

REQUESTING THE PRESIDENT, AND DIRECTING THE SECRETARY OF STATE, TO TRANSMIT TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS, RECORDS, COMMUNICATIONS, TRANSCRIPTS, SUMMARIES, NOTES, MEMORANDA, AND READ-AHEADS IN THEIR POSSESSION REFERRING TO CERTAIN COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP AND PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN

MARKUP

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

H. Res. 1017

SEPTEMBER 13, 2018

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REQUESTING THE PRESIDENT, AND DIRECTING THE SECRETARY OF STATE, TO TRANSMIT TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS, RECORDS, COMMUNICATIONS, TRANSCRIPTS, SUMMARIES, NOTES, MEMORANDA, AND READ-AHEADS IN THEIR POSSESSION REFERRING TO CERTAIN COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP AND PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2018

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 12:30 p.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Edward Royce (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROYCE. The committee will come to order.

We meet today to consider a single item. Pursuant to notice, for purposes of markup, I call up House Resolution 1017, requesting the President, and directing the Secretary of State, to transmit to the House copies of all documents in their possession relating to certain communications between President Trump and Russian President Putin and move to report it adversely to the House.

[The information referred to follows:]

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1017

Requesting the President, and directing the Secretary of State, to transmit to the House of Representatives copies of all documents, records, communications, transcripts, summaries, notes, memoranda, and read-aheads in their possession referring or relating to certain communications between President Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 24, 2018

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Requesting the President, and directing the Secretary of State, to transmit to the House of Representatives copies of all documents, records, communications, transcripts, summaries, notes, memoranda, and read-aheads in their possession referring or relating to certain communications between President Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin.

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives requests
2 the President, and directs the Secretary of State, to trans-
3 mit to the House of Representatives, not later than 14
4 days after the date of the adoption of this resolution, cop-
5 ies of every document, record, communication, transcript,

1 summary, note, memorandum, and read-ahead in the pos-
2 session of the President or the Secretary of State, respec-
3 tively, that refer or relate to matters proposed, discussed,
4 agreed to or otherwise covered during, in connection with,
5 or in preparation for communications between President
6 Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki,
7 Finland on July 15 or July 16, 2018.



Chairman ROYCE. Without objection, the resolution is considered read and open for amendment at any point, and committee members may have 5 calendar days to submit statements for the record.

Because we are dealing with floor votes, activities of other committees, and hurricane-related uncertainty this afternoon, I am going to use my vote postponement authority under committee rules to ensure that all members are given fair notice to participate in any recorded vote we may have.

And I now recognize myself for opening remarks.

This afternoon, we meet to consider House Resolution 1017. As members know, we typically want to see extensive bipartisan consultation and at least 25 co-sponsors before marking up resolutions.

This measure does not fall into that category. It was introduced with no committee consultation and no co-sponsors, as we enter the final stretch of an election campaign.

And we are here today only because it enjoys privilege under House rules as a “resolution of inquiry,” which we have a duty to report.

Because this resolution clearly intrudes into judicially recognized areas of executive privilege and would likely require years of contested and, ultimately, fruitless litigation, we should not endorse it. Let me explain.

This resolution would set a dangerous and harmful precedent with respect to Presidential communications. It demands from the President every document, communication, transcript, summary, note, or memo that relates to matters proposed or discussed or agreed to or otherwise covered during, in connection with, or in preparation for his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki back in July.

Let me be clear. I strongly disagreed with the President’s remarks in Helsinki. Vladimir Putin is not our friend, and there is simply no comparing the actions of the United States with those of Putin’s Russia.

Ultimately, Helsinki was a squandered opportunity to challenge Vladimir Putin's false narratives on issues including Ukraine and Syria and Russia's ongoing interference in our democracy.

So I understand the interest in these issues. I'm sure this resolution is a popular idea in some political circles.

But, ultimately, it is not a wise approach to oversight. Indeed, it would only threaten to distract from the bipartisan legislative and investigative efforts of this committee.

This resolution's broad demand for documents conflicts with the strongest form of executive privilege recognized by the courts—the so-called Presidential communications privilege.

Rooted in the constitutional separation of powers, Presidential communications privilege applies to direct decision making by the President and also protects communications made or solicited or received by his advisors while preparing advice for him.

These privileges are at their strongest when they deal with the President's core constitutional powers, such as his authority to conduct diplomatic discussions with foreign leaders, and this is with good cause.

Today we have instant communications, but Presidents still have and need the authority to meet and speak and negotiate privately with foreign leaders.

Consider the historic Camp David Accords, a diplomatic triumph that strengthened our national security. Members will recall this agreement was preceded by 2 weeks of confidential negotiations among the American, Israeli, and Egyptian heads of state, sequestered in the woods of Maryland.

And during that time, some were genuinely concerned that Jimmy Carter might undermine the security of our ally, Israel. Yet, Congress wasn't privy to every utterance.

By constitutional design, we are not in the room for such discussions. We didn't demand transcripts of every conversation President Obama had with the Russians, even after an open microphone caught him asking President Medvedev for some "space" on missile defense issues, explaining that we would "have more flexibility" after his November 2012 reelection.

This resolution before us today has implications far beyond our current President or our last President. It is about the ability of all Presidents to engage with foreign leaders.

And, sadly, this resolution goes against the grain of this committee's important bipartisan work to confront Russia's dangerous acts.

As my colleagues know, this includes powerful sanctions, which we authored, on Russian hackers and intelligence agencies, passed as part of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which the administration needs to better utilize.

It includes additional sanctions to punish Russia for propping up the murderous Assad regime in Syria, which the Senate needs to pass on to the President's desk without further delay; and successfully pushing for the imposition of new mandatory Russian sanctions under the Chemical and Biological Weapons and Warfare Elimination Act, following Russia's use of military-grade chemical weapons to poison British citizen Sergei Skripal and his daughter on British soil.

It includes creating a strong reformed export controls process that will better protect U.S. advances in emerging technology like robotics and artificial intelligence, and legislatively authorizing the President to provide defensive military systems to Ukraine and to strengthen its cyber defenses against Russian attacks; reforming the Broadcasting Board of Governors to help revitalize U.S. efforts to counter Russian propaganda and disinformation; and enacting the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act—named after a Russian businessman who was murdered by corrupt Russian authorities—to hold regimes accountable for human rights abuses; and it includes passing through the full House just last week the Cyber Deterrence and Response Act, to name, shame, and sanction foreign actors who carry out cyber attacks against the United States.

We have taken these actions together because most of us have been concerned about administration policies toward Russia. I certainly have been.

So I intend for the committee to continue to pursue its serious, bipartisan, and consequential oversight. But for the reasons I have laid out, I cannot support this resolution and I urge my colleagues to join me in reporting it adversely to the House.

Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and as I've said many, many times privately and publicly, I want to thank you for the fair way you've always run this committee.

I know this is an unusual situation for both of us. But we have reached the point with this administration when I believe it's time for tougher action to be taken.

For 18 months we have been trying to exercise basic oversight of the State Department. Two Secretaries of State have been here and have said they'd be responsive to our committee's requests. It hasn't happened.

We have been stonewalled over and over again. We have heard excuse after excuse after excuse, and on the rare occasion like today that the administration sends officials to testify before our committee, we rarely get the answers we need.

This has frustrated me and I've heard the same from many of our members, and the secret meeting between President Trump and President Putin in Helsinki was the last straw, literally.

Vladimir Putin unleashed an attack on our democracy to try to get Donald Trump elected. President Trump cozies up to Putin at every turn. He sides with Putin over our own intelligence community.

So when they went into a room together—no staff, no advisors, just the two of them, and interpreters—alarm bells went off all over Washington, DC, and around the world.

It was unprecedented under any circumstances and particularly troubling in light of the Trump-Russia scandal swirling around this President and his administration.

As Special Counsel Mueller continues to rack up indictments and convictions, my concern is only growing. Now 2 months later, the alarm is still going off because the American people still have no idea what was discussed in that meeting between Putin and Trump.

We need to know. This is a matter of national security, and when an administration—and this would go for any administration of either party—shows such bizarre deference to an adversary who, clearly, means us harm, it falls to Congress to get the answers. That's our job.

Mr. Chairman, I know you've been working hard to get Secretary Pompeo in front of our committee so we can all ask these questions. It's outrageous that he hasn't come before us, especially since he did pay the Senate that courtesy.

But you have tried to allow us to do our job and I am grateful for your effort. This administration just doesn't seem to respect Congress' role as a co-equal branch of government.

So we are running out of options. The resolution that Mr. Boyle has introduced represents one of the few tools Congress has in its rules to get answers from an administration.

I share the frustration that led Mr. Boyle to offer this measure and I fully support his effort to find out what happened in President Trump's failed summit with the Russian dictator in Helsinki.

I think it's a pretty reasonable set of requests. I wish it weren't necessary. I wish the State Department would do what Secretaries Tillerson and Pompeo promised, which is to respond to our documentary requests and heed our efforts to carry out Congress' constitutional responsibilities by conducting basic oversight.

But they have not, and we need to face facts. The Trump administration is not going to give us the information we need willingly. Congress has requested. They've said no.

What we are left with is for Congress to demand, and because that's the only option left for Congress to demand, we are also left with only one question—what will Congress decide to do?

We are not the first committee to take up a resolution like this since the start of the Trump presidency. In other cases, markups have descended into partisan rancor.

Certainly they haven't resulted in getting any information from the executive branch. In my view, the Republican leadership in the House has opted to cover for this administration rather than allowing this body to do its job and exercise our checks and balances.

I am confident, based on this committee's culture, under your leadership, Mr. Chairman, that this markup won't follow that path. In fact, I hope we can have a good debate about Mr. Boyle's resolution, because if anyone thinks we and the American people shouldn't know what happened in that meeting, I'd like to hear why and I'd like to hear that debate continue on the House floor.

As I said, the only question left is, what will Congress decide to do? It should be up to the entire House to weigh in on that decision. We shouldn't end this debate here. We shouldn't end it today.

And so, Mr. Chairman, respectfully, I must oppose your motion and if it's voted down I'll offer a motion of my own to report this resolution favorably, designating Mr. Boyle of Pennsylvania to call it up for consideration by the House.

Again, Mr. Chairman, as I have said many times publicly and privately I am grateful to you for your fairness and leadership, and I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. The gentleman yields back.

Floor votes are now underway. We have 4 minutes left in the vote. We will recess and then resume our markup immediately after the final vote in this two-vote series.

So I urge members to return promptly after casting the second vote. We stand in recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Sires.

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

The reason—where am I? My reason here, Chairman—the reason we are here today is simple. President Trump stood next to Vladimir Putin and took his side over the American people and our intelligence community.

He let Putin lie and say Russia did not have—did not hack our elections. In my eyes, he stood on stage with Putin and failed to defend someone who is committed to destroying this country.

He took a private meeting with Putin with no aides present. We still don't know what happened in that meeting. The American people deserve to know what our President said to one of our adversaries.

It is unacceptable that the administration continues to cozy up to the Russians at the expense of our security and safety.

We were sent here to conduct oversight of the administration's policies and we deserve to know what the President and Putin discussed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

Any other members seek recognition?

Any other members seek recognition to speak?

[Pause.]

Do any members seek recognition?

Mr. Cicilline.

Mr. CICILLINE. Yes. Move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I support House Resolution 1017, which requests that the administration turn over documents related to the July 16th meeting between Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin.

Two months after the fact, Congress and the American people still know nothing or next to nothing about what was discussed between President Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in a private 2-hour meeting in which none of the President's advisors were present.

After that meeting, President Trump stood on a stage with Vladimir Putin, a man who directed his military to launch a cyber attack on our country's elections and whose regime regularly has journalists murdered, LGBT individuals tortured, and political opponents thrown into jail.

Rather than standing up to President Putin, President Trump bent over backwards to appease a dictator and even defended Putin while denigrating our FBI, our intelligence officials, and anyone who wants to see Putin held accountable for his actions.

