**Cosmic Pipeline**

A new study reveals “by far the best evidence” for the elusive cosmic filaments that supercharge ancient galaxies with cold gas.

If you peer into the deep reaches of time and space to glimpse the universe when it was just a few billion years old, you’ll see an ancient era populated by many massive galaxies. Simulations suggest these galactic behemoths must have been fed by cold gas in dark matter filaments—structures that [make up the cosmic web](https://www.vice.com/en/article/zmj7pw/theres-growing-evidence-that-the-universe-is-connected-by-giant-structures) that connects galaxies in the universe—but the nature of these gas infusions has remained murky in the absence of direct observations.

Now, scientists led by Hai Fu, an associate professor of astronomy at the University of Iowa, have spotted what they describe as a “pipeline” gas filament feeding an enormous galaxy that formed when the universe was 2.5 billion years old, about one fifth of its current age.

The discovery, which was years in the making, confirms long-standing models that suggest star-forming material is delivered to huge galaxies via these cosmic filaments, according to [a study published on Wednesday](https://arxiv.org/abs/2101.06273) in the *Astrophysical Journal*.

“This is by far the best evidence we have” for the mysterious gas streams, said Fu in an email. While previous studies have detected possible filaments in the past, they weren’t able to capture detailed chemical information “to support their origin as inflows,” he added.

Fu and his colleagues, in contrast, were able to identify the chemical signatures of the gas stream in the galaxy they studied, thanks to the very rare and fortuitous alignment of giant luminous bodies around it. The galaxy, which is known as SMM J0913, is part of a larger cosmic neighborhood that contains two radiant quasars, which are special galactic cores that are among the most brightest phenomena in the universe.

Because the two quasars are located behind SMM J0913 from our perspective on Earth, the brilliant objects backlight the foreground galaxy, enabling Fu’s team to view never-before-seen details of the gas stream that nourishes this growing entity.

“The stream stood out in silhouette against two bright quasars,” Fu explained.

Using spectral information captured by the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA), currently the largest radio telescope on Earth, the team probed the abundance of chemicals in the filament.

The results showed that the stream lacked heavy elements such as aluminum, carbon, iron, and magnesium. Since the environment inside massive galaxies like SMM J0913 is constantly being enriched with heavy elements, which are spewed out by the explosion of stars, this telltale hint demonstrated that the gas was getting piped in from outside of the galaxy, from a depleted environment.

Cosmic simulations have proposed that these narrow filaments can explain how cold gas gets pumped into galaxies without being disrupted by the hot atmospheric surroundings of such gargantuan entities. But actually detecting these filaments is a tough hurdle to clear; Fu and his colleagues pored over observations of 70,000 galaxies over a period of five years before they tracked down the perfect system that contained SMM J0913.

“The understanding of the system took many years, so it has been a gradual realization synthesizing data from various telescopes,” he said. He added that he was excited when “the final piece of the jigsaw puzzle was in place” and felt “a tremendous relief” when he received the spectral information from ALMA that confirmed SMM J0913 was the exact right type of galaxy needed to illuminate this question.

“It showed that I didn't waste the precious telescope time and we indeed found something interesting,” Fu added.

While the new study represents a breakthrough in our understanding of how massive galaxies formed in the early universe, there’s still plenty of work left to be done. The team only looked at two points along the stream, leaving room for follow-up studies to attempt to “see its full physical extent,” Fu said, which he hopes to attempt to do in March using the Keck Observatory atop Mauna Kea in Hawaii.

 “In the long term, we would need to find more streams around other massive galaxies,” he concluded, “and I wonder how we can achieve that efficiently, using existing telescopes.”

**Virtual Joe Impeached?**

Freshman Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene said she filed articles of impeachment on Thursday against President [Biden](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/joe-biden/) on his first full day in office, as promised.

“We’ll see how it goes,” the Georgia Republican said in a video posted on Twitter.

She had said earlier that she would file impeachment articles accusing Mr. [Biden](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/joe-biden/) of abuse of power, for his family’s business connections in China and Ukraine when he served as vice president.

In a statement, Mrs. Taylor Greene said the case against Mr. [Biden](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/joe-biden/) is “vast and detailed.”
“President [Joe Biden](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/joe-biden/) is unfit to hold the office of the presidency,” she said. “His pattern of abuse of power as President Obama’s vice president is lengthy and disturbing. President Biden has demonstrated that he will do whatever it takes to bail out his son, Hunter, and line his family’s pockets with cash from corrupt foreign energy companies.”

She cited Mr. Biden’s warning in 2015 to withhold $1 billion in U.S. aid from Ukraine unless the Ukrainian government replaced the country’s prosecutor-general Viktor Shokin. Mr. Biden has said the prosecutor was involved in corruption; Biden critics have said that the prosecutor was investigating Burisma, the energy company that gave Hunter Biden a lucrative job on its board.

A subsequent Ukraine prosecutor-general said there was no evidence of Hunter Biden breaking any laws.

