

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 30, 2016

The Honorable James Comey  
Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
935 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Director:

Based on multiple press reports, it appears that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is investigating whether Russia executed cyber attacks against the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) that resulted in the illegal hacking of a wide range of emails and other documents.<sup>1</sup>

We are writing to request that the FBI assess whether connections between Trump campaign officials and Russian interests may have contributed to these attacks in order to interfere with the U.S. presidential election.

Serious questions have been raised about overt and covert actions by Trump campaign officials on behalf of Russian interests. It is critical for the American public to know whether those actions may have directly caused or indirectly motivated attacks against Democratic institutions and our fundamental election process.

On July 22, 2016, just days before the Democratic convention, approximately 20,000 pages of illegally hacked documents were leaked by WikiLeaks in an apparent attempt to influence the U.S. presidential election in favor of Donald Trump.<sup>2</sup> According to one press report:

The FBI suspects that Russian government hackers breached the networks of the Democratic National Committee and stole emails that were posted to the anti-secrecy site

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., *FBI Investigating Whether Russians Hacked Democratic Party's Emails to Help Donald Trump*, Los Angeles Times (July 25, 2016) (online at [www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-pol-fbi-hack-dnc-russia-20160725-snap-story.html](http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-pol-fbi-hack-dnc-russia-20160725-snap-story.html)). See also *Growing Evidence Suggests Recent Hacks the Work of Russian-Backed Cyber Militias*, Fox News (Aug. 20, 2016) (online at [www.foxnews.com/politics/2016/08/20/growing-evidence-suggest-recent-hacks-work-russian-backed-cyber-militias.html](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2016/08/20/growing-evidence-suggest-recent-hacks-work-russian-backed-cyber-militias.html)).

<sup>2</sup> *WikiLeaks Releases Thousands of Documents About Clinton and Internal Deliberations*, Washington Post (July 22, 2016) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/07/22/on-eve-of-democratic-convention-wikileaks-releases-thousands-of-documents-about-clinton-the-campaign-and-internal-deliberations/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/07/22/on-eve-of-democratic-convention-wikileaks-releases-thousands-of-documents-about-clinton-the-campaign-and-internal-deliberations/)).

WikiLeaks on Friday. It's an operation that several U.S. officials now suspect was a deliberate attempt to influence the presidential election in favor of Donald Trump, according to five individuals familiar with the investigation of the breach.<sup>3</sup>

Donald Trump has repeatedly praised Russian President Vladimir Putin, stating that "he's doing a great job,"<sup>4</sup> "I'd get along very well with Vladimir Putin,"<sup>5</sup> and "It is always a great honor to be so nicely complimented by a man so highly respected."<sup>6</sup> Donald Trump's business interests in Russia have also been widely reported.<sup>7</sup>

Donald Trump has proposed shocking policy positions that would greatly benefit Russia, including breaking from longstanding U.S. commitments to our NATO allies to combat Russian aggression<sup>8</sup> and weakening sanctions and recognizing Russia's annexation of Crimea.<sup>9</sup>

Of direct concern, however, are Donald Trump's comments encouraging Russian hacking and his top aides' previously undisclosed connections to Russian officials and interests.

On July 27, 2016—the third day of the Democratic convention—Donald Trump urged Russia to hack Secretary Hillary Clinton's emails.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *FBI Suspects Russia Hacked DNC; U.S. Officials Say it Was to Elect Donald Trump*, Daily Beast (July 25, 2016) (online at [www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/07/25/fbi-suspects-russia-hacked-dnc-u-s-officials-say-it-was-to-elect-donald-trump.html](http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/07/25/fbi-suspects-russia-hacked-dnc-u-s-officials-say-it-was-to-elect-donald-trump.html)).

<sup>4</sup> *Larry King Live*, CNN (Oct. 15, 2007) (online at [www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0710/15/lkl.01.html](http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0710/15/lkl.01.html)).

<sup>5</sup> *Donald Trump: "I'd Get Along Very Well With Vladimir Putin,"* CBS News (July 30, 2015) (online at [www.cbsnews.com/news/donald-trump-id-get-along-very-well-with-vladimir-putin/](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/donald-trump-id-get-along-very-well-with-vladimir-putin/)).

<sup>6</sup> *Trump Says "Great Honor" to Get Compliments from "Highly Respected" Putin*, ABC News (Dec. 17, 2015) (online at <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/trump-great-honor-compliments-highly-respected-putin/story?id=35829618>).

<sup>7</sup> *Inside Donald Trump's Financial Ties to Russia and His Unusual Flattery of Vladimir Putin*, Washington Post (June 17, 2016) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/politics/inside-trumps-financial-ties-to-russia-and-his-unusual-flattery-of-vladimir-putin/2016/06/17/dbdcaac8-31a6-11e6-8ff7-7b6c1998b7a0\\_story.html?postshare=1821472042965377&tid=ss\\_mail](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/inside-trumps-financial-ties-to-russia-and-his-unusual-flattery-of-vladimir-putin/2016/06/17/dbdcaac8-31a6-11e6-8ff7-7b6c1998b7a0_story.html?postshare=1821472042965377&tid=ss_mail)).

<sup>8</sup> *Trump Takes Heat from NATO Officials for Interview Comments*, Fox News (July 21, 2016) (online at [www.foxnews.com/politics/2016/07/21/trump-takes-heat-from-nato-officials-for-interview-comments.html](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2016/07/21/trump-takes-heat-from-nato-officials-for-interview-comments.html)).

<sup>9</sup> *This Week with George Stephanopoulos*, ABC News (July 31, 2016) (online at <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/week-transcript-donald-trump-vice-president-joe-biden/story?id=41020870>).

<sup>10</sup> *Trump Urges Russia to Hack Clinton's Email*, Politico (July 27, 2016) (online at [www.politico.com/story/2016/07/trump-putin-no-relationship-226282](http://www.politico.com/story/2016/07/trump-putin-no-relationship-226282)).

Less than two weeks later, on August 8, 2016, Roger Stone, a Donald Trump confidante, revealed that he has communicated with WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange about the upcoming release of additional illegally-hacked Democratic documents. Mr. Stone made these statements during a Republican campaign event while answering a question about a potential “October surprise.”<sup>11</sup>

It is unclear whether U.S. law enforcement authorities have interviewed Mr. Stone about his communications with Mr. Assange or about his knowledge of how WikiLeaks obtained the illegally-hacked documents.

In addition, on July 7, 2016, one of Donald Trump’s foreign policy advisers, Carter Page, traveled to Moscow to give a speech that was harshly critical of the United States and its “hypocritical focus on ideas such as democratization, inequality, corruption and regime change.”<sup>12</sup> Mr. Page had touted his extensive dealings with Russian energy giant Gazprom, claiming that he had been an adviser “on key transactions for Gazprom.”<sup>13</sup> After Donald Trump named Mr. Page as his foreign policy adviser in March, Mr. Page explained that “his business has suffered directly from the U.S. economic sanctions imposed after Russia’s escalating involvement in the Ukraine.”<sup>14</sup>

Mr. Page appears to enjoy high-level access to Russian officials that are currently under sanctions imposed by the United States government. According to one press report:

After the Obama administration added Rosneft Chairman Igor Sechin to its sanctions list in 2014, limiting Sechin’s ability to travel to the United States or do business with U.S. firms, Page praised the former deputy prime minister, considered one of Putin’s closest allies over the past 25 years. “Sechin has done more to advance U.S.-Russian relations than any individual in or out of government from either side of the Atlantic over the past decade,” Page wrote.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Trump Ally Claims He “Communicated With” WikiLeaks Founder*, Washington Examiner (Aug. 9, 2016) (online at [www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-ally-claims-he-communicated-with-wikileaks-founder/article/2598931](http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-ally-claims-he-communicated-with-wikileaks-founder/article/2598931)).

<sup>12</sup> *Trump’s Russia Adviser Criticizes U.S. for “Hypocritical Focus on Democratization,”* Washington Post (July 7, 2016) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/trumps-russia-adviser-criticizes-us-for-hypocritical-focus-on-democratization/2016/07/07/804a3d60-4380-11e6-a76d-3550dba926ac\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/trumps-russia-adviser-criticizes-us-for-hypocritical-focus-on-democratization/2016/07/07/804a3d60-4380-11e6-a76d-3550dba926ac_story.html)).

<sup>13</sup> *Biography of Carter Page, CFA*, Global Energy Capital LLC (accessed Aug. 22, 2016) (online at [www.globalenergycap.com/management/](http://www.globalenergycap.com/management/)).

