

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 19, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Ambassador Richard Grenell
Acting Director
Office of the Director of National Intelligence

Dear Ambassador Grenell:

On May 13, 2020, you provided us with declassified information related to the “unmasking” of Lt. General Michael Flynn, and we very much appreciate your continued commitment to transparency.¹ We write now both to reiterate our request for the declassification of additional information related to the unmasking of Americans around the time of the 2016 election, but also to expand the scope of our request to include information as early as January 2016. Based on our investigation and recent press reports, we are increasingly concerned that the surveillance of U.S. persons affiliated with the Trump campaign began earlier than the opening of the FBI’s Crossfire Hurricane investigation in late July 2016.²

As we explained in our May 12, 2020, letter to you, one of the most significant unanswered questions about what occurred during the 2016 election is how many Americans were “unmasked,” at whose request, and for what purpose.³ It has become evident that the FBI, and possibly members of the U.S. Intelligence Community, were focused on U.S. persons affiliated with the Trump campaign in early 2016, if not even earlier.⁴ One example is that, in April 2016, FBI headquarters directed its New York Field Office to open a counterintelligence investigation of Carter Page, which on August 10, 2016, became part of the Crossfire Hurricane investigation.⁵

¹ Letter from Richard A. Grenell, Acting Director, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, to Chairman Charles E. Grassley and Chairman Ron Johnson, May 13, 2020.

<https://www.grassley.senate.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05-13%20ODNI%20to%20CEG%20RHJ%20%28Unmasking%29.pdf>.

² See, e.g., Andrew McCarthy, *Unmasking? The Real Story Is When Flynn Was Not Masked in the First Place*, Nat’l Review, May 16, 2020, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/05/michael-flynn-unmasking-real-story-is-when-he-was-not-masked-in-the-first-place/>.

³ Ron Johnson, *We need answers to questions mainstream media won’t ask about Democrats*, The Hill, Oct. 10, 2019, <https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/politics/465241-we-need-answers-to-questions-mainstream-media-wont-ask-about>; Letter from Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Feinstein, Senator Graham, Senator Whitehouse to Director Coats (May 27, 2017); Letter from Chairman Grassley to Attorney General Barr and Acting Director Grenell (May 12, 2020).

⁴ McCarthy, *supra* note 1 (alleging that “several strands of the Trump-Russian probe ... trace back to 2015”).

⁵ U.S. Dep’t of Justice, Office of Inspector Gen., Review of Four FISA Applications and Other Aspects of the FBI’s Crossfire Hurricane Investigation 62-63 (Dec. 2019), <https://www.justice.gov/storage/120919-examination.pdf>.

Again, the best way to resolve these issues is to determine the truth, and to make clear to the American people what did and did not occur. For these reasons, we respectfully request that you make available to us, as soon as possible, all information regarding the “unmasking” of U.S. persons affiliated with the Trump campaign requested by members of President Obama’s administration from January 2016 through January 2017. If this request needs to be responded to in tranches, we would appreciate receiving unmasking information relating to the period of April through June 2016 first.

Should you have any questions, please contact Joseph Folio of Chairman Johnson’s staff at (202) 224-4751 and Joshua Flynn-Brown of Chairman Grassley’s staff at (202) 224-4515. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Committee on Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs



Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee

cc: The Honorable Gary C. Peters
Ranking Member

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member