



## Former U.S. National Security Advisor Pleads Guilty to Lying About Russia Links



Washington, December 2 (RHC)-- U.S. President Donald Trump's former national security advisor, Michael Flynn, has pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about his contacts with Russia. The 58-year-old Flynn -- a retired three-star Army general -- pleaded guilty on Friday to one charge of making false statements to investigators, hours after the Justice Department's special counsel Robert Mueller charged him with "willfully and knowingly" making "false, fictitious and fraudulent statements" to investigators over his Russian contacts.

"I recognize that the actions I acknowledged in court today were wrong," Flynn said in a statement. "My guilty plea and agreement to cooperate with the special counsel's office reflect a decision I made in the best interests of my family and of our country. I accept full responsibility for my actions," he added.

Flynn, who had resigned in February over allegations that he had contacts with Russia, was charged on Friday morning with one count of lying about his private discussions with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak regarding US sanctions being imposed on Moscow by the administration of then-President Barack Obama, according to a court document. "On or about January 24, 2017, defendant Michael T. Flynn did willfully and knowingly make materially false, fictitious, and fraudulent statements and representations" over a government matter, the two-page charge sheet stated.

Mueller, who is probing possible collusion between Trump's election campaign team and Russia during last year's presidential election, said that Flynn lied when he told the FBI that he did not ask Ambassador Kislyak to "refrain from escalating the situation" in response to sanctions that



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Obama had imposed on Russia. Flynn also lied when he said he did not ask the ambassador to either delay or defeat a related UN Security Council vote, the special counsel alleged.

U.S. intelligence agencies have concluded that Russia tried to help Trump win the election by hacking and releasing emails damaging to his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton. Mueller is looking into whether there were any links between the Trump campaign and Russian operatives.

Mueller's mandate gives him permission to investigate "any matters" that arise out of his investigation into Russia's election interference and whether the Trump campaign colluded with Moscow. Mueller is applying renewed pressure on Flynn following his indictment of Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, three sources familiar with the investigation recently told NBC News.

Trump's former campaign chairman Manafort and Richard Gates, Manafort's close associate and business partner, were put under house arrest in October after they pleaded not guilty to charges stemming from Mueller's extensive probe into whether Russia interfered in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

In addition to Manafort and Gates, George Papadopoulos, the former Trump campaign foreign policy adviser, has been charged by Mueller, alleging that he had "close connections with senior Russian government officials." Trump's senior advisers are reportedly worried that Mueller will eventually "get" the U.S. president as part of his investigation.