

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 30, 2016

The Honorable James Comey
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Director:

Based on multiple press reports, it appears that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is investigating whether Russia executed cyber attacks against the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) that resulted in the illegal hacking of a wide range of emails and other documents.¹

We are writing to request that the FBI assess whether connections between Trump campaign officials and Russian interests may have contributed to these attacks in order to interfere with the U.S. presidential election.

Serious questions have been raised about overt and covert actions by Trump campaign officials on behalf of Russian interests. It is critical for the American public to know whether those actions may have directly caused or indirectly motivated attacks against Democratic institutions and our fundamental election process.

On July 22, 2016, just days before the Democratic convention, approximately 20,000 pages of illegally hacked documents were leaked by WikiLeaks in an apparent attempt to influence the U.S. presidential election in favor of Donald Trump.² According to one press report:

The FBI suspects that Russian government hackers breached the networks of the Democratic National Committee and stole emails that were posted to the anti-secrecy site

¹ See, e.g., *FBI Investigating Whether Russians Hacked Democratic Party's Emails to Help Donald Trump*, Los Angeles Times (July 25, 2016) (online at www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-pol-fbi-hack-dnc-russia-20160725-snap-story.html). See also *Growing Evidence Suggests Recent Hacks the Work of Russian-Backed Cyber Militias*, Fox News (Aug. 20, 2016) (online at www.foxnews.com/politics/2016/08/20/growing-evidence-suggest-recent-hacks-work-russian-backed-cyber-militias.html).

² *WikiLeaks Releases Thousands of Documents About Clinton and Internal Deliberations*, Washington Post (July 22, 2016) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/07/22/on-eve-of-democratic-convention-wikileaks-releases-thousands-of-documents-about-clinton-the-campaign-and-internal-deliberations/).

WikiLeaks on Friday. It's an operation that several U.S. officials now suspect was a deliberate attempt to influence the presidential election in favor of Donald Trump, according to five individuals familiar with the investigation of the breach.³

Donald Trump has repeatedly praised Russian President Vladimir Putin, stating that "he's doing a great job,"⁴ "I'd get along very well with Vladimir Putin,"⁵ and "It is always a great honor to be so nicely complimented by a man so highly respected."⁶ Donald Trump's business interests in Russia have also been widely reported.⁷

Donald Trump has proposed shocking policy positions that would greatly benefit Russia, including breaking from longstanding U.S. commitments to our NATO allies to combat Russian aggression⁸ and weakening sanctions and recognizing Russia's annexation of Crimea.⁹

Of direct concern, however, are Donald Trump's comments encouraging Russian hacking and his top aides' previously undisclosed connections to Russian officials and interests.

On July 27, 2016—the third day of the Democratic convention—Donald Trump urged Russia to hack Secretary Hillary Clinton's emails.¹⁰

³ *FBI Suspects Russia Hacked DNC; U.S. Officials Say it Was to Elect Donald Trump*, Daily Beast (July 25, 2016) (online at www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/07/25/fbi-suspects-russia-hacked-dnc-u-s-officials-say-it-was-to-elect-donald-trump.html).

⁴ *Larry King Live*, CNN (Oct. 15, 2007) (online at www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0710/15/lkl.01.html).

⁵ *Donald Trump: "I'd Get Along Very Well With Vladimir Putin,"* CBS News (July 30, 2015) (online at www.cbsnews.com/news/donald-trump-id-get-along-very-well-with-vladimir-putin/).

⁶ *Trump Says "Great Honor" to Get Compliments from "Highly Respected" Putin*, ABC News (Dec. 17, 2015) (online at <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/trump-great-honor-compliments-highly-respected-putin/story?id=35829618>).

⁷ *Inside Donald Trump's Financial Ties to Russia and His Unusual Flattery of Vladimir Putin*, Washington Post (June 17, 2016) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/politics/inside-trumps-financial-ties-to-russia-and-his-unusual-flattery-of-vladimir-putin/2016/06/17/dbdcaac8-31a6-11e6-8ff7-7b6c1998b7a0_story.html?postshare=1821472042965377&tid=ss_mail).

⁸ *Trump Takes Heat from NATO Officials for Interview Comments*, Fox News (July 21, 2016) (online at www.foxnews.com/politics/2016/07/21/trump-takes-heat-from-nato-officials-for-interview-comments.html).

⁹ *This Week with George Stephanopoulos*, ABC News (July 31, 2016) (online at <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/week-transcript-donald-trump-vice-president-joe-biden/story?id=41020870>).

¹⁰ *Trump Urges Russia to Hack Clinton's Email*, Politico (July 27, 2016) (online at www.politico.com/story/2016/07/trump-putin-no-relationship-226282).

Less than two weeks later, on August 8, 2016, Roger Stone, a Donald Trump confidante, revealed that he has communicated with WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange about the upcoming release of additional illegally-hacked Democratic documents. Mr. Stone made these statements during a Republican campaign event while answering a question about a potential “October surprise.”¹¹

It is unclear whether U.S. law enforcement authorities have interviewed Mr. Stone about his communications with Mr. Assange or about his knowledge of how WikiLeaks obtained the illegally-hacked documents.

In addition, on July 7, 2016, one of Donald Trump’s foreign policy advisers, Carter Page, traveled to Moscow to give a speech that was harshly critical of the United States and its “hypocritical focus on ideas such as democratization, inequality, corruption and regime change.”¹² Mr. Page had touted his extensive dealings with Russian energy giant Gazprom, claiming that he had been an adviser “on key transactions for Gazprom.”¹³ After Donald Trump named Mr. Page as his foreign policy adviser in March, Mr. Page explained that “his business has suffered directly from the U.S. economic sanctions imposed after Russia’s escalating involvement in the Ukraine.”¹⁴

Mr. Page appears to enjoy high-level access to Russian officials that are currently under sanctions imposed by the United States government. According to one press report:

After the Obama administration added Rosneft Chairman Igor Sechin to its sanctions list in 2014, limiting Sechin’s ability to travel to the United States or do business with U.S. firms, Page praised the former deputy prime minister, considered one of Putin’s closest allies over the past 25 years. “Sechin has done more to advance U.S.-Russian relations than any individual in or out of government from either side of the Atlantic over the past decade,” Page wrote.¹⁵

¹¹ *Trump Ally Claims He “Communicated With” WikiLeaks Founder*, Washington Examiner (Aug. 9, 2016) (online at www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-ally-claims-he-communicated-with-wikileaks-founder/article/2598931).

¹² *Trump’s Russia Adviser Criticizes U.S. for “Hypocritical Focus on Democratization,”* Washington Post (July 7, 2016) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/trumps-russia-adviser-criticizes-us-for-hypocritical-focus-on-democratization/2016/07/07/804a3d60-4380-11e6-a76d-3550dba926ac_story.html).

¹³ *Biography of Carter Page, CFA*, Global Energy Capital LLC (accessed Aug. 22, 2016) (online at www.globalenergycap.com/management/).

¹⁴ *Trump’s New Russia Adviser Has Deep Ties to Kremlin’s Gazprom*, Bloomberg (Mar. 30, 2016) (online at www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2016-03-30/trump-russia-adviser-carter-page-interview).

¹⁵ *Trump Adviser’s Public Comments, Ties to Moscow Stir Unease in Both Parties*, Washington Post (Aug. 5, 2016) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/trump-advisers-public-comments-ties-to-moscow-stir-unease-in-both-parties/2016/08/05/2e8722fa-5815-11e6-9aee-8075993d73a2_story.html).

It is unclear whether U.S. law enforcement authorities have interviewed Mr. Page about whether he met with Mr. Sechin or other individuals on the U.S. sanctions list during his trip to Moscow or on other occasions.

Another top adviser to Donald Trump, Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, traveled to Moscow in December 2015 and joined Vladimir Putin at the head table during a dinner honoring the Kremlin-backed media network RT. During the event, General Flynn gave a speech that was highly critical of the United States, stating, “The United States can’t sit there and say, ‘Russia, you’re bad.’”¹⁶ The following week, President Putin praised Donald Trump as “an outstanding and talented personality.”¹⁷ General Flynn declined to answer media inquiries about whether he traveled to Moscow on Donald Trump’s behalf.¹⁸

Most recently, Donald Trump’s campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, resigned after failing to disclose his role in assisting a pro-Russian party in Ukraine. Mr. Manafort reportedly had “wooded investments from oligarchs linked to Putin and advised the now-toppled pro-Russian Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich.”¹⁹ According to one press account:

Donald Trump’s campaign chairman helped a pro-Russian governing party in Ukraine secretly route at least \$2.2 million in payments to two prominent Washington lobbying firms in 2012, and did so in a way that effectively obscured the foreign political party’s efforts to influence U.S. policy. ... Under federal law, U.S. lobbyists must declare publicly if they represent foreign leaders or their political parties and provide detailed reports about their actions to the Justice Department. A violation is a felony and can result in up to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.²⁰

Rick Gates, a top strategist in Donald Trump’s campaign, reportedly worked with Mr. Manafort on this effort, “helping steer the advocacy work done by a pro-Yanukovich nonprofit,” including “downplaying the necessity of a congressional resolution meant to pressure the

¹⁶ *Trump Embraces Ex-Top Obama Intel Official*, Daily Beast (Mar. 9, 2016) (online at www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/03/09/donald-trump-embraces-top-obama-intel-official.html).

¹⁷ *Putin Praises “Bright and Talented” Trump*, CNN (Dec. 17, 2015) (online at www.cnn.com/2015/12/17/politics/russia-putin-trump/).

¹⁸ *Trump Embraces Ex-Top Obama Intel Official*, Daily Beast (Mar. 9, 2016) (online at www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/03/09/donald-trump-embraces-top-obama-intel-official.html).

¹⁹ *Trump Adviser’s Public Comments, Ties to Moscow Stir Unease in Both Parties*, Washington Post (Aug. 5, 2016) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/trump-advisers-public-comments-ties-to-moscow-stir-unease-in-both-parties/2016/08/05/2e8722fa-5815-11e6-9aee-8075993d73a2_story.html).

²⁰ *Manafort Tied to Undisclosed Foreign Lobbying*, Associated Press (Aug. 17, 2016) (online at <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/c01989a47ee5421593ba1b301ec07813/ap-sources-manafort-tied-undisclosed-foreign-lobbying>).

Ukrainian leader to release an imprisoned political rival.”²¹ Although Mr. Manafort has resigned from his position, it appears that Mr. Gates continues to be a top adviser to Mr. Trump.

It is unclear whether U.S. law enforcement authorities have interviewed Mr. Manafort or Mr. Page about their failure to disclose this information, but several prominent Members of Mr. Trump’s party have expressed grave concerns.

For example, Republican Adam Kinzinger of Illinois called for an investigation into Donald Trump’s “chief adviser, what his association with the Russians are.” More broadly, Rep. Kinzinger criticized “this affection in the campaign for Russia and Vladimir Putin,” and he questioned how and why a reference to Russian offensive weapons was mysteriously removed from the Republican Party’s platform, noting that “it just happened.”²²

Similarly, Eliot Cohen, who served as a counselor at the State Department under the George W. Bush Administration, warned: “Foreign governments sometimes express preferences about who should be elected; that’s already problematic. But to do something in the nature of dirty tricks would be a very, very serious problem.”²³

Finally, House Speaker Paul Ryan’s spokesman stated: “Russia is a global menace led by a devious thug. Putin should stay out of this election.”²⁴

We do not know if Donald Trump’s public statements or the connections of his campaign officials to Russian interests directly or indirectly led to the cyber attacks against Democratic party organizations, but there is widespread agreement that the United States should take all steps possible to prevent Russia from interfering in our electoral process and prosecute to the full extent of the law anyone involved in such a scheme.

²¹ *Id.*

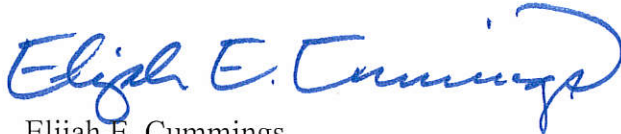
²² *GOP Congressman Warns Trump: Russia Not an Ally*, CNN (Aug. 6, 2016) (online at www.cnn.com/videos/tv/2016/08/15/gop-congressman-rep-adam-kinzinger-reacts-to-trumps-isis-plan-the-lead.cnn); *Rep. Kinzinger Calls for Investigation Into Manafort-Russian Ties*, Politico (Aug. 6, 2016) (online at www.politico.com/story/2016/08/gop-rep-calls-for-investigation-into-manafort-russian-ties-227090). See also *Donald Trump Campaign Chairman Paul Manafort Resigns*, CNN (Aug. 20, 2016) (online at www.cnn.com/2016/08/19/politics/donald-trump-campaign-chairman-paul-manafort-resigns/index.html) (citing Rep. Sean Duffy of Wisconsin, stating, “I want to know what money he got from a pro-Russian organization in the Ukraine.”).

²³ *Trump Invites Russia to Meddle in the U.S. Presidential Race with Clinton’s Emails*, Washington Post (July 27, 2016) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-invites-russia-to-meddle-in-the-us-presidential-race-with-clintons-emails/2016/07/27/a85d799e-5414-11e6-b7de-dfe509430c39_story.html?tid=a_inl).


²⁴ *Speaker Paul Ryan Calls on “Global Menace” Russia to “Stay Out of This Election;” The Call Came After Donald Trump Encouraged Russian Hackers to Target Hillary Clinton*, CNN (July 27, 2016) (online at <http://time.com/4426783/paul-ryan-republicans-donald-trump-russia/>).

Thank you for your consideration of this request.


Sincerely,



Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform



John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary



Elliot L. Engel
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Affairs



Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security

cc: The Honorable Jason Chaffetz
The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
The Honorable Edward R. Royce
The Honorable Michael T. McCaul