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Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
U.S. House of Representatives

June 11, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honorable Ellen McCarthy
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Intelligence and Research
United States Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Assistant Secretary McCarthy:

I write regarding the prepared written testimony of Dr. Rod Schoonover, a senior analyst in the Office of the Geographer and Global Issues at the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (State INR). As you know, Dr. Schoonover appeared in an open hearing before our Committee last Wednesday, June 5, on behalf of State INR to testify about the national security implications of climate change. Two other Intelligence Community (IC) analysts, representing the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) and the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), testified alongside Dr. Schoonover.

The Committee sincerely appreciated Dr. Schoonover's appearance and his science-based, analytic findings about the manifold and interlocking assessed dangers that future climate change impacts pose to U.S. national security interests. However, the circumstances surrounding the absence of Dr. Schoonover's written statement for the record (SFR) – including troubling public reports describing those circumstances published in the days since the open hearing – have left the Committee with deep concern that officials within the Executive Office of the President sought to suppress for political reasons Dr. Schoonover's and State INR's objective analysis about this urgent national security issue.

In preparation for the hearing, Committee staff were in close contact with representatives from both State INR and the Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, who repeatedly confirmed that Dr. Schoonover would submit a written SFR in advance of testifying, in accord with Committee practice and expectations for witnesses. In the days preceding the hearing, through the morning before, State's representatives confirmed to Committee staff in multiple

instances that Dr. Schoonover's draft SFR was in possession of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which was coordinating interagency comments.

Later that same evening, the night before the hearing, State Legislative Affairs informed Committee staff without explanation that, although Dr. Schoonover would still appear to testify, State INR would not be submitting any SFR at all.

After the hearing, both the Washington Post[1] and the New York Times[2] reported disturbing revelations about White House attempts to skew and demand politically-motivated changes of Dr. Schoonover's prepared testimony. An apparent draft version of Dr. Schoonover's testimony posted online by the New York Times[3] is rife with politically-driven comments and deletions from personnel from the Executive Office of the President, including National Security Council staff. These reports raise profound concerns that White House officials abused the interagency process in an effort to manipulate, remove, and ultimately suppress the independent, objective analysis State INR planned to present before the Committee on a matter of national urgency.

According to both outlets, State INR resisted the changes demanded by White House officials, which ultimately prevented Dr. Schoonover's written SFR from being delivered to the Committee. If these reports are accurate, I applaud your Bureau for standing by its analysts and the integrity of their work in the face of political pressure, but the Committee remains gravely concerned about the events surrounding Dr. Schoonover's withheld written testimony.

In light of these reports of undue White House interference in testimony before the Committee, and consistent with the Committee oversight jurisdiction of the Intelligence Community and its activities, including State INR, the Committee hereby requests:

- Testimony from you, or an appropriate senior representative from State INR, to address, among other issues: (1) the intelligence, evidentiary, and analytic bases for Dr. Schoonover's scientific analysis and related assessments; (2) communications with personnel within the Executive Office of the President, including officials on the National Security Council staff, OMB, and the White House Office of Legislative Affairs, involved in reviewing, editing, commenting on, and/or approving Dr. Schoonover's written testimony; and (3) State INR's policies and processes to protect the integrity and prevent the politicization of its intelligence analysis;

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[1] "White House blocked intelligence agency's written testimony calling climate change 'possibly catastrophic,'" by Juliet Eilperin, Josh Dawsey, and Brady Dennis, The Washington Post, June 8, 2019: https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2019/06/08/white-house-blocked-intelligence-aides-written-testimony-saying-human-caused-climate-change-could-be-possibly-catastrophic/

[2] "White House Tried to Stop Climate Science Testimony, Documents Show," by Lisa Friedman, The New York Times, June 8, 2019: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/08/climate/rod-schoonover-testimony.html

[3] https://int.nyt.com/data/documenthelper/1103-rod-schoonover-testimony/9ea6b07179b17035421f/optimized/full.pdf#page=1

- Production to the Committee of Dr. Schoonover's written testimony, as prepared for submission to the Committee prior to review from personnel within the Executive Office of the President, including officials from the offices cited above, as well as any and all edited versions of Dr. Schoonover's written testimony provided by the Executive Office of the President back to State INR;

- Production to the Committee of any and all communications, regardless of form and classification, of State INR personnel with personnel from the Executive Office of the President, including officials from the offices cited above—prior and subsequent to the Committee's June 5 hearing—to include any and all documents and other materials attached to or embedded within electronic correspondence, regarding: (1) the June 5 hearing; (2) Dr. Schoonover's written and/or oral testimony, including deliberations about whether Dr. Schoonover would be allowed to appear before the Committee; and (3) written and/or oral testimony of any of the other IC witnesses before the Committee.

The Committee appreciates and expects State INR's full and complete cooperation with the Committee's duly authorized oversight. State INR's production of the information, material, and testimony requested by the Committee is required under law, and, given the subject matter and U.S. government officials involved, cannot be withheld from the Committee for any legitimate reason. Absent compliance, the Committee is prepared to consider compulsory process.

The Committee would appreciate fulfillment of this request no later than the close of business on **June 21, 2019.** Should you have any questions about the request, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-7690.

Sincerely,

Adam B. Schiff
Chairman

Enclosure: Invitation to State INR to Testify Before HPSCI (May 29, 2019)