

**Additional Questions for the Record of Senator Patrick Leahy  
Senate Judiciary Committee,  
Hearing on the Nomination of Senator Jeff Sessions to Serve  
as Attorney General of the United States  
January 25, 2017**

Many answers to my written questions were non-responsive. While some answers quoted statutes and cases to support your position (e.g. Questions 4b, 11a, 15, 19a), in other responses you professed a complete lack of knowledge, even on topics that have dominated the news in recent months. You acknowledged in one response that you believe a statute is constitutional, but in others you refused even to say whether you considered a law to be “reasonably defensible.” When responding to these follow up questions, please review any necessary materials to provide substantive answers to my questions.

I also was troubled by your responses to questions 8 and 22, in which you consistently did not answer the question directly and stated that you had “no knowledge of whether [an individual] actually said [remarks relevant to the question] or in what context.” Yet you omitted in your response footnotes that I included, which provided the relevant source material. I am re-asking those questions here and, for your convenience, I am appending these source materials to this document.

**Questions 8 and 22**

**8.** In 2014, you accepted the “Daring the Odds” award from the David Horowitz Freedom Center. The Southern Poverty Law Center has repeatedly called David Horowitz an “anti-Muslim extremist” and has an extensive and detailed profile of Mr. Horowitz’s racist and repugnant remarks against Muslims, Arabs, and African-Americans.

In your hearing, you stated to Senator Blumenthal with regard to Mr. Horowitz, “I am not aware of everything he has ever said or not.” You also defended your association with him by saying “I am not aware of those comments, and I do not believe David Horowitz is a racist or a person that would treat anyone improperly, at least to my knowledge.” Now you have had the opportunity to learn more about the extremist remarks Mr. Horowitz has made.

For example, Mr. Horowitz has repeatedly claimed that the United States government has been infiltrated by Muslims. He has referred to Muslims as “Islamic Nazis” who “want to kill Jews, that’s their agenda.”<sup>1</sup>

**a. Do you disavow and condemn that remark?**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://mondoweiss.net/2011/03/peter-king-hearings-come-to-flatbush-david-horowitz-stokes-anti-muslim-sentiment-at-brooklyn-college>.

Mr. Horowitz has said “Obama is an anti-American radical and I’m actually sure he’s a Muslim, he certainly isn’t a Christian. . . . He’s a pretend Christian in the same way he’s a pretend American.”<sup>2</sup>

**b. Do you disavow and condemn that remark?**

Mr. Horowitz has even claimed that Muslims have “infiltrated” the Republican Party, and that “Grover Norquist is a Muslim, he is a practicing Muslim.”<sup>3</sup>

**c. Do you disavow and condemn that remark?**

In 2015, you received the “Keeper of the Flame” award from the Center for Security Policy. The Center for Security Policy has been strongly criticized by the Anti-Defamation League, and is considered a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

In 2011, its founder, Frank Gaffney, was banned from the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) because, in the words of one board member, “they didn’t want to be associated with a crazy bigot.”<sup>4</sup> Among his disgraceful statements, Mr. Gaffney has said that the two Muslims in Congress, Representative Keith Ellison and Andre Carson, have “longstanding Muslim Brotherhood ties.”<sup>5</sup>

**e. CPAC did not want to be associated with a “crazy bigot,” but you accepted an award from him in 2015. Do you condemn Mr. Gaffney’s remarks and his insinuation that the two Muslim Congressmen are affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood?**

**f. Do you believe it is acceptable for the Attorney General to associate with Mr. Gaffney and his extremist organization?**

**g. Mr. Gaffney has complained about Somali refugees holding jobs in the meat processing industry, saying “it kind of creeps me out that they are getting jobs in the food supply of the United States.”<sup>6</sup> Do you condemn that statement?**

**h. Mr. Gaffney argued that a Muslim member of Congress should not be allowed to serve on the House Intelligence Committee because of his “extensive personal and political associations with...jihadist infrastructure in America.”<sup>7</sup> Do you condemn that remark?**

**i. Mr. Gaffney has said of President Obama that it is an “increasingly indisputable fact that this president is providing aid and comfort to enemies of the United States.**

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/david-horowitz-knows-obama-is-a-muslim-because-he-hates-america-so-much>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/david-horowitz-says-huma-abedin-is-worse-than-alger-hiss-and-grover-norquist-is-a-practicing-muslim-subverting-the-gop>.

<sup>4</sup> <http://religiondispatches.org/cpac-conservatives-shun-crazy-bigot-gaffney>.

<sup>5</sup> <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/homeland-security/276636-muslim-brotherhood-day-on-capitol-hill>.

<sup>6</sup> <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/civil-rights/271366-freedom-and-hate>.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/frank-gaffney-muslim-congressman-part-of-islamic-fifth-column>.

**And that is the definition, as you know, of treason.”<sup>8</sup> Do you condemn the offensive allegation that President Obama is a traitor?**

President-elect Trump has appointed Michael Flynn to be his National Security Advisor. The National Security Advisor has typically been the President’s principal advisor on national security matters, a position that does not require Senate confirmation.

Mr. Flynn serves on the board of advisors for an organization called ACT for America. The Southern Poverty Law Center has called this organization “far and away the largest grassroots anti-Muslim group in America.” In August 2016 – less than six months ago – Mr. Flynn spoke at an event for this group. He is on video saying that Islam “is a political ideology. It definitely hides behind this notion of it being a religion.” He also added that Islam is “like a malignant cancer.”<sup>9</sup>

- k. Do you disavow and condemn Mr. Flynn’s remarks?**
- l. Do you believe that the President’s national security advisor should refer to Islam as a “malignant cancer”?**
- m. Do you believe the National Security Advisor should be associated with organizations that promote anti-Islamic bigotry and conspiracy theories?**

In the unclassified Intelligence Community Assessment on “Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections” released on January 6, 2017, there are seven pages describing the activities of RT America TV. The report notes that the network’s “Leadership [is] closely tied to, controlled by Kremlin.” Mr. Flynn has given a paid speech to RT, and attended a dinner celebrating the network’s anniversary, where he sat at the same table as Vladimir Putin.<sup>10</sup>

- n. Given the facts presented here, what legal issues does the relationship between the National Security Advisor and the Russian government raise?**

In 2015, you received an award from the Eagle Forum for “Excellence in Leadership.” The late founder of that organization has a long history of controversial remarks. That includes advocating for “railroad cars full of illegals going south”<sup>11</sup> and increasing the pay gap between men and women,<sup>12</sup> and arguing that married women by definition cannot be raped by their husbands.<sup>13</sup>

- o. Do you agree that there should be “railroad cars full of illegals going south”? Do you condemn that remark?**

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/frank-gaffney-obama-playing-for-the-other-team-committing-treason>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://qz.com/841197/islam-is-a-malignant-cancer-the-hateful-rhetoric-of-michael-flynn-trumps-new-national-security-adviser>.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/20/politics/kfile-michael-flynn-rt-syria>.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/phyllis-schlafly-wants-railroad-cars-full-of-illegals-going-south>.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/schlafly-increase-the-pay-gap-so-women-will-have-better-opportunities-to-find-a-husband>.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/schlafly-reiterates-view-that-married-women-cannot-be-raped-by-husbands>.

- p. **Do you agree that married women by definition cannot be raped by their husbands? Do you condemn that remark?**
- q. **Do you agree that the pay gap between men and women should be increased, rather than diminished?**
- r. **Ms. Schlafly also claimed “it would be useful to reinstate the House Committee on Un-American Activities” to target Muslims.<sup>14</sup> Do you agree with that statement?**

**22.** The intelligence community has concluded that Russia intervened in the 2016 election in an effort to help elect Donald Trump. The report is available at [https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA\\_2017\\_01.pdf](https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf). Russian interference in our elections is larger than any candidate or political party. This is about protecting our democracy. Please review this report and respond to the following questions.

- a. **Do you accept the conclusion of the intelligence community that Russia was responsible for the hack of the DNC and Hillary Clinton’s campaign chair?**
- b. **Do you accept the conclusion of the intelligence community that Russia provided to Wikileaks the information that it stole?**
- c. **Do you accept the conclusion of the intelligence community that Russia engaged in these activities in order to interfere with the election in Donald Trump’s favor?**

### **Additional follow-up questions**

**1.** You previously responded to questions 22a-c that you “have no reason not to accept the intelligence community’s conclusion(s) as contained in the report.” Given that response, I was surprised that when I then asked you if Russia’s behavior, which was detailed in the report, was illegal and a threat to our democracy, your response was only, “I have not reviewed the matter in any detail; therefore, I am not in a position to opine on it.”

This issue has received significant news coverage, has been the subject of the DNI report provided with these questions, and will be the subject of an investigation by the Intelligence Committee (<https://www.burr.senate.gov/press/releases/joint-statement-on-committee-inquiry-into-russian-intelligence-activities>). Senators McCain, Schumer, Graham, and Reed previously called for an investigation by a select bipartisan committee ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/12/18/mccain-calls-for-committee-to-investigate-russia-hacking-theres-no-doubt-of-interference/?utm\\_term=.36d83eddfc08](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/12/18/mccain-calls-for-committee-to-investigate-russia-hacking-theres-no-doubt-of-interference/?utm_term=.36d83eddfc08)).

Please read the appended report before responding.

- a. **Given the information presented in the DNI report, do the Russian attempts to interfere in the 2016 election, including its hacks of the Democratic National**

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/schlafly-reinstate-the-house-committee-on-un-american-activities>.

**Committee and of “some Republican-affiliated targets” (Report 3), constitute illegal behavior? If your answer is anything other than an unambiguous “yes,” please explain how this hacking might possibly be legal.**

**b. The report states on page one:**

**“We assess with high confidence that Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the US presidential election, the consistent goals of which were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency.”**

**Given these conclusions and the entirety of the report, do you believe the Russian attempts to interfere in the 2016 election constitute a threat to our democratic process? If your answer is anything other than an unambiguous “yes,” please explain why such foreign interference in the American electoral process – seeking to “undermine public faith in the US democratic process” – is acceptable.**

**2.** I previously asked you about the propriety of President Trump giving a White House position to Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi. I noted, “In 2013, while Bondi’s office was considering joining a lawsuit against Trump University for fraud (which was settled two months ago for \$25 million), Mr. Trump donated \$25,000 to a group supporting Bondi. The donation was made illegally from Mr. Trump’s foundation, and he was forced to reimburse and to pay a penalty to the IRS once the illegal payment became public. One month after the donation was received, Bondi’s office decided not to join the lawsuit against Mr. Trump.” I asked whether these facts, and the reported White House job for Attorney General Bondi, raised concerns about a quid pro quo.

You responded, “I am not aware of facts that would support the assertions made in the above question and am unable to opine on this matter.” I have appended to these questions a *New York Times* article from last year, titled “New Records Shed Light on Donald Trump’s \$25,000 Gift to Florida Official.” Please review the article, which provides the factual predicate for the question.

**Do the facts of Mr. Trump’s illegal donation, Ms. Bondi’s ensuing decision not to join the lawsuit, and now the White House job for Ms. Bondi raise any concerns about a quid pro quo?**

**3.** When I asked what your recusal standard will be, if confirmed, your responses were not satisfactory. You argued in an op-ed that Attorney General Lynch should have recused herself from matters involving Secretary Hillary Clinton because Lynch had had a single conversation with President Bill Clinton while the investigation was ongoing (<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2016/11/05/giuliani-sessions-keating-et-al-time-for-loretta-lynch-to-appoint-special-counsel.html>). I asked whether you would apply the same standard to yourself regarding President Trump.

You argued that it would be unfair to expect you to recuse yourself for “merely being a supporter of the President’s during the campaign.” I fear you are selling yourself short. ABC News referred to you as “Top Trump foreign policy adviser Sen. Jeff Sessions” (<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/top-trump-adviser-jeff-sessions-trump-campaign/story?id=41358247>). The *Washington Post* said, “In Donald Trump’s world, most roads, it seems, lead back to Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), President-elect Trump’s pick for attorney general. After Sessions became one of the first members of Congress to endorse Trump this February, he became an adviser on almost every major decision and policy proposal Trump made during the campaign” (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/11/18/10-things-to-know-about-sen-jeff-sessions-donald-trumps-pick-for-attorney-general>). Your relationship with President Trump went beyond mere support.

Your response to my recusal questions was that you would consult with Justice Department ethics officials in cases where you “believed [your] impartiality might reasonably be questioned.” Justice Department recusal standards are codified at 28 C.F.R. § 45.2 (see appended). In relevant part, the regulations state:

...no employee shall participate in a criminal investigation or prosecution if he has a personal or political relationship with:

- (1) Any person or organization substantially involved in the conduct that is the subject of the investigation or prosecution; or
- (2) Any person or organization which he knows has a specific and substantial interest that would be directly affected by the outcome of the investigation or prosecution.

“Political relationship” is defined as “a close identification with an elected official...arising from service as a principal adviser thereto or a principal official thereof.”

**Under the definition in 28 C.F.R. § 45.2(c), did you have a “political relationship” with President Trump before you were nominated to be Attorney General? Please answer yes or no.**

4. In my first round of written questions I asked you whether, when opposing the 2013 Leahy-Crapo VAWA reauthorization, you opposed its new protections for LGBT Americans. Your response was nearly 300 words, but it did not directly answer the question, so I will ask again.

**Did you oppose the new protections for LGBT Americans in the 2013 VAWA reauthorization? Please answer yes or no.**

5. I asked at your hearing whether you would defend VAWA’s constitutionality, and you said only “if it is reasonably defensible.” I then asked in my written questions whether you believed “the 2013 Leahy-Crapo VAWA Reauthorization, including its LGBT and tribal victims’ provisions, is ‘reasonably defensible.’” You answered only that you “will carefully study this

program before reaching any final legal conclusions about the VAWA tribal jurisdiction provision.”

Based on your strong opposition to the law, as well as your thorough preparation for this nomination process, I find it difficult to believe you have not “carefully stud[ied]” it. Moreover, you did assert that particular laws were constitutional in other responses. In your response to 14a-b, you wrote, “I believe that this statute is constitutional.” Here, I am not asking for such an endorsement of a law’s constitutionality, I am just asking whether you believe it is “reasonably defensible.”

**Do you believe the 2013 Leahy-Crapo VAWA Reauthorization, including its LGBT and tribal victims’ provisions, is “reasonably defensible”? Please answer yes or no.**

**6.** In response to question 37, on encryption, you wrote “It is also critical, however, that national security and criminal investigators be able to overcome encryption.”

**a. Please explain what you mean by this.**

**b. Do you believe that all encryption should provide a “back door” for law enforcement officials? Please answer yes or no.**

**7.** In response to Question 19(c), you said the United States should take “great care” before using lethal force in the United States in the armed conflict against al Qaeda and associated forces.

**a. Aside from circumstances such as self-defense when law enforcement officials are permitted to lawfully use lethal force, what circumstances could justify the use of lethal force on U.S. soil?**

In 2013, Senator Rand Paul wrote to former Attorney General Eric Holder asking, “Does the President have the authority to use a weaponized drone to kill an American not engaged in combat on American soil?” Former Attorney General Holder responded categorially, “The answer to that question is no.”

**b. Do you agree with former Attorney General Holder? Please answer yes or no.**

**8.** I asked in my first round of written questions about your comment that the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act “has been said to cheapen the civil rights movement.” You emphasized, “Those were not *my* words.” I recognize that.

The *Washington Post* reported Tuesday that the U.S. Attorney in Idaho has used the Act to bring federal hate crimes charges against a man who murdered a gay man by “push[ing] [the victim] to the ground and kick[ing] him at least 30 times with steel-toed boots while [the victim] begged for his life.” The *Post* noted, “The fatal beating of the openly gay man has been compared by some in the community to the murder of Matthew Shepard, the gay college student from Wyoming whose torture and subsequent death set off a nationwide debate about hate crimes and

homophobia and led to the federal Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.” The article is appended and can be found at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/01/24/idahoan-admits-to-brutal-murder-of-gay-man-as-he-pleaded-for-his-life-now-faces-hate-charge>.

While you emphasized that you were not speaking in your own words when you said that my hate crimes amendment “has been said to cheapen the civil rights movement,” I would still like to know whether you agree with that statement.

**When you said in 2009 that “the hate crimes amendment . . . has been said to cheapen the civil rights movement,” did you agree with that viewpoint? Do you agree with it now? Please answer yes or no.**

9. At your hearing, Senator Franken asked you about President Trump’s claims that there were millions of illegal votes cast in the 2016 election. You responded, “I don’t know what the President-elect meant or was thinking when he made that comment, or what facts he may have had to justify his statement. I would just say that every election needs to be managed closely and we need to ensure that there is integrity in it, and I do believe we regularly have fraudulent activities occur during election cycles.”

Earlier this week, President Trump reportedly “surprised the top Republicans and Democrats in Congress on Monday when, during a dinner at the White House, he repeated his claim that millions of undocumented immigrants voted for Hillary Clinton.” (<http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/24/politics/wh-trump-believes-millions-voted-illegally>.) In a press briefing Tuesday afternoon, Press Secretary Sean Spicer responded to a question about that erroneous claim by saying, “The President does believe that, I think he’s stated that before, and stated his concern of voter fraud and people voting illegally during the campaign and continues to maintain that belief based on studies and evidence people have brought to him.” Again, as Senator Franken noted at your hearing, there is zero evidence to support this outlandish claim. The *Washington Post*’s “Fact Checker Recidivism Watch” stated:

Despite Trump’s repeated claims, his attorneys stated there was no evidence of voter fraud in the 2016 election. In a court filing opposing Green Party candidate Jill Stein’s recount petition, lawyers for Trump and his campaign wrote: ‘All available evidence suggests that the 2016 general election was not tainted by fraud or mistake.’

When we debunked this claim on Nov. 29, 2016, we implored Trump’s staff members to please drop this talking point — as we are tired of telling them it is false. We can’t emphasize this point enough. ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2017/01/24/recidivism-watch-spicer-uses-repeatedly-debunked-citations-for-trumps-voter-fraud-claims/?utm\\_term=.89751bee5353](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2017/01/24/recidivism-watch-spicer-uses-repeatedly-debunked-citations-for-trumps-voter-fraud-claims/?utm_term=.89751bee5353).)

