

up dictators and human rights abusers, including Iran and Syria, and has been widely proven to have interfered in our elections and the elections of our allies in Europe.

If this report is indeed true, it would mean that the President may have badly damaged our national security, nothing less, and in several ways. First, the act of a disclosure of this type could threaten the United States' relationships with allies that provide us with vital intelligence and could result in the loss of this specific intelligence source.

We rely on intelligence from our allies to keep America safe. America can't have eyes and ears everywhere. If our allies abroad can't trust us to keep sensitive information close to the vest, they may no longer share it with us. That undermines key relationships and, even more importantly, makes us less safe.

Second, if accurate, such a disclosure could damage our interests in the Middle East. We do not collaborate with Russia in Syria or elsewhere in the Middle East for the simple fact that we have diverging interests. Russia, for example, has worked with Iran to prop up the brutal Assad regime. Sharing vital intelligence with Russian officials could allow the Russians to pursue or even possibly eliminate the source or figure out how the ally conducts operations, including any against Russia or Russia's allies in the region.

Third, if the report is true, the President's alleged carelessness with classified information will further damage the relationship between the White House and the intelligence community—an essential relationship for the security of America. The intelligence community needs to be able to trust the President and trust that he will treat classified information with caution and with care. Our intelligence professionals put their lives on the line every day to acquire information that is critical to our national security and critical to keeping Americans safe. They have done a very good job.

If the reporting is accurate, in one fell swoop, the President could have unsettled our allies, emboldened our adversaries, endangered our military and intelligence officers the world over, and exposed our Nation to greater risk.

Given the gravity of the matter, we need to be able to quickly assess whether this report is true and what exactly was said. So I am calling on the White House to make the transcript of the meeting with the Russian Foreign Minister and Ambassador available to the congressional Intelligence Committees as soon as possible. The White House should make the transcript of the meeting available immediately to the congressional Intelligence Committees. If the President has nothing to hide, he should direct that the transcript of the meeting be made available.

The Members who sit on those committees have the necessary clearances

to review the transcript and any related summary of the President's meeting with the Russians. I agree with the senior Senator from Maine that this briefing should happen immediately. Those committees would be able to help establish the facts before we grapple with the potential consequences.

Last night, the administration issued several overlapping denials. Some questioned the overall veracity of the account. Some took pains to specifically deny certain accusations but not others. This morning, the President tweeted a version of events that undercut his advisers' carefully worded denials and seems to confirm the reports that he had shared the information in question.

Following so closely after Mr. Comey's firing, which was rationalized to the press and the American public in several different ways over the course of a week, this administration now faces a crisis of credibility. The President has told us that we cannot take at face value the explanations of some of his key advisers, but the events of the past week have taken this to an untenable extreme. The timelines and rationales in the administration contradict one another. The truth, as it were, sits atop shifting sands in this administration.

We need the transcripts to see exactly what the President said, given the conflicting reports from the people in the room. Producing the transcripts is the only way for this administration to categorically prove the reports untrue.

Mr. President, there is a crisis of credibility in this administration which will hurt us in ways almost too numerous to elaborate. At the top of the list is an erosion of trust in the Presidency and trust in America by our friends and allies. The President owes the intelligence community, the American people, and the Congress a full explanation. The transcripts, in my view, are a necessary first step. Until the administration provides the unedited transcript, until the administration fully explains the facts of this case, the American people will rightly doubt if their President can handle our Nation's most closely kept secrets.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I noted yesterday that this week we celebrate National Police Week. In particular, we recognize and remember those law enforcement officers who have paid the ultimate price and sacrificed their lives to protect the communities in which they serve. Yesterday, I had the chance to speak about Javier Vega, Jr., a Border Patrol agent who served in South Texas and was tragically killed by two illegal immigrant criminals.

Today, I want to talk about the attack on law enforcement officers in Dallas almost a year ago. Last July, about 800 people gathered in downtown

Dallas for a peaceful march. Given the size of the event, dozens of law enforcement officers were on hand to protect the protesters so they could exercise their fundamental constitutional right. Before 9 p.m., the event had been going very well, by any standard. There wasn't any violence reported in the crowd, even though some similar events across the country hadn't been as calm. But in Dallas, it was clear that there existed a mutual respect between the citizens protesting and law enforcement. There were even social media posts of protesters embracing police officers in a show of solidarity and friendship.

Unfortunately, the night would soon be robbed of any enduring image of that sort of positive scene. A man—someone who came that night explicitly to target law enforcement officers—opened fire, killing five officers and wounding seven more—the deadliest day for American law enforcement since 9/11. The officers who lost their lives that day—Brent Thompson, Patrick Zamarippa, Lorne Aherns, Michael Krol, and Michael Smith—will not be forgotten. They, like the other officers on duty that night—many of whom were injured by the gunmen—didn't look the other way or run the other way when the violence erupted. Like the heroes they are, they ran to the danger, not away from the gunshots and the uproar. They, like law enforcement officers across the country, weren't about to shy away from doing their job, even if that meant putting their own lives on the line.

So today, I want to commend the men and women of the Dallas police force, a group of men and women with incredible courage and unflinching valor in the face of danger. This Police Week I am particularly grateful to them and to the officers and first responders all over the State of Texas and all around our Nation who count the costs and choose to serve their communities day after day, often with little thanks or recognition.

As I said last summer, it shouldn't take an event of this scale to jolt our consciences into action. As legislators, we have tremendous opportunities to better support our men and women in blue who risk their lives to protect ours. We have a duty to do all we can to keep them safe and to keep our society safe and peaceful. So as we celebrate Police Week, I hope we can each do our part to better support the men and women serving in law enforcement.

Later today, Mr. President, I plan to introduce a piece of legislation called the Back the Blue Act, along with Senator CRUZ and Senator TILLIS. This is legislation that makes clear our support for these public servants who spend their lives protecting us and serving us. The Back the Blue Act would create a new Federal crime for killing or attempting to kill a Federal judge, a law enforcement officer, or a federally funded public safety officer.

It would create a new crime for assaulting a law enforcement officer, as well.

There is no justification—none at all—for attacking a police officer. It is an act of anarchy to attack the very people who help keep our society safe and protected.

We need to know and need to show that we value their lives, and we need to make it absolutely clear that we will hold those who carry out crimes against our police officers accountable. The Back the Blue Act sends that message loud and clear.

I think it is important to point out that this legislation would also help make our communities stronger by allowing grant funds to be used for efforts to help foster more trust between police and the communities they protect. This bill would better serve the men and women who work tirelessly in our communities every day. So I would hope our colleagues would join me in supporting it.

We can do more to protect and support our law enforcement officers, and we can start with the Back the Blue Act to do just exactly that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I would like to commemorate National Police Week and the lives and sacrifices of two extraordinary Massachusetts law enforcement officers who fell in 2016: Thomas Clardy, a trooper with the Massachusetts State Police, and Ronald Tarantino, a police officer with the Auburn Police Department. Their names will be inscribed on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial here in Washington, DC, in honor of their service.

By the end of this year, more than 21,000 names will be on that wall. We will never forget their service and sacrifice to our communities and to our country. With the help of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, we pledge to their families and loved ones that they will have the support and resources they need.

FIRING OF JAMES COMEY

Mr. President, I rise to speak about President Trump's firing of FBI Director James Comey. In and of itself, this action by President Trump is seismic and has shaken the very foundation of our government and, I dare say, of our democracy. But just yesterday, the American people were also once again confronted by Presidential actions that raised both alarm and the need for investigation. In a new story, the Washington Post reported that President Trump revealed highly sensitive classified material to senior Russian officials during a meeting last week. According to the Post story, President Trump reportedly revealed information about ISIS that could compromise a partner country's key intelligence sources and enable Russia to, according to the story, "identify our sources and techniques" for gathering intelligence.

There could be no greater compromise of American security. The information that President Trump revealed was so sensitive that the United States had previously refrained from sharing it even with our allies.

President Trump's decision to relay some of our most sensitive intelligence with representatives of the Russian Government betrays an astounding lack of judgment. By revealing what is called "code-word" information to Russia, President Trump may have compromised key intelligence sources, endangered the fight against ISIS, and undermined the trust of our international partners.

While the President may have the authority to declassify U.S. intelligence, it is imperative to the safety of our military and intelligence personnel and those of our partners that he do so through a careful and deliberative process. There is no evidence that Donald Trump did that.

Congress must immediately investigate this irresponsible action and take steps to ensure that President Trump does no additional damage to national security in his dealings with Russia. This dangerous behavior comes on the heels of the President's reckless decision to fire former FBI Director James Comey, pushing our country ever closer to a constitutional crisis. President Trump's firing of Mr. Comey is disturbingly reminiscent of Watergate's Saturday Night Massacre, when our Constitution was last subject to an executive-branch-induced stress test.

Then, President Nixon fired the independent prosecutor, Archibald Cox, who was leading the investigation into the Watergate scandal and the Nixon campaign's involvement in it. Now President Trump has fired his FBI Director, who was leading the investigation into the Russian interference scandal and the Trump campaign's involvement in it. Mark Twain is purported to have said that history doesn't repeat itself, but it does tend to rhyme. Unfortunately, there is no humor in President Trump's actions.

At first, we were supposed to believe that the President fired Director Comey because of the way he handled the investigation of Hillary Clinton's email server, which was unfair to her. That was what President Trump sent his staff out to tell the press and the American people. The official White House statement from Press Secretary Sean Spicer on May 9 said that President Trump acted based on the clear recommendation of both Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein and Attorney General Jeff Sessions. That was a reference to the now-infamous memorandum by Attorney General Sessions, prepared by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, which cited Comey's "handling of the conclusion of the investigation of Secretary Clinton's emails" as the reason why the public purportedly had lost confidence in the FBI and on which Attorney General Sessions based his recommendation to the President that he fire Mr. Comey.

On May 9, Counselor to the President Kellyanne Conway said that President Trump "took the recommendation of his Deputy Attorney General, who oversees the FBI Director." Then on May 10, Deputy White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said that the President "took the recommendation seriously. And he made a decision based on that." Even Vice President PENCE said that President Trump's decision to fire Comey was based on the Rosenstein memo.

So the American people were being told to believe that President Trump took the unprecedented step of firing the FBI Director in the midst of an investigation of the Trump campaign because James Comey was too hard on Hillary Clinton. That simply didn't pass the laugh test. Who can forget that Candidate Trump repeatedly called her "crooked Hillary Clinton" throughout the campaign? Who can forget that Candidate Trump applauded Director Comey for the way he handled the Clinton investigation? At the end of October 2016, just days before the election and after Comey had reopened the Clinton email investigation, Trump said that Comey had "guts" and had "brought back his reputation."

But it took only 1 day after Mr. Comey's firing for President Trump himself to admit that reason was utterly false. In an interview President Trump said that Rosenstein "made a recommendation, but regardless of recommendation I was going to fire Comey, knowing there was no good time to do it."

So much for the Rosenstein memo. So much for the White House press statement. So much for what Kellyanne Conway said. So much for the words of the Vice President of the United States. If that admission wasn't enough, President Trump went on to tell everyone what was on his mind when he made that decision. Here is his quote:

And, in fact, when I decided to just do it, I said to myself, I said, "You know, this Russia thing with Trump and Russia is a made-up story. It's an excuse by the Democrats for having lost an election that they should have won."

President Trump's statements about the Russia investigation are, of course, untrue. There is nothing made up about the conclusion of the intelligence community that Russia interfered with our election. The allegations of the Trump campaign's collusion with the Russians are serious. That is why the FBI and the House and Senate Intelligence Committees have been investigating them.

So contrary to what White House senior administration officials and—the President, in fact, admitted that he fired the Director of the FBI precisely because he was overseeing an investigation of the Trump campaign and its ties to Russia. According to all of these various reports, the President did so just after Director Comey had gone to Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein