

TRUMP BITCHED OUT MCCONNELL ABOUT NOT PROTECTING HIM IN RUSSIA PROBE ON DAY MANAFORT RAID STORY BROKE

Donald Trump continues his habit of alienating people he needs to help him survive his presidency. The NYT provides details of the souring relationship between Trump and Mitch McConnell, which it says culminated in an August 9 phone call.

In a series of tweets this month, Mr. Trump criticized Mr. McConnell publicly, then berated him in a phone call that quickly devolved into a profane shouting match.

During the call, which Mr. Trump initiated on Aug. 9 from his New Jersey golf club, the president accused Mr. McConnell of bungling the health care issue. He was even more animated about what he intimated was the Senate leader's refusal to protect him from investigations of Russian interference in the 2016 election, according to Republicans briefed on the conversation.

Mr. McConnell has fumed over Mr. Trump's regular threats against fellow Republicans and criticism of Senate rules, and questioned Mr. Trump's understanding of the presidency in a public speech. Mr. McConnell has made sharper comments in private, describing Mr. Trump as entirely unwilling to learn the basics of governing.

In offhand remarks, Mr. McConnell has expressed a sense of bewilderment about

where Mr. Trump's presidency may be headed, and has mused about whether Mr. Trump will be in a position to lead the Republican Party into next year's elections and beyond, according to people who have spoken to him directly.

In point of fact, the tweets started on August 9 (about 2:25PM) and continued through the next morning. Both the tweet described as occurring before and the one occurring after the phone call reference only the TrumpCare debacle, not the Russian investigation.

According to the NYT, Trump was "even more animated" about McConnell's "refusal" to protect him from Russian investigations.

August 9 was the day the WaPo first broke (around 10:00AM) the story of the July 26 raid on Paul Manafort's home. The raid itself, of course, was conducted by the FBI. But all the stories about it include allusions about the fact that it came after Manafort's interview with the Senate Intelligence Committee and immediately after Manafort reluctantly agreed to cooperate with the Senate Judiciary Committee on threat of subpoena; Manafort had tried and failed to limit his appearance to SSCI.

Now go back to the language the NYT uses. "Refusal" to protect Trump. That's sure an interesting word, "refusal." Did Trump contact McConnell about the subpoena to Manafort back on July 25? Or did McConnell refuse some other tangible request from Trump? If so does Robert Mueller know about it?

In response to reports on the raid, Trump lawyer John Dowd made all sorts of crazy comments to the press about how FBI had acted improperly because they hadn't exhausted all options for obtaining the materials seized on July 26. Even Fox News said Dowd was trying to protect the President with his comments. And some of the reporting noted that among the seized documents were Manafort's notes for his interview with

SSCI.

That is, all the reporting on the raid intimated that it had as much to do with the Congressional testimony as Mueller's own investigation.

And sometime that day, Trump called McConnell and complained the Majority Leader wasn't providing him sufficient protection. *Refused* to protect him, in fact.

In any case, Trump's attacks have gotten the thin-skinned McConnell wondering "whether Mr. Trump will be in a position to lead the Republican Party into next year's elections and beyond," which sure seems like a bad opinion for Trump to have fostered given that McConnell would have a big influence on how any impeachment trial would proceed if it ever got to the Senate.

Update: Coverage of the Glenn Simpson (head of Fusion GPS, which did the Steele dossier) interview with SJC makes clear that his was the first voluntary testimony, meaning Manafort (and Don Jr) have not sat for an interview yet.