

# Suspected Russian spy, Joseph Mifsud, visited DC in 2014 promising to dole out money to students

[Tom Rogan](#) Nov 2, 2017, 3:24 PM

Professor Joseph Mifsud — the suspected Russian intelligence officer or agent who engaged with Trump surrogate, George Papadopoulos -- visited Washington, D.C. in October or November 2014.

Speaking at American University, Mifsud expounded on his now-shuttered Russian intelligence front, the London Academy for Diplomacy (LAD) and encouraged students to join it. But while American University's events page now describes Mifsud's talk as "[page not found](#)," a university [video](#) recorded Mifsud's lecture for posterity. Introducing Mifsud, OAS spokesperson (now Ombudsperson), Cherry Tross, described her "great respect" for the professor and explained that he had delivered a "stellar" presentation to the OAS the day before.

Then it was Mifsud's moment.

Early into his address, Mifsud asked the audience whether they had heard of the "Valdai Group" (a Kremlin discussion forum). No one had. In a portent of Russian trolling to come, Mifsud then praised the increasing role of social media in diplomatic messaging. Mifsud described a recent meeting "with 45 ambassadors in London," suggesting he was an effective mover on the diplomatic circuit.

Another interesting comment came when Mifsud described discussing the

then-upcoming Brexit vote with a Member of Parliament (MP). That MP, Mifsud said, was from an ethnic minority but strongly opposed to immigration. It might not be relevant, but Russia supported Brexit in the belief (wrong, [in my opinion](#)) that it would weaken both Britain and the EU.

Yet by far the most telling part of Mifsud's speech came at its end, when he asked if there were any students "interested in diplomacy." For those that were, Mifsud said, "we have some funds for scholarships as well, so people who are interested... you can send me an email, I'd be very, very happy to do that... Or else if people are passing thru London who would like to come spend some time with us..."

During the question-and-answer session, Mifsud also indicated that he offered paid internships. Indicating that he had brought brochures for students to peruse, the American University representative helpfully held some up in the air.

This offer of "scholarships" to American University students "interested in diplomacy" is significant. American University attracts top students from all across the world, many of who will pursue careers in government. Mifsud's offer thus represents intelligence recruitment 101: target government-career focused students, get them abroad and then recruit them. I bet if we could follow the "scholarships" money trail and any students who took Mifsud up on his offer, we would find SVR approaches. As former NSA counterintelligence officer, John Schindler put it to me, "I'd like to know who was paying for all this travel and activities by a semi-academic. Any counterintelligence investigator would have questions here."

Still, Mifsud's Washington waltz didn't end at AU.

During the same visit, the professor also spoke with The Washington Diplomat magazine about his London Academy.

Describing Mifsud as a former Maltese diplomat (Malta is home to various Russian money laundering) and cutting edge foreign policy thinker, The Diplomat noted that "LAD arranges visits to the Houses of Parliament, the Commonwealth Secretariat and business organizations in London." The Diplomat [explained](#) that LAD also takes "students to The Hague, the European Parliament, NATO, EU headquarters and the United Nations." Amusingly, Mifsud also claimed that "LAD is a foundation, and funding comes from tuition, we do not accept any corporate funds. We don't even accept national grants."

The Diplomat lapped this up, proudly noting that it gave LAD its "diplomat of the year" award in 2012 "for distinguished contributions to diplomacy in London."

But perhaps Mifsud's 2014 cap had more feathers. Europe's soccer governing body, UEFA, for example, [lists](#) a "Joseph Mifsud" of "Malta" as an honorary member between 2013 and 2015. Incidentally or not, the Russian energy giant, Gazprom, sponsored the UEFA Champions League tournament during that same period.

Welcome to the [wilderness of mirrors](#).