Speaker Paul Ryan evidently agreed with President Trump’s attorneys and is quoted by Fox News saying, “I’ve seen no evidence to that effect. I’ve made that very, very clear.” (<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2017/01/24/spicer-digs-in-on-trumps-illegal-voting-claim-as-ryan-distances.html>.)

Senator Lindsey Graham also evidently agreed with President Trump’s attorneys, and argued, “To continue to suggest that the 2016 election was conducted in a fashion that millions of people voted illegally undermines faith in our democracy.” (<http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2016-election/gop-senator-president-trump-stop-claiming-illegals-cost-you-popular-n711386>.)

Press Secretary Spicer stated that President Trump believes these claims, even though the president’s lawyers do not. I am not asking you to explain the President’s beliefs; I would like to know whether you share that belief.

**Do you share President Trump’s belief that “millions of undocumented immigrants voted for Hillary Clinton” in the 2016 election? Please answer yes or no. If your answer is anything other than an unambiguous “no,” please provide evidence to support the claim that millions of votes were cast illegally.**

**10.** On Wednesday President Trump announced several executive orders involving immigration, including an order involving constructing a border wall and others targeting immigrants. Additional executive orders, targeting refugees, are expected on Thursday.

**What role did you or your staff have in formulating and drafting these executive orders?**

**11.** The New York Times reported this morning that President Trump is preparing an executive order that would expand the use of the ineffective military commission system, allow individuals to be transferred to the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, and allow the CIA to reopen secret “black sites,” among other things.

- a. Do you believe international law prohibits U.S. officials from engaging in torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment? If so, what is the source of that prohibition?**
- b. Do you believe, as a matter of law, that we are in an armed conflict with those who “harbor” Al Qaeda, the Taliban, or associated forces? What constitutes “harboring”?**
- c. Do you believe, as a matter of law, that we are in an armed conflict with those who provide “substantial support” to Al Qaeda, the Taliban, or associated forces? What constitutes “substantial support”?**
- d. What limits does the U.S. Constitution set on placing U.S. citizens in military custody on U.S. soil?**
- e. Do you believe the United States is in an armed conflict with all “violent Islamic extremists”? How would you define a “violent Islamic extremist”?**

## Appendix

- Source material for old question 8 (articles documenting quotes by Michael Horowitz, Frank Gaffney, Phyllis Schlafly, and Michael Flynn)
- Source material for old question 22 and question 1 (Intelligence Community Assessment, “Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections”)
- Source material for question 2 (*NY Times* article, “New Records Shed Light on Donald Trump’s \$25,000 Gift to Florida Official”)
- Source material for question 3 (Sessions op-ed; 28 C.F.R. § 45.2)
- Source material for question 8 (*Washington Post* article)
- Source material for question 9 (articles documenting quotes by Sean Spicer, Speaker Ryan, Senator Graham, and legal filings by Donald Trump’s lawyers)
- Source material for question 11 (*NY Times* article on CIA black sites)

## King hearings come to Flatbush: David Horowitz stokes anti-Muslim sentiment at Brooklyn College

*About Zoe Zenowich Other posts by Zoe Zenowich.*

Brooklyn College had its own Peter King hearing last night when right-wing commentator David Horowitz spoke to a feisty crowd of students and faculty.

At first I debated whether or not to even give voice to what David Horowitz said. After all, it is pretty well known that [Horowitz is the Glenn Beck of Zionists](#)—a rambler of hate who continually contradicts himself and history.

But given the [current political climate](#) and the audience filled with faculty and students who eagerly echoed Horowitz's calls of anti-Muslim sentiment, I feel it is important to document.

Outside the library where the lecture was held, security guards insisted that ten or so peaceful protesters huddled in the rain stand behind steel gates they had brought out for the occasion. Inside, security guards searched bags before running a handheld metal detector over everyone entering the lecture hall—security measures I have never before experienced in my four years of attending guest speaker events at the college. In his opening comments, Horowitz remarked, “How does it feel to go through a check point? I’ll tell you one thing, I feel safer and that’s what check points are about—making people feel safe when they’re under attack by terrorists and Middle East Jew haters. “ Later, Horowitz added, “check points are there to protect the innocent from the guilty.”

Perhaps it was no coincidence that Horowitz was brought on campus with the help of two faculty members only a month following the controversy over the school administration’s decision to [reinstate](#) Political Science adjunct Professor Kristofer Petersen-Overton, who was [fired following outside political motivation](#) due in part to his scholarly work on Palestinian national identity. Horowitz was sure to make reference to the apparent “hostile environment” that “liberal professors” create and to which students are subjected. Apparently, “Jewish organizations across the country have been intimidated from presenting their case.”

But it became all the more clear last night that this so-called “hostile environment” is something being created by the very people pointing to its existence.

Just last week the Brooklyn College administration placed restrictions on the ability of the Palestine Club to participate in a series of direct action events organized in conjunction with other student organization [across](#)

[New York City](#) as part of Israeli Apartheid Week. The club proposed to have a 6 ft x 8 ft mock wall out of paper to symbolize the separation wall in the West Bank, but according to the co-founder of the Palestine Club, Eeman Abuasi, the administration claimed—amongst many other things—that the wall would fuel more tension on campus and could be insulting to some students. Instead, the administration said the Palestine Club could only have the event if they agreed to construct a smaller model that could be placed on a table for display, like a diagram at an elementary school science fair.

Given this context, it was all the more disturbing last night when I looked across the crowd and saw tears run down the face of a member of the Palestine Club as Horowitz said to the group of mostly nodding heads, “All through history people have been oppressed but no people has done what the Palestinians have done—no people has shown itself so morally sick as the Palestinians have.”

Horowitz, who admitted he had actually never even been to Israel, proceeded to give everyone a lesson in Middle East politics: according to him, Muslims in the Middle East are “Islamic Nazi’s” who “want to kill Jews, that’s their agenda.” He added later, “all Muslim associations are fronts for the Muslim Brotherhood.”

Horowitz appeared to be too delusional to even be quoted, or taken seriously if it weren’t for the audience members who so fervently agreed with what he was saying.

The most revealing moment came when a young Arab-American woman directed a question to Horowitz and the audience: “You talk about Muslims as if you know them—We have a Muslim American Society, we have a Palestine Club [on campus]. I want to raise the question to any of the Jews in this room, and students, have you guys ever been threatened by a Muslim on campus or an Arab?” To this, the crowd almost unanimously spun around in their seats to face the young woman and replied “yes.” Someone shouted, “and we’re scared when we see Muslims on buses and airplanes too.”

Horowitz encouraged anti-Muslim hate by telling the crowd, “no other people have sunk so low as the Palestinians have and yet everybody is afraid to say this,” claiming that Muslims are a “protected species in this country” and that he’s “wait[ing] for the day when the good Muslims step forward.”

The scary thing is that people listen to such hateful rhetoric and nod along. What would they say if someone said the same about Jewish people? Alas—hate speech is indeed the downside of First Amendment rights. Nevertheless, if the Brooklyn College administration justifies its decision to hinder the ability of the Palestine Club to partake in a cross-city peaceful demonstration because it’s offensive, it is a wonder why they would agree to give voice to a person who encourages hysterical fear of Muslims.

*Zoe Zenowich is a Senior in the Scholars Program at Brooklyn College, where she is the managing editor of the Excelsior, a student newspaper. Follow her on [Twitter @zoezenowich](#).*

**To our readers:** A Donald Trump presidency threatens to empower dangerous elements of the Radical Right that have, until recently, been relegated to the fringes of America. Never has the work of Right Wing Watch, a project of the People For the American Way dedicated to exposing the Far-Right's extreme and intolerant agenda, been more important. **As a non-profit, our main source of support is readers like you.** If you use Right Wing Watch, please consider making a contribution to support our work at this critical time.

**MENU**



# David Horowitz Knows Obama Is A Muslim Because He Hates America So Much



<[http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post\\_author/brian-tashman/](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post_author/brian-tashman/)>By Brian Tashman  
<[http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post\\_author/brian-tashman/](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post_author/brian-tashman/)> | August 21, 2014 2:00

pm

David Horowitz dropped by the American Family Association's "Today's Issues <<http://vimeo.com/104023352>>" today, where he spoke with AFA head Tim Wildmon about how President Obama refuses to condemn the mass killings of Christians or take military action against ISIS. Of course, Obama has <[1 of 4](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/transcript-president-obamas-remarks-on-the-execution-</a></p></div>
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of-journalist-james-foley-by-islamic-state/2014/08/20/f5a63802-2884-11e4-8593-

da634b334390\_story.html> repeatedly <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08>

/09/statement-president-iraq> condemned <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08>

/07/statement-president> the killing of Christians and has ordered 90 airstrikes

against ISIS to date <<http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/21/world/meast/iraq-crisis>

/index.html?hpt=hp\_t1>.

**MENU**

But in Horowitz's world, Obama is cheering on ISIS because he's a Muslim who hates America.

"Obama is an anti-American radical and I'm actually sure he's a Muslim, he certainly isn't a Christian," Horowitz said. "He's a pretend Christian in the same way he's a pretend American. It really is disgraceful. He's inviting the terrorists to behead more Americans when he should be attacking them with our military. His whole agenda in office has been to defeat America, he lost the war in Iraq deliberately, he created a vacuum which ISIS has filled."

"Saying he's the worst president we've ever had is not saying enough."

Wildmon said he didn't used to believe the conspiracy theory that Obama is a secret Muslim, but now he does due to what he sees as the president's anti-American actions.

"I think he is, I don't think there's really any question," Horowitz said, arguing that Obama is a "liar" who "lies all the time."

Horowitz also said that Obama is letting immigrants illegally cross the border in order to kill Americans through anthrax and beheadings.

"When he was re-elected, the first thought that came into my mind is, a lot of people are going to be dead because of this election, and how right I was," he said, warning that the president "destroyed our borders" in order to let "our enemies" enter the U.S.

“They’re going to come across our border with their dirty bombs and their anthrax and whatever else, you know, their swords to behead us.... The ones who are going to do the killing are coming across our open border and this president is not defending us.”

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**Tags:** David Horowitz, Tim Wildmon, Immigration, American Family Association

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# David Horowitz Says Huma Abedin is 'Worse than Alger Hiss' and Grover Norquist is a 'Practicing Muslim' Subverting the GOP



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pm

David Horowitz has been promoting his new book *Radicals: Portraits of a Destructive Passion* <<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/radicals-david-horowitz/1110914833>> on

conservative talk radio by attacking Hillary Clinton's aide Huma Abedin as a **Muslim Brotherhood agent** <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/horowitz-abedin-special-dispensation-marry-jew-infiltrate-government> and arguing that President Obama was only elected because he is black <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/horowitz-obama-never-president-black> because "part of the racism of our society is [that] if you're black you can get away with murder." Horowitz's interview

<http://www.janetmefferdpremium.com/2012/09/28/janet-mefferd-radio-show-20120928-hr-2/> with Janet Mefferd was no different, as he charged that Abedin "is a Muslim Brotherhood operative and she has been all her life" and that she has been pushing foreign policy favorable to the Muslim Brotherhood. Horowitz even said that Abedin "is worse than Alger Hiss," the accused Soviet spy.

But it is not just the Obama administration which has been penetrated by the Muslim Brotherhood, as Horowitz warned that "the Republican Party has also been infiltrated" thanks to conservative luminary Grover Norquist, whom he said is a "practicing Muslim." Norquist is a reviled figure among <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/geller-republicans-allied-norquist-are-tied-muslim-brotherhood> **anti-Muslim** <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/boykin-grover-norquist-muslim-brotherhood-facilitator> **activists** <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/frank-gaffney-claims-grover-norquist-helping-muslim-brotherhood-infiltrate-conservative-move> like Horowitz, who in 2011 lashed out at Norquist <http://mediamatters.org/blog/2011/02/12/updated-from-cpac-podium-horowitz-claims-there/176361> from the podium at CPAC, mainly due to the fact <http://thinkprogress.org/politics/2012/02/12/422933/exclusive-conservative-board-unanimously-condemned-gaffneys-reprehensible-and-unfounded-attacks/> his wife is a Muslim-American and he works with Muslim Republicans like Suhail Kahn [http://www.slate.com/content/slate/blogs/weigel/2011/02/12/cpac\\_2011\\_suhail\\_khan\\_responds\\_to\\_david\\_horowitz.html](http://www.slate.com/content/slate/blogs/weigel/2011/02/12/cpac_2011_suhail_khan_responds_to_david_horowitz.html).

**MENU**

**Horowitz:** We have a medieval enemy with twenty-first century technology aimed at us, they've infiltrated our government. If you wondered how it's possible that Obama and Hillary would not know or would pretend what was happening wasn't happening in the Middle East or how they could turnover Egypt as they have to the Muslim Brotherhood, which is the fountainhead of Al Qaeda and all of these terrible Islamic Nazi organizations, the answer is not really hard to find: the chief adviser to the American government on Muslim affairs, Hillary Clinton's deputy chief of staff, Huma Abedin, is a Muslim Brotherhood operative and she has been all her life, and her whole family is. This is worse than Alger Hiss, for those in your audience who are old enough to remember, Alger Hiss is a Soviet agent who was right next to Roosevelt at Yalta.

**Mefferd:** It's very true and yet you had these five congressmen, Michele Bachmann and the others, who tried to say the inspectors-general need to look into this, and even Republicans stood up on the floor and said no!

**Horowitz:** You had Boehner and McCain, and McCain is just bonkers. But the Republican Party has also been infiltrated. Grover Norquist is a Muslim, he is a practicing Muslim.

Later, Horowitz explained that liberals and radical Islamists are working out of their shared "hatred for America" and promoted the ridiculous [http://www.slate.com/blogs/weigel/2011/03/28/bill\\_ayers\\_started\\_a\\_joke\\_that\\_started\\_the\\_whole\\_word\\_hyperventilating.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/weigel/2011/03/28/bill_ayers_started_a_joke_that_started_the_whole_word_hyperventilating.html) and debunked <http://mediamatters.org/research/2009/09/23/hannity-andersen-advance-discredited-claim-that/154947> conspiracy that Bill Ayers wrote Obama's book *Dreams from My Father*.

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**Mefferd:** Why is it that you see so many who are radicals and progressives supporting radical Islam?

**Horowitz:** Because they share a common enemy: the great Satan, which is us, and the little Satan, which is Israel. It's very simple, the left for many, many years now, maybe half a century, has had no practical program, they have no idea what they were going to do with the world when they get the power. So what organizes them is their hatred for America. Why would you want to bankrupt America? Why would you want to take its military down? Why would you apologize to our enemies, as our President has done, unless you were a radical and you believe that we're the great oppressor nation. I know he talks out of two sides of his mouth, he actually makes Bill Clinton look like a Boy Scout in the realm of rectitude in what he's saying, this guy lies so easily. Of course because he's black he gets a pass on everything. We have reached a very low point in our national evolution. I'm hoping that this book, you know it's not going to change the world, but those people who are buying and reading "Radicals" will at least understand the mentality behind these people and how influential they are. Bill Ayers is an America-hating terrorist and was Barack Obama's closest political ally for twenty years and wrote his autobiography.

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**Tags:** David Horowitz, Grover Norquist, Janet Mefferd, Anti-Muslim, Islam

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## CPAC Conservatives Shun “Crazy Bigot” Gaffney

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Frank Gaffney, the Islamophobic activist [bent on getting Congress to investigate](#) “creeping shari’ah,” talked to the conspiracy web site *World Net Daily*, [claiming](#) “that CPAC has come under the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, which is working to bring America under Saudi-style Shariah law.”

Gaffney’s exhibit A is Suhail Khan, a member of the American Conservative Union board, which annually sponsors the Conservative Political Action Conference. WND’s piece is based on Gaffney’s charges “that Islamism has infiltrated the American Conservative Union, the host of CPAC, in the person of Washington attorney and political activist Suhail Khan and a group called Muslims for America.”

I caught up with Khan this afternoon, who last [spoke with RD](#) about the American Center for Law and Justice’s calls for the Justice Department to investigate the Congressional Muslim Staffers Association, based on similar paranoid beliefs about the infiltration of “radical Islam” in the highest levels of government.

Khan said he’s known Gaffney for 15 years, and worked with him on defense issues when he was a staffer on the Hill. But, Khan added, while Gaffney “does get called and asked to be part of coalitions because he can represent that defense component . . . I can tell you from my 15 years of being around him, his cachet has greatly diminished . . . The level of rhetoric and completely outlandish levels of accusation has really driven a lot of responsible people, members of Congress to say that we don’t want to be affiliated with you.”

Gaffney [first launched](#) his crusade against Khan when the latter ran for the ACU board in 2007, a position to which he was elected and re-elected by the ACU membership, and which was ratified by the board. Khan, who served in the Bush administration, has long endured accusations from conservatives\* that, among other things, he was a secret al Qaeda mole, and now, from Gaffney and WND, a secret agent of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Gaffney, said Khan, “definitely believes there is good political capital to be made in scaring and fear mongering, there may be some who may be swayed by alarmist and racist assertions, and worse, he makes a good living doing this stuff. Who knew there was money to be made in being a professional bigot?”

Because Gaffney’s group was not invited to participate in CPAC, “that is why this is surfacing now,” said Khan. “Frank has been frozen out of CPAC by his own hand, because of his antics. We need people who are credible on national security . . . but because of Frank’s just completely irresponsible assertions over the years, the

organizers have decided to keep him out.” That, Khan added, is similar reaction to current and former members of Congress, including Bobby Jindal, Sen. Jon Kyl (R-AZ), and the late Henry Hyde, who distanced themselves from Gaffney.

The conservative shunning of Gaffney, said Khan, is not “because of any pressure from Muslim activists but because they didn’t want to be associated with a crazy bigot.”

