

LISA PAGE CONFIRMS THAT THE TRUMP CAMPAIGN INVESTIGATION WAS DIFFERENT THAN RUSSIAN INFO OPS INVESTIGATION

In her interviews, Lisa Page confirms something I keep explaining, only to have people try to correct me. The Russian investigation into Trump's campaign that got started in July 2016 did not, at first, include the GRU and Internet Research Agency activity that later got subsumed into the Mueller investigation. In her first interview, Page makes this clear in a response to John Ratcliffe insinuating, incorrectly, that reference to Obama's interest in the FBI's activities must be an attempt to tamper in the Clinton investigation.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Let me move on to a text message on September 2nd of 2016. It's a series of texts that you exchanged with Agent Strzok. And at one point you text him: Yes, because POTUS wants to know everything we are doing.

[snip]

Ms. Page. It's not about the Midyear investigation, if that's the question. It has to do with Russia. It does not have to do with the Clinton investigation at all.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. It does have to do with Russia, the Russia investigation?

Ms. Page. No, not the Russia investigation. It has to do with the broader look at Russian active measures.

She again makes that distinction regarding an August 5, 2016 text Strzok sent her.

Kim: Mr. Strzok wrote to you, quote: And hi. Went well. Best we could have expected other than, redacted, comma, quote, the White House is running this. Next text you stated—

Page: Yep.

Kim: —or, sorry, next text he stated, my answer, well maybe for you they are. And in response to these texts you wrote, yeah, whatever, re the White House comment. We've got emails that say otherwise. Do you remember what this meeting was about?

[snip]

Page: It is about — again, like the last time, it is about the broader intelligence community's investigation of Russian active measures.

Kim: And not about the specific Russian collusion investigation?

Page: Definitely not.

In her second interview, Page was asked about whether Trump was included in the investigation during fall 2016, and Page describes the investigation at that point as “narrowly scoped.”

Kim: When we talk about the Russia collusion investigation in this timeframe, candidate Donald Trump is not the subject of that investigation, is that correct?

Page: That's correct.

[snip]

So it was a very narrowly scoped, very discrete investigation because we understood the gravity of what it was we

were looking at and we were not going to take a more extreme step than we felt we could justify.

Mark Meadows tries to suggest that the White House got briefed on the Trump investigation, and she corrects him.

Meadows; I think early on, August 5th, there's the first original what we called at that time the Russia investigation briefing that happened. Peter Strzok comes back from [London], makes it just in time for you to have that. There's a briefing that occurs on August 8th. And there's a briefing with Denis McDonough at the White House where Jonathan Moffa and others attended.

[snip]

Page: But those were not about the Crossfire. To the best of my knowledge those were not –

Meadows: So they had nothing to do with any potential collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign? That was never mentioned?

Page: Not to my knowledge. It was always about the Russian active measures effort.

I keep harping on this point for several reasons. First, because when Republicans imagine – as they do here – that every negative comment Page and Peter Strzok made about a Russian investigation reflects bias against Donald Trump, they are unintentionally arguing that any criticism of Russian hacking by definition is a criticism of Trump. Meanwhile, they're not considering why – sometime well after the Mueller investigation started – the Special Counsel had reason to subsume these other investigations.

But the problem with this misconception extends,

too, to supporters of Mueller's investigation. That's because by conflating the larger counterintelligence investigation into Russian active measures with the more narrowly scoped (using Page's description) investigation into Trump's aides, the misinterpret the degree to which Mueller's investigation stems from predicated investigations against individuals.

But don't take my word for it. Take Lisa Page's word for it.

As I disclosed last 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.