


MUELLER FINDS NO TRUMP-RUSSIA CONSPIRACY



The Attorney General
Washington, D.C.

March 24, 2019

To inform you about the status of my initial review of the report he has prepared.

The Special Counsel's Report

On March 24, the Special Counsel delivered to me a confidential report evaluating the


Russian Interference in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election. The

influence the election, which would be a federal crime. The Special Counsel's investigation did not find that the Trump campaign or anyone associated with it conspired or coordinated with Russia in its efforts to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election. As the report states: "[T]he investigation did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities."¹

Obstruction of Justice. The report's second part addresses a number of actions by the President — most of which have been the subject of public reporting — that the Special Counsel investigated as potentially raising obstruction-of-justice concerns. After making a "thorough factual investigation" into these matters, the Special Counsel considered whether to evaluate the conduct under Department standards governing prosecution and declination decisions but ultimately determined not to make a traditional prosecutorial judgment. The Special Counsel therefore did not draw a conclusion — one way or the other — as to whether the examined conduct constituted obstruction. Instead, for each of the relevant actions investigated, the report sets out evidence on both sides of the question and leaves unresolved what the Special Counsel views as "difficult issues" of law and fact concerning whether the President's actions and intent could be viewed as obstruction. The Special Counsel states that "while this report does not conclude that the President committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him."

As I observed in my initial notification, the Special Counsel regulations provide that "the Attorney General may determine that public release of" notifications to your respective Committees "would be in the public interest." 28 C.F.R. § 600.9(c). I have so determined, and I will disclose this letter to the public after delivering it to you.

Sincerely,



William P. Barr
Attorney General

President Sees 'Exoneration,' but Barr Says Inquiry Did Not Settle Obstruction Issue

By MARK MAZZETTI and KATIE BENNER

WASHINGTON — The investigation led by Robert S. Mueller III found no evidence that President Trump or any of his aides coordinated with the Russian government's 2016 election interference, according to a summary of the special counsel's key findings made public on Sunday by Attorney General William P. Barr.

Mr. Mueller, who spent nearly two years investigating Moscow's determined effort to sabotage the last presidential election, found no conspiracy "despite multiple offers from Russian-affiliated individuals to assist the Trump campaign," Mr. Barr wrote in a letter to lawmakers.

Mr. Mueller's team drew no conclusions about whether Mr. Trump illegally obstructed justice, Mr. Barr said, so he made his own decision. The attorney general and his deputy, Rod J. Rosenstein, determined that the special counsel's investigators had insufficient evidence to establish that the president committed that offense.

He cautioned, however, that Mr. Mueller's report states that "while this report does not conclude that the president committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him" on the obstruction of justice issue.

Still, the release of the findings was a significant political victory for Mr. Trump and lifted a cloud that has hung over his presidency since before he took the oath of office. It is also likely to alter discussion in Congress about the fate of the Trump presidency; some Democrats had pledged to wait until the special counsel finished his work before deciding whether to initiate impeachment proceedings.

The president trumpeted the news almost immediately, even as he mischaracterized the special counsel's findings. "It was a complete and total exoneration," Mr. Trump told reporters in Florida before boarding Air Force One. "It's a shame that our country had to go through this. To be honest, it's a shame that your president has had to go through this."

He added, "This was an illegal takedown that failed."

Mr. Barr's letter was the culmination of a tense two days since Mr. Mueller delivered his report to the Justice Department. Mr. Barr spent the weekend poring over the special counsel's work, as Mr. Trump strategized with lawyers and political aides at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

Mr. Mueller, who has been a spectral presence in the capital for nearly two years — so often discussed, but so rarely seen — was photographed leaving a church on Sunday morning just across Lafayette Square from the White House.

Hours later, Mr. Barr delivered his letter describing the special counsel's findings to Congress. But congressional Democrats have demanded more, and the letter could be just the beginning of a lengthy constitutional battle between Congress and the Justice

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INQUIRIES Democrats vowed to press on with investigations of the president while demanding access to Mr. Mueller's report. PAGE A16

THE MEDIA After hours of waiting for news to break, TV anchors and commentators scrambled to interpret "a lot of legalese." PAGE A17

Mueller Demurs
So Barr Makes
A Key Decision

By MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT and CHARLIE SAVAGE

WASHINGTON — Over the 22 months of their inquiry, Robert S. Mueller III's investigators examined countless documents and interviewed dozens of witnesses, including some of the highest-ranking lawyers and aides in the White House, to determine whether President Trump obstructed justice. But in the end, the special counsel reached no conclusion — instead producing a report that merely marshaled evidence on both sides.

