

BEFORE THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

3 In the Matter of)
4)
5 Cambridge Analytica LLC)
6 SCL Group LTD)
7 Alexander Nix)
8 Mark Turnbull)
9 Christopher Wylie)
10 Donald J. Trump)
11 Donald J. Trump for President,)
12 Inc., and Bradley T. Crate in his)
13 official capacity as treasurer)
14 Make America Number 1 and)
15 Jacquelyn James in her official)
16 capacity as treasurer)
17 Cruz for President and Bradley S.)
18 Knippa in his official capacity)
19 as treasurer)
20 Thom Tillis Committee and) MURs 7350, 7351, 7357, and 7382
21 Collin McMichael in his official)
22 capacity as treasurer)
23 Art Robinson for Congress and)
24 Art Robinson in his official)
25 capacity as treasurer)
26 John Bolton Super PAC and)
27 Cabell Hobbs in his official)
28 capacity as treasurer)
29 North Carolina Republican Party)
30 and Jason Lemons in his official)
31 capacity as treasurer)
32 Stephen K. Bannon)
33 Bradley J. Parscale)
34 Rebekah Mercer)
35 Nigel Oaks)
36 Alexander Tayler)
37 Tim Glister)
38 Jared Kushner)

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40 I. ACTION RECOMMENDED

41 Take no further action regarding the alleged violations of the Federal Election Campaign
42 Act of 1971, as amended (the “Act”), and Commission regulations in connection with the

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1 provision of services by Cambridge Analytica LLC (“Cambridge”) to political committees
 2 during the 2014 and 2016 election cycles, and close the file.

3 **II. INTRODUCTION**

4 These matters arose from four complaints alleging violations of the Act and Commission
 5 regulations by Cambridge, its foreign parent company, SCL Group LTD (“SCL”), several
 6 committees that received services from Cambridge during the 2014 and 2016 election cycles, and
 7 a number of individuals involved with Cambridge’s operations, including its Chief Executive
 8 Officer (CEO) Alexander Nix and former employee Christopher Wylie. Three of the complaints
 9 alleged that Cambridge and SCL permitted foreign nationals to directly or indirectly participate
 10 in the management or decision-making processes of political committees with regard to their
 11 federal election activities,¹ while two of the complaints alleged that during the 2014 election
 12 cycle, an independent-expenditure-only political committee (“IEOPC”), the John Bolton Super
 13 PAC and Cabell Hobbs in his official capacity as treasurer (“Bolton PAC”), made
 14 communications that were coordinated with an authorized campaign committee and a state party
 15 committee — the Thom Tillis Committee and Collin McMichael in his official capacity as
 16 treasurer (“Tillis Committee”) and the North Carolina Republican Party and Jason Lemons in his
 17 official capacity as treasurer (“NCRP”), respectively — using Cambridge as a “common
 18 vendor.”²

19 The Commission found reason to believe that Cambridge, Nix, Wylie, the Bolton PAC,
 20 the Tillis Committee, the NCRP, and Art Robinson for Congress and Art Robinson in his official

¹ See MUR 7350 Compl. (Mar. 26, 2018); MUR 7351 Compl. (Mar. 26, 2018); MUR 7382 Compl. (May 10, 2018).

² See MUR 7357 Compl. (Mar. 29, 2018); MUR 7382 Compl. The Commission took no action as to the coordinated communication allegations.

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1 capacity as treasurer (the “Robinson Committee”) violated 52 U.S.C. § 30121 and 11 C.F.R.
2 § 110.20(i), which prohibit foreign nationals from directly or indirectly participating in the
3 management or decision-making processes of political committees with regard to their federal
4 election activities.³ In accordance with those findings, this Office commenced an investigation.

5 Having concluded the investigation, the record before the Commission does not
6 sufficiently establish the extent of the potential violations to support further action, and the
7 investigation is unlikely to uncover additional information without the expenditure of significant
8 additional resources. Moreover, the violations appear to have expired under the five-year statute
9 of limitations.⁴ We therefore recommend that the Commission take no further action and close
10 the file in these matters.

11 **III. SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION**

12 During the investigation of these matters, we pursued a number of avenues to obtain
13 additional information, including voluntary requests for information, subpoenas, and a request
14 for law enforcement cooperation from a foreign government.

³ Certification, MURs 7350, 7351, 7357, and 7382 (July 24, 2019) (finding reason to believe as to Cambridge, Wylie, Bolton PAC, Robinson Comm., Tillis Comm., NCRP); Certification, MURs 7350, 7351, and 7382 (Aug. 20, 2019) (finding reason to believe as to Nix). The Commission took no action as to the remaining respondents.

