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Oversight Investigation & Referral

18 September 2020

The Intelligence Community Assessment (ICA)
"Russia's Influence Campaign Targeting the 2016 US Presidential Election"

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Why This Study?

The conclusions of the Intelligence Community Assessment (ICA), *"Russian Influence Campaign Targeting the 2016 US Presidential Election,"* raised concerns about Russian attempts to undermine confidence in the US election system, prompting a comprehensive examination of the ICA's analysis.

Investigators compared the ICA analytic tradecraft against the standards prescribed in *Intelligence Community Directive (ICD) 203, "Analytic Standards,"* the primary guiding document for evaluation of analytic products for the Intelligence Community (IC). Investigators spent over 2,300 hours reviewing the ICA and its source reports, mostly at CIA Headquarters in the compartmented reports vault, and on outside related research. In addition, 20 interviews were conducted of intelligence officers or FBI agents who were associated with managing or drafting the ICA or the production of raw reporting cited as ICA sources.

Recommendations

1. Improve peer review of controversial assessments involving limited-access intelligence.

2. Require political appointees to recuse themselves from managing such assessments during a presidential transition.

3. Mandate that finished analysis citing substandard raw intelligence reports include a context footnote explaining all factors that reduce confidence in the information.

What the Majority Found

Most ICA judgments on Russia's activities in the US election employed proper analytic tradecraft and were consistent with observed Russian behavior. The key judgments found to be credible include: 1) President Putin ordered conventional and cyber influence operations, notably by leaking politically sensitive emails obtained from computer intrusions; 2) Putin's principal motivations in these operations were to undermine faith in the US democratic process and to weaken what the Russians considered to be an inevitable Clinton presidency; and 3) Putin held back leaking some compromising material for post-election use against the expected Clinton administration.

In contrast to the rest of the ICA, the judgment that Putin developed "a clear preference" for candidate Trump and "aspired to help his chances of victory" did not adhere to the tenets of the ICD, *Analytic Standards:*

- The Director of CIA (DCIA) ordered the post-election publication of 15 reports containing previously collected but unpublished intelligence, three of which were substandard—containing information that was unclear, of uncertain origin, potentially biased, or implausible—and those became foundational sources for the ICA judgments that Putin preferred Trump over Clinton. The ICA misrepresented these reports as reliable, without mentioning their significant underlying flaws.
- One scant, unclear, and unverifiable fragment of a sentence from one of the substandard reports constitutes the only classified information cited to suggest Putin "aspired" to help Trump win.
- The ICA ignored or selectively quoted reliable intelligence reports that challenged—and in some cases undermined—judgments that Putin sought to elect Trump.
- The ICA failed to consider plausible alternative explanations of Putin's intentions indicated by reliable intelligence and observed Russian actions.
- DCIA picked five CIA analysts to write the ICA, and rushed its production in order to publish two weeks before President-elect Trump was sworn-in. Hurried coordination and limited access to the draft reduced opportunities for the IC to discover misquoting of sources and other tradecraft errors.

DETAILED FINDINGS

This is the unredacted, fully-sourced, limited-access investigation report that was drafted and stored in a limited-access vault at CIA Headquarters.

- Although the principal findings of this report are identical to the Top Secret downgraded version prepared for members of Congress, this version contains significantly more detailed quotations from sensitive reports—to include source descriptions from raw intelligence—and extensive footnotes citing raw intelligence reports and interviews of IC officers.
- The names of IC officers quoted in the main text were omitted by prior agreement with the agencies, but are available in the footnotes of the original sourced copy.

Finding #1: The Bulk of ICA Judgments on Russia's Election Operations Were Sound and Employed Proper Analytic Tradecraft

The majority found most ICA judgments on Russia's election activities to be well reasoned, consistent with observed Russian actions, properly documented, and—particularly on the cyber intrusion sections—employed appropriate caveats on sources and identified assumptions. The key ICA judgments that the Majority found credible are summarized below:

- Russian efforts to influence the 2016 US presidential election represent the most recent expression of Moscow's longstanding desire to undermine the US liberal democratic order.
- Russian intelligence services, acting on the orders of Russian President Vladimir Putin, launched conventional and cyber influence operations—notably by leaking politically sensitive emails obtained from computer intrusions—during the 2016 election.
- Putin's principal motivations in these influence operations were to advance Moscow's longstanding desire to undermine faith in US democracy, and to weaken from the start what the Russians considered to be an inevitable Clinton presidency.
- Putin held back leaking some compromising material to use against the expected Clinton Administration after they took office.

The operations officers at CIA and NSA who produced the raw intelligence cited in the ICA showed great professionalism.

- CIA Collection Management Officers (CMOs) in particular, did an excellent job of employing detailed context statements that spelled-out evidentiary problems affecting the reliability of raw intelligence.
- The drafters of ICA did not accurately cite the most critical context statements (addressed in detail later in this study) but the original raw reports were nonetheless professionally prepared.

Finding #2: Significant Tradecraft Failings Cast Doubt on ICA Judgments of Putin's Intentions

In contrast to the ICA's other judgments, the sections addressing Putin's intentions for influencing the US election did not observe professional criteria set forth in *ICD 203, Analytic Standards*

The DNI describes *Intelligence Community Directive (ICD) 203 Analytic Standards* as the document that "establishes the Intelligence Community (IC) analytic standards that govern the production and evaluation

- These failures were serious enough to call into question judgments that allege Putin "developed a clear preference for candidate Trump" and "aspired to help his chances of victory" and that "Russian leaders never entirely abandoned hope for a defeat of Secretary Clinton."
- The ICA defined these as "high confidence" judgments based on a "body of reporting from multiple sources" (see box "Putin's Intentions)

What the ICA Says: Putin's Intentions

"We further assess Putin and the Russian government developed a clear preference for [candidate Trump]. We have high confidence in these judgments" (emphasis added). [ICA p. iii, ICA-U p. ii]

"CIA and FBI also assess with high confidence that Putin and the Russian Government aspired to help [candidate Trump's] chances of victory when possible by discrediting Secretary Clinton" (emphasis added). [ICA p. 1, ICA-U p.ii]

"We assess that Russian leaders never entirely abandoned hope for a defeat of Secretary Clinton." "When it appeared Secretary Clinton was likely to win the election, the Russian influence campaign began to focus more on undermining her future presidency." [ICA page 3, ICA-U p.2]

The ICA judgments on Putin's intentions failed to adhere to the following analytic standards within ICD 203:

- "Properly describe quality and credibility of underlying sources."
- "Properly express and explain uncertainties associated with major analytic judgments."
- Base confidence assessments on "the quantity and quality of source material."
- "Be informed by all relevant information available."
- "Consider alternative perspectives and contrary information."
- "Be independent of political considerations."

Despite the ICA's significant tradecraft failures, the assessment demonstrated awareness of the ICD standards in a section describing analytic process:

- "These standards include describing sources (including their reliability and access to information), clearly expressing uncertainty, distinguishing between underlying information and analysts' judgments and assumptions, exploring alternatives ..."
- A critical part of the analyst's task is to explain uncertainties associated with major judgments based on the quantity and quality of the source material" (emphasis added).

Unlike routine IC analysis, the ICA was a high-profile product ordered by the President, directed by senior IC agency heads, and created by just five CIA analysts, using one principal drafter. Production of the ICA was subject to unusual directives from the President and senior political appointees, and particularly DCIA. The draft was not properly coordinated within CIA or the IC, ensuring it would be published without significant challenges to its conclusions.

The tradecraft failures identified in this review are limited to sections of the ICA addressing Putin's intentions only. Because the ICA did not follow standard procedures for

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of analytic products; articulates the responsibility of intelligence analyst to strive for excellence, integrity, and rigor in their analytic thinking and work practices."

drafting or coordination within CIA and the IC, they should not be seen as an indication of systemic problems with analysis from CIA, NSA or FBI.

Finding #3: The ICA Failed to Acknowledge That Key Judgments on Putin's Intentions Were Based on Raw Intelligence That Did Not Meet Tradecraft Standards

ICD 203 instructs that intelligence tradecraft "properly describes quality and credibility of underlying sources" to include factors affecting the reliability of their information, such as "source access, motivation, possible bias or deception, and accuracy and completeness" (emphasis added). Accurate citation of raw intelligence reporting is critical to explaining to the reader the reliability of the evidence used to drive judgments, yet the ICA disregarded these fundamentals in sections that claimed Putin intended for Trump to win.

Key classified reports, cited by the ICA in support of judgments that Putin developed "a clear preference" for candidate Trump and "aspired to help his chances of victory" contained flaws in terms of clarity or reliability. The ICA omitted or obscured such information from context statements—that the CIA's Directorate of Operations had properly added to raw human source intelligence (HUMINT) reports—thus failing to warn the reader of significant flaws in the quality or credibility of foundational sources.

DCIA ordered the Publication of Three Reports—Which Failed to Meet CIA Criteria for Reliability or Clarity—That Subsequently Became Key ICA Citations on Putin's Intentions. In response to direction from the President to make all information available, CIA officers said the DCIA ordered the publication in early December 2016 of 15 new or revised CIA HUMINT reports containing information on Russian activities collected prior to the election, that CIA professionals had decided not to publish for various reasons having to do with tradecraft standards.

- Most of the 15 were unremarkable, but three contained flawed information *and* these three became foundational sources the ICA cited to claim Putin's aspired to help Trump win.
- Senior CIA officers said some of the information in these reports had been judged to have not met various longstanding IC standards for publication, and that is why they had not been published when first acquired. Two sensitive report were not published on DCIA's orders (see footnote at bottom of page).[b]
- The three reports were published after the election on DCIA orders, despite veteran CIA officer judgments that they contained substandard information that was unclear, of uncertain origin, potentially biased, implausible, or in the words of senior operations officers, "odd."

[b] CIA officers also said that DCIA personally directed that two of the most important reports not be formally disseminated when he first learned of them, ostensibly because they were too sensitive to create printed copies. We were unable to obtain a convincing explanation, however, for why DCIA did this, since the CIA has a special reporting channel (the series) whereby sensitive reports are restricted to only the President or as small a "by name" group as desired. Experienced CIA officers noted that publishing a written report creates a formal record copy, vetted by expert collection management officers (CMOs) and linguists. Unclear or poorly sourced information would normally be removed or else explained in the context statement. Reading a published report ensures a consistent message to all recipients. By briefing the information orally, however, DCIA could have tailored his message to different officials, unconstrained by a consistent record copy.

[redacted]

- The three reports became foundational sources for the ICA judgments on Putin preferring Trump.[redacted]

One scant, unclear, and unverifiable fragment of a sentence from a single HUMINT report—published under DCIA Brennan's December 2016 order—constitutes the only classified information cited by the ICA for the judgment that Putin "aspired to help Trump's chances of victory when possible." The ICA did not cite any report where Putin directly indicated helping Trump win was the objective. That judgment rested on a questionable interpretation of this one unclear fragment of a sentence.[redacted]

The unclear fragment (shown in bold) is part of a sentence in a [redacted] that reads:

- [redacted] *"Putin had made this decision [to leak DNC emails] after he had come to believe that the Democratic nominee had better odds of winning the U.S. presidential election, and that [candidate Trump], **whose victory Putin was counting on,** most likely would not be able to pull off a convincing victory."*[redacted]

- A senior CIA operations officer said of the fragment, "We don't know what was meant by that" and "five people read it five ways."[redacted]

The significance of this fragment to the ICA case that Putin "aspired" for candidate Trump to win cannot be overstated. The major "high confidence" judgment of the ICA rests on one opinion about a text fragment with uncertain meaning, that may be a garble, and for which it is not clear how it was obtained. This text—which would not have been published without DCIA's orders to do so—is cited using only one interpretation of its meaning and without considering alternative interpretations.[redacted]

- The report containing the fragment did not directly say or imply that Putin "developed a preference for Trump" nor did it say Putin ordered his intelligence services to "assist Trump's chances of victory when possible."[redacted]

- The ICA presented only one interpretation of the unclear fragment, and does so without following *ICD 203* directives to "properly distinguish between underlying intelligence information and analysts' assumptions and judgments" and without "incorporating analysis of alternative explanations."[redacted]

- [redacted] The ICA does not address the source's motivations, which were in part driven by a strong dislike for Putin and his regime, and that the source had an anti-Trump bias, according to CIA officers.[redacted]

- The ICA judgment on Putin's thoughts about helping candidate Trump does not stand if the single interpretation of the fragment is wrong, because there is no other intelligence corroborating it, and in any case, viable—perhaps more likely—alternative interpretations of the fragment exist.

- None of the confirmed Russian activities—leaks, public statements, social media messaging, and traditional propaganda—corroborate the ICA interpretation of the fragment, because these activities were all consistent with Putin's objectives to undermine faith in US democracy, without regard for candidate Trump's fate.

[redacted]

[redacted]

DCIA Overruled CIA Professionals to Publish and Cite the Ambiguous Fragment. CIA officers in the component running Russia operations described how two versions of the report—one without the fragment and one with—were published as the ICA was being written.

- Experienced CIA officers responsible for Russia reporting—evaluating raw intelligence and ensuring that HUMINT reporting meets the threshold for publication—initially omitted the confusing fragment from the first version of the report, which was published on **20 December** 2016.
- DCIA countermanded their decision, however, and ordered that the fragment be included so that it could be cited in the ICA. A revised report was published on **28 December** 2016.

A senior CIA operations officer described concerns about relying upon unclear reporting as the only evidence for the significant judgment that Putin "aspired" to help Trump.

