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Three Chairs Statement on State Department Inspector General Briefing

Washington, October 2, 2019

Washington, D.C. (Oct. 2, 2019)— Today, Rep. Eliot L. Engel, the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Rep. Adam Schiff, the Chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, the Chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Reform, released the following statement after committee staff received a briefing from the State Department Inspector General:

“Today, the State Department Inspector General provided an unclassified briefing and documents to House and Senate Committees. The Inspector General believes this matter is urgent in light of the complaint filed by a whistleblower regarding the President’s July 25, 2019, call in which he pressed the Ukrainian President to smear President Trump’s domestic political rival.

“The briefing and documents raise troubling questions about apparent efforts inside and outside the Trump Administration to target specific officials, including former Vice President Joe Biden’s son and then-U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Masha Yovanovitch, who was abruptly removed as Ambassador in May after a sustained campaign against her by the President’s agent, Rudy Giuliani.

“The documents provided by the Inspector General included a package of disinformation, debunked conspiracy theories, and baseless allegations in an envelope marked ‘White House’ and containing folders labeled ‘Trump Hotel.’ These documents also reinforce concern that the President and his allies sought to use the machinery of the State Department to further the President’s personal political interests.

“The Inspector General stated that his office interviewed Secretary Pompeo’s Counselor, Thomas Ulrich Brechbuhl, who informed the Inspector General that Secretary Pompeo told him the packet ‘came over,’ and that Brechbuhl presumed it was from the White House.

“Earlier this week, Pompeo attempted to block Brechbuhl, Ambassador Yovanovitch, and other State Department employees from testifying before Congress.

“These documents only underscore the need for the Trump Administration to comply with our requests for documents and interviews.”

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