

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

January 19, 2021

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Mnuchin:

On January 11, 2021, the Department of the Treasury announced sanctions against Andriy Telizhenko for his role in a larger conspiracy to influence the 2020 presidential election.¹ As explained by the Department of the Treasury, since at least 2019, Russian Agent Andrii Derkach, who your Department imposed sanctions against on September 10, 2020, and his associates, including Telizhenko, “have leveraged U.S. media, U.S.-based social media platforms, and influential U.S. persons to spread misleading and unsubstantiated allegations that current and former U.S. officials engaged in corruption, money laundering, and unlawful political influence in Ukraine.”²

The imposition of sanctions on Mr. Telizhenko was long overdue. However, I am deeply concerned that the Department of the Treasury did not sanction him sooner, particularly given that the Department was apparently aware that he was a key figure in Derkach’s conspiracy.³ In fact, rather than designating Mr. Telizhenko when the Department designated Mr. Derkach, the Department appears to have expeditiously cooperated with a Senate Republican investigation it knew to be predicated on Mr. Telizhenko’s baseless claims.

The Department of the Treasury assisted the Senate Republicans’ politically-motivated investigation by responding to multiple requests for information. Treasury provided this information despite the fact the investigation was directly premised in part on Mr. Telizhenko’s misinformation, and did so at a time when the Treasury knew or should have known of Telizhenko’s ties to Russian intelligence figures.

Beginning in late 2019, the Republican Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Ron Johnson, and the Republican Chairman of the Committee on

¹ *Treasury Takes Further Action Against Russian-linked Actors*, January 11, 2021, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm1232>.

² *Id.*

³ *Treasury Sanctions Russia-Linked Election Interference Actors*, September 10, 2020, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm1118>.

Finance, Chuck Grassley, conducted an unprecedented election-year investigation of President-elect Biden and his family. This investigation attempted to give credibility to disinformation by Mr. Telizhenko and Derkach for the sole purpose of boosting Donald Trump's re-election campaign. Chairman Johnson and Chairman Grassley received documents from Mr. Telizhenko and referenced his allegations at least 42 times in letters related to the investigation, and Chairman Johnson and his staff met with Mr. Telizhenko for hours to discuss his disinformation.⁴

Given Mr. Telizhenko's centrality to the Chairmen's investigation, I am disappointed and concerned that the Department of the Treasury did not act to curb this malign influence on our election by sanctioning Mr. Telizhenko, a known associate of Mr. Derkach pushing the same disinformation as him, at the same time that it announced that Mr. Derkach was sanctioned.⁵ Furthermore, it is alarming that the Department of the Treasury provided documents in furtherance of the Chairmen's efforts despite the fact Treasury knew or should have known the Chairmen were likely being "leveraged" by Russian intelligence-linked actors to "to spread misleading and unsubstantiated allegations that current and former U.S. officials engaged in corruption, money laundering, and unlawful political influence in Ukraine."⁶ In fact, Treasury's most recent response was dated January 15, 2021, four days after the sanctions against Telizhenko were announced. Treasury not only provided this information to the Republican Chairmen, it did so with extraordinary speed, bypassing or ignoring pending requests for information from Democrats in the process.

The Department of the Treasury's January 11 press release notes that Mr. Telizhenko's "efforts [were] consistent with and in support of [Mr.] Derkach's efforts, acting as an agent of the Russian intelligence services, to influence the 2020 U.S. Presidential election."⁷

Before leaving office on January 20, 2021, please clarify why the Department of the Treasury did not sanction Mr. Telizhenko four months ago at the same time that Mr. Derkach was

⁴ Letter from Chairmen Johnson and Grassley to Attorney General Barr (Sept. 27, 2019) (3 mentions), [<https://www.grassley.senate.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09-27%20CEG%20RHJ%20to%20DOJ%20%28Ukraine%20DNC%29.pdf>]; Letter from Chairmen Johnson and Grassley to the National Archives and Records Administration (Nov. 21, 2019) (5 mentions), [<https://www.grassley.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2019-11-21%20RHJ%20CEG%20to%20NARA%20-%20White%20House%20Meeting%20Recrds.pdf>]; Letter from Chairman Johnson to Ranking Member Peters (Feb. 24, 2020) (17 mentions), [<https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2020-0224%20RHJ%20to%20GCP%20re%20Andrii%20Telizhenko%20subpoena.pdf>]; Letter from Chairman Johnson to HSGAC Committee Members (Mar. 1, 2020) (12 mentions), [<https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2020-03-01%20RHJ%20Letter%20to%20HSGAC%20members.pdf>]; Letter from Chairmen Johnson and Grassley to Ranking Members Peters and Wyden (July 28, 2020) (5 mentions), [<https://www.grassley.senate.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07-28%20RHJ-CEG%20Letter%20to%20Peters-Wyden%20%28Defensive%20Briefing%29.pdf>]; *Sen. Johnson, ally of Trump and Ukraine, surfaces in crucial episodes in the saga*, WASHINGTON POST, Oct. 28, 2019, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/sen-johnson-ally-of-trump-and-ukraine-surfaces-in-crucial-episodes-in-the-saga/2019/10/28/40b9e44c-f684-11e9-8cf0-4cc99f74d127_story.html].

⁵ *Treasury Sanctions Russia-Linked Election Interference Actors*, September 10, 2020, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm1118>.

⁶ *Treasury Takes Further Action Against Russian-linked Actors*, January 11, 2021, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm1232>.

⁷ *Id.*

sanctioned, and instead waited until *after* the 2020 presidential election to do so. Furthermore, please preserve the following documents:

1. All documents related to the production of information by the Department of the Treasury, including in particular documents held by the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, to the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee from January 21, 2017 to present.
2. All documents related to the eleven individuals and four entities identified as part of a Russia-linked foreign influence network, including but not limited to Andrii Derkach and Andriy Telizhenko, as announced in Treasury Department press releases on September 10, 2020 and January 11, 2021.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
Ranking Member