

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on the Judiciary**  
Washington, DC 20515–6216  
One Hundred Fifteenth Congress

October 30, 2017

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2138 Rayburn Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte:

It now appears we are at a turning point concerning the investigation of Russian interference in our elections. Today, Special Counsel Mueller released a twelve-count indictment against Paul Manafort and Richard Gates for—among other alleged crimes—false statements, money laundering, failure to register as a foreign agent, and conspiring against the United States. The activity described in the indictment extends for more than a decade, including the period that Mr. Manafort served as Chairman of the Trump campaign.<sup>1</sup> The Special Counsel also released a plea agreement with George Papadopoulos, in which Mr. Papadopoulos admits to making false statements to the FBI regarding efforts by the Russian government to meet and coordinate directly with the Trump campaign.<sup>2</sup>

In response to the quickening pace of the investigation, President Trump and his allies have initiated a series of actions seeking to undermine the Special Counsel's investigation and divert attention from the actual and ongoing threat of Russian interference in our elections. This morning, for example, President Trump tweeted (erroneously) that the indictment describes activity that occurred “years ago, before Paul Manafort was part of the Trump campaign.” He

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<sup>1</sup>Last week, we learned that the memorandum brought by Russian nationals to the June 2016 Trump Tower meeting had been shared in advance with the Kremlin, and that the Trump campaign's data firm, Cambridge Analytica, had inappropriately reached out to WikiLeaks to obtain any missing Hillary Clinton emails.

<sup>2</sup> According to the Statement of the Offense, *U.S. v. George Papadopoulos*, No. 17-CR-182 (RDM), (D.D.C Oct. 5, 2017, Papadopoulos learned through his Russian contacts as early as April 2016 that the Russian government had “dirt on [Hillary Clinton] ... and thousands of emails.” Additionally, the statement revealed that on or around August 15, 2016, Trump campaign officials “encouraged [Papadopoulos] and another foreign policy advisor to make the trip [to Russia], if it is feasible.”

complained, “Why aren’t Crooked Hillary & the Dems the focus?????”<sup>3</sup> On Friday, the Rupert Murdoch-controlled *Wall Street Journal* called on Mr. Mueller to resign without citing a single legal standard or reference. A similar sentiment was expressed by other Republican House Members, including Majority Leader McCarthy, over the weekend.

As you know, last Wednesday, our own Committee, along with the Oversight and Government Reform and Intelligence committees, simultaneously announced investigations into two matters that have already been reviewed—a 2010 government approval concerning transfer of management of certain U.S. uranium mines, and the Justice Department’s handling of its investigation into Secretary Hillary Clinton’s emails. Against this backdrop, I would hope that the House Judiciary Committee investigation, given its timing and context, could avoid some of the partisan taint that has enveloped some other committees. I would therefore request that we take the following steps to ensure that our investigation is seen by the American public as both fair and credible. At a minimum, our Committee should:

1. Expand the investigation’s scope to include the circumstances surrounding the President’s determination to fire FBI Director James Comey and examine whether Attorney General Jeff Sessions’s involvement in the firing violated the terms of his recusal.
2. Review what steps the Justice Department and other relevant agencies have taken and should take to limit the risk of Russia and other adversary nations interfering in future elections, including hacking state election machinery and software.
3. Consider what steps can be taken to help ensure the independence of the Special Counsel and his office, and to protect his investigation from partisan political pressure.
4. The process for conducting the investigation should be open and transparent. This would include, for example, having public hearings, rather than private interviews. I see no reason why Director Comey should not be called to testify before our Committee in open session.
5. The process should be bipartisan and cooperative, with allowance for Minority witnesses and adequate and timely consultation regarding scheduling and any other investigatory activities.

In this regard, I would ask that we, along with relevant senior Members of our Committee, meet at your earliest possible convenience to discuss these matters.

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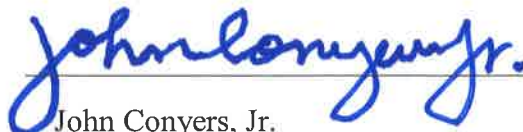
<sup>3</sup>On Sunday, the President took to twitter to lodge an additional series of non-substantiated complaints that he has been subject to a “witch hunt”; and seeking to divert attention to Secretary Clinton and her emails, the “fake dossier,” the uranium deal, and former FBI Director Comey, while insisting that Congressional investigators “DO SOMETHING.”

The circumstances call for extraordinary bipartisan cooperation. Working together is the only way to reassure the American public of the credibility and fairness of our political, legal, and electoral processes. This work would include, of course, the concern that President Trump may seek to use his pardon authority to insulate himself, as well as members of his family, his Administration, and his campaign from legal culpability.

The House Judiciary Committee—given its jurisdiction and our Members' knowledge, experience, and range of perspectives—can play a valuable role in safeguarding the rule of law and placing principle above politics. Based on our years of bipartisan, first-hand experience working directly with Mr. Mueller, we are uniquely positioned to ensure he is given the space and independence he needs to complete his important work on behalf of the American people.<sup>4</sup>

Thank you for your attention to this most serious and time sensitive matter.

Sincerely,



John Conyers, Jr.  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on the Judiciary

cc: Democratic Members, House Committee on the Judiciary

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<sup>4</sup> We are not alone in having expressed our support and respect for Mr. Mueller. For example, on June 13, 2017, Speaker Ryan stated: "I know Bob Mueller. I have confidence in Bob Mueller...the best thing to do is to let Robert Mueller do his job. I think the best vindication for the president is to let this investigation go on independent and thoroughly."