This was an incredibly embarrassing and sad day for America. Based on the President's own words, here's what we know about what took place in the meeting.

The two had, I quote, “a direct, open, deeply productive dialogue and spoke on a wide range of critical issues for both of our countries.”

The President believed Putin when he told him that it was not Russia that interfered in the 2016 elections, regardless of the fact that the U.S. intelligence community has without a doubt identified Russia as the source of the attack.

He has since walked back the stance after widespread outrage and the mountains of clear evidence to the contrary of his claims.

The President also apparently considered Putin’s incredible offer, as he called it, to allow Russians to question Ambassadors and employees of the United States intelligence community. He walked this back too after even his own advisors were incredulous at this absolutely nonsensical and dangerous proposal.

Substantively, most of what we know about the meeting has come from the Russian Government. A Russian major general was reported to have said that the Russian ministry of defense is ready for practical implementation of international security agreements reached between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump at the Helsinki Summit.

Despite this committee’s repeated requests, the administration still hasn’t told the American people or this committee anything substantive about the meeting in Helsinki and certainly nothing about these alleged international security agreements.

This committee has the constitutional authority and responsibility to conduct oversight and get answers. The administration’s lack of transparency about what was said and agreed to is particularly disturbing in light of the ongoing investigation into the Trump campaign’s ties to Russia, which has so far produced nearly 200 criminal charges and active indictments or to which individuals have already pled guilty.

Vladimir Putin is not a friend of the United States or the American people. He’s a brutal dictator whose repressive values are completely contrary to our own.

Given how little we know about what transpired in Helsinki, how can we trust that the President didn’t offer, purposely or otherwise, sensitive information that could put our citizens, soldiers, or allies in danger?

How can we trust that the President didn’t commit the United States to actions or agreements that may be against our Nation’s interest?

And given that we still don’t know the details relating to Russia’s involvement in the election of the President, how can we trust that what was discussed between President Trump and his admitted supporter, Vladimir Putin, didn’t compromise the President’s ability to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against our enemies?

These are basic questions that are absolutely critical to our understanding of the administration’s policies toward Russia.

We have an obligation as the committee of jurisdiction over foreign affairs to conduct proper oversight of the administration’s actions and policies vis-a-vis Russia.

I can’t imagine what reason my colleagues could possibly use to justify their unwillingness to support this resolution. All it does is

ask for documents—documents that will shed light into this important meeting between President Trump and President Putin, and nothing more.

This is a basic function of our committee that we should exercise without hesitation and because it is our obligation.

So I ask my colleagues to join me in support of this very well-written resolution of inquiry so that we can get to the bottom of this and really provide transparency to the American people so we can really understand what happened during this very consequential meeting and what are the implications for the United States' national security and our role in the world.

And with that, I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Any other members seek recognition?

Mr. Boyle.

Mr. BOYLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to debate my resolution.

It is now 2 months after the Helsinki Summit and we still don't know what was said in the private meeting.

The President has not told the American people what he discussed nor has any administration official come before the committee in an open or even a closed setting to brief us on the important foreign policy matters that were addressed.

What we do know is what Donald Trump announced directly following the unprecedented and puzzling one-on-one sit down.

He sowed seeds of doubt regarding the unwavering conclusion of our intelligence community that Russia interfered in our election to the benefit of Mr. Trump and that Putin used the meeting as a propaganda boost—or propaganda to boost his stature as a check on American leadership.

And we know what else Russia has been up to since. Our national security agencies have confirmed Russia is still working to attack the upcoming 2018 elections.

Russia continues to prop up the murderous Assad regime and occupy eastern Ukraine. All of this context fuels important questions regarding the secrecy of this meeting and begs for transparency and congressional oversight.

I introduced this resolution in July following the President's damaging and bizarre remarks at the press conference with Putin following the private sit down where the President met with Putin without any staff or advisors in the room.

This meeting could have profound foreign policy implications and the President has already built a track record of giving away concessions with nothing in return.

Did the President promise any concessions on U.S. sanctions on Russia? The U.S. commitment to NATO? The U.S. nonrecognition policy of the Crimea annexation?

We simply don't know. But we do know that at the press conference President Trump said he "spent a great deal of time" talking about the election and that Putin feels strongly about it and has "an interesting idea."

What does that mean? The President fueled doubt and speculation by refusing to say whether he believed the United States intelligence community or the Russian dictator on the subject of election interference in 2016.

Trump said that the special counsel's Russia investigation has been a "disaster for the U.S. and has kept America and Russia separated."

These comments can be added to a very long list of ways the President has gone out of his way to cozy up to Putin. Now, I wish this resolution weren't necessary. But here we are, 60 days after the Helsinki Summit and we still don't know what President Trump said or committed to.

We are a co-equal branch of government. Indeed, in the Constitution, we are the first Article. The executive is the second.

It is time that we take off our red hat or our blue hat and put on our red, white, and blue hat. As fellow Americans and as Members of Congress, we have a responsibility to do our jobs.

Let's get answers. Let's pass positively this resolution.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We go to Lois Frankel of Florida.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I urge support of this important resolution by my colleague, Representative Boyle, that directs the Trump administration to send the House copies of all documents and communications between Trump and Putin during the Helsinki Summit.

The American people deserve to know the truth of what was discussed and I want to say with emphasis Congress has the oversight and authority, duty, to demand this information and it is critical to national security that this Congress not be just a lackey to the executive branch.

And yet, the administration has failed to provide any information to come before this committee, as mentioned by my colleagues, and Americans are worried. They are in fear.

Why is that? As a candidate, now President, Donald Trump refuses to say anything negative about Vladimir Putin. He actually shows admiration for a man who murders his political opponents, meddles in Western democratic elections, suppresses human rights, illegally annexes foreign territory, supports the murderous Assad regime in Syria, and more.

And right before the Helsinki Summit, President Trump embarrassed our country at NATO, labeling our European allies as foes.

Then standing at Putin's side in Finland he parroted Russian propaganda and repeated Putin's lies.

When asked directly if he believed Russia interfered in our 2016 elections, he said he didn't see any reason why.

