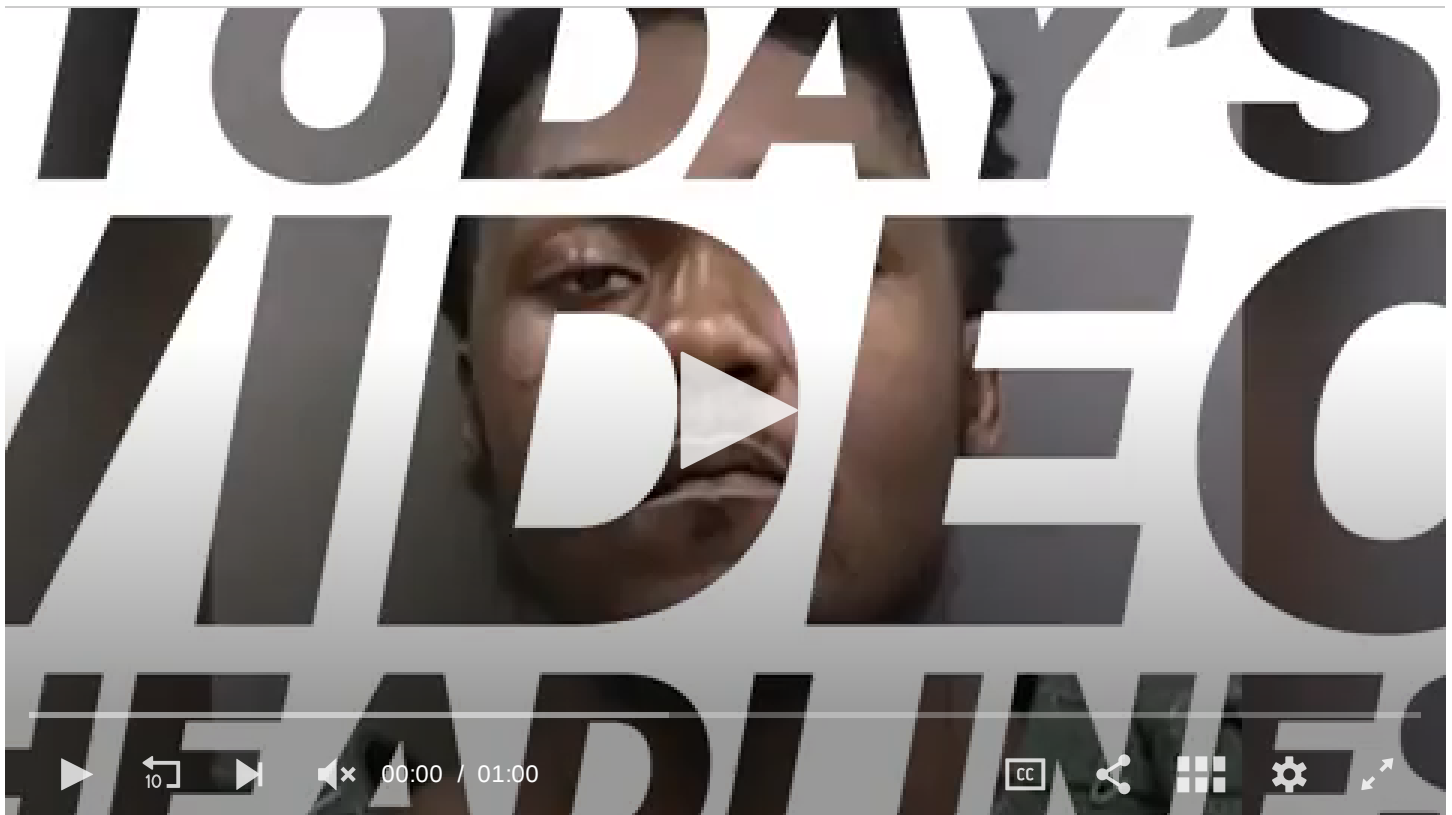


**NEWS**

Ex-CIA chief spills on how he got spies to write false Hunter Biden laptop letter to ‘help Biden’

By **Miranda Devine**

April 20, 2023 | 6:45pm | Updated

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Joe Biden's presidential campaign prompted former acting CIA Director Mike Morell to "help Biden" by organizing 50 colleagues to sign a letter in October 2020 **falsely claiming that damning emails from Hunter Biden's laptop** published by The Post were Russian disinformation.

In private sworn testimony, Morell told the House Judiciary Committee that Antony Blinken, now secretary of state, was the **senior campaign official who reached out to him** "on or before" Oct. 17, 2020, three days after The Post published an email from the laptop suggesting Hunter had introduced his Ukrainian business partner to his father, then-Vice President Biden.

Morell, identified as a potential CIA director under Biden, said he organized the letter to "help Vice President Biden ... because I wanted him to win the election."

Until Blinken's call, Morell told House investigators, he had no intention of writing any statement exonerating Biden.

But he agreed that the conversation with Blinken "triggered ... that intent" in him.

At 10:53 p.m. the night of the call, Blinken emailed Morell a USA Today article claiming that the FBI was examining whether Hunter's laptop was part of a "disinformation campaign."



Morell said Antony Blinken reached out to him about the letter.

Getty Images

At the bottom of Blinken's email was the signature block of Andrew Bates, then-director of rapid response for the Biden campaign.

Morell said he did "a little bit of my own research," then reached out to retired CIA senior operations officer Marc Polymeropoulos for assistance in compiling the letter discrediting The Post's reporting.

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Over the next two days, Morell gathered signatures from 51 former intelligence officials, including himself and four other former CIA directors, including John Brennan and Leon

Panetta.

Morell testified that he sent an email telling Nick Shapiro, former deputy chief of staff to Brennan, that the Biden campaign wanted the statement to go to a particular reporter at the Washington Post and that he should send the statement to the campaign as well.

Morell did not recall why he told Shapiro the campaign wanted the statement to go to this reporter first and admitted that he may have spoken to the campaign on another occasion.

In the end, Shapiro **took the letter to Politico**, which published it on Oct. 19 under the headline: "**Hunter Biden story is Russian disinfo**, dozens of former officials say."

The letter alleged that the New York Post story "has all the classic earmarks of a Russian information operation."

The letter was used by candidate Joe Biden during the Oct. 22 debate against President Donald Trump to deflect accusations about his involvement in his family's international influence-peddling operation, which had garnered millions of dollars from China and Ukraine while he was vice president.



The Hunter Biden laptop story was published by The Post on Oct. 17, 2020.

AFP via Getty Images

It was also used to try to discredit The Post's reporting that had embarrassed candidate Biden by contradicting his claims during the campaign that he had never spoken to his son about his overseas business dealings.

Morell testified that after the debate, he received a call from Steve Ricchetti, chairman of the Biden campaign, to thank him for writing the statement.

"He was the head of the Biden campaign at the time ... Steve thanked me for putting the statement out. And that was the extent of the conversation."



The Biden campaign organized the letter that the Hunter Biden laptop story was Russian disinformation.

Getty Images

The thank-you call with Ricchetti was organized by fellow signatory Jeremy Bash, "who I work with at Beacon [Beacon Global Strategies] and who is active politically," Morell testified.

Bash, Panetta's former chief of staff-turned-MSNBC security analyst, was later appointed by President Biden to a prestigious role on his President's Intelligence Advisory Board.



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Morell did not become CIA director.

In a letter to Blinken sent Thursday, Judiciary Chairman Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) and Rep. Michael Turner (R-Ohio), chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, wrote: “We are examining the origins of the infamous public statement signed by 51 former intelligence officials that falsely discredited a New York Post story regarding Hunter Biden’s laptop as supposed Russian disinformation.”

“Subsequent reporting revealed that the New York Post story was not, as the public statement claimed and then-Vice President Biden parroted, part of a ‘Russian information operation.’

“This revelation nearly two years after the fact, however, was little consolation.

“The concerted efforts to dismiss the serious allegations in the Post’s reporting and to suppress any discussion of the story played a substantial role in the 2020 election.”

Jordan and Turner told Blinken they were requesting his assistance because they “have learned that you played a role in the inception of this statement while serving as a Biden campaign advisor ...

“It is apparent that the Biden campaign played an active role in the origins of the public statement, which had the effect of helping to suppress the Hunter Biden story and preventing American citizens from making a fully informed decision during the 2020 presidential election ...

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“This concerted effort to minimize and suppress public dissemination of the serious allegations about the Biden family was a grave disservice to all American citizens’ informed participation in our democracy.”

Jordan and Turner have asked Blinken to hand over all documents and communications relating to the letter and provide the House with the identities of everyone involved in its “inception, drafting, editing, signing, publishing, or promotion.”

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