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Subject: If Michael Cohen lied about not being Prague in 2016, he may have fooled everyone — including CNN, BuzzFeed, the intelligence community and President Trump

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The Power Beat Daily

All The News That Doesn't Fit the Page

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John Tierney: Scott Pruitt, Warrior for Science

"Imagine if the head of a federal agency announced a new policy for its scientific research: from now on, the agency would no longer allow its studies to be reviewed and challenged by independent scientists, and its researchers would not share the data on which their conclusions were based. The response from scientists and journalists would be outrage. By refusing peer review from outsiders, the agency would be rejecting a fundamental scientific tradition. By not sharing data with other researchers, it would be violating a standard transparency requirement at leading scientific journals. If a Republican official did such a thing, you'd expect to hear denunciations of this latest offensive in the 'Republican war on science.'"

If Michael Cohen lied about not being Prague in 2016, he may have fooled everyone — including CNN, BuzzFeed, the intelligence community and President Trump



By Robert Romano

“By the way, we just found out, I was just coming down, Michael Cohen... is a very talented lawyer, he's a good lawyer at my firm, it was just reported that it wasn't this Michael Cohen they were talking about. So, all night long, it's Michael Cohen. I said, I want to see your passport, he brings his passport to my office, I say, hey, wait a minute, he didn't leave the country, he wasn't out of the country. They had, Michael Cohen of the Trump Organization was in Prague. It turned out to be a different Michael Cohen. It's a disgrace, what took place, it's a disgrace, and I think they ought to be apologize, to start with, to Michael Cohen.”

That was then-President Elect Donald Trump at his famous CNN is “fake news” press conference on Jan. 11, 2017 calling the Fusion GPS-Christopher Steele dossier — which was paid for by the DNC and the Hillary Clinton campaign — a fake. It had contended that Cohen was in Prague in late August or early September to meet with Russian agents and to clean up the supposed fallout of one-time Trump campaign advisor Carter Page and former campaign manager Paul Manafort allegedly working with Russia to hack the DNC and put the emails onto Wikileaks.

Prior to that news conference, on Jan. 11, 2017, Jake Tapper reported on CNN, corroborating Cohen's account: “Michael Cohen, Trump's lawyer, has been out there because in this

uncorroborated report, it talks about Michael Cohen, Trump's official corporate lawyer, making a trip to the Czech Republic. My reporting suggests that people tried to run that down, and they concluded that it was different Michael Cohen. It was a Michael Cohen with a passport from another country, same birth year, different birth date. So for Michael Cohen to dispute that he was in the Czech Republic, completely confirms and comports with our reporting and it's one of the reasons why the intelligence chiefs did not get specific with these allegations and that's why I hope at the press conference today people are more general and don't get into the specifics because a lot of that stuff just has not been proven.”

By Cohen’s account, appearing on Hannity on Jan. 11, 2017, he said Trump called him after the Steele dossier story broke and asked if he was ever in Prague, to which the answer was never. “I’ve never been in Prague... And so he said, ‘Michael, I really need to know.’ I said, ‘Mr. Trump, I have never been to Prague.’ He said to me, ‘Okay.’ I said, ‘Do you want to see my passport? I live close to the office.’ And he said, ‘Yeah, you mind if I see it?’ And I said, ‘Of course not, you’re the President Elect. I’ll be there in about two minutes.’”

All along, Cohen contested, he had never been to Prague. In May 2017, he allowed BuzzFeed, which had broken the dossier story, to examine his passport, which took pictures of it: “The stamps indicate he traveled abroad at least four times in 2016: twice to London, once to St. Maarten, and once to Italy in July. The Italian trip is the most intriguing, because it places Cohen in what’s known as the Schengen Area: a group of 26 European countries, including the Czech Republic, that allows visitors to travel freely among them without getting any additional passport stamps. Upon entering the Schengen Area, visitors get a rectangular stamp with the date, a country code, their port of entry, and a symbol showing how they entered — such as an airplane or a train. In Cohen’s passport, that mark appears on page 17, with a date of July 9. The mark is too faint to be fully legible. The exit stamp, similar but with rounded edges, is also light, but the letters ‘cino’ are legible, indicating he flew out of Leonardo da Vinci–Fiumicino Airport in Rome. That stamp is dated July 17.”

As for London and St. Maarten, “Regarding the three other 2016 stamps in his passport, Cohen said he visited London twice, where his daughter is studying: once in October for a birthday party and again in November for Thanksgiving. He said he vacationed in the Caribbean island of St. Maarten in January.”

As for August, stating he was actually with his son at the University of Southern California with his son’s baseball coach during that time. The Atlantic confirmed Cohen was on campus on Aug. 29 via a University baseball source. For the month of September, Cohen says he was in New York.

So, on the surface, and from the outset, it appeared the Steele dossier was a big bust. If he wasn’t in Prague ever, and hadn’t even left the country in the time frame the Steele dossier put him there, then he certainly couldn’t have been here talking with Russian agents.

But now McClatchy has reported on April 13 that, Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s team is saying that Cohen somehow managed to get in and out of the country without getting his passport stamped. The report states, “investigators have traced evidence that Cohen entered the Czech Republic through Germany, apparently during August or early September of 2016 as the ex-spy reported, said the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation is confidential. He wouldn’t have needed a passport for such a trip, because both countries are in the so-called Schengen Area in which 26 nations operate with open borders. The disclosure still left a puzzle: The

sources did not say whether Cohen took a commercial flight or private jet to Europe, and gave no explanation as to why no record of such a trip has surfaced.”

For his part, Cohen is maintaining he was never in Prague. On Twitter, April 14, he stated, “Bad reporting, bad information and bad story by same reporter Peter Stone... No matter how many times or ways they write it, I have never been to Prague. I was in LA with my son. Proven!”

So is it more fake news? At least one part of the report is incorrect. Cohen would have still needed a passport to get to Germany from the U.S. and back again, even if he traveled on ground to Prague. But again, Cohen’s passport never puts him in Germany in 2016.

If Cohen somehow got into Germany and back to the U.S. in late August or early September 2016 without anyone knowing including immigration officials — he’s a ninja. And he would have fooled everyone — including CNN, the intelligence community and President Trump.

Robert Romano is the Vice President of Public Policy at Americans for Limited Government.

The left is making mountains out of molehills to distract Republicans and the Trump administration



By Natalia Castro

Democrats have never been fans of fiscal conservatism unless it furthers an attack on Republicans. From media outlets to political figures, the left has attempted to convince the American people that various executives within the Trump administration are wasting taxpayer money on lavish unnecessary expenses. Yet, as the facts prove once again, this is nothing more than an attempt to obstruct the success of this administration with hypocritical claims.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin assisted President Trump in implementing one of the largest tax cut overhauls in our nation's history, so it is no surprise the left has decided to make him a target for attack. Several media outlets, such as the Huffington Post, have reported issues with Mnuchin's travel expenditures, questioning his use of military planes rather than commercial flights.

These attacks are both unwarranted and hypocritical. Last week, the Treasury Department released information regarding the travel of Secretary Mnuchin and his recent predecessors to dispel rumors of abuse.

Treasury reports show that Mnuchin spent about \$1.2 million on travel in FY 2017 and has spent \$781,000 on travel so far in FY 2018, with a majority of his flights using commercial airlines rather than private military planes.

This is significantly less than the roughly \$3.2 million Treasury Secretary Jack Lew spent in FY 2016 on travel or the roughly \$2.2 million Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner spent in FY 2011 on travel. Both Secretaries served under President Obama.

While Mnuchin *did* spend more in his first year in office than either of his predecessors, the difference of \$135,000 between Mnuchin and Geithner's first-year travel expenses hardly requires outcry by the left, especially considering the inspector general has already reviewed Mnuchin's expenses and saw no violation of the law.

