

EXECUTIVE SESSION
PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF: SAMANTHA POWER

Friday, October 13, 2017

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-304, the Capitol,
commencing at 9:39 a.m.

Present: Representatives Conaway, Rooney, Stewart, Gowdy, Stefanik,



Schiff, Himes, Sewell, Carson, Swalwell, Castro, and Heck.



[REDACTED]

Appearances:

For the PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE:

[REDACTED]
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For SAMANTHA POWER:

MICHAEL J. GOTTLIEB,
BOIES SCHILLER FLEXNER

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Good morning. This is a transcribed interview of Ambassador Samantha Power.

Thank you for speaking to us today.

For the record, I'm [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for the majority for the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. There are also a number of other members and staff here who will introduce themselves as we proceed.

Before we begin, I wanted to state a few things for the record. The questioning will be conducted by members and staff. During the course of this interview, members and staff may ask questions during their allotted time period. Some questions may seem basic, but that is because we need to clearly establish facts and understand the situation. Please do not assume we know any facts you have previously disclosed as part of any other investigation or review.

This interview will be conducted at the Top Secret/SCI level.

During the course of this interview we will take any breaks that you desire.

We ask that you give complete and fulsome replies to answers based on your best recollections. If a question is unclear or you're uncertain in your response, please let us know. If you do not know the answer to a question or cannot remember, simply say so.

You are entitled to have a lawyer present for you during this interview. Though you are not required, I see that you have brought counsel.

For the record, counsel, could you please state your name?

MR. GOTTLIEB: Michael Gottlieb, with the firm of Boies Schiller Flexner.

[REDACTED] Thank you, Mr. Gottlieb.

The interview will be transcribed. There are reporters making a record of

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

these proceedings so we can easily consult a written compilation of your answers. Because the reporter cannot record gestures, we ask that you answer verbally, and if you should forget to do this, you might be reminded to do so. You may also be asked to spell certain terms or unusual phrases.

Consistent with the committee's rules of procedure, you and your counsel, upon request, will have a reasonable opportunity to inspect the transcript of this interview in order to determine whether your answers were correctly transcribed. The transcript will remain in the committee's custody. The committee also reserves the right to request your return for additional questions should the need arise.

The process for the interview is as follows. The majority will be given 45 minutes to ask questions. The minority then will be given 45 minutes to ask questions. Immediately thereafter, we will take a 5-minute break, should you desire, after which time the majority will be given 15 minutes to ask questions and the minority will be given 15 minutes to ask questions, and the 15-minute rounds will continue until all the questions have been answered.

These time limits on the rounds will be strictly adhered to by all sides, with no extensions being granted. Time will be kept for each portion of the interview, with warnings given at the 5-minute and 1-minute mark, respectively.

To ensure confidentiality, we ask that you do not discuss the interview with anyone other than your attorney. You are reminded that it is unlawful to deliberately provide false information to Members of Congress or staff.

Lastly, the record will reflect that you are voluntarily participating in this interview, which will be oath.

Madam ambassador, will you raise your right hand to be sworn?

[REDACTED]

[Witness sworn.]

██████████ Thank you, Madam.

Mr. Chairman, over to you.

MR. CONAWAY: Well, first of all, thank you for coming in.

Mr. Rooney.

MR. ROONEY: Ms. Ambassador, what we've been doing with most of these witnesses -- as you know, we're looking to write a report for the Intelligence Community and how we can improve upon what our oversight role is of the IC, and what role Russia may have played in our last election, which runs the gamut from, you know, just propaganda to -- Adam and I were just talking about Facebook ads -- to possible collusion with a campaign.

So the ranking member and our side have come up with four parameters that just as a baseline we want to talk about first. And then I will turn it over to my colleague, Mr. Gowdy. And hopefully at the end we can issue a report that's helpful.

This is not a criminal investigation. As you know, anything criminal is -- and I say this to all the witnesses, because sometimes there is a lot of attorneys in here that are former prosecutors and sometimes we sort of feel like we are back in court. But that's for Robert Mueller to do, not us.

The parameters are this. And I'm asking this in your role when you were part of the last administration, and some of these you might just not have any input on or not know or not be exposed to. So, if that's the case, obviously just say that.

What Russian cyber activity and other active measures were directed against the United States and its allies? In your role as the U.N. Ambassador, are

██████████

[REDACTED]

you aware of any of that activity, and can you lend any sort of insight to that?

MS. POWER: I need to turn this on? Yes.

MR. ROONEY: Yes.

MS. POWER: Thank you. May I say a couple words off the bat?

MR. ROONEY: Sure.

MS. POWER: Just to thank everybody for the work that you're doing.

I had two roles while I had the privilege of serving in the executive branch in the second term. The first role was as U.N. Ambassador, and I will come back to that, I think, multiple times I'm sure today. And the second was as a member of the National Security Council.

The founding kind of architectural document for the Obama administration is Presidential Policy Directive 1. That stipulates that, you know, as is true, as has been required in statute, the Vice President, the President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense are part of the NSC. And then in this PPD, President Obama added the Attorney General, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the U.N. Ambassador.

So this is really important, and I've seen some references in the press to my role that maybe seem unaware of this dual-hatted set of functions that I performed for this 3-1/5 years that I had the privilege of serving. I mention it in this context, because I was participating regularly, as some of my U.N. Ambassador colleagues or predecessors had done as well, in NSCs, in Principals Committee meetings, a term you are probably familiar with, which is a meeting of the NSC chaired by the National Security Advisor.

I was shuttling back and forth to Washington. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

And in that capacity, that second hat or dual hat, because they are coequal, I had to advise the President on, you know, the full range of threats: covert action programs, targeting for the drone program, whether we provide lethal assistance to the Ukrainian Government. And to your question: Russia, cybersecurity, cybersecurity generally, China, what they were doing in terms of our intellectual property.

A whole host the topics, you name it and I was part of those discussions, that didn't overlap necessarily with my role, my outward-facing role, or at least my day-to-day functions, as U.N. Ambassador in New York.

So I became aware, as other members of the Principals Committee did, other members of the NSC, of Russian interference in our election in the -- for me, it was in the fall of 2016.

I participated in the meetings among the principals in advance of the issuance of the statement that the intelligence directors issued, basically trying to sound the alarm in advance of the election. I believe it was in October.

I participated in the discussions, deliberations about what we do about it, about, you know, where Secretary Johnson is reporting, what we're doing to help the States harden their defenses in terms of actual attempted probing and interference in the voter rolls, but also what do we do in terms of sanctioning Russian diplomats, do we sanction President Putin. So the set of response questions I was also a part of, again in my -- wearing my hat at the NSC.

I mean, to your specific question, I don't know that I have more to add than what you would know from having heard from the intelligence professionals.

I myself was a consumer of their analysis, of how many States were

[REDACTED]

penetrated, their judgment, you know, between October when I first engaged those deliberations until, you know, January 20th, when we handed the baton over.

So as they were learning, I was getting briefed, again, as part of those discussions. I don't know that I have anything specific to add to what the intelligence professionals who were getting the raw -- doing the raw -- obtaining the raw information. And then doing the first order analysis, I've already provided you with.

MR. ROONEY: Do you know if Susan Rice wore the same dual hat or was that just something that started when you were U.N. Ambassador?

MS. POWER: That's an excellent question. It has -- it's a dual -- she did. PPD 1 was issued in January 2009 by President Obama, so she was a the first U.N. Ambassador to be dual hatted. Other Ambassadors that you would be familiar with, Jeanne Kirkpatrick was dual hatted, Madeleine Albright was dual hatted; Ambassador Negroponte and Ambassador Bolton were not. You know, different Presidents make different judgements about whether this warrants a Cabinet role and an NSC role.

But I really did want to underscore it, because I think I see a lot of references to the U.N. Ambassador as if the position is not sort of central to these key deliberations, especially related to Russian cybersecurity and particularly in relation to the response to what was done.

MR. ROONEY: Okay. Are you aware or did you know Russian active measures, including links between Russia and individuals associated with political campaigns or any other U.S. persons when you were part of the administration?

MS. POWER: Could you just ask the question again? I'm sorry.

[REDACTED]

MR. ROONEY: The parameter here is did the Russian active measures include links between Russia and individuals associated with political campaigns or other U.S. persons? Did you see any of that when you were --

MS. POWER: I mean, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] And then of course as a citizen, I heard the public statements by candidate Trump, you know, related to President Putin or --

MR. ROONEY: Without going into, like -- because we get this a lot with people that, you know, what they've read or heard on TV, but just in your official capacity, like, what you saw officially, when you speak of, like, evidence of conversations or meetings, what are you talking about there?

MS. POWER: Oh, I would -- because I -- again, wearing both my hats, I'm -- other than our Ambassador in Moscow, I'm spending more time with a senior Russian official than anybody else in the U.S. Government, right? Russia is my prime obstacle to everything I want to get done in New York. And, you know, particularly after the election, as more and more -- between -- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

So in the course of preparing for my Principals Committee meetings, in the course of reading the PDB every morning -- you know, as a member of the NSC, I read the President's daily brief, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I can't recall particularly names or dates, but I had a sense of individuals that I knew to be affiliated with the Trump campaign being in conversation, partly because it was a transition. And just as we did, you meet with foreign governments and you have those meetings. And then as I recall, there were also, in advance of the election, pieces that showed that meetings were occurring.

MR. ROONEY: In those briefings that you read or in any of the Principals Committee meetings with regard to Russia, was there anything that you saw, aside from a meeting with the Ambassador, whatever, like you said, the same as the Obama administration may have done, that would alarm you as U.N. Ambassador that this looks like it could be collusion with the Russian Government and the Trump campaign officially?

MS. POWER: I mean, what I saw was --

MR. ROONEY: Like, collusion, what I mean by that, and we hear this on TV a lot, but actual collusion or coordination with the Russian Government and the Trump campaign to assist them in defeating Secretary Clinton. Did you see anything like that that was specific towards advancing their campaign?

MS. POWER: I mean, what I saw was -- what I saw was concerning. I think that in terms of labeling it, you know, I want to just bring you back to me and my role. I was trying to do my job, which was to -- Russia was about to take Aleppo. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So I was processing intelligence not with an eye to that question, but with an eye to doing my job, in both roles, advising the President and standing up to Russia. So I was reading intelligence in order to understand what Russia was thinking so that I could stay a step ahead -- hopefully more than one step ahead -- of my Russian counterpart, and so that we could stay ahead of the Russian Government.

MR. ROONEY: You say you weren't looking for anything like that specifically with regard to collusion or coordination with the Trump campaign and the Russian Government, but you say that you saw some things that were concerning. Can you give me an example of that?

MS. POWER: Well, I think what I would say is that my understanding of the way that -- well, the experience that we had in transition back in 2009 was that we would carry out all of the meetings that we did with foreign governments with State Department officials present, because it was really important to have one government at a time.

So, you know, even though of course all of us lived in anticipation of a transition on January 20th, we were the government. I was representing the United States. I wasn't a political -- I was a political appointee of course back in 2013, but when you're representing the United States, you're representing U.S. interests, you're trying to keep the U.S. safe. You know, terrorists are coming after us in our facilities abroad, you know, it is our job as an NSC and as a Principals Committee to be doing everything we can to stave off.

So we are very focused on one government at a time representing this country, strong through the tape, act the same way on the last day you would on the first day. That's our mentality.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

And, traditionally, the way it has always been done is that has been something embraced by both parties because it would just be damaging -- it stands to reason that it is damaging to the United States to potentially have two kind of governments carrying out foreign policy at the same time.

So I think that what struck me was the extent to which other governments, many of which I was very focused on, were forum shopping a little bit, other governments were making decisions about how to interface with us on the basis of what they were hearing from the transition team. And, again, this departure from the way that we expected things to be done, the way things had always been done --

MR. ROONEY: The departure from not, like, including the State -- the current State Department.

MS. POWER: Well, I mean, that's one way to put it, but I think it's more kind of carrying on a foreign policy. I don't want to generalize, but, you know, the

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] That would be one example.

MR. ROONEY: Okay.

The next bullet is, what was the U.S. Government's response to the Russian active measures? And what do we need to do to protect ourselves and our allies in the future?

So while you were still there, what did you do when you saw some of this kind of activity?

MS. POWER: Well, I was by no means a solo operator. I was part, again,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

of the NSC.

MR. ROONEY: Right.

MS. POWER: So in our deliberations, when I became part of the process, we initially were focused on how do we alert the American people to what is happening and to our concerns about what may yet happen. And those were the deliberations around the statement that you're very familiar with.

That was an Intelligence Community statement so we were not, you know, ourselves as people on the policy side, we were not drafting that statement. That was something they were drafting. But it was something that we discussed because it was important that all of the individuals on the Principals Committee were read into, you know, what was about to be said.

We spent a lot of time thinking about how best to come forward with that message. And because it was an intelligence judgment, again, the judgment of the Intelligence Community was that it was appropriate that it would come out and would be issued also as a kind of technical assessment of the hacking that had been done and the Russian Government's intent to interfere in our elections, which now is such a familiar concept to us, but at the time was a very dramatic thing.

MR. ROONEY: Yeah.

MS. POWER: So there was the statement.

Then, over a period of days, and then, ultimately, when it comes to the expulsion of diplomats, weeks, we discussed what the appropriate measures were to take in response. You know, obviously, President Obama had the most critical role in engaging President Putin, and everybody is familiar with that. But we had to think are about what lay in our arsenal that we could deliver, when we should

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

put it in place, before the election, after the election, the scope of the response.

One thing if I could just draw your attention to is, I think when we had these discussions in advance of the election there was a very salient concern that more was yet to come.

So you had the probing into voter -- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

But also, in terms of the hacking, you know, was there more hacking yet to come or was there some bombshell, you know, that was going to be disclosed.

So part of our policy deliberation about what to do and when to do it also bore in mind, you know, what will our response be then if something subsequently happens? What is -- what will be available to us in another phase of this? So these were the kinds of issues that were debated.

The channels that were maintained were, again, President to head of state channel, and then of course the intelligence channel through -- I believe it was Director Brennan. And so, you know, my job was to be, you know, part of the team deliberating what to do.

And then when -- this is after the transition -- but when we made the decision to expel the diplomats, that had direct bearing on my U.N. Ambassador hat, because we are the host country to the United Nations and we were concerned that here Russian had just hacked our election, carried out this assault on our democracy, and yet there was technically a potential legal vulnerability because we were expelling Russian diplomats who were affiliated with Russia's U.N. mission.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So I did a lot of work to try to ensure that we would be able to swat that, you know, ridiculous argument away, because they were going to claim these were straight-up Russian diplomats affiliated with the U.N. mission, and we knew them to be intelligence operatives trying to spy in the United States.

MR. ROONEY: The last bullet is looking into what possible leaks of classified information took place related to the Intelligence Community assessment of these matters. Were you aware of any of that? And what insight can you give us?

MS. POWER: Well, I mean this is, along with everything that you're investigating, very important. And let me just state for the record, because of some of the insinuations that have been out there, that I have never leaked classified information, never would, and find leaking an abhorrent practice.

Not least because I've had the experience over 8 years in the executive branch and over these last -- the last 3-1/5 years as U.N. Ambassador of just being a primary beneficiary of intelligence, you know, somebody who, wearing my two hats, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I mean, intelligence is our comparative advantage as a country, one of several, but to jeopardize that in any way is an outrage. I am not aware of anybody who did leak. I am, of course, familiar with fact that leaks occurred and I condemn them heartily.

MR. ROONEY: Well, it's going to maybe our jobs harder, too, with some of the reauthorizations that we have to do. So, I mean, you know that well --

[REDACTED]

MS. POWER: Yeah.

MR. ROONEY: -- that that's the downstream consequences.

My final question is just specifically with regard to not the transition, but before the election. Were you aware or did you see any specific intelligence -- not, again, what you read or saw in the media or heard through the grapevine -- but actually saw any kind of definitive proof that would assist this committee with regard to the Trump campaign and the Russian Government with regard to collusion or conspiracy or coordination to help the Trump campaign win on election day? Did you see anything specific?

MS. POWER: You know, I --

MR. ROONEY: -- in either role?

