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Dueling Investigations: Huge Consequences at Stake

As Special Counsel Robert Mueller presses aggressively forward with his Trump-Russia investigation, which President Donald Trump has repeatedly denounced as a “witch hunt,” House and Senate investigations are intensifying their own probes of the FBI and Department of Justice. Republican leaders of House and Senate committees have threatened to use all the tools at their disposal — subpoena powers, contempt citations, and impeachment — against DOJ and FBI officials who have been stonewalling congressional demands for documents related to (among other things) the Hillary Clinton e-mail scandal and illegal FBI spying on Donald Trump and his campaign team.



Even before he officially took over the Oval Office, President-elect Donald Trump was facing unprecedented opposition from within the federal bureaucracy and from “the powers that be” beyond anything ever experienced by any of his White House predecessors. Never before had we witnessed an election — and then the inauguration of a new administration — in which the heads and former heads of the FBI, CIA, and NSA have publicly taken partisan sides and have attempted to unseat a constitutionally elected president of the United States. In addition to former CIA chief John Brennan, former NSA chief James Clapper, former FBI chief James Comey, and former CIA chief Michael Hayden, dozens more of their Deep State minions have joined the viciously anti-Trump Big Media chorus in nonstop attacks against the president. Why? Because he had pledged to drain the fetid, bipartisan, globalist swamp they were trying feverishly to guard and preserve.

President Trump has found himself in the uniquely unenviable situation where he not only is battling the left-wing media and obstructionist Democrats in Congress, but also is having to deal with a mysteriously uncooperative attorney general of his own choosing (Jeff Sessions), a devious and hostile deputy attorney general (Rod Rosenstein), and a bevy of obstructionist Republicans in Congress.

On June 14, the inspector general (IG) of the U.S. Department of Justice, Michael E. Horowitz, issued his long-awaited report that many Trump supporters had hoped would deliver a definitive blow exposing the skulduggery and criminal actions by Deep State actors to aid Hillary Clinton and sabotage Donald Trump. While it did indeed provide important new incriminating information, the massive 568-page report, which was more than a year in the making, disappointingly straddled the fence, making excuses for actions, lies, and deception by FBI officials that would have sent other ordinary citizens to prison.

While presenting evidence of blatant bias and appalling actions — by former FBI Director James Comey, FBI Agent Peter Strzok, FBI attorney Lisa Page, former FBI Deputy Directory Andrew McCabe, and others (see details below) — the IG report, nonetheless, exonerates from charges of bias, bending over



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backwards to accept incredible, self-serving explanations by the offending parties.

Regarding former FBI Director Comey, for instance, the Horowitz report states: “Comey’s public statement announced that the FBI had completed its Midyear [Clinton e-mail] investigation, criticized Clinton and her senior aides as ‘extremely careless’ in their handling of classified information, stated that the FBI was recommending that the Department decline prosecution of Clinton, and asserted that ‘no reasonable prosecutor’ would prosecute Clinton based on the facts developed by the FBI during its investigation.” The report goes on to say, “While we found no evidence that Comey’s statement was the result of bias or an effort to influence the election, we did not find his justifications for issuing the statement to be reasonable or persuasive.”

The IG report further states: “We concluded that Comey’s unilateral announcement was inconsistent with Department policy and violated long-standing Department practice and protocol,” that “Comey usurped the authority of the Attorney General,” and that he “inadequately and incompletely described the legal position of Department prosecutors.” Elsewhere, the report criticized Comey for “insubordination” and “deviation from Department practice.”

The report documents plenty of “extraordinary” insubordination, usurpation, deviation, inconsistency, etc., but, apparently, in order to make the determination of bias, IG Horowitz requires a full confession or a tape-recorded statement from Comey, or an e-mail or note from him explicitly proclaiming, “I’m doing this because I’m biased for Hillary and against Trump.” Even the anti-Trump text rantings of FBI’s Peter Strzok and Lisa Page don’t provide sufficient proof to Team Horowitz of bias. He is adhering to a self-imposed standard of evidence that is patently ludicrous.

No Bias Here?

Writing for *National Review*, Andrew C. McCarthy, a former federal prosecutor, observes: “For all his assiduous attention to detail, IG Horowitz has weaved a no-common-sense report.” McCarthy points to the infamous texts between FBI Agent Peter Strzok and his paramour, FBI attorney Lisa Page, which were “part of a ceaseless stream of anti-Trump bile.”

All of this, McCarthy notes, “occurs against a backdrop in which the FBI has rushed to close the Clinton-emails investigation on an arbitrary deadline for patently political reasons — no other criminal investigation is guided by the electoral calendar. And it occurs at the moment the FBI is moving aggressively to turn its counterintelligence powers against the Trump campaign: An informant has already been deployed, intelligence agents are mobilizing, foreign intelligence contacts have been tapped, and the bureau will soon submit to the FISA court an application to surveil Trump adviser Carter Page — an application that breaks every rule in the book: anonymous foreign sources spouting multiple hearsay, no corroboration, no disclosure to the court that it comes from the opposition presidential campaign, no explanation that the foreigner who supplied the unverified allegations has been booted from the investigation for lying, etc. Yet you’re not supposed to string any of that together.”

Photo: AP Images

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It comes as no surprise then that FBI Director Christopher Wray, who has joined DOJ’s Rod Rosenstein in resisting the release of lawfully requested documents to congressional committees, pounced on the



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report as a vindictory triumph. According to Director Wray, addressing a press conference on June 14, “The Inspector General didn’t find any evidence of political bias or improper consideration impacting the investigation under review.”

Likewise, Adam Schiff, the ranking Democrat obstructionist on the House Intelligence Committee, said the IG probe “found no evidence” that Comey and other FBI and Justice Department officials “acted on the basis of political bias or other improper considerations.”

Moreover, Schiff said, “Nothing in the IG’s report calls into question the legitimacy or conduct of the Special Counsel’s Russia investigation or the importance of allowing the Special Counsel to complete his work without political interference.”

Yep, no bias here, move along. So, there should be no surprise that the anti-Trump/pro-Clinton/pro-Obama media choir immediately began hymning the Alleluia Exoneration refrain. In his *New York Times* op-ed entitled “The Report’s Real Message: Trump Is Lying,” David Leonhardt urged readers to “focus on the big picture.” The IG report, he insists, shows “Federal investigators and prosecutors did not give preferential treatment to Clinton. They pursued the case on the merits.” The virulently anti-Trump crowd at CNN, MSNBC, CBS, PBS, etc., echoed and re-echoed the same “no evidence of political bias” theme in story after story. According to the establishment media, the IG report proves Hillary received no favorable treatment from the FBI investigation regarding her use of a private e-mail server for sending and receiving classified material.

However, President Trump and his supporters have pointed to the same report and declared that it vindicates the president’s claim he was subjected to biased political attacks by the FBI. President Trump tweeted on June 15, “FBI Agent Peter Strzok, who headed the Clinton & Russia investigations, texted to his lover Lisa Page, in the IG Report, that ‘we’ll stop’ candidate Trump from becoming President. Doesn’t get any lower than that!”

So, is there truly “no evidence” of bias, or are all such claims based on “no-common-sense” readings of what is clearly a “ceaseless stream of anti-Trump bile” and pro-Hillary decisions? Readers may decide for themselves by downloading a copy of the ponderous tome (at <https://www.justice.gov/file/1071991/download>).

To assist in that effort, we present here, in brief, some of the more notable revelations in the IG report, which carries the official title of “A Review of Various Actions by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Department of Justice in Advance of the 2016 Election.”

Peter Strzok and Lisa Page

Strzok and Page have been at the center of the FBI-DOJ scandal, owing to leaks of their infamous e-mail and text exchanges. Strzok is the FBI’s former No. 2 counterintelligence official and a top investigator in both the Clinton e-mail investigation and the Trump-Russia collusion investigation. He interviewed Hillary Clinton and her aides Huma Abedin and Cheryl Mills. In the case of Abedin and Mills, he showed incredibly biased leniency in accepting their obviously false claims that they had no knowledge of Clinton’s secret e-mail server. It was Strzok who changed the final wording of James Comey’s July 2016 statement, reducing the characterization of Clinton’s actions from “grossly negligent” to “extremely careless.” This was no small matter, since the former would have subjected Clinton to criminal charges, whereas the latter provided a mere knuckle rap. In other words, he helped Comey provide Clinton with a “Get Out of Jail Free” card. Contrast this treatment with the brutal squeeze Strzok put on President



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Trump's then-National Security Advisor General Michael Flynn. Lisa Page, Strzok's lover at the FBI, was legal counsel to former Deputy Director Andrew McCabe.

Strzok and Page were both assigned to Special Counsel Robert Mueller's Trump-Russia investigation — until their anti-Trump text messages began leaking out. The IG report provides a new, never-before-released text between the two, in which Strzok assures a distraught Page that he will not allow Trump to become president. In an August 8, 2016 text message Page asked Strzok, "[Trump's] not ever going to become president, right? Right?!"

Strzok replied, "No. No he won't. We'll stop it."

We'll stop it? What does that mean? What will "we" stop, and what means will be used to do so? Under questioning during televised congressional hearings, IG Horowitz confirmed that his understanding of the "it" that Strzok intended to stop was the election and/or inauguration of Donald Trump as president of the United States. That is *very* serious business, especially for someone in Strzok's high position of power. This adds to the previously disclosed Strzok-Page messages, among which are references to Trump as an "idiot," a "douche," and a "loathsome human," and which refer to an anti-Trump "secret society" at the FBI and their plans for an "insurance policy" against Trump.

The IG report notes that the Strzok-Page texts are "not only indicative of a biased state of mind but, even more seriously, implies a willingness to take official action to impact the presidential candidate's electoral prospects."

Nevertheless, the most severe condemnation Horowitz could muster was to say that they "demonstrated extremely poor judgment and a gross lack of professionalism." The upshot? According to the IG report: "We therefore refer this information to the FBI for its handling and consideration of whether the messages sent by the five employees listed above violated the FBI's Offense Code of Conduct." It's not likely that Strzok, Page, and the others are sweating that outcome, although they may be sweating over House and Senate committee grillings that still await them.

Who are the additional three unidentified agents mentioned in the report who are merely referred to as "Agent 1," "Agent 5," and "FBI Attorney 2"? During House hearings on June 19, Representative Mark Meadows named Sally Moyer as FBI Agent 5 and Kevin Clinesmith was identified as FBI Attorney 2.

On April 11, 2018 Senator Dr. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) released a letter from the FBI admitting that Agents Peter Strzok and Lisa Page still have their 'Top Secret' security clearances, which give them access to the highest levels of official, private, and personal data. "It is outrageous that agents who have been previously caught red-handed expressing their bias against President Trump continue to have access to Americans' private data," Dr. Paul said in a press release. Just as disturbing is the fact that the FBI's Christopher Wray and DOJ's Rod Rosenstein took more than two months to make this simple confirmation in response to the senator's request.

James Comey, Andrew McCabe

The IG report found James Comey's actions to hide his decision to publicly exonerate Clinton from Attorney General Loretta Lynch (his boss) "extraordinary and insubordinate." The report also revealed that Comey was using a personal e-mail account for official FBI matters (a big no-no) at the same time the FBI was investigating Clinton for her use of a private e-mail account and server. The FBI's former second in command, Andrew McCabe, according to the IG report, lied several times to IG investigators,



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including lying about leaking sensitive information to a *Wall Street Journal* reporter. That's a criminal offense that could land him in prison, even though the IG report soft-pedaled the offense, saying McCabe "lacked candor" rather than accusing him of lying or perjury.

Cozy Comrades: Secret FBI-Media Relations

The Trump administration was hampered by continual leaks from day one, and it is clear that much of the leaking came from anti-Trump officials in the FBI and DOJ. FBI Director James Comey and Deputy Director Andrew McCabe were two of the most notorious leakers. However, they either encouraged and directed their subordinates to leak also, or looked the other way, as long as the leaking was furthering an objective that they approved of.

The IG report states: "The Media Policy in effect both at the time of these events and currently authorizes only four employees at FBI Headquarters to speak directly to the media without prior authorization. This list includes the Director, Deputy Director, Associate Deputy Director, and the Assistant Director of the Office of Public Affairs (OPA)."

IG Horowitz notes that "although FBI policy strictly limits the employees who are authorized to speak to the media, we found that this policy appeared to be widely ignored." "We identified numerous FBI employees, at all levels of the organization and with no official reason to be in contact with the media, who were nevertheless in frequent contact with reporters," the IG report continues. It goes on to state:

In addition to the significant number of communications between FBI employees and journalists, we identified social interactions between FBI employees and journalists that were, at a minimum, inconsistent with FBI policy and Department ethics rules. For example, we identified instances where FBI employees received tickets to sporting events from journalists, went on golfing outings with media representatives, were treated to drinks and meals after work by reporters, and were the guests of journalists at nonpublic social events.

