

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 28, 2022

Dr. Stefanie Tompkins  
Director  
Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency  
Department of Defense  
675 North Randolph Street  
Arlington, VA 22203

Dear Director Tompkins:

Recent reports have raised questions about whether an individual doing research on behalf of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) investigated the 2016 hack of the Democratic National Committee (DNC).<sup>1</sup>

According to press reports, Dr. Manos Antonakakis, a Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) professor who had worked on a DARPA program, was interviewed by Special Counsel John Durham's office. Dr. Antonakakis summarized a portion of that interview in a July 2021 e-mail where he stated that a prosecutor with Durham's office asked him, "Do you believe that DARPA should be instructing you to investigate the origins of a hacker (Guccifer\_2.0) that hacked a political entity (DNC)?"<sup>2</sup> In that same e-mail, Dr. Antonakakis wrote that he said to the prosecutor, "this is a question for DARPA's director, and not for me to answer."<sup>3</sup> Since this e-mail became public, a DARPA spokesman told the media, "to the best of our knowledge, no DARPA-funded researchers investigated" the DNC hack.<sup>4</sup>

A recent press report revealed that Georgia Tech researchers drafted "white papers" relating to the DNC hack for DARPA.<sup>5</sup> Documents indicate that these researchers generated at least four documents with two of them "relat[ing] to the DNC hack."<sup>6</sup>

The DNC hack occurred during the lead up to the 2016 presidential election, which was marked by claims of meddling by foreign actors. Some of those claims have since been confirmed to be disinformation efforts by operatives from the Democratic campaign. As details continue to emerge, the public is rightly concerned about the extent to which various federal agencies investigated, validated, dispelled or relied on these claims. Indeed, the credibility of some agencies has been called into question, and the public deserves a full accounting of federal officials' involvement in these activities. Preserving or restoring public trust in these agencies requires transparency, candor and, when appropriate, corrective action.

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<sup>1</sup> Jerry Dunleavy, *Durham-related emails prompt DARPA to deny involvement in attributing 2016 DNC hack to Russia*, Wash. Examiner, Mar. 14, 2022, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/justice/durham-related-emails-prompt-darpa-to-deny-involvement-in-attributing-2016-dnc-hack-to-russia>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Margot Cleveland, *Docs: Spygate Researchers Did Work For Former Special Counsel Robert Muller*, The Federalist, Apr. 22, 2022, <https://thefederalist.com/2022/04/22/docs-spygate-researchers-did-work-for-former-special-counsel-robert-mueller/>.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

Our staff previously requested records from your agency, for which your staff requested an official letter. In an effort to better understand DARPA's work with Georgia Tech, we request the following by no later than May 13, 2022:

1. From January 1, 2016 to the present, please provide all contracts between DARPA and Georgia Tech.
2. All records<sup>7</sup> between and among employees of DARPA and Georgia Tech including but not limited to the alleged "white papers" entitled:
  - "Whitepaper on DNC attack attribution";
  - "Analysis of attacks of EOP (Executive Office of the President) networks";
  - "Whitepaper for DOJ on APT-29 related hackers, crypto coin transactions, and analysis that includes Yota-related domains"; and
  - "'Mueller List' – list of domains and indicators related to APT-28".<sup>8</sup>

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson  
Ranking Member  
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations



Chuck Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary

cc: The Honorable Jon Ossoff  
Chairman  
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

The Honorable Richard Durbin  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary

The Honorable Sean O'Donnell  
Acting Inspector General  
Department of Defense

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<sup>7</sup> "Records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (e-mails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

<sup>8</sup> Margot Cleveland, *Docs: Spygate Researchers Did Work For Former Special Counsel Robert Muller*, The Federalist, Apr. 22, 2022, <https://thefederalist.com/2022/04/22/docs-spygate-researchers-did-work-for-former-special-counsel-robert-mueller/>.