



Director of National Intelligence

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard

SUBJECT: **Intelligence Community suppression of intelligence showing “Russian and criminal actors did not impact” the 2016 presidential election via cyber-attacks on infrastructure**

The timeline of events, as evidenced by the attached documents, is as follows:

Key Intelligence Manipulated and Withheld from the American People by the IC:

BEFORE THE ELECTION

- **August 31, 2016** — A DHS official tells former DNI James Clapper that there was “*no indication of a Russian threat to directly manipulate the actual vote count.*”

and overall risk due to cyber incident. We are working with CIA on a PDB submission on the threat. The thrust of the analysis is that there is no indication of a Russian threat to directly manipulate the actual vote count through cyber means. However, as seen in recent media reporting, any cyber activity directed against the election infrastructure is likely to have an effect on public confidence - even if the cyber operation is unsuccessful or not intended to impact the election (e.g. theft of PII from a voter)

- **September 2, 2016** — The FBI requests for the whistleblower’s pre-election assessment on alleged Russian election activity in an upcoming, pre-election ICA to be “softened,” given the **FBI was “uncomfortable”** implying that there was “**definitive information that Russia does intend to disrupt our elections.**”

Below are inputs from the FBI. Sorry for the delay. Due to the long weekend, we have several folks out.

- 1) On page 5, under the “(U//[REDACTED]) Adversaries with Intent” section, we would prefer for the first sentence regarding Russia’s intent to be softened. The way it currently reads, it would indicate that we have definitive information that Russia does intend to disrupt our elections and we are uncomfortable making that assessment at this point. We would suggest editing the sentence to read as the following (changes highlighted): “(U//[REDACTED]) We judge Russia to be the only nation state with the current means and possible motivation to use cyber attack to disrupt the 2016 election or deny political legitimacy to US presidential candidates.” We would also suggest editing the title of that section to instead read something along the lines of “(U//[REDACTED]) Evaluation of Likely Adversaries” so that it doesn’t mislead the reader to believe that the IC currently has information indicating Russia has a known intent to influence the elections.

- **September 9, 2016** — An ODNI and PDB official says that an upcoming PDB should make clear that Russia “probably is not trying...to influence the election by using cyber means” to target election infrastructure. Several IC officials agree.



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Russia probably is not trying to going to be able to? influence the election by using cyber means to manipulate computer-enabled election infrastructure.

Russia probably is using cyber means primarily to influence the election by stealing campaign party data and leaking select items, and it is also using public propaganda. This fits an historical pattern of Russia using less sophisticated propaganda and information operations to influence US elections.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Deputy Director / PDB / ODNI

The lead author on the PDB agrees.

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I took the intent of this email to get the basic starting point regarding Russia. We agree with: Russia probably is not (and will not) trying to influence the election by using cyber means to manipulate computer-enabled election infrastructure.

Yes, if we're going further, while Russia has some capability to conduct cyber manipulation of election infrastructure, we judge that efforts by them (or others) to change the outcome of an election through cyber means would be detected. That's a key element of our cyber-focused PDB.

We assess that foreign adversaries, notably Russia, are more likely to focus their cyber operations on undermining credibility/public confidence. That assessment feeds directly into the influence operations, some cyber-enabled, that we've seen related to current and historic election cycles. We concur with CIA's change related to that.

[REDACTED]

Chief, NCCIC Intelligence Support Branch
DHS Office of Intelligence & Analysis (I&A)

- [REDACTED] We judge that foreign adversaries do not have and will probably not obtain the capabilities to successfully execute widespread and undetected cyber attacks on the diverse set of information technologies and infrastructures used to support the November 2016 US presidential election. We have only moderate confidence in our overall threat assessment [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

- **October 7, 2016** — ODNI and DHS suppress the above September intelligence findings in their press release that states with “confidence” the Russian government directed the DNC and DCCC hacks.”
 - Their statement omitted the fact that the FBI and NSA had “**low confidence**” in attributing the data leaks from these entities to Russia.
 - *Note: There is still supporting evidence indicating the Russian government directed hacking of the DNC and DCCC.*
- **November 6, 2016** — Donald J. Trump defeats Hillary Clinton and wins the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election.

