

U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
DOJ OIG FISA Report: Methodology, Scope, and Findings

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER GARY C. PETERS
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AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Inspectors General play a vital role in conducting oversight, offering independent assessments of how programs are working, and holding agencies accountable when errors are made.

The Justice Department Inspector General's Office conducted a thorough, 19-month investigation, interviewed more than 100 witnesses, and analyzed more than 1 million pages of materials to complete the report we are discussing today.

This report found, unequivocally, that the FBI investigation into coordination between individuals affiliated with President Trump's campaign and the Russian government had a proper legal and factual basis and found no evidence that the investigation was affected by political bias.

Politically-motivated investigations are a betrayal of our bedrock democratic principles, and this institution should speak with one voice to say that we will not tolerate them, no matter who is in power.

In this case, the report found that the investigation was rooted in identifying any federal criminal activity or threats to American national security. The Inspector General verified that politics played no role whatsoever in opening this investigation.

Importantly, the report did find that there are areas that need improvement, including the process used to obtain FISA warrants.

Identifying these areas for improvement is a key part of an Inspector General's role, and I applaud the Inspector General's robust and thorough work to shine a light on the FBI and Justice Department's shortcomings.

It is this independence and commitment to the rule of law that sets our institutions apart.

FBI Director Wray has received this report and agreed with its core conclusion that political bias played no role in opening the investigation.

Director Wray also accepted the Inspector General's findings that errors occurred in the FISA process and ordered more than forty corrective actions to improve and reform that important process.

I hope that today's hearing provides this Committee with the opportunity to carefully examine this report's recommendations and determine whether there are areas we can help strengthen as well.

However, the most important fact that we should take away from this report and this hearing is that Russia, a foreign adversary, engaged in a sweeping and systemic effort to interfere in the 2016 Presidential election, and that the FBI was right in investigating those who may have been involved.

The Russian government's effort was an attack on our democracy and our national security, and it's happening again.

The Russian government is intent on sowing distrust, spreading disinformation, and undermining our democracy. And they will pursue those efforts at all costs.

Members of both parties must come together to pass legislation strengthening election security and ensure no foreign adversary can meddle in our elections again.

I had the opportunity to work with Chairman Johnson and Senator Lankford on bipartisan legislation to strengthen cybersecurity standards for our voting machines.

I hope that we can continue working together to identify these kinds of commonsense steps that will protect the very heart of our democracy.

Finally, Inspector General Horowitz, I'd like to thank you and your team for your independence, your integrity, and your hard work in completing this report. I look forward to your testimony.