

Tevfik Arif is a Turkish-Kazakh businessman who is most well-known in the United States for his business ventures in New York City real estate and his partnership with Donald Trump before he became president.

After Donald Trump won the election, the American public became increasingly interested in his earlier business relationships, including his deals with foreign businessmen like Tevfik Arif. The mystery surrounding some of these individuals often led to exaggerated claims and assumptions about their past, motivations and character.

Some became unwilling players in a constructed narrative that threatened to damage their reputation and upend their business ambitions. While not much may be publicly known about Tevfik Arif, he built a successful international business enterprise based in Central Asia and Europe before expanding his interests to the United States.

Early Years

Tevfik Arif, who is also known as Tofik Arifov, was born in 1953 to Turkish parents living in the former Soviet Union, in what would become the modern-day country of Kazakhstan. He was born the second son of four boys. While not much is known about his early years or family life, as he has preferred to keep his personal life private, it is reasonable to assume that his ambitious character and entrepreneurial work ethic was influenced by his experiences growing up.

Education

Arif earned a bachelor's degree in international relations from the Moscow Institute of Trade and Economics, demonstrating an interest in business and global trade systems. Upon graduating, Arif began working in the public sector. His respected career as a civil servant spanned 17 years. During that time, he served as chief economist and deputy director of the food and hospitality department of the Soviet [Tevfik Arif](#)

Union's Government Ministry of Trade. His studies in international relations and his work in the government ministry provided Arif with a wealth of knowledge and experience that would later guide him in the private sector.

Early Business Ventures

Arif ended his career as a civil servant in 1991 when he left the ministry during the dissolution of the Soviet Union. He turned his interests to the business world where the privatization of enterprises and property during the economic restructuring of the former Soviet republics was underway.

His former position in the government had provided Arif with an opportunity to network and collaborate with several business leaders and government officials. These valuable skills and connections enabled him to expand his business interests. This included the acquisition of the Akytyubinsk Chromium Chemicals Plant (ACCP), a chromium plant located in Kazakhstan – a joint venture between Arif and his brother.

Arif's global business began in the natural resource sector. In addition to the chromium plant, Arif founded the Specialty Chemicals Trading Company whose operations handled the import and export of metals and raw materials. He would continue his work in the natural resources field in numerous management, investment and supervisory roles, including as [Politics](#)

a representative for Trans World Group – a commodity trading company that was one of the largest of its kind in the world at one point.

Real Estate Investment and Luxury Property Development

His early success demonstrated his ability to operate in a high-stakes industry, negotiating complex deals and partnerships with powerful business leaders and building a global enterprise. In addition to his operations in raw materials and natural resources, Arif began pursuing real estate investment and property management – more specifically in luxury residential and hotel development. [Real Estate](#) Many of his early investment and development projects were located across the Central Asian region – in Turkey, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. One of his early real estate ventures included the development and construction of the luxury Labada Hotel in Antalya, Turkey. Finding success in real estate investment, Arif looked to expand his interests to other lucrative markets.

Arif founded the New York City real estate investment firm Bayrock Group LLC in 2001. The competitive American market offered a challenge to the seasoned and savvy investor. One of the first projects completed by Bayrock was the development and expansion of Loehmann's Seaport Plaza, a shopping center located in Sheepshead Bay Brooklyn.

Many of Bayrock's first projects were small as Arif build his network of connections and understanding of the local market. He soon set his sights on the more prestigious Manhattan real estate market. While New York real estate can be quite intimidating, especially to outsiders, Arif was a seasoned investor and business entrepreneur.

He relocated Bayrock's offices to Trump Tower, located in the heart of Manhattan. This proximity to Donald Trump, whose own offices were located in the building, quickly led to the development of a working relationship [check here](#)

between the two companies.

In 2006, Bayrock and the Trump Organization announced a deal to [Tevfik Arif & Donald Trump](#) build Trump SoHo, a 46-story, 391-room luxury hotel and condominium complex. The building would be developed and built by Bayrock in partnership with the Sapir Organization, led by Tamir Sapir – a self-made billionaire, under a licensing and operating agreement with the Trump Organization. Under the agreement, Trump did not invest any capital in the development of Trump SoHo tower, which was completed in 2008, instead, the developers licensed the Trump brand to raise the profile of the project to attract investors and property buyers.

Bayrock and the Trump Organization originally had plans for property developments under similar licensing agreements in Florida and Arizona, but the working relationship between Bayrock and Trump ended with the housing market collapse in 2008. During this time, Arif began shifting his interests away from the American real estate market and back to Europe and Central Asia.

Arif's leadership skills, connections, experience and extensive knowledge of international business relations have enabled Tevfik Arif to build an extensive international enterprise.

Today, Arif has partially retired, however, he maintains an advisory role in his family's global business operations. He has turned his interests to his personal and charitable endeavors including donations to local organizations providing vital community services.

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