\*Khan points out that it wasn’t conservatives, but Gaffney making these unfounded accusations. Those accusations got play, however, in magazines like *Front Page*, which published Gaffney’s “[Khan Job](#)” when Khan was first running for the ACU board, and which drew on an earlier report Gaffney said had a “a validating introduction by David Horowitz,” *Front Page*’s editor.



# Muslim Brotherhood Day on Capitol Hill

BY FRANK J. GAFFNEY JR., CONTRIBUTOR - 04/18/16 07:45 AM EDT

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On Monday, April 18, legislators' offices will be visited by individuals associated with a group unknown to most lawmakers: The United States Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO). In the interest of helping members of the U.S. Congress understand precisely who their interlocutors are, permit a brief introduction: The USCMO is the latest in a long series of front organizations associated with, and working to advance, the agenda of the Muslim Brotherhood in the United States.

Members of Congress should be clear about the true nature of that agenda. It is laid out most authoritatively in a [document](#) introduced into evidence by federal prosecutors in the course of the largest terrorism financing trial in the nation's history, *U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation et al.* Written in 1991 by a top Muslim Brotherhood operative, Mohamed Akram, and entitled "The Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal of the Group in North America," this internal correspondence was meant for the eyes only of the organization's leadership in Egypt. So, the document is direct and to the point: It explicitly states that the mission of the Muslim Brotherhood in North America is "destroying Western civilization from within ... by [the infidels'] hands and the hands of the believers so that Allah's religion is made victorious over all other religions."

There are two other important facts legislators should know about Akram's memo.

First, the document helpfully attaches a list of 29 groups under the heading "Our organizations and organizations of our friends: Imagine if they all march according to one plan!" A number of the identified Muslim Brotherhood fronts — and many others that have come into being since 1991 — are members of the U.S. Council of Muslim Organizations. Representatives and associates of such fronts will be among the Islamists in congressional offices on Monday.

Second, the memo describes in detail the Muslim Brotherhood's favored



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technique for accomplishing its stated goal of "destroying Western civilization" — at least until such time as they are strong enough to use violence decisively: "civilization jihad." This sort of jihad involves employing stealthy, subversive means like influence operations to penetrate and subvert our government and civil society institutions. (The successful application of these means have been chronicled extensively in the Center for Security Policy's "[Civilization Jihad Reader Series.](#)")

With the launch of the U.S. Council of Muslim Organizations in March 2014, the Muslim Brotherhood has secured a new instrument for its subversion: a self-described U.S. "political party" meant to dominate and mobilize Muslim voters across the country and get them marching according to one plan. The object is to elicit support for the Muslim Brotherhood's demands from candidates and to help achieve what the Islamic supremacists would regard as favorable outcomes in the 2016 elections. (For more on the USCMO, its purpose and activities to date, see "[Star Spangled Sharia: The Rise of America's First Muslim Brotherhood Party.](#)")

Unfortunately, some members of Congress have already embraced the Council of Muslim Organizations. For example, two with longstanding ties to assorted Muslim Brotherhood fronts, Reps. André Carson (D-Ind.) and Keith Ellison (D-Minn.), spoke at the USCMO's inaugural banquet in June 2014. Neither has disavowed the USCMO's subsequent participation in anti-Semitic, pro-Hamas and pro-Muslim Brotherhood demonstrations and its fundraising on behalf of Islamic Relief USA, a large, U.S.-based Islamic supremacist charity.

Another reason lawmakers and their staffs should be leery of this new Muslim Brotherhood front group is its avowed intention to make common cause with radical non-Muslim entities like the Black Lives Matter movement. At a conference in December 2015 convened by two of the Muslim Brotherhood's most virulent fronts, the Muslim American Society and Islamic Circle of North America, leading USCMO figures [publicly discussed](#) how they could impart lessons to African-Americans by holding up the Brotherhood as the community that staged revolutions across the world.

Congress is on notice: As long as organizations associated with Islamic supremacism like the USCMO and its member organizations dominate "Muslim Advocacy Day" on Capitol Hill, it will actually be Muslim Brotherhood Advocacy Day. And legislators should have nothing to do with either its participants or its programs.

*Gaffney acted as an assistant secretary of Defense under President Reagan. He is the president of the Center for Security Policy in Washington. He serves as a foreign policy adviser to presidential candidate Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas).*

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# Freedom and hate

BY HEIDI BEIRICH, PH.D. - 03/02/16 10:00 AM EST

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At the beginning of each year, the Southern Poverty Law Center publishes a list of hate groups. These are groups we determine to have beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics.

The Center for Security Policy (CSP), an anti-Muslim think tank is one of the groups listed for the first time in 2015. In the run-up to and after the release of our list, CSP officials have defended the organization by claiming that their mission is motivated by a "love of freedom, not hate." Their record suggests otherwise.

The group has long equated Islam with terrorism. CSP vice president Claire Lopez, for example, said in 2013: "When Muslims follow their doctrine, they become jihadists."

CSP dedicated much of 2015 to targeting Syrian refugees. Ann Corcoran, the head of the Refugee Resettlement Watch website wrote an anti-refugee booklet published by CSP in April titled, "Refugee Resettlement and the Hijra to America." It calls for a ban on all Muslim immigration to the U.S. and encourages Americans to oppose the opening of mosques in their neighborhoods (not a very freedom-loving call to action). CSP is also actively working to draft model legislation attempting to bar the relocation of Syrian refugees to locales across the U.S.

In December, CSP received mainstream press attention when Republican front-runner Donald Trump cited a widely debunked CSP poll in his call for a complete shutdown of Muslim immigration into the United States. The demonizing survey results claimed that American Muslims harbored "ominous levels" of support for "Islamic Supremacists" and that these citizens even supported the use of violence to install Sharia law in the U.S. When the poll was first released, a Georgetown University's Bridge Initiative characterized its "shoddy findings" and "unreliable methodology" concluding that it "should not be taken seriously."

In September, CSP's founder, Frank Gaffney, surprised even us when he provided a platform for Jared Taylor, one of the most recognizable white nationalists in America today, by inviting him on his radio show to discuss the Syrian refugee "threat" to Europe. On the show, Gaffney called Taylor's openly racist American Renaissance website "wonderful" and said that he "appreciated tremendously" the work Taylor is doing, before scrubbing the interview from his website after we called him out.

In its [Feb. 24 piece](#) published in *The Hill*, CSP's Jim Hanson claims the SPLC is "trying to suppress free speech" by calling it "Islamophobia." Hanson defines phobia as "an irrational fear." Earlier in 2015, Gaffney was asked at a speaking engagement about Somalis working meatpacking plants. His response: "I don't know about you, but it kind of creeps me out that they are getting jobs in the food supply of the United States" – making Hanson's point for him.

Hanson also wrote in his op-ed, "We believe homosexuals have the right to live without fear." This is ironic when you consider the fact that some of CSP's most vocal backers in recent weeks have been two anti-LGBT hate groups, the American Family Association (AFA) and the Family Research Council (FRC). In 2010, FRC president Tony Perkins wrote that pedophilia, "is a homosexual problem." Gaffney has appeared multiple times on Perkins' radio show.



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2015 saw anti-Muslim sentiment and activity reach a fever pitch, with armed protests outside of mosques, elected officials bashing Muslims and the Islamic faith as well as heinous hate crimes committed against Muslims or those perceived to be. Throughout the year, the Center for Security Policy as well the David Horowitz Freedom Center and ACT! for America, two other groups listed by SPLC as hate groups for the first time, helped to drive this climate of fear and will certainly continue to do so in 2016.

*Beirich heads the Intelligence Project at the Southern Poverty Law Center.*

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# Frank Gaffney: Muslim Congressman Part Of 'Islamic Fifth Column'



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11:35 am

Frank Gaffney thinks that Rep. André Carson, one of two Muslim members of Congress, should lose his seat on the House Intelligence Committee because he might hand classified information to Muslim Brotherhood operatives.

Gaffney, an anti-Muslim conspiracy theorist who leads the Center for Security Policy, told WorldNetDaily <<http://www.wnd.com/2015/02/u-s-intelligence-faces-new-islamic-threat/>> that Carson, an Indiana Democrat, may use his position to advance "the

imposition of Shariah worldwide and the establishment of a caliphate”  
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Gaffney bases his claims on Carson’s work with the Islamic Society of North America and the Council on American-Islamic Relations, alleging that the groups were “unindicted co-conspirator[s] in a terror-financing trial.” Actually, the designations were removed [http://www.jewishjournal.com/nation/article/court\\_removes\\_co-conspirator\\_tag\\_from\\_muslim\\_groups\\_20101022/](http://www.jewishjournal.com/nation/article/court_removes_co-conspirator_tag_from_muslim_groups_20101022/) due to lack of evidence.

“At a minimum, Rep. Andre Carson’s presence on the House Intelligence Committee will necessitate restrictions on his access to classified information about the presence and operations in this country of what amounts to a subversive Islamist Fifth Column and his participation in the panel’s deliberations concerning how it can best be countered,” Gaffney told WND.

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“Since there are, at the moment, few topics more in need of assiduous oversight by the Congress – even if there were no actual risk of compromise of national security secrets or Muslim Brotherhood influence operations associated with Rep. Carson’s presence on the House Intelligence Committee – the potential impediment he may constitute to such work demands his removal from this panel.”

...

“Given the Muslim Brotherhood’s unalterable commitment to Islamic supremacism,” Gaffney said, “the imposition of Shariah worldwide and the establishment of a caliphate to rule globally in accordance with that totalitarian program – in place of our constitutional republic and all other forms of government, what the Obama administration is doing is bad enough. Its serial efforts to engage, legitimate, fund, arm and otherwise empower the Brotherhood overseas and to rely upon the Brothers’ domestic front organizations as representatives of and outreach vehicles to the Muslim community in this country are *intensifying* the dangers we face from the Global Jihad Movement.”

Gaffney said it is “wholly unacceptable to have as a member of a key congressional committee charged with overseeing U.S. intelligence and counterintelligence an individual with extensive personal and political associations with the Muslim Brotherhood’s civilization jihadist infrastructure in America.”

“At a minimum, Rep. Andre Carson’s presence on the House Intelligence Committee will necessitate restrictions on his access to classified information about the presence and operations in this country of what amounts to a subversive Islamist Fifth Column and his participation in the panel’s deliberations concerning how it can

best be countered.”

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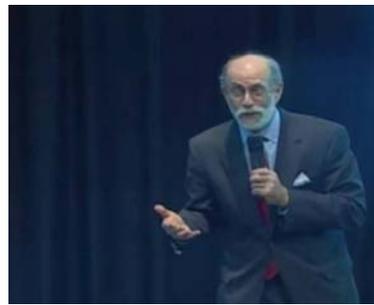
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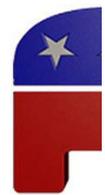
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# Frank Gaffney: Obama 'Playing For The Other Team,' Committing 'Treason'



[By Miranda Blue](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post_author/miranda-blue/)  
[December 16, 2015](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post_author/miranda-blue/)

2:55 pm

There's a new star in the world of Frank Gaffney, an activist who was largely banished from mainstream GOP [circles](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/grover-norquist-secret-muslim-brotherhood-agent-conspiracy-returns-just-time-cpac) for alleging that both the Obama administration and the Republican Party have been infiltrated by the Muslim Brotherhood [1 of 4](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/meet-conspiracy-theorist-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

behind-trumppalincruz-iran-rally>, but has since been enjoying the attention of Donald Trump and Ted Cruz <<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/12/15/cruz-s-cozy-ties-to-dc-s-most-prominent-paranoid-islamophobe.html>>.

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In recent days, Gaffney has been promoting the story of Phillip Haney, a former Department of Homeland Security employee who claims that the Obama administration pulled the plug <<http://insider.foxnews.com/2015/12/10/whistleblower-says-he-could-have-prevented-ca-attack-if-government-didnt-cut-funding>> on an investigation that he was conducting that he claims could possibly have caught the San Bernardino terrorists. It's hard to tell what of Haney's story is true since DHS has stayed mum on it other than to tell Fox News <<http://insider.foxnews.com/2015/12/10/whistleblower-says-he-could-have-prevented-ca-attack-if-government-didnt-cut-funding>> that his tale has "many holes." Haney mentioned in an interview <[http://streamer1.afa.net/afr-aod/sandyrios/sr\\_20151216.mp3](http://streamer1.afa.net/afr-aod/sandyrios/sr_20151216.mp3)> with Sandy Rios this morning that he also locked horns with the Bush administration, but did not provide details.

But in any case, Gaffney has latched onto Haney's story to promote his narrative that, as he told Indianapolis talk radio host Greg Garrison <<http://www.wibc.com/blogs/garrison/audio-demand/december-11-full-show>> last week, President Obama is "playing for the other team" and that it is "indisputable" that the president is committing "treason."

"What I believe this proves, beyond a shadow of a doubt — and I think this is also just the tip of the iceberg, by the way — is that the Obama administration is ... well, they're playing for the other team," Gaffney told Garrison. "And this is an extraordinarily dangerous thing for this country to be experiencing at a moment like this, I think it's contributing, frankly, to the mortal peril we're facing from these jihadists."

It is, he said, an "increasingly indisputable fact that this president is providing aid and comfort to enemies of the United States. And that is the definition, as you know, of treason."

Tags: Frank Gaffney, Center for Security Policy

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## QUARTZ

FEAR FACTOR

# Islam is a "malignant cancer": The hateful rhetoric of Trump's new national security adviser

Ismat Sarah Mangla    November 18, 2016



📷 Hardliner. (AP/Lauren Victoria Burke)

US president-elect Donald Trump famously said in a CNN interview last March that "Islam hates us." In this light, his pick for national security adviser is pitch perfect.

Retired lieutenant general Michael Flynn served as Trump's national security adviser

during the campaign and agreed Friday (Nov. 18) to continue on. Flynn, a registered Democrat, served as head of the US Defense Intelligence Agency before he was ousted in 2014. Since then, he's been a brash critic of President Barack Obama and the national security establishment's approach to defeating terrorism—and he's made no secret of his disdain for Islam.

“Islam is a political ideology...it definitely hides behind this notion of it being a religion,” Flynn said in a speech at the annual conference of ACT for America, the largest anti-Muslim grassroots organization in the US. “It's like cancer...a malignant cancer in this case.” Flynn also serves as an adviser for the group, which was founded by Brigitte Gabriel, a leader of the anti-Islam lobby in the US. Flynn has described Gabriel as “incredibly courageous.”



**Zaid Benjamin**  
@zaidbenjamin

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#Trump Choice for National Security Adviser Michael Flynn:  
Islam is a political ideology that hides itself behind what they call  
a religion.

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At other times, Flynn has been more careful to specify that “radical Islam” is the source of his ire. He led the charge in excoriating Democrats for not using the words “radical Islamic terrorism,” and published a book this summer called *The Field of Fight: How We Can Win the Global War Against Radical Islam And Its Allies*.

In it, Flynn writes that “without a proper sense of urgency, we will eventually be defeated, dominated, and very likely destroyed” by Muslim militants. “They are dead set on taking us over and drinking our blood.”

His rhetoric rarely distinguishes between extremism and ordinary Muslims; instead, Flynn insists that Muslims have “banned the search for truth” because they believe the Quran, Islam’s holy book, is infallible.

Flynn rivals Trump in his penchant for posting frequent and controversial messages on Twitter, a primary vehicle for his anti-Muslim rhetoric. In one of his most notorious tweets, Flynn wrote that the “fear of Muslims is rational.”



**General Flynn**  
@GenFlynn

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Fear of Muslims is RATIONAL: please forward this to others: the truth fears no questions... [youtu.be/tJnW8HRHLLw](https://youtu.be/tJnW8HRHLLw)

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**General Flynn**

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In next 24 hours, I dare Arab & Persian world "leaders" to step up to the plate and declare their Islamic ideology sick and must B healed.

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The national security adviser appointment does not require Senate confirmation, even though the role offers the potential to significantly shape US foreign and military policy. Critics say that Flynn's anti-Islam rhetoric spells trouble for the US.

Flynn is "convinced that all Muslims who practice traditional Islam are a security risk. That is not only untrue but extremely dangerous," says Will McCants, director for the Brookings Project on US relations with the Islamic world and the author of *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*. The effect will be to alienate many of the world's Muslims, he says, and send them "into the arms of jihadist recruiters" who contend that "America seeks to destroy their religion."

# Michael Flynn, on trip to Russia, said 'who knows' whether Syria gas attack was a 'false flag'

By Andrew Kaczynski, CNN

🕒 Updated 9:42 PM ET, Sun November 20, 2016



## Story highlights

"I'm not going to sit here and tell you that I know," Flynn said.

The [Obama administration](#), the Arab League, NATO, and many western governments have pointed to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime as being responsible for the attack.

**(CNN)** — During a 2015 trip to Russia, Donald Trump's pick to be national security adviser, Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, said he didn't know whether the 2013 sarin gas attack in Syria was conducted by the Syrian Army or by other forces in an attempt to draw the United States into the conflict.

Flynn not ruling out the possibility of a "false flag" attack raises questions about how the Trump administration will approach the Syrian conflict. The [Obama administration](#), the Arab League, NATO, and many western governments have pointed to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime as being responsible for the attack. A [United Nations](#) investigation didn't assign blame, but [evidence](#) from the report pointed to the Assad regime being responsible.

Assad's regime and Russian President Vladimir Putin claim opposition forces were behind the attack.

Flynn, who was the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency for the Obama administration at the time of the 2013 attack, made the remarks during a December 2015 question and answer session hosted by the Russian government-funded television network, Russia Today.

At the event, Flynn was asked by an audience member his take on reports the attack was carried out by Turkish

intelligence and made to look like it was the Syrian government, otherwise known as a "false flag" operation.

"I'm going to address your question because it's a good question," Flynn said. "It's an interesting one. What keeps me up at night is the use of chemicals and biological weapons by terrorist groups that have the intent, they have the intellect, they don't necessarily have the specific types of capabilities just yet, but I believe that they will have the ability to get their hands on them. I think that all of us globally need to really pay very close attention to that."

"Your specific question, I really don't know," Flynn said. "I'm not going to sit here and tell you that I know. To have that level of knowledge or insight or detail of what an intelligence service is doing to do a false flag -- who knows. I don't have a good answer for you. I'm not able to answer your specific question."

In a 2013 [op-ed](#) in the New York Times, Putin wrote, "No one doubts that poison gas was used in Syria. But there is every reason to believe it was used not by the Syrian Army, but by opposition forces, to provoke intervention by their powerful foreign patrons, who would be siding with the fundamentalists."

The questioner's claim might be grounded in a 2013 article by journalist Seymour Hersh in the London Review of Books, which claimed the jihadist rebel group al-Nusra was behind the attack. The New Yorker and Washington Post both [declined](#) to publish the report, saying it didn't meet their standards. A follow up report from Hersh claimed the Turkish government supplied the chemical weapons for the attack.

Emails to Flynn and spokespeople for the Trump transition team were not returned.

Flynn told the [Washington Post](#) this year he was paid through his speaking agency for the appearance at the RT event. At the 2015 dinner for RT's anniversary, Flynn was seated at the same table as Putin.

Before the panel, Flynn tweeted, "Regarding RT panel participation: know my values and beliefs are mine & won't change because I'm on a different piece of geography."

At the event, Flynn cautioned the situation on the ground in Syria was complex and deception was being use.

"What I know is that the complexity of the situation on the ground right now is beyond anybody's wildest imagination," he said. "[The panel moderator] highlighted it in one of her questions. I think her question was a very good one. It's all of the things that are happening, not just in Syria. This is happening in the region in a big way. The things that you're talking about, there's this tit-for-tat or there's this give and take. People are doing things. There is deception being used."

"There is false information being used," he added. "This slide that I have up here is a component of that false information or how false information is applied. We have to understand -- this is why I think [the panel moderator is] driving me crazy up here, trying to get me to be more specific because right now we do have to be more specific. We have to be much more specific in our relationships, far more specific in our relationships, so there's not a misunderstanding and there's not a miscalculation because of some ill-advised tactic that's used in Damascus or Baghdad that causes something that we don't want."

After publication of this story, RT cut the clip and posted it on YouTube. Watch it here:

## 2013 gas attack in Syria a 'false flag?': Michael Flynn, Trump'...



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# Phyllis Schlafly Wants 'Railroad Cars Full Of Illegals Going South'



[<http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post\\_author/brian-tashman/>](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post_author/brian-tashman/) By Brian Tashman  
[<http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post\\_author/brian-tashman/>](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post_author/brian-tashman/) | November 23, 2015  
11:20 am

Excited about Donald Trump's call for the mass deportation of the 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the U.S., Eagle Forum founder Phyllis Schlafly told WorldNetDaily this weekend [<http://www.wnd.com/2015/11/schlafly-ship-illegals-out-of-u-s-on-trains/>](http://www.wnd.com/2015/11/schlafly-ship-illegals-out-of-u-s-on-trains/) that she wants American railways to join the deportation effort, hoping to one day "see those railroad cars full of illegals going south."

Blasting President Obama's call for the U.S. to take in Syrian refugees as "ridiculous," she warned that "Obama wants to change the character of our country" by bringing in people who "have no comprehension of our constitutional system, of limited government, of the people being in control."

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“Every time they say, ‘You can’t deport these people, in my mind’s eye, I see the picture of those railroad cars carrying the illegals out of our country when Eisenhower deported them. They say it was a failure. It wasn’t at all,” Schlafly told WND in an exclusive interview. “In my mind’s eye, I see those railroad cars full of illegals going south. That’s what they ought to do.”

...

“Obama wants to change the character of our country,” Schlafly charged, reacting to an expose highlighted at the top of The Drudge Report on Friday.

“These people come in and have no comprehension of our constitutional system, of limited government, of the people being in control, and I think it’s very tragic,” she continued.

“We had a wonderful country of freedom and prosperity, and that’s why everyone in the world wants to come here. But we can’t let everyone in the world in. And we need to be very persnickety about who we let in. We only want people who love America and want to be American.”

...

Schlafly said Obama’s plan to flood the U.S. with unscreened foreigners “certainly isn’t American,” and she never thought she’d see the day when a U.S. president failed to do his duty to protect the nation.

“I never did. Even the ones I didn’t vote for, I think, would have stood up for America,” Schlafly said. “Obama has told us that he doesn’t

believe America should be thought of as better or exceptional. Obama has a mystique about him, and he continues to go down what I think is the wrong path. We need a leader who's going to stand up for America.”

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Many politicians – Democrat and Republican – argue that the U.S. has a duty to accept “refugees.”

But Schlafly isn't having any of that “ridiculous” nonsense.

“These ideas that they're putting out, that we have some obligation to admit all these people, are just ridiculous,” she said. “We don't have an obligation to admit anybody. A country that doesn't have borders isn't a country. We need to have borders.”

...

She added, “I think the grassroots are going to win out because there are more of them every day who are believing what Trump says and disbelieving what the elite are trying to tell us.”

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**Tags:** Phyllis Schlafly, Immigration, Eagle Forum, WorldNetDaily

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# Schlafly: Increase The Pay Gap So Women Will Have Better Opportunities To Find A Husband



[By Kyle Mantyla](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post_author/kyle-mantyla/)  
[April 15, 2014 10:24](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post_author/kyle-mantyla/)

am

Phyllis Schlafly has never been a big fan [of feminism](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/schlafly-tells-male-students-citadel-not-date-feminists) [or of efforts](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/schlafly-american-women-are-most-fortunate-people-who-ever-lived-earth) [to promote equality](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/schlafly-gay-rights-violate-free-speech-feminism-most-destructive-element-our-society)

lashes-out-sheryl-sandberg-feminism-war-mother-nature> between men and women  
<http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/schlafly-we-need-train-men-stand-feminists> in general.

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Schlafly is, after all, notorious for her stated belief <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/schlafly-married-women-can%e2%80%99t-be-raped-husbands> that it is impossible for a husband to ever rape his wife because “when you get married you have consented to sex. <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/schlafly-reiterates-view-married-women-cannot-be-raped-husbands>“

Given this sort of outlook, it is not surprising that Schlafly opposes things like the Paycheck Fairness Act and efforts to close the gender pay gap

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/federal-eye/wp/2014/04/11/how-salaries-compare-by-gender-for-federal-employees/>, arguing in an op-ed published <http://www.christianpost.com/news/facts-and-fallacies-about-paycheck-fairness-117959/> in *The Christian Post* that closing the pay gap will actually *harm* women.

As Schlafly sees it, women *want* to marry a man who makes more money than they do. As such, if women and men make the same amount, then women will be less likely to get married because they will be “unable to find what they regard as a suitable mate.”

The solution, obviously, is to *increase the pay gap* so that men will earn more than women so that women, in turn, will have a better opportunity to find husbands:

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Another fact is the influence of hypergamy, which means that women typically choose a mate (husband or boyfriend) who earns more than she does. Men don't have the same preference for a higher-earning mate.

While women prefer to HAVE a higher-earning partner, men generally prefer to BE the higher-earning partner in a relationship. This simple but profound difference between the sexes has powerful consequences for the so-called pay gap.

Suppose the pay gap between men and women were magically eliminated. If that happened, simple arithmetic suggests that half of women would be unable to find what they regard as a suitable mate.

Obviously, I'm not saying women won't date or marry a lower-earning men, only that they probably prefer not to. If a higher-earning man is not available, many women are more likely not to marry at all.

...

The best way to improve economic prospects for women is to improve job prospects for the men in their lives, even if that means increasing the so-called pay gap.

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**Tags:** Phyllis Schlafly, Women, Eagle Forum

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# Schlafly Reiterates View That Married Women Cannot Be Raped By Husbands



[http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post\\_author/kyle-mantyla/](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post_author/kyle-mantyla/) By Kyle Mantyla  
[http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post\\_author/kyle-mantyla/](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post_author/kyle-mantyla/) | May 7, 2008 3:51 pm

Last year, Phyllis Schlafly spoke on the campus [http://www.rightwingwatch.org/2007/03/schlafly\\_marrie.html](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/2007/03/schlafly_marrie.html) of Bates College where , among other things, she “belittled the feminist movement as ‘teaching women to be victims,’ decried intellectual men as ‘liberal slobs’ and argued that feminism “is incompatible with marriage and motherhood.” She then went on to top herself by claiming that a married woman cannot be sexually assaulted by her husband, saying:

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“By getting married, the woman has consented to sex, and I don’t think you can call it rape.”

Needless to say, those views caused a bit of controversy ... controversy that has now reemerged at Washington University in St. Louis when school officials decided to honor Schlafly <<http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/stlouiscitycounty/story/6603d3ff585083e1862574410011405c?opendocument>> with an honorary doctorate:

Washington University’s decision to bestow an honorary degree on conservative political activist and author Phyllis Schlafly has stirred outrage among some students and faculty.

Opponents of Schlafly’s honorary doctorate formed a group on the social-networking website Facebook and had 1,023 members as of Monday evening.

Apparently the students don’t think that Washington University should be honoring an immigrant-hating <[http://www.rightwingwatch.org/2007/06/protestors\\_warn.html](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/2007/06/protestors_warn.html)>, UN-detesting <<http://www.pfaw.org/pfaw/general/default.aspx?oid=19034>>, evolution-fighting <[http://www.rightwingwatch.org/2006/08/teachers\\_of\\_evo.html](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/2006/08/teachers_of_evo.html)>, court-stripping <[http://www.rightwingwatch.org/2006/09/attack\\_on\\_the\\_c\\_1.html](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/2006/09/attack_on_the_c_1.html)>, conspiracy-theorist <[http://www.rightwingwatch.org/2007/05/antiimmigrant\\_v\\_1.html](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/2007/05/antiimmigrant_v_1.html)> anti-feminist hypocrite <[http://www.rightwingwatch.org/2006/09/dont\\_marry\\_phyl.html](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/2006/09/dont_marry_phyl.html)> who blames <[http://www.rightwingwatch.org/2007/05/who\\_is\\_to\\_blame.html](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/2007/05/who_is_to_blame.html)> the Virginia Tech massacre on the English Department – go figure.

But the university isn’t backing down <<http://news-info.wustl.edu/news/page/normal/11727.html>> ... and neither is Schlafly, who granted an interview

<<http://media.www.studlife.com/media/storage/paper337/news/2008/05/05/press>

[/questions.for.phyllis.schlafly-3366544.shtml](http://questions.for.phyllis.schlafly-3366544.shtml)> to a Washington University student

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newspaper where she complained that the protesting students have “too much extra time” on their hands and reiterated her view that wives cannot be raped by their husbands:

**Could you clarify some of the statements that you made in Maine last year about marital rape?**

I think that when you get married you have consented to sex. That's what marriage is all about, I don't know if maybe these girls missed sex ed. That doesn't mean the husband can beat you up, we have plenty of laws against assault and battery. If there is any violence or mistreatment that can be dealt with by criminal prosecution, by divorce or in various ways. When it gets down to calling it rape though, it isn't rape, it's a he said-she said where it's just too easy to lie about it.

**Was the way in which your statement was portrayed correct?**

Yes. Feminists, if they get tired of a husband or if they want to fight over child custody, they can make an accusation of marital rape and they want that to be there, available to them.

**So you see this as more of a tool used by people to get out of marriages than as legitimate-**

Yes, I certainly do.

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**Tags:** Phyllis Schlafly, Evolution, Feminism, marriage, marry, Media, violence, Virginia, Women

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# Schlafly: 'Reinstate the House Committee on Un-American Activities'



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<[http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post\\_author/brian-tashman/](http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post_author/brian-tashman/)> | April 23, 2013 10:55

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Eagle Forum founder and Joseph McCarthy admirer <<http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/schlafly-and-noebel-mccarthy-was-%e2%80%9cher0%e2%80%9d-communism-nearly-upon-us>> Phyllis Schlafly is using the Boston marathon bombings as an excuse to push for the reinstatement of the notorious House Committee on Un-American Activities.

"It would be useful to reinstate the House Committee on Un-American

Activities,” Schlafly wrote in a column yesterday, “so we can have a look at those in our midst who may be jihadists, dupes of violent Muslim indoctrination, or (in old Communist lingo) fellow travelers or useful idiots.”

**MENU**

In her column <http://www.wnd.com/2013/04/are-you-american-1st-or-muslim-1st/>, which she titled, “Are You American 1st or Muslim 1st?,” Schlafly further argues that while it is okay to be a Christian first and American second, Muslims who put faith first should not be allowed in the country.

**MENU**

The Boston bombing crime shows that comprehensive immigration reform should not be only a southern border problem or even just a problem of illegal aliens. It's also a problem of foreigners who are admitted legally but should never have been admitted, and of others admitted legally on a visa but are not tracked to make sure they depart when their visitor's time expires, as U.S. law requires.

For starters, why would our government have admitted the Tsarnaev family whose son was named Tamerlan? That should have been a red alert because that is the name of one of the world's notorious mass murderers, a 14th-century Central Asian warlord named Tamerlan, who killed about 17 million people.

...

It's long overdue for Congress to have a series of hearings on the loopholes, broken promises and disobeyed laws involving both legal and illegal entry into the United States. It would be useful to reinstate the House Committee on Un-American Activities so we can have a look at those in our midst who may be jihadists, dupes of violent Muslim indoctrination, or (in old Communist lingo) fellow travelers or useful idiots.

...

There is plenty of evidence that legal and illegal immigrants of various nationalities, in contravention of our citizenship pledge, retain their loyalty to the land they came from. Brian Fishman, who studies terrorism at the New America Foundation in Washington, says, "I think there's often a sense of divided loyalties in these cases where Americans turn to violent jihad – are you American first or are you Muslim first?"

MENU

Our government should investigate thoroughly and reject those who do not want to become Americans, obey our Constitution and laws, speak our language, and salute our flag. And they have to accept the rule that disputes in our courts must be decided according to U.S. law, not any foreign law.

Schlafly’s argument is reminiscent of an incoherent answer that Pat Robertson gave last year to a 700 Club viewer who asked him why he criticized Muslims who put their faith ahead of their nationality when he does the same. Robertson claimed <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/pat-robertson-says-you-should-be-christian-first-and-american-second-attacks-muslims-who-put> that Muslims are different from Christians because they are “under control of a foreign power.”

**Tags:** Phyllis Schlafly, mccarthyism, Eagle Forum

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**Background to “Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions  
in Recent US Elections”: The Analytic Process and Cyber  
Incident Attribution**

6 January 2017

## **Background to “Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections”: The Analytic Process and Cyber Incident Attribution**

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“Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections” is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment that has been provided to the President and to recipients approved by the President.

- The Intelligence Community rarely can publicly reveal the full extent of its knowledge or the precise bases for its assessments, as the release of such information would reveal sensitive sources or methods and imperil the ability to collect critical foreign intelligence in the future.
- Thus, while the conclusions in the report are all reflected in the classified assessment, the declassified report does not and cannot include the full supporting information, including specific intelligence and sources and methods.

### **The Analytic Process**

The mission of the Intelligence Community is to seek to reduce the uncertainty surrounding foreign activities, capabilities, or leaders’ intentions. This objective is difficult to achieve when seeking to understand complex issues on which foreign actors go to extraordinary lengths to hide or obfuscate their activities.

- On these issues of great importance to US national security, the goal of intelligence analysis is to provide assessments to decisionmakers that are intellectually rigorous, objective, timely, and useful, and that adhere to tradecraft standards.
- The tradecraft standards for analytic products have been refined over the past ten years. These standards include describing sources (including their reliability and access to the information they provide), clearly expressing uncertainty, distinguishing between underlying information and analysts’ judgments and assumptions, exploring alternatives, demonstrating relevance to the customer, using strong and transparent logic, and explaining change or consistency in judgments over time.
- Applying these standards helps ensure that the Intelligence Community provides US policymakers, warfighters, and operators with the best and most accurate insight, warning, and context, as well as potential opportunities to advance US national security.

Intelligence Community analysts integrate information from a wide range of sources, including human sources, technical collection, and open source information, and apply specialized skills and structured analytic tools to draw inferences informed by the data available, relevant past activity, and logic and reasoning to provide insight into what is happening and the prospects for the future.

- A critical part of the analyst’s task is to explain uncertainties associated with major judgments based on the quantity and quality of the source material, information gaps, and the complexity of the issue.
- When Intelligence Community analysts use words such as “we assess” or “we judge,” they are conveying an analytic assessment or judgment.
- Some analytic judgments are based directly on collected information; others rest on previous judgments, which serve as building blocks in rigorous analysis. In either type of judgment, the tradecraft standards outlined above ensure that analysts have an appropriate basis for the judgment.

- Intelligence Community judgments often include two important elements: judgments of how likely it is that something has happened or will happen (using terms such as “likely” or “unlikely”) and confidence levels in those judgments (low, moderate, and high) that refer to the evidentiary basis, logic and reasoning, and precedents that underpin the judgments.

### **Determining Attribution in Cyber Incidents**

The nature of cyberspace makes attribution of cyber operations difficult but not impossible. Every kind of cyber operation—malicious or not—leaves a trail. US Intelligence Community analysts use this information, their constantly growing knowledge base of previous events and known malicious actors, and their knowledge of how these malicious actors work and the tools that they use, to attempt to trace these operations back to their source. In every case, they apply the same tradecraft standards described in the Analytic Process above.

- Analysts consider a series of questions to assess how the information compares with existing knowledge and adjust their confidence in their judgments as appropriate to account for any alternative hypotheses and ambiguities.
- An assessment of attribution usually is not a simple statement of who conducted an operation, but rather a series of judgments that describe whether it was an isolated incident, who was the likely perpetrator, that perpetrator’s possible motivations, and whether a foreign government had a role in ordering or leading the operation.

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.



ICA

INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

# Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections

ICA 2017-01D | 6 January 2017

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

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## Scope and Sourcing

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Information available as of 29 December 2016 was used in the preparation of this product.

