



In the Obama administration's last days, some White House officials scrambled to spread information about Russian efforts to undermine the presidential election — and about possible contacts between associates of President-elect Donald J. Trump and Russians — across the government.

Former American officials say they had two aims: to ensure that such meddling isn't duplicated in future American or European elections, and to leave a clear trail of intelligence for government investigators.

American allies, including the British and the Dutch, had provided information describing meetings in European cities between Russian officials — and others close to Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin — and associates of President-elect Trump, according to three former American officials who requested anonymity in discussing classified intelligence.

Separately, American intelligence agencies had intercepted communications of Russian officials, some of them within the Kremlin, discussing contacts with Trump associates.

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