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Nunes Opening Statement for Morrison and Volker Hearing on Impeachment

Washington, November 19, 2019

Rep. Devin Nunes
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Welcome back to the circus, ladies and gentlemen.

We are here to continue what Democrats tell us is a serious, somber, and even “prayerful” process of attempting to overthrow a duly elected president. If they’re successful, the end result would be to disenfranchise tens of millions of Americans who thought the president is chosen by the American people—not by thirteen Democrat partisans on a committee that’s supposed to be overseeing the government’s intelligence agencies.

And isn’t it strange how we’ve morphed into the Impeachment Committee, presiding over a matter that has no intelligence component whatsoever? Impeachment, of course, is the jurisdiction of the Judiciary Committee, not the Intelligence Committee.

But putting this farce in our court provides two main advantages for the Democrats: it made it easier for them to shroud their depositions in secrecy, and it allowed them to avoid giving too big a role in this spectacle to another Democrat committee chairman in whom Democrat leaders obviously have no confidence.

Who can possibly view these proceedings as fair and impartial? They are being conducted by Democrats who spent three years saturating the airwaves with dire warnings that President Trump is a Russian agent. And these outlandish attacks continue to this very day.

Just this weekend, in front of a crowd of Democratic Party activists, the Chairman of this committee:

- Denounced President Trump as a “*profound threat to our democracy.*”
- And vowed that “*We will send that charlatan in the White House back to the golden throne he came from.*”

How can anyone believe that people who would utter such dramatic absurdities are conducting a fair impeachment process and are only trying to discover the truth? It’s obvious the Democrats are trying to topple the president solely because they despise him, because they’ve promised since Election Day to impeach him, and because they’re afraid he will win re-election next year.

No witnesses have identified any crime or impeachable offense committed by the President, but that doesn’t matter. Last week the Democrats told us his infraction was asking for a quid pro quo. This week, it’s bribery. Who knows what ridiculous crime they’ll be accusing him of next week.

As witnesses, the Democrats have called a parade of government officials who don’t like President Trump’s Ukraine policy, even though they all acknowledge he provided Ukraine with lethal military aid after the Obama administration refused to do so. They also resent his conduct of policy through channels outside their own authority and control. These actions, they argue, contradict the “interagency consensus.”

They don’t seem to understand that the President alone is constitutionally vested with the authority to set the policy. The American people elect a president, not an interagency consensus.

And of course, our previous witnesses had very little new information to share in these hearings. That’s because these hearings are not designed to uncover new information, they’re meant to showcase a handpicked group of witnesses who the Democrats determined, through their secret audition process, will provide testimony most conducive to their accusations.

In fact, by the time any witness says anything here, people are hearing it for the third time. They heard it first through the Democrats' cherry-picked leaks to their media sympathizers during the secret depositions, and second when the Democrats published those deposition transcripts in a highly staged manner.

Of course there are no transcripts from crucial witnesses like Hunter Biden, who could testify about his well-paying job on the board of a corrupt Ukrainian company, or Alexandra Chalupa, who worked on an election meddling scheme with Ukrainian officials on behalf of the Democratic National Committee and the Hillary Clinton campaign.

That's because the Democrats refuse to let us hear from them.

As for evidence, what we're left with is the transcript of the Trump-Zelensky phone call, which the President has made public. That means Americans can read for themselves an unremarkable conversation with President Zelensky, who repeatedly expressed satisfaction with the call afterward.

The Democrats, however, claim President Zelensky was being bribed, and therefore he must be *lying* when he says the call was friendly and posed no problems.

There's some irony here—for weeks we've heard the Democrats bemoan the damage President Trump supposedly caused to U.S.-Ukrainian relations. But when the Ukrainian President contradicts their accusations, they publicly dismiss him as a liar. I may be wrong, but I'm fairly sure calling a friendly foreign president a liar violates the interagency consensus.

So overall, the Democrats would have you believe President Zelensky was being blackmailed with a pause on lethal military aid that he didn't even know about, that President Trump did not mention to him, and that diplomats have testified they always assumed would be lifted—which it was, without the Ukrainians undertaking any of the actions they were supposedly being coerced into doing.

This process is not serious, it is not somber, and it is certainly not prayerful. It's an ambitious attack to deprive the American people of their right to elect a president that the Democrats don't like.

As I mentioned, the Chairman of this committee claims that democracy is under threat. If that's true, it's not the President who poses the danger.

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