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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

August 24, 2018

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

Following your testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on July 25, we remain concerned over President Trump's unprecedented and disturbing statements in a joint press conference with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki, Finland on July 16, 2018. Unfortunately, since that time, our questions over what commitments President Trump made on behalf of the United States during the private, two-hour meeting remain unanswered. The public press conference in which the President called the United States "foolish" and praised Putin's election meddling denial as "strong and powerful" continues to be the only firsthand, U.S. account the American people have of what was addressed. As you know, Russian officials have taken advantage of the lack of communication by the White House to circulate their own, possibly false, readouts of what occurred in this private meeting. Our concern about this meeting is heightened by the ongoing Special Counsel investigation into potential ties between the 2016 Trump presidential campaign and Russian intelligence operatives and others who sought to interfere in our democratic process. There is an urgent need to address this matter given the continued interference by Russia in the upcoming 2018 midterm elections. Further, recent attacks on Republican-aligned groups demonstrate clearly that this is not a partisan issue.

In view of the President's comments and the inability of senior officials to provide a clear and complete description of any commitments that President Trump may have made during this two-hour conversation, we respectfully request that you provide the Senate Foreign Relations Committee members relevant materials including all classified and unclassified cable traffic, memoranda of conversations, interpreter's notes and policy directives related to the meeting, and if no such documents exist, to confirm so.

The purpose of these requests would be to:

- Obtain an understanding of President Trump's extended one-on-one meeting with President Putin in Helsinki and what, if any, commitments were made to the Russian Federation on behalf of the United States.

- Ascertain the veracity of the statements made by Russian officials since that meeting claiming that President Trump made various commitments to them, including on U.S. policy in Syria and Ukraine, and whether those commitments are consistent with current laws.

We make this request only as a direct result of the extraordinary and, to our knowledge, unprecedented circumstances of President Trump's two hour, one-on-one meeting with a leader identified as a threat to the United States by President Trump's own National Security Strategy. This situation requires urgent congressional oversight particularly in light of any potential U.S. commitments resulting from the meeting and to understand and address any Russian misinformation related to the meeting. In order to conduct the oversight responsibilities of this committee, it is appropriate we have access to these materials.

We thank you for your consideration of this request and look forward to working with you to advance our nation's security.

Sincerely,


Robert Menendez
United States Senator


Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator