

GIULIANI

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people who worked on the campaign.”

He added, referring to discredited conspiracy theories that the president and his allies have long cited, “The only knowledge I have in this regard is the collusion of the Clinton campaign with Russia, which has so far been ignored.”

Giuliani was seeking to clarify an interview Wednesday night in which he stopped short of defending Trump campaign aides, drawing speculation that he might have inside knowledge of possible coordination with Russia.

“I never said there was no collusion between the campaign or between people in the campaign,” he told CNN. He added, “I said the president of the United States. There is not a single bit of evidence the president of the United States committed the only crime you could commit here, conspired with the Russians to hack the Democratic National Committee.”

Giuliani’s backpedaling was the latest in a series of conflicting comments he has made about the investigation by the special counsel, Robert Mueller. The evolution of his statements have suggested shifts in the president’s defense strategy, often following developments in the investigations. On Tuesday,

prosecutors for the special counsel filed a 200-page, mostly redacted court document related to the case against Trump’s one-time campaign chairman, Paul Manafort. Among the little information that was not blacked out were details about his relationship with a Russian whom prosecutors have said has ties to Russian intelligence.

Mueller’s document was in response to a recent filing by Manafort’s legal team, which inadvertently disclosed that Manafort had provided his Russian associate with U.S. polling data — details that offer the clearest example yet that the Trump campaign may have coordinated with Russia before the election. Giuliani has previously denied that there was coordination by Trump campaign aides.

“When I say the Trump campaign, I mean the upper levels of the Trump campaign,” Giuliani said during a July interview with Fox News. “I have no reason to believe anybody else did. The only ones I checked with obviously are the top four or five people.”

Giuliani also went a bit further on the collusion defense, telling Fox, “Even if he did it, it’s not a crime.”

The president agreed with him in a subsequent Twitter post, and added that Hillary Clinton, his former Democratic rival, was the one who was doing the colluding.

Trump has long maintained that his campaign never aided Russia’s meddling, even as the special



Rudy Giuliani, an attorney for President Donald Trump, addresses a gathering in 2018 during a campaign event in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. [CHARLES KRUPA/AP FILE PHOTO]

counsel inquiry has revealed communications between Russians and some Trump campaign aides.

While the word “collusion” has no defined legal meaning, in plain English, it means working together, typically in secret, to do something illicit. And whether Trump knew during the campaign of any Russian attempts to disrupt the election has been a central question in the investigation that started in the summer of 2016.

Trump’s former personal lawyer, Michael D. Cohen, was prepared to tell prosecutors that Trump knew about a June 2016 meeting in Trump Tower that was arranged so campaign officials could get damaging information on Clinton from Russians.

The president and his lawyers have denied that Trump had any knowledge of the meeting until July 2017, when The New York Times was preparing to publish an article about it.

At the time, when the White House was scrambling to prepare a statement about the Trump Tower meeting in response to The

Times’ article, Trump met with President Vladimir Putin for more than two hours in Germany, where they were attending an economic summit. Later that day, Trump sought out the Russian leader during a summit meeting dinner. Only interpreters, the secretary of state at the time, Rex W. Tillerson, and Russia’s foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, were in the first meeting with Trump and Putin. Afterward, Trump took his interpreter’s notes and told the interpreter not to tell anyone what was discussed. No U.S. officials were present for the second encounter during the dinner.

The following day, while Trump traveled back to Washington, he called a Times reporter to say that the Russians had been falsely accused by U.S. intelligence of hacking during the campaign. The president also huddled with his aides to draft a statement in response to the article about the Trump Tower meeting and dictated a misleading account that the meeting was about Russian adoptions. He did

not admit that the meeting was arranged to address Russia’s offer to help his campaign, which emails later obtained by The Times confirmed.

Earlier this week, senators questioned Trump’s nominee to be the next attorney general, William P. Barr, about how the Justice Department would handle a report from Mueller. That there will be such a report at the end of the special counsel’s investigation is just speculation, but Barr was pressed on whether he would share the report with Congress and the public and whether what he shared would be an altered version of the original.

The questioning drew on comments Giuliani had previously made about how the president might invoke executive privilege to prevent the report from going to Congress, or that the White House might edit the report before sending it to lawmakers “so we can correct it if they’re wrong.”

Barr assured senators that the White House would not be correcting the report before releasing it. And Giuliani said his comments Wednesday on CNN had not been an effort to address a possible Mueller report detailing evidence of cooperation between Trump campaign aides and Russia.

“I have no knowledge of collusion involving the campaign, nor does the president,” Giuliani told The Times on Thursday. “However, I only represent the president, and that’s all I can speak for.”

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2018 COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
ANNUAL REPORT

Notice: The 2018 City of Stuart (CRA) Community Redevelopment Agency Annual report has been filed with the Martin County Board of County Commissioners, Martin County Tax Collector, Martin County School Board, Florida Inland Navigational District, Children’s Service Council of Martin County, Martin County Property Appraiser, and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity-Special Districts.

The report is available for inspection during business hours (8:30am-5pm) in the office of the City Clerk and the Development Department office at City Hall, 121 SW Flagler Avenue, Stuart, Florida 34994.

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SHUTDOWN

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the Union address this month, citing security concerns amid a prolonged partial shutdown that has forced thousands of federal employees to work without pay.

Trump at first said nothing, but 24 hours later, without mentioning her request, the president released a sarcasm-tinged letter in which he told her the trip was off.

“In light of the 800,000 great American workers not receiving pay, I am sure you would agree that postponing this public relations event is totally appropriate,” Trump wrote. “I also feel that, during this period, it would be better if you were in Washington negotiating with me and joining the strong border security movement to end the shutdown.”

“Obviously,” Trump added, she still had the option of flying commercial.

The letter amounted to the latest reminder, if any was needed, that the stalemate over Trump’s demand that Democrats support his request for \$5.7 billion to build a border wall has reached such a poisonous pitch that even the most tradition-bound rituals of government — the president’s annual address to a joint session of Congress, lawmakers’ periodic trips overseas to gather facts and perform oversight — have been consumed in a storm of ill will and competing agendas.

It came on the 27th day of the shutdown, a day in which there were once again no negotiations between the two sides, but some indication that House Democrats,

increasingly concerned they have not sufficiently countered Trump’s demands for a wall with ideas of their own, were privately weighing offering their own plan for more effectively securing the border.

The move would be something of a shift in strategy for the Democrats, who have steadfastly refused to engage in a debate with Trump about border security as long as the government remains shuttered.

“There have been concerns by some members saying we need to tell our constituents what we’re for and what it would look like in terms of border security,” said Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, D-Calif., chairwoman of the appropriations subcommittee that handles homeland security. “That is probably a way to respond to that, and a way that does not violate what we are saying: open up the government and then we will talk about border security.”

Rep. Peter A. DeFazio, D-Ore., chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, who told a group of committee chairmen at a closed-door meeting Wednesday that it was time for their party to go public with its own border security ideas, reiterated the idea in an interview.

The president, he said, “is making this about border security, but what he is proposing would not provide real border security — it’s a stupid, static wall which is a symbol, and it’s not a great symbol, and it would be ineffective.”

Among the investments that DeFazio said should be made instead are more money for Coast Guard equipment and personnel to intercept maritime drug shipments, better technology to scan

vehicles legally crossing the border to detect illegal drugs, resources for costly reconfiguration of border crossings to make them more secure, and funds for additional personnel to police them.

“It’s a horrible waste of money when we have real needs,” DeFazio said of Trump’s wall, “so I just want to highlight the real needs to counter his fake proposal.”

Trump’s decision to revoke Pelosi’s military transport drew howls of outrage from Democrats and some Republicans, and threw into disarray a long-planned trip by the speaker and senior lawmakers — including the chairmen of the House Intelligence and Foreign Affairs committees — to visit American allies and troops stationed overseas.

Democrats, newly in control of the House and eager to use their power to challenge Trump, vowed they would not be bullied into scrapping the trip altogether.

“We’re not going to allow the president of the United States to tell the Congress it can’t fulfill its oversight responsibilities, it can’t ensure that our troops have what they need, whether our government is open or closed,” said Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., chairman of the intelligence panel.

“We are a coequal branch of government,” Schiff said, suggesting that the president apparently did not understand the new reality in Washington. “It may not have been that way with the past two years when he had a Republican Congress willing to roll over any time he asked, but that is no longer the case.”

White House, officials including Mick Mulvaney, the acting chief of staff, had been irked by Pelosi’s

invocation of security concerns as her premise for urging Trump to move his speech, and sought to put her in her place after she had emphasized that she represented a coequal branch in governing, according to aides who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Depriving Pelosi of an aircraft was the easiest way to remind her, they said. White House aides were tickled by the move, even as some acknowledged that Republican House members might fear for their own trips going forward.

Some of Trump’s usual allies were less amused.

“One sophomoric response does not deserve another,” Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said in a statement.

“Speaker Pelosi’s threat to cancel the State of the Union is very irresponsible and blatantly political,” he added. “President Trump denying Speaker Pelosi military travel is also inappropriate.”

A White House spokesman said that all coming official visits by lawmakers, known as congressional delegations or “codels,” would be canceled until the shutdown is over, and by day’s end on Thursday, officials announced that Trump had also canceled plans to send Steven Mnuchin, the Treasury secretary, Mike Pompeo, the secretary of state, and Wilbur Ross, commerce secretary, to the World Economic Forum in Switzerland.

But Melania Trump, the first lady, kept her plans to fly on a military jet to West Palm Beach, Florida, to go to the family’s Mar-a-Lago compound.

As of late Thursday, multiple congressional officials could not say, citing security concerns, whether Pelosi’s trip to Afghanistan was still on.

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