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- October 3, 2021 -

Letter to the Pulitzer Prizes

Re: Demand for Revocation of the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting

Dear Mr. Kliment:

I call on the Pulitzer Prize Board to immediately rescind the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting awarded to the staffs of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, which was based on false reporting of a non-existent link between the Kremlin and the Trump Campaign. As has been widely publicized, the coverage was no more than a politically motivated farce which attempted to spin a false narrative that my campaign supposedly colluded with Russia despite a complete lack of evidence underpinning this allegation.

When the Board announced the prize, it lauded the recipients “for deeply sourced, relentlessly reported coverage in the public interest that dramatically furthered the nations’ understanding of Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election and its connections to the Trump campaign, the President-elect’s transition team, and his eventual administration.” Specifically, the prize was awarded for a series of articles centered around the now-debunked Russia collusion conspiracy theory. The headlines themselves were extremely sensational and leaned heavily on unsubstantiated anonymous sources. For example, much of the information contained in these articles were credited to “people with knowledge,” “current and former officials,” “some senior U.S. officials,” and other vaguely defined individuals. As a result, the public was deprived of an independent means of assessing their credibility, their potential for political bias, and the source of their knowledge.

For two years, these institutions feverishly pushed one Russia story after another and – despite lacking any credible evidence – attempted to persuade the public that my campaign had colluded with the Russian government. Contemporaneously with that reporting, numerous conservative news outlets and commentators questioned the legitimacy of these reports, exposing the clear logical fallacies

contained in their narratives and pointing to the clear lack of evidence underpinning them.

It has since been confirmed that the allegations were false and I have been exonerated of these charges. Most recently, John Durham's indictment of former cybersecurity attorney and Hillary Clinton Campaign attorney, Michael Sussman, serves as a damning repudiation of the media's obsession with the collusion story. The indictment pointedly accuses Mr. Sussman of making false statements to the FBI when he presented "evidence" purporting to show secret communications between my organization and the Russia-based Alfa Bank. At the time, Mr. Sussman assured the FBI that he was providing this information of his own accord, and not at the behest of any particular individual or entity. The indictment reveals, however, that Mr. Sussman was working with other Democrats and billing his time to the Clinton campaign. Importantly, the indictment reinforces the falsehood of the Alfa Bank connection, stating that "the FBI's investigation revealed that the e-mail server at issue was not owned or operated by the Trump Organization but, rather, had been administered by a mass marketing email company that send advertisements for Trump hotels and hundreds of other clients."

For over a century, the Pulitzer Prize has been widely recognized as a significant achievement in the field of journalism. It has been viewed by many as an honor that is meant to be bestowed upon well-deserving recipients in recognition of their groundbreaking journalistic efforts. This level of reverence carries with it a very important connotation, namely that the reporting itself is inherently deemed credible, well-sourced and trustworthy. Given this powerful presumption, there is a heavy burden to ensure that these works are continuously and closely examined as to the veracity of the information contained therein. When it becomes apparent that a Pulitzer Prize-winning work was based on shoddy, dubious and manifestly false reporting – as is the case here – the Pulitzer Prize Board must react accordingly.

Ultimately, my hope is that the recipients of the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, will voluntarily surrender this award in light of recent revelations. However, should they fail to do so, I would expect that you will take the necessary steps to rectify the situation, including stripping the recipients of their prize and retracting the false statements which remain on the Pulitzer website. Without holding the recipients to such a high standard of accountability, the integrity of the Pulitzer Prize namesake stands to be wholly compromised.

Sincerely,

Donald J. Trump

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