



Transcript of the Mueller testimony before House Judiciary, Intelligence committees

NADLER:

The Judiciary Committee will come to order. Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare recesses of the committee at any time.

We welcome everyone to today's hearing on oversight of the report on the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election. I will now recognize myself for a brief opening statement. Director Mueller, thank you for being here. I want to say just a few words about our themes today: responsibility, integrity and accountability. Your career, for example, is a model of responsibility. You are a decorated Marine officer. You were awarded a Purple Heart and the Bronze Star for Valor in Vietnam. You served in senior roles at the Department of Justice, and in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, you served as director of the FBI. Two years ago you returned to public service to lead the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 elections. You conducted that investigation with remarkable integrity. For 22 months, you never commented in public about your work, even when you were subjected to repeated and grossly unfair personal attacks. Instead, your indictments spoke for you, and in astonishing detail. Over the course of your investigation, you obtained criminal indictments against 37 people and entities. You secure the conviction of President Trump's campaign chairman, his deputy campaign manager, his national security advisor and his personal lawyer, among others. In the Paul Manafort case alone you recovered as much as \$42 million, so that the cost of your investigation to the taxpayers approaches zero. And in your report you offer the country accountability, as well. In Volume 1 you find that the Russian government attacked our 2016 elections, quote, "in a sweeping and systematic fashion," and that the attacks were designed to benefit the Trump campaign. Volume 2 walks us through 10 separate incidents of possible obstruction of justice where, in your words, President Trump attempted to exert undue influence over your investigation. The president's behavior included, and I quote from your report, quote, "public attacks on the investigation, nonpublic efforts to control it, and efforts in both public and private to encourage witnesses not to cooperate," close quote. Among the most shocking of these incidents, President Trump ordered his White House counsel to have you fired, and then to -- to lie and deny that it had happened, he ordered his former campaign manager to convince the recused attorney general to step in and limit your work, and he attempted to prevent witnesses from cooperating with your investigation.

NADLER:

Although department policy barred you from indicting the president for this conduct, you made clear that he is not exonerated. Any other person who acted in this way would have been charged with crimes, and in this nation, not even the president is above the law. Which brings me to this committee's work. Responsibility, integrity and accountability: These are the marks by which we who serve on this committee will be measured as well. Director Mueller, we have a responsibility to address the evidence that you have uncovered. You recognize as much when you said, quote, "The Constitution requires a process other than the criminal justice system to formally accuse a sitting president of wrong doing," close quote. That process begins with the work of this committee. We will follow your example, Director Mueller. We will act with integrity. We will follow the facts where they lead. We will consider all appropriate remedies. We will make our recommendation to the House when our work concludes. We will do this work because there must be accountability for the conduct described in your report especially as it relates to the president. Thank you again, Director Mueller. We look forward to your testimony.

It is now my pleasure to recognize the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Collins, for his opening statement.

COLLINS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Mr. Mueller, for being here. For two years leading up to the release of the Mueller report and in the three months since Americans were first told what to expect and then what to believe. Collusion, we were told, was in plain sight even if the special counsel's team didn't find it. When Mr. Mueller produced his report and Attorney General Barr provided to every American, we read, "No American conspired with Russia to interfere in our elections," but learned the depths of Russia's malice toward America. We are here to ask serious questions about Mr. Mueller's work and we will do that. After an extended, unhampered investigation, today marks an end to Mr. Mueller's involvement in an investigation that closed in April. The burden of proof for accusations that remain unproven is extremely high and especially in light of the special counsel's thoroughness. We were told this investigation began as an inquiry into whether Russia meddled in our 2016 election. Mr. Mueller, you concluded they did. Russians accessed Democrat servers and disseminated sensitive information by tricking campaign insiders into revealing protected information. The investigation also reviewed whether Donald Trump, the president, sought Russian assistance as a candidate to win the presidency. Mr. Mueller concluded he did not. His family or advisers did not. In fact, the report concludes no one in the president's campaign colluded, collaborated or conspired with the Russians. The president watched the public narrative surrounding this investigation that assumes -- (inaudible) assume his guilt while he knew the extent of his innocence. Volume 2 of Mr. Mueller's report details the president's reaction to a frustrating investigation where his innocence was established early on. The president's attitude toward the investigation was understandably negative, yet the president did not use his authority to close the investigation. He asked his lawyer if Mr. Mueller had conflicts that disqualified Mr. Mueller from the job, but

he did not shut down the investigation. The president knew he was innocent. Those are the facts of the Mueller report. Russia meddled in the 2016 election, the president did not conspire with the Russians and nothing we hear here today will change those facts. But one element of this story remains: the beginnings of the FBI investigation into the president. I look forward to Mr. Mueller's testimony about what he found during his review of the origins of the investigation.

COLLINS:

In addition, the inspector general continues to review how baseless gossip can be used to launch an FBI investigation against a private citizen and eventually a president. Those results will be released and we will need to learn from them to ensure government intelligence and law enforcement powers are never again used and turned on a private citizen or a potential -- or political candidate as a result of the political leanings of a handful of FBI agents. The origins and conclusions of the Mueller investigation are the same things: what it means to be American. Every American has a voice in our democracy. We must protect the sanctity of their voice by combating election interference. Every American enjoys the presumption of innocence and guarantee of due process. If we carry nothing -- anything away today, it must be that we increase our vigilance against foreign election interference, while we ensure our government officials don't weaponize their power against the constitutional rights guaranteed to every U.S. citizen. Finally, we must agree that the opportunity cost here is too high. The months we have spent investigating from this dais failed to end the border crisis or contribute to the growing job market. Instead, we have gotten stuck and it's paralyzed this committee and this House. And as a side note, every week I leave my family and kids, the most important things to me, to come to this place because I believe this place is a place where we can actually do things and help people. Six and a half years ago, I came here to work on behalf of the people of the 9th District and this country. And we accomplished a lot in those first six years on a bipartisan basis, with many of my friends across the aisle sitting on this dais with me today. However, this year, because of the majority's dislike of this president and the endless hearings into a closed investigation have caused us to accomplish nothing except talk about the problems of our country while our border is on fire, in crisis, and everything else is stopped. This hearing is long overdue. We've had the truth for months: No American conspired to throw our election. What we need today is to let that truth bring us confidence. And I hope, Mr. Chairman, closure. With that, I yield back.

NADLER:

Thank you, Mr. Collins. I will now introduce today's witness. Robert Mueller served as director of the FBI from 2001 to 2013, and he most recently served as special counsel in the Department of Justice, overseeing the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 special election. He received his B.A. from Princeton University, an M.A. from New York University -- in my district -- and his J.D. from the University of Virginia. Mr. Mueller is accompanied by his -- by Counsel Aaron Zebley, who served as deputy special counsel on the investigation. We welcome our distinguished witness and we thank you for participating in today's hearing. Now, if

you would please rise, I will begin by swearing you in. Would you raise your right hand, please? Left hand. Do you swear or affirm under penalty of perjury that the testimony you are about to give is true and correct to the best of your knowledge, information and belief, so help you God? Let the record show the witness answered in the affirmative. Thank you, and please be seated. Please note that your written statement will be entered into the record in its entirety. Accordingly, I ask that you summarize your testimony in five minutes. Director Mueller, you may begin.

MUELLER:

Good morning, Chairman Nadler, the -- and Ranking Member Collins, and the members of the committee. As you know, in May 2017, the acting attorney general asked me to serve as special counsel. I undertook that role because I believe that it was of paramount interest to the nation to determine whether a foreign adversary had interfered in the presidential election. As the acting attorney general said at the time, the appointment was necessary in order for the American people to have full confidence in the outcome. My staff and I carried out this assignment with that critical objective in mind: to work quietly, thoroughly and with integrity so that the public would have full confidence in the outcome.

MUELLER:

The order appointing me as special counsel directed our office to investigate Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election. This included investigating any links or coordination between the Russian government and individuals associated with the Trump campaign. It also included investigating efforts to interfere with or obstruct our investigation. Throughout the investigation I continually stressed two things to the team that we had assembled. First, we needed to do our work as thoroughly as possible and expeditiously as possible. It was in the public interest for our investigation to be complete, but not to last a day longer than was necessary. Second, the investigation needed to be conducted fairly and with absolute integrity. Our team would not leak or take other actions that could compromise the integrity of our work. All decisions were made based on the facts and the law. During the course of our investigation we charged more than 30 defendants with committing federal crimes, including 12 officers of the Russian military. Seven defendants have been convicted or plead guilty.

Certain of the charges we brought remain pending today. And for those matters I stress that the indictments contain allegations and every defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. In addition to the criminal charges we brought, as required by Justice Department regulations, we submitted a confidential report to the attorney general at the conclusion of our investigation. The report set forth the results of our work and the reasons for our charging and declination decisions. The attorney general later made the report largely public. As you know, I made a few limited remarks -- limited remarks about our report when we closed the special counsel's office in May of this year. There are certain points that bear emphasis. First, our investigation found that the Russian government interfered in our election

in sweeping and systematic fashion. Second, the investigation did not establish that members of the Trump campaign conspired with the Russian government in its election interference activities. We did not address collusion, which is not a legal term; rather we focused on whether the evidence was sufficient to charge any member of the campaign with taking part in a criminal conspiracy, and there was not. Third, our investigation of efforts to obstruct the investigation and lie to investigators was of critical importance. Obstruction of justice strikes at the core of the government's effort to find the truth and to hold wrongdoers accountable. Finally, as described in Volume 2 of our report, we investigated a series of actions by the president towards the investigation. Based on Justice Department policy and principles of fairness, we decided we would not make a decision as to whether the president committed a crime. That was our decision then and it remains our decision today.

MUELLER:

Let me say a further word about my appearance today. It is unusual for a prosecutor to testify about a criminal investigation. And given my role as a prosecutor, there are reasons why my testimony -- testimony will necessarily be limited. First, public testimony could affect several ongoing matters. In some of these matters, court rules or judicial orders limit the disclosure of information to protect -- to protect the fairness of the proceedings. And consistent with longstanding Justice Department policy, it would be inappropriate for me to comment in any way that could affect an ongoing matter. Second, the Justice Department has asserted privileges concerning investigative information and decisions, ongoing matters within the Justice Department, and deliberations within our office. These are Justice Department privileges that I will respect. The department has released the letter discussing the restrictions of my testimony. I, therefore, will not be able to answer questions about certain areas that I know are of public interest. For example, I am unable to address questions about the initial opening of the FBI's Russia investigation which occurred months before my appointment or matters related to the so-called Steele dossier. These matters are subject of ongoing review by the department. Any questions on these topics should, therefore, be directed to the FBI or the Justice Department. As I explained when we closed the Special Counsel's Office in May, our report contains our findings and analysis and the reasons for the decisions we made. We conducted an extensive investigation over two years. In writing the report, we stated the results of our investigation with precision. We scrutinized every word. I do not intend to summarize or describe the results of our work in a different way in the course of my testimony today. And as I said on May 29th, the report is my testimony, and I will stay within that text. And as I stated in May, I will not comment on the actions of the attorney general or of Congress. I was appointed as a prosecutor, and I intend -- intend to adhere to that role and to the department's standards that govern it. I'll be joined today by Deputy Special Counsel Aaron Zebley. Mr. Zebley has extensive experience as a federal prosecutor and at the FBI, where he served as my chief of staff. Mr. Zebley was responsible for the day-to-day oversight on the investigations conducted by our office. Now, I also want to, again, say thank you to the attorneys, the FBI agents, the analysts and professional staff who helped us conduct this investigation in a fair and independent matter. These individuals who spent nearly two years of -- working on this matter were of the highest integrity. Let me say one more thing. Over the course of my career, I have seen a number of

challenges to our democracy. The Russian government's effort to interfere in our election is among the most serious. And as I said on May 29, this deserves the attention of every American. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

NADLER:

Thank you. Thank you. We will now proceed, under the five-minute rule, with questions. I will begin by recognizing myself for five minutes. Director Mueller, the president has repeatedly claimed that your report found there was no obstruction and that it completely and totally exonerated him, but that is not what your report said, is it?

MUELLER:

Correct. That is not what the report said.

NADLER:

Now, reading from page 2 of Volume 2 of your report that's on the screen, you wrote, quote, "If we had confidence after a thorough investigation of the facts that the president clearly did not commit obstruction of justice, we would so state. Based on the facts and the applicable legal standards, however, we are unable to reach that judgment," close quote. Now does that say there was no obstruction?

MUELLER:

No.

NADLER:

In fact, you were actually unable to conclude the president did not commit obstruction of justice, is that correct?

MUELLER:

Well, we at the outset determined that we -- when it came to the president's culpability, we needed to -- we needed -- we needed to go forward only after taking into account the OLC opinion that indicated that a president -- sitting president cannot be indicted.

NADLER:

So the report did not conclude that he did not commit obstruction of justice, is that correct?

MUELLER:

That is correct.

NADLER:

And what about total exoneration? Did you actually totally exonerate the president?

MUELLER:

No.

NADLER:

Now, in fact, your report expressly states that it does not exonerate the president.

MUELLER:

It does.

NADLER:

And your investigation actually found, quote, "multiple acts by the president that were capable of exerting undue influence over law enforcement investigations, including the Russian interference and obstruction investigations." Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

NADLER:

Now, Director Mueller, can you explain in plain terms what that finding means so the American people can understand it?

MUELLER:

Well, the finding indicates that the president was not -- that the president was not exculpated for the acts that he allegedly committed.

NADLER:

In fact, you were talking about incidents, quote, "in which the president sought to use his official power outside of usual channels," unquote, to exert undue influence over your investigations, is that right?

MUELLER:

That's correct.

NADLER:

Now, am I correct that on page 7 of Volume 2 of your report, you wrote, quote, "The president became aware that his own conduct was being investigated in an obstruction of justice inquiry. At that point, the president engaged in a second phase of conduct, involving public attacks on the investigation, non-public efforts to control it, and efforts in both public and private to encourage witnesses not to cooperate with the investigation," close quote. So President Trump's efforts to exert undo influence over your investigation intensified after the president became aware that he personally was being investigated?

MUELLER:

I stick with the language that you have in front of you, which comes from page 7, Volume 2.

NADLER:

Now, is it correct that if you concluded that the president committed the crime of obstruction, you could not publicly state that in your report or here today?

MUELLER:

Can you repeat the question, sir?

NADLER:

Is it correct that if you had concluded that the president committed the crime of obstruction, you could not publicly state that in your report or here today?

MUELLER:

Well, I would say you could -- the statement would be to -- that you would not indict, and you would not indict because under the OLC opinion a sitting president -- excuse me -- cannot be indicted. It would be unconstitutional.

NADLER:

So you could not state that because of the OLC opinion, if that would have been your conclusion.

MUELLER:

OLC opinion was some guide, yes.

NADLER:

But under DOJ -- under Department of Justice policy, the president could be prosecuted for obstruction of justice crimes after he leaves office, correct?

MUELLER:

True.

NADLER:

Thank you. Did any senior White House official refuse or request to be interviewed by you and your team?

MUELLER:

I don't believe so.

NADLER:

The president...

MUELLER:

Well, I take -- let me take that back. I would have to look at it, but I'm not certain that that was the case.

NADLER:

Did the president refuse a request to be interviewed by you and your team?

MUELLER:

Yes.

NADLER:

Yes.

And is it true that you tried for more than a year to secure an interview with the president?

MUELLER:

Yes.

NADLER:

And is it true that you and your team advised the president's lawyer that, quote, "an interview with the president is vital to our investigation," close quote?

MUELLER:

Yes. Yes.

NADLER:

And is it true that you also, quote, "stated that it is in the interest of the presidency and the public for an interview to take place," close quote?

MUELLER:

Yes.

NADLER:

But the president still refused to sit for an interview by you or your team?

MUELLER:

True. True.

NADLER:

And did you also ask him to provide written answers to questions on the 10 possible episodes of obstruction of justice crimes involving him?

MUELLER:

Yes.

NADLER:

Did he provide any answers to a single question about whether he engaged in obstruction of justice crimes?

MUELLER:

I would have to check on that. I'm not certain.

NADLER:

Director Mueller, we are grateful that you are here to explain your investigation and findings. Having reviewed your work, I believe anyone else who'd engage in the conduct described in your report would have been criminally prosecuted. Your work is vitally important to this committee and the American people because no one is above the law. I now -- I now recognize the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Collins.

COLLINS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. And we're moving on. I want to (inaudible) just reiterate the five-minute rule. Mr. Mueller, I have several questions, many of which you just answered. Will begin (ph) questions here in a moment, but I want to lay some foundation. So we'll go through these fairly quickly. I'll talk slowly. It's said that I talk fast; I will talk slowly.

MUELLER:

Thank you, sir.

COLLINS:

In your press conference you said any testimony from your office would not go beyond our report. "We chose these words carefully. The word speaks for itself. I would not provide information beyond that which is already public in any appearance before Congress." Do you stand by that statement?

MUELLER:

Yes.

COLLINS:

Since closing the special counsel's office in May of 2019, have you conducted any additional interviews or obtained any new information in your role as special counsel?

MUELLER:

In the -- in the -- in the wake of the report?

COLLINS:

Since the -- since the closing of the office in May of 2019.

MUELLER:

And the question was, have we conducted...

COLLINS:

Have you conducted any new interviews, any new witnesses, anything?

MUELLER:

No.

COLLINS:

And you can confirm you're no longer special counsel, correct?

MUELLER:

I am no longer special counsel.

COLLINS:

At any time in the investigation, was your investigation curtailed or stopped or hindered?

MUELLER:

No.

COLLINS:

Were you or your team provided any questions by members of Congress (inaudible) the majority ahead of your hearing today?

MUELLER:

No.

COLLINS:

Your report states that your investigative team included 19 lawyers and approximately 40 FBI agents and analysts and accountants. Are those numbers accurate?

MUELLER:

Could you repeat that, please?

COLLINS:

Forty FBI agents, 19 lawyers, intelligence analysts and forensic accountants; are those numbers accurate? This was in your report.

MUELLER:

Generally, yes.

COLLINS:

Is it also true that you issued over 2,800 subpoenas, executed nearly 500 search warrants, obtained more than 230 orders for communication records and 50 pin registers?

MUELLER:

That went a little fast for me.

COLLINS:

OK. In your report -- I'll make this very simple -- you did a lot of work, correct?

MUELLER:

Yes, that I agree to.

COLLINS:

A lot of subpoenas, a lot of pin registers...

MUELLER:

A lot of subpoenas.

COLLINS:

OK, we'll walk this really slow if we need to.

MUELLER:

A lot of search warrants.

COLLINS:

All right, a lot of search warrants, a lot of things, so you are very thorough.

MUELLER:

What?

COLLINS:

In your opinion, very thorough, you listed this out in your report, correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

COLLINS:

Thank you. Is it true, the evidence gathered during your investigation -- given the questions that you've just answered, is it true the evidence gathered during your investigation did not establish that the president was involved in the underlying crime related to Russian election interference as stated in Volume 1, page 7?

MUELLER:

We found insufficient evidence of the president's culpability.

COLLINS:

So that would be a yes.

MUELLER:

Pardon?

COLLINS:

That would be a yes.

MUELLER:

Yes.

COLLINS:

Thank you. Isn't it true the evidence did not establish that the president or those close to him were involved in the charged (ph) Russian computer hacking or active measure conspiracies or that the president otherwise had unlawful relationships with any Russian official, Volume 2, page 76? Correct?

MUELLER:

I will leave the answer to our report.

COLLINS:

So that is a yes. Is that any (ph) true your investigation did not establish that members of the Trump campaign conspired or coordinated with Russian government in election interference activity, Volume 1, page 2; Volume 1, page 173?

MUELLER:

Thank you. Yes.

COLLINS:

Yes. Thank you. Although your reports states, "collusion is not some (ph) specific offense," -- and you said that this morning -- "or a term of art in federal criminal laws, conspiracy is." In the colloquial context, are collusion and conspiracy essentially synonymous terms?

MUELLER:

You're going to have to repeat that for me.

COLLINS:

Collusion is not a specific offense or a term of art in the federal criminal law. Conspiracy is.

MUELLER:

Yes.

COLLINS:

In the colloquial context, known public context, collusion -- collusion and conspiracy are essentially synonymous terms, correct?

MUELLER:

No.

COLLINS:

If no, on page 180 of Volume 1 of your report, you wrote, "As defined in legal dictionaries, collusion is largely synonymous with conspiracy as that crime is set forth in the general federal conspiracy statute, 18 USC 371."

MUELLER:

Yes (ph).

COLLINS:

You said at your May 29th press conference and here today you choose your words carefully. Are you sitting here today testifying something different than what your report states?

MUELLER:

Well, what I'm asking is if you can give me the citation, I can look at the citation and evaluate whether it is actually...

COLLINS:

OK. Let -- let me just -- let me clarify. You stated that you would stay within the report. I just stated your report back to you, and you said that collusion -- collusion and conspiracy were not synonymous terms. That was your answer, was no.

MUELLER:

That's correct.

COLLINS:

In that, page 180 of Volume 1 of your report, it says, "As defined in legal dictionaries, collusion is largely synonymous with conspiracy as that crime is set forth in general conspiracy statute 18 USC 371."

MUELLER:

Right.

COLLINS:

Now, you said you chose your words carefully. Are you contradicting your report right now?

MUELLER:

Not when I read it.

COLLINS:

So you would change your answer to yes, then?

MUELLER:

No, no -- the -- if you look at the language...

COLLINS:

I'm reading your report, sir. These are yes-or-no answers.

MUELLER:

(inaudible) Page 180?

COLLINS:

Page 180, Volume 1.

MUELLER:

OK.

COLLINS:

This is from your report.

MUELLER:

Correct, and I -- I -- I -- I leave it with the report.

COLLINS:

So the report says yes, they are synonymous.

MUELLER:

Yes.

COLLINS:

Hopefully, for finally, out of your own report, we can put to bed the collusion and conspiracy. One last question as we're going through: Did you ever look into other countries investigated in the Russians' interference into our election? Were other countries investigated...

MUELLER:

(inaudible)

COLLINS:

... or found knowledge that they had interference in our election?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to discuss other matters.

COLLINS:

All right. And I yield back.

NADLER:

Gentleman yields back. The gentlelady from California?

LOFGREN:

Director Mueller, as you've heard from the chairman, we're mostly going to talk about obstruction of justice today, but the investigation of Russia's attack that started your investigation is why evidence that possible obstruction is serious. To what extent did the Russian government interfere in the 2016 presidential election?

MUELLER:

Could you repeat that, ma'am?

LOFGREN:

To what extent did the Russian government interfere in the 2016 presidential election?

MUELLER:

Well, at -- particularly when it came to computer crimes and the like, the government was implicated.

LOFGREN:

So you wrote on -- in Volume 1 that the Russian government interfered in the 2016 presidential election in sweeping and systematic fashion. You've also described in your report that the then-Trump campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, shared with the Russian operative, Kilimnik, the campaign strategy for winning Democratic votes in Midwestern states and internal polling data of the campaign. Isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

LOFGREN:

They -- they also discussed the status of the Trump campaign and Manafort strategy for winning Democratic votes in Midwestern states.

LOFGREN:

Months before that meeting, Manafort had caused internal data to be shared with Kilimnik, and the sharing continued for a (inaudible) period of time after their August meeting. Isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

That's correct.

LOFGREN:

In fact, your investigation found that Manafort briefed Kilimnik on the state of the Trump campaign and Manafort's plan to win the election and that briefing encompassed the campaign's messaging, its internal polling data. It also included discussion of battleground states, which Manafort identified as Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Minnesota. Isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

That's correct.

LOFGREN:

Did your investigation determine who requested the polling data to be shared with Kilimnik?

MUELLER:

Well, I -- I would direct you to the report. That's what we have in the report with regard to that particular issue.

LOFGREN:

We -- we don't have the redacted version. That's maybe another reason why we should get that for Volume 1. Based on your investigation, how could the Russian government have used this campaign polling data to further its sweeping and systematic interference in the 2016 presidential election?

MUELLER:

That's a little bit out of our -- our path.

LOFGREN:

Fair enough. Did your investigation find that the Russian government perceived it would benefit from one of the candidates winning?

MUELLER:

Yes.

LOFGREN:

And which candidate would that be?

MUELLER:

Well, it would be Trimp -- Trump.

LOFGREN:

Correct.

MUELLER:

The president.

LOFGREN:

Now, the Trump campaign wasn't exactly reluctant to take Russian help. You wrote it expected it would benefit electorally from information stolen and released through Russian efforts, isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

That's correct.

LOFGREN:

Now, was the investigation's determination -- what was the investigation's determination regarding the frequency with which the Trump campaign made contact with the Russian government?

MUELLER:

Well, I would have to refer you to the report on that.

LOFGREN:

Well, we went through and we counted 126 contacts between Russians or their agents and Trump campaign officials or their associates. So, would that sound about right?

MUELLER:

I -- I can't say, I -- I -- I understand the statistic and I believe it. You know, I understand the statistic.

LOFGREN:

Well, Mr. Mueller, I appreciate your being here and your report. From your testimony and the report, I think the American people have learned several things. First, the Russians wanted Trump to win. Second, the Russians went on a sweeping cyber influence campaign. The Russians hacked the DNC and they got the Democratic game plan for the election. Russian (sic) campaign chairmen met with Russian agents and repeatedly gave them internal data, polling and messaging in the battleground states.

So while the Russians were buying ads and creating propaganda to influence the outcome of the election, they were armed with inside information that they had stolen through hacking from the DNC and that they had been given by the Trump campaign chairman, Mr. Manafort. My colleagues will probe the efforts undertaken to keep this information from becoming public, but I think it's important for the American people to understand the gravity of the underlying problem that your report uncovered. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I would yield back.

NADLER:

The gentlelady yields back. The gentleman from Texas, (inaudible)?

RATCLIFFE:

Good morning, Director. If you'll let me quickly summarize your opening statement this morning, you said in Volume 1 on the issue of conspiracy, the special counsel determined that the investigation did not establish that members of the Trump campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities. And then in Volume 2, for reasons that you explained, the special counsel did not make a determination on whether there was an obstruction of justice crime committed by the president. Is that fair?

MUELLER:

Yes, sir.

RATCLIFFE:

All right. Now, in explaining the special counsel did not make what you called a traditional prosecution or declination decision, the report, on the bottom of page 2, Volume 2, reads as follows: "The evidence we obtained about the president's actions and intent presents difficult issues that prevent us from conclusively determining that no criminal conduct occurred. Accordingly, while this report does not conclude that the president committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him." Now, I read that correctly?

MUELLER:

Yes.

RATCLIFFE:

All right. Now, your report -- and today, you said that at all times, the special counsel team operated under, was guided by and followed Justice Department policies and principles. So which DOJ policy or principle sets forth a legal standard that an investigated person is not exonerated if their innocence from criminal conduct is not conclusively determined?

MUELLER:

Can you repeat the last part of that question?

RATCLIFFE:

Yeah. Which DOJ policy or principle set forth a legal standard that an investigated person is not exonerated if their innocence from criminal conduct is not conclusively determined? Where does that language come from, Director? Where is the DOJ policy that says that? Can -- let me make it easier. Is...

MUELLER:

May -- can I -- I'm sorry, go ahead.

RATCLIFFE:

... can you give me an example other than Donald Trump, where the Justice Department determined that an investigated person was not exonerated...

MUELLER:

I -- I...

RATCLIFFE:

... because their innocence was not conclusively determined?

MUELLER:

I cannot, but this is a unique situation.

RATCLIFFE:

OK. Well, I -- you can't -- time is short. I've got five minutes. Let's just leave it at, you can't find it because -- I'll tell you why: It doesn't exist. The special counsel's job -- nowhere does it say that you were to conclusively determine Donald Trump's innocence, or that the special counsel report should determine whether or not to exonerate him. It's not in any of the documents. It's not in your appointment order. It's not in the special counsel regulations. It's not in the OLC opinions. It's not in the Justice Manual. And it's not in the Principles of Federal Prosecution. Nowhere do those words appear together because, respectfully -- respectfully, Director, it was not the special counsel's job to conclusively determine Donald Trump's innocence or to exonerate him. Because the bedrock principle of our justice system is a presumption of innocence. It exists for everyone. Everyone is entitled to it, including sitting presidents. And because there is a presumption of innocence, prosecutors never, ever need to conclusively determine it. Now, Director, the special counsel applied this inverted burden of proof that I can't find and you said doesn't exist anywhere in the department policies. And you used it to write a report. And the very first line of your report, the very first line of your report says, as you read this morning, it "authorizes the special counsel to provide the attorney general with a confidential report explaining the prosecution of declination decisions reached by the special counsel." That's the very first word of your report, right?

MUELLER:

That's correct.

RATCLIFFE:

Here's the problem, Director: The special counsel didn't do that. On Volume 1, you did. On Volume 2, with respect to potential obstruction of justice, the special counsel made neither a prosecution decision or a declination decision. You made no decision. You told us this morning, and in your report, that you made no determination. So respectfully, Director, you didn't follow the special counsel regulations. It clearly says, "Write a confidential report about decisions reached." Nowhere in here does it say, "Write a report about decisions that weren't reached." You wrote 180 pages, 180 pages about decisions that weren't reached, about potential crimes that weren't charged or decided. And respectfully -- respectfully, by doing that,

you managed to violate every principle in the most sacred of traditions about prosecutors not offering extra-prosecutorial analysis about potential crimes that aren't charged. So Americans need to know this, as they listen to the Democrats and socialists on the other side of the aisle, as they do dramatic readings from this report: that Volume 2 of this report was not authorized under the law to be written. It was written to a legal standard that does not exist at the Justice Department. And it was written in violation of every DOJ principle about extra-prosecutorial commentary. I agree with the chairman this morning, when he said, "Donald Trump is not above the law." He's not. But he damn sure shouldn't be below the law, which is where Volume 2 of this report puts him.

NADLER:

The (inaudible) time has expired. The gentlelady from Texas, Ms. Jackson (ph) Lee.

JACKSON LEE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Director Mueller, good morning. Your exchange with the gentlelady from California demonstrates what is at stake. The Trump campaign chair, Paul Manafort, was passing sensitive voter information and polling data to a Russian operative, and there were so many other ways that Russia subverted our democracy. Together with the evidence in Volume 1, I cannot think of a more serious need to investigate. So, now, I'm going to ask you some questions about obstruction of justice as it relates to Volume 2. On page 12 of Volume 2, you state, "We determined that there was sufficient factual and legal basis to further investigate potential obstruction of justice issues involving the president," is that correct?

MUELLER:

And -- do you have a citation, ma'am?

JACKSON LEE:

Page 12, Volume 2.

MUELLER:

And which portion of that page?

JACKSON LEE:

That is, "We determined that there was sufficient factual and legal basis to further investigate potential obstruction of justice issues involving the president," is that correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

JACKSON LEE:

Your report also describes at least 10 separate instances of possible obstruction of justice that were investigated by you and your team, is that correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

JACKSON LEE:

In fact, the table of contents serves as a very good guide of some of the acts of that obstruction of justice that you investigated. And I put it up on the screen. On page 157 of Volume 2, you describe those acts. And they range from the president's effort to curtail the special counsel's investigation, the president's further efforts to have the attorney general take over the investigation, the president orders Don McGahn to deny that the president tried to fire the special counsel, and many others, is that correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

JACKSON LEE:

I direct you now to what you wrote, Director Mueller.

"The president's pattern of conduct as a whole sheds light on the nature of the president's acts and the inferences that can be drawn about his intent." Does that mean you have to investigate all of his conduct to ascertain true motive?

MUELLER:

No.

JACKSON LEE:

And when you talk about the president's pattern of conduct, that include the 10 possible acts of obstruction that you investigated, is that correct? When you talk about the president's pattern of conduct, that would include the 10 possible acts of obstruction that you investigated, correct?

MUELLER:

I direct you to the report for how that is characterized.

JACKSON LEE:

Thank you.

Let me go to the screen again. And for each of those 10 potential instances of obstruction of justice, you analyzed three elements of the crime of obstruction of justice: an obstructive act, a nexus between the act and official proceeding, and corrupt intent, is that correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

JACKSON LEE:

You wrote on page 178, Volume 2 in your report about corrupt intent, "Actions by the president to end a criminal investigation into his own conduct to protect against personal embarrassment or legal liability would constitute a core example of corruptly motivated conduct," is that correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

JACKSON LEE:

To the screen again. Even with the evidence you did find, is it true, as you note on page 76 of Volume 2, that, "The evidence does indicate that a thorough FBI investigation would uncover facts about the campaign and the president personally that the president could have understood to be crimes or that would give rise to legal, personal and political concerns"?

MUELLER:

I -- I rely on the language of the report.

JACKSON LEE:

Is that relevant to potential obstruction of justice? Is that relevant to potential obstruction of justice?

MUELLER:

Yes.

JACKSON LEE:

You further elaborate, on page 157, "Obstruction of justice can be motivated by a desire to protect non-criminal personal interests, to protect against investigations where underlying criminal liability falls into a gray area or to avoid personal embarrassment," is that correct?

MUELLER:

I have on the screen a -- a ...

JACKSON LEE:

Is that correct on the screen?

MUELLER:

Can you -- can you repeat the question now that I have the language on the screen?

JACKSON LEE:

Is it correct, as you further elaborate, "Obstruction of justice can be motivated by a direct desire to protect non-criminal personal interests, to protect against investigations where underlying criminal liability falls into a gray area..."

MUELLER:

Yes.

JACKSON LEE:

"... or to avoid" -- is that true?

MUELLER:

Yes.

JACKSON LEE:

And is it true that the impact -- pardon?

MUELLER:

Can you read the last question?

JACKSON LEE:

The last question was...

(CROSSTALK) MUELLER:

... certain I got it accurate.

JACKSON LEE:

No, the last question was the language on the screen asking you if that's correct.

MUELLER:

Yes.

JACKSON LEE:

OK. Does a conviction of obstruction of justice result potentially in a lot of years of -- a lot of years of time in jail?

MUELLER:

Yes. Well, again, can you repeat the -- the question just to make certain I have it accurate?

JACKSON LEE:

Does obstruction of justice warrant a lot of time in -- in jail if you were convicted?

MUELLER:

Yes.

JACKSON LEE:

And...

NADLER:

The time of the gentlelady has expired. The gentleman from Wisconsin?

SENSENBRENNER:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me begin by reading the special counsel regulations by which you were appointed. It reads, quote "At the conclusion of the special counsel's work, he or she shall provide the attorney general with a confidential report explaining the prosecution or declamations decisions reached by the special counsel," is that correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

SENSENBRENNER:

OK. Now when a regulation uses the words "shall provide," does it mean that the individual is in fact obligated to provide what's being demanded by the regulation or statute, meaning you don't have any wiggle room, right?

MUELLER:

I'd have to look more closely at the statute.

SENSENBRENNER:

Well, I just read it to you. OK, now Volume 2, page 1, your report boldly states, "We determined not to make a traditional prosecutorial judgment," is that correct?

MUELLER:

I'm trying to find that citation, Congressman.

