

# The Washington Post

SE Editorial-Opinion

HD Roger Stone remains a convicted felon, and rightly so

BY Robert S. Mueller III

WC 757 words

PD 12 July 2020

SN The Washington Post

SC WP

ED FINAL

PG A31

LA English

CY Copyright 2020, The Washington Post Co. All Rights Reserved

LP The work of the special counsel's office - its report, indictments, guilty pleas and convictions - should speak for itself. But I feel compelled to respond both to broad claims that our investigation was illegitimate and our motives were improper, and to specific claims that Roger Stone was a victim of our office. The Russia investigation was of paramount importance. Stone was prosecuted and convicted because he committed federal crimes. He remains a convicted felon, and rightly so.

TD Russia's actions were a threat to America's democracy. It was critical that they be investigated and understood. By late 2016, the [FBI](#) had evidence that the Russians had signaled to a Trump campaign adviser that they could assist the campaign through the anonymous release of information damaging to the Democratic candidate. And the FBI knew that the Russians had done just that: Beginning in July 2016, [WikiLeaks](#) released emails stolen by Russian military intelligence officers from the Clinton campaign. Other online personas using false names - fronts for Russian military intelligence - also released Clinton campaign emails.

Following FBI Director James B. Comey's termination in May 2017, the acting attorney general named me as special counsel and directed the special counsel's office to investigate Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election. The order specified lines of investigation for us to pursue, including any links or coordination between the Russian government and individuals associated with the Trump campaign. One of our cases involved Stone, an official on the campaign until mid-2015 and a supporter of the campaign throughout 2016. Stone became a central figure in our investigation for two key reasons: He communicated in 2016 with individuals known to us to be Russian intelligence officers, and he claimed advance knowledge of [WikiLeaks'](#) release of emails stolen by those Russian intelligence officers.

We now have a detailed picture of Russia's interference in the 2016 presidential election. The special counsel's office identified two principal operations directed at

our election: hacking and dumping Clinton campaign emails, and an online social media campaign to disparage the Democratic candidate. We also identified numerous links between the Russian government and Trump campaign personnel - Stone among them. We did not establish that members of the Trump campaign conspired with the Russian government in its activities. The investigation did, however, establish that the Russian government perceived it would benefit from a Trump presidency and worked to secure that outcome. It also established that the campaign expected it would benefit electorally from information stolen and released through Russian efforts.

Uncovering and tracing Russian outreach and interference activities was a complex task. The investigation to understand these activities took two years and substantial effort. Based on our work, eight individuals pleaded guilty or were convicted at trial, and more than two dozen Russian individuals and entities, including senior Russian intelligence officers, were charged with federal crimes.

Congress also investigated and sought information from Stone. A jury later determined he lied repeatedly to members of Congress. He lied about the identity of his intermediary to WikiLeaks. He lied about the existence of written communications with his intermediary. He lied by denying he had communicated with the Trump campaign about the timing of WikiLeaks' releases. He in fact updated senior campaign officials repeatedly about WikiLeaks. And he tampered with a witness, imploring him to stonewall Congress.

The jury ultimately convicted Stone of obstruction of a congressional investigation, five counts of making false statements to Congress and tampering with a witness. Because his sentence has been commuted, he will not go to prison. But his conviction stands.

Russian efforts to interfere in our political system, and the essential question of whether those efforts involved the Trump campaign, required investigation. In that investigation, it was critical for us (and, before us, the FBI) to obtain full and accurate information. Likewise, it was critical for Congress to obtain accurate information from its witnesses. When a subject lies to investigators, it strikes at the core of the government's efforts to find the truth and hold wrongdoers accountable. It may ultimately impede those efforts.

We made every decision in Stone's case, as in all our cases, based solely on the facts and the law and in accordance with the rule of law. The women and men who conducted these investigations and prosecutions acted with the highest integrity. Claims to the contrary are false.

The writer served as special counsel for the Justice Department from 2017 to 2019.

CT <http://www.washingtonpost.com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu>  
[<http://www.washingtonpost.com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu>]

RF WP20200712op-mueller0712

CO wkleak : WikiLeaks | fbinv : Federal Bureau of Investigation

NS gcat : Political/General News | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | gvexe : Executive Branch |  
gwithn : Witness Tampering | nedi : Editorials | gpir : Politics/International Relations | gpol :  
Domestic Politics | gvbod : Government Bodies | ncat : Content Types

RE russ : Russia | usa : United States | asiaz : Asia | bric : BRICS Countries | devgcoz :  
Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eeurz : Central/Eastern  
Europe | eurz : Europe | namz : North America | ussrz : CIS Countries

IPD Editorial-Opinion

PUB Washington Post

AN Document WP00000020200712eg7c0000c

© 2020 Factiva, Inc. All rights reserved.