


Reconciling 'Spygate' With The 'Soft Coup' – Five Phases That Explain The Behavior...

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There have been a great many questions surrounding the activity that took place in 2017 after President Trump took office and how politicians and officials coordinated an apparent 'soft coup' attempt to remove President Trump.

Questions around DAG Rod Rosenstein, Andrew McCabe, James Comey and the larger intelligence community (to include the Gang-of-Eight) surrounding the Trump administration. Many of those questions can be reconciled with a review of the predicate.

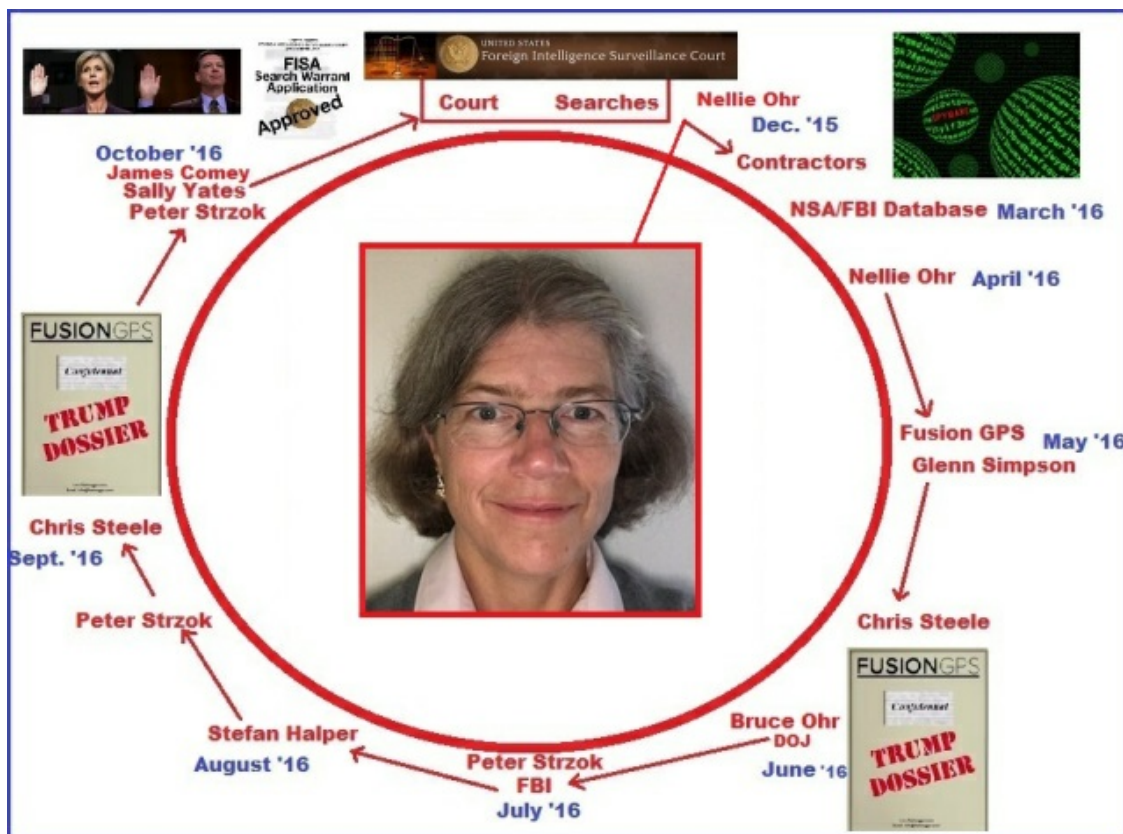
There are five phases in the evolution of 'Spygate' into the 'Soft Coup'; to reconcile the latter, which extends to today, a full review provides the clarity.



♦ **Phase One – December 2015 through April 2016:** The first phase leading into 'Spygate' is the period of time where opposition research of the republican candidate field was taking place. It is in this period where Fusion-GPS hired CIA Open Source researcher Nellie Ohr, wife of DOJ-NSD official Bruce Ohr, to do research.

In the background of this time period the FBI and NSA database was being exploited by unknown FBI contractors; it is highly suspected that Nellie Ohr and/or Fusion-GPS was one of those contracted agencies with access to the

massive electronic and metadata files.