⁴ See 28 U.S.C. § 2462. The exact status of the statute of limitations in these matters is unclear because, as we have explained previously, the alleged violations would have accrued on the dates that a political committee made an expenditure based on a decision-making process in which a foreign national participated, and we do not have sufficient information to establish whether or when any committee made such an expenditure. Nevertheless, it appears that the limitations period, including all applicable tolling, has lapsed even assuming the latest possible date that any such expenditure could have been made.

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1 **A. Voluntary Requests for Information**

2 In response to the Commission's reason-to-believe findings and our voluntary requests

3 for additional information, we received submissions from five respondents: The Robinson

4 Committee, Bolton PAC, Tillis Committee, NCRP, and Nix.

5 We also sent non-respondent witness letters seeking information voluntarily from two

6 former Cambridge employees and a company that Cambridge reportedly contracted for services:

7 Brittany Kaiser, Kieran Ward, and AggregateIQ, a Canadian software company. Kaiser,

8 Cambridge's former head of business development, had reportedly testified regarding

9 Cambridge's business development practices — including its "pitch" to potential clients —

10 before Congress and the U.K. House of Commons, suggesting that she could provide information

11 about foreign nationals participating in Cambridge's efforts to cultivate U.S. political committees

12 as clients. Ward appeared to be a senior-level executive at both SCL and Cambridge — he held

13 the titles of "Director of Communications" at SCL and "Global Creative Director" at Cambridge

14 — with an apparent focus on the companies' communications content, which suggested that he

15 might be a useful source of information about foreign nationals' work on or participation in the

16 creation or targeting of Cambridge/SCL content for U.S. political committees.

17 AggregateIQ had reportedly worked for Cambridge: In their respective appearances

18 before the U.K. House of Commons, both Cambridge's CEO, Nix, and Kaiser testified that

19 AggregateIQ had worked in connection with Cambridge's activities for U.S. political

20 committees. We therefore viewed the company as a potential source of information about the

21 work they did for Cambridge or its U.S. clients.

22 However, we did not receive any response to these inquiries.

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1 **B. Christopher Wylie**

2 After the Commission, on July 24, 2019, found reason to believe that Wylie violated the
 3 Act and Commission regulations, we sent Wylie a notification of the Commission's findings as
 4 well as a voluntary request for additional information. We received no response from Wylie, and
 5 it was unclear whether he received the notification; we did not have a current mailing or email
 6 address for him, and he was not represented by counsel before the Commission.⁵ Based on
 7 articles reporting that Wylie had previously testified before the U.S. House of Representatives
 8 Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, we tried to contact Wylie through the attorney that
 9 represented him in connection with that testimony. However, that attorney, who was apparently
 10 based in the United Kingdom, did not respond to any of our repeated attempts to contact her.

11 Shortly before the Commission lost a quorum on August 30, 2019, the Commission
 12 issued a subpoena for Wylie to provide documents and information, and to make himself
 13 available for an interview.⁶ Because we lacked an address for Wylie, we sent the subpoena to
 14 him through both his reported employer at the time, multinational clothing retailer Hennes &
 15 Mauritz (H&M),⁷ as well as through Verbena Ltd., a London-based company that Wylie had
 16 reportedly formed to hold the copyright to a forthcoming book he wrote about his time working

⁵ The notification was sent to an address in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, which we believed to be Wylie's home address; numerous reports indicate that Wylie is a Canadian national. *See Letter from Chair Ellen L. Weintraub, FEC, to Christopher Wylie* (Aug. 1, 2019). We later received a call from the recipient of the notification letter, who told us that although his name was Christopher Wylie, he was not the Christopher Wylie that had previously worked for Cambridge.

⁶ The Commission did not have a quorum from August 30, 2019, to June 5, 2020, and again from July 3, 2020, through December 2020, precluding the issuance of additional subpoenas during those periods.

⁷ *See Leah Harper, Whistleblower Christopher Wylie Joins Fashion Retailer H&M*, THE GUARDIAN (Jan. 31, 2019), <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2019/jan/31/whistleblower-christopher-wylie-joins-fashion-retailer-h-m> ("Christopher Wylie, the Canadian whistleblower who last year exposed the misuse of data by the political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica, has been hired by the Swedish fashion retailer H&M. The business confirmed that it had signed a consultancy contract with Wylie, who will take the role of research director.").

