

House Intel Hearing Opened an Astonishing Window on Democrats' War With President Trump

Last Monday the House Intelligence Committee (HPSCI) conducted a rare open Committee hearing, and for those few Americans who were paying attention, it opened a truly astonishing window into the Democrats' war on President Trump.

At the hearing, there were some useful exchanges between Republican members and FBI Director Comey on the seriousness of recent leaks of intelligence as well as the unmasking and illegal disclosure of General Michael Flynn's name from NSA reports, noted our friend Fred Fleitz, a former CIA officer and HPSCI staff member.

This is a big deal, says Fleitz, because the names of American citizens incidentally collected by U.S. intelligence agencies are supposed to be blacked out and are not supposed to be revealed unless there is a compelling national security reason.

However, these discussions about the intersection of constitutional protections and intelligence collection were overshadowed by the Democrats, who were much more aggressive in pushing their Trump-Russia conspiracy theories.

Republican Intelligence Committee members were taken completely off guard by the hyper-partisan behavior of their Democratic colleagues.

Congressional Republicans must learn from this episode that the Democratic Party is so obsessed with destroying President Trump that their Democratic colleagues cannot be trusted to

engage in good faith deliberations or hearings on anything that they can use to hurt Trump. Sadly, this includes national security, says Fleitz.

What's more, if open congressional hearings on the Russia/election or similar issues are held, Republican members must be much more aggressive in pursuing leaks of classified information and the abuse of U.S intelligence by the Obama administration to spy on the Trump campaign. Committee chairmen should run such hearings with iron gavels and give Democratic members zero leeway to turn them into political circuses.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes proved he now knows what he's up against in the aftermath of Monday's intelligence committee hearing by the way he handled new information suggesting that the Obama administration did surveil the Trump campaign, observed Fleitz.

Nunes was given intelligence, apparently under the table from U.S. intelligence officers, which indicates the names of Trump campaign aides were "demasked" in intelligence reports that had nothing to do with Russia or any alleged wrongdoing by the Trump campaign.

Chairman Nunes quite sensibly shared this information with the President before briefing the Committee Democrats which, in an outburst of hypocrisy only a Democrat could muster, caused Rep. Adam Schiff, the Democrat Ranking of HPSCI, to launch a made for TV rant about Nunes politicizing the work of the Committee.

The Democrats have long had a troubling relationship with the work of the government's national security and intelligence agencies, so it is worth reviewing some history and looking at who among the House Democrats are on HPSCI.

The Democrats' Ranking Member, Rep. Adam Schiff, is a long time hyper-partisan California politician (known as "Shifty"

when he served in the California State Senate) who is a confidant of Democratic Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, also of California.

Also among the Democrats on HPSCI who have surfaced to attack President Trump are Rep. Andre Carson, one of two Muslims in Congress, and another Pelosi confidant, Rep. Jackie Speier, also of California.

Pelosi herself has long had a troubled relationship with the intelligence agencies and their products.

It is worth noting that Pelosi was once the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee and her role in the "Gang of Four" congressional leaders privy to sensitive intelligence information was the center of controversy during the George W. Bush administration, when she tried to use exposure of the CIA's top secret "enhanced interrogation techniques" (EIT) program to discredit President Bush.

Pelosi's behavior forced the CIA to compile and release a report contradicting her repeated statements over some 18 months that she was never told that these techniques were actually being used.

In a 10-page memo outlining an almost seven-year history of classified briefings, intelligence officials said that Pelosi and then-Rep. Porter Goss (FL-13) were the first two members of Congress ever briefed on the interrogation tactics. Then the ranking member and chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, respectively, Pelosi and Goss were briefed Sept. 4, 2002, one week before the first anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The memo, issued by the Director of National Intelligence and the Central Intelligence Agency to Capitol Hill, noted the Pelosi-Goss briefing covered "EITs including the use of EITs on Abu Zubaydah." EIT is an acronym for enhanced interrogation technique. For the record, Zubaydah was one of the earliest

valuable al-Qaeda members captured and the first to be water boarded.

The behavior of Rep. Adam Schiff and Democrat members of HPSCI isn't caused by their purported outrage at the phony allegations of Russian "hacking" of the 2016 election; it is merely the latest episode in a long-running series of Democrats politicizing leaks and using secret intelligence to discredit their political opponents.

Fred Fleitz says this means there should be no more open hearings on issues like Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election, and we agree. Fleitz also says additional open hearings that the Senate and House Intelligence Committees have scheduled on this issue should also be made closed hearings, and we certainly agree with that as well.

Republicans seemed to have gotten the message on this. Friday, an open House Intelligence Committee hearing scheduled for this week on the Russia/election hearing scheduled was cancelled. It will be replaced with a closed hearing, and we hope this time Republicans will come ready to hold the Democrats' feet to the fire for their political leaks and outrageous violations of the laws and rules governing the use of secret intelligence information. {eoa}

George Rasley is editor of *Richard Viguerie's* . A veteran of over 300 political campaigns, he served on the staff of Vice President Dan Quayle and as spokesman for now-Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Mac Thornberry. He has served as a staff member or consultant to some of America's most-recognized conservative political figures. He is a member of American MENSA and studied international relations at Worcester College, Oxford.

This article was originally published at . Used with permission.