

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 9, 2024

The Honorable Jim Jordan  
Chairman  
House Committee on the Judiciary  
2138 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Jordan:

I am writing this letter regarding the Department of Justice's recent announcement that it has indicted Russian actors attempting to interfere in the United States Presidential elections. I urge you to immediately launch a committee investigation and hold a hearing on these serious allegations. With less than 60 days left until the election, it is critical that we ensure the Department of Justice and other agencies have the support and resources they need to combat foreign malign actors who seek to interfere in our democratic process.

On September 4, 2024, the Department of Justice announced that it had seized 32 internet domains being used by Russia to covertly influence our elections.<sup>1</sup> As Attorney General Garland explained, "President Vladimir Putin's inner circle, including Sergei Kiriyenko, directed Russian public relations companies to promote disinformation and state-sponsored narratives as part of a campaign to influence the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election."<sup>2</sup> The seized sites were chock full of Russian propaganda intended to reduce support for Ukraine, promote Russian interests, and influence American voters.<sup>3</sup> Separately, the Department announced charges against Russian nationals Kostiantyn Kalashnikov and Elena Afanasyeva for violations of the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) and conspiracy to commit money laundering.<sup>4</sup> The Department revealed that Russia Today (RT), a well-known Russian state media company, directed nearly \$10 million to a Tennessee-based company to pump Russian propaganda through social media.<sup>5</sup> The U.S. company created 2000 videos (with more than 16 million views on YouTube), many of which were intended to "amplify domestic divisions in the United States."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Press Release, *Justice Department Disrupts Covert Russian Government-Sponsored Foreign Malign Influence Operation Targeting Audiences in the United States and Elsewhere*, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE (Sept. 4, 2024), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-disrupts-covert-russian-government-sponsored-foreign-malign-influence>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Press Release, *Employees of Russian State-Controlled Media Outlet Deployed Nearly \$10 Million to Publish RT-Curated Content, Which Garnered Millions of Views, Through a Tennessee-Based Online Content Creation Company*, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE (Sept. 4, 2024), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/two-rt-employees-indicted-covertly-funding-and-directing-us-company-published-thousands>.

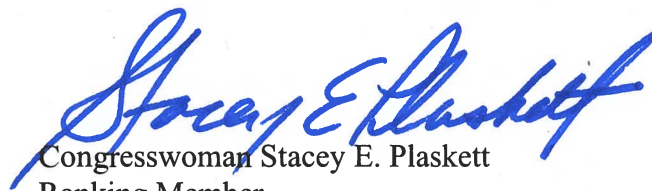
<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

The irony of this week's announcement is not lost on me. For the past nearly two years, you have thrown the full weight of this Committee to investigate benign efforts by the FBI's Foreign Influence Task Force (FITF) to warn social media companies about covert foreign malign influence operations on their platforms. Despite dozens of transcribed interviews of representatives from both the FBI and social media companies, millions of pages of documents, numerous hearings, and countless subpoenas, you have found no evidence to support your theory that the United States Government ever coerced or colluded with companies to suppress free speech in this regard. What you have done, however intentionally, is create an atmosphere of fear. After years of being falsely accused of wrongdoing by this Committee, it would be understandable for federal officials and platform representatives to be reluctant to engage in this critical information sharing. I also fear that foreign actors like Russia are emboldened when they see the division you have sowed over the FBI's most basic efforts to counter these influence operations.

I understand that it may be difficult for you and Committee Republicans to resist looking the other way when it comes to Russian efforts to bolster Donald Trump's candidacy. While this approach may be politically expedient for your party in the short-term, it will lead to severe consequences to the future of our democracy. We should all agree that any foreign interference, regardless of which political party benefits, is reprehensible and cannot be tolerated. I hope that you honor the solemn oath you took to defend the United States Constitution, from *all* enemies, foreign and domestic, and that you will join me showing Russia, Iran, China and all other world countries that we are united in our resolve that Americans, not foreign actors, will determine the next leader of our great country.

Sincerely,



Congresswoman Stacey E. Plaskett  
Ranking Member  
House Judiciary Select Subcommittee on the  
Weaponization of the Federal Government