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# Senators expected to largely endorse intel report on Russian meddling, sound alarm about next election

By **Karoun Demirjian** and **Greg Miller** October 3

Senate Intelligence Committee leaders are expected on Wednesday to largely endorse the intelligence community's findings that Russia sought to sway the 2016 U.S. elections through a hacking and influence campaign as they sound the alarm that states preparing for the coming election season must be vigilant against similar threats.

The planned news conference from Sens. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) and Mark R. Warner (D-Va.) has been billed as a forum for the two panel leaders to give the public an interim status update on the committee's long-running investigation of allegations Russia attempted to meddle in the 2016 U.S. elections, and members of the Trump campaign may have colluded with Kremlin officials to improve their chance of victory. It is one of only a handful of public events the Senate Intelligence Committee has held in the nine months since commencing its probe.

In the course of that investigation, committee members and staff investigators have interviewed several members of the intelligence community and Trump's inner circle, mostly behind closed doors — including former campaign chief Paul Manafort and current senior adviser Jared Kushner, who is also President Trump's son-in-law. They have also spoken with senior executives of social media companies like Facebook and Twitter, which carried many of the Russian-backed ads and falsified accounts that tried to exploit popular divisions in the run-up to the election. The committee is expected to continue those conversations in a public hearing with the tech giants early next month; Burr and Warner may share additional information about the social media-focused part of their probe on Wednesday.

The Senate Intelligence Committee is one of three congressional panels looking into aspects of alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 elections, and one of two committees directly reviewing the intelligence community's report on Russian active


measures. Despite considerable political controversy surrounding those probes, most members of Trump's national security team have endorsed the intelligence community's findings. The president himself has yet to say he believes them.


The intelligence committee has had unprecedented access to classified files during the course of this investigation, and has spent significantly longer vetting the intelligence community's report than officials took to write it. Though Burr has set an aspirational deadline of wrapping up its probe by the end of the year, he and Warner are not expected to release an interim report on Wednesday, according to sources familiar with their plans.

There is a sense among committee officials the panel cannot wait until its probe is fully done to impress upon the public Russia can and probably will act again.

Burr, Warner, and the spy chiefs they have called to testify before their panel in occasional public hearings have stressed the 2016 elections probably only emboldened Russia's resolve to meddle in future American elections, using similar tactics. Though 2018 is not a presidential election year, it could prove to be a pivotal contest for Congress — and the primary season begins in March, less than six months away.

 **464 Comments**

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