

Trump Advisors Were Smeared, We Can Testify to the Facts

by John Hajjar and Hossein Khorram



Global Partners in Diplomacy panel featuring JD Gordon at Case Western Reserve University on July 20, 2016

As unfair partisan attacks have been targeting current and former advisors to the Trump Administration and Presidential campaign, and as some journalists have resorted to lies and misrepresentations of the facts regarding so-called meetings between senior Trump officials and Russian government representatives during the campaign, we have decided to testify regarding at least two charges made by some in the press. To the best of our knowledge, the meetings that then candidate Trump's advisors and surrogates held with foreign diplomats were designed and conducted in order to listen to the diplomats' concerns. Trump advisors and

surrogates made no promises of any kind on behalf of candidate Trump in any meeting where we were present.

The first unwarranted charge is that Attorney General, then Senator, Jeff Sessions held a meeting with the Russian Ambassador to the US, Sergey Kislyak, following a panel discussion at a Republican National Convention side event in July 2016. And second, that then candidate, now President, Trump held a meeting with the Russian ambassador before Trump's first foreign policy speech held at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington DC. We can truthfully testify as to what we saw at both events.

On April 27, 2016, I, John Hajjar, was present as a Middle East American surrogate for the Trump campaign along with my colleague, Tom Harb, at then candidate Trump's foreign policy speech, organized by the Center for National Interest. The surrogates as well as the national security and foreign policy advisors were seated a few rows behind the senior candidate advisors, former US officials, diplomats and VIPs who were seated by the National Interest in the front rows in deference to their status. Behind us, in multiple rows, were many political figures, NGOs leaders and senior members of the campaign. And behind this audience, the media representatives and multiple crews from around the world. The coordinator of the seating for advisors and surrogates was an administrative aide to Senator Sessions' national security board, JD Gordon. After the speech was over, advisors and surrogates spent more than an hour speaking to the press. The candidate and officials had left the auditorium immediately after the event was over. We did not see Senator Sessions "meeting" with any ambassadors, including the Russian ambassador. We actually didn't know the latter was at the meeting; we learned about it later from the media. There was no area in that auditorium which allowed for a private meeting. The room was filled with the cameras of dozens of reporters. The contention cited by some media, that Sessions met with Kislyak there, is simply

not credible. (Please see the