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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

By Jacob Crosse
16.05.2020

US Senator Richard Burr steps down as intelligence chairman amid investigation into pre-pandemic stock dump

As part of an ongoing Justice Department and Securities and Exchange Commission's probe into insider trading conducted by prominent US senators, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents have seized the personal cell phone of North Carolina senator Richard Burr.

A spokesperson for Dianne Feinstein has also confirmed that FBI agents have questioned the California senator regarding her and her husband's selling of up to \$6 million worth of stock between January 31 and February 18. Feinstein has maintained her innocence, pleading ignorance as to her husband's actions.

It was revealed by several media investigations as well as senate disclosure forms in March, that senators Burr and Feinstein, as well as James Inhofe and Kelly Loeffler, sought to secure their personal wealth at the expense of society by selling millions of dollars in stock, prior to the market's collapse and after receiving classified intelligence briefings on the emerging threat of the coronavirus beginning on January 24.



Chairman Richard Burr, R-N.C., gives opening remarks at a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing for a nomination hearing for Rep. John Ratcliffe, R-Texas, on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, May. 5, 2020. (AP Photo/Andrew Harnik, Pool)

As the virus spread unchecked throughout the country, Burr sought to soften the threat of the virus while buttressing the government's preparedness efforts. Burr coauthored an opinion piece for Fox News on February 7 arguing that “the United States today is better prepared than ever before to face emerging public health threats like the coronavirus, in large part due to the work of the Senate Health Committee, Congress and the Trump administration.”

But when speaking to affluent campaign contributors on February 27, Burr made more direct warnings. Members of the Tar Heel Circle, who pay between \$500 and \$10,000 in dues, were truthfully warned by Burr, that far from being a minor flu, “[COVID-19] is probably more akin to the 1918 pandemic.”

In order for a warrant to be executed on a sitting senator, such as Burr, the signature of Attorney General William Barr is required. As Chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Burr oversaw investigations into, and suppressed findings that could shed light on, the murderous and illegal activities of the CIA, FBI and NSA. The purpose of the warrant was to obtain phone records and conversations between Burr and his stockbroker, according to reports.

As of this writing, it does not appear that Inhofe nor Loeffler have been questioned by authorities, nor served any warrants, despite both engaging in similar activity as Burr and Feinstein.

According to Burr’s senate disclosure forms, he and his wife sold 33 different stocks on a single day, February 13, worth between \$628,000 and \$1.72 million. The sales represent the most stock Burr had sold in over a year and a significant portion of his estimated \$3.1 million net worth according to *Opensecrets.org*. *ProPublica* reported last week that Burr’s

brother-in-law, Gerald Fauth, sold between \$97,000 and \$280,000 worth of shares the exact same day as Burr. Fauth was appointed by Donald Trump to the National Mediation Board, the federal agency that coordinates labor-management relations within the railroad and airline industries, in 2017.

As with his connected brother-in-law, Fauth chose to divest from several businesses that were soon to see a precipitous drop in stock value, including several major oil companies. Fauth sold \$50,000 worth of Chevron; between \$1,001 and \$15,000 of BP and between \$15,001 and \$50,000 of Royal Dutch Shell stock.

FBI agents served the now-former chair of the powerful Senate Intelligence Committee with a warrant to seize his cell phone at his Washington D.C. home on Wednesday evening. On Thursday, Burr delivered a letter to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell informing him that he would be stepping down as chair of the Intel Committee.

As chair, Burr oversaw the nearly three-year investigation into “Russian interference” that took place during the 2016 election which supposedly benefited Donald Trump. This fact-free conspiracy theory was promulgated by the ruling class and their servants in the intelligence agencies and Democratic party to channel mass popular opposition to Trump behind a right-wing pro-war campaign to demonize Russia and lay the groundwork for internet censorship and war.

Burr earned Trump’s ire by issuing a subpoena for Donald Trump Jr. to testify in front of the committee last year as part of the committee’s McCarthyite investigation.

While speaking to reporters on Thursday, Trump insisted that he didn’t know about the warrant, or impending seizure of Burr’s phone. During a press conference Trump stated that he “knew nothing about it.” Upon hearing that Burr had resigned his chair position, Trump dryly replied, “That’s too bad.”

World Socialist 15 May 2020