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6 IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY: AMBASSADOR WILLIAM B. TAYLOR

7 AND MR. GEORGE KENT

8 Wednesday, November 13, 2019

9 U.S. House of Representatives,

10 Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence,

11 Washington, D.C.

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15 The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in Room HVC-304, Capitol

16 Visitor Center, the Honorable Adam Schiff (chairman of the committee) presiding.

17 Present: Representatives Schiff, Himes, Sewell, Carson, Speier, Quigley,

18 Swalwell, Castro, Heck, Welch, Maloney, Demings, Krishnamoorthi, Nunes, Conaway,

19 Turner, Wenstrup, Stewart, Stefanik, Hurd, Ratcliffe, and Jordan.

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1 The Chairman. The committee will come to order.

2 Good morning, everyone. This is the first in a series of public hearings the
3 committee will be holding as part of the House's impeachment inquiry.

4 Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess of the committee at
5 any time there is a quorum present. Here is how the committee will proceed for this
6 hearing. I will make an opening statement, and then Ranking Member Nunes will have
7 an opportunity to make a statement. Then we will go to witness statements and then to
8 questions.

9 For audience members, we welcome you, and we respect your interest in being
10 here. In turn, we ask for your respect as we proceed with today's hearing.

11 Mr. Ratcliffe. Mr. Chairman.

12 The Chairman. It is the intention of the committee to proceed without
13 disruption.

14 Mr. Ratcliffe. Mr. Chairman, may I make a parliamentary inquiry?

15 The Chairman. The gentleman will state the inquiry.

16 Mr. Ratcliffe. Mr. Chairman, this is our first hearing under these new set of rules.
17 House Resolution 660 gives you the discretion to allow yourself and the ranking member
18 periods of extended questions of up to 45 minutes each before other members are
19 allowed to ask questions.

20 If possible, we'd like to know the rules of engagement before we get started.
21 Have you made a decision yet as to how many 45-minute rounds you will allow yourself
22 and the ranking member?

23 The Chairman. I have not. As we informed the minority yesterday, we will see
24 how the first period goes and how much material we are able to get through. At that
25 point the chair will announce the period, if there is a period, of the second round, which

1 may be up to 45 minutes, or we'll go straight to 5-minute questions by members.

2 For audience members, again, we welcome you and your interest. In turn, we
3 expect and will insist on decorum in the committee. As chairman, I will take all
4 necessary and appropriate steps to maintain order and ensure the committee is run in
5 accordance with House rules and House Resolution 660.

6 With that, I now recognize myself to give an opening statement in the
7 impeachment inquiry into Donald J. Trump, the 45th President of the United States.

8 In 2014, Russia invaded the United States' ally Ukraine to reverse that Nation's
9 embrace of the West and to fulfill Vladimir Putin's desire to rebuild a Russian empire. In
10 the following years, 14,000 Ukrainians died as they battled superior Russian forces.

11 Earlier this year, Volodymyr Zelensky was elected President of the Ukraine on a
12 platform of ending the conflict and tackling corruption. He was a newcomer to politics
13 and immediately sought to establish a relationship with Ukraine's most powerful patron:
14 the United States.

15 The questions presented by this impeachment inquiry are whether President
16 Trump sought to exploit that ally's vulnerability and invite Ukraine's interference in our
17 elections; whether President Trump sought to condition official acts, such as a White
18 House meeting or U.S. military assistance, on Ukraine's willingness to assist with two
19 political investigations that would help his reelection campaign; and, if President Trump
20 did either, whether such an abuse of his power is compatible with the office of the
21 Presidency.

22 The matter is as simple and as terrible as that. Our answer to these questions
23 will affect not only the future of this Presidency but the future of the Presidency itself and
24 what kind of conduct or misconduct the American people may come to expect from their
25 Commander in Chief.

1 There are few actions as consequential as the impeachment of a President.
2 While the Founders did not intend that impeachment be employed for mere differences
3 over policy, they also made impeachment a constitutional process that the Congress must
4 utilize as necessary.

5 The facts in the present inquiry are not seriously contested. Beginning in January
6 of this year, the President's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, pressed Ukrainian
7 authorities to investigate Burisma, the country's largest natural gas producer, and the
8 Bidens, since Vice President Joe Biden was seen as a strong potential challenger to
9 Trump.

10 Giuliani also promoted a debunked conspiracy that it was Ukraine, not Russia, that
11 hacked the 2016 U.S. election. The Nation's intelligence agencies have stated
12 unequivocally that it was Russia, not Ukraine, that interfered in our election, but Giuliani
13 believed this conspiracy theory, referred to as CrowdStrike, shorthand for the company
14 that discovered the Russian hack, would aid his client's reelection.

15 Giuliani also conducted a smear campaign against the U.S. Ambassador to
16 Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch. On April 29, a senior State Department official told her
17 that, although she had done nothing wrong, President Trump had lost confidence in her.
18 With the sidelining of Yovanovitch, the stage was set for the establishment of an irregular
19 channel in which Giuliani and later others, including Gordon Sondland, an influential
20 donor to the President's inauguration, now serving as Ambassador to the European
21 Union, could advance the President's personal and political interests.

22 Yovanovitch's replacement in Kyiv, Ambassador Bill Taylor, is a West Point
23 graduate and a Vietnam veteran. As he began to better understand the scheme through
24 the summer of 2019, he pushed back, informing Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent and
25 others about a plan to condition U.S. Government actions and funding on the

1 performance of political favors by the Ukrainian Government, favors intended for
2 President Trump that would undermine our security and our elections.

3 Several key events in this scheme took place in the month of July. On July 10th,
4 Ambassador Sondland informed a group of U.S. and Ukrainian officials meeting at the
5 White House that, according to Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney, a White House meeting
6 desperately sought by the Ukrainian President with Trump would happen only if Ukraine
7 undertook an investigation into the energy sector, which was understood to mean
8 Burisma and specifically the Bidens. National Security Advisor Bolton abruptly ended
9 the meeting and said afterwards that he would not be, quote, part of whatever drug deal
10 Sondland and Mulvaney are cooking up on this, end quote.

11 A week later on July 18th, a representative of the Office of Management and
12 Budget, the White House agency that oversees Federal spending, announced on a video
13 conference that Mulvaney, at the direction of the President, was freezing nearly
14 \$400 million in security assistance authorized and appropriated by Congress and which
15 the entirety of the U.S. national security establishment supported.

16 One week after that, Donald Trump would have the now-infamous July 25th
17 phone call with Ukrainian President Zelensky. During that call, Trump complained that
18 the U.S. relationship with Ukraine had not been reciprocal. Later, Zelensky thanks
19 Trump for his support in the area of defense and says that Ukraine is ready to purchase
20 more Javelins, an antitank weapon that was among the most important deterrents of
21 further Russian military action. Trump's immediate response: I would like to you do
22 us a favor, though. Trump then requested that Zelensky investigate the discredited
23 2016 CrowdStrike conspiracy theory and, even more ominously, look into the Bidens.

24 Neither of these investigations was in the U.S. national interest, and neither was
25 part of the official preparatory material for the call. Both, however, were in Donald

1 Trump's personal interest and in the interest of his 2020 reelection campaign, and the
2 Ukrainian President knew about both in advance because Sondland and others had been
3 pressing Ukraine for weeks about investigations into the 2016 election, Burisma, and the
4 Bidens.

5 After the call, multiple individuals were concerned enough to report it to the
6 National Security Council's top lawyer. The White House would then take the
7 extraordinary step of moving the call record to a highly classified server exclusively
8 reserved for the most sensitive intelligence matters. In the weeks that followed,
9 Ambassador Taylor learned new facts about a scheme that even Sondland would describe
10 as becoming more insidious.

11 Taylor texted Sondland, quote: Are we now saying that security assistance and
12 White House meeting are conditioned on investigations?

13 As summer turned to fall, it kept getting more insidious, Mr. Sondland testified.
14 Mr. Taylor, who took notes of his conversations, said the Ambassador told him on a
15 September 1st phone call that everything was dependent on the public announcement of
16 investigations, including security assistance. President Trump wanted Mr. Zelensky in a
17 public box.

18 "President Trump is a businessman," Sondland said later. "When a businessman
19 is about to sign a check to someone who owes him something, the businessman asks that
20 person to pay up before signing the check."

21 In a sworn declaration after Taylor's testimony, Sondland would admit to telling
22 Ukrainians at a September 1st meeting in Warsaw, quote: The resumption of U.S. aid
23 would likely not occur until Ukraine provided the public anticorruption statement that we
24 have been discussing for many weeks.

25 The President's chief of staff confirmed Trump's efforts to coerce Ukraine by

1 withholding aid. When Mick Mulvaney was asked publicly about it, his answer was
2 breathtaking. "We do that all the time with foreign policy," he said. "I have news for
3 everybody: get over it. There is going to be political influence in foreign policy. That is
4 going to happen." The video of that confession is plain for all to see.

5 Some have argued in the President's defense that the aid was ultimately released.
6 And that is true, but only after Congress began an investigation, only after the President's
7 lawyers learned of a whistleblower complaint, and only after Members of Congress began
8 asking uncomfortable questions about quid pro quos. A scheme to condition official
9 acts or taxpayer funding to obtain a personal political benefit does not become less
10 odious because it is discovered before it is fully consummated. In fact, the security
11 assistance had been delayed so long, it would take another act of Congress to ensure that
12 it could still go out. And that Oval Office meeting that Zelensky desperately sought, it
13 still hasn't happened.

14 Although we have learned a great deal about these events in the last several
15 weeks, there are still missing pieces. The President has instructed the State Department
16 and other agencies to ignore congressional subpoenas for documents. He has
17 instructed witnesses to defy subpoenas and refuse to appear, and he has suggested that
18 those who do expose wrongdoing should be treated like traitors and spies.

19 These actions will force Congress to consider, as it did with President Nixon,
20 whether Trump's obstruction of the constitutional duties of Congress constitute
21 additional grounds for impeachment. If the President can simply refuse all oversight,
22 particular in the context of an impeachment proceeding, the balance of power between
23 our two branches of government will be irrevocably altered. That is not what the
24 Founders intended, and the prospects for further corruption and abuse of power in this
25 administration or any other will be exponentially increased.

1 This is what we believe the testimony will show, both as to the President's
2 conduct and as to his obstruction of Congress. The issue that we confront is the one
3 posed by the President's acting chief of staff when he challenged Americans to get over it.

4 If we find that the President of the United States abused his power and invited
5 foreign interference in our elections or if he sought to condition, coerce, extort, or bribe
6 an ally into conducting investigations to aid his reelection campaign and did so by
7 withholding official acts, a White House meeting, or hundreds of millions of dollars of
8 needed military aid, must we simply get over it? Is this what Americans should now
9 expect from their President? If this is not impeachable conduct, what is? Does the
10 oath of office itself requiring that our laws be faithfully executed, that our President
11 defend the Constitution that balances the powers of its branches, setting ambition
12 against ambition so we become no monarchy, still have meaning? These are the
13 questions we must ask and answer, without rancor, if we can, without delay regardless,
14 and without party favor, and without prejudice if we are true to our responsibilities.

15 Benjamin Franklin was asked what kind of a country America was to become. "A
16 republic," he answered, "if you can keep it." The fundamental issue raised by the
17 impeachment inquiry into Donald J Trump is: Can we keep it?

18 I now recognize Ranking Member Nunes for any remarks he may wish to make.

19 [The statement of The Chairman follows:]

20

21 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1 Mr. Nunes. Thank you, Chairman.

2 In a July open hearing of this committee following publication of the Mueller
3 report, the Democrats engaged in a last-ditch effort to convince the American people that
4 President Trump is a Russian agent. That hearing was the pitiful finale of a 3-year-long
5 operation by the Democrats, a corrupt media, and partisan bureaucrats to overturn the
6 results of the 2016 election.

7 After the spectacular implosion of their Russia hoax on July 24th, in which they
8 spent years denouncing any Republican who ever shook hands with a Russian, on
9 July 25th, they turned on a dime and now claim the real malfeasance is Republicans'
10 dealings with Ukraine. In the blink of an eye, we're asked to simply forget about
11 Democrats on this committee falsely claiming they had more than circumstantial
12 evidence of collusion between President Trump and Russians. We should forget about
13 them reading fabrications of Trump/Russia collusion from the Steele dossier into the
14 Congressional Record. We should also forget about them trying to obtain nude pictures
15 of Trump from Russian pranksters who pretended to be Ukrainian officials. We should
16 forget about them leaking a false story to CNN while he was still testifying to our
17 committee, claiming that Donald Trump, Jr., was colluding with Wikileaks, and forget
18 about countless other deceptions, large and small, that make them the last people on
19 Earth with the credibility to hurl more preposterous accusations at their political
20 opponents.

21 And yet now here we are. We are supposed to take these people at face value
22 when they trot out a new batch of allegations, but anyone familiar with the Democrat's
23 scorched-earth war against President Trump would not be surprised to see all the typical
24 signs that this is a carefully orchestrated media smear campaign.

25 For example, after vowing publicly that impeachment requires bipartisan support,

1 Democrats are pushing impeachment forward without the backing of a single Republican.
2 The witnesses deemed suitable for television by the Democrats were put through a
3 closed-door audition process in a cult-like atmosphere in the basement of the Capitol
4 where Democrats conducted secret depositions, released a flood of misleading and
5 one-sided leaks, and, later, selectively released transcripts in a highly staged manner.

6 Violating their own guidelines, Democrats repeatedly redacted from the
7 transcripts the name of Alexandra Chalupa, a contractor for the
8 Democrat National Committee who worked with Ukrainian officials to collect dirt on the
9 Trump campaign which she provided to the DNC and the Hillary Clinton campaign.

10 The Democrats rejected most of the Republicans' witness requests, resulting in a
11 horrifically one-sided process where the crucial witnesses are denied a platform if their
12 testimony does not support the Democrats' absurd accusations. Notably, they are
13 trying to impeach the President for inquiring about Hunter Biden's activities, yet they
14 refuse our request to hear from Biden himself.

15 The whistleblower was acknowledged to have a bias against President Trump, and
16 his attorney touted a coup against the President and called for his impeachment just
17 weeks after the election.

18 At a prior hearing, Democrats on this committee read out a purely fictitious
19 rendition of the President's phone call with President Zelensky. They clearly found the
20 real conversation to be insufficient for their impeachment narrative. So they just made
21 up a new one. And most egregiously, the staff of the Democrats on this committee had
22 direct discussions with the whistleblower before his or her complaint was submitted to
23 the inspector general.

24 Republicans can't get a full account of these contacts because Democrats broke
25 their promise to have the whistleblower testify to this committee. Democrat members

1 hid these contacts from Republicans and then lied about them to the American people on
2 national television.

3 I have noted before the Democrats have a long habit of accusing Republicans of
4 offenses they themselves are committing. Let's recall: For years, they accused the
5 Trump campaign of colluding with Russia when they themselves were colluding with
6 Russia by funding and spreading the Steele dossier, which relied on Russian sources, and
7 now they accuse President Trump of malfeasance in Ukraine when they themselves are
8 culpable. The Democrats cooperated in Ukrainian election meddling, and they defend
9 Hunter Biden's securing of a lavishly paid position with a corrupt Ukrainian company, all
10 while his father served as Vice President.

11 Despite this hypocrisy, the Democrats are advancing their impeachment sham, but
12 we should not hold any hearings at all until we get answers to three crucial questions the
13 Democrats are determined to avoid asking. First, what is the full extent of the
14 Democrats' prior coordination with the whistleblower, and who else did the
15 whistleblower coordinate this effort with? Second, what is the full extent of Ukraine's
16 election meddling against the Trump campaign? And, third, why did Burisma hire
17 Hunter Biden, and what did he do for them, and did his position affect any U.S. actions
18 under the Obama administration?

19 These questions will remain outstanding because Republicans were denied their
20 right to call witnesses that know these answers.

21 What we will witness today is a televised theatrical performance staged by the
22 Democrats. Ambassador Taylor and Mr. Kent, I would like to welcome you here. I
23 would like to congratulate you for passing the Democrats' star chamber auditions held for
24 the last weeks in the basement of the Capitol. It seems you agreed witting or
25 unwittingly to participate in a drama, but the main performance, the Russia hoax, has

1 ended and you've been cast in the low-rent Ukrainian sequel.

2 I will conclude by noting the immense damage the politicized bureaucracy has
3 done to Americans' faith in government. Though executive branches employees are
4 charged with implementing the policies set by our President, who is elected and
5 responsible to the American people, elements of the Civil Service have decided that they,
6 not the President, are really in charge.

7 Thus, as we will learn in these hearings, after expressing skepticism of foreign aid
8 and concern about foreign corruption on the campaign trail, President Trump outraged
9 the bureaucracy about acting skeptically about foreign aid and expressing concerns about
10 foreign corruption. Officials alarm at the President's actions was typically based on
11 secondhand, thirdhand, and even fourth-hand rumors and innuendo. They believed it
12 was an outrage for the President to fire an ambassador, even though the President has
13 full authority to retain or remove diplomats for any reason at any time. Officials showed
14 a surprising lack of interest in the indications of Ukrainian election meddling that deeply
15 concerned the President at whose pleasure they serve.

16 Despite all their dissatisfaction with President Trump's Ukraine policy, the
17 President approved the supply of weapons to Ukraine, unlike the previous administration,
18 which provided blankets as defense against invading Russians.

19 By undermining the President, who they are supposed to be serving, the elements
20 of the FBI or the Department of Justice and now the State Department have lost the
21 confidence of millions of Americans who believe that their vote should count for
22 something. It will take years, if not decades, to restore faith in these institutions. This
23 spectacle is doing great damage to our country. It's nothing more than an impeachment
24 process in search of a crime.

25 With that, I yield back.

1 [The statement of Mr. Nunes follows:]

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3 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1 The Chairman. Today, we are joined by Ambassador William Taylor and Deputy
2 Assistant Secretary of State George Kent, both of whom are appearing under subpoena.
3 Ambassador William Taylor has served our country for over half a century. He attended
4 U.S. Military Academy at West Point, graduating in the top 1 percent of his class before
5 serving as an infantry officer in the U.S. Army for 6 years, including with the 101st
6 Airborne Division during the Vietnam War.

7 Ambassador Taylor led a rifle platoon in Vietnam and was awarded the Bronze
8 Star Medal and the Air Medal for Valor. Following his military service, he worked at the
9 Department of Energy, as a staffer in the U.S. Senate, as an advisor as well to U.S.
10 Ambassador to NATO.

11 In the 1990s, Ambassador Taylor coordinated U.S. assistance to Eastern Europe
12 and the Soviet Union and later served in Afghanistan, Iraq, and worked on the Middle
13 East peace process.

14 In 2006, President Bush nominated him as Ambassador to Ukraine where he
15 served until 2009 and then was appointed by President Barack Obama to be Special
16 Coordinator For Middle East Transitions.

17 Ambassador Taylor was serving as the executive vice president of the nonpartisan
18 U.S. Institute for Peace when, in June 2019, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo asked him to
19 return to lead the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv as charge d'affaires.

20 Mr. George Kent currently serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Department
21 of State's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, overseeing policy towards Ukraine
22 and other countries. He has served twice in Ukraine from 2004 to 2007. He was the
23 deputy political counsel including during the Orange Revolution. And from 2015 to
24 2018, he served as deputy chief of mission in Kyiv.

25 Since joining the Foreign Service in 1992, Mr. Kent has served in Poland,

1 Uzbekistan, and Thailand. He also served as the senior anticorruption coordinator and
2 oversaw programs to strengthen the rule of law.

3 All witness depositions as part of this inquiry were unclassified in nature, and all
4 open hearings will also be at the unclassified level. Any information that may touch on
5 classified information will be addressed separately. Congress will not tolerate any
6 reprisal, threat of reprisal, or attempt to retaliate against any U.S. Government official for
7 testifying before Congress including you or any of your colleagues.

8 If you would both rise and raise your right hand, I will begin by swearing you in.

9 Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the
10 whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

11 Let the record show that the witnesses answered in the affirmative. Thank you,
12 and please be seated.

13 Ms. Stefanik. Mr. Chairman, before we hear from the witnesses, I have a
14 parliamentary inquiry.

15 The Chairman. The gentlewoman will state her parliamentary inquiry.

16 Ms. Stefanik. Mr. Chairman, when can we anticipate a response to our
17 November 9th letter requesting certain individual witnesses to be called?

18 The Chairman. The gentlewoman should be aware that three of the witnesses
19 the minority has requested are scheduled for next week.

20 Ms. Stefanik. Those were your witnesses, Mr. Chairman. What about the
21 additional six witnesses?

22 The Chairman. The gentlewoman may inquire about additional witnesses or
23 make a request for a vote on additional witnesses following the witness testimony.

24 Ms. Stefanik. And, Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order under H.Res. 660.

25 The Chairman. The gentlewoman will state her point of order.

1 Ms. Stefanik. Mr. Chairman, will you be prohibiting witnesses from answering
2 members' questions as you have in the closed-door depositions?

3 The Chairman. As the gentlewoman should know if she was present for the
4 depositions --

5 Ms. Stefanik. Which I was, Mr. Chairman.

6 The Chairman. For some of them, yes.

7 Ms. Stefanik. Correct.

8 The Chairman. The only times I prevented witnesses from answering questions,
9 along with their counsel, was when it was apparent that members were seeking to out
10 the whistleblower. We will do everything necessary to protect the whistleblower's
11 identity, and I am disturbed to hear members of the committee, who have in the past
12 voiced strong support for whistleblower protections, seek to undermine those
13 protections by outing the whistleblower.

14 Ms. Stefanik. Mr. Chairman, only one member and their staff --

15 The Chairman. The gentlewoman --

16 Ms. Stefanik. -- has direct knowledge of the identity of the whistleblower.

17 The Chairman. The gentlewoman will suspend.

18 You asked a parliamentary inquiry, and I am responding -- or a point of order, and
19 I am responding.

20 We will not permit the outing of the whistleblower, and questions along those
21 lines, counsel will inform their clients not to respond to. If necessary, I will intervene.
22 Otherwise, I want members to feel free to ask any questions they like.

23 Mr. Conaway. Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a motion --

24 The Chairman. The gentleman is not recognized.

25 I am responding to the gentlewoman's point of order.

1 Otherwise, members will have every opportunity to ask any questions they like.

2 Mr. Conaway, do you seek recognition and for what purpose?

3 Mr. Conaway. I seek recognition to make a motion that we actually subpoena
4 the whistleblower for a closed-door secret deposition so that the questions that should
5 be appropriately asked of the whistleblower by our side and your side may be asked, and
6 I would prefer that, rather than it be your single decision, that the committee speak to
7 that issue rather than just the chairman, and I move that we --

8 The Chairman. I thank the gentleman.

9 It won't be my single decision.

10 Mr. Conaway. -- subpoena the whistleblower.

11 The Chairman. It won't be my single decision. We will entertain a motion to
12 subpoena any witness but after the witnesses have had an opportunity to testify. That
13 motion will be in order, but that motion will be suspended until after the witnesses
14 testify.

15 Mr. Jordan. Mr. Chairman, do you anticipate when we would vote on that?

16 The Chairman. For what purpose does Mr. Jordan seek recognition?

17 Mr. Jordan. Just to ask a clarifying questioning. Do you anticipate when we
18 might vote on the ability to have the whistleblower in front of us, something you -- of the
19 435 Members of the Congress, you are the only Member who knows who that individual
20 is, and your staff is the only staff of any Member of Congress who has had a chance to
21 talk with that individual. We would like that opportunity. When might that happen in
22 this proceeding today?

23 The Chairman. First, as the gentleman knows, that is a false statement. I do
24 not know the identity of the whistleblower, and I am determined to make sure that
25 identity is protected.

1 But as I said to Mr. Conaway, you have an opportunity after the witnesses testify
2 to make a motion to subpoena any witness and compel a vote.

3 With that, I now recognize the witnesses. Before I do, I want to just emphasize
4 the microphones are sensitive, so please speak directly into them. Without objection,
5 your written statements will be made part of the record.

6 With that, Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent, you are recognized for your opening
7 statement.

8 Ambassador Taylor, you are recognized immediately thereafter for your opening
9 statement.

1

2 **STATEMENTS OF GEORGE KENT, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR**
3 **EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS; AND THE HONORABLE WILLIAM B. TAYLOR,**
4 **CHARGE D’AFFAIRES AD INTERIM, KYIV, UKRAINE, DEPARTMENT OF STATE.**

5

6 **STATEMENT OF GEORGE KENT**

7

8 Mr. Kent. Good morning.

9 My name is George Kent, and I am the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for
10 Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. I have served proudly as a nonpartisan career Foreign
11 Service officer for more than 27 years under five Presidents, three Republican and two
12 Democrat.

13 As I mentioned in my opening comments last month in the closed-door
14 deposition, I represent the third generation of my family to have chosen a career in public
15 service and sworn the oath of office that all U.S. public servants do in defense of our
16 Constitution.

17 Indeed, there has been a George Kent sworn to defend the Constitution
18 continuously for nearly 60 years, ever since my father reported to Annapolis for his Plebe
19 Summer. After graduating first in his Naval Academy class in 1965, the year best known
20 for his Heisman-winning classmate Roger Staubach, my father served a full honorable
21 30 years, including as a captain of a nuclear ballistic missile submarine during the height
22 of the Cold War.

23 Five great unless served honorably in the Navy and the Army in World War II. In
24 particular, Tom Taggart was stationed in the Philippines at the time of the attack on Pearl
25 Harbor. He survived the brutal Bataan Death March and 3 and a half years in a Japanese

1 prisoner-of-war camp unbroken. He returned to service as an Air Force judge advocate,
2 upholding the rule of law until his death in 1965.

3 Today, I appear before you once again under subpoena as a fact witness, ready to
4 answer all of your questions about the events and developments examined in this inquiry
5 to the best of my ability and recollection, subject to the limits placed on me by the law
6 and this process.

7 I will begin with some opening comments on the key principles at the heart of
8 what brings me before you today, to wit, principled public service in pursuit of our
9 enduring national interests and the place of Ukraine in our national and security interests.

10 For the past 5 years, we have focused our united efforts across the Atlantic to
11 support Ukraine in its fight for the cause of freedom and the rebirth of a country free
12 from Russian dominion and the warped legacy of Soviet institutions and post-Soviet
13 behavior.

14 As I stated in my closed-door deposition last month, you don't step into the public
15 arena of international diplomacy in active pursuit of principled U.S. interests without
16 expecting vigorous pushback including personal attacks. Such attacks came from the
17 Russians, their proxies, and corrupt Ukrainians. That tells me our efforts were hitting
18 their mark.

19 It was unexpected and most unfortunate, however, to watch some Americans,
20 including those who allied themselves with corrupt Ukrainians in pursuit of private
21 agendas, launch attacks on dedicated public servants advancing U.S. interests in Ukraine.
22 In my opinion, those attacks undermined U.S. and Ukrainian national interests and
23 damaged our critical bilateral relationship.

24 The United States has very clear national interests at stake in Ukraine. Ukraine's
25 success is very much in our national interest in the way we have defined our national

1 interests broadly in Europe for the past 75 years. After World War II, U.S. leadership
2 furthered farsighted policies like the Marshall Plan in the creation of a rules-based
3 international order. Protected by the collective security provided by NATO, Western
4 Europe recovered and thrived after the carnage of World War II, notwithstanding the
5 shadow of the Iron Curtain. Europe's security and prosperity contributed to our security
6 and prosperity. Support of Ukraine's success also fits squarely into our strategy for
7 Central and Eastern Europe since the fall of the wall 30 years ago this past week. A
8 Europe truly whole, free, and at peace, our strategic aim for the entirety of my Foreign
9 Service career is not possible without a Ukraine whole, free, and at peace, including
10 Crimea and the Donbas, territories currently occupied by Russian, represented by the red
11 in the map.

12 Looking forward, the Trump administration's national security strategy makes
13 clear the global strategic challenge now before us, great power competition with rivals
14 such as Russia and China, and the need to compete for positive influence without taking
15 countries for granted. In that sense, Ukraine has been on the front lines not just of
16 Russia's conventional war in Eastern Europe since 2014 and its broader campaign of
17 malign influence but of the greater geopolitical challenges now facing the United States.

18 Ukraine's popular revolution of dignity in 2014 forced a corrupt pro-Russian
19 leadership to flee to Moscow. After that, Russia invaded Ukraine, occupying 7 percent
20 of its territory, roughly equivalent to the size of Texas for the United States. At that
21 time, Ukraine's state institutions were on the verge of collapse.

22 Ukrainian civil society answered the challenge. They formed volunteer
23 battalions of citizens including technology professionals and medics. They
24 crowdsourced funding for their own weapons, body armor, and supplies. They were the
25 21st century Ukrainian equivalent of our own minutemen of 1776, buying time for a

1 regular Army to reconstitute. Since then, more than 13,000 Ukrainians have died on
2 Ukrainian soil, defending their territorial integrity and sovereignty from Russia aggression.
3 America's support in Ukraine's own de facto war of independence has been critical in this
4 regard.

5 By analogy, the American Colonies may not have prevailed against the British
6 imperial might without the help of transatlantic friends after 1776. In an echo of
7 Lafayette's organized assistance to General George Washington's Army and Admiral John
8 Paul Jones' Navy, Congress has generously appropriated over \$1.5 billion over the past 5
9 years in desperately needed train-and-equip security assistance to Ukraine. These funds
10 increase Ukraine's strength and ability to fight Russian aggression. Ultimately, Ukraine
11 is on a path to become a full security partner of the United States within NATO.

12 Similar to von Steuben training colonials at Valley Forge, U.S. and NATO allied
13 trainers developed the skills of Ukrainian units at Yavoriv near the Polish border and
14 elsewhere. They help rewrite military education for Ukraine's next generation as von
15 Steuben did for America's first.

16 In supporting Ukraine's brave resistance to Russian aggression, we have a
17 front-row seat to the Russian way of war in the 21st century, gaining priceless insights
18 that contribute to our own security.

19 This year, in 2019, Ukrainian citizens passed the political torch to a new
20 generation, one that came of age not in the final years of the Soviet Union but in an
21 independent Ukraine. Presidential and parliamentary elections swept out much of
22 Ukraine's previous governing elite and seated 41-year-old President Zelensky a Cabinet
23 with an average age of 39, and a Parliament with the average age of 41.

24 At the heart of that change mandate 5 years after Ukraine's revolution of dignity is
25 a thirst for justice because there cannot be dignity without justice. Without a reformed

1 judicial sector that delivers justice with integrity for all, Ukrainian society will remain
2 unsettled. Foreign investors, including American investors, will not bring the great
3 investment needed to ensure that Ukraine's long-term prosperity is secured.

4 This is why the principled promotion of the rule of law and institutional integrity is
5 so necessary to our strategy for a successful Ukraine. It is also true for other former
6 captive nations still recovering from the ashes of Soviet and Communist misrule. It is
7 why acting inconsistently with the core principle of the rule of law comes at great peril.

8 I am grateful to all of the Members of Congress and staffers, including many of
9 you sitting here today, who have traveled to Ukraine over the past 5 years and
10 appropriated billions of dollars of assistance in support of our primary policy goals.
11 Those funds increase Ukraine's ability to fight Russian aggression in the defense, energy,
12 cyber, and information spheres. And they also empower state institutions and civil
13 society to undertake systemic reforms and tackle corruption.

14 I believe all of us can be proud of our efforts in Ukraine over the past 5 years, even
15 though much remains to be done. And by "all of us," I mean those of us in the
16 legislative and the executive branches, in both parties, the interagency community
17 working out of our Embassy in Kyiv, with Ukrainians in government, the military, and civil
18 society, and our transatlantic allies and partners. We cannot allow our resolve to waiver
19 since too much is at stake, not just for Ukraine and the future of European security but
20 for the national interests of the United States broadly defined.

21 My prior deposition covered a lot of ground over 10 hours. Here are the main 10
22 themes from my testimony.

23 I outlined my experience with longstanding U.S. interests in supporting
24 anticorruption efforts in Ukraine. This work gave me a front row seat to problematic
25 activities by successive prosecutors general in Ukraine. For many of the issues this

1 committee is investigating, my knowledge and understanding is sometimes firsthand and
2 sometimes comes from others involved in specific conversations and meetings. This is
3 no different than how anyone learns and carries out his or her job responsibilities. I
4 have been and remain willing to share my factual observations with the committee and
5 will make clear when those are based on personal knowledge or from information
6 gleaned from others.

7 U.S. efforts to counter corruption in Ukraine focus on building institutional
8 capacity so that the Ukrainian Government has the ability to go after corruption and
9 effectively investigate, prosecute, and judge alleged criminal activities using appropriate
10 institutional mechanisms, that is, to create and follow the rule of law. That means that
11 if there are criminal nexuses for activity in the United States, U.S. law enforcement should
12 pursue the case. If we think there has been a criminal act overseas that violates U.S.
13 law, we have the institutional mechanisms to address that. It could be through the
14 Justice Department and FBI agents assigned overseas or through treaty mechanisms, such
15 as the mutual legal assistance treaty.

16 As a general principle, I do not believe the United States should ask other
17 countries to engage in selective politically associated investigations or prosecutions
18 against opponents of those in power because such selective actions undermine the rule
19 of law, regardless of the country.

20 The pervasive and longstanding problem of corruption in Ukraine included
21 exposure to a situation involving the energy company Burisma. The primary concern of
22 the U.S. Government since 2014 was Burisma's owner, Mykola Zlochevsky, whose frozen
23 assets abroad we had attempted to recover on Ukraine's behalf. In early 2015, I raised
24 questions with the deputy prosecutor general about why the investigation of
25 Mr. Zlochevsky had been terminated based on our belief that prosecutors had accepted

1 bribes to close the case.

2 Later, I became aware that Hunter Biden was on the board of Burisma. Soon
3 after that, in a briefing call with the national security staff of the Office of the Vice
4 President in February of 2015, I raised my concern that Hunter Biden's status as a board
5 member could create the perception of a conflict of interest. Let me be clear, however:
6 I did not witness any effort by any U.S. official to shield Burisma from scrutiny. In fact, I
7 and other U.S. officials consistently advocated reinstating a scuttled investigation of
8 Zlochevsky, Burisma's founder, as well as holding the corrupt prosecutors who closed the
9 case to account.

10 Over the course of 2018 and 2019, I became increasingly aware of an effort by
11 Rudy Giuliani and others, including his associates Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, to run a
12 campaign to smear Ambassador Yovanovitch and other officials at the U.S. Embassy in
13 Kyiv. The chief agitators on the Ukrainian side of this effort were some of those same
14 corrupt former prosecutors I had encountered, particularly Yuriy Lutsenko and Viktor
15 Shokin. They were now peddling false information in order to extract revenge against
16 those who had exposed their misconduct, including U.S. diplomats, Ukrainian
17 anticorruption officials, and reform-minded civil society groups in Ukraine.

18 During the late spring and summer of 2019, I became alarmed as those efforts
19 bore fruit. They led to the ouster of Ambassador Yovanovitch and hampered U.S. efforts
20 to establish rapport with the new Zelensky administration in Ukraine. In mid-August, it
21 became clear to me that Giuliani's efforts to gin up politically motivated investigations
22 were now infecting U.S. engagement with Ukraine, leveraging President Zelensky's desire
23 for a White House meeting.

24 There are and always have been conditions placed on our sovereign loan
25 guarantees for Ukraine. Conditions include anticorruption reforms, as well as meeting

1 larger stability goals and social safety nets. The International Monetary Fund does the
2 same thing. Congress and the executive branch work together to put conditionality on
3 some security assistance in the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative.

4 Regarding my testimony today, I will do my best to answer your questions,
5 questions that will involve issues, conversations, and documents that span a number of
6 years. I may be limited by three considerations.

7 First, the State Department has collected all materials in response to the
8 September 27th subpoena that may contain facts relevant to my testimony. I have no
9 such documents or materials with me today. I will thus do my best to answer as
10 accurately, completely, and truthfully as I can to the best of my recollection.

11 Second, as this committee knows from the deposition testimony, throughout this
12 process there have been concerns that questions may be asked about classified
13 information. We have asked the State Department for guidance about classification
14 concerns related to the public release of my deposition, and the State Department has
15 declined to provide any. So, if I'm asked a question today that I believe may implicate
16 classified information, I will respectfully decline to answer in this public forum.

17 Third, there may be questions focusing on the identity of people in the
18 Intelligence Community. These questions were redacted from my deposition's
19 transcript. If such a question arises today, I will follow my counsel's advice and decline
20 to answer.

21 I would like to conclude my opening remarks with an observation about some of
22 my fellow public servants who have come under personal attacks: Ambassador
23 Yovanovitch, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, and Dr. Hill, at least one of whom is going
24 appear before this body in the coming days. Masha, Alex, and Fiona were born abroad
25 before their families or they themselves personally chose to immigrate to the United

1 States. They all made the professional choice to serve the United States as public
2 officials, helping shape our national security policy towards Russia in particular. And we
3 and our national security are the better for it.

4 In this sense, they are the 21st century heirs of two giants of 20th century national
5 security policy who also were born abroad, my former professor Zbigniew Brzezinski and
6 his fellow immigrant, Henry Kissinger. Like the Brzezinskis and Kissingers, the
7 Yovanovitches and Vindmans fled Nazi and Communist oppression to contribute to a
8 stronger, more secure America.

9 That honorable tradition of transatlantic ties goes back to the very founding of our
10 Republic. Our 18th century independence would not have been secured without the
11 choice of European officers, the French-born Lafayette and Rochambeau, the
12 German-born von Steuben, and the Poles Pulaski and Kosciuszko to come to the new world
13 and fight for our cause of freedom and the birth of a new country, free from imperial
14 dominion. It is my privilege to sit next to my former boss, Ambassador Taylor, today.
15 And it is my honor to serve with all of these patriotic Americans.

16 Thank you.

17 [The statement of Mr. Kent follows:]

18

19 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1 The Chairman. Thank you.

2 Ambassador Taylor.

3

4 **STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE WILLIAM B. TAYLOR**

5

6 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Chairman, I'm appearing today at the committee's
7 request to provide my perspective on the events that are the subject of the committee's
8 inquiry. I want to emphasize at the outset that while I am aware that the committee
9 has requested my testimony as part of impeachment proceedings, I am not here to take
10 one side or the other or to advocate for any particular outcome of these proceedings.
11 My sole purpose is to provide facts as I know them about the incidents in question, as
12 well as my views about the strategic importance of Ukraine to the United States.

13 By way of background, it has been a privilege for me to serve our country and the
14 American people for more than 50 years, starting as a cadet at West Point, as you have
15 mentioned, Mr. Chairman; then as an infantry officer for six years including with the
16 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam; then at the Department of Energy; then as a member
17 of a Senate staff; then at NATO; then with the State Department here and abroad in
18 Afghanistan, Iraq, Jerusalem, and Ukraine.

19 I retired from the State Department in 2009 to join the United States Institute of
20 Peace. I am neither a career member of the Foreign Service nor of the Civil Service. I
21 am nonpartisan and have been appointed to my positions by every President from
22 President Reagan to President Trump.

23 Let me emphasize my main points. First, Ukraine is a strategic partner of the
24 United States, important for the security of our country as well as Europe. Ukraine is on
25 the front line in the conflict with a newly aggressive Russia.

1 Second, even as we sit here today, the Russians are attacking Ukrainian soldiers in
2 their own country and have been for the last 4 years. I saw this on the front line last
3 week. The day I was there, a Ukrainian soldier was killed and four were wounded.

4 Third, the security assistance we provide is crucial to Ukraine's defense and to the
5 protection of the soldiers I met on the front line last week. It demonstrates to
6 Ukrainians and Russians that we are Ukraine's reliable strategic partner. It is clearly in
7 our national interest to deter further Russian aggression.

8 And, finally, as the committee is aware, I wrote that withholding security
9 assistance in exchange for help with a domestic political campaign in the United States
10 would be crazy. I believe that then, and I believe it now. Let me tell you why.

11 On May 28th of this year, I met with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo who asked
12 me to rejoin the State Department and return to Kyiv to lead our embassy in Ukraine. It
13 was and is a critical time for U.S./Ukraine relations. I had served as Ambassador to
14 Ukraine from 2006 to 2009, having been nominated by George W. Bush, and in the
15 intervening 10 years had stayed engaged with Ukraine. Across the responsibilities I have
16 had in public service, Ukraine is the highlight. And so Secretary Pompeo's offer to return
17 as chief of mission was compelling.

18 Since I left Ukraine in 2009, the country had continued to turn toward the West,
19 but in 2013, Vladimir Putin was so threatened by the prospect of Ukraine joining the
20 European Union that he tried to bribe the Ukrainian President. This triggered mass
21 protests in the winter of 2013 that drove that President to flee to Russia in February of
22 2014 but not before his forces killed a hundred Ukrainian protestors in central Kyiv.

23 Days later, Mr. Putin invaded Crimea, holding a sham referendum at the point of
24 Russian Army rifles. The Russians absurdly claimed that 97 percent voted to join Russia.
25 In early April, Putin sent his Army and security forces into southeastern Ukraine to

1 generate illegal armed formations and puppet governments in what we know at Donbas.
2 You can see this on the map in the right-hand portion in the eastern portion of the
3 country. 14,000 Ukrainians have died in the war in Donbas, and more die each week.

4 In July 2014, these Russian-led forces in Donbas shot down a civilian airliner en
5 route from Amsterdam to Malaysia, killing all 298 people on board. We, the Europeans,
6 and most of the West imposed economic sanctions and kicked the Russians out of the G8.
7 Beginning in 2014, we and NATO began to provide military assistance to Ukraine's Armed
8 Forces in the form of training, advice, military equipment, and weapons.

9 It is this security assistance that is at the heart of the controversy that we are
10 discussing today. The pro-Russian President, who was run out of Kyiv in 2014, had let
11 the Russian Armed Forces deteriorate to the point of ruin. In response to the Russian
12 invasion, the new Ukrainian authorities, with an amazing outpouring of support from
13 regular Ukrainian people, rebuilt the Army nearly from scratch, spending more than
14 5 percent of Ukrainian GDP on defense since the war started. The whole Ukrainian
15 nation fiercely responded to the Russian attack. The nation united like never before.
16 A ragtag army developed into a strong fighting force, and the United States played a vital
17 role.

18 Since 2014, you and Congress have provided over \$1.6 billion in military assistance
19 to Ukraine. The security assistance provides small unit training at an Army base near
20 Lviv in the west end of the country. It provides ambulances, night-vision devices,
21 communications equipment, counterbattery radar, Navy ships, and, finally, weapons.
22 This security assistance demonstrates our commitment to resist aggression and defend
23 freedom.

24 During the 2014 to 2016 period, I was serving outside of government and joined
25 two other former Ambassadors to Ukraine, urging the Obama administration officials at

1 the State Department, Defense Department, and other agencies to provide lethal
2 defensive weapons to Ukraine in order to deter further Russian aggression. I also
3 supported much stronger sanctions on Russia. I was pleased when the Trump
4 administration provided Javelin antitank missiles and enacted stronger sanctions. All to
5 say, I cared about Ukraine's future and the important U.S. interests there.

