

Chaffetz: FBI Is Withholding Information the Public Needs to See

During an interview Tuesday with nationally syndicated radio host Hugh Hewitt, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Jason Chaffetz (D-Utah) said that as damaging as the FBI's document release on Friday was to Hillary Clinton, it could have been much worse.

"We, well, I don't want to reveal it yet, but we do have a hearing, two that are scheduled that are coming up," he said in response to a question from the host about whether or not Chaffetz's committee would be holding hearings over the documents. "One is the Freedom of Information Act: How is it the State Department essentially lied to the media, the world, and the public? And remember, it's our information. These aren't Hillary Clinton's emails. These are federal records. And so we want to know from the State Department how they misled the American public for so long.

"The second thing we want to do and have scheduled for a week from, or for next Monday is all these redactions that they've given, all of these things. We may need to go into a classified setting, because the FBI, State Department, Department of Defense, others, they're holding information back that members of Congress should be able to see as well as the public."

Chaffetz also said it appeared that documents were destroyed after a preservation order had been made. That destruction could be construed as obstruction of a Congressional investigation, or in the case of the FBI's investigation, obstruction of justice.

Hewitt asked specifically about the private companies involved

in the set up and maintenance of Clinton's private servers. Many of these details were not known to the public until after the FBI's documents were released Friday, and the host wanted to know if Chaffetz had been aware of these facts previously.

"There are at least three other companies that we have not yet mentioned, again, all outside purveyors that were able to touch this," he said. "My concern, one of the biggest flaws that Hillary Clinton did is took classified information, some of it so secure and sensitive that even I as the chairman of the Oversight Committee do not have the proper security clearance to see, because it, they're very compartmentalized, the Special Access Program stuff. But they don't have security clearance, and she granted them the security clearance without the authorization, without the background checks.

"And who knows what they did with this material, because the FBI didn't recover any of the actual phones themselves, and it begs a lot of questions of what these IT people did, didn't do, where are the backups, where is this hanging out, and were they hacked?"

Chaffetz said the Clinton email scandal was "potentially one of the largest breaches of security in the history of the State Department," which is why he refused to "let go" of the issue. Hewitt asked specifically about longtime Clinton associate Sydney Blumenthal and his access to classified materials.

"In this three paragraphs on Blumenthal, it says that he sent 24 memos to the Secretary of State, many of which contained classified information which he obtained, as he told the FBI, from a number of different sources, including former United States intelligence community employees and contacts, as well as contacts within foreign governments," Hewitt said. "I would like for him to testify on the record. He cannot be having classified information. I don't know if he violated the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. I don't know that he has any

evidence that there is. But I would certainly want him on the record, and so the American people can see he should never be near a government agency again. And yet, he'll be the first person that Hillary Clinton would bring into her White House."

"[T]his is precisely one of the smart things that actually came out of the White House," Chaffetz answered. "Barack Obama and his White House team said absolutely not, you cannot have Sidney Blumenthal anywhere near. You can't put him on the payroll."

"And so what did Hillary Clinton do? She thumbed her nose and just put him on the Clinton Foundation payroll, and was a very active contributor back and forth, an adviser which she bristles at, communicating. And the way he represented himself, the access to information, was he given improper information? All legitimate questions that need to still be answered."

Unwilling to completely expose his plans, Chaffetz did admit he's planning at least two hearings in the coming days, one of which will likely be held in secret because classified information will be discussed. He also told Hewitt he would not be "bashful" about using his committee's subpoena powers.

"I've tried to bend over backwards to give people a fair, honest chance. But if not, we're going to start issuing subpoenas, absolutely," he said. "Even though we may not be in session doesn't mean we can't compel people to come in for a deposition or to provide documents and whatnot. So Hillary Clinton chose this timeline, not me. She decided to hold this information for years. But now that the FBI has concluded their portion, and by the way, the FBI did not, has not looked at her testimony before Congress, has not looked at other things that she did potentially with the destruction of documents. So that will continue, and we're going to go full steam ahead."

Chaffetz also noted that several members of his committee also belong to the House Judiciary Committee, which will soon have a meeting with FBI Director James Comey, and this investigation is highly likely to be discussed. Additionally, he has questions for key State Department staff.

"Two letters out today, and you'll see those a little bit later," he said. "Thursday, a hearing with the undersecretary for management, Mr. Kennedy, who will come and testify along with a host of others about how did they snooker the American public for years in filling these FOIA requests and the media, and what are they going to do to clean it up, followed by next Monday, if need be, because right now, you've got people that are refusing to come and talk to us. So we're going to have to put out a hearing on why are so many of these things classified? Why not release all of the unclassified stuff? Why aren't all the 302s made public? They're unclassified."