

Sen. Warner Joins Top Senate Democrats in Demanding Details on Putin Summit

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WASHINGTON— Following President Trump’s meeting and press conference with Vladimir Putin in Helsinki, where he accepted Putin’s election meddling denial, top Senate Democrats sent a letter to President Trump listing a series of questions to clarify what commitments he may have made to Putin during their secretive and lengthy meeting.

U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-VA), Vice Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Senate Foreign Relations Ranking Member Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Senate Armed Services Ranking Member Jack Reed (D-RI), and Senate Banking Ranking Member Sherrod Brown (D-OH) signed the letter to President Trump.

“American citizens and the whole world watched the leader of the free world align with an authoritarian leader who orchestrated an attack on our own democracy. President Putin and his government are wasting no time capitalizing on yesterday’s meeting and using it to advance their national interests. We cannot afford to be blindsided or outmaneuvered,” **wrote the Senators** before listing 13 questions to be answered by the President. “Your cursory description of what was discussed at a two-and-a-half-hour meeting does little to assuage these concerns. To adequately protect America’s interests, we need to know what commitments you may have made to President Putin.”

The Senators also called on the Trump Administration to allow the U.S. Ambassador to Russia and the Secretary of Defense to testify before Congress about the repercussions of the Helsinki summit. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is already scheduled to appear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Wednesday July 25th.

The text of the letter can be found [here](#) and below:

Mr. President:

Yesterday was a stunning day for American democracy. American citizens and the whole world watched the leader of the free world align with an authoritarian leader who orchestrated an attack on our own democracy. In doing so, you turned your back on our own intelligence community, which unanimously agrees that the Russian government carried out attacks intended to disrupt and interfere with our elections and influence public opinion.

We as a nation must now wonder exactly what you discussed and may have promised to President Putin. Congress and the American public have a right to know. President Putin and his government are wasting no time capitalizing on yesterday's meeting and using it to advance their national interests. We cannot afford to be blindsided or outmaneuvered. Just today the Russian Ministry of Defense publicly stated that it is prepared to start implementing an agreement you apparently struck in Helsinki with President Putin, an agreement that neither Congress nor the American people have been informed about.

Your cursory description of what was discussed at a two-and-a-half-hour meeting does little to assuage these concerns. To adequately protect America's interests, we need to know what commitments you may have made to President Putin. Specifically:

- 1. What is the full list of topics you discussed?*
- 2. What were the "suggestions" President Putin made to you?*
- 3. Did you discuss any changes to international security agreements?*
- 4. Did you advocate for the removal to the U.S. of the 12 Russian intelligence officers indicted last Friday?*

5. *Did you make any commitments regarding the future of the U.S. military presence in Syria?*

6. *Did you call upon President Putin to uphold Russia's commitments, agreed to at the Presidential level last year in Da Nang, Vietnam, with respect to the de-escalation zone in southwest Syria, especially the presence of Iran and Iranian-aligned forces?*

7. *Did you press Russia to return to compliance with the INF treaty and halt its nuclear threats against Europe?*

8. *Did you discuss relaxing U.S. sanctions on Russia, including CAATSA sanctions? If so, what was said, and what concessions, if any, were made by you and/or President Putin?*

9. *Did you call upon President Putin to withdraw from Crimea and eastern Ukraine so that both areas are returned to Ukrainian Government control?*

10. *Did you discuss NATO military exercises scheduled for this fall? Did you agree to roll back or change the nature of those exercises?*

11. *Did you discuss U.S. security assistance to Ukraine or make any concessions regarding its continuation?*

12. *Did you raise the issue of political prisoners with President Putin, including that of Oleg Sentsov, the Ukrainian filmmaker who has been detained for 4 years and is on hunger strike?*

13. *What, if anything, did you commit to?*

Mr. President, the answers to these questions are of critical importance to U.S. national security. Answering them in full, without hesitation, will demonstrate that you do still hold America's interests first. Some of us will press Secretary Pompeo on these issues next week. In addition, we urge you to immediately send the U.S. Ambassador to Russia, an appropriately high-ranking Intelligence Community official, and the Secretary of Defense to testify before Congress and explain how they will continue to advance America's interests in light of yesterday's summit.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

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