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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

KOLAN L. DAVIS, *Chief Counsel and Staff Director*  
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July 17, 2017

**VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION**

The Honorable John Kelly  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Rex W. Tillerson  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Kelly and Secretary Tillerson:

On July 11, 2017, I requested visa and parole information for Natalia Veselnitskaya, a Russian lawyer who reportedly met with Donald Trump Jr., Jared Kushner, and Paul Manafort at Trump Tower on June 9, 2016, after being paroled in to the country in late 2015. Recently, the *Associated Press* confirmed that Rinat Akhmetshin, a Russian-American operative with reported ties to Russian intelligence, also attended the June 2016 meeting.<sup>1</sup>

The Committee continues to investigate allegations that several agents of the Russian government, including Rinat Akhmetshin and Natalia Veselnitskaya, have worked on behalf on Russian interests to repeal the Magnitsky Act while failing to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA).<sup>2</sup> To aid in the investigation, I previously requested immigration information from Secretary Kelly, and received Akhmetshin's alien file.<sup>3</sup> Based on its contents, I

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<sup>1</sup> Desmond Butler and Chad Day, *Russian-American Lobbyist Says He Was In Trump Son's Meeting*, The Associated Press, available at <https://www.apnews.com/dceed1008d8f45afb314aca65797762a/Russian-American-lobbyist-says-he-was-in-Trump-son's-meeting>.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Chairman Grassley, U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, to Secretary Kelly, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (April 4, 2017), available at [https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2017-04-04%20CEG%20to%20DHS%20\(Akhmetshin%20Information\)%20with%20attachment.pdf](https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2017-04-04%20CEG%20to%20DHS%20(Akhmetshin%20Information)%20with%20attachment.pdf)

write to you both seeking additional details on his numerous visa applications, extensive travel activity, and apparently improper disclosure of his prior Russian military experience.

As you know, Akhmetshin is a Russian immigrant to the United States who reportedly worked for Russia's armed forces intelligence agency and allegedly specializes in "active measures campaigns" and political disinformation operations.<sup>4</sup> Akhmetshin became a naturalized United States citizen in 2009. According to information contained in his immigration records, during the years preceding, he traveled to at least 8 different countries while waiting to adjust his status from a lawful permanent resident to a United States citizen. Notably, he stated that in the five years leading up to his naturalization he made more than sixty trips to foreign countries, spending a total of at least 276 days out of the United States, including visits to Russia, Turkey, and Kazakhstan to name a few. Records also suggest that he may have worked and established a business impermissibly, in violation of his legal status, long before he was considered for permanent residence or naturalization. Additionally, when asked about his previous military service, Akhmetshin notes his service to the military police, with no mention of his alleged time as a former Soviet military counterintelligence officer.<sup>5</sup> Failing to disclose or willfully misrepresenting information to obtain an immigration benefit can lead to a finding of inadmissibility, or denaturalization if the individual has already obtained citizenship.<sup>6</sup>

In order for the Committee to determine the veracity of Rinat Akhmetshin's filings and more fully understand his immigration history, please answer the following questions no later than July 25, 2017.

U.S. Department of State

1. Please provide all visa records and associated documentation for Rinat Akhmetshin.
  - a. Did Akhmetshin apply for any U.S. visa? If the answer is yes, what category of visa was sought? Which embassy or consulate did he submit the application to? If the visa was denied, what was the basis for denial?
  - b. Please provide the visa category and validity period for any and all previous visas issued to Akhmetshin.
  - c. Please provide the dates of application submission and the basis of denial for any past visa applications submitted by Akhmetshin, along with any associated documentation, case or interview notes, or other related information.

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<sup>4</sup> Isaac Arnsdorf, *FARA Complaint Alleges Pro-Russian Lobbying*, POLITICO (Dec. 8, 2016), available at <http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/politico-influence/2016/12/fara-complaint-alleges-pro-russian-lobbying-217776>

<sup>5</sup> David S. Cloud, *Former Russian Military Officer Attended Trump Tower Meeting*, *Los Angeles Times* (Jul. 14, 2017), available at <http://www.latimes.com/politics/washington/la-na-essential-washington-updates-former-russian-military-intelligence-1500045531-htmlstory.html>

<sup>6</sup> 8 U.S.C § 1451 (1994)

d. Has Akhmetshin ever been in possession of a U.S. visa that was later revoked? If so, please provide any information that supported the decision for revocation.

e. Was Akhmetshin subjected to any additional administrative processing associated with any visa application? Please explain and provide all documentation uncovered, or created, as a result of such additional processing.

f. Assuming that your records show that Akhmetshin was granted an F-1 visa, did he ever request permission to work during the period of visa validity? What forms of employment activity would have been permissible during the time that he was in possession of any form of U.S. visa?

g. Please provide a timeline for all applications or petitions for immigrant and/or non-immigrant visas.

#### U.S. Department of Homeland Security

1. Please provide a timeline for all applications or petitions for immigrant and/or non-immigrant visas.

2. Please provide all files not included in the alien file, including but not limited to T files, working papers, notes, and receipt files.

a. Please produce any records of entry into or exit from any port of entry in the United States for Rinat Akhmetshin, and a timeline of his known travel into the United States.

3. What effect, if any, would failing to disclose all requested information on a form have on a determination of approval or denial of a petition? Please explain.

I anticipate that your written reply and any responsive documents will be unclassified. Please send all unclassified material directly to the Committee. In keeping with the requirements of Executive Order 13526, if any of the responsive documents do contain classified information, please segregate all unclassified material within the classified documents, provide all unclassified information directly to the Committee, and provide a classified addendum to the Office of Senate Security. Although the Committee complies with all laws and regulations governing the handling of classified information, it is not bound, absent its prior agreement, by any handling restrictions or instructions on unclassified information unilaterally asserted by the Executive Branch.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Should you have any questions, please contact Katherine Nikas of my staff at 202-224-5225.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Grassley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles E. Grassley  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on the Judiciary

cc:

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on the Judiciary