

U.S. intelligence chiefs decline to discuss Trump contacts

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawmakers verbally sparred with top intelligence chiefs on Wednesday after they staunchly refused to answer questions about conversations they had with President Donald Trump regarding probes into Russian activities during the election.

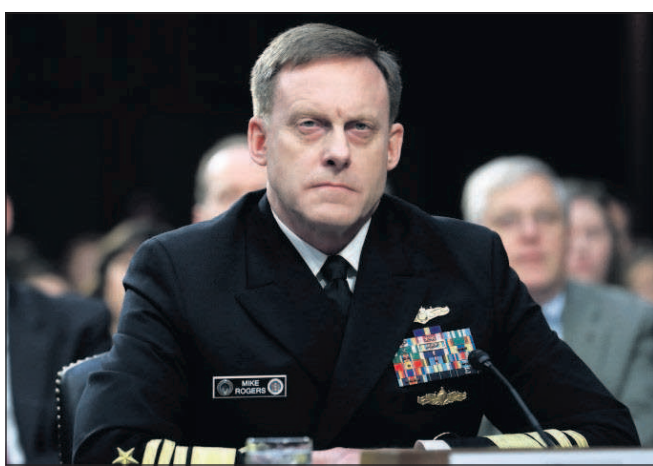
Members of the Senate intelligence committee wanted to know about news reports claiming Trump had asked Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats and Adm. Mike Rogers, the director of the National Security Agency, to publicly state that there was no evidence of collusion between Moscow and the Trump campaign.

Trump has consistently pushed back against suggestions that his campaign coordinated with Russia and says the investigations into the matter are a hoax.

"In the three-plus years that I have been the director of the National Security Agency, to the best of my recollection, I have never been directed to do anything I believe to be illegal, immoral, unethical or inappropriate," Rogers told the committee. "And to the best of my recollection, during that same period of service, I do not recall ever feeling pressured to do so."

Coats, who was confirmed as Trump's national intelligence director in mid-March, said: "In interacting with the president of the United States or anybody in his administration, I have never been pressured."

"I've never felt pressure to intervene or interfere in any way and shape — with shaping intelligence in a



AP Photo/Alex Brandon
National Security Agency Director Adm. Michael Rogers appears before a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing about the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, on Capitol Hill, Wednesday.

political way, or in relationship to an ongoing investigation."

Those answers didn't satisfy the senators. Even mild-spoken Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, got testy. He demanded to know what legal basis justified Coats' refusal to answer questions.

"I'm not sure I have a legal basis, but I am more than willing to sit before this committee ... in a closed session and answer your questions," Coats said.

With the frustrated lawmakers gearing up for Thursday's long-awaited testimony from ousted FBI Director James Comey, the committee on Wednesday afternoon took the unusual step of releasing the written statement Comey plans to deliver.

During Wednesday's hearing, which was about the reauthorization of a federal foreign intelligence collection law, Democrats and Republicans pressed Coats,

Rogers and also acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein.

The senators said they were puzzled as to why McCabe would not answer questions about conversations he had with Comey regarding the former FBI director's meetings with the president.

McCabe said it would be inappropriate to discuss issues that might end up being part of the special counsel's investigation into Russian activities during the election.

At the close of the hearing, the Republican committee chairman, Sen. Richard Burr of North Carolina, said that executive branch officials have the option of briefing the committee or congressional leaders in a classified setting.

"At no time should you be in a position where you come to Congress with no answer," Burr told the witnesses.

Comey: Trump sought to 'lift the cloud' of investigation

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fired FBI Director James Comey will testify under oath Thursday that President Donald Trump repeatedly pressed him for his "loyalty" and directly pushed him to "lift the cloud" of investigation shadowing his White House by declaring publicly the president was not the target of the probe into his campaign's Russia ties.

Comey's detailed and vivid recollections of his one-on-one conversations with Trump were revealed in seven pages of prepared testimony released Wednesday, the day before his much-anticipated appearance before the Senate intelligence committee.

His remarks paint a picture of an FBI director so disconcerted by his interactions with the president that he began keeping written memos of their private discussions. He'll tell lawmakers he believed the president was trying to create a "patronage relationship" with him and describe in detail an Oval Office meeting in which Trump urged him not to investigate ousted National Security Adviser Michael Flynn's contacts with Russian officials.

But the ex-FBI director also will validate Trump's assertion that he was not personally a target of the federal counterintelligence investigation into possible campaign collusion with Russia. Comey says he did offer the president that "assurance," but resisted Trump's appeals to make that information public.

"The FBI and the Department of Justice had been reluctant to make public statements that we did not have an open case on President Trump for a number of reasons, most importantly because it would create a duty to correct, should that change," Comey says in the prepared remarks.

Trump's personal lawyer said Trump was cheered by the testimony.

"The president is pleased that Mr. Comey has finally publicly confirmed his private reports that the president was not under investigation in any Russian probe," attorney Mark Kasowitz said in a statement. "The president feels completely and totally vindicated. He is eager to continue to move forward with his agenda."

Comey has not spoken publicly since he was



AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite, File
In this March 20 file photo, then-FBI Director James Comey pauses as he testifies on Capitol Hill before the House Intelligence Committee hearing on allegations of Russian interference in the election.

abruptly fired by Trump on May 9. His dismissal, four years into a 10-year term, fueled claims Trump's ultimate aim was to quash the investigation and obstruct justice, potentially a federal crime or an impeachable offense. Some legal experts said Comey's account could bolster such a case.

Ryan Goodman, a professor at New York University School of Law, said Trump's efforts to protect Flynn provide "strong evidence" of obstruction of justice. However, Jonathan Turley, a law professor at George Washington University, said that while Trump's dealings with Comey were inappropriate, "We do not indict people for being boorish or clueless."

Comey's statement came hours after two top intelligence officials told lawmakers they never felt "pressured" to do anything inappropriate by the president. But Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats and Adm. Mike Rogers, the director of the National Security Agency, angered members of the Senate intelligence committee by staunchly refusing to answer questions about conversations they had with Trump.

The ex-FBI director's testimony recounts his conversations with the apparent precision of a veteran lawyer. Comey notes he had nine one-on-one interactions with Trump over a four-month stretch, compared to two private conversations with President Barack Obama between September 2013 and the end of 2016. He also says he did not keep written memos of his interactions with Obama.

The first meeting with

Trump after the inauguration occurred Jan. 27, during a private dinner that Comey came to view as an attempt by the president to "create some sort of patronage relationship."

According to Comey, Trump asked if he wanted to remain as FBI director and declared: "I need loyalty. I expect loyalty." Comey says he replied that he could offer his honesty, and that when Trump said he wanted "honest loyalty," Comey paused and said, "You will get that from me."

Comey also describes at length a Feb. 14 meeting in the Oval Office in which he believed Trump asked him to back off an investigation into Flynn.

"He then said, 'I hope you can see your way clear to letting this go, to letting Flynn go. He is a good guy. I hope you can let this go,'" Comey says, according to the prepared remarks. He said he believed the president was talking only about Flynn, not about the broader Russia probe.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said she was unsure if the president read Comey's testimony after its release. Asked whether the president stood by earlier assertions that he had neither sought Comey's loyalty nor asked for the Flynn investigation to be dropped, she said: "I can't imagine the president not standing by his own statement."

Trump allies have raised questions about Comey's credibility ahead of his testimony, noting that the FBI had to correct some of his remarks from his last appearance on Capitol Hill. They've also questioned why Comey did not raise his concerns about Trump publicly or resign.

BRIEFLY

Trump promises 'first-class' infrastructure system for U.S.

CINCINNATI (AP) — Dogged by allegations in Washington, President Donald Trump traveled to friendlier territory Wednesday and promised to create a "first-class" system of roads, bridges and waterways by using \$200 billion in public funds to generate \$1 trillion in investment to pay for construction projects that most public officials agree are badly needed and long overdue.

