

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 9, 2023

## VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Dr. Stefanie Tompkins  
Director  
Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency  
675 North Randolph Street  
Arlington, VA 22203

Dear Dr. Tompkins:

On April 28, 2022, we wrote to you requesting records related to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's (DARPA) collaboration with the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) and work related to the 2016 hack of the Democratic National Committee (DNC).<sup>1</sup> In September 2022, DARPA sent a response but failed to provide email communications and subsequently failed to make available relevant DARPA employees connected to the Enhanced Attribution (EA) program for interviews.<sup>2</sup> On May 12, 2023, Special Counsel John Durham referred two matters to the Department of Defense Inspector General and the Defense Intelligence Agency, including "[o]ne matter involv[ing] the execution of a contract between DARPA and the Georgia Institute of Technology..." and a "separate matter involv[ing] the irregular conduct in 2016 of two former employees of the Department of Defense."<sup>3</sup> As part of our continued oversight of DARPA's taxpayer-funded work with Georgia Tech, we have uncovered an email suggesting DARPA signed off on a project related to the Republican National Committee (RNC) and DNC networks.<sup>4</sup>

In a September 25, 2020, email between Georgia Tech's Dr. Manos Antonakakis, who worked on DARPA's EA program, and DARPA employees, with the subject "RNC and DNC Related networks," Dr. Antonakakis appears to request DARPA sign off on the research to examine networks related to the RNC and DNC.<sup>5</sup> Further, Dr. Antonakakis' email appears to

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Ron Johnson, Ranking Member, Permanent Subcomm. on Investigations and Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, Committee on Judiciary, to Stefanie Tompkins, Director, Defense Advanced Research Project, Apr. 28, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Heidi Shyu, Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, U.S. Department of Defense to Ron Johnson, Ranking Member, Perm. Subcommittee on Investigations and Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary. Sept. 25, 2022. (On file with the Committees); Email between Committee Staff for Sen. Johnson and Sen. Grassley and DARPA staff. Feb. 7, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Report on Matters Related to Intelligence Activities and Investigations Arising Out of the 2016 Presidential Campaigns, Special Counsel John H. Durham, May 12, 2023, <https://www.justice.gov/storage/durhamreport.pdf> at 45.

<sup>4</sup> Email from Manos Antonakakis to DARPA, Sept. 25, 2020 (on file with staff).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*; Jerry Dunleavy, Durham related emails prompt DARPA to deny involvement in attributing 2016 DNC hack to Russia, Wash. Examiner, Mar. 14, 2022, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/justice/durham-relatedemails-prompt-darpa-to-deny-involvement-in-attributing-2016-dnc-hack-to-russia>.

suggest that this examination was to be conducted without the prior knowledge of the RNC or DNC.<sup>6</sup> Dr. Antonakakis wrote:

Folks, last night as I was thinking what we can study, I also realized that we do not know much about the RNC and DNC networks out there. Wrote a job that run [sic] over night and I know [sic] have 292 \*hand verified\* at this point networks that are linked with RNC, DNC, and all local/state committee networks around the US. An adversary would find those networks interesting for a number of reasons. So, I think we should run a reverse Pythia and see what we can see.

If you approve this, [DARPA employee], I would like from you to think how we will break any bad news to these people? If you cannot think of a clear and clean way to inform them (is this DHS's role or FBI's or USCC's?), perhaps we should let them remain infected.

Thanks, Manos<sup>7</sup>

On the same day the DARPA employee responded to Dr. Antonakakis:

**“Sensitive stuff but yes, I know who to talk to if we find anything. Worth doing.”**<sup>8</sup>

Dr. Antonakakis responded to the DARPA employee:

**“OK, then. I will work with these networks and see what I can come up with.”**<sup>9</sup>

This email exchange raises questions about the work of the EA program and government employees responsible for it. We request that you respond to our April 2022 document demands for email communications and interview requests. In addition, please provide the following information:

1. Did Dr. Antonakakis conduct any work related to RNC and DNC networks?
  - a. If yes, did DARPA inform the RNC and DNC of this work? If not, why not?
  - b. Was this work conducted as part of the EA program? If not, what program was this work conducted under?
  - c. Did DARPA employees discuss this work with other agencies? Please list the agency and when those discussions occurred.
  - d. On September 25, 2020, a DARPA employee wrote, “I know who to talk to if we find anything.” Did this DARPA employee talk to any individual outside DARPA related to the RNC and DNC work? If so, who, when and what was discussed?

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<sup>6</sup> Email from Manos Antonakakis to DARPA, Sept. 25, 2020 (on file with staff).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* Emphasis added.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* Emphasis added.

2. Please provide all records<sup>10</sup> related to all work DARPA and Georgia Tech conducted related to the RNC or DNC, including but not limited to, all records related to the project Dr. Antonakakis proposed in his September 25, 2020, email.
3. What actions has DARPA taken related to Special Counsel Durham's December 14, 2022, referral connected to the Georgia Institute of Technology and the separate matter relating to "irregular conduct" by former Department of Defense officials?<sup>11</sup>
4. Is DARPA fully cooperating with the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (DoD OIG) related to Special Counsel Durham's December 14, 2022 referral? Please explain in detail.
  - a. Has DoD OIG requested that DARPA provide the DoD OIG all records connected to DARPA and Georgia Tech? If so, has DARPA provided those records to DoD OIG? If not, why not?
5. What other networks did DARPA approve Dr. Antonakakis to examine as part of the EA program? Please list those networks and provide all records related to those projects.
6. Please provide all records referring or relating to the EA program, including but not limited to, all communications with Dr. Antonakakis.

Thank you for your attention to this request. We request you respond to this letter no later than August 23, 2023.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson  
Ranking Member  
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations



Charles E. Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Budget

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<sup>10</sup> "Records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (e-mails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

<sup>11</sup> Report on Matters Related to Intelligence Activities and Investigations Arising Out of the 2016 Presidential Campaigns, Special Counsel John H. Durham, May 12, 2023, <https://www.justice.gov/storage/durhamreport.pdf> at 45.

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cc: The Honorable Richard Blumenthal  
Chairman  
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse  
Chairman  
Committee on the Budget

The Honorable Robert P. Storch  
Inspector General  
Department of Defense