MS. POWER: I -- that was not the issue on which I was focused, and I read my intelligence with an eye to outfoxing the Russians, achieving what I've been tasked to do on ISIL, you know, on Ukraine, on Aleppo. And so, you know, again, there's a lot of intelligence I know that I didn't see. So I, you know, I was focused on my task. I wasn't focused on that question.

MR. ROONEY: Thank you.

MS. POWER: Thank you.

MR. ROONEY: Mr. Gowdy.

MR. GOWDY: Good morning, Ambassador.

MS. POWER: Morning.

MR. GOWDY: As Tom said, there are four things we are looking at: What did Russia do? With whom, if anyone, did they do it? What was the U.S. Government's response? And then the issue of unmaskings and leaks.

The unmasking and the leaks for this committee is related to Russia, but

there is a broader unmasking issue. In order to be a good steward of your time, I think it's better for you and better for us for us to also ask the broader questions that might not be Russia specific.

And the order in which I ask the questions is not reflective of the importance. It is all important. But you've got to start somewhere.

MS. POWER: Sure.

MR. GOWDY: So you began your service as Ambassador to the U.N. on what date?

MS. POWER: The beginning of August 2013.

MR. GOWDY: All right. And you served continuously until the day of the inauguration of President Trump?

MS. POWER: I turned in my badge on January 19th and my deputy was the charge until Ambassador Haley was sworn in.

MR. GOWDY: And your predecessor was Ambassador Susan Rice?

MS. POWER: Correct. With an interregnum where her deputy was the charge until I was confirmed.

MR. GOWDY: Were you told by either President Obama or Ambassador Rice that your role as U.N. Ambassador would be appreciably different from Ambassador Rice's role when she was the U.N. Ambassador?

MS. POWER: No.

MR. GOWDY: All right. So I think you've already touched upon the fact that some U.N. Ambassadors are part of the National Security Council and some historically have not been.

MS. POWER: Correct.

MR. GOWDY: You were and she was. Is that right?

MS. POWER: Correct.

MR. GOWDY: All right. And when she left the U.N. Ambassador role, did she then become the National Security Advisor?

MS. POWER: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: Would she have chaired that NSC that you made reference to?

MS. POWER: The President chairs the National Security Council.

MR. GOWDY: All right. And what role would Ambassador Rice have had with the NSC?

MS. POWER: She, like the U.N. Ambassador and the Secretary of Homeland Security, was written into the NSC by PPD 1. And Ambassador Rice's role was to chair what's called the Principals Committee, which is the gathering of the national security senior officials, some of whom are also on the -- in the -- serve in the Cabinet.

MR. GOWDY: I tried to write some of them down when you were talking. I got Attorney General and I want so say DHS. Were there others that you mentioned that I may have missed?

MS. POWER: Well -- so I can get you a copy. I actually have it in the other room -- -

MR. GOWDY: It doesn't have to be exhaustive.

MS. POWER: -- of PPD 1. But, statutorily, you have the Vice President, the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Energy, interestingly.

Then what President Obama did is he wrote into the National Security Council, he added as members, as full members, the Attorney General, I believe the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the U.N.

[REDACTED]

Ambassador. And then -- oh, excuse me, and the National Security Advisor.

And then, additionally, other senior heads of agencies and so forth were written into PPD 1 as being able to participate in the meetings, but they were not members of the National Security Council, like the head of the CIA and so forth.

MR. GOWDY: All right. For those of us that are not nearly as well versed in this as you are, is it fair to say that when you replaced Ambassador Rice, with the understanding that there was an interim, that your role was essentially the same as hers? You were not given a larger book of business and you were not given enhanced jurisdiction?

MS. POWER: That is fair to say.

MR. GOWDY: All right. With respect to the masking of U.S. persons and intelligence products, what is your understanding of why names would be masked in the first place?

MS. POWER: Because of the desire to protect the identities of U.S. person because -- persons -- because our Intelligence Community is not tasked to and I think forbidden to do dedicated collection on U.S. persons.

MR. GOWDY: All right, I'm with you on the dedicated collection, but even the ancillary picking up of U.S. persons' names, tell me why you think from a policy standpoint we have decided to mask them, even though there's no legal requirement that we do so, we've make the policy determination that we mask U.S. persons' names?

MS. POWER: You know, this is not something that in any of the roles that I performed in the government that I have dug into, and so I don't really feel comfortable getting into the ideology of minimization, deminimization. But I'm happy to, again, answer any questions related to my practice.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MR. GOWDY: Well, I want to start there. I do want to get into your practice, but I need to have an understanding of how you viewed the original masking of the name, whether or not it was statutorily required, whether it was policy driven, whether or not the intelligence agencies themselves could have left that name unmasked in an intelligence product, whether they made the threshold decision to mask it in the first place. So I promise you it is not a trick question.

MS. POWER: Yes.

MR. GOWDY: I'm just trying to understand how you viewed the fact that initially someone thought that name should be masked.

MS. POWER: I will do my best to answer that question.

So to give you some context, though. So I mentioned that I receive a book the size of the Encyclopedia Britannica every day. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Through the course of the day, whether I was in New York or in Washington because I was participating in meetings up here on the Hill or with the President or the principals, I'm receiving intelligence throughout the day.

I am reading that intelligence with an eye to doing my job, right? Whatever my job is, whatever I am focused on on a given day, I'm taking in the intelligence to inform my judgment, to be able to advise the President on ISIL or on whatever, or to inform how I'm going to try to optimize my ability to advance U.S. interests in New York.

As I'm reading intelligence, recall that in New York you have more foreign diplomats from more foreign governments gathered than any other spot in the

[REDACTED]



world. They are also living in a sea of U.S. persons, right?

It is sort of an unusual circumstance to be at the U.N. You know, if you're Ambassador to Moscow, you're reading -- hopefully -- [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] it is fair to say, that those Russian individuals are interfacing with U.S. persons and reading out their conversations or discussing their negotiating positions, you know, again, with people of a different country. It just -- there's a lot of mixing that goes on in New York.

In addition, and this is something I think also that isn't well-known, there are a number of foreign governments, including -- and foreign entities at the U.N. that are actually represented by U.S. persons, if you can believe it. So, for instance, the [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] Anyway.



[REDACTED]

So to your question, as this intelligence came, everybody is a consumer of intelligence in different ways. Everybody seeks a different volume, I think it is fair to say, of intelligence. I was very interested in learning as much as I could about my counterparts, and I was very interested, especially because I was based in New York, when I came into Principals Committee meetings to being as prepared as I could be, given that I wasn't in Washington moment to moment. So it's fair to say that I had -- [REDACTED] [REDACTED] material for ample preparation.

As I went through my intelligence, I would ask questions, a lot of questions, maybe too many questions, regarding, you know, I need a map, I don't know where this city is, you know. I don't understand how this piece of intelligence comports with what I read 3 days ago.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

But my point is that I didn't have discussions with the intelligence team of briefers, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] about the methodology by which they made judgments about how to answer my questions.

Nor did I see a question, again, that would seem central to me

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

understanding what I was reading about a location or about a policy inconsistency as materially different from a question I felt I needed to ask about an individual where the intelligence I was reading just didn't make sense without having an insight into who that individual was.

And so you're asking me a set of questions about my view of, you know, unmasking. I heard the word unmasking for the first time when I read about it in the press and saw that -- I read about it in the press in the context of Ambassador Rice. I had never heard the term unmasking before.

I've subsequently, over the course of trying to understand, you know, what needs to be understood in order to engage with you, have heard the phrase minimization and deminimization. These are phrases I had never heard.

You know, we didn't have, you know, extensive discussions with the Intelligence Community about their methodology. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

And similarly, when I go back to them with questions of whatever kind, you know, my view was that they were making the judgment about what was appropriate for me to see back.

So I just -- I want to give you that context because now there is this issue that you are engaging on, but it just was not seen as a separate class of questions different from the other questions you might ask to understand what it was you were reading in order to be able to do the best job that you could do.

[REDACTED]

MR. GOWDY: That context is helpful, but as you were providing that context it was not lost on me that you had a predecessor and you have had a successor. So if there is a departure in the number of unmaskings between one U.N. Ambassador and a subsequent U.N. Ambassador, it is not unfair to ask what explains this exponential increase in unmaskings. Because I'd be surprised if Ambassador Rice did not have lots of the same challenges that you had when you were the U.N. Ambassador.

MS. POWER: Sure.

MR. GOWDY: But she didn't make anywhere near the number of unmasking requests.

So again, this is not a criminal probe. Nobody is alleging a violation of the law. But we do have to reauthorize programs where there is already a healthy skepticism of government in general.

MS. POWER: Sure.

MR. GOWDY: And, you know, some people like to make history, some people don't like to make history. Historically speaking, you are the largest unmasker of U.S. persons in our country's history.

So it is not -- I'm sure you would agree, it is reasonable for the Intelligence Committee to ask what was your standard? What's the standard going to be going forward? And when you saw U.S. person and not the name, as smart as you are, you knew that they could have put the name in there if they wanted to. So someone made the threshold decision not to put the name in there.

You have come and said: I need to know that name. And what I need to know is what was your standard for making that request, because it departed from your predecessor's standard.

[REDACTED]

MS. POWER: Sure. Let me say something very, very important, given the premise of your question. You know, I do not know what number of requests I made related to U.S. persons or U.S. entities. I can't tell what that number is over the life of my time in New York or over the last year. But I can tell you that the number is nowhere near the number that I'm reading in the press.

And so let me now go a little bit deeper into how I received intelligence. So I received a lot of intelligence, as I mentioned, that referenced U.S. persons and U.S. entities. More often than not, I could understand the intelligence I was reading without asking anything about those -- the identities of those persons. I mean, in other words, like, they are not relevant, they are just kind of just almost a cameo in something much more substantive that I can understand, and I'm, again, reading very quickly, trying to do a lot of jobs and negotiate a lot of things on a given day.

Sometimes -- this is very important -- in my book the intelligence would come to me masked -- now that I know this term -- and I would ask [REDACTED], "Hey, I don't understand this intelligence."

[REDACTED]

"I can't understand the intelligence. Can you go and ascertain who this is so I can figure out what it is I'm reading. You've made the judgement, intelligence professionals, that I need to read this piece of intelligence, I'm reading it, and it's just got this gap in it, and I didn't understand that."

So I did that and make no apology for wanting to understand what I'm reading so as to retain my edge.

But often I would receive intelligence that I was seeing for the very first time

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

and it would be annotated. So there would be similarly a name that had been, say, it was a U.S. person or U.S. entity, and then there would be an asterisk next to it, and at the bottom, the very first time I was seeing it, it would have that individual's identity disclosed, in handwritten. And then other occasions there would be an asterisk and then there would be a typed form attached to the intelligence.

So, again, because this wasn't controversial, because nobody had ever raised questions about this, I'm just reading my intelligence, I am going one from one to the other, I'm thinking about how to make use of the intelligence in my day or whether I need to ask more questions.

But my point, and I really underscore this, is that the number that I'm seeing in the press -- now, I haven't been given access to how that number was derived -- but that is not my number. And my number was not close to that number.

So this was a -- this was a -- the requests that I -- I did make requests. I think it is extremely important for any U.N. Ambassador to be able to ask some of the kinds of questions that I've been asking.

[REDACTED] Five minutes.

MS. POWER: But, you know -- and, again, I don't -- as long as you are making the request for the reason to understand the intelligence, I would want any U.N. Ambassador to be able to ask those questions and for that insight to be provided if they don't understand the intelligence they are reading, and they need that in order to understand it, and they need the intelligence to do their job, which is what the Intelligence Community is, in effect, conveying by providing that intelligence.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So, I mean, this practice, I think, you know is -- can be -- can be an important ingredient, again, to filling gaps. But I never discussed any name that I received when I did make a request and something came back or when it was annotated and came to me sua sponte. I never discussed one of those names with any other individual. They would come to me from the Intelligence Community. I didn't discuss it with my deputies, you know, many of whom had the same security clearances I did. I didn't -- certainly didn't discuss it with anybody outside the U.S. Government. It was for my understanding.

And, again, I cannot explain the number which, if what you're working on the basis of is what I'm seeing in the press, is a startling number, but it is not my number. I did not personally make that number of requests that I'm seeing in the press.

MR. GOWDY: Did you say time or 5 minutes?

[REDACTED] Five minutes.

MR. GOWDY: I'm as sensitive to what appears in the press as you are and therefore don't rely on it, which is why we asked the Intelligence Community to provide to us the requestor and the number of unmasking requests. And I heard you say better understanding so that you could understand.

That's what I'm look for, is what was -- what was your calculus in your head for whether or not to request, keeping in mind that one of the intelligence agencies, the producer of that product, had already made the determination that the name was not necessary for the reader, the consumer to understand it, so you have to take the affirmative step of requesting it.

MS. POWER: But, Congressman, if I may, what I've just described to you is that, without taking the affirmative step, I received information on -- it's a very --

[REDACTED]

MR. GOWDY: And that is the first -- it's a very important point, and that's the first I've heard that. And that's -- I'm not saying that's the first time I heard that in some nefarious way.

That is something we all need to know. If the ultimate Cabinet-level person is not making the request and yet the name is showing up in the briefing book, that's something our committee needs to know.

But I am sure you can appreciate how at least it warrants questions when the U.N. Ambassador makes exponentially more requests than the CIA Director --

MS. POWER: But, again --

MR. GOWDY: -- than the National Security Advisor, than the Secretary of State. There are lots of people who need to understand intelligence products, but the number of requests they made, Ambassador, don't approach yours.

MS. POWER: But, Congressman, what I'm saying is that the premise, the numbers on which your line of questioning are understandably -- you know, I really understand why you're raising these issues if the number that you're looking at stands out in that way. But it would be very surprising to me if my number of my -- the requests that I made personally were higher than, you know, a similarly situated Ambassador.

Now, did I have a significant appetite for intelligence? I do. And, you know, I'm a big reader. I'm a person who starts working a couple hours before my foreign counterparts start working. As I said, as the U.N. Ambassador, I'm getting, you know, in my book a very large denominator of references to U.S. persons and U.S. entities, and you fairly say: Well, wasn't Ambassador Rice? And I completely take that point.

But what I'm saying to you is the suggestion that I was more than this

[REDACTED]

And the amount of track two engagement of my foreign counterparts on North Korea, on Iran, on a number -- [REDACTED] So you have U.S. persons engaging in kind of making overtures to foreign diplomats and foreign governments, you know, I want -- I want -- I feel I need, in order to make a policy contribution to our discussions about what to do [REDACTED], North Korea, or Iran, to understand who's making these overtures, who's carrying out, again, a foreign policy with them to understand how serious it is, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So I know I'm giving you kind of the, you know, compelling, or I hope compelling examples, but it really just depends on the intelligence that you are reading. And I start from this place of respecting this community of people who operate with no fanfare and who have decided that they are -- that this information is important for me to read on the basis of knowing the processes that I'm a part of.

And you're right that someone has made a judgment somewhere to mask, I guess you'd say, the identity of the U.S. person or entity, but my understanding, and this is the process that's very opaque to me, but is that that is appropriately the default.

So, you know, again, the Intelligence Community would have to answer how they make the calculus about which unmasking request to grant and which not to.

But, again, as long as you're not taking this information and giving it to anybody else -- because one thing I did know is that anything that came back to me was for my eyes only.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

And that was true of the PDB. I mean, I'm the only person, of course, in my mission who had access to the President's daily brief, one of, you know, only probably a few dozen people in the entire U.S. Government who have access to that.

So -- but I just -- I can't tell you what my number is, because I didn't -- I wasn't tracking this, I was tracking how do I read this intelligence so I can go do something for this country.

MR. GOWDY: I think it's Adam's turn, but in fairness to you, on a break, if we do take a break, I'll show you the numbers that I have so we can at least be operating from that same bank of information.

MS. POWER: I'd be very grateful for that. Thank you.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador, thank you for your service to the country. Thank you for being here today.

MS. POWER: Thank you.

MR. SCHIFF: I wanted to talk a little bit about the scope of the investigation. I think the questions that you're being asked about unmasking are all important parts of our oversight.

They are a bit different than the scope of our investigation, though. We are charged with looking into leaks of classified information. Unmasking is not actually mentioned in the scope of our investigation.

