



Chairman Nunes Opening Statement
Open Hearing on Investigation of Russian Active Measures
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

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The Putin regime has a long history of aggressive actions against other countries, including the outright invasion of two of its neighbors in recent years as well as its brutal military action in Syria to defend the Assad regime. But its hostile acts take many forms aside from direct military assaults.

For example, the Kremlin is waging an international disinformation campaign through the RT propaganda network, which traffics in anti-American conspiracy theories that rival the extravagant untruths of Soviet-era *Pravda*. Russia also has a long history of meddling in other countries' election systems and launching cyber-attacks on a wide range of countries and industries. The Baltics and other Russian neighbors have long decried these attacks, but their warnings went unheeded in far too many nations' capitals, including our own.

The fact that Russia hacked U.S. election-related databases comes as no shock to this Committee, which has been closely monitoring Russia's aggression for years. A year ago I stated publicly that our inability to predict the Putin regime's plans and intentions has been "the biggest intelligence failure that we've had since 9/11," and that remains my view today. However, while the indications of Russian measures targeting the U.S. presidential election are deeply troubling, one benefit is already clear—it has focused wide attention on the pressing threats posed by the Russian autocrat. In recent years, Committee members have issued repeated and forceful pleas for stronger action against Russian belligerence. But the Obama administration was committed to the notion, against all evidence, that we could "reset" relations with Putin, and it routinely ignored our warnings.

I hope today's hearing will shed light on three important focus points of this Committee's investigation of Russian active measures.



1. What actions did Russia undertake against the United States during the 2016 election campaign, and did anyone from a political campaign conspire in these activities? Former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper said publicly he's seen no evidence of collusion between the Russians and the Trump campaign, and I can say that the Committee, too, has seen no evidence to date that officials from any campaign conspired with Russian agents. However, we will continue to investigate this question.

2. Were the communications of officials or associates of any campaign subject to any kind of improper surveillance? The Intelligence Community has extremely strict procedures for handling information pertaining to any U.S. citizens who are subject even to incidental surveillance, and this Committee wants to ensure all surveillance activities have followed all relevant laws, rules, and regulations. Let me be clear: we know there was not a wiretap on Trump Tower. However, it's still possible that other surveillance activities were used against President Trump and his associates.

3. Who has leaked classified information? Numerous current and former officials have leaked purportedly classified information in connection to these questions. We aim to determine who has leaked or facilitated leaks of classified information so that these individuals can be brought to justice.

I hope that this Committee's bipartisan investigation will result in a definitive report on the Russian actions taken during the election campaign. To that end, we encourage anyone who has information about these topics to come forward and speak to the Committee. I again thank the witnesses for helping to shed light on these issues.

And with that, I recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Schiff, for five minutes, for any opening comments he would like to make.