

Former FBI deputy director confirms FBI, Justice officials discussed removing Trump

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In an interview with CBS News' "60 Minutes" program, to be aired on Sunday, former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe confirms previously published reports that he and top Justice Department officials discussed invoking the 25th Amendment to the US Constitution to remove Trump from office.

McCabe also describes how, two days after President Donald Trump fired FBI Director James Comey in May of 2017, he secretly launched a criminal obstruction of justice investigation and a counterintelligence investigation against Trump. McCabe became acting FBI director following Comey's ouster, carried out by Trump in an attempt to block the intelligence agencies' investigation into allegations of Russian "meddling" in the 2016 presidential election and possible collusion by the Trump election campaign.

McCabe makes it clear in the interview, an excerpt of which was broadcast Thursday on the "CBS This Morning" television program, that he was motivated by political opposition to Trump's evident reluctance to aggressively pursue the policy of confrontation with Russia in Syria, Ukraine and elsewhere, initiated by the Obama administration and supported by the intelligence agencies and the Democratic Party.

In the clip from the interview shown on "CBS This Morning," McCabe tells interviewer Scott Pelley he was "troubled greatly" by the fact that "the man who had just run for the presidency and won the election for the presidency... might have done so with the aid of Russia, our most formidable adversary on the world stage."

In other words, the official who then headed the state organization historically most directly associated with illegal spying and the persecution of civil rights, anti-war and socialist organizations did not accept the legitimacy of the results of the election. He acted, with

other unelected officials, including Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein and Special Counsel Robert Mueller, to overturn them.

These officials launched an investigation based on the far-fetched premise that the billionaire real estate mogul and TV celebrity was a Russian spy. Their anti-democratic conspiracy was aimed at replacing Trump with a politician, such as Vice President Mike Pence, who would differ from Trump chiefly in his readiness to act even more provocatively against Russia.

No credible evidence has been produced substantiating the trumped-up claims that Russian President Vladimir Putin massively intervened in the election to secure the elevation of his ally, if not direct agent, Donald Trump to the White House. Nevertheless, this narrative advanced by the intelligence agencies has served as the basis for the campaign against Trump waged by those agencies. It has been the focus of the Democrats' opposition to his administration, rather than his far-right policies and attacks on the working class.

McCabe was fired in March 2018 by then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who was himself fired by Trump eight months later. McCabe gave the interview to "60 Minutes" as part of a publicity campaign to promote his new memoir, *The Threat: How the FBI Protects America in the Age of Terror and Trump*, which is scheduled to be released this coming week.

Pelley elaborated on the main content of McCabe's upcoming "60 Minutes" interview on Thursday's "CBS This Morning" broadcast. "There were meetings at the Justice Department at which it was discussed whether the vice president and a majority of the cabinet could be brought together to remove the president of the United States under the 25th Amendment," he said. (The 25th Amendment, ratified in 1967, provides for

replacing a president who becomes incapacitated and unable to carry out the responsibilities of his office.)

In its account of McCabe's interview posted Thursday, the *New York Times* quotes part of an excerpt from McCabe's contemporaneous memos written at the time of these secret discussions, held during the eight days between the firing of Comey and the appointment of Mueller as special counsel.

"We discussed the president's capacity and the possibility he could be removed from office under the 25th Amendment," McCabe wrote. The newspaper adds that, according to the memo, Rosenstein indicated he had looked into the issue and determined he would need a "majority of the 15 cabinet officials."

Pelley also said that, in the interview, McCabe confirms earlier press reports that Rosenstein, who at the time was in overall charge of the Russia investigation, suggested he could wear a wire in White House meetings with Trump. The Justice Department and Rosenstein have sought to undercut such claims, insisting that Rosenstein only made the suggestion in jest.

However, Pelley said on Thursday, "McCabe in the interview says no, it came up more than once and it was so serious that he [McCabe] took it to the lawyers at the FBI to discuss it."

The McCabe interview confirms a front-page article published by the *Times* last month revealing the FBI's secret counterintelligence investigation of Trump. The article detailed the FBI's close monitoring of the actions of the Republican and Democratic parties. It noted that FBI officials "watched with alarm as the Republican Party softened its convention platform on the Ukraine crisis in a way that seemed to benefit Russia." The counterintelligence investigation they launched was to determine whether the president "had been working on behalf of Russia against American interests."

The *World Socialist Web Site* wrote of the *Times* article: "While there is no evidence of a conspiracy between Trump and Moscow, the *Times* report itself is evidence of a conspiracy involving the intelligence agencies and the corporate media to overturn the 2016 presidential election... A secret security investigation by a powerful police agency directed against an elected president or prime minister can be described as nothing other than the antechamber to a coup by the military or

intelligence agencies."

The preview of McCabe's interview came on the same day that Trump signed a national emergency declaration circumventing Congress and mobilizing the military to build his wall on the border between the US and Mexico—a major step on the road to dictatorial rule. The coincidence of the confirmation of the Democratic-backed conspiracy of the intelligence agencies to remove Trump from office and Trump's extra-constitutional assertion of authoritarian powers underscores the utterly reactionary character of both factions in the intensifying political warfare in Washington.



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