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Grassley and Graham appear to be referencing the opposition research dossier on Trump and Russia compiled by ex-British intelligence agent Christopher Steele. The two Republicans sent the Justice Department a criminal referral of Steele last month suggesting he may have lied to federal authorities.

"There is nothing 'unusual' about the National Security Advisor memorializing an important discussion for the record," Kathryn Ruemmler, a counsel for Rice, said in a statement. "The Obama White House was justifiably concerned about how comprehensive they should be in their briefings regarding Russia to members of the Trump transition team, particularly Lt. General Michael Flynn, given the concerning communications between him and Russian officials."

Ruemmler added: "The discussion that Ambassador Rice documented did not involve the so-called Steele dossier. Any insinuation that Ambassador Rice's actions in this matter were inappropriate is yet another attempt to distract and deflect from the importance of the ongoing