

CHUCK GRASSLEY FINALLY SHOWS CONCERN ABOUT PARALLEL CONSTRUCTION — AFFECTING TRUMP

As I've said repeatedly, I think Chuck Grassley's concerns about the Steele dossier — and FBI's refusal to answer questions about it — generally have merit. That continues with his latest letter to FBI.

Effectively, he's worried that because Steele shared the dossier with MI6, the FBI might effectively be parallel constructing intelligence that ultimately came from Steele, and so from a oppo research dossier.

There is another concern about Mr. Steele's and Fusion GPS's work that the FBI needs to address. Public reports indicate that the FBI received the dossier and has used it in the Russia investigation. However, it appears that the FBI, the media, and various Congressional offices were not the only recipients of the dossier prior to its publication. In court filings by Mr. Steele's attorneys in London, he admitted that he had passed at least some contents of the dossier to at least one foreign government — the United Kingdom.^[1]

Media reports have also claimed that foreign governments passed along information to the United States about purported contacts between Trump associates and Russians. Given that Mr. Steele also distributed the dossier's contents to at least one foreign

government, it is possible that this political dossier's collusion allegations, or related allegations originating via Mr. Steele, may have also been surreptitiously funneled into U.S. intelligence streams through foreign intelligence sharing. If so, that foreign information would likely have ended up within the FBI's investigation of allegations of collusion between Trump associates and Russia. However, given that foreign intelligence agencies carefully guard their sources and methods, it may not have been clear to the FBI that the foreign reporting was actually based on the work of Mr. Steele and Fusion GPS.

If this in fact happened, it would be alarming. Mr. Steele's dossier allegations might appear to be "confirmed" by foreign intelligence, rather than just an echo of the same "research" that Fusion bought from Steele and that the FBI reportedly also attempted to buy from Steele. It is even more alarming in light of what we are learning about the allegedly unregistered Russian foreign agents who Fusion GPS and Glenn Simpson were working with to undermine the Magnitsky Act and who met with Trump family and campaign officials last summer.

The Committee must understand what steps the FBI has taken to ensure that any foreign information it received and used in the Russia investigation, beyond the dossier itself, was not ultimately sourced to Mr. Steele, his associates such as Fusion GPS, or his sub-sources.

It's a fair point – as mentioned, he's effectively describing parallel construction, which the FBI uses all the time to hide the ultimate source for its evidence on defendants (though usually, that process involves obtaining

subpoenas to hide what kind of foreign intelligence it relies on).

So I'm grateful the Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee has finally decided to turn his focus on a process that is badly abused, to the detriment of due process in this country.

I just wish he expressed the same concern for less famous targets, rather than just the President.