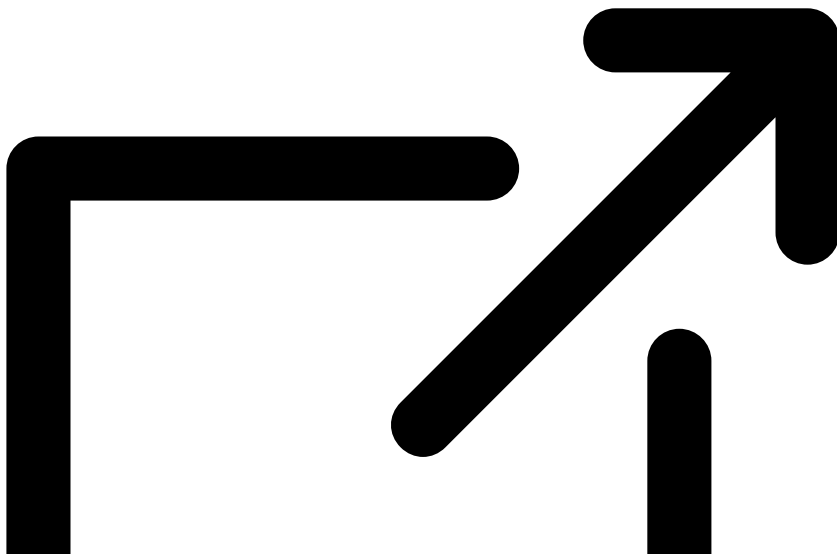


a \$10 million contract with Deripaska in early 2006. The Trump Administration and Manafort have both said that Manafort never worked for Russian interests. Since the FBI confirmed in a House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence hearing on March 20 that investigators are examining whether the Trump campaign and its associates coordinated with Russia to interfere in the 2016 election, the White House has made attempts to distance itself from Manafort, claiming that he played "a very limited role" in the campaign, despite his clear leadership role as campaign chairman leading up to the Republican National Convention. On October 27, 2017, Manafort was indicted by a federal grand jury for conspiracy against the United States, among other charges.

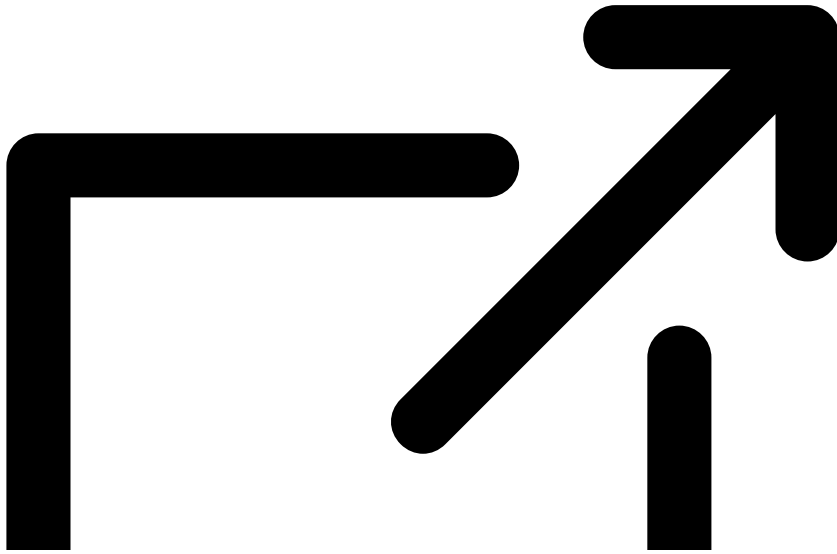
- **Carter Page:** Page, hired as a foreign policy advisor to Trump's 2016 campaign, was known to have [deep ties](#)



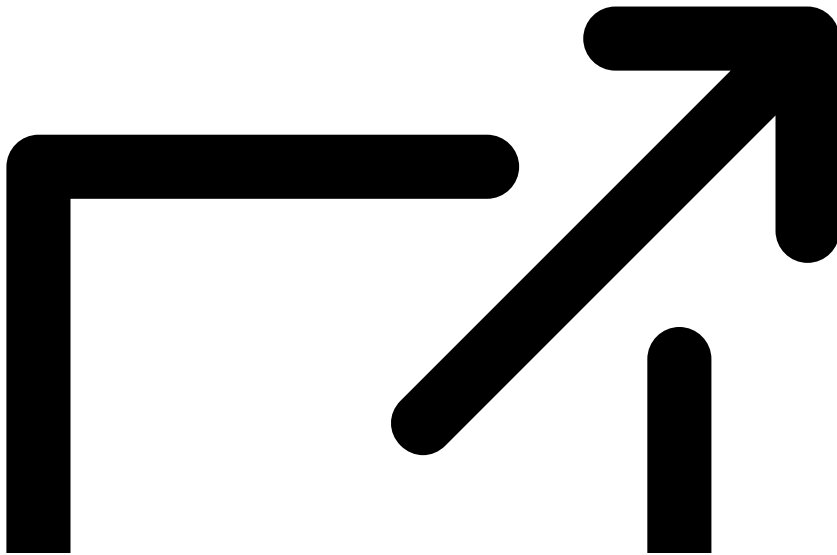
to Gazprom, Russia's state-owned gas company. In July 2016, a month after Russia's DNC meddling was reveled in the press, Page [traveled to](#)



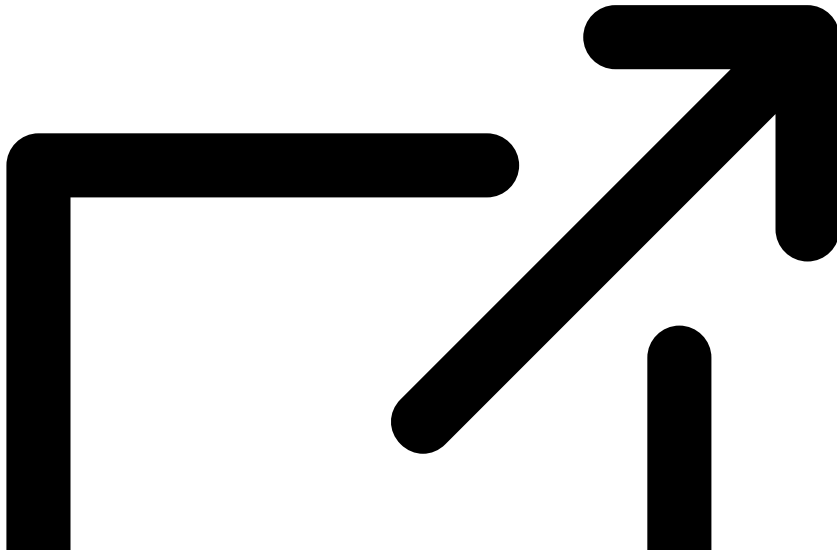
Moscow to make a speech. The Trump campaign [approved](#)



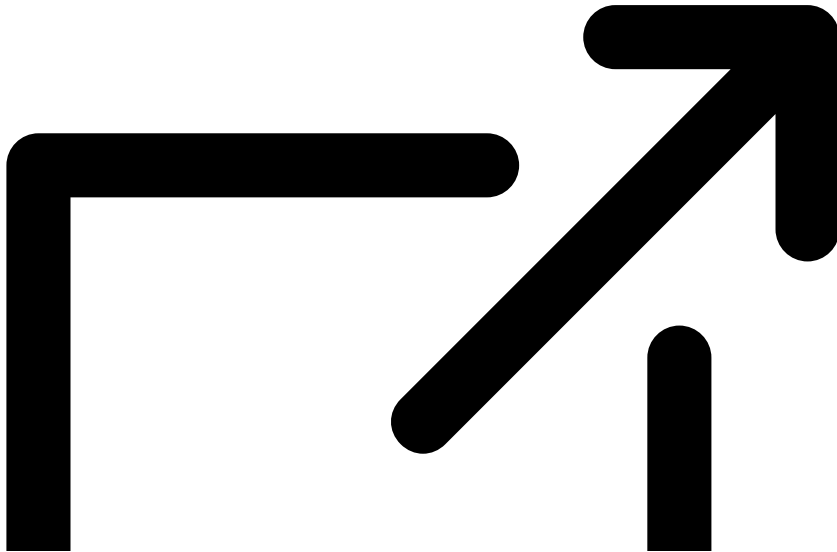
this trip, saying he would not be traveling as an official representative of the campaign. In the speech he delivered in Moscow, he criticized American foreign policy as being hypocritical – remarks which ultimately led to his resignation from Trump's campaign. Before joining the campaign, he was a businessman "of no particular renown



" working in the Moscow branch of Merrill Lynch before creating his own consulting agency. Previously, [Trump identified Page](#)

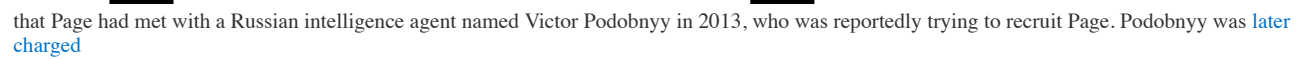


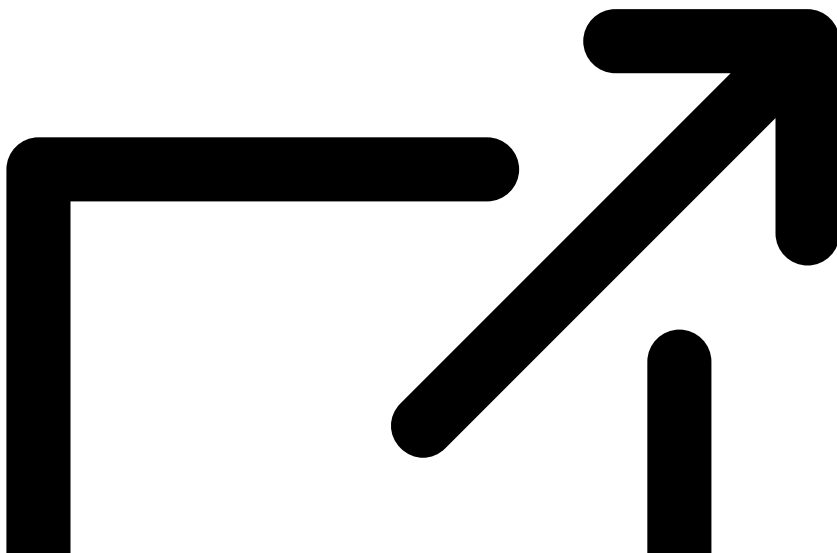
as one of a small group of advisors helping to craft his foreign policy platform during the campaign. However, President Trump's staff [now claims](#)



that "Carter Page is an individual who the [then] president-elect does not know." Page [met with](#)

