

Now More Than Ever, It's Clear the FBI Must Go

The *New York Times* reports that “[i]n the days after President Trump fired James B. Comey as F.B.I. director, law enforcement officials became so concerned by the president’s behavior that they began investigating whether he had been working on behalf of Russia against American interests.”

That’s an interesting way of putting it, but let’s try another:

Enraged at the firing of their director, and suspecting the firing might portend a threat to their place and power in the American political establishment, FBI officials went to war with the president of the United States. They redirected taxpayer money and government resources away from anything resembling a legitimate law enforcement mission, putting themselves instead to the task of drumming up a specious case that said president is an agent of a foreign power.

This is exactly the kind of bovine scat subsumed by the recently popularized term “Deep State” — an entrenched bureaucracy, jealous of its prerogatives and bent on the destruction of anyone and anything it perceives as dangerous to those prerogatives.

I’m far from the first writer to point out that this latest news reflects nothing new. Yes, it’s over the top, but it pretty much sums up what the FBI does, and what it has done for the entirety of its 111 years of existence. It attempts to protect “America” — which it defines as the existing establishment in general and itself in particular — not from crime as such, but from inconvenient disruption.

That’s why the Bureau under J. Edgar Hoover surveilled (and attempted to blackmail) Martin Luther King, Jr. That’s why its COINTELPRO projects illegally infiltrated and attempted to disrupt domestic political groups in the Vietnam era. That’s why the FBI had the material that COINTELPRO operator Mark Felt (“Deep Throat”) leaked to journalists by way of attempting to succeed Hoover as the man who brought down Nixon.

Trump is no Martin Luther King, Jr., but he’s certainly disruptive. That, not some cockamamie theory about a Russian mole in the White House, explains the FBI’s declaration of war on his presidency.

Almost exactly a year ago — after the FBI officials got caught destroying evidence in a probe of its investigations of Trump and of Hillary Clinton — I suggested that the time has come to abolish the Bureau. This latest news confirms that judgment. The FBI guards its own power, not our freedoms. It’s just too dangerous to keep around any longer.