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Democracy Dies in Darkness

FBI director rejects idea of reopening Clinton probe



By [Matt Zapposky](#)

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FBI Director James B. Comey on Wednesday rejected the idea that the bureau would reopen its investigation into Hillary Clinton’s use of a private email server while she was secretary of state — laying to rest a long-shot hope of Republican legislators who have questioned the government’s handling of the case.

At a hearing of the House Judiciary Committee, Republican congressmen again peppered Comey with questions about how he came to the conclusion that Clinton should not be charged in connection with her server use. As he has [at other hearings](#), Comey did not bend from his earlier decision.

“Since you announced that there would be no prosecution of Secretary Clinton in July, there have been several very material issues that are troubling, and would those not require a reopening of the investigation to solve those issues?” Rep. James F. Sensenbrenner Jr. (R-Wis.) asked.

“I haven’t seen anything that would come near to that kind of situation,” Comey responded.

Republicans have been asking for information on the Clinton email probe for months, and they have asked for a [separate investigation](#) into whether the Democratic presidential candidate committed perjury when she testified before a congressional committee about her private server. Comey said the Justice Department had received that request but declined to comment further.

Democrats have charged that the effort is politically motivated and intended to affect the election. Comey at one point acknowledged the politics affecting Congress’s interest after Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) suggested “some things were done differently” in the Clinton investigation.

“I hope some day when this political craziness is over you will look back again on this, because this is the FBI you know and love,” Comey responded. “This was done by pros in the right way. That’s the part I have no patience for.”

For their part, Democrats asked Comey on Wednesday about Trump advisers' contacts with Russian officials and whether the bureau was investigating. Comey declined to answer those questions.

Republican legislators focused a large portion of their questions on the various immunity agreements extended in the Clinton investigation, including those recently revealed for top Clinton aides Cheryl Mills and Heather Samuelson. Comey said the five agreements in the case were "fairly typical in a complex, white-collar case especially," and Mills and Samuelson were only granted immunity related to computers they turned over to agents.

Republican legislators also asked about posts on Reddit by Paul Combetta, a Platte River Networks employee who worked on Clinton's server, soliciting advice in 2014 about removing a VIP's email address from archived messages. The legislators said that seemed obviously to refer to Clinton and might have been evidence of a coverup.

Comey said investigators had looked at the posts, and he noted that nothing was deleted after the FBI began investigating.

Combetta deleted a batch of emails in 2015 after a congressional committee investigating the 2012 attack in Benghazi, Libya, had requested they be preserved, and Comey made clear Monday that Combetta wanted — and received — immunity because of that.

"That's why the guy wouldn't talk to us without immunity," Comey said. But Comey said investigators determined that "no one had directed him to do that." Comey said investigators found credible Combetta's account that he had been told to delete the emails the year before and — having realized he failed to do so — went back and did it on his own after he was required to preserve the records. Comey acknowledged, though, that Combetta gave investigators various accounts about his deletion of the emails in two interviews. Kenneth F. Eichner, an attorney for Platte River, declined to discuss the details of the case, though he confirmed Combetta's immunity agreement came in May, after his first conversation with agents.

Comey flatly dismissed the idea that Clinton herself should be prosecuted, though he said an FBI employee doing what Clinton did would "be in big trouble," even if they were not criminally charged. He bristled at any suggestion that Clinton faced a double standard or that agents were influenced by politics.

"You can call us wrong, but don't call us weasels," Comey said. "We are not weasels."

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