

House Democrats planning expansive Trump probes, even after Mueller report

No matter when and how Special Counsel Robert Mueller's Russia probe ends, House Democrats are planning to aggressively ramp up their own Trump-related investigations that will include a network of committees and high-profile public hearings likely to last well into the 2020 election year.

It is unclear at this point when the special counsel's investigation into Russian meddling and potential collusion with Trump campaign associates will be complete, though several officials have said the probe is nearing its end.

TRUMP ACCUSES SCHIFF OF 'UNLIMITED PRESIDENTIAL HARASSMENT' AMID NEW PROBE

But the Mueller report will not mark the end of Russia investigations. House Democrats have ramped up their own efforts to investigate the president on matters related to Russia, his personal finances, his relationships and communications with foreign officials, and more.

The House Financial Services Committee, led by Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., is the latest panel to join in on the investigations. Axios reported Wednesday that the committee will coordinate with the House Intelligence Committee on money-laundering inquiries — while the House Foreign Affairs Committee is also involved.

The details emerged after House Intelligence Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., already announced a sweeping new probe into the president's foreign business dealings and Russian election meddling.

Committee Democrats alleged last year that Trump's financial records with Deutsche Bank and Russia may reveal a "form of compromise" that "needs to be exposed." Schiff has long maintained there had to be some reason that the German banking giant, which has what he called a "history of laundering Russian money," was willing to work with the Trump Organization.

The same committee has also floated a potential subpoena for notes or testimony from the interpreter in meetings between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin—a move that would dramatically escalate Democrats’ investigations into the Trump administration. Should Schiff choose to subpoena the interpreter, it would likely trigger a major confrontation between the executive and legislative branches concerning discussions with foreign leaders.

Reports last month suggested that Trump took possession of the notes from the interpreter after his summit with Putin in Hamburg in 2017, and instructed the individual not to discuss what had taken place in the meetings with Putin with any other administration officials. But the president’s decision to ask the interpreter not to share details of his meetings with foreign leaders with other members of the administration could have been a response to prior leaks of private conversations with Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and then-Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto in 2017.

TRUMP CALLS SCHIFF ‘POLITICAL HACK’ AS DEMS OPEN NEW RUSSIA PROBE, SEND TRANSCRIPTS TO MUELLER

Schiff posed the idea of subpoenaing the interpreter in 2018, but again, last month, suggested they could use subpoena power to obtain the notes and testimony.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee also has directed resources from their former subcommittee on terrorism and nonproliferation to one focused on investigations and oversight. Chairman Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., said that it “made sense” to have a panel like this when there are “so many questionable activities of this Administration vis-à-vis foreign policy.”

Engel also pointed to Trump’s summit with Putin in Helsinki, Finland in 2018.

“It’s been many months since Helsinki, and we still don’t know what Putin and Trump talked about,” Engel said, adding that a new panel could also look at the “business interests of the president” and how his financial dealings with certain countries in the Middle East and Russia have “affected what he’s done in foreign policy.”

WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCES ADDITIONS TO PRESS SHOP IN ANTICIPATION OF SUBPOENAS AND HEARING INVITES FROM HOUSE

DEMS

Meanwhile, sources told Fox News that the House Judiciary Committee has staffed up with former Obama chief ethics counsel Norm Eisen helping Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., conduct the panel's oversight of Mueller's Russia investigation and the Justice Department. The Judiciary Committee also would lead the charge on any potential impeachment proceedings.

And the House Oversight Committee, while not leading a full investigation, had invited former Trump attorney Michael Cohen to testify before the panel. He accepted, but then postponed the public hearing citing alleged threats made by Trump and his legal team. Cohen was also invited by Schiff to testify before the House Intelligence Committee, but his hearing has yet to be scheduled.

On the other side of the Capitol, the Senate Intelligence Committee has subpoenaed Cohen for a deposition before their panel. That same committee, chaired by Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., and Ranking Member Mark Warner, D-Va., has been probing whether the Trump campaign colluded with Russia during the 2016 presidential election. But this week, NBC News reported that the committee has found "no evidence" of collusion.

While the timeline of Mueller's investigation remains to be seen, Trump's former attorney John Dowd ripped the entire probe as a "terrible waste of time" on Wednesday in an interview with ABC News.

BETWEEN ACTING AG WHITAKER AND HOUSE DEMS, TRUMP-MUELLER HEARING TURNS TESTY

"I will be shocked, if anything regarding the president is made public, other than, 'we're done,'" Dowd said.

"I know exactly what he has. I know exactly what every witness said, what every document said. I know exactly what he asked. And I know what the conclusion [is]," Dowd said, again blasting the probe as "one of the greatest frauds this country's ever seen."

CLICK HERE TO GET THE FOX NEWS APP

"I'm just shocked that Bob Mueller didn't call it that way and say, 'I'm being used.' I would have done that," Dowd added.

Fox News' Gregg Re and Liam Quinn contributed to this report.

Source: <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/house-democrats-plan-sweeping-trump-probes-after-mueller-report>

[Disclaimer]