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1 at Cambridge.⁸ However, Wylie never responded to the Commission's subpoena, and it is
 2 unclear whether he received it.

3 **C. MLAT Request**

4 At the time of the Commission's reason-to-believe finding, Cambridge had already
 5 declared bankruptcy and had effectively been dissolved; it apparently had no office, managers, or
 6 employees. Because Cambridge did not designate counsel before the Commission, the
 7 notification of the Commission's reason-to-believe findings was sent to Cambridge's registered
 8 agent and its former in-house counsel, either of whom appear to have forwarded the notification
 9 to Cambridge's U.S. bankruptcy counsel. Cambridge's bankruptcy counsel represented that
 10 virtually all of Cambridge's records, both physical and electronic, were in the United Kingdom
 11 (U.K.), where its parent company, SCL, had been located, and that those records had been seized
 12 by a U.K. regulatory agency in connection with an investigation of SCL.

13 SCL was also in "administration" (*i.e.*, liquidation or bankruptcy) in the U.K., and,
 14 according to news reports, its records had been seized by the U.K. Information Commissioner's
 15 Office ("ICO").⁹ Accordingly, in September 2019, following notification to the Commission, we
 16 began coordinating with the U.S. Department of Justice ("DOJ") to prepare a formal request for
 17 cooperation under the U.S.-U.K. Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty ("MLAT") to the U.K. Central
 18 Authority ("UKCA"), the U.K. government's designated representative under the MLAT;¹⁰

⁸ See "Verbena Limited," Companies House (U.K.), <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/12108806/persons-with-significant-control> (listing Wylie as owner of 75% or more shares); *see also* Christopher Wylie, *MIND*CK: CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA AND THE PLOT TO BREAK AMERICA* (1st ed., Oct. 8, 2019). A cursory review of Wylie's book did not provide information useful to our investigation.

⁹ See Hannah Summers and Nicola Slawson, *Investigators Complete Seven-Hour Cambridge Analytica HQ Search*, THE GUARDIAN (Mar. 24, 2018), <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/23/judge-grants-search-warrant-for-cambridge-analyticas-offices>.

¹⁰ See Treaty Between the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, Art. 1 (Jan. 6, 1994), <https://www.congress.gov/104/cdoc>

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1 following an updated notification to the Commission, we requested that DOJ submit the request
 2 on our behalf to the UKCA on December 10, 2019.¹¹ Our submission described the nature of the
 3 investigation and the alleged violations, and requested that the UKCA “provide copies of all
 4 physical or electronic records, documents, or communications for the period between January 1,
 5 2013, and December 31, 2016, relating to Cambridge Analytica LLC or SCL Group LTD” and
 6 regarding “services provided to U.S. political committees” during that period, as well as any
 7 “policies, procedures, trainings, or guidance relating to the provision of services to any U.S.
 8 political committee by non-U.S. nationals.”¹²

9 After the UKCA preliminarily approved our request and referred it to the ICO, the ICO
 10 informed us that it had a massive amount of Cambridge/SCL data (around 400 terabytes) that it
 11 had seized, as well as a trove of Cambridge/SCL emails that SCL’s U.K. liquidation counsel had
 12 produced voluntarily. However, after conducting a review of the legal authorities governing its
 13 possession of Cambridge/SCL records, the ICO informed us, in March 2020, that it could not
 14 share either the data that it had seized from SCL’s offices or the emails that SCL’s liquidators
 15 had provided to it voluntarily. As such, it appeared the ICO could not assist us further.

16 The UKCA then informed us it would transfer the MLAT request to a local police office
 17 to seek a court order compelling the SCL’s liquidators to provide us with the relevant emails and
 18 data, while also suggesting that we contact the liquidators directly to see if they would consent to
 19 provide the materials voluntarily (as they had done for the ICO to assist in its investigation). As

tdoc2/CDOC-104tdoc2.pdf (“The Parties shall provide mutual assistance, in accordance with the provisions of this Treaty . . . Assistance shall include: . . . (2) providing documents, records, and evidence.”).

¹¹ Request for Assistance in the Matter of Cambridge Analytica LLC (Dec. 4, 2019) (“MLAT Request”).

¹² MLAT Request at 12-13.

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1 such, in April 2020, we contacted the firm representing SCL in its liquidation proceedings, but
2 received no response to repeated inquiries.

3 In June 2020, the UKCA informed us that the local police were asking SCL's liquidators
4 to voluntarily provide the requested SCL documents, and would otherwise seek a court order
5 compelling the production of those documents. However, we were told that obtaining a court
6 order would require a showing of "dual criminality," *i.e.*, that the alleged conduct we were
7 investigating would also constitute a crime under U.K. law. After discussing that issue with the
8 UKCA, we did not believe that we could successfully make such a showing, and our DOJ
9 contacts shared our skepticism, thus effectively foreclosing the option of compelling SCL's
10 liquidators to cooperate with our request. By November 2020, SCL's liquidators had also
11 informed the UKCA that without a court order, they would not voluntarily produce the requested
12 materials to aid in our investigation.

13 Although the UKCA was in the process of seeking a second opinion on the "dual
14 criminality" issue, in light of the apparent expiration of the statute of limitations and the
15 substantial additional investment of time and resources needed to obtain the Cambridge records
16 through the UK authorities, we determined to end the investigation. We therefore requested that
17 DOJ withdraw the MLAT request on March 10, 2021.

18 **IV. LEGAL ANALYSIS**

19 **A. The Foreign National Prohibition**

20 The Act and Commission regulations prohibit any "foreign national" from directly or
21 indirectly making a contribution or donation of money or other thing of value, or an expenditure,

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1 independent expenditure, or disbursement, in connection with a federal, state, or local election.¹³

2 Moreover, the Act prohibits any person from soliciting, accepting, or receiving any such

3 contribution or donation from a foreign national.¹⁴ The Act's definition of "foreign national"

4 includes an individual who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who is not

5 lawfully admitted for permanent residence, as well as a "foreign principal" as defined at

6 22 U.S.C. § 611(b), which, in turn, includes a "partnership, association, corporation,

7 organization, or other combination of persons organized under the laws of or having its principal

8 place of business in a foreign country."¹⁵ Commission regulations implementing the Act's

9 foreign national prohibition provide:

10 A foreign national shall not direct, dictate, control, or directly or indirectly

11 participate in the decision-making process of any person, such as a corporation,

12 labor organization, political committee, or political organization with regard to

13 such person's Federal or non-Federal election-related activities, such as decisions

14 concerning the making of contributions, donations, expenditures, or

15 disbursements . . . or decisions concerning the administration of a political

16 committee.¹⁶

17 The Commission has explained that this provision also bars foreign nationals from "involvement

18 in the management of a political committee."¹⁷

¹³ 52 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(1); 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(b), (c), (e), (f). Courts have consistently upheld the provisions of the Act prohibiting foreign national contributions and independent expenditures on the ground that the government "has a compelling interest for purposes of First Amendment analysis in limiting the participation of foreign citizens in activities of American democratic self-government, and in thereby preventing foreign influence over the U.S. political process." *Bluman v. FEC*, 800 F. Supp. 2d 281, 288 (D.D.C. 2011), *aff'd* 132 S. Ct. 1087 (2012); *see United States v. Singh*, 924 F.3d 1030, 1041–44 (9th Cir. 2019).

¹⁴ 52 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(2). The Commission's implementing regulation at 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(g) more specifically provides that "no person shall *knowingly solicit*" a foreign national contribution. 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(g). "[K]nowingly" is defined to include "actual knowledge" that the target of the solicitation is a foreign national. *See* 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(a)(4) (definition of knowingly).

¹⁵ 52 U.S.C. § 30121(b); 22 U.S.C. § 611(b)(3); *see also* 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(a)(3).

¹⁶ 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(i).

¹⁷ Contribution Limits and Prohibitions, 67 Fed. Reg. 69,928, 69,946 (Nov. 19, 2002); *see also* Advisory Op. 2004-26 at 2-3 (Weller) (noting that foreign national prohibition at section 110.20(i) is broad and concluding that,

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1 In light of these provisions, Commission regulations permit any person or company —
 2 foreign or domestic — to provide goods or services to a political committee, without making a
 3 contribution, if that person or company does so as a “commercial vendor,” *i.e.*, in the ordinary
 4 course of business, and at the usual and normal charge, as long as foreign nationals do not
 5 directly or indirectly participate in any committee’s management or decision-making process in
 6 connection with its election-related activities.¹⁸ While not all participation by foreign nationals
 7 in the election-related activities of others will violate the Act,¹⁹ the Commission has consistently
 8 found a violation of the foreign national prohibition where foreign national officers or directors
 9 of a U.S. company participated in the company’s decisions to make contributions or in the
 10 management of its separate segregated fund.²⁰

while a foreign national fiancé of the candidate could participate in committees’ activities as a volunteer without making a prohibited contribution, she “must not participate in [the candidate’s] decisions regarding his campaign activities” and “must refrain from managing or participating in the decisions of the Committees”).