- The officer explained that, while most of the ICA was well done, "ideally they should have eliminated the political judgment" because the fragment lacked the clarity needed to support such a significant claim.
- [redacted] The same officer said that, together with another senior colleague, the two officers argued to DCIA that "We don't have direct information that Putin wanted to get Trump elected" and therefore the judgment that Putin was counting on Trump's victory should be removed from the ICA or the ICA should be changed."

The ICA Text Failed to Acknowledge the Ambiguity and Uncertain Origin of the Fragment. Despite the "single source" significance of the fragment to the thesis on Putin's intentions, the ICA fails to *"properly express and explain uncertainties associated with major analytic judgments"* as required by *ICD 203*. This judgment had serious implications for confidence in US democracy, and would be considered a "major analytic judgment" by IC standards.

The ICA used an abbreviated description of the source that, without further mention of the problems associated with the fragment, misleads leads the reader to conclude that that Putin wanted Trump to win. Contrary to *ICD 203* guidance, the ICA fails to explain the misgivings of CIA professionals about the lack of clarity of the fragment, the possibility of other interpretations of it, that fragment does not actually say Putin "aspired to help Trump" or that it is not known how the information was acquired.

- [redacted] The ICA text "We assess the influence campaign aspired to help [Trump's] chances of victory when possible" is supported using an abbreviated source description: "The established source with secondhand access reported that Putin was counting on the President-elect's victory ..."
- This citation leaves out clear and important context flags from the raw intelligence report (see box "Context Warnings").

What the Raw Intelligence Says: Context Warnings

[redacted] The identified subsource of paragraphs two and three had authoritative insight into [redacted], but the exact circumstances in which the subsource obtained the information on Putin's plans and were not explicitly clear." [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

The context statement opens up a number of possibilities affecting reliability of the information that *ICD 203* directs should be explained to the reader. The ICA failed to clarify:

- [redacted] The source did not say that President Putin preferred candidate Trump or that he wanted to help him win.
- [redacted] It is not known how the subsource obtained the information and thus whether the fragment reflected the subsource's opinion of Putin's inner thoughts, Putin's actual statements made to the subsource, or some third-person's opinions relayed to the subsource who then relayed these to the established source.
- [redacted] The key sentence fragment used to make the judgment was ambiguous ("counting on" could equate to "expected" instead of the ICA interpretation of "preferred") and that without further clarification, did not suggest or imply that Putin's orders were intended to help Trump win.
- [redacted] Did not mention that, [redacted], it was not possible to have the established source ask the subsource to clarify what they meant by the puzzling fragment.

The ICA Failed to Acknowledge Alternative Interpretations of the Unclear Fragment Suggested by Events At the Time It Was Collected. *ICD 203* directs that analysis must "consider alternative perspectives and contrary information." Yet despite the misgivings of experienced CIA operations officers over the ambiguity of the fragment, the ICA only considers one "single source" interpretation of its meaning—that Putin wanted Trump to win—when events suggested another, more plausible explanation.

[redacted] Even assuming that the fragment was not a garble between any of the subsource or established source [redacted], and discounting the unknown circumstances under which the subsource obtained the information, the ICA made no effort to explain how the fragment's ambiguous wording indicated that Putin "aspired" to elect Trump. The original report does not directly say, as the ICA implies, that Putin launched leak operations to help Trump win.

[redacted] The ICA also fails to consider alternative, more plausible, explanations for the fragment's meaning suggested by the context of events during early July, when the information was acquired.

- [redacted] The fragment could instead be read that Putin expected ("counted on") a Trump victory at the Republican convention, which was only two weeks away at the time of Putin's WikiLeaks decision.
- [redacted] The fragment referred to decisions made by Putin in early July, when the Republican convention's outcome was still uncertain due to active efforts to deny Trump a majority of convention delegates. This was a headline issue for US political media at the time, although many pundits nonetheless expected—or "counted on"—a Trump victory.
- [redacted] The fragment thus may reflected the subsource's view that Putin "counted on" a Trump victory in the Republican July primary, but not in the November general election against Clinton.

This alternate interpretation would suggest that the fragment says nothing about Putin's thoughts—positive or negative—of Trump or whether Russia ought to help him win or not. It would not support a judgment that Putin "preferred" Trump, nor one that Putin "aspired"

[redacted]

[redacted]

to help him win. Given the importance of this major judgment, policymaker readers deserved to know of all viable alternative interpretations of the unclear fragment.

The ICA Mischaracterized the Fragment As Supporting "High Confidence" Judgments.

To judge with "high confidence"—as the ICA does—that Putin's goal was to help Trump win would, per *ICD 203* guidance, require *"clear and reliable reports from multiple sources."* Moreover, these reports would need to be of sufficient quality to confidently explain Russian actions that were not consistent with helping Trump win, and to also rule out alternative explanations for the Russian influence operations. The ICA failed to meet these standards, and the highly compartmented nature of the raw reporting made it difficult or impossible for most readers to see the foundational sources (see box "Confidence Definitions).

What the ICA Says: Confidence Definitions

High confidence generally indicates that judgments are based on high-quality information from multiple sources.

Moderate confidence generally means that the information is credibly sourced and plausible but not of sufficient quality or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence.

Low confidence generally means that the information's credibility or plausibility is uncertain, that the information is too fragmented or poorly corroborated to make solid analytic inferences, or that reliability of the sources is questionable. [ICA p 13]

. . . The NSA justification for not signing on with the CIA-FBI "high confidence" judgment on Putin's intentions to help candidate Trump (NSA preferred "medium") highlights the weakness of the evidence for this major judgment:

- [redacted] "NSA has moderate confidence in this assessment given a limited source base, lack of corroborating intelligence, and the possibility for an alternative judgment."
- [redacted] The Director of NSA, Admiral Rogers, testified: "It ultimately boils down to a HUMINT source that did not have direct access ... I didn't find the level of corroboration that led me to high [confidence]... I didn't see multiple sources."

The ICA includes a "Scope and Sourcing" statement describing the reliability of the key CIA HUMINT reporting that is misleading (see box "Scope and Sourcing").

What the ICA Says: "Scope and Sourcing"

The ICA notes that key judgments are based on a single "well established" source.

[redacted] We make some judgments based on the reporting of an established clandestine source with secondhand access through identified subsources. The source is well established, and other examples of [redacted] reporting have been corroborated through other streams of human and signals intelligence. [ICA p.i]

[redacted] The established source with secondhand access provided us our only specific information on President Vladimir Putin's order to pass collected material to WikiLeaks; the timing of the formal influence campaign; the existence of specific, planned Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) efforts; some specific details of Putin's views of Secretary Clinton; and the reported role of the Federal Security Service (FSB) hacking operations related to the US election. [ICA p.ii]

[redacted]

[redacted]

- [redacted] Although the ICA correctly describes the primary source's reporting history, it does not explain that information a primary source passes on from a subsource is only as good as the subsource's access, knowledge, and bias. If those factors are unknown, then confidence in the information is affected accordingly.
- When a source sends a report that is unclear, the utility of the information is limited until it can be clarified, and particularly for a major judgment.
- [redacted] In the case of the ICA's foundational reports from the established source, it was not possible [redacted] to clarify the meaning of report language or identify how it was obtained by the subsource.

DCIA Ordered the Publication of a Second Substandard Report, From an Unknown Subsource, Cited by the ICA to Allege That Putin Preferred Trump. This information was both unverified and implausible and, like the unclear fragment, CIA professionals originally declined to publish it when it was first collected. It was only published on DCIA's orders after the election on 16 December 2016 and was subsequently used, without caveats, to source the first bullet of evidence for the judgment that Putin "developed a clear preference" for candidate Trump (see box "First Bullet"). [redacted]

What the ICA Says: The First Bullet of Evidence on Putin's "clear preference" for Trump

- [redacted] "As early as February 2016, a Russian political expert possessed a plan that recommended engagement with [Trump's] team because of the prospects for improved US-Russian relations, according to reporting from [redacted] government service." [ICA p. 2]

The ICA bullet text is alarming, implying the existence of a Russian plan for engagement with the Trump campaign that most readers would see as strong evidence of President Putin showing a "clear preference" for candidate Trump. But the ICA omits critical report context which, had it been made available to the reader, would show the report to be implausible—if not ridiculous—and missing so many key details as to be unusable.

- [redacted] CIA operations officers declined to publish the report when it was acquired [redacted] in **February 2016**, considering it "odd" and "lacking authoritativeness." [redacted]
- [redacted] It was only disseminated in **December 2016**, on DCIA's post-election "full review" order to put out previously unpublished information, and experienced CIA officers said that it "would not have met the threshold" for dissemination otherwise. [redacted]
- The ICA fails to clarify that "the plan" was just an email with no date, no identified sender, no clear recipient, and no classification. CIA could not vouch for the ultimate source's vetting, validation, or access. [redacted]
- [redacted] Station officers were unable to obtain further clarification of this report from the [redacted] service (see box "Second Report's Context Warning"). [redacted]

What the Raw Intelligence Says: Second Report's Context Warning

[redacted] CONTEXT: "The CIA can neither independently vouch for [redacted] vetting or validation of the ultimate source nor the ultimate source's access to the reported information. The document contains no classification. The document did not carry a specific date or identify the originator." [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

ICA Analysis Cites the Second Report Prominently, But Omits Critical Context That Would Cast Doubt on the Veracity and Anti-Trump Bias of the Source. The ICA obscures the implausibility of the report, by vaguely referring to "a plan" without describing its details. The details were important, because they were so peculiar as to likely cause readers to question the report's legitimacy. The ICA also obscured the source of the report, which had an anti-Trump bias, when *ICD 203* specifically notes that analytic products should *"describe factors affecting source quality and credibility"* such as *"motivation"* and *"possible bias."* [redacted]

- [redacted] What the ICA calls a Russian "plan" for engagement with Trump was actually an anonymous email proposal to place [redacted] —on Trump's "election team" in order to formulate a mutually acceptable agenda between Trump and Putin. [redacted]
- [redacted] There is no explanation of how this would be done or why candidate Trump would want a well-known pro-Kremlin official on his campaign team and to endure the media furor that would likely result.
- [redacted] The ICA bullet obscured the source as "an [redacted] Service" when it actually came from the [redacted] Service. Had the bullet clarified that it was from the [redacted], some readers might have known of [redacted] anti-Trump bias at that time, which would further undermine the judgment.
- [redacted] There was no security justification for obscuring the identity of the [redacted] service, as the ICA was written for the President, who is cleared for everything.
- [redacted] The ICA made no mention of Kiev's documented objections to candidate Trump. The Ukrainian Ambassador in Washington, Valeriy Chaly, took the unusual step (for a serving Ambassador) during the campaign of publishing an open letter in a US publication entitled, ***"Trump's Comments Send Wrong Message to World."*** The letter expressed Kiev's fears that candidate Trump was misinformed and, if elected, might hurt Ukraine by improving US relations with Russia. [redacted]

DCIA Ordered the Publication of a Third Substandard Report—Also From An Unknown Subsource—That Was Cited To Imply Putin's Preference for Trump. To support the topic sentence, *"Putin, his advisers, and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for [Trump]"* the ICA quotes information from an "established source" but without clarifying that the ultimate source of the information is unknown (see box "The Established Source").

What the ICA Says: The "Established Source"

[redacted] "The established source with secondhand access ... noted that several members of Putin's inner circle strongly preferred Republican over Democratic candidates because they judged that Republicans had historically been less focused on democracy and human rights ..." [ICA p. 2-3]

The ICA describes the information in terms that most readers would view as more evidence that President Putin would have a "clear preference" for candidate Trump. But this is only accomplished by omitting key context details.

- As with the other two substandard reports, CIA professionals originally declined to publish this information when it was acquired and only did so in

[redacted]

response to DCIA's post-election "full review" order.[redacted]

- [redacted] The information was acquired from the source via a secondhand source in [redacted] 2016, but was not published until 19 December 2016.[redacted]
- The ultimate source of the information is unknown.
- [redacted] While the established source received it from an identified subsource, the ultimate source of the information is not known, which the ICA failed to clarify.
- [redacted] It is unclear if the original source actually had access to Putin's private statements or those of his inner circle, or if this was the subsource's personal opinions of Putin's personal thoughts, if this was a garble or misunderstanding, or if this reflected some other unknown person's opinions (see box Third Report Context Warning).

What the Raw Intelligence Says: The Third Report Context Warning

While the source obtained the information from an identified subsource, the ultimate source of this information was unknown. Additionally, the degree to which the ultimate source was aware of the private comments and views of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Putin's inner circle was unclear."[redacted]

The ICA also misquotes the report to indicate that Putin and his inner circle "strongly preferred Republicans."

- [redacted] The phrase "strongly preferred Republicans" does not appear in the raw intelligence report.
- [redacted] The unknown subsource said that "historically" the "Kremlin had found it easier to reach agreements with US Presidents from the Republican Party" and that this was because Republicans were "less concerned with issues that were unpleasant for Russia such as democracy and human rights."[redacted]
- [redacted] The ICA did not take the basic analytic step, however, of comparing the plausibility of the unknown subsource claims to the documented policies of the past three Republican Presidents, all of whom featured democracy and human rights as cornerstones of their foreign policies. It brings to mind President Reagan's famous quote, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall" or President George W. Bush's comments on "the axis of evil."
- The information does not appear to make sense in the historical context, further raising the question of the reliability of the unknown subsource.

By both obscuring that the reporting is from an unknown source with unknown access and that the information does not make sense, the ICA leaves the reader unaware of the weakness of the evidence cited to support the major judgment on Putin's intentions.

The ICA Failed to Address the Existence of Reliable Intelligence That Contradicts the Third Report's Unknown Source. Even part of the ICA's own classified text—based on reliable reporting—contradicts the information contained in the third substandard report. This raised further questions about why, contrary to *ICD 203* criteria, the third report was cited as evidence of Putin's intentions without further explanation.

[redacted] Some senior Russian officials worried a Trump administration would bring hardline [redacted] security advisers or that a Republican controlled Congress would not support measures that would be beneficial to Russia, [redacted].

[redacted]

- [redacted], cautioned about the risks to Russia of a Republican Administration, noting that "those who would hold positions in [a Trump] Administration should he win will likely adhere to conservative anti-Russian positions."[redacted]

[redacted] Additionally, both the historical record and source materials for the ICA's "Annex D: Historical Patterns of Russian Influence in US Elections" indicate that the ICA "strongly preferred Republicans" judgment glossed over details in the Annex—from reliable sources—that contradict the claims from the unknown source on Russia's historical preference for Republicans.[redacted]

- [redacted] "There are no [Russian] plans to target any Democratic presidential candidate for active measures because any Democratic candidate is preferable to President Reagan", [redacted].
- Despite unknown sourcing, reliable contrary evidence, and implausible claims, the then Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, responding to a request to double check the sourcing behind the judgment, responded in a letter to the Committee that he nonetheless endorsed the ICA judgment (see box "DNI").

DNI Clapper Comments on ICA Citation of the Third Report

"I have reviewed the underlying source material myself and entirely concur in the judgment of the analysts, which I believe is consistent with standards of analytical tradecraft and objectivity." [Letter to HPSCI, 12 January 2017]

The ICA Falsely Claimed the Third Substandard Report Was Corroborated By a Body of Other Reporting. The ICA text is misleadingly drafted to suggest that some of the qualities of candidate Trump aligned with Putin's preferences for international partners, citing the third substandard report as evidence for the ICA judgment that "Putin developed a clear preference" for candidate Trump.

- The ICA further claimed information from the third report was corroborated by liaison, diplomatic, and press reporting, as well as sensitive signals intelligence (SIGINT).
- But in following-up every citation, none were found to corroborate the ICA claims.

[redacted] The ICA also used the third substandard report to claim that members of Putin's "inner circle" had compared Trump to other leaders with "business interests" that Putin could work with, using this a part of the supporting evidence for the judgment that Putin "aspired" to help Trump win.

- [redacted] The cited liaison reporting didn't mention Trump at all, and was from 2014, before Trump was a candidate.[redacted]
- [redacted] The cited SIGINT also didn't mention Trump, and was nothing more than an [redacted]
- [redacted] The cited diplomatic report is a post-election overview of Moscow from the US Ambassador that references a media opinion item by a Russian pundit suggesting that Trump and Putin should "work together like businessmen" which is hardly a corroboration of Putin's "inner circle" preferring Republicans or businessmen.[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

- [redacted] Ironically, the same Embassy cable quotes Deputy Foreign Minister Ryabkov as saying of Trump's election, "We do not feel any euphoria" citing a "bipartisan anti-Russian consensus", which directly contradicts the ICA judgment that the Russians preferred Trump.

Finding #4: The ICA Excluded Significant Intelligence That Contradicted Its Judgments That Putin Aspired to Help Trump Win

ICD 203 also instructs that intelligence analysts "must perform their functions with objectivity and that judgments "must consider alternative perspectives and contrary information." It further directs that "analysis should be informed by all relevant information available" (emphasis added).

The ICA selectively omitted quotes from key HUMINT and SIGINT reports that contradicted the judgments on Putin's intentions while, conversely, it included quotes—from those same HUMINT and SIGINT reports—that supported the ICA thesis. This was done multiple times, to include citations of two foundational sources for the ICA.

This cherry picking of reports is an important indicator for evaluating ICA tradecraft. By selectively quoting a repot repeatedly, the authors both demonstrated their regard for the value of the source, while simultaneously providing evidence of disregard for *ICD 203* criteria on objectivity and consideration of contrary information.

The ICA Selectively Quoted a Key Report That Contradicted Judgments on Putin's Intentions

Although the ICA quoted the reliable report four times, it omitted the most critical element of the report that strongly conflicted with the ICA major judgments on Putin's intentions.[redacted] [redacted] Missing from the ICA was significant intelligence that [redacted], a longtime Putin confidant, told a sensitive contact [redacted] that:

- [redacted] "Putin told him he did not care who won the election";
- [redacted] "Putin had often outlined the weaknesses of both major candidates."
- [redacted] Putin asserted that, in either case, "Russia was strategically placed to outmaneuver either one."[redacted]

[redacted] Putin's ambivalence about the two candidates is further supported by [redacted]—also omitted from the ICA—[redacted]. Putin's [redacted] made no positive mention of Trump. Instead, it revealed his pessimism that neither Trump nor Clinton would be able to correct the strained relationship. Although he indicated that there could be opportunities to gradually improve relations, he made clear that he didn't have a preference for either candidate, [redacted].[105]

- [redacted] Reinforcing his ambivalence about the two candidates, Putin was pessimistic that either one could overcome strong anti-Russian political sentiment in Washington in the near term, but seemed willing to work with either Clinton or Trump, noting that, "regardless of the election's outcome" there could be room to "gradually rid the bilateral dialogue of irritants."[redacted]
- [redacted] This theme was echoed by [redacted], who noted that, "Regardless of who wins the election, Russia will be able to begin a

[redacted]

[redacted]

fresh dialogue with the new administration" and that "Russia is in a stronger position than 8 years ago."[redacted]

- [redacted] A Russian [redacted] said Russia was planning for candidate Clinton's victory because "they knew where [she] stood and despite media stories, Russia could work with her", according to [redacted] a "collaborative source with excellent access" but whose reporting had not been corroborated.[redacted]

[redacted] A preoccupation of Russian officials and analysts was that neither Trump nor Clinton would respect Russia's strategic interests or treat Russia as an equal on the world stage, and it would take years to repair the relationship, [redacted].

- [redacted] A [redacted] report [redacted] warned that, "regardless of the party affiliation" of the next President, the US would "not view Russia as an equal partner."[redacted]
- [redacted] Putin's [redacted] cautioned, "Russia understands that it should not labor under the illusion that relations will get better soon after the November US Presidential election" and that it is "unlikely [Trump] will be able to take steps to correct relations."[redacted]
- [redacted] Putin's top USA experts echoed that view, noting it would take years for Trump or Clinton to fix the relationship.[redacted]

The ICA Omitted Reliable Evidence That Putin's Key Advisers Saw Significant Downsides to a Trump Presidency. The ICA selectively excluded information from reliable intelligence sources that senior Russian officials had serious reservation about how a potential Trump administration could be bad for Moscow and complicate repairing relations with Washington. The significance of that omission becomes apparent when reading the ICA's judgment of what Russian officials thought, which pushed the "clear preference for Trump" judgment that was directly contradicted by the raw reports cited by the ICA as sources (see box "Russian Views").

What the ICA Says: Russian Views of Trump

To support the judgment, "Putin, his advisers, and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for [Trump] over Secretary Clinton" the ICA stated:

"In late [redacted] prepared an analysis for Russia's senior-most America experts in which he said the [Trump's] positive attributes—such as his perceived unwillingness to criticize Putin, his background as a businessman, and the presence of advisers viewed as positively inclined toward Russian interests—outweighed potential negatives such as perceived unpredictability, [redacted]." [ICA p.1-2]

[redacted] At a June 2016 Moscow conference on US politics, President Putin and two prominent Russian experts on US politics—Head of the USA-Canada Institute Sergey Rogov and Ambassador to Washington Sergey Kislyak—gave speeches on the implications for Russia of the US election. The format was an examination of the pros and cons of a Trump victory. [redacted].[redacted]

[redacted] The ICA focused on the "pros" of Russian attitudes towards Trump, while ignoring the "cons" the Russians worried about in the event of a Trump victory. The Russian officials and America experts were thinking hard about all implications, including that a Trump win might keep the House and Senate in Republican hands, and how that would be bad for Russia.

[redacted]

[redacted]

By omitting the below evidence, the ICA denied the reader access to significant intelligence that undermines the major judgment that Putin preferred Trump:

- [redacted] warned senior officials that, "...it is important to be mindful that those who would hold positions in [a Trump] Administration should he win will likely adhere to conservative anti-Russian positions."[115]
- [redacted] worried that, "the implications of a [Trump] victory and an ability to maintain control over both the House and Senate are serious. Legislatively, a conservative victory would probably be a dead-end for developing Russian-US relations."[redacted]
- [redacted] made clear that he "took exception" to a "favorable view" of candidate Trump. He cautioned that there was "no basis for enthusiasm" simply because Trump refrained from using anti-Russian and anti-Putin rhetoric.[redacted]
- [redacted] Putin's [redacted] specifically noted that it is "unlikely Trump will be able to take steps to correct relations" while [redacted] agreed that Trump was unlikely to win and would be unable to improve US-Russia relations if he did.[redacted]
- [redacted] Putin's [redacted] attributed his pessimism to factors beyond the control of Trump or Clinton, such as "Washington's inertia" and "a consensus among Washington politicians on the need to continue pressuring Russia," a view echoed by [redacted].[redacted]

[redacted] Far from showing a consensus "clear preference for Trump", the evidence indicates Putin and Russian officials saw downsides to a potential Trump administration. The intelligence also showed, that regardless of who won, Moscow expected a prolonged struggle to repair strained relations with Washington.

Voluminous and Likely Relevant Evidence Was Excluded From Consideration. Investigators as well as the ICA authors were denied access to a trove of information on grounds of executive or congressional privilege. The ICA glosses over the likely significance of the unexamined additional material to ICA judgments (see box Unexamined").

What the ICA Says: Unexamined Russian Material

> [redacted] "[redacted] is in possession of additional SVR cyber-enabled collection, exfiltrated from US Government and think tank entities and dated at least [redacted], which may further inform the judgments in this assessment. To date, [redacted] and the IC have not reviewed this data."
> [Footnote "b" ICA, p.5]

[redacted] This intelligence consisted of cyber data exfiltrated by the Russians, beginning in 2014, from computer systems at [redacted], and political groups and think tanks.

(U) The ICA footnote affords the reader no insight, however, into why this evidence was not reviewed or the potential significance of the additional material to ICA judgments.

- [redacted] A senior FBI analyst told investigators that there were "many victims" from these Russian hacks.[redacted]
- [redacted] The same analyst said that he argued that this intelligence should have been shared with the Directors' Fusion Cell analysts because it might have clarified the scope of Moscow's operational capabilities and potential leverage from additional influence leaks.[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

- [redacted] The analyst explained that the Obama Administration denied ICA drafters access to this intelligence on grounds of Executive or Congressional privilege.[redacted]

Finding #5: The ICA Disregarded Russian Behavior That Undermined Its Judgment That Putin Aspired to Help Trump Win

ICD 203 notes that analysis requires "clear and logical argumentation" and that all analytic judgments should be effectively supported by relevant intelligence information and "coherent reasoning" (emphasis added).

- "Clear and logical argumentation" would require the ICA to explain actions Putin took that damaged Trump, which were contrary to the ICA's judgments.
- Similarly, "coherent" reasoning demands a thorough analysis of why, if Putin "aspired" to help Trump win, he did not take actions available to him at critical moments in the campaign that were consistent with those objectives.
- The ICA also should have examined the full scope of covert influence options available to Putin, and what his action and inaction say about his true intentions.

The ICA Ignored That Putin's Decision Not to Help Trump in the Closing Weeks of the Campaign Was Not Consistent With ICA Judgments. The ICA judged that Putin wanted to "help Trump's chances of victory when possible by discrediting Secretary Clinton" and that he "never abandoned this objective."

Yet when the race evolved to the point that it became possible for Putin to help Trump win—the polls narrowed dramatically as Election Day approached—the ICA did not address why Putin chose not to leak more discrediting material on Clinton in order to "help Trump's chances of victory."[redacted]

[redacted] A variety of intelligence sources indicate that Russian experts on US politics were following the election polls, briefing Putin on the status of the race, and providing analysis of where the candidates were heading, according to CIA analysts.[redacted]

- [redacted] The GRU warned Putin in early September that Trump would lose the election without the intervention of "remarkable" derogatory information on Clinton, according to [redacted]
- As the election entered the decisive final stages in October, Putin possessed proven, low-risk, cut-out platforms for leaking documents via DCLeaks.com, WikiLeaks, and "Guccifer 2.0 and an arsenal of material on Clinton.[redacted]
- [redacted] The SVR held particularly damaging information that likely would have created greater scandals than material already leaked by the GRU, [redacted]
- [redacted] CIA analysts confirmed that Moscow was receiving reports of US election polling. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Clinton's strong (+7.0 percent) lead in mid-October gradually fell by over half (to +3.1 percent) by the end of the month, according to the Real Clear Politics average of key election polls. The lowest point came five days before the election, when her lead was down to just +1.3 percent. During those decisive final three weeks of the election, new scandals might have been expected to stand a good chance of sinking Clinton's struggling campaign (see box "Final Three Weeks of the Campaign). [redacted]

The Final Three Weeks of the Campaign: Real Clear Politics Poll Average

Date	Clinton	Trump	Clinton
17 Oct	48.8	41.8	Clinton +7.0
18 Oct	49.0	41.9	Clinton +7.1
19 Oct	48.6	42.1	Clinton +6.5
20 Oct	48.5	42.1	Clinton +6.4
21 Oct	48.1	41.9	Clinton +6.2
22 Oct	48.0	41.9	Clinton +6.1
23 Oct	47.9	42.0	Clinton +5.9
24 Oct	47.8	42.3	Clinton +5.5
25 Oct	48.3	43.2	Clinton +5.1
26 Oct	48.4	43.0	Clinton +5.4
27 Oct	47.8	42.2	Clinton +5.6
28 Oct	47.1	42.5	Clinton +4.6
29 Oct	47.1	42.5	Clinton +4.6
30 Oct	47.6	43.3	Clinton +4.3
31 Oct	48.0	44.9	Clinton +3.1
01 Nov	47.5	45.3	Clinton +2.2
02 Nov	47.0	45.3	Clinton +1.7
[redacted]			
04 Nov	46.4	44.8	Clinton +1.6
05 Nov	46.5	45.0	Clinton +1.5
06 Nov	46.6	44.8	Clinton +1.8
07 Nov	47.0	43.8	Clinton +3.2
08 Nov	**ELECTION**	**DAY**	

*Clinton low-point shown in red. [Real Clear Politics source]

- Putin's decision not to leak additional derogatory information on Secretary Clinton as the polls narrowed undermines the ICA's claim that he "aspired" to help Trump win and "never entirely abandoned hope for a defeat of Secretary Clinton."
- [redacted] Putin's decision to stop leaking is consistent with alternative explanations—omitted by the ICA—that Putin didn't care who won because he saw weaknesses for Russia in both candidates. [redacted]

The ICA Glossed Over the Significance of Putin Holding Back His Most Damaging Material. The ICA mentioned that Moscow refrained from using "additional information." But it did so without addressing the strategic implications of what was held back, versus what was leaked, and how this speaks to Putin's objectives (see box "Moscow Could Have Done More.").

