

CONGRESSIONAL INTEGRITY PROJECT

March 21, 2024

The Honorable James Comer
Chairman, House Committee on Oversight and Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Comer:

It seems apparent to everyone but you that your impeachment inquiry into President Biden is essentially dead. After over a year of relentlessly investigating President Biden, you and your colleagues have failed to find a single shred of evidence of wrongdoing by him, let alone anything that rises to the level of impeachment. You yourself have even conceded that after all this time and investigations, the GOP-controlled House might not vote to impeach President Biden.¹ It is time to move on.

We are writing to assist you in your efforts to hold actual corrupt government officials accountable for business deals with foreign adversaries that demonstrate a disturbing willingness to put personal interests ahead of our national security. At your most recent hearing, you indicated an eagerness to investigate influence peddling in our federal government. We are confident the potential conflicts of interest we have identified below are of vital importance to anyone with a sincere desire to prevent corrupt business deals from influencing U.S. foreign policy.

Throughout your impeachment investigation into President Biden and his family, you have repeatedly expressed concern about influence peddling, particularly in regards to our adversaries. In May, you stated plainly “the American people need to know” if our nation’s leaders “sold out the United States of America” for profit.² In media appearances, you shared your deeply held concerns about political leaders allegedly using their public office to “engage in influence

¹ Eric Kelly, *Rep. James Comer: Biden impeachment vote may not happen*, Spectrum News 1 (Feb. 16, 2024), <https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2024/02/15/comer--biden-impeachment-vote-may-not-happen->.

² House Committee on Oversight and Accountability Press Release (May 3, 2023), Grassley, Comer Demand FBI Record Alleging Criminal Scheme Involving Then-VP Biden, <https://oversight.house.gov/release/grassley-comer-demand-fbi-record-alleging-criminal-scheme-involving-then-vp-biden/>.

peddling with our adversaries . . . most [concerningly], China.”³ You further stated that government officials seeking to curry favor from foreign governments for personal gain would be especially problematic because it presents a clear “national security risk” to the United States.⁴

To that end, we feel it our duty to make you aware of clear conflicts of interest involving foreign adversaries carried out by then White House Senior Advisor Jared Kushner, a staffer so involved in executing the nation’s foreign policy he was labeled a “shadow Secretary of State.”⁵ During his time in the White House, Kushner held secret meetings with foreign officials which he failed to coordinate with or report to the National Security Council.⁶ Simultaneously, his family “courted state-connected investors in China and the Middle East” to bail out his family’s business.⁷

Moreover, in the Trump administration’s first year, “a real estate firm tied to the Kushner family made a direct appeal to the government of Qatar to invest” in a financially troubled property.⁸ A firm closely connected to the government of Qatar gave the Kushner family business \$1 billion after Qatari officials reportedly suggested Kushner’s support for a Saudi-led blockade of Qatar was retaliation for the government’s refusal to do the business deal.⁹

Upon leaving the White House, Jared Kushner’s business received a \$2 billion investment from a Saudi investment firm.¹⁰ Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who once bragged that Jared Kushner was “in his pocket,”¹¹ ensured the \$2 billion loan was approved despite the fact that the investment “encountered skepticism from Public Investment Fund officials.”¹²

³ ‘Sunday Morning Futures with Maria Bartiromo’, *Biden family was influence peddling with US adversaries: Rep. James Comer*, Fox News (Dec. 4, 2022), <https://www.foxnews.com/video/6316573410112>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Stef W. Kight, *The shadow Secretary of State*, Axios (May 29, 2017), <https://www.axios.com/2017/12/15/the-shadow-secretary-of-state-1513301526>.

⁶ Shane Harris et al., *Kushner’s overseas contacts raise concerns as foreign officials seek leverage*, The Washington Post (Jan. 27, 2018), https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/kushners-overseas-contacts-raise-concerns-as-foreign-officials-look-for-leverage/2018/02/27/16bbc052-18c3-11e8-942d-16a950029788_story.html.

⁷ Eric Lipton et al., *Those Foreign Business Ties? The Trump Sons Have Plenty Too*, The New York Times (Jan. 20, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/11/us/politics/donald-trump-jr-eric-trump-business.html>.

⁸ Jay Willis, *How Don Jr., Ivanka, and Eric Trump Have Profited Off Their Dad’s Presidency*, QG (Oct. 14, 2019), <https://www.gq.com/story/trump-kids-profit-presidency>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Kate Kelly and David D. Kirkpatrick, *House Panel Examining Jared Kushner Over Saudi Investment in New Firm*, The New York Times (Jun. 2, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/02/us/politics/jared-kushner-house-investigation.html>.

¹¹ Alex Emmons et al., *Saudi Crown Prince Boasted That Jared Kushner Was “In His Pocket”*, The Intercept (Mar. 21, 2018), <https://theintercept.com/2018/03/21/jared-kushner-saudi-crown-prince-mohammed-bin-salman/>.

¹² Kate Kelly and David D. Kirkpatrick, *House Panel Examining Jared Kushner Over Saudi Investment in New Firm*, The New York Times (Jun. 2, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/02/us/politics/jared-kushner-house-investigation.html>.

Alarming, foreign officials from nations including China and the United Arab Emirates had “privately discussed ways they can manipulate Jared Kushner...by taking advantage of his complex business arrangements [and] financial difficulties.”¹³ Likely as a result of these glaring potential conflicts of interest, two career security specialists rejected Jared Kushner’s request for a top-secret clearance¹⁴, but President Trump overruled them.¹⁵

Another White House Senior Advisor, Ivanka Trump, pursued corrupt business deals with foreign adversaries that surely merits your scrutiny. While handling a White House portfolio that “include[d] interacting with heads of state and working with...international corporate chiefs on economic programs,”¹⁶ she “retained a stake in the family business” in addition to her fashion brands.¹⁷

Due to your special concern about foreign entanglements with China, we want to make you aware that the communist government awarded Ivanka “three preliminary trademark approvals for jewelry, handbags and spa services” on the exact same day she and President Trump dined with Chinese President Xi Jinping.¹⁸ By May of 2018, China gave Ivanka Trump “seven new trademarks across a broad collection of businesses, including books, housewares and cushions” that she applied for while holding an influential government position.¹⁹

Moreover, newly discovered records indicate foreign government officials from nations including China, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia “spent more than \$750,000 at former president Donald Trump’s hotel in Washington as they were trying to influence his administration.”²⁰ As you are

¹³ Shane Harris et al., *Kushner’s overseas contacts raise concerns as foreign officials seek leverage*, The Washington Post (Jan. 27, 2018), https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/kushners-overseas-contacts-raise-concerns-as-foreign-officials-look-for-leverage/2018/02/27/16bbc052-18c3-11e8-942d-16a950029788_story.html.

¹⁴ Laura Strickler et al., *Officials rejected Jared Kushner for top secret security clearance, but were overruled*, NBC News (Jan. 24, 2019), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/officials-rejected-jared-kushner-top-secret-security-clearance-were-overruled-n962221>.

¹⁵ Maggie Haberman et al., *Trump Ordered Officials to Give Jared Kushner a Security Clearance*, The New York Times (Feb. 28, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/28/us/politics/jared-kushner-security-clearance.html>.

¹⁶ Noah Bierman and Chris Megerian, *Trump’s children take in millions overseas as president slams Biden’s son*, Los Angeles Times (Oct. 10, 2019), <https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2019-10-10/trumps-adult-children-do-business-overseas-as-president-slams-biden>.

¹⁷ Eric Lipton et al., *Those Foreign Business Ties? The Trump Sons Have Plenty Too*, The New York Times (Jan. 20, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/11/us/politics/donald-trump-jr-eric-trump-business.html>.

¹⁸ Noah Bierman and Chris Megerian, *Trump’s children take in millions overseas as president slams Biden’s son*, Los Angeles Times (Oct. 10, 2019), <https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2019-10-10/trumps-adult-children-do-business-overseas-as-president-slams-biden>.

¹⁹ Sui-Lee Wee, *Ivanka Trump Wins China Trademarks, Then Her Father Vows to Save ZTE*, The New York Times (May 28, 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/28/business/ivanka-trump-china-trademarks.html>.

²⁰ Jacqueline Alemany, *Foreign governments spent over \$750,000 at Trump hotel, report shows*, The Washington Post (Nov. 14, 2022), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/11/14/trump-hotel-foreign-government-spending/>.

surely aware, former President Trump refused to divest from his business while president, effectively opening himself up to bribes from foreign adversaries.²¹

If you are still interested in oversight and accountability as you have repeatedly claimed, looking into the Trump family influence peddling would be a great next step. You and your committee finally have the free time to devote your considerable, taxpayer funded resources to follow up on promises to investigate possible influence peddling by Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and the former president's three eldest children, Ivanka, Don Jr., and Eric, while Donald Trump was in the White House.

While we acknowledge it will be difficult to conduct proper oversight of all the corrupt business deals with foreign adversaries carried out by former President Trump and his family during their time in office with your limited time and resources, we are hopeful this letter has brought to your attention a small portion of the many concerning arrangements worth investigating. As you have made clear, such unethical behavior from these high ranking officials directly threatens our national security. Should you desire more examples of the damning evidence implicating President Trump and his family in influence peddling with foreign adversaries, we stand ready to assist you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle Herrig". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Kyle Herrig, Executive Director

Congressional Integrity Project

80 M Street SE

Washington, DC 20003

²¹ Andy Sullivan et al., *Trump says won't divest from his business while president*, Reuters (Jan. 11, 2017), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-finance/trump-says-wont-divest-from-his-business-while-president-id-USKBN14V21I>.