

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF: MARC POLYMEROPOULOS

Monday, April 17, 2023

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room 2237, Rayburn House Office Building, commencing at 10:03 a.m.

Present: Representative Bishop.

Appearances:

For the COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY:

- ██████████ GENERAL COUNSEL
- ██████████ LAW CLERK
- ██████████ PRESS ASSISTANT
- ██████████ COUNSEL
- ██████████ SENIOR SPECIAL COUNSEL
- ██████████ SPECIAL COUNSEL
- ██████████ MINORITY CHIEF OVERSIGHT COUNSEL
- ██████████ MINORITY OVERSIGHT COUNSEL
- ██████████ MINORITY COUNSEL

For the SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION AND LIMITED GOVERNMENT:

- ██████████ MINORITY INTERN
- ██████████ MINORITY PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBER

For the PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE:

[REDACTED] STAFF DIRECTOR,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

[REDACTED] DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL

[REDACTED] COUNSEL

[REDACTED] MINORITY COUNSEL

For MARC POLYMERPOULOS:

MARK S. ZAID, ESQ.

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██████████ This is a transcribed interview of Marc Polymeropoulos. Chairman Jordan has requested this interview as part of the committee's investigation into the letter about the Hunter Biden laptop that the 51 former intel officials signed.

The Committee on the Judiciary and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence are conducting oversight of Federal law enforcement and intelligence matters within our respective jurisdictions. This investigation serves to inform potential legislative reforms within the jurisdictions of the committees.

For example, we may consider legislative reforms, such as revolving door legislation for Federal employees with security clearances. These reforms might include allowing Federal employees with security clearances to retain their clearances after employment with the government, but limiting their ability to receive access to classified information for some duration after their government service.

The committees may also consider legislative proposals that would ban or restrict intelligence activities -- I'm sorry, intelligence agencies -- from engaging in, coordinating, or promoting any political activity related to Federal elections, including candidates for Federal office.

The HPSCI staff will limit their questions to the letter. The Judiciary staff, we may have a question or two on a couple other topics, and we can deal with that as we go forward.

I want to thank you for appearing here today voluntarily. Also, thank your counsel for facilitating this.

My name is ██████████ I'm with Mr. Jordan's staff. I'll have everyone on the staff introduce themselves for you.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the House Intelligence Committee.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] House Judiciary Committee.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] House Judiciary minority.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] for the Judiciary.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] House Intel majority.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] minority Judiciary.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] chief oversight counsel of the House Judiciary

Democrat staff.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the minority.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] House Judiciary.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] House Judiciary.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] House Judiciary.

Mr. Bishop. I'm Dan Bishop, a member of the committee.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] House Judiciary Minority.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] House Judiciary minority.

[REDACTED] I'll go over the ground rules and guidelines that we'll follow during today's interview.

Our questioning will proceed in rounds. The majority will ask questions for one hour and then the minority will have an opportunity to ask questions for an equal period of time. We'll alternate back and forth.

We'll take a short break at the end of each hour. If you'd like to take a break apart from that, please let us know, to consult with your counsel or for any other reason.

As you can see, there's an official reporter here taking down everything we say to make a written record. We'll do our best not to speak over one another. Sometimes we do have to stop and go back and say a question because we get talking.

We encourage witnesses who appear before the committees to freely consult with counsel. And it's my understanding that you're here today with Mr. Zaid. Maybe he can introduce himself for the record.

Mr. Zaid. Sure. Mark Zaid for the witness today, Z-a-i-d.

██████████ We want you to answer our questions in the most complete and truthful manner possible, so we'll take our time. If you have any questions or if you don't understand a question we pose to you, please let us know.

We're not governed by the Federal Rules of Evidence or the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. So if we do ask you a question and it calls for hearsay, just let us know how you've learned the information, and we can deal with it that way.

If you honestly don't know the answer to a question or do not remember, of course it's best not to guess. Give us your best recollection. And it's okay to tell us if you've learned the information from somebody else. Just indicate how you came to know the information.

If there are things you don't know or can't remember, just say so, and that will be fine. And you can inform us who, to the best of your knowledge, might be able to help us answer that question.

You should also understand that although this interview is not under oath, we're not swearing you in, that by law of course you're required to answer questions before Congress truthfully. And you understand that?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. I do.

██████████ Witnesses that knowingly provide false testimony could be subject to criminal prosecution for perjury or for making false statements under 18 United States Code 1001. You understand that?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Yes.

██████████ And of course is there any other reason that you're unable to provide truthful testimony here today?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. No.

██████████ Finally, I'll make a note that we aim to keep this information confidential as we go through a number of folks we're interviewing. So to the extent, we ask the courtesy of not sharing the Q&A. As other witnesses come in, we'd hate to have their testimony clouded by any information they may have learned from you.

And along those lines, to the extent we mark exhibits, we'll keep them, even if it's an exhibit that you may have provided us.

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Sure.

██████████ Just for the sense of keeping the interview as confidential as possible.

That's the end of my welcoming remarks.

Democrat counsel have any?

██████████ No. Just thanks to the witness taking time out of your schedule for joining us.

██████████ Mr. Bishop, do you have anything?

Mr. Bishop. No, thanks.

██████████ Okay. And from time to time, we'll turn around. We'll like to make sure that Mr. Bishop or any of our other members have a full opportunity to ask questions. So sometimes we might just stop in the middle and pivot to Mr. Bishop just to make sure he has an opportunity to get all his questions answered.

All right. I'll turn it over to ██████████ who will lead our questioning today.

██████████ Okay. The time is 10:09.

EXAMINATION



BY [REDACTED]

Q Good morning.

A Good morning.

Q I have a few warm-up questions that I do for each individual. But given the nature of the work that you did and that this is an unclassified setting, if anything I'm about to ask you, you don't want to answer, or you can't answer, just feel free to let me know. All right?

A Okay.

Q Could you please tell us a bit about your professional background, Mr. Polymeropoulos?

A So I spent 26 years at CIA. Primarily worked on Middle East counterterrorism in the end of my career, on Europe and Eurasia. That's all in my unclassified bio or cleared bio.

Q When did you retire from the CIA?

A July 2019.

Q Okay. And what do you do now?

A Couple different things. I give talks on leadership. I wrote a book on leadership. I have a contract with MSNBC as an intelligence and national security analyst. And I also work for the Washington Examiner. I write a column for them maybe every two weeks on intelligence and national security.

Q All right.

You were one of 51 former intelligence officials who signed a public statement regarding Hunter Biden's emails, correct?

A Correct.

[REDACTED] I would now like to enter a document dated October 19th, 2020,

titled "Public Statement on the Hunter Biden Emails" into the record as exhibit No. 1.

[Polymeropoulos Exhibit No. 1

Was marked for identification.]

██████████ And I would also like to enter the Politico article that featured the public statement dated October 19th, 2020, titled "Hunter Biden Story is Russian disinfo, dozens of former intel officials say" into the record as exhibit No. 2.

[Polymeropoulos Exhibit No. 2

Was marked for identification.]

BY ██████████

Q What was the intent of the public statement?

A The letter?

Q Yes.

A Well, I think that it was certainly to provide some context, based on my experience and experience of others, on essentially Russian information operations, information warfare, and the possibility that they had once again engaged in such.

Q And what role did Mike Morell play in the creation of the statement?

A I believe this is what we provided to the committee. I think Mike Morell on the -- I think it was on the 17th -- had wrote me a text asking me if I thought there was any -- kind of any Russian involvement in this. I said that I thought that there was, based on my professional background. He asked if I would be willing to write something with him on this. And that's how this began.

Q Okay.

██████████ I would now like to enter a draft of the statement Michael Morell and Marc Polymeropoulos sent to potential signatories, including a request to sign, dated October 19th, 2020, at 1:38 a.m., into the record as exhibit No. 3.

[Polymeropoulos Exhibit No. 3

Was marked for identification.]

BY [REDACTED]

Q In this it says, "Marc and I drafted the attached because we believe the Russians were involved in some way in the Hunter Biden email issue and because we think Trump will attack Biden on the issue at this week's debate and we want to give the VP a talking point to use in response."

I'll ask about the use of this letter and the debate at another time, but for now I want to establish a bit of who did what in the creation of it.

A Sure.

Q So Morell asked if you would be willing to co-draft the statement with him, correct?

A Actually, he asked if we would write something together.

Q Okay.

A At first it was -- I wasn't sure what the medium would be, whether it would be an op-ed or not. In fact, I think it was -- that was the -- that was my thinking, it would be an op-ed.

Q All right. And he sought your opinion before drafting the statement?

A That's right.