NADLER:

Director, could you speak more directly into the microphone, please?

MUELLER:

Yes.

NADLER:

Thank you.

SENSENBRENNER:

Well, it's Volume 2, page...

MUELLER:

Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry.

SENSENBRENNER:

Yeah, it's Volume 2, page 1. It says, "We determined not to make a traditional prosecutorial judgment."

MUELLER:

Yes.

SENSENBRENNER:

That's right at the beginning. Now, since you decided under the OLC opinion that you couldn't prosecute a sitting president, meaning President Trump, why do we have all of this investigation of President Trump that the other side is talking about when you know that you weren't going to prosecute him?

MUELLER:

Well, you don't know where the investigation's going to lie, and OLC opinion itself says that you can continue the investigation even though you are not going to indict the president.

SENSENBRENNER:

OK, well if you're not going to indict the president then you just continue fishing. And that's -- you know, that's my -- my observation. You know, sure -- sure you -- sure you -- my time is limited -- sure you can indict other people but you can't indict the sitting president, right?

MUELLER:

That's true.

SENSENBRENNER:

OK. Now, there are 182 pages in raw evidentiary material, including hundreds of references to 302, which are interviews by the FBI for individuals who have never been cross-examined, and which did not comply with the special counsel's governing regulation to explain the prosecution or declamation decisions reached, correct?

MUELLER:

Where are you reading from on that?

SENSENBRENNER:

I'm reading from my question.

(LAUGHTER) MUELLER:

That -- could you repeat it?

SENSENBRENNER:

OK. If -- you have 182 pages of raw evidentiary material with hundreds of references to 302s who are -- never been cross-examined, which didn't comply with the governing regulation to explain the prosecution or declaration -- declination decisions reached.

MUELLER:

This is one of those areas which I decline to discuss...

SENSENBRENNER:

OK, then let...

MUELLER:

... and would direct you to the report itself for what...

(CROSSTALK) SENSENBRENNER:

... 182 pages of it. You know, let me switch gears. Mr. Chabot and I were on this committee during the Clinton impeachment. Now, while I recognize that the independent counsel statute under which Kenneth Starr operated is different from the special counsel statute, he, in a number of occasions in his report, stated that the -- "President Clinton's actions may have risen to impeachable conduct, recognizing that it is up to the House of Representatives to determine what conduct is impeachable." You never used the term "raising to impeachable conduct" for any of the 10 instances that the gentlewoman from Texas (inaudible) -- did. Is it true that there's nothing in Volume 2 of the report that says that the president may have engaged in impeachable conduct?

MUELLER:

Well, we have (inaudible) kept in the -- the center of our investigation the -- our mandate. And our mandate does not go to other ways of addressing conduct, our mandate goes to what -- developing the report and putting the report in to the attorney general.

SENSENBRENNER:

With due respect, you know, it -- it seems to me, you know, that there are a couple of statements that you made, you know, that said that, "This is not for me to decide," and the

implication is this is -- this was for this committee to decide. Now, you didn't use the word "impeachable conduct" like Starr did. There was no statute to prevent you from using the words "impeachable conduct." And I go back to what Mr. Ratcliffe said, and that is is that even the president is innocent until proven guilty. I -- my time is up.

NADLER:

The gentleman's time has expired.

The gentleman from Tennessee?

COHEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. First, I'd just like to restate that -- Mr. Nadler said about your career. It's a model of rectitude and I thank you.

MUELLER:

Thank you, sir.

COHEN:

Based upon your investigation, how did President Trump react to your appointment as special counsel?

MUELLER:

He had a -- I -- I'd send you the report for where that is stated.

COHEN:

Well, there is a quote from page 78 of your report, Volume 2, which reads: "When Sessions told the president that a special counsel had been appointed, the president slumped back in his chair and said, quote, 'Oh my God, this is terrible, this is the end of my presidency. I'm f-ed'," unquote. Did Attorney General Sessions tell you about that little talk?

MUELLER:

I...

NADLER:

Director, please speak into the microphone.

MUELLER:

Oh, surely, my -- my apologies. I am not certain of the -- the person who originally copied that quote.

COHEN:

OK, well, Sessions apparently said it, and one of his aides had it in his notes too, which I think you had, but...

MUELLER:

(inaudible)

COHEN:

... but that's become record. He wasn't pleased. He probably wasn't pleased with the special counsel, and particularly you because of your outstanding reputation.

MUELLER:

Correct.

COHEN:

Prior to your appointment, the attorney general recused himself from the investigation because of his role in the 2016 campaign. Is that not correct?

MUELLER:

That's correct.

COHEN:

Recusal means the attorney general could not be involved in the investigation. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

That's the effect of recusal, yes.

COHEN:

And so instead, another Trump appointee, as you know Mr. Sessions was, Mr. Rosenstein became in charge of it. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

COHEN:

Wasn't Attorney General Sessions following the rules and professional advice of the Department of Justice Ethics folks when he recused himself from the investigation?

MUELLER:

Yes.

COHEN:

And yet, the president repeatedly expressed his displeasure at Sessions' decision to follow those ethics rules, to recuse himself from oversight of that investigation. Is that not correct?

MUELLER:

That's accurate, based on what is written in the report.

COHEN:

And the president's reaction to the recusal, as noted in the report, Mr. Bannon recalled that the president was mad, as mad as Bannon had ever seen him, and he screamed at McGahn about how weak Sessions was. Do you recall that from the report?

MUELLER:

That's in the report, yes.

COHEN:

Despite knowing that Attorney General Sessions was supposed to be in -- was not supposed to be involved in the investigation, the president still tried to get the attorney general to un-recuse himself after you were appointed special counsel. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

COHEN:

In fact, your investigation found that at some point after your appointment, quote, "the president called Sessions at his home and asked if he would un-recuse himself." Is that not true?

MUELLER:

It's true.

COHEN:

Now, that wasn't the first time the president had asked Sessions to un-recuse himself, was it?

MUELLER:

I know there were at least two occasions.

COHEN:

And one of them was with Flynn, and one of them was when Sessions and McGahn flew to Mar-a-Lago to meet with the president. Sessions recalled that the president pulled him aside to speak alone and suggested he should do this un-recusal act, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

COHEN:

And then when Michael Flynn, a few days after Flynn entered a guilty plea for lying to federal agents and indicated his intent to cooperate with that investigation, Trump asked to speak to Sessions alone again in the Oval Office, and again asked Sessions to un-recuse himself. True?

MUELLER:

I'd refer you to the report for that.

COHEN:

Page 109, volume 2. Thank you, sir. Do you know of any point when the president personally expressed anger or frustrations at Sessions?

MUELLER:

I'd have to pass on that.

COHEN:

Do you recall, and I think it's at page 78 of volume 2, the president told Sessions, "You were supposed to protect me. You were supposed to protect me," or words to that effect?

MUELLER:

Correct.

COHEN:

And is the attorney general supposed to be the attorney general of the United States of America, or the consigliere for the president?

MUELLER:

The United States of America.

COHEN:

Thank you, sir. In fact, you wrote in your report that the president repeatedly sought to convince Sessions to un-recuse himself so Sessions could supervise the investigation in a way that was -- restrict its scope. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

I'm relying on the -- on the report. (inaudible)

COHEN:

How could Sessions have restricted the scope of your investigation?

MUELLER:

Well, I'm not going to speculate. If he, quite obviously, if he took over or was (ph) attorney general, he would have greater latitude in his actions that would enable him to do things that otherwise he could not.

COHEN:

On page 113, you said the president believed that an un-recused attorney general would play a protective role and conceal the president from the ongoing investigation. Regardless of all that, I want to thank you, Director Mueller, for your life of rectitude and service to our country. It's clear from your report and the evidence that the president wanted former Attorney General Sessions to violate the Justice Department ethics rules by taking over your investigation and improperly interfering with it to protect himself and his campaign. Your findings are so important because in America, nobody is above the law. I yield back the balance of my time.

NADLER:

Thank the gentleman for yielding back. The gentleman from Ohio.

CHABOT:

Thank you. Director Mueller, my Democratic colleagues were very disappointed in your report. They were expecting you to say something along the lines of he was (ph) -- why President Trump deserves to be impeached, much as Ken Starr did relative to President Clinton back about 20 years ago. Well, you didn't, so their strategy had to change. Now they allege that there's plenty of evidence in your report to impeach the president, but the American people just didn't read it. And this hearing today is their last best hope to build up some sort of groundswell across America to impeach President Trump. That's what this is really all about today. Now a few questions: On page 103 of Volume 2 of your report, when discussing the June 2016 Trump Tower meeting, you referenced, quote, "the firm that produced Steele reporting," unquote. The name of that firm was Fusion GPS. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

And you're on page 103?

CHABOT:

103 (ph), that's correct, Volume 2. When you talk about the -- the firm that produced the Steele reporting, the name of the firm that produced that was Fusion GPS. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Yeah, I -- I'm not familiar with -- with that. I (inaudible)

CHABOT:

(inaudible) It's not -- it's not a trick question, right? It was Fusion GPS. Now, Fusion GPS produced the opposition research document wide -- widely known as the Steele dossier, and the owner of Fusion GPA (sic) was someone named Glenn Simpson. Are -- are you familiar with...

MUELLER:

This is outside my purview.

CHABOT:

OK. Glenn Simpson was never mentioned in the 448-page Mueller report, was he?

MUELLER:

Well, as I -- as I say, it's outside my purview and it's being handled in the department by others.

CHABOT:

OK. Well, he -- he was not. In the 448 pages the -- the owner of Fusion GPS that did the Steele dossier that started all this, he -- he's not mentioned in there. Let me move on. At the same time Fusion GPS was working to collect opposition research on Donald Trump from foreign sources on behalf of the Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee, it also was representing a Russian-based company, Probison (ph), which had been sanctioned by the U.S. government. Are you aware of that?

MUELLER:

It's outside my purview.

CHABOT:

OK, thank you. One of the key players in the -- I'll go to something different. One of the key players in the June 2016 Trump Tower meeting was Natalia Veselnitskaya, who you described in your report as a Russian attorney who advocated for the repeal of the Magnitsky Act. Veselnitskaya had been working with none other than Glenn Simpson and Fusion GPS since at least early 2014. Are -- are you aware of that?

MUELLER:

Outside my purview.

CHABOT:

Thank you. But you didn't mention that or her connections to Glenn Simpson and Fusion GPS in - in your report at all. Let -- let me move on. Now, NBC News has reported the following: quote, "Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya says she first received the supposedly-incriminating information she brought to Trump Tower describing alleged tax evasion and donation to Democrats from none other than Glenn Simpson, the Fusion GPS owner." You didn't include that in the report, and I assume you (inaudible).

MUELLER:

This is a matter that's being handled by others at the Department of Justice.

CHABOT:

OK, thank you. Now, your report spends 14 pages discussing the June 9th, 2016 Trump Tower meeting. It would be fair to say, would it not, that you spent significant resources investigating that meeting?

MUELLER:

Well, I'd refer you to the -- the report.

CHABOT:

OK. And President Trump wasn't at the meeting...

MUELLER:

No, he was not.

CHABOT:

... that (ph) you're aware of (ph)? Thank you.

Now, in stark contrast to the actions of the Trump campaign, we know that the Clinton campaign did pay Fusion GPS to gather dirt on the Trump campaign, from persons associated with foreign governments. But your report doesn't mention a thing about Fusion GPS in it, and you didn't investigate Fusion GPS' connections to Russia (ph).

So let me just ask you this. Can you see that from neglecting to mention Glenn Simpson and Fusion GPS' involvement with the Clinton campaign, to focusing on a brief meeting at the Trump Tower that produced nothing, to ignoring the Clinton campaign's own ties to Fusion GPS, why some view your report as a pretty one-sided attack on the president?

MUELLER:

Well, I'll tell you, this is still outside my purview.

CHABOT:

All right. And I would just note, finally, that I guess it's just by chance, by coincidence that the things left out of the report tended to be favorable to the president?

NADLER:

The gentleman's time has expired.

CHABOT:

My time's expired.

NADLER:

The gentleman from Georgia.

H. JOHNSON:

Thank you.

Director Mueller, I'd like to get us back on track here. Your investigation found that President Trump directed White House Counsel Don McGahn to fire you. Isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

True.

H. JOHNSON:

And the president claimed that he wanted to fire you because you had supposed conflicts of interest, isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

True.

H. JOHNSON:

Now, you had no conflicts of interest that required your removal, isn't that a fact?

MUELLER:

Correct.

H. JOHNSON:

And in fact, Don McGahn advised the president that the asserted conflicts were, in his words, "silly and not real conflicts," isn't that true?

MUELLER:

I refer to the report on that episode.

H. JOHNSON:

Well, page 85 of Volume 2 speaks to that. And also, Director Mueller, DOJ ethics officials confirmed that you had no conflicts that would prevent you from serving as special counsel, isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

That's correct.

H. JOHNSON:

But despite Don McGahn and the Department of Justice guidance, around May 23, 2017, the president, quote, "Prodded McGahn to complain to Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein about these supposed conflicts of interest," correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

H. JOHNSON:

And McGahn declined to call Rosenstein -- or Rosenstein, I'm sorry -- telling the president that it would look like still trying to meddle in the investigation and knocking out Mueller would be another fact used to claim obstruction of justice, isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

Generally so, yes.

H. JOHNSON:

And in other words, Director Mueller, the White House Counsel told the president that if he tried to remove you, that that could be another basis to allege that the president was obstructing justice, correct?

MUELLER:

That is generally correct, yes.

H. JOHNSON:

Now, I'd like to review what happened after the president was warned about obstructing justice. On Tuesday, June...

MUELLER:

Do you have -- I'm sorry, Congressman. Do you have a citation for that?

H. JOHNSON:

On -- yes. Volume 2, page 81.

MUELLER:

Thank you.

H. JOHNSON:

And 82.

Now, I'd like to review what happened after the president was warned about obstructing justice. It's true that on Tuesday, June 13, 2017, the president dictated a press statement, stating he had, quote, "no intention of firing" you, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

H. JOHNSON:

But the following day, June 14, the media reported for the first time that you were investigating the president for obstructing of justice, correct?

MUELLER:

That's correct.

H. JOHNSON:

And then, after learning for the first time that he was under investigation, the very next day, the president, quote, "issued a series of tweets acknowledging the existence of the obstruction investigation, and criticizing it." Isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

Generally so.

H. JOHNSON:

And then, on Saturday, June 17, two days later, the president called Don McGahn at home from Camp David on a Saturday, to talk about you. Isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

H. JOHNSON:

What was the significant -- what was significant about that first weekend phone call that Don McGahn took from President Trump?

MUELLER:

Well, I'm going to ask you to rely on what we wrote about those incidents.

H. JOHNSON:

Well, you wrote in your report that on -- page 85, Volume 2, that on Saturday, June 17, 2017, the president called McGahn at home to have the special counsel removed. Now, did the president call Don McGahn more than once that day?

MUELLER:

Well, I gave...

H. JOHNSON:

I think it was two calls.

NADLER:

Talk into the microphone (ph).

MUELLER:

Oh, sorry about that.

H. JOHNSON:

On page 85 of your report, you wrote, quote, "On the first call, McGahn recalled that the president said something like, quote, 'You've got to do this. You've got to call Rod.'" Correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

H. JOHNSON:

In your investigation and report found that Don McGahn was perturbed, to use your words, by the president's request to call Rod Rosenstein to fire him. Isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

Well, there was a continuous call (ph) he (ph) -- I would -- no, it was a continuous involvement of Don McGahn...

(CROSSTALK) H. JOHNSON:

And (ph) he...

MUELLER:

... responding to the president's entreaties.

H. JOHNSON:

And he did not want to put himself in the middle of that. He did not want to have a role in asking the attorney general to fire the special counsel, correct?

MUELLER:

Well, I would, again, refer you to the report and the way it is characterized in the report.

H. JOHNSON:

Thank you. At Volume 2, page 85, it states that "he didn't want to have the attorney general -- he didn't want to have a role in trying to fire the attorney general." So at this point -- I will yield back.

NADLER:

The gentleman's time has expired.

The gentleman from Texas.

GOHMERT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Mueller -- well, first, let me ask unanimous consent, Mr. Chairman, to submit this article Robert Mueller unmasked for the record.

NADLER:

Without objection.

GOHMERT:

Now, Mr. Mueller, who wrote the nine-minute comments you read at your May 29th press conference.

MUELLER:

I'm not going to get into that.

GOHMERT:

OK. So that's what I thought. You didn't write it. A 2013 puff piece in The Washingtonian about Comey said basically, when Comey called, you'd drop everything you were doing.

Gave examples. You were having dinner with your wife and daughter, Comey calls, you'd drop everything and go. The article quoted Comey as saying if a train were coming down the track -- and I quote -- "at least Bob Mueller will be standing on the tracks with me." You and James Comey have been good friends or were good friends for a -- for many years, correct?

MUELLER:

No. We were business associates. We both started off at the Justice Department about the same (ph) time...

(CROSSTALK) GOHMERT:

You were good friends. You can work together and not be friends, but you and Comey were...

MUELLER:

Yes, we were friends.

GOHMERT:

... friends.

MUELLER:

We were friends.

(CORRECTED COPY - CORRECTS SPEAKER I.D.) GOHMERT:

That's my question. Thank you for getting to the answer.

Now, before you were appointed as special counsel, had you talked to James Comey in the preceding six months?

MUELLER:

No.

GOHMERT:

When you were appointed as special counsel, was President Trump's firing of Comey something you anticipated investigating, potentially obstruction of justice?

MUELLER:

I can't get into that. That's internal deliberations of the Justice Department.

GOHMERT:

Actually, it goes to your credibility and maybe you've been away from the court room for a while, credibility is always relevant, it's always material and that goes for you, too. You're a witness before us. Let me ask you, when you talked to President Trump the day before he appointed you -- or you were appointed as Special Counsel, you were talking to him about the FBI Director position again. Did he mention the firing of James Comey?

MUELLER:

Not -- not as a candidate. I was asked ...

GOHMERT:

Did he mention the firing of James Comey in your discussion with him?

MUELLER:

Cannot remember.

GOHMERT:

Pardon?

MUELLER:

Cannot remember. I don't believe so but I'm not going to be specific.

GOHMERT:

You don't remember? But if he did, you could've been a fact witness as to the President's comments and state of mind on firing James Comey.

MUELLER:

I suppose that's possible.

GOHMERT:

Yeah. So most prosecutors want to make sure there was no appearance of impropriety, but in your case, you hired a bunch of people that did not like the President. Now let me ask you, when did you first learn of Peter Strzok's animus toward Donald Trump?

MUELLER:

In the summer of 2017.

GOHMERT:

You didn't know before he was hired?

MUELLER:

I -- I'm sorry, what'd you ...

GOHMERT:

You didn't know before he was hired for your team?

MUELLER:

Know what?

GOHMERT:

Peter Strzok hated Trump.

MUELLER:

OK.

GOHMERT:

You didn't know that before he was made part of your team, is that what you're saying?

MUELLER:

I did not know that.

GOHMERT:

All right. When did you first learn ...

(CROSSTALK) MUELLER:

... when I did find out, I -- I acted swiftly to have him reassigned elsewhere in the FBI.

GOHMERT:

Well there's some discussion about how swift that was. But when did you learn of the ongoing affair he was having with Lisa Page?

MUELLER:

About the same time I ...

GOHMERT:

OK.

MUELLER:

... from Strzok.

GOHMERT:

Did you ever order anybody to investigate the deletion of all of their texts off of their government phones?

MUELLER:

Once we found that Peter Strzok was author of -- of ...

GOHMERT:

Did you ever ...

MUELLER:

May I finish?

GOHMERT:

... order -- well you're not answering my question. Did you order an investigation in the deletion and reformatting of their government phones?

MUELLER:

No, there was an IG investigation ongoing.

GOHMERT:

Listen, regarding collusion or conspiracy, you didn't find evidence of any agreement, and I'm quoting you, "among the Trump campaign officials and any Russia linked individuals to interfere with our U.S. election," correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

GOHMERT:

So you also note in the report that an element of any of those obstructions you referenced requires a corrupt state of mind, correct?

MUELLER:

Corrupt intent, correct.

GOHMERT:

Right. And if somebody knows they did not conspire with anybody from Russia to affect the election and they see the big Justice Department with people that hate that person coming after them, and then a Special Counsel appointed who hires a dozen or more people that hate that person and he knows he's innocent, he's not corruptly acting in order to see that justice is done, what he's doing is not obstructing justice, he is pursuing justice and the fact that you ...

NADLER:

The gentleman's time ...

GOHMERT:

... ran it out two years means you ...

NADLER:

Gentleman's time ...

(CROSSTALK) GOHMERT:

... injustice, and I yield back.

(CROSSTALK) NADLER:

The gentleman's time is expired, the witness may answer the question.

MUELLER:

I take your question.

NADLER:

The gentleman from Florida?

DEUTCH:

Director Mueller, I -- Director Mueller, I'd like to get back to your findings covering June of 2017. There was a bombshell article that reported that the President of the United States was personally under investigation for obstruction of justice. And you said in your report on page 90 of Volume 2, and I quote, "news of the obstruction investigation prompted the President to call McGahn and seek to have the Special Counsel removed," close quote. And then in your report you wrote about multiple calls from the President to White House Counsel Don McGahn. And regarding the second call, you wrote, and I quote, "McGahn recalled that the President was more direct, saying something like call Rod, tell Rod that Mueller has conflicts and can't be Special -- can't be the Special Counsel. McGahn recalled the President telling him Mueller has to go and call me back when you do it." Director Mueller, did McGahn understand what the President was ordering him to do?

MUELLER:

I direct you to the -- what we've written in the report in terms of characterizing his feelings.

DEUTCH:

And in the report it says quote "McGahn understood the President to be saying that the Special Counsel had to be removed." You also said on page 86 that quote "McGahn considered the President's request to be an inflection point and he wanted to hit the brakes and he felt trapped and McGahn decided he had to resign." McGahn took action to prepare to resign, isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

I direct you again to the report.

DEUTCH:

And in -- in fact, that very day he went to the White House and quoting your report, you said quote "he then drove to the office to pack his belongings and submit his resignation letter," close quote.

MUELLER:

That is -- that is directly from the report.

DEUTCH:

It is. And before he resigned, however, he called the President's Chief of Staff, Reince Preibus, and he called the President's senior advisor, Steve Bannon. Do you recall what McGahn told them?

MUELLER:

I -- whatever he -- was -- was said will -- will appear in the report.

DEUTCH:

It is, it is, and it says on page 87 quote "Preibus recalled that McGahn said that the President asked him to do crazy expletive." In other words, crazy stuff. The White House Counsel thought that the President's request was completely out of bounds. He said the President asked him to do something crazy, it was wrong, and he was prepared to resign over it. Now these are extraordinarily troubling events but you found White House Counsel McGahn to be a credible witness, isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

DEUTCH:

Director Mueller, the most important question I have for you today is why? Director Mueller, why did the President of the United States want you fired?

MUELLER:

I can't answer that question.

DEUTCH:

Well on -- on page 89 in your report on Volume 2, you said and I quote "substantial evidence indicates that the President's evident -- that the President's attempts to remove the Special Counsel were linked to the Special Counsel's oversight of investigations that involve the President's conduct, and most immediately to reports that the President was being investigated for potential obstruction of justice," close quote. Director Mueller, you found evidence, as you lay out in your report, that the President wanted to fire you because you were investigating him for obstruction of justice. Isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

That's what it -- it says in the report, yes, and I go -- I stand by in the report.

DEUTCH:

Director Mueller, that shouldn't happen in America. No president should be able to escape investigation by abusing his power but that's what you testified to in your report. The president ordered you fired. The White House counsel knew it was wrong. The president knew it was wrong. In your report, it says there's also evidence the president knew he should not have made those calls to McGahn.

But the president did it anyway. He did it anyway. Anyone else who blatantly interfered with a criminal investigation, like yours, would be investigated and indicted on charges of obstruction of justice.

Director Mueller, you determined that you were barred from indicting a sitting president. We've already talked about that today. That is exactly why this committee must hold the president accountable. I yield back.

NADLER:

The gentleman yields back. The gentlelady from Alabama?

ROBY:

Director Mueller, you just said in response to two different lines of questionings that you would refer -- as it relates to this firing discussion that I would refer you to the report and the way it was characterized in the report. Importantly, the president never said, fire Mueller or in the investigation. And one doesn't necessitate the other. And McGahn, in fact, did not resign; he stuck around for a year and a half.

On March 24th, Attorney General Barr formed the committee that he had received the special counsel's report and it was not until April 18th that the attorney general released the report to Congress and the public. When you submitted your report to the attorney general, did you deliver a redacted version of the report so that he would be able to release it to Congress and the public without delay, pursuant to his announcement of his intention to do so during his confirmation hearing?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to engage in a discussion about what happened after the production of our report.

ROBY:

Had the attorney general asked you to provide a redacted version of the report?

MUELLER:

We worked on the redacted versions together.

ROBY:

Did he ask you for a version where the grand jury material was separated?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to get into details.

ROBY:

Is it your belief that an unredacted version of the report could be released to Congress or the public?

MUELLER:

That's not within my purview.

ROBY:

In the Starr investigation of President Clinton, it was the special prosecutor who went to court to receive permission to unredact grand jury material, Rule 6(e) material. Why did you not take a similar action so Congress could view this material?

MUELLER:

We had a process that we were operating on with the Attorney General's Office.

ROBY:

Are you aware of any attorney general going to court to receive similar permission to unredact 6(e) material?

MUELLER:

I'm not aware of that being done.

ROBY:

The attorney general released the special counsel's report with minimal redactions to the public and an (ph) even lesser redacted version to Congress. Did you write the report with the expectation that it would be released publicly?

MUELLER:

No, we did not have an expectation. We wrote the report understanding that it was demanded by the statute and would go to the attorney general for further -- further review.

ROBY:

And pursuant to the special counsel regulations, who is the only party that must receive the charging decision resulting from the special counsel's investigation?

MUELLER:

With regard to the president or generally?

ROBY:

No, generally.

MUELLER:

Attorney general.

ROBY:

At Attorney General Barr's confirmation hearing, he made it clear that he intended to release your report to the public. Do you remember how much of your report had been written at that point?

MUELLER:

I do not.

ROBY:

Were there significant changes in tone or substance of the report made after the announcement that the report would be made available to Congress and the public?

MUELLER:

I can't get into that.

ROBY:

During the Senate testimony of Attorney General William Barr, Senate -- Senator Kamala Harris asked Mr. Barr if he had looked at all the underlying evidence that -- that the special counsel's team had gathered. He stated that he had not. So I'm going to ask you, did you personally review all of the underlying evidence gathered in your investigation?

MUELLER:

Well, to the extent that it came through the Special Counsel's Office, yes.

ROBY:

Did any single member of your team review all the underlying evidence gathered during the course of your investigation?

MUELLER:

As has been recited here today, a substantial amount of work was done, whether it be search warrants or -- or...

ROBY:

My point is, is there was no one member of the team that looked at everything.

MUELLER:

... That's what I'm trying to get at.

ROBY:

OK. It's fair to say that in an investigation as comprehensive as yours, it's normal that different members of the team would have reviewed different sets of documents and few, if anyone, would have reviewed all of the underlying?

MUELLER:

Thank you, yes.

ROBY:

How many of the approximately 500 interviews conducted by the Special Counsel's Office (ph) did you attend personally?

MUELLER:

Very few.

ROBY:

On March 27, 2019, you wrote a letter to the attorney general essentially complaining about the media coverage of your report. You wrote, and I quote, "The summery letter the Department sent to Congress and released to the public late in the afternoon of March 24 did not fully capture the context, nature and substance of this office's work and conclusions. We communicated that concern to the Department on the morning of March 25th. There is now public confusion about critical aspects of the result of our investigation."

Who wrote that March 27th letter?

MUELLER:

Well, I -- I -- I can't get into who wrote it. The internal deliberations (ph)...

ROBY:

But you signed it?

MUELLER:

... I -- what I will say is the letter stands for itself.

ROBY:

OK. Why did you write a formal letter since you had already called the attorney general to express those concerns?

MUELLER:

I can't -- I can't get into that, internal deliberations.

ROBY:

Did you authorize the letter's release to the media or was it leaked?

MUELLER:

I have no knowledge on either.

ROBY:

Well, you went nearly two years without a leak. Why was this letter leaked?

MUELLER:

I -- I -- well, I -- I can't get into it.

ROBY:

Was this letter written and leaked for the expressed purpose of attempting to change the narrative about the conclusions of your report? And was anything in Attorney General Barr's letter referred to as principal conclusions...

(CROSSTALK) NADLER:

The time of the gentlelady...

ROBY:

... inaccurate?

NADLER:

... The time of the gentlelady is expired. The gentlelady...

ROBY:

Can he answer the question, please?

MUELLER:

And the question is?

NADLER:

... Yes, he may answer the question.

ROBY:

Was anything in Attorney General Barr's letter referred to as the principle conclusions letter dated March 24th inaccurate?

MUELLER:

Well, I am not going to get into that.

NADLER:

The time of the gentlelady is expired.

The gentlelady from California?

BASS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Director Mueller, as you know, we are focusing on five obstruction episodes today. I would like to ask you about the second of those five obstruction episodes. It is in the section of your report beginning on page 113 of Volume 2, entitled, quote, "The President Orders McGahn to Deny that the President Tried to Fire the Special Counsel," end quote.

On January 25th, 2018, The New York Times reported that, quote, "The president had ordered McGahn to have the Department of Justice fire you." Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

BASS:

And that story related to the events you already testified about here today. The president's calls to McGahn to have you removed. Correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

BASS:

After the news broke, did the president go on TV to deny the story?

MUELLER:

I do not know.

BASS:

In fact, the president said, quote, "Fake news, folks. Fake news, a typical New York Times fake story," end quote. Correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

BASS:

But your investigation actually found substantial evidence that McGahn was ordered by the president to fire you. Correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

BASS:

Did the president's personal lawyer do something the following day in responses to that news report?

MUELLER:

I'd refer you to the coverage of this in the report.

BASS:

On page 114, quote, "On January 26th, 2018, the president's personal counsel called McGahn's attorney and said that the president wanted McGahn to put out a statement denying that he had been asked to fire the special counsel," end quote. Did McGahn do what the president asked?

MUELLER:

I refer you to the report.

BASS:

Communicating through his personal attorney, McGahn refused, because he said, quote, "That the Times story was accurate in reporting that the president wanted the special counsel removed." Isn't that right?

MUELLER:

I believe it is, but I refer you again to the report.

BASS:

OK. So Mr. McGahn, through his personal attorney, told the president that he is -- was not going to lie. Is that right?

MUELLER:

True.

BASS:

Did the president drop the issue?

MUELLER:

I refer to the write-up of this in the report.

BASS:

OK. Next, the president told the White House Staff Secretary Rob Porter to try to pressure McGahn to make a false denial. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

That's correct.

BASS:

What did he actually direct Porter to do?

MUELLER:

And -- and I would send you back to the report.

BASS:

OK. Well, on page 113 it says, quote, "The president then directed Porter to tell McGahn to create a record to make it clear that the president never directed McGahn to fire you," end quote. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

That is as it's -- it's stated in the report.

BASS:

And you found, quote, "The president said he wanted McGahn to write a letter to the file for our records." Correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

BASS:

And to be clear, the president is asking his White House Counsel Don McGahn to create a record that McGahn believed to be untrue, while you were in the midst of investigating the president for obstruction of justice. Correct?

MUELLER:

Generally correct.

BASS:

And Mr. McGahn was an important witness in that investigation, wasn't he?

MUELLER:

I'd have to say yes.

BASS:

Did the president tell Porter to threaten McGahn if he didn't create the written denial?

MUELLER:

I would refer you to the write-up of it in the report.

BASS:

In fact, didn't the president say, quote, and this is on page 116, "If he doesn't write a letter, then maybe I'll have to get rid of him," end quote?

MUELLER:

Yes.

BASS:

Did Porter deliver that threat?

MUELLER:

I, again, refer you to the discussion that's found on page 115.

BASS:

OK. But the president still didn't give up, did he? So the president told McGahn directly to deny that the president told him to have you fired. Can you tell me exactly what happened?

MUELLER:

I can't beyond what's in the report.

BASS:

Well, on page 116, it says the president met him in the Oval Office, quote, "The president began the Oval Office meeting by telling McGahn that The New York Times' story didn't look good and McGahn needed to correct it." Is that correct?

MUELLER:

That's -- as it's written in the report, yes.

BASS:

The president asked McGahn whether he would do a correction and McGahn said no. Correct?

MUELLER:

That's accurate.

BASS:

Well, Mr. Mueller, thank you for your investigation uncovering this very disturbing evidence. My friend, Mr. Richmond will have additional questions on the subject.

However, it is clear to me, if anyone else had ordered a witness to create a false record and cover-up acts that are subject of a law enforcement investigation, that person would be facing criminal charges. I yield back my time.

NADLER:

The gentlelady yields back.

The gentlemen from Ohio?

JORDAN:

Director, the FBI interviewed Joseph Mifsud on February 10th, 2017. In that interview, Mr. Mifsud lied. You point this out on page 193, Volume 1, Mifsud denied, Mifsud also falsely stated. In addition, Mifsud omitted. Three times, he lied to the FBI; yet, you didn't charge him with a crime. Why...

(CROSSTALK) MUELLER:

Excuse me -- are...

JORDAN:

... Why not?

MUELLER:

... did you say -- I'm sorry, did you say 193?

JORDAN:

Volume 1, 193. He lied three times, you point it out in the report, why didn't you charge him with a crime?

MUELLER:

I can't get into internal deliberations with regard to who or who would not be charged.

JORDAN:

You charged a lot of other people for making false statements. Let's remember this -- let's remember this, in 2016 the FBI did something they probably haven't done before, they spied on two American citizens associated with a presidential campaign.

George Papadopoulos and Carter Page. With Carter Page they went to the FISA court, they used the now famous dossier as part of the reason they were able to get the warrant and spy on Carter Page for a better part of a year. With Mr. Papadopoulos, they didn't go to the court, they used human sources, all kinds of -- from about the moment Papadopoulos joins the Trump campaign, you've got all these people all around the world starting to swirl around him, names like Halper, Downer, Mifsud, Thompson, meeting in Rome, London, all kinds of places.

The FBI even sent -- even sent a lady posing as somebody else, went by the name Azmiturk (ph), even dispatched her to London to spy on Mr. Papadopoulos. In one of these meetings, Mr. Papadopoulos is talking to a foreign diplomat and he tells the diplomat Russians have dirt on Clinton. That diplomat then contacts the FBI and the FBI opens an investigation based on that fact. You point this out on page 1 of the report. July 31st, 2016 they open the investigation based on that piece of information.

Diplomat tells Papadopoulos Russians have dirt -- excuse me, Papadopoulos tells the diplomat Russians have dirt on Clinton, diplomat tells the FBI. What I'm wondering is who told Papadopoulos? How'd he find out?