It would be relevant to the degree that unmasking was used in order to derive information to be leaked. So that would be the pertinence of the unmasking issue to our investigation.

But in terms of our general oversight role, looking at how we do unmasking

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

and how we mask things I think is perfectly something we ought to be interested in. But the gravamen of what we're to look at is really leaking of information as it pertains to this investigation.

My understanding of the unmasking may be different from my colleagues and we will have to try to get clarity on this. My understanding of why the masking is done is to protect the identities of the U.S. persons. They are not masked because it's considered that they are not significant to the intelligence, but rather to protect privacy. And if someone wants to know the identity of the person because they cannot understand the significance, then they can request that it be unmasked. But I think, as you say, the default is it to mask.

But I think where this began -- I want to ask you about some of the allegations about where this all began, how we got to sort of the leaking, unmasking part of this investigation. I think much of it began with the President asking our committee to investigate his allegation that he was bugged in Trump Tower by his predecessor.

So let me just ask you, we've had testimony of Director Comey and Director Rogers, statement from the Department of Justice, that there is no evidence of this. But did you ever see any evidence that the Obama administration was illegally wiretapping Trump Tower?

MS. POWER: No.

MR. SCHIFF: Now, I think in the absence of that, of evidence that Trump Tower was being surveilled, the argument then became: Okay, maybe the Obama administration wasn't deliberately surveilling Trump Tower, but maybe they were doing a backdoor surveillance where they were surveilling foreign parties where the real goal was to catch foreign parties in conversations with the Trump

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

campaign.

Are you aware of any effort within the Obama administration to backdoor surveil the Trump campaign by targeting surveillance of foreign persons?

MS. POWER: No.

MR. SCHIFF: And I take it you are not involved in the targeting of foreign surveillance anyway?

MS. POWER: I have no involvement in intelligence gathering -- had no involvement in intelligence gathering of any kind.

MR. SCHIFF: The further sort of derivation of that idea, of backdoor surveillance, is, okay, maybe there wasn't direct surveillance of Trump Tower, maybe there wasn't indirect surveillance of Trump Tower, but maybe there was incidental collection involving people in the Trump administration that was improperly unmasked for the purposes of leaking it. And I think that's sort of where we are now. And so I want to ask you about that.

The numbers of reported unmasking requests by yourself began to go up dramatically in 2014. Now, in 2014 this predated the campaign, so obviously that dramatic expansion of unmaskings, I take it, had nothing do with a concern about an incoming government having its own foreign policy or interactions with other parties. Is that correct?

MS. POWER: Let me be clear that my practice didn't change over the life that I was in my job, and I only got in my job in August 2013. So I read intelligence the same way on the first day of 2014, the last day of 2014, and on January 19th, my last day in the office.

And, again, because I don't know from where this number is derived, even this notion that there was a dramatic increase, I would find, in my personal

[REDACTED]

requests, I would find surprising.

But certainly when I -- any time I did make requests I was not doing so for political reasons. I was doing so in order to be equipped to perform my dual roles. And so I would have never had any kind of political motivation or -- it wasn't nice to know. I personally would only ask when I really felt it was need to know.

MR. SCHIFF: You know, and, again, it's perfectly appropriate I think for us in our oversight role to think about what are the processes used for unmasking and is it appropriate to have a name unmasked before you make the request so that those providing the reports don't have to come back later on and do it. Those are perfectly appropriate questions for us to ask in our oversight role.

But in terms of the Russia investigation and the leaking allegation, I would assume that if your number of requests went up, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], that would have had nothing to do with the incoming administration.

[10:39 a.m.]

MS. POWER: No. Again, I was representing the United States. I recognize that I was a political appointee and that my President was a Democrat, but I didn't -- I wasn't even involved in the political campaign. I had the privilege of being in that job, the best job I could conceivably have had. I'm an Irish immigrant getting to represent the United States every day and to represent our people. I am not looking at intelligence with any kind of eye to politics, and it's offensive to think that someone in my position would do that or that I would do that.

MR. SCHIFF: Well, let me then ask you about, sort of, maybe the gravamen of how this came about. And I think it came about over a concern about the leaking of Mike Flynn's name.

Now, the White House has publicly acknowledged that they had to let him go because he didn't disclose a conversation he had with the Russian Ambassador on the subject of sanctions.

None of the reports that I've seen that will be related to you or you'll be asked about today concern the conversation with Mike Flynn and the Russian Ambassador.

So, to your knowledge, did you ever make [REDACTED]

MS. POWER: I don't recall making such a request. I want to just again stress, though, that any time a U.S. person or entity's name came to me disclosed or annotated or where I requested it and it came back, I never discussed it with another member of the human race.

[REDACTED]

So, you know, I don't recall making such a request. I wasn't tabulating when and whether I was making requests. I wasn't thinking about this practice in the fraught way in which we are discussing it. But, certainly, I have nothing to do with the leaking of names that were deminimized in whatever process occurred --

MR. SCHIFF: And I just want to be clear that there's no indication you ever made a request or that there necessarily was even a report on that subject. But I did want to get you on the record on that, because at the end of the day that's sort of where this came from.

MS. POWER: Yes. I have no recollection of making a request related to General Flynn.

MR. SCHIFF: Okay. And I take it you never leaked Mr. Flynn's name in any way, General Flynn's name?

MS. POWER: I have never leaked classified information. I have never leaked names that have come back to me in this highly compartmented process. I have, in fact, never leaked, even unclassified information.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you.

Mr. Himes.

MR. HIMES: Thank you.

And thank you, Ambassador, for being here.

I'm going to just abstract away a little bit from the ranking member's line of questioning. I think you're here because a narrative has developed, and that narrative is that there were leaks, which is undeniable. And those leaks are absolutely within the purview of this investigation.

There is a supposition that those leaks may be related to unmasking. There has been no evidence offered that that may be the case, but that is a

[REDACTED]

supposition. In fact, none of the leakers have been identified, so it's hard to get at the mechanism by which those leaks occurred.

And then, further, as Mr. Rooney explained, that then leads to a threat to the reauthorization of 702, even though, again, there's no particular evidence that it was the 702 authority that led to the minimization that led to the leaks.

So we have leaks that are very much the purview of this investigation and then a whole set of suppositions.

I say this because this narrative is made very explicit in a letter from the chairman of this committee to the Director of National Intelligence, July 27th, a public letter. Two weeks later, The Wall Street Journal publishes a story that I think has a lot to do with why you're sitting here called "Samantha Power, Unmasked."

I want to look at a couple of the suppositions that were made, both in the letter and in the Journal article, because I think it's important that the public understand generally what we're talking about here but specifically your role, since you were fingered by The Wall Street Journal in particular.

The crux -- this rather extraordinary letter from the chairman, who's not here with us today, it's extraordinary because it's a request to the Director of National Intelligence for assistance in crafting legislation around the unmasking process -- which, by the way, I think is a really interesting topic.

MS. POWER: Right.

MR. HIMES: You know, as I review unmasking/deminimization, there probably are things that we can do to tighten up that process in the service of protecting the personal information of U.S. persons. But, again, it is, as yet, an unproven supposition that unmasking in any way relates to leaks.

[REDACTED]

But there is a sentence here in this letter that says, "Although we are still conducting our review, we have found evidence that current and former government officials had easy access to U.S. person information, and it is possible that these officials used this information to achieve partisan political purposes, including the selective anonymous leaking of such information."

So you see the connection between unmasking and leaks there. It's an odd sentence, because it uses the word "evidence," which my friend Mr. Gowdy spends a lot of time on. Then it goes on to say "had easy access." "Easy" is a subjective characterization which is not subject easily to evidence. And then it goes on to say "it is possible." Lots of things are possible, but there's no evidence there.

The letter then goes on to say -- and this is important to connecting it to the Journal article: "For example, this committee has learned that one official, whose position had no apparent intelligence-related function, made hundreds of unmasking requests during the final year of the Obama administration."

It's hard to know if the chairman was referring to you, unless we look at the numbers of unmaskings, which I'll share with you shortly. You are, in fact, of the unmasking data we have received, the only official who in fact made hundreds of requests, so I think it's probably fair to assume that the chairman was referring to you. And then The Wall Street Journal obviously makes that assumption, though presumably they didn't have access to this data.

So the chairman's letter says "whose position had no apparent intelligence-related function." And then the Journal article says, "Ms. Power's job was diplomacy. Unmaskings are supposed to be rare. And if the mere Ambassador to the U.N. could demand them, what privacy protection was the

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Obama White House really offering U.S. citizens?"

So, again, we've got a characterization that your job here was not related to intelligence, that you were a mere Ambassador. Can you expand on what you were talking about earlier about why comprehensive intelligence was, in fact, essential to your job?

MS. POWER: Yeah, your question is why, even if it was not fully responsive initially to Congressman Rooney's question, I tried to start by describing my role. Because I've seen these depictions of what I was doing, and they bear no resemblance to the 3-1/2 years I got to serve in the post. As I'm described, I would have gotten to spend a lot more time with my two children if I'd had the role that is ascribed to me than I did.

So, again, not every President makes this judgment, but putting the U.N. Ambassador on the National Security Council, you know, and allowing the U.N. Ambassador access to the PDB, you know, the most precious, sort of sacred tract that the Intelligence Community produces every day, all of those aspects of my role dramatically enhance the amount of intelligence I'm going to need.

I mean, if I'm going to weigh in on assistance to the Syrian rebels, you know, that complicated stew of factions on the ground in Syria, I'm going to want to [REDACTED] and understand [REDACTED]

You know, for my day job in New York, I don't need access to that kind of intelligence, as such. But for my day job in New York, I mean, mere diplomacy, to put that in scare quotes, foreign intelligence is our major comparative advantage.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So it just gives me this situational awareness to be the best diplomat I can be for this country, or it gave me that. And, you know, I would hope any U.N. Ambassador would have access to that store of intelligence, and I would expect any U.N. Ambassador who was as engaged in the negotiations as I was -- and different ambassadors, you know, perform their roles in different ways. So, again, that does -- you know, even if you have the same role with the same mandate, you may do it differently, just like, you know, each of you do your jobs, I presume, differently from one another and with different emphasis on different aspects of your jobs.

But that was, you know, capital that I was able to draw on and insight and wisdom, where I couldn't have advised the President if I weren't steeped in intelligence on ISIL or on foreign terrorist fighters who were flowing -- I mean, how do I participate in a meeting like that if I'm not steeped in the intelligence?

So this just gets to the nexus between my roles as a member of the NSC -- one of the few members of the NSC and as a diplomat who tried to get as much done as I could in the time I had in New York.

MR. HIMES: Okay. Great. Thank you.

I want to do two other things. I want to talk a little bit about the process for

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

deminimization or unmasking, and then let's get into some of the numbers. Because I actually think, in the numbers, are some interesting -- unlike this other realm, where there's been a lot of speculation, I think there's some interesting questions.

The chairman's letter says, more pointedly, "Some of the requests for unminimized U.S. person information were followed by anonymous leaks of those names to the media." I think this gets to the crux of this. It's been a long time since I took logic, but "subsequently," of course, is not the same as "consequently."

So you've answered this question, but let me ask it again. Was there ever any episode in which you asked for a U.S. person identifier to be deminimized, unmasked, and then you had a conversation with an unauthorized person about that unmasking?

MS. POWER: Never.

MR. HIMES: Okay.

Was there ever an episode that you recall in which you asked for the unmasking of a U.S. person and there was subsequently, with no involvement on your part, a press story that might have been relevant to that unmasking?

MS. POWER: Not that I can recall. But, again, I can't recall what intelligence came to me, in what form, with what masked or unmasked.

MR. HIMES: Last question on process. The Journal article -- and I hate to keep referring to the media because, you know, it's the media. But the question that emerges is, what privacy protection was the Obama White House really offering U.S. citizens? Again, it's a pretty political statement.

What was your understanding? My understanding is that the request is

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

made for unmasking and that the originating agency, whether it's NSA or whoever it is, then makes the decision as to whether information will be unmasked. What was your understanding, as you were making these requests, as to the process by which an unmasking request would be approved or not?

MS. POWER: My basic disposition for my time in government was to try to do my job as professionally as I could and, particularly, as it related to the Intelligence Community, let them do what they knew how to do. So I did not know anything about the process by which they made those judgments. As I said, you know, I received annotated, unmasked identities unbidden. And I suppose --

MR. HIMES: Can you elaborate on that, "unbidden"?

MS. POWER: Well, simply, it's just a reiteration of the point I made before in my exchange with Congressman Gowdy, simply, you know, that sometimes the information would come masked, and, on occasion, I would make a request so as to understand what I was reading. Sometimes as I'm reading through, there's an asterisk and there's something handwritten, and then sometimes again there was a typed form.

So I don't know the process that went on in a process that I think was deliberately kept within the Intelligence Community so as not to be politicized. I

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] You know, they'd served under the prior President. They're serving,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I'm sure amazingly well, as well, under President Trump. And their process was opaque and shrouded from me, and that seemed like as it should be, you know, given some of the equities that I think are rightly being raised here in terms of the identities of U.S. persons.

MR. HIMES: Okay. Thank you.

So let's spend a little bit of time with the numbers. I think Mr. Gowdy was getting to this, and I do think there's actually some interesting questions here. So let's get into that, and then I'll yield to my colleagues.

And let me just walk you through some of the numbers we have. These numbers come from NSA reporting, and you may have that. It looks like you may.

MS. POWER: Is this the same? Just so we're on the same --

MR. HIMES: Yeah.

MS. POWER: Okay.

MR. HIMES: Good. I'm glad you have it, because I would just -- a couple of numbers and then some context, since I've been staring at this for probably longer than you have.

The middle column there shows an increase starting in 2013 of requests from the Ambassador to the United Nations, you, [REDACTED] 2014, [REDACTED] 2015, [REDACTED] 2016. On an absolute basis, that's a pretty substantial increase.

And let me just point out two contextual things, because, again, I've been staring at this for a long time. If you look at the bottom row, you'll see that there's actually a fairly significant increase in the total number of reports produced over this period of time.

You will also note, just by way of a possibly relevant context, is that the other two individuals, the National Security Advisor and the CIA Director, also

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

show comparable increases, not exponential but substantial increases, doubling 1.5 times, in their unmasking requests.

So those are just two context points that I think are possibly relevant here.

But, on an absolute basis, Congressman Gowdy is right, in terms of, you know, [REDACTED] 2015 and 2016 being fairly high numbers.

So, in as open-ended a way as possible, can you recall what factors may have resulted in both that increase as well as the absolute magnitude of those numbers?

And I wonder if you also might make a distinction, because I understand there may be one, between unmasking requests you personally made and unmasking requests that might have been preemptively made [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MS. POWER: These numbers are very high numbers, and they're even higher than what I read in the press. And I can tell you, I made nowhere near this number of requests [REDACTED]

I take your point, Congressman, that, you know, for instance, the number of NSA reports produced, I guess, in 2016 is 10 times the number back in 2010, and so the denominator of intelligence one could be reading would be greater. But even still, I mean, there's just no way I -- for all of the questions that I asked, that the share of questions I asked that would relate to the identity of U.S. persons would be that number.

Nor, interestingly -- because I've never seen this number before -- would the number of -- this is important, I think -- the number of annotated -- you know, sort of the asterisks, the unmasked names that came to me before, or without me having asked for them, nor would that number be anywhere close to that.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

And, you know, I will not speculate as to -- I cannot speculate, really, as to how to explain that. But even if you added up the, you know, number of requests that I made and then the number of identities that came back to me without me having personally made a request, you wouldn't get close to that number.

So that doesn't offer you much in the way of --

MR. HIMES: Yeah, so I guess we've got a factual issue we've got to better understand. So let me step away, and I guess we can dig into that, but let me step away.

It sounds like there were at least two categories of so-called unmasking, meaning you would read a minimized report and then you would say [REDACTED] [REDACTED] can you find out who this individual is? I would characterize that as you making that request. But it also sounds like -- I said preemptively, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. But it also sounds like perhaps you were handed from time to time reports that had unmasked U.S. person ID, unmasked presumably [REDACTED] would have done so preemptively.

Does that sound right to you? I don't mean to lead the witness there. I'm just --

MS. POWER: Yeah.

