

Nunes Opening Statement for Mueller Hearing

July 24, 2019

Welcome, everyone, to the last gasp of the Russian collusion conspiracy theory, as the Democrats continue to foist this spectacle on the American people as well as on you Mr. Mueller.

As the American people may recall, the media first began spreading this conspiracy theory in the spring of 2016 when Fusion GPS, funded by the Democratic National Committee and the Hillary Clinton Campaign, started developing the Steele dossier, a collection of outlandish accusations that Trump and his associates were Russian agents. Fusion GPS, Steele, and other confederates fed these absurdities to naïve or partisan reporters and to top officials in numerous government agencies including the FBI, the Department of Justice, and the State Department. Among other things, the FBI used dossier allegations to obtain a warrant to spy on the Trump Campaign.

Despite acknowledging dossier allegations as being “salacious and unverified,” former FBI Director James Comey briefed those allegations to President Obama and President-elect Trump. Those briefings conveniently leaked to the press, resulting in the publication of the dossier and launching thousands of false press stories based on the word of a foreign ex-spy—one who admitted he was “desperate” that Trump lose the election and who was eventually fired as an FBI source for leaking to the press. After Comey himself was fired, by his own admission, he leaked derogatory information on President Trump to the press for the specific purpose, and successfully so, of engineering the appointment of a Special Counsel, Robert Mueller.

The FBI investigation was marred by further corruption and bizarre abuses. Top DOJ official Bruce Ohr, whose own wife worked on Fusion GPS’ anti-Trump operation, fed Steel’s information to the FBI even after the FBI fired Steele; the top FBI investigator and his lover, another top FBI official, constantly texted about how much they hated Trump and wanted to stop him from being elected; and the entire investigation was opened based not on any Five Eyes intelligence, but on a tip from a foreign politician about a conversation involving Joseph Mifsud. He’s a Maltese diplomat who’s widely portrayed as a Russian agent but seems to have far more connections with western governments, including the FBI and our own State Department, than with Russia.

Brazenly ignoring all these red flags as well as the transparent absurdity of the claims they are making, the Democrats have argued for nearly three years that evidence of collusion is hidden just around the corner. Like the Loch Ness Monster, they insist it’s there even if no one can find it. Consider this:

- In March 2017, Democrats on this committee said they had “more than circumstantial evidence” of collusion, but they couldn’t reveal it yet. Mr. Mueller was soon appointed, and they said he would find the collusion.

- Then when no collusion was found in Mr. Mueller’s indictments, the Democrats said we’d find it in his final report.
- Then when there was no collusion in the report, we were told Attorney General Barr was hiding it.
- Then when it was clear Barr wasn’t hiding anything, we were told it will be revealed through a hearing with Mr. Mueller himself.

And now that Mr. Mueller is here, they are claiming that the collusion has actually been in his report all along, hidden in plain sight. And they’re right, there *is* collusion in plain sight—collusion between Russia and the Democrats. The Democrats colluded with Russian sources to develop the Steele dossier, and Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya colluded with the dossier’s architect, Fusion GPS head Glenn Simpson.

The Democrats have already admitted, both in interviews and through their usual anonymous statements to reporters, that today’s hearing is not about getting information at all. They said they want to “bring the Mueller report to life,” and create a “television moment” through ploys like having Mr. Mueller recite passages from his own report. In other words, this hearing is political theater—it’s a Hail Mary attempt to convince the American people that collusion is real and it’s concealed in the report. Granted, that’s a strange argument to make about a report that is public—it’s almost like the Democrats prepared arguments accusing Mr. Barr of hiding the report, and didn’t bother to update their claims once he published the entire thing.

Among congressional Democrats, the Russia investigation was never about finding the truth. It’s always been a simple media operation, and by their own accounts, that operation continues in this room today. Once again, numerous pressing issues this Committee needs to address are put on hold to indulge the political fantasies of people who believed it was their destiny to serve in the Hillary Clinton administration. It’s time for the curtain to close on the Russia hoax—the conspiracy theory is dead. At some point, I would argue, we’re going to have to get back to work. Until then, I yield back.