<sup>14</sup> *Trump’s New Russia Adviser Has Deep Ties to Kremlin’s Gazprom*, Bloomberg (Mar. 30, 2016) (online at [www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2016-03-30/trump-russia-adviser-carter-page-interview](http://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2016-03-30/trump-russia-adviser-carter-page-interview)).

<sup>15</sup> *Trump Adviser’s Public Comments, Ties to Moscow Stir Unease in Both Parties*, Washington Post (Aug. 5, 2016) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/trump-advisers-public-comments-ties-to-moscow-stir-unease-in-both-parties/2016/08/05/2e8722fa-5815-11e6-9aee-8075993d73a2\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/trump-advisers-public-comments-ties-to-moscow-stir-unease-in-both-parties/2016/08/05/2e8722fa-5815-11e6-9aee-8075993d73a2_story.html)).

It is unclear whether U.S. law enforcement authorities have interviewed Mr. Page about whether he met with Mr. Sechin or other individuals on the U.S. sanctions list during his trip to Moscow or on other occasions.

Another top adviser to Donald Trump, Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, traveled to Moscow in December 2015 and joined Vladimir Putin at the head table during a dinner honoring the Kremlin-backed media network RT. During the event, General Flynn gave a speech that was highly critical of the United States, stating, “The United States can’t sit there and say, ‘Russia, you’re bad.’”<sup>16</sup> The following week, President Putin praised Donald Trump as “an outstanding and talented personality.”<sup>17</sup> General Flynn declined to answer media inquiries about whether he traveled to Moscow on Donald Trump’s behalf.<sup>18</sup>

Most recently, Donald Trump’s campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, resigned after failing to disclose his role in assisting a pro-Russian party in Ukraine. Mr. Manafort reportedly had “wooded investments from oligarchs linked to Putin and advised the now-toppled pro-Russian Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich.”<sup>19</sup> According to one press account:

Donald Trump’s campaign chairman helped a pro-Russian governing party in Ukraine secretly route at least \$2.2 million in payments to two prominent Washington lobbying firms in 2012, and did so in a way that effectively obscured the foreign political party’s efforts to influence U.S. policy. ... Under federal law, U.S. lobbyists must declare publicly if they represent foreign leaders or their political parties and provide detailed reports about their actions to the Justice Department. A violation is a felony and can result in up to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.<sup>20</sup>

Rick Gates, a top strategist in Donald Trump’s campaign, reportedly worked with Mr. Manafort on this effort, “helping steer the advocacy work done by a pro-Yanukovich nonprofit,” including “downplaying the necessity of a congressional resolution meant to pressure the

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<sup>16</sup> *Trump Embraces Ex-Top Obama Intel Official*, Daily Beast (Mar. 9, 2016) (online at [www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/03/09/donald-trump-embraces-top-obama-intel-official.html](http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/03/09/donald-trump-embraces-top-obama-intel-official.html)).

<sup>17</sup> *Putin Praises “Bright and Talented” Trump*, CNN (Dec. 17, 2015) (online at [www.cnn.com/2015/12/17/politics/russia-putin-trump/](http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/17/politics/russia-putin-trump/)).

<sup>18</sup> *Trump Embraces Ex-Top Obama Intel Official*, Daily Beast (Mar. 9, 2016) (online at [www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/03/09/donald-trump-embraces-top-obama-intel-official.html](http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/03/09/donald-trump-embraces-top-obama-intel-official.html)).

<sup>19</sup> *Trump Adviser’s Public Comments, Ties to Moscow Stir Unease in Both Parties*, Washington Post (Aug. 5, 2016) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/trump-advisers-public-comments-ties-to-moscow-stir-unease-in-both-parties/2016/08/05/2e8722fa-5815-11e6-9aee-8075993d73a2\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/trump-advisers-public-comments-ties-to-moscow-stir-unease-in-both-parties/2016/08/05/2e8722fa-5815-11e6-9aee-8075993d73a2_story.html)).

<sup>20</sup> *Manafort Tied to Undisclosed Foreign Lobbying*, Associated Press (Aug. 17, 2016) (online at <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/c01989a47ee5421593ba1b301ec07813/ap-sources-manafort-tied-undisclosed-foreign-lobbying>).

Ukrainian leader to release an imprisoned political rival.”<sup>21</sup> Although Mr. Manafort has resigned from his position, it appears that Mr. Gates continues to be a top adviser to Mr. Trump.

