

Dear Delegates,

It is our pleasure to welcome you all to the twenty-seventh annual UGA Model United Nations Conference, UGAMUNC XXVII. We hope that your experience at this conference will teach you a little bit more about the events surrounding this committee, different tactics of negotiation, or even just a little more about yourselves! In the 2016 Election Interference Crisis Committee at UGAMUNC, you'll be experiencing things a bit differently than your fellow high school delegates.

Before we explain further, we would like to introduce ourselves, as well as our chairs and co-chairs. The crisis director for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (US) is Meredith Van De Velde ([meredithvandevelde@uga.edu](mailto:meredithvandevelde@uga.edu)). Meredith is a fourth-year Computer Science and International Affairs major at UGA. Meredith has been involved in Model UN for eight years, both in high school and college, and currently serves as the Secretary General of the UGA Model United Nations team.

The crisis director for the Internet Research Agency (Russia) side is Miranda Bourdeau ([bourdeau.miranda@gmail.com](mailto:bourdeau.miranda@gmail.com)). Miranda is a fourth-year International Affairs, Political Science, and Economics major at UGA. This is Miranda's fourth year of doing Model UN and her third year on the UGA team. She currently serves as Collegiate Conference Director for the UGA MUN team.

The chair of the United States committee will be Matthew Li ([Matthew.Li@uga.edu](mailto:Matthew.Li@uga.edu)). Matthew is a first-year Biochemistry & Molecular Biology major with a Spanish minor and maybe a masters in Comparative Biomedical Sciences (who knows!). This is his fifth year doing Model UN, and he looks forward to seeing all of you work in committee. The co-chair of the United States committee will be Alice Ware ([alice.ware@uga.edu](mailto:alice.ware@uga.edu)). Alice is a first-year Statistics and Theatre major at UGA. This is her first year on the UGA MUN team and is excited to experience UGAMUNC on the other side of the dias.

The chair of the Russia committee will be Nic Rasool ([chaudhry.rasool@uga.edu](mailto:chaudhry.rasool@uga.edu)). Nic is a second-year Biological Engineering and Philosophy double major with minors in Biology and German. This is his sixth year doing Model UN and second year on the UGA MUN team, and is looking forward to seeing crisis arcs come to fruition. The co-chair of the Russia committee will be Logan King ([logan.king@uga.edu](mailto:logan.king@uga.edu); they/them). Logan is a second-year History and Political Science major at UGA with minors in Geography and Korean. This is their third year doing Model UN and their first year on the UGA MUN team; they are looking forward to fruitful committee sessions!

We know that you'll all do a fantastic job bringing your role to life in conference. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us. From now until UGAMUNC, start delving deeper into your character and building your crisis arc. We can't wait to see you all in action.

Once again, welcome to UGAMUNC XXVII!

Miranda Bourdeau and Meredith Van De Velde  
Co-Crisis Directors, 2016 Election Interference JCC

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# 1 Rules and Procedure

## 1.1 General Rules

While other delegates at UGAMUNC may be placed in traditional General Assembly-style Model United Nations committees, the 2016 Election Interference committee at UGAMUNC will run as a crisis committee. While you should still familiarize yourself with the UGAMUNC Rules and Procedure document to brush up on parliamentary procedure, this committee will vary from the typical format. Please familiarize yourself with the following rules specific to this committee, and once again, if you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us at [meredithvandevelde@uga.edu](mailto:meredithvandevelde@uga.edu) or [bourdeau.miranda@gmail.com](mailto:bourdeau.miranda@gmail.com).

- **This committee is loosely based on election interference in the 2016 US presidential election.** This is the general topic of our crisis committee, and as members of the FBI or IRA, this will be the focus of much of the conversation for the weekend. However, you are more than welcome to focus on related issues of the times or alter the path of history forever.
- **While this is a historical committee, you have the freedom to alter history.** This committee is to be set starting on [date], only a few months before election results are called. While members of this body should consider any events that took place prior to [date] as historical facts in this committee, any events that occurred after that date will not automatically occur even if they are mentioned in the background guide to provide context. Characters in this body have a chance to rewrite fate in the manner they choose, including changing the results of the election or escalating the situation further.
- **Utilize crisis notes to accomplish your goals in committee and craft your crisis arc.** While the main method of negotiation in a typical General Assembly-style committee stems from typical speaking time work in committee, in a crisis committee, much of the work you do will be on your own through crisis notes. These are letters that your character will write to crisis, a body outside of the committee room, to accomplish something without the committee's knowledge. A good crisis note not only explains, in detail, what to do, but it also explains very specifically how to do it. These notes will be addressed to a fictional person that has some relation to your character. "Crisis" (UGAMUNC staff and your crisis director) will answer these notes as if they were this fictional person, responding as that person would under the circumstances from the context you set out. Only address a note to crisis if you have a question about the way committee is going. There are many fantastic resources that better explain crisis notes in detail, but a starting point can be found [here](#))
- **Because this is a crisis-style committee, write directives, not resolutions.** Although they are very similar, directives are the typical formal paper written in a crisis committee, not resolutions. Directives are less formal, are normally titled, and are generally more straightforward. They are intended to utilize the powers present in the committee to quickly address the crisis at hand or any related issues.
- **Represent your understanding of your character.** This is a modern crisis committee, meaning that much of the context surrounding this committee has been heavily researched and reported upon. Use this to your advantage; do some research! Each character is unique, and therefore has unique goals and relationships among members of the committee. That said, be sure to represent your character's beliefs and not simply your own. While you may not be prepared for the updates which crisis will present to you, you can at least understand the character you have been assigned and react to crisis in the way they would.
- **This committee is English only.** Even if you can speak Russian, there will be no advantage given to any delegate who chooses to write crisis notes or give speeches in Russian. While we certainly respect cultural accuracy, we don't want to exclude other delegates in committee who may not speak Russian (including your chairs, co-chairs, and crisis directors).
- **Position papers will be due February 1, 2021.** Your position paper should explain what approach your character will take regarding personal actions, how you plan to interact with other delegates, and

how you will respond to the main issues in the committee. Qualifying position papers for this committee will be one page and 1.5 spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, as well as a standard and consistent citation format of your choosing (i.e. MLA, Chicago, etc.). Please submit these position papers directly to either Meredith ([meredithvandelde@uga.edu](mailto:meredithvandelde@uga.edu)) or Miranda ([bourdeau.miranda@gmail.com](mailto:bourdeau.miranda@gmail.com)) depending on your committee. We have attached some resources below to help you get started. Happy writing!

## 1.2 Position Paper Resources

- Best Delegate: <https://bestdelegate.com/how-to-write-a-winning-position-paper/>
- NMUN: <https://www.nmun.org/assets/documents/NMUNPPGuide.pdf>
- AMUN example papers: <https://www.amun.org/sample-paper-1/>

## 2 Expectations of a Joint Crisis Committee (JCC)

While joint crisis committees, more commonly referred to as JCCs, are common on the collegiate conference circuit, they are rare among high school conferences. This year, UGA Model UN is seeking to change that with this 2016 election interference committee, the first joint crisis committee that UGAMUNC has ever run.

As the name implies, JCCs are crisis committees, meaning that they follow typical crisis procedure. Therefore, an understanding of crisis committee procedure and crisis arcs will be helpful. For more information on the parliamentary procedure expected in a crisis committee at UGAMUNC, please refer to the delegate handbook found at <https://www.ugamunc.com>.

Like typical crisis committees, each committee within a JCC has its own Chair, Co-Chair, Crisis Director, and Crisis Staffers. JCCs function in more than one physical committee room. In our case, the JCC will be operating across two rooms - the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Internet Research Agency (IRA). However, every committee in a JCC is interconnected, both thematically and practically. Joined by a central issue, the committees in a JCC interact with one another: delegates in each JCC committee can interact with the delegates in other committees.

Both sides of this committee will be heavily involved in the issue of 2016 election interference, but they will be operating on opposite sides of the issue. JCCs are themed around wars (cold or regular) and have a high likelihood of war games happening. The “back room,” commonly known as “crisis,” will be the same room and group of writers for both committees. This allows the actions in one committee to quickly affect the other. It also allows for communication across rooms, either directly from one delegate to another, or indirectly through crisis.