6 So, when Secretary Pompeo asked me to go back to Kyiv, I wanted to say yes, but
7 it was not an easy decision. The former Ambassador, Masha Yovanovitch, has been
8 treated poorly, caught in a web of political machinations, both in Kyiv and Washington.
9 I feared that those problems were still present. I consulted both my wife and the
10 respected former senior Republican official who has been a mentor. I will tell you that
11 my wife in no uncertain terms strongly opposed the idea. The mentor counseled: If
12 your country asks to you do something, you do it if you can be effective.

13 I could be effective only if the U.S. policy of strong support for Ukraine, strong
14 diplomatic support, along with robust security, economic, and technical assistance were
15 to continue, and if I had the backing of the Secretary of State to implement that policy.
16 And I worried about what I had heard concerning the role of Rudy Giuliani, who had made
17 several controversial statements about Ukraine and U.S. policy toward the country.

18 So, during my meeting with Secretary Pompeo on May 28th, I made clear to him
19 and the others present that if U.S. policy towards Ukraine changed, he would not want
20 me posted there and I could not stay. He assured me that the policy of strong support
21 for Ukraine would continue and that he would support me in defending that policy.

22 With that understanding, I agreed to go back to Kyiv. Because I was appointed
23 by the Secretary but not reconfirmed by the Senate, my official position was charge
24 d'affaires ad interim. In effect, I was the Acting Ambassador to Ukraine. I returned to
25 Kyiv on June 17th, carrying the original copy of a letter President Trump signed the day

1 after I met with the Secretary. In that letter, President Trump congratulated President
2 Zelensky on his election victory and invited him to a meeting in the Oval Office.

3 But once I arrived in Kyiv, I discovered a weird combination of encouraging,
4 confusing, and ultimately alarming circumstances.

5 First the encouraging. President Zelensky was reforming Ukraine in a hurry. He
6 appointed reformist ministers and supported long-stalled anticorruption legislation. He
7 took quick executive action, including opening Ukraine's high anticorruption court. With
8 a new parliamentary majority stemming from snap elections, President Zelensky changed
9 the Ukrainian constitution to remove absolute immunity from Rada deputies, the source
10 of raw corruption for two decades. The excitement in Kyiv was palpable. This time
11 could be different, a new Ukraine finally breaking from its corrupt post-Soviet past.

12 And yet I found the confusing and unusual arrangement for making U.S. policy
13 towards Ukraine. There appeared to be two channels of U.S. policymaking and
14 implementation, one regular and one highly irregular. As the Acting Ambassador, I had
15 authority over the regular, formal diplomatic processes, including the bulk of the U.S.
16 effort to support Ukraine against Russian invasion and to help it defeat corruption.

17 My colleague, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent, and our
18 colleagues at the National Security Council were my main points of contact in Washington
19 in this regular channel. This channel is formally responsible for formulating and
20 overseeing the implementation of U.S. foreign policy with respect to Ukraine, a policy
21 that has consistently enjoyed strong, bipartisan support both in Congress and in all
22 administrations since Ukraine's independence from Russia in 1991.

23 At the same time, however, I encountered an irregular, informal channel of U.S.
24 policymaking with respect to Ukraine. Unaccountable to Congress, a channel that
25 included then Special Envoy Kurt Volker, U.S. Ambassador to the European Union Gordon

1 Sondland, Secretary of Energy Rick Perry, White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney, and,
2 as I subsequently learned, Mr. Giuliani.

3 I was clearly in the regular channel, but I was also in the irregular one to the
4 extent that Ambassadors Volker and Sondland included me in certain conversations.
5 Although this irregular channel was well connected in Washington, it operated mostly
6 outside of official State Department channels.

7 The irregular channel began when Ambassador Volker, Ambassador Sondland,
8 Secretary Perry, and Senator Ron Johnson briefed President Trump on May 23rd upon
9 their return from President Zelensky's inauguration.

10

1 RPTR PANGBURN

2 EDTR HOFSTAD

3 [11:04 a.m.]

4 Ambassador Taylor. The delegation was as enthusiastic as I would soon become
5 about the new Ukrainian President and urged President Trump to meet with him early on
6 to cement the U.S.-Ukraine relationship. But from what I understood from the
7 participants, President Trump did not share their enthusiasm for a meeting with President
8 Zelensky.

9 When I arrived in Kyiv, the actions of both the regular and the irregular channels
10 of foreign policy appeared to serve the same goal: a strong U.S.-Ukraine partnership.
11 But it became clear to me by August that the channels had diverged in their objectives.
12 As this occurred, I became increasingly concerned.

13 In late June, both channels were trying to facilitate a visit by President Zelensky to
14 the White House for a meeting with President Trump, which President Trump had
15 promised in his congratulatory letter of May 29th. The Ukrainians were clearly eager for
16 the meeting to happen.

17 But during my subsequent communications with Ambassadors Volker and
18 Sondland, they relayed to me that the President wanted to hear from Zelensky before
19 scheduling the meeting in the Oval Office. It was not clear to me what this meant.

20 On June 27th, Ambassador Sondland told me during a phone conversation that
21 President Zelensky needed to make clear to President Trump that he, President Zelensky,
22 was not standing in the way of investigations.

23 I sensed something odd when Ambassador Sondland told me on June 28th that he
24 did not wish to include most of the regular interagency participants in a call planned with
25 President Zelensky later that day. Ambassador Sondland, Ambassador Volker, Secretary

1 Perry, and I were on this call, dialing in from different locations. However, Ambassador
2 Sondland said he wanted to make sure no one was transcribing or monitoring as they
3 added President Zelensky to the call.

4 Also, before President Zelensky joined the call, Ambassador Volker separately told
5 the U.S. participants that he, Ambassador Volker, planned to be explicit with President
6 Zelensky in a one-on-one meeting in Toronto on July 2nd. In that meeting, Ambassador
7 Volker planned to make clear what President Zelensky should do to get the White House
8 meeting. I did not understand what this meant, but Ambassador Volker said he would
9 relay that President Trump wanted to see rule of law, transparency, but also, specifically,
10 cooperation on investigations to get to the bottom of things.

11 Once President Zelensky joined the call, the conversation was focused on energy
12 policy and the war in Donbas. President Zelensky also said he looked forward to the
13 White House visit President Trump had offered in his May 29th letter.

14 By mid-July, it was becoming clear to me that the meeting President Zelensky
15 wanted was conditioned on the investigations of Burisma and alleged Ukrainian
16 interference in the 2016 U.S. elections. It was also clear that this condition was driven
17 by the irregular policy channel I had come to understand was guided by Mr. Giuliani.

18 In a regular NSC secure video conference call on July 18th, I heard a staff person
19 from the Office of Management and Budget say that there was a hold on security
20 assistance to Ukraine but could not say why. Toward the end of an otherwise normal
21 meeting, a voice on the call -- the person was off-screen -- said that she was from OMB
22 and her boss had instructed her not to approve any additional spending on security
23 assistance for Ukraine until further notice.

24 I and others sat in astonishment. The Ukrainians were fighting Russians and
25 counted on not only the training and weapons but also the assurance of U.S. support.

1 All that the OMB staff person said was that the directive had come from the President, to
2 the Chief of Staff, to OMB.

3 In an instant, I realized that one of the key pillars of our strong support for Ukraine
4 was threatened. The irregular policy channel was running contrary to the goals of
5 longstanding U.S. policy.

6 There followed a series of NSC-led interagency meetings, starting at the staff level
7 and quickly reaching the level of Cabinet Secretaries. At every meeting, the unanimous
8 conclusion was that the security assistance should be resumed, the hold lifted.

9 At one point, the Defense Department was asked to perform an analysis of the
10 effectiveness of the assistance. Within a day, the Defense Department came back with
11 the determination that the assistance was effective and should be resumed.

12 My understanding was that the Secretaries of Defense and State, the CIA Director,
13 and the National Security Advisor sought a joint meeting with the President to convince
14 him to release the hold, but such a meeting was hard to schedule, and the hold lasted
15 well into September.

16 On July 9th, in a phone call with then-Senior Director for European and Russian
17 Affairs Fiona Hill and Director of European Affairs Lieutenant Colonel Alex Vindman at the
18 NSC, they tried to assure me that they were not aware of any official change in U.S. policy
19 towards Ukraine, OMB's announcement notwithstanding. They did confirm that the
20 hold on security assistance for Ukraine came from Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney, who
21 maintained a skeptical view of Ukraine.

22 In the same July 19th phone call, they gave me an account of a July 10th meeting
23 with Ukrainian and American officials at the White House. They told me that, partway
24 through the meeting, Ambassador Sondland had connected investigations with an Oval
25 Office meeting for President Zelensky, which so irritated then-National Security Advisor

1 John Bolton that he abruptly ended the meeting, telling Dr. Hill and Lieutenant Colonel
2 Vindman that they should have nothing to do with domestic politics. He also directed
3 Dr. Hill to brief the lawyers.

4 Dr. Hill said that Ambassador Bolton referred to this deal as -- this as a drug deal
5 after the July 10th meeting. Ambassador Bolton opposed a call between President
6 Zelensky and President Trump, out of concern that it would be a disaster.

7 Needless to say, the Ukrainians in the meetings were confused. Ambassador
8 Bolton and the regular Ukraine policy decision-making channel wanted to talk about
9 security, energy, and reform. Ambassador Sondland, a participant in the irregular
10 channel, wanted to talk about the connection between a White House meeting and
11 Ukrainian investigations.

12 Also during our July 19th call, Dr. Hill informed me that Ambassador Volker had
13 met with Mr. Giuliani to discuss Ukraine. This caught me by surprise. The next day, I
14 asked Ambassador Volker about that meeting but received no response.

15 I began to sense that these two separate decision-making channels, the regular
16 and the irregular, were separate and at odds.

17 Later that day, I received text messages on a three-way WhatsApp text
18 conversation with Ambassadors Volker and Sondland, a record of which was provided by
19 Ambassador Volker. Ambassador Sondland said that a call between President Trump
20 and President Zelensky would take place soon. Ambassador Volker said that what was
21 most important is for Zelensky to say that he will help the investigation and address any
22 specific personnel issues, if there are any.

23 On the next day, July 20th, I had a phone conversation with Ambassador Sondland
24 while he was on a train from Paris to London. Ambassador Sondland told me that he
25 had recommended to President Zelensky that he use the phrase "I will leave no stone

1 unturned" with regard to investigations when President Zelensky spoke with President
2 Trump.

3 Also on July 20th, I had a phone conversation with Oleksandr Danylyuk, President
4 Zelensky's national security advisor, who emphasized that President Zelensky did not
5 want to be used as an instrument in a U.S. reelection campaign. The next day, I texted
6 both Ambassadors Volker and Sondland about President Zelensky's concern.

7 On July 25th, President Trump and President Zelensky had the long-awaited
8 phone conversation. Even though I was Acting Ambassador and was scheduled to meet
9 with President Zelensky along with Ambassador Volker the following day, I received no
10 readout of the call from the White House. The Ukrainian Government issued a short,
11 cryptic summary.

12 During a previously planned July 26th meeting, President Zelensky told
13 Ambassador Volker and me that he was happy with the call but did not elaborate.
14 President Zelensky then asked about the face-to-face meeting in the Oval Office, as
15 promised in the May 29th letter from President Trump. We could give him no firm
16 answer.

17 After our meeting with President Zelensky, Ambassador Volker and I traveled to
18 the front line in northern Donbas to receive a briefing from the commander of forces on
19 the line of contact. Arriving for the briefing in the military headquarters, the
20 commander thanked us for the security assistance. But I was aware that this assistance
21 was on hold, which made me uncomfortable.

22 Ambassador Volker and I could see the armed and hostile Russian-led forces on
23 the other side of the damaged bridge across the line of contact. Russian-led forces
24 continued to kill Ukrainians in the war, one or two a week. More Ukrainians would
25 undoubtedly die without the U.S. assistance.

1 Although I spent the morning of July 26th with President Zelensky and other
2 Ukrainian officials, the first summary of the July 25th Trump-Zelensky call that I heard
3 from anybody inside the U.S. Government was during a phone call I had with Tim
4 Morrison, Dr. Hill's recent replacement at the NSC, on July 28th.

5 Mr. Morrison told me that the call could have been better and that President
6 Trump had suggested that President Zelensky or his staff meet with Mr. Giuliani and
7 Attorney General William Barr. I did not see any official readout of the call until it was
8 publicly released on September 25th.

9 By August, I was becoming more concerned. On August 16th, I exchanged text
10 messages with Ambassador Volker in which I learned that Andriy Yermak, a senior advisor
11 to President Zelensky, had asked that the United States submit an official request for an
12 investigation into Burisma's alleged violations of Ukrainian law if that is what the United
13 States desired.

14 A formal U.S. request to the Ukrainians to conduct an investigation based on
15 violations of their own law struck me as improper, and I recommended to Ambassador
16 Volker that we stayed clear. To find out the legal aspects of the question, however, I
17 gave him the name of a deputy assistant attorney general whom I thought would be the
18 proper point of contact for seeking a U.S. request for a foreign investigation.

19 By mid-August, because the security assistance had been held for over a month
20 for no reason that I could discern, I was beginning to fear that the longstanding U.S. policy
21 of support for Ukraine was shifting.

22 I called State Department counselor Ulrich Brechbuhl to discuss this on August
23 21st. He said he was not aware of a change in policy but would check on the status of
24 the security assistance.

25 My concern deepened the next daily, on August 22nd, during a phone

1 conversation with Mr. Morrison. I asked him if there had been a change in policy of
2 strong support for Ukraine, to which he responded, "It remains to be seen." He also told
3 me during this call that "the President doesn't want to provide any assistance at all."

4 That was extremely troubling to me, as I had told Secretary Pompeo in May, if the
5 policy of strong support for Ukraine were to change, I would have to resign. Based on
6 my call with Mr. Morrison, I was preparing to do so.

7 Just days later, on August 27th, Ambassador Bolton arrived in Kyiv and met with
8 President Zelensky. During their meeting, security assistance was not discussed. As far
9 as I knew, the Ukrainians were not aware of the hold until August 29th. I, on the other
10 hand, was all too aware of and still troubled by the hold.

11 Near the end of Ambassador Bolton's visit, I asked to meet him privately, during
12 which I expressed to him my serious concern about the withholding of military assistance
13 to Ukraine while the Ukrainians were defending their country from Russian aggression.
14 Ambassador Bolton recommended that I send a first-person cable to Secretary Pompeo
15 directly relaying my concerns.

16 I wrote and transmitted such a cable on August 29th, describing the folly I saw in
17 withholding military aid to Ukraine at a time when hostilities were still active in the east
18 and when Russia was watching closely to gauge the level of American support for the
19 Ukrainian Government. The Russians, as I said at my deposition, would love to see the
20 humiliation of President Zelensky at the hands of the Americans. I told the Secretary
21 that I could not and would not defend such a policy.

22 Although I received no specific response, I heard that soon thereafter the
23 Secretary carried the cable with him to a meeting at the White House focused on security
24 assistance for Ukraine.

25 The same day that I sent my cable to the Secretary, Mr. Yermak contacted me,

1 very concerned, asking about the withheld security assistance. The hold that the White
2 House had placed on assistance had just been made public that day in a Politico story.

3 At that point, I was embarrassed that I could give him no explanation for why it
4 was withheld. It had still not occurred to me that the hold on security assistance could
5 be related to the investigations. That, however, would change.

6 On September 1st, just 3 days after my cable to Secretary Pompeo, President
7 Zelensky met Vice President Pence at a bilateral meeting in Warsaw. President Trump
8 had planned to travel to Warsaw but at the last minute had canceled because of
9 Hurricane Dorian.

10 Just hours before the Pence-Zelensky meeting, I contacted Mr. Danylyuk to let him
11 know that the delay of U.S. assistance was an all-or-nothing proposition, in the sense that
12 if the White House did not lift the hold prior to the end of the fiscal year, September 30th,
13 the funds would expire and Ukraine would receive nothing.

14 I was hopeful that at the bilateral meeting or shortly thereafter the White House
15 would lift the hold, but this was not to be.

16 On the evening of September 1st, I received a readout of the Pence-Zelensky
17 meeting over the phone from Mr. Morrison, during which he told me that President
18 Zelensky had opened the meeting by immediately asking the Vice President about the
19 security cooperation. The Vice President did not respond substantively but said that he
20 would talk to President Trump that night. The Vice President did say that President
21 Trump wanted the Europeans to do more to support Ukraine and that he wanted the
22 Ukrainians to do more to fight corruption.

23 During the same phone call with Mr. Morrison, he described a conversation
24 Ambassador Sondland had with Mr. Yermak in Warsaw. Ambassador Sondland told
25 Mr. Yermak that the security assistance money would not come until President Zelensky

1 committed to pursue the Burisma investigation.

2 I was alarmed by what Mr. Morrison told me about the Sondland-Yermak
3 conversation. I understand that Mr. Morrison testified at his deposition that
4 Ambassador Sondland proposed it might be sufficient for the Ukrainian Prosecutor
5 General to commit to pursue the investigations, as opposed to President Zelensky. But
6 this was the first time that I had heard that the security assistance, not just the White
7 House meeting, was conditioned on the investigations.

8 Very concerned, on that same day, September 1st, I sent Ambassador Sondland a
9 text message asking if we are now saying that the security assistance and a White House
10 meeting are conditioned on investigations. Ambassador Sondland responded, asking
11 me to call him, which I did.

12 During that phone call, Ambassador Sondland told me that President Trump had
13 told him that he wants President Zelensky to state publicly that Ukraine will investigate
14 Burisma and alleged Ukrainian interference in the 2016 election.

15 Ambassador Sondland also told me that he now recognized that he had made a
16 mistake by earlier telling Ukrainian officials that only a White House meeting with
17 President Zelensky was dependent on a public announcement of the investigations. In
18 fact, Ambassador Sondland said, everything was dependent on such an announcement,
19 including security assistance.

20 He said that President Trump wanted President Zelensky in a public box, by
21 making a public statement about ordering such investigations.

22 In the same September 1st call, I told Ambassador Sondland that President Trump
23 should have more respect for another head of State and that what he described was not
24 in the interest of either President Trump or President Zelensky. At that point, I asked
25 Ambassador Sondland to push back on President Trump's demand. Ambassador

1 Sondland pledged to try.

2 I suggested the possibility that the Ukrainian Prosecutor General, rather than
3 President Zelensky, would make a statement about the investigations, potentially in
4 coordination with Attorney General Barr's probe into the investigation of interference in
5 the 2016 elections.

6 The next day, September 2nd, Mr. Morrison called to inform me that Mr.
7 Danylyuk had asked him to come to his hotel in Warsaw. Mr. Danylyuk expressed
8 President Zelensky's concern about the possible loss of U.S. support for Ukraine.

9 In particular, Mr. Morrison relayed to me that the inability of any U.S. officials to
10 respond to the Ukrainians' explicit questions about security assistance was troubling
11 them. I was experiencing the same tension in my dealings with the Ukrainians, including
12 a meeting I had had with the Defense Minister that day.

13 On September 5th, I accompanied Senators Johnson and Murphy during their visit
14 to Kyiv. When we met with President Zelensky, his first question to the Senators was
15 about the withheld security assistance. My recollection of the meeting is that both
16 Senators stressed that bipartisan support for Ukraine in Washington was Ukraine's most
17 important strategic asset and that President Zelensky should not jeopardize that
18 bipartisan support by getting drawn in to U.S. domestic politics.

19 I had been making and continue to make this point to all of my official Ukrainian
20 contacts. But the odd push to make President Zelensky publicly commit to
21 investigations of Burisma and alleged interference in the 2016 election showed how the
22 official foreign policy of the United States was undercut by the irregular efforts led by Mr.
23 Giuliani.

24 Two days later, September 7th, I had a conversation with Mr. Morrison in which
25 he described a phone conversation earlier that day between Ambassador Sondland and

1 President Trump. Mr. Morrison said that he had a sinking feeling after learning about
2 this conversation from Ambassador Sondland.

3 According to Mr. Morrison, President Trump told Ambassador Sondland he was
4 not asking for a quid pro quo, but President Trump did insist that President Zelensky go to
5 a microphone and say he is opening investigations of Biden and 2016 election
6 interference and that President Zelensky should want to do this himself.

7 Mr. Morrison said that he told Ambassador Bolton and the NSC lawyers of this
8 phone call between President Trump and Ambassador Sondland.

9 The following day, on September 8th, Ambassador Sondland and I spoke on the
10 phone. He confirmed that he had talked to President Trump, as I had suggested a week
11 earlier, but that President Trump was adamant that President Zelensky himself had to
12 clear things up and do it in public. President Trump said it was not a quid pro quo. I
13 believe this was the same conversation between Ambassador Sondland and President
14 Trump that Mr. Morrison had described to me on September 7th.

15 Ambassador Sondland also said that he had talked to President Zelensky and Mr.
16 Yermak and had told them that, although this was not a quid pro quo, if President
17 Zelensky did not clear things up in public, we would be at a stalemate. I understood a
18 "stalemate" to mean that Ukraine would not receive the much-needed military
19 assistance.

20 Ambassador Sondland said that this conversation concluded with President
21 Zelensky agreeing to make a public statement in an interview on CNN.

22 Shortly after that call with Ambassador Sondland, I expressed my strong
23 reservations in a text message to Ambassador Sondland, stating that my nightmare is that
24 they, the Ukrainians, give the interview and don't get the security assistance. "The
25 Russians love it. (And I quit.)" And I was serious.

