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Nunes Opening Statement for Kent and Taylor Hearing on Impeachment

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Rep. Devin Nunes
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In a July open hearing of this committee following publication of the Mueller report, the Democrats engaged in a last-ditch effort to convince the American people that President Trump is a Russian agent. That hearing was the pitiful finale of a three-year-long operation by the Democrats, the corrupt media, and partisan bureaucrats to overturn the results of the 2016 presidential election.

After the spectacular implosion of their Russia hoax on July 24, in which they spent years denouncing any Republican who ever shook hands with a Russian, on July 25 they turned on a dime and now claim the real malfeasance is Republicans' dealings with Ukraine.

In the blink of an eye, we're asked to simply:

- forget about Democrats on this committee falsely claiming they had "more than circumstantial evidence" of collusion between President Trump and the Russians;
- forget about them reading fabrications of Trump-Russia collusion from the Steele dossier into the congressional record;
- forget about them trying to obtain nude pictures of Trump from Russian pranksters who pretended to be Ukrainian officials;
- forget about them leaking a false story to CNN, while he was testifying to our committee, claiming Donald Trump Jr. had colluded with Wikileaks;
- and forget about countless other deceptions, large and small, that make them the last people on earth with the credibility to hurl more preposterous accusations at their political opponents.

And yet now we're supposed to take these people at face value when they trot out a new batch of allegations. But anyone familiar with the Democrats' scorched-earth war against President Trump would not be surprised to see all the typical signs that this is just a carefully orchestrated media smear campaign. For example:

- After vowing publicly that impeachment requires bipartisan support, Democrats are pushing impeachment forward without the backing of a single House Republican.
- The witnesses deemed suitable for television by the Democrats were put through a closed-door audition process in a cult-like atmosphere in the basement of the Capitol, where the Democrats conducted secret depositions, released a flood of misleading and one-sided leaks, and later selectively released transcripts in a highly staged manner.
- Violating their own guidelines, the Democrats repeatedly redacted from the transcripts the name of Alexandra Chalupa, a contractor for the Democratic National Committee who worked with Ukrainian officials to collect dirt on the Trump campaign, which she provided to the DNC and the Hillary Clinton campaign.
- The Democrats rejected most of the Republicans' witness requests, resulting in a horrifically one-sided process where crucial witnesses are denied a platform if their testimony doesn't support the Democrats' absurd accusations. Notably, they are trying to impeach the President for inquiring about Hunter Biden's activities, yet they refused our request to hear from Biden himself.
- The whistleblower was acknowledged to have a bias against President Trump, and his attorney touted a "coup" against the President and called for his impeachment just weeks after his election.
- At a prior hearing, Democrats on this committee read out a purely fictitious rendition of the President's phone call with President Zelensky. They clearly found the real conversation to be insufficient for their impeachment narrative, so they just made up a new one.

And most egregiously, the staff of Democrats on this committee had direct discussions with the whistleblower before his or her complaint was submitted to the Inspector General, and Republicans cannot get a full account of these contacts because

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- For years they accused the Trump campaign of colluding with Russia when they themselves were colluding with Russia by funding and spreading the Steele dossier, which relied on Russian sources.
- And now they accuse President Trump of malfeasance in Ukraine when they themselves are culpable. The Democrats cooperated in Ukrainian election meddling, and they defend Hunter Biden's securing of a lavishly paid position with a corrupt Ukrainian company, all while his father served as vice president.

Despite this hypocrisy, the Democrats are advancing their impeachment sham. But we should not hold any hearings at all until we get answers to three crucial questions the Democrats are determined to avoid asking:

- First, what is the full extent of the Democrats' prior coordination with the Whistleblower and who else did the Whistleblower coordinate this effort with?
- Second, what is the full extent of Ukraine's election meddling against the Trump campaign?
- And third, why did Burisma hire Hunter Biden, what did he do for them, and did his position affect any U.S. government actions under the Obama administration?

These questions will remain outstanding because Republicans were denied the right to call witnesses who know the answers.

What we will witness today is a televised theatrical performance staged by the Democrats. Ambassador Taylor and Mr. Kent—I'd like to welcome you here, and congratulate you for passing the Democrats' Star Chamber auditions held for the last six weeks in the basement of the Capitol. It seems you agreed, wittingly or unwittingly, to participate in a drama. But the main performance—the Russia hoax—has ended, and you've been cast in the low-rent Ukrainian sequel.

I'll conclude by noting the immense damage the politicized bureaucracy has done to Americans' faith in government. Though executive branch employees are charged with implementing the policy set by our President, who is elected by and responsible to the American people, elements of the civil service have decided that they, not the President, are really in charge.

Thus, as we'll learn in these hearings:

- After expressing skepticism of foreign aid and concern about foreign corruption on the campaign trail, President Trump outraged the bureaucracy by acting skeptically about foreign aid and expressing concerns about foreign corruption.
- Officials' alarm at the President's actions was typically based on second-hand, third-hand, and even fourth-hand rumors and innuendo.
- They believed it was an outrage for President Trump to fire an ambassador, even though the President has full authority to retain or remove diplomats for any reason at any time.
- Officials showed a surprising lack of interest in the indications of Ukrainian election meddling that deeply concerned the President at whose pleasure they serve.
- Despite all their dissatisfaction with President Trump's Ukraine policy, the President approved the supply of weapons to Ukraine, unlike the previous administration, which provided blankets as defense against invading Russians.

By undermining the President who they are supposed to be serving, elements of the FBI, the Department of Justice, and now the State Department, have lost the confidence of millions of Americans who believe that their vote should count for something. It will take years, if not decades, to restore faith in these institutions.

This spectacle is doing great damage to our country. It's nothing more than an impeachment process in search of a crime.

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