¹⁸ 11 C.F.R. § 114.2(f)(1); *see* 11 C.F.R. § 116.1(c) (defining “commercial vendor” as “any persons providing goods or services to a candidate or political committee whose usual and normal business involves the sale, rental, lease or provision of those goods or services). The Act defines a contribution to include “anything of value,” which in turn includes all “in-kind contributions,” such as “the provision of any goods or services without charge or at a charge that is less than the usual and normal charge for such goods or services.” 11 C.F.R. § 100.52(d)(1); *see* 52 U.S.C. § 30101(8).

¹⁹ *See* Factual and Legal Analysis at 4-5, MUR 6959 (Cindy Nava) (citing 52 U.S.C. § 30101(8)(A)(ii); 11 C.F.R. § 100.54; Advisory Op. 1982-04 (Apodaca)); Factual and Legal Analysis at 6-9, MURs 5987, 5995, and 6015 (Sir Elton John); Advisory Op. 2004-26 at 3 (Weller).

²⁰ *See, e.g.*, Conciliation Agreement, MUR 6093 (Transurban Grp.) (U.S. subsidiary violated Act by making contributions after its foreign parent company’s board of directors directly participated in determining whether to continue political contributions policy of its U.S. subsidiaries); Conciliation Agreement, MUR 6184 (Skyway Concession Company, LLC) (U.S. company violated Act by making contributions after its foreign national CEO participated in company’s election-related activities by vetting campaign solicitations or deciding which nonfederal committees would receive company contributions, authorizing release of company funds to make contributions, and signing contribution checks); Conciliation Agreement, MUR 7122 (American Pacific International Capital, Inc.) (U.S. corporation owned by foreign company violated Act by making contribution after its board of directors, which included foreign nationals, approved proposal by U.S. citizen corporate officer to contribute).

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1 **2 B. The Factual Record Does Not Sufficiently Establish the Violations to Take**
2 **Further Action**

3 Based on the information before the Commission prior to initiating an investigation in
4 these matters, the Commission found reason to believe that Cambridge, through its foreign
5 national employees, including Wylie, may have participated in the decision-making processes
6 with regard to election-related activities of one or more U.S. political committees.²¹ The
7 investigation aimed to uncover additional information regarding “the parameters of Cambridge’s
8 participation in the management or decision-making processes of the Respondent political
9 committees and whether it employed foreign nationals to provide those services.”²²

10 As explained below, however, in light of the overall post-investigatory record, including
11 respondents’ submissions contesting the Commission’s findings, and the expiration of the statute
12 of limitations as to the activity upon which the Commission found reason to believe, we do not
13 recommend that the Commission expend the additional resources necessary to establish the
14 extent of the respondents’ violations.

15 1. Cambridge Analytica

16 Cambridge did not respond to the Commission’s reason to believe findings because, as
17 noted above, it was by that time in bankruptcy and had been effectively dissolved. Moreover, its
18 records were located in a foreign country, in the custody and control of a foreign government.
19 As discussed above, we therefore attempted, through the MLAT process, to acquire Cambridge’s
20 communications and records from its foreign parent company, SCL, but were ultimately unable
21 to obtain those documents. We were also unable to contact former Cambridge employees,

²¹ See Factual and Legal Analysis at 11-12, MURs 7350, 7351, and 7382 (Cambridge Analytica LLC).

²² First Gen. Counsel’s Report at 39, MURs 7350, 7351, 7357, and 7382 (Cambridge Analytica LLC, *et al.*).

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1 including Wylie, who might have been able to provide more insight into Cambridge's activities
2 during the relevant period.

3 As such, the investigation did not uncover additional information to substantiate the
4 extent of Cambridge's potential violations. Lacking this detailed information, and given the
5 expiration of the statute of limitations in connection with any services foreign nationals may
6 have provided through Cambridge, the overall record thus does not appear to merit the additional
7 Commission resources necessary to take any further action as to Cambridge.

8 2. Christopher Wylie

9 Wylie did not respond to the Commission's reason to believe finding, and he did not
10 respond to either an informal request for information or the Commission's duly-authorized
11 subpoena. Moreover, we are unsure whether he received any of these documents, despite our
12 best efforts to contact him: Because Wylie never retained counsel before the Commission and
13 apparently lives outside the U.S., and we have no email or mailing address — or other contact
14 information, such as a phone number — through which to reach him, we could not confirm
15 whether he received any of the Commission's correspondence in these matters.

16 As such, in conjunction with the lack of additional information regarding Cambridge's
17 activities, the investigation did not uncover additional information to substantiate the extent of
18 Wylie's violations of the Act. While the information available prior to the investigation raised
19 an inference that Wylie, a foreign national, may have participated in the decision-making process
20 with regard to election-related spending of the U.S. political committees that hired Cambridge,

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1 particularly during the 2014 election cycle,²³ the overall record does not appear sufficiently
 2 detailed as to the extent of Wylie's participation to take further action.

3 3. Alexander Nix

4 Nix submitted a detailed response to the Commission's reason to believe finding on
 5 November 6, 2019, raising several points to contest that finding. In addition to raising
 6 arguments against the reliability of the pre-investigatory record, Nix's response primarily
 7 contends that Nix did not "personally engage" in the alleged conduct that violated the Act, *i.e.*,
 8 the participation by foreign nationals working for Cambridge in a committee's management or
 9 decision-making process with regard to its election-related activities.²⁴ The response also argues
 10 that the Commission's finding conflates conduct by foreign nationals that merely *influences* a
 11 committee's decision-making process, such as providing research or data services at a fair
 12 market price, with conduct that amounts to *participation* in a committee's decision-making
 13 process with regard to its election-related activities.²⁵

14 The pre-investigatory record indicated that "while Nix served as the chief executive and
 15 day-to-day manager of Cambridge, he and other foreign national employees of Cambridge may
 16 have . . . participat[ed] in committees' decision-making in connection with their communications
 17 strategy and expenditures."²⁶ That was, in fact, the basis on which the Commission found reason

²³ See Factual and Legal Analysis at 3, 11-13, MURs 7350 and 7351 (Christopher Wylie).

²⁴ Post-RTB Resp. of Alexander Nix at 2-3 (Nov. 6, 2019).

²⁵ *Id.* at 3. Nix's response also stated: "[S]ubsequent to the transmission of this letter, this [law] firm will no longer represent Mr. Nix before the Commission in connection with MURs 7350, 7351 or 7382, and hence is not authorized to accept service of correspondence or compulsory process on his behalf." *Id.* at 4.

²⁶ Factual and Legal Analysis at 14, MURs 7350, 7351, and 7382 (Alexander Nix).

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1 to believe Nix violated the Act.²⁷ As such, the argument that Nix did not personally engage in
 2 such participation is inapposite. Further, the response's legal argument is likewise unavailing; as
 3 the Commission explained, a foreign national may, as a commercial vendor, provide services that
 4 *influence* a political committee's activities, "as long as foreign nationals do not directly or
 5 indirectly participate in any committee's management or decision-making process in connection
 6 with its election-related activities."²⁸ As such, the Commission's reason to believe finding drew
 7 a distinction between permitted and prohibited conduct by an entity, like Cambridge, that
 8 employs foreign nationals to provide services to a political committee.

9 Nevertheless, despite the weaknesses in the Nix's arguments, given the lack of additional
 10 specific information regarding Cambridge's activities and Nix's role in managing or directing
 11 those activities, the overall record appears insufficient to substantiate the extent of Nix's
 12 violations.

13 4. The Robinson Committee

14 The Robinson Committee filed a response to the Commission's reason to believe finding
 15 on August 13, 2019, asserting that the candidate, Arthur Robinson, "personally made all
 16 decisions in the 2014 campaign" and "personally directed it in its entirety."²⁹ While the response
 17 acknowledges that the Robinson Committee "did receive advice from people . . . employed by
 18 Cambridge Analytica," and that it did "not know whether or not we received advice directly or

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ Factual and Legal Analysis at 8-9, MURs 7350, 7351, and 7382 (Alexander Nix).

²⁹ Post-RTB Resp. of Robinson Comm. at 1 (Aug. 13, 2019).

