

Rep. Devin Nunes
Opening Statement for Cooper and Hale Hearing on Impeachment
November 20, 2019

As we Republicans have argued at these hearings, the American people are getting a skewed impression of these events. That's because the Democrats assumed full authority to call witnesses, and they promptly rejected any new witnesses the Republicans requested.

So I'd like to take a moment to discuss a few of the people whose testimony has been deemed unacceptable for the American people to hear.

The Whistleblower

The Whistleblower is the key figure who started this entire impeachment charade by submitting a complaint against President Trump that relied on second-hand and third-hand information and media reports.

This began a bizarre series of events. Although the complaint had no intelligence component whatsoever, the Intelligence Community Inspector General accepted it and even changed the guidance on complaint forms to eliminate the requirement for first-hand information. Then his office backdated the forms to make them appear as if they were published a month earlier.

Democrats then took the extremely rare step of pushing a whistleblower complaint into the public, using it as the centerpiece of their impeachment crusade.

We later learned that Democratic staff had prior coordination with the Whistleblower, though Democrats themselves had denied it on national television. Following that revelation, Democrats did a dramatic about-face—they suddenly dropped their insistence that the Whistleblower testify to us and rejected our request to hear from him.

Then, in a hearing yesterday, the Democrats cut off our questions and accused us of trying to out the Whistleblower—even though they claim they don't know who he is.

Alexandra Chalupa

Chalupa is a former operative for the Democratic National Committee who worked with officials of the Ukrainian Embassy in Washington D.C. in order to smear the Trump campaign. She met directly about these matters with then-Ukrainian Ambassador Valeriy Chaly, who himself wrote an article criticizing Trump during the 2016 campaign.

Chalupa's activities were one of several indicators of Ukrainian election meddling in 2016, all of which were aimed against the Trump campaign.

Once you understand that Ukrainian officials were cooperating directly with President Trump's political opponents to undermine his candidacy, it's easy to understand why the President would want to learn the full truth about these operations, and why he would be skeptical of Ukraine.

Hunter Biden

Biden is another witness who the Democrats are sparing from cross-examination. His securing of an extremely well-paying job on the board of a corrupt Ukrainian company, Burisma, highlights the precise corruption problem in Ukraine that concerned not only President Trump, but all the witnesses we've interviewed.

The Democrats have dismissed questions about Biden's role at Burisma as conspiracy theories, yet they're trying to impeach President Trump for having expressed concerns about the company. If we could hear from Biden, we could ask him how he got his position, what he did to earn his lavish salary, and what light he could shed on corruption at this notorious company.

But Biden would make an inconvenient witness for the Democrats, and so they've blocked his testimony.

At these hearings, we've heard a lot of second-hand and third-hand information and speculation about President Trump's intentions. But in the end, the only direct order we've heard about from the President is his order to Ambassador Sondland that he wanted *nothing* from Ukraine.

That is consistent with the testimony provided by Senator Johnson, who said President Trump angrily denied accounts from Sondland that a quid pro quo existed.

Aside from rejecting our witnesses, the Democrats have tried other petty tricks to shape public opinion. Just this morning, they called a break in the hearing in order to press their absurd arguments to TV cameras. Then, for this hearing, they cancelled the multiple rounds of initial questioning they had earlier today with Ambassador Sondland, who they bizarrely consider their star witness.

When you look through the presumptions, assumptions, and smoke and mirrors, you see the facts of this case are clear:

- President Trump was skeptical of foreign aid generally, and especially skeptical of aid to corrupt countries like Ukraine.
- He wanted to discover the facts about Ukrainian meddling in the 2016 election against his campaign.
- A brief hold on Ukrainian aid was lifted without Ukraine taking any of the steps they were supposedly being bribed to do.
- President Zelensky repeatedly said there was nothing improper about President Trump's call with him, and he did not even know about the hold in aid at the time he was supposedly being extorted with it.

So what exactly are the Democrats impeaching the President for? None of us here really knows, because the accusations change by the hour. Once again, this is an impeachment in search of a crime.