I'll tell you why or what he's ignoring. Number one, our own intelligence community unanimously concluded Russia has meddled in our elections. Number two, the Department of Justice has indicted 25 Russian nationals responsible for the meddling. And number three, Russia has a long proven history of assaulting Western democracies and using cyber attacks, disinformation, and support for nationalist political groups.

Now, here's the thing. We don't have a clue what was discussed with the two—in the 2-hour-long private meeting between Trump and Putin—what promises were made, whether they talked about sanctions, what about our election.

We have no answers and the cloud of secrecy is disturbing. We are in fear. It's been reported that they talked about holding a referendum in eastern Ukraine, Iran's presence in Syria, recognition of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, and the future of our nuclear arsenals, and we know Trump himself said it was a wonderful offer when Putin suggested Russia's interrogators question American citizens, including a former U.S. Ambassador to Russia.

Is it possible that the President jeopardized our national security when he was alone in the room with Putin? But without these documents, we may never know.

And I just want to conclude by repeating that Congress has the authority and the oversight duty to demand this information that is critical to our national security.

I urge we use this responsibility and adopt this resolution.

I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Do any other members seek recognition?

Mr. Meeks.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The camera of history is rolling. We do not live in a time where Congress can just sit back. In fact, we live in extraordinary times.

We cannot fool ourselves and say this is ordinary times because it's not, and history is looking to see what is the United States House of Representatives—what is the Congress going to do to make sure it is utilizing its oversight power of the executive branch—an equal branch of government.

And so we cannot pretend that this is a normal circumstance. In fact, a number of my Republican colleagues, especially those that ran for President—not Gregory Meeks—warned us about some of this back during the campaign during that time.

I'd just refer individuals to the comments of Mr. Romney, who's running for United States Senate now; Mr. Cruz, who is, you know, during that primary period of time; Mr. Rubio, who also had comments about the President at that time, of which I continue to articulate and utilize.

So they had some clues that this was not going to be an ordinary circumstance if Mr. Trump was elected, and that's why they said the things that they said during that campaign.

And so what has played out is what we have seen to take place at the Helsinki Summit, which remains astonishing because for the first time a U.S. President sat in front of the world stage to undermine their own Department of Justice, their own intelligence community, and invited a foreign adversary to do the same.

Without question, this is a troubling moment in our Nation's history. When given a chance to forcefully denounce Russia's interference in our elections, President Trump instead parroted Russia's propaganda.

Even the administration's latest Executive order sanctioning foreign interference in our elections fails to mention Russia by name.

This committee's request for documents, records, communications, and even the U.S. translator's notes constitutes not only a moral obligation but an execution of our constitutionally-enshrined right to check and balance the executive branch of government.

No other vibrant democracy would accept a meeting between its head of state and a former KGB agent whose primary currency is

half truths and disinformation and is committed to stirring up discord and division.

We need accountability and we need it today. Unfortunately, we do not trust the administration not to give away key concessions on issues like Crimea, Ukraine, the nuclear nonproliferation.

It's unprecedented for staff, his advisors, and technical experts to be excluded from discussions with far-reaching implications for not only the United States but the entire global community.

It is hyperbolic to say Mr. Trump's secretive meeting undermines our national security and aggregates this chamber's ability to perform effective oversight.

As public stewards dedicated to transparency and the rule of law, we just keep the executive accountable. It is time for all Members of Congress to put their affiliation aside and come together as Americans to address this blatant breach of trust.

As the biblical maxim says, a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough. The yeast of secrecy and unaccountability, if left unchecked, will undermine the very foundations of our democracy.

The actions of this President is just puzzling. I would have hoped that if he did then these transcripts would show that he was talking to the Russians, and should have been, about them being complicit with Syria, for example, in utilizing chemical weapons.

He pulled out of an agreement that all had agreed with with reference to nuclear weapons. But was there any—with Iran—but was there any conversation in that regard and what is Russia's role?

It seems to me that the American people and all of us here in Congress should know. So I would hope that my—our Republican colleagues and our public oaths require no demand—I'll note they demand that we examine the Helsinki events closely and if not this body, the American people will regret not doing so and history will so record it, and I thank Mr. Boyle for his amendment.

And I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman ROYCE. Other members seeking recognition?

Congresswoman Norma Torres.

Ms. TORRES. Thank you, Chairman Royce.

H.R. 1017 is an important measure and I thank my colleague, Congressman Boyle, for introducing it, and I also want to thank Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel for bringing it before this committee.

H.R. 1017 would force the administration to turn over documents related to the July 16 meeting that took place between President Trump and Vladimir Putin in Helsinki.

As I recall, Democrats were not the only ones with very serious questions about that meeting or concerns. As I recall, many of my Republican colleagues were shocked at the fact that President Trump would meet with Putin with no staff and shocked by the bizarre spectacle of a joint conference in which President Trump treated Putin like a friend, not the adversary that he is.

He is not our friend, and let us be clear about that. Russia is not our ally. As we discussed in this morning's hearing, Russia is a subject to multiple U.S. sanctions for its many malign activities.

The United States has sanctioned Russia for corruption, for interfering in our elections, for invading Crimea, for using chemical weapons to poison a former spy in the U.K.

And I won't go into the long and sordid history of President Trump's relationship with Russia. I won't go into the many examples of President Trump's campaign officials' ties to Russia or the administration officials' ties to Russia in general.

There is an ongoing investigation and we must allow that investigation to run its course. But I will say that there are some serious questions about the Helsinki meeting and the American people deserve to know.

I hope that today that we can rise above party politics and bring some much needed transparency to this disturbing episode.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

Do any other members seek recognition?

Seeing no further requests for recognition to speak, the question occurs on the pending motion of the Chair to report the resolution adversely.

The Chair orders a recorded vote, as I stated at the outset, to give all our members a fair opportunity to participate.

We are going to take a brief recess and then we reconvene to vote at 1:50.

The committee stands in recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman ROYCE. Okay. This committee will come back to order.

When we recessed, we had concluded debate—

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, move to strike the last word.

Chairman ROYCE. The gentleman is recognized.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the legendary journalist, Bob Woodward, released a book with disturbing details about what's going on in the White House.