### Scope

This report includes an analytic assessment drafted and coordinated among The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and The National Security Agency (NSA), which draws on intelligence information collected and disseminated by those three agencies. It covers the motivation and scope of Moscow's intentions regarding US elections and Moscow's use of cyber tools and media campaigns to influence US public opinion. The assessment focuses on activities aimed at the 2016 US presidential election and draws on our understanding of previous Russian influence operations. When we use the term "we" it refers to an assessment by all three agencies.

- This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment. This document's conclusions are identical to the highly classified assessment, but this document does not include the full supporting information, including specific intelligence on key elements of the influence campaign. Given the redactions, we made minor edits purely for readability and flow.

We did not make an assessment of the impact that Russian activities had on the outcome of the 2016 election. The US Intelligence Community is charged with monitoring and assessing the intentions, capabilities, and actions of foreign actors; it does not analyze US political processes or US public opinion.

- New information continues to emerge, providing increased insight into Russian activities.

### Sourcing

Many of the key judgments in this assessment rely on a body of reporting from multiple sources that are consistent with our understanding of Russian behavior. Insights into Russian efforts—including specific cyber operations—and Russian views of key US players derive from multiple corroborating sources.

Some of our judgments about Kremlin preferences and intent are drawn from the behavior of Kremlin-loyal political figures, state media, and pro-Kremlin social media actors, all of whom the Kremlin either directly uses to convey messages or who are answerable to the Kremlin. The Russian leadership invests significant resources in both foreign and domestic propaganda and places a premium on transmitting what it views as consistent, self-reinforcing narratives regarding its desires and redlines, whether on Ukraine, Syria, or relations with the United States.

# Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections

ICA 2017-01D  
6 January 2017

## Key Judgments

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**Russian efforts to influence the 2016 US presidential election represent the most recent expression of Moscow's longstanding desire to undermine the US-led liberal democratic order, but these activities demonstrated a significant escalation in directness, level of activity, and scope of effort compared to previous operations.**

**We assess Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the US presidential election. Russia's goals were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency. We further assess Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump.** We have high confidence in these judgments.

- **We also assess Putin and the Russian Government aspired to help President-elect Trump's election chances when possible by discrediting Secretary Clinton and publicly contrasting her unfavorably to him.** All three agencies agree with this judgment. CIA and FBI have high confidence in this judgment; NSA has moderate confidence.
- Moscow's approach evolved over the course of the campaign based on Russia's understanding of the electoral prospects of the two main candidates. When it appeared to Moscow that Secretary Clinton was likely to win the election, the Russian influence campaign began to focus more on undermining her future presidency.
- Further information has come to light since Election Day that, when combined with Russian behavior since early November 2016, increases our confidence in our assessments of Russian motivations and goals.

**Moscow's influence campaign followed a Russian messaging strategy that blends covert intelligence operations—such as cyber activity—with overt efforts by Russian Government agencies, state-funded media, third-party intermediaries, and paid social media users or “trolls.”** Russia, like its Soviet predecessor, has a history of conducting covert influence campaigns focused on US presidential elections that have used intelligence officers and agents and press placements to disparage candidates perceived as hostile to the Kremlin.

- Russia's intelligence services conducted cyber operations against targets associated with the 2016 US presidential election, including targets associated with both major US political parties.
- We assess with high confidence that Russian military intelligence (General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate or GRU) used the Guccifer 2.0 persona and DCLeaks.com to release US victim data

obtained in cyber operations publicly and in exclusives to media outlets and relayed material to WikiLeaks.

- Russian intelligence obtained and maintained access to elements of multiple US state or local electoral boards. **DHS assesses that the types of systems Russian actors targeted or compromised were not involved in vote tallying.**
- Russia's state-run propaganda machine contributed to the influence campaign by serving as a platform for Kremlin messaging to Russian and international audiences.

**We assess Moscow will apply lessons learned from its Putin-ordered campaign aimed at the US presidential election to future influence efforts worldwide, including against US allies and their election processes.**

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This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

## Russia's Influence Campaign Targeting the 2016 US Presidential Election

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## Russia's Influence Campaign Targeting the 2016 US Presidential Election

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### Putin Ordered Campaign To Influence US Election

We assess with high confidence that Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the US presidential election, the consistent goals of which were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency. We further assess Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump. When it appeared to Moscow that Secretary Clinton was likely to win the election, the Russian influence campaign then focused on undermining her expected presidency.

- We also assess Putin and the Russian Government aspired to help President-elect Trump's election chances when possible by discrediting Secretary Clinton and publicly contrasting her unfavorably to him. All three agencies agree with this judgment. CIA and FBI have high confidence in this judgment; NSA has moderate confidence.
- In trying to influence the US election, we assess the Kremlin sought to advance its longstanding desire to undermine the US-led liberal democratic order, the promotion of which Putin and other senior Russian leaders view as a threat to Russia and Putin's regime.
- Putin publicly pointed to the Panama Papers disclosure and the Olympic doping scandal as US-directed efforts to defame Russia, suggesting he sought to use disclosures to discredit the image of the United States and cast it as hypocritical.

- Putin most likely wanted to discredit Secretary Clinton because he has publicly blamed her since 2011 for inciting mass protests against his regime in late 2011 and early 2012, and because he holds a grudge for comments he almost certainly saw as disparaging him.

We assess Putin, his advisers, and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump over Secretary Clinton.

- Beginning in June, Putin's public comments about the US presidential race avoided directly praising President-elect Trump, probably because Kremlin officials thought that any praise from Putin personally would backfire in the United States. Nonetheless, Putin publicly indicated a preference for President-elect Trump's stated policy to work with Russia, and pro-Kremlin figures spoke highly about what they saw as his Russia-friendly positions on Syria and Ukraine. Putin publicly contrasted the President-elect's approach to Russia with Secretary Clinton's "aggressive rhetoric."
- Moscow also saw the election of President-elect Trump as a way to achieve an international counterterrorism coalition against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).
- Putin has had many positive experiences working with Western political leaders whose business interests made them more disposed to deal with Russia, such as former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder.
- Putin, Russian officials, and other pro-Kremlin pundits stopped publicly criticizing the US election process as unfair almost immediately

after the election because Moscow probably assessed it would be counterproductive to building positive relations.

We assess the influence campaign aspired to help President-elect Trump's chances of victory when possible by discrediting Secretary Clinton and publicly contrasting her unfavorably to the President-elect. When it appeared to Moscow that Secretary Clinton was likely to win the presidency the Russian influence campaign focused more on undercutting Secretary Clinton's legitimacy and crippling her presidency from its start, including by impugning the fairness of the election.

- Before the election, Russian diplomats had publicly denounced the US electoral process and were prepared to publicly call into question the validity of the results. Pro-Kremlin bloggers had prepared a Twitter campaign, #DemocracyRIP, on election night in anticipation of Secretary Clinton's victory, judging from their social media activity.

### **Russian Campaign Was Multifaceted**

Moscow's use of disclosures during the US election was unprecedented, but its influence campaign otherwise followed a longstanding Russian messaging strategy that blends covert intelligence operations—such as cyber activity—with overt efforts by Russian Government agencies, state-funded media, third-party intermediaries, and paid social media users or “trolls.”

- We assess that influence campaigns are approved at the highest levels of the Russian Government—particularly those that would be politically sensitive.
- Moscow's campaign aimed at the US election reflected years of investment in its capabilities, which Moscow has honed in the former Soviet states.

- By their nature, Russian influence campaigns are multifaceted and designed to be deniable because they use a mix of agents of influence, cutouts, front organizations, and false-flag operations. Moscow demonstrated this during the Ukraine crisis in 2014, when Russia deployed forces and advisers to eastern Ukraine and denied it publicly.

The Kremlin's campaign aimed at the US election featured disclosures of data obtained through Russian cyber operations; intrusions into US state and local electoral boards; and overt propaganda. Russian intelligence collection both informed and enabled the influence campaign.

### **Cyber Espionage Against US Political Organizations.**

Russia's intelligence services conducted cyber operations against targets associated with the 2016 US presidential election, including targets associated with both major US political parties.

We assess Russian intelligence services collected against the US primary campaigns, think tanks, and lobbying groups they viewed as likely to shape future US policies. In July 2015, Russian intelligence gained access to Democratic National Committee (DNC) networks and maintained that access until at least June 2016.

- The General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) probably began cyber operations aimed at the US election by March 2016. We assess that the GRU operations resulted in the compromise of the personal e-mail accounts of Democratic Party officials and political figures. By May, the GRU had exfiltrated large volumes of data from the DNC.

### **Public Disclosures of Russian-Collected Data.**

We assess with high confidence that the GRU used the Guccifer 2.0 persona, DCLeaks.com, and WikiLeaks to release US victim data obtained in

cyber operations publicly and in exclusives to media outlets.

- Guccifer 2.0, who claimed to be an independent Romanian hacker, made multiple contradictory statements and false claims about his likely Russian identity throughout the election. Press reporting suggests more than one person claiming to be Guccifer 2.0 interacted with journalists.
- Content that we assess was taken from e-mail accounts targeted by the GRU in March 2016 appeared on DCLeaks.com starting in June.

We assess with high confidence that the GRU relayed material it acquired from the DNC and senior Democratic officials to WikiLeaks. Moscow most likely chose WikiLeaks because of its self-proclaimed reputation for authenticity. Disclosures through WikiLeaks did not contain any evident forgeries.

- In early September, Putin said publicly it was important the DNC data was exposed to WikiLeaks, calling the search for the source of the leaks a distraction and denying Russian “state-level” involvement.
- The Kremlin’s principal international propaganda outlet RT (formerly Russia Today) has actively collaborated with WikiLeaks. RT’s editor-in-chief visited WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London in August 2013, where they discussed renewing his broadcast contract with RT, according to Russian and Western media. Russian media subsequently announced that RT had become “the only Russian media company” to partner with WikiLeaks and had received access to “new leaks of secret information.” RT routinely gives Assange sympathetic coverage and provides him a platform to denounce the United States.

These election-related disclosures reflect a pattern of Russian intelligence using hacked information in targeted influence efforts against targets such as Olympic athletes and other foreign governments. Such efforts have included releasing or altering personal data, defacing websites, or releasing e-mails.

- A prominent target since the 2016 Summer Olympics has been the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), with leaks that we assess to have originated with the GRU and that have involved data on US athletes.

Russia collected on some Republican-affiliated targets but did not conduct a comparable disclosure campaign.

**Russian Cyber Intrusions Into State and Local Electoral Boards.** Russian intelligence accessed elements of multiple state or local electoral boards. Since early 2014, Russian intelligence has researched US electoral processes and related technology and equipment.

- DHS assesses that the types of systems we observed Russian actors targeting or compromising are not involved in vote tallying.

**Russian Propaganda Efforts.** Russia’s state-run propaganda machine—comprised of its domestic media apparatus, outlets targeting global audiences such as RT and Sputnik, and a network of quasi-government trolls—contributed to the influence campaign by serving as a platform for Kremlin messaging to Russian and international audiences. State-owned Russian media made increasingly favorable comments about President-elect Trump as the 2016 US general and primary election campaigns progressed while consistently offering negative coverage of Secretary Clinton.

- Starting in March 2016, Russian Government-linked actors began openly supporting President-elect Trump’s candidacy in media

aimed at English-speaking audiences. RT and Sputnik—another government-funded outlet producing pro-Kremlin radio and online content in a variety of languages for international audiences—consistently cast President-elect Trump as the target of unfair coverage from traditional US media outlets that they claimed were subservient to a corrupt political establishment.

- Russian media hailed President-elect Trump's victory as a vindication of Putin's advocacy of global populist movements—the theme of Putin's annual conference for Western academics in October 2016—and the latest example of Western liberalism's collapse.
- Putin's chief propagandist Dmitriy Kiselev used his flagship weekly newsmagazine program this fall to cast President-elect Trump as an outsider victimized by a corrupt political establishment and faulty democratic election process that aimed to prevent his election because of his desire to work with Moscow.
- Pro-Kremlin proxy Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, leader of the nationalist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, proclaimed just before the election that if President-elect Trump won, Russia would "drink champagne" in anticipation of being able to advance its positions on Syria and Ukraine.

RT's coverage of Secretary Clinton throughout the US presidential campaign was consistently negative and focused on her leaked e-mails and accused her of corruption, poor physical and mental health, and ties to Islamic extremism. Some Russian officials echoed Russian lines for the influence campaign that Secretary Clinton's election could lead to a war between the United States and Russia.

- In August, Kremlin-linked political analysts suggested avenging negative Western reports

on Putin by airing segments devoted to Secretary Clinton's alleged health problems.

- On 6 August, RT published an English-language video called "Julian Assange Special: Do WikiLeaks Have the E-mail That'll Put Clinton in Prison?" and an exclusive interview with Assange entitled "Clinton and ISIS Funded by the Same Money." RT's most popular video on Secretary Clinton, "How 100% of the Clintons' 'Charity' Went to...Themselves," had more than 9 million views on social media platforms. RT's most popular English language video about the President-elect, called "Trump Will Not Be Permitted To Win," featured Assange and had 2.2 million views.
- For more on Russia's past media efforts—including portraying the 2012 US electoral process as undemocratic—please see Annex A: Russia—Kremlin's TV Seeks To Influence Politics, Fuel Discontent in US.

Russia used trolls as well as RT as part of its influence efforts to denigrate Secretary Clinton. This effort amplified stories on scandals about Secretary Clinton and the role of WikiLeaks in the election campaign.

- The likely financier of the so-called Internet Research Agency of professional trolls located in Saint Petersburg is a close Putin ally with ties to Russian intelligence.
- A journalist who is a leading expert on the Internet Research Agency claimed that some social media accounts that appear to be tied to Russia's professional trolls—because they previously were devoted to supporting Russian actions in Ukraine—started to advocate for President-elect Trump as early as December 2015.

### **Influence Effort Was Boldest Yet in the US**

Russia's effort to influence the 2016 US presidential election represented a significant escalation in directness, level of activity, and scope of effort compared to previous operations aimed at US elections. We assess the 2016 influence campaign reflected the Kremlin's recognition of the worldwide effects that mass disclosures of US Government and other private data—such as those conducted by WikiLeaks and others—have achieved in recent years, and their understanding of the value of orchestrating such disclosures to maximize the impact of compromising information.

- During the Cold War, the Soviet Union used intelligence officers, influence agents, forgeries, and press placements to disparage candidates perceived as hostile to the Kremlin, according to a former KGB archivist.

Since the Cold War, Russian intelligence efforts related to US elections have primarily focused on foreign intelligence collection. For decades, Russian and Soviet intelligence services have sought to collect insider information from US political parties that could help Russian leaders understand a new US administration's plans and priorities.

- The Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) Directorate S (Illegals) officers arrested in the United States in 2010 reported to Moscow about the 2008 election.
- In the 1970s, the KGB recruited a Democratic Party activist who reported information about then-presidential hopeful Jimmy Carter's campaign and foreign policy plans, according to a former KGB archivist.

### **Election Operation Signals “New Normal” in Russian Influence Efforts**

We assess Moscow will apply lessons learned from its campaign aimed at the US presidential election to future influence efforts in the United States and worldwide, including against US allies and their election processes. We assess the Russian intelligence services would have seen their election influence campaign as at least a qualified success because of their perceived ability to impact public discussion.

- Putin's public views of the disclosures suggest the Kremlin and the intelligence services will continue to consider using cyber-enabled disclosure operations because of their belief that these can accomplish Russian goals relatively easily without significant damage to Russian interests.
- Russia has sought to influence elections across Europe.

We assess Russian intelligence services will continue to develop capabilities to provide Putin with options to use against the United States, judging from past practice and current efforts. Immediately after Election Day, we assess Russian intelligence began a spearphishing campaign targeting US Government employees and individuals associated with US think tanks and NGOs in national security, defense, and foreign policy fields. This campaign could provide material for future influence efforts as well as foreign intelligence collection on the incoming administration's goals and plans.

## Annex A

### **Russia -- Kremlin's TV Seeks To Influence Politics, Fuel Discontent in US\***

*RT America TV, a Kremlin-financed channel operated from within the United States, has substantially expanded its repertoire of programming that highlights criticism of alleged US shortcomings in democracy and civil liberties. The rapid expansion of RT's operations and budget and recent candid statements by RT's leadership point to the channel's importance to the Kremlin as a messaging tool and indicate a Kremlin-directed campaign to undermine faith in the US Government and fuel political protest. The Kremlin has committed significant resources to expanding the channel's reach, particularly its social media footprint. A reliable UK report states that RT recently was the most-watched foreign news channel in the UK. RT America has positioned itself as a domestic US channel and has deliberately sought to obscure any legal ties to the Russian Government.*

In the runup to the 2012 US presidential election in November, English-language channel RT America -- created and financed by the Russian Government and part of Russian Government-sponsored RT TV (see textbox 1) -- intensified its usually critical coverage of the United States. The channel portrayed the US electoral process as undemocratic and featured calls by US protesters for the public to rise up and "take this government back."

- RT introduced two new shows -- "Breaking the Set" on 4 September and "Truthseeker" on 2 November -- both overwhelmingly focused on criticism of US and Western governments as well as the promotion of radical discontent.

- From August to November 2012, RT ran numerous reports on alleged US election fraud and voting machine vulnerabilities, contending that US election results cannot be trusted and do not reflect the popular will.

- In an effort to highlight the alleged "lack of democracy" in the United States, RT broadcast, hosted, and advertised third-party candidate debates and ran reporting supportive of the political agenda of these candidates. The RT hosts asserted that the US two-party system does not represent the views of at least one-third of the population and is a "sham."



*Messaging on RT prior to the US presidential election (RT, 3 November)*

\* This annex was originally published on 11 December 2012 by the Open Source Center, now the Open Source Enterprise.

- RT aired a documentary about the Occupy Wall Street movement on 1, 2, and 4 November. RT framed the movement as a fight against "the ruling class" and described the current US political system as corrupt and dominated by corporations. RT advertising for the documentary featured Occupy movement calls to "take back" the government. The documentary claimed that the US system cannot be changed democratically, but only through "revolution." After the 6 November US presidential election, RT aired a documentary called "Cultures of Protest," about active and often violent political resistance (RT, 1-10 November).



