

Withdrawn/Redacted Material

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DOCUMENT NO.	FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
001	Cover Sheet	[Cover Sheet]	1	09/08/2016	
002	Table of Contents	Table of Contents	1	N.D.	
003	Note	[Handwritten notes]	2	N.D.	P1/b1;
004	Paper	[Background Paper with Talking Points]	1	N.D.	P1/b1;
005	Draft	Letter from Jeh Charles Johnson to Secretaries Padilla and Kemp	3	08/2016	P5;
006	Newsletter	Cyber Incident Reporting A Unified Message for Reporting to the Federal Government	2	N.D.	

COLLECTION TITLE:

National Security Council - Homeland Security and Counter-Terrorism Directorate

SERIES:

Monaco, Lisa - Subject Files

FOLDER TITLE:

Congressional Briefing on Russian Intrusion and Electoral Infrastructure (09/08/2016)

FRC ID:

70724

RESTRICTION CODES

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007	Memorandum	From Jeh Johnson to Lisa Monaco, re: Assisting States with the Cybersecurity of their Election Infrastructure: What can DHS do?	3	09/09/2016	P5;
008	Email	From Lisa O. Monaco to Kimberly C. Lang, re: FW: Requested documents	1	09/12/2016	
009	List	DHS (Department of Homeland Security) Cyber Security Advisors (CSAs)	1	08/31/2016	P6/b6; b7c; b7f;
010	Map	Cyber Security Advisors	1	N.D.	P6/b6; b7c; b7f;
011	List	DHS Protective Security Advisors (PSAs)	2	08/31/2016	P6/b6; b7c; b7f;
012	Map	Protective Security Advisor (PSA) Locations	1	08/31/2016	P6/b6; b7c; b7f;

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013	Newsletter	State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Cybersecurity Engagement	1	N.D.	
014	Newsletter	State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Cybersecurity Engagement [Duplicate of 013]	1	N.D.	
015	Draft	[Talking Points for Congressional Meeting]	2	N.D.	P1/b1; P5;
016	Draft	[Question and answer talking points]	11	N.D.	P1/b1; P5;
017	Draft	Joint Intelligence Bulletin	9	09/2016	P5;
018	Email	From Joe "Michael" Daniel to Lisa O. Monaco et al.	2	09/07/2016	P1/b1;
019	Memorandum	[Memorandum]	5	07/27/2016	P1/b1;

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020	Memorandum	[Memorandum]	3	07/29/2016	P1/b1;
021	Report	[Government Report]	2	N.D.	P1/b1;
022	Memorandum	[Memorandum]	10	08/03/2016	P1/b1;
023	Report	National Intelligence Council Report	14	08/09/2016	P1/b1;
024	Memorandum	[Memorandum]	9	08/10/2016	P1/b1;
025	Memorandum	[Memorandum]	11	08/12/2016	P1/b1;
026	Report	[Government Report]	3	08/16/2016	P1/b1;
027	Memorandum	[Memorandum]	8	08/26/2016	P1/b1;

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028	Letter	From Senator Feinstein and Representative Schiff to President Obama	2	07/27/2016	
029	Letter	From Senator Reid to Director Comey	2	08/27/2016	
030	Letter	From Representative Thompson to Secretary Johnson	2	08/08/2016	
031	Letter	From Senator Carper to Secretary Johnson	2	08/08/2016	
032	Email	From Mark E. Stroh to Lisa O. Monaco et al., re: RE: Secretary Johnson Media Hits	5	09/06/2016	P5;
033	Email	From Caitlin E. Young, re: Press Briefing by Press Secretary Josh Earnest and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes	6	09/06/2016	

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034	Email	From Dominique A. Dansky Bari, re: Background Press Briefing on the President's Meetings at the G20 Summit	10	09/05/2016	
035	Email	From White House Press Office, re: Press Conference by President Obama after G20 Summit	10	09/05/2016	
036	Email	re: Rough Transcript: 9/6/2016 Sec. Johnson MSNBC Andrea Mitchell	2	N.D.	
037	Note	[Handwritten Notes]	2	09/08/2016	P1/b1;

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**NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
Lisa Monaco**

**Congressional Briefing
September 8, 2016**

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DECLASSIFIED
White House Guidelines, September 11, 2006
NARA JO Date 7/3/2023

Table of Contents

- 1. Talking Points**
- 2. Secretary Johnson and Director Comey Talking Points**
- 3. Hard Q&A**
- 4. Draft JIB**
- 5. CTIIC Intel**
- 6. Relevant USG Officials Transcripts**

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Cyber Incident Reporting

A Unified Message for Reporting to the Federal Government

Cyber incidents can have serious consequences. The theft of private, financial, or other sensitive data and cyber attacks that damage computer systems are capable of causing lasting harm to anyone engaged in personal or commercial online transactions. Such risks are increasingly faced by businesses, consumers, and all other users of the Internet.

A private sector entity that is a victim of a cyber incident can receive assistance from government agencies, which are prepared to investigate the incident, mitigate its consequences, and help prevent future incidents. For example, federal law enforcement agencies have highly trained investigators who specialize in responding to cyber incidents for the express purpose of disrupting threat actors who caused the incident and preventing harm to other potential victims. In addition to law enforcement, other federal responders provide technical assistance to protect assets, mitigate vulnerabilities, and offer on-scene response personnel to aid in incident recovery. When supporting affected entities, the various agencies of the Federal Government work in tandem to leverage their collective response expertise, apply their knowledge of cyber threats, preserve key evidence, and use their combined authorities and capabilities both to minimize asset vulnerability and bring malicious actors to justice. This fact sheet explains when, what, and how to report to the Federal Government in the event of a cyber incident.

When to Report to the Federal Government

A cyber incident is an event that could jeopardize the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of digital information or information systems. Cyber incidents resulting in significant damage are of particular concern to the Federal Government. Accordingly, victims are encouraged to report all cyber incidents that may:

- result in a significant loss of data, system availability, or control of systems;
- impact a large number of victims;
- indicate unauthorized access to, or malicious software present on, critical information technology systems;
- affect critical infrastructure or core government functions; or
- impact national security, economic security, or public health and safety.

What to Report

A cyber incident may be reported at various stages, even when complete information may not be available. Helpful information could include who you are, who experienced the incident, what sort of incident occurred, how and when the incident was initially detected, what response actions have already been taken, and who has been notified.

How to Report Cyber Incidents to the Federal Government

Private sector entities experiencing cyber incidents are encouraged to report a cyber incident to the local field offices of federal law enforcement agencies, their sector specific agency, and any of the federal agencies listed in the table on page two. The federal agency receiving the initial report will coordinate with other relevant federal stakeholders in responding to the incident. If the affected entity is obligated by law or contract to report a cyber incident, the entity should comply with that obligation in addition to voluntarily reporting the incident to an appropriate federal point of contact.

Types of Federal Incident Response

Upon receiving a report of a cyber incident, the Federal Government will promptly focus its efforts on two activities: Threat Response and Asset Response. Threat response includes attributing, pursuing, and disrupting malicious cyber actors and malicious cyber activity. It includes conducting criminal investigations and other actions to counter the malicious cyber activity. Asset response includes protecting assets and mitigating vulnerabilities in the face of malicious cyber activity. It includes reducing the impact to



systems and/or data; strengthening, recovering and restoring services; identifying other entities at risk; and assessing potential risk to the broader community.

Irrespective of the type of incident or its corresponding response, Federal agencies work together to help affected entities understand the incident, link related incidents, and share information to rapidly resolve the situation in a manner that protects privacy and civil liberties.

Key Federal Points of Contact

Threat Response

Asset Response

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

FBI Field Office Cyber Task Forces:

<http://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field>

Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3):

<http://www.ic3.gov>

Report cybercrime, including computer intrusions or attacks, fraud, intellectual property theft, identity theft, theft of trade secrets, criminal hacking, terrorist activity, espionage, sabotage, or other foreign intelligence activity to FBI Field Office Cyber Task Forces.

Report individual instances of cybercrime to the IC3, which accepts Internet crime complaints from both victim and third parties.

National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center (NCCIC)

NCCIC: (888) 282-0870 or NCCIC@hq.dhs.gov

United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team:

<http://www.us-cert.gov>

Report suspected or confirmed cyber incidents, including when the affected entity may be interested in government assistance in removing the adversary, restoring operations, and recommending ways to further improve security.

National Cyber Investigative Joint Task Force

NCIJTF CyWatch 24/7 Command Center: (855) 292-3937 or cywatch@ic.fbi.gov

Report cyber intrusions and major cybercrimes that require assessment for action, investigation, and engagement with local field offices of federal law enforcement agencies or the Federal Government.

United States Secret Service

Secret Service Field Offices and Electronic Crimes Task Forces (ECTFs):

<http://www.secretservice.gov/contact/field-offices>

Report cybercrime, including computer intrusions or attacks, transmission of malicious code, password trafficking, or theft of payment card or other financial payment information

United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement / Homeland Security Investigations (ICE/HSI)

HSI Tip Line: 866-DHS-2-ICE (866-347-2423) or <https://www.ice.gov/webform/hsi-tip-form>

HSI Field Offices: <https://www.ice.gov/contact/hsi>

HSI Cyber Crimes Center: <https://www.ice.gov/cyber-crimes>

Report cyber-enabled crime, including: digital theft of intellectual property; illicit e-commerce (including hidden marketplaces); Internet-facilitated proliferation of arms and strategic technology; child pornography; and cyber-enabled smuggling and money laundering.

If there is an immediate threat to public health or safety, the public should always call 911.

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Memorandum	From Jeh Johnson to Lisa Monaco, re: Assisting States with the Cybersecurity of their Election Infrastructure: What can DHS do?	3	09/09/2016	P5;

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COLLECTION:

National Security Council - Homeland Security and Counter-Terrorism Directorate

SERIES:

Monaco, Lisa - Subject Files

FOLDER TITLE:

Congressional Briefing on Russian Intrusion and Electoral Infrastructure (09/08/2016)

FRC ID:

70724

FOIA IDs and Segments:

22-26841-F

OA Num.:

W1100

22-26840-F 5

NARA Num.:

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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Lang, Kimberly C. EOP/NSC

From: Monaco, Lisa O. EOP/WHO
Sent: Monday, September 12, 2016 10:15 AM
To: Lang, Kimberly C. EOP/NSC
Subject: FW: Requested documents
Attachments: CSA and PSA Contacts_083116.pdf; Cyber Incident Reporting United Message FINAL.PDF; SLTT Slick Sheet_for election officials.pdf; DHS Support to State Election Officials.docx; Letter to NASS.docx

Pls print in color

-----Original Message-----

From: JCJS1 [mailto:JCJS1@hq.dhs.gov]
Sent: Saturday, September 10, 2016 10:40 PM
To: Monaco, Lisa O. EOP/WHO <lisa_o_monaco@who.eop.gov>
Subject: Requested documents

Lisa:

Enclosed are Word documents we discussed yesterday, along with PDFs of some other documents that may be helpful.