Then, Attorney General William P. Barr, a political appointee whom Mr. Trump installed less than a month ago and who began reading Mr. Mueller's report on Friday, stepped in. With the concurrence of his deputy, Rod J. Rosenstein, Mr. Barr seized the opportunity to render a judgment — pronouncing Mr. Trump clear of committing any criminal offense.

The propriety of that move by Mr. Barr — who had written an unsolicited memo last year arguing that Mr. Mueller ought not to be permitted to investigate Mr. Trump for obstruction of justice — is certain to be a focus of political contention as Congress grapples with what it now knows about the still-secret Mueller report.

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President Trump spoke angrily with reporters on Sunday before leaving Florida for Washington.

Quiet Weekend Closes With Triumph and Fury

By MARK LANDLER and MAGGIE HABERMAN

WASHINGTON — President Trump was in the private quarters of his Palm Beach, Fla., club on Sunday afternoon when two White House lawyers briefed him on the details of Attorney General William P. Barr's four-page summary of the Russia investigation.

Mr. Trump, just back from a round of golf, expressed vindication, though no great display of emotion, two people close to him said. An hour later, as he boarded Air Force One to fly to Washington, a very different Mr. Trump emerged.

Speaking with barely concealed fury, he told reporters, "It's a shame that our country had to go through this. To be honest, it's a shame that your president has had to go through this." He denigrated the investigation, led by the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, as an "illegal takedown that failed" and said those responsible for it should face scrutiny.

Mr. Trump's aides warned him not to react to the findings with a sense of triumphalism, people close to him said. But the president, who has long felt victimized by the Russia investigation and

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Attorney General William P. Barr leaving his house on Sunday.

Burden Lifts, Leaving President Fortified for the Battles to Come

By PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON — For President Trump, it may have been the best day of his tenure so far. The darkest, most ominous cloud hanging over his presidency was all but lifted on Sunday with the release of the special counsel's conclusions, which undercut the threat of impeachment and provided him with a powerful boost for the final 22 months of his term.

There are still other clouds overhead and no one outside the Justice Department has actually read the report by Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel, which may yet disclose damning information if made public. But the end of the investigation without findings of collusion with Russia fortified the president for the battles to come, including his campaign for re-election.

While critics will still argue about whether Mr. Trump tried to obstruct justice, the president quickly claimed vindication and Republican allies pounced on their Democratic colleagues for what they called an unrelenting partisan campaign against him. Even as his own party's congressional leaders called on the country to move on, however, the president indicated that he may not be ready to, denouncing the very existence of Mr. Mueller's investigation as "an illegal takedown that failed" and calling for a counterinvestigation into how it got started.

Emboldened and angry, the president can now proceed with his administration without the distraction of new search warrants and indictments by Mr. Mueller's team or the worry that the special counsel might charge Mr. Trump's family members or

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An Ice Marathon in Russia

It is one of the world's most grueling races, 26 miles over Siberia's Lake Baikal, amid cracking ice and shifting weather. Russia Dispatch. PAGE A4

In Thai Elections, a Surprise

A military-linked party was unexpectedly in the lead, likely cementing the army's status as the country's dominant political force. PAGE A10

Church Leader Tested in China

Wang Yi has been held incommunicado for three months, part of a government crackdown on independent religious groups. PAGE A9



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From Woman to Marine

Women make up eight percent of the U.S. Marine Corps. At Parris Island, S.C., they start their journey. PAGE A12

When the Accuser Is Black

Black women in sexual assault cases often face added pain: charges of disloyalty to their race. PAGE A11

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A Trade Thaw From China?

Top Chinese officials, looking at a skeptical audience both at home and abroad, pledge to open the country's markets to foreign investment. PAGE B4

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As start-ups like Lyft and Pinterest prepare I.P.O.s, Silicon Valley investors are ready for their close-ups. PAGE B1

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Issues of Race and Policing

The veracity of Chanel Lewis's confession is being called into question in a murder retrial in Queens. PAGE A24

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No. 1 Duke Advances, Barely

The Blue Devils rallied in the final minute to edge Central Florida, 77-76, and reach the N.C.A.A. tournament's round of 16. Tennessee, a No. 2 seed, defeated Iowa in overtime. PAGE D3

Patriots' Gronkowski Retires

Rob Gronkowski, 29, a three-time Super Bowl champion known for his size and speed as a tight end and for his goofy antics off the field, made the announcement on Instagram. PAGE D6

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Charles M. Blow PAGE A23



ARTS C1-8

She Sounds Awful. That's Good.

Some of the scariest parts of the film "Us" are heard rather than seen. Lupita Nyong'o is a big reason why. PAGE C1

