

Congress to probe whether Trump told lawyer Cohen to lie

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON —

Democrats are vowing to investigate whether President Donald Trump directed his personal attorney Michael Cohen to lie to Congress about a Moscow real estate project, calling that possibility a “concern of the greatest magnitude.” Trump’s current lawyer said the allegations sparking the inquiry are “categorically false.”

Any evidence that Trump directed a witness to lie to investigators would place him in the greatest political and legal jeopardy yet and confront him with allegations of the sort that led to the departure of one president and the impeachment of another.

At issue is a report by BuzzFeed News that Trump told Cohen to lie about negotiations over the Moscow project that extended into the 2016 campaign. The Associated Press has not independently confirmed the report.

Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani said in a statement Friday that “any suggestion — from any source — that the President counseled Michael Cohen to lie is categorically false.” White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders called the allegation “absolutely ridiculous.”

The report comes as House Democrats have promised a thorough look into Trump’s ties to Russia, and as special counsel Robert Mueller is investigating Russia’s meddling in the 2016 election and contacts with the Trump campaign.

Though his supporters have said Trump cannot be investigated for actions the Constitution permits him to take, even the president’s nominee for attorney general, William Barr, said at his confirmation hearing this week that a president or



Michael Cohen arrives at his home in New York with his left arm in a sling supported by a pillow on Friday.

AP Photo/Kevin Hagen

anyone else who instructs a witness to lie or change his testimony commits illegal obstruction of justice.

BuzzFeed, citing two unidentified law enforcement officials, said Trump directed Cohen to lie to Congress and that Cohen regularly briefed Trump and his family on the Trump Tower project in Moscow — even as Trump said he had no business dealings with Russia. BuzzFeed said Cohen told Mueller that Trump personally instructed him to lie about the timing of the project in order to obscure Trump’s involvement.

BuzzFeed said Mueller’s investigators learned about Trump’s directive “through interviews with multiple witnesses from the Trump Organization and internal company emails, text messages, and a cache of other documents.” The report says Cohen then acknowledged Trump’s instructions when he was

interviewed by the Mueller team.

On Twitter, Trump charged that Cohen was “Lying to reduce his jail time!”

Giuliani noted that Cohen had pleaded guilty to lying and quoted federal prosecutors in New York who chastised him for a “pattern of lies and dishonesty over an extended period of time.” Mueller’s team, however, has called him a credible witness.

“Today’s claims are just more made-up lies born of Michael Cohen’s malice and desperation,” Giuliani said.

Lanny Davis, a Cohen adviser, declined to comment. On Friday, as photos surfaced of Cohen wearing a hospital ID bracelet and cradling a pillow with his right arm in a sling, Davis said Cohen had undergone minor shoulder surgery.

Though Republicans stayed mostly silent, two Democratic committee

chairmen in the House said they will open inquiries.

The House Intelligence Committee chairman, Adam Schiff, D-Calif., said “we will do what’s necessary to find out” if the report was true. He said the allegation that Trump directed Cohen to lie in his 2017 testimony “in an effort to curtail the investigation and cover up his business dealings with Russia is among the most serious to date.”

Calling the allegations a “counterintelligence concern of the greatest magnitude,” Schiff said his committee had already been working to secure witness testimony and documents related to the Moscow deal.

The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York, said directing a subordinate to lie to Congress would be a federal crime. He said his committee’s job “is to get to the bottom of it, and we will do that work.”

Cohen is scheduled

to testify publicly before the House Oversight and Reform Committee on Feb. 7. Schiff has said he wants Cohen to testify before the intelligence panel, as well.

The top Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee, Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, said Friday that he expects Cohen to talk to that panel in February. The intelligence committee interviews would most likely be behind closed doors, if Cohen does appear.

Cohen pleaded guilty in November to lying to Congress to cover up that he was negotiating the Trump Tower project on Trump’s behalf during the heat of his presidential campaign. The charge was brought by Mueller and was the result of Cohen’s cooperation with that probe.

He admitted that he lied when he told lawmakers he had never agreed to travel to Russia in connection with the Moscow project and when he said that he’d decided

by the end of January 2016 that the “proposal was not feasible for a variety of business reasons and should not be pursued further.”

He was sentenced to three years in prison for crimes that included arranging the payment of hush money to conceal his boss’ alleged sexual affairs, telling a judge that he agreed time and again to cover up Trump’s “dirty deeds” out of “blind loyalty.”

Though some limits of executive power are untested, there is historical precedent for a president to face consequences over similar allegations.

One of the articles of impeachment against Bill Clinton, for instance, accused him of encouraging a witness to give false testimony. Richard Nixon faced similar allegations before ultimately leaving the White House.

Though Congress could use the allegation as a basis for impeachment proceedings, Justice Department legal opinions say a sitting president cannot face criminal charges. Barr said this week that he saw no reason to change that policy.

Though House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has discouraged any talk of impeachment in the early days of her new majority, some senior Democrats said that if the BuzzFeed report is confirmed, Trump’s actions could rise to that level.

“If the @BuzzFeed story is true, President Trump must resign or be impeached,” tweeted Texas Rep. Joaquin Castro, a member of the House intelligence panel.

Rhode Island Rep. David Cicilline, also a Judiciary committee member, tweeted that if Trump directed Cohen to lie, “that is obstruction of justice. Period. Full stop.”

A Senate Democrat, Chris Murphy of Connecticut, tweeted that “we need to know this ASAP” if Mueller does have multiple sources confirming that Trump directed Cohen to lie.

Trump, North Korean leader to hold 2nd summit

By MATTHEW LEE and DEB RIECHMANN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump will hold a second summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to try to broker a deal to coax the North to give up its nuclear weapons, the White House announced Friday.

News of a second meeting with the reclusive North Korean leader came after Trump’s 90-minute meeting in the Oval Office with a North Korean envoy, Kim Yong Chol, who traveled to Washington to discuss denuclearization talks. Trump and Kim Jong Un are to meet near the end of February at a place to be announced later, said White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

“The United States is going to continue to keep pressure and sanctions on North Korea until we see fully and verified denuclearization,” Sanders said “We’ve had very good steps and good faith from the North Koreans in releasing the hostages and other moves. And so we’re going to continue those conversations and the president looks forward to the next meeting.”

In May, North Korea released three American detainees and sent them home with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo after his 90-minute meeting with the North Korean leader in Pyongyang.

The second summit signals stepped-up efforts by both countries to continue talks. Trump has exchanged multiple letters with the

North Korean leader amid little tangible progress on the vague denuclearization agreement reached at their first meeting last June in Singapore.

On Friday, Pompeo met with the North Korean envoy at a Washington hotel before the White House meeting and the two had lunch together afterward.

Trump has spoken several times of having a second summit early this year. Vietnam has been considered as a possible summit venue, along with Thailand, Hawaii and Singapore.



Know what's below.
Call 811 before you dig.

- 1 Whiteline Dig Area
- 2 Call 811 to Locate
- 3 Wait for Locates
- 4 Dig Safe

CASCADE NATURAL GAS CORPORATION
A Subsidiary of MDU Resources Group, Inc.

In the Community to Serve

1-888-522-1130 | www.cngc.com

BIG LOTS!

FRIENDS & FAMILY

SUNDAY, JANUARY 20, 2019 ONLY!

OPEN 8 AM - 10 PM

BIG Rewards | **20% OFF EVENT***
SATURDAY JANUARY 19, 8 AM - 10 PM

Just use your rewards card at checkout.
Not a BIG Rewards member yet? Sign up today and start saving. Ask an associate for more details.

PRESENT THIS COUPON IN STORE OR USE ONLINE

20% OFF
YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE*

NOW ALSO BUY ONLINE! Discount Automatically Applied at Checkout.

*Promotional offer valid only at Big Lots stores and biglots.com on pre-tax purchases. Limit one coupon per customer, per transaction. This offer does not apply to shipping charges, BIG! Delivery charges, previous transactions, price holds, non-purchases such as rentals, deposits, charitable donations, purchases of milk, dairy products, eggs and/or purchases of gift cards. May not be used in combination with any other offer, coupon, discount or associate discounts, but may be combined with Rewards. Value is forfeited if item is returned. By attempting to redeem this offer, user unconditionally agrees that decisions of Big Lots are final on all matters of interpretation, fact and procedure with respect to this offer. Valid only on in stock goods (including special orders). Void where prohibited. No cash value or cash back. Coupon may not be sold. For Rewards members, online offer valid 1/19/2019 @ 12:00 am EST until 11:59 pm EST only. To redeem online, sign in to Rewards account before checkout, and offer will be automatically applied. For Rewards members, in store offer valid all day 1/19/2019 open until close. To redeem in store, present Rewards card at checkout. For all customers, online offer valid 1/20/2019 @ 12:00 am EST until 11:59 pm PST. Online discount automatically applied at checkout. For all customers, in store offer valid all day 1/20/2019 open until close. To redeem in store, present coupon to cashier at checkout. Sunday early open excludes Saraland, AL and Bismarck, ND stores.

BIG LOTS! FRIENDS & FAMILY

4 80000 00890 17