MUELLER:

I can't get into the evidentiary filings.

JORDAN:

Yes, you can because you wrote about it, you gave us the answer. Page 192 of the report, you tell us who told him. Joseph Mifsud, Joseph Mifsud's the guy who told Papadopoulos, the mysterious professor who lives in Rome and London, works at -- teaches in two different universities.

This is the guy who told Papadopoulos he's the guy who starts it all, and when the FBI interviews him, he lies three times and yet you don't charge him with a crime. You charge Rick Gates for false statements, you charge Paul Manafort for false statements, you charge Michael Cohen with false statements, you charge Michael Flynn a three star general with false statements, but the guy who puts the country through this whole saga, starts it all for three years we've lived this now, he lies and you guys don't charge him. And I'm curious as to why.

MUELLER:

Well I can't get into it and it's obvious I think that we can't get into charging decisions.

JORDAN:

When the FBI interviewed him in February -- FBI interviews him in February, when the Special Counsel's Office interviewed Mifsud, did he lie to you guys too?

MUELLER:

Can't get into that.

JORDAN:

Did you interview Mifsud?

MUELLER:

Can't get into that.

JORDAN:

Is Mifsud western intelligence or Russian intelligence?

MUELLER:

Can't get into that.

JORDAN:

A lot of things you can't get into. What's interesting, you can charge 13 Russians no one's ever heard of, no one's ever seen, no one's ever going to hear of them, no one's ever going to see them, you can charge them, you can charge all kinds of people who are around the president with false statements but the guy who launches everything, the guy who puts this whole story in motion, you can't charge him. I think that's amazing.

MUELLER:

I'm not certain I -- I'm not certain I agree with your characterizations.

JORDAN:

Well I'm reading from your report, Mifsud told Papadopoulos, Papadopoulos tells the diplomat, the diplomat tells the FBI, the FBI opens the investigation July 31st, 2016.

And here we are three years later, July of 2019, the country's been put through this and the central figure who launches it all, lies to us and you guys don't hunt him down and interview him again and you don't charge him with a crime.

Now here's the good news, here's the good news, the president was falsely accused of conspiracy. The FBI does a 10 month investigation and James Comey when we deposed him a year ago told us at that point they had nothing. You do a 22-month investigation, at the end of that 22 months you find no conspiracy and what's the Democrats want to do, they want to keep investigating, they want to keep going. Maybe a better course of action, maybe a better course of action is to figure out how the false accusations started, maybe it's to go back and actually figure out why Joseph Mifsud was lying to the FBI. And here's the good news, here's the good news, that's exactly what Bill Barr is doing. And thank goodness for that. That's exactly what the

attorney general and John Durham doing, they're going to find out why we went through this three year...

NADLER:

The time of the gentleman...

JORDAN:

...three year saga and get to the bottom of it.

NADLER:

Time of the gentleman has expired. In a moment we will take a very brief five minute break. First I ask everyone in the room to please remain seated and quiet while the witness exit the -- exits the room.

I also want to announce to those in the audience that you may not be guaranteed your seat if you leave the hearing room at this time. At this time, the committee will stand in a very short recess.

(RECESS) NADLER:

Gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Richmond.

RICHMOND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Mueller, Congressman Duetch addressed Trump's request to McGahn to fire you. Representative Bass talked about the president's request to McGahn to deny the fact that the president made that request. So I want to pick up where they left off and I want to pick up with the president's personal lawyer. In fact, there was evidence that the president's personal lawyer was alarmed at the prospect of the president meeting with Mr. McGahn to discuss Mr. McGahn's refusal to deny The New York Time's report about the president trying to fire you, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

RICHMOND:

In fact, the president's counsel was so alarmed by the prospect of the president's meeting with McGahn that he called Mr. McGahn's counsel and said that McGahn could not resign no matter what happened in the Oval Office that day, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

RICHMOND:

So it's accurate to say that the president knew that he was asking McGahn to deny facts that McGahn, quote, "had repeatedly said were accurate," unquote. Isn't that right?

MUELLER:

Correct.

RICHMOND:

Your investigation also found, quote, "by the time of the Oval Office meeting with the president, the president was aware, one, that McGahn did not think the story was false, two, did not want to issue a statement or create a written record denying facts that McGahn believed to be true. The president nevertheless persisted and asked McGahn to repudiate facts that McGahn had repeatedly said were accurate." Isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

(Inaudible)

RICHMOND:

I believe that's on page 119. Thank you. In other words, the president was trying to force McGahn to say something that McGahn did not believe to be true.

MUELLER:

That's accurate.

RICHMOND:

I want to reference you to a slide and it's on page 120, and it says, "substantial evidence indicates that in repeatedly urging McGahn to dispute that he was ordered to have the special counsel terminated, the president acted for the purpose of influencing McGahn's account in order to deflect or prevent further scrutiny of the president's conduct towards the investigation."

MUELLER:

It's accurate.

RICHMOND:

Can you explain what you meant there?

MUELLER:

I'm just going to leave it as it appears in the report.

RICHMOND:

So it's fair to say the president tried to protect himself by asking staff to falsify records relevant to an ongoing investigation?

MUELLER:

I would say that is generally a summary.

RICHMOND:

Would you say that that action the president tried to hamper the investigation by asking staff to falsify records relevant to your investigation?

MUELLER:

I'm just going to refer you to the report if I could for review of that episode.

RICHMOND:

Thank you. Also, the president's attempt to get McGahn to create a false-written record, were related to Mr. Trump's concerns about your obstruction of justice inquiry, correct?

MUELLER:

I believe that to be true.

RICHMOND:

In fact, at that same Oval Office meeting, did the president also ask McGahn why he had told - quote, "why he had told Special Counsels Office investigators that the president told him to have you removed," unquote?

MUELLER:

What was the question, sir? I might (ph)...

RICHMOND:

Let me go to the next one. The president, quote, "criticized McGahn for telling your office about the June 17, 2017 events when he told McGahn to have you removed," correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

RICHMOND:

In other words, the president was criticizing his White House Counsel for telling law enforcement officials what he believed to be the truth?

MUELLER:

I, again, go back to the text of the - of the report.

RICHMOND:

Well, let me go a little bit further. Would it have been a crime if Mr. McGahn had lied to you about the president ordering him to fire you?

MUELLER:

I don't want to speculate.

RICHMOND:

OK. Is it true that you charged multiple people associated with the president for lying to you during your investigation?

MUELLER:

That is accurate.

RICHMOND:

The president also complained that his staff were taking notes during the meeting about firing McGahn. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

That's what the report says. Yes, the report.

RICHMOND:

But, in fact, it's completely appropriate for the president's staff, especially his counsels, to take notes during a meeting correct?

MUELLER:

I rely on the wording of the report.

RICHMOND:

Well, thank you, Director Mueller, for your investigation into whether the president attempted to obstruct justice by ordering his White House Counsel, Don McGahn, to lie to protect the president and then to create a false record about it. It is clear that any other person who engaged in such conduct would be charged with a crime. We will continue our investigation. We will hold the president accountable because no one is above the law.

NADLER:

Gentleman's time has expired. The gentleman from Florida.

GAETZ:

Director Mueller, can you state with confidence that the Steele dossier was not part of Russia's disinformation campaign?

MUELLER:

No. I said they - my opening statement that part of the building of the case predated me by at least 10 months.

GAETZ:

Yes. I mean, Paul Manafort's alleged crimes regarding tax evasion predated you. You had no problem charging them, and a matter of fact, this Steele dossier predated the attorney general and he didn't have any problem answering the question when Senator Cornyn asked the attorney general the exact question I asked you, Director. The attorney general said, and I'm quoting, "no. I can't state that with confidence, and that's one of the areas I'm reviewing. I'm concerned about it and I don't think it's entirely speculative."

Now, something is not entirely speculative that it must have some factual basis, but you identify no factual basis regarding the dossier or the possibility that it was part of the Russia

disinformation campaign. Now, Christopher Steele's reporting is referenced in your report. Steele reported to the FBI that senior Russian foreign ministry figures among with other - along with other Russia's told him that there was a - and I'm quoting from the Steele dossier - "extensive evidence of conspiracy between the Trump campaign team and the Kremlin."

GAETZ:

So here's my question. Did Russians really tell that to Christopher Steele or did he just make it all up and was he lying to the FBI?

MUELLER:

Let me back up a second if I could and say as I've said earlier, with regard to Steele, that's beyond my purview.

GAETZ:

No it is exactly your purview Director Mueller and here's why. Only one of two things is possible, right? Either Steele made this whole thing up and there were never any Russians telling him of this vast criminal conspiracy that you didn't find or Russians lied to Steele. Now if Russians were lying to Steele to undermine our confidence in our duly elected president, that would seem to be precisely your purview because you stated in your opening that the organizing principle was to fully and thoroughly investigate Russia's interference but you weren't interested in whether or not Russians were interfering through Christopher Steele and if Steele was lying then you should have charged him with lying like you charged a variety of other people. But you say nothing about this in your report.

MUELLER:

Well, sir...

GAETZ:

Meanwhile, Director, you're quite loquacious on other topics, you write 3,500 words about the June 9 meeting between the Trump campaign and Russian lawyer Veselnitskaya. You write on page 103 of your report that the president's legal team suggested and I'm quoting from your report, "that the meeting might have been a set up by individuals working with the firm that produced the Steele reporting." So I'm going to ask you a very easy question Director Mueller, on the week of June 9, who did Russian lawyer Veselnitskaya meet with more frequently, the Trump campaign or Glenn Simpson who is functionally acting as an operative for the Democratic National Committee?

MUELLER:

Well what I think is missing here is the fact that this is under investigation and -- elsewhere...

GAETZ:

I get that...

MUELLER:

And if I could finish, sir. And if I could finish, sir. And consequently it's not within my purview, the Department of Justice and FBI should be responsive to questions on this particular issue.

GAETZ:

It is absurd to suggest that a operative for the democrats was meeting with this Russian lawyer the day before, the day after the Trump Tower meeting and yet that's not something you reference. Now Glenn Simpson testified under oath he had dinner with Veselnitskaya the day before and the day after this meeting with the Trump team. Do you have any basis as you sit here today to believe that Steele was lying?

MUELLER:

As I said before and I'll say again, it's not my purview. Others are investigating what you...

GAETZ:

It's not your purview to look into whether or not Steele is lying? It's not your purview to look into whether or not anti-Trump Russians are lying to Steele? And it's not your purview to look at whether or not Glenn Simpson was meeting with the Russians the day before and the day after you write 3,500 words about the Trump campaign meeting so I'm wondering how -- how these decisions are guided. I look at the inspector general's report. I'm citing from page 404 of the inspector general's report. It states, "Page (ph) stated, Trump is not ever going to be president, right? Right?" Strzok replied, "No he's not. We'll stop it." Also in the inspector general's report there's someone identified as "Attorney Number 2." Attorney Number 2, this is page 419 replied, "Hell no," and then added, "viva la resistance." Attorney Number 2 in the inspector general's report and Strzok both worked on your team, didn't they?

MUELLER:

Pardon me, can you ask...

GAETZ:

They both worked on your team didn't they?

MUELLER:

I heard Strzok. Who else are we talking about?

GAETZ:

Attorney Number 2 identified in the inspector general's report.

MUELLER:

OK. And the question was?

GAETZ:

Did he work for you? The guy who said, "Viva la resistance."

MUELLER:

Peter -- Peter Strzok worked for me for a period of time, yes.

GAETZ:

Yes, but so did the other guy that said, "Viva la resistance." And here's what I'm kind of noticing Director Mueller, when people associated with Trump lied, you threw the book at them. When Christopher Steele lied, nothing. And so it seems to be when Simpson met with Russians, nothing. When the Trump campaign met with Russians, 3,500 words. And maybe the reason why there are these discrepancies in what you focused on because the team was so biased...

NADLER:

Time of the -- time of the gentleman has expired.

GAETZ:

... (inaudible) resistance, pledged to stop Trump.

NADLER:

Mr. Jeffries of New York is recognized.

JEFFRIES:

Mr. Mueller, obstruction of justice is a serious crime that strikes at the core of an investigator's effort to find the truth. Correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

JEFFRIES:

The crime of obstruction of justice has three elements, true?

MUELLER:

True.

JEFFRIES:

The first element is an obstructive act. Correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

JEFFRIES:

An obstructive act could include taking an action that would delay or interfere with an ongoing investigation as set forth in Volume 2, page 87 and 88 of your report. True?

MUELLER:

I'm sorry. Could you again repeat the question?

JEFFRIES:

An obstructive act could include taking an action that would delay or interfere with an ongoing investigation.

MUELLER:

That's true.

JEFFRIES:

Your investigation found evidence that President Trump took steps to terminate the special counsel. Correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

JEFFRIES:

Mr. Mueller, does ordering the termination of the head of a criminal investigation constitute an obstructive act?

MUELLER:

That would be -- I -- I -- I'll refer you to the report on that.

JEFFRIES:

Let me refer you to page 87 and 88 of Volume 2 where you conclude the attempt to remove the special counsel would qualify as an obstructive act if it would naturally obstruct the investigation in any grand jury proceedings that might flow from the inquiry. Correct?

MUELLER:

Yes, I've got that now. Thank you.

JEFFRIES:

Thank you. The second element of obstruction of justice is the presence of an obstructive act in connection with an official proceeding. True?

MUELLER:

True.

JEFFRIES:

Does the special counsel's criminal investigation into the potential wrong doing of Donald Trump constitute an official proceeding?

MUELLER:

And that's an area which I cannot get into.

JEFFRIES:

OK. President Trump tweeted on June 16, 2017, quote, "I am being investigated for firing the FBI director by the man who told me to fire the FBI director. Witch hunt." The June 16th tweet just read was cited on page 89 in Volume 2 constitutes a public acknowledgement by President Trump that he was under criminal investigation. Correct?

MUELLER:

I -- I think generally correct.

JEFFRIES:

One day later on Saturday, June 17, President Trump called White House counsel Don McGahn at home and directed him to fire the special counsel. True?

MUELLER:

I believe it to be true. I think we've been -- I may have stated in response to questions some.

JEFFRIES:

That is correct. President Trump told Don McGahn quote, "Mueller has to go," close quote. Correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

JEFFRIES:

Your report found on page 89, Volume 2 that substantial evidence indicates that by June 17 the president knew his conduct was under investigation by a federal prosecutor who could present any evidence of federal crimes to a grand jury. True?

MUELLER:

True.

JEFFRIES:

The third element, second element having just been satisfied, the third element of the crime of obstruction of justice is corrupt intent. True?

MUELLER:

True.

JEFFRIES:

Corrupt intent exists if the president acted to obstruct an official proceeding for the improper purpose of protecting his own interest. Correct?

MUELLER:

That's generally correct.

JEFFRIES:

Thank you.

MUELLER:

And I -- the only thing I would say is we are going through the three elements of proof of the -- obstruction of justice charges when the fact of the matter is we got -- excuse me just one second.

JEFFRIES:

Well thank you Mr. Mueller. Let me -- let me move on in the interest of time. Upon learning about the appointment of the special counsel, your investigation found that Donald Trump stated to the then attorney general quote, "Oh my God. This is terrible. This is the end of my presidency. I'm f'ed." Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

JEFFRIES:

Is it fair to say that Donald Trump viewed the special counsel's investigation into his conduct as adverse to his own interest?

MUELLER:

I think that generally is true.

MUELLER:

I think that generally is true.

JEFFRIES:

The investigation found evidence quote, "that the president knew that he should not have directed Don McGahn to fire the special counsel." Correct?

MUELLER:

And where do you have that -- that quote?

JEFFRIES:

Page 90, Volume 2. "There's evidence that the president knew he should not have made those calls to McGahn", close quote.

MUELLER:

I see that, yes, that's accurate.

JEFFRIES:

The investigation also found substantial evidence that President Trump repeatedly urged McGahn to dispute that he was ordered to have the Special Counsel terminated, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

JEFFRIES:

The investigation found substantial evidence that when the president ordered Don McGahn to fire the special counsel and then lie about it, Donald Trump one, committed an obstructive act, two, connected to an official proceeding, three, did so with corrupt intent.

Those are the elements of obstruction of justice. This is the United States of America, no one is above the law. No one. The president must be held accountable one way or the other.

MUELLER:

Let me -- let me just say I -- if I might, I don't subscribe necessarily to your -- the way you analyze that. I'm not saying it's out of the ballpark, but I'm not supportive of that analytical charge.

JEFFRIES:

Thank you.

NADLER:

(OFF MIKE)

BUCK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Mueller, over here.

MUELLER:

Hi.

BUCK:

Hi, I want to start by thanking you for your service. You joined the Marines and led a rifle platoon in Vietnam where you earned a Bronze Star, Purple Heart and other accommodations.

You serves as an assistant United States attorney, leading the homicide unit here in D.C., U.S. attorney for the district of Massachusetts and later Northern District of California, assistant attorney general for DOJ's criminal division and the FBI director. So thank you. I appreciate that. But having reviewed your biography, it puzzles me why you handled your duties in this case the way you did. The report contradicts what you taught young attorneys at the Department of Justice, including to ensure that every defendant is treated fairly or as Justice Sutherland said in the Berger case, a prosecutor is not the representative of an ordinary party to a controversy, but of a sovereignty whose interest in a criminal prosecution is not that shall win a case, but that justice shall be done and that the prosecutor may strike hard blows but he is not at liberty to strike fowl ones.

By listing the 10 factual situations and not reaching a conclusion about the merits of the case, you unfairly shifted the burden of proof to the president, forcing him to prove his innocence while denying him a legal form to do so. And I've never heard of a prosecutor declining a case and then holding a press conference to talk about the defendant. You noted eight times in your report that you had a legal duty under the regulations to either prosecute or decline charges.

Despite this, you disregarded that duty. As a former prosecutor, I'm also troubled with your legal analysis. You discussed 10 separate factual patterns involving alleged obstruction and then you failed to separately apply the elements of the applicable statutes.

I looked at the 10 factual situations and I read the case law and I have to tell you just looking at the Flynn matter for example, the four statutes that you cited for possible obstruction, 1503, 1505, 1512 B3 and 1512 C2. When I look at those concerning the Flynn matter, 1503 is inapplicable because there wasn't a grand jury or trial jury impaneled and Director Comey was not an officer of the court as defined by the statute.

Section 1505 criminalizes acts that would obstruct or impede administrative proceedings, those before Congress an administrative agency, the Department of Justice criminal resource manual states that the FBI investigation is not a pending proceeding.

1512 B3 talks about intimidation threats of force to tamper with a witness. General Flynn at the time was not a witness and certainly Director Comey was not a witness. And 1512 C2 talks about tampering with the record and as Joe Biden described the statute as being debated on the

Senate floor, he called this a statute criminalizing document shredding, and there's nothing in the -- in your report that alleges that the president destroyed any evidence.

So what I have to ask and what I think people are working around in this hearing is -- let me lay a little foundation for you, the ethical rules require that a prosecutor have a reasonable probability of conviction to bring a charge, is that correct?

MUELLER:

Generally accurate.

BUCK:

OK. And the regulations concerning your job as special counsel state that your job is to provide the attorney general with a confidential report explaining the prosecution or declination decisions reached by your office. You recommended declining prosecution of President Trump and anyone associated with his campaign because there was insufficient evidence to convict for a charge of conspiracy with Russian interference in the 2016 election. Is that fair?

MUELLER:

That's fair.

BUCK:

Was there sufficient evidence to convict President Trump or anyone else with obstruction of justice?

MUELLER:

We did not make that calculation.

BUCK:

How could you not have made the calculation when the regulation...

MUELLER:

Because the OLC opinion -- the OLC opinion, Office of Legal Counsel, indicates that we cannot indict a sitting president. So one of the tools that a prosecutor would use is not there.

BUCK:

OK but let me just stop, you made the decision on the Russian interference, you couldn't have indicted the president on that and you made the decision on that. But when it came to obstruction, you threw a bunch of stuff up against the wall to see what would stick, and that is fundamentally unfair.

MUELLER:

I would not agree to -- I would not agree to that characterization at all. What we did is provide to the attorney general in the form of a confidential memorandum our understanding of the case. Those cases that were brought, those cases that were declined and the -- that one case where the president cannot be charged with a crime.

BUCK:

OK, but the -- could you charge the president with a crime after he left office?

MUELLER:

Yes.

BUCK:

You believe that he committed -- you could charge the president of the United States with obstruction of justice after he left office.

MUELLER:

Yes.

BUCK:

Ethically, under the ethical standards.

MUELLER:

Well I am -- I'm not certain because I haven't looked at the ethical standards, but the OLC opinion says that the prosecutor while he cannot bring a charge against a sitting president, nonetheless he continue the investigation to see if there are any other person to might be drawn into the conspiracy.

NADLER:

Time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from Rhode Island.

CICILLINE:

Director, Director as you know we are specifically focusing on five separate obstruction episodes here today. I'd like to ask you about the third episode, it's the section of your report entitled the president's efforts to curtail the Special Counsel investigation beginning at page 90.

And by curtail you mean limit, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

CICILLINE:

My colleagues have walked through how the president tried to have you fired through the White House Council, and because Mr. McGahn refused the order, the president asked others to help limit your investigation, is that correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

CICILLINE:

And was Cory Lewandowski one such individual?

MUELLER:

Again, can you remind me what character (ph)...

CICILLINE:

Well Cory Lewandowski is the president's former campaign manager, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

CICILLINE:

Did he have any official position in the Trump administration?

MUELLER:

I don't believe so.

CICILLINE:

Your report describes an incident in the Oval Office involving Mr. Lewandowski on June 19, 2017 that Volume 2 page 91, is that correct.

MUELLER:

I'm sorry, what's the citation, sir?

CICILLINE:

Page 91.

MUELLER:

Of the second volume?

CICILLINE:

Yes.

MUELLER:

And where...

CICILLINE:

A meeting in the Oval Office between Mr. Lewandowski and the president.

MUELLER:

OK.

CICILLINE:

And that was just two days after the president called Don McGahn at home and ordered him to fire you. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Apparently so.

CICILLINE:

So right after his White House Council, Mr. McGahn refused to follow the president's order to fire you, the president came up with a new plan. And that was to go around all of his senior advisors and government aids to have a private citizen try to limit your investigation. What did the president tell Mr. Lewandowski to do? Do you recall, he called him -- he dictated a message to Mr. Lewandowski for Attorney General Sessions and asked him to write it down, is that correct?

MUELLER:

True.

CICILLINE:

And do you -- did you and your team see this handwritten message?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to get into what we may or may not have included in our investigation.

CICILLINE:

OK. The message directed Sessions to give, and -- and I'm quoting from your report, to give a public speech saying that he planned to, "Meet with the special prosecutor to explain this is very unfair and threat the special prosecutor move forward with investigating investigation meddling for future elections." That's at page 91. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Yes, I see that, thank you. Yes, it is.

CICILLINE:

In other words, Mr. Lewandowski, a private citizen, was instructed by the president of the United States to deliver a message from the president to the attorney general that directed him to limit your investigation. Correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

CICILLINE:

And at this time, Mr. Sessions was still recused from oversight of your investigation. Correct?

MUELLER:

I'm sorry. Could you restate that?

CICILLINE:

The attorney general was recused from oversight.

MUELLER:

Yes. Yes.

CICILLINE:

So the attorney general had to violate his own Department's rules in order to comply with the president's order, correct?

MUELLER:

Well, I'm not going to get into the subsidiary details...

CICILLINE:

OK.

MUELLER:

... I'd just refer you again to page 91, 92 of the report.

CICILLINE:

And if the attorney general had followed through with the president's request, Mr. Mueller, it would have effectively ended your investigation into the president and his campaign, as you note on page 97. Correct?

MUELLER:

Could you?

CICILLINE:

On page 97 you write, and I quote, "Taken together, the president's directives indicate that Sessions was being instructed to tell the special counsel to end the existing investigation into the president and his campaign, with the special counsel being permitted to move forward with investigating election meddling for future elections." Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Generally true, yes, sir.

CICILLINE:

And it's -- an unsuccessful attempt to obstruct justice is still a crime, is that correct?

MUELLER:

That is correct.

CICILLINE:

And Mr. Lewandowski tried to meet with the attorney general. Is that right?

MUELLER:

True.

CICILLINE:

And he tried to meet with him in his office so he would be sure -- certain there wasn't a public log of the visit?

MUELLER:

According to what we gathered for the report.

CICILLINE:

And the meeting never happened. And the president raised the issue again with Mr. Lewandowski and this time he said, and I quote, "If Sessions does not meet with you, Lewandowski should tell Sessions he was fired," correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

CICILLINE:

So immediately following the meeting with the president, Lewandowski then asked Mr. Dearborn to deliver the message, who's the former chief of staff to Mr. Sessions. And Mr. Dearborn refuses to deliver it because he doesn't feel comfortable. Isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

Generally correct, yes.

CICILLINE:

Just so we're clear, Mr. Mueller, two days after the White House Counsel Don McGahn refused to carry out the president's order to fire you, the president directed a private citizen to tell the attorney general of the United States -- who was recused at the time -- to limit your investigation to future elections, effectively ending your investigation into the 2016 Trump campaign. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Well, I'm not going to adopt your characterization. I'll say that the facts as laid out in the report are accurate.

CICILLINE:

Well, Mr. Mueller, in your report you, in fact, write at page 99 -- 97, "Substantial evidence indicates that the president's effort to have Sessions limit the scope of the special counsel's investigation to future elections interference was intended to prevent further investigative scrutiny of the president and his campaign conduct." Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Generally.

CICILLINE:

And so, Mr. Mueller, you have seen a letter where 1,000 former Republican and Democratic federal prosecutors have read your report and said anyone but the president who committed those acts would be charged with obstruction of justice. Do you agree with those former colleagues, 1,000 prosecutors, who came to that conclusion?

NADLER:

(OFF-MIKE).

MUELLER:

Those...

NADLER:

(OFF-MIKE).

BIGGS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Over here. Thanks.

Mr. Mueller, you guys -- your team wrote in the report, quote, on -- this is at the top of page 2, Volume 1 -- also on page 173, by the way -- you said you'd come to the conclusion that, quote, "The investigation did not establish that members of the Trump campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities," closed quote. That's an accurate statement, right?

MUELLER:

That's accurate.

BIGGS:

And I'm curious, when did you personally come to that conclusion?

MUELLER:

Can you remind me which paragraph you're referring to?

BIGGS:

Top of page 2...

MUELLER:

On 2?

BIGGS:

... Volume 1.

MUELLER:

OK. And exactly which paragraph are you looking at on 2?

BIGGS:

Investigation did not establish...

MUELLER:

Of course, I see it.

BIGGS:

You see it?

MUELLER:

Yes. And what was your question?

BIGGS:

My question now is when did you personally reach that conclusion?

MUELLER:

Well, we were ongoing for two years.

BIGGS:

Right. You were ongoing and you wrote it at some point during that two-year period. But at some point, you had to come to a conclusion that -- that I don't think there's a -- that there's not a conspiracy going on here. There was no conspiracy between this president -- and I'm not talking about the rest of the president's team, I'm talking about this president and the Russians.

MUELLER:

As you understand, in developing a criminal case, you get pieces of information -- pieces of information, witnesses and the like as you make your case.

BIGGS:

Right.

MUELLER:

And when you make a decision on a particular case depends on a number of factors.

BIGGS:

Right, I understand all this.

MUELLER:

And so I cannot say specifically that we reached the decision on a particular defendant at a particular point in time.

BIGGS:

But it was sometime well before you wrote the report. Fair enough? I mean, you wrote the report dealing with a whole myriad of issues. Certainly, at some time prior to that report is when you reached the decision that, OK, with -- with regard to the president himself, I don't find anything here. Fair enough?

MUELLER:

Well, I'm not certain I do agree with that. The...

BIGGS:

So you waited until the last minute when you were actually writing the report and said, oh, OK...

MUELLER:

... No, but there -- there are various aspects of the development of an...

BIGGS:

... Sure. And that's my point. There are various aspects that are -- that happen. But somewhere along the pike, you will come to a conclusion, there's no there, there (ph) for this defendant. Isn't that right? So apparently...

(CROSSTALK) MUELLER:

I can't -- I can't speak to it.

BIGGS:

... You can't -- you can't say when? Fair enough. So -- so...

ZEBLEY:

Mr. Biggs, I...

BIGGS:

... No, I'm not -- I'm asking the -- the sworn witness.

Mr. Mueller, evidence suggests that on May 10th, 2017 at approximately 7:45 a.m., six days before the DAG, that's deputy attorney general, appointed you special counsel, Mr. Rosenstein called you and mentioned the appointment of a special counsel, not -- not necessarily that you would be appointed, but that you had a discussion of that. Is that -- is that true? May 10th, 2017.

MUELLER:

I -- I -- I don't have any -- no, I don't have any knowledge of that occurring.

BIGGS:

You don't have any knowledge or you don't recall?

MUELLER:

I don't have any knowledge.

BIGGS:

Evidence also suggests that...

MUELLER:

I mean (ph), given that -- what I saw you do, are you questioning that?

BIGGS:

... Well, I -- I just find it intriguing. Let me just tell you that there's evidence that suggests that that phone call took place and that that is what was said. So let's move to the next question.

Evidence suggests that also on May 12th, 2017, five days before the DAG appointed you special counsel, you met with Mr. Rosenstein in person. Did you discuss the appointment of special counsel then, not necessarily you but that there would be a special counsel.

MUELLER:

I -- I've gone into waters that don't allow me to give you an answer the particular question. It relates to the internal discussions we would have in terms of indicting an individual.

BIGGS:

It has nothing to with the indictment. It has to do with special counsel and whether you discussed that with Mr. Rosenstein.

Evidence also suggested, on May 13th, four days before you were appointed special counsel, you met with attorney -- former Attorney General Sessions and Rosenstein and you spoke about special counsel. Do you remember that?

MUELLER:

Not offhand, no.

BIGGS:

OK. And on May 16th, the day before you were appointed special counsel, you met with the president and Rod Rosenstein. Do you remember having that meeting?

MUELLER:

Yes.

BIGGS:

And the discussion of the position of the FBI director took place. Do you remember that?

MUELLER:

Yes.

BIGGS:

And did you discuss at any time in that meeting Mr. Comey's termination?

MUELLER:

No.

BIGGS:

Did you discuss at any time in that meeting the potential appointment of a special counsel? Not necessarily you, but just in general terms?

MUELLER:

I can't get into any discussions on that.

BIGGS:

How many times did you speak to Mr. Rosenstein before May 17, which is the day you got appointed, regarding the appointment of special counsel? How many times prior to that did you -- did you discuss with him?

MUELLER:

I can't tell you how many times.

BIGGS:

Is that because you don't recall or you just...

MUELLER:

I do not recall.

BIGGS:

OK. Thank you. How many times -- did you speak with Mr. Comey about any investigations pertaining to the Russia prior to May 17, 2017? Did you have any?

MUELLER:

None at all (ph).

BIGGS:

Zero?

MUELLER:

Zero.

BIGGS:

OK. Now, my time's -- my time is expired. So...

NADLER:

The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from California.

SWALWELL:

Director Mueller, going back to the president's obstruction via Corey Lewandowski, it was referenced that a thousand former prosecutors who served under Republican and Democratic

administrations with 12,000 years of federal service wrote a letter regarding the president's conduct. Are you familiar with that letter?

MUELLER:

I've read about that letter, yes.

SWALWELL:

Some of the individuals who signed that letter, the statement of former prosecutors, are people you worked with. Is that right?

MUELLER:

Quite probably. Yes.

SWALWELL:

People that you respect?

MUELLER:

Quite probably yes.

SWALWELL:

And in that letter, they said all of this conduct, trying to control and impede the investigation against the president by leveraging his authority over others is similar to conduct we have seen charged against other public officials and people in powerful positions. Are they wrong?

MUELLER:

They have a different case.

SWALWELL:

Do you want to sign that letter, Director Mueller?

MUELLER:

No. They have a different case.

SWALWELL:

Director Mueller, thank you for your service going all the way back to the 60s when you courageously served in Vietnam. Because I have a seat on the Intelligence Committee, I'll have questions later. And because of our limited time, I will ask to enter this letter into the record under unanimous consent...

NADLER:

Without objection.

SWALWELL:

... and I yield for my colleague from California, Mr. Lieu.

LIEU:

Thank you, director Mueller, for your long history of service to our country including your service as a Marine where you earned a brown star with a V device.

I'd like to now turn to the elements of obstruction of justice as applied to the president's attempts to curtail your investigation. The first element of obstruction of justice requires an obstructive act, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

LIEU:

OK. I'd like to direct you to page 97 of Volume 2 of your report, and you wrote there on page 97, quote, "Sessions was being instructed to tell the special counsel to end the existing investigation into the president and his campaign," unquote. That's in the report, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

LIEU:

That would be evidence of an obstructive act because it would naturally obstruct their investigation, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

LIEU:

OK. Let's turn now to the second element of the crime of obstruction of justice which requires a nexus to an official proceeding. Again, I'm going to direct you to page 97, the same page of Volume 2. And you wrote, quote, "by the time of the president's initial one-on-one meeting with Lewandowski on June 19, 2017, the existence of a grand jury investigation supervised by the special counsel was public knowledge." That's in the report, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

LIEU:

That would constitute evidence of a nexus to an official proceeding because a grand jury investigation is an official proceeding, correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

LIEU:

OK. I'd like to now turn to the final element of the crime of obstruction to justice. On that same page, page 97, do you see where there is the intent section on that page?

MUELLER:

I do see that.

LIEU:

All right. Would you be willing to read the first sentence?

MUELLER:

And that was starting with...

LIEU:

Substantial evidence.

MUELLER:

Indicates that the president...

LIEU:

If you read that first sentence, would you be willing to do that?

MUELLER:

I'm happy to have you read it.

LIEU:

OK. I will read it. You wrote, quote, "substantial evidence indicates that the president's effort to have Sessions limit the scope of the special counsel's investigation be featuring (ph) election interference was intended to prevent further investigative scrutiny of the president and his campaign's conduct," unquote. That's in the report, correct?

MUELLER:

That is in the report, and I rely what's in the report to indicate what's happened in the paragraphs that we've been discussing.

LIEU:

Thank you. So to recap what we've heard, we have heard today that the president ordered former White House Counsel, Don McGahn, to fire you. The president ordered Don McGahn to then cover that up and create a false paper trail. And now we've heard the president ordered Corey Lewandowski to tell Jeff Sessions to limit your investigation so that he -- you stop investigating the president. I believe any reasonable person looking at these facts could conclude that all three elements of the crime of obstruction of justice have been met. And I'd like to ask you the reason, again, that you did not indict Donald Trump is because of OLC opinion stating that you cannot indict a sitting president, correct?

MUELLER:

That is correct.

LIEU:

The fact that their orders by the president were not carried out, that is not a defense to obstruction of justice because a statute itself is quite dry. It says that as long as you endeavor or attempt to obstruct justice, that would also constitute a crime.

MUELLER:

I'm not going to get into that at this juncture.

LIEU:

OK. Thank you, and based on the evidence that we have heard today, I believe a reasonable person could conclude that at least three crimes of obstruction of justice by the president occurred. We're going to hear about two additional crimes. That would be the witnessed hamperings of Michael Cohen and Paul Manafort, and I yield back.

MUELLER:

Well, the only thing I want to add is that I'm going through the elements with you do not mean or does not mean that I subscribe to the -- what you're trying to prove through those elements.

NADLER:

The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentlelady from Arizona. I'm sorry. Gentleman from California.

MCCLINTOCK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mueller, over here. Thanks for joining us today. You had three discussions with Rod Rosenstein about your appointment as special counsel May 10, May 12, and May 13, correct?

MUELLER:

If you say so, I have no reason to dispute that.

MCCLINTOCK:

Then you met with the president on the 16th with Rod Rosenstein present. And then on the 17th, you were formally appointed as special counsel. Were you meeting with the president on the 16th with knowledge that you were under consideration for appointment of special counsel?

MUELLER:

I did not believe I was under consideration for counsel. The -- I had served two terms as FBI director...

MCCLINTOCK:

We consider (ph) the answer's no.

MUELLER:

The answer's no.

MCCLINTOCK:

Gregg Jarrett describes your office as the team of partisans. And additional information's coming to light, there's a growing concern that political biased caused important facts to be omitted from your report in order to cast the president unfairly in a negative light.

For example, John Dowd, the president's lawyer, leaves a message with Michael Flynn's lawyer on November 17 in 2017 -- November 2017. The edited version in your report makes it appear that he was improperly asking for confidential information, and that's all we know from your report expect that the judge in the Flynn case ordered the entire transcript released in which Dowd makes it crystal clear that's not what he was suggesting. So my question's why did you edit the transcript to hide the exculpatory part of the message?

MUELLER:

I will answer and I will agree (ph) with your characterization as we did anything to hide...

MCCLINTOCK:

Well, you omitted -- you omitted it. You quoted the part where he says we need some kind of heads up just for the sake of protecting all of our interests if we can, but you omitted the portion where he says without giving up any confidential information.

MUELLER:

Well, I'm not going to go further in terms of discussing the...

MCCLINTOCK:

Well, let's go on.

MUELLER:

... what's -- what the (ph)...

MCCLINTOCK:

You -- you extensively discussed Konstantin Kilimnik's activities with Paul Manafort. And you described him as, quote, "A Russian/Ukrainian political consultant," and, "longtime employee of Paul Manafort, assessed by the FBI to have ties to Russian intelligence."

And again, that's all we know from your report, except we've since learned from news articles that Kilimnik was actually a U.S. State Department intelligence source, yet nowhere in your report is he so identified. Why was that fact omitted?

MUELLER:

I don't -- I don't necessarily credit what you're saying occurred.

MCCLINTOCK:

Were you aware that Kilimnik was a -- a...

(CROSSTALK) MUELLER:

I'm not going to go into the...

MCCLINTOCK:

...State Department source?

MUELLER:

... ins and outs -- I'm not going to go into the ins and outs of what we had in the -- in the course...

(CROSSTALK) MCCLINTOCK:

Did you interview...

MUELLER:

... in the course of our investigation.

MCCLINTOCK:

... did you interview Konstantin Kilimnik?

MUELLER:

Pardon?

MCCLINTOCK:

Did you interview Konstantin Kilimnik?

MUELLER:

I can't go into the discussion of our investigative moves.

MCCLINTOCK:

And -- and -- and yet that is the -- the -- the basis of your report. Again, the problem we're having is we have to rely on your report for an accurate reflection of the evidence and we're starting to find out that's -- that's not true.

For example, you -- you -- your report famously links Russian Internet troll farms with the Russian government. Yet, at a hearing on May 28th in the Concord Management IRA prosecution that you initiated, the judge excoriated both you and Mr. Barr for producing no evidence to support this claim. Why did you suggest Russia was responsible for the troll farms, when, in court, you've been unable to produce any evidence to support it?

MUELLER:

Well, I am not going to get into that any further than I -- than I already have.

MCCLINTOCK:

But -- but you -- you have left the clear impression throughout the country, through your report, that it -- it was the Russian government behind the troll farms. And yet, when you're called upon to provide actual evidence in court, you fail to do so.

MUELLER:

Well, I would again dispute your characterization of what occurred in that -- in that proceeding.

MCCLINTOCK:

In -- in -- in fact, the judge considering -- considered holding prosecutors in criminal contempt. She backed off, only after your hastily called press conference the next day in which you retroactively made the distinction between the Russian government and the Russia troll farms.

Did your press conference on May 29th have anything to do with the threat to hold your prosecutors in contempt the previous day for publicly misrepresenting the evidence?

MUELLER:

What was the question?

MCCLINTOCK:

The -- the question is, did your May 29th press conference have anything to do with the fact that the previous day the judge threatened to hold your prosecutors in contempt for misrepresenting evidence?

MUELLER:

No.

MCCLINTOCK:

Now, the -- the -- the fundamental problem is -- is that, as I said, we've got to take your word, your team faithfully, accurately, impartially and completely described all of the underlying evidence in the Mueller report.

And we're finding more and more instances where this just isn't the case. And it's starting to look like, you know, having desperately tried and failed to make a legal case against the president, you made a political case instead. You put it in a paper sack, lit it on fire, dropped it on our porch, rang the doorbell and ran.

MUELLER:

I don't think you reviewed a report that is as thorough, as fair, as consistent as the report that we have in front of us.

MCCLINTOCK:

Then -- then why is contradictory information...

(CROSSTALK) NADLER:

The time of the gentleman has expired...

MCCLINTOCK:

... continuing to come out?

NADLER:

... The gentleman from Maryland is recognized.

RASKIN:

Director Mueller, let's go to a fourth episode of obstruction of justice in the form of a witness tampering, which is urging witnesses not to cooperate with law enforcement, either by

persuading them or intimidating them. Witness tampering is a felony, punishable by 20 years in prison. You found evidence that the president engaged in efforts, and I quote, "To encourage witnesses not to cooperate with the investigation." Is that right?

MUELLER:

That's correct. Do you have a citation?

RASKIN:

On page 7, on Volume 2.

MUELLER:

Thank you.

RASKIN:

Now, one of these witnesses was Michael Cohen, the president's personal lawyer, who ultimately plead guilty to campaign violations based on hush money payments to -- to -- when the president knew, and also to lying Congress -- lying to Congress about the hope (ph) for \$1 billion Trump tower deal. After the FBI searched Cohen's home, the president called him up personally, he said to check in, and told him to, quote, "hang in there and stay strong." Is that right? Do you remember finding that?

MUELLER:

It's in the report as stated. Yes, it is right.

RASKIN:

Yes. Also in the report actually are a series of calls made by other friends of the president. One reached out to say he was with the boss in Mar-a-Lago and the president said, he loves you. His name is redacted. Another redacted friend called to say he boss loves you and the third redacted friend called to say everyone knows the boss has your back. Do you remember finding that sequence of calls?

MUELLER:

Generally, yes.

RASKIN:

When the news -- and in fact, Cohen said that following the receipt of these messages, I'm quoting here page 147 of Volume 2, he believed he had the support of the White House if he continued to toe the party line. And he determined to stay on message and be part of the team. That's page 147. Do you remember generally finding that?

MUELLER:

Generally, yes.

RASKIN:

Well, and Robert Costello, a lawyer close to the president's team emailed Cohen to say, quote, you are loved. They are in our corner. Sleep well tonight. And you have friends in high places. And that's up on the screen, page 147. Do you remember reporting that

MUELLER:

I see that.

RASKIN:

OK. Now, when the news first broke that Cohen had arranged payoffs to Stormy Daniels, Cohen faithfully stuck to this party line. He said that publicly that neither the Trump organization nor the Trump campaign was a party to the transaction and neither reimbursed him. Trump's personal attorney at that point quickly texted Cohen to say, quote, "Client says thank you for what you do." Mr. Mueller, who is the capital "C" client thanking Cohen for what he did (ph)?

MUELLER:

Can't speak to that.

RASKIN:

The assumption in the context suggests very strongly its President Trump.

MUELLER:

I can't speak to that.

RASKIN:

OK. Cohen later broke and pled guilty to campaign finance violations and admitted fully they were made, quote, "at the account of candidate Trump." Do you remember that?

MUELLER:

Yes.

RASKIN:

After Cohen's guilty plea, the president suddenly changed his tune towards Mr. Cohen, didn't he?

MUELLER:

I would say I rely on what's in the report.

RASKIN:

Well, he made the suggestion that Cohen family members had crimes. He targeted, for example, Cohen's father-in-law and repeatedly suggested that he was guilty of committing crimes, right?

MUELLER:

That's generally accurate.

RASKIN:

OK. On page 15,4 you give a powerful summary of this change in dynamics. And you said -- I'm happy to have you read it, but I'm happy to do it, if not.

MUELLER:

I have it in front of me, thank you.

RASKIN:

Would you like to read it?

MUELLER:

I would.

RASKIN:

Could you read it out loud to everybody?

MUELLER:

I would be happy to have you read it.

RASKIN:

OK, very good, we'll read it at the same time. The evidence concerning this sequence of events could support an inference that the president used inducements in the form of positive messages in an effort to get Cohen not to cooperate and then turned to attacks and intimidation to deter the provision of information or to undermine Cohen's credibility once Cohen began cooperating.

MUELLER:

I believe that's accurate.

RASKIN:

OK. And in my view, if anyone else in America engaged in these actions, they would have been charged with witness tampering. We must enforce the principle in Congress that you emphasize so well in the last sentence of your report which is that in America, no person is so high as to be above the law. I yield back.

NADLER:

(OFF-MIC)

LESKO:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Just recently, Mr. Mueller, you said -- Mr. Lieu was asking you questions. And Mr. Lieu's question, I quote, "the reason you didn't indict the president was because of the OLC opinion. And you answered, that is correct. But that is not what you said in the report and it's not what you told Attorney General Barr.

In fact, in a joint statement that you released with DOJ on May 29th after your press conference, your -- your office issued a joint statement with the Department Of Justice that said, "the attorney general has previously stated that the special counsel repeatedly affirmed that he was not saying that but for the OLC opinion, he would have found the president obstructed justice.

The special counsel's report and his statement today made clear the office concluded it would not reach a determination one way or the other whether the president committed a crime. There is no conflict between these statements." So Mr. Mueller, do you stand by your joint statement with DOJ you issued on May 29th as you sit here today?

MUELLER:

I would have to look at it more closely before I say I agree with it (ph).

LESKO:

Well, so -- you know, my conclusion is that what you told Mr. Lieu really contradicts what you said in the report. And specifically what you said, apparently repeatedly, to Attorney General Barr that -- and then you issued a joint statement on May 29th saying that the attorney general has previously stated that the special counsel repeatedly affirmed that he was not saying but for the OLC report that we would have found the president obstructed justice. So I say there's a conflict. I do have some more questions. Mr. Mueller, there's been a lot of talk today about firing the special counsel and curtailing the investigation. Were you ever fired, Mr. Mueller?

MUELLER:

Was I what?

LESKO:

Were you ever fired as special counsel, Mr. Mueller?

MUELLER:

No.

LESKO:

Were you allowed to complete your investigation unencumbered?

MUELLER:

Yes.

LESKO:

And in fact, you resigned as special counsel when you closed up the office in late May of 2019. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

LESKO:

Thank you. Mr. Mueller, on April 18th, the attorney general held a press conference in conjunction with the public release of your report. Did Attorney General Barr say anything

inaccurate either in his press conference or his March 24th letter to Congress summarizing the principle conclusions of your report?

MUELLER:

Well, what you are not mentioning is the letter we sent on March 27th to Mr. Barr that raised some issues. And that letter speaks for itself.

LESKO:

But then I don't see how you could -- that could be since A.G. Barr's letter detailed the principle conclusions of your report and you have said before that -- that there wasn't anything inaccurate. In fact, you had this joint statement. But let me -- let me go on to another question. Mr. Mueller, rather than purely relying on the evidence provided by witnesses and documents, I think you relied a lot on media. I'd like to know how many times you cited "The Washington Post" in your report.

MUELLER:

How many times I what?

LESKO:

Cited "The Washington Post" in your report.

MUELLER:

I did not have knowledge of that figure, but -- I don't have knowledge of that figure.

LESKO:

I counted about 60 times. How many times did you cite "The New York Times"? I counted...

MUELLER:

Again, I have no idea.

LESKO:

I counted about 75 times. How many times did you cite Fox News?

MUELLER:

As with the other two, I have no idea.

LESKO:

About 25 times. I've got to say it looks like Volume 2 is mostly regurgitated press stories. Honestly, there's almost nothing in Volume 2 that I couldn't already hear or know simply by having a \$50 cable news subscription. However, your investigation cost American taxpayers \$25 million. Mr. Mueller, you cited media reports nearly 200 times in your report then in a footnote, a small footnote, number 7, page 15 of Volume 2 of your report you wrote. I quote, "this section summarizes and cites various news stories not for the truth of the information contained in the stories but rather to place Candidate Trump's response to those stories in context." Since nobody but lawyers reads footnotes, are you concerned that the American public took the embedded news stories...

NADLER:

The time of the gentlelady has expired. The gentlelady from Washington.

LESKO:

Can Mr. Mueller answer the question?

NADLER:

No. No. No, we're running short on time. I said the gentlelady from Washington.

JAYAPAL:

Thank you. Director Mueller, let's turn to the fifth of the obstruction episodes in your report and that is the evidence of whether President Trump engaged in witness tampering with Trump Campaign Chairman Paul Manafort whose foreign ties were critical into your investigation into Russia's interference in our elections and this starts at Volume 2, page 123. Your office got indictments against Manafort and Trump Deputy Campaign Manager Rick Gates in two different jurisdictions. Correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

JAYAPAL:

And your office found that after a grand jury indicted them, Manafort told Gates not to plead guilty to any charges because quote, "he had talked to the president -- president's personal counsel and they were going to take care of us." Is that correct?

MUELLER:

That's accurate.

JAYAPAL:

And according to your report, one day after Manafort's conviction on eight felony charges, quote, "The president said that flipping was not fair and almost ought to be outlawed." Is that correct?

MUELLER:

I'm aware of that.

JAYAPAL:

In this context Director Mueller, what does it mean to flip?

MUELLER:

To have somebody cooperate in a criminal investigation.

JAYAPAL:

And how essential is that cooperation to any efforts to combat crime?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to go beyond that -- characterizing that effort.

JAYAPAL:

Thank you. In your report you concluded that President Trump and his personal counsel Rudy Giuliani quote, "made repeated statements suggesting that a pardon was a possibility for Manafort while also making it clear that the president did not want Manafort to flip and cooperate with the government," end quote. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

JAYAPAL:

And as you stated earlier, witness tampering can be shown where someone with an improper motive encourages another person not to cooperate with law enforcement. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

JAYAPAL:

Now on page 123 of Volume 2 you also discuss the president's motive and you say that as court proceedings moved forward against Manafort, President Trump quote, "discussed with aides whether and in what way Manafort might be cooperating and whether Manafort knew any information that would be harmful to the president," end quote. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

And that was a quote from...

JAYAPAL:

From page 123, Volume 2.

MUELLER:

I have it. Thank you. Yes.

JAYAPAL:

And when someone tries to stop another person from working with law enforcement and they do it because they're worried about what that person will say, it seems clear from what you wrote that this is a classic definition of witness tampering. Now Mr. Manafort did eventually decide to cooperate with your office and he entered into a plea agreement but then he broke that agreement. Can you describe what he did that caused you to tell the court that the agreement was off.

MUELLER:

Now I'm referring to the court proceedings on that issue.

JAYAPAL:

So in -- on page 127 of Volume 2 you told the court that Mr. Manafort lied about a number of matters that were material to the investigation and you said that Manafort's lawyers also quote, "regularly briefed the president's lawyers on topics discussed and the information that Manafort had provided in interviews with the special counsel's office." Does that sound right?

MUELLER:

And the source of that is?

JAYAPAL:

That's page 127, Volume 2. That's a direct quote.

MUELLER:

If it's on the report, yes I support it.

JAYAPAL:

Thank you. And two days after you told the court that Manafort broke his plea agreement by lying repeatedly, did President Trump tell the press that Mr. Manafort was quote, "very brave because he did not flip." This is page 128 of Volume 2.

MUELLER:

If it's in the report I support it as it is -- as it is set forth.

JAYAPAL:

Thank you. Director Mueller in your report you make a very serious conclusion about the evidence regarding the president's involvement with the Manafort criminal proceedings. Let me read to you from your report. "Evidence concerning the president's conduct toward Manafort indicates that the president intended to encourage Manafort to not cooperate with the government."

It is clear that the president both publicly and privately discouraged Mr. Manafort's cooperation or flipping while also dangling the promise of a pardon if he stayed loyal and did not share what he knew about the president. Anyone else who did these things would be prosecuted for them. We must ensure that no one is above the law and I thank you for being here Director Mueller.

MUELLER:

Yes.

JAYAPAL:

I yield back.

NADLER:

The gentleman from Pennsylvania.

RESCHENTHALER:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Mueller. I'm over here, I'm sorry. Mr. Mueller, are you familiar with the now expired independent counsel statute. It's a statute under which Ken Starr was appointed.

MUELLER:

That Ken Starr did what? I'm sorry.

RESCHENTHALER:

Are you familiar with the independent counsel statute?

MUELLER:

Are you talking about the one we're operating under now or previous?

RESCHENTHALER:

No. Under which Ken Starr was appointed.

MUELLER:

I am not that familiar with that but I'd be happy to take your question.

RESCHENTHALER:

Well the Clinton Administration allowed the independent counsel statute to expire after Ken Starr's investigation. The final report requirement was a major reason why the statute was allowed to expire. Even President Clinton's A.G. Janet Reno expressed concerns about the final report requirement and I'll quote A.G. Reno. She said, "On one hand the American people have an interest in knowing the outcome of an investigation of their highest officials. On the other hand, the report requirement cuts against many of the most basic traditions and practices of American law enforcement. Under our system, we presume innocence and we value privacy. We believe that information obtained during a criminal investigation should, in most cases be made public only if there's an indictment and prosecution not any lengthy and detailed report filed after a decision has been made not to prosecute. The final report provides a forum for unfairly airing a target's dirty laundry and it also creates yet another incentive for an independent counsel to over investigate in order to justify his or her tenure and to avoid criticism that the independent counsel may have left a stone unturned."

Again, Mr. Mueller, those are A.G. Reno's words. Didn't you do exactly what A.G. Reno feared? Didn't you publish a lengthy report unfairly airing the target's dirty laundry without recommending charges?

MUELLER:

I disagree with that and ...

RESCHENTHALER:

OK. Did any -- did any of your witnesses ...

MUELLER:

Can I finish?

RESCHENTHALER:

... have the chance to be cross examined?

MUELLER:

Can I just finish my answer on that?

RESCHENTHALER:

Quickly. My time...

MUELLER:

We operate under the current statute not the original statute so I'm most familiar with the current statute not the older statute.

RESCHENTHALER:

OK. Did any of the witnesses have a chance to be cross examined?

MUELLER:

Did any of the witnesses in our investigation?

RESCHENTHALER:

Yes.

MUELLER:

I'm going to answer that.

RESCHENTHALER:

Did you allow the people mentioned in your report to challenge how they were characterized?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to get into that.

RESCHENTHALER:

Given that A.G. Barr stated multiple times during his confirmation hearing that he would make as much of your report public as possible, did you write your report knowing that it would likely be shared with the public?

MUELLER:

No.

RESCHENTHALER:

Did knowing that the report could and likely would be made public, did that alter contents would you include it?

MUELLER:

I can't speak to that.

RESCHENTHALER:

Despite the expectations that your report would be released to the public, you left out significant exculpatory evidence. In other words, evidence favorable to the president correct?

MUELLER:

Well, I actually would disagree with you. I think we strove to put into the report exculpatory (inaudible) as well...

RESCHENTHALER:

(inaudible) got into that with you where he said there was -- you said there was evidence you left out.

MUELLER:

Well, you make a choice as to what goes into a indictment.

RESCHENTHALER:

Isn't it true -- Mr. Mueller, isn't it true that on page 1, Volume 2 you state when you're quoting the statute the obligation to either prosecute or not prosecute?

MUELLER:

Well, generally that is the case.

RESCHENTHALER:

Right.

MUELLER:

Although most cases are not done in the context of the president.

RESCHENTHALER:

In this case you made a decision not to prosecute, correct?

MUELLER:

No. We made a decision not to decide whether to prosecute or not.

RESCHENTHALER:

So essentially what your report did was everything that A.G. Reno warned against?

MUELLER:

I can't agree with that characterization.

RESCHENTHALER:

OK, well what you did is you compiled a nearly 450 -- you compiled nearly 450 pages of the very worst information you gathered against the target of your investigation who happens to be the President of the United States and you did this knowing that you were not going to recommend charges and that the report would be made public.

MUELLER:

Not true.

RESCHENTHALER:

Mr. Mueller, as a former officer in the United States JAG Corps I prosecuted nearly 100 terrorists in a Baghdad courtroom. I cross-examined the Butcher of Fallujah in defense of our Navy SEALs. As a civilian, I was elected a magisterial district judge in Pennsylvania, so I'm very well-versed in the American legal system. The drafting and the publication of some of the information in this report without an indictment, without prosecution frankly flies in the face of American justice and I find those facts and this entire process un-American. I yield the remainder of my time to my colleague Jim Jordan.

JORDAN:

Mister -- Director Mueller, the third FISA renewal happens a month after you're named special counsel. What role did your office play in the third FISA renewal of Carter Page.

MUELLER:

I'm not going to talk to that.

NADLER:

The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentlelady from Florida.

DEMINGS:

Director Mueller, a couple of my colleagues right here wanted to talk to you or ask you about lies, so let's talk about lies. According to your report, page 9, Volume 1, witnesses lied to your offices and to Congress. Those lies materially impaired the investigation of Russia interference according to your report other than the individuals who plead guilty to crimes based on their lying to you and your team. Did other witnesses lie to you?

MUELLER:

I think there are probably a spectrum of witnesses in terms of those who are not telling the full truth and those who are outright liars.

DEMINGS:

Thank you very much, outright liars. It is fair to say then that there were limits on what evidence was available to your investigation of both Russia election interference and obstruction of justice.

MUELLER:

That's usually the case.

DEMINGS:

And that lies by Trump campaign officials and administration officials impeded your investigation?

MUELLER:

I would generally agree with that.

DEMINGS:

Thank you so much, Director Mueller. You will be hearing more from me in the next hearing, so I yield the balance of my time to Mr. Correa. Thank you.

CORREA:

Mr. Mueller, first of all let me welcome you. Thank you for your service to our country. You are a hero, Vietnam War vet, wounded war vet. We won't forget your service to our country.

MUELLER:

Thank you, sir.

CORREA:

I may begin because of time limits we have gone in depth on only five possible episodes of obstruction. There's so much more. And I want to focus on another section of obstruction which is the president's conduct concerning Michael Flynn, the president's national security advisor. In early 27, the White House Counsel and the president were informed that Mr. Flynn had lied to government authorities about his communications with the Russian ambassador during the Trump campaign in transition. Is this correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

CORREA:

If a hostile nation knows that a U.S. official has lied publicly that can be used to blackmail that government official, correct?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to speak to that. I don't disagree with it necessarily, but I'm not going to speak to -- anymore to that issue.

CORREA:

Thank you very much, sir. Flynn resigned on February 13, 2016, and the very next day when the president was having lunch with New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, did the president say, open quotes, "now that we fired Flynn, the Russia thing is over," close quote. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

CORREA:

And is it true that Christie responded by saying, open quotes, "no way, and this Russia thing is far from over," close quote?

MUELLER:

That's the way we have it in the report.

CORREA:

Thank you. And after the president met with Christie, later that same day the president arranged to meet with then FBI Director James Comey along in the Oval Office, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct. Particularly if you have the citation to the...

CORREA:

Page 39-40, Volume 2.

MUELLER:

Thank you very much.

CORREA:

And according to Comey, the president told him I hope -- open quote, "I hope you can see your way to clear to letting this thing go, to letting Flynn go. He's a good guy and I hope you can let it go," close quote. Page 40, Volume 2.

MUELLER:

Accurate.

CORREA:

What did Comey understand the president to be asking?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to get into what was in Mr. Comey's mind.

CORREA:

Comey understood this to be a direction because of the president's position and the circumstances of the one-to-one meeting, page 40, Volume 2?

MUELLER:

Well, I understand it's in the report and I support it as being in the report.

CORREA:

Thank you, sir. Even though the president publicly denied telling Comey to drop the investigation you found, open quote, "substantial evidence corroborating Comey's account over the president's." Is this correct?

MUELLER:

It's correct.

CORREA:

The president fired Comey on May 9. Is that correct, sir?

MUELLER:

I believe that's the accurate date.

CORREA:

That's page 77, Volume 2. You found substantial evidence that the catalyst for the president's firing of Comey was Comey's, open quote, "unwillingness to publicly state that the president was not personally under investigation"?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to delve more into the details of what happened. If it's in the report, then I support it because it's already been reviewed appropriately appears in the report.

CORREA:

And that's page 75, Volume 2.

MUELLER:

Thank you.

CORREA:

Thank you. And in fact, the very next day the president told the Russian Foreign Minister, open quote, "I just fired the head of the FBI. He was crazy, a real nut job. I face great pressure because of Russia. That's taken off. I'm not under investigation," close quote. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

That's what was written in the -- written in the report, yes.

NADLER:

Time of the -- time of the gentleman has expired.

CORREA:

Thank you, sir.

NADLER:

Gentleman from Virginia.

CLINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Mueller, we've heard a lot about what you're not going to talk about today, so let's talk about something that you should be able to talk about -- the law itself, the underlying obstruction statute, and your creative, legal analysis of the statutes in Volume 2, particularly your interpretation of 18 USC (ph) 1512-c. Section 1512-c is a statute created as part of auditing financial regulations for public companies. And as you write on page 164 of Volume 2, this provision was added as a floor amendment in the Senate and explained as closing a certain loophole with respect to document shredding.

And to read the statute, "Whoever appropriately alters, destroys, mutilates, or conceals a record, document or other object, or attempts to do so with the intent to impair the object's integrity or availability for use in an official proceeding, or otherwise obstructs, influences or impedes any official proceeding or attempts to do so shall be fined under the statute or imprisoned not more than 20 years, or both." Your analysis and application of the statute proposes to give clause C2 a much broader interpretation than commonly used. First, your analysis proposes to read clause C2 in isolation, reading it as a free standing all-encompassing provision, prohibiting any act influencing a proceeding if done with an improper motive.

And second, your analysis of the statute to apply this way (ph) -- proposes to apply this sweeping prohibition to lawful acts taken by public officials, exercising their discretionary powers if those acts influence a proceeding.

So, Mr. Mueller, I'd ask you, in analyzing the obstruction, you state that you recognize that the Department of Justice and the courts have not definitely resolved these issues, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

CLINE:

You'd agree that not everyone in the Justice Department agreed with your legal theory of the obstruction of justice statutes, correct?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to be involved in a discussion on -- on that at this juncture.

CLINE:

In fact, the attorney general himself disagrees with your interpretation of the law, correct?

MUELLER:

I leave that to the attorney general to identify.

CLINE:

And you would agree that prosecutors sometimes incorrectly apply the law, correct?

MUELLER:

I would have to agree with that one.

CLINE:

And members of your legal team in fact have had convictions overturned because they were based on an incorrect legal theory, correct?

MUELLER:

I don't know to what you (inaudible) -- we've all spent time in the trenches trying casing, have not won every one of those cases.

(CROSSTALK) CLINE:

Well, let me ask you about one in particular. One of your top prosecutors, Andrew Weissmann, obtained a conviction against auditing firm Arthur Anderson, lower court, which was subsequently overturned and a unanimous Supreme Court decision that rejected the legal theory advanced by Weissmann, correct?

MUELLER:

Well, I'm not going to get into that -- delve into that...

CLINE:

Well let me read from that, maybe...

(CROSSTALK) MUELLER:

May I just finish? May I just finish my answer?

CLINE:

Yes.

MUELLER:

To say I'm not going to be --get involved in a discussion on that. I will refer you to that citation that you gave me at the outset for the lengthy discussion on just what you're talking about. And to the extent I have anything to say about it, it is what we've already put into the report on that.

CLINE:

And I am reading from your report when discussing this section. Now I'll read from the decision of the Supreme Court unanimously reversing Mr. Weissmann, when he said, "Indeed, its striking how little culpability the instructions require. For example, the jury was told that even a

petitioner who honestly and sincerely believed that his conduct was lawful, the jury could convict. The instructions also diluted the meaning of 'corruptly,' such that it covered innocent conduct."

MUELLER:

Let me just say...

(CROSSTALK) CLINE:

Let me move on, I have limited time. Your report takes the broadest possible reading of this provision in applying it to the president's official acts, and I'm concerned about the implications of your theory for over-criminalizing conduct by public officials and private citizens alike.

So to emphasize how broad your theory of liability is, I want to ask a few examples. On October 11, 2015 during the FBI investigation into the Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server, President Obama said, "I don't think it posed a national security problem." And he later said, "I can tell you that this is not a situation in which America's national security was endangered."

Assuming for a moment that his comments did influence the investigation, couldn't President Obama be charged under your interpretation with obstruction of justice?

MUELLER:

Well, again, I refer you to the report. But let me say, with Andrew Weissmann, he's one of the more talented attorneys we have on board...

CLINE:

OK, well, I'll take that as...

MUELLER:

... over a period of time he has run a number of units...

(CROSSTALK) CLINE:

I have very limited time.

In August 2015, a very senior DOJ official called FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, expressing concern that FBI agents were still openly pursuing the Clinton Foundation probe. The DOJ official was apparently "very pissed off," quote/unquote. McCabe questioned this official, asking, "Are you telling me I need to shut down a validly predicted investigation?" To which the official replied of course not.

This seems to be a clear example of somebody within the executive branch attempting to influence a FBI investigation. So under your theory, couldn't that person be charged with obstruction as long as a prosecutor could come up with a potentially corrupt motive?

MUELLER:

I refer to you to our lengthy dissertation on exactly those issues that appears in the -- at the end of the report.

CLINE:

Mr. Mueller, I'd argue that it says above the Supreme Court...

(CROSSTALK) NADLER:

Time of the gentleman has expired. Our intent -- our intent was to conclude this hearing in three hours. Given the break, that would bring us to approximately 11:40. With Director Mueller's indulgence, we will be asking our remaining Democratic members to voluntarily limit their time below the five minutes so that we can complete our work as close to that timeframe as possible.

I recognize the gentlelady from Pennsylvania.

SCANLON:

Thank you. Director Mueller, I want to ask you some questions about the president's statements regarding advanced knowledge of the WikiLeaks dumps. So the president refused to sit down with your investigators for an in-person interview, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

SCANLON:

So the only questions we have from the president are contained in Appendix C to your report.

MUELLER:

That's correct.

SCANLON:

OK. So looking at Appendix C on page 5, you asked the president over a dozen questions about whether he had knowledge that WikiLeaks possessed or might possess the emails that were stolen by the Russians.

MUELLER:

I apologize. Can you start it again?

SCANLON:

Sure. OK, sure. So we're looking at Appendix C.

MUELLER:

Right.

SCANLON:

And Appendix C, page 5 you asked the president about a dozen questions about whether he had knowledge that WikiLeaks possessed the stolen emails that might be released in a way helpful to his campaign or harmful to the Clinton campaign. Is that correct, you asked those questions?

MUELLER:

Yes.

SCANLON:

OK. In February of this year, Mr. Trump's personal attorney Michael Cohen testified to Congress under oath that, quote, "Mr. Trump knew from Roger Stone in advance about the WikiLeaks dump." End quote. That's a matter of public record, isn't it?

MUELLER:

Well, are you referring to the report or some other record?

SCANLON:

This was testimony before Congress by Mr. Cohen. Do you know if he told you...

MUELLER:

Ma'am, I am not familiar with -- specifically familiar with what he testified to before Congress.

SCANLON:

OK. Let's look at an event described on page 18 of Volume 2 of your report. Now according -- and we're going to put it up in a slide, I think. According to Deputy Campaign Manager Rick Gates, in the summer of 2016, he and Candidate Trump were on the way to the airport shortly after WikiLeaks released its first set of stolen e-mails. And Gates told your investigators that Candidate Trump was on a phone call, and when the call ended, Trump told Gates that "more releases of damaging information would be coming, end quote. Do you recall that from the report?

MUELLER:

If it's in the report, I support it.

SCANLON:

OK, and that's on page 18 of Volume 2. Now, on page 77 of Volume 2, your report also stated, quote, "In addition some witnesses said that Trump privately sought information about future WikiLeaks releases," end quote. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

SCANLON:

Now, in Appendix C, where the president did answer some written questions, he said, quote, "I do not recall discussing WikiLeaks with him, nor do I recall being aware of Mr. Stone having discussed WikiLeaks with individuals associated with my campaign," end quote. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

If it's from the report, it is correct.

SCANLON:

OK. So is it fair to say the president denied ever discussing WikiLeaks with Mr. Stone and denied being aware that anyone associated with this campaign discussed WikiLeaks with Stone?

MUELLER:

I'm sorry, could you repeat that one?

SCANLON:

Is it fair then that the president denied knowledge of himself or anyone else discussing WikiLeaks dumps with Mr. Stone?

MUELLER:

Yes, yes.

SCANLON:

OK. And with that, I would yield back.

MUELLER:

Thank you, ma'am.

NADLER:

(OFF MIKE)

STEUBE:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Mueller, over here. Mr. Mueller did you indeed interview for the FBI director job one day before you were appointed as Special Counsel?

MUELLER:

My understanding I was not applying for that job, I was asked to give my input on what it would take to do the job, which triggered the interview you're talking about.

STEUBE:

So you don't recall on May 16th, 2017 that you interviewed with the president regarding the FBI director job?

MUELLER:

I interviewed with the president and it was about...

STEUBE:

Regarding the FBI director job?

MUELLER:

...it was about the job and not about me applying for the job.

STEUBE:

So your statement here today is that you didn't interview to apply for the FBI director job?

MUELLER:

That's correct.

STEUBE:

So it - did you tell the vice president that the FBI director position would be the one job that you would come back to - for?

MUELLER:

I don't recall that one.

STEUBE:

You don't recall that?

MUELLER:

No.

STEUBE:

OK. Given your 22 months of investigation, tens of million dollars spent and millions of documents reviewed, did you obtain any evidence at all that any American voter changed their vote as a result of Russia's election interference?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to speak to that.

STEUBE:

You can't speak to that after 22 months of investigation, there's not any evidence in that document before us that any voter changed their vote because of their interference and I'm asking you based on all of the documents that you reviewed...

MUELLER:

That was - that was outside our purview.

STEUBE:

Russian meddling was outside your purview?

MUELLER:

But the impact of that meddling was undertaken by other agencies.

