

their ability to pay their bills and to receive medications, and that small businesses are not able to complete their transactions. Congress has a responsibility to enact legislation that will restore timely delivery and fully fund the Postal Service.

Finally, we need to ensure that the Census Bureau has the time necessary to execute a complete and accurate 2020 count. You know, it has been interesting to me to see the efforts of this administration to try and politicize the census, because this is no red State or blue State problem. The States with the lowest percentage of households that have been counted during the census are Alabama, Montana, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, and South Carolina. They are mostly in the South, but not all. We must give the Census Bureau time to make a complete and accurate count by including a statutory delay for the apportionment and redistricting count that is part of any package before we go home. This is something that the Census Bureau asked us for last spring, and it is something that we should make sure they receive, even though under political pressure they changed their request.

Bipartisanship on these priorities is possible. We were able to negotiate the CARES Act legislation that passed the Senate by a vote of 96 to 0. We did it before. We can do this again because that is how government is supposed to work. We are supposed to come together and negotiate and deliver for the American people.

Probably the most often heard remark that I hear in New Hampshire is this: Why can't you just all work together to address the needs of this country?

That is what we should be doing around everything, and it is what we should be doing around responding to this coronavirus.

We should not recess until we can get a bill to the President's desk. We were sent here to do a job. We have an obligation to get it done. The foot dragging has gone on for far too long. Brinksmanship should end because time is running out on the needs of the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this morning the Republican majority of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee authorized another smattering of subpoenas in what seems to be an ongoing effort to disparage a former Vice President and his family.

While the rest of the country is busy fighting COVID-19, this is what the Homeland Security Committee has been up to—using the powers of the Senate to, in effect, conduct opposition research for President Trump's campaign.

The Republican chairman has said he plans to release a report about it next

week—merely a month before election day. There is a dark similarity here to the Republican effort in the House in the previous election to discredit the Democratic Presidential candidate with the Select Committee on Benghazi.

You may remember the now-minority leader of the House Republican caucus bragging that the Republicans created the committee to bring down Hillary's poll numbers. You know what they say about a political gaffe: It is when politicians tell the truth.

Well, it seems like the Republican chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee has made the same gaffe that Minority Leader MCCARTHY made in 2016. In a little-noticed interview with a Wisconsin radio station last month, Senator JOHNSON said that his probe would "help Donald Trump win reelection," and yet somehow the current activities of the Republican majority in the Homeland Security committee are even worse than what the House Republicans did in 2016, because in the rush to find scraps of information for these investigations, Senate Republicans may have collected and propagated disinformation that came from Putin's intelligence agents.

Some of the allegations that the Homeland Security chairman is now pursuing are the same ones pushed by Andriy Derkach, a known Russian agent who was sanctioned by President Trump's own Treasury Department for interfering in our elections.

Powerful Senate Republicans are echoing the same claims that the Russians are pushing, the same nonsense that Ukraine interfered in the 2016 elections and not just Putin.

We have all become so inured to scandal during this scandalous administration, but the fact that a powerful Senate committee may have fallen victim to misinformation from Moscow is appalling.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Would the Democratic leader yield?

Mr. SCHUMER. I will yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The chair will remind Senators that Rule XIX provides that "No Senator in debate shall, directly or indirectly, by any form of words impute to another Senator or to other Senators any conduct or motive unworthy or unbecoming a Senator."

Mr. SCHUMER. I am aware of it. Everything I have stated here is factual—everything, every single thing.

So, this afternoon, my colleagues and I have drafted a simple resolution that calls for the cessation of any Senate investigation or activity that allows the U.S. Congress to act as a conduit for Russian disinformation.

I cannot fathom how any Member of this Chamber could justify blocking such a resolution. There must not be a single aspect of this Chamber that wittingly or unwittingly furthers the propaganda machine of Vladimir Putin.

Now, I know what my friend from Wisconsin might say. He will deny re-

ceiving information from the particular Russian agent that I have mentioned, Mr. Derkach, but Chairman JOHNSON has never provided a full accounting of all the Russian- and Ukrainian-linked individuals he sought information from. One of the chairman's subpoenas, for example, targeted a Ukrainian national who is an associate of Mr. Derkach.

