

No sign that Russians accessed NM voter systems

Written by By Matthew Reichbach NM Political Report
Friday, 23 June 2017 00:38



There's no indication that New Mexico's voter databases were improperly accessed, according to New Mexico's secretary of state.

This comes even as U.S. senators probed the issue in a hearing June 21.

Wednesday morning, Jeanette Manfra, the acting undersecretary for cybersecurity and communications at DHS, told the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee that election systems in 21 states were targeted in a Russian cyber attack.

Jeh Johnson said that while interference by Russia "was unprecedented" in "scale and scope," there was no indication that Russians changed any votes in 2016.

New Mexico hasn't been contacted by any federal authority of any alleged breaches by Russia during the cycle, Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver told *NM Political Report*.

"Secretary of State Toulouse Oliver considers election security a high priority, and she continues to work with federal agencies and other states to collaborate on best security practices and her office engages in regular security scans and testing," Toulouse Oliver said in an email last week.

While vote tallying was not attacked, New Mexico has an older-technology way of combatting

No sign that Russians accessed NM voter systems

Written by By Matthew Reichbach NM Political Report
Friday, 23 June 2017 00:38

that: full paper ballots. Ballots are filled out by hand and counted by optical scanner. Ballots can be hand-counted if needed.

Last week, reports indicated that Russian hackers breached voter databases and software systems in 39 states. The news came from investigators and a classified National Security Agency document obtained by *The Intercept*.

The Russian government denies it was involved, as it has denied it was involved in the hacking of emails from the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta.

U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich, the New Mexico Democrat who sits on the Senate Intelligence Committee, did not discuss the cyber intrusion into state election systems during his questioning.

Instead, Heinrich asked FBI Assistant Director of the Counterintelligence Division Bill Priestap about why Russia sought to interfere in elections and if the foreign power felt they were successful.

Priestap offered a nuanced answer about whether Russians believed their efforts were successful.

“In many ways, they might argue that because of the time and energy we’re spending on this topic, maybe it’s distracting us from other things,” he said. “But on the other hand, exactly what this committee is doing as far as raising awareness to their activities, their aims for the American people, to me they’ve done the American people a service in that regard.”

Later, Heinrich focused on statements by Donald Trump in 2016.

“By effectively reinforcing the Russian narrative and publicly saying that our system is rigged, did

No sign that Russians accessed NM voter systems

Written by By Matthew Reichbach NM Political Report
Friday, 23 June 2017 00:38

then-candidate Trump, now president-Trump become what intelligence officials call an unwitting agent?” Heinrich asked Priestap.

After a long pause—over five seconds—Priestap said he couldn’t comment on that.

“I don’t blame you for not answering that question,” Heinrich said, to laughter from those in attendance.

Update: Quotes originally attributed to Deputy Secretary of State John Blair are now attributed to Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver.

Visit: nmpoliticalreport.com

By Matthew Reichbach

NM Political Report