

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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September 18, 2018

The Honorable Trey Gowdy  
Chairman  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to request that you issue a subpoena to compel the White House to produce documents it is withholding regarding President Donald Trump's unprecedented revocation of former Central Intelligence Agency Director John Brennan's security clearance.

On August 15, 2018, White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders announced at the daily press briefing that President Trump decided to revoke Mr. Brennan's security clearance, citing Mr. Brennan's allegedly "outrageous" statements and "wild outbursts on the Internet and television."<sup>1</sup>

However, in an interview that same day, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that President Trump actually revoked Mr. Brennan's security clearance because he viewed "Mr. Brennan as among those he held responsible for the investigation, which also is looking into whether there was collusion between the Trump campaign and the Kremlin." The report quoted the President as saying, "I call it the rigged witch hunt, [it] is a sham," and conceding, "So I think it's something that had to be done."<sup>2</sup>

On August 16, 2018, I wrote to White House Chief of Staff John Kelly requesting an immediate briefing and documents about the process the White House followed—pursuant to existing Executive Orders on the revocation of security clearances—to investigate whether Mr. Brennan had compromised classified information or was otherwise unsuitable for continued access to classified information. I also requested information about other individuals for whom the White House had revoked or suspended security clearances.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders*, The White House (Aug. 15, 2018) (online at [www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/press-briefing-press-secretary-sarah-sanders-081518/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/press-briefing-press-secretary-sarah-sanders-081518/)).

<sup>2</sup> *Trump Revokes Ex-CIA Director John Brennan's Security Clearance*, Wall Street Journal (Aug. 15, 2018) (online at [www.wsj.com/articles/trump-revokes-ex-cia-director-john-brennans-security-clearance-1534358658](http://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-revokes-ex-cia-director-john-brennans-security-clearance-1534358658)).

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Ranking Member Elijah E. Cummings, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to John Kelly, White House Chief of Staff (Aug. 16, 2018) (online at <https://democrats->

To date, the White House has not responded to the letter and has refused to produce any of the requested documents or information.

When you assumed the chairmanship of the Oversight Committee last year, you held a meeting with reporters during which you explained that you were walling off numerous topics from our Committee's oversight. However, as the *Washington Post* reported after the meeting, "Gowdy said there were Trump-related matters that he did see falling within the Oversight panel's purview," including "procedures for issuance of security clearances."<sup>4</sup>

The White House's unprecedented revocation of Mr. Brennan's security clearance for apparent political purposes is, as you noted, squarely within our Committee's jurisdiction.

For all of these reasons, I ask that you finally put the full authority of the Committee behind a serious investigation of the White House's procedures for issuing and revoking security clearances. In particular, I request that you issue a subpoena to compel the White House to produce the following documents:

- (1) all documents and communications referring or relating to the decision to revoke Mr. Brennan's access to classified information, including but not limited to documents referring or relating to any investigation of Mr. Brennan's suitability for continued access to classified information;
- (2) all documents and communications referring or relating to consultations that the White House had with agencies in the United States Intelligence Community regarding the value of a continuing consulting relationship with Mr. Brennan;
- (3) all documents and communications referring or relating to the White House's policy on suspending or revoking security clearances; and
- (4) a list of all individuals for whom the Trump White House has revoked or suspended security clearances.

If you choose not to issue this subpoena yourself, then I ask that you place this matter on the agenda for our next regularly scheduled business meeting so all Committee Members will have the opportunity to vote on a motion to issue this subpoena.

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[oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2018-08-16.EEC%20to%20Kelly-WH%20re%20Brennan%20Clearance.pdf](https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2018-08-16.EEC%20to%20Kelly-WH%20re%20Brennan%20Clearance.pdf)).

<sup>4</sup> *On Trump and Russia, Oversight Chair Trey Gowdy Says He Will Stay in His Lane*, Washington Post (June 23, 2017) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/on-trump-and-russia-oversight-chair-trey-gowdy-says-he-will-stay-in-his-lane/2017/06/23/4d1dfca6-583d-11e7-a204-ad706461fa4f\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/on-trump-and-russia-oversight-chair-trey-gowdy-says-he-will-stay-in-his-lane/2017/06/23/4d1dfca6-583d-11e7-a204-ad706461fa4f_story.html)).

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



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Elijah E. Cummings  
Ranking Member