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NSA examined all queries using identifiers for “U.S. persons targeted pursuant to Sections 704 and 705(b) of FISA using the [REDACTED] tool in [REDACTED] . . . from November 1, 2015 to May 1, 2016.” *Id.* at 2-3 (footnote omitted). Based on that examination, “NSA estimates that approximately eighty-five percent of those queries representing [REDACTED] queries conducted by approximately [REDACTED] targeted offices, were not compliant with the applicable minimization procedures.” *Id.* at 3. Many of these non-compliant queries involved use of the same identifiers over different date ranges. *Id.* Even so, a non-compliance rate of 85% raises substantial questions about the propriety of using of [REDACTED] to query FISA data. While the government reports that it is unable to provide a reliable estimate of the number of non-compliant queries since 2012, *id.*, there is no apparent reason to believe the November 2015-April 2016 period coincided with an unusually high error rate.

◆ **Phase Two – April 18th through July 31st 2016:** At the same time as NSA Director Mike Rogers discovered a significant and unauthorized uptick in FISA-702(16)(17) database queries, and subsequently blocked access (April 18th, 2016), candidate Donald Trump became the presumptive nominee for the presidential race.

It was within this period where Fusion-GPS was commissioned by Hillary Clinton to focus exclusively on candidate Trump. Fusion held the prior search findings, and Fusion contracted Christopher Steele who later contacted the FBI through official channels. On July 31st, 2016, FBI counterintelligence operation Crossfire Hurricane became official.

An official investigation targeting the campaign of Donald Trump now held a legal, albeit sketchy and politically motivated, justification. Under the auspices of investigating Russian involvement with George Papadopoulos, Carter Page, Paul Manafort and General Michael Flynn, the FBI was now conducting full-blown surveillance on the political campaign of Donald Trump. Crossfire Hurricane was the legal cover; *'Spygate'* begins.



♦ **Phase Three – August 1st through October 21st 2016.** With the FBI's Crossfire Hurricane counterintelligence operation in full swing, the Obama intelligence community, the CIA, was conducting facilitating operations throughout. In August 2016 CIA Director John Brennan brought the covert intelligence congressional oversight team known as the Gang-of-Eight into the picture.

The CIA angle was explained by Director John Brennan under the open auspices of the CIA operation looking at possible Russian interference with the election. However, Brennan's activity was more importantly, and intentionally, a supplement to the FBI activity. Brennan provided FBI Director James Comey with the two-page "EC" or electronic communication document that initiated Crossfire Hurricane in July.

Brennan's role is critical. Brennan kicked-off Crossfire Hurricane; Brennan's intelligence product was included in President Obama's daily briefing (PDB); and specifically by design, very importantly, Brennan was the ONLY intelligence official briefing congress:

Brennan Testimony: “Third, through the so-called Gang-of-Eight process we kept congress apprised of these issues as we identified them.”

“Again, in consultation with the White House, **I PERSONALLY briefed** the full details of our understanding of Russian attempts to interfere in the election to congressional leadership; specifically: Senators Harry Reid, Mitch McConnell, Dianne Feinstein and Richard Burr; and to representatives Paul Ryan, Nancy Pelosi, Devin Nunes and Adam Schiff **between 11th August and 6th September [2016]**, I provided the same briefing to each of the gang of eight members.”

“Given the highly sensitive nature of what was an active counter-intelligence case [that means the FBI], involving an ongoing Russian effort, to interfere in our presidential election, the full details of what we knew at the time were shared only with those members of congress; each of whom was accompanied by one senior staff member.”...

During this time-frame [Aug, Sept, Oct '16]: •Chris Steele was funneling the results of his collaborative work with Nellie Ohr into the FBI; •the FBI was conducting full surveillance upon the Trump campaign (CH/Spygate); •and Brennan was seeding the legal background, a plausible justification of sorts which might be needed later, with carefully worded briefings to the Gang-of-Eight.

Critical to note – the Go8 was not being briefed on Crossfire Hurricane/Spygate, which was the FBI operation to conduct internal political surveillance of the Trump campaign. The Go8 only knew what Brennan was informing them. Those Brennan briefings were more of a disingenuous overview of generalized Russian interference. James Comey never briefed the Go8 on his FBI operation. [In March 2017 Comey would tell congress his decision not to inform them was due to “the sensitivity of the matter”.]

Toward the end of October things took on a new sense of urgency. All of the aggregate intelligence exploitation, FISA-702 database extraction, and ongoing campaign surveillance being conducted was seriously fraught with legal peril. On October 21st, 2016, the FBI urgently applied for, and received, a FISA Title One surveillance warrant against U.S. person Carter Page.

That FISC approved warrant made all of the prior FBI surveillance on the Trump campaign completely legal. In essence the FISA court approved all prior FBI conduct. Presiding Judge Rosemary Collyer approved the warrant. Sally Yates and James Comey were the application signatories.