“President Biden residing in the White House is a threat to national security and he must be immediately impeached,” Mrs. Taylor Greene said. “[Joe Biden](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/joe-biden/) abused the power of the office of the vice president, enabling bribery and other high crimes and misdemeanors, by allowing his son to influence the domestic policy of a foreign nation and accept various benefits — including financial compensation — from foreign nationals in exchange for certain favors.”

By the way, Joe Biden's administration is seeking to charge reporters a $170 fee to do their jobs covering the White House.

"Reporters who cover the White House may soon be paying what amounts to an admission fee to do their jobs. Starting Monday, the White House's press office said it will start charging journalists for coronavirus tests, which are required for anyone entering the White House grounds," The Washington Post reports. "With dozens of journalists at the White House each day, the fees could add up to tens of thousands of dollars flowing from newsrooms, many of them small and cash-strapped, into government coffers."

The plan has alarmed journalists.

"The plan has alarmed the White House Correspondents' Association, which represents reporters in issues affecting the presidential press corps. The organization has objected to the proposal because of the financial burden it would impose on news organizations, especially smaller ones for whom a $170 daily fee would be onerous," the newspaper reported. "The fees would add up quickly for larger news organizations, too. The TV networks send as many as eight people a day to the White House grounds to report, produce and operate cameras and equipment. It would cost $1,360 a day to test an eight-person crew under the White House plan."

Foreign reporters are speaking out:

Australian reporter **Cory Bernardi** is the [**first prominent mainstream host**](https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/02/wow-australian-media-runs-segment-joe-bidens-dementia-something-poisonous-us-media-still-lies/) to report on Joe Biden’s obvious dementia that is apparent to anyone paying attention. No one in the US liberal media is strong enough to point this out – President Biden is out to lunch. He is in an escalating stage of cognitive decline.

Bernardi shared this on Friday, “Such was the hatred of Donald Trump by the partisan and poisonous mainstream media that they chose not to highlight anything that may have derailed a Biden victory. Even now after he’s been sworn in many are still refusing to speak the truth.”

**Starship Update**

The stainless steel tower, dubbed SN10, is currently undergoing tests at a SpaceX facility in southern Texas.

The company hopes to send a fully functioning Starship to space for the first time later this year.

Conditions in Texas have improved after the Lone Star State was hit by a deadly winter storm last week, forcing SpaceX to delay its operations.

Temperatures at the Starship base near the town of Boca Chica have now returned to normal, allowing work to continue.



6

Starship is an experimental spacecraft in the early stages of developmentCredit: Getty Images - Getty

Expectations for the first flight of SN10 are high after its predecessor, SN9, met a fiery end earlier this month.

The prototype rocket shot six miles into the air during a test flight before plummeting back towards the ground and exploding on impact.

Another rocket, SN8, met a similar violent end following a flight in December.

The blasts were so violent that they sparked an investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration into SpaceX's safety precautions.

An FAA spokesperson told [CNET](https://www.cnet.com/news/new-spacex-starship-prototype-sn10-could-fly-as-soon-as-next-week/) that the agency had closed the investigation, "clearing the way for the SN10 test flight".

They added that the Californian company required FAA approval of license updates.

According to pictures snapped by onlookers over the weekend, SpaceX recently installed aerodynamic flaps to SN10.

They will help to steer the spacecraft as it launches to a height of up to several miles above sea level.

Previous Starship prototypes have exploded on landingCredit: Alamy Live News

Starship is in the early stages of development, and trial "launches" so far have largely taken the form of short hops of a few hundred feet.

These tests involve a single trash can-shaped engine but the final spacecraft will look a lot more like a traditional rocket, sporting a cone-shaped nose.

That all changed on December 8 when SN8 performed its first full flight, soaring 7.8 miles into the air before exploding the moment it hit the ground.

Despite the rocket's fiery demise, billionaire SpaceX boss Elon Musk – recently crowned the world's richest man – hailed the launch as a success.

The prototype managed to reach its target height and collected plenty of useful data, the 49-year-old said.

Writing on Twitter before the launch, Musk had warned viewers that there was only a one-in-three chance the rocket would make it back in one piece.

"Lot of things need to go right," he said. "But that’s why we have SN9 & SN10."

Billionaire Musk, who is also CEO of Tesla, hopes to send a million people to Mars in his lifetime using a 1,000-strong fleet of the powerful rockets.

**What is SpaceX?**

**Here's what you need to know...**

SpaceX is a cash-flushed rocket company that wants to take man to Mars.

It was set up by eccentric billionaire Elon Musk in 2002 and is based in Hawthorne, California.

SpaceX's first aim was to build rockets that can autonomously land back on Earth for refurbishment and re-use.

The technology makes launching and operating space flights more efficient, and therefore cheaper.

SpaceX currently uses its reusable Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy rockets to fly cargo to the International Space Station (ISS) for Nasa.

It also carries satellites and other space tech into orbit for various government agencies and multinational companies.

The company took astronauts to the ISS for the first time in 2020.

Other future missions involve carrying tourists to the ISS and astronauts to the Moon and Mars.

Musk has repeatedly said he believes humanity must colonise Mars to save itself from extinction.

He plans to get a SpaceX rocket to the Red Planet by 2027.

The finished product will stand 165ft (50 metres) tall and boast six of SpaceX's powerful Raptor engines.

According to SpaceX, the contraption will hit speeds of 15,000mph (25,000kph), making it the world's most powerful spacecraft.

In a series of tweets earlier this year, Musk outlined how his Starlink plans would open up space travel to anyone, regardless of their income.

"Needs to be such that anyone can go if they want, with loans available for those who don't have money," he wrote.

Musk's plan involves building an expansive fleet of Starship vehicles, which comprise a huge rocket topped by a bullet-shaped spacecraft.

SpaceX says reusable rockets that can land and take off again make space travel more cost effective, accessible and sustainable.

However, the team has a long way to go before they can conduct Starship's first manned flight.

**Operation Mockingbird**

The idea of a large organisation controlling the minds and thoughts of individuals, pushing them towards a specific ideology and certain life choices, may seem as science fiction, or as an absurd conspiracy that can be found in books and movies. However, for some, it is certainly not a new surprising discovery that corporations, organisations and politicians, manipulate public opinion in order to fit certain agendas. These, are in their turn manipulated by even bigger and more powerful organisations, such as the government itself.

The CIA controlling and manipulating civilians’ minds is not fiction: it is a conspiracy turned out to be true during the 1970s in the USA.

Following the Second World War, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was able to gain control over what was being published not only in the USA but more in general across the globe. It exerted much influence over what the public should be allowed to see, and what should be concealed. In essence, it ruled what ‘the public saw, heard and read on a regular basis’ (Tracy 2018).

Operation Mockingbird is a United States CIA campaign that aimed not only to influence the media but also infiltrate it.

Since the 1950s, the CIA started recruiting journalists, editors, and students in order to write and promulgate false stories. The CIA’s stories were entirely propaganda and their employees were paid huge salaries in order to promote such fake news. Essentially, the CIA managed to control both national and international newspapers through a bribe.

During the ‘50s, Cord Meyer and Allen W. Dulles devised and organised a propaganda outreach program. They recruited leading American journalists into a network in order to promulgate the CIA’s views.

The CIA went to the extremes of funding students, cultural organisations, and magazines that would spread the CIA’s views of events.

However, the suspicion that the CIA could manipulate public opinion arose between 1972-1974 due to the Watergate Scandal, which exposed President Nixon’s involvement in the war in Vietnam.

In fact, Nixon had adopted two strategies: whereas on the one side he was employing aggressive strategies in order to try and appease North Vietnam, on the other, he was trying to appease the protests in the U.S. by demonstrating through the press and the news that he was aiming to achieve a peace agreement and bring home the American troops. When the truth about Nixon’s Vietnamization was revealed, many started to question up to which point was the CIA enmeshed in the publishing of news and information (Slate 2018).

Moreover, during the Cold War, the CIA supported many prominent writers and artists such as Arthur Schlesinger and Jackson Pollock in their ‘propaganda war against the Soviet Union’ (Washington 2017).

In 1977, Carl Bernstein published The CIA and the Media in Rolling Stone. The article exposed much of the CIA’s attitude towards the spreading of fake news and it’s tacit’ as well as ‘explicit’ collaboration with journalists. Bernstein explains how journalists did not limit themselves to write what the CIA suggested: their relationship was much more complicated and intimate. In fact, reporters ‘shared their notebooks with the CIA’, some of the journalists were also award-winning writers, and others became spies in Communist countries (Bernstein 1977).

According to Dice (2016), more than a billion dollars were being invested each year in such propaganda programs. The CIA’s writers were generously retributed, and there were no limits on how much they could receive: sometimes they were paid more than half a million dollars to spread the information required by the CIA.

When the CIA was caught out in their wrongdoings, they did not reveal the newspapers and the names of the journalists with whom they had collaborated in the past (Harrock 1976).

However, in 1973, the Washington Star published the names of around three dozens of American journalists. According to the CIA, revealing the names of those who had worked with them, meant ‘endangering’ the writers’ and reporters’ lives, as well as making them appear in a ‘ridicule’ light (Harrock 1976).

Church Committee and actions to prevent the CIA’s involvement in the news

During the 1970s, the Church Committee was created by Senator Frank Church in order to investigate any ‘government operations and potential abuses’ carried out by the CIA, the NSA, the FBI, and the IRS (Goldfarb 2018). During an interview, Senator Church publicly claimed: ‘we have quite a lot of detailed information and we will evaluate it and we will include any evidence of wrongdoing or any evidence of impropriety in our final report, and we will make recommendation’.

In 1973, the CIA published Family Jewels, a book which exposes all the information that had been hidden and/or manipulated through the years. The book is around seven-hundred pages long.
Moreover, in the same year the Director of the CIA, William E. Colby stated that ‘CIA will undertake no activity in which there is a risk of influencing domestic public opinion, either directly or indirectly. The Agency will continue its prohibition against the placement of material in the American media. In certain instances, usually, where the initiative is on the part of the media, CIA will occasionally provide factual non-attributable briefings to various elements of the media, but only in cases where we are sure that the senior editorial staff is aware of the source of the information provided’ (Slate 2018; citing Colby).

In 1975, the CIA admitted their manipulation of mainstream media in order to forge and redirect the opinions of American citizens. They admitted that information was distorted in order to fit specific agendas. Following a report published by the U.S. Congress in 1976: ‘The CIA currently maintains a network of several hundred foreign individuals around the world who provide intelligence for the CIA and at times attempt to influence opinion through the use of covert propaganda. These individuals provide the CIA with direct access to a large number of newspapers and periodicals, scores of press services and news agencies, radio and television stations, commercial book publishers, and other foreign media outlets’.

Although in 1975 George H.W. Bush publicly ended the CIA relations with the U.S. media, the CIA is still actively involved with foreign news organisations, which in turn, feed the United States media with information.

Bush established that ‘the CIA will not enter into any paid or contractual relationships with any full-time or part-time news correspondent accredited by any United States news service, newspaper, periodical, radio or television network or station’ (Slate 2018).

Although in 1976, Colby claimed that Central Intelligence had broken all relations and ties with journalists in 1973, this is hard to believe (Harrock 1976). Moreover, he also stated that he did not see any harm in purchasing information from ‘part-time correspondents who sell their information to news organisations in the country’ (Harrock 1976).

However, a general suspicion took over the Capitol City: all conservative journalists and former CIA employees that had rapidly achieved recognition within the news world were now regarded with mistrust (Harrock 1976).

The same year, Senator Church published in his report that the CIA had a strong network composed of ‘several hundred foreign individuals around the world’ that were dedicated to providing the Central Intelligence with misleading news (Slate 2018).

In fact, American journalist Scott Shane gives an account of his experience with the CIA: in 1979, he received their recruitment letter in which they ‘expressed “tentative interest” in [his] qualifications’ (Shane 2018). Shane declined the offer of collaborating with the CIA, and his file was placed in the ‘inactive section’ (Shane 201).

According to Bernstein (1977), the people that worked undercover for the CIA often were employed by the ‘CBS, Time, the New York Times, the Louisville Courier-Journal, the Copley News Service, ABC, NBC, Reuters’, and so on. Moreover, throughout the 1950s, the CIA invested much money in training their agents as journalists: according to members of the CIA, they ‘were taught to make noises like reporters’ before being placed in powerful organisations (Bernstein 1977).

In essence, mass media is able to implement manipulative strategies in order to alter ‘global perception’ about events, people, and situations (Washington 2017; citing Davis 2008). Certainly, it would be naive to believe that the government has stopped paying journalists ‘to spread disinformation’ (Washington 2017). The United States are often the first to spread information in order to serve their own objectives: as Washington (2017) points out, ‘the government plants disinformation in American media in order to mislead foreigners’.

**Rosatom Begins Mining in Wyoming**

Yesterday, the Land Quality Division of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) announced it has approved the in-situ recovery (ISR) uranium mine permit application submitted by Uranium One, owned by the Russian nuclear state corporation Rosatom.

According to WDEQ, the permit comes with a special condition: the permit reclamation performance bond contains a reduced contingency factor and only covers the monitoring wells that are already existing.

Uranium One was acquired by the Russian nuclear state corporation Rosatom in January 2013, and this deal was surrounded by a string of scandals involving allegations against the Clinton Foundation.

“I am pleased to inform you that today we control 20 percent of uranium in the United States. If we need that uranium, we shall be able to use it any time,” said the former Rosatom’s head Sergey Kiriyenko back in 2013 in his address speech to the Russian Parliament after Rosatom consolidated 100% of Uranium One and took it private.

Uranium One now is one of the world’s largest uranium producers with a portfolio of assets worldwide, including Kazakhstan, the United States, Tanzania, Namibia and other countries. Uranium One is currently producing uranium in Kazakhstan from Akdala, South Inkai, Karatau, Akbastau, Zarechnoye and Kharasan mines.

In 2013, Rosatom, backed by the Russian state, acquired a Canadian uranium mining company, now called Uranium One, which has assets in the U.S. Uranium is a key material for making nuclear weapons.

Through the deal, Russia is able to own about 20 percent of U.S. uranium production capacity. However, Colin Chilcoat, an energy affairs specialist who has [written extensively about Russia's energy deals](https://oilprice.com/Alternative-Energy/Nuclear-Power/Does-Russia-Really-Own-20-Of-The-US-Uranium-Reserves.html), said that the company only extracts about 11 percent of uranium in the U.S.

The deal also “doesn’t allow for that uranium to be exported at all,” Chilcoat told Fox News. “It’s not like it’s leaving the U.S. or somehow finding its way to more insidious players.”

The agreement was approved by nine government agencies with the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), an inter-agency group that reviews how certain foreign investments can impact national security. The State Department under Clinton was one of those agencies, though Clinton [told WMUR-TV in 2015](http://www.wmur.com/article/hillary-clinton-facing-questions-over-involvement-in-uranium-one-sale/5201352) that she was not “personally involved” in the agreement.