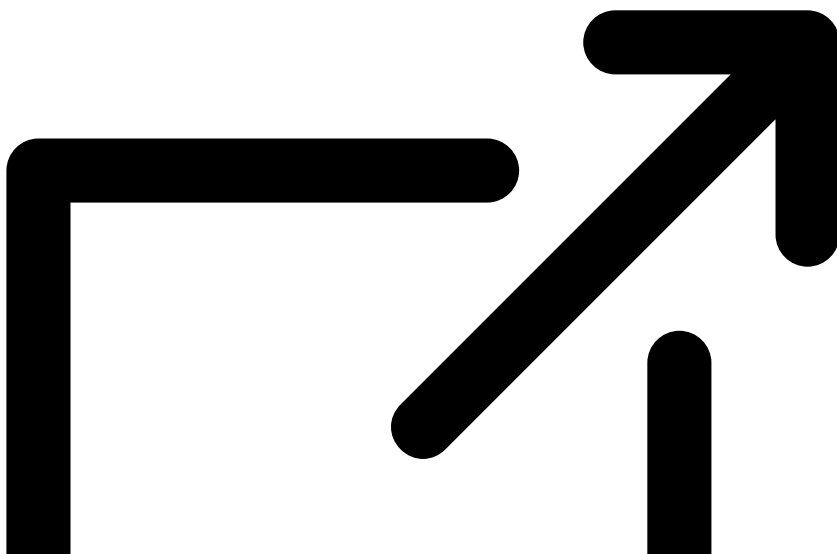




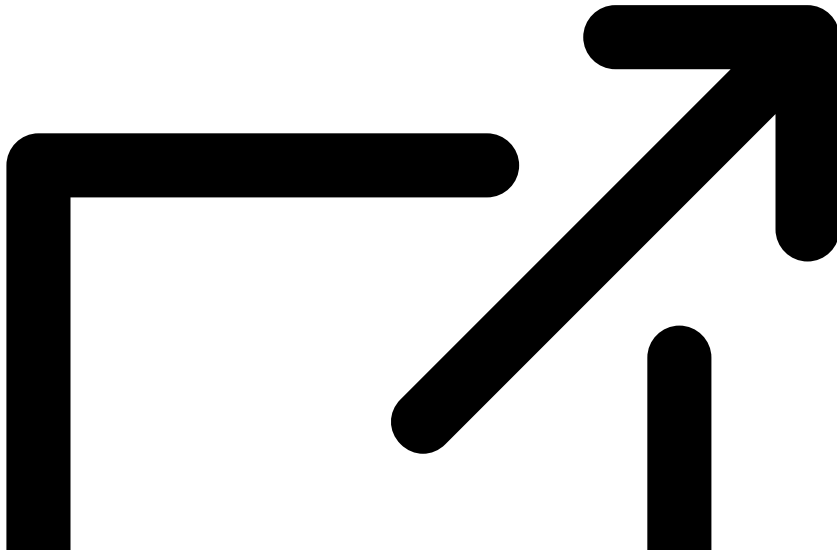


by the U.S. for acting as an unregistered agent of a foreign government.

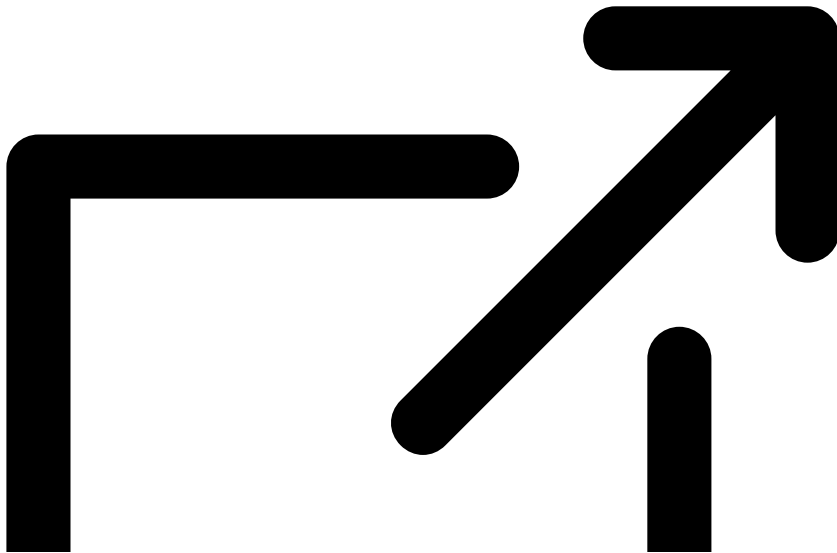
- **Tevfik Arif:** Arif, who founded [Bayrock](#)



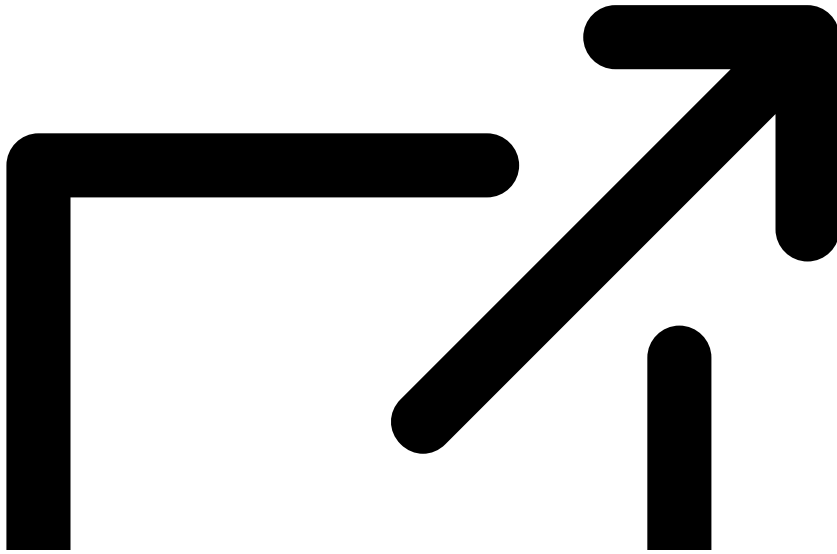
, a real estate group known to have many deals with Trump, had a 17-year career in the [Soviet Ministry of Commerce and Trade](#)