1 The next day, September 9th, I said to Ambassadors Sondland and Volker that the
2 message to the Ukrainians and the Russians we send with the decision on security
3 assistance is key. With the hold, we have already shaken their faith in us. I also said, I
4 think it's crazy to withhold security assistance for help with a political campaign.

5 Ambassador Sondland responded about 5 hours later that I was incorrect about
6 President Trump's intentions. The President has been crystal-clear: No quid pro quos
7 of any kind.

8 During our meeting -- during our call on September 8th, Ambassador Sondland
9 tried to explain to me that President Trump is a businessman. When a businessman is
10 about to sign a check to someone who owes him something, the businessman asks that
11 person to pay up before signing the check. Ambassador Volker used the same language
12 several days later while we were together at the Yalta European Strategy Conference.

13 I argued to both that the explanation made no sense. The Ukrainians did not
14 owe President Trump anything. And holding up security assistance for domestic political
15 gain was crazy, as I had said in my text message to Ambassadors Sondland and Volker on
16 September 9th.

17 Finally, on September 11th, I learned that the hold had been lifted and security
18 assistance would be provided. I was not told the reason why the hold had been lifted.

19 The next day, I personally conveyed the news to President Zelensky and the
20 Ukrainian Foreign Minister, and I again reminded Mr. Yermak of the high strategic value
21 of bipartisan support for Ukraine and the importance of not getting involved in other
22 countries' elections. My fear at the time was that, since Ambassador Sondland had told
23 me President Zelensky had already agreed to do a CNN interview, President Zelensky
24 would make a statement regarding investigations that would've played into domestic
25 U.S. politics.

1 I sought to confirm through Mr. Danylyuk that President Zelensky was not
2 planning to give such an interview to the media. While Mr. Danylyuk initially confirmed
3 that on September 12th, I noticed during a meeting on the morning of September 13th at
4 President Zelensky's office that Mr. Yermak looked uncomfortable in response to the
5 question. Again, I asked Mr. Danylyuk to confirm that there would be no CNN interview,
6 which he did.

7 On September 25th, at the U.N. General Assembly session in New York City,
8 President Trump met President Zelensky face-to-face. He also released the transcript of
9 the July 25th call. The United States gave the Ukrainians virtually no notice of the
10 release, and they were livid.

11 Although this was the first time I had seen the details of President Trump's
12 July 25th call with President Zelensky in which he mentioned Vice President Biden, I had
13 come to understand well before then that "investigations" was a term Ambassadors
14 Volker and Sondland used to mean matters related to the 2016 elections and to
15 investigations of Burisma and the Bidens.

16 Last Friday, a member of my staff told me of events that occurred on July 26th.
17 While Ambassador Volker and I visited the front, a member of my staff accompanied
18 Ambassador Sondland. Ambassador Sondland met with Mr. Yermak.

19 Following that meeting, in the presence of my staff at a restaurant, Ambassador
20 Sondland called President Trump and told him of his meetings in Kyiv. The member of
21 my staff could hear President Trump on the phone asking Ambassador Sondland about
22 the investigations. Ambassador Sondland told President Trump the Ukrainians were
23 ready to move forward.

24 Following the call with President Trump, the member of my staff asked
25 Ambassador Sondland what President Trump thought about Ukraine. Ambassador

1 Sondland responded that President Trump cares more about the investigations of Biden
2 which Giuliani was pressing for.

3 At the time I gave my deposition on October 22nd, I was not aware of this
4 information. I am including it here for completeness. As the committee knows, I
5 reported this information, through counsel, to the State Department's Legal Advisor as
6 well as to counsel for both the majority and the minority of this committee. It is my
7 understanding that the committee is following up on this matter.

8 Mr. Chairman, I recognize that this is a rather lengthy recitation of the events of
9 the past few months, told from my vantage point in Kyiv. But I also recognize the
10 importance of the matters your committee is investigating, and I hope that this
11 chronology will provide some framework for your questions.

12 As I mentioned in my October 22nd deposition, the information in quotes in my
13 testimony are based on my best recollection as well as a review of my personal notes.

14 Let me return to the points I made at the outset. Ukraine is important to the
15 security of the United States. The largest country in Europe by land mass, Ukraine is a
16 young democracy struggling to join Europe and ally itself with the United States. It has
17 been violently attacked by Russia, which continues its armed aggression against Ukraine
18 to this day.

19 If we believe in the principle of the sovereignty of nations, on which our security
20 and the security of our friends and allies depends -- if we believe that nations get to
21 decide on their own economic, political, and security alliances, we must support Ukraine
22 in its fight against its bullying neighbor. Russian aggression cannot stand.

23 Republican and Democratic administrations over three decades have been
24 generous with assistance, funding both civilian and military and political support. With
25 overwhelming bipartisan majorities, Congress has imposed harsh sanctions on Russia for

1 invading and occupying Ukraine.

2 Mr. Chairman, there are two Ukraine stories today. The first is the one we are
3 discussing this morning that you've been hearing about for the past 2 weeks. It's a
4 rancorous story about whistleblowers, Mr. Giuliani, side channels, quid pro quos,
5 corruption, and interference in elections. In this story, Ukraine is merely an object.

6 But there's another story -- a positive, bipartisan one. In this second story,
7 Ukraine is the subject. This one is about young people in a young nation struggling to
8 break free of its past, hopeful that their new government will finally usher in a new
9 Ukraine, proud of its independence from Russia, eager to join Western institutions and
10 enjoy a more secure and prosperous life.

11 This story describes a nation developing an inclusive, democratic nationalism not
12 unlike what we in America, in our best moments, feel about our diverse country -- less
13 concerned about what language we speak, what religion, if any, we practice, where our
14 parents and grandparents came from, more concerned about building a new country.

15 And I'm now looking forward to your questions.

16 [The statement of Ambassador Taylor follows:]

17

18 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1 The Chairman. I thank you both for your testimony.

2 And I now recognize myself and majority counsel for 45 minutes of questions.

3 Mr. Conaway. Mr. Chairman, I --

4 The Chairman. Ambassador Taylor, I'd like to begin by following up on
5 something that you have disclosed today and you disclosed earlier to both majority and
6 minority but it is some new information for the committee.

7 You said in your testimony that one of your staff was present with Ambassador
8 Sondland on the day after the July 25th phone call. Is that right?

9 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct, Mr. Chairman.

10 The Chairman. And as your staff related the event to you, your staff member
11 could overhear Mr. Sondland on the phone -- could overhear the President on the phone
12 with Mr. Sondland. Is that right?

13 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

14 The Chairman. So the President must have been speaking loud enough on the
15 phone -- this was a cell phone, I take it?

16 Ambassador Taylor. It was a cell phone.

17 The Chairman. The President must have been speaking loud enough for your
18 staff member to be able to overhear this?

19 Ambassador Taylor. It was.

20 The Chairman. And what your staff member could overhear was President
21 Trump asking Ambassador Sondland about, quote, "the investigations." Is that right?

22 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

23 The Chairman. Now, I think you testified also that you had come to understand
24 that the term "investigations" was a term that Ambassador Sondland, as well as Volker,
25 used to mean matters related to the 2016 elections and to the investigations of Burisma

1 and the Bidens. Is that correct?

2 Ambassador Taylor. That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

3 The Chairman. So your staff member overhears the President asking about the
4 investigations, meaning Burisma and the Bidens and 2016. Ambassador Sondland told
5 President Trump that the Ukrainians were ready to move forward?

6 Ambassador Taylor. He did.

7 The Chairman. And I think you said that, after the call, when your staff asked
8 Ambassador Sondland what President Trump thought of Ukraine, his response was that
9 President Trump cares more about the investigations of Biden. Is that right?

10 Ambassador Taylor. And Burisma. Yes, sir.

11 The Chairman. And, I take it, the import of that is he cares more about that than
12 he does about Ukraine?

13 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

14 The Chairman. During your testimony, Ambassador Taylor, you also said that
15 more Ukrainians would undoubtedly die without U.S. assistance. Why is that?

16 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Chairman, the security assistance that we provide takes
17 many forms. One of the components of that assistance is counter-battery radar.
18 Another component are sniper weapons.

19 These weapons and this assistance allows the Ukrainian military to deter further
20 incursions by the Russians against Ukrainian territory. If that further incursion, further
21 aggression, were to take place, more Ukrainians would die. So it is a deterrent effect
22 that these weapons provide.

23 It's also the ability -- it gives the Ukrainians the ability to negotiate from a position
24 of a little more strength when they negotiate an end to the war in Donbas, negotiating
25 with the Russians. This also is a way that would reduce the number of Ukrainians who

1 would die.

2 The Chairman. I take it, if the provision of the U.S. military assistance would save
3 Ukrainian lives, that any delay in that assistance may also cost Ukrainian lives. Is that
4 true?

5 Ambassador Taylor. Chairman, of course it's hard to draw any direct lines
6 between any particular element of security assistance and any particular death on the
7 battlefield. But it is certainly true that that assistance had enabled Ukrainian Armed
8 Forces to be effective and deter and to be able to take countermeasures to the attacks
9 that the Russians had --

10 The Chairman. I think you said that a Ukrainian soldier lost their life while you
11 were visiting Donbas.

12 Ambassador Taylor. We keep very careful track of the casualties. And I
13 noticed, on the next day, the information that we got, that one was killed, four soldiers
14 were wounded on that day.

15 The Chairman. And, indeed, Ukrainians lose their lives every week.

16 Ambassador Taylor. Every week.

17 The Chairman. I think you also testified that Russia was watching closely to
18 gauge the level of American support for the Ukrainian Government. Why is that
19 significant?

20 Ambassador Taylor. This is significant, Mr. Chairman, because the Ukrainians, in
21 particular under this new administration, are eager to end this war, and they are eager to
22 end it in a way that the Russians leave their territory.

23 These negotiations, like all negotiations, are difficult. Ukrainians would like to be
24 able to negotiate from a position of strength or at least more strength than they now
25 have.

1 Part of that strength, part of the ability of the Ukrainians to negotiate against the
2 Russians with the Russians for an end to the war in Donbas, depends on United States
3 and other international support.

4 If we withdraw or suspend or threaten to withdraw our security assistance, that's
5 a message to the Ukrainians, but it's at least as important, as your question indicates,
6 Mr. Chairman, to the Russians, who are looking for any sign of weakness or any sign that
7 we are withdrawing our support for Ukraine.

8 The Chairman. And so, when the Ukrainians learned of the suspension of the
9 military aid, either privately or when others learned publicly, the Russians would be
10 learning also, and they would take that as a lack of robust U.S. support for Ukraine. Is
11 that right?

12 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct, sir.

13 The Chairman. And that would weaken Ukraine in negotiating an end to the war
14 in Donbas.

15 Ambassador Taylor. It would.

16 The Chairman. People watching, I'm sure, are interested in how military
17 assistance and diplomatic support for Ukraine affects Ukraine but, even more so,
18 interested in how does this affect our national security.

19 Now, I think you said that, if we believe in the principle of sovereignty of nations,
20 where countries get to determine their own economic, political, and security alliances, we
21 have to support Ukraine in its fight, that the kind of aggression we see by Russia can't
22 stand.

23 How is it important to American national security that we provide for a robust
24 defense of Ukraine's sovereignty?

25 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Chairman, as my colleague, Deputy Assistant Secretary

1 George Kent, described, we have a national security policy, a national defense policy that
2 identifies Russia and China as adversaries.

3 The Russians are violating all of the rules, treaties, understandings that they
4 committed to that actually kept the peace in Europe for nearly 70 years. Until they
5 invaded Ukraine in 2014, they had abided by sovereignty of nations, of inviolability of
6 borders. That rule of law, that order that kept the peace in Europe and allowed for
7 prosperity as well as peace in Europe was violated by the Russians. And if we don't push
8 back on that, on those violations, then that will continue.

9 And that, Mr. Chairman, affects us. It affects the world that we live in, that our
10 children will grow up in, and our grandchildren. This affects the kind of world that we
11 want to see abroad. So that affects our national interest very directly. Ukraine is on
12 the front line of that conflict.

13 The Chairman. I want to thank you both for your decades of service to the
14 country.

15 And I'll now recognize Mr. Goldman for questioning.

16 Mr. Goldman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Ambassador Taylor, on the heels of your discussing the importance of the security
18 assistance to Ukraine, I want to go to the end of the timeline, where you learned that that
19 security assistance was conditioned on Ukraine announcing the investigations that the
20 President wanted.

21 And, in particular, on September 9th of this year, you texted Ambassadors
22 Sondland and Volker. And the text message should be on the screen in front of you.
23 And if you could read what you wrote.

24 Ambassador Taylor. "As I said on the phone, I think it's crazy to withhold security
25 assistance for help with a political campaign."

1 Mr. Goldman. What did you mean when you said you thought it was crazy?

2 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Goldman, I meant that the importance -- because of the
3 importance of security assistance that we had just described and had a conversation with
4 the chairman, because that was so important, that security assistance was so important
5 for Ukraine as well as our own national interests, to withhold that assistance for no good
6 reason other than help with a political campaign made no sense. It was
7 counterproductive to all of what we had been trying to do. It was illogical. It could not
8 be explained. It was crazy.

9 Mr. Goldman. And when you say "all of what we were trying to do," what do
10 you mean by "we"?

11 Ambassador Taylor. I mean that the United States was trying to support Ukraine
12 as a frontline state against Russian attack. And, again, the whole notion of a rules-based
13 order was being threatened by the Russians in Ukraine. So our security assistance was
14 designed to support Ukraine. And it was not just the United States; it was all of our
15 allies.

16 Mr. Goldman. When you referenced "help with a political campaign" in this text
17 message, what did you mean?

18 Ambassador Taylor. I meant that the investigation of Burisma and the Bidens
19 was clearly identified by Mr. Giuliani in public for months as a way to get information on
20 the two Bidens.

21 Mr. Goldman. And that investigation, at the very least, was mentioned by
22 President Trump in the July 25th phone call with President Zelensky. Is that right?

23 Ambassador Taylor. As we now know, yes. I -- yes. On September 25th, that
24 transcript was released.

25 Mr. Goldman. Ambassador Taylor, in your decades of military service and

1 diplomatic service representing the United States around the world, have you ever seen
2 another example of foreign aid conditioned on the personal or political interests of the
3 President of the United States?

4 Ambassador Taylor. No, Mr. Goldman, I have not.

5 Mr. Goldman. Mr. Kent, that vital military assistance, that was not the only thing
6 that President Trump was withholding from Ukraine. What else was contingent on
7 Ukraine initiating these investigations?

8 Mr. Kent. Well, as we've talked earlier today, the possibility of a White House
9 meeting was being held contingent to an announcement.

10 Mr. Goldman. How important to President Zelensky was a White House
11 meeting?

12 Mr. Kent. New leaders, particularly countries that are trying to have good
13 footing in the international arena, see a meeting with the U.S. President in the Oval Office
14 at the White House as the ultimate sign of endorsement and support from the United
15 States.

16 Mr. Goldman. And President Zelensky was a relatively new President. Is that
17 right?

18 Mr. Kent. That's correct. He was elected on April 21st, and his government
19 was formed after parliamentary elections in July.

20 Mr. Goldman. Would a White House meeting for President Zelensky boost his
21 legitimacy as a new President in Ukraine?

22 Mr. Kent. It would primarily boost his leverage to negotiate with Vladimir Putin
23 about the Russian occupation of 7 percent of Ukrainian territory.

24 Mr. Goldman. Mr. Kent, is pressuring Ukraine to conduct what I believe you
25 have called "political investigations" a part of U.S. foreign policy to promote the rule of

1 law in Ukraine and around the world?

2 Mr. Kent. It is not.

3 Mr. Goldman. Is it in the national interests of the United States?

4 Mr. Kent. In my opinion, it is not.

5 Mr. Goldman. Why not?

6 Mr. Kent. Because our policies, particularly in promoting the rule of law, are
7 designed to help countries. And in Eastern Europe and Central Europe, that is
8 overcoming the legacy of communism. In the communist system in particular, the
9 Prosecutor General Office was used to suppress and persecute citizens, not promote the
10 rule of law.

11 So, in helping these countries reach their own aspirations to join the Western
12 community of nations and live lives of dignity, helping them have the rule of law, with
13 strong institutions, is the purpose of our policy.

14 Mr. Goldman. So, in other words, it is a purpose of our foreign policy to
15 encourage foreign nations to refrain from conducting political investigations. Is that
16 right?

17 Mr. Kent. Correct. And, in fact, as a matter of policy, not of programming, we
18 oftentimes raise our concerns, usually in private, with countries that we feel are engaged
19 in selective, political prosecution and persecution of their opponents.

20 Mr. Goldman. Ambassador Taylor, now that we've established that you
21 ultimately did understand that President Trump was withholding the security assistance
22 and a White House meeting from Ukraine until they announced these investigations to
23 benefit his reelection campaign, let's go back a little bit in time to when you first learned
24 about this conditionality.

25 And on September 1st, so a little more than a week before that text we just read,

1 you sent another text to Ambassadors Sondland and Volker, which should also be on the
2 screen in front of you, and if you could read what you wrote to them.

3 Ambassador Taylor. "Are we now saying that security assistance and White
4 House meeting are conditioned on investigations?"

5 Mr. Goldman. And Ambassador Sondland responded, "Call me."

6 Ambassador Taylor. He did.

7 Mr. Goldman. Now, what information had you learned that prompted you to
8 write this text message?

9 Ambassador Taylor. I had learned that, in Warsaw, after the meeting Vice
10 President Pence had with President Zelensky, Ambassador Sondland had had meetings
11 there and had described to Mr. Yermak, the assistant to President Zelensky, that the
12 security assistance was also held, pending announcement by President Zelensky in public
13 of these investigations.

14 Before that, I had only understood from Ambassador Sondland that the White
15 House meeting was conditioned. And at this time, after I heard of this conversation, it
16 struck me -- it was clear to me that security assistance was also being held.

17 Mr. Goldman. You said previously that you were alarmed to learn this. Why
18 were you alarmed?

19 Ambassador Taylor. It's one thing to try to leverage a meeting in the White
20 House. It's another thing, I thought, to leverage security assistance -- security assistance
21 to a country at war, dependent on both the security assistance and the demonstration of
22 support. It was much more alarming. The White House meeting was one thing;
23 security assistance was much more alarming.

24 Mr. Goldman. Now, Ambassador Taylor, in your opening statement, you
25 outlined a very detailed timeline. And, in fact, we have a written copy here, and you

1 included some phrases and words in quotations.

2 Did you take notes of this conversation on September 1st with Ambassador
3 Sondland?

4 Ambassador Taylor. I did.

5 Mr. Goldman. And did you take notes related to most of the conversations, if
6 not all of them, that you recited in your opening statement?

7 Ambassador Taylor. All of them, Mr. Goldman.

8 Mr. Goldman. And what do those quotations that you include in your opening
9 statement reflect?

10 Ambassador Taylor. They reflect my notes on the exact words that I heard on
11 that call. So it was -- if I put those in quotes, that meant that those were the words used
12 on that phone call or in that conversation.

13 Mr. Goldman. And did you review those notes before you drafted your opening
14 statement and came here to testify?

15 Ambassador Taylor. I did.

16 Mr. Goldman. Now, is that how, for example, you remember that Ambassador
17 Sondland was on a train from Paris to London during a call in July?

18 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

19 Mr. Goldman. And you are aware, I presume, that the State Department has not
20 provided those notes to the committee. Is that right?

21 Ambassador Taylor. I am aware.

22 Mr. Goldman. So we don't have the benefit of reviewing them to ask you these
23 questions.

24 Ambassador Taylor. Correct. I understand that they may be coming, sooner or
25 later.

1 Mr. Goldman. Well, we would welcome that.

2 You also testified earlier, Ambassador Sondland -- or Ambassador Taylor, that
3 President Trump had delegated some matters overseeing Ukraine policy to Ambassador
4 Sondland, who was a big inaugural supporter of President Trump, even though Ukraine is
5 not in his domain of the European Union. Is that right?

6 Ambassador Taylor. Several members -- several participants in the meeting in
7 the Oval Office with President Trump with the delegation to the inauguration of President
8 Zelensky told me of that conversation. And it was at that meeting, as I understand it
9 from several participants, that President Trump asked the participants to work with
10 Mr. Giuliani on Ukraine policy.

11 Mr. Goldman. Did you come to understand that Ambassador Sondland had a
12 direct line of communication into President Trump?

13 Ambassador Taylor. I did.

14 Mr. Goldman. And you testified -- or, rather, in that text message, Ambassador
15 Sondland says to call him after you wrote that. Did you, in fact, call him?

16 Ambassador Taylor. I did.

17 Mr. Goldman. And what did he say to you?

18 Ambassador Taylor. He said that I had -- I was wrong about President Trump's
19 intent, that there was no quid pro quo.

20 Mr. Goldman. And -- but did he say anything after that? Did he describe to
21 you -- I believe you said -- I'll refresh your memory.

22 Ambassador Taylor. Thank you.

23 Mr. Goldman. You mentioned something in your opening statement. You said
24 that he said that everything -- and you had that in quotes -- was actually contingent on
25 the initiation of these investigations. What did he mean by "everything"?

1 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Goldman, what he meant by "everything" was the
2 security assistance and the White House meeting.

3 Mr. Goldman. And I believe you also testified that he said he had made a
4 mistake in relaying a message to the Ukrainians. What was that mistake?

