

**Prepared Statement by Senator Dianne Feinstein of California
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing
Cambridge Analytica and the Future of Data Privacy
May 16, 2018**

Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman, for holding the hearing. In March of this year, a series of articles and videos were published online regarding Cambridge Analytica and its efforts to use personal Facebook data of millions of Americans to influence United States elections.

To date, numerous governments have launched formal investigations into the company including the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Nigeria, Kenya, and India. There's much we do not know about Cambridge Analytica, but there are significant facts already in the public record. We know that Cambridge Analytica was established by Robert and Rebecca Mercer in 2013 at the urging of former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon as an American subsidiary of a London-based firm, SCL Group.

It has reported that the intent of creating an American shell was to give the appearance of compliance with the United States election law that prohibits foreigners from working on United States elections. According to CEO Alexander Nix, Cambridge Analytica worked for candidates in 44 United States elections in 2014.

During the 2016 election cycle, Mr. Nix stated that Cambridge Analytica and I quote, "did all the research, all the data, all the analytics, all the targeting," end quote. We ran all of the digital campaign, the television campaign, and our data, informed all the strategy for Trump campaign.

In addition, Cambridge Analytica obtained detailed personal information on approximately 87 million people from Facebook without their knowledge. The massive data set which reportedly including approximately 4,000 data points on each individual, was used by Cambridge Analytica and SCL of Canada to develop a comprehensive voter targeting and online behavioral influence tool called Project Ripon.

Reportedly, Project Ripon was a software program that used sophisticated algorithms to allow campaigns to segment voters into groups based on psychological characteristics such as neurotic or introverted. Once individuals were identified and grouped, the platform then provided pre-selected and focused group-tested images and keywords that were most likely to alter the behavior of those individuals.

Examples of the messages developed and used by Cambridge Analytic included keywords such as drain the swamp and deep state as well as images of border walls. In an undercover video, Cambridge Analytica managing director Mark Turnbull explained that Cambridge Analytica also created the brand Defeat Crooked Hillary.

The company then created hundreds of different online advertisements for that brand, including online videos that were viewed 30 million times. Through Project Ripon, selected images were

then sent to the relevant individuals through online advertising services like Google and Facebook.

These websites provided feedback on an individual's reactions to those advertisements, which were then fed automatically back into the targeting program. This is what we've learned in the past several months. However, significant questions remain. And there's much we still do not know about Cambridge Analytica.

We do not know the extent to which it worked with hackers to illegally obtain damaging information on candidates including the United States. It was reported in 2015 that Cambridge Analytica's parent company facilitated the hacking and theft of sensitive medical records from a Nigerian presidential candidate and published them online.

We do not know whether Cambridge Analytica used these tactics in the United States. But this pattern of activity was certainly used by Russian intelligence during the 2016 election. We do not know the extent of Cambridge Analytica connections to WikiLeaks and other Russian interests. It has been reported that Alexander Nix contacted WikiLeaks in June of 2016. Mr. Nix has said this was his only contact with WikiLeaks. However, his former partner, Mr. Nigel Oakes, has suggested that Cambridge Analytica's first contact with Julian Assange was between 12 and 18 months prior.

It has also been reported that other employees at Cambridge Analytica had direct connections to Mr. Assange including through Assange's former attorney. In 2016, Alexander Nix also provided white papers and briefings to executives from Lukoil, Russia's second largest oil firm, about Cambridge Analytica's political activities in the United States. Lukoil is currently under United States sanctions related to the Russian government's activities in the Ukraine. And in March 2017, Lukoil revealed its formal information sharing partnership with the Russian Federal Security Service, the FSB, the successor to the KGB.

Finally, we still do not know whether the data obtained by Cambridge Analytica was ever shared with or obtained by a third party. The data was originally obtained through a Facebook application developed by a Russian-born professor named Alexander Kogan. Professor Kogan maintains a teaching position at St. Petersburg University in Russia, a state-funded institution, and has travelled frequently back and forth to Russia.

These are concerning questions not only for the United States but for all democracies around the world. Based on what we have already learned, there is no question that the future of data privacy will have a significant impact on every aspect of our lives, including our basic constitutional rights.

Today, we're going to hear testimony from Christopher Wylie, who served as research director at Cambridge Analytica from June of 2013 until November of 2014. I understand he will be able to share insight into some of these significant questions based on his firsthand experience. So I very much look forward to hearing from Mr. Wylie and I thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.

