

# Bill Kaplan: Trump like Nixon, more cover-up

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On Wednesday, North Carolina GOP Senator Richard Burr, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, indicated that the committee's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election is bipartisan and serious. Virginia Democratic Senator Mark Warner, vice-chairman of the committee, concurred with Burr. Warner – a centrist known for working across party lines – then dropped a bombshell, with no disagreement from Burr. Warner said that Russian hackers had created fake news stories on the internet for Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin during the 2016 presidential election.

Wisconsin, a swing state, voted for Trump by a margin of only 22,748 votes. Did Russian interference play a role, and what did the Trump campaign know? Months ago U.S. intelligence agencies said: “We assess Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. presidential election”. The Kremlin clandestine operation sought to “help” Trump by “discrediting” Clinton. Moreover, FBI director James Comey recently confirmed that the FBI is “investigating the nature of any links between individuals associated with the Trump campaign and the Russian government, and whether there was any coordination between the campaign and Russia's efforts.”

Republicans such as Arizona Senator John McCain, South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham and Pennsylvania Representative Charlie Dent support a bipartisan congressional investigation or an independent commission to look into this explosive matter. However, California GOP Representative Devin Nunes, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, has turned his committee's investigation into a clown show to protect Trump and cover-up the facts. The Fresno Bee, a newspaper in Nunes's congressional district, editorialized: “Nunes, a Trump transition team member – betrayed the Constitution and its separation of powers by running like an errand boy to the White House to share with Trump classified information that he had received.” Nunes claimed “whistle blowers” gave him

material supposedly exonerating Trump for falsely claiming that President Obama had “wiretapped” the president-elect (Trump). The White House claimed no involvement with Nunes. Then The New York Times revealed that Nunes’s “sources” were White House aides! There is more.

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Wisconsin Democratic Representatives Ron Kind, Gwen Moore and Mark Pocan have repeatedly called for an independent commission to conduct a bipartisan probe of Russian interference and possible ties to Trump and his entourage. And, Wisconsin Democratic Senator Tammy Baldwin early on asked the Justice Department to appoint a special counsel to look into this matter. However, Speaker Paul Ryan and fellow Wisconsin GOP Representative Jim Sensenbrenner have defended Nunes. And, Wisconsin GOP Senator Ron Johnson sees no urgency to investigate, but is upset about “leaks”. Just like Nixon.

Nixon and Trump have similarities. The New York Times outlined them: “Their thin skin. Their skyscraping paranoia. Their cavernous memory for slights ...” and hatred of the press.

Watergate’s ghost looms over Trump. Former Trump administration national security adviser Michael Flynn, fired for lying about his secret contacts with the Kremlin, is seeking immunity. Why does Flynn want immunity? Trump tweeted his support. Cover-up like Nixon and Watergate? Will the Senate and FBI investigations get to the bottom?

*— Kaplan wrote a guest column from Washington, D.C. for the Wisconsin State Journal from 1995 - 2009.*