

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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July 24, 2018

The Honorable Trey Gowdy
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We are writing to request that you convene an immediate hearing on the Trump-Putin summit that took place in Helsinki last week and the extent to which President Donald Trump is currently being manipulated by President Vladimir Putin.

The Oversight Committee must act swiftly to determine what would cause President Trump to capitulate to President Putin on nearly every point of contention in our bilateral relationship with Russia. He publicly cast doubt on Russian interference in our election, despite overwhelming evidence and the conclusions of our intelligence and law enforcement officials. He praised as an “incredible offer” a proposal from President Putin to hand over American officials for interrogation—including a former Ambassador to Russia and a former staffer on the House Foreign Affairs Committee who currently serves as Chief of Staff for the U.S. Helsinki Commission. He also reportedly concluded agreements with President Putin on Syria and Russian aggression in Ukraine, but to date he has failed to disclose to Congress or the American people any details about these agreements.

We are not the only Members of Congress who have concerns about what occurred during President Trump’s two-hour, one-on-one meeting with President Putin.

For example, in a recent op-ed in the *New York Times*, Rep. Will Hurd, the Chairman of our Subcommittee on Information Technology, wrote:

Over the course of my career as an undercover officer in the C.I.A., I saw Russian intelligence manipulate many people. I never thought I would see the day when an American president would be one of them.¹

¹ Rep. Will Hurd, *Trump Is Being Manipulated By Putin. What Should We Do?*, *New York Times* (July 19, 2018) (online at www.nytimes.com/2018/07/19/opinion/trump-russia-putin-republican-congress.html).

We agree with Chairman Hurd that the Oversight Committee must work to “ensure that the administration is taking the Russian threat seriously” and “fulfill our oversight duty and keep the American people informed of the current danger.”

Similarly, Representative Brian Fitzpatrick, a former FBI agent, said in an interview this weekend, “The president was manipulated by Vladimir Putin.” He added that he was “sickened by the exchange.”²

Even you, during an interview yesterday on *Fox News Sunday*, said that President Trump’s refusal to acknowledge the evidence and admit that Russia tried to attack our election systems in 2016 cannot continue:

The evidence is overwhelming. It can be proven beyond any evidentiary burden that Russia is not our friend and they tried to attack us in 2016. So the president either needs to rely on the people that he has chosen to advise him, or those advisors need to reevaluate whether or not they can serve in this administration. But the disconnect cannot continue. The evidence is overwhelming, and the president needs to say that and act like it.³

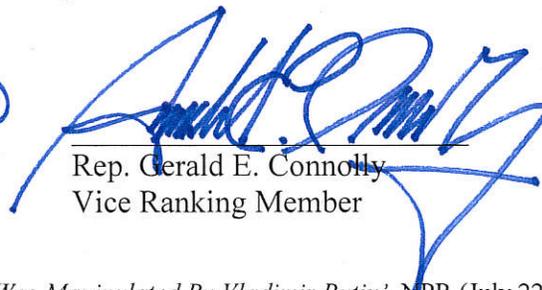
In contrast to these public statements, however, you have refused our request to invite the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) to testify during today’s hearing on election security, instead offering a classified briefing at a later date. While we will accept any information from ODNI, a closed-door briefing is not an adequate substitute for public testimony from the nation’s top intelligence official on how Russia attacked our state election systems in 2016 and is continuing to interfere with the midterm elections in 2018.

We ask that the Committee hold a hearing with the Director of National Intelligence and other witnesses who can inform the Committee and the public about the extent of the Russian threat. President Trump’s susceptibility to manipulation by President Putin is a matter of national security and warrants the urgent attention of this Committee. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Rep. Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member



Rep. Gerald E. Connolly
Vice Ranking Member

² *GOP Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick: ‘The President Was Manipulated By Vladimir Putin’*, NPR (July 22, 2018) (online at www.npr.org/2018/07/22/631326586/gop-rep-brian-fitzpatrick-the-president-was-manipulated-by-vladimir-putin).

³ *Rep. Trey Gowdy on Helsinki Summit Fallout*, Fox News Sunday (July 22, 2018) (online at www.foxnews.com/transcript/2018/07/22/rep-trey-gowdy-on-helsinki-summit-fallout.html).