

National

A guide to the five major investigations of the Trump campaign's possible ties to Russia

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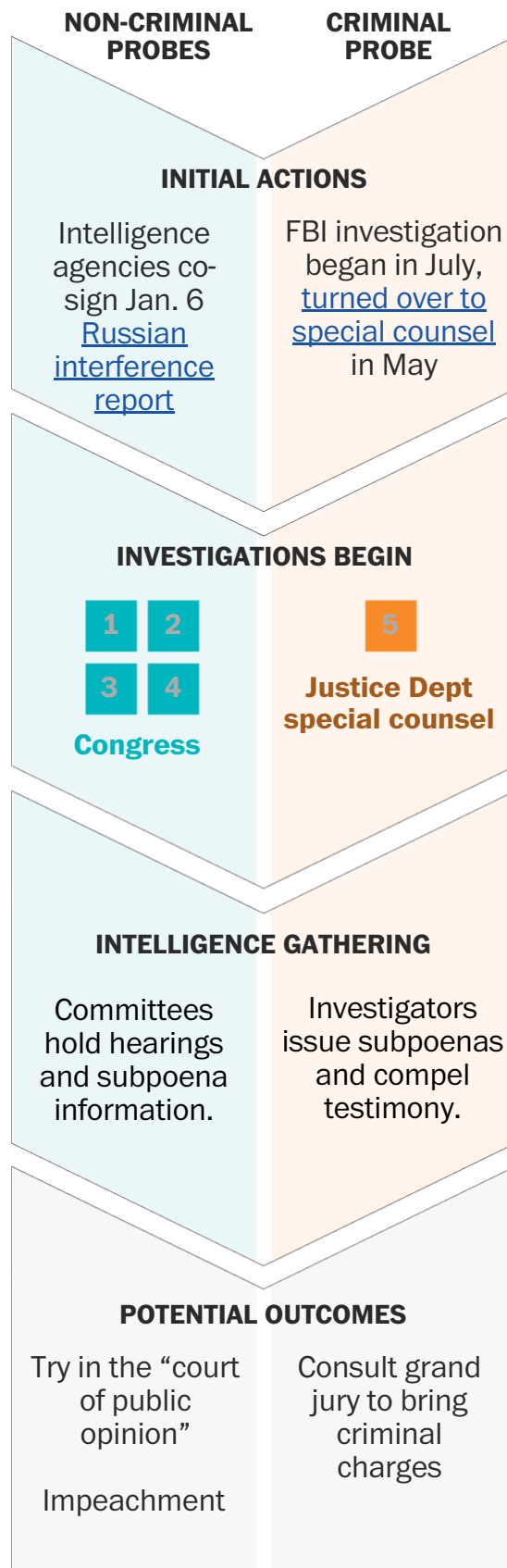
Special
counsel

This page has been updated to reflect [The Post's report](#) that the special counsel is now investigating possible obstruction of justice by President Trump.

All eyes are on Robert S. Mueller III as he begins his role as special counsel, leading the Justice Department's probe into the Trump campaign's possible ties to Russia. But that's far from the only investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election.

The criminal investigation led by the special counsel is charged with determining if anything illegal occurred. Meanwhile, each of the four major congressional fact-finding investigations is working to expose transgressions it finds unethical.

Despite their differing goals, all the investigations are moving simultaneously and using much of the same information.



The investigations are looking into different things

Generally, the special counsel and intelligence committees have a broader scope than the other committees.

The scope of the special counsel's inquiry has broadened [to include any effort by Trump to obstruct justice](#). Former FBI Director James Comey said [in his Senate testimony](#) that he believes he was fired over the FBI's investigation into possible coordination between the Trump campaign and the Russians.

Special counsel

Any attempt to obstruct justice by
Trump, or his allies

The Trump campaign's ties to Russia

Russian meddling in the 2016 election

Possible financial interests by Trump
associates

Senates Intelligence

Russia's interference in the election

Collusion between the Trump campaign
and Russia

Senate Judiciary

The circumstances that led to national
security adviser Michael Flynn's
dismissal

Leaks to the media

House Intelligence

Russia's interference in the election

Collusion between the Trump campaign
and Russia

Leaks to the media

House Oversight

Flynn's contacts with Russian officials,
including payments he received.

Some have more access to information than others

Access differs both because of how aggressively the leaders pursue the investigation — the special counsel is expected to be more thorough — and the jurisdiction of the committees. They all are also expected to get unclassified information by requesting or subpoenaing testimony and documents from Trump affiliates and others involved.

Mueller plans to interview top intelligence officials as early as [this week](#). It may not be possible for the White House to prevent those officials from speaking to Mueller's investigators because the Supreme Court ruled during the Watergate scandal that administration officials cannot withhold evidence in criminal prosecutions.

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CLASSIFIED MATERIALS**



**Special
counsel**

Mueller will work directly with the FBI and have broad access to FBI intelligence, and is expected to subpoena many Trump allies. He also has his own budget and staff independent of the Justice Department, and no deadline.



**Senate
Intelligence**

**House
Intelligence**

These committees have the broadest access to classified intelligence in Congress. They also have the power to subpoena people for testimony.



**Senate
Judiciary**

**House
Oversight**

These committees have a more general oversight role. They will access some classified information, but less than the intelligence committees, and can also subpoena people for testimony.

**LESS ACCESS TO
CLASSIFIED MATERIALS**

[Everything you need to know about the Russia investigation's 'special counsel']

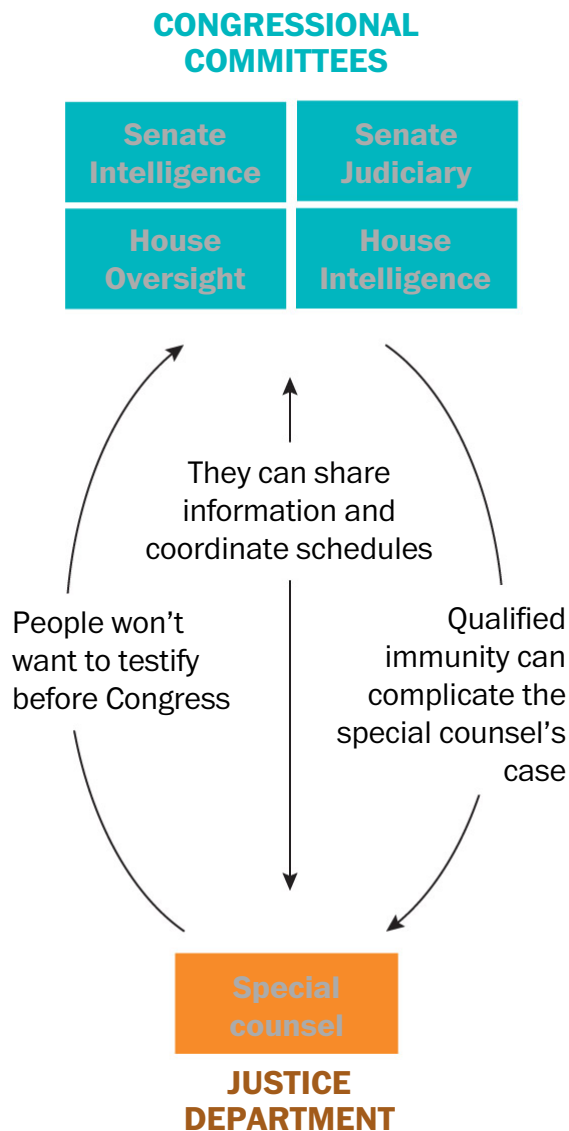
The investigations can interfere with one another

Each probe will share information to some extent. The leaders of the Senate Intelligence Committee released [a statement](#) saying they “will engage with Director Mueller and our expectation is that he will engage with the Committee as well.”

But the investigations can also stymie one another. Congress has the power to grant “qualified immunity” to people who testify, meaning their statements cannot be used against them in court. Since it is hard for prosecutors to show the evidence they are using is independent of those statements, it can make their case significantly harder to prove.

