

Trump and Mueller: What to expect from the president's Russia probe interview

President Trump said this week that he was willing to testify in the ongoing investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election.

More: Trump says he is 'looking forward' to testifying under oath for Mueller's Russia probe

That's a big deal. Why? Here's the breakdown:

First off: Who wants to interview the president?

There are actually multiple ongoing investigations into Russia's election meddling and possible collusion with Trump associates. Three are run by congressional panels. Another is run by special counsel Robert Mueller, the former FBI director now overseeing the wide-ranging federal probe for the Justice Department.

What is the president being interviewed about?

Mueller is expected to ask about collusion between Trump's campaign and Russia – which Trump denies. Mueller is also investigating whether Trump obstructed justice in the Russia probe.

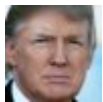
It's likely that investigators will press the president about his contacts with James Comey, the FBI director Trump abruptly fired in May. Originally, the White House said it fired Comey based on his controversial handling of the Hillary Clinton email investigation – but later, Trump said the Russia investigation was on his mind when he made the decision. Comey himself has spoken with Mueller's team and turned over memos that documented the unusual contacts – but Mueller will likely want to hear the president's side of the story.

Trump is also expected to be asked about his firing of Michael Flynn, his former national security adviser who allegedly lied to Vice President Pence about his contacts with a Russian official. Flynn has pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about his contacts and is cooperating with Mueller's investigation.

More: Mueller team in early talks for possible interview with President Trump

But hasn't the president criticized this investigation?

Yes, repeatedly. Shortly after Mueller was appointed last May, Trump declared that this was the "single greatest witch hunt" in American history. He again made that same pronouncement just two weeks ago.



Donald J. Trump

✓@realDonaldTrump

The single greatest Witch Hunt in American history continues. There was no collusion, everybody including the Dems knows there was no collusion, & yet on and on it goes. Russia & the world is laughing at the stupidity they are witnessing. Republicans should finally take control!

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And didn't he say he didn't think his testimony was necessary?

Yes. On the same day that he reiterated his thoughts on the Russia "witch hunt," the president declined to commit to an interview, because he insisted there had been no collusion.

"Certainly I'll see what happens," he said during a news conference this month. "But when they have no collusion, and nobody's found any collusion at any level, it seems unlikely that you'd even have an interview."

More: Trump declines to commit to Mueller interview for Russia probe

More: Trump suggests Republicans 'finally take control' of Russia probe

Why did Trump change his mind?

That's unclear.

When will the interview happen?

According to Trump, his testimony could take place within the next two to three weeks. But there does not appear to be an official timetable.

Will he do it under oath?

"Absolutely," he told reporters. His lawyers are working out the rules of his testimony with Mueller's team, he said.

Who else has been interviewed by Mueller's probe?

Some of the most notable people the probe has interviewed include Flynn, Comey and Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

More: Attorney General Jeff Sessions interviewed by Mueller's team as part of Russia investigation

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