So anticipating his objection to this resolution, I would simply ask the chairman to provide a full accounting of whom he sought information from, so we can know who they are, what their motives are, and, therefore, the Senate can see if they are trying to interfere with our elections.

The chairman should have no issue furthering a complete accounting of his contacts with Russian and Ukrainian sources. The American people ought to know whether the U.S. Senate has been sullied by potentially receiving information from discredited Russian agents. The American people should expect the Senate to pass this resolution today.

What were our Founding Fathers most worried about? One of the top things—top things—was interference by foreign powers in our elections. Back then, their concerns were about bribery or treason or a foreign actor who infiltrated our government. Today, in our information age, the methods of foreign interference are different, but the risks are the same.

Our chief adversaries—Russia, China, Iran, North Korea—have found that disinformation and misinformation are a weak point in open societies like ours. That makes it incumbent on us—all of us—here in the Congress to be careful about the information we receive and repeat.

In the zeal for partisan advantage, we hope the Republican majority on the Homeland Security Committee has not become a sympathetic audience and a potential entrance point to foreign influence campaigns, wittingly or unwittingly. What a disastrous and disgraceful state of affairs. The Senate should pass this resolution today.

I yield the floor to my colleague from Oregon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise in support of this resolution offered by the Democratic leader. We are calling for an end to a horribly flawed congressional investigation. The foreign threats to our democracy—attempts to poison it with disinformation and to sow distrust—are an established matter of fact.

It is especially troubling because for periods over the last year, two Senate committees have conducted an investigation involving Ukraine, former Vice President Biden, and his son Hunter: the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, led by our colleague from Wisconsin, Chairman JOHNSON; and our colleague from Iowa, Chairman GRASSLEY, of the Finance Committee, in which I am the

ranking Democrat. My staff has joined in interviews and received documents pertinent to the investigation.

Given my Finance Committee role and my position on the Senate Intelligence Committee, I am unable to discuss classified information or details of an ongoing inquiry. However, I can discuss public information about the spread of Russian propaganda and the pathway it is following from Russian agents, through the U.S. Senate, to the American people.

The Russian Government is again interfering in our election. This has been confirmed by our intelligence community. Its interference campaign includes disinformation about Vice President Biden and the work he was doing to fight corruption in Ukraine.

To spread this disinformation, Russia enlists the help of characters like Andriy Derkach and Andriy Telizhenko. Derkach has been identified by American counterintelligence as an active agent for Russian intelligence. This agent, instead of being treated as a foreign enemy, has met personally with the President's lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, to further his task of undermining elections in America. I am not sure, colleagues, what you should call an American who aids a Russian agent, but counselor to the President is certainly not it.

In August, the Director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center issued a threat assessment on foreign threats to our election. It identified Derkach as a Kremlin-linked actor involved with attempting to denigrate former Vice President Biden.

On September 3, Senator SCHUMER and I wrote a letter, along with several of our Democratic colleagues, urging the Treasury Department to issue sanctions against Derkach. It did so the following week, describing his role in what it called "a covert influence campaign centered on cultivating false and unsubstantiated narratives concerning U.S. officials in the upcoming 2020 Presidential Election."

Telizhenko is yet another Giuliani associate who, according to press accounts, American counterintelligence has identified as a conduit for Russian attacks on our elections. He has also been a star witness in the Johnson-Grassley investigation.

Derkach and Telizhenko have released what appears to be heavily edited portions of phone calls Vice President Biden held with Ukrainian officials in the course of his anti-corruption work. Some were released on the very same day. Telizhenko is promising further releases. Telizhenko also told the Washington Post that he forwarded more than 100 emails to staff on Senator JOHNSON's committee and answered their questions.

Our colleague from South Carolina, Senator GRAHAM, was involved in the earliest stages of the Johnson-Grassley inquiry in 2019, but in February of 2020, Chairman GRAHAM said: "I called the attorney general this morning and

RICHARD BURR, [then, of course] chairman of the Intel Committee, and they told me take very cautiously anything coming out of the Ukraine against anybody."

