

**STATEMENT OF**

**JOHN O. BRENNAN  
FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

**BEFORE THE**

**HOUSE PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**CONCERNING**

**RUSSIAN ACTIVE MEASURES INVESTIGATION**

**PRESENTED ON**

**MAY 23, 2017**

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Representative Conaway, Ranking Member Schiff, and Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. As you know, I served as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency from March 2013 to January of this year, Assistant to President Obama for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism from 2009 to 2013, and as a CIA officer from 1980 to 2005. I am currently serving as a part-time Senior Advisor at Kissinger Associates.

I would like to express my deepest condolences to the British people and to the families of those killed and injured in yesterday's heinous attack against innocents in Manchester. I am confident that intelligence, security, and law enforcement officers from the United Kingdom, United States, and other countries are actively working to find those responsible and to prevent further attacks.

Congress and the American people have already heard from former and current U.S. officials intimately involved in uncovering Russian attempts to interfere in the 2016 presidential election, notably former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, former Director of the FBI James Comey, former Acting Attorney General Sally Yates, and NSA Director Admiral Mike Rogers. Rather than repeating details contained in their testimonies, I will use this opportunity to make three main points before I take your questions.

**First,** I am exceptionally proud of the work done by the women and men of the CIA, who, along with their talented colleagues from the FBI, NSA, and the Office of the DNI, tracked and exposed Russian active measures against our presidential election. When it became clear to me last summer that Russia was engaged in a very aggressive and wide-ranging effort to interfere in one of the key pillars of our democracy we pulled together experts from CIA, NSA, and FBI in late July to focus on this issue, drawing in multiple perspectives and subject matter experts with broad expertise to assess Russian attempts to interfere in the U.S. presidential election.

- The purpose was to ensure that experts from key agencies had access to information and intelligence relevant to Russian actions so that we could have as full an appreciation as possible on the scope, nature, and intentions of Russian activity.
- The experts provided regular updates and assessments through the summer and fall, which were used to inform senior U.S. officials, including President Obama.
- Their work also was leveraged for the Intelligence Community Assessment that was completed in early January under the aegis of the Director of National Intelligence.

**Second**, it should be clear to everyone that Russia brazenly interfered in our 2016 presidential election process, and that they undertook these activities despite our strong protest and explicit warning that they not do so. Along these lines, on 4 August of last year, I spoke to Alexander Bortnikov, the head of Russia's Federal Security Bureau, the FSB—Russia's internal security and intelligence service. The bulk of the scheduled call focused on Syria, as Mr. Bortnikov was my principal Russian interlocutor on terrorism matters. In consultation with the White House, I took the opportunity to raise two additional issues.

I first told Mr. Bortnikov, as I had several times previously, that the continued mistreatment and harassment of U.S. diplomats in Moscow was irresponsible, reckless, intolerable, and needed to stop. Over the years, it has been Mr. Bortnikov's FSB that has been most responsible for this behavior.

I next raised the published media reports of Russian attempts to interfere in our upcoming presidential election. I told Mr. Bortnikov that if Russia had such a campaign underway, it would be certain to backfire. I said that all Americans, regardless of political affiliation or whom they might support in the election, cherish their ability to elect their own leaders without outside interference or disruption. I said American voters would be outraged by any Russian attempt to interfere in the election. Finally, I warned Mr. Bortnikov that if Russia pursued this course, it would destroy any near-term prospect for improvement in relations between Washington and Moscow and would undermine constructive engagement even on matters of mutual interest.

As I expected, Mr. Bortnikov denied that Russia was doing anything to influence our presidential election, claiming that Moscow is a traditional target of blame by Washington for such activities. He said that Russia was prepared to work with whichever candidate wins the election. When I repeated my warning, he again denied the charge but said that he would inform President Putin of my comments. I believe I was the first U.S. official to brace the Russians on this matter.

**Third**, through the so-called Gang of Eight process, we kept Congress apprised of these issues as we identified them. Again in consultation with the White House, I personally briefed the full details of our understanding of Russian attempts to interfere in the election to Congressional leadership—specifically Senators Harry Reid, Mitch McConnell, Diane Feinstein, and Richard Burr and Representatives Paul Ryan, Nancy Pelosi, Devin Nunes, and Adam Schiff—between 11 August and 6 September. I provided the same briefing to each Gang of Eight member. Given the highly sensitive nature of what was an active counterintelligence case

involving an ongoing Russian effort to interfere in our presidential election, the full details of what we knew at the time was shared only with these members of Congress, each of whom was accompanied by one senior staff member. The substance of those briefings was entirely consistent with the main judgments contained in the January classified and unclassified assessments—namely, that Russia’s goals were to undermine public faith in the U.S. democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton and harm her electability and potential presidency, and help President Trump’s election chances.

Let me conclude by saying that it was a very special privilege to serve as a CIA officer for the first 25 years of my public service. And it was the highest honor of my professional career—and always will be—to have served another four years as the Director of CIA. CIA officers of all disciplines—past, present, and future—serve this country and their fellow citizens with tremendous dedication, talent, and courage. They recognize that this country’s national security rests heavily on their continued outstanding work and on the sacrifices they and their families make every day on behalf of their fellow citizens. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to all CIA officers and their families for what they have done and continue to do to protect this country.

I will now be pleased to take your questions.