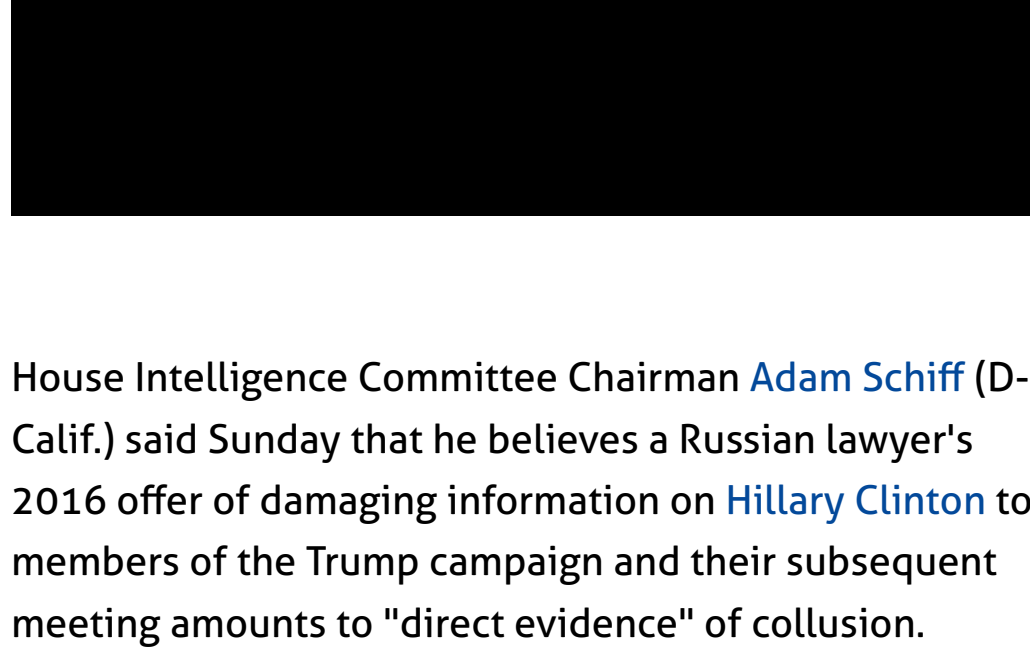


March 03, 2019 - 11:26 AM EST

Schiff claims there's already 'direct evidence' of collusion by Trump campaign

BY **BRETT SAMUELS**

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House Intelligence Committee Chairman **Adam Schiff** (D-Calif.) said Sunday that he believes a Russian lawyer's 2016 offer of damaging information on **Hillary Clinton** to members of the Trump campaign and their subsequent meeting amounts to "direct evidence" of collusion.

"I think there is direct evidence in the emails from the Russians through their intermediary offering dirt on Hillary Clinton as part of what is described in writing as the Russian government effort to help elect Donald Trump," Schiff said on CBS's "Face the Nation," in response to a question about collusion.

"They offer that dirt. There is an acceptance of that offer in writing from the president's son, Don Jr., and there is overt acts and furtherance of that," he added, citing a summer 2016 meeting at Trump Tower between the Russian lawyer and members of the president's team.

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"That to me is direct evidence," Schiff continued. "But there's also abundant circumstantial evidence."

He pointed to charges against former Trump campaign chairman **Paul Manafort** and former Trump attorney Michael Cohen's testimony as examples.

Rep. Adam Schiff says the emails from Russians offering the Trump campaign dirt on Hillary Clinton are "direct evidence" of collusion <https://t.co/QheikiQQOI> <pic.twitter.com/Q6l06nKLzp>

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— CBS News (@CBSNews) **March 3, 2019**

The Trump Tower meeting has remained a flashpoint in investigations into Russian interference in the 2016 election. **Donald Trump Jr.** initially said the meeting was focused on Russian adoption policy and that it was a waste of time, but the president last August **confirmed** that the meeting was meant to gather damaging information on his then-opponent.

Schiff stopped short of indicating that the evidence amounts to a case for impeachment, saying it's not yet clear there's evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that the president engaged in a criminal conspiracy. He said he intends to wait for the special counsel and congressional investigators to present their findings.

Schiff's committee concluded its investigation into Russian interference last year, but Schiff disputed the conclusion that there was no collusion reached by Republicans who were at that point leading the investigation.

The Senate Intelligence Committee chairman has said his panel, which is still investigating Russia's election interference and possible collusion, after two years of looking has yet to find direct proof of collusion, and Cohen also testified to Congress last week that he does not believe **President Trump** colluded with Russia.

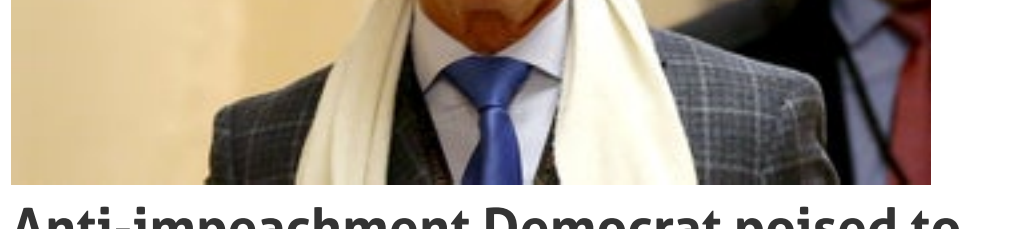
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Trump on Saturday **derided Schiff** over his pursuit of investigations into the president, taking aim at the congressman during a two-hour speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference.

— Updated 2:24 p.m.

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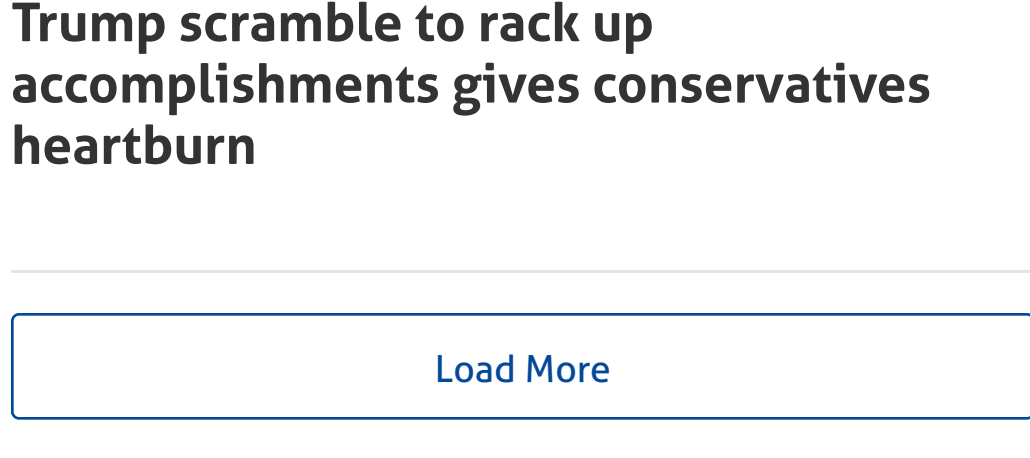
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