Q And asked whether you thought, quote, "the Russians played in the Hunter Biden laptop thing."

Why do you believe Mr. Morell asked you that? Do you believe that was him expressing uncertainty over whether the Russians were involved and he wasn't sure and wanted to get a second opinion or have you had a longstanding relationship with him?

A Sure. So we definitely had a relationship, Michael as the Deputy Director

and then the Acting Director. I had briefed him numerous times, knew him quite well from times, whether I worked -- have to be careful -- when I worked in headquarters roles, when I would brief him, and then when I was in the field at field stations when he would come visit.

Prior to that, my wife, who was an Agency officer as well, had been his executive assistant. So we got to know Michael well. You know, he turned into not only a professional colleague, but a friend.

I think he was asking -- based on my last role at the Agency and what I can tell, disclose about it, I was the acting and then -- I was -- I'm sorry, I was the deputy and then acting chief of operations in Europe and Eurasia between early 2017 and then in 2019 when I retired.

And so I had some I wouldn't say expertise, but I certainly had a professional background on Russian active measures. That's why I think he asked me.

Q Okay. That was the last role you had before leaving the CIA, correct?

A That's right.

Q Did you get the sense that he was asking because he was uncertain himself whether the Russians, quote, "played" --

A I don't know. I don't know.

Q Okay. And then you sent Mr. Morell a list of what y'all described as hallmarks that he used to write the first draft, correct?

A Right. I sent him -- and I think that was provided to the committee as well --

Q Yes.

A -- I sent him kind of a backgrounder on just my thoughts. I don't recall if he was going to take exact language from that or not, but he certainly -- that was for him to

draft.

Q And I will enter that into the record as well.

[REDACTED] I will now enter an email Marc Polymeropoulos sent to Michael Morell dated October 17th, 2020, at 8:01 p.m., into the record as exhibit No. 5.

[Polymeropoulos Exhibit No. 4

Was marked for identification.]

[REDACTED] I think it's 4.

[REDACTED] Oh, is this 4? Sorry.

BY [REDACTED]

Q So we took some time to review the list of hallmarks that you sent. We also now know that the contents on the laptop have been authenticated.

Do you still believe that the Russians played in the laptop thing?

A I don't know.

Q You don't know?

A I think that ultimately that chapter has not been written. I don't know.

And even with the understanding that the laptop has been authenticated, that was, I think, part of the thinking involved, that it certainly could be real.

Q Did you have a role in recruiting other signatories to the statement?

A I was asked to provide some email addresses of some other former colleagues. That was certainly not my primary role in this at all.

But I do recall Michael asking, and I think we submitted that as well, to some email addresses of some other colleagues. That was not my responsibility in this. Mine was really the background piece.

Q Did you have a role in outreach to former officials in terms of strategizing who you wanted on the letter with you?

A What I can recall is just the names that I -- there was that text, I think, where I gave some names of individuals. But that wasn't -- that was based on, I think, Michael asking me: Who else do you think would be interested in considering signing?

Q We know that the statement was shopped around to a variety of officials, some of which did not sign on, including, for example, Lisa Monaco.

Do you have any knowledge as to why some officials declined to sign on, including Ms. Monaco?

A No. I was not involved in that. I have no idea.

Q Okay. Did you play any role in tasking other officials that we either intend to speak to or have already spoken to with roles in the creation or the promotion of the statement, such as Kristin Wood? Did you give her any sort of assignments or duties on how to get the word out there?

A I don't recall. I think Kristen's role in this, again, from what I remember, was to do what you're talking about now, is the outreach to others. I don't recall if I gave her any advice on what to do or not. Again, I go back to that, those text messages on individuals who I have their email address.

Q Okay. In regards to the draft itself, did any of the former officials have edits or suggestions to either the input that you provided or initial versions of the draft that went around?

A So the input I provided, I sent this document or I sent only to Michael. And in terms of the drafts and other folks' comments, I was not aware of any of that.

I think there were some emails in which people agreed to sign on. That was part of what we provided. But in terms of the substantive nature of it or if they had any edits, I was not privy to any of that.

Q Okay. We know that the statement as published is different from the draft

that was originally circulated. In particular, the last two paragraphs referencing, quote, "Vice President Joe Biden taking his private and public stand against the then Prosecutor General of Ukraine, Viktor Shokin," were taken out for being what was described as too political.

Do you know why that was?

A I'm not aware of any of that, no.

Q Okay. And you don't know who suggested taking that out?

A No.

Q Okay. In emails Mr. Morell and you sent out soliciting signatures for the statement with a draft of the statement attached, you wrote, "Marc and I drafted the attached because we believe the Russians were involved in some way in the Hunter Biden email issue and because we think Trump will attack Biden on the issue at this week's debate and we want to give the VP a talking point to use in response."

Was the purpose of the statement then to help Vice President's Biden campaign?

A Well, this is Michael's email that he sent out. I didn't -- this is not my language.

Q Okay.

A So obviously I saw it. But the draft, this is Michael's email that he sent out to others. So that statement on giving the Vice President a talking point to use in response, that's not from me. I mean, I think that if you take a look at this, clearly that was the intent when it went to others when they're asking to sign on, but that's not my language.

Q But do you agree with that? Had you also hoped that it would be used in that way?

A Yeah, I think so.

Q Okay. Are you aware that now Secretary of State Antony Blinken called Mr. Morell some time on or about October 17th, 2020, to inquire as to whether Mr. Morell believed Russia might have been involved in the Hunter Biden email story in some way?

A That's the first I heard of that. I was not aware of that at all.

Q Were you aware that Secretary Blinken also sent an article to Mr. Morell from USA Today titled "A tabloid got a trove of data on Hunter Biden from Rudy Giuliani. Now, the FBI is probing a possible disinformation campaign"?

A No.

Q How does it make you feel to know that?

A That's it's a high-level individual. I have to think about that for a bit.

Q Are you aware that Secretary Blinken at the time was employed by the Biden campaign?

A I know he was a -- I don't know. I think obviously he was a supporter of Biden. But I had no contact. I've never even met Blinken or talked to him.

Q I assume the answer is going to be no, but are you also aware that the email from Secretary Blinken was originally sent to him by Andrew Bates, then director of rapid response for the Biden campaign and current White House deputy press secretary, who then sent it to Blinken; Blinken then sent it to Morell?

A No, not aware.

Q Okay. Did you speak to Secretary Blinken at all?

A No.

Q When Mr. Morell spoke to you, he did not bring up the fact that he and Mr. Blinken had been in contact about this issue?

A No.



Q Okay. We are aware that the Biden campaign coordinated with Mr. Morell on a strategy to get the statement to reporters as well. Were you aware of this?

A No.

██████████ Let me just back up a second.

BY ██████████

Q Did you say you had a conversation with Mr. Morell?

A About?

Q About this letter. Or was it only over text message?

A So I think from what I recall, two -- a couple things happened. First, he wrote me the text. I then -- I believe he asked, and I looked at my records and I just don't have the exact date, but shortly after that he asked me to come over to his house.

Q Okay.

A And we discussed this there.

I don't recall how it morphed from what I thought was an op-ed into a letter. He did mention to me that someone in the kind of Biden world had asked about doing this.

Q But he didn't --

A He did not tell me who it was, and I did not ask.

Q So you prepared the backgrounder that's exhibit 4.

A Right.

Q Was that before or after you went to Morell's house?

A I believe it was after, but I actually don't recall. I see that text was on the 17th, and I think I sent the backgrounder on the 17th as well. But I actually don't recall if this was before or after.

Q And as you understand it, Mr. Morell took your backgrounder and turned it into the letter?

A That's right.

Q And do you know if any other person helped him do that?

A I don't know.

Q Or whether he did it himself?

A I don't know.

Q How long did you have this discussion with Mr. Morell at his house?

A It was probably over a coffee usually when I went over to see him. It was -- there's other elements that we were discussing.

This was also a time in which I was about -- I had some pretty severe health issues. I had suffered from a traumatic brain injury, I think this is well known, what we call AHIs or Havana Syndrome, from my time in -- trip to Moscow in 2017. And what I had done -- I was actually engaged in quite a long and lengthy battle with the Agency for healthcare.

Q Okay.

A And on the -- within days of this, I think on the 20th was the scheduled -- a scheduled press piece, media piece, by Julia Ioffe about me in GQ, in Gentleman's Quarterly, in which I was going public with my pleas for healthcare because I was in such kind of bad straits.

And so I had a discussion with Michael about this too, and, frankly, the ramifications of doing this. I think he was concerned about kind of the Agency's response.

Q To the Havana Syndrome issue?

A Yeah, to the Havana Syndrome issue.

