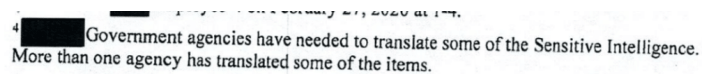


RUSSIA'S USEFUL IDIOM, JOHN RATCLIFFE: LOST IN TWO TRANSLATIONS

John Ratcliffe keeps going on propaganda channels to parrot Russian idioms (and make false claims) shamelessly. Whichever Russian spy wrote that disinformation package years ago must have gotten a new dacha to reward him for how he has turned America's CIA Director into an unabashed useful idiom for Russia.

Ratcliffe might want to rein in his boisterousness, however. Because Chuck Grassley and Tulsi Gabbard – or whoever actually did the declassification of the Durham appendix – left just enough breadcrumbs to suggest there's a material difference between the FBI and some other government agency's translation of the Deep State email reflecting an SVR plan to frame Hillary Clinton. Ratcliffe may not realize just how clear it is that John Durham framed Hillary Clinton, with Ratcliffe's help.

I started down this rabbit hole when I puzzled through this footnote, revealing that there are multiple translations of "some" of the items in question.

⁴ Government agencies have needed to translate some of the Sensitive Intelligence. More than one agency has translated some of the items.

So I made a table of all the documents identified as exhibits to the appendix, showing which footnote referred to which document and the language of the document.

Document	Footnotes	Description	Language
Classified Appendix Document-1	6	Something about Benardo	Unknown
Classified Appendix Document-2	9, 10, 11	January 2016 Loretta Lynch report and March 2016 Loretta Lynch report	Translated
Classified Appendix Document-3	30	Draft report purporting to describe Clinton plan	Translated
Classified Appendix Document-4	34, 37	Third fake Benardo email, dated July 25 (included as second document in report)	"English"
Classified Appendix Document-5	36	First fake Benardo email, dated July 25	"English"
Classified Appendix Document-6	36, 39	The July 27 SVR email and a second version of fake Benardo email, dated July 25, not included	"English"
Classified Appendix Document-7	38	The Deep State email -- described as FBI translation	Russian: described as FBI translation
Classified Appendix Document-8	40, 41	The July 27 Benardo email, attached to completely redacted email	Russian, English
Classified Appendix Document-9	46, 47, 48	Tim Maurer email about Thomas Rid article and July 27 Julianne Smith NATO solicitation	English
Classified Appendix Document 10	Redacted fn 76	Redacted text	Unknown
Classified Appendix Document-11	77, 92	2017 CIA report	English
Classified Appendix Document-12	96	September 2016 Intelligence Note relating to Russian election interference	English

The first thing this exercise disclosed were two missing documents – or rather, documents the discussions of which are entirely redacted.

The first appears in a discussion of a 2017 CIA review that concluded these SVR reports – it's not clear whether the report reviewed just the Loretta Lynch ones, or all of them; I have a hunch this report also discusses Oleg Deripaska – were not fabrications. Note missing footnote 76 here.

Moreover, in 2017, more than a year after [redacted] initially received the [redacted] reports, the [redacted] CIA prepared a written assessment of the authenticity and veracity of the above-referenced intelligence. The CIA stated

⁷⁴ (U) Notes of John O. Brennan, declassified by DNI Ratcliffe Oct. 6, 2020 (hereinafter "Brennan Notes"); Classified Appendix Document-10.

⁷⁵ (U) See Letter from John Ratcliffe, DNI, to Sen. Lindsey Graham (Sept. 29, 2020) (hereinafter "Ratcliffe Letter").

The second is more interesting—but it's part of a far more important discovery. At least according to the footnotes, the redactions in these two passages (which bracket the draft report that Durham falsely claims was the basis of his investigation) serve to obscure which fake Leonard Benardo email was incorporated into which SVR document.

[redacted] After receiving the initial intelligence in [redacted] 2016 [redacted]
FBI subsequently received additional intelligence from T1. In particular, in late July 2016 [redacted]
[redacted] received a [redacted] report that summarized [redacted] certain hacked emails
allegedly sent by Leonard Benardo of the Open Society Foundations.²⁶ [redacted]

[redacted] The above-referenced [redacted] memorandum included
the English text of a document that one [redacted]
[redacted]³⁴ As discussed above, the document contained a purported email
from Benardo [redacted] appears to have been

The reference to “The above-referenced [SVR] memorandum included the English text of a document” pertains to the Benardo email that appears *second* in the appendix – the one with the (stupid, obviously Russian) references to the Olympics.

At the same, politicization is on the table. I have been a bit surprised that nobody has mentioned this 18-month-long story yet in their analysis, and makes explicit reference to US elections at the end.

Julie says it will be a long-term affair to demonize Putin and Trump. Now it is good for a post-convention bounce. Later the FBI will put more oil into the fire. Outcome is far from clear as Americans are more keen on their own woes and Hillary is hardly good-looking as far as credibility is concerned. *Anyway it should last as long as the Olympics accusations. And things are ghastly for US-Russian relations.*

Lenny³⁷

There are at least two versions of the Benardo email (identified as Appendix Documents 5 and 6 in footnote 36) that lack the Olympics reference.

And one of *those*, Appendix Document 6, is what was attached to the July 27 email described in the unredacted passage here.

[redacted] Another [redacted] email [redacted]
[redacted] dated July 27, 2016, appears to discuss “mak[ing]
[something]” to “illuminate” how Clinton was attempting to “vilif[y] Moscow” and discredit
Putin and Trump.³⁹ [redacted]

The fake Benardo email dated July 27 – which these redactions tried hard to suggest was attached to the email mentioning “vilif[ying] Moscow” – was actually attached to *another* communication completely obscured by this redaction, the second missing document. Footnote 40 and footnote 41 both cite Classified Appendix Document 8.

⁴⁰ The email attached the following English text in a document, which appears to be another email from Benardo, bearing a date of July 27th:

From: Leonard Benardo

Sent: July 27, 2016

Hi,

HRC approved Julia's idea about Trump and Russian hackers hampering U.S. elections. That should distract people from her own missing email, especially if the affair goes to the Olympic level. The point is making the Russian play a U.S. domestic issue. Say something like a critical infrastructure threat for the election to feel menace since both POTUS and VPOTUS have acknowledged the fact IC would speed up searching for evidence that is regrettably still unavailable. However there seems to be signs GRU penetration (cyrlic, 2.0 VPN elite VPN, Felix Edmundovich). They appear hardly skilled, "incompetent bumbling idiots" as smb [somebody] called them. In absence of direct evidence, Crowdstrike and ThreatConnect will supply the media, and GRU will hopefully carry on to give more facts.⁴¹

This clarifies the process by which the draft report that Durham falsely claimed was the basis of his investigation was made.

The first email in the chain is the July 26 Deep State one – the one saying it'd be cool to frame Hillary.

The second is that July 27 email – basically a discussion about *how* they were going to frame Hillary, attaching one of the fake Benardo emails without mention of the Olympics. Again, that's what got mentioned in John Brennan's notes, not the report. At that point, one of the spies must have thought it would be cute to make a reference to what appears to be the Olympics doping scandal, which was ongoing at the time, something that mattered to the Russians but probably not Benardo or Julianne Smith, and so they altered the fake Benardo email for inclusion in the eventual report, to add the Olympics.

And then a third email between Russian spies – the one that is completely redacted – attached the fake Benardo email, dated July 27, claiming Hillary had approved this plan. The email reflecting approval came after the spies decided to frame Hillary (not like it matters since the emails were all fake anyway).

Now, as I keep saying, the report that Durham falsely claimed was the basis of his investigation had to come after that missing email, because that's what they fabricated to claim that Hillary had actually approved the plan. The report *was the last document*, not the

first, as Durham misleadingly suggested by putting it at the beginning of his discussion. The unredacted report would make clear that both the approval and the Olympics reference were deliberately added to take Benardo emails, and then incorporated in the draft report itself.

Which brings me back to where I started. Aside from two documents of little interest here (a document on Benardo that could be a SVR profile of him or could just be his bio, Classified Appendix Document 1) and the entirely redacted reference associated with the 2017 CIA review (Classified Appendix Document 10), there are six documents in Russian:

- The January 2016 report mentioning Loretta Lynch and Jim Comey
- The March 2016 report mentioning Loretta Lynch
- The July 26 Deep State email discussing framing Hillary
- The July 27 email, to which one of the fake July 25 Benardo emails that did not mention the Olympics was attached
- The missing document, to which the fake July 27 Benardo email was attached
- The draft report, to which the fake July 25 Benardo email that mentioned the Olympics was incorporated

The January and March reports are actually the same document, Classified Appendix Document 2. Durham describes both were "in Russian," with the discussion of translation redacted; this discussion tracks the DOJ IG Report closely, and so may have used those same versions.

According to public sources, [redacted] was senior policy advisor for Eurasia at the Open Society Foundations.⁹ The January 2016 memorandum, which was in Russian [redacted] stated in relevant part:

As you can see above, the discussion about who translated the July 27 email and the missing one is entirely redacted. The same is true of the draft report itself.

Not the July 26 Deep State email, though.

The intro to that states clearly that Durham used an FBI translation: "The FBI's translation of this email is as follows."

In other words, the July 26 Deep State email showing that Russian spies decided to frame Hillary before they fabricated emails supporting their effort exists in at least two versions.

And John Ratcliffe, rattling off Russian idioms on every Fox show, may not know that.

Update: I'm reviewing the Michael Sussmann case, and Andrew DeFilippis played a similar temporal gimmick twice during that trial.