

Withdrawn/Redacted Material

Obama Presidential Library

DOCUMENT NO.	FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
001	Email	From Brett M. Holmgren to Christopher Fonzone and Caroline A. Tess, re: FW: [Timing]	2	12/31/2016	P1/b1;
002	Webpage	Statement by Secretary Johnson Concerning the Cybersecurity of the Nation's Election Systems	3	09/16/2016	
003	Webpage	President, Congressional Leaders Come Together to Talk Shutdown, Zika Funding	3	09/13/2016	
004	Webpage	Russia Intervened to Help Trump Win Election: Intelligence Officials	3	12/10/2016	
005	Webpage	Clapper: Trump Rhetoric on Intel Agencies Alarming U.S. Allies	5	01/05/2017	
006	Webpage	Obama Strikes Back at Russia for Election Hacking	6	12/29/2016	

COLLECTION TITLE:

Counsel's Office, White House (WHCO)

SERIES:

Walsh, James - Subject Files

FOLDER TITLE:

Russian Hacking [1]: Press Coverage of election - related interference

FRC ID:

70723

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

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DOCUMENT NO.	FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
007	Webpage	Joint Statement from the Department of Homeland Security and Office of the Director of National Intelligence on Election Security	3	10/07/2016	
008	Webpage	Obama Says U.S. Will Retaliate for Russia's Election Meddling	5	12/15/2016	
009	Webpage	Here's What We Know About Russia and the DNC Hack	4	07/27/2016	
010	Webpage	How We Identified the D.N.C. Hack's 'Patient Zero'	5	12/20/2016	
011	Webpage	Hackers Breach Some White House Computers	2	10/28/2014	
012	Webpage	Obama Orders Review of Russian Election-Related Hacking	3	12/09/2016	

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DOCUMENT NO.	FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
013a	Webpage	Congressional Leaders Urge States to Protect Election Systems	2	09/29/2016	
013b	Letter	[Joint Congressional Letter to the National Association of State Election Directors President Todd Valentine]	1	09/28/2016	
014	Webpage	Obama Says He Told Putin: 'Cut it out' on Hacking	4	12/16/2016	

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NARA Num.:

FOIA IDs and Segments:

22-26841-F

22-26840-F

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Statement by Secretary Johnson Concerning the Cybersecurity of the Nation's Election Systems

Release Date: September 16, 2016

For Immediate Release
DHS Press Office
Contact: 202-282-8010

In recent months we have seen cyber intrusions involving political institutions and personal communications. We have also seen some efforts at cyber intrusions of voter registration data maintained in state election systems. We have confidence in the overall integrity of our electoral systems. It is diverse, subject to local control, and has many checks and balance built in.

Nevertheless, we must face the reality that cyber intrusions and attacks in this country are increasingly sophisticated, from a range of increasingly capable actors that include nation-states, cyber hackers, and criminals. In this environment, we must be vigilant.

The Department of Homeland Security stands ready to assist state and local election officials in protecting their systems. In our cybersecurity mission, this is the nature of what we do – offer and provide assistance upon request. We do this for private businesses and other entities across the spectrum of the private and public sectors. This includes the most cybersecurity sophisticated businesses in Corporate America.

It is important to emphasize what DHS assistance does not entail. DHS assistance is strictly voluntary and does not entail regulation, binding directives, and is not offered to supersede state and local control over the process. The DHS role is limited to support only.

DHS offers the following services to state and election officials to assist in their cybersecurity:

- **Cyber hygiene scans on Internet-facing systems.** These scans are conducted remotely, after which we can provide state and local officials with a report identifying vulnerabilities and mitigation recommendations to improve the cybersecurity of systems connected to the Internet, such as online voter registration systems, election night reporting systems, and other Internet-connected election management systems.
- **Risk and vulnerability assessments.** These assessments are more thorough and done on-site by DHS cybersecurity experts. They typically require 2-3 weeks and include a wide range of vulnerability testing services, focused on both internal and external systems.
- **The National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center, or “NCCIC.”** The NCCIC is DHS’s 24x7 cyber incident response center. We encourage state and local election officials to report suspected malicious cyber activity to the NCCIC. On request, the NCCIC can provide on-site

assistance in identifying and remediating a cyber incident.

- **Information sharing.** DHS will continue to share relevant information on cyber incidents through multiple means. The NCCIC works with the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) to provide threat and vulnerability information to state and local officials. All states are members of the MS-ISAC. DHS requests that election officials connect with their state CIO to benefit from this partnership and rapidly receive information they can use to protect their systems. State election officials may also receive incident information directly from the NCCIC.
- **Sharing of best practices.** DHS intends to publish best practices for securing voter registration databases and addressing potential threats to election systems from ransomware. These best practices documents will be publicly available by September 16, 2016.
- **Field-based cybersecurity advisors and protective security advisors.** DHS has personnel available in the field to provide actionable information and connect election officials to a range of tools and resources available to improve the cybersecurity preparedness of election systems and the physical site security of voting machine storage and polling places. These advisors are also available to assist with planning and incident management assistance for both cyber and physical incidents.

In recent weeks a number of states have reached out to us with questions or for assistance. We strongly encourage more state and local election officials to do so.

###

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WHITE HOUSE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT NATIONAL SECURITY ELECTIONS FIRST READ

POLITICS SEP 13 2016, 4:59 AM ET

President, Congressional Leaders Come Together to Talk Shutdown, Zika Funding

by MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR

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The looming threat of a government shutdown and the growing need for Zika funding has brought the executive and legislative branches together at the White House for the first time since early February.


President Barack Obama invited Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wisc., and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Ca., to discuss both issues on Monday afternoon.

"I was encouraged by some of the constructive work that's being done right now," Obama said after the meeting.

Obama said his "hope is that by the time Congress adjourns, before the election, that we will have an agreement in place to fund the government and that Zika funding will be taken care of."

The first priority of the congressional leaders, according to the president, should be to avoid yet another government shutdown, which could happen if members do not pass a funding bill before the fiscal year ends on Sept. 30.



U.S. President Barack Obama meets with Speaker Paul Ryan (2nd-L), Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (L), Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid (R) and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (C) at the Oval Office in the White House, Washington U.S., September 12, 2016.  CARLOS BARRIA / Reuters

But a shutdown showdown is highly unlikely now that McConnell set up a vote on a continuing resolution that could happen as early as this week.

After the meeting, McConnell released a statement, saying, "We had a good meeting, talked about wrapping up the funding issue and I think we are all in a very good place to do that on a bipartisan basis pretty quickly."

His spokesman, David Popp added, "Leader McConnell was happy to give the president an update on the ongoing bipartisan-bicameral congressional negotiations regarding the CR and Zika funding."

The short-term funding bill would keep the government operating until Dec. 9, effectively moving the budget deadline to after Election Day.

Related: Could Obama Face Veto Override Showdown Over 9/11 Bill?

But instead of once again passing a bulk funding bill at year's end, Speaker Ryan indicated that Republicans will strive to roll out separate mini-funding packages.

"The speaker talked about his desire to get the appropriations process working, and told the leaders he objected to doing an omnibus spending bill later in the year," an aide to the speaker said after the meeting with the president.

The continuing resolution is expected to include a \$1.1 billion Zika funding provision that was struck down three times by Senate Democrats in the past several months.

To get them on board, Republicans are looking at scrapping controversial language from the Zika legislation that would have also defunded Planned Parenthood.

The leaders also said they were able to discuss bipartisan initiatives that could be addressed during the lame duck season including criminal justice reform, disaster relief for Louisiana and areas affected by wildfires this summer, and more money to help the Flint water crisis.

"Even though we're in the midst of a political season, everyone is thinking about elections, there's still business to be done," Obama said.

MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR

TOPICS CONGRESS, BARACK OBAMA, POLITICS NEWS

FIRST PUBLISHED SEP 12 2016, 10:47 PM ET

↓ **NEXT STORY** Betsy DeVos, Trump's Pick for Education Secretary, Won't Rule Out Defunding Public Schools

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EDITION: UNITED STATES

WORLD NEWS | Sat Dec 10, 2016 | 3:00pm EST

Russia intervened to help Trump win election: intelligence officials

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- 2 U.S. obtained evidence after election that Russia leaked emails: officials
- 3 U.S. spy chief 'resolute' on Russia cyber attack, differs with Trump
- 4 Dismal holiday sales at Macy's and Kohl's cast gloom over sector
- 5 Trump picks former U.S. Senator Coats as director of national intelligence

CIA: Russia intervened to help Trump win White House

01:08

By John Walcott | WASHINGTON

U.S. intelligence analysts have concluded that Russia intervened in the 2016 election to help President-elect Donald Trump win the White House, and not just to undermine confidence in the U.S. electoral system, a senior U.S. official said on Friday.