Jeh

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
List	DHS (Department of Homeland Security) Cyber Security Advisors (CSAs)	1	08/31/2016	P6/b6; b7c; b7f;

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National Security Council - Homeland Security and Counter-Terrorism Directorate

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Monaco, Lisa - Subject Files

FOLDER TITLE:

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Map	Cyber Security Advisors	1	N.D.	P6/b6; b7c; b7f;

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
List	DHS Protective Security Advisors (PSAs)	2	08/31/2016	P6/b6; b7c; b7f;

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Map	Protective Security Advisor (PSA) Locations	1	08/31/2016	P6/b6; b7c; b7f;

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Homeland Security

STATE, LOCAL, TRIBAL, AND TERRITORIAL CYBERSECURITY ENGAGEMENT

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) State, Local, Tribal and Territorial (SLTT) Cybersecurity Engagement program was established to help non-federal public stakeholders manage cyber risk. The program coordinates the Department's cybersecurity efforts with its SLTT partners to enhance and protect their cyber interests.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

To build trusted relationships, the SLTT program partners with stakeholders on all levels, and plans and coordinates cyber summits. The summits bring key stakeholders together to share best practices and discuss trends and advancements in the field.

INFORMATION SHARING

Close working relationships with key SLTT stakeholders are critical to fulfilling DHS's mission to protect the Nation's critical cyber infrastructure.

The DHS National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center (NCCIC) is a 24X7 cyber situational awareness, incident response, and management center and a national nexus of cyber and communications integration for the Federal Government, intelligence community, and law enforcement.

The NCCIC leads the protection of the federal civilian agencies in cyberspace, provides support and expertise to critical infrastructure owners and operators, and works with the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) to provide information to SLTT governments.

The Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) is grant-funded and designated by DHS as the key resource for cyber threat prevention, detection, response and recovery for the Nation's SLTT governments. The MS-ISAC provides advisories, newsletters, cybersecurity guides and toolkits, and many more services to all members in an effort to enhance cyber situational awareness.

Through its 24X7 Security Operations Center (SOC), the MS-ISAC serves as a central resource for situational awareness and incident response for SLTT governments. The SOC provides real-time network monitoring, dissemination of early cyber threat warnings, and vulnerability identification and mitigation to reduce cyber risks to SLTT governments. Membership is free.

MANAGING CYBER RISK

In conjunction with partners, DHS engages with SLTT representatives to help enhance their cybersecurity risk postures and collaborates with them to leverage free resources available to improve their cybersecurity.

The Cyber Hygiene (CH) assessment is a no-cost, voluntary, technical assessment encompassing configuration error and vulnerability scanning. Based on findings, DHS offers recommendations on remediating the vulnerabilities. This assessment is conducted remotely and on a recurring basis.

The Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (RVA) is a more in-depth no-cost, voluntary, technical assessment than Cyber Hygiene; This suite of services includes penetration testing, social engineering, wireless access discovery and identification, as well as database and operating system scanning.

Cyber Security Advisors (CSA) and Protective Security Advisors (PSA) are regionally located personnel that provide immediate and sustained assistance, coordination, and outreach to prepare and protect both SLTT and private sector critical infrastructure entities from cyber and physical threats.

ABOUT DHS CYBER

DHS is responsible for safeguarding our Nation's critical infrastructure from physical and cyber threats that can affect national security, public safety, and economic prosperity.

For more information: www.dhs.gov/cyber.

To learn more about SLTT resources, email SLTTCyber@hq.dhs.gov.



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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Draft	[Talking Points for Congressional Meeting]	2	N.D.	P1/b1; P5;

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Draft	[Question and answer talking points]	11	N.D.	P1/b1; P5;

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Records Not Subject to FOIA

Court Sealed - The document is withheld under a court seal and is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

Withdrawal Marker

Obama Presidential Library

FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Email	From Joe "Michael" Daniel to Lisa O. Monaco et al.	2	09/07/2016	P1/b1;

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COLLECTION:

National Security Council - Homeland Security and Counter-Terrorism Directorate

SERIES:

Monaco, Lisa - Subject Files

FOLDER TITLE:

Congressional Briefing on Russian Intrusion and Electoral Infrastructure (09/08/2016)

FRC ID:

70724

FOIA IDs and Segments:

22-26841-F

OA Num.:

W1100

22-26840-F 5

NARA Num.:

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Memorandum	[Memorandum]	5	07/27/2016	P1/b1;

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SERIES:

Monaco, Lisa - Subject Files

FOLDER TITLE:

Congressional Briefing on Russian Intrusion and Electoral Infrastructure (09/08/2016)

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Memorandum	[Memorandum]	3	07/29/2016	P1/b1;

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SERIES:

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FOLDER TITLE:

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Report	[Government Report]	2	N.D.	P1/b1;

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SERIES:

Monaco, Lisa - Subject Files

FOLDER TITLE:

Congressional Briefing on Russian Intrusion and Electoral Infrastructure (09/08/2016)

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Obama Presidential Library

FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Memorandum	[Memorandum]	10	08/03/2016	P1/b1;

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COLLECTION:

National Security Council - Homeland Security and Counter-Terrorism Directorate

SERIES:

Monaco, Lisa - Subject Files

FOLDER TITLE:

Congressional Briefing on Russian Intrusion and Electoral Infrastructure (09/08/2016)

FRC ID:

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NARA Num.:

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Report	National Intelligence Council Report	14	08/09/2016	P1/b1;

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COLLECTION:

National Security Council - Homeland Security and Counter-Terrorism Directorate

SERIES:

Monaco, Lisa - Subject Files

FOLDER TITLE:

Congressional Briefing on Russian Intrusion and Electoral Infrastructure (09/08/2016)

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Memorandum	[Memorandum]	9	08/10/2016	P1/b1;

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COLLECTION:

National Security Council - Homeland Security and Counter-Terrorism Directorate

SERIES:

Monaco, Lisa - Subject Files

FOLDER TITLE:

Congressional Briefing on Russian Intrusion and Electoral Infrastructure (09/08/2016)

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Memorandum	[Memorandum]	11	08/12/2016	P1/b1;

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COLLECTION:

National Security Council - Homeland Security and Counter-Terrorism Directorate

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FOLDER TITLE:

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Report	[Government Report]	3	08/16/2016	P1/b1;

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SERIES:

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FOLDER TITLE:

Congressional Briefing on Russian Intrusion and Electoral Infrastructure (09/08/2016)

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Memorandum	[Memorandum]	8	08/26/2016	P1/b1;

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Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 27, 2016

President Barack H. Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The recent hack into the servers of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and the subsequent release via WikiLeaks of a cache of 20,000 internal emails has demonstrated once again the vulnerability of our institutions to cyber intrusion and exploitation. In its timing, content and manner of release, the email dissemination was clearly intended to undermine the Democratic Party and the presidential campaign of Secretary Hillary Clinton, as well as disrupt the Democratic Party's convention in Philadelphia.

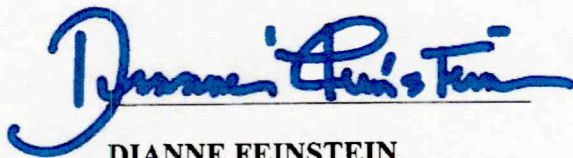
In June, the DNC publicly acknowledged that the party's network had been hacked and released a report prepared by cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike that found convincing evidence that the infiltration had been carried out by two separate teams working for the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) and Russian military intelligence (GRU). According to CrowdStrike, the FSB group focused on exfiltrating DNC emails, while the GRU hackers went after opposition research on Republican nominee Donald Trump. If true, and if Russia made the material available to WikiLeaks for release, then the episode would represent an unprecedented attempt to meddle in American domestic politics—one that would demand a response by the United States.

Russia's cyber capabilities are well known. Its apparent willingness to use those capabilities to embarrass American officials and seek to influence our foreign policy is not new—as illustrated by the 2014 release, widely blamed on Russia, of an intercepted phone call at the height of the Ukraine crisis that included comments by Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland. Russian meddling also has long been a fact of European political life, going back decades to Soviet times and continuing at a robust level to this day. Hacking, financial backing and a burgeoning relationship between Russia and right-wing parties elsewhere in Europe are exacerbating political divisions across the continent—to Europe's detriment and Moscow's advantage.

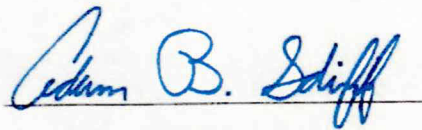
Earlier this week, the FBI announced that it had launched an investigation into the DNC hack, a step that we support. Given the grave nature of this breach and the fact that it may ultimately be found to be a state-sponsored attempt to manipulate our presidential election, we believe a heightened measure of transparency is warranted.

Specifically, we ask that the administration consider declassifying and releasing, subject to redactions to protect sources and methods, any intelligence community assessments regarding the incident, including any that might illuminate potential Russian motivations for what would be an unprecedented interference in a U.S. presidential race, and why President Putin could potentially feel compelled to authorize such an operation, given the high likelihood of eventual attribution.

Sincerely,



DIANNE FEINSTEIN
Vice-Chair
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence



ADAM B. SCHIFF
Ranking Member
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-7012

August 27, 2016

The Honorable James Comey
Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation
Federal Bureau of Investigation Headquarters
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20535-0001

Dear Director Comey:

I have recently become concerned that the threat of the Russian government tampering in our presidential election is more extensive than widely known and may include the intent to falsify official election results. The evidence of a direct connection between the Russian government and Donald Trump's presidential campaign continues to mount and has led Michael Morrell, the former Acting Central Intelligence Director, to call Trump an "unwitting agent" of Russia and the Kremlin. The prospect of a hostile government actively seeking to undermine our free and fair elections represents one of the gravest threats to our democracy since the Cold War and it is critical for the Federal Bureau of Investigation to use every resource available to investigate this matter thoroughly and in a timely fashion. The American people deserve to have a full understanding of the facts from a completed investigation before they vote this November.

As you know, Russia's intent to influence the outcome of our presidential election has been well-documented by numerous news organizations. For example, it has been reported that your agency is currently investigating the cyber theft of thousands of documents from several Democratic organizations, including, but not limited to, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC). Already, a consensus of national security experts publicly concluded that actors of the Russian government carried out these cyber attacks.

It is of vital public interest to understand the chain of custody of these illegally obtained documents from the time they were stolen to the time of public dissemination, including any evidence of complicit intermediaries between the Russian government, those who leaked the material and any United States citizen.

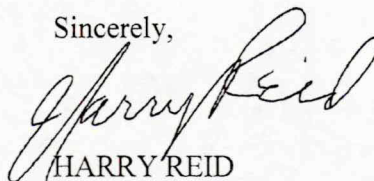
For example, it has come to my attention that last week, video evidence came to light of an individual with long ties to Donald Trump and his top campaign aides claiming to be in communication with WikiLeaks, the organization that posted online the 20,000 DNC documents illegally obtained by Russia. The prospect of individuals tied to Trump, Wikileaks and the Russian government coordinating to influence our election raises concerns of the utmost gravity and merits full examination.

