

*Obama admin briefed on claims Hillary Clinton drummed up Russia controversy to vilify Trump, distract from emails  
Clinton allegedly sought to distract from her email scandal  
**Sam Dorman***



***Gowdy on differences between Trump, Clinton investigations***

*Fox News contributor Trey Gowdy, former chair of the House Oversight Committee and author of the new book 'Doesn't Hurt to Ask,' joins Maria Bartiromo on 'Sunday Morning Futures.'*

*The Director of National Intelligence (DNI) declassified information indicating that former President Obama's administration knew of allegations that former Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton was attempting to tie Trump to the Russia and distract from her email scandal before the 2016 presidential election.*

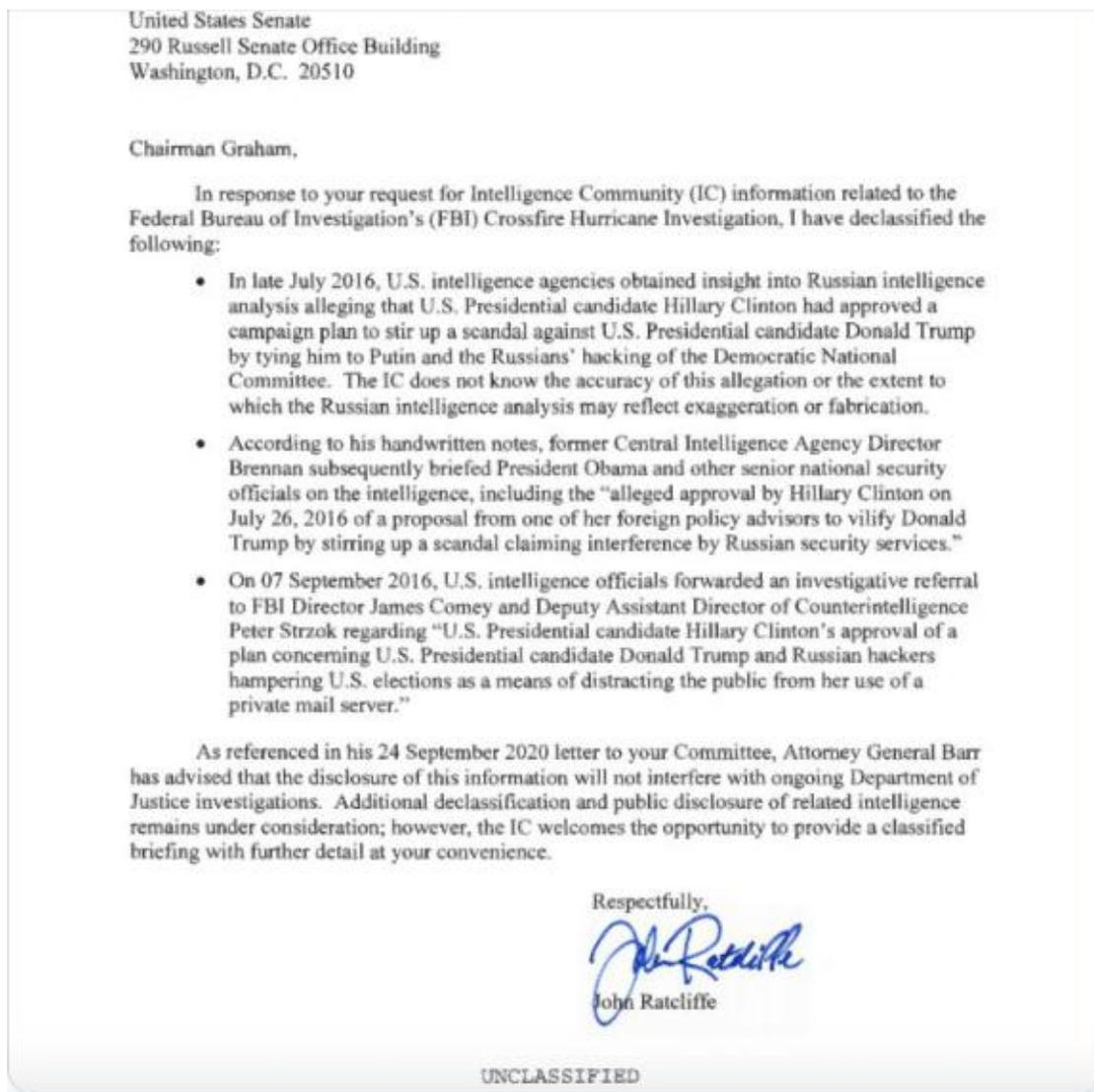
*DNI John Ratcliffe informed the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday that the prior administration obtained Russian intelligence in July of 2016 with allegations against Clinton, but cautioned that the intelligence community (IC) "does not know the accuracy of this allegation or the extent to which the Russian intelligence analysis may reflect exaggeration or fabrication."*

