

CIA director stands by intel community assessment Russia meddled in election

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- Trump has been on a marathon trip through Asia
- He met with Putin three times during recent summit

Washington (CNN) CIA Director Mike Pompeo stands by US intelligence assessments that Russia meddled in the 2016 election, the agency said Saturday, despite President Donald Trump saying he believes Russian President Vladimir Putin when he says his country didn't interfere.

"The Director stands by and has always stood by the January 2017 Intelligence Community Assessment entitled: Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Elections," the CIA said in a statement when asked for reaction to the president's remarks. "The intelligence assessment with regard to Russian election meddling has not changed." The agency said it would have no further comment.

Trump says he believes Putin's election meddling denials

While describing his relationship with Putin and the ongoing investigations into 2016 meddling, Trump seemed to indicate to reporters aboard Air Force One on Saturday that he trusts Putin's denials more than the comments of former intelligence officials, like former

high-ranking intelligence officials James Comey, John Brennan and James Clapper.

"I mean, give me a break, they are political hacks," Trump said. "So you look at it, I mean, you have Brennan, you have Clapper and you have Comey. Comey is proven now to be a liar and he is proven now to be a leaker. So you look at that and you have President Putin very strongly, vehemently says he had nothing to do with them."

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Trump told reporters as he flew from Da Nang to Hanoi in Vietnam that he's done confronting Putin over the issue and took him at his word that Russia did not seek to interfere in the election.

"He said he didn't meddle. He said he didn't meddle. I asked him again. You can only ask so many times," Trump said.

Trump spoke to Putin three times on the sidelines of summit here, where the Russia meddling issue arose.

"Every time he sees me, he says, 'I didn't do that,'" Trump said. "And I believe, I really believe, that when he tells me that, he means it."

"I think he is very insulted by it," Trump added.

His remarks, which came near the end of Trump's marathon swing through Asia, amounted to the clearest statement yet of Trump's views about last year's election meddling issue.