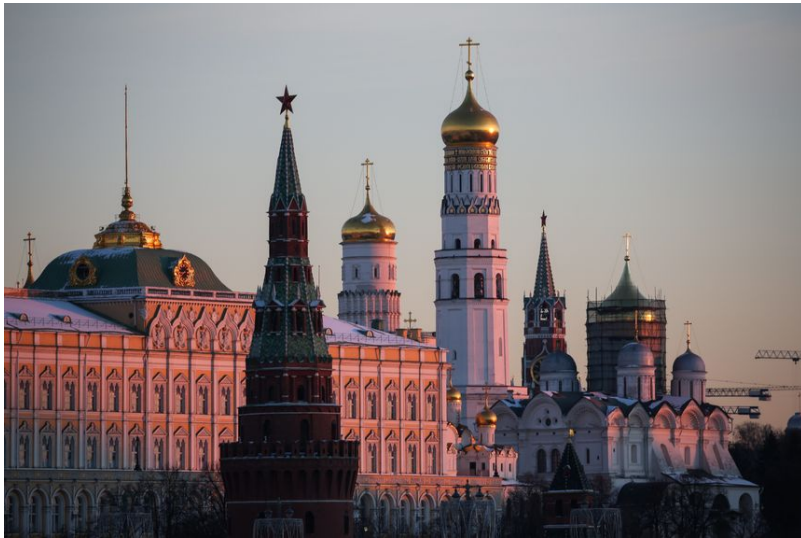


POLITICS

# ‘Putin Has Won’: Mueller Report Details the Ways Russia Interfered in the 2016 Election

The report reinforces the conclusion of intelligence agencies, offers unprecedented detail of the Russian government’s activities



The Mueller report will likely serve as the definitive document about Russia’s use of an array of digital weapons to influence the American electorate in 2016. Above, the Moscow Kremlin. PHOTO: MARINA LYSTSEVA/ZUMA PRESS

*By Dustin Volz and Alan Cullison*

April 19, 2019 5:30 am ET

WASHINGTON—Robert Mueller’s long-awaited report is unambiguously clear on this point: Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential election and sought to help Donald Trump win the White House.

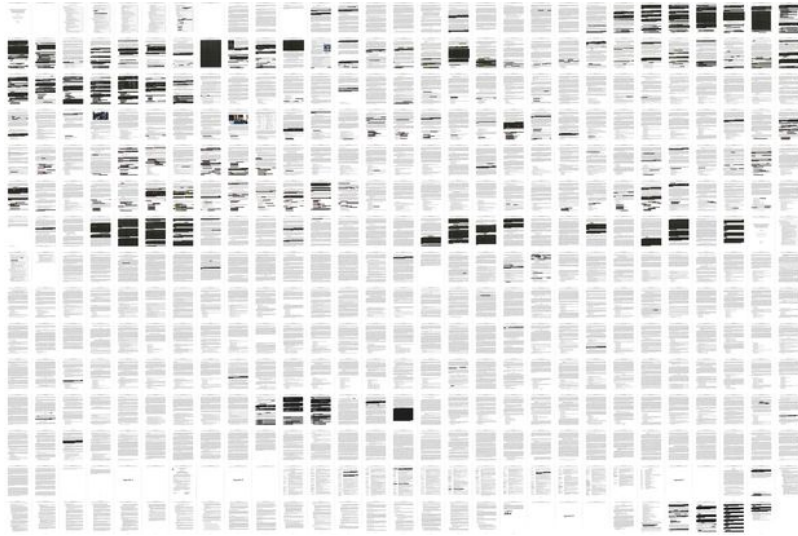
That has been the unanimous view of the intelligence community for nearly 2½ years. But it is laid out in unprecedented detail across nearly 200 pages of the special counsel’s report, which also describes Russian efforts to forge ties with members of Trump’s campaign to further the Kremlin’s interference goals.

The report from Mr. Mueller will likely serve as the definitive document about Russia’s use of an array of digital weapons to influence the American electorate in 2016. It will also bolster warnings from senior U.S. intelligence officials that Russia and other hostile foreign powers remain intent on disrupting future elections, including the 2020 presidential contest.

Mr. Mueller asserted on the very first page of the report that the Russian government “interfered in the 2016 presidential election in sweeping and systematic fashion.”

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### The Mueller Report, Redacted



Read the redacted Mueller report DYLAN MORIARTY/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

The report describes how the Russian troll farm known as the Internet Research Agency engaged in interference dating back to 2014, as Russia’s relations with the U.S. took an abrupt turn for the worse after Russia’s seizure of Crimea. In June of that year, the report said, four IRA employees traveled to the U.S. on an intelligence-gathering mission, assisting what would metastasize over the following two years into a

relentless psychological war on voters.

IRA employees took to social media from Moscow pretending to be Americans, creating bogus accounts on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter that reached tens of millions of people and garnered hundreds of thousands of followers, the report said. In one instance, Russians used social media to recruit an American to walk through New York wearing a Santa Claus suit and a Donald Trump mask, the report says.

“Hopefully, what this report does is put to bed any lingering questions about what Russian intent or activities were during the 2016 presidential election,” said April Doss, who served as senior counsel for the Senate Intelligence Committee’s own Russia investigation until last year. “This is a level of detail we have never seen before.”

Russia has denied interfering in the election.

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The report explains how Russia’s yearslong hacking and social-media operations coincided with a series of contacts between the Kremlin and Trump campaign officials and associates, including Donald Trump Jr., the president’s son. Those interactions included discussions about possible business deals, policy goals and getting dirt on Hillary Clinton. The latter transpired during a well-known meeting in Trump Tower in New York. Investigators didn’t establish that a conspiracy existed between the two sides to work together to interfere in the election.

The Russians also succeeded in getting a number of officials closely associated with the Trump campaign to promote the Russian government’s messages. Those officials included the younger Mr. Trump; then-digital-media director for the Trump campaign, Brad Parscale ; and prominent members of the media. A lawyer for Mr. Trump Jr. declined to comment on sharing disinformation from Russia, but said there was nothing wrong with his client’s decision to listen to a Russian offer of potentially damaging information on Mrs. Clinton. Mr. Parscale declined to comment on Thursday. Previously, he has said that he retweeted a tweet of Russian origin in his timeline that others in the campaign had retweeted and that Twitter doesn’t advise users of the country of origin for tweets.

In his Thursday press conference, Mr. Barr was emphatic that the report found that no American, including anyone associated with the Trump campaign, knowingly conspired or coordinated with the Russian government to hack Democratic Party emails or peddle disinformation on social-media networks.

Mr. Barr addressed as a separate issue the special counsel’s investigation of whether anyone associated with the Trump campaign helped disseminate or encouraged the release of documents related to the Democratic Party that were stolen by Russian hackers. Mr. Barr didn’t say that no American engaged in such activity, but rather that “publication of these types of materials would not be criminal unless the publisher also participated in the underlying hacking conspiracy.”

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## THE MUELLER REPORT

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- Report Dismisses Many Steele Dossier Claims
- Voters Have Other Concerns
- • Key Excerpts, Explained
- • The Hidden Parts of the Report

Large portions of the report’s section on Russian interference were redacted due to concerns that details would reveal sources or methods of the U.S. investigation, or do damage to an ongoing probe. About two dozen Russian officers were indicted last year as a result of Mr. Mueller’s investigation, but they all remain at large.

Certain sections about Russian interference are so heavily redacted they are nearly unreadable, including one labeled “Structure of the Internet Research Agency” and more

than a full page describing Russia’s operations involving political rallies. Both are scrubbed due

to concerns about harming an ongoing investigation, while substantial information about Russia's hacking of Democratic Party emails is blacked out to protect investigative techniques.

Despite the redactions, new details are scattered throughout the report. Former national security adviser Mike Flynn embarked on an effort to find Mrs. Clinton's deleted emails at Mr. Trump's direction in the summer of 2016, enlisting the help of a Senate staffer and a longtime GOP donor, according to the report.

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Mr. Trump “asked individuals affiliated with his campaign to find the deleted Clinton emails,” the report said. Mr. Flynn “recalled that Trump made this request repeatedly, and Flynn subsequently contacted multiple people in an effort to obtain the emails.” A lawyer for Mr. Flynn didn’t respond to a

