

U.S. Attorney General William Barr resigns

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Washington, December 14 (RHC)-- U.S. Attorney General William Barr resigned on Monday, ending a tenure in which the President Donald Trump loyalist carried the administration's "law and order" message but ultimately dealt the most credible blow to Trump's unfounded claims that the 2020 election was littered with fraud.

"Just had a very nice meeting with Attorney General Bill Barr at the White House. Our relationship has been a very good one, he has done an outstanding job! As per letter, Bill will be leaving just before Christmas to spend the holidays with his family," Trump tweeted, announcing the news.

"Deputy Attorney General Jeff Rosen, an outstanding person, will become Acting Attorney General. Highly respected Richard Donoghue will be taking over the duties of Deputy Attorney General. Thank you to all!"

Political observers noted that Barr repeatedly and unapologetically prioritized Trump's political goals while furthering his own vision of expansive presidential power. In his most notorious move, Barr delivered a misleading summary of special counsel Robert Mueller's report, essentially clearing Trump in the Russia probe, which drew a sharp rebuke from Mueller himself.

He remained steadfast in his support of the President heading into Election Day, including by launching various operations across the country to combat violence and drug trafficking and reiterating Trump's message not to participate in mail-in voting prior to the presidential election. He also appointed a special counsel to continue investigating one of Trump's longtime infatuations, that intelligence and law enforcement violated the law in investigating the 2016 Trump campaign.

But the decision from the former attorney general to rebuke the President's false claims of widespread fraud in his loss to Democrat Joe Biden represented a final failure of Trump's often successful attempt to weaponize the Justice Department as a personal and potent political weapon.

Following the 2020 election, Trump's legal team filed dozens of civil lawsuits in federal and state courts across the country in an effort to prove that Biden did not fairly win the election. Barr told the Associated Press in an interview on December 1 that the Justice Department had not found any such evidence. "To date, we have not seen fraud on a scale that could have effected a different outcome in the election," he said.

The President was frustrated with his attorney general's comments to the AP and had a "contentious," lengthy meeting at the White House the day they were published, according to a person familiar with the meeting.

By early December, Barr was considering leaving his post before January 20th, the day Trump leaves office, a source with knowledge of the matter told CNN days after he buffed the President's election fraud claims. The source said Barr was not happy with Trump and that the former attorney general "is not someone who takes bullying and turns the other cheek!"

The attorney general echoed the President's anger at coronavirus lockdowns, calling them, apart from slavery, "the greatest intrusion on civil liberties in American history." Barr also asked for the Justice Department to take over the President's defense in a defamation lawsuit filed against him by Jean E. Carroll, who accused him of sexual assault.

In one dramatic scene in June, Barr ordered authorities to disperse a large crowd of peaceful protesters near the White House so Trump could walk to the nearby historic St. John's Church, where a fire had been set in the basement the previous night during unrest sparked by the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

His extraordinary decision to use force on the protesters underscored his commitment to Trump's law and order message, and in the days following the incident, he defended his actions and claimed there was no connection between his order and a photo-op Trump staged at the church.

The attorney general also faced criticism for saying that systemic racism is not an issue in US law enforcement agencies, comments that came as throngs of people took to the streets across the country to protest police violence and racism.

"I think there's racism in the United States still but I don't think that the law enforcement system is systemically racist. I understand the distrust, however, of the African American community given the history in this country," he said in an interview with CBS in June.

And he ordered his prosecutors to dismiss charges against Trump's first national security advisor Michael Flynn, who has since been pardoned by the President.

Despite offering such service to the President, there had been signs that Trump has been becoming ever more frustrated with Barr. He lashed out against the attorney general before the election, complaining he had not indicted Obama-era officials for their role in the Russia investigation.

The tension suggested that for all of Barr's apparent moves to placate Trump and his clear sympathy with the President over the Russia investigation in particular, he remained within the lines of evidence and legal procedure on the issue of election interference.

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