U.S. intelligence agencies have assessed that as the 2016 presidential campaign progressed, Russian government officials devoted increasing attention to assisting Trump's effort to win the election, the U.S. official familiar with the finding told Reuters on Friday night, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The president-elect's transition office released a statement that exaggerated his margin of victory and attacked the U.S. intelligence community that Trump will soon command, but did not address the analysts' conclusion.

"These are the same people that said Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass destruction," the statement said. "The election ended a long time ago in one of the biggest Electoral College victories in history. It's now time to move on and 'Make America Great Again.'"

Democrats and some Republicans in Congress are calling for a full investigation into Russia's election year activities.

"Protecting the integrity of our elections is hindered when President-elect Trump and his transition team minimize or dismiss the intelligence assessments themselves," Representative Adam Schiff of California, the ranking Democrat on the House intelligence committee, said in a statement issued on Saturday.

Citing U.S. officials briefed on the matter, the Washington Post reported on Friday that intelligence agencies had identified individuals with connections to the Russian

PICTURES OF THE DAY

government who provided thousands of hacked emails from the Democratic National Committee and others, including the chairman of Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, to WikiLeaks.

U.S. President Barack Obama has ordered intelligence agencies to review cyber attacks and foreign intervention into the 2016 election and deliver a report before he leaves office on Jan. 20, the White House said on Friday.



Editor's Choice



FACEBOOK LIVE: Jodie Patterson shares the story of her transgender son [VIEW MORE](#)

Russia intervened to help Trump win election: intelligence officials



U.S. President-elect Donald Trump speaks at a 'Thank You USA' tour rally in Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S. December 9, 2016. REUTERS/Mike Segar

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Obama's homeland security adviser, Lisa Monaco, told reporters the report's results would be shared with lawmakers and others.

"The president has directed the intelligence community to conduct a full review of what happened during the 2016 election process ... and to capture lessons learned from that and to report to a range of stakeholders, to include the Congress," she said during an event hosted by the Christian Science Monitor.

As summer turned to fall, Russian hackers turned almost all their attention to the Democrats. Virtually all the emails they released publicly were potentially damaging to Clinton and the Democrats, not Republicans, the official told Reuters.

"That was a major clue to their intent," the official said. "If all they wanted to do was discredit our political system, why publicize the failings of just one party, especially when you have a target like Trump?"

A second official familiar with the report said the intelligence analysts' conclusion about Russia's motives does not mean the intelligence community believes that Moscow's efforts altered or significantly affected the outcome of the election.

Russian officials have denied all accusations of interference in the U.S. election.

A Central Intelligence Agency spokeswoman said the agency had no comment on the matter.

The hacked emails passed to WikiLeaks were a regular source of embarrassment to the Clinton campaign during the race for the presidency.

ALSO IN WORLD NEWS

U.S. spy chief 'resolute' on Russia cyber attack, differs with Trump

U.S. intelligence analysts have assessed "with high confidence" that at some point in the extended presidential campaign Russian President Vladimir Putin's government had decided to try to bolster Trump's chances of winning.

South Korea minister says

The Russians appear to have concluded that Trump

South Korea minister says China indirectly retaliating against THAAD

had a shot at winning and that he would be much friendlier to Russia than Clinton would be, especially on issues such as maintaining economic sanctions and imposing additional ones, the official said.

Moscow is launching a similar effort to influence the next German election, following an escalating campaign to promote far-right and nationalist political parties and individuals in Europe that began more than a decade ago, the official said.

In both cases, said the official, Putin's campaigns in both Europe and the United States

FACEBOOK LIVE: Jodie Patterson shares the story of her transgender son VIEW MORE

Russia intervened to help Trump win election: intelligence officials

In October, the U.S. government publicly accused Russia of a campaign of cyber attacks against Democratic Party organizations ahead of the Nov. 8 presidential election. Obama has said he warned Putin about consequences for the attacks.

"I don't believe they interfered," Trump told Time magazine about Russia in an interview published this week. "That became a laughing point, not a talking point, a laughing point. Any time I do something, they say, 'Oh, Russia interfered.'"

(Writing by David Alexander and John Walcott; Additional reporting by Brendan O'Brien in Milwaukee, Wis.; Editing by Louise Heavens and Matthew Lewis)

NEXT IN WORLD NEWS

Berlin truck attacker used at least 14 names: German police



BERLIN/DUESSELDORF, Germany The Tunisian man who killed 12 people last month by plowing a truck into a Berlin Christmas market had lived under at least 14 different names in Germany, a regional police chief said on Thursday, raising more questions about security lapses.

Two Islamic State car bombs in Baghdad kill at least 14: sources



BAGHDAD Two car bombs in Baghdad claimed by Islamic State killed at least 14 people on Thursday, police and medics said, part of a surge in violence across the capital at a time when U.S.-backed Iraqi forces are trying to drive the militants from Mosul in the north.

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Clapper: Trump rhetoric on intel agencies alarming U.S. allies

'I think there's a difference between skepticism and disparagement,' Director of National Intelligence James Clapper says.

By **MARTIN MATISHAK** and **CONNOR O'BRIEN** | 01/05/17 10:14 AM EST | Updated 01/05/17 01:53 PM EST

Democrats used a bipartisan hearing on Russian hacking Thursday to attack President-elect Donald Trump's ongoing disparagement of the intelligence community, arguing his statements ruin morale and embolden the country's enemies.

Minority members on the Senate Armed Services Committee turned Congress' first hearing on Russia's alleged election hacks into a platform to strike at the billionaire businessman and try to drive a wedge between him and GOP leadership — with even South Carolina Republican Lindsey Graham joining in the criticism.

"Let's talk about who benefits from a president-elect trashing the intelligence community," Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) said during a hearing with top intelligence leaders, ticking off Iran, North Korea, Russia, China and the Islamic State as the "biggest benefactors."

Even Director of National Intelligence James Clapper seemed to implicitly rebuke Trump's ongoing refusal to believe the government's assessment that senior Moscow officials orchestrated a cyber campaign that roiled the Democratic Party in last year's election.

"I think there's a difference between skepticism and disparagement," said Clapper, who leaves office on Jan. 20, in response to McCaskill's speech.

DEFENSE**Trump's team tries to stifle rift on Russia**

By **BRYAN BENDER**

Later, Clapper — who strongly defended the government's assessment that Moscow directed the election-season hacks — told Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) that Trump's rhetoric about intelligence agencies is alarming American allies.

"I do think that public trust and confidence in the intelligence community is crucial," he said. "And I've received many expressions of concern from foreign counterparts about, you know, the disparagement of the U.S. intelligence community, or I should say what has been interpreted as disparagement of the intelligence community."

These exchanges were peppered throughout the session, which was being held amid Trump's ongoing public spat with the U.S. intelligence community.

The president-elect on Friday will receive a briefing from Clapper, FBI Director James Comey and CIA Director John Brennan on an extensive report detailing Moscow's digital campaign to interfere with the 2016 presidential race.

The Obama administration has publicly accused the Kremlin of directing the computer attacks that hit the Democratic Party and Hillary Clinton campaign operatives. The digital thefts eventually led to a WikiLeaks dump of embarrassing internal emails that ousted top Democratic National Committee leaders and destabilized Clinton's campaign in the final months.

President Barack Obama, who directed the intelligence community to create the report, is receiving his own briefing on Thursday.

The looming memo and Trump's pending briefing has shed a spotlight on the incoming commander in chief's long-standing skepticism about the government's intelligence apparatus.

Trump has repeatedly accused the intelligence officials hawking false narratives in an attempt to undermine his incoming administration. Most recently, Trump cited as evidence WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's repeated insistence that his organization did not receive the emails from the Russian government.

Trump's Cabinet picks: A rundown of upcoming hearings

By **KAITLYN BURTON** and **KELSEY TAMBORRINO**

The billionaire businessman's odd team-up brought a sharp admonishment from Democrats and even several congressional Republicans, including Senate defense hawks like Graham.

Clapper and NSA chief Adm. Michael Rogers also denounced Assange at Thursday's hearing, when McCain asked if "any credibility" should be "attached to this individual," given WikiLeaks' record of leaking materials that put U.S. lives "in direct danger."

"Not in my view," Clapper replied.

"I'd second those comments," Rogers answered.

Perhaps sensitive to the public perception, Trump on Thursday tried to walk back his previous online comments.

"The dishonest media likes saying that I am in Agreement with Julian Assange — wrong. I simply state what he states, it is for the people....," he tweeted, "to make up their own minds as to the truth. The media lies to make it look like I am against "Intelligence" when in fact I am a big fan!"

