

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

March 31, 2017

The Honorable Jefferson Sessions
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

Yesterday evening, you indicated in a television interview that the Trump Administration will pursue criminal charges to curb the number of alleged leaks of classified information from within the government.¹ Your comments appear to contradict your earlier statements about the scope of your recusal from any investigation of the Trump campaign, and we write to you for clarification.

Hours after the *Washington Post* reported about two of your previously undisclosed meetings with the Russian ambassador to the United States,² you announced your recusal “from any existing or future investigations of any matters in any way related to the campaigns for President of the United States.”³ You noted further that you have “taken no actions regarding any such matters,” and your recusal “should not be interpreted as confirmation of the existence of any investigation or suggestive of the scope of any such investigation.”⁴

Many of our colleagues expressed initial concerns about the scope of your recusal—and, in particular, how a recusal limited to “the campaigns for President of the United States” would impact matters involving “Russian contacts with the Trump transition team and administration.”⁵

¹ Jesse Byrnes, *Sessions: Convictions likely needed to end government leaks*, THE HILL, Mar. 30, 2017.

² Adam Entous *et al.*, *Sessions met with Russian envoy twice last year, encounters he later did not disclose*, WASH. POST, Mar. 1, 2017.

³ *Attorney General Sessions Statement on Recusal*, U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Public Affairs, Mar. 2, 2017.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Letter from Ranking Member Dianne Feinstein, S. Comm. on the Judiciary, et al., to Chairman Charles E. Grassley, S. Comm. on the Judiciary, Mar. 3, 2017.

In your supplementary testimony to the Senate Judiciary, you assured us that you “understand the scope of the recusal . . . would include any such matters.”⁶

And yet last night, when asked about “the leakers, in the various agencies,” you stated: “This has got to end, and it will probably take some convictions to put an end to it.”⁷

Of course, most of the alleged leaks in question are related to ongoing investigations about contact between President Trump’s advisors and Putin’s Russia.⁸ In many cases, these reports are the only way the public came to learn about these contacts. Accordingly:

- Does your recusal “from any existing or future investigations of any matters in any way related to the campaigns for President of the United States” remain in effect?
- Does that recusal still extend to matters involving “Russian contacts with the Trump transition team and administration?”
- If you are, in fact, recused from matters involving “Russian contacts with the Trump transition team and administration,” is it appropriate for you to be involved in any investigation or decision to prosecute anyone who may have leaked classified information about the Administration’s connections to the Russian government?
- Is it your intention to participate in such matters?
- Is it appropriate for you to comment on such matters in public?

We ask that you answer these questions, and provide us with any other relevant guidance that may clarify the scope of your recusal, no later than April 7, 2017.

Sincerely,

⁶ Letter from U.S. Attorney General Jefferson Sessions to Sen. Charles Grassley, Chairman, S. Comm. on the Judiciary, and Sen. Dianne Feinstein, Ranking Member, S. Comm. on the Judiciary, Mar. 6, 2017.

⁷ *The O’Reilly Factor: Jeff Sessions enters the “No Spin Zone,”* FOX NEWS (broadcast Mar. 30, 2017).

⁸ See, e.g., Michael Isikoff, *U.S. intel officials probe ties between Trump advisor and Kremlin*, YAHOO! NEWS, Sept. 24, 2016; Ken Dilanian et al., *FBI Making Inquiry into Ex-Trump Campaign Manager’s Foreign Ties*, NBC NEWS, Nov. 1, 2016; Michael S. Schmidt, *Intercepted Russian Communications Part of Inquiry into Trump Associates*, N.Y. TIMES, Jan. 29, 2017; Greg Miller et al., *National security adviser Flynn discussed sanctions with Russian ambassador, despite denials, officials say*, WASH. POST, Feb. 9, 2017.

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