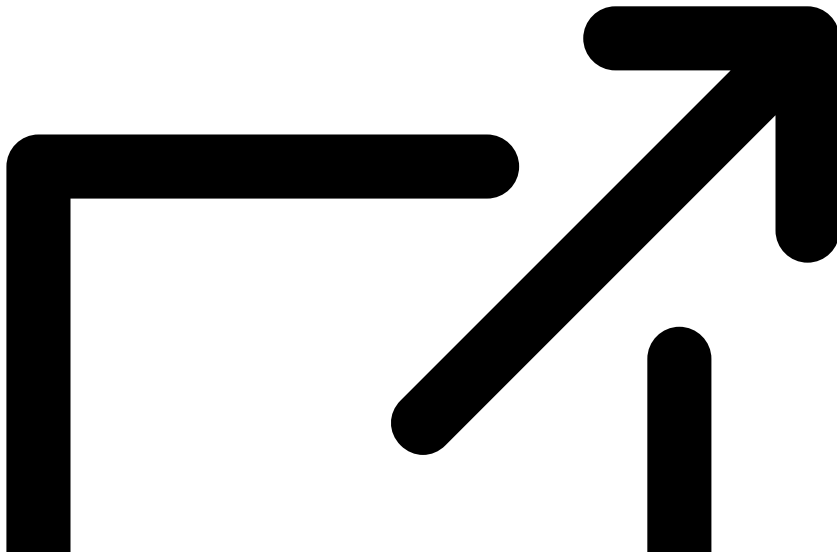
- **Roger Stone:** Stone, a former advisor to Trump, [had back channel conversations](#)



with Julian Assange, the founder of Wikileaks, which is the organization that published the DNC leaks and Podesta emails during the 2016 elections. He also [had exchanges with](#)



Guccifer 2.0 -- a hacker believed to be linked to Russia involved in the 2016 hacking of Democratic National Committee emails -- in August 2016. Also in August, he [tweeted](#)



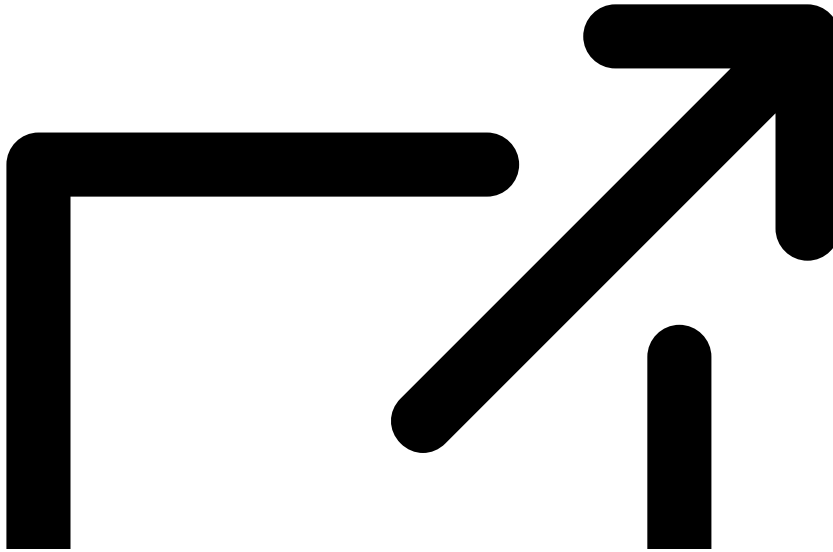
"it will soon [be] Podesta's time in the barrel." About two months later, Wikileaks began posting John Podesta's emails.

- **Felix Sater:** Sater, formerly a senior advisor to the Trump Organization, is a [Russian-born Bayrock associate](#)

with extensive involvement in organized crime. In 2015, he [wrote](#)

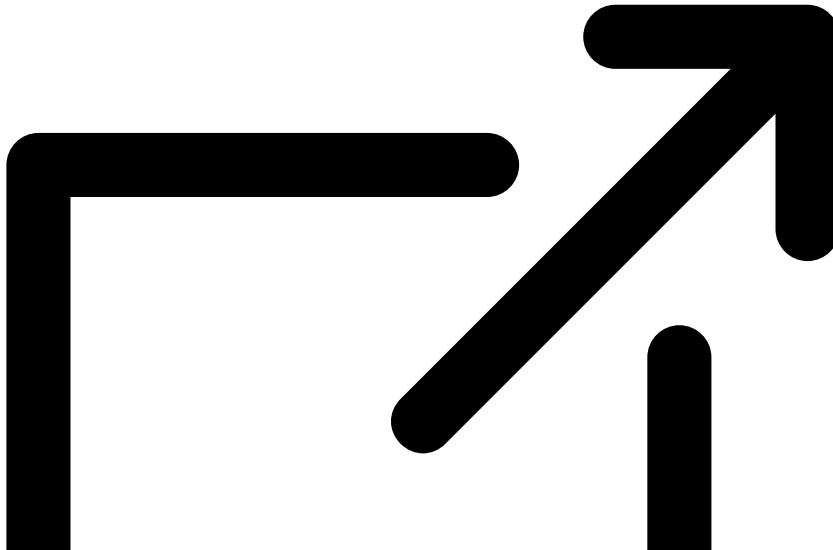
an email to Trump's lawyer, Cohen, referencing then-candidate Trump saying: "Our boy can become President of the USA and we can engineer it. I will get all of Putins team to buy in on this, I will manage this process."

