



FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
Electronic Communication

Title: ([REDACTED]) Opening EC

Date: 05/16/2017

From: COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

D [REDACTED]

Contact: [REDACTED]

Approved By: BAKER JAMES A
PRIESTAP E W

Drafted By: [REDACTED]

Case ID #: [REDACTED]-HQ-2167885

([REDACTED]) OXFERD COMMA;
FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT -
RUSSIA;
SENSITIVE INVESTIGATIVE MATTER

Synopsis: ([REDACTED]) To open and assign captioned matter.

Reason: 1.4(b)

Derived From: FBI NSISC-
20090615

Declassify On: 20421231

Full Investigation Initiated: 05/16/2017

Reference: [REDACTED]-HQ-2063661 Serial 1

Details:

([REDACTED]) At the direction of the Assistant Director of the FBI's Counterintelligence Division, following consultation with the Office of the General Counsel, the FBI is opening a full investigation based on an articulable factual basis that reasonably indicates that President Donald J. Trump may be or has been, wittingly or unwittingly, involved in activities for or on behalf of the Government of the Russian Federation which may constitute violations of federal

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criminal law or threats to the national security of the United States. The goal of the investigation is to determine if President Trump is or was directed by, controlled by, and/or coordinated activities with, the Russian Federation in a manner constituting a threat to the national security of the United States and/or a violation of federal criminal statutes. In addition, this investigation will also seek to determine whether President Trump and others yet to be named obstructed and/or conspired to obstruct any associated FBI investigation.

([REDACTED]) The FBI is predicated the investigation on predetermined criteria set forth by the CROSSFIRE HURRICANE investigative team based on an assessment of reliable lead information received during the course of the investigation.

- [REDACTED] In May 2016, a named member of the Trump campaign team indicated he was knowledgeable that the Russians made a suggestion to the "Trump team" that they [the Russians] could assist the Trump campaign with an anonymous release of information during the campaign damaging to the Clinton campaign.

- o (U/[REDACTED]) According to U.S. Intelligence Community (USIC) information, Russian intelligence gained access to Democratic National Committee (DNC) networks as early as July 2015 and maintained access through June 2016. Circa March 2016, Russian intelligence also gained email access to senior Democratic Party officials and political figures.

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The USIC assesses with high confidence, beginning in June 2016, Russian intelligence services used DCLeaks.com and WikiLeaks to publicly release the material obtained through the aforementioned cyber operations.

- (U/[REDACTED]) According to multiple open source reports, the Trump campaign intervened during the course of the GOP platform committee discussion on Ukraine in the run-up to the 18-22 July 2016 Republican National Convention (RNC) in Cleveland. Allegedly, through this intervention, the Trump campaign members were able to amend the GOP platform language on US support for Ukraine away from "[the provision of] lethal defensive weapons" to a more anodyne call for "appropriate assistance." The FBI assesses this platform change would be favorable to Russian interests following their annexation of Crimea. Immediately after the RNC, Trump and his then-campaign manager Paul Manafort publicly denied any involvement in "softening" the language on Ukraine. However, following the 2016 presidential election and inauguration, Trump's foreign policy advisor during the campaign, Jeff (JD) Gordon, told CNN that he pushed the platform change to align with Trump's views. Gordon said he "advocated for the GOP platform to include language against arming Ukrainians against pro-Russian rebels...[as it was] in line with Trump's views, expressed at a March [2016] national security meeting [for the campaign] at the unfinished Trump hotel."

- o [REDACTED] Gordon's post-inauguration comments to CNN are supported through FBI investigation. According to FBI
- [REDACTED]

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information, Gordon advised members of the Trump campaign foreign policy team on 14 July 2016 that they [the campaign] had "defeated red line amendments like providing lethal assistance to Ukraine."

- (U/ [REDACTED]) Open source information indicates that President Trump has had long-standing business and real estate ties in Russia and former Soviet states, stemming from the late 1980s. In 2008, President Trump's son claimed that Russians made up a "disproportionate cross-section" of many of President Trump's assets. Open source information also indicates that President Trump has had business ties in the United States and Russia with named Russian oligarchs.

[REDACTED] As part of this investigation, the FBI is also seeking to determine whether President Trump and others yet to be named obstructed and/or conspired to obstruct any associated FBI investigation. An effort to impede the FBI's investigation into the Russian efforts to influence the 2016 Presidential election could have a negative impact on the United States's ability to fully understand our foreign adversary, protect the national security, and on the FBI's ability to enforce the criminal law.

- ([REDACTED]) Starting on 28 January 2017 and continuing through at least April 2017, President Trump had multiple conversations during one-on-one personal meetings and telephone calls with former FBI Director James Comey, in which he repeatedly: (a) sought Comey's personal loyalty; (b) asked Comey to publicize the fact that the President was not the subject of an FBI investigation; and (c) asked Comey to do what he could to resolve the investigations and lift what the President viewed as a cloud

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over his Presidency. In addition, President Trump expressed his hope that Comey not further pursue the investigation of former US National Security Advisor Michael Flynn.

• (U// [REDACTED]) The rationale provided by President Trump for the 9 May 2017 termination of Comey has changed over time. President Trump's 9 May 2017 letter to Comey stated that he was being terminated at the recommendation of the Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General of the United States. A White House press release issued the same evening repeated that "President Trump acted based on the clear recommendations of both Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein and Attorney General Jeff Sessions." On the evening of 9 May 2017, White House spokesmen further added the termination had "nothing to do with Russia." In a televised interview on 11 May 2017, the rationale changed, when President Trump stated that he [President Trump] made the decision well prior to the recommendation of the Department of Justice that, "I was gonna fire regardless of the recommendation. . . And in fact when I decided to just do it, I said to myself, I said you know, this Russia thing with Trump and Russia is a made up story, it's an excuse by the Democrats for having lost an election that they should have won." This alternative explanation can be reasonably read to imply that the FBI's counterintelligence investigation was a factor in President Trump's decision to terminate Comey.

([REDACTED]) As the captioned subject was the candidate of a domestic political campaign and is currently serving in national political office, the FBI has categorized this investigation as a sensitive

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investigative matter (SIM) and considered the factors set forth in DIOG 10.1.3. Based on the facts and circumstances provided to date, the FBI believes that opening this investigation is the least intrusive method to address the serious national security risk posed by the activities alleged.

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