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Engel Remarks at Press Conference on Russian Election Interference (/press-releases?ID=7864F53B-7515-45F4-AE6B-0E19EDA258C0)

January 9, 2018

- *As Delivered* -

WASHINGTON—Representative Eliot L. Engel, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, today joined Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi; Ranking Members Maxine Waters of the Financial Services Committee, Bennie Thompson of the Homeland Security Committee, and Jerrold Nadler of the Judiciary Committee; and Vice Ranking Member Gerald Connolly of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee for a

press conference on the failure of the Trump Administration and Republican leadership to respond to Russia's interference in the 2016 election and protect American democracy from future attacks. Representative Engel delivered the following remarks:

"A year has gone by since our intelligence agencies shined a light on Russia's scheme to interfere with the 2016 elections. A year has gone by, and there have been no consequences whatsoever for those who attacked American democracy. A year has gone by, and nothing has been done to Russia stop it from doing this again.

"And we know the Russians are trying. CIA Director Pompeo, a former member of the House, said as much on TV over the weekend. Our Ambassador to Russia, Jon Huntsman—the Foreign Affairs Committee met with him this morning—confirmed it again when he briefed members of our committee.

"Putin views 2016 as a successful operation. Russia got what it wanted and, so far, has acted with impunity. Why wouldn't they do it again?

"So my question for Republican leaders is simple. What are we going to do about it? What steps are we going to take to protect our democracy before Americans go back to the polls? Or are we just going to leave the door open to another attack?

"You see, it doesn't matter to me whether they tried to help Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton. The fact of the matter is: I don't want the Russians interfering in our democracy and no American representative should and the House of Representatives has been silent. And that's not acceptable to anybody.

"We passed new, tough sanctions last year on a bipartisan way, out of the Foreign Affairs Committee, onto the Floor. The sanctions hold Russia accountable for election interference. So far, those tools have sat on the shelf. The President has done nothing with this legislation. So we passed, it, but we haven't implemented it. That's absolutely unacceptable. That's not acceptable to me. And it shouldn't be acceptable to any lawmaker on either side.

"It's time to do more. Last year, I introduced a bill with my friend, Gerry Connolly of Virginia, we call it the SECURE Our Democracy Act (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/530>) and it would go even farther with sanctions—specifically going

after anyone who played a role in election interference from the year 2016 onward. We should move that bill, or we should find some other way to prevent another scenario like what we saw in 2016.

“And if Republican leaders are not willing to do what it takes to protect our election system, they need to explain why. The clock is ticking, and Russia is coming for us again.

“Thank you.”

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