5 Ambassador Taylor. The mistake he told me was, earlier, he had told
6 presumably President Zelensky and Mr. Yermak that what was necessary for the White
7 House meeting was the pursuit of these investigations. And he said he recognized that
8 that was a mistake. It was not just the White House meeting that was dependent on the
9 investigations; he said it was now everything. It included the security assistance.

10 Mr. Goldman. So it was not just the White House meeting; it was also the
11 security assistance.

12 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

13 Mr. Goldman. And so, even though President Trump was saying repeatedly that
14 there is no quid pro quo, Ambassador Sondland relayed to you that the facts of the
15 matter were that the White House meeting and the security assistance were conditioned
16 on the announcement of these investigations. Is that your understanding?

17 Ambassador Taylor. That's my understanding.

18 Mr. Goldman. Now, you referenced a television interview and a desire for
19 President Trump to put Zelensky in a public box, which you also have in quotes. Was
20 that in your notes?

21 Ambassador Taylor. It was in my notes.

22 Mr. Goldman. And what did you understand that to mean, to put Zelensky in a
23 public box?

24 Ambassador Taylor. I understood that to mean that President Trump, through
25 Ambassador Sondland, was asking for President Zelensky to very publicly commit to these

1 investigations, that it was not sufficient to do this in private, that this needed to be a very
2 public statement.

3 Mr. Goldman. And did you understand why it needed to be in public as opposed
4 to a private confirmation?

5 Ambassador Taylor. No further information on that.

6 Mr. Goldman. Now, during this time period in early September, did you come to
7 understand that, from your conversations with the Ukrainians or other individuals, that
8 Ukraine felt pressure to initiate these investigations because of the conditionality of the
9 White House meeting and the security assistance?

10 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Goldman, here's what I know. I got several
11 questions -- other officials got several questions as well -- from Ukrainians asking about
12 the security assistance. So what I know is the security assistance was very important to
13 the Ukrainians. They had begun to hear from Ambassador Sondland that the security
14 assistance was not going to come until the investigations were pursued.

15 What I heard from the Defense Minister, what the Senators -- what Senator
16 Johnson and Senator Murphy heard in their conversation with President Zelensky was the
17 clear concern, the urgent concern, that Ukrainians had about the security assistance.

18 Mr. Goldman. Now, you also described a conversation that you had with
19 Ambassador Sondland a week later, on September 8th. And in that conversation, in
20 your opening statement, you described how Ambassador Sondland used the term
21 "stalemate." What did you understand the concern about a stalemate to be?

22 Ambassador Taylor. Ambassador Sondland said that if President Zelensky did
23 not clear things up in public we would be at a stalemate. He began that, again, by
24 repeating, this is not a quid pro quo, but if President Zelensky did not clear things up in
25 public, we would be at a stalemate. And what I understood for, in that meeting, the

1 meaning of "stalemate" was the security assistance would not come.

2 Mr. Goldman. So, even though he said the words, there was no quid pro quo, he
3 then went on to say, but the security assistance will not come unless these investigations
4 are done. Is that what you're saying?

5 Ambassador Taylor. My understanding, that's what was meant by "stalemate."

6 Mr. Goldman. You also described in your opening statement a discussion you
7 had about President Trump being a businessman who wanted to have people pay up
8 before signing the check. And what did you understand that to mean?

9 Ambassador Taylor. This was an explanation that Ambassador Sondland gave
10 me about his understanding of President Trump's thought process. Ambassador
11 Sondland is a businessman. President Trump's a businessman. He was explaining to
12 me the relationship, the understanding that a businessman would have when he was
13 about to sign a check.

14 And by that, he clearly meant that President Trump was thinking about or had in
15 front of him the possibility of providing security assistance to Ukraine. It was similar to
16 writing a check to someone who you're about to send.

17 He used that analogy very clearly to indicate that this would be -- this will require
18 something. If that person owed him something, before he signed the check, he wanted
19 to get whatever he was owed paid back to him.

20 And Ambassador Volker used very similar language about a week later, which
21 indicates to me that they had that conversation as well.

22 Mr. Goldman. Did you Ukraine owe anything to the United States?

23 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Goldman, they didn't. They owed appreciation for the
24 support. And they were getting support, and they appreciated that. But there was
25 not -- there was nothing owed to President Trump on that.

1 Mr. Goldman. But you understood the upshot of this comment made by both
2 Ambassador Sondland and Ambassador Volker to be that President Trump believed that
3 Ukraine owed him something personally. Is that accurate?

4 Ambassador Taylor. It's hard to understand, but there was a feeling by President
5 Trump that he -- and this came out in the transcript -- I'm sorry, this came out in the
6 discussion with the inaugural delegation when they came back to have a conversation
7 with President Trump on May 23rd -- that he had a feeling of having been wronged by the
8 Ukrainians. And so this was something that he thought they owed him to fix that
9 wrong.

10 Mr. Goldman. Right. But what he was talking about, as you understood
11 it -- because in the context of the conversation is that what he owed him were these
12 investigations that he wanted. Is that right?

13 Ambassador Taylor. That would've been to fix the wrong, exactly.

14 Mr. Goldman. And those investigations into the 2016 election and Biden and
15 Burisma.

16 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

17 Mr. Goldman. Now, during this early period in September, we've talked a little
18 bit about the fact that you continually heard that the President was repeatedly saying
19 that there was no quid pro quo. Is that right?

20 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

21 Mr. Goldman. And he still says that repeatedly today. But regardless of what
22 you call it, whether it's a quid pro quo, bribery, extortion, abuse of power of the Office of
23 the Presidency, the fact of the matter, as you understood it, is that security assistance
24 and the White House meeting were not going to be provided unless Ukraine initiated
25 these two investigations that would benefit Donald Trump's reelection. Is that what you

1 understood the facts to be?

1

2 RPTR JOHNSON

3 EDTR SECKMAN

4 [12:02 p.m.]

5 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Goldman, what I can do here for you today is tell you
6 what I heard from people. And in this case, it was what I heard from Ambassador
7 Sondland. He described the conditions for the security assistance and the White House
8 meeting in those terms, that is, that it was dependent upon, conditioned on pursuing
9 these investigations.

10 Mr. Goldman. And you heard that from Ambassador Sondland himself, correct?

11 Ambassador Taylor. Correct.

12 Mr. Goldman. And you also heard a similar story from Mr. Morrison as well. Is
13 that right?

14 Ambassador Taylor. Who also talked to Ambassador Sondland about the
15 conversations that he had had in Warsaw with Ukrainians.

16 Mr. Goldman. And what Mr. Morrison recounted to you was substantially
17 similar to what Mr. Sondland recounted to you, right?

18 Ambassador Taylor. Yes.

19 Mr. Goldman. So, regardless of what Ukrainians may say now, now that
20 everything is out in the public and we are here in this public hearing, that they felt no
21 pressure from President Trump, it was your clear understanding, was it not, that, in early
22 September, when the pressure campaign was still secret, that the Ukrainians believed
23 that they needed to announce these public investigations? Is that right?

24 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Goldman, I know that the Ukrainians were very
25 concerned about the security assistance, and I know that they were prepared or

1 preparing to make a public statement, that is, with a CNN interview, that that was being
2 planned. Those are the two pieces that I know.

3 Mr. Goldman. And that CNN interview was to announce these investigations as
4 you understood it, right?

5 Ambassador Taylor. That was the implication. That was certainly the
6 implication.

7 Mr. Goldman. We've been focused a lot on this September timeframe. But I
8 want to go back 2 months to July, before the July 25th call. And you testified,
9 Ambassador Taylor, in your opening statement, that it was in the middle of July when you
10 understood that the White House meeting was first a condition on these investigations.
11 Is that accurate?

12 Ambassador Taylor. Yes. We were preparing -- and I agreed that the White
13 House meeting was going to be an important step in U.S./Ukrainian relations.

14 So, in June and in early July, attempts to work out a way to get that meeting
15 included a phone call. And so there were several conversations about how to have this
16 phone call that eventually happened on July 25th.

17 Mr. Goldman. And you described in your opening statement a July 10th White
18 House meeting with a number of officials where Ambassador Bolton used the term that
19 something was a drug deal. What did you understand him to mean in hearing that he
20 said that -- used this term "drug deal"?

21 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Goldman, I don't know. I don't know what
22 Ambassador Bolton had in mind.

23 Mr. Goldman. And was that in reference to a discussion in that meeting related
24 to the White House meeting that President Zelensky wanted in connection to the
25 investigations?

1 Ambassador Taylor. The context of that comment was the discussion that
2 Mr. Danylyuk, who was Mr. Bolton's counterpart, Ukrainian counterpart, the National
3 Security Advisor, had had with Mr. Bolton. And that conversation was very substantive
4 up until the point where the White House meeting was raised, and Mr. -- Ambassador
5 Sondland intervened to talk about the investigations. It was at that point that
6 Ambassador Bolton ceased the meeting, closed the meeting, finished the meeting, and
7 told his staff to report this meeting to the lawyers.

8 And he also later, then, indicated to Fiona Hill, who was also a participant, on NSC
9 staff, that he, Ambassador Bolton, didn't want to be associated with this drug deal. So it
10 was -- the implication was, it was the domestic politics that was being cooked up.

11 Mr. Goldman. And did Ambassador Sondland say this in front of the Ukrainian
12 officials, to your understanding?

13 Ambassador Taylor. Ambassador Sondland, in the meeting where Ambassador
14 Bolton was having a conversation with his counterpart, raised the issue of investigations
15 being important to come before the White House meeting that had just been raised.

16 Mr. Goldman. And Ukrainian officials were there?

17 Ambassador Taylor. And Ukrainian officials were in that meeting, yes, sir.

18 Mr. Goldman. Now, around this same time, in mid-July, did you have any
19 discussions with Ukrainian officials about these investigations?

20 Ambassador Taylor. I don't recall.

21 Mr. Goldman. Well, let me show you a text message that you wrote on July 21st,
22 where you wrote it again to Ambassadors Sondland and Volker. And if you could just
23 read what you wrote here on July 21st.

24 Ambassador Taylor. "Gordon, one thing Kurt and I talked about yesterday about
25 Sasha Danylyuk's point that President Zelensky is sensitive about Ukraine being taken

1 seriously, not merely as an instrument in Washington domestic reelection politics."

2 Mr. Goldman. And Sasha Danylyuk, I think you just said, is Ambassador Bolton's
3 counterpart, right?

4 Ambassador Taylor. Is the National Security Advisor to the -- was. He is no
5 longer, but was at the time.

6 Mr. Goldman. What did you understand it to mean when -- that Zelensky had
7 concerns about being an instrument in Washington domestic reelection politics?

8 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Danylyuk understood that these investigations were
9 pursuant to Mr. Giuliani's request to develop information, to find information about
10 Burisma and the Bidens. This was very well known in public. Mr. Giuliani had made
11 this point clear in several instances in the beginning -- in the springtime. And
12 Mr. Danylyuk was aware that that was a problem.

13 Mr. Goldman. And would you agree that, because President Zelensky is worried
14 about this, they understood, at least, that there was some pressure for them to pursue
15 these investigations? Is that fair?

16 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Danylyuk indicated that President Zelensky certainly
17 understood it, that he did not want to get involved in these type of activities.

18 Mr. Goldman. Now, I'm going to move ahead now to July 25th, which is when
19 President Trump and President Zelensky had the phone call. But before we get to the
20 phone call, I want to show both of you a text message, neither of which -- neither of you
21 is on this text message. It is between Ambassador Volker and Andriy Yermak, a top aide
22 to President Zelensky. I will read it, because neither of you is on it.

23 Ambassador Volker says: Good lunch, thanks. Heard from White House.
24 Assuming President Z convinces Trump he will investigate/get to the bottom of what
25 happened in 2016, we will nail down date for visit to Washington. Good luck. See you

1 tomorrow. Kurt.

2 And this was a half hour -- less than a half hour before the call actually occurred.

3 Now, Ambassador Taylor, was Ambassador Volker with you in Ukraine at this
4 time?

5 Ambassador Taylor. He was.

6 Mr. Goldman. Did you know that he was prepping President Zelensky for this
7 phone call with President Trump in this way?

8 Ambassador Taylor. Not in this way, Mr. Goldman, but I knew that Ambassador
9 Volker was prepping Ukrainians for the phone call earlier on; that is, at a meeting in
10 Toronto on July 2nd, Mr. -- Ambassador Volker had a conversation with President
11 Zelensky and had indicated in a phone call that he, at that time, was going to talk
12 Mr. Zelensky, President Zelensky, through the steps that needed to be taken in order to
13 get to the phone call.

14 Mr. Goldman. Understood. And you testified earlier that the security
15 assistance had already been frozen, to your knowledge, at least by July 18th. Is that
16 right?

17 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

18 Mr. Goldman. So that was just a week earlier than this?

19 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct?

20 Mr. Goldman. Just so we're clear, Ambassador Taylor, before this July 25th call,
21 President Trump had frozen the security assistance that Ukraine needed and that the
22 White House meeting was conditioned on Ukraine initiating this investigation, and that
23 had been relayed to the Ukrainians. Is that an accurate state of play at this time?

24 Ambassador Taylor. That's an accurate state of play. I at that point had no
25 indication that any discussion of the security assistance being subject to, conditioned on

1 investigations had taken place.

2 Mr. Goldman. Right. But you understood that the White House meeting --
3 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

4 Mr. Goldman. All right. Let's move ahead to this July 25th call and -- between
5 the Presidents. Now, am I correct that neither of you were on this call. Is that right,
6 Mr. Kent?

7 Mr. Kent. That's correct.

8 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

9 Mr. Goldman. And you weren't neither as well?

10 Ambassador Taylor. That's right.

11 Mr. Goldman. And you both read it after it was released publicly at the end of
12 September?

13 Ambassador Taylor. Yes.

14 Mr. Kent. Yes.

15 Mr. Goldman. I want to spend just a little time reading the transcript, as we've
16 been encouraged to do. And I want to particularly note four excerpts of the transcript:
17 one that relates to the security assistance we've been talking about; another that
18 discusses a favor that President Trump asked of President Zelensky; a third where
19 President Trump asks the Ukrainian President to investigate his political opponent,
20 former Vice President Biden; and then a final one where the Ukrainian President directly
21 links the desired White House visit to the political investigations that President Trump
22 wanted.

23 So let's look at the first excerpt, which is near the beginning of the call when
24 President Zelensky discusses the military aid that the U.S. provides to Ukraine.

25 He says: I would also like to thank you for your great support in the area of

1 defense. We are ready to continue to cooperate for the next steps. Specifically, we
2 are almost ready to buy more Javelins from the United States for defense purposes.

3 Now, at the time of this phone call, Ambassador Taylor and Mr. Kent, you both
4 knew that the aid had been frozen; is that right?

5 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

6 Mr. Kent. Yes.

7 Mr. Goldman. And, Ambassador Taylor, you testified that President Trump
8 obviously also knew that the aid had been frozen as well, since he was responsible for
9 doing that. Is that correct?

10 Ambassador Taylor. That's what I had been told. That's what we heard on that
11 conference call, yes.

12 Mr. Goldman. But to neither of your knowledge, the Ukrainians were not aware
13 of that at that point?

14 Ambassador Taylor. Not to my knowledge.

15 Mr. Kent. Not to my knowledge.

16 Mr. Goldman. But right after President Zelensky thanks President Trump for his
17 great support in the area of defense, President Trump then says, and we'll go to the next
18 excerpt: I want you to do us a favor, though, because our country has been through a
19 lot, and Ukraine knows a lot about it. I would like you to find out what happened with
20 this whole situation with Ukraine. They say CrowdStrike. I guess you have one of your
21 wealthy people, the server, they say Ukraine has it.

22 And at the end of the paragraph, he says: Whatever you can do, it's very
23 important that you do it if that's possible.

24 Now, Mr. Kent, you've testified a little bit about how this important this White
25 House meeting was to President Zelensky. How would you expect a new Ukrainian

1 President to interpret a request for a favor from the President of the United States?

2 Mr. Kent. I cannot interpret the mind of President Zelensky, other than to say
3 that it was very clear that what they were hoping to get out of this meeting was a date
4 and a confirmation that he could come to Washington.

5 Mr. Goldman. Obviously, you can't put yourself in the mind. But if the
6 Ukrainian President, for a country that's so dependent on the United States for all things,
7 including military assistance, is requested to do a favor, how do you think the Ukrainians
8 would interpret that?

9 Mr. Kent. Well, if you go further into the call record as part of this -- and we
10 don't have it on screen -- but to the best of my recollection, reading it after it was
11 released on September 25th, President Zelensky went into having: Whatever your
12 problems were, that was the old team. I've got a new team, and we will do whatever's
13 appropriate and be transparent and honest about it.

14 I don't remember the exact words, but he was trying to be, in his own words, in
15 response, be responsive, to conduct the business of the Ukrainian Government in a
16 transparent and honest manner.

17 Mr. Goldman. Now, when he talks about this CrowdStrike and the server, what
18 do you understand this to be a reference to?

19 Mr. Kent. To be honest, I had not heard of CrowdStrike until I read this
20 transcript on September 25th.

21 Mr. Goldman. Do you now understand what it relates to?

22 Mr. Kent. I understand it has to do with the story that there's a server with
23 missing emails. I also understand that one of the owners of CrowdStrike is a
24 Russian-American. I'm not aware of any Ukrainian connection to the company.

25 Mr. Goldman. Now, are you aware that this is all part of a larger allegation that

1 Ukraine interfered in the 2016 election?

2 Mr. Kent. Yes, that is my understanding.

3 Mr. Goldman. And to your knowledge, is there any factual basis to support the
4 allegation that Ukraine interfered in the 2016 election?

5 Mr. Kent. To my knowledge, there's no factual basis, no.

6 Mr. Goldman. And, in fact, who did interfere in the 2016 election?

7 Mr. Kent. I think it's amply clear that Russian interference was at the heart of
8 the interference in the 2016 election cycle.

9 Mr. Goldman. Let's move to the third excerpt that I mentioned related to Vice
10 President Biden. And it says: The other thing, there's a lot of talk about Biden's
11 son -- this is President Trump speaking -- that Biden stopped the prosecution, and a lot of
12 people want to find out about that. So whatever you can do with the Attorney General
13 would be great. Biden went around bragging that he stopped the prosecution, so if you
14 can look into it. It sounds horrible.

15 Now, at the time of this call, Vice President Biden was the frontrunner for the
16 Democratic nomination in the 2020 election.

17 Mr. Kent, are you familiar, as you indicate in your opening statement, about these
18 allegations related to Vice President Biden?

19 Mr. Kent. I am.

20 Mr. Goldman. And to your knowledge, is there any factual basis to support
21 those allegations?

22 Mr. Kent. None whatsoever.

23 Mr. Goldman. When Vice President Biden acted in Ukraine, did he act in
24 accordance with official U.S. policy?

25 Mr. Kent. He did.

1 Mr. Goldman. Now, let's go to, then, the last excerpts that I wanted to highlight,
2 which is President Zelensky speaking. And he says, I also wanted to thank you for your
3 invitation to visit the United States, specifically Washington, D.C. On the other hand, I
4 also want to ensure you that we will be very serious about the case, and we will work on
5 the investigation.

6 Now, Ambassador Taylor, right after President Zelensky mentions his
7 much-desired Washington visit, he says "on the other hand" and then says that Ukraine
8 will be very serious about the investigation.

9 Is this the same link between the White House visit and the investigations that
10 Ambassador Volker had texted to Andriy Yermak just a few minutes before this
11 conversation?

12 Ambassador Taylor. That's my assumption.

13 Mr. Goldman. Now, just to summarize what we've just read in this July 25th call
14 between the Presidents, the Ukrainian President thanked President Trump for security
15 assistance that President Trump had just frozen, to which President Trump responded
16 that he wanted President Zelensky to do him a favor, though, by investigating the 2016
17 U.S. election and the Bidens. And then President Zelensky says that he will pursue these
18 investigations right after he mentions the White House visit.

19 Is that your understanding, Ambassador Taylor, of what we just read?

20 Ambassador Taylor. Yes.

21 Mr. Goldman. And, Mr. Kent, is that yours?

22 Mr. Kent. Yes.

23 Mr. Goldman. I yield back.

24 The Chairman. The majority time has expired.

25 Would you gentlemen like a brief recess?

1 Let's take a 5-minute recess, and then we'll resume with minority questioning.

2 [Recess.]

3 The Chairman. The committee will come back to order.

4 The chair now recognizes the ranking member and minority counsel for
5 45 minutes.

6 Mr. Nunes. Thank you.

7 The call summary for which the Democrats want to impeach President Trump is
8 dramatically different from their nefarious depiction of it. What it actually shows is a
9 pleasant exchange between two leaders who discuss mutual cooperation over a range of
10 issues.

11 The Democrats claim this call demonstrates extortion, bribery, and a host of other
12 monstrous crimes being committed against President Zelensky. Yet President Zelensky
13 himself insists there was nothing improper whatsoever about the conversation.

14 Indeed, the routine nature of the call helps to explain why, in this committee's last
15 public hearing, Democrats recited a fictitious version of the call, instead of reading the
16 actual transcript.

17 The Democrats depicted the President saying, quote: I want you to make up dirt
18 on my political opponent, understand? Lots of it on this and on that, unquote.

19 The transcript did not show President Trump saying anything remotely like that.
20 The President did not ask Ukraine to make up dirt on anyone. But the Democrats are
21 not trying to discover facts; they're trying to invent a narrative. And if the facts they
22 need do not exist, then they'll just make it up.

23 Not only does President Zelensky deny the Democrats' characterization of the call,
24 but as Ambassador Taylor testified to this committee, the Ukrainians did not even know
25 at the time of the call that a temporary delay was put on the security assistance for them.