The format of this committee may lead you to believe that the most important aspect is your “behind-the-scenes” work as a character through crisis. However, the best delegates in a crisis committee find the balance between writing directives and crisis notes that further your character’s short and long-term goals in committee.

## 3 Disclaimer on the topic of this Committee

This committee is not only unique due to its format as a JCC, but also because of its modern setting. The events to be discussed in this committee happened only a couple of years ago, and as such, we understand that delegates may have personal opinions on the context surrounding the committee. We ask that all delegates put aside their own personal political ideology for the duration of this committee to fully participate as your assigned characters.

Additionally, we would like to underscore that any events that are discussed in this background guide are real. Any instances of election interference have been found as fact from reputable sources, all of which are referenced in this document.<sup>1</sup>

As always, please be respectful of other delegates, the Chair and Co-Chair of the committee, and the Crisis Staffers.

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<sup>1</sup>Mueller, Robert S., et al. *Report on the Investigation into Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election: Submitted Pursuant to 28 C.F.R. §600.8(c)*. U.S. Department of Justice, 2019.

## 4 Background of Committee - both sides

### 4.1 Summary of Russian Interference

In July 2016, the FBI opened an investigation into the Russian government's attempt to influence the 2016 presidential election, including any possible connections between the Trump campaign and Russian operatives. The campaign from the Russians was dual-pronged: Russia directly attacked members of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) as well as passively spreading information on social media.

As early as December 2015, The Internet Research Agency (IRA), a Russian online propaganda operation, conducted a social media campaign "to advocate for President-elect Trump as early as December 2015," according to a US intelligence community report.<sup>2</sup> In April 2016, the IRA began to officially produce, purchase, and post advertisements on U.S. social media and other online sites expressly advocating for the election of then-candidate Trump or expressly opposing Clinton. By June, the IRA, began to organize political rallies, including pro-Trump or anti-Clinton rallies throughout the United States, including in Florida, Pennsylvania, and New York.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, throughout Fall 2016, IRA-managed social media accounts, including Instagram account "Blacktivist," posted messages as part of a larger campaign to suppress the minority vote in the 2016 US presidential election. This included encouraging minority groups to vote for third party candidates such as Green Party candidate Jill Stein.<sup>4</sup>

Simultaneously, President Putin sanctioned an influence campaign during 2016 aimed at the US presidential election. Russian intelligence services gained access to the computer network of Democratic Party officials and released the hacked material to WikiLeaks and others "to help President-elect Trump's election chances," according to the aforementioned IC report.

### 4.2 Digital Election Interference as a Strategy

Although Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential election is by far the most public instance of election interference, it is not the first. Election interference can be conducted through dissemination of disinformation, as was done for Russia in 2016, but it can also involve directly compromising election infrastructure, such as directly hacking election machines or setting up fake absentee ballot dropboxes. Two examples of elections prior to the 2016 US presidential election that experienced interference through social media disinformation campaigns are the 2012 Mexican presidential election and Russian interference in Ukrainian elections from 2004 through the present.

The 2012 Mexican presidential election was heavily influenced by mass Twitter campaigns by the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI, to trend hashtags in favor of their candidate's campaigns.<sup>5</sup> The PRI used tens of thousands of bots, or user accounts programmed to tweet automatically.<sup>6</sup> In some cases, they even paid real people to simultaneously tweet the same message.<sup>7</sup> Although the PRI used the most effective strategy in the 2012 election, allowing their candidate, Enrique Peña Nieto to win 38% of the vote, all three dominant political parties in Mexico have used bots in various elections at the national and state level.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections. Office of the Director of National Intelligence, National Intelligence Council, 2017.

<sup>3</sup>Kiely, Eugene. "Timeline of Russia Investigation." *FactCheck.org*, 27 Apr. 2020, [www.factcheck.org/2017/06/timeline-russia-investigation/](http://www.factcheck.org/2017/06/timeline-russia-investigation/).

<sup>4</sup>Windrem, Robert. "Russians Launched pro-Jill Stein Social Media Blitz to Help Trump Win Election, Reports Say." *NBCNews.com*, NBCUniversal News Group, 22 Dec. 2018, [www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/russians-launched-pro-jill-stein-social-media-blitz-help-trump-n951166](http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/russians-launched-pro-jill-stein-social-media-blitz-help-trump-n951166).

<sup>5</sup>Vega, Ana Francisca. "Spambots Driving Mexican Twitter Users Crazy Ahead of Presidential Election." *Slate Magazine*, Slate, 22 June 2012, [slate.com/technology/2012/06/spambots-on-twitter-for-mexican-presidential-candidates-like-the-pri-enrique-pena-nieto.html](http://slate.com/technology/2012/06/spambots-on-twitter-for-mexican-presidential-candidates-like-the-pri-enrique-pena-nieto.html).

<sup>6</sup>Orcutt, Mike. "Twitter Mischief Plagues Mexico's Election." *MIT Technology Review*, MIT Technology Review, 2 Apr. 2020, [www.technologyreview.com/2012/06/21/185262/twitter-mischief-plagues-mexicos-election/](http://www.technologyreview.com/2012/06/21/185262/twitter-mischief-plagues-mexicos-election/).

<sup>7</sup>"Twittergate: Is Mexico's PRI Paying for Tweets?" *UnivisionNews1*, 2012, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGRXxt3L4A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGRXxt3L4A).

<sup>8</sup>Orcutt, Mike. "Twitter Mischief Plagues Mexico's Election." *MIT Technology Review*, MIT Technology Review, 2 Apr. 2020, [www.technologyreview.com/2012/06/21/185262/twitter-mischief-plagues-mexicos-election/](http://www.technologyreview.com/2012/06/21/185262/twitter-mischief-plagues-mexicos-election/).

Russia utilized sophisticated cyber techniques in an election in Ukraine as early as 2014. In the 2014 election, however, Russian hackers infiltrated Ukraine's central election commission to spread a virus that would have changed the results of the election in favor of a fringe ultra-nationalist party, Right Sector, had Ukrainian cybersecurity experts not detected the malware less than an hour before the election results were announced.<sup>9</sup> In addition to their direct cyberattack, Russian state media still reported the fake results, showing the ultra-nationalists winning, and attempted to spread that information on social media.<sup>10</sup> Many experts consider these Russian disinformation campaigns as precursors to the country's actions in American elections in 2016 and recommend decisive action to stop any similar actions in 2020.<sup>11</sup>

### 4.3 International Law in Election Interference

There are several methods of digital election interference. Perhaps most obvious is actual interference in the election process. In some countries, electronic voting and vote tabulation systems are over a decade old, maybe even no longer manufactured.<sup>12</sup> This means it is nearly impossible to conduct maintenance tests on the machines, which introduces the possibility of inaccuracy when tabulating votes. In addition, these systems are not updated with the latest digital security protections, so they are more susceptible to interference in the election process. They can very easily be hacked and see votes not counted or even changed to sway the results of an election. As hacking capabilities have advanced, older voting machines become more vulnerable to attack.



Less obvious but more prevalent lately is running disinformation campaigns through social media platforms. Some foreign state-run media sources infuse the political agenda of their home country when reporting in the United States. In fact, Moscow's multimedia "propaganda machine" has heavily pushed the virtues of Trump and sowed disinformation on the corruption of American democracy.<sup>13</sup> Social media has also been a source of disinformation campaigns for digital election interference. Facebook and Twitter especially have recently faced increased scrutiny for their protocols running political ads and removing false information regarding politics. It is relatively simple for foreign operatives to either purchase ad spaces or create thousands of fake accounts that promote the spread of disinformation supporting a certain political agenda.<sup>14</sup>

With so many people on social media in this day and age, disinformation campaigns can be extremely successful by reaching a large audience in a short amount of time. Considering foreign agents are able to amplify already-existing divisions in American politics through disinformation campaigns, it is up to this committee to decide how to best handle foreign infiltration of our election process in order to uphold the values of democracy.

<sup>9</sup>SHULMAN, STEPHEN, and STEPHEN BLOOM. "The Legitimacy of Foreign Intervention in Elections: the Ukrainian Response." *Review of International Studies*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2012, pp. 445–471., [www.jstor.org/stable/41485557](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41485557). Accessed 29 Oct. 2020.

<sup>10</sup>"THE FUTURE OF POLITICAL WARFARE: RUSSIA, THE WEST, AND THE COMING AGE OF GLOBAL DIGITAL COMPETITION." *Brookings Institution*, Mar. 2018, [www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/fp-20180316\\_future\\_political\\_warfare.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/fp-20180316_future_political_warfare.pdf).

<sup>11</sup>Tennis, Maggie. "Russia Ramps up Global Elections Interference: Lessons for the United States." *Russia Ramps up Global Elections Interference: Lessons for the United States | Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 20 Oct. 2020, [www.csis.org/blogs/technology-policy-blog/russia-ramps-global-elections-interference-lessons-united-states](http://www.csis.org/blogs/technology-policy-blog/russia-ramps-global-elections-interference-lessons-united-states).

<sup>12</sup>Norden, Lawrence, et al. "Election Security." *Brennan Center for Justice*, 29 June 2017, [www.brennancenter.org/issues/defend-our-elections/election-security](http://www.brennancenter.org/issues/defend-our-elections/election-security).

<sup>13</sup>Friedman, Uri. "Russia's Election Meddling Is Part of a Bigger Story." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 24 July 2017, [www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/07/legal-ways-interfere-election/534057/](http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/07/legal-ways-interfere-election/534057/).

<sup>14</sup>Parks, Miles. "5 Ways Election Interference Could (And Probably Will) Worsen In 2018 And Beyond." *NPR*, NPR, 27 Jan. 2018, [www.npr.org/2018/01/27/579683042/5-ways-election-interference-could-and-probably-will-worsen-in-2018-and-beyond](http://www.npr.org/2018/01/27/579683042/5-ways-election-interference-could-and-probably-will-worsen-in-2018-and-beyond).

The question is, however, is either method of digital election interference considered illegal in terms of international law? Its answer is not straightforward. International law prohibits countries from “coercively interfering in each other’s domestic affairs, whether social, political, or economical.”<sup>15</sup> However, digital election interference may not be considered coercive. After all, no one is being forced to do anything or threatened to vote in a certain way. In this manner, hacking voting machines or spreading disinformation on social media, although considered interfering in a country’s domestic affairs, would not be considered violating international law.

It is also possible to consider hacking voting machines an act of espionage. Spying has traditionally been understood as a violation of domestic, but not international, law.<sup>16</sup> However, some people consider election interference to be a violation of national sovereignty.<sup>17</sup> Proponents of this perspective argue that a country loses its right to govern itself without forcible interference from outside bodies when its elections are tampered with. It is believed that by not being able to accurately choose one’s leaders, one’s ability to self-govern is rendered moot. This understanding of election interference would suggest that it is considered illegal in terms of national law.

Overall, many of the previous norms in domestic and international law are not well suited for the relatively new phenomenon of digital election interference. For that reason, it is difficult to truly pin down whether election interference in any form would be considered a violation of international law.

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<sup>15</sup> “TU Law Professor Explores the Role of U.S. and International Law to Mitigate Foreign Interference in Elections -.” *College of Law*, 29 Apr. 2020, [law.utulsa.edu/cybersecurity-election-interference-kilovaty/](http://law.utulsa.edu/cybersecurity-election-interference-kilovaty/).

<sup>16</sup> Ohlin, Jens David. Cornell Law Faculty Publications, 2017, pp. 1580–1582, *Did Russian Cyber Interference in the 2016 Election Violate International Law?*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*



## 5 Background of Committee - Russia

### 5.1 Internet Research Agency

The Russian Internet Research Agency (IRA) is an entity both widely known and shrouded in mystery. Since 2013, the IRA has been used by the Russian government in order to attack political enemies, both at home and abroad<sup>18</sup>. The IRA is commonly known as a “troll farm.” Its mission is to sow disinformation into social networks by creating a significant number of fake accounts. The IRA has been known to create fake crises that have affected Americans such as Columbian Chemicals hoax and even some targeted fake news in the city of Atlanta during the ebola crisis<sup>19</sup>. The IRA is able to do this by hiring hundreds of people to sit and create fake accounts, fake comments, and fake stories. Employees at the IRA needed to hit certain post goals, including a number of political and non-political posts as well as hundreds of comments on their colleagues’ posts.<sup>20</sup> This organization essentially created a network of fake social media profiles and added legitimacy to them by having lots of posts and lots of comments.

The IRA is heavily connected to the Russian government. Its founder, Evgeny Prigozhi, is a highly connected oligarch with many ties to the Kremlin<sup>21</sup>. This has led to the IRA defending both Vladimir Putin and actions taken by the Russian government. The original boom in pro-Kremlin comes in 2011 after anti-government protests were mainly organized on social media platforms<sup>22</sup>. While this is still an important part of the IRA, its purpose has now expanded to other parts of the world as well. With the election in America shaping up to be a particularly contentious one, the IRA sees an opportunity to not only influence political thought in the United States, but an opportunity to significantly change the outcome.

### 5.2 Russian Political Atmosphere

The Russian Federation is in a precarious situation in March of 2016. GDP growth has sagged in the years prior, and GDP even shrunk in 2015.<sup>23</sup> The nation’s economy is merely beginning to emerge from a state of economic recession that has lasted for months, yet as crude oil prices continue to dwindle, some argue that optimism for the future is still dim. Crude oil, one of Russia’s major exports, remains at some of its lowest prices in decades.<sup>24</sup> Inflation reached a high of 15.53% in 2015.<sup>25</sup> While investors’ confidence in the Russian economy is beginning to heal and the Russian ruble is starting to recover in value after sharply declining in value as a result of the aforementioned financial crisis, Russia’s economic woes are anything but one-dimensional.

Russia has been engaged in a proxy war with neighboring Ukraine since early 2014. The Russo-Ukrainian war still rages on to this day, as Russian-backed insurgents in the eastern Ukrainian region of the Donbass, which has a large number of ethnic Russians, clash with the Ukrainian government. This is, of course, in addition to the Russian annexation of Crimea, a Ukrainian province that also has a high population of ethnic Russians, in 2014, which drew sharp criticism from western powers and resulted in widespread sanctions

<sup>18</sup>Bail, Christopher A., Brian Guay, Emily Maloney, Aidan Combs, D. Sunshine Hillygus, Friedolin Merhout, Deen Freelon, and Alexander Volfovsky. “Assessing the Russian Internet Research Agency’s Impact on the Political Attitudes and Behaviors of American Twitter Users in Late 2017.” PNAS. National Academy of Sciences, January 7, 2020. <https://www.pnas.org/content/117/1/243>.

<sup>19</sup>Chen, Adrian. “The Agency.” The New York Times. The New York Times, June 2, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/07/magazine/the-agency.html>.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Calamur, Krishnadev. “What Is the Internet Research Agency?” Defense One. The Atlantic, July 28, 2020. <https://www.defenseone.com/threats/2018/02/what-internet-research-agency/146085/>.

<sup>22</sup>Chen, Adrian. “The Agency.” The New York Times. The New York Times, June 2, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/07/magazine/the-agency.html>.

<sup>23</sup>“GDP Growth (Annual %) - Russian Federation.” The World Bank. The World Bank. Accessed October 31, 2020. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2015>.

<sup>24</sup>“WTI Crude Oil Prices - 10 Year Daily Chart.” MacroTrends. Accessed October 31, 2020. <https://www.macrotrends.net/2516/wti-crude-oil-prices-10-year-daily-chart>.