MR. HIMES: -- trying to get at whether part of this may be that there were unmaskings done without you being witting of it.

MS. POWER: Well, certainly there were, because I received them. So I think the answer is yes. But, again, lest this be seen as somehow, you know, anything problematic on the part of the IC, you know, these are individuals who were trying to ensure that I am, you know, prepared, maximally prepared. And because I don't believe I saw that number, you know, it's conceivable that they

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

also just want to be prepared to answer questions that I pose [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] And so, you know, I shouldn't speculate, but I -- I think I've answered your question.

MR. HIMES: Yeah. No, I appreciate that.

So, before I yield to Ms. Sewell, let me just ask this final question, which is: It does sound like there's an interesting set of categories here, requests you make, requests that are perhaps preemptively made [REDACTED]

Did you ever have a conversation [REDACTED] as to, you know, what the policy is or should be with respect to what they preemptively unmask or what --

MS. POWER: No. Again, I'd never heard the terms, and this was a set of questions and answers that did not seem of a different order than the other set of questions and answers that I was getting. I was very alert to the sensitivity of U.S. persons, but, because of the awesome responsibilities I felt I had for this brief period of time in my life, you know, I wanted to understand what I was reading and, again, be able to do the best job I could, but I wasn't thinking about this in any pejorative sense, and nor, again, did it seem appropriate for a policy consumer to be, you know, nosing into how the Intelligence Community was making its judgments. It felt like that was a lesson we learned, you know, in history, that policy consumers on one side of a wall and the intelligence professionals on the other.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Like, we

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

would find secure facilities, you know, even when my family was on vacation so I could participate in Principals Committee meetings and NSCs.

You know, [REDACTED] always knew there was something that I could come in and ask a question, and then I'd be running into a meeting with Obama and, you know, God forbid I not have that answer. You know, I'd need to get them to declassify intelligence so I could put it before the Russians, who were saying they weren't in Ukraine.

You know, [REDACTED], who were just doing everything in their power to service my objective, which was not to deminimize -- that wasn't -- I didn't wake up in the morning and that was not something I ever thought about. It was to get things done for the United States at the U.N. and offer my best judgment to the President so he could make the best decisions possible for this country.

MR. HIMES: Great. Thank you, Ambassador.

Let me yield to Ms. Sewell.

MS. SEWELL: Thank you, Madam Ambassador, for being here today.

I actually wanted to continue on this same line of questioning, partly because I think it's important to understand your state of mind, when you're asking for U.S. persons to be identified, sort of where you're coming from. And I think it's clear, from just listening to you, that you felt like it was on a need-to-know basis, not, as you said, a need-to-ask basis.

So can you talk to us a little bit about the process, as you saw it? So, for

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Is it safe to say that you guys got to know -- they got to understand your state of mind and what was important to you in order to do your job, and vice versa, like, that there was a

[REDACTED]

rapport that was built such that perhaps they would preemptively unmask, as we've come to know it, because they kind of know how you think, kind of thing?

So can you just talk to us a little bit about -- you said that there was a big volume of -- encyclopedia volume that you would get on a daily basis. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED], you know, on average, on average; what you, you know, can remember and recall with respect to how long it would take for you once you've asked for something to be unmasked or an identity to be told to you, how long would that process take; and how involved were you in that process.

I guess I'm asking a number of questions, but I kind of just want us to understand, sort of, the actual process itself. Have you ever been denied getting, you know, a name that you requested?

MS. POWER: Thank you so much. And I really should have said at the outset that, because I kept -- well, I should have said at the outset that all of this is on the basis of my recollection, needless to say. Although, this question, you know, I have a decent memory of, because it was a practice that I was able to take advantage of for 3-1/2 years.

So I think I come back to how I, as U.N. Ambassador under President Obama, was staffed. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED], again, which I don't -- we tend to think of the U.N. as a kind of, I don't know, airy-fairy place, but it's foreign governments who are doing their business and talking to their capitals and talking to their leaders.

[REDACTED]

MS. SEWELL: And were they the same [REDACTED]

MS. POWER: Yeah, let me come to that. And then -- I maintained an office in Washington comprised of regional experts, you know, a Russia expert, an Afghanistan/Pakistan expert, because even though it didn't overlap with my U.N. duties, we were having big discussions about what our force posture in Afghanistan should be.

So I had a team in Washington. These were policy people. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So when I was in Washington, I was briefed [REDACTED]

Now, to your question about, sort of, the [REDACTED] methodology, I received information in a lot of different ways, and it really just depended on the

[REDACTED]

Did you even know [REDACTED] would do -- I'm just taking this example.

MS. POWER: Yeah.

MS. SEWELL: When you did make a formal request, what did that look like? You just asked? You circled the person's name and said, "I'd like to know the identity of this person"?

MS. POWER: Well --

MS. SEWELL: And what would [REDACTED] then do? Would [REDACTED] share with you their justification to the agency as to why they wanted -- like, did you know [REDACTED] would say to get that approved or not approved?

MS. POWER: No. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and I never deemed it appropriate to inquire as to how they were making judgments about bringing me intelligence or how they were answering my questions.

I mean, frankly, I was focused on the intelligence itself and then what was I going to do with it. You know, we're spending a lot of time talking about my intelligence practices, appropriately, but, you know, most of my U.N. job was negotiating with foreign governments and directing my team, who were also carrying negotiations out at a different level.

But on the occasions where I made requests that related to U.S. entities or U.S. persons, it could come orally or I could circle it and just put a question mark.

And then you asked, I believe, how long it would take?

MS. SEWELL: Uh-huh.

MS. POWER: From my recollection, you know, a day or two. But that's, again, in this subcategory of those where I made a personal request, as distinct from the larger category of --

[REDACTED]

MS. SEWELL: Annotated.

MS. POWER: -- annotated. That's the best way to describe it, yes.

Thank you.

MS. SEWELL: Uh-huh. So, to your knowledge, were you ever denied a request for an unmasking of a U.S. person?

MS. POWER: I don't recall being denied, as U.N. Ambassador.

MS. SEWELL: And then just to clarify, you don't have the ultimate right to compel that a name be unmasked; you're making a request of the agency, [REDACTED], to unmask it. Is that your understanding?

MS. POWER: Yeah.

MS. SEWELL: And so, you know, the justification has to be provided, [REDACTED], as I understand it. Justification has to be made to the agency to get it. Do you even know what that justification would look like? What would be said about --

MS. POWER: I do not. Again, I had no window into the Intelligence Community's process.

You did ask a question earlier that I don't think I responded to, which was, would [REDACTED] get to know you and understand your practices?

MS. SEWELL: And so perhaps would preemptively have --

MS. POWER: Well, again, you know, that I think we've addressed up to a point. But there definitely is an evolution in the relationship. I mean, I'm sure many of you here receive intelligence and have comparable evolving relationships.

But, you know, I started out with a different [REDACTED] than I had at the end of my time there. But they come to know, you know, what are the priorities that the Ambassador has, for instance, that, you know, her predecessor

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

may not have had. You know, what does she want to get done in New York or in the Washington policy process that is, sort of, distinct to her, and then how do we alter our selection criteria for what we put in her book. You know, who are the kinds of foreign officials she wants to learn more about. And, you know, as soon

[REDACTED], like, let's get her the updated bio.

I mean, they really come to know you, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MS. SEWELL: And I would also assume that -- and just looking at, sort of, what was taking place in the world generally during 2014 and 2015 and 2016, you know, the political climate was ever-changing, so that, to the point that Congressman Himes was saying, the number of reports may be more voluminous year to year versus timeline.

My other question is this, really. And I'm sensitive to the time. In particular, do you recall how many times you requested information related specifically to the Trump campaign, something that you read about the Trump

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

campaign or activities with Russians and the Trump campaign? Can you recall specifically any time that you circled a U.S. person and requested a name and that name popped back with somebody who was a part of the campaign?

MS. POWER: Well, you came around to a point I was going to make, which is, you know, if you see something in intelligence that references a U.S. person or U.S. entity, by definition, you don't know who it is, so, you know, when it comes back -- you wouldn't be asking the question if you actually knew who the individuals were.

MS. SEWELL: Right.

MS. POWER: But I think that goes without saying.

You know, I just want to stress what this period was like. You know, for me, at least, from the fall through January 19th, my last day in the office --

MS. SEWELL: So, through the transition, did you --

MS. POWER: Well, no, if you don't mind --

MS. SEWELL: Sure.

MS. POWER: -- just to finish the point. But what this period was like was: Russia, which, you know, I had been engaging with to get some things done and clashing with routinely since their invasion of Ukraine, their assault on Aleppo, Russia was interfering in our election in all the ways you're probably a lot more familiar with now than I am or certainly than I was at that time. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

And this is an example of the Intelligence Community making judgments about what I need. I began to engage our highly compartmented Russia election interference policy process later than some of my colleagues. I was brought into

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the process, I believe, you know -- I don't know, from recollection, like, in late September. And because the process, or the circle, you know, was kept, understandably, at a -- you know, circumscribed.

From the minute I was brought on, suddenly my book had in it, you know, intelligence that I had not needed to know before and that was so sensitive that it was only provided to me, because they understood that, in order to advise the President on how we respond to Russian election interference, in order to be a valuable contributor to the discussion about what we say and how we handle it as a policy matter, that this was information that I needed.

So this is an example, again, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] One minute.

MS. POWER: -- [REDACTED] providing me, again, with material that they believe that I needed to know, me deferring to their judgment, and then me asking questions about that intelligence.

But my motive was never political. I wasn't interested in what the Trump administration was going to do. I was interested in foreign governments and what they were going to do between the election day and January 20th. I was interested in continuing to do our jobs and protect this country and advance our interests.

And so any questions that I asked were with an eye to understanding what
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So I never read intelligence with an eye to understanding about the Trump administration. There was plenty in the press about the Trump administration. I was trying to understand what these other governments were up to and the extent to which the transition was going to affect their behavior between November and January 20th.

MS. SEWELL: Thank you.

[Recess.]

Mr. Gowdy, over to you. We'll do 15-minute rounds now.

MR. GOWDY: We're going to do 15 and 15 now. So if I ask leading questions, it's not because I'm trying to trick you, it's because I'm trying to get it in within the 15 minutes.

MS. POWER: Yeah.

MR. GOWDY: And I ask this series of questions of every witness. So it's not just you; it is everyone else who has sat in that chair.

When I use the words "collude," "coordinate," "conspire," do they have different meanings to you, or are they appreciably the same? "Collude," "coordinate," "conspire."

MS. POWER: Different meanings.

MR. GOWDY: They have different meanings?

MS. POWER: But -- yes, different meanings.

MR. GOWDY: All right. It's going to take me a little longer to ask the question then, because I'm going to have to ask each word. And if you see a trend developing and you want me to summarize all three, then I will.

Do you have any evidence -- and I know that some of my friends in the media don't like that word, but that's the word I'm most familiar with. You can

substitute "intelligence" in there if you want.

But do you have any evidence, regardless of the source and regardless of the manner in which that evidence may have been collected, that candidate-for-President Donald Trump colluded with the Russian Government to interfere with or influence the 2016 election cycle at either the primary or general stage?

MS. POWER: I tried to describe earlier the mindset with which I read intelligence, which was about my interactions with foreign governments and my advice to the President on a set of issues. I just wasn't -- I wasn't reading intelligence with a question of that nature in mind.

MR. GOWDY: I'm with you. It is not a trick question. Here's my dilemma. If I don't ask you, then someone at some point is going to say, in hindsight, a-ha, but you didn't Ambassador Power that question, you asked everyone else. So I'm trying to give --

MS. POWER: I understand.

MR. GOWDY: -- every witness an opportunity. If that witness has evidence that President Trump, now-President Trump, Candidate Trump conspired, colluded, or coordinated with the Russian Government himself, I want to give a witness a chance to say whatever evidence he or she may have.

Because I don't want anybody looking back and saying, well, you skipped this witness, and you didn't ask that one, and the one you didn't ask is the one that had all the answers. So I'm asking every one. Evidence of collusion, coordination, or conspiracy between the candidate and the Russian Government.

MS. POWER: I saw, as we've discussed, a lot of intelligence of a lot of different kinds. Just, the way you're framing the question is not how I was

processing the intelligence. I was looking at it -- it was like the foreign government names are in technicolor, their motivation, their everything. So I just -- I don't feel as if I can accurately or fairly answer the question "yes" or "no."

MR. GOWDY: All right. But the inability to answer the question "yes" or "no" leaves open the possibility that you have seen evidence or are somehow in possession of evidence that the candidate himself conspired, colluded, coordinated with the Russian Government. And if that is true, the committee needs to know it.

MS. POWER: No, I completely respect the question. And what I'm trying to say is I think that a "yes" or a "no" answer both risk being misleading, because it suggests that I've seen all the evidence that's out there, which I clearly haven't. I've read a subset of -- when I say "evidence," excuse me -- all of the intelligence on this larger matter that is out there. And, you know, I read what [REDACTED] gave me, and I don't know what I didn't read. But --

MR. GOWDY: And I am not asking you about anything you don't know.

MS. POWER: Yeah.

MR. GOWDY: I am not asking you about anything that exists that you don't know. I'm just asking whether you saw evidence of collusion, coordination, conspiracy between Candidate Trump and the Russian Government to interfere with or influence the 2016 election.

MS. POWER: I don't even -- I wouldn't know how you're defining "collusion," "coordination," "conspiracy," myself, and so, again, I just don't feel as if I can answer that question.

MR. GOWDY: All right. Well, then we'll do it this way: How do you define the three words? And then we'll go with your definition and not mine.

MS. POWER: I haven't ever thought about this. I mean, my basic view is -- and this was my view while I was in government too -- is that, you know, there are professionals, and there are even -- in terms of the language you're using or the standards you're using, there are, I'm sure, statutes and enunciations of each of the words that you describe that professionals can then apply to the facts at hand.

I don't feel as if I have enough insight into the facts of what happened. My last act as -- my last big, public act as U.N. Ambassador was to give a speech imploring us as a country to put together a bipartisan investigation, you know, to look into Russian interference generally, which would include, of course, that question but also would include, critically, you know, how they took advantage of our openness and our democracy to interfere with our infrastructure.

So I just don't feel, on the basis of what I have seen, that I can give you, you know, an answer that doesn't mislead in one direction or another.

MR. GOWDY: Well, I don't want that, but I don't want the absence of an answer to mislead either.

MS. POWER: That's fair.

MR. GOWDY: And sometimes a witness saying "I don't know" can mean that at one point you knew and you don't currently know or at no point did you ever know.

So what I'm trying to do -- if we were in a courtroom, it would be a very different analysis, because we would have a jury of impartial people. That's not the political environment that we're in.

So the environment we're in is your -- and I do understand -- your reluctance to answer that question will, itself, create some curiosity as to whether

[REDACTED]

or not you knew something that the FBI did not know, that the NSA did not know, that the CIA did not know. And I have asked every witness the same question.

So maybe I should phrase it differently. Are you in possession of intelligence or evidence that would be unique to you that no one else would have?

MS. POWER: No.

MR. GOWDY: All right. So if there were evidence of collusion, coordination, conspiracy between Candidate Trump and the Russian Government, you would not be in possession of any evidence that would not also be known by someone else in the Intelligence Community.

MS. POWER: I mean, because the intelligence that I received came from the Intelligence Community, I had no -- anything that would have come to me would have been in their possession first. They would have provided that.

MR. GOWDY: And that's what I'm getting at.

MS. POWER: Yeah. So I am not in possession of anything else that -- any other information that came from, for instance, my diplomatic colleagues or from other sources. I am not.

MR. GOWDY: All right.

And I asked specifically about Candidate Trump. Would the answer be the same for those that were part of his official campaign but not the candidate himself? Independent evidence of collusion, coordination, conspiracy between the Russian Government and official members of the campaign that would not otherwise be known by others.

MS. POWER: Again, I am not in possession of anything -- I am not in possession and didn't read or absorb information that came from outside the Intelligence Community. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MR. GOWDY: All right.

There's a stack of documents that your attorney has. And I don't know that we'll be able to get through the three examples I want to give you a chance to go through, but we'll do what we can, and then we'll come back afterwards.

MS. POWER: Great.

