

# Trump claims innocence after Justice Department appoints special counsel

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Representative Elijah Cummings of Maryland, accompanied by (from left) Representatives Adam Schiff of California, Joseph Crowley of New York and Ruben Kihuen of Nevada, speaks during a news conference on May 17, 2017, in Washington, D.C. A poster behind them shows President Donald Trump and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov shaking hands during a May 10, 2017, meeting in the Oval Office of the White House. Photo by: AP Photo/Alex Brandon

WASHINGTON, D.C.— President Donald Trump lashed out at the Justice Department Thursday. One day earlier, the department appointed a lawyer called a special counsel to investigate claims that Trump's campaign worked with Russia to change the outcome of the 2016 election. Trump tweeted Thursday that it was "the single greatest witch hunt of a politician in American history!"

The Justice Department picked the former leader of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Robert Mueller, to lead the investigation. As special counsel, Mueller will have the power to get the documents and any other proof he needs. He will also have the authority to try any crimes he uncovers in a court of law.

## **A Big Change In The Investigation**

The surprise announcement to hand the investigation over to Mueller was a shift for Trump's Justice Department. Earlier, the department had resisted calls from Democrats for a prosecutor like Mueller. The decision to hire Mueller casts more doubt on Trump, who has tried to dismiss the matter as lies told by Democratic lawmakers. Mueller is a longtime Washington lawyer who has the respect of both Republicans and Democrats.

Trump tweeted on Thursday about former President Barack Obama and candidate Hillary Clinton. "With all of the illegal acts that took place in the Clinton campaign & Obama Administration," they never got a special counsel. He did not give examples of anything they had done that was against the law.

## **Criticism Over FBI Firing**

Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein made the announcement. Rosenstein has been in the news recently, too. Last week, Trump made the decision to fire the head of the FBI, James Comey. He used a note written by Rosenstein to justify his actions.

Comey was unpopular with both Democrats and Republicans at different times, but Democrats were highly suspicious when he was fired. Several Democratic lawmakers accused Trump of firing Comey for investigating Trump's relationship with Russia.

Rosenstein said he needed to appoint Mueller as a special counsel to ensure that "the American people to have full confidence in the outcome" of the investigation.

## **Accusations Of Information-Sharing**

Trump faced criticism again earlier this week when newspapers reported that he had given classified, or secret, security information to visiting Russian officials.

In a written statement, Trump insisted again there were no ties between his campaign and Russia.

A thorough investigation will show "what we already know" - that there was no scheme between his campaign and any foreign country, he said.

Mueller has not only oversight of the Russia review, but also any matters coming directly from the investigation.

Mueller, a former federal prosecutor at the Justice Department, was confirmed as FBI director days before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. The FBI's mission against terrorism was elevated in those years, as the U.S. worked to prevent another such attack. Mueller was so valued that Obama asked him to stay on two years longer than his 10-year term.

After that time was up, Obama selected Comey as the new head of the FBI.

## **A Shift In Republican Support?**

Republicans have mostly supported Trump in his first months as president. But GOP lawmakers have grown anxious since Trump fired Comey, who had been leading the FBI's investigation. They also expressed concern after Comey associates said he had notes from a meeting with Trump. The president reportedly asked Comey to shut down the investigation into the relationship between Russia and Michael Flynn. Trump had chosen Flynn to be his national security adviser.

Both of the revelations — that the president gave classified information to Russian officials and that he asked Comey to drop an investigation before later firing him — came from unnamed sources. The White House was quick to deny any wrongdoing. Trump aides said he did not give inappropriate information to the Russians or try to shut down the Flynn investigation.

## **Democrats And Republicans Agree On Mueller**

On the whole, lawmakers were glad the special counsel was appointed.

Republican leader Paul Ryan said the appointment was a good idea. He wants to ensure that "thorough and independent investigations are allowed to follow the facts wherever they may lead."

Republican Jason Chaffetz, chairman of the House Oversight Committee, said Mueller was a great choice.

Democratic lawmakers were also pleased.

"I believe Mueller will be independent, he will be thorough and he will be fair and

## **"No Politician ... Has Been Treated Worse"**

Still, Trump has repeatedly criticized investigations by both the FBI and Congress. He has blamed officials at intelligence agencies for leaking information related to the reviews. During a commencement address Wednesday at the Coast Guard Academy, he complained about criticism he's faced.

"No politician in history, and I say this with great surety, has been treated worse or more unfairly," he said. "You can't let the critics and the naysayers get in the way of your dreams. ... I guess that's why we won. Adversity makes you stronger. Don't give in, don't back down."

Trump is preparing to leave town Friday on his first foreign trip. Aides hope the journey will be a chance for the administration to get back on track after weeks of distractions.

## Quiz

1 Which two of the following sentences from the article support central ideas?

1. *One day earlier, the department appointed a lawyer called a special counsel to investigate claims that Trump's campaign worked with Russia to change the outcome of the 2016 election.*
2. *Earlier, the department had resisted calls from Democrats for a prosecutor like Mueller.*
3. *On the whole, lawmakers were glad the special counsel was appointed.*
4. *Aides hope the journey will be a chance for the administration to get back on track after weeks of distractions.*

- (A) 1 and 3  
(B) 1 and 4  
(C) 2 and 3  
(D) 2 and 4

2 Read the paragraphs from the section "Accusations Of Information-Sharing."

*Mueller has not only oversight of the Russia review, but also any matters coming directly from the investigation.*

*Mueller, a former federal prosecutor at the Justice Department, was confirmed as FBI director days before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. The FBI's mission against terrorism was elevated in those years, as the U.S. worked to prevent another such attack. Mueller was so valued that Obama asked him to stay on two years longer than his 10-year term.*

How is the central idea developed in these paragraphs?

- (A) by explaining Mueller's responsibilities and qualifications  
(B) by explaining the relationship between Mueller and Obama  
(C) by describing how Mueller investigated terrorist attacks  
(D) by describing other matters Mueller may find related to Russia

- 3 Which of the following MOST influenced the Justice Department's decision to appoint a special counsel to investigate the Trump campaign's ties to Russia?
- (A) a note written by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein
  - (B) respect for Mueller expressed by both Democrats and Republicans
  - (C) the relationship between national security adviser Michael Flynn and Russia
  - (D) reports that Trump asked Comey to stop investigating Russia before firing him
- 4 Based on the article, President Trump would be MOST LIKELY to agree with which of the following statements?
- (A) Mueller will be thorough and fair in his investigation.
  - (B) The Justice Department made a wise decision by hiring Mueller.
  - (C) James Comey did a better job than Mueller as head of the FBI.
  - (D) The investigation by Mueller is an unfair waste of time.