

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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November 17, 2016

The Honorable Jason Chaffetz
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for meeting with me yesterday about the Oversight Committee's priorities going forward. During our meeting, I proposed that we conduct a bipartisan investigation into Russia's role in interfering with and influencing the 2016 presidential election. In response, you stated that although you were open to considering such an investigation, you wanted me to "show the evidence" that Russia in fact meddled in our election.

Two days ago, on November 15, 2015, Admiral Michael Rogers, the Director of the National Security Agency (NSA), made the following statement:

There shouldn't be any doubt in anybody's minds, this was not something that was done casually, this was not something that was done by chance, this was not a target that was selected purely arbitrarily. This was a conscious effort by a nation-state to attempt to achieve a specific effect.¹

The NSA Director's statement followed a previous statement issued on October 7, 2016, by the Office of Director of National Intelligence and the Department of Homeland Security, speaking on behalf of our nation's 17 federal intelligence agencies:

The U.S. Intelligence Community (USIC) is confident that the Russian Government directed the recent compromises of e-mails from US persons and institutions, including from US political organizations. The recent disclosures of alleged hacked e-mails on sites like DCLeaks.com and WikiLeaks and by the Guccifer 2.0 online persona are consistent with the methods and motivations of Russian-directed efforts. These thefts and disclosures are intended to interfere with the US election process. Such activity is

¹ A "Nation-State" Used Wikileaks to Influence the US Election, the Head of the NSA Says, Quartz (Nov. 15, 2016) (online at <http://qz.com/838615/nsa-chief-on-wikileaks-and-the-hacks-affecting-the-us-election-a-conscious-effort-by-a-nation-state/>).

not new to Moscow—the Russians have used similar tactics and techniques across Europe and Eurasia, for example, to influence public opinion there. We believe, based on the scope and sensitivity of these efforts, that only Russia’s senior-most officials could have authorized these activities.²

House Speaker Paul Ryan’s spokesman warned: “Russia is a global menace led by a devious thug. Putin should stay out of this election.”³

In addition, Senator Marco Rubio stated: “I want to warn my fellow Republicans who may want to capitalize politically on these leaks: Today it is the Democrats. Tomorrow it could be us.”⁴

Two days ago, Senator Lindsey Graham called for a Senate investigation into Russia’s role in manipulating our election, stating:

Here’s what I would tell Republicans: We cannot sit on the sidelines as a party and let allegations against a foreign government interfering in our election process go unanswered because it may have been beneficial to our cause.⁵

Over the course of your chairmanship, we have had our differences on certain issues, but this should not be one of them. This perilous menace goes beyond party, beyond politics, and beyond partisanship. Although these attacks were executed to harm the Democratic candidate for president on this occasion, Russia’s actions sow doubts about our entire elections system and merit a robust congressional investigation.

Elections are the bedrock of our nation’s democracy. Any attempt by a foreign power to undermine them is a direct attack on our core democratic values, and it should chill every Member of Congress and American—red or blue—to the core.

I believe the public deserves a full and open accounting of this matter—one that we are uniquely positioned to provide. I propose that the Oversight Committee begin by obtaining for all of our Members and appropriately-cleared staff a classified briefing from the Intelligence

² Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Joint DHS and ODNI Election Security Statement* (Oct. 7, 2016) (online at www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/215-press-releases-2016/1423-joint-dhs-odni-election-security-statement).

³ *Speaker Paul Ryan Calls on “Global Menace” Russia to “Stay Out of This Election,”* Time (July 27, 2016) (online at <http://time.com/4426783/paul-ryan-republicans-donald-trump-russia>).

⁴ *Rubio Warns GOP to Stay Silent on Wikileaks Hack*, Politico (Oct. 19, 2016) (online at www.politico.com/story/2016/10/marco-rubio-stay-silent-wikileaks-229977).

⁵ *GOP Sen. Lindsey Graham Wants Congress to Investigate Russian Cyberattack on DNC, Election*, Los Angeles Times (Nov. 15, 2016) (online at www.latimes.com/nation/politics/trailguide/la-na-trailguide-updates-gop-sen-lindsey-graham-wants-congress-1479254194-htmllstory.html).

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Community on these issues, followed by a robust investigation designed to identify specific recommendations for actions that our country can take to respond to these attacks and safeguard against similar attacks in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elijah E. Cummings". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member