

HOW RUSSIAN SPIES CULTIVATED THE NRA AND NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST TO SEEK REPUBLICAN ASSETS

DOJ just [announced](#) the arrest, over the weekend, of gun rights activist Maria Butina for conspiracy to spy for Russia. ([complaint](#), [affidavit](#))

The affidavit explains how, between March 2015 (when she expected the GOP would “likely obtain control over the U.S. government after the 2016 elections”) and 2017, Butina worked with Aleksandr Torshin and two US persons to cultivate Republicans and lay the groundwork for warmer relations between Republicans and Russia. She focused on the NRA, she explained, because “the NRA [is] the largest sponsor of the elections in the US congress.”

The person listed as USP 1 (who has been named but I’ll wait for confirmation) laid out precisely how she should pitch herself – not too critical of Obama, pretense that there was a post-Putin world on the horizon – and gave her all the introductions to friendly types she might need.

The end of the narrative laid out in the complaint describes meticulous details around the National Prayer Breakfast last year, on February 2, 2017. Trump [very nearly met](#) with Torshin at the meeting, only pulling out at the last minute.

I’ll have more to say about this indictment (there’s a bunch of screen caps on my Twitter feed). But understand that this indictment is not even part of the Mueller probe. Nevertheless, several parts of it get two degrees away from Trump and his spawn.