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1 indirectly from a non-U.S. citizen,” it also contends that “no individual case of a possible
 2 violation . . . is cited” in the Commission’s reason to believe finding.³⁰

3 Viewed in light of the pre-investigatory information indicating that Cambridge employed
 4 many foreign nationals in providing services to U.S. committees during the 2014 election cycle,
 5 the Robinson Committee’s acknowledgement that it received advice from Cambridge during the
 6 2014 election suggests that a foreign national may have thereby participated in a decision-
 7 making process in connection with the Robinson Committee’s electoral activities.³¹

8 Nevertheless, without more definitive information regarding the nature of the advice given or
 9 specific instances where a foreign national managed, administered, or “direct[ed], dictate[d],
 10 control[led], or directly or indirectly participate[d] in the decision-making process” of the
 11 Robinson Committee’s electoral activities, there is insufficient information to establish the full
 12 extent of these violations.³²

13 5. The Bolton PAC, Tillis Committee, and NCRP

14 The Bolton PAC filed a response, along with a sworn declaration from its director,
 15 denying the allegations and contesting the Commission’s finding, principally arguing that
 16 Cambridge (which it refers to as “SCL USA”) only provided “data analytics” services as a paid
 17 commercial vendor and “did not direct, dictate, control, or directly or indirectly participate in the
 18 decision-making process of the John Bolton Super PAC with respect to any expenditures it

³⁰ *Id.*; see also Arthur Robinson Resp. at 1-2 (Apr. 18, 2018) (acknowledging that the Robinson Committee “listened to advice from many individuals and organizations, including Cambridge Analytica”).

³¹ See Factual and Legal Analysis at 4-5, 9-10, MUR 7351 (Art Robinson for Congress).

³² 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(i).

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1 made.”³³ The response specifically denies that Cambridge provided “lists of voters to target” or
 2 “prepared scripts or contents for use” by the Bolton PAC.³⁴

3 The Tillis Committee likewise submitted a response, attaching multiple sworn affidavits,
 4 denying the allegations and contending that “Cambridge Analytica did NOT participate in the
 5 Tillis Committee’s management of decision-making process in connection with its election
 6 related spending” and “further did NOT provide ‘polling, focus groups and message
 7 development’ services for the Tillis Campaign in 2014.”³⁵ The NCRP also submitted a response
 8 denying the allegations and incorporating large portions of the Tillis Committee’s response by
 9 reference.³⁶

10 Viewed in light of these responses, which attach sworn affidavits specifically denying the
 11 factual basis for the alleged violations, as well as the lack of additional information regarding
 12 whether, and in precisely what capacities, Cambridge may have employed foreign nationals to
 13 provide services for these committees, there is insufficient information to substantiate the extent
 14 of these respondents’ violations.

³³ Post-RTB Resp. of Bolton PAC at 4 (Oct. 15, 2019); *see id.*, Ex. A ¶¶ 27-28, 31 (Decl. of Sarah Tinsley) (“Cambridge Analytica provided data analytics to one of the John Bolton Super PAC’s vendors, Campaign Solutions, which Campaign Solutions analyzed to see how the messages they crafted might resonate with certain generic personality types. Cambridge Analytica provided these data analytics in the ordinary course of business and at the usual and normal charge. . . Cambridge Analytica and its employees never directed, dictated, controlled, or directly or indirectly participated, in any management or decision-making process in connection with the John Bolton Super PAC’s election-related activities.”).

³⁴ *Id.* at 3.

³⁵ Post-RTB Resp. of Tillis Comm. at 3 (Oct. 16, 2019) (emphases in original); *see id.*, Ex. K ¶ 5, 13, 26 (Aff. of Paul Shumaker) (“The Tillis Campaign retained Cambridge Analytica LLC . . . to serve as the microtargeting data vendor for the Tillis Campaign in 2014. . . Cambridge Analytica did not develop ‘individually targeted messages’ for the Campaign, nor did it direct the Campaign as to where to target messages or spend resources. . . Cambridge Analytica had nothing to do with decisions about expenditures, budgeting, strategy or any election-related spending by the Tillis campaign.”).

³⁶ Post-RTB Resp. of NCRP (Oct. 16, 2019).

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1 **C. The Commission Should Dismiss the Remaining Allegations on Which No**
2 **Action was Previously Taken**

3 The Commission previously took no action as to three political committees that hired
4 Cambridge during the 2016 election cycle, which allegedly resulted in foreign nationals
5 participating in the management or decision-making processes of these committees with regard
6 to their election-related activity: Cruz for President and Bradley S. Knippa in his official
7 capacity as treasurer (the “Cruz Committee”); Donald J. Trump for President, Inc. and Bradley
8 T. Crate in his official capacity as treasurer (the “Trump Committee”); and Make America
9 Number 1 and Jacquelyn James in her official capacity as treasurer (“Make America Number
10 1”).³⁷ The Commission also previously took no action as to the allegation that during the 2014
11 election cycle, the Bolton PAC made coordinated communications with the Tillis Committee and
12 NCRP using Cambridge as a “common vendor.”³⁸ Finally, the Commission previously took no
13 action as to several individual respondents: Donald J. Trump, Mark Turnbull, Stephen K.
14 Bannon, Bradley J. Parscale, Rebekah Mercer, Nigel Oaks, Alexander Tayler, Tim Glister, and
15 Jared Kushner.

