

EXECUTIVE SESSION
PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF: JAKE SULLIVAN

Thursday, December 21, 2017

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-304, the Capitol, commencing at 2:37 p.m.

Present: Representatives Rooney, Ros-Lehtinen, Turner, Schiff, Speier, Castro, and Heck.

Appearances:

For the PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE:

[REDACTED]

For JAKE SULLIVAN:

BRIAN L. STEKLOFF, FOUNDING PARTNER

HAL BREWSTER, ASSOCIATE

WILKINSON WALSH + ESKOVITZ

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██████████ Good afternoon. This is an unclassified transcribed interview of Jake Sullivan. Thank you for being here today. I appreciate your patience during the votes.

For the record, I am ██████████ a staff member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Before we begin, I have a security reminder: If you haven't left your electronics outside, please do so at this time. Everybody left their phones outside?

MR. ROONEY: Ha, ha, ha. Very funny.

██████████ I also want to state a few things for the record. The questioning will be conducted by members and staff during their allotted time period. Some questions may seem basic, but that is because we need to clearly establish facts and understand the situation. Please do not assume we know any facts you've previously disclosed as part of any other investigation or review.

We ask that you give complete and fulsome replies to questions based on your best recollection. If a question is unclear or you are uncertain in your response, please let us know. And if you do not know the answer to a question or cannot remember, simply say so.

During the course of the interview, we will take any breaks you desire.

This interview will be transcribed. There is a reporter making a record of these proceedings so we can easily consult a written compilation of your answers. Because the reporter cannot record gestures, we ask that you answer verbally. If you forget to do this, you might be reminded to do so. You may also be asked to spell certain terms or unusual phrases.

Also, please try to speak into one of these microphones so that the reporter can hear what you're saying clearly.

You're entitled to have a lawyer present for this interview, though you are not required to do so. I see that you have counsel present and would ask at this time that your attorneys make an appearance for the record.

MR. STEKLOFF: Brian Stekloff from Wilkins Walsh and Eskovitz.

MR. BREWSTER: Hal Brewster, also with Wilkins Walsh Eskovitz.

██████████ Thank you. To ensure confidentiality, we ask that you do not discuss the interview with anyone other than your attorneys.

Consistent with the committee's rules of procedure, you and your counsel, if you wish, will have a reasonable opportunity to inspect the transcript of this interview in order to determine whether your answers were correctly transcribed. The transcript will remain in the committee's custody.

The committee also requests -- reserves the right to request your return for additional questions should the need arise.

The process for this interview is as follows: The majority will be given 45 minutes to ask questions. Then the minority will be given 45 minutes. Immediately thereafter, we will take a brief break if you wish; after which, the majority will be given 15 minutes to ask questions, and the minority will be given 15 minutes to ask questions. We will then proceed in 15-minute rounds until the questioning is complete. These time limits will be strictly adhered to with no extensions being granted.

Our record today will reflect you have not been compelled to appear.

You are reminded that it is unlawful to deliberately provide false information to Members of Congress or staff.

Lastly, the record will reflect that you are voluntarily participating in this interview, which will be under oath.

Please raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

MR. SULLIVAN: I do.

██████████ Thank you. Mr. Rooney.

MR. ROONEY: Thanks, ██████████

Welcome. And thanks for coming in, helping us write our report on what happened in the last election. And as much as you can provide us assistance with writing our report, we would very much appreciate it.

I'll turn it over to you to start the questions.

EXAMINATION

BY ██████████

Q Sure.

Sir, my name is ██████████ ██████████ for the majority. And I'm going to just go through a few areas here of questions, and I want to focus first on the DNC hack of the DNC server I know you're familiar with.

When did you become first aware that the DNC's emails had been hacked?

A Sometime in the late spring or early summer of 2016.

Q And how did you come to be aware of that?

A I don't remember who exactly told me, but somebody at the campaign shared that they were looking at the possibility of intrusions, computer intrusions into the DNC computer system.

Q Was that a telephone conversation? Email? Do you remember?

A I don't. I don't remember.

Q Okay. Were you aware that -- did you -- did anyone indicate to you that your emails had been hacked?

A No. No. In the spring of 2016, there was a variety of phishing attempts at a number of campaign officials' personal emails, including mine. So I was aware of those because I received the phishing attacks but also kind of knew that this was consistent with the kind of behavior you'd see from a hostile actor like Russia.

MR. ROONEY: What were the phishing attempts like? Do you remember?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yeah. So I supplied the committee with the examples of them from the time period.

MR. ROONEY: Do you know off the top of your head?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yeah, so they would say, "Your Gmail password has been reset" -- I'm sorry -- not "Your Gmail password has been reset." They'd say, "Your Gmail account has -- somebody has attempted to access it. Please go to this link," and it would supply a link or a button to reset your password, the concept being that if you click on that link or that button, it would take you to a page where you would put in your password and that would give the bad guys your password.

So I received several of these and, you know, let the campaign know that I had received them but otherwise did nothing with them. I kept them so that, you know, I could provide them to anyone who might need them, but didn't click on those links, so I had no reason to believe that my personal email was hacked.

Around the same time, in the late spring, early summer of 2016, we were on a heightened alert with respect to the campaign email systems that, you know, there might be efforts by foreign entities or others to penetrate them. But I wasn't

aware of any successful penetration of the campaign email systems, including my email, my campaign email, at that time.

BY [REDACTED]

Q On -- and before I go any further, probably we all know who you are and what you did and what you do. But for the record, can you just tell us your role on the Hillary Clinton for President campaign, what capacity you served?

A Sure. I was the senior policy adviser on the campaign, so I, in that role, oversaw the whole campaign policy shop, both domestic and foreign policy.

Q And can you just tell us for the record the length of time you spent on the campaign.

A I joined the campaign in, I believe it was, April of 2015 and served until the end of 2016.

Q Thank you.

And so going back to the -- my line of questioning, you had mentioned that you had received, I think you said alerts or some indications that there may be malicious attacks going on with respect to email accounts. Is that correct, that you had received some warning that that could be occurring?

A Yeah. I mean, I received the attacks themselves. I was the -- subject to the attacks themselves in this time period, in the March, April, May time period.

Q Did you get an actual warning that you had been attacked by somebody or -- by the DNC?

A No. No.

Q So you learned subsequently you'd been attacked, but there was no pre -- you didn't get a warning from somebody that said, "We think your email

account has been hijacked by, you know, a foreign entity or by a cyber attacker"?

A No. No. Nobody suggested my email was actually successfully penetrated by a foreign entity.

MR. STEKLOFF: Just to be clear, we produced from his Gmail account these attempted phishing emails.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Yes.

So let's -- I want to talk a little about John Podesta. When did you become aware -- and for the record, we know that obviously his emails were --

A Yeah.

Q -- had been hacked. When did you become aware of that?

A You know, I don't remember when I first heard that there was a possibility. But at some point before his emails actually came out to the public domain, somebody on the campaign had mentioned to me that it was possible that Podesta's Gmail, his personal email, had been hacked.

But I don't remember who it was, and I couldn't tell you if that was the summer or if it was the early fall. I just don't recall. But I do know, I do remember that I had some sense that this was a possibility, this was a risk, before the actually emails dropped on October 7.

Q Okay. But you just don't recall how you heard that?

A I don't. I think one of the things I remember is there were emails in some of the releases. So it must have been in the summer, because there were emails in some of the releases that suggested that there were other successful penetrations, including possibly Podesta, as well as possibly others.

I just don't remember if it was around that timeframe that somebody said,

"Hey, could -- Podesta could have been subject to this," or if it was later. I don't recall.

Q Now, based on your senior role in the Clinton campaign, can you tell us how you understood the reaction from the campaign once it became aware that their servers had been hacked? Can you kind of explain what you recall during that time in terms of when you obviously learned about it or when the campaign learned about it and how they reacted to that information?

A I don't believe the campaign servers were hacked, or at least I'm not aware of the campaign servers being hacked.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Or to the -- as the fact that the DNC hack became public.

A Oh, the DNC hack. Sorry, I thought --

Q Subsequently Podesta, but if you could just talk through from that time period, spring, summer, fall. You have, I guess, confirmation of hacking publicly by an outside firm.

A Right.

Q Eventually you have the dumping during the convention.

A Right.

Q Later you have, I guess, rumors of others and then the dumping of Podesta in the fall.

A Yeah.

Q Kind of walk through the campaign's perspective on and response to that series of events.

A Sure. So, just to set the context a little bit, I wasn't part of the team that was dealing with CrowdStrike or dealing with the DNC on their hack. So,

from a technical perspective, or from the perspective of how to manage the communications or the technological responses to that, that wasn't something that I was involved in.

I was involved in trying to figure out how to frame the fact that a hostile foreign power was attempting to interfere in an American election, how to educate reporters and the public on what this meant, particularly after the Russians went from merely penetrating the systems, which countries had done in campaigns past, both the Chinese, the Russians, perhaps others had penetrated previous campaign systems.

When that shifted from merely being a snooping exercise to being weaponized through the form of leaks, I became much more involved in speaking publicly and also speaking to reporters about what this meant and the fact that our country was under attack.

And, you know, to a certain extent, also around the convention, I was involved in conversations about how to actually manage the dates of the convention, given that these hacks had been released with an eye towards maximum damage to a unified, seamless convention. And so I was obviously involved in conversations about how we dealt with some of the substantive revelations as well.

But chiefly, my role, especially as the senior policy person on the campaign and as someone with a national security background, was to be focused on lifting this up to the larger challenge that was confronting us, which was here we have a country that has decided that it is going to interfere in the American election, and it certainly seemed to us at the time that they were intending to do so for the purposes of harming one candidate and helping the other, and that represented, I

think I said at the time, not just a political issue but a national security issue.

And so, through the end of July and August, that was our focus. And then we did become concerned, very much concerned that there would be further hacks along the way, that there would be more leaks of documents, that Putin wasn't going to stop with the DNC, that he'd want to do more. But, of course, we had to sort of just wait and see what came because we weren't really in a position to know exactly what was in his possession.

And so then, in October, when the Podesta emails dropped, you know, we were right back into a similar kind of dynamic of trying to explain to people that this was the product of an intelligence operation led by a foreign country and foreign adversary.

MR. ROONEY: And being a Monday morning quarterback, in retrospect, the way that that all played out -- and I'm not just talking about politically, but like, you know, as a policy guy with Russia involved, what they were releasing, which I don't even remember what they released, just that things were released -- one of the things that we're trying to do in this investigation is sort of like lessons learned. Was there anything that you think that you could have done or as a campaign or otherwise that would have mitigated Russia's weaponizing of this information or whatever Russia was trying to do. In retrospect, can you think of anything that you would have done differently to try to stop them from having this kind of influence?