Some of Trump's previous statements on the intelligence apparatus would indicate otherwise. Most notably, he has latched onto claims in the run-up to the Iraq war that the regime of Saddam Hussein was developing weapons of mass destruction. The assertions were ultimately false.

Clapper conceded "my fingerprints" were on the report including those claims. But he argued the intelligence community has striven not to repeat the same mistakes.

"That was 13 years ago," he told Blumenthal. "We have done many, many things to improve our processes ... in order to prevent that from happening again."

Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), who is also a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, asked Clapper and Rogers what impact Trump's tweets might have on the intelligence community's morale.

"I hardly think it helps," Clapper said.

CONGRESS**McCain, Graham to take on Trump over Russia hacking**

By **BURGESS EVERETT** and **AUSTIN WRIGHT**

"I just don't want a situation where our workforce decides to walk," Rogers added.

Graham later crossed the aisle to join the Democrats in their condemnation, addressing his remarks directly to Trump.

"What I don't want you to do is undermine those who are serving our nation in this area until you're absolutely certain they need to be undermined," Graham said.

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) insisted that he trusted Clapper and the intelligence community to carry out the election-season hacking review and brief lawmakers on its findings.

Clapper said the intelligence community would brief Congress on the report and release an unclassified, public version "early next week."

"I intend to push the envelope as much as I can," Clapper said, adding that the public needs to know why he thinks the Russians were interfering.

Reportedly, the memo — which Clapper said was prepared by the CIA, NSA and FBI — will drop Monday afternoon.

Until then, though, Clapper cautioned that "we're really not prepared to discuss this beyond standing by our earlier statements."

Still, the intelligence chief told lawmakers that the memo "will ascribe a motivation" to Russia's election hacks. He later elaborated that Russia had "more than one motive."

CYBERSECURITY

Shaky accusations hamper cyber case against Russia

By CORY BENNETT and ERIC GELLER

"That will be in the report," he added.

In the meantime, McCain vowed to strike back against Russia for what he called an "unprecedented attack on our democracy."

The Obama administration has already slapped Russia with sanctions and ejected 35 alleged Russian spies from the U.S. in retaliation for the election-season hacks.

But McCain wants Congress to go further. He will have support from many Democrats, and even some within his own party.

"I think what Obama did was throw a pebble," Graham said. "I'm ready to throw a rock."

Sen. Jack Reed (R.I.), the panel's top Democrat, also re-upped on Thursday a call for a special select Senate committee on Russian hacking because the issue "spills across jurisdictional divide."

McCain has supported the select committee proposal but recently backed down after GOP leaders rebuffed the attempts, insisting that the existing committee structure is best suited to probing the situation.

In addition to the Armed Services examination, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Senate Intelligence Committee are both looking into Moscow's digital menace.

The New York Times | <http://nyti.ms/2hwS8pA>

POLITICS

Obama Strikes Back at Russia for Election Hacking

By DAVID E. SANGER DEC. 29, 2016

WASHINGTON — President Obama struck back at Russia on Thursday for its efforts to influence the 2016 election, ejecting 35 suspected Russian intelligence operatives from the United States and imposing sanctions on Russia's two leading intelligence services.

The administration also penalized four top officers of one of those services, the powerful military intelligence unit known as the G.R.U.

Intelligence agencies have concluded that the G.R.U. ordered the attacks on the Democratic National Committee and other political organizations, with the approval of the Kremlin, and ultimately enabled the publication of the emails it harvested to benefit Donald J. Trump's campaign.

The expulsion of the 35 Russians, who the administration said were spies posing as diplomats and other officials, and their families was in response to the harassment of American diplomats in Russia, State Department officials said. It was unclear if they were involved in the hacking.

In addition, the State Department announced the closing of two waterfront estates — one in Upper Brookville, N.Y., and another on Maryland's Eastern Shore —

that it said were used for Russian intelligence activities, although officials declined to say whether they were specifically used in the election-related hacks.

Taken together, the sweeping actions announced by the White House, the Treasury, the State Department and intelligence agencies on Thursday amount to the strongest American response yet to a state-sponsored cyberattack. They also appeared intended to box in President-elect Trump, who will now have to decide whether to lift the sanctions on Russian intelligence agencies when he takes office next month.

Mr. Trump responded to the Russian sanctions late Thursday by reiterating a call to “move on.” But he pledged to meet with intelligence officials, who have concluded that the Russian hacking was an attempt to tip the election to Mr. Trump.

In an earlier statement from Hawaii, Mr. Obama took a subtle dig at Mr. Trump, who has consistently cast doubt on the intelligence showing that the Russian government was deeply involved in the hacking. “All Americans should be alarmed by Russia’s actions,” Mr. Obama said, and added that the United States acted after “repeated private and public warnings that we have issued to the Russian government, and are a necessary and appropriate response to efforts to harm U.S. interests in violation of established international norms of behavior.”

He issued a new executive order that allows him, and his successors, to retaliate for efforts to influence elections in the United States or those of “allies and partners,” a clear reference to concern that Russia’s next target may be Germany and France. Already there are reports of influence operations in both.

Mr. Trump’s position is at odds with most members of his party, who after classified briefings have called for investigations into the combination of cyberattacks and old-style information warfare used in the 2016 campaign. Mr. Trump has largely stuck to the theory he set forth in a debate with Hillary Clinton in September, when he said the hacks could have been organized by “somebody sitting on their bed that weighs 400 pounds.”

Russia criticized the sanctions and vowed retaliation.

“Such steps of the U.S. administration that has three weeks left to work are aimed at two things: to further harm Russian-American ties, which are at a low point as it is, as well as, obviously, deal a blow on the foreign policy plans of the incoming administration of the president-elect,” Dmitri S. Peskov, the spokesman for President Vladimir V. Putin, told reporters.

Konstantin Kosachyov, the head of the foreign affairs committee in the upper house of the Russian Parliament, told Interfax that “this is the agony not even of ‘lame ducks,’ but of ‘political corpses.’”

Despite the international fallout and political repercussions surrounding the announcement, it is not clear how much effect the sanctions will have, except on the ousted diplomats, who have until midday Sunday to leave the country. G.R.U. officials rarely travel to the United States, or keep assets here.

The four Russian intelligence officials are Igor Valentinovich Korobov, the chief of the G.R.U., and three deputies: Sergey Aleksandrovich Gizunov, Igor Olegovich Kostyukov and Vladimir Stepanovich Alexseyev.

The administration also put sanctions on three companies and organizations that it said supported the hacking operations: the Special Technology Center, a signals intelligence operation in St. Petersburg, Russia; a firm called Zorsecurity that is also known as Esage Lab; and the Autonomous Noncommercial Organization Professional Association of Designers of Data Processing Systems, whose lengthy name, American officials said, was cover for a group that provided special training for the hacking.

Still, the sanctions go well beyond the modest sanctions imposed against North Korea for its attack on Sony Pictures Entertainment two years ago, which Mr. Obama said at the time was an effort to repress free speech — a somewhat crude comedy, called “The Interview,” imagining a C.I.A. plot to assassinate Kim Jung-un, the country’s leader.

The sanctions are not as biting as previous ones in which the United States and its Western allies took aim at broad sectors of the Russian economy and blacklisted dozens of people, some of them close friends of Mr. Putin’s. Those sanctions were in

response to the Russian annexation of Crimea and its activities to destabilize Ukraine. Mr. Trump suggested in an interview with The New York Times this year that he believed those sanctions were useless, and left open the possibility he might lift them.

The F.B.I. and the Department of Homeland Security on Thursday also released samples of malware and other indicators of Russian cyberactivity, including network addresses of computers commonly used by the Russians to start attacks. But the evidence in a report, in which the administration referred to the Russian cyberactivity as Grizzly Steppe, fell short of anything that would directly tie senior officers of the G.R.U. or the F.S.B., the other intelligence service, to a plan to influence the election.

A more detailed report on the intelligence, ordered by Mr. Obama, will be published in the next three weeks, though much of the information — especially evidence collected from “implants” in Russian computer systems, tapped conversations and spies — is expected to remain classified.

Several Obama administration officials, including Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., have suggested that there may also be a covert response, one that would be obvious to Mr. Putin but not to the public.

While that may prove satisfying, many outside experts have said that unless the public response is strong enough to impose a real cost on Mr. Putin, his government and his vast intelligence apparatus, it might not deter further activity.

“They are concerned about controlling retaliation,” said James A. Lewis, a cyberexpert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

But John P. Carlin, who recently left the administration as the chief of the Justice Department’s national security division, where he assembled cases against North Korean, Chinese and Iranian hackers, called the administration’s actions a “significant step that is consistent with a new model: When you violate norms of behavior in this space, we can figure out who did it and we can impose consequences.”

