

THE CARTER PAGE IG REPORT DEBUNKS A KEY [IMPEACHMENT- RELATED] CONSPIRACY ABOUT PAUL MANAFORT

The DOJ IG Report on the Carter Page FISA debunks a key conspiracy behind GOP claims that Ukraine tampered in the 2016 elections: that the investigation into Paul Manafort was only resuscitated after Serhiy Leshchenko published the Black Ledger. That investigation was opened in January 2016, well before Trump hired Manafort.

AMY BERMAN JACKSON DISPUTES CLAIMS OF “EXCULPATORY” INFORMATION ON RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

Amy Berman Jackson has seen more of the underlying evidence from this investigation than anyone. And, in her comments during Rick Gates' sentencing yesterday, she sure seems to think that Bill Barr, Donald Trump, and Michael Horowitz are dismissing the seriousness of this investigation.

JUDGE EMMET SULLIVAN TO MIKE FLYNN: YOU SIR, ARE NO TED STEVENS

I keep predicting that Mike Flynn's efforts to blow up his plea deal will backfire. Thus far, I continue to be right.

TRUMP "CARES" ABOUT CORRUPTION IN UKRAINE BECAUSE IT ENSURES PAUL MANAFORT WILL KEEP HIS SECRETS

When Republicans claim Trump cares about corruption in Ukraine, they mean he cares that the corrupt people who paid Paul Manafort to get him elected benefit.

WHILE REPUBLICANS CONTINUE TO CLAIM COLLUSION DIDN'T HAPPEN, GEORGE

PAPADOPOULOS LABELED ROGER STONE'S ACTIONS AS TREASON

As part of its claim that the FBI withheld exculpatory information in Carter Page's FISA application, the DOJ IG Report described George Papadopoulos' interactions with Stefan Halper in mid-September 2016. When Halper twice asked Papadopoulos, "whether help 'from a third party like Wikileaks for example or some other third party like the Russians, could be incredibly helpful' in securing a campaign victory," Papadopoulos categorically denied the campaign would reach out to WikiLeaks.

Well as a campaign, of course, we don't advocate for this type of activity because at the end of the day it's, ah, illegal. First and foremost it compromises the US national security and third it sets a very bad precedence [sic] So the campaign does not advocate for this, does not support what is happening. The indirect consequences are out of our hands.... [F]or example, our campaign is not. .. engag[ing] or reaching out to wiki leaks or to the whoever it is to tell them please work with us, collaborate because we don't, no one does that.... Unless there's something going on that I don't know which I don't because I don't think anybody would risk their, their life, ah, potentially going to prison over doing something like that. Um ... because at the end of the day, you know, it's an illegal, it's an illegal activity. Espionage is, ah, treason. This is a form of treason I mean that's why, you know, it became a very big issue when Mr. Trump said, "Russia if you're listening " Do you remember? ... And

you know we had to retract it because, of course, he didn't mean for them to actively engage in espionage but the media then took and ran with it.

When asked a second time, Papadopoulos called that "collusion."

No one's looking to ... obviously get into trouble like that and, you know, as far as I understand that's, **no one's collaborating, there's been no collusion** and it's going to remain that way. [my emphasis]

When Papadopoulos has described this previously, he claimed he also denied having anything to do with Russia. If he did, it would be a lie. The very dates he was in London meeting with Halper, Papadopoulos had intended to conduct a secret meeting with Russia, something he failed to fully explain to Mueller. Even two weeks later, Papadopoulos was sharing an anti-sanction column in the Russian site Interfax with Joseph Mifsud.

It's unclear whether Papadopoulos really believed that the campaign was not and would not coordinate with WikiLeaks. The most likely person he would have told that Russia planned to drop emails on Hillary back in April 2016 would be Stephen Miller, whom he emailed the day after learning of the emails and said, "Have some interesting messages coming in from Moscow about a trip when the time is right." According to Rick Gates' testimony at Roger Stone's trial, Miller was one of several people with whom he brainstormed months later on how to optimize the WikiLeaks releases.

Q. Without saying what they said, who was involved in those brainstorming sessions about what to do if information was leaked?

A. Sure. It was Mr. Manafort; myself; Mr. Jason Miller, who was our director of communications; and Mr. Stephen

Miller, who was our director of policy at the time.

According to the DOJ IG Report, the investigation team believed Papadopoulos had rehearsed his answer to Halper (and indeed, the Mueller Report makes clear that in the wake of Trump's "Russia, are you listening" comment, everyone but Manafort stopped pursuing previous plans to reach out to Russia).

Case Agent 1 told the OIG that Papadopoulos's "response to the direct questions seemed weird" to the Crossfire Hurricane team because it "seemed rehearsed and almost rote." Case Agent 1 added that at these points in the conversation, Papadopoulos "went from a free-flowing conversation with [Source 2] to almost a canned response. You could tell in the demeanor of how [Papadopoulos] changed his tone, and to [the Crossfire Hurricane team] it seemed almost rehearsed."

Whether or not he lied about knowing about "collusion," which he defined to include reaching out to WikiLeaks, Papadopoulos defined doing so as treason. He's wrong, but that is, apparently, what he said.

And less than a month ago, the government laid out evidence that Roger Stone had attempted to reach out to WikiLeaks via cut-outs, including Jerome Corsi. At the trial, the government did not disclose how Corsi and Stone had learned of the John Podesta emails in advance, but Stone invented yet a new cover story for the trial to continue to deny that he had done so, this time that Corsi had been lying about obtaining such information, just like Credico.

Absent a pardon, Stone is headed to prison because he refused to reveal what really happened in July and August 2016.

And whatever it is that Stone is hiding, what's

clear is he definitely tried to reach out to WikiLeaks, something that Papadopoulos claimed to consider treason.

Stone did so with the enthusiastic encouragement of Donald Trump.

During the impeachment “debate,” Republicans on the House Judiciary Committee just repeated over and over that the Mueller Report showed no “collusion.” But the facts show that, at least according to Papadopoulos’ definition, it did.

As I disclosed last year, 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.

YEVGENIY PRIGOZHIN’S TROLLS RECOIL FROM SUNLIGHT

Yevgeniy Prigozhin’s trolls complain that if they have to comply with a subpoena they may commit treason in Russia.

WITH RELEASE OF DOJ IG FISA REPORT, DEMOCRATS SHOULD

PAUSE ON IMPEACHMENT

I think Democrats should pause the impeachment process for about a week to give both sides time to really read the DOJ IG Report on FISA.

THE FLYNN PREDICATION

Mike Flynn got investigated because he was one possible answer to the question of how George Papadopoulos got advance notice of Russia's hack-and-leak operation.

THE SPECIAL ENVOY FOR UKRAINE WAS WORKING ON PAUL MANAFORT'S DEFENSE

Instead of making peace with Russia, Kurt Volker was instead trying to help Paul Manafort dodge accountability for 2016.

DOJ FLIPS THE LAWFARE

ON ITS HEAD IN RUSSIAN TROLL CASE

After almost two years during which Concord Management has used its prosecution as a fishing expedition, the government has now turned the tables.