

Durbin releases statement on further reports of Russian interference in the United States, changing context of Sessions hearing

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WASHINGTON—U.S. Senator Dick Durbin released the following statement on reports that the U.S. intelligence community briefed President Obama and President-elect Trump on Russian efforts to collect “personally and financially compromising”

information on the President-elect. On Friday, Durbin reviewed classified and unclassified versions of the U.S. intelligence community's assessment of Russia's cyberattack on the 2016 election.

“The American people need to know the credibility of these allegations of attempts to compromise the President-elect—his public statements about Russia and President Putin are even more worrisome in this context. These reports, though unverified, warrant serious investigation by a Select Committee in Congress or a Commission of public officials and private citizens with subpoena power to investigate them—led by people of integrity like General Colin Powell and Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

The allegation that an American President could be susceptible to blackmail by a hostile foreign government is historic and deeply troubling. It makes the resistance of Republican leaders in the Senate and House to a fulsome investigation all the more inexplicable.

The context of Senator Sessions' confirmation hearings is changing by the minute. It is becoming clear that we need credible assurance that America's next Attorney General would continue any investigation on this matter, independent of directives by the White House to terminate it. I plan to press this issue in the hearing today and submit written questions on it to Senator Sessions directly.”

Senator Durbin yesterday joined a group of bipartisan Senators to [introduce comprehensive sanctions legislation on Russia](#) for their cyber intrusions, aggression, and destabilizing activities here in the United States and around the world.