

Durham sub-source



Office of the Attorney General  
Washington, D. C. 20530

September 24, 2020

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
290 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Graham,

For months, the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") have been declassifying and providing documents to the Judiciary Committee related to the Inspector General's report, "Review of Four FISA Applications and Other Aspects of the FBI's Crossfire Hurricane Investigation."

In connection with your Committee's investigation of these matters and ongoing hearings, you have been asking us to accelerate this process and to provide any additional information relating to the reliability of the work of Christopher Steele and the so-called "Steele dossier," as long as its release would not compromise U.S. Attorney John Durham's ongoing criminal investigation.

A footnote in the Inspector General's report contains information, which up till now has been classified and redacted, bearing on the reliability of the Steele dossier. The FBI has declassified the relevant portion of that footnote, number 334, which states that "[t]he Primary Sub-source was the subject of an FBI counterintelligence investigation from 2009 to 2011 that assessed his/her documented contacts with suspected Russian intelligence officers." Further, at my request, the FBI has prepared a declassified summary of certain information from the counterintelligence investigation of the Primary Sub-source, which I am now providing to the Committee.

I have consulted with Mr. Durham, who originally brought this information to my attention in the course of his investigation, and he has informed me that disclosure of the information will not interfere with his criminal investigation. I have also alerted the Director of National Intelligence ("DNI") to certain classified information in the possession of the intelligence community, also brought to my attention by Mr. Durham, which bears upon the FBI's knowledge concerning the reliability of the dossier. Mr. Durham confirms that the

what FBI knew reliability Dossier

classified FBI now

Durham flagged sub-source subject FBI investigation

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FBI in Washington Sub-source

INTERVIEW

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██████████ 2006 + 2005 Primary sub-source  
Contact Russian intelligence officer

- ██████████ In September 2006, the Primary Sub-source was in contact with a known Russian intelligence officer. During these conversations, the Russian Intelligence Officer invited the Primary Sub-source to the Russian Embassy to see his office. The Primary Sub-source told the Russian Intelligence Officer that he/she was interested in entering the Russian diplomatic service one day. The two discussed a time when the Primary Sub-source was to visit. Four days later, the Russian Intelligence Officer contacted the Primary Sub-source and informed him/her they could meet that day to work "on the documents and then think about future plans." Later in October 2006, the Primary Sub-source contacted the Russian Intelligence Officer seeking a reply "so the documents can be placed in tomorrow's diplomatic mail pouch."
- ██████████ FBI information further identified, in 2005, the Primary Sub-source making contact with a Washington, D.C.-based Russian officer. It was noted that the Russian officer and the Primary Sub-source seemed very familiar with each other.

#### ██████████ INTERVIEWS TO SUPPORT THE INVESTIGATION

██████████ As part of its investigation, the FBI conducted interviews with the Primary Sub-source's associates. One individual indicated that the Primary Sub-source was not anti-American but wanted to return to Russia one day. Another described the Primary Sub-source as pro-Russia and indicated that he/she always interjected Russian opinions during policy discussions. While both stated that they did not recall the Primary Sub-source asking directly about their access to classified information, one interviewee did note that the Primary Sub-source persistently asked about the interviewee's knowledge of a particular military vessel.

#### ██████████ CLOSURE OF THE INVESTIGATION

→ "consideration to re-opening" if returned to US.

██████████ In July 2010, the field office initiated a request for Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA)-authorized coverage, and the request was routed to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Intelligence Policy and Review in August 2010. Investigators subsequently learned that the Primary Sub-source departed the United States in September 2010. Further investigation determined that his/her visa was not renewed. Because the Primary Sub-source had apparently left the United States, the FBI withdrew the FISA application request and closed the investigation. The record documenting the closing of the investigation stated that consideration would be given to re-opening the investigation in the event that the Primary Sub-source returned to the United States.

#### ██████████ IDENTIFICATION BY CROSSFIRE HURRICANE TEAM

██████████ In December 2016, the CROSSFIRE HURRICANE team identified the Primary Sub-source used by Christopher Steele and, at that time, became familiar with the 2009 investigation. The CROSSFIRE HURRICANE team interviewed the Primary Sub-source over the course of three sequential days in January 2017. At that time, the 2009 investigation remained closed. The 2009 investigation remains closed to this day.

moves up timeline "Dec 2016" identified Dossier sub-source → link 2009 FBI investigation

Overview of the Counterintelligence Investigation of Christopher Steele's Primary Sub-source

SUMMARY

This document is an unclassified summary of classified investigative case file reports pertaining to the counterintelligence investigation referenced in footnote 334 of the Department of Justice Inspector General Report, Review of Four FISA Applications and Other Aspects of the FBI's Crossfire Hurricane Investigation. The FBI is providing this information to the Office of the Attorney General pursuant to the DOJ's request, which the FBI understands is based on DOJ receiving an inquiry from the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee on September 18, 2020.

Between May 2009 and March 2011, the FBI maintained an investigation into the individual who later would be identified as Christopher Steele's Primary Sub-source ("the 2009 investigation"). As explained below, the FBI commenced this investigation based on information by the FBI indicating that the Primary Sub-source may be a threat to national security. The following describes the investigation and subsequent knowledge of the investigation by the CROSSFIRE HURRICANE team.

→ FBI prior investigation Steele dossier source

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

In May 2009, the FBI opened a preliminary investigation predicated on a specific interaction between three individuals who were then employed by a prominent U.S. think tank. Specifically, the FBI received reporting indicating a research fellow for an influential foreign policy advisor in the Obama Administration was at a work-related event in late 2008 with a coworker when they were approached by another employee of the think tank ("the employee"). The employee reportedly indicated that if the two individuals at the table "did get a job in the government and had access to classified information" and wanted "to make a little extra money," the employee knew some people to whom they could speak. According to the research fellow, there was no pretext to the conversation; the employee had not been invited to the table; and the employee began the exchange by asking if the research fellow "would follow [his/her principal] anywhere." When later interviewed by the FBI, the research fellow confirmed the report and stated that while he/she could not be certain, he/she did not believe the employee was attempting to gain access to the foreign policy advisor through the research fellow's access. When interviewed by the FBI, the coworker seated with the research fellow did not recall a specific pitch for classified information, however, the coworker did express suspicion of the employee and had questioned the possibility that the employee might actually be a Russian spy. In December 2016, the FBI's Crossfire Hurricane investigation identified the employee as Christopher Steele's Primary Sub-source.

§§ - classified information

\* December 2016

CONVERSION TO FULL INVESTIGATION


After initiating the investigation, the FBI converted it from a preliminary to a full investigation based on the following open source and FBI information:

- The Primary Sub-source was identified as an associate of two FBI counterintelligence subjects. The FBI assessed that the Primary Sub-source formed the associations with these individuals through a university student organization of which he/she was a member. The FBI identified no additional derogatory information pertaining to these associations.
- A review of FBI databases revealed that the Primary Sub-source had contact in 2006 with the Russian Embassy and known Russian intelligence officers.

Letter to The Honorable Lindsey Graham

disclosure of that information would not interfere with his investigation, and the Department otherwise defers to the DNI concerning the handling of this information.

Sincerely,

  
William P. Barr  
Attorney General

cc: The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary

Enclosure

