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**How Orbis played a
part in investigating
links between Russia
and Trump**



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Anyone even casually following the **headlines** will have noticed the innuendos and allegations of an unsavoury Russian connection that have dogged US President Donald Trump since

before he was sworn into office two months ago.

Indeed, the media's search has only intensified of late, as news agencies determinedly chase down more and more shreds of information to help them shed light on and make sense of the multiple threads that some suggest link President Trump with the Russian government of Vladimir Putin.

When trying to get to the root of this extraordinarily complex situation, with many tangled branches of corporate and business elements leading in multiple directions, it's often helpful for the various press organisations investigating these issues to rely on accurate and far-reaching sources of company information. One such invaluable resource – which reporters are turning to as they pursue the many leads that seem to crop up on a regular basis – is **Orbis**, our company database, which covers more than 200 million companies worldwide.



For those who may need a refresher, this matter began to heat up in the news shortly after the conclusion of the hotly contested election, which resulted in Trump's surprise victory. In the months after Trump was elected, all 17 of the top US intelligence agencies went on the record with their consensus **assessment** that the Russians – directly empowered at the highest levels by Putin – interfered in the 2016 US presidential elections with the express intention of causing Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton to lose and Republican candidate Donald Trump to win.

Adding more intrigue and drama to this already unprecedented situation, there has recently been a relentlessly steady release of information in the press, in regards to possible communications and connections between top members of the Trump campaign and Russian officials. These reports have so far led to the resignation of one high-ranking administration official, former National Security Advisor **Mike Flynn**, and the recusal of another, US Attorney General **Jeff Sessions**.

The media's hunt for information on connections between Trump and Russia has only grown more intense after the recent explosive **testimony** by FBI Director James Comey. In a statement given before a congressional committee, Comey announced that there is an ongoing investigation aimed, in part, at examining potential links between members of the Trump campaign and Russian officials during the lengthy run up to the election.

One area that has been receiving extra scrutiny as part of the news agencies' efforts to locate and identify possible connections between Trump and Russia involves searching for ways in which Trump or Trump-connected businesses may have financially benefited from dealings with Russia or Russians. Increasingly, in many different ways, reporters are looking into Trump's numerous and serpentine business dealings in an attempt to "follow the money".

Reuters uncovers information on a large number of Russian investors in Trump-branded Florida properties



Reuters recently published an article in this vein entitled, **Russian elite invested nearly \$100 million in Trump building**, which takes a look at the very high incidence of Russian investment in several Trump-associated properties in Florida. Specifically, in this article, Reuters examines, in depth, the phenomenon of an extremely high number of, often-prominent, Russian nationals investing in seven Trump-branded high-rise, luxury real estate properties, clustered throughout two sun-soaked counties in South Florida.

The article begins with and revolves around the compelling fact that “at least 63 individuals with Russian passports or addresses have bought at least \$98.4 million worth of property,” in these seven Trump-backed and branded towers. From this initial premise, the article goes on to both establish the history and nature of Trump’s connections to these properties and to delve deeper into the backgrounds of some of the most high-profile of these Russian purchasers.

Although the article goes out of its way to underline that the mere existence of this level of Russian ownership in Trump-branded properties does not necessarily imply any “suggestion of wrongdoing by President Trump or his real estate organization,” the detailed reporting certainly appears to open the door to, at the very least, more questions.

Reuters uses Orbis's structured company and ownership data to help research Russian investors in Trump properties

In order to gather enough detailed and relevant information on the Russian purchasers of the Trump-branded South Florida properties, it was necessary for Reuters to call upon several sources, which the article identifies as, "Interviews in Russia, Florida public records and the Bureau van Dijk company database Orbis."

Florida public records would mainly be able to supply such basic information as sales' prices and the identities of purchaser(s) (which could take the form of an individual, group or limited liability company [LLC]). So, in order to paint a fuller picture about who exactly these Russian investors are and what roles they played or continue to play in Russian society, business or government, Reuters turned to the rich, reliable, wide-ranging and extremely detailed corporate and ownership data in our **Orbis** database.

By harnessing Orbis's accurate, structured ownership information, the article's authors were able to drill more deeply beneath the surface to discover more about the identities of these Russian purchasers who invested so heavily in these Trump-branded properties.

Taking full advantage of resources, such as Orbis, this article is able to definitively associate many of these Russian investors in Trump-trademarked real estate with specific (and often influential and sometimes even controversial) positions, holdings or associations within Russia.

For example, after initially learning that one of these Russian purchasers, Alexander Yuzvik, paid \$1.3 million in 2010 for unit 3901 in Trump Palace in Sunny Isles, Reuters was then able to take their research further. Tapping into structured and accurate ownership data, the article's authors discovered that Yuzvik had been, until March 2016, a senior executive at Spetstroi, a state-owned company that had done construction work for various military installations in Russia. Some of Spetstroi's projects had included buildings for the GRU, the Russian military's intelligence agency, and the FSB, Russia's pre-eminent intelligence service and the successor to the once-formidable and notorious KGB.

By uncovering information like this on several of the Russian investors in the Trump-branded Floridian towers, this article was able to expose some eye-opening links which, in turn, could serve to pose some further questions and add to the ongoing discourse about the possible meaning of the ever-growing connections between the president of the United States and Russia.

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