- **December 7, 2016** — The IC is working on a new PDB examining the potential impact of cyber hacks on the election results. DNI Clapper’s office develops talking points based on the PDB’s findings:
 - *“Foreign adversaries did not use cyberattacks on election infrastructure to alter the US Presidential election outcome”*
 - *“We have no evidence of cyber manipulation of election infrastructure intended to alter results”*



Director of National Intelligence

All,

With the PC having moved to Friday morning, please send me proposed TPs and Scenesetter by 1500 on Thursday. Thank you.

Separately, for everyone's reference, below are the revised TPs that the DNI mentioned at the backbrief yesterday. What I did was lift key lines from the draft PDB that is attached.

■

ACTIVITY ON AND SINCE ELECTION DAY

■ We assess that foreign adversaries did not use cyber attacks on election infrastructure to alter the US Presidential election outcome this year.

- We have no evidence of cyber manipulation of election infrastructure intended to alter results.
- There was, however, minimal targeting of election infrastructure probably by cyber criminals to steal data, although these efforts did not disrupt the election.
 - Unattributed denial-of-service attacks against election infrastructure were reported on election day, including a 4-minute attack against an unspecified Illinois elections website that had no impact on the website's availability.

■ Since the election, cyber actors linked by signals intelligence to Russia's SVR on 9 November conducted multiple election-themed spear-phishing campaigns.

- **December 8, 2016** — IC officials discuss the draft PDB, which finds that “**Russian and criminal actors did not impact recent US election results by conducting malicious cyber activities against election infrastructure.**” The group also decides the PDB will be published the following day, due to “high administration interest.”

*For the President
8 December 2016*

Cyber Manipulation Of US Election Infrastructure To Remain A Challenge

We assess that Russian and criminal actors did not impact recent US election results by conducting malicious cyber activities against election infrastructure.



Director of National Intelligence

Hi All,

Due to **high Administration interest, this piece is now scheduled to run tomorrow**. Therefore, we now ask that coordination responses be sent by 2pm, so that the production process for tomorrow can be completed.

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Thank you,

██████████
NCCIC Intelligence Support Branch
Cyber Division
DHS Office of Intelligence & Analysis

A few hours later, after initially coauthoring the PDB, the FBI (led by FBI Director James Comey) inexplicably withdraws from coordinating on the product and notifies other IC officials that the FBI will be drafting a dissent.

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██████████, FBI will be drafting a dissent this afternoon. Please remove our seal and annotations of co-authorship.

██████████

Later in the afternoon, a senior PDB official kills the PDB “based on some new guidance.” The post-election PDB, which once again assessed that Russia did not hack the election, was never published.

All,

Based on some new guidance, we are going to push back publication of the PDB. It will not run tomorrow and is not likely to run until next week.

██████████

████████████████████

Deputy Director / PDB / ODNI



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- **December 9, 2016** — The Obama White House gathers top cabinet officials for a National Security Council Principals Committee (PC) Meeting. James Clapper, John Brennan, Susan Rice, John Kerry, Brian McKeon, Loretta Lynch, Andrew McCabe, and Avril Haines are among those in attendance.

[REDACTED]		005018
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON, D.C. 20504		
<u>Summary of Conclusions for</u> <u>Meeting of the Principals Committee</u> DATE: December 9, 2016 LOCATION: White House Situation Room TIME: 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.		
SUBJECT: <u>Summary of Conclusions for PC Meeting on a Sensitive</u> <u>Topic</u> [REDACTED]		
Participants:		
<u>Chair</u>	<u>WH Counsel</u>	
Susan Rice	Neil Eggleston	
<u>OVP</u>	<u>DNI</u>	
No Representative	James Clapper	
<u>State</u>	<u>FBI</u>	
Secretary John Kerry (SVTS)	Andrew McCabe	
Victoria Nuland		
<u>Treasury</u>	<u>CIA</u>	
Adam Szubin	John Brennan	
<u>DOD</u>	<u>JCS (SVTS)</u>	
Brian McKeon	Gen Joseph Dunford	
<u>Justice</u>	<u>NSA</u>	
Loretta Lynch	Richard Ledgett	
Mary McCord	<u>White House</u>	
<u>DHS</u>	Avril Haines	
Secretary Jeh Johnson	Lisa Monaco	
Rob Silvers	Ben Rhodes	
<u>Chief of Staff</u>	<u>NSC</u>	
Denis McDonough	Chris Fonzone	
<u>USUN</u>	Caroline Tess	
Maher Bitar	Brett Holmgren	
	Michael Daniel	
	Celeste Wallander	
	Samir Jain	
	Jeffrey Edmonds	

After the meeting, in an email titled “POTUS Tasking on Russia Election Meddling,” Director of National Intelligence James Clapper’s assistant sends an email to ODNI leaders tasking them with the creation of an “assessment per the President’s request.” ODNI leads the effort, along with CIA, FBI, NSA, and DHS.



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All,

Pursuant to the POTUS tasking at Monday's meeting on Russia election meddling for a comprehensive assessment, the DNI broached the TPs below with Dennis McDonough and DCIA at the Russia PC this afternoon.

Rather than brief it, he just handed a copy of the TPs to Dennis and mentioned it to DCIA, who both said they were okay with the proposal. I'm sure there may be some bureaucratic hurdles still, but the DNI's directive was to move forward with the paper as outlined. (See below the exact TPs he handed CoS POTUS, which I amended slightly in keeping with the DNI's expressed intent.)

██████ The IC is prepared to produce an assessment per the President's request, that pulls together the information we have on the tools Moscow used and the actions it took to influence the 2016 election, an explanation of why Moscow directed these activities, and how Moscow's approach has changed over time, going back to 2008 and 2012 as reference points. ODN will lead the effort with participation from CIA, FBI, NSA, and DHS.

- The goal would be to produce a highly classified version and an unclassified version:
 - The classified version would include a comprehensive analysis of Russia's activities, drawing from all available sources, with a target delivery date of 9 January to the President.
 - The unclassified version would follow the classified delivery, and to the greatest extent possible would include the same information while still protecting sources and methods. The goal would be to make the unclassified document publicly available.

Specifically, the assessment will address the following questions:



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b. Assessment will address the following questions

- i. How did Moscow seek to influence the US presidential election in 2016? What tools did they use?
 - 1. Hacking (CIA, FBI, NSA lead)
 - 2. Leaks (CIA, FBI, NSA lead)
 - 3. Cyber activity against voting system (DHS input)
 - 4. Media spin, trolls, fake news (OSE lead)
 - 5. Domestic Russian Intelligence efforts (FBI input)
- ii. Why did Moscow direct these activities? What have the Russians hoped to accomplish? (CIA lead)

- iii. How has Moscow's approach to our elections changed over time? What kinds of activities did they undertake in previous elections? (CIA lead)
- iv. What is our assessment regarding how Moscow will leverage its capabilities in future US elections? (all, NIC lead)

That same day, Deep State officials in the IC begin leaking blatantly false intelligence to the Washington Post, as proven by the unpublished PDB and previous IC products, claiming that Russia used “cyber means” to influence “the outcome of the election.”

Though Russia has long conducted cyberspying on U.S. agencies, companies and organizations, this presidential campaign marks the first time Russia has attempted through cyber means to interfere in, if not actively influence, the outcome of an election, the officials said.

Later that evening, another leak to the Washington Post falsely alleges that the CIA “concluded in a secret assessment that Russia intervened” in the election to help President Trump.

The CIA has concluded in a secret assessment that Russia intervened in the 2016 election to help Donald Trump win the presidency, rather than just to [undermine confidence in the U.S. electoral system](#), according to officials briefed on the matter.



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At this point, there is no official IC assessment that contains that conclusion.

- **December 14, 2016** — IC officials again leak to the media, this time claiming that IC officials believe “with a high level of confidence” that Russian President Vladimir Putin was personally involved in the “U.S. Election Hack.”

U.S. intelligence officials now believe with “a high level of confidence” that Russian President Vladimir Putin became personally involved in the covert Russian campaign to interfere in the U.S. presidential election, senior U.S. intelligence officials told NBC News.

- **December 16, 2016** — Though President Obama admits there is no “evidence of machines being tampered with” during the election, he says he was concerned that potential hacks “could hamper vote counting and affect the actual election process.”

“What I was concerned about in particular was making sure that [Wikileaks/Clinton emails] wasn’t compounded by potential hacking that could hamper vote counting and affect the actual election process itself. And so in early September, when I saw President Putin in China, I felt that the most effective way to ensure that, that didn’t happen was to talk to him directly. And tell him to cut it out.” – President Obama on hacking the vote.

Reality: Multiple IC assessments before and after the election consistently showed no credible reporting of Russian intent or capability to do what President Obama alleges.

- **Late December 2016** — Due to the ODNI Whistleblower’s questioning his leadership about why an IC assessment was being created that contradicted multiple IC assessments, the whistleblower is immediately removed from emails regarding the drafting of the Obama-ordered IC assessment. The whistleblower is sidelined, despite the fact that they led the ICA on similar topics in September, just months prior.
- **Late December 2016/Early January 2017** — The National Intelligence Officer for Cyber pressures the ODNI Whistleblower to accept a number of findings in the Obama ICA, including that the Russian government had a preference for President Trump.

“As for the 2017 ICA’s judgement of a decisive Russian preference for then-candidate Donald Trump, I could not concur in good conscience based on information available, and my professional analytic judgement.” – ODNI Whistleblower



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The ODNI Whistleblower will later recall that his superior said, “you need to trust me on this,” and referenced reporting the ODNI Whistleblower was “not allowed to see.”

- **January 6, 2017** — The Obama administration shares the unclassified ICA with the public. It falsely alleges, based in part on “further information” that had “come to light” since the election, that Putin directed an effort to help President Trump defeat Hillary Clinton. This “further information” is later confirmed to be the Steele Dossier.

The assessment also:

- Suppresses intelligence from before and after the election showing Russia lacked intent and capability to hack the 2016 election.
- Deceives the American public by claiming the IC did not assess the “impact” of Russian activities.
 - Reality: The IC did, in fact, assess for impact. The unpublished December PDB *stated clearly* that Russia “did not impact” the election through cyber hacks on the election.
- Assesses Russia was responsible for leaking data from the DNC and DCCC, while failing to mention that the FBI and NSA previously expressed LOW CONFIDENCE in this attribution.

██████ FBI and NSA, however, have low confidence in the attribution of the data leaks to Russia. They agree that the disclosures appear consistent with what we might expect from Russian influence activities but note that we lack sufficient technical details to correlate the information posted online to Russian state-sponsored actors.

ALMOST THREE YEARS LATER

- **September 18, 2019** — The ODNI Whistleblower assists in a FOIA request related to the Obama ICA. Specifically, an IC official asks the ODNI Whistleblower to search for material related to the Steele Dossier, as it “was a factor” in the Obama ICA. This revelation shocks the ODNI Whistleblower, who had been told that DNI Clapper viewed the Steele Dossier as “untrustworthy.”

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Election Group,

Suspense: COB Tuesday, 9/24 to NIC-Tasker

Shelby believes this should be responded to by the NIC as the dossier was a factor in the 2017 ICA on the election interference in which an assessment of the document was added as an annex.

Please review the attach document and conduct a search for the time period May 2016 through February 2017 of all records of communication (including emails on both .gov and non-.gov accounts, text messages, and instant chats) between the office of the Director of National Intelligence, including but not limited to former ODNI Director James Clapper, and the office of the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, including but not limited to former FBI Director James Comey, regarding the collection of memos known as the "Steele Dossier."

“The assertion...was in contradiction to what [the National Intelligence Officer for Cyber Issues] had previously implied, and at no time during the prior three years had any of the [National Intelligence Council] staff members suggested to me that the IC viewed the “Steel Dossier” [sic] material as credible.” – ODNI Whistleblower recalls learning of the Steele Dossier’s inclusion in the ICA.

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