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From: [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)
Subject: Fwd: Mother Jones story
To: McCabe, Andrew G. (DO) (FBI)
Sent: October 31, 2016 9:37 PM (UTC-04:00)

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b7C -1
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----- Original message -----

From: [redacted] (DO) (FBI)" [redacted] >
Date: 10/31/2016 9:33 PM (GMT-05:00)
To: "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted] >, "Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (DO) (FBI)" [redacted] >, "Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (DO) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (DO) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CTD) (FBI)" [redacted] >
Subject: Mother Jones story

<http://m.motherjones.com/politics/2016/10/veteran-spy-gave-fbi-info-alleging-russian-operation-cultivate-donald-trump>

MotherJones

A Veteran Spy Has Given the FBI Information Alleging a Russian Operation to Cultivate Donald Trump
Has the bureau investigated this material?

DAVID CORN OCT. 31, 2016 7:52 PM

The

On Friday, FBI Director James Comey set off a political blast when he informed congressional leaders that the bureau had stumbled across emails that might be pertinent to its completed inquiry into Hillary Clinton's handling of emails when she was secretary of state. The Clinton campaign and others criticized Comey for intervening in a presidential campaign by breaking with Justice Department tradition and revealing information about an investigation—information that was vague and perhaps ultimately irrelevant—so close to Election Day. On Sunday, Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid upped the ante. He sent Comey a fiery letter saying the FBI chief may have broken the law and pointed to a potentially greater controversy: "In my communications with you and other top officials in the national security community, it has become clear that you possess explosive information about close ties and coordination between Donald Trump, his top advisors, and the Russian government...The public has a right to know this information."

Reid's missive set off a burst of speculation on Twitter and elsewhere. What was he referring to regarding the Republican presidential nominee? At the end of August, Reid had written to Comey and demanded an investigation of the "connections between the Russian government and Donald Trump's presidential campaign," and in that letter he indirectly referred to Carter Page, an American businessman cited by Trump as one of his foreign policy advisers, who had financial ties to Russia and had recently visited Moscow. Last month, Yahoo News reported that US intelligence officials were probing the links between Page and senior Russian officials. (Page has called accusations against him "garbage.") On Monday, NBC News reported that the FBI has mounted a preliminary inquiry into the foreign business ties of Paul Manafort, Trump's former campaign chief. But Reid's recent note hinted at more than the Page or Manafort affairs. And a former senior intelligence officer for a Western country who specialized in Russian counterintelligence tells Mother Jones that in recent months he provided the bureau with memos, based on his recent interactions with Russian sources, contending the Russian government has for years tried to co-opt and assist Trump—and that the FBI requested more information from him.

"This is something of huge significance, way above party politics," the former intelligence officer says. "I think [Trump's] own party should be aware of this stuff as well."

Does this mean the FBI is investigating whether Russian intelligence has attempted to develop a secret relationship

FBI(23-CV-30)-579

with Trump or cultivate him as an asset? Was the former intelligence officer and his material deemed credible or not? An FBI spokeswoman says, "Normally, we don't talk about whether we are investigating anything." But a senior US government official not involved in this case but familiar with the former spy tells Mother Jones that he has been a credible source with a proven record of providing reliable, sensitive, and important information to the US government.

In June, the former Western intelligence officer—who spent almost two decades on Russian intelligence matters and who now works with a US firm that gathers information on Russia for corporate clients—was assigned the task of researching Trump's dealings in Russia and elsewhere, according to the former spy and his associates in this American firm. This was for an opposition research project originally financed by a Republican client critical of the celebrity mogul. (Before the former spy was retained, the project's financing switched to a client allied with Democrats.) "It started off as a fairly general inquiry," says the former spook, who asks not to be identified. But when he dug into Trump, he notes, he came across troubling information indicating connections between Trump and the Russian government. According to his sources, he says, "there was an established exchange of information between the Trump campaign and the Kremlin of mutual benefit."

This was, the former spy remarks, "an extraordinary situation." He regularly consults with US government agencies on Russian matters, and near the start of July on his own initiative—without the permission of the US company that hired him—he sent a report he had written for that firm to a contact at the FBI, according to the former intelligence officer and his American associates, who asked not to be identified. (He declines to identify the FBI contact.) The former spy says he concluded that the information he had collected on Trump was "sufficiently serious" to share with the FBI.

Mother Jones has reviewed that report and other memos this former spy wrote. The first memo, based on the former intelligence officer's conversations with Russian sources, noted, "Russian regime has been cultivating, supporting and assisting TRUMP for at least 5 years. Aim, endorsed by PUTIN, has been to encourage splits and divisions in western alliance." It maintained that Trump "and his inner circle have accepted a regular flow of intelligence from the Kremlin, including on his Democratic and other political rivals." It claimed that Russian intelligence had "compromised" Trump during his visits to Moscow and could "blackmail him." It also reported that Russian intelligence had compiled a dossier on Hillary Clinton based on "bugged conversations she had on various visits to Russia and intercepted phone calls."

The former intelligence officer says the response from the FBI was "shock and horror." The FBI, after receiving the first memo, did not immediately request additional material, according to the former intelligence officer and his American associates. Yet in August, they say, the FBI asked him for all information in his possession and for him to explain how the material had been gathered and to identify his sources. The former spy forwarded to the bureau several memos—some of which referred to members of Trump's inner circle. After that point, he continued to share information with the FBI. "It's quite clear there was or is a pretty substantial inquiry going on," he says.

"This is something of huge significance, way above party politics," the former intelligence officer comments. "I think [Trump's] own party should be aware of this stuff as well."

The Trump campaign did not respond to a request for comment regarding the memos. In the past, Trump has declared, "I have nothing to do with Russia."

The FBI is certainly investigating the hacks attributed to Russia that have hit American political targets, including the Democratic National Committee and John Podesta, the chairman of Clinton's presidential campaign. But there have been few public signs of whether that probe extends to examining possible contacts between the Russian government and Trump. (In recent weeks, reporters in Washington have pursued anonymous online reports that a computer server related to the Trump Organization engaged in a high level of activity with servers connected to Alfa Bank, the largest private bank in Russia. On Monday, a Slate investigation detailed the pattern of unusual server activity but concluded, "We don't yet know what this [Trump] server was for, but it deserves further explanation." In

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an email to Mother Jones, Hope Hicks, a Trump campaign spokeswoman, maintains, "The Trump Organization is not sending or receiving any communications from this email server. The Trump Organization has no communication or relationship with this entity or any Russian entity.")

According to several national security experts, there is widespread concern in the US intelligence community that Russian intelligence, via hacks, is aiming to undermine the presidential election—to embarrass the United States and delegitimize its democratic elections. And the hacks appear to have been designed to benefit Trump. In August, Democratic members of the House committee on oversight wrote Comey to ask the FBI to investigate "whether connections between Trump campaign officials and Russian interests may have contributed to these [cyber] attacks in order to interfere with the US. presidential election." In September, Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Rep. Adam Schiff, the senior Democrats on, respectively, the Senate and House intelligence committees, issued a joint statement accusing Russia of underhanded meddling: "Based on briefings we have received, we have concluded that the Russian intelligence agencies are making a serious and concerted effort to influence the U.S. election. At the least, this effort is intended to sow doubt about the security of our election and may well be intended to influence the outcomes of the election." The Obama White House has declared Russia the culprit in the hacking capers, expressed outrage, and promised a "proportional" response.

There's no way to tell whether the FBI has confirmed or debunked any of the allegations contained in the former spy's memos. But a Russian intelligence attempt to co-opt or cultivate a presidential candidate would mark an even more serious operation than the hacking.

In the letter Reid sent to Comey on Sunday, he pointed out that months ago he had asked the FBI director to release information on Trump's possible Russia ties. Since then, according to a Reid spokesman, Reid has been briefed several times. The spokesman adds, "He is confident that he knows enough to be extremely alarmed."

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From: Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)
Subject: POTUS news conference transcript
To: James B. Comey; McCabe, Andrew G. (DO) (FBI); Bowdich, David L. (DO) (FBI); Rybicki, James E. (DO) (FBI); Steinbach, Michael B. (DO) (FBI)
Sent: December 16, 2016 5:59 PM (UTC-05:00)

From: [redacted] (NBCUniversal) [mailto:[redacted]]
Sent: Friday, December 16, 2016 5:46 PM
To: Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI); [redacted]
Subject: Obama news conference transcript

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b7C -3
b7E -3

President Barack Obama Holds News Conference

All right, everybody. Good afternoon. This is the most wonderful press conference of the year. I have got a list of who has been naughty and nice to call on. But let me first make a couple of quick points and then I will take your questions.

Typically I use this year-end press conference to review how far we have come over the course of the year. Today, understandably, I'm going to talk a little bit about how far we have come over the past eight years.

As I was preparing to take office, the unemployment rate was on its way to 10 percent. Today it is at 4.6 percent, the lowest in nearly a decade. We've seen the longest streak of job growth on record, and wages have grown faster over the past few years than at any time in the past 40.

When I came into office, 44 million people were uninsured. Today we have covered more than 20 million of them. For the first time in our history, more than 90 percent of Americans are insured.

In fact, yesterday was the biggest day ever for health care.gov, more than 670,000 Americans signed up to get covered, and more are signing up by the day.

We've cut our dependence on foreign oil by more than half, doubled production of renewable energy, enacted the most sweeping reforms since FDR to protect consumers and prevent a crisis on Wall Street from punishing main street ever again.

None of these actions stifled growth as critics are predicted. Instead, the stock market has nearly tripled.

Since I signed Obamacare into law, our businesses have added more than 15 million new jobs, and the economy undoubtedly more durable than it was in the days when we relied on oil from unstable nations and banks took risky bets with your money.

Add it all up, and last year the poverty rate fell at the fastest rate in almost 50 years, while the median household income grew at the fastest rate on record. In fact, income gains were actually larger for households at the bottom and the middle than for those at the top.

And we have done all this while cutting our deficits by nearly two-thirds, and protecting vital investments that grow the middle class.

In foreign policy, when I came into office we were in the midst of two wars. Now nearly 180,000 troops are down to 15,000. Bin Laden, rather than being at large, has been taken off the battlefield, along with thousands of other terrorists.

Over the past eight years no foreign terrorist organization has successfully executed an attack on our homeland that was directed from overseas. Through diplomacy, we have ensured Iran cannot obtain a nuclear weapon without going to war with Iran.

We opened up a new chapter with the people of Cuba. And we have brought nearly 200 nations together around a climate agreement that could very well save this planet for our kids.

And almost every country on Earth sees America as stronger and more respected today than they did eight years ago.

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In other words, by so many measures our country is stronger and more prosperous than it was when we started. It is a situation that I'm proud to leave for my successor. And it's thanks to the American people, to the hard work that you have put in, the sacrifices you have made for your families and your communities, the businesses that you started or invested in, and the way you looked out for one another. And I could not be prouder to be your president.

Of course, to tout this progress does not mean that we are not mindful of how much more there is to do. In this season in particular, we are reminded that there are people who are still hungry, people who are still homeless, people who still have trouble paying the bills or finding work after being laid off.

There are communities that are still mourning those who have been stolen from us by senseless gun violence, and parents who still are wondering how to protect their kids.

And after I leave office I intend to continue to work with organizations and citizens doing good across the country on these and other pressing issues to build on the progress that we have made.

Around the world as well, there are hotspots where disputes have been intractable, conflicts have flared up, and people, innocent people are suffering as result, and nowhere is this more terribly true than in the city of Aleppo. For years, we've worked to stop the civil war in Syria and alleviate human suffering. It has been one of the hardest issues that I've faced as president.

The world as we speak is united in horror at the savage assaults by the Syrian regime and its Russian and Iranian allies on the city of Aleppo. We have seen a deliberate strategy of surrounding, besieging and starving innocent civilians. We've seen relentless targeting of humanitarian workers and medical personnel, entire and neighbors reduced to rubble and dust. There are continuing reports of civilians being executed. These are all horrific violations of international law.

Responsibility for this brutality lies in one place alone, with the Assad regime and its allies, Russia and Iran, and this blood and these atrocities are on their hands. We all know what needs to happen. There needs to be an impartial international observer force in Aleppo that can help coordinate an orderly evacuation through say corridors. There has to be full access for humanitarian aid, even as the United States continues to be the world's largest donor of humanitarian aid to the Syrian people. And beyond that, there needs to be a broader cease-fire that can serve as the basis for a political rather than a military solution.

That's what the United States is gonna continue to push for, both with our partners and through multilateral institutions like the U.N.

Regretfully, but unsurprisingly, Russia has repeatedly blocked the Security Council from taking action on these issues, so we're gonna keep pressing the Security Council to help improve the delivery of humanitarian aid to those who are in such desperate need and ensure accountability, including continuing to monitor any potential use of chemical weapons in Syria.

And we're gonna work in the U.N. General Assembly as well, both on accountability and to advance a political settlement because it should be clear that although you may achieve tactical victories, over the long-term, the Assad regime cannot slaughter its way to legitimacy. That's why we'll continue to press for a transition to a more representative government, and that's why the world must not avert our eyes to the terrible events that are unfolding.

The Syrian regime and its Russian and Iranian allies are trying to obfuscate the truth. The world should not be fooled and the world will not forget.

So even in a season where the incredible blessings that we know as Americans are all around us, even as we enjoy family and friends and are reminded of how lucky we are, we should also be reminded that to be an American involves bearing burdens and meeting obligations to others. American values and American ideals are what will lead the way to a safer and more prosperous 2017, both here and abroad. And by the way, you (ph) embody those values and ideals like our brave men and women in uniform and their families.

So I just want to close by wishing all of them a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

With that, I will take some questions, and I'm gonna start with Josh Lederman of A.P.

QUESTION:

Thank you, Mr. President.

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There's a perception that you're letting President Putin get away with interfering in the U.S. election and that a response that nobody knows about (inaudible) don't cut it. Are you prepared to call out President Putin by name for ordering (inaudible)? And do you agree with Hillary Clinton now says, that the hacking was actually partially responsible for her loss?

And is your administration open to correlate with Trump and his team on this issues, tarnishing (ph) the smooth transition of power that you have promised?

OBAMA:

Well, first of all, with respect to the transition, I think they would be the first to acknowledge that we have done everything we can to make sure that they are successful, as I promised, and that will continue. And it's just been a few days since I last talked to the president-elect about a whole range of transition issues. That cooperation's gonna continue.

There hasn't been a lot of squabbling. What we've simply said is the facts, which are that based on uniform intelligence assessments, the Russians were responsible for hacking the DNC and that as a consequence, it is important for us to review all elements of that and make sure that we are preventing that kind of interference through cyber attacks in the future. That should be a bipartisan issue, that shouldn't be a partisan issue.

And my hope is that the president-elect is going to similarly be concerned with making sure that we don't have a potential foreign influence in our election process. I don't think any American wants that. And that shouldn't be a source of an argument.

I think that part of the challenge is that it gets caught up in the carryover from election season. And I think it is very important for us to distinguish between the politics of the election and the need for us as a country, both from a national security perspective but also in terms of the integrity of our election system and our democracy to make sure that we don't create a political football here.

Now, with respect to how this thing unfolded last year, let's just go through the facts pretty quickly. At the beginning of the summer, were alerted to the possibility that the DNC has been hacked. And I made (ph) an order, law enforcement, as well as our intelligence teams to find out everything about it, investigate it thoroughly to brief the potential victims of this hacking, to brief on a bipartisan basis the leaders of both the House and the Senate and the relevant intelligence committees.

And once we had clarity and certainty around what in fact had happened, we publicly announced that in fact Russia had hacked into the DNC. And at that time, we did not attribute motives or you know any interpretations of why they had done so.

We didn't discuss what the effects of it might be. We simply let people know -- the public know just as we had let members of Congress know that this had happened.

And as a consequence, all of you wrote a lot of stories about both what had happened and then you interpreted why that might have happened and what effect it was going to have on the election outcomes. We did not -- and the reason we did not was because in this hyper-partisan atmosphere, at a time when my primary concern was making sure that the integrity of the election process was not in any way damaged, at a time when anything that was said by me or anybody in the White House would immediately be seen through a partisan lens.

I wanted to make sure that everybody understood we were playing this thing straight, that we weren't trying to advantage one side or another. But what we were trying to do was let people know that this had taken place.

And so if you started seeing effects on the election, if you were trying to measure why this was happening and how you should consume the information that was being leaked, that you might want to take this into account. And that's exactly how we should have handled it.

Imagine if we had done the opposite, it would become immediately just one more political scrum. And part of the goal here was to make sure that we did not do the work of the leakers for them by raising more and more questions about the integrity of the election right before the election was taking place -- at a time, by the way, when the president-elect himself was raising questions about the integrity of the election.

And finally, I think it's worth pointing out, that the information was already out. It was in the hands of Wikileaks, so that was going to come out no matter what.

What I was concerned about in particular was making sure that that wasn't compounded by potential hacking that could hamper vote counting, affect the actual election process itself.

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And so in early September when I saw President Putin in China, I felt that the most effective way to ensure that that did not happen was to talk to him directly and tell him to cut it out, there were going to be some serious consequences if he did not.

And in fact, we did not see further tampering of the election process. But the leaks through Wikileaks had already occurred.

So when I look back in terms of how we handled it, I think we handled it the way it should have been handled. We allowed law enforcement and the intelligence community to do its job without political influence.

We briefed all relevant parties involved in terms of what was taking place. When we had a consensus around what had happened, we announced it, not through the White House, not through me, but rather through the intelligence communities that had actually carried out these investigations.

And then we allowed you and the American public to make an assessment as to how to weigh that going into the election.

And the truth is, is that there was nobody here who did not have some sense of what kind of effect it might have. I am finding it a little curious that everybody is suddenly acting surprised that this looked like it was disadvantaging Hillary Clinton, because you guys wrote about it every day, every single leak about every little juicy tidbit of political gossip, including John Podesta's risotto recipe.

This was an obsession that dominated the news coverage. So I do think it is worth us reflecting how it is that a presidential election of such importance, of such moment, with so many big issues at stake and such a contrast between the candidates came to be dominated by a bunch of these leaks.

What is it about our political system that made us vulnerable to these kinds of potential manipulations which, as I've said publicly before, were not particularly sophisticated. This was not some elaborate, complicated espionage scheme.

They hacked into some Democratic Party e-mails that contained pretty routine stuff, some of it embarrassing or uncomfortable because I suspect that if any of us got our emails hacked into there might be some things that we would not want suddenly appearing on the front page of a newspaper or a telecast, even if there was not anything particularly illegal or controversial about it.

And then it just took off. And that concerns me, and it should concern all of us. But the truth of the matter is, is that everybody had the information. It was out there, and we handled it the way we should have.

Now, moving forward, I think there are a couple of issues that this raises. Number one is just the constant challenge that we are going to have with cyber security throughout our economy and throughout our society.

We are a digitalized culture. And there's hacking going on every single day. There is not a company, there is not a major organization, there is not a financial institution, there is not a branch of our government where somebody is not going to be fishing for something or trying to penetrate or put in a virus or malware.

And this is why for the last eight years I have been obsessed with how do we continually upgrade our cyber security systems. And this particular concern around Russian hacking is part of a broader set of concerns about how do we deal with cyber issues being used in ways that can affect our infrastructure, affect the stability of our financial systems, and affect the integrity of our institutions like our election process.

I just received, a couple of weeks back, it wasn't widely reported on, a report from our cyber-security commission that outlines a whole range of strategies to do a better job on this. But it's difficult because it's not all housed -- the target of cyberattacks is not one entity, but it's widely dispersed and a lot of it is private, like the DNC. You know, it's not a branch of government. We can't tell people what to do.

What we can do is inform them, get best practices. What we can also do is to on a bilateral basis warn other countries against these kinds of attacks, and we've done that in the past. So just as I told Russia to stop it and indicated there will be consequences when they do it, the Chinese have in the past engaged in cyberattacks directed at our companies to steal trade secrets and proprietary technology, and I had to have the same conversation with President Xi.

And what we've seen is some evidence that they have reduced but not completely eliminated these activities, partly because they can use cutouts. One of the problems with the internet and cyber issues is there's not always a return address, and by the time you catch up to it, you know, attributing what happened to a particular government can be difficult, not always provable in court, even though our intelligence communities can make an assessment.

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What we've also tried to do is to start creating some international norms about this to prevent some sort of cyber arms race because we obviously have offensive capabilities as well as defensive capabilities, and my approach is not a situation which everybody's worse off because folks are constantly attacking each other back and forth, but putting some guardrails around behavior of nation states, including our adversaries, just so that they understand that whatever they do to us, we can potentially do to them.

We do have some special challenges because oftentimes, our economy is more digitalized. It is more vulnerable partly because we're a wealthier nation and we're more wired than some of these other countries and we have a more open society and engage in less control and censorship over what happens over the internet, which is also part of what makes us special.

Last point, and the reason I'm going on here is because I know that you guys have a lot of questions about this and I addressed all of you directly about this. With respect to response, my principal goal leading up to the election was making sure that the election itself went off without a hitch, that it was not tarnished and that it did not feed any sense in the public that somehow, tampering had taken place with the actual process of voting and we accomplished that. That does not mean that we are not going to respond, it simply meant that we had a set of priorities leading up to the election that were of the utmost importance.

Our goal continues to be to send a clear message to Russia or others not to do this to us because we can do stuff to you, but it is also important for us to do that in a thoughtful, methodical way. Some of it, we do publicly. Some of it, we will do in a way that they know but not everybody will. And I know that there have been folks out there who suggests somehow that if we went out there and made big announcements and thumped our chests about a bunch of stuff, that somehow that would potentially spook the Russians.

But keep in mind that we already have enormous numbers of sanctions against the Russians. The relationship between us and Russia has deteriorated, sadly, significantly over the last several years. And so how we approach an appropriate response that increases costs for them for behavior like this in the future but does not create problems for us is something that's worth taking the time to think through and figure out. And that's exactly what we've done.

So, at a point in time where we've taken certain actions that we can divulge publicly, we will do so. There are times where the message will be directly received by the Russians and not publicized. And I should point out by the way, part of why the Russians have been effective on this is because they don't go around announcing what they're doing. It's not like Putin's gone around the world publicly saying, look what we did. Wasn't that clever? He denies it.

So the idea that somehow public shaming is gonna be effective, I think doesn't read the -- the thought process in Russia very well. OK.

QUESTION:

Did Clinton lose because of the hacking?

OBAMA:

I'm gonna let all the political pundits in this town have a long discussion about what happened in the election. It was a fascinating election. So, you know, I'm sure there are gonna be a lot of books written about it. I've said what I think is important for the Democratic Party going forward, rather than try to parse every aspect of the election.

And I -- I've said before, I couldn't be prouder of Secretary Clinton, her outstanding service and she's worked tirelessly on behalf of the American people and I don't think she was treated fairly during the election. I think the coverage of her and the issues was troubling, but having said that, what I've been most focused on -- appropriate for the fact I am not going to be a politician in about -- what is it, 32 days, 31, 34?

What I've said is that I can maybe give some counsel advice to the Democratic Party. And I think the -- the -- the thing we have to spend the most time on -- because it's the thing we have most control over -- is, how do we make sure that we're showing up in places where I think Democratic policies are needed, where they are helping, where they are making a difference, but where people feel as if they're not being heard?

And where Democrats are characterized as coastal, liberal, latte-sipping, you know, politically correct, out-of-touch folks, we have to be in those communities. And I've seen that, when we are in those communities, it makes a difference. That's how I became president. I became a U.S. Senator not just because I had a strong base in Chicago, but because I was driving downstate Illinois and going to fish fries and sitting in V.F.W. Halls and talking to farmers.

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And I didn't win every one of their votes, but they got a sense of what I was talking about, what I cared about, that I was for working people, that I was for the middle class, that the reason I was interested in strengthening unions and raising the minimum wage and rebuilding our infrastructure and making sure that parents had decent childcare and family leave, was because my own family's history wasn't that different from theirs even if I looked a little bit different. Same thing in Iowa.

And so the question is, how do we rebuild that party as a whole, so that there's not a county in any state -- I don't care how red -- where we don't have a presence and we're not making the argument, because I think we have a better argument. But that requires a lot of work. You know, it's been something that I've been able to do successfully in my own campaigns.

OBAMA:

It is not something I've been able to transfer to candidates in mid-terms and sort of build a sustaining organization around. That's something I would have liked to have done more of, but it's kind of hard to do when you're also dealing with a whole bunch of issues here in the White House. And that doesn't mean, though, that it can't be done, and I think there are gonna be a lot of talented folks out there, a lot of progressives who share my values, who are gonna be leading the charge in the years to come.

Michelle Kosinski (ph) of CNN.

QUESTION:

Thank you.

This week we heard Hillary Clinton talk about how she thinks that the FBI director's most recent announcement made a difference in the outcome of the election. And we also just heard in an op-ed her campaign chairman talk about something being deeply broken within the FBI.

He talked about thinking that the investigation early on was lackadaisical, in his words. So what do you think about those comments? Do you think there's any truth to them? Do you think there's a danger there that they're calling into question the integrity of institutions in a similar way that Donald Trump's team has done?

And the second part to that is that Donald Trump's team repeatedly -- I guess, given the indication that the investigation of the Russian hack as well as retaliation might not be such a priority once he's in office.

So what do you think the risk is there? And are you going to talk to him directly about some of those comments he made?

OBAMA:

Well, on the latter point, as I said before, the transition from election season to governance season is not always smooth. You know, it's bumpy. There are still feelings that are raw out there. There are people who are still thinking how things unfolded. And I get all that.

But when Donald Trump takes the oath of office and is sworn in as the 45th president of the United States, then he has got a different set of responsibilities and considerations.

And I've said this before. I think there is a sobering process when you walk into the Oval Office. And, you know, I haven't shared previously private conversations I've had with the president-elect. I will say that they have been cordial and in some cases have involved me making some pretty specific suggestions about how to ensure that regardless of our obvious deep disagreements about policy, maybe I can transmit some thoughts about maintaining the effectiveness, integrity, cohesion of the office, our various democratic institutions, and he has listened.

I can't say that he will end up implementing, but the conversations themselves have been cordial as opposed to defensive in any way. And I will always make myself available to him just as previous presidents have made themselves available to me as issues come up.

With respect to the FBI, I will tell you, I've had a chance to know a lot of FBI agents. I know Director Comey. They take their job seriously. They work really hard. They help keep us safe and save a lot of lives.

And it is always a challenge for law enforcement when there's an intersection between the work that they are doing and the political system. It's one of the difficulties of democracy generally.

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We have a system where we want our law enforcement investigators and our prosecutors to be free from politics, to be independent, to play it straight. But sometimes that involves investigations that touch on politics and particularly in this hyper-partisan environment that we've been in, everything is suspect, everything you do one way or the other.

One thing that I have done is to be pretty scrupulous about not wading into investigation decisions or prosecution decisions or decisions not to prosecute. I have tried to be really strict in my own behavior about preserving the independence of law enforcement, free from my own judgments and political assessments, in some cases. And I don't know why it would stop now.

Mike Dorney (ph) of Bloomberg.

QUESTION:

Thank you, Mr. President.

On Aleppo, your views of (ph) what happens there, the responsibility of the Russian government, the Iranian government, the Assad regime (inaudible), but do you, as president of the United States, leader of the free world, feel any personal moral responsibility now at the end of your presidency for the carnage we're all watching in Aleppo, which I'm sure disturbs you (inaudible)?

Secondly, also on Aleppo, you've again made clear your practical disagreements with (inaudible) and President-elect Trump has throughout his campaign, and he said again last night, that he wants to create safe zones in Syria. Do you feel like in this transition, you need to help him toward implementing that or is that not something you need to be doing?

OBAMA:

Mike, I always feel responsible. I felt responsible when kids were being shot by snipers. I felt responsible when millions of people had been displaced. I feel responsible for murder and slaughter that's taken place in South Sudan that's not being reported on, partly because there's not as much social media being generated from there.

There are places around the world where horrible things are happening and because of my office, because I'm president of the United States, I feel responsible. I ask myself every single day, is there something I could do that would save lives and make a difference and spare some child who doesn't deserve to suffer. So that's a starting point. There's not a moment during the course of this presidency where I haven't felt some responsibility.

That's true, by the way, for our own country. When I came into office and people were losing their jobs and losing their homes and losing their pensions, I felt responsible and I would go home at night and I would ask myself, was there something better that I could do or smarter that I could be that would make a difference in their lives, that would relieve their suffering and relieve their hardship.

So with respect to Syria, what I have consistently done is taken the best course that I can to try to end the civil war while having also to take into account the long-term national security interests of the United States. And throughout this process, based on hours of meetings -- if you tallied it up, days and weeks of meetings -- where we went through every option in painful detail with maps and we had our military and we had our aid agencies and we had our diplomatic teams, and sometimes, we'd bring in outsiders who were critics of ours.

Whenever we went through it, the challenge was that short of putting large numbers of U.S. troops on the ground uninvited, without any international law mandate, without sufficient support from Congress, at a time when we still had troops in Afghanistan and we still had troops in Iraq and we had just gone through over a decade of war and spent trillions of dollars and when the opposition on the ground was not cohesive enough to necessarily govern a country and you had a military superpower in Russia prepared to do whatever it took to keep its (inaudible) involved and you had a regional military power in Iran that saw their own vital strategic interests at stake and were willing to send in as many of their people or proxies to support the regime.

And in that circumstance, unless we were all in and willing to take over Syria, we were going to have problems. And everything else was tempting because we wanted to do something and it sounded like the right thing to do but it was going to be impossible to do this on the cheap. And in that circumstance, I have to make decision as president of the United States as to what is best -- I'm sorry.

What's going on? Somebody's not feeling good. All right. Why don't we have -- we got -- we can get our doctors back there to help out. Somebody want to go to my doctor's office and just send them -- all right. Where was I? So we couldn't do it on the

cheap. Now, it may be --

QUESTION:

Can we get a doctor in here? Can that be arranged?

OBAMA:

Can somebody help out, please, and get Doc Jackson in here? Somebody grabbing our doctor?

QUESTION:

Thank you, Mr. President.

OBAMA:

Of course. In the meantime, just give her a little room. Doctor will be here in a second. You guys know where the doctor's office is? So just go through the palm doors. Its right -- its right next to the map room. There he is. All right. There's Doc Jackson. He's all right. OK. The doctor -- the doctor's in the house.

So -- And I don't mean that -- I mean that with all sincerity. I understand the impulse to want to do something, but ultimately what I've had to do is to think about, what can we sustain, what is realistic? And my first priority has to be, what's the right thing to do for America? And it has been our view that the best thing to do has been to provide some support to the moderate opposition so that they could sustain themselves.

And that you wouldn't see anti-Assad regime sentiments just pouring into Al- Nusra and Al-Qaeda or ISIL that we engaged our international partners in order to put pressure on all the parties involved. And to try to resolve this through diplomatic and political means. I cannot claim that we've been successful. And so that's something that, as is true with a lot of issues and problems around the world, I have to go to bed with every night.

But I continue to believe that it was the right approach given what realistically we could get done. Absent a decision, as I said, to go into much more significant way. And that, I think would not have been a sustainable or good for the American people because we had a whole host of other obligations that we also had to meet, wars we had already started and that were not yet finished.

With respect to the issue of safe zones , it is a continued problem, a continued challenge with safe zones is if you are setting up those zones on Syrian territory, then that requires some force that is willing to maintain that territory in the absence of consent from the Syrian government and now the Russians or the Iranians.

So it may be that with Aleppo's tragic situation unfolding that in the short term, if we can get more of the tens of thousands who are still trapped there out , that so long as the world's eyes are on them and they are feeling pressure, the regime in Russia concludes that they are willing to find some arrangement, perhaps in coordination with Turkey, whereby those people can be safe.

Even that will probably be temporary, but at least it solves a short-term issue that's going to arise.

Unfortunately we are not there yet because right now we have Russians and Assad claiming that basically all the innocent civilians who were trapped in Aleppo are out when international organizations, humanitarian organizations who know better and who are on the ground, have said unequivocally that there are still tens of thousands who are trapped and prepared to leave under pretty much any conditions.

And so right now our biggest priority is to continue to put pressure wherever we can to try to get them out.

Mike, I can't have too much...

QUESTION:

(OFF-MIKE) but do you see, responsibility notwithstanding, moving in that direction or help President-elect Trump move in that direction?

OBAMA:

I will help President Trump -- President-elect Trump with any advice, counsel, information that we can provide so that he, once he's sworn in, can make a decision.

Between now and then, these are decisions that I have to make based on the consultations that I have with our military and the people who have been working this every single day.

Peter Alexander (ph).

QUESTION:

Mr. President, thank you very much.

Can you, given all the intelligence that we have now heard, assure the public this was once and for all a free and fair election? And specifically on Russia, do you feel any obligation now as they have been insisting that this isn't the case to show the proof, as it were? They say, put your money where your mouth is and declassify some of the intelligence and the evidence that exists.

And more broadly, as it relates to Donald Trump on this very topic, are you concerned about his relationship with Vladimir Putin, especially given some of the recent cabinet picks, including his selection for secretary of state, Rex Tillerson, who toasted Putin with champagne over oil deals together? Thank you.

OBAMA:

I may be getting older because these multipart questions, I start losing track.

OBAMA:

I can assure the public that there was not the kind of tampering with the voting process that was our concern and will continue to be of concern going forward, that the votes that were cast were counted, they were counted appropriately.

We have not seen evidence of machines being tampered with, so that assurance I can provide.

That doesn't mean that we find every single, you know, potential probe of every single voting machine all across the country, but we paid a lot of attention to it. We worked with state officials, et cetera, and we feel confident that that didn't occur and that the votes were cast and they were counted.

And so that's on that point. What was the second one?

QUESTION:

Say more about declassification.

OBAMA:

Declassification. Look, we will provide evidence that we can safely provide, that does not compromise sources and methods. But I'll be honest with you, when you are talking about cybersecurity, a lot of it is classified and we're not going to provide it, because the way we catch folks is by knowing certain things about them that they may not want us to know and if we're gonna monitor this stuff effectively going forward, we don't want them to know that we know.

So, this is one of those situations where, unless the American people genuinely think that the professionals in the CIA, the FBI, our entire intelligence infrastructure, many of whom -- by the way, served in previous administrations and who are Republicans -- are less trustworthy than the Russians. Then people should pay attention to what our intelligence agencies say.

This is part of what I meant when I said we've got to think what is happening to happening to our political culture here. The Russians can't change us or significantly weaken us. They are a smaller country, they are a weaker country, their economy doesn't produce anything that anybody wants to buy except oil and gas and arms. They don't innovate.

Obtained by UndeadFOIA

But they can impact us if we lose track of who we are. They can impact us if we abandon our values. Mr. Putin can weaken us just like he's trying to weaken Europe if we start buying into notions that it's OK to intimidate the press, or lock up dissidents, or discriminate against people because of their faith or what they look like.

And what I worry about -- more than anything -- is the degree to which because of the fierceness because of the partisan battle, you start to see certain folks in the Republican Party and Republican voters suddenly finding a government and individuals who stand contrary to everything that we stand for as being OK, because that's how much we dislike Democrats.

I mean, think about it. Some of the people who historically have been very critical of me for engaging with the Russians and having conversations with them, also endorsed the president-elect, even as he was saying that we should stop sanctioning Russia and being tough on them and work together with them against our common enemies.

It was very complimentary of Mr. Putin personally. Now that -- that wasn't news. The president-elect during the campaign said so. And some folks who had made a career out of being anti-Russian, didn't say anything about it. And then after the election, suddenly they're asking, oh, why didn't you tell us that maybe the Russians were trying to help our candidate? Well, come on.

There was a survey some of you saw where -- not this just one poll, but pretty credible source, 37 percent of Republican voters approve of Putin. Over a third of Republican voters approve of Vladimir Putin, the former head of the KGB. Ronald Reagan would roll over in his grave. And how did that happen? It happened in part because for too long, everything that happens in this town, everything that's said is seen through the lens of does this help or hurt us relative to Democrats or relative to President Obama. And unless that changes, we're going to continue to be vulnerable to foreign influence because we've lost track of what it is that we're about and what we stand for.

With respect to the president-elect's appointments, it is his prerogative, as I have always said, for him to appoint who he thinks can best carry out his foreign policy or his domestic policy. It is up to the Senate to advise and consent. There will be plenty of time for members of the Senate to go through the record of all his appointees and determine whether or not they're appropriate for the job.

Martha (inaudible).

QUESTION:

Mr. President, I want to talk about Vladimir Putin again. Just to be clear, do you believe Vladimir Putin himself authorized the hack? And do you believe he authorized that to help Donald Trump?

And on the intelligence, one of the things Donald Trump cites is Saddam Hussein and the weapons of mass destruction and that they were never found. Can you say unequivocally that this was not China, that this was not a 400-pound guy sitting on his bed as Donald Trump says? And do these types of tweets and kinds of statements from Donald Trump embolden the Russians?

OBAMA:

When the report comes out before I leave office, that will have drawn together all the threads, and so I don't want to step on their work ahead of time. What I can tell you is that the intelligence that I've seen gives me great confidence in their assessment that the Russians carried out this hack.

QUESTION:

Which hack?

OBAMA:

The hack of the DNC and the hack of John Podesta.

Now, the -- but again, I think this is exactly why I want the report out, so that everybody can review it. And this has been briefed and the evidence in closed session has been provided on a bipartisan basis, not just to me, it's been provided to the leaders of the House and the Senate and the chairmen and ranking members of the relevant committees. And I think that what you've already seen is, at least some of the folks who've seen the evidence don't dispute I think the basic assessment that the Russians carried this out.

QUESTION:

But specifically, could (ph) you not say that...

OBAMA:

Well, Martha, I think what I want to make sure of is that I give the intelligence community a chance to gather all the information.

But I'd make a larger point, which is, not much happens in Russia without Vladimir Putin. This is a pretty hierarchical operation. Last I checked, there's not a lot of debate and democratic deliberation, particularly when it comes to policies directed at the United States. We have said and I will confirm that this happened at the highest levels of the Russian government and I will let you make that determination as to whether there are high-level Russian officials who go off rogue and decide to tamper with the U.S. election process without Vladimir Putin knowing about it.

QUESTION:

So I wouldn't be wrong in saying the president thinks Vladimir Putin authorized the hack?

OBAMA:

Martha, I've given you what I've -- what I'm gonna give you.

What was your second question?

QUESTION:

Do the tweets and do the statements by -- by Donald Trump embolden Russia?

OBAMA:

As I said before, I think that the president-elect, you know, is still in transition mode from campaign to governance. I think he hasn't gotten his whole team together yet. He still has campaign spokespersons sort of filling in and appearing on cable shows. And there is just a whole different attitude and vibe when you're not in power as when you are in power.

So rather than me sort of characterize the appropriateness or inappropriateness of what he is doing at the moment, I think what we have to see is how will the president-elect operate and how will his team operate when they've been fully briefed on all these issues. They have their hands on all the levers of government. And they have got to start making decisions.

One way I do believe that the president-elect can approach this that would be unifying is to say that we welcome a bipartisan independent process that gives the American people an assurance not only that votes are counted properly, that the elections are fair and free, but that we have learned lessons about how internet propaganda from foreign countries can be released into the political bloodstream and that we have got strategies to deal with it for the future.

The more this can be non-partisan, the better served the American people are going to be, which is why I made the point earlier and I'm going to keep on repeating this point, our vulnerability to Russia or any other foreign power is directly related to how divided, partisan, dysfunctional our political process is. That's the thing that makes us vulnerable.

If fake news that's being released by some foreign government is almost identical to reports that are being issued through partisan news venues, then it's not surprising that that foreign propaganda will have a greater effect. It doesn't seem that far-fetched compared to some of the other stuff that folks are hearing from domestic propagandists.

To the extent that our political dialogue is such where everything is under suspicion, and everybody is corrupt, and everybody is doing things for partisan reasons, and all of our institutions are, you know, full of malevolent actors, if that's the story line that is being put out there by whatever party is out of power, then when a foreign government introduces that same argument, with facts that are made up, voters who have been listening to that stuff for years, who have been getting that stuff every day from talk radio or other venues, they're going to believe it.

So if we want to really reduce foreign influence on our elections, then we had better think about how to make sure that our

political process, our political dialogue is stronger than it has been.

Mark Langley (ph).

QUESTION:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I wonder whether I could move you from Russia to China for a moment.

OBAMA:

Absolutely.

QUESTION:

Your successor spoke by phone with the president of Taiwan the other day, and declared subsequently that he wasn't sure why the United States needed to be bound by the One China Policy.

He suggested it could be used as a bargaining chip perhaps to get better terms on a trade deal or more cooperation on North Korea. There's already evidence that tensions between the two sides have increased a bit, and just today, the Chinese have seized an underwater drone in the South China Sea.

Do you agree, as some do, that our China policy could use a fresh set of eyes and what's the big deal about having a short phone call with the president of Taiwan? Or do you worry that these types of unorthodox approaches are setting us on a collision course with perhaps our biggest geopolitical adversary?

OBAMA:

That's a great question.

I'm somewhere in between. I think all of our foreign policy should be subject to fresh eyes. I think one of the -- I've said this before, I am very proud of the work I've done. I think I'm a better president now than when I started. But you know, if you're here for eight years in the bubble, you start seeing things a certain way and you benefit from -- the democracy benefits, America benefits from some new perspectives.

And I think it should be not just the prerogative, but the obligation of a new president to examine everything that's been done and see what makes sense and what doesn't. That's what I have done when I came in and I'm assuming any new president's gonna undertake those same exercises.

And given the importance of the relationship between United States and China, given how much is at stake in terms of the world economy, national security, our presence in the Asia-Pacific, China's increasing role in international affairs, there's probably no bilateral relationship that carries more significance and where there's also the potential if that relationship breaks down or goes into full conflict mode that everybody is worse off. So I think it's fine for him to take a look at it.

What I have advised the president-elect is that across the board on foreign policy, you want to make sure that you're doing it in a systematic, deliberate, intentional way.

And since there's only one president at a time, my advice to him has been that before he starts having a lot of interactions with foreign governments other than the usual courtesy calls, that he should want to have his full team in place, that he should want his team to be fully briefed on what's gone on in the past and where the potential pitfalls may be, where the opportunities are, what we've learned from eight years of experience so that as he's then maybe taking foreign policy in a new direction, he's got all the information to make good decisions, and by the way, that all of government is moving at the same time and singing from the same hymnal.

And with respect to China -- and let's just take the example of Taiwan, there has been a longstanding agreement essentially between China and the United States, and to some agree the Taiwanese, which is to not change the status quo. Taiwan operates differently than mainland China does. China views Taiwan as part of China, but recognizes that it has to approach Taiwan as an entity that has its own ways of doing things.

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The Taiwanese have agreed that as long as they're able to continue to function with some agree of autonomy, that they won't charge forward and declare independence. And that status quo, although not completely satisfactory to any of the parties involved, has kept the peace and allowed the Taiwanese to be a pretty successful economy and -- of people who have a high agree of self-determination. What I understand for China, the issue of Taiwan is as important as anything on their docket.

The idea of One China is at the heart of their conception as a nation. And so if you are going to upend this understanding, you have to have thought through what the consequences because the Chinese will not treat that the way they'll treat some other issues. They won't even treat it the way they issues around the South China Sea, where we've had a lot of tensions. This goes to the core of how they see themselves.

And their reaction on this issue could end up being very significant. That doesn't mean that you have to adhere to everything that's been done in the past, but you have to think it through and have planned for potential reactions that they may engage in. All right. Isaac Dove, Politico.

QUESTION:

Thank you Mr. President. Two questions on where this all leaves us.

OBAMA:

What leaves us? Where my presidency leaves us? It leaves us in a really good spot.

OBAMA:

If we make some good decisions going forward.

QUESTION:

What do you say to the electors who are going to meet on Monday and are thinking of changing their votes? Do you think they should be given an intelligence briefing about the Russian activity or should they bear in mind everything you have said and have said already (ph)? Should they -- should votes be bound by the state votes as they've gone? And long-term, do you think that there is need for Electoral College reform that was tied to the popular vote?

OBAMA:

Sounded like two but really was one.

OBAMA:

I love how these start. I've got two questions, but each one has four parts.

QUESTION:

On the Democratic Party, your labor secretary is running for -- to be the chair of the Democratic National Committee. Is the vision that you've seen him putting forward what you think the party needs to be focused on? And what do you think about the complaint that say that the future democratic committee shouldn't be a continuation of some of your political approach? Part of that is complaints that decisions that you have made as president and leader of the party has structurally weakened the DNC and the Democratic Party and they think that that has led to or has help lead to some of the losses in elections around the country. Do you regret any of those decisions?

OBAMA:

I'll take the second one first and say that Tom Perez has been, I believe one of the best secretaries of labor in our history. He is tireless. He is wicked smart. He has been able to work across the spectrum of you know, labor, business, activists. He has produced. I mean, if you look at his body of work on behalf of working people, what he's pushed for in terms of making sure that workers get a fair deal, decent wages, better benefits, that their safety is protected on the job. He has been extraordinary.

Now others who have declared are also my friends and fine people as well. And the great thing is, I don't have a vote in this. So - so - so we'll let the process unfold, I don't think it's going to happen any time soon. I described to you earlier what I think needs to happen, which is that the democratic party, whether that's entirely through the DNC or through rebuilding of state

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parties, or some other arrangement, has to work at the grassroots level, has to be present in all 50 states, has to have a presence in counties.

Has to think about in that extension (ph) how are we speaking directly to voters.

I will say this, and I'm not going to engage in too much punditry. But that I could not be prouder of the coalition that I put together in my -- each of my campaigns. Because it was inclusive and it drew in people who normally weren't interested in politics and didn't participate.

But I'd like to think -- I think I can show that in those elections, I always cast a broad net. I always said first and foremost we're Americans, that we have a common creed, that there's more that we share than divides us. And I want to talk to everybody and get a chance to get everybody's vote.

I still believe what I said in 2004 which is this red state-blue thing is a construct. Now it is a construct that has gotten more and more powerful for a whole lot of reasons from gerrymandering, to big money, to a way that the media is splintered.

And so people are just watching what reinforces their existing biases as opposed to having to listen to different points of view. So there are all kinds of reasons for it.

But outside the realm of electoral politics, I still see people the way I saw them when I made that speech, full of contradictions and some regional differences but basically, folks care about their families.

They care about having meaningful work. They care about making sure their kids have more opportunity than they did. They want to be safe. They want to feel like things are fair.

And whoever leads the DNC and any candidate with the Democratic brand going forward, I want them to feel as if they can reach out and find that common ground and speak to all of America. And that requires some organization.

And you're right that -- and I said this in my earlier remarks, that what I was able to do during my campaigns, I wasn't able to do during midterms. It's not that we didn't put in time and effort into it. I spent time and effort into it. But the coalition I put together didn't always turn out to be transferable.

And the challenge is that -- you know, some of that just has to do with the fact that when you are in the party in power and people are going through hard times like they were in 2010, they are going to punish to some degree the president's party regardless of what organizational work is done.

Some of it has to do with just some deep standing traditional challenges for Democrats like during off-year elections the electorate is older and we do better with the younger electorate. But we know those things are true.

And I didn't crack the code on that. And if other people have ideas about how to do that even better, I'm all for it.

So with respect to the electors, I'm not going to wade into that issue. Because, again, it's the American people's job and now electors' job to decide my successor. It is not my job to decide my successor.

And I have provided people with a lot of information about what happened during the course of the election, but more importantly, the candidates themselves I think talked about their beliefs and their vision for America.

The president-elect I think has been very explicit what he cares about and what he believes in. And so it's not in my hands now, it's up to them.

QUESTION:

what about long term about the Electoral College?

OBAMA:

Long term with respect to the Electoral College, the Electoral College is a vestige, it's a carry-over from an earlier vision of how our federal government was going to work that put a lot of premium on states, and it used to be that the Senate was not elected directly, it was through state legislatures. And it's the same type of thinking that gives Wyoming two senators and -- with about half a million people and California with 33 million get the same two.

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So there's -- there are some structures in our political system as envisioned by the founders that sometimes are going to disadvantage Democrats, but the truth of the matter is that if we have a strong message, if we're speaking to what the American people care about, typically, the popular vote and the electoral college vote will align.

And I guess -- I guess part of my overall message here as I leave for the holidays is that if we look for one explanation or one silver bullet or one easy fix for our politics, then we're probably going to be disappointed. There are just a lot of factors in what's happened, not just over the last few months, but over the last decade that has made both politics and governance more challenging. And I think everybody's raised legitimate questions and legitimate concerns.

I do hope that we all just take some time, take a breath, that's certainly what I'm going to advise Democrats, to just reflect a little bit more about how can we -- how can we get to a place where people are focused on working together based on at least some common set of facts? How can we have a conversation about policy that doesn't demonize each another? How can we channel what I think is the basic decency and goodness of the American people so it reflects itself in our politics, as opposed to it being so polarized and so nasty that in some cases, you have voters and unelected officials who have more confidence and faith in a foreign adversary than they have in their neighbors?

And those go to some bigger issues. How is it that we have some voters or some elected officials who think that Michelle Obama's healthy eating initiative and school nutrition program is a greater threat to democracy than, you know, our government going after the press if they're issuing a story they don't like? I mean, that's -- that's an issue that I think, you know, we've got to -- we've got to wrestle with. And we will.

People have asked me how you feel after the election and so forth and I say well, look, this is a clarifying moment. It's a useful reminder that voting counts, politics counts. What the president-elect is going to be doing is gonna be very different than what I was doing and I think people will be able to compare and contrast and make judgments about what worked for the American people. And I hope that building off the progress we've made, that what the president-elect is proposing works.

What I can say with confidence is that what we've done works. That I can prove. I can show you where we were in 2008 and I can show you where we are now. And you can't argue that we are not better off, we are.

And for that, I thank the American people and then more importantly I thank -- well, not importantly, as importantly -- I was going to say Josh Earnest...for doing such a great job.

For that, I thank the American people, I thank the men and women in uniform who serve. I haven't gotten to the point yet where I've been overly sentimental. I will tell you that when I was doing my last Christmas party photo -- I know many of you have participated in these, they're pretty long.

Right at the end of the line, the President's Marine Corps Band comes in, those who have been performing. And I take a picture with them. And that was the last time that I was going to take a picture with my Marine Corps Band after an event. And I got a little choked up.

Now I was in front of marines so I had to like tamp it down. But it was just one small example of all of the people who have contributed to our success. I am responsible for where we've screwed up, the successes are widely shared with all of the amazing people who have been part of this administration.

OK? Thank you, everybody. Mele Kalikimaka!

From: McCabe, Andrew G. (DO) (FBI)
Subject: WaPo
To: McCabe, Andrew G. (DO) (FBI)
Sent: December 28, 2016 7:56 AM (UTC-05:00)

The Washington Post

National Security

Obama administration is close to announcing measures to punish Russia for election interference

President Obama speaks about counterterrorism during his visit to MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa on Dec. 6. (Kevin Lamarque/Reuters)

By Ellen Nakashima December 27 at 8:24 PM

The Obama administration is close to announcing a series of measures to punish Russia for its interference in the 2016 presidential election, including economic sanctions and diplomatic censure, according to U.S. officials.

The administration is finalizing the details, which also are expected to include covert action that will probably involve cyber-operations, the officials said. An announcement on the public elements of the response could come as early as this week.

The sanctions portion of the package culminates weeks of debate in the White House on how to revise a 2015 executive order that was meant to give the president authority to respond to cyberattacks from overseas but that did not cover efforts to influence the electoral system.

The Obama administration rolled the executive order out to great fanfare as a way to punish and deter foreign hackers who harm U.S. economic or national security.

The threat to use it last year helped wring a pledge out of China's president that his country would cease hacking U.S. companies' secrets to benefit Chinese firms.

What the U.S. knows about Russia's election hacks, and what it can do about it

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In December, during a closed door briefing with senators, the CIA shared a secret assessment. The agency concluded it was now "quite clear" that Russia's goal was to help Donald Trump win the White House. (Jason Aldag/The Washington Post)

[Treasury, Justice officials pushed for economic sanctions on China over cybertheft]

But officials concluded this fall that the order could not, as written, be used to punish the most significant cyber-provocation in recent memory against the United States — Russia's hacking of Democratic organizations, targeting of state election systems and meddling in the presidential election.

With the clock ticking, the White House is working on adapting the authority to punish the Russians, according to the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations. President Obama pledged this month that there would be a response to Moscow's interference in the U.S. elections.

Russia had denied involvement in the hacking.

One clear way to use the order against the Russian suspects would be to declare the electoral systems

part of the “critical infrastructure” of the United States. Or the order could be amended to clearly apply to the new threat — interfering in elections.

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The industry uses the latest technology to identify, measure and manage potential risks.

Administration officials would also like to make it difficult for President-elect Donald Trump to roll back any action they take.

“Part of the goal here is to make sure that we have as much of the record public or communicated to Congress in a form that would be difficult to simply walk back,” said one senior administration official. President Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping at a news conference in Beijing in 2014. A year later, Xi reached an agreement with Obama that his country would stop commercial cyber-spying. (Feng Li/Getty Images)

Obama issued the executive order in April 2015, creating the sanctions tool as a way to hold accountable people who harm computer systems related to critical functions such as electricity generation or transportation, or who gain a competitive advantage through the cyber--theft of commercial secrets.

The order allows the government to freeze the assets in the United States of people overseas who have engaged in cyber-acts that have threatened U.S. national security or financial stability. The sanctions would also block commercial transactions with the designated individuals and bar their entry into the country.

But just a year later, a Russian military spy agency would hack into the Democratic National Committee and steal a trove of emails that were released a few months later on WikiLeaks, U.S. officials said. Other releases followed, including the hacked emails of Hillary Clinton’s campaign chairman, John Podesta.

“Fundamentally, it was a low-tech, high-impact event,” said Zachary Goldman, a sanctions and national security expert at New York University School of Law. And the 2015 executive order was not crafted to target hackers who steal emails and dump them on WikiLeaks or seek to disrupt an election. “It was an authority published at a particular time to address a particular set of problems,” he said.

So officials “need to engage in some legal acrobatics to fit the DNC hack into an existing authority, or they need to write a new authority,” Goldman said.

Administration officials would like Obama to use the power before leaving office to demonstrate its utility.

“When the president came into office, he didn’t have that many tools out there to use as a response” to malicious cyber-acts, said Ari Schwartz, a former senior director for cybersecurity on the National Security Council. “Having the sanctions tool is really a big one. It can make a very strong statement in a way that is less drastic than bombing a country and more impactful than sending out a cable from the State Department.”

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The National Security Council concluded that it would not be able to use the authority against Russian hackers because their malicious activity did not clearly fit under its terms, which require harm to critical infrastructure or the theft of commercial secrets.

“You would (a) have to be able to say that the actual electoral infrastructure, such as state databases, was critical infrastructure, and (b) that what the Russians did actually harmed it,” said the administration official. “Those are two high bars.”

Although Russian government hackers are believed to have penetrated at least one state

voter-registration database, they did not tamper with the data, officials said.

Some analysts believe that state election systems would fit under “government facilities,” which is one of the 16 critical infrastructure sectors designated by the Department of Homeland Security.

Another option is to use the executive order against other Russian targets — say, hackers who stole commercial secrets — and then, in either a public message or a private one, make clear that the United States considers its electoral systems to be critical infrastructure.

The idea is not only to punish but also to deter.

“As much as I am concerned about what happened to us in the election, I am also concerned about what will happen to us in the future,” a second administration official said. “I am firmly convinced that the Russians and others will say, ‘That worked pretty well in 2016, so let’s keep going.’ We have elections every two years in this country.”

Even the threat of sanctions can have deterrent value. Officials and experts point to Chinese President Xi Jinping’s agreement with Obama last year that his country would stop commercial cyber-spying. Xi came to the table after news reports that summer that the administration was preparing to sanction Chinese companies.

Complicating matters, the Trump transition team has not yet had extensive briefings with the White House on cybersecurity issues, including the potential use of the cyber sanctions order. The slow pace has caused consternation among officials, who fear that the administration’s accomplishments in cyber--security could languish if the next administration fails to understand their value.

[Trump turning away intelligence briefers since election win]

Sanctions are not a silver bullet. Obama noted that “we already have enormous numbers of sanctions against the Russians” for their activities in Ukraine. So it is questionable, some experts say, whether adding new ones would have a meaningful effect in changing the Kremlin’s behavior. But in combination with other measures, they could be effective.

Criminal indictments of Russians might become an option, officials said, but the FBI has so far not gathered enough evidence that could be introduced in a criminal case. At one point, federal prosecutors and FBI agents in San Francisco considered indicting Guccifer 2.0, a nickname for a person or people believed to be affiliated with the Russian influence operation and whose true identity was unknown.

Before the election, the administration used diplomatic channels to warn Russia. Obama spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin at a Group of 20 summit in China in September. About a week before the election, the United States sent a “hotline”-style message to Moscow using a special channel for crisis communication created in 2013 as part of the State Department’s Nuclear Risk Reduction Center. As part of that message, the officials said, the administration asked Russia to stop targeting state voter registration and election systems. It was the first use of that system. The Russians, officials said, appeared to comply.

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Ellen Nakashima is a national security reporter for The Washington Post. She focuses on issues relating to intelligence, technology and civil liberties.

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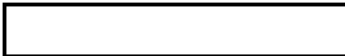
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b7E -3

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Pause live updates

terry4000

7:55 AM EST

Obama the clown is wanting to sanction Russia..HA HA HA HA HA. Pajama Boy needs to go back to Chicago and community organize again. It's all he can do.

Ignore User

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DontFuseMeWitFacts

7:55 AM EST

"Obama issued the executive order in April 2015, creating the sanctions tool".

Overtured first day. Why waste the time? Why this article besides trying to make a point / create a fake legacy?

Ignore User

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NRroad

7:55 AM EST

It's astonishing to see leaks on this topic coming clearly from senior White House sources. The concept of treason comes to mind.

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daf62757

7:54 AM EST

Is he going to punish the DNC for rigging the primaries?

Ignore User

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2

CryLosersCry

7:54 AM EST

WikiLeaks claims that the emails they put out did not come from Russia, but from that moron who let his password leak to a phishing email. Podesta is a moron and these people are not smart enough to run the govt. They proved it beyond any doubt.

Ignore User

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USMC 70-82

7:54 AM EST

I like it when you see all the conservatives at the WAPO comments just burying the little pantywaist liberals.... Yes lib's times are a changing....

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1

Dale Doback UUI ETC PHD MTS

7:53 AM EST

This Administration is not very bright. Why the hell are you going to tell your enemies what you are planning? My god, the incompetence with Obama and those around him is mind numbing.

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4

ItsANewDay

7:53 AM EST

I honestly don't care what political party controls the Presidency or Congress when it comes to punishing Russia and Vladimir Putin. So long as it happens. He is a murderous tyrant. He is the enemy of the west.

Ignore User

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maverick13

7:53 AM EST

Three more weeks of Obama, only three more weeks of Obama

Ignore User

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7

Leo D. Lion

7:53 AM EST

All dems have a speed dial set up for their shrinks,,,, on a quiet night you can hear them pressing it.

Ignore User

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2

wormwar1

7:53 AM EST

Democrats have completely lost their mind. Maybe it's finally time that the party of slavery and the KKK is

abolished.

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2

bluenation2016

7:52 AM EST

A fantastic, quiet, damning essay about how pathetic Trump really is:

<http://www.alreporter.com/the-toughest-man-in-amer...>

Putin knows. He's a former KGB agent. It was his job to manipulate weak boys like Donald.

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2

bill clinton

7:53 AM EST

Scramble JERK.

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JuanGonzalez23

7:55 AM EST

Well gee, if you can't trust a website founded with Go Daddy and a dream who can you trust. Try looking at someone other your employers website their at Media Matters. Yeah, its getting the obvious.

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bill clinton

7:52 AM EST

0-bama, the irrelevant guy from Kenya, is struggling to stay in the headlines.

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2

Hazmat77

7:52 AM EST

Has anyone seen or heard ONE BIT of evidence supporting the otherwise foolish Obama conclusion?

The only substantiation so far is the claim that 17 Federal Agencies believe the Russians did it! The obvious response is why do we have 17 agencies involved? And where's the evidence?

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Hazmat77

7:52 AM EST

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Zabaglione

7:54 AM EST

Tons of evidence, all over the place. The question is no longer if they did it, but it is what we do about it.

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1

question-guy

7:51 AM EST

Israel and Russia SPIES on us and the traitorous Republicans (and their racist, poor, uneducated

supporters) tells us to befriend them?

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2

Troy Dynes

7:54 AM EST

how funny!!! obama claims racist white men elected Trump and they claims they would have voted for him if he ran for prez....

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CryLosersCry

7:51 AM EST

Obama never seemed concerned until HiLLIARy lost the election? Wonder why, he did nothing when he and other fools thought HiLLIARy was a shoo-in?

Ignore User

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2

Zabaglione

7:52 AM EST

He explained all that twice. weren't you listening?

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2

CryLosersCry

7:54 AM EST

which lie do I believe, the first one or the second?

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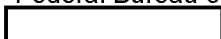
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Andrew G. McCabe
Deputy Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation



b7E -3

From: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)
Subject: RE: BuzzFeed published some of the reports
To: [redacted] (OGC) (FBI); Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI); Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI); Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI); Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI); [redacted] (OGC) (FBI); Rybicki, James E. (DO) (FBI); Burton, Dawn (DO) (FBI) b6 -1
b7C -1
Cc: McCabe, Andrew G. (DO) (FBI)
Sent: January 10, 2017 7:56 PM (UTC-05:00)
Attached: Trump-Intelligence-Allegations.pdf
Sorry to fill everyone's inbox, this is what BuzzFeed put up

-----Original Message-----

From [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)
Sent: Tuesday, January 10, 2017 7:44 PM
To: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI) <[redacted]>; [redacted] (OGC) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Rybicki, James E. (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Burton, Dawn (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>
Cc: McCabe, Andrew G. (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>
Subject: RE: BuzzFeed published some of the reports

b6 -1
b7C -1
b7E -3

Adding Andy.

Buzzfeed has 16 of the reports. Includes Ritz, allegations about Page, Manafort, Cohen, and the identities of various foreign actors.

-----Original Message-----

From: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)
Sent: Tuesday, January 10, 2017 7:36 PM
To: Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI) <[redacted]>; [redacted] (OGC) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Rybicki, James E. (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Burton, Dawn (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>
Subject: BuzzFeed published some of the reports
Importance: High

b6 -1
b7C -1
b7E -3

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3259984-Trump-Intelligence-Allegations.html>

These Reports Allege Trump Has Deep Ties To Russia

A dossier, compiled by a person who has claimed to be a former British intelligence official, alleges Russia has compromising information on Trump. The allegations are unverified, and the report contains errors.

Ken Bensinger
BuzzFeed News Reporter

Miriam Elder
BuzzFeed News Reporter

Mark Schoofs
BuzzFeed News Investigations Editor

A dossier making explosive — but unverified — allegations that the Russian government has been “cultivating, supporting and assisting” President-elect Donald Trump for years and gained compromising information about him has been circulating among elected officials, intelligence agents, and journalists for weeks.

The dossier, which is a collection of memos written over a period of months, includes specific, unverified, and potentially unverifiable allegations of contact between Trump aides and Russian operatives, and graphic claims of sexual acts documented by the Russians. CNN reported Tuesday that a two-page synopsis of the report was given to President Barack Obama and Trump.

Now BuzzFeed News is publishing the full document so that Americans can make up their own minds about allegations about the president-elect that have circulated at the highest levels of the US government.

The document was prepared for political opponents of Trump by a person who is understood to be a former British intelligence agent. It is not just unconfirmed: It includes some clear errors. The report misspells the name of one company, “Alpha Group,” throughout. It is Alfa Group. The report says the settlement of Barvikha, outside Moscow, is “reserved for the residences of the top leadership and their close associates.” It is not reserved for anyone, and it is also populated by the very wealthy.

The documents have circulated for months and acquired a kind of legendary status among journalists, lawmakers, and intelligence officials who have seen them. Mother Jones writer David Corn referred to the documents in a late October column. Harry Reid spokesman Adam Jentleson tweeted Tuesday that the former Senate Democratic leader had seen the documents before writing a public letter to FBI Director James Comey about Trump’s ties to Russia. And CNN reported Tuesday that Arizona Republican John McCain gave a “full copy” of the memos to Comey on Dec. 9, but that the FBI already had copies of many of the memos.

Peter P. Strzok II
Deputy Assistant Director, Branch I
Counterintelligence Division

 (O)
(C)

b7E -3

COMPANY INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2016/080

US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE DONALD TRUMP'S
ACTIVITIES IN RUSSIA AND COMPROMISING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE
KREMLIN

Summary

- Russian regime has been cultivating, supporting and assisting TRUMP for at least 5 years. Aim, endorsed by PUTIN, has been to encourage splits and divisions in western alliance
- So far TRUMP has declined various sweetener real estate business deals offered him in Russia in order to further the Kremlin's cultivation of him. However he and his inner circle have accepted a regular flow of intelligence from the Kremlin, including on his Democratic and other political rivals
- Former top Russian intelligence officer claims FSB has compromised TRUMP through his activities in Moscow sufficiently to be able to blackmail him. According to several knowledgeable sources, his conduct in Moscow has included perverted sexual acts which have been arranged/monitored by the FSB
- A dossier of compromising material on Hillary CLINTON has been collated by the Russian Intelligence Services over many years and mainly comprises bugged conversations she had on various visits to Russia and intercepted phone calls rather than any embarrassing conduct. The dossier is controlled by Kremlin spokesman, PESKOV, directly on PUTIN's orders. However it has not as yet been distributed abroad, including to TRUMP. Russian intentions for its deployment still unclear

Detail

1. Speaking to a trusted compatriot in June 2016 sources A and B, a senior Russian Foreign Ministry figure and a former top level Russian intelligence officer still active inside the Kremlin respectively, the Russian authorities had been cultivating and supporting US Republican presidential candidate, Donald TRUMP for at least 5 years. Source B asserted that the TRUMP operation was both supported and directed by Russian President Vladimir PUTIN. Its aim was to sow discord and

disunity both within the US itself, but more especially within the Transatlantic alliance which was viewed as inimical to Russia's interests. Source C, a senior Russian financial official said the TRUMP operation should be seen in terms of PUTIN's desire to return to Nineteenth Century 'Great Power' politics anchored upon countries' interests rather than the ideals-based international order established after World War Two. S/he had overheard PUTIN talking in this way to close associates on several occasions.

2. In terms of specifics, Source A confided that the Kremlin had been feeding TRUMP and his team valuable intelligence on his opponents, including Democratic presidential candidate Hillary CLINTON, for several years (see more below). This was confirmed by Source D, a close associate of TRUMP who had organized and managed his recent trips to Moscow, and who reported, also in June 2016, that this Russian intelligence had been "very helpful". The Kremlin's cultivation operation on TRUMP also had comprised offering him various lucrative real estate development business deals in Russia, especially in relation to the ongoing 2018 World Cup soccer tournament. However, so far, for reasons unknown, TRUMP had not taken up any of these.
3. However, there were other aspects to TRUMP's engagement with the Russian authorities. One which had borne fruit for them was to exploit TRUMP's personal obsessions and sexual perversion in order to obtain suitable 'kompromat' (compromising material) on him. According to Source D, where s/he had been present, TRUMP's (perverted) conduct in Moscow included hiring the presidential suite of the Ritz Carlton Hotel, where he knew President and Mrs OBAMA (whom he hated) had stayed on one of their official trips to Russia, and defiling the bed where they had slept by employing a number of prostitutes to perform a 'golden showers' (urination) show in front of him. The hotel was known to be under FSB control with microphones and concealed cameras in all the main rooms to record anything they wanted to.
4. The Moscow Ritz Carlton episode involving TRUMP reported above was confirmed by Source E, [REDACTED], who said that s/he and several of the staff were aware of it at the time and subsequently. S/he believed it had happened in 2013. Source E provided an introduction for a company ethnic Russian operative to Source F, a female staffer at the hotel when TRUMP had stayed there, who also confirmed the story. Speaking separately in June 2016, Source B (the former top level Russian intelligence officer) asserted that TRUMP's unorthodox behavior in Russia over the years had provided the authorities there with enough embarrassing material on the now Republican presidential candidate to be able to blackmail him if they so wished.
5. Asked about the Kremlin's reported intelligence feed to TRUMP over recent years and rumours about a Russian dossier of 'kompromat' on

CONFIDENTIAL/SENSITIVE SOURCE

Hillary CLINTON (being circulated), Source B confirmed the file's existence. S/he confided in a trusted compatriot that it had been collated by Department K of the FSB for many years, dating back to her husband Bill's presidency, and comprised mainly eavesdropped conversations of various sorts rather than details/evidence of unorthodox or embarrassing behavior. Some of the conversations were from bugged comments CLINTON had made on her various trips to Russia and focused on things she had said which contradicted her current position on various issues. Others were most probably from phone intercepts.

6. Continuing on this theme, Source G, a senior Kremlin official, confided that the CLINTON dossier was controlled exclusively by chief Kremlin spokesman, Dmitriy PESKOV, who was responsible for compiling/handling it on the explicit instructions of PUTIN himself. The dossier however had not as yet been made available abroad, including to TRUMP or his campaign team. At present it was unclear what PUTIN's intentions were in this regard.

20 June 2016

CONFIDENTIAL/SENSITIVE SOURCE

COMPANY INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2016/086

RUSSIA/CYBER CRIME: A SYNOPSIS OF RUSSIAN STATE SPONSORED AND OTHER CYBER OFFENSIVE (CRIMINAL) OPERATIONS

Summary

- Russia has extensive programme of state-sponsored offensive cyber operations. External targets include foreign governments and big corporations, especially banks. FSB leads on cyber within Russian apparatus. Limited success in attacking top foreign targets like G7 governments, security services and IFIs but much more on second tier ones through IT back doors, using corporate and other visitors to Russia
- FSB often uses coercion and blackmail to recruit most capable cyber operatives in Russia into its state-sponsored programmes. Heavy use also, both wittingly and unwittingly, of CIS emigres working in western corporations and ethnic Russians employed by neighbouring governments e.g. Latvia
- Example cited of successful Russian cyber operation targeting senior Western business visitor. Provided back door into important Western institutions.
- Example given of US citizen of Russian origin approached by FSB and offered incentive of "investment" in his business when visiting Moscow.
- Problems however for Russian authorities themselves in countering local hackers and cyber criminals, operating outside state control. Central Bank claims there were over 20 serious attacks on correspondent accounts held by CBR in 2015, comprising Roubles several billion in fraud
- Some details given of leading non-state Russian cyber criminal groups

Details

1. Speaking in June 2016, a number of Russian figures with a detailed knowledge of national cyber crime, both state-sponsored and otherwise, outlined the current situation in this area. A former senior intelligence officer divided Russian state-sponsored offensive cyber operations into four categories (in order of priority):- targeting foreign, especially

western governments; penetrating leading foreign business corporations, especially banks; domestic monitoring of the elite; and attacking political opponents both at home and abroad. The former intelligence officer reported that the Federal Security Service (FSB) was the lead organization within the Russian state apparatus for cyber operations.

