

MEMORANDUM

(U) FROM: Charles E. Grassley, Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Lindsey O. Graham, Chairman, Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism,
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary

TO: The Honorable Rod J. Rosenstein, Deputy Attorney General, U.S.
Department of Justice

The Honorable Christopher A. Wray, Director, Federal Bureau of
Investigation

RE: Referral of Christopher Steele for Potential Violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001

(U) As you know, former British Intelligence Officer Christopher Steele was hired by the private firm Fusion GPS in June 2016 to gather information about “links between Russia and [then-presidential candidate] Donald Trump.”¹ Pursuant to that business arrangement, Mr. Steele prepared a series of documents styled as intelligence reports, some of which were later compiled into a “dossier” and published by *BuzzFeed* in January 2017.² On the face of the dossier, it appears that Mr. Steele gathered much of his information from Russian government sources inside Russia.³ According to the law firm Perkins Coie, Mr. Steele’s dossier-related efforts were funded through Fusion GPS by that law firm on behalf of the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton Campaign.⁴

(U) In response to reporting by the *Washington Post* about [REDACTED] the Judiciary Committee began raising a series of questions to the FBI and the Justice Department about these matters as part of the Committee’s constitutional oversight responsibilities.⁵

(U) The FBI has since provided the Committee access to classified documents relevant to the [REDACTED]. As explained in greater detail below, when information in those classified documents is evaluated in light of sworn statements by Mr. Steele in British litigation, it appears that either Mr. Steele lied to the FBI or the British court, or that the classified documents reviewed by the Committee contain materially false statements.

¹ (U) Defence, *Gubarev et. Al v. Orbis Business Intelligence Limited and Christopher Steele*, Claim No. HQ17D00413, Queen’s Bench (Apr. 4, 2017), para. 9 [Hereinafter “Steele Statement 1”] [Attachment A].

² (U) *Id.* at para. 10; Ken Bensinger, Miriam Elder, and Mark Schoofs, *These Reports Allege Trump Has Deep Ties to Russia*, BUZZFEED (Jan. 10, 2017).

³ (U) *Id.*

⁴ (U) Adam Entous, Devlin Barrett and Rosalind S. Helderman, *Clinton Campaign, DNC Paid for Research that Led to Russia Dossier*, THE WASHINGTON POST (Oct. 24, 2017).

⁵ (U) [REDACTED]

(U) In response to the Committee's inquiries, the Chairman and Ranking Member received a briefing on March 15, 2017, from then-Director James B. Comey, Jr.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(U) Similarly, in June 2017, former FBI Director Comey testified publicly before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that he had briefed President-Elect Trump on the dossier allegations in January 2017, which Mr. Comey described as "salacious" and "unverified."⁶

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

⁶ (U) Statement of James B. Comey, Jr., Hearing of the U.S. Sen. Select Comm. on Intelligence (June 8, 2017).

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(U) But there is substantial evidence suggesting that Mr. Steele materially misled the FBI about a key aspect of his dossier efforts, one which bears on his credibility.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

7 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(U) However, public reports, court filings, and information obtained by the Committee during witness interviews in the course of its ongoing investigation indicate that Mr. Steele [REDACTED] provided dossier information [REDACTED] to numerous media organizations prior to the end of [REDACTED] October 2016.⁸

(U) In Steele's sworn court filings in litigation in London, he admitted that he "gave off the record briefings to a small number of journalists about the pre-election memoranda [*i.e.*, the dossier] in late summer/autumn 2016."⁹ In another sworn filing in that case, Mr. Steele further

⁸ (U) See Steele Statement 1; Defendants' Response to Claimants' Request for Further Information Pursuant to CPR Part 18, *Gubarev et. Al v. Orbis Business Intelligence Limited and Christopher Steele*, Claim No. HQ17D00413, Queen's Bench (May 18, 2017), [Hereinafter "Steele Statement 2"] [Attachment B]; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THE WASHINGTON POST [REDACTED] Simpson Transcript, on File with Sen. Comm. on the Judiciary.