The disinformation that these two have spread—Derkach and Telizhenko have spread—the disinformation these two have spread, largely a collection of unproven allegations and wild conspiracy theories, has obviously made it into many media outlets in the country all too willing to spread the products of Russian intelligence. It has been circulated by the President's own legal team.

From there, that disinformation became the basis of much of the work of the Johnson-Grassley inquiry. I am going to have more to say on the details of that investigation in the days ahead, but for now, I will say this: Chairman JOHNSON has repeatedly claimed in the media that he has uncovered new and damaging information about Vice President Biden's activity in Ukraine. This is simply not true. Nothing I have seen—not one bit of evidence—could lead to the conclusion that Vice President Biden did anything wrong in Ukraine. What I have seen is a monthlong investigation that still has no legitimate basis, burning through an incredible amount of manpower and taxpayer-funded resources. Neither of these committees, by the way, under the rules of the Senate, have any jurisdiction over our diplomatic ties with Ukraine. It has no legislative purpose.

This investigation, as I have pointed out on a number of occasions, also is happening under a clear double standard that has favored Republicans in the Senate and stonewalled oversight by Democrats. In my view, that is a sign that the flimsy accusations made against the Vice President can't stand up to real scrutiny.

The real nature of this inquiry has been clear all along. It began as a counterprogramming during the impeachment trial, and the urgency behind the investigation really almost seemed to die out when the trial ended. It only returned—and again, these are facts. All of these are facts. It only returned when the Vice President established himself as the Democratic frontrunner. The day after the Biden victory in the South Carolina primary, Chairman JOHNSON sent a letter to the committee announcing his intention to kick-start the investigation with a subpoena.

So now what I am going to do is outline what Senator JOHNSON said in his own words, because I think that is also very important as Senators consider this resolution. These are Senator JOHNSON's words specifically.

My colleague said in March: "[I]f I were a Democrat primary voter, I'd want these questions satisfactorily answered before I cast my final vote."

The chairman said in August: "I would think it would certainly help Donald Trump win reelection and cer-

tainly be pretty good, I would say, evidence about not voting for Vice President Biden."

He said in September: "Stay tuned. In about a week we're going to learn a whole lot more of Vice President Biden's unfitness for office."

Furthermore, the chairman, in my view, looking again at the public record, cannot credibly take issue with the work the Vice President was doing because he supported it publicly at the time.

In June 2014, at a Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Ukraine, Chairman JOHNSON stated: "If we have to tie aid or help to make sure that anti-corruption laws are passed, I think we should do it."

In 2016, Chairman JOHNSON wrote a letter with a bipartisan group of members of the Senate Ukraine Caucus to former Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko. The letter reads:

Succeeding in these reforms will show Russian President Putin that an independent, transparent and democratic Ukraine can and will succeed. It also offers a stark alternative to the authoritarianism and oligarchic cronyism prevalent in Russia. As such, we respectfully ask that you address the serious concerns raised—

And we are talking here about the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

We similarly urge you to press ahead with urgent reforms to the Prosecutor General's Office and Judiciary.

So these are the words, colleagues, the words of the chairman of the committee. That is why Senator SCHUMER and I believe this investigation, the Johnson-Grassley investigation, is baseless. We have brought forward a resolution that we believe is important to defending our democracy. It comes down to a question of what we want campaigns and elections to be all about.

In my view—and I have always said this—right at the core of my being, I want elections about our best ideas. That is why I serve on the Finance Committee, to try to come up with the best ideas in healthcare, taxes, trade, and the like. Elections ought to be about our best ideas and having real debates and not attacking the other side with farfetched foreign misinformation, especially at a time when the American people are dealing with the crushing weight of one crisis stacked on another.

There are 200,000 Americans who have died of COVID-19. I couldn't disagree more with the President's handling of the coronavirus pandemic. We have seen so much economic hurt. I championed on the floor and, for a while, we had bipartisan support for basically bringing unemployment into the relevant century and getting an extra \$600 per week to people and covering gig

workers and all kinds of other people. Yet, still, the economy has collapsed, and millions are out of work. My Oregon neighbors—a number of them—have seen their communities reduced to ashes. Thousands and thousands of homes and businesses have been lost. There has been a national outcry against racism and violence against Black Americans.

