

Nunes Opening Statement for HPSCI Hearing on Mueller Report

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Here we are, more than two years since Democrats from this committee publicly claimed to have “more than circumstantial” evidence that the Trump campaign colluded with Russians to hack the 2016 elections, and more than two years since they read false allegations from the Steele dossier into the Congressional record at an open hearing of this committee.

After that, the American people were subjected to endless hysteria by the media, Democrats, and anonymous intelligence leakers. Seemingly every day the media triumphantly published a supposed bombshell story, often based on classified documents the reporters had not actually seen, which purportedly proved that President Trump or some Trump associate was a treacherous Russian agent. Democrats on this committee regularly joined cable news pundits in denouncing the traitors. Eventually the Democrats became convinced that the Mueller report would finally rid them of the sinister president who had the audacity to defeat Hillary Clinton.

The entire scheme has now imploded and the collusion accusation has been exposed as a hoax. One would think the Democrats would simply apologize and get back to lawmaking and oversight. But it’s clear they couldn’t stop this grotesque spectacle even if they wanted to. After years of false accusations and McCarthyite smears, the collusion hoax now defines the Democratic Party. The hoax is what they have in place of a governing philosophy or a constructive vision for our country.

The Democrats assembled us today to analyze the shoddy political hit piece known as the Mueller report. It’s written in the same spirit, and with the same purpose, as the Steele dossier, which was once championed by Democrats on this committee, but which they rarely mentioned after it was exposed as yet another Democrat-created hoax.

Unfortunately for Democrats, the Mueller dossier, as I call it, either debunked many of their favorite conspiracy theories or did not even find them worth discussing. These include:

- Mueller’s finding that Michael Cohen did not travel to Prague to conspire with Russians.
- No evidence that Carter Page conspired with Russians.
- No mention of Paul Manafort visiting Julian Assange in London.
- No mention of secret communications between a Trump Tower computer server and Russia’s Alfa Bank.
- And no mention of former NRA lawyer Cleta Mitchell or her supposed knowledge of a scheme to launder Russian money through the NRA for the Trump campaign. Insinuations against Mitchell originated with Fusion GPS chief Glenn Simpson and were first made public in a document published by Democrats on this committee.

The real purpose of the Mueller dossier, however, was to help Democrats impeach the president in the absence of any evidence of collusion. Thus the report includes:

- A long litany of ordinary contacts between Trump associates and Russians, as if a certain number of contacts indicate a conspiracy even if no conversations actually created or even discussed a conspiracy.
- Excerpts from a voicemail from Trump attorney John Dowd that the Mueller team selectively edited to make it seem threatening and nefarious.
- No comment on the close relationship between Democrat operatives at Fusion GPS and multiple Russians who participated in the June 9, 2016 meeting at Trump Tower. In fact, no comment on Fusion GPS at all.
- No useful information on figures who played key roles in the investigation such as Joseph Mifsud, Alexander Downer, or Christopher Steele.
- No useful information about the many irregularities that marred the FBI's Russia investigation.

Furthermore, the Mueller dossier cites dozens of articles from the reporters and publications that were most responsible for perpetuating the Russia hoax. Thus Mueller produced a perfect feedback loop: intelligence leakers spin a false story to the media, the media publishes the story, Mueller cites the story, and the media and the Democrats then fake outrage at Mueller's findings.

In sum, Mueller relied on a mass of reporting whose central narrative—that the Trump campaign colluded with Russians to hack the elections—is false. And the Democrats spread a hoax claiming Trump is a Russian agent, but it was later discovered that the only people who colluded with Russians were the Democrats, who paid for the Steele dossier, which relied on Russian sources.

I'd like to remind the Democrats that this committee was created to do important oversight of our intelligence agencies. This work is even more crucial now that the media have abandoned their traditional watchdog role and instead have become the mouthpiece of a cabal of intelligence leakers. I understand the Democrats' inability to move past their failed hoax and get back to normal business. Nevertheless, I suggest they give it a try.