

Russiagate Explained: The Sins Of The 2017 Intelligence Community Assessment



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By Greg Collard of [Racket News](#)

A key part of the House Permanent Selection Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) review is about then-CIA director John Brennan's reliance on an obscure fragment to determine in the 2017 ICA that Putin "aspired to help Trump's chances of victory when possible."



Former CIA Director John Brennan testifies before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on May 23, 2017. (Getty Images)

The fragment, which is in bold below, comes from a raw human source intelligence report, or HUMINT in intelligence-speak.

*“Putin had made this decision [to leak DNC emails) after he had come to believe t h a t the Democratic nominee had better odds of winning the U.S. presidential election, and that [candidate Trump], **whose victory Putin was counting on**, most likely would not be able to pull off a convincing victory.”*

You might think that means Putin wanted Trump to win. That’s one interpretation.

But there were five different interpretations among the five people who wrote the ICA.

A senior CIA operations officers remarked: *“We don’t know what was meant by that,” and “five people read it five ways,” the HPSCI reports says.*

Usually that’s no problem, because as the Intelligence Community Directive standards ([ICD 203](#)) make clear, alternative interpretations should be included. Incredibly, the ICA failed to do that even though there was great disagreement on the fragment’s meaning.

The significance of this fragment to the ICA case that Putin “aspired” for candidate Trump to win cannot be overstated. The major “high confidence” judgment of the ICA rests on one opinion about a text fragment with uncertain meaning, that may be a garble, and for which it is not clear how it was obtained. This text—which would not have been published without DCIA’s orders to do so—is cited using only one interpretation of its meaning and without considering alternative interpretations.




The HPSCI gives some examples of alternative interpretations for “**whose victory Putin was counting on.**” Since the information was acquired in July 2016, it could have meant Putin “expected” a Trump victory at the upcoming Republican National Convention. The HPSCI notes that the convention’s outcome “was still uncertain to do active efforts to deny Trump a majority of convention delegates. This was a headline issue for the US political media at the time, though many pundits nonetheless expected — or ‘counted on’ — a Trump victory.”

I encourage you to read the declassified HPSCI report for yourself. In the meantime, some other findings from the report are listed below. There are enough findings that make clear the ICA reeks to make even a roach turn away. Unfortunately, too many pols in the Adam Schiff mold have lower standards.

- Three of the 15 HUMINT reports the ICA relied on contained flawed information, yet “these three became foundational sources the ICA cited to claim Putin aspired to help Trump win.”
- The three reports were published “on DCIA (then-CIA director John Brennan) orders, despite veteran CIA officer judgments that they contained substandard information that was unclear, of uncertain origin, potentially biased, implausible, or in the words of senior operations officers, ‘odd’.”
- “The original report does not directly say, as the ICA implies, that Putin launched lead operations to help Trump win.”
- “The ICA omits critical report context which, had it been made available to the reader, would show the report to be implausible—if not ridiculous—and missing so many key details as to be impossible.”
- “The ICA selectively excluded information from reliable intelligence sources that senior Russian officials had serious reservation about how a potential Trump administration could be bad for Moscow and complicate repairing relations with Washington.”
- “Far from showing a consensus ‘clear preference for Trump’, the evidence indicates Putin and Russian officials saw downsides to a potential Trump administration. The intelligence also showed, that regardless of who won, Moscow expected a prolonged struggle to repair strained relations with Washington.”

Citing intelligence findings that don’t exist

The ICA report says, “We assess that Russian leaders never entirely abandoned hope for a defeat of Secretary Clinton.” However, the intelligences the ICA cites to make that conclusion report does not say that. The raw intelligence, the HPSCI report says:

- *Does not state— not does it infer—that Russian leaders “never abandoned hope” for defeating Clinton, nor does it even use the word “hope” or similar phrasing.*
- *Does not in any way describe the aspirations, plans or intentions of Putin or other Russian leaders.* 
- *Does not describe Putin’s “aspiration to help Trump’s chances of victory” nor does it propose contrasting Clinton unfavorably to Trump.*

The HPSCI report says that **"Putin's decision not to leak additional derogatory information on Secretary Clinton as the polls narrowed undermine the ICA's claim that he 'aspired' to help Trump win and "never entirely abandoned hope for a defeat of Secretary Clinton."**

Racket has asked Clinton to comment on the below "derogatory information" that SVR compiled. We haven't heard back from her office. It's important to clarify the assertions about Clinton may be important without being true. Even if it was bad intelligence, it existed, and the ICA chose not to include it. Meanwhile, it ignored the multitude of problems with the intelligence relied on to denigrate Trump.

The HPSCI report says the "generic description of the material Putin held back makes the reader unaware of significant information available to Moscow to denigrate Secretary Clinton. This violated ICD 203 directives that analysis 'be informed by all relevant information available' given that documents leaked during the election were far less damaging to Secretary Clinton than those Putin chose not to leak."

Examples of the derogatory information held back:

- "As of September 2016, the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) had Democratic National Committee (DNC) information that President Obama and party leaders found the state of Secretary Clinton's health to be 'extraordinarily alarming' and felt it could have 'serious negative impact' on her election prospects. Her health information was being kept in 'strictest secrecy' and even close advisors were not being fully informed."
- "The SVR possessed DNC communications that Clinton was suffering from 'intensified psycho-emotional problems, including uncontrolled fits of anger, aggression, and cheerfulness.' Clinton was placed on a daily regimen of 'heavy tranquilizers' and while afraid of losing, she remained 'obsessed with a thirst for power.'"
- "The SVR also had information that Clinton suffered from 'Type 2 diabetes, Ischemic heart disease, deep vein thrombosis, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.' "
- "The SVR possessed a campaign email discussing a plan approved by Secretary Clinton to link Putin and Russian hackers to candidate Trump in order to 'distract the [American] public' from the Clinton email server scandal."

- “The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) in August had details of secret meetings with multiple named US religious organizations, in which US State Department representatives offered - in exchange for supporting Secretary Clinton-‘significant increases in financing’ from Department funds and “the patronage” of State in dealing with ‘post-Soviet’ countries.

The Steele Dossier

- The ICA referred to the dossier as “Russian plans and intentions,” falsely implying to high-level US policymakers that the dossier had intelligence value for understanding Moscow's influence operations.
- Two senior CIA officers—one from Russia operations and the other from Russia analysis—argued with DCIA that the dossier should not be included at all in the ICA, because it failed to meet basic tradecraft standards, according to a senior officer present at the meeting.
- The same officer said that DCIA refused to remove it, and when confronted with the dossier’s many flaws, responded, “Yes, but doesn’t it ring true?”
- CIA veterans noted that they could not imagine any previous director **allowing such information in a formal CIA** product, much less one intended for two Presidents, and then overriding the objections of experienced senior officers to do so. (emphasis HPSCI)

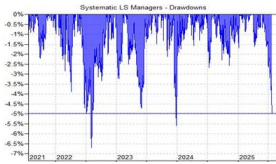
This list is far from complete, as you’ll see from the HPSCI report listed below and Matt’s story, [“In Brutal Disclosure, Russia Hoax Finally Revealed.”](#)

Many of these findings will come as no surprise to a lot of people, although it might be still be eye-opening to them and maybe others who haven’t reached a conclusion on the merits of the ICA. For sure, there will also be people who remain convinced that nothing untoward occurred. Nonetheless, it appears the highest levels of government during the final days of the Obama administration orchestrated a deception designed to deceive us all.

Here is the full [Oversight Investigation and Referral](#)



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