Our elections are supposed to be about those kinds of issues, and in all of them, what I have tried to do is devote my public service to bringing people together and getting parties to find common ground on the best ideas of how to make changes in these areas. Now, that sure seems to me to be what the Senate should be all about rather than baseless attacks and foreign disinformation.

I urge my colleagues to support the resolution that Senator SCHUMER and I have championed. It is long past time for this badly flawed investigation by our colleagues to end.

As in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of a resolution opposing efforts to launder Russian disinformation through the Congress, which is at the desk. I further ask that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Is there objection?

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object.

I want to first point out—I want to thank the previous Presiding Officer for pointing out the fact that if this is not a violation of rule XIX, it is coming pretty darn close.

What you just witnessed here is this: We have witnessed Democrats doing what Democrats do so well, accusing the other side of doing exactly what they do—only 10 times or 100 times worse.

Earlier today, I chaired a business meeting of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, precipitated, created, made necessary by the fact that the ranking member of my committee presented an absurd, ridiculous interpretation of our rules. Based on the subpoena authority I received earlier on June 4, the ranking member said, in order to actually schedule a subpoena or schedule a meeting—a deposition—I could come back for another vote.

During my opening statement of that business meeting, having just described that level of meddling—which, by the way, the ranking member also provided that ridiculous interpretation to our witness, the witness, Jonathan Winer, an individual, by the way, who decided not to cooperate with the Department of Justice inspector general in his report on the FISA abuse. He decided not to show up for his deposition that had been previously scheduled. Having just

explained that in my opening statement, I would like to read the next part, which describes the duplicity and the hypocrisy of the Democrats.

I said: The most recent example of this hypocrisy was a letter and classified addendum created by senior Democratic leaders that accused Senator GRASSLEY and me—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair will remind Senators that rule XIX provides that “[N]o Senator in debate shall, directly or indirectly, by any form of words impute to another Senator or to other Senators any conduct or motive unworthy or unbecoming a Senator.”

Mr. JOHNSON. I appreciate the warning. I don’t think I did that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. JOHNSON. Let me continue.

The most recent example is a letter and classified addendum created by senior Democratic leaders that accused Senator GRASSLEY and me of relying on foreign disinformation. This “intelligence product,” which was full of false allegations, was produced, classified, and then leaked to the press more than a week before Senator GRASSLEY or I were given access to it. Many in the media dutifully reported this hot tip. Democrats then used those media reports to repeat, distort, and embellish the false charges. This coordinated smear—and that is what you have to call it. It is a coordinated smear which continues today on the floor of the Senate—culminated in an August 7 opinion piece in the Washington Post submitted by Senator RICHARD BLUMENTHAL.

But John Ratcliffe, the Director of National Intelligence, wrote:

I can confirm the IC did not create the classified addendum to the 13 July letter, nor did we authorize its [release].

The foreign information we were falsely accused of receiving—we have a misprint here.

The foreign information we were falsely accused of receiving utilized—purportedly comes from a Ukrainian named Andriy Derkach, who has since been sanctioned by the Treasury Department. Although neither Senator GRASSLEY nor I ever sought, received, or used any information from Mr. Derkach, the media has continued to report otherwise for weeks, despite our repeated and unequivocal denials.

But it is true that a chart produced by Mr. Derkach is now part of our investigatory record, not because of me or Senator GRASSLEY but because Senator PETERS’ staff introduced it into the record.

So as was the case in the 2016 election, the only foreign disinformation being used to interfere in this investigation has been introduced by Democrats against Republicans and not by Republicans.

Given all the concerns expressed by Democrats over foreign disinformation, it is notable that we have not heard the same concern over disclosure of the

Steele dossier containing Russian disinformation. We are aware of this fact because, during the course of this investigation, my chief counsel uncovered it buried in four classified footnotes to the Department of Justice inspector general FISA report. We also know the FBI was aware of this as early as 2016. Think about that. The FBI knew that Russian disinformation was contained in the Steele dossier as early as August of 2016. Yet they continued the investigation, and that investigation spilled over into a special counsel and disrupted America’s Government and politics for years.

We also note that the Steele dossier was bought and paid for by the DNC and Clinton campaign. Apparently, Democrats are willing to look the other way when they pay for or use disinformation against Republicans.

That is what I read in my opening statement at our business meeting earlier today.

As I look at this resolution, the last “whereas” talks about a congressional investigation that alleges the same discredited claims by Derkach. I don’t know who Derkach is. As I said earlier, Senator GRASSLEY and I have repeatedly, unequivocally, denied we did not solicit; we did not accept; we did not receive any information from Mr. Derkach whatsoever. Yet Democrats persist in pushing this false allegation.

As a matter of fact, I am not sure our committee has alleged anything yet. About the only thing that I have alleged is the glaring and obvious conflict of interest.

I have to step back here. I just have to give a little history about Ukraine. In February of 2014, Ukrainians, courageous Ukrainians—basically two factions: one that wanted to integrate closer to the West and the younger Ukrainians who wanted to rid themselves of the corruption of the Soviet legacy—joined together in massive protest on the Maidan. Approximately, February 20, 21, over 80 Ukrainians were slaughtered by snipers protesting to rid Ukraine of corruption and increase their ties to the West.

Less than 2 months later—and I have asked my colleagues: Is there any disinformation here? Is this anything from Russian sources? Two months later, here are the series of events that occurred.

On April 16, 2014, Vice President Biden met with his son’s business partner, Devon Archer, at the White House. That is kind of a big deal—anybody meeting with the Vice President at the White House. Hunter Biden’s business partner got to do that.

Five days later, Vice President Biden visited Ukraine. The media described him as the public face of the administration’s handling of Ukraine. The next day, April 22, Archer joined the board of Burisma.

Again, Burisma is this company that is owned by what George Kent from the State Department called an “odious oligarch,” Mykola Zlochevsky. It is hard to say Ukrainian names.

Six days later, after Archer joined the board, British officials seized \$23 million from the London bank accounts of Burisma's owner, Mykola Zlochevsky. Fifteen days later, on May 13, Hunter Biden joined the board of Burisma. And over the course of the next, approximately, 4 to 5 years, Hunter and his firms were paid more than \$3 million for his and Archer's board participation.

Again, Ukraine had just gone through a revolution. Their leadership was desperate for U.S. support. We all have to believe that Mr. Zlochevsky, an odious oligarch, would have made those Ukrainian officials well aware of the fact that the son of the Vice President of the United States, the public face of the administration's handling of Ukraine, was sitting on his board.

So what kind of signal did that send to Ukrainians who were trying to stand up and were being pressured by U.S. officials to rid their country of corruption? It basically said: If you want U.S. support, don't touch Burisma.

The fact is, when all was said and done, Burisma and Mykola Zlochevsky were never held to account. The investigation, the prosecution of him was ceased. It never occurred.

In terms of Russian disinformation, these false charges, these wild claims against me and Senator GRASSLEY—I was way ahead of the curve when it came to Russian disinformation. Back in 2015, as chairman of the European Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I held three hearings focusing on what Russia does to destabilize the politics in countries—an attempted coup in Montenegro and other places in Eastern Europe. So I am well aware of what Russia is doing—well aware. I don't condone it. I condemn it. I am not having any part of pushing it.

But I have to say, for all the crocodile tears the Democrats shed in terms of Russian disinformation, the effects on our politics, I would argue that the Russian disinformation that has been perpetrated on our politics and the effect it has on the election pales in comparison to the false allegations, for example, that Russia colluded with the Trump campaign. It was promoted by Democrats for years, culminating in a special counsel and finally an impeachment. But how Democrats have used and how the media has promoted and carried the water for Democrats all this time has had a far greater effect, by orders of magnitude, in terms of destabilization and affecting the politics and affecting the elections. That is basically the truth.

I would just ask my colleagues and I would ask the American public to take a look at what has really been happening here. The false allegations, the basic playbook the Democrats engage in, time and again, create a false narrative, create a false intelligence product, accuse the other side of things that you are doing tenfold. That is what is happening here.