MR. GOWDY: If you will flip over past that, you may see -- I hope it's marked exhibit A for you, but I don't see a sticker on there -- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Is that the --

MS. POWER: No, but I can find that.

MR. GOWDY: Well, I'll tell you what. Why don't I get somebody to put those in order for you.

MS. POWER: I got it. I got it.

MR. GOWDY: You got it?

MS. POWER: Yeah. Why don't you give me the -- do you want to give me the three so I'll just get the three of them now?

[REDACTED]

MR. GOWDY: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MS. POWER: Got it.

MR. GOWDY: I want to give my friend from Connecticut a chance to find them too.

Are you good? All right.

I picked three. There are others, although what we've learned this morning is that there is some discrepancy, in your recollection, of requests versus the numbers that are assigned to you. So these may be three that you don't recall making, but they're attributed to you.

MS. POWER: Uh-huh.

MR. GOWDY: [REDACTED] I think you will see two named U.S. persons on the second page, maybe two-thirds of the way down.

MS. POWER: Yep.

MR. GOWDY: Adam is right. There's the leak part. There's the masking with respect to Russia. There's the broader unmasking question that if we had you twice we wouldn't be going into today, but we're trying to only bring you once. So that's what we're trying to do.

Help me understand why you would have made a request to unmask those two named U.S. persons and how their identity would've helped you assess the intelligence value of this product.

MS. POWER: If I could --

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MR. GOWDY: Sure.

MS. POWER: -- Congressman. We were given occasion to look at these briefly before coming in, but I just want to refresh.

[REDACTED] Five minutes, Mr. Gowdy.

MR. HIMES: Trey, I'm sorry, if I can interrupt. So we can kind of see where you're going, you've got 17 documents --

MR. GOWDY: Not 17. I'm just going to do three.

MR. HIMES: We're totally happy to let you go through this line of inquiry with additional time if you give us that additional time to tack onto our 15 minutes. Just so we don't interrupt what you're doing.

MR. GOWDY: I'm with you there. And I hope it doesn't take a long time, but I appreciate the offer. And, yes, whatever I go over will be reciprocated.

MS. POWER: So I don't recall making this unmasking request, and I don't recall this piece of intelligence. Again, I'm reading a lot of intelligence and often quite quickly.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

But, again, I certainly have no recollection of making a request of this kind.

MR. GOWDY: And that's fair. And I think, from a broader policy perspective, at least what I'm trying to do -- I can't speak for any of my colleagues -- is, this phrase, "to better understand the underlying intelligence," how, if at all, does that differ from what we just used to call curiosity?

And I'm not assigning any malice to either one of those definitions, but I think, going forward, there has to be some -- I'll give you a for-instance. And, again, you've been really clear this morning, you do not recall the number of unmasking requests that have been attributed to you.

I think under that same general heading, at least according to the Intelligence Community statistics, 217 times your justification was, "This is a very important topic for the U.S./U.N., and Ambassador to the U.N. Power has

[REDACTED]

requested the identity as to fully understand the intelligence." That suggests to me that you made a specific request. And, according to the Intelligence Community, that was 217 times.

A hundred and nineteen times it was: "U.S. U.N. Ambassador Samantha Power is a Cabinet-level official who requires the identity to fully understand the foreign intelligence."

And to Jim's point and Adam's also, if there are people who were trying to read your mind ahead of time and say, "Well, she's going to ask me for this, I'd better get it," we should know that. That doesn't mean that they shouldn't do it; it's just we should know that. If you're the one reading it and saying "I need it," we should know that also.

So I get that there's a numbers disparity, but, at some point, we've got to unlock the difference between "I'd like to know this" and "I need to know it," and if you're not making the requests, who is making them.

I want you, in whatever time I've got left -- and then I'll turn it over to my friends on the other side -- exhibit C. You made reference that in the time remaining -- I've got to tell you, I'm very --

MR. GOTTLIEB: What exhibit is this?

MS. POWER: [REDACTED]

MR. GOWDY: Let's go with the [REDACTED]

I'm very sensitive to the argument you make, that we're one government at a time. I happen to agree with every syllable of that. This one was pretty near the end of one of those one governments. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] which would have been, what, the day before you left?

MS. POWER: Correct.

[REDACTED]

MR. GOWDY: All right. So help me understand, so I can explain if called upon, the need to know the name of a U.S. company the day before you left. And what did you do with the information? If it was important enough to ask for, what did you do with it, given the fact you didn't have that long left?

MS. POWER: This is a very fair question, appropriate question. Let me say a couple things, if I could, first, and I'll come to this.

So, you know, in my book every day -- and I was in at the weekend, reading it the weekend as well, I was reading on the road, brought secure communications with me when I traveled abroad, always, so as to be able to read and participate in NSCs and Principals Committee meetings -- the number of references to U.S. persons that would be in my book on a given date was enormous, partly maybe because of the reason I described, just the interface of foreign diplomats in the host country that is the United States, just a lot of that back-and-forth. And it would have been a tiny, tiny fraction of the U.S. persons and U.S. entities referenced in my book as a whole that I would ever have personally requested.

[REDACTED]

[11:44 a.m.]

MS. POWER: I say that because I thought you asked an excellent question, like how does it differ from curiosity. I think, you know, curiosity would be, oh, I wonder who that is, you know. But I was, you know, very selective in the request that I personally made.

Now, again, the -- I didn't spend a huge amount of time, you know, thinking about the kinds of questions you guys were asking. It wasn't -- this wasn't -- it was a subset of questions that I asked.

And I think you all are asking very, very reasonable questions about, as I think the Congressman put it, whether the system needs to be tightened, whether the justification that either the principal [REDACTED] offer need to be more extensive than some, what looks like, from what I just saw this morning, a kind of boilerplate justification.

I never saw a justification. Because I think of my role as just one of a very few people on the NSC, I think there -- you know, it may well be that there was a deference, you know, to the position and to the seniority and to the role with the President. I can't say what the calculus of people behind this curtain was.

But what I can tell you is that I never asked out of curiosity or, wouldn't it be nice to know who is hanging out with the -- no, I asked because maybe that identity would help me understand, you know, what a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] what their mindset was, what their thinking was.

And but, again, you know, this was a process that perhaps wasn't given the kind of scrutiny that it needed. And so I think there's a -- you know, this will be, you know, a healthy exercise to dig down on, you know, how you ensure that

[REDACTED]

people who, you know, have important roles advising the President or advancing our interests through diplomatic actions, how they get the information they need in a timely way; how we don't unwittingly deter intelligence professionals from making sound judgments about where to be forthcoming in that way, but where the privacy concerns of U.S. persons and U.S. entities are also adequately taken into account.

I mean in other words, you know, I think the policy questions you all are raising about this practice are very good ones. But all I can say is -- tell you about on the basis of my recollections is my practice.

And, you know, when I asked or circled and inscribed a question, it was because I felt there was, you know, a gap of relevance from my understanding of the intelligence or my understanding of foreign actor.

[REDACTED], I have no memory of reading this intelligence, and I have no memory of certainly of making a request for this named U.S. company. Again, you know, I suppose it's conceivable that this is something that would've come to me, you know, annotated, that somebody else thought that this might be something.

I don't -- I am not able to say that. But the one thing I do want to push back on a little bit is the idea that January 18, you know, as we get closer to the end that somehow something would change. It can't change.

Like I had to go in -- you know, there could have been a principals meeting on, you know, whether we wanted to lock in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] later that day or on -- so I don't think -- even as one asks fair questions about, you know, the motive that any of us might have used for why we asked the questions we asked, I think those are all very reasonable.

But I would caution against somehow suggesting that as we got closer to

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the end that our jobs had changed in some fashion. Because we were having principals meetings like at 9:00 at night, you know, right up until the very end.

And it was only when I turn in my badge at, you know, whatever it was, you know, late in the night on January 19 and, you know, read out of my compartmented programs that I had been read into and gave up my Blackberry, reintroduced myself to my family -- first time in sometime -- it was only, you know, then that I -- that it was someone else's job.

But I would hope that they also are interrogating what they are reading, you know, with rigor -- to understand the foreign governments though. I mean, if -- I do agree with you that it would be wrong, you know, out of curiosity, oh, I have been wondering, you know, who might be doing this or that or -- I mean -- but nothing could be further from how I read my book and how I process what was being laid down to me.

Like the Trump administration, you could read about them -- there was so much about the Trump administration in the press, you know. We were going to have a Trump administration. But when we have this parallel foreign policy going on, it was a new layer of complexity that I had not anticipated and really was affecting the behavior of my colleagues, you know, at other missions.

And so, you know, again, I don't think that my number of requests would've increased materially in the transition period. It would surprise me if my personal requests had, because, again, I was looking at foreign governments. But it is possible that, you know, the number of things that came back to me in that form increased, you know, commensurate with the vast surge in collection that we were doing.

Because, remember, for the sake of the Trump -- this is really important

[REDACTED]



actually -- for the sake of the Trump administration, this is a gold mine period for them coming in on January 20, because now they are getting all of the -- they will get all of the foreign governments' views of them, right.

Because foreign governments are saying, hey, I just met with, you know, whoever, with Flynn, and then call back to their capital and say here's what I think we can -- and so the collection in transition generally, from what I understand, rightly goes up because it's -- you get a kind of naked view of what governments are thinking about you as you try to situate your policy choices in the early days.

So, again, I hope that's responsive.

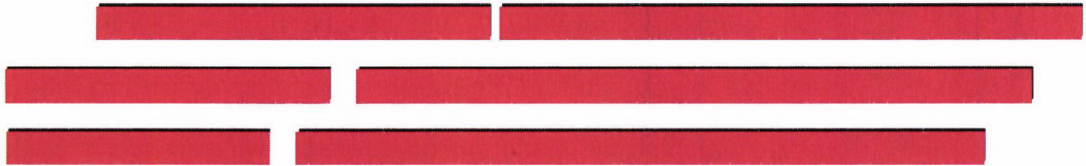
MR. GOWDY: Jimmy.

MR. HIMES: Thanks.

I just have one question, Ambassador, and I will turn it over to Mr. Swalwell.

I was thinking, it's got to have been true for 2 and-a-half centuries that every time there's that period between November and January that every country on the planet is probably jockeying to get to know the new administration and make contact.

And there's no reason to read any malign intent into those efforts anymore than there is to read malign intent into people reading about those efforts or anything else. It might just help us -- and maybe just take 2 minutes to do this.



Take 2 or 3 minutes and just walk us through what is that very awkward moment where we can't stop our activities at the U.N., but you've turned in your Blackberry and you're gone. So that's the night of the 19th.



Who then -- you made reference to your charge, your deputy, I guess. Who then takes up the work and how does that work? We don't need a huge disquisition, but I think understanding the way we don't allow for a gap in our diplomacy, that might help us understand.

MS. POWER: Yeah. Okay. Well, the short answer is that while I was U.N. Ambassador, I had four ambassadors who were my deputies in New York. I had one who worked the budget issues, one who worked the human rights and humanitarian issues, and two political deputies.

One of the two political deputies was my principal deputy. Her name was -- is -- remains -- Ambassador Michele Sison. She had been Ambassador previously to the United Arab Emirates. I believe she is about to be confirmed or was confirmed now to become Ambassador to Haiti. You know, she had been Ambassador to Sri Lanka, very seasoned professional.

However, of course, she is not a member of the NSC or a member of the Principals Committee, nor would she ever have participated in discussions about, you know, who to target or foreign terrorist fighters, or things outside the purview of her jurisdiction as my principal political deputy interfacing with other ambassadors from other countries.

So I certainly -- you know, I had initially thought that I would walk out, you know, at noon on January 20, but it's a very just -- it's very difficult saying good-bye to your staff. I mean -- terrible. I loved my job. So I left -- sorry. I was up watching the Nationals game until -- with my son at Nationals stadium last night, so sorry.

So anyway, I decided to leave the night before because it was so -- just the outpouring and the relationships you build with these career people, you know,

[REDACTED]

over 8 years. Sorry. So I left the night before.

I talked to Ambassador Sison about the issues that I thought would arise in the morning, you know, and into the weeks that lay ahead, because recall, again, we have a big North Korea problem pending. We have some decisions about Raqqa and how to take Raqqa. These are all me wearing my principals hat.

Now, she is not going to get read into these compartments or participate in these principals meetings, but it may be that there's fallout in New York, right, because of, you know, some accidental, you know, Russia/U.S. military engagement on the battlefield in Raqqa, because we have two sets of forces that we're supporting and we're meeting on the battlefield in ways that were not ideal.

So I tried to read her in to the set of policy choices that could be pending for the government without, of course, disclosing anything to her that she wouldn't have been read into. And then she led the mission, as she had done an able job helping me lead the mission for the prior couple years.

I don't recall exactly when Ambassador Haley was confirmed. I was also in close touch with Ambassador Haley in this period. I wrote her detailed memos about what she could expect her first week, about what her colleagues would be like, about the big issues that were going to be inevitably, you know, in her role as a member of the Principals Committee and as a member of the Cabinet were going to be coming down in Washington, or my judgment of what those would be.

So my mentality for the transition was we have a hell of a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in New York and in Washington. Like they are able to carry the baton, but there are things that they need to be made aware of that may come.

And we have an able, new U.N. Ambassador coming in once she gets

[REDACTED]

confirmed. Let me try to give her the benefit of everything that I learned over this 3.5 years so that I can help expedite her learning curve. So those are my two sort of preparatory impulses.

MR. HIMES: Great. Great. Thank you.

I will yield to Mr. Swalwell. Thank you.

MR. SWALWELL: Thank you, Ambassador, for your service to our country, for what --

MS. POWER: Thank you.

MR. SWALWELL: -- is a clear passion for the work that you did and also your loyalty to our country. And the information you read and the secrets you kept, you know, protected lives and gave us that edge that you talked about.

And I am sure that, you know, going through some of these questions you may feel like you're a victim of your own success. You asked a lot of questions of your staff. You demanded to know as much as you could to protect our country and engage with other diplomats, and it may seem like you're being, you know, punished for being, you know, someone who did their job.

But I first want to ask, do you believe the U.S. was attacked by Russia in the last election?

MS. POWER: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: And we do too, and that's why we have four key questions that we're looking into: The first is, what Russian cyber activity and other active measures were directed against the United States and its allies. In your role as U.N. Ambassador, do you have any information to offer us on that first question?

MS. POWER: I am sorry. My mind drifted for just a second. Could you

repeat that. I am sorry.

MR. SWALWELL: On the first question we have, because our committee acknowledges that we were attacked, what Russian cyber activity and other active measures were directed against the United States and its allies? That's one of the questions we're seeking to answer. And in your role as U.N. Ambassador, could you help us answer that question?

MS. POWER: Thank you, Congressman.

Well, one dimension of my role in New York, I think, you know, may be unique because, I think, on the actual technical penetration there are others who are better equipped and I think probably have already answered questions of that nature.

But what I can speak to is a couple things: One, the pattern that we watched develop really over the whole decade, but certainly during my time in New York of the interference in Georgia, the use of these hybrid active measures, you know, in their case with actual troops, you know, physical attack of that nature, but also a physical attack on the cyber infrastructure.

The complete shamelessness of the lying. I mean, just -- I had to deal with that every single day of just my Russian counterpart just baldly stating falsehoods, you know, in the court of public opinion and privately and -- about whether their troops were present in Ukraine, about whether they had hacked the Ukrainian cyber system or infrastructure, you know, just lying and then, you know, reaping the rewards that they had sowed.

And then, of course, in Syria. No, we're not attacking Aleppo, except that it's on television, Russian planes attacking Aleppo. So I had seen that. Our systems also -- this is important -- you know, had gone down a number of times.

[REDACTED]

The State Department -- I don't know if you'd call it cyber infrastructure but our ability to use our Blackberrys.

I'd be in the middle of like a critical negotiation and then suddenly my Blackberry would just go black, and there was, you know, certainly a belief that the timing of some of that penetration was not coincidental.

And it wasn't just mine. You know, it could be the whole State Department system would go out, even, at one point, for days on end. So Russia and these tactics had been a presence in our lives.

The other thing I wanted to flag is that a very unusual thing happened in October of 2016, and I believe this was after we had issued the statement -- the Intelligence Community had issued the statement publicly informing the American people that this hacking and this interference had occurred or was occurring.