MR. SULLIVAN: Well, I mean, obviously, the first thing that comes to mind is enhanced cyber defenses for the campaign, for the DNC, for others. And I think that that should be incumbent on every dimension of a political campaign, government servers, election systems servers, campaign servers. We should all

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learn going forward.

But I think we also have to recognize that when you have highly sophisticated cyber actors like Russia, offense tends to get ahead of defense over time. They tend to find a way through.

And so I think a big part of the lesson learned for me out of 2016 is to find a way to take the partisan politics out of this and make it very much about a unified effort to say: We are not going to treat purloined information by hostile foreign powers as just another news day. We are going to come together as a country and reject that and try to repel that. That's very hard to do --

MR. ROONEY: Yeah. I was going to say, how do you do that?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yeah. I mean, I think that that's about personal responsibility from every leader on both sides to, you know, stepping up and saying: I'm going to be part of the solution on this. And that's true of Democrats. That's true of Republicans.

And then media organizations, I think, are going to have to take a hard look at the ways that they treat this information and how they try to educate the public about its providence.

Look, none of this is easy. None of this is going to fix the problem entirely going forward. But I would say that we cannot rely entirely on self-help from campaigns for this purpose.

And, of course, then there's the other dimension, which is, what should the national security apparatus of the United States be doing, both to impose costs on a foreign power to deter it, to help on the defense side.

I think there's a whole series of issues there too that obviously you guys are looking into. But it seems to me that, looking ahead to 2018 and 2020, the sooner

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we can implement some of these lessons, the better off we'll be.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Going back to when you first learned about the hack, and you mentioned, I think, CrowdStrike a little while ago, when did you -- to the best of your knowledge, when do you recall hearing about CrowdStrike's efforts to figure out what happened to the DNC systems?

A I -- I couldn't pinpoint a month for you. I am sorry. I mean, it was not -- it was around the time that it became public. It's not -- I wasn't deeply involved in the, you know, the back and forth between CrowdStrike and the DNC prior to when all of this was emerging in, I think, early June. So -- but --

Q Was there ever like a briefing among senior advisers of the campaign as to the development in terms of what had happened and what the findings were of CrowdStrike to senior advisers?

A I didn't participate in any formal briefing that I recall, no. I mean, I think at some point somebody alerted me to this, but I just couldn't tell you who it was or when. But I don't remember any kind of formal briefing of the DNC hack that I went to at least.

Q Do you know whether or not then-Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton had been briefed by CrowdStrike about what they had found?

A I don't know.

Q Okay.

BY [REDACTED]

Q You mentioned that your engagement on this issue, particularly in terms of press outreach or messaging, escalated at some point in the summer. Was that primarily prompted by attribution of this activity to Russia, the

subsequent dumping of emails, or both?

A It was -- what dramatically enhanced the urgency of this for me was the shift from simply Russia being in the system and looking around and learning things to weaponizing by releasing the information publicly, which was a big change from past elections where, you know, foreign countries got into email systems but didn't do much with it.

So it was really around the convention, the Democratic National Convention, which occurred shortly after the first wave of DNC leaks happened, that I really started sounding the alarm.

Q So, just to step back briefly, you've got the hacking distributed to Russia and then the dumping which leads you to sound the alarm about dumping by a hostile foreign power. But when was it that you first attributed this activity to Russian actors, and what was the basis for that attribution in your mind?

A I relied on the attribution that was provided by CrowdStrike, who was doing the forensic analysis, and by the reports that they made both publicly and then to people at the DNC and our campaign that this was the Russians, this was the GRU.

And everything about it was totally consistent with the type of Russian tradecraft that I had learned about while being a national security official in government. And then when you saw the Guccifer 2.0 move and everything subsequent to that, all of it, I think, in pretty blinking red lights shouted "Russia."

But in terms of the actual technical analysis of the intrusion of the DNC system, at that point in the summer, I was going based off of the IT firm's analysis.

Q So you weren't at this point privy to classified information, for instance?

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A No. No. No.

Q Were you otherwise engaged in conversations with then-current Obama administration officials about these issues?

A Not about these issues.

Q And so it was primarily trusting sort of CrowdStrike's forensics combined with your general background in national security and understanding how the Russians operated. Is that a fair --

A Yeah, then combined with the subsequent activity, which included Guccifer 2.0, who was your sort of perfect cutout, kind of ripped from the pages of the Russian playbook, combined then further with corroborating information that started to be reported in the press where the press was sourcing to Intelligence Community officials, saying, "Yeah, we really think this was Russia." So, I mean, the solidity of that conclusion was building in the weeks following the early June reports of the hack.

Q So you talked about the -- the dumping was a real trigger point for you. You had already had the prior attribution to Russia. Your colleague, Jennifer Palmieri, wrote an account earlier this year about how the two of you kind of devised a plan to bring attention to this issue during the convention. Can you speak -- elaborate a little bit on your response and how you formulated a response from your perspective?

A So what Jennifer and I did was basically go to the reporting and producer teams of each of the major networks. I recall going to CNN, ABC, FOX, CBS, I think NBC. I think it was every one of them.

And so it would be, you know, say, for example, with FOX, it was Chris Wallace and Brett Baier and also their producers. With CNN, it was some of the

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on-air talent plus some of their producers.

And basically we sat with them and walked through what we understood to be the case from -- in terms of the DNC hack and leak, what we believed to be the case with respect to Russian involvement and then what we thought the upshot of this was, which is you now have the start of a much more aggressive phase of an intelligence-led operation by foreign power, and there's likely to be more as we go forward, and people should really pay attention to this.

The other thing that I was focused on in those conversations was raising questions about why -- what was motivating Vladimir Putin to do this. And, of course, it's no secret that he and Hillary Clinton didn't have the greatest of relationships.

But the other factor here was that Donald Trump, in the time that he had spent on the campaign trail, was adopting a series of positions that seemed to track almost exactly to Vladimir Putin's wish list, whether it was about NATO or about Ukraine or about human rights on down the list.

And I found that very curious that a major Presidential candidate in the Republican Party would be taking these positions. But also it would be the kind of thing that would motivate Putin to want to see him get elected. So I laid all of that out based on publicly available reporting.

And then the other dimension of this that I put on the table, which I found strange and continue to find strange, is the nature of the connections between several members of Trump's foreign policy and political team and elements of the Russian Government or Russian-backed proxies, whether you're talking about Mike Flynn or Paul Manafort or Carter Page and that when you add all of this up, it's a pretty disturbing picture.

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And that was essentially the presentation that we made to reporters and producers, without an ask, simply to say: This dynamic is unusual, perhaps unprecedented, when you pull all of the factors together. And it's going to be an important issue between now and November 8th, when the election occurs. So we wanted to provide a certain kind of context or framing foundation for it in those conversations.

BY [REDACTED]

Q I want to shift your -- the questioning on a different subject. So I want to talk a little about the dossier, which I'm sure you've heard a lot about in recent weeks. When did you -- are you aware that -- what we call the Trump dossier?

A Yes.

Q And when did you become aware of the existence of that document?

A I first saw the dossier and read it with great interest when it was released, I think, released on the internet in January.

Q Had you heard about it prior to that point?

A I had not heard about the, quote/unquote, dossier prior to that, no.

Q Had you heard about any of the contents of that document prior to January of 2017?

A Some of them. I'd heard about some of the substantive materials that were -- or some of the substantive claims that were made in the dossier prior to January, yes.

Q And how did you hear that?

A So I would hear it both from reporters outside the campaign that would call and say, you know, "Have you heard this thing," this issue or that issue.

And I heard some of it from -- and I'm pausing to --

MR. STEKLOFF: There's probably privilege issues, so I think we just want to be careful if he heard it from a lawyer acting on behalf of the Clinton campaign. It's our understanding that privilege is being held by the Clinton campaign and is not our privilege to waive.

So he wants to be candid with you, but there's just the issue of conversations that he had as a campaign official that may have been with a lawyer acting on behalf of the campaign.

MR. ROONEY: Can you -- do you know who, if anyone, took over paying for the Fusion Christopher Steele research, the dossier into Trump after the election? Do you know that?

MR. SULLIVAN: No, I don't know who was paying for the -- who -- I'm sorry. Maybe I'm not sure I'm following the question.

MR. ROONEY: Do you know who, if anyone, took over paying for the Christopher Steele research information into Donald Trump after the election?

MR. SULLIVAN: I don't. I don't know who was paying for it, no.

MR. ROONEY: Okay. Do you recall -- and I want to ask these questions since I'm a member. Do you recall meeting with members of the minority of this committee on October 3?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yes.

MR. ROONEY: Can you tell us why you decided to discuss or meet with members of the minority on how the Clinton campaign came to suspect an alleged Russian meddling amid the election with the minority but not the majority?

MR. SULLIVAN: Sure. So it wasn't a solo trip. I wasn't -- I didn't go up to kind of give testimony the way that we're doing right here. I was part of a group

of folks who went up to talk generally about the nature of the Russian threat, and we sort of divided up the brief.

But the basic purpose was to have a conversation, a policy conversation about how to prevent this from happening in the future. This was not me coming in by myself to provide testimony.

I did talk about my experience on the Clinton campaign in that context, but the purpose of talking about my experience in the Clinton campaign, along with my colleagues, who talked about other things Russia's up to and about what we might look for in 2018 and 2020, was all part of an effort to have a conversation with people who were following these issues closely about how we deal with them.

MR. ROONEY: Okay. Other than the media and ongoing investigations outside of this one, are you aware of any post-election efforts by political operatives, nonprofits, or others to expose President Trump's alleged Russia ties, and are you involved with any of those efforts?

MR. SULLIVAN: I'm not involved with any -- well, I guess, I don't know how to put it. I mean, I think all of us would like to get to the bottom of the ties between Trump and Russia. So, you know, I think that there are a wide range of --

MR. ROONEY: It could be more organized than just, you know, getting to the bottom, like a political operation, a nonprofit group, something like that, some kind of organized campaign in and of itself.

MR. SULLIVAN: I think that there's a number of organizations that are looking at everything from the Panama Papers to, you know, The Trump Organization's ties to Russia over the years. I mean --

MR. ROONEY: But are you part of any of those?

MR. SULLIVAN: I'm not, no.

MR. ROONEY: Okay. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So, Mr. Sullivan, I want to go back to the dossier line of questioning that I was on, and that is, you mentioned -- so you had a conversation with a lawyer that represented the Democratic National Committee. Is that correct? I guess we can just say that. Is that something you can admit to --

MR. STEKLOFF: I think the --

[REDACTED] -- that you had a conversation?

MR. STEKLOFF: I think the campaign itself, right? Not --

MR. SULLIVAN: Here's -- let me try this, just to help put in context so that it might help your questioning. I was aware that there was an outside effort to do opposition research that included research into ties between Trump and Russia.

And, periodically, over the course of the fall, summer fall, I don't remember the exact timeframe, I would get, you know, told about certain developments in that effort but always in kind of general terms and without any kind of specifics around who was doing it, how it was being funded, what the structure was, what the arrangement was.

I didn't know any of that. I only kind of knew that there was an effort and that it was producing some results. And so, when I saw the dossier come out in January and I saw things in it, I thought, oh, some of those things are consistent with, you know, what I had heard previously and what reporters had --

BY [REDACTED]

Q Can you just -- that is helpful. Thank you.

Can you just unpack kind of what you knew and when in a little bit of a chronology in terms of: The first time you saw the dossier was on January

of 2017 --

A Yeah.

Q -- as the dossier was published.

A Right.

Q You obviously knew, as a campaign veteran when you were working on the campaign, that the campaign was involved in opposition research into the --

A Right.

Q -- other candidate. But -- so, from that very general, "Hey, we're probably doing opposition research on the other guy," to seeing the dossier in January 2017, can you just walk us through, to the best of your recollection, what you recall learning and when, when you had these updates, what was sort of the nature and structure then of the participants that -- sort of take us from A to B a little bit?

A Yeah. I mean, I will try to do this as best I can, given the strictures in terms of precise conversations and so forth. But, broadly speaking, at some point in the summer, and I don't remember exactly when it was, around the convention, I learned that there was an effort to do some research into the ties between Trump and Russia.

Then at various points between then and November, I would hear, oh, that effort has turned up this thing or this point. But I was never briefed on or brought into any discussions around the who or the how in terms of the arrangement, the payment, and so I learned all of that subsequent to the election as it was emerging in the news.

Q Did you find any of that -- the fact that you didn't know that, is that typical from your experience in the -- your experience on campaigns, or was there

anything that you perceived or know to be, you know, deliberate effort to cordon this work off?

A I mean, from my perspective as the senior policy adviser on the campaign, I didn't intend to get into ins and outs of how opposition research was conducted on any issue, domestic or otherwise. So I -- you know, I couldn't tell you sitting here how we funded or staffed any of the major lines of opposition research in the campaign, including this one.

Q If we wanted to ask somebody who would have been expert or particularly knowledgeable about that facet of the campaign from the campaign side, who would you suggest that we talk to?

A I mean, I think you'd be worth talking to Mark Elias on this. I mean, he's as -- you know, as they pointed out, he's the person who was sort of managing this process, so he would know best both how he made his arrangements with the campaign and what the nature of those arrangements were.

Q Right. But he was the outside lawyer. So who would have been his counterpart or interlocutor within the campaign? Do you know?

A I don't know, no. I mean, I don't know who knew what. I don't know.

Q And then, with respect to the updates that you received about what the -- this opposition research uncovered, do you recall the -- can you shed a little light on the frequency, nature of those, who usually participated in them?

A It's hard to say on the frequency, because, you know, this was the most intense period of the campaign. It was the closing months of the campaign. So it's just hard for me to remember, you know, how often we were discussing

these issues.

You know, I would say -- it really depended. It really kind of came down to, if there was something interesting to share, it tended to be shared. But this was nothing remotely resembling a daily occurrence. So every now and again this would -- you know, this would happen.

Q And who were the typical participants in these updates?

A So, obviously, Mark. Sorry, I'm just -- I'm like trying to be the good lawyer, so I'm trying to be -- I mean, former lawyer, so I'm trying to be careful on this stuff, but --

MR. STEKLOFF: Yeah. If Mark was a participant, I think that that's fine, but I don't think that he could then talk about the details of any of those discussions. But I understand your question is broader than that, if there were other participants.

MR. SULLIVAN: John; Robby, Robby Mook, the campaign manager; John Podesta; occasionally the -- it wasn't like there was some set participation, but occasionally Jennifer Palmieri. I think that was about it.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Did the candidate ever participate in --

A No.

Q -- that you recall?

A No.

Q When you read the dossier that's going to be known in January, were there any particular pieces of information where you recognized the providence or heritage from these earlier briefings?

A Well, there were pieces of information that I had heard in the course

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of conversations over the campaign, but they also tended to be pieces of information that I'd heard from reporters as well. So, when I saw the dossier, I didn't know if this had been generated by the campaign, been rumors flying around in journalistic circles that then got washed back in the campaign. I didn't know. I didn't know.

Q Any particular reporter seem to have information that tread closely with what later became -- popped up in Podesta?

A No. I mean, there was a pretty -- as I recall, there was a -- I didn't tend to talk directly to a lot of these reporters. They would come through the press shop and with the inquiry. And, you know, they wanted to talk to me because I was foreign policy guy on the campaign: Hey, what do you know about this, that, or the other thing?

But a number of different outlets were chasing some of these rumors during the campaign.

Q Did you know or have reason to believe at the time that those outlets might have also had direct engagement with the same entities that were conducting research on your behalf?

A No, I didn't.

Q I want to link up sort of this discussion with the earlier one, which is around the time of the convention, you realize Russia's hacking and particularly dumping of emails is what you believed to be a major national security and important campaign issue, along with the other candidates' potential ties to Russia on the one hand.

On the other hand, you've got, as part of the campaign's opposition research, information coming in related to some of those same issues, particularly

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the latter, the other candidates had ties to the -- alleged ties to foreign power.

How did the information you were receiving via opposition research inform or filter into your own media outreach and engagement on these issues?

A It didn't. I mean, I was very focused on being able to present things that I knew to be facts. So, before, in the questioning, I walked through for you two of the pillars of, I think, the foundation of this whole Russia issue on the campaign: One was the positions Donald Trump was taking on the issues, all of which were publicly known and available positions, walking back the article V guarantee, talking about how Russia could have Crimea, saying that, you know, America's no better than Russia on human rights and killing journalists, on down the line. All of that was disturbing to me but also publicly available. So that was one pillar.

And the other pillar was the fact that many of the people associated with Donald Trump had longstanding publicly known affiliations and engagements with either Russian officials or Russian entities.

And so I can find myself in my public discussions and the background briefings I gave to those reporters and producers at the convention to the set of issues that I had deep knowledge of and confidence in.

Q Just reflecting, it seems a little bit, I don't know if "ironic" is quite the right word, in retrospect that your -- the campaign with which you were affiliated was involved in commissioning and paying, I think it's been publicly disclosed something on the order of \$1 million to -- or I guess the campaign, the DNC paid on the order of \$1 million to Perkins Coie, which then commissioned what has sort of become one of the most impactful pieces of opposition research in American --

MR. ROONEY: Not that impactful.

██████████ -- political history.

MR. ROONEY: It didn't work.

██████████ Impactful in 2017 after the campaign was over. And you were obviously engaged in this issue during the campaign, but it sounds like you didn't really avail yourself of that research during the campaign. Is that a fair summary?

MR. SULLIVAN: I'm not sure I agree with all the various characterizations you just laid out, so I can't say it's an entirely fair summary, no. I guess, I can't, no.

██████████ Where do you -- any particular points of disagreement?

MR. SULLIVAN: I mean, first of all, the research project was trying to develop information to the point where, I guess, you know, the people actually doing it would have felt, as in, you know, our outside counsel who were working it, would have felt comfortable doing something with it. They didn't do something with it.

So I'm not sure what my -- where, looking back, I should have been more involved in that process. That doesn't strike me as something that -- I think you used the phrase "ironic," did I find it ironic.

MR. ROONEY: Well, I guess the question is, if you do the opposition research -- I'm a politician. We're politicians. If you do opposition research, potentially it's to use some of the information you have, whether it be for political purposes or policy purposes.

So I think your testimony is, is that you didn't really use anything that was in that document for your policy -- I don't know if you said political or not as well -- agenda. Is that accurate?

MR. SULLIVAN: I'm saying it didn't --

MR. ROONEY: And if so, why?

MR. SULLIVAN: Oh, so it didn't factor into my presentations because --

MR. ROONEY: Why?

MR. SULLIVAN: -- because I, as the guy who goes out to make the policy case, all right, for why we're facing a threat from Russia, why the American people should be concerned about electing someone who seems to have an affinity for Russia's positions, and a lot of people who tend to carry Russia's water, from a policy perspective, that was my job. That's the job I did.

And, you know, I have developed, I think, a very good set of relationships with the press over the years, in part on the basis of providing them with information that I know to be absolutely true, accurate, that I've looked at, gone through, and that's what I presented.

Other things that -- other tracks involved in the campaign around opposition research, on this issue and other issues, wasn't really something that I dealt in. I wasn't dealing in opposition research about Trump and, you know, the various sexual assault allegations against him.

I wasn't dealing with opposition research related to Trump and, you know, Trump -- The Trump Organization's efforts over the years that, you know, might have crossed various ethical or legal lines. That wasn't what I did.

What I did was talk about the policy issues in the context of the national security threat this posed. And from my perspective, what I knew at the time and what has now been borne out with, you know, much more evidence that's built up since then, is that Donald Trump represented a dramatic departure from the mainstream Republican or Democratic view on a series of issues and that that was

strange and that that deserved real scrutiny over the course of the campaign, particularly since, at the same time that was happening, the Russians themselves were doing everything they could to harm Hillary Clinton and help Donald Trump.

So that's where my focus was over the course of the campaign. It wasn't on particular pieces of research or, you know, stories about this, that, or the other thing. It was on the core elements of a case that a hostile foreign power was trying to hack our election to help a candidate who seemed to be carrying their water, and by "water," I mean their policy water, which, for me, was my area of focus and expertise on the campaign.

MR. ROONEY: Three minutes.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Do you recall making an October 31 statement on, quote, "new report exposing Trump's secret line of communication to Russia"?

A Yes.

Q And you recall -- what do you recall about what that report was?

A There was a lengthy article in Slate.com that described a computer expert or perhaps a group of computer experts who had discovered a pattern of unusual activity in the server connection between Alpha Bank and The Trump Organization.

Their analysis led them to believe that this was an effort to create essentially a secret server connection that could allow information to flow both ways without being picked up or recognized by the outside and that this was a highly unusual arrangement that would have had to have taken people on both sides, the Alpha Bank side and The Trump Organization side, kind of a conscious effort to put in place.

Q Did you know what the sort of basis of Slate's information was for that story?

A I mean, I knew that it was a series of just sort of computer data forensic experts who had found this and then have analyzed it, the traffic between the two sides, and that had gone and sat down with the author of the Slate story and said, "This is what we found, and this is what we believe the import of this finding is."

Q Were you aware that that information had been found or uncovered on behalf of Fusion GPS?

A No. And -- no, I didn't know that and didn't think that was the case that Fusion GPS uncovered that information.

MR. HECK: My turn?

MR. ROONEY: Forty-five. You're up.

MR. HECK: Thank you.

Mr. Sullivan, thanks for being here. I apologize I was a little late --

MR. SULLIVAN: That's okay.

MR. HECK: -- so I may go over some familiar ground.

For my purposes, however, I would like to establish frankly a very quick re-charting of your career trajectory, actually beginning with undergraduate education. And I want you to specifically mention where any of your education or job experiences may have included anything related to foreign affairs. So take us back to undergraduate and just quickly more just to the present day.

██████████ Are you trying to make all the rest of us feel bad, Mr. Heck?

MR. HECK: We can do that all on our own.

MR. STEKLOFF: This might fill the 45 minutes.

MR. SULLIVAN: No. I'll try to keep it -- I grew up in Minnesota, went to Minneapolis Southwest High School, and then to Yale Law School -- Yale Law School, to Yale College, where I majored in political science and international studies and wrote my two senior theses on foreign affairs subjects.

I spent both the summer and the senior year of college working for Les Gelber (ph), who at the time as the president of the Council on Foreign Relations and became a mentor of mine. I then went to Oxford and did a 2-year master's degree in international relations, where I was the editor of the Oxford International Review, and then returned to Yale Law School where I worked for Strobe Talbot (ph), who obviously is a Russia expert and was running the Yale Center for the Study of Globalization.

Upon completing law school, I spent 2 years clerking, briefly returned home to Minnesota and then became the chief counsel for Senator Amy Klobuchar, who had just been elected to the Senate from my home State of Minnesota, where I handled a range of matters for her, including all of her foreign policy work.

I then joined Hillary Clinton's 2008 Presidential primary campaign where I was the deputy policy director and did a substantial amount of foreign policy work in that context.

And then I managed her confirmation process as Secretary of State, then spent 4 years at the State Department, 2 as deputy chief of staff, and 2 as the director of policy planning at the State Department. Then I became the National Security Adviser to Vice President Joe Biden.

MR. HECK: Can I interrupt and ask a question? As National Security Adviser to the Vice President, I would assume you had the highest possible clearance. Is that correct?

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MR. SULLIVAN: Yes.

MR. HECK: Okay. Go on.

MR. SULLIVAN: So I served in that capacity until I left government to return to Yale Law School to teach, where I taught on foreign policy and international law issues until joining the Hillary campaign and running her policy team for the last 2 years. So that, in brief, is my sketch.

In the 6 years I was in government, I held the highest security clearance through all of them and worked on all of the range of matters that play here, everything from Russia to cyber to intel to you name it, was part of my portfolio, not just at the White House but as a senior adviser to Hillary Clinton at the State Department as well.

MR. HECK: And for the last year?

MR. SULLIVAN: Sorry. So, for the last year, I have split my time between teaching at Yale Law School and as a senior fellow here in D.C. at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, also continuing to work on foreign policy and national security issues.

MR. HECK: And, with that, [REDACTED] I think it's our green light to engage in mutual self-loathing.

MR. ROONEY: I believed in everything except that Oxford made an Irish guy the head of their review. That's a little --

MR. SULLIVAN: You know what's funny is I ultimately didn't take it, but I won a scholarship from the British Government. And my mom was -- maybe this shouldn't be on the record -- was like, "The British Government is paying for your education? I don't think so."

MR. HECK: You're not welcome home for Christmas.

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MR. SULLIVAN: She's a [REDACTED] from Wisconsin, and she's like --

MR. HECK: All right. Mr. Sullivan, have you read the ICA that came out in January?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yes.

MR. HECK: In its entirety?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yes.

MR. HECK: I want to ask you a few questions about it. To begin with, it obviously asserts that this was a -- the Russian interference was approved by Putin and intended to either/or hurt Secretary Clinton and/or help Donald J. Trump. Do you agree with that conclusion?

MR. SULLIVAN: I do.

MR. HECK: It also asserted that the number of active measures undertaken by Russia were on an unprecedented scale, both as to breadth and depth, if I can characterize the language. Do you agree with that characterization or conclusion?

MR. SULLIVAN: Absolutely.

MR. HECK: It outlined that there had been a unique form of weaponization of information with exfiltrated information as one example of how Russia undertook active measures. Do you agree with that conclusion?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yes.

MR. HECK: We've since learned that, among these active measures taken, that in addition to just trolling and bots, there were actually significant paid digital ads in furtherance of this objective. Do you agree that that occurred?

MR. SULLIVAN: I do.

MR. HECK: Finally, there was the suggestion in the ICA and by its authors

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that Russia would do this again and have done it elsewhere on a scale that they had not done before. Do you agree with that conclusion?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yes.

MR. HECK: So I want to ask you about something that candidate Trump said. And herein I want to, I guess, rely a little bit on that incredible blue blood resume you just generously shared with us.

MR. SULLIVAN: Somehow blue blood doesn't sound like -- anyway.

MR. HECK: Yale, Oxford, Yale. Sorry, dude.

MR. SULLIVAN: No. No. I mean, it doesn't sound like a compliment, I guess, but anyway.

MR. HECK: So, on July 25 of 2016, the FBI confirmed that it had opened an investigation into the hacking of the DNC computer network, July 25. Two days after the FBI opened its investigation on July 27, again 2016, then-candidate Trump publicly encouraged Russia to hack Secretary Clinton's email. He did so by making the following statement, which has been recorded, and I quote, "Russia, if you're listening, I hope you'll be able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing," end quote.

Now, again, as somebody who has forgotten more about foreign relations and relations specifically with Russia than I will ever know, I'd like to ask your expert opinion as to how you think the Russians interpreted those comments, how they received them?

MR. SULLIVAN: Well, I think simply on the basis of those comments what Putin and the people around him would think is: We have essentially a pliable partner here who is seeing what we're doing because it's being publicly reported. He's encouraging it and cheering it on. He's saying, "This is a good thing," and

he's saying, "Do more, please."

And so, from their perspective, I think this reinforced their view that having Donald Trump in the White House would be a benefit to Russian foreign policy and national security, and that it would have given them some comfort that the strategy that they embarked upon was going to be a positive strategy because it was going to boost a candidate who, you know, they felt could be a good partner for them.

[3:33 p.m.]

MR. HECK: So to distill what you just said, you believed that they would have read it to affirm what they were already undertaking and to encourage them to continue.

MR. SULLIVAN: Yes.

MR. HECK: At the end of the day, do you think President Putin was successful in undermining the American confidence in our electoral process?

MR. SULLIVAN: I think it is hard to deny that he was, yes. I think he was successful in doing that.

MR. HECK: Why do you say it's hard to deny?

MR. SULLIVAN: Well, I put it that way because that's a conclusion I reach somewhat reluctantly as a patriotic American. I mean, you never want to have to admit that a hostile foreign power has succeeded in an operation they have embarked upon at the expense of our country's national interests. I don't take any joy in that. I think that's a painful fact, but it's a true fact.

MR. HECK: I want to spend what I hope will be the bulk of my time on the issue of the going forward. It's the part of this that I have been personally most focused on, namely what do we do to protect ourselves going forward, that I have been fairly explicit in expressing my disappointment we haven't collectively spent more time on in this committee. I personally find this to be very hard stuff. And I think the top lines are easy, one or two top lines are easy, i.e. here's an idea, there's an idea, and then it gets to be a pretty short list. And, frankly, Mr. Sullivan, I think it requires kind of grinding on it. I am going to ask you to grind with me a little bit because I think it's so important that we get there. You were asked earlier by my friend Mr. Rooney -- I think it was Mr. Rooney -- I think really the only thing I

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heard you say was enhanced cyber devices and practices, especially for campaigns, but also on the public side, because good line offense tends to get ahead of defense. I don't personally find that to be sufficient. We have got to do more than that, would be my personal opinion. Would you agree?

MR. SULLIVAN: I would. One of the other things I added in the back and forth I had with Congressman Rooney was about the role of our national security apparatus. I mean, at the end of the day, one of the incredibly important dimensions of stopping this from happening again is effective deterrence. And effective deterrence means raising the costs to our adversaries for doing this so they think twice about doing it. And that requires a structured interaction that goes way beyond any one sanction or one tit for tat. It's about how we effectively position ourselves so that other countries are worried, they think it will be high cost, not low cost, for them to intervene. I think Putin believed that this was a foreign policy success that came to him at very low cost. So how do you do that? I think that there is a range of different elements that go into it, including things on the overt side and things on the covert side that, in this session, we can't get into. But on the overt side, I do think that the Obama administration was correct to impose a series of sanctions in response. I don't think that that was a sufficient response. I think there has to be more done there. And that, to me, is probably the area of policy that is most significant. And the challenge we have right now is we currently have a President who denies this even happened, so has no interest in actually mobilizing the national security apparatus of the United States to create the kinds of conditions that would stop it from happening in the future. But for me, a huge amount of the focus has got to be there.

MR. HECK: [REDACTED] just to clarify, this is not a classified setting?

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██████████ That is right. Yes, sir.

MR. HECK: It is not?

██████████ It is not classified, yes, sir.

MR. HECK: So I want to ask you, however -- I am going to get into the accountability piece I call it. But I want to ask you about the covert side in a way that is appropriate for this setting because I don't have the slightest idea what you are even suggesting in general terms. What is it that you can say about it in an unclassified setting about covert measures that would be a part of my term, the accountability?

MR. SULLIVAN: So it would be steps that we would take, whether cyber-enabled or otherwise, to hold at risk things that Putin cares deeply about so that he would feel, in the cost-benefit analysis going forward, that if he does it again, these things will happen, and these will not be positive for him.

MR. HECK: Can you give an example?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yeah. I mean, I am not currently holding a security clearance, so this is just an armchair quarterback. I mean, I would say, for example, we should think hard about the degree to which there is either information or relationships or money flows or otherwise that Putin relies upon to continue to hold his grip on power that we would say: Look, if you are going to keep going to the heart of our government and our democracy, then you are going to pay a big price.

MR. HECK: But that's the overt side, is it not? I am asking about the covert side.

MR. SULLIVAN: I am saying that would require an intelligence-led operation to successfully carry out.

MR. HECK: Understood. So I do want to ask you about sanctions, because you mentioned them. I presume you have at least a cursory understanding of what the current sanction regime is vis-à-vis Russia.

MR. SULLIVAN: Yes.

MR. HECK: We have enacted additional sanctions over the last summer that I believe have a February 1st deadline for being implemented but which have not yet been implemented, so factor that into this question. Just generally speaking, do you think we should do more on the sanctions side in order to hold Russia accountable for their interference?

MR. SULLIVAN: For me, I think about sanctions right now less as about accountability for 2016 and more about deterrence for 2018 and 2020. So the way I would think about the sanctions tool is not just to pile on a new set and say, "These are just more punishment for what you did." Rather, I would go to our European partners and say: This has become an urgent priority for the United States of America, and frankly, it should be an urgent priority for you too and your democracies. Here's the deal. We should go sit down with the Russians and lay out for them that if we see this again, this is the menu of sanctions that are coming. And be quite straightforward and predictable on that. In that regard, I think we should be significantly more aggressive. The Europeans have got to come onboard on this. So I think we are going to have a hard time getting them right now to do more for retrospective, but I think we could get them onboard for a prospective approach to the Russians. Again, that requires, though, that the administration buys into it. I mean, the administration would have to be the one who executed this play.

MR. HECK: So, accepting for discussion purposes your prospective

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approach to deterrence, let's plumb a little bit what those elements might be on the sanctions side. And herein I am looking for those -- I am looking for your response and feedback both on those that you think would be most effective but also colored by your expertise about those which you think, if we had an amenable administration, would be plausible with our European partners.

MR. SULLIVAN: Yeah. And I have to say --

MR. HECK: Can I go through them?

MR. SULLIVAN: Oh, sure, yeah, please. Please. Absolutely. I thought that was the question.

MR. HECK: No, it's a preface.

MR. SULLIVAN: Okay. Sorry.

MR. HECK: The financial services sector. That's a question.

MR. SULLIVAN: I agree that that is an area that we can do more in than we have done.

MR. HECK: And what should we do?

MR. SULLIVAN: Well, it's hard for me to say exactly because I have not been privy in the last 3 years to a forensic analysis of which Russian financial institutions are doing the most work to prop up Putin and the oligarchs around him or which he would feel the most pain in or, for that matter, which are most European exposed and could cause the greatest systemic risk. So you have got to balance slapping sanctions on banks that hurt but not going so far as to potentially destabilize the global financial system. And I can't sit here today and tell you, "Here's the list." But I would expand the list of targeted financial institutions and I would take on greater risk over time. Particularly if you are in a prospective environment, you can talk about onboarding sanctions over the course

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of 2, 3, 4 years so that our European partners can adjust.

MR. HECK: So I have a general impression, please disabuse me if I am wrong, that the current sanction regime is weighted a little more to individuals than institutions.

MR. SULLIVAN: It's largely for this reason: It's both because of European exposure and because of systemic risk. And I guess the point I am making is we can get more aggressive on the institution side.

MR. HECK: That's what I was looking for.

MR. SULLIVAN: Yeah.

MR. HECK: Gazprom.

MR. SULLIVAN: I would love to --

MR. HECK: But --

MR. SULLIVAN: -- go hard at Gazprom. I think this politically diplomatically vis-à-vis the Europeans is the area that would require the greatest amount of diplomatic spade work. And I think this would have to have a phase-in period as well to allow for adjustment. The fact is that Europe still remains pretty vulnerable from the perspective of its reliance on Russian gas. That is changing and could change much faster if we actually implemented a strategy to begin to diversify to a greater extent their sources of energy and to put -- set a glide path for being able to hold Gazprom much more significantly at risk than we have been able to.

MR. HECK: So, in addition to creating a forward-looking diversification that might make this easier or enable it more, are there any other elements that might make this more possible? I gathered, either from your word choice or your tone, that this could be very effective with Russia if we figure out how to do it.

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MR. SULLIVAN: Yeah. Exactly. This is the heart of the Russian economy and, frankly, the heart of the logic of the petro-state that Putin has built. So, I mean, other things that come to mind, and, you know, I can follow up with more specifics than just sitting here today without anything in front of me, but other things that come to mind would be building on some of the initial steps the Obama administration took on future investment and, in particular, technologies that Russia relies upon to continue to build out its pipeline system, its extraction, its exploration, all of which Russia as a country is way behind on compared to the United States and the rest of the world. So I think that there is fruitful stuff to do that isn't just about pipelines into Europe but that is about pinching Gazprom's future projected oil -- gas production and distribution networks. I think there are things we can do on that front. Now, we would have to map out, okay, you go down that road, how do they respond? What's the escalation risk? How do you balance it? And I confess I haven't recently done that analysis. But it is certainly something that I would look hard at.

MR. HECK: I would very much appreciate it if you had additional ideas about necessary elements that might enable that path forward. I want to ask you as well about RT. It's come in for some controversy. You may or may not have noticed the capitol press corps gave them the boot I think.

MR. SULLIVAN: Yeah.

MR. HECK: As I am told, they are still accredited for attendance at White House, Defense, and State Department briefings. Insofar as, on the one hand, this is heavily anchored in the First Amendment society. On the other hand, we are dealing with a propaganda arm of the state which is obviously engaged in practices that are antithetical to our best interests. Would you take any action

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with respect to RT?

MR. SULLIVAN: My take on RT is that, as long as it remains an integrated element of this multifaceted warfare campaign that the ICA laid out -- and they talked about RT specifically in there -- then it is not just like other state TV services from other countries. It is an offensive weapon as part --

MR. HECK: And what do we do?

MR. SULLIVAN: -- a campaign. I would be open to -- I hadn't thought about the concept of denying them accreditation at the White House and Defense. I would want to think about it. I would put that on the table. I would generally put on the table sort of saying they shouldn't be regulated as a traditional media entity; they should be treated as a part of a foreign intelligence service. And what are the policy implications of that exactly? I am not sure. I don't know, but it's something I would take a hard look at. And I don't think you have to go down the road of saying the same thing about every TV station around the world that's owned by a government. You look to the one that has actually played a role as a particular tool in a campaign against the United States.

MR. HECK: As a subset of that, we target individual oligarchs and government officials when we know that they are party to this as a means. In like fashion, would it make sense to effectively target so-called Russian journalists who are clearly actively engaged in this warfare upon us?

MR. SULLIVAN: I think if we --

MR. HECK: As individuals I am asking.

MR. SULLIVAN: I think you would have to find and, you know, the law on these individual designations requires an evidentiary basis. I think it would not be sufficient that they are simply employees of RT. But if they have been -- if we can

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come with a factual predicate that shows that they had been put to work to execute part of the information warfare campaign of the sort that happened in 2016, then I think they are fair game, yes.

MR. HECK: So we have talked about the financial service sector doing more on the institution side. We have talked about Gazprom. We have talked about RT. You have talked about a prospective integration of overt and covert measures by our government and our national security apparatus. Anything else, in addition to enhanced cyber devices and practices for both the public side of voting, voting registration, and campaigns? Anything else? We're grinding here, Mr. Sullivan, we're grinding.

MR. SULLIVAN: Well, you know, one thing you have to think about from my perspective, there was this talk about doing some kind of code of conduct between the two countries, which was laughable at the time because it wasn't accompanied even by an acknowledgement they had done something wrong, so it just seemed to be a complete giveaway by the United States. But in the context of a much more robust strategy of both deterrence and accountability, I think part of the solution here has got to be an effort, a multilateral effort to set some basic rules around this stuff. And I think that that can -- you know, you can start building that with like-minded states and move outward, but fundamentally we are going to have to come to some understandings with the Russians on this. I believe we have to come to those from a position of strength rather than just go to them and say: Hey, we can have some, you know, nice words on a piece of paper that would be honored in the breach. But I do think that norms are going to matter in this space and that norms have to be enforced, sometimes coercively enforced. But that has to be part of the answer as well. How do you get the

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Russians to accept what's in bounds and what's out of bounds in a world in which right now this gray zone for them is all in bounds.

MR. HECK: You said multilateral. You didn't say bilateral.

MR. SULLIVAN: Right, multilateral.

MR. HECK: So what's the venue? What's an example of how that might come about? Is that a United Nations thing? Is that a --

MR. SULLIVAN: I don't think it's a U.N. thing, no. It's hard to describe in a world in which you have Donald Trump, who doesn't want to do any of this. But the way you want to do this is have a leaders level conversation that looks something like the nuclear security summit, which was an Obama administration initiative at leaders level, where you brought I think it was somewhere on the order of 40 or 50 heads of states, not the whole world, key actors with the capabilities or the vulnerabilities -- you set the metrics, right, and you bring them around the table and you start talking about what this has to look like. Now, I don't want to sound like a fuzzy-headed international law guy, like rules are just going to make this stop, but I think you've got to pair a much more aggressive strategy of imposing costs with something that creates a set of guidelines in the space. Because one of the problems that we've run into is the Russians say, and frankly people in this country say: Oh, you do this too. You do it in this way or that way. You give money to the National Endowment for Democracy, as though that's somehow the same thing as what the Russians did here. So, as a going forward proposition, I think the United States would be well served to help define what is in bounds and what is out of bounds. But I don't think we should do it bilaterally with the Russians.

MR. HECK: So are you thinking of this being a code of conduct as it

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relates to how we relate to other countries' elections processes?

MR. SULLIVAN: I would say -- I wouldn't just say election processes. I would say it would be defining what information warfare is and which practices in that space are out of bounds. So I would not limit it just to elections. Because, look, I think the Russians -- you talked about how they may come back and do it again. I think they are sort of doing it again in a way already on certain issues that aren't just about elections, where it's state-sponsored information warfare for purposes of destabilizing the American political debate on issues. And I think we've got to put a stop to that too. So, for me, it's not just about elections.

MR. HECK: Actually, I have been a little bit of a --

██████████ You have 15 minutes, sir.

MR. HECK: It's 16 or 17 actually, ██████████

MR. CASTRO: You agree there is no robust mutual cybersecurity defense pact across the world?

MR. SULLIVAN: Right.

MR. CASTRO: With our allies?

MR. SULLIVAN: Right. It's a huge area where reality has gotten way ahead of the rules, yeah.

MR. CASTRO: And so would you agree that it wouldn't just be about the rules for the road, but also what defensive and offensive measures are fair play?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yeah. I think there's a much larger conversation about the rules of cyber conflict, how you manage escalation, how you deal with attribution when it's really hard to figure out sometimes where an attack is coming from. If you are attacked, what you get to avail yourself of as responses. I think that is absolutely --

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MR. CASTRO: It is stark that we have that agreement within NATO, for example, for physical intrusions against a country, but it doesn't exist in cyberspace.