A Title-One FISA warrant authorizes any and all surveillance methods; and establishes legal authority for retroactive review of all files and records associated with Carter Page; and anyone he comes into contact with; and anyone those contacts come into contact with.

In essence Title-One authority permits all electronic and physical surveillance, wiretaps, phone and electronic records, database extraction etc. The warrant is retroactive. All of the previous actions against the Trump campaign were now authorized and legal. A Title-One FISA Court warrant is the highest level of surveillance authority any court can grant.



♦ **Phase Four – October 21st, 2016, through January 20th, 2017:** The FBI received their FISC surveillance authority two weeks before the November 8th presidential election.

If Hillary Clinton won the 2016 election all of this would disappear; none of this would ever surface; and the entire operation would just evaporate into the ether of invisible DC history. But Hillary didn't win. She lost. Now, all downstream official action takes an entirely more urgent and important shift.

Shortly after Presiding Judge Rosemary Collyer authorized the FISA warrant, NSA Director Mike Rogers went to the FISC and informed the same judge of the FISA-702(16)(17) abuses that took place in the 2016 presidential election cycle.

Judge Collyer issues an explosive opinion lambasting the FBI for their allowed abuse of the system. The DOJ head of the National Security Division, John Carlin, resigned from his position.

Ten days after the election NSA Director Mike Rogers also travelled to Trump Tower without informing his boss ODNI James Clapper.

There has been a great deal of speculation as to what Rogers told President-elect Trump during that meeting. It's likely Director Rogers informed Trump about some of what he knew surrounding the unauthorized surveillance activity and FISA(702) exploitation. However, intelligence is highly compartmented; it's also virtually guaranteed Rogers had no idea what the FBI did, or was doing, with the material and the larger 'Spygate' operation.

After Hillary lost the election, CIA Director John Brennan and ODNI James Clapper quickly put together an Intelligence Community Assessment (ICA) about Russian interference in the 2016 election. When the report was pushed into the media bloodstream NSA Director Mike Rogers **did not** hold the same level of confidence in the assessment.



[...] A source close to the House investigation said Brennan himself selected the CIA and FBI analysts who worked on the ICA, and that they included former FBI counterespionage chief Peter Strzok.

“Strzok was the intermediary between Brennan and [former FBI Director James] Comey, and he was one of the authors of the ICA,” according to the source. ([link](#))

Again, it is super important to remember congressional oversight has no idea about the FBI operation (CH/Spygate) during the election. Congressional oversight, the ‘Gang-of-Eight’, only knows what John Brennan has briefed them about; there have been no Go8 briefings by FBI Director James Comey.

After the 2016 election the Go8 members also changed. Senator Dianne Feinstein abdicated her SSCI Vice-Chair position to Senator Mark Warner, and with the retirement of Harry Reid, Senator Chuck Schumer now became minority leader.

On January 5th, 2017, President Obama held an Oval Office meeting with VP Joe Biden, James Comey (FBI), Michael Rogers (NSA), John Brennan (CIA), James Clapper (ODNI), Sally Yates (DOJ) and Susan Rice. At the conclusion of the briefing, President Obama asks Sally Yates and James Comey to remain. Together with Susan Rice, this is where the “by the book” comment comes into play. As recounted by Rice:

“President Obama said he wants to be sure that, as we engage with the incoming team, we are mindful to ascertain if there is any reason that we cannot share information fully as it relates to Russia.”

The background context here is important. The outgoing Obama white house team knows what has taken place throughout. Obama’s PDB’s have included information about the Trump campaign officials who were under active surveillance. As the Trump transition team enters into office the FBI surveillance is still ongoing. The counterintelligence operation against the incoming administration, and every participating member, remains in full swing.

The day after Obama’s oval office meeting, when President-elect Trump is briefed on the Steele Dossier, ODNI James Clapper and FBI Director James Comey cannot brief the target within their investigation on the granular material they used to gain the FISA warrant against the candidate who is now the President-elect.

Their target was Trump.

Trump is now the President-elect.

That’s why Comey only briefed Trump on the salacious material... the ‘pee tapes’ and ‘Russian hookers’ nonsense was not part of the FISA application. The material that was part of the FISA application; the material that outlined candidate Trump as a target; was not shared with the President-elect because it would have amounted to Trump discovering the factual origin of an ongoing counterintelligence operation against him.

Simultaneous to this transition taking place, all the Trump officials within his team were still under an active FISA Title-One surveillance warrant. This surveillance also included the capture of all of their transition email accounts, the content was later given -without transition team approval- to Robert Mueller by the GAO. The legal authority for that controversial event was inside the FISA Title-One surveillance warrant.

