

January 9, 2017

Open letter to Idaho's Congressional delegation:

I retired from the judiciary at the end of 2016 and no longer speak on behalf of Idaho's court system. This letter contains my personal opinions as a concerned citizen of this great country.

I write to urge that you use your best efforts to convince the incoming President that Russia and its president, Vladimir Putin, pose a substantial threat to the security of the United States. The threat is not military in nature because this country is stronger militarily than Russia. However, Russia has very substantial cyber capabilities and, in fact, effectively deployed such capabilities against the United States in the recent election. It is essential that we take strong action to demonstrate that we will not tolerate such activity ever again.

The question is not whether Russia was able to affect the outcome of the election. The election has been decided and nothing will change that. What is essential is that we find out everything we can about Russia's cyber activities, act decisively to defend against future cyberattacks, and implement measures to deter any further malicious activities by Putin and his cronies.

Vladimir Putin is not a friend of the United States. Indeed, he has taken every opportunity in recent years to vilify the United States in order to increase his popularity at home. The Russian people have endured great financial hardship as a result of Putin's misconduct and Putin has conveniently blamed it all on the United States. This is a routine ploy for a dictator.

If you want to get a sense of who Putin really is, I would suggest reading Karen Dawisha's well-documented book, *Putin's Kleptocracy*. She describes how Putin started as a lowly KGB agent and through thuggery, treachery, and theft of state property was able to amass billions and become the ruler of Russia. He and his former KGB cronies are presently in control of the major assets of the Russian state.

In his 2005 state of the nation address, Putin said, "The break-up of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical tragedy of the 20th century." Since that time, he has worked assiduously to resurrect the Soviet way of life. He has cracked down on basic freedoms in Russia, has killed thousands of people in Chechnya and Syria, has tried to disrupt and discredit democracies in Europe and elsewhere, has annexed Crimea, has committed military aggression against Georgia and Ukraine, has liquidated truth-seeking members of the press, and now has taken very significant actions to disrupt America's electoral system. We simply cannot trust him and must take effective measures to bring a halt to his aggression.

Please do your best to convince president-elect Trump that he needs to reconsider his opinion of President Putin. While Putin may seem to be extending an olive branch, I fear that all he wants now is for the new President to lift the sanctions imposed because of the Russian grab of Crimea. That would amount to appeasement, only encouraging Putin to take further action hurtful to U.S. interests. While Russian actions were taken this time against a candidate of one

party, it is very likely that the candidate of another party will be the target next time. We must take decisive counter-measures now in order to stop these attacks that go to the heart of our democracy.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jim Jones

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