

# Transcript of Robert S. Mueller III's testimony before the House Intelligence Committee

[top washingtonpost.com/politics/transcript-of-robert-s-mueller-iiis-testimony-before-the-house-intelligence-committee/2019/07/24/f424acf0-ad97-11e9-a0c9-6d2d7818f3da\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/transcript-of-robert-s-mueller-iiis-testimony-before-the-house-intelligence-committee/2019/07/24/f424acf0-ad97-11e9-a0c9-6d2d7818f3da_story.html)



Former Special Counsel Robert Mueller testifies before the House Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill on Wednesday. (Melina Mara/The Washington Post)

By Washington Post Staff

July 24 at 10:43 PM

HOUSE PERMANENT SELECT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE HEARING WITH

SPECIAL COUNSEL ROBERT MUELLER

JULY 24, 2019

SPEAKERS:

REP. ADAM B. SCHIFF, D-CALIF., CHAIRMAN

REP. JIM HIMES, D-CONN.

□

Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.) asks former special counsel Robert S. Mueller III a question as he testifies before the House Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill on Wednesday. (Salwan Georges/The Washington Post)

REP. TERRI A. SEWELL, D-ALA.

REP. ANDRE CARSON, D-IND.

REP. MIKE QUIGLEY, D-ILL.

REP. JACKIE SPEIER, D-CALIF.

REP. ERIC SWALWELL, D-CALIF.

□

Former special counsel Robert Mueller testifies before the House Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill on Wednesday. (Matt McClain/The Washington Post)

REP. JOAQUIN CASTRO, D-TEXAS

REP. DENNY HECK, D-WASH.

REP. VAL B. DEMINGS, D-FLA.

REP. RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY, D-ILL.

REP. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY, D-N.Y.

REP. PETER WELCH, D-VT.

REP. NANCY PELOSI, D-CALIF., EX OFFICIO

REP. DEVIN NUNES, R-CALIF., RANKING MEMBER

REP. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY, R-TEXAS

REP. CHRIS STEWART, R-UTAH

REP. MICHAEL R. TURNER, R-OHIO

REP. BRAD WENSTRUP, R-OHIO

REP. RICK CRAWFORD, R-ARK.

REP. WILL HURD, R-TEXAS

REP. ELISE STEFANIK, R-N.Y.

REP. JOHN RATCLIFFE, R-TEXAS

REP. KEVIN MCCARTHY, R-CALIF., EX OFFICIO

WITNESSES:

FORMER SPECIAL COUNSEL ROBERT S. MUELLER

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 far 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 ( ) 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 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 our office. These are Justice Department privileges that I will respect.

The department has released a letter discussing 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 intend 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 go 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 .

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 GRU and another, active 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 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 cases of these, which then 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 exoneration -- the statement about exoneration 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 times with a man named Konstantin Kilimnik, who the FBI assessed to have ties with Russian intelligence 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 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 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 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. (R)MD+SD-- 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 .

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 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.

MUELLER: 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.

(RECESS)

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 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 an 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 at 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 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 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 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 . 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 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 Dmitriev 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 .

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 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 .

(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.

: 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 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 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 of 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 -- 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 it's 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.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: 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.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: 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.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: 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 particular 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 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 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 officer. 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 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.