"America must have the best, fastest and most reliable infrastructure anywhere in the world," Trump said, pushing his infrastructure plan in middle America as Washington geared up for Thursday's appearance before Congress by fired FBI Director James Comey.

"We will fix it," said Trump, standing along the Ohio River. "We will create the first-class infrastructure our country and our people deserve."

But the controversies and distractions in Washington continued to dog the president throughout the day. As he was speaking, the Senate intelligence

committee released the prepared testimony Comey is expected to deliver Thursday. It includes detailed descriptions of meetings and phone conversations between Trump and Comey.

In the speech, the president also pressed the Senate to send him a health care bill, criticized congressional Democrats as "obstructionists" and revisited his controversial decision to pull the U.S. out of the Paris climate agreement.

Trump said that as he campaigned across the country last year, people often asked him why the U.S. was spending money to rebuild other countries when the roads and bridges they travel on needed rebuilding.

Islamic State claims stunning attack in Iran

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — The Islamic State group claimed responsibility Wednesday for a pair of stunning attacks on Iran's parliament and the tomb of its revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, which killed 12 and wounded more than 40.

Tehran Police Chief Gen. Hossein Sajedinia announced late Wednesday

night that five suspects had been detained for interrogation, according to a report in the semi-official ISNA news agency. Sajedinia did not offer any further details.

Reza Seifollahi, an official in the country's Supreme National Security Council, was quoted by the independent Shargh daily as saying that the perpetrators of the attacks were Iranian nationals. He did not elaborate.

The bloodshed shocked the country and came as emboldened Sunni Arab states — backed by U.S. President Donald Trump — are hardening their stance against Shiite-ruled Iran.

The White House released a statement from Trump condemning the terrorist attacks in Tehran and offering condolences, but also implying that Iran is itself a sponsor of terrorism.

In recent years, Tehran has been heavily involved in conflicts in Syria and Iraq against the Islamic State, but had remained untouched by IS violence around the world. Iran has also battled Saudi-backed Sunni groups in both countries. Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard indirectly blamed Saudi Arabia for the attacks. A statement stopped short of alleging direct Saudi involvement.



OPENINGS FOR OPERATORS OF NEW RETAIL LIQUOR LOCATIONS

OLCC is recruiting applicants for new retail liquor locations. The open recruitment process is a market-driven effort to improve customer convenience by expanding retail liquor locations with a measured, but consistent amount of growth.

The Oregon Liquor Control Commission is accepting applications and aiming to add new retail liquor locations in the following counties:

Baker County	Grant County	Sherman County	Wasco County
Crook County	Hood River County	Umatilla County	Wheeler County
Deschutes County	Jefferson County	Union County	
Gilliam County	Morrow County	Wallowa County	

Applicants are evaluated on background, knowledge and work experience in:

- Retail business management
- Inventory/cash management
- Retail sales and operation
- Customer service/public relations in a retail environment
- Financial ability to open and operate a retail liquor location

A detailed business plan will be required as part of the application process.

For additional information on open recruitment for new retail liquor locations and application information, visit: http://www.oregon.gov/OLCC/LIQUORSTORES/Pages/liquorsalesoutlets_openrecruitment.aspx

Questions can be directed to OLCC.RetailServices@oregon.gov or call 503-872-5020 (toll-free 1-800-426-2004, Dept # 62). Provide your name, email address and phone number. Applications can also be picked up at 9079 SE McLoughlin Blvd., Portland, OR 97222.

An application with a business plan must be received at OLCC's main office in Portland at the above address, by 5:00 PM, Monday, July 31st, 2017. Applications received after this deadline will not be accepted. Additional open recruitments for these areas and others in the state may occur in the future.

Little Darlings!



This special section will be filled with photos of and messages for adorable little darlings from Umatilla County. Families will want to keep this special keepsake for their child and family for years to come.



*Olivia,
I loved you from the very start.
You stole my breath, embraced my heart.
Our life together has just begun.
You're part of me, my little one.
Love, Mom*

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June 28, 2017

DEADLINES:

June 08, 2017

Send in, or drop by, a full color high resolution photo, your child's name and a message to your child today!

Little Darlings

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