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STEFAN HALPER'S 'ASSISTANT' IN PAPADOPOULOS SPY OPERATION HAS BEEN OUTED

Chuck Ross | Reporter

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- A woman who met alongside Stefan Halper in September 2016 with Trump campaign adviser George Papadopoulos has been identified in a press report as an FBI investigator.
- Azra Turk, an alias for the investigator, was tasked by the FBI to accompany Halper during his meetings in London with Papadopoulos.
- Halper also made contact during the campaign with Trump aides Carter Page and Sam Clovis.



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George Papadopoulos, the former Trump campaign adviser.

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The New York Times **reports** that the woman, who used the alias Azra Turk, was tasked by the FBI to work alongside Halper during a series of meetings with Papadopoulos in London in September 2016.

NBC News Issues Correction For Trump-Putin Claim

The operation, which The Times says yielded little information from Papadopoulos, adds a new wrinkle to "Spygate," the term that President Donald Trump began using after it was reported in May 2018 that Halper was a longtime CIA and FBI informant.

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Democrats and some pundits have defended the FBI against the "Spygate" term, which they consider a pejorative. **Attorney General William Barr** told Congress on April 9 that he believes government agencies spied on the Trump team. He said he has formed a task force to investigate whether the surveillance was authorized.

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The Daily Caller News Foundation first reported on March 25, 2018 that Halper had contact during the campaign with three Trump aides: Papadopoulos, Carter Page, and Sam Clovis. **Halper and Page first met on July 11, 2016** at a political event held at Cambridge, where Halper served as a director for an intelligence seminar. The pair remained in contact through September 2017, meeting on occasion in the Washington, D.C., area.

Halper reached out to Papadopoulos out of the clear blue on Sept. 2, 2016, offering the young Trump adviser \$3,000 and a trip to London to discuss writing an academic paper on Mediterranean Sea energy issues.

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Papadopoulos, who had worked on energy issues at the Hudson Institute, has said that he met with Halper and Turk together, as well as separately during his visit to London. Papadopoulos agreed to write the paper, and was paid in early October 2016.



Foreign policy advisor to US President Donald Trump's election campaign, George Papadopoulos and his wife Simona Mangiante Papadopoulos arrive at US District Court for his sentencing in Washington, DC on September 7, 2018. (MANDEL NGAN/AFP/Getty Images)

Email traffic reviewed by TheDCNF shows that Papadopoulos exchanged emails with Turk, Halper and Halper's wife.

Papadopoulos has described Turk as a "honeypot," a spy term used to describe a situation where sex is used to lure targets of intelligence operations. Papadopoulos told TheDCNF that Turk, an attractive blonde, flirted heavily with him and attempted to make contact after the London meeting back in the States.

"I'm stunned by the come-hither tone of Azra Turk and her classic honeypot act,"

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Turk asked him whether he knew about Russian hacks of Democrats. Papadopoulos says he had knowledge of Russian hacking operations, and conveyed that to the two covert agents.

Papadopoulos says that he did not meet again with Turk, in part because he suspected she was working with foreign intelligence agencies. He has recently said he believes that Turk, who spoke little English during the London meetings, has links to the CIA and Turkish intelligence.

Unknown to Papadopoulos at the time of the London meetings was that the FBI was investigating whether he and other Trump campaign advisers were conspiring with Russia to influence the election. The FBI opened its counterintelligence investigation of the campaign on July 31, 2016, after receiving information from the Australian government regarding Papadopoulos.

Alexander Downer, a top Australian diplomat to the U.K., claimed that Papadopoulos mentioned to him during a meeting in London on May 10, 2016 that he had heard Russia had information on former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Papadopoulos has claimed he did not see, handle or disseminate any Clinton-related information. He pleaded guilty in the special counsel's investigation to making false statements to the FBI during an interview on Jan. 27, 2017. He was not charged with conspiracy with Russia.

The Times report provides other details about the Papadopoulos operation. According to the story:

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two decades

- Azra Turk was a trained investigator who was used in part to protect Halper from being revealed as an informant in the event charges were brought against Papadopoulos

The Justice Department's inspector general is looking at the FBI's use of Halper, including whether the bureau had adequate control of the informant, according to The Times. Michael Horowitz, the inspector general, has been investigating whether the FBI abused the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act during its investigation of the Trump campaign.

The FBI relied heavily on the unverified Steele dossier to obtain four FISA warrants against Carter Page.

TheDCNF reached out to both Halper and Turk in March 2018. A man who answered a phone with Halper's number denied he was Halper. Emails and phone calls placed to Turk were not returned. Turk's phone number has since been disconnected.

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