**Why is it controversial?**

Some investors reportedly donated millions of dollars to the Clinton Foundation. Former President Bill Clinton also received a $500,000 speaking fee in Russia and reportedly met with Vladimir Putin around the time of the deal, Republicans, who are largely critical of the deal, have said.



[**'Clinton Cash' author talks Russian uranium deal controversy**](http://video.foxnews.com/v/5617550807001)

Peter Schweizer shares his take on 'Fox & Friends.'

The FBI had looked into the agreement and uncovered that some Russian nuclear industry officials were engaged in nefarious dealings, which included extortion, bribery and kickbacks, [The Hill reported](http://thehill.com/policy/national-security/355749-fbi-uncovered-russian-bribery-plot-before-obama-administration). Evidence of wrongdoing by Vadim Mikerin, the Russian official overseeing Putin’s nuclear expansion in the U.S. who was eventually sentenced to prison, was discovered by the FBI before the deal was approved, according to The Hill.

Author Peter Schweizer – who wrote about the deal in his 2015 book “Clinton Cash” – [told Fox News that there is no evidence](http://insider.foxnews.com/2017/10/19/clinton-cash-author-peter-schweizer-russia-uranium-one-deal-gag-order-witness) that the people involved with approving the agreement knew that the FBI had an ongoing investigation into it.

But White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders told Fox News “if anyone colluded for a foreign government in [the 2016] election, it was the Clinton campaign [and] the Democrats.”

**What did the informant reveal?**

[Douglas Campbell](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2018/02/08/informant-says-moscow-paid-millions-in-bid-to-influence-clinton.html), the FBI informant, alleged that Moscow paid millions of dollars to a lobbying firm to help Bill Clinton’s charities in order to influence Hillary Clinton, who was then former President Barack Obama’s secretary of state.

Campbell made the claims in a 10-page statement given to the Senate Judiciary Committee, House Intelligence Committee and House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

Campbell said Russian nuclear officials “told me at various times that they expected APCO to apply a portion of the $3 million annual lobbying fee it was receiving from the Russians to provide in-kind support for the Clinton’s Global Initiative.”

**"Your real Russia story is uranium."**

— President Donald Trump

“The contract called for four payments of $750,000 over twelve months,” Campbell said in the statement. “APCO was expected to give assistance free of charge to the Clinton Global Initiative as part of their effort to create a favorable environment to ensure the Obama administration made affirmative decisions on everything from Uranium One to the US-Russia Civilian Nuclear Cooperation agreement.”

APCO Worldwide is a global public affairs consulting agency. In a statement to Fox News, APCO said Campbell’s allegations are “false and unfounded.”

“The key issues at stake in this investigation are all about intent and knowledge: was there an intent to influence official business, and, if so, did the recipient take the money in exchange for taking official action,” Jamil Jaffer, a former counsel in the Justice Department and the director of the National Security Law and Policy Program at George Mason University’s Antonin Scalia Law School, told Fox News.

But Jaffer said the credibility of the so-called informant will also come into play.

“Was this a foreign agent or criminal who turned? Was this a private individual the FBI placed inside [the deal]? Was this a government employee? All these factors, plus the level of the informant’s access to relevant information, will make a big difference here,” Jaffer said.

**But what does this deal have to do with the Russia investigation?**

Multiple congressional committees, as well as the Justice Department, are looking into [possible Russian collusion](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2018/02/05/trump-and-russia-investigation-what-to-know.html) in the 2016 presidential election – and ties between Russians and Trump’s campaign.

"That's your real Russia story. Not a story where they talk about collusion and there was none. It was a hoax. Your real Russia story is uranium," Trump has said.



[**Uranium One informant says Russia sent money to sway Clinton**](http://video.foxnews.com/v/5729045563001)

Victoria Toensing speaks out on what her client Douglas Campbell told Congress.

[Robert Mueller](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2018/01/25/muellers-russia-investigation-what-to-know.html), the special counsel leading the probe into alleged Russian interference in the election, was the head of the FBI when it investigated Rosatom officials’ extortion and corruption.



[**What new documents reveal about the Uranium One deal**](http://video.foxnews.com/v/5656996433001)

Unveiled memos conflict with the Justice Department's statement.

And the investigation was led by then-Assistant FBI Director [Andrew McCabe](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2018/02/07/former-trump-administration-officials-from-comey-to-mccabe.html), then-U.S. Attorney Rod Rosenstein, [The Hill reported](http://thehill.com/policy/national-security/355749-fbi-uncovered-russian-bribery-plot-before-obama-administration). Rosenstein is now the deputy attorney general; McCabe, until last month, was the deputy director of the FBI.

Mueller's investigators in the Russia probe report to Rosenstein.

The special prosecutors instructed by the Justice Department to investigate “certain issues” pertaining to the Uranium One deal will also report to Rosenstein and Sessions, according to a letter obtained by Fox News.

