

**Statement for the Record**

**Sally Quillian Yates**

**Senate Committee on the Judiciary**

**“Oversight of the Crossfire Hurricane Investigation: Day 2”**

**August 5, 2020**

Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Feinstein and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

For twenty seven years, I was honored to represent the people of the United States with the Justice Department. I began as an Assistant United States Attorney in Atlanta in the fall of 1989. Like all line prosecutors, I investigated and tried cases, working to ensure that our communities were safe and that those who violated the law were held accountable. Over time, through five Democratic and Republican administrations, I assumed greater leadership positions within the Department of Justice. In the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Atlanta, I served as Chief of the Fraud and Public Corruption section, First Assistant U.S. Attorney, and U.S. Attorney. I then had the privilege of serving as Deputy Attorney General, overseeing the daily operations of the Justice Department for over two years, and finally as Acting Attorney General after being asked to stay on by the current Administration until Senator Sessions was confirmed.

Throughout my time at the Department, I was fortunate to work alongside career men and women who followed the facts and applied the law with tremendous care and dedication, and who are in fact the backbone of the Department of Justice. And at every step, in every position from AUSA to Acting Attorney General, I have always tried to carry out my responsibility to seek justice in a manner that would engender the trust of the people whom I served.

I have agreed to testify today about my knowledge of three topics: the OIG report entitled “Review of Four FISA Applications and Other Aspects of the FBI’s Crossfire Hurricane Investigation,” the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election, and the FBI investigation of Michael Flynn.

As you know, I have testified on these topics before, including before this Committee more than three years ago, in May 2017. Since that hearing, I have testified or been interviewed on these same subjects five more times: I testified to both Houses of Congress (the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence); I was interviewed by prosecutors and agents with DOJ’s

Special Counsel's Office; and I sat for interviews with DOJ's Inspector General as part of two different investigations.

In the three and a half years since I left DOJ, I have cooperated extensively with these inquiries for two reasons. First, I have dedicated my career to upholding high standards at the Department, and that includes assisting the entities that oversee DOJ's work.

Second, foreign interference in our elections continues to be a pressing threat to our democracy—one that deserves the government's and the public's full attention.

In that regard, it is important—especially now—to recall the context in which the events that we are discussing today arose. By the end of 2016, our intelligence community determined that Russia had engaged in a multi-faceted influence campaign aimed at the election and had done so on the direct orders of President Vladimir Putin. As has since been confirmed by our intelligence agencies, by the Mueller investigation, and—on a bipartisan basis—by the Senate Intelligence Committee, Russia's campaign was designed to undermine faith in our democratic processes, damage Hillary Clinton's electability, and aid the candidacy of now-President Donald Trump. The Russian government used a wide variety of tactics against us, including cyber attacks, the strategic release of stolen information, and a coordinated campaign to weaponize social media against American citizens.

We've all heard it said so often by now that Russia interfered in our 2016 presidential election that repeating it once more does not shock us in the way it should. But what Russia did here is shocking. Its actions constituted the gravest type of national security threat. It was essential that our intelligence agencies get to the bottom of what was happening, both to try to stop it and then, afterwards, to find out how it happened so that we could make sure it didn't happen in the future.

Russia's direct assault on our democracy thus required both an investigation and a response. And as we approach another Presidential election, we must remain vigilant about and committed to confronting the continued threat posed by malicious foreign actors. I hope that my testimony today will contribute to that effort.

I am testifying remotely from my hometown of Atlanta because, since the pandemic began in March, I have been following guidelines from both local authorities and the federal government to limit travel and avoid large gatherings.

My testimony is constrained in other respects as well. The events at issue took place nearly four years ago, and because I am no longer a government employee, I don't have access to many of the relevant documents. I have not been able to review those materials, so my testimony is based on my best recollection. In addition, since I left office, there has been a series of decisions about classification and privilege concerning

the topics on which the Committee has asked me to testify. I remain bound by my professional responsibility obligations and federal classification laws, and I will decline to answer any question that would call for information I am not authorized to provide.

With those understandings, I am happy to answer the Committee's questions.