It is unclear whether U.S. law enforcement authorities have interviewed Mr. Manafort or Mr. Page about their failure to disclose this information, but several prominent Members of Mr. Trump’s party have expressed grave concerns.

For example, Republican Adam Kinzinger of Illinois called for an investigation into Donald Trump’s “chief adviser, what his association with the Russians are.” More broadly, Rep. Kinzinger criticized “this affection in the campaign for Russia and Vladimir Putin,” and he questioned how and why a reference to Russian offensive weapons was mysteriously removed from the Republican Party’s platform, noting that “it just happened.”<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, Eliot Cohen, who served as a counselor at the State Department under the George W. Bush Administration, warned: “Foreign governments sometimes express preferences about who should be elected; that’s already problematic. But to do something in the nature of dirty tricks would be a very, very serious problem.”<sup>23</sup>

Finally, House Speaker Paul Ryan’s spokesman stated: “Russia is a global menace led by a devious thug. Putin should stay out of this election.”<sup>24</sup>

We do not know if Donald Trump’s public statements or the connections of his campaign officials to Russian interests directly or indirectly led to the cyber attacks against Democratic party organizations, but there is widespread agreement that the United States should take all steps possible to prevent Russia from interfering in our electoral process and prosecute to the full extent of the law anyone involved in such a scheme.

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<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

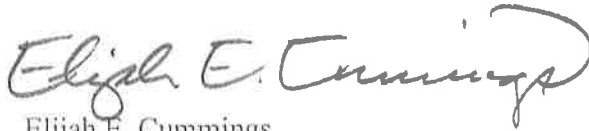
<sup>22</sup> *GOP Congressman Warns Trump: Russia Not an Ally*, CNN (Aug. 6, 2016) (online at [www.cnn.com/videos/tv/2016/08/15/gop-congressman-rep-adam-kinzinger-reacts-to-trumps-isis-plan-the-lead.cnn](http://www.cnn.com/videos/tv/2016/08/15/gop-congressman-rep-adam-kinzinger-reacts-to-trumps-isis-plan-the-lead.cnn)); *Rep. Kinzinger Calls for Investigation Into Manafort-Russian Ties*, Politico (Aug. 6, 2016) (online at [www.politico.com/story/2016/08/gop-rep-calls-for-investigation-into-manafort-russian-ties-227090](http://www.politico.com/story/2016/08/gop-rep-calls-for-investigation-into-manafort-russian-ties-227090)). *See also Donald Trump Campaign Chairman Paul Manafort Resigns*, CNN (Aug. 20, 2016) (online at [www.cnn.com/2016/08/19/politics/donald-trump-campaign-chairman-paul-manafort-resigns/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/19/politics/donald-trump-campaign-chairman-paul-manafort-resigns/index.html)) (citing Rep. Sean Duffy of Wisconsin, stating, “I want to know what money he got from a pro-Russian organization in the Ukraine.”).

<sup>23</sup> *Trump Invites Russia to Meddle in the U.S. Presidential Race with Clinton’s Emails*, Washington Post (July 27, 2016) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-invites-russia-to-meddle-in-the-us-presidential-race-with-clintons-emails/2016/07/27/a85d799e-5414-11e6-b7de-dfe509430c39\\_story.html?tid=a\\_inl](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-invites-russia-to-meddle-in-the-us-presidential-race-with-clintons-emails/2016/07/27/a85d799e-5414-11e6-b7de-dfe509430c39_story.html?tid=a_inl)).

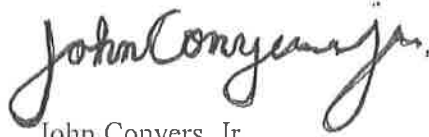
<sup>24</sup> *Speaker Paul Ryan Calls on “Global Menace” Russia to “Stay Out of This Election;” The Call Came After Donald Trump Encouraged Russian Hackers to Target Hillary Clinton*, CNN (July 27, 2016) (online at <http://time.com/4426783/paul-ryan-republicans-donald-trump-russia/>).

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

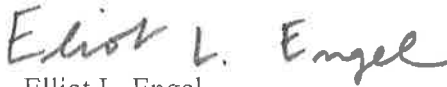
Sincerely,



Elijah E. Cummings  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and  
Government Reform



John Conyers, Jr.  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary



Elliot L. Engel  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Foreign Affairs



Bennie G. Thompson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security

cc: The Honorable Jason Chaffetz  
The Honorable Bob Goodlatte  
The Honorable Edward R. Royce  
The Honorable Michael T. McCaul

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 25, 2016

The Honorable James B. Comey  
Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation  
FBI Headquarters  
935 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20535

The Honorable Ashton B. Carter  
Secretary of Defense  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1300 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

The Honorable John F. Kerry  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable James R. Clapper  
Director of National Intelligence  
Office of the Director of National  
Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20511

Dear Director Comey, Secretaries Kerry and Carter, and General Clapper:

As senior Members of national-security committees in Congress, we are deeply troubled by reports of a Russia-supported hacking of Democratic National Committee data, and we applaud the FBI's quick action launching an investigation. We request that the Administration brief members of Congress on this situation as soon as possible in unclassified or classified settings as needed.

We see two separate issues at play here, both of which deserve the focus of investigators and Congressional overseers.

First, the DNC hack was plainly cyber-crime. More and more, America's adversaries are employing cyber-theft and cyber-terrorism as tactics to threaten our security. We need to understand fully the extent of the hack and work to determine who was responsible. We need to assess whose personal information was compromised by the attack and ensure those individuals have what they need to prevent any further damage. We need to determine what vulnerabilities allowed this attack to succeed, and provide information to the public about how to guard against future attacks of this nature.

Second—and perhaps more important—the timing and content of the theft, targeting one of our two major political parties, makes clear that this cyber-attack amounts to more than a public embarrassment or harmless mischief. If reports of Russia's involvement are confirmed, the only reasonable conclusion is that leaders in Russia are stealing and disseminating information in an effort to sway an election in the United States.


Honorable James B. Comey  
Honorable John F. Kerry  
Honorable Ashton B. Carter  
Honorable James R. Clapper  
Page Two  
July 25, 2016


This is an action right out of President Putin's playbook. In recent years, Russia has influenced elections, infiltrated political parties across Europe, and stoked divisive politics in the hope of fracturing Western unity. It doesn't stretch the imagination that Mr. Putin would now try his hand at manipulating the course of American democracy—leaking information through a syndicate that has repeated anti-Semitic insinuations, endangered lives, and threatened American security by recklessly releasing stolen information. That scenario should sound the alarm for people across this country.


That's why we also ask that the FBI collaborate with the Departments of State and Defense and the Intelligence Community to obtain a complete picture of Russia's involvement and its leaders intentions. Nearly a half century ago, a break-in at the DNC headquarters eventually led to the end of a Presidency. For a foreign government to engage in the same sort of behavior cannot be tolerated. Russia doesn't get to put its thumb on the scale in our elections. In the days ahead, we need to send a clear message to Russia's leaders and all who mean us harm: we will not allow the Kremlin or any other foreign power to dictate the terms of political debate in this country.

With the clock ticking down to our election, we ask for quick action on this matter. The American people deserve to go to the polls in November confident that Russian subterfuge has had no role in setting the agenda for our country's future.

Sincerely,

  
ELIOT L. ENGEL  
Ranking Member  
House Foreign Affairs Committee

  
JOHN CONYERS, JR.  
Ranking Member  
House Judiciary Committee

  
BENNIE G. THOMPSON  
Ranking Member  
House Homeland Security Committee



# U.S. intel officials probe ties between Trump adviser and Kremlin



Michael Isikoff

Chief Investigative Correspondent

September 23, 2016

U.S. intelligence officials are seeking to determine whether an American businessman identified by Donald Trump as one of his foreign policy advisers has opened up private communications with senior Russian officials — including talks about the possible lifting of economic sanctions if the Republican nominee becomes president, according to multiple sources who have been briefed on the issue.

The activities of Trump adviser Carter Page, who has extensive business interests in Russia, have been discussed with senior members of Congress during recent briefings about suspected efforts by Moscow to influence the presidential election, the sources said. After one of those briefings, Senate minority leader Harry Reid wrote FBI Director James Comey, citing reports of meetings between a Trump adviser (a reference to Page) and “high ranking sanctioned individuals” in Moscow over the summer as evidence of “significant and disturbing ties” between the Trump campaign and the Kremlin that needed to be investigated by the bureau.

Some of those briefed were “taken aback” when they learned about Page’s contacts in Moscow, viewing them as a possible back channel to the Russians that could undercut U.S. foreign policy, said a congressional source familiar with the briefings but who asked for anonymity due to the sensitivity of the subject. The source added that U.S. officials in the briefings indicated that intelligence reports about the adviser’s talks with senior Russian officials close to President Vladimir Putin were being “actively monitored and investigated.”