<sup>25</sup>“Russia Inflation Rate 1993-2020.” MacroTrends. Accessed October 31, 2020. <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/RUS/russia/inflation-rate-cpi>.

and the expulsion of Russia from the G8.<sup>26</sup> Russian leaders have opted to largely shrug off their expulsion from the G8; however, the consequences are nonetheless palpable. The western sanctions placed upon Russia have also played a large role in fueling the financial crisis that Russia is only beginning to emerge from. Yet, economic and geopolitical strife is fresh on the minds of many Russian citizens, neighbors, and observers.

In December of 2015, the Turkish government shot down a Russian warplane near the Turkey-Syria border. Turkish officials claimed that the Russian plane entered Turkish airspace; however, Russian officials maintain that they did no such thing.<sup>27</sup> Russian war planes were in this area in the first place as a part of an effort to support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Assad, who took power in 2000 after the death of his father, has been embroiled in a multi-front civil war for years since the uprisings known as the “Arab Spring.”<sup>28</sup> Russian President Vladimir Putin is a staunch supporter of the Assad regime, much to the chagrin of the United States and its allies, who currently back various rebel groups. As was demonstrated by the Turkish takedown of a Russian plane, Syria is a hotbed of potential conflict.

Of course, none of these factors dissuade Mr. Putin. Mr. Putin, who is currently four years into his second bout as President of the Russian Federation, has a firm grip on power and is not afraid to crack down on dissenters. Dissidence certainly exists, but its influence is middling at best as critics operate under the constant looming threat of retribution. Several critics have been mysteriously murdered or poisoned over the past decade, with many observers suspecting their deaths were ordered on Mr. Putin’s behalf.<sup>29</sup> Make no mistake, Mr. Putin is *the* strongman of Russia. He has sought to portray himself as a grizzly, masculine leader of the people, often posing with animals.<sup>30</sup> Yet, behind the closed doors of the Kremlin, Mr. Putin can best be described as Machiavellian, which is in line with his time spent in the Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti, colloquially known as the KGB- the main security apparatus of the former Soviet Union. He is only currently eligible to serve as President due to his push to have the Russian Constitution amended to change the term limits after he was term limited out of running again in 2008.<sup>31</sup> Mr. Putin will go to extreme means in order to accomplish his desired ends, whether that means allegedly poisoning a critic or shoring up support from one of many Russian oligarchs. As he seeks to project Russian geopolitical influence across areas formerly controlled by the Soviet Union and the world at large, only time will tell the tactics that he will employ. The one thing that is certain is that he will have the support of the Russian Federation and its resources at his back.

### 5.3 Possible US Targets

There are several potential avenues of attack at the disposal of Russian agencies. From disinformation campaigns targeting social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit to much more involved hacking and leaking of sensitive information, there are a multitude of potential viable targets in order to interfere with the election.

Facebook is a social networking site that had over 1.5 billion active users at the beginning of 2016.<sup>32</sup> Its American user base largely consists of older individuals many of whom (knowingly or not) are contributing

<sup>26</sup>Acosta, Jim. “U.S., Other Powers Kick Russia out of G8 - CNNPolitics.” CNN. Cable News Network, March 25, 2014. <https://www.cnn.com/2014/03/24/politics/obama-europe-trip/index.html>.

<sup>27</sup>“Turkey’s Downing of Russian Warplane - What We Know.” BBC News. BBC, December 1, 2015. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34912581>.

<sup>28</sup>Rodgers, Lucy, David Gritten, James Offer, and Patrick Asare. “Syria: The Story of the Conflict.” BBC News. BBC, March 11, 2016. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868>.

<sup>29</sup>“Toxic Tea: Multiple Russian Opponents of Vladimir Putin Have Been Struck by Poison.” Chicago Tribune. Chicago Tribune, August 20, 2020. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/nation-world/ct-nw-russian-tea-poisoning-20200820-6gweyb65srgffi7hk4kb6vulne-story.html>.

<sup>30</sup>Rodgers, Lucy, David Gritten, James Offer, and Patrick Asare. “Syria: The Story of the Conflict.” BBC News. BBC, March 11, 2016. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868>.

<sup>31</sup>Harding, Luke. “Russian MPs Vote to Extend Presidential Term.” The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, November 21, 2008. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/nov/21/russia-vladimir-putin>.

<sup>32</sup>Clement, J. “Facebook: Mobile Monthly Active Users 2016.” Statista, October 22, 2018. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/277958/number-of-mobile-active-facebook-users-worldwide/>.

to an ongoing “Fake News” epidemic.<sup>33</sup> Many of these articles have been targeted at the American political establishment and the Clinton family in particular. These claims range from Pope Francis endorsing the candidacy of Donald Trump<sup>34</sup> to the alleged murder of a Democratic National Committee (DNC) staffer before he was to meet with the FBI.<sup>35</sup> While distinct in nature, these claims have one thing in common: they are spreading rapidly despite being patently false, and are consequently generating a great deal of negative media in the process. Russian interests have invested heavily in this front and will purchase thousands of ads by election day, reaching millions of Americans in the process.<sup>36</sup>

Twitter is a much smaller social networking site, populated by about 315 million active users worldwide.<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, it too was able to cultivate its own ecosystem of fake or highly misleading news sources, with a study finding that 25% of Tweets from a sample of 30 million contained “either fake or extremely biased news.”<sup>38</sup> Is this spread the doing of Russian trolls and bots, the doing of well-meaning American patriots, or a mix of both?<sup>39</sup>

Reddit is a social message board site that contains various “subreddits” that individuals can visit according to their interests. Anybody (or any agency) can establish a subreddit. As of 2016, many of these subreddits became avenues for conspiracy theories, fake news, or plain old mudslinging. r/The.Donald in particular is infamous for their unwavering support of Presidential hopeful Donald Trump; this support oftentimes manifested as targeted harassment. Regardless, a wide variety of subreddits, from r/Politics to r/conspiracy, are rife to be plagued with potentially misleading news sources. Like other social media platforms, the potential to generate free media or negative media of either candidate (whether based on fact or fiction) is waiting to be cashed in upon.

Social media isn’t the only potential means of Russian attack. Several American institutions, from political campaigns to polling stations, are all vulnerable to attack. For example, the Democratic National Committee, the governing body of the Democratic Party that is currently chaired by Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), is of great interest to Russian agents. Sowing the seeds of discord within the Democratic Party could be just a few leaked emails away.

The campaigns of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump may not even be safe themselves. Sensitive communications surely exist; the only question is what they concern and how the public could go about learning about them. These could range from mundane affairs to damning indictments, but the latter of which will certainly be under much more strict security than the former. Donald Trump, for example, has famously refused to release his tax returns.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps these could be retrieved with some adept intelligence work on his campaign, or even the Internal Revenue Service itself.

On that note, American agencies are certainly not off the table as potential targets. Only the bold would attempt an outright attack on institutions such as the FBI, IRS, or CIA, which are undoubtedly well-secured.

<sup>33</sup>Lee, Timothy B. “Facebook’s Fake News Problem, Explained.” Vox. Vox, November 16, 2016. <https://www.vox.com/new-money/2016/11/16/13637310/facebook-fake-news-explained>.

<sup>34</sup>LaCapria, Kim. “FALSE: DNC Worker Seth Conrad Rich Gunned Down on the Way to Meet FBI.” Snopes.com, July 14, 2016. <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/seth-conrad-rich/>.

<sup>35</sup>Evon, Dan. “FALSE: Pope Francis Shocks World, Endorses Donald Trump for President.” Snopes. Snopes Media Group, July 10, 2016. <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/pope-francis-donald-trump-endorsement/>.

<sup>36</sup>“Exposing Russia’s Effort to Sow Discord Online: The Internet Research Agency and Advertisements.” U.S. House of Representatives Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. U.S. Congress, n.d. <https://intelligence.house.gov/social-media-content/>.

<sup>37</sup>Clement, J. “Twitter: Monthly Active Users Worldwide.” Statista, August 14, 2019. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/282087/number-of-monthly-active-twitter-users/>.

<sup>38</sup>Bovet, Alexandre, and Hernán A. Makse. “Influence of Fake News in Twitter during the 2016 US Presidential Election.” Nature News. Nature Publishing Group, January 2, 2019. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-018-07761-2>.