So the point I'm making is there were a lot of other things on my plate besides this, including what I was talking to him about.

Q Okay. And you don't remember what day that was?

A I can't. I looked in my records. I don't know exactly when I went to see him at his house.

Q Okay.

A I presume it's got to be after, on that 17th, 18th timeframe, I would imagine.

Q So after you prepared this backgrounder and sent it to him --

A Yes.

Q -- did you do anything else related to the letter other than sign it?

A No. I don't recall doing anything else.

Q And do you remember having any other conversations with Mr. Morell about the letter?

A I don't recall.

Q Or it was just at his house?

A Yeah. Other than what he sent when he sent this cover piece on the 19th.

Q Okay. And any -- the cover piece, did it have an attachment?

A It was the letter.

Q The letter was attached?

A Yeah. Yeah.

Q And from your standpoint, that was pretty much the end of it?

A Yes.

Q Did you have any other communications with any of the other 51 officials?

A I don't recall if I did or not. I don't know. I mean, I'm friends with a lot of these people. John Sipher and others are very good friends of mine. So I just don't recall. I'm sure I had communications with them all through this time. It might not have been about this issue.

Again, I was very concerned about the upcoming press piece on -- it was a story on me -- and kind of the reaction that this would entail. So that was my focus.

Q So to the best of your knowledge, the sum total of the communications before the letter went out was the text with Mr. Morell --

A And then --

Q -- the visit with him --

A Right.

Q -- then sharing the backgrounder.

A Yeah.

Q And then you signed on.

A Yeah. That's correct.

██████████ Okay. I'll go back to ██████████

BY ██████████

Q Talking just now to ██████████ you said that when you were at Morell's house someone high in the Biden campaign had, quote, asked for this --

A I don't --

Q -- or about this.

A Right.

Q Do you know if they were asking for it to help the campaign, like they had asked -- was it your impression that they had asked for it?

A I think -- I want to be very careful on exactly my statements because I don't remember. What I recall from that time is that Biden said that someone in that -- and he might have said the campaign, he might have said around the Bidens, something like that -- had asked for this.

██████████ Morell said that.

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Morell said that to me.

██████████ Morell?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Yeah. And he did not give me the name.

██████████ You said Biden.

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Oh, I apologize. Morell said that to me, that someone from kind of the Biden world had asked for this. And he did not tell me who it was or any of the other kind of details of it.

BY ██████████

Q And by "asked for this," it sounds like they were hoping to initiate it with Morell to get this, something that could be published?

A I would -- that sounds plausible, sure.

Q Okay.

A And the key piece on that, again, is -- and I don't know when it switched from kind of my thought that this would be an op-ed to a letter signed. I just don't recall. But that was my initial thought, was when he said let's write something together. Him and I had done, I think, one or two pieces before for The Washington Post on other issues.

Q Have you ever had any communications with Andrew Bates?

A I don't know who that is. I'm sorry.

Q Okay. He was the -- at the time of this, he was the director of rapid response for the Biden campaign and is the current White House deputy press secretary --

A No.

Q -- the individual that sent the original USA Today article to Blinken who then forwarded it to Mr. Morell.

A Right.

Q Okay.

A No, and I have not.

Q Did you play any role in the dissemination of the letter to the press?

A No.

Q Okay. Are you familiar with the CIA's Prepublication Classification Review Board, known as the PCRB?

A Very. I talk to them probably once a week.

Q Do you?

A Yep.

Q What does the CIA's PCRB do?

A It ensures that no classified information is published by, I would say, former and even current officers when they write something for the press. And so it's a very simple review process. You send it in. They review it and they get it back to you.

Q And Mr. Morell and you sent the statement to the CIA's PCRB, correct?

A Michael sent it. I did not send it.

Q Okay.

██████████ And I will enter that into the exhibit mail -- it is an email Michael Morell sent to the CIA's PCRB dated October 19th, 2020, at 7:11 a.m. -- into the record as exhibit No. 5.

[Polymeropoulos Exhibit No. 5

Was marked for identification.]

BY [REDACTED]

Q At the very end it says, "This is a rush job as it needs to get out as soon as possible."

Do you know why Mr. Morell described the statement as a rush job to the PCRB?

A I don't know.

Q Do you know if the intent was to be able to use that for the debate, which was in just a few days?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. Do you know whether the CIA's PCRB made any edits to the statement before it was published?

A I don't know. I was not on the response.

Q Okay.

A But Michael did say that it was cleared, so I'm assuming he has that in his private.

Q Are you aware that CIA staff at the PCRB reportedly promoted the letter by asking former CIA officials to sign on to the letter?

A No.

[REDACTED] I would now like to enter a statement David Cariens provided to the committee in an email dated March 5th, 2023, into the record as exhibit No. 6.

[Polymeropoulos Exhibit No. 6

Was marked for identification.]

BY [REDACTED]

Q Mr. Cariens told me, "When the person in charge of reviewing the book called to say it was approved with no changes, I was told about the draft letter. The person asked me if I would be willing to sign. (I do not recall the person's name or the exact date of the phone call.)

"After hearing the letter's contents, and the qualifiers in it such as, 'We want to emphasize that we do not know if the emails provided to the New York Post by President Trump's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, are genuine or not and that we do not have evidence of Russian involvement...' I agreed to sign."

Does what Mr. Cariens described there, that interaction with the PCRB, sound like a quid pro quo to you?

A I can't comment on this. This is -- to me, this is something that the PCRB in my experience would never engage in something like that. They are just straightforward back and forth in terms of approval. The idea they would have a comment on any other thing that they were working on, that to me is not even close to what I've experienced with them.

Q Does that concern you?

A If it's true, it would concern me, for sure. But I just -- I have a hard time believing that occurred. If it did, that's incredibly unprofessional.

Q Do you know David Cariens?

A No.

Q You had no communication with him? Did he reach out to you to ask to sign on or anything like that?



A No. I don't know who that is.

Q Okay. We know that your article that you've mentioned, I think it was in the Rolling Stone, was --

A GQ.

Q GQ. Related to AHI --

A Yeah.

Q -- was published around this time, I think on October 19th?

A It was the 19th or 20th. That's right.

Q Did you talk to anyone who was approving that article about this letter, the statement?

A That article was not approved.

Q Okay.

A So when I, if I write something, the PCRB has to approve it. If I give an interview to someone else, that's not part of the process.

Q Okay. So there was no substantive information that you had to run by the PCRB ahead of time of that GQ article?

A No. No, what I did in terms of the substance of that article and a lot of my kind of writings on the AHI issue, I certainly engaged with them on the AHI issue after. But that's it.

Q Okay. Do you know if any of your fellow signatories coordinated with the CIA in promoting the statement through the PCRB?

A No.

Q Did you have any contact with the PCRB directly about this statement?

A No, Michael's the one who sent it in.

Q Just Mr. Morell?

A Yeah. I think on this he had me CC'd on this. But on their response, I was not on.

Q Okay.

A So this is the only -- he was in charge of dealing with the PCRB on this issue.

Q Did you speak to any other offices or staff outside of the PCRB at the CIA regarding this?

A No.

Q Okay. Do you happen to know whether the statement was sent to any of the other intelligence agencies, such as the ODNI, for approval?

A I don't know.

Q Okay.

A That's not part of our obligations to do so.

Q All right.

A But no.

Q Okay.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Other signatories of the letter you mentioned had some role in pushing it out, such as Kristin Wood.

What were her responsibilities, as far as you know, with the letter?

A That's what I recall, just that she was going to be involved in finding others to sign.

Q And do you know if she did find others?

A I don't know.

Q And did you have any conversations with her about that?

A I don't recall.

Q So it was just related to you by Mr. Morell?

A That, or there was several occasions in this timeframe over a month where myself and Michael and Kristin met, because we were writing a lot. I can't recall if when I told you that I met with Michael that time, if Kristin was there or not.

Q Okay.

A But Kristin, I think, had written some pieces together, and we had been -- we would meet at Michael's house to kind of discuss just op-eds on totally separate issues.

Q Do you know any of the other signatories, did they have any role or responsibility with regard to the letter?

A Other than signing?

Q Yeah.

A I don't know. Other than -- I think Nick Shapiro signed. So he was, as you know, had been involved in this -- he was involved in this in some fashion.

Q And what was your understanding of his role?

A I think he was the one who was going to kind of push it to the press. That's what I recall.

Q Since the letter has been -- became public, did you have any communications with the other signatories about the fallout for lack of a better word?

A Over the last two and a half years?

Q Yeah.

A Yeah. Sure.

Q And can you just tell us who you've talked with and maybe we can go through some of those conversations?

A Sure. I think that -- I mean, it was more of not even the letter itself, but kind of the, as you say, the fallout.

So I'm very close with John Sipher, Doug Wise, in particular. I think both of them have been in the media commenting on it as well.

I mean, this is over a two and a half year period. So I'm sure I have spoken with them quite a bit on this.

Q Any others?

A Clearly Michael and Nick. Kristin as well, I believe. This is when, again, when this became a very sensitive issue.

And so I think that at a time where it was clear we were going to come down here, I think people were asking about do we need counsel, what is it going to be like, what this is going to entail. So there was plenty of conversations.

Q Were you or any of the folks you spoke with surprised at how effective, for lack of a better word, the letter was in quashing the discussion of the story?

A I don't even know.

Q I mean, the letter had a remarkable effect. Would you agree with that?

A I think the effect of the letter had to do with statements that Vice President Biden made mischaracterizing it.

Q And what were those statements?

A I think it was clear that he called it -- well, I mean, I think not only during the debate, but I think other times too when they said that the -- called it disinformation, which is not what the letter said.

And in a sense at one point, I can't remember where I saw this, even if it was as I was reviewing this, Biden said that the whole laptop issue is false. That's not what we were saying. So it was clearly mischaracterized.

Q And it's been acknowledged now that the contents of the laptop are more or less authentic, correct?

A Correct.

Q So the Russian disinformation aspect, it had the hallmarks of Russian disinformation. Now that you look back on it, do you disagree with that assessment?

A The word "disinformation," sure, because, again, the notion of information operations, information warfare that the Russians have successfully done over the years has been everything from hacking into campaigns, what they did in 2017 with the French Presidential elections, but they will take accurate information and then promulgate it.

The notion, by using the word "disinformation," that's the concept of pushing out something that is false. So that, in that sense, that is not what we said. And I'm not -- I think at the time, particularly when Michael and I talked about this, there was the very real possibility that the laptop was -- had -- at least some aspects of it had authentic information on it.

Q When you were putting the letter together, did you realize that it was a political operation?

A What's that?

Q Or would become a political operation? I mean, it was a device to be used for the -- I mean, ultimately for the campaign.

A Right. So I think it was two.

One, it was a warning, because, again, my sense was that the Russians were doing again what they had done when they hacked into the DNC server, when they hacked into Macron's campaign. But clearly it was going to be designed to be used by the Vice President.

Q And do you think the signatories to the letter all understood that, that it was essentially a political move to help the campaign of --

A I think that Michael's cover letter that he sent out was very explicit on that,

when he said this is designed to help the Vice President.

Q And were you surprised by the censorship that subsequently occurred on social media platforms?

A I wasn't following that. And I say that honestly. I was going through my own -- with that GQ piece that came out, that kind of dominated my life after that. It really did. I was really struggling then.

Censorship issue, I certainly have followed recently, but --

Q But you're aware that the platforms essentially wiped the story --

A Right.

Q -- off their platform?

A With the -- I guess with the notion that this was disinformation, right, yep, which is not what we said in the letter.

Q What do you think about that?

A In terms of?

Q Do you think that was appropriate?

A Of them? That's a much longer conversation.

Q Right.

A I think it's a very legitimate debate on what should be allowed on platforms and not. I think that's very legitimate to have that.

Q Do you think the effect of wiping it off the platforms played a role in the outcome of the election?

A I don't know.

██████████ Mr. Bishop, do you --

Mr. Bishop. What you just said about platforms, what is it that you think?

What should be allowed on platforms? What was your thought there?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. In terms of what is on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, other places like that?

Mr. Bishop. Things regarding social media platforms.

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Yeah, social media platforms.

Mr. Bishop. What information do you believe should not be allowed on it?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Well, I think if there's -- if we know something is absolutely false, I think there is a kind of a legitimate debate to be had whether that should be allowed or not. But then you have to counter that with the notion of free speech.

But I think that questions on this, this is a debate that obviously is ongoing now, whether what Twitter did was right or wrong, and I think that it's fair to question what they did in taking it down.

Mr. Bishop. What if it's true? Do you believe it ought to be kept off the platform if it's true?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. No.

Mr. Bishop. Now, your thoughts about this I imagine are most thoroughly or most directly captured in the emails marked as exhibit 4, right? That's your -- you wrote that.

Mr. Polymeropoulos. This is the background piece?

Mr. Bishop. It says at the top on the page I'm looking at, it says from Marc Polymeropoulos, subject, "My thoughts..." dated October 17th, right?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Yeah. This is the background piece I sent to Michael. Yes.

Mr. Bishop. So you summarized your thinking about what the laptop -- about the laptop in these comments to him, right?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Yes.

Mr. Bishop. What do you understand disinformation to be?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. So my use of "disinformation" in the backgrounder was incorrect.

Mr. Bishop. What do you understand disinformation to be?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Disinformation operations are where you take something that's false, where a hostile service takes something that's false and promulgates it out for a desired effect.

Mr. Bishop. I'll just point out to you in the first paragraph, first sentence, that you described your background, and I think Mr. Morell's, in battling the Russians and their covert action disinformation campaign, right?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Uh-huh.

Mr. Bishop. You need a verbal answer.

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Yes.

Mr. Bishop. And then in paragraph three, it's marked B at the front, third line from the bottom, you talk about "and at times himself promulgate specific SVR and GRU disinformation campaigns," correct?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. You're reading from it. I assume that's correct. I can't follow it.

Mr. Bishop. Well, I'm just saying that you got the words "disinformation campaign" in that portion of your memo. That's all I'm trying to say.

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Yes. That's right.

Mr. Bishop. Okay. And in the next paragraph, the third line down -- and I haven't read the rest, but you guys also have, "one can push disinformation on the cheap." You're talking about Russians doing this.

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Right.



Mr. Bishop. So you -- it's fair to say -- well, I see another one. Down at the bottom of the page, in paragraph F, it talks about platforms "such as Facebook that generally allow for such disinformation to prosper" -- perhaps what you intended there is misspelled -- "have a demonstrated history of pushing Russian disinformation," right?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Right.

Mr. Bishop. So it's fair to say, isn't it, that the disinformation quality, the falsity of the information, was what was a significant factor in your mind when you put down your initial thoughts?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. I think my initial -- my use of the word "disinformation" here, I should have written "information warfare," because I was -- and as later as obviously the letter that went out it was corrected to write "information operations."

It has to encompass two things. It has to encompass when the Russians push out real, true information and also disinformation, when something is false, what they've made up. There's a long history of them doing that.

Mr. Bishop. But there are several points in there. One is, disinformation was certainly in your mind as of October 17th. Fair?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Yes.

Mr. Bishop. Okay. And you didn't know whether it was disinformation or not?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. That's right. We weren't sure if the laptop was real, if it was elements were real and elements were altered with, or if it was totally false. So it was the idea of putting --

Mr. Bishop. You said a moment ago if information is true, you believe it should not be prohibited from social media platforms. That's your opinion, right?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Right.

Mr. Bishop. Would it also be true that if the information is true, you wouldn't

want to be out using your professional background as an intelligence official to attempt to discredit it?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. I'm sorry. I don't understand the question.

Mr. Bishop. If the information is true --

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Right.

Mr. Bishop. -- would you have participated in attempting to discredit it?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. I think it would have been important to put out that the Russians were involved in pushing it out if that was the case.

Mr. Bishop. So if it was from the Russians but true, then you think it would be important to put that out?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Yes, for the American people to understand that part of it, yes. That is totally separate from the idea of censorship by social media platforms.

Mr. Bishop. You gave your opinion a moment ago that if it was true, you didn't think it -- you don't think it should be banned from social media platforms.

Do I understand that nevertheless, that if it's true, you do believe your role as a former intel official includes letting the American people know of its source?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. That's right. I think that's fair.

Mr. Bishop. I'll come back later. Thank you.

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Sure.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Do you currently hold a security clearance?

A I don't think so. I think mine has lapsed.

Q Did you hold one at the time you drafted the statement?

A So I think there's two things on it.

One is there's -- I'm not sure -- when you retire from the CIA, I think your

clearances don't lapse for 3 to 5 years. I'm not sure exactly what that was.

And also at the time I had been doing some consulting work for a group down in Florida called Patriot, in which we were -- I was helping train members of Joint Special Operations Command in an unclassified setting, on unclassified issues such as how to operate effectively in an embassy, but Patriot might have held my clearances at that time.

So it's entirely possible I still had them.

Q Had you ever had access to classified information regarding the contents of Hunter Biden's laptop?

A No.

Q Okay. Did you not knowingly insinuate to the American public that, given you and your fellow signatories previous access to classified information, you might continue to have special knowledge about the contents on Hunter Biden's laptop?

A No. I don't believe we did that.

Q Now that the contents on Hunter Biden's laptop have been authenticated, including documentation of shady business dealings with Chinese and Ukrainian foreign nationals, do you believe Hunter Biden is a threat to national security?

A I think that an investigation of Hunter Biden, which I understand is ongoing, is legitimate.

Q Have you considered retracting the statement in any way or --

A No, because, as I mentioned at the beginning, I'm not -- the statement itself, I think, is very different from how it was characterized and used. And I still -- I don't -- the final chapter on this, regarding possible Russian involvement or not, I don't think has been written.

But it's entirely possible there's no Russian involvement, but I, of course, am keen to find out at some point.

BY [REDACTED]

Q How would the Russians have been involved in this, now that we know a little bit more about it?

A I mean, I think it's -- there's -- well, there's a couple different ways. And I think part of the basis for the statement, which caused me a great deal of suspicion, was the role of Rudy Giuliani as the President's lawyer and his contact with Andrii Derkach, who is someone that the Department of Justice has named as a Russian intelligence agent. I believe this -- that contact was back in 2019.

And so as Giuliani was working with someone whom we know was very closely tied with a Russian intelligence source, that to me was very suspect because that's Russian modus operandi on how they would engage with individuals who are either witting or unwitting. And so to me that was something that still to this day is troubling.

Q What was your understanding of Derkach and Giuliani's relationship?

A It was only based on press reports that Giuliani had met him in Ukraine. I believe Derkach was a former parliamentarian and that they were involved in kind of Giuliani's efforts to dig some dirt up on the Bidens.

Q And do you know anything about the -- you mentioned the blind individual at the store.

A Right.

Q What did you know about him other than from press reports?

A Nothing other than press. Nothing.

Q Okay. So the fact that he was blind -- you mentioned in your backgrounder, first paragraph, "No joke, you can't make that up."

A That was a dumb joke on my part. That has nothing to do with -- it's obviously an individual who you wouldn't really be thought would be involved in such

a -- in something. But I don't even know why I wrote that.

Q Did that give you maybe some concern that the Russians were involved, if a blind computer store clerk was pushing out the information?

A The notion that he was blind was silly. I don't think that was any --

Q Okay. Yeah, I'm not trying to be silly here.

A Yeah, I mean, I'm just trying to --

Q I'm just wondering if that --

A Right. Yeah. I just -- the entire affair seemed unusual to me.

Ultimately, what the Russians will use is any kind of dissemination mechanism. I think what everything comes back to for me and my thinking -- and I do recall this -- was that the Giuliani connection was to me, because of his work with Andrii Derkach, that to me made this most suspect.

I think that if this laptop had come from anything other than through the hands of Giuliani, I might have had a different view, because Giuliani's tied to someone who is a Russian intelligence source.

Q In hindsight, there doesn't seem to be facts out there that the laptop was taken to the computer store for any other reason other than genuine reasons, to get it worked on. Is that correct?

A I don't know.

Q And that the laptop -- I mean, you're not aware of any other reason that the laptop was left at the and essentially abandoned at the computer shop, correct?

A Correct. I don't know. No.

Q The contents of the laptop, Hunter Biden's business deals, would you agree that that is information that the American people ought to be aware of heading into a Presidential election?

A You know, I think that's something the Department of Justice should be aware of for sure, whether it's he broke the law or not. Whether it's someone who's the son of a senior official, I don't know.

Q If the son of a senior official running for President is trading on that, on his name --

A Right.

Q -- and getting huge payouts from some of our adversaries --

A I think that's --

Q -- that's certainly an issue --

A That's an issue. Sure.

Q -- that ought to be discussed in a Presidential campaign, correct? And so the quashing of that story presents serious concerns, don't you think?

A Well, I think the quashing of the story is different than the letter that we wrote. The quashing of the story --

Q Fair enough. But as we know, the story was essentially quashed by Facebook and Twitter --

A Right.

Q -- and a lot of news organizations, and that had serious implications on the election. Would you agree with that?

A I can't comment one way or the other. I don't -- I mean, I don't know. I don't know the implications it had on the election.

Q But certainly it's fair to believe that it did have implications if you believe that. I mean, that's certainly a fair belief, isn't it, for a reasonable person to believe that the quashing of the story had a material impact on the election?

A I don't know. I don't know the effect it had on the election at all.

Q But you can understand the concern?

A Sure.

Q And it's a fair concern that a reasonable person would have?

A Sure.

██████████ You seemed to cast aspersions on the statement David Cariens provided to me in an email. You have no reason to believe that he or any other CIA official, former CIA official, would lie to me, do you?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. I don't know him at all. I just -- I think the idea that the PCRB was advocating folks signing this, I think that -- I find that very implausible.

██████████ For the record, we have requested Mr. Cariens to come in for a TI like this as well. So we will get to talk to him about that as well.

BY ██████████

Q So you had no familiarity with Mr. Cariens or his wife?

A I don't know that name, yeah.

Q Of the 51 who did sign the letter, how many of them were you familiar with?

A Easily three quarters of them --

Q Okay.

A -- just from professional -- I mean, some personal. Again, John Sipher and Doug Wise are friends of mine, but others just I knew through my course of duties in government.

Q But there were some in the letter that you had never heard of?

A I'd have to go back and take a look again. I think there's a couple I wasn't -- I didn't know.

Q And Cariens was one of them?

A I don't know him, no.

Mr. Bishop. Who did you say was one?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. I'm sorry?

Mr. Bishop. Who did you say was one of the ones you were unfamiliar with?

██████████ Mr. Cariens.

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Cariens. Cariens. Yeah.

Mr. Bishop. Could you look through the list and give us the names of the ones you did not know?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Sure.

██████████ I think it's No. 2 or No. 1.

Mr. Bishop. Exhibit 1.

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Can I go through it now?

Mr. Bishop. Yes, sir. You can just read through it silently. You don't have to read them all out loud, just pick out the ones as you go that you were not personally --

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Do you want me to read them out. I'm sorry. Should I read them out loud? The one I don't know.

██████████ The ones that you don't know.

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Thomas Finger, I don't know. Rick Ledgett, I do not know.

Mr. Zaid. Just, do you not know them personally, or you didn't know their names or weren't familiar with them or heard of them?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Finger and Ledgett, I never heard. I don't know either of them, both personally and even the names I don't recognize.

John Moseman, that name is not familiar to me. David Buckley, not familiar to me. James Bruce, not familiar to me. There's David Cariens, again, not familiar. Janice, same thing. Peter Corsell, not familiar to me. Roger Zane George, not familiar



to me. Tim Kilbourn, not familiar to me. Pam Purcilly, not familiar to me. David Terry, not familiar to me.

That's it.

Mr. Bishop. Thank you.

BY [REDACTED]

Q So you don't know how those folks got on the letter?

A I don't know.

Q We had a couple questions about some of the health issues you experienced.

A Sure.

Q My colleague [REDACTED] is going to ask you about some of those, if that's okay?

A Yep.

[REDACTED] As [REDACTED] alluded to, Mr. Polymeropoulos, [REDACTED] Good to see you.

Just a few questions that we think your expertise could really help the committee.

Do you currently suffer from a brain injury?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Yep.

[REDACTED] Could you give me some more details on the symptoms and how you've come to that conclusion?

[11:02 a.m.]

Mr. Polymeropoulos. Sure. So, in December of 2017, I was on a temporary duty assignment in Moscow. Something happened that evening where I suffered from an incredible attack of vertigo, a splitting headache, tinnitus. This resulted in really degenerative health issues that has affected me even to this day.

Ultimately, I was treated at Walter Reed's National Intrepid Center of Excellence, and I was diagnosed by the Walter Reed doctors with a traumatic brain injury as well as significant anxiety.

██████████ What do you believe caused that brain injury?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. I was in Moscow when this attack occurred, so my conclusion is the Russians.

██████████ What exhibit are we up to?

██████████ Six.

[Polymeropoulos Exhibit No. 7

Was marked for identification.]

BY ██████████

Q So this would be 7. Okay.

At this time, I'm entering a Wall Street Journal article by Mary Anastasia O'Grady, dated March 19th, 2023, titled "Havana Syndrome Revisited." I will pass this around.

Mr. Polymeropoulos, are you familiar with this article?

A I am.

Q Have you reviewed it before today?

A I did read it.

Q Who do you believe is responsible for what we call Havana Syndrome?

A My belief is it's the Russians.

Q Now, when you say the Russians, do you believe Vladimir Putin himself has involvement in this syndrome?

A I don't know. I think the Russian intelligence services certainly do.

Nothing much happens in terms of Russian intelligence operations without Vladimir Putin's okay, so I would not be surprised if he certainly was aware.

