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# ***Harry Reid Cites Evidence of Russian Tampering in U.S. Vote, and Seeks F.B.I. Inquiry***

By **David E. Sanger**

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The Senate minority leader, Harry Reid of Nevada, asked the F.B.I. on Monday to investigate evidence suggesting that Russia may try to manipulate voting results in November.

In a letter to the F.B.I. director, James B. Comey Jr., Mr. Reid wrote that the threat of Russian interference “is more extensive than is widely known and may include the intent to falsify official election results.” Recent classified briefings from senior intelligence officials, Mr. Reid said in an interview, have left him fearful that President Vladimir V. Putin’s “goal is tampering with this election.”

News reports on Monday said the F.B.I. warned state election officials several weeks ago that foreign hackers had exported voter registration data from computer systems in at least one state, and had pierced the systems of a second one.

The bureau did not name the states, but Yahoo News, which first reported the confidential F.B.I. warning, said they were Arizona and Illinois. Matt Roberts, a spokesman for Arizona’s secretary of state, said the F.B.I. had told state officials that Russians were behind the Arizona attack.

After the F.B.I. warning, Arizona took its voter registration database offline from June 28 to July 8 to allow for a forensic exam of its systems, Mr. Roberts said.

The F.B.I., in its notice to states, said the voter information had been “exfiltrated,” which means that it was shipped out of the state systems to another computer. But it does not mean that the data itself was tampered with.

It is unclear whether the hackers intended to affect the election or pursued the data for other purposes, like gaining personal identifying information about voters. The F.B.I. warning referred to “targeting activity” against state boards of elections, but did not discuss the intent of the hackers.

“That incident was only a small part of what disturbed me,” Mr. Reid said on Monday.

In his letter to the F.B.I., he offered no specifics about how Russian hackers could manipulate election data, an effort made harder by the varying vote-tallying procedures in each state.

But the prospect of election tampering has been discussed since the revelation that two Russian intelligence agencies, the F.S.B. and the G.R.U., were believed to be responsible for the hacking of the networks of the Democratic National Committee.

Emails published by a hacker who called himself Guccifer 2.0 — believed to be an alias for Russian hackers linked to the intelligence agencies — revealed that the committee had denigrated the campaign of Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

The disclosures led to the resignation of Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida as the committee’s chairwoman.

Mr. Reid’s accusation that Russia is seeking not only to influence the election with propaganda but also to tamper with the vote counting goes significantly beyond anything the Obama administration has said in public.

While intelligence agencies have told the White House that they have “high confidence” that Russian intelligence services were behind the hacking of the Democratic committee, the administration has not leveled any accusations against Mr. Putin’s government. Asked about that in the interview, Mr. Reid said he was free to say things the president was not.

But Mr. Reid argued that the connections between some of Donald J. Trump’s former and current advisers and the Russian leadership should, by itself, prompt an investigation. He referred indirectly in his letter to a speech given in Russia by one Trump adviser, Carter Page, a consultant and investor in the energy giant Gazprom, who criticized American sanctions policy toward Russia.

“Trump and his people keep saying the election is rigged,” Mr. Reid said. “Why is he saying that? Because people are telling him the election can be messed with.” Mr. Trump’s advisers say they are concerned that unnamed elites could rig the election for his opponent, Hillary Clinton.

Mr. Reid argued that if Russia concentrated on “less than six” swing states, it could alter results and undermine confidence in the electoral system. That would pose challenges, given that most states have paper backups, but he noted that hackers could keep people from voting by tampering with the rolls of eligible voters.