What the ICA Says: Moscow Could Have Done More

[redacted] "Moscow had additional information it obtained from cyber collection against US government and nongovernment targets—such as reports on Secretary Clinton's health—that it could have used against a Clinton Admiration's policies and nominees, based on [redacted]." [ICA p.3]

[redacted] "We assess that Moscow refrained from the full spectrum of actions it could have taken to affect the US election. We judge that the Kremlin could have disclosed additional material ...." [ICA p.11]

[redacted] The ICA's generic description of the material Putin held back makes the reader unaware of significant information available to Moscow to denigrate Secretary Clinton. This violated *ICD 203* directives that analysis "be informed by all relevant information available" given that documents leaked during

[redacted]

[redacted]

the election were far less damaging to Secretary Clinton than those Putin chose not to leak.[redacted]

- [redacted] As of September 2016, the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) had Democratic National Committee (DNC) information that President Obama and party leaders found the state of Secretary Clinton's health to be "extraordinarily alarming" and felt it could have "serious negative impact" on her election prospects. Her health information was being kept in "strictest secrecy" and even close advisors were not being fully informed.[redacted]
- [redacted] The SVR possessed DNC communications that Clinton was suffering from "intensified psycho-emotional problems, including uncontrolled fits of anger, aggression, and cheerfulness." Clinton was placed on a daily regimen of "heavy tranquilizers" and while afraid of losing, she remained "obsessed with a thirst for power."[redacted]
- [redacted] The SVR also had information that Clinton suffered from "Type 2 diabetes, ischemic heart disease, deep vein thrombosis, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease."[redacted]
- [redacted] The SVR possessed a campaign email discussing a plan approved by Secretary Clinton to link Putin and Russian hackers to candidate Trump in order to "distract the [American] public" from the Clinton email server scandal.[redacted]
- [redacted] The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) in August had details of secret meetings with multiple named US religious organizations, in which US State Department representatives offered—in exchange for supporting Secretary Clinton—"significant increases in financing" from Department funds and "the patronage" of State in dealing with "post-Soviet" countries.,[redacted]
- [redacted] FBI Director James Comey testified to the Committee that, in August 2016, the SVR had DNC emails in which the head of the DNC "was telling people that [former Attorney General] Lynch was working to control me and keeping a named member of the Clinton campaign informed on what the FBI was doing in the [Clinton] email investigation."[redacted]
- [redacted] The SVR also had information that the DNC leadership and Clinton's foreign policy advisors had heard that US allies "in London, Berlin, Paris, and Rome" were not optimistic about a Clinton Presidency. They had "expressed notes of doubt regarding her ability to perform the functions of head-of-state" and her election would "create

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[redacted] The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) published a report in early September quoting "European government experts" that noted candidate Clinton was building her lead in battleground states, and that candidate Trump would have "only minimal chances" of winning unless he was "... able to take advantage of yet more revelations concerning CLINTON's work as Secretary of State and, in particular, the growing scandal surrounding her use of her government position to attract large donors to the Clinton Family Foundation." The text suggests that Russian intelligence services were aware of candidate Clinton's potential vulnerability to ethical issues, which would highlighted the potential value of leaking the details of the secret meetings offering State Department patronage to religious groups in exchange for support to the Clinton campaign. The CIA redacted source details of this report, however, so it is difficult to assess the value of this intelligence without clarification of source access, reliability, or motivation. It is also not clear, because of redactions, if this information went to President Putin or his Presidential Administration staff. The ICA did not quote this report.

[redacted]

[redacted]

unfavorable conditions for advancing the foreign policy interest of the US." [redacted]

- [redacted] The SVR reported in January 2016 that it had information taken from a US think tank indicating that a high ranking official in the Democratic National Committee (DNC) knew about the application of political pressure on the FBI in the Clinton email investigation by a high ranking official of the US Department of Justice. [redacted]
- [redacted] In March 2016, the SVR had intercepted discussions between a high-ranking DNC official and a US non-governmental organization indicating that a Clinton staffer was receiving updates on the FBI's Clinton email investigation from a high ranking Department of Justice official. [redacted]

It is difficult to justify the ICA judgment that Putin "aspired" to help Trump win by discrediting Secretary Clinton, given that in the closing weeks of the campaign—when such devastating leaks could have been decisive—President Putin elected not to inject this material into the campaign.

At a minimum, the ICA should have identified this contrary evidence and addressed it. By not including this significant intelligence, the CIA violated *ICD 203* directives that analysis "should be informed by all relevant information available" and that assessments "must not be distorted by, nor shaped for, advocacy of a particular audience or agenda." [redacted]

[redacted] While the ICA did not address the significant strategic implications of what was held back, it does speculate on possible SVR tactical motives to explain Putin's decision to stop leaking after October (see box Speculation on Tactical Priorities).

What the ICA Says: Speculation on Tactical Priorities

[redacted] "SVR officers were protective of the accesses they used to derive intelligence reports for Putin ... and may have argued to prevent the disclosure of non-public material ... that, if disclosed, would have endangered continued collection on US decisionmaking" (emphasis added). [ICA p.11]

The ICA speculation about SVR tactical priorities doesn't make sense, given that the media had already reported on Russian intrusions into DNC servers by June.

- [redacted] their accesses were already blown by the GRU leaks and subsequent media reports and forensic investigations by private US companies, [redacted].[157][158]
- The cyber security company CrowdStrike had done an analysis of the attacks on DNC servers, and company officials testified that security measures had been improved. [redacted]

[redacted] The ICA pointed out that politically sensitive decisions to leak or not were made by President Putin personally. So it still would have been his call—regardless of ICA speculation on what the SVR might have argued—to hold back material during the critical final three weeks of the election. Putin's strategic priorities would have trumped any SVR tactical concerns about accesses. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

The ICA Did Not Attempt to Explain Russian Leaks to Damage Trump That Were Inconsistent With ICA Judgments on Putin's Intentions. The ICA does not directly address the GRU's September leaks of emails that were embarrassing to Trump and highly critical of his character. *ICD 203* tradecraft standards indicate that the reader is owed an explanation for such contrary evidence, which is at odds with ICA assumptions behind the thesis that Putin "aspired" for Trump to win.

The GRU-associated DCLeaks.com in September 2016 leaked emails belonging to Colin Powell, the former Republican Secretary of State under President George W. Bush, according to media reports and forensic information. In the leaked emails, Secretary Powell attacked the character of candidate Trump: [redacted]

- Donald Trump is "a national disgrace and an international pariah. All his lies and nonsense just pile up ... I just go back to the unforgivable one. Trying to destroy the President elected by the American people with his fictitious investigation into his source of birth. Absolutely disgraceful."
- "Trump is taking on water. He doesn't have a GOP philosophy or even a conservative philosophy."[redacted]

These leaks were contrary to the ICA judgments about Putin's intentions to help Trump. Yet instead of addressing the issue, the ICA only acknowledged that additional Russian compromises of US systems occurred, without tackling the significant implications of why Putin would want to hurt Trump. The ICA only notes that additional Russian compromises of US systems "may have" occurred (see box "Targeting Republicans").

What the ICA Says: Targeting Republicans

[redacted] "The GRU may have compromised additional personal email accounts of leading US political figures from both parties, judging from [redacted] on the extent of its spearphishing campaign from March through June" (emphasis).[ICA p.11]

[redacted] Although we saw Russian collection on some Republican-affiliated organizations, we have no reporting on whether Moscow collected similarly damaging Republican Party-related information.[ICA, p.7]

If Putin wanted Trump to win, it would seem logical that he would not have leaked anti-Trump material.

- Leaking the Powell emails that discredited Trump would make sense, however, if Putin didn't care who won.
- Discrediting Trump would also be consistent with Putin's objectives to undermine faith in the US democratic process and to fuel divisions in the country.

The ICA Also Failed to Adequately Examine the Disparity in the Scope of Russian Leaks Involving Clinton and Trump. The ICA stops with simply stating the fact that this occurred (see box "Additional Compromises of US Political Figures.").

What the ICA Says: Additional Compromises of US Political Figures

[redacted] "We assess that the SVR and GRU both conducted cyber operations against targets associated with the 2016 US presidential election, including targets associated with both major US political parties."[ICA, p. 4]

[redacted]

The ICA leaves the reader to assume Russia's unequal leak activates were another data point confirming the thesis that Putin aspired to help Trump win. But the ICA fails to consider that Moscow likely had substantially fewer documents available on Trump.

- Clinton's communications profile was larger and more exposed, as she ran a well-funded conventional campaign, connected to the Democratic National Committee (DNC).
- Trump's smaller staff and unconventional campaign, by contrast, was less integrated with the Republican National Committee, and presented a smaller footprint and fewer opportunities for Putin to breach than was the case with Clinton's more traditional campaign.
- Clinton was also likely to have been a priority Russian intelligence collection target for a much longer time than Trump (this was her second run for President and she was a high profile political personality for some 25 years). The ICA notes, by contrast, that Moscow only considered Trump a "fringe candidate" prior to the summer of 2016.

The ICA Failed to Adequately Address the Likelihood That Russian Intelligence Services Had Additional—Possibly Voluminous—Damaging Information on Secretary Clinton. The ICA details the methods Russia employed to leak emails, but does not give sufficient consideration to Clinton's vulnerability to other collection, or the capabilities of Russian intelligence services to collect non-cyber sources, such as audio or video surveillance of private meetings or intercepts of her private calls with foreign leaders, Obama Administration officials, campaign managers or advisers, or other sensitive conversations.

- Secretary Clinton would have been a Russian intelligence collection target for some 25 years, first as a politically active First Lady, then as a Senator on the Armed Services Committee, the Secretary of State, and as a two-time presidential candidate.
- Her extensive travel overseas as Secretary of State—including to Russia—would have created situations where she was more vulnerable to various Russian intelligence surveillance and monitoring capabilities.
- FBI Director Comey stated publicly in July 2016 that Secretary Clinton's careless security practices increased her vulnerability to intelligence collection.

We know that Putin held back significant derogatory material that he had on Secretary Clinton. But it is probable that he had more that what was contained in the ICA source material.

Finding #6: The ICA Misrepresented Documents on Putin's Intentions

ICD 203 states that proper tradecraft "makes accurate judgments and assessments." Accurate judgments require that raw reports be correctly quoted, and significant "contrary information" that does not support the judgments be included and explained.

Significant reports cited in support of judgments of Putin's intentions were not quoted accurately, were not quoted in context, or were selectively quoted to omit evidence that undermined ICA major judgments. Moreover, critical information that undermined source credibility and veracity of key reporting was omitted from both the ICA text and the subsequent briefings of the document to the President-elect, the US Congress, and the White House staff.

[redacted]

A Key Russian Political Assessment Was Incorrectly Cited As Supporting the ICA Judgment That Putin Aspired to Help Trump Win. The ICA falsely cited an analysis of the US elections by Russian experts on American politics as evidence of Putin's intentions. On closer examination of the raw intelligence, however, the report was not only badly misquoted, it provided additional evidence that Putin didn't care if Trump won or not, the opposite of the ICA key judgment that it was alleged to support.[redacted]

[redacted] analysts following American politics [redacted] sent their assessment of the final two months of the US election [redacted]. It examined the prospects for candidates Trump and Clinton, and various factors that could influence the outcome.

[redacted] This report revealed what Putin was being told by [redacted], which might have influenced his thinking. It was obtained from [redacted].

- [redacted] The [redacted] analysts speculated that Republican Speaker Ryan wanted candidate Trump to lose, so Ryan could run against President Clinton in 2020, and that "traditional Republican supporters" were refusing to assist candidate Trump.[redacted]
- [redacted] The assessment predicted Trump would lose the election, based on a host of factors, and that the only way he might win was if he obtained "remarkable compromising material" on Secretary Clinton.[redacted]
- [redacted] assessed with a high degree of probability that, "regardless of who won" neither candidate would view Russia as an equal partner.[redacted]

The ICA cites this report using a misleading topic sentence, "We assess that Russian leaders never entirely abandoned hope for a defeat of Secretary Clinton" (see box "Misrepresenting a Key Russian Assessment").[redacted]

What the ICA Says: Misrepresenting a Key Russian Assessment

There were four bullets of evidence under the ICA judgment that the Russian influence campaign "aspired" to help candidate Trump win. The third bullet—citing the Russian analytic report—says:

[redacted] "We assess that Russian leaders never entirely abandoned hope for a defeat of Secretary Clinton. [redacted] assessed for Russian leadership in [redacted] the only way to improve [Trump's] chances was if his campaign had sufficiently derogatory information at its disposal about Secretary Clinton, [redacted]." (emphasis added) [ICA, p. 3]

The wording implies that reliable reporting supports the judgment. But the actual cited intelligence says something quite different. Specifically, the raw report:

- [redacted] Does not state—nor does it infer—that Russian leaders "never abandoned hope" for defeating Clinton, nor does it even use the word "hope" or similar phrasing.[redacted]
- [redacted] Does not in any way describe the aspirations, plans or intentions of Putin or other Russian leaders.[redacted]
- [redacted] Does not describe Putin's "aspiration to help Trump's chances of victory" nor does it propose contrasting Clinton unfavorably to Trump.[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] The cited analytic report is nothing more than a clinical analysis of factors affecting the election contest, written by [redacted] political analysts. [redacted]

- The assessment is intended to inform Putin of factors that might affect the election, not to tell him what his objectives ought to be.

- [redacted] The ICA points out that sensitive decisions on Russia's covert influence policy are made by Putin personally, and it would thus be inappropriate in the Russian system for [redacted] intelligence analysts to tell the President what his goals ought to be regarding candidate Clinton. [redacted]

- The ICA cites no other classified report to make the case that Putin "never entirely abandoned hope for a defeat of Secretary Clinton."

The Russian analytic report actually undermines the broader ICA judgment that Putin "aspired" to help Trump win, to include the secondary judgment that Putin "never abandoned hope" for defeating Clinton:

- [redacted] The [redacted] report demonstrated that Putin's intelligence analysts warned him that candidate Trump was likely to lose without "remarkable compromising material" on Secretary Clinton that would "discredit her completely." [redacted]
- [redacted] As described earlier in this investigation report, Putin did possess "remarkable" compromising material on candidate Clinton, and not only did he hold it back, he did so when it mattered most, in the closing weeks of the campaign as the polls narrowed.

The ICA thus not only misquotes the report, but fails to adhere to *ICD 203* directive to address "contrary information" such as why Putin chose not to help Trump when intelligence indicated such help would be critical to Trump having any chance of winning the election.

[redacted] This Russian analytic report also provides evidence—supported by other classified reports from multiple sources—that some Russian officials and experts believed there was little difference between candidates Trump and Clinton in terms of helping Moscow's strategic interests.

- [redacted] The [redacted] report concludes by noting "with a high degree of confidence" that US-Russia relations are unlikely to improve "regardless of which candidate" were to win. [redacted]
- [redacted] Such a pessimistic assessment that neither candidate would improve relations with Moscow would hardly be likely to cause Putin to take action favor one candidate over another, and thus does not bolster the ICA claim that Moscow had a "clear preference" for Trump.

[redacted] The conclusion that neither candidate would be good for Russia appears to be a consistent theme among Russian intelligence and diplomatic experts, according to other HUMINT, SIGINT and diplomatic reporting detailed in this assessment. [redacted]

The ICA Also Misrepresented the Unsourced Steele Dossier As Intelligence "Reporting of Russian Plans and Intentions." The ICA included a two-page summary of a series of anti-Trump political opposition research reports—which have collectively come to be known as "the dossier" in the media—that was produced on behalf of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and the Clinton campaign—by former British intelligence officer, Christopher Steele. The dossier's most significant claims—that Russia launched cyber activities to leak political emails—were little more than a regurgitation of stories previously published by multiple media outlets prior to the creation of the dossier. Other dossier reports

[redacted]

[redacted]

were either proven false or were unsubstantiated, and these largely disparaged candidate Trump's character and alleged collusion between him or his campaign and Russian intelligence in a criminal conspiracy to influence the US 2016 election.[redacted]

Contradicting public claims by the DCIA that the dossier "was not in any way" incorporated into the ICA, the dossier was referenced in the ICA main body text, and further detailed in a two-page ICA annex (see box "Fourth Bullet").[redacted]

What the ICA Says: Fourth Bullet of Evidence Putin Aspired to Help Trump

In the CIA main body text, the key judgment "We assess the influence campaign aspired to help [Trump's] chances of victory" was followed by four bullets of supporting evidence. The fourth bullet referred the reader to a detailed summary and analysis of the dossier:

- For additional reporting on Russian plans and intentions, please see Annex A: Additional Reporting from an FBI Source on Russian Influence Efforts. [ICA p.3]

The ICA "Annex A" summarized the Dossier anti-Trump allegations, and included some analysis that struggled to imply that some dossier findings might have been corroborated by intelligence. The lead author of ICA, a CIA officer, said that he drafted the Annex A in coordination with FBI, even though FBI had provided the dossier information via a memo from their Assistant Director, Counterintelligence Division.[redacted]

- By devoting nearly two pages of ICA text to summarizing the dossier in a high-profile assessment intended for the President and President-elect, the ICA misrepresented both the significance and credibility of the dossier reports.
- The ICA referred to the dossier as "Russian plans and intentions," falsely implying to high-level US policymakers that the dossier had intelligence value for understanding Moscow's influence operations.

Even though the dossier information was unclassified, the dossier summary was only included in the highest classified version of the ICA that was briefed to President Obama and President-elect Trump, and was seen by various national security officials and senior political appointees. It was omitted from both the Top Secret version of the ICA released for Congress, and the unclassified, public-release version.

- By relegating the dossier text to only the highest classified version of the ICA, the authors were better able to shield the assessment from scrutiny, since accesses to that ICA version was so limited.

The DCIA Rejected Requests From CIA Professionals That the Dossier Be Kept Out Of the ICA. CIA analysts and operations officers struggled to explain how the ICA—written for two Presidents and other high-level officials—could have included dossier information without identifying and vetting primary sources and without explaining the political circumstances surrounding why the report was produced and funded.

The ICA sourcing errors involving the dossier violated so many *ICD 203* directives, that the text would normally not have passed first-line supervisor review at CIA, FBI or other IC agencies. Moreover, the dossier made outlandish claims and was written in an amateurish conspiracy and political propaganda tone that invited skepticism, if not ridicule, over its content.

- Two senior CIA officers—one from Russia operations and the other from Russia analysis—argued with DCIA that the dossier should not be included at all in the ICA, because it failed to meet basic

[redacted]

tradecraft standards, according to a senior officer present at the meeting. [redacted]

- The same officer said that DCIA refused to remove it, and when confronted with the dossier's many flaws responded, "Yes, but doesn't it ring true?" [redacted]
- CIA veterans noted that they could not imagine any previous director allowing such information in a formal CIA product, much less one intended for two Presidents, and then overriding the objections of experienced senior officers to do so. [redacted]
- Every CIA analyst and operations officer who was asked about the "dossier" took pains to emphasize that they had nothing to do with the decision to include Annex A, could not vouch for it, did not believe it should have been included, and some CIA officers blamed FBI officials for adding it to the ICA. [redacted]
- Explaining the analytic debate over the dossier, a FBI senior analyst said that CIA didn't want it in the ICA because they "were not comfortable with the sourcing." [redacted]

Echoing comments by CIA officers discussing the three substandard CIA HUMINT reports, the FBI senior analyst said that they were told by FBI leadership that all material, regardless of traditional sourcing standards, was to be made available in drafting the ICA.

- "Our instructions were that anything we had was to be used ... we were to push this." [redacted]
- When pressed to explain the decision, the analyst said that FBI leadership decided "it was the right thing to do" but that "we were not able to verify it [the dossier]."
- The senior analyst also addressed the poor sourcing, noting that "we were trying to determine who the Steele subsources were. The question is, who are these people? Are they credible? We need to qualify the path of how this got to Steele." He further noted that, "I'm not comfortable that we don't know how this got to Steele." [redacted][d]

The analyst did not say that any FBI personnel objected to the inclusion of the dossier in the ICA, as was clearly the case at CIA. The analyst's words were carefully chosen, however, highlighting strong concerns over unverifiable sourcing of dossier reports and their chain of acquisition. The FBI would not allow any other analysts to be interviewed, and it would be interesting to meet with other about their views of the dossier and the ICA.

The FBI Assistant Director of the Counter-intelligence Division and one of his senior officers, acting on behalf of their Director, pushed to have the Dossier woven throughout the main text of the ICA, according to CIA and FBI analysts. [redacted]

- Ultimately, the decision of how to handle the dossier was jointly made by the Directors of CIA and FBI, who overruled the objections from CIA officers, and agreed to reference it with other ICA text bullets describing Putin's intentions, while placing the details of the dossier in the ICA Appendix A, according to senior CIA officials. [redacted]
- The decision by the two directors was confirmed by the FBI senior analyst who said, "It was debated for several days ... upper levels [at FBI and CIA] decided to

[d] In mid-January, four months before this interview, the FBI met with Mr. Steele's principal subsource, and found that he did not have access to Russian covert action plans, that he was not credible, and most of what he reported was fabricated or poorly sourced hearsay.

[redacted]

put it in" and by a memo for the record written by Director FBI, in which he told White House officials that "I thought it very important that it be included." [redacted]

The ICA Ignored Abundant Evidence That Steele's Alleged Source Network Did Not Appear Credible. For at least four months prior to the publication of the dossier, the FBI possessed indications that the alleged source network behind the dossier was implausible, and that Christopher Steele was dishonest, based on interviews with the FBI agent who handled Mr. Steele (until he was fired—for being dishonest—by FBI in October 2016).

Even a cursory examination of the dossier documents revealed that the only significant verifiable information had come from media stories. Ignoring *ICD 203* directives to "properly describe quality and credibility of underlying sources," the ICA made no effort to address the implausible qualities of Steele's alleged high-level Russian agent network. [redacted]

- The dossier author claimed to have a network of sources with access to President Putin's most sensitive covert action plans and objectives, information that would be exceptionally sensitive, closely held, and subject to Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) counterintelligence monitoring.
- The ICA leaves the reader to wonder how an experienced British intelligence officer like Mr. Steele—after developing such a seemingly priceless network—would risk exposing his sources by giving their reports to numerous media outlets or political clients with the intent of making them public?
- At least as early as September 2016, Mr. Steele was offering his dossier reports to a dozen media outlets, all of whom refused to publish them until Buzzfeed.com did so on 10 January 2017, following leaks to CNN that the FBI Director briefed the dossier to President-elect Trump. [redacted]

If the reports from Mr. Steele's alleged source network were accurate, their publication in the media would have triggered a fierce FSB counter-intelligence investigation.

- Standard FSB practice would have counterintelligence officers compare the published classified information to the small circle of individuals with access to Putin's covert action plans, and use interrogations, polygraphs, computer forensics, surveillance, travel records, and other methods to identify the culprits.
- That Steele deliberately exposed the dossier to the media suggests that he either knew the information to be fabricated, or didn't care about his assets' safety, possibly because his alleged network lacked any meaningful access to Putin, his inner circle, or genuine covert action plans.

Mr. Steele raised more red flags—ignored by the ICA—when he delivered the dossier reports to the FBI using a circuitous route that bypassed US and UK intelligence authorities in London, and appeared designed to get the material into official FBI channels while minimizing the prospects for scrutiny of his suspect source network.

Mr. Steele, who resided in London, delivered the first dossier reports to FBI in early July 2016. He could have easily passed the reports in London via the British Secret Intelligence Service, the FBI Legal Attaché, or the CIA Station. But he instead exploited an old contact at FBI with whom he had worked on unrelated criminal matters years prior. He persuaded the agent, who was based in Rome, to fly to London in early July 2016 to retrieve the documents, fly the documents back to Rome on a commercial flight,

[redacted]

and then pass them back to FBI Headquarters, according to the agent who received the dossier.

- Delivering the documents to Washington via British Intelligence or the American Embassy in London would have been more convenient and secure, and Mr. Steele had established British and American intelligence contacts in London.

- The Rome-based FBI agent admitted that he had no intelligence training, nor did he have experience working with foreign intelligence services, but he had worked with Steele previously on an unrelated criminal matter.

- The FBI agent also said he accepted the dossier reports from Steele without getting even basic source information or inquiring about asset access or validation, something a trained intelligence collector would have insisted on. The agent said he trusted Steele because, "He had been helpful on a past criminal case" and "seemed professional."

- The agent also noted that he was not sure how to handle reporting of this nature, and had to discuss dissemination methods with colleagues in the FBI's New York Field Office where he was previously assigned.

Mr. Steele refused to be interviewed for this investigation, but as a former intelligence officer, he had to know that experienced British or American intelligence professionals probably would have balked at using official channels to transmit to Washington unsourced gossip that appeared to have political motivations. Doing so would have called into question their tradecraft judgment and risked being viewed in Washington as using their office to advance partisan smears of a US presidential candidate:

- The dossier's unknown souring failed to meet basic tradecraft standards required of US and British field intelligence reports.

- Steele's unsubstantiated claims of network in Moscow would have appeared fanciful to a professional, and even raised counterintelligence concerns that the dossier might be Russian disinformation.

- It is notoriously difficult to run sources out of Moscow, and Steele was unable to demonstrate that he had such resources, much less that they were vetted, per discussions with the FBI analyst.

- The dossier tone and content appeared to be dubious, and was highly political and specifically intended to denigrate candidate Trump.

