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UNDERMINING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND SPLINTERING NATO: RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION AIMS

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UNDERMINING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND SPLINTERING NATO: RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION AIMS

THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 2017

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Edward Royce (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROYCE. This hearing will come to order.

This morning we examine Russia's systematic attempts to undermine and discredit Western democratic institutions, with one goal being to splinter the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

In January, the U.S. intelligence community produced a report which found that "Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. Presidential election." Thankfully, there is no evidence to suggest Russia interfered in our voting and tallying process. But Members of Congress rightfully have many more questions surrounding Russian meddling. So it is appropriate that the intelligence committees, on a bipartisan basis, are working to get to the bottom of this. We need answers. And we need to make sure it doesn't happen again.

Indeed, the intelligence community reports warn that "Moscow will apply lessons learned to future influence efforts worldwide, including against U.S. allies and their election processes." Here in the U.S., our midterm elections will be here before we know it. And with elections on the horizon in France, Germany, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, and Italy, European intelligence services are sounding the alarm about Russian attempts to skew the outcome with targeted disinformation and propaganda. In France, for example, one pro-European candidate has reportedly been the subject of "hundreds and even thousands" of hacking attempts against his party, and outlets such as RT and Sputnik spread disinformation to undermine his candidacy.

This isn't new. The committee is joined today by Toomas Ilves, a former Estonian President—welcome, Mr. President—who led his country as Russia inflamed ethnic passions and directed disinformation and cyberattacks against Estonia. Russia's media war against the Baltic states goes back over a decade.

What is new is that Russian disinformation has been growing in sophistication, intensity, reach, and impact. According to the Center for European Policy Analysis—also represented here today—

"Russia's information warfare does not crudely promote the Kremlin's agenda, instead it is calibrated to confuse, befuddle, and distract." They go on to note that "Russia aims to erode public support for Euro-Atlantic values in order to increase its own relative power." Russia has deployed its arsenal of trolls, propaganda, and false information to a new level. These techniques have even become enshrined in official Kremlin doctrine.

Moscow's strategic objective is to break apart the NATO alliance and, thus, to boost Russian geopolitical influence in Western Europe. The stakes are high: If Kremlin-backed politicians take power in France, it could potentially spell the end of the European Union. Even for those who might approve of that development, I think we can all agree the future of the EU should be left to the Europeans—not manipulators in Moscow.

So how do we push back? Last Congress, when this committee held a hearing on Russia's "weaponization of information," U.S. international broadcasters were on the air with a near 30-minute television news program in the Russian language called Current Time. Now, 2 years later, this Russian language show is running 6 hours of live programming daily—but still cannot provide data on target audience and market penetration. In December, the President signed legislation authored by myself and Mr. Engel—and pushed by this committee—to empower a CEO to run all U.S. international broadcasting. The CEO should use its new authority to prioritize this threat, and the committee should look at other steps we can take to intensify U.S. international broadcasting.

And more should be done to hold those hacking accountable. Why not go on the offense to release information exposing corruption at the Kremlin?

I want to thank all of our distinguished witnesses for their participation in today's important discussion. I am afraid it is not exaggeration to say the long-term future of the European security order and America's role as an Atlantic power is at risk. Last month the Russian foreign minister called for, in his words, a "post-West" world order. Unless the United States stands solidly with its allies to better challenge this Russian disinformation assault, that disturbing call could come sooner than we would like.

I now turn to the ranking member for his opening comments. Mr. Engel of New York.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank our witnesses as well and welcome you all to the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Ambassador Baer, I want to just tell you it is good to see you again. Your service at the State Department was exemplary, both in the Democracy, Labor and Human Rights Bureau and as our Ambassador to the OSCE. And I also want to commend your work in promoting diversity among our foreign affairs personnel, speaking out about the importance of getting more LGBT individuals into senior roles in the department.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you. I am glad our focus today is on Russia. Disinformation is a problem, no doubt about it. But in my view, as I believe your view as well, a much bigger problem is that a hostile foreign government committed criminal acts in an effort to undermine American democracy. At Vladimir Putin's orders, Russia's

agents tried to swing last year's election in favor of President Trump. Those actions were an attack on our country. And if we don't respond effectively, Putin will become an even bigger threat to the United States and our allies.

It doesn't matter who they try to help or not help, the fact that they had the nerve to interfere in our elections should make all of us pause—give all of us pause for concern. So while I am glad we are having this hearing today, I hope it will only be the first in a series of hearings and other actions by this committee to address this problem.

Before I continue, I want to say that when I first came to this committee in 1989, the chairman of the committee was Dante Fascell. I know Ms. Ros-Lehtinen knew him well. Well, today would have been Dante Fascell's 100th birthday. As chair of this committee he helped establish the Helsinki Commission and the National Endowment for Democracy. He was a true statesman and he personified what the chairman and I have done these past 6 years for this committee, saying that politics stops at the water's edge. He really believed that as well. And his portrait is right over my left shoulder.

This committee has an important role to play. And I am delighted that the chairman scheduled this hearing. With respect to our witnesses, we will also need to hear from senior administration officials once they are in place because this committee needs to exercise our oversight role and we need to legislate.

For instance, this committee is the gateway to a full independent investigation. The bill to create that commission and to protect our democracy, as introduced by Mr. Swalwell and Mr. Cummings, is solely within our jurisdiction and waiting for this committee to mark it up. We can't wait any longer. Each week it seems we learn about another person in the Trump campaign who met with a Russian official. Already the President's national security advisor, General Flynn, has resigned because of these contacts.

The Attorney General met with the Russian Ambassador as well. Look, we meet with Ambassadors all the time. They come into my office. But Mr. Sessions hid the truth about these meetings when he testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee. I find his explanation impossible to be taken seriously. But I want to know why these meetings were shrouded in secrecy.

And now we learn that the President himself met with Russia's Ambassador. There are just too many unanswered questions. Shutting this behind the closed doors of the Intelligence Committee isn't the solution. A 9/11-style commission, along with a special prosecutor appointed by the Justice Department, is the only way to stop the drip, drip, drip of information. But an investigation isn't enough. We need to respond.

Mr. Connolly and I have offered a bill, the SECURE Our Democracy Act, that would be a real punch in the nose to Putin and his thugs. This bill would sanction anyone who interferes in an American election from overseas. Those responsible for last year's crimes would be held accountable. And anyone thinking about meddling with our elections in the future would know there would be consequences. It is based on sanctions legislation that has worked well in the past, and it wouldn't cost the taxpayers a dime.

This bill is common sense. You mess with the bull, you get the horns. Every Democrat on this committee, along with dozens of others, are cosponsoring this bill. I would hope that our Republican friends will eventually sign on or offer an alternative bill to impose similar consequences.

It is very remarkable to me that rather than dealing with the very real, very immediate threat of Putin's aggression, the administration is instead taking aim at our intelligence and law enforcement agencies and shifted blame onto the last administration, spinning wild theories about wiretaps and other spy novel tactics. These allegations are not true. There is no evidence. This is an attempt to muddy the water, and it won't work.

Have our politics really gotten to the point where they stop us from confronting an attack on our country? If so, shame on us. Russia attacked the United States. Putin meddled with American democracy. We need to know exactly what happened and determine the best way to respond. So I am glad our committee is taking the first step in dealing with that problem. I hope we stay focused on it. We are the first committee to do it. And this is within our jurisdiction and I am proud of, again, Chairman Royce and myself working together so we can be the first committee to do this. But we must continue; we cannot stop here.

So I look forward to our witnesses' insights on how to confront this problem. I thank the chairman again, and I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Engel.

This morning we are pleased to be joined by a distinguished panel. His Excellency Toomas Ilves served as the President of Estonia from 2006 to 2016, during which time his country was directly impacted by Russian disinformation and cyberattacks. We are honored to have him with us here today.

The Honorable Lincoln Bloomfield is the chairman emeritus and distinguished fellow at The Stimson Center. Previously, Ambassador Bloomfield held a series of positions in the Departments of State and Defense, including serving as the Assistant Secretary of State for Political and Military Affairs. We welcome him back.

Mr. Peter Doran is executive vice president at the Center for European Policy Analysis where he oversees the Center's Information Warfare Initiative.

The Honorable Daniel Baer is the former U.S. Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Welcome, Ambassador.

Without objection, the witnesses' full prepared statements will be made part of the record and members will have 5 calendar days to submit statements or questions or any extraneous material for the record.

I also will remind my colleagues of Jefferson's Manual, which allows robust discussion but prohibits engaging in personalities.

We will start, Mr. President, with your remarks. If you could please summarize your remarks for us now. And just hit the talk button. There you go. Thank you, Mr. President.

STATEMENT OF HIS EXCELLENCY TOOMAS HENDRIK ILVES (FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA)

President ILVES. Thank you very much. It is an honor to be here. To compress it all might be—I will try to do my best.

Basically, I mean, we go back to General Clausewitz who said, "War is the continuation of policy by other means." We are certainly seeing the continuation of policy by other means when it comes to disinformation and all of the other behaviors that we have seen. And I would suggest or recommend reading the Russian chief of the general staff Valery Gerasimov's article from 2013 in which he outlines basically all of the behaviors that we have seen here which have been given the name of "hybrid war." But, in fact, he does in that article outline all of the various policies that should be pursued by the Russian Federation in order to achieve its ends.

We have seen these processes in action for—well, I would argue—we have seen since 1989, even before the establishment of our independence in Estonia, and also in Latvia and Lithuania, when already the Soviet Union embarked on a disinformation campaign directed toward us. And we have actually gone through it since then.

The disinformation campaign really hit sort of a wider audience, I would argue, after the annexation of Crimea. When taking the lessons of a complete PR flop in the Georgian invasion where the Georgians managed to really outdo the Russians, and the Russians had not paid any attention to getting the message out, when it came to Crimea the Western media was flooded with stories about Ukrainian Nazis and all kinds of horrible tales that were untrue.

And what we see now, and I would argue this will be the main battlefield for the next year, is in Europe where, as you rightly mentioned, there are a number of key elections coming up, not only key elections, but among major countries. They, I mean the large countries, first and foremost Germany and France, will have elections. There are strong odds there will be an Italian snap election. That is this year. That is three out of the four remaining big countries in Europe, now that the U.K. has left. So this is a big year.

Then there are also the crucial elections in the Netherlands, which may not be one of the biggest countries but it is sort of considered one of the medium powers. And in all cases we have seen significant meddling.

The Dutch are so afraid they have decided to go back to paper balloting because they are afraid of what might happen. And we have seen, I mean, any number of stories in the literature about how in the Netherlands there have been attempts to influence opinion, most recently on the referendum on whether or not to allow the association agreement with Ukraine, which is kind of a minor issue since an association agreement between the European Union and a country is kind of a free trade agreement with student teacher exchange, but that is it. Nonetheless, they held a referendum and defeated it, and which left Ukraine in the cold regarding the rest of the year.

Policies in general seem to be directed at splitting up the EU and NATO. Certainly the candidates that are being supported are ones who are very anti-EU and anti-NATO. The most prominent, of course, in the key country of France, is Marine Le Pen who is anti-

EU, anti-NATO, anti-U.S. She has received or her party has received $9 million from a Russian bank for support. With the rise of Emmanuel Macron as a leading centrist alternative to Marine Le Pen we see massive disinformation about him.

With the little time remaining I will say, clearly Angela Merkel is a key target. Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, has been the figure holding the EU together on sanctions policy. And I guess in the question period I can answer more specific questions. But, basically, this year the goal seems to be to win elections in Europe so that anti-EU, anti-NATO forces get into power.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of President Ilves follows:]

Prepared Testimony and Statement for the Record of

Toomas Hendrik Ilves

Bernard and Susan Liautaud Visiting Fellow
Center for International Security and Cooperation
Freeman-Spogli Institute for International Studies

President of Estonia 2006-2016

At the Hearing on "Undermining Democratic Institutions and Splintering NATO: Russian Disinformation."" Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee March 9, 2017

With U.S. security agencies now agreeing that Russia interfered in the recent U.S. election, all liberal democracies will need to rethink how to protect their electoral processes. This is especially true in Europe, the other pillar of liberal democracy in the world, where governments will face elections in the next couple of years.

If the most powerful and richest democracy in the world can have its electoral process derailed through mass disinformation, electronic break-ins and doxing (i.e. publication of hacked documents), then what awaits the elections this year in Germany, France and the Netherlands, where genuine extremist parties are rapidly gaining popularity?

The German domestic and foreign intelligence agencies already have announced that the same groups that hacked the emails of the Democratic National Committee and of Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman have successfully breached the German Parliament and the accounts of political parties and politicians. German elections take place in the fall of 2017; officials already report an upsurge in fake news.

French presidential and parliamentary elections are slated for April and June of 2017. In the Netherlands, where elections are just around the corner, Russian disinformation already played a strong role passing the referendum on the decision not to ratify the European Union association agreement with Ukraine. The heads of intelligence in Sweden and the U.K. have both warned in recent weeks about Russian meddling in the two countries' domestic politics. In Italy, with or without Russian help, fake news played a significant role defeating Matteo Renzi's reform referendum in December, leading to the prime minister's resignation.

The use of digital technology in politics has a relatively short history, although deception in warfare – and influencing a country's election outcome *is* warfare – goes back to the Trojan Horse of Ancient Greece. Yet the scale of deception and use of digital technology we saw in the U.S. elections is much newer.

Democracies are in uncharted territory.

Virtually every history of what is now known as "Cyber-war" or "Cyber-warfare" begins describing an attack on Estonia at six months into my presidency in 2007 when our governmental, banking and news media servers were hit with "distributed denial-of-service" or "DDOS attacks." Cyber attacks have a far longer history of course, but this was different. It was digital warfare, in the well-known definition of the great theoretician Carl Paul von Clausewitz as "the continuation of policy by other means." In a DDOS attack, networks of bots or robots from hijacked computers send out massive numbers of signals to specific addresses to overload servers until they can no longer handle so many pings and they finally shut down. Without going into details, DDOS attacks are mounted by the same people using the same technology as spam, only instead of sending spam mails to massive numbers of address shotgun style, DDOS attacks target specific servers. It is underline that this activity is criminal, it is done for hire.

Such attacks had been used prior to 2007 in Estonia but mainly for extortion of net-based businesses or e-commerce. A web-based, general small or medium-sized company would find that their server was overloaded and would have to pay a criminal group for this activity to stop.

The attack on Estonia in 2007 was different and new. This was as far as we can tell the first time a nation-state had been targeted using digital means for political objectives — in our case, as punishment for moving a Soviet statue unloved by the populace. This was clearly a continuation of policy by other means. The next year, in the Russian war against Georgia in 2008, DDOS attacks were coordinated with kinetic attacks, meaning real military ordinance — a new development in hybrid warfare where targets were blinded by DDOS attacks and then proceeded to be bombed or shelled.

It is important to keep in mind, however, is that DDOS attacks do not breach the computers, they are not strictly-speaking "hacking"; they simply render servers and hence web-sites inaccessible. Which of course is enough to do plenty of damage. DDOS attacks reached a new level in October 2016, in the so-called Mirai attacks created major internet site outages in the US and Europe when the attackers used millions of IoT or Internet of Things devices to shut down the DYN domain server. Domain servers translate the name you write in when you want to access a page into the IP address of that site.

In the wake of DDOS attacks and their paralyzing impact, the focus of cyber-security shifted to more elaborate possibilities: the use of malware to shut-down critical infrastructure: electricity and communication networks, water supplies, even disrupting traffic light systems in major cities. This already does require "hacking", as we know the term – breaking into a computer system, not just blocking access. Indeed the potential danger to critical infrastructure became the primary focus of government and private sector concern, including in my own country, where we were already quite aware of cyber power.

This kind of cyber attack could mean shutting down a country, rendering it open to conventional attack. In 2010 the Stuxnet worm, which spun Iranian plutonium enriching centrifuges out of control warned us of the power of cyber to do serious damage to physical systems. Leon Panetta, Secretary of Defense from 2011 to 2013, warned in 2012 of the potential of a "Cyber-Pearl Harbor". Subsequent events such as the shutting down of a Ukrainian power plant in 2016 and again this year through cyber operations showed that such concerns were hardly unwarranted.

At the same time I should also note that one could already do considerable damage to national security and the private sector without disabling infrastructure; the hack of Sony and of the Office of Personnel Management in which the records of up to 23 million past and present Federal employees are good examples of an extremely dangerous breach that endangers a country's national security or its commerce.

All of these concerns fell into the broad rubric of symmetrical warfare. Whatever they did to you, once you figured out who "they" were, you could do back to them. Moreover, the U.S. Department of Defense has explicitly said in its cyber strategy that a cyber attack as I have described here need not be met in the cyber domain; a kinetic response is just as possible.

What we have seen recently, in the U.S. and currently see ongoing in Europe, especially in countries with elections this year, is *asymmetric*. You can undermine a democratic election through various means I shall briefly describe, but how do you do it back to the attackers? If an authoritarian government undermines your elections, you can hardly undermine theirs if they do not have democratic elections, especially since the authoritarian government is ultimately the one to count the vote. Hacking e-mails of the rulers and publishing the more embarrassing finds does little if the media in the ruler's country are under state control and if republishing them on the web lands you in jail or worse. In this regard liberal democracies are weaker against attacks even from relatively small cyber powers such as Iran. It is the asymmetry of such attacks that places democracies in danger.

What are the mechanisms of this asymmetric cyber war?

- *Kompramat,* is the Russian term for publishing (real or fake) compromising materials on opponents;
- *hacking* is breaking into servers and stealing data;
- *doxing*, combines the two: to publish hacked documents to embarrass or harm opponents. The first large scale case of this were Wikileaks' publication of some quarter million U.S diplomatic cables in 2010, the most recent only this week the publication of CIA materials.
- Finally there are *fake news,* an old propaganda trick but used far more effectively in the era of social media. KGB fake news in the 1980s of AIDS being invented by CIA had relatively little

traction but today social media disseminates false stories with abandon.

All of these have been combined in the past year as a pincer movement on democratic elections. Hacked private mail is doxed; it appears in social and later mainstream media, after which fake news content spin on these same revelations takes off and goes "viral". *Buzzfeed* reported that in the last three months leading up to the U.S. election, fake news stories were shared on Facebook 8.7 million times, surpassing mainstream news by 1.4 million shares. Meanwhile, the Pew Center meanwhile reported last Summer, that for 62 percent of Americans social media was their primary news source.

Where do we stand? Democracies are in uncharted territory. Never before has private information been as vulnerable to hacking, never has it been so common to distribute it publicly and never in the past 75 years has the public been as receptive to fake news. One outcome has been a major disruption of the electoral process, which I need not go into here. Yet false stories can lead to genuine tragedy as well: after the election, a gunman with an AR-15 machine gun attacked a Washington pizza restaurant, his anger fueled by a fake story about Hillary Clinton running a child abuse ring there.

More broadly, we see the same is going on in Europe. What we are seeing in the United States and among the European allies is that *influencing a country's election outcome is warfare.* There is no need to wage a kinetic war or even use debilitating cyber attacks on critical infrastructure if you can sway an election to elect a candidate or a party friendly to your interests or to defeat a candidate you don't like. This is clearly the goal of Russia in the German elections, where Angela Merkel's role in maintaining EU sanctions against Russia has been critical and annoys Russia no end. It is true as well as in France, where Marine le Pen's Front National is anti-EU, anti-NATO and anti-US. With anti-EU and anti-NATO parties rising in popularity in a number of countries in Europe, this asymmetrical attack on the democratic process is already now a security threat to the NATO alliance.

So where to we stand?
The US intelligence services say that they the Russians were behind the Democratic National Committee and John Podesta's e-mail

breaches. The Dutch are so worried about possible disruption of their upcoming elections that they are going back to paper ballots. German intelligence agencies both domestic – the *Verfassungschutz* which is their FBI – and foreign, the *Bundesnachtrichtendienst*, which is their CIA have been uncharacteristically blunt. They say outright the hacking group APT 28, run by Russian military intelligence GRU has hacked into the Bundestag as well as the servers of some political parties.

Just five weeks ago the French media reported France's Directorate-General for External Security (DGSE) believes a disinformation campaign coordinated by the Kremlin threatens to undermine April's Presidential election. They fear Russia will seek to help the anti-EU, anti-NATO National Front and its leader Marine Le Pen by using bots to massively post pro Le Pen messages online. They also fear that other candidates, most noticeably the pro-European front runner Emmanuel Macron will suffer the same hacked emails and their "doxing" or publication that cost Hillary Clinton. Russian media outlets have already begun putting out stories Macron is gay and is supported by what they call the rich gay vote.

British officials have said they believe Russia had a hand in the Brexit referendum and I have been told the same by Italians about the referendum called by Prime Minister Renzi on government reform last December. Certainly the number of fake news shared on social media Italy was greater than genuine referendum stories, a finding repeating the U.S. experience during your elections.

We see not only the Enlightenment values of liberal democracy under attack, but we see one of the greatest scientific creations of our lifetime, the internet turned against liberal democracy we could never have imagined when 30 years ago I worked for Radio Free Europe.

Only a few years ago we believed that the Internet, social media would be a tool of liberation, that when Middle East autocrats shut down social media, using technology to keep twitter open would allow pro-democracy protestors liberate the autocracies of the Middle East. Instead we face a dystopian landscape. These are not tools of democracy but rather are turned into tools against democracy through manipulating the electoral process. No one really thought that this can happen. Instead of helping new democracies we

see our own societies under threat from fake news, by anti-democratic, often racist rhetoric that drowns out the voices of reason.

This puts Europe's future and trans-Atlantic security in a whole different light. Europe's hitherto unity on sanctions, in foreign policy, difficult as it has been to maintain under current circumstances, would crumble if we see the election of a Marine Le Pen's Front National. Similarly, Anti-EU, anti-Muslim Geert Wilders party has until the most recent poll been the front runner in the Netherlands, though there other parties have vowed to form a ruling coalition should Wilders win a plurality of votes.

We are facing something that is clearly a policy. It is a policy of the Russian Federation to use military intelligence units to run hacking groups such as APT28 or APT29. The first one is also known as "Fancy bear", the other "Cozy Bear", both are GRU hacking units whose footprint has been found across the globe.

If we return to Clausewitz's definition of war as the continuation of policy by other means, then what we are seeing is clearly the continuation of policy by other means. And then we must think not just about critical infrastructure attacks as war but attacks on democratic elections in the same light.

If you read the Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov's 2013 article about hybrid war – which he means as using all means at hand to achieve your ends – in turn means that in some places you use "little green men", in some places you use missiles and in some places you use doxing. All these require different responses but we need to understand that these are all part and parcel of a larger game and that in all cases we are facing a major aggressive action. Just because it is digital, electronic and people don't get killed does not mean that it is not aggression.

The conundrum that Europe will face in the coming year is whether or not to use illiberal methods to safeguard the liberal democratic state under external attack. Social media is responding, albeit slowly. Facebook has announced a system to flag fake news; Twitter and Google are looking at the issue. For some, however, this may not be enough. In Germany, a country that for obvious reasons is far more attuned than most to the dangers of demagogy, populism and

extremist nationalism, lawmakers have already proposed taking legal measures against fake news. When populist, nationalist fake news threatens the liberal democratic center, other Europeans may follow suit.

Democracies stand on several key pillars: Free and fair elections, human rights, the rule of law and a free untrammeled media. Until 2016, an open media was seen as a resilient democratic pillar that supported the others. Yet, because of hacks, doxing and fake news, we can already imagine the problem all democratic societies will face in future elections: how to limit lies when they threaten democracy?

In conclusion:

It is in light of this, I believe that in this age of "cyber," democracies need to think beyond the hitherto geographical bounds of security. Up until now, security was constrained by geography: NATO is the *North Atlantic* Treaty Organization because that's where the threats were; these threats were kinetic and by definition constrained by physical distance.

Today, unconstrained by the limits of kinetic war, by the range of missiles and bombers, by the logistics needed to support an armored division, we can succumb instead to digital aggression. In the digital age, physical distance no longer has any meaning. The range of threats we have seen in the past decade since Estonia was attacked – from DDOS attacks to wiping out communications or power grid infrastructure to disrupting elections are all independent of distance from the adversary.

Disruptions of electoral processes differ, however, because of the asymmetrical vulnerabilities of democracies to the kind of behavior we have witnessed in the past year, behaviors we now see rolled out against European democracies as well.

We do have asymmetrical advantages too, after all a Russia visa ban on supporters of Russian sanctions on such Western leaders as John McCain was met with considerable derision in the West. It is *our* asymmetrical advantage that adversaries want to come here. We *can* investigate money laundering, especially in the countries favored by

the adversaries, we *can* make it hard for the children of the regime to study in the West or to live here on stolen riches.

But we won't do that.

Which leads me to suggest that we need a new form of defense organization, a non-geographical but a strict criteria-based organization to defend democracies, countries, that genuinely *are* democracies…

In different contexts, both Madeleine Albright and John McCain have proposed a community or league of democracies. Neither proposal went far at the time. But the threats then were minor. Could such an organization do the job to face this new threat? I proposed already 5 years ago at an Atlantic Council event at the Munich Security Conference that we consider a cyber defense and security pact for the genuine democracies of the world. After all, Australia, Japan and Chile, all rated as free democracies by Freedom House, are just as vulnerable as NATO allies such as the United States, Germany or my own country.

It will take much hard work to create such a pact but those who would undermine our democracies are already hard at work.

Thank you

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. President.

Ambassador Bloomfield.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE LINCOLN P. BLOOMFIELD, JR., CHAIRMAN EMERITUS AND DISTINGUISHED FELLOW, THE STIMSON CENTER (FORMER ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL MILITARY AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE)

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. Thank you and good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Engel, and members. It is an honor to be here this morning.

My prepared testimony provides a strategic analysis of a longer-term view that looks into the future, that takes into consideration the past, and tries to put the current disturbance and the current events in a broader perspective. I associate myself with the opening remarks of both the chairman and the ranking member. And I hope the members will take what I have to say today as being entirely non-partisan and in favor of the home team, which is all of us.

The fact that we have distinguished European visitors in the room today, both at the panel with President Ilves and the others behind me, Ambassadors, shows this is not just an American issue. This is a much bigger issue.

I start by saying that there are some big changes going on in the world that have nothing to do with Russia. As you have seen, globalization, robotics, the massive increase in connectivity in the internet has had profound effects. And last year's election may well have been manipulated by Russia, but it was also caught up in some very big headwinds of global change, as you know. And this change is affecting Europe; it is affecting the whole world.

We have to separate those two things and recognize that last year was a change election where a number of Americans were worried about whether the tools of foreign policy were strong enough, whether we could be effective in fighting extremism and finishing what we started in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. There were a lot of things we were worried about including the loss of manufacturing jobs. Russia tried to exploit all of that. And we will find out when we investigate exactly how much they did and what the effect was.

But it is very important to realize that our democracy is being tested. What I would say is look at Russia's recent history. For the last 20 or 30 years the trend has been toward open democratization around the world. We saw autocracies disappear in Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the colored revolutions, starting with the Czech Republic and what happened in Poland years ago, and the fall of the Soviet Union, but then more recently in Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, and Georgia. This, of course, alarmed Mr. Putin and his secret service colleagues who thought that they would lose the whole thing.

So what did they do? They tightened down and they moved in a different direction. And I want the members to think about how not only Russia but China, Iran, and Syria, and perhaps others, are regimes that are going to try to stick around forever. They are trying to stay in power as one-party states. How do they do this? They do it by repressing their dissidents, by parking money in for-

eign banks so that they have assets, by controlling all security services, all the guns, and by censoring the media—that is extremely important.

So there is a contest that I think can play out over the next 20 or 30 years as to whether this model of a repressive autocracy in the modern age is going to surpass Western democracies. They are trying to undermine our confidence. They are trying to undermine our institutions. I think that is very dangerous.

My testimony provides two sets of responses. One is, what should we do to protect ourselves?

First is to investigate, as Ranking Member Engel said, and take appropriate actions. We need to know what happened. And we need to do it in concert with our NATO allies, with our European Union friends. We should do this as a joint project. We should share, compare notes, and we should talk about appropriate responses.

We should probably take a much deeper look at what the cyber implications are of our deep dependence on internet-connected information, and the fact that people can put out their own news, and their own broadcasts. We can't stop that but we need to think about it and be strategic and perhaps have a Western response to this threat.

But the ultimate answer is to govern successfully. Nothing would work better for Russia strategically than to deepen the natural differences in a vibrant American democracy between Republicans, Democrats; left, right; blue, red, et cetera. That is fine. That is the glory of our democracy. But when it becomes so intractable that we cannot agree on national security, we cannot agree on the future solvency of the country, and we cannot agree on the reputation of the United States in the world, that is when Russia starts to win. We need to be conscious of this contest. And our victory will be to prove that democracy works.

So, we will survive. My final point, and my testimony lays this out, is that we will survive this, this attempt to try to influence us. We had some very dangerous Russian provocations during the Cold War, which some of us lived through.

Can Mr. Putin survive a taste of his own medicine? If you go to the end of my testimony I have put out the idea of issuing a number of reports that reveal his little secrets, as a Western response, and see how he likes it when everyone knows where he put his money, how many dissidents he has killed, how they shot down the Malaysian airliner, and several other issues.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Bloomfield follows:]

Ambassador Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr.
Chairman Emeritus, Stimson Center

March 9, 2017 hearing on "Undermining Democratic Institutions
and Splintering NATO: Russian Disinformation"
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs

Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, Members of the Committee, thank you for the honor of appearing before you this morning to discuss Russia's efforts to meddle with our democratic political process and those of other countries. As I do not answer to any boss or client or institution, I hope my remarks will be understood as the personal view of one who has served in the Pentagon, White House and State Department under three presidents in five administrations, and who also had the good fortune of serving as Chairman of the non-partisan Stimson Center for eight years until the end of 2016.

There are two questions at the heart of the challenge posed by Russia's disinformation campaign against the United States and other countries including our NATO allies: what corrective actions we Americans should take in response to the revelation that the Russian government has been attempting to undermine the public's trust in our governing institutions by interfering with the free and vigorous national conversation that marks our domestic politics; and the appropriate response to this hostile behavior by the Russian government led by Vladimir Putin.

The Challenge of Reacting Constructively to Disruptive Change

In addressing the first issue, I start by suggesting that we Americans should not be too hard on ourselves. The world has been changing fast in this century, and it has created pressures on society and government, here and elsewhere. Globalization and robotics have impacted our economy such that manufacturing jobs have migrated to lower-cost foreign labor markets. Government and major media outlets have lost the near-monopoly they once exercised as the public's source of information about important events and issues. Today anyone can put a video broadcast or well-packaged news story on the internet, and we find sensational allegations and conspiracy theories spread through social media without any check on their veracity. This is fueling popular mistrust of the government and of traditional news organizations.

At the height of the Cold War, as the free world and the Soviet bloc competed for primacy while carefully controlling steps that could escalate toward the unthinkable prospect of nuclear war, our national security secrets were tightly walled off from public disclosure. Not so today, as sensitive information finds its way into the public realm on almost a daily basis. A capital city that was once a relatively quiet factory for policy and bipartisan legislation has been transformed by the central focus on managing the news cycle, the high financial stakes associated with laws and regulations, and the influence of political donors and lobbying groups.

We live in a changed and changing world. With these and other pressures building up in America, our political system was destined to experience a major shake-up sooner or later. The tumultuous 2016 election process elevated the voices of not one but two candidates – President Trump and Independent Senator Bernie Sanders – challenging both major political parties by tapping into public anxiety and hunger for a more vibrant economy, a more effective federal bureaucracy, a more successful international security role, and a process in Washington that more clearly elevates the public interest above special interests. It was a close election, and had it gone the other way we could well be back to business as usual until the next election.

