

# Major Liberal Think Tanks Able to Collect Foreign Government Cash Without Reporting It

By **Donny Ferguson**

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Senate Republican leaders are demanding the Justice Department explain how a major left-wing think tank has been able to accept millions of dollars in funding from foreign governments without legally reporting it.

**Senate Judiciary Committee** Ranking Member **Chuck Grassley** (R-Iowa), and Judiciary Committee members John Cornyn (R-**Texas**), Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) issued a letter to Attorney General **Merrick Garland** asking him to explain how the **Brookings Institution** and other liberal think tanks have been able to collect millions of dollars in funding from foreign governments and enterprises without apparently complying with the **Foreign Agents Registration Act** (FARA).

“FARA requires certain agents of foreign principals who are engaged in political activities or other activities specified under the statute to make periodic public disclosure of their relationship with the foreign principal, as well as activities, receipts and disbursements in support of those activities,” the Justice Department states.

“The American public deserves to know when foreign entities are operating in and attempting to influence U.S. policy and public opinion,” the senators wrote in the letter to Garland.

“Moreover, Congress must be made aware of foreign support provided to think tanks which often provide policy advice to Congress that impacts legislation and its potential passage into law. The sanctity of the legislative process must be free from foreign influence because members answer to the American people, not a foreign power,” they add.

The Brookings Institution is a major liberal think tank with tremendous influence on Congress and the media and a \$93 million budget.

In the letter to Garland, the senators outlined Brookings's multi-million-dollar funding arrangement with the government of Qatar, which was never reported under federal law.

The FBI is currently investigating Brookings' ties to Qatar, forcing the resignation of the Institution's president.

“In 2007, Brookings partnered with the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs to launch the Brookings Doha Center, making the center a foreign principal under FARA. The Qatari government donated an initial \$5 million to launch the center, and made future funding contingent on a review of the center's agenda for programs it developed. The arrangement made Brookings an agent of a foreign principal under FARA,” Committee Republicans report.

“The center's activities also appear to be aimed at influencing U.S. government policy and public opinion. The Doha Center held annual meetings of the U.S. Islamic World Forum with U.S. officials in attendance, and produced research, press statements and educational programming that can influence both policy and opinion,” Committee Republicans report.

“Based on the available evidence and the plain text of the agreement between the Brookings Institution and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, it is clear that a foreign principal had significant control over the Center and the Center itself was a foreign principal, the State of Qatar provided the Center with millions of dollars in financial support, and the Center most likely engaged in activity that it either intended or believed would influence the U.S. Government and public for the benefit of the foreign principal,” the senators write.

They are now asking Garland to report by Aug. 29 whether the Justice Department “has taken any action to assess Brookings' compliance with FARA and whether Brookings sought an advisory opinion from the department on its responsibilities and that of its affiliates under the statute.”

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