

REMINDER: THE GUY KILLING THE HPSCI INVESTIGATION WAS PART OF TRUMP'S TROUBLED TRANSITION TEAM

Over the weekend, the WaPo had an article on all the things Devin Nunes is doing to kill the House Intelligence Committee investigation into Trump's cooperation with Russia during the election. It started like this:

Rep. Devin Nunes, once sidelined by an ethics inquiry from leading the House Intelligence Committee's Russia probe, is reasserting the full authority of his position as chairman just as the GOP appears poised to challenge special counsel Robert S. Mueller III's investigation of possible coordination between the Trump campaign and Russian officials.

The California Republican was cleared in December of allegations he improperly disclosed classified information while accusing the Obama administration of exposing the identities of Trump affiliates on surveillance reports. Since clearing his name, Nunes has stepped up his attacks on Mueller's team and the law enforcement agencies around it, including convening a group of Intelligence Committee Republicans to draft a likely report on "corruption" among the investigators working for the special counsel.

And ended like this:

Nunes, meanwhile, appears to have made

up his mind about the House Intelligence Committee probe into the allegations surrounding Trump and Russia, expressing his convictions in an interview with Fox News.

“We have no evidence of Russia collusion between the Trump campaign” and Russia, Nunes said.

I’ll save you the click and answer the question you should be asking: did this 1400 word article on Nunes’ attempts to kill his committee’s investigation make any mention of the fact that Nunes served on Trump’s Transition Team?

The answer, as it so routinely has been when people treat Nunes’ opinion about whether there was “collusion” between the Trump campaign and Russia as a credible opinion, is no. No, the WaPo didn’t think it relevant to mention that Nunes was a key figure in the transition process that has since become a close focus of the Mueller investigation. Indeed, Nunes was involved in both efforts to shield members of Congress and Transition officials when they do Bibi Netanyahu’s bidding. And if he didn’t use his Congressional email address during the transition (in which case Mueller would probably give it great deference), he might well be among the 13 officials whose emails Mueller’s team obtained from GSA, which has been the latest panic that Nunes has fed.

In short, Nunes was in the thick of things, and he should no more be treated as a credible judge of whether there was collusion going on in the casino than Mike Flynn Jr or Don Jr or Trump himself. While I don’t imagine Nunes is in any legal difficulty, he was nevertheless part of efforts to hijack US policy before Trump became President and some of his obstruction since then has served to distract attention that the Transition Team did so.

And it’s not just WaPo’s news page that seems to have ignored this detail. So has Greg Sargent,

in a piece assessing the likelihood HPSCI Democrats would do their own report laying out all the ways Nunes obstructed a legitimate inquiry. You'd think you'd point those two points together: *that* Nunes obstructed the inquiry *because* he's tangentially a subject of it.

This should be a really basic thing: Nunes may have been cleared of leaking. But he is still making key decisions on an investigation into actions targeting an organization he participated in. Naming HPSCI Chair Nunes to his Transition Team might be the most competent aspect of Trump's cover-up, by far.

That's the story here.