

AMID DESCRIPTION OF KUSHNER'S SHADOW FOREIGN POLICY, TILLERSON COUNTERS A JARED CLAIM TO MUELLER ABOUT KIRILL DMITRIEV'S PLAN

When the FBI interviewed Mike Flynn on January 24, 2017, he offered a lame excuse for why he and other Transition officials (notably including Jared Kushner) were hiding their meetings with foreign leaders.

FLYNN explained that other meetings between the TRUMP team and various foreign countries took place prior to the inauguration, and were sensitive inasmuch as many other countries did not want the then-current administration to know about them.

In reality, the Trump Transition had provided Obama's team reassurances they would not try to undermine Obama's policies, but were doing so secretly.

But it wasn't just the Obama Administration that Kushner was hiding his actions from. In a May interview with the House Foreign Relations Committee, Rex Tillerson revealed this continued to happen. He provided an example where he caught Mexico's Foreign Minister meeting with Jared "and I don't remember who else was at the table" without his knowledge.

Q And we've had concerning reports lately that Mr. Kushner has traveled to the Middle East with virtually no assistance or input of his ability from the embassy. Was that something that you

experienced? You know, obviously you said that there was this exchange about a broader framework that he had worked on to develop and inform the Saudi-U.S. relationship.

Did you ever experience anything of the nature of this trip I just mentioned where diplomatic engagement occurred, whether or not it was related to that framework, but it was outside the scope of your knowledge or didn't involve preparation by the State Department?

A Yes.

Q Could you say a little more about that?

A In Saudi Arabia particularly?

Q Or other examples that I think are similar in nature.

A Yeah. There were – on occasion the President's senior adviser would make trips abroad and usually, you know, kind of was in charge of his own agenda.

Sr. Democratic Counsel. And just to clarify, you mean Mr. Kushner?

Mr. Tillerson. Yes. Yeah. Yes. And typically not a lot of coordination with the embassy.

Sr. Democratic Staff. Did you ever raise this phenomenon with Mr. Kushner or –

Mr. Tillerson. I did.

BY SR. DEMOCRATIC COUNSEL: Q What were those conversations like?

A He said he would try to do better.

Q Did he?

A Not much changed.

Q How did that impact your job?

A Well, I think – you know, I alluded earlier to the fact that it's always challenging if everyone isn't kind of working from the same playbook. And certainly there – and let me be clear – there are occasions, and it's certainly the President's prerogative, to have individuals undertake special assignments in a very compartmentalized way. Not using – I'm trying not to use the word "compartmentalize" relative to –

Q Not a term of art.

A Right. But in a way that, for whatever reasons, they prefer to have it carried out by an individual that way, and it's the President's prerogative to do that. But it – yeah, it presents special challenges to everyone if others who are trying to effect foreign policy with a country and move the agenda forward are not fully aware of other conversations that are going on that might be causing your counterparty in that country to take certain actions or behave a certain way and you're not clear as to why, why did they do that.

Q Did you ever find yourself in one of those situations where Mr. Kushner had had a meeting or had a conversation that you weren't aware of and it caught you off guard?

A Yes.

Q Could you be specific about that?

A Well, I'll give you just one example and then maybe we can –

Q Yes, sir.

A – leave it at the one example. But Mexico was a situation that that occurred on a number of occasions. And I mention this one because I think it was

– some of the elements of it were reported publicly that the Foreign Secretary of Mexico was engaged with Mr. Kushner on a fairly – unbeknownst to me – a fairly comprehensive plan of action.

And the Foreign Secretary came to town – unbeknownst to me – and I happened to be having a business dinner at a restaurant in town. And the owner of the restaurant, proprietor of the restaurant came around and said: Oh, Mr. Secretary, you might be interested to know the Foreign Secretary of Mexico is seated at a table near the back and in case you want to go by and say hello to him. Very innocent on his part.

And so I did. I walked back. And Mr. Kushner, and I don't remember who else was at the table, and the Foreign Secretary were at the table having dinner. And I could see the color go out of the face of the Foreign Secretary of Mexico as I very – I smiled big, and I said: Welcome to Washington. And I said: I don't want to interrupt what y'all are doing. I said: Give me a call next time you're coming to town. And I left it at that.

As it turned out later, the Foreign Secretary was operating on the assumption that everything he was talking to Mr. Kushner about had been run through the State Department and that I was fully on board with it. And he was rather shocked to find out that when he started telling me all these things that were news to me, I told him this is the first time I'm hearing of it. And I don't know that any of those things were discussing ultimately happened because there was a change of government in Mexico as well.

Earlier in the interview, staffers told

Tillerson (for the first time!) that Kushner and Steve Bannon got advance notice of the Gulf blockade of Qatar, which pissed Tillerson off.

Q A couple of weeks later on May 20th, 2017, you were in Riyadh with the President in advance of the Middle East summit. And you again gave public remarks with the Saudi Foreign Minister. This is the night before the President's speech. Did he say anything to you or did anyone else say anything to you on that same topic, regional tensions, something might be changing?

A No.

Q So that same night as we understand it, so on or about May 20th, 2017, there was apparently a private dinner that was hosted between Steve Bannon, Jared Kushner, and the rulers of Saudi Arabia and UAE, respectively. Were you aware of that dinner?

A No.

Q We understand that as part of that dinner the leaders of Saudi and UAE did lay out for Mr. Kushner and Mr. Bannon their plans for the blockade. That wasn't something that you had heard previously?

A No.

Q And to clarify, sir, not prior to when I just said it? A Correct.

