Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2016

The Honorable Eliot Engel, Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member Engel:

We write to ask that you request an urgent hearing in the House Foreign Affairs Committee to examine reportedly deliberate attempts by foreign governments to influence the outcome of the 2016 presidential election.

On October 7, 2016, the Department of Homeland Security and Office of the Director of National Intelligence on Election Security released a joint statement saying "The U.S. Intelligence Community (USIC) is confident that the Russian Government directed the recent compromises of emails from U.S. persons and institutions, including from U.S. political organizations." The USIC went further to explicitly state that "these thefts and disclosures are intended to interfere with the U.S. election process," and "only Russia's senior-most officials could have authorized these activities." We cannot ignore these facts merely because Election Day has come and gone.

The Committee must understand and be prepared to counter what constitutes a potentially unprecedented intervention by a foreign government into U.S. elections. The Committee has previously seen fit to examine foreign propaganda directed at American audiences. On April 15, 2015, the Committee conducted a hearing titled "Confronting Russia's Weaponization of Information." This hearing examined Russia's use of media to destabilize Ukraine, Eastern Europe and beyond, and the U.S. government's inability to respond effectively.

The Committee's initiative to respond to this threat is appreciated. We believe this front against foreign influence is a potential venue for bipartisan collaboration.

Ranking Member Engel, one of our most cherished institutions, democratic elections free of foreign interference, is in question. We believe our committee can play a critical and constructive role in investigating and highlighting such foreign influence, and we respectfully request that you help convene a hearing on the matter.

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

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