Clearly, the left is promoting baseless attacks to delegitimize a successful member of the Trump administration, and Mnuchin is not alone. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Director Scott Pruitt and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Ben Carson have also been victims of repeated attacks regarding expenditures.

Pruitt has been mocked for his expensive spending on travel and security. As Michael Biesecker of the Chicago Tribune reported, "Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt's concern with his safety came at a steep cost to taxpayers as his swollen security detail blew through overtime budgets and at times diverted officers away from investigating environmental crimes. Altogether, the agency spent millions of dollars for a 20-member full-time detail that is more than three times the size of his predecessor's part-time security contingent."

But three times the expenses on security should not be a point of criticism about Pruitt but instead on the people requiring Pruitt to act in this way.

The EPA's assistant inspector general for investigations, Patrick Sullivan, told [CNN on Nov. 2017](#), "We have at least four times — four to five times the number of threats against Mr. Pruitt than we had against [Obama's EPA Chief] Ms. McCarthy... They run the variety of direct death threats — 'I'm going to put a bullet in your brain' — to implied threats — 'if you don't classify this particular chemical in this particular way, I'm going to hurt you.'"

Additionally, the [Washington Examiner reported on Feb. 2018](#); the EPA currently has 70 open probes into threats against Pruitt and his family. *This* is the reason the EPA's Criminal Investigations Division decided to provide Pruitt with a 24/7 security detail to ensure his and his family's safety.

Pruitt did not become EPA director and decide he wanted lavish travel and constant security; the threats levied against his family by the left caused him to *need* this expensive security detail. Liberals created this problem and are now blaming Pruitt for being a victim.

Meanwhile, at HUD, [Congressional Democrats such as Sherrod Brown \(D-Ohio\), have called Carson's spending of \\$31,000 on furniture for HUD offices "extremely disturbing" and led Congressional probes into Carson's spending.](#)

While Carson has admitted his spending should have been better controlled, it is by no means excessive compared to previous administrations.

As the [Washington Free Beacon reported in Feb. 2015](#), the Obama Administration's Department of Homeland Security (DHS) spent \$147.7 million on furniture between FY 2010 and FY 2014. This included \$1.1 million for furniture in a single Vermont office, \$2.4 million for furniture in a single D.C. office and \$163,856 for "waiting room seating" in one office in 2014.

Obama's DHS also spent an incredible \$148, 809 for "aluminum folding tables in support of Sandy Recovery Office" a full two years after Hurricane Sandy occurred in 2012. To be clear, [a single aluminum folding table on Amazon is \\$39.99](#), Obama's DHS could have purchased nearly 4,000 tables with these funds for an office quickly becoming purposeless, yet the left is attacking the Trump Administration for improper spending.

Despite all this, Carson is still trying to prevent this abuse and misuse of funds from being allowed in his office, even if he is barely a culprit.

Last month, Carson introduced new financial controls "to enhance department's fiscal strength and integrity." [In a press release, Carson explains](#), "We simply need to do better. An updated system of internal controls will provide our agency with greater certainty that the dollars we spend are spent in a manner that satisfies all laws and regulations, and most importantly, the American people. We will approach this as any business would by increasing transparency and accountability."

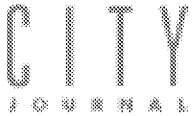
The Trump Administration is working tirelessly to eliminate waste and introduce successful policy. Naturally this scares the left. While politicians and the liberal media continue to make baseless claims against this administration, individuals such as Mnuchin, Pruitt, and Carson must continue fighting for better policy for the people. Whether you believe excessive spending by executives is not an issue at

all or one that has plagued every modern administration, the reality is it is *not* a uniquely Republican issue, and the left's attempts to frame it as one must be rejected.

Natalia Castro is a contributing editor at Americans for Limited Government.



ALG Editor's Note: In the following piece from City Journal, John Tierney describes how Scott Pruitt is bringing science back to the EPA and the absolute breakdown the left is having because they can no longer peddle science without showing their work:



Scott Pruitt, Warrior for Science

By John Tierney

Imagine if the head of a federal agency announced a new policy for its scientific research: from now on, the agency would no longer allow its studies to be reviewed and challenged by independent scientists, and its researchers would not share the data on which their conclusions were based. The response from scientists and journalists would be outrage. By refusing peer review from outsiders, the agency would be rejecting a fundamental scientific tradition. By not sharing data with other researchers, it would be violating a standard transparency requirement at leading scientific journals. If a Republican official did such a thing, you'd expect to hear denunciations of this latest offensive in the "Republican war on science."

That's the accusation being hurled at Scott Pruitt, the Republican who heads the Environmental Protection Agency. But Pruitt hasn't done anything to discourage peer review. In fact, he's done the opposite: he has called for the use of more independent experts to review the EPA's research and has just announced that the agency would rely only on studies for which data are available to be shared. Yet Democratic officials and liberal journalists have denounced these moves as an "attack on science," and Democrats have cited them (along with accusations of ethical violations) in their campaign to force Pruitt out of his job.

How could "the party of science," as Democrats like to call themselves, be opposed to transparency and peer review? Because better scientific oversight would make it tougher for the EPA to justify its costly regulations. To environmentalists, rigorous scientific protocols are fine in theory, but not in practice if they interfere with the green political agenda. As usual, the real war on science is the one waged from the left.

The EPA has been plagued by politicized science since its inception in 1970. One of its first tasks was to evaluate the claim, popularized in Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, that the use of DDT pesticide was causing an epidemic of cancer. The agency held extensive hearings that led to the conclusion that DDT was not a carcinogen, a finding that subsequent research would confirm. Yet the

EPA administrator, William Ruckelshaus, reportedly never even bothered to read the scientific testimony. Ignoring the thousands of pages of evidence, he declared DDT a potential carcinogen and banned most uses of it.

Since then, the agency has repeatedly been criticized for relying on weak or cherry-picked evidence to promote needless alarms justifying the expansion of its authority (and budget). Its warnings about BPA, a chemical used in plastics, were called unscientific by leading researchers in the field. Its conclusion that secondhand smoke was killing thousands of people annually was ruled by a judge to be in violation of “scientific procedure and norms”—and was firmly debunked by later research.

To justify the costs of the Obama administration’s Clean Power Plan restricting coal-burning power plants, the EPA relied on a controversial claim that a particular form of air pollution (from small particulates) was responsible for large numbers of premature deaths. To reach that conclusion, the agency ignored contradictory evidence and chose to rely on 1990s research whose methodology and conclusions were open to question. The EPA’s advisory committee on air pollution, a group of outside scientists, was sufficiently concerned at the time to ask to see the supporting data. But the researchers and the EPA refused to share the data, citing the confidentiality of the medical records involved, and they have continued refusing demands from Congress and other researchers to share it, as Steve Milloy recounts in his book, Scare Pollution: Why and How to Fix the EPA.

Pruitt’s new policy will force the EPA to rely on studies for which data is available to other researchers, ensuring the transparency that enables findings to be tested and confirmed. So why is he being attacked? His critics argue that some worthwhile research will be ignored because it is based on confidential records that are impractical to share. They say that it would cost the EPA several hundred million dollars to redact personal medical information in the air-pollution studies used to justify the Obama administration’s Clean Power Plan. But even if that estimate is correct—it seems awfully high—it’s a pittance compared with the costs of the EPA’s regulations. The Obama EPA estimated the annual cost of its Clean Power Plan at \$8 billion; others estimated it at more than \$30 billion. Before saddling utility customers with those higher bills year after year, the EPA could at least pay for reliable research.

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