

Russia wants to see US ‘tear ourselves apart’

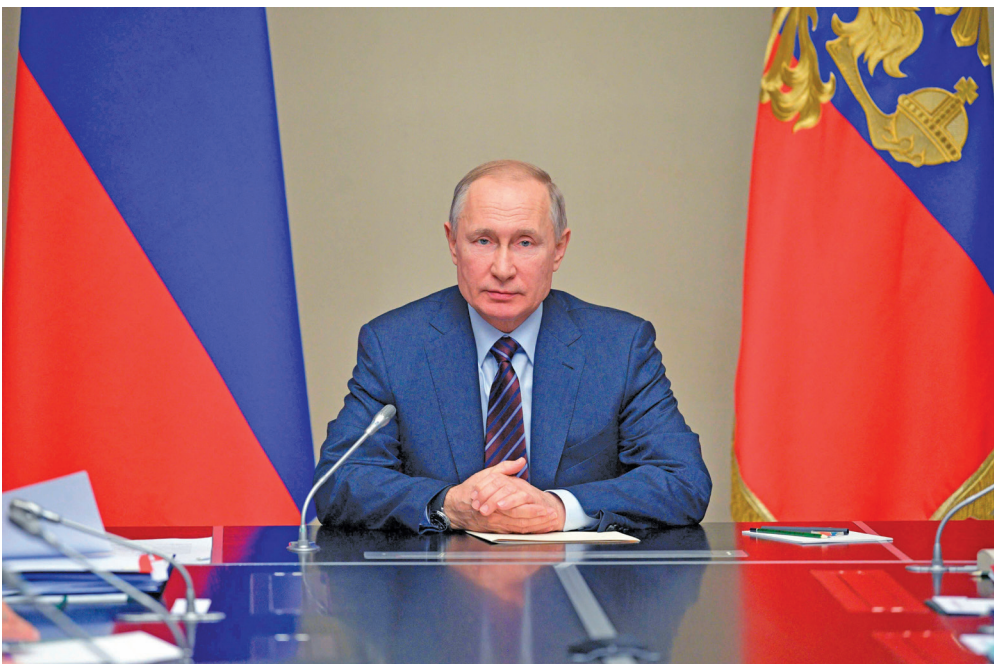
Security threats aimed at election

By ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Russia wants to watch Americans “tear ourselves apart” as the United States heads toward elections, an FBI official warned Monday.

David Porter, an assistant section chief with the FBI’s Foreign Influence Task Force, accused Russia of conducting brazen operations aimed at spreading disinformation, exploiting lines of division in society and sowing doubt about the integrity of U.S. elections and the ability of its leaders to govern effectively.

Porter spoke at an election security conference on Capitol Hill just days after conflicting accounts emerged of a closed-door briefing intelligence officials had given to House lawmakers on threats from Russia and other nations in the 2020 election. That briefing focused attention on the possibility that Russia could work to aid President Donald Trump’s reelection. Democratic rival Sen. Bernie Sanders has said intelligence officials told him that Russia was looking to boost



Alexei Druzhinin/AP Photo

Russian President Vladimir Putin chairs a Security Council meeting at the Novo-Ogaryovo residence outside Moscow Moscow, Russia, on Friday.

his candidacy, too.

Porter did not address the briefing or whether Russia had a preference for particular candidates. But he said Russia was generally engaged in “information confrontation” aimed at blurring fact from fiction, eroding American confidence in democratic institutions and driving wedges into society’s fracture lines.

“The primary objective is not to create a particular version of the truth but rather

to cloud the truth and erode our ability to find it, creating a sentiment that no narrative or news source can be trusted at all,” Porter said.

The FBI formed the Foreign Influence Task Force after widespread interference by Russia in the 2016 presidential campaign. The task force was initially intended to focus primarily on Russia, but it also works to counter influence operations — including hacking and more covert methods

— from adversaries including China, North Korea and Iran.

U.S. officials see China as an aggressive threat, particularly when it comes to espionage and theft of intellectual property, but Porter said Beijing’s goal was less about sowing general chaos in the U.S. and more about promoting and developing its own economic standing in the world.

“To put it simply, in this space, Russia wants to watch

us tear ourselves apart, while it seems that China would rather manage our gradual economic decline over the course of generations,” Porter said.

Intelligence officials have not commented publicly on the Feb. 13 briefing given to members of the House Intelligence Committee. One intelligence official said lawmakers were not told that Russia was working directly to aid Trump. But other people familiar with the meeting said they were told the Kremlin was looking to help Trump’s candidacy. The people spoke on condition of anonymity to discussed the classified briefing.

Carrie Cordero, a former Justice Department national security lawyer, lamented the lack of public information about the briefing and the underlying intelligence, particularly since a recent Senate Intelligence Committee report faulted the Obama administration for not being sufficiently transparent about Russian election interference ahead of the 2016 presidential contest.

She said it remains unclear from the news reporting exactly what message was communicated to the committee.

“What I have really been encouraging is that the gov-

ernment be more forthcoming of information that is more indicative of the current election threats,” Cordero said.

Other speakers at the symposium, whose sponsors included the Center for Democracy and Technology and Penn State Dickinson Law, focused on more domestic threats to election security.

Lawrence Norden, the director of the Election Reform Program at the Brennan Center for Justice, said he was concerned that there were no federal regulations governing the vendors who supply local election infrastructure.

“I do think this is a real weakness going into 2020, and the solution as always in elections is to hope for the best and prepare for the worst,” Norden said.

Meanwhile, Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York, along with Democratic Sens. Sherrod Brown of Ohio and Robert Menendez of New Jersey, sent a letter Monday to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urging sanctions for “all those determined to be responsible for ongoing elections interference,” including Russia President Vladimir Putin.

Weinstein convicted of rape, sexual assault

Mogul faces up to 29 years in prison

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and TOM HAYS
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Former Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein was convicted of rape and sexual assault against two women and led off to prison in handcuffs Monday in what his foes hailed as a landmark moment for the legal system and a long-overdue reckoning for the man vilified as the biggest monster of the #MeToo era.

The 67-year-old Weinstein had a look of resignation on his face as he heard the verdict: guilty on two charges, not guilty on a set of more serious ones.

While it was not the across-the-board victory prosecutors and his accusers had hoped for, it could put the stooped and feeble-looking Weinstein behind bars for the rest of his life. The charges carry up to 29 years in prison.

District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. saluted the women who came forward against the once-feared studio boss, saying they “changed the course of history in the fight against sexual violence” and “pulled our justice system into the 21st century.”

“This is the new landscape for survivors of sexual assault in America, I believe, and it is a new day. It is a new day because Harvey Weinstein has finally been

held accountable for crimes he committed,” Vance said.

Weinstein’s lawyers said they will appeal.

“Harvey is unbelievably strong. He took it like a man,” defense attorney Donna Rotunno said. “He knows that we will continue to fight for him, and we know that this is not over.” Another of his lawyers, Arthur Aidala, quoted Weinstein as telling as his legal team: “I’m innocent. I’m innocent. I’m innocent. How could this happen in America?”

The jury of seven men and five women took five days to find Weinstein guilty of raping an aspiring actress in a New York City hotel room in 2013 and sexually assaulting production assistant Mimi Haleyi at his apartment in 2006 by forcibly performing oral sex on her.

He was acquitted on the most serious charges, two counts of predatory sexual assault, each carrying up to life in prison. Both of those counts hinged on the testimony of “Sopranos” actress Annabella Sciorra, who said Weinstein barged into her apartment, raped her and forcibly performed oral sex on her in the mid-1990s.

Judge James Burke ordered Weinstein taken to jail immediately. Court officers handcuffed Weinstein and put their arms under his, leading him unsteadily out of the courtroom via a side door without the use of the walker he relied on for much of the trial. He was later

taken from the courthouse in an ambulance, strapped to a stretcher in his suit, in what was believed to be just a precautionary measure.

The judge said he will ask that Weinstein, who had been free on bail since his arrest nearly two years ago, be held in the infirmary after his lawyers said he needs medical attention following unsuccessful back surgery.

Sentencing was set for March 11. The sexual assault charge carries up to 25 years in prison, while the third-degree rape count is punishable by up to four years. (The jury acquitted Weinstein of first-degree rape, which requires the use of force or the threat of it, and found him guilty of third-degree rape, which involves a lack of consent.)

The verdict followed weeks of often harrowing and excruciatingly graphic testimony from a string of accusers who told of rapes, forced oral sex, groping, masturbation, lewd propositions and excuses from Weinstein about how the Hollywood casting couch works. In addition to the three women he was charged with attacking, three more who said they were attacked by Weinstein testified in an effort by prosecutors to show a pattern of brutish behavior.

Whispers about Weinstein circulated in Hollywood for years before they finally turned into a torrent of accusations in 2017 that destroyed his career and gave rise to #MeToo, the

global movement to encourage women to come forward and hold powerful men accountable for their sexual misconduct.

The trial was the first criminal case to arise from the barrage of allegations against Weinstein from more than 90 women, including actresses Gwyneth Paltrow, Salma Hayek, Ashley Judd, Uma Thurman and Mira Sorvino. Most of those cases were too old to prosecute.

While prosecutors and other Weinstein foes were disappointed by his acquittal on the most serious charges, they exulted over the guilty verdicts.

“The era of impunity for powerful men who rape people is over,” Sorvino said,



Seth Wenig/AP Photo

Harvey Weinstein arrives at a Manhattan courthouse for jury deliberations in his rape trial Monday.

breaking down in tears on a conference call of Weinstein’s former accusers. “He will rot in jail as he deserves.”

Judd, who accused Weinstein of damaging her career by spreading lies about

her after she rejected his advances, tweeted: “For the women who testified in this case, and walked through traumatic hell, you did a public service to girls and women everywhere, thank you.”

SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
50 39	51 36	55 37	55 41	50 37	51 37	51 40
Rain and drizzle	Clearing	Mostly sunny	Periods of sun	Chance of rain	Showers possible	Showers possible

ALMANAC

Astoria through Sunday

Temperatures

High/low	49/41
Normal high/low	52/37
Record high	68 in 2005
Record low	23 in 2018

Precipitation

Sunday	0.36"
Month to date	6.36"
Normal month to date	5.93"
Year to date	24.50"
Normal year to date	16.13"

Forecasts and graphics provided by
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UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: The bright star Spica of Virgo, goddess of the harvest, emerging above the east-southeast.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:03 a.m.
Sunset tonight	5:55 p.m.
Moonrise today	8:21 a.m.
Moonset today	8:07 p.m.

First	Full	Last	New
Mar 2	Mar 9	Mar 16	Mar 24

TODAY'S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks	Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
2:30 a.m.	7.8	8:30 a.m.	1.9	
2:12 p.m.	7.8	8:43 p.m.	0.4	

Cape Disappointment

2:06 a.m.	7.6	7:37 a.m.	2.1	
1:45 p.m.	7.9	7:57 p.m.	0.5	

Hammond

2:17 a.m.	8.0	7:58 a.m.	2.0	
2:00 p.m.	8.2	8:13 p.m.	0.3	

Warrenton

2:25 a.m.	8.2	8:14 a.m.	2.0	
2:07 p.m.	8.2	8:27 p.m.	0.5	

Knappa

3:07 a.m.	8.1	9:31 a.m.	1.6	
2:49 p.m.	8.1	9:44 p.m.	0.3	

Depoe Bay

1:20 a.m.	7.9	7:05 a.m.	2.3	
12:59 p.m.	8.3	7:26 p.m.	0.5	

NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Wed. Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	68/46/c	57/30/sh
Boston	48/40/c	42/40/r
Chicago	38/27/sn	30/15/sn
Dallas	59/35/pc	48/31/s
Denver	26/12/sf	40/23/s
Honolulu	82/71/s	82/69/s
Houston	71/42/pc	54/33/s
Los Angeles	82/55/s	81/54/s
Miami	84/71/pc	86/61/sh
New York City	50/43/r	48/42/sh
Phoenix	71/45/s	72/47/s
San Francisco	68/48/s	71/49/pc
Wash., DC	57/48/r	59/38/sh

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, l-ice.

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REGIONAL FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Wed. Hi/Lo/W
Baker City	46/23/s	49/25/pc
Brookings	60/42/pc	61/45/s
Ilwaco	49/41/r	50/38/pc
Newberg	54/39/c	57/34/pc
Newport	54/39/c	52/37/pc

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Wed. Hi/Lo/W
North Bend	57/40/pc	56/39/s
Roseburg	59/38/pc	61/37/s
Seaside	51/40/c	52/35/pc
Springfield	57/39/pc	59/33/pc
Vancouver	54/40/c	57/34/c