

Trump: ‘No reason’ for White House to comply with congressional investigations

President Trump on Tuesday said he doesn't want current and former White House aides to testify in front of Congress following the release of special counsel Robert Mueller's report.

In an exclusive interview with The Washington Post, Trump said complying with further investigations was not necessary after the White House cooperated with Mueller's investigation into Russian collusion in 2016 and possible obstruction of justice into subsequent probes.

"There is no reason to go any further, and especially in Congress where it's very partisan — obviously very partisan," Trump said.

The comments come amid reports that the White House is preparing to go to legislative war with several House committees as they continue their sprawling probes into the Trump administration.

White House officials are reportedly planning on exerting executive privilege after the House Judiciary Committee filed a subpoena for testimony and documents from former White House Counsel Don McGahn, who was known to have a contentious relationship with Trump and played a starring role in Mueller's report.

The administration directed former security clearance official Carl Kline to ignore a subpoena from the House Committee on Oversight and Reform regarding its probe into the White House security clearance process. The direction prompted a threat from panel Chairman Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) to hold Kline in contempt of Congress.

The Treasury Department also missed a second deadline to hand over six years of the president's tax returns.

The newest back and forth between the two ends of Pennsylvania Avenue has brought the White House's relationship with Capitol Hill into arguably its most

combative position to date.

Trump told The Post that he has not yet made a decision regarding exerting executive privilege over testaments from aides already called upon by Congress, though to officials familiar with internal plans said that White House lawyers intend to use the tool to bar congressional testimony.

"I don't want people testifying to a party, because that is what they're doing if they do this," Trump said.

"I allowed my lawyers and all the people to go and testify to Mueller — and you know how I feel about that whole group of people that did the Mueller report," Trump added. "I was so transparent; they testified for so many hours. They have all of that information that's been given."

However, Democrats appear emboldened in their investigative efforts in the aftermath of the Mueller report. While the party remains divided on impeachment, with its upper echelons expressing skepticism about the prospect, House Democrats are united in their resolve to find answers to lingering questions from the special counsel's probe.

"As to the President's conduct, we will scrupulously assert Congress' constitutional duty to honor our oath of office to support and defend the Constitution and our democracy. That includes honoring the Article I responsibility of the legislative branch to conduct oversight over the other branches of government, unified in our search for the truth and in upholding the security of our elections," Speaker Pelosi (D-Calif.) wrote in a letter to her colleagues Monday.

While Mueller found insufficient evidence of coordination between the Trump campaign and Moscow to bring charges, he neither implicated nor exonerated the president regarding obstruction of justice, saying that while he found 10 "episodes" of possibly obstructive behavior, Congress would ultimately decide whether or not to charge Trump in light of Justice Department guidelines that sitting presidents cannot be indicted.

Sources:

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