RT new show "Truthseeker" (RT, 11 November)

### RT Conducts Strategic Messaging for Russian Government

RT's criticism of the US election was the latest facet of its broader and longer-standing anti-US messaging likely aimed at undermining viewers' trust in US democratic procedures and undercutting US criticism of Russia's political system. RT Editor in Chief Margarita Simonyan recently declared that the United States itself lacks democracy and that it has "no moral right to teach the rest of the world" (*Kommersant*, 6 November).

- Simonyan has characterized RT's coverage of the Occupy Wall Street movement as "information warfare" that is aimed at promoting popular dissatisfaction with the US Government. RT created a *Facebook* app to connect Occupy Wall Street protesters via social media. In addition, RT featured its own hosts in Occupy rallies ("Minaev Live," 10 April; RT, 2, 12 June).
- RT's reports often characterize the United States as a "surveillance state" and allege widespread infringements of civil liberties, police brutality, and drone use (RT, 24, 28 October, 1-10 November).
- RT has also focused on criticism of the US economic system, US currency policy, alleged Wall Street greed, and the US national debt. Some of RT's hosts have compared the United States to Imperial Rome and have predicted that government corruption and "corporate greed" will lead to US financial collapse (RT, 31 October, 4 November).



Simonyan steps over the White House in the introduction from her short-lived domestic show on REN TV (REN TV, 26 December 2011)

RT broadcasts support for other Russian interests in areas such as foreign and energy policy.

- RT runs anti-fracking programming, highlighting environmental issues and the impacts on public health. This is likely reflective of the Russian Government's concern about the impact of fracking and US natural gas production on the global energy market and the potential challenges to Gazprom's profitability (5 October).
- RT is a leading media voice opposing Western intervention in the Syrian conflict and blaming the West for waging "information wars" against the Syrian Government (RT, 10 October-9 November).



*RT anti-fracking reporting (RT, 5 October)*

- In an earlier example of RT's messaging in support of the Russian Government, during the Georgia-Russia military conflict the channel accused Georgians of killing civilians and organizing a genocide of the Ossetian people. According to Simonyan, when "the Ministry of Defense was at war with Georgia," RT was "waging an information war against the entire Western world" (*Kommersant*, 11 July).

In recent interviews, RT's leadership has candidly acknowledged its mission to expand its US audience and to expose it to Kremlin messaging. However, the leadership rejected claims that RT interferes in US domestic affairs.

- Simonyan claimed in popular arts magazine *Afisha* on 3 October: "It is important to have a channel that people get used to, and then, when needed, you show them what you need to show. In some sense, not having our own foreign broadcasting is the same as not having a ministry of defense. When there is no war, it looks like we don't need it. However, when there is a war, it is critical."
- According to Simonyan, "the word 'propaganda' has a very negative connotation, but indeed, there is not a single international foreign TV channel that is doing something other than promotion of the values of the country that it is broadcasting from." She added that "when Russia is at war, we are, of course, on Russia's side" (*Afisha*, 3 October; *Kommersant*, 4 July).
- TV-Novosti director Nikolov said on 4 October to the Association of Cable Television that RT builds on worldwide demand for "an alternative view of the entire world." Simonyan asserted on 3 October in *Afisha* that RT's goal is "to make an alternative channel that shares information unavailable elsewhere" in order to "conquer the audience" and expose it to Russian state messaging (*Afisha*, 3 October; *Kommersant*, 4 July).
- On 26 May, Simonyan tweeted with irony: "Ambassador McFaul hints that our channel is interference with US domestic affairs. And we, sinful souls, were thinking that it is freedom of speech."

## RT Leadership Closely Tied to, Controlled by Kremlin

RT Editor in Chief Margarita Simonyan has close ties to top Russian Government officials, especially Presidential Administration Deputy Chief of Staff Aleksey Gromov, who reportedly manages political TV coverage in Russia and is one of the founders of RT.

- Simonyan has claimed that Gromov shielded her from other officials and their requests to air certain reports. Russian media consider Simonyan to be Gromov's protege (*Kommersant*, 4 July; *Dozhd TV*, 11 July).
- Simonyan replaced Gromov on state-owned Channel One's Board of Directors. Government officials, including Gromov and Putin's Press Secretary Peskov were involved in creating RT and appointing Simonyan (*Afisha*, 3 October).
- According to Simonyan, Gromov oversees political coverage on TV, and he has periodic meetings with media managers where he shares classified information and discusses their coverage plans. Some opposition journalists, including Andrey Loshak, claim that he also ordered media attacks on opposition figures (*Kommersant*, 11 July).

The Kremlin staffs RT and closely supervises RT's coverage, recruiting people who can convey Russian strategic messaging because of their ideological beliefs.

- The head of RT's Arabic-language service, Aydar Aganin, was rotated from the diplomatic service to manage RT's Arabic-language expansion, suggesting a close relationship between RT and Russia's foreign policy apparatus. RT's London Bureau is managed by Darya Pushkova, the daughter of Aleksey Pushkov, the current chair of the Duma Russian Foreign Affairs Committee and a former Gorbachev speechwriter (*DXB*, 26 March 2009; *MK.ru*, 13 March 2006).
- According to Simonyan, the Russian Government sets rating and viewership requirements for RT and, "since RT receives budget from the state, it must complete tasks given by the state." According to Nikolov, RT news stories are written and edited "to become news" exclusively in RT's Moscow office (*Dozhd TV*, 11 July; *AKT*, 4 October).
- In her interview with pro-Kremlin journalist Sergey Minaev, Simonyan complimented RT staff in the United States for passionately defending Russian positions on the air and in social media. Simonyan said: "I wish you could see...how these guys, not just on air, but on their own social networks, *Twitter*, and when giving interviews, how they defend the positions that we stand on!" ("*Minaev Live*," 10 April).



*Simonyan shows RT facilities to then Prime Minister Putin. Simonyan was on Putin's 2012 presidential election campaign staff in Moscow (Rospress, 22 September 2010, Ria Novosti, 25 October 2012).*

## **RT Focuses on Social Media, Building Audience**

RT aggressively advertises its social media accounts and has a significant and fast-growing social media footprint. In line with its efforts to present itself as anti-mainstream and to provide viewers alternative news content, RT is making its social media operations a top priority, both to avoid broadcast TV regulations and to expand its overall audience.

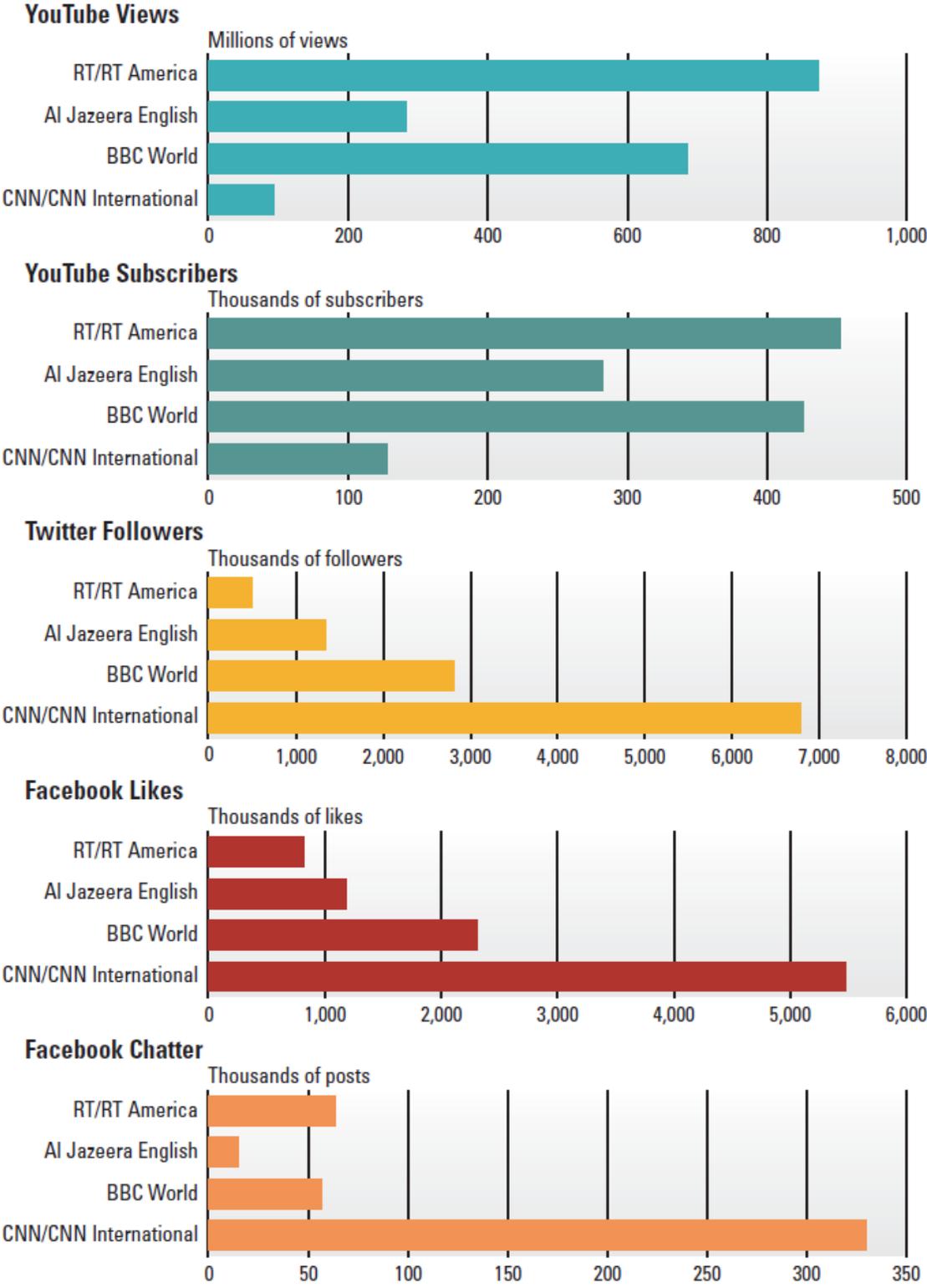
- According to RT management, RT's website receives at least 500,000 unique viewers every day. Since its inception in 2005, RT videos received more than 800 million views on *YouTube* (1 million views per day), which is the highest among news outlets (see graphics for comparison with other news channels) (*AKT*, 4 October).
- According to Simonyan, the TV audience worldwide is losing trust in traditional TV broadcasts and stations, while the popularity of "alternative channels" like RT or Al Jazeera grows. RT markets itself as an "alternative channel" that is available via the Internet everywhere in the world, and it encourages interaction and social networking (*Kommersant*, 29 September).
- According to Simonyan, RT uses social media to expand the reach of its political reporting and uses well-trained people to monitor public opinion in social media commentaries (*Kommersant*, 29 September).
- According to Nikolov, RT requires its hosts to have social media accounts, in part because social media allows the distribution of content that would not be allowed on television (*Newreporter.org*, 11 October).
- Simonyan claimed in her 3 October interview to independent TV channel Dozhd that Occupy Wall Street coverage gave RT a significant audience boost.

The Kremlin spends \$190 million a year on the distribution and dissemination of RT programming, focusing on hotels and satellite, terrestrial, and cable broadcasting. The Kremlin is rapidly expanding RT's availability around the world and giving it a reach comparable to channels such as Al Jazeera English. According to Simonyan, the United Kingdom and the United States are RT's most successful markets. RT does not, however, publish audience information.

- According to market research company Nielsen, RT had the most rapid growth (40 percent) among all international news channels in the United States over the past year (2012). Its audience in New York tripled and in Washington DC grew by 60% (*Kommersant*, 4 July).
- RT claims that it is surpassing Al Jazeera in viewership in New York and Washington DC (*BARB*, 20 November; RT, 21 November).
- RT states on its website that it can reach more than 550 million people worldwide and 85 million people in the United States; however, it does not publicize its actual US audience numbers (RT, 10 December).

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

## TV News Broadcasters: Comparative Social Media Footprint



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## **Formal Disassociation From Kremlin Facilitates RT US Messaging**

RT America formally disassociates itself from the Russian Government by using a Moscow-based autonomous nonprofit organization to finance its US operations. According to RT's leadership, this structure was set up to avoid the Foreign Agents Registration Act and to facilitate licensing abroad. In addition, RT rebranded itself in 2008 to deemphasize its Russian origin.

- According to Simonyan, RT America differs from other Russian state institutions in terms of ownership, but not in terms of financing. To disassociate RT from the Russian Government, the federal news agency RIA Novosti established a subsidiary autonomous nonprofit organization, TV-Novosti, using the formal independence of this company to establish and finance RT worldwide (Dozhd TV, 11 July).
- Nikolov claimed that RT is an "autonomous noncommercial entity," which is "well received by foreign regulators" and "simplifies getting a license." Simonyan said that RT America is not a "foreign agent" according to US law because it uses a US commercial organization for its broadcasts (AKT, 4 October; Dozhd TV, 11 July).
- Simonyan observed that RT's original Russia-centric news reporting did not generate sufficient audience, so RT switched to covering international and US domestic affairs and removed the words "Russia Today" from the logo "to stop scaring away the audience" (Afisha, 18 October; *Kommersant*, 4 July).
- RT hires or makes contractual agreements with Westerners with views that fit its agenda and airs them on RT. Simonyan said on the pro-Kremlin show "Minaev Live" on 10 April that RT has enough audience and money to be able to choose its hosts, and it chooses the hosts that "think like us," "are interested in working in the anti-mainstream," and defend RT's beliefs on social media. Some hosts and journalists do not present themselves as associated with RT when interviewing people, and many of them have affiliations to other media and activist organizations in the United States ("Minaev Live," 10 April).

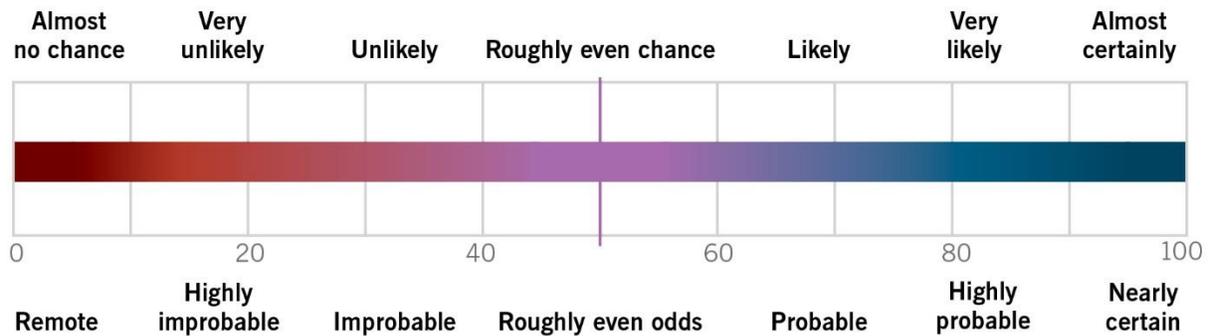
## Annex B

### ESTIMATIVE LANGUAGE

Estimative language consists of two elements: judgments about the likelihood of developments or events occurring and levels of confidence in the sources and analytic reasoning supporting the judgments. Judgments are not intended to imply that we have proof that shows something to be a fact. Assessments are based on collected information, which is often incomplete or fragmentary, as well as logic, argumentation, and precedents.

**Judgments of Likelihood.** The chart below approximates how judgments of likelihood correlate with percentages. Unless otherwise stated, the Intelligence Community's judgments are not derived via statistical analysis. Phrases such as "we judge" and "we assess"—and terms such as "probable" and "likely"—convey analytical assessments.

Percent



**Confidence in the Sources Supporting Judgments.** Confidence levels provide assessments of the quality and quantity of the source information that supports judgments. Consequently, we ascribe high, moderate, or low levels of confidence to assessments:

- **High confidence** generally indicates that judgments are based on high-quality information from multiple sources. High confidence in a judgment does not imply that the assessment is a fact or a certainty; such judgments might be wrong.
- **Moderate confidence** generally means that the information is credibly sourced and plausible but not of sufficient quality or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence.
- **Low confidence** generally means that the information's credibility and/or plausibility is uncertain, that the information is too fragmented or poorly corroborated to make solid analytic inferences, or that reliability of the sources is questionable.

This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.

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This report is a declassified version of a highly classified assessment; its conclusions are identical to those in the highly classified assessment but this version does not include the full supporting information on key elements of the influence campaign.



[nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com)

## New Records Shed Light on Donald Trump's \$25,000 Gift to Florida Official

*Kevin Sack and Steve Eder*

But documents obtained this week by The New York Times, including a copy of Mr. Trump's check, at least partly undercut that timeline. Although the check was received by Ms. Bondi's committee four days after the Sentinel report, and was recorded as such in her financial disclosure filings, it was actually dated and signed by Mr. Trump four days before the article appeared.

The check's date does not categorically demonstrate that Mr. Trump was not seeking to influence Ms. Bondi, a fellow Republican. Even as he has denied trying to do so in this instance, he has boasted brazenly and repeatedly during his presidential campaign that he has made copious campaign contributions over the past two decades, including to Hillary Clinton and other Democrats, in order to buy access and consideration for his business dealings.

Politicians in Florida, which Mr. Trump considers his second home, have been among his leading beneficiaries. An analysis of public records shows he has contributed at least \$375,000 to state and federal candidates and political committees here since 1995, accounting for 19 percent of the roughly \$2 million he has given to campaigns nationwide, other than his own.

Although not unprecedented, his \$25,000 gift to And Justice for All, the committee supporting Ms. Bondi, is among his largest.