But in the end, this was a change election, and we are living in anything but ordinary times. I have no doubt Russian meddling sought to take advantage of the anxiety and discontent so evident from the beginning of the election season; others will judge how much of a difference this made. The question is what should happen now. One answer needs to focus on our country, our economy, our society, our politics, and how America needs to adapt to a faster-moving, hyper-connected and technology-driven world. We need to assess what Russia hoped to accomplish by interfering in our political affairs, and consider how best to inoculate our free and open traditions from hostile interference. The issue of how to respond to Russia's provocative actions is a separate and no less important question.

What Russia Hopes to Gain by Meddling in Others' Politics

The fact is that Russia's security services have used disinformation as a primary tool of influence going back to the beginnings of the Soviet Union. Not unlike US strategists, Russian national security leaders have embraced the ancient Chinese General Sun Tsu's philosophy that it is always preferable to achieve strategic goals without having to fight for them. A 2014 article about Russian so-called "new-generation warfare" in the Aspen Institute's Central Europe publication, by Janis Berzins, Managing Director of the Center for Security and Strategic Research in the National Defense Academy of Latvia, offered useful insights about Russian tactics under Vladimir Putin. Among these were the idea of exerting "direct influence" in lieu of "direct destruction," waging "culture war" instead of a war with weapons, and promoting "internal decay" rather than destruction of an enemy.

The author concluded that "the Russian view of modern warfare is based on the idea that the main battlespace is the mind." In reading this, I was reminded of a statement last November in a presentation at the Halifax International Security Forum by LTG H.R. McMaster, USA, who has since become our country's National Security Advisor. Speaking of the U.S. and its allies, General McMaster said, "We have largely vacated the battleground spaces beyond the physical space." As National Endowment of Democracy Vice President Christopher Walker wrote last week in Politico,

> *"In contrast to inward-leaning democracies, which have an "End of History" sense of complacency, today's autocrats are vibrant internationalists in the ideas sphere. In recent years, the leading autocracies have forged a diverse constellation of*

efforts to shape perceptions and project their preferred worldview, while contesting the ideas they find anathema. They have upped the competition in this arena at a time when the world's leading democratic states have largely gone to the sidelines."

If Russia believes it can demoralize the American people, divert the energies of our media, and provoke debilitating intramural squabbles among our elected leaders and representatives, we all need to pay more attention to the net impact of what takes place in the highest-profile political arena here in Washington, and its effect on the morale and civic spirit of our citizens as well as the confidence of our allies.

With comparable pressures and anxieties felt by populations in Europe, exacerbated by the destabilizing flow of refugees from North Africa and Syria as well as terrorist attacks perpetrated by ISIS in major European cities, Russia sees a similar opening to weaken the NATO alliance. Disinformation and propaganda are meant to undermine the confidence of Europeans in their leaders and institutions. As in the United States, this is a wake-up call for Western democratic politicians to reconnect with their people, embrace changes that will restore the public trust, and show that our governments can successfully address today's challenges.

The Center for Naval Analysis has produced some useful research on Russian efforts to focus disinformation in countries formerly within the Soviet bloc where ethnic Russian populations live. Mr. Putin's government has sought to diminish the solidarity and sovereign vitality of countries like Ukraine, Latvia, Belarus and others by targeting so-called "Russian compatriots" within neighboring countries with influence operations. Foreign television broadcasts by RT – formerly Russia Today – cast aspersions on Western politics and culture, while other outlets fill print and online social media with similar content. Large numbers of so-called "trolls" working for the Russian government saturate social media with propaganda themes, including entirely fictitious stories and images, posted under false identities. Countries burdened by official corruption and lack of transparency are particularly vulnerable.

The 21st Century Geopolitical Contest – Free-Market Democracies versus Autocratic Powers

There is a larger geopolitical contest being played out here, and I believe that this context must inform Washington's response. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, Mr. Putin and the Russian intelligence services have made it their top priority to preserve the levers of power and control even as dictatorships elsewhere collapsed. A long list of countries have experienced popular uprisings – often called "colored revolutions" – and thrown off authoritarian rule for more open and democratic governance. From South and Central America to Central and Eastern Europe, to Central Asia, Southeast Asia and most recently with the Arab Spring, the historical tide has swept away autocrats, reflecting the aspirations of ordinary citizens who are now connected by cellphones and the internet.

While other countries worked to realign their political systems with the historical trend empowering individuals and advancing their rights, the leadership circles of Russia along with

China, Iran and some other countries including Syria have instead concentrated on holding onto power indefinitely, in defiance of pressures for political reform. They censor and control media within their territory, and punish political opposition, with as much violence as it takes. They also try to convince their populations that rights-based free-market democracies are inferior and unstable, and cannot be trusted to provide for their needs. When free-market economies have suffered downturns, such as the Asia financial crisis of 1997 and the global recession in 2008, these authoritarian regimes have seized upon the opportunity to denounce democratic systems and to claim that their model of stable governance is superior to ours.

Vladimir Putin's effort to sow doubts about the legitimacy of our electoral process and stir up controversy here in Washington is consistent with Russia's longer-term goals of discrediting America's global reputation, sowing internal divisions and weakening our resolve to lead in the world, thus making it easier for Russia to wall off historical pressures for political reform at home and in countries along its western and southern periphery. These actions are in pursuit of but one objective: to preserve and extend his circle's hold on power in Russia. The Key Judgments in the January 6 Intelligence Community Assessment titled "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections" labeled these activities "the most recent expression of Moscow's longstanding desire to undermine the US-led liberal democratic order."

As we consider specific responses to Russia's hostile actions, we must align these responses with a consistent national security strategy to resist and actively discourage this rival model of governance, which is undemocratic, economically statist and inefficient, and sustained by ever more severe coercion. Over the long term, the durability and survival of international law and norms that underpin a stable and just international order are at stake. Our national interests will be harmed if this 21st Century model of cruel and corrupt dictatorship gains wider adoption and disrupts the maturation of young democracies. With Russia, as with China and Iran, if we understand the larger stakes and act in defense of our principles, it is only a matter of time before their citizens will demand political participation, economic opportunity and an end to repression, corruption and censorship, as we have repeatedly seen all over the world.

Defensive Responses: Reducing Our Vulnerability to Russian Disinformation Campaigns

As the Congress investigates Russia's waging of "new-generation warfare" against the United States, its NATO allies and neighboring countries that broke free of the Soviet Union a quarter-century ago, the following kinds of responses are recommended:

1. Expose Russia's activities in detail, building upon the Intelligence Community's recent assessment. This should also include investigation of unconfirmed press reports about criminal Russian hacking of American entities potentially involving extortion. As with most unwanted secret activity, sunlight is the strongest disinfectant. The best response to Russia's covert interference in our internal affairs is transparency, a hallmark of our democracy.
2. Conduct Intensive Dialogue and Collaboration with Allies to Forge a Unified Policy. Congress should discuss its findings with Parliamentarians and Ministers in targeted

European countries, while urging the Administration to work with both NATO and the European Union to forge common policies aimed at detecting, exposing and discrediting Russian disinformation. Alliance-wide strategic communications should educate the public about Russia's nefarious activities and the Putin ruling clique's vulnerability to geopolitical trends favoring popular sovereignty, good governance and the rule of law.

3. Continued National Focus on Cyber Policy. Given the ever-growing critical dependence of the US economy, the military and the American lifestyle on cyber technology utilizing the internet, the challenge of protecting US interests from malicious intrusions is greater than ever. The fact that in America major cyber systems are in the hands of the private sector only underscores the importance of a well-considered, well-managed policy in Washington involving effective collaboration with all stakeholders including the general public. Hopefully Congress and the Administration will address this challenge and find common ground. Doing so will afford Russia and other external actors fewer opportunities to harm the national interest.

4. Show that Our Democracy Works. Perhaps the greatest strength of our republic is the exercise of political freedom, allowing all voices to be heard and a vigorous competition of ideas. We cannot allow the Russian provocation or any hostile interference to curb our open democratic process. What has made America the most successful political system in history is our capacity to adapt and change with the times, faster and more effectively than any other society. America has always owned the future. With the disruptions we are now experiencing in Washington from economic, social, technological and geopolitical pressures, the solution is to adapt, and address these challenges with vision and confidence.

Russia's hope is that our political differences can be exacerbated, and internal divisions sharpened, such that the left and the right, Republicans and Democrats, coastal elites and the red state heartland, will never find common ground. As the January Intelligence Community Assessment noted, pro-Kremlin bloggers had prepared a #DemocracyRIP Twitter campaign at the time of our November election. No one would deny that the United States is undergoing a turbulent political episode, spurred mainly by global trends but also exploited by hostile foreign influence operations. Now Russia has been caught, and the next move is up to us. If we are to preserve our cherished right to say no to policies we oppose, we must now demonstrate our capacity to say yes to the things that matter most.

This chaotic period in Washington – where budgets, organizational structures, decision processes and policies suddenly appear so uncertain – is also a dynamic opportunity to make sensible changes for the better. I hope my testimony will persuade Members that the first step in defeating the rival authoritarian model threatening the international order is to show that our system works, reaching common ground on core issues affecting our security, our future solvency and our reputation in the world. Every Member of Congress, indeed every American citizen, is part of the home team. We need to come together and agree on steps, including

bold changes if needed, that will enable America once again to embrace the future and thrive, serving as an example to the world.

Responding to Moscow: Is "New-Generation Warfare" an Act of War?

To the second question posed by Russia's provocations – what is the appropriate response? – compelling arguments will be made that the use of deceptive propaganda and disinformation, the hacking and theft of domestic political communications, the bribing of officials in some countries, and like activities emanating from Russian sources under the control of Vladimir Putin, are a seamless extension of Russia's hard power threats to its neighbors, NATO and the US. Russia has violated security agreements, seized foreign territory, issued ominous nuclear threats, and placed nuclear-capable missiles to the west of the Baltic states in Kaliningrad, among other actions of concern.

It is entirely appropriate, and will be salutary, for the US and its NATO allies to engage in a joint assessment and high-level consultations regarding Russia's attempt to undermine our solidarity and weaken our collective security. If such consultations lead to decisions to adopt new defensive military measures, they will be perfectly legitimate responses by the member states of the alliance.

There is, however, an alternative mode of response to Putin's secret campaign. Russia obtained sensitive private communications pertinent to our domestic politics, and arranged for their disclosure at times calculated to perturb and distract our national conversation approaching the November election. For better or worse, we Americans are becoming accustomed to hearing about matters that used to be kept private. We read personal emails, we hear details about intelligence and law enforcement investigations, and even our 44th and 45th Presidents have openly discussed intelligence-related matters that earlier Presidents would likely have kept from the public discourse.

In spite of the constant disclosures, revelations and leaks of personal, proprietary, and apparently classified information here in Washington, our republic will not be threatened by any such disclosures. Can Mr. Putin say the same thing about his secrets?

After reading sources including the meticulously documented history of Vladimir Putin's rise to power, Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia? (2014) by Professor Karen Dawisha at Miami University in Ohio, I would like to suggest that the Congress and Administration seriously explore a campaign of public exposure to see how Mr. Putin and his political allies fare when his secrets become known to the world, including 143 million Russians trapped in a weak economy.

I do not advocate propaganda or deception, nor should the American response complicate the life of ordinary Russians. Our weapon in this strategic contest is the truth. Recall that in 1982, the Soviet Defense Ministry published a propagandistic monograph called "Whence The Threat To Peace." The following year, the Pentagon released a monograph called "Soviet Military Power", detailing with declassified information the buildup of destabilizing Soviet forces. The United States had the more credible reputation, and its international leadership was, if anything, strengthened by the contest of narratives.

In that spirit, I conclude by recommending that the Congress consider encouraging the White House and the Intelligence Community to issue a series of well-researched, unclassified reports regarding the Russian leadership. These would represent our government's best assessment of the truth, and could in fact become a NATO-wide effort, issued by the member states of NATO in various formats including video, audio, print and digital, and in several languages including Russian.

Topics for these reports could include the following:

- Estimated funds and properties controlled by Russia's leader and security services in foreign banks and countries; share of national wealth reaching the population.

- A comprehensive narrative of Russia's "hybrid operations" (what some term "gray warfare") in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, including violations of the Geneva Conventions such as the absence of identifying markings on uniforms. The study would review Russian media (mainly state-controlled television) to confirm that the government concealed from the population the Red Army's intervention in Ukraine.

- A comprehensive review of the shoot-down of Malaysian Airlines flight 17 over eastern Ukraine on July 17, 2014, summarizing all available evidence that indicates not only Russia's culpability but its denials and efforts to cover up its role.

- The details of liberal politician Boris Nemtsov's writings about an alleged $30 Billion in official corruption surrounding the Sochi Olympics, and the intervention in Ukraine, leading up to his assassination in February 2015 on a bridge near the Kremlin; and the raid by regime authorities of the hard drives in his apartment following his death.

- A compendium of the several mysterious deaths and poisonings of critics of the Putin government, with details of available evidence indicating Moscow's likely culpability.

- A comprehensive review of Russian combat operations in Syria over the past year, including the targeting and destruction of numerous hospitals and other sites protected under international law (building on the Atlantic Council's excellent work on this topic).

- An estimate of Russian-Iranian cooperation and collaboration, including negotiations over future arms sales and other prohibited forms of cooperation, during the P5+1 talks prior to conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in July 2015.

I thank the Committee for its consideration, and look forward to responding to any questions.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Doran.

STATEMENT OF MR. PETER B. DORAN, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CENTER FOR EUROPEAN POLICY ANALYSIS

Mr. DORAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee.

I am Peter B. Doran, the executive vice president of the Center for European Policy Analysis. It is an honor to be here to talk with you today. I have submitted my written testimony for the record. And what I would like to do is to provide a brief overview of Russia's global efforts to undermine democratic states.

Now, Mr. Chairman, my organization is a U.S.-based, nonprofit policy institute dedicated to the study of Central Europe. Our main focus in the question of disinformation right now centers on American allies like Poland and the Baltic states. Based on our research and reporting at CEPA, my main message to the committee is this: The Russian Government is sharpening its use of state-sponsored propaganda against Western democracies. This puts democratic states and NATO at risk.

This committee should have no doubt Russia is a rival to the United States. The strategic aims of the Russian Government are fundamentally incompatible with American interests in Europe. In its place, Russia wants to change this. Russia wants to establish a sphere of privileged influence in Europe. But to do so, they must weaken America's links to our allies, divide NATO and, if necessary, use force.

Russia's problem is that against a united Atlantic alliance, Russia is relatively weak. Against individual states in Europe, Russia is comparatively strong. Russian leaders know this. It is why they must fracture allied security, stoke public distrust against democratic institutions, and discredit the alliance structures that defend Europe. If we are divided and distracted, Russia can challenge the U.S.-led security order. This is Russia's aim. Propaganda is a means.

Unlike the Cold War, today's Russian propaganda does not crudely promote the Kremlin's foreign policy agenda. Instead, it is calibrated to confuse, distract, and dismay audiences. The intent here is to erode Euro-Atlantic values and degrade trust and public support for security organizations like NATO. So whether Russian propagandists are repackaging deceptive narratives to disguise their original source, a concept that we call narrative laundering, the methods are many. Trust is the intended casualty: Trust in America's promises, NATO's staying power, and democratic efficacy.

All of this has immediate ramifications for upcoming elections, as members of this panel have already noted. Right now Russian propaganda outlets are actively trying to shape public perceptions ahead of both contests. The Russian Government has a stake in the outcome of these elections because if we are distracted, divided, and incapable of defending the existing security order in Europe, then Russia can achieve its foreign policy goals. If Russia succeeds, it will create great harm to U.S. interests.

The question becomes for us then how do we protect ourselves? And what does victory on this new frontier of conflict actually look like?

Well, for starters, I would recommend to the committee that we start to view Russian propaganda like a virus. To stop this virus we should treat it like one. This means detecting the virus, knowing what it is and how it works, debunking it, so curing those who may have been exposed, defending people by educating citizens to protect themselves and others, and disarming it or finding a vaccine.

CEPA has developed a packager of ideas to address the different dimensions of disinformation. The full list is included in my written testimony for the record. But the bottom line is this: In the 21st Century media space the lie can be disproved but audiences have to care. To defeat Russian disinformation we are going to need more systemic analysis of its methods and impact, better countermessaging from government and non-government sources, high impact media education for everyday audiences, and not just a whole of government approach at the policy level, but a whole of society approach to disarming propaganda.

Well, this may seem like a sobering assessment for the committee. Members should be encouraged. Trust can be restored. The information space can be protected.

I very much thank you for your time. And I do look forward to questions from the committee. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Doran follows:]

Written Testimony of Peter B. Doran
Center for European Policy Analysis Executive Vice President
House Foreign Affairs Committee
March 9, 2017

Hearing on "Undermining Democratic Institutions and Splintering NATO: Russian Disinformation Aims"

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee. I am Peter B. Doran, Executive Vice President at the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA). I want to thank you for inviting me here today. It is an honor and a privilege to give this testimony. I would like to submit my written testimony for the record and offer a brief summary of my thoughts on Russia's global efforts to undermine democratic states.

Mr. Chairman, my organization is a U.S.-based non-profit policy institute dedicated to the study of Central Europe. At CEPA, we have developed an on-going program to analyze and expose Russian disinformation and propaganda in Europe. Our primary area of focus covers frontline American allies like Poland and the Baltic countries: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Based on our research and reporting at CEPA, my main message to the committee is this: the Russian government is sharpening its use of state-sponsored propaganda against Western democracies. While some of these propaganda techniques are not new, their sophistication and intensity are increasing. This puts democratic states and NATO at risk.

This committee should have no doubt: Russia is a rival to the United States. The strategic aims of the Russian government are fundamentally at odds with American interests in Europe. Russia's leaders view the American-led security order as outdated and unfair. Russian leaders want to change this. In its place, they seek to establish a sphere of privileged influence in Europe. To do so, they must weaken America's links to allies, divide NATO, and if necessary use force.

Russia's problem is this: it is no match against a united Atlantic alliance. Against individual states in Europe, however, Russia is comparatively strong. Russian leaders know this. It is why they must fracture allied solidarity, stoke public distrust for democratic institutions, and discredit the alliance structures that defend Europe. If we are divided and distracted, Russia can challenge the U.S. led security order in Europe. This is Russia's ultimate aim. Propaganda is a means.

Unlike the Cold War, today's Russia propaganda does not crudely promote the Kremlin's foreign policy agenda. Instead, it is designed to confuse and dismay. By polluting the information space with disinformation, Russia seeks to increase polarization in the West, undermine democratic debate, and create doubt among allies. The intended result is to erode Euro-Atlantic values and degrade public support for security organizations like NATO.

Perhaps most troubling is how Russian propaganda exploits the natural openness of democratic systems. Crucial elements in an open society such as a free press, broadcast and social media, civic groups, political parties or even economic actors can be utilized to spread disinformation. They may not even know they are doing it. Whether Russian propagandists are re-packaging

false narratives to disguise their original source—a concept we call "narrative laundering"—or branding credible news as fake, or employing rumors, myths and conspiracy to confound audiences, the methods are many. Trust is the intended casualty—trust in America's promises, NATO's staying power, and democratic efficacy.

Propagandists want the news to be confusing. When facts and falsehoods become interchangeable, Russia can befuddle and dismay Western audiences. This allows propaganda to play upon an audience's fears, doubts, and real-life worries. By calibrating its narratives and messaging to specific countries and audiences, Russian propaganda can aggravate dormant historical or ethnic tensions, widen political cleavages, and heighten feelings of isolation or estrangement from the United States. What's worse, the spreading of these ideas is as easy as a "Like" a "Tweet" and a "Share."

All of this has immediate ramifications for upcoming elections in France and Germany. Right now, Russia's propaganda outlets are active in trying to shape public perceptions ahead of both contests. The Russian government has a clear stake in the outcomes, since it desires to keep Europe distracted, divided and incapable of defending the existing security order that has maintained peace since the Cold War. If Russia succeeds, it will create great harm to U.S. interests.

The question for us becomes: how do we protect ourselves against this danger; and what does victory on this new frontier of conflict look like?

For starters, we should begin to view Russian propaganda like a virus. To stop this virus, we should treat it like one. This means:

Detecting the virus—knowing what it is, and how it works;

Debunking it—curing those who may have been exposed;

Defending people—educating citizens to protect themselves and others;

Disarming it—finding a vaccine.

Ultimate success occurs when audiences, editors, journalists, experts and leaders easily spot Russian propaganda and ignore it.

For the recommendations that follow, CEPA has developed a package of ideas to address the different dimensions of disinformation.

Recommendations

Detect (and analyze)

Today, no dedicated agency or *systematic* effort exists to detect and analyze Russian disinformation in real or near-real time. Especially needed is greater analysis on how Russia targets different audiences across multiple countries—and its impact. To address this gap we recommend greater support for increased monitoring and analysis (inside and outside of government) on the methods, reach and especially impact of Russian propaganda.

Debunk

While Russia's propaganda messages are relatively simple and emotional, Western counter-messaging is often too complex or lacks broad public appeal. Regional audiences tend to consume Kremlin propaganda because it is glossier and more entertaining than fact-based alternatives. To address this gap we recommend a full spectrum approach to counter Russian propaganda featuring: broadcast, social, and online media. Both government and non-governmental actors should play a role. This includes greater support for public fact-checking and myth-busting efforts, especially in countries and populations, which are common targets for Russian disinformation.

Defend

Media education matters, as audiences require a wider variety of sources to understand and explain Russia's false narratives and disinformation techniques. To address this gap we recommend robust assistance for public awareness campaigns, which educate audiences in how to spot disinformation, protecting themselves and others against it. This can include high-quality media content where disinformation techniques and false narratives are explained for general, non-specialist audiences.

Disarm

Defending U.S. allies and protecting exposed democracies will require not just a whole of government approach at the policy level, but a whole of society approach to "make facts cool again." In the 21st century media space, a lie can be disproved but audiences have to care. To address this gap we recommend increased backing for the development of Russian-language media featuring satire, humor, news and even entertainment content. Ideally, this content would be calibrated for specific counter-messaging on Russian propaganda, inoculating audiences against the digital virus of disinformation. Additionally, the creation of a voluntary charter for broadcast and online content producers would demonstrate that participating media adhere to the highest ethical standards in journalism and fact-based reporting.

Trust can be restored.

The information space can be protected.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to answering your questions.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.
Ambassador Baer.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DANIEL BAER (FORMER U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE)

Ambassador BAER. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Ranking Member, and thank you especially for your warm comments. And thank you to all the members for having us here today.

Over the last few years I have developed a kind of Pavlovian response to this kind of microphone. And when I see one I prepare to defend the United States against the spurious claims of the Russian Ambassador. But I am glad to be here today with the home team.

Vladimir Putin pursues with obsessive compulsion a range of efforts to dominate the post-Soviet space and to weaken Europe, the U.S., transatlantic relationships, and institutions that reinforce democratic values. We must understand why the Kremlin does this, how, why it matters to the U.S., and what we should do about it. A fuller treatment is in my written testimony.

Russia's foreign policy is driven by Putin's domestic political aims, namely, the preservation of his personal position and the corrupt authoritarian system by which he and so many of his cronies have enriched themselves and maintained an iron grip on the state. Putin longs for a lost Soviet past, sure. But he also fears the present. He fears justice, accountability, the rule of law, all the things that the European Union, NATO, and the United States of America represent and reinforce.

The rules-based order, which has been a chief accomplishment of U.S. foreign policy throughout Democratic and Republican administrations over the last seven decades, is anathema to the kleptocratic authoritarianism of Russia's KGB President.

Let me turn to disinformation and hacking. It is possible to track Russian disinformation's past from GRU and FSB agents working with the Kremlin, through Russia's propaganda arms like Sputnik and RT, to a set of intermediaries disguised as independent sources. These actors often describe themselves in their profiles in ways intended to legitimize and make them attractive to target audiences. For example, those targeting Trump supporters may have "Make America Great Again" or "Christian Patriot USA" in their profile. Never mind that they might in fact be sitting in a troll factory in St. Petersburg.

They share the stories, which are then amplified through technical means, or bots, that send many thousands of tweets of the same false stories accompanied by hashtags. This burst of activity puts the hashtags on Twitter's trending list. And then the story is picked up by genuine supporters of a candidate or cause who share it on Twitter or Facebook. Little does the person in Hamilton, New Jersey, or Brea, California, know that what they just shared with their friends and family is junk that was written by a Russian agent.

State-sponsored hacking is another part of this operation. WikiLeaks is the most well-known platform for Russian intelligence to distribute their stolen material. The coordination of the

two tactics was exposed several times during the U.S. Presidential campaign when RT or Sputnik ran a story based on hacked material hours before the material was posted on WikiLeaks. Even Russian spies make mistakes.

The same intermediaries and bots that were active during our election pivoted almost immediately to upcoming elections in Europe, as we have heard today. There, Russia seeks to bolster xenophobic and anti-EU candidates and to take down German Chancellor Merkel for similar reasons—to strike a blow to Europe.

Attempts to undermine democracy and political stability in Europe are a threat to American security and prosperity. Our European allies remain our partners of first resort in taking on the challenges of the 21st Century. And when they are weakened, the United States is less able to accomplish our objectives. In response, we must pursue three general lines of effort at the same time: First, work with governments and civil society in Europe to help repulse Russian efforts.

Second, sustain existing punitive measures aimed at delivering consequences to Russia for its intervention in our election, and be prepared to implement additional measures.

Third, we need a comprehensive, independent review of Russian interference in our elections.

Support for a full investigation has divided too often on party lines. This saddens me. This should not be a partisan issue. This is a national security issue that should concern any patriot. I understand that because Russian influence was deployed on behalf of the Republican candidate, an investigation feels politically uncomfortable for Republicans. But I respectfully urge you to recognize that while the focus of an investigation must necessarily be on our last election, the reason for an investigation is to defend our future elections, to defend our democracy itself. And that is an interest that we all share.

If we are to withstand future efforts to manipulate us through hacking and disinformation, we must have the facts about how this effort worked and how effective it was. For this reason, a robust, independent investigation of the Russian role in our elections is needed, separate from and in addition to any appointment of a special prosecutor to look into criminal collaboration with such efforts.

Again I thank you for inviting me to be here today. And I will do my best to answer any of your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Baer follows:]

Written testimony for the record
Daniel B. Baer
For the hearing
"Undermining Democratic Institutions and Splintering NATO: Russia's Disinformation Aims"
House Foreign Affairs Committee
March 9, 2017

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me to testify today. I am humbled and honored to be with you, and to be part of such a distinguished panel. And as a citizen and voter, I want to thank you for holding a hearing on this important and timely topic that is central to the future security and prosperity of our great country.

I agree with the premise of the subject Mr. Royce has chosen for this hearing: that Moscow seeks to undermine democratic institutions and liberal democracy, and to splinter NATO, the EU, and other political institutions that protect our democratic values. Disinformation campaigns—a combination work by Russia's vast spy agencies and government-controlled propaganda outlets—are one of the tools that the Kremlin uses to advance these objectives.

I would like to offer a few observations on several questions that follow from this starting point. First, why does the Kremlin pursue these aims? Second, how, practically speaking, does the Kremlin execute disinformation efforts? Third, why does this matter for the United States? And finally, what should we do about it?

1. Why Moscow seeks to undermine democracy and its institutions

I heard it said once a couple years ago that it is only a slight exaggeration to say that Russia doesn't have a foreign policy as such; it has only domestic policy that manifests itself internationally. This is an important point—we project onto Russia a foreign policy framework that mirrors our own in form. But Russia's foreign policy is not driven by any kind of genuine world view—it's driven by the domestic political imperatives that drive Putin: preservation of his personal position and, necessarily, preservation of the corrupt and increasingly authoritarian system by which he and so many of his cronies have enriched themselves and maintained an iron grip on the state. This is why Russian foreign policy is so often at odds with the actual interests of ordinary Russians. It's not about advancing the security or prosperity of Russian citizens, or even the long term interests of the Russian state. It's about the preservation of a particular regime.

The myth of NATO as a security threat to Russia is case-in-point. NATO is a defensive alliance. But the myth of NATO's aggressive encirclement provides a domestic justification for the regime. In fact, if you look at a map, Russia's borders with or near NATO countries are the most secure and stable borders it has. NATO has been a stabilizing force for Europe, and it has enhanced the security of Europeans and Russians, whether or not the latter are prepared to admit it. Yet the Putin regime has cultivated the perception of NATO as a bogeyman. Here it is important to remember: It's not, or not only, the supposed military threat that NATO poses, but

rather the blow to democracy that NATO's fragmentation would represent, that drives Moscow to attempt to undermine it. Similarly, Russia's desire to undermine the EU is not about neutralizing a threat but about destroying a political arrangement that is founded on the universal values at the heart of liberal democracy.

The most prominent example of Russia's attempts to undermine democracy in Europe in the last five years was the invasion of Ukraine and ongoing conflict that Russia continues to pursue in that country. This was not a "foreign policy" chosen because Ukraine posed a security threat to Russia—it was pursued because Putin saw the opportunity, among other things, to boost his waning domestic popularity by whipping up nationalist sentiments at home through the seizure of Crimea. And his ongoing attempts to sabotage the democratic choices of the people of Ukraine is driven by his (reasonable) fear that a successful democratic Ukraine would expose the (racist) lie that his authoritarian rule depends on: that Russians and other Slavs are incapable of living in a liberal democracy.

The rules-based order which has been a chief accomplishment of U.S. foreign policy through Democratic and Republican administrations over the last seven decades, pursued in cooperation with Canada, our allies in Europe, and democratic governments in other parts of the world, is anathema to the kleptocratic authoritarianism Russia's ex-KGB president has built.

I do not discount the macho egotism that many see as one of Putin's chief motives—that an effort to restore the perceived stolen greatness of the Soviet Union is one of his personal ambitions. But we must also recognize that not only does he long for a lost past, he fears the present. He fears justice, accountability, the rule of law—all of the things that the European Union, NATO, and the United States of America represent and reinforce.

This in short, is why Putin pursues—with obsessive compulsion—a range of efforts to dominate the post-Soviet space and to weaken Europe, the US, trans-Atlantic relationships, and domestic and international institutions that reinforce the values of liberal democracy.

2. How Moscow uses disinformation to accomplish these aims.

We know Putin's goals, now let's turn to one of his tactics. Russian disinformation campaigns today are part of a broader arsenal used in Putin's assault on democracy. They are both old—in that they continue core elements of Soviet "active measures" efforts—and new—in that they have harnessed new technologies and used them effectively.

Using open source information and analyzing the data on social media, it is possible to track Russian disinformation's path from GRU or FSB agents working with the Kremlin, through Russia's propaganda arms like Sputnik and RT, to a set of intermediaries disguised as independent sources or commentators who act either voluntarily or as part of a paid apparatus to propagate stories. These sources often describe themselves in their profiles in ways intended to legitimize them and make them attractive to target audiences—for example, those targeting Trump supporters may have "Make America Great Again" or "Christian Patriot USA" in

their profile—never mind that they might in fact be sitting in a troll factory in St. Petersburg or in a town in Eastern Europe. They promote and share the stories, which are then amplified through technical means—"bots"—that send out, for example, many thousands of tweets with the same false stories and headlines accompanied by a set of hashtags. This burst of activity puts the hashtags on twitter's "trending" list and then the story is picked up by more and more genuine supporters of a candidate or cause, and finds its way into their own twitter feeds and facebook posts. Little does the person in Hamilton, NJ or Brea, CA know that what they just shared with their friends and family is junk that was written by a Russian agent. (And indeed, Members of Congress watching their own twitter feeds may be unaware that the responses they are seeing to their posts may be coming from the same bots or network of Russian collaborators that spread propaganda, rather than from constituents.)