[\[Appointment of Mueller could complicate other probes into alleged Russian meddling\]](#)

On the other hand, some people may refuse to testify before congressional committees because they are under criminal investigation by the special counsel. Former national security adviser Michael Flynn has already [refused](#) to turn over documents to the Senate Intelligence Committee, invoking his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination.



They can deliver different consequences

Because the congressional investigations are political and the special counsel's is legal, they have different standards for what qualifies as wrongdoing, and different ways to punish wrongdoers.

The Justice Department has long taken the position that [it would not be appropriate to charge a sitting president](#). Instead, the responsibility would fall on Congress to review any findings of criminal misconduct and then decide whether to initiate impeachment proceedings.



Special counsel

This is the legal arm of the investigation, so members are focused on violations of federal law rather than immoral actions more broadly. They could file charges against the subjects of their investigation. Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein, a Trump appointee, could publish reports of their findings, which would have political consequences.



Senate
Intelligence

Senate
Judiciary

They can publicize their findings, which could ultimately lead to public apologies, resignations or lost elections. And the wrongdoings they punish do not necessarily need to be illegal, just politically unpalatable.

House
Intelligence

House
Oversight

They can deliver similar political consequences to the Senate. They also are able to initiate the impeachment process, though this probably would largely occur within the Rules and Judiciary committees.

Their conclusions will probably have different levels of credibility

Because Republicans control both houses of Congress, Democrats are less inclined to view their committees' conclusions as credible than the special counsel's. And depending on how the special counsel investigation plays out — Trump-appointed Justice Department officials still have [some control over the investigation](#) — it may lose some credibility as well.

And not all congressional investigations are on equal footing in this respect — some have made a real effort for the investigation to be bipartisan, while others have appeared too cozy with Trump administration leaders and have had to recuse themselves.

Special counsel

TRUMP APPOINTEE



Rosenstein Mueller

Mueller still reports to Trump-appointed Rosenstein since Attorney General Jeff Sessions recused himself, and could be fired by Trump — though it would be no small task. Also, Mueller previously worked at the law firm WilmerHale, which had Jared Kushner and former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort as clients. Democrats view these as conflicts of interest, though Justice Department ethics experts have [cleared](#) the latter.

Senate Intelligence

GOP

DEM



Burr Warner

Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) and Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-Va.) are jointly working on this notoriously bipartisan investigation. Many Democrats view it as the most credible of the congressional investigations.

Senate Judiciary

GOP



Grassley

Sen. Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa) [publicly](#) cast doubt on the FBI investigation's objectivity because of acting director Andrew McCabe's wife's close ties to the Clintons and how former director James B. Comey handled the Clinton email investigation.

House Intelligence

GOP

DEM



Conaway



Schiff

Rep. K. Michael Conaway (R-Tex.) and Rep. Adam B. Schiff (D-Calif.) are working together after committee chair Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Calif.) was pressured to recuse himself. Nunes allegedly publicly shared classified intelligence and gave Trump details about the investigation.

House Oversight

GOP



Chaffetz

Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) is running the investigation as the chair of the committee — for now. He [will resign at the end of June](#), and Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) will probably take control. Chaffetz has been widely viewed by Democrats as unwilling to stand up to Trump.

Even with all these investigations — plus other related inquiries in the Treasury Department and other congressional committees — it could be [years](#) before they come to a close. And if charges are not filed, we may never know what happened, or did not happen, between the Trump campaign and the Russian government.

About this story

Information from staff reports and Eric Schickler, political science professor at the University of California at Berkeley. Additional special counsel details from Congressional Research Service [[PDF](#)] and the [Justice Department](#).

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6/13/2017 4:44 PM EDT [Edited]

We.Are. Doomed.

The first four of these investigations are a joke - political window dressing.

The fifth is rife with conflicts of interest and is supervised by a Trump loyalist.

Just go ahead and call Putin to congratulate him.

And consider off-shoring your retirement funds.

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6/8/2017 12:08 PM EDT

Cotton is a moron

1 • [Like](#) [Report](#) [Reply](#) [Share](#)

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