1 Furthermore, as the Ambassador testified, these holds occur from time-to-time.
2 Both he and Ambassador Volker were confident the delay would be lifted. And, in fact,
3 military aid to Ukraine has actually substantially improved since President Trump took
4 office.

5 Ambassador Taylor testified that President Trump was the first President to see
6 that Ukraine was afforded Javelin antitank weapons. This was a very strong message
7 that Americans are willing to provide more than blankets. This was the Obama
8 administration's approach.

9 Note this important fact: the security assistant was provided to Ukraine without
10 the Ukrainians having done any of the things they were supposedly being blackmailed to
11 do. So we're supposed to believe that President Trump committed a terrible crime that
12 never actually occurred and which the supposed victim denies ever happened.

13 I'd like to briefly speak about the core mistruth at the heart of the Democrats'
14 impeachment drive. They claim the President tried to get the Ukrainians to, quote,
15 manufacture dirt against his political rivals. This is supported by precisely zero evidence.
16 Once again, the Democrats simply made it up.

17 But let's consider the broader question about why President Trump may have
18 wanted answers to questions about Ukraine meddling in 2016. The Democrats
19 downplay, ignore, outright deny the many indications that Ukrainians actually did meddle
20 in the election, a shocking about-face for people who for 3 years argued that foreign
21 election meddling was an intolerable crime that threatened the heart of our democracy.

22 While the brazen suddenness of this U-turn is jarring, this denial is a necessary
23 part of their argument. After all, if there actually were indications of Ukrainian election
24 meddling and if foreign election meddling is a dire threat, then President Trump would
25 have a perfectly good reason for wanting to find out what happened. And since the

1 meddling was aimed against his campaign, he'd have good reason for sending his
2 personal attorney to make inquiries about it.

3 What's strange is that some of the witnesses at these hearings and previous
4 depositions who express alarm about these inquiries were remarkably uninformed about
5 these indications of Ukrainian election meddling and why the President may have been
6 concerned by them.

7 For example, I noted previously, Alexandra Chalupa, a former staffer for the
8 Democratic National Committee, admitted to Politico that she worked with officials at the
9 Ukrainian Embassy in Washington, D.C., to dig up dirt on the Trump campaign, which she
10 passed on to the DNC and the Hillary Clinton campaign. Chalupa revealed that
11 Ukrainian Embassy officials themselves were also working directly with reporters to trade
12 information and leads about the Trump campaign.

13 Ambassador Kent, you didn't seem to be too concerned about it in the last round
14 of questioning, so I'll just skip you because we know that wasn't a concern.

15 But, Ambassador Taylor, you testified to this committee that you only recently
16 became aware of reports of this cooperation between Ukrainian Embassy officials and
17 Chalupa to undermine the Trump campaign from your last deposition. Is that correct?

18 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Nunes, it is correct that I had not known about this
19 before.

20 Mr. Nunes. That's -- I'm just going over your last deposition, Ambassador.

21 Ambassador Taylor. Yeah.

22 Mr. Nunes. The Politico article cites three named Ukrainian officials asserting
23 that the Ukrainian Embassy supported the Hillary Clinton campaign. It quotes Ukrainian
24 Parliamentarian Andriy Artemenko saying, quote: It was clear they were supporting
25 Hillary Clinton's candidacy. They did everything from organizing meetings with the

1 Clinton team to publicly supporting her, to criticizing Trump. I think that they simply
2 didn't meet with the Trump campaign because they thought Hillary would win, unquote.

3 Ambassador Taylor, you testified you were unfamiliar with that statement. Is
4 that correct?

5 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

6 Mr. Nunes. You also said you were unaware that then Ukrainian Ambassador to
7 the U.S. Valeriy Chaly wrote an op-ed in The Hill during the 2016 Presidential campaign
8 criticizing then candidate Trump. Is that correct?

9 Ambassador Taylor. That is correct.

10 Mr. Nunes. You said you did not know that Serhiy Leshchenko, then a Ukrainian
11 parliamentarian, had admitted that part of his motivation in spreading information about
12 the so-called black ledger, a disputed document purporting of reveal corruption by a
13 former Trump campaign official, was to undermine the Trump's candidacy.

14 This was in your deposition. Is that still correct?

15 Ambassador Taylor. That is still correct, sir.

16 Mr. Nunes. Thank you, Mr. Taylor.

17 Fusion GPS contractor Nellie Ohr testified to Congress that Leshchenko was a
18 source for Fusion GPS' operation to dirty up the Trump campaign, including the
19 compilation of the Steele dossier on behalf of the DNC and the Clinton campaign. You
20 testified you were unaware that Leshchenko served as a source for that project.

21 Ambassador Taylor, is this still correct?

22 Ambassador Taylor. It is, sir.

23 Mr. Nunes. You said you did not know that Ukrainian Internal Affairs Minister,
24 Arsen Avakov, mocked and disparaged then candidate Trump on Facebook and Twitter.
25 Is that still correct?

1 Ambassador Taylor. That is correct.

2 Mr. Nunes. Ambassador Taylor, in your testimony to this committee, you said
3 you were never briefed on these reports and statements, that you did not do due
4 diligence before taking your post to discover that President -- the President's and Mayor
5 Giuliani's concerns may have been -- what they may have been and that you did not
6 discuss them with Ambassador Yovanovitch. Is that still correct?

7 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

8 Mr. Nunes. Furthermore, you said it upset you to hear about the many
9 indications of Ukrainian election meddling. Your precise words were -- I'm going to read
10 them back to you: Based on this Politico article, which again surprises me, disappoints
11 me, because I think it's a mistake for any diplomat or government official in one country
12 to interfere in the political life of another. That's disappointing, unquote.

13 Ambassador Taylor, is that still your testimony?

14 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Nunes, it is. Subsequent to that, I looked into the
15 circumstances for several of the things that you just mentioned.

16 In 2016, candidate Trump had made a statement saying that it was possible that
17 he would allow Crimea to go back to Russia. He expressed the sentiment, or the
18 opinion, that it's possible that Crimea wanted to go back to Russia.

19 What I can tell you, Mr. Nunes, is that those -- that sentiment is amazingly
20 inflammatory to all Ukrainians, so --

21 Mr. Nunes. So I think -- so I can understand that. Are you aware during the -- I
22 believe it was the 2012 election, when, at the time, President Obama leaned over on a
23 hot mike to the then Russian president and said that he'd have to wait until after the
24 election? Was that inflammatory to the Ukrainians also?

25 Ambassador Taylor. I don't know, sir.

1 Mr. Nunes. I just want to be clear that some government officials oppose
2 President Trump's approach to Ukraine, but many had no idea what concerned him. In
3 this case, it was numerous indications of Ukrainian interference in the 2016 election to
4 oppose his campaign and support Hillary Clinton.

5 Once you know that, it's easy to understand the President's desire to get to the
6 bottom of this corruption and to discover exactly what happened in the 2016 election.

7 And with that, I'll turn to Mr. Castor.

8 Mr. Castor. Ambassador Taylor, Mr. Kent, President Trump's concerns about
9 Ukraine's role in the 2016 election, you believe he genuinely believed they were working
10 against him, right?

11 Ambassador Taylor?

12 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Castor, I don't know what or President or candidate
13 Trump was thinking about the Ukrainians.

14 Mr. Castor. I mean, didn't he, in his Oval Office meeting, on May 23rd, after the
15 Zelensky inauguration, didn't he lament that the Ukrainians were out to get him?

16 Ambassador Taylor. I heard that his response to the suggestion that
17 Mr. Zelensky visit Mr. Trump, President Trump, in the Oval Office, was not well received
18 and that he had concerns about Ukrainians, yes.

19 Mr. Castor. But from the President's perspective, if the Ambassador -- Ukrainian
20 Ambassador to the United States, one of the most influential diplomats, is penning an
21 op-ed, certainly with the okay of President Poroshenko, the DNC consultants
22 are conferring with Ukrainian officials at the Embassy, Former Prime Minister Yatsenyuk is
23 saying things on social media, Interior Minister Avakov, who has spanned both the
24 Poroshenko and Zelensky realm, is also saying some very unkind things on social media
25 about the President, you certainly can appreciate that President Trump was very

1 concerned that some elements of the Ukrainian establishment were not in favor of him,
2 did not support him, and were out to get him.

3 The Chairman. And I'll allow the question, but are you asking --

4 Mr. Nunes. Parliamentary inquiry. Are you seriously interrupting our time?

5 The Chairman. I will allow the question. I won't dock this from the time.

6 I just want to be clear, Ambassador, if you're able to verify the things that counsel
7 has asked you in the prerequisite of the question, that's fine. Otherwise, in questions
8 from the majority or the minority that may assume facts not in evidence before you, you
9 should be cautioned about that.

10 Mr. Ratcliffe. Mr. Chairman, point of order.

11 The Chairman. The time is with Mr. -- with minority counsel.

12 Mr. Nunes. Mr. Ratcliffe.

13 Mr. Ratcliffe. Chairman, I sat here through the first 45 minutes and literally had
14 an objection to almost the foundation of every question that Mr. Goldman asked
15 regarding facts not in evidence, leading. But House Resolution 660 does not say that we
16 are under the Federal Rules of Evidence. If it is your position that I should be asserting
17 objections to questions that violate the Federal Rules of Evidence, let me know now
18 because this hearing is going to change significantly.

19 The Chairman. As I said, Mr. Ratcliffe, I will allow the question.

20 Mr. Nunes. I think the gentleman has a different question about the rules.

21 So what are the rules that are going to govern this?

22 The Chairman. Does the ranking member seek recognition?

23 Mr. Nunes. I'm asking -- I'm yielding you to the question I just asked you.

24 The Chairman. For what purpose do you seek recognition.

25 Mr. Nunes. To answer Mr. Ratcliffe's question.

1 The Chairman. I have answered it.

2 You may resume your questioning.

3 Mr. Ratcliffe. Respectfully, Mr. Chairman, you haven't answered my question
4 whether or not I should be asserting assumes facts not in evidence or leading objections
5 to questions that are posed from this point forward. That's my question.

6 The Chairman. Mr. Ratcliffe, I'll say once again, I'm not objecting to the
7 question, but I am instructing the witness that they should not presume questions from
8 the majority or the minority that may represent facts not in evidence are correct.

9 This is -- I have answered the question. We will resume the questioning and
10 resume the clock.

11 Mr. Castor. So you certainly can appreciate President Trump's concerns?

12 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Castor, I don't know the exact nature of President
13 Trump's concerns. In my deposition, I recall you handed me the Politico article, which
14 listed at least three of the elements that you have described earlier. And you recognize
15 and I have confirmed with the ranking minority member that I -- this is the first I had
16 heard of those and was surprised by those. I don't know President Trump's reaction to
17 those.

18 Mr. Castor. In the information published by Serhiy Leshchenko, a former
19 Ukrainian investigative journalist, and then he was a member of the parliament, about
20 the Manafort black ledgers, in August of 2016, I mean the very day that was published,
21 Mr. Manafort resigned from the campaign, correct?

22 Ambassador Taylor. I don't know, Mr. Castor.

23 Mr. Castor. But certainly that gives rise to some concern that there are elements
24 of the Ukrainian establishment that were out to get the President. That's a very
25 reasonable belief of his, correct?

1 Ambassador Taylor. I don't know.

2 Mr. Castor. In the runup to the 2016 election, there were many facts that
3 remain unresolved, agreed?

4 Ambassador Taylor. I'm sorry. What's the question?

5 Mr. Castor. There are many facts relating to the runup of the 2016 election that
6 remain unresolved.

7 Ambassador Taylor. Any further --

8 Mr. Castor. Well, Attorney General Barr, in May of 2019, tasked the U.S.
9 Attorney for Connecticut, John Durham, to broadly examine the government's collection
10 of intelligence involving the President's campaign. That effort initially was an
11 administrative review, has turned into a criminal probe. And U.S. Attorney Durham
12 is casting a wide net and is following the facts where they may lead.

13 Are you aware of that?

14 Ambassador Taylor. I'm aware that there is an investigation. That's as much as
15 I'm aware.

16 Mr. Castor. And so, to the extent any information resides in Ukraine, it's
17 perfectly appropriate for the Ukrainians to try to get to the bottom of that, for the
18 Ukrainians to cooperate with the United States through official channels to share that
19 information, correct?

20 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Castor, can you say that one again? I would
21 appreciate it if you would restate the question.

22 Mr. Castor. To the extent Ukraine has facts related to the runup of the 2016
23 election that are under the U.S. Attorney Durham's probe, Ukraine should cooperate with
24 the United States, and to the extent there are Ukrainians doing improper things, the
25 Ukrainians ought to investigate that themselves, correct?

1 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Castor, the Ukrainian-American relations are very
2 supportive. The Ukrainians will certainly be responsive to requests.

3 Mr. Castor. So, when the President on the call transcript of July 25th raises this
4 with President Zelensky and he urges that there be a connection between the Ukrainian
5 Government and the Justice Department officially, I mean, that's the appropriate way to
6 raise an issue with the Ukrainian President, correct?

7 Ambassador Taylor. It's appropriate for the Justice Department and the
8 Prosecutor General to cooperate and to exchange information, yes.

9 Mr. Castor. But to the extent that the President has concerns and to the extent
10 the Attorney General is having the U.S. Attorney Durham look into it, isn't it entirely
11 appropriate for the President to flag this for President Zelensky and say that you should
12 be in touch with our official channels?

13 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Castor, I don't know the precise appropriateness of
14 these kinds of relations.

15 Mr. Castor. Now, were you involved -- either of you -- involved in the
16 preparation for the 7/25 call?

17 Ambassador Taylor. I was not.

18 Mr. Kent. I was not.

19 Mr. Castor. And how do you account for that?

20 I mean, you're the -- you are two of the key officials with responsibility for
21 Ukrainian policy. I mean, if the President of the United States is going to have a call with
22 the leader of the Ukraine, why wouldn't you ordinarily be involved with the preparation?

23 Mr. Kent. Sir, we work for the Department of State in an embassy overseas.
24 And in preparation for a Presidential phone call, that responsibility lies within the staff of
25 the National Security Council. Normally, if there is enough sufficient time, national

1 security staff can solicit information, usually from the State Department, and we can draw
2 on the Embassy, but that's only background information. And my understanding, having
3 never worked at the National Security Council, is that national security staff write a memo
4 to the President, and none of us see that outside of the national security staff.

5 Mr. Castor. Okay. So the charge or the U.S. Ambassador to the country
6 wouldn't ordinarily be on a call with a foreign leader?

7 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct. Would not.

8 Mr. Castor. And did Colonel Vindman, or anyone at the National Security Council
9 staff, reach out to you, Mr. Kent, in preparation for the call?

10 Mr. Kent. I was given notification the day before, on July 24th. And to the
11 extent I had any role that was to reach out to the Embassy, give them the heads up, and
12 ask them to ensure that the secure communications link in the Office of the President of
13 Ukraine was functional so the call could be patched through from the White House
14 situation room.

15 Mr. Castor. Did you provide any substantive advice to Colonel Vindman about
16 the call and what ought to be the -- the official position?

17 Mr. Kent. I was not asked and I did not provide.

18 Mr. Castor. Okay. Same with you, Ambassador?

19 Ambassador Taylor. The same.

20 Mr. Castor. And the call was scheduled -- you know, you testified earlier that the
21 call was on again/off again. And after the July 10th meeting with Ambassador Bolton,
22 the consensus was the call was not going to happen. Is that correct?

23 Mr. Kent. I would not say that was a consensus. The State Department's
24 position was that a call between the two Presidents would be useful. And once
25 Zelensky's party won the first ever absolute majority in parliamentary elections on

1 July 21st, the idea of congratulatory call made imminent sense, from our perspective.

2 Mr. Castor. Okay. And the call was scheduled. And did you get a readout,
3 Ambassador Taylor, initially from the call?

4 Ambassador Taylor. I didn't, Mr. Castor. I read the -- we all read the statement
5 that the Ukrainians put out. I got a readout several days later from Mr. Morrison,
6 National Security Council.

7 Mr. Castor. Okay. And how about you, Mr. Kent?

8 Mr. Kent. I likewise first saw the Ukrainian statement, and I believe the next day,
9 July 26th, which would have been a Friday, I did get a partial readout from Lieutenant
10 Colonel Vindman, yes.

11 Mr. Castor. Ambassador Taylor, you said that the Ukrainian readout was cryptic.
12 Is that just because it's initially written in Ukrainian and translated to the U.S.?

13 Ambassador Taylor. No. It's -- as a general rule, both the United States and
14 other countries, including Ukraine, will put out very short summaries that kind of hit the
15 highlights of the discussion --

16 Mr. Castor. Okay.

17 Ambassador Taylor. -- but without going into detail.

18 Mr. Castor. Okay. And you mentioned it was cryptic. Why did you think it
19 was cryptic?

20 Ambassador Taylor. Knowing now what -- having read the transcript and looking
21 back at their summary --

22 Mr. Castor. Uh-huh.

23 Ambassador Taylor. -- as I recall -- I don't recall the exact words -- but they said
24 that there were issues to be pursued in order to improve relations between the two
25 countries, or something like that.

1 Mr. Castor. That seems pretty ordinary.

2 Ambassador Taylor. It seems pretty ordinary.

3 Mr. Castor. You were with President Zelensky the very next day?

4 Ambassador Taylor. We were. We had a meeting with him the very next day.

5 Mr. Castor. And did President Zelensky raise any concerns about his views of the
6 call?

7 Ambassador Taylor. He said -- so, right. So I, Ambassador Volker, Ambassador
8 Sondland were in his office, and we asked him, I think, how the call -- he said: The call
9 was fine. I was happy with the call.

10 Mr. Castor. Okay. And did you get any additional readout subsequently about
11 the call? Like when did you first learn that the call contained things that concerned
12 you? Was that not until September 25th?

13 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Morrison, as I say, briefed me several days later, before
14 the end of July, and I think this is where I said in my testimony that he said it could have
15 gone better, and he said it -- that the call mentioned Mr. Giuliani. He also said that the
16 call mentioned the former Ambassador. Both of those were concerning.

17 Mr. Castor. Giuliani was first raised on the call by President Zelensky, correct?

18 Ambassador Taylor. I don't recall. It could have been. Well, I have it here, if
19 you would like.

20 Mr. Castor. Yeah. It's on page -- page 3.

21 The first mention of Giuliani is from President Zelensky. It's on page 3. And
22 President Zelensky says: I will personally tell you that one of my assistants spoke with
23 Mr. Giuliani just recently, and we are hoping very much that Mr. Giuliani will be able to
24 travel to Ukraine and we will meet once he comes to Ukraine.

25 Did that surprise you?

1 Ambassador Taylor. Again, I didn't have the transcript at the time. All I heard
2 was that Giuliani was mentioned. Mr. Morrison said that Giuliani was mentioned in the
3 call.

4 Mr. Castor. But the way Zelensky states it here, it sounds like he is very much
5 looking forward to speaking with America's mayor.

6 Ambassador Taylor. That's what I found out when I read the transcript on the
7 25th of September or so.

8 Mr. Castor. Okay. Now, Mr. Kent, corruption in Ukraine is endemic, correct?

9 Mr. Kent. That's correct.

10 Mr. Castor. And it affects the courts, the prosecutors, and there have historically
11 been problems with all of the prosecutors in Ukraine, correct?

12 Mr. Kent. I would say up until the new set of prosecutors appointed by President
13 Zelensky in the last two months, correct.

14 Mr. Castor. Okay. And so the U.S. Government, the consensus hope at the
15 State Department and the National Security Council and the White House is that
16 Zelensky's the real deal, he is a real reformer, he is genuinely interested in rooting out
17 corruption, prosecuting the bad guys, correct?

18 Mr. Kent. I would say we are cautiously optimistic, and we will work wherever
19 there is the political will to do the right thing and put forward genuine reform.

20 Mr. Castor. And at the heart of the corruption is this oligarchical system, correct,
21 where the oligarchs take control, often by a virtual theft of, you know, for example, the
22 right to certain energy licenses, correct?

23 Mr. Kent. That is one element, yes, sir.

24 Mr. Castor. And the company Burisma, its leader, Zlochevsky, he has a little bit
25 of a storied history of corruption, doesn't he?

1 Mr. Kent. Mr. Zlochevsky was Minister of Energy from 2010 to 2012 under the
2 pro-Russian Government, and he used his regulatory authority to award gas exploration
3 licenses to companies that he himself controlled. That would be considered an act of
4 corruption in my view, yes.

5 Mr. Castor. Certainly self-dealing.

6 Mr. Kent. Certainly self-dealing and self-enriching.

7 Mr. Castor. And how did the Ukrainian Government ultimately pursue that?

8 Mr. Kent. In the spring of 2014, the Ukrainian Government, the new
9 government, after the Revolution of Dignity, turned to partners, particularly the U.S. and
10 the U.K., to try to recover tens of billions of dollars of stolen assets.

11 The first case that we tried to recover that money came from Mr. Zlochevsky.
12 The Serious Crimes Office in the U.K. had already opened up an investigation. They
13 worked with us and the Ukrainian authorities to develop more information. The
14 \$23 million was frozen until somebody in the general prosecutor's office of Ukraine shut
15 the case, issued a letter to his lawyer, and that money went poof.

16 Mr. Castor. So essentially paid a bribe to make the case go away?

17 Mr. Kent. That is our strong assumption, yes, sir.

18 Mr. Castor. Okay. Now, at any point in time, has anyone in the Ukrainian
19 Government tried to reinvestigate that, or did that -- did those crimes just go unpunished
20 and was he free to go?

21 Mr. Kent. Mr. Zlochevsky spent time, as far as I understand, in Moscow and
22 Monaco, after he fled Ukraine. We continued to raise, as a point of order, that because
23 U.S. taxpayer dollars had been used to try to recover frozen assets, that we have a
24 fiduciary responsibility. And we have continued to press Ukrainian officials to answer
25 for why alleged corrupt prosecutors had closed a case, and we have till now not gotten a

1 satisfactory answer.

2 So, to summarize, we thought that Mykola Zlochevsky had stolen money; we
3 thought a prosecutor had taken a bribe to shut the case; and those were our main
4 concerns.

5 Mr. Castor. And are you in favor of that matter being fully investigated and
6 prosecuted?

7 Mr. Kent. I think, since U.S. taxpayer dollars were wasted, I would love to see
8 the Ukrainian Prosecutor General's Office find who the corrupt prosecutor was that took
9 the bribe and how much it was paid. And that's what I said to the deputy prosecutor
10 general on February 3, 2015.

11 Mr. Castor. But in addition to prosecuting the person that took the bribes,
12 shouldn't the organization or individual that sponsored the bribes be prosecuted?

13 Mr. Kent. I would agree that the Ukrainian law authority should uphold the rule
14 of law and hold the people account for breaking Ukrainian law.

15 Mr. Castor. So this company Burisma is involved in lots of criminal activity,
16 correct?

17 Mr. Kent. I do not know that.

18 Mr. Castor. But over the years, it's been involved in a number of questionable
19 dealings, correct?

20 Mr. Kent. I would say that it's the largest private gas producer in the country,
21 and its business reputation is mixed.

22 Mr. Castor. So, to the extent a new regime is coming in under President
23 Zelensky, it certainly would be fair for the new prosecutor, a genuine prosecutor, to
24 reexamine old crimes that hadn't sufficiently been brought to justice, right?

25 Mr. Kent. I believe that the new prosecutor general, Ruslan Ryaboshapka, made

1 a statement to that and that they would be reviewing past cases. But keep in mind, this
2 is a country where those that commit crimes generally never get held to account, so there
3 is a lot to review.

4 Mr. Castor. Okay. Now, the bribe was paid in what year?

5 Mr. Kent. To the best of my knowledge, the case against Zlochevsky, the former
6 minister, was shut down December of 2014.

7 Mr. Castor. Okay. And right around that time, Burisma starts adding officials to
8 its board. Is that correct?

9 Mr. Kent. My understanding is, yes, that Zlochevsky invited a series of new
10 individuals to join the board in 2014.

11 Mr. Castor. And do you know what his strategy was in adding officials to his
12 board?

13 Mr. Kent. I have never met Mr. Zlochevsky.

14 Mr. Castor. And who are some of the folks he added to the board?

15 Mr. Kent. The most prominent person he added to the board was the former
16 president of Poland, Aleksander Kwasniewski.

17 Mr. Castor. And anyone else?

18 Mr. Kent. There were a number of others, including some Americans, and the
19 most prominent one in this context is Hunter Biden.

20 Mr. Castor. Okay. So Hunter Biden is added to the board of Burisma. Now do
21 you think that creates a problem that Burisma may be adding people to its board for
22 protection purposes?

23 Mr. Kent. Sir, I work for the government. I don't work in the cooperate sector,
24 and so I believe that companies build their boards with a variety of reasons, not only to
25 promote their business plans.

1 Mr. Castor. Was Hunter Biden a corporate governance expert?

2 Mr. Kent. I have no idea what Hunter Biden studied at university or what his CV
3 says.

4 Mr. Castor. Like is he the Jeffrey Sonnenfeld of the Ukraine?

5 Mr. Kent. I have no awareness or knowledge of what his background was and
6 what he may have done on the board of Burisma.

7 Mr. Castor. So you don't know whether he has any business experience in
8 Ukraine prior to joining Burisma's board?

9 Mr. Kent. I've heard nothing about prior experience, no.

10 Mr. Castor. Okay. Do you know if he speaks Ukrainian?

11 Mr. Kent. I do not.

12 Mr. Castor. Do you know if he possesses any other element, other than the fact
13 that he is the son of, at the time, the sitting Vice President?

14 Mr. Kent. I do not.

15 Mr. Castor. Ambassador Taylor, do you know whether Hunter Biden offers
16 anything other than the fact that his dad is the former Vice President?

17 Ambassador Taylor. I don't.

18 Mr. Castor. Or at the time was the Vice President?

19 Ambassador Taylor. I have no knowledge of Hunter Biden.

20 Mr. Castor. But you would agree it raises questions, right?

21 He was getting paid, I think, \$50,000 a month to sit on the board? Do you know
22 if he relocated to Ukraine?

23 Ambassador Taylor. Counsel, say again?

24 Mr. Castor. Do you know if Hunter Biden relocated to Ukraine?

25 Ambassador Taylor. No knowledge.

1 Mr. Castor. Do you, Mr. Kent?

2 Mr. Kent. Again, no knowledge.

3 Mr. Castor. Okay. So he is getting paid \$50,000 a month, but we don't know
4 whether he had any experience, he had any -- spoke the language, or whether he moved
5 to Ukraine, correct?

6 Mr. Kent. Correct.

7 Mr. Castor. Now, at this time, Vice President Biden was taking a specific interest
8 in Ukraine, wasn't he?

9 Mr. Kent. He was.

10 Mr. Castor. And could you tell us about that?

11 Mr. Kent. I believe that, while he was Vice President, he made had a total of six
12 visits to Ukraine. One may have been during the old regime, Yanukovych, and that
13 would make five visits after the Revolution of Dignity, which started February of 2014.

14 Mr. Castor. Okay. And you are the DCM, the deputy chief of mission, at the
15 time, correct?

16 Mr. Kent. Starting in 2015, yes.

17 Mr. Castor. Okay. And did Vice President Biden come when you were at post?

18 Mr. Kent. He did not. I came back for Ukrainian language training, and so I
19 missed several visits.

20 Mr. Castor. Okay. Now, you have seen Vice President Biden's -- he has sort of
21 given a speech, and he's, you know, a little folksy about how he went into Ukraine and he
22 told the Ukrainians that, if they don't fire the prosecutor, they're going to lose their \$1
23 billion in loan guarantees. You have seen that, correct?

24 Mr. Kent. I have. I think it was a speech at the Council of Foreign Relations in
25 January of 2018.

1 Mr. Castor. Right. And he also said that he has been there, you know, to
2 Ukraine, 13 times. Do you know if that's accurate?

3 Mr. Kent. To the best of my knowledge, when he was Vice President, he made
4 six visits.

5 Mr. Castor. And did the State Department ever express any concerns to the Vice
6 President's Office that the Vice President's role at the time in engaging on Ukraine
7 presented any issues?

8 Mr. Kent. No. The Vice President's role was critically important. It was top
9 cover to help us pursue our policy agenda.

10 Mr. Castor. Okay. But given Hunter Biden's role on Burisma's board of
11 directors, at some point, you testified in your deposition that you expressed some
12 concern to the Vice President's office. Is that correct?

13 Mr. Kent. That is correct.

14 Mr. Castor. And what did they do about that concern that you expressed?

15 Mr. Kent. I have no idea. I reported my concern to the Office of the Vice
16 President.

17 Mr. Castor. Okay. That was the end of it? Nobody --

18 Mr. Kent. Sir, you would have to ask people who worked in the Office of the Vice
19 President during 2015.

20 Mr. Castor. But after you expressed a concern of a perceived conflict of interest,
21 at the least, the Vice President's engagement in the Ukraine didn't decrease, did it?

22 Mr. Kent. Correct, because the Vice President was promoting U.S. policy
23 objectives in Ukraine.

24 Mr. Castor. And Hunter Biden's role on the board of Burisma didn't cease, did it?

25 Mr. Kent. To the best of my knowledge, it didn't. And my concern was that

1 there was the possibility of a perception of a conflict of interest.

2 Mr. Castor. Now, Ambassador Taylor, I want to turn to the discussion of the
3 irregular channel you described. And, in fairness, this irregular channel of diplomacy,
4 it's not as outlandish as it could be. Is that correct?

5 Ambassador Taylor. It's not as outlandish as it could be, yeah, I agree, Mr.
6 Castor.

7 Mr. Castor. Okay. We have Ambassador Volker, who is a former
8 Senate-confirmed Ambassador to NATO, longtime State Department diplomat, and
9 you've known Ambassador Volker for years, correct?

10 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

11 Mr. Castor. A man of unquestioned integrity, correct?

12 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

13 Mr. Castor. And somebody with incredible knowledge of the region?

14 Ambassador Taylor. With very good knowledge of the region, yes, sir.

15 Mr. Castor. And the best interest of the United States?

16 Ambassador Taylor. I'm sure that's right.

17 Mr. Castor. And the best interest of Ukraine?

18 Ambassador Taylor. His first priority is clearly the United States.

19 Mr. Castor. Okay.

20 Ambassador Taylor. And to the extent that Ukraine has an implication for that,
21 yes, Ukraine as well.

22 Mr. Castor. Okay. And the second member of the irregular channel is
23 Ambassador Sondland, who is Senate-confirmed, Ambassador to the EU. So his
24 involvement here, while, you know, not necessarily part of his official duties as the
25 Ambassador to the EU, it is certainly not outlandish for him to be interested and engaged

1 pursuant to the President or Secretary Pompeo's direction, correct?

2 Ambassador Taylor. It's a little unusual for the U.S. Ambassador to the EU to
3 play a role in Ukraine policy.

4 Mr. Castor. Okay. And, you know, might be irregular, but it's certainly not
5 outlandish?

6 And then Secretary Perry is the third member of the irregular channel, certainly a,
7 you know, Senate-confirmed official, somebody with deep experience in energy markets,
8 and he was pursuing some liquefied natural gas projects in Ukraine?

9 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct, Mr. Castor.

10 Mr. Castor. So his involvement, Secretary Perry's involvement, is perfectly
11 acceptable?

12 Ambassador Taylor. It is.

13 Mr. Castor. Okay. Now, this irregular channel, as it developed, when did you
14 determine that it became problematic? I mean, you, in your opening statement,
15 identified yourself appropriately as the leader of the regular channel.

16 Ambassador Taylor. At least a participant. Here's another leader of the regular
17 channel.

18 Mr. Castor. So when did you first develop concerns that the irregular channel
19 was being problematic?

20 Ambassador Taylor. So I arrived in Kyiv in mid-September. By late September,
21 a couple of phone calls with --

22 Mr. Castor. You arrive in Kyiv in June, right?

23 Ambassador Taylor. June, right. Sorry.

24 Mr. Castor. The 17th?

25 Ambassador Taylor. Mid-June. June 17th. Thank you.

1 And so by the end of June, I had begun to hear references to investigations --

2 Mr. Castor. Uh-huh.

3 Ambassador Taylor. -- as something that would have to happen prior to the
4 meeting that President Trump had offered to President Zelensky. That began to raise
5 questions for me.

6 Mr. Castor. Okay. Now, you have known Ambassador Volker and you certainly
7 have a reason to know Ambassador Sondland.

8 What did you do at this point, or did you ever try to wrest control of the irregular
9 channel?

10 Ambassador Taylor. I didn't try to wrest control of the irregular channel, do that.
11 At the time, when I --

12 Mr. Castor. Why not, though, if you had these concerns?

13 Ambassador Taylor. Because, Mr. Castor, at the time, as Ambassador
14 Kent -- no -- Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent testified, both channels, both of
15 those -- both channels were interested in having a meeting between President Zelensky
16 and President Trump.

17 So there's no reason to kind of wrest control if we're going in the same direction.

18 Mr. Castor. But at some point, you developed concerns. I mean, your opening
19 statement is here. I mean, you're the impeachment witness No. 1 -- and you're No. 2,
20 Mr. Kent -- you know, for the case, impeaching the President of the United States
21 because of the concerns you have testified about the irregular channel, correct?

22 Ambassador Taylor. I was concerned when the irregular channel appeared to be
23 going against the overall -- the irregular channel was going against the overall direction of
24 and purpose of the regular channels, yes.

25 Mr. Castor. And as I understand the record, however, you -- when you arrived in

1 Ukraine, you had the support of the Secretary and the Secretary's top advisor, Counselor
2 Ulrich Brechbuhl, correct?

3 Ambassador Taylor. That is correct.

4 Mr. Castor. And they assured you that if you had any concerns, you would be
5 able to contact them and they would have your back?

6 Ambassador Taylor. That is correct.

7 Mr. Castor. And you knew going in that the Rudy Giuliani element presented
8 some complexities, correct?

9 Ambassador Taylor. I was concerned about Rudy Giuliani's statements and
10 involvement in the Ukraine policy, yes.

11 Mr. Castor. Okay. So, when it genuinely became, you know, a concern for you,
12 what did you do to either engage Sondland and Volker and Perry -- by the way, have you
13 ever met Rudy Giuliani during these times relevant?

14 Ambassador Taylor. Not during the times relevant. He visited -- Mr. Giuliani
15 visited Ukraine one time when I was there, I think in 2007 or 2008.

16 Mr. Castor. Okay.

17 Ambassador Taylor. That's the only time I've met him.

18 Mr. Castor. Okay. So you've never had any communications with Rudy Giuliani
19 as part of these irregular channel business --

20 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct. That's correct.

21 Mr. Castor. Okay. And anyway, getting back to my question, did you try to
22 engage Brechbuhl or the Secretary, you know, during this time period? I know you said
23 that you had, I believe, an August 21st or 22nd telephone call with Brechbuhl; you had a
24 July 10th telephone call with Brechbuhl; and then you sent a first person cable to the
25 Secretary on 29th.

1 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

2 Mr. Castor. Is that sort of the universe of initiatives you took inside the State
3 Department to raise your concerns about the irregular channel?

4 Ambassador Taylor. I also raised my concerns with Deputy Assistant Secretary
5 George Kent. In particular, early on, when there -- I think I have mentioned this phone
6 call that was odd in that it did not include the normal staff -- indeed, Ambassador
7 Sondland's staff -- and that struck me as unusual.

8 I consulted with Mr. Kent and, at his suggestion, made a note of this and also
9 had -- I think at that point I had a conversation with Mr. Brechbuhl.

1 RPTR WARREN

2 EDTR HOFSTAD

3 [2:27 p.m.]

4 Mr. Castor. And that was a June 28th call, I believe?

5 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

6 Mr. Castor. And, in your opening statement, you expressed some concerns
7 about what Ambassador Sondland had said. But then, once Zelensky got on the phone,
8 it proceeded in a very regular-channel way, correct?

9 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

10 Mr. Castor. Okay. So the June 28th call, at least, in and of itself, didn't
11 ultimately, as it played out, present any problems for you.

12 Ambassador Taylor. The call with President Zelensky did not. The preparation
13 for that call -- the preparation included maybe 15 minutes of just the Americans that
14 would stay on the call.

15 Mr. Castor. Right.

16 Ambassador Taylor. And that -- again, that was a little irregular in that it didn't
17 have the staff.

18 It was also in that pre-call, in that 15 minutes before President Zelensky got on the
19 phone, where Ambassador Volker told the rest of the participants that he was planning to
20 have a conversation with President Zelensky in Toronto in 3 days, 4 days, where he would
21 outline for President Zelensky the important components of the phone call that we were
22 trying to establish.

23 Mr. Castor. Okay. And you didn't have any issue with that, did you?

24 Ambassador Taylor. The only issue I had with that, Mr. Castor, was, there was
25 reference to "investigations" in -- I believe this is -- I'll have to check my notes on that.

1 Mr. Castor. Okay.

2 Ambassador Taylor. But there was -- it raised issues for me, that I didn't
3 understand what Ambassador Volker had in mind that he was specifically going to raise --

4 Mr. Castor. Okay.

5 Ambassador Taylor. -- with Mr. Zelensky. That was a little bit of a concern.

6 Mr. Castor. Okay.

7 I mean, the President's expressed his, you know, interest in certain investigations,
8 certainly relating to the 2016 election and relating to, you know, this corrupt Burisma
9 outfit. So that wasn't inconsistent with the President's message, right?

10 Ambassador Taylor. I'm not sure, Mr. Castor. Maybe -- can I ask you to repeat
11 the question?

12 Mr. Castor. The President's concerns about the 2016 election and that you
13 needed to get to the bottom of it and the President's concerns as is ultimately related to
14 the Burisma company, I mean, if Ambassador Volker is raising that with Zelensky, that's
15 consistent with the direction of the President, correct?

16 Ambassador Taylor. The President's interest -- or, I would say, Mr. Giuliani's
17 interests, because that's what we were -- that's what was very clear at the time --

18 Mr. Castor. Right.

19 Ambassador Taylor. -- Mr. Giuliani's interest in pursuing these investigations was
20 of concern, but --

21 Mr. Castor. By the way, do you know how many times Volker met with Giuliani?

22 Ambassador Taylor. I don't.

23 Mr. Castor. How many would you guess? Like, was he talking to him all the
24 time or meeting with him all the time?

25 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Castor, I don't know.

1 Mr. Castor. Okay. From his -- you know, at his deposition, he told us just once.
2 And, you know, he texted back and forth with the mayor and had a call or two, but it
3 wasn't a pervasive engagement for Ambassador Volker. Were you aware of that?

4 Ambassador Taylor. I was not aware. I was aware of one breakfast, I think, but
5 that's the only one that I was aware of.

6 Mr. Castor. And, Mr. Kent, before my time expires, I want to circle back to the
7 company of Burisma. And you testified at your deposition that there was an instance
8 where USAID had engaged with Burisma in possibly sponsoring a program and you took
9 issue with that and recommended to the USAID to pull back from that. Could you tell us
10 about that?

11 Mr. Kent. So I became aware in the summer, I believe, of 2016 that, as a part of
12 what I recall was a clean-energy awareness campaign, that part of the USAID mission that
13 worked on economics and governance, including energy, had sponsored some sort of
14 contest for young Ukrainians to come up with a theme. And there was a prize; I believe
15 it may have been a camera. And they had cosponsored, with "public-private
16 partnership" being a buzzword, having a cosponsorship with Burisma.

17 Given the past history of our interest in recovering stolen assets from Zlochevsky,
18 it was my view that it was inappropriate for the Embassy to be cosponsoring a contest
19 with Burisma. I raised that with the mission director at the Embassy. She agreed.
20 And the USAID mission kept the contest but dropped the public-private partnership
21 sponsorship.

22 The Chairman. The time of the gentleman has expired.

23 We'll now move to 5-minute member rounds. I recognize myself for 5 minutes.

24 Mr. Kent, I want to follow up on my colleague's questions regarding Burisma.
25 You testified about a time when an oligarch named Zlochevsky, I think it was, was

1 self-dealing, awarding himself contracts. When was that?

2 Mr. Kent. To the best of my knowledge, he was Minister of
3 Energy -- sorry -- Minister of Ecology under President Yanukovich from 2010 to 2012.
4 And, at the time, licenses to have substrata exploration of gas were awarded by a
5 subdivision of the Ministry of Ecology.

6 The Chairman. So this corrupt self-dealing, then, was approximately 7 years, at
7 least 7 years, before the events that bring us here today, the phone call on the 25th and
8 the events around it?

9 Mr. Kent. Correct. His time as Minister was 2010 to 2012. Hunter Biden
10 joined the board of Burisma in 2014.

11 The Chairman. And you've read the call transcript, have you not?

12 Mr. Kent. I have, and I have it in front of me, but I haven't read it for about a
13 month.

14 The Chairman. Is there any mention in the discussion with President Trump and
15 President Zelensky of this oligarch, Zlochevsky, who 7 years earlier had been self-dealing?

16 Mr. Kent. To the best of my knowledge, no.

17 The Chairman. Is there a discussion of awarding contracts to oneself or the
18 corrupt acts in the 2012-to-2014 timeframe?

19 Mr. Kent. To the best of my knowledge, no.

20 The Chairman. Now, what the President brings up is CrowdStrike, the server,
21 and the Bidens. Am I right?

22 Mr. Kent. That's -- I see that here. Yes.

23 The Chairman. There was no discussion on that call of setting up an
24 anticorruption court or looking into corruption among oligarchs or companies in general.
25 The President's comments were focused on two things: 2016 and the Bidens. Am I

1 right?

2 Mr. Kent. I believe so, yes.

3 The Chairman. Now, you testified in your opening statement, "I do not believe
4 the United States should ask other countries to engage in selective, politically associated
5 investigations or prosecutions against opponents of those in power because such
6 selective actions undermine the rule of law regardless of the country."

7 The "selective, politically associated investigations or prosecutions against
8 opponents of those in power," are you referring to the Bidens there?

9 Mr. Kent. I am referring as a general principle about the promotion of the rule of
10 law.

11 The Chairman. But that would apply to the President of the United States
12 seeking an investigation of his political opponent, would it not?

13 Mr. Kent. It could be interpreted that way, yes, sir.

14 The Chairman. And, I take it, in your discussions, Ambassador Taylor, with
15 Ambassador Sondland or others, what was communicated to you was that the President
16 wanted investigations into 2016 and the Bidens, not into an oligarch named Zlochevsky or
17 self-dealing, but 2016 and the Bidens. Was that your understanding?

18 Ambassador Taylor. That was my understanding.

19 The Chairman. And, in fact, when you said your staff overheard this call between
20 Ambassador Sondland and the President, in that call, the President brings up
21 investigation, does he not?

22 Ambassador Taylor. He did.

23 The Chairman. And immediately after the President gets off the phone with
24 Sondland, Sondland is asked by your staff, what does the President think about Ukraine,
25 and his answer is, he's just interested in the Bidens. Am I right?