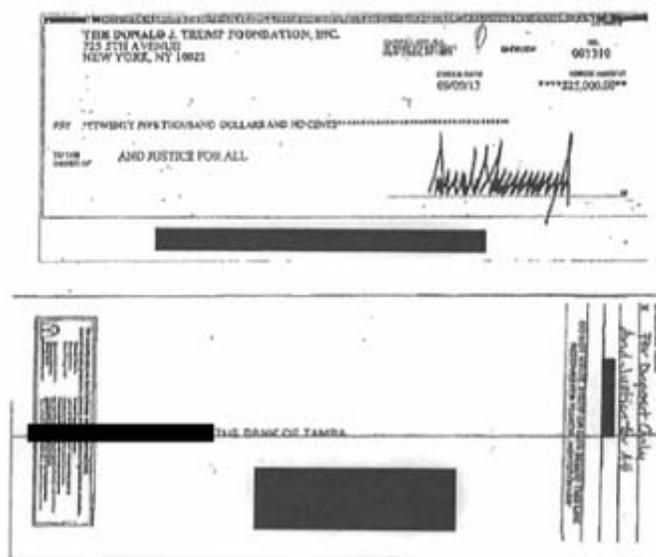
What is more, when Mr. Trump wrote that check, he still theoretically had reason to be concerned that Florida's attorney general could become a player in the legal assault on Trump University.

Through 2010, when the company ceased operations, Florida had been one of the most lucrative markets for his unaccredited [for-profit school](#). It ranked second among states in purchases, with 950 transactions, and third in sales, at \$3.3 million, according to an analysis of sales data revealed in court filings.

### [Document](#)

### [Check From Trump Foundation Sent to Committee Supporting the Florida Attorney General](#)

[On Sept. 9, 2013, Donald J. Trump signed a check from his foundation to And Justice for All, a political committee supporting Pam Bondi, the Florida attorney general. The date of the check, which was included in documents released on Tuesday by the New York attorney general, highlights that the contribution appeared to be on its way before Ms. Bondi's office said publicly that it was reviewing complaints about Mr. Trump's for-profit education company, Trump University.](#)



[OPEN Document](#)

The lawsuit by New York's Democratic attorney general, Eric T. Schneiderman, which was announced on Aug. 25, 2013 — two weeks before Mr. Trump wrote the check to And Justice for All on Sept. 9 — did not cite allegations from consumers in Florida. But news organizations [had reported as early as 2010](#) that the attorneys general of Florida and Texas had fielded complaints from consumers who had paid up to \$35,000 for Mr. Trump's seminars and mentoring programs. His contribution, therefore, could have been a pre-emptive investment to discourage Ms. Bondi from joining the New York case.

Brian Ballard, Mr. Trump's lobbyist in Florida, said it was "ridiculous" to think his client sought to buy off Ms. Bondi. "I'm the Trump Organization lobbyist, and he has never, ever brought up Trump University with me," he said. "It wasn't something of concern to him. With Donald Trump, if a friend calls up and says, 'Listen, I'm running for XYZ, could you help me?' his instinct is to say yes. That's all it was."

Yet, even those who doubt anything nefarious between Mr. Trump and Ms. Bondi acknowledge that they bear

blame for the intensifying focus on the appearance of a conflict.

For his part, Mr. Trump fanned the embers by sending the contribution from his nonprofit foundation, which cannot under federal law make political donations. When questions arose this year, he agreed to refund \$25,000 to the foundation from his personal account and [pay a \\$2,500 penalty to the Internal Revenue Service](#). Trump officials have called the mix-up an inadvertent error by his staff.

Ms. Bondi, meanwhile, has failed to explain why she accepted Mr. Trump's check even after learning that her office was examining the New York case against Trump University. Six months later, she allowed him to host a \$3,000-per-head fund-raiser for her at his Mar-a-Lago Club in Palm Beach. Mr. Trump attended the event, which records indicate raised at least \$50,000.

Now, with the revelation of the date on Mr. Trump's check — which came in a release of correspondence by Mr. Schneiderman — it appears that Mr. Trump and Ms. Bondi had in their possession a piece of favorable evidence that they bewilderingly failed to disclose.

“All these things come together in a way that if you don't unpack the whole thing, the unspoken implications coalesce to create this great suspicion,” said Mac Stipanovich, a longtime Florida Republican strategist and lobbyist who disdains Mr. Trump and has never worked with Ms. Bondi. “The optics are terrible even though there is not a shred of evidence that Pam Bondi solicited a bribe or that Donald Trump provided one.”

Mr. Trump and Ms. Bondi have said they share a long friendship, but the origins of it are not apparent. Ms. Bondi, who declined requests for an interview, initially backed former Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida for president. After he withdrew from the race, she endorsed Mr. Trump [the day before Florida's March 15 primary](#), snubbing the state's other favorite son, Senator Marco Rubio. The only woman currently holding statewide elected office in Florida, she has since become an enthusiastic Trump surrogate.

Ms. Bondi became a conservative darling in 2010 when, as an assistant state attorney, she won her post in her first campaign of any kind. Her political future is unclear as she faces a two-term limit and has said she will not run for governor in 2018.

It was in late summer 2013, as her re-election campaign was gearing up, [that Ms. Bondi called Mr. Trump](#) to solicit the donation, aides to both of them have said; they have declined to provide a precise date. Records show that Mr. Trump had already donated \$500 to Ms. Bondi's campaign on July 15. His daughter Ivanka Trump donated another \$500 on Sept. 10.

The Texas attorney general's office, then under Greg Abbott, a Republican, had also decided in 2010 not to act on complaints against Trump University [when it left the state](#). Mr. Trump later donated \$35,000 to Mr. Abbott's successful 2014 campaign for governor. Mr. Abbott's office has denied there was any connection. No

other attorneys general have joined Mr. Schneiderman's litigation.

Both Mr. Trump and Ms. Bondi have said they never discussed complaints against Trump University and a separate entity, Trump Institute, which Mr. Trump did not own but that paid him licensing fees to use his name for [wealth seminars held in hotel ballrooms](#).

There is no evidence in more than 8,000 pages of documents released by Ms. Bondi's office in response to an open records request that she had any direct role in assessing a potential case against Trump University, or that she knew of the Florida complaints when she asked Mr. Trump for money.

That would not be unusual. Although most of the complaints were received before Ms. Bondi's election, her predecessor, Bill McCollum, said he had never heard about them. His two top deputies and the chief lawyer and investigator in his consumer protection division each said in interviews that the complaints never reached their level.

"For whatever reason, the synergy didn't exist before I left office," said Mr. McCollum, who received a \$500 donation from Mr. Trump in 2006.

Tens of thousands of consumer allegations are lodged with Florida's attorney general each year on everything from used-car sales to pharmaceutical marketing to price gouging. The consumer protection division currently has 38 lawyers and 37 investigators. Limits on manpower and resources mean that most complaints do not prompt a formal probe and therefore do not come to the attorney general's attention, former officials said.

Mr. McCollum's deputy, Robert Hannah, and his consumer protection chief, Mary Leontakianakos, said the triage process took into account the quantity, veracity and seriousness of the complaints, as well as the number of Floridians affected and the potential to collect damages. Mr. Hannah said that "20 would not be the number of complaints that would cause someone to get concerned."

The complaints against Trump University continued once Ms. Bondi took over, albeit at a slower pace because Trump University, as well as Trump Institute, based in Boca Raton, Fla., were no longer operating.

In April 2011, Elizabeth J. Starr, then the chief of consumer protection in the Orlando office, wrote in an internal email that she had "light discussion" about devoting additional resources to assessing the Trump complaints. "The decision was made to hold off at that time," she wrote.

In the weeks after the initial September 2013 article in The Sentinel, Ms. Bondi received daily emails from her staff to her personal Yahoo address with news reports about the Trump case. By mid-October, Scott Maxwell, a columnist for The Sentinel, had spotted Mr. Trump's \$25,000 donation in public filings and wrote that [it smelled "awfully fishy."](#) His column set off days of critical coverage.

Despite the pressure, Mark Hamilton, a lawyer in the consumer protection division who eventually had a discussion with an attorney prosecuting the New York case, pushed his view internally that already-announced litigation would cover any Floridians who had been harmed by Trump University. Within two days, The Miami Herald reported that Ms. Bondi's spokeswoman had said no action would be necessary because the affected Florida consumers would be compensated if Mr. Schneiderman won his lawsuit.

Mr. Trump also weighed in for the same article.

"Pam Bondi is a fabulous representative of the people — Florida is lucky to have her," he said in a statement. "The case in New York is pure politics brought by an incompetent attorney general, a political hack."

## Giuliani, Sessions, Keating, et al: Time for Loretta Lynch to appoint a Special Counsel

*Rudy Giuliani*

**Editor's note:** *The authors of the following column are all supporting Donald Trump for president.*

We are concerned about the egregious damage that has been inflicted on two revered government agencies: the Department of Justice and Department of State. The primary missions of both have been derailed for political purposes.

The Department of Justice has been thwarted by its top officials' refusal to conduct a proper investigation of former Secretary Clinton's unsecured email server and the Pay for Play accusations based on millions of dollars paid to President Clinton personally and the Clinton Foundation by entities having issues before the State Department, all while she was Secretary.

Attorney General Lynch and former President Clinton met on the Phoenix, Arizona tarmac days before Secretary Clinton was to be interviewed by the FBI for possible criminal activity. It has been reported that her staff ordered witnesses not to take pictures and no one was present during their 39-minute conversation. General Lynch never recused herself from decisions on the Clinton investigation after her self-admitted "mistake," as it has also been reported that she continues to deny the FBI the authority to convene a Grand Jury, which is necessary for any meaningful investigation.

Secretary Clinton's conduct at the Department of State corrupted our foreign policy.

It has also been reported that General Lynch opposed Director Comey from fulfilling his obligation to Congress by informing members of the discovery of 650,000 emails on Anthony Weiner's and Huma Abedin's computer, the existence of which had been concealed from government authorities.

Recusal is a formal process. It is a written document specifically describing the scope of the recusal and designating the official in charge of the recused matter. If General Lynch went through the proper procedure for recusal, she has not publicly shared it.

Secretary Clinton's conduct at the Department of State corrupted our foreign policy. She and President Clinton turned the agency into a Pay for Play adjunct of the Clinton Foundation and their personal bank account, the latter via his personal "speaking" fees. UBS, Switzerland's largest bank, contributed over

\$600,000 to the Foundation and loaned it over \$30,000,000. UBS was grateful that Secretary Clinton had intervened in the IRS' demand to UBS to provide identities of 52,000 depositors. Secretary Clinton announced the settlement of only 4,450 identities in an "unusual intervention by a top U.S. diplomat," according to the Wall Street Journal. UBS additionally paid President Clinton personally \$1,500,000 for a series of questions and answers with top management.

President Clinton reaped \$6,200,000 personally from foreign governments and businesses for speeches while she was Secretary of State. For example, Ericsson, a Swedish corporation, had sanction issues pending before the State Department regarding telecom sales in certain countries. Ericsson paid President Clinton \$750,000 for one speech. Days later the State Department announced the sanction list and Ericsson was not affected.

Why should any spouse of a Secretary of State be permitted ever to receive one cent from a foreign entity?

Because of our grave concern for integrity in government we ask for a Special Counsel. When a high public official is accused of serious wrongdoing and there is a sufficient factual predicate to investigate, it is imperative the investigation be thorough, with dispatch and without partisanship.

Secretary Clinton is the subject of two spheres of criminal conduct: her deliberate, systematic mishandling of official and classified emails and her abuse of a family-controlled, tax-exempt Foundation, and corporate and foreign donations for her own economic and political benefit.

These allegations arose well before this election year.

Clinton's mishandling of emails became public in March 2015, and allegations over abuse of the Foundation arose well before that. There has long been sufficient factual predicate to require these matters be fully investigated.

The appropriate response when the subject matter is public and it arises in a highly-charged political atmosphere is for the Attorney General to appoint a Special Counsel of great public stature and indisputable independence to assure the public the matter will be handled without partisanship.

In 1991-1992, a Special Counsel was appointed for three separate matters: House Bank, Iraqgate, and Inslaw. It was also done in 2003 in the Valerie Plame matter.

Instead of moving with dispatch to ensure a vigorous investigation of Secretary Clinton, it appears that the Justice Department, along with State, have enabled the Clinton campaign to "slow roll" the inquiry.

General Lynch continues to exert control of a matter that she should have assigned to another official.

We are distressed by widespread and credible reports that FBI agents have been hindered by the Justice Department's withholding of basic investigative tools, such as grand jury subpoenas, which are fundamental in a complex investigation.

It is time to do what should have been done long ago – appoint a Special Counsel.

**Rudolph W. Giuliani** -- *Former Associate Attorney General and U.S. Attorney in Southern District of New York*

**Senator Jeff Sessions** -- *former U. S. Attorney for Alabama's Southern District*

**Frank Keating** -- *Former Associate Attorney General, U.S. in District of Kansas and Special Agent FBI*

**Victoria Toensing** -- *former Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Criminal Division of the U.S. Justice Department*

**Henry McMaster** -- *former U.S. Attorney, District of South Carolina*

*Rudy Giuliani is the former Mayor of the City of New York.*

Code of Federal Regulations  
Title 28. Judicial Administration  
Chapter I. Department of Justice  
Part 45. Employee Responsibilities (Refs & Annos)

28 C.F.R. § 45.2

§ 45.2 Disqualification arising from personal or political relationship.

Currentness

(a) Unless authorized under paragraph (b) of this section, no employee shall participate in a criminal investigation or prosecution if he has a personal or political relationship with:

- (1) Any person or organization substantially involved in the conduct that is the subject of the investigation or prosecution; or
- (2) Any person or organization which he knows has a specific and substantial interest that would be directly affected by the outcome of the investigation or prosecution.

(b) An employee assigned to or otherwise participating in a criminal investigation or prosecution who believes that his participation may be prohibited by paragraph (a) of this section shall report the matter and all attendant facts and circumstances to his supervisor at the level of section chief or the equivalent or higher. If the supervisor determines that a personal or political relationship exists between the employee and a person or organization described in paragraph (a) of this section, he shall relieve the employee from participation unless he determines further, in writing, after full consideration of all the facts and circumstances, that:

- (1) The relationship will not have the effect of rendering the employee's service less than fully impartial and professional; and
- (2) The employee's participation would not create an appearance of a conflict of interest likely to affect the public perception of the integrity of the investigation or prosecution.

(c) For the purposes of this section:

- (1) Political relationship means a close identification with an elected official, a candidate (whether or not successful) for elective, public office, a political party, or a campaign organization, arising from service as a principal adviser thereto or a principal official thereof; and
- (2) Personal relationship means a close and substantial connection of the type normally viewed as likely to induce partiality. An employee is presumed to have a personal relationship with his father, mother, brother, sister, child

and spouse. Whether relationships (including friendships) of an employee to other persons or organizations are “personal” must be judged on an individual basis with due regard given to the subjective opinion of the employee.

(d) This section pertains to agency management and is not intended to create rights enforceable by private individuals or organizations.

Credits

[Order No. 993–83, [48 FR 2319](#), Jan. 19, 1983; [61 FR 59815](#), Nov. 25, 1996]

SOURCE: Order No. 350–65, [30 FR 17202](#), Dec. 31, 1965; [55 FR 30452](#), July 26, 1990; [61 FR 59815](#), Nov. 25, 1996; [62 FR 23943](#), May 2, 1997; Order No. 2789–2005, [70 FR 69653](#), Nov. 17, 2005; Order No. 2835–2006, [71 FR 54414](#), Sept. 15, 2006, unless otherwise noted.

AUTHORITY: [5 U.S.C. 301](#), [7301](#), App. 3, 6; [18 U.S.C. 207](#); [28 U.S.C. 503](#), [528](#); DOJ Order 1735.1.

[Notes of Decisions \(1\)](#)

Current through January 12, 2017; 82 FR 4118.

## Idahoan admits to brutal murder of gay man as he pleaded for his life. Now faces hate charge.

By *Samantha Schmidt*

Steven Nelson pulled his car up to the Idaho Walmart that night in April expecting to meet a male escort, a man he had contacted via an ad on the website Backpage. Nelson picked up the bearded, tattooed man named Kelly Schneider and, at his request, drove him to Gotts Point, on the shore of Lake Lowell.

Another man met them there. With him, Schneider pushed Nelson to the ground and kicked him at least 30 times with steel-toed boots while Nelson begged for his life, according to court documents. Nelson was choked and stripped of his clothes before they drove away in his car, taking Nelson's wallet, credit cards and clothing with him.

Barefoot and naked, Nelson knocked on the doors of nearby homes, asking residents to call 911. Hours after being transported to a Boise, Idaho, hospital with broken ribs and a bleeding ear, he died of cardiac arrest.

In a state court Monday, Schneider pleaded guilty to first-degree murder, saying he intended to rob Nelson but not kill him, the Idaho Statesman [reported](#). He admitted to kicking the man repeatedly and acknowledged that his actions caused Nelson's death.

Afterward, Idaho U.S. attorney Wendy J. Olson [announced](#) that Schneider, 23, of Nampa, Idaho, had been indicted on federal hate crime charges by a grand jury for willfully assaulting Nelson because of his sexual orientation. The indictment alleges that Schneider's actions resulted in the death of his victim. The charge is punishable by up to life in prison, supervised release of not more than five years and a \$250,000 fine. He is scheduled to be arraigned Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Boise before Magistrate Ronald Bush. A trial date will be set at the same time.

The fatal beating of the openly gay man has been compared by some in the community to the murder of Matthew Shepard, the gay college student from Wyoming whose torture and subsequent death set off a nationwide debate about hate crimes and homophobia and led to the federal Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

"Folks are grieving the loss of a fellow colleague, as well as facing the reality that our community can be a hostile and sometimes very dangerous place for folks who identify as LGBTQIA," said Adriane Bang, director of the Gender Equity Center at Boise State University.

[\[The town where Matthew Shepard was killed is the first in Wyoming to pass an LGBT anti-discrimination measure\]](#)

Prosecutors dropped Schneider's charges of felony robbery, theft and robbery conspiracy in exchange for his guilty plea on the murder charge. He faces up to life in prison when sentenced March 20. Prosecutors can recommend a fixed sentence as high as 28 years before parole eligibility, and the defense can ask for as little as 10 years.

Deputy Canyon County Prosecutor Chris Boyd said Schneider had lured and beaten other victims "many, many times before." He called the beating of Nelson "particularly brutal," the Idaho Statesman [reported](#).

