

Report: DNC 'Inhibited' the FBI Investigation of Its Stolen Emails

Thursday night, reported that sources in the FBI were refuting claims by the Democratic National Committee that the bureau never asked for access to its servers.

In a story claiming the DNC itself was responsible for the hacking now blamed on Russian government-sponsored hackers, the alternative web news outlet reports:

"The FBI struck back at the Democratic National Committee on Thursday, accusing it of denying federal investigators access to its computer systems and hamstringing its investigation into the infiltration of DNC servers by Russia-backed hackers. The FBI repeatedly stressed to DNC officials the necessity of obtaining direct access to servers and data, only to be rebuffed until well after the initial compromise had been mitigated. This left the FBI no choice but to rely upon a third party for information," a senior law enforcement official told BuzzFeed News in a statement. "These actions caused significant delays and inhibited the FBI from addressing the intrusion earlier."

Buzzfeed accurately reports the matter has turned into a battle of conflicting stories between the FBI and DNC, which had tried to downplay the FBI's version of events. So far, the only "evidence" of the Russian government being involved in the hacking incident has come from the DNC's own internet technology vendor, Crowdstrike.

The report quotes an anonymous U.S. intelligence official as saying that's the only source government investigators have had:

A U.S. intelligence official, requesting anonymity to discuss the investigation, said that because the FBI did not have access to the DNC servers, investigators had been forced to rely on computer forensics from the CrowdStrike analysis. CrowdStrike was originally hired by the DNC to investigate the hacks in the spring of 2016.

In a statement sent to BuzzFeed News Wednesday, the DNC said it cooperated fully with the FBI investigation and shared all of the CrowdStrike information with the FBI.

The DNC declined to comment on the FBI's statement.

Adding intrigue to the entire situation, one of President-elect Donald Trump's national intelligence advisers, former CIA Director James Woolsey, has resigned from the presidential transition team effective immediately. In an interview with CNN, he suggested that he had not actually been providing advice to the president-elect for some time and wanted to publicly clarify the arrangement.

Other liberal mainstream media outlets have suggested the move came about over tension about Trump's reluctance to accept the Russian hacking narrative. Others suggested it was over disagreement about the president-elect's planned direction for the future of the U.S. intelligence community.

President Barack Obama was briefed on the intelligence community's findings in the matter on Thursday. President-elect Trump was to be briefed Friday. A declassified version of the report is expected to be released Monday. {eoa}