2. In terms of the success of Russian offensive cyber operations to date, a senior government figure reported that there had been only limited success in penetrating the "first tier" foreign targets. These comprised western (especially G7 and NATO) governments, security and intelligence services and central banks, and the IFIs. To compensate for this shortfall, massive effort had been invested, with much greater success, in attacking the "secondary targets", particularly western private banks and the governments of smaller states allied to the West. S/he mentioned Latvia in this regard. Hundreds of agents, either consciously cooperating with the FSB or whose personal and professional IT systems had been unwittingly compromised, were recruited. Many were people who had ethnic and family ties to Russia and/or had been incentivized financially to cooperate. Such people often would receive monetary inducements or contractual favours from the Russian state or its agents in return. This had created difficulties for parts of the Russian state apparatus in obliging/indulging them e.g. the Central Bank of Russia knowingly having to cover up for such agents' money laundering operations through the Russian financial system.
3. In terms of the FSB's recruitment of capable cyber operatives to carry out its, ideally deniable, offensive cyber operations, a Russian IT specialist with direct knowledge reported in June 2016 that this was often done using coercion and blackmail. In terms of 'foreign' agents, the FSB was approaching US citizens of Russian (Jewish) origin on business trips to Russia. In one case a US citizen of Russian ethnicity had been visiting Moscow to attract investors in his new information technology program. The FSB clearly knew this and had offered to provide seed capital to this person in return for them being able to access and modify his IP, with a view to targeting priority foreign targets by planting a Trojan virus in the software. The US visitor was told this was common practice. The FSB also had implied significant operational success as a result of installing cheap Russian IT games containing their own malware unwittingly by targets on their PCs and other platforms.
4. In a more advanced and successful FSB operation, an IT operator inside a leading Russian SOE, who previously had been employed on conventional (defensive) IT work there, had been under instruction for the last year to conduct an offensive cyber operation against a foreign director of the company. Although the latter was apparently an infrequent visitor to Russia, the FSB now successfully had penetrated his personal IT and through this had managed to access various important institutions in the West through the back door.

CONFIDENTIAL/SENSITIVE SOURCE

5. In terms of other technical IT platforms, an FSB cyber operative flagged up the 'Telegram' enciphered commercial system as having been of especial concern and therefore heavily targeted by the FSB, not least because it was used frequently by Russian internal political activists and oppositionists. His/her understanding was that the FSB now successfully had cracked this communications software and therefore it was no longer secure to use.
6. The senior Russian government figure cited above also reported that non-state sponsored cyber crime was becoming an increasing problem inside Russia for the government and authorities there. The Central Bank of Russia claimed that in 2015 alone there had been more than 20 attempts at serious cyber embezzlement of money from corresponding accounts held there, comprising several billions Roubles. More generally, s/he understood there were circa 15 major organised crime groups in the country involved in cyber crime, all of which continued to operate largely outside state and FSB control. These included the so-called 'Anunak', 'Buktrap' and 'Metel' organisations.

26 July 2015

RUSSIA/US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: FURTHER INDICATIONS OF EXTENSIVE CONSPIRACY BETWEEN TRUMP'S CAMPAIGN TEAM AND THE KREMLIN

Summary

- Further evidence of extensive conspiracy between TRUMP's campaign team and Kremlin, sanctioned at highest levels and involving Russian diplomatic staff based in the US
- TRUMP associate admits Kremlin behind recent appearance of DNC e-mails on WikiLeaks, as means of maintaining plausible deniability
- Agreed exchange of information established in both directions. TRUMP's team using moles within DNC and hackers in the US as well as outside in Russia. PUTIN motivated by fear and hatred of Hillary CLINTON. Russians receiving intel from TRUMP's team on Russian oligarchs and their families in US
- Mechanism for transmitting this intelligence involves "pension" disbursements to Russian emigres living in US as cover, using consular officials in New York, DC and Miami
- Suggestion from source close to TRUMP and MANAFORT that Republican campaign team happy to have Russia as media bogeyman to mask more extensive corrupt business ties to China and other emerging countries

Detail

1. Speaking in confidence to a compatriot in late July 2016, Source E, an ethnic Russian close associate of Republican US presidential candidate Donald TRUMP, admitted that there was a well-developed conspiracy of co-operation between them and the Russian leadership. This was managed on the TRUMP side by the Republican candidate's campaign manager, Paul MANAFORT, who was using foreign policy advisor, Carter PAGE, and others as intermediaries. The two sides had a mutual interest in defeating Democratic presidential candidate Hillary CLINTON, whom President PUTIN apparently both hated and feared.
2. Inter alia, Source E, acknowledged that the Russian regime had been behind the recent leak of embarrassing e-mail messages, emanating from the Democratic National Committee (DNC), to the WikiLeaks platform.

The reason for using WikiLeaks was "plausible deniability" and the operation had been conducted with the full knowledge and support of TRUMP and senior members of his campaign team. In return the TRUMP team had agreed to sideline Russian intervention in Ukraine as a campaign issue and to raise US/NATO defence commitments in the Baltics and Eastern Europe to deflect attention away from Ukraine, a priority for PUTIN who needed to cauterise the subject.

3. In the wider context of TRUMP campaign/Kremlin co-operation, Source E claimed that the intelligence network being used against CLINTON comprised three elements. Firstly there were agents/facilitators within the Democratic Party structure itself; secondly Russian émigré and associated offensive cyber operators based in the US; and thirdly, state-sponsored cyber operatives working in Russia. All three elements had played an important role to date. On the mechanism for rewarding relevant assets based in the US, and effecting a two-way flow of intelligence and other useful information, Source E claimed that Russian diplomatic staff in key cities such as New York, Washington DC and Miami were using the émigré 'pension' distribution system as cover. The operation therefore depended on key people in the US Russian émigré community for its success. Tens of thousands of dollars were involved.
4. In terms of the intelligence flow from the TRUMP team to Russia, Source E reported that much of this concerned the activities of business oligarchs and their families' activities and assets in the US, with which PUTIN and the Kremlin seemed preoccupied.
5. Commenting on the negative media publicity surrounding alleged Russian interference in the US election campaign in support of TRUMP, Source E said he understood that the Republican candidate and his team were relatively relaxed about this because it deflected media and the Democrats' attention away from TRUMP's business dealings in China and other emerging markets. Unlike in Russia, these were substantial and involved the payment of large bribes and kickbacks which, were they to become public, would be potentially very damaging to their campaign.
6. Finally, regarding TRUMP's claimed minimal investment profile in Russia, a separate source with direct knowledge said this had not been for want of trying. TRUMP's previous efforts had included exploring the real estate sector in St Petersburg as well as Moscow but in the end TRUMP had had to settle for the use of extensive sexual services there from local prostitutes rather than business success.

COMPANY INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2016/94

RUSSIA: SECRET KREMLIN MEETINGS ATTENDED BY TRUMP ADVISOR, CARTER PAGE IN MOSCOW (JULY 2016)

Summary

- TRUMP advisor Carter PAGE holds secret meetings in Moscow with SECHIN and senior Kremlin Internal Affairs official, DIVEYKIN
- SECHIN raises issues of future bilateral US-Russia energy co-operation and associated lifting of western sanctions against Russia over Ukraine. PAGE non-committal in response
- DIVEYKIN discusses release of Russian dossier of 'kompromat' on TRUMP's opponent, Hillary CLINTON, but also hints at Kremlin possession of such material on TRUMP

Detail

1. Speaking in July 2016, a Russian source close to Rosneft President, PUTIN close associate and US-sanctioned individual, Igor SECHIN, confided the details of a recent secret meeting between him and visiting Foreign Affairs Advisor to Republican presidential candidate Donald TRUMP, Carter PAGE.
2. According to SECHIN's associate, the Rosneft President (CEO) had raised with PAGE the issues of future bilateral energy cooperation and prospects for an associated move to lift Ukraine-related western sanctions against Russia. PAGE had reacted positively to this demarche by SECHIN but had been generally non-committal in response.
3. Speaking separately, also in July 2016, an official close to Presidential Administration Head, S. IVANOV, confided in a compatriot that a senior colleague in the Internal Political Department of the PA, DIVEYKIN (nfd) also had met secretly with PAGE on his recent visit. Their agenda had included DIVEYKIN raising a dossier of 'kompromat' the Kremlin possessed on TRUMP's Democratic presidential rival, Hillary CLINTON, and its possible release to the Republican's campaign team.
4. However, the Kremlin official close to S. IVANOV added that s/he believed DIVEYKIN also had hinted (or indicated more strongly) that the Russian leadership also had 'kompromat' on TRUMP which the latter should bear in mind in his dealings with them.

19 July 2016

COMPANY INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2016/097

RUSSIA-US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: KREMLIN CONCERN THAT POLITICAL FALLOUT FROM DNC E-MAIL HACKING AFFAIR SPIRALLING OUT OF CONTROL

Summary

- Kremlin concerned that political fallout from DNC e-mail hacking operation is spiralling out of control. Extreme nervousness among TRUMP's associates as result of negative media attention/accusations
- Russians meanwhile keen to cool situation and maintain 'plausible deniability' of existing /ongoing pro-TRUMP and anti-CLINTON operations. Therefore unlikely to be any ratcheting up offensive plays in immediate future
- Source close to TRUMP campaign however confirms regular exchange with Kremlin has existed for at least 8 years, including intelligence fed back to Russia on oligarchs' activities in US
- Russians apparently have promised not to use 'kompromat' they hold on TRUMP as leverage, given high levels of voluntary co-operation forthcoming from his team

Detail

1. Speaking in confidence to a trusted associate in late July 2016, a Russian émigré figure close to the Republican US presidential candidate Donald TRUMP's campaign team commented on the fallout from publicity surrounding the Democratic National Committee (DNC) e-mail hacking scandal. The émigré said there was a high level of anxiety within the TRUMP team as a result of various accusations levelled against them and indications from the Kremlin that President PUTIN and others in the leadership thought things had gone too far now and risked spiralling out of control.
2. Continuing on this theme, the émigré associate of TRUMP opined that the Kremlin wanted the situation to calm but for 'plausible deniability' to be maintained concerning its (extensive) pro-TRUMP and anti-CLINTON operations. S/he therefore judged that it was unlikely these would be ratcheted up, at least for the time being.
3. However, in terms of established operational liaison between the TRUMP team and the Kremlin, the émigré confirmed that an intelligence exchange had been running between them for at least 8 years. Within this context PUTIN's priority requirement had been for intelligence on the activities, business and otherwise, in the US of leading Russian oligarchs and their families. TRUMP and his associates duly had obtained and supplied the Kremlin with this information.

4. Finally, the émigré said s/he understood the Kremlin had more intelligence on CLINTON and her campaign but he did not know the details or when or if it would be released. As far as 'kompromat' (compromising information) on TRUMP were concerned, although there was plenty of this, he understood the Kremlin had given its word that it would not be deployed against the Republican presidential candidate given how helpful and co-operative his team had been over several years, and particularly of late.

30 July 2016

COMPANY INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2016/100

RUSSIA/USA: GROWING BACKLASH IN KREMLIN TO DNC HACKING AND TRUMP SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Summary

- Head of PA IVANOV laments Russian intervention in US presidential election and black PR against CLINTON and the DNC. Vows not to supply intelligence to Kremlin PR operatives again. Advocates now sitting tight and denying everything
- Presidential spokesman PESKOV the main protagonist in Kremlin campaign to aid TRUMP and damage CLINTON. He is now scared and fears being made scapegoat by leadership for backlash in US. Problem compounded by his botched intervention in recent Turkish crisis
- Premier MEDVEDEV's office furious over DNC hacking and associated anti-Russian publicity. Want good relations with US and ability to travel there. Refusing to support or help cover up after PESKOV
- Talk now in Kremlin of TRUMP withdrawing from presidential race altogether, but this still largely wishful thinking by more liberal elements in Moscow

Detail

1. Speaking in early August 2016, two well-placed and established Kremlin sources outlined the divisions and backlash in Moscow arising from the leaking of Democratic National Committee (DNC) e-mails and the wider pro-TRUMP operation being conducted in the US. Head of Presidential Administration, Sergei IVANOV, was angry at the recent turn of events. He believed the Kremlin "team" involved, led by presidential spokesman Dmitriy PESKOV, had gone too far in interfering in foreign affairs with their "elephant in a china shop black PR". IVANOV claimed always to have opposed the handling and exploitation of intelligence by this PR "team". Following the backlash against such foreign interference in US politics, IVANOV was advocating that the only sensible course of action now for the Russian leadership was to "sit tight and deny everything".
2. Continuing on this theme the source close to IVANOV reported that PESKOV now was "scared shitless" that he would be scapegoated by PUTIN and the Kremlin and held responsible for the backlash against Russian political interference in the US election. IVANOV was determined

to stop PESKOV playing an independent role in relation to the US going forward and the source fully expected the presidential spokesman now to lay low. PESKOV's position was not helped by a botched attempt by him also to interfere in the recent failed coup in Turkey from a government relations (GR) perspective (no further details).

3. The extent of disquiet and division within Moscow caused by the backlash against Russian interference in the US election was underlined by a second source, close to premier Dmitriy MEDVEDEV (DAM). S/he said the Russian prime minister and his colleagues wanted to have good relations with the US, regardless of who was in power there, and not least so as to be able to travel there in future, either officially or privately. They were openly refusing to cover up for PESKOV and others involved in the DNC/TRUMP operations or to support his counter-attack of allegations against the USG for its alleged hacking of the Russian government and state agencies.
4. According to the first source, close to IVANOV, there had been talk in the Kremlin of TRUMP being forced to withdraw from the presidential race altogether as a result of recent events, ostensibly on grounds of his psychological state and unsuitability for high office. This might not be so bad for Russia in the circumstances but in the view of the source, it remained largely wishful thinking on the part of those in the regime opposed to PESKOV and his "botched" operations, at least for the time being.

5 August 2016

RUSSIA/US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: SENIOR KREMLIN FIGURE OUTLINES EVOLVING RUSSIAN TACTICS IN PRO-TRUMP, ANTI-CLINTON OPERATION

Summary

- Head of PA, IVANOV assesses Kremlin intervention in US presidential election and outlines leadership thinking on operational way forward
- No new leaks envisaged, as too politically risky, but rather further exploitation of (WikiLeaks) material already disseminated to exacerbate divisions
- Educated US youth to be targeted as protest (against CLINTON) and swing vote in attempt to turn them over to TRUMP
- Russian leadership, including PUTIN, celebrating perceived success to date in splitting US hawks and elite
- Kremlin engaging with several high profile US players, including STEIN, PAGE and (former DIA Director Michael Flynn), and funding their recent visits to Moscow

Details

1. Speaking in confidence to a close colleague in early August 2016, Head of the Russian Presidential Administration (PA), Sergei IVANOV, assessed the impact and results of Kremlin intervention in the US presidential election to date. Although most commentators believed that the Kremlin was behind the leaked DNC/CLINTON e-mails, this remained technically deniable. Therefore the Russians would not risk their position for the time being with new leaked material, even to a third party like WikiLeaks. Rather the tactics would be to spread rumours and misinformation about the content of what already had been leaked and make up new content.
2. Continuing on this theme, IVANOV said that the audience to be targeted by such operations was the educated youth in America as the PA assessed that there was still a chance they could be persuaded to vote for Republican candidate Donald TRUMP as a protest against the Washington establishment (in the form of Democratic candidate Hillary CLINTON). The hope was that even if she won, as a result of this CLINTON in power would be bogged down in working for internal reconciliation in the US, rather than being able to focus on foreign policy which would damage Russia's interests. This also should give President PUTIN more room for manoeuvre in the run-up to Russia's own presidential election in 2018.
3. IVANOV reported that although the Kremlin had underestimated the strength of US media and liberal reaction to the DNC hack and TRUMP's links to Russia, PUTIN was generally satisfied with the progress of the anti-CLINTON operation to date. He recently had had a drink with PUTIN to mark this. In IVANOV's view, the US had tried to divide the Russian elite with sanctions but failed, whilst they, by contrast, had succeeded in splitting the US hawks inimical to Russia and the Washington elite more generally, half of whom had refused to endorse any presidential candidate as a result of Russian intervention.
4. Speaking separately, also in early August 2016, a Kremlin official involved in US relations commented on aspects of the Russian operation to date. Its goals had been threefold - asking sympathetic US actors how Moscow could help them; gathering relevant intelligence; and creating and disseminating compromising information ('kompromat'). This had involved the Kremlin supporting various US political figures, including funding indirectly their recent visits to Moscow. S/he named a delegation from Lyndon LAROUCHE; presidential candidate Jill STEIN of the Green Party; TRUMP foreign policy adviser

Carter PAGE; and former DIA Director Michael Flynn, in this regard and as successful in terms of perceived outcomes.

10 August 2016

COMPANY INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2016/102

RUSSIA/US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: REACTION IN TRUMP CAMP TO RECENT NEGATIVE PUBLICITY ABOUT RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE AND LIKELY RESULTING TACTICS GOING FORWARD

Summary

- TRUMP campaign insider reports recent DNC e-mail leaks were aimed at switching SANDERS (protest) voters away from CLINTON and over to TRUMP
- Admits Republican campaign underestimated resulting negative reaction from US liberals, elite and media and forced to change course as result
- Need now to turn tables on CLINTON's use of PUTIN as bogeyman in election, although some resentment at Russian president's perceived attempt to undermine USG and system over and above swinging presidential election

Detail

1. Speaking in confidence on 9 August 2016, an ethnic Russian associate of Republican US presidential candidate Donald TRUMP discussed the reaction inside his camp, and revised tactics therein resulting from recent negative publicity concerning Moscow's clandestine involvement in the campaign. TRUMP's associate reported that the aim of leaking the DNC e-mails to WikiLeaks during the Democratic Convention had been to swing supporters of Bernie SANDERS away from Hillary CLINTON and across to TRUMP. These voters were perceived as activist and anti-status quo and anti-establishment and in that regard sharing many features with the TRUMP campaign, including a visceral dislike of Hillary CLINTON. This objective had been conceived and promoted, inter alia, by TRUMP's foreign policy adviser Carter PAGE who had discussed it directly with the ethnic Russian associate.
2. Continuing on this theme, the ethnic Russian associate of TRUMP assessed that the problem was that the TRUMP campaign had underestimated the strength of the negative reaction from liberals and especially the conservative elite to Russian interference. This was forcing a rethink and a likely change of tactics. The main objective in the short term was to check Democratic candidate Hillary CLINTON's successful exploitation of the PUTIN as bogeyman/Russian interference story to tarnish TRUMP and bolster her own (patriotic) credentials. The TRUMP campaign was focusing on tapping into support in the American television media to achieve this, as they reckoned this resource had been underused by them to date.
3. However, TRUMP's associate also admitted that there was a fair amount of anger and resentment within the Republican candidate's team at what was perceived by PUTIN as going beyond the objective of weakening CLINTON and bolstering TRUMP, by attempting to exploit the situation to undermine the US government and democratic system more generally. It was unclear at present how this aspect of the situation would play out in the weeks to come.

10 August 2016

COMPANY INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2016/136

RUSSIA/US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: FURTHER DETAILS OF TRUMP LAWYER COHEN'S SECRET LIAISON WITH THE KREMLIN

Summary

- Kremlin insider reports TRUMP lawyer COHEN's secret meeting/s with Kremlin officials in August 2016 was/were held in Prague
- Russian parastatal organisation Rossotrudnichestvo used as cover for this liaison and premises in Czech capital may have been used for the meeting/s
- Pro-PUTIN leading Duma figure, KOSACHEV, reportedly involved as "plausibly deniable" facilitator and may have participated in the August meeting/s with COHEN

Detail

1. Speaking to a compatriot and friend on 19 October 2016, a Kremlin insider provided further details of reported clandestine meeting/s between Republican presidential candidate, Donald TRUMP's lawyer Michael COHEN and Kremlin representatives in August 2016. Although the communication between them had to be cryptic for security reasons, the Kremlin insider clearly indicated to his/her friend that the reported contact/s took place in Prague, Czech Republic.
2. Continuing on this theme, the Kremlin insider highlighted the importance of the Russian parastatal organisation, Rossotrudnichestvo, in this contact between TRUMP campaign representative/s and Kremlin officials. Rossotrudnichestvo was being used as cover for this relationship and its office in Prague may well have been used to host the COHEN/Russian Presidential Administration (PA) meeting/s. It was considered a "plausibly deniable" vehicle for this, whilst remaining entirely under Kremlin control.
3. The Kremlin insider went on to identify leading pro-PUTIN Duma figure, Konstantin KOSACHEV (Head of the Foreign Relations Committee) as an important figure in the TRUMP campaign-Kremlin liaison operation. KOSACHEV, also "plausibly deniable" being part of the Russian legislature rather than executive, had facilitated the contact in Prague and by implication, may have attended the meeting/s with COHEN there in August.

Company Comment

We reported previously, in our Company Intelligence Report 2016/135 of 19 October 2016 from the same source, that COHEN met officials from the PA Legal Department clandestinely in an EU country in August 2016. This was in order to clean up the mess left behind by western media revelations of TRUMP ex-campaign manager MANAFORT's corrupt relationship with the former pro-Russian YANUKOVYCH regime in Ukraine and TRUMP foreign policy advisor, Carter PAGE's secret meetings in Moscow with senior regime figures in July 2016. According to the Kremlin advisor, these meeting/s were originally scheduled for COHEN in Moscow but shifted to

what was considered an operationally "soft" EU country when it was judged too compromising for him to travel to the Russian capital.

20 October 2016

COMPANY INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2016/105

RUSSIA/UKRAINE: THE DEMISE OF TRUMP'S CAMPAIGN MANAGER PAUL MANAFORT

Summary

- Ex-Ukrainian President YANUKOVYCH confides directly to PUTIN that he authorised kick-back payments to MANAFORT, as alleged in western media. Assures Russian President however there is no documentary evidence/trail
- PUTIN and Russian leadership remain worried however and sceptical that YANUKOVYCH has fully covered the traces of these payments to TRUMP's former campaign manager
- Close associate of TRUMP explains reasoning behind MANAFORT's recent resignation. Ukraine revelations played part but others wanted MANAFORT out for various reasons, especially LEWANDOWSKI who remains influential

Detail

1. Speaking in late August 2016, in the immediate aftermath of Paul MANAFORT's resignation as campaign manager for US Republican presidential candidate Donald TRUMP, a well-placed Russian figure reported on a recent meeting between President PUTIN and ex-President YANUKOVYCH of Ukraine. This had been held in secret on 15 August near Volgograd, Russia and the western media revelations about MANAFORT and Ukraine had featured prominently on the agenda. YANUKOVYCH had confided in PUTIN that he did authorise and order substantial kick-back payments to MANAFORT as alleged but sought to reassure him that there was no documentary trail left behind which could provide clear evidence of this.
2. Given YANUKOVYCH's (unimpressive) record in covering up his own corrupt tracks in the past, PUTIN and others in the Russian leadership were sceptical about the ex-Ukrainian president's reassurances on this as relating to MANAFORT. They therefore still feared the scandal had legs, especially as MANAFORT had been commercially active in Ukraine right up to the time (in March 2016) when he joined TRUMP's campaign team. For them it therefore remained a point of potential political vulnerability and embarrassment.

3. Speaking separately, also in late August 2016, an American political figure associated with Donald TRUMP and his campaign outlined the reasons behind MANAFORT's recent demise. S/he said it was true that the Ukraine corruption revelations had played a part in this but also, several senior players close to TRUMP had wanted MANAFORT out, primarily to loosen his control on strategy and policy formulation. Of particular importance in this regard was MANAFORT's predecessor as campaign manager, Corey LEWANDOWSKI, who hated MANAFORT personally and remained close to TRUMP with whom he discussed the presidential campaign on a regular basis.

22 August 2016

COMPANY INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2016/111

RUSSIA/US: KREMLIN FALLOUT FROM MEDIA EXPOSURE OF MOSCOW'S INTERFERENCE IN THE US PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

Summary

- Kremlin orders senior staff to remain silent in media and private on allegations of Russian interference in US presidential campaign
- Senior figure however confirms gist of allegations and reports IVANOV sacked as Head of Administration on account of giving PUTIN poor advice on issue. VAINO selected as his replacement partly because he was not involved in pro-TRUMP, anti-CLINTON operation/s
- Russians do have further 'kompromat' on CLINTON (e-mails) and considering disseminating it after Duma (legislative elections) in late September. Presidential spokesman PESKOV continues to lead on this
- However, equally important is Kremlin objective to shift policy consensus favourably to Russia in US post-OBAMA whoever wins. Both presidential candidates' opposition to TPP and TTIP viewed as a result in this respect
- Senior Russian diplomat withdrawn from Washington embassy on account of potential exposure in US presidential election operation/s

Detail

1. Speaking in confidence to a trusted compatriot in mid-September 2016, a senior member of the Russian Presidential Administration (PA) commented on the political fallout from recent western media revelations about Moscow's intervention, in favour of Donald TRUMP and against Hillary CLINTON, in the US presidential election. The PA official reported that the issue had become incredibly sensitive and that President PUTIN had issued direct orders that Kremlin and government insiders should not discuss it in public or even in private.
2. Despite this, the PA official confirmed, from direct knowledge, that the gist of the allegations was true. PUTIN had been receiving conflicting advice on interfering from three separate and expert groups. On one side had been the Russian ambassador to the US, Sergei KISLYAK, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with an independent and informal network run by presidential foreign policy advisor, Yuri USHAKOV

(KISLYAK's predecessor in Washington) who had urged caution and the potential negative impact on Russia from the operation/s. On the other side was former PA Head, Sergei IVANOV, backed by Russian Foreign Intelligence (SVR), who had advised PUTIN that the pro-TRUMP, anti-CLINTON operation/s would be both effective and plausibly deniable with little blowback. The first group/s had been proven right and this had been the catalyst in PUTIN's decision to sack IVANOV (unexpectedly) as PA Head in August. His successor, Anton VAINO, had been selected for the job partly because he had not been involved in the US presidential election operation/s.

3. Continuing on this theme, the senior PA official said the situation now was that the Kremlin had further 'kompromat' on candidate CLINTON and had been considering releasing this via "plausibly deniable" channels after the Duma (legislative) elections were out of the way in mid-September. There was however a growing train of thought and associated lobby, arguing that the Russians could still make candidate CLINTON look "weak and stupid" by provoking her into railing against PUTIN and Russia without the need to release more of her e-mails. Presidential Spokesman, Dmitriy PESKOV remained a key figure in the operation, although any final decision on dissemination of further material would be taken by PUTIN himself.
4. The senior PA official also reported that a growing element in Moscow's intervention in the US presidential election campaign was the objective of shifting the US political consensus in Russia's perceived interests regardless of who won. It basically comprised of pushing candidate CLINTON away from President OBAMA's policies. The best example of this was that both candidates now openly opposed the draft trade agreements, TPP and TTIP, which were assessed by Moscow as detrimental to Russian interests. Other issues where the Kremlin was looking to shift the US policy consensus were Ukraine and Syria. Overall however, the presidential election was considered still to be too close to call.
5. Finally, speaking separately to the same compatriot, a senior Russian MFA official reported that as a prophylactic measure, a leading Russian diplomat, Mikhail KULAGIN, had been withdrawn from Washington at short notice because Moscow feared his heavy involvement in the US presidential election operation, including the so-called veterans' pensions ruse (reported previously), would be exposed in the media there. His replacement, Andrei BONDAREV however was clean in this regard.

Company Comment

The substance of what was reported by the senior Russian PA official in paras 1 and 2 above, including the reasons for Sergei IVANOV's dismissal, was corroborated independently by a former top level Russian intelligence officer and Kremlin insider, also in mid-September.

14 September 2016

COMPANY INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2016/112

RUSSIA/US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: KREMLIN-ALPHA GROUP CO-OPERATION

Summary

- Top level Russian official confirms current closeness of Alpha Group-PUTIN relationship. Significant favours continue to be done in both directions and FRIDMAN and AVEN still giving informal advice to PUTIN, especially on the US
- Key intermediary in PUTIN-Alpha relationship identified as Oleg GOVORUN, currently Head of a Presidential Administration department but throughout the 1990s, the Alpha executive who delivered illicit cash directly to PUTIN
- PUTIN personally unbothered about Alpha's current lack of investment in Russia but under pressure from colleagues over this and able to exploit it as lever over Alpha interlocutors

Detail

1. Speaking to a trusted compatriot in mid-September 2016, a top level Russian government official commented on the history and current state of relations between President PUTIN and the Alpha Group of businesses led by oligarchs Mikhail FRIDMAN, Petr AVEN and German KHAN. The Russian government figure reported that although they had had their ups and downs, the leading figures in Alpha currently were on very good terms with PUTIN. Significant favours continued to be done in both directions, primarily political ones for PUTIN and business/legal ones for Alpha. Also, FRIDMAN and AVEN continued to give informal advice to PUTIN on foreign policy, and especially about the US where he distrusted advice being given to him by officials.
2. Although FRIDMAN recently had met directly with PUTIN in Russia, much of the dialogue and business between them was mediated through a senior Presidential Administration official, Oleg GOVORUN, who currently headed the department therein responsible for Social Co-operation With the CIS. GOVORUN was trusted by PUTIN and recently had accompanied him to Uzbekistan to pay respects at the tomb of former president KARIMOV. However according to the top level Russian government official, during the 1990s GOVORUN had been Head of Government Relations at Alpha Group and in reality, the "driver" and "bag carrier"

used by FRIDMAN and AVEN to deliver large amounts of illicit cash to the Russian president, at that time deputy Mayor of St Petersburg. Given that and the continuing sensitivity of the PUTIN-Alpha relationship, and need for plausible deniability, much of the contact between them was now indirect and entrusted to the relatively low profile GOVORUN.

3. The top level Russian government official described the PUTIN-Alpha relationship as both carrot and stick. Alpha held 'kompromat' on PUTIN and his corrupt business activities from the 1990s whilst although not personally overly bothered by Alpha's failure to reinvest the proceeds of its TNK oil company sale into the Russian economy since, the Russian president was able to use pressure on this count from senior Kremlin colleagues as a lever on FRIDMAN and AVEN to make them do his political bidding.

14 September 2016

COMPANY INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2016/113

RUSSIA/US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION- REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE TRUMP'S PRIOR ACTIVITIES IN ST PETERSBURG

Summary

- Two knowledgeable St Petersburg sources claim Republican candidate TRUMP has paid bribes and engaged in sexual activities there but key witnesses silenced and evidence hard to obtain
- Both believe Azeri business associate of TRUMP, Araz AGALAROV will know the details

Detail

1. Speaking to a trusted compatriot in September 2016, two well-placed sources based in St Petersburg, one in the political/business elite and the other involved in the local services and tourist industry, commented on Republican US presidential candidate Donald TRUMP's prior activities in the city.
2. Both knew TRUMP had visited St Petersburg on several occasions in the past and had been interested in doing business deals there involving real estate. The local business/political elite figure reported that TRUMP had paid bribes there to further his interests but very discreetly and only through affiliated companies, making it very hard to prove. The local services industry source reported that TRUMP had participated in sex parties in the city too, but that all direct witnesses to this recently had been "silenced" i.e. bribed or coerced to disappear.
3. The two St Petersburg figures cited believed an Azeri business figure, Araz AGALAROV (with offices in Baku and London) had been closely involved with TRUMP in Russia and would know most of the details of what the Republican presidential candidate had got up to there.

14 September 2016

RUSSIA: KREMLIN ASSESSMENT OF TRUMP AND RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE IN US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Summary

- Buyer's remorse sets in with Kremlin over TRUMP support operation in US presidential election. Russian leadership disappointed that leaked e-mails on CLINTON have not had greater impact in campaign
- Russians have injected further anti-CLINTON material into the 'plausibly deniable' leaks pipeline which will continue to surface, but best material already in public domain
- PUTIN angry with senior officials who "overpromised" on TRUMP and further heads likely to roll as result. Foreign Minister LAVROV may be next
- TRUMP supported by Kremlin because seen as divisive, anti-establishment candidate who would shake up current international status quo in Russia's favor. Lead on TRUMP operation moved from Foreign Ministry to FSB and then to presidential administration where it now sits

Detail

1. Speaking separately in confidence to a trusted compatriot in early October 2016, a senior Russian leadership figure and a Foreign Ministry official reported on recent developments concerning the Kremlin's operation to support Republican candidate Donald TRUMP in the US presidential election. The senior leadership figure said that a degree of buyer's remorse was setting in among Russian leaders concerning TRUMP. PUTIN and his colleagues were surprised and disappointed that leaks of Democratic candidate, Hillary CLINTON's hacked e-mails had not had greater impact on the campaign.
2. Continuing on this theme, the senior leadership figure commented that a stream of further hacked CLINTON material already had been injected by the Kremlin into compliant western media outlets like Wikileaks, which remained at least "plausibly deniable", so the stream of these would continue through October and up to the election. However s/he understood that the best material the Russians had already was out and there were no real game-changers to come.
3. The Russian Foreign Ministry official, who had direct access to the TRUMP support operation, reported that PUTIN was angry at his subordinate's "over-promising" on the Republican presidential candidate, both in terms of his chances and reliability and being able to cover and/or contain the US backlash over Kremlin interference. More heads therefore were likely to roll, with the MFA the easiest target. Ironically, despite his consistent urging of caution on the issue, Foreign Minister LAVROV could be the next one to go.
4. Asked to explain why PUTIN and the Kremlin had launched such an aggressive TRUMP support operation in the first place, the MFA official said that Russia needed to upset the liberal international status quo, including on Ukraine-related sanctions, which was seriously

disadvantaging the country. TRUMP was viewed as divisive in disrupting the whole US political system; anti-Establishment; and a pragmatist with whom they could do business. As the TRUMP support operation had gained momentum, control of it had passed from the MFA to the FSB and then into the presidential administration where it remained, a reflection of its growing significance over time. There was still a view in the Kremlin that TRUMP would continue as a (divisive) political force even if he lost the presidency and may run for and be elected to another public office.

12 October 2016

COMPANY INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2016/134

RUSSIA/US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: FURTHER DETAILS OF KREMLIN LIAISON WITH TRUMP CAMPAIGN

Summary

- Close associate of SECHIN confirms his secret meeting in Moscow with Carter PAGE in July
- Substance included offer of large stake in Rosneft in return for lifting sanctions on Russia. PAGE confirms this is TRUMP's intention
- SECHIN continued to think TRUMP could win presidency up to 17 October. Now looking to reorientate his engagement with the US
- Kremlin insider highlights importance of TRUMP's lawyer, Michael COHEN in covert relationship with Russia. COHEN's wife is of Russian descent and her father a leading property developer in Moscow

Detail

1. Speaking to a trusted compatriot in mid October 2016, a close associate of Rosneft President and PUTIN ally Igor' SECHIN elaborated on the reported secret meeting between the latter and Carter PAGE, of US Republican presidential candidate's foreign policy team, in Moscow in July 2016. The secret meeting had been confirmed to him/her by a senior member of SECHIN's staff, in addition to by the Rosneft President himself. It took place on either 7 or 8 July, the same day or the one after Carter PAGE made a public speech to the Higher Economic School in Moscow.
2. In terms of the substance of their discussion, SECHIN's associate said that the Rosneft President was so keen to lift personal and corporate western sanctions imposed on the company, that he offered PAGE/TRUMP's associates the brokerage of up to a 19 per cent (privatised) stake in Rosneft in return. PAGE had expressed interest and confirmed that were TRUMP elected US president, then sanctions on Russia would be lifted.
3. According to SECHIN's close associate, the Rosneft President had continued to believe that TRUMP could win the US presidency right up to 17 October, when he assessed this was no longer possible. SECHIN was keen to re-adapt accordingly and put feelers out to other business and political contacts in the US instead.
4. Speaking separately to the same compatriot in mid-October 2016, a Kremlin insider with direct access to the leadership confirmed that a key role in the secret TRUMP campaign/Kremlin relationship was being played by the Republican candidate's personal lawyer Michael COHEN. [REDACTED]

Source Comment

5. SECHIN's associate opined that although PAGE had not stated it explicitly to SECHIN, he had clearly implied that in terms of his comment on TRUMP's intention to lift Russian sanctions if elected president, he was speaking with the Republican candidate's authority.

Company Comment

6. 

18 October 2016

COMPANY INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2016/135

RUSSIA/US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF TRUMP LAWYER, COHEN IN CAMPAIGN'S SECRET LIAISON WITH THE KREMLIN

Summary

- Kremlin insider outlines important role played by TRUMP's lawyer COHEN in secret liaison with Russian leadership
- COHEN engaged with Russians in trying to cover up scandal of MANAFORT and exposure of PAGE and meets Kremlin officials secretly in the EU in August in pursuit of this goal
- These secret contacts continue but are now farmed out to trusted agents in Kremlin-linked institutes so as to remain "plausibly deniable" for Russian regime
- Further confirmation that sacking of IVANOV and appointments of VAINO and KIRIYENKO linked to need to cover up Kremlin's TRUMP support operation

Detail

1. Speaking in confidence to a longstanding compatriot friend in mid-October 2016, a Kremlin insider highlighted the importance of Republican presidential candidate Donald TRUMP's lawyer, Michael COHEN, in the ongoing secret liaison relationship between the New York tycoon's campaign and the Russian leadership. COHEN's role had grown following the departure of Paul MANNAFORT as TRUMP's campaign manager in August 2016. Prior to that MANNAFORT had led for the TRUMP side.
2. According to the Kremlin insider, COHEN now was heavily engaged in a cover up and damage limitation operation in the attempt to prevent the full details of TRUMP's relationship with Russia being exposed. In pursuit of this aim, COHEN had met secretly with several Russian Presidential Administration (PA) Legal Department officials in an EU country in August 2016. The immediate issues had been to contain further scandals involving MANNAFORT's commercial and political role in Russia/Ukraine and to limit the damage arising from exposure of former TRUMP foreign policy advisor, Carter PAGE's secret meetings with Russian leadership figures in Moscow the previous month. The

overall objective had been to "to sweep it all under the carpet and make sure no connections could be fully established or proven"

3. Things had become even "hotter" since August on the TRUMP-Russia track. According to the Kremlin insider, this had meant that direct contact between the TRUMP team and Russia had been farmed out by the Kremlin to trusted agents of influence working in pro-government policy institutes like that of Law and Comparative Jurisprudence. COHEN however continued to lead for the TRUMP team.
4. Referring back to the (surprise) sacking of Sergei IVANOV as Head of PA in August 2016, his replacement by Anton VAINO and the appointment of former Russian premier Sergei KIRIYENKO to another senior position in the PA, the Kremlin insider repeated that this had been directly connected to the TRUMP support operation and the need to cover up now that it was being exposed by the USG and in the western media.

Company Comment

The Kremlin insider was unsure of the identities of the PA officials with whom COHEN met secretly in August, or the exact date/s and locations of the meeting/s. There were significant internal security barriers being erected in the PA as the TRUMP issue became more controversial and damaging. However s/he continued to try to obtain these.

19 October 2016

COMPANY INTELLIGENCE REPORT 2016/166

US/RUSSIA: FURTHER DETAILS OF SECRET DIALOGUE BETWEEN TRUMP CAMPAIGN TEAM, KREMLIN AND ASSOCIATED HACKERS IN PRAGUE

Summary

- TRUMP's representative COHEN accompanied to Prague in August/September 2016 by 3 colleagues for secret discussions with Kremlin representatives and associated operators/hackers
- Agenda included how to process deniable cash payments to operatives; contingency plans for covering up operations; and action in event of a CLINTON election victory
- Some further details of Russian representatives/operatives involved; Romanian hackers employed; and use of Bulgaria as bolt hole to "lie low"
- Anti-CLINTON hackers and other operatives paid by both TRUMP team and Kremlin, but with ultimate loyalty to Head of PA, IVANOV and his successor/s

Detail

1. We reported previously (2016/135 and /136) on secret meeting/s held in Prague, Czech Republic in August 2016 between then Republican presidential candidate Donald TRUMP's representative, Michael COHEN and his interlocutors from the Kremlin working under cover of Russian 'NGO' Rossotrudnichestvo.
2. [REDACTED] provided further details of these meeting/s and associated anti-CLINTON/Democratic Party operations. COHEN had been accompanied to Prague by 3 colleagues and the timing of the visit was either in the last week of August or the first week of September. One of their main Russian interlocutors was Oleg SOLODUKHIN operating under Rossotrudnichestvo cover. According to [REDACTED], the agenda comprised questions on how deniable cash payments were to be made to hackers who had worked in Europe under Kremlin direction against the CLINTON campaign and various contingencies for covering up these operations and Moscow's secret liaison with the TRUMP team more generally.

3. [REDACTED] reported that over the period March-September 2016 a company called XBT/Webzilla and its affiliates had been using botnets and porn traffic to transmit viruses, plant bugs, steal data and conduct "altering operations" against the Democratic Party leadership. Entities linked to one Aleksei GUBAROV were involved and he and another hacking expert, both recruited under duress by the FSB, Seva KAPSUGOVICH, were significant players in this operation. In Prague, COHEN agreed contingency plans for various scenarios to protect the operation, but in particular what was to be done in the event that Hillary CLINTON won the presidency. It was important in this event that all cash payments owed were made quickly and discreetly and that cyber and other operators were stood down/able to go effectively to ground to cover their traces. (We reported earlier that the involvement of political operatives Paul MANAFORT and Carter PAGE in the secret TRUMP-Kremlin liaison had been exposed in the media in the run-up to Prague and that damage limitation of these also was discussed by COHEN with the Kremlin representatives).
4. In terms of practical measures to be taken, it was agreed by the two sides in Prague to stand down various "Romanian hackers" (presumably based in their homeland or neighbouring eastern Europe) and that other operatives should head for a bolt-hole in Plovdiv, Bulgaria where they should "lay low". On payments, IVANOV's associate said that the operatives involved had been paid by both TRUMP's team and the Kremlin, though their orders and ultimate loyalty lay with IVANOV, as Head of the PA and thus ultimately responsible for the operation, and his designated successor/s after he was dismissed by president PUTIN in connection with the anti-CLINTON operation in mid August.

13 December 2016

From: Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)
Subject: NYT
To: McCabe, Andrew G. (DO) (FBI); Bowdich, David L. (DO) (FBI); James B. Comey; Steinbach, Michael B. (DO) (FBI); Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI); Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI); Rybicki, James E. (DO) (FBI); Burton, Dawn (DO) (FBI)
Sent: January 20, 2017 3:47 PM (UTC-05:00)

b6 -1
b7C -1

Some internal NYT debate over its own reporting...

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/20/public-editor/trump-russia-fbi-liz-spayd-public-editor.html>

Public Editor

Trump, Russia, and the News Story That Wasn't

Liz Spayd

THE PUBLIC EDITOR JAN. 20, 2017



LATE fall was a frantic period for New York Times reporters covering the country's secretive national security apparatus. Working sources at the F.B.I., the C.I.A., Capitol Hill and various intelligence agencies, the team chased several bizarre but provocative leads that, if true, could upend the presidential race. The most serious question raised by the material was this: Did a covert connection exist between Donald Trump and Russian officials trying to influence an American election? One vein of reporting centered on a possible channel of communication between Trump's organization and a Russian bank with ties to Vladimir Putin. Another source was offering The Times salacious material describing an odd cross-continental dance between Trump and Moscow. The most damning claim was that Trump was aware of Russia's efforts to hack Democratic computers, an allegation with implications of treason. Reporters Eric Lichtblau and Steven Lee Myers led the effort, aided by others.

Conversations over what to publish were prolonged and lively, involving Washington and New York, and often including

Obtained by UndeadFOIA

the executive editor, Dean Baquet. If the allegations were true, it was a huge story. If false, they could damage The Times's reputation. With doubts about the material and with the F.B.I. discouraging publication, editors decided to hold their fire.

But was that the right decision? Was there a way to write about some of these allegations using sound

I have spoken privately with several journalists involved in the reporting last fall, and I believe a strong case can be made that The Times was too timid in its decisions not to publish the material it had.

I appreciate the majority view that there wasn't enough proof of a link between Trump and the Kremlin to write a hard-hitting story. But The Times knew several critical facts: the F.B.I. had a significant and sophisticated investigation underway on Trump, possibly including FISA warrants. (Some news outlets now report that the F.B.I. did indeed have such warrants, an indication of probable cause.) Investigators had identified a mysterious communication channel.

At one point, the F.B.I. was so serious about its investigation into the server that it asked The Times to delay publication. Meanwhile, reporters had met with a former British intelligence officer who was building the dossier. While his findings were difficult to confirm, Times reporting bore out that he was respected in his craft. And of his material that was checkable, no significant red flags emerged. What's more, said one journalist frustrated with the process, a covert link seemed like a plausible explanation for the strange bromance between Trump and Putin.

There were disagreements about whether to hold back. There was even an actual draft of a story. But it never saw daylight. The deciding vote was Baquet's, who was adamant, then and now, that they made the right call.

"We heard about the back-channel communications between the Russians and Trump," he said. "We reported it, and found no evidence that it was true. We wrote everything we knew — and we wrote a lot. Anybody that thinks we sat on stuff is outrageous. It's just false."

I don't believe anyone suppressed information for ignoble reasons, and indeed The Times produced strong work on former campaign chairman Paul Manafort. But the idea that you only publish once every piece of information is in and fully vetted is a false construct.

If you know the F.B.I. is investigating, say, a presidential candidate, using significant resources and with explosive consequences, that should be enough to write. Not a "gotcha" story that asserts unsubstantiated facts. But a piece that describes the nature of the investigations, the unexplained but damning leads, with emphasis on what is known and what isn't.

Running every detail of the dossier, as BuzzFeed did, would have been irresponsible. Writing about a significant investigation would not. Weeks after The Times had the goods, Franklin Foer of Slate and David Corn of Mother Jones each took a turn at such pre-election articles. Their stories may not have been precisely what The Times would have done, but they offered a model.

If The Times didn't write about ongoing investigations, it wouldn't have produced the excellent scoop on Trump associates and Russia that broke Thursday night. Nor would it have so relentlessly documented the F.B.I.'s pursuit of Hillary Clinton's emails until all facts were resolved. That investigation was fair game, and so was Trump's.

A wave of readers over the past week have challenged The Times's decision to sit on its reporting about the dossier. Among them was Michael Russo of Brooklyn, who had this to say:

I can appreciate that journalistic diligence requires your paper to describe these memos as "unsubstantiated." But the "unsubstantiated" allegations described in this article have been circulating for months. While your editors made a value judgment about the veracity of these claims, American intelligence agencies apparently took the memos seriously enough to open their own investigations. How is this not newsworthy in its own right?

There is an unsettling theme that runs through The Times's publishing decisions. In each instance, it was the actions of government officials that triggered newsroom decisions — not additional reporting or insight that journalists gained. On the computer server, once the F.B.I. signaled it had grown wary of its importance — without explaining why — the paper backed off. Weeks later, the Senate Democratic leader, Harry Reid, publicly admonished the F.B.I. for being secretive about its probe of Trump. That gave The Times cover to write what it knew about the bureau's investigation into the bank server.

It was the same pattern on the dossier. Only after learning from CNN that Trump and President Obama had been briefed on the document did The Times publish what it had known for months. Its confidence in the material had not changed, nor did its editors know whether the top level briefing meant the government believed the information was true. But the briefing became justifiable cause to publish.

In this cat-and-mouse atmosphere between a manipulative government and a reluctant press, the government won. After-action insights are easier than in-the-moment decisions. Back then, the media still thought Trump was a weak challenger to Clinton, a mind-set that might have made taking the risk of publishing explosive allegations all the more fraught.

But it's hard not to wonder what impact such information might have had on voters still evaluating the candidates, an issue I chided The Times for not pursuing enough in an earlier column. Would more sources have come forward? Would we already know the essential facts?

If the new president was in fact colluding with a foreign adversary, journalists and investigators should feel enormous

Obtained by UndeadFOIA

pressure to conclusively establish that fact. If it is not true, both Trump and the country deserve to have this issue put to rest.

Follow the public editor on Twitter [@spaydl](https://twitter.com/spaydl) and reach her by email at public@nytimes.com.

From: Rybicki, James E. (DO) (FBI)
Subject: Just saw this on CNN
To: McCabe, Andrew G. (DO) (FBI); Ghattas, Carl (CTD) (FBI); [REDACTED]
(DO) (FBI)
Sent: February 23, 2017 4:21 PM (UTC-05:00)
White House effort to justify travel ban causes growing concern for some intelligence officials

b6 -1
b7C -1

By Jake Tapper and Pamela Brown, CNN

• Updated 4:04 PM ET, Thu February 23, 2017

Washington (CNN) — President Donald Trump has assigned the Department of Homeland Security, working with the Justice Department, to help build the legal case for its temporary travel ban on individuals from seven countries, a senior White House official tells CNN.

Other Trump administration sources tell CNN that this is an assignment that has caused concern among some administration intelligence officials, who see the White House charge as the politicization of intelligence -- the notion of a conclusion in search of evidence to support it after being blocked by the courts. Still others in the intelligence community disagree with the conclusion and are finding their work disparaged by their own department.

"DHS and DOJ are working on an intelligence report that will demonstrate that the security threat for these seven countries is substantial and that these seven countries have all been exporters of terrorism into the United States," the senior White House official told CNN. "The situation has gotten more dangerous in recent years, and more broadly, the refugee program has been a major incubator for terrorism."

The report was requested in light of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals' conclusion that the Trump administration "has pointed to no evidence that any alien from any of the countries named in the order has perpetrated a terrorist attack in the United States." The seven countries are Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

The senior White House official said the desire to bolster the legal and public case that these seven countries pose a threat is a work in progress and as of now, it's not clear if DHS and DOJ will offer separate reports or a joint report.

One of the ways the White House hopes to make its case is by using a more expansive definition of terrorist activity than has been used by other government agencies in the past. The senior White House official said he expects the report about the threat from individuals the seven countries to include not just those terrorist attacks that have been carried out causing loss of innocent American life, but also those that have resulted in injuries, as well as investigations into and convictions for the crimes of a host of terrorism-related actions, including attempting to join or provide support for a terrorist organization.

The White House did not offer an on-the-record comment for this story despite numerous requests.

Dissension and concern

The White House expectation of what the report will show has some intelligence officials within the administration taking issue with this intelligence review, sources told CNN.

First, some intelligence officials disagree with the conclusion that immigration from these countries should be temporarily banned in the name of making the US safer. CNN has learned that the Department of

Homeland Security's in-house intelligence agency, the Office of Intelligence and Analysis -- called I&A within the department -- offered a report that is at odds with the Trump administration's view that blocking immigration from these seven countries strategically makes sense.

It's not clear if this was the conclusion of the I&A report but many DHS officials have said they do not think nationality is the best indicator of potential terrorist inclinations.

DHS press secretary Gillian Christensen confirmed CNN's report but dismissed it.

"While DHS was asked to draft a comprehensive report on this issue, the document you're referencing was commentary from a single intelligence source versus an official, robust document with thorough interagency vetting," she said.

A Department of Homeland Security source who asked for anonymity since he was not authorized to speak on the record said the report from the I&A officials did not meet the standards of the agency since it relied upon open source material and did not utilize necessary data from the intelligence community, specifically the FBI.

Others in DHS disagree with that assessment of the I&A report and a senior official in the Department of Homeland Security told CNN that some DHS officials are concerned that the new I&A director -- Acting Undersecretary for Intelligence David Glawe -- may be politicizing intelligence. One source familiar with the department told CNN that Glawe came into I&A "like a bull in a china shop."

The seven countries were originally designated by DHS in the Obama administration for tighter immigration scrutiny -- removing them from the visa waiver program -- but not for a temporary suspension of immigration, as the Trump administration has attempted.

A second issue for many in the intelligence community is the notion of the Trump White House seeking an intelligence report to fit the policy instead of the other way around, sources tell CNN.

Trump's travel ban wouldn't have stopped these deadly terrorists

Related Article: Trump's travel ban wouldn't have stopped these deadly terrorists

A senior government official told CNN that the normal procedure would be for the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to be tasked with creating such an intelligence report, working with all relevant agencies and providing dissenting views. Theoretically, this would be done before the policy was formulated.

The senior White House official told CNN that it's possible that the National Counterterrorism Center, via the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and perhaps the National Security Council might also provide reports on the same subject.

A senior government official told CNN that the National Counterterrorism Center, via the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, has already been tasked with such a report, separately from DHS and DOJ. This has prompted some in government to wonder whether the White House is shopping around among agencies for the report that best bolsters their policy and legal support for it.

Other intelligence officials told CNN that such discussions among agencies about differing interpretations of the existing intelligence are not unusual and do not necessarily reflect an effort to "shop around" for intelligence to support a particular policy.

White House to make its case

The White House is determined to prove that the Ninth Circuit argument is wrong, as are Democrats and those in the media, that terror attacks do not predominantly originate from the seven countries targeted by Trump's order.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler said on CNN late last month that "the various people who have, in fact, committed terrorist acts in this country, from 9/11 on, none of them came from any of the seven countries that are the subject of the President's executive order."

The senior White House official told CNN that the Ninth Circuit's language that no one from those seven countries has "perpetrated a terrorist attack" or Nadler's comment that none had "committed terrorist acts" is false.

Ohio State University attack investigation: FBI asks public for help

Related Article: Ohio State University attack: FBI asks public for help

"It's using the most narrow definition of the term you can use," the official said -- referring only to those who had successfully killed an innocent civilian. That definition does not include those who wounded Americans, or those who plotted but failed in their attacks, or those who tried to join or provide material support to a terrorist group. Information will soon be presented to the public that makes this stronger case using the broader definition.

A case in point: Somali-born Abdul Razak Ali Artan attempted to run over and stab 13 innocent people at Ohio State University last November. He and his family left Somalia in 2007 and moved to Pakistan, arriving in the US in 2014. He was a legal permanent resident. His attack would not count using the more narrow definition.

"In most cases, the American people don't hear about these cases," the senior White House official said, "but these cases have required thousands of man-hours by law enforcement in any number of plots to commit terrorism against this country. The threat is very jarring."

The White House official said the Obama administration tried to downplay the threat while the Trump administration believes in a culture of "very robust disclosure."

CNN's Jim Sciutto contributed to this report

Obtained by UndeadFOIA

From: Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)
Subject: Expected WP story
To: McCabe, Andrew G. (DO) (FBI); Bowdich, David L. (DO) (FBI); Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI); Rybicki, James E. (DO) (FBI); Ghattas, Carl (CTD) (FBI)
Sent: February 24, 2017 7:49 PM (UTC-05:00)
All:

The Washington Post is prepared to write a story as early as this weekend that will discuss the so-called "Trump dossier" and how it was handled. The Washington Post has confirmed through a number of sources that a former MI-6 intelligence officer prepared the alleged dossier in 2016 that contained information about then-presidential candidate Trump, his associates and Russia. The story draws upon non-government sources in describing how the FBI and Christopher Steele, known to us for his work in the FIFA investigation, discussed payment for his services including the dossier. It will say that the money has never been paid. It will make clear he worked for opponents of President Trump and had provided credible information during the FIFA investigation. It will also discuss the intelligence community's ability to corroborate some aspects of the dossier but not others. It will include a quote from former DNI Clapper that was released at the time the IC briefed President-elect Trump in NYC.

Importantly, it will not include the FBI agent's name who received the dossier nor the location of the where agent is located or where the meeting took place. It will state that FBI declined to comment for the story.

A second story will detail an individual named Sergey Milian as a main source for some of the information included in the dossier. It will discuss his background and credibility. It will state that he was associated with an organization with ties to Russia that had been investigated by the FBI. The association with this organization will suggest that he did have connections to Russia. At the same time, it will quote associates and acquaintances of Milian that will raise doubts about his credibility.

M.

Obtained by UndeadFOIA

From: [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)
Subject: Fwd: Grassley Examines Potential Conflicts in Top FBI Official's Role in Russia Collusion Probe
To: McCabe, Andrew G. (DO) (FBI)
Sent: March 28, 2017 5:03 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1
b7C -1

I have not seen this from OCA yet.

----- Original message -----

From: "Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)" <[redacted]>
Date: 03/28/2017 4:56 PM (GMT-05:00)
To: [redacted] (OGC) (FBI) <[redacted]>
Subject: FW: Grassley Examines Potential Conflicts in Top FBI Official's Role in Russia Collusion Probe

b6 -1
b7C -1
b7E -3

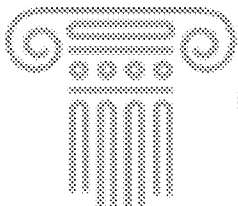
From: [redacted] (DO) (FBI)
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2017 4:47 PM
To: Beers, Elizabeth R. (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>
Cc: Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>; [redacted] (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>
Subject: FW: Grassley Examines Potential Conflicts in Top FBI Official's Role in Russia Collusion Probe

b6 -1
b7C -1
b7E -3

Grassley apparently has sent us a letter regarding the DD.

From: "Chairman Grassley (Judiciary-Rep)" <[redacted]>
Date: March 28, 2017 at 4:15:15 PM EDT
To: "Foy, Taylor (Judiciary-Rep)" <[redacted]>, "Levine, Beth (Judiciary-Rep)" <[redacted]>
Subject: Grassley Examines Potential Conflicts in Top FBI Official's Role in Russia Collusion Probe

b6 -3
b7C -3



COMMITTEE *on the* **JUDICIARY**
CHAIRMAN CHUCK GRASSLEY WWW.JUDICIARY.SENATE.GOV

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, March 28, 2017

Grassley Examines Potential Conflicts in Top FBI Official's Role in

FBI(23-CV-30)-697

Obtained by UndeadFOIA

Russia Collusion Probe

Deputy Director under review for political conflict in Clinton email case also in position to oversee inquiry into Trump campaign associates

WASHINGTON – Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley today called on the FBI to detail the involvement in the probe of alleged collusion between Trump campaign associates and Russia of one senior official who is under investigation for political conflicts in the Clinton email matter. Deputy Director Andrew McCabe helped oversee the FBI’s investigation in the Clinton case even though his wife received nearly \$700,000 from close Clinton associates during her campaign for Virginia state senate. As the FBI’s second-in-command, McCabe could have significant influence over the ongoing investigation into allegations of collusion between Trump campaign associates and Russia as well.

In January, the Justice Department Inspector General announced it is reviewing whether McCabe should have recused himself from overseeing the Clinton matter following reports that his wife received campaign contributions from longtime Clinton associate, Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, and his political organizations. The contributions occurred while the investigation was underway. In a letter today to FBI Director James Comey, Grassley is seeking details on McCabe’s involvement in the alleged collusion matter, whether it, too, constitutes an appearance of conflict, and whether he should be recused from any involvement in the collusion investigation as well.

“These circumstances undermine public confidence in the FBI’s impartiality ... FBI’s senior leadership should never have allowed that appearance of a conflict to undermine the Bureau’s important work. ... If Mr. McCabe failed to avoid the appearance of a partisan conflict of interest in favor of Mrs. Clinton during the presidential election, then any participation in this inquiry creates the exact same appearance of a partisan conflict of interest against Mr. Trump,” Grassley said in the letter.

Grassley raised questions about potential use of federal authorities for political gain following reports that the FBI sought to pay the author of the unsubstantiated and politically funded opposition research dossier on then-candidate Donald Trump. Grassley is now seeking details on McCabe’s involvement in the Trump campaign associates probe, including whether he was a part of any decision to continue funding the opposition research or whether he based investigative actions, such as surveillance, on information in the unsubstantiated dossier.

Text of Grassley’s letter to Comey follows:

March 28, 2017

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable James B. Comey, Jr.

Director

Federal Bureau of Investigation

935 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20535

Dear Director Comey:

At your speech last Thursday at the University of Texas, you referenced former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's short letter to Attorney General Robert Kennedy, which sought authorization for FBI surveillance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. without any proper basis for doing so. You mentioned that you keep this letter on your desk, and place FISA applications awaiting your review on top of it, as a reminder. You cited this to emphasize the importance of oversight over the FBI, even over well-meaning FBI officials, to ensure the propriety of the FBI's actions. You are right to call attention to the importance of such oversight. As Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, it is my constitutional duty to conduct that oversight over the FBI and the Department of Justice.

Pursuant to its authority under the Constitution and the Rules of the Senate, the Committee requires information to determine: (1) the extent to which FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe has been involved in the FBI's investigation of President Trump's associates and Russia; (2) whether that involvement raises the appearance a conflict of interest in light of his wife's ties with Clinton associates; and (3) whether Mr. McCabe has been or should be recused from the investigation.

As you know, Mr. McCabe is under investigation by the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General. That investigation is examining whether the political and financial connections between his wife's Democratic political campaign and Clinton associates warranted his recusal in the FBI's Clinton email investigation. On March 7, 2015, just five days after the *New York Times* broke the story about Secretary Clinton's use of private email for official business, Mr. McCabe met with Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, a longtime, close associate of the Clintons—along with his wife, Dr. McCabe. Mr. McAuliffe recruited Dr. McCabe, who had not previously run for any political office, to be the Democratic candidate for a Virginia state senate seat. Dr. McCabe agreed, and Governor McAuliffe's political action committee subsequently gave nearly \$500,000 to her campaign while the FBI's investigation of Secretary Clinton was ongoing. The Virginia Democratic Party, over which Mr. McAuliffe exerts considerable control, also donated over \$200,000 to Dr. McCabe's campaign. While Mr. McCabe recused himself from public corruption cases in Virginia—presumably including the reportedly ongoing investigation of Mr. McAuliffe regarding illegal campaign contributions—he failed to recuse himself from the Clinton email investigation, despite the appearance of a conflict created by his wife's campaign accepting \$700,000 from a close Clinton associate during the investigation.

You have publicly stated that the people at the FBI “don't give a rip about politics.”¹¹ However, the

Obtained by UndeadFOIA

fact is that the Deputy Director met with Mr. McAuliffe about his wife's run for elected office and she subsequently accepted campaign funding from him. The fact is that the Deputy Director participated in the controversial, high-profile Clinton email investigation even though his wife took money from Mr. McAuliffe. These circumstances undermine public confidence in the FBI's impartiality, and this is one of the reasons that many believe the FBI pulled its punches in the Clinton matter. FBI's senior leadership should never have allowed that appearance of a conflict to undermine the Bureau's important work. The Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General is now investigating that matter, as part of the work it announced on January 12, 2017.

Last week, you publicly testified that in late July of 2016, the FBI began investigating the Russian government's attempts to interfere in the 2016 presidential election, including investigating whether there was any collusion between individuals associated with the Trump campaign and the Russian government. Given the timing of the investigation and his position, it is likely that Mr. McCabe has been involved in that high-profile, politically charged inquiry as well. If Mr. McCabe failed to avoid the appearance of a partisan conflict of interest in favor of Mrs. Clinton during the presidential election, then any participation in this inquiry creates the exact same appearance of a partisan conflict of interest against Mr. Trump. As you testified last week, you believe that if someone had a bias for or against one of them, he would have the opposite bias toward the other: "they're inseparable, right; it's a two person event."

According to public reports, the FBI agreed to pay the author of the unsubstantiated dossier alleging a conspiracy between Trump associates and the Russians. It reportedly agreed to pay the author, Christopher Steele, to continue investigating Mr. Trump. Clinton associates reportedly paid Mr. Steele to create this political opposition research dossier against Mr. Trump. The FBI has failed to publicly reply to my March 6 letter asking about those reports. That leaves serious questions about the FBI's independence from politics unanswered.

Mr. McCabe's appearance of a partisan conflict of interest relating to Clinton associates only magnifies the importance of those questions. That is particularly true if Mr. McCabe was involved in approving or establishing the FBI's reported arrangement with Mr. Steele, or if Mr. McCabe vouched for or otherwise relied on the politically-funded dossier in the course of the investigation. Simply put, the American people should know if the FBI's second-in-command relied on Democrat-funded opposition research to justify an investigation of the Republican presidential campaign. Full disclosure is especially important since he is already under investigation for failing to recuse himself from the Clinton matter due to his partisan Democrat ties.

The Committee requires additional information to fully understand this situation. Please provide the following information and respond to these questions by April 11, 2017:

1. Has Mr. McCabe been involved in any capacity in the investigation of alleged collusion between Mr. Trump's associates and Russia? If so, in what capacity has he been involved? When did this involvement begin?

Obtained by UndeadFOIA

2. Has Mr. McCabe been involved in any requests or approvals for physical surveillance, consensual monitoring, searches, or national security letters relating to the investigation? If so, please provide all related documents.
3. In the course of the investigation, has Mr. McCabe been involved in any requests or approvals relating to the acquisition of the contents of stored communications from electronic communication service providers pursuant to the Electronic Communications Privacy Act? If so, please provide all related documents.
4. Has Mr. McCabe been involved in any FISA warrant applications relating to the investigation? If so, in what capacity? Please provide all related documents.
5. In the course of the investigation, has Mr. McCabe, or anyone under his supervision, made any representations to prosecutors or judges regarding the reliability of information in the FBI's possession as part of seeking judicial authorization for investigative tools? Has he or anyone under his supervision made any such representations about the political opposition research dossier compiled by Mr. Steele and Fusion GPS? If so, please explain and provide copies of all relevant documents.
6. Was Mr. McCabe involved in any FBI interactions with Mr. Steele? If so, please explain.
7. Did Mr. McCabe brief or otherwise communicate with anyone in the Obama administration regarding the investigation? If so, who did he brief, and when? Please provide all related documents.
8. Has Mr. McCabe been authorized by the FBI to speak to the media, whether as an anonymous source or otherwise, regarding the investigation? If so, please provide copies of such authorizations. If he was so authorized, to whom did he speak, and when? If he was not authorized to do so, does the FBI have any indication that he nonetheless spoke to the media?
9. To the best of your knowledge, has anyone within the FBI raised concerns within the Bureau that Mr. McCabe appears to have a conflict of interest in the investigation of Trump associates? If so, who raised such concerns, when did they do so, and how did FBI respond?
10. To the best of your knowledge, has anyone within the FBI filed a complaint with the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General regarding Mr. McCabe's involvement in the investigation?

Obtained by UndeadFOIA

11. Have personnel from the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General spoken with you yet as part of that Office's investigation into Mr. McCabe's alleged conflict of interest in the Clinton investigation? If so, did they also raise concerns as to whether Mr. McCabe's alleged partisan conflict would also apply to the investigation of Mr. Trump's associates?

12. Has anyone at FBI, the Department of Justice, or the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General recommended or requested that Mr. McCabe recuse himself from the investigation of Mr. Trump's associates or from any ongoing investigations of the Clinton Foundation? If so, what action was taken in response?

I anticipate that your responses to these questions may contain both classified and unclassified information. Please send all unclassified material directly to the Committee. In keeping with the requirements of Executive Order 13526, if any of the responsive documents do contain classified information, please segregate all unclassified material within the classified documents, provide all unclassified information directly to the Committee, and provide a classified addendum to the Office of Senate Security. Although the Committee complies with all laws and regulations governing the handling of classified information, it is not bound, absent its prior agreement, by any handling restrictions or instructions on unclassified information unilaterally asserted by the Executive Branch.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter. If you have any questions, please contact Patrick Davis of my Committee staff at (202) 224-5225.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary

cc:

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member

FBI(23-CV-30)-702

Senate Committee on the Judiciary

The Honorable Dana Boente

Acting Deputy Attorney General

United States Department of Justice

The Honorable Michael E. Horowitz

Inspector General

United States Department of Justice

-30-



^[1] Evan Perez, *FBI Chief on Clinton Investigation: My People ‘Don’t Give a Rip About Politics’* CNN (Oct. 1, 2015).

From: Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)
Subject: WSJ
To: McCabe, Andrew G. (DO) (FBI); Bowdich, David L. (DO) (FBI); Ghattas, Carl (CTD) (FBI); Rybicki, James E. (DO) (FBI); Brower, Gregory (OGC) (FBI)
Sent: March 30, 2017 7:30 PM (UTC-04:00)

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/mike-flynn-offers-to-testify-in-exchange-for-immunity-1490912959?mod=e2tw>

Mike Flynn Offers to Testify in Exchange for Immunity

Former national security adviser tells FBI, the House and Senate intelligence committees he's willing to be interviewed in exchange for deal, officials say

By
Shane Harris, Carol E. Lee and Julian E. Barnes

The Wall Street Journal

Updated March 30, 2017 6:41 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—Mike Flynn, President Donald Trump's former national security adviser, has told the Federal Bureau of Investigation and congressional officials investigating the Trump campaign's potential ties to Russia that he is willing to be interviewed in exchange for a grant of immunity from prosecution, according to officials with knowledge of the matter. As an adviser to Mr. Trump's presidential campaign, and later one of Mr. Trump's top aides in the White House, Mr. Flynn was privy to some of the most sensitive foreign-policy deliberations of the new administration and was directly involved in discussions about the possible lifting of sanctions on Russia imposed by the Obama administration. He has made the offer to the FBI and the House and Senate intelligence committees though his lawyer but has so far found no takers, the officials said.

Mr. Flynn's attorney, Robert Keiner, declined to comment.

It wasn't clear if Mr. Flynn had offered to talk about specific aspects of his time working for Mr. Trump, but the fact that he was seeking immunity suggested Mr. Flynn feels he may be in legal jeopardy following his brief stint as the national security adviser, one official said.

Mr. Flynn was forced to resign after acknowledging that he misled White House officials about the nature of his phone conversations with the Russian ambassador to the U.S. during the presidential transition.

Mr. Flynn's communications with the Russian ambassador, Sergei Kislyak, have been scrutinized by the FBI, which is examining whether Trump campaign personnel colluded with Russian officials who are alleged to have interfered with the presidential election, according to current and former U.S. officials. Russia has denied the allegations.

Mr. Flynn also was paid tens of thousands of dollars by three Russian companies, including the state-sponsored media network RT, for speeches he made shortly before he became a formal adviser to Mr. Trump's campaign, according to documents obtained by a congressional oversight committee.

Democratic lawmakers have requested a copy of the security-clearance form that Mr. Flynn was required to file before joining Mr. Trump in the White House, to see if he disclosed sources of foreign income.

And they have asked the Defense Department to investigate whether Mr. Flynn, a retired Army general, violated the Constitution's emoluments clause by accepting money from RT, which U.S. intelligence officials say is part of a state-funded media apparatus.

—Aruna Viswanatha contributed to this article.

From: [REDACTED] (DO) (FBI)
Subject: OPA Horizon - 4/14/17
To: NPO
Sent: April 14, 2017 4:46 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1
b7C -1

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**FBI Office of Public Affairs
The Horizon
Friday, April 14, 2017**

National Issues

- Russia: OPA – The Washington Times asked whether the FBI made a financial agreement with a former British intelligence official who was looking into ties between then presidential candidate Donald Trump and Russia. OPA declined comment.
- Child Porn Case Plea: OPA – In coordination with CID, NPO provided a quote to from AD Richardson for a DOJ press release announcing two men pleading guilty in a large-scale, international child pornography case: "Crimes against children are among the most heinous crimes that the FBI investigates. This case is a prime reminder of the FBI's unwavering commitment to delivering justice to those who victimize the most vulnerable members of our society. It also serves as a warning that we will stop at nothing to find those who commit these despicable acts. I am incredibly proud of the immense amount of time and effort that men and women throughout the FBI devoted to this investigation. I am also grateful to all of our partners whose collaboration was vital to making this a successful case."
- Best Buy/Geek Squad Inquiry: OPA – NBC Nightly News inquired about cooperation between the FBI and Best Buy's Geek Squad in general, but also specifically in regards to allegations made in US v. Mark Rettenmaier that some of the repair technicians are working as paid informants of the Louisville Field Office. OPA declined to comment since the case is ongoing.
- Int'l Human Rights & FGM: OPA – CID's International Human Rights Unit provide information on the unit and the FBI's dedication to investigating FGM to Detroit's "The Oakland Press" related to coverage on the recent arrest of a doctor for FGM.
- Iris Scanning in Smart Phones: OPA – A reporter with Business Insider inquired about iris scanning in smart phones, as private sector claims that iris recognition technology is more accurate than the FBI's fingerprinting practices. The reporter asked if the FBI uses iris scanning technology and if the FBI recognizes that iris scanning is more secure or a better identifier than fingerprints. OPA declined to comment on technology used by the FBI and on which technology is better.
- Laura Poitras: OPA – The Associated Press is expected to publish a story soon that will profile filmmaker Laura Poitras. The story will look at her interactions with the U.S. government over the years and her possible involvement in an incident in Iraq in 2006 as well as with the Edward Snowden case. She alleges that the investigations resulted in increased screening when she travelled through domestic airports between 2006 and 2012. Much of the story will be based on FOIA documents received from the Electronic Frontier Foundation. The FBI declined to comment for the story.
- Gang Statistics: OPA – The AP is working on a story about the 4 likely MS-13-related murders in NY this week, and inquired about MS-13-specific crime data and whether it shows an increase in violent crimes committed by the gang. OPA explained that we don't have MS-13-specific gang statistics, but suggested the reporter take a look at the UCR statistics.

Local Stories

- Jackson – SAC Freeze was interviewed by WDAM (NBC Affiliate) in Hattiesburg about a variety of topics related to the FBI in Mississippi. Topics included public corruption, violent crime, gangs, and healthcare fraud. SAC Freeze reiterated that the FBI will continue to have a presence in the Pine Belt region of Mississippi, and we will continue to refine our strategic approach to combat crime in the area. The interviews will air over the next few weeks.
- Milwaukee – Milwaukee SAC Justin Tolomeo participated in a joint press conference announcing the details surround the arrest of [REDACTED] of Janesville, Wisconsin, wanted for allegedly robbing multiple weapons from a local gun store, and mailing a 161 page manifesto to President Trump expressing his willingness to carry out violent acts and posing a threat to public safety.
- St. Louis – SA [REDACTED] responded to written questions from BBC/PRI radio show "The World." Reporter Daniel Gross asked general questions about hate crimes specific to the St. Louis area.

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b7C -1,3
FBI(23-CV-30)-705

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[Redacted]

FBI National Press Office

(o) [Redacted]
(c) [Redacted]

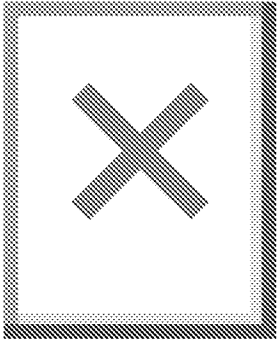
[Redacted]

b6 -1
b7C -1
b7E -3

From: Bulletin Intelligence
Subject: FBI Public Affairs News Briefing Friday, September 08, 2017
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: September 8, 2017 6:56 AM (UTC-04:00)

b7E -3

Mobile version and searchable archives available at [REDACTED]



TO: THE DIRECTOR AND SENIOR STAFF
DATE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2017 7:00 AM EDT

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LEADING THE NEWS

Wray: No "Whiff Of Interference" By White House In Russia Probe.

Reuters (9/7, Lynch) reports that in his first public comments since being confirmed as FBI Director, Christopher Wray said during a panel discussion at the Intelligence and National Security Summit in Washington Thursday that he has "not detected any whiff of interference" by the White House in regards to the investigation of Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election.

The Washington Examiner (9/7, Quinn, 465K) quotes Wray as saying, "I can say very confidently that I have not detected any whiff of interference with that investigation." The Financial Times (9/7, Lynch, Subscription Publication, 1.34M) and the Wall Street Journal (9/7, Wilber,

Subscription Publication, 6.45M) also draw attention to Wray's comments regarding the White House's distance from the ongoing probe.

The Washington Times (9/7, Noble, 541K) notes Wray told the same audience "that he has confidence in those working the probe" and "enormous respect" for special counsel Robert Mueller. While the Administration "has raised doubts about Mueller's impartiality," the New York Post (9/7, Fredericks, 4.31M) reports that Wray "said he had no concerns." Wray is quoted as saying: "I have enormous respect for former Director Mueller, who I got to work with almost daily in the early 2000s, as a consummate professional. ... He's really running that investigation."

The Washington Examiner (9/7, Quinn, 465K) notes Wray also praised Mueller's team, saying, "There's a great group of people working on it and I have confidence in them to be able to do their job."

The Washington Post (9/7, Nakashima, 10.38M) says that while the President "has publicly expressed doubts about the intelligence community's conclusion that Russia intervened in the election in part to help him win," Wray said in July that "he had no reason to second-guess the spy agencies' assessment," and says his opinion "hasn't changed now that he has seen the classified report on the subject."

Likewise, CNN (9/7, Watkins, 33.59M) reports that on Thursday, Wray, "who was seated next to NSA Director Mike Rogers, said he has confidence in the intelligence community's abilities and said he accepts the findings of the bombshell report from the intelligence community in January that accused Russia of attempting to meddle in the 2016 election to help Trump and hurt Democrat Hillary Clinton." CNN adds that Wray said he "reviewed the unclassified version of the report as he went through the confirmation process, and that since his swearing-in, he has 'had the opportunity to see a lot more' that bolstered his confidence in the intelligence community report. 'I have no reason to doubt the conclusions that the hardworking people who put that together came to,' Wray said of the January report."

According to The Daily Caller (9/7, 521K), "It is not clear how involved Wray is in the day-to-day operations of the Russia investigation." The DC says Ron Hosko, a former FBI assistant director, "recently" said Mueller "likely has a tight grip on the investigation and that it does not heavily involve top brass at the FBI or Justice Department."

Wray Says Identifying Leakers Is "A Very High Priority" For The Bureau. Josh Gerstein of Politico (9/7, Gerstein, 3.6M) notes that at the Intelligence and National Security Summit on Thursday, Wray said the bureau is "working hard on...rooting out leakers," which he called "a very high priority." According to Gerstein, Wray "said he believes many leaks of national security information don't come from individuals with first-hand knowledge." Wray is quoted as saying, "More often than not the leaks are not coming from somebody who's in the inside circle of knowledge in the first instance."

Mueller Wants To Question White House Aides About Statement On Trump Tower Meeting. In what a report on CNN's (9/7, Brown, Borger, Diamond, 33.59M) website calls "the latest indication that [special counsel Robert] Mueller's investigators are interested in the response" to Donald Trump Jr's meeting with a Russian lawyer at Trump Tower, "three sources familiar with the conversations" say the White House has been approached by Mueller's team about "interviewing staffers who were aboard Air Force One when the initial misleading statement" about the meeting was crafted. According to two of the sources, Mueller "wants to know how the statement aboard Air Force One was put together, whether information was intentionally left out and who was involved." His questions "could go to the issue of intent and possible efforts to conceal information during an obstruction of justice investigation."

Manafort Notes On Meeting Not Damaging To Trump Family Or Campaign Officials. Politico (9/7, Dawsey, Watkins, 3.6M) reports that "government officials and others" who have seen notes from former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort on the meeting, which he also attended, do not see those notes "as damaging to the Trump family or campaign officials." People who have seen the notes say they "do not contain any damaging information about [Hillary] Clinton or references to promises of damaging information about her, nor do they indicate that officials on the campaign were promising favors or seeking them in return for money."

The Daily Caller (9/7, Hasson, 521K) reports that NBC News has dropped a story (8/31,

3.46M) it had "hyped as a 'potential bombshell' last week." Under the headline, "Manafort Notes From Russian Meet Contain Cryptic Reference to 'Donations,'" the story "claimed that Manafort's notes from the 2016 Trump Tower meeting with White House aide Jared Kushner, Donald Trump Jr. and a Russian lawyer included the word 'donations' near a reference to the Republican National Committee." NBC "began walking back the 'potential bombshell' almost immediately, issuing a correction the same day noting that the word 'donation' didn't actually appear in the notes, but quoting one source who said the word 'donor' was in the notes." However, according to Politico, "the word 'donor' didn't appear in Manafort's notes," and the notes "are not seen as damaging to the Trump family or campaign officials."

In Email Exchange With Prankster, Cobb Predicts Manafort, Flynn Would Face Jeopardy. Business Insider (9/7, Bertrand, 3.83M) reports that a "prankster posing as White House social media director Dan Scavino" engaged White House special counsel Ty Cobb "in a lengthy email exchange." The "self-described 'email prankster,' who tweets under the name @SINON_REBORN... wrote to Cobb's official White House account on Tuesday night," sending the emails from "'dan.scavinojr@emailprankster.co.uk' with the subject line 'Nipping it in the bud.'" Cobb told Business Insider: "No idea--it is a felony of course to impersonate a government official of course, or to conspire to."

The Daily Caller (9/7, Ross, 521K) reports that in the email exchange, Cobb wrote that he believes the President will get "'a clean bill of health' in the Russia collusion investigation but that former Trump advisers Paul Manafort and Michael Flynn could be in legal jeopardy." Cobb wrote, "I have great confidence there is nothing there implicating the President or the White House. Manafort and Flynn have issues separate and apart from the [White House] that will cause the investigation to linger but am hoping we get a clean bill of health soon."

Trump Jr. Says President Didn't Know He Met With Russians At Trump Tower. Donald Trump Jr. was interviewed behind closed Thursday by members and staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee concerning his meeting at Trump Tower with a Russian lawyer who claimed have damaging information on Hillary Clinton. Media coverage is relatively light and focuses primarily on Trump Jr.'s claim that no meaningful information came from the meeting and his insistence that neither he nor anyone he knows colluded with Russia during the campaign.

The CBS Evening News (9/7, story 10, 0:25, Mason, 11.17M) said Trump Jr. was "grilled by Senate Judiciary Committee staffers for more than five hours behind closed doors." Hallie Jackson reported on NBC Nightly News (9/7, story 7, 2:15, Holt, 16.61M) that Trump Jr. issued a statement saying "he answered every question until both sides had exhausted their lines of questioning. 'I trust this interview fully satisfied their inquiry.'" However, Mary Bruce said on ABC World News Tonight (9/7, story 8, 1:40, Muir, 14.63M) that "lawmakers I talked with say they want him to appear again, this time in public."

Manu Raju reported on CNN's Situation Room (9/7, 1.29M) that sources tell him Trump Jr. claimed "pretty emphatically that his father had no knowledge that he did, in fact, meet with Russians in Trump Tower."

Trump Jr. told the panel that nothing came of the meeting with Natalia Veselnitskaya, the Russian lawyer who "offered damaging information about Hillary Clinton," the Washington Post (9/7, Hamburger, O'Connell, 10.38M) reports. According to a transcript of his prepared testimony, Trump Jr. said, "The meeting provided no meaningful information and turned out not to be about what had been represented." Trump said that "he would have consulted with lawyers if any useful information had been provided about Clinton by the visiting Russian." The AP (9/7, Jalonick, Tucker, Lemire) reports that while Trump Jr. told the panel "he was open to receiving information about Hillary Clinton's 'fitness, character or qualifications,'" he "insisted that neither he nor anyone else he knows colluded with any foreign government during the presidential campaign."

The Wall Street Journal (9/7, Tau, Ballhaus, Subscription Publication, 6.45M) reports that Trump defended his response, "I love it," to the email offering damaging information on Clinton, saying it was "simply a colloquial way of saying that I appreciated Rob's [the publicist who arranged the meeting] gesture." The New York Times (9/7, Haberman, Apuzzo, Subscription Publication, 13.56M) reports that Trump Jr. said "he always intended to consult with his own lawyers about the propriety of using any information that Ms. Veselnitskaya, who has ties to the

Kremlin, gave him at the meeting." The Times says the acknowledgment that he "intended to seek legal counsel after the meeting suggests that he knew, or at least suspected, that accepting potentially damaging information about a rival campaign from a foreign country raised thorny legal issues."

Reuters (9/7, Zengerle, Freifeld) says Trump Jr. was questioned for five hours and "left without speaking to reporters." Sen. Richard Blumenthal "described the atmosphere in the room as 'cordial,'" and "said the testimony made it clear there was more to discover." Politico (9/7, Wright, 3.6M) reports that Blumenthal said "there are 'gaps' in...Trump Jr.'s closed-door testimony" and "that he expects President Donald Trump's son to return for a public hearing before the panel." Blumenthal told reporters, "There are a lot of gaps that will need to be filled. ... My being there gives me a sense of his demeanor, his willingness to answer questions, his pauses and reluctance on some questions and eagerness on others."

Blumenthal told MSNBC's Morning Joe (9/7, 1.14M) Thursday morning, "My worst fears, among them, are that this meeting may have been a prelude or an overture to more coordinated activities involving collusion between the Trump campaign and the Russians in their interference in our election and that afterward there was obstruction of justice."

USA Today (9/7, Kelly, Jackson, Today, 8.62M) reports that investigators for the Senate Intelligence Committee, "which is conducting its own Russia probe," are also expected to interview Trump Jr. and special counsel Robert Mueller is also investigating the meeting as part of his inquiry. Moreover, Rep. Adam Schiff, ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, told MSNBC's Morning Joe (9/7, 1.14M), "We expect to have Don Jr. come before our committee as well." Schiff added, "I think the most important questions are going to be what happened before the meeting, during, and after the meeting. In the category of after the meeting what role did the President play in fabricating that statement about what the meeting was all about?"

Google Finds No Evidence Of Russian Propaganda On Its Platforms. A day after Facebook said a likely Russian-based operation placed thousands of ads with controversial views on issues including immigration, race and gay rights on its site over two years through May 2017, Reuters (9/7) reports that Google said Thursday it has found no evidence on its advertising platforms of suspected Russian propaganda like those that appeared on Facebook. Google said in a statement, "We're always monitoring for abuse or violations of our policies and we've seen no evidence this type of ad campaign was run on our platforms."

Sen. Mark Warner said Thursday that Twitter will brief congressional investigators soon on "whether Russia used its advertising platform to promote divisive social and political messages during the 2016 election," Reuters (9/7, Volz, Landay) reports. According to Warner, "the suspected Russian placement of such ads may have gone far beyond what Facebook disclosed, and that Twitter and other technology companies should also examine the issue."

The New York Times (9/7, Shane, Subscription Publication, 13.56M) reports that on Twitter and Facebook, "Russian fingerprints are on hundreds or thousands of fake accounts that regularly posted anti-Clinton messages." While "both companies have been slow to grapple with the problem of manipulation, they have stepped up efforts to purge fake accounts."

Analysis Finds Russian Political Interference In 27 Countries Since 2004. According to an analysis by the Alliance for Securing Democracy of the German Marshall Fund, since 2004, Russia "has meddled in the affairs of at least 27 European and North American countries...with interference that ranges from cyberattacks to disinformation campaigns," USA Today (9/7, Dorell, 8.62M) reports. The analysis shows that "the meddling started in former Soviet republics allied with the West and spread to Western Europe," with more recent impacts seen in the US and Canada.

Maddow Slams Pence For Russia "Lies." Raw Story (9/7, Burris, 757K) reports that on Thursday's episode of MSNBC's Rachel Maddow Show (9/7, 769K), Rachel Maddow criticized Vice President Pence for a "long list of Russia lies" that she argued has placed him in the "crosshairs" - in the words of Raw Story - of special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election. Maddow said, "Mike Pence did bluntly asserted multiple times that there had been no contacts between the Trump campaign and Russians during the campaign. ... That was false. Mike Pence's bluntly asserted that Trump national security adviser Mike Flynn

had never talked to the Russians about sanctions. That was false. Mike Pence bluntly asserted that he had no idea Mike Flynn had foreign business ties, even though Pence was running the transition when the transition was notified multiple times in writing and in person by Flynn's lawyers that yeah, Flynn had foreign business ties." Maddow "went on to say that Pence even said that Trump fired the FBI director because of the Justice Department recommendation, which we now also know is false because Pence was in the room when Trump read his letter explaining that he wanted to fire James Comey because of the Russia investigation."

COUNTER-TERRORISM

FBI Continues Probe Of Pipe Bomb Explosion At Indiana Post Office.

The Northwest Indiana Post-Tribune (9/8, Jacobs, 1.11M) reports that the FBI is "working to determine 'if there are any terrorism links' after an explosion at the East Chicago post office Wednesday evening, but that 'there is no ongoing public safety concern.'" According to the Post-Tribune, on Thursday, the FBI "confirmed...that one pipe bomb detonated shortly after 6:30 p.m." One employee was "treated for minor injuries." FBI spokeswoman Chris Bavender is quoted as saying: "At this time, investigators are still trying to ascertain if there are any terrorism links."

According to WLS-TV Chicago (9/7, 469K), "The injured worker, who was only hired a few weeks ago, was the person who processed the package from the sender, making her key in the FBI's investigation." The New York Times (9/7, Stevens, Subscription Publication, 13.56M), and the AP (9/7) also cover the investigation.

Counterfeit Sneaker Market Tied To Terrorism Financing.

ABC News (9/7, 2.83M) reports that "some of the hottest items for sale today are limited edition or rare sneakers," and "federal customs officials say...counterfeiters with potential ties to transnational crime and even terrorism have stepped in to feed the demand." According to ABC, "Officials say terrorists who attacked the French magazine Charlie Hebdo in 2015 financed their weapons partly by selling fake Nike sneakers." Customs and Border Patrol's Edward Fox says sneakers are among "of the most counterfeited commodities coming into the U.S. according to Edward Fox, the Customs and Border Patrol's acting port director of the Port of New York and New Jersey in Newark." ABC says CBP "partners with other agencies, including the FBI and the DEA, to share intelligence on counterfeit shipments and try to prevent fakes from ever making it to the U.S. in the first place."

Democrats Seek Select Committee On White Supremacy, Domestic Terrorism.

The New York Times (9/7, Alcindor, Subscription Publication, 13.56M) reports that the House's "top five" Democrats have written to House Speaker Ryan, urging him "to establish a select committee on 'the rise of white supremacy and domestic terrorism.'" In a letter to Ryan sent Wednesday, Reps. Joseph Crowley, Nancy Pelosi, Linda T. Sánchez, Steny H. Hoyer, and James E. Clyburn "argued that Congress needed to study an 'outbreak of hate' brought on by last year's presidential election, as well as the threat that white supremacist groups pose to 'the security and stability of our nation.'" The Times says it is unclear if Ryan will establish the committee.

Paris "Bomb Factory" Suspects Made Phone Calls To Contacts In Syria.

The New York Post (9/7, 4.31M) reports that French Interior Minister Gerard Collomb said Thursday that officials investigating a suspected "bomb factory" south of Paris now believe the three detained suspects were preparing attacks on a bank and "had made phone calls to unidentified contacts in Syria." In a radio interview, Collomb said, "Those under investigation spoke of wanting to blow up a bank with the TATP" – referring to an explosive employed in the past by terrorists – "but the way we see it is they have links with terrorism, and this is the channel of investigation."

German Intel Official: "No Evidence" Of ISIS Militants Flowing To Europe From Iraq, Syria. The Washington Times (9/7, Muñoz, 541K) reports that European intelligence

officials "have yet to see a massive rush of Islamic State fighters flow across their borders" despite the militant group's recent battlefield losses. At a DC symposium on Thursday, Friedrich Grommes, the head of the international terrorism directorate for Germany's Federal Intelligence Service, said, "We have no evidence of a rising tide" of foreign militants. Instead, assessments "show a majority of foreign fighters are choosing to bleed back into local populations rather than flee."

COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE

State Department Rejects Russian Complaints About Search Of Facilities.

The Washington Examiner (9/7, Gerhrke, 465K) reports that the State Department on Thursday "rejected Russian complaints about the search of three facilities taken by the U.S. government and said the U.S. invited Russian officials to observe the process." Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert told reporters, "Russian officials were invited to come along with us as we toured those facilities last weekend. ... They chose not to accompany us on the New York walkthrough, for whatever reason. I simply do not know. It is certainly in our authority to be able to look around and I'll just leave it at that." Nauert "rejected Foreign Ministry complaints about the process, which her counterpart dubbed 'an illegal invasion' of sovereign Russian territory," and "offered a mild rebuke of American reporters who focused on the process," saying, "I don't know if you all are working for RT today or what," which was "a reference to a Russian state-run media outlet."

Daily Caller Continues To Examine Case Of Ex-Wasserman Schultz IT Aide.

Under the headline "DWS NEXT? Early Prosecutor Moves Suggest Intent To Bring House Cybersecurity, Theft Charges," the Daily Caller (9/7, Rosiak, 521K) reported, "Prosecutors have given Imran Awan" – a former IT specialist for House Democrats – "a copy of the hard drive of a House laptop that Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz tried to keep law enforcement from looking at, court filings show, suggesting prosecutors intend to bring charges related to the underlying cybersecurity and theft probe. The hard-drive copy was included in discovery even though Wasserman Schultz has said the laptop contains House information on it and is a government-paid work laptop, and even though Imran was fired and banned from the House network because of suspected cybersecurity violations."

Former Turkish Minister Charged With Violating Iran Sanctions.

Reuters (9/7, Butler, Dolan) reports that former Turkish economy minister Zafer Caglayan has been charged by US prosecutors with "conspiring to violate Iran sanctions by illegally moving hundreds of millions of dollars through the U.S. financial system on Tehran's behalf." According to Reuters, "The indictment marks the first time an ex-government member with close ties to President Tayyip Erdogan has been charged in an investigation that has strained ties between Washington and Ankara." Reuters notes that Caglayan "was also charged with taking bribes in cash and jewelry worth tens of millions of dollars."

The Washington Post (9/7, Cunningham, 10.38M) reports that, along with Caglayan, "other high-profile Turkish figures" were charged with "conspiracy to evade U.S. sanctions on Iran." Among those is Suleyman Aslan, "onetime chief of the state-owned Halkbank." According to the Post, "The investigation had focused mainly on Turkish Iranian millionaire Reza Zarrab, whose network of companies prosecutors allege was used to launder money for Iran." The Post notes that Rudy Giuliani is representing Caglayan.

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Menendez Judge Warns Prosecutors Against "Tabloid Trial."

The AP (9/7, Porter) reports that US District Judge William Walls, who is overseeing the federal corruption trial of Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and his longtime friend and donor, eye doctor Salomon Melgen, "chastised prosecutors Thursday for asking a witness 'irrelevant' questions, and" warned "both sides to avoid turning the case into a tabloid trial by focusing on details about

swanky hotels, limestone baths and rain showers." The Judge's "admonition came during the questioning of the prosecution's first witness, an FBI agent summoned to authenticate emails between Menendez and...Melgen about a trip to Paris taken by" Menendez "in 2010."

Bloomberg News (9/7, Weinberg, Voreacos, 4.52M) reports that DOJ prosecutor J.P. Cooney was questioning an FBI analyst about "messages the senator exchanged with one of Melgen's assistants and others about booking a hotel room that included 'a limestone bath with soaking tub and enclosed rain shower.' He continued with questioning aimed at showing the jury that Menendez was angling for a particularly expensive room when...Walls asked the jury to leave the courtroom. 'I'm not going to permit this to be a tabloid trial,' Walls told Cooney."

The Philadelphia Inquirer (9/7, Seidman, 1.71M) further quotes Walls as telling Cooney, "I'm not just going to let you swish and swash nonsensical scenarios that really don't even make for a good pulp fiction story." The Inquirer adds, "The tone the judge set for the trial could bode well for Menendez...because prosecutors have argued that the sumptuous gifts" he was given by Melgen "prove the defendants' corrupt intent."

Meigen Attorney: Trial "An Attack" On Hispanic-American Community. Politico (9/7, Friedman, 3.6M) reported that Melgen attorney Kirk Ogrosky on Thursday "cast the federal corruption case against" Melgen and Menendez "as an attack on the Hispanic-American community," describing "a deep, 25-year friendship between" the pair "in which the two men often sought to help young Hispanic Americans advance professionally." In his opening statement, Ogrosky said, "Sal and Bob were part of a fellowship of Hispanic Americans. Entrepreneurs, businessmen, doctors, politicians. You'll hear this at trial: their idea was to pay it forward, help young Hispanic Americans improve their lives, lift up their community, play a larger role in their community. This case isn't only an attack on those two men. It's an attack on that whole group."

NYTimes Editor Says Omitting Menendez's Party Affiliation From Story Was "Dumb Mistake." The Daily Caller (9/7, Randall, 521K) reported that New York Times standards editor Phil Corbett on Thursday said "that leaving out" Menendez's "party affiliation in a story on his corruption trial was a 'dumb mistake.'" Speaking with the Washington Post's Erik Wemple, Corbett said that omitting "Menendez's party affiliation was 'a dumb mistake and shouldn't have happened, as [reporter Nick Corsanti] and his editors would be the first to acknowledge. I don't know if the Dem reference got lost in revisions and moving stuff around, or whether the omission just slipped by folks because they were too close to the story, which can happen."

MSNBC's Melber Says Case Against Menendez "Looks Overwhelming." In another story, the Daily Caller (9/7, Hasson, 521K) reported that MSNBC host Ari Melber, commenting on Menendez's corruption trial, said, "The case against Menendez as a legal matter doesn't look close, it looks overwhelming." Melber added "that 'if a politician can take the kind of gifts that Menendez has already taken and be acquitted, then you have to wonder if there's something wrong with all of these corruption laws in the first place.'"

Guadagno To Unveil Ethics Plan Amid Menendez's Federal Corruption Trial.

The Bergen (NJ) Record (9/7, Racioppi) reports that New Jersey Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno (R), who is battling ex-Goldman Sachs executive Phil Murphy (D) in this fall's race to succeed term-limited Gov. Chris Christie (R), "plans to propose a sweeping set of measures designed to curb the influence of special interests and place a check on personal ambitions," including "a five-year lobbying ban for officials after they leave an administration, stronger financial disclosure requirements for lawmakers and term limits for public officials." The Record says that Guadagno's ethics plan comes as Sen. Bob Menendez (D) "stands trial in federal court on charges he abused his office to advance the interests of a wealthy friend and donor from Florida."

Hunter's Chief Of Staff Leaving To Take Pentagon Post.

The San Diego Union-Tribune (9/7, Prine, 668K) reports that Joseph Kasper, the chief of staff to "embattled" Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA) is "leaving...to take a Pentagon position." Kasper "had served as the Alpine Republican's top aide since late 2014 after previously directing his communications and policy operations." The Union-Tribune notes that FBI agents "raided the office of Hunter's campaign treasurer in February, seeking evidence into allegations that the Republican

lawmaker misspent campaign dollars and tried to dodge federal and Congressional investigators.”

According to the Los Angeles Times (9/7, Wire, 4.49M), Kasper’s “name has been officially tied to the investigations just once, in an FBI warrant to search Hunter’s campaign treasurer’s office. The warrant said agents were looking for communication with Kasper, Hunter, Hunter’s wife and others.”

Former Mississippi Prosecutor Sentenced To Probation For Taking Bribe To Lower Bond.

The AP (9/7) reports former Hinds County, Mississippi assistant district attorney Ivon Johnson was sentenced Thursday to five years probation in relation to accusations he “took a \$300 bribe in October 2014 to recommend a bond reduction from \$15,000 to \$3,500.” The former prosecutor’s “plea stated he accepted at least \$15,000 from an unnamed co-conspirator between 2013 and 2016.” He will also have to pay a \$3,000 fine.

Former Alabama Lawmaker Pleads Guilty To Bribery Conspiracy, Fraud, Tax Evasion.

The Birmingham (AL) Times (9/7, 107K) reports former Alabama state representative Oliver L. Robinson Jr. pleaded guilty Thursday in federal court “to conspiracy, bribery and honest services wire fraud” in connection to allegations he accepted “a valuable contract between the Birmingham law firm Balch & Bingham and the Oliver Robinson Foundation to influence and reward Robinson for using his position as a member of the Alabama House of Representatives, vice-chairman of the Jefferson County Legislative Delegation, and as an elected representative of citizens of Birmingham to pressure and advise public officials to oppose the Environmental Protection Agency’s prioritization and expansion of a North Birmingham EPA Superfund site.” The Times reports Robinson has agreed as part of his plea “never again to seek elected office and to pay restitution and forfeiture in amounts to be determined.” Robinson faces sentencing on December 7 but remains free on bond.

The Athens (AL) News Courier (9/7, 18K) reports US Attorney Jay Town, FBI Special Agent in Charge Johnnie Sharp Jr. and Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation, Acting Special Agent in Charge James Dorsey announced the plea on Thursday.

Three Minnesota Men Charged With Kidnapping And Raping Teen For A Month.

The Minneapolis Star Tribune (9/7, Smith, 1.27M) reports that on Thursday, three men were charged “with kidnapping a 15-year-old Alexandria girl and holding her captive for 29 days as they assaulted her numerous times, including rape and attempts to drown her in a bathtub. The horrific details of the crime were released in a criminal complaint filed in Douglas County that charged Thomas Jay Barker, 32, and Joshua Lee Holby, 31, both of Carlos, Minn., and Steven Michael Samuel Powers, 20, of Benson, Minn., with kidnapping and false imprisonment.” The Star Tribune says “the 15-year-old girl was reunited with her family hours after saving herself, escaping from an abandoned rural house where she had been held captive.”

Man Faces 26 Federal Charges Including Child Pornography Distributions And Making Threats.

WRTV-TV Indianapolis (9/7, 110K) reports that Buster Hernandez, “the man accused of terrorizing juvenile victims across the country under the online moniker ‘Brian Kil,’ was formally indicted Thursday on 26 federal charges in U.S. district court” in Indianapolis. Hernandez is accused of having “used his online persona to coerce or threaten underage girls into sending him illicit images of themselves, which he then allegedly distributed online.” According to WRTV, “The first nine counts against Hernandez deal with his alleged acquisition and distribution of child pornography,” counts 10-13 “accuse him of using a Facebook account to bomb multiple locations in Indiana,” and “the remaining charges, counts 14-26, cover Hernandez’s alleged threats to kill, kidnap and rape his victims.”

VA Official Accused Of Taking Bribes Following Undercover FBI Operation.

KCNC-TV Denver (9/7, 91K) reports that “newly released court documents have revealed an

elaborate scheme with a Veterans Affairs insider, who was accepting bribes for lucrative government contracts." The FBI "staged an undercover operation to catch Dwane Nevins, director of the Rocky Mountain VA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization." Nevins "allegedly worked with Robert Revis and Anthony Bueno of Auxilious, an Arvada based company, to secure contracts for medical supplies."

New Mexico Library Received Bomb Threats Before Fatal Shooting.

KRQE-TV Albuquerque, NM (9/7, 101K) reports that the FBI is "following a string of bomb threats in Clovis after last week's deadly shooting inside the public library." According to KRQE, "30 calls were reported August 30, and several more came in on Tuesday which caused temporary lockdowns and evacuations."

Colorado Man Sentenced To 20 Years In Prison For Trafficking Teen.

Fort Collins (CO) Coloradoan (9/7, 106K) reports that on Thursday, Eighth Judicial District Judge Carroll Brinegar sentenced Durrell Bumphus "to 20 years in prison for human trafficking...saying he exploited vulnerable young women for his personal benefit." According to the Coloradoan, Bumphus "was arrested in March on allegations that he acted as a pimp for a young woman and a 17-year-old girl, putting them up in a Fort Collins hotel and taking care of their daily needs in exchange for the money they earned prostituting themselves." The Coloradoan notes that his arrest "came after the[FBI] contacted the Larimer County Sheriff's Office to let them know that a young woman might have fallen victim to human trafficking...in Fort Collins."

Violent Boston Gang Leader Sentenced To More Than 12 Years For Trafficking Oxycodone.

The Boston Globe (9/8, Sennott, 969K) reports Demetrius Williams, 30, of Roxbury, was sentenced Thursday to 151 months in prison and five years supervised release "for trafficking oxycodone, the US Attorney's office said." Williams - who is a leader of "one of Boston's most violent street gangs," the Columbia Point Dawgs - pleaded guilty last December "to racketeering and drug charges." He was charged, along with 48 other gang members, as part of "a major raid in 2015 carried out by federal and state law enforcement."

New York Mobster Sentenced To Seven Years In Prison For Extortion.

Newsday (NY) (9/7, 1.64M) reports that in Manhattan on Thursday, U.S. District Judge Richard Sullivan sentenced Pasquale "Patsy" Parrello "to 7 years in prison for running a violent Genovese family extortion ring out of the popular Bronx Italian eatery on Arthur Avenue that bears his name." According to Newsday, "Parrello's deal to plead to three counts of conspiracy to commit extortion had included estimated sentencing guidelines of 5-1/4 to 6-1/2 years, but Sullivan decided to go above that range." Newsday notes that Parrello "was one of 46 mobsters charged in August, 2016, in a sprawling racketeering indictment of members of five different mob families based on thousands of hours of recordings made by an informant and an undercover FBI agent."

FBI Assists In Probe Of Ohio Island's Government Offices.

The AP (9/7) reports that "investigators have searched the Police Department, Village Hall and several other addresses on an Ohio island." Ohio's Attorney General's office "said the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation and the Ohio Ethics Commission were conducting a joint investigation Thursday in the village of Put-in-Bay on South Bass Island." According to the AP, "The FBI, Internal Revenue Service and the state Auditor's Office are assisting."

Minnesota Probation Officer Charged With Harassing Women He Supervised.

The Minneapolis Star Tribune (9/6, 1.27M) reports that "two Minnesota women have sued the federal government, alleging that" Dennis Bresnahan, "a former probation officer, solicited sexual favors and demanded nude photos while he supervised them in separate cases, and their lawyer said he expects more victims to step forward." Bresnahan is accused of having "pressured one of

the plaintiffs, Ayesha McKinney, into sending him photos of her breasts – often using his work e-mail – and tried to persuade her to share other photos of an intimate nature.” In addition, Bresnahan is alleged to have “exploited the ‘vulnerable mental health condition’ of a second plaintiff, Tracina Ross, while supervising her last year by caressing her legs sexually, inviting her to participate in a ‘threesome’ and asking her to go on vacation with him.”

New Jersey “Serial Sextortionist” Sentenced To 25 Years In Prison.

The [Wilkes-Barre \(PA\) Citizens' Voice](#) (9/7, 158K) reports that Hubert Young of Basking Ridge, New Jersey, who “federal prosecutors described as a ‘serial sextortionist’ who targeted teens... was sentenced Thursday to 25 years in federal prison.” Young “previously pleaded guilty to child pornography production. ... At least 12 youths between 11 and 17 years old were victimized between January 2015 and June 2016 in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio and Indiana, prosecutors said.”

Washington Man Sentenced To Nine Years In Prison For Receiving Child Pornography.

The [AP](#) (9/7) reports that Daniel Vadnais of Moses Lake, Washington, “has been sentenced to nine years in federal prison for receiving child pornography.” FBI agents “searched Vadnais’ home in April 2016, where authorities say Vadnais told them he had been using the software to download child pornography files.”

Oakland Fire Department Captain Arrested For Possession Of Child Pornography.

The [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (9/7, 3.31M) reports that Oakland Fire Department Capt. Richard Chew “was placed on leave after he was arrested on suspicion of possession of child pornography.”

Texas Veteran Who Threatened VA Hospital Arrested.

The [San Antonio Express-News](#) (9/7, 1.18M) reports that on Thursday, the FBI arrested Walter Steven Crosley of Lakehills, Texas, “an Army veteran... who is accused of making threats to blow up a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital in Kerrville and kill its employees.”

Authorities Bust \$20 Million San Diego-Based Shoplifting Ring.

The [AP](#) (9/7, Watson) reports that an indictment unsealed Wednesday showed that US authorities “broke up a San Diego-based shoplifting ring that stole more than \$20 million in goods from popular clothing stores across the country and sold the stolen merchandise in Mexico.” The “stores targeted included Abercrombie & Fitch, Banana Republic and Victoria’s Secret at malls from Schaumburg, Illinois, to Las Vegas and San Diego.” HSI San Diego’s Special Agent in Charge Dave Shaw explained that “to help its stealing, the group’s U.S. members smuggled in acquaintances from Mexico who had previously been deported.”

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (9/7, Davis, 4.49M) quotes Shaw as saying, “They’re not just shoplifting. They’re using violence to get what they want.” Acting US Attorney Alana Robinson said in a statement, “The mall is supposed to be a safe place for families to shop, eat and enjoy themselves. Instead, a prolific and violent group of thieves has stolen millions of dollars in merchandise as well as peace of mind from mall employees and customers.”

Arrest Of Michigan Bank Robbery Suspect Attributed To Tracking Device.

[MLive \(MI\)](#) (9/7, 947K) reports that “a bank robbery suspect who tried to escape via northbound U.S. 23 near Ann Arbor was taken into custody after police caught up to him on the freeway Thursday, Sept. 7.” According to [MLive](#), “A tracking device with the stolen money led officers to the suspect on the freeway.”

Suspect In Custody Following Thursday Morning Illinois Bank Robbery.

The [Skokie \(IL\) Review](#) (9/7, 1.04M) reports that an unidentified man “is in police custody in connection with a Skokie bank robbery Thursday morning at a PNC Bank in Skokie.” FBI agents “responded to the scene, according to a spokesman from the Chicago area FBI office.”

Portland, Oregon Bank Robbed.

KOIN-TV Portland, OR (9/7, 87K) reports that "a man wearing a mask robbed an undisclosed amount of money and escaped without confrontation on Thursday morning from Umpqua Bank in Northeast Portland." FBI agents are investigating, according to KOIN.

Suburban Cleveland Bank Robbed On Tuesday.

The Willoughby (OH) News-Herald (9/7, 142K) reports that the FBI and the Euclid, Ohio police "are searching for a bank robbery suspect," who "entered the Dollar Bank branch...in Euclid at 1:30 p.m. Sept. 5 and passed a demand note to a teller. The suspect was provided an undisclosed amount of cash."

Louisiana Bank Robbed On Thursday.

The New Orleans Times-Picayune (9/7, 710K) reports that "a masked man robbed an Algiers bank at gunpoint Thursday morning...prompting a search for the unidentified gunman, the FBI announced Thursday night."

Two Charged With Making "Prank" Threat That Closed Massachusetts College.

The Boston Globe (9/7, Gans, 969K) reports that a woman and a 16-year-old boy from Everett, Massachusetts, "are facing criminal charges for a 'prank threat' against a classmate at Bunker Hill Community College in July that led to a three-hour lockdown...and the closure of the nearby Orange Line station." The Globe says the threat "spark[ed] a major law enforcement response, including bomb squad technicians from the FBI and State Police."

Connecticut Man Sentenced To Three Years Of Probation For Distributing Pills And Steroids.

The Connecticut Post (9/7, 199K) reports that Jeffrey Gentile of Ansonia, Connecticut, "was sentenced to probation and community service hours for his involvement in a distribution conspiracy" involving "prescription pill[s] and steroid[s]." According to the Post, the FBI, DEA and Homeland Security Investigation "led a long-term investigation, assisted by the U.S. Marshals Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives."

FINANCIAL CRIME & CORPORATE SCANDALS

Prosecutors Want To Revoke Shkreli's Bail Over Request For Clinton Hair.

The AP (9/5) reports that on Thursday, federal prosecutors "filed a court motion asking a judge to revoke Martin Shkreli's bail and throw him in jail because of recent threats...[he] allegedly made against Hillary Clinton." In their motion, prosecutors wrote: "Since his conviction on August 4, 2017, Shkreli has engaged in an escalating pattern of threats and harassment that warrant his detention pending sentencing. ... Most recently, Shkreli threatened former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton by publicly offering \$5,000 to anyone who would 'grab' some of her hair on the defendant's behalf during her upcoming book tour."

According to Bloomberg News (9/7, Hurtado, 4.52M), the prosecutors claim Shkreli "not only appears to have violated state and federal laws prohibiting threats against the immediate family members of former presidents, but that he also has a history of harassing specific women." The prosecutors also noted that the Secret Service "has sought to interview Shkreli but he declined."

The New York Times (9/8, Clifford, Subscription Publication, 13.56M) reports that Judge Kiyo A. Matsumoto "scheduled a Sept. 14 hearing on the government's motion, which, if upheld, would return Mr. Shkreli to jail." USA Today (9/8, McCoy, 8.62M), the New York Post (9/7, 4.31M), and the New York Daily News (9/8, Keshner, 3.61M) also cover the prosecutors' motion.

Two More Jamaican Lottery Defendants Reach Plea Deals.

The AP (9/5, Nicholson) reports that "two more defendants have reached plea agreements with

U.S. prosecutors in a Jamaican lottery scam that authorities say bilked mostly elderly Americans out of millions of dollars. " Jason Jahalal and Xanu Morgan "were among a group of eight suspects extradited from Jamaica to Bismarck, North Dakota, in April to face charges." The AP notes that "four of the 15 defendants have now reached such deals, including Lavrick Willocks, the man accused of being the kingpin."

New Mexico Doctor Who Defrauded Medicare Faces Additional Obstruction Charges.

The Albuquerque (NM) Journal (9/7, 217K) reports that Roy Heilbron, "a self-described 'holistic' cardiologist in Santa Fe who has pleaded guilty to health care fraud charges filed in 2015 is now accused of faking medical documents about himself that were filed in his court case." The Journal says a federal grand jury "recently returned indictments against...Heilbron...for making false statements and obstruction of justice for presenting false documents concerning his own medical condition in an effort to postpone or avoid sentencing on his earlier charges." According to the Journal, Heilbron was "facing a possible two-year sentence after pleading guilty earlier this year to defrauding Medicare," but "now, he could get up to 15 years in prison for making false statements and another 30 years for obstruction of justice."

Texas Bank Employee Accused Of Embezzling Deposits.

The AP (9/7) reports that Susann Nelson of Greenville, Texas, "a longtime suburban Dallas bank employee, has been indicted on charges of bank theft and fraud in a scheme prosecutors say continued for five years." Nelson, who "worked at the LegacyTexas Bank in Richardson," is accused of "embezzling cash from deposits from the Federal Reserve Bank beginning in January 2010 through February 2015 and making false entries in records to conceal the embezzlement."

Former Amazon Financial Analyst Pleads Guilty To Insider Trading.

Reuters (9/7, Stempel) reports former Amazon.com Inc financial analyst Brett Kennedy, 26, of Blaine, Washington, pleaded guilty Thursday to insider trading for giving nonpublic information to fellow University of Washington alumnus Maziar Rezakhani. Kennedy reported shared "information from Amazon's database, showing that the retailer would lose less money and report higher revenue for the first quarter of 2015 than Wall Street expected, in exchange for \$10,000 cash." The US Securities and Exchange Commission said in a related civil case that "Rezakhani made \$115,997 trading Amazon shares based on the April 2015 tip, after posting the results on Internet message boards and boasting that the 'numbers are so obvious' that a '5 year old can guess what they will do.'" Kennedy faces "up to 20 years in prison at his Dec. 8 sentencing, but prosecutors will recommend that he serve no more than a year and a day. He agreed to pay \$10,875 to settle with the SEC."

Seattle (WA) Post-Intelligencer (9/8, Pulkkinen, 568K) reports "SEC investigators claim a third man, Sam Sadeghi, was also involved in the insider trading." The agency's civil complaint "lists Kennedy, Rezakhani and Sadeghi as defendants." Seattle PI reports "Sadeghi was Rezakhani's 'trading partner and investment adviser'" who, according to the SEC's attorneys, "received a 10 percent cut of Rezakhani's profits."

Also reporting are the New York Post (9/7, Dugan, 4.31M) and CNN Money (9/7, Watties, 3.59M).

CYBER DIVISION

Equifax Reports "Massive Security Breach."

NBC Nightly News (9/7, story 5, 1:50, Holt, 16.61M) reported on a "massive security breach" announced by Equifax, "one of the big three reporting bureaus," in which "hackers stole personal information including social security numbers on some 143 million Americans." NBC added that "the hack could go down as among the biggest ever." In addition to "names, addresses, social security numbers, birth dates, and even driver's license information for 143 million people...roughly 209,000 credit card numbers were stolen." NBC added that "ironically," Equifax is

"where people go when they fear they've been hacked."

ABC World News Tonight (9/7, story 9, 0:20, Muir, 14.63M) reported that the FBI is investigating. The CBS Evening News (9/7, story 12, 0:20, Mason, 11.17M) reported similarly.

The New York Times (9/7, Hsu, Subscription Publication, 13.56M) reports, "Criminals gained access to certain files in the company's system from mid-May to July by exploiting a weak point in a website application, according to an investigation by Equifax." Additionally, the company "said that some personal information for British and Canadian residents was also hacked."

PBS NewsHour (9/7, Hendry, 827K) reports, "The number of customers affected in this breach amounts to nearly half of the entire U.S. population." PBS quotes Ron Miller as writing in TechCrunch (9/7, 466K), "This is not the worst breach of all time by a long shot in terms of pure numbers. ... But this leak is particularly worrisome because Equifax is a credit reporting service and tracks a history of your consumer life, credit cards, credit scores and more – and it gives the black market a potential gold mine of information about people's financial lives." CNET News (9/7, Ng, Musil, 2.35M) echoes this assessment, calling Equifax a "treasure trove of financial data" for hackers.

Politico (9/7, Geller, 3.6M) reports, "Hackers exploited a now-fixed website vulnerability to access the information, according to Equifax." The Los Angeles Times (9/7, Dave, 4.49M) reports, "Equifax said it launched a website for people to check whether their data were affected and to sign up for the company's credit-monitoring services. But a form on the website purportedly offering to 'check potential impact' instead just gives users a date on which they must return to Equifax's website to enroll in credit monitoring. The discrepancy drew quick scorn from consumers on social media."

The Wall Street Journal (9/7, Minaya, Subscription Publication, 6.45M) quotes Equifax CEO Richard Smith as saying in a prepared statement, "This is clearly a disappointing event for our company, and one that strikes at the heart of who we are and what we do. ... I apologize to consumers and our business customers for the concern and frustration this causes."

Fox Business (9/7, Kazin, 741K) quotes security analyst Avivah Litan as saying, "On a scale of one to 10, this is a 10 in terms of potential identity theft. ... Credit bureaus keep so much data about us that affects almost everything we do."

Reporting similarly are PC Magazine (9/7, Albanesius, 2.38M), USA Today (9/7, McCoy, 8.62M), CNN Money (9/7, O'Brien, 3.59M), Reuters (9/7, Swamynathan), and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution (9/7, Grantham, 1.16M).

Equifax Executives Sold Shares After Breach Discovered But Before Publicly Disclosed. NBC News (9/8, 3.46M) reports online, "Adding to the scandal, three of the company's top executives sold Equifax shares just days after the breach was discovered. The breach was not publicly disclosed until Thursday, more than six weeks later."

The Washington Post (9/7, Timberg, Dwoskin, Fung, 10.38M) reports, "The company did not respond to a question about why it waited six weeks to disclose the hack." Bloomberg News (9/7, Melin, 4.52M) reports that the executives who sold their shares "had not yet been informed of the incident, the company said."

Bossert Discusses Administration's Approach To Deterring Cyberattacks, Pushes Bilateral Cyber Discussions.

Politico (9/7, Starks, 3.6M) continues coverage of Homeland Security Adviser Bossert's comments on deterring cyberattacks. Bossert spoke Wednesday at the Intelligence and National Security Summit, where he reportedly said the Administration "isn't planning to use pre-emptive digital attacks as part of its plan to deter America's cyber adversaries." Instead, Bossert is quoted as saying the Administration will "apply elements of national power outside of cyber to punish bad behavior. ... We'll try to do it in a way that's commensurate with the offense, and also revocable." Politico says this aims to avoid escalation. Bossert discussed the need for the government to propose cyberspace rules so "we can think through what it is that we'll do to those that violate those rules," and he also promoted bilateral talks for cyber engagement. He stated, "I love multilateral bodies for a lot of reasons, but I don't always love multilateral bodies for the purpose of enforcement."

Wagner: Threats Against Critical Infrastructure Growing.

Risk Cooperative managing director of risk solutions Daniel Wagner writes in the [Huffington Post](#) (9/7, Wagner, 5.74M) that "much of the world's critical infrastructure utilizes supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems," which "have increasingly become connected to the Internet but were not designed with cybersecurity in mind." Wagner asserts that many cyberattacks "either go unreported or are under-reported, leaving the public with a false sense of security," and "infrastructure is becoming a target of choice." Wagner adds, "Both governments and companies are generally hesitant to implement strict security protocols to protect themselves, nor devote the resources necessary to getting the job done, without having experienced an attack. That must change, and soon."

New Democratic National Committee CTO Launches Simulated Phishing Attacks.

[The Hill](#) (9/7, Greenwood, 1.68M) reports new Democratic National Committee CTO Raffi Krikorian "is launching a series of simulated phishing attacks on DNC staff in an effort to prevent another cybersecurity breach." The Hill says, "The simulated attack is among several steps being taken by Krikorian to tighten the DNC's cybersecurity to avoid a repeat of the breach last year that led to thousands of internal emails being posted on WikiLeaks." Krikorian "has pushed staffers to use messaging apps that offer end-to-end encryption, as well as to enable two-factor verification for login credentials."

WPost: Recent Malware Wave Highlights Growing Importance Of Cybersecurity.

In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (9/7, 10.38M) reports that security firm Symantec's recent discovery of a wave of malware called Dragonfly surfacing in Europe and the United States – malware that poses a "serious potential threat to electrical and industrial systems" – has highlighted the increasing importance of investing in cybersecurity.

LABORATORY

Buffalo Woman Pleads Guilty To 1983 Murder After DNA Evidence Linked Her To Crime Scene.

The [Washington Post](#) (9/7, Press, 10.38M) reports that in Buffalo in 1983, "sixty-five years after Edmund Schreiber survived some of the bloodiest fighting of World War I, the Purple Heart Medal recipient was found strangled with his own neckties." Now, Saundra Adams, "a then-teenage neighbor-turned-librarian, is facing prison time after admitting to killing the 92-year-old combat veteran during a break-in." DNA evidence tied Adams to the murder scene. On Wednesday, Adams "pleaded guilty in a Buffalo courtroom to a reduced charge of manslaughter."

LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

Members Of White Supremacist Gang Moved Following Murder Of Colorado Prisons Official.

The [Denver Post](#) (9/7, 817K) reports that "after a 211 Crew parolee killed Colorado prisons chief Tom Clements in 2013, officials began banishing leaders of the white supremacist gang to prisons across the U.S. through an inmate-swapping system in which high-risk prisoners are secretly traded from one state to the next." According to the Post, "That diaspora of shot callers – those who can order gang murders – is why Benjamin Davis was at the Wyoming State Penitentiary, south of Rawlins, when he killed himself last month." The Post says Davis founded the gang and is "suspected of ordering Clements' assassination."

FBI Asked To Probe Arrest Of Utah Nurse.

The [AP](#) (9/2, Whitehurst) reports that Salt Lake County District Attorney Sim Gill has "asked the FBI to join an investigation into the rough arrest of a Utah nurse after video of her being dragged

screaming from a hospital drew widespread condemnation." According to the AP, Gill is "overseeing a criminal investigation into officers involved in the handcuffing of nurse Alex Wubbels," and is "asking for FBI help in part because his office can't prosecute possible civil rights violations like wrongful arrest."

Justice Department Declines To Pursue Charges In Alabama Police Shooting.

The [AP](#) (9/7) reports the Justice Department announced Thursday it is not pursuing charges against Mobile, Alabama Police Officer Harold Hurst, who on June, 13, 2016 shot and killed 19-year-old Michael Moore during a traffic stop. Justice Department officials reportedly "said there was no evidence to disprove the officer's account that... Moore was reaching for a gun tucked in his waistband," citing lack of video evidence and conflicting witness accounts. "The Department makes this decision because the evidence obtained through the course of a rigorous investigation is insufficient to prove that the Officer willfully used excessive force resulting in Moore's death," the department said in a statement. According to the AP, "Hurst said he noticed a gun tucked in Moore's waistband when Moore bent down to place a cellphone on the ground and ordered him not to touch it." Emergency room personnel later confirmed Moore had a "firearm in the waistband of his clothing, the department said."

[WSFA-TV Montgomery \(AL\)](#) Montgomery, AL (9/7, McAboy, Coffaro, 55K) offers similar coverage of the Justice Department decision, adding that Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson released a statement, saying, "Since the shooting of Michael Moore, the City of Mobile has taken unprecedented steps to ensure transparency, incorporating lessons learned from other communities that have experienced similar tragedies. Our prayers remain with all of the families affected by this incident. We continue to work as a City to strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and the citizens we serve. We remain committed to the vision of making Mobile the safest, most business and family friendly city in America."

The [Mobile \(AL\) Press-Register](#) (9/7, Specker, 714K) offers additional coverage.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Private Lawyer Appears On Behalf Of 'El Chapo' In Brooklyn Court.

[Newsday \(NY\)](#) (9/7, Riley, 1.64M) reports Washington defense lawyer Eduardo Balarezo, who specializes "in drug cases, has entered an appearance in Brooklyn federal court on behalf of alleged Mexican drug lord Joaquin 'El Chapo' Guzmán Loera, ending a stalemate with the government over possible fee forfeiture." Balarezo and other private lawyers have replaced the public defenders who represented Guzmán since January. The transition was "stalled because prosecutors wouldn't guarantee they won't seize fees as drug proceeds, and U.S. District Judge Brian Cogan refused to intercede." Newsday reports, "Although he has no written guarantee that the government won't challenge fees, Balarezo said he has received a retainer from Guzmán and is prepared to face any challenge."

Elderly Colombian Man Sentenced To 50 Months In Prison For Laundering Drug Money.

The [Boston Globe](#) (9/7, Andersen, 969K) reports that Pedro Mejia Salaza, "a Colombian national in his 70s, received a 50-month prison term on Wednesday in Boston for laundering more than \$760,000 for a feared crime syndicate with ties to the late Pablo Escobar, the notorious Colombian drug trafficker." Salazar "was sentenced in US District Court in Boston, after pleading guilty in May to a charge of conspiracy to launder money." According to Prosecutors, Salazar "washed at least \$768,586 in drug proceeds in Boston and elsewhere over a three-year period at the direction of La Oficina de Envigado, a crime syndicate based in Medellin."

OTHER FBI NEWS

45th Anniversary Of First Female FBI Agents Celebrated This Year.

[KMOX-TV St. Louis](#) (9/7, 21K) notes that the FBI is "celebrating its 45th anniversary of the first

women agents of the modern FBI." KMOX says St. Louis "has a distinct connection" considering that Joanne Pierce Misko was "assigned...to the St. Louis field office in the early 70's." Misko is quoted as saying: "In St. Louis I found the agents very accepting, and they just let me be an agent and do my work like anybody else. And that's the way you prove yourself, by doing the job that you were sent to do."

OTHER WASHINGTON NEWS

Wife Of Trump Organization Ethics Attorney Arrested For Sex With Jail Inmate.

The New York Post (9/7, II, 4.31M) reports that Teresa Jo Burchfield, the wife of Trump Organization ethics attorney Bobby Burchfield, on Tuesday "was busted for allegedly having sex in the back seat of a car with an jail inmate in Virginia, officials said." She was arrested "outside the Fauquier County Adult Detention Center, authorities" said. Mrs. Burchfield "was allegedly doing the deed with a 23-year-old inmate who had trustee privileges, allowing him to go outside the jail. 'The defendant was caught in the backseat of her vehicle with an inmate,' according to a criminal complaint. ... She was released on a \$5,000 secured bond."

Feinstein, Durbin Question Judicial Nominee's Catholic Faith.

The Washington Free Beacon (9/7, McMorris, 158K) reports that Sen. Dianne Feinstein's "criticism of a judicial nominee's faith led to accusations of religious discrimination Thursday." Feinstein "said the Catholic faith of Notre Dame Law School Prof. Amy Barrett was 'of concern' in her nomination to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals." Said Feinstein, "The dogma lives loudly within you and that's of concern." Her comments "sparked outcry from the Catholic Association, which condemned her 'shockingly illegitimate line of questioning.'" However, Feinstein "was not the only Democrat to bring up Barrett's faith" during Wednesday's confirmation hearing. Senate Minority Whip Durbin "also brought up Barrett's faith, asking her, 'Do you consider yourself an Orthodox Catholic?'" A Wall Street Journal (9/7, Subscription Publication, 6.45M) editorial is critical of the Democrats' questioning of Barrett, arguing it is part of a larger effort on the part of the left to exclude people with strong religious beliefs from public life.

Harsanyi: Democrats Becoming "Hostile Towards Orthodox Faiths." In a piece for The Federalist (9/7, Harsanyi, 88K), senior editor David Harsanyi like wise highlights Democrats' questioning of Barrett and argues that "these lines of questioning, increasingly prevalent in political discourse, are an attempt to create the impression that faithful Christians whose beliefs are at odds with newly sanctified cultural mores are incapable of doing their jobs." Democratic "dogma," he adds, "is becoming increasingly hostile towards orthodox faiths, not the other way around."

Trump Nominates Katsas To DC Circuit Court Of Appeals.

In what the Washington Times (9/7, Boyer, Swoyer, 541K) describes as an "unusual step," President Trump on Thursday nominated White House lawyer Gregory G. Katsas "to a seat on the influential US Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, a court that former President Barack Obama fought to turn into an institution dominated by Democratic appointees." The nomination of Katsas, who "currently serves as deputy counsel to the president in the White House Counsel's Office," could "set off a contentious confirmation battle in the Senate" as Kastas is likely to face questions "about thorny legal issues such as the White House response to Russia-related investigations and the drafting of the president's order on 'extreme vetting' of travelers from predominantly Muslim countries."

Justice Department Says Sanctuary Cities Are Lower On Grant Priority.

The AP (9/7, Press) reports the Justice Department said Thursday that cities cooperating with US immigration authorities will have increased likelihood of securing grant money for community policing over "so-called sanctuary cities." According to the AP, "the department said Thursday that compliant cities will get 'additional points' in the application scoring process" for grants supporting the "development of community policing strategies as well as training for community members

and leaders." The AP characterizes the move as "another way in which Attorney General Jeff Sessions is trying to force cities to help federal authorities detain and deport those in the country illegally."

Citing DOJ documents, [Breitbart](#) (9/7, Mason, 2.42M) reports the DOJ Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) – which is responsible for issuing "one of the department's most important discretionary grant programs for state and local law enforcement agencies, will allow applicants for this year's cycle to certify their cooperation with Department of Homeland Security immigration enforcement efforts." In turn, those "certified cooperative agencies" will be granted "priority consideration in funding decisions" for the fiscal year 2017 COPS grant program." According to Breitbart, the certification requirements are similar to "the requirements DOJ put in place in July to prevent non-cooperative sanctuary cities from participating in the department's Byrne Grant program."

DOJ: Confirming Sessions Resignation Letter Would Violate His Privacy.

The [Huffington Post](#) (9/7, Reilly, 5.74M) reports the Justice Department has refused "to confirm or deny the existence of a letter of resignation that Attorney General Jeff Sessions reportedly prepared at the request of President Donald Trump," who has "been stewing for months over Sessions' decision to recuse himself from the DOJ investigation into alleged Russian interference in the 2016 presidential campaign." HuffPo "submitted a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request seeking a copy of any resignation letter," but a "Justice Department representative wrote HuffPost on Thursday that even to acknowledge the existence of such a letter would violate the attorney general's privacy." Such "language is called a Glomar response" and is a common tactic "in the national security realm when records are classified." The article concludes that, in public, Sessions' "standing in the Trump administration has improved in recent months," noting that he served as "the face of the Trump administration's announcement about ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program."

Report: DOJ Faults DEA Over Dangerous Agent Liaison.

[Reuters](#) (9/7, Lynch) reports an internal Justice Department Inspector General report "found that two former top officials at the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration improperly reinstated the security clearance of a special agent who was having a sexual affair with a convicted criminal." The report, which was released Thursday, states that former DEA Administrator Michele Leonhart – who resigned following a 2015 IG report revealing "that agents attended sex parties with prostitutes" – "shares responsibility" for a "flawed decision" by former DEA Acting Chief Inspector Herman E. "Chuck" Whaley to improperly intervene in getting a security clearance reinstated for a special agent who had engaged in "serious misconduct." The DEA did not offer "any immediate comment on the report, and Leonhart could not be immediately reached."

The [New York Post](#) (9/7, Perez, 4.31M) offers similar coverage.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Tillerson, Mattis Concerned By Proposed AUMF Amendment.

Mike Emmanuel reported on [Fox News' Special Report](#) (9/7, 2.06M) reported Secretary of State Tillerson and Defense Secretary Mattis have signed a letter sent to "key lawmakers" that expressed "serious concerns" that a proposed amendment to the Authorization for the Use of Military Force "would tie the Commander-in-Chief's hands." The amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act, introduced by Sens. Tim Kaine and Jeff Flake, would let Congress "set parameters on geography and add time limits to military action." Fox showed Kaine saying it's "very unwise to continue to let war happen on autopilot. That's what we are doing now." According to Emmanuel, sources say they don't expect the amendment will have the votes, "especially with the concerns from the Administration."

Trump Expresses Openness To Mediating Qatar Dispute.

Politico (9/7, McCaskill, 3.6M) reports that during a joint news conference with Kuwait's emir, President Trump "expressed a willingness to be a mediator between Qatar and other Arab countries accusing it of supporting terrorism," saying, "While I do appreciate and respect the mediation, I would be willing to be the mediator. ... I was telling the emir before that if I can help between UAE and Saudi Arabia...if I can help mediate between Qatar and, in particular, the UAE and Saudi Arabia, I would be willing to do so." He added, "I think you'd have a deal worked out very quickly. I think it's something that's going to get solved fairly easily."

Trump Says US Killing ISIS Fighters At Record Pace.

The Washington Times (9/7, Boyer, 541K) reports President Trump said Thursday that the US has killed more ISIS militants in the Middle East under his Administration than during the entire Obama Administration. During a news conference with the Emir of Kuwait, Trump said, "ISIS is rapidly disappearing, as you know. ... What we do is we kill ISIS, and we have succeeded in that respect. That's because of our great military. We have done better in the previous eight months of my presidency than we did in the previous eight years against ISIS."

USA Today Analysis: Defeat Of ISIS In Syria Bolstering Assad Regime.

In an analysis, USA Today (9/7, Michaels, 8.62M) reports that the Administration's focus on eliminating ISIS is having the "unintended consequence" of bolstering the regime of Bashar Assad. Analysts say the de facto buffer zones established by the US and Russian military have allowed the Syrian government "room to expand its influence," and the success of government forces earlier this week in reaching an army outpost outside the ISIS-held city of Deir el-Zour has given the regime a greater foothold in northeastern Syria.

Iranian-Backed Militia Vows To Target Americans Once ISIS Defeated.

The Washington Times (9/7, Scarborough, 541K) reports the commander of an Iranian-trained Shiite militia known as Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH) vowed Sunday that it would start targeting US soldiers once ISIS is defeated in Iraq, according to Iran's Fars News Agency. A military official "told The Washington Times that the US has plans to counter KH if it begins attacking Americans," adding, "Regarding the sense of Iranian malign influence, we're trying alert NATO, the coalition, the State Department, the UN and the Gulf countries. ... It's a really big question. We're very aware of it. We're watching the move to post-ISIS. What the Iranians are saying is of significant concern."

Israel Strikes Military Facility Deep In Syria, Killing Two.

The AP (9/7, Mroue, Karam) reports that Israeli warplanes struck a military facility in western Syria Thursday, killing two soldiers, "in a stronghold of President Bashar Assad that is also heavily protected by the Russians and Iranians." The Syrian army in a statement "said the Israeli warplanes fired several missiles from Lebanese air space, and warned of the 'dangerous repercussions of such hostile acts on the security and stability of the region.'" Some reports describe the compound as a "missile producing factory," and others suggest the facility was linked to Syria's chemical weapons program.

The Washington Post (9/7, Loveluck, Morris, 10.38M) reports that military analysts say the facility in the western town of Masyaf "hosts a branch of the government agency responsible for developing and producing nonconventional weapons and precision missiles." The site also has been linked to producing "missiles bound for the Hezbollah militant group."

The Wall Street Journal (9/7, Abdulrahim, Shekter-Porat, Subscription Publication, 6.45M) reports former Israeli officials say the airstrike was designed to thwart military threats from Iran and its Lebanese ally Hezbollah. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the strikes targeted a military training base and a warehouse for short- and midrange missiles.

WSJournal: Israel And Syria Heading For Conflict. In an editorial, the Wall Street Journal (9/7, Subscription Publication, 6.45M) writes that Israel's airstrike on a Syrian military facility on Thursday – a facility linked with Iran – should draw focus to the fact that the danger of a proxy war or a direct war between Israel and Iran over southern Syria is steadily growing.

Trump: I'd "Prefer Not Going" Military Route With North Korea, But It "Could Happen."

NBC Nightly News (9/7, story 7, 2:15, Holt, 16.61M) reported as the White House is "bracing for the possibility of another missile test by North Korea," President Trump is "again leaving open the option of military force against Kim Jong-Un, saying if he did, and he hopes he doesn't have to, it would be what he called a very sad day for North Korea." Bret Baier reported on Fox News' Special Report (9/7, 2.06M) that President Trump on Thursday said war with North Korea is not inevitable. Trump was shown saying, "I would prefer not going the route of the military, but it's something certainly that could happen."

USA Today (9/7, Jackson, Przybyla, 8.62M) reports that during a joint news conference with the emir of Kuwait, Trump "refused to say whether he would demand that North Korea give up all its nuclear weapons, saying he did not want to reveal his negotiation strategy." Said the President, "I can tell you that North Korea is behaving badly and it's got to stop." The Washington Post (9/7, Gearan, 10.38M) says Trump also "cast doubt that further negotiations could work," saying that US presidents have been "talking and talking and talking" to North Korea for 25 years while North Korea has been developing its nuclear capability.

Roll Call (9/7, Bennett, 134K) reports Trump warned North Korea by saying the US military "has never been stronger," but notes that "as a candidate he said it was a force weakened by unwise wars as well as budgetary neglect by the Obama administration and Congress." Politico (9/7, Nelson, 3.6M) reports that he "boasted of the uptick in military spending since his inauguration," telling reporters that "each day, new equipment is delivered, new and beautiful equipment, the best in the world, the best anywhere in the world by far."

State Dept.: "Pressure Campaign" Against North Korea Working. The Washington Examiner (9/7, Kasperowicz, 465K) reports that the State Department said Thursday that the international campaign to pressure North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile program "is working." Spokeswoman Heather Nauert said it's a "legitimate question" to ask if the international campaign is working, and responded, "Yes, I can say that the pressure campaign is working." She added, "Now, when you see a test that took place on Sunday, you may think, 'Goodness, that is not working.' But that is not the case, and here's why. It can take a long, long time for sanctions to work. It can take a long time for a pressure campaign to work. It is not an overnight thing."

China Agrees UN Should Action Against North Korea For Nuclear Test. Greg Palkot said Fox News' Special Report (9/7, 2.06M) there are reports that Kim Jong-un's assets "could be frozen by new US-backed UN sanctions," while "oil imports, textile exports, and North Korean foreign workers could be cut." Russia is "rejecting" the measures, and China is "dragging its feet," although it "agrees the UN Security Council should take further action." China, Reuters (9/7, Shepherd, Golubkova) reports, agreed Thursday that the UN "should take more action against North Korea after its latest nuclear test, while also pushing for dialogue to help resolve the standoff." The Washington Post (9/7, Rauhala, 10.38M) says the comments by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi "suggested possible room for cooperation over US-drafted plans to increase pressures on North Korea after its nuclear test earlier this week."

UN Report: Sanctions Being Subverted By Member States. A draft UN report obtained by the Wall Street Journal (9/7, Talley, Subscription Publication, 6.45M) says member countries are helping North Korea evade international sanctions, including through prohibited trade in arms and commodities and financing. The Journal quotes the UN report as saying, "Despite an increased rate of member states' submission of national implementation reports to the Security Council, the actual implementation of the sanctions lags far behind what is necessary to achieve the core goal of denuclearization."

South Korea: North Korea Could Another Conduct ICBM Test Soon. The New York Times (9/7, Sanger, Subscription Publication, 13.56M) reports that South Korean Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon "is saying publicly what American officials will not: In the next few days, intelligence reports predict, North Korea will launch another intercontinental ballistic missile." At the White House and the Pentagon, however, US officials are "scrambling to decide how the United States should react, particularly if the North Koreans demonstrate without doubt that they can reach"

Guam, or "even a distance equivalent to striking the West Coast of the United States."

Experts: North Korea Nearing Its Nuclear Goal. The AP (9/7, Talmadge) reports North Korea's latest nuclear test was "part theater, part propaganda and maybe even part fake. But experts say it was also a major display of something very real: Pyongyang's mastery of much of the know-how it needs to reach its goal of becoming a full-fledged nuclear state." However, it remains unclear whether North Korea tested, as it claims, a hydrogen bomb ready to be mounted on an ICBM.

North Korea Threatens Electromagnetic Pulse Attack For First Time. Breitbart (9/7, Nazarian, 2.42M) reports that North Korea, "for the first time, threatened to wage an EMP (electromagnetic pulse) attack" against the US. Shortly after North Korea launched its latest nuclear test using a hydrogen bomb, its state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) claimed the weapon "is a multi-functional thermonuclear nuke with great destructive power which can be detonated even at high altitudes for super-powerful EMP (electromagnetic pulse) attack according to strategic goals." Breitbart warns that "such an attack has the potential to cause catastrophic damage to North America, Canada, the West, and many of its neighbors."

Analysts: South Korea's Moon "Sandwiched" By North's Threat. The Washington Post (9/7, Lee, 10.38M) reports South Korean President Moon Jae-in took office earlier this year "with a pledge to foster warmer ties with North Korea. But the North Korean nuclear threat has rapidly escalated in the months since his election," leaving him "sandwiched" between "his supporters' expectations and the realities of dealing with an increasingly volatile regime, analysts say."

Dennis Rodman Wants To "Straighten Things Out" With Friend Kim Jong-Un. The Washington Times (9/7, Blake, 541K) reports former NBA star Dennis Rodman said in an interview Wednesday with "Good Morning Britain" that he'd like to "straighten things out" with his friend, North Korea leader Kim Jong-Un. Rodman said, "I just want to try to straighten things out for everyone to get along together." Rodman, who was also a contestant on President Trump's reality television show, "The Apprentice," added, "I think if the president even tries to reach out for Kim, I think it will be a great possibility. Things can happen if Donald Trump, if they sit down, and have some type of mutual conversation."

Top Navy Admiral Says Ships Kept At Sea Despite Training, Maintenance Shortfalls.

The New York Times (9/7, Schmitt, Subscription Publication, 13.56M) reports that Adm. William F. Moran, the vice chair of naval operations, acknowledged Thursday before a hearing of two House Armed Services subcommittees that the Navy "had knowingly operated warships" in the western Pacific "despite a growing number of major training and maintenance shortfalls – all to meet increasing operational demands." The hearing "painted a disturbing portrait of fatigued crews and commanders on a shrinking overseas fleet saddled with constant deployments – including confronting an expansionist Chinese military and keeping vigil on a nuclear saber-rattling North Korea – with little time left to train or to repair aging ships."

Official: New Venezuela Sanctions Focused On Behavior, Not Regime Change.

The AP (9/7, Lugo) reports Deputy National Security Adviser Rick Waddell said Thursday that new sanctions on Venezuela do not "necessarily" aim for "regime change" but rather seek to restore a "democratic process" in the country. Waddell said the sanctions would be "behaviorally focused," and added, "We would like them to respect human rights. We would like them to respect property." The AP observes that Waddell's comments "suggest a softening in America's position" from President Trump's consideration of military action last month.

Pope Francis Urges Reconciliation In Colombia.

The Washington Post (9/7, Tomaselli, 10.38M) reports that Pope Francis on Thursday urged Colombians to embrace reconciliation in the country's long conflict with FARC rebels as he began his five-day trip in the country. In an address at Colombia's presidential palace, Francis acknowledged the "obstacles, differences and varying perspectives," but stressed, "The more demanding the path...the greater must be our efforts to acknowledge each another, to heal

wounds, to build bridges, to strengthen relationships and support one another.”

Massive Earthquake Hits Mexico.

The [New York Times](#) (9/8, Malkin, Ramzy, Subscription Publication, 13.56M) reports an earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 8.1 struck about 60 miles southwest of Pijijiapan, Mexico, “shaking buildings as far away as Mexico City and sending worried residents fleeing into the streets.” Mexico City’s airport had a glass door shatter, “and there were reports of tumbling walls.” [USA Today](#) (9/7, Ventura, 8.62M) reports, “The governor of the Mexican state of Chiapas says at least three people have been killed.” Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales said on national television, “We have reports of some damage and the death of one person, even though we still don’t have exact details.” The [Washington Post](#) (9/8, Partlow, 10.38M) reports, “The US Tsunami Warning System said hazardous tsunami waves were possible on the Pacific coasts of Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama and Honduras.”

Congressional Leaders Condemn Violence In Burma.

The [Washington Post](#) (9/7, Nakamura, Gowen, 10.38M) reports that Democrat and Republican congressional leaders on Thursday joined international condemnation of the violence in western Burma, with a bipartisan group of senators issuing a joint resolution condemning the “horrific acts of violence” against the country’s Rohingya minority and imploring Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi “to play an active role in ending this humanitarian tragedy.” Sens. Richard Durbin (D-IL), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Corey Booker (D-NJ), and John McCain (R-AZ) wrote the resolution.

Ignatius: Tillerson Working “Very, Very Quietly” With China And Russia.

[Washington Post](#) (9/7, 10.38M) columnist David Ignatius writes that Secretary of State Tillerson “has often been the silent man in the Trump foreign policy team. But out of the spotlight, he appears to be crafting a broad strategy aimed at working with China to resolve the North Korea crisis and with Russia to stabilize Syria and Ukraine.” The “Tillerson approach,” Ignatius says, “focuses on personal diplomacy, in direct contacts with Chinese and Russian leaders, and through private channels to North Korea.” He is working on the “strategic assumption is that if the United States can subtly manage its relations with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin — and allow those leaders to take credit for successes — complex regional problems can be solved effectively.” According to Ignatius, Tillerson is “unfazed by criticism that he has been a poor communicator and by recent talk of discord with President Trump.”

THE BIG PICTURE

Headlines From Today’s Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[Senate Passes Bill On Storm Aid, Debt Limit And Spending](#)

[The Corporate Hurricane: Houston CEOs Race To Mend A Battered Workforce](#)

[Equifax Data Breach Potentially Affected 143 Million In US](#)

[Amazon Seeks Prime Location For \\$5 Billion Second HQ](#)

New York Times:

[The Fake Americans Russia Created To Influence The Election](#)

[Devastation In The Caribbean As Irma Heads Toward Miami](#)

[Energized Trump Sees Bipartisan Path, At Least For Now](#)

[Trump Jr. Says He Wanted Russian Dirt To Determine Clinton’s ‘Fitness’ For Office](#)

[Equifax Says Cyberattack May Have Affected 143 Million Customers](#)

[Graydon Carter To End 25-Year Run As Vanity Fair’s Editor](#)

Washington Post:

[Trump's Shift Shakes Parties](#)

[Equifax Breach Hits Credit Data Of Millions](#)

[Florida Bracing For A Direct Hit From Irma](#)

[At Least 10 Dead As Massive Storm Pounds Caribbean](#)

[NFL's Most Talked-About Player Is Also A Player Without A Job](#)

Financial Times:

[ECB Begins Discussions On Tapering QE Despite Stronger Euro](#)

[Emmanuel Macron Makes Case For 'Ambitious' Overhaul Of Eurozone](#)

[Irma Set To Hit Florida As 'Dangerous Major Hurricane'](#)

[Saudi Arabia Redrafts Crown Prince's Transformation Plan](#)

Washington Times:

[Ruthless Iranian Militia Vows To Turn Against U.S. Troops Once Islamic State Is Defeated In Iraq](#)

[Depth Of War Carnage Comes Into Focus As Syrians Start Long Struggle To Rebuild Their Lives](#)

[Trump Hails New Era Of Bipartisanship After Lawmakers Vote For More Debt, Spending](#)

[More Than 5,000 Out-Of-State Voters May Have Tipped New Hampshire Against Trump](#)

[DeVos To Overhaul 'Shameful' Obama-Era Campus Sexual-Assault Regulations](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: Hurricane Irma-Caribbean; Hurricane Irma-Forecast; Hurricane Irma-Barbuda; Hurricane Irma-Florida; Hurricane Irma-Miami; Hurricane Irma-Travel Disruption; Hurricane Irma-Wind Strength; Russia Meddling Investigation-Trump Junior; Equifax-Cyber Security Breach; West Coast-Wild Fires; Las Vegas-Police Violence; Hurricane Irma-Neighbor Generosity.

CBS: Hurricane Irma-Forecast; Hurricane Irma-Caribbean; Hurricane Irma-Miami; Hurricane Irma-Florida; Hurricane Irma-Storm Surge; Hurricane Irma-Georgia, Carolinas; Senate-Hurricane Relief; DeVos-Campus Sexual Assault Policy; Steve Bannon Interview; Russia Meddling Investigation-Trump Junior; West Coast-Wild Fires; Equifax-Cyber Security Breach; Amazon-New Headquarters Plan; US Womens Tennis.

NBC: Hurricane Irma-Florida; Hurricane Irma-Travel Disruption; Hurricane Irma-Forecast 1; Hurricane Irma-Caribbean; Equifax-Cyber Security Breach; Senate-Hurricane Relief; Russia Meddling Investigation-Trump Junior; Hurricane Irma-Infrastructure; Amazon-New Headquarters Plan; British Royal Family-Prince Returns To School; Hurricane Irma-Forecast 2.

Network TV At A Glance:

Hurricane Irma – 37 minutes

Russia Meddling Investigation-Trump Junior – 4 minutes, 20 seconds

Equifax-Cyber Security Breach – 2 minutes, 30 seconds

West Coast-Wildfires – 45 seconds

Amazon-New Headquarters Plan – 45 seconds

Senate-Hurricane Relief – 35 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: Hurricane Irma; Russia Meddling Investigation-Trump Junior; Equifax-Cyber Security Breach.

CBS: Hurricane Irma; Hurricane Harvey-Former Presidents Fundraising; North Korea Threats; California-Travel Restriction Lawsuit; Equifax-Cyber Security Breach.

FOX: Hurricane Irma; Senate-Hurricane Relief. Russia Meddling Investigation-Trump Junior.

NPR: Hurricane Irma; California-Travel Restriction Lawsuit; Equifax-Cyber Security Breach.

WASHINGTON'S SCHEDULE

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

PRESIDENT TRUMP — Receives a hurricane update; Departs the White House to Camp David.
VICE PRESIDENT PENCE — Joins the President to receive a hurricane update; Joins the President at Camp David.

US Senate: No public schedule announced.

US House: 9:00 AM House expected to vote on omnibus funding bill – House of Representatives meets for legislative business, with agenda expected to include completion of consideration of 'H.R. 3354 – Make America Secure and Prosperous Appropriations Act, 2018', and possibly also consideration of legislation related to a continuing resolution, Hurricane Harvey supplemental funding, and the debt ceiling Location: Washington, DC <http://www.house.gov/>

10:00 AM Dem Reps. Bobby Scott and John Conyers hold forum on affirmative action, racial climate on college campuses – Democratic Reps. Bobby Scott and John Conyers hold a forum titled 'Affirmative Action, Inclusion, and Racial Climate on America's Campuses', convening student officers, representatives from institutions of higher education, and key legal experts to discuss the role of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act in 'ensuring that students are welcomed to a safe, inclusive learning environment free of harassment and intimidation on the basis of race, color, or national origin'. Attendees include NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund President and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill, Southern Poverty Law Center Executive Director Richard Cohen, University of Virginia President Theresa Sullivan, Duke University Office for Institutional Equity Vice President Dr Benjamin Reese, and University of Maryland Chief Diversity Officer Roger Worthington Location: Rayburn House Office Building, Rm 2203, Washington, DC www.bobbyscott.house.gov <https://twitter.com/repbobbyscott>

12:00 PM Congressional Internet Caucus Advisory Committee briefing on Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act – Advisory Committee to the Congressional Internet Caucus Advisory Committee hosts 'Carving Out Exceptions to Section 230: How Will It Affect The Internet?' educational briefing, featuring Georgetown University Law School Professor in Law & Technology Julie Cohen, Santa Clara Law School Professor Eric Goldman, and Engine Policy Director Rachel Wolbers Location: Rayburn House Office Building, Rm 2237, Washington, DC www.netcaucus.org <https://twitter.com/NetCaucusAC> #Sec230

Other: 9:00 AM Commerce Secretary Ross speaks at The Washington Post – Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross speaks at The Washington Post, interviewed by the newspaper's James Hohmann, about Trump administration efforts to 'reshape the playing field for international trade', the future of NAFTA, the tax reform push, and other 'pressing domestic and international economic issues' * Event held as part of The Daily 202 Live event series, sponsored by Bank of America Location: The Washington Post Live Center, 1301 K St NW, Washington, DC <http://www.washingtonpost.com/> <https://twitter.com/washingtonpost>

9:00 AM '9/11 to ISIS and Beyond' BPC conference – '9/11 to ISIS and Beyond: The Future of Terrorism (And What We Can Do About It)' Bipartisan Policy Center conference examining 'the evolution of terrorism from 9/11 to ISIS and beyond, the effectiveness of U.S. counter-terrorism strategy, and how to break the cycle in the future'. Participants include Republican Rep. Michael McCaul, State Department Coordinator for Counterterrorism Nathan Sales, former New Jersey Governor Thomas Kean, former Rep. Lee Hamilton, Atlantic Council Senior Fellow Jasmine El-Gamal, Coexist President Tarek Elgawhary, Middle East Broadcasting Networks President Alberto Fernandez, Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy Senior Fellow Hassan Hassan, International Institute for Strategic Studies Middle East Corresponding Director Sir John Jenkins, Talisman-gate.com's Nibras Kazimi, IREX President and CEO Kristin Lord, and American Enterprise Institute Critical Threats Project Research Manager Katherine Zimmerman Location: Sofitel Washington DC Lafayette Square, 806 15th St, NW, Washington, DC www.bipartisanpolicy.org https://twitter.com/BPC_Bipartisan

9:15 AM Ohio Gov. Kasich and Colorado Gov. Hickenlooper discuss bipartisan proposal to stabilize health insurance market at AEI – American Enterprise Institute and Center for American Progress host conference on health care, with Governors John Kasich (Ohio) and John Hickenlooper (Colorado) discussing their bipartisan proposal to 'stabilize the individual insurance market and reform the health system'. Also at the event, a panel discusses the challenges of ensuring access to affordable health coverage Location: American Enterprise Institute, 1789 Massachusetts Ave

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NW, Washington, DC <http://www.aei.org/> <https://twitter.com/AEI>

11:00 AM Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue ceremonially swears in Tony Tooke as the 18th U.S. Forest Service chief Location: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC www.usda.gov <https://twitter.com/USDA>

Congressional Budget Office releases 'Monthly Budget Review for August 2017' report Location: TBD www.cbo.gov/ <https://twitter.com/USCBO>

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Obtained by UndeadFOIA

From: Brower, Gregory (DO) (FBI)
Subject: Pending Investigations Update
To: McCabe, Andrew G. (DO) (FBI); Bowdich, David L. (DO) (FBI); Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI); Ghattas, Carl (CTD) (FBI); Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI)
Sent: November 6, 2017 12:59 PM (UTC-05:00)



b5 -1
b7E -4

Gregory A. Brower
Assistant Director
FBI Congressional Affairs
(Direct)
(Mobile)

b7E -3

From: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)
Subject: Russian government hackers penetrated DNC, stole opposition research on Trump
To: Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI); [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)
Cc: [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)
Sent: June 14, 2016 12:42 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1
b7C -1

Russian government hackers penetrated DNC, stole opposition research on Trump

By Ellen Nakashima June 14 at 11:30 AM

Russian government hackers penetrated the computer network of the Democratic National Committee and gained access to the entire database of opposition research on GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump, according to committee officials and security experts who responded to the breach.

The intruders so thoroughly compromised the DNC's system that they also were able to read all email and chat traffic, said DNC officials and the security experts.

The intrusion into the DNC was one of several targeting American political organizations. The networks of presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump were also targeted by Russian spies, as were the computers of some GOP political action committees, U.S. officials said. But details on those cases were not available.

A Russian Embassy spokesman said he had no knowledge of such intrusions.

Some of the hackers had access to the DNC network for about a year, but all were expelled over the past weekend in a major computer cleanup campaign, the committee officials and experts said.

The DNC said that no financial, donor or personal information appears to have been accessed or taken, suggesting that the breach was traditional espionage, not the work of criminal hackers.

The intrusions are an example of Russia's interest in the U.S. political system and its desire to understand the policies, strengths and weaknesses of a potential future president — much as American spies gather similar information on foreign candidates and leaders.

The depth of the penetration reflects the skill and determination of the United States' top cyber adversary as Russia goes after strategic targets, from the White House and State Department to political campaign organizations.

"It's the job of every foreign intelligence service to collect intelligence against their adversaries," said Shawn Henry, president of CrowdStrike, the cyber firm called in to handle the DNC breach and a former head of the FBI's cyber division. He noted that it is extremely difficult for a civilian organization to protect itself from a skilled and determined state such as Russia.

"We're perceived as an adversary of Russia," he said. "Their job when they wake up every day is to gather intelligence against the policies, practices and strategies of the U.S. government. There are a variety of ways. [Hacking] is one of the more valuable because it gives you a treasure trove of information."

Russian President Vladimir Putin has spoken favorably about Trump, who has called for better relations with Russia and expressed skepticism about NATO. But unlike Clinton, whom the Russians probably have long had in their spy sights, Trump has not been a politician for very long, so foreign agencies are playing catch-up, analysts say.

"The purpose of such intelligence gathering is to understand the target's proclivities," said Robert Deitz, former senior councillor to the CIA director and a former general counsel at the National Security Agency. "Trump's foreign investments, for example, would be relevant to understanding how he would deal with countries where he has those investments" should he be elected, Deitz said. "They may provide tips for understanding his style of

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negotiating. In short, this sort of intelligence could be used by Russia, for example, to indicate where it can get away with foreign adventurism.”

Other analysts noted that any dirt dug up in opposition research is likely to be made public anyway. Nonetheless, DNC leadership acted quickly after the intrusion’s discovery to contain the damage.

“The security of our system is critical to our operation and to the confidence of the campaigns and state parties we work with,” said Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.), the DNC chairwoman. “When we discovered the intrusion, we treated this like the serious incident it is and reached out to CrowdStrike immediately. Our team moved as quickly as possible to kick out the intruders and secure our network.”

The Clinton campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A spokeswoman for the Trump campaign referred questions to the Secret Service.

DNC leaders were tipped to the hack in late April. Chief executive officer Amy Dacey got a call from her operations chief saying that their information technology team had noticed some unusual network activity.

“It’s never a call any executive wants to get, but the IT team knew something was awry,” Dacey said. And they knew it was serious enough that they wanted experts to investigate.

That evening, she spoke with Michael Sussmann, a DNC lawyer who is a partner with Perkins Coie in Washington. Soon after, Sussmann, a former federal prosecutor who handled computer crime cases, called Henry, whom he has known for many years.

Within 24 hours, CrowdStrike had installed software on the DNC’s computers so that it could analyze audit data that could indicate who had gained access, when and how.

The firm identified two separate hacker groups, both working for the Russian government, that had infiltrated the network, said Dmitri Alperovitch, CrowdStrike co-founder and chief technology officer. The firm had analyzed other breaches by both groups over the last two years.

One group, which CrowdStrike had dubbed Cozy Bear, had gained access last summer and was monitoring the DNC’s email and chat communications, Alperovitch said.

The other, which the firm had named Fancy Bear, broke into the network in late April and targeted the opposition research files. It was this breach that set off the alarm. The hackers stole two files, Henry said. And they had access to the computers of the entire research staff — an average of about several dozen on any given day.

The computers contained research going back years on Trump. “It’s a huge job” to dig into the dealings of somebody who has never run for office before, Dacey said.

CrowdStrike is not sure how the hackers got in. The firm suspects they may have targeted DNC employees with “spearphishing” emails. These are communications that appear legitimate — often made to look like they came from a colleague or someone trusted — but that contain links or attachments that when clicked on deploy malicious software that enables a hacker to gain access to a computer. “But we don’t have hard evidence,” Alperovitch said.

The two groups did not appear to be working together, Alperovitch said. Fancy Bear is believed to work for the GRU, or Russia’s military intelligence service, he said. CrowdStrike is less sure of whom Cozy Bear works for but thinks it might be the Federal Security Service or FSB, the country’s powerful security agency, which was once headed by Putin.

The lack of coordination is not unusual, he said. “There’s an amazing adversarial relationship” among the Russian intelligence agencies, Alperovitch said. “We have seen them steal assets from one another, refuse to collaborate. They’re all vying for power, to sell Putin on how good they are.”

The two crews have “superb operational tradecraft,” he said. They often use previously unknown software bugs —

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known as “zero-day” vulnerabilities — to compromise applications. In the DNC’s case, the hackers constantly switched tactics to maintain a stealthy presence inside the network and used built-in Windows tools so that they didn’t have to resort to malicious code that might trigger alerts. “They flew under the radar,” Alperovitch said.

The two groups have hacked government agencies, tech companies, defense contractors, energy and manufacturing firms, and universities in the United States, Canada and Europe as well as in Asia, he said.

Cozy Bear, for instance, compromised the unclassified email systems of the White House, State Department and Joint Chiefs of Staff in 2014, Alperovitch said.

“This is a sophisticated foreign intelligence service with a lot of time, a lot of resources, and is interested in targeting the U.S. political system,” Henry said. He said the DNC was not engaged in a fair fight. “You’ve got ordinary citizens who are doing hand-to-hand combat with trained military officers,” he said. “And that’s an untenable situation.”

Russia has always been a formidable foe in cyberspace, but in the last two years “there’s been a thousand-fold increase in its espionage campaign against the West,” said Alperovitch, who is also a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council. “They feel under siege.”

Western sanctions, imposed after Russia’s annexation of Crimea in Ukraine, have hurt the economy and led the government to increase its theft of intellectual property to limit the impact of import restrictions, he said. And Russia’s growing isolation has increased the need for intelligence to understand and influence political decisions in other countries, he added.

CrowdStrike is continuing the forensic investigation, DNC lawyer Sussmann said. “But at this time, it appears that no financial information or sensitive employee, donor or voter information was accessed by the Russian attackers,” he said.

The firm has installed special software on every computer and server in the network to detect any efforts by the Russian cyber spies to break in again. “When they get kicked out of the system,” Henry predicted, “they’re going to try to come back in.”

From: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)
Subject: FW: Lawfare: Is Trump a Russian Agent? A Legal Analysis
To: [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)
Sent: July 27, 2016 6:33 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1
b7C -1

From: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)
Sent: Wednesday, July 27, 2016 6:32 PM
To: Priestap, E W. (CD) (FBI)
Subject: Lawfare: Is Trump a Russian Agent? A Legal Analysis

Is Trump a Russian Agent? A Legal Analysis

By [Susan Hennessey, Benjamin Wittes](#)
Wednesday, July 27, 2016, 1:46 PM

An amazing debate is taking place among serious analysts and journalists in the United States regarding the relationship between the Republican nominee for President and the Russian state.

This debate is not taking place on the fringes, or in internet comments, but instead in the pages of the *New York Review of Books*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *Slate*, and elsewhere. The participants are undeniably substantive—editors of famed magazines, Pulitzer Prize winners, and authors of esteemed books on Russia, its leader, and its history.

This high-power group is debating whether Donald Trump is a tool, wittingly or unwittingly, of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

On the “yes” side is a remarkable lineup of intellectual firepower. There’s [this remarkable essay by Franklin Foer](#); there’s [this piece from Anne Applebaum](#); there’s [this one from Paul Krugman](#); and there’s [this from Josh Marshall](#). On the other side of the ledger, in addition to the weird comments both from official Russian sources and from Trump himself, is [this essay by Putin foe Masha Gessen](#), who sees the entire Trump-Putin meme as a distraction from the deeply American dangers of Trump.

The fact that serious people can have a serious discussion of whether a major party candidate for president is operating on behalf of an adversarial foreign nuclear power is alone gobsmacking. And we don’t propose to resolve the dispute here, at least not in any final kind of way.

We do think, however, that the discussion would benefit from slightly greater clarity of terms. So as a public service, we are offering the following analysis of the Trump-Putin evidence against several different legal and non-legal standards.

Question #1: Is Donald Trump an Agent of a Foreign Power Targetable Under FISA?

Answer: Not On the Current Record.

One way of asking whether a U.S. person is a Manchurian Candidate is to look at whether he meets the criteria for surveillance under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). The fact that we are even writing this sentence about a presidential candidate is a reflection of what a strange year 2016 is.

FISA defines an “agent of a foreign power,” in relevant part, as follows: any person who “knowingly engages in clandestine intelligence gathering activities for or on behalf of a foreign power, which activities involve or may involve a violation of the criminal statutes of the United States”; or who “pursuant to the direction of an intelligence

service or network of a foreign power, knowingly engages in any other clandestine intelligence activities for or on behalf of such foreign power, which activities involve or are about to involve a violation of the criminal statutes of the United States.”

The DNC hack provides considerable evidence that Trump is the beneficiary of the clandestine activity of “a foreign power.” And there is plenty of evidence that Trump has spoken in a fashion that would reasonably please the foreign actor in question. But there is no evidence at all that Trump has engaged in or abetted clandestine espionage activity himself, much less that he has done so in probable violation of any U.S. law.

So if the Manchurian Candidate question is one of whether Trump is a Putin agent within the meaning of FISA, the public record certainly does not support that.

Question #2: Is Trump an Agent of a Foreign Principal Under FARA?

Answer: Not on the current record.

Under the Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA), every non-exempt agent of a foreign principal is required to register with the Department of Justice.

Donald Trump is clearly a “person” within the meaning of the Act (less obviously in other senses of the word). His corporations, partnerships and organizations also qualify, though we’ll treat him as an individual for now. A foreign principal includes “a government of a foreign country and a foreign political party” or any non-US citizen outside the United States (subject to exceptions). Here, the Russian government, Vladimir Putin, and most of the various associated actors clearly qualify.

The important legal question under FARA is whether Trump (a person) qualifies as an “agent” of Russia (a foreign principal). An agent of a foreign principal is any person who acts “at the order, request, or under the direction or control of” that principal, anyone “whose activities are directly or indirectly supervised, directed, controlled, financed, or subsidized” by that principal and who then “engages within the United States in political activities for or in the interest of such foreign principal.” Separately, an agent of a foreign principal under FARA is “any person who agrees, consents, assumes, or purports to act as, or who is or holds himself out to be ... an agent of a foreign principal” as otherwise defined.

Based on the facts in evidence, Donald Trump does not qualify as a foreign agent within the Act. Previously, FARA was primarily focused on countering propaganda and did not require a direct nexus or connection. But the law has been amended to more narrowly define the requirements for an agent relationship. While Trump has ties to Russia and has expressed surprising affinity and admiration for its strongman leader, there is no evidence that he is actually working under the direction or control of Russia or Putin and he expressly disavows that characterization. On the present record, at least, to borrow language from the ISIS discussion, Trump seems to be more inspired by Putin than directed by him. (Note: it is more plausible that particular Trump campaign advisors—who are engaging in “political activity” by virtue of their participation in his campaign—would be required to register under the Act.)

If Trump were to be deemed an agent of a foreign power, that would be a rather serious matter. While the United States has not successfully prosecuted any criminal violations of FARA in a half-century, it does routinely seek civil enforcement against covered individuals who fail to register. Moreover, if Trump were a foreign agent within the Act and actually won the Presidency, he would be in violation of 18 USC 219, which prohibits any “public official” from being an agent of a foreign principal. Public officials include Members of Congress and “an officer or employee or person acting for or on behalf of the United States, or any department, agency or branch of Government thereof... in any official function.” Being President of the United States would appear to qualify.

Question: Is Russia Actively Supporting Trump’s Candidacy?

Answer: Damn Straight!

The evidence that Russia is actively supporting Trump’s candidacy using covert intelligence means seems, at this

point, pretty strong. This does not mean, of course, that Trump is a Russian agent. But apparently without his direction or control, Russian intelligence agencies have laid a bet on the man. Susan summarized the evidence of this the other day:

Defense One lays out the powerful, though not definitive, public evidence of Russian involvement. The New York Times offers a somewhat more tempered assessment. It is important to recognize that the strongest evidence regarding attribution was made public long before the most recent batch of emails was released:

- Director of National Intelligence James Clapper reported in May that the intelligence community had evidence that foreign governments were targeting campaigns.
- In June, CrowdStrike published its account, specifically naming Russian state actors as behind the DNC hack.
- While the Russians have long been known to use information and disinformation campaigns to influence foreign elections, there was initial skepticism regarding the degree of CrowdStrike's certainty. However, the discovery of incriminating metadata—first noticed by Matt Tait who tweets under @pwnallthethings—and other evidence quickly corroborated the CrowdStrike assessment.
- There are well-documented connections between Wikileaks—the chosen vehicle for the leak release—its founder Julian Assange, and the Russian state apparatus.
- Paired with the technical indicators, the sum total of evidence is about as close to a smoking gun as can be expected where a sophisticated nation state is involved.

Since then, the evidence has only grown stronger. The *New York Times* yesterday reported that “American intelligence agencies have told the White House they now have ‘high confidence’ that the Russian government was behind the theft of emails and documents from the Democratic National Committee.”

Even if there were no covert actions, the overt ones alone are pretty telling. Putin and others in the Russian leadership have repeatedly praised Trump. They are not playing their cards close to their vests about liking him and disliking his opponent. In U.S. presidential elections, the distinction between working on behalf of one candidate versus against the other is largely semantic. Harm done to one of the candidates in a two-party system necessarily benefits the other. So it is difficult to understand how much Russia is motivated by liking Trump and how much it is motivated by hating Clinton. Probably a bit of a both.

Bottom line: Trump may not be acting (legally speaking) on behalf of Russia, but Russia is acting on behalf of him.

Question: Is Trump a “Useful Idiot” for Putin?

Answer: Yup.

The phrase “useful idiots” (полезные дураки, in Russian) is often attributed to Lenin—though probably not accurately—and refers to people in the West who can be counted upon by virtue of naivete or stupidity to act on Russia's behalf while not being active agents. This is probably the best way to understand the relationship between Trump and Putin. The evidence of a bromance between them is uncontestable. The evidence of an affinity in personality and strongman nastiness is as well.

Moreover, the evidence is neither contested or contestable that Trump has taken public positions exceedingly favorable to Russia and far outside of the American mainstream. As Foer points out at great length in his excellent piece, Trump has repeatedly sought to do business in Russia and acquired financing from Russian sources. He has proposed Russia-friendly policies, even to the point of proposing to abandon NATO allies. He has praised Putin repeatedly. And he has surrounded himself with people who have extensive histories representing the interests of those close to Putin. Only today, Trump openly sided with Russian intelligence against the United States and urged further spying.

Obtained by UndeadFOIA

Small wonder that Russia has responded by seeking to advance Trump's cause domestically, both by covert and overt means. Who needs an agent when you get so much for free?

From: Priestap, E W. (CD) (FBI)
Subject: RE: Lawfare: Is Trump a Russian Agent? A Legal Analysis
To: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)
Sent: July 27, 2016 8:54 PM (UTC-04:00)

Thanks much Pete.

----- Original message -----

From: "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>
Date: 07/27/2016 6:32 PM (GMT-05:00)
To: "Priestap, E W. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Lawfare: Is Trump a Russian Agent? A Legal Analysis

b7E -3

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The important legal question under FARA is whether Trump (a person) qualifies as an “agent” of Russia (a foreign principal). An agent of a foreign principal is any person who acts “at the order, request, or under the direction or control of” that principal, anyone “whose activities are directly or indirectly supervised, directed, controlled, financed, or subsidized” by that principal and who then “engages within the United States in political activities for or in the interest of such foreign principal.” Separately, an agent of a foreign principal under FARA is “any person who agrees, consents, assumes, or purports to act as, or who is or holds himself out to be ... an agent of a foreign principal” as otherwise defined.

Based on the facts in evidence, Donald Trump does not qualify as a foreign agent within the Act. Previously, FARA was primarily focused on countering propaganda and did not require a direct nexus or connection. But the law has been amended to more narrowly define the requirements for an agent relationship. While Trump has ties to Russia and has expressed surprising affinity and admiration for its strongman leader, there is no evidence that he is actually working under the direction or control of Russia or Putin and he expressly disavows that characterization. On the present record, at least, to borrow language from the ISIS discussion, Trump seems to be more inspired by Putin than directed by him. (Note: it is more plausible that particular Trump campaign advisors—who are engaging in “political activity” by virtue of their participation in his campaign—would be required to register under the Act.)

If Trump were to be deemed an agent of a foreign power, that would be a rather serious matter. While the United States has not successfully prosecuted any criminal violations of FARA in a half-century, it does routinely seek civil enforcement against covered individuals who fail to register. Moreover, if Trump were a foreign agent within the Act and actually won the Presidency, he would be in violation of 18 USC 219, which prohibits any “public official” from being an agent of a foreign principal. Public officials include Members of Congress and “an officer or employee or person acting for or on behalf of the United States, or any department, agency or branch of Government thereof... in any official function.” Being President of the United States would appear to qualify.

Question: Is Russia Actively Supporting Trump's Candidacy?

Answer: Damn Straight!

The evidence that Russia is actively supporting Trump's candidacy using covert intelligence means seems, at this point, pretty strong. This does not mean, of course, that Trump is a Russian agent. But apparently without his direction or control, Russian intelligence agencies have laid a bet on the man. Susan [summarized the evidence of this the other day](#):

[Defense One](#) lays out the powerful, though not definitive, public evidence of Russian involvement. The New York Times offers a somewhat more tempered [assessment](#). It is important to recognize that the strongest evidence regarding attribution was made public long before the most recent batch of emails was released:

- Director of National Intelligence James Clapper [reported](#) in May that the intelligence community had evidence that foreign governments were targeting campaigns.
- In June, Crowdstrike published [its account](#), specifically naming Russian state actors as behind the DNC hack.
- While the Russians have [long been known](#) to use information and disinformation campaigns to influence foreign elections, there was initial skepticism regarding the degree of Crowdstrike's certainty. However, the [discovery of incriminating metadata](#)—first noticed by Matt Tait who tweets under [@pwnallthethings](#)—and other evidence quickly corroborated the Crowdstrike assessment.
- There are well-documented connections between Wikileaks—the chosen vehicle for the leak release—its founder Julian Assange, and the Russian state apparatus.
- Paired with the technical indicators, the sum total of evidence is about as close to a smoking gun as can be expected where a sophisticated nation state is involved.

Since then, the evidence has only grown stronger. The *New York Times* yesterday reported that “American intelligence agencies have told the White House they now have ‘high confidence’ that the Russian government was behind the [theft of emails and documents from the Democratic National Committee](#).”

Even if there were no covert actions, the overt ones alone are pretty telling. Putin and others in the Russian leadership have repeatedly praised Trump. They are not playing their cards close to their vests about liking him and disliking his opponent. In U.S. presidential elections, the distinction between working on behalf of one candidate versus against the other is largely semantic. Harm done to one of the candidates in a two-party system necessarily benefits the other. So it is difficult to understand how much Russia is motivated by liking Trump and how much it is motivated by hating Clinton. Probably a bit of a both.

Bottom line: Trump may not be acting (legally speaking) on behalf of Russia, but Russia is acting on behalf of him.

Question: Is Trump a “Useful Idiot” for Putin?

Answer: Yup.

The phrase “useful idiots” (полезные дураки, in Russian) is often attributed to Lenin—though probably not accurately—and refers to people in the West who can be counted upon by virtue of naivete or stupidity to act on Russia's behalf while not being active agents. This is probably the best way to understand the relationship between Trump and Putin. The evidence of a bromance between them is uncontestable. The evidence of an affinity in personality and strongman nastiness is as well.

Moreover, the evidence is neither contested or contestable that Trump has taken public positions exceedingly favorable to Russia and far outside of the American mainstream. As Foer points out at great length in his excellent piece, Trump has repeatedly sought to do business in Russia and acquired financing from Russian sources. He has

Obtained by UndeadFOIA

proposed Russia-friendly policies, even to the point of proposing to abandon NATO allies. He has praised Putin repeatedly. And he has surrounded himself with people who have extensive histories representing the interests of those close to Putin. Only today, Trump openly sided with Russian intelligence against the United States and urged further spying.

Small wonder that Russia has responded by seeking to advance Trump's cause domestically, both by covert and overt means. Who needs an agent when you get so much for free?

From: Peter
Subject: WikiLeaks walks back Assange claim on hacking Trump tax returns - CNNPolitics.com
To: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)
Sent: August 6, 2016 1:48 PM (UTC-04:00)

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/06/politics/julian-assange-wikileaks-donald-trump-tax-returns/>

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Obtained by UndeadFOIA

Julian Assange responds to Hillary Clinton 06/09

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Barack Obama.

From: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)
Subject: Fwd: WikiLeaks walks back Assange claim on hacking Trump tax returns - CNNPolitics.com
To: [REDACTED] (WF) (FBI) [REDACTED] (CD) (FBI); Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)
Sent: August 6, 2016 1:50 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1
b7C -1

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**Date:** 08/06/2016 2:10 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CG) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (NY) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CV) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Cc:** "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (WF) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Subject:** RE: WikiLeaks walks back Assange claim on hacking Trump tax returns - CNNPolitics.com

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

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<http://www.businessinsider.com/russia-internet-trolls-and-donald-trump-2016-7>

<http://talkingpointsmemo.com/edblog/trump-putin-russia-connections>

<http://www.politico.com/story/2016/08/hack-trump-tax-returns-julian-assange-226751>

----- Original message -----

**From:** [redacted] (WF) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Date:** 08/06/2016 2:02 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CG) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (NY) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CV) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Subject:** Fwd: WikiLeaks walks back Assange claim on hacking Trump tax returns - CNNPolitics.com

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
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[redacted]  
FBI Washington Field Office  
[redacted]  
Desk [redacted]  
Cell [redacted]

----- Original message -----

**From:** [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Date:** 08/06/2016 1:59 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** [redacted] (WF) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Subject:** Fwd: WikiLeaks walks back Assange claim on hacking Trump tax returns - CNNPolitics.com

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

----- Original message -----

From: "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted]

Date: 08/06/2016 1:49 PM (GMT-05:00)

To: [redacted] (WF) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted],

"Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted]

Subject: Fwd: WikiLeaks walks back Assange claim on hacking Trump tax returns - CNNPolitics.com

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

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Julian Assange responds to Hillary Clinton 06:09

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**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Fwd: WikiLeaks walks back Assange claim on hacking Trump tax returns - CNNPolitics.com  
**To:** [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** August 6, 2016 7:05 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

See first link. You want these, or just notable articles?

----- Original message -----

**From:** [redacted] (WF) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Date:** 08/06/2016 2:10 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CG) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (NY) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CV) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Cc:** "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (WF) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Subject:** RE: WikiLeaks walks back Assange claim on hacking Trump tax returns - CNNPolitics.com

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Passing along some more... (in case you need a break from the Olympics)

<http://www.businessinsider.com/russia-internet-trolls-and-donald-trump-2016-7>

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<http://www.politico.com/story/2016/08/hack-trump-tax-returns-julian-assange-226751>

----- Original message -----

**From:** [redacted] (WF) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Date:** 08/06/2016 2:02 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CG) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (NY) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CV) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Subject:** Fwd: WikiLeaks walks back Assange claim on hacking Trump tax returns - CNNPolitics.com

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b7C -1  
b7E -3

[redacted]  
FBI Washington Field Office  
[redacted]  
Desk: [redacted]  
Cell: [redacted]

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -2,3

----- Original message -----

**From:** [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Date:** 08/06/2016 1:59 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** [redacted] (WF) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Subject:** Fwd: WikiLeaks walks back Assange claim on hacking Trump tax returns - CNNPolitics.com

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

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From: "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] <>

Date: 08/06/2016 1:49 PM (GMT-05:00)

To: [redacted] (WF) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted],  
"Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] <>

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
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# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Fwd: Tsg  
**To:** [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** August 13, 2016 8:39 AM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Pasted the text below because I don't trust all these links

AUGUST 12--The e-mail from Google arrived at 4:09 AM on March 22 and contained an ominous alert for its recipient, William Rinehart, a staffer with Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign.

"Someone has your password," the e-mail's subject line declared. "Someone just used your password to try to sign in to your Google Account," warned the message, which reported that the incursion attempt came from an IP address in Ukraine.

While the "Gmail Team" advised Rinehart that the sign-in attempt was stopped, he was told, "You should change your password immediately."

When he received the message--which carried the address no-reply@accounts.googlemail.com--Rinehart was in Hawaii preparing for the March 26 Democratic presidential caucus. An experienced organizer, Rinehart, 33, has previously worked for the United Nations Foundation, Barack Obama's presidential campaigns, and Organizing for America, which was formed to build grass roots support for Obama's legislative agenda.

In a bid to thwart any future Ukrainian hijacking attempts, Rinehart followed Google's suggestion and clicked on a red box marked "CHANGE PASSWORD." He was then taken to a Gmail log-in page where, as directed, he keyed in his credentials.

Until he was contacted this month by The Smoking Gun, Rinehart had not given that Google alert a second thought. It sat buried in his Inbox, just one of tens of thousands of messages he had never bothered to delete.

Armed with evidence that Rinehart's Gmail account had been hacked in late-March--likely as part of the suspected Russian intelligence operation that targeted the Democratic National Committee--a reporter asked Rinehart to search for any messages he received that month from Google.

In short order, Rinehart located the March 22 e-mail and shared the message--along with its full header information--with TSG.

An analysis of that e-mail--which was part of a larger "spear phishing" effort aimed at Clinton campaign staffers--has revealed new details about the illegal operation, which is now the subject of an FBI probe.

Additionally, a TSG investigation has unearthed new details about the hacking spree, which recently prompted Obama to cite experts who have tied Russia to the illegal incursions. For its part, the Clinton campaign has insinuated that the hacking was a Russian attempt to influence the presidential election (in favor of Donald Trump, a Vladimir Putin stan).

And while Democrats may appear to be the only crime victims, TSG has learned that numerous prominent Republicans and GOP groups have also been targeted. These hacking victims include John McCain, Lindsey Graham, Michele Bachmann, various state Republican parties, as well as assorted GOP candidates, PACs, and consultants.

As with Rinehart, none of the Republican victims contacted by TSG was aware that their web sites and e-mail servers had been compromised at some point in the past year.

\* \* \*

FBI(23-CV-30)-758

Rinehart was one of scores of Clinton campaign staffers and DNC employees targeted in a “spearphishing” effort that was flagged--after the fact--by researchers with SecureWorks, the security firm hired by the DNC to investigate the hacking of its computer systems.

While the illegal gambit’s success rate is unknown, it appears likely that several targets were duped by the Gmail scam. In late-June, TSG reported that Sarah Hamilton, a Clinton campaign press aide, had her Gmail account breached. Like Rinehart, Hamilton was tricked by a spoofed Google alert warning of an overseas log-in attempt.

TSG learned of the Hamilton hack from “Guccifer 2.0,” the purported “hactivist” who first contacted the site on June 15 to claim credit for the DNC attack and share an assortment of purloined Democratic Party documents.

In the initial e-mail--which came a day after the Washington Post reported the DNC intrusion--“Guccifer 2.0” said that he had “been in the DNC’s networks” for nearly a year and had provided the “main part of the papers, thousands of files and mails, I gave to Wikileaks.” On July 22, Wikileaks posted nearly 20,000 stolen DNC e-mails, a disclosure that triggered the resignation of the party’s chairman, CEO, CFO, and communications director.

In e-mails, “Guccifer 2.0” has claimed to be a Romanian national and has bristled when a TSG story referred to him as a thief. “Stop calling me the vandal,” he wrote. “I’m not a criminal I’m a freedom fighter.”

Several security groups have theorized that “Guccifer 2.0” is a Russian invention, a hype man tasked with publicizing criminal acts that were actually committed by skilled government hacking groups. While he has described himself in e-mails as an “unknown hacker with a laptop” and a foe of “all the illuminati and rich clans which try to rule the governments,” “Guccifer 2.0” has acted more like a press flack, promising “exclusives” and pushing journalists to do stories based on stolen documents carrying little news value.

In reviewing e-mails sent by “Guccifer 2.0”--including 25 messages provided by TSG--researchers with ThreatConnect, a Virginia-based cybersecurity firm, determined that he usually connected to a series of burner e-mail accounts via a Russian virtual private network (VPN) as a way of masking his identity. On three occasions, “Guccifer 2.0” made contact with TSG via a Miami, Florida IP address connected to the Russia-based Elite VPN service. ThreatConnect, which has investigated the recent hacking spree, today published a new analysis of developments on that felonious front.

Though “Guccifer 2.0” regularly provided documents swiped during the DNC breach, he wrote from an AOL France account on June 27 offering “exclusive access to some leaked emails” from Clinton’s staff. In a follow-up message, the vandal--whose e-mail account carries the name “Stephan Orphan”--offered a collection of material that was “part of the big archive that includes Hillary Clinton’s staff correspondence.”

But instead of attaching the documents to an e-mail or providing a download link to a file sharing site (as he had previously done), “Guccifer 2.0” told TSG that the material would be available through DC Leaks, a web site he described as a “sub project” of Wikileaks. In fact, DC Leaks has no connection at all with Wikileaks or Julian Assange.

“Guccifer 2.0” wrote that he had “asked the DCLeaks” to “release a part” of the staff correspondence, but “with a closed access.” After offering to provide TSG a password with which to access the material on DC Leaks, “Guccifer 2.0” claimed that DC Leaks “asked me not to make any announcements yet.” He added, “So I ask you not to make links to my blog. Ok?”

After TSG accepted his offer, “Guccifer 2.0” e-mailed a password that provided access to the e-mails and documents stolen from Sarah Hamilton’s Gmail account three months earlier. “Let me know your opinion. to be continued...” he wrote.

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

The Hamilton records posted on DC Leaks provided a largely inconsequential look at the logistical details of the Clinton campaign and its press operation. In a June 28 article about the “spear phishing” attack on Hamilton, TSG noted that a reporter learned of the Hamilton hack from “Guccifer 2.0.” The story did not mention DC Leaks or that “Guccifer 2.0” had provided a password to the newborn web site.

On June 29, “Guccifer 2.0” wrote seeking a correction. “It seems people think it was me who hacked Hamilton,” he stated. “That’s not correct. I just sent you a link. I don’t claim it’s my work! I don’t need another person’s glory.”

In subsequent correspondence, “Guccifer 2.0” did not push further for a correction and he ignored questions about who hacked Hamilton (pictured below) and how he became aware of the stolen e-mails that had mysteriously appeared on an obscure web site.

TSG’s contact with “Guccifer 2.0” ended on July 4, when he e-mailed two DNC documents along with the greeting “happy independence day!”

When “Guccifer 2.0” wrote in late-June to introduce TSG to DC Leaks, the web site had barely been online for three weeks, according to tracking data. The DC Leaks Twitter and Facebook accounts debuted on June 8, the day that the site itself appears to have launched. While nobody else had heard of DC Leaks, “Guccifer 2.0” had somehow not only discovered the site, but had privileges that allowed him to provide TSG with access to a password-protected section of the site.

On its “About” page, DC Leaks describes itself as a “new level project” committed to exposing “Wall Street fat cats, industrial barons and multinational corporations’ representatives who swallow up all resources and subjugate all markets.” At launch, the site’s sparse offerings included documents hacked from George Soros’s Open Society Foundation and e-mails stolen from the Gmail account of Philip Breedlove, a recently retired U.S. General who served as NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander.

DC Leaks notes that Soros is “named as the architect and sponsor of almost every revolution and coup around the world for the last 25 years.” In a Facebook post, the site reported that the hacked documents revealed Soros’s plans to support opposition movements in Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Armenia, and other countries “where the United States desire to promote their interests.”

The most newsworthy Breedlove e-mails focused on the military commander’s back-channel attempts to gather support for a more aggressive U.S. stance against Russia in light of the military crisis in Ukraine. The balance of Breedlove’s e-mails, however, involve him exchanging correspondence with old Air Force buddies with call signs like Ghost, Cobra, Maggot, Tuna, and Horndog.

While the DC Leaks proprietors claim to be “American hacktivists,” the site includes some odd phrasings. Hillary Clinton is identified as “the most probable candidate for the President of the Democratic Party,” while a collection of campaign newsclips is described as “media reports from Hillary Clinton’s electoral staff.”

According to domain records, the dcleaks.com address was registered in mid-April via a small web hosting company in Romania. The site itself traces back to an IP address in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In a series of e-mails over the past week, DC Leaks has corresponded with TSG via a Gmail account in the name of “Steve Wanders.”

Since being provided a password by “Guccifer 2.0,” TSG has monitored DC Leaks for further evidence that the site is being used as a cut-out for the cabal behind the DNC hacking and the “spear phishing” directed at Clinton campaign workers.

Late last month, DC Leaks added a new entry to its “Portfolio” of “latest leaks.” Next to a portrait of Hamilton, a photo of Rinehart appeared. Upon mousing over the image, the words “Protected: William E. Rinehart” emerged. Clicking on the photo brought a visitor to a sign-in page requiring a password

In an August 1 direct message to the DC Leaks Twitter account, TSG sought an opportunity to preview the Rinehart

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

collection. In a reply two days later, DC Leaks wrote, “we could give you a password but we would like to have an article in TSG when the materials are published.” DC Leaks provided a password after TSG responded that it would do a story if a review of the documents proved them to be newsworthy.

An examination of the Rinehart e-mails showed that they spanned several years and contained the kind of mundane campaign details seen in the stolen Hamilton correspondence. The extent of campaign dirt, as it were, was limited to a March e-mail with the subject line “FYI-Oreos are now a political issue.” In the message, a Clinton staffer reported that a journalist visiting the campaign’s Honolulu office “noticed the Oreos in our office and brought this up to me.” This was an issue since Nabisco was moving its Oreo production from a 600-employee Chicago plant to Mexico. Since Clinton had criticized the plan, the e-mail noted, “let’s fall in line and pls refrain from keeping Oreos in plain sight in our office. #optics Mahalo!”

While the targeting of Rinehart (seen at right) and Hamilton apparently did not yield valuable e-mails or documents, the cyberthieves would have been able to copy scores of e-mail addresses--many for Clinton campaign workers. Those fresh addresses likely would have been sent “spear phishing” e-mails like the ones that tricked Rinehart and Hamilton.

When TSG contacted Rinehart earlier this month, he was unaware of the Gmail hack. Nor did he know that his photo was on DC Leaks and that the site had staged his stolen e-mails for future publication. At Rinehart’s request, TSG gave him the password provided to us by DC Leaks so that he could review the material lifted from his e-mail account.

While the spoofed March 22 alert looked on its face like a legitimate communication from Google, a TSG examination of the e-mail’s full header--a jumble of nearly 6000 characters--revealed that it had actually been sent to Rinehart from an e-mail account on Yandex.com, a Moscow-based e-mail provider.

The e-mail’s header also contained a shortened bit.ly link that took Rinehart to a phony Gmail log-in page when he clicked on the red “CHANGE PASSWORD” box in the message. The bit.ly link had condensed a 305-character url that included this string: “myaccount.google.com-securitysettingpage.”

The lengthy url included the .ml suffix, indicating that the domain used in the “spear phishing” operation was registered in the Republic of Mali. A review of the header by ThreatConnect found that the spoofed Gmail page was linked to an IP address in Germany. When the company’s researchers examined the German host, they found several other domains that were similar in structure to the one buried in the Rinehart e-mail. But instead of Mali, suffixes for Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic, and Tokelau, a remote group of South Pacific atolls, were seen.

As of this writing, the Rinehart e-mails on DC Leaks remain password protected. The site’s anonymous operators appear preoccupied with plans to upload additional Soros documents. In an e-mail sent yesterday from the DC Leaks Gmail account, the site gave TSG a Trumpian assurance about the new material: “it’s gonna be huge.”

Asked last week whether DC Leaks had any connection with the actors responsible for the DNC and Clinton campaign hacks, “Steve Wanders” replied, “We have our own sources. We have no connection to those leaks.” He also denied any ties to Wikileaks and declared that, “The wish to make our country better is our motivation. We are not afraid of being prosecuted. Let them try to find us :).”

In response to a TSG question about “Guccifer 2.0,” “Wanders” said, “We have no ties with this guy.”

In an August 8 exchange, TSG asked how DC Leaks could have no ties to “Guccifer 2.0” since he provided TSG with a password to the DC Leaks site. Not to mention the hacker’s account of providing DC Leaks with the Hamilton e-mails and the directions to maintain a “closed access” to the material.

The DC Leaks response was not convincing.

“We don’t know how Guccifer got this pass,” claimed “Wanders.” “But he is a hacker, you know. Maybe we need

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

to change our passwords now :).” He later added, “Sure, we’ve heard about Guccifer’s activity but we aren’t in touch with this guy.”

\* \* \*

While the e-mails and documents stolen from Soros and Breedlove have gotten some press coverage for DC Leaks, the site houses a hodgepodge of stolen e-mails offering fresh evidence of the scope and targets of the recent political hacking campaign.

A “portfolio” titled “The United States Republican Party” contains about 300 e-mails that were sent during a five-month period ending in late-October 2015.

A review of that correspondence shows that a wide variety of GOP e-mail accounts have been breached. The victims range from staffers for Senator John McCain’s campaign committee to a candidate running for State Senate in Virginia. Officials with four state Republican party organizations--Wyoming, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Illinois--had correspondence stolen. E-mails to the campaign committees of Senator Lindsey Graham, Rep. Robert Hurt, and former Rep. Michele Bachmann were also swiped. E-mails from Campaign Solutions, a leading Republican consulting firm, and the Stop Hillary PAC were pilfered.

None of the victims contacted by TSG--including the McCain campaign and the Connecticut GOP, were aware of the e-mail hacking.

Since it seemed unlikely that hackers would target such a wide array of individual Republican web sites and e-mail servers, TSG reviewed the DC Leaks “portfolio” in search of a common thread. That analysis revealed that the victimized campaigns, state parties, PACs, and businesses all contracted with the same Tennessee web hosting outfit.

The firm, Smartech, and its parent, AirNet Group, are major providers of data services, call centers, and web hosting for scores of Republican clients. Since the 2008 federal election cycle, the Republican National Committee has paid the companies more than \$10.5 million, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. The firms have done work for a Who’s Who of GOP figures, including Karl Rove, Mitt Romney, George W. Bush, Newt Gingrich, and the Koch brothers.

A review of the domains on a single Smartech server in Chattanooga shows that nine of the sites whose e-mails were compromised are housed on that server. Oddly, that server also includes the web site for comedian Stephen Colbert’s

super PAC. Defunct since 2012, Americans for a Better Tomorrow, Tomorrow still maintains a home page with a photo of “Ham Rove,” its late “advisor and chief strategist.”

Jeff Averbeck, Airnet’s CEO, did not respond to voicemail messages left by TSG, as well as an e-mail seeking comment on what seems to be a significant security breakdown at the company.

The firm’s web site notes that it understands “the delicacy of your data and importance of meeting your security comfort levels.” That delicate data is safeguarded, the company assures, with “security features including triple layered authentication, 24X7 monitoring, and re-enforced concrete walls, redundant power grids.”

It appears that “Guccifer 2.0” and his shadowy cohorts were not deterred by those really thick walls.

----- Original message -----

From: [REDACTED] (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED]

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
FBI(23-CV-b7E -32

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

Date: 08/13/2016 7:29 AM (GMT-05:00)

To: "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted], "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)"

[redacted] [redacted] (WF) (FBI)" [redacted]

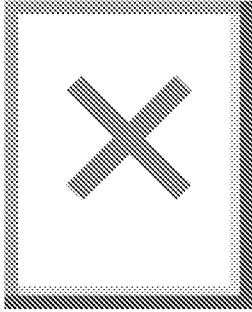
Subject: Fwd: Tsg

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** Peter  
**Subject:** Snowden speculates leak of NSA spying tools is tied to Russian DNC hack | Ars Technica  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** August 16, 2016 4:54 PM (UTC-04:00)

<http://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2016/08/snowden-speculates-leak-of-nsa-spying-tools-is-tied-to-russian-dnc-hack/>



A.K. Rockefeller

Two former employees of the National Security Agency—including exiled whistleblower Edward Snowden—are speculating that Monday's leak of what are now confirmed to be advanced hacking tools belonging to the US government is connected to the separate high-profile hacks and subsequent leaks of two Democratic groups.

Private security firms brought in to investigate the breach of the Democratic National Committee and a separate hack of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee have said that the software left behind implicates hackers tied to the Russian government. US intelligence officials have privately said they, too, have high confidence

FBI(23-CV-30)-764

of Russian government involvement.

In the weeks following the reports, WikiLeaks and an unknown person using the moniker Guccifer 2.0 have published a steady stream of documents. One batch released just ahead of last month's Democratic National Convention contained embarrassing private conversations that led to the resignation of DNC Chair Debra Wasserman Schultz. A more recent installment included a spreadsheet detailing the cell phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and other personal information of every Democratic member of the House of Representatives. The Obama administration has signaled that it may impose new economic sanctions on Russia in response to what critics claim is Russian attempts to disrupt or influence the US presidential election.

## “More diplomacy than intelligence”

Both Snowden and Dave Aitel, an offensive security expert who spent six years as an NSA security scientist, are speculating that Monday's leak by a group calling itself Shadow Brokers is in response to growing tensions between the US and Russia over the hacks on the Democratic groups. As this post was being prepared, researchers with Kaspersky Lab confirmed that the tools belong to Equation Group, one of the most sophisticated hacking groups they've ever investigated. Ars will have more on this development in an upcoming story.

"Why did they do it?" Snowden wrote in a series of tweets early Tuesday morning. "No one knows, but I suspect this is more diplomacy than intelligence, related to the escalation around the DNC hack."

In the same tweet stream, Snowden continued:

Circumstantial evidence and conventional wisdom indicates Russian responsibility. Here's why that is significant: This leak is likely a warning that someone can prove US responsibility for any attacks that originated from this malware server. That could have significant foreign policy consequences. Particularly if any of those operations targeted US allies. Particularly if any of those operations targeted elections. Accordingly, this may be an effort to influence the calculus of decision-makers wondering how sharply to respond to the DNC hacks. TL;DR: This leak looks like a somebody sending a message that an escalation in the attribution game could get messy fast.

In a brief post of his own, Aitel agreed that Russia is the most likely suspect behind both the Democratic hacks and the leaking of the NSA spying tools. He also said the NSA data was likely obtained by someone with physical access to an NSA secure area who managed to walk out with a USB stick loaded with secrets. Aitel cited the following support:

1. Timing: Seems almost certain to be related to the DNC hacks. High level US political officials seemed quite upset about the DNC hacks, which no doubt resulted in a covert response, which this is then likely a counter-response to. As Snowden put it: Somebody is sending a message that they know about USG efforts to influence elections and governments via cyber.
2. Mention of corruption and elections in the text of the release feels classically Russian.
3. Ability to keep something this big quiet for three years (leak is just post-Snowden) is probably limited to only those with operational security expertise or desire to leverage those bugs for themselves.
4. Information results from HUMINT, not simple hack of a C2 box as suggested (not that even that would be easy). Level of difficulty: Very Experienced Nation State.
  1. Alternate possibility: someone was sitting on a redirector box and the most incompetent person on Earth uploaded this ops disk to it to make their lives easy. Still means someone was hiding on this box who knows what they're doing in an unusually skilled way.
5. No team of "hackers" would want to piss off Equation Group this much. That's the kind of cojones that only come from having a nation state protecting you.
6. Wikileaks also has the data (they claim).

As noted throughout this post, attributing Internet hacks is a difficult undertaking that's often prone to error. In the interest of keeping readers apprised of what informed security experts are saying, Ars is providing these opinions as is, with the reminder that they're pure speculation.



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**To:** Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI); [REDACTED] (WF) (FBI) [REDACTED] (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** August 16, 2016 4:58 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

<http://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2016/08/snowden-speculates-leak-of-nsa-spying-tools-is-tied-to-russian-dnc-hack/>

## Snowden speculates leak of NSA spying tools is tied to Russian DNC hack

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**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Fwd: A Powerful Russian Weapon: The Spread of False Stories - NYTimes.com  
**To:** [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** August 28, 2016 11:23 AM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

Thx...

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Priestap, E W. (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED]  
**Date:** 08/28/2016 10:36 AM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: A Powerful Russian Weapon: The Spread of False Stories - NYTimes.com

Thanks Pete.

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED]  
**Date:** 08/28/2016 10:27 AM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Priestap, E W. (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Fwd: A Powerful Russian Weapon: The Spread of False Stories - NYTimes.com

Thanks to [REDACTED] for forwarding...

[http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/08/29/world/europe/russia-sweden-disinformation.html?\\_r=0](http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/08/29/world/europe/russia-sweden-disinformation.html?_r=0)

## A Powerful Russian Weapon: The Spread of False Stories

STOCKHOLM — With a vigorous national debate underway on whether Sweden should enter a military partnership with NATO, officials in Stockholm suddenly encountered an unsettling problem: a flood of distorted and outright false information on social media, confusing public perceptions of the issue.

The claims were alarming: If Sweden, a non-NATO member, signed the deal, the alliance would stockpile secret nuclear weapons on Swedish soil; NATO could attack Russia from Sweden without government approval; NATO soldiers, immune from prosecution, could rape Swedish women without fear of criminal charges.

They were all false, but the disinformation had begun spilling into the traditional news media, and as the defense minister, Peter Hultqvist, traveled the country to promote the pact in speeches and town hall meetings, he was repeatedly grilled about the bogus stories.

“People were not used to it, and they got scared, asking what can be believed, what should be believed?” said Marinette Nyh Radebo, Mr. Hultqvist’s spokeswoman.

As often happens in such cases, Swedish officials were never able to pin down the source of the false reports. But they, numerous analysts and experts in American and European intelligence point to Russia as the prime suspect,

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

noting that preventing NATO expansion is a centerpiece of the foreign policy of President Vladimir V. Putin, who invaded Georgia in 2008 largely to forestall that possibility.

In Crimea, eastern Ukraine and now Syria, Mr. Putin has flaunted a modernized and more muscular military. But he lacks the economic strength and overall might to openly confront NATO, the European Union or the United States. Instead, he has invested heavily in a program of "weaponized" information, using a variety of means to sow doubt and division. The goal is to weaken cohesion among member states, stir discord in their domestic politics and blunt opposition to Russia.

"Moscow views world affairs as a system of special operations, and very sincerely believes that it itself is an object of Western special operations," said Gleb Pavlovsky, who helped establish the Kremlin's information machine before 2008. "I am sure that there are a lot of centers, some linked to the state, that are involved in inventing these kinds of fake stories."

The planting of false stories is nothing new; the Soviet Union devoted considerable resources to that during the ideological battles of the Cold War. Now, though, disinformation is regarded as an important aspect of Russian military doctrine, and it is being directed at political debates in target countries with far greater sophistication and volume than in the past.

The flow of misleading and inaccurate stories is so strong that both NATO and the European Union have established special offices to identify and refute disinformation, particularly claims emanating from Russia.

The Kremlin's clandestine methods have surfaced in the United States, too, American officials say, identifying Russian intelligence as the likely source of leaked Democratic National Committee emails that embarrassed Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign.

The Kremlin uses both conventional media "Sputnik, a news agency, and RT, a television outlet" and covert channels, as in Sweden, that are almost always untraceable.

Russia exploits both approaches in a comprehensive assault, Wilhelm Urme, a spokesman for the Swedish Security Service, said this year when presenting the agency's annual report. "We mean everything from internet trolls to propaganda and misinformation spread by media companies like RT and Sputnik," he said.

The fundamental purpose of dezinformatsiya, or Russian disinformation, experts said, is to undermine the official version of events "even the very idea that there is a true version of events" and foster a kind of policy paralysis.

Disinformation most famously succeeded in early 2014 with the initial obfuscation about deploying Russian forces to seize Crimea. That summer, Russia pumped out a dizzying array of theories about the destruction of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 over Ukraine, blaming the C.I.A. and, most outlandishly, Ukrainian fighter pilots who had mistaken the airliner for the Russian presidential aircraft.

The cloud of stories helped veil the simple truth that poorly trained insurgents had accidentally downed the plane with a missile supplied by Russia.

Moscow adamantly denies using disinformation to influence Western public opinion and tends to label accusations of either overt or covert threats as "Russophobia."

"There is an impression that, like in a good orchestra, many Western countries every day accuse Russia of threatening someone," Maria Zakharova, the Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, said at a recent ministry briefing.

Tracing individual strands of disinformation is difficult, but in Sweden and elsewhere, experts have detected a characteristic pattern that they tie to Kremlin-generated disinformation campaigns.

"The dynamic is always the same: It originates somewhere in Russia, on Russia state media sites, or different

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

websites or somewhere in that kind of context," said Anders Lindberg, a Swedish journalist and lawyer.

"Then the fake document becomes the source of a news story distributed on far-left or far-right-wing websites," he said. "Those who rely on those sites for news link to the story, and it spreads. Nobody can say where they come from, but they end up as key issues in a security policy decision."

Although the topics may vary, the goal is the same, Mr. Lindberg and others suggested. "What the Russians are doing is building narratives; they are not building facts," he said. "The underlying narrative is, 'Don't trust anyone.'"

The weaponization of information is not some project devised by a Kremlin policy expert but is an integral part of Russian military doctrine "what some senior military figures call a "decisive" battlefield.

"The role of nonmilitary means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness," Gen. Valery V. Gerasimov, the chief of the general staff of the Russian Armed Forces, wrote in 2013.

A prime Kremlin target is Europe, where the rise of the populist right and declining support for the European Union create an ever more receptive audience for Russia's conservative, nationalistic and authoritarian approach under Mr. Putin. Last year, the European Parliament accused Russia of "financing radical and extremist parties" in its member states, and in 2014 the Kremlin extended an \$11.7 million loan to the National Front, the extreme-right party in France.

"The Russians are very good at courting everyone who has a grudge with liberal democracy, and that goes from extreme right to extreme left," said Patrik Oksanen, an editorial writer for the Swedish newspaper group MittMedia. The central idea, he said, is that "liberal democracy is corrupt, inefficient, chaotic and, ultimately, not democratic."

Another message, largely unstated, is that European governments lack the competence to deal with the crises they face, particularly immigration and terrorism, and that their officials are all American puppets.

In Germany, concerns over immigrant violence grew after a 13-year-old Russian-German girl said she had been raped by migrants. A report on Russian state television furthered the story. Even after the police debunked the claim, Russia's foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, continued to chastise Germany.

In Britain, analysts said, the Kremlin's English-language news outlets heavily favored the campaign for the country to leave the European Union, despite their claims of objectivity.

In the Czech Republic, alarming, sensational stories portraying the United States, the European Union and immigrants as villains appear daily across a cluster of about 40 pro-Russia websites.

During NATO military exercises in early June, articles on the websites suggested that Washington controlled Europe through the alliance, with Germany as its local sheriff. Echoing the disinformation that appeared in Sweden, the reports said NATO planned to store nuclear weapons in Eastern Europe and would attack Russia from there without seeking approval from local capitals.

A poll this summer by European Values, a think tank in Prague, found that 51 percent of Czechs viewed the United States' role in Europe negatively, only 32 percent viewed the European Union positively, and at least a quarter believed some elements of the disinformation.

"The data show how public opinion is changing thanks to the disinformation on those outlets," said Jakub Janda, the think tank's deputy director for public and political affairs. "They try to look like a regular media outlet even if they have a hidden agenda."

Not all Russian disinformation efforts succeed. Sputnik news websites in various Scandinavian languages failed to attract enough readers and were closed after less than a year.

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

Both RT and Sputnik portray themselves as independent, alternative voices. Sputnik claims that it “tells the untold,” even if its daily report relies heavily on articles abridged from other sources. RT trumpets the slogan “Question More.”

Both depict the West as grim, divided, brutal, decadent, overrun with violent immigrants and unstable. “They want to give a picture of Europe as some sort of continent that is collapsing,” Mr. Hultqvist, the Swedish defense minister, said in an interview.

RT often seems obsessed with the United States, portraying life there as hellish. Its coverage of the Democratic National Convention, for example, skipped the speeches and focused instead on scattered demonstrations. It defends the Republican presidential nominee, Donald J. Trump, as an underdog maligned by the established news media.

Margarita Simonyan, RT’s editor in chief, said the channel was being singled out as a threat because it offered a different narrative from “the Anglo-American media-political establishment.” RT, she said, wants to provide “a perspective otherwise missing from the mainstream media echo chamber.”

Moscow’s targeting of the West with disinformation dates to a Cold War program the Soviets called “active measures.” The effort involved leaking or even writing stories for sympathetic newspapers in India and hoping that they would be picked up in the West, said Professor Mark N. Kramer, a Cold War expert at Harvard.

The story that AIDS was a C.I.A. project run amok spread that way, and it poisons the discussion of the disease decades later. At the time, before the Soviet Union’s 1991 collapse, the Kremlin was selling communism as an ideological alternative. Now, experts said, the ideological component has evaporated, but the goal of weakening adversaries remains.

In Sweden recently, that has meant a series of bizarre forged letters and news articles about NATO and linked to Russia.

One forgery, on Defense Ministry letterhead over Mr. Hultqvist’s signature, encouraged a major Swedish firm to sell artillery to Ukraine, a move that would be illegal in Sweden. Ms. Nyh Radebo, his spokeswoman, put an end to that story in Sweden, but at international conferences, Mr. Hultqvist still faced questions about the nonexistent sales.

Russia also made at least one overt attempt to influence the debate. During a seminar in the spring, Vladimir Kozin, a senior adviser to the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, a think tank linked to the Kremlin and Russian foreign intelligence, argued against any change in Sweden’s neutral status.

“Do they really need to lose their neutral status?” he said of the Swedes. “To permit fielding new U.S. military bases on their territory and to send their national troops to take part in dubious regional conflicts?”

Whatever the method or message, Russia clearly wants to win any information war, as Dmitry Kiselyev, Russia’s most famous television anchor and the director of the organization that runs Sputnik, made clear recently.

Speaking this summer on the 75th anniversary of the Soviet Information Bureau, Mr. Kiselyev said the age of neutral journalism was over. “If we do propaganda, then you do propaganda, too,” he said, directing his message to Western journalists.

“Today, it is much more costly to kill one enemy soldier than during World War II, World War I or in the Middle Ages,” he said in an interview on the state-run Rossiya 24 network. While the business of “persuasion” is more expensive now, too, he said, “if you can persuade a person, you don’t need to kill him.”

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** Peter  
**Subject:** Russian hackers breached a computer used by county elections officials in Arizona, a state official said - The Washington Post  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** August 29, 2016 8:50 PM (UTC-04:00)

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/fbi-is-investigating-foreign-hacks-of-state-election-systems/2016/08/29/6e75884-6e00-11e6-8365-b19e428a975e\\_story.html?postshare=7591472493597608&tid=ss\\_tw](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/fbi-is-investigating-foreign-hacks-of-state-election-systems/2016/08/29/6e75884-6e00-11e6-8365-b19e428a975e_story.html?postshare=7591472493597608&tid=ss_tw)

Hackers targeted voter registration systems in Illinois and Arizona, and the FBI alerted Arizona officials in June that Russian hackers were behind the assault on the election system in that state.

The bureau told Arizona officials that the threat was “credible” and severe, ranking as “an 8 on a scale of 1 to 10,” said Matt Roberts, a spokesman for the secretary of state’s office.

As a result, Secretary of State Michele Reagan shut down the state voter registration system for almost a week.

It turned out that the hackers did not succeed in compromising the state system or even any county system, but rather had managed to steal the user name and password for one Gila County elections official.

Nonetheless, the revelation comes amid news that the FBI is investigating suspected foreign hacks of state election computer systems, and earlier this month warned states to be on the alert for intrusions.

In Illinois, officials discovered an intrusion into their state voter registration system in July.

The FBI’s Aug. 18 warning follows heightened concern over Russian hacks of Democratic Party organizations and possible meddling in the presidential election.

Although the hackers did not alter any data, the intrusion into the Illinois database marks the first successful compromise of a state election database, federal officials said.

Until now, countries such as Russia and China have shown little interest in voting systems in the United States. But experts said that if a foreign government gains the ability to tamper with voter data, for instance by deleting registration records, such a hack could cast doubt on the legitimacy of U.S. elections.

Meanwhile, the recently discovered hacks have state officials across the country scrambling to ensure that their systems have not been compromised. At least two other states are looking into potential breaches, officials said.

“This was a highly sophisticated attack most likely from a foreign (international) entity,” said Kyle Thomas, director of voting and registration systems for the Illinois State Board of Elections, in a message that was sent to all election authorities in the state.

In July, officials in that state discovered the intrusion, in which hackers were able to retrieve voter records. The amount accessed was “a fairly small percentage of the total,” said Ken Menzel, general counsel for the Illinois elections board.

## **How the Russian hackers got into the DNC's network**

Play Video2:37

The Post's Ellen Nakashima goes over the events, and discusses the two hacker groups responsible. (Jhaan Elker/The Washington Post)

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

State officials alerted the FBI, he said. The Department of Homeland Security also got involved, he said. The intrusion led the state election board to shut down the voter registration system for a week.

In June, the Arizona Secretary of State's office shut down part of its website after the FBI found a potential threat to its state voter registration system, according to the Arizona Republic.

Following those breaches, the FBI issued its "flash" alert, which listed Internet protocol addresses and other technical fingerprints associated with the hacks.

"The FBI is requesting that states contact their Board of Elections and determine if any similar activity to their logs, both inbound and outbound, has been detected," said the FBI alert, which was first reported by Yahoo News.

The FBI declined official comment other than to note it "routinely advises private industry of various cyber threat indicators" it turns up in investigations.

The bureau has told Illinois officials that they're looking at possible foreign government agencies as well as criminal hackers, Menzel said.

The technical details in the alert were gathered by the MS-ISAC, a multi-state information-sharing center that helps state, local and tribal government agencies combat cyber threats and that works with federal law enforcement agencies.

"I'm less concerned about the attackers getting access to and downloading the information," said Brian Kalkin, vice president of operations for the Center for Internet Security, which operates the MS-ISAC. "I'm more concerned about the information being altered, modified or deleted. That's where the real potential is for any sort of meddling in the election."

And James Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence, has told Congress that manipulation or deletion of data is the next big cyber threat--"the next push on the envelope."

But Tom Hicks, chairman of the federal Election Assistance Commission, an agency set up by Congress after the 2000 Florida recount to maintain election integrity, said he is confident that states have sufficient safeguards in place to ensure efforts at manipulation will be unsuccessful.

For one, he said, if a voter's name does not show up on the list, the individual can still cast a provision ballot and once his or her status is confirmed, the ballot will be counted. Also, he said, in general the voting systems themselves "are not hooked up to the Internet" and so "there's not going to be any manipulation of data."

Nonetheless, more than 30 states have some provisions for online voting, primarily for voters living overseas of serving in the military. An official at the Department of Homeland Security cautioned this spring that online voting is not yet secure.

"We believe that online voting, especially online voting in large scale, introduces great risk into the election system by threatening voters' expectations of confidentiality, accountability and security of their votes and provides an avenue for malicious actors to manipulate the voting results," Neil Jenkins, an official in the Office of Cybersecurity and Communications at the Department of Homeland Security,

Some private-sector researchers say some of the information released by the FBI points to a potential Russian link, but they caution that their work is preliminary. Rich Barger, chief information officer at ThreatConnect, said that several of the IP addresses trace back to a website-hosting service called King Servers that offers Russia-based technical support. He also said that one of the methods used was similar to a tactic in other intrusions suspected of being carried out by the Russian government, including one this month on the World Anti-Doping Agency.

"The very fact that [someone] has rattled the doorknobs, the very fact that the state election commissions are in the cross-hairs gives grounds to the average American voter to wonder: Can they really trust the results?" said Barger.



# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

On Aug. 15, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson held a conference call with state election officials, offering the Department of Homeland Security's assistance in protecting against cyberattacks.

He said that DHS was "not aware of any specific or credible cybersecurity threats relating to the upcoming general election systems," according to a readout of the call. It was not clear whether he was aware at the time of the FBI's investigation into the Arizona and Illinois intrusions.

## **Read more:**

[Russian government hackers penetrated DNC, stole opposition research on Trump](#)

[More than 30 states offer online voting, but experts warn it isn't secure](#)

**From:** [redacted] (WF) (FBI)  
**Subject:** RE: Reid Sends Letter Implying Stone Is With The Russians | The Daily Caller  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (OGC) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** August 31, 2016 8:05 AM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

Nice

...

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>  
**Date:** 08/31/2016 7:57 AM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)"  
[redacted] >, [redacted] (WF) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)"  
**Subject:** Fwd: Reid Sends Letter Implying Stone Is With The Russians | The Daily Caller

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

First article I've seen naming the unnamed in Reid's letter

<http://dailycaller.com/2016/08/30/harry-reid-sends-letter-to-fbi-implying-trump-associates-are-in-cahoots-with-the-russians/>

## Harry Reid Sends Letter To FBI Implying Trump Associates Are In Cahoots With The Russians

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid sent a letter Saturday to the FBI to ask for an investigation into the Kremlin ties of Trump confidant Roger Stone and foreign policy adviser Carter Page.

“The evidence of a direct connection between the Russian government and Donald Trump’s presidential campaign continues to mount,” Democratic Nevada Sen. Reid wrote in the [letter](#). He added, “The prospect of a hostile government actively seeking to undermine our free and fair elections represents one of the gravest threats to our democracy since the Cold War and it is critical for the Federal Bureau of Investigation to use every resource available to investigate this matter thoroughly and in a timely fashion.”

The Clinton campaign and allies have now for weeks been pushing a conspiracy theory that the Russian government is actively aiding Trump. This theory has been pushed ever since Wikileaks released nearly 20,000 emails from DNC officials.

In his letter, Reid goes on to imply the FBI investigate Roger Stone, without ever naming him. “It has come to my attention that last week, video evidence came to light of an individual with long ties to Donald Trump and his top campaign aides claiming to be in communication with WikiLeaks, the organization that posted online the 20,000 DNC documents illegally obtained by Russia,” Reid wrote. Stone has said before that he has communicated with Wikileaks founder Julian Assange.

Reid continued on to say, “The prospect of individuals tied to Trump, Wikileaks and the Russian government

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

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“The Democrats would like to shift the question back to who was leaking,” Stone said to The Daily Caller. “If the emails and the other documents exposed to the American people show evidence of misdeeds and criminality that is the point.” He praised Assange as someone who is fighting “the deep state.” Stone called the letter a “publicity stunt” and added “there is no there there.”

Stone described himself as not being involved with the Trump campaign “formally or informally” and pointed to donations to the Clinton Foundation by Russian oligarchs.

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To: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (WF) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI)  
Sent: August 31, 2016 8:47 AM (UTC-04:00)

FWIW - I felt much much better after I heard that [redacted] was involved and engaged [redacted] Plus, I've also confirmed that [redacted] and I are meeting g with [redacted] today to get more background.

b3 -5  
b6 -1  
b5 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -14

...

----- Original message -----

From: "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>  
Date: 08/31/2016 7:57 AM (GMT-05:00)  
To: "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (WF) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>  
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**Subject:** Trump confidant predicts WikiLeaks will end Clinton's campaign this week | Washington Examiner  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 2, 2016 4:53 PM (UTC-04:00)

[http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-confidant-predicts-wikileaks-will-end-clintons-campaign-this-week/article/2603399?custom\\_click=rss](http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-confidant-predicts-wikileaks-will-end-clintons-campaign-this-week/article/2603399?custom_click=rss)

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**Subject:** Fwd: Trump confidant predicts WikiLeaks will end Clinton's campaign this week | Washington Examiner  
**To:** Priestap, E W. (CD) (FBI); Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI); [REDACTED] (WF) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 2, 2016 4:53 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

[http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-confidant-predicts-wikileaks-will-end-clintons-campaign-this-week/article/2603399?custom\\_click=rss](http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-confidant-predicts-wikileaks-will-end-clintons-campaign-this-week/article/2603399?custom_click=rss)

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**Subject:** Fwd: Trump confidant predicts WikiLeaks will end Clinton's campaign this week | Washington Examiner  
**To:** [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 2, 2016 4:54 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7c -1

[http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-confidant-predicts-wikileaks-will-end-clintons-campaign-this-week/article/2603399?custom\\_click=rss](http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-confidant-predicts-wikileaks-will-end-clintons-campaign-this-week/article/2603399?custom_click=rss)

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**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); Priestap, E W. (CD) (FBI); [REDACTED] (WF) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 2, 2016 4:56 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

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----- Original message -----

**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** 10/02/2016 4:53 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Priestap, E W. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>, "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] (WF) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Trump confidant predicts WikiLeaks will end Clinton's campaign this week | Washington Examiner

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

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**To:** Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI); Priestap, E W. (CD) (FBI) [REDACTED] (WF) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 2, 2016 5:02 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

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**Date:** 10/02/2016 4:56 PM (GMT-05:00)  
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**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI); [REDACTED] (WF) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 2, 2016 5:39 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

Thank you.

...

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** 10/02/2016 5:01 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>, "Priestap, E W. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] (WF) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>  
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**Subject:** RE: Trump confidant predicts WikiLeaks will end Clinton's campaign this week | Washington Examiner

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

He's the guy who has made public statements in the past indicating his direct contact with wiki...

...

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** 10/02/2016 4:53 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Priestap, E W. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>, "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] (WF) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Trump confidant predicts WikiLeaks will end Clinton's campaign this week | Washington Examiner

b6 -1  
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[http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-confidant-predicts-wikileaks-will-end-clintons-campaign-this-week/article/2603399?custom\\_click=rss](http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-confidant-predicts-wikileaks-will-end-clintons-campaign-this-week/article/2603399?custom_click=rss)

## Trump confidant predicts WikiLeaks will end Clinton's campaign this week

FBI(23-CV-30)-789

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

A friend of Donald Trump who has served as an unofficial campaign surrogate says Wednesday will be the end of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's campaign.

Roger Stone, who served on Trump's campaign before leaving in August 2015, tweeted early Sunday morning that WikiLeaks may have some revelations about Clinton coming.

"Wednesday @HillaryClinton is done," Stone tweeted, adding the hashtag "Wikileaks."

Stay abreast of the latest developments from nation's capital and beyond with curated **News Alerts** from the Washington Examiner news desk and delivered to your inbox.

WikiLeaks has released a trove of emails related to the Democratic National Committee's dealings over the presidential primary race between Clinton and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders.

Those emails had more of an impact on the DNC than the Clinton campaign directly, which revealed correspondence DNC officials plotting to undermine Sanders in favor of Clinton. Florida Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz stepped down from her post as chairwoman of the committee along with multiple staffers in the wake of the email dump.

National security analysts have suggested WikiLeaks received the emails from hackers working at the direction of Russia or possibly agents of the Kremlin. It's been widely speculated that WikiLeaks is being used by Russian President Vladimir Putin to influence the United States election.

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has promised to release information that could impact the race before Nov. 8.

Also from the Washington Examiner

Top Story



# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** Sporre, Eric W. (CYD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** RE: Trump issue  
**To:** [redacted] (CYD) (FBI); [redacted] (CE) (FBI); [redacted] (CYD) (FBI)  
**Cc:** [redacted] Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (CYD) (FBI); Smith, Scott S. (PG) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 5, 2016 2:33 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Thanks. Copying CD.

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[redacted]

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This data shows communications between Trump, Spectrum, and Russian Alfa Bank networks.
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**Summary:**

FBI(23-CV-30)-791

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- Confronted with questions by NYT reporter, Alfa Bank denies any relationship
- Hidden server belonging to Trump then disappears (no one but Alfa Bank was asked)
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Trump's [FEC filings](#) fail to disclose any foreign bank account in Russia or relationship with the [Russian Alfa Bank](#).

Network logs show a distinctively human pattern of communications between a hidden server dedicated for use by the Trump Organization and the Russian financial company Alfa Bank, which has close ties to the Kremlin. [Trump campaign advisors also have relationships with Alfa Bank and related Alfa-Group / LetterOne.](#)

The other frequent connection to Trump's hidden server with the same distinctive human pattern is Spectrum Health, a Michigan hospital with close ties to the DeVos family (<http://www.spectrumhealth.org/locations/helen-devos-childrens-hospital>). The Devos family founded Amway / Alticor which operates in Russia including transactions with Alfa Bank such as [buying insurance for 800 Alticor employees from Alfa Bank's insurance subsidiary](#). The Devos family has given millions of dollars in the past few months to conservative super PACs ([www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov)). One member of the [Devos family](#) was a [founder](#) of [Blackwater](#).

Trump's hidden server appears to be a specially configured outbound email server. The email server type normally would handle outbound bulk advertising or transactional mail for a large enterprise to customers, powerful enough to deliver millions of emails per day. ( <http://www.marketerspublishinggroup.com/PMTA-UsersGuide-4.0.pdf>). Different in every way from traffic seen on adjacent servers managed by the same server company, this specially configured server has been exclusively corresponding with Alfa-Bank and Spectrum since at least May 2016 with a cadence and rate of a human conversation. See the graph of the connections here.

The stealth server has had two different names:

mail1.Trump-Email.com (zone deleted on Friday, 2016-Sept-23 after the Russian Alfa-Bank was asked by the New York Times to explain the communications)

and on 2016-Sept-27 a new name showed up:

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The physical server itself was never changed; just the hostname mail1.Trump-Email.com stopped pointing to that physical server and the hostname was effectively deleted from the global Domain Name System (DNS).

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The Russian Alfa Bank was the first to contact the newly renamed host, strongly indicating again that Trump and Alfa Bank are coordinating with each other and have a very close relationship. After this discovery, they are likely moving conversations to a new channel.

Trump has a bank account with the Russian Alfa Bank, which may explain the need for hidden server communications. Alfa Bank / Alfa Group / LetterOne has expressed interest in investing billions in US health care companies, which could include Michigan's Spectrum Health or could be regarding the financial relationships Amway/Alticor has with the Russian Alfa Bank insurance company.

## **F.A.Q.**

### **Are you sure the Trump-Email.com domain really belongs to the Trump Organization?**

We have 100% confidence. You can verify the complete whois record by going to the Godaddy.com website and clicking on WHOIS. While whois records can be forged, we also judge authenticity based on the resources used by each domain name. A very detailed analysis has been made of thousands of Trump Organization domain names, vendors and hosting resources, confirming that this domain without question belongs in the same group.

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Registrant State/Province: New York Registrant State/Province: New York  
Registrant Postal Code: 10022  
Registrant Country: US Registrant Country: US  
Registrant Phone: +1.2128322000

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
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**To:** [redacted] (WF) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (CG) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 5, 2016 3:03 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

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**To:** [redacted] (CYD) (FBI) <[redacted]>, [redacted] (CE) (FBI)"  
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b6 -1  
b7C -1  
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b6 -3  
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[redacted]

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trump1.contact-client.com

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Registrant Street: 725 Fifth Avenue  
Registrant City: New York  
Registrant State/Province: New York Registrant State/Province: New York

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

Registrant Postal Code: 10022

Registrant Country: US Registrant Country: US

Registrant Phone: +1.2128322000

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Trump issue  
**To:** [redacted] (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 5, 2016 3:03 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Sporre, Eric W. (CYD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Date:** 10/05/2016 2:32 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** [redacted] (CYD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (CE) (FBI)"  
<[redacted]>, [redacted] (CYD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>  
**Cc:** [redacted] >, "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)"  
[redacted] >, "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted]  
(CYD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, "Smith, Scott S. (PG) (FBI)" [redacted] <  
**Subject:** RE: Trump issue

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Thanks. Copying CD.

...

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**To:** "Sporre, Eric W. (CYD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (CE) (FBI)"  
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**Cc:** [redacted] >  
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b6 -1  
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Reuters Washington Bureau

b6 -3  
b7C -3

[redacted]



# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** [redacted] (CG) (FBI)  
**Subject:** RE: Trump issue  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (WF) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (CG) (FBI); [redacted] (CG) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 5, 2016 3:14 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7D -4

Roger. [redacted]

---

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**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Date:** 10/05/2016 2:02 PM (GMT-06:00)  
**To:** [redacted] (WF) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (CG) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
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**Subject:** RE: Trump issue  
**To:** [redacted] (CG) (FBI); [redacted] (WF) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (CG) (FBI); [redacted] (CG) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI)  
**Cc:** Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 5, 2016 3:21 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

Rgr. Would you please send me an update where we are on this aspect? Nothing fancy, just hammer out details in an email

Thanks

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**Date:** 10/05/2016 3:14 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (WF) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (CG) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (CG) (FBI)" [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Trump issue

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7D -4  
b7E -3

Roger. [redacted]

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**Date:** 10/05/2016 2:02 PM (GMT-06:00)  
**To:** [redacted] (WF) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (CG) (FBI)" [redacted]  
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b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

----- Original message -----

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b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Thanks. Copying CD.

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b6 -1  
b7C -1  
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Eric and all:

FYI on this being out in the media

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b6 -1,3  
b7C -1,3

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[redacted]

b6 -3  
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and on 2016-Sept-27 a new name showed up:

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### **Excerpt from Trump-Email.com whois record:**

Registrant Name: Trump Orgainzation  
Registrant Organization: Trump Orgainzation  
Registrant Street: 725 Fifth Avenue  
Registrant City: New York  
Registrant State/Province: New York Registrant State/Province: New York  
Registrant Postal Code: 10022  
Registrant Country: US Registrant Country: US  
Registrant Phone: +1.2128322000



# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Trump issue  
**To:** [redacted] (CG) (FBI); [redacted] (WF) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (CG) (FBI); [redacted] (CG) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI)  
**Cc:** Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 5, 2016 3:22 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

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Thanks

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b6 -1  
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**Cc:** Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 5, 2016 3:32 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

Sure Pete. We're having a lync call with [redacted] to hammer the details out now. He said he'll brief you on the update when we're done.

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>  
**Date:** 10/05/2016 2:21 PM (GMT-06:00)  
**To:** [redacted] (CG) (FBI); [redacted] (WF) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (CG) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (CG) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (CG) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI)  
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b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7D -4  
b7E -3

Roger. [redacted]

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b6 -1  
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b6 -1  
b7C -1  
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b6 -1  
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b6 -1,3  
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b6 -3  
b7C -3

[redacted]

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Registrant Street: 725 Fifth Avenue
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Registrant State/Province: New York Registrant State/Province: New York
Registrant Postal Code: 10022
Registrant Country: US Registrant Country: US
Registrant Phone: +1.2128322000
```

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**From:** [redacted] (CG) (FBI)  
**Subject:** RE: Trump issue  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (CG) (FBI); [redacted] (WF) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (CG) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI)  
**Cc:** Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)  
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b6 -1  
b7C -1

Good afternoon,

We just got off the phone with [redacted] who is coming to update you now. I am in the process of writing up a quick update email now on the red side but I am happy to answer any questions that you have in the meantime.

Best,

SA [redacted]  
Chicago Division [redacted]  
Desk: [redacted]  
Mobile: [redacted]

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -2,3

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# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

they were making connections to Trump-Email.com. While no errors were seen in all the months prior to this question from the reporter - suddenly errors appeared. Two of the authoritative name server hosts deleted the zone, while the third authoritative just erased the IP from the configuration line and continued to answer authoritatively. This mistake can still be demonstrated at the time of this writing.

The Trump Organization deleted the Trump-Email.com zone shortly before 10 AM Eastern US time on Friday Sept 23rd after the NYT reporter called Alfa Bank. This suggests a cover-up attempt by Trump and Alfa Bank. It suggests communication from Alfa Bank warning the Trump Organization to take action to remove the evidence of the hidden server domain, mail1.Trump-Email.com.

The physical server itself was never changed; just the hostname mail1.Trump-Email.com stopped pointing to that physical server and the hostname was effectively deleted from the global Domain Name System (DNS).

By September 27th 2016, the Trump Organization had created a new host trump1.contact-client.com pointing to the exact same physical server previously operating as mail1.Trump-Email.com.

The Russian Alfa Bank was the first to contact the newly renamed host, strongly indicating again that Trump and Alfa Bank are coordinating with each other and have a very close relationship. After this discovery, they are likely moving conversations to a new channel.

Trump has a bank account with the Russian Alfa Bank, which may explain the need for hidden server communications. Alfa Bank / Alfa Group / LetterOne has expressed interest in [investing billions in US health care companies](#), which could include Michigan's Spectrum Health or could be regarding the financial relationships Amway/Alticor has with the Russian Alfa Bank insurance company.

## **F.A.Q.**

### **Are you sure the Trump-Email.com domain really belongs to the Trump Organization?**

We have 100% confidence. You can verify the complete whois record by going to the Godaddy.com website and clicking on WHOIS. While whois records can be forged, we also judge authenticity based on the resources used by each domain name. A very detailed analysis has been made of thousands of Trump Organization domain names, vendors and hosting resources, confirming that this domain without question belongs in the same group.

### **Excerpt from Trump-Email.com whois record:**

Registrant Name: Trump Orgainzation  
Registrant Organization: Trump Orgainzation  
Registrant Street: 725 Fifth Avenue  
Registrant City: New York  
Registrant State/Province: New York Registrant State/Province: New York  
Registrant Postal Code: 10022  
Registrant Country: US Registrant Country: US  
Registrant Phone: +1.2128322000

**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Prepare For Electoral Chaos - Lawfare  
**To:** Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 6, 2016 10:52 PM (UTC-04:00)

## Prepare For Electoral Chaos

It is now clear to effectively everybody except those blindly following Donald Trump that the Russians are actively tampering with the U.S. election. It may have started largely by accident, when the transparently bad "Romanian" Guccifer 2 persona deliberately muddled attribution of the DNC hack, but the subsequent disclosures and resulting disruption have turned this bit of improvisation into a significant strategy: sow chaos.

Making the problem worse, the United States is now distinctly vulnerable to chaos. With the rise of a dangerous post-fact demagogue in the form of Donald Trump and a more general hyper-polarization of parties that equates "compromise" with "betrayal," any actor who wishes to cripple the United States for a generation only needs to destabilize the election. Given Trump's talk of a "rigged" election, his defeat will already seem suspicious by his followers. Add in actual voting disruptions and the results may be catastrophic.

I won't discuss how a hostile actor could disrupt the voting process, simply because there are so many possible methods. Gather two or three security experts around the table and you will end up with a pile of horrors. Add both a case of beer and an expert in dirty tricks to the mix, and the scenarios will ensure that you will never sleep again.

Although there has already been a lot of focus on preventing specific methods, we also need to focus on more general plans for handling post-election chaos. A hostile attacker might launch disruptive attacks resulting in closed polling places, corrupted vote counts, or disrupted voter rolls.

Preparation begins with state and local governments. Local officials need to have plans in place for extending voting past the deadline at both single precincts or across entire counties. They should also ensure that there are large stocks of provisional ballots in case of disrupted rolls. These plans should factor in the possibility of corrupted votes where there aren't proper audit trails, perhaps even necessitating a re-vote. Officials should focus

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not just on "security" through planning to prevent particular scenarios, but also on resiliency, so that no matter what happens there is an ability to recover.

But preparation also requires a private commitment from Republican leaders. The party needs to quietly plan on how to respond should Trump lose. It seems highly likely that in a maliciously disrupted but still definitive election, Trump will refuse to concede and instead actively incite his base. The Republican party has no hope of preventing their candidate from doing destructive things, but can at least attempt to mitigate the damage by presenting a unified front against the worst Trump might offer on November 9th.

**From:** Peter  
**Subject:** Dear Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, I Am Not Sidney Blumenthal  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 11, 2016 6:18 AM (UTC-04:00)

This was out of Newsweek. Note use by Trump at the end

## Dear Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, I Am Not Sidney Blumenthal

By [Kurt Eichenwald](#) On 10/10/16 at 7:45 PM

*Updated* | I am Sidney Blumenthal. At least, that is what Vladimir Putin—and, somehow, Donald Trump—seem to believe. And that should raise concerns not only about Moscow’s attempts to manipulate this election, but also how Trump came to push Russian disinformation to American voters.

An email from Blumenthal—a confidant of Hillary Clinton and a man, second only to George Soros at the center of conservative conspiracy theories—turned up in the recent [document dump](#) by Wikileaks. At a time when American intelligence believes [Russian hackers](#) are trying to interfere with the presidential election, records have been fed recently to Wikileaks out of multiple organizations of the Democratic Party, raising concerns that the self-proclaimed whistleblowers group has become a tool of Putin’s government. But now that I have been brought into the whole mess—and transformed into Blumenthal—there is even more proof that this act of cyberwar is not only being orchestrated by the Russians, but that they are really, really dumb.

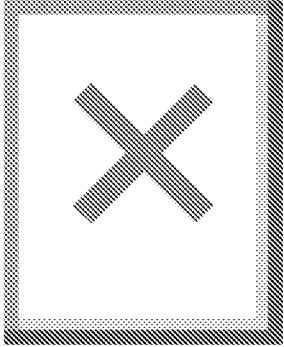
The evidence emerged thanks to the incompetence of *Sputnik*, the Russian online news and radio service established by the government controlled news agency, Rossiya Segodnya.

[Try Newsweek for only \\$1.25 per week](#)

The documents that Wikileaks unloaded recently have been emails out of the account of John Podesta, the chairman of Clinton’s election campaign. Almost as soon as the pilfered documents emerged, *Sputnik* was all over them and rapidly found (or probably already knew about before the Wikileaks dump) a purportedly incriminating email from Blumenthal.

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The email was amazing—it linked Boogie Man Blumenthal, Podesta and the topic of conservative political fevered dreams, Benghazi. This, it seemed, was the smoking gun finally proving Clinton bore total responsibility for the terrorist attack on the American outpost in Libya in 2012. *Sputnik* even declared that the email might be the “October surprise” that could undermine Clinton’s campaign.



**Russian President Vladimir Putin listens to German Vice Chancellor and Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel during their meeting at the Novo-Ogaryovo state residence outside Moscow, Russia on September 21. REUTERS/Ivan Sekretarev/Pool**

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To understand the full importance of the story—and how much Putin and his Kremlin cronies must have been dancing with delight—I have to quote the top few paragraphs:

*In a major revelation from the second batch of WikiLeaks emails from Clinton Campaign Chairman John Podesta it was learned that Hillary's top confidante Sidney Blumenthal believed that the investigation into Benghazi was legitimate because it was "preventable" and the result of State Department negligence.*

*In an email titled "The Truth" from Hillary's top confidante Sidney Blumenthal, the adviser writing to undisclosed recipients said that "one important point that has been universally acknowledged by nine previous reports about Benghazi: The attack was almost certainly preventable" in what may turn out to be the big October surprise from the WikiLeaks released of emails hacked from the account of Clinton Campaign Chair John Podesta.*

*Then came the money quote: "Clinton was in charge of the State Department, and it failed to protect U.S. personnel at an American consulate in Libya. If the GOP wants to raise that as a talking point against her, it is legitimate," said Blumenthal, putting to rest the Democratic Party talking point that the investigation into Clinton's management of the State Department at the time of the attack was nothing more than a partisan witch hunt.*

Those words sounded really, really familiar. Really familiar. Like, so familiar they struck me as something I wrote. Because they were something I wrote.

The Russians were quoting two sentences from a 10,000 word piece I wrote for Newsweek, which Blumenthal had emailed to Podesta. There was no mistaking that Blumenthal was citing *Newsweek*—the magazine's name and citations for photographs appeared throughout the attached article. The Russians had carefully selected the "of course" paragraph, which mentions there were legitimate points of criticism regarding Clinton and Benghazi, all of which had been acknowledged in nine reports about the terror attack and by the former Secretary of State herself. But that was hardly the point of the story, "Benghazi Biopsy: A Comprehensive Guide to One of America's Worst Political Outrages." The piece is about the obscene politicization of the assault that killed four Americans, and the article slammed the Republican Benghazi committee which was engaged in a political show trial disguised as a Congressional investigation—the tenth inquiry into the tragedy.

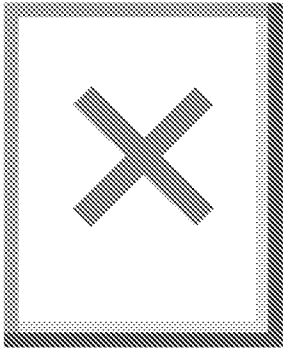
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Here is the real summation of my article, which the Russians failed to quote:

*The historical significance of this moment can hardly be overstated, and it seems many Republicans, Democrats and members of the media don't fully understand the magnitude of what is taking place. The awesome power of government—one that allows officials to pore through almost anything they demand and compel anyone to talk or suffer the shame of taking the Fifth Amendment—has been unleashed for purely political purposes. It is impossible to review what the Benghazi committee has done as anything other than taxpayer-funded political research of the opposing party's leading candidate for president. Comparisons from America's past are rare. Richard Nixon's attempts to use the IRS to investigate his perceived enemies come to mind. So does Senator Joseph McCarthy's red-baiting during the 1950s, with reckless accusations of treason leveled at members of the State Department, military generals and even the secretary of the Army...The consequences, however, are worse than the manipulation of the electoral process. By using Benghazi for political advantage, the Republicans have communicated to global militants that, through even limited attacks involving relatively few casualties, they can potentially influence the direction of American elections.*

Of course, this might be seen as just an opportunity to laugh at the incompetence of the Russian hackers and government press—once they realized their error, *Sputnik* took the article down. But then things got even more bizarre.

This false story was only reported by the Russian controlled agency (a reference appeared in a Turkish publication, but it was nothing but a link to the *Sputnik* article). So how did Donald Trump end up advancing the same falsehood put out by Putin's mouthpiece?



**Donald Trump enters the town hall debate against Hillary Clinton at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, on October 9.** REUTERS/Lucy Nicholson

At a rally in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, Trump spoke while holding a document in his hand. He told the assembled crowd that it was an email from Blumenthal, whom he called “sleazy Sidney.”

“This just came out a little while ago,” Trump said. “I have to tell you this.” And then he read the words from my article.



# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

“He’s now admitting they could have done something about Benghazi,” Trump said, dropping the document to the floor. “This just came out a little while ago.”

The crowd booed and chanted, “Lock her up!”

This is not funny. It is terrifying. The Russians engage in a sloppy disinformation effort and, before the day is out, the Republican nominee for president is standing on a stage reciting the manufactured story as truth. How did this happen? Who in the Trump campaign was feeding him falsehoods straight from the Kremlin? (The Trump campaign did not respond to a request for comment).

The Russians have been obtaining American emails and now are presenting complete misrepresentations of them—falsifying them—in hopes of setting off a cascade of events that might change the outcome of the presidential election. The big question, of course, is why are the Russians working so hard to damage Clinton and, in the process, aid Donald Trump? That is a topic for another time.

For now, though, Americans should be outraged. This totalitarian regime, engaged in what are arguably war crimes in Syria to protect their government puppet, is working to upend a democracy to the benefit of an American candidate who uttered positive comments just Sunday about the Kremlin's campaign on behalf of Bashar al-Assad. Trump’s arguments were an incomprehensible explication of the complex Syrian situation, which put him right on the side of the Iranians and Syrian,s who are fighting to preserve the government that is the primary conduit of weapons used against Israel.

So no, Mr. Putin, I’m not Sidney Blumenthal. And now that you have been exposed once again, get the hell out of our election. And Mr. Trump—you have some explaining to do.

*This story has been updated to include information about Donald Trump's speech in Pennsylvania and a request for comment from the Trump campaign.*

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**From:** [redacted] (WF) (FBI)  
**Subject:** RE:  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 15, 2016 1:19 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

Thanks

---

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted]  
**Date:** 10/15/2016 1:16 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (WF) (FBI)"  
[redacted], [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted]  
**Subject:** Fwd:

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

----- Original message -----

**From:** Peter [redacted]  
**Date:** 10/15/2016 1:10 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted]  
**Subject:**

b7E -3

Clinton's team unleashes Watergate attack against Trump

In an essay shared with POLITICO, the campaign accuses Trump and Russia of criminal theft.

By Annie Karni

10/15/16 10:00 AM EDT

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Four decades after five men broke into the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate, Hillary Clinton's campaign is trying to frame the hacking of her campaign chairman's email as a repeat of the most famous political scandal in American history — and to directly implicate Donald Trump.

“What did Trump know, and when did he know it?” the campaign asks in an essay that will post on Medium, a play on the famous line from the Senate's Watergate investigation. (“What did the President know and when did he know it?” Sen. Howard Baker asked then.)

“We're witnessing another effort to steal private campaign documents in order to influence an election,” Clinton campaign spokesman Glen Caplin writes in an early version of the post, which was shared with POLITICO. “Only this time, instead of filing cabinets, it's people's emails they're breaking into; and a foreign government is behind it.”

Clinton's campaign has been increasingly frustrated by media coverage of campaign chairman John Podesta's stolen emails, which are being released by the thousands every morning on Wikileaks.

Major news outlets have treated the internal correspondence of top campaign officials as a treasure trove of unfiltered

FBI(23-CV-30)-827

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information about how Clinton's operatives navigated a thorny and prolonged primary challenge, and dealt with the almost-crippling State Department email scandal, which defined the early months of Clinton's campaign.

Private email conversations about Chelsea Clinton, where former presidential aide Doug Band accused her of acting like a "spoiled brat kid" who "hasn't found her way and has a lack of focus in her life" have had internal repercussions.

And portions of Clinton's secretive paid speeches in front of Wall Street banks -- where she touts the importance of having a "public and a private position" on contentious political issues -- could still have reverberations for the former secretary of state down the line.

But the Democrat's campaign has argued that newsrooms should ignore the emails or at least identify them as hacked "not leaked" documents.

Clinton press secretary, and former Justice Department spokesman, Brian Fallon, first compared the Wiki release to Watergate last week in a tweet. But Saturday's Medium post marks the start of a more deliberate push that will carry through the final three weeks of the campaign to frame the emails as part of a criminal hack "and to make the electronic files seem as compromised to the media and to voters as reading and reporting on a stolen physical document.

The campaign will lean into the suggestion that Trump or his close advisers are connected directly to the hack, which is widely believed to be tied to Russia.

"Donald Trump needs to condemn these illegal hacks and denounce Russian efforts to intervene in our election," Caplin writes. "Why is Trump protecting Putin by lying about Russia's role in these hacks? What did his campaign know and when did they know it? Why won't he condemn this? With less than a month until Election Day, these are the questions we need answered" and soon.

Podesta last week claimed Trump operatives colluded with the Russians in an effort to derail Clinton and meddle in the U.S. election. Speaking to reporters aboard the Democratic nominee's campaign plane, he pointed to longtime Trump adviser Roger Stone as an operative who has bragged about his back-channel connection to Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, and said it was safe to assume Stone had advanced warning about the hack. Stone has vehemently denied the accusation.

Trump has denied any colluding with Russia and any involvement in the hack of the Democratic National Committee last summer. "I don't know Putin," he said at the second presidential debate. "I notice anything wrong happens, they like to say the Russians. She doesn't know it's the Russians doing the hacking. Maybe there is no hacking."

In the Medium post, Caplin also highlights a Yahoo! News report that a former foreign policy adviser to Trump, Carter Page, had private communications with Russian government officials.

About 10,000 emails have been released so far, and Wikileaks has said it plans to release 50,000 emails in total. So far, the Clinton campaign has not confirmed or denied the authenticity of any of the messages.

But in the post, the campaign also attempts to enter into the bloodstream the idea that emails in the Podesta dump could be "manipulated," apparently girding for potentially sensitive information to be released in the final 24 days of the race.

"We also know that documents previously released by the Russian hackers behind Guccifer 2.0 and WikiLeaks have been manipulated, and that we should only expect more of these dirty tricks moving forward," Caplin writes.

**From:**   
**Subject:** A Veteran Spy Has Given the FBI Information Alleging a Russian Operation to Cultivate Donald Trump | Mother Jones  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 31, 2016 8:34 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -3  
b7c -3

<http://m.motherjones.com/politics/2016/10/veteran-spy-gave-fbi-info-alleging-russian-operation-cultivate-donald-trump>

## A Veteran Spy Has Given the FBI Information Alleging a Russian Operation to Cultivate Donald Trump

Has the bureau investigated this material?

Carlo Allegri/ZUMA • Oct. 31, 2016 7:52 PM



On Friday, FBI Director James Comey set off a political blast when he informed congressional leaders that the bureau had stumbled across emails that might be pertinent to its completed inquiry into Hillary Clinton's handling of emails when she was secretary of state. The Clinton campaign and others criticized Comey for intervening in a presidential campaign by breaking with Justice Department tradition and revealing information about an investigation—information that was vague and perhaps ultimately irrelevant—so close to Election Day. On Sunday, Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid upped the ante. He sent Comey a fiery letter saying the FBI chief may have broken the law and pointed to a potentially greater controversy: "In my communications with you and other top officials in the national security community, it has become clear that you possess explosive information about close ties and coordination between Donald Trump, his top advisors, and the Russian government...The public has a right to know this information."

Reid's missive set off a burst of speculation on Twitter and elsewhere. What was he referring to regarding the Republican presidential nominee? At the end of August, Reid had written to Comey and demanded an investigation of the "connections between the Russian government and Donald Trump's presidential campaign," and in that letter he indirectly referred to Carter Page, an American businessman cited by Trump as one of his foreign policy advisers, who had financial ties to Russia and had recently visited Moscow. Last month, Yahoo News reported that US intelligence officials were probing the links between Page and senior Russian officials. (Page has called accusations against him "garbage.") On Monday, NBC News reported that the FBI has mounted a preliminary inquiry into the foreign business ties of Paul Manafort, Trump's former campaign chief. But Reid's recent note hinted at more than the Page or Manafort affairs. And a former senior intelligence officer for a Western country who specialized in Russian counterintelligence tells *Mother Jones* that in recent months he provided the bureau with memos, based on his recent interactions with Russian sources, contending the Russian government has for years tried to co-opt and assist Trump—and that the FBI requested more information from him.

***"This is something of huge significance, way above party politics," the former intelligence officer says. "I think [Trump's] own party should be aware of this stuff as well."***

Does this mean the FBI is investigating whether Russian intelligence has attempted to develop a secret relationship with Trump or cultivate him as an asset? Was the former intelligence officer and his material deemed credible or not? An FBI spokeswoman says, "Normally, we don't talk about whether we are investigating anything." But a senior US government official not involved in this case but familiar with the former spy tells *Mother Jones* that he has been a credible source with a proven record of providing reliable, sensitive, and important information to the US government.

In June, the former Western intelligence officer—who spent almost two decades on Russian intelligence matters and who now works with a US firm that gathers information on Russia for corporate clients—was assigned the task of researching Trump's dealings in Russia and elsewhere, according to the former spy and his associates in this American firm. This was for an opposition research project originally financed by a Republican client critical of the celebrity mogul. (Before the former spy was retained, the project's financing switched to a client allied with Democrats.) "It started off as a fairly general inquiry," says

the former spook, who asks not to be identified. But when he dug into Trump, he notes, he came across troubling information indicating connections between Trump and the Russian government. According to his sources, he says, "there was an established exchange of information between the Trump campaign and the Kremlin of mutual benefit."

This was, the former spy remarks, "an extraordinary situation." He regularly consults with US government agencies on Russian matters, and near the start of July on his own initiative—without the permission of the US company that hired him—he sent a report he had written for that firm to a contact at the FBI, according to the former intelligence officer and his American associates, who asked not to be identified. (He declines to identify the FBI contact.) The former spy says he concluded that the information he had collected on Trump was "sufficiently serious" to share with the FBI.

*Mother Jones* has reviewed that report and other memos this former spy wrote. The first memo, based on the former intelligence officer's conversations with Russian sources, noted, "Russian regime has been cultivating, supporting and assisting TRUMP for at least 5 years. Aim, endorsed by PUTIN, has been to encourage splits and divisions in western alliance." It maintained that Trump "and his inner circle have accepted a regular flow of intelligence from the Kremlin, including on his Democratic and other political rivals." It claimed that Russian intelligence had "compromised" Trump during his visits to Moscow and could "blackmail him." It also reported that Russian intelligence had compiled a dossier on Hillary Clinton based on "bugged conversations she had on various visits to Russia and intercepted phone calls."

The former intelligence officer says the response from the FBI was "shock and horror." The FBI, after receiving the first memo, did not immediately request additional material, according to the former intelligence officer and his American associates. Yet in August, they say, the FBI asked him for all information in his possession and for him to explain how the material had been gathered and to identify his sources. The former spy forwarded to the bureau several memos—some of which referred to members of Trump's inner circle. After that point, he continued to share information with the FBI. "It's quite clear there was or is a pretty substantial inquiry going on," he says.

"This is something of huge significance, way above party politics," the former intelligence officer comments. "I think [Trump's] own party should be aware of this stuff as well."

The Trump campaign did not respond to a request for comment regarding the memos. In the past, Trump has declared, "~~I have nothing to do with Russia.~~"

The FBI is certainly investigating the hacks attributed to Russia that have hit American political targets, including the Democratic National Committee and John Podesta, the chairman of Clinton's presidential campaign. But there have been few public signs of whether that probe extends to examining possible contacts between the Russian government and Trump. (In recent weeks, reporters in Washington have pursued anonymous ~~online reports~~ that a computer server related to the Trump Organization engaged in a high level of activity with servers connected to Alfa Bank, the largest private bank in Russia. On Monday, a *Slate* ~~investigation~~ detailed the pattern of unusual server activity but concluded, "We don't yet know what this [Trump] server was for, but it deserves further explanation." In an email to *Mother Jones*, Hope Hicks, a Trump campaign spokeswoman, maintains, "The Trump Organization is not sending or receiving any communications from this email server. The Trump Organization has no communication or relationship with this entity or any Russian entity.")

According to several national security experts, there is widespread concern in the US intelligence community that Russian intelligence, via hacks, is aiming to undermine the presidential election—to embarrass the United States and delegitimize its democratic elections. And the hacks appear to have been designed to benefit Trump. In August, Democratic members of the House committee on oversight ~~wrote~~ Comey to ask the FBI to investigate "whether connections between Trump campaign officials and Russian interests may have contributed to these [cyber] attacks in order to interfere with the US. presidential election." In September, Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Rep. Adam Schiff, the senior Democrats on, respectively, the Senate and House intelligence committees, issued a joint ~~statement~~ accusing Russia of underhanded meddling: "Based on briefings we have received, we have concluded that the Russian intelligence agencies are making a serious and concerted effort to influence the U.S. election. At the least, this effort is intended to sow doubt about the security of our election and may well be intended to influence the outcomes of the election." The Obama White House has ~~declared~~ Russia the culprit in the hacking capers, expressed outrage, and promised a "proportional" response.

There's no way to tell whether the FBI has confirmed or debunked any of the allegations contained in the former spy's memos. But a Russian intelligence attempt to co-opt or

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cultivate a presidential candidate would mark an even more serious operation than the hacking.

In the letter Reid sent to Comey on Sunday, he pointed out that months ago he had asked the FBI director to release information on Trump's possible Russia ties. Since then, according to a Reid spokesman, Reid has been briefed several times. The spokesman adds, "He is confident that he knows enough to be extremely alarmed."



**From:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Mother Jones story  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI); [redacted] OGC) (FBI); Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI); Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI); [redacted] (DO) (FBI); [redacted] (DO) (FBI); [redacted] (CTD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 31, 2016 9:33 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

<http://m.motherjones.com/politics/2016/10/veteran-spy-gave-fbi-info-alleging-russian-operation-cultivate-donald-trump>

MotherJones

A Veteran Spy Has Given the FBI Information Alleging a Russian Operation to Cultivate Donald Trump  
Has the bureau investigated this material?

DAVID CORN OCT. 31, 2016 7:52 PM

The

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# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

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Mother Jones has reviewed that report and other memos this former spy wrote. The first memo, based on the former intelligence officer's conversations with Russian sources, noted, "Russian regime has been cultivating, supporting and assisting TRUMP for at least 5 years. Aim, endorsed by PUTIN, has been to encourage splits and divisions in western alliance." It maintained that Trump "and his inner circle have accepted a regular flow of intelligence from the Kremlin, including on his Democratic and other political rivals." It claimed that Russian intelligence had "compromised" Trump during his visits to Moscow and could "blackmail him." It also reported that Russian intelligence had compiled a dossier on Hillary Clinton based on "bugged conversations she had on various visits to Russia and intercepted phone calls."

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"This is something of huge significance, way above party politics," the former intelligence officer comments. "I think [Trump's] own party should be aware of this stuff as well."

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the senior Democrats on, respectively, the Senate and House intelligence committees, issued a joint statement accusing Russia of underhanded meddling: "Based on briefings we have received, we have concluded that the Russian intelligence agencies are making a serious and concerted effort to influence the U.S. election. At the least, this effort is intended to sow doubt about the security of our election and may well be intended to influence the outcomes of the election." The Obama White House has declared Russia the culprit in the hacking capers, expressed outrage, and promised a "proportional" response.

There's no way to tell whether the FBI has confirmed or debunked any of the allegations contained in the former spy's memos. But a Russian intelligence attempt to co-opt or cultivate a presidential candidate would mark an even more serious operation than the hacking.

In the letter Reid sent to Comey on Sunday, he pointed out that months ago he had asked the FBI director to release information on Trump's possible Russia ties. Since then, according to a Reid spokesman, Reid has been briefed several times. The spokesman adds, "He is confident that he knows enough to be extremely alarmed."

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**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** RE: Mother Jones story  
**To:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (OGC) (FBI); Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI); Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI); [redacted] (DO) (FBI); [redacted] (DO) (FBI); [redacted] (CTD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 31, 2016 9:41 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

Thanks [redacted] please let me know if you have follow up on this.  
Pete

----- Original message -----

**From:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI)" [redacted]  
**Date:** 10/31/2016 9:33 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted], "Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)" [redacted], "Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (DO) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (DO) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (CTD) (FBI)" [redacted]  
**Subject:** Mother Jones story

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

<http://m.motherjones.com/politics/2016/10/veteran-spy-gave-fbi-info-alleging-russian-operation-cultivate-donald-trump>

MotherJones

A Veteran Spy Has Given the FBI Information Alleging a Russian Operation to Cultivate Donald Trump  
Has the bureau investigated this material?

DAVID CORN OCT. 31, 2016 7:52 PM

The

On Friday, FBI Director James Comey set off a political blast when he informed congressional leaders that the bureau had stumbled across emails that might be pertinent to its completed inquiry into Hillary Clinton's handling of emails when she was secretary of state. The Clinton campaign and others criticized Comey for intervening in a presidential campaign by breaking with Justice Department tradition and revealing information about an investigation—information that was vague and perhaps ultimately irrelevant—so close to Election Day. On Sunday, Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid upped the ante. He sent Comey a fiery letter saying the FBI chief may have broken the law and pointed to a potentially greater controversy: "In my communications with you and other top officials in the national security community, it has become clear that you possess explosive information about close ties and coordination between Donald Trump, his top advisors, and the Russian government...The public has a right to know this information."

Reid's missive set off a burst of speculation on Twitter and elsewhere. What was he referring to regarding the Republican presidential nominee? At the end of August, Reid had written to Comey and demanded an investigation of the "connections between the Russian government and Donald Trump's presidential campaign," and in that letter he indirectly referred to Carter Page, an American businessman cited by Trump as one of his foreign policy advisers, who had financial ties to Russia and had recently visited Moscow. Last month, Yahoo News reported that US intelligence officials were probing the links between Page and senior Russian officials. (Page has called accusations against him "garbage.") On Monday, NBC News reported that the FBI has mounted a preliminary inquiry into the foreign business ties of Paul Manafort, Trump's former campaign chief. But Reid's recent note hinted at more than the Page or Manafort affairs. And a former senior intelligence officer for a Western country who specialized in Russian counterintelligence tells Mother Jones that in recent months he provided the bureau with memos, based on his recent interactions with Russian sources, contending the Russian government has for years tried to co-opt and assist Trump—and that the FBI requested more information from him.

FBI(23-CV-30)-837

"This is something of huge significance, way above party politics," the former intelligence officer says. "I think [Trump's] own party should be aware of this stuff as well."

Does this mean the FBI is investigating whether Russian intelligence has attempted to develop a secret relationship with Trump or cultivate him as an asset? Was the former intelligence officer and his material deemed credible or not? An FBI spokeswoman says, "Normally, we don't talk about whether we are investigating anything." But a senior US government official not involved in this case but familiar with the former spy tells Mother Jones that he has been a credible source with a proven record of providing reliable, sensitive, and important information to the US government.

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# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** RE: FBI Making Inquiry Into Ex-Trump Campaign Manager's Foreign Ties - NBC News  
**To:** [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Cc:** [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 31, 2016 9:57 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

Ha. [redacted] said it was an operational call, I thought. I'm willing to incur some risk for speed. So there, decision made.

Have fun with your burpees. See you at 930.

----- Original message -----

**From:** [redacted] (OGC) (FBI) [redacted] >  
**Date:** 10/31/2016 9:55 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Cc:** [redacted] (OGC) (FBI) [redacted] >  
**Subject:** RE: FBI Making Inquiry Into Ex-Trump Campaign Manager's Foreign Ties - NBC News

b5 -1  
b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Ha! [redacted] I'll try for Weds. That's the best day anyway.

...

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Date:** 10/31/2016 9:53 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** [redacted] (OGC) (FBI) [redacted] >  
**Cc:** [redacted] (OGC) (FBI) [redacted] >  
**Subject:** RE: FBI Making Inquiry Into Ex-Trump Campaign Manager's Foreign Ties - NBC News

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Unrelated. [redacted] tells me you're wavering on boot camp. I've cancelled all meetings before 930.

----- Original message -----

**From:** [redacted] (OGC) (FBI) [redacted] >  
**Date:** 10/31/2016 9:42 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Subject:** RE: FBI Making Inquiry Into Ex-Trump Campaign Manager's Foreign Ties - NBC News

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

FYI -Slate has an article on the Trump server.

...

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Date:** 10/31/2016 8:42 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Cc:** [redacted] (OGC) (FBI) [redacted] >

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

FBI(23-CV-30)-840

Subject: Fwd: FBI Making Inquiry Into Ex-Trump Campaign Manager's Foreign Ties - NBC News

Wow, busy news night. Talked with [redacted] earlier, he said [redacted] had mentioned below to him...

b6 -3  
b7c -3

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/fbi-making-inquiry-ex-trump-campaign-manager-s-foreign-ties-n675881>

## FBI Making Inquiry Into Ex-Trump Campaign Manager's Foreign Ties

by Ken Dilanian, Cynthia McFadden, William M. Arkin and Tom Winter

The FBI has been conducting a preliminary inquiry into Donald Trump's former campaign manager Paul Manafort's foreign business connections, law enforcement and intelligence sources told NBC News Monday.

Word of the inquiry, which has not blossomed into a full-blown criminal investigation, comes just days after FBI Director James Comey's disclosure that his agency is examining a new batch of emails connected to an aide to Hillary Clinton.

And it comes a day after Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid criticized Comey's revelation and asserted that Comey possesses "explosive information about close ties and coordination between Donald Trump, his top advisors, and the Russian government."

The FBI did not comment. Manafort told NBC News "none of it is true ... There's no investigation going on by the FBI that I'm aware of." He said he had never had ties to Russian president Vladimir Putin, or had dealings with Putin and his government. He said any suggestion of such ties was "Democratic propaganda."

"This is all political propaganda, meant to deflect," he said.

NBC News reported in August that Manafort was a key player in multi-million-dollar business propositions with Russian and Ukrainian oligarchs "one of them a close Putin ally with alleged ties to organized crime" which foreign policy experts said raised questions about the pro-Russian bent of the Trump candidacy.

A few days later, amid other reporting on Manafort's Ukraine ties, Manafort was ousted



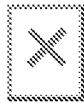
from the campaign.

Rep. Adam Schiff of California, the ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, regularly receives sensitive briefings. Schiff said he could not discuss Reid's assertions, but he said, "Americans have every right to be concerned about what they see in terms of Trump advisors and their closeness with the Kremlin, Trump's policies vis-a-vis Russia, Trump's potential financial interest, all of those things ought to be of deep concern to voters."

He added, "Whether an investigation is appropriate depends on whether there's evidence of criminal connections. Of course the intelligence community wants to know what foreign influence Russia may be looking to exert in the United States."

Manafort was paid millions of dollars — \$12.7 million in cash, according to The New York Times — representing a pro-Russian politician in the Ukraine.





Manafort's name in an alleged payment ledger. The Times

Trump has taken a series of pro-Russian positions that experts from both parties say are far outside the mainstream, and inexplicable from a political viewpoint. He continues to cast doubt on Russian involvement in election hacking, for example, despite the intelligence community's public assessment.

"The relationships that Trump's advisors have had with pro-Russian forces are deeply

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disturbing," David Kramer, a former senior State Department official in the George W. Bush administration and a former adviser to Marco Rubio's presidential campaign, told NBC News in August. "Trump's attitude on Russia is not in line with most Republican foreign-policy thinking. Trump has staked out views that are really on the fringe."

An FBI inquiry is a preliminary examination that falls short of a criminal investigation. But in this highly charged atmosphere, it has some arguing that Comey is applying a double standard.

"Any specifics of what the FBI or intelligence agencies may be looking at are not something that the bureau should be discussing publicly," Schiff said. "But here, where the director has discussed an investigation involving one candidate, it opens the director up to claims of bias if he doesn't discuss other potential investigations."

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

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**Subject:** RE: Mother Jones story  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (OGC) (FBI); Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI); Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI); [redacted] (DO) (FBI); [redacted] (DO) (FBI); [redacted] (CTD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** October 31, 2016 9:58 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

Will do.  
Reuters reached out asking for any info on that story.

Meanwhile here is the NBC story on Manafort:

## Manager's Ties to Russia

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## The Times

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--

----- Original message -----

From: "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>  
Date: 10/31/2016 9:40 PM (GMT-05:00)  
To: [redacted] (DO) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, "Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, "Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (DO) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (DO) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (CTD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>  
Subject: RE: Mother Jones story

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

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Subject: Mother Jones story

b6 -1  
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FBI(23-CV-30)-845

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"This is something of huge significance, way above party politics," the former intelligence officer comments. "I think [Trump's] own party should be aware of this stuff as well."

The Trump campaign did not respond to a request for comment regarding the memos. In the past, Trump has declared, "I have nothing to do with Russia."

The FBI is certainly investigating the hacks attributed to Russia that have hit American political targets, including the Democratic National Committee and John Podesta, the chairman of Clinton's presidential campaign. But there have been few public signs of whether that probe extends to examining possible contacts between the Russian government and Trump. (In recent weeks, reporters in Washington have pursued anonymous online reports that a computer server related to the Trump Organization engaged in a high level of activity with servers connected to Alfa Bank, the largest private bank in Russia. On Monday, a Slate investigation detailed the pattern of unusual server activity but concluded, "We don't yet know what this [Trump] server was for, but it deserves further explanation." In an email to Mother Jones, Hope Hicks, a Trump campaign spokeswoman, maintains, "The Trump Organization is not sending or receiving any communications from this email server. The Trump Organization has no communication or relationship with this entity or any Russian entity.")

According to several national security experts, there is widespread concern in the US intelligence community that Russian intelligence, via hacks, is aiming to undermine the presidential election—to embarrass the United States and delegitimize its democratic elections. And the hacks appear to have been designed to benefit Trump. In August, Democratic members of the House committee on oversight wrote Comey to ask the FBI to investigate "whether connections between Trump campaign officials and Russian interests may have contributed to these [cyber] attacks in order to interfere with the US. presidential election." In September, Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Rep. Adam Schiff, the senior Democrats on, respectively, the Senate and House intelligence committees, issued a joint statement accusing Russia of underhanded meddling: "Based on briefings we have received, we have concluded that the Russian intelligence agencies are making a serious and concerted effort to influence the U.S. election. At the least, this effort is intended to sow doubt about the security of our election and may well be intended to influence the outcomes of the election." The Obama White House has declared Russia the culprit in the hacking capers, expressed outrage, and promised a "proportional" response.

There's no way to tell whether the FBI has confirmed or debunked any of the allegations contained in the former spy's memos. But a Russian intelligence attempt to co-opt or cultivate a presidential candidate would mark an even more serious operation than the hacking.

In the letter Reid sent to Comey on Sunday, he pointed out that months ago he had asked the FBI director to release information on Trump's possible Russia ties. Since then, according to a Reid spokesman, Reid has been briefed several times. The spokesman adds, "He is confident that he knows enough to be extremely alarmed."

--

**From:** Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** NYT article  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI); [REDACTED] (CD) (FBI); [REDACTED] (WF)  
(FBI) [REDACTED] (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** November 1, 2016 3:38 PM (UTC-04:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

Investigating Donald Trump, F.B.I. Sees No Clear Link to Russia

By ERIC LICHTBLAU and STEVEN LEE MYERS  
OCTOBER 31, 2016

WASHINGTON — For much of the summer, the F.B.I. pursued a widening investigation into a Russian role in the American presidential campaign. Agents scrutinized advisers close to Donald J. Trump, looked for financial connections with Russian financial figures, searched for those involved in hacking the computers of Democrats, and even chased a lead — which they ultimately came to doubt — about a possible secret channel of email communication from the Trump Organization to a Russian bank.

Law enforcement officials say that none of the investigations so far have found any conclusive or direct link between Mr. Trump and the Russian government. And even the hacking into Democratic emails, F.B.I. and intelligence officials now believe, was aimed at disrupting the presidential election rather than electing Mr. Trump.

Hillary Clinton’s supporters, angry over what they regard as a lack of scrutiny of Mr. Trump by law enforcement officials, pushed for these investigations. In recent days they have also demanded that James B. Comey, the director of the F.B.I., discuss them publicly, as he did last week when he announced that a new batch of emails possibly connected to Mrs. Clinton had been discovered.

Supporters of Mrs. Clinton have argued that Mr. Trump’s evident affinity for Russia’s president, Vladimir V. Putin — Mr. Trump has called him a great leader and echoed his policies toward NATO, Ukraine and the war in Syria — and the hacks of leading Democrats like John D. Podesta, the chairman of the Clinton campaign, are clear indications that Russia has taken sides in the presidential race and that voters should know what the F.B.I. has found.

The F.B.I.’s inquiries into Russia’s possible role continue, as does the investigation into the emails involving Mrs. Clinton’s top aide, Huma Abedin, on a computer she shared with her estranged husband, Anthony D. Weiner. Mrs. Clinton’s supporters argue that voters have as much right to know what the F.B.I. has found in Mr. Trump’s case, even if the findings are not yet conclusive.

“You do not hear the director talking about any other investigation he is involved in,” Representative Gregory W. Meeks, Democrat of New York, said after Mr. Comey’s letter to Congress was made public. “Is he investigating the Trump Foundation? Is he looking into the Russians hacking into all of our emails? Is he looking into and deciding what is going on with regards to other allegations of the Trump Organization?”

Mr. Comey would not even confirm the existence of any investigation of Mr. Trump’s aides when asked during an appearance in September before Congress. In the Obama administration’s internal deliberations over identifying the Russians as the source of the hacks, Mr. Comey also argued against doing so and succeeded in keeping the F.B.I.’s imprimatur off the formal findings, a law enforcement official said. His stance was first reported by CNBC.

Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, the minority leader, responded angrily on Sunday with a letter accusing the F.B.I. of not being forthcoming about Mr. Trump’s alleged ties with Moscow.

“It has become clear that you possess explosive information about close ties and coordination between Donald Trump, his top advisers, and the Russian government — a foreign interest openly hostile to the United States, which Trump praises at every opportunity,” Mr. Reid wrote. “The public has a right to know this information.”

F.B.I. officials declined to comment on Monday. Intelligence officials have said in interviews over the last six weeks that apparent connections between some of Mr. Trump's aides and Moscow originally compelled them to open a broad investigation into possible links between the Russian government and the Republican presidential candidate. Still, they have said that Mr. Trump himself has not become a target. And no evidence has emerged that would link him or anyone else in his business or political circle directly to Russia's election operations.

At least one part of the investigation has involved Paul Manafort, Mr. Trump's campaign chairman for much of the year. Mr. Manafort, a veteran Republican political strategist, has had extensive business ties in Russia and other former Soviet states, especially Ukraine, where he served as an adviser to that country's ousted president, Viktor F. Yanukovich.

But the focus in that case was on Mr. Manafort's ties with a kleptocratic government in Ukraine — and whether he had declared the income in the United States — and not necessarily on any Russian influence over Mr. Trump's campaign, one official said.

In classified sessions in August and September, intelligence officials also briefed congressional leaders on the possibility of financial ties between Russians and people connected to Mr. Trump. They focused particular attention on what cyberexperts said appeared to be a mysterious computer back channel between the Trump Organization and the Alfa Bank, which is one of Russia's biggest banks and whose owners have longstanding ties to Mr. Putin.

F.B.I. officials spent weeks examining computer data showing an odd stream of activity to a Trump Organization server and Alfa Bank. Computer logs obtained by The New York Times show that two servers at Alfa Bank sent more than 2,700 "look-up" messages — a first step for one system's computers to talk to another — to a Trump-connected server beginning in the spring. But the F.B.I. ultimately concluded that there could be an innocuous explanation, like a marketing email or spam, for the computer contacts.

The most serious part of the F.B.I.'s investigation has focused on the computer hacks that the Obama administration now formally blames on Russia. That investigation also involves numerous officials from the intelligence agencies. Investigators, the officials said, have become increasingly confident, based on the evidence they have uncovered, that Russia's direct goal is not to support the election of Mr. Trump, as many Democrats have asserted, but rather to disrupt the integrity of the political system and undermine America's standing in the world more broadly.

The hacking, they said, reflected an intensification of spy-versus-spy operations that never entirely abated after the Cold War but that have become more aggressive in recent years as relations with Mr. Putin's Russia have soured.

A senior intelligence official, who like the others spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a continuing national security investigation, said the Russians had become adept at exploiting computer vulnerabilities created by the relative openness of and reliance on the internet. Election officials in several states have reported what appeared to be cyberintrusions from Russia, and while many doubt that an Election Day hack could alter the outcome of the election, the F.B.I. agencies across the government are on alert for potential disruptions that could wreak havoc with the voting process itself.

"It isn't about the election," a second senior official said, referring to the aims of Russia's interference. "It's about a threat to democracy."

The investigation has treated it as a counterintelligence operation as much as a criminal one, though agents are also focusing on whether anyone in the United States was involved. The officials declined to discuss any individual targets of the investigation, even when assured of anonymity.

As has been the case with the investigation into Mrs. Clinton, the F.B.I. has come under intense partisan political pressure — something the bureau's leaders have long sought to avoid. Supporters of both Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Trump have been equally impassioned in calling for investigations — and even in providing leads for investigators to follow.



# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

Mr. Reid, in a letter to Mr. Comey in August, asserted that Mr. Trump's campaign "has employed a number of individuals with significant and disturbing ties to the Russia and the Kremlin." Although Mr. Reid cited no evidence and offered no names explicitly, he clearly referred to one of Mr. Trump's earlier campaign advisers, Carter Page.

Mr. Page, a former Merrill Lynch banker who founded an investment company in New York, Global Energy Capital, drew attention during the summer for a speech in which he criticized the United States and other Western nations for a "hypocritical focus on ideas such as democratization, inequality, corruption and regime change" in Russia and other parts of the former Soviet Union.

Mr. Page responded with his own letter to Mr. Comey, denying wrongdoing and calling Mr. Reid's accusations "a witch hunt." In an interview, he said that he had never been contacted by the F.B.I. and that the accusations were baseless and purely partisan because of his policy views on Russia. "These people really seem to be grasping at straws," he said.

Democrats have also accused another Republican strategist and Trump confidant, Roger Stone, of being a conduit between the Russian hackers and WikiLeaks, which has published the emails of the Democratic National Committee and Mr. Podesta, the Clinton campaign manager. Mr. Stone boasted of having contacts with the WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange, and appeared to predict the hacking of Mr. Podesta's account, though he later denied having any prior knowledge.

Mr. Stone derided the accusations and those raised by Michael J. Morell, a former C.I.A. director and a Clinton supporter, who has called Mr. Trump "an unwitting agent of the Russian Federation." In an article on the conservative news site Breitbart, Mr. Stone denied having links to Russians and called the accusations "the new McCarthyism."

...

**From:** [REDACTED] (DI) (FBI)  
**Subject:** New Report Lifts Curtain On Russia's Construction Of Powerful "Cyberarmy"  
**To:** Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI); Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); Boone, Jennifer C. (CD) (FBI); Corsi, Dina M. (CD) (FBI); [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Laycock, Stephen C. (CD) (FBI); Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI); [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** November 8, 2016 10:19 AM (UTC-05:00)  
New Report Lifts Curtain On Russia's Construction Of Powerful "Cyberarmy"

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

The independent Russian news site Meduza details how Russia turned to offensive cyberoperations and how it found recruits.

posted on Nov. 7, 2016, at 8:08 a.m.

Sheera Frenkel

BuzzFeed News World Correspondent

Russia's defense ministry ran recruiting ads for hackers. youtube.com

SAN FRANCISCO — An investigation published early Monday on the eve of the US election details how Russia built one of the largest and most aggressive "cyberarmies" in the world.

As Russia's cyberoperations have risen in global prominence (and notoriety), the independent Russian news site Meduza has detailed how Russia built its current cyberabilities. While US officials recently took the unprecedented step of accusing Russia of trying to influence the upcoming vote in the US by hacking and leaking emails in an effort to damage the campaign of Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton, cybersecurity experts claim that Russia has been meddling in the affairs of European states for years. The report reveals a system in which Russia's top political leadership is tasked with recruiting hackers and blackmailing criminals to do their bidding, all the while testing the limits of their cyberabilities on eastern European states before, ultimately, turning their attention to the US this year. BuzzFeed News was given an early look at the report, authored by journalist Daniil Turovsky, and is publishing some of its findings here. Meduza found that:

- Russia's Ministry of Defense focused some of its earliest efforts on recruiting both from academic institutions and from hackers who may have arisen from the criminal underground.

- The teams were organized into groups known as "research squadrons," many of which lay within various Russian ministries and military units.

- Some of Russia's earliest cyberattacks were on nearby Baltic states, dating back to a dispute with Estonia in 2007 over the placement of a memorial statue.

- Public records show that at least one Russian institution purchased surveillance tools from the private Italian company Hacking Team, which sells products that allow governments to spy on their own citizens.

- Over time, the Russian government developed its own offensive cyberweapons, and also bought tools from cybersecurity companies that could be used for surveillance and espionage.

While the Russian government's involvement in cyberoperations goes back decades, the Russian military's involvement started with the appointment of Sergei Shoigu as defense minister on Nov. 6, 2012, according to the research laid out by the independent journalists who work at Meduza, a site based out of Latvia that employs some of Russia's top reporters, who fled other outlets as they were taken over by Kremlin-friendly voices.

Shortly after taking office, Shoigu started making public statements about the need for a Russian cyberunit that could mirror those of the Cyber Command in the US, Meduza reports. But first, Shoigu needed to recruit. Half a year after taking office, in March 2013, he announced that he was leading a headhunt for young programmers.

"A headhunt in the positive meaning of the word; this need is preconditioned by the scope of software required by the Army in the next five years," Shoigu explained at a meeting with the heads of various engineering colleges and information security departments, Meduza reports.

Cyberwarfare quickly became a central block in Russia's increasingly aggressive foreign policy, with senior Russian politicians at the heart of recruiting and structuring the cyberunits. In 2013, Dmitry Rogozin, then a deputy prime minister, took control of supervising the recruitment for the new cyberunits, saying the move "stems from the necessity to ensure information security of the national infrastructure." In addition to defense, he said the units would also "fight cyberthreats" and undergo linguistic training to make them fluent in English.

Around the start of 2014, the defense ministry created the Center of Special Studies, and began hiring personnel through headhunting sites and the webpages of engineering universities, according to Meduza. They called for expertise in the analysis of exploits (software used for cyberattacks) and reverse-engineering skills (analysis of the mechanisms behind the features of a software product with the aim of replicating them). The employees were granted a high security clearance and a salary of up to 120,000 rubles (about \$1,900), according to the Meduza report.

"It would be fairly naive to presume that Russia had not addressed the issue of its presence in cyberspace prior to 2014," Alexander Gostev, a leading anti-malware expert at Kaspersky Lab, a Moscow-based cybersecurity company, told Meduza. "Most likely, they need additional input from outside to perform such work, and this is why the format of a 'research squadron' was chosen."

As it recruited, the defense ministry also created "research squadrons" embedded within military units across Russia, and increasingly looked toward hiring hackers, Meduza reports. Dmitri Alperovich, a researcher at CrowdStrike, a US-based cybersecurity company, said that there was a history of forcing hackers to work for the government to avoid imprisonment.

"Soon after a bright individual emerges in the Russian digital underground, a criminal case is filed against him, after which he simply disappears," he said. What happened to the hackers once they had finished their contracts with the government, or how their code could be repurposed by other governments or criminal groups, was unclear, Alperovich said.

The defense ministry ran ads on VKontakte, Russia's version of Facebook, which certainly spoke to a sense of adventure and danger. In one, a man reloads a machine gun and places it on a table beside his laptop, then begins writing lines of code. To the accompaniment of old-fashioned hard-rock music, a caption emerges in the picture: "Research Squadron of the Russian Federation." The video was posted to VKontakte in July 2015. Meanwhile, Army Today, a news site focused on Russia's defense ministry, compared the work of research squadrons to James Bond movies: "In one of the recent movies, a digital genius Q hands a small briefcase to the agent, saying: 'I can do more damage on my laptop sitting in my pajamas before my first cup of Earl Grey than you can do in a year in the field.' That is the kind of specialists they aspire to train in Russian cyberforces."

The report also looks at the role of the Kvant Research Institute, which Meduza shows has purchased tools that have been used by governments to spy on citizens. Meduza uses public records to show that between 2012 and 2014, Hacking Team, an Italian surveillance and cybersecurity company known for software that can remotely hack into and take over cell phones and computers, was paid 451,000 euros (\$499,708) on behalf of Kvant Research Institute.

In 2008, the institute, a leading research center, fell under the leadership of Georgy Babakin, a former agent in the FSB, the main successor agency to the KGB, Meduza reports. Under him, Kvant began working under the umbrella of the FSB, it reports.

Citing Hacking Team emails leaked on WikiLeaks, Meduza's report outlines how on April 2, 2011, Babakin got an email from Marco Bettini, a Hacking Team employee. Hacking Team gained global notoriety when it was discovered to be selling software to countries around the world that allowed governments to hack into the cell phones and computers of whomever they wished to spy on. Bettini pitched Babakin one of those programs, known as the Remote Control System, promising that it could track all activities on an infected device, take screenshots, access the web camera and the microphone, intercept correspondence in messenger and email clients, and keep record of what keys were pressed by the owner of the computer or the smartphone.

Citing the emails, Meduza reports that Bettini appears to have visited Moscow. In an internal company email, Bettini wrote that the FSB "gave us a warm welcome and asked a lot of questions about the program's features. Their questions implied that, in spite of having an experience of authorized hacking, they don't have the means of infecting mobile devices and Mac computers."

Russia's conflicts with other countries have, since 2007, coincided with cyberattacks on those nations, wrote Meduza.

One of the earliest known cases occurred in Estonia in the spring of 2007, during what turned into a huge row over the Estonian government's desire to relocate a memorial to Soviet soldiers who died in WWII from the center of the city. Hackers attacked the websites of the country's president, its prime minister, state institutions, and banks with a DDoS attack that brought the pages down for several weeks. They posted apologies that they wanted read by Estonia's prime minister, and promises to move the memorial back to its original location. Konstantin Goloskokov, a member of the Kremlin youth group Nashi, took credit for organizing the attacks. (He refused to respond to Meduza's requests for comment).

The attacks on Estonia lay the groundwork for the type of online assaults that Russian hackers would launch during the war with Georgia the following year, and by December 2015 Russian cyberattacks were taking down a power grid, which led to a short-term blackout in the Ivano-Frankivsk region of Ukraine.

Which brings us to 2016 in the United States, where a Russian group known as Fancy Bear has been accused of attempting to interfere in the US election by hacking into the email accounts of the Democratic National Convention (DNC), and Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton's top aides. Many of those emails were made public, via WikiLeaks and other websites, in what US officials have described as a clear attempt to influence the US elections.

Ilya Sachkov, a cybersecurity expert with Group-IB, a company focused on Russian cybercrime, told Meduza that a global "cyberwar is being waged."

"Normally, when [hacker] groups realize they have been tracked, they change the structure of [their attacks] completely. Fancy Bear have performed a number of high-resonance hacks, but it doesn't take a genius to see the connection between these attacks, as they've been following the same algorithm," says Sachkov. "They are either idiots or have no fear."

"Does that mean they are confident of their impunity?"

"Yes."

**From:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Inquiry regarding Trump/Russia/FISA  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (OGC) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (DO) (FBI)  
**Cc:** [redacted] (FBI)  
**Sent:** November 8, 2016 12:32 PM (UTC-05:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

Hello,

Reporters have asked various agencies including ours about the story below from an outlet called Heat Street. We don't plan to comment but wish to make you aware. A BBC reporter also reached out with some similar questions before this story ran.

<http://heatst.com/world/exclusive-fbi-granted-fisa-warrant-covering-trump-camps-ties-to-russia/>

## EXCLUSIVE: FBI 'Granted FISA Warrant' Covering Trump Camp's Ties To Russia

By Louise Mensch | 10:18 pm, November 7, 2016

Two separate sources with links to the counter-intelligence community have confirmed to Heat Street that the FBI sought, and was granted, a FISA court warrant in October, giving counter-intelligence permission to examine the activities of 'U.S. persons' in Donald Trump's campaign with ties to Russia.

Contrary to earlier reporting in the New York Times, which cited FBI sources as saying that the agency did not believe that the private server in Donald Trump's Trump Tower which was connected to a Russian bank had any nefarious purpose, the FBI's counter-intelligence arm, sources say, re-drew an earlier FISA court request around possible financial and banking offenses related to the server. The first request, which, sources say, named Trump, was denied back in June, but the second was drawn more narrowly and was granted in October after evidence was presented of a server, possibly related to the Trump campaign, and its alleged links to two banks: SVB Bank and Russia's Alfa Bank. While the *Times* story speaks of metadata, sources suggest that a FISA warrant was granted to look at the full content of emails and other related documents that may concern US persons.

The FBI agents who talked to the New York Times, and rubbished the ground-breaking stories of Slate (Franklin Foer) and Mother Jones (David Corn) may not have known about the FISA warrant, sources say, because the counter-intelligence and criminal sides of the FBI often work independently of each other employing the principle of 'compartmentalization'.

Bottom of Form

The FISA warrant was granted in connection with the investigation of suspected activity

FBI(23-CV-30)-860

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

between the server and two banks, SVB Bank and Alfa Bank. However, it is thought in the intelligence community that the warrant covers any 'US person' connected to this investigation, and thus covers Donald Trump and at least three further men who have either formed part of his campaign or acted as his media surrogates. The warrant was sought, they say, because actionable intelligence on the matter provided by friendly foreign agencies could not properly be examined without a warrant by US intelligence as it involves 'US Persons' who come under the remit of the FBI and not the CIA. Should a counter-intelligence investigation lead to criminal prosecutions, sources say, the Justice Department is concerned that the chain of evidence have a basis in a clear warrant.

In June, when the first FISA warrant was denied, the FBI was reportedly alarmed at Carter Page's trip to Moscow and meetings with Russian officials, one week before the DNC was hacked. Counter intelligence agencies later reported to both Presidential candidates that Russia had carried out this hack; Donald Trump said publicly in the third debate that 'our country has no idea' if Russia did the hacking. The discovery of the Trump Tower private Russian server, however, communicating with Alfa Bank, changed matters, sources report.

To further complicate the story, the FISA warrant was allegedly granted in part because of the involvement of Vladimir Putin's own daughters. One is married to a senior official at Gazprom, where Carter Page and Paul Manafort reportedly have holdings; another to Kirill Shamalov, a banking official.

The fact that the alleged warrant was a FISA warrant is itself significant. The court exists to grant warrants to examine cases concerned with Foreign Intelligence.

Pursuant to FISA, the Court entertains applications submitted by the United States Government for **approval of electronic surveillance, physical search, and other investigative actions for foreign intelligence purposes.**

Most of the Court's work is conducted ex parte as required by statute, and due to the need to protect classified national security information.

Bradley P. Moss is a national security lawyer. He told us:

If a FISA warrant was issued, it does not necessarily mean that the court considered any U.S. persons as literal 'spies.' I can imagine an argument having been made that there was probable cause to believe they were "agents of influence" who were unwittingly being influenced by a foreign power.

If the operation concerns suspected money laundering involving a foreign government, the FISA warrant could theoretically encompass U.S. persons in that limited context. A FISA

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

warrant is authorization to collect evidence, not to arrest.

On October 9th, the Trump campaign released a large number of documents pointing out what they alleged were Hillary Clinton's ties to Russia. On October 12th, rumors of a FISA warrant started to surface online. Donald Trump's campaign had not answered requests for comment on the matter at time of going to press.



**From:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI)  
**Subject:** RE: Inquiry regarding Trump/Russia/FISA  
**To:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI); Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (OGC) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI)  
**Cc:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI)  
**Sent:** November 8, 2016 12:43 PM (UTC-05:00)

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b7C -1

Thanks. Unfortunately some other outlets like the Daily Beast find it intriguing nonetheless. And the BBC had reached out earlier.

[redacted]

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**From:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 08, 2016 12:39 PM  
**To:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI); [redacted]; Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); [redacted]; [redacted] (OGC) (FBI); [redacted] (CD) (FBI); [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI); [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Inquiry regarding Trump/Russia/FISA

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Thanks [redacted] just to note the website is a Murdoch enterprise, aimed at conservative/libertarian audience. But you prolly knew that already [redacted]

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**From:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 08, 2016 12:32 PM  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); [redacted]; [redacted] (OGC) (FBI); [redacted]; [redacted] (CD) (FBI); [redacted] (DO) (FBI); [redacted]  
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b7C -1  
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Bottom of Form

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On October 9th, the Trump campaign released a large number of documents pointing out what they alleged were Hillary Clinton's ties to Russia. On October 12th, rumors of a FISA warrant started to surface online. Donald Trump's campaign had not answered requests for comment on the matter at time of going to press.

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Inquiry regarding Trump/Russia/FISA  
**To:** Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI)  
**Cc:** [redacted] (WF) (FBI); Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** November 8, 2016 1:56 PM (UTC-05:00)

b3 -5  
b6 -1  
b7C -1

FYSA this is out. [redacted]

----- Original message -----

**From:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>  
**Date:** 11/08/2016 12:42 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>, "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>  
**Cc:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI)" <[redacted]>  
**Subject:** RE: Inquiry regarding Trump/Russia/FISA

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Thanks. Unfortunately some other outlets like the Daily Beast find it intriguing nonetheless. And the BBC had reached out earlier.

**From:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 08, 2016 12:39 PM  
**To:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI) <[redacted]> [redacted] (OGC) (FBI) <[redacted]> [redacted] (CD) (FBI) <[redacted]>  
**Cc:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>  
**Subject:** RE: Inquiry regarding Trump/Russia/FISA

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Thanks [redacted] just to note the website is a Murdoch enterprise, aimed at conservative/libertarian audience. But you prolly knew that already [redacted]

**From:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 08, 2016 12:32 PM  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI) <[redacted]> [redacted] (OGC) (FBI) <[redacted]> [redacted] (CD) (FBI) <[redacted]> [redacted] (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>  
**Cc:** [redacted] (DO) (FBI) <[redacted]>  
**Subject:** Inquiry regarding Trump/Russia/FISA

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Hello,

Reporters have asked various agencies including ours about the story below from an outlet called Heat Street. We don't plan to comment but wish to make you aware. A BBC reporter also reached out with some similar questions before this story ran.

<http://heatst.com/world/exclusive-fbi-granted-fisa-warrant-covering-trump-camps-ties-to-russia/>

## EXCLUSIVE: FBI 'Granted FISA Warrant' Covering Trump Camp's Ties To Russia

By Louise Mensch | 10:18 pm, November 7, 2016

Two separate sources with links to the counter-intelligence community have confirmed to Heat Street that the FBI sought, and was granted, a FISA court warrant in October, giving counter-intelligence permission to examine the activities of 'U.S. persons' in Donald Trump's campaign with ties to Russia.

Contrary to earlier reporting in the New York Times, which cited FBI sources as saying that the agency did not believe that the private server in Donald Trump's Trump Tower which was connected to a Russian bank had any nefarious purpose, the FBI's counter-intelligence arm, sources say, re-drew an earlier FISA court request around possible financial and banking offenses related to the server. The first request, which, sources say, named Trump, was denied back in June, but the second was drawn more narrowly and was granted in October after evidence was presented of a server, possibly related to the Trump campaign, and its alleged links to two banks: SVB Bank and Russia's Alfa Bank. While the *Times* story speaks of metadata, sources suggest that a FISA warrant was granted to look at the full content of emails and other related documents that may concern US persons.

The FBI agents who talked to the New York Times, and rubbished the ground-breaking stories of Slate ( Franklin Foer) and Mother Jones (David Corn) may not have known about the FISA warrant, sources say, because the counter-intelligence and criminal sides of the FBI often work independently of each other employing the principle of 'compartmentalization'.

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Bottom of Form

The FISA warrant was granted in connection with the investigation of suspected activity between the server and two banks, SVB Bank and Alfa Bank. However, it is thought in the intelligence community that the warrant covers any 'US person' connected to this investigation, and thus covers Donald Trump and at least three further men who have either formed part of his campaign or acted as his media surrogates. The warrant was sought, they say, because actionable intelligence on the matter provided by friendly foreign agencies could not properly be examined without a warrant by US intelligence as it involves 'US Persons' who come under the remit of the FBI and not the CIA. Should a counter-intelligence investigation lead to criminal prosecutions, sources say, the Justice Department is concerned that the chain of evidence have a basis in a clear warrant.

In June, when the first FISA warrant was denied, the FBI was reportedly alarmed at Carter Page's trip to Moscow and meetings with Russian officials, one week before the DNC was hacked. Counter intelligence agencies later reported to both Presidential candidates that Russia had carried out this hack; Donald Trump said publicly in the third debate that 'our

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

country has no idea' if Russia did the hacking. The discovery of the Trump Tower private Russian server, however, communicating with Alfa Bank, changed matters, sources report.

To further complicate the story, the FISA warrant was allegedly granted in part because of the involvement of Vladimir Putin's own daughters. One is married to a senior official at Gazprom, where Carter Page and Paul Manafort reportedly have holdings; another to Kirill Shamalov, a banking official.

The fact that the alleged warrant was a FISA warrant is itself significant. The court exists to grant warrants to examine cases concerned with Foreign Intelligence.

Pursuant to FISA, the Court entertains applications submitted by the United States Government for **approval of electronic surveillance, physical search, and other investigative actions for foreign intelligence purposes.**

Most of the Court's work is conducted ex parte as required by statute, and due to the need to protect classified national security information.

Bradley P. Moss is a national security lawyer. He told us:

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**From:** Peter  
**Subject:** U.S. intelligence officials say Russian hacks 'prioritized' Democrats  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** December 13, 2016 10:04 PM (UTC-05:00)

[https://cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/www.washingtonpost.com/amphtml/world/national-security/us-intelligence-officials-say-russian-hacks-prioritized-democrats/2016/12/12/0fbca4da-c09b-11e6-b527-949c3893595e\\_story.html?amp\\_js\\_vr0#origin=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&exp=sl%3A0&sch=elid=0&cid=1&dialog=0&prerenderSize=1&visibilityState=rrsrender&paddingTop=54&history=1&prerenderSize=1&prerenderState=rrsrender&paddingTop=54&history=1](https://cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/www.washingtonpost.com/amphtml/world/national-security/us-intelligence-officials-say-russian-hacks-prioritized-democrats/2016/12/12/0fbca4da-c09b-11e6-b527-949c3893595e_story.html?amp_js_vr0#origin=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&exp=sl%3A0&sch=elid=0&cid=1&dialog=0&prerenderSize=1&visibilityState=rrsrender&paddingTop=54&history=1&prerenderSize=1&prerenderState=rrsrender&paddingTop=54&history=1&prerenderSize=1&prerenderState=rrsrender&paddingTop=54&history=1)

## U.S. intelligence officials say Russian hacks 'prioritized' Democrats

By [Greg Miller, Adam Entous](#) • December 12, 2016 at 6:55 PM

### National Security

The Washington Post's Greg Miller explains what President-elect Donald Trump's clash with the CIA over Russia's suspected election interference means and how it started. (The Washington Post)

The CIA assessment that Russia waged a [cyber-campaign to help elect Donald Trump](#) is based in part on intelligence suggesting that Moscow's hacking efforts were disproportionately aimed at targets tied to the Democratic Party and its nominee, Hillary Clinton, U.S. officials said.

U.S. officials said that both parties were repeatedly targeted as part of a months-long cyber-operation linked to Moscow, but that Democratic institutions and operatives came under a more sustained and determined online assault.

U.S. officials said the Republican National Committee's computer systems were also probed and possibly penetrated by hackers tied to Russian intelligence services, but that it remains unclear how much material — if any — was taken from the RNC.

The lack of a corresponding Republican trove has contributed to the CIA assessment, reported by The Washington Post, that Russia was seeking to elect Trump and not merely to disrupt last month's presidential election.

The disclosure of that CIA finding has roiled Washington, prompting calls for a broad congressional probe, compounding tensions between the president-elect and U.S. spy agencies, and extending the turmoil of a turbulent campaign.

CIA officials told senators it is now "quite clear" that electing Donald Trump was Russia's goal. In an interview on Fox News Sunday on Dec. 11, President-elect Trump denied the CIA's assessment. (The Washington Post)

Clinton officials on Monday joined calls for U.S. intelligence agencies to share their findings with members of the electoral college before they formally cast their votes, a step that would represent an extraordinary departure from a process that is typically an overlooked formality in the U.S. election process.

**Related:** [FBI and CIA give differing accounts on Russia's motives in 2016 hacks](#).

Trump has [denounced the CIA conclusion](#) as "ridiculous." Republican operatives have vehemently disputed that their party's computer systems were hacked or, by implication, that Russia possessed but "sat" on a secret trove of emails or other materials that might have undermined the GOP nominee.

U.S. intelligence officials said that the Russian government appears to have succeeded in penetrating computer systems associated with both parties, but "prioritized" Democratic institutions in a campaign that culminated with the posting of thousands of sensitive emails on the WikiLeaks website.

The CIA briefed the administration that it thinks the Russians "breached" the RNC systems, according to a senior U.S. official, who like others spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue. "Obviously there haven't been the same sort of leaks and pilfered documents spread about from this intrusion as there were from the various DNC and related incursions."

Other officials familiar with the CIA's assessment said there is "high confidence" that the RNC was targeted but less certainty that the Russians got inside the committee and stole material.

The explanation for the lack of damaging Republican leaks remains a source of debate across the U.S. intelligence community, but officials think it may reflect in part an allocation of resources and effort by Russian-backed actors who have been tied to the hacking campaign.

President-elect Donald Trump as well as Republican and Democratic lawmakers on Dec. 11 reacted to the CIA's assessment that Russia intervened to help Trump win the election. (The Washington Post)

There are other possible explanations still being explored, with some officials noting that Republican Party computers may simply have been better protected from intrusion.

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That theory is viewed with skepticism, however, by security officials and experts who describe Russia as a highly capable cyber-adversary, and see it as unlikely that a concerted campaign orchestrated by Moscow would fail to extract material.

*Related: [Trump...CIA on collision course over Russia's role in U.S. election](#)*

“If the Russians want to get into an unclassified network, one that has young staffers, it’s not going to be that hard,” said a U.S. official who has reviewed intelligence on the intrusions. The official said that the intelligence gathered so far indicates a more “sustained effort” was aimed at Democratic targets.

The White House and CIA officials declined to comment.

U.S. officials emphasized that intelligence agencies are continuing to gather and examine intelligence in an effort to reconstruct the alleged Russian intervention in a U.S. election, and that there are disagreements among agencies over how to interpret what they have assembled so far.

The FBI has been more cautious in assessing Russian intentions, and has so far stopped short of endorsing the CIA position that Russia “quite clearly” favored Trump. Some have attributed the competing positions to cultural differences between the bureau, accustomed to courtroom standards of proof, vs. the agency, whose mission is to help policymakers understand global events.

A senior FBI counterintelligence official was equivocal during a briefing with congressional officials last week — confirming that Republican systems had been targeted and acknowledging the apparent imbalance in damage done to Democrats, but refraining from assigning a pro-Trump motive to the Kremlin.

The RNC has vigorously disputed reports that its systems were hacked, let alone that Russia made off with a trove of material that it protected as part of an effort to elevate Trump’s election chances.

“The RNC was not ‘hacked,’ ” GOP spokesman Sean Spicer said in a statement posted to Twitter on Friday evening in response to a New York Times report. He said the report was “exhibit #1 in the fake news.”

U.S. officials said the competing claims may reflect disagreement over terminology. “There is no definition of ‘hack,’ ” a U.S. official said. “If you’re probed are you hacked? If a low-level staffer is breached are you hacked? Or do you have to get a massive release of documents?”

The DNC “was hacked by the common understanding of the word — the data was exfiltrated,” the official said, referring to the exfiltration of files. “Whether the data in the RNC was exfiltrated, maybe not. But if not, why not?”

Republicans contributed to the confusion surrounding the issue with contradictory statements before the election. Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Tex.) the chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, said in September during a CNN interview that Russian operatives had “not only hacked into the DNC but also into the RNC.”

He subsequently said that he had misspoken, and that the targets had been “Republican political operatives.”

The material turned over to WikiLeaks included not just emails stolen from the DNC, but a separate trove taken from top Clinton campaign adviser John Podesta.

U.S. intelligence officials said the CIA has identified the “actors” who took possession of those stolen files and delivered them to WikiLeaks. The individuals are known for their affiliations to Russian intelligence services, but “one step” removed from the Russian government.

A senior administration official said that the CIA did not have “high confidence” about Russia’s motives until after the election, and that White House officials had engaged in numerous deliberations about how much to disclose before Election Day.

“There was an honest and ethical determination among the senior leadership not to undermine the election,” the official said. “The political sensitivity was extremely important to take into account.”

After failing to get bipartisan backing from senior members of Congress for a joint statement condemning Russian interference, the White House released language from National Intelligence Director James R. Clapper and Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson accusing Russia of interfering in the election.

Last week, President Obama ordered all U.S. spy agencies to cooperate on a fuller investigation and to deliver a consensus report on Russian interference before Trump is inaugurated.

Ellen Nakashima, Greg Jaffe and Julie Tate contributed to this report.

**Read more:**



# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

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Related: *As Democrats demand probe over CIA election claim, GOP senators express doubt*

Related: *Kremlin defers to Trump on the CIA assessment that Moscow helped him win*

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Greg Miller covers intelligence agencies and terrorism for The Washington Post.

Adam Entous writes about national security, foreign policy and intelligence for The Post. He joined the newspaper in 2016 after more than 20 years with The Wall Street Journal and Reuters, where he covered the Pentagon, the CIA, the White House and Congress. He covered President George W. Bush for five years after the September 11, 2001, attacks.

**From:**  
**Subject:** FW: UK article on Dem Hacks  
**To:**  
**Sent:** December 15, 2016 8:04 AM (UTC-05:00)

## **EXCLUSIVE: Ex-British ambassador who is now a WikiLeaks operative claims Russia did NOT provide Clinton emails - they were handed over to him at a D.C. park by an intermediary for 'disgusted' Democratic whistleblowers**

- **Craig Murray, former British ambassador to Uzbekistan and associate of Julian Assange, told the Dailymail.com he flew to Washington, D.C. for emails**
- **He claims he had a clandestine hand-off in a wooded area near American University with one of the email sources**
- **The leakers' motivation was 'disgust at the corruption of the Clinton Foundation and the 'tilting of the primary election playing field against Bernie Sanders'**
- **Murray says: 'The source had legal access to the information. The documents came from inside leaks, not hacks'**
- **'Regardless of whether the Russians hacked into the DNC, the documents Wikileaks published did not come from that,' Murray insists**
- **Murray is a controversial figure who was relieved of his post as British ambassador amid allegations of misconduct but is close to Wikileaks**

By [Alana Goodman In Washington, Dc For Dailymail.com](#)

Published: 15:33 EST, 14 December 2016 | Updated: 18:01 EST, 14 December 2016

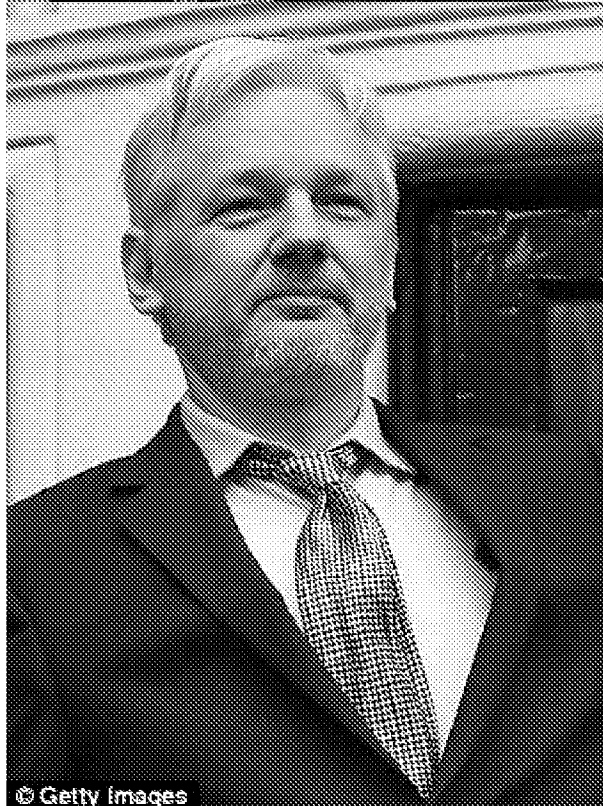
A Wikileaks envoy today claims he personally received Clinton campaign emails in Washington D.C. after they were leaked by 'disgusted' whistleblowers - and not hacked by Russia.

Craig Murray, former British ambassador to Uzbekistan and a close associate of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, told Dailymail.com that he flew to Washington, D.C. for a clandestine hand-off with one of the email sources in September.

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'Neither of [the leaks] came from the Russians,' said Murray in an interview with Dailymail.com on Tuesday. 'The source had legal access to the information. The documents came from inside leaks, not hacks.'

His account contradicts directly the version of how thousands of Democratic emails were published before the election being advanced by U.S. intelligence.



# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

Craig Murray (left), former British ambassador to Uzbekistan and a close associate of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange (right), told the Dailymail.com that he flew to Washington, D.C. for a clandestine hand-off with one of the email sources in September

Murray is a controversial figure who was removed from his post as a British ambassador amid allegations of misconduct. He was cleared of those but left the diplomatic service in acrimony.

His links to Wikileaks are well known and while his account is likely to be seen as both unprovable and possibly biased, it is also the first intervention by Wikileaks since reports surfaced last week that the CIA believed Russia hacked the Clinton emails to help hand the election to Donald Trump.

Murray's claims about the origins of the Clinton campaign emails comes as U.S. intelligence officials are increasingly confident that Russian hackers infiltrated both the Democratic National Committee and the email account of top Clinton aide John Podesta.

In Podesta's case, his account appeared to have been compromised through a basic 'phishing' scheme, the New York Times reported on Wednesday.

U.S. intelligence officials have reportedly told members of Congress during classified briefings that they believe Russians passed the documents on to Wikileaks as part of an influence operation to swing the election in favor of Donald Trump.

But Murray insisted that the DNC and Podesta emails published by Wikileaks did not come from the Russians, and were given to the whistleblowing group by Americans who had authorized access to the information.

'Neither of [the leaks] came from the Russians,' Murray said. 'The source had legal access to the information. The documents came from inside leaks, not hacks.'

He said the leakers were motivated by 'disgust at the corruption of the Clinton Foundation and the tilting of the primary election playing field against Bernie Sanders.'

Murray said he retrieved the package from a source during a clandestine meeting in a wooded area near American University, in northwest D.C. He said the individual he met with was not the original person who obtained the information, but an intermediary.



Murray claims he met with the person who passed the emails over in a Washington, D.C. part near American University

His account cannot be independently verified but is in line with previous statements by Wikileaks - which was the organization that published the Podesta and DNC emails.

Wikileaks published the DNC messages in July and the Podesta messages in October. The messages revealed efforts by some DNC officials to undermine the presidential campaign of Sen. Bernie Sanders, who was running against Hillary Clinton.

Others revealed that Clinton aides were concerned about potential conflicts and mismanagement at the Clinton Foundation.

Murray declined to say where the sources worked and how they had access to the information, to shield their identities.

He suggested that Podesta's emails might be 'of legitimate interest to the security services' in the U.S., due to his communications with Saudi Arabia lobbyists and foreign officials.

Murray said he was speaking out due to claims from intelligence officials that Wikileaks was given the documents by Russian hackers as part of an effort to help Donald Trump win the U.S. presidential election.

'I don't understand why the CIA would say the information came from Russian hackers when they must know that isn't true,' he said. 'Regardless of whether the Russians hacked

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

into the DNC, the documents Wikileaks published did not come from that.'

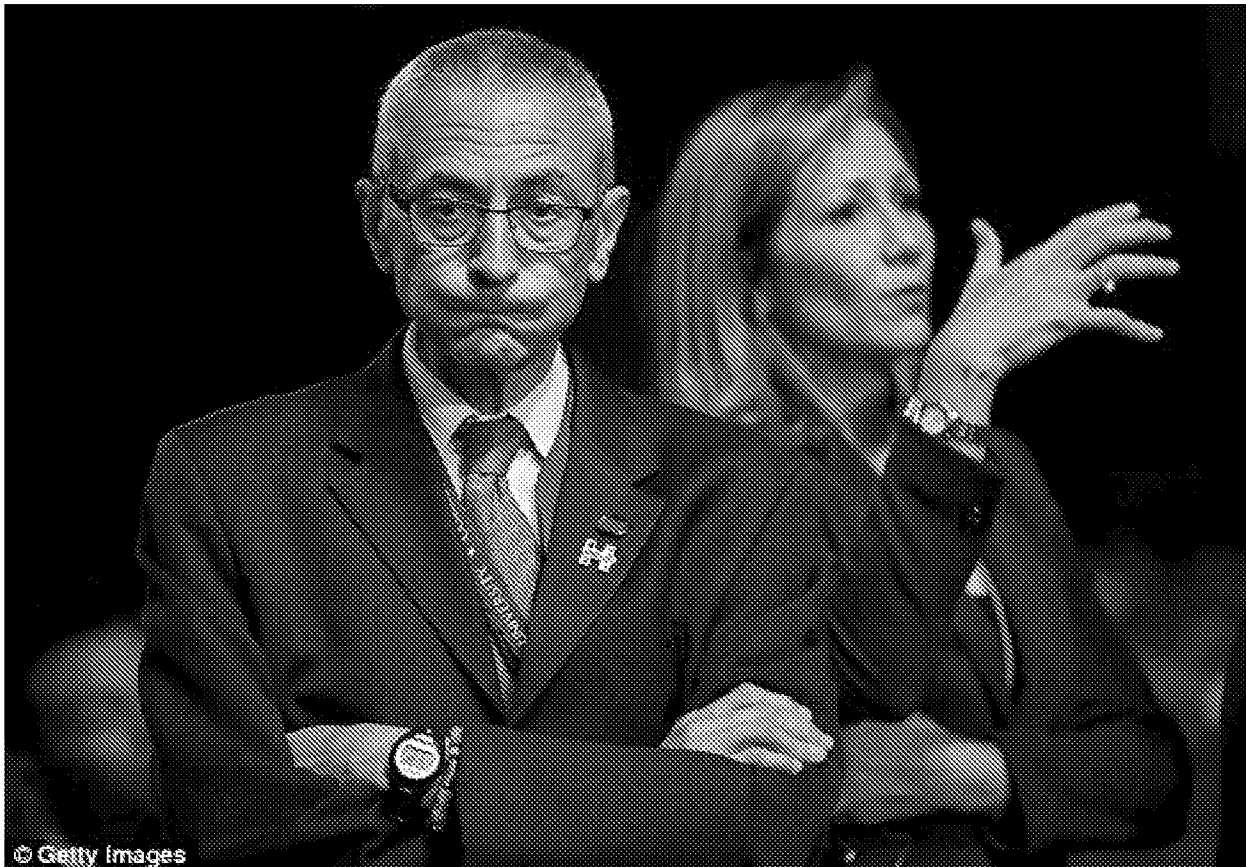
Murray was a vocal critic of human rights abuses in Uzbekistan while serving as ambassador between 2002 and 2004, a stance that pitted him against the UK Foreign Office.

He describes himself as a 'close associate' of Julian Assange and has spoken out in support of the Wikileaks founder who has faced rape allegations and is currently confined to the Ecuadorian embassy in London.

Assange has similarly disputed that charges that Wikileaks received the leaked emails from Russian sources.

'The Clinton camp has been able to project a neo-McCarthyist hysteria that Russia is responsible for everything,' Assange told John Pilger during an interview in November.

'Hillary Clinton has stated multiple times, falsely, that 17 US intelligence agencies had assessed that Russia was the source of our publications. That's false – we can say that the Russian government is not the source.'



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The Washington Post reported last Friday that U.S. intelligence agencies had 'identified individuals with connections to the Russian government who provided WikiLeaks with

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

thousands of hacked emails.'

The paper said U.S. senators were presented with information tying Russia to the leaks during a recent briefing by intelligence officials.

'It is the assessment of the intelligence community that Russia's goal here was to favor one candidate over the other, to help Trump get elected,' a senior U.S. official familiar with the briefing told the Post. 'That's the consensus view.'

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'It is the assessment of the intelligence community that Russia's goal here was to favor one candidate over the other, to help Trump get elected,' a senior U.S. official familiar with the briefing told the Post. 'That's the consensus view.'

The Obama administration has been examining Russia's potential role in trying to influence the presidential election. Officials said Russians hacked the Republican National Committee, but did not release that information in a deliberate effort to damage Clinton and protect Donald Trump.

Several congressional committees are also looking into the suspected Russian interference.

While there is a consensus on Capitol Hill that Russia hacked U.S. political groups and officials, some Republicans say it's not clear whether the motive was to try to swing the election or just to collect intelligence.

'Now whether they intended to interfere to the degree that they were trying to elect a certain candidate, I think that's the subject of investigation,' said Sen. John McCain on CBS Face the Nation. 'But facts are stubborn things, they did hack into this campaign.'

President elect Donald Trump raised doubts about the reports and said this was an 'excuse' by Democrats to explain Clinton's November loss.

'It's just another excuse. I don't believe it,' said Trump on Fox News Sunday.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4034038/Ex-British-ambassador-Wikileaks-operative-claims-Russia-did-NOT-provide-Clinton-emails-handed-D-C-park-intermediary-disgusted-Democratic-insiders.html#ixzz45uYJlrim>

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED] (LO) (FBI)

Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2016 7:56 AM

To: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI) [REDACTED]

Cc: Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI) [REDACTED]

Subject: UK article on Dem Hacks

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

FBI(23-CV-30)-877

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

Pete --

Thought this was interesting.



b6 -1  
b7C -1

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4034038/Ex-British-ambassador-WikiLeaks-operative-claims-Russia-did-NOT-provide-Clinton-emails-handed-D-C-park-intermediary-disgusted-Democratic-insiders.html>



**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** FW: UK article on Dem Hacks  
**To:** [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** December 15, 2016 8:05 AM (UTC-05:00)

b6 -1  
b7c -1

Shaddy sh\*t at AU... ;)

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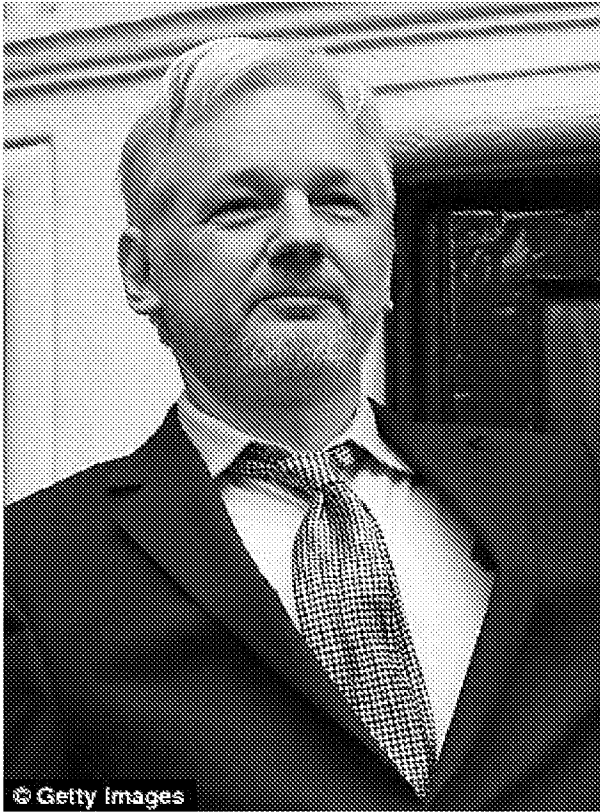
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Others revealed that Clinton aides were concerned about potential conflicts and mismanagement at the Clinton Foundation.

Murray declined to say where the sources worked and how they had access to the

information, to shield their identities.

He suggested that Podesta's emails might be 'of legitimate interest to the security services' in the U.S., due to his communications with Saudi Arabia lobbyists and foreign officials.

Murray said he was speaking out due to claims from intelligence officials that Wikileaks was given the documents by Russian hackers as part of an effort to help Donald Trump win the U.S. presidential election.

'I don't understand why the CIA would say the information came from Russian hackers when they must know that isn't true,' he said. 'Regardless of whether the Russians hacked into the DNC, the documents Wikileaks published did not come from that.'

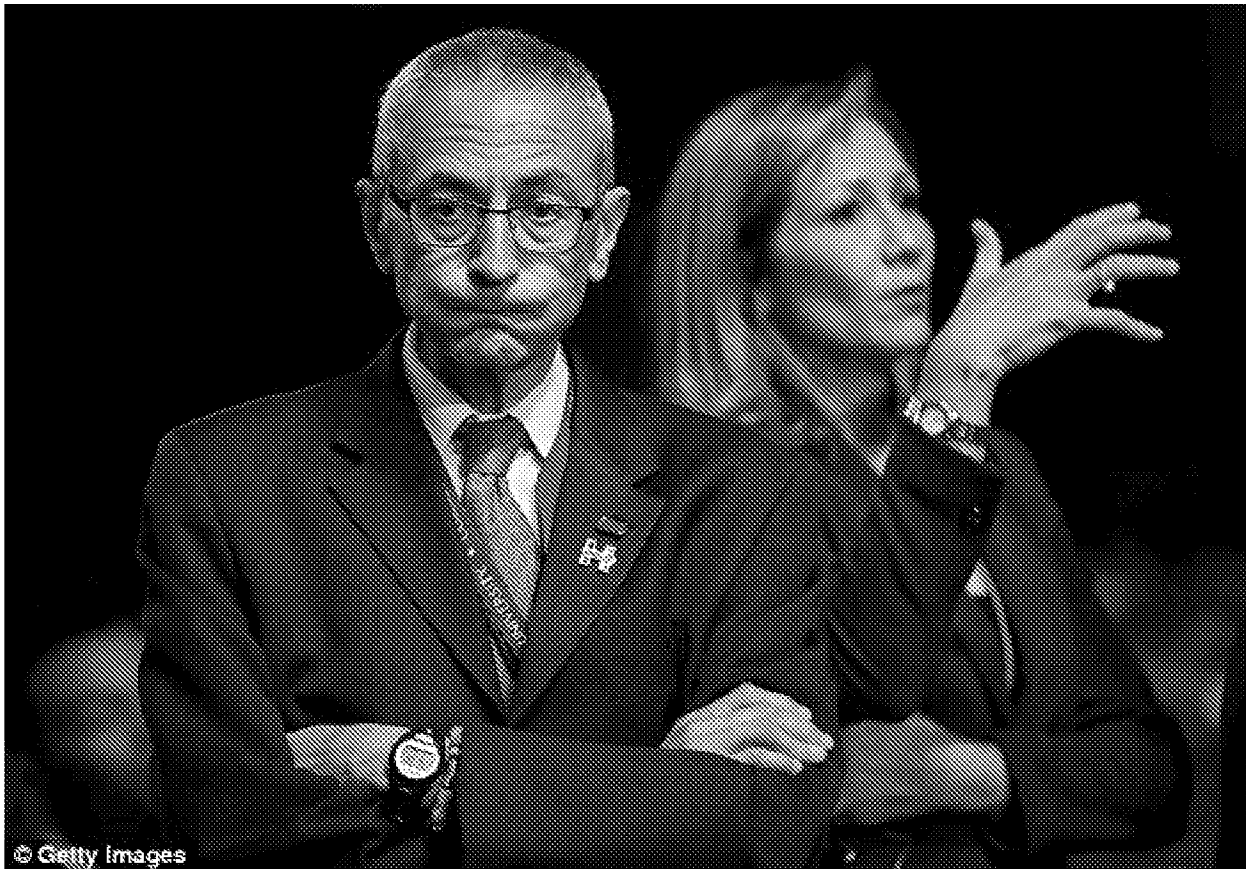
Murray was a vocal critic of human rights abuses in Uzbekistan while serving as ambassador between 2002 and 2004, a stance that pitted him against the UK Foreign Office.

He describes himself as a 'close associate' of Julian Assange and has spoken out in support of the Wikileaks founder who has faced rape allegations and is currently confined to the Ecuadorian embassy in London.

Assange has similarly disputed that charges that Wikileaks received the leaked emails from Russian sources.

'The Clinton camp has been able to project a neo-McCarthyist hysteria that Russia is responsible for everything,' Assange told John Pilger during an interview in November.

'Hillary Clinton has stated multiple times, falsely, that 17 US intelligence agencies had assessed that Russia was the source of our publications. That's false – we can say that the Russian government is not the source.'



Murray suggested that John Podesta's emails might be 'of legitimate interest to the security services' in the U.S., due to his communications with Saudi Arabia lobbyists and foreign officials

The Washington Post reported last Friday that U.S. intelligence agencies had 'identified individuals with connections to the Russian government who provided WikiLeaks with thousands of hacked emails.'

The paper said U.S. senators were presented with information tying Russia to the leaks during a recent briefing by intelligence officials.

'It is the assessment of the intelligence community that Russia's goal here was to favor one candidate over the other, to help Trump get elected,' a senior U.S. official familiar with the briefing told the Post. 'That's the consensus view.'

The paper said U.S. senators were presented with information tying Russia to the leaks during a recent briefing by intelligence officials.

'It is the assessment of the intelligence community that Russia's goal here was to favor one candidate over the other, to help Trump get elected,' a senior U.S. official familiar with the briefing told the *Post*. 'That's the consensus view.'

The Obama administration has been examining Russia's potential role in trying to influence the presidential election. Officials said Russians hacked the Republican National Committee, but did not release that information in a deliberate effort to damage Clinton and

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protect Donald Trump.

Several congressional committees are also looking into the suspected Russian interference.

While there is a consensus on Capitol Hill that Russia hacked U.S. political groups and officials, some Republicans say it's not clear whether the motive was to try to swing the election or just to collect intelligence.

'Now whether they intended to interfere to the degree that they were trying to elect a certain candidate, I think that's the subject of investigation,' said Sen. John McCain on CBS Face the Nation. 'But facts are stubborn things, they did hack into this campaign.'

President elect Donald Trump raised doubts about the reports and said this was an 'excuse' by Democrats to explain Clinton's November loss.

'It's just another excuse. I don't believe it,' said Trump on Fox News Sunday.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4034038/Ex-British-ambassador-WikiLeaks-operative-claims-Russia-did-NOT-provide-Clinton-emails-handed-D-C-park-intermediary-disgusted-Democratic-insiders.html#ixzz4SuYJlrim>

-----Original Message-----

From [REDACTED] (LO) (FBI)

Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2016 7:56 AM

To: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI) [REDACTED]

Cc: Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI) [REDACTED]

Subject: UK article on Dem Hacks

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Pete --

Thought this was interesting.



<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4034038/Ex-British-ambassador-WikiLeaks-operative-claims-Russia-did-NOT-provide-Clinton-emails-handed-D-C-park-intermediary-disgusted-Democratic-insiders.html>

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Fwd: JAR/Related Materials  
**To:** Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** December 30, 2016 8:00 AM (UTC-05:00)  
**Attached:** Joint Analysis Report (JAR).PDF, Executive Briefing Points (JAR).DOCX, WH Press Guidance.DOCX

----- Original message -----

b7E -3

From: "Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>  
Date: 12/30/2016 6:46 AM (GMT-05:00)  
To: "Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>, "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>, "Boone, Jennifer C. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>  
Subject: Fwd: JAR/Related Materials

Bill, Pete, Jen,

Just for visibility, please find the attached Joint Analysis Report (JAR), Executive Briefing Points (JAR), and WH Press Guidance documents related to yesterday's release. In addition, links to the various press statements by participating agencies are included below, as is the transcript from yesterday's post release conference call with reporters.

<https://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/joint-dhs-odni-fbi-statement-on-russian-malicious-cyber-activity>

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/12/29/statement-president-actions-response-russian-malicious-cyber-activity>

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/12/29/fact-sheet-actions-response-russian-malicious-cyber-activity-and>

<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0693.aspx>

<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/12/266145.htm>

<https://www.dhs.gov/news/2016/12/29/joint-dhs-odni-fbi-statement-russian-malicious-cyber-activity>

<https://www.us-cert.gov/security-publications/GRIZZLY-STEPPE-Russian-Malicious-Cyber-Activity>

<https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/215-press-releases-2016/1463-joint-dhs-odni-fbi-statement-on-russian-malicious-cyber-activity>

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary  
For Immediate Release

December 29, 2016

PRESS CALL  
ON THE ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE  
TO RUSSIAN MALICIOUS CYBER ACTIVITY AND HARASSMENT

Via Conference Call

MR. STROH: Thank you very much and, everyone, thanks for joining our call this afternoon. This will be a background press conference call on the administration response to Russian malicious cyber activity and

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harassment. I will introduce the senior administration officials that we have here on the call, but as a reminder, they'll be referred to on background as senior administration officials. And secondly, we'll embargo the content of this call until the call concludes, so please no tweeting or filing while the call is ongoing.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thanks, everybody. I'll just make some brief comments and then turn it over to my other colleagues.

So today's actions were all approved by President Obama as a package of steps that is in response to very disturbing Russian threats to U.S. national security. And we're responding here to a pattern of Russian behavior that has been evident over some time.

First of all, as you are all aware, in October, we took the very unique step of publicly attributing efforts to interfere in the U.S. election to Russia. And as you know, we've continued to refine and develop our assessment of those Russian efforts and, as President Obama has directed, there will be a report issued summarizing what we know with respect to those efforts. And we can talk about that later in the Q&A.

In addition, as my State colleague can speak to, we've seen other Russian actions that aim to directly interfere with the conduct of U.S. foreign policy, particularly a pattern of harassment of our diplomats inside of Russia. So the range of actions announced today are in response to those Russian provocations and actions. They include a set of sanctions that my colleague from Treasury can speak to, include some important efforts that we're taking with respect to cybersecurity and attribution, and include some actions against some of the Russian personnel and facilities here in the United States. And, again, each of my colleagues will speak to the unique actions taken.

I would just add this is not the sum total of everything that we are doing in response to Russia's actions, including its malicious cyber activities and its interference in our election. As President Obama and others have said, some of those actions will be public and some of them will not. And today, we are announcing a series of the public measures that we're taking, but that should not be mistaken for the sum total of our response.

I'd also note that this should come as no surprise to the Russian government, given that we have warned publicly and privately, including directly from President Obama to President Putin, that there would be a response for these Russian actions. So, again, we've been very clear about our intent here.

The only other thing I'd say by way of an introduction is that this really serves two purposes. One, there has to be a cost and a consequence for what Russia has done. It is an extraordinary step for them to interfere in the democratic process here in the United States of America, and there needs to be a price for that. They need to be held accountable for that. And we believe that this should be of concern to all Americans, as the President said in his statement and to members of Congress from both parties, because this was an attack on our democratic system, and we're responding in kind.

Secondly, we also believe that these steps are important because Russia is not going to stop. We have every indication that they will continue to interfere in democratic elections in other countries, including some of our European allies. There's no reason to believe that they will not try to interfere in future American elections, be they state and local elections, midterm elections, or future presidential elections. And so we also need to publicize what we know about who is responsible, demonstrate that there's a cost, try to reveal what we know about how Russia operates in this space. And, again, more of that information will be in the report that the President has directed be prepared, but some of that is embedded in the response that we're taking today.

With that, I'll turn it over to my colleague to talk through the sanctions in particular.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thank you. The number of significant actions that the President took and that Treasury has taken today -- first, I wanted to note that the President has amended the Cyber Executive Order, and that's an executive order that he issued originally in April of last year, which was meant to target malicious cyber activity by state or non-state actors anywhere in the world who were tampering with the infrastructure, who were disrupting the ability of networks of computers -- for example, through DDoS attacks -- or

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who were misappropriating funds -- basically cyber -- or cyber theft of intellectual property for commercial gain.

The single prong that the President has added today makes clear that we will -- future administrations will have the authority to go after those who are tampering with or misappropriating through cyber means with the purpose or effect of interfering with election processes. And that's basically the progress the President is -- on with the actions today.

Under this new authority, the President has sanctioned nine entities and individuals. First and foremost, two Russian intelligence services -- the GRU and the FSB -- four individual officers of the GRU who are the senior-most ranking leaders of the GRU, as well as three companies -- Russian companies that have provided material support to the GRU's cyber operation. Those companies are the Special Technology Center St. Petersburg, Zorsecurity, and the Autonomous Noncommercial Organization, which is often known by its acronym, ANO PO KSI -- all of which have provided cyber services and training to the GRU.

In addition to the actions taken by the President under the -- executive order, Treasury is targeting two Russian individuals, Evgeniy Bogachev and Aleksey Belan, under the preexisting cyber EO. In both cases, they're notorious cyber criminals who have been responsible for major (inaudible) and havoc in the international financial system, including against American companies.

Bogachev and the cyber criminals associated have been responsible for the theft of over \$100 million -- U.S. financial institutions, as well as Fortune 500 (audio drop) universities and government agencies. And Belan has been responsible for compromising at least three major e-commerce companies and misappropriating the data, including private identifying data, from those companies.

As all of these actions make clear, we will not tolerate the abuse of our systems, including our election systems, by foreign actors. And these authorities are standing authorities that can be drawn upon in the future, as well.

I'll now turn it over to my colleague.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thank you. I wanted to talk with you all about the Joint Analysis Report that we issued today along with the FBI. As you know, on October 7th of this year, DHS and the DNI issued a joint statement that attributed the compromise of emails from U.S. persons and institutions, including a U.S. political organization, and the subsequent disclosure of those emails to the Russian government.

So today, with this Joint Analysis Report, we are expanding on that statement and providing details on the tools and the infrastructure used by the Russian military and civilian intelligence services to compromise and exploit networks and endpoints associated with the recent election, and -- to include state-owned voter registration databases, as well as a range U.S. government political and private sector entities.

And a key objective in the release of this information today, of course, is to -- particularly the technical124 information is to better help network defenders in the United States and abroad to identify, detect and disrupt Russia's global campaign of malicious cyber activities.

The establishment of the attributions back to the Russian intelligence service is based on a U.S. government assessment that incorporates the technical information that's included in this JAR, the Joint Analysis Report, as well as the intelligence information and collection. Russia's civilian and military intelligence services have been engaged in aggressive and sophisticated cyber-enabled operations targeting the U.S. government and its citizens for a number of years. We are referring to this set of malicious cyber activity as GRIZZLY STEPPE -- and that's S-T-E-P-P-E -- and that becomes relevant for things like finding this JAR on the -- on our website. You can find it at US-CERT -- that's C-E-R-T -- .gov/grizzlysteppe. So again, that's G-R-I-Z-Z-L-Y-S-T-E-P-P-E, all one word.

These operations that we're describing in the JAR included spear-phishing campaigns, which have targeted government organizations, political infrastructure entities, think tanks, universities, political organizations, and corporations. Theft of information from these organizations and, specifically, recently, the public release of that

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information in operation of targeting other countries, including U.S. allies and partners -- Russian intelligence services have undertaken damaging or disruptive cyberattacks, including on critical infrastructure, in some cases, masquerading as a third parties or hiding behind false online personas which are designed to cause the victim to misattribute the source of the attack.

The JAR itself provides technical indicators that are related to many of these operations. Importantly, it lays out in an extended section of the JAR recommended mitigations, and, equally important, information on how to report incidents or detection of malicious indicators or activities to the U.S. government.

The JAR does recognize that some really excellent work has been done already by security companies and the private sector networks' owners or operators themselves. And some of this information is -- they have provided previously. But we are also providing new indicators of compromised malicious infrastructure identified during our own course of investigations and incident response, along with the Bureau. Again, we're focused on providing network defenders with the tools they need to identify and detect and disrupt Russian malicious activity targeting our country's networks.

So again, in the JAR itself, we have provided some descriptions of approaches that Russian intelligence services used, as well as some of the technical indicators, including Internet protocol addresses, the set of numbers that basically serves as an address for each computer in their use to transmit data to and between computers. These IT addresses are -- reflect infrastructure that the Russian intelligence services are using, and oftentimes it's other people's networks without the owner's knowledge. And they do that, obviously, to hide their malicious activity, but that means that these addresses also host, oftentimes, legitimate websites and other Internet services. And so we are providing this information for network defenders, network administrators to be able to use to try to detect and put on their watch list so that they can be alert to potential malicious activity.

We've also released -- it's not included in the JAR, but separately we've released two malware samples that Russian intelligence services use to broadly conduct their malicious activities, and we've given those to antivirus vendors so that they can be used to help, again, both private sector and government folks defend their networks.

We've provided a subseries of questions that companies need to be asking themselves, as well as a list of steps that they can take, some basic cyber hygiene practices that are really important and can actually stop 85 percent of the malicious activity that we see. We're going to continue our NCCIC, our National Cybersecurity Communications Integration Center, to look at the research and analysis, and we will continue to issue subsequent updates to the JAR if and when additional information becomes available.

And so we really urge that folks out there continue to check the US-CERT website and, again, both implement these recommended mitigations, but also provide information to the government to help fill in the bigger picture. What we're asking the companies to do is to take this technical information, go back through their logs and see if they see indications of this malicious activity in the past. Because knowledge of these historical incidents -- even if the bad actors are no longer active in your system -- it's important for the government to know about it and understand it. It helps to fill in the bigger picture, provides greater insight into the scope and scale of Russian activity, and helps all the network defenders.

DHS has added these indicators to the automated information sharing that we have implemented this year, which provides them to companies that sign up at machine speed. And so we encourage companies to continue to sign up to receive those indicators.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thanks, I'm here at State. You all saw the statement that we put out earlier today with the other interagency statements on the President's decisions. We implemented two of his decisions. We declared persona non grata 35 Russian officials operating in the U.S. who were acting in a manner inconsistent with their diplomatic and consular duties. And we also have denied Russian personnel access to two Russian-owned compounds in the United States. And this is part of the comprehensive response to their interference in our elections and a pattern of harassment. I have some details on the harassment, as well, but maybe I'll stop there. I've got details on the harassment for later in the conversation.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Great. Any of you guys want to say -- before we open to questions?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I would just add that the actions inconsistent with their responsibilities and duties that my colleague referred to were intelligence activities. And the two facilities which the Russians are now denied access to were used for intelligence collection activities, as well.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And I would just add that from our view, the purpose of the indicator release is really twofold. One is to put the weight of the U.S. government behind the attribution of a lot of this activity to the Russian government and their intelligence services so that network defenders should prioritize fixing those issues and identifying that, because that is sponsored by a government that is carrying out malicious aggressive activity against us. And two, to cause them some operational friction and inhibit their ability, at least for a little while, to carry out their activities and to cause them some problems.

Q Hi, thanks very much. Can you comment broadly on how difficult it would be or easy it might be for President-elect Trump to undo some of the things that you've been announcing today? And specifically how difficult or easy would it be for him to allow some of the officials back into the country who are being asked to leave?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'll start and see if any of my colleagues want to weigh in.

First of all, we're taking these actions consistent with our assessment of what Russia has done. To be very clear here, they have been interfering in both the American democratic process and in the conduct of American diplomacy. And so this should be of concern to all Americans -- again, to members of both parties, members of Congress from both parties. This has been a sustained effort to both harass our diplomatic personnel and interfere in our democratic process. And as I said, we have no reason to believe that Russia's activities will cease.

They have been engaged in malicious cyber activity for some time now. They have interfered in democratic elections not just here in the United States, but other countries. So one reason why I think that it is necessary to sustain these actions is because there's every reason to believe that Russia will interfere in future U.S. elections and future elections around the world.

That said, to your question, these are executive actions. So if a future President decided that he wanted to allow in a large tranche of Russian intelligence agents, presumably a future President could invite that action. We think it would be inadvisable. As my colleague just said, these diplomatic compounds were being used for intelligence purposes. That is a direct challenge to U.S. national security, and I don't think it would make much sense to reopen Russian intelligence compounds.

Secondly, the officials who have been PNGed are Russian intelligence agents. So I don't think it would make much sense to invite back in Russian intelligence agents. The officials who were sanctioned were participating in malicious cyberattacks on U.S. critical infrastructure and interfering in our democratic process. So, again, hypothetically you could reverse those sanctions, but it wouldn't make a lot of sense.

I don't know if any of my colleagues have anything they want to add to that.

Q You've made reference at several points to attacks on critical infrastructure in the U.S., and I was wondering does that include the campaign against U.S. companies in 2014, U.S. energy companies? And does it also include other things that you could identify?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Certainly, so I think in broad terms we know that the Russian government has targeted critical infrastructure around the world, and it is part of their normal operating procedures. And if you look at the list of malware and other kinds of activity that are listed in the JAR as being tied to the Russian intelligence services, you would see some of those that are aimed at critical infrastructure, such as BlackEnergy and Havex. So that's the kind of activity that we're talking about.

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Q Thank you for doing the call. First of all, I was wondering if you could talk about the chronology of the way you're doing this. Russia has been saying for weeks now if you guys really have evidence that we were behind this, prove it, show us what you have. And so why are you doing the announcement of these retaliatory actions before you're releasing this report that the President has promised that ostensibly would back up the accusations that you've made?

And then for State, you guys are saying that the actions to kick out the diplomats and shutter these compounds are related to harassment, which is kind of a separate issue, but you're rolling it out as part of this big package. So is it fair to say that the decision to move forward with those penalties now is part of your attempt to be tougher on Russia over the cyber actions? Thanks.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, let me just start on that. On your second question, I think for the -- we've been looking at the issue of how to respond to the harassment of our diplomats for some time, but the fact is it's hard for us to separate that from the context of a foreign power also interfering in our democratic election.

So it's fair to say that President Obama's direction was that we should look at these actions as interconnected, and that the same hostile posture and the same flagrant violation of basic norms of international behavior that guided their harassment of our diplomatic personnel are also seen in the interference in our election. So again, that's why we looked at this as a package. And, frankly, if you look at the actions taken with respect to the diplomatic personnel and facilities, they were also related to an intelligence purpose. So just as it was a Russian intelligence effort that was tied to the interference in our election, we see a nexus to Russian intelligence and the actions taken by the State Department today in addition to the response of the harassment of our diplomats. And my State colleague can speak to the harassment of diplomats.

On your first question, look, we don't -- we actually, as you know, publicly put out the assessment that Russia was interfering in our election in early October. So we have been public with that assessment for some time now. Frankly, if you look at who is designated and what entities are designated and what's in the JAR, you begin to get a sense of our assessment of how Russia approached those issues. And what we'll be doing in the report that the President asked for is look comprehensively at the information that we have and the analysis that flows from that information.

This is not in question, though. There's no debate in the U.S. administration about the fact -- and it is a fact -- that Russia interfered in our democratic election. We've established that clearly to our satisfaction. I would never expect Russia to come out with their hands up and acknowledge what they did. They don't do that. They didn't do that -- they still deny that they are intervening in eastern Ukraine. And, frankly, I'd say to journalists, let's look at what they say and what they do. This is a country that has intervened in a sovereign country and denied that they did it, even though everybody could see that they were doing it, with respect to Ukraine; that has bombed civilians in Syria while denying that they were doing it.

So we don't see this as a he said, she said situation, we see this as, there are facts and then there are things that Russia says.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I would also add, and maybe my colleague can speak to this more directly, but the process of putting together sanctions packages is extremely onerous and requires evidence that can stand up in court. So this is a very intense, elaborate process with a lot of input from agencies across the board.

We don't need to tell the Russian government what it's been doing. It knows what it's doing. We owe it to the American people to explain what the Russian government is doing, and the President's instruction for the U.S. government to do a report on what happened is exactly directed at explaining to the American people what happened. But we don't need to make the case to the Russians, for all the reasons that my colleague has laid out.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: State, you may want to talk about the harassments.

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SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes, the pattern of harassment over several years is really disturbing, and we felt -- and were pleased with the President's decision to do something about it.

They have -- you saw the YouTube video of the June 6th incident where our diplomat was assaulted by a Russian police officer. Embassy officials have been harassed and detained on their routine diplomatic travels around the country. Russian state-owned television has put some of our diplomats at risk by putting personal details about them on TV. They've blocked our ability to make our consulate general in St. Petersburg safe, in terms of the perimeter of security and new construction. They've closed 28 American Corners around the country and the American Center, which is making it impossible for us to do our job in terms of culture, education, and people-to-people ties.

So a whole series of pattern of actions over a number over years is what triggered this part of the decision.

Q Hi, thanks for doing this. Just to be clear here, the Russians that are being expelled from here and denied access to these -- you called them recreational compounds -- are you saying, one, these very intelligence officers are involved, or is that something they -- out of Moscow? And two, are you talking about a compound within the embassy compound or someplace else, say in Washington?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can speak to that, but I believe my colleague would be best positioned to do so.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The compounds are not part -- are not contiguous with the embassy. One is in Maryland and one is in New York. They are compounds that the Russian government owns and that they use for multiple purposes -- as described by my colleague, intelligence, but also recreational, as well. And under the Foreign Missions Act, we have the authority to restrict their access to these properties based on their pattern of behavior.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And just to be absolutely clear, there are 35 Russian diplomats -- actually intelligence officers -- who were PNGed by State. The denial of access to the two compounds is all Russian personnel. The Russian missions in Washington, in New York -- all Russian personnel will be denied access to those two compounds beginning at noon tomorrow, or December 30th. And those who were PNGed have 72 hours from the moment of having been informed to leave. So they should be gone, by my calculation, that would be Sunday -- by noon on Sunday. And for the Russian speakers among you, I will wish you s novym godom.

Q Thanks very much. First of all, President-elect Trump said on Wednesday that we ought to "get on with our lives" when asked about sanctioning Russia. So there have been reports that some of the other actions, the not-public actions that were to be taken against Russia was going to be left to the next administration. Is that the case? Or are there other non-public actions that are already being taken? And is your decision -- will your decision in any way change based on the signals coming from the President-elect that he does not believe that this is a matter that should be pursued, the election matter itself?

And would you describe the harassment against our diplomats in Moscow as unusual, or -- are you focused on the normal pattern of behavior, or is this unusual between us and the Russians in terms of what you've seen, as you just described?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: So on your first question, as you've heard us say many times, our approach is that there's one President at a time, and that President Obama is going to execute the duties of his office until January 20th. And he is acting in what he believes to be the best interest of the United States.

I'd say a couple of things. One is, there are any number of actions that we're taking -- some we announce, some we don't -- that will be in process as the next administration takes office. So again, there may be things that commence while we're in office in addition to what we're saying today. When the new administration takes office, it's entirely their judgment as to whether or not they continue down the course that we have set in a number of different areas.

I guess what I'd suggest is that the Russian actions have been sustained over an extended period of time, and by any

definition are against the national interests of the United States, not the interests of President Obama. The harassment of our diplomats -- which is not in line, frankly, with the way things have been in the past; it's been escalating steadily for some time -- is a direct threat to the ability of the United States of America to conduct diplomacy. And I would think that that would be of concern to future administrations.

The interference in our election is a pattern that we see in other Western democracies, including some of our closest allies. And I think future administrations would find it concerning if there are efforts to undermine the democracies of our closest allies in the world.

What we've seen in general with their malicious cyber activity has targeted our critical infrastructure beyond even our election process. So I would think that the malicious cyber-targeting of American critical infrastructure would be of concern to future administrations. I'd note, from our own consultations, that this is an issue of great concern to American business, and so I would expect that future administrations would be concerned about the threat to the American economy from malicious Russian cyber activity.

So again, as I said earlier, some of the actions we're taking have to do with Russian intelligence efforts, which, again, are aimed at harming the national security of the United States. I would think that future administrations would be concerned about those efforts. If they aren't, then they should explain why, and they'll have the opportunity to explain why. But I think clearly we're taking these actions because of what has been a pattern of behavior over an extended period of time that we've seen replicated in other countries, and we believe it's the right approach to take.

I don't know if my colleagues want to comment on the kind of historical perspective of harassment.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, my understanding -- and I'll leave it to my colleague -- but my understanding is the State Department assesses that the pattern of Russian harassment of our diplomatic mission in Russia is unprecedented for the post-Cold War era, that this really was a change in behavior in the last two or so years.

But I'll turn it over to my colleague for the authoritative comment.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Just to agree with you and my colleague, nothing to add from here. Exactly right.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I just want to emphasize that, of course, the Joint Analytic Report contains information also that does go beyond just the election's malicious cyber activity, and again, to highlight activity aimed at critical infrastructure but also other non-governmental organizations, really a broad campaign. And the list of actors and actor sets, and of malware, et cetera, including BlackEnergy and Havex, is an indication of how broad this campaign is and how serious it is.

Q Thanks very much. Can you explain to us why these activities come -- why these actions come at the time that they do? There was obviously a debate about taking each of the steps that you've announced today prior to the election. There was -- there's obviously been concern about retaliation by the -- and escalation by the Russians. Can you say whether or not you believe in retrospect that you wish you had acted earlier? And can you also on just one factual issue tell us whether or not the facilities that you've closed in New York and Maryland you believe were just generally intelligence facilities, or whether they were used as part of the DNC and other hacking activity here?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Your second question obviously kind of gets pretty precise on intelligence equities, so I don't think we can speak to that.

On the timing question, look, I'd say there are a range of factors here. Number one, each one of these steps takes a different amount of time to prepare. As you know -- and my colleague can speak if he wants to -- sanctions packages are time consuming, as you're establishing both the basis for the action and then refining the target list. The JAR itself is a complex procedure, as we are putting together the information that we can share publicly that

provides the best possible guidance about what we know. And then obviously, the response to the harassment is something we've been focused on for some time.

So a number of points. First of all, with respect to how this fit around the election, I think our first priority was to publicly disclose the information. So before we were going to take an action, the most important thing was to make public what we knew, and we did that on October 7th. And that was a fairly unique, if not unprecedented, step to come out with a common view of the U.S. intelligence community that a foreign power, Russia, was interfering in our election. So point one is getting out that information.

We also wanted to give a warning directly to the Russians accompanying that public message and also in private, which he did at numerous times, about the fact that we knew what they were doing, and that we would be preparing a response. And we therefore wanted to have them absorb that message and have that effect -- see how that affected their behavior.

We also, frankly, in the run-up to the election were very focused on securing the election itself. And we have no indication at all that the efforts included tampering with the vote. And so in terms of a priority for a lot of our cybersecurity efforts, we wanted to make sure that our election was secure. And the warning to Russia combined with our efforts to secure the voting process I think was a priority.

Let's also bear in mind that even as we have made this disclosure and were preparing these steps, material had been hacked and was being released. So it's not as if that genie could be put back into the bottle. We were putting this together and preparing a response in the context in which this information had been shared with other parties and was being publicly released and widely reported on by our news media. So what we wanted to do then is methodically work through these different elements: What could we do on sanctions? How are we going to deal with Russia's diplomatic presence here in the United States? What are we doing with the JAR? And how are we preparing other elements? And that takes some amount of time to put together. And we also wanted to, again, do some of this as a package.

So I think the President has been very deliberate: Let's gather the information; when we had enough confidence to put it out, we released it publicly. We issued a warning. We worked to secure our election. We worked to develop these responses. When the responses were complete, we aligned them so that we would be doing this as a package. And that I think explains the nature of the timeline.

I don't know if anybody wants to speak to individual components of that process in terms of how they were put together.

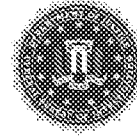
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think I can just add that from the very start of when, even going back some time, we have been engaging diplomatically with the Russians and raising our concerns about their activity -- even if not all of that became public -- whenever we learn about or detect intrusions into companies or organizations, we do notifications to those companies, and we go and we tell them. DHS began ramping up its coordination, as my colleague was talking about, in order to make sure that we doing everything possible to secure the electoral infrastructure. We started that back in the summer.

All this has been building for some period of time. So it's not like all of these actions sort of popped in kind of right now out of the blue, they are really part of a long-term effort that we've been building over time to push back on this kind of Russian behavior, and they're setting the stage for the fact that we will have to continue to deter and push back on this kind of behavior going into the future.

MR. STROH: All right. Thank you very much for participating in today's call and, as of now, the call is concluded and the embargo is lifted. Thanks, everyone. Have a nice day.



[Redacted] (S)  
(M)

**NCCIC**Federal Bureau  
of Investigation**JOINT ANALYSIS REPORT**

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Reference Number: JAR-16-20296

December 29, 2016

**GRIZZLY STEPPE – Russian Malicious Cyber Activity****Summary**

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This Joint Analysis Report (JAR) is the result of analytic efforts between the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). This document provides technical details regarding the tools and infrastructure used by the Russian civilian and military intelligence Services (RIS) to compromise and exploit networks and endpoints associated with the U.S. election, as well as a range of U.S. Government, political, and private sector entities. The U.S. Government is referring to this malicious cyber activity by RIS as GRIZZLY STEPPE.

Previous JARs have not attributed malicious cyber activity to specific countries or threat actors. However, public attribution of these activities to RIS is supported by technical indicators from the U.S. Intelligence Community, DHS, FBI, the private sector, and other entities. This determination expands upon the Joint Statement released October 7, 2016, from the Department of Homeland Security and the Director of National Intelligence on Election Security.

This activity by RIS is part of an ongoing campaign of cyber-enabled operations directed at the U.S. government and its citizens. These cyber operations have included spearphishing campaigns targeting government organizations, critical infrastructure entities, think tanks, universities, political organizations, and corporations leading to the theft of information. In foreign countries, RIS actors conducted damaging and/or disruptive cyber-attacks, including attacks on critical infrastructure networks. In some cases, RIS actors masqueraded as third parties, hiding behind false online personas designed to cause the victim to misattribute the source of the attack. This JAR provides technical indicators related to many of these operations, recommended mitigations, suggested actions to take in response to the indicators provided, and information on how to report such incidents to the U.S. Government.

## Description

The U.S. Government confirms that two different RIS actors participated in the intrusion into a U.S. political party. The first actor group, known as Advanced Persistent Threat (APT) 29, entered into the party's systems in summer 2015, while the second, known as APT28, entered in spring 2016.

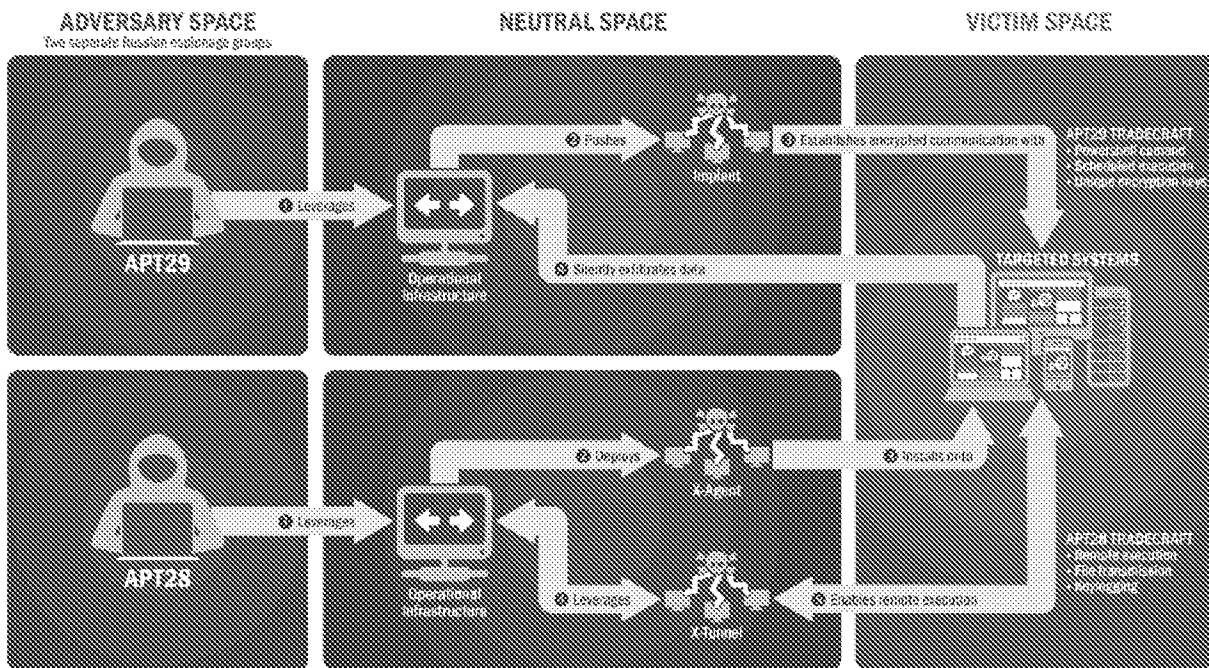


Figure 1: The tactics and techniques used by APT29 and APT 28 to conduct cyber intrusions against target systems

Both groups have historically targeted government organizations, think tanks, universities, and corporations around the world. APT29 has been observed crafting targeted spearphishing campaigns leveraging web links to a malicious dropper; once executed, the code delivers Remote Access Tools (RATs) and evades detection using a range of techniques. APT28 is known for leveraging domains that closely mimic those of targeted organizations and tricking potential victims into entering legitimate credentials. APT28 actors relied heavily on shortened URLs in their spearphishing email campaigns. Once APT28 and APT29 have access to victims, both groups exfiltrate and analyze information to gain intelligence value. These groups use this information to craft highly targeted spearphishing campaigns. These actors set up operational infrastructure to obfuscate their source infrastructure, host domains and malware for targeting organizations, establish command and control nodes, and harvest credentials and other valuable information from their targets.

In summer 2015, an APT29 spearphishing campaign directed emails containing a malicious link to over 1,000 recipients, including multiple U.S. Government victims. APT29 used legitimate

domains, to include domains associated with U.S. organizations and educational institutions, to host malware and send spearphishing emails. In the course of that campaign, APT29 successfully compromised a U.S. political party. At least one targeted individual activated links to malware hosted on operational infrastructure of opened attachments containing malware. APT29 delivered malware to the political party's systems, established persistence, escalated privileges, enumerated active directory accounts, and exfiltrated email from several accounts through encrypted connections back through operational infrastructure.

In spring 2016, APT28 compromised the same political party, again via targeted spearphishing. This time, the spearphishing email tricked recipients into changing their passwords through a fake webmail domain hosted on APT28 operational infrastructure. Using the harvested credentials, APT28 was able to gain access and steal content, likely leading to the exfiltration of information from multiple senior party members. The U.S. Government assesses that information was leaked to the press and publicly disclosed.

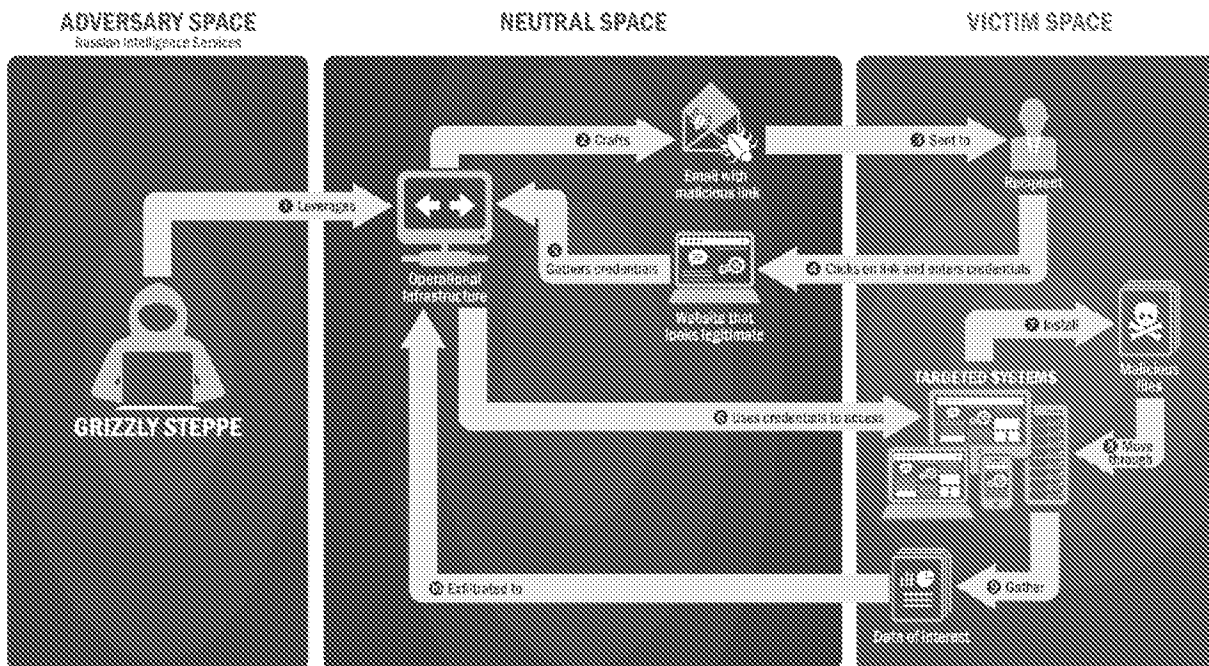


Figure 2: APT28's Use of Spearphishing and Stolen Credentials

Actors likely associated with RIS are continuing to engage in spearphishing campaigns, including one launched as recently as November 2016, just days after the U.S. election.

*Reported Russian Military and Civilian Intelligence Services (RIS)*

| Alternate Names                        |
|----------------------------------------|
| APT28                                  |
| APT29                                  |
| Agent.btz                              |
| BlackEnergy V3                         |
| BlackEnergy2 APT                       |
| CakeDuke                               |
| Carberp                                |
| CHOPSTICK                              |
| CloudDuke                              |
| CORESHELL                              |
| CosmicDuke                             |
| COZYBEAR                               |
| COZYCAR                                |
| COZYDUKE                               |
| CrouchingYeti                          |
| DIONIS                                 |
| Dragonfly                              |
| Energetic Bear                         |
| EVILTOSS                               |
| Fancy Bear                             |
| GeminiDuke                             |
| GREY CLOUD                             |
| HammerDuke                             |
| HAMMERTOSS                             |
| Havex                                  |
| MiniDionis                             |
| MiniDuke                               |
| OLDBAIT                                |
| OnionDuke                              |
| Operation Pawn Storm                   |
| PinchDuke                              |
| Powershell backdoor                    |
| Quedagh                                |
| Sandworm                               |
| SEADADDY                               |
| Seaduke                                |
| SEDKIT                                 |
| SEDNIT                                 |
| Skipper                                |
| Sofacy                                 |
| SOURFACE                               |
| SYNful Knock                           |
| Tiny Baron                             |
| Tsar Team                              |
| twain_64.dll (64-bit X-Agent implant)  |
| VmUpgradeHelper.exe (X-Tunnel implant) |
| Waterbug                               |
| X-Agent                                |

## Technical Details

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### *Indicators of Compromise (IOCs)*

IOCs associated with RIS cyber actors are provided within the accompanying .csv and .stix files of JAR-16-20296.

### *Yara Signature*