A senior U.S. law enforcement official did not dispute that characterization when asked for comment by Yahoo News. “It’s on our radar screen,” said the official about Page’s contacts with Russian officials. “It’s being looked at.”

Page is a former Merrill Lynch investment banker in Moscow who now runs a New York consulting firm, Global Energy Capital, located around the corner from Trump Tower, that specializes in oil and gas deals in Russia and other Central Asian countries. He declined repeated requests to comment for this story.

Trump first mentioned Page’s name when asked to identify his “foreign policy team” during an interview with the Washington Post editorial team last March. Describing him then only as a “PhD,” Trump named Page as among five advisers “that we are dealing with.” But his precise

role in the campaign remains unclear; Trump spokeswoman Hope Hicks last month called him an "informal foreign adviser" who "does not speak for Mr. Trump or the campaign." Asked this week by Yahoo News, Trump campaign spokesman Jason Miller said Page "has no role" and added: "We are not aware of any of his activities, past or present." Miller did not respond when asked why Trump had previously described Page as one of his advisers.

The questions about Page come amid mounting concerns within the U.S. intelligence community about Russian cyberattacks on the Democratic National Committee and state election databases in Arizona and Illinois. In a rare public talk this week, former undersecretary of defense for intelligence Mike Vickers said that the Russian cyberattacks constituted meddling in the U.S. election and were "beyond the pale." Also, this week, two senior Democrats — Sen. Dianne Feinstein, ranking minority member on the Senate Intelligence Committee, and Rep. Adam Schiff, ranking minority member on the House Intelligence Committee — released a joint statement that went further than what U.S. officials had publicly said about the matter.

**"Based on briefings we have received, we have concluded that the Russian intelligence agencies are making a serious and concerted effort to influence the U.S. election," they said. "At the least, this effort is intended to sow doubt about the security of our election and may well be intended to influence the outcomes of the election." They added that "orders for the Russian intelligence agencies to conduct such actions could come only from very senior levels of the Russian government."**

Page came to the attention of officials at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow several years ago when he showed up in the Russian capital during several business trips and made provocative public comments critical of U.S. policy and sympathetic to Putin. "He was pretty much a brazen apologist for anything Moscow did," said one U.S. official who served in Russia at the time.

He hasn't been shy about expressing those views in the U.S. as well. Last March, shortly after he was named by Trump as one of his advisers, Page told Bloomberg News he had been an adviser to, and investor in, Gazprom, the Russian state-owned gas company. He then blamed Obama administration sanctions — imposed as a response to the Russian annexation of Crimea — for driving down the company's stock. "So many people who I know and have worked with have been so adversely affected by the sanctions policy," Page said in the interview. "There's a lot of excitement in terms of the possibilities for creating a better situation."

Page showed up again in Moscow in early July, just two weeks before the Republican National Convention formally nominated Trump for president, and once again criticized U.S. policy. Speaking at a commencement address for the New Economic School, an institution funded in part by major Russian oligarchs close to Putin, Page asserted that "Washington and other West capitals" had impeded progress in Russia "through their often hypocritical focus on ideas such as democratization, inequality, corruption and regime change."

At the time, Page declined to say whether he was meeting with Russian officials during his trip, according to a Reuters report.

But U.S. officials have since received intelligence reports that during that same three-day trip, Page met with Igor Sechin, a longtime Putin associate and former Russian deputy prime minister who is now the executive chairman of Rosneft, Russian's leading oil company, a well-placed Western intelligence source tells Yahoo News. That meeting, if confirmed, is viewed as especially problematic by U.S. officials because the Treasury Department in August 2014 named Sechin to a list of Russian officials and businessmen sanctioned over Russia's "illegitimate and unlawful actions in the Ukraine." ([The Treasury announcement](#) described Sechin as "utterly loyal to Vladimir Putin — a key component to his current standing." At their alleged meeting, Sechin raised the issue of the lifting of sanctions with Page, the Western intelligence source said.

U.S. intelligence agencies have also received reports that Page met with another top Putin aide while in Moscow — Igor Diveykin. A former Russian security official, Diveykin now serves as deputy chief for internal policy and is believed by U.S. officials to have responsibility for intelligence collected by Russian agencies about the U.S. election, the Western intelligence source said.