Q Okay. What's your reaction to a meeting of that sort having taken place without your knowledge?

A You mean now?

Q Yes. A Today?

Q Well –

A It makes me angry.

Q Why is that?

A Because I didn't have a say. The State Department's views were never expressed.

In any case, the revelation that Jared continued to conduct shadow foreign policy even after his father-in-law took over – and the fact that his so-called “peace” “process” in Palestine has been shown instead to be a hedge fund driven excuse to turn apartheid into a profit center (See these threads on just how bad it is: one, two, three) – I'd like to point to a more subtle detail in Tillerson's interview. He claims that – contrary to what Jared told Mueller – the President's son-in-law did not share a plan from Kirill Dmitriev with him.

Either during the transition or early in your tenure as Secretary, did anyone ever pass you a plan or sort of a roadmap regarding policy changes in the US Russia relationship?

A Not that I can recall.

Q And as you'll note, sir, I believe one of those was mentioned in the Mueller report and it was stated that that had gone from a Mr. Kirill Dmitriev to Mr. Kushner who I believe was said that that was passed to you. Do you have any recollection of that?

A I don't recall ever receiving any such report as described in the Mueller report or any other.

Q Okay. And no other sort of here's what we should do on Russia proposals from anyone else?

A No.

Q Nothing from the Trump family, the organization?

A No.

As you'll recall, Kirill Dmitriev, whom Putin tasked to reach out to the new Administration, got to Jared via one of his hedgeie friends, Rick Gerson and via George Nader. Between the three of them, they had a role in setting the agenda for the January 28 phone call between Putin and Trump (Tillerson, who was not confirmed yet, did not sit in on that meeting). That plan included "win-win investment initiatives." According to the Mueller Report, Jared claimed he had given that report to Bannon (who was in the meeting) and Tillerson, but neither followed up on it.

Dmitriev told Gerson that he had been tasked by Putin to develop and execute a reconciliation plan between the United States and Russia. He noted in a text message to Gerson that if Russia was "approached with respect and willingness to understand our position, we can have Major Breakthroughs quickly."¹¹⁰⁵ Gerson and Dmitriev exchanged ideas in December 2016 about what such a reconciliation plan would include. ¹¹⁰⁶ Gerson told the Office that the Transition Team had not asked him to engage in these discussions with Dmitriev, and that he did so on his own initiative and as a private citizen.¹¹⁰⁷

[snip]

On January 16, 2017, Dmitriev consolidated the ideas for U.S.-Russia reconciliation that he and Gerson had been discussing into a two-page document that listed five main points: (1) jointly fighting terrorism; (2) jointly engaging in anti-weapons of mass destruction efforts; (3) **developing "win-win" economic and investment initiatives**; (4) maintaining an honest, open, and continual dialogue regarding issues of disagreement; and (5) ensuring proper communication and trust by "key people" from each country. ¹¹¹¹ On January 18, 2017, Gerson gave a copy of

the document to Kushner. 1112 Kushner had not heard of Dmitriev at that time. 1113 Gerson explained that Dmitriev was the head of RDIF, and Gerson may have alluded to Dmitriev's being well connected. 1114 Kushner placed the document in a file and said he would get it to the right people. 1115 **Kushner ultimately gave one copy of the document to Bannon and another to Rex Tillerson; according to Kushner, neither of them followed up with Kushner about it.** 1116 On January 19, 2017, Dmitriev sent Nader a copy of the two-page document, telling him that this was "a view from our side that I discussed in my meeting on the islands and with you and with our friends. Please share with them – we believe this is a good foundation to start from." 1117

Gerson informed Dmitriev that he had given the document to Kushner soon after delivering it. 1118 On January 26, 2017, Dmitriev wrote to Gerson that his "boss"-an apparent reference to Putin-was asking if there had been any feedback on the proposal. 1119 Dmitriev said, " [w]e do not want to rush things and move at a comfortable speed. At the same time, my boss asked me to try to have the key US meetings in the next two weeks if possible."1120 He informed Gerson that Putin and President Trump would speak by phone that Saturday, and noted that that information was "very confidential."1121

The same day, Dmitriev wrote to Nader that he had seen his "boss" again yesterday who had "emphasized that this is a great priority for us and that we need to build this communication channel to avoid bureaucracy." 1122 On January 28, 2017, Dmitriev texted Nader that he wanted "to see if I can confirm to my boss that your friends may use some of

the ideas from the 2 pager I sent you in the telephone call that will happen at 12 EST,"¹¹²³ an apparent reference to the call scheduled between President Trump and Putin. Nader replied, "Definitely paper was so submitted to Team by Rick and me. They took it seriously!"¹¹²⁴ After the call between President Trump and Putin occurred, Dmitriev wrote to Nader that "the call went very well. My boss wants me to continue making some public statements that us [sic] Russia cooperation is good and important." ¹¹²⁵ Gerson also wrote to Dmitriev to say that the call had gone well, and Dmitriev replied that the document they had drafted together "played an important role." ¹¹²⁶

¹¹¹⁶ Kushner 4/11/18 302, at 32.

The claim that Kushner handed over the document is sourced solely to him (Steve Bannon did testify after Kushner made this claim; it's not clear if Tillerson ever did).

It may or may not be a big deal that Tillerson doesn't agree with Kushner's claim. Tillerson claims to have forgotten a *lot* about what happened while he was at State, so it's possible he just forgot. But given that Kushner repeatedly kept Tillerson out of the loop, it's certainly possible that he did so with this plan, as well.

Which would raise interesting questions if he actually made up his claim that he had kept Tillerson in the loop on this plan.