Pro-Clinton/Obama "Resistance" Inside FBI

"Trump's supporters are all poor to middle class, uneducated, lazy POS [pieces of ****]." That's just one of many phone text, instant message, and e-mail expressions by FBI employees indicating that a significant number of the bureau's personnel — including, especially, at the upper levels — are highly politicized. Here's more of the context for the expression quoted above, part of an instant-message dialogue between an unnamed duo designated as "FBI Attorney 2" and "FBI Employee" on November 9, 2016, the day after the presidential election:

FBI Attorney 2: "I am numb."

FBI Employee: "I can't stop crying."

FBI Attorney 2: "That makes me even more sad."

FBI Employee: "Like, what happened?"

FBI Employee: "You promised me this wouldn't happen. YOU PROMISED.... I'm very upset."

FBI Attorney 2: "I am so stressed about what I could have done differently...."

FBI Attorney 2: "I'm just devastated.... I just can't imagine the systematic disassembly of the progress we made over the last 8 years. ACA [ObamaCare] is gone. Who knows if the rhetoric about



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deporting people, walls, and crap is true.”

Here’s another troubling exchange between two unidentified FBI attorneys:

FBI Attorney 1: “Is it making you rethink your commitment to the Trump administration?”

FBI Attorney 2: “Hell no.... Viva le resistance.”

The accumulated evidence indicates that the anti-Trump “Resistance” elements within the FBI/DOJ have been doing everything within their power to sabotage the Trump administration from the get-go, while the radical anti-Trump “Resistance” carries out the disruptive — and often violent — street demonstrations try to sabotage the administration from the outside.

All of this and much more is to be found in the IG report. However, according to IG Horowitz, he couldn’t prove that any of this political bias caused the FBI officials and agents involved to illegally or inappropriately use their official capacities in a biased manner against the Trump administration or in favor of Hillary Clinton.

Incredible! However, it is not surprising. We have seen this many times before, as, for instance, in the case of the IG report exposing egregious actions of the FBI lab under President Bill Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno. The inspector general and his investigators are on a leash held by the head of the agency they are investigating. The IG is under pressure not to rock the boat too much. Even if the IG and his team are courageous and dig deep, the final IG report goes through editing and massaging by Department of Justice and FBI higher-ups before publication. All too rarely are high-level officials prosecuted and punished over malfeasance exposed in IG investigations. If a scandal is hot enough and the public must be satisfied, a lower-level employee can usually be found to sacrifice as a scapegoat.

It may be recalled that in 2014, 47 federal inspectors general signed a letter to Congress warning that IG investigations were being obstructed by the Obama administration. The New American reported at the time: “In all, 47 inspectors general from across the federal government — many of them appointed by Obama — wrote to Congress this month warning that their work and investigations were being unlawfully impeded. Among other concerns, the officials cited denial of access to documents, wild interpretations of statutes purporting to authorize the stonewalling, undermining the independence of the inspectors general, and similar tactics being used by top administration officials.”

Unfortunately, many of the Obama officials that were obstructing investigations by those inspectors general — at the DOJ and elsewhere — are still populating the swamp and obstructing justice under the Trump administration. Following release of the IG report, Representative Devin Nunes (R-Calif.), chairman of the House Intelligence Committee; Representative Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.), chairman of the House Oversight Committee; and Representative Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.), chair of the House Judiciary Committee, along with House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), met with Wray and Rosenstein to let them know that they would not continue to accept the DOJ-FBI stonewalling, “slow-walking” of documents, and excessive redacting of documents.

Chairman Nunes, who has been increasingly and visibly angry in news interviews over the DOJ-FBI obstruction of his committee’s investigation, has stated that he has reached the end of his patience with the dilatory tactics and is ready to begin more robust action against obstructionist officials. The threats have had some effect; the DOJ and FBI have released more batches of documents, but it is still not



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known how responsive those releases have been with regard to the most critical documents Congress has been requesting, or how extensive are the redactions.

While the Horowitz report has exposed much bias, corruption, obstruction, and sabotage by top-level FBI officials, it did not delve deeply into the even bigger viper's nest at Justice (which oversees the FBI) involving former Acting Attorney General Sally Yates, Special Counsel Robert Mueller, and top DOJ officials Rod Rosenstein, Matthew Axelrod, Scott Schools, Peter Kadzik, and others. Considering how long it has taken IG Horowitz to complete his report and how deficient it turned out to be, members of Congress would be foolish to wait for his next report. They should proceed posthaste, using all tools at their disposal to hold the Department of Justice and FBI officials to account and force them to release the thousands of documents they have been hiding from the American people.

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