

White House rejects Oversight request for Flynn documents



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The Trump administration has denied a request from the House Oversight Committee for more information on payments that former national security adviser Michael Flynn received from foreign governments, including from the Kremlin-backed television station RT and other Russian firms.

Legislative affairs director Marc Short said the committee is requesting documents that are not in possession of the White House because they involved Flynn's activity prior to President Trump's Jan. 20 inauguration. Other documents sought by the committee, from after Jan. 20, involve sensitive information, he said.

"It is unclear how such documents would be relevant to the stated purpose of the committee's review, which according to your letter is to examine Lt. Gen. Flynn's disclosure of payments related to activities that occurred in 2015 and 2016, prior to his service in the White House," Short wrote in a letter dated April 19 that was sent to committee leaders.

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In March, the committee sent a letter to the White House, the Defense Department and several other administration heads asking for a range of records related to the payments received by Flynn, who also worked on Trump's campaign and the presidential transition.

On Tuesday morning, the committee reviewed a batch of documents responsive to the request from the Pentagon behind closed doors.

Those documents, said both chairman [Jason Chaffetz](#) (R-Utah) and ranking member Elijah Cummings (D-Md.), suggest that Flynn broke the law by declining to disclose the payments from both Russia and Turkey in his application to renew his security clearance.

“Personally, I see no data to support the notion that Gen. Flynn complied with the law,” Chaffetz said.

But both Chaffetz and Cummings stopped short of accusing the White House of obstructing their investigation.

“I wouldn’t call it obstruction,” Cummings said.

Flynn had also declined to disclose the payments in his original financial disclosure forms submitted in February.

He filed an amended disclosure last month [reporting payments for speeches](#) from three Russian-linked companies, including RT, but the move has remained under scrutiny amidst the FBI’s ongoing investigation into possible coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia during the election.

According to Cummings, Flynn applied to renew his security clearance — using a form called a SF-86 — in January of 2016, just month after he traveled to Moscow to give a paid speech. During a dinner at that appearance, he was seated with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

There is “no evidence in the documents that he reported funds he received for his trip” and “no evidence he sought permission to obtain these funds from a foreign source,” Cummings said Tuesday, noting that knowingly falsifying or concealing a material fact in an SF-86 is a felony.

[Flynn was forced to resign](#) in February after it came to light that he had misled Vice President Pence and the public about the content of a phone call with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyac.

The former intelligence official has offered to testify before the Senate and House Intelligence committees — which are both investigating Russian interference in the election — [in exchange for immunity](#), but neither committee has accepted the offer.

Chaffetz said Tuesday that Flynn could potentially be on the hook for tens of thousands of dollars in remittance to the U.S. government.

But the authority to levy that penalty would rest with the administration — not with the committee.

Although Cummings said that he would like to see Flynn appear before the committee, such a hearing appears unlikely. Chaffetz argued that the “lead” in any Russia-related investigations is the Intelligence Committee. Oversight, he said, is in “more of a support role.”

“I highly doubt” the committee will call Flynn to testify, Chaffetz said.

This story was updated at 11:56 a.m.