

BILL BARR COMMITS THE BRUCE OHR “CRIME”

Far be it for me to ever underestimate the possibility of Bill Barr nefariousness (and I’ll almost certainly have to eat these words), but I’m far less concerned about what Barr said the other day about a process to ingest Ukrainian bullshit from Rudy Giuliani than virtually everyone else. That’s because in his comments from the other day, he emphasized the import of vetting information from Ukraine, whether it comes from Rudy Giuliani or anyone else.

We have to be very careful with respect to any information coming from the [sic] Ukraine. There are a lot of agendas in the [sic] Ukraine, there are a lot of cross-currents, and we can’t take anything we receive from the [sic] Ukraine at face value. And for that reason we had established an intake process in the field so that any information coming in about Ukraine could be carefully scrutinized by the department and its intelligence community partners so that we could assess its provenance and its credibility. That is true for all information that comes to the Department relating to the [sic] Ukraine including anything Mr. Giuliani might provide.

This sounds like the kind of thing you’d do to placate your boss even while ensuring DOJ doesn’t accept a bunch of disinformation manufactured by mobbed up oligarchs to mess with America.

The WaPo’s report that Barr is sending all this to the US Attorney in Pittsburgh suggests Barr neither wants this stuff in Main DOJ but also is not sending it to either of the two places – John Durham’s inquiry or the SDNY prosecution of the Ukrainian grifters – where it might be used

in an ongoing investigation.

A Justice Department official said Giuliani had “recently” shared information with federal law enforcement officials through the process described by Barr. Two people familiar with the matter said the information is being routed to the U.S. attorney’s office in Pittsburgh.

[snip]

It is not clear whether Scott W. Brady, the U.S. attorney in Pittsburgh, will play a similar role, or why his office was chosen. A spokeswoman for Brady’s office declined to comment.

So while I hope (again, probably over-optimistically) that this is just a convenient way to deal with a difficult boss and his criminal subject attorney, I also worry that it’s not being shared with the people investigating such information sharing as illegal foreign influence peddling.

Plus, it strikes me as a unbelievably hypocritical for Bill Barr to continue to ingest dodgy information probably sourced to corrupt oligarchs after the entire frothy right has demonized Bruce Ohr for continuing to accept information – some but not all of it sourced to Oleg Deripaska – from Christopher Steele.

Admittedly, no one can complain about the basis for which DOJ’s Inspector General relied on to make a completely irresponsible attack on Ohr – that he didn’t inform his superiors (even though they had, in fact, been informed). Barr is the boss! He has chosen who should deal with this information, in a way that Sally Yates and Rod Rosenstein did not.

But Barr is, nevertheless, doing what the frothy right complains that Ohr did: continue to accept problematic information – deemed partisan (inaccurately in the case of Ohr, because his

information sharing with Steele long preceded the DNC project and much of what he shared during and after that involved entirely unrelated topics) – after it had been discredited.

Perhaps, along with issuing orders that suggest Trump can commit any crime he wants between now and November 2020, Barr should issue an order explaining how DOJ should accept such information – including manufactured dirt from Steve Bannon – as a rule, so we can stop working under different rules for different parties.