

Senate Turns Its Attention to New Election 2016 Scandal

The Senate Committee on the Judiciary and the Subcommittee on Crime & Terrorism are now investigating a new figure for attempting to influence events surrounding the 2016 presidential election.

Rather than looking at a Russian, or a member of the Trump 2016 campaign, however, they're looking at a member of the Obama administration. Namely, former Secretary of State Loretta Lynch.

Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, announced the investigation Friday afternoon:

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member Dianne Feinstein, Crime and Terrorism Subcommittee Chairman Lindsey Graham and Ranking Member Sheldon Whitehouse sought information about alleged political interference by then-Attorney General Loretta Lynch during the FBI's investigation of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server. The bipartisan inquiry comes as the Judiciary Committee is examining the circumstances surrounding the removal of James Comey as FBI Director.

In April, *The New York Times* reported that the FBI came into possession of a batch of hacked documents, one of which was said to be authored by a "Democratic operative who expressed confidence that Ms. Lynch would keep the Clinton investigation from going too far." Chairman Grassley then requested a copy of the document from the Justice Department, which has failed to respond. A month later, *The Washington Post* reported similar facts and provided further details about individuals involved in

these communications. The *Post* reported that the email in question, sent by then-chair of the Democratic National Committee Debbie Wasserman Schultz to Leonard Benardo of the Open Society Foundations, indicated that Lynch had privately assured Clinton campaign staffer Amanda Renteria that the FBI's investigation wouldn't "go too far."

Comey was reportedly concerned that the communication would raise doubts about the investigation's independence and began discussing plans to announce the end of the Clinton email investigation rather than simply referring it to the department for a prosecutorial decision. Comey's extraordinary action to announce the end of the investigation was a break from Justice Department protocol and was later cited as justification for his removal from the FBI.

The Open Society Foundations are George Soros' main philanthropic arm but have frequently been connected to a number of disturbing scandals around the world. They have been linked to claims of election-rigging in a number of countries, including Malaysia, Uganda and Macedonia.

The committee has sent letters to Renteria, Benardo, OSF general counsel Benardo and Lynch. In those letters, the senators seek details about the reported communication, copies of any related documents and whether the FBI contacted them to investigate the alleged communication.

"The reports come amidst numerous allegations of political inference in controversial and high-profile investigations spanning the current and previous administrations," Grassley's office stated in a press release. "The Senate Judiciary Committee has jurisdiction over the FBI and Justice Department and is obliged to oversee any potential misconduct or inappropriate political influence at these agencies." {eoa}