Propaganda masked and spread through a combination of digital and human means is one piece of this operation. State sponsored hacking is another. These are not separate lines of effort; they are part of the same whole—a campaign to manipulate public opinion in ways that serve the interests of the Kremlin. Wikileaks has become the most well-known platform for Russian intelligence to distribute their stolen caches. Hacked material is dumped, some of it unadulterated, some of it perhaps modified—mixing authentic or legitimate material in with falsehoods is a tactic for building trust with an audience. The hacked material then gets distributed alongside propaganda and used as a kernel around which fully-formed propaganda stories are distributed. The coordination of the two tactics was apparently exposed several times during the U.S. presidential campaign when RT or Sputnik ran a story based on hacked material several hours before it was posted on Wikileaks. Even Russian spies make mistakes.

It's important to note that while disinformation is used to attempt to change views on certain issues, or to bolster support for candidates and political or social issues that Moscow perceives as advancing its agenda, the broader attack here is not about one candidate or political decision-point. It's about fomenting conflict rather than debate within our democracies, it's about undermining public trust in government and democratic institutions, it's about calling into question truth itself. This last part is important because it is one of the asymmetries that plays to the Kremlin's advantage: if you're trying to undermine people's confidence in truth or facts, you need only to call it into question, you need not persuade them to change their mind. "You say the sky is blue, I say it's green, we both have our opinions," they say. This notion that nothing is true, and every argument or opinion is equally valid is what some have called "weaponized relativism," and it is a common Russian tactic. The RT motto "Question more" isn't about critical thinking, it's about undermining the basis for civilized, fact-based argument and debate in democratic societies. I worry that this tactic is too often bleeding into our own political discourse, and when it does, it accomplishes a Russian objective and constitutes an abandonment a cornerstone of our democracy.

Russia has deployed these tactics during the 2016 U.S. election and during the Brexit referendum in the UK earlier last year. While Russia targeted particular groups of voters for its influence operations, in both cases, all voters—and indeed all citizens and residents of the

United States and UK—were victims, for Russia was attacking a fundamental institution of our democracy itself: free and fair elections.

3. Why Russia's attempts to undermine democracy in Europe matter for the United States

Analysts tracking the network through which the Kremlin executes its campaigns noted that some of the same intermediaries and bots that were active during the 2016 U.S. campaign pivoted almost immediately to upcoming elections in Europe, including the upcoming Dutch and French elections and, especially, the German election in which Chancellor Merkel is seeking a fourth term later this year.

Russia has recognized that the success of the xenophobic and anti-EU Geert Wilders in the Netherlands or of his French far right populist counterpart Marine Le Pen, whose Front Nationale party has received Russian financing in the past, would be a blow to Europe and European values and would advance Russia's aims. Putin also seeks to embolden the extreme right and extreme left in Germany, believing that Merkel's political end would spell the end of European solidarity in standing against Russian aggression in Ukraine and elsewhere, and would bring down a pillar in support of liberal democracy in Europe and the world—a pillar that many consider to be of singular importance.

Though they have ramped up in the wake of successful operations in the U.K. and U.S. last year, Russian disinformation campaigns in Europe aren't new or exclusively focused on elections. Russia also uses these tactics to attempt to undermine popular support for NATO and to thwart expansion of the alliance, most recently in the ongoing attempts to sabotage Montenegro's accession. Russia allies with domestic groups to stir up anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment. It works to support groups and corporate interests that attack plans that would enhance Europe's energy independence, seeking to maintain Europe's dependence on Russia so that it can better exploit Europe economically and coerce it politically.

These attempts to undermine the institutions of democracy in Europe, and to fragment Europe politically, aren't just a threat against European security and prosperity, they are a threat to American security as well. Our allies in Europe remain our partners of first resort in taking on the challenges of the 21st century. When they are weakened, the United States is less able to accomplish our objectives whether those are related to countering global terrorism, supporting a stable global economy, preserving an open and level playing field for American business, or countering climate change and global epidemics. The post-World War II project has been a European and North American project, and it has been enormously successful. It was crucial to bringing an end to the Cold War and expanding freedom's reach to tens of millions of people. NATO is the most successful military alliance in the history of the world, it is anchored in shared democratic values—values worth defending—and it is far from obsolete. The United States will continue to have an abiding interest in a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace in the decades to come. We must be ready to help our European friends withstand Russia's attempts to undermine their institutions and their security.

4. What should we do about it?

To do this, we must pursue three general lines of effort at the same time:

First we should work with governments and civil society in Europe to help repulse Russian efforts to undermine European democratic institutions. Our intelligence community—which is the best in the world—should sustain and enhance information sharing with European partners about Russian malign activity within and across their borders. Working through NATO, the EU, and bilaterally, we should work with European partners, and with Canada, to identify concrete steps to enhance the resilience of their societies to Russian malign influence.

Second the U.S. government should sustain existing punitive measures aimed at delivering consequences to Russia for its intervention in our election, and should be prepared to forcefully implement additional measures, whether unilaterally or in partnership with Canadian and European allies.

Third, we must continue to gather facts about the Russian malign influence on our own elections and the Brexit referendum. We need a comprehensive, independent review of what happened, why it worked, why certain parts didn't work, and how we can resist it. We need a coherent approach for determining appropriate and effective countermeasures and punitive action.

A lot of the discussion about an investigation has—predictably but regrettably—become politicized in the United States, and support for a full investigation has divided mostly, but not perfectly, along partisan lines. This saddens me. This should not be a Republican issue or a Democratic issue. This is a national security issue that should concern any patriot. I understand that because both open source evidence and the findings of our intel agencies support a conclusion that Russian influence was deployed on behalf of the Republican candidate in our presidential election, an investigation feels politically uncomfortable for Republicans. But I urge members of this committee, and of the broader House of Representatives, as well as your Senate colleagues, to recognize that while the focus of an investigation must necessarily be our last election, the reason for an investigation is to defend our future elections—and that is an interest we all share.

And so I want to emphasize a specific reason for a full, independent investigation into Russia's engagement in U.S. elections: education. A well-executed investigation will provide facts that can help American citizens educate themselves. Russia took advantage of a number of asymmetries in its campaign to undermine our elections—our protections of freedom of speech and freedom of the press are one such asymmetry. The very fact that we have free and fair elections—where the authorities don't perpetrate fraud as Putin does in his elections at home—is a strength that the Russians use against us. Another asymmetry historically has been relatively high levels of public trust—in the media and in government. These are strengths of our society, but we have learned that they can present vulnerabilities. Knowing this, it is up to

us to take action. We should not forsake our democratic values, but we should prepare ourselves to repel attacks on our democratic system. If we are to withstand future efforts to manipulate us through disinformation, we must have the facts about how this effort worked and how effective it was. This is part of equipping our citizens to defend ourselves, to defend the unmolested exercise of our right to vote, to defend our democracy. For this reason, a robust independent investigation of the Russian role in our elections is needed, separate from and in addition to any appointment of a special prosecutor to look into criminal collaboration with such efforts.

* * *

Before concluding I want to make two points about Russia—one substantive, one semantic. First, on substance, while it is true that Russia is a nuclear power and a menace that has demonstrated its ability to cause significant damage and exact enormous human costs through its actions abroad, we should avoid exaggerating Russia's strengths. The Kremlin is acting out of weakness, not strength. In recent years it has been difficult to talk to a Russian diplomat for any amount of time without having them talk about a "multi-polar world", their code for an end to American global leadership and the rise of Russian influence. But even if one were to accept the premise that the 21st century brings the advent of a multi-polar world, it's far from obvious that Russia would be one of the poles. There is nothing attractive to most people about Putinism—to be a pole in the world you have to have something that draws people to you without coercion. Putin's Eurasian Economic Union is a failure—a political project dressed up as an economic one, and one that he has had to twist arms to get several neighbors to sign up to. Russia has the birth rates of Western Europe and the life expectancy of a developing country. It has an economy that has not diversified because its leaders have been too busy siphoning off natural resource wealth and have not invested for the 21st century. It lacks rule of law and reliable courts that are necessary for entrepreneurs to flourish. Its economy is under enormous strain and is the size of Italy's. And Putin is so insecure that he feels compelled to silence political opponents despite his grip on the mechanics of state power and control of the media. Vladimir Kara-Murza a Russian democrat—small d—and one such critic has recently suffered, for a second time, a mysterious poisoning. Any regime that has to physically attack those who advocate for different policies is not a regime that is confident in its appeal.

The second point is semantic. We often talk—as I have today—about "Russia" and "Russian interests" or "Russian objectives." We need to be clear that most of the time in international politics when we discuss Russian behavior and motives, we're principally talking about the decision-making of President Putin. This is not to say that Putin is unconstrained—he is far weaker than most believe. But Putin's interests are, in many cases, radically divergent from the the interests of ordinary Russian citizens, and it is Putin's perceptions of his own interests that drive his behavior. Like most nationalists, Putin is no patriot. He manipulates public institutions and public sentiments for personal gain. This distinction between Russia as a whole and the Kremlin is important for at least two reasons. One, so that we focus our attention where it belongs as we work to understand and counter the threats emanating from the Kremlin. And two, because we should be clear that we seek friendship with the Russian

people—they are mothers and fathers, grandparents and grandchildren, with dreams and hardships just like us. They deserve a government better than the one they have, and the government they have is a threat to their futures just as it is a threat to so many beyond Russia's borders. We should never leave a doubt that the international system we seek is one in which a free and democratic Russia that truly represents the interests of its citizens plays a constructive role.

Again, I thank you for the invitation and am happy to do my best to answer your questions.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Ambassador Baer.

Mr. President, I'd like to begin by asking you a question because, as you mentioned, the textbook case here was originally Estonia's cyberwar, all surrounding originally a Soviet-era statute when you first entered office.

Looking back, I wondered if you could walk us through that attack and maybe also answer how has Estonia prepared for that attack? Or was it prepared then? And 10 years on how have NATO allies like Estonia and the Baltic States prepared themselves for what is ongoing? And what can we do to help the Baltic States maintain their independence, free of Russian manipulation?

President ILVES. Thank you, Chairman.

Well, what happened in 2007 was, as is known in the jargon as a DDOS attack, a distributed denial-of-service attack, in which one floods servers so they can't respond. This was until our attack a common practice for extortion of small businesses that were online. This was, and the reason why to this day every history of cyberattacks starts with Estonia, is that this was the first time there was a clear link between a digital event, a major digital event and policy.

Before that, I mean, there were probably millions of attacks that we don't know anything about but they were always things that never reached the press, or they were known but there was no obvious connection between policies. That is why I started off with von Clausewitz. I mean that was a punishment action.

The way they work, two points need to be made. One is that the cyberattack does not penetrate anything. It works in a way that no one has access. But they do not get into the servers. Rather it is that government sites, newspapers, banks, even the European equivalent of the 911 emergency number was attacked—we have 112 in Europe—those were subject to these attacks that made them inaccessible. And that is, I mean that was quite disruptive, would be I guess an understatement.

We were actually better prepared than many because we had just gamed a possible DDOS attack because we were about to have—we had had just our first electronic elections. So we were better prepared. So there are ways to deal with this that you can deflect attacks on you.

The second point about this is that the way these are done is that basically it is a unique form of public/private partnership. DDOS attacks are done by, rarely, by companies that spend most of their time sending out spam. The idea of spam is a shotgun approach: You shoot out these things to everywhere, using hijacked computers or bots or networks of bots known as botnets. Now, but you can take the same process and invert it and direct botnets to attack single servers, overloading the servers.

Again, this is something that is done by criminal gangs that have hijacked computers to send out spam. The profile of the attack showed us that it was—they were rented out for a certain amount of time. And, in fact, the peak was on the 9th of May 2007. It started massively at an incredible level at 00:00 GMT and ended at 24:00:00 GMT. And I asked the head of our CERT team, well, how is that possible? Why is that possible? It doesn't follow a Gaussian

normal distribution to talk to them. They said, Oh, they stopped paying.

And I said, What does that mean?

And he said, Well, I mean they were rented.

So the attack was designed to be on the Soviet or Russian anniversary of the end of World War II, which is for them May 9th, for us it is May 8th. And they simply used that day to attack us as a political gesture.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

When we look at Putin's goals we see a clear aim of tearing down the United States and Western democracy and institutions, to cast aspersions on our values. Instead of telling the world Russia is great, Putin is subtly spreading the message you may not think Russia is great, but neither is the U.S., neither is NATO or the EU, neither is Western-style democracy. We are all down here in the mud together.

Now, I have been around long enough to remember when a Republican President likened America to a shining city on a hill. But President Trump, when asked about Putin in a recent interview, seemed actually to draw an equivalency between American policies and Putin's tactics. When Putin was called a killer, President Trump said, and I quote, "There are a lot of killers. Do you think our country is so innocent?"

Let me start, let me ask all of you, let me start with Ambassador Baer, and anyone else who wants to weigh in, are American leaders killers? Are they the same as Putin? And what does it do for Putin's aims to hear that kind of talk coming from the President of the United States?

And, Ambassador Bloomfield, as you described, doesn't this erode trust in the United States?

Let me start with Ambassador Baer.

Ambassador BAER. Thank you, Mr. Ranking Member.

In a word, no. There is no equivalence between the United States and Russia. And our President should be able to state that clearly, as should our Vice President be able to state that clearly.

I recently wrote a piece for Foreign Policy talking about the President who you alluded to, Ronald Reagan, and the fact that the comparisons between our current President and Ronald Reagan do not hold up because Ronald Reagan saw so clearly that America's military was strong but that America was strong because it was our military, because it had to do with our principles and the values that that military stands behind.

And I think it is very important that we not lose sight of that because that is exactly the distraction that Vladimir Putin would like us to submit to.

What you talked about more broadly, I think, is what some have called "weaponized relativism." This is a tactic that Putin uses to try to remove the focus on the failings of his own regime. And we should be clear that the failings of his own regime are not just international. His regime is failing domestically. He has stolen so much, his cronies have stolen so much, they have failed so completely to diversify that economy. Russia has the birthrates of

Western Europe, the life expectancy of parts of Africa, and an undiversified economy. That is not a recipe for success.

And as I said in my written testimony, you can't talk to a Russian diplomat these days for more than 5 minutes without having them talk about a multi-polar world that we live in. And I always want to say, okay fine, I will grant you the premise that the 21st Century is a multi-polar world. What makes you think that Russia is one of the poles?

There is nothing attractive about Putinism as a system. And we should be very clear, even as we take very seriously the threats that Putinism poses, both domestically and internationally, we should take those threats seriously but we should never lose sight of the fact that we didn't get it wrong. The values that underpin American democracy, the values that are the foundation for the NATO alliance, the values that are universal values at the center of the European project, are the right values. They are the right prescription for a successful society. And we should never lose confidence in that.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Doran.

Mr. DORAN. Thank you, Ranking Member.

In considering your question I would look directly at the exact purpose of this hearing today, you know: What is it that Russian disinformation attempts to achieve? I think it is very obvious that Putin does not want to make America great again. In fact, Putin has the opposite goal. However, our allies do, allies like front-line states, the Baltic states, Poland and others, neighbors of Russia, they actually want us to succeed. Russia does not.

One of the things that we have seen is that Russia has field tested many of its propaganda techniques that it has utilized in Western democracies now, it has field tested these concepts and techniques in Central Europe, in front-line states. What we are seeing is not new.

One of the points I would stress for the committee is the urgency and the speed at which these techniques are evolving. They are going from laboratory to field test to refinement rapidly. Our responses are slow. Our messaging is clunky. And we are combating a highly effective, well-funded effort that does not care about facts.

One of the problems we face when we look at facts, when we look at what is true, is that, frankly, Russia is just fine with us stating our side of the debate. Russia does not mind. Because the more ideas are out there, the more explanations there could be for anything, the more relativistic interpretations of facts that we and others can put out, this assists Russia in confusing audiences, distracting from the main issue, and ultimately befuddling us into pointing fingers at each other and not keeping the shields faced toward Moscow.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

I want to ask Ambassador Bloomfield, as you described, doesn't this erode trust in the United States, what our President has done, what our President has said?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. Thank you, Ranking Member Engel.

I am not going to involve myself in talking about specific statements. I will say that President Trump is my President. President

Obama was my President. I am an American. I vote. Elections matter. However, we have a vigorous set of checks and balances. We have a free press. We are absolutely free to challenge the people we have entrusted with power, and do challenge by every act that we take in the public interest. So that is perfectly legitimate.

That is why we are robust. And, look, in American history a lot of things have changed from the agrarian age to the industrial age to the information age. This is a time of change. This was a change election. And it doesn't mean politically it was a change election, it means that America needs to adapt. Republicans and Democrats, you need to come together and figure this out. And, as we always have, we need to own the future.

I would simply conclude by——

Mr. ENGEL. But not adapt with Russian interference. We want to prevent Russian interference.

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. We need to call them out.

But my point is, consider their center of gravity, their weakness: They are very brittle. Look how much they are trying to—look at the information age. Information is omnipresent, but they are trying to control the media. Russian television never told the Russian people that they had troops in Ukraine. They hid the fact. So they are extremely vulnerable to a reverse information campaign from the West.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We go to Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member.

Well, as all of us know, despite renewed interest in Cuba and not Russia—I was going to get to that soon—the undermining of U.S. interests by Vladimir's regime is nothing new. We have seen his interference throughout Latin America, and my native homeland of Cuba, throughout the hemisphere. Nothing new. From its military campaigns in Georgia and Ukraine, to its propaganda and misinformation campaign in outlets like Russia Today or RT, to its support in Syria and Iran dictatorships and throughout Latin America, Putin's regime has undermined the United States and our allies at every turn, expanding its influence and corruption, showing nothing but contempt for human rights and the rule of law.

Many of us have been pushing for a stronger stance against Russia for a long time, arguing against the Obama administration's reset in relations, as well as the Bush administration's proposed Civil Nuclear 123 Agreement. After Russia's actions in Georgia we warned about potential interference in Ukraine, as well as additional Russian pressure in the Baltics, in Kazakhstan, in Moldova, so many places.

And one effort I strongly argued against was the repeal of the Jackson-Vanik amendment which would grant Russia Permanent Normal Trade Relation status, just one more item in a long list of concessions to Putin in recent years. And I have consistently been arguing for additional sanctions on Russian officials for their human rights violations, pushing for passage of the Sergei Magnitsky Act. Many of us have been active in that to add more names to that list.

And my friend Eliot Engel and I led resolutions calling for investigations into the murder of opposition leader Boris Nemtsov, as well as sanctions against all of those responsible. And I have been calling for sanctions against those who poisoned Vladimir Kara-Murza, who has been coming to DC many times. He has been a leader in Russia on human rights. He is now just recovering from a second mysterious attack.

But as with so many of our sanctions, sanctions against Russia have never been fully implemented, have never been fully enforced, diluting their effectiveness. That is why I am supporting the effort to limit executive waivers on our Russia sanctions, just as I have consistently moved to limit the ability to waive sanctions on Iran, on the Palestinian Authority, so many entities and areas.

I would urge my colleagues who support the removal of waivers on Russia sanctions to join me in eliminating other such waivers because they water down the impact of our sanctions. In order to do that, in order to remove those sanctions, then we can have a more successful and consistent approach across the board everywhere.

So two questions for the panel. Have we done enough with our NATO allies to help against Russian aggression in that region? And if not, why do you think that is?

And, secondly, how can European countries cooperate within themselves more closely on enforcing sanctions against Russia? And do you believe that there will be greater hesitancy to do so or more cooperation? Whoever would like to answer.

President ILVES. I will start off. Thank you.

Well, we have two problems. And the first problem is the complete asymmetry of the various attacks we see. Because, as Ambassador Bloomfield and Ambassador Baer mentioned, we can't do to them what they do to us, meaning us in the West. I mean it does no good to make up fake stories. I mean, the real ones are bad enough. But if you don't communicate them, you can't get through. RFE/RL where I worked for 10 years used to do that. But no one listens to shortwave anymore.

And ultimately, what are you going to do anyway if all of the bad news about corruption and the offshore money and all of that is not going to get anywhere anyway? And if someone republishes it there, they get in trouble or receive the fate of Navalny.

So that's an asymmetry; we can't do to them. And ultimately if you are the ones counting the votes, you are not going to—I mean, in an authoritarian one-party state you are not going to influence the outcome of the election. I remember the television screen shot of the votes in Rostov-on-Don, which showed Vladimir Putin with 134 percent.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. President, on that note we are going to need to go to Mr. Brad Sherman of California.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I think Cuba uses those same things.

Mr. SHERMAN. We are here today because this goes beyond a foreign policy issue. This is an issue for the core of America's democracy. The key issue is did the Trump campaign collude with Russian hackers in the cyber burglary of the Democratic National Committee and related entities?

And a related question is whether Trump's gratitude is preventing an appropriate response to Russia's interference with democracy? Or whether his fear of what they might have on him is preventing that appropriate response?

Mr. Chairman, we need more than one hearing on this subject. And we need, ultimately, a 9/11-style commission. That is why so many of us have cosponsored the Protect Our Democracy Act.

The ranking member mentioned his bill, the Engel-Connolly SECURE Our Democracy Act because we do need tough sanctions to respond to what Russia has done.

And, ultimately, we need a special counsel or special prosecutor in the Department of Justice. I formally urged Loretta Lynch to appoint one. She said no. Now various Republican members of the House are saying yes.

I want to put in the record an effort by our minority staff of this committee to just list some of the investments—the connections and meetings between the Trump campaign and Russia and its officials. I have been involved in seeing this from a political side and I know how tough it is to get a meeting with senior officials in a political campaign. If you can't deliver a whole lot of money or a whole lot of votes, you are not going to get the meeting. So I would think in a campaign you would want to spend as few minutes as possible with foreign Ambassadors.

Ambassador Baer, does the British or Indian Ambassador get, you know, a large number of meetings with senior officials? I mean, I am sure they would like them, but do they get them when they seek them or is it typical to just do as few minutes of meeting as possible?

Ambassador BAER. I am sure there are others who are much better placed to answer your question on a kind of, on a consistent basis. But just anecdotally it was, it was not uncommon for me, with the 56 other Ambassadors at the OSCE, to get a request from one of them that they had an official maybe in their government who was traveling to the U.S. and who wanted to meet with one of the campaigns. I am not aware of any of those requests actually being fulfilled for precisely——

Mr. SHERMAN. They want them. Campaigns are focused on——

Ambassador BAER. It is difficult, yes.

Mr. SHERMAN. I want to turn your attention to the 35-page dossier put forward by Christopher Steele, who is the British spy or former British spy. And keep in mind he was paid by Trump's enemies. Nothing in that dossier has been disproved. Parts of it have been proved to be true. And I hope to God that parts of it are not true, particularly the salacious part.

The Trump administration has just called the whole report garbage but they haven't denied specific parts of it, except in one case that I am aware of. And that is the report says that Michael Cohen, Trump's personal lawyer, met with Russian officials in Prague. He responded by tweeting the front of his passport and stating, "I have never been to Prague in my life."

Now, obviously the front of the passport doesn't teach us anything, but it causes us to want to look inside the passport. But, Ambassador Baer, isn't the Czech Republic part of the Schengen Zone so an American visiting Prague typically wouldn't have a

Czech Republic stamp in their report? They fly into Paris, they fly into Frankfort and only be stamped there. Does the absence of a Czech stamp mean an American hasn't been to Prague in their life? Simple question.

Ambassador BAER. No. The absence of a Czech stamp does not mean that an American hasn't been to Prague. I have been to Prague and I do not have a Czech stamp, I believe, in my passport.

Mr. SHERMAN. But you have been to Prague in your life?

Ambassador BAER. I have, yes. I drove there from Vienna.

Mr. SHERMAN. And then finally I would address you and then, if we have time, the other members. This is a 35-page report that talks an awful lot about the internal machinations of the Russian Government. I assume most of you have read the report. Does it ring true? Is that the way things happen in the Kremlin? Ambassador Baer?

Ambassador BAER. I think, obviously, that the Kremlin is a very complex organization but I think it is fair to say that the Kremlin operates in a way that is difficult for us to imagine because it is so driven by the corrupt and authoritarian——

Mr. SHERMAN. And, Mr. Doran?

Mr. DORAN. When it comes to how the Kremlin is operating does it ring true? Obviously this committee is in a much better, and other committees are in a much better position to answer that question. I would say that, clearly, Russia's system of government is fundamentally different than ours. And I would stop there before——

Chairman ROYCE. We have to go to Mr. Dana Rohrabacher of California.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Well, here we are. Wherever you go, there you are.

Let me just note that we just keep hearing sinister words after sinister words. Especially this last thing, oh, how sinister it is that he just showed the top of his passport. Give me a break. Come on.

And, also, we got instead of a sinister report from your question to the Ambassador, no, it is not uncommon for people to meet with foreign Ambassadors and foreign diplomats. And how sinister is it that people met with a Russian Ambassador? I am sure that if they were going to plan something really rotten about the United States they would go to the Ambassador, the Russian Ambassador rather than some political operatives that they have running all over the place. This has, this has reached the absurd level of attacks.

And let us note, that in order to get Russia, what we are now doing is destabilizing our own democratic system here with that kind of nonsense.

I will have to say that during the Cold War, I want to remind everybody, I worked not only with President Reagan but my entire life was dedicated to defeating communism. I felt really great when Ronald Reagan helped us establish peace and the elimination of communism from Russia. We are now dealing with a national power. You know, it is a big power in the world. It is no longer being motivated by communist ideology that has it trying to overthrow democratic governments and replace them with atheistic communist dictatorships.

And you expect Russia, and I agree, they are being run by tough guys, sort of like Mayor Daley in Chicago is transported over to Russia. Oh, you love Mayor Daley do you? Okay. I don't. I thought Mayor Daley was a tough guy who beat demonstrators up and did not represent anything that America was all about. But he was not some vicious dictator. He had been elected by his people. And we would try to un-elect him as well.

What is happening in Russia, of course, is you have a country watching out for its national interests. Mr. Chairman, I would have preferred to have at least one person on this panel, like perhaps former Ambassador Matlock, who could have balanced it off a little bit on some of these questions. And instead what we have is, again, an unrelenting hostility toward Russia that is going to lead us to war if we don't watch out. And I don't know who wants war in this country, but I was very happy when Ronald Reagan ended the Cold War by reaching out to Russia. And they ended up discarding their Marxist-Leninist bologna that had threatened the world for so long.

Let me ask our former President of Estonia, could you give me—well, first of all, the Russian cyberattacks, were there any demands on Estonia that you didn't meet that they, some of the big guys demanding something and you say, no, we are not going to do that, and then they retaliated by trying to hurt you?

President ILVES. Well, they demanded that we not remove this statue which——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay.

President ILVES [continuing]. People were against having. And that is the result.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay, so that's it. There was a demand and the Russians acted like bullies and they were going to get their way with a cyberattack.

Okay. Second question. Could you give me some examples of the military aggression that your country has suffered from Russia in the last 10 years?

President ILVES. Well, probably the most prominent example is the kidnaping of——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Right.

President ILVES [continuing]. Of the equivalent of our FBI who was investigating a massive cross-border cigarette smuggling operation.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Right.

President ILVES. Which could not take place without the connivance of the FSB since they manage the border.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Let me add something. You had a situation of corruption at the border. One of your border guards disappeared. I mean military aggression? Has there been any cross-border at all military action on the part of the Russians in Estonia?

President ILVES. Well, we have constant violations of our border by military jets. That is one thing.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Right.

President ILVES. And that is consistent. But has massively increased in the last 4 years.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Yes. I went to the Baltics about 3 years ago after I heard story after story after story of Russian military ag-

gression in the Baltics. I am sure all of you have heard that slogan before. Not one report of actual military aggression.

And here we are sending our tanks up there, having B-52 mock raids on Russia over Estonia toward the Soviet capital in the name of stopping Soviet military aggression that never existed. This has got to stop or we are going to end up in war. Let's try to, let's try to have a little balanced view of what is going on here.

Mr. Chairman, I would ask 15 seconds more from my colleagues. Look, the United States, we have engaged in some of these activities. We have. You remember the Phoenix Program in Vietnam? I remember the Phoenix Program. I supported the Phoenix Program. We murdered hundreds of local officials. How about Allende? How about Diem? How about any number of people during the Cold War that we assassinated.

Chairman ROYCE. The gentleman's time——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay. That is wrong, it is wrong to do that.

Chairman ROYCE. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. But please do not say that Russia is the only country that commits these kind of crimes.

Chairman ROYCE. It is time to go to Mr. Gregory Meeks of New York.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I tell you, my good friend Mr. Rohrabacher, but I am going to, you know, resist because it is important that we focus on what is important for the United States of America. It is important that we make sure that we preserve our democracy. And it is important that we make sure that we hold up the institutions of the United States of America.

And I think what I have heard from just about every witness and at every corner, one of the things that Mr. Putin wants to do and wants to accomplish is to undermine institutions and to undermine and get involved with the destruction of Democratic states. And when I hear not just from—and I am hearing this from countries from around the world. And I thank the former President for being here because it is tremendously important we hear from our allies in that regard.

And that is why, you know, when I look at threats to our democracy I think it is important that we have a 9/11-style commission set up. That is why we had the 9/11 Commission in the first place; it was a threat to our democracy. So we had an independent commission so that we could make sure that does not happen.

So the markup of the Swalwell and Cummings Protect Our Democracy Act is tremendously important for all of us because that is what is at stake, that is what they are trying to get at. And, you know, and I also want to join with the ranking member when he said we need a markup on the Engel-Connolly SECURE Our Democracy Act. That is tremendously important.

And I thank the chair, who indicated that we would have some hearings on Russia. And he kept his word. And we know that there will be more and with the witnesses. So I want to thank the chair for doing that. And I agree with his and Mr. Engel's opening statements.

You know, I am concerned. Maybe I will ask Ambassador Baer because what I am concerned about, as I say, is Mr. Putin getting

his way because what I am unfortunately hearing, somewhat similar to Mr. Rohrabacher actually, from Mr. Bannon in the White House who calls for the deconstruction of the administrative state. As opposed for us working to forge our values and basically our lives and protecting and supporting those who fight for liberty, equality and justice in the world, it seems that the Kremlin wants us to retreat from the world. He wants our values to be diluted.

But with President Trump's repeated moral equivalencies—and I think that's what Mr. Rohrabacher was talking about, that we are just as bad as Russia, et cetera—those are those moral equivalencies that I, unfortunately, am hearing from the President of the United States. When there are attacks on our free press, and when there is out and out lying going on, when there are ongoing conflicts of interest, when we have the kind of dialog like we just heard, doesn't that already put Mr. Putin where he wants to be? And isn't that then giving him, and the administration even giving him, what he wants: To undermine us, Mr. Ambassador?

Ambassador BAER. Thank you. I think here it is important to remember what Ambassador Bloomfield said, which is that, absolutely, when we allow ourselves to be divided on a partisan basis or allow our politics to act as fuel Russian propaganda rather than the problems of the American people, we are doing Vladimir Putin's work for him.

Congressman Rohrabacher knows that I enjoy a good debate with him. We have had the pleasure several times. I think the important thing about what Congressman Rohrabacher said, he is right that there is no longer an ideological drive that drives Moscow to try to undermine democracies around the world. But there is a deep insecurity that drives Moscow to try to undermine democracies around the world.

