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Intel Committee Ranking Member Schiff Statement on Significant Developments This Week in HPSCI Investigation

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Washington, DC – Today, Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA), the Ranking Member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, released the following statement:

“The House Intelligence Committee investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election had several important developments this week:

“First, Steve Bannon testified before the Committee and refused to answer any questions about matters that took place after he left the campaign, including what he witnessed during the presidential transition, his time in the Trump Administration and even certain matters that took place after he left the Administration, but that are relevant to the investigation. His counsel informed our Committee that he was willing to answer these questions, but that he was being directed not to by White House Counsel and the President. The Committee, on a bipartisan basis, immediately subpoenaed Mr. Bannon during his interview to compel his testimony and has insisted that he return to answer all our questions.

“Second, Corey Lewandowski testified before the Committee the following day, and, adhering to Mr. Bannon’s example, refused to answer any questions as to matters he learned that are relevant to our investigation after he left the Trump campaign in June 2016. While he did not represent that his refusal was based on instructions by the White House, when he was asked whether he discussed his upcoming testimony with the President within the 24 hours preceding our interview, he refused to fully respond. His counsel gave no other basis for his refusal to answer questions than that his client was not prepared to do so. Unlike the situation with Mr. Bannon, however, the Majority was unwilling to subpoena Mr. Lewandowski and has said that it is simply willing to rely on Mr. Lewandowski’s commitment to return to the Committee at a later date. This represents not only a dramatic departure from the precedent set only the day before, but also deeply undermines our investigation.

“Third, following Mr. Lewandowski’s testimony and refusal to answer questions, the Administration canceled entirely an interview scheduled for Friday with another key witness in our investigation. If that interview has been rescheduled, the date has not yet been shared with the Minority.

“Fourth, the Committee has voted on a bipartisan basis to release the transcripts of Glenn Simpson. Those transcripts reveal serious allegations that the Trump Organization may have engaged in money laundering with Russian nationals – the same subject which Mr. Bannon described to the author of Fire and Fury. Mr. Simpson, who, prior to his time at Fusion GPS, was an investigative journalist for the Wall Street Journal with a focus on Russia, the Russian government and mafia, and illicit financial transactions, testified that if the Trump Organization did engage in money laundering with the Russians, it would be with the knowledge or approval of the Kremlin and constitute powerful leverage over the President of the United States.

“Finally, in an effort to distract from the above, the Majority voted today on a party-line basis to grant House Members access to a profoundly misleading set of talking points drafted by Republican staff attacking the FBI and its handling of the investigation. Rife with factual inaccuracies and referencing highly classified materials that most of Republican Intelligence Committee members were forced to acknowledge they had never read, this is meant only to give Republican House members a distorted view of the FBI. This may help carry White House water, but it is a deep disservice to our law enforcement professionals.”

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