Congressional committees are looking into whether Mueller informed the Obama administration, particularly those tasked with approving the Uranium One deal, prior to CFIUS approval.

In her attempt to discredit reports of the controversy surrounding the Uranium One deal, Clinton said Trump and “his allies,” are diverting from the investigation.

“The closer the investigation about real Russian ties between Trump associates and real Russians … the more they want to just throw mud on the wall,” she said. “I’m their favorite target, me and President Obama.”

**No Flu Season**

**Despite all those warnings from Dr. Anthony Fauci**about COVID-19 and the flu joining forces in 2020 and 2021 to create some kind of super-deadly double-whammy viral pandemic, it's no longer a secret at this point that worries about a super-charged flu season simply never came to pass. [We've reported on the phenomenon of falling flu cases before](https://www.zerohedge.com/geopolitical/seasonal-flu-rates-plunge-baffling-experts-who-predicted-deadly-superbug),

February is usually the peak of flu season, when doctors' offices and hospitals are packed with patients. But that's not the case this year. Instead,**the flu has virtually disappeared from the US,** with reports coming in at far lower levels than the world has seen in decades. Some areas, like San Diego, have seen such low numbers, health authorities have demanded [audits of COVID-positive patients to see whether some might have been misdiagnosed.](https://www.zerohedge.com/covid-19/mysterious-disappearance-flu-san-diego-prompted-call-audit-covid-records?__s=388hdhsxmyryq4r6t2hu)



According to the CDC, **the cumulative positive influenza test rate from late September into the week of December 19th was just 0.2%, compared to 8.7% from a year before.**

Hospitals say the expected army of flu-sickened patients never materialized, and that nationally***"this is the lowest flu season we’ve had on record,"*** according to a surveillance system that is about 25 years old.

One source from Maine Medical Center in Portland, the state's largest hospital, said ***"I have seen zero documented flu cases this winter,"*** said Dr. Nate Mick, the head of the emergency department.

Ditto in Oregon's capital city, where the outpatient respiratory clinics affiliated with Salem Hospital have not seen any confirmed flu cases.

Dr. Michelle Rasmussen, the head of the hospital, said***"It's beautiful."*** Especially considering the flu's longstanding status as the country's biggest virus threat, the outcome is remarkable.

"Many parents will tell you that this year their kids have been as healthy as they’ve ever been, because they’re not swimming in the germ pool at school or day care the same way they were in prior years," Mick said.

Some have suggested it's a miracle of tyrannical COVID restrictions. Phyllis Kanki, an infectious disease professor at Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health, told Just the News:

"I think**COVID mitigation measures are likely to lower levels**. Some of these mitigation measures may have been particularly effective for high-risk groups for flu, like the elderly and immunosuppressed."

Also, **because the nation is panicked over this virus, unlike during the 2018 flu season,**[**the threshold for people going to the hospital is likely much lower than in past flu seasons.**](https://www.zerohedge.com/political/despite-no-lockdownmask-mandate-florida-has-same-hospitalization-rate-2018-flu-season) While there are definitely some people who are gravely ill with this virus, we have decided to treat this virus in the hospital much more liberally than any other virus. Hospitals receive higher reimbursement rates for treating COVID-19 patients. However, many of the cases are not necessarily clinical level.

[Professor Christina Pagel suggested](https://www.zerohedge.com/medical/uk-health-authorities-announce-not-single-case-flu-detected-year) that some of the measures brought in to fight coronavirus could be kept in place to combat flu infections.

**Asserting that “we can reduce flu deaths to pretty much zero,” Pagel said it is “worth encouraging people to wear masks” on public transport and in other busy environments every winter.**

But, looking at a chart of US flu cases vs. COVID cases should raise more than one eyebrow...



The phenomenon isn't unique to the US.

**In the UK, data released this week show that the number of active flu cases in the country has fallen to zero.**

However, [as we previously highlighted](https://www.zerohedge.com/medical/uk-health-authorities-announce-not-single-case-flu-detected-year), other health experts have suggested that flu cases are so dramatically low because influenza cases are being falsely counted as COVID cases.

Last month, top epidemiologist Knut Wittkowski [asserted](https://summit.news/2021/01/05/epidemiologist-says-influenza-cases-are-being-counted-as-covid-19/) that,**“Influenza has been renamed COVID-19 in large part.”**

According to Wittkowski, former Head of Biostatistics, Epidemiology and Research Design at Rockefeller University, this was because many flu infections are being incorrectly labeled as coronavirus cases.

**“There may be quite a number of influenza cases included in the ‘presumed COVID-19’ category of people who have COVID-19 symptoms (which Influenza symptoms can be mistaken for), but are not tested for SARS RNA,**” Wittkowski told Just the News.

While the great 2020 disappearing flu passes largely under the mass media’s radar, media-proliferated mass deception and power of repetition get most people to believe that what’s harmful to health and well-being is beneficial.

**The Administrative State**

Lockdowns should have shown every American just how tyrannical and unreasonable our leaders can be. There are elected leaders like [Governor Cuomo](https://news.yahoo.com/cuomo-accused-criminal-abuse-power-162453830.html) who have acted as outright tyrants, alienating everyone, even those in his own party. Then there are the unelected bureaucrats who wave away our liberties with the stroke of a pen from the secrecy of their massive offices with technocratic efficiency. This is all of course a sudden and dramatic curtailing of our freedoms. I would not be surprised that with this much public attention, some sort of effort will be made to roll back much of what has been done. **Although lockdowns are certainly an existential threat to our long-term freedoms and system of liberal democracy, there has been another specter out there that many experts have been sounding the alarm on for decades. The growth of the administrative state.**



The chilling narrative about the growth of the administrative state, which is essentially the regulatory apparatus of the executive branch, is usually confined to specialist professions. The ever-present danger of a slowly expanding and unaccountable apparatus of bureaucrats that threatens to sap the life out of American society and drown it in a sea of paperwork is typically a concern that only keeps policy wonks and lawyers up at night. Although many lawyers probably celebrate this dystopian vision because they benefit from the compliance fees. **The regulatory state not only threatens to make society that much slower and dreary with its excessive onslaught of regulation but it also makes us poorer.**Robert Samuelson writes for the Washington Post [that](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-administrative-state-is-huge-and-its-only-getting-bigger/2017/03/05/bb388e28-003a-11e7-99b4-9e613afeb09f_story.html)

“No one really knows by how much, but “there is ample evidence that regulation has expanded and that this expansion has limited economic growth,” as Ted Gayer and Philip Wallach of the Brookings Institution [recently wrote](https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/prospects-for-regulatory-reform-in-the-trump-administration/). One study estimates that regulation has shaved [0.8 percent](https://www.mercatus.org/publication/cumulative-cost-regulations) off the U.S. annual growth rate, which — if confirmed by other studies — would be huge.”

**The regulatory state refers to organizations such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the Centers for Disease Control, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Education, the Department of Justice, the Internal Revenue Service, and all the other three-letter agencies in Washington, DC.** If you would like to see how long the list of agencies is, take a look at the [Federal Register](https://www.federalregister.gov/agencies), to which there are 455. That number is absolutely mind-boggling and you don’t need a fancy degree in political science like I have to say that society can function without their oversight. A paper by [Peter Strauss](https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3673&context=faculty_scholarship)at Columbia Law School notes that there are currently over 2 million civilians employed in the federal government alone. He notes that for context,

“The first Congress to meet once the Constitution was ratified created a Post Office and Departments of War, Navy, Foreign Affairs, and Treasury, each in unique ways suited to its responsibilities; this new government employed few civil servants to manage all its affairs. The first serious count of federal civilian employees, in 1816, reported that they numbered 4,837.”

**The drastic expansion of the administrative state has come at a cost to not only our liberty, which is slowly being eroded by a sea of paperwork and regulations, but it also undermines our democracy.**According to [Article 1 of the Constitution](https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript), the legislative branch or Congress is supposed to be the primary law-making body of our government. That is because if there are bad laws or laws society doesn’t like, we can hold people accountable. However, more and more power has been shifted to the executive branch because of the growth of the administrative state. Even the judicial system is losing power to the administrative state after the establishment of a legal doctrine known as [Chevron Deference](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/chevron_deference), which binds the court system to defer to the administrative agency’s interpretation of a rule, not the Constitutional interpretation of a sitting judge. It shouldn’t be too hard to assume that the interpretation will probably favor the ambitions of the agency, not the integrity of the Constitution. These issues and more form the basis of legal scholar Richard Epstein’s [assertion](https://www.law.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/ECM_PRO_060974.pdf) that the administrative state is not congruent with rule of law in this country.

The worst part about all of this is that society continues to tell itself that those in the administrative state are simply humble public servants. Although I’m sure many of them are, the hard reality is that at the end of the day it’s a source of income and advancement for bureaucrats just like jobs in the private sector are for everyone else. This is the basic insight of [Public Choice Theory](https://www.aier.org/research/what-is-public-choice-theory/), which is the common-sense realization that government agents are not angels, they are humans and follow human nature. That means that although many government agents may think they are serving the country, they are also limited by their own capabilities as humans as well as their desires. This is demonstrated by a phenomenon known as the [Washington Monument Syndrome](https://mises.org/wire/washington-monument-syndrome-strikes-again-trump-imposes-hiring-freeze), which refers to how when a government agency is threatened with a budget cut or hiring freeze, they shun fiscal restraint in order to protect their own self-interests. **The Washington Monument Syndrome gets its name because when the National Park Service was faced with budget cuts, instead of streamlining its finances like a normal private company they protested by shutting down the Washington Monument rather than taking sensible steps to cut costs.** In the private sector there is a natural check on how much workers can demand, such as the threat of going out of business. In the public sector there are no such restraints. This is part of the reason why the bureaucracy simply grows and grows and grows, taking our freedom as well as our treasure as it does.

Finally, there is the dark fact that there are ambitious people in the administrative state who want to make a name for themselves at the expense of their fellow countryman. If there aren’t any problems to solve, hotshot regulators are trying to move up the food chain by creating problems to solve by either targeting innocent private actors or trying to pump up their resumes with unnecessary sanctions. This problem is well known when it comes to the criminal justice system, as [prosecutors leverage plea bargains](https://www.brennancenter.org/issues/end-mass-incarceration/changing-incentives/prosecutorial-reform)to increase their incarceration statistics regardless of the guilt of the defendant and without ever having to take a case to trial, which is a constitutional right. However, this system of perverse incentives to simply rack up wins at the expense of society is present in the regulatory state as well as agencies bringing the government’s boot down on businesses just trying to provide a good service.

I had a personal experience with this dynamic when I interned at a law firm providing pro bono services to private entities that were being pursued by trigger-happy regulators. The case I worked on was [FTC vs D-Link Systems](https://causeofaction.org/settlement-in-federal-trade-commission-v-d-link-systems-includes-no-finding-of-liability/), which was settled finding no liability for any violations. The FTC in this case levied a claim that D-Link Systems was engaging in deceptive practices. However, upon investigation there were no rules that they violated, nor were there any widespread complaints from consumers to be found. The FTC was essentially going out of its way and leveraging vague rules to pursue a responsible corporation likely in the name of career advancement. That is because there are no rewards for doing nothing, even though that’s what the government should be doing when its citizens are being responsible. Sadly, not every private business has the resources to fight back against overzealous government regulators. Even worse, there is little being done to check the powers of the administrative state. In fact, many elected politicians simply see it as a way to shift blame away from themselves.

**Key Takeaway**

**If lockdowns were a sudden and brutal assault on our liberties, the rise of the administrative state would be the silent killer.** It keeps itself away from the public spotlight, only raising alarms for the communities it directly affects and policy wonks who enjoy ranting about taxes and federal codes all day. To the average person, the administrative state is not a problem until it is. Every year it grows and grows with little incentive to care for the trouble it has caused for the rest of American society. It is the true embodiment of the [leviathan](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hobbes-moral/) illustrated by Hobbes. Although there is certainly a time and place for regulatory agencies, today they have so greatly outgrown their bounds to the point they are becoming an unelected judge, jury, and executioner. What was a handful of executive agencies at the beginning of the republic has now become an expansive list of alphabet soup abbreviations, some with their own [SWAT teams](https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/36343/from-nasa-to-amtrak-these-are-all-the-government-agencies-with-tactical-teams) and [court systems](https://www.fjc.gov/history/courts/executive-agency-courts). **The administrative state not only saps our treasure and stifles our creativity but it drains our spirit. If left unchecked it will surely turn this country of ambitious innovators and entrepreneurs into one of paper pushers and clerks.**

**See You in Court**

Government agencies have significant protections against lawsuits by individuals for mistreatment, even if they intentionally violated the law.

They are given a pass mostly under the legal concept of "qualified immunity," which provides they are protected unless a court "clearly established" in a previous case that the actions were unconstitutional.

That might change.

It's because the New Mexico House of Representatives recently voted 39-29 to let individuals sue government agencies for violating their rights.

The bill is the tip of the spear in a developing movement to call officials to account for their actions, according to the Institute for Justice.

"Qualified immunity is a failure as a matter of policy, as a matter of law, and as a matter of basic morality," said Institute for Justice Attorney Keith Neely, who testified on behalf of the New Mexico plan.

"For too long, qualified immunity has denied victims a remedy for violations of their constitutional rights. We urge the Senate to seize this historic opportunity to end this injustice. Any police reform bill is only meaningful if it includes reform to qualified immunity," he said.

The bill comes from recommendations by the New Mexico Civil Rights Commission that followed IJ's model legislation closely.

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The plan, HB4, "would create a new way to hold government agencies accountable in state court. If local or state government employees violate constitutional rights while working within the scope of employment, victims can sue their government employer for damages."

Under the proposed law, individuals still would not have personal liability.

"Under qualified immunity, government officials can only be held liable for violating someone’s rights if a court has previously ruled that it was 'clearly established' those precise actions were unconstitutional," IJ said. "If no such decision exists — or it exists, but just in another jurisdiction — the officials are immune by default, even if they intentionally violated the law. Created by the Supreme Court in 1982, qualified immunity appears nowhere in the Constitution or in Section 1983, the federal statute that authorizes civil rights lawsuits against government agents."

But opposition to the practice has been building since the death of George Floyd last year.

Over the summer, Colorado became the first state to pass a law blocking qualified immunity from being used as a defense in court. However, unlike the Colorado bill, New Mexico’s legislation would apply to all government employees, not just law enforcement officers, IJ said.

Groups supporting the new direction include IJ, the ACLU, the Innocence Project, the National Police Accountability Project and Americans for Prosperity.

IJ President Scott Bullock said, "The principle at stake is simple: If citizens must obey the law, then government officials must obey the Constitution.

"The Constitution’s promises of freedom and individual rights are important only to the extent that they are actually enforced—and the Institute for Justice will work tirelessly to ensure that they are."