STEUBE:

OK, you stated in your opening statement that you would not get into the details of the Steele Dossier. However multiple times in Volume 2 on page 23, 27 and 28 you mentioned the unverified allegations. How long did it take you to reach the conclusion that it was unverified?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to speak to that.

STEUBE:

It's in - it's actually in your report multiple times that its unverified and you're telling me that you're not willing to tell us how you came to conclusion that it was unverified?

MUELLER:

True.

STEUBE:

When did you become aware that the unverified Steele Dossier was included in the FISA application to spy on Carter Page?

MUELLER:

I'm sorry, what was the - what was the question?

STEUBE:

When did you become aware that the unverified Steele Dossier was intended - was included in the FISA application to spy on Carter Page?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to speak to that.

STEUBE:

Your team interviewed Christopher Steele, is that correct?

MUELLER:

Not going to get into that. I said it - I...

STEUBE:

You can't - you can't - you can't tell this committee as to whether or not you interviewed Christopher Steele in a 22 month investigation with 18 lawyers?

MUELLER:

As I said at the outset, that is one of those - one of the investigations that is being handled by others in the Department of Justice.

STEUBE:

Yes but you're here testifying about this investigation today and I am asking you directly did any members of your team or did you interview Christopher Steele in the course of your investigation.

MUELLER:

And I am not going to answer that question, sir.

STEUBE:

You had two years to investigate, not once did you consider it worthy to investigate how an unverified document that was paid for by a political opponent was used to obtain a warrant to spy on the opposition political campaign. Did you do any investigation in that way (ph)?

MUELLER:

I do not accept your characterization of what occurred.

STEUBE:

What would you - what would be your characterization?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to speak any more to it.

STEUBE:

So you can't speak any more to it but you're not going to agree with my characterization? Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

STEUBE:

The FISA application makes reference to Source 1, who is Christopher Steele, the author of the Steele Dossier. The FISA application says nothing Sources 1's reason for conducting the research into Canada 1' (ph) ties to Russia. Based on Source's 1 previous reporting history with FBI, whereby Source One provided reliable information to the FBI. The FBI believes Source One's reporting herein to be credible. Do you believe the FBI's representation that Source 1's reporting was credible to be accurate?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to answer that.

STEUBE:

So you're not going to respond to any of the questions regarding Christopher Steele or your interviews with him?

MUELLER:

Well as I said at the outset this morning, that was one of the investigations that I could not speak to.

STEUBE:

Well I don't understand how if you interviewed an individual on the purview of this investigation that you're testifying to us today that you've closed that investigation, how that's not within your purview to tell us about that investigation and who you interviewed.

MUELLER:

I have nothing to add.

STEUBE:

OK well the - I can guarantee that the American people want to know and I'm - and I'm very hopeful and glad that A.G. Barr is looking into this and the inspector general is looking into this because you're unwilling to answer the questions of the American people as it relates to the very basis of this investigation into the president and the very basis of this individual who you did interview, you're just refusing to answer those questions.

Can - can't the president fire the FBI director at any time without reason under the Article I of the Constitution?

MUELLER:

Yes.

STEUBE:

Article II.

MUELLER:

Yes.

STEUBE:

That's correct. Can't he also fire U.S. Special Counsel at any time without any reason?

MUELLER:

I believe that to be the case.

STEUBE:

Under Article II.

MUELLER:

Well hold on just a second, you said without any reason, I know the Special Counsel can be fired, but I'm not certain it extends to for whatever reasons is given.

STEUBE:

Well then you've testified that you weren't fired, you were able to complete your investigation in full. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to add to what I've stated before.

STEUBE:

My time has expired.

NADLER:

Gentleman's time has expired. The gentlelady from Pennsylvania - from Texas.

GARCIA:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you Mr. Mueller for being with us this afternoon - close to the afternoon now. Director Mueller, now I would like to ask you about the president's answers relating to Roger Stone. Roger Stone was indicted for multiple federal crimes and indictment alleges that Mr. Stone discussed future WikiLeaks e-mail releases with the Trump campaign. Understanding there's a gag order on the Stone case, I will keep my questions restricted to publicly available information. Mr. Stone's indictment...

MUELLER:

Let me just at the outset, I don't mean to disrupt you, but I'm not - I would like some demarcation of that which is applicable to this, but also in such a way that it does not hinder the other prosecution that is taking place in D.C.

GARCIA:

I understand that, I'm only going to be talking about the questions that you asked in writing to the president...

MUELLER:

Thank you, ma'am.

GARCIA:

...that relate to Mr. Stone. Mr. Stone's indictment states among other things the following, quote, "Stone was contacted by senior Trump officials to inquire about future releases of organization 1", organization 1 being WikiLeaks.

The indictment continues, quote, "Stone thereafter told the Trump campaign about potential future releases of damaging material by WikiLeaks". So in short, the indictment alleges that Stone was asked by the Trump campaign to get information about more WikiLeaks releases, and that Stone in fact did tell the Trump campaign about potential future releases. Correct?

MUELLER:

Yes, ma'am, but I see you're quoting from the indictment and even though the indictment is a public document, I feel uncomfortable discussing anything having to do with the Stone prosecution.

GARCIA:

Right, the indictment is of record and I pulled - and we pulled it off of the - (inaudible) straight from it.

MUELLER:

I understand that.

GARCIA:

Well turning back to the president's answers to your questions then on this very subject, the president denied ever discussing future WikiLeaks releases with Stone and denied knowing whether anyone else in his campaign had those discussions with Stone. If you had learned that other witnesses - putting aside the president, if other witnesses had lied to your investigators in response to specific questions whether he - whether in writing or in interview, could they be charged with false statement crimes?

MUELLER:

Well, I'm not going to speculate because I think you're asking for me to speculate given a set of circumstances.

GARCIA:

Well, let's put it more specific. What if I had made a false statement to an investigator on your team. Could I go to jail for up to five years?

MUELLER:

Yes.

GARCIA:

Yes.

MUELLER:

Although there's - it's Congress, so...

(LAUGHTER) GARICA:

Well, that's the point, though, isn't it that no one is above the law.

MUELLER:

That's right.

GARICA:

Not you, not the Congress, and certainly not the president, and I think it's just troubling to have to hear some of these things, and that's why the American people deserve to learn the full facts of the misconduct described in your report for which any other person would have been charged with crimes. So thank you for being here. And again, this - the point has been underscored many times, but I'll repeat it. No one is above the law. Thank you.

MUELLER:

Thank you, ma'am.

NADLER:

The time - the gentle - the gentleman from North Dakota is recognized.

ARMSTRONG:

Mr. Mueller, how many people did you fire - how many people on your staff did you fire during the course of the investigation?

MUELLER:

How many people...

ARMSTRONG:

Did you fire?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to discuss that.

ARMSTRONG:

You fired - according to inspector general's report, attorney number two was let go and we know Peter Strzok was let go, correct?

MUELLER:

Yes, and there may have been other persons on other issues that have been either transferred or fired.

ARMSTRONG:

Peter Strzok testified before this Committee on July 12, 2018 that he was fired because you were concerned about preserving the appearance of independence. Do you agree with this testimony?

MUELLER:

Say that again if you could?

ARMSTRONG:

He said he was fired at least partially because you were worried about - concerned about preserving the appearance of independence with the special counsel's investigation. Do you agree with that statement?

MUELLER:

And the statement was by whom?

ARMSTRONG:

Peter Strzok at this hearing.

MUELLER:

I am not familiar with that.

ARMSTRONG:

Did you fire him because you were worried about the appearance of independence of the investigation?

MUELLER:

No. He was transferred as a result of instances involving texts.

ARMSTRONG:

Do you agree that - do you agree that your office did not only have an obligation to operate with independence but to operate with the appearance of independence as well?

MUELLER:

Absolutely. We strove to do that over the two years.

ARMSTRONG:

Andrew...

MUELLER:

Part of that was making certain that...

ARMSTRONG:

Andrew Weissmann's one of your top attorneys?

MUELLER:

Yes.

ARMSTRONG:

Did Weissmann have a role in selecting other members of your team?

MUELLER:

He had some role but not a major role. **ARMSTRONG.** Andrew Weissmann attended Hillary Clinton's election night party. Did you know that before or after he came onto the team?

MUELLER:

I don't know when I found that out.

ARMSTRONG:

On January 30, 2017, Weissmann wrote an email to Deputy Attorney General Yates stating, "I am so proud and in awe regarding her disobeying a direct order from the president." Did Weissmann disclose that email to you before he joined the team?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to talk about that.

ARMSTRONG:

Is that not a conflict of interest?

MUELLER:

Not going to talk about that.

ARMSTRONG:

Are you aware that Ms. Jeannie Rhee represented Hillary Clinton in litigation regarding personal emails originating from Clinton's time as Secretary of State?

MUELLER:

Yes.

ARMSTRONG:

Did you know that before she came on the...

MUELLER:

No.

ARMSTRONG:

Aaron Zelbley, the guy sitting next to you, represented Justin Cooper, a Clinton aide who destroyed one of Clinton's mobile devices, and you must be aware by now that six of your lawyers donated \$12,000 directly to Hillary Clinton. I'm not even talking about the \$49,000 they donated to other democrats, just the donations to the opponent who was the target of your investigation.

MUELLER:

Can I speak for a second to the hiring practices?

ARMSTRONG:

Sure.

MUELLER:

We strove to hire those individuals that could do that job.

ARMSTRONG:

OK.

MUELLER:

I have been in this business for almost 25 years, and in those 25 years I have not had occasion once to ask somebody about their political affiliation. It is not done. What I care about is the capability of the individual to do the job and do the job quickly and seriously and with integrity.

ARMSTRONG:

But that's what I'm saying, Mr. Mueller. This isn't just about you being able to vouch for your team. This is about knowing that the day you accepted this role you had to be aware no matter what this report concluded half of the country was going to be scheduled - skeptical of your team's findings, and that's why we have recusal laws that define bias and perceive bias for this very reason. 28 United States code 5218 (ph) specifically lists not just political conflict of interest but the appearance of political conflicts of interest. It's just simply not enough that you vouch for your team. The interest (inaudible) demand that no perceived bias exists. I can't imagine a single prosecutor or judge that I have every appeared in front of would be comfortable with these circumstances where over half of the prosecutorial team had a direct relationship to the opponent of the person being investigated.

MUELLER:

Let me one other fact that I put on the table, and that is we hired 19 lawyers over the period of time. Of those 19 lawyers, 14 of them were transferred from elsewhere in the Department of Justice. Only five came from outside, so we did not have...

ARMSTRONG:

And half of them had a direct relationship, political or personal, with the opponent of the person you were investigating, and that's my point. I wonder if not a single word in this entire report was change but rather the only difference was we switched Hillary Clinton and President Trump. If Peter Strzok has texted those terrible things about Hillary Clinton instead of President Trump, if a team of lawyers worked for, donated thousands of dollars to, and went to Trump's parties instead of Clinton's, I don't think we'd be here trying to prop up an obstruction allegation. My colleagues would have spent the last four months accusing your team of being bought and paid for by the Trump campaign and we couldn't trust a single word of this report. They would still be accusing the president of conspiracy with Russia and they would be accusing your team of aiding and embedding with that conspiracy, and with that I yield back.

NADLER:

Gentleman yields back. The gentleman from Colorado.

NEGUSE:

Director Mueller, thank you for your service to our country. I'd like to talk to you about one of the other incidents of obstruction, and that's the evidence in your report showing the president directing his son and his communications director to issue a false public statement in June of 2017 about a meeting between his campaign and Russian individuals at Trump Tower in June of 2016. According to your report, Mr. Trump Jr. was the only Trump associate who participated in that meeting and who declined to be voluntarily interviewed by your office. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

NEGUSE:

Did Mr. Trump Jr. or his counsel ever communicate to your office any intent to invoke his fifth amendment right against self incrimination?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to answer that.

NEGUSE:

You did pose written questions to the president about his knowledge of the Trump Tower meeting. You included also asked him about whether or not he had directed a false press statement. The president did not answer at all that question, correct?

MUELLER:

I don't have it in front of me. I take your word.

NEGUSE:

I can represent to you that Appendix C, specifically C13 states as much. According to page 100 of Volume 2 of your report, your investigation found that Hope Hicks, the president's communications director, in June of 2017 was shown emails that set up the Trump Tower meeting, and she told your office that she was, quote, "shocked by the emails," because they looked, quote, "really bad." True?

MUELLER:

Do you have a citation?

NEGUSE:

Sure. It's page 100 of Volume 2.

NEGUSE:

While you're flipping to that page, Director Mueller, I will also tell you that according to page 99 of Volume 2 that those emails in question stated according to reporting that the crown prosecutor of Russia had offered to provide the Trump campaign with some official documents and information that would incriminate Hillary and her dealings with Russia as part of Russia and its government's support for Mr. Trump. Trump Jr. responded, "if it's what you say, I love it. And he, Kushner, and Manafort met with the Russian attorneys and several other Russian individuals at Trump Tower on June 9, 2016," end quote. Correct?

MUELLER:

Generally accurate.

NEGUSE:

Isn't it true that Ms. Hicks told your office that she went multiple times to the president to, quote, "Urge him that they should be fully transparent about the June 9th meeting," end quote, but the president, each time, said no, correct?

MUELLER:

Accurate.

NEGUSE:

And the reason was because of those emails, which the president, quote, believed "would not leak." Correct?

MUELLER:

Well, I'm not certain how it's characterized, but generally correct.

NEGUSE:

Did the president direct Ms. Hicks to say, quote, "Only that Trump Jr. took a brief meeting and was about Russian adoption," end quote, because Trump Jr.'s statement to The New York Times, quote, "said too much," according to page 102, of Volume 2?

MUELLER:

OK.

NEGUSE:

Correct?

MUELLER:

Let me -- one -- let me just check one thing. Yes, correct.

NEGUSE:

And according to Ms. Hicks, the president still directed her to say the meeting was only about Russian adoption. Correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

NEGUSE:

Despite knowing that to be untrue. Thank you, Director Mueller.

I yield back the balance of my own time.

NADLER:

(OFF-MIKE).

M. JOHNSON:

Mr. Mueller, you've been asked -- over here on the -- on the far right, sir -- you've been asked a lot of questions here today. And to be frank, you performed as most of us expected. You've stuck closely to your report and you have declined to answer many of our questions on both sides.

As the closer for the Republican side, I know you're glad to get to the close, I want to summarize the highlights of what we have heard and what we know. You spent two years, and nearly \$30 million taxpayer dollars and unlimited resources to prepare a nearly 450-page report which you describe today as very thorough. Millions of Americans today maintain genuine concerns about

your work, in large part, because of the infamous and widely publicized bias of your investigating team members, which we now know included 14 Democrats and 0 Republicans.

Campaign finance reports later showed that team...

(CROSSTALK) MUELLER:

Can I...

M. JOHNSON:

... Excuse me, it's my time. That team of Democrat investigators you hired donated more than \$60,000 to the Hillary Clinton campaign and other Democratic candidates. Your team also included Peter Strzok and Lisa Page, which have been discussed today, and they had the lurid text messages that confirm they openly mocked and hated Donald Trump and his supporters, and they vowed to take him out. Mr. Ratcliffe asked you earlier this morning, quote, "Can you give me an example, other than Donald Trump, where the Justice Department determined that an investigated person was not exonerated because their innocence was not conclusively determined?" unquote. You answered, "I cannot." Sir, that is unprecedented. The president believed from the very beginning that you and your special counsel team had serious conflicts this is stated in the report and acknowledged by everybody. And yet, President Trump cooperated fully with the investigation. He knew he had done nothing wrong, and he encouraged all witnesses to cooperate with the investigation and produce more than 1.4 million pages of information, and allowed over 40 witnesses who are directly affiliated with the White House or his campaign. Your report acknowledges on page 61, Volume 2 that a volume of evidence exists of the president telling many people privately, quote, "The president was concerned about the impact of the Russian investigation on his ability to govern, and to address important foreign relations issues and even matters of national security." And on page 174, Volume 2 your report also acknowledges that the Supreme Court has held, quote, "The president's removal powers are at their zenith with respect to principal officers -- that is, officers who must be appointed by the president and who report to him directly. The president's 'exclusive and illimitable power of removal' of those principal officers furthers 'the president's ability to ensure that the laws are faithfully executed,'" unquote. And that would even include the attorney general. Look, in spite of all of that, nothing ever happened to stop or impede your special counsel's investigation. Nobody was fired by the president, nothing was curtailed and the investigation continued unencumbered for 22 long months. As you finally concluded in Volume 1, the evidence, quote, "Did not establish that the president was involved in an underlying crime related to Russian election interference," unquote. And the evidence, quote, "did not establish that the president or those close to him were involved in any Russian conspiracies or had an unlawful relationship with any Russian official," unquote. Over those 22 long months that your investigation dragged along, the president became increasingly frustrated as many of the American people did with its effects on our country and - and his ability to govern.

He vented about this to his lawyer and his close associates and he even shared his frustrations, as we all know, on twitter. But while the president's social media accounts might have influenced some in the media or the opinion of some the American people, none of those audiences were targets or witnesses in your investigation.

The president never affected anybody's testimony. He never demanded to end the investigation or demanded that you be terminated and he never misled Congress, the DOJ or the special counsel. Those, sir, are her undisputed facts. There will be a lot of discussion I predict today and great frustration throughout the country about the fact that you wouldn't answer any questions here about the origins of this whole charade, which was the infamous Christopher Steele dossier, now proven to be totally bogus, even though it is listed and specifically referenced in your report. But as our hearing is concluding, we apparently will get no comment on that from you. Mr. Mueller there's one primary reason why you were called here today by the democrat majority of our committee. Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle just want political cover. They desperately wanted you today to tell them they should impeach the president but the one thing you have said very clearly today is that your report is complete and thorough and you completely agree with and stand by its recommendations and all of its content. Is that right?

MUELLER:

True.

M. JOHNSON:

Mr. Mueller, one last important question. Your report does not recommend impeachment, does it?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to talk about recommendations.

M. JOHNSON:

It does not conclude that impeachment would be appropriate here, right?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to talk - I'm not going to talk about that - about that issue.

M. JOHNSON:

That's one of the many things you wouldn't talk about today but I think we can all draw our own conclusions. I do thank you for your service to the country and I'm glad this charade will come to

an end soon and we can get back to the important business of this committee with its broad jurisdiction of so many important issues for the country. With that, I yield back.

NADLER:

The gentleman yields back. I want to announce that our intent was to conclude this hearing at around 11:45. All of the republican members have now asked their questions but we have a few remaining democratic members. They will be limiting their questions so with Director Mueller's indulgence we expect to finish within 15 minutes. The gentlelady from Georgia is recognized.

MCBATH:

Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you Director Mueller. Your investigations of the Russian attack on our democracy and of obstruction of justice were extraordinarily productive and in under two years you charged at least 37 people or entities with crimes. You convicted seven individuals, five of whom are top Trump campaign or White House aides. Charges remain pending against more than two dozen Russian persons or entities and against others. Now let me start with those five Trump campaign or administration aides that you convicted. Would you agree with me that they are Paul Manafort, President Trump's campaign manager; Rick Gates, President Trump's deputy campaign manager; Michael Flynn, President Trump's former National Security Advisor; Michael Cohen, the president's personal attorney; George Papadopoulos, President Trump's former campaign foreign policy advisor? Correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

MCBATH:

And the sixth Trump associate will face - will face trial later this year. Correct? And that person would be Roger Stone. Correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

MCBATH:

Thank you.

MUELLER:

Well I'm not certain about what you said about Stone but he is in another court system as I indicated before.

MCBATH:

Exactly. He's still under - still under investigation.

MUELLER:

And I don't want to discuss.

MCBATH:

Correct. Thank you. And there are many other charges as well, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

MCBATH:

So sir, I just want to thank you so much in my limited time today for your team - the work that you did and your dedication in less than two years your team was able to uncover an incredible amount of information related to Russia's attack on our elections and to obstruction of justice and there is still more that we have to learn. Despite facing unfair attacks by the president and even here today, your work has been substantive and fair. The work has laid the critical foundation for our investigation and for that I thank you. I thank you. And with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

NADLER:

The young lady yields back. The gentleman from Arizona.

STANTON:

Thank you. Director Mueller, I'm disappointed that some have questioned your motives throughout this process and I want to take a moment to remind the American people of who you are and your exemplary service to our country. You are a Marine. You served in Vietnam and earned a Bronze Star and Purple Heart. Correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

STANTON:

Which president appointed you to become the United States Attorney for Massachusetts?

MUELLER:

Which Senator?

STANTON:

Which president?

MUELLER:

Which president? I think that was President Bush.

STANTON:

According to my notes it was President Ronald Reagan had the honor to do so.

MUELLER:

My mistake. (Laughter)

STANTON:

Under whose administration did you serve as the assistant attorney general in charge of the DOJ's criminal division?

MUELLER:

Under which president?

STANTON:

Yes.

MUELLER:

That would be George Bush, I.

STANTON:

That is correct, President George H. W. Bush. After that you took a job at a prestigious law firm and after only a couple of years you did something extraordinary. You left that lucrative position to reenter public service, prosecuting homicides here in Washington, D.C. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

STANTON:

When you were named director of the FBI, which president first appointed you?

MUELLER:

Bush.

STANTON:

And the Senate confirmed you with a vote of 98-0. Correct?

MUELLER:

Surprising.

STANTON:

And you were sworn in as director just one week before the September 11 attacks.

MUELLER:

True.

STANTON:

You helped to protect this nation against another attack. You did such an outstanding job that when your 10-year term expired, the Senate unanimously voted to extend your term for another 2 years, correct?

MUELLER:

True.

STANTON:

When you were asked in 2017 to take the job as special counsel, the president had just fired FBI Director James Comey. The Justice Department and the FBI were in turmoil. You must have known there would be an extraordinary challenge. Why did you accept?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to get into - that's a little bit off track. It was a challenge. Period.

STANTON:

Some people have attacked the political motivations of your team, even suggested your investigation was a witch hunt. When you consider people to join your team, did you ever even once ask about their political affiliation?

MUELLER:

Never once.

STANTON:

In your entire career as a law enforcement official, have you ever made a hiring decision based upon a person's political affiliation?

MUELLER:

No.

STANTON:

I'm not surprised...

MUELLER:

If I might just interject. The capabilities that we have shown in the report that's been discussed here today was a result of - it came of agents and lawyers who are absolutely exemplary and were hired because of the value they could contribute to getting the job done and getting it done expeditiously.

STANTON:

So you're a patriot. And clear to me in reading your report and listening to your testimony today, you acted fairly and with restraint. There were circumstances where you could have filed charges against other people mentioned in the report but you declined. Not ever prosecutor does that, certainly not one on a witch hunt. The attacks made against you and your team intensified because your report is damning and I believe you did uncover substantial evidence of high crimes and misdemeanors. Let me also say something else that you were right about. The only remedy for this situation is for Congress to take action. I yield back.

NADLER:

The gentleman yields back. The gentlelady from Pennsylvania.

DEAN:

Good morning Director Mueller, Madeleine Dean.

MUELLER:

Oh, got you. Sorry.

DEAN:

Thank you. I wanted to ask you about public confusion connected with Attorney General Barr's release of your report. I will be quoting your March 27th letter. In that letter and at several other times, did you convey to the attorney general, that the quote, "introduction to the executive summaries of our two volume report accurately summarized this office's work and conclusions?" End quote.

MUELLER:

I'd have to say the letter itself speaks for itself.

DEAN:

And those were your words in that letter. Continuing with your letter, you wrote to the attorney general that quote, "the summary letter -- letter that the department sent to Congress and released to the public late in the afternoon of March 24th did not fully capture the context, nature and substance of this office's work and conclusions," end quote. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

I rely on the letter itself for its terms.

DEAN:

Thank you. What was it about the report's context, nature, substance that the attorney general's letter did not capture?

MUELLER:

I think we captured that in the March 27th responsive letter.

DEAN:

This is from the 27th letter. What were some of the specifics that you thought...

MUELLER:

I'd direct you to that letter itself.

DEAN:

OK. You finish that letter by saying there is now public confusion about critical aspects as a result of our investigation. Could you tell us specifically some of the public confusion you identified?

MUELLER:

Not generally. Again, I go back to the letter and the letter speaks for itself.

DEAN:

And could Attorney General Barr have avoided public confusion if he had released your summaries -- and executive introduction and summaries?

MUELLER:

I don't feel comfortable speculating on that.

DEAN:

Shifting to May 30th, the attorney general in an interview with CBS News said that you could have reached -- quote, "you could have reached a decision as to whether it was criminal activity," end quote, on the part of the president. Did the attorney general or his staff ever tell you that he thought you should make a decision on whether the president engaged in criminal activity?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to speak to what the attorney general was thinking or saying.

DEAN:

If the attorney general had directed you or ordered you to make a decision on whether the president engaged in criminal activity, would you have so done?

MUELLER:

I can't answer that question in the vacuum.

DEAN:

Director Mueller, again, I thank you for being here. I agree with your March 27th letter. There was public confusion and the president took full advantage of that confusion by falsely claiming

your report found no obstruction. Let us be clear, your report did not exonerate the president. Instead, it provided substantial evidence of obstruction of justice, leaving Congress to do its duty. We shall not shrink from that duty. I yield back.

NADLER:

The gentle lady yields back.

M. JOHNSON:

Mr. Chairman -- Mr. Chairman, I have a point of inquiry, over on your left.

NADLER:

Gentleman will state his point of inquiry.

M. JOHNSON:

Was the point of this hearing to get Mr. Mueller to recommend impeachment?

NADLER:

That's not a fair point of inquiry. The gentle lady from Florida is recognized.

M. JOHNSON:

Mr. Chairman...

MUCARSEL-POWELL:

Director Mueller, I'm to your...

NADLER:

The gentle lady from Florida is recognized.

MUCARSEL-POWELL:

I thank you for coming here, you're a patriot. I want to refer you now to Volume 2, page 158. You wrote that quote, "the president's efforts to influence the investigation were mostly unsuccessful, but that is largely because the persons who surrounded the president declined to carry out orders or exceed to his request? "Is that right?

MUELLER:

That is accurate, and that is what we found.

MUCARSEL-POWELL:

And you're basically referring to senior advisors who disobeyed the president's orders like White House Don McGahn, Former Trump Campaign Manager Corey Lewandowski. Is that right?

MUELLER:

We have not specified the persons (ph).

MUCARSEL-POWELL:

Well, in -- in page 158, White House Counsel Don McGahn, quote "did not tell the acting attorney general that the special counsel must be removed, but was instead prepared to resign over the president's orders." You also explained that an attempt to obstruct justice does not have to succeed to be a crime, right?

MUELLER:

True.

MUCARSEL-POWELL:

Simply attempting to obstruct justice can be a crime, correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

MUCARSEL-POWELL:

So even though the president's aides refused to carry out his orders to interfere with your investigation, that is not a defense to obstruction of justice by this president, is it?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to speculate.

MUCARSEL-POWELL:

So to reiterate, simply trying to obstruct justice can be a crime, correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

MUCARSEL-POWELL:

And you say that the president's efforts to influence the investigation were, quote, "mostly unsuccessful," and that's because not all of his efforts were unsuccessful, right?

MUELLER:

You're reading into what I - what we've written in the report.

MUCARSEL-POWELL:

I was going to ask you if you could just tell me which ones you had in mind as successful when you wrote that sentence.

MUELLER:

I'm going to pass on that.

MUCARSEL-POWELL:

Yes. Director Mueller, today we've talked a lot about the separate acts by this president, but you also wrote in your report that, quote, "the overall pattern of the president's conduct towards the investigations can shed light on the nature of the president's acts and the inferences can be drawn about his intent." Correct?

MUELLER:

Accurate recitation from the report.

MUCARSEL-POWELL:

Right, and on page 115, again, I think it's important for everyone to note that the president's conduct had a significant change when he realized that it was - the investigations were conducted to investigate his obstruction acts. So in other words, when the American people are deciding whether the president committed obstruction of justice they need to look at all of the president's conduct and overall pattern of behavior. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

I don't disagree.

MUCARSEL-POWELL:

Thank you. Dr. Mueller - Director Mueller, doctor also - I'll designate that, too - I have certainly made up my mind about whether we - what we have reviewed today meets the elements of obstruction including whether there was corrupt intent. And what is clear is that anyone else including some members of Congress would have been charged with crimes for these acts. We would not have allowed this behavior from any of the previous 44 presidents. We should not allow it now or for the future to protect our democracy, and yes. We will continue to investigate because as you clearly state at the end of your report, no one is above the law. I yield back my time.

NADLER:

Gentlelady yields back. The gentlelady from Texas.

ESCOBAR:

Director Mueller, you wrote in your report that you, quote, "determined not to make a traditional prosecutorial judgment," end quote. Was that in part because of an opinion by the Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel that a sitting president can't be charged with a crime?

MUELLER:

Yes.

ESCOBAR:

Director Mueller, at your May 29, 2019 press conference, you explained that, quote, "the opinion says that the Constitution requires a process other than the criminal justice system to formally accuse a sitting president of wrongdoing," end quote. That process other than the criminal justice system for accusing a president of wrongdoing, is that impeachment?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to comment on that.

ESCOBAR:

In your report you also wrote that you did not want to, quote, "potentially preempt constitutional processes for addressing presidential misconduct," end quote. For the non-lawyers in the room, what did you mean by, quote, "potentially preempt constitutional processes"?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to try to explain that.

ESCOBAR:

That actually is coming from page 1 of Volume 2. In the footnote is the reference to this. What are those constitutional processes?

MUELLER:

I think I heard you mention at least one.

ESCOBAR:

Impeachment, correct?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to comment.

ESCOBAR:

OK. That is one of the constitutional processes listed in the report in the footnote in Volume 2. Your report documents the many ways the president sought to interfere with your investigation, and you state in your report on page 10, Volume 2 that with a - interfering with a congressional inquiry or investigation with corrupt intent can also constitute obstruction of justice.

MUELLER:

True.

ESCOBAR:

Well, the president has told us that he intends to fight all the subpoenas. His continued efforts to interfere with investigations of his potential misconduct certainly reinforce the importance of the process the Constitution requires to, quote, "formally accuse a sitting president of wrongdoing," as you cited in the report. And in this - this hearing has been very helpful to this Committee as it exercises its constitutional duty to determine whether to recommend articles of impeachment against the president. I agree with you, Director Mueller, that we all have a vital role in holding this president accountable for his actions. More than that, I believe we in Congress have a duty to demand accountability and safeguard one of our nation's highest principles that no one is above the law. From everything that I have heard you say here today, it's clear that anyone else would have been prosecuted based on the evidence available in your report. It now falls on us to hold President Trump accountable. Thank you for being here. Chairman, I yield back.

COLLINS:

Mr. Chairman...

NADLER:

Gentlelady yields back.

COLLINS:

Just one personal privilege (ph). You and I agree...

NADLER:

One personal privilege (ph).

COLLINS:

I just want to thank the Chairman. We did get in our time. After this was first developed to us (ph), we both didn't get in time. Our side got our five minutes in, also, Mr. Mueller, thank you for being here, and I join the Chairman in thanking you for being here.

NADLER:

Thank you. Director Mueller, we thank you for attending today's hearing. Before we conclude, I ask everyone to please remain seated and quiet while the witness exists the room. Without objection, all members will have five legislative days to submit additional written questions for the witness or additional materials for the record. And without objection, the hearing is now adjourned. END OF THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE .

START OF THE HOUSE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE:

SCHIFF:

This meeting will come to order. At the outset, and on behalf of my colleagues, I want to thank you, Special Counsel Mueller, for a lifetime of service to your country. Your report, for those who have taken the time to study it, is methodical and it is devastating, for it tells the story of a foreign adversary's sweeping and systemic intervention in a close U.S. presidential election.

That should be enough to deserve the attention of every American, as you well point out. But your report tells another story as well. The story of the 2016 election is also a story about disloyalty to country, about greed, and about lies. Your investigation determined that the Trump campaign, including Donald Trump himself, knew that a foreign power was intervening in our election and welcomed it, built Russian meddling into their strategy and used it. Disloyalty

to country. Those are strong words, but how else are we to describe a presidential campaign which did not inform the authorities of a foreign offer of dirt on their opponent, which did not publicly shun it or turn it away, but which instead invited it, encouraged it and made full use of it? That disloyalty may not have been criminal. Constrained by uncooperative witnesses, the destruction of documents and the use of encrypted communications, your team was not able to establish each of the elements of the crime of conspiracy beyond a reasonable doubt, so not a provable crime in any event. But I think maybe something worse: The crime is the violation of law written by Congress. But disloyalty to country violates the very oath of citizenship, our devotion to a core principle on which our nation was founded that we, the people and not some foreign power that wishes us ill, we decide who governs us. This is also a story about money, and about greed and corruption. About the leadership of a campaign willing to compromise the nation's interest not only to win, but to make money at the same time. About a campaign chairman indebted to pro-Russian interests who tried to use his position to clear his debts and make millions. About a national security advisor using his position to make money from still other foreign interests. And about a candidate trying to make more money than all of them put together through real estate project that to him was worth a fortune, hundreds of millions of dollars and the realization of a life-long ambition, a Trump Tower in the heart of Moscow. A candidate who, in fact, viewed his whole campaign as the greatest infomercial in history. Donald Trump and his senior staff were not alone in their desire to use the election to make money. For Russia, too, there was a powerful financial motive. Putin wanted relief from U.S. economic sanctions imposed in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and over human rights violations.

SCHIFF:

The secret Trump Tower meeting between the Russians and senior campaign officials was about sanctions. The secret conversations between Flynn and the Russian ambassador were about sanctions. Trump and his team wanted more money for themselves, and the Russians wanted more money for themselves and for their oligarchs. But the story doesn't end here either, for your report also tells a story about lies. Lots of lies. Lies about a gleaming tower in Moscow and lies about talks with the Kremlin. Lies about the firing of FBI Director James Comey and lies about efforts to fire you, Director Mueller, and lies to cover it up. Lies about secret negotiations with the Russians over sanctions and lies about WikiLeaks. Lies about polling data and lies about hush money payments. Lies about meetings in the Seychelles to set up secret back channels and lies about a secret meeting in New York Trump Tower. Lies to the FBI, lies to your staff, and lies to this committee. Lies to obstruct an investigation into the most serious attack on our democracy by a foreign power in our history. That is where your report ends, Director Mueller, with a scheme to cover up, obstruct and deceive every bit as systematic and pervasive as the Russian disinformation campaign itself, but far more pernicious since this rot came from within. Even now after 448 pages and two volumes, the deception continues. The president and his accolades say your report found no collusion, though your report explicitly declined to address that question, since collusion can involve both criminal and noncriminal conduct. Your report laid out multiple offers of Russian help to the Trump campaign, the campaign's acceptance of that help, and overt acts in furtherance of Russian help. To most Americans that is the very definition

of collusion, whether it is a crime or not. They say your report found no evidence of obstruction, though you outlined numerous actions by the president intended to obstruct the investigation.

They say the president has been fully exonerated, though you specifically declare you could not exonerate him. In fact, they say your whole investigation was nothing more than a witch hunt, that the Russians didn't interfere in our election, that it's all a terrible hoax. The real crime, they say, is not that the Russians intervened to help Donald Trump, but that the FBI investigated it when they did. But worst of all, worse than all the lies and the greed, is the disloyalty to country, for that, too, continues. When asked, "If the Russians intervene again, will you take their help, Mr. President?" "Why not?" was the essence of his answer. "Everyone does it." No, Mr. President, they don't. Not in the America envisioned by Jefferson, Madison and Hamilton. Not for those who believe in the idea that Lincoln labored until his dying day to preserve, the idea animating our great national experiment, so unique then, so precious still, that our government is chosen by our people, through our franchise, and not by some hostile foreign power. This is what is at stake, our next election, and the one after that for generations to come. Our democracy. This is why your work matters, Director Mueller. This is why our investigation matters, to bring these dangers to light. Ranking Member Nunes?

NUNES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, everyone, to the last gasp of the Russia collusion conspiracy theory. As Democrats continue to foist this spectacle on the American people, as well as you, Mr. Mueller, the American people may recall the media first began spreading this conspiracy theory in the spring of 2016, when Fusion GPS, funded by the DNC and the Hillary Clinton campaign, started developing the Steele dossier, a collection of outlandish accusations that Trump and his associates were Russian agents. Fusion GPS, Steele and other confederates fed these absurdities to naive or partisan reporters and to top officials in numerous government agencies, including the FBI, the Department of Justice and the State Department. Among other things the FBI used dossier allegations to obtain a warrant to spy on the Trump campaign. Despite acknowledging dossier allegations as being salacious and unverified, former FBI Director James Comey briefed those allegations to President Obama and President-elect Trump. Those briefings conveniently leaked to the press, resulting in the publication of the dossier and launching thousands of false press stories based on the word of a foreign ex-spy, one who admitted he was desperate that Trump lose the election and who was eventually fired as an FBI source for leaking to the press. After Comey himself was fired, by his own admission, he leaked derogatory information on President Trump to the press for the specific purpose, and successfully so, of engineering the appointment of a special counsel who sits here before us today. The FBI investigation was marred by further corruption and bizarre abuses. Top DOJ official Bruce Ohr, whose own wife worked on Fusion GPS' anti-Trump operation, fed Steele information to the FBI even after the FBI fired Steele. The top FBI investigator and his lover, another top FBI official, constantly texted about how much they hated Trump and wanted to stop him from being elected. And the entire investigation was open based not on Five Eyes intelligence, but on a tip from a foreign politician about a conversation involving Joseph Mifsud.

He's a Maltese diplomat who's widely portrayed as a Russian agent, but seems to have for more connections with Western governments, including our own FBI and our own State Department, than with Russia.

Brazenly ignoring all these red flags as well as the transparent absurdity of the claims they are making, the Democrats have arguing for nearly three years that evidence of collusion is hidden just around the corner. Like the Loch Ness monster, they insist it's there, even if no one can find it. Consider this. In March of 2017, Democrats on this committee said they had more than circumstantial evidence of collusion but they couldn't reveal it yet. Mr. Mueller was soon appointed and they said he would find the collusion.

Then when no collusion was found in Mr. Mueller's indictment, the Democrats said we'd find it in his final report. Then when there was no collusion in the report, we were told Attorney General Barr was hiding it. Then when it was clear Barr wasn't hiding anything, we were told it will be revealed through a hearing with Mr. Mueller himself.

NUNES:

Now that Mr. Mueller is here, they are claiming that the collusion has actually been in his report all along, hidden in plain sight, and they're right. There is collusion in plain sight, collusion between Russia and the Democratic party.

The Democrats colluded with Russian sources to develop the Steele dossier, and Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya colluded with the dossier's key architect, Fusion GPS Head Glenn Simpson.

The Democrats have already admitted both in interviews and through their usual anonymous statements to reporters that today's hearing is not about getting information at all, they said they want to, "bring the Mueller report to life." And create a television moment (ph) for poise, like having Mr. Mueller recite passages from his own report.

In other words, this hearing is political theater, it's a Hail Mary attempt to convince the American people that collusion is real, and that it's concealed in the report. Granted, that's a strange argument to make about a report that is public. It's almost like the Democrats prepared arguments accusing Mr. Barr of hiding the report and didn't bother to update their claims once he published the entire thing.

Among Congressional Democrats the Russia investigation was never about finding the truth, it's always been a simple media operation by their own accounts this operation continues in this room today. Once again numerous pressing issues this Committee needs to address are put on hold to indulge the political fantasies of people who believed it was their destiny to serve Hillary Clinton's administration. It's time for the curtain to close on the Russia hoax, the conspiracy theory is dead.

At some point I would argue we're going to have to get back to work -- until then, I yield back the balance of my time.

SCHIFF:

To ensure fairness and make sure that our hearing is prompt, I know we got a late start Director Mueller. The hearing will be structured as follows -- each member of the Committee will be afforded five minutes to ask questions beginning with the Chair and Ranking Member.

As Chair, I will recognize thereafter an alternating fashion and descending order of seniority -- members of the majority and minority. After each member has asked his or her questions the Ranking Member will be afforded an additional five minutes to ask questions followed by the Chair, who'll have additional five minutes for questions.

Ranking Member and the Chair will not be permitted to delegate or yield our final round of questions to any other member. After six members of the majority and six members of the minority have concluded their five minute rounds of questions we'll take a 5 or 10 minute break, we understand you requested before resuming the hearing with Congressman Swalwell starting his round of questions.

Special Counsel Mueller is accompanied today by Aaron Zebley who served as Deputy Special Counsel from May 2017 until May 2019, and had day-to-day oversight of the Special Counsel's investigation.

Mr. Mueller and Mr. Zebley resigned from the Department of Justice at the end of May 2019 when the Special Counsel's Office was closed.

Both Mr. Mueller and Mr. Zebley will be available to answer questions today and will be sworn in consistent with the rules of the House and the Committee.

Mr. Mueller and Mr. Zebley's appearance today before the Committee is in keeping with the Committee's longstanding practice of receiving testimony from current or former Department of Justice and FBI personnel regarding open and closed investigative matters. As this hearing is under oath and before we begin your testimony, Mr. Mueller and Zebley, would you please rise and raise your right hands to be sworn.

Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give at this hearing is the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Thank you, the record will reflect that the witnesses have been dually sworn. Ranking member.

NUNES:

Thank you Mr. Chair, I just want to clarify that this is highly unusual for Mr. Zebley to be sworn in, we're here to ask Director Mueller questions, he's here as counsel -- our side's not going to be directing any questions to Mr. Zebley, and we have concerns about this prior representation of the Hillary Clinton campaign aid. So I just want to voice that concern that we do have, we will not be addressing any questions to Mr. Zebley today.

SCHIFF:

I thank the Ranking Member, I realize as you probably do Mr. Zebley that there is an angry man down the street whose not happy about your being here today, but it is up to this Committee and not anyone else who will be allowed to be sworn in and testify, and you are welcome as a private citizen to testify, and members may direct their questions to whoever they choose. With that, Director Mueller you are recognized for any opening remarks you'd like to make.

MUELLER:

Good afternoon Chairman Schiff, Ranking Member Nunes and members of the Committee. I testified this morning before the House Judiciary Committee, I asked that the opening statement I made before that Committee be incorporated in to the record here.

SCHIFF:

Without objection, Director.

MUELLER:

I understand that this Committee has a unique jurisdiction, and that you are interested in further understanding the counterintelligence implications of our investigation. So let me say a word about how we handled the potential impact of our investigation on counterintelligence matters.

As we explained in our report, the Special Counsel regulations effectively gave me the role of United States Attorney. As a result we structured our investigation around evidence for possible use in prosecution of federal crimes. We did not reach what you could call counterintelligence conclusions. We did however set up processes in the office to identify and pass counterintelligence information on to the FBI.

Members of our office periodically briefed the FBI about counterintelligence information in addition there were agents and analysts from the FBI who were not on our team, but whose job it was to identify counterintelligence information in our files, and to disseminate that information to the FBI.

With these reasons, questions about what the FBI has done with the counterintelligence information obtained from our investigation should be directed to the FBI. I also want to reiterate a few points that I made this morning.

I am not making any judgments or offering opinions about the guilt or innocence in any pending case. It is unusual for a prosecutor to testify about a criminal investigation, and given my role as a prosecutor there are reasons why my testimony will (ph) necessarily be limited.

First public testimony could effect several ongoing matters, in some of these matters court rules or judicial orders limit the disclosure of information to protect the fairness of the proceedings. And consistent with longstanding Justice Department policy, it would be inappropriate for me to comment in any way that could effect an ongoing matter.

MUELLER:

Second, the Justice Department has asserted privileges concerning investigative information and decisions, ongoing matters within the Justice Department, and deliberations within out office. These are Justice Department privileges that I will respect.

The department has released a letter discussion the restrictions on my testimony. I therefore will not be able to answer questions about certain areas that I know are of public interest. For example, I am unable to address questions about the opening of the FBI's Russia investigation which occurred months before my appointment or matter related to the so-called Steele dossier. These matters are the subject of ongoing review by the department. Any questions on these topics should therefore be directed to the FBI or the Justice Department. Third as I explained this morning, it is important for me to adhere to what we wrote in our report. The report contains our findings and analysis and the reasons for the decisions we made. We stated the results of our investigation with precision and do not intent to summarize or describe the results of our work in a different way in the course of my testimony today. And as I stated in May, I also will not comment on the actions of the attorney general or of Congress. I was appointed as a prosecutor and I intend to adhere to that role and to the department's standards that govern it. Finally, as I said this morning, over the course of my career I have seen a number of challenges to our democracy. The Russian government's efforts to interfere in our election is among the most serious, and I am sure that the committee agrees. Now, before we god to questions I want to add one correction to my testimony this morning. I wanted to go back to one thing that was said this morning by Mr. Lieu. It was said, and I quote, "you didn't charge the president because of the OLC opinion." That is not the correct way to say it.

As we say in the report and as I said in the opening, we did not reach a determination as to whether the president committed a crime. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I'm ready to answer questions.

SCHIFF:

Thank you, Director Mueller. I recognize myself for five minutes. Director Mueller, your report describes a sweeping and systematic effort by Russia to influence our presidential election. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

That is correct.

SCHIFF:

And during the course of this Russian interference in the election, the Russians made outreach to the Trump campaign, did they not?

MUELLER:

That occurred over the course of - yes, that occurred.

SCHIFF:

It's also clear from your report that during that Russian outreach to the Trump campaign, no one associated with the Trump campaign ever called the FBI to report it. Am I right?

MUELLER:

I don't know that for sure.

SCHIFF:

In fact, the campaign welcomed the Russian help, did they not?

MUELLER:

I think we have - we report in our - in the report indications that that occurred, yes.

SCHIFF:

The president's son said when he was approached about dirt on Hillary Clinton that the Trump campaign would love it?

MUELLER:

That is generally what was said, yes.

SCHIFF:

The president himself called on the Russians to hack Hillary's emails?

MUELLER:

There was a statement by the president in those general lines.

SCHIFF:

Numerous times during the campaign the president praised the releases of the Russian-hacked emails through WikiLeaks?

MUELLER:

That did occur.

SCHIFF:

Your report found that the Trump campaign planned, quote, " a press strategy, communications campaign, and messaging," unquote, based on that Russian assistance?

MUELLER:

I am not familiar with that.

SCHIFF:

That language comes from Volume 1, page 54. Apart from the Russians wanting to help Trump win, several individuals associated with the Trump campaign were also trying to make money during the campaign and transition. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

That is true.

SCHIFF:

Paul Manafort was trying to make money or achieve debt forgiveness from a Russian oligarch?

MUELLER:

Generally that is accurate.

SCHIFF:

Michael Flynn was trying to make money from Turkey?

MUELLER:

True.

SCHIFF:

Donald Trump was trying to make millions from a real estate deal in Moscow?

MUELLER:

To the extent you're talking about the hotel in Moscow?

SCHIFF:

Yes.

MUELLER:

Yes.

SCHIFF:

When your investigation looked into these matters, numerous Trump associates lied to your team, the grand jury, and to Congress?

MUELLER:

A number of persons that we interviewed in our investigation turns out did lie.

SCHIFF:

Mike Flynn lied?

MUELLER:

He was convicted of lying, yes.

SCHIFF:

George Papadopoulos was convicted of lying?

MUELLER:

True.

SCHIFF:

Paul Manafort was convicted of lying?

MUELLER:

True.

SCHIFF:

Paul Manafort was - in fact, went so far as to encourage other people to lie?

MUELLER:

That is accurate.

SCHIFF:

Manafort's deputy, Rick Gates, lied?

MUELLER:

That is accurate.

SCHIFF:

Michael Cohen, the president's lawyer, was indicted for lying?

MUELLER:

True.

SCHIFF:

He lied to stay on message with the president?

MUELLER:

Allegedly by him.

SCHIFF:

And when Donald Trump called your investigation a witch hunt, that was also false, was it not?

MUELLER:

I'd like to think so, yes.

SCHIFF:

Well, your investigation is not a witch hunt. Is...

MUELLER:

It is not a witch hunt.

SCHIFF:

When the president said the Russian interference was a hoax, that was false, wasn't it?

MUELLER:

True.

SCHIFF:

We decided publically it was false?

MUELLER:

He did say publically that it was false, yes.

SCHIFF:

And when he told it to Putin, that was false, too, wasn't it?

MUELLER:

That I'm not familiar with.

SCHIFF:

When the president said he had no business dealings with Russia, that was false, wasn't it?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to go into the details of the report that are along those lines.

SCHIFF:

When the president said he had no business dealings with Russia, in fact he was seeking to build a Trump Tower in Moscow, was he not?

MUELLER:

I think there - there are some questions about when this was accomplished.

SCHIFF:

You would consider a billion dollar deal to build a tower in Moscow to be business dealings, wouldn't you, Director Mueller?

MUELLER:

Absolutely.

SCHIFF:

In short, your investigation found evidence that Russia wanted to help Trump win the election, right?

MUELLER:

I think generally that would be accurate.

SCHIFF:

Russia informed campaign officials of that?

MUELLER:

I'm not certain to what conversation you're referring to.

SCHIFF:

Well, through an intermediary then informed Papadopoulos that they could help with the anonymous release of stolen emails?

MUELLER:

Accurate.

SCHIFF:

Russia committed federal crimes in order to help Donald Trump?

MUELLER:

When you're talking about computer crimes in the charge...

SCHIFF:

Yes.

MUELLER:

... in our case, absolutely.

SCHIFF:

The Trump campaign officials built their strategy - their messaging strategy around those stolen documents?

MUELLER:

Generally that's true.

SCHIFF:

And then they lied to cover it up.

MUELLER:

Generally, that's true.

SCHIFF:

Thank you. Mr. Nunes.

NUNES:

Thank you. Welcome, Director. As a former FBI Director, you'd agree that the FBI is the world's most capable law enforcement agency?

MUELLER:

I would say we're - yes.

NUNES:

The FBI claims the counterintelligence investigation of the Trump campaign began on July 31, 2016. But in fact, it began before that. In June 2016 before the investigation officially opened, Trump campaign associates Carter Page and Stephen Miller, a current Trump advisor, were invited to attend a symposium at Cambridge University in July 2016. Your office, however, did not investigate who was responsible for inviting these Trump associates to this symposium. Your

investigators also failed to interview Steven Schrage, and American citizen who helped organize the event and invited Carter Page to it. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Can you repeat the question?

NUNES:

Whether or not you interviewed Steven Schrage, who organized the Cambridge...

MUELLER:

In those areas, I am going to stay away from.

NUNES:

The first Trump associate to be investigated was General Flynn. Many of the allegations against him stem from false media reports that he had an affair with the Cambridge Academics' Svetlana Lokhova and that Lokhova was a Russian spy. Some of these allegations were made public in a 2017 article written by British intelligence historian Christopher Andrew.

Your report fails to reveal how or why Andrew and his collaborator, Richard Dearlove, former head of Britain's MI6, spread these allegations. And you failed to interview Svetlana Lokhova about these matters. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

I'm going to get - not going to get into those matters to which you refer.

NUNES:

You had a team of 19 lawyers, 40 agents and an unlimited budget, correct, Mr. Mueller?

MUELLER:

I would not say we had an unlimited budget.

NUNES:

Let's continue with the ongoing - or the opening of the investigation, supposedly on July 31st, 2016, the investigation was not open based on an official product from Five Eyes intelligence, but based on a rumor conveyed by Alexander Downer.

On Volume 1, page 89, your report describes him blandly as a representative of a foreign government. But he was actually a long time Australian politician, not a military or intelligence official who had previously arranged a \$25 million donation to the Clinton Foundation and has previous ties to Dearlove.

So Downer conveys a rumor he supposedly heard about a conversation between Papadopoulos and Joseph Mifsud. James Comey has publicly called Mifsud a Russian agent, yet your report does not refer to Mifsud as a Russian agent.

Mifsud has extensive contacts with western governments and the FBI. For example, there is a recent photo of him standing next to Boris Johnson, the new prime minister of Great Britain.

What we're trying to figure out here, Mr. Mueller, is if our NATO allies or Boris Johnson have been compromised. So we're trying to figure out Comey says Mifsud is a Russian agent, you do not.

So is - do you stand by what's in the report?

MUELLER:

I stand by that which is in the report and not so necessarily with that, which is - which is not in the report.

NUNES:

I want to return to Mr. Downer. He denies that Papadopoulos mentioned anything to him about Hillary Clinton's e-mails and in fact Mifsud denies mentioning to them - that to Papadopoulos. He denies that Papadopoulos mentioned anything to him about Hillary Clinton's e-mails and in fact Mifsud denies mentioning them to Papadopoulos in the first place. So how does the FBI know to continually ask Papadopoulos about Clinton's e-mails for the rest of 2016? Even more strangely, your sentencing memo on Papadopoulos blames him for hindering the FBI's ability to potentially detain or arrest Mifsud. But the truth is, Mifsud waltzed in and out of the United States in December 2016.

The U.S. media could find him, the Italian press found him, and he's a supposed Russian agent at the epicenter of the reported collusion conspiracy. He's the guy who knows about Hillary Clinton's e-mails and that the Russians have them.

But the FBI failed to question him for a half a year after officially opening the investigation. And then according to Volume 1, page 193 of your report, once Mifsud finally was questioned, he made false statements to the FBI.

But you declined to charge him. Is that correct, you did not indict Mr. Mifsud?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to speak to the series of happenings as you articulated them.

NUNES:

But you did not indict Mr. Mifsud?

SCHIFF:

Time of the gentleman has expired.

MUELLER:

Pardon?

NUNES:

You did not indict Mr. Mifsud.

MUELLER:

True.

SCHIFF:

Mr. Himes.

HIMES:

Director Mueller, thank you for your lifetime of service to this country and thank you for your perseverance and patients today. Director, your report opens with two statements of remarkable clarity and power.

The first statement is one that is as of today not acknowledged by the president of the United States, and that is, quote, "the Russian government interfered in the 2016 presidential election in sweeping and systematic fashion". The second statement remains controversial amongst members of this body, same page on your report, and I quote, "the Russian government perceived it would benefit from a Trump presidency and worked to secure that outcome". Do I have that statement right?

MUELLER:

I believe so.

HIMES:

Director Mueller, this attack on our democracy involved as you said two operations. First, a social media disinformation campaign, this was a targeted campaign to spread false information on places like Twitter and Facebook. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

That's correct.

HIMES:

Facebook estimated as per your report that the Russian fake images reached 126 million people, is that correct?

MUELLER:

I believe that's the sum that we recorded.

HIMES:

Director, who did the Russian social media campaign ultimately intend to benefit, Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump?

MUELLER:

Donald Trump.

HIMES:

The second operation, Director -

MUELLER:

Let me just say Donald Trump, but there were instances where Hillary Clinton was subject to much the same behavior.

HIMES:

The second operation in the Russian attack was a scheme, what we called the hack and dump to steal and release hundreds of thousands of e-mails from the Democratic Party from the Clinton campaign. Is that a fair summary?

MUELLER:

That is.

HIMES:

Did your investigation find that the releases of the hacked e-mails were strategically timed to maximize impact on the election?

MUELLER:

I'd have to refer you to the - our report on that question.

HIMES:

Page 36, I quote, "the release of the documents were designed and timed to interfere with the 2016 U.S. presidential election." Mr. Mueller, which presidential candidate was Russia's hacking and dumping operation designed to benefit, Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump?

MUELLER:

Mr. Trump.

HIMES:

Mr. Mueller, is it possible that this sweeping and systematic effort by Russia actually had an effect on the outcome of the presidential election?

MUELLER:

Those issues are being - or have been investigated by other entities.

HIMES:

One hundred and twenty-six million Facebook impressions, fake rallies, attacks on Hillary Clinton's health, would you rule out that it might have had some effect on the election?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to speculate.

HIMES:

Mr. Mueller, your report describes a third avenue of attempted Russian interference, that is the numerous links in contacts between the Trump campaign and individuals tied to the Russian government. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Could you repeat that question?

HIMES:

Your report describes what is called a third avenue of Russian interference, and that's the links and contacts between the Trump campaign and individuals tied to the Russian government.

MUELLER:

Yes.

HIMES:

Let's bring up slide one which is about George Papadopoulos and it reads on May 6th, 2016, 10 days after that meeting with Mifsud, much discussed today, Papadopoulos suggested to a representative of a foreign government that the Trump campaign had received indications from the Russian government that it could assist the campaign through the anonymous release of information that would be damaging to Hillary Clinton. And Director, that's exactly what happened two months later, is it not?

MUELLER:

Well I can speak to the excerpt that you have on screen as being accurate from the report, but not the second half of your question.

HIMES:

Well, the second half, just to refer to page six of the report, is that on July 22nd, through WikiLeaks, thousands of these emails that were - that were stolen by the Russian government appeared, correct? That's on page six of the report. This is the WikiLeaks posting of those e-mails.

MUELLER:

I can't find it quickly, but please continue.

HIMES:

OK. So just to be clear, before the public or the FBI ever knew, the Russians previewed for a Trump campaign official, George Papadopoulos, that they had stolen e-mails that they could release anonymously to help Donald Trump and hurt Hillary Clinton. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to speak to - to that.

HIMES:

Director, rather than report this contact with Joseph Mifsud, and the notion there that was dirt that the campaign could use, rather than report that to the FBI that I think most of my constituents would expect an individual to do, Papadopoulos in fact lied about his Russian contacts to you. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

That's true.

HIMES:

We have an election coming up in 2020, Director. If a campaign receives an offer of dirt from a foreign individual or a government, generally speaking, should that campaign report those contacts?

MUELLER:

It should be (ph) - it can be, depending on the circumstances of crime.

HIMES:

I will yield back the balance of my time.

SCHIFF:

Mr. Conaway.

CONAWAY:

Thank you. Mr. Mueller, did anyone ask you to exclude anything from your report that you felt should've been in the report?

MUELLER:

I don't think so, but it's not a small report.

CONAWAY:

But no one asked you specifically to exclude something that you believe should've been in there?

MUELLER:

Not that I can recall, no.

CONAWAY:

I yield the balance of time to Mr. Ratcliffe. Thank you.

RATCLIFFE:

I thank the gentleman for yielding. Good afternoon, Director Mueller. In your May 29th press conference and, again, in your opening remarks this morning, you made it pretty clear you wanted the special counsel report to speak for itself. You said at your press conference that that was the office's final position and we will not comment on any other conclusions or hypotheticals about the president. Now you spent the last few hours of your life from Democrats trying to get you to answer all kinds of hypotheticals about the president, and I expect that it may continue for the next few hours of your life. I think you've stayed pretty much true to what your intent and desire was, but I guess, regardless of that, the special counsel's office has closed, and it has no continuing jurisdiction or authority. So what would be your authority or jurisdiction for adding new conclusions or determinations to the special counsel's written report?

MUELLER:

As to the latter, I don't know or expect changes in conclusions that we included in our - in our report.

RATCLIFFE:

So to that point, you addressed one of the issues that I needed to, which was from your testimony this morning, which some construed as a change to the written report. You talked about the exchange that you had with Congressman Lou. I wrote it down a little bit different. I want to ask you about it so that the record's perfectly clear. I recorded that he asked you, quote, "The reason you did not indict Donald Trump is because of the OLC opinion stating you cannot indict a sitting president," to which you responded, "That is correct." That response is inconsistent. I think you'll agree with your written report. I want to be clear that it is not your intent to change your written report. It is your intent to clarify the record today (ph).

MUELLER:

Well, as I started today, this afternoon, and added either a footnote or an endnote, what I wanted to clarify is the fact that we did not make any determination with regard to culpability in any way. We did not start that process down - down the road.

RATCLIFFE:

Terrific. Thank you for clarifying the record. The stated purpose of your appointment as special counsel was to ensure a full and thorough investigation of the Russian government efforts to interfere in the 2016 presidential election. As part of that full and thorough investigation, what determination did the special counsel office make about whether the Steele dossier was part of the Russian government efforts to interfere in the 2016 presidential election?

MUELLER:

Again, when it comes to Mr. Steele, I defer to the Department of Justice.

RATCLIFFE:

Well, first of all, Director, I very much agree with your determination that Russia's efforts were sweeping and systematic. I think it should concern every American. That's why I want to know just how sweeping and systematic those efforts were. I want to find out if Russia interfered with our election by providing false information through sources to Christopher Steele about a Trump conspiracy that you determined didn't exist.

MUELLER:

Well, I - again, I'm not going to discuss the issues with regard to Mr. Mueller. The - and in terms of a portrayal of the conspiracies, we returned two indictments in the computer crimes arena. One with (ph) GRU and another, active (ph) measures in which we lay out, in excruciating detail ...

RATCLIFFE:

I ...

MUELLER:

... what occurred in those two rather large conspiracies.

RATCLIFFE:

I agree, with respect to that. But why this is important is an application and three renewal applications were submitted by the United States government to spy or surveil on Trump campaign Carter associate - or Carter Page, and on all four occasions, the United States government submitted the Steele dossier as a central piece of evidence, with respect to that. Now the basic premise of the dossier, as you know, was that there was a well-developed conspiracy of cooperation between the Trump campaign and the Russian government, but the special counsel investigation didn't establish any conspiracy, correct?

MUELLER:

Well, I - what I can tell you is that the events that you are characterizing here, now, is a part of another matter that is being handled by the Department of Justice.

RATCLIFFE:

But you did not establish any conspiracy, much less a well-developed one?

MUELLER:

Again, I pass on answering that question.

RATCLIFFE:

The special counsel did not charge Carter Page with anything, correct?

MUELLER:

The special counsel did not.

RATCLIFFE:

All right. My time has expired. I yield back.

SCHIFF:

Ms. Sewell.

SEWELL:

Director Mueller, I'd like to turn your attention to the June 9th, 2016 Trump Tower meeting. Slide two, which should be on the screen now, is part of an e-mail chain between Don Jr. - Donald Trump Jr. and a publicist representing the son of a Russian oligarch. The e-mail exchange ultimately led to the now infamous June 9th, 2016 meeting. The e-mail from the publicist to Donald Trump Jr. reads in part, "The crown prosecutor of Russia offered to provide the Trump campaign with some official documents and information that would incriminate Hillary in her dealings with Russia and is a part of the Russia and its government's support of Mr. Trump." In this e-mail, Donald Trump Jr. is being told that the Russian government wants to pass along information which would hurt Hillary Clinton and help Donald Trump. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

That's correct.

SEWELL:

Now Trump Jr.'s response to that e-mail is slide three. He said, and I quote, "If it is what you say, I love it, especially later in the summer." Then Donald Jr. invited senior campaign officials Paul Manafort and Jared Kushner to the meeting, did he not?

MUELLER:

He did.

SEWELL:

This e-mail exchange is evidence of an offer of illegal assistance, is it not?

MUELLER:

I cannot adopt that characterization.

SEWELL:

But isn't it against the law for a presidential campaign to accept anything of value from a foreign government.

MUELLER:

Generally speaking, yes, but -- generally the cases are unique.

SEWELL:

Well, you say in page 184 in Volume 1, that the Federal Campaign Finance Law broadly prohibits foreign nationals from making contributions, et cetera, and then you say that foreign nationals may not make a contribution or donation of money or anything of value. It says clearly in the report itself.

MUELLER:

Thank you.

SEWELL:

Now, let's turn to what actually happened at the meeting. When Donald Trump Junior and the others got to the June 9th meeting, they realized the Russian delegation didn't have the promised quote unquote "dirt." They got upset about that, did they not?

MUELLER:

Generally, yes.

SEWELL:

You say in Volume 1, page 118, that Trump Junior asked what are we doing here? What -- what do they have on Clinton? And during the meeting, Kushner actually texted Manafort saying it was, quote, "a waste of time," end quote. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

I believe it's in the report, along the lines you specify.

SEWELL:

So to be clear, top Trump campaign officials learned that Russia wanted to help Donald Trump's campaign by giving him dirt on his opponent. Trump Junior said loved it. Then he and senior officials held a meeting with the Russians to try to get the Russian help, but they were disappointed because the dirt wasn't as good as they hoped. So to the next step, did anyone to your knowledge in the Trump campaign ever tell the FBI of this offer?

MUELLER:

I don't believe so.

SEWELL:

Did Donald Trump Junior tell the FBI that they received an offer of help from the Russians?

MUELLER:

That's about all I'll say on this aspect of it.

SEWELL:

Wouldn't it be true, sir, that if they had reported it to the FBI or anyone in the campaign during the course of your two-year investigation, you would have uncovered such a...

MUELLER:

I would hope, yes.

SEWELL:

Sir, is it not the responsibility of political campaigns to inform the FBI if they receive information from a foreign government?

MUELLER:

I would think that that is something they would and should do.

SEWELL:

Not only did the campaign not tell the FBI, they sought to hide the existence of the June 9th meeting for over a year. Is that not correct?

MUELLER:

On the general characterization, I would question it. If you're referring to later initiative that flowed from the media, then...

SEWELL:

No, what I'm suggesting is you've said in Volume 2, page 5 on several occasions the president directed aides not to publicly disclose the email setting up the June 9th meeting.

MUELLER:

Yes, that's accurate.

SEWELL:

Thanks. Sir, given this illegal assistance by Russians, you chose even given that, you did not charge Donald Trump Junior or any of the other senior officials with conspiracy. Is that right?

MUELLER:

Correct.

SEWELL:

And while...

MUELLER:

When you're talking about -- if you're talking about other individuals, you're talking about the attendees on June 9th, that's accurate.

SEWELL:

That's right. So Mr. Mueller, even though it didn't -- you didn't charge them with conspiracy, don't you think the American people would be concerned these three senior campaign officials

eagerly sought a foreign adversary's help to win elections and don't you think that reporting that is important that we don't set a precedent for future elections?

MUELLER:

I can't accept that characterization.

SEWELL:

Well, listen, I think that it seems like a betrayal of American values to me, sir, that someone with -- if not (ph) being criminal is unethical and wrong, and I would think that we would not want to set a precedent that political campaigns would not divulge information if it's foreign government assistance. Thank you, sir.

NADLER:

Mr. Turner?

TURNER:

Mr. Mueller, I have your opening statement, and in the beginning of your opening statement you indicate pursuant to Justice Department relations, that you submitted a confidential report to the attorney general at the conclusion of the investigation. What I'd like you to confirm is the report that you did that is the subject matter of this hearing was to the attorney general.

MUELLER:

Yes.

TURNER:

You also state in this opening statement that you threw overboard the word collusion because it's not a legal term. You would not conclude because collusion was not a legal term?

MUELLER:

Well, it depends on how you want to use the word. In a general parlance, people can think of it that way, if you're talking about in a criminal statute arena, you can't. Because it really -- it's much more accurately described as conspiracy. **TURNER:** All right. So in your words, it's not a legal term, so you didn't put it in your conclusion. Correct?

MUELLER:

That's correct.

TURNER:

Mr. Mueller, I want to talk about your powers and authorities. Now, the attorney general and the appointment order gave you powers and authorities that reside in the attorney general. Now, the attorney general has no ability to give you powers of authority greater than the powers and authority of the attorney general. Correct?

MUELLER:

I don't believe -- yeah. I think that is correct.

TURNER:

Mr. Mueller, I want to focus on one word in your report. It's a second to the last word in the report. It's exonerate. The report states accordingly, while this report does not conclude that the president committed a crime, it does not exonerate him. Now, in the judiciary hearing in your prior testimony, you've already agreed with Mr. Ratcliffe that exonerate is not a legal term, that there is not a legal test for this.

So I have a question for you, Mr. Mueller. Mr. Mueller, does the attorney general have the power or authority to exonerate? What I'm putting up here is the United States code. This is where the attorney general gets his power and the Constitution and the annotated (ph) cases of these, which then (ph) starts, we even went to your law school, I went to Case Western, but I thought maybe your law school teaches it differently, and we got the criminal law textbook from your law school.

Mr. Mueller, nowhere in these -- because we had these scanned -- is there a process or description on exonerate. There's no office of exoneration at the attorney general's office. There's no certificate at the bottom of his desk. Mr. Mueller, would you agree with me that the attorney general does not have the power to exonerate?

MUELLER:

I'm going to pass on that.

TURNER:

Why?

MUELLER:

Because it embroils us in a legal discussion, and I'm not prepared to do a legal discussion in that arena.

TURNER:

Mr. Mueller, you would not disagree with me when I say that there is no place that the attorney general has the power to exonerate and he's not been given that authority?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to -- I take your question.

TURNER:

Great. The one thing that I guess, is that the attorney general probably knows he can't exonerate either, and that's the part that kind of confuses me. Because if the attorney general doesn't have the power to exonerate, then you don't have the power to exonerate, and I believe he knows he doesn't have the power to exonerate.

And so this is that I don't understand. If your report is to the attorney general, and the attorney general doesn't have the power to exonerate and he does not -- and he knows you do not have that power, you don't have to tell him that you're not exonerating the president. He knows this already. So then that kind of changes the context of the report.

MUELLER:

No. We included in the report for exactly that reason. He may not know it and should.

TURNER:

So you believe that Attorney Bill Barr believes somewhere in the hallways of the Department of Justice, there's an office of exoneration?

MUELLER:

No, that's not what I said.

TURNER:

Well I believe he knows and I don't believe you put that in there for Mr. Barr. I think you put that in there for exactly what I'm going to discuss next, and that is, so "The Washington Post" yesterday, when speaking of your report, the article said Trump could not be exonerated of trying to obstruct the investigation itself.

Trump could not be exonerated. Now, that statement is correct, Mr. Mueller isn't it, in that no one can be exonerated? The reporter wrote this. This reporter can't be exonerated. Mr. Mueller,

you can't be exonerated. In fact, in our criminal justice system, there is no power or authority to exonerate.

Now, this is my concern, Mr. Mueller, this is the headline on all of the news channels while you were testifying today Mueller, Trump was not exonerated.

