

Redacted Mueller report slated for mid-April release

White House won’t get privilege review, according to Barr

By **MICHAEL BALSAMO** and **ERIC TUCKER**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A redacted version of special counsel Robert Mueller’s report on the Russia investigation will be sent to Congress by mid-April and will not be shared with the White House beforehand, Attorney General William Barr said Friday.

Barr’s timeline, included in a letter to the chairmen of the House and Senate judiciary committees, sets up a possible showdown with House Democrats, who are insisting they see the full report next week.

In his letter, Barr said he shares a desire for Congress and the public to be able to read Mueller’s findings, which are included in the nearly 400-page report the special counsel submitted last week.

Barr said President Donald Trump would have the right to assert executive privilege over parts of the report. But he noted that Trump “has stated publicly that he intends to defer to me and, accordingly, there are no plans to submit the report to the White House for a privilege review.”

Mueller officially concluded his investigation when he submitted the report last Friday. Two days later, Barr sent a four-page letter to Congress that detailed Mueller’s “principal conclusions.”

Mueller did not find that the Trump campaign coordinated or conspired with Russia, Barr wrote, and did not reach a conclusion on whether Trump obstructed justice. Barr said he and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein decided on their own that Mueller’s evidence was insufficient to establish that the president committed obstruction.

Barr said he is preparing to redact multiple categories of information from the report and Mueller is helping the Justice Department identify sections that will be blacked out in the public version.

Those include grand jury material, information that would compro-

mise sensitive sources and methods; information that could affect ongoing investigations, including those referred by Mueller’s office to other Justice Department offices and information that could infringe on the personal privacy and reputation of “peripheral third parties.”

“Our progress is such that I anticipate we will be in a position to release the report by mid-April, if not sooner,” Barr wrote.

Barr said last week’s letter detailing Mueller’s “principal conclusions” was not intended to be an “exhaustive recounting” of the special counsel’s investigation.

Barr described Mueller’s report as nearly 400 pages long, not including the tables and supporting materials, which he said sets forth Mueller’s analysis, findings and the reasons for his conclusions.

“Everyone will soon be able to read it on their own,” Barr wrote. “I do not believe it would be in the public’s interest for me to attempt to summarize the full report or to release it in serial or piecemeal fashion.”

Asked about Barr’s commitment to release a redacted version of Mueller’s report, Trump said he has “a lot of confidence” in Barr “and if that’s what he’d like to do, I have nothing to hide.” He spoke at Mar-a-Lago, his private estate in Florida.

Barr’s letter drew a quick — and critical — response from Rep. Jerrold Nadler, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, who had demanded the full Mueller report by April 2.

Nadler, D-N.Y., said that deadline still stands and called on Barr to join him in working to get a court order allowing the release of grand jury information to the committee, rather than spending “valuable time and resources” keeping portions of the report from Congress.

“There is ample precedent for the Department of Justice sharing all of the information that the Attorney General proposes to redact to the appropriate congressional committees,” Nadler said in a statement. “Again, Congress must see the full report.”

Trump threatens to close border

Says he will act if Mexico does not immediately stop illegal immigration

By **CATHERINE LUCEY, NOMAAN MERCHANT** and **JONATHAN LEMIRE**
Associated Press

PALM BEACH, Fla. — Threatening drastic action against Mexico, President Donald Trump declared on Friday he is likely to shut down America’s southern border next week unless Mexican authorities immediately halt all illegal immigration. Such a severe move could hit the economies of both countries, but the president emphasized, “I am not kidding around.”

“It could mean all trade” with Mexico, Trump said when questioned by reporters in Florida. “We will close it for a long time.”

Trump has been promising for more than two years to build a long, impenetrable wall along the border to stop illegal immigration, though Congress has been reluctant to provide the money he needs. In the meantime, he has repeatedly threatened to close the border, but this time, with a new surge of migrants heading north, he gave a definite timetable.

A substantial closure could have an especially heavy impact on cross-border communities from San Diego to South Texas, as well as supermarkets that sell Mexican produce, factories that rely on imported parts, and other businesses across the U.S.

The U.S. and Mexico trade about \$1.7 billion in goods daily, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which said closing the border would be “an unmitigated economic debacle” that would threaten 5 million American jobs.

Trump tweeted Friday morning, “If Mexico doesn’t immediately stop ALL illegal immigration coming into the United States through our Southern Border, I will be CLOSING the Border, or large sections of the Border, next week.”

In Florida, he didn’t qualify his threat with “or large sections,” stating: “There is a very good likelihood I’ll be closing the border next week, and that is just fine with me.”

He said several times that it would be “so easy”



AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta
President Donald Trump walks with, from left, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., and Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., on Friday during a visit to Lake Okeechobee and Herbert Hoover Dike at Canal Point, Fla.

for Mexican authorities to stop immigrants passing through their country and trying to enter the U.S. illegally, “but they just take our money and ‘talk.’”

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen suggested Trump was referring to the ongoing surge of mostly Central American families heading north through Mexico. Many people who cross the border illegally ultimately request asylum under U.S. law, which does not require asylum seekers to enter at an official crossing.

Short of a widespread shutdown, Nielsen said the U.S. might close designated ports of entry to re-deploy staff to help process parents and children. Ports of entry are official crossing points that are used by residents and commercial vehicles.

“If we have to close ports to take care of all of the numbers who are coming, we will do that,” Nielsen said. “So it’s on the table, but what we’re doing is a very structured process based on operational needs.”

The White House did not immediately respond to questions about whether Trump’s possible action would apply to air travel.

Trump’s latest declaration came after Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said his country was doing its part to fight migrant smuggling. Criminal networks charge thousands of dollars a person to move migrants through Mexico, increasingly in large groups toward remote sections of the border.

“We want to have a good relationship with the government of the United States,” Lopez Obrador said Friday. He added: “We are going to continue helping so that the migratory flow, those who pass through our country, do so according to the law, in an orderly way.”

Marcelo Ebrard, Mexico’s foreign relations secretary, tweeted that his country “doesn’t act based on threats” and is “the best neighbor” the U.S. could have.

Customs and Border Protection commissioner Kevin McAleenan said Wednesday that 750 border inspectors would be reassigned to deal with the growing number of migrant families, and the DHS official said Friday that the department was seeking volunteers from other agencies to help.

In Florida, Trump was also asked about the two migrant children who died in U.S. custody in December. Is the administration equipped to handle sick children who are detained?

“I think that it has been very well stated that we have done a fantastic job,” he said, defending Border Patrol efforts to help the children.

Trump said that in one of the cases “the father gave the child no water for a long period of time.”

“It was a very tough situation and that trek up, that’s a long hard trek,” he said. “It’s a horrible situation.”

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