And that is that my Russian counterpart in New York, Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, went to the U.N. secretary general to protest and condemn the fact that the U.N. high commissioner for human rights had criticized Candidate Trump for his xenophobic remarks.

So this is one of the most bizarre things that had ever happened. A Russian Government official is going to the U.N. secretary general to complain about a criticism of a candidate in the U.S. presidential election. It was --

MR. SWALWELL: When was that?

MS. POWER: That was in, from the best of my recollection, it was in sort of mid-October probably. But it was just so strange that a representative of President Putin's government would use their precious political capital to go to the U.N. secretary general to complain that the U.N. was criticizing, you know, I think it was language about Muslim entry to this country, or, I think, the language of the

[REDACTED]

U.N. official who had said something was, you know, xenophobic or this or that, but had been -- the U.N. official had been critical of the candidate, rightly or wrongly. But what was weird was that the -- it was the Russian Ambassador who complained about that.

So those are the kinds of insight I had. Again, I don't -- on the technical piece, you know, I read the, you know, the IC product that was produced just before we left, the classified version. You know, it really was, I think, a good distillation of what we knew at that point.

I have to say, as a citizen, I am, every day I open the newspaper, more and more surprised about how much more was going on than we were aware of at the time. So I know one of your prongs is the -- a critical prong is the prophylactic prong about how do we learn from this so we're not in a position for this to happen.

So, you know, when I think back on our policy process, the fake news dimension really did not resonate nearly as much with us as we debated what steps to take as the hacking and then the activity in the States, you know, around the election infrastructure.

MR. SWALWELL: And I think we established earlier through Mr. Gowdy's questions that you do not have any personal knowledge or original knowledge of Russian active measures that included links between Russia and anyone on the Trump campaign?

MS. POWER: I don't know anything more than what you would have heard from other people, I think it's fair to say, or at least I don't think I do.

MR. SWALWELL: And then I want to go to the U.S. Government's response to the Russian active measures as it related to our election. What did you see taking place, or what were you directed to do from the point that --

MS. POWER: Yeah.

MR. SWALWELL: -- we acknowledge that this was happening or understood that this was happening up until the election?

MS. POWER: From memory, again, starting in October, you know, I was part of the discussions about the statement that the Intelligence Community wanted to issue. Part of the debate about whether it was appropriate in advance of the election to make sanctions designations against those Russian individuals implicated in the interference or whether that was -- the timing was better to wait until afterwards.

And then to your specific question about a tasking, I was assigned, along with Secretary Kerry, to go through the roster of Russian diplomats housed in Washington and in New York and elsewhere at other consulates to assess who -- what was the appropriate number and who were the appropriate personnel, you know, that we would -- well, I am conflating two issues.

I was part of the sanctions process, which is which entities would we designate, you know, Russia-based entities. And then I was part of, you might call it a different kind of sanction process, which was which diplomats will we expel and what will we do with the Russian diplomatic facilities.

MR. SWALWELL: Well, what did you think when you read reports that President Putin was not going to respond to the expulsion of Russian diplomats in the United States and then actually saw that they did not respond? What was your make of that, knowing how the --

MS. POWER: Can you remind me of the timing of that?

MR. SWALWELL: So about December 28 is when President Obama announces that, you know, certain measures against -- sanctions and measures

██████████

against Russians were going to take place. Reports came out that President Putin was not going to respond. And then, of course, we saw up until January 20 that there was no response.

Knowing the Russians, dealing with the Russians, for us to take that approach, were you surprised or were you -- is that what you expected of the Russians that they did not retaliate against us?

MS. POWER: Well, let me separate out two things. I mean, Russia retaliates. That's what they do. That's what I lived. Russia bullies, Russia lies, and Russia retaliates. And so, as a general rule, if you ask me in the abstract if we inflict pain or punishment on Russia will they retaliate, my answer would be absolutely, they are going to retaliate.

But, you know, bear in mind that, you know, I didn't have to be read into all these compartments and reading all these intelligence and be part of this high-level policy process to be aware -- you didn't have to know all that to know that President Trump had said that he wanted a different kind of relationship -- or at that time President-elect Trump and Candidate Trump had said he wanted a different kind of relationship from Putin.

So in that very specific context, you know, when I heard that, I thought, wow, he must really be expecting a different kind of relationship. But, you know, it made -- within the logic of the statements that Trump had made about, you know, wanting, you know, to be able to build a relationship with Putin, you know, in that context it made some sense.

MR. SWALWELL: And with respect to the question of what possible leaks of classified information took place related to the Intelligence Community assessment of these matters, again, I think it has been established, but I just want

██████████

[REDACTED]

to make sure we agree that in no way were you responsible for any leaking?

MS. POWER: Never, ever. I despise leaking.

MR. SWALWELL: I want to go through some of the numbers. I reviewed your, what the majority calls unmasking requests for 2016, and I think we can agree that there are [REDACTED] requests, if you look at 2016.

And I have counted and I have gone through the individual requests, and by my count, and you can tell me if it sounds right or not, in 2016, you made [REDACTED] requests as it related to [REDACTED]. Does that sound about in the neighborhood, or would you have to look at the individual request?

MS. POWER: I am not -- I don't know what you're referring to, and I don't think I have anything that -- I don't have any way of knowing how many requests I made on any particular -- but I would caution, just if you're -- what you're looking at is a subset somehow a disaggregation of this number, I would caution just about the assumption that those are my personal requests. I would really -- I would -- so if it is a subset or if it's some other number, I --

MR. SWALWELL: And I want to get into that, because it does sound like from your testimony today that many of what has been attributed to be your requests may have been by a staffer or a deputy with equal access to intelligence.

MS. POWER: I --

MR. SWALWELL: [REDACTED]

MS. POWER: Well, let me clear. You know, diplomats -- and this gets to these policy questions that you're raising -- you know, diplomats throughout the State Department and intelligence officers, even of relatively low level, from what I understand, can make their own requests.

I have no way of knowing whether requests made by people, you know, at

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

my mission, you know, how those are ascribed. I don't know -- but, again, the questions are all appropriate, I think, related to this practice. But, you know, the -- just, you could imagine a lot of different ways in which the information could be tabulated.

MR. SWALWELL: Sure.

MS. POWER: But, you know, while it is true that, you know, the number of high-level compartmented issues that I was working in may have affected the Intelligence Community's disposition on my requests, this is a routine practice for, as I understand it, for people throughout the Foreign Service, you know, working at missions abroad and elsewhere, if they feel that it is relevant for them doing their jobs.

MR. SWALWELL: And through the tabulating that has been provided to us -- and I hope we have an opportunity to relay this to you, and I know there may be some access issues that we have to sort out. But I can tell you, from my review of 2016, I counted [REDACTED] requests related to [REDACTED]. Of those [REDACTED] requests,

[REDACTED]

then in 2016 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So if we are talking -- having a conversation about unmaskings with respect to an investigation on Russia, would you agree that there was a limited number of requests that you had even made for an unmasking that could relate to our investigation with Russia?

MS. POWER: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And then, when you look at the numbers that you have, something unusual happens in the total number of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

produced. [REDACTED] Do you see that?

MS. POWER: Could you repeat that again? I am sorry.

MR. SWALWELL: Looking at the chart that Mr. Gowdy gave you of --

MS. POWER: Oh, 2008, yes, sir. Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: So [REDACTED]

If we go to 2016, the year that you made the most requests, can you tell me how many reports the [REDACTED] produced in that year?

MS. POWER: [REDACTED] -- it looks like the -- yeah, I guess that's it for 2016.

MR. SWALWELL: And then the 10 years that are accounted for in this chart, what year has the most [REDACTED] reports produced?

MS. POWER: 2016.

MR. SWALWELL: And so it's clear that there's a -- as the [REDACTED] has produced more reports, you have requested more what the majority calls unmaskings? You have more access -- you're requesting more unmaskings?

MS. POWER: Yeah. I mean, what I can tell you is that the number reflect -- the number that you have appears to reflect that, but I don't -- my intelligence practice didn't change in 2016. I don't recall there being any increase or --

[REDACTED] One minute.

MS. POWER: -- or change in the way that I would've asked questions about intelligence.

So I recognize that your numbers are reflecting an increase, and I recognize that the totality of [REDACTED] reports has [REDACTED] it looks like [REDACTED] in 2016 than 2008.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

But even your [REDACTED] numbers, which are news to me, that you have provided, I can't tell you with certainty that I made that number or a different number. I just have no recollection, and, again, I was focused on another task not on tabulating this.

I can only tell you that -- just because this really would be -- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], that that is wildly different from my recollection of my practice in 2016 and in the other years. I do not recall my practice changing over the time that I was at U.S./U.N.

MR. SWALWELL: Great. Thank you. And I will yield back.

MS. STEFANIK: Ambassador Power, thank you for being here today. Don't worry, I cry every time I talk about my parents in public settings.

MS. POWER: I am so sorry.

MS. STEFANIK: But you were very heartfelt talking about the team surrounding you. And of the [REDACTED] officials, those are nonpolitical jobs. They serve from one administration to the next. They are dedicated, whether it's President Bush, President Obama, or President Trump.

My question to you is, were you served by the same [REDACTED] team as Susan Rice when she was in the role? The same individuals, not the same positions but the same actual individuals.

MS. POWER: Yeah. From what I can recall -- and recall I have a team, [REDACTED], all people who report --

MS. STEFANIK: Yes.

MS. POWER: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] And I have people who report -- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From what I can recall, I -- at the outset of my tenure, I had her -- her -- I had [REDACTED] that she had had at the end of her tenure, and then they transitioned out, you know, some months into my first year, from what I can recall. So different -- most of my time I had [REDACTED] that were different [REDACTED] than her [REDACTED]

MS. STEFANIK: So the reason why I am asking you that question is, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were the same but there was still an uptick in requests, you know, we had talked about some of the unmasked names that were sort of pre-prepared by staff. I think it's important for us to know whether those [REDACTED] shifted in 2014 or 2015, because there is an uptick from the previous practice to when you were appointed into this position.

Does that shed light on the question a little bit?

MS. POWER: No, I understand the question, and I tried to answer the question. I mean, there definitely was a change in personnel. But the one thing I want to make sure of is that, you know, they were doing their jobs as they understood their job. Like, you know, nobody did anything wrong here.

If somebody had leaked, if one [REDACTED] had done something, if someone had disclosed what they learned through this process with a staff member who they didn't know to be read into the -- or even if they did know, like, you know, anything that comes back to you only comes to you. You're not allowed to disclose it to anybody else.

Moreover, while there was a change [REDACTED] you know, I don't want to say -- maybe several months into my tenure. I can't remember if it was in early 2014 or at the end of 2013 -- that [REDACTED] were rotated out, you know, that -- to take the premise of your question, that might indicate something, but it

[REDACTED]

might not.

It might be just that the amount that we were reading where the U.S. person seems central to what you were reading, you know, [REDACTED], that seemed necessary to provide to the consumer or to the consumer it seemed necessary to inquire. You know what I mean? It's just, there's a lot of different factors.

MS. STEFANIK: I understand. Intelligence isn't static. Global issues aren't static. They change over time. I understand that.

MS. POWER: Fair enough.

MS. STEFANIK: So my next question is, you know, we talked about the numbers on this sheet that you've been provided. And you have stated that this number is higher than what you recall. Think back to a specific instance when you did request for the unmasking. Can you talk through the basics of how that request would actually happen to the staff?

So in one of your answers, you referenced you asked or circled. Did you specifically ask [REDACTED], this U.S. person, I would like it to be unmasked, or you circled it? How did that actually work when you do recall making that request?

MS. POWER: On the occasions that I made these requests I would say some version of, you know, I need to know who this is; or if I was writing it, I would merely circle it and put a question mark, who, or just a question mark.

MS. STEFANIK: And were you ever -- do you recall ever being asked for a justification?

MS. POWER: No.

MS. STEFANIK: That's important for us to know, because they were sending justifications on your behalf.

[REDACTED]

Knowing that this number is higher than what you recall, can you ballpark, knowing that it's not going to be exact, how many requests you recall making?

MS. POWER: I can't, because --

MS. STEFANIK: Can you ballpark, is it over 100? Is it under 100?

MS. POWER: I have thought a lot about this, as you can imagine, particularly in reading these press reports with these huge numbers, I just can't recall, again, because this wasn't a thing. This wasn't -- I never heard the word. I wasn't -- you know, if you ask me how many questions I asked, I wouldn't know how many questions I asked generally. I wouldn't know how many times I asked for maps.

I wouldn't know how many times I saw inconsistencies between SIGINT reports that confused me and I stapled them together and said what. You know, I --

MS. STEFANIK: But you know this is too high?

MS. POWER: Well, I know there's no way that I would've been asking about U.S. persons -- you know, this has me doing it virtually every day that I am in my job.

MS. STEFANIK: So is it once a week? I mean, it's just -- it's helpful. I know the difficulties of saying -- if someone were to ask me how many meetings have you taken since the start of this year, I would say over 500, over 600 but, you know, probably not over 1,500. I'd be able to ballpark that knowing that I don't necessarily keep track of that. But just thinking in, you know, how I do my job.

So if you know [REDACTED] and you say you weren't doing it on a daily basis, what about a weekly basis? Just to help us understand what the actual number was, if it's more consistent with other requests.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MS. POWER: I don't recall, and it's not because I have a bad memory. It's just because I wasn't tracking this. I am trying to think of -- you've offered an analogy. You know, it was nowhere close to this. But I just think it's perilous, you know. We're talking orally, I am writing, I am writing in the car, I am writing in

[REDACTED].

You know, it just -- the process was -- I am reading over the life of my time, you know, hundreds of thousands of pages of intelligence, in which, again, there are a huge number of references to U.S. persons. And I just think it's hazardous for me to go there. But, again, it was nowhere near what is being ascribed here.

MS. STEFANIK: I am going to switch to questions about the transition. I think you have an interesting background, because you're one of the few witnesses that has actually served on the transition team before, going into a new administration. You know, my perspective on this issue comes from serving at the tail end of the Bush administration.

Transition goes both way; it goes both transitioning into and transitioning out of. And I agree with what Mr. Gowdy said that I wholeheartedly -- I think we all do -- there's one government at a time.

But in your experience in the 2008 transition process, obviously you were on the State Department transition team, you noted that there were State Department officials in all of the meetings. Can you recall any meetings occurring of the transition writ large with foreign officials that didn't include a State Department official?

MS. POWER: I wouldn't have had huge visibility, right. I mean, the transition team is so vast, I think I can only speak, you know, in terms of my experience. I was actually initially on the State Department transition team and

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

then I was deployed to North Korea for U.S./U.N.'s -- interestingly, to their transition team.

And we had a number of meetings, you know, I can't, again, recall the number, but there was always someone from U.S./U.N. who was with us in those meetings. In any meeting that I was in, I would say there was always a U.S./U.N. official, which is the equivalent of a State Department official.

MS. STEFANIK: Uh-huh. And in the 2008 election, we remember, similar to this past election, you had an outgoing President who had very different national security views than the incoming President, in both cases.

MS. POWER: True, yeah.

MS. STEFANIK: In those transition meetings, you referenced, your word was, it's considered the golden time. It's a time to situate policy decisions for the early days of the next administration.

MS. POWER: True.

MS. STEFANIK: Did you, in your role as a transition staff member, share views and policy priorities of the incoming administration before the swearing-in?

MS. POWER: My job was --

MS. STEFANIK: Would it be inappropriate to share what the policy positions would likely be in the next administration?

MS. POWER: Let me first just answer -- so my job was to get the lay of the land to what our Ambassador designate was going to be walking into. And I'd just written a book on the U.N., or a U.N. person, and knew a lot of officials there. So I spent a lot of time trying to understand the dynamics in New York and then distilling them in a briefing memo for Ambassador Rice.

And so I was not -- I was sort of absorbing kind of in my -- the way I used to

[REDACTED]

do in my old career, rather than projecting anything out. And, again, whether it was -- you know, the way our transition worked, it was a quite hierarchical. I think this transition seems like it was a lot more decentralized.