Vladimir Putin's greatest fear is a democratic, successful, prosperous Ukraine. That is why he is invading Ukraine and trying to undermine the Ukrainian people's choice to live in a European-style democracy. He is threatened by democracy's success. And, therefore, every time that we make democracy succeed we are countering Vladimir Putin's aims and objectives.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you. I only have 5 seconds so I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. We will go to Mr. Steve Chabot of Ohio.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, first, I would just note that it is my opinion that in recent years America's traditional leadership role around the world has been in great retreat. And this has left a power vacuum all around the globe, from the South China Sea where you have China building not only islands but militarizing them, and in the Middle East where, because the U.S. after sustaining a victory—obviously at high cost and one that was very controversial, ultimately as a result of the surge we had prevailed there—the U.S. pulled out and then we saw the chaos that ensued with the growth of ISIS, et cetera. And now in Eastern Europe and the countries along the borders of Russia we have seen a vacuum there.

And as a result we have seen, for example, the invasion of Crimea and the West basically lamely protesting but ultimately doing little or nothing. And I want to commend my colleague on the other side of the aisle, Mr. Connolly, for in that invasion of Crimea he

has stood up relentlessly against the Russian action there and encouraged, along with myself and others, encouraged us never to recognize Russia's takeover of Crimea.

But you've seen all the countries in the region fearful, I think for good reason. The ranking member mentioned before our President's comment about how we have a lot of killers and, you know, you think that we are innocent, we being the United States. I think that was a stupid comment. But it was a comment. Unfortunately, we have seen actions or lack thereof which I think have been even more damaging. One was pulling out of the deal that we had with Poland and with the Czech Republic.

We had a missile defense arrangement that we had with them. We pulled out of that immediately because the Russians didn't like it. And now there is criticism because this administration is too close to the Russians. But that was something that I think was a very bad decision early on. We saw the failure really to do anything in Crimea. We have seen the failure to provide the Ukrainians—despite the fact of Russian aggression in their east, the administration has refused to provide lethal weapons, which we ought to do. And I would encourage this administration to do the same thing.

I could go on. I have only 5 minutes. So, Mr. Doran, let me ask you this. Some of our colleagues, let's just say to the left, have basically accepted the premise that this election was stolen by the Russians and given to this President and, therefore, he is not a legitimate President. And that is one of the issues that is being looked at here. But it is far beyond that.

How does this fit in with Russia's overall goal of undermining democracy, the United States, or our western European allies, NATO? How does the constant that maybe half the American population sort of thinks that that is the case, how does that benefit Russia in all this and how does it hurt us?

Mr. DORAN. Very briefly and directly, I do not believe that we should view this as a partisan issue. I also believe that Vladimir Putin is not about picking winners and losers in specific elections. Vladimir Putin is about creating chaos and division in our ranks. As long as we are chaotic, divided, as long as our publics, both here in the United States but especially in front-line Europe, begin to doubt the efficacy of democratic institutions, the ironclad nature of America's promises, or the fighting power and defending power of NATO, that is what Vladimir Putin wants.

The means is propaganda, as you pointed out, Congressman. And the aim is to, as I said, to distract us, to divide us, and to ultimately paralyze us. As long as we are having these efforts here in the West, Vladimir Putin can, not in one big swoop but in a series of small slices, systematically alienate and isolate our allies and partner countries. Disinformation is a means to achieve that.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Albio Sires of New Jersey.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to our members of the panel.

You know, to me Putin is a throwback to all of the Cold War that has morphed into what they couldn't beat us militarily, so now they try to disrupt everything that we stand for: Our democracy, freedom of the press, our elections. And I think this past election

just woke people up to actually the efforts of Putin on what he is trying to do—his unrelenting effort to destroy this country and the institutions of this country.

So to me it was amazing that all of a sudden people woke up that this guy is trying to do this to this country. He has been doing that all around the world. He is disrupting Europe. He is trying to disrupt Central America and South America. So when it came time for this election and the influence of the Russians on the election, I think it is legitimate. I think we should have a 9/11 commission to look at all these contacts.

You know, the last commission was led by a Republican, Tom Kean. And it was put together very well and it was accepted by both members of this body and this country. So to have a force like Putin out there trying to disrupt us all the time, we have to be on our best guard. And we have to meet him, I think, everywhere he challenges us. If it is Europe, we have to be there to assist the Europeans. If it is in Central America, we have to be there.

So does anybody have any doubts that he was working with WikiLeaks and Assange to put all those things out? Anybody on the panel have any doubts? No. So what was that all about? It wasn't because he's such a nice guy that he wanted to help us with this election and get the truth out there.

I really have nothing good to say about Putin. And I am afraid I am going to get carried away and really say the things that I feel. I mean, I experienced communism. I experienced what they did to me when I was 11 years old. I experienced the indoctrination process in the schools. And I experienced the media telling how bad this country was. It is so bad that you come to this country as a refugee and you are sitting here today and you are making laws for the rest of the country because I had the privilege of becoming a citizen. And that is pretty strong. So, to me, I better just stop, Chairman, because I——

Mr. CONNOLLY. Would you yield?

Mr. SIRES. Yes, sure.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you for your powerful testimony. And I know your personal experience, Mr. Sires, undergirds your motivation here in the United States Congress, and certainly on this subject. Your sincerity can't be questioned. And I think all of us salute you and honor you for us.

If I may, Mr. President, in your response to Mr. Rohrabacher surely you could have cited more than cigarette smuggling. Is it not true that the Russians have been testing air space in the Baltics in a provocative way, testing NATO defenses and, for that matter, your own respective defenses?

President ILVES. Thank you. Well, I didn't get to finish. But that was a military action. Troops came over and kidnaped this guy. This was not done, I mean their——

Mr. CONNOLLY. Russian troops?

President ILVES [continuing]. FSB, KGB troops.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Violating your sovereignty?

President ILVES. Our territory. And they took him, yes.

Now, I mean more broadly we have massive—we have on the other side of the border we see constant, massive exercises. Zapad is this main exercise——

Mr. CONNOLLY. Right.

President ILVES [continuing]. That takes place every 2 years, you know, violating through various techniques.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And real quickly, Mr. President, because I'm going to run out of Albio Sires' time, these were provocations generated on the other side of the border, not on your side of the border?

President ILVES. Right.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Is that correct?

President ILVES. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Because I think there was a suggestion by my friend from California that it was the other way around. That is not true.

President ILVES. I will just add quickly that it is not just us. I mean, they do mock bombing raids on Sweden, so it is not just us.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And no one does that.

Chairman ROYCE. The gentleman's time has expired. We now go to Mr. Mike McCaul of Texas.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As chairman of the Homeland Security Committee I have been dealing with the cyber threat for quite some time from many foreign adversary nations. The Chinese stole 20 million security clearances, including my own. The North Koreans, a very devastating attack on Sony Pictures. Iran getting great capability now, not as good as ours but they are getting better.

This latest cyberattack on the Central Intelligence Agency Vault 7, stealing over 8,000 pages of documents with some of the most highly sensitive cyber weapons, cyber tools in the United States Government now stolen, allegedly, by WikiLeaks as they dump it out to the public. This is going to have devastating consequences to all of us here because it hands to our foreign adversaries the keys to the kingdom.

And then we get to Russia. Sir, Estonia, we all know the story there. And my condolences. They shut down Estonia in one of the first acts of cyber warfare.

I got briefed on the Russian threat through our elections when it was in the classified space when the Obama administration was in power. And my advice to them was we need to call them out for what they are doing. And we have to have consequences to those actions.

The response was, we don't want to acknowledge publicly the threat.

Then under now President Trump, the same briefing with the same advice. And I think the President has now finally understood when he had the classified briefing that it was in fact a nation state attack by Russia on the United States against our democracy. And I don't care whether it is Republican or Democrat, I care if it is an American election being challenged, being influenced by a foreign adversary, particularly one like Russia.

So my question very simply to the panel to the extent there is about 2 minutes and 40 seconds left: You know, I have five teenagers, if there are no consequences to bad behavior, guess what, bad behavior continues. We have no international norms, no international standards when it comes to cyber, whether it be espionage

or warfare. To the panel, I will start with you, Mr. President, what do we have to do, what should be the consequences when Russia threatens not only our European allies but your country and NATO and now the United States of America and our democracy?

President ILVES. Well, I would start—thank you very much—I would start with the Tallinn Manual 1.0 and Tallinn Manual 2.0 which were produced by the NATO Center of Excellence for Cyber Defence in Estonia. I should say no reason—you don't have to feel too sorry for us because having asked NATO for years to deal with cyber, after the Russian attack NATO decided to actually build a center and they put it in my country. But that Center has produced two books on the international law and how it applies to cyber. That is the beginning. But there is still a long way to go on that.

We do need to think about genuine conventions. There probably is one convention right now, and that is the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime. The problem is that the primary sources of cybercrime—Russia, China, North Korea—have not acceded to it, which means that it is basically inoperative in those countries that are producing the bulk of the cybercrime.

Here I mean credit card theft, all kinds of extortion schemes and so forth.

Mr. MCCAUL. Ambassador.

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. Thank you, Chairman McCaul. There is a lot of work that could be done to make our cyber policies more robust and more specific, more combined with our NATO allies and the European Union. We should have that conversation at the technical level and at the political level.

I think that working with parliamentarians between the Congress and our allies, that is a good conversation. We have expertise on The Hill. So I applaud that.

I really come back to the way to defeat Putin—because there is something slightly pathetic about the way the Russians are trying to meddle in democracies—is to seize the moment of change. Forget about Russia, there are things that need to be done here. We need to reform our agencies and tools and processes. There is a lot of flux in Washington right now. As the coach of my favorite professional team says, "Do your job." If we all do our job, we will come out stronger. We will own the future; they won't.

Now, there is retaliation, and I have laid it out in my testimony, of things that we should consider. He is a very brittle, dangerous actor. We should engage him where we can. And I want to tell Congressman Rohrabacher, we did it under the Bush administration. We did—I wouldn't do it today—military exercises, 33 a year. We went to Russia for bilateral talks on terrorism; we did a lot. But now there should be consequences. And I suggest these in my testimony.

Mr. MCCAUL. I would like to have written testimony from the other two witnesses. Thank you.

[The information referred to follows:]

Response submitted by Ambassador Daniel Baer
To question from Rep. Michael McCaul

Congressman, I agree with you 100% that the primary issue is not that the Russians intervened on behalf of one candidate and in an effort to undermine the other, but rather that they intervened in an American election. Putin vandalized our democratic process—he disrupted the exercise of one of our sacred rights as American citizens. For that there must be consequences.

You compared the need for consequences in this situation to the need for consequences with your own teenagers, and while I can't personally imagine what it is like for you and your wife to run a household with five teenagers, I am quite sure that you're being overly generous to Putin and his clique by comparing them to teenagers. The behavior of Putin and his clique is both more infantile and more nefarious than most teenagers.

Obviously the Obama Administration delivered an initial round of consequences in late December. My personal view is that these were appropriate and are significant but that they have not yet imposed costs that outweigh the benefit Vladimir Putin perceives to have achieved through his intervention. As I said, I believe that Putin sees his intervention in our 2016 elections as the most successful Russian intelligence operation since the end of the Cold War. Putin is reportedly a ruthlessly calculating person—we must deliver consequences that are significant enough to change his calculus as he considers whether or not to interfere with our democracy or that of our allies again.

This is yet another reason for an independent bi-partisan commission to take up the investigation of what happened in our elections. In addition to fact finding about what happened, such a commission would be able to make recommendations for policy makers about appropriate consequences for the 2016 intervention and for any future actions. Having a range of consequences laid out could have its own deterrent effect.

You asked a specific question about what we should do—I realize that I've outlined a process rather than a specific answer. I can only say that I think we should consider a full range of responses from the obvious—like broader travel sanctions and economic sanctions—to more creative ways to turn the screws on Putin and his coterie.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Gerry Connolly of Virginia.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for holding this hearing. I thank the ranking member as well. I hope it is the first in a series of robust hearings.

This is about our country. This is not about party. It is not about defending a President or attacking a President, it is about our country. We have seen—and by the way, my friend from California compared, apparently, Vladimir Putin to the late Mayor of Chicago Richard Daley. I went to school in Chicago during his mayoralty. I didn't know him. But I assure you, Vladimir Putin is no Richard Daley. Richard Daley didn't have his political opponents assassinated. He didn't send them into exile. He didn't put them in prison. He didn't silence the press. He didn't assassinate members of the press. He didn't exile members of the press. He sparred with them. And sometimes he was bested.

The late Mike Royko made a career out of making fun of Richard Daley, and a very good career at that. Never, never was there a movement to silence or fire Mike Royko. There is no comparison. And I think we do ourselves a disservice by not recognizing, on a bipartisan basis, the gravity of the situation we face: A massive

propaganda effort by Russia to basically distort truth and to have an alternative view of reality.

We have a massive cyber operation run by the Russians undermining our allies, undermining the West, undermining now our democratic process in the United States of America and, of course, the undermining of democratic institutions and the Western alliance itself.

My question, Ambassador Baer, is in light of all of that why, what is the speculation that a new administration led by President Trump would seemingly enable that, so that when confronted the answer is: "Well, we do it too. I don't believe it. The intelligence community is distorting reality and making it up." And very reluctantly acknowledging any reality. And then we discover numerous members of the administration have in fact have contacts with Russian intelligence officials and the Ambassador. And what is interesting is kind of covering that up.

If you have nothing to hide, why not just freely say, yeah, of course I met with the Ambassador? I meet with Ambassadors. I know the chairman and the ranking member do. I haven't met with the Russian Ambassador, nor would that be a meeting I would forget.

But I wonder if you could help me understand or shed some light on why in the world would any American administration want to be enabling, seemingly, this pernicious, insidious effort by the Russian Government?

Ambassador BAER. To answer your question directly, Congressman, I don't believe that any administration of the United States, whether Democratic or Republican, should be working to enable any other government, particularly one that is an autocratic regime.

I think your question highlights that there are two separate issues at play. And I guess we have been focused on the first, which is the issue of what exactly was the nature, you know, it is my perception that the Russians perceive their engagement in our elections to have been the most successful Russian intelligence operation since the end of the Cold War. We need to understand what happened, why it worked, what worked and what didn't work and, you know, how that played out, so that we can figure out how to defend ourselves, what appropriate countermeasures are, and what appropriate consequences are. That is one set of issues. That is a national security issue, as you and others on both sides of the aisle have highlighted.

There is a second set of issues that is about the allegations that have arisen about the possible collusion of certain officials with that effort. And that is not my area of expertise. That is obviously a legal issue as well as a national security issue, and that is not my area of expertise. But I think the investigation is something that we should all agree is a national security issue that we all have an interest in.

Mr. CONNOLLY. You would agree that it would be harmful to U.S. interests to undermine NATO?

Ambassador BAER. Without question.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So to call NATO obsolete might be harmful.

Ambassador BAER. NATO is not a charity project for our European allies. NATO is strongly in the interests of the United States of America. The United States has a strong interest in a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Would it be fair to say, also, that it would be harmful to U.S. interests to undermine the European Union?

Ambassador BAER. Absolutely. The European Union, like the United States, is founded on timeless and universal principles and has the institutions to protect those. And that is why it is a threat to Vladimir Putin.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And conversely, if you were pro Russian or Vladimir Putin, the opposite would be true, it is in your interest to undermine NATO and in your interest to see the disintegration of the EU?

Ambassador BAER. That might be a narrow political calculus that somebody might make.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

Right on time, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you. We go to Mr. Ted Poe of Texas.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for being here.

In 2008 the Russians invade the Republic of Georgia, take one-third of their territory, and the West basically said that's not nice, you shouldn't do it. The Russians still control and occupy one-third of the Republic of Georgia, supposedly an ally of the U.S. The world did nothing.

The Russians then invade Crimea, conquer Crimea, put their people there, claim it is theirs. And the Russians are still in Crimea. And the West said, not nice, shouldn't have done it. No consequences.

Then the Russians go into Eastern Ukraine where they are now and are trying to, I think, take a portion of the Ukraine that is valuable for energy.

I met with the President of the Ukraine, asked him what we could do as a country. And he said, quit sending us MREs, canned food. And he was very blunt. They can't stop the Russians with MREs. But that is what the West has done. And the Russians are still in Eastern Ukraine. And the world says, not nice.

Mr. Connolly and I serve on the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. We have been to those NATO meetings. We have encouraged the parliamentarians in NATO to have sanctions on Russia for their misconduct. And in my opinion—I can't speak for Mr. Connolly—in my opinion those parliamentary folks seem that they want to talk about other things other than the Russians. And meanwhile, no sanctions on the Russians.

Why are we surprised that the Russians are doing all of these things? We aren't surprised. Because the West has basically said, it is not nice. And they continue to operate.

When I have met personally with former Eastern Europe Soviet Republic officials—and I am not going to name them—when I meet with them you know what they talk about? The Russians are coming. They are afraid that the Russians are going to come into their country and do what they have done in the past and that we in the West aren't going to do anything about it.

So Mr. Putin, the individual that we are all talking about, is emboldened and points his chest out to the world that the Russians are coming. And he has said, or the foreign minister, as the chairman has pointed out, that we are working on a "post-West world order." They are serious about that. And they are doing everything to impose a new world order on the world. And maybe we should do something besides say that's not nice. And that seems to be the foreign policy of the West in dealing with the Russians.

The Napoleon of Siberia, Putin, is going to continue these activities, whether it is in the Baltics or the Balkans, or Eastern Europe or other places, even in Syria, trying to show their post-West world order. Russians hack our elections. I think my friends on the other sides, I finally got their attention because the information that the Russians seemed to show to the American public was not very pleasant to the person running for President. And so the emails and contradictions and the DNC and all of that internal information was not good for the person running for President.

I don't believe, and I think most people agree, that did not affect the elections. The Russians didn't hack into our computer system and change votes. But that has gotten the attention of my friends on the west—on the west—on the left I should say. Interesting, west/left. And now everybody is upset about the Russian hacking. Well, I don't think it affected the elections. But we need a policy of dealing with Russia.

The saber rattling by some of my friends over in the Senate, you know, do they want war with Russia? Is that what the goal is here? Because I don't think it is. But we have to have a response to the Napoleon of Siberia besides it is not nice. And there are consequences for doing this. And they are not going to be pleasant. And so I think that we need to impose and get down to business to say what is our response? What are we going to do? And let's do something about it. Not talking about war but consequences, Mr. Napoleon of Siberia.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Connolly, I appreciate your comments.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We go to Mr. Ted Deutch of Florida.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you and the ranking member for holding today's hearing. I want to thank Ranking Member Engel for pushing for this hearing. I want to welcome our very distinguished panel.

The American people, Mr. Chairman, want a full and a fair and a bipartisan investigation into not just what happened in this election, but they want an investigation into President Trump's connections to Russia. They want an investigation into his business connections, his campaign connections, his administration's connections.

Today's hearing is on an important topic and our panelists have an important view. But this hearing will not give the American people the investigation that they deserve. Seventeen American intelligence agencies concluded that Russia executed a cyberattack against the United States. They concluded that the attack was designed to influence the outcome of the election. And they concluded that the attack was intended to benefit Donald Trump's campaign.

How can we proceed with a hearing on Russia's involvement in Europe while ignoring the unresolved questions around this attack?

What credibility do we have? If we were to look at attempts to splinter NATO we might first look to President Trump's criticism of that very body and his relationship with Russia. During the Presidential campaign Mr. Trump claimed that our allies don't contribute enough to our shared security. As President-elect, Mr. Trump was interviewed by European reporters and he took the opportunity not to reassure our allies but to write off our partnership with them as obsolete.

This committee cannot seriously review Russia's attempts to undermine NATO without acknowledging these statements by the President about NATO and Russia. Throughout the Obama administration, Republican Members of Congress and this committee consistently criticized America's response to Russia as too weak. Yet here we are, 6 months after the intelligence community determined that Russia conducted a cyberattack in Mr. Trump's favor, and we are having a hearing in many ways as if that didn't happen.

In the meantime, an overwhelming number of serious questions about the President's contacts with Russia have been met with obfuscation, with misdirection, and with outright lies from our own White House. Pretending otherwise is a disservice to this committee and to this country. We have learned that former National Security Advisor Flynn lied to the Vice President and the country about his contacts with Russian agents.

We have learned that Flynn and presidential advisor Jared Kushner met with Russia's Ambassador in Trump Tower. And unlike every other meeting, the Ambassador was ushered into the building in secret, out of view of the press.

Last week Carter Page, a previously disavowed policy advisor, admitted in two national television interviews that he met with the Russian Ambassador in Cleveland at the Republican National Convention.

And we have learned that former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort's claims that there was no involvement in the Trump campaign in efforts to soften language in the Republican platform related to our assistance to Ukraine were untrue.

We have learned that Trump campaign advisor J.D. Gordon met with Russian officials in Cleveland with Carter Page and others. We have learned that they advocated for the change in the platform language.

We have learned that Attorney General Sessions made false statements about his contacts with the Russian Ambassador under oath at his confirmation hearings.

If the leadership and majority members of this committee are as concerned about Russian attempts to undermine democracy here as they are around the world then we need to move forward with that full investigation about all of these issues. Holding this hearing without acknowledging the Russian attacks on our own elections hurts our own credibility when fighting for democracy around the globe. I would ask every member of this committee, from both sides of the aisle, to join in calling for a bipartisan investigation to answer the questions the American people have about the health of

our own democracy. Without it, those unanswered questions will be a thorn in the side of this committee.

I would ask my colleagues on both sides to join in demanding an independent commission and a special prosecutor to do the job that the Attorney General is unable to do. Our responsibility on this committee is to exercise meaningful oversight of the foreign policy of the United States. And I commend the chair and ranking member for taking that responsibility seriously. But no one watching this hearing should rest any easier that we have examined Russia's relationship with the Trump campaign and the Trump White House.

The American people must be able to trust their government. And until there is a full investigation into the Trump campaign, the Trump White House, and the Kremlin, and until we see the President's tax return to fully understand the extent of the Trump family's business relationship with Russia, the motives of the White House's foreign policy decisions will be in doubt at this very moment when American leadership is needed the most.

I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Jeff Duncan of South Carolina.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Congressman Poe mentioned Russia's involvement with the sovereign state of Georgia. I will further piggyback that they annexed Crimea, invaded Ukraine in August 2014. We need to keep in mind in this committee that Russia sent a billion dollars worth of air defense systems to Iran in April 2015, just months before the P5+1 nuclear fiasco was signed, paid for, by the way, with billions of dollars after Iran signed the P5+1 agreement, money they garnered from that.

It is clear that Russia is an adversary to U.S. interests and those of our allies. I am pleased that the minority party sitting across the room finally acknowledges that. Many of them probably laughed when candidate Obama told candidate Romney that the 1980s called and wanted their foreign policy back because many of the comments I hear today resemble those from the 1980s. But hashtags don't invade Crimea, Georgia, or Ukraine, the Russians did.

One of the first acts of the Obama administration was to remove defensive missiles from Eastern Europe. Secretary Clinton hit the red reset button with Russia. President Obama told the Russian President to let Putin know that he would have more flexibility after reelected. So the question to ask ourselves is who was weak on Russia?

So I mentioned the previous President famously ridiculed his opponent in the 2012 Presidential campaign. I am going to ask the panel was that statement misguided? Start on the right, Ambassador Baer. Was that statement misguided?

Ambassador BAER. I think that I have heard from both sides of the aisle today a desire which I subscribe——

Mr. DUNCAN. It is pretty much a yes or no question, sir.

Ambassador BAER. I would say no, that it was not misguided. Because there is a desire that has been longstanding on both sides of the aisle to avoid unnecessary conflict. It was a moment in which the opportunities from engagement seemed to be on the table.

And I think the important thing for us now today is take the lessons of the last 8 years and recognize that engagement has not worked in the way that we wished it would and to——

Mr. DUNCAN. Let's go to the next one.

Ambassador BAER [continuing]. Deal with Russia accordingly.

Mr. DORAN. I will be very direct. I believe that Russia and Russia's leadership views itself currently in a conflict and a rivalry with the United States. Their own strategic documents define how they define war. And Russia views itself in a conflict with the United States right now. It doesn't have bullets or tanks or missiles it has used, but that is what we are looking at.

Mr. DUNCAN. Next?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. I would say that job one with the United States is to be a global superpower, and that in that vein Russia does not measure up to us. So that whatever they do, they should be confronted by the superior model of American democracy. And I am not sure that Presidents under both parties have fully grasped the geopolitics of that.

President ILVES. I really can't say anything about U.S. domestic politics, unfortunately.

Mr. DUNCAN. Under the previous administration was Russia deterred or emboldened by American and NATO allies? Deterred or emboldened?

Ambassador BAER. I think neither. Obviously we, we took a number of steps under the previous administration and we did far more than just say no or were disappointed, but we took a number of steps. And, obviously, those steps have not yet accomplished the objectives of that policy. And we have made attempts——

Mr. DUNCAN. Appreciate you all eating up all my time as I have a two-word question: Deterred or emboldened?

Ambassador BAER. Well, sometimes answers can't be given in two words. Pretending that a complicated——

Mr. DUNCAN. And that is why I am giving you some leniency.

Ambassador BAER. There is a sin in politics to pretend a complicated thing is simple or a simple thing is complicated. And this is a complicated thing. It is not simple.

Mr. DORAN. The early steps in the early part of the administration conveyed weakness to Russia. And Vladimir Putin took advantage of the weakness that we were communicating through our actions in the early phase of the last administration.

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. I will say emboldened. But they would be trying to do it no matter what we did.

President ILVES. Emboldened, but not thanks to the United States but rather the unwillingness of some of our European allies to take steps to deter them.

For example, the inability of our European allies to accept even having contingency plans for the new members. So, in fact, the United States was the front, sort of took the lead on many of these issues. When many of our NATO allies did not want to frighten or offend Russia, the United States has been in the lead.

Mr. DUNCAN. So, 2 seconds left. I would say that when Russia invades Georgia, annexes Crimea, invades Ukraine, gives missile systems or sells missile systems to Iran, other things, I would believe that they are more emboldened today because of the past poli-

cies. I agree with President Trump: Peace through strength. It worked under Reagan and it will work in the future with regard to Russia.

With that I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Karen Bass of California.

Ms. BASS. Well, first of all I want to thank the chair and the ranking member. And I think really this hearing is an example of your leadership. And the recognition that this issue is much more important to our country than our last election. And I think one of the panelists said that this is really about our future elections and also our standing in the world.

And with this in mind, I think that our NATO allies would benefit from an investigation, the 9/11-style investigation that is in the Cummings-Swalwell bill. And I am hoping that my colleagues in the other side of the aisle will join in the call for that.

And I think about Estonia. I had the honor of visiting your country and going to the cybersecurity center. And I know that a lot of countries around the world studied what happened to Estonia.

And I think just as we studied what happened to Estonia, we need to study what happened here in the United States. And I believe that one of the panelists said that this was Russia's most successful intervention in an election.

I also, I think it was Mr. Doran who said a few times that the interference in our election was not about picking winners and losers but about creating chaos and undermining the confidence. And when I hear you describe that I am not just thinking about the election, but I am, frankly, thinking about the last 45, 46 days, because the chaos has continued. And in terms of undermining the confidence, one of the things that is so perplexing to me is that I can't understand why the President contributes to that.

So saying things like 3 million people voted illegally, the crazy tweets that we are all experiencing day to day, it makes me wonder whether or not there is ongoing involvement of Russia in the administration. And I wanted to know if some of the panelists could comment.

A lot of people question whether or not the President is compromised; whether or not the Russian's have some information on the President. I think about the unbelievable business entanglements that it seems as though we are learning more and more about every day, and I want to know your opinions about that. I want to know whether or not there is other examples around the world of where Russia has intervened, and one of the ways that they have continued to have influence is because of business entanglements.

I also wonder if there are other people around the United States, other business folks that have such deep financial involvement. One of the theories out there—I don't know that it is a theory, I think it is really fact—which is Trump's business practices before winning the election were so bad, his number of bankruptcies, that no one in the United States would lend him money and he had to go over and he is in hock, not just to the Russian Government but also to individuals in Russia. And so I wanted to know if the panelists could comment about that? And maybe, Mr. Doran, Ambas-

sador Baer, if we have time maybe everybody can. But if we could start with you two.

Mr. DORAN. I will be very brief. When I say that Vladimir Putin wants to create chaos and division among our ranks I would include Europeans with us. Our front-line allies in Europe are part of the Western alliance that stands against Vladimir Putin.

Ambassador BAER. Thank you, Congresswoman. You asked a number of questions. One is about the continuation of Russian malign influence.

Ms. BASS. Right.

Ambassador BAER. And I think that is something that an investigation would expose.

We know that Russian intelligence uses WikiLeaks as a distribution platform. And we have seen the attack on our intelligence agencies this week.

Ms. BASS. Right.

Ambassador BAER. Obviously that is a sign of the continuation of Russia's attempts to foment discord and chaos. And the important thing here is what they are trying to do is deprive us of the kind of civilized fact-based debate that our democracy depends on by feeding garbage into the system and causing us to divide in ways that aren't about civilized fact-based debate. And so I would see those efforts as ongoing.

I think, again, we are dealing with two sets of questions here. One is, what is the nature of the Russian malign influence, past and present, on the United States, particularly with a focus on the 2016 election where we know that they made a concerted effort there.

Ms. BASS. Before I run out of time. Do you think this President is compromised?

Ambassador BAER. That is something that is not in my area of expertise. Obviously there have been a number of administration officials who have had covert meetings with the Russians. That raises questions. That is a separate investigation, a criminal/national security investigation.

Ms. BASS. Could they have information on him that if it comes out it is so overwhelming that he is compromised?

Ambassador BAER. I think the American people deserve to know that. It is not something that I am capable of answering for you today.

Ms. BASS. Thank you. Anybody else?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. I would just mention I read a Rolling Stone article this morning that said there is a great deal of speculation about what might be true that is not yet established, and that it is a very high wire and a long way down.

Ms. BASS. And I hope we have better sources than Rolling Stone. Thank you.

Mr. PERRY [presiding]. The Chair thanks the gentlewoman. The Chair now recognizes himself.

Just to put this all into perspective historically, at least from my point of view, I want to remind everybody that Alger Hiss traveled to Yalta with President Roosevelt when he sat across the table with Stalin. And it was Harry Hopkins who lived in Roosevelt's White house. And that doesn't even begin to scratch the surface.

That having been said, Russia also attempted to hack the RNC during last year's election. And for my good friend from California, in 2016 the Russian Government planned to spend 13 million rubles to preserve Lenin's body, which still sits in Red Square, in case anybody, including him, has any wonder about what the leadership in Russia believes in politically.

So now let's talk about some compromise and some business connections. And these questions will go directly to the Ambassador and Mr. Doran.

Skolkovo, which is located just outside of Moscow, is described as the sort of win/win deal that President Obama sought during Secretary Clinton's Russian reset. Skolkovo is Russia's own version of Silicon Valley and was developed with the cooperation and investment of major U.S. tech firms such as CISCO, Google, Intel, Microsoft and IBM, matching Russian brain power with American investment dollars and entrepreneurial know-how. Its mission included, among other things, breakthroughs in areas including energy, communication, sensors, and propulsion systems.

Incidentally, 60 percent of the Russian, American, and European key partners made financial commitments to the Clinton Foundation or sponsored speeches by Bill Clinton.

The questions are as follows: Did the Obama administration modify its posture toward Skolkovo once the FBI sent a letter to Boston-area companies and MIT in 2014 raising concerns about Russian-backed investment in U.S. high tech startups and issuing what was called an "extraordinary warning" to technology companies?

