

# RICHARD BURR PRETENDS HE HAS A BASIS TO CLAIM SSCI HAS [SEARCHED FOR AND] NOT FOUND ANY EVIDENCE OF “COLLUSION”

Richard Burr is teeing up Tweet-bait again by going on Fox News and suggesting his committee has not found “hard evidence of collusion.”



realDonaldTrump 

10:06

“I can say, as it relates to the Senate Intelligence Committee Investigation, that we have NO hard evidence of Collusion.”  
Richard Burr (R-NC) Senate Intelligence Committee, Chairman

In the interview, Burr uses some of the same squishy language he used last month with the AP, which the Fox dude raised to explain why he was asking him about the investigation when Burr’s Fox appearance was designed to boast about how well prepared the Trump Administration was for Hurricane Florence.

Fox: Sir, can you say today that there has been no evidence – no factual evidence – of collusion between the Trump campaign and *any elements of the Russian government* during the election of 2016?

Burr: I can say, *as it relates to the Senate Intelligence Committee investigation*, that we have *no hard evidence* of collusion. Now, we’re not over, and that leaves the opportunity that we might find something that we don’t have today. But the fact is if this is all about collusion – and our

investigation encompasses more than collusion – *that issue has not been finalized at all.*

Fox: If that is your answer today, what is next, or how does this end, perhaps that's the better way to ask that question.

Burr: Well, Bill, if you'd have asked me when we started this 19 months ago, if it would be over today, I would have said yes, but we found a lot of things that we didn't anticipate that we would find, we've had to chase a lot of threads that needed to be chased. I hope to complete this at some point before the end of the year. It will take probably three to six months to write the final report. But we've got, we've been charged with making a determination as to what happened, and conveying that with facts to the American people, to let them make their mind up.

Fox: Okay, can you give us an idea of what the conclusion could be then Sir, if it's not collusion? What is it?

Burr: I can't really tell you, and maybe we find something in the next several interviews that are evidence of collusion, I don't think so, with what we've seen, but clearly we were asked to look at Russian meddling. Today, once again, this Administration said we're not going to let Russia meddle in our elections, we're going to sanction people, they gave 45 days until after the election to report to DHS any interference, and DHS would seek sanctions against them. So the United States government, the whole of government's taking a very tough stand on Russia. [my emphasis]

As I noted regarding the AP story last month,

this statement also stops well short of claiming the Senate Intelligence Committee has *looked for* and not found evidence of Trump's campaign conspiring with Russia.

It's a squishy statement that seems designed – particularly given Burr's newfound lassitude about ending the inquiry and his stated worries of being accused of missing something in the future – to permit him to sustain a claim he hasn't seen any conspiracy, at least through the election, without aggressively investigating for one.

Burr is careful to make clear that he is speaking only about his committee, and the question, which seems coached, asked only about Trump's campaign "colluding" with "elements of the Russian government." Heck, Don Jr and Aras Agalarov employee Ike Kaveladze could have signed a pact in blood on June 10, 2016, the day after their Trump Tower meeting, and Burr's statement would still be true, because Agalarov and his employees are not Russian officials. And both last month and today, Burr specifies that he's talking about "factual" or "hard" evidence.

As it is, the public record of what SSCI has been focused on (and the witnesses whose dodgy comments it hasn't tried to nail down) makes it clear it's not looking all that aggressively for evidence of a conspiracy with Russia.

But Burr might feel comfortable making this repeated claim even if his investigators had, in the privacy of their SCIF, been told *that* a witness had provided Mueller evidence of a conspiracy, so long as those investigators made no effort to actually obtain the evidence. They could even have been told by a witness that she was specifically withholding inflammatory pieces of hard evidence potentially implicating Trump's campaign, on the basis that she was waiting to see if FBI corroborated the most likely explanation for that evidence. If they never asked for that evidence, then Burr would be

perfectly able to go on Fox News and claim his committee hadn't received any evidence. No one is asking Burr whether he has sought out all the evidence of "collusion" his investigators have been informed about.

Such a scenario might also explain why, in both appearances, Burr laid the ground work to "discover" evidence in two months or so that did corroborate a conspiracy. He's just going to make sure he doesn't actually ask for such evidence before then.

*As I disclosed in July, I provided information to the FBI on issues related to the Mueller investigation, so I'm going to include disclosure statements on Mueller investigation posts from here on out. I will include the disclosure whether or not the stuff I shared with the FBI pertains to the subject of the post.*