

**From:** Gountanis, John  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 7, 2020 2:54 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Erickson, Scott; HOULTON, TYLER; Hanna, Matthew  
**Subject:** Fwd: (U//FOUO) Advanced Notification of Pending U//FOUO Intelligence In Focus Release: "(U//FOUO) Russia Likely to Denigrate Health of US Candidates to Influence 2020 Election"  
**Attachments:** ADVANCED NOTIFICATION (U--FOUO) IIF - Russia Likely to Denigrate Health of US Candidates 07092020.pdf

Please hold on sending this one out until you have a chance to speak to AS1.  
 Please confirm receipt of this message.  
 Thanks,  
 John

**From:** I&A\_PB [REDACTED]@hq.dhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 7, 2020 1:49 PM  
**Subject:** (U//FOUO) Advanced Notification of Pending U//FOUO Intelligence In Focus Release: "(U//FOUO) Russia Likely to Denigrate Health of US Candidates to Influence 2020 Election"

(U) The Office of Intelligence and Analysis provides the Offices of Public Affairs and Legislative Affairs with notice of the pending release of unclassified products to allow time to draft public affairs guidance.  
 (U//FOUO) The attached is a draft of the U//FOUO Intelligence In Focus titled "(U//FOUO) Russia Likely to Denigrate Health of US Candidates to Influence 2020 Election". The intended audience is federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector authorities. We plan to publish the final version of this Intelligence In Focus on Thursday, 9 July 2020.  
 (U) If we can be of any further assistance or answer any questions, please contact the I&A Planning, Production, & Standards Division at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].  
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9 JULY 2020 IA-44399-20

FOREIGN INFLUENCE

(U//FOUO) Russia Likely to Denigrate Health of US Candidates to Influence 2020 Election

(U//FOUO) We assess Russian malign influence actors are likely to continue denigrating presidential candidates through allegations of poor mental or physical health to influence the outcome of the 2020 elections. We base this assessment on the pattern of Russian state media and proxy websites amplifying allegations of poor mental and physical health of 2020 and 2016 presidential candidates. Russian state media and proxy websites often wrap these allegations with other claims denigrating US media, democratic institutions, and global standing.

- (U) Russian state media RT and Sputnik and a Russian proxy website between September 2019 and May 2020 posted allegations about the poor mental health of 2020 Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden<sup>USPER</sup>. For example, the proxy website in March 2020 refuted media claims that the candidate's gaffes are a result of a stutter, instead arguing these verbal miscues are symptoms of dementia.
- (U) RT and Sputnik in September 2016 claimed the 2016 Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton's<sup>USPER</sup> admission of having pneumonia after allegedly becoming overheated at a 9/11 event raised serious doubts about the candidate's physical capability. RT and Sputnik also alleged Clinton suffered from a more serious health condition and suggested diagnoses ranging from thyroid disease to the early onset of Parkinson's disease and other neurological conditions.

(U//FOUO) Iranian and Chinese State Media Narratives

(U//FOUO) In contrast to Russian state media and proxy website content on presidential candidate health issues, Iranian and Chinese state media have focused on allegations concerning the mental health of the President.

- (U) Iranian state media questioned the President's mental health and amplified public discussion by medical professionals alleging that the President suffered from psychosis and narcissistic personality disorder and that his mental instability was enough to invoke the 25th amendment and remove him from office.
- (U) Chinese state media questioned the President's mental health and suggested that a debate about the mental health of a US president is indicative of deeper problems with democracy and the electoral system in the United States. A Chinese outlet highlighted public appearances by the President where he allegedly demonstrated signs of health issues.

(U) Prepared by the Cyber Mission Center. Coordinated within DHS (CBP, CWMD, ICE, and USCG). For questions, contact the Homeland Security Single Point of Service, Request for Information Office at [REDACTED]@hq.dhs.gov

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Source, Reference, and Dissemination Information

**Source Summary Statement** (U//FOUO) We assess Russian malign influence actors are likely to continue denigrating presidential candidates through allegations of poor mental or physical health to influence the outcome of the 2020 election. We have high confidence in this assessment based on open source Russian state media reporting and Russian proxy websites reporting over the past year and in the 2016 presidential election. Our confidence would be lower with indications that Russia intends to modify or cease its malign foreign influence against the United States, particularly those targeting the presidential election.

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