

JAMES A. HIMES, CONNECTICUT
RANKING MEMBER

André Carson, Indiana
Joaquin Castro, Texas
Raja Krishnamoorthi, Illinois
Jason Crow, Colorado
Ami Bera, California
Stacey E. Plaskett, U.S. Virgin Islands
Josh Gottheimer, New Jersey
Jimmy Gomez, California
Chrissy Houlahan, Pennsylvania
Mike Quigley, Illinois
Steve Cohen, Tennessee

U.S. Capitol Building
HVC-304
Washington, DC 20515

(202) 225-4121

Jeff Lowenstein
MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE
ON INTELLIGENCE

June 11, 2026

Rodney Mims Cook, Jr.
Chairman
U.S. Commission of Fine Arts
401 F Street, NW, Suite 312
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Cook:

I write regarding your participation at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum earlier this month. As a presidentially-appointed member and the chairman of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, an independent federal agency funded by Congress, you appear to be the first American official to attend this annual conference in nearly a decade.

Because this conference serves as a forum to promote Russia's economic interests and geopolitical narratives, your participation raises significant geostrategic, political, and counterintelligence concerns—the last of which is very much in my committee's jurisdiction.

As you should be aware, Russia is subject to extensive U.S. and international sanctions in response to President Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine. Additionally, Russia conducts aggressive intelligence collection and malign influence operations targeting the United States and our allies. Any U.S. official traveling to Russia would undoubtedly be the target of substantial Russian intelligence interest, both overt and covert.

It is important to understand whether you traveled to this conference on your own accord, and the nature of the preparation you and the delegation may have undergone. Given that public reporting¹ indicates that you conveyed "a good hello from your friend President Trump" to President Putin, I am left with the distinct impression that your attendance at the conference was not entirely as a private citizen.

¹ "US official tells Putin: 'Good Hello' from your friend President Trump," Reuters, 5 June 2026: <https://www.reuters.com/world/us-official-tells-putin-good-hello-your-friend-president-trump-2026-06-05/>

UNCLASSIFIED

Accordingly, I request your reply to the below requests for information no later than June 19, 2026:

- 1) Did you travel under auspices of the U.S. government?
- 2) Were you invited by a Russian entity to attend the Forum?
- 3) Who paid for your travel, or for any conference registration or associated fees?
- 4) Did you receive any instructions or guidance from the State Department or any other federal agency prior to your travel?
- 5) Did you receive any counterintelligence briefing prior to your travel?
- 6) Did you meet with the State Department or any other agency following your travel to be debriefed?
- 7) Were you asked to convey any message by the State Department or any other government agency?
- 8) Please provide the names of any Russian officials you met at the conference and the topic of the conversation.

Sincerely,



James A. Himes
Ranking Member
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence