

Judge: Special Counsel Had Authority to Prosecute Manafort
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The ruling means the trial of Paul Manafort, which will center on alleged laundering of millions of dollars for Viktor Yanukovich and the Party of Regions, will go forward at a time almost certain to have potential impact on U.S. congressional elections in November this year. Also, the Manafort trial appears likely to be a major embarrassment for a number of pro-Russian politicians still active in Ukraine and close to Vladimir Putin. Moreover, the trial could lead to increased pressure from the IMF and other IFIs for the current administration and government to redouble efforts at recovery of the laundered funds, alleged to be the result of extortion and bribery.

By Chad Day, Associated Press, as published in US News & World Report, May 15, 2018
WASHINGTON — Special counsel Robert Mueller was working within his authority when he brought charges against President Donald Trump's former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, a federal judge in Washington ruled Tuesday. The decision was a setback for Manafort in his defense against charges of money-laundering conspiracy, false statements and acting as an unregistered foreign agent related to his Ukrainian political work. Manafort had argued that Mueller had exceeded his authority because the case was unrelated to Russian election interference. But U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson disagreed. Citing Manafort's years of work in Ukraine, his prominent role on the Trump campaign and his publicized connections to Russian figures, Jackson said it was "logical and appropriate" for Mueller's team to scrutinize him as part of their investigation into Russian election meddling and possible coordination with Trump associates. […]

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