

# Russian woman admits to being a secret agent

By **MICHAEL BALSAMO**  
*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — A Russian woman accused of being a secret agent admitted today that she conspired to infiltrate the American gun-rights movement to gather intelligence on conservative political groups as Donald Trump rose to power.

Maria Butina, 30, agreed to plead guilty to a conspiracy charge as part of a deal with federal prosecutors.

The case, which is separate from special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, has offered insight into how Moscow seeks to influence American policy.

Prosecutors say Butina and her Russian patron,

Alexander Torsion, used their contacts in the National Rifle Association to pursue Russian back channels to American conservatives during that campaign, when Republican Trump defeated Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Butina's case, brought by federal prosecutors in Washington, also comes amid a broader push by the Justice Department to enforce U.S. laws governing foreign agents, including those accused of working for Russia.

As part of her deal, Butina pleaded guilty to a single charge of conspiracy to act as an unregistered foreign agent and she agreed to cooperate with investigators.

She probably will be deported from the U.S. after her sentence is completed. The charge carries a maxi-



Associated Press

**Maria Butina, leader of a pro-gun organization in Russia, speaks to a crowd in 2013 during a rally in support of legalizing the possession of handguns in Moscow.**

mum sentence of five years in prison, though the defense noted today that federal sentencing guidelines recommend no time to six months.

Authorities charged that Butina's work was directed by Torshin, a Russian gov-

ernment bank official now under sanction by the Treasury Department for his ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Prosecutors also have said that Butina's boyfriend, conservative political oper-

ative Paul Erickson, identified in court papers as "U.S. Person 1," helped her establish ties with the NRA.

In their filings, prosecutors have said federal agents found Butina had contact information for people suspected of being employed by Russia's Federal Security Services, or FSB, the successor intelligence agency to the KGB. Inside her home, they found notes referring to a potential job offer from the FSB, according to the documents.

Investigators recovered several emails and Twitter direct message conversations in which Butina referred to the need to keep her work secret and, in one instance, said it should be "incognito." Prosecutors said Butina had contact with Russian intelligence officials and that the FBI photographed her dining with a diplomat suspected of being a Russian intelligence agent.

Butina's lawyer, Robert Driscoll, had previously denied the charges against her as "overblown" and said prosecutors criminalized her mundane networking opportunities. He has said his client was a student interested in American politics and wanted to see a better relationship between the U.S. and Russia.

Butina, jailed since her arrest in July, had mounted an aggressive defense and tried to have the charges against her tossed. But for several weeks, Butina's lawyers and federal prosecutors had indicated in court papers that they were working toward a resolution in the case.

## WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

### Detentions raise tensions between China, US, Canada

BEIJING — China confirmed today that it has detained two Canadian men, raising the stakes in a three-way dispute over a Chinese technology executive facing possible extradition from Canada to the United States.

Entrepreneur Michael Spavor and former diplomat Michael Kovrig were taken into custody Monday on suspicion of "engaging in activities that endanger the national security" of China, said foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang.

Lu said Canada was informed but declined to say whether the men have been provided with lawyers. The cases are being handled separately by local bureaus of the national intelligence agency in Beijing, where Kovrig was picked up, and the northeastern city of Dandong, where Spavor lived.

The two cases ratchet up pressure on Canada, which is holding Meng Wenzhou, the chief financial officer of Huawei Technologies Ltd. She was arrested Dec. 1 at the request of the United States, which wants her extradited to face bank fraud charges.

Despite the escalating frictions resulting from the detentions, trade talks between Beijing and the Trump administration remain ongoing. The two sides have taken pains this week to emphasize that their trade talks are entirely separate from the U.S. case against Meng and any retaliatory moves by Beijing.

### Virgin Galactic rocket ship reaches space in test flight

MOJAVE, Calif. — Virgin Galactic's tourism spaceship climbed more than 50 miles high above California's Mojave Desert today, reaching for the first time what the company considers the boundary of space.

The rocket ship reached an altitude of 51 miles before beginning its gliding descent, said mission official Enrico Palermo. The craft landed on a runway minutes later.

Today's flight takes Virgin Galactic a big step closer to turning the dream of commer-

cial space tourism into reality. The company aims to take paying customers on the six-passenger rocket, which is about the size of an executive jet. Virgin Galactic founder Richard Branson has said he wants to be one of the first on board.

Virgin Galactic considers 50 miles the boundary of space because it is used by the U.S. Air Force and other U.S. agencies. That's different than a long-held view that the boundary is at 62 miles. Virgin Galactic CEO George Whitesides noted that recent research favors the lower altitude.

Virgin Galactic's development of its spaceship took far longer than expected and endured a setback when the first experimental craft broke apart during a 2014 test flight, killing the co-pilot.

More than 600 people have committed up to \$250,000 for rides that include several minutes of weightlessness and a view of the Earth far below.

### Pelosi compromises for support to return as speaker

WASHINGTON — Rep. Nancy Pelosi shrugged off suggestions today that she weakened herself by agreeing to limit her tenure as next House speaker to a four-year maximum, a deal that clears the way for her to be elected to the post for the new Congress.

"That's a long time," she said at a news conference a day after she and seven insurgents who'd been pushing for younger leadership announced their pact.

For weeks, the 78-year-old California Democrat had resisted opponents' demands that she step aside or restrict how long she'd serve, saying limits would make her a lame duck and sap her bargaining clout. But on Wednesday she relented and struck a deal that all but guarantees she'll be elected when the House votes on its new speaker on Jan. 3.

Democrats widely agreed that the pledge meant Pelosi had clinched a comeback to the post she held from 2007 until January 2011, the last time her party ran the House and the first time the speaker was a woman.

Wednesday's accord gives Pelosi a clear path to becoming the most powerful Democrat in government and a leading role in confronting President Donald Trump during the upcoming 2020 presidential and congressio-

nal campaigns. It moves a 78-year-old white woman to the cusp of steering next year's diverse crop of House Democrats, with its large number of female, minority and younger members.

### Boy Scouts exploring 'all options' to address fiscal problems

NEW YORK — The Boy Scouts of America says it is exploring "all options" to address serious financial challenges, but is declining to confirm or deny a report that it may seek bankruptcy protection in the face of declining membership and sex-abuse litigation.

"I want to assure you that our daily mission will continue and that there are no imminent actions or immediate decisions expected," Chief Scout Executive Mike Surbaugh said in a statement issued

Wednesday evening.

Surbaugh was responding to a Wall Street Journal report that the BSA, founded in 1910, had hired a law firm to assist in a possible Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing. He described the report as "news speculation," but he acknowledged that the group is "working with experts to explore all options available" as well as the pressures arising from multiple lawsuits related to past instances of sexual abuse.

"We have a social and moral responsibility to fairly compensate victims who suffered abuse during their time in Scouting, and we also have an obligation to carry out our mission to serve youth, families and local communities through our programs," Surbaugh said.

Other institutions facing multifaceted sexual abuse scandals have sought bankruptcy protection recently. USA Gymnastics took the step last week as it attempts to settle dozens of lawsuits related to abuse by now-imprisoned gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar.