Further, there have been a series of disturbing reports suggesting other methods Russia is using to influence the Trump campaign and manipulate it as a vehicle for advancing the interests of Russian President Vladimir Putin. For example, questions have been raised about whether a Trump advisor who has been highly critical of U.S. and European economic sanctions on Russia, and who has conflicts of interest due to investments in Russian energy conglomerate Gazprom, met with high-ranking sanctioned individuals while in Moscow in July of 2016, well after Trump became the presumptive Republican nominee. (The same individual recently broke precedent by giving a speech critical of U.S. policy while in Moscow.) Any such meetings should be investigated and made a part of the public record. Indeed, the recent staff changes within the Trump campaign have made clear that the Trump campaign has employed a number of individuals with significant and disturbing ties to Russia and the Kremlin.

The foregoing - and more - has led me to believe that this matter should be fully investigated and the investigation made public.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Harry Reid".

HARRY REID
Democratic Leader



One Hundred Fourteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

August 8, 2016

The Honorable Jeh C. Johnson
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson:

In recent weeks, a spate of hacking incidents against national political institutions have brought into sharp focus that cyber hackers, possibly at the direction of a foreign government, are engaged in a campaign to exploit cyber vulnerabilities to impact the forthcoming national election. Your recent acknowledgement that high-level discussions are underway about our nation's election cybersecurity¹ and designating our nation's electronic ballot-casting system as "critical infrastructure" for the November Presidential election is under consideration² reflects an appreciation of the risk that cyber weaknesses in certain voting equipment could be exploited by nefarious actors to alter the results of the election.

While attribution for these attacks is still the subject of ongoing Federal investigation, ignoring the risks to our electoral process presented by this campaign of cyber attack is not an option. With precincts in at least 28 States, including jurisdictions in Ohio and Florida, expected to utilize digital touch screen voting machines,³ there is an urgent need for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to provide a coherent, quick, and thorough response to needs of State and local officials who want to address the cyber vulnerabilities in their election equipment but may lack the resources and expertise.

¹ U.S. Seeks to Protect Voting System from Cyberattacks. Julie Hirschfeld Davis. New York Times. 3 August 2016.

² Id.

³ "How to Hack an Election in 7 Minutes," Ben Wofford. Politico Magazine. 5 August 2016.

The Department must act swiftly to prevent even the suggestion that our electoral processes are vulnerable or under attack and ensure the public confidence of one of our most sacred treasures—the right to vote—is not affected by the prospect of malicious cyber and information technology intrusions. Local, county, and state officials must be able to call on the Federal government to defend the integrity, reliability, and validity of our free and democratic elections. DHS, as the Federal government lead for working with State, local, tribal, and territorial governments to secure critical infrastructure and information systems, is the natural partner for efforts to address cyber vulnerabilities in the nation's electoral system.

I believe that DHS could assist jurisdictions in need by (1) increasing its outreach and awareness effort to State and local officials to educate them about the cybersecurity resources available through the United States Computer Emergency Readiness Teams (US-CERT); and (2) prioritizing the provision of assistance to any jurisdiction that requests assistance to help to secure an at-risk voting systems; and redoubling its efforts to produce actionable information for distribution to State, local, tribal and territorial governments through the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center (NCCIC). The Department is uniquely-situated and has the capabilities to help make a fundamental difference and protect a bedrock of our democratic process in a meaningful way.

It is in our Nation's best interest for DHS to move quickly for the benefit of all of state and local election officials whose systems are vulnerable and to protect the integrity of one of our most precious democratic institutions—our democratic, free, and unfettered voting process.

Again, I appreciate your attention to this critical homeland security issue, and I encourage you to strengthen your efforts to address this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Hope Goins, Chief Counsel for Oversight at hope.goins@mail.house.gov or 202-226-2616.

Sincerely,



Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

CHRISTOPHER R. HIXON, STAFF DIRECTOR
GABRIELLE A. BATKIN, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

August 8, 2016

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson:

I write today regarding the recent cyberattacks on American political organizations and the potential vulnerability of election systems and voting machines in the United States to similar attacks.

As you are aware, recent reports indicate the Russian Federal Security Service and Russian military intelligence may have been involved in the recent cyberattacks against the Democratic National Committee and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. If these reports are accurate, such an intrusion raises concerns about the ability of foreign actors to interfere in the American political process during the upcoming election, including through cyberattacks targeting electronic voting machines or the information technology of state and local election officials.

Recently, you indicated that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is considering whether to designate election systems in the United States as critical infrastructure.¹ While I am not aware that DHS has publically identified a specific or current cyberthreat related to election systems, concerns regarding the security of election-related information technology have persisted for some time. As far back as 2004, the United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team identified vulnerabilities in voting machines that would allow malicious actors to modify vote totals.² Other entities, including the Argonne National Laboratory and the Virginia State Board of Elections, have identified issues that left certain electronic voting machines vulnerable to physical or wireless intrusion without detection.³ Additionally, the Central Intelligence Agency has reportedly monitored foreign countries' use of electronic voting systems and identified attempts to manipulate election outcomes in those countries.⁴

¹ Jeh Johnson, Secretary, Dep't of Homeland Security, Remarks at the Monitor Breakfast (Aug. 3, 2016).

² Cyber Security Bulletin SB04-252, United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team (Summary of Security Items from Sep. 1-Sep. 7, 2004).

³ *Suggestions for Better Election Security*, Argonne National Laboratory (Oct. 2011); *Security Assessment of Winvote Voting Equipment for Department of Elections*, Virginia Information Technologies Agency – Commonwealth Security and Risk Management (Apr. 14, 2015).

⁴ Standards Board Meeting, United States Election Assistance Commission (Feb. 27, 2009).

Election security is critical, and a cyberattack by foreign actors on our election systems could compromise the integrity of our voting process. The American public should have confidence in our current election systems and the efforts of state and local governments to make the risk of voter fraud and a successful cyberattack remote. At the same time, the federal government can play a supporting role in helping address the potential for these types of attacks. Designating election systems as critical infrastructure could improve and expand our nation's ability to prevent and to respond to potential cyberattacks originating both from inside or outside our borders. As such, I commend your efforts to carefully consider this issue and urge you to make this determination as quickly as is feasible.

You also indicated that DHS is considering communicating with state and local election officials to inform them of best practices to guard against cyber intrusions related to electronic voting machines.⁵ As the federal agency that has expertise to assist state and local governments with cyberthreats, I encourage you to move quickly to provide appropriate technical assistance and any other support to state and local jurisdictions that request assistance with the cybersecurity of their election systems. I also ask that you coordinate your efforts with the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Election Assistance Commission, and other relevant agencies involved with the security of election systems.

Finally, I ask that you make the appropriate DHS officials available to brief me and my staff on this issue and efforts to ensure our election systems are secure.

As you know, cybersecurity remains one of our nation's biggest security challenges, and it is vital that we do what is necessary to protect ourselves and our democracy from these potential threats. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

With warmest personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,



Tom Carper
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman

The Honorable Willie May
Director
National Institute of Standards and Technology

The Honorable Thomas Hicks
Chairman
Election Assistance Commission

⁵ Jeh Johnson, Secretary, Dep't of Homeland Security, Remarks at the Monitor Breakfast (Aug. 3, 2016).

Withdrawal Marker

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
Email	From Mark E. Stroh to Lisa O. Monaco et al., re: RE: Secretary Johnson Media Hits	5	09/06/2016	P5;

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COLLECTION:

National Security Council - Homeland Security and Counter-Terrorism Directorate

SERIES:

Monaco, Lisa - Subject Files

FOLDER TITLE:

Congressional Briefing on Russian Intrusion and Electoral Infrastructure (09/08/2016)

FRC ID:

70724

FOIA IDs and Segments:

22-26841-F

OA Num.:

W1100

22-26840-F 5

NARA Num.:

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Pietranton, Kelsey L. EOP/NSC

Subject: Press Briefing by Press Secretary Josh Earnest and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes

From: Young, Caitlin E. EOP/WHO

Sent: Tuesday, September 6, 2016 10:32 AM

Subject: Press Briefing by Press Secretary Josh Earnest and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 6, 2016

PRESS BRIEFING
BY PRESS SECRETARY JOSH EARNEST
AND DEPUTY NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR FOR
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS BEN RHODES

Press Filing Center
Rashmi's Plaza Hotel
Vientiane, Laos

6:15 P.M. ICT

MR. EARNEST: Good evening, everybody. It's nice to see you all. Obviously this will be the -- one of the briefings that we'll do on the trip. I don't think we have anything at the top, so I think we'll just go to straight to your questions for the sake of efficiency. Who wants to get us started? Not everybody at once. Josh, do you want to go first?

Q Sure. I wanted to ask about the cancellation of the meeting with Duterte. The President said yesterday this wasn't going to affect our long-term relationship with the Philippines, but how is that the case if the President and the head of this other -- our ally are essentially in a war of words with each other? And the office of the Philippine leader said that the decision to cancel the meeting was mutual. Is that the case, or did the U.S. basically inform them that this was not happening?

MR. RHODES: Well, look, first of all, the nature of our alliance with the Philippines has been and remains rock solid. We have incredibly close working relationships with the government of the Philippines on issues related to disaster response, maritime security, diplomatic coordination on issues related to the South China Sea; economic, commercial and people-to-people ties. So I think people should certainly expect that our very close

working relationship with the Philippines is going to be enduring. And in fact, we continue to consult closely at a variety of levels, and in fact, I think Chairman Dunford has even been in the Philippines recently, if not today, for a chiefs of defense meeting.

With respect to the bilateral meeting, I think it was our judgment that given the focus of attention on President Duterte's comments leading into the meetings here, we felt that that did not create a constructive environment for a bilateral meeting. All of the attention, frankly, was on those comments and, therefore, not on the very substantive agenda that we have with the Philippines. So, again, given that focus, we felt that it wasn't the right time to have a bilateral meeting between the two Presidents. And that's something that we discussed with officials from the government of the Philippines last night.

Going forward, I would expect our close cooperation to continue, and where we also have differences, we'll continue to speak to those. And as President Obama said, for any country in the world, not just the Philippines, we'll certainly support very robust counter-narcotic efforts, but we also want to make sure that they're consistent with the rule of law and due process. And that too will be a message that we continue to carry forward.

Q What can you say about the likelihood of a Syrian ceasefire at this point? And you've heard the calls from Erdogan to establish a no-fly zone now that there's been more progress in Jarabulus. Do you still feel the same way about a no-fly zone as you did before?

MR. RHODES: So, again, as it relates to the potential for a ceasefire, that continues to be a subject of discussion with the Russian government. After the discussion between President Putin and President Obama yesterday, we feel like we have now identified the remaining gaps in what have been very extensive and technical discussions over a number of weeks now. And Foreign Minister Lavrov was returning to Moscow; Secretary Kerry is staying in touch with him, and they plan to meet in the coming days to see if they can conclude an agreement, having now identified the remaining issues.

Our objectives for that agreement would include ensuring that there is a Cessation of Hostilities that allows for humanitarian assistance to get into people who are in need. We want to make sure that there's space for the moderate opposition, and we also are open to working with Russia to focus on the threat from al Qaeda in Syria, al Nusra, as well as ISIL.

However, again, in order to achieve that cooperation, we do want to make sure that there is this period of calm and that there is this humanitarian access. So we'll be, again, following up in discussions between Secretary Kerry and Foreign Minister Lavrov, and I think we've made a lot of progress. But we're not going to take a deal that doesn't meet our basic objectives. And I think we'll know very quickly whether or not we can close those remaining gaps.

