

The Mueller report is in. Now it's up to Congress.

## **But first, they need all 400 pages.**

From the Editors in the [April 24, 2019](#) issue



U.S. Capitol, 2013. Photo by Martin Falbisoner, [some rights reserved](#).

Robert Mueller's report on Russian influence in the 2016 presidential election proved anticlimactic—at least as it was summarized by Attorney General William Barr. The special counsel did not find what many expected him to find: definitive evidence that Trump or his associates enlisted Russian agents to help get him elected. The investigation did not show Trump engaged in an actual quid pro quo.

Anticlimactic or not, Mueller's work should be assessed in light of its overall achievement. Had Mueller chosen to release all his findings in one final report rather than a series of criminal indictments over the course of 22 months, it would have landed like a bombshell.

Mueller indicted or won guilty pleas from 34 people, including six people in Trump's inner political circle. Those convicted of fraud and/or of lying to federal investigators include Trump's chief campaign manager Paul Manafort and national security

adviser Michael Flynn. Mueller also indicted 26 Russian agents and three Russian-based Internet companies for trying to manipulate US voters—the clearest evidence yet of Russia’s effort to tip the election to Trump. And Mueller’s probe sparked several other criminal investigations of the president and his associates that will continue, as well as the probe that led to Trump’s personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, being convicted of lying to Congress, tax fraud, and campaign finance violations.

Far from exonerating Trump, as he claims, Mueller’s investigation documented the culture of lies and deceit that Trump created around himself. It was a culture in which people were quite happy to benefit from Russia’s interference and look the other way or even misdirect the federal investigators who looked into it.

It may be that Trump did not break any laws by persistently attacking the special counsel’s investigation and firing FBI director James Comey. But his words and actions have blatantly undermined the rule of law. The nation will suffer from his example for years to come.

It appears that Trump’s allies lied about their contacts with Russia because they wanted to hide evidence of Trump’s financial dealings with Russia, or simply because lying when challenged was instinctive. On the question of whether Trump himself tried to obstruct the investigation, Mueller neither indicted nor exonerated the president. Following the precedent set in the Watergate investigation, Mueller apparently aimed to leave that question up to Congress. That’s why members of Congress and the public need to see Mueller’s complete 400-page report, not just the attorney general’s four-page summary. Let Americans judge the evidence for themselves.

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