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# TV SCHEDULE

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Evening listings THURSDAY

THURSDAY EVENING										DECEMBER 13						
A	L	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30			
2	KATU (2)	KATU News at 6 (N)		Jeopardy! (N)	Wheel Fortune (N)	Prep and Landing	Prep & Landing 2	Baking Show "Cookie Week" (N)	Baking Show "Bread Week" (N)	News (N)		(3:35) Jimmy Kimmel				
5	KOMO (4)	KOMO 4 News (N)		Wheel Fortune (N)	Jeopardy! (N)	Prep and Landing	Prep & Landing 2	Baking Show "Cookie Week" (N)	Baking Show "Bread Week" (N)	KOMO 4 News (N)		(3:35) Jimmy Kimmel				
5	KING (5)	NBC News (N)	KING 5 News (N)	KING 5 News (N)	KING 5 News (N)	Evening Superstore (N)	I Feel Bad (N)	Saturday Night Live "A Saturday Night Live Christmas Special"		KING 5 News (N)	(3:35) Tonight Show					
6	KOIN (4)	KOIN Local 6 (N)	Evening News (N)	Extra	Ent. Tonight (N)	The Big Bang (N)	Young Sheldon (N)	Mom (N)	Murphy Brown (N)	S.W.A.T. "Patrol"		News (N)	(3:35) Colbert (N)			
7	KIRO (7)	KIRO 7 News (N)	Evening News (N)	KIRO 7 News (N)	Ent. Tonight (N)	The Big Bang (N)	Young Sheldon (N)	Mom (N)	Murphy Brown (N)	S.W.A.T. "Patrol"		KIRO 7 News (N)	(3:35) Colbert (N)			
8	KGW (3)	KGW News at 6:00 p.m. (N)		Tonight Cassidy	Inside Edition	Superstore (N)	I Feel Bad (N)	Saturday Night Live "A Saturday Night Live Christmas Special"		News (N)		News (N)	(3:35) Tonight Show			
9	KRCW (3)	Modern Family	Modern Family	The Goldbergs	The Goldbergs	Supernatural "The Spear"		Legacies (N)		Friends		Two and a Half	Two and a Half			
10	KOPB (10)	Destination Craft	Business (N)	PBS NewsHour (N)		Oregon Art Beat	Oregon Guide	Midsomer M.	(4:00) Midsomer Murders	Masterpiece Classic	"Unforgotten"					
12	KPTV (12)	(5:20) NFL Football Los Angeles Chargers at Kansas City Chiefs Site: Arrowhead Stadium (L)		Prime News (N)		Prime News (N)		Family Feud	Family Feud	10 O'Clock News (N)		News (N)	Page Six TV			
13	KPDx (13)	Mike & Molly	Mike & Molly	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Prime News (N)		Prime News (N)		Big Bang Theory	Family Guy	American Dad!	The Game			
13	KCPQ (13)	(5:20) NFL Football Los Angeles Chargers at Kansas City Chiefs Site: Arrowhead Stadium (L)		Gameday		Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Q13 NEWS AT 10 (N)		News (N)		News (N)	The Simpsons			
20	TBS (20)	Family Guy	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Seinfeld		Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	The Guest Book	Seinfeld			
22	KZJO (22)	Black-ish	Black-ish	Mom	Modern Family	Mom		Q13 News at 9 (N)		Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Two and a Half	Two and a Half			
29	ESPN (29)	NCAA Studio	NCAA Volleyball Division I Tournament (L)			SportsCenter (N)	SportsCenter (N)	SportsCenter With Scott Van Pelt (N)		SportsCenter (N)		SportsCenter (N)				
30	ESPN2 (30)	Poker World Series	Poker World Series			SportsCenter (N)	Highly Question	Around the Horn	Interruption	First Take	The hottest topics in sports are debated.					
31	NICK (31)	The Loud House	The Loud House	The Loud House	The Loud House	The Loud House	SpongeBob	** The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie (04) Tom Kenny.		Friends		Friends				
32	DISN (32)	Coop & Cami	Coop & Cami	Bunk'd	Bunk'd	Raven's Home	Raven's Home	Coop & Cami	Stuck in Middle	Bunk'd		Raven's Home	Raven's Home			
34	FAM (34)	(5:45) *** The Holiday (2006, Romance) Kate Winslet, Jack Black, Cameron Diaz.		(4:45) **** Rio 2 (14, Ani) Anne Hathaway, Rodrigo Santoro, Jesse Eisenberg.		(5:55) *** The Santa Clause (94) Judge Reinhold, Wendy Crewson, Tim Allen.		(4:00) *** Life of Pi (2012, Fantasy) Irrfan Khan, Adil Hussain, Suraj Sharma.		The 700 Club						
35	FMC (35)	(5:30) *** Rio (11) Jesse Eisenberg.		(4:45) **** Rio 2 (14, Ani) Anne Hathaway, Rodrigo Santoro, Jesse Eisenberg.		(4:00) *** Life of Pi (2012, Fantasy) Irrfan Khan, Adil Hussain, Suraj Sharma.										
38	LIFE (38)	Christmas on the Bayou (2013, Romance) Hilarie Burton, Tyler Hilton, Markie Post.		The Christmas Pact (2018, Romance) Jarod Eiseberg, Kadeem Hardison, Kyla Pratt.	(05) Christmas Harmony (18, Rom) Chandra Wilson, Adam Mayfield, Kelley Jakle.											
39	ROOT (39)	(5:00) Champions Tennis Helpful Cup		Hot Rod	Chronicling the life of the great Rod Hundley.			Press Pass (N)	Press Pass	The Fantasy Football Hour (N)		Formula E Preview	Poker			
39	FS1 (39)	UFC UFC Fight Night 122		PBC Countdown	PBC Countdown	TMZ Sports (N)	Main Event "Nunes vs. Pennington"	UFC Tonight		UFC Tonight		Fair Game	Fair Game			
43	SPIKE (43)	Mom	Mom	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	*** I Am Legend (2007, Sci-Fi) Alice Braga, April Grace, Will Smith.		Walking Tall (04)		Walking Tall (04)				
44	COM (44)	(1:15) The Office	(1:50) The Office "Two Weeks"	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Daily Show (N)	The Office 1/2			
45	HIST (45)	American Pickers "Frank's Birthday"	American Pickers "40 Acre Pick"	American Pickers "Real Knuckleheads"	American Pickers "Pickin' Through the Snow" (N)	(05) American Pickers "Texas Pick'em"	(05) American Pickers "Pickin' the 60s"									
47	A&E (47)	The First 48 "Lost Boys"	Live PD: Patrol	Live PD: Patrol	Live PD: Patrol	Live PD: Patrol	Live PD: Patrol	Live PD: Patrol	Live PD: Patrol	PD Cam	PD Cam	(05) PD Cam	(3:35) PD Cam			
47	TLC (47)	Invasion of the Christmas Lights	Dr. Pimple Popper "A Lipoma Jackpot"	Dr. Pimple Popper "The Lipoma Whisperer"	Dr. Pimple Popper "The 12 Pops of Christmas" (N)	Crazy Obsession	Dr. Pimple Popper "Another Man's Treasure"									
48	DISC (48)	Exp. Unknown "Finding Fenn's Fortune"	Exp. Unkn. "Butch Cassidy's Lost Loot"	Expedition Unknown "Plummer's Gold"	Exp. Unknown "Virginia Is For Lovers" (N)	To Be Announced	Legendary									
49	NGEO (49)	Hard Time "Breaking Point"	Lockdown "Inmate University"	Lockdown "Gang vs. Family"	Hard Time "Prison Changes You" (N)	Lockdown "Surviving Stateville"	Lockdown "Gang vs. Family"									
50	TNT (50)	(5:00) NBA Basketball L.A. Lakers vs Houston (L)		NBA Basketball Dallas Mavericks at Phoenix Suns Site: Talking Stick Resort Arena - Phoenix, Ariz. (L)		Inside the NBA										
51	AMC (51)	(5:00) The Sons of Mistletoe		*** Miracle on 34th Street (47) Natalie Wood, John Payne, Maureen O'Hara.	(15) *** Miracle on 34th Street (1947, Family) Natalie Wood, John Payne, Maureen O'Hara.											
52	USA (52)	Law & Order: S.V.U. "P.C."		Law & Order: S.V.U. "Savior"		Law & Order: S.V.U. "Confidential"		Law & Order: S.V.U. "Witness"		Law & Order: S.V.U. "Conned"		Modern Family	Modern Family			
53	FOOD (53)	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Cookie Challenge "Mr. and Mrs. Claus"	Cmas Cookie "Spice Up Your Christmas"	Wars "When the Elves Call in Sick"	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay	Beat Bobby Flay			
54	HGTV (54)	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	Flip or Flop	FlipFlo Atlanta	House Hunters (N)	House Hunters (N)	House Hunters (N)	House Hunters (N)	House Hunters	House Hunters			
56	FX (56)	(5:30) *** Deepwater Horizon (16) Kurt Russell, Mark Wahlberg.		*** Inferno (2016, Mystery) Felicity Jones, Irrfan Khan, Tom Hanks.												
57	CNN (57)	Cuomo Prime Time		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon	Anderson Cooper 360			Cuomo Prime Time		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon				
58	FNC (58)	Hannity		The Ingraham Angle		Fox News @ Night	Tucker Carlson Tonight			Hannity		The Ingraham Angle				
61	CNBC (61)	Shark Tank		Shark Tank		Shark Tank	Shark Tank			Shark Tank		Paid Program	Paid Program			
63	BRAV (63)	Vanderpump Rules "A Decent Proposal"		Vanderpump Rules		Top Chef	Top Chef (N)			(1:15) Below Deck "Let Them Eat Chicken"		(1:15) Watch (N)	(4:45) Top Chef			
64	TCM (64)	(5:00) Shipmates Forever Dick Powell.		*** Flirtation Walk (1934, Musical) Ruby Keeler, Pat O'Brien, Dick Powell.		*** Colleen (1936, Musical) Ruby Keeler, Dick Powell.		(4:45) *** Dames (1934, Musical) Dick Powell, Joan Blondell.								
65	SYFY (65)	(4:05) Fast Five (2011, Action) Vin Diesel.		(05) *** Avengers: Age of Ultron (2015, Action) Scarlett Johansson, Chris Hemsworth, Robert Downey Jr.						Flyers "All That We Have Found" (SF) (N)	(55) The Incredible Hulk					
162	RFD (162)	SF Machinery	Small Town	Rural America "Live" (N)		Steve Lantvit (N)	Rural Eve. News	Grown	GA Farm Monitor	SF Machinery	Small Town	Time Life Library				