



**It'll be Trump's war soon: Afghan's future is cloudy**

**S KOREANS CELEBRATE PARK IMPEACHMENT**



**GRAND RAPIDS: President-elect Donald Trump waves to the crowd as he arrives onstage at the DeltaPlex Arena. — AFP**

**RUSSIA INTERFERED IN US ELECTION: REPORT**  
 DOCUMENT FINDS EVIDENCE THAT RUSSIA TIPPED VOTES IN TRUMP'S FAVOR

**WASHINGTON:** A secret CIA assessment has found that Russia sought to tip last month's US presidential election in Donald Trump's favor, The Washington Post reported Friday, a conclusion that drew an extraordinary rebuke from the president-elect's camp. "These are the same people that said Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction," Trump's transition team said, launching a broadside against the spy agency. "The election ended a long time ago in one of the biggest Electoral College victories in history. It's now time to move on and 'Make America Great Again.'"

The Washington Post report comes after President Barack Obama ordered a review of all cyberattacks that took place during the 2016 election cycle, amid growing calls from Congress for more information on the extent of Russian interference in the campaign. The newspaper cited officials briefed on the matter as saying that individuals with connections to Moscow provided anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks with emails hacked from the Democratic National Committee, Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton's campaign chief and others.

**Russia's goal**

Those emails were steadily leaked out via WikiLeaks in the months before the election, damaging Clinton's White House run. The Russians' aim was to help Donald Trump win and not just undermine the US electoral process, the paper reported. "It is the assessment of the intelligence community that Russia's goal here was to favor one candidate over the other, to help Trump get elected," the newspaper quoted a senior US official briefed on an intelligence presentation last week to key senators as saying. "That's the consensus view."

CIA agents told the lawmakers it was "quite clear" that electing Trump was Russia's goal, according to officials who spoke to the Post, citing growing evidence from multiple sources. Russian hackers did not limit their hits to the Democrats, according to The New York Times. "We now have high confidence that they hacked the DNC and the RNC, and conspicuously released no documents" from the Republican organization, the Times cited one senior administration official as saying, referring to the Russians.

The Times also questioned when Russia started supporting Trump. "It is ...far from clear that Russia's original intent was to support Mr Trump, and many intelligence officials - and former officials in Mrs. Clinton's campaign - believe that the primary motive of the Russians was to simply disrupt the campaign and undercut confidence in the integrity of the vote," the Times report added.

**Question marks**

However, some questions remain unanswered and the CIA's assessment fell short of a formal US assessment produced by all 17 intelligence agencies, the newspaper said. For example, intelligence agents don't have proof that Russian officials directed the identified individuals to supply WikiLeaks with the hacked Democratic emails. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has denied links with Russia's government.

Those individuals were "one step" removed from the Russian government, which is consistent with past practices by Moscow to use "middlemen" in sensitive intelligence operations to preserve plausible deniability, the report said. "I'll be the first one to come out and point at Russia if there's clear evidence, but there is no clear evi-

dence - even now," said California Republican congressman Devin Nunes, the chair of the House Intelligence Committee and a member of the Trump transition team. "There's a lot of innuendo, lots of circumstantial evidence, that's it."

At the White House, Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz said Obama called for the cyberattacks review earlier this week to ensure "the integrity of our elections." "This report will dig into this pattern of malicious cyberactivity timed to our elections, take stock of our defensive capabilities and capture lessons learned to make sure that we brief members

of Congress and stakeholders as appropriate," Schultz said.

Obama wants the report completed before his term ends on January 20. "We are going to make public as much as we can," the spokesman added. "This is a major priority for the president." The move comes after Democrats in Congress pressed the White House to reveal details, to Congress or to the public, of Russian hacking and disinformation in the election.

On October 7, one month before the election, the Department of Homeland Security and the Director of National Intelligence announced that "the Russian

Government directed the recent compromises of emails from US persons and institutions, including from US political organizations." "These thefts and disclosures are intended to interfere with the US election process," they said.

Trump dismissed those findings in an interview published Wednesday by Time magazine for its "Person of the Year" award. Asked if the intelligence was politicized, Trump answered: "I think so." "I don't believe they interfered," he said. "It could be Russia. And it could be China. And it could be some guy in his home in New Jersey." — AFP

**SANTOS RECEIVES NOBEL PEACE PRIZE**

**OSLO:** Colombia's peace deal between the government and the Marxist FARC rebels is a model for war-torn countries like Syria, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said yesterday as he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize. The peace accord, signed on November 24 to end five decades of conflict, is a "model for the resolution of armed conflicts that have yet to be resolved around the world."

"It proves that what, at first, seems impossible, through perseverance may become possible even in Syria or Yemen or South Sudan," Santos said during a lavish ceremony at Oslo's City Hall, decked out in red, orange and white roses and carnations imported from Colombia for the occasion.

After a first peace deal was rejected in a popular vote on October 2, the rebels and government negotiated a new accord to end the conflict, which has killed more than 260,000 people, left 45,000 missing and forced nearly seven million to flee their homes. "The Colombian peace agreement is a ray of hope in a world troubled by so many conflicts and so much intolerance," he said.

Yet in an interview with AFP just hours before Saturday's prize ceremony, Santos acknowledged that the hardest part of the country's peace process was yet to come. The period ahead "is a more difficult phase than the (negotiation) process itself, and will require a lot of effort, perseverance and humility," he said.

"A lot of coordination efforts will also be needed... to bring the benefits of peace to the regions that have suffered the most in the conflict," he added. He also said he could offer no guarantees there would be a peace deal in place with Colombia's second-largest rebel group, the National Liberation Army (ELN), before the end of his mandate in 2018. "I will do my best but to establish a time frame is always counter-productive in negotiations of this sort," he said.

In a speech at the ceremony, Berit Reiss-Andersen, deputy chairwoman of the Nobel committee, urged "all sides in Colombia to carry on the national dialogue and continue on the road to reconciliation." "Hopefully, a similar negotiated disarmament agreement with the ELN guerrilla will soon be in place as well." The Nobel prize consists of a gold medal, a diploma and a cheque for eight million Swedish kronor (824,000 euros, \$871,000), a sum Santos promised to donate to the victims of the war.

**Dylan's snub**

Later, another ceremony will be held in Stockholm where the Nobel laureates in the sciences, economics and literature will be honored-a ceremony marked by the notable absence of this year's literature laureate, Bob Dylan. The first songwriter to win the prestigious award, he has declined to attend the glittering ceremony due to "pre-existing commitments". The no-show has created a stir in Sweden, where it has been perceived as a slight towards the Swedish Academy that awards the literature prize and the Nobel Foundation. Announced as the winner on October 14, Dylan waited almost two weeks to publicly acknowledge the accolade, a silence one Academy member termed "impolite and arrogant".

Dylan did ultimately say he was honored to win, but then informed the Academy in mid-November that he would not be travelling to Stockholm to accept his prize. "A slap in the face," remarked editorialist Lena Mellin at one of Sweden's biggest dailies, Aftonbladet. "Anyone who has ever received a prize, even if it's just for being the best neighbor in the apartment building, knows that the least one can do is go and accept it," she wrote. On social media, opinions were mixed. "If it were me, I would probably... collect a Nobel Prize and \$900,000. But it's Bob, and that's part of what makes him Bob," wrote fan Evan Sarzin on the singer's Facebook page. "He is 75, give him a break," argued another, Karen Lunebach. — AFP



**OSLO: Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos poses with the medal and diploma during the Peace Prize awarding ceremony at the City Hall. — AP**