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Trump Accepts Russian Involvement in Election Hacks, Says Top Aide

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Evan Vucci / AP

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has accepted Russian involvement in cyber-attacks against U.S. institutions during last year's presidential elections, according to a top aide.

Reince Priebus, Trump's incoming chief of staff, told Fox News on Sunday that the President-elect believed U.S. intelligence reports which blamed Moscow for the attacks.

It is the first time that a senior member of Trump's team has admitted to possible Russian interference during the election.

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The Kremlin has been repeatedly accused of orchestrating the release of some 20,000 emails from the Democratic National Committee (DNC), in a scandal which led to the resignation of

DNC chairperson Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

In a statement released on Friday, Trump acknowledged that "Russia, China, other countries, outside groups and people are consistently trying to break through the cyber infrastructure of our governmental institutions, businesses and organizations including the Democrat(ic) National Committee."

Trump made the statement after he received a full briefing by U.S. intelligence agencies, which claimed the Kremlin planned the hack to deliberately discredit Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

Officials maintain that the overall vote count was not affected by Russian interference.

Russia has called the accusations “absurd” and denies any involvement.

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