

Rep. Devin Nunes
Opening Statement for Vindman and Williams Hearing on Impeachment
November 19, 2019

I'd like to address a few brief words to the American people watching at home.

If you watched the impeachment hearings last week, you may have noticed a disconnect between what you actually saw and the mainstream media accounts describing it. What you saw were three diplomats, who dislike the President's Ukraine policy, discussing second-hand and third-hand conversations about their objections. Meanwhile, they admitted they had not talked to the president about these matters, and they were unable to identify any crime or impeachable offense the President committed.

But what you read in the press were accounts of shocking, damning, and explosive testimony that fully supports the Democrats' accusations.

If these accounts have a familiar ring, it's because this is the same preposterous reporting the media offered for three years on the Russia hoax. On a near-daily basis, the top news outlets in America reported breathlessly on the newest *bombshell* revelations showing that President Trump and everyone surrounding him are Russian agents. It really wasn't long ago that we were reading these headlines:

- From CNN: "*Congress investigating Russian investment fund with ties to Trump officials.*" That was false.
- From the New York Times: "*Trump Campaign aides had repeated contacts with Russian intelligence.*" That was false.
- From Slate: "*Was a Trump server communicating with Russia?*" That was false.
- From New York Magazine: "*Will Trump be meeting with his counterpart or his handler?*" That was false.
- From the Guardian: "*Manafort held secret talks with Assange in Ecuadorian Embassy, sources say.*" That was false.
- And from BuzzFeed: "*President Trump directed his attorney Michael Cohen to lie to Congress about the Moscow Tower project.*" That was false.

There was no objectivity or fairness in the media's Russia stories—just a fevered rush to tarnish and remove a president who refuses to pretend that the media are something different than what they really are—puppets of the Democratic Party.

With their biased misreporting on the Russia hoax, the media lost the confidence of millions of Americans. And because they refused to acknowledge how badly they botched the story, they've learned no lessons and simply expect Americans will believe them as they try to stoke yet another partisan frenzy.

In previous hearings, I've outlined three questions the Democrats and the media don't want asked or answered. Instead of shedding light on these crucial questions, the media are trying to smother and dismiss them. Those questions are:

- First, what is the full extent of the Democrats' prior coordination with the Whistleblower and who else did the Whistleblower coordinate this effort with?

The media have fully accepted the Democrats' stunning reversal on the need for the Whistleblower to testify to this committee. When the Democrats were insisting on his testimony, the media wanted it too.

But things have changed since it became clear the Whistleblower would have to answer problematic questions, including

- What was the full extent of the Whistleblower's prior coordination with Chairman Schiff, his staff, and any other people he cooperated with while preparing the complaint?
- What are the Whistleblower's political biases and connections to Democratic politicians?
- How does the Whistleblower explain the inaccuracies in the complaint?
- What contact did the Whistleblower have with the media, which appears to be ongoing?
- What are the sources of the Whistleblower's information, who else did he talk to, and was the Whistleblower prohibited by law from receiving or conveying any of that information?

The media have joined the Democrats in dismissing the importance of cross-examining this crucial witness. Now that the Whistleblower has successfully kickstarted impeachment, he has disappeared from the story—as if the Democrats put the Whistleblower in their own Witness Protection Program.

- My second question: What is the full extent of Ukraine's election meddling against the Trump campaign?

In these depositions and hearings, Republicans have cited numerous indications of Ukrainians meddling in the 2016 elections to oppose the Trump campaign. Many of these instances were reported, including the posting of many primary source documents, by veteran investigative journalist John Solomon.

Since the Democrats switched from Russia to Ukraine for their impeachment crusade, Solomon's reporting on Burisma, Hunter Biden, and Ukrainian election meddling has become inconvenient for the Democratic narrative, and so the media is furiously smearing and libeling Solomon.

In fact, the publication The Hill told its staff yesterday it would conduct a review of Solomon's Ukraine reporting. Coincidentally, the decision came just three days after a Democrat on this

committee told a Hill writer that she would stop speaking to The Hill because it had run Solomon's stories, and she urged the writer to relay her concerns to Hill management.

So now that Solomon's reporting is a problem for the Democrats, it's a problem for the media as well.

I'd like to submit for the record John Solomon's October 31 story titled, "*Debunking some of the Ukraine scandal myths about Biden and election interference.*" I encourage viewers today to read this story and draw your own conclusions about the evidence Solomon has gathered.

The concerted campaign by the media to discredit and disown one of their own colleagues is shocking. And we see it again in the sudden denunciations of New York Times reporter Ken Vogel as a conspiracy theorist after he covered similar issues, including a 2017 Politico piece entitled, "*Ukrainian efforts to sabotage Trump backfire.*"

- And my third question: 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?

We have now heard testimony from the Democrats' own witnesses that diplomats were concerned about a conflict of interest involving Hunter Biden. That's because he had secured a well-paid position, despite having no qualifications, on the board of a corrupt Ukrainian company while his father was Vice President charged with overseeing Ukrainian issues.

After trying out several different accusations against President Trump, the Democrats have recently settled on "bribery"—according to widespread reports, they replaced their "quid pro quo" allegation because it wasn't polling well.

But if the Democrats and the media are suddenly so deeply concerned about bribery, you'd think they would take some interest in Burisma paying Hunter Biden \$83,000 a month. And you'd think they would be interested in Joe Biden threatening to withhold U.S. loan guarantees unless the Ukrainians fired a prosecutor who was investigating Burisma. That would be a textbook example of bribery.

The media, of course, are free to act as Democrat puppets, and they're free to lurch from the Russia hoax to the Ukraine hoax at the direction of their puppet masters. But they cannot reasonably expect to do so without alienating half the country who voted for the President they're trying to expel.

Americans have learned to recognize fake news when they see it, and if the mainstream press won't give it to them straight, they'll go elsewhere to find it—which is exactly what the American people are doing.