```
rule PAS_TOOL_PHP_WEB_KIT
{
 meta:
 description = "PAS TOOL PHP WEB KIT FOUND"
 strings:
 $php = "<?php"
 $base64decode = /\='base'\.\\(\d+*\d+)\. '_de'\.code'/
 $strreplace = "(str_replace("
 $md5 = ".substr(md5(strrev("
 $gzip = "gzip"
 $cookie = "_COOKIE"
 $isset = "isset"
 condition:
 (filesize > 20KB and filesize < 22KB) and
 #cookie == 2 and
 #isset == 3 and
 all of them
}
```

### *Actions to Take Using Indicators*

DHS recommends that network administrators review the IP addresses, file hashes, and Yara signature provided and add the IPs to their watchlist to determine whether malicious activity has been observed within their organizations. The review of network perimeter netflow or firewall logs will assist in determining whether your network has experienced suspicious activity.

When reviewing network perimeter logs for the IP addresses, organizations may find numerous instances of these IPs attempting to connect to their systems. Upon reviewing the traffic from these IPs, some traffic may correspond to malicious activity, and some may correspond to legitimate activity. Some traffic that may appear legitimate is actually malicious, such as vulnerability scanning or browsing of legitimate public facing services (e.g., HTTP, HTTPS, FTP). Connections from these IPs may be performing vulnerability scans attempting to identify websites that are vulnerable to cross-site scripting (XSS) or Structured Query Language (SQL) injection attacks. If scanning identified vulnerable sites, attempts to exploit the vulnerabilities may be experienced.

Network administrators are encouraged to check their public-facing websites for the malicious file hashes. System owners are also advised to run the Yara signature on any system that is suspected to have been targeted by RIS actors.

#### *Threats from IOCs*

Malicious actors may use a variety of methods to interfere with information systems. Some methods of attack are listed below. Guidance provided is applicable to many other computer networks.

- ***Injection Flaws*** are broad web application attack techniques that attempt to send commands to a browser, database, or other system, allowing a regular user to control behavior. The most common example is SQL injection, which subverts the relationship between a webpage and its supporting database, typically to obtain information contained inside the database. Another form is command injection, where an untrusted user is able to send commands to operating systems supporting a web application or database. See the United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT) Publication on [SQL Injection](#) for more information.
- ***Cross-site scripting (XSS) vulnerabilities*** allow threat actors to insert and execute unauthorized code in web applications. Successful XSS attacks on websites can provide the attacker unauthorized access. For prevention and mitigation strategies against XSS, see US-CERT's Alert on [Compromised Web Servers and Web Shells](#).
- ***Server vulnerabilities*** may be exploited to allow unauthorized access to sensitive information. An attack against a poorly configured server may allow an adversary access to critical information including any websites or databases hosted on the server. See US-CERT's Tip on [Website Security](#) for additional information.

## **Recommended Mitigations**

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### *Commit to Cybersecurity Best Practices*

A commitment to good cybersecurity and best practices is critical to protecting networks and systems. Here are some questions you may want to ask your organization to help prevent and mitigate against attacks.

1. **Backups:** Do we backup all critical information? Are the backups stored offline? Have we tested our ability to revert to backups during an incident?
2. **Risk Analysis:** Have we conducted a cybersecurity risk analysis of the organization?
3. **Staff Training:** Have we trained staff on cybersecurity best practices?
4. **Vulnerability Scanning & Patching:** Have we implemented regular scans of our network and systems and appropriate patching of known system vulnerabilities?
5. **Application Whitelisting:** Do we allow only approved programs to run on our networks?
6. **Incident Response:** Do we have an incident response plan and have we practiced it?

7. **Business Continuity:** Are we able to sustain business operations without access to certain systems? For how long? Have we tested this?
8. **Penetration Testing:** Have we attempted to hack into our own systems to test the security of our systems and our ability to defend against attacks?

## *Top Seven Mitigation Strategies*

DHS encourages network administrators to implement the recommendations below, which can prevent as many as 85 percent of targeted cyber-attacks. These strategies are common sense to many, but DHS continues to see intrusions because organizations fail to use these basic measures.

1. **Patch applications and operating systems** – Vulnerable applications and operating systems are the targets of most attacks. Ensuring these are patched with the latest updates greatly reduces the number of exploitable entry points available to an attacker. Use best practices when updating software and patches by only downloading updates from authenticated vendor sites.
2. **Application whitelisting** – Whitelisting is one of the best security strategies because it allows only specified programs to run while blocking all others, including malicious software.
3. **Restrict administrative privileges** – Threat actors are increasingly focused on gaining control of legitimate credentials, especially those associated with highly privileged accounts. Reduce privileges to only those needed for a user's duties. Separate administrators into privilege tiers with limited access to other tiers.
4. **Network Segmentation and Segregation into Security Zones** – Segment networks into logical enclaves and restrict host-to-host communications paths. This helps protect sensitive information and critical services and limits damage from network perimeter breaches.
5. **Input validation** – Input validation is a method of sanitizing untrusted user input provided by users of a web application, and may prevent many types of web application security flaws, such as SQLi, XSS, and command injection.
6. **File Reputation** – Tune Anti-Virus file reputation systems to the most aggressive setting possible; some products can limit execution to only the highest reputation files, stopping a wide range of untrustworthy code from gaining control.
7. **Understanding firewalls** – When anyone or anything can access your network at any time, your network is more susceptible to being attacked. Firewalls can be configured to block data from certain locations (IP whitelisting) or applications while allowing relevant and necessary data through.



## *Responding to Unauthorized Access to Networks*

**Implement your security incident response and business continuity plan.** It may take time for your organization's IT professionals to isolate and remove threats to your systems and restore normal operations. Meanwhile, you should take steps to maintain your organization's essential functions according to your business continuity plan. Organizations should maintain and regularly test backup plans, disaster recovery plans, and business continuity procedures.

**Contact DHS or law enforcement immediately.** We encourage you to contact DHS NCCIC ([NCCICCustomerService@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:NCCICCustomerService@hq.dhs.gov) or 888-282-0870), the FBI through a local field office or the FBI's Cyber Division ([CyWatch@ic.fbi.gov](mailto:CyWatch@ic.fbi.gov) or 855-292-3937) to report an intrusion and to request incident response resources or technical assistance.

## **Detailed Mitigation Strategies**

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### *Protect Against SQL Injection and Other Attacks on Web Services*

Routinely evaluate known and published vulnerabilities, perform software updates and technology refreshes periodically, and audit external-facing systems for known Web application vulnerabilities. Take steps to harden both Web applications and the servers hosting them to reduce the risk of network intrusion via this vector.<sup>1</sup>

- Use and configure available firewalls to block attacks.
- Take steps to further secure Windows systems such as installing and configuring Microsoft's Enhanced Mitigation Experience Toolkit (EMET) and Microsoft AppLocker.
- Monitor and remove any unauthorized code present in any www directories.
- Disable, discontinue, or disallow the use of Internet Control Message Protocol (ICMP) and Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) and response to these protocols as much as possible.
- Remove non-required HTTP verbs from Web servers as typical Web servers and applications only require GET, POST, and HEAD.
- Where possible, minimize server fingerprinting by configuring Web servers to avoid responding with banners identifying the server software and version number.
- Secure both the operating system and the application.
- Update and patch production servers regularly.
- Disable potentially harmful SQL-stored procedure calls.
- Sanitize and validate input to ensure that it is properly typed and does not contain escaped code.
- Consider using type-safe stored procedures and prepared statements.
- Perform regular audits of transaction logs for suspicious activity.
- Perform penetration testing against Web services.
- Ensure error messages are generic and do not expose too much information.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ff648653.aspx>. Web site last accessed April 11, 2016.

## *Phishing and Spearphishing*

- Implement a Sender Policy Framework (SPF) record for your organization's Domain Name System (DNS) zone file to minimize risks relating to the receipt of spoofed messages.
- Educate users to be suspicious of unsolicited phone calls, social media interactions, or email messages from individuals asking about employees or other internal information. If an unknown individual claims to be from a legitimate organization, try to verify his or her identity directly with the company.
- Do not provide personal information or information about your organization, including its structure or networks, unless you are certain of a person's authority to have the information.
- Do not reveal personal or financial information in social media or email, and do not respond to solicitations for this information. This includes following links sent in email.
- Pay attention to the URL of a website. Malicious websites may look identical to a legitimate site, but the URL often includes a variation in spelling or a different domain than the valid website (e.g., .com vs. .net).
- If you are unsure whether an email request is legitimate, try to verify it by contacting the company directly. Do not use contact information provided on a website connected to the request; instead, check previous statements for contact information. Information about known phishing attacks is also available online from groups such as the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<http://www.antiphishing.org>).
- Take advantage of anti-phishing features offered by your email client and web browser.
- Patch all systems for critical vulnerabilities, prioritizing timely patching of software that processes Internet data, such as web browsers, browser plugins, and document readers.

## *Permissions, Privileges, and Access Controls*

- Reduce privileges to only those needed for a user's duties.
- Restrict users' ability (permissions) to install and run unwanted software applications, and apply the principle of "Least Privilege" to all systems and services. Restricting these privileges may prevent malware from running or limit its capability to spread through the network.
- Carefully consider the risks before granting administrative rights to users on their own machines.
- Scrub and verify all administrator accounts regularly.
- Configure Group Policy to restrict all users to only one login session, where possible.
- Enforce secure network authentication where possible.
- Instruct administrators to use non-privileged accounts for standard functions such as Web browsing or checking Web mail.

- Segment networks into logical enclaves and restrict host-to-host communication paths. Containment provided by enclaving also makes incident cleanup significantly less costly.
- Configure firewalls to disallow RDP traffic coming from outside of the network boundary, except for in specific configurations such as when tunneled through a secondary VPN with lower privileges.
- Audit existing firewall rules and close all ports that are not explicitly needed for business. Specifically, carefully consider which ports should be connecting outbound versus inbound.
- Enforce a strict lockout policy for network users and closely monitor logs for failed login activity. This can be indicative of failed intrusion activity.
- If remote access between zones is an unavoidable business need, log and monitor these connections closely.
- In environments with a high risk of interception or intrusion, organizations should consider supplementing password authentication with other forms of authentication such as challenge/response or multifactor authentication using biometric or physical tokens.

## *Credentials*

- Enforce a tiered administrative model with dedicated administrator workstations and separate administrative accounts that are used exclusively for each tier to prevent tools, such as Mimikatz, for credential theft from harvesting domain-level credentials.
- Implement multi-factor authentication (e.g., smart cards) or at minimum ensure users choose complex passwords that change regularly.
- Be aware that some services (e.g., FTP, telnet, and .rlogin) transmit user credentials in clear text. Minimize the use of these services where possible or consider more secure alternatives.
- Properly secure password files by making hashed passwords more difficult to acquire. Password hashes can be cracked within seconds using freely available tools. Consider restricting access to sensitive password hashes by using a shadow password file or equivalent on UNIX systems.
- Replace or modify services so that all user credentials are passed through an encrypted channel.
- Avoid password policies that reduce the overall strength of credentials. Policies to avoid include lack of password expiration date, lack of lockout policy, low or disabled password complexity requirements, and password history set to zero.
- Ensure that users are not re-using passwords between zones by setting policies and conducting regular audits.
- Use unique passwords for local accounts for each device.

### *Logging Practices*

- Ensure event logging (applications, events, login activities, security attributes, etc.) is turned on or monitored for identification of security issues.
- Configure network logs to provide enough information to assist in quickly developing an accurate determination of a security incident.
- Upgrade PowerShell to new versions with enhanced logging features and monitor the logs to detect usage of PowerShell commands, which are often malware-related.
- Secure logs, potentially in a centralized location, and protect them from modification.
- Prepare an incident response plan that can be rapidly implemented in case of a cyber intrusion.

### *How to Enhance Your Organization's Cybersecurity Posture*

DHS offers a variety of resources for organizations to help recognize and address their cybersecurity risks. Resources include discussion points, steps to start evaluating a cybersecurity program, and a list of hands-on resources available to organizations. For a list of services, visit <https://www.us-cert.gov/ccubedvp>. Other resources include:

- **The Cyber Security Advisors (CSA)** program bolsters cybersecurity preparedness, risk mitigation, and incident response capabilities of critical infrastructure entities and more closely aligns them with the Federal Government. CSAs are DHS personnel assigned to districts throughout the country and territories, with at least one advisor in each of the 10 CSA regions, which mirror the Federal Emergency Management Agency regions. For more information, email [cyberadvisor@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:cyberadvisor@hq.dhs.gov).
- **Cyber Resilience Review (CRR)** is a no-cost, voluntary assessment to evaluate and enhance cybersecurity within critical infrastructure sectors, as well as state, local, tribal, and territorial governments. The goal of the CRR is to develop an understanding and measurement of key cybersecurity capabilities to provide meaningful indicators of an entity's operational resilience and ability to manage cyber risk to critical services during normal operations and times of operational stress and crisis. Visit <https://www.cert.org/resilience/rmm.html> to learn more about the CERT Resilience Management Model.
- **Enhanced Cybersecurity Services (ECS)** helps critical infrastructure owners and operators protect their systems by sharing sensitive and classified cyber threat information with Commercial Service Providers (CSPs) and Operational Implementers (OIs). CSPs then use the cyber threat information to protect CI customers. OIs use the threat information to protect internal networks. For more information, email [ECS\\_Program@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:ECS_Program@hq.dhs.gov).
- **The Cybersecurity Information Sharing and Collaboration Program (CISCP)** is a voluntary information-sharing and collaboration program between and among critical

infrastructure partners and the Federal Government. For more information, email [CISCP@us-cert.gov](mailto:CISCP@us-cert.gov).

- **The Automated Indicator Sharing (AIS)** initiative is a DHS effort to create a system where as soon as a company or federal agency observes an attempted compromise, the indicator will be shared in real time with all of our partners, protecting them from that particular threat. That means adversaries can only use an attack once, which increases their costs and ultimately reduces the prevalence of cyber-attacks. While AIS will not eliminate sophisticated cyber threats, it will allow companies and federal agencies to concentrate more on them by clearing away less sophisticated attacks.
- AIS participants connect to a DHS-managed system in the NCCIC that allows bidirectional sharing of cyber threat indicators. A server housed at each participant's location allows each to exchange indicators with the NCCIC. Participants will not only receive DHS-developed indicators, but can share indicators they have observed in their own network defense efforts, which DHS will then share with all AIS participants. For more information, visit <https://www.dhs.gov/ais>.
- **The Cybersecurity Framework (Framework)**, developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in collaboration with the public and private sectors, is a tool that can improve the cybersecurity readiness of entities. The Framework enables entities, regardless of size, degree of cyber risk, or cyber sophistication, to apply principles and best practices of risk management to improve the security and resiliency of critical infrastructure. The Framework provides standards, guidelines, and practices that are working effectively today. It consists of three parts—the Framework Core, the Framework Profile, and Framework Implementation Tiers—and emphasizes five functions: Identify, Protect, Detect, Respond, and Recover. Use of the Framework is strictly voluntary. For more information, visit <https://www.nist.gov/cyberframework> or email [cyberframework@nist.gov](mailto:cyberframework@nist.gov).

## Contact Information

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Recipients of this report are encouraged to contribute any additional information that they may have related to this threat. Include the JAR reference number (JAR-16-20296) in the subject line of all email correspondence. For any questions related to this report, please contact NCCIC or the FBI.

### *NCCIC:*

Phone: +1-888-282-0780

Email: [NCCICCustomerService@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:NCCICCustomerService@hq.dhs.gov)

### *FBI:*

Phone: +1-855-292-3937

Email: [cywatch@ic.fbi.gov](mailto:cywatch@ic.fbi.gov)

## Feedback

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NCCIC continuously strives to improve its products and services. You can help by answering a few short questions about this product at the following URL:

<https://www.us-cert.gov/forms/feedback>.

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Fwd: JAR/Related Materials  
**To:** [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** December 30, 2016 8:04 AM (UTC-05:00)  
**Attached:** Joint Analysis Report (JAR).PDF, Executive Briefing Points (JAR).DOCX, WH Press Guidance.DOCX

b6 -1  
b7C -1

Fyi, not sure if you received through other routing

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI)" [REDACTED]  
**Date:** 12/30/2016 6:46 AM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED], "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED], "Boone, Jennifer C. (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Fwd: JAR/Related Materials

b7E -3

Bill, Pete, Jen,

Just for visibility, please find the attached Joint Analysis Report (JAR), Executive Briefing Points (JAR), and WH Press Guidance documents related to yesterday's release. In addition, links to the various press statements by participating agencies are included below, as is the transcript from yesterday's post release conference call with reporters.

<https://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/joint-dhs-odni-fbi-statement-on-russian-malicious-cyber-activity>

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/12/29/statement-president-actions-response-russian-malicious-cyber-activity>

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/12/29/fact-sheet-actions-response-russian-malicious-cyber-activity-and>

<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0693.aspx>

<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/12/266145.htm>

<https://www.dhs.gov/news/2016/12/29/joint-dhs-odni-fbi-statement-russian-malicious-cyber-activity>

<https://www.us-cert.gov/security-publications/GRIZZLY-STEPPE-Russian-Malicious-Cyber-Activity>

<https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/215-press-releases-2016/1463-joint-dhs-odni-fbi-statement-on-russian-malicious-cyber-activity>

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary  
For Immediate Release

December 29, 2016

PRESS CALL  
ON THE ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE  
TO RUSSIAN MALICIOUS CYBER ACTIVITY AND HARASSMENT

Via Conference Call

MR. STROH: Thank you very much and, everyone, thanks for joining our call this afternoon. This will be a background press conference call on the administration response to Russian malicious cyber activity and

FBI(23-CV-30)-929

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**From:** [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Subject:** RE: JAR/Related Materials  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** December 30, 2016 8:10 AM (UTC-05:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

No, I hadn't. Thanks.

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Date:** 12/30/2016 8:04 AM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** [redacted] (OGC) (FBI) [redacted]  
**Subject:** Fwd: JAR/Related Materials

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Fyi, not sure if you received through other routing

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Date:** 12/30/2016 6:46 AM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] > "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
[redacted], "Boone, Jennifer C. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Subject:** Fwd: JAR/Related Materials

b7E -3

Bill, Pete, Jen,

Just for visibility, please find the attached Joint Analysis Report (JAR), Executive Briefing Points (JAR), and WH Press Guidance documents related to yesterday's release. In addition, links to the various press statements by participating agencies are included below, as is the transcript from yesterday's post release conference call with reporters.

<https://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/joint-dhs-odni-fbi-statement-on-russian-malicious-cyber-activity>

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/12/29/statement-president-actions-response-russian-malicious-cyber-activity>

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/12/29/fact-sheet-actions-response-russian-malicious-cyber-activity-and>

<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0693.aspx>

<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/12/266145.htm>

<https://www.dhs.gov/news/2016/12/29/joint-dhs-odni-fbi-statement-russian-malicious-cyber-activity>

<https://www.us-cert.gov/security-publications/GRIZZLY-STEPPE-Russian-Malicious-Cyber-Activity>

<https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/215-press-releases-2016/1463-joint-dhs-odni-fbi-statement-on-russian-malicious-cyber-activity>

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary  
For Immediate Release

December 29, 2016

PRESS CALL

FBI(23-CV-30)-972



## ON THE ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE TO RUSSIAN MALICIOUS CYBER ACTIVITY AND HARASSMENT

Via Conference Call

MR. STROH: Thank you very much and, everyone, thanks for joining our call this afternoon. This will be a background press conference call on the administration response to Russian malicious cyber activity and harassment. I will introduce the senior administration officials that we have here on the call, but as a reminder, they'll be referred to on background as senior administration officials. And secondly, we'll embargo the content of this call until the call concludes, so please no tweeting or filing while the call is ongoing.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thanks, everybody. I'll just make some brief comments and then turn it over to my other colleagues.

So today's actions were all approved by President Obama as a package of steps that is in response to very disturbing Russian threats to U.S. national security. And we're responding here to a pattern of Russian behavior that has been evident over some time.

First of all, as you are all aware, in October, we took the very unique step of publicly attributing efforts to interfere in the U.S. election to Russia. And as you know, we've continued to refine and develop our assessment of those Russian efforts and, as President Obama has directed, there will be a report issued summarizing what we know with respect to those efforts. And we can talk about that later in the Q&A.

In addition, as my State colleague can speak to, we've seen other Russian actions that aim to directly interfere with the conduct of U.S. foreign policy, particularly a pattern of harassment of our diplomats inside of Russia. So the range of actions announced today are in response to those Russian provocations and actions. They include a set of sanctions that my colleague from Treasury can speak to, include some important efforts that we're taking with respect to cybersecurity and attribution, and include some actions against some of the Russian personnel and facilities here in the United States. And, again, each of my colleagues will speak to the unique actions taken.

I would just add this is not the sum total of everything that we are doing in response to Russia's actions, including its malicious cyber activities and its interference in our election. As President Obama and others have said, some of those actions will be public and some of them will not. And today, we are announcing a series of the public measures that we're taking, but that should not be mistaken for the sum total of our response.

I'd also note that this should come as no surprise to the Russian government, given that we have warned publicly and privately, including directly from President Obama to President Putin, that there would be a response for these Russian actions. So, again, we've been very clear about our intent here.

The only other thing I'd say by way of an introduction is that this really serves two purposes. One, there has to be a cost and a consequence for what Russia has done. It is an extraordinary step for them to interfere in the democratic process here in the United States of America, and there needs to be a price for that. They need to be held accountable for that. And we believe that this should be of concern to all Americans, as the President said in his statement and to members of Congress from both parties, because this was an attack on our democratic system, and we're responding in kind.

Secondly, we also believe that these steps are important because Russia is not going to stop. We have every indication that they will continue to interfere in democratic elections in other countries, including some of our European allies. There's no reason to believe that they will not try to interfere in future American elections, be they state and local elections, midterm elections, or future presidential elections. And so we also need to publicize what we know about who is responsible, demonstrate that there's a cost, try to reveal what we know about how Russia operates in this space. And, again, more of that information will be in the report that the President has directed be prepared, but some of that is embedded in the response that we're taking today.

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With that, I'll turn it over to my colleague to talk through the sanctions in particular.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thank you. The number of significant actions that the President took and that Treasury has taken today -- first, I wanted to note that the President has amended the Cyber Executive Order, and that's an executive order that he issued originally in April of last year, which was meant to target malicious cyber activity by state or non-state actors anywhere in the world who were tampering with the infrastructure, who were disrupting the ability of networks of computers -- for example, through DDoS attacks -- or who were misappropriating funds -- basically cyber -- or cyber theft of intellectual property for commercial gain.

The single prong that the President has added today makes clear that we will -- future administrations will have the authority to go after those who are tampering with or misappropriating through cyber means with the purpose or effect of interfering with election processes. And that's basically the progress the President is -- on with the actions today.

Under this new authority, the President has sanctioned nine entities and individuals. First and foremost, two Russian intelligence services -- the GRU and the FSB -- four individual officers of the GRU who are the senior-most ranking leaders of the GRU, as well as three companies -- Russian companies that have provided material support to the GRU's cyber operation. Those companies are the Special Technology Center St. Petersburg, Zorsecurity, and the Autonomous Noncommercial Organization, which is often known by its acronym, ANO PO KSI -- all of which have provided cyber services and training to the GRU.

In addition to the actions taken by the President under the -- executive order, Treasury is targeting two Russian individuals, Evgeniy Bogachev and Aleksey Belan, under the preexisting cyber EO. In both cases, they're notorious cyber criminals who have been responsible for major (inaudible) and havoc in the international financial system, including against American companies.

Bogachev and the cyber criminals associated have been responsible for the theft of over \$100 million -- U.S. financial institutions, as well as Fortune 500 (audio drop) universities and government agencies. And Belan has been responsible for compromising at least three major e-commerce companies and misappropriating the data, including private identifying data, from those companies.

As all of these actions make clear, we will not tolerate the abuse of our systems, including our election systems, by foreign actors. And these authorities are standing authorities that can be drawn upon in the future, as well.

I'll now turn it over to my colleague.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thank you. I wanted to talk with you all about the Joint Analysis Report that we issued today along with the FBI. As you know, on October 7th of this year, DHS and the DNI issued a joint statement that attributed the compromise of emails from U.S. persons and institutions, including a U.S. political organization, and the subsequent disclosure of those emails to the Russian government.

So today, with this Joint Analysis Report, we are expanding on that statement and providing details on the tools and the infrastructure used by the Russian military and civilian intelligence services to compromise and exploit networks and endpoints associated with the recent election, and -- to include state-owned voter registration databases, as well as a range U.S. government political and private sector entities.

And a key objective in the release of this information today, of course, is to -- particularly the technical information is to better help network defenders in the United States and abroad to identify, detect and disrupt Russia's global campaign of malicious cyber activities.

The establishment of the attributions back to the Russian intelligence service is based on a U.S. government assessment that incorporates the technical information that's included in this JAR, the Joint Analysis Report, as well as the intelligence information and collection. Russia's civilian and military intelligence services have been engaged in aggressive and sophisticated cyber-enabled operations targeting the U.S. government and its

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citizens for a number of years. We are referring to this set of malicious cyber activity as GRIZZLY STEPPE -- and thatâ€™s S-T-E-P-P-E -- and that becomes relevant for things like finding this JAR on the -- on our website. You can find it at US-CERT -- thatâ€™s C-E-R-T -- .gov/grizzlysteppe. So again, thatâ€™s G-R-I-Z-Z-L-Y-S-T-E-P-P-E, all one word.

These operations that weâ€™re describing in the JAR included spear-phishing campaigns, which have targeted government organizations, political infrastructure entities, think tanks, universities, political organizations, and corporations. Theft of information from these organizations and, specifically, recently, the public release of that information in operation of targeting other countries, including U.S. allies and partners -- Russian intelligence services have undertaken damaging or disruptive cyberattacks, including on critical infrastructure, in some cases, masquerading as a third parties or hiding behind false online personas which are designed to cause the victim to misattribute the source of the attack.

The JAR itself provides technical indicators that are related to many of these operations. Importantly, it lays out in an extended section of the JAR recommended mitigations, and, equally important, information on how to report incidents or detection of malicious indicators or activities to the U.S. government.

The JAR does recognize that some really excellent work has been done already by security companies and the private sector networksâ€™ owners or operators themselves. And some of this information is -- they have provided previously. But we are also providing new indicators of compromised malicious infrastructure identified during our own course of investigations and incident response, along with the Bureau. Again, weâ€™re focused on providing network defenders with the tools they need to identify and detect and disrupt Russian malicious activity targeting our countryâ€™s networks.

So again, in the JAR itself, we have provided some descriptions of approaches that Russian intelligence services used, as well as some of the technical indicators, including Internet protocol addresses, the set of numbers that basically serves as an address for each computer in their use to transmit data to and between computers. These IT addresses are -- reflect infrastructure that the Russian intelligence services are using, and oftentimes itâ€™s other peopleâ€™s networks without the ownerâ€™s knowledge. And they do that, obviously, to hide their malicious activity, but that means that these addresses also host, oftentimes, legitimate websites and other Internet services. And so we are providing this information for network defenders, network administrators to be able to use to try to detect and put on their watch list so that they can be alert to potential malicious activity.

Weâ€™ve also released -- itâ€™s not included in the JAR, but separately weâ€™ve released two malware samples that Russian intelligence services use to broadly conduct their malicious activities, and weâ€™ve given those to antivirus vendors so that they can be used to help, again, both private sector and government folks defend their networks.

Weâ€™ve provided a subseries of questions that companies need to be asking themselves, as well as a list of steps that they can take, some basic cyber hygiene practices that are really important and can actually stop 85 percent of the malicious activity that we see. Weâ€™re going to continue our NCCIC, our National Cybersecurity Communications Integration Center, to look at the research and analysis, and we will continue to issue subsequent updates to the JAR if and when additional information becomes available.

And so we really urge that folks out there continue to check the US-CERT website and, again, both implement these recommended mitigations, but also provide information to the government to help fill in the bigger picture. What we're asking the companies to do is to take this technical information, go back through their logs and see if they see indications of this malicious activity in the past. Because knowledge of these historical incidents -- even if the bad actors are no longer active in your system -- itâ€™s important for the government to know about it and understand it. It helps to fill in the bigger picture, provides greater insight into the scope and scale of Russian activity, and helps all the network defenders.

DHS has added these indicators to the automated information sharing that we have implemented this year, which provides them to companies that sign up at machine speed. And so we encourage companies to continue to sign up

to receive those indicators.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thanks, I'm here at State. You all saw the statement that we put out earlier today with the other interagency statements on the President's decisions. We implemented two of his decisions. We declared persona non grata 35 Russian officials operating in the U.S. who were acting in a manner inconsistent with their diplomatic and consular duties. And we also have denied Russian personnel access to two Russian-owned compounds in the United States. And this is part of the comprehensive response to their interference in our elections and a pattern of harassment. I have some details on the harassment, as well, but maybe I'll stop there. I've got details on the harassment for later in the conversation.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Great. Any of you guys want to say -- before we open to questions?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I would just add that the actions inconsistent with their responsibilities and duties that my colleague referred to were intelligence activities. And the two facilities which the Russians are now denied access to were used for intelligence collection activities, as well.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And I would just add that from our view, the purpose of the indicator release is really twofold. One is to put the weight of the U.S. government behind the attribution of a lot of this activity to the Russian government and their intelligence services so that network defenders should prioritize fixing those issues and identifying that, because that is sponsored by a government that is carrying out malicious aggressive activity against us. And two, to cause them some operational friction and inhibit their ability, at least for a little while, to carry out their activities and to cause them some problems.

Q Hi, thanks very much. Can you comment broadly on how difficult it would be or easy it might be for President-elect Trump to undo some of the things that you've been announcing today? And specifically how difficult or easy would it be for him to allow some of the officials back into the country who are being asked to leave?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'll start and see if any of my colleagues want to weigh in.

First of all, we're taking these actions consistent with our assessment of what Russia has done. To be very clear here, they have been interfering in both the American democratic process and in the conduct of American diplomacy. And so this should be of concern to all Americans -- again, to members of both parties, members of Congress from both parties. This has been a sustained effort to both harass our diplomatic personnel and interfere in our democratic process. And as I said, we have no reason to believe that Russia's activities will cease.

They have been engaged in malicious cyber activity for some time now. They have interfered in democratic elections not just here in the United States, but other countries. So one reason why I think that it is necessary to sustain these actions is because there's every reason to believe that Russia will interfere in future U.S. elections and future elections around the world.

That said, to your question, these are executive actions. So if a future President decided that he wanted to allow in a large tranche of Russian intelligence agents, presumably a future President could invite that action. We think it would be inadvisable. As my colleague just said, these diplomatic compounds were being used for intelligence purposes. That is a direct challenge to U.S. national security, and I don't think it would make much sense to reopen Russian intelligence compounds.

Secondly, the officials who have been PNGed are Russian intelligence agents. So I don't think it would make much sense to invite back in Russian intelligence agents. The officials who were sanctioned were participating in malicious cyberattacks on U.S. critical infrastructure and interfering in our democratic process. So, again, hypothetically you could reverse those sanctions, but it wouldn't make a lot of sense.

I don't know if any of my colleagues have anything they want to add to that.

Q You've made reference at several points to attacks on critical infrastructure in the U.S., and I was wondering

does that include the campaign against U.S. companies in 2014, U.S. energy companies? And does it also include other things that you could identify?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Certainly, so I think in broad terms we know that the Russian government has targeted critical infrastructure around the world, and it is part of their normal operating procedures. And if you look at the list of malware and other kinds of activity that are listed in the JAR as being tied to the Russian intelligence services, you would see some of those that are aimed at critical infrastructure, such as BlackEnergy and Havex. So that's the kind of activity that we're talking about.

Q Thank you for doing the call. First of all, I was wondering if you could talk about the chronology of the way you're doing this. Russia has been saying for weeks now if you guys really have evidence that we were behind this, prove it, show us what you have. And so why are you doing the announcement of these retaliatory actions before you're releasing this report that the President has promised that ostensibly would back up the accusations that you've made?

And then for State, you guys are saying that the actions to kick out the diplomats and shutter these compounds are related to harassment, which is kind of a separate issue, but you're rolling it out as part of this big package. So is it fair to say that the decision to move forward with those penalties now is part of your attempt to be tougher on Russia over the cyber actions? Thanks.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, let me just start on that. On your second question, I think for the -- we've been looking at the issue of how to respond to the harassment of our diplomats for some time, but the fact is it's hard for us to separate that from the context of a foreign power also interfering in our democratic election.

So it's fair to say that President Obama's direction was that we should look at these actions as interconnected, and that the same hostile posture and the same flagrant violation of basic norms of international behavior that guided their harassment of our diplomatic personnel are also seen in the interference in our election. So again, that's why we looked at this as a package. And, frankly, if you look at the actions taken with respect to the diplomatic personnel and facilities, they were also related to an intelligence purpose. So just as it was a Russian intelligence effort that was tied to the interference in our election, we see a nexus to Russian intelligence and the actions taken by the State Department today in addition to the response of the harassment of our diplomats. And my State colleague can speak to the harassment of diplomats.

On your first question, look, we don't -- we actually, as you know, publicly put out the assessment that Russia was interfering in our election in early October. So we have been public with that assessment for some time now. Frankly, if you look at who is designated and what entities are designated and what's in the JAR, you begin to get a sense of our assessment of how Russia approached those issues. And what we'll be doing in the report that the President asked for is look comprehensively at the information that we have and the analysis that flows from that information.

This is not in question, though. There's no debate in the U.S. administration about the fact -- and it is a fact -- that Russia interfered in our democratic election. We've established that clearly to our satisfaction. I would never expect Russia to come out with their hands up and acknowledge what they did. They don't do that. They didn't do that -- they still deny that they are intervening in eastern Ukraine. And, frankly, I'd say to journalists, let's look at what they say and what they do. This is a country that has intervened in a sovereign country and denied that they did it, even though everybody could see that they were doing it, with respect to Ukraine; that has bombed civilians in Syria while denying that they were doing it.

So we don't see this as a he said, she said situation, we see this as, there are facts and then there are things that Russia says.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I would also add, and maybe my colleague can speak to this more directly, but the process of putting together sanctions packages is extremely onerous and requires evidence that can

stand up in court. So this is a very intense, elaborate process with a lot of input from agencies across the board.

We don't need to tell the Russian government what it's been doing. It knows what it's doing. We owe it to the American people to explain what the Russian government is doing, and the President's instruction for the U.S. government to do a report on what happened is exactly directed at explaining to the American people what happened. But we don't need to make the case to the Russians, for all the reasons that my colleague has laid out.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: State, you may want to talk about the harassments.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes, the pattern of harassment over several years is really disturbing, and we felt -- and were pleased with the President's decision to do something about it.

They have -- you saw the YouTube video of the June 6th incident where our diplomat was assaulted by a Russian police officer. Embassy officials have been harassed and detained on their routine diplomatic travels around the country. Russian state-owned television has put some of our diplomats at risk by putting personal details about them on TV. They've blocked our ability to make our consulate general in St. Petersburg safe, in terms of the perimeter of security and new construction. They've closed 28 American Corners around the country and the American Center, which is making it impossible for us to do our job in terms of culture, education, and people-to-people ties.

So a whole series of pattern of actions over a number over years is what triggered this part of the decision.

Q Hi, thanks for doing this. Just to be clear here, the Russians that are being expelled from here and denied access to these -- you called them recreational compounds -- are you saying, one, these very intelligence officers are involved, or is that something they -- out of Moscow? And two, are you talking about a compound within the embassy compound or someplace else, say in Washington?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can speak to that, but I believe my colleague would be best positioned to do so.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The compounds are not part -- are not contiguous with the embassy. One is in Maryland and one is in New York. They are compounds that the Russian government owns and that they use for multiple purposes -- as described by my colleague, intelligence, but also recreational, as well. And under the Foreign Missions Act, we have the authority to restrict their access to these properties based on their pattern of behavior.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And just to be absolutely clear, there are 35 Russian diplomats -- actually intelligence officers -- who were PNGed by State. The denial of access to the two compounds is all Russian personnel. The Russian missions in Washington, in New York -- all Russian personnel will be denied access to those two compounds beginning at noon tomorrow, or December 30th. And those who were PNGed have 72 hours from the moment of having been informed to leave. So they should be gone, by my calculation, that would be Sunday -- by noon on Sunday. And for the Russian speakers among you, I will wish you s novym godom.

Q Thanks very much. First of all, President-elect Trump said on Wednesday that we ought to "get on with our lives" when asked about sanctioning Russia. So there have been reports that some of the other actions, the not-public actions that were to be taken against Russia was going to be left to the next administration. Is that the case? Or are there other non-public actions that are already being taken? And is your decision -- will your decision in any way change based on the signals coming from the President-elect that he does not believe that this is a matter that should be pursued, the election matter itself?

And would you describe the harassment against our diplomats in Moscow as unusual, or -- are you focused on the normal pattern of behavior, or is this unusual between us and the Russians in terms of what you've seen, as you just described?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: So on your first question, as you've heard us say many times, our approach is that there's one President at a time, and that President Obama is going to execute the duties of his office until January 20th. And he is acting in what he believes to be the best interest of the United States.

I'd say a couple of things. One is, there are any number of actions that we're taking -- some we announce, some we don't -- that will be in process as the next administration takes office. So again, there may be things that commence while we're in office in addition to what we're saying today. When the new administration takes office, it's entirely their judgment as to whether or not they continue down the course that we have set in a number of different areas.

I guess what I suggest is that the Russian actions have been sustained over an extended period of time, and by any definition are against the national interests of the United States, not the interests of President Obama. The harassment of our diplomats -- which is not in line, frankly, with the way things have been in the past; it's been escalating steadily for some time -- is a direct threat to the ability of the United States of America to conduct diplomacy. And I would think that that would be of concern to future administrations.

The interference in our election is a pattern that we see in other Western democracies, including some of our closest allies. And I think future administrations would find it concerning if there are efforts to undermine the democracies of our closest allies in the world.

What we've seen in general with their malicious cyber activity has targeted our critical infrastructure beyond even our election process. So I would think that the malicious cyber-targeting of American critical infrastructure would be of concern to future administrations. I'd note, from our own consultations, that this is an issue of great concern to American business, and so I would expect that future administrations would be concerned about the threat to the American economy from malicious Russian cyber activity.

So again, as I said earlier, some of the actions we're taking have to do with Russian intelligence efforts, which, again, are aimed at harming the national security of the United States. I would think that future administrations would be concerned about those efforts. If they aren't, then they should explain why, and they'll have the opportunity to explain why. But I think clearly we're taking these actions because of what has been a pattern of behavior over an extended period of time that we've seen replicated in other countries, and we believe it's the right approach to take.

I don't know if my colleagues want to comment on the kind of historical perspective of harassment.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, my understanding -- and I'll leave it to my colleague -- but my understanding is the State Department assesses that the pattern of Russian harassment of our diplomatic mission in Russia is unprecedented for the post-Cold War era, that this really was a change in behavior in the last two or so years.

But I'll turn it over to my colleague for the authoritative comment.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Just to agree with you and my colleague, nothing to add from here. Exactly right.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I just want to emphasize that, of course, the Joint Analytic Report contains information also that does go beyond just the election's malicious cyber activity, and again, to highlight activity aimed at critical infrastructure but also other non-governmental organizations, really a broad campaign. And the list of actors and actor sets, and of malware, et cetera, including BlackEnergy and Havex, is an indication of how broad this campaign is and how serious it is.

Q Thanks very much. Can you explain to us why these activities come -- why these actions come at the time that they do? There was obviously a debate about taking each of the steps that you've announced today prior to the

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election. There was -- there's obviously been concern about retaliation by the -- and escalation by the Russians. Can you say whether or not you believe in retrospect that you wish you had acted earlier? And can you also on just one factual issue tell us whether or not the facilities that you've closed in New York and Maryland you believe were just generally intelligence facilities, or whether they were used as part of the DNC and other hacking activity here?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Your second question obviously kind of gets pretty precise on intelligence equities, so I don't think we can speak to that.

On the timing question, look, I'd say there are a range of factors here. Number one, each one of these steps takes a different amount of time to prepare. As you know -- and my colleague can speak if he wants to -- sanctions packages are time consuming, as you're establishing both the basis for the action and then refining the target list. The JAR itself is a complex procedure, as we are putting together the information that we can share publicly that provides the best possible guidance about what we know. And then obviously, the response to the harassment is something we've been focused on for some time.

So a number of points. First of all, with respect to how this fit around the election, I think our first priority was to publicly disclose the information. So before we were going to take an action, the most important thing was to make public what we knew, and we did that on October 7th. And that was a fairly unique, if not unprecedented, step to come out with a common view of the U.S. intelligence community that a foreign power, Russia, was interfering in our election. So point one is getting out that information.

We also wanted to give a warning directly to the Russians accompanying that public message and also in private, which he did at numerous times, about the fact that we knew what they were doing, and that we would be preparing a response. And we therefore wanted to have them absorb that message and have that effect -- see how that affected their behavior.

We also, frankly, in the run-up to the election were very focused on securing the election itself. And we have no indication at all that the efforts included tampering with the vote. And so in terms of a priority for a lot of our cybersecurity efforts, we wanted to make sure that our election was secure. And the warning to Russia combined with our efforts to secure the voting process I think was a priority.

Let's also bear in mind that even as we have made this disclosure and were preparing these steps, material had been hacked and was being released. So it's not as if that genie could be put back into the bottle. We were putting this together and preparing a response in the context in which this information had been shared with other parties and was being publicly released and widely reported on by our news media. So what we wanted to do then is methodically work through these different elements: What could we do on sanctions? How are we going to deal with Russia's diplomatic presence here in the United States? What are we doing with the JAR? And how are we preparing other elements? And that takes some amount of time to put together. And we also wanted to, again, do some of this as a package.

So I think the President has been very deliberate: Let's gather the information; when we had enough confidence to put it out, we released it publicly. We issued a warning. We worked to secure our election. We worked to develop these responses. When the responses were complete, we aligned them so that we would be doing this as a package. And that I think explains the nature of the timeline.

I don't know if anybody wants to speak to individual components of that process in terms of how they were put together.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think I can just add that from the very start of when, even going back some time, we have been engaging diplomatically with the Russians and raising our concerns about their activity -- even if not all of that became public -- whenever we learn about or detect intrusions into companies or organizations, we do notifications to those companies, and we go and we tell them. DHS began ramping up its coordination, as my colleague was talking about, in order to make sure that we doing everything possible to secure



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the electoral infrastructure. We started that back in the summer.

All this has been building for some period of time. So it's not like all of these actions sort of popped in kind of right now out of the blue, they are really part of a long-term effort that we've been building over time to push back on this kind of Russian behavior, and they're setting the stage for the fact that we will have to continue to deter and push back on this kind of behavior going into the future.

MR. STROH: All right. Thank you very much for participating in today's call and, as of now, the call is concluded and the embargo is lifted. Thanks, everyone. Have a nice day.

Richard P. Quinn  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Media/Investigative Publicity

 (s)  
(m)

b7E -3

**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** WSJ: Donald Trump Plans Revamp of Top U.S. Spy Agency - WSJ  
**To:** Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI); Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI); [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI); [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 4, 2017 8:05 PM (UTC-05:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

Interesting. Also interesting Pompeo didn't attend the HPSCI brief...

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/lawmakers-officials-frown-on-donald-trumps-dismissal-of-u-s-intelligence-1483554450>

## Donald Trump Plans Revamp of Top U.S. Spy Agency

President-elect works on restructuring Office of the Director of National Intelligence, tweets again his doubts that Russia hacked Democrats

By Damian Paletta and Julian E. Barnes • Updated Jan. 4, 2017 6:35 p.m. ET



ENLARGE

President-elect Donald Trump, seen speaking in November in Hershey, Pa., is working on a plan to restructure the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the nation's top spy agency, according to people familiar with the matter. *Photo: Evan Vucci/Associated Press*

WASHINGTON—President-elect Donald Trump, a harsh critic of U.S. intelligence agencies, is working with top advisers on a plan that would restructure and pare back the

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nation's top spy agency, people familiar with the planning said.

The move is prompted by his belief that the Office of the Director of National Intelligence has become bloated and politicized, these people said.

The planning comes as Mr. Trump has leveled a series of social-media attacks in recent months and the past few days against U.S. intelligence agencies, dismissing and mocking their assessment that Russia stole emails from Democratic groups and individuals and then provided them to WikiLeaks for publication in an effort to help Mr. Trump win the White House.

One of the people familiar with Mr. Trump's planning said advisers also are working on a plan to restructure the Central Intelligence Agency, cutting back on staffing at its Virginia headquarters and pushing more people out into field posts around the world. The CIA declined to comment.



ENLARGE

“The view from the Trump team is the intelligence world has become completely politicized,” said the individual, who is close to the Trump transition. “They all need to be slimmed down. The focus will be on restructuring the agencies and how they interact.”

In Twitter posts on Wednesday, Mr. Trump referenced an interview that WikiLeaks editor-in-chief Julian Assange gave to Fox News in which Mr. Assange denied Russia had been his source for the thousands of emails he published that had been stolen from Democratic organizations and Hillary Clinton advisers, including campaign manager John Podesta.

Mr. Trump tweeted: “Julian Assange said ‘a 14 year old could have hacked Podesta’—why was DNC so careless? Also said Russians did not give him the info!”

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Mr. Trump has drawn criticism from Democratic and Republican lawmakers and from intelligence and law-enforcement officials for praising Russian President Vladimir Putin, for criticizing U.S. intelligence agencies, and now for embracing Mr. Assange, long viewed with disdain by government officials and lawmakers.

“We have two choices: some guy living in an embassy on the run from the law...who has a history of undermining American democracy and releasing classified information to put our troops at risk, or the 17 intelligence agencies sworn to defend us,” said Sen. Lindsey Graham (R., S.C.). “I’m going with them.”

But for Mr. Trump and some supporters, the accusations that Russia hacked Democrats are seen as an effort to delegitimize his election.

Since the November election, Mr. Trump has published close to 250 Twitter posts. Of those, 11 have focused on Russia or the election-related cyberattacks. In each of those tweets, Mr. Trump either has praised Russian President Vladimir Putin—last month calling him “very smart”—or disparaged the investigation into the hacks.

This stands in sharp contrast to his posts on other issues and countries, such as North Korea or China, where his views on national-security risks line up more squarely with U.S. spy agencies.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence was established in 2004 in large part to boost coordination between intelligence agencies following the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks. Many Republicans have proposed cutting the DNI before, but this has proven hard to do, in part because its mission is focused on core national security issues, such as counterterrorism, nuclear proliferation and counterintelligence.

“The management and integration that DNI focuses on allows agencies like the CIA to better hone in on its own important work,” said Rep. Adam Schiff (D., Calif.), the ranking Democrat on the House intelligence panel, who believes dismantling the DNI could lead to national security problems.

Mr. Trump’s advisers say he has long been skeptical of the CIA’s accuracy, and the president-elect often mentions faulty intelligence in 2002 and 2003 concerning Iraq’s weapons programs. But his public skepticism about the Russia assessments has jarred analysts accustomed to more cohesion with the White House.

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White House officials have been frustrated by Mr. Trump’s confrontations with intelligence officials. “It’s appalling,” an official said. “No president has ever taken on the CIA and come out looking good.”

Among those helping lead Mr. Trump’s plan to revamp the intelligence agencies is his national security adviser, Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, who had served as director of the Defense Intelligence Agency until he was pushed out by Mr. Clapper and others in 2014. Also involved in the planning is Rep. Mike Pompeo (R., Kan.), whom Mr. Trump selected as CIA director.

Gen. Flynn didn’t respond to a request for comment on Wednesday, and Mr. Pompeo declined to comment.

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ENLARGE

The lobby of the CIA Headquarters Building in Langley, Va. Donald Trump's criticism of U.S. intelligence agencies' assessments of Russian involvement in cyberattacks has some lawmakers questioning his goals. *Photo: larry downing/Reuters*

Current and former intelligence and law-enforcement officials have reacted with a mix of bafflement and outrage to Mr. Trump's continuing series of jabs at U.S. spies.

"They are furious about it," said one former senior intelligence official, adding that a retinue of senior officials who thought they would be staying on in a Hillary Clinton administration now are re-evaluating their plans following Mr. Trump's election.

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—*Carol E. Lee, Shane Harris and Siobhan Hughes contributed to this article.*

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**Subject:** RE: WSJ: Donald Trump Plans Revamp of Top U.S. Spy Agency - WSJ  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 4, 2017 9:02 PM (UTC-05:00)

Thanks Pete.

----- Original message -----

From: "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
Date: 01/04/2017 8:05 PM (GMT-05:00)  
To: "Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted], "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
Subject: WSJ: Donald Trump Plans Revamp of Top U.S. Spy Agency - WSJ

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

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President-elect works on restructuring Office of the Director of National Intelligence, tweets again his doubts that Russia hacked Democrats

By Damian Paletta and Julian E. Barnes • Updated Jan. 4, 2017 6:35 p.m. ET





ENLARGE

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WASHINGTON—President-elect Donald Trump, a harsh critic of U.S. intelligence agencies, is working with top advisers on a plan that would restructure and pare back the nation's top spy agency, people familiar with the planning said.

The move is prompted by his belief that the Office of the Director of National Intelligence has become bloated and politicized, these people said.

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ENLARGE

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ENLARGE

The lobby of the CIA Headquarters Building in Langley, Va. Donald Trump's criticism of U.S. intelligence agencies' assessments of Russian involvement in cyberattacks has some lawmakers questioning his goals. *Photo: larry downing/Reuters*

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—*Carol E. Lee, Shane Harris and Siobhan Hughes contributed to this article.*

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**From:** Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Fwd: News article: The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers  
**To:** Smith, Scott S. (PG) (FBI); Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI); Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); Anderson, Trisha B. (OGC) (FBI); [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 5, 2017 6:41 PM (UTC-05:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

Folks,

Is this article correct?

Thanks.

Jim

..

----- Original message -----

**From:** [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Date:** 01/05/2017 4:23 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (CTD) (FBI)"  
[redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted] <[redacted]>, [redacted]  
(OGC) (FBI)" [redacted], [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted]  
[redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted]  
**Subject:** News article: The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

## The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers

The Democratic National Committee tells BuzzFeed News that the bureau “never requested access” to the servers the White House and intelligence community say were hacked by Russia.

Ali Watkins BuzzFeed News Reporter

Dmitri Lovetsky / AP

WASHINGTON — The FBI did not examine the servers of the Democratic National Committee before issuing a report attributing the sweeping cyberintrusion to Russia-backed hackers, BuzzFeed News has learned.

Six months after the FBI first said it was investigating the hack of the Democratic National Committee's computer network, the bureau has still not requested access to the hacked servers, a DNC spokesman said.

No US government entity has run an independent forensic analysis on the system, one US intelligence official told BuzzFeed News.

**“The DNC had several meetings with representatives of the FBI’s Cyber Division and its Washington (DC)**

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**Field Office, the Department of Justice's National Security Division, and U.S. Attorney's Offices, and it responded to a variety of requests for cooperation, but the FBI never requested access to the DNC's computer servers,"** Eric Walker, the DNC's deputy communications director, told BuzzFeed News in an email.

**The FBI has instead relied on computer forensics from a third-party tech security company, CrowdStrike, which first determined in May of last year that the DNC's servers had been infiltrated by Russia-linked hackers,** the U.S. intelligence official told BuzzFeed News.

"CrowdStrike is pretty good. There's no reason to believe that anything that they have concluded is not accurate," the intelligence official said, adding they were confident Russia was behind the widespread hacks.

The FBI declined to comment.

"Beginning at the time the intrusion was discovered by the DNC, the DNC cooperated fully with the FBI and its investigation, providing access to all of the information uncovered by CrowdStrike — without any limits," said Walker, whose emails were stolen and subsequently distributed throughout the cyberattack.

It's unclear why the FBI didn't request access to the DNC servers, and whether it's common practice when the bureau investigates the cyberattacks against private entities by state actors, like when the Sony Corporation was hacked by North Korea in 2014.

BuzzFeed News spoke to three cybersecurity companies who have worked on major breaches in the last 15 months, who said that it was "par for the course" for the FBI to do their own forensic research into the hacks. None wanted to comment on the record on another cybersecurity company's work, or the work being done by a national security agency.

The hack of the DNC servers and the subsequent release of purloined emails by WikiLeaks has become a Washington scandal of proportions perhaps not seen since the Watergate era. The hacks — part of what intelligence officials, the White House, and private sector analysts say was a broader Moscow-directed effort to influence the US election — were specifically designed to undercut democratic nominee Hillary Clinton's path to the presidency and bolster Donald Trump, according to CIA and FBI analysis.

Trump has denied that analysis and mocked the US intelligence agencies that produced it. The president-elect is due to receive an in-depth briefing on the subject on Friday.

In a 13-page report made public the last week of December, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security confirmed in a joint analysis that Russia was behind the widespread hacks, which targeted Democrats with the intention to manipulate the US election. But the analysis was attributed to broad intelligence across both public and private sectors. Nowhere in the report does it say that the government conducted its own computer forensics on the DNC servers.

"Public attribution of these activities to [Russian Intelligence Services] is supported by technical indicators from the U.S. Intelligence Community, DHS, FBI, the private sector, and other entities," the report says.

On the heels of the report's release, the White House expelled 35 Russian diplomats, sanctioned, among other things, two of Russia's premier intelligence agencies, and shut down access to two Russian diplomatic facilities in the US.

Sheera Frenkel contributed reporting to this story.

CORRECTION

FBI(23-CV-30)-995

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The article has been updated to reflect that CrowdStrike first discovered Russia-backed hackers had infiltrated the DNC in May 2016. A previous version of the article incorrectly said the group first discovered it in March.



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**Sent:** January 5, 2017 6:52 PM (UTC-05:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

No it is not accurate. We can talk through it tomorrow. I know today Mike K and OPA have been working on potential response. Let me know if you need something more tonight. Thanks, Scott

...

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**From:** "Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI)" <[redacted]>  
**Date:** 01/05/2017 6:41 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Smith, Scott S. (PG) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, "Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, "Anderson, Trisha B. (OGC) (FBI)" <[redacted]>, [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" <[redacted]>  
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**To:** [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 5, 2017 6:56 PM (UTC-05:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

---

**From:** Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 05, 2017 6:41 PM  
**To:** Smith, Scott S. (PG) (FBI) [REDACTED]; Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI) [REDACTED]; Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI) [REDACTED]; Anderson, Trisha B. (OGC) (FBI) [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI) [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Fwd: News article: The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Folks,

Is this article correct?

Thanks.

Jim

--

----- Original message -----

**From:** [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED]  
**Date:** 01/05/2017 4:23 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED] (CTD) (FBI)"  
[REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** News article: The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers

The Democratic National Committee tells BuzzFeed News that the bureau “never requested access” to the servers the White House and intelligence community say were hacked by Russia.

Ali Watkins BuzzFeed News Reporter

Dmitri Lovetsky / AP

WASHINGTON — The FBI did not examine the servers of the Democratic National Committee before issuing a report attributing the sweeping cyberintrusion to Russia-backed hackers, BuzzFeed News has learned.

FBI(23-CV-30)-1000

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

Six months after the FBI first said it was investigating the hack of the Democratic National Committee's computer network, the bureau has still not requested access to the hacked servers, a DNC spokesman said. No US government entity has run an independent forensic analysis on the system, one US intelligence official told BuzzFeed News.

**“The DNC had several meetings with representatives of the FBI’s Cyber Division and its Washington (DC) Field Office, the Department of Justice’s National Security Division, and U.S. Attorney’s Offices, and it responded to a variety of requests for cooperation, but the FBI never requested access to the DNC’s computer servers,”** Eric Walker, the DNC’s deputy communications director, told BuzzFeed News in an email.

**The FBI has instead relied on computer forensics from a third-party tech security company, CrowdStrike, which first determined in May of last year that the DNC’s servers had been infiltrated by Russia-linked hackers,** the U.S. intelligence official told BuzzFeed News.

“CrowdStrike is pretty good. There’s no reason to believe that anything that they have concluded is not accurate,” the intelligence official said, adding they were confident Russia was behind the widespread hacks.

The FBI declined to comment.

“Beginning at the time the intrusion was discovered by the DNC, the DNC cooperated fully with the FBI and its investigation, providing access to all of the information uncovered by CrowdStrike — without any limits,” said Walker, whose emails were stolen and subsequently distributed throughout the cyberattack.

It’s unclear why the FBI didn’t request access to the DNC servers, and whether it’s common practice when the bureau investigates the cyberattacks against private entities by state actors, like when the Sony Corporation was hacked by North Korea in 2014.

BuzzFeed News spoke to three cybersecurity companies who have worked on major breaches in the last 15 months, who said that it was “par for the course” for the FBI to do their own forensic research into the hacks. None wanted to comment on the record on another cybersecurity company’s work, or the work being done by a national security agency.

The hack of the DNC servers and the subsequent release of purloined emails by WikiLeaks has become a Washington scandal of proportions perhaps not seen since the Watergate era. The hacks — part of what intelligence officials, the White House, and private sector analysts say was a broader Moscow-directed effort to influence the US election — were specifically designed to undercut democratic nominee Hillary Clinton’s path to the presidency and bolster Donald Trump, according to CIA and FBI analysis.

Trump has denied that analysis and mocked the US intelligence agencies that produced it. The president-elect is due to receive an in-depth briefing on the subject on Friday.

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Sheera Frenkel contributed reporting to this story.

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**To:** Smith, Scott S. (PG) (FBI); Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI); Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); Anderson, Trisha B. (OGC) (FBI); [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI) b6 -1  
b7C -1  
**Sent:** January 5, 2017 7:04 PM (UTC-05:00)

OK. Thanks.

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Smith, Scott S. (PG) (FBI)" [REDACTED] > b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3  
**Date:** 01/05/2017 6:51 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, "Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, "Anderson, Trisha B. (OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** RE: News article: The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers

No it is not accurate. We can talk through it tomorrow. I know today Mike K and OPA have been working on potential response. Let me know if you need something more tonight. Thanks, Scott

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**Date:** 01/05/2017 6:41 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Smith, Scott S. (PG) (FBI)" [REDACTED] >, "Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, "Anderson, Trisha B. (OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
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**Subject:** News article: The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers



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# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

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**Subject:** RE: News article: The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 5, 2017 7:05 PM (UTC-05:00)

No sir I don't know the veracity of the article. [redacted]

b5 -1  
b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3,4,5

[redacted]  
Assistant Section Chief (Acting SC)  
Cyber Counterintelligence Coordination Section  
Operations Branch I  
Counterintelligence Division

[redacted]

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted]  
**Date:** 01/05/2017 6:56 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** [redacted] (CD) (FBI) [redacted]  
**Subject:** FW: News article: The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

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**To:** Smith, Scott S. (PG) (FBI) [redacted]; Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI) [redacted]; Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI) [redacted]; Anderson, Trisha B. (OGC) (FBI) [redacted]; [redacted] (OGC) (FBI) [redacted]  
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b6 -1  
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**Date:** 01/05/2017 4:23 PM (GMT-05:00)  
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b6 -1  
b7C -1  
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Subject: News article: The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers

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**Subject:** RE: News article: The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 5, 2017 7:12 PM (UTC-05:00)

Also sir remember often times when notifications are made lawyers get involved and will often do whatever they can to not give the FBI servers PREFERING to go thru 3rd party intrusion response companies like Mandan and CrowdStrike thereby enabling the victim to control what is released to the FBI. I notice the article says never requested versus servers were offered. If the DNC initially stonewalled saying they would engage a third party normally that third party under contract provides reports and findings.

[redacted]

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

[redacted]

Assistant Section Chief (Acting SC)  
Cyber Counterintelligence Coordination Section  
Operations Branch I  
Counterintelligence Division

[redacted]

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Date:** 01/05/2017 6:56 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** [redacted] (CD) (FBI)" [redacted]  
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b6 -1  
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b7E -3

[redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted] [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted] [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted] [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted] [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted]

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[REDACTED], [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED] >, [REDACTED]

(OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED], [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)" [REDACTED] >, [REDACTED]

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**Sent:** January 5, 2017 7:22 PM (UTC-05:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

NP thanks for the info. Scott responded that the article was wrong.

---

**From:** [REDACTED] (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 05, 2017 7:17 PM  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI) [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: News article: The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers

Typo Mandiant. Using the samsung. Sorry

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

[REDACTED]  
Assistant Section Chief (Acting SC)  
Cyber Counterintelligence Coordination Section  
Operations Branch I  
Counterintelligence Division  
[REDACTED]

----- Original message -----

**From:** [REDACTED] (CD) (FBI) <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** 01/05/2017 7:12 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED] >  
**Subject:** RE: News article: The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers

Also sir remember often times when notifications are made lawyers get involved and will often do whatever they can to not give the FBI servers PREFERING to go thru 3rd party intrusion response companies like Mandan and CrowdStrike thereby enabling the victim to control what is released to the FBI. I notice the article says never requested versus servers were offered. If the DNC initially stonewalled saying they would engage a third party normally that third party under contract provides reports and findings.

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

[REDACTED]  
Assistant Section Chief (Acting SC)  
Cyber Counterintelligence Coordination Section  
Operations Branch I  
Counterintelligence Division  
[REDACTED]

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED] >  
**Date:** 01/05/2017 6:56 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** [REDACTED] (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED] >  
**Subject:** FW: News article: The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

I'll let CYD answer, but any insight?

**From:** Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI)

**Sent:** Thursday, January 05, 2017 6:41 PM

**To:** Smith, Scott S. (PG) (FBI) [redacted]; Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI) [redacted]; Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI) [redacted]; Anderson, Trisha B. (OGC) (FBI) [redacted]; [redacted] (OGC) (FBI) [redacted]

**Subject:** Fwd: News article: The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Folks,

Is this article correct?

Thanks.

Jim

..

----- Original message -----

**From:** "[redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted]

**Date:** 01/05/2017 4:23 PM (GMT-05:00)

**To:** "Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted]; [redacted] (CTD) (FBI)" [redacted]; [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted]; [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted]; [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted]; [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted]; [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted]; [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted]

**Subject:** News article: The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

## The FBI Never Asked For Access To Hacked Computer Servers

The Democratic National Committee tells BuzzFeed News that the bureau “never requested access” to the servers the White House and intelligence community say were hacked by Russia.

Ali Watkins BuzzFeed News Reporter

Dmitri Lovetsky / AP

WASHINGTON — The FBI did not examine the servers of the Democratic National Committee before issuing a report attributing the sweeping cyberintrusion to Russia-backed hackers, BuzzFeed News has learned.

Six months after the FBI first said it was investigating the hack of the Democratic National Committee's computer network, the bureau has still not requested access to the hacked servers, a DNC spokesman said.

No US government entity has run an independent forensic analysis on the system, one US intelligence official

told BuzzFeed News.

**“The DNC had several meetings with representatives of the FBI’s Cyber Division and its Washington (DC) Field Office, the Department of Justice’s National Security Division, and U.S. Attorney’s Offices, and it responded to a variety of requests for cooperation, but the FBI never requested access to the DNC’s computer servers,”** Eric Walker, the DNC’s deputy communications director, told BuzzFeed News in an email.

**The FBI has instead relied on computer forensics from a third-party tech security company, CrowdStrike, which first determined in May of last year that the DNC’s servers had been infiltrated by Russia-linked hackers,** the U.S. intelligence official told BuzzFeed News.

“CrowdStrike is pretty good. There’s no reason to believe that anything that they have concluded is not accurate,” the intelligence official said, adding they were confident Russia was behind the widespread hacks.

The FBI declined to comment.

“Beginning at the time the intrusion was discovered by the DNC, the DNC cooperated fully with the FBI and its investigation, providing access to all of the information uncovered by CrowdStrike — without any limits,” said Walker, whose emails were stolen and subsequently distributed throughout the cyberattack.

It’s unclear why the FBI didn’t request access to the DNC servers, and whether it’s common practice when the bureau investigates the cyberattacks against private entities by state actors, like when the Sony Corporation was hacked by North Korea in 2014.

BuzzFeed News spoke to three cybersecurity companies who have worked on major breaches in the last 15 months, who said that it was “par for the course” for the FBI to do their own forensic research into the hacks. None wanted to comment on the record on another cybersecurity company’s work, or the work being done by a national security agency.

The hack of the DNC servers and the subsequent release of purloined emails by WikiLeaks has become a Washington scandal of proportions perhaps not seen since the Watergate era. The hacks — part of what intelligence officials, the White House, and private sector analysts say was a broader Moscow-directed effort to influence the US election — were specifically designed to undercut democratic nominee Hillary Clinton’s path to the presidency and bolster Donald Trump, according to CIA and FBI analysis.

Trump has denied that analysis and mocked the US intelligence agencies that produced it. The president-elect is due to receive an in-depth briefing on the subject on Friday.

In a 13-page report made public the last week of December, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security confirmed in a joint analysis that Russia was behind the widespread hacks, which targeted Democrats with the intention to manipulate the US election. But the analysis was attributed to broad intelligence across both public and private sectors. Nowhere in the report does it say that the government conducted its own computer forensics on the DNC servers.

“Public attribution of these activities to [Russian Intelligence Services] is supported by technical indicators from the U.S. Intelligence Community, DHS, FBI, the private sector, and other entities,” the report says.

