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## Even when they misfire, Trump's shots at Russia probe are landing

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The mainstream media spends an inordinate amount of time repeating and parsing the words of President Donald Trump and Rudy Giuliani regarding the Russia investigation and charges of collusion.

Commentators and pundits seem perplexed about the apparent shifts and inconsistencies in the Trump team's claims and strategy, often conveying the impression that the President is out of control and doesn't seem to have a clear and well thought out game plan.

However, the media's coverage may miss the point and actually reinforce what Trump really is doing. In fact, one might argue that Trump is more politically and rhetorically savvy than we may realize. If there is one thing at which he has been successful for years it is preserving himself and his reputation.

As I have argued in several op-eds in the past year, President Donald Trump made a strategic decision to accelerate his response to the Russia investigation by attacking the investigators; this revealed a calculated choice to make the case less about potential legal indictments (which are unlikely to be brought against a sitting president), instead taking his claims directly to the court of public opinion where the only issue is political (impeachment).

This should give us pause, especially in view of the increasing number of Republicans who trust Trump and question the Russia investigation. Trump may be banking on this, as well as the public's fatigue with the collusion story. We shouldn't be surprised, therefore, if Trump escapes impeachment—regardless of the findings of Robert Mueller.

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