Or did the Obama administration modify its posture toward Skolkovo once the U.S. Army Foreign Military Studies Program issued a report in 2013 declaring the purpose of Skolkovo was to serve as a vehicle for worldwide technology transfer to Russia in the areas of information technology, biomedicine, energy, satellite and space technology, and nuclear technology?

Or how about in 2011 when Skolkovo approved the development of a hypersonic cruise missile engine directly in response to ours?

And, finally, did the administration change its posture when cybersecurity experts also expressed deep reservations as early as 2010—cybersecurity, since that is a big issue, as it should be—that the U.S. companies working at Skolkovo may inadvertently be harming global cybersecurity since Skolkovo is the site of the Russia Security Service, or FSB's Security Centers 16 and 18, which are in charge of information warfare for the Russian Government, including information warfare operations against the Ukrainian Government?

Gentlemen.

Ambassador BAER. Congressman, you laid out quite a lot and I won't be able to respond to all of it. Let me just say that I think one of the strengths of the United States is the independence of our corporate entities. And, unlike Russia, we don't give orders to our corporations on what they do. And I think——

Mr. PERRY. But when we encourage them to collaborate and cooperate with our adversaries and people that are well known to want to steal and coopt our secrets.

Ambassador BAER. I don't presume that——

Mr. PERRY. And then there are FBI reports and the United States Army reports, and then the intelligence community's report that there are cyber issues, the question is did we change our posture?

Ambassador BAER. And I believe that we are venturing into territory that would include confidential information, so I want to be careful here about——

Mr. PERRY. Can you say yes or no?

Ambassador BAER. Certainly when we get intelligence we do change our posture on a policy basis.

Mr. PERRY. Can you say yes or no?

Ambassador BAER. And I think the important thing is that Skolkovo was a failure because of all of the weaknesses that we have been discussing about the Russian Federation today, which is that it has a brain drain, it cracks down in independent thinkers, and it can't be the Silicon Valley of Russia because only America is capable of creating Silicon Valley. So that's what we——

Mr. PERRY. Since you apparently want to answer this, tell me, having viewed Russia as an adversary, if not a direct enemy, for my whole life based on everything I have read, seen, and experienced, how was it in our best interest, how was it in the United States' best interest to transfer our technology and our know-how to Russia and encourage such?

Ambassador BAER. First of all I don't think you will find anybody who knows me who thinks that I am soft on Russia. But——

Mr. PERRY. I didn't say you were. I am asking you about how this supports United States' interests and United States policy abroad?

Ambassador BAER. Obviously we would never, the United States Government, no Democratic administration or Republican administration would ever pursue a policy whose objective was technology transfer to Russia. The fact is that we might pursue policies whose objective——

Mr. PERRY. But we knew when we made the agreement, the Secretary knew that the Russians would actually require patents and technologies to remain in Russia. That is part of the agreement. So that countervails the statement that you just made.

Ambassador BAER. The objective of a policy would not be technology transfer to——

Mr. PERRY. But it says so in the agreement.

Ambassador BAER. It doesn't say that that's the objective. It may be the case that in certain cases investments in Russia include technology arrangements. Investments in most countries include technology arrangements. And I——

Mr. PERRY. Most countries aren't trying to destroy this country.

Ambassador BAER. Congressman, I couldn't agree more with you that we should be taking a robust, sober, firm position with the Russian Federation. I think we should be focused more on what we should be doing today as a country——

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, sir.

Ambassador BAER [continuing]. And what our policies should be.

Mr. PERRY. My time has expired.

I am going to ask unanimous consent to submit this report regarding Skolkovo for the record. Hearing none, so ordered.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Keating of Massachusetts.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think the public as a whole centers their attention on this attack from Russia on the cyberattack and on the hacking. But I really think that what they are doing and what they have done in other countries is much more comprehensive than that. It is a mixture of not just propaganda but a mixture of politics, a mixture of business and money and corruption, and Putin's self-interest and insecurities, as well as the oligarchs and his cronies as well.

And that is why, honestly, as nice as this hearing is today it is not going to accomplish what the American public needs or what our allies need overseas, and that is an independent commission, a neutral commission looking in at this, as well as a special prosecutor.

And I would add to that, this committee, I think, will take a role in sanctions on Russia as well.

So I want to look at this as a window, as limited as our time is, where I think we can gather some insight and maybe some overlap in terms of the Russians' behavior, and that is looking at Ukraine. You know, it was 9 or 10 months ago that there was an office that had personal effects in it and furniture in it sitting in Independence Square in Kiev of Paul Manafort. And there were reports—and I must say that they are not substantiated; there is a need for this kind of investigation I spoke about—where the Ukraine Anti-Corruption Bureau put facts forward that, at least in their investigation, that he had some $12.7 million in an offshore account, and undisclosed payments that are involved.

And my point is this that can you delve a little bit into not only Russia's propaganda and cyberattacks, but actually their interaction in terms of political parties and candidates as well? And I think Ukraine gives us a great example. Could you start with that, Ambassador Baer?

Ambassador BAER. Thank you, Congressman.

I think in a general term you are right to characterize that the specific topics that we have been addressing today in terms of disinformation and hacking are only one piece of a broader arsenal that Putin uses to attack and undermine democratic governments around the world.

And another way that he has done that is by funding, for example, groups on the far left or the far right in European countries that foment xenophobia or anti-refugee settlement or that attack European energy independence plans.

Another way that he does it is by ordering support for certain political parties. And Ukraine is a prime case in point, and has been for years, where there has been a strong alliance of Moscow with the Yanukovych regime, however many misgivings Putin had about Yanukovych himself, who reportedly he thought of as kind of a dolt. The Yanukovych regime was doing the business of Moscow, which is why the Ukrainian people had the Revolution of Dignity. They were tired of being subjugated, their oligarchs being subjugated by Russian oligarchs who were then subjugating the Ukrainian people to the interests of Moscow.

And I think we have seen, obviously, some reference today to Russian banks—which obviously no business is truly fully inde-

pendent in Russia—Russian banks making loans to European far right political parties, including Marine Le Pen's Front National.

So it is certainly the case that supporting political organizations in Europe that run counter to European values and that support Russian aims is one of the tactics that goes along with this disinformation and hacking that we have talked about today.

Mr. KEATING. Yes, what are some of the tactics though that you have seen or been aware of in terms of oligarch involvement, you know, how businesses prosper in a corrupt government such as Russia, as well as maybe looking at attempts to put people in compromising positions, either for business reasons or for political reasons, and maybe use the threat of blackmail? How common is that as a tactic in Russia? You know, all these things are connected, frankly.

Ambassador BAER. Absolutely. Our intelligence people would be able to give you a full briefing on how common Russian tactics are. But my understanding from what I know is that Russian intelligence continues to use a number of methods that are aimed at compromising people either financially or personally, and using that to extract the information that they want or the behavior that they want.

I think with the oligarchs, it is often hard for us to understand how much the power of the state is used to privilege certain political actors usually in business dealings. So monopolies over energy, for example, are a prime area for extracting rents by corrupt oligarchs.

Mr. KEATING. Along those lines, Mr. Ilves, you mentioned the $9 million suggested was going toward Le Pen. Could you tell us how common this is or what the interrelation is, you know, between all of these factors? Because without a comprehensive, independent review we are never fully going to understand this. And we will never give the American public the information they need about what has happened. But also, it won't prepare us for the next election.

I will submit that in writing, unless could I have 15 seconds, Mr. Chair? Some of the other people have had that.

Mr. PERRY. Grant you 15 seconds.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you.

President ILVES. Well, there are other cases which perhaps, I mean, there was a former chancellor of Germany who immediately after pushing through a gas pipeline, went to work for the gas pipeline. So, I mean, there is a term, "schroderization." I can't say more than that, but that has happened many times, but that is the most egregious example.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. PERRY. The Chair thanks the gentleman.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Florida, Mr. DeSantis.

Mr. DESANTIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome to the panel.

Mr. President, are you available for a question?

President ILVES. I am.

Mr. DESANTIS. Okay, good.

I am a supporter of missile defense and want to support our Eastern European allies. When that was removed, I think it was 2009, did that have a beneficial effect in terms of Russian behavior?

President ILVES. Not as far as we could tell. I mean the missiles were directed against Iran. So we didn't quite understand why the Russians were objecting to it.

I think that, now speaking personally, I mean I think the effect was huge in Poland simply because of the timing of it which was the date, September 19th, of the invasion of Poland in 1939—the Nazis invaded on September 1, the Russians, the Soviets, on September 19th. And it is something that few people understand the impact of that. And the movie Katyn is a good example of what the real impact was.

Mr. DESANTIS. Do you think it would be beneficial for having a missile defense shield that would cover all of Eastern Europe?

President ILVES. Ultimately yes. But, I mean, as I said the shield was not against Russia or missiles from Russia, it was for potential missiles from Iran. The whole setup was based on what happens if the Iranians attack Europe.

At this point countries that are close to Russia are already within range of Russian missiles, at least 400 kilometers into Europe. That includes all of my country. And from Kaliningrad it extends even to Germany over Poland. So, so there is, I mean there is quite a bit of concern about potential missile—well, I mean need for a missile shield in Europe. But I doubt at this point, looking at the political spectrum, that there is much political will among the governments of Europe to push for that, simply because they are not as forward leaning in general as the United States has been.

Mr. DESANTIS. I understand.

Let me ask Ambassador Baer, you served in the Obama administration, do you acknowledge that Russia had expanded its influence over the 8 years of the Obama administration in malevolent ways?

Ambassador BAER. Sure, I acknowledge that. I think that Russia would have aimed to expand its influence no matter who was in government. I think the important thing now for us to——

Mr. DESANTIS. I think, well, but they would have aimed it, but the question is were they deterred from doing it or were they emboldened to act, was Putin emboldened to act? And it seems to me that he was really emboldened to act in a variety of spheres. Obviously he sees Crimea. He sees Georgia. That was at the end of the Bush administration but the response for the incoming administration was to seek a rest in response to that rather than do much.

A major foothold now in the Middle East which has a lot of people worried. They are sending different defensive missiles to Iran, the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism.

So, you know, that is a lot of activity. And I guess, you know, I didn't see Russia being checked during those 8 years.

And I appreciate this issue of them with their cyberattacks because I think it is important. I also think they have done way worse than cyber in terms of some of the things they have tried to do with financial institutions and other things that we probably can't get into in this.

So why weren't they checked? Or was there simply nothing, were the policies of the Obama administration correct and it is just that is the way the cookie crumbles?

Ambassador BAER. I think we need to look back further. And then we need to come to today.

First of all, I fully support your—what I take to be your view—that we should have a comprehensive review today of our posture toward Russia with an eye toward figuring out what additional measures may be needed across the range in order to deter Russia from further aggression in whatever form. So I agree with you on that.

I think for 25 years after the end of the Cold War there were people in both parties who worked incredibly hard to try to knit Russia into the international system, a rules-based order that the United States had built with its European allies. And, obviously, Russia's invasion of Georgia, its seizure of Crimea, its continued fomenting a conflict in Ukraine runs counter to those hopes. And we need to be realistic about that, accept that, and figure out what the right policies are moving forward.

Mr. DESANTIS. Let me just ask, I saw in your testimony you had mentioned the hacking of Russia, that there would be a mix sometimes of false information and accurate information. In terms of the United States, the emails that were released were Podesta's. Is there any evidence that that was disinformation or was that all truthful information?

Ambassador BAER. I am not in a position to make an assessment of all of the things that have been released during the course of our election right now.

Mr. DESANTIS. Because it is still wrong to do the hacking, don't get me wrong. But if truthful information is out and that truthful information is undermining confidence, well then there is, you know, some of the things that were said on there I think undermine the confidence. And I thought, as far as I could tell, it was all accurate information. Doesn't excuse the hacking but I think there is a difference between disinformation or other——

Chairman ROYCE [presiding]. We need to, yes, we need to go to Mr. David Cicilline of Rhode Island.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want to thank you and the ranking member for holding this hearing today and thank the witnesses for being here.

The title of today's hearing is Undermining Democratic Institutions and Splintering NATO: Russian Disinformation Aims. Now, I think the scope of this hearing is, as announced, is perfect if it took place a year ago. But let's be honest, we are here today because Russia engaged in unprecedented criminal attacks against the United States by illegally hacking information and releasing it in a controlled way to influence the 2016 Presidential election. This is indisputable. Seventeen American intelligence agencies concurred in an assessment published in January.

The witnesses today have shed light on Russia's nefarious activities. But due to their status as private citizens they cannot comment on the real issue at hand, namely, why did the Russian Government believe that Donald Trump would be a sympathetic partner and attempt to tip the scales in his favor; whether anyone

within the Trump campaign, the transition team, or the administration colluded with the Russian Government to undermine our democratic election; and what we can do to ensure this type of interference never happens in another American election?

The only way to do this is to hear from witnesses from the Trump campaign and the Trump administration, including Michael Flynn and Jeff Sessions testifying under oath. And I firmly believe that the most appropriate context for such an investigation is with an independent, bipartisan commission. And that is why I, along with every single Democrat in the House, have signed on to H.R. 356, the Swalwell-Cummings Protecting Our Democracy Act.

I confounds me that there are members of this body who do not support the independent commission. The very fundamentals of our democracy are at stake. As elected officials, we have more at stake than anybody to get to the bottom of what happened in the 2016 election and to find out what ties, if any, President Trump and his administration actually have with Russia. A partisan investigation held under the cover of the intelligence committees simply will not suffice. The American people deserve to know the truth. Any investigation needs to be held in the light of day so that Americans concerned about the undermining of our democracy can hold those responsible accountable.

The Swalwell-Cummings legislation is referred solely to this committee. And I urge the chairman to bring it up and let's have a markup and vote on it.

In the meantime, we must send a clear message to the Russian Government, and other governments who I can assure you are eagerly watching to see how we react, that we will not stand for their brazen interference in democratic elections in this country and around the world. We need to build upon the sanctions put in place by the Obama administration and pass the Engel-Connolly SECURE Our Democracy Act which would put in place sanctions against anyone who interferes in an American election from overseas. We must send a warning to anyone thinking about meddling in future American elections.

Additionally, we must acknowledge the widespread hacking and misinformation efforts in which Russia is already engaged in Europe, and pass a bipartisan resolution I introduced this week with my Republican colleague Peter Roskam, condemning Russia's interference in European elections and reinforcing the necessity of strong sanctions against those who seek to undermine democratic institutions through cyber warfare and misinformation. And I hope all my colleagues will join in this resolution.

What Russia has done and continues to do is declare war against Western liberal democracy. While his tactics may be high tech, Putin's motives are very familiar. He sees democracy, and everything that comes with it—elections, a free media, transparency and accountability—as enemies to be defeated. I do not accept Putin's world view. The Russian people are not our enemy to be defeated. But I think we are naive if we don't acknowledge the full extent of Putin's war against the West and respond forcefully. Make no mistake, Putin sees this as a zero sum game: In order for him to be stronger, the United States and our allies must be weaker.

But we have a secret weapon that Putin cannot and will not ever understand, and that is our democracy based on universal values. Putin sees the truth as an enemy and rules with an iron fist so that the true extent of his crimes against the Russian people and the rest of the world are never fully revealed. We cannot revert to a tactic used by Putin himself to hide what really happened in this country last year. This is not about politics, this is about the very fundamentals of our democracy and what makes America America. And the strongest refutation of Putin's plans is to unite in a serious and thoughtful defense of our democracy.

Contrary to what some on the other side have suggested, no one wants war. What we want is the truth and a way forward. And as Bob Kagan, the former Reagan official and respected conservative expert on international affairs, said last week in the Washington Post, "The longer the American people remain in the dark about Russian manipulations, the longer they will remain vulnerable to them. The longer Congress fails to inform itself, the longer it will be before it can take steps to meet the threat."

The truth is that the truth will set us free. But we won't know the truth if we make no attempt to find it.

And I apologize to the witnesses for using my time to speak rather than ask questions but this is important. We owe it to our constituents, to our families, to our allies, and to ourselves to discover exactly what happened last year in our election, how it happened, and how we can ensure it never happens again in this country. And I implore my colleagues, let's put aside politics, let's get to the bottom of this. The testimony of our witnesses today only confirms the urgency of doing this.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to put into the record the assessment of 17 intelligence agencies entitled "Background to Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in the Recent U.S. Election," and the Washington Post piece by Mr. Kagan entitled "Republicans Are Becoming Russia's Accomplices."

Chairman ROYCE. Without objection.

We go now to Mr. Tom Garrett of Virginia.

Mr. GARRETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would thank the witnesses and apologize in advance for what might seem to be something of a soliloquy here. There is a question if I am able to get to it.

At the beginning of the hearing the ranking member said we also need to hear from senior administration officials once they are in place. Rhetorically I would ask, why aren't they in place? We are in the middle of March and there is accountability to be had here and in other areas. There are things to do here and in other areas. And senior administration officials are unprecedentedly not in place. Whose fault is that?

There was also a comment made about the NSA advisor General Flynn resigning because of his contacts. No, he resigned because of his lies to his chain of command. And I supported that action.

We have heard of Attorney General meetings shrouded in secrecy. Well, the Attorney General met twice. One of those meetings was arranged by the Obama administration. Candidly, I am in a meeting with everyone in this room right now, and the definition of the term "meeting" is nebulous, bordering on meaningless, as it

is used by members of this committee in political rhetoric. They say a 9/11-style commission alone is the only way to ensure transparency. Well, be careful what you ask for because you just might get it.

What we have here is hypocrisy writ large. President Obama said to Dmitry Medvedev, "I will have more flexibility after this election." Medvedev responded, "I will transmit your message to Vladimir."

Obama said the 1980s called and they want their foreign policy back. The Cold War has been over for 20 years. It was funny then. But there was at least half of the political realm in this nation concerned with a threat posed even then by Russia.

Former Secretary Clinton said that to be concerned with Russia was "somewhat dated as a world view."

Vice President Joe Biden said Republicans' concerns about Russia were only held by a small group of Cold War holdovers.

Secretary of State Kerry said Republicans worry about Russia as if their only knowledge of Russia comes from having viewed Rocky IV.

Chris Matthews said to Rachel Maddow, Republic Russian concerns, I don't know what decade these guys are living in.

Earlier Mr. Doran commented that we are combating a well-organized, well-funded organization that doesn't care about the facts. Rhetorically I would ask are we discussing the Russians or the political opposition to President Trump?

If you want hearings, let's have hearings. But let's not limit them to 2016 and 2017. When the fact comes out and the public learns that the former Soviet Union colluded with members affiliated with the Democrat party to influence the United States elections in 1980 and '84 as it related to the election and re-election of Ronald Reagan in the form of the nuclear freeze movement and others, then we will understand just the nature of people being involved in influencing other people's elections.

I have here copies of a story from December 2016 from the Los Angeles Times detailing 82 instances where the United States was involved in influencing other people's elections. It is not okay. I do not defend the Russians. But this is not some genesis that occurred as it relates to the Trump administration, it is something that has been omnipresent.

I could ask if the United States uses influence and information to influence elections. But we have limited time and everyone knows the answer.

A lot of us recognized Russia as a cyber and traditional kinetic threat before this election. The remainder of us have now a convenient readout bolstered by a sudden acknowledgment of a threat that has been omnipresent despite previous strategic denial by those who are now screaming the loudest: Don't worry about Russia. Don't worry about Russia. Oh my gosh, look, Russia.

To those people I would quote police detective John McClane, "Welcome to the party, pal."

So what we need to do if we are going to be productive and not just talk at one another is have actual actions. And I am going to do something. I am going to outline some. Congresswoman Ros-

Lehtinen earlier suggested a limit on waivers of sanctions on Russia. Hear, hear.

Congressman McCaul said establish and identify and articulate real doctrine of response to cyber and information warfare and draw lines that we will not back away from. I second that, Mr. Chairman.

The sanctions we should tie to specific actions. If we want the Russians to do things, we should say these are the things you need to do in order to get to those. And we should not allow a linkage between Russian actions in Crimea and Georgia and Syria and Eastern Ukraine. These should all be dealt with independently so that they don't use them as leverage against us furthering democracy across the globe.

Finally, to address this question of whether Mr. Trump has somehow undermined NATO, I want to bring people back to the real world. My question would be, is a NATO where nations spend more to defend themselves stronger or weaker? Because through his questioning of NATO's ability and relevance he has caused the very defense build-up that I think we can all appreciate, thus strengthening NATO by encouraging nations like Germany to take more responsibility for their own defense.

So, finally, in wrapping up, Mr. Chairman, my question is, is a stronger military NATO a stronger NATO?

Thank you. With that I would conclude.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired.

We will go to Dr. Ami Bera of California.

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for calling this hearing.

It is disturbing to me this defense of Vladimir Putin and Russia. And it is very worrisome. Look, if we want to call an independent investigation looking beyond 2016, looking to the last administration, great, let's do it. But this is about protecting our democracy. I mean let's just go through a timeline of what our current President has said.

You know, in October 2013 he talked about how he does a lot of business with Russia.

In November 2015 he talked about how he got to know Putin very well because we were both on "60 Minutes." They were stable mates.

December of 2015, Vladimir Putin praises him. In response, Trump praises him back.

February of 2016 he talks about how Putin called him a genius.

March 28th he hired Paul Manafort.

August 17th, President Trump gets his first intelligence briefing. We are told in that briefing he is shown direct evidence of the Russian Government hacking emails. Two days later Paul Manafort resigns.

In July 2016 he encourages the Russians to hack Hillary Clinton's emails.

President Trump is elected November 8th. November 9th the Russian Parliament cheers.

This is very worrisome. The President talks about this as a political witch hunt. Look, he won the election but this isn't a political witch hunt. When the tragedy of Benghazi happened we came to-

gether, an independent investigation looked at what happened, what went wrong. We lost some heroes that day. They made recommendations. We ought to do the same thing.

I, you know, I think many of us would say the millions of dollars that were spent on Benghazi, the majority had no issue with doing that. We ought to do the same thing. This is not Democrats or Republicans. This is about protecting the integrity of our elections and pushing back.

You know, I would ask the witnesses a couple yes/no questions. Do you have faith in the intelligence community's assessment that Russia intentionally interfered with our recent elections? Yes? No?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. Yes. But I am very troubled to see the Commander-in-Chief announcing something that I would have thought was sensitive information, and then reading that people were rolled up in Russia who were probably close to Putin. So this distresses me.

Mr. BERA. Yes, no, on intelligence?

Mr. DORAN. As a citizen, yes, I have faith in the intelligence community.

Mr. BERA. Ambassador?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. Yes.

Mr. BERA. And based on that, do we believe that we ought to consider this interference in our democracy, in our elections, a national security threat? Ambassador Bloomfield?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. I use the word "challenge."

Mr. BERA. Mr. Doran?

Mr. DORAN. Russia's efforts to destabilize the West on all fronts is a threat to us.

Mr. BERA. Ambassador Baer?

Ambassador BAER. Yes.

Mr. BERA. Great. And I think we would all agree that we don't believe Russia or Vladimir Putin has our best interests or democracy's best interests in mind in these attempts.

This is about us coming together as Democrats and Republicans and protecting our democracy. If America is not standing up for democracy and pushing back, you know, the rest of the world is watching. It starts to undermine our leadership.

Mr. Chairman, one of the reasons why this has been such a great committee is the bipartisan nature of your leadership working with the ranking member. I would urge you to let us mark up the Protect Our Democracy Act. Let's have this discussion.

Let's set up an independent investigation, look at those independent findings and look at those independent recommendations to protect our elections, to protect the integrity of our elections. Let's not do a political witch hunt. This is about our democracy. Would any of you disagree?

Now let's go to Ambassador Bloomfield. Would you support the recommendation of setting up an independent investigation that could come up with findings and make recommendations?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. I think an investigation is absolutely appropriate. But where you come out matters: If we are in confusion, if we are in chaos, if we stop after an investigation and say we are dysfunctional and we can't restore the Western order against the threat, then we have failed.

So the idea is to heal the nation, find a way to move forward, see what we can agree on, and still have our political differences. Show the world that our democracy not only is democratic but that we can get something done that works.

Mr. BERA. Ambassador Baer, should we do an investigation?

Ambassador BAER. Yes. And I said as much in my testimony, both written and spoken.

Mr. BERA. Great. Thanks. I'm out of time.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Ted Yoho of Florida.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for everybody enduring today's hearing.

Mr. Doran, you said treat Russia like a virus. And I agree. Whether it is Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, or ISIS, or other entity, the attacks will continue because those nations and organizations they don't like us or our principles of freedoms and liberty. And they are going to continue to do that.

And I don't have to remind anybody, as Mr. Garrett and several other have brought up, that we are not angelic in this either.

I would like to go to Mr. Chabot's comments that Putin's goal is to create chaos. And it kind of reminds me of Don Adams' series back in the '60s of Maxwell Smart. His nemesis was the Russian spy agency called KAOS. And if you look at what has happened here, I think the narrative shouldn't be on did Russia help Mr. Trump win or help Mrs. Clinton lose because they released information or information was released on both candidates. I think their goal was to create chaos.

And I can only imagine that it is 5:00 o'clock somewhere in Russia, or beyond, probably about 8:00, 8:30 right now. And it reminds me of that song of Alan Jackson and Jimmy Buffett's, "It's Five O'Clock Somewhere." And I can see Vladimir Putin with his comrades around a fire at the Kremlin and they are drinking potato vodka, toasting each other, saying, "Hey, Comrade Boris, look at America," while they are watching C-Span. We are fighting amongst each other over something that we know has happened. And I think what we need to focus on is how did it happen and how do we prevent it?

And it is not the Republicans or Democrats, as my colleagues brought up multiple times today, it is about what are we going to do? And that is where the concern to me is. As a nation—and the last, Dr. Bera was just talking about do you have faith in our intelligence community? I do. But where I have doubts is the ability of other countries to hack into us.

You know, we are the guys that put people on the moon and brought them back in the '60s without technology. And I want to know why we have fallen down this far to where we can't block this. It kind of reminds me of what my dad said having six sons, and I am five of six, saying don't worry about what your brother is doing. Worry about what you are doing and do it better than anybody else so that, you know, you succeed. And I think we, as a Nation, need to do that.

And our goal is, you know, I heard Mr. DeSantis talk about the missile defense system. And you said, well, it is not pointed at Russia. I think we should have missile defense systems in the countries and our allies that want to partner up with us versus a coun-

try like that, or any other country. And I think those missile defense systems should be adaptable as they are to any threat to freedom and liberty.

And so I think you guys have already weighed in on that. I would like to hear your response on Radio Free America and just sending out the message, the truth message of what freedom and liberty is. And how effective is that in your realm or in your experience? Mr. Doran, if you would.

Mr. DORAN. Yes. Thank you very much, Congressman, for the excellent question.

I would clarify that when I was speaking about the virus I was talking specifically not about Russia as a country but, obviously, about, as you know and understand, obviously about Russian propaganda. I——

Mr. YOHO. And that is what it is, it is propaganda. And they are going to continue it and we are going to continue it. And that is just human nature. I just want to be so secure that it doesn't matter because we are putting out the truth. And liberty and freedom is something all people around the world yearn, if they know about it.

Mr. DORAN. That is correct.

The way we do this, we have got to detect it. We have got to move quickly to have a better handle on how Russian propaganda works, and specifically the impact it is having. You mentioned Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty. That is one of several avenues we should take.

I would stress to this committee an all-of-the-above approach when it comes to counter strategies against Russian propaganda. This means media education. It means broadcasts. It means online, leveraging humor and satire. This is something that Vladimir Putin and the Russian leadership are very vulnerable to.

And, finally, you know, we have talked a bit about government responses but ultimately we are all in this together, this is something that society, down to journalists and news outlets, have to come to grips with to restore trust and credibility in our free press.

Mr. YOHO. Okay. And I just want to cut you off there because, you know, we are going to win this. You look at the principles of this country: Freedom and liberty. People around the world yearn. We are going to come together as Americans. We are going to go up on the hill, we are going to dust off the lamps and mirrors on that beacon and it will shine. And it will come together by us standing strong as Americans.

Thank you. And I appreciate your time. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

Lois Frankel of Florida.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the panel today. And I appreciate this hearing.

So this is my third term on this committee. And we have heard about a lot of scary things, whether it is last week what is going on in North Korea, Iran, the humanitarian crisis in Syria. I could go on and on. But the Russian interference with our election to me is the scariest of recent activities that I have learned about.

And what is also very surprising, it is very rare that we have all the panelists in front of our committee seem to be agreeing. That never happens. So that makes it even more alarming to me.

I want to—and I am going to ask a question before I give a whole speech, and that is this: One of the things that I think you all mentioned is that there seems to be this pattern of interference with elections before ours and going on. And so we know, for example, I think one of you said that a lot of false stories are spread. My question is, is there any kind of pattern of Russia collecting compromising information on candidates as well as spreading the false stories?

President ILVES. I mean, we don't know but we do know that the, for example, the German equivalent of the FBI and the German equivalent of the CIA, the Verfassungsschutz and Bundesnachrichtendienst, actually have made stronger statements than the U.S. intelligence agencies on the hacking of the entire Bundestag already in 2015, and have also said that political parties are being hacked.

The DSGE, which is the French foreign intelligence agency, has again said that the Russians are trying to disrupt the elections in favor of one candidate. So we know they are doing that. But we don't, we have not seen—see, the hacking works when you dox——

Ms. FRANKEL. Okay, can I, I want to get to the second point which is, which is have you seen any evidence of the Russians collecting compromising information on candidates?

President ILVES. It becomes compromising when you publish it.

Ms. FRANKEL. Ambassador Baer?

Ambassador BAER. I mean, I think one of the challenges is that President Ilves is getting at is that if you want to effectively control someone you don't actually put it out there. So the answer is we don't know what efforts at using compromise as a way of leveraging behavior or information are currently being used because, by definition, effective compromise means the threat, using that threat. And, obviously, once the information is out there it is not a very good lever anymore.

Ms. FRANKEL. My colleagues talked today about, well, isn't it too bad there was some true information that was put out and it is too bad. How much false information was put out, to the best of your knowledge, in our campaign? How much false information was put out against Hillary Clinton?

Ambassador BAER. I think it would be difficult to quantify. I know some of the people have been doing open source analysis of this, of the engagement in our election. And I would be happy to deliver to your office a broader analysis.

I think the important thing here is, and I——

Ms. FRANKEL. Well, would it be surprising to hear that it is hundreds of thousands of false tweets and Facebook pages and whatever kind of social media that is getting out there?

Ambassador BAER. That wouldn't be surprising at all. I mean there are certainly examples, one in Germany recently where the Russian propaganda made up a crime that they alleged was perpetrated by a migrant which never occurred, and was revealed to be completely false from whole cloth. And it is consistent with normal Russian propaganda practices.

Ms. FRANKEL. So let me just sum up by saying this, and why I want to just join my colleagues who are calling for an independent review of these matters. Listen, I believe Putin is about Putin. Putin isn't trying to help Mr. Trump because he likes Mr. Trump. He, for some reason, he believes, I think, he was going to get a better deal.

I don't know whether it is because he didn't like Hillary Clinton or President Trump's comments are based on ignorance or greed or financial ties or I don't know why the President is accusing our President Obama of spying on him. Is he reading Russian information? I have no idea. And I think the American people have the same kind of questions.

My first hearing, Mr. Chair, when I was on this committee was Hillary Clinton talking about Benghazi. And then there was probably nine hearings on Benghazi, $7 million spent. And, listen, Benghazi was bad. But if Benghazi was bad let me tell you something, the Russians trying to take over our elections with all that they did, that is very, very bad. And we need to start having some independent reviews and hearings until we get to the bottom of this.

