

---

## INTELLIGENCE CHIEF DEFENDS FINDING RUSSIA MEDDLED IN ELECTION

06.01.2017

---

The Wall Street Journal, 06 Jan 2017

Top American intelligence officials reaffirmed and broadened their accusations of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election at a Senate hearing Thursday, rejecting President-elect Donald Trumps suggestions that their conclusions on the matter could be faulty or false.

Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, speaking at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on foreign cyberthreats, described a multifaceted Russian campaign that went beyond leaking hacked emails from the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clintons campaign chairman to include classic propaganda, disinformation and fake news.

I dont think weve ever encountered a more aggressive or direct campaign to interfere in our election process, he said.

Thursdays committee hearing [ ] included questions about whether Russia had committed an act of war [ ] the latest example of how Russias alleged actions and Mr. Trumps tension with the intelligence community over the matter have come to dominate the first week of the new Congress. It comes amid discussions by the president-elects senior advisers about revamping the intelligence services, according to people familiar with the planning.

Mr. Clapper mounted a defense of the intelligence community, saying he welcomed healthy debate over its conclusions but added, theres a difference between skepticism and disparagement.

On the same day as the Senate hearing, Mr. Trump nominated Dan Coats, a former Republican senator from Indiana and U.S. Ambassador to Germany, to replace Mr. Clapper as Director of National Intelligence. The longtime lawmakers hawkish views on Russias behavior are in line with many in the intelligence community but at odds with Mr. Trump, who has praised Russian President Vladimir Putin as being very smart.

In the Senate, Mr. Coats pushed the Obama administration to stiffen penalties against Russia for its actions in Ukraine. In 2014, the Russian government put him on a list of nine lawmakers who they said would face travel and financial restrictions following U.S. sanctions against Russia.

If confirmed by the Senate, Mr. Coats would join DNI at a time when the transition team is discussing possible changes to the structure of the U.S. intelligence community, with some believing it has become too bloated and bureaucratic.

Russian President Vladimir Putin making his New Year's address. Last year, the U.S. intelligence agencies issued a joint statement pinning blame for the cyberhacking operation on Russias senior-most officials. ENLARGE

The current director told senators Thursday that he hadn't been consulted by the Trump transition team about prospective changes in his office's structure. Mr. Clapper told the committee he was open to improvements in the U.S. intelligence apparatus's structure but urged the new administration to make sure any such changes receive legislative underpinnings and go through Congress.

Sean Spicer, Mr. Trump's spokesman, said no decisions had been made about changes in the nation's intelligence framework and that there had been only transition-level discussions. He was responding to a Wall Street Journal article about potential changes in some intelligence agencies.

All discussions are tentative, he said. The president-elect's top priorities will be to ensure the safety of the American people and the security of the nation, and he's committed to finding the best and most effective ways to do it.

He added that there is no truth to this idea of restructuring the intelligence community's infrastructure.

His comment came hours before an adviser to Mr. Trump's transition on intelligence issues, former Central Intelligence Agency Director James Woolsey, stepped down from his position. The Trump team wasn't seeking Mr. Woolsey's advice on intelligence matters being discussed in recent weeks, a person familiar with the matter said, so he felt uncomfortable continuing to appear in public as an adviser. The transition team couldn't immediately be reached to comment.

At Thursday's Senate hearing on foreign cyberthreats, Mr. Clapper, appearing alongside National Security Agency Director Adm. Mike Rogers and Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence Marcel Lettre, said the intelligence agencies analyzed Russia's motives in a report they submitted to President Barack Obama on Thursday and plan to discuss with Mr. Trump on Friday. Mr. Clapper said intelligence officials would provide hearings for all House and Senate members next week.

Mr. Obama said after receiving the report that he has full confidence in its conclusions. He said he hopes once Mr. Trump receives his own briefing and his team becomes familiar with intelligence officials that some of those current tensions will be reduced.

Mr. Trump, after earlier in the day backing off from some of his criticisms, continued to call into question the validity of the investigation into the hacking after the hearing.

The Democratic National Committee would not allow the FBI to study or see its computer info after it was supposedly hacked by Russia..... he wrote in a tweet on Thursday night. So how and why are they so sure about hacking if they never even requested an examination of the computer servers? What is going on? he wrote in a follow-up tweet.

Russia has denied any involvement in the hacking. Mr. Putin has said he aims to restore U.S.-Russian relations after Mr. Trump takes office.

Mr. Clapper, a retired Air Force general, said his confidence about Russian involvement had increased in the months since the intelligence community issued a joint statement in October saying that senior-most officials of the Russian government had authorized the operation to interfere with the election.

Mr. Clapper characterized the suspected Russian interference as transcending the boundaries of

traditional espionage [ ] which the U.S. engages routinely [ ] called it an activist attempt to subvert U.S. democracy.

#### CYBERWARS GROWING THREAT

A second Senate panel, the Foreign Relations Committee, held a closed-door, classified meeting about the suspected Russia hacks and the U.S. response with senior officials from the State Department, Treasury Department and Department of Homeland Security.

Afterward, Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Sen. Bob Corker (R., Tenn.) said every senator in the room, from both parties, was very negative on Russia and very concerned about where that might go.

Asked what would happen if Mr. Trump doesnt accept the findings of the intelligence community on Friday, Mr. Corker said thats why we have three branches of government.

The public hearing, called by the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sen. John McCain (R., Ariz.), began a new round of scrutiny and deliberation over the Russian hacking allegations, which likely will grow when the unclassified version of the intelligence communitys report on the matter becomes public next week.

Mr. Clapper said the intelligence community couldnt put enough information into the public domain to be completely persuasive to everyone, because such a move would jeopardize sources and methods the agencies used to gather the information. Still, he said he planned to make public as much information as possible.

Asked whether the report would assign a motivation to Mr. Putin, Mr. Clapper said, There is actually more than one motive.

Central Intelligence Agency Director John Brennan, who along with other intelligence officials will brief Mr. Trump on Friday, separately said Thursday that his agency and the Obama administration want to publicize Russian interference in the U.S. elections as a warning to other countries, particularly in Europe.

The potential of Russian interference across Europe and especially in upcoming elections in Germany, a U.S. ally and partner in implementing sanctions against Russia, is a very serious concern, Mr. Brennan said at an event hosted by the University of Chicagos Institute of Politics.

By exposing this publicly, [it] makes Mr. Putin in the future more reluctant to go down this path, because their activities are being uncovered, he added.

Mr. Clapper said the intelligence community couldnt gauge the influence the leaks of information had during the campaign or whether they impacted voters choices, describing the matter as outside his purview. He emphasized that there was no information to suggest that Russian hackers changed vote tallies or interfered with voting systems.

Lawmakers pressed Mr. Clapper and other intelligence officials on how to view the suspected Russian cyberattacks in the context of warfare and what the U.S. can do to deter such behavior. Whether or not that constitutes an act of war I think is a very heavy policy call that I dont believe the intelligence community should make, he said.

The question is vital for policy makers because the U.S. doesnt have a coherent policy for how to

respond to aggression in cyberspace. Mr. Clapper praised the U.S. sanctions on Russia and said noncyber responses tended to be more effective in curbing cyberattacks.

---

Kaynak/Source: