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NO COLLUSION

• Senate: No evidence Trump undermined U.S. election

By Donald Jeffries

For close to two years, the United States government has been chasing a far-fetched theory that Donald Trump and members of his staff “colluded” with Russian officials during the 2016 presidential election. After conducting some 200 interviews and sifting through 300,000 documents in the course of their investigation, the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee has all but admitted the obvious: There is no evidence of any such collusion. This was reflected in a headline from NBC News in early February, “Senate Has Uncovered No Direct Evidence of Conspiracy Between Trump Campaign and Russia.”

In a recent interview with CBS News, Senate Intelligence Committee chairman Richard Burr (N.C.) stated, “If we write a report based upon the facts that we have, then we don’t have anything that would suggest there was collusion by the Trump campaign and Russia.”

Vice-Chairman Democrat Mark Warner (Va.) countered, “I’m not going to reach any final conclusions until we finish our report.” Warner alluded to “Russian agents, Russian actors reaching out to the Trump organization with



SEN. RICHARD BURR

Sen. Richard Burr, head of the Senate Intelligence Committee, says that no evidence of collusion has been uncovered.

promise of dirt on . . . Clinton.”

Burr also mentioned the Obama administration’s response to alleged Russian interference in the election, and the committee would be releasing information on that within a “matter of weeks.”

The House intelligence committee, now chaired by a Democrat, plans to re-open and expand its own investigation

into the matter. The Republican-led House reported last year that it had found no collusion. “If the committee is driven based upon the facts that we have at hand, I have a very difficult time understanding how you can come to two different conclusions,” Burr responded to CBS. “Unless, for the first time, you let politics come into play.” The House committee is chaired by Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), one of Trump’s most partisan political opponents. Trump recently accused Schiff of “trying to build a name for himself. And I think that’s fine because that’s what they do. But there would be no reason to do that. No other politician has to go through that.”

Predictably, Trump responded to the committee chairman’s remarks with a passionate tweet: “Senator Richard Burr, the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, just announced that after almost two years, more than 200 interviews, and thousands of documents, they have found no collusion between Trump and Russia! Is anybody really surprised by this?”

Sen. Jim Risch (R-Idaho), another member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, was more emphatic in his comments during a recent appearance on Fox News.

“There has been no evidence of collusion,” Risch declared. “It is not there. I was a prosecutor. I know what evidence is. It is simply not there. People need to listen to the president when he says that. . . . How long can this go on? It has got to come to an end.”

Risch went on to note, “I have been a governor, almost 30 years in our state Senate. I have never seen the hate and vitriol against an individual that there is against this president.” ★

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