Opinion
News
Editorial

by NCR Editorial Staff

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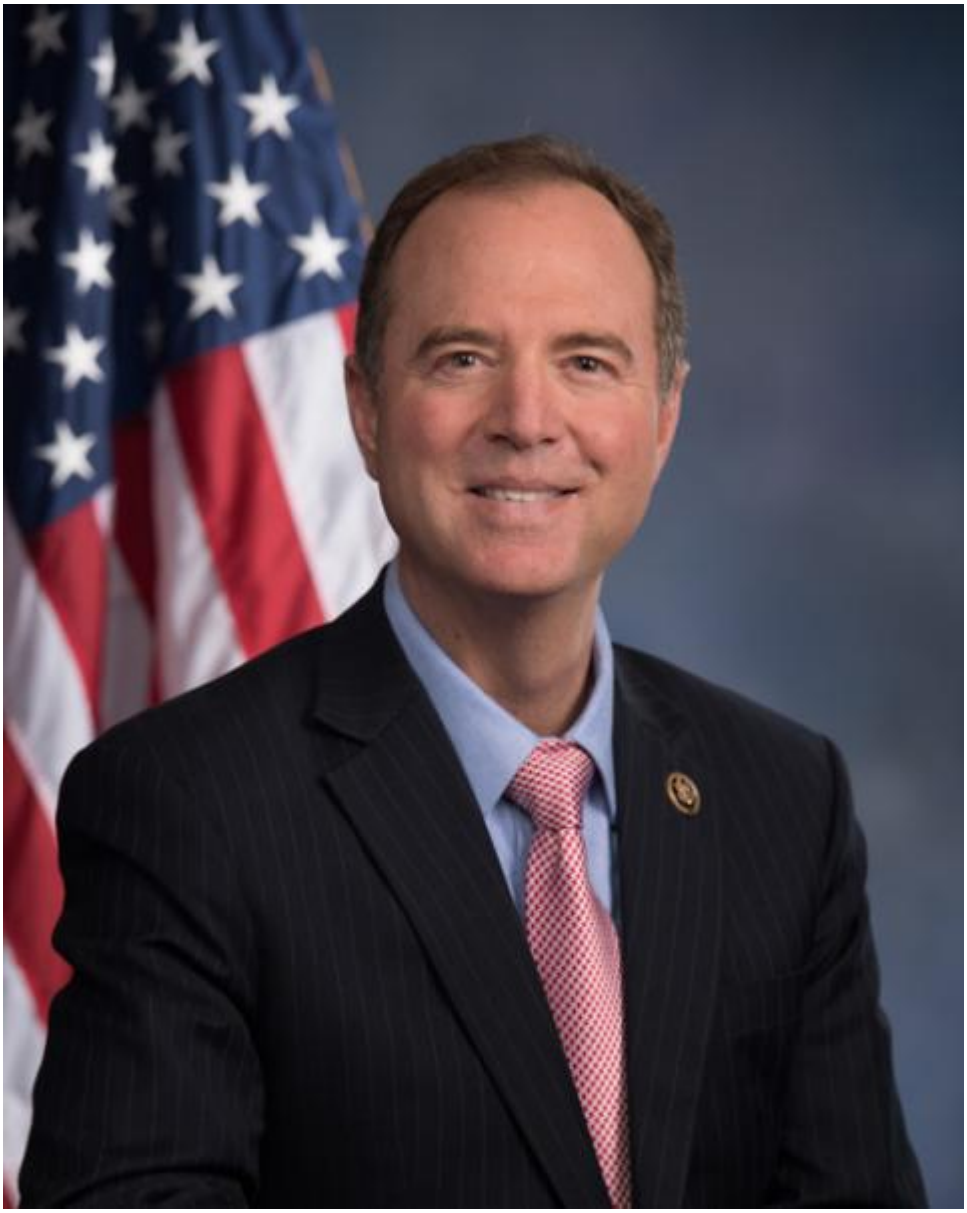
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Last week, Attorney General William Barr quoted from the report by special prosecutor Robert Mueller into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election: "[T]he investigation did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities." While we await the release of the full report, it is important to resist the claims from President Donald Trump and his allies that this is a complete vindication.

By week's end, Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, reminded his colleagues and the country that whether Mueller found evidence of criminal wrongdoing or not, there are lots of things we have learned about the president's campaign that remain morally suspect and ethically suspect and require a full airing. He repeatedly said, "I don't think that's OK" to a long list of wrongdoings about which we know from court filings: The failure to go to the FBI when Russian agents first contacted the campaign, sharing sensitive polling data with foreign agents, and urging a hostile non-state actor, Wikileaks, to interfere in the election by hacking into the emails of prominent Democrats.



Rep. Adam Schiff (https://schiff.house.gov)

He concluded his broadside: "You might think it's OK that the national security adviser-designate secretly conferred with a Russian ambassador about undermining U.S. sanctions, and you might think it's OK he lied about it to the FBI. You might say that's all OK, you might say, 'That that's just what you need to do to win.' But I don't think it's OK. I think it's immoral, I think it's unethical, I think it's unpatriotic and, yes, I think it's corrupt, and evidence of collusion."

The Constitution does not define "high crimes and misdemeanors." The phrase is a political designation as much as a legal one. Nor is the word "collusion" a legal term. Intent, a critical part of any criminal proceeding, is difficult to prove against a man

whose public personality suggests the maturity of a 10- year-old. It will be up to the voters to decide whether the president's narrative or Schiff's is more accurate, and more consistent with our nation's ideals.

We side with Schiff. His speech to members of his committee is memorable and anchors the committee once again in the principles that recently have been seriously compromised.

From CSPAN, a video of the speech:

> .@RepAdamSchiff: "You might say that's all okay. You might say that's just what you need to do to win, but I don't think it's okay. I think it's immoral. I think it's unethical. I think it's unpatriotic. And yes, I think it's corrupt and evidence of collusion." pic.twitter.com/AaO59iriAI
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> — CSPAN (@cspan) March 28, 2019

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