The Rome-based FBI agent testified that he was contacted in September 2016 by a senior Department of Justice official who had met with Steele that same month, and had been speaking or texting regularly with Mr. Steele. The official's wife worked for the company (Fusion GPS) that contracted with Steele to produce the dossier. The official wanted to verify that the documents had been received by FBI Headquarters and were being used by the FBI investigation team looking at Russia.

- Steele was thus able to successfully exploit his previous relationship with a senior Justice Department official and an FBI agent who exclusively worked criminal investigations to get the dossier to Washington in official channels, where they might carry an air of credibility they would not otherwise have.

- Indeed, when the dossier summary was sent to CIA Headquarters by the FBI Assistant Director for Counterintelligence, it was described as coming from a "confidential human source" and the paragraphs were classified SECRET NOFORN ORCON

[redacted]

(originator controlled), as if it were legitimate intelligence.[redacted]

- The same FBI agent also testified that Steele had been touting his relationship with the FBI when he tried to persuade media outlets to publish his dossier, illustrating the value to Steele of the FBI association.[redacted]

Although the agent who received the Steele dossier came from the criminal investigations side of FBI, that was not the case with the personnel in the CROSSFIRE HURRICANE team at FBI Headquarters (a group of FBI agents and analysts charged with investigating Trump Campaign ties to Russia).

- The CROSSFIRE team was comprised of veteran FBI Counterintelligence Division agents and analysts.
- It is surprising, therefore, that FBI CROSSFIRE team was willing, without further vetting, to rely on the dossier to secure surveillance warrants on US citizens, and push to include it in the ICA, given its many sourcing, bias, and credibility problems.[redacted]

In Citing the Dossier, the ICA Violated ICD 203 Tenets For Proper Source Description. While referring to the Dossier as "additional reporting" of Putin's intentions, the ICA failed to mention significant information—known to the FBI during the drafting process—that speaks to source bias and credibility. According to the FBI agent responsible for obtaining the dossier and other sources, prior to incorporating the Dossier into the ICA, Mr. Steele:

- Told a senior Department of Justice official in September 2016 that he was "desperate that Donald Trump not get elected and was passionate about him not being President."[redacted]
- Told an FBI agent on 1 November 2016 that he was angry at the FBI Director for reopening the investigation into the Clinton email scandal.[redacted]
- Was terminated by the FBI on 1 November 2016 for being dishonest after the FBI learned he had violated his agreement with them by discussing with the media the dossier and his FBI relationship.[redacted]
- Told the FBI and media sources that he was angry that the FBI was investigating Secretary Clinton's email server scandal instead of Trump's ties to Russia.[redacted]
- Had admitted to be working for Fusion GPS, a political messaging company being retained by the Clinton Campaign and the Democratic National Committee (DNC) to gather and disseminate anti-Trump disinformation.[redacted]

By omitting these vital problems affecting source credibility, the ICA violated *ICD 203* directives that analysis "properly describes quality and credibility of underlying sources" affecting source quality and credibility, including "source access, validation, motivation, and possible bias."[redacted]

The Dossier Was Misleadingly Described Using Intelligence Terminology That Implied it Was From a Legitimate FBI HUMINT Source. The ICA further lent an inaccurate sense of credibility to the dossier by describing it using intelligence terminology, but without addressing all of the serious intelligence tradecraft red flags that characterized the dossier. Reporting from "an FBI source" implies that the information was acquired following standard source validation and that any shortcomings would highlighted to the reader. This did not occur in the ICA.

- The ICA misleadingly described the dossier as coming from "an FBI source." But Mr. Steele was not an FBI source as he had already been fired two months

[redacted]

before the ICA was published for lying to the Bureau, critical information that should have been clarified.[redacted]

- The ICA also describes dossier information as collected from "a layered network of identified and unidentified subsources" although the ICA did not clarify that FBI and CIA had so few details on the alleged network, that they didn't know if this material was all or in part fabricated by Mr. Steele, his subsources, or if it was Russian disinformation fed to the subsources.[redacted]
- While generically mentioning Steele's alleged network included "identified and unidentified subsources", the ICA omitted that FBI and CIA could not verify the dossier chain of acquisition or the accesses, reliability, motivations, biases, and reporting records of any of the alleged subsources who actually acquired the information.[redacted]

The ICA Made False, Misleading, or Incomplete Statements in Summarizing the Dossier. Compounding the tradecraft errors on identifying source credibility, the ICA also included statements that, through misstatement or omission, were false or misleading based on publicly released FBI information, media reporting, and other classified sources.

The nature of these misleading statements indicates the ICA author intended to distract the reader from the many tradecraft problems that made the dossier unreliable. This raises questions about why the Directors of CIA and FBI insisted this material be included.

- The ICA claimed the source "collected this information on behalf of private clients" while failing to note those clients—the DNC and the Clinton campaign—were Candidate Trump's political opponents, information known to the FBI at the time.
- This was extraordinarily important for assessing source motivation and the veracity of his reporting, and it was intentionally omitted based on analysis of the testimony of Steele's FBI handler, Fusion GPS officials, and media exposures of the relationship.[redacted]
- The ICA also excluded that the political messaging firm that hired the dossier author, Fusion GPS, was also working on behalf of Russian interests to uncover information that was shared with the Kremlin, raising serious counterintelligence concerns over possible Russian influence on the dossier.[redacted]
- The ICA misleadingly claimed that "the source...was not compensated for [the dossier information] by the FBI," when in fact the FBI had authorized payment of $25,000 to Mr. Steele for his initial work on the dossier prior to his termination, according to the FBI agent working the case. (He didn't receive the money because the FBI bureaucracy had not processed the payment fast enough before Steele was fired.)[redacted]
- It is not clear why did the ICA authors decide to cover-up these payments.
- Given the poor quality and bias of dossier reporting, this also raises questions about the motivations of the FBI leadership, in particular, who used use government funds to pay for junk produced by a political campaign.[redacted]

The ICA falsely claimed that Mr. Steele's reporting "appears to have been acquired by multiple Western press organizations starting in October" when the FBI knew—because Mr. Steele told them—that he had delivered the dossier to the media well before that.

- According to the testimony of the FBI agent and later confirmed by Mr. Steele's own testimony in a British court, Mr.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Steele had peddled the dossier to five major media outlets at least as early as September 2016. Moreover, on 23 September, the US news outlet *Yahoo!* published an article about the dossier sourced to Mr. Steele.[redacted]

The dossier was not accidently "acquired" by probing journalists, as the ICA suggests. It is not clear why the ICA covered-up that the dossier was deliberately fed to the media by the FBI former source, Mr. Steele, as political messaging on behalf of the Clinton campaign and DNC.[redacted]

The ICA analysis of the dossier also did not take the form of a defensive counterintelligence briefing, as The Director of FBI and Department of Justice officials testified. The credibility of the FBI Director's claim that the dossier needed to be included in the ICA to "warn the President that it was out there" is destroyed by the fact that the most essential evidence affecting the credibility of the dossier was intentionally omitted by FBI and CIA.[redacted]

- A true defensive briefing, ostensibly to warn Trump of Russian threats to himself or his staff, would not have omitted so much key information, nor would it have excluded information on Trump's associates, such as Carter Page.[redacted]
- It also would have been inappropriate to share defensive briefing data in a document disseminated to CIA analysts and 250 other US government officials, including appointees who were candidate Trump's political opponents.[redacted]

By leaving out so much critical information—the dossier's origins, purpose, sponsors, and source bias—all of which would have undermined the product's credibility, the ICA falsely encouraged senior policymakers to draw alarmist conclusions about the dossier's significance that were not warranted by evidence. This was subsequently confirmed by numerous questions and concerns about the dossier—voiced by President Trump and the White House staff—after the publication of the ICA.[redacted]

The ICA Misleadingly Claimed That Some of the Dossier Was Corroborated. The ICA further claimed "limited" intelligence corroboration of Steele's information, but failed to mention that his dossier was produced after Russian election hacking operations had already been exposed in the media—beginning 4 June 2016, while Mr. Steele delivered his first report to FBI on 5 July 2016—and thus any dossier mention of Russian hacking was neither predictive, nor was it unique information that was "corroborated" by intelligence.

"Regurgitated" would have been a more descriptive term to describe the dossier, in that it parroted media or internet stories and pundit comments on Russian hacks of the DNC. Mr. Steele even admitted under oath in a British court that some of the information in his dossier reports was obtained from anonymous internet postings.

The dossier offered no other significant or unique information that could be verified, per the testimony of the FBI Deputy Director. Much of the "verified" material consisted of broad observations that could be separately surmisable from unclassified sources media stories, academic literature, or internet research.[redacted]

The ICA claimed that "some" of the source's information "has been corroborated in the past" but failed to clarify that no significant 2016 information from Mr. Steele on Putin's covert action operations—the topic of the ICA—had ever been corroborated.

- Mr. Steele's reporting from prior years on unrelated criminal matters had no bearing on the veracity of his information on the far more sensitive topic of Putin's covert action plans against US democracy, and it was misleading for the ICA to equate the two without clarifying the distinction.[redacted]

[redacted]

- That distinction became increasingly important as the President and senior White House officials sought clarification for why the dossier was included in the ICA.

Pushing the limits of what might constitute intelligence corroboration of the dossier, the ICA identifies some information from dossier reports—information so broad that they could have been acquired from any number of media or academic writings on Putin's Russia—which the ICA claims were "consistent" with intelligence reporting (see box, "The FBI Source Quoted").

What the ICA Says: The FBI Source Quoted ...

Under the ICA judgment that "some of the FBI source's reporting is consistent" with ICA analysis, is the following bullet:

- "The FBI source quoted three sub-sources who reported that Moscow's aim in its campaign was to upend the international liberal order, cause tensions with European allies, shift US policy on key Russian interests, and undermine US politics regardless of the electoral result."

The ICA bullet text goes on to say this information is "consistent with what reporting from a Western government service and signals intelligence indicated were key Russian goals." [ICA p 2-]

Such broad ranging information could be consistent with all sorts of reporting, classified or unclassified, and thus does not—as the ICA implies—constitute evidence of the dossier's veracity. There is nothing particularly noteworthy about the Dossier generic claims that Putin desired to "cause tension" with European allies or "shift US policy on key Russian interests." And Moscow for decades has attempted to undermine democratic political systems. It is also noteworthy that the ICA dossier assessment, employed exceptionally compartmented but poor quality reports in its attempts to "corroborate" the dossier's vague claims.

- [redacted] Both human source reports cited by the ICA as corroborating the Steele dossier came from the [redacted]. Both were given the lowest confidence rating by [redacted] of "limited confidence" from "an untested source" with "unvalidated second-hand access" to a senior government official. [redacted]

- [redacted] The [redacted] includes a comment on the report, that explains some of the information has appeared in the press, and that it is not clear if this report reflects an official's personal understanding of what they consider to be Russia's overall plans for engaging the US, or if the report reflects actual Kremlin decided policies (see box "ICA Citations of Limited Confidence Reports"). [redacted]

What Raw Intelligence Says: ICA Citations of "Limited Confidence" Reports Alleged to Corroborate the Dossier

[redacted] "[redacted] Service comment: This report makes various assertions about Putin's objectives and priorities ... It is not clear, though, whether these views are based on a general understanding of how Russia will seek to engage the US, or specific ideas emanating from the Kremlin. Some of this commentary has appeared in open source." [redacted]

CIA would neither confirm nor deny if these [redacted] reports might have come from Steele's subsources. Steele claims to have shared dossier information with the [redacted] government, but we lack details of exactly what was shared or whether the material was taken seriously.

[redacted]

The content of the reports provided largely broad-brush information such as:

- [redacted] "Russia saw NATO expansionism as part of a trend of Western hostility towards Russia."
- [redacted] "Russia to take steps to actively deter NATO action on its borders; but remains open to dialogue to prevent conflict."
- [redacted] "Russia's priority was to prevent Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine from joining NATO."
- [redacted] "Putin remained opposed to US hegemony" and was "determined to curb US influence."
- [redacted] "Russia wanted from the US: A) Sanctions relief; B) To push Crimea to one side, adopting an 'agree to disagree' position; C) Force Ukraine to implement Minsk II; D) A reversal of the NATO military build-up; E) Respect for Russia's interest in its border states."[redacted]

Some of the information from the two reports seemed odd:

- [redacted] "PUTIN believed that the President-elect Trump's policy would be shaped by [the 97-year-old former Secretary of State] Henri Kissinger."
- [redacted] "Putin's ultimate aim was a more democratic, multi-polar world, but one that still included the US."

Given the broad-brush nature of the dossier reporting that the ICA claimed was corroborated, it was unusual that the authors chose such a highly classified, yet poor quality report, to demonstrate corroboration.

- The poor quality reporting did not induce confidence in the dossier.
- It did, given the tightly controlled access to the reports, greatly limit access to anyone seeking to verify the ICA's claim that some of the dossier was consistent with other intelligence.

The Misrepresentation of the Dossier's Credibility Extended to White House Briefings on the ICA. The Director of FBI visited the White House on 8 February 2017, where he briefed on the dossier among other topics. The Director wrote a memo for the record immediately afterward in which he documented:

- The White House Chief of Staff asked why the dossier materials ended up in the ICA, given that they were "unproven", according to the Director's memo.[redacted]
- The Director wrote that he told the Chief of Staff, "analysts from all three agencies [FBI, CIA, NSA] agreed it was relevant and that portions of the material were "corroborated by other intelligence" ... and I thought it very important that it be included."[redacted]
- In describing the dossier sourcing, the Director wrote "I explained [to the Chief of Staff] that the primary source was credible" and "much of it [the dossier] was consistent with and corroborative of other intelligence."[redacted]
- The Director further wrote that his motive for wanting the dossier included in the ICA was that "the incoming president [Trump] needed to know the rest of it was out there."[redacted]

The FBI Director's memo indicates that in briefing the White House, he largely stuck to the ICA depiction of the dossier, to include conveying false and misleading information, and omitting critical facts.