I, personally, am tired of it. As a result, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am very disappointed that my colleague has objected.

I just want to make a brief response reflecting on my role as a senior member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Again, as I indicated earlier, I can't get into anything classified or sources and methods, but before we leave this subject, I just want to remind the Senate that the Russian disinformation campaign is going on now. It is not some abstract issue. The Russian disinformation campaign is going on now.

The Russians have attempted to rewrite the history of the 2016 campaign. It is the conclusion of the intelligence community—this is not Democrats; it is not Republicans; it is the intelligence community—that they are trying to interfere again, this time in the 2020 election, including with these attacks on Vice President Biden, and they are saying this now. And active Russian agents, like Mr. Derkach, apparently are having press conferences. I heard a report that he may have had one today.

So Members of the Senate—again, this is a matter of public record—have been presented with specific warnings about these Kremlin-backed conspiracies and lies again and again, including in classified settings. As I wrap this up, I would only ask that Members of this great institution reflect on that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, a quick response because in my other paper here, I did not have the full quote from John Ratcliffe. I would like to read it now.

This is referring to the intelligence product that senior Democratic leaders created, leaked to the press, accusing Senator GRASSLEY and I, falsely, of receiving information from Andriy Derkach.

John Ratcliffe, Director of National Intelligence, wrote:

I can confirm the IC did not create the classified addendum to the 13 July letter, nor did we authorize its creation. The IC was not consulted prior to its creation and subsequent release to the entire membership of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Then, referring to that addendum, he said it "by no means reflects the full and complete analysis of the IC."

I would ask unanimous consent to enter into the RECORD an article that was published today by John Solomon talking about the extensive—extensive—contacts by members of the Obama administration in terms of the NSC and the State Department and the Ambassador with Andriy Telizhenko. It is right here.

We have a nice picture of House Member ELLIOT ENGEL as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEMOCRATS HAD EXTENSIVE CONTACT WITH UKRAINIAN THEY NOW USE FOR 'RED SCARE' ATTACK ON GOP

(By John Solomon)

September 16, 2020—2:30pm

For months, Democrats on Capitol Hill have waged a whisper campaign to disparage the reputation of a former Ukrainian government official named Andriy Telizhenko, who has emerged as a fact witness for Republicans investigating the controversial business deals of Joe Biden's son Hunter.

Led by Sens. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Gary Peters (D-Mich.), the Democrats have tried to suggest—without evidence—that Telizhenko is connected to Ukrainian Parliamentary member Andriy Derkach, identified by U.S. intelligence as leading Russian disinformation efforts targeting Joe Biden in the 2020 election and sanctioned by the Trump Treasury Department.

Their campaign will break into the open Wednesday on the Senate floor when Democrats try to force a vote on a resolution criticizing Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Chairman Ron Johnson (R-Wisc.) suggesting the probe he and Senate Finance Committee chairman Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) are leading into the Bidens' Ukraine dealings is part of Derkach's election meddling. Their argument is thin, relying on the fact that Telizhenko has talked publicly about some of the same issues as Derkach. Their resolution is likely to fail in the GOP-controlled Senate.

But the Democrats' character-assassination campaign suffers a much bigger problem: Long before he assisted the GOP Senate investigation, Telizhenko was a trusted mid-level Ukrainian government contact for the Obama-Biden administration, according to scores of U.S. government emails and memos obtained by Just the News.

The memos show Telizhenko routinely arranged sensitive meetings for senior State Department officials at the U.S. embassy in Kiev, met with senior Democrats on Capitol Hill, including current House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), and facilitated contacts with Ukrainians for the National Security Council and the U.S. Justice Department in Washington dating to 2013. He also was cleared for meetings inside the Obama White House, Secret Service entry logs show.

His contacts included such senior State officials as William Taylor and Geoffrey Pyatt, two ambassadors, the memos show.

In another words, the man the Democrats are now using for a "red scare" attack on the GOP senators was actually their own party's Ukrainian contact, vetted and cleared by the State Department to meet with senior officials like ambassadors and DOJ prosecutors on sensitive foreign matters.

Telizhenko also was hired by the Democratic-leaning firm known as Blue Star Strategies to help Burisma Holdings—the Ukrainian gas firm that hired Hunter Biden as a board member in 2014—lobby the State Department and Ukrainian prosecutors to drop corruption allegations against the company in 2016, the memos show.

Telizhenko, in fact, was so trusted and familiar with Obama administration officials that he was on a first-name basis, trading smiley face emoticons and arranging coffee and beer outings in Washington with such contacts as Obama-era National Security Council staffer Elisabeth Zentos, the memos show.

"Hi Andrii! I'm doing ok. Yes, definitely got some rest over the weekend. How about you?" Zentos wrote April 4, 2016 to Telizhenko from her official White House email account. "Survive the visit ok? Also, should we still plan for coffee this week? Maybe Wednesday or Friday? Hope all is well! Liz."

A month earlier, a planned beer outing with Zentos got changed. "Would you be up for doing coffee instead of beer though? I'm realizing that if I drink beer at 3 p.m., I will probably fall asleep while attempting to work afterward," Zentos wrote.

Zentos and Telizhenko also discussed the sensitive case of Burisma and its founder, Mykola Zlochevsky, in a July 2016 email exchange with the subject line "Re: Z," the shorthand Telizhenko used to refer to the Burisma founder. Their email exchange did not mention Hunter Biden's role in the company but showed the Obama White House had interest in the business dealings of Hunter Biden's boss.

"Hi Liz, Yes, It would be great to meet, tomorrow whatever works best for you 12:30pm or 6pm—I am ready," Telizhenko wrote the NSC staffer, adding a smiley face. Zentos eventually replied when he suggested a restaurant: "Ooh, that would be wonderful—thanks so much!"

Attached to Telizhenko's email was an org chart showing the structure of some foreign companies that had been connected at one point to Zlochevsky's business empire.

The memos show Zentos first befriended Telizhenko when she worked at the U.S. embassy as far back as 2014.

The memos show that officials at the Obama Justice Department, the NSC, and the State Department enlisted Telizhenko for similarly sensitive diplomatic matters dating to 2013 including:

Arranging for senior members of the Ukraine Prosecutor General's Office to travel to Washington in January 2016 to meet with NSC, State, DOJ and FBI officials to discuss ongoing corruption cases. At the time, the Ukraine prosecutors had an escalating corruption probe of Burisma, where Hunter Biden served on the board. Within weeks of the Washington meeting, Vice President Joe Biden had pressured Ukraine's president Petro Poroshenko to fire the lead prosecutor, Viktor Shakin.

Securing a meeting in February 2015 at the U.S. embassy in Kiev with a deputy Ukrainian prosecutor whom U.S. officials wanted to confront about a bribe allegedly paid by Burisma.

Facilitating a draft statement in November 2013 from members of the Ukrainian parliament to President Obama denouncing then-Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, whom the Obama administration would help oust from power a few weeks later.

"We, people of Ukraine, appeal to you with request to support Ukrainian people in their standing for freedom, justice and democracy," the November 2013 draft statement from Telizhenko to the U.S. embassy in Kiev read. "The President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich proved that he is not the guarantor of constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens, freedom of choice and right for free expression."

The draft statement was fielded by a military attache at the U.S. embassy who urged Telizhenko to get it to the embassy's political section for consideration. "The ambassador has not shared with me what the position of the US government would be on such a statement, other than his message yesterday morning," the attache wrote. ". . . I'm sure once you pass this statement to Ambassador Pyatt's political section, they will render a timely response."

Photos taken by U.S. and Ukrainian government photographers show Telizhenko facilitated meetings between 2014 and 2016 with key lawmakers in Washington, including Democrat Reps. Engel and Marcy Kaptur and then-GOP Sen. Bob Corker, as well as other U.S. agencies.

And the emails show U.S. embassy officials in Kiev routinely sought advice and insights from Telizhenko about happenings inside the Ukrainian government. "Andriy, we have heard that there may be a briefing today. Do you know the specifics?" embassy political officer Stephen Page asked in a January 2014 email.

Such contacts are normal in the diplomacy and national security business of the United States. But they take on significance now because they have been missing from the Democrats' attacks on Telizhenko and the GOP senators who have interviewed him in their probe of the Bidens. The question now is: If Telizhenko is so bad as Democrats claim, why did the Obama administration and Democrats so frequently engage him?

Sen. Wyden's recent statement ignored that issue. "While Democrats are pushing for more aggressive action against Russian assets interfering in our elections, Republicans are using their conspiracy theories to advance bogus investigations," he said.

U.S. intelligence officials tell *Just the News* that while they remain vigilant in fighting Russian interference in the 2020 election, they have no direct evidence Telizhenko is, like Derkach, connected to the Kremlin. However, they have extensive evidence he was welcomed by the U.S. government during the Obama years and that he assisted Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani's probe of legal matters in Ukraine, including finding political dirt last year on the Bidens.

The officials also noted there is open source intelligence that Telizhenko actually engaged in a rivalry in the Ukrainian press with Derkach and derided the Ukrainian parliamentary member as a Russian operative just a few months ago. The open source information includes a BuzzFeed article quoting Telizhenko and social media posts, the officials said.

Ukraine is a country with much corruption and many mysterious characters. But one thing is clear: U.S. government memos corroborate Andrii Telizhenko was trusted by the Obama administration for many years before congressional Democrats turned on him.

Mr. JOHNSON. The same person they are saying is just this dangerous Russian agent, they were using extensively throughout the Obama administration to set up contacts. He actually had the ability to go to meetings in the White House, and he attended those. This is the person whom now they are saying, because we spoke to him and got a little bit of information from him, we are dealing in Russian disinformation.

If they had that level of concern, why did Democratic lobbying firm Blue Star Strategies employ him for over a year, and why did Democrats deal with him so frequently during the Obama administration?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

CRIME

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, as we all know and as any American who has watched the news over the summer knows, there has been a terrible increase in crime in America's cities. As-

saults, shootings, murders have been higher this year, and my home State has not been safe from this trend. In fact, in St. Louis, MO, there were 55 murders in the month of July. That compares to 22 murders a year earlier in July, which we thought were way too many then. In Kansas City, MO, homicides in the first 6 months of this year were about 40 percent higher than they were last year.

One of the Kansas City victims was a 4-year-old boy named LeGenD Taliferro. He was murdered in the early hours of July 29 while he was asleep—a 4-year-old boy murdered while he was asleep—by a random shooting, violence going on outside his home. So early in July, the Justice Department launched an effort in Kansas City that has become a national effort, which they called Operation LeGenD, named for little LeGenD Taliferro. Under Operation LeGenD, Federal law enforcement officers are working alongside local police to solve crimes, to make arrests, to track down fugitives, and to prepare cases for trial so criminals can be held accountable. The key phrase there is "alongside." Federal agents aren't going in and taking over the police department; they are going in to add assistance to the police department.

On that topic, there was no immediate raid of trafficking centers or drug gangs or anything like that. I, frankly, thought the Justice Department was wrong in not announcing earlier to Federal officials and local officials what they were going to do and when they were going to do it, but I think we worked with them to see that that isn't going to continue to be the case. In fact, in early August, they made a similar determination to go into St. Louis.

One of the advantages of having Federal officers work with the local police in these cases is, one, they bring a whole lot more intensity to the moment. With the extra help, suddenly something becomes possible that wasn't possible before. Also, many of the people arrested can face Federal charges as well as other sentences.

Certainly in our State—in Kansas City and Missouri both—the two different U.S. attorney's offices have done a great job working with local officials before this but are even better able to look at what Federal charges might be faced to take some of that load off the local prosecutor and also look for another way to get these people off the street.

By September 1, in Kansas City, the operation had led to the arrest of 355 people suspected of serious crimes in Kansas City. More than 100 of those 355 people have been charged in Federal court. In St. Louis, where I said before that the government decided to bring Operation LeGenD—the Justice Department made that decision in early August, and by September 1, there were already 359 arrests, and 128 of those people arrested were looking at Federal charges as well.