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PROPERTY, AND THE INTERNET

June 14, 2019

The Honorable Christopher Wray
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20535

Dear Director Wray:

I write with extreme concern about President Trump's recent comments regarding foreign election interference and want to know how you are going to address them, especially in light of the chilling effect Attorney General William Barr's investigation may have on the attitude of your agents.

As you know, President Trump this week said that if offered he would listen to opposition research on a political opponent from a foreign country, including one hostile to the United States. He said he may not alert the FBI in such circumstances and would not consider it interference in our domestic elections.

You seem to disagree with President Trump on this point. On May 7 of this year, you testified before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, saying, "I think my view is that if any public official or member of any campaign is contacted by any nation-state or anybody acting on behalf of a nation-state about influencing or interfering with our election, then that is something that the FBI would want to know about." President Trump said you are wrong.

I share your view and vehemently disagree with President Trump. His unwillingness to alert the FBI to offers of foreign assistance in a political campaign and his willingness to accept such assistance make him a national security threat. It also invites foreign powers to make offers of assistance that they may not have made but for the president's comments.

Furthermore, the very counterintelligence officers we need guarding against foreign interference in our elections face a chilling effect from Attorney General Barr investigating the origins of the Mueller Report. This leads to the problem of the president inviting foreign interference while the agents asked to protect against it are perhaps anxious that they would be penalized for investigating the matter.

In light of President Trump's admissions and the chilling effect of Attorney General Barr's investigation, I would like to know what steps you plan to take at the FBI to ensure that law enforcement is aware of and can, without fear of being second-guessed, act on any offers by a foreign country or agent thereof that may come to help President Trump in any future political campaign. I also am asking if you feel the FBI needs any additional legal or budgetary authority to combat the threat President Trump may now have unleashed.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress