

Putin gave Trump a soccer ball that may have a transmitter chip

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Washington (CNN) — Russian President Vladimir Putin gave President Donald Trump an Adidas soccer ball during a news conference last week in Helsinki -- and the ball may have contained a transmitter chip.

Images of the ball Putin handed to Trump appear to show a logo indicating it has a chip included as part of a standard feature.

The Adidas [website explains](#) that the technology gives users access to "different functionalities," including "exclusive information about the product, adidas football content, special competitions and challenges."

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[Bloomberg first reported](#) on the soccer ball's transmitter chip logo.

The US Secret Service said in a statement, "All gifts given to the President are subject to thorough security screening. The Secret Service does not comment specifically nor in general about the means and methods of our protective responsibilities."

The White House did not immediately return a request for comment about the ball.

It is unclear whether the ball Putin gave Trump contained the the advertised device -- and even if it does, that doesn't mean it necessarily poses a security risk.

According to the Adidas website, the technology works by interacting with smartphones or tablets enabled with "Near Field Communication," which the company describes as "a digital technology that allows two devices to exchange data or trigger certain actions when physically connected to each other."

Scott Schober, a cybersecurity expert, said in an interview that the technology would be unlikely to be used for espionage and that any gift a US President receives would be thoroughly vetted to ensure it is safe.

"This is the kind of technology used for mobile payment with smartphones, and it involves bringing the two devices very close, in this case typically within a couple of centimeters. If anyone had any nefarious motives, they probably picked the wrong technology," he said.

Schober added, "They're going to be carefully looking at any gift. They're probably going to X-ray it and sweep it to see if there's any radio frequency emanating out of it."

There has already been speculation, however, that the gift might not be secure.

The same day that Putin gave Trump the soccer ball, South Carolina's Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham [tweeted a warning](#), saying that "if it were me, I'd check the soccer ball for listening devices and never allow it in the White House."

Adidas declined to comment on whether the chip could be compromised by hackers. Its website [states](#) that "it is not possible to delete or rewrite the encoded parameters" of the tag enabled with the communication technology.

During the news conference where Putin gifted the soccer ball, Trump [stunned observers](#) -- and prompted a rebuke from top Republicans in Congress -- by declining to endorse the conclusions of the US intelligence community that Russia had interfered in the 2016 US presidential election.

Following the news conference, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats [issued a statement](#) saying Moscow's "efforts to undermine our democracy" are "ongoing" and "pervasive."

Amid a backlash, Trump later said [he had misspoken](#) during the news conference and that [he holds Putin personally responsible](#) for election interference.

CNN's Jeremy Diamond contributed to this report.