

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<http://oversight.house.gov>

March 2, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

Last night, I called on you to resign after the *Washington Post* revealed that your testimony at your confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee in January—"I did not have communications with the Russians"—was false, and that you concealed your meetings with the Russian Ambassador for more than a month after your testimony despite the firing of General Michael Flynn for a similar offense.¹

You did not disclose your meetings with the Russian Ambassador to the Senate or the American people even after the President proclaimed in a press conference on February 16 relating to General Flynn's firing: "I have nothing to do with Russia. To the best of my knowledge no person that I deal with does." When asked whether any other Trump advisers had ever communicated with Russian officials before the election, the President stated: "No. Nobody that I know of. Nobody."²

Calls for your resignation have now been made by both Democrats and Republicans. For example, the former White House ethics adviser to President George W. Bush, Richard Painter, stated:

I don't understand why he didn't disclose to that Committee the conversations he had with the Russians. And this is not just any old question. This is about a country that has

¹ *Sessions Met With Russian Envoy Twice Last Year, Encounters He Later Did Not Disclose*, *Washington Post* (Mar. 2, 2017) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/sessions-spoke-twice-with-russian-ambassador-during-trumps-presidential-campaign-justice-officials-say/2017/03/01/77205eda-feac-11e6-99b4-9e613afeb09f_story.html).

² *Full Transcript and Video: Trump News Conference*, *New York Times* (Feb. 16, 2017) (online at www.nytimes.com/2017/02/16/us/politics/donald-trump-press-conference-transcript.html).

been conducting espionage activities against Americans throughout 2016.³

Mr. Painter also wrote in an op-ed in the *New York Times*:

President Trump has already fired his national security adviser, Michael Flynn, for misleading Vice President Pence about his conversations with the Russians. Misleading the United States Senate in testimony under oath is at least as serious. We do not yet know all the facts, but we know enough to see that Attorney General Sessions has to go as well.⁴

In addition, both Republicans and Democrats have also called on you to immediately recuse yourself from any investigation relating to Russian interference with our elections. These calls have come from Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, Senator Rob Portman, and House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz.

In response to these calls to recuse yourself, you stated this morning: "I have said that whenever it's appropriate, I will recuse myself."⁵ Clearly, it is appropriate now.

The American people deserve a full accounting of why you concealed these meetings for so long. For this reason, I ask that you answer the following questions:

1. Did you inform President Trump that you met with the Russian Ambassador during the campaign? If so, when?
2. Did you inform anyone else at the White House that you met with the Russian Ambassador during the campaign? If so, who did you inform, and when?
3. Did you discuss with President Trump or anyone else the situation with General Michael Flynn that caused the President to request his resignation? If so, what was the substance of those conversations?
4. Have you already received information from the FBI, the Department of Justice, the Intelligence Community, or anyone else about any ongoing work regarding the investigation into Russian interference with our election? If so, what information did you receive?
5. Have you already made any decisions as Attorney General regarding those

³ *Ex-White House Lawyer: Sessions Should Resign*, CNN (Mar. 2, 2017) (online at www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2017/03/02/painter-ethics-lawyer-on-sessions-russia-newday.cnn).

⁴ Richard W. Painter, *Jeff Sessions Needs To Go*, New York Times (Mar. 2, 2017) (online at www.nytimes.com/2017/03/02/opinion/jeff-sessions-needs-to-go.html?_r=0).

⁵ *Attorney General Jeff Sessions: 'I Will Recuse Myself' If Necessary*, NBC News (Mar. 2, 2017) (online at www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/attorney-general-jeff-sessions-i-will-recuse-myself-if-necessary-n728046).

investigations, including for example the approval or denial of intelligence warrants?

6. Did you disclose these meetings with the Russian Ambassador to the FBI or the White House as part of your background check, vetting process as the nominee, or preparations for the confirmation hearing? If so, when and to whom?
7. Who requested these meetings between you and the Russian Ambassador? Who handled the logistics? What was the purpose of those meetings?
8. What was discussed during those meetings? If you do not recall, as your office stated, how can you claim now that you did not discuss "issues of the campaign"?
9. When you testified before the Senate on January 10, did you recall your meetings with the Russian Ambassador? If not, on what date did you recall those meetings? How did you come to recall those meetings? Who did you inform about those meetings, and when?
10. Were these two meetings with Russian Ambassador the only discussions you had with Russian government officials or their agents since the date that you became an adviser to President Trump's campaign?
11. Are you aware of any allegation regarding any other Trump Administration officials or advisers to the President having any communications with Russian officials or agents prior to the election? If so, disclose all information you are aware of relating to these communications.
12. Were you involved in efforts to rebut news stories about the FBI's investigation of contacts between Russia and the President's campaign?

The American people should not have to keep finding out about new contacts between Trump advisers and Russian officials as a result of investigative reporting. The President and his aides must disclose all of their contacts with the Russians during the campaign immediately and provide a full accounting. It does not matter if Trump advisers talked to Russian officials or agents in coffee shops, on park benches, in their congressional offices, at campaign events, or at the Hotel Metropol in Red Square. The White House must disclose each and every contact with the Russians now.

Sincerely,



Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member

cc. The Honorable Jason Chaffetz, Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform