



Image: CNN

US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin met yesterday in Helsinki, Finland for what can only be described as a peculiar conference. The conference would have been all things unremarkable had it not been for the key point discussed widely in this conference- the apparent rigging of the United States' 2016 presidential election.

The aforementioned election between Democratic representative Hillary Clinton and Republican representative Donald Trump declared Mr Trump as the President of the reigning superpower, amidst shock and in some cases, horror. Since Ms Clinton was the favourite in that election, speculations went haywire about a possible rigging of the elections by another giant, Russia and in turn, the Russian President, Vladimir Putin. The director of National Intelligence of the US, Dan Coats had no doubts that there was Russian interference in the elections, along with many of Mr Trump's fellow Republicans. Although international affairs were expected to dominate the session, the conference saw a wide variation of questions flung at both the Presidents pertaining to a single topic: Was Russia involved in that election?

Of course, Mr Putin straight-out denied their involvement, saying, and quote, "Where did you get this idea that President Trump trusts me or that I trust him? He defends the interests of the United States of America and I defend the interests of the Russian Federation." On the other hand, Mr Trump came pretty close to asserting he didn't believe that Russia was involved, thereby effectually going against the reports given by his own intelligence community. "They think it's Russia," he said. "I have President Putin — he just said it's not Russia. I don't see any reason why it would be."

Mr Putin also said that the Russian State had and will not interfere in internal American affairs, including the election process. He offered to have his Russian intelligence work with the American intelligence community to get to the bottom of this matter. Mr Trump greatly appreciated this and said, quote, "He offered to have the people working on the case come and work with their investigators with respect to the 12 people. I think that's an incredible offer." However, Mr Dan Coats, the intelligence director had a different view on this whole matter. "We have been clear in our assessments of Russian meddling in the 2016 election and their ongoing, pervasive efforts to undermine our democracy," he said in a statement, "and we will continue to provide unvarnished and objective intelligence in support of our national security."

A large number of Americans, mainly Mr Trump's own Republicans were aghast at the President's apparent siding with his Russian counterpart. Said Mr Paul Ryan, the House Speaker, "There is no question that Russia interfered in our election and continues attempts to undermine democracy here and around the world. That is not just the finding of the American intelligence community but also the House Committee on Intelligence. The president must appreciate that Russia is not our ally." The Republican Senator of the State of Nebraska, Ben Sasse joined in. "This is bizarre and flat-out wrong," he said. "The United States is not to blame. The Democrats, on the other hand, did not let go of this opening to voice their concerns regarding Mr Trump being the President. Senator Edward J. Markey of Massachusetts flat-out stated that Mr Trump's performance was a national embarrassment.

In order to backpedal from this giant fiasco, Mr Trump tweeted that he had a greMrdeal of confidence in his intelligence agencies. Of course, he will have to excuse people all around the world if they don't believe him.

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