MR. SULLIVAN: Right. That is stark. We have the closest thing that we have done with another country in this space is, in 2015, the U.S. and China reached a kind of voluntary set of understandings around cyber-enabled economic espionage. And when they came out, they were derided as just like kind of words on the page, but they've actually resulted in a material decrease in what the Chinese have done. And what that goes to show you is if you can actually work through some rules here, then you can think about how you go about enforcing those rules and making them stick. And part of the reason I was saying earlier that we should start with like-minded is, at a bare minimum, we should get together with NATO and figure out how we think about what an attack is, how we respond to it, what we consider to be acceptable and unacceptable responses, how we manage the possibility of tit for tat escalation. We should absolutely be doing that.

MR. HECK: Jackie?

MS. SPEIER: Thank you, Mr. Sullivan. The Magnitsky Act has played a prominent role in most of the interactions that the Russians have had with the Trump campaign and with others. Did you ever get visited by persons suggesting that the Magnitsky Act had to be overturned in terms of adoptions from Russia?

MR. SULLIVAN: No. No, I didn't have -- as far as I can recall, I wasn't visited by anyone either representing or claiming to represent the Russian Government.

MS. SPEIER: Well, they would not necessarily be claiming to represent

the Russian Government, but they could have been --

MR. SULLIVAN: Right. No.

MS. SPEIER: -- fishing for what the policy was going to be on the Magnitsky Act.

MR. SULLIVAN: No one came to me on the Magnitsky Act.

MS. SPEIER: Did any foreign persons or persons representing the interests of foreign governments come to you?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yeah, sure. We, you know, would meet from time to time with the ambassadors from different countries. I met with the Ambassador to the U.K. -- from the U.K., the Ambassador from Colombia, the Foreign Minister from Australia. Hillary herself at the United Nations held meetings with Prime Minister Abe and President Poroshenko of Ukraine, and President Sisi, all of which involved public readouts and the like. So it's pretty common for campaigns to meet sort of foreign policy head of the campaign to ambassador level. Like that's pretty common. What's weird, totally uncommon, is to do that many times, have many different people on the campaign do it, and, you know, also meet with an array of other folks from these countries, the same country representing a certain set of interests. So the pattern of interaction between the Trump campaign and both Russian Government officials and people associated with Russia was a striking departure from what normal campaign practice would be, either ours or Mitt Romney's or Barack Obama's or anyone like that.

MS. SPEIER: So, you know, it's been over a year. You have had the time to reflect. As you go back and look at the campaign and how the Russian intervention was treated, how would you as an adviser to then-candidate Hillary Clinton have advised her differently? Or would you?

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MR. SULLIVAN: You mean just in general? Well, the answer to would I is of course, because we lost. And so, if I said I wouldn't have done anything different, then I wouldn't be sort of learning the most basic lesson. Look, one thing that I have really struggled with is I was out publicly banging on the Russian interference during the campaign, but I do worry that we just weren't effective at sounding the alarm in a way that actually mobilized action to respond effectively. And I don't know what we could have done. But I think a lot about whether if we had handled that set of issues differently, we could have forestalled the Podesta Wikileaks stuff and some of the other things that came late.

Then, on other issues, I mean, we could spend all day with me talking about where, you know, I wish we had done better by her in terms of helping her deal with some of the stuff thrown at her or helping her with her message and so forth. But I don't want to turn this into a therapy session.

MS. SPEIER: The fact that the voting records in [REDACTED] States were hacked, did you know about that at all during the campaign?

MR. SULLIVAN: I don't think I did. I think I learned about that shortly after the campaign. If I knew about it, it was like right at the end. But in the timeframe, the rest of November into December was when I really started hearing about Illinois and some of these other States that had been hacked.

MS. SPEIER: So did you know about the DNC hack before June of 2016, when it became public?

MR. SULLIVAN: I don't know that I did. I mean, I may have heard about it in late May, but it would have been shortly before it became public, not long before it became public.

MS. SPEIER: And so your Gmail account -- has this already been

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covered? -- your Gmail account had been spearphished. Is that right.

MR. SULLIVAN: Multiple times, yes.

MS. SPEIER: And could you kind of walk us through what they did or what whomever did did?

MR. SULLIVAN: So what they tend to do is they send an email that putatively is from Gmail itself, from Google, asserting that someone has tried to access your account from somewhere. And they list the location. So it could be Ukraine or California or whatever. And then they say: Please click this link to reset your password.

MS. SPEIER: So you got multiple requests like that saying: Please --

MR. SULLIVAN: Correct.

MS. SPEIER: -- reset your password.

MR. SULLIVAN: Yeah.

MS. SPEIER: And did you ever respond?

MR. SULLIVAN: No.

MS. SPEIER: So you anticipated that it was a spearphishing expedition?

MR. SULLIVAN: I did. Yeah. Any time I get anything from Gmail asking me to click on anything, I assume that it's some kind of spearphishing. Now, I also had two-factor. So this strategy only works if you don't have two-factor, because even if the bad guys get your password, they can enter it, but then they need your phone to be able to get into your account. So, even if I had clicked through, I probably still would have been okay, but I didn't touch any of them.

██████████ Just for the record, you are mentioning two-factor authentication?

MR. SULLIVAN: Right. Two-factor authentication, right.

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MS. SPEIER: So it was just John Podesta's who got -- they got through, or did they get through others within the campaign?

MR. SULLIVAN: You know, at the end of the day, we don't know. And I don't believe that my account was compromised, but I couldn't tell with you a hundred percent certainty it wasn't through some other means. All we know is that John Podesta's were the only emails they dumped out. And putatively, if they had some other senior official's email, they would have put them out too, and they didn't.

EXAMINATION

BY [REDACTED]

Q So part of the committee's investigation has led to greater information about Russian activity on social media. And as you may be aware, this committee has held an open hearing with executives from Twitter, Facebook, and Google. And the committee also made a decision to release publicly a large number of Twitter handles that were traced back to a Russian Government-linked outfit in St. Petersburg, Russia, and also a large number of accounts and fake personas on Twitter that seemed to be operating in cross-pollinating across social media platforms. And just yesterday, NBC news conducted an analysis of Kremlin-connected Twitter handles and published a story, I am not sure if you saw, titled "Russian Trolls Went on Attack During Key Moments." So, according to the NBC story, quote, thousands of Russian trolls targeted national events during the 2016 U.S. Presidential election to infiltrate the online conversations of millions of Americans. According to the data set, Russian Twitter troll volume increased significantly on July 21st, 2 days after Trump became the official Republican nominee and continued at the same intensity or higher through the rest of the

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year. Throughout 2016, the trolls' tweets and retweets spiked during key campaign events. With regards to social media activity during the election season, did you or other campaign officials notice anything unusual with regard to the pace, volume, and viral nature of false political news or other information that was being disseminated about the campaign?

A Yeah, particularly in the closing weeks of the campaign and especially around the release of Wikileaks. So, I mean, what we were seeing was -- we were fighting a daily pitched battle -- and by "we," I mainly mean our communications team -- to try to keep whatever the daily, quote-unquote, revelation was off the news, off of cable. And some days we would succeed, and some days we would fail. But, you know, basically trying to say this is old news, or this is not news. And it wasn't news, it was all -- you know, it was the fact of the leaks more than the leaks themselves. But then we started realizing nonetheless all of this was penetrating in a massive way, in a way that I think a lot of people in the media didn't quite understand how much Wikileaks was actually penetrating. And that's because the interaction on social media, Google searches, Facebook shares related to Wikileaks was really significant, noticeably significant. And of course we didn't know why at the time, but it was something that we definitely recognized in the closing weeks of the campaign. And that went hand in hand with something that I wasn't -- wasn't really on my radar screen until September, October, which was this fake news phenomenon. And the fake news in some instances keyed off of Wikileaks releases. So you saw essentially the distortion or the bastardization of a Wikileaks document into some kind of story that then itself went viral, which was another thing that we were watching over the course of the campaign.

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Q The reason I ask is because any comprehensive report to the American people will have to include, to the extent possible based on the information that we have unearthed, a recreation of key moments during the campaign or during the election period, and trying to identify where Russian-related hacks and information seeped its way into the American public debate and may have been exploited by the campaigns and, in this case, most likely the Trump campaign. To the extent you recall, are there any key moments that stick out for you now that you can look back where -- or are there any key fake news stories that you thought seemed to penetrate particularly effectively?

A So one set of stories that I just found odd because there was no immediate news hook for it related to Hillary Clinton's health, not around the September timeframe when she came off the road with pneumonia, but this was in, you know, sometime in October when it's like, why is it that now all of a sudden interest in Hillary Clinton's health is spiking? And that's because there was a big push of these fake news stories around really kind of bizarre claims about various ailments and diseases that she had. And there was a lot of -- what was interesting is that that was reflecting back in kind of what we were picking up in terms of concerns, spiking concern about this issue of her health. So that was one example of a moment. And I can spend some time thinking about others as well that I could share with you.

MR. HECK: Joaquin?

MR. CASTRO: Did you or do you know of anybody on the campaign that had reason to believe that their phones were compromised, for example, or being monitored somehow, text messaging, phone calls, anything like that?

MR. SULLIVAN: I mean, aside from the occasional macabre joke about

the Russians listening in on everything, I don't think anybody had specific reason to believe their phones had been compromised that I recall.

██████████ Members, want to take a break for 5 minutes?

MR. SULLIVAN: Five minutes would be great.

[Recess.]

BY ██████████

Q Okay. I am just going to ask you a few questions, Mr. Sullivan, on a topic that my colleague was asking about before we ended our first session. And that relates to Fusion GPS.

A Yeah.

Q I know that you had mentioned, I think the question that ██████████ had asked you at the very end of his questioning was along the lines if you knew in that one instance related to an article in Slate magazine if you knew the source of the information was from a firm named Fusion GPS. Are you familiar with Fusion GPS?

A At this point somewhat familiar with them. I mean, not intimately, but --

Q Were you familiar with them in 2016?

A No.

Q Were you aware of them in 2016?

A You know, it's funny, I have spent a lot of time this year trying to think, did I even hear of them in 2016 before they became publicly associated with this? I don't remember hearing of them, but it's possible that somebody mentioned them, a reporter or someone else may have. But I don't think so.

Q So you personally didn't deal with Fusion GPS or any

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representatives of that company on the Clinton campaign while you served as --

A I never met with anyone from Fusion GPS during the Clinton campaign.

Q Do you know if anybody else on the Clinton campaign met with Fusion GPS or representatives of Fusion GPS?

A I don't know.

Q Do you know Glen Simpson?

A I have met him once since, yeah.

Q Okay. When did you meet him?

A In February of 2017.

Q And what was the purpose of the conversation?

A So this is after the dossier had come out and after everything was out publicly. I don't remember who raised having the meeting, but Podesta and I went and sat down with him basically just to say, like, now that we've learned you were doing this and you commissioned this dossier and so forth, like how -- kind of look him in the eye and say: What do you make of all this? And what do you have to say about it? That was the purpose of the meeting.

Q Where did the conversation occur?

A Somewhere in D.C. It was in an office building. I don't recall.

Q Was there anyone else at the meeting other than you and Mr. Podesta and Mr. Simpson?

A There was another person from Fusion there, but I don't remember who it was.

Q Peter Cattan (ph) or --

A I don't know. And then there might have been -- there might have

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been somebody else there as well.

Q And what exactly did you talk about?

A Well, you know, John and I were basically like, you know, you put all this effort into this, tell us what you know. You know, we had just been through a campaign on the receiving end of all this, so we were just genuinely curious about what this whole exercise had uncovered and how confident they were in it and what they believed was real and to what extent and all of that. So we just, you know, asked him some questions.

Q Was the conversation about the then-dossier or --

A I mean not specifically about the dossier. It was sort of about the effort that they had put in to finding out ties between Trump and Russia and what their belief was based on the accumulation on that.

Q How long was the conversation as you recall?

A Maybe an hour, maybe a little less.

Q After you had that conversation and meeting with Mr. Simpson, did you have any follow on meetings with him or anyone else from Fusion?

A Huh-uh.

Q The information that you learned from that meeting, was it information you had not previously known, or was it new information?

A No. It was -- it was a pretty general conversation where they were sort of going back to basics on what they believed were this series of connections. So I didn't leave that meeting with any new information.

Q Did you ever have conversations subsequent to that meeting with Mr. Simpson in which you discussed the information you learned from Mr. Simpson with representatives of the media or any media organization?

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A That's the only time I have met with or talked to Glenn Simpson.

Q But anything that you learned from that conversation on or about February of this year, did you have subsequent meetings with individuals who represent the media about what you learned during that meeting with Mr. Simpson in February?

A I don't think I learned anything in that meeting that wasn't already a part of the public record. He didn't share new leads or details that I remember.

Q Okay. I want to go back just real quick in your role as obviously the senior policy director, foreign policy director of the Clinton campaign, and you talked a little bit I think in our first segment about some of the meetings you had with respect to opposition research. And you did mention that in the course of some of those meetings information -- you learned of information I think you said from Mr. Elias. Is that correct?

MR. STEKLOFF: I think that that would be privileged.

██████████ Let me ask you this. Let me frame it this way. I am not asking for the contents of the information. I will ask the question this way. Were you in meetings in which Mr. Elias briefed you on information that was of an opposition research nature?

MR. SULLIVAN: I was.

██████████ Can you tell me what exactly the topics were of that information?

MR. STEKLOFF: I think that would be -- I am not trying to be obstructionist, but I don't know how he can answer that without --

MR. SULLIVAN: Just to help you out from my perspective, my experience on the campaign, Mark would tell us occasionally over the course of the latter

months of the campaign about information that he was coming into possession of. I didn't know who was doing the research. I didn't know who was funding the research. I didn't know -- and, frankly, after the campaign ended and the stories started being reported that this was being paid for by allies of the Clinton campaign, as far as I was concerned, that made total sense. I didn't learn about the Clinton campaign's arrangement with Perkins Coie until October or whenever, you know, just recently, shortly before it came out publicly. So the nature of these conversations was Mark basically saying: You know, I have got this information. Here's some things I've learned, et cetera. That was it.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Was it of a similar nature as the information that was in the what we call the Trump dossier that was published in January of this year?

A Some of it was, yeah.

Q And when you had those conversations with Mr. Elias, did you know he was representing Perkins Coie?

A To be honest with you, Mark wears a tremendous number of hats. So I wasn't sure who he was representing. In that context, I sort of thought he was, you know, just talking to us as, you know, a fellow traveler in this -- in the campaign effort. So I didn't think about what was his institutional affiliation.

Q Would he brief you and others on the campaign on a frequent basis, or was it just kind of -- I mean, was there a regularity to the briefings, or was it just --

A It wasn't a standing meeting of any kind. But, you know, it was not a daily occurrence or even every other day, but, you know, I couldn't tell you exactly what the frequency was.

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Q When you learned of this information -- and again I am not going to ask you the specifics; I understand the confidentiality here -- what was the impression -- what was your impression? Were you shocked? Were you taken aback? I mean, how did you react to learning some of this information that you now know was part of the Trump dossier?

A You know, just to put this into perspective, Mark would share certain things. I would also hear very similar things from reporters around town. Or reporters would call the communications shop and say we picked up this lead. What do you have to say about it? Can we talk to Jake, who ostensibly knows something about Russia and might have a reaction? So, from my perspective, a lot of these kinds of things were floating out there. And my basic take on them was most of this is pretty consistent with everything else we know to be true about Donald Trump. So I can't say that I was shocked by almost any of it.

Q When you heard of things that related to the dossier that you now know were part of the dossier and you were briefed on this information, did you ask where any of that information came from? Did you ask as to the validity of it, or how do you know X is true? Or did you just otherwise -- were you in receive mode?

A I was in receive mode in large part because, from my perspective, my job on the campaign was not to chase down opposition research to its conclusion. That's not what I was doing day to day. If somebody gave me something and said, you know, this is a solid piece of evidence to fit into a policy case that you should build into Hillary Clinton's speeches or into your own presentations, that would have been a different thing. But this was not information of that nature.

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Q Did anyone else in the room ever ask questions as to the validity of the information or how it was obtained? When you were in those high level -- I mean it sounds to me like these were all senior advisers, so folks who were very senior in the campaign were getting updates or briefed on this information.

A I think people's basic attitude on this was others are going to have to corroborate this. So I don't think people were really focused on how we build and prove the case ourselves. It was sort of more, you know, leads were coming out, and it was really going to be up to others to figure out whether or not they bore out or didn't bear out.

Q I am going to finish up. I think I just have a few minutes, and I am going to finish up on the last round of questions and I will be done. I am going to ask you a series of questions that we have been asking I know on the majority side of every witness that has appeared before us. And I will ask you the same. They relate to whether or not you are aware of any information or evidence that would indicate whether or not candidate Trump colluded, coordinated, or conspired. I know those terms have different meanings to different individuals. Do you have a sense -- what is your view of those three terms? Do you think they are different? Do you have a different -- do you place a different definition with each of those terms, which are collusion, coordination, and conspiracy?

A I think collusion and coordination are both forms of conspiracy.

Q Okay. Do you have any information then that candidate Trump colluded, coordinated, or otherwise conspired with the Russians to hack or disseminate emails?

A I mean, I think there is ample evidence at this point in the public record of collusion, coordination, and conspiracy between the Trump campaign

and the Russians.

Q Do you know of anything outside of what you read in the public record that would be helpful to this investigation that you are aware of?

A I am not sitting on anything right now that's not already out in the public record, no.

Q Okay. And along the same lines, do you have any information that candidate Trump colluded, coordinated, or conspired with the Russians to otherwise influence the 2016 election?

A I am sorry, what --

Q So do you have any information or evidence, outside of what's in the public record, if you will, that you are aware of, that candidate Trump colluded, coordinated, or conspired with the Russians to otherwise influence the 2016 election?

A Basically, everything that I knew or suspected about the relationship between the Trump campaign and the Russians is stuff that is now out in the public record.

Q And, again, just a couple more along the same lines. Do you have any information that anyone affiliated with the Trump campaign colluded, coordinated, or conspired with the Russians to hack or disseminate emails?

A I mean, again, you have got Trump campaign advisers specifically seeking Hillary Clinton's emails, and multiple of them in multiple ways over multiple periods. So I guess I would point to that evidence.

Q Outside of what you are aware of in the public record, do you have anything else that you could share?

A I don't.

Q And do you have any information that anyone affiliated with the Trump campaign colluded, coordinated, or conspired with the Russians to otherwise influence the 2016 election?

A Same as for the rest of them.

██████████ Okay. I have no further questions. Thank you.

MS. SPEIER: I have one question. I was astonished to hear you say that you and John Podesta met with Glenn Simpson for the first time in February of 2017 and for all intents and purposes knew nothing about the dossier except what you had seen in the newspapers. Is that accurate?

MR. SULLIVAN: It is accurate that the first time we met with Glenn Simpson, the first time I had an interaction with Fusion GPS was months after the campaign ended, after everything was out in the public domain.

MS. SPEIER: And so, during the campaign, outside of reporters calling and asking questions, you never actually saw the dossier?

MR. SULLIVAN: I never saw the dossier. As I was telling counsel in response to his questions, Mark, and without going into privilege, would occasionally give us updates on the opposition research they were conducting. But I didn't know what the nature of that effort was, inside effort, outside effort, who was funding it, who was doing it, anything like that, nor was I sort of centrally responsible for figuring out how to deal with or use opposition research. My job was to put everything in a policy context. So that's where my focus was. So Christopher Steele, Orbis, all of that, those were things that I came to learn about and know about their role after the campaign ended.

MR. HECK: You go ahead, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: I will be very quick. I was just going to ask you, given your

expertise in foreign policy, about the factual basis for Mike Flynn's plea, in that he admitted making false statements about a conversation he had with the Russian Ambassador on the subject of sanctions -- and this was obviously not public, the Vice President misrepresented to the country that it never happened -- would you view that as a form of conspiracy with the Russians to undermine the effective penalties imposed over their interference in our election?

MR. SULLIVAN: Absolutely. I mean, this was the American Government's response to the Russian information warfare campaign. And what Flynn was saying to Kislyak was: We'll help you undo this, or we won't put it into place.

MR. SCHIFF: It would also, would it not, violate, to your knowledge, the Logan Act?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yes. If I went out right now and started telling foreign officials, "Don't worry, we'll avoid some action the current government is taking," that would be a violation of the Logan Act. And I think what Flynn did here -- I mean, I'm not an attorney, but just on the face of what the purpose of this act is, what he did ran directly contrary to it.

MR. SCHIFF: And the underpinning of the Logan Act is that we should only have one government at a time, is it not?

MR. SULLIVAN: It is.

MR. SCHIFF: And would that be particularly important during a transition period after an election in which a foreign adversary interfered in our election?

MR. SULLIVAN: It would. And I would say doubly so when the interference in the election our Intelligence Community judged was in part to help one candidate win.

MR. SCHIFF: If there had been a scheme to coordinate or collude or conspire during the course of the campaign, would private conversations to undermine the penalties imposed as a result potentially be part of that scheme?

