

[Opinion](#)
[News](#)



The White House in Washington. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)



by Pat Perriello

[View Author Profile](#)
perriello@aol.com

[**Join the Conversation**](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

September 26, 2018

[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

How is one to categorize President Donald Trump's [latest attacks on the FBI](#) and the justice department?

The attacks are the most vitriolic so far and real damage is being done to these institutions. The president says, "I hope to be able to put this up as one of my crowning achievements that I was able to expose something that is truly a cancer in our country." He sees this action as "a great service to the country." Of all the things he's done, he says this "might be the most important thing because this was corrupt."

Where is Trump's anger coming when he claims the FBI is corrupt and can be seen as a cancer in our country? Words do matter. This is his FBI. It is his FBI director. We depend on the FBI to keep us safe and protect us from terrorism both foreign and domestic. With such an unbridled attack on one of our most fundamental institutions, what do we do next? How does the damage that has been done get repaired?

As I have said before, the beginning of a solution lies in the November mid-term elections, which can provide a check on the more extreme actions of this president. However, it is also important to understand what this president is trying to accomplish. There can be little doubt that everything Trump is doing at this point is designed to protect himself from the Russia investigation. It is also instructive to know where the president got the idea to declassify sensitive information.

Rather than listening to his national security team or his intelligence advisors, the president has chosen a different route. He has been listening to Fox News commentators and acting on their statements and advice. It is stunning to think that the president has greater respect for [his cable news friends](#) than for his White House team, cabinet, and the entire intelligence community.

Fortunately, we now learn that the president is backing off the [immediate release of these classified documents](#). What could have made the president change his mind on this issue? It seems particularly surprising in light of his vicious attack on the

justice department and his determination to eliminate anyone who he sees as having conspired against him.

Perhaps the justice department has convinced him of the dangers to national security if he compromises sources and methods. Yet he hasn't seemed concerned about that in the past. Maybe our European allies have been able to convince him of the dangers of the precipitous release of these documents. Yet, he has shown little respect or interest in what our allies have had to say in the past.

Take a look at his [actual tweet](#).

I believe the operative comment in that tweet is that the release of these documents "may have a perceived negative impact on the Russia probe."

At first, I was puzzled by this comment. Could it be that the president was suddenly interested in seeing the Mueller probe be allowed to continue without interference? This interpretation didn't seem plausible.

Then, it made sense. This comment was about the danger to the president. If he demanded the release of these documents, he could be seen, once again, as obstructing justice — obstructing the investigation.

Apparently, his lawyers were able to convince him that he could damage his own case by the release of these documents at this time.

What we now have to wonder is what actions this president will take following the mid-term elections. Will we see wholesale firings of the Attorney General, his deputy and perhaps the special counsel? Will the demand to release sensitive documents come up again?

On the other hand, what will we be seeing from the Mueller investigation? Will we see new indictments, and who will they be? Finally, what will be the public response to actions by both the president and the special counsel?

All the while this is going on we have the confirmation hearings for Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. We have the accusations against Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein that has his continuation in office hanging by a thread. The results of the mid-term elections are still uncertain.

A climax is building. Regardless of the outcome of the mid-term elections, it seems likely that dramatic events will be occurring faster than one can imagine.

History is about to happen. The outcome cannot be predicted. Yet, whatever happens, it will shape the course of events in the United States of America for decades to come.

Advertisement