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TRUMP RELEASE OF MISLEADING NUNES MEMO SEEKS TO UNDERMINE INDEPENDENCE OF JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND SPECIAL COUNSEL MUELLER'S INVESTIGATION INTO RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

"FOR THE SAKE OF OUR REPUBLIC, A BIPARTISAN MAJORITY OF CONGRESS MUST STEP UP AND PUT AN END TO THIS DANGEROUS PATTERN OF BEHAVIOR."

BALTIMORE – **U.S. Senator Ben Cardin, Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee**, released the following statement.

"No one should be confused about what happened today: the president, once again, chose politics over national security. The president and his enablers in Congress have bent over backwards to release cherry-picked, classified information to confuse and distract the American public for partisan purposes.

"Rather than marshalling an all-of-government response to protect America from a national security threat coming from Russia, the president continues to do all he can to marginalize the rule of law and the independence of the Justice Department, while crippling the intelligence and law enforcement professionals who work tirelessly to keep our country safe. Any words of praise the president or his aides and supporters may offer to the brave men and women

working in law enforcement and the intelligence community ring hollow, because his actions repeatedly show a willful disregard for separation of powers, justice, and objective investigatory work.

"Clearly, the president and his congressional allies will stop at nothing to undermine the independence and integrity of Special Counsel Mueller's investigation, which already has produced several guilty pleas and grand jury indictments. The president chose to release the Nunes memo even after the FBI publicly said it has 'grave concerns about material omissions of fact that fundamentally impact the memo's accuracy.' The House Intelligence Committee did the president's bidding here by releasing a deliberately misleading memo designed to fuel conspiracy theories, while expressly forbidding the release of a far more substantive and informative Democratic memo. This process makes a mockery of the non-partisan oversight process that Congress and the executive branch have historically used to handle sensitive intelligence matters. This is not a game or a TV show. This is about degrading the very foundation on which our country is built and the way our government operates.

"Congress and the administration should focus on protecting the Mueller investigation so it can reach its conclusion, bringing to justice those who broke our laws, and preventing Russian aggression against the United States and our allies in the future.

"President Nixon's Saturday Night Massacre began on a Friday afternoon and spilled into the late evening and next day. My deepest fear is that we are watching history repeat itself. The Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Special Counsel's inquiry are under full-blown assault from the President of the United States. President Trump appointed the Attorney General, Deputy Attorney General, and FBI Director, and then criticizes his own appointees when they are not sufficiently loyal or 'on his team,' regardless of what the law demands. The root problem, however, isn't with DOJ, FBI, or the intelligence community. The problem is with a president who is failing to uphold his oath to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution.

"For the sake of our republic, a bipartisan majority of Congress must step up and put an end to this dangerous pattern of behavior."

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