

## **Putin Asked Trump to Let Russia Question McFaul, White House Says**

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President Donald Trump entertained a proposal from Vladimir Putin to let Russian authorities question the former U.S. ambassador to Moscow, Michael McFaul, White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Wednesday.

Trump made no commitments to the Russian leader when Putin raised the idea at a private meeting in Helsinki on Monday and is “going to meet with his team,” Sanders said.

In exchange, the Russian president offered to allow Special Counsel Robert Mueller to observe interrogations of 12 Russian intelligence agents indicted by a U.S. grand jury last week for hacking Democratic Party email accounts.

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Sanders said “there was some conversation about” Putin’s proposed exchange during Trump’s summit with the Russian leader in Helsinki on Monday, where the two leaders spent about two hours together accompanied only by translators.

Putin outlined his proposal at a news conference following the summit, and said that his government would like to question Hermitage Capital chief executive William Browder, a longtime Kremlin antagonist who lobbied the U.S. government to adopt a law authorizing sanctions against Russian officials accused of human rights abuses. But Putin did not mention McFaul’s name to reporters.

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Trump called it an “interesting idea” and an “incredible offer” at the news conference.

“He wants to work with his team and determine if there’s any validity that would be helpful to the process,” Sanders said. “But again, we’ve committed to nothing. It was an idea that they threw out.”

“Putin has been harassing me for a long time,” McFaul, who was ambassador to Russia under former President Barack Obama, said on Twitter on Wednesday. “That he now wants to arrest me, however, takes it to a new level. I expect my government to defend me and my colleagues in public and private.”

**Video: Former Russian Ambassador Michael McFaul on the Helsinki Summit**

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