

# IG's Report Is Just Another Opportunity for Partisan Cherry-Picking

Our two national parties had great expectations about the findings of the Department of Justice's Inspector General concerning the surveillance operation carried out by the FBI against Donald Trump's campaign staff. What came out of this [newly released report](#) won't fully satisfy either side.

The Democrats were hoping that Inspector General Michael Horowitz's report would exonerate those involved in this operation, which has been traced back to the notorious FISA dossier. Those responsible for that fraudulent dossier were the Democratic National Committee and its presidential standard-bearer, Hillary Clinton, who paid for its creation.

The Republicans, on the other hand, were expecting that the report would uncover glaring wrongdoing on the part of the FBI and the Democratic Party. If this were shown, the findings might lessen the effects of the cumulative attacks leveled against Trump by the media and the Democratic establishment.

Despite pinpointing specific mistakes in FBI operations, Horowitz has pursued a middle course with his report. He chastised anti-Trump FBI operatives but refrained from charging them with "political bias." This leaves John Durham – whom the Attorney General appointed to examine the FISA abuse – to issue the far more damning report.

To the displeasure of Trump supporters, Horowitz inserts the following judgment about the investigations of Trump's team in 2016: "We did not find documentary or testimonial evidence that political bias or improper motivation influenced the decisions to open the four individual investigations." Despite this seeming exoneration, the report also indicates that an

invasive investigation was initiated because of slim findings and might better have not been conducted.

The report further notes that the surveillance of Trump staffer Carter Page was undertaken without considering exculpatory evidence that would have protected Page against this intrusion on his privacy. FBI Director Christopher Wray has promised to take measures to make sure that such mistakes are not repeated.

A relevant question about the Inspector General's Report is how it affected the impeachment proceedings against the President. If the report indicated the surveillance operation had been launched because Trump was suspiciously embroiled with the Russian government, thus justifying the FBI's snooping, then Trump's opponents would score a victory.

But such a hypothetical finding is non-existent. Furthermore, it's hard to see how even the harshest reprimand delivered by Horowitz against Trump's enemies in our secret services would have kept the impeachment-minded Democrats from pursuing their work.

Congressional Democrats are not pushing impeachment because they proved that Trump committed an impeachable offense. Instead, they are acting in response to their base, which loathes Trump and wants him immediately removed from office. According to a November *Fox News* poll, [49 percent](#) of respondents want the president removed from office. This likely includes just about everyone in the districts represented by Jerry Nadler, Adam Schiff, Nancy Pelosi, Eric Swalwell, and Maxine Waters.

No matter what skullduggery Horowitz and Durham might have unearthed about the FBI and/or the DNC, the anti-Trump opposition isn't likely to go away. Moreover, what Trump decries as "the lying media" will spin any document coming from Horowitz and/or Durham to fit their preconceptions.

I would also call attention to the intensity factor. The Democratic base feels more deeply about its cause, which is destroying Trump and handing over the country to the social-political Left, than does the other side, which has been considerably less violent and more willing to engage in bipartisan initiatives. Republicans are not encouraging angry mobs to occupy our streets and then condoning their mayhem; Democrats in Congress are.

Mind you, I am not making this observation to condemn the Democrats or their Antifa allies. What I am suggesting is that anti-Trump partisanship has reached a fever pitch that does not exist on the other side, despite the enthusiastic supporters sporting MAGA hats. The "antifascist" Dems seem more similar to the violent European extremists of the 1930s than the Catholic and Evangelical working-class types who applaud Trump's tirades.

As an historian who has studied World War I extensively, I've noticed that certain interpretations keep popping up for political reasons, no matter how thoroughly they've been called into question. The reason is obvious: Scholarly research about controversial past events is rarely conducted in a partisan-free spirit. Those who study these events bring emotional baggage to their work; and the most one can ask for in these circumstances is that historians become aware of their prejudices and try to see beyond them. But things become even more complicated and partisan when observers are talking about the present.

A deep ideological and cultural division is now convulsing this country; and the presidency of Donald Trump has made this dissension more apparent than ever. We may therefore assume that each side will take from the Inspector General's report whatever confirms its position. Anyone who expects present divisions to end because of the report must surely be dreaming.

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