

Special Counsel Robert Mueller to make statement at Justice Dept. amid pressure to testify

Special Counsel Robert Mueller is expected to deliver his first public statement on his investigation into Russian interference during the 2016 presidential election on Wednesday at 11 a.m. from the Justice Department.

The Justice Department announced Mueller would make a statement on Wednesday morning—his first in the more than two years since he was appointed as special counsel. A senior White House official told Fox News that the White House was advised on Tuesday night of Mueller’s plans.

White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders told reporters Wednesday morning that President Trump was “aware” Mueller’s remarks were coming but had no comment when asked whether the White House had advanced knowledge of the substance of Mueller’s remarks. Sanders also had no comment on whether the president would make a public statement after Mueller speaks.

Meanwhile, multiple sources familiar with the situation told Fox News that Attorney General Bill Barr was aware of Mueller’s plans to deliver a statement Wednesday. One source told Fox News that Barr has also been made aware of the contents of Mueller’s statement. The attorney general, though, will not be at the Justice Department for Mueller’s appearance, and is, instead, traveling to Alaska to meet with law enforcement officials.

Mueller’s appearance comes amid mounting pressure for Mueller to testify before the House Judiciary Committee in a public setting as part of that panel’s oversight investigation of the probe and the Trump administration.

MUELLER’S OFFICE SHOOTS DOWN KEY CLAIM IN MICHAEL WOLFF’S NEW BOOK ‘SIEGE’

The committee, led by Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., has been in negotiations with Mueller to schedule a hearing for the special counsel, but it is unclear if and when he will appear.

Meanwhile, the special counsel's office this week issued a rare denial in response to questions about controversial author Michael Wolff's upcoming book, "Siege: Trump Under Fire," which reportedly claims that Mueller drew up an obstruction of justice indictment against President Trump.

According to The Guardian's Edward Helmore, Wolff reports that Mueller's office planned to charge the president with "influencing, obstructing or impeding a pending proceeding," "tampering with a witness, victim or informant" and "retaliating against a witness, victim or informant" but eventually decided to "shelve" it. The Guardian reporter claimed he viewed the document, but the special counsel's office denied it even exists.

"The documents described do not exist," Mueller spokesman Peter Carr told Fox News on Tuesday.

DOJ AGREES TO SHARE SOME MUELLER DOCUMENTS WITH DEMOCRATS

Last month, Mueller's report, with redactions covering sources and methods, and grand jury material, was released to the public and to Congress. The special counsel found no evidence of collusion between the Russians and members of the Trump campaign during the 2016 presidential election.

Mueller was also leading an inquiry into whether the president obstructed justice, outlining 10 instances that could have been perceived as obstruction. Mueller did not, however, come to a conclusion on that matter.

Attorney General Bill Barr, in March, upon reviewing Mueller's report, said in his four-page summary that the special counsel's investigation did not find evidence sufficient to charge the president with an obstruction of justice offense.

Barr has come under intense scrutiny over his handling of the report. The House Judiciary Committee, earlier this month, voted to hold him in contempt after he failed to comply with a subpoena to turn over an unredacted version of the Mueller report and its underlying documents and evidence to the committee. The president, then, asserted executive privilege in a bid to protect those files from release.

Fox News' Kristin Brown, Jake Gibson, Brian Flood, and Blake Burman

contributed to this report.

Brooke Singman is a Politics Reporter for Fox News. Follow her on Twitter at @brookefoxnews.

Source:

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/special-counsel-robert-mueller-to-make-statement-at-justice-dept-amid-pressure-to-testify>

[Disclaimer]