

Former MI6 chief Richard Dearlove says Donald Trump borrowed money from Russia during 2008 financial crisis

Days before taking office, Mr Trump said Russia had never had any 'leverage' over him



Former head of MI6 Richard Dearlove said Donald Trump borrowed money from Russia during the 2008 financial crisis (PA)

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The former head of MI6 has said [Donald Trump](#) borrowed money from [Russia](#) for his business during the 2008 financial crisis.

Richard Dearlove [told](#) Prospect Magazine that “what lingers for Trump may be what deals – on what terms – he did after the financial crisis of 2008 to borrow Russian money” when other banks and lenders would not risk the money, given Mr Trump’s history of bankruptcy.

Mr Dearlove alleged the money was used by Mr Trump to prop up his real estate empire, which was hit hard by the [financial crisis](#). It is not illegal to borrow money from Russian entities but Mr Dearlove, who left government in 2004, did not provide any evidence to support his claim in the interview.

Rex Tillerson: US have "low level of trust" with Russia

Just days before taking office Mr Trump tweeted that Russia has never had “leverage” over him.

Mr Trump also recently said US-Russia relations may be at an “all-time low” following the US air strike in Russian-allied [Syria](#) after a chemical attack in the Idlib province.

Robert Amsterdam, a lawyer at international law firm Amsterdam & Partners with considerable experience in Russian affairs, told *The Independent* there was “no question” that US intelligence agencies and the FBI had information about Trump’s financial dealings with Russian entities prior to the 2016 [US election](#).

“Trump’s relationship with Russia goes back many, many years. I’m sure the FBI was monitoring it,” he said.

Two parallel investigations into alleged ties between Trump associates and Russia during the 2016 presidential election as well as Russia’s alleged tampering with the election are being conducted in Congress at the moment.

Democrat Senator Mark Warner, Vice Chair of the [Senate Intelligence Committee](#) said the tactics used by the Kremlin “send a chill down anyone who believes in the democratic process”.

If the FBI and or other US intelligence agencies did know about any financial burden Mr Trump had with Russian lenders, it will raise further questions over why the information was not released earlier, especially given the FBI’s approach to Mr Trump’s opposition candidate Hillary Clinton during the 2016 election.

FBI Director [James Comey](#) infamously sent a letter on 28 October - just 11 days before Americans went to the polls - to Congress stating the agency found new, pertinent emails in its ongoing investigation into then-candidate Ms Clinton’s use of a private email server for messages containing classified information.

Mr Amsterdam said one possible explanation is “that the FBI has an informer who was once part of the Trump organisation” and that information was not released in order to protect that source.

“In my view...[the FBI] had no obligation” to share the Trump investigation but “the same rules should apply to Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump,” he said.

Mr Amsterdam explained that Russian authorities likely have the same, if not “better,” information about Mr Trump’s financial dealings with Russian entities.

“One of Mr Trump’s main lenders is a bank that’s been particularly close with Russians: Deutsche Bank,” said Mr Amsterdam.

It is unknown if Mr Trump is still paying off the alleged 2008 debts to Russian lenders or which part of the vast Trump organisation took out the loans.

The Congressional investigations will also include interviews and possibly hearings with Mr Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner.

It has been confirmed that Vnesheconombank, a Russian state development bank, met with Mr Kushner in December 2016.

The bank is currently subject to western economic sanctions due to Russia's incursion into Ukraine.