

In His Own Words: Why National Security Adviser Mike Flynn Has Resigned

Less than a month on the job, and National Security Adviser Mike Flynn has resigned his position following reports that he didn't tell Vice President Mike Pence the whole story about his phone conversations with the Russian ambassador to the U.S.

President Donald Trump has accepted his resignation and is already beginning the process to replace him. In the meantime, Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg (ret.), the chief of staff of the National Security Council, is now acting national security adviser.

Among the likely permanent replacements are Kellogg, who served as the president's primary national security adviser during the 2016 campaign, and Gen. David Petraeus (ret.), former director of the CIA.

Flynn's resignation letter explained his decision:

In the course of my duties as the incoming national security adviser, I held numerous phone calls with foreign counterparts, ministers, and ambassadors. These calls were to facilitate a smooth transition and begin to build the necessary relationships between the president, his advisers and foreign leaders. Such calls are standard practice in any transition of this magnitude.

Unfortunately, because of the fast pace of events, I inadvertently briefed the vice president-elect and others with incomplete information regarding my phone calls with the Russian ambassador. I have sincerely apologized to the president and the vice president, and they have accepted my

apology.

Throughout my over 33 years of honorable military service, and my tenure as the national security adviser, I have always performed my duties with the utmost of integrity and honesty to those I have served, to include the president of the United States.

I am tendering my resignation, honored to have served our nation and the American people in such a distinguished way. I am also extremely honored to have served President Trump, who in just three weeks, has reoriented American foreign policy in fundamental ways to restore America's leadership position in the world.

As I step away once again from serving my nation in this current capacity, I wish to thank President Trump for his personal loyalty, the friendship of those who I worked with throughout the hard-fought campaign, the challenging period of transition and during the early days of his presidency.

I know with the strong leadership of President Donald J. Trump and Vice President Mike Pence and the superb team they are assembling, this team will go down in history as one of the greatest presidencies in U.S. history, and I firmly believe the American people will be well served as they all work together to help Make America Great Again.

Democrats had been demanding the president fire Flynn all day Monday. Some conservatives had come to his defense, but ultimately, many in Trump's inner circle found the lack of openness about the conversations—particularly to Pence, who had publicly come to his defense based on the bad information—had irreparably damaged his ability to lead the NSA.

Russian officials didn't take the news of Flynn's resignation quite as well. They accused the president of being driven by "paranoia" that they say plagued previous administrations.

Media reports in Russia suggest the resignation will damage efforts to forge a more mutually beneficial relationship between the two countries. {eoa}