

Sens. Johnson, Grassley and Graham: Seek interviews on reported coordination between Ukrainian officials, DNC consultant to aid Clinton in 2016 elections

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WASHINGTON – Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Chairman Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), Senate Finance Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) are seeking records from and transcribed staff interviews with two individuals reportedly involved in an effort by Ukrainian embassy officials to undermine the Trump campaign in the 2016 election. The interview and records requests are a continuation of an inquiry that Grassley [launched in 2017](#) following [news reports](#) that a Democratic National Committee (DNC) consultant solicited derogatory information on the Trump campaign from Ukrainian embassy officials prior to the 2016 election. According to those reports, elements of the Ukrainian government were actively working to undermine candidate Trump's electoral prospects in favor of Hillary Clinton.

“Contrary to the popular narrative in the ‘main stream media’ that Ukrainian involvement in the 2016 election has been debunked, or ‘no evidence exists,’ there are many unanswered questions that have festered for years. One of the reasons our nation remains so divided is the disconnect between those who are curious about any and all possible foreign interference and those who are not. Those who are curious, have a legitimate and understandable desire to know if wrongdoing occurred. The American public also has a right to know if no wrongdoing occurred. The sooner we get answers to the many unanswered questions, the sooner we can

turn our attention to the many challenges our nation faces,” **Johnson said.**

“Election interference by any foreign entity is a serious matter. Since the last presidential election, our nation rightly expended significant resources to examine allegations of collusion and foreign interference by Russia to influence the outcome. While there was no collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia, we know that Russia meddled in our democratic processes. However, certain reports of collusion and interference involving Ukrainian officials have not been sufficiently examined, and the few answers that have been given are inadequate. With another election right around the corner, choosing to ignore these matters or conflating them with separate, uncorroborated allegations is no way to adequately safeguard the sanctity of our elections,” **Grassley said.**

“To believe that the mainstream media will investigate all things Russia or Ukraine is to hope against hope. The hacking of the Democratic National Committee’s emails was done by the Russians and no one else. Whether there’s a connection between Democratic operatives and Ukrainian officials during the 2016 election has yet to be determined. It will only be found by looking. We intend to look,” **said Graham.**

In addition to the production of relevant records, Johnson, Grassley and Graham are requesting staff-led transcribed interviews with then-DNC consultant Alexandra Chalupa, who reportedly solicited damaging information on Trump campaign associates and lobbied Congress to launch a congressional investigation months before the election. They are also seeking a similar interview with Andrii Telizhenko, a political officer within the Ukrainian embassy at the time. According to reports, Telizhenko was ordered to assist in an off-the-books investigation into ties between the Trump campaign and Russia he said was being coordinated between Ukrainian officials and “the Hillary team.” That investigation included then-Trump campaign advisor Paul Manafort’s prior business dealings in the region. A [CBS News analysis](#) of the reported arrangement noted that “it’s deeply unusual for an American campaign to be working with foreign assets like this, regardless of whether it’s Ukraine or Russia.”

Grassley and Johnson recently requested information from the National Archives

and Records Administration regarding [White House meetings](#) in 2016 that included representatives from the Obama administration, Ukrainian government and the DNC. They also requested Justice Department records related to the [FBI's interactions with Chalupa](#). The senators' inquiries are unrelated to an uncorroborated theory that Ukraine was also behind the hack of DNC servers. U.S. intelligence officials and Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation found that Russia was responsible for the DNC hack.

Grassley, Johnson, and Graham also have outstanding requests (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) related to potential conflicts of interest and political influence by Ukrainian elements, including the natural gas firm Burisma, which employed as a board member Hunter Biden while his father was the U.S. vice president and public face of the Obama administration's handling of Ukraine. Additional records and interviews related to these matters may also be necessary.