

JANUARY 06, 2017

CARDIN STATEMENT ON INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY REPORT ON RUSSIAN HACKING, INTERFERENCE IN U.S. POLITICAL SYSTEM

WASHINGTON - ***U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee***, released the following statement Friday after the Office of the Director of National Intelligence released, *"Background to 'Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Election'"*:

"Russian interference in the U.S. political system was a premeditated and massive effort to erode the American public's confidence in our democratic process that goes beyond the troubling hacks of the Democratic National Committee or John Podesta's email. The Russian attack on our democratic institutions, ordered at the highest levels in the Kremlin, is a wake-up call and a political Pearl Harbor as others have noted. I welcome today's report from the intelligence community to help us respond and take steps to make sure it never happens again.

"The president-elect appears indifferent to this assessment following his briefing today, and that is unfortunate and dangerous. Now is the critical moment to appropriately and comprehensively respond to the ongoing threat that Russia poses to our democracy and global national security interests. We have a more robust picture of what happened with today's report and yesterday's compelling testimony of the intelligence community before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"To that end, I have introduced legislation which would establish an independent commission to comprehensively examine Russia's interference and develop a series of policy recommendations the American people can have confidence in.

"Next week, I will introduce a bipartisan bill to enhance sanctions on Russia and send a strong message of resolve from the United States Senate that whether they attack by MiG or by mouse, the Kremlin's destabilizing activities against us and countries around the world will not go unanswered.

"The Senate Foreign Relations Committee also has an important role in examining this attack. The most solemn responsibility of the Committee is deliberating on the use of force, and the Committee is the only entity in the Senate that can authorize such an action. In our modern world, those responsibilities now include cyber warfare. Russia attacked us. We need to think through the implications of this attack and how we as a country should respond.

"Therefore the Senate Foreign Relations Committee must take the lead and examine several critical issues.

"First, we need to consider how the cyber-attacks fit in the broader context of Russian foreign policy.

"Second, Russia has used many tools to achieve its foreign policy goals, especially in Europe. Russia has pursued these interests by seeking to influence elections, manipulating civil society, using energy as a weapon, and corrupting governance.

"Finally, we need to consider how the U.S. can better defend itself against the catalogue of Russian 'information warfare' and destabilization methods, and effectively protect ourselves, our values, and our allies.

"The Russian attack merits a strong, commensurate and united response from the United States, and the American people deserve a president-elect who shares this concern."

###

PRESS CONTACT

Sean Bartlett 202-224-4651