

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0533

November 28, 2017

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

Dear Director Wray,

Thank you for your service. I write to you with great concern about reports that the FBI failed to notify scores of U.S. government officials that they were the targets of hacking attempts perpetrated by a malicious actor linked to Russian military intelligence known as APT28, or “Fancy Bear.”¹ The FBI apparently had knowledge of Russian efforts to break into officials’ personal Gmail accounts for over a year. I respectfully request that you brief Members of Congress on the FBI’s reasoning for maintaining its silence and detail the Bureau’s policy regarding the notification of cyber intrusions affecting current or former U.S. government officials.

As a computer science major and Member on the House Judiciary Committee, I have been deeply concerned about the breadth and complexity of the cybersecurity threats facing our nation. These threats often outpace our ability to track them, let alone combat them. However, given the FBI’s mission of protecting the United States from the malign efforts of “foreign intelligence and espionage” and “cyber-based attacks,”² the FBI’s response to this advanced persistent threat appears to have been deficient and demands further attention.³

Failing to notify current or former U.S. officials of known cyber attacks hampers their ability to assess and mitigate damage. Threat actors can often glean useful data from private email accounts that is then used to conduct further attacks. Given the success this particular actor has enjoyed in disrupting the Democratic National Committee (2016)⁴, the Ukrainian Army’s Rocket Forces and Artillery Unit (2014-2016)⁵, and other American and European entities⁶, it is unacceptable that targeted U.S. officials learned about these attacks on their own accounts from news reports rather than from their own government.

¹ Raphael Satter, Jeff Donn, and Desmond Butler, “FBI gave heads-up to fraction of Russian hackers’ US targets” *Associated Press*, November 26, 2017.

² “Our Priorities,” *Federal Bureau of Investigation*. <https://www.fbi.gov/about/mission>.

³ Satter, Donn, and Butler.

⁴ Dmitri Alperovitch, “Bears in the Midst: Intrusion into the Democratic National Committee,” *CrowdStrike Blog* <https://www.crowdstrike.com/blog/bears-midst-intrusion-democratic-national-committee/>

⁵ Adam Meyers, “Danger Close: Fancy Bear Tracking of Ukrainian Field Artillery Units” *CrowdStrike Blog*, December 22, 2016.

⁶ Andy Greenberg, “U.S. Sanctions Didn’t Stop Russia’s Election Hacking – Or Even Slow It Down,” *Wired*, May 4, 2017.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ted W. Lieu". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue ink color.

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

cc:
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee