

## Statement of Chairman Elijah E. Cummings

### Resolution to Authorize Issuance of Subpoena to Depose Carl Kline

April 2, 2019

Today, we are considering a resolution relating to the security clearance process at the White House—a process that is supposed to protect our nation’s most closely guarded secrets. This resolution would authorize me to issue a subpoena for the testimony of Carl Kline, who served as the White House Personnel Security Director under the Trump Administration.

Yesterday, I sent a memo to all Committee Members providing information from a detailed, on-the-record interview with a whistleblower who currently works in the White House. Her name is Tricia Newbold, and she came forward at great personal risk to warn Congress—and the nation—about the grave security risks she has been witnessing first-hand over the past two years. As she said during her interview with Committee staff:

I would not be doing a service to myself, my country, or my children if I sat back knowing that the issues that we have could impact national security.

Ms. Newbold has worked at the White House under both Republican and Democratic Administrations for the past 18 years.

She has informed the Committee that during the Trump Administration, she and other career officials adjudicated denials of dozens of applications for security clearances that were later overturned. As a result, she warned that security clearance applications for White House officials “were not always adjudicated in the best interest of national security.”

She raised her concerns inside of the White House, and they targeted her for retaliation. Yet, despite these risks, she has agreed to identify herself publicly at this time because she strongly believes that Congress must intervene immediately to safeguard our national security.

In fact, she implored the Committee to act now, warning that “this is my **last hope** to really bring the integrity back into our office.”

I just want to emphasize that point. She came forward because the system at the White House is so dysfunctional that she believes Congress needs to intervene.

Ms. Newbold came forward out of concern for our country and our national security. And she called on us to act. To do our jobs. To conduct credible, independent oversight.

Now, with respect to Mr. Kline, we first asked the White House to interview Mr. Kline back in January, along with everyone else in the security clearance office. They said no.

Then the Committee sent a letter directly to Mr. Kline in February. He never responded.

Then the Committee sent a third letter in March, explaining to Mr. Kline that if he did not respond, our next step was going to be compulsory process. He never responded to that letter.

In addition, on March 1—more than a month ago—I wrote to the White House Counsel yet again, and I warned him explicitly that this was the “final time” I was going to ask for voluntary compliance. They still refused. To this day, they have not produced a single piece of paper or a single requested witness to this Committee.

It was not until yesterday—after the whistleblower’s claims were made public, and less than 24 hours before today’s subpoena vote—that we finally received last-minute letters from Mr. Kline’s lawyer and the White House saying he would voluntarily comply.

But there is a catch. He will come in voluntarily, but he will not answer any of our questions about specific officials, about specific security violations, or about specific security clearance adjudications. Instead, he will only talk about general policies.

This is clearly not sufficient.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote in support of this subpoena. The White House needs to understand that they cannot stonewall and stall this Committee for months and then just offer us general information about their policies—not when there are such serious allegations of a risk to national security.

To my Republican counterparts, I ask that you read the memo I circulated carefully. In fact, I urge you to read Rep. Jordan’s memo carefully too because it also makes a very good case for why this Committee needs Mr. Kline to come in and answer all of our questions.

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