- **Alex Shnaider:** Born in Russia, Shnaider [co-financed](#)



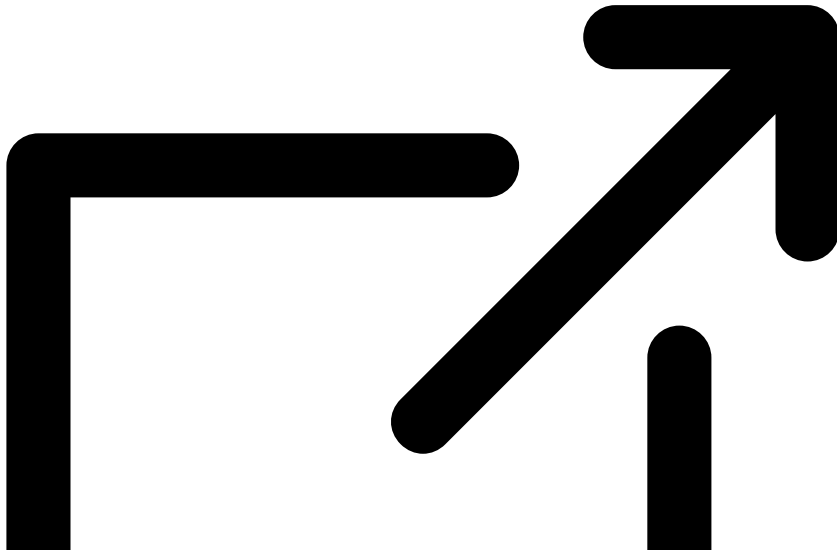
a real estate project with Trump. Shnaider's father-in-law, Boris J. Birshtein, was a close business associate of Sergei Mikhaylov, the head of one of the largest branches of the Russian mob.

- **JD Gordon:** Gordon, a national security advisor for the Trump campaign [met with](#)



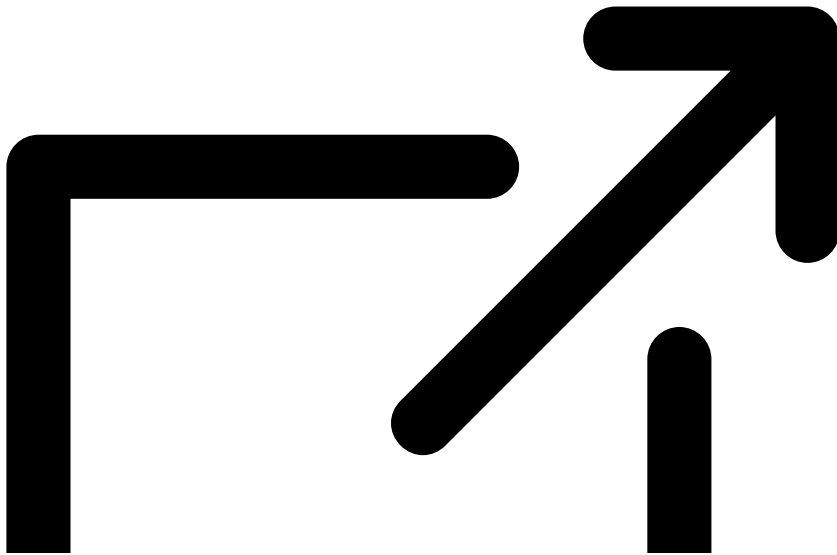
Russian Ambassador to the US Sergey Kislyak during the Republican National Convention in Cleveland in July, who he told he would like to improve US - Russia relations. He [advocated](#)



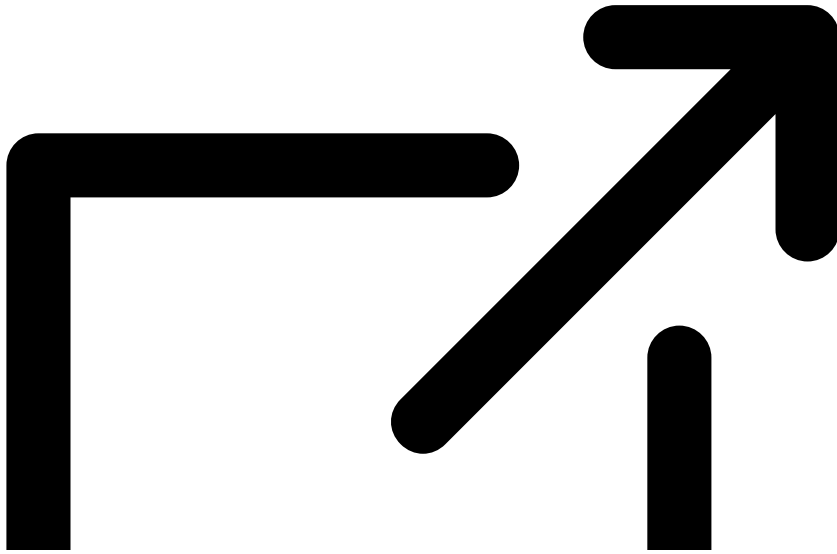


for a change to the GOP national platform to make their policies more pro-Russian and less pro-Ukraine, a change which Gordon said was directly supported by then-candidate Donald Trump.

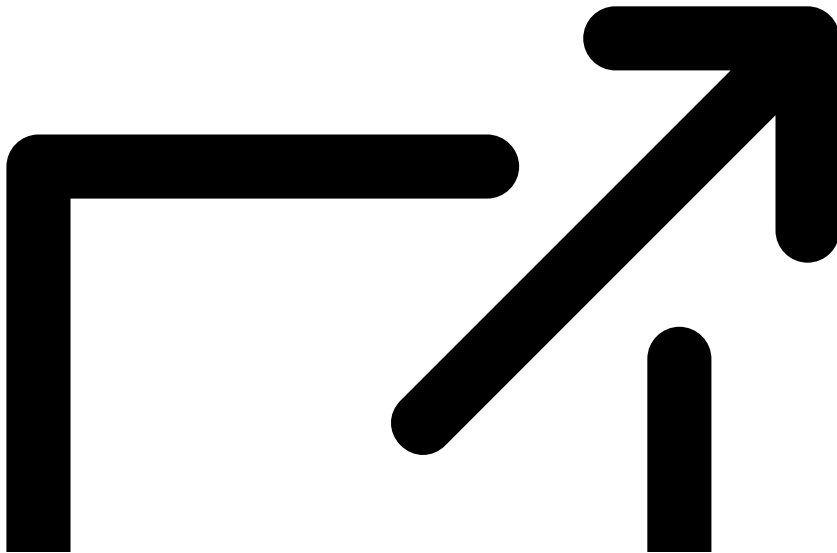
- **Wilbur Ross:** Ross, President Trump's Secretary of Commerce, was the [top shareholder](#)



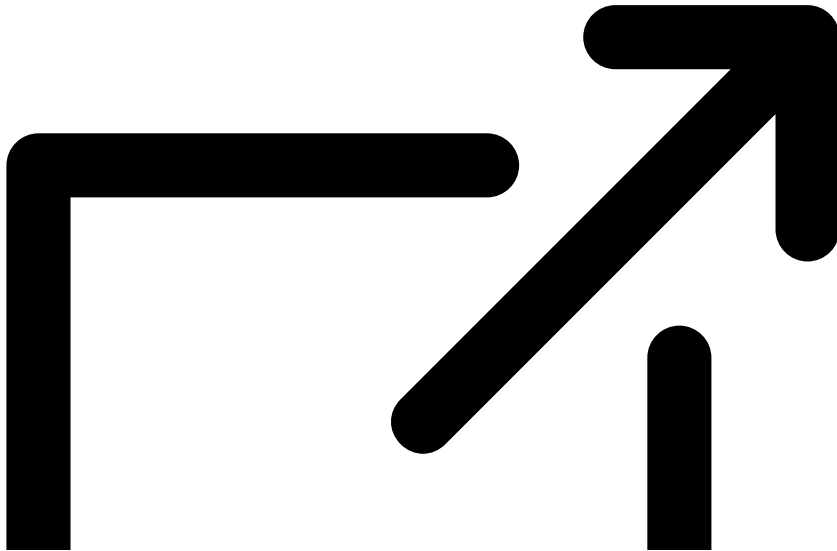
in the Bank of Cyprus, an institution with deep Russian ties and investors who made fortunes under Russian President Vladimir Putin. According to [McClatchy](#)



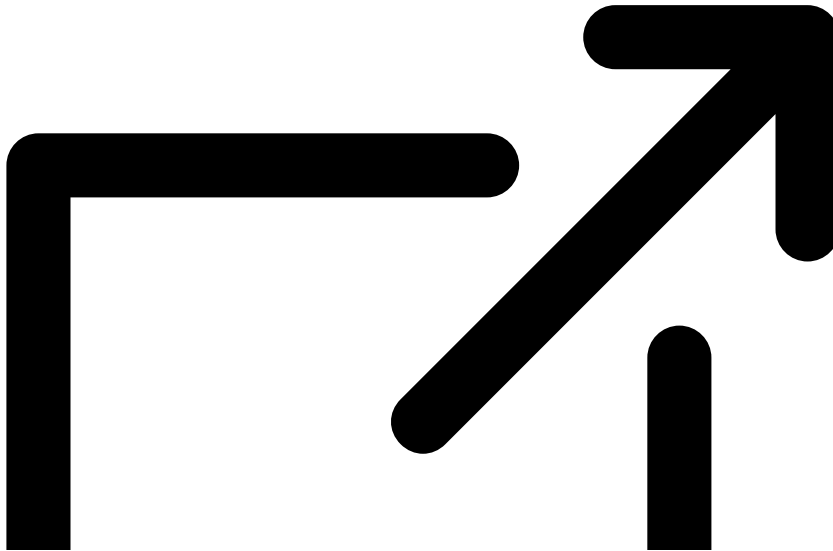
, the banking system in Cyprus, because of its dependence on Russian investors, is money-laundering concern for the US State Department. Ross served as



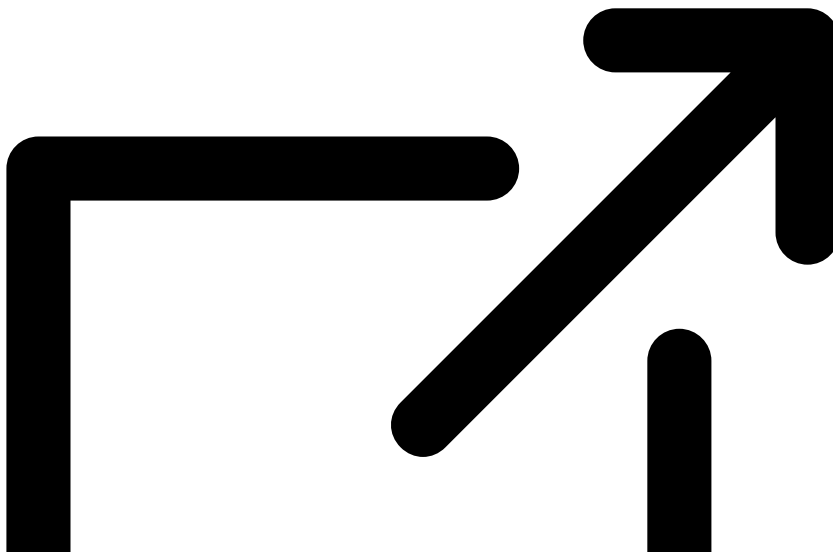
the vice chairman of the board of directors for the Bank of Cyprus. The second largest investor in the Bank of Cyprus was Viktor Vekselberg, who once served



to have a close relationship with Vladimir Putin. In February, six senators [sent a letter](#)