On the heels of the report’s release, the White House expelled 35 Russian diplomats, sanctioned, among other things, two of Russia’s premier intelligence agencies, and shut down access to two Russian diplomatic facilities in the US.

Sheera Frenkel contributed reporting to this story.

## CORRECTION

The article has been updated to reflect that CrowdStrike first discovered Russia-backed hackers had infiltrated the DNC in May 2016. A previous version of the article incorrectly said the group first discovered it in March.



**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Guardian: FBI chief given dossier by John McCain alleging secret Trump-Russia contacts  
**To:** Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI); Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI); Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI); Anderson, Trisha B. (OGC) (FBI); [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI); Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI); Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI); [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 10, 2017 8:23 PM (UTC-05:00)  
<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/10/fbi-chief-given-dossier-by-john-mccain-alleging-secret-trump-russia-contacts>

b6 -1  
b7c -1

Nb - "The Guardian has learned that the FBI applied for a warrant from the foreign intelligence surveillance (Fisa) court over the summer in order to monitor four members of the Trump team suspected of irregular contacts with Russian officials. The Fisa court turned down the application asking FBI counter-intelligence investigators to narrow its focus. According to one report, the FBI was finally granted a warrant in October, but that has not been confirmed, and it is not clear whether any warrant led to a full investigation."

----

FBI chief given dossier by John McCain alleging secret Trump-Russia contacts

Julian Borger in Washington

Tuesday 10 January 2017 19.29 EST Last modified on Tuesday 10 January 2017 20.03 EST

Senator John McCain passed documents to the FBI director, James Comey, last month alleging secret contacts between the Trump campaign and Moscow and that Russian intelligence had personally compromising material on the president-elect himself.

The material, which has been seen by the Guardian, is a series of reports on Trump's relationship with Moscow. They were drawn up by a former western counter-intelligence official, now working as a private consultant.

The Guardian has not been able to confirm the veracity of the documents' contents, and the Trump team has consistently denied any hidden contacts with the Russian government.

But an official in the US administration who spoke to the Guardian described the source who wrote the intelligence report as consistently reliable, meticulous and well-informed, with a reputation for having extensive Russian contacts.

Some of the reports – which are dated from 20 June to 20 October last year – also proved to be prescient, predicting events that happened after they were sent.

One report, dated June 2016, claims that the Kremlin has been cultivating, supporting and assisting Trump for at least five years, with the aim of encouraging "splits and divisions in western alliance".

It claims that Trump had declined "various sweetener real estate deals offered him in Russia" especially in developments linked to the 2018 World Cup finals but that "he and his inner circle have accepted a regular flow of intelligence from the Kremlin, including on his Democratic and other political rivals."

Most explosively, the report alleges: "FSB has compromised Trump through his activities in Moscow sufficiently to be able to blackmail him."

CNN reported on Tuesday that the FBI was still investigating the credibility of the documents but added that the intelligence chiefs had included a summary of the material in a secret briefing on Russian

interference in the election delivered last week to Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

The emergence of the documents is potentially explosive, 10 days before Trump's inauguration and on the eve of his first planned press conference since July last year.

Despite glowing references from US and foreign officials who have worked with the source, there are some errors in the reports. One describes the Moscow suburb of Barvikha as "reserved for the residences of the top leadership and their close associates", but although it is a very expensive neighbourhood, there are no restrictions on who can own property there. The document also misspells the name of a Russian banking corporation.

The FBI does not normally make any comment on ongoing counter-intelligence investigations but was under increasing pressure from Democrats and some Republicans to act before the inauguration, particularly because of Comey's announcement of a continuing investigation into Hillary Clinton's email server 11 days before the election, which many of her supporters believe cost her the presidency.

The reports were initially commissioned as opposition research during the presidential campaign, but its author was sufficiently alarmed by what he discovered to send a copy to the FBI. It is unclear who within the organisation they reached and what action the bureau took. The former Democratic Senate leader, Harry Reid, has lambasted Comey for publicising investigations into Hillary Clinton's private server, while allegedly sitting on "explosive" material on Trump's ties to Russia.

Another Democratic senator, Ron Wyden, questioned Comey insistently at a Senate intelligence committee hearing on Tuesday on whether the FBI was pursuing leads on Trump campaign contacts with Russia.

"Has the FBI investigated these reported relationships?" Wyden asked.

Comey replied: "I would never comment on investigations ... in a public forum.

The Guardian can confirm that the documents reached the top of the FBI by December. Senator John McCain, who was informed about the existence of the documents separately by an intermediary from a western allied state, dispatched an emissary overseas to meet the source and then decided to present the material to Comey in a one-on-one meeting on 9 December, according to a source aware of the meeting. The documents, which were first reported on last year by Mother Jones, are also in the hands of officials in the White House.

McCain is not thought to have made a judgment on the reliability of the documents but was sufficiently impressed by the source's credentials to feel obliged to pass them to the FBI.

The Senate armed services committee, which Senator McCain chairs, launched an inquiry last week into Russian cyber-attacks during the election, and the intelligence services are due to complete a final assessment of Russian electoral meddling for President Obama this week.

Russian intelligence allegedly gathered compromising material from his stay in Moscow in November 2013, when he was in the city to host the Miss Universe pageant.

Another report, dated 19 July last year said that Carter Page, a businessman named by Trump as one of his foreign policy advisers, had held a secret meeting that month with Igor Sechin, head of the Rosneft state-owned oil company and a long-serving lieutenant of Vladimir Putin. Page also allegedly met Igor Divyevkin, an internal affairs official with a background in intelligence, who is said to have warned Page that Moscow had "kompromat" (compromising material) on Trump.

Two months later, allegations of Page's meetings surfaced in the US media, attributed to intelligence sources, along with reports that he had been under FBI scrutiny.

Page, a vociferous supporter of the Kremlin line, was in Moscow in July to make a speech decrying western policy towards Russia. At the time he declined to say whether he had been in contact with Russian officials, but in September he rejected the reports as “garbage”.

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A month after Trump’s surprise election victory, Page was back in Moscow saying he was meeting with “business leaders and thought leaders”, dismissing the FBI investigation as a “witch-hunt” and suggesting the Russian hacking of the Democratic Party alleged by US intelligence agencies, could be a false flag operation to incriminate Moscow.

Another of the reports compiled by the former western counter-intelligence official in July said that members of Trump’s team, which was led by campaign manager Paul Manafort (a former consultant for pro-Russian politicians in Ukraine), had knowledge of the DNC hacking operation, and in return “had agreed to sideline Russian intervention in Ukraine as a campaign issue and to raise US/Nato defence commitments in the Baltics and Eastern Europe to deflect attention away from Ukraine”.

A few days later, Trump raised the possibility that his administration might recognise Russia’s annexation of Crimea and openly called on Moscow to hack Hillary Clinton’s emails.

In August, officials from the Trump campaign intervened in the drafting of the Republican party platform, specifically to remove a call for lethal assistance to Ukraine for its battle against Moscow-backed eastern rebels.

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Manafort has denied secret links with Moscow calling the allegation “an outrageous smear being driven by Harry Reid and the Clinton campaign”.

Since then, Trump has consistently cast doubt on Russian culpability for hacking the Democratic National Committee, defying a consensus of 17 national intelligence agencies. After Obama deported 35 Russian diplomats in retaliation for Moscow’s intervention, Trump praised Putin for not carrying out tit-for-tat deportations of US diplomats. “I always knew he was very smart,” he tweeted.

An FBI spokesman declined to comment after the CNN report.

Peter P. Strzok II  
Deputy Assistant Director, Branch I  
Counterintelligence Division

 (O)  
(C)

b7E -3

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI)  
**Subject:** RE: Guardian: FBI chief given dossier by John McCain alleging secret Trump-Russia contacts  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 10, 2017 8:38 PM (UTC-05:00)

Copy/thanks Pete.

Richard P. Quinn  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Media/Investigative Publicity

[redacted] (s)  
[redacted] (m)

b7E -3

----- Original message -----

**From:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Date:** 01/10/2017 8:22 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, "Anderson, Trisha B. (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted] >, "Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted] >, "Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)" [redacted] >, "Quinn, Richard P. (DO) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
**Subject:** Guardian: FBI chief given dossier by John McCain alleging secret Trump-Russia contacts

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/10/fbi-chief-given-dossier-by-john-mccain-alleging-secret-trump-russia-contacts>

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# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

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Peter P. Strzok II  
Deputy Assistant Director, Branch I  
Counterintelligence Division

(O)  
 (C)

b7E -3

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Fwd: NYT  
**To:** Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI); Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI); [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI); [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI); [REDACTED] (WF) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 11, 2017 10:22 PM (UTC-05:00)

b6 -1  
b7c -1

Pretty good reporting

WASHINGTON — Seven months ago, a respected former British spy named Christopher Steele won a contract to build a file on Donald J. Trump’s ties to Russia. Last week, his lurid account — unsubstantiated accounts of frolics with prostitutes, real estate deals that were intended as bribes and coordination with Russian intelligence of the hacking of Democrats — was summarized for Mr. Trump in an appendix to a [top-secret intelligence report](#).

The consequences have been incalculable and will play out long past Inauguration Day. Word of the summary, which was also given to President Obama and to congressional leaders, leaked to CNN on Tuesday, and the rest of the media followed with sensational reports.

Mr. Trump denounced the unproven claims Wednesday as a fabrication, a Nazi-style slander concocted by “sick people.” It has further undermined, at least temporarily, his relationship with the intelligence agencies and cast a shadow over the new administration. Parts of the story remain out of reach — most critically the basic question of how much, if anything, in the dossier is true. But it is possible to piece together a rough narrative of what led to the current crisis, including lingering questions about the ties binding Mr. Trump and his team to Russia. The episode also offers a glimpse of the hidden side of presidential campaigns, involving private sleuths-for-hire looking for the worst they can find about the next American leader.

The story began in September 2015, when a wealthy Republican donor who strongly opposed Mr. Trump put up the money to hire a Washington research firm run by former journalists, Fusion GPS, to compile a dossier about the real estate magnate’s past scandals and weaknesses, according to a person familiar with the effort. The person described the opposition research work on condition of anonymity, citing the volatile nature of the story and the likelihood of future legal disputes. The identity of the donor who funded the effort is unclear.

Fusion GPS, headed by a former Wall Street Journal journalist known for his dogged reporting, Glenn Simpson, most often works for business clients. But in presidential elections, the firm is sometimes hired by candidates, party organizations or donors to do political “oppo” work — shorthand for opposition research — on the side.

It is routine work and ordinarily involves creating a big, searchable database of public information: past news reports, documents from lawsuits and other relevant data. For months, Fusion GPS gathered the documents and put together the files from Mr. Trump’s past in business and entertainment, a rich target.

After Mr. Trump emerged as the presumptive Republican nominee in the spring, the Republicans no longer wanted to finance the effort. But Democratic supporters of Hillary Clinton were very interested, and Fusion GPS kept doing the same deep dives into Mr. Trump’s record, but on behalf of new clients. In June, the tenor of the effort suddenly changed. [The Washington Post reported](#) that the Democratic National Committee had been hacked, apparently by Russian government agents, and a mysterious figure [calling himself “Guccifer 2.0”](#) began to publish the stolen documents online.

Mr. Simpson hired Mr. Steele, a former British intelligence officer with whom he had worked before. Mr. Steele, in his early 50s, had served undercover in Moscow in the early 1990s and later was the top

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

expert on Russia at the London headquarters of Britain's spy service, MI6. When he stepped down in 2009, he started his own commercial intelligence firm, Orbis Business Intelligence.

The former journalist and the former spy, according to people who know them, had a similar dark view of President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, a former K.G.B. officer, and the varied tactics he and his intelligence operatives used to smear, blackmail or bribe their targets.

As a former spy who had carried out espionage inside Russia, Mr. Steele was in no position to travel to Moscow to study Mr. Trump's connections there. Instead, he hired native Russian speakers to call informants inside Russia and made surreptitious contact with his own connections in the country as well.

Mr. Steele wrote up his findings in a series of memos, each a few pages long, that he began to deliver to Fusion GPS in June and continued at least until December. By then, the election was over, and neither Mr. Steele nor Mr. Simpson had a client to pay them, but they did not stop what they believed to be very important work. (Mr. Simpson declined to comment for this article, and Mr. Steele did not immediately reply to a request for comment.)

The memos described two different Russian operations. The first was a yearslong effort to find a way to influence Mr. Trump, perhaps because he had contacts with Russian oligarchs whom Mr. Putin wanted to keep close track of. According to Mr. Steele's memos, it used an array of familiar Russian tactics: the gathering of "kompromat," compromising material such as alleged tapes of Mr. Trump with prostitutes in a Moscow hotel, and proposals for business deals attractive to Mr. Trump to win his allegiance.

The goal would probably never have been to make Mr. Trump a knowing agent of Russia, but to make him a source who might provide information to friendly Russian contacts. But if Mr. Putin and his agents wanted to entangle Mr. Trump using business deals, they did not do it very successfully — Mr. Trump has said he has no major properties inside Russia.

The second Russian operation described was recent: a series of contacts with Mr. Trump's representatives during the campaign, in part to discuss the hacking of the Democratic National Committee and Mrs. Clinton's campaign chairman, John D. Podesta. According to Mr. Steele's sources, it involved, among other things, a late-summer meeting in Prague between Michael Cohen, a lawyer for Mr. Trump, and Oleg Solodukhin, a Russian official who works for Rossotrudnichestvo, an organization that promotes Russia's interests abroad.

By all accounts, Mr. Steele has an excellent reputation with American and British intelligence colleagues and had done work for the F.B.I. on the investigation of bribery at FIFA, soccer's global governing body. Colleagues say he was acutely aware of the danger he and his associates were being fed Russian disinformation. Russian intelligence had mounted a complex hacking and leaking operation to damage Mrs. Clinton, after all, and a similar operation against Mr. Trump was an obvious possibility.

But much of what he was told, and passed on to Fusion GPS, was very difficult to check. And some of the claims that can be checked seem problematic. Mr. Cohen, for instance, [said on Twitter](#) on Tuesday night that he has never been in Prague; Mr. Solodukhin, his purported Russian contact, [denied in a telephone interview](#) that he had ever met Mr. Cohen or anyone associated with Mr. Trump. The president-elect on Wednesday cited news reports that a different Michael Cohen with no Trump ties may have visited Prague and that the two Cohens might have been mixed up in Mr. Steele's reports.

But word of a dossier had begun to spread through political circles. Rick Wilson, a Republican political operative who was working for a "super PAC" supporting Marco Rubio, said he heard about it in July, when an investigative reporter for a major news network called him to ask what he knew. Other campaigns and super PACs were also developing more limited opposition research into Mr. Trump's Russia ties.



# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

By early fall, some of Mr. Steele's memos had been given to the F.B.I. and to journalists. An MI6 official, whose job does not permit him to be quoted by name, said that in late summer or early fall, Mr. Steele also passed the reports he had prepared on Mr. Trump and Russia to British intelligence. Mr. Steele was concerned about what he was hearing about Mr. Trump, and he thought that the information should not be solely in the hands of people looking to win a political contest.

After the election, the memos, still being supplemented by his inquiries, became one of Washington's worst-kept secrets, as reporters scrambled to try to confirm or disprove their contents.

Word also reached Capitol Hill. Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, heard about the dossier and obtained a copy in December from David J. Kramer, a former top State Department official who works for the McCain Institute at Arizona State University. Mr. McCain passed the information to James B. Comey, the F.B.I. director.

Remarkably for Washington, many reporters for competing news organizations had the salacious and damning memos, but they did not leak, because their contents could not be confirmed. That changed only this week, after the heads of the C.I.A., the F.B.I. and the National Security Agency added a summary of the memos, along with information gathered from other intelligence sources, to their report on the Russian cyberattack on the election.

Now, after the most contentious of elections, Americans are divided and confused about what to believe about the incoming president. And there is no prospect soon for full clarity on the veracity of the claims made against him.

"It is a remarkable moment in history," said Mr. Wilson, the Florida political operative. "What world did I wake up in?"

Get politics and Washington news updates via [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and in [the Morning Briefing newsletter](#). Jonathan Martin, Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt contributed reporting.

**From:**   
**Subject:** Democrats confront FBI director over Clinton, Trump probes - POLITICO  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 13, 2017 9:51 PM (UTC-05:00)

b6 -3  
b7c -3

<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/01/spy-agency-briefing-contentious-233602>

## Democrats confront FBI director over Clinton, Trump probes

By **TIM STARKS** and **HEATHER CAYGLE** 01/13/17 01:16 PM EST Updated 01/13/17 06:30 PM EST

Democrats went after FBI Director James Comey on Friday during a briefing about Russian election-season hacking, airing months of frustrations over what they see as the bureau's unequal treatment of the two presidential candidates.

Comey's responses did little to help his case. Democrats left the room disappointed, with some saying they no longer trust Comey's impartiality.

*Story Continued Below*

"I still hold the opinion that he is a good man, but I question some of his decisions now," said House Oversight ranking member Elijah Cummings (D-Md.). "When I left the hearing, I felt a great sense of disappointment."

Democrats are furious about the gap between the FBI chief's public comments about the probe into Hillary Clinton's private email server, and Comey's ongoing silence about any investigations into ties between President-elect Donald Trump and Moscow.

In one of the most loaded exchanges, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) "laid into" Comey, according to sources. Wasserman Schultz was forced to resign as chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee after thousands of DNC emails were released as part of the suspected Russian hacking.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) also confronted Comey during the briefing, sources said, taking up a line of questioning similar to Wasserman Shultz.



**Intelligence Committee will investigate  
possible Russia-Trump links**  
By **ELANA SCHOR**

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Later, in a Democratic caucus meeting, Pelosi told lawmakers she was frustrated Comey continues to refuse to say whether the bureau has opened an investigation into a link between the Trump campaign and Russia.

The briefing, said House Intelligence ranking member Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), was "contentious" and "at times, heated."

Schiff said the briefing, which he called “very necessary,” was heavily attended by members on both sides of the aisle.

Other Democrats publicly panned Comey after the meeting, with several rank-and-file members saying they’d lost faith in the FBI chief.

Arizona Democratic Rep. Ruben Gallego was blunt: “What I heard in the briefing, it made me not trust him.”

Comey “sacrificed our electoral integrity” when he announced publicly that the FBI had reopened the investigation into Clinton’s email server days before the election, added Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-Va.). “That’s a very high price for our democracy to pay.”



**Ryan breaks with Trump — gently**  
By RACHAEL BADE

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After what he heard in the meeting, Rep. Tim Walz (D-Minn.), ranking member of the Veterans Affairs Committee, walked away with “serious concerns,” said Sara Severs, Walz’s deputy chief of staff.

“He has serious questions about his ability to act in the impartial manner you would expect from the director of the FBI,” she added.

In a separate briefing on Thursday, Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) and other Democrats lit into Comey over his handling of Clinton’s email investigation and announcement of new investigatory steps right before the election, sources familiar with the exchange said.

Comey was pressed on when he knew about the emails, leading some Democrats to believe he contradicted himself on the chain of events, those sources said.

Democrats also want Comey to publicly disclose any FBI probes into links between Trump and his associates and the Kremlin. Reportedly, intelligence officials last Friday briefed Trump on unverified allegations of collusion between Moscow and Trump aides the FBI has investigated.



**Chaffetz threatens to subpoena federal ethics watchdog over Trump criticism**  
By DARREN SAMUELSON and JOSH GERSTEIN

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But Comey, in his first public appearance on Capitol Hill since the election, declined to confirm or deny any investigation.

“The irony of your making that statement here, I cannot avoid, but I’ll move on,” quipped Sen. Angus King (I-Maine), referencing Comey’s public statements about the Clinton email case.

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

Earlier this week, every House Judiciary Democrat signed on to a letter sent to Comey urging him to reveal any investigation.

But Democrats, for all their criticisms, were reluctant to call for Comey's resignation.

"It's not that I don't think he should step down or not, I just don't trust the Trump administration to actually appoint somebody that would be any better," Gallego said.

Cummings, asked whether Comey should step down: "One time, there was no jury. And now there is a jury, and the jury is still out."

*Martin Matishak, Burgess Everett and Ken Vogel contributed to this report.*

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** RE: Lawfare  
**To:** [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 17, 2017 1:58 PM (UTC-05:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Thanks

-----Original Message-----

**From:** [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 17, 2017 1:35 PM  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI); [REDACTED]; Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)  
[REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI); [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Lawfare

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 17, 2017 12:47 PM  
**To:** Rybicki, James E. (DO) (FBI); [REDACTED]; Burton, Dawn (DO) (FBI)  
[REDACTED]; McCabe, Andrew G. (DO) (FBI); [REDACTED] (OGC)  
(FBI); [REDACTED]; Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI); [REDACTED]; Herring,  
Jason V. (CD) (FBI); [REDACTED]; Anderson, Trisha B. (OGC) (FBI)  
[REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Lawfare

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

FYSA:

<https://lawfareblog.com/six-thoughts-defense-james-comey>

Six Thoughts In Defense of James Comey

By Benjamin Wittes

Tuesday, January 17, 2017, 12:14 PM

Let me start with a disclosure: FBI Director James Comey is a personal friend. So feel free to dismiss, if you like, what follows as the rantings of a guy who doesn't like to see friends put through the ringer. That said, the emerging bipartisan groupthink on Comey needs a big splash of ice cold water.

Over the last week, we have seen the announcement of an inspector general investigation of, among other things, Comey's decisions on the Hillary Clinton email investigation. We have seen an angry meeting in which Comey refused to discuss the state of the investigation of Trump's links to Russia. Democratic members of Congress vented at him for the supposed double standard that allowed him to talk about the Clinton investigation but not about this one. We have seen repeated calls for his resignation from all over the political map.

And speaking on Fox News Sunday, incoming Vice President Mike Pence conspicuously refused to say that Trump would not fire Comey when he takes office in a few days: "Well, you will have to ask [Trump] about that. I know it's been the subject of some commentary this week. . . . [Y]ou'd have to ask the president-elect. I know they've had conversations. And that will be a good question for him after January 20th."

Jeffrey Goldberg perhaps best summed up the situation on Meet the Press when he quipped: "If I were doing P.R. for Comey, I would note that he's a uniter, not a divider. He's brought Republicans and Democrats together in a way that they don't get together anymore."

So let me sound a note of dissent—several notes of dissent, to be precise—on Comey’s villainy. And let me emphatically dissent on the question of whether of whether he should be replaced as FBI director. Here are six thoughts in defense of Comey:

First, the notion that there was some great double standard in which Comey was willing to discuss in detail the Clinton email investigation yet now stays mum about allegations about Trump is wrong. There is no double standard; the comparison between the Clinton and Trump investigations is not even an apples-to-oranges comparison. It is comparing apples to orangutans.

The investigation of Clinton was, at the time Comey issued his detailed statement on it and talked publicly about it before Congress in July, a completed criminal investigation on which he had findings to deliver. By contrast, the investigation of the relationship between the Trump campaign and the Russians, assuming there is such an investigation (and I do so assume), is an ongoing one; what’s more, it’s an ongoing foreign counterintelligence investigation (FCI). Comey did not discuss the Clinton email matter until he had completed findings on that, so it’s no double standard for him not to discuss the Trump matter while it is still in play.

Moreover, the expectation that he would discuss an FCI investigation involving the Russians, even if it were complete, reveals a deep ignorance of what FCI is and how it works. These are matters about which the FBI simply does not comment publicly—ever. To confirm such an investigation would effectively confirm FISA surveillance against Russian targets. These investigations are often not discrete examinations of alleged misconduct but long-term monitoring of foreign intelligence activity against the United States. The only circumstances in which such investigations become public are indictments and leaks (which are rare in the FCI space). The idea that this or any other FBI director is going to publicly discuss this sort of investigation—or that a closed Congressional meeting offers sufficient protection from public disclosure—is laughable.

Second, even more laughable is the notion, implicit or explicit in some of the criticism, that Comey was somehow seeking to aid Trump or injure Clinton in the way he handled the email and dossier matters. Remember that Comey succeeded during the campaign in enraging both sides. Republicans were furious at his judgment that Hillary Clinton had not committed any prosecutable offenses. The Democrats were furious that he cleared her while simultaneously excoriating both her and her team as “extremely careless.” Democrats were enraged that Comey informed Congress shortly before the election of the reactivation of the matter. Republicans slammed him for announcing days later that no evidence of wrongdoing had emerged. If the mark of a fair deal is that all sides are unhappy, then Comey has been a model of fairness.

The idea that he sought to assist Trump during the campaign, or seeks to assist him now, against allegations of ties to Russia is even more absurd. I have not asked Comey how he voted in the election and never would. But consider the almost-daily reports, carried by multiple newspapers, of the anxiety within the intelligence community about Trump. What sane FBI Director wouldn’t be anxious in Comey’s shoes? What sane FBI director would not be concerned about being part of an interagency process run by General Flynn, a man who famously sat beside Vladimir Putin at an RT dinner? RT, recall, figured prominently in the intelligence community’s report on Russian interference in the U.S. election. If you believe, as I do, that Comey probably knows a great deal more than we do about the reality of any Russian kompromat file on Trump and any untoward contacts between Trump forces and Russian operatives, what on earth would possess him to bury that information in order to help a compromised and less-than-stable man become his boss?

Comey may have erred back in July in discussing the Clinton email findings and in informing Congress of the investigation’s reinvigoration in October, but to now attribute base or partisan motives is more than baseless. It’s silly.

Third, the question of whether Comey did, in fact, err back in July and in October is a very complicated one in my view, one that Jack Goldsmith and I treated in some depth at the time and on which I think criticism is warranted. As we noted then, “Comey probably erred in testifying about his decision [in July].

In his initial public statement, he had total control over what he said. In his subsequent live testimony, however, members drew a great deal more out of him. It was a mistake to let them do so.” He “compounded that mistake . . . by allowing so many of the underlying documents in the investigation to become public.” Because of the statement, the testimony, and the documents, “the flood of material about Clinton and her emails created an expectation that everything the FBI did would be discussed in public.” That expectation proved consequential when Comey then felt obliged to keep Congress abreast when the investigation reactivated shortly before the election.

But note on this point that very few of the people who are so angry at Comey now expressed any of that anxiety back in July, when he actually delivered his comments on the Clinton email matter and made the commitment to keep Congress up to speed if things changed. I was actually one of the few people who raised the question of the propriety of what Comey was doing at the time, though I did not dissent from his action. Here’s what I wrote:

I think it's important to stress that this is really not the way we want major investigations to be closed out in the future.

There is something horrible about watching a senior government official, who has used the coercive investigative capacities of the federal government, make public judgments about a subject's conduct which the Justice Department is not prepared to indict. There is something even more horrible about a hearing in which individual members of Congress feel entitled to pick over the details of that conduct, asking about whether specific questions were asked by the FBI of specific witnesses and subjects and asking whether specific lines of inquiry were followed.

As a general matter, when prosecutors and investigators decline to indict someone, we don't want a report, much less congressional oversight of the unindicted conduct. We want them to shut the heck up.

This point is rooted in important civil liberties concerns. We don't give the FBI the power to investigate people so that it can report on their characters or behavior, so that the FBI director can pronounce on the truthfulness of their public utterances (which Comey endeavored not to do and yet inevitably did repeatedly simply by reporting his findings). And we don't give congressional committees the power of oversight, generally speaking, so that they can review individual prosecutorial decisions by flyspecking the details of the conduct of particular investigations vis a vis individual subjects. We give the FBI these powers so that it can investigate crimes. And if the Justice Department is not going to prosecute someone, it generally has no business talking about the conduct of that person's affairs.

This was a very lonely position at the time. The vast majority of people who are today calling for Comey to be flayed in public with an iron comb were perfectly content then to dive into the substance of what he said, either to declare that he had “cleared” Clinton or to delve into the facts he reported in order to condemn him for not recommending her indictment. It may well be—and in retrospect I tend to believe—that the right answer was for Comey to say nothing except that the Clinton email investigation was complete. But even I did not go that far at the time, and I can think of only a few people who said any such thing in public. If you’re not one of those people, have a little humility about how much outrage to gin up now. And understand that it makes zero sense to be furious that Comey will not publicly discuss a highly sensitive ongoing FCI investigation involving an adversary foreign power because he then discussed what he thought was a completed criminal investigation on which he could put matters to rest. If you think he made a mistake in commenting on a case before, the way to fix that now surely is not to comment on another case.

Fourth, to whatever extent Comey erred, he erred in a public fashion about which he was entirely up front and for which he has been willing to be held accountable. Think about that for a minute. In the era of Trump, do we really want to get rid of the people who are willing to speak the truth as they see it in circumstances in which they know they will brave a firestorm by doing so? Do we really want an FBI director who will, instead of taking responsibility for his conclusions, whisper them in the ear of a sympathetic journalist as a “source familiar with the investigation”? Do we really want to send the

message—even as Trump is denying the reality of Russian intervention in our election and we desperately need independent and serious investigation of precisely what happened—that if you diligently investigate a matter to conclusion and forthrightly report your findings in the fashion you believe (perhaps erroneously) is demanded by your obligations to the public and Congress, that we will have your head?

To ask these questions should be to answer them.

Fifth, not everyone involved in this episode behaved in such a forthright fashion here, and the comparison between Comey and certain other key actors bears some emphasis. Jack and I wrote back in October about the ass-covering behavior of Attorney General Loretta Lynch and Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates:

there's an elephant in the room alongside all these DOJ officials who are clucking about the FBI director's having gone rogue: Attorney General Lynch, having been consulted ahead of time, let him do it.

Lynch could have ordered Comey not to send the letter. She declined to do that, and instead acted in a manner that minimized her own responsibility, as the head of the Justice Department, for what Comey did.

This is not the way the matter is playing in the press. Many news stories over the weekend, citing anonymous Justice Department sources, suggested that Comey acted contrary to Justice Department wishes. The idea is that the DOJ was somehow helpless to prevent an out-of-control investigator from meddling in a presidential campaign with actions undertaken either to gratify Comey's ego and arrogate power and responsibility to himself or to help Donald Trump—or because Comey just couldn't help himself.

But that's not how the Justice Department works, and that's not what happened here. If you think what Comey did was beyond the pale, Lynch does not get to escape accountability for the action.

The Washington Post later reported that Lynch and Yates never even spoke to Comey directly about his impending decision to send the letter. They let staff handle the whole thing. And they also, it turns out, shared Comey's concerns about how the public would react to leaks that they had sought to keep information from Congress:

Justice officials decided that neither Lynch nor her deputy, Yates, should order Comey to not send the letter. They were not sure how Comey would respond to such a command. And they too feared leaks. Lynch and her advisers were nervous about how it would look if people found out that she, a Democratic presidential appointee, told Comey to keep secret from Congress a new development in the Clinton investigation.

Instead, they tried to convince Comey that he had never promised to update Congress at every turn. He had merely said he would “look at” any new information in the case.

When that did not work, they made one last effort to contain the damage. Justice officials wanted Comey to simply say that he had new information that might be related to the Clinton probe, and to make clear the FBI did not know whether the new material was significant.

Remember that Comey was in the position he faced, in the first instance, because Lynch had, months earlier, let Bill Clinton walk onto her airplane in Los Angeles and have a chat just as the investigation was finishing up—thus utterly compromising herself. So having made Comey central to the public debate, Lynch now made a deliberate decision to let him do as he pleased and take the heat for it.

Comey may well have too willingly fallen on this particular grenade, in other words, but the Justice Department senior leadership was knowingly let him do it and ran fleeing from the grenade to a waiting



press core eager to hear—on background, of course—about how Comey was violating long-standing Justice Department policy. It's the perfect Washington outcome: The attorney general got all the benefit of Comey's action and came out looking like his victim and largely escaping scrutiny in the aftermath.

Let me here venture the modest suggestion that her conduct was not wholly honorable.

I actually welcome the inspector general investigation, in part because I suspect we have a great deal to learn about the interactions between the bureau and Main Justice during this episode—none of it flattering to the way senior Justice Department officials conducted themselves. To be sure, Comey will have some things to answer for too in that probe, particularly the grotesque leaking from the New York Field Office on matters related to the Clinton Foundation. But I suspect we will learn a lot less of interest about the Comey's decisionmaking, which has been very public, than we will about those on the other side of Pennsylvania Avenue.

Sixth and finally, I want to reiterate a point that Susan Hennessey and I made immediately after the election: Replacing Comey would be a disaster for the country. "Whatever you think of Comey's judgment or conduct during the campaign," we wrote, "his actions have unequivocally demonstrated political independence from his political bosses, as he has in the past. And that is exactly what we will need from the FBI in the coming years."

Don't kid yourself that there is somebody out there whom Trump is likely to appoint and the Senate is likely to confirm about whom you could honestly write those words.

Don't kid yourself on another point either: Comey will not resign; if we're going to get a new FBI director, he's going to have to be fired.

So ask yourself this question: Do you really want Donald Trump to fire the FBI director for a set of good faith judgments about two high-profile criminal and FCI investigations in which Trump has direct personal interests and to replace him with someone less independent?

I didn't think so.

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)  
**Subject:** FW: A few things ..  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 19, 2017 8:55 AM (UTC-05:00)

**From:** [REDACTED]mailto:[REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 19, 2017 7:03 AM  
**To:** Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI) [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** A few things ..

b6 -3  
b7C -3  
b7E -3

A few things ..

- We're told by several lawmakers that in Comey's briefing with the House last week he said that there was an open investigation related to Trump and the Russians. Did Comey really say that or is a non-answer answer from him being interpreted to be more than it was?

-Putting whatever Comey may or may not have said aside, we're told that several people close to Trump who advised him and worked on his campaign are under investigation for their links to the Russians in the months before the election. The investigations are examining why there was such extensive communications between the advisors and the Russians, and whether the advisors and aides knew anything about the hack.

-Among the advisers whose links to the Russians are being examined are Roger Stone, Carter Paige, Paul Manafort, Mike Flynn and Michael Cohen. While the investigations were opened before the election, they remain open and the bureau is proceeding with the inquiries.

-In regards to Stone, the bureau is seeking to determine what role he played in helping Wikileaks make the emails public. Stone has said that he was in communication with Wikileaks before the emails were released.

-The basis to open these investigations goes far beyond what was included in the dossier anti-Trump operatives gave the bureau last year. The bureau has been told by confidential informants about information linking the advisers to Russia and the bureau is in possession of intercepted communications between Trump advisers and suspicious Russian officials

-Around the time that Manafort became the chairman of Trump's campaign last summer, the bureau opened a counter-intelligence investigation into him out of New York. The counter-intelligence investigation was an outgrowth of a Foreign Corrupt Practices Act inquiry into Manafort. The decision to open the counter-intelligence investigation was based on source reporting that had raised questions about Manafort's ties to Ukrainians who were close to Russia and Russian officials. As part of the investigation, the bureau obtained a FISA to examine the communications of Ukrainians and Russians who were close to Manafort.

-All of these inquiries have put the FBI in a very difficult position as Trump takes office. Some in the bureau are concerned about how to handle this ongoing investigation and how much information about the Russian hack they will be able to share with Trump and other White House officials.

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** RE: A few things ..  
**To:** Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 19, 2017 9:04 AM (UTC-05:00)

Thanks Mike. I have a 9 with Bill and possibly a call with him at 10, otherwise will be here

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**From:** Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 19, 2017 8:55 AM  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI) [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: A few things ..

**From:** [REDACTED]mailto:[REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 19, 2017 7:03 AM  
**To:** Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI) [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** A few things ..

b6 -3  
b7C -3  
b7E -3

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**From:** Peter Strzok  
**Subject:** Intercepted Russian Communications Part of Inquiry Into Trump Associates - NYTimes.com  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 19, 2017 9:26 PM (UTC-05:00)

<https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/01/19/us/politics/trump-russia-associates-investigation.html>

## Intercepted Russian Communications Part of Inquiry Into Trump Associates

January 19, 2017

**By MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT, MATTHEW ROSENBERG, ADAM GOLDMAN and MATT APUZZO**

WASHINGTON — American law enforcement and intelligence agencies are examining intercepted communications and financial transactions as part of a broad investigation into possible links between Russian officials and associates of President-elect [Donald J. Trump](#), including his former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, current and former senior American officials said.

The continuing counterintelligence investigation means that Mr. Trump will take the oath of office on Friday with his associates under investigation and after the intelligence agencies concluded that the Russian government had worked to help elect him. As president, Mr. Trump will oversee those agencies and have the authority to redirect or stop at least some of these efforts.

It is not clear whether the intercepted communications had anything to do with Mr. Trump's campaign, or Mr. Trump himself. It is also unclear whether the inquiry has anything to do with an investigation into the hacking of the Democratic National Committee's computers and other attempts to disrupt the elections in November. The American government has concluded that the Russian government was responsible for a broad computer hacking campaign, including the operation against the D.N.C.

### **The Run-Up**

The podcast that makes sense of the most delirious stretch of the 2016 campaign.

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

The counterintelligence investigation centers at least in part on the business dealings that some of the president-elect's past and present advisers have had with Russia. Mr. Manafort has done business in Ukraine and Russia. Some of his contacts there were under surveillance by the National Security Agency for suspected links to Russia's Federal Security Service, one of the officials said.

Mr. Manafort is among at least three Trump campaign advisers whose possible links to Russia are under scrutiny. Two others are Carter Page, a businessman and former foreign policy adviser to the campaign, and Roger Stone, a longtime Republican operative.

The F.B.I. is leading the investigations, aided by the National Security Agency, the CLIA, and the Treasury Department's financial crimes unit. The investigators have accelerated their efforts in recent weeks but have found no conclusive evidence of wrongdoing, the officials said. One official said intelligence reports based on some of the wiretapped communications had been provided to the White House.

Counterintelligence investigations examine the connections between American citizens and foreign governments. Those connections can involve efforts to steal state or corporate secrets, curry favor with American government leaders or influence policy. It is unclear which Russian officials are under investigation, or what particular conversations caught the attention of American eavesdroppers. The legal standard for opening these investigations is low, and prosecutions are rare.

"We have absolutely no knowledge of any investigation or even a basis for such an investigation," said Hope Hicks, a spokeswoman for the Trump transition.

In an emailed statement Thursday evening, Mr. Manafort called allegations that he had interactions with the Russian government a "Democrat Party dirty trick and completely falsea."

"I have never had any relationship with the Russian government or any Russian officials. I was never in contact with anyone, or directed anyone to be in contact with anyone," he said.

"On the 'Russian hacking of the D.N.C.,'" he said, "my only knowledge of it is what I have read in the papers."

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

The decision to open the investigations was not based on a dossier of salacious, uncorroborated allegations that were compiled by a former British spy working for a Washington research firm. The F.B.I. is also examining the allegations in that dossier, and a summary of its contents was provided to Mr. Trump earlier this month.

Representatives of the agencies involved declined to comment. Of the half-dozen current and former officials who confirmed the existence of the investigations, some said they were providing information because they feared the new administration would obstruct their efforts. All spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the cases.

Numerous news outlets, including The New York Times, have reported on the F.B.I. investigations into Mr. Trump's advisers. On Wednesday, McClatchy revealed the existence of a multiagency working group to coordinate investigations across the government.

The continuing investigation again puts the F.B.I. director, James B. Comey, in the middle of a politically fraught investigation. Democrats have sharply criticized Mr. Comey's handling of the investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server. Mrs. Clinton has said his decision to reveal the existence of new emails late in the campaign cost her the election.

The F.B.I. investigation into Mr. Manafort began last spring, and was an outgrowth of a criminal investigation into his work for a pro-Russian political party in Ukraine and for the country's former president, Viktor F. Yanukovich. In August, The Times reported that Mr. Manafort's name had surfaced in a secret ledger that showed he had been paid millions in undisclosed cash payments. The Associated Press has reported that his work for Ukraine included a secret lobbying effort in Washington aimed at influencing American news organizations and government officials.

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Russian clients. He said that he had worked in Ukraine for a pro-Western party, but that any assertion that he had ties to Russian intelligence was “nonsense” and “totally false.”

“The whole thing is a canard,” he said. “I have no Russian influences.”

The Senate intelligence committee has started its own investigation into Russia’s purported attempts to disrupt the election. The committee’s inquiry is broad, and will include an examination of Russian hacking and possible ties between people associated with Mr. Trump’s campaign and Russia.

Investigators are also scrutinizing people on the periphery of Mr. Trump’s campaign, such as Mr. Page, a former Merrill Lynch banker who founded Global Energy Capital, an investment firm in New York that has done business with Russia.

In an interview,, Mr. Page expressed bewilderment about why he might be under investigation. He blamed a smear campaign that he said was orchestrated by Mrs. Clinton for the news media speculation about the nature of his ties to Russia.

“I did nothing wrong, for the 5,000th time,” he said. His adversaries, he added, are “pulling a page out of the Watergate playbook.”

The lingering investigations will pose a test for Senator Jeff Sessions, Republican of Alabama, who has been nominated for attorney general. If Mr. Sessions is confirmed, he will for a time be the only person in the government authorized to seek foreign intelligence wiretaps on American soil.

Mr. Sessions said at his confirmation hearing that he would recuse himself from any investigations involving Mrs. Clinton. He was not asked whether he would do so in cases involving associates of Mr. Trump.

**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Intercepted Russian Communications Part of Inquiry Into Trump Associates - NYTimes.com  
**To:** Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI); Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI); [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 19, 2017 9:27 PM (UTC-05:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

<https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/01/19/us/politics/trump-russia-associates-investigation.html>

## Intercepted Russian Communications Part of Inquiry Into Trump Associates

January 19, 2017

**By MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT, MATTHEW ROSENBERG, ADAM GOLDMAN and MATT APUZZO**

WASHINGTON — American law enforcement and intelligence agencies are examining intercepted communications and financial transactions as part of a broad investigation into possible links between Russian officials and associates of President-elect [Donald J. Trump](#), including his former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, current and former senior American officials said.

The continuing counterintelligence investigation means that Mr. Trump will take the oath of office on Friday with his associates under investigation and after the intelligence agencies concluded that the Russian government had worked to help elect him. As president, Mr. Trump will oversee those agencies and have the authority to redirect or stop at least some of these efforts.

It is not clear whether the intercepted communications had anything to do with Mr. Trump's campaign, or Mr. Trump himself. It is also unclear whether the inquiry has anything to do with an investigation into the hacking of the Democratic National Committee's computers and other attempts to disrupt the elections in November. The American government has concluded that the Russian government was responsible for a broad computer hacking campaign, including the operation against the D.N.C.

**The Run-Up**



The podcast that makes sense of the most delirious stretch of the 2016 campaign.

The counterintelligence investigation centers at least in part on the business dealings that some of the president-elect's past and present advisers have had with Russia. Mr. Manafort has done business in Ukraine and Russia. Some of his contacts there were under surveillance by the National Security Agency for suspected links to Russia's Federal Security Service, one of the officials said.

Mr. Manafort is among at least three Trump campaign advisers whose possible links to Russia are under scrutiny. Two others are Carter Page, a businessman and former foreign policy adviser to the campaign, and Roger Stone, a longtime Republican operative.

The F.B.I. is leading the investigations, aided by the National Security Agency, the C.I.A. and the Treasury Department's financial crimes unit. The investigators have accelerated their efforts in recent weeks but have found no conclusive evidence of wrongdoing, the officials said. One official said intelligence reports based on some of the wiretapped communications had been provided to the White House.

Counterint

**From:** Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)  
**Subject:** RE: NYTimes  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 19, 2017 10:07 PM (UTC-05:00)  
anything scream out at you?

---

From: Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
Sent: Thursday, January 19, 2017 9:57 PM  
To: Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)  
Subject: RE: NYTimes

Thanks Mike

----- Original message -----

From: "Kortan, Michael P. (DO) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>  
Date: 01/19/2017 9:56 PM (GMT-05:00)  
To: "McCabe, Andrew G. (DO) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>, "Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>, "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>, "Bowdich, David L. (DO) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>, "[REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>, "Rybicki, James E. (DO) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>, "Steinbach, Michael B. (DO) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>, "[REDACTED]", "Burton, Dawn (DO) (FBI)" <[REDACTED]>  
Subject: NYTimes

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

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By MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT, MATTHEW ROSENBERG, ADAM GOLDMAN and MATT APUZZOJAN. 19, 2017

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The counterintelligence investigation centers at least in part on the business dealings that some of the president-elect's past and present advisers have had with Russia. Mr. Manafort has done business in Ukraine and Russia. Some of his contacts there were under surveillance by the National Security Agency for suspected links to Russia's Federal Security Service, one of the officials said.

Mr. Manafort is among at least three Trump campaign advisers whose possible links to Russia are under scrutiny. Two others are Carter Page, a businessman and former foreign policy adviser to the campaign, and Roger Stone, a longtime Republican operative.

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Treasury Department's financial crimes unit. The investigators have accelerated their efforts in recent weeks but have found no conclusive evidence of wrongdoing, the officials said. One official said intelligence reports based on some of the wiretapped communications had been provided to the White House.

Counterintelligence investigations examine the connections between American citizens and foreign governments. Those connections can involve efforts to steal state or corporate secrets, curry favor with American government leaders or influence policy. It is unclear which Russian officials are under investigation, or what particular conversations caught the attention of American eavesdroppers. The legal standard for opening these investigations is low, and prosecutions are rare.

"We have absolutely no knowledge of any investigation or even a basis for such an investigation," said Hope Hicks, a spokeswoman for the Trump transition.

In an emailed statement Thursday evening, Mr. Manafort called allegations that he had interactions with the Russian government a "Democrat Party dirty trick and completely falsea."

"I have never had any relationship with the Russian government or any Russian officials. I was never in contact with anyone, or directed anyone to be in contact with anyone," he said.

"On the 'Russian hacking of the D.N.C.,'" he said, "my only knowledge of it is what I have read in the papers."

The decision to open the investigations was not based on a dossier of salacious, uncorroborated allegations that were compiled by a former British spy working for a Washington research firm. The F.B.I. is also examining the allegations in that dossier, and a summary of its contents was provided to Mr. Trump earlier this month.

Representatives of the agencies involved declined to comment. Of the half-dozen current and former officials who confirmed the existence of the investigations, some said they were providing information because they feared the new administration would obstruct their efforts. All spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the investigations. Numerous news outlets, including The New York Times, have reported on the F.B.I. investigations into Mr. Trump's advisers. On Wednesday, McClatchy revealed the existence of a multiagency working group to coordinate investigations across the government.

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**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Fwd: GOP Senator Calls for Investigating What FBI Did About Russia-Trump Intelligence | Mother Jones  
**To:** [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 20, 2017 8:56 PM (UTC-05:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

----- Original message -----

**From:** Peter Strzok [REDACTED]  
**Date:** 01/20/2017 8:51 PM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** GOP Senator Calls for Investigating What FBI Did About Russia-Trump Intelligence | Mother Jones

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

Graham said he hoped to examine what the FBI knew about any Trump-Russia contacts and what actions the bureau had taken. (Before the election, FBI Director Jim Comey talked rather publicly about the bureau's investigation of Hillary Clinton's handling of her email at the State Department. But Comey has declined to say anything in public regarding whether the bureau has probed links between Trump associates and Russians.) "I hope to be able to work with Sen. Grassley [the chair of the judiciary committee] to look into the FBI's role," Graham said, "in terms of what they did, what they know, and what they can provide to Congress."

<http://m.motherjones.com/politics/2017/01/lindsey-graham-calls-investigating-what-fbi-did-about-russia-trump-intelligence>

## GOP Senator Calls for Investigating What FBI Did About Russia-Trump Intelligence

Lindsey Graham also slams Donald Trump for his "forgive-and-forget" stance toward Vladimir Putin.

[David Corn](#) • Jan. 20, 2017 3:40 PM

The night before Donald Trump was sworn in as president, the *New York Times* dropped a bombshell: intelligence and law enforcement agencies have been examining intercepted communications and financial transactions in an investigation of possible contacts between Trump associates and Russian officials. This report seemed to confirm previous indications that the US government has collected sensitive intelligence about interactions between Trump insiders and Russians. And hours before the inauguration, I ran into Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), who has been one of the few Republicans to call for a special investigation of the Russian hacking that helped Trump, and I asked him about this latest development.

Graham, a member of the Senate judiciary committee, said that he didn't know anything

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

about the intelligence intercepts. He remarked, "I want to learn and investigate all things Russian, wherever it leads." He noted that it was clear that Vladimir Putin's regime had "tried to undermine our election" and "succeeded in creating discontent and discord." He added, "I want to know what they did and who they did it with." He went on: "I want to see all of it...I want to know what Russia did...If there is campaign contacts, I want to know about it."

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At the moment, the Senate investigation of the Russian hacking and possible contacts between Russia and the Trump campaign is being conducted by the Senate intelligence committee. So it's unclear whether Graham will get his wish for a judiciary committee inquiry into the FBI end of this matter.

Before darting off to inauguration business, Graham, who often tussled with Trump during the 2016 campaign, criticized the incoming president for trying to downplay Russian meddling in the 2016 election. "Trump," he said, "seems to be in the forgive-and-forget mode." He noted the "biggest mistake" Trump could make would be "forgiving Russia...for what they did in our election."

**From:** Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** RE: GOP Senator Calls for Investigating What FBI Did About Russia-Trump Intelligence | Mother Jones  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 20, 2017 9:25 PM (UTC-05:00)

Thank you.

---

----- Original message -----

From: "Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >  
Date: 01/20/2017 8:55 PM (GMT-05:00)  
To: "Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, "Herring, Jason V. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] >, [redacted] (OGC) (FBI)" [redacted] >, "Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)" [redacted] <  
Subject: Fwd: GOP Senator Calls for Investigating What FBI Did About Russia-Trump Intelligence | Mother Jones

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

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<http://m.motherjones.com/politics/2017/01/lindsey-graham-calls-investigating-what-fbi-did-about-russia-trump-intelligence>

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[David Corn](#) • Jan. 20, 2017 3:40 PM

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# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

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**From:** [redacted] (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** FW: [redacted]  
**To:** Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI); Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** January 30, 2017 3:28 PM (UTC-05:00)  
**Attached:** [redacted]

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -4,8

FYI, below and attached [redacted]

-----Original Message-----

**From:** [redacted] (DI) (FBI)  
**Sent:** Monday, January 30, 2017 1:59 PM  
**To:** [redacted] Laycock, Stephen C. (CD) (FBI)  
[redacted]

b6 -1  
b7C -1  
b7E -3

[redacted] Moffa, Jonathan C. (CD) (FBI)  
[redacted]

**Cc:** Boone, Jennifer C. (CD) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Byron, Pamela (DI) (FBI)  
**Subject:** [redacted]

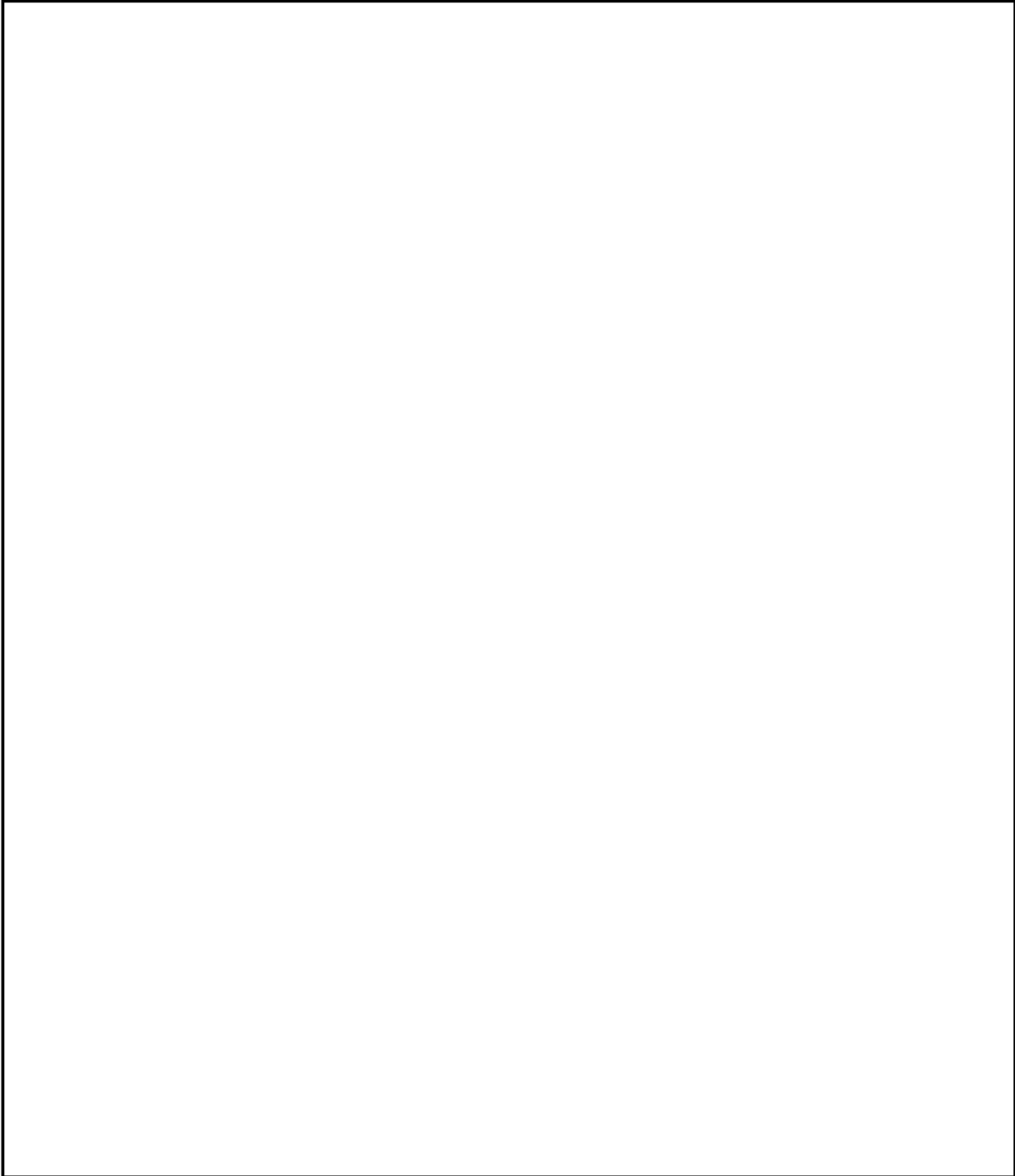
[redacted]

b7E -4,8

[REDACTED]

b7E -4,8

[REDACTED] Former Washington Post reporter Brian Krebs in his cybercrime blog has just published on these alleged links further detailing them. His blog is reprinted below (the actual blog included numerous live links which are not included as active below--to see these you will need to visit the actual blog):



b7E -4

**From:** Peter  
**Subject:** John Podesta Says 'Forces Within The FBI' Wanted Hillary Clinton To Lose | The Huffington Post  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** February 12, 2017 12:54 PM (UTC-05:00)

[http://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us\\_58a07fdce4b0ab2d2b15d75e](http://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_58a07fdce4b0ab2d2b15d75e)

“I think to this day it’s inexplicable that they were so casual about the investigation of the Russian penetration of the DNC emails.”

*Igor Bobic Associate Politics Editor, The Huffington Post*



Carlos Barria / Reuters

John Podesta, chairman of the 2016 Hillary Clinton presidential campaign, addresses the crowd her election night rally in New York. He said at an event on Wednesday that “it’s inexplicable that [the FBI was] so casual about the investigation of the Russian penetration of the DNC emails.”

Hillary Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta criticized the FBI on Wednesday for how it responded to the Democratic National Committee’s hacked emails, which U.S. intelligence agencies say Russia stole and gave to WikiLeaks in order to tip the election to President Donald Trump.

“I think to this day it’s inexplicable that they were so casual about the investigation of the Russian penetration of the DNC emails,” Podesta said during a cybersecurity panel at the NewCo Shift Forum in San Francisco, according to TechCrunch. Clinton campaign general counsel Marc Elias and CrowdStrike president Shawn Henry, whose firm investigated the DNC hacks, were also on the panel.

“They didn’t even bother to send an agent to the DNC,” Podesta said. “They left a couple

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

of messages at the IT help desk saying, “You might want to be careful.””

“There are at least forces within the FBI that wanted her to lose,” he added.

Some FBI employees were reportedly incensed when Director James Comey decided not to recommend an indictment over the former secretary of state’s private email server. A current agent told [The Guardian](#) in November that the agency was “Trumpland.”

The FBI didn’t notify the DNC in person about the hack until months after it had occurred, according to a deeply reported story from [The New York Times](#) last year. Agents contacted a low-level staffer at the DNC’s IT desk who initially believed the phone call was a prank, according to the Times.

Hackers gained access to Podesta’s email account via a phishing scheme that was precipitated due to an aide’s unfortunate typo, the Times reports. The aide had meant to warn Podesta about the “illegitimate email” but instead wrote “legitimate email.”

Podesta disputed the notion that he fell victim to a phishing scheme in an interview with TechCrunch following the panel, however.

“Woulda, coulda, shoulda,” he said. “I don’t think it was an issue of what the strength of my password was. Although I now have stronger passwords.”

Podesta also said the American public deserved to know more about Russia’s meddling in the election, and its motivation for doing so.

“It wasn’t just that they didn’t like Hillary Clinton’s pantsuit, it was that Putin had a vendetta about her and her tenure as secretary of state,” he told TechCrunch. “But mostly it was about Trump having adopted positions that were extraordinarily friendly to Putin and strongly at odds with a bipartisan collection of national security officials and people overseas.”

**From:** Peter  
**Subject:** Trump, Offering No Evidence, Says Obama Tapped His Phones - NYTimes.com  
**To:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Sent:** March 4, 2017 8:16 PM (UTC-05:00)

But a senior White House official said that Donald F. McGahn II, the president's chief counsel, was working to secure access to what Mr. McGahn believed to be an order issued by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court authorizing some form of surveillance related to Mr. Trump and his associates.

The official offered no evidence to support the notion that such an order exists. It would be a highly unusual breach of the Justice Department's traditional independence on law enforcement matters for the White House to order it to turn over such an investigative document.

Any request for information from a top White House official about a continuing investigation would be a stunning departure from protocols intended to insulate the F.B.I. from political pressure. It would be even more surprising for the White House to seek information about a case directly involving the president or his advisers, as does the case involving the Russia contacts.

<https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/03/04/us/politics/trump-obama-tap-phones.html>

## Trump, Offering No Evidence, Says Obama Tapped His Phones

March 4, 2017

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — President Trump on Saturday accused former President Barack Obama of tapping his phones at Trump Tower the month before the election, taking to Twitter to call his predecessor a “bad (or sick) guy.”

Without offering any evidence or providing the source of his information, Mr. Trump fired off a series of Twitter messages claiming that Mr. Obama “had my ‘wires tapped.’” He likened the supposed tapping to “Nixon/Watergate” and “McCarthyism.”

How low has President Obama gone to tapp my phones during the very sacred election process. This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) March 4, 2017

A spokesman for Mr. Obama said any suggestion that the former president had ordered such surveillance was “simply false.”

During the 2016 campaign, the federal authorities began an investigation into links between Trump associates and the Russian government, an issue that continues to dog Mr. Trump. His aides declined to clarify on Saturday whether the president's explosive allegations were

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

based on briefings from intelligence or law enforcement officials — which could mean that Mr. Trump was revealing previously unknown details about the investigation — or on something else, like a news report.

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Last month, Reince Priebus, the White House chief of staff, came under fire for asking a top F.B.I. official to publicly rebut news reports about contacts between Trump campaign officials and the Russian government.

The president's decision on Saturday to lend the power of his office to accusations against his predecessor of politically motivated wiretapping — without offering any proof — was remarkable, even for a leader who has repeatedly shown himself willing to make assertions that are false or based on dubious sources.

It would have been difficult for federal agents, working within the law, to obtain a wiretap order to target Mr. Trump's phone conversations. It would have meant that the Justice Department had gathered sufficient evidence to convince a federal judge that there was probable cause to believe Mr. Trump had committed a serious crime or was an agent of a foreign power, depending on whether it was a criminal investigation or a foreign intelligence one.

Former officials pointed to longstanding laws and procedures intended to ensure that

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

presidents cannot wiretap a rival for political purposes.

“A cardinal rule of the Obama administration was that no White House official ever interfered with any independent investigation led by the Department of Justice,” said Kevin Lewis, a spokesman for Mr. Obama. “As part of that practice, neither President Obama nor any White House official ever ordered surveillance on any U.S. citizen.”

Mr. Trump asserted just the opposite in a series of five Twitter messages beginning just minutes before sunrise in Florida, where the president is spending the weekend at his Mar-a-Lago estate.

In the first message, the president said he had “just found out” that “Obama had my ‘wires tapped’ in Trump Tower” before the election. Mr. Trump’s reference to “wires tapped” raised the possibility that he was referring to some other type of electronic surveillance and was using the idea of phone tapping loosely.

Terrible! Just found out that Obama had my "wires tapped" in Trump Tower just before the victory. Nothing found. This is McCarthyism!

— [Donald J. Trump \(@realDonaldTrump\)](#) March 4, 2017

Two people close to Mr. Trump said they believed he was referring to [a Breitbart News article](#) which aides said had been passed around among his advisers. Mark Levin, a conservative radio host, had also embraced the theory recently in a push against what right-leaning commentators have been calling the “deep state.”

The Breitbart article, published on Friday, claimed that there was a series of “known steps taken by President Barack Obama’s administration in its last months to undermine [Donald Trump](#)’s presidential campaign and, later, his new administration.” Stephen K. Bannon, Mr. Trump’s chief strategist, once led Breitbart News.

If Mr. Trump was motivated to take to Twitter after reading the Breitbart article or listening to Mr. Levin, he was using a presidential megaphone to spread dark theories of a broad conspiracy aimed at undermining his presidential ambitions, and later his presidency.

Even with the Breitbart article circulating, several of Mr. Trump’s advisers were stunned by the president’s morning Twitter outburst. Those advisers said they were uncertain about

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

what specifically Mr. Trump was referring to; one surmised that he may also have been referring to a months-old news report about a secret surveillance warrant for communications at his New York offices.

One senior law enforcement official from the Obama administration, who has direct knowledge of the F.B.I. investigation into Russia and of government wiretapping, said that it was “100 percent untrue” that the government had wiretapped Mr. Trump. The official, who asked for anonymity to discuss matters related to investigations and intelligence, said the White House owed the American people an explanation for the president’s allegations.

Ben Rhodes, a former top national security aide to Mr. Obama, said in a Twitter message directed at Mr. Trump on Saturday that “no president can order a wiretap” and added, “Those restrictions were put in place to protect citizens from people like you.”

The House and Senate Intelligence Committees are moving forward with their own investigations into Russia’s efforts to influence the election, and they have said they will examine links between Mr. Trump’s associates and the Russians.

Mr. Trump claimed the Obama administration ordered the phoned at his building in New York tapped.

Victor J. Blue for The New York Times

Senator Chris Coons, Democrat of Delaware, said on Friday that he believed there were “transcripts” that would help document those contacts, though he said he had not yet seen them.

“There are transcripts that provide very helpful, very critical insights into whether or not Russian intelligence or senior Russian political leaders — including Vladimir Putin — were cooperating, were colluding, with the Trump campaign at the highest levels to influence the outcome of our election,” Mr. Coons told Andrea Mitchell on MSNBC. “I believe they exist.”

In a written statement on Saturday, a spokesman for Mr. Coons said that the senator “did not imply that he is aware of transcripts indicating collusion between the Trump campaign and the Russians.” The spokesman, Sean Coit, said Mr. Coons had “simply stated that a full review of all relevant transcripts and intelligence intercepts is necessary to determine if



collusion took place.”

The New York Times reported in January that among the associates whose links to Russia are being scrutinized are Paul Manafort, Mr. Trump’s onetime campaign chairman; Carter Page, a businessman and foreign policy adviser to the campaign; and Roger Stone, a longtime Republican operative who said he was in touch with WikiLeaks at one point before it released a trove of emails from John D. Podesta, Hillary Clinton’s campaign chairman, last August. Mr. Stone later said he had communicated with WikiLeaks through an intermediary.

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There is no confirmed evidence that the F.B.I. obtained a court warrant to wiretap the Trump Organization or was capturing communications directly from the Trump Organization.

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# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

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Mr. Levin, a day earlier, railed about what he called a “much bigger scandal,” claiming — again with no proof — that Mr. Obama and his aides had used “the instrumentalities of the federal government, intelligence activity, to surveil members of the Trump campaign and put that information out in the public.”

Several senior members of Mr. Trump’s White House staff, including his spokesman, Sean Spicer, did not respond to an email requesting on-the-record responses to more than a half-dozen questions about Mr. Trump’s Twitter posts.

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Even some Republican lawmakers questioned Mr. Trump’s accusations. Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska issued a statement demanding that the president reveal everything he knows about any wiretaps or warrants.

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Taping calls seems to hold a spot in Mr. Trump’s consciousness. He spent many years taping his own phone calls as a businessman. During the campaign, Mr. Trump’s staff members told reporters they feared that their offices were being bugged.

But Mr. Trump’s latest allegations represented a sharp change in his tone toward Mr.

Obama.

The current president has frequently spoken about how much he admires Mr. Obama for the gracious way he handled the transition. But since taking office, Mr. Trump has frequently clashed with the intelligence agencies over the Russia inquiries, including efforts to examine the attempts by that country to influence the presidential election and the contacts between Mr. Trump's aides and the Russian government.

In recent days, the president has appeared increasingly angry about leaks of information that he believes are coming from law enforcement and intelligence officials who are holdovers or recently departed from Mr. Obama's administration.

People close to Mr. Trump have described him as determined to stop those people from sabotaging his administration. One adviser said on Friday that the president had been discussing a possible plan to try to prevent leaks from occurring. The adviser declined to elaborate on what the plan might entail.

Two senior administration officials said Mr. Trump had tried for two days to find a way to be on an offensive footing against the news articles resulting from leaks; one person close to Mr. Trump said his explosive claim was a result of that.

Mr. Trump's mood was said to be volatile even before he departed for his weekend in Florida, with an episode in which he vented at his staff. The president's ire was trained in particular on Mr. McGahn, his White House counsel, according to two people briefed on the matter.

Mr. Trump was said to be frustrated about the decision by Jeff Sessions, his attorney general, to recuse himself from participating in any investigations of connections between the Trump campaign and Russia. Mr. Trump has said there were no such connections. Mr. Trump, who did not learn that Mr. Sessions was recusing himself until after the decision was made, told aides that it gave an opening to his critics on the Russia issue.

**From:** Strzok, Peter P. (CD) (FBI)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Trump, Offering No Evidence, Says Obama Tapped His Phones - NYTimes.com  
**To:** Priestap, E. W. (CD) (FBI); Baker, James A. (OGC) (FBI)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Bcc:** [REDACTED] (OGC) (FBI)  
**Sent:** March 4, 2017 8:18 PM (UTC-05:00)

b6 -1  
b7C -1

Not sure if you saw this NYT article, nor if accurate.

But a senior White House official said that Donald F. McGahn II, the president's chief counsel, was working to secure access to what Mr. McGahn believed to be an order issued by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court authorizing some form of surveillance related to Mr. Trump and his associates.

The official offered no evidence to support the notion that such an order exists. It would be a highly unusual breach of the Justice Department's traditional independence on law enforcement matters for the White House to order it to turn over such an investigative document.

Any request for information from a top White House official about a continuing investigation would be a stunning departure from protocols intended to insulate the F.B.I. from political pressure. It would be even more surprising for the White House to seek information about a case directly involving the president or his advisers, as does the case involving the Russia contacts.

<https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/03/04/us/politics/trump-obama-tap-phones.html>

## Trump, Offering No Evidence, Says Obama Tapped His Phones

March 4, 2017

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — President Trump on Saturday accused former President Barack Obama of tapping his phones at Trump Tower the month before the election, taking to Twitter to call his predecessor a “bad (or sick) guy.”

Without offering any evidence or providing the source of his information, Mr. Trump fired off a series of Twitter messages claiming that Mr. Obama “had my ‘wires tapped.’” He likened the supposed tapping to “Nixon/Watergate” and “McCarthyism.”

How low has President Obama gone to tapp my phones during the very sacred election process. This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) March 4, 2017

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

A spokesman for Mr. Obama said any suggestion that the former president had ordered such surveillance was “simply false.”

During the 2016 campaign, the federal authorities began an investigation into links between Trump associates and the Russian government, an issue that continues to dog Mr. Trump. His aides declined to clarify on Saturday whether the president’s explosive allegations were based on briefings from intelligence or law enforcement officials — which could mean that Mr. Trump was revealing previously unknown details about the investigation — or on something else, like a news report.

But a senior White House official said that Donald F. McGahn II, the president’s chief counsel, was working to secure access to what Mr. McGahn believed to be an order issued by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court authorizing some form of surveillance related to Mr. Trump and his associates.

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Last month, Reince Priebus, the White House chief of staff, came under fire for asking a top F.B.I. official to publicly rebut news reports about contacts between Trump campaign officials and the Russian government.

The president’s decision on Saturday to lend the power of his office to accusations against his predecessor of politically motivated wiretapping — without offering any proof — was remarkable, even for a leader who has repeatedly shown himself willing to make assertions that are false or based on dubious sources.

It would have been difficult for federal agents, working within the law, to obtain a wiretap order to target Mr. Trump’s phone conversations. It would have meant that the Justice

# Obtained by UndeadFOIA

Department had gathered sufficient evidence to convince a federal judge that there was probable cause to believe Mr. Trump had committed a serious crime or was an agent of a foreign power, depending on whether it was a criminal investigation or a foreign intelligence one.

Former officials pointed to longstanding laws and procedures intended to ensure that presidents cannot wiretap a rival for political purposes.

“A cardinal rule of the Obama administration was that no White House official ever interfered with any independent investigation led by the Department of Justice,” said Kevin Lewis, a spokesman for Mr. Obama. “As part of that practice, neither President Obama nor any White House official ever ordered surveillance on any U.S. citizen.”

Mr. Trump asserted just the opposite in a series of five Twitter messages beginning just minutes before sunrise in Florida, where the president is spending the weekend at his Mar-a-Lago estate.

In the first message, the president said he had “just found out” that “Obama had my ‘wires tapped’ in Trump Tower” before the election. Mr. Trump’s reference to “wires tapped” raised the possibility that he was referring to some other type of electronic surveillance and was using the idea of phone tapping loosely.

Terrible! Just found out that Obama had my "wires tapped" in Trump Tower just before the victory. Nothing found. This is McCarthyism!

— [Donald J. Trump \(@realDonaldTrump\)](#) March 4, 2017

Two people close to Mr. Trump said they believed he was referring to [a Breitbart News article](#) which aides said had been passed around among his advisers. Mark Levin, a conservative radio host, had also embraced the theory recently in a push against what right-leaning commentators have been calling the “deep state.”

The Breitbart article, published on Friday, claimed that there was a series of “known steps taken by President Barack Obama’s administration in its last months to undermine [Donald Trump](#)’s presidential campaign and, later, his new administration.” Stephen K. Bannon, Mr. Trump’s chief strategist, once led Breitbart News.

If Mr. Trump was motivated to take to Twitter after reading the Breitbart article or listening to Mr. Levin, he was using a presidential megaphone to spread dark theories of a broad conspiracy aimed at undermining his presidential ambitions, and later his presidency.

Even with the Breitbart article circulating, several of Mr. Trump's advisers were stunned by the president's morning Twitter outburst. Those advisers said they were uncertain about what specifically Mr. Trump was referring to; one surmised that he may also have been referring to a months-old news report about a secret surveillance warrant for communications at his New York offices.

One senior law enforcement official from the Obama administration, who has direct knowledge of the F.B.I. investigation into Russia and of government wiretapping, said that it was "100 percent untrue" that the government had wiretapped Mr. Trump. The official, who asked for anonymity to discuss matters related to investigations and intelligence, said the White House owed the American people an explanation for the president's allegations.

Ben Rhodes, a former top national security aide to Mr. Obama, said in a Twitter message directed at Mr. Trump on Saturday that "no president can order a wiretap" and added, "Those restrictions were put in place to protect citizens from people like you."

The House and Senate Intelligence Committees are moving forward with their own investigations into Russia's efforts to influence the election, and they have said they will examine links between Mr. Trump's associates and the Russians.

Mr. Trump claimed the Obama administration ordered the phoned at his building in New York tapped.

Victor J. Blue for The New York Times

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