MR. SULLIVAN: Well, you would expect that any effort to work together to produce a positive outcome for Trump, there would have to be something in it for the Russians. Okay. That something in it would be a better policy from their perspective, from Moscow's perspective from the United States. And the first thing on that list would be reduce rather than raise the sanctions. So it would be a completely natural outcome of a coordinated effort like this that you would expect that to be the result.

MR. SCHIFF: And would you say near the top of the Russian wish list in terms of U.S. policy would be repeal of the Magnitsky Act and doing away with the sanctions imposed on Russia for their invasion of Ukraine?

MR. SULLIVAN: Yes. I would say that that would be right at the top of the near-term priority list for Vladimir Putin.

MR. SCHIFF: I am going to yield. Jackie, do you have any other questions? I am going to yield to counsel and go vote. Thank you for coming.

MR. SULLIVAN: Thank you for having me.

██████████ We have we have only a few more questions. I do want to take one of the questions that my colleague across the aisle raised again about collusion, coordination, conspiracy, which is true has been raised with other witnesses in the context of Russia and the Trump campaign. But as you may have seen in the public domain and many of the questions you got today from our colleagues across the aisle had to do with a different elaborate conspiracy that is being presented publicly. And that conspiracy is that the Democratic National

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Committee and the Hillary campaign, working through a law firm, Perkins Coie, and paying the law firm Perkins Coie, that Perkins Coie then hired an opposition research firm or a business intelligence firm, Fusion GPS, which then hired as subcontractor a foreign national, in this case a U.K. citizen, Christopher Steele, who then acquired either fabricated information harmful to Donald Trump or was fed this information by the Russians and Russian sources about Donald Trump, all as part of an effort, ultimately, to harm Donald Trump, potentially prior to the election outcome and after the election, and that, as part of that elaborate conspiracy, the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation somehow -- and again this is the way it's presented publicly -- relied on this fake DNC, Hillary campaign-paid opposition research to undermine Trump and possibly, in the current period that we're in, orchestrate what some members of the media, including on FOX News, have described as orchestrating a coup against the Trump administration. So I am going to ask you the same questions that our majority colleagues asked. Are you aware of any collusion, coordination, or conspiracy by yourself or by any other members of the campaign that you were working with to procure fake Russian information to harm Donald Trump?

MR. SULLIVAN: I mean, you will forgive me if I want to say more than just an emphatic no to that answer, because I find that totally absurd. And it actually reminds me of the moment in the third debate between Hillary and Trump where Hillary says that Trump is Vladimir Putin's puppet, and Trump turns around and says, "No puppet, no puppet, you're the puppet," that this is the equivalent of "No collusion, no collusion, you're the colluder. You colluded." And I find that a kind of astonishing effort to flip the script on this thing. I mean, the fact is that the entire Intelligence Community stood behind a statement in October that the

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Russian campaign had hacked the DNC and released their emails, and that in January the CIA, the FBI, and the NSA concluded, with a very thoroughly researched intelligence report, that the Russians had done this, along with a broader information warfare campaign to hurt Hillary Clinton and help Donald Trump get elected. The Hillary campaign, recognizing they were under assault by the Russians, took completely commonsense steps to try to figure out what was behind this, including whether there were any ties between Trump and Russia. To take those steps and look into whether there was any ties between Trump and Russia, now we know just how extensive they were, and call it collusion somehow is such an astonishing twisting of logic that I really don't even know where to start. But I can just say that, for our purposes, we were under attack. We feared that we were under attack, not just by the Russians, but by a coordinated with the Trump campaign as well. The more we learn, the more that seems to be the case. And we wanted to do what we could to figure out how to push back effectively against that. So the answer is no.

Now, at the same time, I will underscore I can't speak to various links in that chain of logic about Russian sources and all the rest of it because I wasn't privy to any of that, and I am not privy to any of it today. But I will tell you this: If someone had come to me during the campaign telling me, "Jake, as part of the Russian Government's effort to help Hillary beat Trump, I have got some good information for you on Donald Trump," I would have called the FBI.

██████████ Thank you.

██████████ ██████████ for the minority. Just one question. We touched on this earlier, sort of social media activity about Wikileaks releases and other dumps of information that were then amplified. Did you ever, along those

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lines, notice any patterns or trends from within the campaign with regard to when certain information was being put out and then things that you were seeing the Trump campaign or the Trump candidate or Trump surrogates also amplifying? We touched on the, "If you are listening Russia, please find" --

MR. SULLIVAN: Yeah.

██████████ Were there any other instances that stuck out in your mind or --

MR. SULLIVAN: Look, it felt, and I think if you talk to our social media people, they would say this with even more kind of particularity and effectiveness, but it felt like a symphony. It felt like various instrumental sections each playing their parts. You had the Trump campaign and allies on social media driving the same messages as what have now become shown to be Russian bots and trolls. And when a Wikileaks dump would come out, Trump himself, Pence, others would go tout it, people would push it, and they would all center around -- it wasn't just kind of undifferentiated, it would be like here's the story of the day on this Wikileaks dump. This is the thing we're going to fixate on and focus in on and drive on social media, sometimes fake and fabricated. I mean Pizzagate being the canonical example of where it took this to the extreme. But there were other examples kind of less colorful than that. So, yes, the short answer is that that was -- and after the campaign ended and I saw the Intelligence Community report in January about the nature of the Russian information warfare campaign, one of the first things that occurred to me was, looking back, the way in which there was such a consonance between the Trump-directed or Trump-encouraged social media effort and the Russian social media effort.

BY ██████████

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Q Just on those lines, I mentioned this earlier, but have you been able to take a look at some of the fake personas and accounts and messages that have since been made public by this committee from Facebook and Twitter?

A I haven't dug into them. What I will say is that we were getting reports in the late months of the campaign and then really more after the campaign ended of trolls sort of infiltrating different social media communities. So like what eventually emerged to be Russian bots or Russian humans or Russian-paid humans kind of impersonating Bernie supporters, getting in with a bunch of Bernie people and whipping up a fury. That became a dynamic that --

Q Do you know, was it mostly on Twitter?

A That was more on Twitter, but I think Facebook as well. But I think that was mainly a Twitter phenomenon. But I haven't gone and dug into what was released in the context of Twitter's presentation to Congress. I haven't gone and dug into their listing.

Q I guess one question we have is whether or not progressively as the campaign was moving forward, let's just say, as the clock was winding down on election day, whether or not there was any indication that there was such a network of fake personas or fake accounts, whether it was actually so effective because it was so stealth and covert --

A Yeah.

Q -- that it wasn't apparent. And it's also not something that was a focus of the ICA either. It has actually come out after the ICA but is consistent with the ICA's initial findings.

A Yeah. It's interesting. Our fixation, correct fixation in my view, on the Russian interference in that October period was really about the weaponization

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of Wikileaks. It was not on a sophisticated operation of personalities and online presence to drive messages and create echo chambers. I don't believe we were seeing -- we were seeing the results in a way of all of this, but we were not seeing the actors for who they were at the time.

██████████ I think we are okay.

BY ██████████

Q I just have one quick followup question. On the Podesta meeting you had with Mr. Simpson in February --

A Yeah.

Q -- who set that up? Was it you and Mr. Podesta?

A I honestly, as I think I said before, I don't remember how it came to be, like who actually emailed and said, "Hey, we should go meet with him, whether it was us or them."

Q Yeah. I mean --

A Like I am not sure if it was John -- it wasn't me. I was asked, do you want to come to this meeting? So I don't know if John initiated or the Simpson people initiated. I don't know.

Q All right. And I know I may have asked this, but I will just ask it again, when you were at that meeting, did you find out how -- I mean, you obviously, as you mentioned in your previous testimony here, you said you read the dossier when it was published on BuzzFeed, as did millions of Americans and people in the country and the world. So you had this meeting a month later or whatever, at least subsequent to that disclosure. You had heard about some of this information. Obviously, you didn't know exactly where it was coming from, yet you had been briefed during the campaign.

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A Yeah.

Q Did you ask where he got the information? Did you say, "Well, now that" -- you know, you obviously were able to tie the fact that Fusion and Mr. Simpson had procured the information as a result of their work on behalf of Perkins Coie. So did you learn that in the meeting?

A I mean, before that we learned -- we learned about Christopher Steele in January.

Q So, when you asked him about -- I assume in the conversation that you had with Mr. Simpson --

A Yeah.

Q -- did you ask him about his relationship with Mr. Steele and how Mr. Steele had obtained the information that was published in the dossier?

A I asked him what he thought of Steele.

Q What did he say?

A He said I think he is highly credible, like really effective. And in fact, other people I know who have worked with Steele in the past in various contexts have said over the course of this year, you know, this guy is serious business. He knows what he's up to.

Q Did you ask him about how he obtained the information that was in the dossier which, as published, it talks about different sub sources?

A No. We didn't get into any of who were the sub sources.

Q You didn't ask how any of that information was gathered or how he gathered it?

A I didn't. I didn't. No. I don't think he would have told me if I had asked, though. I assume they try to protect their sources. But I didn't ask, who

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was your source for this piece or your sub source for that piece? I was mostly focused in that meeting on, you know, the guy standing behind this material is Christopher Steele. He is the one who's judging its credibility and veracity. You know him. What do you think, based on your conversations with him? That's what I was really there to try and figure out. And Glenn was incredibly positive about Steele and felt he was really onto something and also felt that there was more out there to go find.

Q Did he indicate that's what he was doing?

A I think he did -- he was eager -- he believed that this was a clear and present danger to the Republic. And so I think he didn't want to give up on -- he didn't want to give up on the --

Q Did he in any way indicate that he was working with others to go find more information of a similar nature?

A What do you mean by "others"?

Q In other words, I think you just mentioned that he thought that -- when you say clear and present danger, tell me what you mean by that. The information that Mr. Steele had obtained was a clear and present danger?

A No, no, no, that he thought the Trump-Russia connection was a big problem.

Q Did you think from that discussion that he was going to take additional action to either provide more information to other parties or that he was going to investigate further to find more information?

A I mean, I assume that he kept working at this, right?

Q Do you know if he had -- did he indicate to you that he was going to

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talk to others about what he had found and disseminate that information to other entities, media entities, other organizations or groups?

A We didn't talk about it specifically, but I came away with the distinct impression that he was going to keep working at this.

Q When you say "working," what do you mean having -- what do you mean by "working"?

A I don't know. The campaign was over. I wasn't -- like my job was done. I was interested in finding out about Chris Steele. But, I mean, you have talked to Simpson, so he could tell you what, if anything, he has been up to. I don't know.

██████████ I have no further questions. You guys have any more?

██████████ No. We are good.

██████████ Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 4:54 p.m., the interview was concluded.]