And I thank you all for being with us today and I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. We go to Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First I want to thank the chairman for holding this important hearing. And as cochair of the Ukrainian Caucus I just wanted to commend the efforts of those who organized here this week for Ukraine Day advocacy programs here on The Hill. So thank you for being here.

And I want to commend my colleague Mr. Yoho. I am not liking a lot of what I am hearing here, quite frankly, and I think we need to get to solving these problems in a bipartisan fashion. I am going to zero in on one issue, and that is propaganda specifically as it pertains to Ukraine.

I spent time in the Embassy there. We got the daily propaganda reports. They were troubling to say the least. Ukraine is not only engaged in a physical battle, they are engaged in a battle of ideas as well. And my question is going to be very simple: What specifically can this committee do to show our unequivocal support for Ukraine in this fight?

Mr. DORAN. If I could just jump in, obviously there are a number of steps that the United States has. I would highlight two.

The first one, continued support for defensive lethal weapons to empower the Ukrainians to defend themselves. And I also think attention and rhetoric from this body would send a strong message that the Americans have not forgotten about your fight.

Ambassador BAER. I agree, particularly with the point about attention and with a constant evaluation of what can be helped. I mean, I think your question was about the information war that the Ukrainians are under. I think one of the strongest things that we can do is to continue to shine a spotlight on the situation there and remind the world that there is an ongoing conflict. We had the largest land battle since World War II in Europe in Eastern Ukraine, and most Americans, most Europeans don't know that fact.

And so we need to continue to shine a spotlight and support the reformers who are continuing to do the ongoing work of the revolution with dignity. There is obviously there is a huge corruption case unfolding this week. Stories like that need to get out because those stories, those stories of the truth of the reform effort that young Ukrainians, civil society, independent journalists are pushing, those stories are the stories that win the hearts and minds of the Ukrainian people and that push back against the steady diet of Russian propaganda that is being pumped into the country.

And, obviously, the Russians make use of an asymmetry. When we, in our own society and Ukraine as well, where there are great protections for freedom of expression, greater protections for media freedom, the Russians take advantage of that. They pump their propaganda in. If countries target that propaganda they say, oh, what happened to free speech? And they use that against us.

We need to continue to support Ukraine's reform agenda. We need to continue to support independent voices inside Ukraine, including with small grants funding, et cetera, to support those startups of independent journalism. We need to keep the spotlight on Ukraine so that Putin's crimes there are exposed to the world.

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. President Ilves started by talking about Clausewitz and saying that war is an extension of politics by other means. In that spirit, the committee can exercise oversight on the administration and hold it to a standard of having a comprehensive policy that deters Putin from pushing Ukraine further, and that reviews a whole series of measures that the Congress believes are wise and the administration is willing to pursue through all means to try to support Ukraine's freedom.

President ILVES. I think it is also important to recognize that the propaganda war goes among ourselves against Ukraine. Just 2 days ago there was a blistering attack against Chrystia Freeland, the new foreign minister of Canada, because she has Ukrainian roots and has been very pro-Ukrainian, and published in the Canadian press.

When we looked at this massive flow of disinformation immediately after Crimea we had the BBC saying, well, we have to balance. So here is what the Ukrainians say and here is what, you know, these other people say. And they're all lies. And if you start balancing between lies and the truth, what is in between is something very funny.

But basically I think, I mean in Europe I think they have gotten a better handle on this. But 2014 there was so much disinformation that was simply taken up. And, also, it is in our own language. If the European Union, if the foreign affairs people there don't say until 2015 that they are dealing with Russians in the Donbass but rather only separatists, who for some reason have hundreds of tanks and the missiles that it takes 2 years to learn how to use, I mean, that is we have to, we have to here in the West recognize the propaganda about Ukraine.

And I think in the first year or so we lost that battle.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. I want to thank you. And if you could, just keep this committee advised on what we can do in that fight because with the 24-hour news cycle it is very easy to lose sight of the plight that is occurring out there. And it is sad and it is severe

and we need to have their back. So if you could just keep that information flow coming, I would appreciate it.

I yield. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Robin Kelly of Illinois.

Ms. KELLY. Thank you, Chairman Royce. I hope this is the first of many hearings on Russia. And I look forward to future hearings once the administration has put in place senior level officials at the State Department. Thank you to the witnesses.

It is my hope also, as we have heard, that this committee will take the initiative and mark up the SECURE Our Democracy Act and Protect Our Democracy Act to get to the bottom of Russian interference in U.S. elections and prevent future action. Members on both sides of the aisle have acknowledged Russia's use of disinformation campaigns to hack and disrupt elections. Professional-looking programming on channels like RT complement disinformation efforts to promote the reiteration effect. Taken together, Russian propaganda is blended into infotainment with reality talk shows that either twist or invent facts and parallel it with media stories to create the impression of popular support.

Putin has surrounded himself with oligarchs and used the government to protect and enrich those loyal to him. Oligarchs have used the courts to paint unflattering stories such as fake news. Most recently—and excuse all of my pronunciation—oil baron Igor Sechin, the CEO of Rosneft, who has a close personal relationship with Secretary Tillerson, filed lawsuit over unflattering stories about media outlets that still retain some freedom and objectivity, like RBK and Vedomosti.

Delegitimizing and establishing news sources and promoting propaganda media has created an environment where news outlets fear speaking truth to power in the service of the Kremlin. I think some may see troubling parallels between the Kremlin's media distrust and what we are seeing from the current Trump administration.

Ambassador Baer, over the weekend we saw reports that President Trump was in a rage that the Attorney General recused himself from Russian interference investigations. On Saturday morning, President Trump sent a series of, in my opinion, irrational tweets accusing President Obama of wiretapping him, with no evidence. It seems that the closer we get to tying the President to Russia, the more erratic, illogical, and defensive he becomes to change the news cycles.

You have worked with foreign governments, friends and adversaries alike. What sort of message does it send when the President lashes out like this after he reads something that he doesn't like about himself or his inner circle? Put simply, can the leader of a nation that engages in disinformation campaigns and speaks out against a free press in his or her nation be taken credibly by our foreign counterparts—or by their foreign counterparts?

Ambassador BAER. I think that question probably is best answered by our foreign colleagues and partners.

I think without commenting on the specific incidents that you mentioned, which I think gave a lot of people reason for concern, I think to state it in the affirmative I think it is fundamentally important that the leader of the United States recognizes that being

leader of the free world is not some added task that gets put on the side. It is a distinct honor of being the President of the United States of America that we are seen as representing something around the world.

Ronald Reagan was referenced earlier today. And certainly Reagan was one who communicated and understood this as well as anyone. And so I think to state it affirmatively, it is incumbent upon the occupier of that office to carry her or himself in a way that represents American values and American principles for the world in a compelling way. And I think any incumbent of that office should be always thinking about that.

Ms. KELLY. I don't know if any of the other witnesses have a comment on what effect you think this is having?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. I will just make a personal comment, if I may.

The United States for the last two Presidents has had someone who wasn't predicted to win, who came from the outside, who resonated with the American people and who won the election. They were not establishment figures. They were not the lead candidate.

And by the way, the day we see that in Moscow or Tehran or Beijing will be a great day for the world because those are one-party systems that are never going to give it up and are really punishing their own people to stay in power.

So you are not getting somebody who spent years and years and years practicing being a Washington politician. I worked for President Reagan and both Bush presidencies. They were attacked very strongly. You will never hear me criticize the oversight and checks and balances process. That is what makes us strong, stronger than anyone. So have at it, but recognize that at the end of the day we need an executive branch that can perform Article II powers and can do what it is authorized to do to achieve strategic goals in the world. That is the bottom line.

Ms. KELLY. My time is up.

Chairman ROYCE. Well, we go to Brendan Boyle of Pennsylvania.

Mr. BOYLE. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to Ranking Member Engel for calling what I hope is the first of many congressional hearings into just what exactly happened this past election with respect to Russian interference in our precious American democracy.

Based on the unanimous conclusion of the 16 intelligence agencies in the United States, it is abundantly clear that we need a 9/11-style commission, a bipartisan, non-partisan commission modeled after the 9/11 Commission to investigate and determine what exactly happened. But more than that, we need to ensure the independence of any such commission and the ability to act on any criminality that took place. That is why in addition to a 9/11-style commission I have called for a special investigator or special prosecutor.

Now, I have also gone to the House Floor and publicly thanked Republican Senators Lindsey Graham and John McCain and any others who have clearly put country ahead of party in this matter. I have been disappointed that there haven't been more voices on the other side, especially in this chamber, who recognize that this is not about party, this is about country, and to join with Senators

Graham and McCain to call for a 9/11-style commission, to co-sponsor the Cummings-Swalwell Act, and to call for an independent outside investigation.

We need to know as Americans what exactly the relationship is between the top levels of the executive branch, including the occupant of the Oval Office, and this Russian regime. I would also say that both in George Washington's farewell message and all throughout the Federalist Papers it is written of the dangers of partisanship and just how concerned our founders were that partisan interests would override the national interests. I think that 240 years later we would be wise, all of us, to remember their words.

Now, specifically I want to turn to a more strategic issue and consideration. A recent article in the New Yorker brought to light an article written by the Russian chief of general staff which said that in the future, wars will be fought with a four-to-one ratio of non-military to military measures. The non-military was to include efforts to shape the political and social landscape of the adversary through subversion, espionage, propaganda, and cyberattacks.

Ambassador Baer, can you comment on how you saw examples of these during your time at the OSCE? And I wonder if you could specifically speak about Ukraine, knowing that I have a number of Ukrainian-American constituents, some of whom are here today and on the Hill this week lobbying their elected representatives. And we are probably right now the most in danger even, respectfully even more so than the Baltics and any other part of Europe.

Ambassador BAER. Thank you, Congressman.

I think what you are referring to is the Gerasimov article and with the practice that we have seen that put into in Ukraine in the last 3 years. We just passed the third anniversary of Yanukovych's flight, abandoning his post. And it was shortly after that that President Putin sent in the so-called little green men into Crimea who took over first the Parliament, and then surrounded military bases, of course without insignia or any demarcation. And then held a "referendum," a mock referendum at the barrel of a gun and claimed that that was a justification for annexation.

We saw that continue, and hybrid warfare continue in Eastern Ukraine when Putin sent in highly-trained paramilitaries to take over town halls and government buildings in Eastern Ukraine, take over police stations, et cetera, and work with local gangs and criminal elements to seize control of territory in Eastern Ukraine.

All along with this there was hard force, as you referred to, but there was also an information and propaganda war that was going along. And to the points that have been made, a huge piece of this is confusion and sowing the inability to make a determination. And, obviously, one of the things that I think for our own systems that we need to be studying is how do we make determinations in an environment in which the other actor is purposely trying to make the kinds of determinations that we need to make more difficult?

This, you mentioned that this has to do centrally with Ukraine. That is where we are seeing it play out. But I think the concerns that we see among allies are that, you know, we need to be able to determine when hybrid warfare is under way. And we may not

be able to determine that in the old fashioned way when we see tanks with Russian flags on them coming across the border, we know hybrid warfare has started.

Mr. BOYLE. And I know I am running out of time. I was going to say that this is especially true with the elections in France and Germany coming up this year. It is not an exaggeration to say the future of the EU is at stake.

I thank the chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Brad Schneider of Illinois.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you. And again thank you to the witnesses for being so generous with your time. I want to take a special moment to thank Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel for calling this hearing. I will echo what others have said, I hope this is the first of a series of hearings to understand what has happened and, more importantly, to understand how we will respond to it.

But I would also add my voice to calling for an independent commission to investigate the Russian efforts to interfere in our elections and how that would play out.

To the panel, you know, looking backward and given what we know so far about the Russian efforts to interfere in our elections, what our capacities are, and to figure out how to go forward you always have to look back, if you were to counsel—and 20/20 hindsight is always wonderful—to counsel if we had only done X, Y, and Z, are there things that we could have done in hindsight that might have thwarted their efforts in this past election that would be useful going forward?

President ILVES. Well, I would quote Jonathan Eyal, who is the head of the British Defence Ministry think tank RUSI, in a quote 2 years ago or 3 years ago actually, in the Financial Times, is that for 25 years we told the East Europeans that they were paranoid, didn't understand what was really going on, and that Russia was just a normal country. And now we have to admit those East Europeans were right.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Ambassador Bloomfield.

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. I don't know what we could have done differently in the past. But I do know that as we go forward, if we have more object lessons such as President Ilves just gave us, if we are still saying why didn't we take corrective measures in 2017 when we were focusing on the issue, and why are the Russians still able to pollute the information space in the information era, we will have failed. So we have got work to do.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. If I could expand on that more on your testimony, let me thank all of the witnesses. Your written testimony was extraordinary across the board and very helpful as we prepared. But, Ambassador, you talked about the needs for moving forward through governance, making sure we are standing strong. Thoughts on what we can do, specific stuffs, how we move that forward?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. Just whatever is done next, if there are investigations of Russia, if there are special investigations, never lose sight of the bar that you are aiming toward which is an American standard of ethics, transparency, accountability, and justice.

And the founders said "toward a more perfect union." We know we are not perfect, so we are not holding ourselves up to be better than anyone, we are trying to get better ourselves. But if the world sees us doing that and trying to hold ourselves to a standard above partisanship, then I think we will have more influence and power in the world, and Putin will be guilty of being a bad actor. No one will want to do business with Russian companies if they think it is going to bring corruption and coercion and blackmail into their economy.

So they are not helping themselves.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. And I think, as we have been here a long time, I think it was in response to a question Ranking Member Engel asked, of the ability to recognize the difference between the United States and Russia. Ambassador Baer, I think it was you, who said that we need the President to speak clearly, to articulate that there is a difference in the United States living up to its values, working toward that more perfect union.

But, Ambassador Baer, I wonder if you have further thoughts, after several hours here, what we can do in our roles to help articulate that difference?

Ambassador BAER. I mean, I would associate myself with the comments made by Ambassador Bloomfield. I think that it is very important, whatever we are doing, to keep that objective, which is a common and shared objective, in mind. And I do think that an independent commission is the kind of mechanism, the kind of tool that we can use, not only to educate policy makers about what kind of approaches can forestall future efforts by Russia or others to interfere in our democracy, but also can help American citizens to educate themselves about the nature of these attempts to manipulate us through control, through taking advantage of some of the asymmetries that are based on our greatest strengths. The fact that we actually have free and fair elections, unlike the Russians where Putin manipulates the tallies, we have free and fair elections. He can take advantage of that.

We have freedom of the press. He can take advantage of that.

And I think that is the value and we should be aiming at are these constructive objectives that could come out of a fact finding mechanism.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. I am out of time. I am sorry, Mr. Doran, because I wanted to touch on your comments about pushing back on fake news. But I think all of this comes together. As we live up to our values, we continue to educate our public, we need to stay true to those values and stay true to our path.

Again I thank the witnesses very much. And I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Tom Suozzi of New York.

Mr. SUOZZI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you again. I especially appreciated your comment in the beginning about the manipulators of Moscow. I thought that was a very good way of putting it. And I want to thank the ranking member as well for some of his comments, especially if you mess with the bull, you get the horns. And I think that his sanctions act that he has proposed along with one of our colleagues is a great example of that.

And I want to echo a lot of things that have been said on both sides here today about the need to actually do something in re-

sponse to what the Russians have been doing. The world today is not as simple as America versus Russia, like it was against the Soviets. The challenge in the world today is, Tom Friedman wrote in his book and I think Mr. Yoho was referencing, the battle is between control versus chaos. Places in the world that are stable versus chaos. Places that are ungoverned, places that are failing, places that were propped up in the old days by the Soviets and the Americans that were average and below average states, but because of corruption or because of lack of resources or incompetence they are failing. And we now have 65 million refugees in the world as opposed to 35 million refugees 10 years ago.

And what Putin is doing and what the Russians are doing is they are fomenting chaos in the world. And that is the biggest threat to our world order today is chaos, places that are ungoverned, places that cannot stay governed and that are fomenting unrest and insecurity in so many different places.

So I want to appreciate both Ambassadors' comments about that they support the idea of an independent investigative body, similar to the 9/11 Commission. And I think, Mr. Doran, are you in support of that as well?

Mr. DORAN. I will leave that up to the committee.

Mr. SUOZZI. Well, I certainly would support that and I think many others would as well.

What I want to ask each of you in the 3 minutes that I have left is what is the one thing that you think that we can do now, even before we do further investigation, because everybody agrees what the Russians did in this past election, the intelligence community, each of the witnesses here, all of us up here, we all know what the Russians have done and have continued to do, what is the one thing we can do now to send a very clear message to the Russians that we are not going to take this, and we are going to act strongly? Just one thing from each of you.

President ILVES. Well, recognize the positive asymmetry in favor of the West and actually make it difficult for people to send their massive amounts of illicit money to be laundered in the West, to be parked in real estate in London and in Florida. The same people—I mean it is unconscionable—the same person who stopped Russian adoptions has a mansion in Florida.

Mr. SUOZZI. So the financial money that is pouring into our country and in other countries that we think they have influenced elections as well, try and do what we can to try and stop people from being able, having that freedom from Russia to spread their money around the world to influence people's behavior.

Ambassador?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. Recognize that what Russia tries to do works best if no one ever figures it out. They have been caught. We have caught them. And so flip the lights on, let the sunlight of transparency shine on all of his sins. Punch it through their firewalls and let the 143 million Russian people know everything about Vladimir Putin and what his circle has done.

Mr. SUOZZI. So, we have figured it out and we have seen the intelligence community's reports on this, the unclassified ones. But you think that there is even more that we can figure out and tie

more of these connections together if we were to do this type of investigation?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. You have to ask yourself why the Russians, the Iranians, the Chinese spend so much time and effort, and they create commands to oversee the internet and television and create propaganda channels. They have a huge investment and they invest in the information space that is not public. It is not free. There is a reason for that.

Mr. SUOZZI. We have to fight them with the truth. As you have been saying all day here today, transparency.

So I only have a minute left. So, Mr. Doran?

Mr. DORAN. When it comes to disinformation and propaganda a magic trick is only magic as long as you can't see the slight of hand. Revealing Russia's slight of hand on propaganda is the best way that we could push back against disinformation.

Mr. SUOZZI. So you are leaving it up to the committee but you are encouraging us to dig further. So further investigation, further information, independence, find out what is going on, expose the trick that they are doing.

Ambassador?

Ambassador BAER. I mean, I agree with the some of the statements that have been made so far. I think we need to keep the punishments that we have already put in place and be assessing whether additional punishments are necessary. And that can be part of the work of this committee or a recommendation of an independent commission. And I think we should be sitting down with our European colleagues, both in government and in civil society, and thinking practically about next steps to help them build their resilience of their society.

Mr. SUOZZI. I would argue that more punishment is necessary and we need to do more. But at the same time, recognizing what some of my colleagues said, we don't want a war. We don't want to destroy Russia because, you know, we don't want more chaos. We want them to be stable. But they have to know they can't mess with us like this.

Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

Mr. Espaillat of New York.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Engel for hosting this overdue briefing. I also want to thank the witnesses for their expert testimony.

Though I will admit that this is not the briefing that I think we should be having. In fact, I am convinced that my constituents and the American people want a hearing about who enabled the Russians to interfere with our democracy and our electoral process. They really want to know did our Attorney General meet with Russian, with the Russian Ambassador during the past election and what for.

They may also want to know did members of the President Trump's campaign team meet with the Russians and for what reasons did they do that? Or did the President himself meet with the Russian Ambassador during or prior to his campaign and for what? Did anyone collude, conspire, or enable the Russians to break the

law and influence the results of our election? I think that is what the American people want to know.

Disinformation is certainly an issue, and one that we see in the U.S. as well. Putin has Russia Today and Trump has Breitbart. As an American, I am mortified to learn that a foreign government with a history of hostility has committed criminal acts to undermine the cornerstone of who we are as a nation, our democracy. I echo my Democratic colleagues because I don't think that we can overstate this, that we need a 9/11-style commission. We need a sanctions response. DOJ needs to appoint a special prosecutor, one that, unlike the Attorney General, is independent, with no links associated with Russia.

I have some questions and I would appreciate if you can just give me a yes or no answer because I think they are critical to the content of what I have just explained.

My first question is, do any of you know how many meetings took place between Russian officials and former Trump campaign officials that are now part of the Trump administration? Mr. President?

President ILVES. No.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Ambassador?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. No.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Doran?

Mr. DORAN. None.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Ambassador?

Ambassador BAER. No.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. My second question is do you know if any of Trumps campaign officials and/or associates met with Russians during the past election? Mr. President?

President ILVES. No.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Ambassador?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. No.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Doran?

Mr. DORAN. None.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Ambassador?

Ambassador BAER. No.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. And finally, do you know if President Trump himself, as it was reported recently in the news, met with the Russian Ambassador at any time prior or during his campaign? Mr. President?

President ILVES. No.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Ambassador?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. No.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Doran?

Mr. DORAN. No.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Ambassador?

Ambassador BAER. No.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Well, these are questions that we must have answers to. I believe very strongly that this crisis is as serious as the Cuban Missile Crisis. There may not be any missiles involved in this, but there is a clear attempt to undermine and destroy our democracy. And during the Cuban Missile Crisis you had two major figures. You had Nikita Khrushchev, who allegedly pounded his shoe at the U.N. Plenary Session in 1960. And, of course, Vladimir

Putin has a different approach, his passive-aggressive approach. He may not pound his shoe but his intent is to dismantle and discredit our democracy.

The other great figure in that debate was President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, who I think outflanked the former Soviet Union and avoided a nuclear holocaust. And, of course, our President is no Jack Kennedy.

But this is a serious crisis, as serious as the Cuban Missile Crisis. And we need to know who enabled the Russians to hijack our democratic process. This is something that we must do. And I hope that we can convene another hearing where we will be able to subpoena, if necessary, Mr. Chairman, the folks that may have the answer to these questions that this distinguished panel could not answer.

I want to thank the panel for their expert testimony. But I think at the core of this debate is the American public's need to know who tried to hijack our democracy. We need those answers. And we need to bring a group of witnesses here and, if necessary, to subpoena them to come in and give us the answers to those critical questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We go to Norma Torres of California.

Ms. TORRES. Thank you very much, Chairman Royce. And thank you for working together with Ranking Member Engel to bring us together to talk about one of what I hope to be the first hearings on how Russia interfered in our election. I certainly hope that this dialog will continue.

The hour is late and I want to thank, you know, everyone who is here, our panelists. I thank you for being so patient with all of us.

I truly believe that we need to more fully understand how Russia interfered in our election. Russian intelligence accessed elements of multiple state and local electoral boards. Since early 2014, Russian intelligence has researched U.S. electoral processes and related technology and equipment. I feel like we are speaking in two different languages because much of that information has been kept, you know, under lock and key in a very classified room. But our electorate, our voters need to know what happened.

And that is why I will join my colleagues in calling on an independent fact finding investigation, a commission of some sort, something like the 9/11 Commission. It doesn't have to be specifically that. But we need to figure out how did Russian agents, whether working, you know, with one or more than one campaign, how did they interfere in our election? We need the Department of Justice to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate.

Ambassador Baer, in your testimony you state that we need a comprehensive independent review of what occurred. And I wanted to talk a little bit about what that review board will look like and what sort of questions could be asked and what sort of fact finding information we should be looking for?

For instance, should such a review include questions about the extent to which our state electoral boards were compromised? We know that the FBI provided some support to our secretaries of

state. We know that in a couple of cases they have also sent a team of half a dozen or a dozen investigators to look at exactly how that data was or was not manipulated. Can you comment on that?

What could we task this non-partisan commission to work? And what should be our priority? Should our priority be the DNC personal emails? Or should our priority be protecting our electoral elections for future elections?

Ambassador BAER. Thank you, Congresswoman, for the question.

I think my answer to the question would be that if I were designing the mandate for an independent commission of some sort I would make it relatively broad. Because I think part of what we don't know is what we don't know. And I think you want to give the commission the ability to direct their investigatory efforts, their fact finding efforts, and to redirect that as they learn more about what has happened. And I think the focus should be on foreign, and at this point particularly Russian, efforts to undermine the integrity of our elections, either through the manipulation of the public sphere or through technical means.

I think one of the things that has come out—and I worked very closely with the National Association of Secretaries of State during the run-up to our elections because the OSCE actually sends people to learn about how good elections, to observe our elections and see how they work—you know, one of the things we saw is that a number of state election boards had had cyber incidents. The fact that the United States has a very decentralized system of running, managing the actual counting, et cetera, of ballots makes us actually fairly well-defended against a massive cyberattack against our electoral system.

I think at this point, from what we know and the conclusion of our intel community, the bulk of the influence operation was aimed at the issues that we have been discussing today in terms of hacking and disinformation. But I wouldn't think——

Ms. TORRES. Well, we also know that they spent a lot of resources in learning about the different types of electoral systems across the U.S. So given that we know that, what kind of expertise is needed for such a board to be able to conduct that type of information research?

Ambassador BAER. I think we would, I think if I were designing it, again, I would give it a broad mandate. I would hope to have a mix of expertise on the board. And I would give the board latitude to bring in additional expertise as needed as the work proceeds. Because I think you want to make sure that if we are going to go through this, which will necessarily have resource costs as well as political costs—let's be realistic—you want to make sure that it has the best chance of success, where success is, as Assistant Secretary Bloomfield said, something that will contribute to the progress and the integrity of our democracy going forward and enable the American citizens to have confidence in that.

Ms. TORRES. Thank you. My time has expired. I yield back and hope to continue this conversation with all of you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We go now to Mr. Ted Lieu of California.

Mr. LIEU. Thank you, Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel for holding this hearing.

I think for many Americans Russia is confusing because there are so many things going on. So I thought it would be helpful to just boil it down to just three things.

We do know that Russia launched a massive cyberattack last year and influence campaign to undermine faith in the U.S. democracy, help Trump win, hurt Secretary Clinton. It is an unclassified intelligence report that anybody can go on Google and read.

I read the classified intelligence report. I went to classified briefings. I can say from my perspective as a computer science major there is clear and convincing evidence to support the conclusions of the unclassified report. So, we have the Russian attack on America.

The second thing we have is we have now these numerous covert meetings between Trump campaign officials and the Russians that they had lied about having. And, Ambassador Bloomfield, I did read the Rolling Stone article. It is true there is a lot of smoke. We don't know what was said in those meetings. It is possible in all these secret meetings they were talking about the lovely weather in America. It is possible they were not.

The third thing we do know is we also, perhaps, have a motive for why there would be collusion which has to do with massive global business holdings of the President of the United States. He may have business holdings in Russia. Why do we not know if he does or doesn't? Because he doesn't release his tax returns. That is deeply disturbing.

When the framers of the Constitution set up our constitution they set put in Article 1, Section 9, Clause 8, called the Emoluments Clause that says you can't have foreign conflicts of interest that result in payments or gifts because they viewed foreign influence as one of the greatest dangers to our republic.

So, Ambassador Baer, I want to ask you, when you were Ambassador and had these 50 different countries, were you ever worried about the President's business interests or what other interests the President might have in relation to those countries?

Ambassador BAER. I only served as Ambassador under President Obama. And I had no concerns about President Obama's business interests.

Mr. LIEU. If you were Ambassador today would you find it concerning if the current President of the United States had massive undisclosed business interests in Russia?

Ambassador BAER. I think it is in the interest of the President of the United States to have as much confidence as possible from the American people. And I think the release of tax returns is something that past Presidents have done uniformly in an effort to demonstrate the transparency and the sincerity of their commitment to the tasks of the office rather than to any other interests.

Mr. LIEU. Thank you. I have always believed that where there is smoke there is fire. And there is a lot of smoke right now, which is why I join my colleagues in a call for a 9/11-style bipartisan commission to look at the Trump/Russia ties.

I also join my colleague, who is a Republican from San Diego, as well as other colleagues here who are Democrats, in calling for a special prosecutor.

Something else that happened this last weekend that I find enormously, deeply disturbing. President Trump, who has access to the

highest levels of intelligence, told the American public that Trump Tower was wiretapped. What that means is that U.S. intelligence officials believe that agents of a foreign power were at Trump Tower. It also means an independent FISA court judge, appointed by Chief Justice Roberts, sat there, reviewed the evidence, and concluded there was probable cause to believe agents of a foreign power were at Trump Tower. That is what Donald Trump's tweet means.

So I take President Trump at his word. And I join Senator Lindsey Graham in requesting investigations and documents into this issue because the American public needs to know why would U.S. officials and an independent judge believe there were agents of a foreign power at Trump Tower. So this issue of collusion is so threatening to our republic we can't just sort of hide this under the rug.

And it also has real life and death consequences. Just today we learned that the President of the United States, with no debate in Congress, sent additional conventional ground troops to Syria to help assault a city, Raqqa. This is a huge escalation of the war in Syria now that we are using conventional ground forces.

What if these U.S. troops run into the Russians? What is our policy? What are we going to do? What is our end stake in Syria where there are Russians sitting there who have a different view than in the U.S.? This measure in particular has no strategy. So not only do we have possible collusions, we have actions that are going to directly confront Russia. And it is time for the President and this administration to come clean.

I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. I want to thank all of our witnesses for their excellent testimony today. There is a strong consensus that Russia is aggressively seeking to undermine Western democracies. We have critical European elections coming up. It is essential that we must be as effective as possible working to counter these Russian efforts, and this must be done in unison with our allies.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, we will continue working on reforming our international broadcasting efforts. Bad information must be combated with accurate information.

Many concerns were expressed about Russian meddling in our 2016 Presidential elections. This is an established fact. We are all concerned about Russia's past, current, and future efforts. Our democracy is under attack and needs to be aggressively protected. We all agree that is absolutely essential.

That is why the Speaker of the House has tasked the House Intelligence Committee to continue its investigation of Russian meddling, including contacts with individuals associated with political campaigns. This is a bipartisan investigation. The chairman is a Republican, the ranking member is a Democrat. It is an investigation by a committee that will have access to highly classified material. It will hear from administration officials. Importantly, it will meet in public session. It will meet in public session later this month. And it will issue a report.

This committee will continue its focus on Russia and its aggression.

I thank the ranking member and, again, I thank the witnesses for their time.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:25 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Record

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Edward R. Royce (R-CA), Chairman

March 9, 2017

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Thursday, March 9, 2017

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: Undermining Democratic Institutions and Splintering NATO: Russian Disinformation Aims

WITNESSES: His Excellency Toomas Hendrik Ilves
(Former President of the Republic of Estonia)

The Honorable Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr.
Chairman Emeritus and Distinguished Fellow
The Stimson Center
(Former Assistant Secretary for Political Military Affairs, U.S. Department of State)

Mr. Peter B. Doran
Executive Vice President
Center for European Policy Analysis

The Honorable Daniel Baer
(Former U.S. Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe)

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day *Thursday* Date *3/9/2017* Room *2172*

Starting Time *10:05* Ending Time *1:25*

Recesses [*0*] (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Edward R. Royce, Rep. Scott Perry

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]

Electronically Recorded (taped) [✓]
Stenographic Record [✓]

TITLE OF HEARING:

Undermining Democratic Institutions and Splintering NATO: Russian Disinformation Aims

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

See attached.

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

none

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [✓] No [ ]
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

IFR - Mr. Peter Doran
IFR - Rep. Scott Perry
IFR - Rep. Brad Sherman
IFR - Rep. Thomas Garrett
IFR - Rep. David Cicilline
SFR - Rep. Gerald Connolly
QFR - Rep. Ann Wagner

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *1:25*

Full Committee Hearing Coordinator

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

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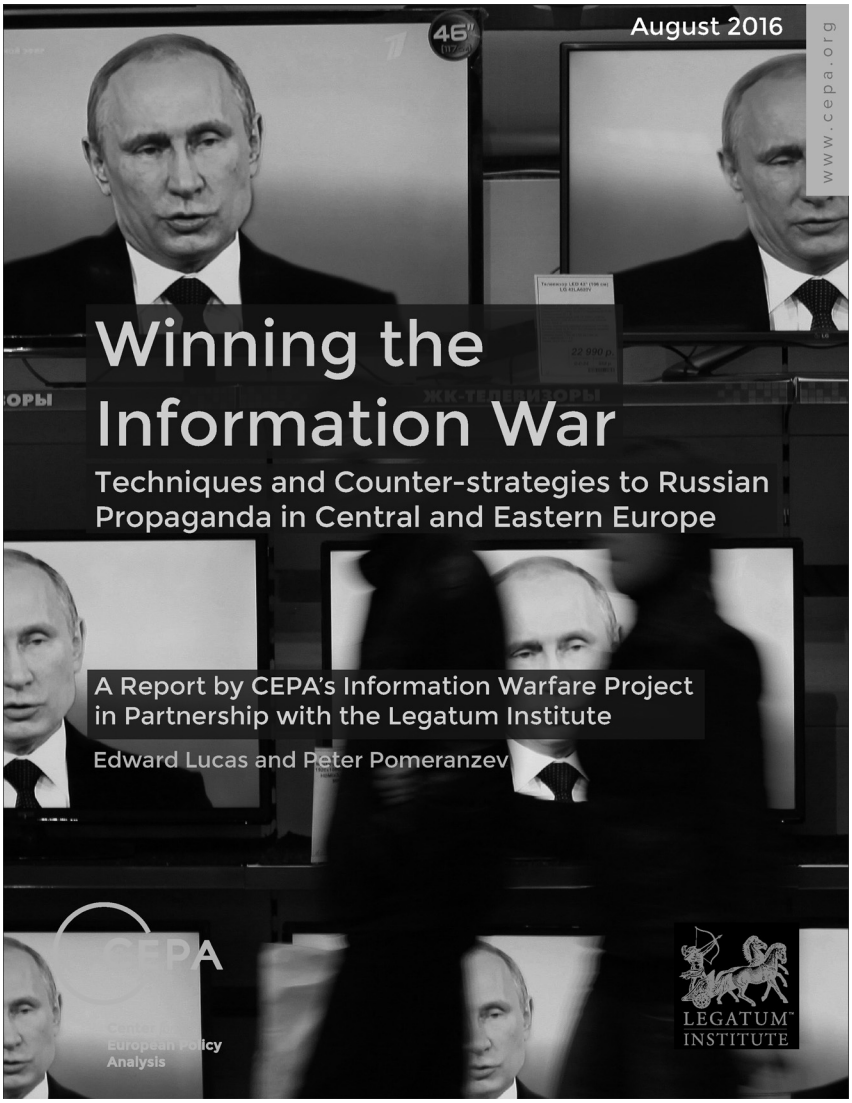
MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY MR. PETER B. DORAN, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CENTER FOR EUROPEAN POLICY ANALYSIS



Acknowledgments

This report, "Winning the Information War: Techniques and Counter-Strategies in Russian Propaganda," is produced under the auspices of the Center for European Policy Analysis' (CEPA) Information Warfare Initiative. Co-authored by CEPA Senior Vice President **Edward Lucas** and Legatum Institute Senior Fellow **Peter Pomerantsev**, it is part of an ongoing effort at CEPA to monitor, collate, analyze, rebut and expose Russian propaganda in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Previous publications in this series provided an analytical foundation for evaluating the methods and aims of Russian propaganda. This report extends that research, examining how Russian propaganda is being employed across the CEE region, the perils it presents and actionable counter-strategies for addressing it.

In preparing this report, the authors conducted an extended assessment of the existing record of Russian, English and Baltic language literature on the subject of information warfare. They solicited written inputs from, and conducted interviews with, members of the scholarly, academic and expert community who are investigating specific dimensions of Russia's "new" propaganda. Additionally, the authors solicited written and conceptual inputs through practitioner workshops with CEE media specialist, area experts and journalists – individuals who are on the frontlines of the Western response to Russian disinformation campaigns.

Special recognition is owed to the invaluable contributions of **Anne Applebaum** (CEPA and Legatum Institute), **Paul Copeland**, **Marina Denysenko** (Ukrainian Institute in London), **Peter Doran** (CEPA), **Vasily Gatov** (USC Annenberg), **Michal Harmata** (CEPA), **Sanita Jemberga** (Baltic Centre for Investigative Journalism), **Andis Kudors** (Centre for East European Policy Studies in Riga), **Ben Nimmo** (Institute for Statecraft), **Wiktor Ostrowski** (Krzyżowa Academy), **Alistair Shawcross** (Legatum Institute), **Hanna Shelest** (UA: Ukraine Analytica), **Ivana Smoleňová** (Prague Security Studies Institute), **Virgis Valentinavičius** (Mykolas Romeris University), **Magda Walter** (UK-based media consultant) and **Kazimierz Wóycicki** (Krzyżowa Academy). Finally, the authors would like to thank the invaluable inputs and insight provided by the monitors and media experts at CEPA's Information Warfare Initiative, including **Dalia Bankauskaite, Urve Eslas, Martins Kaprans** and **Andrzej Poczobut.**

Edward Lucas and Peter Pomerantsev

Contributors support the thrust of the report, though not necessarily every recommendation. They are not responsible for the opinions expressed throughout this document. Institutional affiliations are for purposes of identification only. The opinions stated in this report do not necessarily represent the position or views of the Center for European Policy Analysis or the Legatum Institute.

Recommendations

The Russian government uses disinformation, incitement to violence and hate speech to destroy trust, sap morale, degrade the information space, erode public discourse and increase partisanship. Our ability to respond is constrained by the mainstream media's loss of reach and impact. Its myth-busting and fact-checking reaches only a limited audience—and probably not the one the Kremlin is targeting. The response involves a contradiction: our approach must be tailored to different audiences, yet must also seek to build trust between polarized groups.

Our recommendations include tactical, strategic and long-term priorities, targeted partly at Kremlin disinformation and also aiming to strengthen media in democracies and educate audiences.

1) Systematic analysis

Currently, no dedicated agency or systematic effort analyzes the effect of Russian (or any other) disinformation. Who really watches RT? Where? For how long? And why? Nor do we have the means to systematically track the content: How does the Kremlin's message in Germany differ from the line in Sweden or Poland? Our case studies, combined with an ongoing effort at CEPA to identify and monitor Russian propaganda in parts of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) show the variety of Russia's means and messaging. But the lack of a coherent picture constrains our ability to respond in both quantitative and qualitative terms. We recommend:

- Regular, targeted analysis of the reach and impact of Russian propaganda;
- Greater analysis of the CEE media environment to detect disinformation campaigns and understand what sources shape public awareness; and
- Monitoring of social media, identifying trends and personalities that are popular among polarized social groups and who could be engaged to build trust.

2) Ensuring media quality. Even with the strongest free-speech protection, broadcast media is regulated (for example with rules on nudity) and criminals and terrorists are kept off the airwaves. Political advertising, correcting mistakes and the boundaries of hate speech may also be regulated. However many non-EU frontline states have weak or inexperienced regulators. **An international commission under the auspices of the Council of Europe** on the lines of the Venice Commission—which monitors adherence to the rule of law and democratic standards—could **advise fledgling regulators**, ensuring their independence and help communicate their decisions, and **act as a broadcasting badge of quality.** If an official body cannot be created, then an NGO could play a similar advisory role.

3) New agencies, new cooperation. Some are calling for the reconstruction of the U.S. Information Agency. A bipartisan bill co-sponsored by Senators Chris Murphy and Rob Portman calls for the creation of an **interagency** 'Center for Information Analysis and Response.'[I, II] In Europe, Jakub Janda of the European Values think tank argues for strategic communications departments throughout the EU.[III] In any case, Western governments need to find a constructive way to interact with media and NGOs, fostering a community of transnational critical inquiry and trust.[IV] Governments should show more willingness to share evidence of financial crimes, video of covert military operations and audio intercepts.

4) Deconstruct disinformation. A counterpart to organizations such as Global Witness, Transparency International and the OCCRP could **investigate** Russian (and other) disinformation and hybrid campaigns and **myth-bust** for key audiences who are receptive to fact-based argument. It could use technology to automate fact-checking and troll-busting, educate media professionals and provide "disinformation ratings" to call out those media outlets which have fallen victim to (or collude in) Russian propaganda attacks.[v]

5) A working group on historical trauma. One of the most effective Kremlin propaganda themes exploits the heroic legacy of World War II. This employs false syllogisms, such as "Stalin fought the Nazis, therefore everyone who fought Stalin was a Nazi," and then links these to the present: "Everyone who opposes Russia now is a fascist." A working group of psychologists, historians, sociologists and media specialists should create an "ideas factory" to develop ways of approaching historical and psychological trauma and highlighting other narratives.[vi]

6) Targeted interaction. Facebook technology is already used to try to deradicalize far-right extremists and jihadists.[vii] Similar initiatives should be undertaken with those who have fallen victim to Kremlin propaganda.

7) Reinvent public broadcasting. In a fragmented media landscape, a strong, independent public broadcaster could grow to be the most trusted medium available, not only **setting journalistic standards** but also **engaging in social and civic issues** on the lines of Ukrainian broadcaster Hromadske.

8) Bloggers' charter/exchanges. Signatories would signal their adherence to ethical standards, qualifying for exchange programs between core Western and frontline states to create transnational communities of trust and critical inquiry.

9) Russian-language content factory. Viewers in Ukraine, the Baltics and the Caucasus tune into Kremlin TV because it is glossier and more entertaining. Britain's Foreign Office has commissioned the BBC to develop a blueprint for a "content factory" to help EU Association and Baltic countries create new Russian-language entertainment programming. Other donors should support this initiative.

10) A Russian-language news wire/hub. No Russian-language outlet provides consistently reliable and comprehensive news. The European Endowment for Democracy suggests a proto-news agency for news outlets across the region. Free Press Unlimited, a Dutch media development organization, received a grant from its government to develop a cooperative Russian-language independent regional news agency.[viii] This initiative should be encouraged and further supported.

11) Estonia's Russian-language public broadcaster. With a budget of a few million dollars, Estonia's Russian-language public broadcaster ETV+ focuses on town-hall and talk-show type programming to help disenfranchised audiences feel understood. It deserves further support: Estonia is a unique opportunity to pilot initiatives that can be replicated in trickier environments such as Moldova or Ukraine.

12) Media literacy. Educating media consumers to spot disinformation is an important long-term priority. Pilot projects in Ukraine, notably by IREX, have broken new ground both in the techniques used, and in reaching beyond academic environments. Future media-literacy projects should use both online and broadcast media channels.

13) Advertising boycotts. Western advertisers finance channels that carry hate speech and demonize LGBT communities while Western production companies sell entertainment content. A sustained campaign is needed to pressure them to shun such clients and business.

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INTRODUCTION

Russia's use of information as a weapon is not new, but the sophistication and intensity are increasing. Belatedly, the West has begun to realize that disinformation poses a serious threat to the United States and its European allies, primarily the "frontline states"—Poland, the Baltic states, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Ukraine—but also to Western Europe and North America. Across the Western world, the Kremlin promotes conspiratorial discourse and uses disinformation to pollute the information space, increase polarization and undermine democratic debate. Russia's actions accelerate the declining confidence in international alliances and organizations, public institutions and mainstream media.

The Information Warfare Initiative at the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) analyzes the impact of Russian disinformation by drawing on dozens of case studies, both those directly commissioned by the authors and those made available by allied organizations. This paper synthesizes those works and analyzes the tools of Russian information warfare—overt propaganda channels such as RT, proxies disguised as mainstream media outlets and social media—as well as the political forces, civil society actors, businesses and public figures who use them. It also looks at several examples of Russian policies which have been enacted using disinformation: Specific interventions in decision-making (such as seeding fear of Western institutions and alliances (Lithuania); fomenting insurrection (eastern Ukraine); general denigration of a country's international reputation (Latvia); the development of native pro-Kremlin media (the Czech Republic and Estonia); and support for far-right and ultranationalist movements and sentiments (Poland).

Note: The entire report is not reprinted here but may be found on the Internet at: http://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=105674

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE SCOTT PERRY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY INSTITUTE

FROM RUSSIA WITH MONEY

Hillary Clinton, the Russian Reset, and Cronyism

www.g-a-i.org

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Executive Summary

- A major technology transfer component of the Russian reset overseen by Hillary Clinton substantially enhanced the Russian military's technological capabilities, according to both the FBI and the U.S. Army.
- Russian government officials and American corporations participated in the technology transfer project overseen by Hillary Clinton's State Department that funnelled tens of millions of dollars to the Clinton Foundation.
- A Putin-connected Russian government fund transferred $35 million to a small company with Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman John Podesta on its executive board, which included senior Russian officials.
- John Podesta failed to reveal, as required by law on his federal financial disclosures, his membership on the board of this offshore company.
- Podesta also headed up a think tank which wrote favorably about the Russian reset while apparently receiving millions from Kremlin-linked Russian oligarchs via an offshore LLC.

Note: The entire report is not reprinted here but may be found on the Internet at: http://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=105674

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE BRAD SHERMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Reported Meetings between President Donald Trump, colleagues, and Russian Officials

February 14, 2017

Trump campaign aides reportedly had multiple contacts with Russian intelligence officials.

Phone records and intercepted calls collected by American law enforcement and intelligence agencies during investigations of Russian involvement in the hacking of the Democratic National Committee show that members of Trump's 2016 presidential campaign and other associates were in repeated contact with senior Russian intelligence officials the year before the elections.

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/14/us/politics/russia-intelligence-communications-trump.html?_r=1

February 19, 2017

Michael D. Cohen, Trump's personal lawyer, worked with representatives of Ukraine and Russia to propose a peace plan.

One week prior to the resignation of national security adviser Michael Flynn, a lawyer of President Trump's, Michael D. Cohen reportedly hand-delivered a sealed document to his office, which outlined a method for Trump to lift sanctions against Russia. This effort was made in coordination between Michael Cohen, Felix H. Sater, a business associate who has helped Trump secure deals in Russia and Andrii V. Artemenko, a Ukrainian lawmaker trying to gain momentum in a political opposition movement.

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/19/us/politics/donald-trump-ukraine-russia.html

February 23, 2017

Paul Manafort may have been the victim of blackmail while serving as Donald Trump's presidential campaign chair.

An alleged cyber hack of Paul Manafort's daughter suggests that he may have been blackmailed while serving as President Donald Trump's campaign chairman. The communications recovered from the iPhone of Manafort's daughter include a text coming from the personal number of a Ukrainian parliamentarian named Serhiy Leshchenko, attempting to get a hold of her father regarding politically damaging information about Manafort and Trump.

http://www.politico.com/story/2017/02/paul-manafort-blackmail-russia-trump-235275

March 1, 2017

Attorney General Jeff Sessions reportedly met with the Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak in July and September 2016.

U.S. Justice Department officials stated that then Senator Jeff Sessions (R-Alabama) met with Sergey Kislyak, Russian ambassador to the U.S. twice in 2016. Sessions did not disclose these encounters when asked about possible contacts between members of President Trump's campaign and representatives of Moscow during his confirmation hearing for U.S. Attorney General.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/sessions-spoke-twice-with-russian-ambassador-during-trumps-presidential-campaign-justice-officials-say/2017/03/01/77205eda-feac-11e6-99b4-9e613afeb09f_story.html?utm_term=.d3e34a9660aa

March 2, 2017

Carter Page met with Ambassador Kislyak at the GOP convention in July 2016.

Russian ambassador Sergey Kislyak met with then Senator Jeff Sessions and two of President Trump's other campaign advisers (including oil industry consultant Carter Page) during the GOP convention last summer. Page, who was reportedly an unpaid foreign policy advisor to Trump at the time, had a conversation with the ambassador at the same luncheon in Cleveland, where Sessions and Kislyak chatted according to J.D. Gordon, a national security advisor to Trump who was also present at the lunch.

http://www.politico.com/story/2017/03/carter-page-russian-ambassador-meeting-235626

March 2, 2017

Flynn and Kushner met with Ambassador Sergey Kislyak in December 2016.

The Trump Administration announced that Michael Flynn, then President Trump's incoming national security advisor had a previously undisclosed meeting with Russian ambassador Sergey Kislyak in December to 'establish a line of communication' between the Russian government and the new administration. Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, now senior adviser also participated in the meeting which took place at Trump Tower.

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/02/us/politics/kushner-flynn-sessions-russia.html?_r=0

March 7, 2017

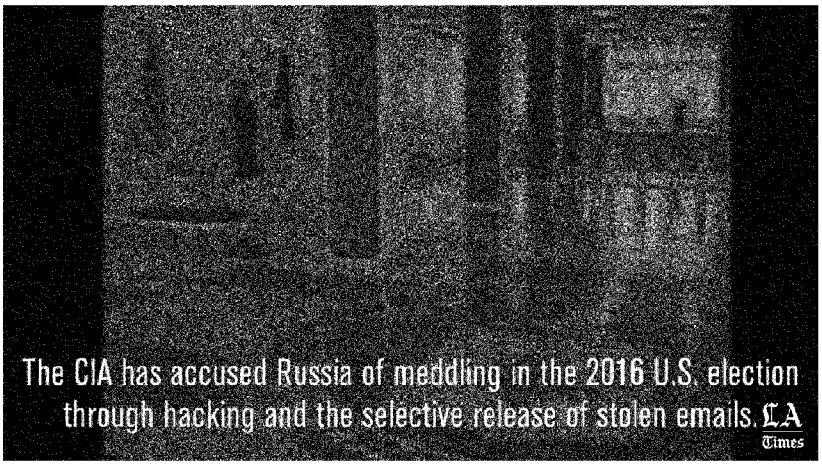
President Donald Trump reportedly met with the Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak on April 27, 2016

Evidence shows that President Donald Trump personally met with Russian ambassador on April 27, 2016 before giving an invite-only foreign policy speech where he called for better relations with Russia. This information surfaced despite President Trump's repeated claims that he had no contact with Russian officials as a presidential candidate.

https://thinkprogress.org/trump-personally-met-with-russian-ambassador-during-campaign-cc59ac305032#.959gro9j4

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE THOMAS A. GARRETT, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

The U.S. is no stranger to interfering in the elections of other countries



One professor's database cites 81 attempts by the United States to influence elections in other countries, notably in Iran, Guatemala and Chile.

By Nina Agrawal

DECEMBER 21, 2016, 2:45 AM

Update: President Obama on Thursday slapped Russia with new penalties for meddling in the U.S. presidential election, kicking out dozens of suspected spies and imposing banking restrictions on five people and four organizations the administration says were involved.

The CIA has accused Russia of interfering in the 2016 presidential election by hacking into Democratic and Republican computer networks and selectively releasing emails. But critics might point out the U.S. has done similar things.

The U.S. has a long history of attempting to influence presidential elections in other countries – it's done so as many as 81 times between 1946 and 2000, according to a database amassed by political scientist Dov Levin of Carnegie Mellon University.

That number doesn't include military coups and regime change efforts following the election of candidates the U.S. didn't like, notably those in Iran, Guatemala and Chile. Nor does it include general assistance with the electoral process, such as election monitoring.

Levin defines intervention as "a costly act which is designed to determine the election results [in favor of] one of the two sides." These acts, carried out in secret two-thirds of the time, include funding the election campaigns of specific parties, disseminating misinformation or propaganda, training locals of only one side in various campaigning or get-out-the-vote techniques, helping one side design their campaign materials, making public pronouncements or threats in favor of or against a candidate, and providing or withdrawing foreign aid.

In 59% of these cases, the side that received assistance came to power, although Levin estimates the average effect of "partisan electoral interventions" to be only about a 3% increase in vote share.

The U.S. hasn't been the only one trying to interfere in other countries' elections, according to Levin's data. Russia attempted to sway 36 foreign elections from the end of World War II to the turn of the century – meaning that, in total, at least one of the two great powers of the 20th century intervened in about 1 of every 9 competitive, national-level executive elections in that time period.

Italy's 1948 general election is an early example of a race where U.S. actions probably influenced the outcome.

"We threw everything, including the kitchen sink" at helping the Christian Democrats beat the Communists in Italy, said Levin, including covertly delivering "bags of money" to cover campaign expenses, sending experts to help run the campaign, subsidizing "pork" projects like land reclamation, and threatening publicly to end U.S. aid to Italy if the Communists were elected.

Levin said that U.S. intervention probably played an important role in preventing a Communist Party victory, not just in 1948, but in seven subsequent Italian elections.

Throughout the Cold War, U.S. involvement in foreign elections was mainly motivated by the goal of containing communism, said Thomas Carothers, a foreign policy expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "The U.S. didn't want to see left-wing governments elected, and so it did engage fairly often in trying to influence elections in other countries," Carothers said.

This approach carried over into the immediate post-Soviet period.

In the 1990 Nicaragua elections, the CIA leaked damaging information on alleged corruption by the Marxist Sandinistas to German newspapers, according to Levin. The opposition used those reports against the Sandinista candidate, Daniel Ortega. He lost to opposition candidate Violeta Chamorro.

In Czechoslovakia that same year, the U.S. provided training and campaign funding to Vaclav Havel's party and its Slovak affiliate as they planned for the country's first democratic election after its transition away from communism.

"The thinking was that we wanted to make sure communism was dead and buried," said Levin.

Even after that, the U.S. continued trying to influence elections in its favor.

In Haiti after the 1986 overthrow of dictator and U.S. ally Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, the CIA sought to support particular candidates and undermine Jean-Bertrande Aristide, a Roman Catholic priest and proponent of liberation theology. The New York Times reported in the 1990s that the CIA had on its payroll members of the military junta that would ultimately unseat Aristide after he was democratically elected in a landslide over Marc Bazin, a former World Bank official and finance minister favored by the U.S.

The U.S. also attempted to sway Russian elections. In 1996, with the presidency of Boris Yeltsin and the Russian economy flailing, President Clinton endorsed a $10.2-billion loan from the International Monetary Fund linked to privatization, trade liberalization and other measures that would move Russia toward a capitalist economy. Yeltsin used the loan to bolster his popular support, telling voters that only he had the reformist credentials to secure such loans, according to media reports at the time. He used the money, in part, for social spending before the election, including payment of back wages and pensions.

In the Middle East, the U.S. has aimed to bolster candidates who could further the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. In 1996, seeking to fulfill the legacy of assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the peace accords the U.S. brokered, Clinton openly supported Shimon Peres, convening a peace summit in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el Sheik to boost his popular support and inviting him to a meeting at the White House a month before the election.

"We were persuaded that if [Likud candidate Benjamin] Netanyahu were elected, the peace process would be closed for the season," said Aaron David Miller, who worked at the State Department at the time.

In 1999, in a more subtle effort to sway the election, top Clinton strategists, including James Carville, were sent to advise Labor candidate Ehud Barak in the election against Netanyahu.

In Yugoslavia, the U.S. and NATO had long sought to cut off Serbian nationalist and Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic from the international system through economic sanctions and military action. In 2000, the U.S. spent millions of dollars in aid for political parties, campaign costs and independent media. Funding and broadcast equipment provided to the media arms of the opposition were a decisive factor in electing opposition candidate Vojislav Kostunica as Yugoslav president, according to Levin. "If it wouldn't have been for overt intervention ... Milosevic would have been very likely to have won another term," he said.

nina.agrawal@latimes.com

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ALSO

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE DAVID CICILLINE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Background to "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections": The Analytic Process and Cyber Incident Attribution

6 January 2017

Background to "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections": The Analytic Process and Cyber Incident Attribution

"Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections" is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment that has been provided to the President and to recipients approved by the President.

- The Intelligence Community rarely can publicly reveal the full extent of its knowledge or the precise bases for its assessments, as the release of such information would reveal sensitive sources or methods and imperil the ability to collect critical foreign intelligence in the future.
- Thus, while the conclusions in the report are all reflected in the classified assessment, the declassified report does not and cannot include the full supporting information, including specific intelligence and sources and methods.

The Analytic Process

The mission of the Intelligence Community is to seek to reduce the uncertainty surrounding foreign activities, capabilities, or leaders' intentions. This objective is difficult to achieve when seeking to understand complex issues on which foreign actors go to extraordinary lengths to hide or obfuscate their activities.

- On these issues of great importance to US national security, the goal of intelligence analysis is to provide assessments to decisionmakers that are intellectually rigorous, objective, timely, and useful, and that adhere to tradecraft standards.
- The tradecraft standards for analytic products have been refined over the past ten years. These standards include describing sources (including their reliability and access to the information they provide), clearly expressing uncertainty, distinguishing between underlying information and analysts' judgments and assumptions, exploring alternatives, demonstrating relevance to the customer, using strong and transparent logic, and explaining change or consistency in judgments over time.
- Applying these standards helps ensure that the Intelligence Community provides US policymakers, warfighters, and operators with the best and most accurate insight, warning, and context, as well as potential opportunities to advance US national security.

Intelligence Community analysts integrate information from a wide range of sources, including human sources, technical collection, and open source information, and apply specialized skills and structured analytic tools to draw inferences informed by the data available, relevant past activity, and logic and reasoning to provide insight into what is happening and the prospects for the future.

- A critical part of the analyst's task is to explain uncertainties associated with major judgments based on the quantity and quality of the source material, information gaps, and the complexity of the issue.
- When Intelligence Community analysts use words such as "we assess" or "we judge," they are conveying an analytic assessment or judgment.
- Some analytic judgments are based directly on collected information; others rest on previous judgments, which serve as building blocks in rigorous analysis. In either type of judgment, the tradecraft standards outlined above ensure that analysts have an appropriate basis for the judgment.

- Intelligence Community judgments often include two important elements: judgments of how likely it is that something has happened or will happen (using terms such as "likely" or "unlikely") and confidence levels in those judgments (low, moderate, and high) that refer to the evidentiary basis, logic and reasoning, and precedents that underpin the judgments.

Determining Attribution in Cyber Incidents

The nature of cyberspace makes attribution of cyber operations difficult but not impossible. Every kind of cyber operation—malicious or not—leaves a trail. US Intelligence Community analysts use this information, their constantly growing knowledge base of previous events and known malicious actors, and their knowledge of how these malicious actors work and the tools that they use, to attempt to trace these operations back to their source. In every case, they apply the same tradecraft standards described in the Analytic Process above.

- Analysts consider a series of questions to assess how the information compares with existing knowledge and adjust their confidence in their judgments as appropriate to account for any alternative hypotheses and ambiguities.
- An assessment of attribution usually is not a simple statement of who conducted an operation, but rather a series of judgments that describe whether it was an isolated incident, who was the likely perpetrator, that perpetrator's possible motivations, and whether a foreign government had a role in ordering or leading the operation.

Note: The entire report is not reprinted here but may be found on the Internet at: http://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=105674

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE DAVID CICILLINE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

The Washington Post

Opinions

Republicans are becoming Russia's accomplices

By Robert Kagan March 6

It would have been impossible to imagine a year ago that the Republican Party's leaders would be effectively serving as enablers of Russian interference in this country's political system. Yet, astonishingly, that is the role the Republican Party is playing.

U.S. intelligence services have stated that the Russian government interfered in the 2016 presidential election with the intention of swinging it to one side. Knowing how cautious the intelligence community is in making such judgments, and given the significance of this particular finding, the evidence must be compelling. At the very least, any reasonable person would have to conclude that there is enough evidence to warrant a serious, wide-ranging and open investigation. Polls suggest that a majority of Americans would like to see such an investigation carried out.

It's important at this time of intense political conflict to remain focused on the most critical issue. Whether certain individuals met with Russian officials, and whether those meetings were significant, is secondary and can eventually be sorted out. The most important question concerns Russia's ability to manipulate U.S. elections. That is not a political issue. It is a national security issue. If the Russian government did interfere in the United States' electoral processes last year, then it has the capacity to do so in every election going forward. This is a powerful and dangerous weapon, more than warships or tanks or bombers. Neither Russia nor any potential adversary has the power to damage the U.S. political system with weapons of war. But by creating doubts about the validity, integrity and reliability of U.S. elections, it can shake that system to its foundations.

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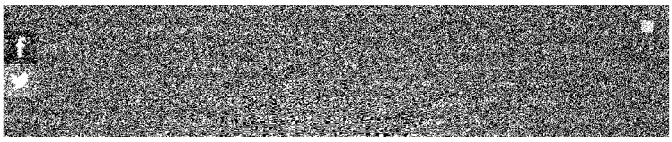

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The United States has not been the only victim. The argument by at least one former Obama administration official and others that last year's interference was understandable payback for past American policies is undermined by the fact that Russia is also interfering in the coming elections in France and Germany, and it has already interfered in Italy's recent referendum and in numerous other elections across Europe. Russia is deploying this weapon against as many democracies as it can to sap public confidence in democratic institutions.

The democracies are going to have to figure out how to respond. With U.S. congressional elections just 20 months away, it is essential to get a full picture of what the Russians did do and can do here, and soon. The longer the American people remain in the dark about Russian manipulations, the longer they will remain vulnerable to them. The longer Congress fails to inform itself, the longer it will be before it can take steps to meet the threat. Unfortunately, the present administration cannot be counted on to do so on its own.

There's no need to ask what Republicans would be doing if the shoe were on the other foot — if the Russians had intervened to help elect the Democratic nominee. They would be demanding a bipartisan select committee of Congress, or a congressionally mandated blue-ribbon panel of experts and senior statesmen with full subpoena powers to look into the matter. They would be insisting that, for reasons of national security alone, it was essential to determine what happened: what the Russians did, how they did it and how they could be prevented from doing it again. If that investigation found that certain American individuals had somehow participated in or facilitated the Russian operation, they would insist that such information be made public and that appropriate legal proceedings begin. And if the Democrats tried to slow-roll the investigations, to block the creation of select committees or outside panels, or to insist that investigations be confined to the intelligence committees whose inquiries and findings could be kept from the public, Republicans would accuse them of a coverup and of exposing the nation to further attacks. And they would be right.

But it is the Republicans who are covering up. The party's current leader, the president, questions the intelligence community's findings, motives and integrity. Republican leaders in Congress have opposed the creation of any special investigating committee, either inside or outside Congress. They have insisted that inquiries be conducted by the two intelligence committees. Yet the Republican chairman of the committee in the House has indicated that he sees no great urgency to the investigation and has even questioned the seriousness and validity of the accusations. The Republican chairman of the committee in the Senate has approached the task grudgingly. The result is that the investigations seem destined to move slowly, produce little information and provide even less to the public. It is hard not to conclude that this is precisely the intent of the Republican Party's leadership, both in the White House and Congress.

This approach not only is damaging to U.S. national security but also puts the Republican Party in an untenable position. When Republicans stand in the way of thorough, open and immediate investigations, they become Russia's accomplices after the fact. This is undoubtedly not their intent. No one in the party wants to help Russia harm the United States and its democratic institutions. But Republicans need to face the fact that by slowing down, limiting or otherwise hampering the fullest possible investigation into what happened, that is what they are doing.

It's time for the party to put national security above partisan interest. Republican leaders need to name a bipartisan select committee or create an outside panel, and they need to do so immediately. They must give that committee the mission and all the necessary means for getting to the bottom of what happened last year. And then they must begin to find ways to defend the nation against this new weapon that threatens to weaken American democracy. The stakes are far too high for politics as usual.

