

Judge dismisses case against former U.S. Security Advisor Michael Flynn

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Washington, December 9 (RHC)-- A U.S. district judge has dismissed the case against US President Donald Trump's former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn as "moot," citing a presidential pardon issued by Trump. The U.S. president pardoned Flynn, who had pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI during the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election, on November 25th.

The order, written by District Judge Emmet G Sullivan, detailed Flynn's conversations with then-Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak that began in December 2016. Flynn and Kislyak discussed a planned UN Security Council vote to condemn Israeli sanctions in the occupied West Bank, and US sanctions on Russia.

The discussion prompted an FBI investigation into Flynn's conduct, part of Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian efforts to boost Trump's electoral chances in 2016.

Flynn, a retired army general, "made a series of materially false statements to FBI investigators during an interview at the White House on January 24, 2017 about his conversations with the Russian Ambassador", Sullivan, appointed by former President Ronald Reagan in 1984, wrote.

Flynn admitted that he lied to the FBI in December 2017. He was one of several Trump aides convicted stemming from Mueller's investigation.

Trump has discussed pre-emptive pardons for his family as he prepares to leave office in January, according to U.S. media sources. Reports cite worries that President-elect Joe Biden's eventual attorney general will pursue charges against Trump's children, Donald Trump Jr, Eric Trump, Ivanka Trump, her husband Jared Kushner, and his attorney and former mayor of New York City Rudy Giuliani.

Presidential pardons shield individuals from federal charges and crimes, but not those brought on the state and local levels.

Sullivan wrote in his order that "the scope of the pardon is extraordinarily broad – it applies not only to the false statements offense to which Mr. Flynn twice pled guilty in this case, but also purports to apply to 'any and all possible offenses' that he might be charged with in the future in relation to this case and Special Counsel."

However, the pardon "does not, standing alone, render [Mr Flynn] innocent of the alleged violation," Sullivan wrote.

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