Q So unpacking that answer, if they don't do anything of which he is not aware, then it's your testimony he is aware of this Havana Syndrome and ultimately inflicting it on others?

A I would think so, yeah.

Q Are you aware that Avril Haines, Director of National Intelligence, said that it's "very unlikely" a foreign adversary is responsible for the brain injuries commonly referred to as Havana Syndrome?

A Yes.

Q What is your view of that?

A I do not agree with her assessment.

Q There's been some reporting in this exhibit and some others that essentially Havana Syndrome is a mass psychogenetic illness. Essentially when people think they're sick they become sick.

What is your view of that as it relates to Havana Syndrome?

A I think that's insulting to the victims. And it also doesn't make much sense for people like myself and other victims that I know who were affected by this, other victims whose children were affected as young as 6 months old. That explanation doesn't fly for me.

Q Would you say that -- is it your opinion that mass psychogenetic illness is not a real condition?

A I think it is a real condition.

Q Well, so then is it your testimony perhaps that Havana Syndrome is, in fact, a mass psychogenetic illness?

A Not at all. But psychogenetic illness is real. But I think it has nothing to do with what happened to my colleagues who were serving.

Q Now, you believe it was the Russians who are perpetrating this Havana Syndrome symptoms on American intelligence officials?

A Well, considering it happened to me in Moscow, yes.

Q But there's been some testimony, or at least been reporting, that it could be the Cubans as well.

A Sure.

Q What is your understanding? How do you make heads or tails of that dichotomy?

A This is my opinion, not based on anything that -- in terms of any kind of classified information. I couldn't talk about it here, but it's not. It's just my assessment that the Russians were involved.

But given the history of the Russian-Cuban relationship, what happened to my colleagues in Havana, I'd be very surprised if the Cuban intelligence services were not involved.

Q So would you agree that sort of making these sort of accusations has serious consequences for American foreign relations?

A In terms of the possible Russian involvement, sure, and it should. I don't make that accusation lightly. I make it based on what I believe has been going on and has affected both myself and my colleagues.

Q Well then, building on that, doesn't it behoove sort of a responsible

characterization to determine whether it's the Cubans or whether it's the Russians before such accusations are made publicly?

A I think there is plenty of evidence out there, not just blindly making accusations, plenty of evidence that the Russians were involved from a history of their work on such weapons programs to what I understand is some solid work going on in the open-source field that has -- that pinpoints Russian involvement in this as well.

Q So, finally, in your opinion, why would the Director of National Intelligence say otherwise?

A This is going down a road of a separate issue, but I think that ultimately my belief in this is that -- two things.

One is, there is concern over potential liability for officers who have been affected.

But more importantly, it's the notion -- and again, this is just my assessment of if we deem officers at risk overseas it's going to be pretty damn hard to get people to go serve in stations and embassies abroad.

So I think there's quite a sense or a need or a requirement for this to be swept under the table.

Q So there's an attempt to say this is essentially not real?

A Right. That's my assessment.

Q Have you seen anything like this before in your career?

A I think what seems familiar to me is the U.S. Government response to things such as Agent Orange, Gulf War syndrome, burn pits, where it took a long time to figure out the health or what was behind some pretty serious health incidents for U.S. servicemen and -women serving abroad.

So to me, kind of the initial U.S. Government response to these kind of health

concerns has always been suspect. It takes a while for the truth to come out.

██████████ What do you think was going on? Do you think the Russians were just trying to injure you, or were they trying to get your information on your phones or computers?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. No. Well, there's -- well, this is a whole other -- to put it in briefly, I think that it's very likely that these kind of weapons or even collection systems perhaps were revised and improved over time.

Perhaps it started off as a collection mechanism for signals intelligence when people were injured. They realized they could weaponize it, and then they've done so successfully. That's just -- that's certainly my sense for me and for many others.

You know, I was at the top of my game. I was in the Senior Intelligence Service. I had a pretty successful career, spent almost 3 years in our conflict zones, and had done a hell of a lot for the country. And so it's a way to kind of take me and others off the battlefield.

And I think about some of my other colleagues who were affected, and these were the tip of the spear for the U.S. Government. And to take them off the battlefield in almost a nonattributable fashion would be a pretty remarkable feat. But I think that's what the Russians have done.

██████████ So you think they were trying to injure you, not necessarily collect information?

Mr. Polymeropoulos. I think over time that's what they concluded. Again, just my assessment.

██████████ Okay. I think our hour is up, so we need to stop here.

██████████ Thank you.

██████████ We can go off the record.

[Recess.]

██████████ We can go back on the record. It's 11:19.

EXAMINATION

BY ██████████

Q Good morning again. I'm ██████████ I'm the chief oversight counsel for the Democrats on the House Judiciary Committee.

I want to start out circling back to a questioning line that we went through a little earlier.

You were asked about the role or whether your -- whether the October 19th letter played any role in, I think, quote, a decision to censor the laptop story.

Do you believe that your letter played any role in that?

A I have no idea about the --

Q Okay.

A -- the machinations within kind of social media circles, Twitter, Facebook, or others. So I don't know.

Q And do you know the date that Twitter made the decision first to halt distribution of the story?

A I do not.

Q Okay. And do you know the date that Twitter made the decision to release or permit the story to be shared?

A I do not.

[Polymeropoulos Exhibit No. 8

Was marked for identification.]

BY ██████████

Q Okay. I want to introduce as exhibit 8 a New York Times article from

October 16th, 2020, saying that, "In Reversal, Twitter Is No Longer Blocking New York Post Article." This will be marked as exhibit 8.

So this says that -- have you seen this before?

A No.

Q I can give you a minute to review if you'd like.

A Sure. Okay.

Q Okay. So this article says that on Wednesday, which would've been October 15th, Twitter put a pause on the article, and by the following day, 24 hours later, had unreleased the article.

And so your letter was published October 19th, right?

A Right.

Q So that was after all the decisions involving Twitter, correct?

A Looks that way, yes.

Q So presumably your letter couldn't have played a role, because it actually postdated the time of the Twitter article or the Twitter issues?

A Okay.

Q Do you agree?

A Sure. Yes.

Q Okay. And I want to turn next again to something that came up earlier. You were asked about the use of the term "disinformation" in your email to Mr. Morell, which is dated October 17th, 2020, at 8:01.

A This is the backgrounder?

Q Yeah, that's exhibit 4.

A Right.

Q So I want to look at actually the actual October 19th letter itself, which is



exhibit 1.

A Right.

Q The bottom of the second -- the last sentence of the second paragraph says, "A few of us worked against Russian information operations in the United States in the last several years."

So this letter says "information" not "disinformation"?

A Correct.

Q And the fourth paragraph down, the last sentence -- the last clause of the last sentence says the story, quote, "has all the classic earmarks of a Russian information operation," right?

A Correct.

Q And so the letter that was actually made public used the word "information" not "disinformation."

A That's correct.

Q And to your knowledge, before we discussed it today, before you produced it to the committee, was your email, which is exhibit 4, the backgrounder, was that ever made public?

A No.

Q So your use of the word "disinformation," and I think you've said it was a mistake, that was never part of the public discourse?

A No. It was only for Mr. Morell.

Q Okay. And it didn't make it into the final?

A It did not.

Q Okay. I want to move on and look a little further at exhibit 4 and some of the issues, the items that you highlighted in here.

So what were you hoping, looking at this broadly, what were you hoping to accomplish by sending Mr. Morell this list?

A So I wanted to give him some context in both kind of a history of Russian information warfare and also what I thought would be kind of their goals in this, how they would go about doing it, and of course why I was suspicious of what had occurred.

Q And is it fair to say that this list of hallmarks draws on your background as a CIA operations officer?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. And your experience working -- your experience understanding and working against Russia?

A That's right.

Q Okay. And we just kind of went through this.

Was this draft ever intended for public consumption?

A Not at all. This is just for background and for Michael.

Q Okay. And he actually was the one that wrote the statement, the final --

A That's right.

Q -- the final letter?

A Yes, he did.

Q Okay. In the first paragraph you write, "We need to assess several key traits for covert action and determine if it matches what we have learned over the last week." And you base this on your decades of experience, but without the benefit of being inside the IC at the time -- at this time -- and privy to whatever intelligence the USG has collected.

USG is a reference to U.S. Government?

A That's right.

Q Okay. Is it fair to say that in this analysis you're applying your decades of experience to what's been made publicly available?

A That's right.

Q And you went through it earlier. You didn't have access to any classified information?

A Not at all.

Q And any -- no access to nonpublic information that --

A None.

