



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on May 17, 2017

Putin Offers “Transcript” to Prove Trump Did Not Reveal Classified Intel

As the beleaguered White House continues to fumble its way through the escalating scandal of whether or not President Trump revealed sensitive, classified intelligence to Russian officials in last week’s Oval Office meeting, Russian Vladimir Putin has offered Congress a copy of the “transcript” of that meeting as proof that he did not.



The White House has not yet issued a clear and unambiguous denial that President Trump let slip intelligence — likely gathered by Israel and made available to the United States — regarding an ongoing ISIS plot to use laptop computer bombs on airplanes. The closest to a denial so far was when White House national security advisor General H.R. McMaster issued what amounts to a non-denial denial, saying:

There’s nothing that the president takes more seriously than the security of the American people. The story that came out tonight, as reported, is false. The president and the foreign minister reviewed a range of common threats to our two countries, including threats to civil aviation. At no time — at no time — were intelligence sources or methods discussed. And the president did not disclose any military operations that were not already publicly known. Two other senior officials who were present, including the secretary of state, remember it being the same way and have said so. Their on-the-record accounts should outweigh those of anonymous sources. And I was in the room. It didn’t happen.

As this writer said in a [previous article](#) about that statement:

It is noteworthy that McMaster did not deny that President Trump provided the Russian officials with classified intelligence. He only said the story was false “as reported.” Just to put in the for-what-it’s-worth column, that type of nuanced denial would not sell to conservatives had it come from the Obama administration. The material issue is not whether “intelligence sources or methods [were] discussed.” The question is whether the president disclosed classified intelligence at all. McMaster’s cleverly crafted statement denies what was not asserted, while avoiding what was. Coming from the administration of a man who ran a campaign of “plain speaking,” this non-denial denial stands out in sharp contrast.

Now, President Trump — who has been accused of being “Putin’s puppet” — finds himself the recipient of an offer of salvation from the man who is accused of being his puppet master. Trump’s enemies in politics, media, and intelligence — who have spent months making headlines about alleged Trump-Russia and Trump-Putin connections — could not have scripted this drama any better. Rather than



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being seen as evidence that Trump did not reveal secrets, Putin's offer will likely be seen as evidence of Putin protecting Trump.

As Reuters is [reporting](#):

Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday that U.S. President Donald Trump had not divulged any secrets during a meeting in Washington with Russian officials and offered to prove it by supplying Congress with a transcript.

And:

If the Trump administration deemed it appropriate, Putin said Russia could hand over a transcript of Trump's meeting with Lavrov to U.S. lawmakers to reassure them that no secrets were revealed.

It is not, however, a transcript of an audio recording, but instead "a written record of the conversation," according to Yuri Ushakov, a Kremlin aide. One can easily see why Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) would call the credibility of the offered transcript into question. "I wouldn't put much credibility into whatever Putin's notes are," Rubio told Fox News," adding, "And if it comes in an email, I wouldn't click on the attachment." Rubio is not alone in questioning the veracity of a written note from Putin. Representative Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) — the top ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee — told CBS News, "If they want to send something, you know, hats off. Send it our way," but added, "It's credibility would be less than zero." Schiff also said what many are likely thinking, "The last person Trump needs to vouch for him right now is Vladimir Putin."

Putin seems to be enjoying the notoriety of being accused of benefiting from Trump's presidency and lack of discretion. Speaking to the assembled press with Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni Wednesday, Putin — finding his Russian sarcasm — said he would have to "reprimand" Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov "because he did not share these secrets with us. Not with me, nor with representatives of Russia's intelligence services. It was very bad of him."

Putin also had strong words for Trump's enemies who have made much ado of the alleged connection between Trump and Moscow. He said:

What surprises me is that they are shaking up the domestic political situation using anti-Russian slogans. Either they don't understand the damage they're doing to their own country, in which case they are simply stupid, or they understand everything, in which case they are dangerous and corrupt.

Strong words from the Russian president are not what is needed, though. In the continued absence of a firm denial — lacking any nuanced language — from President Trump, Putin's strong words and his offer of a transcript are simply more fuel for the fire.

Photo: Vladimir Putin



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