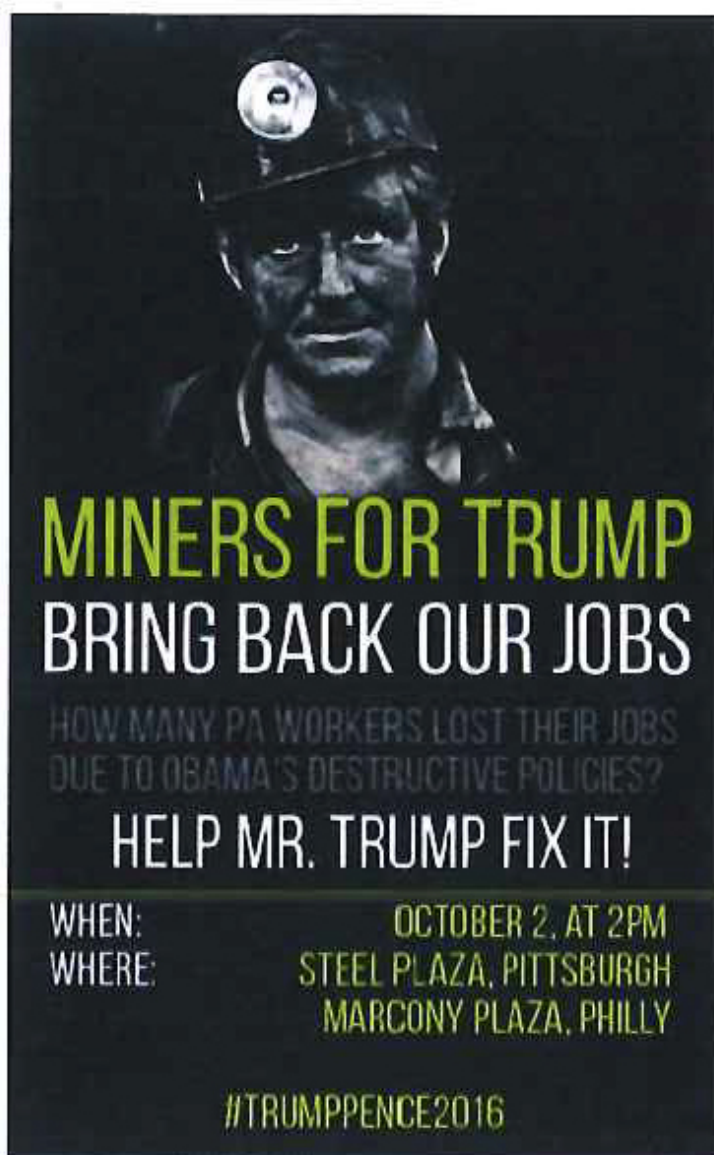
request for comment. The emails haven’t surfaced.

The report doesn’t answer all Russia-related questions. Konstantin Kilimnik, a Ukrainian-born aide to Trump’s campaign manager Paul Manafort, remains a riddle.

Investigators have long sought to learn whether Mr. Kilimnik, who the Federal Bureau of Investigation says has ties to Russian intelligence, was a conduit between the Kremlin and the Trump campaign. Mr. Kilimnik denies ever serving as a conduit or having ties to Russian intelligence. The report didn’t say definitively that Mr. Kilimnik ever worked for Russian intelligence, but noted that several facts supported the notion.

During the campaign, Mr. Manafort told investigators that he purveyed polling data to Mr. Kilimnik, with the expectation that he would then give it to people in Ukraine and to a former client in Russia, oligarch Oleg Deripaska. The report also says that Rick Gates, who served as Mr. Manafort’s deputy on the Trump campaign, told investigators he relayed to Mr. Manafort his belief that Mr. Kilimnik was a Russian spy.

Investigators weren’t sure whether to believe Mr. Manafort. “Because of questions about Manafort’s credibility and our limited ability to gather evidence on what happened to the polling data after it was sent to Kilimnik, the Office could not assess what Kilimnik (or others he may have given it to) did with it,” the report said.



*IRA Poster for Pennsylvania Rallies organized by the IRA*

The report also reveals some of the forensic challenges encountered by investigators, and suggests that some questions about the Russian operation and WikiLeaks' exact role in releasing Democratic Party emails may never be fully known. It acknowledges that investigators encountered hurdles trying to obtain communications between Russia's military intelligence agency known as the GRU, Russian military hackers behind the pilfering of the emails and WikiLeaks, which received those emails and dumped them online in advance of the 2016 election.

The Kremlin was apparently thrilled with Mr. Trump's victory. Kirill Dmitriev, the chief executive of Russia's sovereign-wealth fund who has close ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin, received a message from an unidentified person on Nov. 9, 2016, as news spread that Mr. Trump had triumphed in an upset. It read, according to the report, "Putin has won."

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Join WSJ journalists on April 19 as they discuss the Mueller report. Register here, and send your questions to [subscribercall@wsj.com](mailto:subscribercall@wsj.com).

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