Now, Mr. Mueller, what you know is that this can't say Mueller exonerated Trump. Because you don't have the power or authority to exonerate Trump, you had no more power to declare him exonerated than you have the power to declare him Anderson Cooper. So the problem that I have here is that, since there's no one in the criminal justice system that has that power -- the president pardons, he doesn't exonerate; courts and juries don't declare innocent, they declare not guilty, they don't even declare exonerated -- the statement about exonerated is misleading and it's meaningless. And it -- it colors this investigation; one word, out of the entire portion of your report, and it's a meaningless word that has no legal meaning and it has colored your entire report.

SCHIFF:

Time of the gentleman has expired.

TURNER:

I yield back.

SCHIFF:

Mr. Carson?

CARSON:

Thank you, chairman.

Thank you, Director Mueller, for your years of service to our country. I want to look more closely, sir, at the Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, an individual who I believe betrayed our country, who lied to a grand jury, who tampered with witnesses and who repeatedly tried to use his position with the Trump campaign to make more money. Let's focus on the betrayal and greed. Your investigation, sir, found a number of troubling contacts between Mr. Manafort and Russian individuals during and after the campaign. Is that right sir?

MUELLER:

Correct.

CARSON:

In addition to the June 9th meeting just discussed, Manafort also met several time with a man named Konstantin Kilimnik, who the FBI assessed to have ties with Russian intel agencies. Is that right, sir?

MUELLER:

Correct.

CARSON:

In fact, Mr. Manafort didn't just meet with him; he shared private Trump campaign polling information with this man linked to Russian intelligence. Is that right, sir?

MUELLER:

That is -- that is correct.

CARSON:

And in turn, the information was shared with a Russian oligarch tied to Vladimir Putin. Is that right, sir?

MUELLER:

Allegedly.

CARSON:

Director Mueller, meeting with him wasn't enough. Sharing internal polling information wasn't enough. Mr. Manafort went so far as to offer this Russian oligarch tied to Putin a private briefing on the campaign. Is that right, sir?

MUELLER:

Yes, sir.

CARSON:

And finally, Mr. Manafort also discussed internal campaign strategy on four battleground states - Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Minnesota -- with the Russian intelligence-linked individual. Did he not, sir?

MUELLER:

That's reflected in the report, as were the items you listed previously.

CARSON:

Director Mueller, based on your decades of years of experience at the FBI, would you agree, sir, that it creates a national security risk when a presidential campaign chairman shares private polling information on the American people, private political strategy related to winning the votes of the American people and private information about American battleground states with a foreign adversary?

MUELLER:

Is that the question, sir?

CARSON:

Yes, sir.

MUELLER:

I'm not going to speculate along those lines. To the extent that it's within the lines of the report, then I support it. Anything beyond that is not part of that which I would support.

CARSON:

Well, I think it does, sir. I think it shows an infuriating lack of patriotism from the very people seeking the highest office in the land. Director Mueller, Manafort didn't share this information in exchange for nothing. Did he, sir?

MUELLER:

I can't answer that question without knowing more about the -- the question.

CARSON:

Well, it's clear that he hoped to be paid back money he was owed by Russian or Ukrainian oligarchs in return for the passage of private campaign information. Correct, sir?

MUELLER:

That -- that is true.

CARSON:

Director Mueller, as my colleague Mr. Heck will discuss later, greed corrupts. Would you agree, sir, that the sharing of private campaign information in exchange for money represents a particular kind of corruption, one that presents a national security risk to our country, sir?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to opine on that. I don't have the expertise in that arena to really opine.

CARSON:

Would you agree, sir, that Manafort's contacts with Russians close to Vladimir Putin and his efforts to exchange private information on Americans for money left him vulnerable to blackmail by the Russians?

MUELLER:

I think generally so that would be the case.

CARSON:

Would you agree, sir, these acts demonstrated a betrayal of the democratic values that our country rests on?

MUELLER:

I can't agree with that. Not that -- not that it's not true, but I cannot agree with it.

CARSON:

Yes, sir. Director Mueller, well, I can tell you that in my years of experience as a law enforcement officer and as a member of Congress fortunate to serve on the Intel Committee, I know enough to say yes. Trading political secrets for money with a foreign adversary can corrupt and it can leave you open to blackmail and it certainly represents the betrayal of the values underpinning our democracy. I want to thank you for your service again. Director Mueller, we appreciate you for coming today. I yield back, Chairman.

SCHIFF:

Dr. Wenstrup.

WENSTRUP:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Mueller for being here today. Mr. Mueller, is it accurate that your investigation found no evidence that members of the Trump campaign were involved in the theft or publication of Clinton campaign-related emails?

MUELLER:

Can you read -- or can you repeat the question?

WENSTRUP:

Is it accurate to say your investigation found no evidence that members of the Trump campaign were involved in the theft or publication of the Clinton campaign-related emails?

MUELLER:

I don't know. What (inaudible)

WENSTRUP:

Well, Volume 1, page 5, the investigation did not establish that members of the Trump campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities.

So it would therefore be inaccurate based on this to describe that finding as open to doubt, that finding being that the Trump campaign was involved with theft or publication of the Clinton campaign emails. You following that, sir?

MUELLER:

I do believe I'm following it, but it is -- that portion or that matter does not fall within our jurisdiction or fall within our investigation.

WENSTRUP:

Well basically what your report says Volume 1, page 5, I just want to be clear that open to doubt is how the Committee Democrats describe this finding in their minority views of our 2018 report, and it kind of flies in the face of what you have in your report. So is it accurate also to say the investigation found no documentary evidence that George Papadopoulos told anyone affiliated with the Trump campaign about Joseph Mifsud's claims that the Russians had dirt on candidate Clinton?

MUELLER:

Let me turn that over to Mr. Zebley.

WENSTRUP:

I'd like to ask you, sire. This is your report, and that's what I'm basing this on.

MUELLER:

And then could you repeat the question for me again?

WENSTRUP:

Yes, is it accurate to say the investigation found no documentary evidence that George Papadopoulos told anyone affiliated with the Trump campaign about Joseph Mifsud's claims that the Russians had dirt on candidate Clinton?

MUELLER:

I believe and appearing in the report that it's accurate.

WENSTRUP:

OK, so yes. In the report it says no documentary evidence that Papadopoulos shared this information with the campaign. It's therefore inaccurate to conclude that by the time of the June 9, 2016 Trump Tower meeting, quote, "the campaign was likely already unnoticed via George Papadopoulos's contact with Russian agents that Russia, in fact, had damaging information on Trump's opponent. Would you say that that is inaccurate to say that it's likely already...

MUELLER:

I'd direct you to -- I'd direct you to the report.

WENSTRUP:

Well, I appreciate that because the Democrats jumped to this incorrect collusion in their minority views, again, which contradicts what you have in your report. I'm concerned about a number of statements I'd like you to clarify because a number of Democrats have made some statements that I have concerns with, and maybe you can clear them up. So a member of this Committee said President Trump was a Russian agent after your report was publicly released. That statement is not supported by your report, correct?

MUELLER:

That is accurate. Not supported.

WENSTRUP:

Multiple democrat members have asserted that Paul Manafort met with Julian Assange in 2016 before WikiLeaks released DNC emails implying Manafort colluded with Assange. Because your report does not mention finding evidence that Manafort met with Assange, I would assume that means you found no evidence of this meeting. Is that assumption correct?

MUELLER:

I'm not certain I agree with that assumption.

WENSTRUP:

But you make no mention of it in your report. Would you agree with that?

MUELLER:

Yes, I would agree with that.

WENSTRUP:

OK. Mr. Mueller, does your report contain any evidence that President Trump was enrolled in the Russian system of Kompromat as a member of this Committee once claimed?

MUELLER:

Well, and to what I can speak to is information and evidence that we picked up at the special counsel, and I think that's accurate as far as it goes.

WENSTRUP:

Thank you. I appreciate that. So let's go for a second to scope. Did you ask the Department Justice to expand the scope of the special counsel's mandate related to August 2, 2017 or August 20, 2017 scoping memoranda?

MUELLER:

Well, there are -- without looking at the memoranda I could not answer that question.

WENSTRUP:

Well, let me ask you did you ever make a request to expand your office's mandate at all?

MUELLER:

Generally, yes.

WENSTRUP:

And was that ever denied?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to speak to that. It goes to no internal deliberation.

WENSTRUP:

Well, I'm just trying to understand the process. Does expanding the scope come from the acting attorney general or Rod Rosenstein or does it come from you or can it come from either?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to discuss any other alternatives.

WENSTRUP:

Thank you, Mr. Mueller.

SCHIFF:

Ms. Speier.

SPEIER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Mueller, I think I can say without fear of contradiction that you are the greatest patriot in this room today and I want to thank you for being here.

MUELLER:

Thank you.

SPEIER:

You said in your report -- and I'm going to quibble with your words -- that the Russian intervention was sweeping and systematic. I would quibble with that because I don't think it was just an intervention. I think it was an invasion. And I don't think it was just sweeping and systematic. I think it was sinister and scheming. And having said that, one of my colleagues earlier here referred to this Russian intervention as a hoax, and I'd like to get your comment on that. On page 26 of your report, you talk about the Internet research agency and how tens of millions of U.S. persons became engaged with the posts that they made, that there were some 80,000 posts on Facebook that Facebook itself admitted that 126 million people had probably

seen, the posts that were put up by the Internet Research Agency, that they had 3,800 Twitter accounts and had designed more than 175,000 tweets that probably reached 1.4 million people. The Internet Research Agency was spending about \$1.25 million a month on all of this social media in the United States in what I would call an invasion in our country. Would you agree that it was not a hoax that the Russians were engaged in trying to impact our election?

MUELLER:

Absolutely. It was not a hoax. The indictments we returned against the Russians, two different ones, were substantial in their scope, using that scope word again. And I think one of the -- we have underplayed to a certain extent, that aspect of the investigation that has and would have long term damage to the United States that we need to move quickly to address.

SPEIER:

Thank you for that. I would like to drill down on that a little bit more. The Internet Research Agency actually started in 2014 by sending over staff as tourists, I guess, to start looking at where they wanted to engage. And there are many that suggest -- and I'm interested in your opinion -- as to whether or not Russia is presently in the United States looking for ways to impact the 2020 election.

MUELLER:

I can't speak to that. That would be in (ph) levels of classification.

SPEIER:

All right. Let me ask you this. Often times when we engage in these hearings, we forget the forest for the trees. You have a very large report here of over 400 pages, most Americans have not read it. We have read it. Actually the FBI director yesterday said he hadn't read it which was a little discouraging. But on behalf of the American people, I want to give you a minute and 39 seconds to tell the American people what you would like them to glean from this report.

MUELLER:

Well, we spent substantial time assuring the integrity of the report, understanding it would be our living message to those who come after us. But it also is a signal, a flag, to those of us who have some responsibility in this area to exercise those responsibilities swiftly and don't let this problem continue to linger as it has over so many years.

SPEIER:

All right. You didn't take the whole amount of time, so I'm going to yield the rest of my time to the chairman.

SCHIFF:

I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. Director Mueller, I wanted to ask you about conspiracy. Generally, a conspiracy offers an offer of something illegal, acceptance of that offer in overt act and furtherance of it, is that correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

SCHIFF:

And Don Jr. was made aware that the Russians were offering dirt on his opponent, correct?

MUELLER:

I don't know that for sure, but one would assume given the presence at the meeting.

SCHIFF:

And when you say that you would love to get that help, that would constitute acceptance of the offer?

MUELLER:

It's a wide open request.

SCHIFF:

And it would certainly be evidence of acceptance if you say when somebody offers you something illegal and you say I would love it, that would be considered evidence of acceptance.

MUELLER:

I (ph) can stay away -- addressing one or two particular situations.

SCHIFF:

Well, this particular situation I'll have to continue in a bit. Now yield to Mr. Stewart.

STEWART:

Mr. Mueller, it's been a long day. Thank you for being here. I do have a series of important questions for you, but before I do that, I want to take a moment to re-emphasize something that my friend Mr. Turner has said. I've heard many people state no person is above the law. And

many times recently, they add not even the president which I think is blazingly (ph) obvious to most of us.

MUELLER:

I'm having trouble hearing you, sir.

STEWART:

Is this better?

MUELLER:

That is better, thank you.

STEWART:

I want you to know that I agree with this statement that no person is above the law. But there's another principal that we also have to defend, and that is the presumption of innocence. And I'm sure you agree with this principle, though I think the way your office phrased some parts of your report, it does make me wonder, I have to be honest with you.

For going on three years, innocent people have been accused of very serious crimes, including treason, accusations made even here today. They have made their lives disrupted, and in some cases destroyed, for false accusations for which there is no basis other than some people desperately wish it was so.

But your report is very clear. No evidence of conspiracy, no evidence of coordination. And I believe we owe it to these people who have been falsely accused, including the president and his family, to make that very clear. Mr. Mueller, the credibility of your report is based on the integrity of how it is handled. And there's something that I think bothers me and other Americans.

I'm holding here in my hand a binder of 25 examples of leaks that occurred from the special counsel's office from those who associated with your work, dating back to as early as a few weeks after your inception of the beginning of your work and continuing to a few months ago.

All of these, all of them, have one thing in common. They were designed to weaken or embarrass the president, every one. Never was it leaked that you had found no evidence of collusion. Never was it leaked that the Steele dossier was a complete fantasy nor that it was funded by the Hillary Clinton campaign. I could go on and on.

Mr. Mueller, are you aware of anyone on your team having given advanced knowledge of the raid on Roger Stone's home to any person or the press including CNN?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to talk about specifics. I will mention or talk more a moment about persons who become involved in an investigation. And the understanding that in a lengthy, thorough investigation some persons will be under a cloud that should not be under a cloud. And one of the reasons for emphasizes as I have the speed of an election -- not election -- the speed of an investigation is that so those persons who are disrupted as a result of...

STEWART:

I appreciate that. But I do have a series of questions.

MUELLER:

...with the result of that investigation.

STEWART:

Thank you. And you're right, it is a cloud, and it's an unfair cloud for dozens of people. But to my point, are you aware of anyone providing information to the media regarding the raid on Roger Stone's home including CNN?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to speak to that.

STEWART:

OK. Mr. Mueller, you sent a letter dated March 27th to Attorney General Barr in which you acclaim the attorney general's comments did not capture the context of the report. You stated earlier today that response was not authorized. Did you make effort to determine who leaked this confidential letter?

MUELLER:

No, and I'm not sure -- this is a letter of March 27?

STEWART:

Yes, sir.

MUELLER:

I'm not certain when it was publicized, I do know it was publicized. I do not believe we would be responsible for the leaks. I do believe we have done a good job in assuring that no leaks occur.

STEWART:

We have 25 examples here of where you did not do a good job. Not you, sir. I'm not accusing you at all, but where your office did not do a good job protecting this information. One more example, do you know anyone who anonymously made claims to the press that Attorney General's Barr's March 24th letter to Congress had been misrepresented or misrepresented your basis of your report?

MUELLER:

What was the question?

STEWART:

Do you know who anonymously made claims to the press that Attorney General Barr's March 24th letter to Congress had misrepresented the findings of your report?

MUELLER:

No.

STEWART:

Sir, given these examples as well as others, you must have realized that leaks were coming from someone associated with the special counsel's office. What I'd like to ask...

MUELLER:

I do not believe that.

STEWART:

Well, sir, this was your work. You're the only one -- your office is the only one who had information regarding this. It had to come from your office. Putting that aside, which leads me to my final question, did you do anything about it?

MUELLER:

From the outset, we've undertaken to make certain that we minimize the possibility of leaks, and I think we were successful over the two years that we were in operation.

STEWART:

Well, I wish you had been more successful, sir. I think it was disruptive to the American people. My time is expired. I yield back.

SCHIFF:

Mr. Quigley.

QUIGLEY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Director, thank you for being here. This, too, shall pass. Earlier today and throughout today you have stated the policy that a seated president cannot be indicted, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

QUIGLEY:

And upon questioning this morning, you were asked could that -- could a president be indicted after their service, correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

QUIGLEY:

And your answer was that they could.

MUELLER:

They could.

SCHIFF:

Director, please speak into the microphone.

MUELLER:

I'm sorry. Thank you. They could.

QUIGLEY:

So the follow up question that should be concerning is what if a president serves beyond the statute of limitations?

MUELLER:

I don't know the answer to that one.

QUIGLEY:

Would it not indicate that if the statute of limitations of federal crimes such as this are five years that a president who serves a second terms is therefore under the policy, above the law?

MUELLER:

I'm not certain I would agree with the -- I'm not certain I would agree with the conclusion. I'm not certain that I can see the possibility that you suggest.

QUIGLEY:

But the statute doesn't toll, is that correct?

MUELLER:

I don't know specifically.

QUIGLEY:

It clearly doesn't. I just want -- as the American public is watching this and perhaps learning about many of these for the first time, we need to consider that and that the other alternatives are perhaps all that we have, but I appreciate your response. Earlier in questioning, someone mentioned that it was a question involved whether anyone in the Trump political world publicized the emails whether or not that was the case.

I just want to refer to Volume 1, page 60 where we learned that Trump Jr. publicly tweeted a link to the leak of stolen (inaudible) emails in October of 2016. You familiar with that?

MUELLER:

I am.

QUIGLEY:

So that would at least be a republishing of this information, would it not?

MUELLER:

I'm not certain I would agree -- I'm not certain I would agree with that.

QUIGLEY:

Director Pompeo assessed WikiLeaks in one point as a hostile intelligence service. Given your law enforcement experience and your knowledge of what WikiLeaks did here and what they do generally, would you assess that to be accurate or something similar? How would you assess what WikiLeaks does?

MUELLER:

Absolutely. And they are currently under indictment as Julian Assange is (ph).

QUIGLEY:

Would it be fair to describe them as you would agree with Director Pompeo -- that's what he was when he made that remark -- that it's a hostile intelligence service, correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

QUIGLEY:

If we could put up slide six. "This just came out... WikiLeaks. I love WikiLeaks," Donald Trump, October 10, 2016, "This WikiLeaks stuff is unbelievable. It tells you the inner heart, you gotta read it," Donald Trump, October 12, 2016. "This WikiLeaks is like a treasure trove," Donald Trump, October 31, 2016. "Boy, I love reading those WikiLeaks," Donald Trump, November 4, 2016. Do any of those quotes disturb you, Mr. Director?

MUELLER:

I'm not sure I would say...

QUIGLEY:

How do you react?

MUELLER:

Well, problematic is an understatement in terms of what it displays, in terms of (inaudible) some, I don't know, hope or some boost to what is and should be illegal activity.

QUIGLEY:

Volume 1, page 59. Donald Trump Jr. had direct electronic communications with WikiLeaks during the campaign period. On October 3, 2016, WikiLeaks sent another direct message to Trump Jr. asking you guys to help disseminate a link alleging candidate Clinton had advocated a drone to attack Julian Assange. Trump Jr. responded that, quote, "he had already done so." Same question. Is behavior at the very least disturbing? Your reaction?

MUELLER:

Disturbing and also subject to investigation.

QUIGLEY:

Would it be described as aid and comfort to a hostile intelligence service, sir?

MUELLER:

I wouldn't categorize with any specificity.

QUIGLEY:

I yield the balance to the chairman, please.

SCHIFF:

I'm not sure I can make good use of 27 seconds but, Director, I think you made it clear that you think it unethical, to put it politely, to tout a foreign service like WikiLeaks publishing stolen political documents of presidential campaign?

MUELLER:

Certainly calls for investigation.

SCHIFF:

Thank you, Director. We're going to go now to Mr. Crawford, and then after Mr. Crawford's five minute, we'll take a five or 10 minute break.

CRAWFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Mueller, for being here. Days after you appointment, Peter Strzok texted about his concern that there's, quote, "no big there there in the Trump campaign investigation." Did Strzok or anyone else who worked on the FBI's investigation tell you that around 10 months into the investigation the FBI still had no case for collusion?

MUELLER:

Who -- can you repeat that?

CRAWFORD:

Peter Strzok.

MUELLER:

OK, do you -- I'm sorry. Can you move the microphone a little closer?

CRAWFORD:

Sure.

MUELLER:

Thank you.

CRAWFORD:

There's a quote attributed to Peter Strzok. He texted about his concern that there is, quote, "no big there there in the Trump campaign investigation." Did he or anyone else who worked on the FBI's investigation tell you that around 10 months into the investigation the FBI still had no case for collusion?

MUELLER:

No.

CRAWFORD:

Is the inspector general report correct that the text messages from Peter Strzok and Lisa Page's phones from your office were not retained after they left the Special Counsels Office?

MUELLER:

No. I don't -- it depends on what you're talking about. An investigation into those -- Peter Strzok went on for a period of time, and I'm not certain what it encompasses, and they will have encompassed what you're referring to.

CRAWFORD:

OK, let me move on just real quickly. Did you ask the department to authorize your office to investigate the origin of the Trump Russia investigation?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to get into that. It goes into internal deliberations.

CRAWFORD:

So the circumstances surrounding the origin of the investigation have yet to be fully vetted then. I'm certainly glad that Attorney General Barr and U.S. Attorney Derum (ph) are looking into this matter. With that, I'd like to yield the balance of my time to the Ranking Member Nunes.

NUNES:

I think the gentleman for yielding. Mr. Mueller, I want to make sure you're aware of who Fusion GPS is. Fusion GPS is a political operations firm that was working directly for the Hillary Clinton campaign and the Democrat National Committee. They produced the dossier, so they paid Steele who then went out and got the dossier. And I know you don't want to ask - answer any dossier questions, so I'm not going there, but your report mentions Natalia Veselnitskaya 65 times. She meets in the Trump Tower. It's this infamous Trump Tower meeting that's in your report. You've heard many of the Democrats refer to it today. The meeting was shorter than 20 minutes, I believe. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

I think what we have in our report reflects it was about that length.

CRAWFORD:

So, do you know -- so, Fusion GPS, the main actor of Fusion GPS, the president of the company or owner of the company is a guy named Glenn Simpson who's working for Hillary Clinton. Glenn Simpson -- do you know how many times Glenn Simpson met with Natalia Veselnitskaya?

MUELLER:

Myself? No.

CRAWFORD:

Would it surprise you that the Clinton campaign dirty ops arm met with Natalia Veselnitskaya more times than the Trump campaign did?

MUELLER:

This is an area I'm not going to get into as I indicated at the outset.

CRAWFORD:

Did you ever interview Glenn Simpson?

MUELLER:

I'm again going to pass on that.

CRAWFORD:

According to -- I'm going to change topics here. According to notes from the State Department Official Kathleen Kavalec, Christopher Steele told her that former Russian intelligence head Trubnikov and Putin adviser Surkov, were sources for the Steele dossier. Now, knowing that these are not getting into whether these sources were real or not real, was there any concern that there could have been disinformation that was going from the Kremlin into the Clinton campaign and then being fed into the FBI?

MUELLER:

As I said before, this is an area that I cannot speak to.

CRAWFORD:

Is that because you're -- it's not in the report or because...

MUELLER:

It's deliberations, other proceedings, and the like.

CRAWFORD:

When Andrew Weissmann and Zainab Ahmad joined your team, were you aware that Bruce Ohr, Department of Justice top official, directly briefed the dossier allegations to them in the summer of 2016.

MUELLER:

Again, I'm not going to speak to that issue.

CRAWFORD:

OK. Before you arrested George Papadopoulos in July of 2017, he was given \$10,000 in cash in Israel. Do you know who gave him that cash?

MUELLER:

Again, that's outside our questions. Such as that, you go to the FBI or department.

CRAWFORD:

But it involved your investigation.

MUELLER:

It involved persons involved in my investigation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SCHIFF:

We will stand a recess for five or ten minutes. Please, folks, remain in your seats. Allow the director , Mr. Zebley to exit the chamber.

MUELLER:

Thank you, sir.

SCHIFF:

Thank you Director. Mr. Swalwell you are recognized.

SWALWELL:

Thank you. Director Mueller, as a prosecutor you would agree that if a witness or suspect lies or obstructs or tampers with witnesses or destroys evidence during an investigation that generally that conduct can be used to show a consciousness of guilt. Would you agree with that?

MUELLER:

Yes.

SWALWELL:

Let's go through the different people associated with the Trump campaign and this investigation who lied to you and other investigators to cover up their disloyal and unpatriotic conduct. If we could put Exhibit 8 up. Director Mueller I'm showing you Campaign Chairman Paul Manafort, Political Advisor Roger Stone, Deputy Campaign Manager Rick Gates, National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, Donald Trump's personal attorney Michael Cohen and Foreign Policy Advisor

George Papadopoulos. These six individuals have each been charged, convicted or lied to your office or other investigators. Is that right?

MUELLER:

That's all - look askance at Mr. Stone because he is - he is a different case here in D.C.

SWALWELL:

So National Advisor Flynn lied about discussions with a Russian ambassador related to sanctions. Is that right?

MUELLER:

That's correct.

SWALWELL:

Michael Cohen lied to this committee about Trump Tower Moscow. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

SWALWELL:

George Papadopoulos, the president's senior foreign policy advisor lied to the FBI about his communications about Russia's possession of dirt on Hillary Clinton. Is that right.

MUELLER:

Correct. Yes.

SWALWELL:

The president's campaign chairman Paul Manafort lied about meetings that he had with someone with ties to Russian intelligence. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

That's - that's true.

SWALWELL:

And your investigation was hampered by Trump campaign official's use of encryption communications. Is that right?

MUELLER:

We believe that to be the case.

SWALWELL:

You also believe to be the case that your investigation was hampered by deletion of electronic messages. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

It would be, yes. Generally any case would be if those kinds of communications are - are used.

SWALWELL:

For example you noted that deputy campaign manager Rick Gates who shared internal campaign polling data with the person with ties to Russian intelligence at the direction of Manafort that Mr. Gates deleted those communications on a daily basis. Is that right?

MUELLER:

I think it were - I'm saying, I don't know specifically but if it's in the report then I support it.

SWALWELL:

That's right Director. It's Volume 1, page 136.

MUELLER:

Thank you.

SWALWELL:

In addition to that, other information was inaccessible because your office determined it was protected by attorney-client privilege. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

That is true.

SWALWELL:

That would include that you do not know whether communications between Donald Trump and his personal attorneys Jay Sekulow, Rudy Giuliani, and others discouraged witnesses from cooperating with the government. Is that right?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to talk to that.

SWALWELL:

That would also mean that you can't talk to whether or not pardons were dangled through the president's attorneys because of the shield of attorney-client privilege.

MUELLER:

No. I'm not going to discuss that.

SWALWELL:

Did you want to interview Donald Trump, Jr.?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to discuss that.

SWALWELL:

Did you subpoena Donald Trump, Jr.?

MUELLER:

And I'm not going to discuss that.

SWALWELL:

Did you want to interview the president?

MUELLER:

Yes.

SWALWELL:

Director Mueller, on January 1, 2017, through March 2019, Donald Trump met with Vladimir Putin in person 6 times, called him 10 times and exchanged 4 letters with him. Between that time period, how many times did you meet with Donald Trump?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to - I'm not going to get into that.

SWALWELL:

He did not meet with you in person. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

He did not.

SWALWELL:

As a result of lies, deletion of text messages, obstruction and witness tampering, is it fair to say that you were unable to fully assess the scope and scale of Russia's interference in the 2016 election and Trump's role in that interference?

MUELLER:

I'm not certain I would adopt that characterization in total; maybe pieces of it that are accurate but in total.

SWALWELL:

But you did state in Volume 1, page 10 that while this report embodies factual and legal determinations, the office believes it to be accurate and complete to the greatest extent possible given these identified gaps, the office cannot rule out the possibility that the unavailable information would shed additional light. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

That is correct. We don't know what we don't know.

SWALWELL:

Why is it so important that witnesses cooperate and tell the truth in an investigation like this?

MUELLER:

Because the testimony of the witness goes to the heart of just about any criminal case you have.

SWALWELL:

Thank you and Mr. Chairman, I yield back. And thank you Director Mueller.

SCHIFF:

Ms. Stefanik.

STEFANIK:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Mueller, as special counsel did you review documents related to the origin of the counterintelligence investigation into the Trump campaign?

MUELLER:

On occasion.

STEFANIK:

Was the Steele dossier one of those documents that was reviewed.

MUELLER:

Yes and I can't discuss that case.

STEFANIK:

I'm just asking a process question. Have you read the Steele dossier?

MUELLER:

Yes, and again I'm not going to respond to that.

STEFANIK:

You were tasked as special counsel to investigate whether there was collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign associates to interfere with the 2016 election and the FBI, we know, has relevant documents and information related to the opening of the CIA investigation. Were you and your team permitted to access all of those documents?

MUELLER:

And again, I can't get into that investigative - what we - what we collected and what we're doing with the investigation - investigation materials.

STEFANIK:

Let me ask it this way, was there any limitation in your access to documents related to the counterintelligence

MUELLER:

That's such a broad question, I have real trouble answering it.

STEFANIK:

Did the special counsel's office undertake any efforts to investigate and verify or disprove allegations contained in the Steele dossier?

MUELLER:

Again, I can't respond.

STEFANIK:

The reason I'm asking for the American public that's watching, it's apparent that the Steele Dossier formed part of the basis to justify the FBI's counterintelligence investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election. As we know it was used to obtain a FISA warrant on Carter Page. This is why I'm asking these questions. Did your office undertake any efforts to identify Steele's sources or subsources?

MUELLER:

Again, the same answer.

STEFANIK:

Were these tasks referred to any other agencies?

MUELLER:

Again, I can't speak to it.

STEFANIK:

Did your office consider whether the Russian government used Steele's sources to provide Steele with disinformation.

MUELLER:

Again, I can't speak to that.

STEFANIK:

I understand. I'm asking these questions just for the record so thanks for your patience. Shifting gears here, did any member of the special counsel's office staff travel overseas as part of the investigation?

MUELLER:

Yes, but I can't go further than that.

STEFANIK:

I'm going to ask to which countries?

MUELLER:

And I can't answer that.

STEFANIK:

Did they meet with foreign government officials?

MUELLER:

Again, it's out of our - out of our bailiwick.

STEFANIK:

Did they meet with foreign private citizens?

MUELLER:

Again, same response.

STEFANIK:

Did they seek information about a U.S. citizen, or any U.S. citizens?

MUELLER:

Again, a territory that I cannot go to.

STEFANIK:

Thank you for answering on the record, these are important questions for the American public and we're hopeful that the I.G. is able to answer these questions. I will yield the balance of my time to the Ranking Member.

NUNES:

Thank the gentle lady for yielding. Mr. Mueller I want to go back to, we started off with Joseph Mifsud whose at the center of this investigation, he appears in your report a dozen times or more.

He really is the epicenter, he's at the origin of this. He's the man who supposedly knows about Clinton's e-mails. You've seen on the screen the Democrats can only put up all the prosecutions that you made against Trump, campaign officials and others.

But I'm struggling to understand why you didn't indict Joseph Mifsud who seems to be the man in the middle of all of this?

MUELLER:

Well I think you understand that you cannot get in to either classified or law enforcement information without a rationale for doing it and I have said all I'm going to be able to say with regard to Mr. Mifsud.

NUNES:

Were you aware of Kathleen Kavalec's involvement, that she had met with Ms. Steele, the State Department official --

MUELLER:

Again, I can't respond to that question, it's outside my jurisdiction.

NUNES:

OK. The Carter Page FISA warrant was reupped (ph) three times, the last time it was reupped was under your watch -- so were you in the approval process of that last time that the Carter Page warrant was --

MUELLER:

Well I can't speak specifically about that warrant, but if you asked was I in the approval chain, the answer is no.

NUNES:

OK, that's very helpful. Thank you Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

SCHIFF:

Mr. Castro.

CASTRO:

Thank you Chairman, thank you Special Counsel Mueller for your testimony and for your service to our country. Donald Trump over the years has surrounded himself with some very shady people -- people that lied for him, people that covered up for him, people that helped him enrich himself. I want to talk specifically about one of those instances that's in your report.

Specifically let's turn to the Trump Tower Moscow project, which you described in your report as, "a highly lucrative deal for the Trump Organization," is that right?

MUELLER:

I would have to look at the quote from the report if you have it?

CASTRO:

Sure, it's on volume two, page 135. It's described as highly lucrative.

MUELLER:

OK, I have it --

CASTRO:

Sure.

MUELLER:

Thank you, sir.

CASTRO:

Yeah, no problem. Your office prosecuted Michael Cohen, and Michael Cohen was Donald Trump's lawyer, for lying to this Committee about several aspects of the Trump organization's pursuit of the Trump Tower Moscow deal, is that right?

MUELLER:

That is correct.

CASTRO:

According to your report, Cohen lied to "minimize links between the project and Trump," and to "stick to the party line... in order not to contradict Trump's public message that connected existed between Trump and Russia," is that right?

MUELLER:

Yes, that's correct.

CASTRO:

Now when you're talking about the party line here, the party line in this case --

MUELLER:

If I could interject, the one thing I should have said at the outset -- it was in the report, and consequently I do believe it to be true.

CASTRO:

Thank you. The party line in this case was that the deal ended in January 2016, in other words they were saying that the deal ended in January 2016 before the Republican primaries. In truth though, the deal extended to June 2016, when Donald Trump was already the presumptive Republican nominee, is that correct?

MUELLER:

That is correct.

CASTRO:

The party line was also that Cohen discussed the deal with Trump only three times, when in truth they discussed it multiple times, is that right?

MUELLER:

Also true in the basis for -- and part of the basis for that plea that he entered (ph) for lying to this entity.

CASTRO:

Thank you -- and thank you for prosecuting that. The party line was also that Cohen and Trump never discussed traveling to Russia during the campaign when in truth they did discuss it, is that right?

MUELLER:

That's accurate.

CASTRO:

And the party line was that Cohen never received a response from the Kremlin to his inquiries about the Trump Tower Moscow deal. In fact, Cohen not only received a response from the Kremlin to his e-mail, but also had a lengthy conversation with a Kremlin representative who had a detailed understanding of the project, is that right?

MUELLER:

If it's in the -- if it's in the report that is accurate representation of that piece of the report.

CASTRO:

So you had the candidate Trump at the time saying he had no business dealings with Russia, his lawyer who was lying about it and then the Kremlin who during that time was talking to President Trump's lawyer about the deal.

MUELLER:

Well, I can't adopt your characterization.

CASTRO:

Not only was Cohen lying on Trump's behalf, but so was the Kremlin. On August 30, 2017 two days after Cohen submitted his false statement to this Committee, claiming that he never received a response to his e-mail to the Kremlin. Vladimir Putin's Press Secretary told reporters that the Kremlin left the e-mail unanswered.

That statement by Putin's Press Secretary was false, wasn't it?

MUELLER:

I can't speak to that.

CASTRO:

Although it was widely reported in the press.

MUELLER:

Again, I can't speak to that particularly if it was dependent upon media sources.

CASTRO:

But it was consistent with the lie that Cohen had made to the Committee, is that right?

MUELLER:

I'm not sure if I could go that far.

