

Special counsel reportedly investigating Trump for obstruction of justice

Barry Grey
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Bipartisan calls for “unity” following the Wednesday morning shooting attack on Republican lawmakers practicing at a baseball field outside Washington DC have had no effect on the political warfare convulsing the American state and political establishment.

The *Washington Post* signaled an escalation of the conflict when it posted an article later Wednesday reporting that special counsel Robert Mueller has launched an investigation into President Donald Trump personally over possible obstruction of justice in connection with the federal probe into alleged Russian interference in the 2016 US election and collusion by Trump campaign officials.

The *Post* report marked the first major media acknowledgment that the sprawling investigation has extended to the president himself. It came on the heels of a series of highly publicized Senate Intelligence Committee hearings involving fired FBI Director James Comey and top Trump administration and national security officials.

The FBI probe headed by Mueller, a former FBI director appointed special counsel following Trump’s firing of Comey last month, is running parallel with separate investigations by committees in both the Senate and House of Representatives.

There is no democratic or progressive content to this campaign being waged by sections of the state and ruling elite against Russia and the White House.

Trump personifies the criminality and parasitism of the American financial oligarchy. His administration of billionaires and generals is laying siege to what remains of past social reforms, attacking health care, food stamps, education and health and safety and environmental regulations in order to slash taxes for corporations and the rich and sharply increase funding for the military. Its “America First” foreign policy,

prioritizing confrontation with China and North Korea, represents a further escalation of Washington’s policy of militarism and war.

The Democratic Party is barely discussing Trump’s offensive against the working class. Instead, it is focusing entirely on his stated intention of seeking improved relations with Moscow and spearheading a hysterical, neo-McCarthyite campaign, in alliance with powerful sections of the intelligence apparatus and corporate elite, to prevent any pullback from the aggressive and provocative anti-Russian policy of the Obama administration.

To pressure Trump, or possibly seek his removal, the Democrats, a section of the Republican Party and their media allies such as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* are employing anti-democratic means, coordinating their moves with the spy agencies that carry out illegal surveillance of the American people and plot wars of aggression all over the world.

The entire campaign over alleged Russian government hacking and leaking of Democratic Party emails rests on entirely unsubstantiated allegations. Its aim is to intensify the confrontation with Russia in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, threatening the eruption of war between the world’s two biggest nuclear powers.

According to multiple media sources, Mueller has arranged for Director of National Intelligence Daniel Coats, National Security Agency Director Adm. Michael Rogers and former Deputy NSA Director Rick Ledgett to be interviewed as early as this week by his investigators. Coats and Rogers were reportedly asked by Trump in private conversations last March to pressure then-FBI head Comey to drop his investigation into retired Gen. Michael Flynn, as well as to publicly declare that there was no evidence of collusion between

the Trump election campaign and the Russian government.

Trump fired Flynn from his post as national security adviser last February when it emerged that Flynn had lied about discussions he held with Russian officials concerning the possible removal of US sanctions.

Ledgett, who recently retired as deputy NSA director, reportedly drafted a memo documenting a phone call NSA Director Rogers had with Trump, in which the president expressed skepticism over the intelligence agencies' claims of Russian hacking and tried to persuade Rogers to publicly state that there was no evidence of Trump campaign collusion with the Kremlin.

The *New York Times* reported Thursday that Mueller has also asked the NSA to provide his investigators with any notes or documents relating to interactions between the agency and the White House in connection with the Russia investigation. The newspaper also said Mueller was looking into money laundering by Trump associates.

Coats and Rogers testified last week before the Senate Intelligence Committee that they did not feel pressured by Trump to curtail the investigation, but they refused to answer questions about the actual content of discussions they held with Trump on the matter.

The *Post* revelation that Trump is a direct target of the special counsel's investigation follows public statements by close friends of Trump that the president is considering firing Mueller. It is likely that Mueller leaked the news of an obstruction of justice probe to the *Post* to make it more politically difficult for Trump to dismiss him.

Trump responded to the *Post* story Thursday morning with a tweet once again denouncing the investigation as a witch-hunt. A spokesman for his personal lawyer issued a statement declaring, "The FBI leak of information regarding the president is outrageous, inexcusable and illegal."

In his nationally televised testimony last week, Comey accused the president of firing him because he refused to pledge personal loyalty and rejected Trump's appeals that he call off the probe of Flynn. Comey acknowledged that he had told Trump at the time that Trump was not a target of the FBI investigation. At the same time, he said that he had

turned over his contemporaneous memos of discussions with Trump to Mueller and broadly hinted that the special counsel was investigating Trump for possible obstruction of justice.

In a press conference the following day, Trump accused Comey of lying under oath and said he would be willing to be questioned under oath by Mueller.

Other reports have emerged pointing to an intensification of the political warfare in Washington:

* The Democratic attorneys general of Maryland and Washington DC filed a suit earlier this week accusing Trump of violating the emoluments clause of the US Constitution by refusing to sever relations with his multi-billion-dollar real estate business. The emoluments clause prohibits federal officials from accepting gifts or titles from foreign governments without congressional approval. Nearly 200 Democratic lawmakers filed a similar complaint Wednesday morning in US District Court for the District of Columbia.

* The *Wall Street Journal* reported Thursday that the Senate Judiciary Committee plans to open an investigation into Trump's firing of Comey. "The Judiciary Committee has an obligation to fully investigate any alleged improper partisan interference in law enforcement investigations," said committee Chairman Charles Grassley, a Republican, in a letter released Wednesday.

* Vice President Mike Pence has reportedly hired his own personal lawyer to deal with matters relating to the Russia investigation.



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