

Justice names special counsel

Ex-FBI chief Mueller will probe possible Trump-Russia ties

By ERIC TUCKER, JULIE PACE and NANCY BENAC
Associated Press

Washington — The Justice Department abruptly appointed former FBI Director Robert Mueller Wednesday night as a special counsel to lead a federal investigation into allegations that Donald Trump’s campaign collaborated with Russia to sway the 2016 election that put him in the White House. Mueller will have sweeping powers and the authority to prosecute any crimes he uncovers.

The surprise announcement, the latest in the shock-a-day Washington saga, marked a concession by the Trump administration, which had resisted calls from Democrats to turn the investigation over to an outside prosecutor. The White House counsel’s office was alerted only after the order appointing Mueller was signed.

After the announcement, Trump insisted anew that there were no nefarious ties between his campaign and Russia.

“A thorough investigation will confirm what we already know — there was no collusion between my campaign and any foreign entity,” he declared in a statement. “I look forward to this matter concluding quickly.”

The appointment increases the pressure on Trump and his associates. Mueller’s broad mandate gives him not only oversight of the Russia probe, but also “any matters that arose or may arise directly from the investigation.” That would surely include Trump’s firing last week of FBI Director James Comey.

Mueller, a former federal prosecutor at the Justice Department, was confirmed as FBI director days before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks that would ultimately shape his tenure. The FBI’s counterterror mission was elevated in those years, as the U.S. intelligence agencies adjusted to better position America to prevent another attack of such magnitude. He was so valued that President Barack Obama asked him to stay on two years longer than his 10-year term.

Comey succeeded him, appointed by Obama.

Mueller was appointed Wednesday by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who had faced criticism as the author of a memo that preceded Comey’s firing. Rosenstein said the appointment was “necessary in order for the American

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UNITED STATES COAST GUARD ACADEMY★CLASS OF 2017



SARAH GORDON/THE DAY

Trump: ‘Never, ever give up’

Protesters, supporters alike gather peacefully

By JUDY BENSON and GREG SMITH
Day Staff Writers

New London — Other than some dueling chants and a few heated arguments, protesters and supporters of President Donald Trump shared a small park near the Coast Guard Academy for more than four hours Wednesday without incident, even engaging in some civil disagreements about issues ranging from religion to climate change to immigration and free speech rights.

The two groups converged on McKinley Park, the closest public space to the Coast Guard Academy, where Trump addressed a graduating class of Coast Guard cadets. Trump supporters arrived as early as 7:30 a.m. to establish their presence atop a grassy knoll at the back of the park, separated by a low stone wall from protesters who arrived about 8:30 after marching from the Soldiers and Sailors Monument downtown to occupy the lower section of the park along Williams Street.

Across the road, about 20 Bikers for Trump parked their

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Top, graduates, from left, Nathaniel Matthews, William Maxam, Matthew McAllister, Frederick McClimans and Michaela McKeown. **Below left**, protesters and police at McKinley Park in New London. **Below right**, graduate Erin Reynolds poses for a photo with President Trump.

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President welcomes the service’s newest officers

By JULIA BERGMAN and MARTHA SHANAHAN
Day Staff Writers

New London — In his first address as president to a military service academy, President Donald Trump paid tribute to the Coast Guard’s work to “save lives, defend the homeland and protect America’s interests,” but also seized the opportunity to tout his achievements and dismiss criticism of his administration.

“You could’ve gone to school anywhere you wanted, and with very, very few responsibilities by comparison, instead

you chose the path of service,” Trump told the 195 members of the Coast Guard Academy’s Class of 2017.

With family members and friends looking on, the U.S. cadets were commissioned as ensigns in the Coast Guard, while the six international cadets were commissioned as officers in the sea-going services of their home countries.

Offering the Class of 2017 some advice, Trump said, “over the course of your life, you will find that things are not always fair. You will find

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TIM MARTIN/THE DAY



SARAH GORDON/THE DAY

Through the Lens



THANASSIS STAVRAKIS/AP PHOTO

Protesters chant slogans during a nationwide general strike Wednesday in Athens. Greek workers walked off the job for an anti-austerity strike that was disrupting services across the country.

TRUMP CONTROVERSIES RATTLE STOCK MARKETS

The stock market on Wednesday took its biggest dive since September, as Wall Street analysts said investors had begun to grapple with the increasing possibility that Washington would be consumed with chaos and fail to enact policies President Trump and his congressional allies have said would boost the economy.

The Dow Jones industrial average lost 368 points, or 1.8 percent to 20,611, as a broad array of other indexes all lost ground. Meanwhile, a widely followed measure of volatility known as the VIX spiked by a dramatic 21 percent.

While some had predicted that a surprise Trump victory would bring uncertainty to markets, the stock market had kept up a steady rise since November.

— The Washington Post

LIEBERMAN INTERVIEWED FOR FBI DIRECTOR POST

Washington — President Donald Trump on Wednesday interviewed four potential candidates to lead the FBI, including former Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman, former Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating and Andrew McCabe, currently the bureau’s acting director.

Trump will also meet with Richard McFeely, a former top FBI official, in addition to the three other candidates. The meetings came more than a week after Trump fired James Comey from his post as FBI director.

Trump said on Monday that the search for a successor to Comey was “moving rapidly.” He also has said he could name a candidate by the end of the week, before he departs Friday afternoon on his first overseas trip as president.

— Associated Press

WEATHER

Some areas of early fog, becoming mostly sunny. High 75. Friday, partly sunny and turning less humid. High 75.

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