The FISA warrant was reauthorized on January 12th, 2017, about a week before the inauguration of Trump with DAG Sally Yates and James Comey again approving.



♦ **Phase Five – January 20th, 2017, through today:** Here's where the current background of multiple issues and questions begins to make sense.

Remember, as the Trump administration takes office, congressional oversight (Go8) still has no idea what is taking place within the ongoing counterintelligence operation against President Trump and all those around him. Crossfire Hurricane, aka 'Spygate', is mostly invisible in the background.

The need to put factual teeth behind a fraudulently created investigative predicate means the FBI needs to start getting serious about the investigative targets. Thus in January, for the first time since CH/Spygate began, the FBI reaches out to question George Papadopoulos. Additionally, on January 24th, 2017, investigators question another origination target, National Security Advisor Michael Flynn.

Evidence of CH/Spygate surfaces in the actions against appointed National Security Advisor Michael Flynn and George Papadopoulos; however, despite President Trump and FBI Director James Comey twice being together (January 27th and Feb 14th), only the small group within the FBI and DOJ-NSD are aware of the operation as incoming Trump intelligence officials replace outgoing Obama intelligence officials.

All of that changes mid-March 2017.

Around March 14th, 2017, amid the Flynn fiasco, multiple swirling contradictions, massive intelligence leaks to the media and Trump administration officials beginning inquiries about what the heck is going on.... FBI Director James Comey now has to brief congressional oversight. This is the first time the 2017 Gang-of-Eight is officially informed about the counterintelligence operation known as Crossfire Hurricane.

This necessary shift toward oversight briefing leads to the Senate Intelligence Committee receiving a March 17th copy of the FISA application. Go8 members Richard Burr and Mark Warner receive the original October 21st, 2016, FISA application and the first renewal.

A few days later, March 20th, 2017, James Comey testifies to congress and tries to explain why oversight was not informed of the operation since it began in July 2016. [Note, if Clinton had won the election no-one would ever have needed to be informed] **WATCH:**



Now, it's unknown to what extent FBI Director Comey explained the level of FBI investigation into candidate and President-elect Trump; it's also unknown whether or not Comey gave the Go8 all of the details to include the origination of Crossfire Hurricane and the FISA Title-One surveillance warrant authority received by the investigative unit in October 2016; the distribution date of the FISC copy, March 17th, would indicate that he did..

However, immediately after this public testimony on March 20th, HPSCI Chairman Devin Nunes, a Go8 member who would have been part of the briefing, gets information about the Trump campaign officials and transition team officials under surveillance and being unmasked. **Watch and listen carefully:**



<https://youtu.be/kQf3sHl4SQM>

Presumably if FBI Director James Comey was fulsome with his briefing Devin Nunes would not have been surprised; **OR**, it could be the surprise was not about the investigation itself per se, but rather that Obama political officials would be part of the pipeline of information about an ongoing covert counterintelligence operation against a political campaign. The latter seems to be the most likely cause of alarm and concern.

After Nunes' March 22nd, 2017, Press announcement, and the subsequent democrat/media outrage therein, House Speaker Paul Ryan somewhat removes Devin Nunes from his committee responsibilities as they pertain to oversight on the Trump-centric investigative matters, and Nunes is placed under an ethics investigation.

In hindsight, and knowing the Comey Go8 briefing likely outlined Trump as a potential target within the FBI counterintelligence operation, Speaker Ryan's action against Devin Nunes now makes more sense. In essence, from Ryan's perspective Nunes might be compromising the FBI's investigation by communicating with the White House about information from the FBI shared to the Gang-of-Eight. Even giving the impression that such communication might have occurred was enough for Ryan to act.

Then we move on to April 2017, when the FISA surveillance warrant was again reauthorized; and the FBI counterintelligence operation is continuing; this surveillance now includes almost the entire Trump administration.

By this time Sally Yates has been fired over her refusal to defend Trump's travel ban. Acting Deputy Attorney General Dana Boente and James Comey sign the second extension; everyone is keeping notes about every encounter with the President, yet President Trump doesn't know he's the '*Soft Coup*' target.

May 9th, 2017, President Trump fires the insufferably political FBI Director James Comey. Now Andrew McCabe, the lead initiator of the FBI Crossfire Hurricane operation, is Acting FBI Director.

In McCabe's 2019 media tour he claims he was going bananas because his target was firing his team, yet McCabe appeared in front of congress on May 11th, 2017 and said President Trump firing James Comey two days earlier did not amount to any interference:

♦**Senator Rubio:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. McCabe, can you—without going to the specifics of any individual investigation, I think the American people want to know, has the dismissal of Mr. Comey in any way impeded, interrupted, stopped, or negatively impacted any of the work, any investigation, or any ongoing projects at the Federal Bureau of Investigation?