16 The First General Counsel’s Report recommended that the Commission find reason to
17 believe as to the 2016 committees — the Cruz Committee, the Trump Committee, and Make
18 America Number 1 — as well as Mark Turnbull, Cambridge’s Chief Operating Officer (COO),
19 and recommended finding reason to believe as to the allegation that the Bolton PAC made

³⁷ See MUR 7350 Compl.; MUR 7351 Compl.

³⁸ See MUR 7357 Compl.; MUR 7382 Compl.

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1 coordinated communications.³⁹ The report also recommended taking no action at that time as to
 2 the remaining respondents, pending an investigation.⁴⁰

3 Our investigation of the allegations for which the Commission found reason to believe
 4 did not provide additional relevant information for the Commission's further consideration of the
 5 allegations on which it previously took no action. Based on the passage of time and the apparent
 6 lapsing of the statute of limitations, further consideration of these allegations would not be a
 7 prudent use of the Commission's limited resources. Accordingly, we recommend that the
 8 Commission exercise its prosecutorial discretion and dismiss these allegations.⁴¹

9 * * *

10 As the foregoing discussion reflects, we had significant difficulty contacting witnesses
 11 and respondents in these matters, many of whom are foreign nationals based outside the U.S.
 12 We were also unable to obtain the communications and records of the primary respondent,
 13 Cambridge, which were located in the United Kingdom. Our investigation was also hampered
 14 by the lack of a quorum on the Commission for much of the investigation period. Therefore, the
 15 current record is more developed but similar to the record on which the Commission found
 16 reason to believe these violations occurred. Viewed in light of the apparent lapsing of the statute
 17 of limitations, and the fact that the investigation is unlikely to uncover additional information
 18 without the expenditure of significant additional resources, we recommend that the Commission
 19 take no further action and close the file as to all Respondents in these matters.

³⁹ See First Gen. Counsel's Report at 40-41, MURs 7350, 7351, 7357, and 7382 (Cambridge Analytica LLC, *et al.*). The Commission voted on a motion to approve these recommendations on April 11, 2019, which failed 2-0, with two abstentions. Certification, MURs 7350, 7351, 7357, and 7382 (Apr. 11, 2019).

⁴⁰ First Gen. Counsel's Report at 40-41, MURs 7350, 7351, 7357, and 7382 (Cambridge Analytica LLC, *et al.*).

⁴¹ See *Heckler v. Chaney*, 470 U.S. 821, 831 (1985).

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1 **V. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2 **MURs 7350, 7351, and 7382**

3 1. Take no further action as to the allegations regarding Cambridge Analytica LLC; Alexander Nix; Christopher Wylie; the John Bolton Super PAC and Cabell Hobbs in his official capacity as treasurer; the Thom Tillis Committee and Collin McMichael in his official capacity as treasurer; the North Carolina Republican Party and Jason Lemons in his official capacity as treasurer; and Art Robinson for Congress and Art Robinson in his official capacity as treasurer, on which the Commission previously found reason to believe;

10 2. Dismiss the allegations as to Cruz for President and Bradley S. Knippa in his official capacity as treasurer; Donald J. Trump for President, Inc. and Bradley T. Crate in his official capacity as treasurer; Make America Number 1 and Jacquelyn James in her official capacity as treasurer; Donald J. Trump; Mark Turnbull; Stephen K. Bannon; Bradley J. Parscale; Rebekah Mercer; Nigel Oaks; Alexander Tayler; Tim Glister; and Jared Kushner;

16 **MURs 7357 and 7382**

17 3. Dismiss the allegation that the John Bolton Super PAC and Cabell Hobbs in his official capacity as treasurer violated 52 U.S.C. §§ 30116(a), 30118(a), and 11 C.F.R. § 109.21;

20 **MURs 7350, 7351, 7357, and 7382**

21 4. Approve the appropriate letters; and

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1 5. Close the file.

Lisa J. Stevenson
Acting General Counsel

August 4, 2021

Date

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