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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

KOLAN DAVIS, STAFF DIRECTOR AND CHIEF COUNSEL  
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February 13, 2019

**VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION**

Dimitri K. Simes  
President and CEO, Center for the National Interest  
Publisher, The National Interest  
1025 Connecticut Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Simes:

The Senate Finance Committee has a constitutional responsibility to engage in vigilant oversight of entities and government agencies within its jurisdiction. A critical issue facing the Committee and the country is the extent to which the Russian government engaged in efforts designed to undermine our political system and governmental policy through obfuscation and manipulation.

According to a Reuters news report, Maria Butina, who recently pled guilty in federal court for conspiracy to act as a foreign agent in the United States, and Alexander Torshin met with Obama administration officials from the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve in 2015.<sup>1</sup> At the time, Mr. Torshin was Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation and later, in April 2018, he was added to a list of Russian nationals sanctioned by the Treasury Department. The meetings, reportedly arranged by Center for the National Interest, a self-described bipartisan, tax exempt entity,<sup>2</sup> are said to have involved Stanley Fischer, then Federal Reserve Vice Chairman, and Nathan Sheets, then Treasury Undersecretary for International Affairs.<sup>3</sup> Ms. Butina and Mr. Torshin reportedly discussed U.S.-Russia economic relations with Mr. Fischer and Mr. Sheets.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah N. Lynch, Exclusive: Alleged Russian agent Butina met with U.S. Treasury, Fed officials, *Reuters*, July 22, 2018; [www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-russia-butina-exclusive/exclusive-accused-russian-agent-butina-met-with-u-s-treasury-fed-officials-idUSKBN1KC0DC](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-russia-butina-exclusive/exclusive-accused-russian-agent-butina-met-with-u-s-treasury-fed-officials-idUSKBN1KC0DC).

<sup>2</sup> Bob Davis, Butina, Fed's Fischer In Meeting Together, *Wall Street Journal*, July 23, 2018; <https://www.wsj.com/articles/alleged-russian-agent-maria-butina-was-at-2015-meeting-with-top-fed-official-1532300577>.

<sup>3</sup> Lynch, *supra* n.1.

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

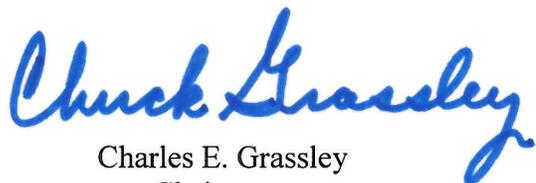
Given what is now known about them from public court filings, it is concerning that Ms. Butina and Mr. Torshin were able to gain access to high-level administration officials responsible for U.S. economic and monetary policy to reportedly discuss U.S. Russian economic relations. Furthermore, it is important to better understand what role the CFTNI played in arranging meetings between Ms. Butina and Mr. Torshin and U.S. government officials.

Accordingly, we are writing to request the following information and records<sup>5</sup> no later than February 26, 2019:

1. All records relating to meetings CFTNI organized between or among Treasury Department officials, Ms. Butina, and Mr. Torshin, or any other Russian government official then known to have associated with Ms. Butina or Mr. Torshin, as well as a description of the purpose of each of these meetings and CFTNI's role in them.
2. All records relating to meetings CFTNI organized between or among Federal Reserve officials, Ms. Butina, and Mr. Torshin, or any other Russian government official then known to have associated with Ms. Butina or Mr. Torshin, as well as a description of the purpose of each of these meetings and CFTNI's role in them.
3. All records relating to meetings CFTNI organized between or among any other Federal officials and Ms. Butina and Mr. Torshin and a description of the purpose of each of these meetings and CFTNI's role in organizing them.
4. Please also describe how CFTNI's efforts to arrange these reported meetings differed, if at all, from other similar efforts that CFTNI may have undertaken with regard to nations other than Russia and foreign nationals other than Mr. Torshin and Ms. Butina.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. You may reach our respective investigative staffs at (202) 224-4515 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley  
Chairman  
Committee on Finance



Ron Wyden  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Finance

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<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this letter, "records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, interoffice communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).