



Department of Justice

STATEMENT OF
BILL PRIESTAP
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
COUNTERINTELLIGENCE DIVISION
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

BEFORE THE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
UNITED STATES SENATE

FOR A HEARING ENTITLED
“ASSESSING RUSSIAN ACTIVITIES AND INTENTIONS
IN RECENT ELECTIONS”

PRESENTED

JUNE 21, 2017

**Statement of
Bill Priestap
Assistant Director
Counterintelligence Division
Federal Bureau of Investigation**

**Before the
Select Committee on Intelligence
United States Senate**

**For a Hearing Entitled
“Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent Elections”**

**Presented
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(U) Chairman Burr, Vice Chairman Warner, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the FBI’s contributions to the early 2017 Intelligence Community Assessment, or “ICA,” entitled “Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent Elections.”

(U) As the Committee is well aware, the ICA was a joint effort between the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the CIA, the National Security Agency (“NSA”), and the FBI, in collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) and other U.S. Government stakeholders. In light of the interagency nature of this product — consistent with interagency agreements on the ICA — I will speak only to portions of the ICA as to which the FBI made substantial contributions in sourcing or analysis. As the Committee and the American Public are aware, the full version of the ICA is highly classified and derived from exceptionally sensitive sources and methods. Nonetheless, I am pleased to be here today to discuss the unclassified version of the report and the FBI’s findings and contributions.

(U) Russia’s 2016 Presidential election influence effort was its boldest to date in the United States. Moscow employed a multi-faceted approach intended to undermine confidence in our democratic process. Russia’s activities included efforts to discredit Secretary Clinton and to publicly contrast her unfavorably with President Trump. This Russian effort included the weaponization of stolen cyber information, the use of Russia’s English-language state media as a strategic messaging platform, and the mobilization of social media bots and trolls to spread disinformation and amplify Russian messaging. The FBI has not made an assessment of any impact that the Russian activities might have had on the outcome of the 2016 election; instead, I am here to discuss Russia’s activities and the importance of combating them.

(U) The FBI’s direct contributions to the ICA included FBI collection and analysis that attributed cyberattacks against U.S. political institutions and state election infrastructure specifically to the Russian Intelligence Services. We also provided historic insight into prior Russian active

measures targeting our elections. The FBI was afforded access to our partners' collection to complete the ICA, access that we gladly reciprocated to ensure that the joint team drafting the report benefitted from the entire Intelligence Community's insights into these matters.

(U) One of the FBI's primary strengths in contributing to the ICA was our history investigating Russia's intelligence operations within the United States. As articulated in the ICA, reckoning with Russian efforts to influence our elections or political processes is not a new challenge.

(U) Traditionally, these influence efforts leveraged forged documents, newspaper placements, and other publications to smear candidates who advocated positions contrary to Russia's strategic interests. Following the Cold War, Russian intelligence efforts related to U.S. elections focused primarily on foreign intelligence collection intended to help Russian leaders understand a new Administration's plans and priorities.

(U) The FBI also brought insights and expertise to the ICA's judgments on Russian cyber activities. While I cannot, in this setting, discuss the FBI's sensitive sources and methods that underpinned our judgments, we welcome our continued engagement with the Committee and its staff on these matters in closed session. I will highlight the attribution to the Russian General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate ("GRU") of the cyber intrusions into the Democratic National Committee ("DNC") and the correlation of data exfiltrated from the DNC to the information later posted on DCLeaks.com.

(U) Beyond the specific scope of the ICA, I am pleased to be joined by my colleagues from DHS, with whom we closely collaborated in the run-up to the election to protect our voting infrastructure and ensure American confidence in our election. Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.