

The Damning Inspector General's Report

Democrats are trying to spin the Horowitz report as an exoneration, when in fact it is anything but.

by Conrad Black



It is hard to believe that the run-up to the presidential-election year has plumbed such a depth of farcical degradation. It must be that Trump's influence has contributed to unserious responses, but he can't be blamed for the unutterable nonsense of his opponents and the straight men of the political class that has absorbed the shock of the Trump phenomenon. Monday, December 9, had been much anticipated. Congressman Jerry Nadler, who has not been able to utter a sentence in the last three years that did not contain the word "impeachment," gaveled to order his asinine Judiciary Committee hearings to consider the partisan recommendation of Adam Schiff's Intelligence Committee that the president had

abused his powers by asking about what must concern the endangered minority that takes former vice president Joe Biden's run for the Democratic presidential nomination seriously. Trump asked the Ukrainian president to find out whether Biden and his son were influence-peddling in Ukraine. Trump didn't try to write the verdict of his inquiry; he asked a reasonable question. The Democrats, if any of them retain their sanity despite the simulation of a lunatic asylum their party is conducting, would be at least as curious as the Republicans to hear the answer. Last week Nadler had four constitutional experts before the committee, including three rabid Trump haters, one so overwrought that she couldn't walk on the sidewalk in front of Washington's Trump Hotel.

While this impeachment charade has bounced between the two most compulsively mendacious legislators in the Western world, Speaker Nancy Pelosi has been giving daily recitals of her "prayerful solemnity" at the dark majesty of the impeachment process that saddens her so deeply. She has invoked her Roman Catholic faith (tempered in its fervor by enthusiasm for abortion and other doctrinal inconveniences from the theology of St. Teddy Kennedy and the Blessed Joe Biden) to say she "hates" no one and "prays for the president." This was enough to bring on what seemed to be out-of-body epiphanies with the susceptible pundits on cable television, such as Rachel Maddow and Larry O'Donnell of MSNBC: "The speaker stood there, in the Catholic faith she has practiced all her life," etc. The result is nausea and amusement conjoined. As a very young person, I remember when the time came that all sensible opinion required the end of the outrages of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, and the time 20 years later when the Watergate controversy simply had to end. The coruscation of the present foolishness must be almost at hand. The Democrats are rushing to an impeachment committal requiring adjudication by the Senate, though no statutory offense has been alleged against the president, and there is no evidence of any. One hesitates to mind-read, especially such febrile and limited minds as

these, but they presumably want to throw this stink bomb at the president to foul the air as the proportions of the previous administration's misconduct in the Trump–Russia collusion scam ooze sluggishly into the light.

The inspector general of the Justice Department, Michael Horowitz, again gave birth to a mouse. His report released Monday purported to believe that those who initiated the investigation of the president were not motivated by partisanship, though they all hated the subject of the investigation (at least they and Mr. Horowitz spared us the treat of representing Trump's tormentors as Pelosian bead-rattling rosarians raising supplications heavenwards for the man they were trying to crucify). Unfortunately, he did not offer an alternative motive for a staggering sequence of frauds and felonies committed by the Obama Justice Department and FBI. The following is a faithfully representative selection of the inspector general's concerns.

The conduct of former deputy attorneys general Sally Yates and Rod Rosenstein "were inconsistent with or undercut the assertions contained in the FISA applications" (to conduct surveillance on Trump-campaign helper Carter Page). They contained "inaccurate information," i.e. the applications were fraudulent. Christopher Steele, the author of the infamous Steele Dossier, a pastiche of defamatory fabrications that was paid for by the Clinton campaign and was the principal basis of the FISA (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act) applications, thought he was answerable to paying clients (the Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee, through a law firm and the dirty-tricks operation Fusion GPS), while the FBI thought he was answerable to the Bureau, despite having closed out Steele for cause for assisting Fusion GPS in getting his false allegations into the media. Yet he continued to feed information to the FBI through the wife of senior Justice Department official Bruce Ohr; she was contracted to Fusion GPS. Steele met 13 times with Mrs. Ohr after Steele's

termination by the FBI, and his information was fed to the FBI. Steele continued to supply information to the FBI that director James Comey and deputy director Andrew McCabe wanted to include in the Intelligence Community Assessment of these matters (at least that outrage was not approved, but their effort incites intense curiosity about Horowitz's imputation of motives). "Ohr committed consequential errors in judgment" and a (prolonged) "lapse of judgment," Horowitz writes.

The FBI "failed to reassess" Steele's information and denied to the FISA court that Steele had "directly provided" information for a false Yahoo story linking Trump and Russia on September 23, 2016, for which the Bureau fired Steele as a "confidential human source." Steele played a "central and essential role" in obtaining the FISA authorizations and was represented to the court as "a reliable source" even though his own handler warned Comey and McCabe that Steele was not reliable and was uncorroborated, and that his principal sub-source was "a boaster, egoist . . . [who] embellishes," according to Steele himself. Yet the source was asserted to the FISA court to be "truthful and cooperative."

The FBI omitted to tell the FISA court that Carter Page was an approved "operational contact" with another branch of government and had loyally supplied any information he had about Russian activities. George Papadopoulos, another victim of the Comey-McCabe Keystone Kops smear operation, was cited in FISA applications, but not his repeated assertions that there was no evidence of any Trump involvement with Russia. Carter Page was selectively and misleadingly cited to the court throughout the period when he was under surveillance. His helpful reports of financial irregularities in the international soccer federation were misrepresented as evidence of Page's untrustworthiness; he was shamefully traduced, as Horowitz demonstrates in great detail. The FBI's Validation Management Unit debunked Steele as, inter alia, "minimally corroborated," but he continued to be reverently

invoked in FISA court filings. There were a number of confidential human sources who happened to be working loyally for the Trump campaign, but none of them were consulted or questioned, though they were proven FBI resources.

Horowitz concluded that there were "17 significant errors" in the FISA renewal applications, but he was unable to discover when Comey, McCabe, and Yates became aware of all these problems, only that they "did not have accurate information when they approved supplementary FISA applications." It is impossible to imagine that he made a very strenuous effort to answer that question. He limply concludes this hair-raising revelation of scandalous and massive official wrongdoing by urging senior Justice and FBI officials to take "any action they deem appropriate."

It is clear from the statements of demurral from Horowitz's absurdly bland conclusions by attorney general William Barr and special prosecutor John Durham that they do not share his confidence in the motives and probity of a broad swath of the Justice Department and FBI, from the highest ranks to quite junior people. It is obvious from the report itself that horrifying misdeeds were committed, and that the FBI was careening out of control and meddling in the electoral process illegally as well as incompetently. Since this is his second effort to string out and partially whitewash with humdrum verbosity the revelation of shocking violations of law and duty by senior Justice officials, Horowitz's head should roll with the others in due course, and be replaced by someone more energetic in scorching out such monstrous misconduct as he thoroughly reports.

James Comey's smug tweet of righteous victory on Monday was particularly galling, given that even Horowitz lambastes his unprofessional and implicitly dishonest performance. That over-righteous stuffed goose should now have cackled in public self-praise for the last time. Comey and his compulsively belligerent lawyer, former prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald, and

McCabe, whom Horowitz accused in his previous report of lying under oath, should all now take their turn in the dock. This psychotic attempt to pretend the 2016 election did not happen should flounder to a contemptible end in time for the reelection of the administration next November.

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