

U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on the Judiciary

Washington, DC 20515-6216
One Hundred Fifteenth Congress

February 17, 2017

The Honorable Michael E. Horowitz
Inspector General
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Horowitz:

As you know, it is the unanimous conclusion of seventeen U.S. intelligence agencies that the government of Vladimir Putin engaged in a massive campaign to influence the 2016 election in favor of President Trump. Over the course of the past week, it has become increasingly clear that members of the Trump campaign were in direct contact with agents of the Russian intelligence agencies.

Given the significance and magnitude of these developments, we believe it is appropriate that your office—in conjunction with other Offices of Inspectors General, if necessary—conduct an investigation into the following matters:

- Whether the Trump Administration has engaged in any improper effort to intimidate or threaten whistleblowers under your jurisdiction, or others who are seeking to expose misconduct by Trump Administration officials.
- Whether U.S. Attorney General Sessions has any conflict of interest, or should recuse himself from the Department's investigation into these matters, given his involvement in the Trump campaign and his personal relationship with former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn. Federal regulations prohibit the Attorney General—and any other Department employee—from participating in an investigation if he has a personal or political relationship with any person or organization substantially involved in the conduct that is subject to that investigation (28 C.F.R. § 45.2).

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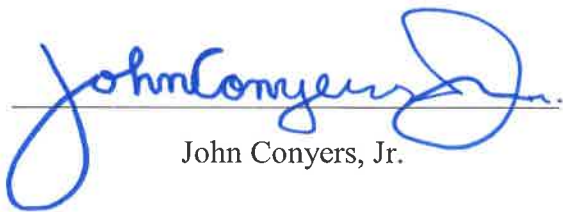
We note that President Trump and other officials in his Administration have made numerous statements and taken numerous actions to disparage both the law enforcement and intelligence communities. For example, prior to his inauguration, Mr. Trump criticized the assessment that the Russian government had intervened to assist his candidacy: "I think it's ridiculous. I think it's just another excuse. I don't believe it."

On January 11, 2017, in reaction to the release of a dossier—widely known to have been the product of a private investigator and made available to the news media by sources outside the intelligence community—President Trump took to Twitter: "Intelligence agencies should never have allowed this fake news to "leak" into the public. One last shot at me. Are we living in Nazi Germany?"

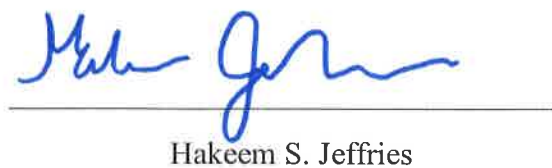
Just yesterday, the *New York Times* disclosed that President Trump plans to have a New York Financier lead a review of intelligence agencies, "an effort that members of the intelligence community fear could curtail their independence and reduce the flow of information that contradicts the president's world view." Although oversight of the intelligence agencies is certainly an important prerogative for all three branches of government, President Trump seems to have other motives. He told the White House press pool: "We're going to find the leakers. They're going to pay a big price."

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



John Conyers, Jr.



Hakeem S. Jeffries

cc: Bob Goodlatte, Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary

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