Jayson Woods, 28, of Nampa, is accused of helping Schneider as he beat and robbed Nelson of his car, wallet and other possessions. Kevin R. Tracy, 21, of Nampa, and Daniel Henkel, 23, of Wilder, are accused of hiding nearby in case Nelson put up a struggle.

Woods's trial began in District Court on Monday, and Tracy and Henkel are scheduled as witnesses. Tracy is scheduled to go to trial Feb. 6 on first-degree murder, robbery and conspiracy charges. Henkel is set for trial March 6 on the same charges. They have both pleaded not guilty, the Idaho Statesman reported.

Investigators identified and arrested Schneider by comparing his tattoos to a photo in the Backpage ad. They found the others with the help of a woman who called the sheriff's office to say her SUV had been used to drop Schneider off at the Walmart. According to court documents, the woman said Woods held her inside the SUV, drove her around and forced her to perform sex acts with random men for money.

In the wake of the news last spring, family and friends mourned Nelson's death, recounting memories of his distinctive baritone voice, his talent for theater lighting and his love for baking croissants.

He was in his late 40s when he finished his bachelor's degree in public relations at the University of Idaho in 2011. He hoped to work as a development director, possibly one day managing fundraising for a political campaign, the Idaho Statesman reported.

Nelson was anything but shy, and gave presentations to university classes about his experiences as an openly gay man, according to University of Idaho Professor Becky Tallent.

"Somebody brought up Matthew Shepard in class one day," she said. "Steven said something along the line of, 'I hope to God we've gotten past that kind of violence.'"

According to [KTVB](#), Tallent said her friend and former student had previously received homophobic slurs

and even a punch, but frequently let cruel comments roll off his back.

“As he put it, people are just sometimes so bigoted that there’s nothing you can do to talk to them,” she said.

Tallent said she was horrified to hear of the brutal way in which her friend died.

“For one human being to do this to another is just beyond the pale, especially as someone as generous as Steven Nelson,” she said.

# Trump believes millions voted illegally, WH says -- but provides no proof



By **Kevin Liptak** and **Dan Merica**, CNN

🕒 Updated 3:00 PM ET, Tue January 24, 2017

## Story highlights

Spicer, however, would not provide any concrete evidence for the claim

He would say only that Trump "has believed that for a while based on studies and information he has"

**Washington (CNN)** — President Donald Trump believes millions of votes were cast illegally in last year's election, White House press secretary Sean Spicer said on Tuesday, but he wouldn't provide any concrete evidence for the claim, which has long been debunked.

"The President does believe that, I think he's stated that before, and stated his concern of voter fraud and people voting illegally during the campaign and continues to maintain that belief based on studies and evidence people have brought to him," Spicer said.

Pressed for what evidence exists, Spicer would say only that Trump "has believed that for a while based on studies and information he has."

When pushed about whether Trump will call for an investigation into the voter fraud, Spicer said, "maybe we will."

Trump **surprised** the top Republicans and Democrats in Congress on Monday when, during a dinner at the White House, he repeated his claim that millions of undocumented immigrants voted for Hillary Clinton -- allegedly depriving him of the popular vote, according to two sources familiar with the meeting.

Trump lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by nearly 3 million votes in November, but won the Electoral College and thus the presidency. Trump, however, has seemingly been fixated on the popular vote, tweeting after the election in November that, "In addition to winning the Electoral College in a landslide, I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally."

A number of studies have found no evidence of widespread voter fraud.

The Truth About Voter Fraud, a report written by experts at The Brennan Center for Justice, found voter fraud rates were between 0.00004% and 0.0009%.

"Given this tiny incident rate for voter impersonation fraud, it is more likely, the report noted, that an American will be struck by lightning than that he will impersonate another voter at the polls," reads the report.

South Carolina Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham slammed Trump earlier Tuesday over the claim.

"I wasn't there, but if the President of the United States is claiming that 3.5 million people voted illegally, that shakes confidence in our democracy — he needs to disclose why he believes that," Graham told CNN.

Spicer said Tuesday that Trump believes in widespread voter fraud, in part, because of a study that found 14% of people who voted were non-citizens.

Spicer did not say expressly which study Trump has read, [but a 2014 study by Jesse Richman and David](#)

[Earnest](#) found more than 14% of non-citizens in 2008 and 2010 "indicated that they were registered to vote."

The authors wrote, in a Washington Post opinion piece, the report showed "that 6.4 percent of non-citizens voted in 2008 and 2.2 percent of non-citizens voted in 2010."

The study was designed by Cooperative Congressional Election Study, and in 2014 [the group said their sample was so small that it could be incorrect](#) and attributable to normal survey error and not non-citizens saying that they are registered to vote.

Trump's campaign cited in October a [2012 study from the Pew Charitable Trusts](#) entitled "Inaccurate, Costly and Inefficient: Evidence that American Voter Registration Systems Needs an Upgrade" as backup for that claim. The study found that "about 24 million voter registrations are no longer valid or are significantly inaccurate" and "more than 1.8 million dead people are listed as voters."

The study, which is based on 2011 data, is about the need to update voter rolls and underscores deficiencies in the voter registration system, but does not show that people who have registrations in two states are voting twice for Democrats or for Republicans.



**David Becker**  
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We found millions of out of date registration records due to people moving or dying, but found no evidence that voter fraud resulted.

1:18 PM - 28 Nov 2016

282      303

David Becker, the primary author of the Pew Report, tweeted in November, "We found millions of out of date registration records due to people moving or dying, but found no evidence that voter fraud resulted."

*CNN's Jennifer Agiesta contributed to this report.*

[washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com)

## Recidivism Watch: Spicer uses repeatedly debunked citations for Trump's voter fraud claims

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During the daily briefing, White House press secretary Sean Spicer said that widespread voter fraud is a belief President Trump has "maintained for a while." (Reuters)

During the daily briefing, White House press secretary Sean Spicer said that widespread voter fraud is a belief President Trump has "maintained for a while." Spicer: Trump believes millions of people voted illegally (Reuters)

*"I think there have been studies; there was one that came out of Pew in 2008 that showed 14 percent of people who have voted were not citizens. There are other studies that were presented to him."*

**—White House press secretary Sean Spicer, news briefing, Jan. 24, 2017**

Spicer cited repeatedly debunked research to support Trump's claim that millions of people voted illegally during the 2016 presidential election. These studies do not support Trump's Four-Pinocchio claims of "millions" of people voting illegally — as we've covered [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Spicer claimed Trump believes there was widespread voter fraud, based on studies that were presented to him. Then Spicer cited a Pew study that — as we [noted before](#) — does not support this claim. Moreover, Spicer conflated the Pew study with another study that — [again](#) — does not support this claim.

A [2012 Pew Center on the States study](#) found problems with inaccurate voter registrations, people who registered in more than one state (which could happen if the voter moves and registers in the new state without telling the former state) and deceased voters whose information was still on the voter rolls.

The primary author of the Pew report tweeted in response to Trump's staff's claim that he "can confirm that report made no findings re: voter fraud."

Spicer said a Pew study from 2008 showed that "14 percent of people who have voted were not citizens." He likely was referring to research by Old Dominion University professors, using data from 2008 and 2010. They found that 14 percent of noncitizens in the 2008 and 2010 samples said they were registered to vote.

But the researchers warned that “it is impossible to tell for certain whether the noncitizens who responded to the survey were representative of the broader population of noncitizens.”

One of the researchers, Jesse Richman, [wrote about](#) the Trump staff’s use of his research. The results “suggest that almost all elections in the US are not determined by noncitizen participation, with occasional and very rare potential exceptions,” he wrote.

Despite Trump’s repeated claims, his attorneys stated there was no evidence of voter fraud in the 2016 election. [In a court filing](#) opposing Green Party candidate Jill Stein’s recount petition, lawyers for Trump and his campaign wrote: “All available evidence suggests that the 2016 general election was not tainted by fraud or mistake.”

When we debunked this claim on Nov. 29, 2016, we implored Trump’s staff members to please drop this talking point — as we are tired of telling them it is false. We can’t emphasize this point enough.

***The Fact Checker Recidivism Watch tracks politicians who repeat claims that we have previously found to be incorrect or false. These posts are short summaries of previous findings, with links to the original fact-check. We welcome reader suggestions.***

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## Spicer digs in on Trump's illegal voting claim, as Ryan distances

White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer dug in Tuesday on President Trump's claim to congressional leaders that he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton last November because between 3 million and 5 million "illegals" cast ballots – even as House Speaker Paul Ryan pushed back.

"I've seen no evidence to that effect. I've made that very, very clear," Ryan said earlier Tuesday.

But Spicer, asked repeatedly by reporters about the issue at Tuesday's briefing, said Trump believes this to be the case.

"It was a comment he made on a longstanding belief," Spicer said. "... He believes what he believes based on the information he's been provided."

Spicer said Trump remains "comfortable" with his Electoral College victory, which handed him the presidency regardless of the popular vote totals.

Pressed on whether the administration would pursue an investigation into illegal immigrants voting given Trump's beliefs, Spicer said: "Maybe we will." He later backed off the suggestion, saying only that anything is possible.

Trump made the claim during a meeting with congressional leaders Monday, though he's made similar assertions before.

In late November, Trump tweeted that he had "won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally."

At the time, multiple law enforcement sources told Fox News that there was no evidence to support Trump's claims.

Trump defeated Clinton in the Electoral College, collecting 304 votes to her 227. However, Clinton won the popular vote by more than 2.8 million ballots.

Spicer said Tuesday that Trump's claim was based on "studies and evidence."

*The Associated Press contributed to this report.*

[nbcnews.com](http://nbcnews.com)

## GOP senator to President Trump: Stop claiming 'illegals' cost you popular vote

by Frank Thorp V and Corky Siemaszko

Exasperated Republican senator Lindsey Graham pleaded with President Donald Trump on Tuesday to stop repeating his widely debunked claim that millions of so-called "illegals" cost him the popular vote.

"To continue to suggest that the 2016 election was conducted in a fashion that millions of people voted illegally undermines faith in our democracy," Graham, of South Carolina, told reporters in a hallway of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in D.C. "It's not coming from a candidate for the office, it's coming from the man who holds the office. So I am begging the president, share with us the information you have about this or please stop saying it."



*Senate Armed Services Committee member Sen. Lindsey Graham speaks on Capitol Hill on Jan. 5, 2017. Evan Vucci / AP, file*

Graham, who along with Senator John McCain, R-Ariz., has been one of Trump's more outspoken Republican critics, said the new president needs to put this issue to rest — for his own good.

**Related:** [Trump Again Makes Debunked Claim: 'Illegals' Cost Me Popular Vote](#)

"As a matter of fact I'd like you to do more than stop saying it," he said. "I'd like you to come forward and say having looked at it I am confident the election was fair and accurate and people who voted voted legally. Cause

if he doesn't do that, this is going to undermine his ability to govern this country."

There are no signs that Trump intends to do that. White House spokesman Sean Spicer said Tuesday afternoon that Trump has "believed for a long, long time" that illegal immigrants voted in the presidential election, but declined to share evidence that supports Trump's belief.

When asked if Trump was planning to launch an investigation, Spicer said, "We're here on day two. Let's not prejudge what we may or may not do in the future."

Trump reached the White House by winning the [Electoral College](#), but he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by a whopping 2.9 million votes, according to the certified final election results from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Graham spoke out a day after Trump reportedly spent [the first 10 minutes of his bipartisan meeting](#) with congressional leaders at the White House claiming once again that 3 to 5 million people who shouldn't have been allowed to vote cast their ballots for Clinton.

It's a false claim that Trump began making back in November when it became clear that he was [losing the popular vote to Clinton](#).

"By repeating false and unsubstantiated voter fraud allegations as the cause for losing the popular vote, President Trump is dangerously attacking the legitimacy of free and fair elections and the foundation of our democracy," California Secretary of State Alex Padilla, a Democrat, said.

There are not "alternative facts," he added.

"They are corrosive lies without any evidence," Padilla said. "Even leaders in the President's own party agree there is no evidence to support his claims since they were irresponsibly made back in November."

But in an interview Tuesday with NBC's Hallie Jackson, Trump supporter Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, insisted "there is data out there" to back up the president's claim — but said he believes the figure was closer to 2.4 million.

King said he came up with the figure by doing "an extrapolation calculation on how many illegals could have or could be voting in the United States."

"So it's plausible the number, three million sounds like it's a plausible number to me," he said.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky) would not answer whether he agreed with Trump, but said "the notion that election fraud is a fiction is not true."

"It does occur," he told NBC's Kasie Hunt. "There are always arguments on both sides about how much, how frequent, and all the rest."

Still, said McConnell, "most states have done a better job on this front."

So far, just Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach — a Republican and political ally — has said Trump might have a case. And he has repeatedly cited a 2014 analysis by professors at Old Dominion University that was widely criticized by other scholars.

Among those panning the Old Dominion analysis was the [Cooperative Congressional Election Study](#) at Harvard University, which supplied some of the data.

The National Association of Secretaries of State, which includes many Republicans, has also said it too disagrees with Trump's claim.

[nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com)

# Trump Poised to Lift Ban on C.I.A. 'Black Site' Prisons

*Charlie Savage*

Elisa Massimino, the director of Human Rights First, denounced the draft order as “flirting with a return to the ‘enhanced interrogation program’ and the environment that gave rise to it.” She noted that [numerous retired military leaders](#) have rejected torture as “illegal, immoral and damaging to national security,” and she said that many of Mr. Trump’s cabinet nominees had seemed to share that view in their confirmation testimony.

“It would be surprising and extremely troubling if the national security cabinet officials were to acquiesce in an order like that after the assurances that they gave in their confirmation hearings,” she said.

A White House spokesman did not immediately respond to an email inquiring about the draft order, including when Mr. Trump may intend to sign it. But the order was accompanied by a one-page statement that criticized the Obama administration for having “refrained from exercising certain authorities” about detainees it said were critical to defending the country from “radical Islamism.”

## ***Lasting Scars***

*Articles in this series examine the American legacy of brutal interrogations.*

Specifically, the draft order would revoke two executive orders about detainees that Mr. Obama issued in January 2009, shortly after his inauguration. [One](#) was Mr. Obama’s directive to close the Guantánamo prison and [the other](#) was his directive to end C.I.A. prisons, grant Red Cross access to all detainees and limit interrogators to the Army Field Manual techniques.

In their place, Mr. Trump’s draft order would resurrect [a 2007 executive order](#) issued by President Bush. It responded to a 2006 Supreme Court ruling about the Geneva Conventions that had put C.I.A. interrogators at risk of prosecution for war crimes, leading to a temporary halt of the agency’s “enhanced” interrogations program.

Mr. Bush’s 2007 order enabled the agency to resume a form of the program by specifically listing what sorts of prisoner abuses counted as war crimes. That made it safe for interrogators to use other tactics, like [extended sleep deprivation](#), that were not on the list. Mr. Obama revoked that order as part of his 2009 overhaul of detention legal policy.

One of the Obama orders Mr. Trump's draft order would revoke also limited interrogators to using techniques listed in the Army Field Manual. But in 2015, Congress enacted a statute locking down that rule [as a matter of law](#), as well as a requirement to let the Red Cross visit detainees. Those limits would remain in place for the time being.

Still, the draft order says high-level Trump administration officials should conduct several reviews and make recommendations to Mr. Trump. One was whether to change the field manual, to the extent permitted by law. Another was "whether to reinstate a program of interrogation of high-value alien terrorists to be operated outside the United States" by the C.I.A., including any "legislative proposals" necessary to permit the resumption of such a program.

It was not clear whether the C.I.A. would be enthusiastic about resuming a role in detaining and interrogating terrorism suspects after its scorching experience over the past decade. In [written answers](#) to questions by the Senate Intelligence Committee, Mr. Trump's C.I.A. director, [Mike Pompeo](#), said he would review whether a rewrite of the field manual was needed and left the door open to seeking a change in the law "if experts believed current law was an impediment to gathering vital intelligence to protect the country."

While Mr. Trump's order says no detainee should be tortured or otherwise subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment "as prescribed by U.S. law," it makes no mention of international law commitments binding the United States to adhere to humane standards even if Congress were to relax domestic legal limits on interrogations, such as the Convention Against Torture or the Geneva Conventions.

Another core national security legal principle for Mr. Obama was to use civilian courts, not military commissions, whenever possible in terrorism cases — and to exclusively use civilian law enforcement agencies and procedures, not the military, to handle cases arising on domestic soil. The draft order also signals that the Trump administration may shift that approach as well.

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In 2012, after Congress enacted a statute mandating that the military initially take custody of all foreign Qaeda suspects, Mr. Obama issued a [directive](#) that pre-emptively waived that rule for [most domestic circumstances](#), such as if the F.B.I. had arrested the suspect and was already in the process of an interrogation.

But Mr. Trump's draft order calls for the attorney general, in consultation with other national-security officials, to review that directive and recommend modifications to it within 120 days.

Many Republicans — including Senator Jeff Sessions, Mr. Trump's attorney general nominee — criticized the Obama administration's approach as weak, even though the civilian court system has regularly convicted terrorists at trial while the military commissions system has [proved to be dysfunctional](#). During the campaign, Mr. Trump [said](#) he would prefer to prosecute terrorism suspects at Guantánamo — including American citizens, although the law currently limits the commissions system to foreign defendants.

Against that backdrop, Mr. Trump's draft order would direct Defense Secretary James N. Mattis, along with the attorney general and the director of national intelligence, to “review the military commissions system and recommend to the president how best to employ the system going forward to provide for the swift and just trial and punishment of unlawful enemy combatants detained in the armed conflict with violent Islamist extremists.”

Tom Malinowski, who was assistant secretary of state for human rights in the Obama administration, said the draft order showed that everyone who thought the office of the presidency or the advice of cabinet secretaries like Mr. Mattis would temper Mr. Trump “is being shown wrong again.”

“He'll listen to his worst instincts over his best advisers unless restrained by law,” Mr. Malinowski said.