

Sen. Johnson and Grassley: Push for transparency surrounding the October 2016 meeting between Christopher Steele and state department officials

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Sens. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, sent a letter to U.S. Department of State Inspector General Steve Linick today seeking an explanation as to why his office did not issue a report on its investigation into the October 2016 meeting between Christopher Steele and Orbis Intelligence employee Tatyana Duran, then-Deputy Assistant Secretary Kathleen Kavalec, and then-Special Envoy Jonathan Winer. The senators also seek to understand why the state department OIG did not interview all parties present at that October 2016 meeting.

“We write seeking to understand why the OIG did not issue a report on its investigation and did not interview employees who most likely have relevant information regarding the subject matter of the inquiry,” the senators wrote.

The senators asked the state department OIG about its failure to interview Mr. Winer in light of him introducing Mr. Steele to high-ranking state department officials with direct access to their counterparts at the FBI days before the FBI sought a FISA order to surveil a Trump campaign official.

The senators also learned the state department OIG discovered at least one department official, Mr. Winer, utilized non-official email accounts to conduct official

department business, and they have requested an explanation as to why the OIG did not interview Mr. Winer about his use of personal email when he directed others to upload those emails to classified systems within the department. In addition, the senators learned that the state department OIG determined a department employee may have engaged in anti-Trump political conduct, in violation of the Hatch Act, and the OIG referred that individual to the Office of Special Counsel for Investigation. That Hatch Act investigation is ongoing.

The Office of Special Counsel is the permanent, independent investigative agency for personnel matters in the federal government and is not related to Robert Mueller's temporary prosecutorial office within the justice department.

Full text of the letter is below, and the letter can be viewed [here](#).

Sens. Johnson and Grassley's May 9, 2019, letters to the state department and the FBI can be viewed [here](#).