- Contrary to the FBI Director's statements to the White House, that analysts "from all three agencies agreed" that the dossier was relevant, CIA

[redacted]

analysts and senior operations officers had only weeks earlier argued with FBI counterparts against the dossier being included in the ICA. DCIA had to order it included over the objections of those professionals. CIA officers said that NSA had no role in the decision to include the dossier, and that it was only pushed by FBI.

- It was highly misleading to tell the White House that the dossier primary source—Christopher Steele—was credible, when his only credible information came from an unrelated criminal case years prior.
- Mr. Steele's credibility as a source was very much in doubt by February 2016, yet the FBI Director did not mention the multitude of red flags on the dossier to include that Steele was not a source after being fired for lying, no significant information had been corroborated except for that previously published in open source media, the political messaging company that produced it was hired by the DNC, and that Mr. Steele "was desperate that Donald Trump not become President."
- The FBI Director also failed to mention that only a couple of weeks earlier FBI agents met with Christopher Steele's principal source, and learned the source had no relevant access to Putin or the Russian government, that the information was fabricated or "hearsay upon hearsay" and that Mr. Steele had greatly exaggerated the credibility of the material and sources, according to notes taken by the agents conducting the interview.

The ICA also claimed that "some of the FBI source's reporting is consistent with the judgments" in the ICA, specifically citing the judgment that "Putin ordered the influence effort with the aim of defeating Secretary Clinton." As reported previously in this investigation report, the ICA was not able to correctly cite any classified intelligence demonstrating that Putin intended to help one candidate or the other win the election. In any case, that allegation had also been made by various media pundits, prior to the production of the dossier, and thus constituted regurgitated, rather than unique information.

The ICA Made False or Misleading Claims About Adhering to Proper Analytic Tradecraft

In light of the documented cases of the ICA employing misleading source descriptions, exclusion of contrary evidence, misquoted reports, and failure to consider alternative analytic hypotheses, the ICA's pointed references to the importance of tradecraft fundamentals does not hold up to scrutiny (see box "Analytic Process").

What the ICA Says: Analytic Process

"The goal of intelligence analysis is to provide assessments to decision makers that are intellectually rigorous, objective, timely, and useful, and that adhere to tradecraft standards. These standards include describing sources (including their reliability and access to information), clearly expressing uncertainty, distinguishing between underlying information and analysts' judgments and assumptions, exploring alternatives."

"A critical part of the analyst's task is to explain uncertainties associated with major judgments based on the quantity and quality of the source material, information gaps, and the complexity of the issue." [ICA-U p. 1]

[redacted]

Finding #7: The ICA Failed to Consider Significant Alternative Hypotheses suggested by Intelligence Reporting and Observed Russian Behavior

ICD 203 states that proper tradecraft "incorporates analysis of alternatives" to include "systematic evaluation of differing hypotheses to explain events or phenomena." It explains that plausible alternative hypotheses are "particularly important when major judgments must contend with significant uncertainties" and when alternative assessments might "produce high-impact results" (emphasis added).[redacted]

Discerning what was in the mind of President Putin that led him to order covert influence operations was fraught with significant uncertainties.

- Under these circumstances, it was important that the ICA address reasonable alternative hypotheses..
- By adopting a single-track explanation for Putin's actions—that he "preferred" candidate Trump and "aspired" to help him win—the ICA authors had little choice but to ignore contrary evidence and attempt to force-fit weak evidence to make their case.

The ICA Single-track Hypothesis Mislead US Policymakers on a Textbook "High-impact" Intelligence Judgment. This was a particularly serious tradecraft mistake, because Putin's objectives had to be accurately understood by US policymakers in order to appreciate the actual effects of the Russian operations on the election or to take actions to mitigate threats to future US elections.

- With three versions of the ICA being published—Top Secret/limited dissemination, Top Secret, and Unclassified—the ICA general conclusions were available to everyone, and the publicity these generated ensured the document was widely read.[redacted]
- The DNI reported that highest classified compartmented version was shared with some 250 US officials, an extraordinarily high number for such a sensitive document.[redacted]
- The ICA judgments affected all manner of decisions by Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches of government, as well as the perceptions of American democracy by US allies, foreign opponents, the US and world media, and American citizens.

Collectively, these factors made the ICA a "high impact" assessment that demanded the highest standards of tradecraft, to include the consideration of plausible alternative hypotheses.[redacted]

The ICA Ignored Strong Indicators Supporting the Alternative Hypothesis That, at a Minimum, Putin Didn't Care Who Won, and Even Had Reasons to Prefer a Clinton Victory. By keeping the most damaging material on Clinton in reserve, Putin was not only demonstrating a clear lack of concern for Trump's election fate, but conversely, his actions could also indicate that he preferred to see Secretary Clinton elected, knowing she would be a more vulnerable President than candidate Trump. Moscow's reserve of compromising materials would have given Putin leverage over a Clinton Administration, but not a Trump one.[redacted]

- [redacted] The ICA glossed over the significance that "Moscow held back some pre-election influence efforts for potential later use" without explaining how much more damaging these were than the relatively benign materials leaked during the election, and the implications that Putting preferred Clinton to win or at least didn't care.[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

- [redacted] The ICA also did not address the possibility that, even setting aside the compromising materials Moscow had on Secretary Clinton, Putin might have considered her the weaker prospect for President, given the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) reporting on her psychological health. [redacted]

- [redacted] The FBI had information from [redacted] that pointed to the possibility that President Putin had reasons to prefer Secretary Clinton win, because Russia "knew where Clinton stood and despite media stories, could work with her" according to [redacted]

[redacted] *Russian strategic Plans Appeared to Prioritize Post-election Influence Operations, Rather Than "Aspiring" to Help Trump Win the Election.* [redacted] omitted from the ICA—provides more evidence that President Putin's priorities were not focused on election operations designed to help candidate Trump to win. Rather, his priorities appeared focused on post-election operations to undermine the credibility of the expected, and possibly preferred, Clinton Administration, and on calling into question the fairness and effectiveness of the American democratic process.

ICD 203 directs the analysis of alternatives, and this intelligence further reinforces the alternative hypothesis that, from Putin's perspective, candidate Clinton was uniquely more vulnerable to Russian influence operations.

- [redacted] In early August 2016, [redacted] reviewed the ongoing leaks of anti-Clinton materials and pressure [redacted] to collect more, [redacted]

- [redacted] (The ICA timeline of Russian operations shows the last dump of emails began on 7 October, when WikiLeaks started leaking the Clinton Campaign Manager emails.) [redacted]

- [redacted]

[redacted] The timing and context of these [redacted] discussions—addressing possession and leaking of emails damaging to candidate Clinton—suggests [redacted] was deliberately "laying low" with unspecified material and planning "to shoot" after the election when the new Administration was setting up.

- [redacted] does not specify which candidate they expected to attack or the details of what [redacted] means, but the context suggest it was leaking the particularly damaging emails on Secretary Clinton, that were held back prior to the election.

- [redacted] It is clear, however, that the goals discussed did not involve helping one candidate or the other to win the election, but rather, "getting ready" for the big attack after the election when the new Administration was setting-up.

- [redacted] The strategic plan would only work if Secretary Clinton won the election, and the reserve materials

[redacted]

[redacted]

Moscow held on her would be leaked—a plausible explanation for "to shoot" in this context—in conjunction with the media campaign Russian intelligence was preparing. [redacted]

- [redacted] made no mention—directly or indirectly—of operations to help candidate Trump win or to denigrate him after the election.
- [redacted] The ICA indicated no evidence of similar damaging material being held by Moscow on candidate Trump, making him less vulnerable to such post-election influence operations than Secretary Clinton.

[redacted] ***Russian Tactical-Operational Orders Also Indicated That Putin Prioritized Post-election Influence Operations, Rather Than "Aspiring" to Help Trump Win the Election.*** While the ICA only considered the one hypothesis that Putin "aspired" to elect candidate Trump, the alternative hypothesis that he preferred Secretary Clinton was not considered in the ICA. [redacted]

[redacted] That Putin had reasons to want Clinton elected is supported not only by Putin's actual behavior, but also by the timing and content of Russian operational orders that indicated that Moscow assumed they had unique leverage over Secretary Clinton that would more useful if she won the election.

- [redacted] In [redacted] 2016, [redacted] instructed its regional directorates to conduct information operations to disseminate negative news stories on Clinton, according [redacted]
- The timing suggests the effects of the operations were intended to occur after the election.
- [redacted]

[redacted] issued orders to their field elements in Europe to "spread allegations about Secretary Clinton among European Union (EU) leaders" according to [redacted]

- [redacted] The allegations "included information on her purported tendency toward authoritarianism, violence, and coarseness in relation to partners and associates." The allegations would emphasize how extremely difficult it would be for EU leaders to work with a President Clinton, as she only "took her own and US interests into account when forming opinions" that Secretary Clinton "then tried to impose on others."
- [redacted] The media influence themes of these orders appeared to mirror the contents of some of the particularly damaging DNC and Clinton Campaign materials that Putin held back as the election became close. [redacted]
- [redacted] Such planted media articles with themes linked to the held-back emails would have laid the groundwork for subsequent leaks of the actual emails that would serve to validate earlier press speculation.

[redacted] The timing and targets of FSB and SVR covert media orders did not make sense if President Putin's intent was to ensure the election of candidate Trump.

- Operations timed to launch after the election or that targeted European leaders would not be expected to influence the decisions US voters toward either candidate.
- [redacted] The orders do make sense, however, in the context of laying a covert influence groundwork for

[redacted]

[redacted]

the post-election leaks of the more damaging emails.

- [redacted] Had Clinton been elected, these would have helped Russia undermine NATO perceptions of her competence to be President. They also would have provided rich propaganda opportunities for Moscow to denigrate the US democratic process.

There Were No Reliable Indications That Orders by Putin to Help Trump Win the Election Were Ever Issued, Which Further Makes the Case For Considering Alternative Hypotheses. ICD 203 emphasizes the importance of considering alternatives when analysts must "contend with significant uncertainties." President Putin's intentions—in terms of preferring one candidate over the other, or having no preference for either candidate—fit the ICD 203 definition, given the nature of the intelligence and difficulty of ascertaining Putin's thoughts.

[redacted] Had Putin preferred Trump to win, then we also would have expected to see evidence from a variety of HUMINT or technical intelligence sources that mentioned Trump in campaign orders from Putin, his subordinate intelligence authorities, or else evidence suggesting these orders exists from observations of Russian activities or discussions of lower level operators.

Yet the available intelligence showed:

- [redacted] No Putin orders directing or suggesting operations intended to elect Trump (by contrast, intelligence on Russian operations in German elections specifically mentioned Putin's goal of defeating Chancellor Merkel). [redacted]
- [redacted] No observed Russian operations that could only be explained in the context of electing Trump (as opposed to efforts to undermine faith in US democracy or post-election themes).
- [redacted] No evidence of attempts to covertly transfer money to the Trump campaign or otherwise directly assist the campaign.
- [redacted] No discussions or activities among subordinate authorities or tactical operators suggesting they were attempting to help Trump win or had received orders to do so. [redacted]
- [redacted] No indications of orders to not engage in activities that would damage candidate Trump, such as releasing the emails from Colin Powell that were critical of Trump's character.

The ICA Was Unable to Support Claims That Russian Operations to Denigrate Secretary Clinton Were Also Intended to Elect Trump. The ICA offered no reliable intelligence that indicated or implied that Putin issued orders to conduct influence operations that denigrated Clinton with the goal of electing Trump. Moreover, all of the Russian leak operations could be attributed to Putin's objectives to undermine US democracy, or to weaken the expected, and possibly preferred, Clinton Administration, without regard for Trump's fate. [redacted]

By Assuming Putin's Public Statements Could Only be Truthful, the ICA Missed the Alternative Hypothesis That Russian Propaganda Organs Were Actually Pushing a Manipulative Post-Election Theme to Paint US Elections as Unfair. The ICA claims that the judgment that "Putin developed a clear preference for candidate Trump" is confirmed in part by "the public behavior of senior Russian officials and state-controlled media."

- The ICA assumed—without citing any direct evidence—that the Russian state-controlled media coverage of candidates Trump and Clinton could only reflect

[redacted]

what President Putin truly believed, as opposed to his manipulation of foreign audiences.

- [redacted] In doing so, the ICA ignored the warning from the US Ambassador to Moscow—sent the week after the election—that addressed the danger of taking Russian statements literally, noting, "We caution that Russia must not be judged on what it says, only on what it actually does."[redacted]

- The ICA did not consider the obvious alternative hypotheses that Russian state media might actually be another tool for deception and manipulation of world opinion (see box "Putin and Russian Media Said").[redacted]

What the ICA Says: Putin and Russian Media Said They Prefer Trump

In support of the judgment, "Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for [Trump]" the ICA said:

"Our high confidence in these judgment is based on a body [of classified evidence] ... and the public behavior of senior Russian officials and state-controlled media."

"Putin publicly indicated a preference for [Trump's] stated policy to work with Russia." [ICA-U p.1 and ICA p. 2]

Russia's state-run propaganda machine served as "a platform for Kremlin messaging to Russian and international audiences. State-owned media made increasingly favorable comments about [Trump] ... while consistently offering negative coverage of Secretary Clinton." [ICA-U p.3 and ICA p.1 and p.8]

Looking at public statements by Russian officials and propaganda organs from a more skeptical view—informed by the classified intelligence and observed Russian influence operations—Moscow's public line can be shown to be exploiting Trump's outsider and underdog status, rather than helping him win or publicizing Putin's personal views.

- A positive portrayal of Trump would help Putin exploit him—after his expected defeat—as a "martyr" to the "corrupt" US democratic process and unfair Clinton election tampering.

- Secretary Clinton, by contrast, would be presented as having unfairly won, and having benefited from media bias, establishment favoritism, or election tampering.

Directly Contradicting the ICA Judgment That Pro-Trump Russian Propaganda Confirmed Putin Preferred Trump, the ICA Itself Offered Evidence Supporting the Opposite Conclusion

Following Trump's victory, the ICA notes that the Russian media began to immediately spin the surprise election results as a "popular indictment of US policies" and an "obvious sign of the ideological bankruptcy of globalization and liberalism," per the ICA. Statements that suggest Moscow's priority of undermining faith in US elections, rather than rejoicing at Trump's election.[redacted]

Although the ICA fails to examine the alternative hypothesis that Russian state media was exploiting candidate Trump to portray him—after his expected defeat—as a victim of a corrupt American democratic process, the ICA section on "Russian propaganda efforts" lays out that this was, in fact, what was happening.

- The ICA noted that Putin's chief propagandist, Dmitriy Kiselev, used his "flagship" program to cast Trump "as an outsider victimized by a corrupt political establishment and faulty democratic election process that aimed to prevent

[redacted]

his election because of his desire to work with Moscow."[redacted]

- The ICA also observed that "pro-Kremlin bloggers had prepared a Twitter campaign, #DemocracyRIP on election night in anticipation of Secretary Clinton's victory." Such plans fit perfectly with the theme that candidate Trump, had he lost the election, was a victim of a corrupt American political system.[redacted]

The ICA further omitted key intelligence of Russian operations shortly after the election to organize anti-Trump rallies, actions that directly contradicted claims that Putin preferred Trump:

- After Trump's election, the Russians employed false US Facebook personas "to organize and coordinate rallies protesting the results of the 2016 election" according to the indictment filed by Special Counsel, Robert Mueller.
- In November 2016, about four days after Trump's election, a Russian group organized a "Trump is NOT my President" rally in New York. A similar Russian-organized rally occurred a week later in Charlotte, North Carolina.[redacted]

Finding #8: The ICA Draft Was Unnecessarily Rushed and Subjected to Inadequate Review and Coordination

ICD 203 stipulates that analysis be "Independent of political consideration" and "must not be distorted by, nor shaped for, advocacy of a particular audience, agenda, or policy viewpoint." Yet the ICA was unnecessarily rushed to production based on orders that suggested political, rather than intelligence, priorities.[redacted]

On 6 December 2016, almost a month after the election, the President ordered the directors of CIA, FBI, and NSA to review their work to date on the Russian influence campaign, and to quickly produce the ICA—to include an unclassified version—for release in early January, according to CIA officers involved in producing the ICA. By 22 December (16 days later) DCIA was given the final draft for review.[redacted]

- The ICA classified and unclassified versions were disseminated on 5 and 6 January 2017—two weeks before the inauguration of President Trump—suggesting that the rushed work schedule was driven by a political motivation to ensure the ICA was rolled out to the Congress and world media by the outgoing administration.
- By finishing the ICA before the new President was inaugurated, the outgoing DCIA retained total control over who could see the raw intelligence cited, who was allowed to review the draft, and what comments would be accepted or rejected.
- Senior, experienced CIA officers who objected that the intelligence did not support the key judgment that Putin "aspired" to help Trump win, were silenced by the outgoing DCIA in December 2016. Those officers might have had their voices heard if the ICA's publication delayed until after the inauguration, to allow the incoming DCIA to manage the process.
- Rushing publication also allowed the outgoing DCIA to lead the briefings to Congress, where he could control the narrative.

Rushing the analytic process is sometimes necessary in the intelligence business, but that did not appear to be the case for the ICA. A comprehensive and authoritative review of Russian activities for lessons learned purposes could have been done at a deliberate pace, to include a second review by other analysts. The election had passed, and with it, the need for current intelligence updates of the sort produced by the Fusion Cell.

[redacted]

- Glaring ICA tradecraft errors identified in this investigation might have been caught and corrected by a more unpressured drafting process and a broader based review by additional working-level analysts outside of the tiny circle handpicked by the outgoing DCIA.

- Most of the ICA's key points on Russian hacking and leaking—except for the judgment that Putin aspired for Trump to win—had already been disseminated to key officials in the Executive Branch prior to the election, via the Fusion Cell reports. Russia's hacking had also been extensively covered in the media since June of 2016.

- The Congressional Intelligence Committees were given classified briefings in September and December 2016 on Russian election interference—primarily covering the hacking and leaking of emails—and Putin's objective to undermine faith in the US electoral process. The judgment that Putin "aspired" to help Trump win was not formally briefed to members of the Intelligence Committees until after the publication of the election following the publication of the ICA in early January 2017.

- [redacted] The allegation that Putin preferred Trump was only published in one, close-hold *President's Daily Brief* article on 2 August 2016. In August and September, DCIA also gave oral briefings—conducted separately—to eight senior congressional leaders using sensitive reporting, but with no written product, it was not possible to determine if DCIA provided the same details in each briefing.

- Virtually all significant classified reports cited by the ICA had been collected prior to the election and the paltry new intelligence the ICA cited from November-December 2016 did not justify rushing the product.

CIA officers commented that the process for producing and reviewing the ICA was complicated by the rushed schedule, the use of sensitive, compartmented reporting that few analysts and managers had access to, and by the order to produce an unclassified version. Together, these factors likely created disincentives against objecting to misquoting of sources or challenging questionable analytic reasoning.

- Just five CIA analysts were directed by the DCIA to write the ICA, with one analyst doing most of the drafting.

- Only three of the analysts had been cleared into the compartmented materials in the four months since the Director's Fusion Cell was established in July.

- The five authors would later express their astonishment to the Committee that management made no significant changes to their draft during the review process, something unheard of for such a high-profile paper.

- Some reviewers said they only saw select segments that they were cleared for, and did not necessarily know how those segments fit in the larger analysis.

- One key CIA analytic manager was unaware of the concerns regarding the unclear "fragment" that played such a significant role in the judgments of Putin's intentions. After reviewing the critical report, the manager admitted to not having been read-on to the various compartmented materials until 19 December, three days before the final product went to DCIA, and the officer had thus not read the raw reporting carefully enough to notice the ambiguity of the fragment.

- A senior operational manager said they did not see the draft ICA until days before it was published, and when they voiced objections about some judgments to DCIA, it was in the context of a fast approaching deadline, and the rush to publish created additional pressure against slowing the process or making significant substantive changes to the draft.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Qualities of character—such as professional ethics and leadership—play a significant role in ensuring that politically controversial assessments are subjected to the highest standards of analytic tradecraft. In offering recommendations, it should be noted that there are limits to what can be achieved by procedural or legislative dictates alone.

Recommendation #1: Improve Peer Review of Controversial Assessments Involving Limited-Access Intelligence

To strike a better balance between the need to protect sensitive sources and the requirement to produce a properly reviewed analytic product, IC agencies might consider establishing a senior analytic peer review team.

- A small team of long-serving senior analysts from outside the project lead component or retired analysts on contract, could be read-on to compartmented reporting in order to double check that sources are accurately quoted, see that judgments are corroborated, challenge assumptions, consider alternative analytic hypotheses, and to ensure experienced review outside of line management.
- Should significant analytic differences arise, the peer review team's concerns would be highlighted in the final product, both to inform the reader and to demonstrate that alternative views were considered and addressed.
- CIA officers said the Ombudsman for Analytic Integrity did not review the ICA, because no tradecraft complaint about the product was filed by the few cleared authors. For controversial assessments involving limited-access intelligence, the Ombudsman might also be enlisted as a matter of policy.
- CIA officers said only five CIA analysts wrote the ICA —with one doing the bulk of the drafting—and the DCIA subjected their draft to what some CIA officers described as an "unusually limited and hurried" review and coordination process.
- Given the significance of the ICA for America, DCIA's decision to limit peer review of the ICA—written by just five analysts—cannot be excused by the sensitivity of some reporting used. The CIA should have been subjected to a broader, more deliberate, and more independent review and coordination process.
- Over 250 people saw the most sensitive final version of the ICA, so it seems reasonable that a second analytic team could have been cleared to see ICA raw source reports, review tradecraft, and consider the ICA's lack of alternative explanations.

Recommendation #2: Require Political Appointees to Recuse Themselves From Management of Controversial Assessments During the Presidential Transition

To reduce the prospect for politicization negatively affecting controversial assessments, the Committee recommends that outgoing political appointees should recuse themselves from managing controversial assessments during the transition period between administrations. Political appointees should consider removing themselves from all aspects of management, production timelines, ordering dissemination of substandard reports, product review, and briefings of analytic findings.

- Rushing a significant assessment to completion on the orders of a political appointee nearing the end of his or her service could undermine confidence in the objectivity of the assessment.

- This is particularly important for products based on highly compartmented reporting, which are not subjected to normal coordination processes, and are seen by fewer analysts and managers.

Recommendation #3: Mandate a Special Context Statement for Publishing and Citing Substandard Raw Intelligence Reports

To discourage misleading citations of substandard raw intelligence reports, IC collectors might consider developing more stringent context statement policies for cases where a policymaker, intelligence agency director, or senior analytic manager wants to publish raw intelligence information that fails to meet normal publication standards. Citation of such a report in any finished analytic product should require a same-page footnote quoting the abbreviated context statement.

The objective of the special context statement would be to:

- Ensure that readers—particularly busy policymakers who may lack the time to read the original raw reporting—are made aware of factors affecting confidence in the raw intelligence.
- Stringent context statements should flag all factors affecting the reliability of the information, such as clarity, plausibility, and source access, knowledge, or bias.

[redacted]

APPENDIX A: ICA TIMELINE

6 November—Election Eve IC Assessments Do Not Mention Putin Helping or Even Showing Concern About Trump's Election Chances

Two days before American voters cast their ballots for President, a 15-person multi-agency task force known as the "Directors' Fusion Cell," transmitted its final memorandum on Russia's influence campaign to a select audience. The CIA Director shared this memorandum exclusively with the White House, the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) and directors of NSA and FBI. The memo's authors enjoyed unique and privileged access to the most sensitive compartmented intelligence, including reports withheld from the vast majority of Intelligence Community (IC) analysts. [redacted]

The election eve Fusion Cell memo made no mention of Putin "aspiring" for a Trump victory, even as the US polls showed the race to be close. The memo predicted Moscow would: [redacted]

1. [redacted] Continue influence operations to undermine the legitimacy of the US electoral process and degrade Secretary Clinton—whom Putin expected to win—and her presumptive Administration. [redacted]
2. [redacted] Seek to publish material that would "embarrass the incoming Administration" and "cast doubt on their integrity." [redacted]
3. [redacted] The memo concluded that, "Such efforts would also support Putin's domestic claims that the US is a corrupt, hypocritical, and undemocratic pretender to global leadership." [redacted]

[redacted] The memo's only mention of candidate Trump was to note that "Putin did not care who wins the election," according to a close associate of the Russian President, and that Putin said he was "prepared to outmaneuver whichever candidate wins." [redacted]

8 November—Trump Wins

The subsequent election of Donald Trump was as big a surprise in Moscow as it was in Washington DC, based on Embassy and media reporting. [redacted] Back in the US, media pundits struggled to explain how the American voters had chosen an upstart political outsider over a veteran establishment politician.

5 December—The House Intelligence Committee Receives the First Post-election Classified Briefing on Putin's Campaign

The FBI's Director of Counterintelligence and the DNI's National Intelligence Officer for Russia led a classified briefing that described Putin's leak operations, but made no mention of Putin "aspiring" to elect Trump. [redacted]

6 December—Obama Orders a Rewrite of IC Assessments on Russian Activities During the Election

The President directed the IC to review their work to date on the Russian influence campaign, and quickly produce the new ICA for release in early January, before President-elect Trump took office. The ICA would rehash much of the previously published material on Russian activities, but would also include the judgment that President Putin "aspired" for Trump to win. CIA would be the lead drafter, in coordination with FBI and NSA. [redacted]

- Five CIA analysts wrote the ICA, presenting a draft to DCIA by 22 December. The authors would later express their surprise that management made few changes to their draft during the review process. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

9 December—DCIA Brennan Orders Publication of Substandard Reporting on Russian Activities During the Election

Acting on President Obama's orders, DCIA Brennan directed a "full review" and publication of raw HUMINT information that had been collected before the election. CIA officers said that some of this information had been held on the orders of DCIA, while other reporting had been judged by experienced CIA officers to have not met longstanding publication standards. Some of the latter was unclear or from unknown subsources, but would nonetheless be published after the election—over the objections of veteran officers—on orders of DCIA and cited in the ICA to support claims that Putin aspired to help Trump win. [redacted]

5-6 January—The ICA is Officially Launched

On 5 January, the most sensitive classified version of the ICA was briefed to President Obama and shared with about 250 Administration officials and policy makers.

- On 6 January, the ICA was briefed to President-elect Trump, and the unclassified version was posted on the DNI website. [redacted]
- The unclassified ICA key judgments were identical to the classified versions: "Putin and the Russian government developed a clear preference for Trump" and "aspired to help [Trump's] election chances when possible by discrediting Secretary Clinton." [redacted]

[redacted]