⁹ (U) Steele Statement 1 at para. 32.

stated that journalists from “the New York Times, the Washington Post, **Yahoo News**, the New Yorker, and CNN” were “briefed **at the end of September 2016 by [Steele]** and Fusion at Fusion’s instruction.”¹⁰ The filing further states that Mr. Steele “subsequently participated in further meetings at Fusion’s instruction with Fusion and the New York Times, the Washington Post, and Yahoo News, which took place mid-October 2016.”¹¹ According to these court filings, “[t]he briefings involved the disclosure of limited intelligence regarding indications of Russian interference in the US election process and the possible co-ordination of members of Trump’s campaign team and Russian government officials.”¹² In his interview with the Committee, Glenn Simpson of Fusion GPS confirmed this account by Mr. Steele and his company as filed in the British court.¹³

[REDACTED]

¹⁰ (U) Steele Statement 2 at para. 18. (emphasis added).

¹¹ [REDACTED]

¹² (U) *Id.*

¹³ (U) Simpson Transcript, On File with the Sen. Comm. on the Judiciary at 205-07.

¹⁴ [REDACTED]
¹⁵ [REDACTED]
¹⁶ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(U) Mr. Steele conducted his work for Fusion GPS compiling the “pre-election memoranda” “[b]etween June and early November 2016.”¹⁷ In the British litigation, Mr. Steele acknowledged briefing journalists about the dossier memoranda “in late summer/autumn 2016.”¹⁸ Unsurprisingly, during the summer of 2016, reports of at least some of the dossier allegations began circulating among reporters and people involved in Russian issues.¹⁹ Mr. Steele also admitted in the British litigation to briefing journalists from the *Washington Post*, *Yahoo News*, the *New Yorker*, and *CNN* in September of 2016.²⁰ Simply put, the more people who contemporaneously knew that Mr. Steele was compiling his dossier, the more likely it was vulnerable to manipulation. In fact, in the British litigation, which involves a post-election dossier memorandum, Mr. Steele admitted that he received and included in it *unsolicited*—and unverified—allegations.²¹ That filing implies that he similarly received unsolicited intelligence on these matters prior to the election as well, stating that Mr. Steele “*continued to receive unsolicited intelligence* on the matters covered by the pre-election memoranda after the US Presidential election.”²²

[REDACTED]

(U) One memorandum by Mr. Steele that was not published by *Buzzfeed* is dated October 19, 2016. The report alleges [REDACTED], as well as [REDACTED]. Mr. Steele’s memorandum states that his company “received this report from [REDACTED] US State Department,” that the report was the second in a series, and that the report was information that came from a foreign sub-source who “is in touch with [REDACTED], a contact of [REDACTED], a friend of the Clintons, who passed it to [REDACTED].” It is troubling enough that the Clinton Campaign funded Mr. Steele’s work, but that these Clinton associates were contemporaneously feeding Mr. Steele allegations raises additional concerns about his credibility.

¹⁷ (U) Steele Statement 1 at para. 9.

¹⁸ (U) Steele Statement 1 at para. 32

¹⁹ (U) Ahkmetshin Transcript, On File with the Sen. Comm. on the Judiciary (Mr. Ahkmetshin informed the Committee that he began hearing from journalists about the dossier before it was published, and thought it was the summer of 2016).

²⁰ (U) Steele Statement 2 at para. 18 (emphasis added).

²¹ (U) Steele Statement 1 at para. 18 and 20c.

²² (U) *Id.*; see Steele Statement 2 at 4 (“Such intelligence was not actively sought, it was merely received.”)

[REDACTED]

(U) On September 23, 2016, *Yahoo News* published its article entitled “U.S. Intel Officials Probe Ties Between Trump Adviser and Kremlin.”²³ That article described claims about meetings between Carter Page and Russians, including Igor Sechin. Mr. Sechin is described in the article as “a longtime Putin associate and former Russian deputy prime minister” under sanction by the Treasury Department in response to Russia’s actions in the Ukraine.²⁴ The article attributes the information to “a well-placed Western intelligence source,” who reportedly said that “[a]t their alleged meeting, Sechin raised the issue of the lifting of sanctions with Page.”²⁵ This information also appears in multiple “memoranda” that make up the dossier.²⁶

(U) In sum, around the same time *Yahoo News* published its article containing dossier information about Carter Page, *Mr. Steele and* Fusion GPS had briefed *Yahoo News* and other news outlets about information contained in the dossier.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

²³ (U) Michael Isikoff, *U.S. Intel Officials Probe Ties Between Trump Adviser and Kremlin*, YAHOO NEWS (Sept. 23, 2016).

²⁴ (U) *Id.*

²⁵ (U) *Id.*

²⁶ (U) Bensinger *et. al*, BUZZFEED.



(U) Accordingly, we are referring Christopher Steele to the Department of Justice for investigation of potential violation(s) of 18 U.S.C. § 1001.