

Open Hearing on Russian Oligarchs and Impacts of U.S. Sanctions

Ranking Member Opening Statement

March 28, 2019

Today we will hear from a panel on Russian oligarchs. Challenges emanating from Russia have been an abiding topic of this committee for many years. In fact, under the Obama administration, committee Republicans repeatedly warned the administration, both privately and publicly, that more resources and better intelligence were needed to counter numerous threats to our national security from the Kremlin.

Our advice, however, was not heeded. The Obama administration's approach to Russia was characterized by misspelled "reset" buttons, direct promises of more flexibility after Obama's reelection, the scrapping of our missile defense plans in Poland and the Czech Republic at Russia's behest, and the ridicule of Mitt Romney for identifying Russia as our primary geopolitical foe, all under an administration that watched helplessly while Russia marched into Ukraine and annexed Crimea.

This Committee should be focused on intelligence oversight and making sure that the IC has the resources and authorities needed to protect the US. We should not be used as a platform to spread false information, and bizarre conspiracies. We have unique capabilities and authorities to do crucial oversight work that now, frankly speaking, is not being done adequately. This committee was created to oversee the intelligence community, not to serve as a tribune for launching frivolous accusations and investigations of one party's political opponents.