<sup>39</sup>“Exposing Russia’s Effort to Sow Discord Online: The Internet Research Agency and Advertisements.” U.S. House of Representatives Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. U.S. Congress, n.d. <https://intelligence.house.gov/social-media-content/>.

<sup>40</sup>Shear, Michael D, Steve Eder, and Patricia Cohen. “Donald Trump’s Taxes: What We Know and Don’t Know.” The New York Times. The New York Times, October 2, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/us/politics/donald-trump-taxes-explained.html>.

Yet, these institutions likely hold the most potentially damning secrets. With this damaging information comes the potential of exposing the entire Russian network of interference.

Only the boldest would seek to actually directly hack the US election itself. Voting machines, while increasingly digital and strictly monitored, are vulnerable to attack.<sup>41</sup> Swathes of votes could be erased or even changed to give either candidate an edge, and this will surely be of great concern to American officials. Tampering with the legitimacy of their election with tactics this involved would be difficult, but the potential to embarrass or even cripple a rival could be a temptation too good to pass up.

Whatever method of interference must be selected carefully. The Agency can choose to primarily focus on disinformation or on hacking, though it is highly believed that a dual approach will have the most effect during the election cycle. The targets and what information is to be released is all determined by the Agency, so if another option not listed above is proven to cause great damage to the American electoral system, then the Agency may take this path. It is all up to the IRA to sow as much disinformation and cause as much chaos as possible while pushing the Kremlin's position. Good luck comrades, it is all up to you.

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<sup>41</sup>Wofford, Ben. "How to Hack an Election in 7 Minutes." POLITICO Magazine, August 5, 2016. <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/08/2016-elections-russia-hack-how-to-hack-an-election-in-seven-minutes-214144>.

## 6 Background of Committee - United States

### 6.1 Intelligence Agencies in the United States

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is just one piece of the larger intelligence apparatus in the United States. In total, there are 17 intelligence agencies. In no particular order, those agencies are:

- The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI),
- The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA),
- The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA),
- The National Security Agency (NSA),
- The National Geospatial- Intelligence Agency (NGA),
- The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO),
- The Military Intelligence Corps (MI),
- The Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI),
- Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA),
- Sixteenth Air Force Intelligence (16AF),
- Coast Guard Intelligence (CGI or CG-2),
- The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A),
- The Department of Energy's Office of Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence (OICI),
- The Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR),
- The Department of the Treasury's Office of Intelligence and Analysis (TFI),
- The Drug Enforcement Agency's Office of National Security Intelligence (ONSI), and
- The Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).<sup>42</sup>

The entire intelligence community had a 2016 budget of \$70.7 billion, and declassified reports on intelligence work are regularly published.<sup>43</sup> In this crisis, delegates will be representing FBI agents, but they may contact individuals across intelligence agencies if needed. Delegates are also free to reference any intelligence information from agencies including not only the FBI, but the larger intelligence community.

The FBI has been the lead agency in regard to election interference because it serves as the principal US intelligence agency responsible for investigating foreign influence operations.<sup>44</sup> Foreign influence operations include the targeting of US officials or citizens through intelligence tradecraft, cyber-attacks against voting infrastructure, computer intrusions targeting elected officials and others, or most critically to this committee, criminal efforts to suppress voting and provide illegal campaign financing. This counterintelligence work has only increased in scope and frequency with increased access to the internet and growing technological advancements. The FBI Director in 2016, during instances, was James B. Comey, whose term lasted from September 4, 2013 through May 9, 2017.<sup>45</sup>

### 6.2 Social Media as a Tool of Election Interference

Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have become powerful tools for altering the outcome of elections. Instances of election interference that utilize social media are especially tricky for cybersecurity experts and election officials. It is difficult to notice a problematic internet trend until it has already influenced users, even more difficult to regulate the vast sea of information on sites like Twitter, and almost impossible to remove a fraudulent account without another popping up in its place. Through powerful disinformation campaigns, swing voters can easily be swayed by adversaries of an individual candidate, a political party, or a country as a whole.

<sup>42</sup> "ODNI Home." *Home*, [www.dni.gov/index.php/what-we-do/members-of-the-ic](http://www.dni.gov/index.php/what-we-do/members-of-the-ic).

<sup>43</sup> "ODNI Home." *Home*, [www.dni.gov/index.php/what-we-do/ic-budget](http://www.dni.gov/index.php/what-we-do/ic-budget).

<sup>44</sup> "Combating Foreign Influence." *FBI*, FBI, 30 Aug. 2018, [www.fbi.gov/investigate/counterintelligence/foreign-influence](http://www.fbi.gov/investigate/counterintelligence/foreign-influence).

<sup>45</sup> "James B. Comey, September 4, 2013 - May 9, 2017." *FBI*, FBI, 3 May 2016, [www.fbi.gov/history/directors/james-b-comey](http://www.fbi.gov/history/directors/james-b-comey).

This quiet problem affects all working parts of a democracy. Voters often do not know they are being influenced by what seem like harmless posts they can scroll past. Political parties and their candidates bear an increased burden from social media disinformation campaigns, as their advertising spending must adapt to this blossoming digital market. And of course, those who orchestrate these massive disinformation campaigns have the ultimate goal to undermine the targeted elections.<sup>46</sup> But perhaps the most important stakeholder are the social media companies that serve as vehicles for these campaigns. Facebook and Twitter are the two most popular examples, but meme accounts on Instagram and YouTube's algorithm have also had growing effects.<sup>47</sup>

Because this problem is so pervasive, there are many solutions that have been proposed by cybersecurity experts, and some can be used in combination with others. The first and most popular proposal is to make social media companies better regulate their platforms. Some steps have already been made in this area after the 2016 election had already passed: Facebook introduced a feature in 2019 that attempts to balance the popularity of certain websites on its platform, and Twitter reportedly removes more than a million suspicious accounts a day.<sup>48</sup> Most internally developed regulation on social media sites focuses on alerting users that a post might contain false claims, but research suggests that the very act of reading a headline still influences people, even if they have been warned that it might not be true. A paper published in the Georgetown Law Technology review explained "fact-checking is predicated on the assumption that people will change their mind when confronted with correct information," according to UNC professor Alice Marwick.<sup>49</sup>

If companies will not regulate themselves effectively enough, then government regulation may be the only solution. However, this option has always been tricky to implement, and between the impending presidential election, policy on social media disinformation is unlikely to be implemented in the US government this year, or anytime soon. As a result, social media companies have begun gearing up on their own, leaving social media users, politicians, and intelligence experts to brace themselves for impending effects in US politics.<sup>50</sup>

### 6.3 The Role of Wikileaks



Wikileaks is a media organization founded in 2006 by Julian Assange to publish original documents from anonymous sources and leakers.<sup>51</sup> It is regarded as a whistleblowing platform where classified documents and data sets can be released. A well-known entity in the world of Internet security, Wikileaks became mainstream in 2010 with the release of an annotated video called "Collateral Murder" that showed the deliberate bombing of Iraqi civilians by a U.S. helicopter crew.<sup>52</sup> Wikileaks was also responsible for the leaking of hundreds of thousands of documents from the Iraq and

<sup>46</sup>"Political Advertising on Social Media Platforms." *American Bar Association*, [www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human\\_rights\\_magazine\\_home/voting-in-2020/political-advertising-on-social-media-platforms/](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/voting-in-2020/political-advertising-on-social-media-platforms/).

<sup>47</sup>Smith, Allan. "Facebook's Instagram Poised to Be 2020 Disinformation Battleground, Experts Say." *NBCNews.com*, NBCUniversal News Group, 22 Oct. 2019, [www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/facebook-s-instagram-poised-be-2020-disinformation-battleground-experts-say-n1063941](http://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/facebook-s-instagram-poised-be-2020-disinformation-battleground-experts-say-n1063941).

<sup>48</sup>Craig Timberg, Elizabeth Dwoskin. "Twitter Is Sweeping out Fake Accounts like Never before, Putting User Growth at Risk." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 23 Dec. 2019, [www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2018/07/06/twitter-is-sweeping-out-fake-accounts-like-never-before-putting-user-growth-risk/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2018/07/06/twitter-is-sweeping-out-fake-accounts-like-never-before-putting-user-growth-risk/).

<sup>49</sup>Marwick, Alice. *Georgetown Law Technology Review*, 2018, pp. 474-512, <https://Georgetownlawtechreview.org/Wp-Content/Uploads/2018/07/2.2-Marwick-Pp-474-512.Pdf>.

<sup>50</sup>T.S. Allen, Stephen Rodriguez. "To Protect Democracy, Protect the Internet." *Foreign Policy*, 14 July 2020, [foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/14/united-states-election-interference-illegal-social-](http://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/14/united-states-election-interference-illegal-social-)

<sup>51</sup>Whittaker, Francis. "What Is WikiLeaks? Everything You Need to Know." *NBCNews.com*, NBCUniversal News Group, 14 Aug. 2018, [www.nbcnews.com/storyline/smart-facts/what-wikileaks-everything-you-need-know-n869556](http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/smart-facts/what-wikileaks-everything-you-need-know-n869556).

<sup>52</sup>Madrigal, Alexis C. "The Beginner's Guide to WikiLeaks." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 14 Dec. 2010, [www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2010/12/the-beginners-guide-to-wikileaks/67705/](http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2010/12/the-beginners-guide-to-wikileaks/67705/).

Afghanistan wars. The release was orchestrated with several major newspapers and produced a strong global reaction.

In 2016, Wikileaks made headlines when it released over 30,000 emails and attachments sent to and from Hillary Clinton's private email server while she served as Secretary of State under President Barack Obama.<sup>53</sup> While the fact that Clinton used an private, nongovernmental email server for official State Department business was first revealed in 2015, the release of the actual content of many of the emails by Wikileaks renewed scrutiny on Clinton's risky handling of classified information.<sup>54</sup> This has ultimately played a role in the public perception of Clinton amid the backdrop of the 2016 Presidential Election. Donald Trump, Clinton's Republican challenger, has quickly seized on this new development to criticize his opponent.

Wikileaks has proven to be a relevant player in the leadup to the 2016 Presidential Election. Its premise, leaking confidential files to the public, is of great concern to the FBI. It remains to be seen what the role of Wikileaks will be moving forward into 2016 in regards to the election, but it is certainly a group the FBI should monitor.

## 6.4 2016 Political Climate

The United States finds itself in a showdown between the presumptive Democrat nominee Hillary Clinton and the Republican Donald J. Trump, but that wasn't always the case.

As of the start of this committee, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont has yet to suspend his campaign, although the math suggests he has not garnered enough votes or delegates to be the Democratic nominee. He trails Clinton by millions in the Democratic popular vote, and by hundreds in delegate counts with or without superdelegates. Sanders has faced public pressure to drop out of the race and endorse Hillary Clinton in order to unite the Democratic Party against Donald Trump, but thus far has vowed to continue with his campaign. Either way, Clinton was recently declared the "presumptive nominee" and is now campaigning as a nominee would, even garnering the support of sitting president Barack Obama.<sup>55</sup>



She campaigns against the presumptive Republican nominee Donald J. Trump. The Republican field started with 17 candidates, including household names such as Texas Senator Ted Cruz, Florida Senator Marco Rubio, and former Florida Governor Jeb Bush.<sup>56</sup> Originally considered a political outsider, Trump developed an enthusiastic voter base with a promise to "Make America Great Again" and ran off a string of Republican primary wins. By May 4, Trump became the presumptive Republican nominee after Kasich suspended his campaign a day after Trump's victory in the Indiana primary.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> "Submit Documents to WikiLeaks." *WikiLeaks*, [wikileaks.org/clinton-emails/?q=](http://wikileaks.org/clinton-emails/?q=).

<sup>54</sup> Eder, Steve. "'We Need to Clean This Up': Clinton Aide's Newly Public Email Shows Concern." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 25 Oct. 2016, [www.nytimes.com/2016/10/26/us/politics/wikileaks-hillary-clinton-emails.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/26/us/politics/wikileaks-hillary-clinton-emails.html).

<sup>55</sup> Sanders, Sam. "Bernie Sanders, Party Crasher: Notes On The (Looming) End Of A Campaign." *NPR*, NPR, 15 June 2016, [www.npr.org/2016/06/15/481453188/bernie-sanders-party-crasher-notes-on-the-looming-end-of-a-campaign](http://www.npr.org/2016/06/15/481453188/bernie-sanders-party-crasher-notes-on-the-looming-end-of-a-campaign).

<sup>56</sup> History.com Editors. "The 2016 U.S. Presidential Election." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 29 Nov. 2018, [www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/us-presidential-election-2016](http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/us-presidential-election-2016).

<sup>57</sup> Kaplan, Thomas. "John Kasich Suspends Campaign for President." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 4 May 2016, [www.nytimes.com/2016/05/05/us/politics/john-kasich.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/05/us/politics/john-kasich.html).



Both presumptive nominees have faced their fair share of controversies on the road to securing their party's respective nomination. As mentioned before, Clinton has endured heavy criticism for using a personal email server while serving as Secretary of State. On July 10, 2015, the FBI officially opened a criminal investigation code-named "Midyear Exam" on her potential mishandling of classified information.<sup>58</sup> That investigation will still be ongoing at the start of committee. Clinton has also faced continuous criticism from Republicans over her handling of the 2012 attack on a U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya that resulted in the death of four Americans, including Ambassador Chris Stevens. At the time that committee starts, the House of Representatives is currently investigating security preparations at the American facility in Benghazi and how Clinton responded during the night of the attacks.<sup>59</sup> Both the FBI and House have yet to release their respective reports on Clinton's behavior, but the controversy and speculation regarding her past record has generated questions about her trustworthiness and presidential merits.



Meanwhile, Trump for years has been a proponent of the "birther" theory that current President Barack Obama was not born in the United States despite it being debunked multiple times.<sup>60</sup> In addition, even when he announced his campaign on June 16, 2015, he made headlines for saying Mexican immigrants are "bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."<sup>61</sup> His remarks have been labelled as racist, but his comments on immigration at our southern border are consistent with his controversial policy desire of building a wall between the U.S. and Mexico. He has also faced backlash by calling for an immigration ban that specifically pertained to Muslims.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps the most ongoing issue surrounding Trump has been his refusal to release his tax records. Going into

this election, there is an unprecedented shroud of secrecy surrounding his finances, with past candidates being much more transparent with their personal financial dealings.

Amid an election between two of the least popular candidates in modern political history, it is an opportune time for America's foreign adversaries to attempt to further sow discord. Russia has taken the lead in this endeavor, with Russian hackers acting to damage the Clinton campaign, boost Trump's election chances, and most importantly, increase distrust in the American democratic system.<sup>63</sup> There have already been small instances of Russian interference in this election. In September 2015, an agent from the FBI's Washington Field Office notified the Democratic National Committee's IT department that at least one computer had been compromised by Russian hackers.<sup>64</sup> A low-level DNC technician ended up scanning the system networks but found nothing and did not follow up with DNC leadership regarding the FBI's warning.

The impacts of Russia's initial attempts at interfering in the election remain to be seen, but the message is clear. They are taking advantage of the polarized political climate in the United States. It is up to this FBI to protect domestic interests and preserve the tenets of democracy, whatever the costs.

<sup>58</sup>Jarrett, Laura. "Key Dates in the FBI Probe of Hillary Clinton's Emails." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 14 June 2018, [www.cnn.com/2018/06/14/politics/key-dates-fbi-hillary-clinton-emails/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2018/06/14/politics/key-dates-fbi-hillary-clinton-emails/index.html).

<sup>59</sup>Graham, David A. "From Whitewater to Benghazi: A Clinton-Scandal Primer." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 6 Nov. 2016, [www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/11/tracking-the-clinton-controversies-from-whitewater-to-benghazi/396182/](http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/11/tracking-the-clinton-controversies-from-whitewater-to-benghazi/396182/).

<sup>60</sup>Barbaro, Michael. "Donald Trump Clung to 'Birther' Lie for Years, and Still Isn't Apologetic." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 16 Sept. 2016, [www.nytimes.com/2016/09/17/us/politics/donald-trump-obama-birther.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/17/us/politics/donald-trump-obama-birther.html).

<sup>61</sup>Stracqualursi, Veronica. "7 Of the Most Controversial Lines of the 2016 Election." *ABC News*, ABC News Network, 29 Oct. 2016, [abcnews.go.com/Politics/controversial-lines-2016-election/story?id=42886273](http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/controversial-lines-2016-election/story?id=42886273).

<sup>62</sup>"Donald Trump Urges Ban on Muslims Coming to US." *BBC News*, BBC, 8 Dec. 2015, [www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-35035190](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-35035190).

<sup>63</sup>Abrams, Abigail. "Here's What We Know So Far About Russia's 2016 Meddling." *Time*, Time, 18 Apr. 2019, [time.com/5565991/russia-influence-2016-election/](http://time.com/5565991/russia-influence-2016-election/).

<sup>64</sup>Sciutto, Jim. "How One Typo Helped Let Russian Hackers In." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 28 June 2017, [www.cnn.com/2017/06/27/politics/russia-dnc-hacking-csr/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2017/06/27/politics/russia-dnc-hacking-csr/index.html).



## 7 Starting Scenario

*June 14, 2016, Washington D.C., United States:*

Thomas J. Quell, a member of the FBI since the 1980's, has become accustomed to his morning routine at his rather plain D.C. cubicle. Quell works on the tip line at the Cyber Division, reading mostly baseless accusations from trolls on the Internet's darker spaces. He loves his job and has no plans on retiring soon. It comes with a nice benefits package and he is always home to his wife, Cindy, by 5:30pm. Today was not going to be one of those days. As he sipped his tea, he came across an email labeled "URGENT: RUSSIA HACKS DNC." This seemed strange; most of Quell's emails pertained to more domestic affairs like leaked social media passwords by an angry teenager in Florida or fraudulent advertising from a small business owner in California. Either way, it was his responsibility to investigate all of these claims. He clicked on the profile and his eyes widened. "Internet Research Agency... Russia... Donald Trump... Democratic Party" he whispered to himself as he poured over an incredibly lengthy email. He did not understand what a lot of it meant, but it became plainly apparent that this information was both as urgent as described and well above his pay grade. He quickly forwarded it to his boss, flagging it to make sure it was the first thing they saw, and promptly made a call to Cindy - he was going to be late to dinner tonight. Not even 30 minutes later, the entire Bureau is in a frenzy... somewhere in Saint Petersburg, Russia, a man hunched over his laptop and dozens of monitors running thousands of lines of code whispers: "perfect."

Your goal in this committee is to work within your agency, either the FBI or the IRA, to either prevent a catastrophe surrounding the 2016 US presidential election or to create one. You must accomplish this while increasing your own knowledge and influence over the events unfolding surrounding the election or beyond into 2016. Because who you know is everything, this may involve working with other committee delegates to take down those in the opposing bureau, or perhaps working with people in different agencies in your own country or abroad. You'll also have to take into account other societal problems of the day, from the political instability surrounding the election to international issues like Brexit. Taking all these factors into account, it's up to you to come out on top.

## 8 Questions to consider while preparing for the committee

- What was my role during this time and in relativity to this group?
- Are there any other characters in this committee, or in the other room, to whom my character might be close? How should I go about working with these individuals?
- What types of issues will members of this body most likely encounter?
- What kind of influence do we want to have as a body on the history of the time? What do we want to change about the way that history played out?
- What is my personal goal in this committee? How do I plan to accomplish it? What kind of decisions will I make along the way to achieve this goal?

These questions are a good place to start when beginning to craft your plan for this weekend. They will help you to have a good idea about the goals of your character and the committee.

## 9 Character List

### 9.1 United States, Federal Bureau of Investigation:

1. **Michael Johnson, Director of the International Operations Division** - Michael Johnson was promoted to the position of Director of the International Operations Division only two months ago, but it is the perfect position for his experience. After serving in the army for five years, Michael returned home to work in the greater defense industry. He bounced around to DoD agencies for several years, but found his specialty was international relations and negotiation with foreign adversaries. He has worked through disagreements with the Russians in the past and expects to succeed in these negotiations again.
2. **Peter Brown, Director of the Cyber Division** - Peter Brown has always had a knack for technology. He was lucky enough to develop his programming skills at the height of the tech bubble in the 90s, working at IBM and Microsoft before switching gears and working in cybersecurity for a major defense contractor. He quickly became Northrop Grumman's top code breaker and was snatched up by the FBI. For all things code, Peter is the main man for the job.
3. **Thomas Martin, Director of the Criminal Investigative Division** - Thomas Martin has worked in the FBI for more than 20 years and is next in line to take over as Executive Assistant Director for Criminal, Cyber, Response and Services, the overarching branch that covers the Cyber Division, International Operations Division, Critical Incident Response Group, and the Criminal Investigative Division, which he currently leads. With his previous experience as a lawyer, he plans to lead his team to investigate any legal repercussions for the presidential campaigns or any affiliated individuals.
4. **David Moore, Director of the Critical Incident Response Group** - David Moore has been handling crises his whole life. He has been working for the FBI since he graduated college, starting as a translator for Czech, Russian, and Arabic, becoming a hostage negotiator, and then working his way through the ranks to his current position. Moore's team was the first to be notified about any direct Russian attack on the DNC, and as the problem has snowballed, much of the pressure is on him to handle the incident and its effects.
5. **Susan Taylor, Assistant Director of the Cyber Division** - Susan Taylor currently serves as the second-in-command of the Cyber Division of the FBI, a position that no woman has ever held. She was initially hired by the CIA when she hacked into one of their servers at age 23, and has taken a few other jobs throughout the intelligence community since. Even though she is a talented computer scientist, Susan spends most of her time these days leading the Cyber Division to accomplish tasks set forth by the director. She is trusted by her team because of her no-nonsense leadership style. Her connections across D.C. may prove to be her greatest assets in this investigation.
6. **Richard White, Assistant Director of the Criminal Investigative Division** - Richard White has been anticipating a disinformation campaign or cyber-attack like this one for some time now. A former professor of International Law at Columbia Law School, White was recruited to the FBI about 5 years ago after they read his research. White has been speculating with his fellow professors about the weaknesses of the current election system, but he never expected to be at the forefront of the problem. Hopefully he can apply his research into action. The fate of US elections depends on it.
7. **Lisa Clark, Assistant Director of the Critical Incident Response Group** - Lisa Clark has handled crisis after crisis with the FBI, but she's never seen anything like this. Lisa is known for always being cool in a crisis. Her background in Economics and Management allow her to look at the numbers objectively and lead her team effectively. Lisa has a husband who works for the CIA, as well as twin children, Jeffrey and Jordan, age 5.
8. **Mark Stetson, Assistant Director of the International Operations Division** - Mark Stetson is the Assistant Director of the International Operations Division of the FBI. Mark is a retired operative from the FBI, mostly based in former Soviet bloc states. He was heavily involved on the ground during the Yugoslavian civil war, and his years of covert operations have given him an edge. He is a cold and calculating leader who wants nothing more than to get the job done and go home to his dog.

9. **Greg Leschnik, Intern in the International Operations Division** - A 3rd-year International Affairs and Russian double-major at the University of Georgia, Greg scored the internship of a lifetime this summer. He just received his security clearance and has been assigned introductory work in the International Operations Division. In between struggling to learn acronyms for international organizations, Greg has decided that if he wants a full-time offer for after graduation, he'll need to do everything he can to shine on the job. He plans to wow his team with his excellent translation skills and knowledge of global issues that he gained as a member of the UGA Model UN team.
10. **David Green, Programmer in the Cyber Division** - David Green is perhaps the strongest programmer in the Cyber Division, but he doesn't have much to show for it. At 32, he hasn't yet gotten married (or even even had a significant other), but his rich parents have helped him get into the best schools and have the best exposure to tech from a young age. His family is also well-connected around town: his Dad is a senator from North Dakota. David was groomed for a life of politics, but is just too geeky to make it work. His team trusts his code, but they never invite him out to drinks after work.
11. **William Byrd, Analyst in the International Operations Division** - William Byrd is the most recent hire in the International Operations Division. And by recent, we mean *very* recent: this is his sixth day on the job. Even after only one week, William is very much struggling with this job and thinking about quitting. But just as he got up the nerve to talk to his supervisor, he was assigned a major part of the investigation into Russian operatives. It's his first major task, and he can't really leave now. William isn't quite committed to this work, so he has a lot of choices on his hands. Will he sell information? Will he backstab his coworkers? Will he do the best dang analyst job the world has ever seen? It's up to him.
12. **Brian Davis, Analyst in the Critical Incident Response Group** - Brian Davis is an Analyst by trade, but a linguist my passion. He studied linguistics in undergrad with a concentration in rhetoric, and he has his PhD in Political Psychology from Princeton. Brian loves to read through messages and analyze wording for specific clues, phrases, and secret messages. His latest job has been working with the cyber team to screen social media posts for dangerous trends. Hopefully his work with words will be used for good and not for evil.
13. **JP McCall, Analyst in the Cyber Division** - JP McCall has been an analyst in the Cyber Division for over 7 years, after working at NASA on the security team. Over the same time, he consulted for the CIA and the NSA for the Stuxnet virus. After working for intelligence agencies, he was interested in the more political application of intelligence work and decided to move to the State Department for a bit. A jack of all trade, JP works well with the team and is happy with his work.
14. **Scott Pavinsky, Special Agent in the Criminal Investigative Division** - Scott Pavinsky is a small-town boy from Nebraska. Inspired by his father, the Chief of Police in Lakeside, he worked as a police officer before being hired by the Nebraska Bureau of Intelligence. His work was so incredible that he was recruited to the FBI only a few years later. Eager to prove his worth in the big city, Scott is nervous but excited to get his first major case investigating Russians involved in election interference.
15. **Donna Hendrix, Translator in the Critical Incident Response Group** - Donna Hendrix is one of the only FBI agents in her division that is not from the US. She grew up in Ukraine, so she has lots of political thoughts about Russia and their interference in Eastern European affairs, but she fell in love with an American named Ryan in her teens and moved to DC for him. Donna is an expert translator and hopes to climb the ranks to an analyst position over time, but she's a bit flighty and reactionary. Her team doesn't really know how to work with her, but they know she always does her work ahead of schedule and gets the job done well.

## 9.2 Russia, Internet Research Agency:

1. **Boris Alekseyevich Antonov, Major, Unit 26165** - Boris Alekseyevich Antonov has worked hard to get from his small hometown in Russia to become a Major in Unit 26165 and a force within GRU. Known as a cut-throat military intelligence officer, Boris has worked extremely hard to get where he is today. Though not well connected to the Kremlin, he has proven his worth through his inventive and unique coding abilities. These abilities combined with his charisma make him both a friend to all and a serious threat to adversaries.
2. **Dmitriy Sergeyevich Badin, Military Intelligence Officer, Unit 26165** - Dmitriy Sergeyevich Badin has always had an affinity for art. As a young child, he loved creating different art pieces from wonderful pieces of digital art to delicate pottery pieces. These creative talents have led Dmitriy to a successful career in Unit 26165. Though only a military intelligence officer and no true rank, Dmitriy has been instrumental in past missions and craves to earn a higher rank.
3. **Anatoliy Sergeyevich Kovalev, Military Intelligence Officer, Unit 74455** - Anatoliy Sergeyevich Kovalev is newly married and enjoying his new assignment in Unit 74455. His wife, Helga, is also in Russian military intelligence and often collects information about FBI agents. While only an officer, Anatoliy has big plans to move up the chain of command and eventually lead his unit. However, his wife's work and his own possible connections to the FBI may hold him back.
4. **Nikolay Yuryevich Kozachek - Lieutenant Captain, Unit 26165** - Known to some as "blablabla1234565" and as Nikolay to others, Nikolay Yuryevich Kozachek is the "class clown" amongst his unit<sup>65</sup>. His pranks are legendary and so are his coding skills. He has been able to move up so quickly through the ranks due to ingenuity and charisma. However, his pranks sometimes get out-of-hand and cause issues with his superior officers. Even still, Nikolay is a hard working lieutenant captain with a love of complex problems and creating funny solutions.
5. **Aleksey Viktorovich Lukashev, Senior Lieutenant, Unit 26165** - All the way from Murmanskaya Oblast, Russia to the Internet Research Agency, Aleksey is known for his exceedingly sharp intellect as well as his love for music. As a child, he learned the piano, the violin, and, of course, the accordion. He has a knack for coming up with catchy, repetitive songs that can get stuck in anyone's head. His life dream is to eventually get involved with politics and become President of Russia.
6. **Artem Andreyevich Malyshev, Senior Lieutenant, Unit 26165** - Born on February 2, 1988, Artem always knew two things: that he loved his home country of Russia and that he was destined for greatness. He worked his way up the intelligence ladder to become Senior Lieutenant of Unit 26165 (obviously the best unit). Artem's confidence definitely helped him reach his current rank, and he's now eager to prove himself and his unit to the higher ups.
7. **Sergey Aleksandrovich Morgachev, Lieutenant Colonel, Unit 261265** -Sergey started out a mere janitor in the Internet Research Agency, but he had big dreams (plus his mother always said he was special). After taking a number of coding courses, and using some old books to self-learn, he finally managed to reach the rank of Lieutenant Colonel of Unit 26165. Despite others fearing the abilities of a Ukrainian "janitor," Sergey knows he has more to offer and looks forward to showing up all these stuck up Russians by being the best at his work, and, just maybe, being a leader of the IRA.
8. **Aleksandr Vladimirovich Osadchuk, Colonel, Unit 74455** - Aleksandr always knew he would be a military man, being the son of an army officer, but his heart yearned for the written word. Despite his desires to follow in his heroes' footsteps, his family pushed him towards mathematics and military strategy. Ultimately, he landed in the Internet Research Agency as a Colonel and commanding officer of Unit 74455. Aleksandr does good work, always a capable and dutiful man, but ever does he long to write more than just code.
9. **Aleksey Aleksandrovich Potemkin, Supervisor, Unit 74455** - Aleksey was always a gifted young man; born in March 20, 1983, and excelling in mathematics, physics, and computer science, he

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<sup>65</sup><https://www.fbi.gov/wanted/cyber/nikolay-yuryevich-kozachek>

was expected to go straight into academia. However, Aleksey simply did not have the money for higher education, but in came the Russian military offering a lucrative (and obviously patriotic) position with the IRA. Aleksey quickly accepted and now is a military intelligence officer and supervisor of Unit 74455. He hopes to prove himself and make enough to further his education goals, and that he could get a better job elsewhere by doing well in the IRA.

10. **Ivan Sergeyevich Yermakov. Military Intelligence Officer, Unit 26165** - Ivan Yermakov, or better known to some as “Kate S. Milton”, “James McMorgans”, or “Karen W. Millen”, was born in 1986 and was an adept hacker and coder. He always loved messing with people and trolling others, especially online, and one day he just happened to cross the wrong oligarch. Thankfully though, the man offered Ivan a job with the Internet Research Agency doing everything he loved: trolling. Ivan became a military intelligence officer in Unit 26165, and is content with his job, but he knows he could be doing so much more damage if only he was given the chance.
11. **Pavel Vyacheslavovich Yershov, Military Intelligence Officer, Unit 26165**, - Pavel was always a bit on the quieter side, but he was smart and hard working. While studying Computer Science in a major university in Moscow, Pavel managed to land a job with the Russian government. Despite his quiet nature, Pavel managed to get a mentor in the intelligence office who helped him get into the Internet Research Agency in unit 26165. Pavel hopes to prove his mentor right and break out of his shell and finally move beyond the grunt work of the intelligence field.