

METRO THE TRUMP TRANSITION

Bharara accepts Trump's offer to 'stay on' as US attorney

By Jamie Schram and Kaja Whitehouse

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Preet Bharara at Trump Tower

Photo: AP

There's going to be the same old "sheriff" in this town.

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Preet Bharara, The gungho federal prosecutor has agreed to “stay on” as Manhattan U.S. Attorney after President-elect Donald Trump offered him the gig during a meeting Wednesday afternoon at Trump Tower in Midtown.

“We had a good meeting. I agreed to stay on. I have already spoken to Senator Sessions, who is as you know is the nominee to be the attorney general. He also asked that I stay on, and so I expect that I will be continuing to work at the southern district,” Bharara confirmed to a pool of reporters in the lobby of Trump’s Fifth Avenue skyscraper following their 40 minute powwow.

Bharara, who’s been called “The Sheriff of Wall St.” for his aggressive prosecution of bankers, also heaped praise on his own office.

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“The president-elect asked, presumably because he’s a New Yorker and is aware of the great work that our office has done over the past seven years, asked to meet with me to discuss whether or not I’d be prepared to stay on as the United States attorney to do the work as we have done it, independently, without fear or favor for the last seven years, Bharara said.

The closed-door discussion between the two heavy hitters came on the one-year anniversary of Bharara's winning a corruption conviction against former Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, indicating that Bharara was trying to highlight his successes to keep his job.

"One year ago today, Sheldon Silver got justice, and at long last, so did the people of New York," Bharara tweeted on Wednesday just prior to his face-to-face- with Trump.

Silver aside, Bharara has won convictions against some of New York's most notorious white collar villains, corrupt politicians and international terrorists, including ex-NY Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos and al Qaeda terrorist Khalid Al-Fawwaz.

During a Nov. 17 press conference, Bharara hinted that he didn't want to leave his post.

"Have you put any thought into whether you would stay on in the Trump administration?," a reporter asked him.

"I have said and I'll say again, I love my job, I enjoy doing my job, I think we're still doing great work here in the office. I serve at the pleasure of the president like every U.S. attorney does, and if and when our president decides to replace me, I'll ride off into the sunset," Bharara replied.

Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) was one of the first to toot Preet's horn to Trump – and even put the president-elect directly in touch with Preet to set up the meeting, a source said.

"President-elect Trump called me last week and asked me what I thought about Preet Bharara continuing his role as U.S. Attorney. I told him I thought Preet was great, and I would be all for keeping him on the job and fully support it," Schumer said.

"I am glad they met and am glad Preet is staying on. He's been one of the best U.S Attorneys New York has ever seen," the longtime lawmaker added.

Others who were being considered for the plumb position, included Rudy Giuliani's ally Marc Mukasey, but he hadn't met with Trump, a source said.

Mukasey served eight years as a prosecutor for the Southern District of New York. He was also an attorney for the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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