White House Chief of Staff General Kelly reportedly said, "President Trump has gone off the rails. We are in Crazy Town. I don't even know why any of us are here."

And General Kelly denied some of the comments attributed to him and Woodward is standing by his reporting. Either way, the question it raises is a good one.

Why are any of us here? Why are any of us up here on this dais? Are we taking our duty to our constituents seriously? Are we living up to Article One of the Constitution? This is the people's House.

We are the American people's check on power, check on the administration, their oversight of the White House.

Are we going to take that job seriously? In July, I am sure many of you were as dumbfounded as I was when we saw the President of the United States stand side by side with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

He undermined the conclusions of American intelligence agencies—the agencies made up of hardworking patriotic Americans who sacrificed so much and go out into the most dangerous situations to gather information to keep our country safe.

The conclusions in their report have been publicly available since January 2017. President Trump pretended they didn't exist. He ignored the American lives that were on the line to create it.

In fact, there are rumors that he considered Putin's request to allow questioning of some of those very U.S. officials. But once again, we don't know where the truth lies because the only people in the room were Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin.

I don't know about you—that's not what I expect of my President. I expect strength in the face of Russian aggression.

I don't expect our President to blame America when Russia invaded its neighbors, when it used nerve gas against agents in Britain, when it attacked the foundation of our democracy.

If history teaches anything, it teaches that simpleminded appeasement or wishful thinking about our adversaries is folly. It means the betrayal of our past, the squandering of our freedom.

That's how President Reagan said it in 1983. That is a statement with principles at its foundation and our dearest American values at its core.

You won't hear anything like that coming out of this President's mouth. We cannot be complicit in Donald Trump's abandonment of the principals that used to guide us and we have a lot of work to do to restore American values.

That's the answer to the question why are we even here. I urge my colleagues who have now returned to this hearing room to oppose the motion to report the resolution adversely so that we can move forward with Mr. Boyle's resolution and advance this committee's responsibility to protect our democracy by pursuing the truth.

And I am glad to yield to my friend, Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank my friend and I thank him for his eloquence and for setting the parameters of what ought to be a fruitful discussion.

I plead with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. This committee has by and large seen and heard no evil when it comes to this President, even as he talks down alliances, even as he caters and panders to Vladimir Putin at the summit, even when he trashes our allies in the G7, even when he rips up agreements that disrupts long-term friendships and relationships, even when he deplores the EU and says that NATO, our longest alliance that worked so well and still does, is obsolete.

Is there any line he can cross that might merit your ire? This resolution, allowed to come to the floor without a recommendation, would be something then the House of Representatives—the people's body—could debate, and fruitfully so.

Or are we today once again simply going to vote along party lines to protect and defend the indefensible in foreign policy and once again shirk our duty as the committee of jurisdiction and cognizance to protect the foreign interests of the United States of America, even when that means we cross the executive?

I hope we think long and hard about our action today and I thank Mr. Boyle for his leadership on this resolution and my friend from Florida for yielding.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, and Mr. Chairman—
Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

Mr. DEUTCH [continuing]. I appreciate it. I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman ROYCE. All right.

The pending question is on the motion to report House Resolution 1017 adversely. In other words, if you share my opposition to the resolution, you would vote aye.

The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Would the chair entertain a parliamentary inquiry first?

Chairman ROYCE. I will entertain that inquiry.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the chair.

Just a couple of parliamentary inquiries. Is the motion—

Chairman ROYCE. Will the gentleman state his inquiry?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Yes. I am going to ask if the motion is amendable.

Chairman ROYCE. It is not at this point. We could consider an alternative motion only if this motion was defeated.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Because I have—

Chairman ROYCE. The motion before us—

Mr. CONNOLLY [continuing]. I have an itsy bitsy change in the adverb from adversely to favorably. [Laughter.]

Chairman ROYCE. Well—well, we could—we could consider that if this motion fails. But this is the motion before us, Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the chair.

Chairman ROYCE. All right. Well, thank you.

So the pending question—we will ask the clerk to call the roll.

Ms. MARTER. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Aye.

Ms. MARTER. The chairman votes aye.

Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Aye.

Ms. MARTER. Mr. Smith votes aye.

Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Aye.

Ms. MARTER. Ms. Ros-Lehtinen votes aye.

Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Aye.

Ms. MARTER. Mr. Rohrabacher votes aye.

Mr. Chabot.

Mr. CHABOT. Aye.

Ms. MARTER. Mr. Chabot votes aye.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Aye.

Ms. MARTER. Mr. Wilson votes aye.

Mr. McCaul.

Mr. MCCAUL. Aye.

Ms. MARTER. Mr. McCaul votes aye.

Mr. Poe.

[No response.]

Mr. Issa.

[No response.]

Mr. Marino.

Mr. MARINO. Aye.

Ms. MARTER. Mr. Marino votes aye.

Mr. Brooks.
Mr. BROOKS. Aye.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Brooks votes aye.
Mr. Cook.
Mr. COOK. Aye.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Cook votes aye.
Mr. Perry.
Mr. PERRY. Aye.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Perry votes aye.
Mr. Meadows.
Mr. MEADOWS. Aye.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Meadows votes aye.
Mr. Yoho.
Mr. YOHO. Aye.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Yoho votes aye.
Mr. Kinzinger.
Mr. KINZINGER. Aye.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Kinzinger votes aye.
Mr. Zeldin.
Mr. ZELDIN. Aye.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Zeldin votes aye.
Mr. Donovan.
Mr. DONOVAN. Aye.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Donovan votes aye.
Mr. Sensenbrenner.
Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Aye.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Sensenbrenner votes aye.
Mrs. Wagner.
Mrs. WAGNER. Aye.
Ms. MARTER. Mrs. Wagner votes aye.
Mr. Mast.
Mr. MAST. Aye.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Mast votes aye.
Mr. Rooney.
Mr. ROONEY. Aye.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Rooney votes aye.
Mr. Fitzpatrick.
Mr. FITZPATRICK. Aye.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Fitzpatrick votes aye.
Mr. Garrett.
Mr. GARRETT. Aye.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Garrett votes aye.
Mr. Curtis.
Mr. CURTIS. Aye.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Curtis votes aye.
Mr. Engel.
Mr. ENGEL. No.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Engel votes no.
Mr. Sherman.
Mr. SHERMAN. No.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Sherman votes no.
Mr. Meeks.
[No response.]
Mr. Sires.

Mr. SIRES. No.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Sires votes no.
Mr. Connolly.
Mr. CONNOLLY. Nay.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Connolly votes no.
Mr. Deutch.
Mr. DEUTCH. No.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Deutch votes no.
Ms. Bass.
[No response.]
Mr. Keating.
Mr. KEATING. No.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Keating votes no.
Mr. Cicilline.
Mr. CICILLINE. No.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Cicilline votes no.
Mr. Bera.
Mr. BERA. No.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Bera votes no.
Ms. Frankel.
Ms. FRANKEL. No.
Ms. MARTER. Ms. Frankel votes no.
Ms. Gabbard.
[No response.]
Mr. Castro.
Mr. CASTRO. No.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Castro votes no.
Ms. Kelly.
Ms. KELLY. No.
Ms. MARTER. Ms. Kelly votes no.
Mr. Boyle.
Mr. BOYLE. No.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Boyle votes no.
Ms. Titus.
Ms. TITUS. No.
Ms. MARTER. Ms. Titus votes no.
Ms. Torres.
Ms. TORRES. No.
Ms. MARTER. Ms. Torres votes no.
Mr. Schneider.
Mr. SCHNEIDER. No.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Schneider votes no.
Mr. Suozzi.
Mr. SUOZZI. No.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Suozzi votes no.
Mr. Espaillat.
Mr. ESPAILLAT. No.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Espaillat votes no.
Mr. Lieu.
Mr. LIEU. No.
Ms. MARTER. Mr. Lieu votes no.
Chairman ROYCE. Have all members been recorded?
The clerk will report the vote.

Ms. MARTER. Mr. Chairman, on that vote there are 23 ayes and 18 noes.

Chairman ROYCE. The motion is adopted and House Resolution 1017 will be reported adversely.

The motion to reconsider is laid on the table and without objection staff is directed to make any technical and conforming changes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, I have a—

Chairman ROYCE. That concludes our business.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I just have a UC request to enter something into the record.

Chairman ROYCE. Without—well, let—state the nature of your UC request.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I have a series of 20 different quotes from Members of Congress with respect to the Helsinki performance. I was simply asking unanimous consent they be entered into the record.

Chairman ROYCE. Without objection.

Mr. CICILLINE. May I ask—I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. May I ask that those—before I decide whether to object that Mr. Connolly read those statements? [Laughter.]

Chairman ROYCE. I think there will be objection at that point. [Laughter.]

So might I suggest that—

Mr. CONNOLLY. I would ask my friend from Rhode Island to perhaps withdraw his request. [Laughter.]

I thank the chair.

Chairman ROYCE. Very good. I am trying to be helpful here.

That concludes our business. Without objection, the committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:05 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX



MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Edward R. Royce (R-CA), Chairman

September 13, 2018

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN meeting of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at <http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov>):

DATE: Thursday, September 13, 2018

TIME: 12:30 p.m.

MARKUP OF: H. Res. 1017, Requesting the President, and directing the Secretary of State, to transmit to the House of Representatives copies of all documents, records, communications, transcripts, summaries, notes, memoranda, and read-aheads in their possession referring to certain communications between President Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin.

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
X	Edward R. Royce, CA
X	Christopher H. Smith, NJ
X	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL
X	Dana Rohrabacher, CA
X	Steve Chabot, OH
X	Joe Wilson, SC
X	Michael T. McCaul, TX
X	Ted Poe, TX
	Darrell Issa, CA
X	Tom Marino, PA
X	Mo Brooks, AL
X	Paul Cook, CA
X	Scott Perry, PA
X	Mark Meadows, NC
X	Ted Yoho, FL
X	Adam Kinzinger, IL
	Lee Zeldin, NY
X	Dan Donovan, NY
X	James F. Sensenbrenner, Jr., WI
X	Ann Wagner, MO
X	Brian J. Mast, FL
X	Brian K. Fitzpatrick, PA
X	Francis Rooney, FL
X	Thomas A. Garrett, Jr., VA
X	John Curtis, UT

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
X	Eliot L. Engel, NY
X	Brad Sherman, CA
X	Gregory W. Meeks, NY
X	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerald E. Connolly, VA
X	Theodore E. Deutch, FL
	Karen Bass, CA
X	William Keating, MA
X	David Cicillinc, RI
X	Ami Bera, CA
X	Lois Frankel, FL
X	Tulsi Gabbard, HI
X	Joaquin Castro, TX
X	Robin Kelly, IL
X	Brendan Boyle, PA
X	Dina Titus, NV
X	Norma Torres, CA
X	Brad Schneider, IL
X	Tom Suozzi, NY
X	Adriano Espaillat, NY
X	Ted Liguori, CA

9/13/18 Foreign Affairs Committee Markup Summary

The Chair called up the following measure, previously provided to Members:

H. Res. 1017 (Boyle), Requesting the President, and directing the Secretary of State, to transmit to the House of Representatives copies of all documents, records, communications, transcripts, summaries, notes, memoranda, and read-aheads in their possession referring to certain communications between President Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin.

The Chair moved to report the resolution adversely. A recorded vote was requested, and by a roll call vote of 23 Ayes and 18 Noes, the motion was adopted.

The Committee adjourned.

**Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
115th Congress**

Date: 9/13/18

Record Vote Description:

Motion to report H. Res. 1017 adversely

Clerk's initials

Member	Aye	No	Present
Edward R. Royce, R-CA, Chairman	✓		
Christopher H. Smith, R-NJ	✓		
Teanna Ross-Lehtinen, R-FL	✓		
Dana Rohrabacher, R-CA	✓		
Steve Chabot, R-OH	✓		
Joe Wilson, R-SC	✓		
Michael T. McCaul, R-TX	✓		
Ted Poe, R-TX			
Danell E. Issa, R-CA			
Tom Marino, R-PA	✓		
Mo Brooks, R-AL	✓		
Paul Cook, R-CA	✓		
Scott Perry, R-PA	✓		
Mark Meadows, R-NC	✓		
Tad S. Yoho, R-FL	✓		
Adam Kinzinger, R-IL	✓		
Lee M. Zeldin, R-NY	✓		
Daniel M. Donovan, Jr., R-NY	✓		
Jim Sensenbrenner, Jr., R-WI	✓		
Ann Wagner, R-MO	✓		
Brian J. Mast, R-FL	✓		
Francis Rooney, R-FL	✓		
Brian K. Fitzpatrick, R-PA	✓		
Thomas A. Garrett, Jr., R-VA	✓		
John R. Curtis, R-UT	✓		
Vacant			
SUBTOTAL 1	23	0	0

Member	Aye	No	Present
Eliot L. Engel, D-NY			✓
Brad Sherman, D-CA			✓
Gregory W. Meeks, D-NY			
Albio Sires, D-NJ			✓
Gonalo E. Connolly, D-VA			✓
Theodore E. Deutch, D-FL			✓
Karen Bass, D-CA			
William R. Keating, D-MA			✓
David N. Cicilline, D-RI			✓
Ami Bera, D-CA			✓
Lois Frankel, D-FL			✓
Tulsi Gabbard, D-HI			
Joaquin Castro, D-TX			✓
Robin L. Kelly, D-IL			✓
Brendan F. Boyle, D-PA			✓
Dina Titus, D-NV			✓
Norma J. Torres, D-CA			✓
Bradley Scott Schneider, D-IL			✓
Thomas R. Suozzi, D-NY			✓
Adriano Español, D-NY			✓
Ted Lieu, D-CA			✓
SUBTOTAL 2	0	18	0

	Aye	No	Present
SUBTOTAL 1	23	0	0
SUBTOTAL 2	0	18	0
TOTAL	23	18	0

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE GERALD E. CONNOLLY,
A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Information for the Record from Representative Gerry Connolly

September 13, 2018

- Speaker Paul Ryan (Wisconsin)
 - "The president must appreciate that Russia is not our ally. There is no moral equivalence between the United States and Russia, which remains hostile to our most basic values and ideals. The United States must be focused on holding Russia accountable and putting an end to its vile attacks on democracy."
 - <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/16/politics/congress-reaction-trump-putin-comments/index.html>
- Chairman Ed Royce (California, HFAC)
 - "I disagree with the president's comments. There is simply no comparing the actions of the United States and Vladimir Putin. While the United States promotes democracy and human rights, Vladimir Putin has invaded Ukraine, backed Assad's gas attacks on the Syrian people, and used cyber-attacks and propaganda campaigns to undermine our democracy. Putin's actions, and his alone, are why U.S.-Russia relations are at a low point.
 - "As we approach the November midterm elections, it is critical that Putin understand he will pay a steep price for any further interference in our democratic process. Congress has provided important tools to hold Russia accountable for its meddling. The administration needs to use them to the fullest extent."
 - <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press-release/royce-statement-on-putin-summit/>
- Rep. Adam Kinzinger (Illinois, HFAC)
 - "The American people deserve the truth, & to disregard the legitimacy of our intelligence officials is a disservice to the men & women who serve this country. It's time to wake up & face reality. #Putin is not our friend; he's an enemy to our freedom."
 - <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/16/politics/congress-reaction-trump-putin-comments/index.html>
- Rep. Trey Gowdy
 - "I am confident former CIA Director and current Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, DNI Dan Coats, Ambassador Nikki Haley, FBI Director Chris Wray, Attorney General Jeff Sessions and others will be able to communicate to the President it is possible to conclude Russia interfered with our election in 2016 without delegitimizing his electoral success."
 - <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/16/politics/congress-reaction-trump-putin-comments/index.html>
- Rep. Will Hurd (Texas, and former undercover CIA officer)
 - "I've seen the Russian intelligence manipulate many people many people in my career, and I never would have thought the US President would be one of them."
 - <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/16/politics/congress-reaction-trump-putin-comments/index.html>

- Chairman Bob Goodlatte (Virginia, Judiciary)
 - "U.S. intelligence agencies have confirmed Russia's actions, and the evidence is plentiful. Today's summit was an opportunity to forcefully address this growing threat directly with President Putin. I am dismayed that we did not see that."
 - <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/07/16/us/politics/republicans-trump-putin-russia-reaction.html>

- Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (Washington, Republican Conference Chairwoman)
 - "Russia is not a friend to the United States or our allies. There's no question that they meddled in our election, and all evidence points to Putin's direct involvement. In order to put America first, the president must hold Russia accountable for their adversarial actions and their continued efforts to undermine our democratic institutions."
 - <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/07/16/us/politics/republicans-trump-putin-russia-reaction.html>

- Rep. Liz Cheney, a Wyoming Republican.
 - "As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I am deeply troubled by President Trump's defense of Putin against the intelligence agencies of the U.S. & his suggestion of moral equivalence between the U.S. and Russia. Russia poses a grave threat to our national security."
 - <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/16/politics/congress-reaction-trump-putin-comments/index.html>

- Rep. Frank LoBiondo (chairs House CIA subcommittee)
 - "I strongly disagree w/ statement that Russia did not meddle in 2016 election. With all I have seen on House Intel Comm & additional indictments of 12 Russian officers last week, it is clear Russia's intentions. President Trump missed opportunity to hold Putin publicly accountable."
 - <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/16/politics/congress-reaction-trump-putin-comments/index.html>

- Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (Kentucky)
 - "I've said a number of times and I say it again, the Russians are not our friends and I entirely believe the assessment of our intelligence community,"
 - <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/16/politics/congress-reaction-trump-putin-comments/index.html>

- Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Bob Corker (Tennessee)
 - The President "made us look like a pushover." "I was very disappointed and saddened with the equivalency that he gave between them (the US intelligence agencies) and what Putin was saying."

- <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/16/politics/congress-reaction-trump-putin-comments/index.html>
- Senator Ben Sasse (Nebraska)
 - "This is bizarre and flat-out wrong. The United States is not to blame. America wants a good relationship with the Russian people but Vladimir Putin and his thugs are responsible for Soviet-style aggression. When the President plays these moral equivalence games, he gives Putin a propaganda win he desperately needs."
 - <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/16/politics/congress-reaction-trump-putin-comments/index.html>
- Senator Lindsey Graham (South Carolina)
 - "Missed opportunity by President Trump to firmly hold Russia accountable for 2016 meddling and deliver a strong warning regarding future elections. This answer by President Trump will be seen by Russia as a sign of weakness and create far more problems than it solves."
 - <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/16/politics/congress-reaction-trump-putin-comments/index.html>
- Sen. Tim Scott
 - "The President's summit in Helsinki today should have been an attempt at confronting Russian aggression, hacking, and election interference." "Russia is not a friend or ally. As Americans, we stand up for our interests and values abroad; but I fear today was a step backwards."
 - <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/16/politics/congress-reaction-trump-putin-comments/index.html>
- Senator Susan Collins (Maine)
 - "It's certainly not helpful for the President to express doubt about the conclusions of his own team. He has assembled a first-rate intelligence team handled by Dan Coats and I would hope that he would take their analysis over the predictable denials of President Putin."
 - <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/16/politics/congress-reaction-trump-putin-comments/index.html>
- Senator Jeff Flake (Arizona)
 - "I never thought I would see the day when our American President would stand on the stage with the Russian President and place blame on the United States for Russian aggression. This is shameful."
 - <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/16/politics/congress-reaction-trump-putin-comments/index.html>
- Senator Chuck Grassley (Iowa, Judiciary Chairman)

- “President Trump missed an opportunity to publicly press President Putin on whether he would agree to extradite the defendants to the United States to answer the allegations in court.”
 - <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/07/16/us/politics/republicans-trump-putin-russia-reaction.html>
 - Senator John McCain (Arizona)
 - "Today's press conference in Helsinki was one of the most disgraceful performances by an American president in memory. The damage inflicted by President Trump's naiveté, egotism, false equivalence, and sympathy for autocrats is difficult to calculate. But it is clear that the summit in Helsinki was a tragic mistake. President Trump proved not only unable, but unwilling to stand up to Putin. He and Putin seemed to be speaking from the same script as the president made a conscious choice to defend a tyrant against the fair questions of a free press, and to grant Putin an uncontested platform to spew propaganda and lies to the world. It is tempting to describe the press conference as a pathetic rout – as an illustration of the perils of under-preparation and inexperience. But these were not the errant tweets of a novice politician. These were the deliberate choices of a president who seems determined to realize his delusions of a warm relationship with Putin's regime without any regard for the true nature of his rule, his violent disregard for the sovereignty of his neighbors, his complicity in the slaughter of the Syrian people, his violation of international treaties, and his assault on democratic institutions throughout the world. Coming close on the heels of President Trump's bombastic and erratic conduct towards our closest friends and allies in Brussels and Britain, today's press conference marks a recent low point in the history of the American Presidency. That the president was attended in Helsinki by a team of competent and patriotic advisors makes his blunders and capitulations all the more painful and inexplicable. No prior president has ever abased himself more abjectly before a tyrant. Not only did President Trump fail to speak the truth about an adversary; but speaking for America to the world, our president failed to defend all that makes us who we are—a republic of free people dedicated to the cause of liberty at home and abroad. American presidents must be the champions of that cause if it is to succeed. Americans are waiting and hoping for President Trump to embrace that sacred responsibility. One can only hope they are not waiting totally in vain."
 - <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/07/16/john-mccain-says-trump-abased-himself-before-putin-at-summit.html>
- 

Statement for the Record from Representative Gerry Connolly
September 13, 2018

President Trump's July 2018 summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki, Finland was an utter disgrace to the Office of the Presidency. Trump never should have afforded Russia the honor of a presidential summit in the first place, and never should have conceded to a private, one-on-one meeting with Putin.

At their joint press conference on the world's stage, Trump should have condemned Russian interference in U.S. elections, decried Russia's forcible and illegal annexation of Crimea, and denounced Russia's efforts to undermine democracy and the rules-based world order. Instead, Trump failed to name a single, specific issue for which he holds Putin or Russia accountable, and reiterated his claim that the Mueller investigation is a witch hunt.

To make matters worse, Trump described as "an incredible offer" Putin's proposal to swap Russian officials indicted by Mueller with U.S. officials wanted by the Kremlin for questioning, including former U.S. Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul and Congressional staffer Kyle Parker. To suggest that the U.S. government would hand over its esteemed diplomatic personnel to endure interrogation at the hands of Putin's thugs is not only preposterous, but it also erodes the credibility of the Presidency's sworn duty to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. It is hard to put into words how offensive it is that the President of the United States would entertain a request from a brutal dictator to interrogate a former staff member of this Committee in relation to lawful actions that staff member took at the behest of a member of Congress.

The concerns regarding Trump's preparation for, performance at, and comments following his summit with Putin are too numerous to name. That is why I am glad to support H. Res. 1017, which requests the President and directs the Secretary of State to transmit to the House all documentation in their possession relating to communications between President Trump and President Putin in Helsinki, Finland, on July 15 or July 16, 2018.

The only reason this Committee is holding this markup is to keep this resolution off the floor. I have requested several times that this Committee consider the SECURE Our Democracy Act (H.R. 530), which Ranking Member Engel and I introduced, and my resolution calling on the Trump Administration to implement Russia sanctions (H. Res. 749), which I introduced with nearly every member on this side of the dais, to no avail. Instead of advance meaningful legislation, this Committee is holding a markup to block legitimate oversight requests from members of this Committee.

The resolution of inquiry is the tool we have to assert Congress' role in foreign policy and conduct oversight when the executive branch fails to exercise proper transparency. It is both appropriate and necessary to employ a resolution of inquiry in this case, and I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support Mr. Boyle's resolution so that the American people can know what really happened in President Trump's one-on-one meeting with Vladimir Putin.