And your other question was -- President Erdogan. Well, first of all, I think we very much welcome the progress that has been made in terms of

clearing ISIL out from along the Turkish border. That's something that we've been focused on for a long time now in our discussions with Turkey. Our own operations in support of SDF opposition forces on the ground helped to clear Manbij, which was a key transit point for ISIL fighters into Turkey. And Turkey's operations in Jarabulus and then further clearing operations on the border have made a significant amount of progress on what has been a key priority, which is making sure that you cut off that border area. Because, frankly, that's also where the flow of foreign fighters comes in and out of Syria, and so if we can seal that border using Turkish forces, opposition forces, with our logistical and air support, I think that would help us make a substantial gain against ISIL.

In terms of a no-fly zone, in terms of the dedication of U.S. military resources, we want to use those resources to go after ISIL, to go after al Nusra insofar as we see them affiliated with al Qaeda and engaged in external plotting. We do not think a no-fly zone would resolve the fundamental issues on the ground because there continues to be fighting on the ground. A no-fly zone would necessarily only be contained to one specific area, and we have problems and violence across the country.

However, if we are able to preserve the space along that Turkish border, you do have an area for greater security and you do prevent this flow of foreign fighters into and out of Syria. So that's something -- an objective we shared with President Erdogan. We have not determined that a no-fly zone would be the best dedication of U.S. military resources.

Q Back on the meeting with Duterte. You said that it was your judgment that given the focus on his comments that you decided not to do the meeting. So are you saying that it wasn't the content of what he said that you found objectionable, or -- I'm trying to figure out what you're -- it seems like you're saying -- you're putting the focus on the fact that it was gathering all this attention as opposed to what he actually said, and I'm wondering if that had anything to -- if the President was offended by that.

MR. RHODES: Well, look, I think the two are fundamentally interrelated. So certainly the nature of those comments was not constructive, and therefore there was an enormous amount of tension on this series of statements by President Duterte. And again, given the important issues that we have, having a meeting where all we were going to discuss was a series of comments, frankly, did not strike us as the most constructive way to approach a bilateral meeting.

At the same time, we also knew that we could have a very important meeting with President Park of the Republic of Korea at a time when we just recently had an additional provocation from North Korea. So we had a lot of business to do with President Park, and we had a constructive meeting with her today.

But, again, we remain in contact with Filipino officials, and our close alliance relationship obviously continues and will going forward.

Q Can I ask on North Korea? Can you explain a little bit -- about closing loopholes? What loopholes? And is he talking about new

sanctions? What did he mean by "making them more effective?" And do you expect that he'll do some of this around UNGA?

MR. RHODES: So we've passed now through the U.N. Security Council the strongest sanctions ever on North Korea. They are having an impact, we believe. It is putting a tighter squeeze on North Korea. At the same time, we have over many years seen North Korea try to find ways to evade sanctions, try to find ways to access foreign currency, try to find ways to access sensitive technology using front companies for their activities. So we have to be very vigilant in sanctions enforcement, and we have to maintain the sense of urgency among the international community.

This is something that President Obama talked to President Xi about, because China plays an enormously important role in the enforcement of those sanctions. It's something that we'll talk about with the leaders here at the East Asia Summit, because when you look at the interdiction of sensitive technologies into North Korea, or the interdiction of North Korean efforts to procure things on the international black market, we've worked very closely with a number of Southeast Asian countries as well.

So we want to make sure that we're just cutting off all the lifelines that North Korea tries to grab onto in terms of evading sanctions and accessing currency so that they pay the full cost for their actions. So that was a subject of the meeting with President Park. So was our shared commitment to deploy the THAAD defensive -- missile defense system, given these repeated provocations and the development of ballistic missiles. One of the things the two leaders focused on was our determination to move forward with the deployment of the THAAD system, which protects U.S. personnel in the Republic of Korea, protects our allies, and it ultimately is necessary to counter the threat from North Korean ballistic missiles

MR. EARNEST: Ron.

Q Are you saying that in order to -- a more meaningful agreement on Syria, the two Presidents won't be -- down the road, that something appropriate or (inaudible) be accomplished about that? And secondly, on the whole cyber issue thing, the President spoke about it generally -- about (inaudible) but how concerned is he about the Russians specifically trying to target -- to meddle in the U.S. election?

MR. RHODES: So, first of all, on Syria, we did not in any way have an expectation that the two presidents would conclude the agreement, because, frankly, the remaining issues are fairly technical, and they have to do with the manner in which an agreement would be implemented. And so we've had expert teams that have been negotiating this in Geneva in some detail, and Secretary Kerry and Foreign Minister Lavrov have been leading those discussions.

So the purpose of the meeting between the two presidents was to provide direction to those teams to indicate what were our respective priorities, and then to see whether they can get this done. And I do not think that the two presidents will need to meet on this again. Frankly, we would like to see this, if it can get done, happen quickly because of the enormous

humanitarian needs in places like Aleppo. If it cannot get done, we won't sign on to a bad deal.

So I think we've been at this long enough to know what the outlines of an agreement could be, and we have to see in the coming days whether or not that can conclude, because there is an urgent humanitarian situation that needs to be dealt with. There is a terrorist threat that needs to be dealt with. And there also is the necessity of having space for a moderate opposition that can participate in the political process in Syria.

On cyber issues, the President spoke to this yesterday. I think, again, generally speaking, we have raised concerns with Russia, with China, about certain cyber activities that have targeted U.S. interests. The fact of the matter is, in this space we have our own significant offensive and defensive capabilities. And the reason he speaks about international rules and norms is precisely because we want to be able to hold nations to account when they are operating in an offensive manner against our infrastructure or, frankly, any other nation's infrastructure.

We're confident in our cybersecurity capabilities and our ability to secure our critical infrastructure, our election, as the President said yesterday. So I'm not going to get into the details of ongoing investigations that may be taking place about certain cyber intrusions.

Generally, we've also had concerns with some Russian actions in other parts of the world, where we've seen them seek to play a role in European politics, as well. So I think, in addition to the cyber issues, we do want to make sure that we and our democratic allies are standing up for the values that we believe in and pushing back against any efforts from Russia to seek to support -- again, I'm speaking in Europe now -- efforts to undermine European unity.

Q But about how many -- this investigation (inaudible). Is there a concern specifically about the U.S. election, based on (inaudible)?

MR. RHODES: Well, again, I think we're always obviously focused on assuring that we have the ability to defend against cyber threats to all of our critical infrastructure and all major events. But again, as the President has said, I think we have great confidence in our electoral process and the integrity of our elections.

MR. EARNEST: Roberta.

Q Is there any chance at all that President Obama would have kind of like an informal pull-aside or informal chat with President Duterte on the sidelines of these summits, particularly now that President Duterte has offered some kind of an apology for his statements? And secondly, how concerned is the White House that this spat, whatever you want to call it, could have an impact and push the Philippines into sort of China's arms?

MR. RHODES: So I would expect that the President will see President Duterte in the course of those summits. We have an ASEAN meeting, we have an East Asia Summit meeting. He tends to interact with all the leaders at

those events. So I would not expect a formal bilateral meeting, but I think he'll have an opportunity to interact with him, as with all leaders.

With respect to the South China Sea, we've sustained very close cooperation with the Philippines over the course of the transition to the new government there on those issues. So, first of all, we've supported the outcome of the arbitral ruling because we believe that international legal processes are the way to resolve these issues. We have a very close partnership with the Philippines on maritime security issues and continue to provide them with assistance in that space. We have a recently agreed-upon access agreement as it relates to bases in the Philippines. So the working relationship in this very important space continues to be strong.

Frankly, where we've had differences with President Duterte has related more to our concerns that there needs to be a clear commitment to due process and the rule of law as it relates to some of the internal security efforts that had been undertaken there. On the alliance issues, we'll continue to work closely with them.

We do think it's important, though, that given the serious nature of the issues in our relationship, that leaders seek to create a constructive tone for discussions. And again, that is why we made the decision that we did about the bilateral meeting.

As it relates to China, we welcome efforts by the Philippines to engage in a dialogue with China. Our position has always been that we're not picking a winner in terms of claims; that we want to see basic international principles upheld, including the peaceful resolution of disputes consistent with international law. What we don't want to see is these claims resolved through force or coercion. So we don't want to see a bigger nation forcing a smaller nation to accept their will. However, if the Philippines can reach a mutual understanding with China, or any of the claimants can reach a peaceful resolution to these disputes consistent with international law, then we believe that would be a constructive development. And, in fact, we've encouraged all ASEAN countries who are claimants to engage in dialogue, and we've encouraged ASEAN as a collective to support these basic sets of international principles.

MR. EARNEST: Margaret.

Q On North Korea, did you get any concrete pledges from Xi on cutting off financial lifelines? Because it was mentioned broadly, but specifically, anything that China is actually going after, bank accounts of -- leaders in a serious way? And on Duterte, this isn't the first time that he's insulted a U.S. leader, though it's certainly the first time the most powerful man in the world. I mean, he called John Kerry crazy. He used slurs to refer to the U.S. ambassador. Do you see this as a trend of anti-Americanism in the Philippines? And are you concerned about some of the things Duterte has said about perhaps getting a little closer to the Chinese, putting the court ruling aside?

MR. RHODES: So, each time we've seen comments like that, I think we've expressed concern. We were certainly concerned about the comments that related to our ambassador. I think that, again, what we are focused on here

Pietranton, Kelsey L. EOP/NSC

Subject: Background Press Briefing on the President's Meetings at the G20 Summit

From: Dansky Bari, Dominique A. EOP/WHO

Sent: Monday, September 5, 2016 11:00 AM

Subject: Background Press Briefing on the President's Meetings at the G20 Summit

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 5, 2016

BACKGROUND PRESS BRIEFING
BY A SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL
ON THE PRESIDENT'S MEETINGS AT THE G20 SUMMIT

Hangzhou International Expo Center
Hangzhou, China

3:31 P.M. CST

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Okay. So, first of all, President Obama met today --

Q Sorry, ground rules -- are we on the record?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Background since the President has got the press conference.

President Obama met today on the sidelines of the G20 Summit with President Hollande of France and Chancellor Merkel of Germany. They focused their discussion on the situation in Ukraine. They reaffirmed the importance of transatlantic unity and pursuing a resolution to the crisis, and they welcomed the recent "school year" ceasefire in eastern Ukraine. They agreed on the importance of maintaining sanctions on Russia until Moscow fully implements its Minsk agreement commitments to which all sides must adhere.

Then, separately, the President met for 90 minutes with President Putin of Russia on the sidelines of the G20. President Obama and President Putin discussed efforts to reach an agreement on Syria, to reduce violence, to provide humanitarian assistance, and to focus on al Qaeda -- also known as al Nusra -- and ISIL within Syria. Those talks have made progress,

including this morning in the meeting between Secretary Kerry and Foreign Minister Lavrov.

In their discussion, President Putin and President Obama clarified the remaining gaps in those discussions, and they directed Secretary Kerry and Foreign Minister Lavrov to see if they can reach an agreement. Secretary Kerry and Foreign Minister Lavrov are making plans to meet in the coming days, certainly this week. If an agreement can be reached, we want to do so urgently because of the humanitarian situation. However, we must ensure that it is an effective agreement, and so that is why we continue to have these discussions.