CASTRO:

So Cohen, President Trump and the Kremlin were all telling the same lie?

MUELLER:

I defer to you on that -- I can't get in to details.

CASTRO:

Special Counsel Mueller I want to ask you something that's very important to the nation -- did your investigation evaluate whether President Trump could be vulnerable to blackmail by the Russians because the Kremlin knew that Trump and his associates lied about connections to Russia related to the Trump Tower deal?

MUELLER:

I can't speak to that.

CASTRO:

I yield back Chairman.

SCHIFF:

Mr. Hurd.

HURD:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Director Mueller you've been asked many times this afternoon about collusion, obstruction of justice, and impeachment, and the Steele dossier -- and I don't think your answers are going to change if I ask you about those questions.

So I'm going to ask about a couple of press stories, because a lot of what the American people have received about this have been on press stories, and some of that has been wrong and some of that -- some of those press stories have been accurate.

On April 13, 2018 McLatchy (ph) reported that you had evidence Michael Cohen made a secret trip to Prague during the 2016 presidential election. I think he told the -- one of the Committees here in Congress that was incorrect, is that story true?

MUELLER:

I can't -- I can't go in to it.

HURD:

Got you. On October 31st, 2016, Slate published a report suggesting that a server at Trump tower was secretly communicating with Russia's alpha bank. And I quote, "akin to what criminal syndicates do." Do you know if that story is true?

MUELLER:

Do not. Do not.

HURD:

You do not?

MUELLER:

Do not know if it's true.

HURD:

So did you not investigate these allegations that are suggestive of potential Trump/Russia...

MUELLER:

Because I don't believe it not true doesn't mean it would not investigate it. It may have been investigated, but my belief at this point is (ph) not true.

HURD:

Good, copy. Thank you. As a former CIA officer, I want to focus on something I think both sides of the political aisle can agree on. That is how do we prevent Russian intelligence and other adversaries from doing this again? After overseeing counterintelligence operations for 12 years as FBI director, and then investigating what the Russians have done in the 2016 election, you've seen tactics, techniques, and results of Russian intelligence operations.

Our committee made a recommendation that the FBI should improve its victim notification process when a person, entity, or campaign has fallen victim to active measures attack (ph). Could you agree with this -- with this?

MUELLER:

It sounds like a worthwhile endeavor. I will tell you, though, that the ability of our intelligence agencies to work together in this arena is perhaps more important than that. And adopting whatever -- and I'm not that familiar with legislation, but whatever legislation will encourage us working together -- by us, I mean the FBI, CIA, NSA, and the rest -- it should be pursued aggressively early.

HURD:

Who do you think should be responsible within the federal government to counter disinformation?

MUELLER:

I'm no longer in the federal government so...

HURD:

But you've had a long storied career, and I don't think there's anybody who better understands the threat that we are facing than you. Do you have an opinion as a former FBI officer?

MUELLER:

As to?

HURD:

As to who should be the coordinating points within the federal government on how to deal?

MUELLER:

I don't want to wade in those waters.

HURD:

Good, copy. One of the most striking things in your report is that the Internet Research Agency not only on its social media campaign in the U.S., but they were able to organize political rallies after the election. Our committee issued a report (inaudible) saying that Russian active measures are growing with frequency and intensity and including their expanded use of groups such as the IRA. And these groups pose a significant threat to the United States and our allies in upcoming elections. Would you agree with that?

MUELLER:

Yes. In fact, one of the other areas that we have to look at, and many more companies -- not companies -- many more countries are developing capability to replicate what the Russians had done.

HURD:

You -- you alluded to making sure all the elements of the federal government should be working together. Do you have a suggestion on a strategy to do that to counter this information?

MUELLER:

Not overarching.

HURD:

Is this -- in your investigation, did you think this was a single attempt by the Russians to get involved in our election, or did you find evidence to suggest they'll try to do this again?

MUELLER:

It wasn't a single attempt. The doing it as we sit here, and they expect to do it during the next campaign.

HURD:

Director Mueller, I appreciate your time in indulging us here in multiple committees. And I yield back to the ranking member if he has -- I yield back to the chairman.

SCHIFF:

Mr. Heck.

HECK:

Director Mueller, I would like to go to the motives behind the Trump campaign encouragement and acceptance of help during the election. Obviously clear motivation is to help them in what would turn out to be a very close election. But there was another key motivation and that was frankly the desire to make money. I always try to remember what my dad who never had the opportunity to go beyond the 8th grade taught me, which was that I should never ever underestimate the capacity of some people to cut corners and even more, in order to worship and chase the almighty buck.

And this is important because I think it in fact does go to the heart of why the Trump campaign was so unrelentingly intent on developing relationships with the Kremlin. So, let's quickly revisit one financial scheme we just discussed which was the Trump tower in Moscow. We indicated earlier that it was a lucrative deal. Trump, in fact, stood in his company to earn many millions of dollars on that deal, did they not, sir?

MUELLER:

True.

HECK:

And Cohen, Mr. Cohen, his attorney, testified before this committee that President Trump believed the deal required Kremlin approval. Is that consistent with what he told you?

MUELLER:

I'm not certain whether Mr. Trump himself or others associated with that enterprise, had discussed the necessity of having the input with the state, meaning the Russian government, in order for it to go forward successfully.

HECK:

Isn't it also true that Donald Trump viewed his presidential campaign as he told top campaign aides that the campaign was an infomercial for the Trump organization and his properties?

MUELLER:

I'm not familiar with that.

HECK:

Let's turn to Trump Campaign Chair Paul Manafort. Did in fact your investigation find any evidence that Manafort intended to use his position as Trump's campaign chair for his own personal financial benefit?

MUELLER:

I would say there was some indication of that, but I won't go further.

HECK:

I think you'll find it on page 135 of Volume 1, during the transition, Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner met with Sergei Gorkov, the head of a Russian-owned bank that was under -- is under U.S. sanctions. And according to the head of the bank, he met with Kushner in his capacity as CEO of Kushner Companies to discuss business opportunities, is that correct, sir?

MUELLER:

I'm not certain. I'm not certain about that, let me just put it that way.

HECK:

It was asserted thusly in your report, Volume 1, pages 161 and 162 . Your report notes that at the time Kushner Companies were trying to renegotiate a billion -- with a B -- a billion dollar lease of their flag shipbuilding at 666 5th avenue, correct?

MUELLER:

I'm not familiar with those financial arrangements.

HECK:

Also on page 162, where Kushner Companies, it was asserted, had dead obligations (ph) coming due on the company. Erik Prince, a supporter close to Trump...

MUELLER:

A supporter.

HECK:

Yes. He met in the Seychelles during the transition with Kirill Dmitriev, who was the head of a sanctioned Russian government investment arm which has close ties to Vladimir Putin, correct, sir?

MUELLER:

Yes.

HECK:

Your investigation determined that Mr. Prince had not known or conducted business with Dimitriev before Trump won the election, correct?

MUELLER:

I defer to the report on that.

HECK:

Yet it does, and yet Prince, who had connections to top administration - Trump administration officials, met with Dimitriev during the transition period and discussed business opportunities among other things. But it wasn't just Trump and his associates who were trying to make money off this deal nor hide it nor lie about it. Russia was, too. That was the whole point to gain relief from sanctions which would hugely benefit their incredibly wealthy oligarchs. For example, sanctions relief was discussed at that June 9 meeting in the Trump Tower. Was it not, sir?

MUELLER:

Yes, but it was not a main subject of floor discussion (ph).

HECK:

Trump administration National Security Advisor designate Michael Flynn also discussed sanctions in a secret conversation with the Russian ambassador. Did he not?

MUELLER:

Correct.

HECK:

So to summarize, Donald Trump, Michael Cohen, Paul Manafort, Jared Kushner, Erik Prince, and others in the Trump orbit all tried to use their connections with the Trump organization to profit from Russia which was openly seeking relief from sanctions. Is that true, sir?

MUELLER:

I'm not certain I can adopt what you're...

HECK:

Well, I will and I'd further assert that was not only dangerous, it was un-American. Greed corrupts. Greed corrupts and it is a terrible foundation for developing American foreign policy.

SCHIFF:

Mr. Ratcliffe.

RATCLIFFE:

Director Mueller, given your constraints on what you're able or allowed to answer with respect to counterintelligence matters or other matters that are currently open under investigation, you're not going to be able to answer my remaining questions, so I thank you for your courtesies and the answers that you have given to my prior questions, and I do thank you for your extraordinary career and record of service and yield the balance of my time to the Ranking Member.

MUELLER:

Thank you.

NUNES:

Thank you, Mr. Ratcliffe. And Mr. Mueller, let me associate my words with Mr. Ratcliffe. There are a few more questions. I want to clean up a little bit about the Erik Prince Seychelles meeting. So Erik Prince testified before this Committee that he was surveilled by the U.S. government and the information from the surveillance was leaked to the press. Did you investigate whether Prince was surveilled and whether classified information on him was illegally leaked to the media?

MUELLER:

Did you say did you or will you?

NUNES:

Well, I know you can't. I know you're not going...

MUELLER:

So I can't discuss either way.

NUNES:

I know you're not going to join it back up in the ranks, but did you refer - were you aware that Prince has made these allegations that he was surveilled. He's concerned that there were leaks about this surveillance. Did you make any referrals about these...

MUELLER:

I can't get into discussion on it.

NUNES:

OK. Also on General Flynn, I know you came after the leak of his phone call with the Russian ambassador. Your time at FBI, it would be a major scandal, wouldn't it, for the leak of the national security advisor and anyone...

MUELLER:

I can't - I can't adopt that hypothesis.

NUNES:

Did your report name any people who were acting as U.S. government informants or sources without disclosing that fact?

MUELLER:

I can't answer that.

NUNES:

On Volume 1, page 133 of your report, you state the Konstantin Kilimnik has ties to Russian intelligence. His name's came up quite often today. The report omits to mention that Kilimnik has long-term relationships with U.S. government officials including our own State Department.

MUELLER:

I can't be - I can't get into that.

NUNES:

I know it's not in the report, but, you know, if Kilimnik is being used in the report to say that he was possibly some type of Russian agent, then I think it is important for this Committee to know if Kilimnik has ties to our own State Department, which it appears that he does.

MUELLER:

Again, it's the same territory that I'm low (ph) to get into.

NUNES:

You were asked this earlier about Trump attorney, John Dowd, that pieces of his phone call were omitted from the report. It was what Mr. Dowd calls exculpatory evidence. Are you concerned...

MUELLER:

I'm not - I'm not certain I would agree with that characterization, and I think I said that before.

NUNES:

Yes. And American citizen from the Republic of Georgia, who your report misidentifies as a Russians, claims that your report omitted parts of a text message he had with Michael Cohen about stopping the flow of compromising tapes of Donald Trump. In the omitted portions, he says he did not know what the tapes actually showed. As that portion of the exchange left out of the report for a reason?

MUELLER:

No. We got an awful lot in the report, but we did not get every intersection or conversation and the like. So I am not familiar with that particular episode you're talking about.

NUNES:

Thank you, Mr. Mueller. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SCHIFF:

Mr. Welch.

WELCH:

Director Mueller, did you find there was no collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia?

MUELLER:

Well, we don't use the word collusion, and the word we usually use is not collusion but one of the other terms that fills in when collusion is not used. In any event, the - we decided not to use the work collusion in as much as it has no relevance to the criminal law arena.

WELCH:

The term is conspiracy that you prefer to use?

MUELLER:

That's right. Conspiracy, exactly right.

WELCH:

You help me, I'll help you...

MUELLER:

Thank you.

WELCH:

... it's an agreement (ph). (LAUGHTER) And in fact, you had to then make a charging decision after your investigation where unless it was enough evidence to prove beyond reasonable doubt you wouldn't make a charge, correct?

MUELLER:

Generally that's the case.

WELCH:

But making that decision does not mean your investigation failed to turn up evidence of conspiracy.

MUELLER:

Absolutely correct.

WELCH:

And in fact, I'll go through some of the significant findings that your exhaustive investigation made. You found, as I understand it, that from May 2016 until the end of the campaign, campaign chairman, Mr. Manafort, gave private polling information to Russian agents, correct? And...

SCHIFF:

Can you speak in the microphone?

MUELLER:

Yes, I will. My apologies.

WELCH:

... your - thank you. And your investigation found that in June 2016 Donald Trump Jr. made an arrangement to meet at Trump Tower along with Jared Kushner and others expecting to receive dirt on the Hillary Clinton campaign. Correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

WELCH:

And you found in your investigation that on July 27, candidate Trump called on Russia to hack Hillary Clinton's e-mail, something for the first time they did about five hours later. Correct?

MUELLER:

That's correct.

WELCH:

And you also found that on August 2, Mr. Manafort met with the person tied to Russian intelligence, Mr. Kilimnik and gave him internal campaign strategy where that Russia was intending to do a misinformation social media campaign, correct?

MUELLER:

I'm not certain of the tie there.

WELCH:

But the fact of that meeting, do you agree with?

MUELLER:

The fact that the meeting took place is accurate.

WELCH:

In your investigation, as I understand it, also found that in late summer of 2016 the Trump campaign, in fact, devised its strategy in messaging around WikiLeaks releases of materials that were stolen from the Democratic National Committee. Correct?

MUELLER:

Is that from the report?

WELCH:

Yes. It's according to Mr. Gates.

MUELLER:

Yes. Yes.

WELCH:

Thank you. And you also talked earlier about the finding in your investigation that in September and October of 2016, Donald Trump, Jr. had e-mail communications with WikiLeaks now indicted about releasing information damaging to the Clinton campaign, correct?

MUELLER:

True. True.

WELCH:

So, I understand you made a decision, prosecutorial decision, that this would not rise to proof beyond a reasonable doubt, but I ask if you share my concern. And my concern is, have we established a new normal from this past campaign that is going to apply to future campaigns, so that if any one of us running for the U.S. House, any candidate for the U.S. Senate, and candidacy for the presidency of the United States, aware that if hostile foreign powers trying to influence an election has no duty to report that to the FBI or their authorities ...

MUELLER:

Well, I hope ...

WELCH:

Go ahead.

MUELLER:

I hope this is not the new normal, but I fear it is.

WELCH:

And would, in fact, have the ability, without fear of legal repercussion to meet with agents of that foreign entity hostile to the American election?

MUELLER:

I'm sorry, what is the question?

WELCH:

Is that an apprehension that you share with me.

MUELLER:

Yes.

WELCH:

And that there would be no repercussions whatsoever to Russia if they did this again, and as you stated earlier, as we sit here, they're doing it now. Is that correct?

MUELLER:

You're absolutely right.

WELCH:

Do you have any advice to this Congress as together what we should do to protect our electoral system and accept responsibility on our part to report to you or your successor when we're aware of hostile foreign engagement in our elections?

MUELLER:

I would say the basis -- the first line of defense really is the ability of the various agencies who have some piece of this to not only share information, but share expertise, share targets and we use the full resources that we have to address this problem.

WELCH:

Thank you Director Mueller, I yield back.

SCHIFF:

Mr. Maloney.

MALONEY:

Mr. Mueller, thank you. I know it's been a long day and I want to make clear how much respect I have for your service and for your extraordinary career and I want you to understand my questions in that context sir.

I'm going to be asking you about appendix C to your report and, in particular, the decision not to do a sworn interview with the president. It's really the only subject I want to talk to you about, sir.

Why didn't you subpoena the president?

MUELLER:

Well, at the outset, after we took over and initiated the investigation.

MALONEY:

If I could ask you to speak into the microphone.

MUELLER:

Yes, of course. At the outset, after we took over the investigation and began it and pursued it, quite obviously one of the things we anticipated wanting to accomplish in that is getting -- having the interview of the president.

We negotiated from -- with him for a little over a year and I think what you adverted in the appendix lays out our expectations as a result of those negotiations. But finally, we were almost towards the end of our investigation and we had had little success in pushing to get the interview of the president. We decided that we did not want to exercise the subpoena powers because of them as a necessity of expediting the end of the investigation.

MALONEY:

Was that -- was that -- excuse me -- did you want to ...

MUELLER:

I was going to say, the expectation was, if we did subpoena the president, he would fight the subpoena and we would be in the midst of the investigation for a substantial period of time.

MALONEY:

Right, but as we sit here, you've never had an opportunity to ask the president, in person, questions under oath, and so obviously that must have been a difficult decision. And you're right, appendix C lays that out, and indeed, I believe you describe the in-person interview as vital. That's your word.

And of course, you make clear, you had the authority and the legal justification to do it, as you point out. You waited a year, you put up with a lot of negotiations, you made numerous

accommodations, which you lay out, so that he could prepare and not be surprised. I take it you were trying to be fair to the president. And, by the way, you were going to limit the questions, when you got to written question, to Russia only.

And, in fact, you did go with written questions after about nine months, sir, right? And the president responded to those and you have some hard language for what you thought of those responses. What did you think of the president's written responses Mr. Mueller?

MUELLER:

It was certainly not as useful as the interview would be.

MALONEY:

In fact -- in fact, you pointed out, and by my count, there were more than 30 times when the president said he didn't recall, he didn't remember, no independent recollection, no current recollection and I take it by your answer that it wasn't as helpful, that's why you used words like incomplete, imprecise, inadequate, insufficient. Is that a fair summary of what you thought of those written answers?

MUELLER:

That is a fair summary. And I presume that comes from the report.

MALONEY:

And yet, sir, and I ask this respectfully -- by the way, the president didn't ever claim the Fifth Amendment, did he?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to talk to that.

MALONEY:

Well I -- from what I can tell sir, at one point it was vital and then at another point it wasn't vital. And my question to you is, why did it stop being vital, and I can only think of three explanations. One is, that somebody told you couldn't do it, but nobody told you couldn't subpoena the president, is that right?

MUELLER:

No, we understood we could subpoena the president.

MALONEY:

Rosenstein didn't tell you, Whitaker didn't tell you, Barr didn't tell you, you couldn't ...

MUELLER:

We could serve a subpoena.

MALONEY:

So, the only other explanation -- well, there's two others I guess, one, that you just flinched. That you had the opportunity to do it and you didn't do it. But sir, you don't strike me as the kind of guy who flinches.

MUELLER:

I'd hope not.

MALONEY:

Well then the third explanation -- I hope not too sir. And the third explanation I can think of is that -- is that you didn't think you needed it. And in fact, what caught my eye was page 13 in volume 2, where you said, in fact, you had a substantial body of evidence and you sight a bunch of cases there don't you, about how you often have to prove intent to obstruct justice without an in-person interview, that's the kind of nature of it, and you used terms like a substantial body of evidence, significant evidence of the president's intent.

So, my question sir is, did you have sufficient evidence of the president's intent to obstruct justice and is that why you didn't do the interview.

MUELLER:

No, there's a balance. In other words, how much evidence you have that would satisfy the last element, against how much time are you willing to spend in the courts litigating a -- the -- interviewing the president?

MALONEY:

In this case, you felt that you had enough evidence of the president's intent?

MUELLER:

We had to make a balanced decision in terms of how much evidence we had, compared to length of time it would take...

MALONEY:

And sir, because I have limited time, you thought that if you gave it to the attorney general or to this Congress, that there was sufficient evidence that it better than that delay?

MUELLER:

Can you state that again?

MALONEY:

Well, that it was better than the delay to present the sufficient evidence, your term of the President's intent to obstruct justice to the attorney general and to this committee. Isn't that why you didn't do the interview?

MUELLER:

No. The reason the why -- the reason we didn't do the interview was because of the length of time that it would take to resolve the issues attended to that.

MALONEY:

Thank you, sir.

SCHIFF:

Ms. Demings.

DEMINGS:

Thank you so much Mr. Chairman and Director Mueller, thank you so much for being a person of honor and integrity. Thank you for your service to the nation, we are certainly better for it.

Director Mueller, I too want to focus on the written responses that the president did provide and the continued efforts to lie and cover up what happened during the 2016 election. Were the president answers submitted under oath?

MUELLER:

Yes, yes.

DEMINGS:

Thank you, they were. Were these all the answers your office wanted to ask the president about Russia interference in the 2016 election?

MUELLER:

No, not necessarily.

DEMINGS:

So there were other...

MUELLER:

Yes.

DEMINGS:

...questions that you wanted to answer.

Did you analyze his written answers on Russia interference to draw conclusions about the president's credibility?

MUELLER:

No, it was perhaps one of the factors, but nothing more than that.

DEMINGS:

It was one of the factors? So, what did you determine about the president's credibility?

MUELLER:

And that I can't get into.

DEMINGS:

Director Mueller, I know based on your decades of experience, you've probably had an opportunity to analyze the credibility of countless witnesses, but you weren't able to do so with this witness?

MUELLER:

Well with every witness, particularly a -- a leading witness, one assesses the credibility day by day, witness by witness, document by document. And that's what happened in this case, so we started with very little and then by the end we ended up with a fair amount -- fair amount.

DEMINGS:

Thank you. Well let's go through some of the answers to take a closer look at his credibility, because it seems to me, Director Mueller, that his answers were not credible at all. Did some of President Trump's incomplete answers relate to Trump Tower Moscow?

MUELLER:

Yes.

DEMINGS:

For example, did you ask the president whether he had had at any time, directed or suggested that -- that discussions about Trump Moscow project should cease?

MUELLER:

Should what?

DEMINGS:

Cease.

MUELLER:

Do you have a citation?

DEMINGS:

Yes. We're still in Appendix C, Section 1, 7.

MUELLER:

The first page?

DEMINGS:

Yes. Because the president did not answer whether he had at any time directed or suggested that discussions about the Trump Moscow project should cease, but he has since made public comments about this topic.

MUELLER:

OK. And the question was?

DEMINGS:

Did the president -- well let me go onto the next. Did the president fully answer that question in his written statement to you about the Trump Moscow project ceasing? Again, in Appendix C.

MUELLER:

No. And can you direct me to the particular paragraph your inverting (ph) to?

DEMINGS:

It would be Appendix C-C1, but let me move forward. Nine days after he submitted his written answers, didn't the president say publicly that he, quote, "decided not to do the project, " unquote. And that is in your report.

MUELLER:

I am not -- I'd ask you -- I'd ask you if you would to point out the particular paragraph that you're focused on --

DEMINGS:

OK, we can move on. Did the president answer your follow-up questions? According to the report there were follow-up questions because of the president's incomplete answers about the Moscow project.

Did the president answer your follow up questions either in writing or orally? We're now in Volume 2, page 150-151.

MUELLER:

No.

DEMINGS:

He did not. In fact, there were many questions that you asked the president that he simply didn't answer, isn't that correct?

MUELLER:

True.

DEMINGS:

And there were many answers that contradicted other evidence you had gathered during the investigation, isn't that correct Director Mueller?

MUELLER:

Yes.

DEMINGS:

Director Mueller, for example the president is written as or stated (ph) he did not recall having advanced knowledge of WikiLeaks releases, is that correct?

MUELLER:

I think that's what he said.

DEMINGS:

But didn't your investigation uncover evidence that the president did in fact have advanced knowledge of WikiLeaks public releases of e-mails damaging to his opponent?

MUELLER:

And I can't get in to that area.

DEMINGS:

Did your investigation determine after very careful vetting or Rick Gates and Michael Cohen's that you found them to be credible?

MUELLER:

That we found the president to be credible?

DEMINGS:

That you found Gates and Cohen to be credible in their statements about WikiLeaks --

MUELLER:

Those are areas I'm not going to discuss.

DEMINGS:

OK. Could you say Director Mueller that the president was credible?

MUELLER:

I can't answer that question.

DEMINGS:

Director Mueller, isn't it fair to say that the president's written answers were not only inadequate and incomplete because he didn't answer many of your questions, but where he did his answers show that he wasn't always being truthful.

MUELLER:

There (ph) -- I would say generally.

DEMINGS:

"Generally." Director Mueller it's one thing for the president to lie to the American people about your investigation, falsely claiming that you found no collusion and no obstruction -- but its (ph) something else altogether for him to get away with not answering your questions and lying about them. And as a former law enforcement officer of almost 30 years, I find that a disgrace to our criminal justice system.

Thank you so much, I yield back to the Chairman.

SCHIFF:

Mr. Krishnamoorthi.

KRISHNAMOORTH:

Director Mueller, thank you for your devoted service to your country. Earlier today you described your report as "detailing a criminal investigation," correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

KRISHNAMOORTH:

Director, since it was outside the purview of your investigation, your report did not reach counterintelligence conclusions regarding the subject matter of your report.

MUELLER:

That's true.

KRISHNAMOORTH:

For instance, since it was outside your purview, your report did not reach counterintelligence conclusions regarding any Trump administration officials who might potentially be vulnerable to compromise of blackmail by Russia, correct?

MUELLER:

Those decisions probably were made in the FBI.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

But not in your report, correct?

MUELLER:

Not in our report. We avert to the counterintelligence goals of our investigation which were secondary to any criminal wrongdoing that we could find.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

Let's talk about one administration official in particularly namely President Donald Trump. Other than Trump Tower Moscow, your report does not address or detail the president's financial ties or dealings with Russia, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

Similarly since it was outside your purview your report does not address the question of whether Russian oligarchs engaged in money laundering through any of the president's businesses, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

And of course your office did not obtain the president's tax returns which could otherwise show foreign financial sources, correct?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to speak to that.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

In July 2017 the president said his personal finances were off limits, or outside the purview of your investigation and he drew a "red line," around his personal finances. Were the president's personal finances outside the purview of your investigation?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to get in to that.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

Were you instructed by anyone not to investigate the president's personal finances?

MUELLER:

No.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

Mr. Mueller, I'd like to turn your attention to counterintelligence risks associated with lying. Individuals can be subject to blackmail if they lie about their interactions with foreign countries, correct?

MUELLER:

True.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

For example, you successfully charged former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn of lying to federal agents about this conversations with Russian officials, correct?

MUELLER:

Correct.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

Since it was outside the purview of your investigation your report did not address how Flynn's false statements could pose a national security risk because the Russians knew the falsity of those statements, right?

MUELLER:

I cannot get in to that, mainly because there are many elements of the FBI that are looking at different aspects of that issue.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

Currently?

MUELLER:

Currently.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

Thank you. As you noted in Volume two of your report, Donald Trump repeated five times in one press conference, Mr. Mueller in 2016 "I have nothing to do with Russia."

Of course Michael Cohen said Donald Trump was not being truthful, because at this time Trump was attempting to build Trump Tower Moscow. Your report does not address whether Donald Trump was compromised in any way because of any potential false statements that he made about Trump Tower Moscow, correct?

MUELLER:

I think that's right -- I think that's right.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

Director Mueller, I want to turn your attention to a couple of other issues. You've served as FBI Director during three presidential elections, correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

And during those three presidential elections you have never initiated an investigation at the FBI looking in to whether a foreign government interfered in our elections the same way you did in this particular instance, correct?

MUELLER:

I would say, I personally no -- but the FBI quite obviously has the defense and attack (ph) such as the Russians undertook in 2016.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

Now Director Mueller, is there any information you'd like to share with this Committee that you have not so far today?

MUELLER:

Well that's a broad question. And it'd take me a while to get an answer to it, but I'll say no.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

Mr. Mueller, you said that every American should pay very close attention to the systematic and sweeping fashion in which the Russians interfered in our democracy. Are you concerned that we are not doing enough currently to prevent this from happening again?

MUELLER:

Well I'll speak generally, and what I said in my opening statement this morning -- and hear (ph) that much more needs to be done in order to protect against this intrusions -- not just by the Russians but others as well.

KRISHNAMOORTHY:

Thank you, Director.

SCHIFF:

We have two, five minute periods remaining -- Mr. Nunes and myself. Mr. Nunes you are recognized.

NUNES:

Mr. Mueller it's been a long day for you, and you've had a long, great career. I want to thank you for your longtime service starting in Vietnam, obviously in the U.S. attorney's office, Department of Justice and the FBI. And I want to thank you for doing something you didn't have to do. You came here upon your own free will and we appreciate your time today. With that I yield back.

MUELLER:

Thank you, sir.

SCHIFF:

Director Mueller, I want to close out my questions, turn to some of the exchange you had with Mr. Welsh a bit earlier. I'd like to see if we can broaden the aperture at the end of your hearing. From your testimony today I'd gather that knowingly accepting assistance from a foreign government is an unethical thing to do.

MUELLER:

And a crime.

SCHIFF:

And a crime.

MUELLER:

Given the circumstances.

SCHIFF:

And to the degree that it undermines our democracy and our institutions, we can also agree that it's unpatriotic.

MUELLER:

True.

SCHIFF:

And wrong.

MUELLER:

True.

SCHIFF:

The standard behavior of a presidential candidate, or any candidate for that matter shouldn't be merely whether something is criminal, it should be held to a higher standard, you would agree?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to answer that because it goes to the standards to be applied by other institutions besides ours.

SCHIFF:

I'm just referring to ethical standards. We should hold our elected officials to a higher standard than mere evidence of criminality, shouldn't we?

MUELLER:

Absolutely.

SCHIFF:

You have served this country for decades, you've taken an oath to defend the Constitution. You hold yourself to a standard of doing what's right.

MUELLER:

I would hope.

SCHIFF:

You have, I think we can all see that. And befitting the times, I'm sure your reward will be unending criticism, but we are grateful. The need to act in ethical manner is not just a moral one, but when people act unethically it also exposes them to compromise particularly in dealing with foreign powers, is that true?

MUELLER:

True.

SCHIFF:

Because when someone acts unethically in connection with a foreign partner, that foreign partner can expose their wrongdoing and extort them.

MUELLER:

True.

SCHIFF:

And that conduct -- that unethical conduct can be of a financial nature if you have a financial motive or elicit business dealing, am I right?

MUELLER:

Yes.

SCHIFF:

It could also just involve deception. If you are lying about something that can be exposed, then you can be blackmailed.

MUELLER:

Also true.

SCHIFF:

In the case of Michael Flynn, he was secretly doing business with Turkey, correct?

MUELLER:

Yes.

SCHIFF:

That could open him up to compromise that financial relationship.

MUELLER:

I presume.

SCHIFF:

He also lied about his discussions with the Russian ambassador and since the Russians were on the other side of the conversation, they could have exposed that, could they not?

MUELLER:

Yes.

SCHIFF:

If a presidential candidate was doing business in Russia and saying he wasn't, Russians could expose that too, could they not?

MUELLER:

I leave that to you.

SCHIFF:

Well, let's look at Dmitry Pskov, the spokesperson for the Kremlin, someone that the Trump organization was in contact with to make that deal happen. Your report indicates that Michael Cohen had a long conversation on the phone with someone from Dmitry Pskov's office. Presumably, the Russians could have tape recorded that conversation, could they not?

MUELLER:

Yes.

SCHIFF:

and so we have Candidate Trump whose saying "I have no dealings with the Russians," but if the Russians had a tape recording, they could expose that, could they not?

MUELLER:

Yes.

SCHIFF:

That's the stuff of counterintelligence nightmares, is it not?

MUELLER:

It has to do with counterintelligence and the need for a strong counterintelligence entity.

SCHIFF:

It does indeed. And when this was revealed that there were these communications notwithstanding president's denials, the president was confronted about this and he said two things. First of all, that's not a crime. But I think you and I have already agreed that shouldn't be the standard, right, Mr. Mueller?

MUELLER:

True.

SCHIFF:

The second thing you said was why should I miss out on all those opportunities? I mean, why indeed merely running a presidential campaign, why should you miss out on making all that money was the import of his statement. Were you ever able to ascertain whether Donald Trump still intends to build that tower when he leaves office?

MUELLER:

Is that a question, sir?

SCHIFF:

Yes. Were you able to ascertain, because he wouldn't answer your questions completely, whether or if he ever ended that desire to build that tower?

MUELLER:

I'm not going to speculate on that.

SCHIFF:

If the president was concerned that if he lost the election, he didn't want to miss out on that money, might he have the same concern about losing his reelection?

MUELLER:

Again, speculation.

SCHIFF:

The difficulty with this, of course, is we are all left to wonder whether the president is representing us or his financial interests. That concludes my questions. Mr. Nunes, do you have any concluding remarks?

Director Mueller, let me close by returning to where I began. Thank you for your service and thank you for leading this investigation. The facts you set out in your report and have elucidated here today tell a disturbing tale of a massive Russian intervention in our election, of a campaign so eager to win, so driven by greed, that it was willing to accept the help of a hostile foreign power, and a presidential election decided by a handful of votes in a few key states.

Your work tells of a campaign so determined to conceal their corrupt use of foreign help that they risked going to jail by lying to you, to the FBI and to Congress about it and, indeed, some have gone to jail over such lies. And your work speaks of a president who committed countless acts of obstruction of justice that in my opinion and that of many other prosecutors, had it been anyone else in the country, they would have been indicted.

Notwithstanding, the many things you have addressed today and in your report, there were some questions you could not answer given the constraints you're operating under. You would not tell us whether you would have indicted the president but for the OLC only that you could not, and so the Justice Department will have to make that decision when the president leaves

office, both as to the crime of obstruction of justice and as to the campaign finance fraud scheme (ph) that individual one directed and coordinated and for which Michael Cohen went to jail.

You would not tell us whether the president should be impeached, nor did we ask you since it is our responsibility to determine the proper remedy for the conduct outlined in your report. Whether we decide to impeach the president in the House or we do not, we must take any action necessary to protect the country while he is in office.

You would not tell us the results or whether other bodies looked into Russian compromise in the form of money laundering, so we must do so. You would not tell us whether the counterintelligence investigation revealed whether people still serving within the administration pose a risk of compromise and should never have been given a security clearance, so we must find out.

We did not bother to ask whether financial inducements from any gulf nations were influencing this U.S. policy, since it is outside the four corners of your report, and so we must find out.

One thing is clear from your report, your testimony from Director Wray's statements yesterday, the Russians massively intervened in 2016, and they are prepared to do so again in voting that is set to begin a mere eight months from now. The president seems to welcome the help again. And so, we must make all efforts to harden our election's infrastructure to ensure there is a paper trail for all voting, to deter the Russians from meddling, to discover it when they do, to disrupt it, and to make them pay. Protecting the sanctity of our elections begins, however, with the recognition that accepting foreign help is disloyal to our country, unethical, and wrong. We cannot control what the Russians do, not completely, but we can decide what we do and that the centuries old experiment we call American democracy is worth cherishing. Director Mueller, thank you again for being here today. And before I adjourn, I'd like to excuse you and Mr. Zebley. Everyone else please remain seated. This hearing is adjourned.

END OF HOUSE INTEL COMMITTEE

Text Analytics results including complexity

Total word count:

32180

Number of different words:	3708
Complexity factor (Lexical Density):	11.5%
Readability (Gunning-Fog Index) : (6-easy 20-hard)	5.8
Total number of characters:	357323
Number of characters without spaces:	205953
Average Syllables per Word:	1.69
Sentence count:	6680
Average sentence length (words):	8.78
Max sentence length (words):	85
Min sentence length (words) :	1
Readability (Alternative) beta : (100-easy 20-hard, optimal 60-70)	54.8