

# White House Orders Former Security Director to Defy Oversight Committee Subpoena

Washington, D.C. (Apr. 23, 2019)— This morning at 9 a.m., Democratic and Republican investigators on the Committee on Oversight and Reform convened the scheduled deposition of White House Personnel Security Director Carl Kline, which was ordered by a subpoena issued by the Committee on April 2. Mr. Kline did not appear for his deposition. The White House informed the Committee that it ordered Mr. Kline not to appear, but the President has not asserted any Constitutional or other privilege that would have relieved Mr. Kline of his legal obligation to testify.

Chairman Elijah E. Cummings issued the following statement in response to today's actions:

“The White House and Mr. Kline now stand in open defiance of a duly authorized congressional subpoena with no assertion of any privilege of any kind by President Trump. Based on these actions, it appears that the President believes that the Constitution does not apply to his White House, that he may order officials at will to violate their legal obligations, and that he may obstruct attempts by Congress to conduct oversight. It also appears that the White House believes that it may dictate to Congress—an independent and co-equal branch of government—the scope of its investigations and even the rules by which it conducts them. To date, the White House has refused to produce a single piece of paper or a single witness in any of the Committee's investigations this entire year.

“The White House's position is untenable. The White House claims that ‘under no circumstance’ will it provide to Congress any information about any specific White House employee—regardless of whether that employee lied to federal investigators about communicating with the Russians or continued working in the White House after the FBI reported derogatory information involving domestic violence. The White House has disregarded numerous examples of the Committee obtaining exactly this type of information under previous Chairmen.

“Instead of making any privilege assertion, the White House now seeks to challenge the Committee's authority to conduct depositions under a rule that has been used by Republican and Democratic Chairmen for years—and that was just adopted again this past January with unanimous support from all Committee Members. The Committee has repeatedly deposed officials across the government—including from the White House—represented by their own counsel and excluding representatives of the agency under investigation. The White House now seeks to stonewall this otherwise routine congressional process. There are obvious reasons we need to conduct our investigations of agency malfeasance without representatives of the office under investigation.

“To that end, Mr. Kline's attorney is trying to cast him as caught in the middle of a dispute between the Committee and the White House, asserting that Mr. Kline is ‘not a party in interest.’ That is not correct. Mr. Kline stands accused of retaliating against a whistleblower who reported serious allegations of abuse to Congress. As the Committee with primary jurisdiction over the Whistleblower Protection Act, we take extremely seriously our responsibility to investigate these allegations and to protect the rights of all whistleblowers who come before Congress. Mr. Kline has a direct and personal legal obligation to comply with this subpoena, and he failed to do so.

“The American people want transparency and accountability from this Administration, but we can't provide that if we don't have the information we need.

“I intend to consult with House Counsel and Committee Members about scheduling a vote on contempt. I hope that Mr. Kline, in close consultation with his personal attorney, will carefully review his legal obligations, reconsider his refusal to appear, and begin cooperating with the Committee's investigation.”