

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

2138 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6216

(202) 225-6906
judiciary.house.gov

April 22, 2025

The Honorable Kashyap Patel
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20535

Dear Director Patel:

Recent reporting reveals that Ed Martin, whom the President has nominated to be U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, failed to disclose more than 150 appearances over an eight-year period on Russian state-controlled propaganda and disinformation outlets in his Senate Judiciary Committee questionnaire. In light of these alarming revelations, I write to request that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) investigate whether Mr. Martin's omissions were inadvertent or part of a deliberate attempt to conceal his extensive ties to Russian media and intelligence operations.

According to *The Washington Post*, Mr. Martin appeared on RT (formerly "Russia Today") and Sputnik—networks funded and directed by the Russian government under Vladimir Putin—as a guest commentator more than 150 times between August 2016 to April 2024.¹ Moreover, Mr. Martin initially failed to disclose these appearances on his Senate Judiciary Committee nomination questionnaire, which specifically requires nominees to list all media interviews.² According to two people familiar with the nomination process, Mr. Martin failed to disclose about 350 events and interviews in a severe and baffling departure from the normal disclosure process.³ Comparatively, "only about three of roughly 80 such nominees from 2021 through 2024 left out published writings and public statements in supplemental committee disclosures, and none missed more than four items."⁴

RT and Sputnik have been "critical elements" in Moscow's propaganda and disinformation efforts, which have been addressed by both Democratic and Republican administrations. Since 2017 and 2018, the Department of Justice (DOJ) "has required RT and Sputnik to register as

¹ Spencer S. Hsu & Aaron Schaffer, *Trump's D.C. U.S. attorney pick appeared on Russian state media over 150 times*, WASH. POST (Apr. 16, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/04/16/ed-martin-rt-sputnik-usattorney/>.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

foreign agents, reflecting Russian government control over their operations,” and as recently as last year, the outlets were sanctioned by the United States, Canada, and Britain for reasons related to their disinformation campaigns which were aimed at undermining confidence in United States election processes and institutions.⁵ Moreover, an investigation conducted by the Republican-controlled Senate Select Committee on Intelligence revealed that RT and Sputnik played a key role in Russia’s efforts to interfere with the 2016. U.S. election.⁶

According to the State Department, Sputnik uses “the guise of conventional international media outlets to provide disinformation and propaganda support for the Kremlin’s foreign policy objectives.”⁷ Similarly, State Department officials publicly acknowledged that RT has become “a fully-fledged member” of the Russian government’s intelligence apparatus and is engaged in information-gathering, covert influence, and military procurement operations targeting the United States and other countries throughout the world.⁸ For example, RT has repeatedly used social media platforms to conduct covert foreign influence operations targeting the United States that were specifically designed to influence U.S. political discourse. Last summer, DOJ announced it has disrupted an “AI-enhanced social media bot farm” run by the outlet, which used artificial intelligence (AI) to create fictitious social media profiles—often purporting to belong to individuals in the United States—to spread disinformation and promote Russian government messaging.⁹ Moreover, on September 4, 2024, DOJ announced the indictment of two RT employees, Kostiantyn Kalashnikov and Elena Afanasyeva, on charges of conspiracy to violate the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) and conspiracy to commit money laundering.¹⁰ Specifically, the indictment alleges that RT and its employees funneled nearly \$10 million to Tenet Media, a Tennessee-based company that worked with conservative influencers to create and spread pro-Kremlin propaganda on social media platforms.¹¹

⁵ *Id.*; see Press Release, U.S. Dep’t of the Treasury, *Treasury Takes Action as Part of a U.S. Government Response to Russia’s Foreign Malign Influence Operations* (Sept. 4, 2024), <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2559>.

⁶ *Russian Active Measures Campaign and Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election, Volume V: Counterintelligence Threats and Vulnerabilities*, S. Rep. No. 116-290, at 202-204 (2020); see Mark Mazzetti, *G.O.P.-Led Senate Panel Details Ties Between 2016 Trump Campaign and Russia*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 18, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/18/us/politics/senate-intelligence-russian-interference-report.html>.

⁷ *GEC Special Report, Kremlin Funded Media: RT and Sputnik’s Role in Russian’s Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem*, U.S. DEP’T OF STATE (Jan. 2022), https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Kremlin-Funded-Media_January_update-19.pdf; see Letter from Hon. Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight and Accountability, to Hon. James Comer, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight and Accountability (Apr. 5, 2024), <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/oversightdemocrats.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/2024-04-05.Raskin%20to%20Comer%20re%20CIA%20Whistleblower.pdf>.

⁸ *U.S. Hits Russian State Media with New Sanctions*, NPR (Sept. 14, 2024), <https://www.npr.org/2024/09/14/g-s1-23036/us-russian-state-media-sanctions>.

⁹ Press Release, U.S. Dep’t of Justice, *Justice Department Leads Efforts Among Federal, International, and Private Sector Partners to Disrupt Covert Russian Government-Operated Social Media Bot Farm* (Jul. 9, 2024), <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/justice-department-leads-efforts-among-federal-international-and-private-sector-partners>.

¹⁰ Press Release, U.S. Dep’t of Justice, *Two RT Employees Indicted for Covertly Funding and Directing U.S. Company that Published Thousands of Videos in Furtherance of Russian Interests* (Sept. 4, 2024), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/two-rt-employees-indicted-covertly-funding-and-directing-us-company-published-thousands>.

¹¹ *DOJ alleges Russia funded US media company linked to right-wing social media stars*, CNN (Sept. 5, 2024), <https://www.cnn.com/2024/09/04/politics/doj-alleges-russia-funded-company-linked-social-media-stars/index.html>.

During the same period that Mr. Martin was appearing on Russian media outlets, he appears to have promoted Russian interests. For example, just 16 days after Russia invaded Ukraine, Mr. Martin suggested Vladimir Putin might be a “hero.”¹² Moreover, Mr. Martin has repeatedly denigrated the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), questioning whether NATO countries have ever supported the United States.¹³ Sputnik and RT appeared to capitalize on these sentiments and reportedly “relied on Martin to explain America in terms that seemed to match the perspective of the Kremlin, mostly to its international audiences.”¹⁴

The Congress of the United States and the American people deserve a full picture of Mr. Martin, his relationships to Russia, and his political loyalties. We have observed in shock as Mr. Martin has used his interim role as U.S. Attorney to threaten enemies of Elon Musk and pledge allegiance to the corrupt billionaire, publicly attack and threaten Democratic lawmakers for engaging in protected speech critical of the Trump Administration, categorically fire dedicated career civil servants for having prosecuted violent January 6th crimes, and refuse to recuse himself from clear conflicts of interest.

These new revelations regarding Mr. Martin’s failure to report more than 150 appearances on Russia state-controlled disinformation and propaganda outlets raise significant national security concerns given the significant role of the U.S Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia in prosecuting many of the country’s most serious national security and espionage cases. I therefore urge you to conduct an expeditious and thorough inquiry and to share your findings with the relevant committees of the United States Congress.

Sincerely,


Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Jim Jordan, Chairman

The Honorable Michael E. Horowitz, Inspector General
U.S. Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General

¹² Spencer S. Hsu & Aaron Schaffer, *Trump’s D.C. U.S. attorney pick appeared on Russian state media over 150 times*, WASH. POST (Apr. 16, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/04/16/ed-martin-rt-sputnik-usattorney/>.

¹³ See @EagleEdMartin, X (Feb. 16, 2024), <https://x.com/EagleEdMartin/status/1758600264888557740>;
@EagleEdMartin, X (Feb. 17, 2024), <https://x.com/EagleEdMartin/status/1758865959048142881>;
@EagleEdMartin, X (Mar. 4, 2024), <https://x.com/EagleEdMartin/status/1764693666940031190>

¹⁴ *Id.*