

Andrew Bolt: Why Donald Trump had to sack FBI boss James Comey

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THE hysterical reporting of Donald Trump's sacking of FBI boss James Comey ignores one thing: the facts.

We're told the US President sacked Comey to stop him investigating his campaign's alleged collusion with the Russian government to influence last year's election.

Democratic congresswoman Maxine Waters even claimed on US cable network MSNBC last week that Russian President Vladimir Putin helped Trump "develop" his campaign slogans.

Trump sacks Comey

True, Waters admitted, there was no evidence of any collusion, but "calling Hillary crooked, the 'lock her up, lock her up,' all of that was developed, I think that was developed strategically with people from the Kremlin, with Putin".

This is seriously nuts, yet the MSNBC host didn't question it.

In fact, the media questions few anti-Trump claims in a manic desperation to write their dream story — Trump sacked Comey because he, himself, is corrupt. But there is a serious problem with this story — the three letters that led to Comey's sacking and prove Trump had no choice.

The first is from Deputy Attorney-General Rod Rosenstein, who worked for Democratic president Bill Clinton and is so respected by both sides of politics that the Senate confirmed his nomination by 94 votes to 6. On May 9, Rosenstein wrote a report to his boss, Attorney-General Jeff Sessions, concluding that Comey had overstepped his authority as FBI director when he had announced during the campaign the FBI was dropping its case against Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton for having used a private email server when she was Secretary of State.

Rosenstein said that call was not Comey's to make. His job was simply to present the FBI's evidence to President Barack Obama's attorney-general and let her decide. Instead, Comey had "announced his own conclusions about the nation's most sensitive criminal investigation", and then made it worse by publicly criticising Clinton anyway.



The hysterical reporting of Donald Trump's sacking of FBI boss James Comey ignores one thing: the facts. Picture: Jim Watson/AFP

"The director ignored another longstanding principle: we do not hold press conferences to release derogatory information about the subject of a declined criminal investigation,' wrote Rosenstein, a veteran public prosecutor. "It is a textbook example of what federal prosecutors and agents are taught not to do."

Rosenstein cited a long list of former attorneys-general and deputy attorneys-general from both sides of politics, as far back as the Ford administration, who had condemned Comey. For instance, former attorney-general Michael Mukasey, who served under president George W. Bush, said Comey had "stepped way outside his job". Another Bush appointee said he had been left "astonished and perplexed". Eric Holder, Obama's deputy attorney-general, agreed Comey had "violated longstanding Justice Department policies and traditions".

Rosenstein wrote that a decision to sack Comey "should not be taken lightly", but "the FBI is unlikely to regain public and congressional trust until it has a director who understands the gravity of the mistakes, and pledges never to repeat them". But Comey had "refused to admit his errors", and so "cannot be expected to implement the necessary corrective actions".

Having read Rosenstein's report, Attorney-General Jeff Sessions wrote to Trump recommending Comey be sacked: "The director of the FBI must be someone who follows faithfully the rules and principles."

Trump then told Comey he was fired, because it was “essential that we find new leadership for the FBI that restores public trust and confidence”.



US President Donald Trump told James Comey he was fired because it was “essential that we find new leadership for the FBI that restores public trust and confidence”. Picture: Drew Angerer/Getty Images/AFP

He was doing this, he said, even though “I greatly appreciate you informing me, on three separate occasions, that I am not under investigation”.

So what on earth is the scandal here? What is so unjustifiable about Comey’s sacking? True, Trump has, with his big mouth and dangerous indiscipline, made muddy what was clear, later saying he would have sacked Comey anyway and did so because of the FBI’s Russian investigation.

Comey kicked that story along by claiming through “friends” that Trump had tried to stop him from investigating the alleged links between Russia and former national security adviser Michael Flynn, who was sacked by Trump for lying. Comey claims Trump in February told him: “I hope you can see your way clear to letting this go, to letting Flynn go. He is a good guy.”

But was that just Trump issuing an order or just stupidly expressing a hope?

Curiously, just a week before his sacking, Comey testified on oath to a Senate committee that he had never been “told to stop something for a political reason”. “It’s not happened in my experience.”

Nor has any FBI investigation been stopped.

Instead, Rosenstein has since also appointed a special prosecutor to also check any links between the Trump campaign and Russia.

Yet the media is full of hyperventilating stories of Trump sacking a brave FBI boss for investigating the President's crimes.

As fake news goes, this one's on steroids.