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Feinstein: Senate Must Hold Hearing with Special Counsel Mueller

Washington—Senate Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today spoke on the discrepancies between Attorney General William Barr’s letter to Congress outlining the findings of the Mueller report and the contents of the redacted Mueller report provided to Congress. Feinstein also called for the Senate to hear from Special Counsel Mueller directly. Video of her remarks is available [here](#).

“On March 24, you sent a letter to Chairman Graham and the ranking member of this committee providing your summary of the principal conclusions set out in Special Counsel Mueller’s report. This letter was widely reported as a win for the president and was characterized as confirming there was ‘no collusion.’

Following this letter, the White House put out a statement declaring, ‘the special counsel did not find any collusion and did not find any obstruction’ and that the report was ‘a total and complete exoneration’ of the president.

However, last night, the *Washington Post* reported that Special Counsel Mueller sent you a letter in late March where he said your letter to Congress failed to ‘fully capture the context, nature, and substance of [his] office’s work and conclusions’ and that he spoke with you about the concern that the letter threatened to undermine the ‘public confidence in the outcome of the investigations.’

Then, on April 18, you held a press conference where you announced repeatedly that the Mueller report found no collusion and no evidence of a crime.

An hour later, a redacted copy of the Mueller report was provided to the public and the Congress, and we saw why Mueller was concerned. Contrary to the declarations of the ‘total and complete exoneration,’ the special counsel’s report contains substantial evidence of misconduct.

First, Special Counsel Mueller’s report confirms that the Russian government implemented a social media campaign to mislead millions of Americans and that Russian intelligence services hacked into the DNC and DCCC computers, stole emails and memos, and systematically released them to impact the presidential election.

Your March letter stated that there was no evidence that the Trump campaign ‘conspired or coordinated with Russia.’ However the report outlined substantial evidence that the Trump campaign welcomed, encouraged and expected to benefit electorally from Russia’s interference in the election.

The Mueller report also details how, time and time again, the Trump campaign took steps to gain advantage from Russia’s unlawful interference. For example, President Trump’s campaign manager, Paul Manafort, passed internal campaign polling data, messaging and strategy updates to Konstantin Kilimnik, a Russian national with ties to Russian intelligence.

The Mueller report explains how Paul Manafort briefed Kiliminik in early August 2016 on ‘the state of the Trump Campaign and Manafort’s plan to win the election,’ including the campaign’s focus on the ‘battleground states of Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Minnesota.’

Next, the Mueller report documents the Trump campaign's communications regarding Secretary Clinton’s and the DNC’s stolen emails. Specifically, the report states ‘within approximately five hours’ of President Trump calling on Russia to find Secretary Clinton’s emails, Russian intelligence agency (GRU) officers ‘targeted for the first time Clinton’s personal office.’

The Mueller report also reveals that President Trump repeatedly asked individuals affiliated with his campaign, including Michael Flynn, ‘to find the deleted Clinton emails.’ These efforts included suggestions to contact foreign intelligence services, Russian hackers and individuals on the dark web.

The report confirms that Trump knew of WikiLeaks’ releases of the stolen emails and received status updates about upcoming releases while his campaign promoted coverage of the leaks. Donald Trump Jr. communicated directly with WikiLeaks and, at its request, publicly tweeted a link to emails stolen from Clinton’s campaign manager.

Second, in your March letter to Congress you concluded ‘that the evidence ... is not sufficient to establish that the president committed an obstruction-of-justice offense.’

However, Special Counsel Mueller methodically outlines 10 episodes – some containing multiple actions – by the president to mislead the American people and interfere with the investigations into Russian interference and obstruction.

In one example, the president repeatedly called White House Counsel Don McGahn at home and directed him to fire Mueller, saying ‘Mueller has to go’ and ‘call me back when you do it.’ Then later the president repeatedly

ordered McGahn to release a press statement and write a letter saying the president did not order Mueller fired.

The Mueller report also outlines efforts by President Trump to influence witness testimony and deter cooperation with law enforcement. For example, the president's team communicated to witnesses that pardons would be available if they 'stayed on message' and remained 'on the team.'

In one case, the president sent messages through his personal lawyers to Paul Manafort that he would be taken care of and just 'sit tight.' The president then publicly affirmed this communication by stating that Manafort was 'a brave man' for refusing to break.

Similarly, the Mueller report stated 'the president used inducements in the form of positive messages in an effort to get [Michael] Cohen not to cooperate, and then turned to attacks and intimidation to deter the provision of information or undermine Cohen's credibility.'

Finally, while the March letter to Congress and the April press conference left the impression there were no remaining questions to examine, this report notes several limitations Mueller faced while gathering the facts that Congress needed to examine.

More than once, the report documents that legal conclusions were not drawn because witnesses refused to answer questions or failed to recall the events.

In addition, numerous witnesses – including but not limited to Jared Kushner, Sarah Sanders, Rudolph Giuliani, Michael Flynn, Steve Bannon and John Kelly – all stated they could not recall events. The president himself said more than 30 times that he could not recall or remember enough to be able to answer written questions from the special counsel.

The special counsel also recounted that ‘some associated with the Trump campaign deleted relevant communications or communicated during the relevant period using applications that featured encryption or do not provide for long-term retention of data.’

Based on these gaps, the Mueller report concluded, ‘the office cannot rule out the possibility that the unavailable information would shed additional light on (or cast in a new light) the events described in the report.’

And contrary to the conclusion that the special counsel’s report did not find evidence of communication or coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia, the Mueller report explicitly states, ‘A statement that the investigation did not establish particular facts does not mean there was no evidence of those facts.’ Volume two, page two.

Let me conclude with this: Congress has both the constitutional duty and the authority to investigate the serious findings contained in the Mueller report.

I strongly believe that this committee needs to hear directly from Special Counsel Mueller about his views on the report and his March letter.

I also believe senators should have the opportunity to ask him about these subjects in questions directly. I have requested this to our chairman, to authorize a hearing with Special Counsel Mueller, and I hope that will happen soon.”

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