

Anyone of “Russian Descent” Now Targeted in Senate Investigation

Vice Chairman Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.) speaks with Committee Chairman Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) during a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on June 8, 2017.

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The Senate committee probing alleged Russian interference in the U.S. political system has deemed anyone “of Russian nationality or Russian descent” relevant to its investigation, according to a document obtained by TYT.

In an email dated December 19, 2017, April Doss—who [serves](#) as senior minority counsel on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI)—defined the scope of the committee’s inquiry as anyone a subject “knows or has reason to believe [is] of Russian nationality or descent.” The senior majority counsel for the SSCI, Vanessa Le, was cc’d on the emails.



Doss, the former head of intelligence law at the National Security Agency, was reportedly [brought onto](#) the committee by Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.), who serves as its vice chairman and one of its most [prominent public faces](#). Warner has repeatedly said that the committee’s work [represents](#) the “most important thing [he’s] ever done.” The chairman of the committee is Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.).

On July 27, 2017, Charles C. Johnson, a controversial right-wing media figure, received a [letter](#) from Sens. Burr and Warner requesting that he voluntarily provide materials in his possession that are “relevant” to the committee’s investigation. Relevant materials, the letter went on, would include any records of interactions Johnson had with “Russian persons” who were involved in some capacity in the 2016 U.S. elections.

The committee further requested materials related to “Russian persons” who were involved in some capacity in “activities that related in any way to the political election process in the U.S.”

Materials may include “documents, emails, text messages, direct messages, calendar appointments, memoranda, [and] notes,” the letter outlined.

Doss’s statement was in response to a request made by Robert Barnes, an attorney for Johnson, for clarification as to the SSCI’s definition of a “Russian person.”

How the committee expects subjects to go about ascertaining whether a person is of

“Russian descent” is unclear.

“It does indicate that the committee is throwing a rather broad net,” Jonathan Turley, a professor of law at George Washington University, said. “It is exceptionally broad.” In terms of constitutionality, Turley speculated that “most courts would view that as potentially too broad, but not unlawful.”

Rachel Cohen, a spokesperson for Sen. Warner, said the SSCI “does not comment on specific witnesses or related requests.”

Johnson told TYT that he intends not to cooperate with the SSCI in any respect.

Jill Stein, the 2016 Green Party candidate, also [received](#) a request for materials from the committee, and has stated that she plans to fully comply. But as TYT previously reported, a former Stein campaign staffer, Dennis Trainor Jr., [said](#) that he has serious reservations about compliance.

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