*Ratcliffe's letter doesn't offer specifics on the intelligence but does reveal that former CIA Director John Brennan's handwritten notes show that he briefed Obama on the information. According to his letter, the intelligence included the "alleged approval by Hillary Clinton on July 26, 2016 of a proposal from one of her foreign policy advisors to vilify Donald Trump by stirring up a scandal claiming interference by Russian security services."*

*In a statement on the letter, Ratcliffe pushed back on the idea he was advancing "Russian disinformation." "To be clear, this is not Russian disinformation and has not been assessed as such by the Intelligence Community. I'll be briefing Congress on the sensitive sources and methods by which it was obtained in the coming days."*

*Politico reported that Nick Merrill, Clinton's spokesperson, called the allegations "baseless b-----t."*

*"This is Russian disinformation," tweeted Rachel Cohen, spokeswoman for Senate Intelligence Committee Vice Chairman Mark Warner, D-Va. She added that it was "laundered by the Director Of National Intelligence and Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. This is extraordinary."*



*Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said he would review the information, noting that Ratcliffe would make it available in a classified setting. "This latest information provided by DNI Ratcliffe shows there may have been a double standard by the FBI regarding allegations against the Clinton campaign and Russia," Graham said.*

*"Whether these allegations are accurate is not the question. The question is did the FBI investigate the allegations against Clinton like they did Trump? If not, why not? If so, what was the scope of the investigation? If none, why was that?"*

*In September of 2016, U.S. intelligence officials also forwarded an investigative referral on Clinton purportedly approving "a plan concerning U.S. Presidential candidate Donald Trump and Russian hackers hampering U.S. elections" in order to distract the public from her email scandal. That referral went to former FBI Director James Comey and Deputy Assistant Director of Counterintelligence Peter Strzok.*

*Tuesday's letter will likely add to mounting scrutiny of the DOJ's initial investigation into Trump's campaign and Democrats' influence on foundational information like the Steele Dossier. That probe eventually evolved into a multi-year, special counsel investigation that cost American taxpayers more than \$30 million.*

*Under Attorney General William Barr, the Justice Department has been reviewing the process Obama's DOJ undertook in order to probe the origins of the Russia investigation.*

*Last week, Barr penned a letter to Graham stating that the source of the infamous Steele dossier -- which informed a the FBI's surveillance of the Trump campaign -- was under investigation for suspected contact with Russian intelligence officers.*

*"In connection with your Committee's investigation of these matters and ongoing hearings, you have been asking us to accelerate this process and to provide any additional information relating to the reliability of the work of Christopher Steele and the so-called 'Steele dossier,' as long as its release would not compromise U.S. Attorney John Durham's ongoing criminal investigation," Barr wrote.*

*"A footnote in the Inspector General's report contains information, which up till now has been classified and redacted, bearing on the reliability of the Steele dossier," Barr wrote. "The FBI has declassified the relevant portion of the footnote, number 334, which states that 'the Primary Sub-source was the subject of an FBI counterintelligence investigation from 2009 to 2011 that assessed his or her contacts with suspected Russian intelligence officers.'"*

*Fox News' Brooke Singman contributed to this report.*