

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

February 13, 2020

Joseph Maguire
Acting Director
Office of the Director of National Intelligence
Washington, DC 20511

Dear Acting Director Maguire:

We write to request information regarding the establishment of the Foreign Malign Influence Response Center (hereafter referred to as “the Center”) at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) and to ensure that you have the resources necessary to effectively combat foreign influence campaigns ahead of the upcoming elections.

In the 2019 Worldwide Threat Assessment Report, former Director Coats detailed the threats that influence operations from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea pose for the United States’ economic, military, and political activities.¹ The Report notes that we should expect adversaries to interfere in the 2020 elections using online influence campaigns to “...try to weaken democratic institutions, undermine U.S. alliances and partnerships, and shape policy outcomes in the United States and elsewhere.”

Currently, multiple federal agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, the National Security Agency, and U.S. Cyber Command are operating distinct task forces charged with combatting foreign influence operations. While it is promising to see agencies working to address the threat, we are concerned that there is a lack of coordination between these task forces that creates a vulnerability in our ability to effectively fight foreign disinformation campaigns. This concern led us to support the inclusion of a provision in the FY20 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that requires the ODNI to establish the Foreign Malign Influence Response Center.

The mission of the Center is to serve as the primary organization for analyzing and integrating all intelligence on foreign influence operations from Russia, China, Iran, North Korea and any other designated foreign country, and to support efforts by departments and agencies working to combat foreign influence operations. While these adversaries pose a direct threat to our elections, they also work to undermine our critical infrastructure, economy, and military. Accordingly, the mission of the Center is to coordinate a comprehensive response to all foreign influence campaigns. In order to effectively fight disinformation, we must ensure that that our departments and agencies are effectively sharing information and working together.

¹ Coats, Daniel R. “Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community.” *United States Office of the Director of National Intelligence*, 29 Jan. 2019, <http://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/2019-ATA-SFR--SSCI.pdf>.

As you work to establish the Center, we respectfully request answers to the following questions by March 6, 2020:

1. What progress has been made to identify and appoint a Director of the Center?
2. How will the Center fit into the overall organizational structure of the ODNI?
3. How will the Center work with the Intelligence Community's Election Threats Executive?
4. The Center is to have access to all intelligence possessed or acquired by the United States Government pertaining to foreign malign influence, including intelligence that is often not disseminated widely. Has the Acting DNI identified or established the appropriate channels for the provision of such information?
5. The Center is to be comprised of analysts from all elements of the intelligence community and include officers with diplomatic and law enforcement functions. Has the ODNI identified appropriate and qualified persons to staff the Center? If not, what progress has been made to fill these positions?
6. Will the Center be subject to the same oversight as the ODNI Oversight offices carry out for its Mission Centers?
7. How can Congress assist the Center's implementation of strategic priorities leading up to the 2020 elections?

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator