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Trump Says Russia Should Find Clinton's Missing Emails

By DAN MCCUE

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(CN) — Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump pleaded with Russian hackers on Wednesday to find a supposed 30,000 missing emails from Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton's private email server, saying if found, the missing messages would reveal "some beauties."

"Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing," Trump said during a news conference in Florida Wednesday morning.

"I think you'll be rewarded mightily by our press," he declared.

But the declaration appears to have unsettled the Trump campaign, which moments later issued a press release under the name of GOP vice presidential candidate Gov. Mike Pence, who said if Russia is behind the hack into the Democratic National Committee "and it is interfering in our elections, I can assure you both parties and the United States government will ensure there are serious consequences."

Clinton's campaign has said that Russia hacked computers belonging to the Democratic National Convention and released those emails on the eve of the party's convention to benefit Trump's candidacy.

The emails, published by WikiLeaks last week, revealed that the DNC favored Clinton's candidacy over rival Bernie Sanders, triggering a leadership shakeup within the DNC.

Trump dismissed the claims, saying it's not clear who hacked those emails, but the hacking is a sign that foreign countries no longer respect the United States.

"If it's any foreign country, it shows how little respect they have for the United States," said Trump, who added that he was "not an email person myself because I believe it can be hacked."

Pence went on to criticize the Democrats for "singularly focusing on who might be behind it and not addressing the basic fact that they've been exposed as a party who not only rigs the government, but rigs elections while literally accepting cash for federal appointments is outrageous." He went on to insist that the revelations in the hacked emails -- that the Democratic party deliberately sought to block Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders' insurgent White House bid -- should disqualify her from office. "If the media did their job," it would, he said. Meanwhile, Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan sought to distance himself from his party's presidential nominee's remarks.

"Russia is a global menace led by a devious thug," said his spokesman Brennan Buck. "Putin should stay out of this election."

The Clinton campaign immediately denounced Trump's call.

"This has to be the first time that a major presidential candidate has actively encouraged a foreign power to conduct espionage against his political opponent," senior policy adviser Jake Sullivan said in a statement. "That's not hyperbole, those are just the facts. This has gone from being a matter of curiosity, and a matter of politics, to being a national security issue."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Photo caption:

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during a news conference at Trump National Doral, Wednesday, July 27, 2016, in Tampa, Fla. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

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