

FBI director defends decision not to prosecute Hillary Clinton

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FBI Director James Comey appeared for more than four hours Thursday before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, defending the decision of an FBI task force against bringing criminal charges against Hillary Clinton for her use of a private email server while secretary of state.

The Republican majority repeatedly pressed Comey to explain the contradiction between his lengthy criticism of Clinton's email practices, and his ultimate decision not to seek an indictment under either the 1917 Espionage Act or a 1994 law making it a misdemeanor to "mishandle" classified materials.

Many of the Republicans pressed Comey on the obvious "double standard," under which low-ranking members of the military or civilian workers have been fired or even prosecuted for violations of secrecy rules much less significant than Clinton's.

Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz of Utah declared, "If your name is Clinton or you're part of the rich and powerful, you live under a different set of rules than everybody else." Such statements are thoroughly hypocritical, since the Republicans are equally willing to dismiss the crimes of the rich, powerful and well-connected, provided their name is Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, etc.

The "double standard" charge has added credibility because of the conduct of the Obama administration itself, which has ruthlessly prosecuted whistleblowers within the military-intelligence apparatus, conducting more prosecutions under the Espionage Act than all previous administrations combined.

One Democratic representative at the hearing even proudly cited the prosecutions of Chelsea (Bradley) Manning, Thomas Drake and John Kirikiakou, noting that these were cases of individuals who sought to injure the US government—i.e., expose its crimes to the

public—while Hillary Clinton had no such intention.

Comey made the same distinction throughout his four hours at the witness table, noting that intent to damage national security had always been a requirement for prosecution under the Espionage Act, and that to charge Clinton under its provisions would be unprecedented. He also revealed that the decision not to prosecute was the unanimous view of the FBI task force which conducted the investigation.

What was remarkable about the hearing was the degree to which the Democrats glorified the role of the FBI as a supposedly neutral, apolitical and unchallengeable arbiter, relying on the agency to shield Clinton from Republican attacks. Democrat after Democrat praised the FBI and Comey personally, and berated the Republicans for daring to question Comey's "integrity."

This is in reference to a federal police agency that has been the spearhead of attacks on democratic rights for nearly a century, targeting socialists and other left-wing political activists, including, most famously, the illegal wiretapping of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

Under Comey's leadership, the FBI has pushed for a virtual license to spy on all Internet and cellphone communications. It is also responsible for repeated whitewashes of police killings throughout the United States, acting as the primary responder for the US Department of Justice when such killings are referred for investigation.

While Democrats fawned over the FBI, the Republicans appealed to Comey to reopen his investigation into Clinton under a new guise. Chaffetz asked the FBI director whether the agency had considered charging Clinton for perjury before Congress, claiming that her testimony to the House

Special Committee on Benghazi last October was directly contradicted by Comey's own findings in the email investigation.

When Comey replied that the FBI could not open such an investigation without a referral from the House committee, Chaffetz declared, "You'll have one in the next few hours."

Another line of attack on Clinton was suggested when Comey declined to answer a direct question from Chaffetz about whether the FBI was investigating the Clinton Foundation, including charges that the charity served as a conduit for foreign companies and wealthy individuals to buy influence with the State Department during Hillary Clinton's tenure there. "I'm not going to comment on the existence or nonexistence of other investigations," Comey said.

A press release from the Clinton campaign underscored its embrace of the FBI director, declaring, "Director Comey's testimony clearly knocked down a number of false Republican talking points and reconciled apparent contradictions between his previous remarks and Hillary Clinton's public statements. The Director's explanations shut the door on any remaining conspiracy theories once and for all."

The press release highlighted Comey's admission that only three of more than 30,000 emails had "partial" markings indicating they contained classified information, and these "were improperly marked and that as a result, the materials could have been reasonably judged as not classified."

Meanwhile, in the barrage of lies and mudslinging between the Democrats and Republicans, there has been virtually no discussion of the actual content of the emails stored on Clinton's private server, which concern the wide range of crimes against international law carried out by the US military-intelligence apparatus under the leadership of Obama and Clinton from 2009 to 2013, and which both Democrats and Republicans are pledged to continue, whichever party wins the 2016 presidential election.

Clinton herself is most closely associated with advocating and instigating the US-NATO war with Libya, which destroyed the country, murdered its leadership, and led to the deaths of tens of thousands of people.

Another major topic in her email exchanges, according to several reports, is the State Department

role in drone-missile assassinations in Pakistan, which required Clinton's approval as well as that of Obama and the CIA, because of concerns over the diplomatic repercussions. There is no indication that Clinton ever blocked such a strike.



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