Director McCabe. As you know, Senator, the work of the men and women of the FBI continues despite any changes in circumstance, any decisions. So **there has been no effort to impede our investigation to date.** Quite simply put, sir, you cannot stop the men and women of the FBI from doing the right thing, protecting the American people and upholding the Constitution. ([link](#))

In 2019 both Andrew McCabe and DAG Rod Rosenstein have admitted to conversations about the best way to proceed after Comey was fired. Eventually a decision was reached to initiate a Special Counsel, Robert Mueller, to take over the entire probe.

Consider from their small group perspective in May 2017; knowing what actions had been undertaken from December 2015 through all phases of the investigative purposing; Andrew McCabe, FBI Chief Legal Counsel James Baker, Peter Strzok, Lisa Page and all team members would want to pass any investigative torch to a very tight and ideologically aligned crew.

If McCabe, Baker et al had to pass the baton, there would be an element of risk involved if the totality of all 2016 background information surfaced. They would need an insider with a perfect set of specific tools to continue the

operation and also avoid risk. That person was Robert Mueller; and they leveraged maximum influence over DAG Rosenstein toward that end.

Now think about Robert Mueller being contacted by Rosenstein, briefed on the task at hand, and generally given a background overview of what was needed. For Mueller this endeavor to investigate a sitting president would have all kinds of possibilities for going sideways and backfiring. In addition, Mueller would be watching the news and he knows this entire crew before the phone call is even answered.

It stands to reason the only person Mueller wouldn't know in this entire story is the target President Donald Trump. That explains Rosenstein introducing Mueller to Trump on May 16th, 2017, and then a day later announcing Mueller's appointment as special counsel.

The first priority Mueller would hold, after a briefing from McCabe, Comey, Baker and all the FBI team; and considering the claims and evidence used to obtain the legal warrants to conduct surveillance etc; would be to prioritize investigating whether POTUS was factually a Russian asset.

A few weeks later, June 2017, DAG Rosenstein and Deputy FBI Director Andrew McCabe signed the third -and final- FISA warrant reauthorization.

Shortly after Mueller begins the urgent review of POTUS as a Russian asset, in late June and July 2017, Robert Mueller is also forced to confront a paper trail of unavoidable evidence pointing to the extreme political bias (Lisa Page, Peter Strzok, Andrew McCabe) within the previous FBI investigative unit. Mueller would have to be an idiot not to see the outline of what had taken place throughout 2016 all the way to his appointment.

As a result of the pre-Mueller moves by the FBI (McCabe) and DOJ (Yates), the FBI investigative unit already has Michael Flynn inside their investigative control system. Mueller now moves to throw a bag over George Papadopoulos.

In July 2017 Mueller's team executes the \$10,000 sting operation using CIA asset Charles Tawil, and they arrest Papadopoulos under extremely suspicious and sketchy circumstances. Papadopoulos is now shut down; any subsequent risk is under control. Again, the purposeful intent is to provide the originating CH/Spygate fraud with more necessary predicate authenticity.

By August 2nd, 2017, Robert Mueller has ensnared Flynn (lobbying & lying), Manafort (lobbying & taxes), and Papadopoulos (presumably lying). Three of the originating four CH/Spygate targets as outlined to the FISA court. The only one they didn't capture, or perhaps some would say they didn't try to capture because defense discovery would be problematic, is Carter Page.

On August 2nd, 2017, with the aforementioned Trump-Trio in various stages of legal limbo, Robert Mueller requests an updated "scope memo" from Rod Rosenstein:

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By outlining, in a specific mandate to Mueller, that the office of the president was currently the subject of an ongoing counterintelligence investigation, the special counsel would be authorized to block any congressional oversight requests for documents, material or evidence that would interfere in their investigation.

Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein's scope memo created a impenetrable firewall through which information could not be shared until Robert Mueller's probe was complete.

The picture here is pretty clear:

So long as Team Obama can reasonably keep claiming the originating 2016 surveillance upon the Trump campaign was an outcome of a valid counterintelligence investigative probe; which is the underpinning of their need to perpetuate the Russian election conspiracy narrative; and so long as all Obama officials who were engaged within the process keep up the story that validates the fraudulent purpose; then it is likely all players will escape legal accountability for the unlawful weaponization of the intelligence apparatus to target political opposition.

In essence, "*by the book*" will have been successful.

This background reality is likely what new Attorney General William Barr has been absorbing over the past several days.