They also discussed the situation in Ukraine. The President, again, underscored the need for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, and made clear to President Putin that sanctions will continue on Russia if Minsk is not fully implemented. They also had a conversation about cyber issues.

And with that, I'm happy to take questions.

Q Can you tell us -- you said that they clarified what the remaining gaps are to get a deal. What are the remaining gaps?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, look, it's a diplomatic negotiation, so I don't want to get into the details. I will say that we have been focused on ensuring that the agreement includes for a period of calm so that we can get urgently needed humanitarian assistance to populations that are in need. So a focal point for us in those discussions has been to ensure that we do have a Cessation of Hostilities that allows for humanitarian access to people in need. More broadly, of course, we're also discussing what can be done to focus on al Nusra and ISIL inside of Syria. And we're also discussing what can be done on the political track.

They discussed the transition plans that have been developed by the U.N. representative, Staffan de Mistura, as a means for hopefully utilizing any potential U.S.-Russia agreement as something that can provide momentum to the political track, given that it would include for some calm and a focus on Nusra and ISIL, but a place for the moderate opposition in the future of Syria.

Q Ninety minutes seems like a long time. What was the tone of the meeting? Is this longer than they usually talk?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yeah, I think -- it is longer, actually. I've been in some of these other discussions on the margins. I think they were really addressing the core issues on both Syria and Ukraine. So they had a lengthy exchange of views about the situation in Syria and our respective perspectives on the situation in Syria. Again, the President was underscoring that the ongoing bombardment of civilians by President Assad, the Assad regime, supported by Russia and Iran, is both a humanitarian crisis and is also ultimately something that has fueled terrorism, given the breakdown of the situation in Syria, and therefore was emphasizing the need for there to be a Cessation of Hostilities while we are

providing humanitarian access, but also discussing what can be done to focus on al Nusra and ISIL.

So they had, again, a lengthy exchange on the situation in Syria. And then on Ukraine, what the President is focused on is determining whether the Minsk agreement can be fully implemented. If it cannot, then we will have to work to roll over sanctions with our European partners.

He had spoken to Chancellor Merkel and President Hollande about Ukraine. We agreed to coordinate very closely with our European allies who have been negotiating with Russia, through the Normandy process, on Ukraine. So we will be consulting with them in the coming days. And we want to determine whether Minsk can be implemented certainly while President Obama remains in office. And again, if it cannot, then the sanctions will have to be rolled over. That's our view, and that was a view that the leaders agreed upon in their discussions.

Q Did he get insight from Putin on whether that can be implemented, whether Minsk can actually be implemented?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, yes. I mean -- but, of course, as it relates to Ukraine, President Putin tends to focus on the Ukrainians and the remaining steps that President Poroshenko has to take in order for Minsk to be implemented. President Obama's point was that we can work in a coordinated fashion with the Ukrainian government, with our European allies, to see if there's an opportunity to move forward, but that for Ukraine to be expected to implement its side of the deal, we have to see that Russia is similarly implementing its side of the deal. And of course, that would include things like the Russian-backed separatists agreeing to security measures in which they're pulling back heavy weaponry and not engaging in violations along the line of control, just for one example.

So we'll be testing diplomatically in the coming weeks whether or not we can make progress on Minsk implementation.

Q Two things. The first, I know you didn't want to describe exactly what the differences were, but can you characterize them as -- I think we heard a week ago that they were technical differences, maybe not as substantive. There seemed to be some backsliding by the Russians in the last couple days, so if you can confirm whether that happened. And --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yeah. So, look, I think it's fair to say that they are technical. They have to do with how an agreement would be implemented. I think we understand that the objectives we're pursuing are relieving the humanitarian crisis; focusing on Nusra and ISIL; having some reduction of violence; and then trying to energize a political process, I think. So the main questions that remain have to do with the implementation of an agreement that would pursue those objectives.

I think there was some backsliding from some of the recent discussions in Geneva. However, I think today there was a narrowing-back to essentially at least where we were coming into here. And President Obama and President Putin were not going to get down into the weeds of the language of an agreement and the implementation associated with the agreement. They wanted

to therefore clarify for their respective teams exactly what the remaining gaps are, what their view of the strategic objectives are, and then we'll have to test whether or not Russia can agree to something that meets our core objectives. And again, I emphasize the fact that that includes the need for the type of Cessation of Hostilities that can allow for humanitarian access.

And again, we, on the one hand, want to test that proposition quickly because we're very concerned, obviously, as is the international community, about the continually deteriorating humanitarian situation in places like Aleppo. At the same time, we need to make sure that this is a good agreement. And so I think the coming discussions between Secretary Kerry and Foreign Minister Lavrov will determine whether or not there can be that type of implementation plan and, therefore, an agreement.

Q And then you said cyber came up. I'm wondering, of course, specifically if they discussed the hack of Democratic Party -- different party apparatus, and concerns over Russian interference in the election.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: So I don't want to -- I can't get into -- I don't want to get into the details of that discussion given the sensitivity of cyber-related issues. I think it's fair to say that, broadly speaking, the President wanted to address a number of concerns that we've had related to cyber issues, and this is something that we're going to continue to discuss with the Russians.

Q Can you tell us a little about what they discussed as far as what kind of enforcement mechanism there would be if the Assad regime violates areas under this agreement where they're not supposed to be launching airstrikes?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, again, I don't want to get into too much detail, but what we have said is that the type of cooperation that Russia has pursued with us -- they would like to pursue with us as it relates to ISIL and al Nusra would be, of course, dependent upon their fulfilling commitments under any agreement. So the agreement has linkages between the commitments on both sides, but I don't want to get into details yet, given that there is not an agreement.

Q So is this really -- I mean, I thought that the agreement was going to be something narrowly tailored to humanitarian aid delivery, but it sounds like you're linking it to these broader issues and these bigger issues. Does that mean that there was that much progress made, or --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The agreement is focused principally on the objectives I outlined -- a reduction of violence, humanitarian access, and then how can we focus on al Qaeda -- also known as al Nusra -- and ISIL. However, again, we see those steps as a prerequisite for political progress. And on a separate track, you have Staffan de Mistura developing a transition plan. So our hope would be that if we're able to reach an agreement, that that can help provide a better environment for progress on the political front.

At the same time, again, we're not going to take an agreement that doesn't meet our objectives in terms of humanitarian access and that doesn't allow for the type of moderate opposition that needs to be a part of that political progress.

Q How would you characterize the meeting? Productive? Contentious?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I mean, I think it was -- to pick a third word, it was constructive. I don't want to suggest that they resolved these issues. The reason it was constructive is I think it's clear now what our respective positions are, and we will see in the coming days whether on Syria we can reach a near-term agreement. If we cannot get the type of agreement we want, we will walk away from that effort. And on Minsk, I think it was important for the President to lay down for President Putin his view so that we can determine whether this is achievable in our remaining time in office.

And so on these two big issues, I think it was useful for them to be able to lay out their respective views. But again, we have serious differences with the Russians on these issues, and we won't know whether or not they are serious about making progress until we see whether or not, on Syria, they can reach an agreement that meets our objectives, and whether or not, on Minsk, they can demonstrate that they are ready to fulfill their commitments. So I think there will be a lot of diplomatic work out of this discussion, and we'll be able to see whether or not there can be a narrowing of the very significant differences that we've had with Russian policy in the recent years.

Q When you say focus on al Qaeda or al Nusra, does that mean joint military operations between the Russians and the U.S. in a way that -- beyond de-conflicting?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Again, I think that's something that we'd have to -- that remains to be seen. Again, this has been a focal point of a lot of our discussion. I think what's been clear in the past is there are times during which certainly the Syrian regime has painted the opposition -- supported by Russia -- has painted the opposition with I think a very broad brush. And what we're trying to do is make clear that the focus needs to be on Nusra and ISIL, and that there are other opposition groups that are more moderate that should be a part of the political process.

We have concerns about Nusra, as well, though. And we are concerned both by their al Qaeda affiliation and by their elements of Nusra that have had an external plotting ambition. So we share the concern about al Nusra. The question is, can we make sure that moderate opposition groups are protected by any reduction of violence and have a place in the political process.

Q What were some of President Putin's demands to the U.S. as part of moving this deal forward? Did he press you to try and get al Nusra to separate from U.S.-backed rebels? Were there any talks about what the U.S. could do to accomplish that? Or what were the other issues?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I don't want to necessarily characterize President Putin's views. Again, I will say that -- your question I think alludes to what has long been the case, which is, as I was just saying, we believe that the opposition is painted with too broad a brush in terms of being characterized as terrorist organizations. We can share, and we do share, the concern about Nusra, but we also believe that there are elements of the opposition in Aleppo and other places, of course, who are more moderate in orientation.

Q Talking about painting terrorism -- terrorists with a broad brush, I wanted to go back to the Erdogan meeting yesterday. First, just your kind of reaction or readout from it. He seemed less -- well, it seemed like a different tone than the Vice President's meeting about a week ago. I'm wondering if that's an accurate read on it; if you guys heard anything from him that was promising in terms of sort of de-conflicting our interests with the Kurds in Syria and what the Turks are up to there.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Actually, I thought it was a very good meeting. With respect to Syria, first of all, the Turks have made some progress, even in recent days, in securing their border and clearing out ISIL from their border. And we have not seen them take action against the SDF- and the U.S.-supported opposition groups who are south of Jarabulus.

The President did once again make clear that we have partners inside of Syria that include Kurds and include Arabs. And the SDF forces, for instance, who were very successful in the Manbij operation -- the forces that are going to stay behind in Manbij are indigenous, they're people from Manbij. However, we do continue to work with Kurdish and Arab forces who are going to be critical to the effort to push down to Raqqa. And that -- we made clear that that does not need to be inconsistent with Turkey's concern about making sure that its border is secure and their actions against the PKK.

So I think, again, there's a clear understanding of positions on both sides. There's good communication between our militaries. We supported some of their recent operations against ISIL. In fact, for many years, we've encouraged them to use their military to secure their border against ISIL. I think if we could achieve the objective of fully sealing that border, not only would that help retake territory from ISIL, but that would stem the flow of foreign fighters, which has been a large concern of ours.

On the coup, the President expressed solidarity with President Erdogan and the Turkish people. I think you've seen Turkey not engage in the same tone of suggestion of U.S. complicity. And, in fact, President Erdogan was -- in his public comments after the meeting -- I thought it was quite positive about Turkish-U.S. ties. He continues to insist on the extradition of Gulen, and obviously characterizes that as a terrorist movement. Again, President Obama explained that, in our system, we need to make an evidentiary determination on questions like extradition. It's not a political decision he could make; it has to be run through the proper legal channels. And our Department of Justice is sitting down with their Turkish counterparts, including the Turkish Minister of Justice and Minister of Interior, to review their evidence. And President Erdogan understands that

that process has to go forward, even as he of course has made his own determinations about the Gulen movement.

Q Can you give us some atmospheric from the Putin meeting? Where did they meet? Who else was meeting with them? Were they huddling over coffee?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: They have meeting rooms on the margins of the G20. So, again, it was 90 minutes. It was a business-like tone. On the U.S. side, Susan Rice was there, John Kerry was there, myself and Rob Malley, who's been in our discussions in Vienna, and Charlie Kupchan, who is our lead in the White House on Ukraine. So that was -- I won't read out the Russian side. I'm sure that they could. Foreign Minister Lavrov obviously was there.

And it was a lengthy discussion, went longer I think than we anticipated.

Q Anything you want to preview coming up in the next couple days? Anything about the speech tomorrow that you think is important that we haven't heard from you guys already?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think the bilateral meeting, of course, will be historic in that it's the first U.S. President to visit Laos. And the President will be looking to build that relationship both by discussing the legacy of war issues and our efforts on unexploded ordnance and that clearance, and POW-MIA recovery, but also discuss some of the more affirmative work we're doing together on development where we have a relationship in areas like health and education, and also discuss some of the regional issues that will be addressed at the summit.

Just as we've improved relations with Vietnam and Myanmar, we see Laos as a country that has traditionally been in the past an adversary of the United States. More recently, it's a country that we did not have a particularly close relationship with, but given how we focused on Southeast Asia, we think there's a lot of potential in that relationship. We're at the beginning stages of it, though.

The speech -- I think the President will want to speak not just to Laos, but also more broadly to his Asia Pacific policy over the last seven and a half years, and discuss the progress we've made in showing that the United States is helping to shape the course of events in the Asia Pacific; is a leading participant in the architecture of the region, including the summits that he'll be attending. He'll discuss the important economic commercial ties, which includes the necessity of approving TPP, which is a centerpiece of our potential leadership in this part of the world and central to demonstrating our staying power here.

He'll discuss maritime security issues in the South China Sea given its prominence. He'll discuss the commitment that we have to our values, which will also be demonstrated later this month when Aung San Suu Kyi visits Washington and meets with the President. And he'll, I think, provide a vision of the type of role he would like to see the U.S. play in the Asia Pacific, one where we're at the table and determining the architecture of

the region; one in which we have a very significant presence in support of our allies, but also have security cooperation with a broad range of countries on maritime issues and others; where we are helping to write the rules for the region through agreements like TPP, and where we have the type of people-to-people ties that can benefit Americans, given this is the largest emerging region in the world.

Q I know that she's coming to Washington later this month, but will there be any meetings with her at --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Suu Kyi?

Q Yes.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Not a separate bilateral meeting. She will be at the ASEAN meeting, so I'm sure he'll have the opportunity to see her. And this will be her first -- this will be the first ASEAN Summit since her party won the election in Myanmar.

Q Sorry -- in the readout of the bilat with Xi, there was sort of a lengthy discussion about the South China Sea. Was the President able to sort of glean something or work on something through that conversation that he'll be able to take to partners at his next set of meetings in order to sort of advance or deal with concerns over the situation?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I think there is a common position and there is a difference with China. In terms of our differences, we believe that the claims need to be resolved under international law and that the arbitral ruling that was reached under the Law of the Sea is binding. But China has rejected the legitimacy of that ruling. That's obviously an area of difference.

At the same time, we believe that there should be peaceful mechanisms for addressing these issues. So we've encouraged China to work with ASEAN on things like a code of conduct for activity in the South China Sea. We've also expressed our own commitment to things like freedom of navigation. China has objected to some of those operations, but we've made clear that we're going to continue them going forward.

So I think at the summits in Laos, we don't expect to resolve those issues. I think the differences will be clear. But I do think that the ASEAN countries at Sunnylands and in our discussions have supported basic principles, like freedom of navigation, peaceful resolution of disputes consistent with international law. There are obviously several claimants within ASEAN. Laos is not a claimant. But we'll want to have that discussion with ASEAN. And just as we had a lengthy discussion with President Xi about these issues, we want to make sure we're also talking to the other Southeast Asian nations so that everybody has an understanding of the U.S. position.

Q The administration said today that the President will raise the issue of North Korea's missile launches today when he's at the East Asia Summit. Can you flesh that out a little bit? Is he going to be lobbying countries to try and do more sanctions? Or what will be the --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: On sanctions implementation, that's going to come through the existing U.N. Security Council resolution. And we believe if that is fully implemented -- consistently implemented by countries like China, that that will have an impact, a significant impact, in North Korea.

I think with the other countries at the East Asia Summit, we want to see a renewed commitment to expressing opposition to North Korea's actions, isolating North Korea, making sure that there are not cracks in various sanctions regimes, so that North Korea is politically and economically isolated in this region and doesn't have the type of lifelines that they saw in the past.

One example of that is we've worked very hard with Myanmar to have them scale back their military relationship and their trading relationship with North Korea. We've worked very hard with a number of Southeast Asia countries to try to interdict shipments of sensitive technologies that are coming either from or to North Korea. So we want to make sure that, broadly speaking, there's the isolation of North Korea for its actions, but also the implementation of sanctions and interdiction regimes that allow us to ensure that North Korea cannot, again, try to find cracks or lifelines.

Q Returning to Roberta's question, there seems like there were Chinese ships spotted in the Scarborough Shoal. The Philippines are obviously worried about that. I'm just wondering what your guys' read on this -- if this is tied to the G20 and the kind of provocative response to some of the issues that you guys have raised; if you've been in touch with the Philippines to reassure them, or not; or if this is something where you guys are really concerned about.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: So I saw those reports. I have not -- I don't know whether or not we have independently verified them, so I can't speak to the circumstances immediately around Scarborough.

A couple points I would make. One, with the Chinese, even as it's clear that we have a difference about the arbitral ruling, one of the points that we've made to them repeatedly for the last several months is we do not want to see escalation in the South China Sea. Steps that could be provocative are inconsistent with trying to resolve these differences peacefully. And also, the President tomorrow will be seeing the President of the Philippines, a treaty ally of the United States, so we'll certainly have the opportunity to discuss Scarborough and other South China Sea-related issues in that meeting.

Q Can I ask one sort of broad question about the summit in toto?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes.

Q I mean, there's been all these concerns about protectionism around the world, and I'm wondering whether leaders were able to sort of make any pledges or take any concrete steps sort of to deal with that issue that sort of we've been seeing all over.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, to be honest, I actually have not really been in the G20 sessions, so we can get you a more detailed answer. But what I would say is I think the summit has focused on global growth, and we believe very strongly that protectionist policies are ultimately inconsistent with the steps that we believe need to be taken to promote global growth.

But let me make sure somebody -- yes. I don't want to read you a script.

Q I wasn't sure how many of the G20 sessions you had sort of monitored between all these other meetings.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes -- division of labor.

Q Thanks a lot.

END

4:03 P.M. CST

Pietranton, Kelsey L. EOP/NSC

Subject: Press Conference by President Obama after G20 Summit

From: White House Press Office [mailto:noreply@messages.whitehouse.gov]

Sent: Monday, September 5, 2016 1:52 PM

To: Stroh, Mark E. EOP/NSC <Mark_E_Stroh@nsc.eop.gov>

Subject: Press Conference by President Obama after G20 Summit

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 5, 2016

PRESS CONFERENCE BY PRESIDENT OBAMA
AFTER G20 SUMMIT

J.W. Marriott Hotel Hangzhou
Hangzhou, China

7:30 P.M. CST

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Good evening, everybody. Let me begin by thanking President Xi and the people of Hangzhou and China for the hospitality in hosting this G20 summit on the shores of beautiful West Lake. Thank you so much. Xie xie.

This visit offered the eighth opportunity for President Xi and me to meet. We agreed to advance our cooperation across a range of issues, including climate change, global health and development, peacekeeping, counter-narcotics, and nuclear security. We also addressed our differences on issues like religious freedom, maritime security, and a level economic playing field, but we did so in a clear, candid, direct, and I think constructive way. That has helped us to manage problems, and it's consistently helped us to improve relations between the United States and China.

This has also been my tenth and final G20 meeting. It goes by fast. And so before I take your questions, let me put into context what we've done over the course of our G20 meetings.

And I think back to April 2009, when hundreds of thousands of Americans were losing their jobs and their homes and their savings each month, and unemployment was on its way to 10 percent. Around the world, for the first time in a generation, the global economy was contracting, trade was shrinking, and the international financial system was nearly frozen. By several key measures, the global economy was on a worse trajectory than it was at the outset of the Great Depression.

But the size and the scope of the crisis was not what made that London G20 historic. What made it historic was the speed and magnitude of our collective response. One nation couldn't solve the problem alone, so together, developed and developing nations alike, took a comprehensive and unprecedented set of actions to prevent another depression and set the stage for recovery.

Most important was to create jobs and growth by stimulating demand across our economies. And America led the way. By then, in just my first 10 or so weeks as President, we had already passed the Recovery Act, set in motion plans to rescue our auto industry, stabilize our banks, jumpstart loans to small businesses, and launch programs to help homeowners refinance and stay in their homes. And our G20 partners would follow with similar actions.

To stabilize the global economy, we rejected the protectionism that could deepen the crisis. We cooperated to keep markets open and trade finance flowing, and bolstered the international finance system's lending capacity to respond to countries that were hurting the most. And to prevent future crises, we took steps to reform our financial regulatory system -- including the historic Wall Street Reform that we passed more than six years ago.

These were the actions we took in 2009. They were actions that prevented another depression, and created conditions for the global economy to grow by more than 25 percent over the past seven years.

What we also did, though, was to elevate the G20 to become the world's premier forum for international economic cooperation. And that decision allowed us, as the global recovery progressed, to take further actions to strengthen the global economy. And that's what we came to Hangzhou to do.

We've had long debates over the years about the best ways to promote sustained growth. But America's voice in the G20 has always been one of bold action, and that stance has been backed up by our economic performance. Since job growth turned positive in early 2010, America's businesses have created more than 15 million new jobs. We've cut the unemployment rate in half. And so far this year, wages have risen by almost 3 percent, which is much faster than the pace of inflation.

But one of the things that we learned through the G20 process is that more than ever our economies are interconnected and we've got more work to do together to keep the global economy growing. We have to do more to grow wages faster; to shrink inequality faster; to give everybody a shot at opportunity and security in a changing economy. And that should be the way forward for the G20 -- to make sure that the benefits of trends like globalization and technological progress are shared broadly by more workers and families who still feel like the global economy is not working for them.

And that's what we did here at this G20 Summit. We committed to using all of our policy tools to promote robust, inclusive growth that creates opportunity for young people and the middle class that they're working to join. We focused on making sure that businesses can compete fairly and all

working families can take advantage of the new prospects the digital economy creates. And we reaffirmed our commitment to support emerging economies through an array of development initiatives.

We also discussed ways to unlock the mutual benefits that trade provides while keeping it fair for our workers and the playing field level for our businesses. And that includes high-standard trade agreements that actually benefit the middle class, like the TPP. That includes working together to abstain from unfair currency practices, and address corruption and global tax evasion. And it includes our agreement to establish a new forum to address some of the market-distorting policies in the global steel sector that have hurt workers and businesses.

We also added momentum to the fight to protect our planet for future generations. On Saturday, the U.S. and China formally entered the Paris Agreement. And today, the G20 welcomed efforts to enter the Paris Agreement into force by the end of this year.

