

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 9, 2018

Mr. Wayne LaPierre
Chief Executive Officer
National Rifle Association
11250 Waples Mill Road
Fairfax, VA 22030

Dear Mr. LaPierre:

I am writing about the reported relationship between the National Rifle Association (NRA) and Russia.¹ I am deeply concerned by stories indicating that the NRA and certain Russian individuals may have coordinated to influence the 2016 elections.

The NRA was one of President Trump's most powerful and influential donors in the 2016 election. The NRA also contributes heavily to congressional candidates. Reports indicate that the organization spent more than \$30 million to support the Trump campaign, a sum far greater than those used for previous Republican presidential nominees. Organizations like yours are able to contribute funds to their preferred candidate, but it is unlawful for foreign individuals to make contributions in U.S. elections. That is why I am alarmed by reports that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is investigating whether Alexander Torshin – the deputy governor of Russia's central bank – secretly funneled money to the NRA during the 2016 campaign season.

Torshin's influence in Russia and his relationship with the NRA suggest that this allegation may have merit. For example, in May 2016, Torshin attended the NRA convention at which the Association officially endorsed Donald Trump for the presidency. This was before Trump had been officially named the Republican nominee and much earlier than the NRA had endorsed previous nominees.

Further, this endorsement came only months after Torshin acted as a liaison for an official NRA trip to Moscow in December 2015. On this trip, the current and former presidents of the NRA – Pete Brownell and David Keene – as well as Milwaukee Sheriff David Clarke, who was associated with the Trump campaign, met with Russian nationals Sergei Rudov and Dmitry Rogozin. Rudov is the general director of St. Basil the Great Charitable Foundation, which has reportedly been used for money laundering. Rogozin is Russia's Deputy Prime Minister of

¹ Fandos, Nicholas. "Operative Offered Trump Campaign 'Kremlin Connection' Using N.R.A. Ties." *The New York Times*, 3 Dec. 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/12/03/us/politics/trump-putin-russia-nra-campaign.html;

Mak, Tim. "Depth Of Russian Politician's Cultivation Of NRA Ties Revealed." *NPR*, 1 Mar. 2018, www.npr.org/2018/03/01/590076949/depth-of-russian-politicians-cultivation-of-nra-ties-revealed.

Defense and leads the Russian Foundation for Advanced Research Projects in the Defense Industry, which focuses on cyberspace war. Rogozin is also an outspoken and longtime opponent of American power and was sanctioned by the U.S. government in March 2014.

It is deeply disturbing that an organization like the NRA, whose stated purpose and objective is to “protect and defend the Constitution,” would meet with sanctioned individuals connected to a foreign adversary that seems determined to undermine our elections. More troubling is that Torshin and Rudov appear to be further intertwined with other Russian individuals seeking to destabilize our democracy. At the same time Torshin’s NRA delegation met with Rudov and Rogozin, the now infamous dinner hosted by Russia Today was taking place. Alongside General Michael Flynn and Russian President Vladimir Putin, Konstantin Malofeev – founder of the aforementioned St. Basil Foundation – attended the dinner. Malofeev is also the co-founder of CFG Marshall, where Torshin sits on the advisory board. Malofeev is close with the Russian government and with the former director of the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, which reportedly developed plans to help elect Trump.

This complex web of Russian officials, NRA officials, and Trump campaign associates raises serious concerns. I respectfully request a response to each of the following questions:

- Did any NRA officials communicate with Torshin or any other Russian-linked individuals about efforts to interfere in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election?
- If so, was anyone associated with the Trump campaign aware of those communications?
- Did any NRA officials communicate with Torshin or any other Russian-linked individuals about efforts to interfere in the 2016 U.S. congressional elections?
- If so, was anyone associated with any congressional office or campaign, including the House Speaker and Senate Leader, aware of those communications?
- Did the NRA facilitate any meetings or communications between Trump campaign associates and Torshin or any other Russia-linked individuals?
- Did the NRA receive any money from Russia or Russia-linked individuals or entities during the 2016 election cycle?
- If so, did the NRA use any of that money in their 2016 election campaign contributions?
- Did any NRA officials discuss money laundering or the funneling of money from Russia to the NRA?

- Has anyone at the NRA been contacted by the FBI related to its investigation into interference in the 2016 election?

In January 2017, the U.S. intelligence community announced with certainty that the Russian government interfered in our election. This interference is a direct threat to our democracy, and it is critical that we have a full understanding of Russia's tactics so that we can hold those involved accountable and safeguard future elections.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please give full and fair consideration to my request.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

cc:

The Honorable Devin Nunes, Chairman, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
The Honorable Adam Schiff, Ranking Member, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte, Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary
The Honorable Jerrold Nadler, Ranking Member, House Committee on the Judiciary