But we didn't really have license to be characterizing, you know, what the President-to-be was going to be doing. Like, I would've felt like I would get in trouble with somebody, you know, for speculating beyond what was out there and had been committed to in the campaign and there was quite a lot in that.

So what I can say is that we never went further than, you know, what our kind of talking points would be derived from the pledges that Obama had made while he was trying to become President.

And, I guess, I don't feel like I know enough about past transitions to gauge appropriateness, but I can tell you that I would really urge whoever the next, whether it's in 3 years or 7 years, the next President-elect, you know, to -- just to centralize the process.

Because, you know, to feel the diminution in America's juice at the U.N. in that -- particularly like in that sort of December -- I think some of that -- you must know, some of that happens anyway. Like, inevitably they are looking past you to the next set of officials, no question.

But the fact that the, you know, that we had so little visibility into what was being said and what was being processed, like we couldn't even play good cop, bad cop. We couldn't -- it was -- and, you know, so, you know, just the weight of my word in a period where no one else was in charge but us was altered, you know, by the fact that this parallel process was going on. So I just hope that doesn't get repeated.

MS. STEFANIK: My final question related to the transition is what I led

[REDACTED]

with. The transition goes both ways, both incoming and outgoing. And you're right, I believe in -- that this transition was decentralized. Many individuals have stated themselves they haven't served at the highest levels of government. Some for the first time are serving in government in their entire careers.

Was guidance issued to anyone, to your knowledge, on the Trump transition team from the Obama administration of the importance of having someone from the State Department or the equivalent that you had during the 2008 transition?

MS. POWER: I had no -- I would have had no visibility into the interface between the new transition team -- the Trump transition team and then the transition team that each of the agencies had set up.

I set up a transition team at U.S./U.N. and, again, had, you know, really -- I hope for her -- but productive conversations over that period with Ambassador Haley. But I implored her to press the State Department transition team to give her a transition team so that she could begin her staffing so she didn't have gaps.

Because my -- you know, I had these four ambassadors. They were going to be -- they were political appointees. We all had resignations that were going to take effect, and she was going to be left with these gaps. She could begin the personnel search.

And that -- again, it was such a chaotic process that we had a transition team at the outgoing, as you say, all dressed up and ready to go. We had the stacks of memos that we had prepared, the binders. And, you know, the transition -- the incoming transition team, you know, didn't deploy to New York in that manner. And, I mean, even had they, I wouldn't have had visibility into what the SOP was for how that interface would occur.

[REDACTED]

MS. STEFANIK: Okay. Thank you.

I yield back to Mr. Gowdy, if you have any other questions.

MR. CONAWAY: So, I have got just a couple this and thats. Adam asked you about, you know, legal wiretapping, surveillance, whatever and improper wiretappings, illegal -- improper of Trump Tower, Trump Trump folks. You said no. Would your answer have changed if he had used the word "legal" or "proper," the words "legal" or "proper" in that context?

MS. POWER: You know, I don't have expertise on the means by which SIGINT is being provided.

MR. CONAWAY: Because you were able to say no to the illegal. Can you say yes or no to the legal?

MS. POWER: That's fair. I get -- the question, if I recall it -- we will have the transcript -- but was there evidence of illegal? I saw no evidence.

MR. CONAWAY: Yeah. I asked you if you were aware of any evidence to illegal wiretapping, surveillance in the Trump Tower of Trump people, transition folks.

MS. POWER: Yes. I had no evidence of that. Now, you're asking me --

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. Did you have any evidence of legal surveillance wiretapping, et cetera, et cetera?

MS. POWER: I can't make a judgment about --

MR. CONAWAY: So you are then aware of some wiretapping, some surveillance, and some --

MS. POWER: [REDACTED]

MR. CONAWAY: Of Trump Tower of Trump officials?

MS. POWER: No, of -- I don't know anything about that. No, I don't know anything about that.

MR. CONAWAY: That's what I was asking.

MS. POWER: I am sorry.

MR. CONAWAY: You said you didn't know anything about it when Adam asked you the question on illegal. I am just simply asking, were you aware of any legal wiretapping of Trump Tower?

MS. POWER: I am sorry. No, I am not aware of anything.

MR. CONAWAY: Are you aware of anything improper?

MS. POWER: I wasn't aware of the technical means that we deploy anywhere at any time. I am sorry. I just wasn't.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. So, well, we'll move on, but that's -- it's an odd answer.

MS. POWER: It is? I don't mean it to be. Sorry.

MR. CONAWAY: Are you aware of it happening? I am not asking you -- well --

MS. POWER: No, please. Maybe I am hearing it wrong.

MR. CONAWAY: Well, you said no to the illegal, and I am just closing the loop. Can you tell us no to the legal, which would mean you really don't know any -- or you're not aware of any wiretaps with respect to the Trump Tower, Trump transition people, those kind of -- I am just closing the loop.

MS. POWER: Yeah, I would have no visibility into that, so I am not aware of anything illegal or legal.

MR. CONAWAY: There you go.

MS. POWER: Sorry, sir. I think I maybe wasn't following.

[REDACTED]

MR. CONAWAY: All right. One real quick one and then we will flip over. Absolutes always raised a flag with me. I am a CPA, and we're a little cautious about absolutes. You made a comment that you never discussed a name with any other human being that was unmasked?

MS. POWER: Beyond the interface with [REDACTED], never.

MR. CONAWAY: Oh, so there are human beings that you discussed it with?

MS. POWER: No beyond -- when they provided me with the information --

MR. CONAWAY: Well, I am allowing you to clarify your answer.

MS. POWER: Thank you.

MR. CONAWAY: Your answer was, I've never discussed one with another human being and then you went onto something else. So that's technically not accurate. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I am just trying to make sure that the record reflects that --

MS. POWER: I appreciate that.

MR. CONAWAY: -- that you had other -- that that's not an absolute.

MS. POWER: When [REDACTED] would inform me of the name, which is inherent in the whole question of request and receipt of request, I would be informed of the name.

MR. CONAWAY: Right. [REDACTED]

MS. POWER: Not that I recall. It was -- and, again --

MR. CONAWAY: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MS. POWER: Well, again, a lot of my intelligence processing was done through the book and was doing through writing. So I would just get the -- you know, the annotated, the asterisk or the sheet or -- [REDACTED]

But I don't recall any discussion of an individual, because, again, I was looking for the individual so I had context to understand what the foreign government was doing. I wasn't -- I mean, it is possible that --

MR. CONAWAY: I am not trying to trap you. I am just trying to make sure that --

MS. POWER: Yeah.

MR. CONAWAY: I get [REDACTED] all the time. It's a free flow of conversation between someone who is cleared to have this conversation. There's nothing wrong with it at all. It would be perfectly -- it's kind of odd that you wouldn't say, well, you know, this U.S. company on this [REDACTED] thing is X, Y, Z, does that really matter. We now know who they are, et cetera. You go back and forth with [REDACTED]

MS. POWER: Yeah. No, well, I mean, that's how --

MR. CONAWAY: That would be standard [REDACTED], I would think.

MS. POWER: It's true. Although, again, getting an unmasked name or entity back was not a very common thing or at least I don't have very many memories of that happening [REDACTED] So but I appreciate your correction, and what I meant to say was anybody outside the channel of the request and the receipt. So thank you for allowing me to clarify that.

And [REDACTED] are most definitely members of the human race, for the record. Wonderful members.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MR. SWALWELL: Ambassador, Mr. Gowdy also brought up some of the justifications that were used in what the majority refers to as unmasking. And if I recall, you stated that you weren't providing those justifications.

But I want to ask you if it would surprise you to learn that the current U.N. Ambassador, Nikki Haley, uses identical justifications to do what the majority calls unmasking?

MS. POWER: Again, that procedure is -- and the justifications are opaque to me. I wasn't aware of the justifications until today. So, you know, I do know that just as I inherited the [REDACTED] team that Ambassador Rice had used, Ambassador Rice inherited the [REDACTED] team that Ambassador Calazad had used. So too, I presume, Ambassador Haley would've inherited, at least at the outset, the [REDACTED] team that I used.

MR. SWALWELL: And, Ambassador, do you have an opinion based on the intelligence you reviewed and your knowledge of Russia and its President as to whether President Putin had a preference for the two general election candidates, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton?

MS. POWER: You know, I believe the Intelligence Community's assessment that was issued before I left, their analysis was that he did have a preferred candidate and that the -- that there was a motivation -- several motivations, but that one of them was to undermine one candidate and to advantage another.

I will say, the other motivation, because when I last heard from the Intelligence Community, they did not assess -- or if I remember from that intelligence assessment, they said that they, you know, did not believe that Putin necessarily thought that Trump would win, but that their motivation was also to

[REDACTED]

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sow division and to undermine faith in our Democratic institutions to taint the incoming -- the likely incoming President. So I think there was a range of motivations, as the Intelligence Community briefed.

MR. SWALWELL: How about your opinion, just as an expert of foreign relations, someone who observed the election, someone who reviewed intelligence reports. Do you believe that President Putin had a preferred candidate?

MS. POWER: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: Who do you think it was?

MS. POWER: Donald Trump.

MR. SWALWELL: And why do you think it was Donald Trump?

MS. POWER: Because, A, I am suppose I am influenced by the Intelligence Community's view of that; but also the selective disclosure of emails were all, from what I understand -- I am also normally leery of absolutes -- but from what I understand and recall were emails coming from one political campaign and, you know, the DNC on one side of the spectrum.

So my sense was that his views of the -- or his disparate views of the two candidates and their desirability was relatively straightforward.

MR. SWALWELL: And, Ambassador, finally, what recommendations would you make to our committee as to reforms that need to be put in place to make sure that an attack like Russia carried out never happens again, whether it's from Russia or any other adversary?

MS. POWER: Well, if I could wave a magic wand, the number one recommendation would be for us to somehow find unity. This is the most politically polarized moment of my lifetime, most of our lifetimes. And, you know,

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it's sort of heartening, you know, that these committees came together.

I mentioned that my farewell address as U.N. Ambassador was to appeal for bipartisan investigations and so forth. And I think initially, you know, some -- at least from the press, some subset of supporters of President Trump or people who voted for President Trump felt as though the investigation into Russian interference was sour grapes.

You know, and if somehow we could develop what we used to have during the cold war, you know, which was just a consensus that we're all this -- we're all in this together to just keep the country safe and, you know, irrespective of who we voted for, you know, next -- this time was Russia; next time it could be ISIS, it could be China. This time it was, you know, with one preferred candidate; the next time it could be for another.

And another thing I would stress is, I feel like the way this debate gets played out is that it's all about elections. And just to underscore the interference that was done through hacking, through ad purchases, you know, the active measures, they can be done at any time of the year.

Like, you know, we could have a vote on, I don't know what's a pending piece -- on the budget, you know, and suddenly a Congressperson who is making a judgment about how to vote on a tough vote could find themselves like smothered in ads, you know, going in another direction.

You know, I think there's a way in which this is getting siloed as an election issue or as a Russia issue. This is about adversaries, and it's about our democracy. And it's not about who wins or who loses. As it happens, you know, it went in one direction this time, but it could very easily go in the other direction.

And it's just not about who wins; it's about who gets to choose and on what

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[REDACTED]

basis. So I don't have, you know, technical recommendations. I think, you know, the question of -- one of the most disturbing things I remember from some of the briefings we got in the last days from Director Comey and others was just the kind of this is just the beginning briefings, you know, particularly as it relates to the States.

And this puts us all in a -- or not me anymore, but you all public servants in a tough spot at the Federal level because it also means, you know, this is, you know, fundamentally not in our jurisdiction actually to -- in your jurisdiction at the Federal level to be helping the States, you know, shore up their defenses.

But if we could get that political consensus, maybe not on everything, but on the threat that is posed, on cybersecurity, on infrastructure, then it would make it easier, it would seem, to, if not ensure, to really mitigate against the risk of the next, much more intrusive penetration where it's not merely about propaganda and hacking, you know, both of which were horrific and, you know, very apparently, you know, reaching a huge number of Americans, but, you know, could be something much more extreme like changing an individual's vote or, you know, changing the voter rules or the composition of the district.

And so just, if there's some way in all of this political moment to just remember that, you know -- John Rawls, the political theorist, you know, had this great concept: The veil of ignorance. You know, if you didn't know whether you were Republican or Democrat and you didn't know, you know, if your candidate had won or lost, like what would you want the rules to be. You know, what would you want the policy to look like and to sort of suspend, you know, one's personal identification.

I know how hard it is, but that would be my more abstract and --

[REDACTED]

MR. SWALWELL: That's helpful.

MS. POWER: -- idealistic appeal, I guess.

MR. SWALWELL: And, Ambassador, you invoked the name former Director James Comey. How would you judge his credibility, from someone who worked with him?

MS. POWER: Just played it straight, solid, and completely, from what I could see, limited visibility, but from what I could see in our principals meetings is completely apolitical.

MR. SWALWELL: Thank you. I will yield back.

MR. CONAWAY: Well, thanks. Part of the -- having two things going on at the same time, the Russian stuff and then the overall unmasking, they kind of get pushed together. But those of us in the legislative branch have to deal with this issue of protection of privacy, constitutional rights, and it is a big deal to us.

Every time one of our tools comes up for reauthorization, we have got to go through this knockdown, drag-out fight to try to convince Americans that our government is not spying on each of us, is not reading our emails, is not listening to our phone calls.

And folks on both sides of the aisle just, you know, get wrapped around the axle about the Federal Government knowing something about us that is private. So this privacy issue to us is maybe a bigger deal than it is to other folks. But much of what we're talking about right here is not you so much as it's NSA.

I have been on the committee for a long time, and throughout that entire time we were assured over and over that these U.S. company one, person two, three, that that was sacrosanct, that people just had a really difficult time to get at that and that you had to jump through all kind of hoops and bells and whistles to

make that happen to --

And so that's kind of what we're going at, you know, how did it occur that that's not the case. And that's a whole different issue, and it's not really anything you were doing wrong.

As your role of -- you joined the NSC in 2009 then either as Ambassador, did you get any kind of an orientation or a briefing as to how important U.S. person privacy is and that you're going to get information, see documents that has that? Any sense of that, that, you know, hey, this is a big deal to America?

MS. POWER: I don't recall any such briefing.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. It's unexpected for me -- no criticism necessarily. It's unexpected to me that you hadn't expressed a much more intense protection of privacy issues with respect to American citizens, unmaskings, all those kind of things.

Is that prevalent with your colleagues at the NSC that they too weren't so much concerned about privacy issues that they wouldn't be more careful about unmaskings, et cetera?

MS. POWER: Well, I can't speak for anybody else because -- so I can only speak for my own. But, sir, if I may, I mean we're not unmasking anybody.

When I get a --

MR. CONAWAY: Yes, ma'am, we are.

MS. POWER: No, I am not unmasking anybody.

MR. CONAWAY: The name is "U.S. Person One." That's a mask. And so for you to get the name, however you came by it, that name should not have gotten to you unless there was specific reasons why the NSA believed in an independent version of why you asked for it that that was the case.

MS. POWER: Right, and I understand. I'd be curious about your practice, you know, whether --

MR. CONAWAY: We don't. Yeah.

MS. POWER: -- how elaborate --

MR. SWALWELL: The committee has.

MR. CONAWAY: I know, but we go through a whole -- but go ahead.

We're --

MS. POWER: Well, no. I mean, I don't mean to mix apples and oranges, but I just -- you know, when you read this PPD and you see that you're on a body that has on it the Vice President of the United States, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Energy, Secretary for Homeland Security, the Attorney General, and the U.N. Ambassador, I did not believe that there -- I take that responsibility and view it as an awesome responsibility.

MR. CONAWAY: Right.

MS. POWER: I had no reason to believe --

MR. CONAWAY: We're not questioning that at all, ma'am.

MS. POWER: The idea, as a human rights lawyer, that I have no concern for the privacy of U.S. citizens --

MR. CONAWAY: You didn't express it real well. Maybe that was the case.

MS. POWER: Well, I am asked to justify why I made requests when I made them. So I am trying to give you the foreign policy context.

MR. CONAWAY: Right.

MS. POWER: But when I obtained responses to the request that I made, which, again, are subset of this larger number that you have at your disposal, that

[REDACTED]

is causing you concern, I knew that it was coming to me. I didn't even know if it was going to other members of the NSC.