The Obama administration was riven for months by an internal debate about how much of its evidence to make public. In interviews for a **New York Times investigation into the hack**, several of Mr. Obama's top aides expressed regret that they had not made evidence public earlier, or reacted more strongly. None said they believed it would have affected the outcome of the election, however.

In recent weeks, Mr. Obama decided that the authorities he created in April 2015 to retaliate against states or individuals that conduct hacking after the Sony attack did not go far enough. They made no provision issuing sanctions in response to an incursion on the electoral system — an attack few saw coming.

So he ordered his lawyers to amend the executive order, specifically giving himself and his successor the authority to issue travel bans and asset freezes on those who “tamper with, alter, or cause a misappropriation of information, with a purpose or effect of interfering with or undermining election processes or institutions.”

The administration has not publicly criticized how its own officials handled the case. But the Times investigation revealed that the F.B.I. first informed the Democratic National Committee that it saw evidence that the committee's email systems had been hacked in the fall of 2015. Months of fumbling and slow responses followed.

Mr. Obama said at a news conference that he was first notified early this summer. But one of his top aides met Russian officials in Geneva to complain about activity in April.

By the time the leadership of the committee woke up to what was happening, the G.R.U. had not only obtained emails through a hacking group that has been closely associated with it for years, but, investigators say, also allowed them to be published on a number of websites, including a newly created one called DC Leaks and the far more established WikiLeaks. Meanwhile, several states reported the “scanning” of their voter databases — which American intelligence agencies also attributed to Russian hackers. But there is no evidence, American officials said, that Russia sought to manipulate votes or voter rolls on Nov. 8.

Mr. Obama decided not to issue sanctions earlier for fear of Russian retaliation ahead of Election Day. Some of his aides now believe that was a mistake. But the president made clear before leaving for Hawaii that he planned to respond.

Correction: December 31, 2016

Articles on Friday about the Obama administration's decision to close two Russian-owned compounds in the United States misidentified one of the compounds, using information from the White House and F.B.I. officials. The administration ordered the closure of Norwich House in Upper Brookville, N.Y., owned by Russia — not the nearby Killenworth Mansion in Glen Cove, N.Y., also owned by the Russians. An accompanying picture that showed Killenworth Mansion should have been of Norwich House.

Follow David E. Sanger on Twitter @SangerNYT.

Neil MacFarquhar contributed reporting from Moscow.

Get politics and Washington news updates via Facebook, Twitter and in the Morning Briefing newsletter.

A version of this article appears in print on December 30, 2016, on Page A1 of the New York edition with the headline: U.S. Punishes Russia Over Election Hacking.



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Joint Statement from the Department Of Homeland Security and Office of the Director of National Intelligence on Election Security

Release Date: October 7, 2016



For Immediate Release
DHS Press Office
Contact: 202-282-8010

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 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.

Some states have also recently seen scanning and probing of their election-related systems, which in most cases originated from servers operated by a Russian company. However, we are not now in a position to attribute this activity to the Russian Government. The USIC and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) assess that it would be extremely difficult for someone, including a nation-state actor, to alter actual ballot counts or election results by cyber attack or intrusion. This assessment is based on the decentralized nature of our election system in this country and the number of protections state and local election officials have in place. States ensure that voting machines are not connected to the Internet, and there are numerous checks and balances as well as extensive oversight at multiple levels built into our election process.

Nevertheless, DHS continues to urge state and local election officials to be vigilant and seek cybersecurity assistance from DHS. A number of states have already done so. DHS is providing several services to state and local election officials to assist in their cybersecurity. These services include cyber “hygiene” scans of Internet-facing systems, risk and vulnerability assessments, information sharing about cyber incidents, and best practices for securing voter registration databases and addressing potential cyber threats. DHS has convened an Election Infrastructure Cybersecurity Working Group with experts across all levels of government to raise awareness of cybersecurity risks potentially affecting election infrastructure and the elections process. Secretary Johnson and DHS officials are working directly with the National Association of Secretaries of State to offer assistance, share

information, and provide additional resources to state and local officials.

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Last Published Date: October 7, 2016

POLITICS

Obama Says U.S. Will Retaliate for Russia's Election Meddling

By JULIE HIRSCHFELD DAVIS and DAVID E. SANGER DEC. 15, 2016

WASHINGTON — President Obama said on Thursday that the United States would retaliate for Russia's efforts to influence the presidential election, asserting that “we need to take action,” and “we will.”

The comments, in an interview with NPR, indicate that Mr. Obama, in his remaining weeks in office, will pursue either economic sanctions against Russia or perhaps some kind of response in cyberspace.

Mr. Obama spoke as President-elect Donald J. Trump on Thursday again refused to accept Moscow's culpability, asking on Twitter why the administration had waited “so long to act” if Russia “or some other entity” had carried out cyberattacks.

The president discussed the potential for American retaliation with Steve Inskeep of NPR for an interview to air on Friday morning. “I think there is no doubt that when any foreign government tries to impact the integrity of our election,” Mr. Obama said, “we need to take action. And we will — at the time and place of our choosing.”

On Friday morning, the Kremlin's spokesman, Dmitri S. Peskov, batted away the warning. “It is necessary to either stop talking about it, or finally produce some evidence,” he told the Interfax news agency. “Otherwise, it all begins to look quite unseemly.”

The White House strongly suggested before the election that Mr. Obama would make use of sanctions authority for cyberattacks that he had given to himself by executive order. But he did not, in part out of concern that action before the election could lead to an escalated conflict.

If Mr. Obama invokes sanctions on Russian individuals or organizations, Mr. Trump could reverse them. But that would be politically difficult, as his critics argue that he is blind to Russian behavior.

On Thursday, pressure grew on Mr. Trump in Congress for him to acknowledge intelligence agencies' conclusions that Russia was behind the hacking. But aides said that was all but impossible before the Electoral College convenes on Monday to formalize his victory.

Mr. Trump has said privately in recent days that he believes there are people in the C.I.A. who are out to get him and are working to delegitimize his presidency, according to people briefed on the conversations who described them on the condition of anonymity.

The president-elect's suspicions have been stoked by the efforts of a group of Democratic electors, as well as one Republican, who called this week for an intelligence briefing on the Russian hacking, raising the prospect that votes in the Electoral College might be changed.

In his Twitter posting on Thursday, Mr. Trump suggested that the government's conclusions on Russian hacking were a case of sour grapes by Mr. Obama. The president-elect falsely stated that Mr. Obama had waited until after the election to raise the issue.

"Why did they only complain after Hillary lost?" Mr. Trump asked, although the director of national intelligence, James R. Clapper Jr., formally blamed Russia on Oct. 7 for cyberattacks on the Democratic National Committee and other organizations.

In September, meeting privately in China with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, Mr. Obama not only complained, the White House says, but also warned him

of consequences if the Russian activity did not stop.

Among those in his own party, Mr. Trump's refusal to accept the evidence that Russia was the perpetrator was raising growing concerns, with Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina saying he would not vote for Rex W. Tillerson, Mr. Trump's nominee for secretary of state, unless Mr. Tillerson addressed Russia's role during his confirmation hearings.

It remains to be seen whether Mr. Trump's stated doubts about Russia's involvement will subside after Monday's Electoral College vote. He and his allies have been concerned that the reports of Russian hacking have been intended to peel away votes from him, although even Democrats have not gone so far as to say the election was illegitimate.

"Right now, certain elements of the media, certain elements of the intelligence community and certain politicians are really doing the work of the Russians — they're creating this uncertainty over the election," Representative Peter T. King, Republican of New York, told reporters on Thursday after meeting with Mr. Trump.

But many other Republicans, including Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader, and Senator John McCain of Arizona, have publicly argued that the evidence leads straight to Russia. They have called for a full investigation, and Senator Dianne Feinstein, Democrat of California, who sits on the Senate Intelligence Committee, urged Mr. Obama on Thursday to complete an administration review quickly.

Mr. Trump's Twitter post was his latest move to accuse the intelligence agencies he will soon control of acting with a political agenda and to dispute the well-documented conclusion that Moscow carried out a meticulously planned series of attacks and releases of information to interfere in the presidential race.

But as he repeated his doubts, Mr. Trump seized on emerging questions about the Obama administration's response: Why did it take months after the breaches had been discovered for the administration to name Moscow publicly as the culprit? And why did Mr. Obama initially opt not to openly retaliate, through sanctions or other measures?

White House officials have said that the warning to Mr. Putin at the September summit meeting in China constituted the primary American response so far. When the administration decided to go public with its conclusion a month later, it did so in a statement from the director of national intelligence and the Homeland Security secretary, not in a prominent presidential appearance.

Officials said they were worried that any larger public response would have raised doubts about the election's integrity, something Mr. Trump was already seeking to do during the campaign when he insisted the election was "rigged."

Josh Earnest, the White House press secretary, criticized Mr. Trump on Thursday for questioning whether Russia was behind the attacks, referring to Mr. Trump's call during the campaign for Moscow to hack Hillary Clinton's emails, a remark his team has since dismissed as a joke.

"I don't think anybody at the White House thinks it's funny that an adversary of the United States engaged in malicious cyberactivity to destabilize our democracy — that's not a joke," Mr. Earnest said. "It might be time to not attack the intelligence community, but actually be supportive of a thorough, transparent, rigorous, nonpolitical investigation into what exactly happened."

While he declined to confirm news reports that Mr. Putin was personally involved in directing the cyberattacks, Mr. Earnest pointedly read part of the Oct. 7 statement that said intelligence officials believed "that only Russia's senior-most officials could have authorized these activities."

He said that language "would lead me to conclude that based on my personal reading and not based on any knowledge that I have that may be classified or otherwise, it was pretty obvious that they were referring to the senior-most government official in Russia."

In a conference call with reporters later on Thursday, aides declined to explain Mr. Trump's position on whether Russia had been responsible for the breaches or to describe what he would do about the issue as president. Jason Miller, a spokesman, said he would let Mr. Trump's "tweets speak for themselves" and added that those raising questions about the hacking were refusing to come to terms with his victory.

“At a certain point you’ve got to realize that the election from last month is going to stand,” Mr. Miller said.

Maggie Haberman contributed reporting from New York, and Ivan Nechepurenko from Moscow.

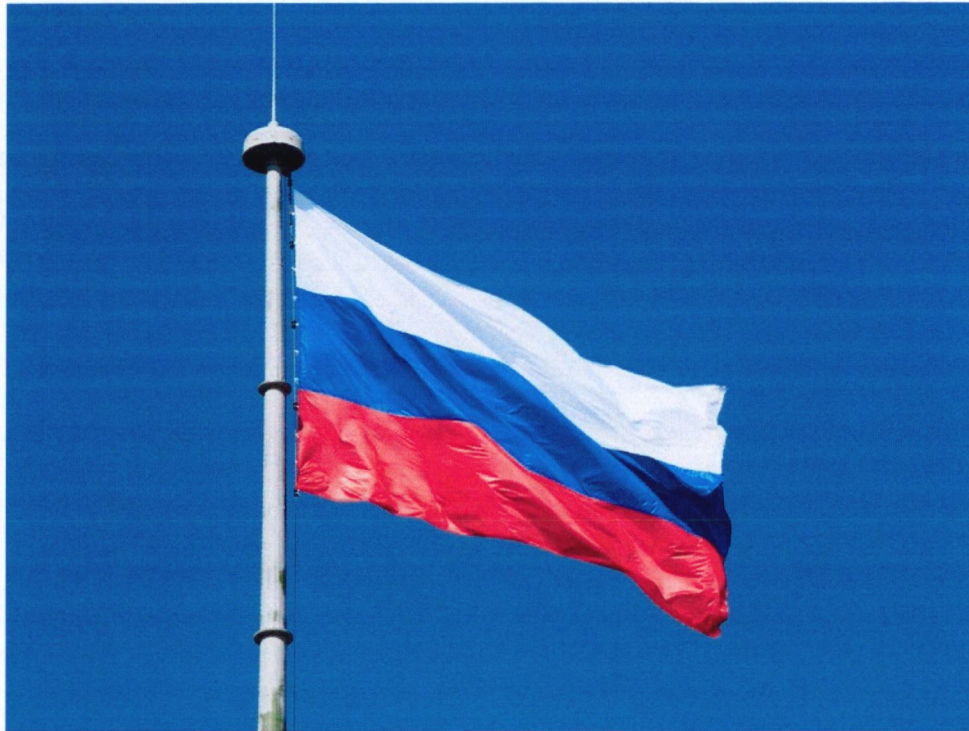
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HERE'S WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT RUSSIA AND THE DNC HACK



GETTY IMAGES

AS THE DEMOCRATIC National Convention continues its week-long stay in Philadelphia, accusations of Russian hacking continue to cloud the proceedings. At this point, it seems likely that Russia is responsible. What's less clear is what that will mean going forward.

It's been a bad stretch for the Democratic National Committee. Hackers broke into its servers months ago, stealing private emails, opposition research, and campaign correspondence. Last Friday, Wikileaks made nearly 20,000 of those private emails public, revealing embarrassing details of the political machine's inner workings. DNC officials allege that the Russian government is behind the breach. The *New York Times* reports that US intelligence agencies increasingly share that opinion. According to a number of top cybersecurity researchers, they're probably right.

A Brief History of a Hack

News of the hack of the Democratic National Committee first broke in mid-June. That's when CrowdStrike, a firm that analyzes threats to network security, revealed that the DNC had called it in to inspect the party's servers, where it found "two separate Russian intelligence-affiliated adversaries present in the DNC network." CrowdStrike released a comprehensive report of its findings on June 14, which accompanied a *Washington Post* article detailing the attacks. One of the hacking groups, CrowdStrike found, had access to the DNC servers for almost a year.

A day after that report, someone calling themselves Guccifer 2.0 (an allusion to notorious hacker Guccifer) claimed responsibility for the hack in a blog post. Through the blog and an accompanying Twitter account, Guccifer 2.0 refuted CrowdStrike's claims that this was a Russian operation, instead calling himself a "lone hacker." He also claimed to have handed much of the DNC bounty to Wikileaks.

The following week, two cybersecurity firms, Fidelis Cybersecurity and Mandiant, independently corroborated CrowdStrike's assessment that Russian hackers infiltrated DNC networks, having found that the two groups that hacked into the DNC used malware and methods identical to those used in other attacks attributed to the same Russian hacking groups.

But some of the most compelling evidence linking the DNC breach to Russia was found at the beginning of July by Thomas Rid, a professor at King's College in London, who discovered an identical command-and-control address hardcoded into the DNC malware that was also found on malware used to hack the German Parliament in 2015. According to German security officials, the malware originated from Russian military intelligence. An identical SSL certificate was also found in both breaches.

The evidence mounts from there. Traces of metadata in the document dump reveal various indications that they were translated into Cyrillic. Furthermore, while Guccifer 2.0 claimed to be from Romania, he was unable to chat with Motherboard journalists in coherent Romanian. Besides which, this sort of hacking wouldn't exactly be outside of Russian norms.

"It doesn't strain credulity to look to the Russians," says Morgan Marquis-Boire, a malware expert with CitizenLab. "This is not the first time that Russian hackers has been behind intrusions in US government, and it seems unlikely that it will be the last." Last year Russian hackers were able to breach White House and State

Department email servers, gleaning information even from President Obama's Blackberry.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin has denied Russian involvement in the DNC breach. But the reverberations continue; DNC Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz will resign at the end of the week, after emails revealed what many view as the unfair treatment of Bernie Sanders.

From Russia With Love

As compelling as the evidence is, there's still a small amount of room to argue that Guccifer 2.0 was a lone actor, an individual motivated by hacktivist ideals of dismantling state power. He wouldn't be the first. And in a recent interview on NBC, Julian Assange of Wikileaks gave a soft disavowal of claims that his whistleblowing organization is in cahoots with Russian intelligence, "Well, there is no proof of that whatsoever," he said. "We have not disclosed our source, and of course, this is a diversion that's being pushed by the Hillary Clinton campaign."

This is, of course, the same Assange who boasts responsibility for helping find Snowden a home in Russia and Wikileaks publicly criticized the Panama Papers for implicating Putin in financial misdeeds. He's also an outspoken frequent critic of Hillary Clinton's time at the State Department. A damning document dump the weekend before Clinton's nomination arguably aligns with both Russian interests and his own.

If the allegations do prove correct, this is an unprecedented step for Russia. Hacking is nothing new, but publicizing documents to attempt to sway an election certainly is. Putin would clearly prefer a Trump presidency. The billionaire Republican candidate is a longtime admirer of Putin's, and has publicly stated that he wouldn't necessarily defend NATO allies against a Russian invasion. To top it all off, Trump's campaign manager, Paul Manafort, formerly worked as an advisor to Viktor Yanukovich, the Russian-backed President of Ukraine before he was ousted in 2014.

"Due to the nature and timing of this hack, it all seems very political," says Marquis-Boire.

And there's a whole lot of election left—and likely more leaks to come with it. On Sunday, a Twitter user asked Wikileaks if more DNC leaks were on their way. The reply: "We have more coming."

Update: In a press conference Wednesday, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump invited Russia to retrieve “missing” emails from Hillary Clinton’s campaign and release them. Cybersecurity experts described the remarks as “unprecedented” and “possibly illegal.”

TIMES INSIDER | REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

How We Identified the D.N.C. Hack's 'Patient Zero'

By ERIC LIPTON DEC. 20, 2016

Times Insider delivers behind-the-scenes insights into how news, features and opinion come together at The New York Times. In this article, the Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter Eric Lipton details how he and his Times colleagues David E. Sanger and Scott Shane constructed a chronological narrative of one of the most famous hacks in history.

Epidemiologists, at the outbreak of any major disease, are sent out to the field to find patient zero — the first victim, which helps explain how the contagion began. As David Sanger, Scott Shane and I set out in late November to reconstruct the events surrounding the hacking of the Democratic Party during the 2016 election campaign, we too wanted to understand, among all factors, how and where this story started.

The Times had extensively covered the remarkable story of Russia's effort to influence the election — with David Sanger and our colleague Eric Schmitt first breaking the news back in late July that the hack was almost certainly the work of Russian operatives (after David and Nicole Perlroth had explored how the Russians were casting the Democratic convention into chaos). That was followed in August with an article about suspicions that the N.S.A. itself was hacked by the Russians and in October with analysis of President Obama's options for retaliation.

But we had never taken the opportunity to look back and tell the story as a single, extended narrative, chronicling the people who got swept into one of the most famous hacks in history. Kitty Bennett, our news researcher extraordinaire, helped start the effort by building a chronology of events — based on as many primary source documents as we could find.

We then set out to interview every major figure involved in the episode: the executives and staffers at the Democratic National Committee, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and Hillary Clinton's campaign; the private sector investigator at CrowdStrike, a cybersecurity firm, and Perkins Coie, a law firm, both of which were hired by the D.N.C. and the D.C.C.C.; the government investigators from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the director of National Intelligence and the White House officials who advised President Obama on how to respond. We talked to members of Congress and other congressional candidates, and to intelligence officials who, of course, would not speak on the record. And that was just the beginning.

We also reached out to WikiLeaks — and its editor in chief, Julian Assange — and tried, though without much success, to engage individuals in the Russian government, as well as Guccifer 2.0 and DCLeaks, the Russian-linked websites that dumped many of the Democrats' emails and other documents.

In each of these interviews, we asked the principal players not only to tell their stories, from start to finish, but also to provide us with primary source documents, such as emails or memos, even if they shared them on the condition that we could not reproduce them. Documents are better than human memory: They nail down names and days and times — some of the last captured emails offered windows into how various email accounts were cracked open — and sometimes give us a sense of contemporaneous reactions. The Democratic Party officials were surprisingly open to telling this story, as they almost all felt that the media had focused far too much on the content of the stolen emails themselves and not nearly enough on how the 2016 election had been disrupted by a Russian plot. The White House didn't want to discuss the topic.

Kitty Bennett's original chronology grew in length, as we filled it in based on our interviews and collected documents, ultimately reaching more than 10,000 words: a 28-page compilation of people and events that served as the core of our narrative.

It was while doing all these interviews that we first heard the story of Yared Tamene, the tech-services consultant at the D.N.C. who had fielded a call in September 2015 from an F.B.I. special agent named Adrian Hawkins — who contacted the D.N.C. to disclose that federal officials had evidence that the D.N.C. computer system had already been hacked. But Mr. Tamene did not believe he was talking to a real F.B.I. agent, so he didn't move definitively to find and shut down this intrusion.

Even after Special Agent Hawkins repeatedly called Mr. Tamene and finally met with him in person last January, he remained skeptical, describing their encounter this way in an internal D.N.C. memo: "During this meeting, SA Hawkins showed his FBI badge to us, and shared his business card, lending some credence to his claim about working for the FBI." This was five months after the F.B.I. had first contacted the D.N.C. But Special Agent Hawkins's superiors took no steps to independently reach out to the committee's leaders to persuade them to take seriously what appeared to be a Russian government attack. Between the passivity of the F.B.I. and the passivity of the D.N.C., almost no progress had been made to identify and lock out the hackers.

Mr. Tamene never agreed to speak with us, although we happened to run into him during one of our visits to D.N.C. headquarters. But based on documents we reviewed — including an internal D.N.C. account of his dealings with the F.B.I. that Mr. Tamene himself had written — we were confident we had found our patient zero. Our story would start in September 2015, when this first warning call had come in from the FBI.

When you do reporting like this, you begin to hear the same stories over and over again, told by different players who experienced the same events. These accounts might seem redundant. But for reporters, they're vital stuff, because each person fills in different tidbits — or pieces of color, as we call them. These overlapping stories help increase your confidence that the version of events you're

piecing together is fair and true, particularly when backed up with emails and other documents.

While I was focused on the D.N.C., David was busy pressing Obama administration officials to explain how they responded to the cyberattacks — a time-consuming process because of the difficulty of getting access to them and, in some cases, because of their reluctance to talk. David is perhaps the best-sourced cybersecurity reporter in the United States: He was the guy who broke the story of the most sophisticated cyberattack in history, the American-Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. (That tale recently became a documentary.) Eventually the White House began to tell its story, and it's no surprise that when President Obama gave his news conference on Friday, his version of events echoed what we had already reported.

While David worked, Scott Shane, one of the top intelligence reporters in Washington, focused on the F.B.I. and on a group we called "the facilitators," which included players like WikiLeaks that posted the hacked emails in a public place. He also spent a large chunk of time examining the evidence investigators had gathered as proof that the Russian state was involved in the hack — we went into this project determined to evaluate it on our own rather than base our work on an assumption that this was Russian espionage.

What is often most fascinating when you do so-called narrative reconstructs like this is how seemingly minor events can in retrospect have such enormous consequences. Consider the case of Charles Delavan, an aide to Hillary Clinton's campaign, who in March 2016 was forwarded the phishing email that had been sent to John D. Podesta, the chairman of the Clinton campaign. Mr. Delavan had been asked to advise Mr. Podesta if this was a real email from Google, asking him to change the password on his personal Gmail account, or a hoax, trying to hack into Mr. Podesta's account.

The Clinton campaign, simultaneously, was the target of an aggressive cyberattack that relied in large part on near replicas of this same fake Google email, urging recipients to change their password. So Mr. Delavan, in an interview, said he

immediately knew this was a fake. And to me, as a reporter, that was a plausible statement.

But somehow — and this action by Mr. Delavan remains inexplicable — he wrote back that the fake Google email was “legitimate,” leading Mr. Podesta or one of his aides to fall for the ruse. This opened up to the Russian hackers a decade’s worth of Mr. Podesta’s emails (60,000 in total), including those that contained copies of speeches Mrs. Clinton had given on Wall Street, as well as hundreds of private exchanges he had had with other close aides. All of these became public, causing a distraction to Mrs. Clinton’s campaign in its critical final month.

The mistake, Mr. Delavan said in the interview, is “the worst thing that ever happened in my life.” He has become a target of threats via Twitter, email and telephone, with one person even coming to his house in Brooklyn before the election to tell him, “You are going to make us lose the election.” It is a burden he will carry with him for the rest of his life.

As we moved toward wrapping up our reporting, the history almost overtook us.

During one of these weekends, I happened to be at Politics and Prose, a popular Washington bookstore, interviewing a former D.N.C. staffer. At the same time, a gunman entered Comet Ping Pong, a pizza restaurant a few doors down, and fired his weapon. He was there to check out a fictional story suggesting that this pizza place was somehow the center of a child-trafficking ring. This conspiracy had been inspired — with no justification in reality — by the same set of emails stolen from John Podesta. The narrative of the Russian hacks we were reporting had driven right into this bookstore coffee shop. I wondered as I continued the interview, with police officers in body armor holding rifles right outside the window, should I crouch down under the table or keep talking? (Ultimately, I called the weekend editor in our Washington Bureau and wrote a breaking news story on the incident.)

The doorstopper-size history books we read make it seem like much of what happens as the pages turn is a matter of fate. It all had to happen that way, right? My impression is quite different. History, as this story once again illustrates, is marked by a lot of happenstance — small but consequential acts that ricochet out into the world, writing the narrative in real time as the events unfold.

National Security

Hackers breach some White House computers

By **Ellen Nakashima** October 28, 2014

Hackers thought to be working for the Russian government breached the unclassified White House computer networks in recent weeks, sources said, resulting in temporary disruptions to some services while cybersecurity teams worked to contain the intrusion.

White House officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation, said that the intruders did not damage any of the systems and that, to date, there is no evidence the classified network was hacked.

“In the course of assessing recent threats, we identified activity of concern on the unclassified Executive Office of the President network,” said one White House official. “We took immediate measures to evaluate and mitigate the activity. . . . Unfortunately, some of that resulted in the disruption of regular services to users. But people were on it and are dealing with it.”

The FBI, Secret Service and National Security Agency are all involved in the investigation. White House officials are not commenting on who was behind the intrusion or how much data, if any, was taken.

