

Obama administration trying to undermine Donald Trump, 'worse than prostitutes': Putin

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Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin has accused the outgoing US administration of trying to undermine President-elect Donald Trump by spreading "fake allegations".

Vladimir Putin speaks at a news conference in Moscow on Tuesday

He even said that those who are doing it are "worse than prostitutes".

"People who order such fakes against the US president-elect, fabricate them and use them in political struggle are worse than prostitutes. They have no moral restrictions whatsoever, and it highlights a significant degree of degradation of political elites in the West, including in the United States," Putin said here on Tuesday.

Putin further said that the allegations were part of efforts by the Obama administration to "undermine the legitimacy of the president-elect despite his convincing victory".

He further said that the outgoing administration was trying "binding the president-elect hand and foot to prevent him from fulfilling his election promises".

"I have never met him (Trump)"

Voicing hope that "common sense will prevail" and Russia and the United States will be able to normalize relations once Trump takes office.

"I don't know Mr. Trump. I have never met him and I don't know what he will do on the international arena. I have no reason whatsoever to assail him, criticize him for something, or defend him," Putin said.

This was Putin's first public remarks about an unsubstantiated dossier outlining unverified claims that Trump engaged in sexual activities with prostitutes at a Moscow hotel, Putin dismissed the material as "nonsense."

Putin also ridiculed those behind the dossier for alleging Russian spy agencies collected compromising material on Trump when he visited Moscow in 2013 for the Miss Universe pageant.

"He wasn't a politician. We didn't even know about his political ambitions. Do they think that our special services are hunting for every US billionaire?" he asked.

Putin sarcastically suggested that Trump, who met the world's most beautiful women at the pageant, had a better choice for female companionship than Moscow prostitutes, even though Putin claimed "they are also the best in the world".

Separately, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said the dossier, compiled by former British spy Christopher Steele, was a "rude provocation".

The diplomat contemptuously called its author a "runaway swindler from MI6," Britain's foreign intelligence agency. Trump has rejected the sexual allegations as "fake news" and "phony stuff."

The statements by Putin and Lavrov reflected the Kremlin's deep anger at President Barack Obama's administration in a culmination of tensions that have built up over the crisis in Ukraine, the war in Syria and allegations of Russian meddling in the US election.

Asked about Putin's remarks, White House press secretary Josh Earnest said it "was not the first time the intelligence community has had some uncomfortable things to say about Russia."

"These are the kind of things I'm sure the Russians would rather not to hear, but ultimately, and this is something that the next administration is going to have to decide, there's a pretty stark divide here," he added.

- With AP Inputs