[REDACTED]

[12:47 p.m.]

MR. CONAWAY: Okay.

MS. POWER: And I know that I, in this role, am in this role that very few people occupy. So I wouldn't have had any situational awareness that there was a broad -- you're describing a broader phenomenon.

MR. CONAWAY: Well, I'm just saying, is there a broader phenomenon?

So --

MS. POWER: I don't think I'd be the best person to answer that.

MR. CONAWAY: -- we'd have to go through all [REDACTED] individually to determine what was going on. But we don't need to do that.

Also, names are only unmasked -- just FYI, they're only unmasked for you. Nobody else on that list would've gotten an unmasking unless --

MS. POWER: I just said that. I just made that point.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay. So -- that's fine. It's just that I was wondering if your other folks that you're aware of within the NSC, your colleagues, didn't understand the masking/unmasking circumstances the way --

MS. POWER: I never discussed -- again, I never knew the word, I never discussed the practice --

MR. CONAWAY: But you understand that there was a reason why it didn't say "John Doe," it said "U.S. person."

MS. POWER: Yeah. And that is why, when I would see a U.S. person or U.S. entity, I would very rarely make a request to understand. I would only do it if it just didn't make sense without it.

MR. CONAWAY: Well, it got made on your behalf [REDACTED] times.

[REDACTED]

MS. POWER: Pardon me?

MR. CONAWAY: It got made on your behalf [REDACTED] times.

MS. POWER: I can't speak to what others were doing without my knowledge.

MR. CONAWAY: No, no, no. Those people worked directly for you, and they used your name to justify the unmask. That's how we got that list.

MS. POWER: And they did a tremendous job --

MR. CONAWAY: But I have people who work with me --

MS. POWER: -- protecting this country, working 24/7 --

MR. CONAWAY: -- and I own their work as well.

MS. POWER: Well, I don't feel it's appropriate for a policy consumer of intelligence to be meddling in the tradecraft of what --

MR. CONAWAY: It's not tradecraft. You have to justify -- you were supposed to justify --

MS. POWER: What I did was ask questions of my intelligence.

MR. CONAWAY: Right.

MS. POWER: And on occasion --

MR. CONAWAY: And they took it upon themselves to unmask that name on your behalf. That's all I'm saying. Because they had the name, they got --

MS. POWER: But you're suggesting that there's something nefarious. They were providing it to --

MR. CONAWAY: No, no, no, no.

MS. POWER: -- an individual who's a member of the National Security Council, who would never disclose that information --

MR. CONAWAY: Okay.

[REDACTED]

MS. POWER: -- to another individual, and who was using it to inform her judgement to try to keep the country --

MR. CONAWAY: All right.

MS. POWER: -- to try to do her part, very small part, to keep the country safe.

MR. CONAWAY: This criticism is of NSA, not you. Does that make sense? We're trying to get to what we're going to wind up doing at NSA. And --

MS. POWER: Yeah.

MR. CONAWAY: -- your practices and the practices of your team help us a lot in what we will have to craft in order to convince the American people that their names aren't being floated around inappropriately.

One point was made that we've had a 10-time increase in reports.

MS. POWER: Which is from this chart. Yes.

MR. CONAWAY: You're not arguing that you read 10 times as much information?

MS. POWER: No. I wouldn't argue that. No.

MR. CONAWAY: All right.

So, one final thing. You started off the conversation, you gave us a very fulsome description of your role at NSC and dual-hatted with U.N., and throughout that conversation it seemed to be that you really relished the NSC part and the role that that played and that you were into that kind of deal. So I thought both of them were full-time jobs, but you gave us a good description of that.

And you said that Russia was always on the mind. You beat -- you had a contest every day with the Russian Ambassador. Thank you for doing that, by the way. It's a tough job to put up with that lying to you all the time like that.

But the Russia involvement in our elections, you only became aware of that late in September, early October.

MS. POWER: Yeah, I don't recall the exact date.

MR. CONAWAY: Well, I know, but that had been going on earlier. At the time were you brought in, did you think, why hadn't I been brought in earlier because --

MS. POWER: No. I don't -- I mean, the number of processes that are going on with subsets and, you know, just with counterterrorism people --

MR. CONAWAY: All right. You didn't -- that's fine.

MS. POWER: No.

MR. CONAWAY: But from that point forward --

MS. POWER: Yeah.

MR. CONAWAY: -- you are read in, you're knowing what they're doing, what they're not doing. If you'd have come across evidence as a part of that conversation, or readings or whatever, that the Russians were conspiring with Donald Trump personally, his transition team, or whoever else, would that have registered on you as being a big deal?

MS. POWER: You know --

MR. CONAWAY: Given that they were trying to mess with the election -- and, you know, back to the old "collusion," "conspiracy" --

MS. POWER: Yeah.

MR. CONAWAY: -- whatever it is, if you had been reading something on that, would that have triggered an "a-ha, wait a second" as a part of the conversation you were having with your colleagues who were --

MS. POWER: Yeah, I mean, as I said, you know, at the outset, what I was

reading was concerning, in and of itself. I was aware throughout that, particularly regarding some of the sources and methods that were being drawn upon, that even when I was read into the Principals Committee discussions and NSC discussions, that I was not aware of everything, you know, by any means, that was out there, because I was still doing the two day jobs that you mentioned.

MR. CONAWAY: But of what you were reading and what you were aware of, had you read something that said, "We have intelligence that a Trump transition person is talking directly with a Russian to try to figure what they can release next into the public arena so it affects the election on November" --

MS. POWER: Oh, I see what you're saying. Yeah.

MR. CONAWAY: If you'd have read something like that, would that have stuck with you to today? Or, at that time, would you have said -- or would you just -- because we all read thousands of stuff every day, and some of it sticks with us and some of it doesn't. Something like that, would that have stuck with you?

MS. POWER: I don't mean to be, you know, not clear in my answer. Yes, it would have stuck with me, but I read a very -- particularly in that time, pre-election, you know, that was not when we saw the big surge --

MR. CONAWAY: Well, post-election, I mean, up until you left, I mean, did you --

MS. POWER: Well, it depends on, again, the nature of the intelligence that you just -- in the hypothetical, I thought it was a pre-election scenario of --

MR. CONAWAY: Either one. I mean, I'm just trying to get to the point that -- some things we read really scare the pants off of me.

MS. POWER: Right.

MR. CONAWAY: Like the Toby Keith song, "I Wish I Didn't Know Now

[REDACTED]

What I Didn't Know Then."

MS. POWER: Yeah.

MR. CONAWAY: I would think evidence or an indication that the Trump election team was conspiring or that the transition team was in some sort of cahoots with the Russians, that would've been something I would remember through the fog of all the thousands of --

MS. POWER: I understand.

Well, I mean, from my memory, from recollection, you know, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MR. CONAWAY: I'm focused just on the Trump folks. We know the Russians --

MS. POWER: No, no. Sorry. That's what I meant. I mean, I saw that the -- you know, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and, in some cases, [REDACTED] and so forth.

MR. CONAWAY: Okay.

MS. POWER: So, I mean, that was on display, and that was cause for concern. I guess my focus in that period was very much on, okay, so what are we going to do about it.

And then I called publicly, as others did -- I mean, this wasn't unique to me -- but decided to dedicate my whole last speech as U.N. Ambassador to Russian interference and to plead, you know, while I still had a platform, that people would take up, you know, this set of questions.

[REDACTED]

But, again, my mentality then was mainly with an eye to preventing worse --

MR. CONAWAY: Thank you, ma'am.

MS. POWER: Thank you, sir.

MR. GOTTLIEB: Congressman, if I could, we've been on the record now for north of 3 hours and 15 minutes, the vast majority of which time has been spent on topics other than the topics that were disclosed to us in the June 14th letter that was written to my client.

And I just want the record to reflect -- and sensitive to Congressman Gowdy's statement that the motivation of asking all of these range of questions is to make sure that the witness doesn't come back a second time. We want the record to reflect that we very much share that and expect that. And I want the record to reflect that we have not objected on scope to a single question that's been asked today and that my client has answered every question that's been put to her and that we would appreciate wrapping this up pretty soon.

MR. GOWDY: And the only thing I would say is I think the record will reflect everything that you just said. And I was looking at my friend from California to see if he would allow me to ask three, kind of, cleanup questions so I don't miss a flight. And I think, because he's such a nice guy, he's going to let me do it.

I've only got three questions and one observation. And I want to say how grateful I am for the time that you have given us. I hope that you have found the lines of inquiry to be serious, because I certainly have found your answers to be thoughtful, and you have not given short shrift to any of our questions. I hope that you have not found our questions to have been anything other than rooted in a desire for a better product.

[REDACTED]

Toward that end, you and I have not met before today. I don't recall that -- we have mutual friend that speaks very highly of you, but, other than that, I don't think we have met.

MS. POWER: I'm grateful to that mutual friend, whoever he or she may be.

MR. GOWDY: Yeah, it's a he, from Massachusetts.

I'm not interested in any conversation you've ever had with your attorney. But any Republican Members of Congress, have you talked with any of them in anticipation or preparation for your testimony today?

MS. POWER: No, except I testified before SSCI and met with Senator Burr at the tail end of -- my testimony was to the staff, my appearance was with the staff, but Senator Burr came by.

MR. GOWDY: Democratic Members of Congress, House or Senate?

MS. POWER: Let me just pause on the Republicans and just make sure that --

MR. GOWDY: Yes, ma'am.

MS. POWER: -- I haven't had any other stray encounters with Republican Members of Congress.

So, to the best of my recollection, no, only with Senator Burr.

Democratic Members of Congress, no, not before today. But right before I came out here, several of the Congressmen came in and said hello.

MR. GOWDY: Got it.

This is two quick points.

And thank you, Eric, for letting me go.

If you saw me smile at the question about Comey, I was not smiling at your

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

answer. I was smiling at what I perceived to be the irony of that question. There was a time in the not-too-distant past where --

MS. POWER: I know.

MR. GOWDY: -- all of my colleagues were not as complimentary of Jim Comey as they are now. I may have been wrong, but at least I've been consistent. He had a really tough job, and bad facts make for tough decisions.

My last question is, at some point if I am asked -- and you went through the list with Chairman Conaway and Adam and others of all the folks that are on the NSC. And they're super-important people. It's the FBI. It's the Department of Energy, which is curious but still important. It's lots of important people.

To the extent there was ever an unmasking request that only you made, out of that full group of important people who need to know a lot of information, what is the explanation for why the Ambassador to the U.N. would be the only one in that group to need the identity of a U.S. person to do her job?

Do you see what I'm saying? The others didn't make the request. And, at some point, I'm going to be asked, why did Ambassador Power need the information but the others did not?

MS. POWER: Well, one of things I mentioned earlier, I'm not sure if you were in the room, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

If I'm trying to figure out what to do about Burundi and the Russians are cozying up to this dictator, a war criminal, I'm going to be interested in that, but I don't think the Attorney General is going to be particularly interested in that at least for the purposes of doing her job, her day-to-day job.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

You know, I mentioned the number of the U.S. persons who happen to represent foreign entities [REDACTED], you know -- Secretary Kerry is a busy man, he's on the road a huge amount of the time. His negotiations are, you know, concentrated on particular issues, staff does a lot of preparatory work. You know, he would not need to know what the [REDACTED] is about to do on a given day. He would know that if something was going happen where he needed [REDACTED], I would be on the phone to him to make sure that he did that, because that would be his channel to be [REDACTED] my would be to my counterpart New York.

So I can actually think of a lot of scenarios, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] That I did get briefed on when I arrived, at least given a distillation of our approach. But, you know, a lot of that, you know, is seen to be tailored for the consumer, a single consumer and that is U.S./U.N., because we are in these negotiations, voting these resolutions. And I know the U.N. can sometimes feel very removed from like core national security issues, but you know, I negotiated the toughest sanctions resolution in 20 years against North Korea. Ambassador Haley has done an amazing job subsequently supplementing that. We hope that it will some effect at some point on that regime.

I negotiated the first ever body of international law dedicated to preventing ISIL from using, you know, financial conventional financial networks to move their money or selling oil on the free market in order to take those proceeds and use it to their dastardly end.

So, you know, whether it's that or you know, some peacekeeping mission

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

where civilian lives at stake like in South Sudan or in Central African Republic, whether it is Afghanistan where we have a political mission, you know, the -- or the U.N. I should say has a political mission. The range of issues that are being worked that have relevance to our interests is huge and the amount of collection really usefully is also huge. And so I think that from my situational awareness -- I think this exchange is really about [REDACTED] generally not specific to again that subset that references the U.S. person, but there is just a vast collection effort that is made. And then, you know, some of the other principals, [REDACTED] might be filtering out, you know a select piece of information that seems relevant for their next phone call with a foreign leader and so forth.

But for me my relevance is how can I on any given day optimize, you know, for the American people? And the one thing that troubles me about all of this and I know a lot is directed at -- even if it feels directed at me that it's really in the spirit of, you know, just trying to get this right and, you know, it warrants this level of attention. I don't think there's been enough intentionality around this process and I think that's what you all are very usefully introducing.

But the only thing I would appeal to you to bear in mind is anybody who provided me with either an answer to my question or information proactively, or in anticipation of a question, or anybody who just prepared themselves to be able to answer a question I might have, like maybe that, you know, we don't know what comprises this number, all they are trying to do is help me be the best version of myself. And they're acutely aware that I'm about to head into a meeting with President Obama, you know. And I just -- I want to be primed and if to the degree that, you know, this process, you know, gets attention and gets -- and evolves in some way and to the degree that more questions are asked either of the policy

[REDACTED]

consumer or of the individuals in the intelligence side, I just hope that that gets done in a manner that doesn't in any way suggest that anybody did anything wrong, because these people, you know, I'm behind the placard, you know, I'm on TV, I'm get to go hang out with Congressmen, you know, you never hear of these people, you know.

And I was saying earlier it was nice at the end of 8 years to get reintroduced to my kids and my family. These people, they are still doing it and they are going to be doing it for the rest of time, like, until they retire. And, you know, this is deserved attention to a process, but to the degree that anybody, you know, was asking more questions or trying to be better prepared, it was in service, not of a Democratic party objective, but of America's objectives at that time.

And I would want any Ambassador to be able to draw on, you know, a proactive, enthusiastic, determined, knowledgeable, you know, [REDACTED] base. I wanted Ambassador Haley to have access to that team of professionals that were just so dedicated, you know. I mean, sometimes I decided, I would wake up early on a Saturday morning, you know, unhappy about something that happened over night in Syria, and at 5:00 a.m. I would write [REDACTED] and say I am going to coming in, I want to read [REDACTED] about what's happening around Aleppo. And I would write [REDACTED] and I would get a response by, you know, 6:30, you know, it is going to take me some time to pull it together. You know, always at the beck and call of people like me and never just given the props frankly that they deserve.

So just in this as you go forward justly in asking these fair questions, I just -- when people are trying to be the best [REDACTED] they can possibly be and the best [REDACTED] support for the American Ambassador, we still, we want to

continue to have those resources at our disposal and to value that.

MR. GOWDY: Thank you. And thank you Eric for letting me go, I appreciate it.

MR. SWALWELL: Of course. And Trey in the spirit of the Chairman's cautionary tale about absolutes never heard a criticism public or private from me, in October or July of Director Comey.

MR. GOWDY: I purposefully did not use your name. I purposefully did not use your name.

MR. SWALWELL: But thank you, Trey.

Ambassador, if you lost the ability to request the name of a U.S. person as the U.N. Ambassador, would that impede your ability to address threats?

MS. POWER: Yes.

MR. SWALWELL: And Ambassador, I just want to clear up can you explain to us the respect that you would show for the privacy of U.S. persons?

MS. POWER: Um --

MR. SWALWELL: How important was it to you?

MS. POWER: It is sacred, the privacy of U.S. persons is sacred and any information I would obtain in any circumstance about U.S. persons is something that I would guard, you know, with the utmost determination and zeal. I mean, it's essential that the privacy of U.S. persons be protected.

MR. SWALWELL: Thank you. I yield back.

That's it, Madam Ambassador. Thank you for coming in.

MS. POWER: Oh, my God. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 1:10 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

