

THE HOLE IN THE HPSCI EXONERATION: TRUMP'S HIRING OF MIKE FLYNN

I'll have a lot to say about HPSCI's attempt to exonerate Trump in their Russia report released today. But for now I want to point to a big hole in it.

After laying out the four members of HPSCI complains (for the most part, fairly) that DOJ didn't warn Trump about the four members of his staff who were viewed as a CI problem.

The Committee found that the Trump campaign was not notified that members of the campaign were potential counterintelligence concerns. This lack of notification meant that the campaign was unable to address the problems with each campaign member and was ignorant about the potential national security concerns. AG Lynch recalled that, during her first meeting with Director Comey and McCabe about Page, "one of the possibilities the three of us discussed was whether or not to provide what is called a defensive briefing to the campaign, wherein there would be a meeting with a senior person with the Trump campaign to alert them to the fact that ... there may be efforts to compromise someone with their campaign." 102

The suggestion is that, had someone only warned Trump that people suspected of being recruited by Russians were infiltrating his campaign, they wouldn't have been there.

Except just before this passage, the report makes clear that the Flynn investigation predated his hiring as National Security Adviser, included an examination of a meeting between him, his spawn, and Sergey Kislyak as well as

the better publicized RT event in Moscow.

[REDACTED]

(U) Prior to his trip to Moscow, General Flynn and his son met with Russian Ambassador Kislyak at the ambassador's private residence in Washington, D.C. on December 2, 2015. The meeting was later described by General's Flynn's son in an email to the Russian embassy as "very productive."⁷⁹ The email indicates that the meeting was arranged at the request of General Flynn or his son.⁸⁰ The Committee was unable to interview General Flynn and his son because of their written intent to assert their Fifth

Trump can't complain that he wasn't warned about Flynn before hiring him, because Obama did warn him, and not just because of Obama's problems with Flynn at DNI, but also because of concerns about his ties with Russia.

Obama warned Trump about Flynn during their Oval Office meeting on November 10, days after Trump was elected president.

"Given the importance of the job, the President thought there were better people for it, and that Flynn wasn't up for the job," a former senior Obama administration official told CNN Monday.

[snip]

But at least one former Obama official disputed that, saying Obama's concerns were not related to the firing of Flynn from the Defense Intelligence Agency but rather in the course of the investigation into Russian interference into the 2016 election.

"Flynn's name kept popping up," according to a senior Obama administration source.

In other words, in the one case where we know Trump knew of a tie between a top aide and Russia, he hired the person anyway. And then ordered him to reach out to the Russians to undercut Obama's policies.