“Certainly a variety of actors find our networks to be attractive targets and seek access to sensitive information,” the White House official said. “We are still assessing the activity of concern.”

U.S. officials were alerted to the breach by an ally, sources said.

Recent reports by security firms have identified cyber-espionage campaigns by Russian hackers thought to be working for the government. Targets have included NATO, the Ukrainian government and U.S. defense contractors. Russia is regarded by U.S. officials as being in the top tier of states with cyber-capabilities.

In the case of the White House, the nature of the target is consistent with a state-sponsored campaign, sources said.

The breach was discovered two to three weeks ago, sources said. Some staffers were asked to change their passwords. Intranet or VPN access was shut off for awhile, but the email system, apart from some minor delays, was never down, sources said.

White House officials said that such an intrusion was not unexpected. "On a regular basis, there are bad actors out there who are attempting to achieve intrusions into our system," said a second White House official. "This is a constant battle for the government and our sensitive government computer systems, so it's always a concern for us that individuals are trying to compromise systems and get access to our networks."

The Russian intelligence service was believed to have been behind a breach of the U.S. military's classified networks, which was discovered in 2008. The operation to contain the intrusion and clean up the computers, called Buckshot Yankee, took months.

That incident helped galvanize the effort to create U.S. Cyber Command, a military organization dedicated to defending the country's critical computer systems — including those in the private sector — against foreign cyberattack, as well as helping combatant commanders in operations against adversaries. The command is expected to have some 6,000 personnel by 2016, officials said.

When directed by the president or defense secretary, Cyber Command can undertake offensive operations.

Craig Whitlock contributed to this report.

Ellen Nakashima is a national security reporter for The Washington Post. She focuses on issues relating to intelligence, technology and civil liberties. [Follow @nakashimae](#)

The Post Recommends

Hillary Clinton attacks 'fake news' in post-election appearance on Capitol Hill

"It's now clear that so-called fake news can have real-world consequences," Clinton says

Trump names Rep. Tom Price as next HHS secretary

The Republican lawmaker from Georgia, a physician himself, has been a fierce Obamacare critic.

Republicans ready to launch wide-ranging probe of Russia, despite Trump's stance

Obama orders review of Russian election-related hacking

By **Tal Kopan, Kevin Liptak and Jim Sciutto, CNN**

🕒 Updated 5:51 PM ET, Fri December 9, 2016



Obama orders Russian hacking probe 03:01

Story highlights

The review is intended to be done before Donald Trump's inauguration

Donald Trump has repeatedly questioned Russian involvement

Washington (CNN) — President Barack Obama has ordered a full review into hacking aimed at influencing US elections going back to 2008, the White House said Friday.

"The President has directed the Intelligence Community to conduct a full review of what happened during the 2016 election process. It is to capture lessons learned from that and to report to a range of stakeholders," White House Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser Lisa Monaco said at a Christian Science Monitor breakfast with reporters Friday. "This is consistent with the work that we did over the summer to engage Congress on the threats that we were seeing."

White House spokesman Eric Schultz added later that the review would encompass malicious cyber activity related to US elections going back to 2008.

Monaco said the administration would be mindful of the consequences of revealing the results of their review publicly, and Schultz said they will make public "as much as we can." All of the Democratic senators on the Senate Intelligence Committee have called on Obama to declassify intelligence on Russia's actions during the election.

"You want to do so very attentive to not disclosing sources and methods that would impede our ability to identify and attribute malicious actors in the future," Monaco said of disclosure.

The review is intended to be done before Donald Trump's inauguration on January 20, Monaco said. "He expects to get a report prior to him leaving office."

In response to the news, the Russian government called for evidence of its involvement, denying claims made by the US.

"We are also very interested in understanding what they accused Russia of," said Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova. "Many times the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Minister Lavrov have asked Americans to provide full information. But never had any response."

The US government before the election publicly blamed senior levels of the Russian government for cyberattacks designed to influence the outcome, including hacks of Democratic groups like the Democratic National Committee.

A steady stream of documents and internal emails from Democratic groups and from Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman were released in the weeks and months leading up to the election, with damaging consequences for Democrats.

There was also concern about attempted attacks on voter registration systems at the state and local level, though the intelligence community never said there was strong evidence that was tied to the Russian government. Voter registration databases are attractive targets for financially motivated hackers, as well.

Questions have remained about the extent of the hacking and Russians' motivations. While the intelligence community has not suggested the attacks were designed to bolster President-elect Donald Trump, the impact of the hacks were much more damaging to Democrats and to Clinton.

Trump has continually denied a Russian role in the hacking, despite the overwhelming consensus from private sector cybersecurity firms that investigated the hacks and from the various US government intelligence agencies.

Members of his own party have strongly pointed the finger at Russia, and Republican Sens. John McCain and Lindsey Graham are reportedly leading the charge among Republicans to investigate the hacking, according to The Washington Post, and Graham has told CNN he intends to be unrelenting.

"I'm going after Russia in every way you can go after Russia," Graham told CNN. "I think they're one of the most destabilizing influences on the world stage, I think they did interfere with our elections, and I want Putin personally to pay a price."

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes said Russian interference was real, but dinged the administration for being slow to react.

"Russia's cyber-attacks are no surprise to the House Intelligence Committee," Nunes said in a statement. "Unfortunately the Obama administration, dedicated to delusions of 'resetting' relations with Russia, ignored pleas by numerous Intelligence Committee members to take more forceful action against the Kremlin's aggression. It appears, however, that after eight years the administration has suddenly awoken to the threat."

Democrats were quick to praise Obama on Friday and pressured Trump to change his tune.

"Defending our elections from foreign meddling is more important than any political party's advantage or disadvantage," House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi said in a statement. "Any Administration should be deeply troubled by Russia's attempt to tamper with our elections."

The top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, California Rep. Adam Schiff, praised the administration for its move and called on the White House to declassify as much as it could.

"Given President-elect Trump's disturbing refusal to listen to our intelligence community and accept that the hacking was orchestrated by the Kremlin, there is an added urgency to the need for a thorough review before

President Obama leaves office next month," Schiff said in a statement. "More than that, the administration must begin to take steps to respond forcefully to this blatant cyber meddling, and work with our allies in Europe who have been targets of similar attacks to impose costs on the Kremlin; if we do not, we can expect to see a lot more of this in the near future."

Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden, a Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, called the President's move "constructive" and said he has no doubt about the Moscow's role.

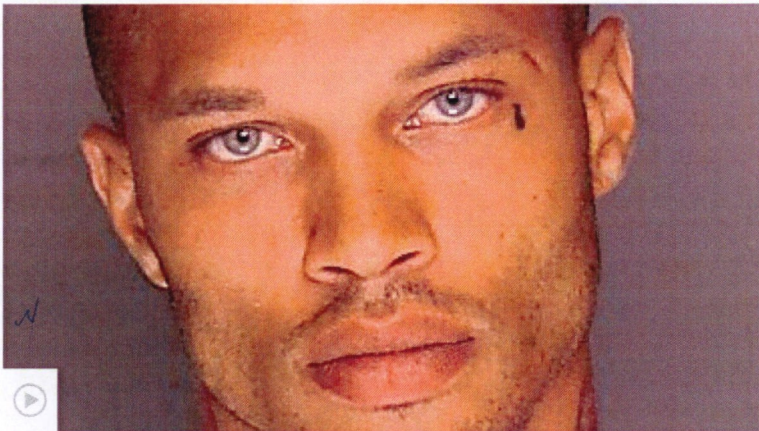
"Let's put it this way: i have no reason to doubt the assessment made by the intelligence community back in October," he said on CNN. "The intelligence community was very explicit."

Monaco declined to draw conclusions before the review was complete.

"We'll see what comes out of the report. There will be a report to a range of stakeholders, including Congress," she said.

This story has been updated.

CNN's Jill Dougherty in Moscow contributed to this report.



'Hot felon' takes photo with family



House Republicans pull plan to gut independent ethics committee after...



Rebecca Ferguson says she'll sing at Trump inauguration under one condition



Paul Ryan re-elected as House speaker Tuesday

POLITICO



The bipartisan letter follows reports that more than a dozen states' voter registration rolls have been targeted by hackers. | AP Photo

Congressional leaders urge states to protect election systems

By **HEATHER CAYGLE** | 09/29/16 09:41 AM EDT

Congressional leaders are urging states to do everything they can to insulate their election systems from cyber attacks amid reports that more than a dozen states have already been targeted by hackers.

“We urge the states to take full advantage of the robust public and private sector resources available to them to ensure that their network infrastructure is secure from attack,” House Speaker Paul Ryan, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid wrote Wednesday.