So if there's anything that the past eight years have taught us, it's that the complicated challenges of the 21st century cannot be met without coordinated and collective action. Agreement is not always easy and results do not always come quickly. Respecting different points of view; forging consensus instead of dictating terms -- that can sometimes be frustrating. But it is how progress has been won and how it will be won in the future. It's how we've come as far as we have in the eight years since the crisis affected us all. And it's how the G20 can make progress for all people in the years to come.

So, with that, let me take some questions. And I will start with Roberta Rampton of Reuters.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. I want to ask you about tomorrow, the next leg of your trip, a little bit. And tomorrow you're going to be meeting for the first time with President Duterte, and he's a leader whose war on drugs has led to the death of about 2,400 people in just the last two months since he took office. And today he said in a very colorful way that you better not bring this up. And I'm wondering, are you are committed to raising this with President Duterte? And are you concerned that meeting him legitimizes his approach on this issue?

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Well, I just came out of a long day of meetings, so I just heard about some of this. But I have seen some of those colorful statements in the past, and so, clearly, he's a colorful guy. And what I've instructed my team to do is to talk to their Philippine counterparts to find out is this, in fact, a time where we can have some constructive, productive conversations. Obviously, the Filipino people are some of our closest friends and allies, and the Philippines is a treaty ally of ours. But I always want to make sure that if I'm having a meeting that it's actually productive and we're getting something done.

We recognize the significant burden that the drug trade plays just not just in the Philippines, but around the world. And fighting narco-trafficking is tough. But we will always assert the need to have due process and to engage in that fight against drugs in a way that's consistent

with basic international norms. And so, undoubtedly, if and when we have a meeting, that this is something that's going to be brought up, and my expectation, my hope is, is that it could be dealt with constructively.

But I'll have my team discuss this. I've got a whole bunch of folks that I'm going to be meeting with over the course of the next several days. And, as I said, historically, our relationship with the Philippines is one of our most important, and my relationship with the Philippine people has been extraordinarily warm and productive. So I expect that will continue. But I want to make sure that the setting is right and the timing is right for us to have the best conversation possible.

Q So you're not going to meet with him?

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Well I'm -- no, as I said, I'm going to just make an assessment. I just got out of these meetings. What is certainly true is, is that the issues of how we approach fighting crime and drug trafficking is a serious one for all of us, and we've got to do it the right way.

Michelle Kosinski.

Q Thank you. Same subject, I guess, of colorful guys. What can you tell us about this hour-and-a-half-long meeting you had with President Putin -- the tone of it, any progress that was made? And do you agree with him that the relationship between our two countries is now frozen?

On the cyber front, Senator Reid recently cited intelligence briefings when he was expressing his suspicions that Russia is trying to meddle in the election and may even have direct ties to one of the campaigns. What can you tell us? Do you think Russia is trying to influence the U.S. election through hacking?

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Well, President Putin is less colorful, but typically the tone of our meetings are candid, blunt, businesslike --- and this one was no different. We had a range of issues that we had to discuss, but the two most important were, as has been reported, discussions that have been taking place between Secretary Kerry and Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, about ways in which we can institute a meaningful, serious, verifiable Cessation of Hostilities in Syria, and our capacity to provide some humanitarian relief to families, children, women who are suffering enormously under the burdens of that war.

As you'll recall, we had initiated a Cessation of Hostilities a while back. Initially, it did lessen some of the violence, and then slowly it unwound. And we're back into a situation in which Assad's regime is bombing with impunity. That, in turn, we think is actually strengthening the capacity of Nusra to recruit people who might not have initially been sympathetic to terrorism but now view anyone who's fighting against Assad as legitimized. And that is a very dangerous dynamic.

And so we have had some productive conversations about what a real Cessation of Hostilities would look like that would allow us both, the United States and Russia, to focus our attention on common enemies, like ISIL and Nusra. But given the gaps of trust that exist, that's a tough

negotiation, and we haven't yet closed the gaps in a way where we think it would actually work. But my instructions to Secretary Kerry, and Mr. Putin's instructions to Mr. Lavrov was to keep working at it over the next several days

— because the faster we can provide some relief to folks on the ground, the better off we're going to be.

And that, then, is a predicate for us to be able to transition into a serious conversation about a political solution to this problem that would involve all the parties that have either directly or indirectly involved themselves in the Syrian conflict.

We also spent time talking about Ukraine. There is a Minsk agreement that arose out of the Normandy negotiations between Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany, but it hasn't been implemented. And I made very clear that until it is implemented, the United States is not going to pull down sanctions; that it is important for both sides to try to seize this opportunity in the coming weeks to finalize an agreement and to figure out a sequence in which that document is put into effect. And there was agreement not just between myself and Mr. Putin, but also with Chancellor Merkel and President Hollande, that that effort should increase in urgency over the next several weeks.

And so that what was constructive but not conclusive. And we'll have to see whether we can actually get this done, or whether, in fact, President Putin -- despite talking about wanting a negotiation and a solution -- in fact, is comfortable with this constant low-grade conflict along the Russia-Ukraine border.

And finally, we did talk about cybersecurity, generally. I'm not going to comment on specific investigations that are still live and active. But I will tell you that we've had problems with cyber intrusions from Russia in the past, from other countries in the past. And, look, we're moving into a new era here where a number of countries have significant capacities. And, frankly, we got more capacity than anybody both offensively and defensively. But our goal is not to suddenly, in the cyber arena, duplicate a cycle of escalation that we saw when it comes to other arms races in the past, but rather to start instituting some norms so that everybody is acting responsibly.

We're going to have enough problems in the cyberspace with non-state actors who are engaging in theft and using the Internet for all kinds of illicit practices, and protecting our critical infrastructure, and making sure that our financial systems are sound. And what we cannot do is have a situation in which suddenly this becomes the Wild, Wild West, where countries that have significant cyber capacity start engaging in competition -- unhealthy competition or conflict through these means when, I think, wisely we've put in place some norms when it comes to using other weapons.

So that's been a topic of conversation with President Putin as it has been with other countries. We've started to get some willingness on the part of a lot of countries around the world, including through our G20 process, to adopt these norms, but we've got to make sure that we're observing them.

William Wan.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Heading into Laos, what are the main things you can offer its leaders? And what do you plan to push for in return? On the offering side, for example, I'm wondering how you view U.S. responsibility for unexploded ordnance. On the asking side, what are you pushing for most? Is it human rights? Closer U.S. ties in the face of China? Improving their problems with governance and corruption? What's the priority?

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Well, look, symbolically, it is important. I'll be the first U.S. President to visit Laos. And when you think about the history of the United States and Laos, I think it's useful to see what's happened in the evolution of our relationship with Vietnam, a country that I just visited recently.

At the outset, as we're trying to build trust, a lot of work can be done around war legacy issues. For the Lao, that involves dealing with unexploded ordnance, which is still plaguing big chunks of the countryside. And since Laos is still a relatively poor country that is developing, their capacity alone to clean that up is hampered by a lack of resources. We should help. And my expectation is, is that, in our meetings over the course of several days, that we'll be able to provide some really concrete assistance that ensures that innocent kids who are running through a field, or a farmer that's trying to clear a field, or a business that's trying to get set up -- that they're not endangered by the possibility of an explosion.

Likewise, we have deep commitments to accounting for those who were lost during that war. And as was true with Vietnam, to the extent that we're able to find out more about our missing-in-action and our POWs, that not only provides enormous comfort and meaning for families and is consistent with our traditions, but it also ends up being a show of good faith on the part of the country, and a way for us to move into a next phase of a relationship.

And so a lot of the conversation I think will start there, but it doesn't end there. We've had an initiative, for example, helping all the countries along the Mekong Delta to find ways to harness development and deal with environmental issues. And that's something that we've been doing through ASEAN over the course of several years now. For us to be able to expand some of that work I think would be important. Establishing people-to-people exchanges is another area that historically has been important.

I do think Laos -- seeing the enormous economic progress that Vietnam and China and others have made, are going to be very interested in finding ways in which they can advance into the global economy and help themselves grow, and I think that we can be a useful partner there.

So I think there will be a broad-based agenda. But if you think about the visit I made to Ho Chi Minh City, and driving through those streets, and the enormous wellspring of goodwill that you saw -- that started with some of the same kinds of steps that we're going to be taking with Laos. But I

think we can hopefully do it faster, make more progress faster than we did over the course of 10, 15 years, because we've learned some things. And I think Laos is very eager to engage with us, and we're eager to engage with them.

So I look forward to visiting what I hear is a beautiful country.

Christi Parsons.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. On the Transpacific Partnership, how do you plan to sell this to these Asian leaders who still have work to do in their own countries, and with some political -- you know, it's not -- the politics aren't easy, and maybe they don't want to do that. So much of it seems like the future is rocky in the U.S. Can you -- the U.S. usually ratifies its trade deals. Do you plan to convey a sense of inevitability? Do you feel that for the lame duck session, even if it doesn't happen then, do you feel like it's inevitable anyway?

And, if I may, I wonder what you think about the silent protest of Colin Kaepernick? And I also wonder what you think about the public response to it, which is really divided. I mean, some police don't want to secure '49ers games, and many fans feel that he's giving voice to something they feel strongly. So I just wonder how you look at that.

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Well, with respect to TPP, I don't have to sell it to Asian leaders here who were part of the negotiations because they see this as the right thing to do for their own countries. And when you look at the architecture, the structure of TPP, what it does is open up new markets for us that are generally closed. Our markets are more open than theirs for the most part, so we benefit from a reduction in tariffs and taxes that are already in place.

But for many of them, what they benefit from is this trade deal is the spur, the incentive for them to engage in a whole bunch of structural reforms that they know, over the long term, will reinvigorate their economy.

So, for example, Prime Minister Abe of Japan, yes, he's having to make some difficult decisions about opening up markets that previously have been closed, but he's also looking at a couple of decades of stagnation and anemic growth. And what he said to the Japanese people is, if we want to break out of this, then we're going to have to change how we do business, and this provides us a road map of how we can become more competitive on the world stage.

Vietnam, that, for the first time, is debating in a very serious way how they can provide protections to their workers and allow them to participate and have voice and bargain for wages, and, yeah, that's tough politically for Vietnam. On the other hand, they recognize that if they want to move up the value chain in the global market that they've got to start abiding by basic norms.

So the good news is they're ready to go. And what I'll be telling them is that the United States has never had a smooth, uncontroversial path to

ratifying trade deals, but they eventually get done. And it's my intention to get this one done, because, on the merits, it is smart for America to do it. And I have yet to hear a persuasive argument from the left or the right as to why we wouldn't want to create a trade framework that raises labor standards, raising environmental standards, protects intellectual property, levels the playing field for U.S. businesses, brings down tariffs.

It is indisputable that it would create a better deal for us than the status quo. Nobody has been able to describe to me -- with all the general criticism of trade that you hear coming out of some quarters, nobody is able to describe to me how this would not be a significant improvement for U.S. workers and U.S. businesses going forward compared to the status quo.

And so I intend to be making that argument. I will have to be less persuasive here because most people already understand that. Back home, we'll have to cut through the noise once election season is over. It's always a little noisy there.

And in terms of Mr. Kaepernick, I got to confess that I haven't been thinking about football while I've been over here, and I haven't been following this closely. But my understanding, at least, is, is that he's exercising his constitutional right to make a statement. I think there's a long history of sports figures doing so. I think there are a lot of ways you can do it. As a general matter, when it comes to the flag and the National Anthem, and the meaning that that holds for our men and women in uniform and those who fought for us, that is a tough thing for them to get past to then hear what his deeper concerns are. But I don't doubt his sincerity, based on what I've heard. I think he cares about some real, legitimate issues that have to be talked about. And if nothing else, what he's done is he's generated more conversation around some topics that need to be talked about.

So, again, I haven't been paying close attention to it, but you've heard me talk about in the past the need for us to have an active citizenry. Sometimes that's messy and controversial, and it gets people angry and frustrated. But I'd rather have young people who are engaged in the argument and trying to think through how they can be part of our democratic process than people who are just sitting on the sidelines and not paying attention at all.

And my suspicion is, is that over time he's going to refine how he's thinking about it, and maybe some of his critics will start seeing that he has a point around certain concerns about justice and equality. And that's how we move forward. Sometimes it's messy, but it's the way democracy works.

All right, last one. Angela Greiling Keane of Bloomberg.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. The G20 group today discussed the importance of tax fairness and consistency among countries. For you, how much of that discussion was centered on the Apple case and the EU's decision? And how do you balance your efforts here to ensure global tax fairness with your need and desire to protect U.S. companies and their shareholders? And if I may, on one other business topic, how would you

assess the likelihood of the actions taken on steel today of making a difference in overcapacity?

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Those are both great questions. This issue of tax avoidance and tax evasion is something that we have actively promoted as an issue for the G20 to tackle. We've worked with not only the G20 countries, but also some of the multilateral organizations, like the OECD, to refine how we can approach these problems. It's a complicated piece of business.

We did not bring up the specific case of Apple, because as a general rule, I don't want to bring up a single case in a forum like this where we're trying to shape broader policy. But at home, we have been focused -- whether it's on the inversion rules that we put forward, the proposals that we put forward to define who the beneficiaries are behind the veil so that we can catch people who are avoiding their taxes -- we're doing a bunch of stuff at home, and we want to coordinate better norms internationally.

The one thing that we have to make sure we do is to move in concert with other countries, because there's always a danger that if one of us acts unilaterally, that it's not just a matter of a U.S. company being impacted, but it may also have an effect in terms of our ability to collect taxes from that same company. And so you might end up with a situation where they pay into Europe, and the U.S. Treasury is shortchanged. So if there is not some coordination between various tax authorities, you get a problem there.

In the same way, we think there has to be some coordination about even some of our closest allies racing to the bottom in terms of how they enforce their tax policies in ways that lead to revenue-shifting and tax avoidance in our country.

So this is not something that I think is going to be sorted out overnight. I do think that if we are to regain the trust of ordinary people but the system is not rigged, and deal with these trends of inequality that have risen out of globalization and technological change, that we've got to make sure we tackle this issue in an effective way.

And we've made some progress, but not as much as we need to. And my hope is, is that it's recognized that it's in the interest of all countries -- whether they're developed countries or developing countries -- to work together to put a stop to this. Because developed countries are losing revenue, and that erodes their tax base and their ability to educate kids and build universities and build infrastructure, but it also wallops developing countries because oftentimes tax avoidance can go hand in hand with corrupt practices that impede development.

In terms of excess capacity, this is an issue that we wanted to get on the agenda. We got it on the agenda. In my bilateral conversations with President Xi, there was an agreement that we would make progress on dealing with steel overcapacity -- which, by the way, is consistent with the plans that President Xi himself has had to reorient the economy so that it's not heavily dependent on state-owned enterprises and an export model.

So, we've made some progress -- not as much as we'd like to see -- but some progress on that front bilaterally. Multilaterally, the way this was

resolved was the G20 agreed to put together an intensive process of gathering all the data, determining what the best steps are, which will then be reported in the G20 in Hamburg next year. And I think there was a validation of the basic principle that, to the extent that overcapacity is the result not just of market forces but specific policy decisions that are distorting a well-functioning market, that that needs to be fixed.

And so it was one of a number of examples that aren't always sexy and don't attract a lot of headlines of where issues that we've raised in the G20 get adopted and then a bunch of work gets done, and the following year you start seeing action, and slowly we strengthen and build up international norms.

If you look at the issue of IT and the digital economy, we were able to get the G20 to adopt a range of principles about an open Internet, net neutrality, making sure that businesses and vendors and providers aren't discriminated across borders, reflecting a lot of the foundational principles that have led to this digital revolution over the last several years.

And that will, in turn, generate a bunch of new work. And there will still be conflicts about how people deal with censorship or how they deal with cybersecurity issues, but we chip away at it, and over time what you get is sturdier international norms that everybody abides to and will help all countries grow and help people prosper.

So my parting words at the G20 were, having watched this process over the last eight years, I think we all have to recognize these are turbulent times. A lot of countries are seeing volatile politics. Sometimes you read the headlines and you can get discouraged about whether the international community and leadership are able to shape solutions fast enough for the scale of the problems -- whether it's migrants and refugees, or climate change, or terrorism, or making sure the international economy is working for everybody. But then when you look back over the course of eight years, actually you find out things have gotten better -- not always as fast as we'd like, but in significant ways.

You look at the progress we've made on the financial system. The American banking system now has \$700 billion more in capital; it is much safer and much sturdier. But it's not just us. Because of the G20, you also have a Basel III agreement in which all countries are having to strengthen their capital requirements and put in place some basic safeguards to prevent what happened at Lehmans. And that's true across the board.

So, as always, I'd always like to see even more get done, but I'm cautiously optimistic about the progress that we made. I tell my staff when they feel worn out sometimes that better is always good. It may not be everything that needs to get done, but if it's better than before we started, we'll take it.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

END

8:11 P.M. CST

Pietranton, Kelsey L. EOP/NSC

Subject:

Rough Transcript: 9/6/2016 Sec. Johnson MSNBC Andrea Mitchell

Andrea Mitchell: Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, the first cabinet secretary to speak to the largest convention of Muslim Americans. They were gathered this weekend outside of Chicago. Secretary Johnson joins me now. You speak of the parallels and to talk about what Muslim Americans have been perceived given the nature of the rhetoric, starting with the Muslim ban which we first discussed a year ago December -- and how it has pervaded the conversation both political and otherwise in our country.

Jeh Johnson: Well, first, Andrea, I think it's critical in this current environment where the Islamic State, other terrorist organizations are trying to target American Muslim communities for recruitment that we build bridges to American Muslim communities, which I've made a priority since I've been secretary of homeland security. I've been in multiple cities talking to American Muslim communities, I use that plural on purpose because they are a very diverse group. I received this invitation to come speak to this convention of literally thousands of American Muslims in one place and I thought it was imperative to accept. I do see parallels in history, I'm a student of history, and I look at the struggle of honest, hardworking Muslim Americans who are patriotic people to win full acceptance in this society and I see prior examples of the same thing, whether it's African Americans, whether it's Catholic Americans, Jewish Americans, I see parallels of the same thing. And the message I wanted to send to this community that was gathered at this convention is if you know the American story, you know that ultimately you will win full acceptance and become a part of the fabric of our country. That was the message I wanted to send and I think it was well-received.

AM: And also speaking there with the khans, you met with the khans. Whom you had not met before. And your impressions of what they've gone through as the gold star family.

Naturally, Mr. and Mrs. Khan, the gold star parents were probably the two most recognizable people at this convention. I had the opportunity to meet them and I was impressed because they are remarkably humble, dignified people. They've been through a lot obviously and I was just really pleased to meet them. He showed me his copy of the pocket constitution and so that was, that was a good occasion for me.

AM: Immigration. It's unclear exactly what is the policy. We've had the debate. I know you're not going to get into that, how would a deportation force work? If you had to deport four, five, six million of the 11 or 12 million Muslim -- rather, undocumented immigrants here, for whatever reason, how would you go about doing that as a practical manner?

JJ: Well, under the enforcement priorities we've set, we actually have prioritized the removal of convicted criminals. we have prioritized the removal of people who are threats to public safety. we stress that and focused on it even more with the presidents enforcement priorities which I announced in November 2014. And so, we've been out there looking for convicted criminals who are undocumented on the streets and arresting them and sending them home. We just had a very large operation in Philadelphia where we rounded up over 100 undocumented, convicted criminals, many of whom frankly should not have been running around the streets and so, we're bringing these people into custody and we're removing them. this is our enforcement priority right now.

AM: And the White House has been criticized by many in the community in the Mexican-American community saying there's too much deportation.

JJ: The level of deportations over the last five, six years gone down, but we're focused even more intensely on removing convicted criminals, threats to public safety and national security. that's the direction that I gave our immigration enforcement work force and they're complying with it.

AM: Now I don't know if you've seen these Trump rallies and I have been watching very closely, and it's heart breaking when he brings out these moms and a few dads, the angel moms he calls them and they all speak about their children or spouses who have been killed by criminals, they say, who were undocumented. they use more pejorative languages.

JJ: The stories are heart breaking, truly. I've met with parents of those killed by undocumented criminals and first of all, we have discontinued the controversial secure communities program where cities and states and counties were refusing to work with our immigration work force. And we've replaced that with something called the priority enforcement program. I'm pleased that we've been seeing progress where states and cities and counties are coming back us to and to work with again because we've told them we're interested in taking from your jails the most dangerous, undocumented criminal that you have. And so i am pleased that they're working with us again and we've actually reduced the number of convicted criminals who have been released from immigration detention. and i want to continue moving in that direction.

AM: Now Russian hacking. There's a lot of lot of reporting, Washington Post, reports on security national concerns that Russia may be trying to get involved through this hacking of democratic organizations, primarily, get involved in somehow swag at election. and we don't know what could happen on election day. what is homeland security doing to protect the American election from foreign interference.

JJ: Well first, we have a lot of confidence in the integrity of the election process itself. There are some 9,000 state and local jurisdictions that are involved in the election process, including national elections, we've looked at a fair amount of it. we've looked at what states and cities do. we have a lot of confidence in the process itself, we're in the mode now of wanting to leave no stone unturned, and so, what DHS, my department, has been going over the last several weeks is contacting state election officials to say, we want to leave no stone unturned. There are services we can offer by way of vulnerability to detection, incident response, we're in a general environment where there's an increasing level of sophistication by cyber attackers across the spectrum, whether it's assassination state actors, hacktivists, and so we want to the inform state election officials of what we see on a national level as best practices and we're doing that right now.

AM: With all due respect, the office of personal management was hacked 21, 22 million people, perhaps you as well, we could see where recently vetted in the last number of years, Russia was being held responsible for one of the hacks against the white house and the state department. china was also implicated, and others. so if they can hack our agencies how can we pretend we're protecting the election?

JJL The election process is not tied to the internet grid.

AM: It's electronic in many instances.

JJ: It's not generally linked to the internet. in terms of federal.gov, we're moving in the right direction. DHS is now installing across lots of federal agencies, including OPM now, the ability to not just monitor and detect cyber intrusions, but to block them as well. we're in a much better place than we were as recently as a year ago. pursuant to a pretty aggressive timetable that I've set for the federal.gov system.

AM: thanks so much, Jeh Johnson, always a pleasure.

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