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MUELLER REPORT: MUDDLED, MUSHY, AND MORE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

By Steve Bakke  June 4, 2019



The Mueller report on possible Trump/Russian election conspiracy was released weeks ago and we quickly received Attorney General Barr's summary advising us that there was no finding of any conspiracy. As to obstruction, while the report "does not conclude that the President committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him."

Barr has been criticized for misrepresenting the Mueller report in the summary he released, accused of lying to congress about discussions with Mueller, and threatened with "contempt of Congress," largely for withholding from the full House the unredacted report.

And now, Mueller surprised almost everybody by reading a statement that, rather than providing clarity, his equivocal and ambiguous explanation made the issue even more muddled and mushy. Republicans still believe the "case is closed" while Congressional democrats believe it was intended as a "GO" to proceed with plans for presidential impeachment.

Mueller, the benefactor of this confusion, owes us answers. Here are questions he should be asked directly:

- Attorney General Barr is being criticized for issuing a misleading summary of your findings. He has stated you did not object to his summary. Is that an accurate representation?
- AG Barr stated you could have reached a conclusion about the obstruction question and seems critical of your choice not to do so. He seems to have inserted himself into making the final decision. In Barr's words, "the report identifies no actions that, in ***our*** judgement, constitute obstructive conduct." (emphasis added) Can we agree he acted within his authority in creating the summary and reaching that conclusion?
- In the report you state: "while this report does not conclude that the President committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him." You are known to be a person who avoids the spotlight, yet your rather tortured choice of words has thrust you into the spotlight. Can we agree that your ambiguous "on the one hand/but on the other hand" commentary will guarantee unwanted publicity and intense pressure to respond to questions?

- It's generally understood that you knew early in the investigation that charges of a Trump/Russia conspiracy were unlikely. Some of the more cynical Trump supporters believe you kept pursuing the investigation while hoping Trump would "slip-up," and those "slip-ups" are the basis of your obstruction report. How do you react to those comments?
- You were careful to emphasize "presumption of innocence" when referring to the Russians whom you have charged with crimes. In contrast, you seem to be insinuating "possibility" of guilt by Trump. Were you inviting democrats to institute impeachment proceedings? Please comment on that comparison.
- Prior to your short public statement, the House Judiciary Committee wanted your testimony. You were either being prevented from testifying, or were personally refusing to do so. After your public statement, Chairman Nadler's immediate reaction was that they have all they need to proceed with impeachment, without your testimony. Was Nadler's initial reaction an indication that you were subtly suggesting they pursue impeachment?
- Some legal scholars (prominent Democrat law professor Alan Dershowitz, for example) have been critical of you for not following prosecutorial protocol. Some point out that your job was to find indication of guilt, period. You were not there to exonerate Trump through exculpatory evidence – that's the role of a vigorous defense in an adversarial trial. Yet you refer to your inability to exonerate in the report. How do you react to that observation?



The Russians' primary goal in their meddling with our election was to cause division and confusion. It seems they were successful beyond their wildest dreams. It's too bad our politicians' foolish infighting is adding to the Russian enjoyment.

What's next? House democrats will be considering the merits of impeachment. Soon we will have the Justice Department IG investigative report on the Russia investigation. And the momentum has changed a bit with investigations initiated by AG Barr who named U.S. Attorney John Durham to investigate origins of the surveillance of the Trump campaign. That will include investigating the discredited Steele dossier used to obtain the FISA warrant. Barr wants to find out if the origination of the Russia probe was justified or the result of wrongdoing among the investigators.