

OPENING STATEMENT  
**Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)**

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
*“Bolstering the Government’s Cybersecurity:  
A Survey of Compliance with the DHS Directive”*  
November 14, 2017

Thank you Chairman LaHood.

In September, the Department of Homeland Security banned the use of Kaspersky Lab software on federal government computer networks. The U.S. intelligence community believes this Russian company’s products pose an unnecessary potential risk to our security from Russia’s intelligence services. Whether or not the company is aware of those threats is irrelevant. I trust the judgment of the American intelligence community in this matter. I am also confident that federal agencies will successfully eliminate Kaspersky Lab software from their respective computer systems. I am much more concerned, though, about the persistent threat foreign actors pose to our electoral system.

During the previous Kaspersky Lab hearing the Subcommittee held three weeks ago, I noted that prior to the 2016 Election, this Committee held a hearing to review the guidelines for protecting voting and election systems—including voter registration databases and voting machines. I asked that this Committee hold a follow-up hearing to discuss protecting these same systems, in the light of last year’s events, as well as to examine the sophisticated influence operations conducted by Russian intelligence services to disrupt our democratic processes and damage our democracy. Today I want to reiterate that request.

Russian actors attempted to hack into voter databases in multiple states before the 2016 election, successfully compromising “a small number of networks,” according to the Department of Homeland Security. But Russia, as we all know, did not only attempt to penetrate these sorts of hard targets, they sought to influence public opinion and undermine our democratic institutions through their use of trolls, bots and social media platforms. Rather than simply examine the specific threat posed by Kaspersky Lab software, we need to take a much wider view and look at the evolving and expanding threat that Russian cyber attacks and influence operations pose today in our society. I am happy that Dr. Mark Jacobson, our witness today, can speak about Russia’s history of influence operations against the United States and the many ways that Russia seeks to undermine Western democracies. Thank you for coming today Dr. Jacobson.

I again ask for the Science Committee to commit to holding a 2016 Election post mortem, with an eye on ways the Science Committee can help discourage foreign interference in future elections and how we can encourage the development of tools and technologies to help identify these threats and limit their impact on our government, public and society.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and I yield the balance of my time.