The bipartisan letter follows reports that more than a dozen states' voter registration rolls have been targeted by hackers, according to CNN, including successful hacks in Illinois and Arizona.

In the bipartisan letter, sent to Todd Valentine, president of the National Association of State Election Directors, congressional leaders also underscored that the Department of Homeland Security is ready to provide cybersecurity help to states that request it.

"Such assistance does not entail federal regulation or binding federal directives of any kind, and we would oppose any effort by the federal government to exercise any degree of control over the states' administration of elections by designating these systems as critical infrastructure," they wrote.

DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson told lawmakers on Tuesday that 18 states have requested cybersecurity help from the department so far.

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 28, 2016

Hon. Todd Valentine
President
National Association of State Election Directors
21946 Royal Montreal Drive, Suite #100
Katy, TX 77450

Dear President Valentine:

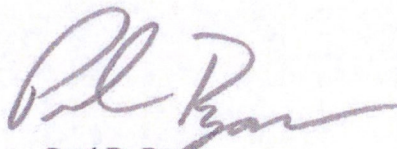
The U.S. Constitution reserves to the states the responsibility for administering elections. In the committee report for the 2002 Help America Vote Act, Congress explained that:

This system has many benefits that must be preserved. The dispersal of responsibility for election administration has made it impossible for a single centrally controlled authority to dictate how elections will be run, and thereby be able to control the outcome. This leaves the power and responsibility for running elections where it should be, in the hands of the citizens of this country. Local control has the further added benefit of allowing for flexibility, so that local authorities can tailor their procedures to meet the demands of disparate and unique communities. Further by leaving the responsibility for election administration in the hands of local authorities, if a problem arises, the citizens who live within their jurisdictions know whom to hold accountable. The local authorities who bear the responsibility cannot now, and should not in the future be able to, point the finger of blame at some distant, unaccountable, centralized bureaucracy.

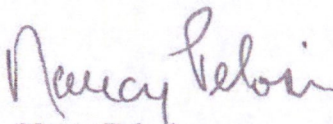
Today, the states face the challenge of malefactors that are seeking to use cyberattacks to disrupt the administration of our elections. We urge the states to take full advantage of the robust public and private sector resources available to them to ensure that their network infrastructure is secure from attack. In addition, the Department of Homeland Security stands ready to provide cybersecurity assistance to those states that choose to request it. Such assistance does not entail federal regulation or binding federal directives of any kind, and we would oppose any effort by the federal government to exercise any degree of control over the states' administration of elections by designating these systems as critical infrastructure.

For over 200 years the states have overcome every challenge to ensure the smooth function of our democracy. We trust that you will take the steps necessary to meet the new challenges of the 21st century by securing your election systems against cyberattacks.

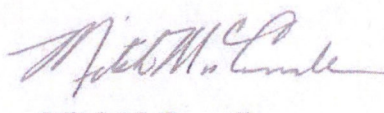
Sincerely,



Paul D. Ryan
Speaker



Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader



Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader



Harry Reid
Democratic Leader

POLITICS

Obama Says He Told Putin: 'Cut It Out' on Hacking

By MARK LANDLER and DAVID E. SANGER DEC. 16, 2016

WASHINGTON — President Obama said for the first time on Friday that he had held back from retaliating against Russia's meddling in the presidential race for fear of inciting further hacking "that could hamper vote counting." But he said he was weighing a mix of public and covert actions against the Russians in his last 34 days in office, actions that would increase "the costs for them."

Mr. Obama said he was committed to sending the Kremlin a message that "we can do stuff to you," but without setting off an escalating cyberconflict.

"There have been folks out there who suggest somehow if we went out there and made big announcements and thumped our chests about a bunch of stuff, that somehow it would potentially spook the Russians," he said. "I think it doesn't read the thought process in Russia very well."

The president did not reveal what steps he was considering and suggested that some of the options, if they were carried out, could remain secret. "Some of it we will do in a way that they will know, but not everybody will," he said.

Mr. Obama made his comments at an annual end-of-year news conference. His remarks were tinged with melancholy at the impending end of his presidency, with foreboding about the changes that could follow President-elect Donald J. Trump into office next month and with uneasiness about the role Russia played in the political upheaval that has resulted from his election.

The president spoke hours after Hillary Clinton, addressing campaign donors in New York, bluntly accused President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia of orchestrating the hacks of her campaign and the Democratic National Committee computers “to undermine our democracy,” as part of a “personal beef against me.”

Mr. Obama declined to place the blame so squarely on Mr. Putin, though he noted, “Not much happens in Russia without Vladimir Putin.” Mr. Obama also sought to diminish the specter of Russian influence over the American political process, saying Russia was a smaller, weaker country that “doesn’t produce anything that anybody wants to buy, except oil and gas and arms.”

Still, the president was clearly wrestling with what he said the hacking affair and the reaction to it revealed about the state of American politics. Citing a recent poll that showed more than a third of Trump voters saying they approved of Mr. Putin — “Ronald Reagan would roll over in his grave,” Mr. Obama said — the president appealed to Americans not to allow partisan hatred and feuds to blind them to manipulation by foreign powers.

“Unless that changes,” Mr. Obama said, “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.”

Mr. Obama offered a long list of accomplishments that he said marked his eight years in office. But the messy aftermath of Mr. Trump’s victory has raised questions about Mr. Obama’s pre-election response to the hacking, ignited a nasty squabble between Mr. Trump and the nation’s intelligence agencies, and left a residue of suspicion over the vote itself.

The president continued to defend his cautious approach to reports of hacking — an approach that has come under criticism from Democrats after it emerged last week that the intelligence agencies had concluded Russia was trying to help Mr. Trump win the election.

“We were playing this thing straight — we weren’t trying to advantage one side or the other,” Mr. Obama said. “Imagine if we had done the opposite. It would have become one more political scrum.”

The president, however, is likely to face further questions after his C.I.A. director, John O. Brennan, issued a statement Friday disputing reports of a rift between the intelligence agencies and the C.I.A. over Russia's motives in hacking the D.N.C. and handing over emails to WikiLeaks, which released them in the weeks leading up to the vote.

In his statement, first reported by The Washington Post, Mr. Brennan said he had met with the director of the F.B.I., James B. Comey, and the director of national intelligence, James R. Clapper, and "there is strong consensus among us on the scope, nature and intent of Russian interference in our presidential election."

That statement will also challenge Mr. Trump, who has seized on reports of an interagency squabble to undermine the credibility of the hacking findings. He has criticized the C.I.A. analysis, saying it was supplied by the same agency that provided erroneous intelligence about Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction before the Iraq War.

Mr. Obama held out hope that when Mr. Trump takes office, he would take a more sober approach. He said he had had "cordial" conversations with his successor, and that Mr. Trump had listened to his suggestions about "maintaining the effectiveness, integrity, cohesion of our office, our various democratic institutions," though he was not specific.

The president defended the F.B.I., which has come under fierce criticism from Mrs. Clinton and her aides because of Mr. Comey's 11th-hour announcement that the bureau was considering reopening its investigation of Mrs. Clinton's email, which she has said cost her the election.

Mrs. Clinton's remarks on Thursday underscored longstanding differences she has had with her former boss in how the United States should view Mr. Putin.

For his part, Mr. Obama also made a startling admission as he described how his administration had reacted to the Russian hack: He said it was not until the "beginning of the summer" that the White House was "alerted to the possibility that the D.N.C. has been hacked."

That was nine months after an F.B.I. agent had first contacted the Democratic National Committee with evidence that a major, government-linked hacking group was inside the committee's networks, raising the question of why it took so long for that news to reach the president.

Mr. Obama made it clear that he went out of his way to play down the news, because "in this hyperpartisan atmosphere" he did not think he or anyone else at the White House could talk about it without risking to appear to be acting on behalf of Mrs. Clinton.

But the unintended result, as some of Obama aides concede, was that the Russians faced very little resistance. Not until September, when Mr. Obama pulled Mr. Putin aside at a Group of 20 meeting in Hangzhou, China, was the Russian leader given a warning directly from the United States. Mr. Obama said he told him "to cut it out, there were going to be serious consequences if he did not."

The president made it sound like that worked, saying "we did not see further tampering of the election process." But the leaks of D.N.C. emails, and those of John D. Podesta, the Clinton campaign manager, continued, because they were already in the hands of WikiLeaks, which doled them out to an eager news media until the last days of the campaign.

The Russian government's motives were hardly a mystery, Mr. Obama said, "because you guys wrote about it every day, every single leak about every little juicy piece of political gossip, including John Podesta's risotto recipe."

Michael D. Shear and Amy Choick contributed reporting.

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A version of this article appears in print on December 17, 2016, on Page A1 of the New York edition with the headline: Obama Defends Muted Response to Russian Hacks.