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Katrina vanden Heuvel: Neo-McCarthyite furor around Russia is counterproductive

Robert Kagan is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a contributing columnist for The Post. He served in the State Department from 1984 to 1988.

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The 2017 iHeartRadio Music Awards started with Justin Timberlake speaking about inclusion and dedicating his award to children who feel different, and ended with a rousing performance by Bruno Mars that included crowd participation from Florida Georgia Line, Thomas Rhett, Ty Dolla $ign, Heidi Klum and more.

Statement for the Record
Submitted by Mr. Connolly of Virginia

The scoping and titling of this hearing is a tortured version of what we were promised and what this committee should be examining, and one cannot help but draw the conclusion that this has been done to deflect attention away from the Trump Administration's unexplained ties to Russia. Each day there are more troubling revelations than the last that make clear senior-level Trump officials had undisclosed direct contact with Russian officials during the campaign and the transition. Even more concerning, each of these individuals was willing to obfuscate about those meetings. Congress must immediately launch an independent investigation into President Trump and his affiliates' murky ties to the Russian Government.

President Trump's former campaign chairman Paul Manafort is under investigation for doing business with Russians under surveillance by the National Security Agency for suspected links to Russia's Federal Security Service. General Michael Flynn discussed U.S. sanctions against Russia with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak before Trump's inauguration, lied about those conversations to Vice President Mike Pence, and was forced to resign his post as National Security Advisor after just three weeks on the job. And now, we have learned that Attorney General Jeff Sessions also met with Ambassador Kislyak during the presidential campaign and failed to disclose those meetings during his Senate confirmation hearing, potentially perjuring himself in the process and leading to his forced recusal from related Department of Justice (DOJ) Investigations. FBI Director James Comey has appealed to the DOJ to refute unsubstantiated claims made by the president that seemed to serve no purpose other than to muddy the waters and undermine the credibility of the Office of the President.

The Trump Administration's obscured ties to a hostile foreign power would be concerning enough on their own. However, they are particularly disturbing in light of Russia's deliberate interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election to aid Trump's victory, and Trump's failure to release his tax returns, which might shed light on his financial ties to Russia, and address his additional potential conflicts of interest. The need for an independent investigation into these matters is simply undeniable.

Fortunately, we already have legislation designed to do just that. The Protecting Our Democracy Act (H.R. 356), introduced by Representatives Swalwell and Cummings, would establish an independent commission to investigate Russian interference in our election. I was proud to be an original cosponsor of this bill, which has garnered 198 cosponsors so far. This legislation was referred solely to this committee, and we need to mark it up without delay.

On January 6, 2017, the U.S. Intelligence Community released an unclassified report detailing an unprecedented, deliberate, and multi-faceted campaign by Russia to interfere in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. The USIC assessed that Putin directed this interference not only to "undermine public faith in the U.S. democratic process," but also "to help President-elect Trump's election chances when possible by discrediting Secretary Clinton and publicly contrasting her unfavorably to him." That should trouble

every American. One of our most cherished institutions, democratic elections free of foreign interference, was attacked. Congress must come together in a bipartisan fashion to demonstrate that there is a cost to such attacks on American democratic institutions. This is about country not party.

Again, we already have legislation that would facilitate such a response. The SECURE Our Democracy Act (H.R. 530), legislation I was glad to introduce with Ranking Member Eliot Engel, would publicly identify and authorize sanctions against foreign persons and governments that unlawfully interfere in U.S. federal elections. Our legislation was referred to this committee, and we need to mark it up without delay.

More than three months ago, I led a letter with 15 members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee calling for a hearing into Russia's deliberate interference in our presidential election. I am glad that the Majority is finally holding a hearing that touches on this issue, but I am afraid that the focus of this hearing, as demonstrated by the title alone, is deeply out of sync with the imperative before us. Russian disinformation is merely a tool. The heart of the problem lies in Russia's criminal interference in our election to sow discord in democratic institutions, to help elect Donald Trump, and to undermine the liberal world order as we know it.

We must have absolute clarity about what Russia is doing and the challenges it poses to American interests. There are potential areas for U.S. cooperation with Russia, such as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and nuclear non-proliferation. However, Russia is not a status quo power, and Russian interests often diverge and even conflict with U.S. interests. The forcible and illegal annexation of Crimea and the Russian invasion into eastern Ukraine are disturbing reminders that Putin will foment violence and open conflict to subvert Western interests and coerce nations on Russia's periphery. It is troubling that we have a president who cannot or will not acknowledge these circumstances, and it is profoundly disturbing that we know not the extent to which he is beholden to financial or other interests in Russia.

This hearing is an important first step, but it is only the tip of the iceberg. It is our constitutional duty to provide oversight of the executive branch. In order to fulfill that duty, we must hear from Trump Administration officials directly on these matters. In the span of time it has taken for the Committee to respond to the Minority's request for a hearing, a thorough examination has only become more compelling as we continue to learn more about the troubling ties between Russia and Trump's associates. The only plausible resolution is an independent investigation into the Trump Administration's murky ties to Russia. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses regarding how Congress can bring to light that which so many in the Trump Administration seek to obscure.

Congresswoman Ann Wagner
HFAC Full Committee Hearing
Questions for the Record
March 9, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for organizing this hearing. I have a great deal of interest in the Balkans stemming from my time as the U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg, and Russia's role in the region is clearly concerning to all of us on both the political and security fronts.

1. During my time in Congress, I have been honored to represent the St. Louis Bosnian community, which constitutes the largest population of Bosnians outside of Bosnia. To whoever can best answer, can you discuss how Russian influence has contributed to political tensions in Bosnia?

Bloomfield: I claim no special expertise on Bosnian issues beyond what I have learned during a number visits both in and out of government during the past 15 years. So I defer to other panelists. It seems apparent that Vladimir Putin sees relations with the Republika Srpska President Milorad Dodik as a means to show that Russia has allies within Europe who support his annexation of Crimea and similar nationalist policies. Putin is reportedly unhappy that Serbia proper, Russia's historical ally, has been more accommodating to EU positions on economic and political issues, and positioning itself as a potential candidate to join NATO, although pro-Russian sentiment still remains resident within the Serbian population. By cultivating a solid relationship with Republika Srpska, Putin reflects a historic connection to the westernmost population following the Eastern Orthodox church. He also gains leverage on the EU countries by appearing to have the capacity to undermine continued progress under the fragile but still successful Dayton Accords that have allowed Bosnians to recover from conflict since 1995.

Doran: Thank you Congresswoman Wagner for the chance to answer your question for the record.

Americans are right to be worried about Russia's actions and ambitions in the Balkans. The tragic history of the Balkan region provides ample opportunities for Russian propaganda and influence. Perhaps the best example is the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. The Russian government certainly exploits this event for propaganda purposes. It is offered—falsely—as "proof" that the West harbors a wider-strategy to topple governments, break apart countries and redraw international borders. Russia's purpose here is to provide a false "Tu quoque" (i.e. "You too") comparison with the West; and it is often employed to justify the Kremlin's illegal annexation of Crimea.

Likewise, Russia exploits ethno-national grievances in the Balkans as a means of gaining influence with regional leaders or governments. As you and perhaps many of your Bosnian constituents know all too well, ethno-nationalism is a combustible concept. Bosnia suffered greatly as a target of virulent ethno-nationalism following the breakup of Yugoslavia. In the present time, the Kremlin aims to encourage ethno-nationalism as a "wedge issue" in the Balkans. Its purpose here is to divide Muslims and Christians in the region. When divided internally, the Kremlin can exert greater influence or pressure over a country.

Finally, as my CEPA colleague Janusz Bugajski has demonstrated in his recent book (Eurasian Disunion: Russia's Vulnerable Flanks), Russian propaganda spreads via outlets like "local media, Internet, and social networks to enhance Moscow's position and undermine Western institutions or to discredit local politicians who favor NATO and the US....Strident messages are intended to appeal to anti-globalist, euroskeptic, anti-American, ultra-conservative, and religious orthodox constituencies in which Russia poses as the defender of traditional values and the EU and US are depicted as deviant and immoral." This is a potent concoction when deployed in regions like the Balkans. Russian propaganda therefore requires a more coordinated governmental and societal approach to counter-messaging, myth-busting, and the offering of alternative—truthful—narratives in regions like the Balkans.

Baer: Thank you, Congresswoman, for the important question about Russia's role in contributing to political tensions in Bosnia.

First, I want to acknowledge that the origin of St. Louis Bosnian community is a great example of America's tradition of welcoming those in need, and of these newcomers adopting America as their home and becoming part of the fabric of our great nation. St. Louis is not in the top 25 largest cities in the U.S., but it managed to welcome tens of thousands of people in need of sanctuary in the 1990s. St. Louis has a big heart; and that example is one that you and the St. Louis community should be proud of.

I think in order to understand Russia's role in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we must first acknowledge that Russia plays a destabilizing role in the entire Balkans region. Why? Russia wants Europe to fail, and knows that the Balkans is one of the most fragile regions on the European continent. Trouble in the Balkans is trouble for Europe, and Putin sees this as way of exerting influence. Even the countries with which Putin feigns a kind of Slavic solidarity—most obviously Serbia—find themselves manipulated by Putin. Second, Putin's own nationalism—which he uses to distract people from his failings as a leader at home—is helped by stoking nationalism elsewhere. Obviously, nationalism has been at the root of so much tragedy and suffering in the Balkans (and elsewhere) over the last century and it remains a poison in the region today.

The most obvious way in which Russia contributes to political tensions in Bosnia is by fanning the flames of Serbian nationalism and encouraging the leader of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, to do likewise. Putin's meetings with Dodik make Putin look silly, but they encourage Dodik to challenge the post-Dayton arrangement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including with the counterproductive referendum last September.

While Putin's efforts have certainly contributed to instability and retarded growth in Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere (recall the many steps Russia has taken to try to undermine Montenegro's NATO ambitions, including intervention in the recent Montenegrin elections), we must also recognize that the leaders in the region have not made the progress they need to in cracking down on corruption and laying the groundwork for multi-ethnic societies. They too must do more—their people deserve it and the future of the region depends on it.

2. Clearly, much of the Turkish public does not view Russia kindly. But with the signing of the Moscow Declaration, ties between Erdogan and Putin have grown visibly stronger. Ambassador Bloomfield, or others, can you please discuss Russian attempts to undermine Turkish democracy and delegitimize NATO within Turkey?

Bloomfield: As with the previous question, others will have deeper expertise; however, the advantages to Russia of this warming of ties between Putin and Erdogan are many, and they directly impact US interests: 1) in light of its seizure of the Georgian ports of Batumi and Poti in 2008, followed by the 2014 invasion and claimed annexation of Crimea in Ukraine with its port of Sevastopol, Russian military seapower has secured major benefits from positive relations with Turkey, as this can ease the access of maritime forces through Turkish-controlled straits to the eastern Mediterranean, where a Russian carrier has been supporting the war effort in Syria and Russian forces have been utilizing the Syrian port of Tartus; 2) given the high tactical value of US and NATO access to Turkish military facilities including Incirlik Airbase, Russia has a strong incentive to poison Turkey's relations with the US and the West and thereby inflict a major wound on the NATO alliance; 3) by perpetuating Bashar al Assad's regime despite UN-sanctioned efforts to negotiate a power transition in Damascus, Putin obviously hopes that large numbers of desperate Syrian civilians will continue to flee to Europe, destabilizing the politics in several countries as the issue of immigration undermines EU and NATO cohesion; and 4) finally, with all of these actions, Putin is giving the citizens of Russia and people in the western democracies the appearance that he is an influential world statesman while the United States is no longer the leading diplomatic actor on the world stage.

3. Ambassador Bloomfield, big question, but can you very briefly discuss U.S. strategic concerns with trilateral coordination on Syria between Russia, Iran, and Turkey?

Bloomfield: Thank you for the question; I will try. The concerns with Turkey, other than those described in the previous answer, mainly concern its deep opposition to the Syrian Kurdish forces who are contributing to the fight against Daesh/ISIS in eastern Syria. Turkey sees the Syrian Kurds as being linked to the Kurdistan Worker's Party or PKK, which Turkey has long outlawed as a terrorist organization. The US military sees significant value in working closely with the Syrian Kurdish forces near Raqqa, but recognizes that Turkey will react badly if these forces operate too close to the border with Turkey. The US is torn between its desire to arm these Kurdish forces in order to accelerate the fight against Daesh/ISIS and the potential that Turkey could withdraw very important support to US military forces including basing privileges.

Russia is a second complicating factor for the US. Under the previous Administration, Secretary of State Kerry cultivated a relationship with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to solicit Russian cooperation in supporting a ceasefire in Syria and entry of humanitarian aid to war-torn areas. The disadvantage of cooperating in this way with Russia diplomatically is that it implies that the US is not serious about holding Russia accountable for its invasion and occupation of Crimea, its continued meddling in eastern Ukraine, and mounting threats to the Baltic states among others. It also suggests that the US is indifferent to the war crimes for which, according to many credible observers, Russia bears responsibility. According to a February 2017 report by The Atlantic Council, these include active participation in many of the more than 170

documented attacks on hospitals and medical facilities across Syria (nearly half in Aleppo) in 2016 alone, in clear violation of the Geneva Conventions.

Should the Trump Administration seek an understanding with Russia relating to ending the Syria crisis, there are likely to be several issues on which Mr. Putin's interest differs from the US interest: Putin wants to keep Bashar al Assad in power despite his culpability for crimes against humanity; Putin wants to see continued refugee flows to Europe, although stopping the exodus and permitting relief and recovery for Syrian civilians would be a prime object of any US-led effort to stabilize Syria. A third issue – Iran's role in Syria – should probably be at the top of the Administration's list as a priority to be addressed. Without Iranian support, Assad cannot remain in office, and his departure would in turn undermine Hizballah's ability to threaten Israel, and might even weaken the fundamentalist regime's grip on power in Tehran. Many top US diplomatic and military experts on the Syria crisis are united in their belief that success in the war against Daesh/ISIS will be facilitated, not hindered, with Assad no longer in power and his Iranian patrons unable to resupply their own forces and proxy militias as well as mercenary fighters.

Can the US pursue such an approach in Syria with even tacit Russian consent, a policy that would put pressure on the Iranian presence, expose Iranian plundering of mineral rights, telecom licenses, etc., belonging to the Syrian people, and demand their departure? "Pushing back" on Iran's destabilizing role in Syria (which has no bearing on the P5+1 nuclear agreement) may be the acid test of Russia's seriousness about taking action against extreme fundamentalism in the Muslim world. Realistically, Putin has lucrative contracts with Syria and Iran; he profits from the Syrian refugee crisis impacting the West; he would welcome the opportunity to split Turkey from the US and NATO. One has to wonder what Russia's leader would gain from a successful UN-led political transition process giving Syrians an opportunity to recover and pursue constitutional government. These considerations could well stand in the way of meaningful Russian cooperation with the Trump Administration, in Syria or elsewhere.

4. President Ilves, you've been a leader in the digital modernization of Estonia and I hear you are slated to lend your experience on ICT and security to Stanford as a visiting fellow this year. Given Estonia's position on the front lines of Russian cyber warfare, what lessons or recommendations can you share with us on improving U.S. cyber security?

Ilves: The most essential element is to ensure that people dealing with even slightly sensitive data or issues possess a secure digital identity. Almost all "hacking" is accomplished by accessing a server with a fake identity. Meaning if your password is stolen, someone else can access anything that you can. Step one is to provide or require secure identities, verifiable through 2-factor authentication. That, however, is only the start. For a much fuller answer, I append relevant excerpts from a talk I recently gave at Stanford on the fundamentals of developing a safe and secure internet.

(Continued on following page)

Why you need a digital identity (excerpts)
Talk by Toomas Hendrik Ilves

(...)
Co-chairing the editorial board of the World Bank's annual Development Report 2016, devoted to digitization and entitled *Digital Dividends*, it became clear that in virtually every aspect of digitization, it was the non-digital: policy decisions, regulations and legal frameworks that determined how a country develops digitally.

All of this becomes far more important as, on the one hand we see exponential development and proliferation of digital solutions, and on the other hand, the exponential *abuse* of it. As economies and countries become increasingly digital, the threats increase as well. Consider these developments in the 21st digital century.

- Digital industrial espionage, that now is carried out on a scale unimaginable before the digital revolution, a threat greatest to industrial leaders (US, Germany, Japan), but even in Estonia ten years ago, Skype's research and development headquarters was receiving 35K probes per day. Companies have seen years of highly confidential research simply sucked out of their servers.
- The use of Distributed Denial of Service and locked down sites, also known popularly as *ransom-ware* to extort money from private companies, in some cases even hospitals.
- Data theft and its use in political manipulation or the electoral process, as already mentioned earlier, with no sign of abatement.
- Data corruption/manipulation, better known as the problem of Data Integrity. While most public attention has been focused on privacy, or someone seeing your data, the key issue is and will increasingly be illegally *changing data*. This is an existential issue for banking, financial markets, stock exchanges etc, as well as fin-tech obviously. Yet as we move into IoT (Internet of things) data integrity will be existential for all of modern industry as well as our citizens.

As our lives become increasingly digital, we need to rethink solutions that worked in the early days of digital communication and the internet. Old solutions that worked when the internet was not yet the Hobbesian wilderness it has become, need to be rethought. This paper is a brief look at some of the fundamental issues that need to be solved, with reference to Estonia, which began to deal with some of the foundations already at the turn of the Millennium.

Identity

Security – or its absence – in the borderless digital world is ultimately an issue of do you know with whom you are communicating, or more importantly, who is trying to communicate with you, or to be precise, who is trying to talk to your server, your email account, your data base?

To understand security in the digital world, the most fundamental issue is to understand how a computer or server is hacked: it is transgressed using a fake identity. Someone has gotten into a computer system, a server, you by fooling it to believe the intruder to be a trusted, known, authorized source.

Imagine your apartment doorbell ringing. You check on the intercom and a familiar voice answers and you let him or her in. But it is not the person you have recognized but someone who has fooled you into letting him into the apartment house, say, with a recording of someone saying "hello, it's Tom". The intruder may not even be interested in *your* apartment, and most likely is not, at least in the digital world. The guy at the doorbell or the hacker at the server just wants to get into the apartment building or the computer system. This is the essence of hacking: one way or another an intruder gets into the system and then proceeds to go after what he wants.

There are many ways to get into your computer. Brute force hacking, if you have a powerful enough can figure out your password, at least if you use the standard security of an email address and a password.

Or, there is the spear-fishing attack: you get a mail from an ostensibly legitimate company – your bank, Paypal, in my case on a regular basis from Apple, usually saying something such as there is a problem with an account so please log in. These you can spot my looking at the actual email. They never look like the address you would expect from the company you know. This by the way is how John Podesta, Hillary Clinton's campaign manager was hacked.

There are more devious and sinister ways as well: A foreign government picks out from a government ministry's homepage a secretary working there, finds the secretary's Facebook page and discovers that she has sister whose daughter is the favorite niece of the secretary. The foreign government easily hacks the secretary's sister's e-mail, sends the secretary a photo of her favorite niece; the secretary, believing her sister has sent it, downloads the photo file, which actually contains a key-stroke reader. In a matter of days, as people e-mail to each other the key-stroke reader is passed from computer to computer throughout the ministry. And soon the ministry's mails are being read by a hostile power. Or data bases are hacked, secrets stolen. This by the way, actually happened.

All this came about from trusting untrustworthy identities.

The need for a secure digital identity

The first, and unfortunately most difficult step in moving toward a more secure digital environment is agreeing to use a secure identity system. The most ubiquitous, universally used system throughout governments, the private sector and in personal communication, used since the late 1970s is, as I mentioned, the familiar and today unfortunately almost useless system: e-mail address and a password

username@domain name dot top-level domain (i.e. John.Smith@Googlemail.com) that is then "verified" by a string of letters, numbers and characters called a "password".

This system worked rather well when three to four thousand academics at universities used Bitnet to communicate between universities. Today, however, 3.5 *billion* people are on the internet.
Some of you may recall that then Vice-President Gore coined the term, "The Information highway". Today that highway has millions of lanes and 3 and half million cars, and all but a few

of them have no license plate. Imagine then what the internet looks like all of these billions of unidentified cars, driving, crashing, cutting you off with impunity.

With all of the sophisticated hacking of the past decade, this is no way for even a private citizen to do on-line purchases, let alone for government to be run. Computers can try all kinds of combinations to hack into your email account.

For any country, government, private company or organization, the fundamental issue of on-line security is how to guarantee *identity*: Secure online identity will determine whether a country moves fully into the digital age or not. One could go further: if the problem of secure on-line identity is left unsolved, breaches, hacks and doxing will lead to failures, thefts and disruption of an unimaginable scale.

Currently, the bare minimum *sine qua non* of security in digital communications is *two-factor* authorization. For an entity – be it a person, an agency, or a company sales department, to communicate with others, two separate inputs must be authenticated to prove that the entity in question is genuinely who it says it is. It could be a unique chip, mounted on a card or in a phone, that must match a code or a biometric signature, verified by an independent body. Other forms include verification of a transaction on one device (e.g. a lap-top) by notification requiring an additional input sent to a different device (e.g. a mobile phone). The key is authentication via two alternative sources.

Stanford uses 2-factor identification, though in Estonia we call it 1.5 factor. As you know, when you log in you are sent a corroborating SMS with a code. This is a common system today, used by banks, g-mail and others. Unfortunately, as we know from numerous cases, SMS-s are hackable. A mobile phone is simply not secure.

But it does raise the threshold. David Sanger of the NY Times reported at a conference recently that of the 128 accounts on the DNC server hacked by the Russians, all but two used 2-factor ID. The hack into the system came from one of the persons not using 2-factor identification to get into the server.

Public Key Infrastructure (PKI)

This, however, is not enough. Two-factor authentication is a weak step forward if the communication channels themselves are compromised. At least one of the identification sources must be secured through Public Key Infrastructure or PKI, the encryption method whereby each user has a private and a public encryption key, which for the next several years will remain the most secure form of encryption.

Japan and the EU have understood this and are moving ahead to create secure digital identities. Japan has *My Number,* the EU, the e-IDAS directive[1] on trusted electronic identities. Secure digital IDs have existed for a quarter century, the underlying technology is hardly new, but their implementation unfortunately has required legal and policy decisions made only recently (with

[1] See https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/trust-services-and-eid, accessed 12.02.2017

exceptions as in Estonia). The UK, US, Canada, Australia, NZ on the other hand have all balked at an e-ID, something that left uncorrected, will have long-term consequences in digital competition.

A secure electronic ID not only allows security for electronic communication but also allows for other useful ID functions. In Estonia, for example virtually all medical prescriptions are done online: the doctor enters the prescription for a patient requiring medicine in a the computer with his own secure e-ID. The patient then can go to any pharmacy in the country, identify himself with his ID card and pin and retrieve his medicine. This is especially useful when a patient needs his prescription renewed. Simply calling or e-mailing his doctor, who then renews the prescription, the patient need only go to the pharmacy to pick it up.

These benefits of secure communication and digital identification are a step in the right direction, but to create a digital society a simple two factor e-ID is not enough. In order for a digital identity to have genuine benefits it needs to have legal efficacy; that is to say, it needs to be equivalent to a legal signature. This expands the role of a secure ID from assurance to a contract.

One can have secure communications of course without a legal signature yet since a digital identity is already a guarantee of identity, why not extent its functionality? If we want to take full advantage of the possibilities afforded by a secure identity, then any transaction that in the non-digital world requires a signature – bank transfers, signing contracts, allowing a doctor access to your medical records – becomes possible in the digital world.

Creating legal efficacy

This, though, means the signature needs to be tied to the legal system, which can be done through the national registry. That is, for a legal transaction to be valid in the digital world a country, (or in federated systems, a state) needs to maintain a citizen registry that can be used uniquely identify a person. This is done already by the state when in the physical world you are asked to provide a driver's license, student ID or a passport to verify you are you. An entity – the motor vehicle bureau, a university or the state vouches for your identity.

The logical step is to bring this vouchsafing process we are accustomed to in the physical world to the digital world. The government guarantees you are you digitally, not with visual inspection of a plastic card or passport. Nations and states do maintain registries of drivers' license holders, social insurance benefit recipients, (i.e. social security or social insurance numbers), and passport holders. Yet for in many countries this would seem a step too far. It would seem to represent a significant change in the way governments work and their responsibility to the citizen. And it is, if done right.

Unfortunately, many countries, especially the "English-speaking" countries, (which, as the "Five Eyes" ,paradoxically also share intelligence information as an intelligence alliance) the idea of an e-ID tied to a national registry is anathema. However, this is not as significant departure in the role of the government as it seems. In addition to social insurance cards and drivers licenses used domestically in countries, governments for a century already have issued government IDs in the form of the passport. Historically only a century old in general usage, tha passport is a

document stating you are a citizen of that a particular country and that that country's national government vouches for your identity. It allows you to cross the border to another state that then recognizes you to be legitimately there (sometimes a visa issued by the receiving country adds to this verification). Returning home you need to show your passport to your own officials the ensure you are a legitimate resident of your home country.

Thinking of guaranteed identities as passports for crossing borders is a useful way to grasp the nature of a legal e-ID. Up to now, governments *guaranteed* passport-holder's physical identity. In the digital era, borders disappear. In the physical world you can generally be sure the person you are speaking with is that person. A passport is sufficient for identification at banks. In the borderless digital world it could just as well be someone on the other side of the globe, or even just a local criminal impersonating someone, a company, a bank.

The absence of any physical borders, or officially guaranteed physical ID (e.g. drivers license, passport, notarized document) you cannot be sure of any transaction or interaction in cyber-space. This also works both ways. The bank, the company or your healthcare giver cannot be sure either that you are who you say you are.

To get around this, each identity-dependent – bank, government office, on-line store, has its own identification procedures: passwords, code cards, a three digit CVC code on the back of a credit card. None of which is as secure as a two-factor authorization. Private companies such as Google and Facebook do offer a digital identity and two-factor authorization but there is no guarantee the person behind the digital identity are who they say they are.

As a service, a government guaranteed digital identity will give you security if it is necessary, but for the development of a wide range of digital services simply offering an identity is not enough. To achieve genuine digitization, however, in the private as well as public sectors, the digital ID in whatever form it takes (chip, biometric) will have to be **mandatory, universal** and based on **Public Key Infrastructure (PKI).**

An e-ID needs to be mandatory and universal because the without it, uptake of use will not generate its use either in public or private sectors. A low level of use is insufficient to foster development of services. In countries that have adopted an e-ID as a voluntary option, adoption ranges between 15 and 25 percent, which is insufficient motivation for either companies or government agencies to develop the use of the ID in services. If 75 to 85 percent of the population does not have a digital identity, the cost of developing a product seems to outweigh remaining in a paper world.

Estonia opted for a mandatory e-ID for all residents of Estonia over the age of 15; infants receive an e-ID at birth. The result is 100% coverage; in services such as taxation, digital prescriptions and banking use is almost. Contracts are routinely signed digitally. Some 350 million digital signatures have been given and 520 million digital identifications have been made with 1.3 million ID cards.

E-IDs will remain for a while, the sole *general* basis of security in the digital world.

Distributed Data Exchange

Once we have a robust identity system, the task is to decentralize data bases. If we take as an analogy a castle surrounded by a moat, then a strong digital identity prevents a breach, but if this is overcome, i.e. one gains entry to the castle, everything is open to attack, theft or corruption.

Estonia has a decentralized data exchange system called *X-Road*. An e-ID grants entry *only* to the data associated with that ID; others are permitted only through a user agreement. For example a patient may authorize a different doctor than his or her personal physician to access the patients data, but no one else other than the patient himself or patient authorized personnel are permitted to do so. The data for each person is isolated from all others and blanket requests to an entire data base are neither allowed or even possible. In other words, even if one ID is compromised, the hacker cannot access any other person's data. All data exchanges between data bases are encrypted.[2]

Integrity

Data integrity is increasingly the fundamental concern of the internet. The public, as well as parliaments and governments worry primarily about privacy – someone may find something out about somebody – especially after the revelation of Edward Snowden. The nightmare for digitization of any data, however, is data integrity. To put it in concrete terms: you may be annoyed or irate if someone accesses your healthcare data and finds out what your blood type is, but if they change your blood type or other entries in your health care record, the results could be fatal.

Data integrity has become *the* fundamental concern of the digital era. The Stuxnet worm was the first widely-known case of a crucial and critical case of data integrity manipulation. Computers controlling centrifuges functioned exactly as they should have but the input data were manipulated, leading the centrifuges to spin out of control. The same kind of data manipulation, tampering with data in SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) systems can disrupt or cripple our critical infrastructure. Moreover, the integrity of financial sector and stock market records, as well as virtually all other critical data bases are the new nightmare worry. What if someone wipes out or changes a bank's records, or the records of a stock market?

The response for maintaining data base integrity is **blockchain** or **data ledger technology** where a distributed data base is continuously verified and ordered in blocks, making illegal changes in data impossible. Banks and the financial sector are, as would be expected in an increasingly digital world leading the move to integrity. In the public sector Estonia is a leader protecting the integrity of national healthcare records, property and legal case registries. You do not want your public records being changed by unauthorized entities. Just as you do not want your financial records changed by a hostile power or a criminal group.

[2] For a description of X-road, see https://www.ria.ee/en/introduction-to-xroad-part1.html

International political/security considerations

As we have seen in the past several years, hacking into computers with the goal of manipulating the democratic process is our new worry, at least in the democratic world with free and fair elections, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and with the rule of law. An authoritarian government that does not follow the principles of liberal democracy, does not, of course need to worry about disruptions of this type. "Doxing" or publishing hacked materials with the goal of embarrassing or discrediting a candidate in a democratic election has no effect in societies without free and fair elections where the regime exercises censorship and repression to deal with unfavorable material. Thus authoritarian governments can disrupt democratic elections but democracies cannot, even if they wished to, disrupt pseudo-elections in a regime that censors its media. In other words, democratic countries face an *asymmetric threat.*

In a world with authoritarian and liberal democratic governments, each with radically different notions of what the state may or may not do to do with its own citizens, with what constitutes a democracy and, as we have seen, what is considered acceptable in cross-border relations, we need to move on to a far more robust system of defense of our democracy.

In cyberspace there are no geographical regions that could constitute an alliance or legal space like NATO or the EU. Geographically based alliances such as NATO are geographical because of kinetic threats: artillery range, bomber range, logistical support. In the digital world distance becomes irrelevant. Since these new threats are no longer geographical, we need to begin thinking of some kind of non-geographic digital alliance, this time based on commonly shared values and a common set of rules. These include common standards, practices backed by treaties that would enable democracies to defend themselves, regardless of where on the planet they are. In case of cyber-aggression, these countries will also require previously agreed upon common rules of engagement.

Today this is an issue we have not yet addressed. Yet as we see more and more democracies come under attack, we need to begin thinking about it already now.

Conclusion

This brief overview of the fundamental issues and problems that need to be addressed in order to create a safe and secure digital society, beginning with identity and ending with defense of democracy, to I return to the proposition that while technology is digital, the solution is analog. All of the challenges outlined here revolve around digital technology, yes. Yet how we solve these challenges is almost always a decision of policy and regulation, backed up by law. Do governments have the courage to provide digital identities to all? To make the e-ID mandatory? To tie the identity to a national data base and through that to the legal system? Will democratic societies have the will to create a digital alliance to thwart attacks on the democratic process?

While some solutions, such a distributed data exchange layer like X-road or maintaining data integrity via block-chain tend toward the technical side, even these require policy decisions and regulations, which are not digital. This is the challenge: to build our digital societies, we require analog courage and effort.

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