

Trump to face the press after special counsel announcement

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During the press conference Thursday afternoon, Trump also categorically denied media reports he asked former FBI Director James Comey to shut down an investigation into former national security adviser Michael Flynn, whose business ties to Russian Federation have come under close scrutiny since Trump fired Flynn only weeks into his administration. Trump fired Comey on May 9.

The Trump White House has been besieged by Russia-related controversies on several fronts.

Comey's dismissal last week set off a series of jarring developments that culminated on Wednesday in the Justice Department's appointment of a special counsel to probe possible ties between Russian Federation and Trump's 2016 presidential campaign.

Who is the newly appointed overseer of the Trump-Russia investigation?

No less a commentator than Russia's Vladimir Putin called the dramatic charges swirling around Trump evidence of "political schizophrenia spreading in the U.S".

"I respect the move but the entire thing has been a witch hunt".

President Donald Trump speaks at a joint press conference with President Juan Manuel Santos of Colombia in the East Room at the White House on Thursday.

Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein knew President Trump planned to fire FBI Director Jim Comey before he sat down to write a memo criticizing Comey's conduct. "A special prosecutor can not take the place of a truly independent outside commission that is completely free from the Trump administration's meddling". The others were former Connecticut Sen.

"This is the single greatest witch hunt of a politician in American history", he wrote on Twitter.

Democratic Senator Amy Klobuchar responded, "This is a truth hunt".

Questions surrounding alleged ties to Russian Federation have dogged Mr Trump since before his election. Trump has long bristled at the notion that Russian Federation played any role in his November election victory.

Trump fired Flynn on February 14 for misleading Vice President Mike Pence about the extent of his conversations a year ago with Russia's ambassador.

US stocks rose as upbeat economic data emboldened investors to return to the market on Thursday, a day after Wall Street saw its worst selloff in eight months on worries that the political turmoil could sideline Trump initiatives such as tax cuts that investors see as favoring economic growth.

Velázquez said that she would continue to call on House Speaker Paul Ryan to allow a vote on legislation creating an independent commission to investigate as well.

"I believe it hurts our country terribly, because it shows we're a divided, mixed-up, not-unified country".

"He knew the day before", Durbin said of Rosenstein.

"If I were Mr. Mueller I would jealously guard the witness pool", Graham said.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said Comey should still appear before congressional committees that have invited him to testify.

"He also told me that Trump was perceptibly uncomfortable with this answer", wrote Benjamin Wittes, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a critic of Trump. Democratic Senator Joe Manchin said Rosenstein would be questioned about a letter he wrote accusing Comey of missteps as Federal Bureau of Investigation director, including his handling of an election-year probe into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while she was secretary of state.

The White House pointed to Rosenstein's memo last week as justification for Trump's abrupt decision to dismiss Comey. Nonsense, said Roger Pilon, founding director of the Center for Constitutional Studies at the Libertarian-leaning Cato Institute.

Trump later said in an interview with NBC News last week that he had made a decision to fire Comey "regardless of the recommendation" from the Justice Department.

The winners of such a shift could be congressional Republicans.