

## **House Judiciary and HPSCI Democrats Release Transcripts, Emails Exposing Misleading Claims in GOP “Report”**

May 10, 2023

Last night, Judiciary Committee Republicans released a cherrypicked “report” intended to mislead the public about the intelligence community, the failed 2020 Trump campaign, and Hunter Biden’s laptop. The “report” ignores important evidence and restates claims that have been repeatedly disproven.

Chairman Jim Jordan claims that a single email from former CIA analyst and author David Cariens to Republican staff proves that the CIA approached Cariens about signing an October 19 letter about Hunter Biden’s laptop. Chairman Jordan has overpromised and underdelivered to the MAGA extremists once again.

Today, House Judiciary and HPSCI Democrats released key transcripts and emails that directly refute Chairman Jordan’s claims. Those documents show:

- Michael Morell, a highly-decorated veteran of the intel community, drafted the October 19 letter because he had serious concerns about the Russians apparently once again interfering in our elections.
- Mr. Morell also testified that he was the sole person in contact with the PCRB with respect to the draft letter and produced a complete copy of his exchange with the PCRB. If others working on the letter had contacted the PCRB, he would have known.
- Mr. Morell sent the letter to the PCRB at 6:34 a.m. on October 19, 2020. He received clearance at 12:44 p.m. He did not ask the CIA for anything other than clearance, and there is no evidence to suggest that the PCRB did anything other than clear letter in line with their normal processes.
- Mr. Morell and another witness, former CIA officer Marc Polymeropoulos, both explained that the PCRB tends to move quickly on short, time sensitive requests like the letter. Mr. Polymeropoulos explained that the PCRB tries to honor timing requests: “I’ve had them turn it around in several hours.”
- The Cariens email states that Mr. Cariens heard about the letter via a phone call with a PCRB. But there is substantial reason to question Mr. Cariens’ recollection of what happened, given the evidence and testimony on hand. For example, Mr. Polymeropoulos testified that, based on his “70 or 80” interactions with the PCRB, he has never known them to communicate anything via phone and said that he “would never take any kind of approval over the phone.”
- Republicans hold other evidence that cast serious doubt on their claims: former CIA officer Kristen Wood produced the email in which Mr. Cariens agreed to join the letter. Mr. Cariens

received the same email as every other signatory and signed on eight minutes later. His response says nothing about the PCRB.

- Republicans are making expansive claims that CIA “promoted” the letter without hearing Cariens’ testimony or taking any steps to corroborate or refute the single email they received from the witness directly.

**Michael Morell – a highly-decorated veteran of the intelligence community - drafted the October 19 letter because he had serious concerns about the Russians interfering in our elections yet again.**

[Morell Transcript 70-71]

Q -- if this was a Russian information, as opposed to disinformation, a Russian information operation, the goal of it would've been to promote one candidate over another?

A Right.

Q And was that candidate President Trump?

A Yes.

Q Again, in your experience -- and you said earlier, I think we referenced the letter saying that "the Russians need to stop interfering in our elections," is a quote from your letter, or roughly -- is this type of Russian interference -- in other words, a Russian information operation -- equally as concerning as the actual, for example, hacking and leaking of materials or the creation and dissemination of false materials?

A Yes.

Q Why is that?

A Because it's actually more subtle. When you hack John Podesta's emails and you put them in the public domain, everybody kind of knows where it came from, right? So I think it devalues it a little bit, politically.

What you don't see, right, particularly on social media, in terms of amplification and targeting, that's a lot harder

to see and, therefore, potentially more effective in affecting people's thinking.

Q In that situation where it's more effective, is it even more useful to bring attention to the fact of what the Russians may be doing?

A I'm sorry?

Q In other words, in a situation -- you said part of the reason that it's more effective, an information operation can be more effective, is because the Russians or anybody who is conducting it can kind of hide what they're doing and give it some additional authenticity or --

A Yeah, what I would say -- what I would say is, based on my experience -- based on my experience watching this, I think that information operations are often more effective than disinformation operations because it's easier to sustain the truth than it is to sustain a falsehood, and it's easier -- because, as I said earlier, to the extent the information is true, it's already out there, usually, and you're simply amplifying and directing. So it's often more effective than disinformation.

Q And can it be an effective tactic to counter that spread of accurate information but for a, you know, purpose of interfering --

A Absolutely.

Q -- can it be a good countermeasure to call attention

to it, in other words, to publicly point out, "This is what the Russians are doing," so that Americans understand what is happening?

A Yes.

Q Why is that?

A Again, for the same reasons we talked about, right? To the extent that there is a narrative in the public domain that's not accurate, to the extent that their operations support that narrative, right, it's more difficult --

Q Uh-huh.

A -- it's more difficult for our political system, you know, to get to the truth, right, which is ultimately what we're trying to do here.

**Mr. Morell also testified that he was the sole person in contact with the PCRB with respect to the draft letter and produced a complete copy of his exchange with the PCRB. If others working on the letter had contacted the PCRB, he would have known.**

[Morell Transcript p. 47-49]

Q Okay.

I want to turn to the conversation about Mr. Cariens. And we were discussing earlier -- it's marked as exhibit No. 10.

A Uh-huh.

Q Do you know Mr. Cariens?

A You know, I know of him. Maybe he briefed me from time to time. But I did not know him well. I did not know him well.

Q Okay.

And the exhibit 10 that we've been looking at, this is an email dated March 5, 2023, 3:02 p.m., correct?

A Yes, it is.

Q And so that's -- and it's addressed from Mr. Cariens to Majority Staff

A Yes.

Q And Majority Staff is the counsel sitting down there.

A Yes.

Q So this is -- March 5, 2023, is about 3, 2-1/2 years after the email -- I'm sorry, the public statement was released, correct?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And this is just an email; it's not a sworn statement, correct?

A Correct.

Q Okay.

In this, Mr. --

A But I would hope -- I would hope that, you know, in a letter to this committee that people would be honest. I'm sure you'll agree.

Q But it's not been subject to cross-examination, in other words?

A No.

Q Okay.

In the email, Mr. Cariens says that he retired in 1997.

A Yes.

Q Do you know about how old Mr. Cariens is?

A I do not. I'm sorry.

Q Okay.

He continues on -- so you have no idea if anything in this is accurate. The first time --

A I don't.

Q -- you saw this was today.

A I don't.

Q Okay. And you haven't spoken to Mr. Cariens about his statement.

A No. No.

Q Okay. So you don't know, for example, if he's remembering things correctly. You have no idea.

A I don't. I don't. You're absolutely correct.

Q Okay.

He says in paragraph 1, partway, about three-quarters of the way down, "I agreed to sign," and then his wife agreed to sign as well. He says that the PRB described the letter to him and then he'd agreed to sign.

Are you reading that as he told the PRB individual that he would agree to sign?

A Let me read it, please.

Q Uh-huh.

A So the way I'm reading it is that the person in the PRB explained the letter to him --

Q Okay.

A -- and it was at that moment that he, in his mind at least, agreed to sign. That's the way I'm reading this.

Q So, if there had been -- and your only communication with the PRB was the email we went through in which you asked for clearance and then they came back and said that you were cleared, correct?

A Yes.

Q You never received any communication from the PRB saying that Mr. Cariens and his wife want to join the letter.

A No.

Q To your knowledge, did anybody else who was organizing the letter receive such a contact?

A Not that I know of.

Q Okay. ...Do you recall how Mr. Cariens agreed to sign? Do you recall getting an email from him?

A I don't.

Q Okay.

So everything that we know about Mr. Cariens's comments are in the four corners of this letter --

A As far as I know, yes.

Q -- and you have no other information about it?

A As far as I know, yes --



Q Okay.

A No. No, I do not.

Q Okay.

And you produced to the committee any relevant communications that --

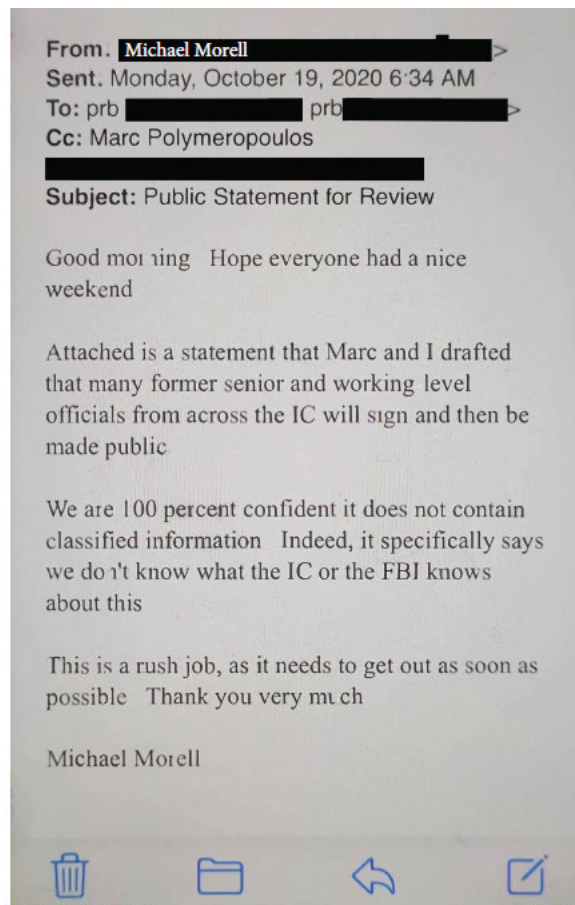
A Yes, ma'am.

Q -- you'd had with the PRB? Okay. And, to your knowledge, nobody else had any communications with the PRB?

A To my knowledge, no.

Q Okay.

**Mr. Morell sent the letter to the PCRB at 6:34 a.m. on October 19, 2020. He received clearance at 12:44 p.m. He did not ask the CIA for anything other than clearance, and there is no evidence to suggest that the PCRB did anything other than clear the letter in line with their normal processes.**



**From:** [JAMESAG2](#)  
**To:** ["Michael.M"](#)  
**Cc:** [gib](#)  
**Subject:** [AIN] PCRB Submission 999145/21667 Determination - Approved  
**Date:** Monday, October 19, 2020 12:44:00 PM

---

CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

---

### **AIN EMAIL**

This email originated on the AIN (U) and has been forwarded to the **Agency Data Network** (TS/SCI). *This is only a copy of the original message.* This email has been virus scanned, and the message body has been converted to text-only format. If the message is from someone unfamiliar to you (especially if it contains an attachment) do NOT open it; instead, contact your ISSM (<http://security.cia/infosec/programs/issm>). The original message in its original format can be viewed in your AIN email inbox. Questions can be emailed to GLIDE\_HELP.

[ANTE Up Info](#) [GLIDE File Security](#)

Message ID: 667403261/glide-ain-ecds-ap02-low-ain-adn-anteup

---

Dear Michael,

The Prepublication Classification Review Board completed its review of your article titled "Public Statement on the Hunter Biden Emails." The Board determined that it contains no classified information and can be published. Agency approval for publication of this material does not represent Agency endorsement or verification of this work.

If you add new material, please re-submit it before sharing, highlighting the new language to expedite our review. The PCRB appreciates your cooperation with prepublication review. You may reach out to us via [PRB@ucia.gov](mailto:PRB@ucia.gov) with questions or concerns.

Kind regards,  
PCRB Staff

**After Democrats pointed out the flaws in the Cariens exhibit, Republican Counsel promised to bring Cariens himself in for an interview to testify to the veracity of his email. So far, this has not happened.**

[Morell Transcript p. 84]

BY [Republican Committee Staff]:

Q Our committees are deeply troubled by the CIA's engagement and what it's -- my understanding you have testified here today is describing its political activity.

[Democratic Committee Staff] earlier noted that the statement that Mr. Cariens provided me was not under oath. I did just want to say for the record that we have requested Mr. Cariens to appear for a transcribed interview and are currently working with him and counsel to provide that.

**Mr. Morell and another witness, Mark Polymeropolous, both confirmed that it was not unusual for the PCRB to move quickly on short, time sensitive requests like the letter. Mr. Polymeropoulos explaining that the PCRB tries to honor timing requests: "I've had them turn it around in several hours."**

[Polymeropolous Transcript at 64-65]

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.

[Morell Transcript at 28-29]

Chairman Jordan. How does that typically work? You said you mentioned rush job in the emails. So tell me how -- I assume you've written a lot of things --

Mr. Morell. Yes, sir.

Chairman Jordan. -- you've had to go through that board numerous times.

Mr. Morell. Yes, sir.

Chairman Jordan. So who is on the record? What's the typical timeframe? How does the process work.

Mr. Morell. It is a number of staff officers, not contractors, staff officers who work on this board. This is what they do all day long. When they get something, if it's straightforward, they can do the approval themselves. If it's not straightforward, they will send it to the relevant part of the Agency for comment.

Chairman Jordan. So, on previous things you submitted, what was the turnaround time?

Mr. Morell. So, for op-eds, very fast. Within hours.

Chairman Jordan. Okay.

Mr. Morell. Within hours. For my book, it took them longer to review it than it took me to write it. So I've had experiences at both ends of the spectrum.

**The Cariens email states that Mr. Cariens heard about the letter via a phone call with a PCRB. But there is substantial reason to question Mr. Cariens' recollection of what happened, given the evidence and testimony on hand. Mr. Polymeropolous told the Committee that "in all [his] in all my time since July 2019 when I retired and the numerous times I've engaged with the PCRB, 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." He said that this had been the case in each of his "at least 70, 80" interactions with the PCRB.**

[Polymeropolous Transcript at 63-65]

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 Majority Staff 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.

**Republicans hold other evidence that cast serious doubt on their claims: former CIA officer Kristen Wood produced the email in which Mr. Cariens agreed to join the letter. Mr. Cariens received the same email as every other signatory and signed on eight minutes later. His response says nothing about the PCRB.**

Gmail Kristin W [REDACTED]

---

[REDACTED]

1 message

---

**Kristin W [REDACTED]** Mon, Oct 19, 2020 at 10:36 AM  
To: Michael Gmail New [REDACTED]

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** David Cariens [REDACTED]  
**Date:** October 19, 2020 at 10:35:50 AM EDT  
**To:** Kristin W [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Quick turnaround: Intelligence officers signing statement on Russian election interference

Yes, I want to sign. As for signing, just do: David Cariens, former CIA Intelligence Analyst  
Over 50 years working in the U.S. Intelligence Community

On Mon, Oct 19, 2020 at 10:27 AM Kristin W [REDACTED] wrote:  
To all (everyone bcc'ed to protect privacy),

---

affiliation to read. For CIA officers, we would like to find a way to highlight your Russia work, if appropriate. For example, Marc's citation will read:

>> Marc P...  
>> Former Senior CIA Operations Officer  
>> Former Acting Chief of Operations for Europe and Eurasia

There also is a new category -- the number of people who support the letter but cannot sign publicly.

>> The statement will be sent to the Publication Review Board at CIA later today.

Again, just let us know by 2pm today if you would like to be included.

Thanks!  
Kristin

---

--  
Dave Cariens [www.aquestionofaccountability.com](http://www.aquestionofaccountability.com)  
[www.aquestionofaccountability.blogspot.com](http://www.aquestionofaccountability.blogspot.com)