Q -- may have not been classified?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. In paragraph C of this list, it's about halfway down the page, you write, "One can push disinformation on the cheap. We are likely counting for this operation only a handle of individuals in the Ukraine who are pushing such schemes, a likely hack of the Burisma company server via the Russian intelligence services (as reported by The New York Times) and then perhaps travel costs for Rudy Giuliani on his Kiev adventures."

What were the "Kiev adventures" you were referring to?

A This is when Giuliani was reportedly, as seen in the press, going back and forth traveling throughout the Ukraine trying to dig up dirt on the Bidens.

Q And why would that have been concerning to you?

A He was -- well, first of all, he was meeting with individuals, as noted here, who were tied to Russian intelligence. And so -- and it also is, frankly, in kind of Russia's backyard, where they would have pretty easy access to him. So --

Q And why does your mind go to Rudy Giuliani specifically when you were writing this paragraph?

A It's because of Giuliani's relationship -- again, as reported in the press -- with Andrii Derkach, who was a Russian intelligence agent, as he was indicted or is named by DOJ. And so the idea that the President's lawyer was working with someone who, not a suspect, but is, per DOJ, confirmed as a Russian intelligence asset, is very concerning.

Q And I want to get back to Mr. Derkach in a minute. But in paragraph D of the hallmarks list, you assess whether the Russians would have, quote, "Agents in place."

A Right.

Q And you write this Giuliani is, quote, "at best a nonpaid but witting player." Why did you write that?

A So when I said "witting," and I think that's key, is that, again, from what I learned from press, is that the Department of Justice had been very clear in warning the White House that Giuliani was -- had a relationship with someone who is tied to Russian intelligence. So presumably, in my mind, Giuliani knew what he was doing. And I think, you know, I guess, my sense was that they were thinking the ends justify the means.

So ultimately this is not something that Giuliani or the White House didn't know was occurring. They were warned that Giuliani had a relationship, some kind of relationship, and digging dirt with someone who was a Russian intelligence asset. That to me is very troubling.

Q And why specifically is that troubling?

A That's classic Russian modus operandi. So they would have their recruited agent, who was Andrii Derkach, and their role would be to find means to promulgate Russian active measures campaigns.

This is a classic -- classically what the Russians would do. Sometimes they would do it via someone witting or unwitting. Either case, they're looking for a dissemination

mechanism. So Derkach working with Giuliani really fit that bill.

Q Do you believe that Russian -- and we talked earlier information versus disinformation operations.

A Right.

Q Do you think that Russian information operations pose a threat to American democracy?

A Absolutely.

Q And can you explain the nature of this threat?

A So it's the idea of, again, hacking into a server, pushing out embarrassing information. They did it with the DNC server hack. Again, looking over -- I'm just trying to find examples that I know have been -- that are out in the public world. Looking what they did to the French election campaigns.

But it's the idea of collecting what they call Kompromat, compromising information, and pushing it out for a goal.

So I do think that in the sense that Russia is an adversary to the United States, if they are doing this, that's something that should be exposed.

Q And do you think the American public have a right to know about that information?

A Absolutely.

Q Do you think there's some duty to inform the American public of that?

A Yes.

Q Okay. I want to introduce into the record an article about an interview with Rudy Giuliani. It was in The Daily Beast. It's entitled "Rudy: Only '50/50' Chance I Worked With a 'Russian Spy' to Dig Dirt on Bidens in Ukraine." We'll introduce this as exhibit 9.

[Polymeropoulos Exhibit No. 9

Was marked for identification.]

BY [REDACTED]

Q Have you seen this before?

A I don't recall, no.

Q I'll give you a minute to review it.

In the middle of the third page of the article, as printed, I think we actually highlighted it -- yeah, it's on page 3 -- when Rudy Giuliani was told the information on the Hunter Biden laptop might be in some way linked to the Russians, Giuliani replied, "Wouldn't matter. What's the difference?"

Do you agree or do you disagree with this view?

A I disagree. I think that working with an adversary, an enemy of the United States, does make a difference.

Q And would it be concerning to you if an American was participating in disseminating information that was -- that's part of a Russian influence campaign?

A Yes.

Q And why is it concerning to have an American involved in that?

A Well, that's how Russians would do two things. That's how they would promulgate the information. But it's also in a sense hide their hand. It makes it more legitimate.

Q On page 5 of this article, at the top, it reads, "Giuliani said he viewed his latest leak to the New York Post as an extension of his years-long efforts to work with Ukrainians to dig up dirt on the Bidens."

And this, again, is taken from an hour-long interview directly with Mr. Giuliani by The Daily Beast.

Would it be concerning to you if Giuliani apparently viewed his, quote, leak to the Times (sic) as part of his ongoing work with Ukrainians to dig up dirt on the Bidens?

A Sure.

Q And can you explain a little bit further?

A I mean, again, this is unethical. It's working with an adversary. I believe that as an American, the idea that we would work with individuals, with countries that would wish to do us harm is something that should not occur at all.

And that's, at the very least, it should be certainly something that the American people would see, whether it's against U.S. law or not. That's for the Department of Justice to determine.

Q Okay. And this article references Mr. Giuliani working with Andrii Derkach?

A That's right.

Q What's your understanding of who Andrii Derkach is?

A Again, referring to press reports here, former Ukrainian parliamentarian who the Department of Justice has named as an agent of Russian intelligence and, again, someone who certainly does not have the best interests of the United States at heart.

[Polymeropoulos Exhibit No. 10

Was marked for identification.]

BY [REDACTED]

Q Okay. And I want to introduce into the record the Treasury designation dated September 10th, 2020, designating Mr. Derkach -- sorry, designating -- sanctioning Mr. Derkach for attempting to influence U.S. electoral process.

This reads, "Treasury designated Andrii Derkach, pursuant to Executive Order 13848 for his efforts to influence the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Derkach, a member of the Ukrainian Parliament, has been an active Russian agent for over a decade,

maintaining close connections with the Russian Intelligence Services. Derkach has directly or indirectly engaged in, sponsored, concealed, or otherwise been complicit in foreign interference in an attempt to undermine the upcoming 2020 U.S. presidential election."

A Right.

Q Is this generally consistent with your understanding of who Mr. Derkach was?

A Yes.

Q Do you know if you reviewed this prior to preparing the list of hallmarks that you sent to Mr. Morell?

A Something of that sort. I mean, it was out there in the public sphere.

Q Okay.

A Clearly, everything we had to do on that had to be obviously sourced to open-source, readily available information. So --

Q Okay. And the fact that Mr. Derkach -- or that Treasury determined Mr. Derkach maintained close connections with the Russian intelligence services, is that something of concern --

A Absolutely.

Q -- particularly in relation to his work with Mr. Giuliani?

A This was, to me, my recollection of this, and it remains to this day, kind of center to my concern that Rudy Giuliani, the President's lawyer, was working with an agent of Russian intelligence. That, to me -- and it's a comment that we would -- or a characterization we would make that there's kind of a lot of stink on him, and that means everything that he touches, who he touches, is going to be suspect. And with Giuliani working for him, that was, to me, a glaring signal.



Q And can you say more why was it a glaring signal?

A Because it was the President's lawyer who was digging dirt and was gathering information from a Russian intelligence agent.

Q Okay. Are you familiar with an individual named Telizhenko?

A No, not off the top of my head. Sorry.

Q This article refers to Mr. Giuliani's interactions with him, but if you --

A Okay. Gotcha.

[Polymeropoulos Exhibit No. 11

Was marked for identification.]

BY [REDACTED]

Q I want to introduce as exhibit 11 a Washington Post article dated October 15th, 2020. It's entitled "White House was warned Giuliani was target of Russian intelligence operation to feed misinformation to Trump."

Are you familiar with this article?

A That must have been one of them that we referred to, yeah.

Q So The Post actually -- this article -- we've printed off the October 15th version just for clarity for the record -- this article says that Mr. Giuliani was warned directly himself. The Post later issued a correction saying that Giuliani was not directly warned, but the White House was warned.

A Right.

Q And so the part I'm going to ask you about is about the White House specifically.

A Okay.

Q So it says, "U.S. intelligence agencies warned the White House that President Trump's personal lawyer, Rudy W. Giuliani, was the target of an influence operation by

Russian intelligence, according to four former officials familiar with the matter."

It says, "The warnings were based on multiple sources, including intercepted communications, that showed Giuliani was interacting with people tied to Russian intelligence during a December 2019 trip to Ukraine, where he was gathering information that he thought would expose corrupt acts by former vice president Joe Biden and his son Hunter.

"The intelligence raised concerns that Giuliani was being used to feed Russian misinformation to the president, the former officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive information and conversations."

The fact that Giuliani was being used -- that may have been being used to feed Russian misinformation to the President, can you explain why that would be concerning to the intelligence community?

A Well, of course -- well, first of all, Giuliani is being used as, again, whether a witting or unwitting collaborator. That's classic Russian modus operandi. It's something that an intelligence service will do. They'll look for kind of dissemination mechanisms, and Giuliani obviously was that.

And I think that ultimately the notion that there was a warning issued and that was ignored, again, that to me is pretty concerning. That shows also a level of complicity on Giuliani's part. Ordinarily, if an American is warned that they're talking to a Russian intelligence asset, they will cease and desist on any activities, particularly if it's someone involved in any kind of U.S. Government affairs.

Q And in this case, even if Mr. Giuliani was not warned directly, if the White House was warned --

A Right.

Q -- and they didn't then subsequently warn Giuliani, would that be

concerning?

A Absolutely.

Q For the same reason?

A Absolutely.

Q Okay. Did the fact that the warning apparently was made but didn't have any impact, did that heighten your -- was that part of the reason -- did that contribute to your decision to write the letter?

A I think it certainly made things more suspect, because ultimately, again, when someone is usually warned, they will stand down. The fact that he didn't care was very disconcerting.

Q And did you believe that the American public had a reason -- had a need to know about that?

A Sure. Yes.

Q And what was the value in informing the American public of that?

A Well, again, it's the notion that -- two things.

One is that Rudy -- that the President's lawyer is willing to work with Russian intelligence. I think that's something that's pretty disturbing.

But, again, it's the notion of what information comes out of that is going to be suspect, whether it's, again -- and, again, it's part of the information warfare aspect. So it can be true information that's part of kind of this notion of compromising information, it can be information that has been true and then somewhat altered, and then total disinformation. It's all part of the Russian playbook.

Q And so is it fair to say that by putting the October 19th letter together and pushing that out you were working to put information into the public sphere to counter those Russian --

A That's right.

Q -- what you understood to be a Russian operation?

A Correct.

Q All right. Just quickly, you were asked earlier if you were aware that Mr. Morell coordinated with the Biden campaign. You have no information about that any way, in any direction?

A My comment was I didn't know who he talked to, but that he did make me aware that he spoke to somebody. But I did not know who. I did not -- he provided no details.

Q Okay. Did you have any interaction directly with any social media company about the Hunter Biden emails?

A No.

Q Okay. And to your knowledge, did any of the other signatories have any interactions with any social media company?

A I don't know. Not to my knowledge, no.

Q Did you have any interaction with any social media company about the New York Post article specifically?

A No.

Q And to your knowledge, did any of the other signatories have any such interactions?

A Not to my knowledge.

Q Okay. On October 19th, 2020, when the article was made public -- or when the letter was made public -- you were a private citizen, correct?

A That's correct.

Q And to your knowledge, were all of the other signatories private citizens

also?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Would you agree that as a private citizen you have a right to engage in the political process?

A Yes.

Q And you have a right to exercise your First Amendment?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And looking at the letter itself, it doesn't actually endorse a political candidate, correct?

A It does not endorse a political candidate, no.

Q Okay. In fact, the closing line of the letter says that, "It is high time that Russia stops interfering in our democracy."

A [Nonverbal response.]

Q Is it fair to say that the letter -- the focus of the letter was actually a concern about Russia as opposed to the Presidential candidates themselves?

A It was certainly a focus on Russia. But, you know -- so, yes, it was a focus on Russia. I mean, the Morell email to everyone did put into play the reviews by the Vice President. There's no doubt about that, though.

Q But on the face of the letter?

A The face of the letter, nothing on politics, no.

Q Okay. And the letter itself, we went through earlier that you didn't have any direct access to any nonpublic information? You didn't have any access at all to any nonpublic information?

A None.

Q Okay. And the letter actually makes it clear, right?

A Very clear.

Q So you didn't -- there's nothing in the letter that suggests any of the signatories had any --

A No.

Q Okay. So the --

A I think that's done on purpose.

Q And can you say that --

A I mean, we have to be very clear on that. You know, we are retired, left government service. We do not have access to that kind of information, nor would it be appropriate to even insinuate that we did, because that just doesn't happen.

Q And why was it important for you to include in the letter so that the American public would know that --

A Because it's just our assessment as retired U.S. Government officials. That's it.

Q Okay. So you didn't intend to imply, in other words, that you had any access to nonpublic information?

A No.

Q And that's actually fairly clear on the face of the email, right?

A Yes.

Q So, for example, the fifth paragraph says, "We want to emphasize that we do not know if the emails, provided to the New York Post by President Trump's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani, are genuine or not," right?

A Right.

Q And then the very following paragraph says, "If we are right," suggesting that you could not be right, right?

A Right.

Q Okay. And then the paragraph after that says, "There are a number of factors that make us suspicious of Russian involvement." It doesn't say that you know that there was Russian involvement?

A Correct.

Q Okay. You were asked earlier about the Mr. David Cariens email.

A Uh-huh.

Q You said you don't know who Mr. Cariens is?

A I do not.

Q And you don't have any personal knowledge of his interactions with the PRB?

A No.

Q Okay. And you said you thought it would be almost unthinkable for the PRB to have done -- or very surprising, I guess?

A I would be very shocked if that is what they did.

Q And I want to look at the actual email quickly. It's exhibit -- majority exhibit 6.

A Okay.

Q And so this email was sent from Mr. Cariens to [REDACTED] who is the majority counsel. Nothing in here has been subject to cross-examination, right?

A Uh-huh.

Q Okay. And you say you don't have any personal knowledge of the interaction between Mr. Cariens and the PRB. It actually says here that -- let's see, one, two, three, four -- fifth line down in parentheses, "I do not recall the person's name or the exact date of the phone call," right?

A Uh-huh.

Q And so he actually says he can't remember key details, correct?

A Correct.

Q Okay. And the email that's one giant paragraph there, it's not broken out, it's possible that he is misremembering or he wrote the email unclearly, correct?

A Correct. And one other notion on this is, all of my -- in my two and a half -- in all my time since July 2019 when I retired and the numerous times I've engaged with the PRB, over 50 articles I've written for the Washington Examiner, multiple other articles for Just Security, for The Washington Post, others, I never had any contact over the phone. Everything with them is done over email, including approval processes.

You have to have that in writing when something is approved, or if something is denied with the changes you made.

But it's always -- I would never take any kind of approval over the phone. That would mean nothing to me. It would have to be an email for the record. So I just noticed here that he said it was based on a phone call. That doesn't seem plausible.

Q I'm sorry, could you say that again?

A That doesn't seem plausible.

Q How many interactions do you think -- could you estimate you've had with the PRB over your career?

A Probably, in two and a half years, at least 70, 80.

Q Okay. And can you talk, how long does it usually take for the PRB to respond to a request?

A It depends. If I write something with a suspense time of a day or two, they will honor that. When I wrote my book it took them several weeks. But they usually honor kind of a suspense on things. So as long as you're specific on it, they kind of put



that to the top of the pile.

Q So it's not unusual for them to turn around a request quickly?

A No, I've had them turn it around in several hours.

Q Okay.

A But, again, all in writing. I would never take anything verbal from them.

Q And just a couple quick questions to wrap up.

A Sure.

Q And then we can hopefully let you get on with your day.

You mentioned, I think, the fallout of the letter earlier. Has the aftermath of signing the letter, like the fact that you're involved in this investigation, that your name has been in the New York Post, has that impacted you in any way?

A Sure. I've had numerous death threats. The Vienna police are involved. I've sent them kind of the emails that I've received. Have consistent phone calls to my landline, consistent phone calls to my cell phone, people threatening me, threatening me and my family.

Q And your family?

A Yep.

Q Do you have children?

A Yep.

Q The fact that you've participated in writing this letter, which is an exercise of your, as a private citizen, an exercise of your First Amendment rights, participating in the political process, do you think that what you've experienced in the aftermath could chill your willingness to participate in this type of activity in the future?

A I think that -- I think it would -- for myself, no, only because I served 26 years at the CIA. I did operational meetings in the back alleys of conflict zones. So I have a

pretty high tolerance for fear.

I do think, though, that for others, the idea that one would be subject to kind of such vitriol and threats would be -- would certainly be something that would question -- or would cause them questioning into speaking out. No doubt about that.

██████████ Okay. We don't have anything further. Thank you. We can go off the record.

██████████ We have no further questions on our side either, so we're prepared to end this and go off the record.

[Whereupon, at 11:49 a.m., the interview was concluded.]

Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

I have read the foregoing \_\_\_\_ pages, which contain the correct transcript of the answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

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Witness Name

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Date