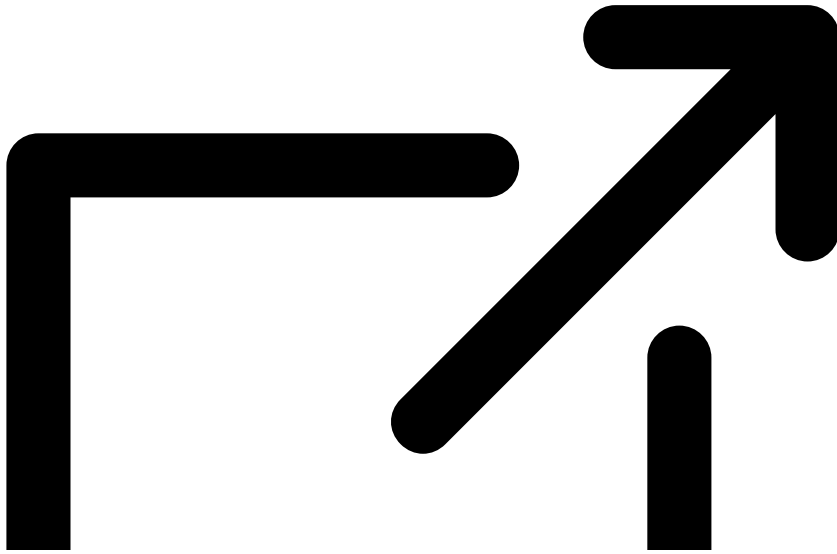
to Ross inquiring about his relationship to Vekselberg. The senators also inquired about Ross's relationship with Vladimir Strzhalkovsky, who is also [linked to](#)



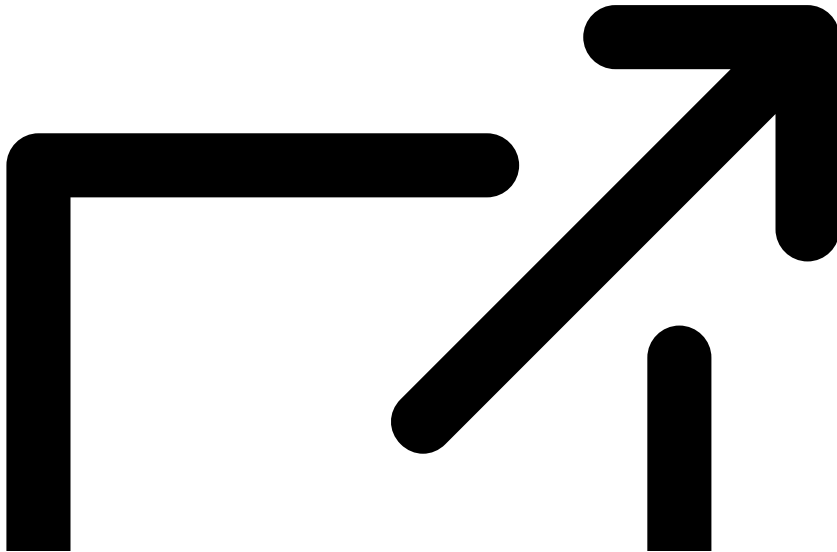
the Bank of Cyprus, was a former KGB agent, and is believed to be a Putin associate.

- **Erik Prince:** Prince, who had no formal role with the Trump campaign or transition team, had a secret meeting with a Russian close to President Putin, arranged by the United Arab Emirates, the Washington Post recently [reported](#).





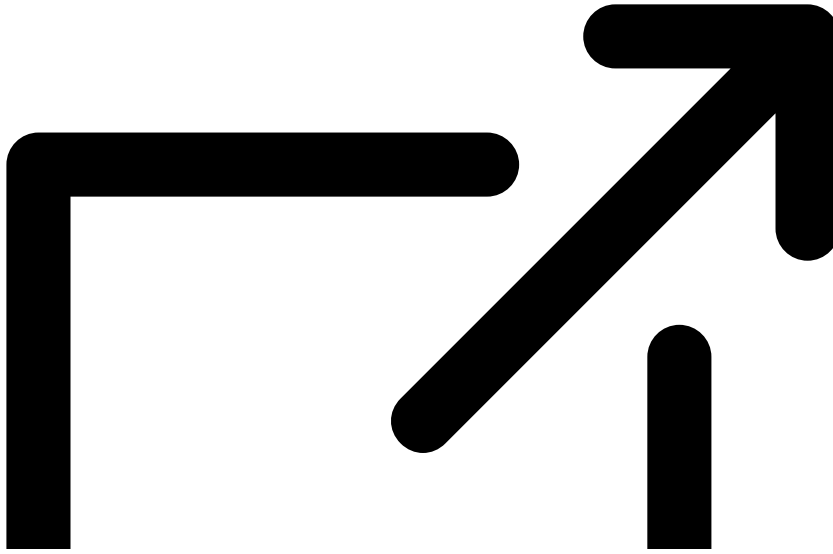
to facilitate the meeting in order to explore Russia's willingness to curtail its relationship with Iran. Prince was a supporter of Trump, and [has ties](#)



to Steve Bannon and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, who is his sister. He was also seen in Trump transition offices in December.

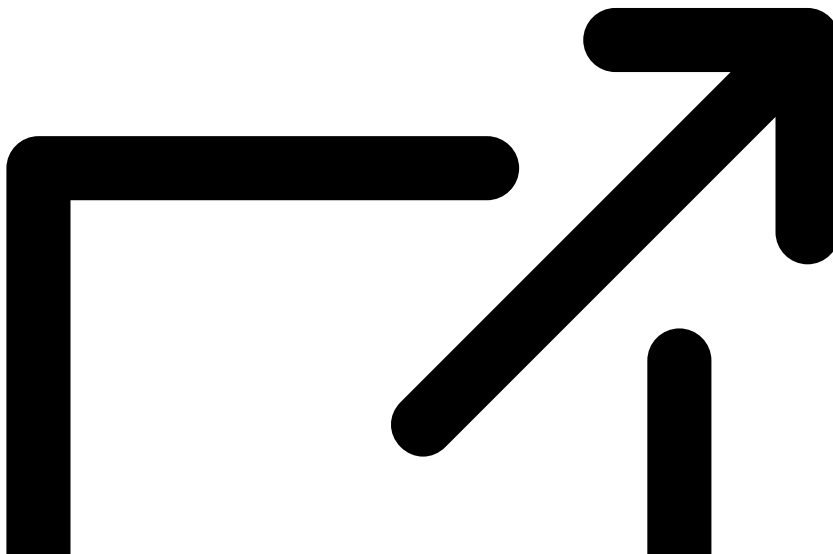


- **Michael Cohen:** Cohen is a longtime associate of President Trump's and is his current personal lawyer. He has come under scrutiny for [pursuing](#)



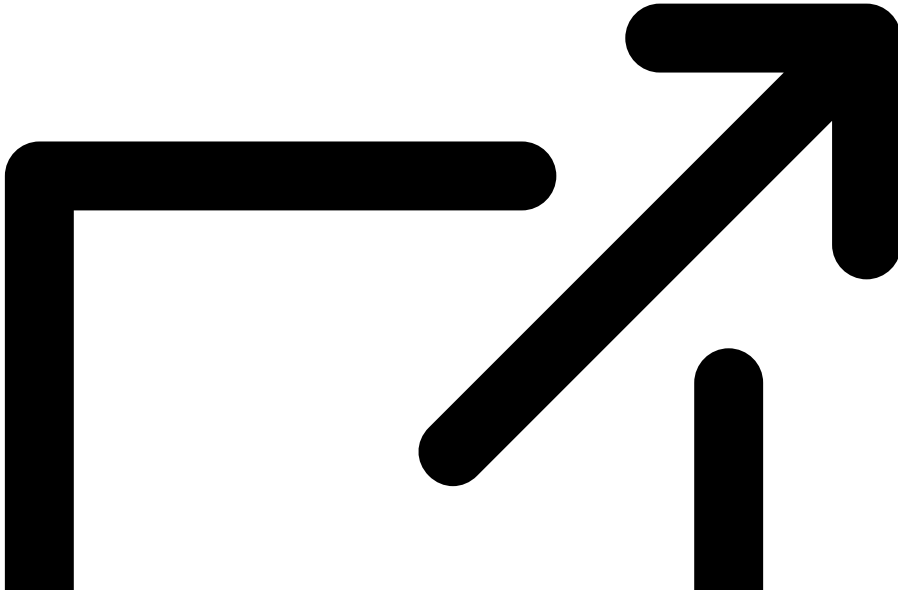
a Trump Tower deal in Moscow while Trump was campaigning to be President, and for alleged meetings with Russian officials in Prague. In January 2017, he met with a Ukrainian opposition politician and Felix Sater to discuss a plan to give Russia long term control over Ukraine and lift sanctions against Russia. They then put this plan in a sealed envelope and left it in the office of then National Security Advisor Michael Flynn.

- **George Papadopoulos:** Papadopoulos was a foreign policy advisor for the Trump Campaign. On October 27, 2017 it was [revealed](#)

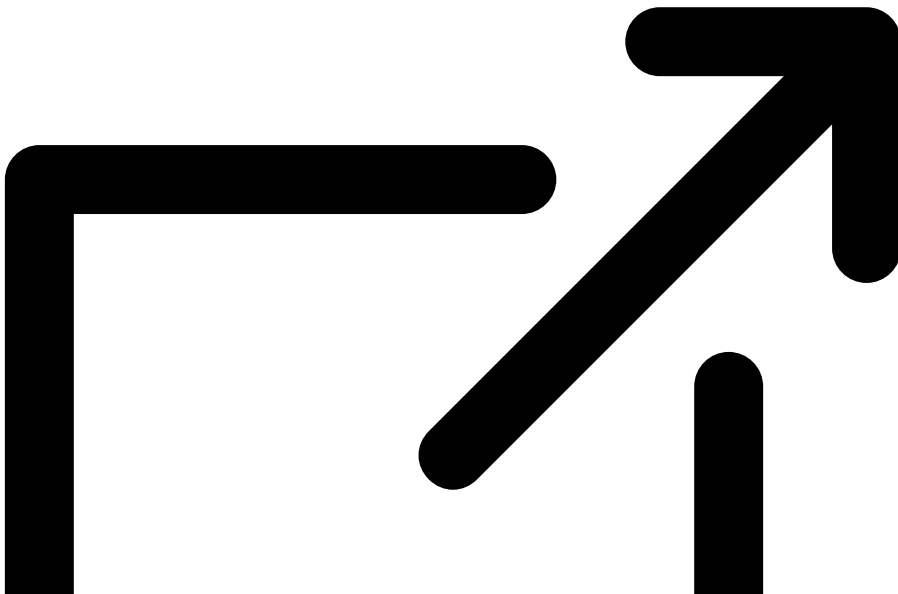


that Papadopoulos had plead guilty to making a false statement to federal investigators "about the timing, extent and nature of his relationships and interactions with certain foreign nationals whom he understood to have close connections with senior Russian officials." While working for the Trump Campaign, Papadopoulos met with an overseas professor who told him about the Russians possessing "dirt" on Hillary Clinton in the form of "thousands of emails." He repeatedly sought to use his connections to arrange a meeting between the campaign and Russian government officials. On March 31, 2016, at a foreign policy meeting with Trump and other campaign advisers, Papadopoulos shared that he could help arrange a meeting between Trump and Putin. He sent multiple emails to other members of the campaign about his contact with "the Russians" and "outreach to Russia."

In addition to these ties, it appears that Trump and his team are **conscious of their guilt**. In late February 2017, [CNN reported](#)



that "the FBI rejected a recent White House request to publicly knock down media reports about communications between Donald Trump's associates and Russians known to US intelligence during the 2016 presidential campaign." [This request](#)



may be a violation of procedures that limits communications between the White House and FBI on pending investigations.

**Why is America's leader and his team so close to Russia?** This is either due to poor judgement or a deeper personal, financial, or political link between President Trump and Russia. It is **not normal** for the leader of our country to be so extensively tied to a foreign government that has sought to undermine democracies across the globe, and connections like these should be concerning to American citizens everywhere.

Next Page: [Russia: Attack on our Democracy](#)



Is there a connection we're missing?  
We'll hunt it down. Click here to submit.