1 Ambassador Taylor. He said he was more interested in the Bidens.

2 The Chairman. More interested in the Bidens. No discussion of Zlochevsky or
3 Chalupa or things that happened 7 years ago. He was interested in the Bidens.

4 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

5 The Chairman. Now, I think you also testified that Ambassador Sondland told
6 you that President Zelensky wanted Zelensky in a public box. Is that right?

7 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

8 The Chairman. And by "public box," did that mean that private statements,
9 private promises to do this investigation of 2016 or the Bidens were not enough? He
10 had to go on TV, he had to go public in some way, because the President wanted him in
11 that box. Is that your understanding?

12 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Chairman, I don't know exactly what he had in mind,
13 and I'm not sure what Ambassador Sondland had in mind, who was the one who
14 mentioned that to me. That's the implication. The implication was it needed to be
15 public as opposed to being a private assurance.

16 The Chairman. And I think you said, in that same call, you asked Ambassador
17 Sondland to push back on President Trump's demand. Is that right?

18 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct, sir.

19 The Chairman. So you understood, from your conversation with Sondland, this
20 was the President's demand, not Sondland's demand, the President's demand. And you
21 wanted Sondland to push back. Am I right?

22 Ambassador Taylor. What I wanted -- so Ambassador Sondland was clearly able
23 to have conversations with the President. And I thought that the pressure on another
24 President, on President Zelensky, was not a good idea from either President's standpoint.

25 So I suggested in that phone call with Ambassador Sondland that he, since he

1 regularly -- or frequently had conversations with the President, could make that point.

2 The Chairman. And I think the way you expressed yourself is you wanted
3 Sondland to push back on President Trump's demand, right?

4 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

5 The Chairman. So it was your understanding from talking to Sondland, this is
6 what the President wanted him to do, and you wanted Sondland to push back.

7 Ambassador Taylor. I asked Ambassador Sondland to push back. That's
8 correct.

9 The Chairman. And, in fact, even after the aid was ultimately released, even
10 after the White House learns of the whistleblower complaint and the congressional
11 investigation, the aid is released, even after those events, you were still worried that
12 Zelensky was going to feel it necessary to go on CNN and announce these investigations,
13 were you not?

14 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Chairman, I was still worried that he might do that.
15 So, yes, I thought that would be a bad idea. And so, when there was some indication
16 that there might still be a plan for the CNN interview in New York, which was upcoming at
17 the United Nations General Assembly meeting, I was worried -- I wanted to be sure that
18 that didn't happen, so I addressed it with Zelensky's staff.

19 The Chairman. And I think you said earlier that Danylyuk, the national security
20 advisor then for Zelensky, was concerned Zelensky didn't want to be used as some tool in
21 American politics. Is that right?

22 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct, sir.

23 The Chairman. So Zelensky didn't want to go on TV to announce political
24 investigations that he thought would mire him in U.S. politics, right?

25 Ambassador Taylor. He knew that -- he and his advisors knew that it's a bad idea

1 to interject, to interfere in other nations' elections, yes, sir.

2 The Chairman. But, nonetheless, it appeared, until the aid was lifted, the hold
3 was lifted, that he felt compelled to do it.

4 Ambassador Taylor. He was making plans -- his staff was making plans to have
5 him make some kind of announcement -- I don't know what it would have been -- on CNN
6 in public.

7 The Chairman. Even though he didn't want to be mired in U.S. politics.

8 Ambassador Taylor. Even though he knew it was a bad idea to interfere in other
9 people's elections.

10 The Chairman. Mr. Nunes, you are recognized for 7 minutes and 10 seconds.

11 Mr. Nunes. I thank the gentleman for that.

12 Ambassador Taylor, you said in your deposition that the first time you heard about
13 this issue with Rudy Giuliani -- and I'm paraphrasing, but you read it in The New York
14 Times. Is that correct?

15 Ambassador Taylor. I do remember that first -- I do remember noticing about
16 Mr. Giuliani being involved in this in that article, yes, sir.

17 Mr. Nunes. Okay.

18 I think one of the mothers of all conspiracy theories is that somehow the
19 President of the United States would want a country that he doesn't even like, he doesn't
20 want to give foreign aid to, to have the Ukrainians start an investigation into Bidens.

21 With that, I yield to Mr. Jordan.

22 Mr. Jordan. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

23 Ambassador Taylor, thank you for being here.

24 Aid's held up on July 18th. Is that right?

25 Ambassador Taylor. That's what I first heard about it, Mr. Jordan.

1 Mr. Jordan. And then it's released, Ambassador Taylor, on September 11th.
2 And we know that, from your deposition, in those 55 days that aid is delayed, you met
3 with President Zelensky three times.

4 The first one was July 26th, the day after the famous call, now, between President
5 Trump and President Zelensky. President Zelensky meets with you, Ambassador Volker,
6 and Ambassador Sondland. And, again, according to your deposition, your testimony,
7 there was no linkage of security assistance dollars to investigating Burisma or the Bidens.

8 The second meeting's August 27th. Again, in this 55-day timeframe, second
9 meeting is August 27th. President Zelensky meets with you and Ambassador Bolton and
10 others. And, again, there's no linkage of dollars, security assistance dollars, to an
11 investigation of the Bidens.

12 And then, of course, the third meeting is September 5th. President Zelensky
13 meets with you and Senators Johnson and Murphy. And, once again, there was no
14 linkage of security assistance dollars to an investigation of Burisma or the Bidens.

15 Three meetings with the President of Ukraine, the new President, and no linkage.
16 That's accurate?

17 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Jordan, it's certainly accurate on the first two, first two
18 meetings, because, to my knowledge, the Ukrainians were not aware of the hold on
19 assistance until -- until the 29th of August.

20 Mr. Jordan. Until the Politico article.

21 Ambassador Taylor. The Politico article.

22 The third meeting that you mentioned with the Senators, Senator Murphy and
23 Senator Johnson, there was discussion of the security assistance but --

24 Mr. Jordan. No linkage.

25 Ambassador Taylor. -- there was not discussion of linkage.

1 Mr. Jordan. Three meetings face-to-face with President Zelensky, no linkage.

2 Yet, in your deposition, you said this, and you said it again the first hour of the
3 majority: My clear understanding was security assistance money would not come until
4 President Zelensky committed to pursue the investigation. My clear understanding was
5 they weren't going to get the money until President Zelensky committed to pursue the
6 investigations.

7 Now, with all due respect, Ambassador, your clear understanding was obviously
8 wrong, because it didn't happen. President Zelensky didn't announce he was going to
9 investigate Burisma or the Bidens. He didn't do a press conference and say, "I'm going
10 to investigate the Bidens. We're going to investigate Burisma." He didn't tweet about
11 it. And you just told the ranking member he didn't do the CNN interview and announce
12 he's going to investigate Burisma or the Bidens.

13 So three face-to-face meetings, it doesn't come up. No linkage whatsoever.
14 President Zelensky doesn't announce it before the aid is released on the 11th. And yet
15 you said you have a clear understanding that those two things were going to happen:
16 The money was going to get released but not until there was an investigation. And that,
17 in fact, didn't happen.

18 So what I'm wondering is, where did you get this clear understanding?

19 Ambassador Taylor. As I testified, Mr. Jordan, this came from Ambassador
20 Sondland --

21 Mr. Jordan. Well, can you hold 1 second, Ambassador? I'm going to bring you
22 a piece of paper from Ambassador Sondland's statement.

23 Ambassador Taylor. Very good.

24 Mr. Jordan. And you can take a look at this. Go ahead, though. I want to let
25 you finish.

1 Ambassador Taylor. So, Mr. Jordan, shall I read this or --

2 Mr. Jordan. No, no.

3 Ambassador Taylor. No.

4 Mr. Jordan. I just want you to it have because I'm going read it.

5 Ambassador Taylor. Oh, very good, very good, very good.

6 Mr. Jordan. Yeah, but I wanted you to go ahead and finish. You said you got
7 this from Ambassador Sondland.

8 Ambassador Taylor. That is correct. Ambassador Sondland also said he had
9 talked to President Zelensky and Mr. Yermak and had told them that, although this was
10 not a quid pro quo, if President Zelensky did not clear things up in public, we would be at
11 a stalemate. That was the -- that was one point.

12 It was also the case --

13 Mr. Jordan. Mr. Morrison talked to you, right?

14 Ambassador Taylor. No. What I was going to say is Ambassador Sondland also
15 told me that he recognized that it was a mistake to have told the Ukrainians that only the
16 meeting with the President in the Oval Office was held up in order to get these
17 investigations. No, it was not just the meeting; it was also the security assistance.
18 That is, everything was.

19 So those two --

20 Mr. Jordan. Okay.

21 Ambassador Taylor. -- those two discussions --

22 Mr. Jordan. No, I understand.

23 Ambassador Taylor. Okay.

24 Mr. Jordan. All right. So, again, just to recap, you had three meetings with
25 President Zelensky; no linkage in those three meetings came up. Ambassador Zelenksy

1 didn't announce that he was going to do any investigation of the Bidens or Burisma before
2 the aid was released. He didn't --

3 Ambassador Taylor. That was President --

4 Mr. Jordan. -- do a tweet, didn't do anything on CNN, didn't do any of that.
5 President Zelensky. Excuse me.

6 Ambassador Taylor. Yeah. Right.

7 Mr. Jordan. And then what you have in front of you is an addendum that
8 Mr. Sondland made to his testimony that we got a couple weeks ago. It says,
9 "Declaration of Ambassador Gordon Sondland. I, Gordon Sondland, do hereby swear
10 and affirm as follows."

11 I want you to look at point number two, bullet point number two, second
12 sentence.

13 "Ambassador Taylor recalls that Mr. Morrison told Ambassador Taylor that I told
14 Mr. Morrison that I conveyed this message to Mr. Yermak on September 1st, 2019, in
15 connection with Vice President Pence's visit to Warsaw and a meeting with President
16 Zelensky."

17 Now, this is his clarification. Let me read it one more time.

18 "Ambassador Taylor recalls that Mr. Morrison told Ambassador Taylor that I told
19 Mr. Morrison that I had conveyed this message to Mr. Yermak on September 1st, 2019, in
20 connection with Vice President Pence's visit to Warsaw and a meeting with President
21 Zelensky."

22 We've got six people having four conversations in one sentence, and you just told
23 me this is where you got your clear understanding, which -- I mean, even though you had
24 three opportunities with President Zelensky for him to tell you, "You know what? We're
25 going to do these investigations to get the aid," he didn't tell you, three different times.

1 Never makes an announcement, never tweets about it, never does the CNN interview.

2 Ambassador, you weren't on the call, were you? The President -- you didn't
3 listen in on President Trump's call and President Zelensky's call?

4 Ambassador Taylor. I did not.

5 Mr. Jordan. You never talked with Chief of Staff Mulvaney.

6 Ambassador Taylor. I never did.

7 Mr. Jordan. You never met the President.

8 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

9 Mr. Jordan. You had three meetings again with Zelensky and it didn't come up.

10 Ambassador Taylor. And two of those, they had never heard about it, as far as I
11 know, so there was no reason for it to come up.

12 Mr. Jordan. And President Zelensky never made an announcement.

13 This is what I can't believe. And you're their star witness. You're their first
14 witness.

15 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Jordan --

16 Mr. Jordan. You're the guy. You're the guy based on this, based on -- I mean,
17 I've seen church prayer chains that are easier to understand than this.

18 "Ambassador Taylor recalls that Mr. Morrison told" -- now, again, this is "I hereby
19 swear and affirm" from Gordon Sondland.

20 "Ambassador Taylor recalls that Mr. Morrison told Ambassador Taylor that I told
21 Mr. Morrison that I conveyed this message to Mr. Yermak on September 1st" -- this all
22 happens, by the way -- this all happens, by the way, in Warsaw --

23 The Chairman. Time of the gentleman has expired.

24 Mr. Jordan. -- where Vice President Pence meets with President Zelenksy, and
25 guess what?

1 The Chairman. Ambassador Taylor --

2 Mr. Jordan. They didn't talk about any linkage either.

3 The Chairman. The time of the gentleman has expired.

4 Ambassador Taylor, would you like to respond?

5 Ambassador Taylor. The only response -- I have two responses, Mr. Chairman.

6 Thank you.

7 And, Mr. Jordan, glad to take those questions.

8 Let me just say that I don't consider myself a star witness for anything.

9 Mr. Jordan. They do. You don't, but they do.

10 Ambassador Taylor. No, I don't. I'm just --

11 Mr. Jordan. They do.

12 Ambassador Taylor. I'm responding to your questions.

13 The Chairman. Mr. Jordan, please don't interrupt the witness.

14 Ambassador Taylor. As I think I was clear about, I'm not here to take one side or
15 the other or to advocate any particular outcome. So let me just restate that.

16 The second thing is that my understanding is only coming from people that I
17 talked to. And I --

18 Mr. Jordan. We got that.

19 Ambassador Taylor. We got that.

20 And I think this clarification from Ambassador Sondland was because he said he
21 didn't remember this in his first deposition, so he wanted to kind of clarify.

22 But I think, Mr. Jordan, the way I read this, he remembers it the same way I do.

23 Mr. Jordan. Yeah. And it's real clear, right?

24 Ambassador Taylor. It's very clear to me.

25 The Chairman. Thank you, Ambassador Taylor.

1 Mr. Himes, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

2 Mr. Himes. Gentlemen, thank you for your testimony today.

3 One of the things I find startling about these proceedings is that, faced with very
4 serious allegations of Presidential misconduct, my colleagues on the other side of the
5 aisle don't engage or defend that conduct. Rather, they spin theories about black
6 ledgers and Steele dossiers and the startling revelation that Ukrainians might have been
7 upset when a Presidential candidate suggested that perhaps he would let the Russians
8 keep Crimea. Or, of course, we get the attacks, so epitomized by Mr. Nunes's opening
9 statement when he attacked Democrats, he attacked the media, and, most disgustingly,
10 attacked the extraordinary men and women of the State Department and the FBI.

11 When a defense does emerge, it looks a little like this: Ukraine is a corrupt
12 country, and the President was just acting in a long line, a long tradition of actually trying
13 to address corruption in Ukraine.

14 Mr. Kent, you've worked on anticorruption and rule of law for much of your
15 27-year career. Is that correct?

16 Mr. Kent. I have specialized in anticorruption and rule-of-law issues since 2012,
17 correct.

18 Mr. Himes. So, like most of us up here, I don't have a good sense of what a real
19 anticorruption effort that we must engage in all over the world all the time, what that
20 looks like. So let me ask you to just take a minute and just characterize for us what a
21 real initiative, what a real program of anticorruption might look like.

22 Mr. Kent. If we're doing a systemic, holistic program, you need institutions with
23 integrity. That starts with investigators. It goes to prosecutors, it goes to courts, and
24 eventually it goes the corrections system.

25 In countries like Ukraine, we generally start with law enforcement, and that's

1 what we did in 2014-'15 with the new patrol police.

2 There also is oftentimes needed a specialized anticorruption agency. In Ukraine,
3 that was called the National Anti-Corruption Bureau, or NABU.

4 There was a different body that reviewed asset declarations for unusual wealth
5 called the National Anti-Corruption Prevention Council.

6 And eventually we got to helping them establish a special anticorruption
7 prosecutor and eventually a high court on anticorruption. And that was to try to create
8 investigators, prosecutors, and courts with integrity, that couldn't be bought, and would
9 be focused on high-level corruption.

10 Mr. Himes. So what I'm hearing there, Mr. Kent, is a very comprehensive effort.

11 So let me read you President Trump's own words to the Ukrainian President in a
12 July 25th phone call. And I quote: "There's a lot of talk about Biden's son, that Biden
13 stopped the prosecution, and a lot of people want to find out about that. So whatever
14 you can do with the Attorney General would be great. Biden went around bragging that
15 he stopped the prosecution, so if you can look into it. It sounds horrible to me."

16 Mr. Kent, when you hear those words, do you hear the President participating in
17 or requesting a thoughtful and well-calibrated anticorruption program?

18 Mr. Kent. I do not.

19 Mr. Himes. And, Mr. Kent and Mr. Taylor, the defenders of the President's
20 behavior have made a big deal out of the fact that Vice President Biden encouraged the
21 Ukrainians to remove a corrupt former Ukrainian prosecutor, 2016, Mr. Shokin.

22 And, in fact, Senator Rand Paul on Sunday said, and I quote him, "They're
23 impeaching President Trump for exactly the same thing that Joe Biden did."

24 Is that correct? Is what the President did in his phone call and what Joe Biden
25 did in terms of Mr. Shokin, are those exactly the same things? And, if not, how are they

1 different?

2 Mr. Kent. I do not think they are the same things.

3 What former Vice President Biden requested of former President of Ukraine
4 Poroshenko was the removal of a corrupt prosecutor general, Viktor Shokin, who had
5 undermined a program of assistance that we had spent, again, U.S. taxpayer money to try
6 to build an independent investigator unit to go after corrupt prosecutors.

7 And there was a case called the diamond prosecutor case in which Shokin
8 destroyed the entire ecosystem that we were trying to help create -- the investigators,
9 the judges who issued the warrants, the law enforcement that had warrants to do the
10 wiretapping, everybody -- to protect his former driver, who he'd made a prosecutor.

11 That's what Joe Biden was asking. Remove the corrupt prosecutor --

12 Mr. Himes. So Joe Biden was participating in an open effort -- established,
13 whole-of-government effort to address corruption in Ukraine.

14 Mr. Kent. That is correct.

15 Mr. Himes. Great.

16 So, Mr. Kent, as you look at this whole mess -- Rudy Giuliani, President Trump -- in
17 your opinion, was this a comprehensive and whole-of-government effort to end
18 corruption in Ukraine?

19 Mr. Kent. You're referring to the request in July?

20 Mr. Himes. Exactly.

21 Mr. Kent. I would not say so. No, sir.

22 Mr. Himes. Yeah, I don't. I don't think President Trump was trying to end
23 corruption in Ukraine. I think he was trying to aim corruption in Ukraine at Vice
24 President Biden and at the 2020 election.

25 And I yield back the balance of my time.

1 The Chairman. Mr. Conaway is recognized for 5 minutes.

2 Mr. Conaway. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 I yield my time to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Ratcliffe.

4 Mr. Ratcliffe. I thank the gentleman.

5 And I thank you both for being here. It's obvious from your testimony today that
6 you both care a great deal about U.S.-Ukraine relations.

7 It's also very clear that you're optimistic about President Zelensky.

8 Ambassador Taylor, you related that one of his first acts in office was to remove
9 immunity from deputies, which had long been a source of corruption.

10 I know you had a number of personal dealings with him. Has he given you any
11 reason to question his honesty or his integrity?

12 Ambassador Taylor. No, sir.

13 Mr. Ratcliffe. In your prior deposition, I asked you -- and I'll read it directly.

14 "If nobody in the Ukrainian Government was aware of a military hold at the time
15 of the Trump-Zelensky call, then, as a matter of law and as a matter of fact, there can be
16 no quid pro quo based on military aid. And, to your knowledge, nobody in the Ukrainian
17 Government was aware of the hold."

18 And your answer was, "That is correct."

19 Is that still your testimony?

20 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Ratcliffe, at some point in September --

21 Mr. Ratcliffe. I'm talking about on July 25th.

22 Ambassador Taylor. Ah, July 25th. Sorry. Yes, that's correct. That's correct.
23 They did not know this.

24 Mr. Ratcliffe. All right.

25 And, as it turns out, President Zelensky agreed with you. On October 10th,

1 President Zelensky held a press marathon with over 300 reporters, where he said
2 repeatedly and consistently over hours and hours that he was not aware of a military hold
3 during the July 25th call.

4 In fact, in his official press release from the Ukrainian Government, available on
5 his website, that I'll be introducing into the record, he said: "Our phone conversation
6 bears no relations to arms. They blocked the provision of military assistance prior to our
7 telephone conversation, but the issue had not been discussed during our conversation.
8 I mean, I didn't even know."

9 [The information follows:]

10

11 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1 Mr. Ratcliffe. So, now, in addition to confirming that, because he had no
2 knowledge of it, there was no quid pro quo involving military aid during that call,
3 President Zelensky went on to confirm a number of things: that there was no pressure,
4 that there were no conditions, that there were no threats on military aid, there were no
5 conditions or pressure to investigate Burisma or the 2016 election, that there was no
6 blackmail, that there was no corruption of any kind during the July 25th call.

7 Again, from his official press release: "Therefore, there was no blackmail,
8 because it was not the subject of our conversation with the President of the United
9 States. There were no conditions on the investigation either because of arms or the
10 situation around Burisma company."

11 He told Reuters, "There was no blackmail." He told the L.A. Times, "There was
12 no pressure or blackmail from the United States." He told Japan's Kyoto News, "I was
13 never pressured, and there were no conditions being imposed." He told ABC News and
14 the BBC, "I'm against corruption. This is not corruption. It was just a call."

15 The Ukrainian President stood in front of the world press and repeatedly,
16 consistently, over and over again, interview after interview, said he had no knowledge of
17 military aid being withheld, meaning no quid pro quo, no pressure, no demands, no
18 threats, no blackmail, nothing corrupt.

19 And unlike the first 45 minutes that we heard from the Democrats today, that's
20 not secondhand information. It's not hearsay. It's not what someone overheard
21 Ambassador Sondland say. That was his direct testimony.

22 Ambassador Taylor, do you have any evidence to assert that President Zelensky
23 was lying to the world press when he said those things? Yes or no?

24 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Ratcliffe, if I can respond --

25 Mr. Ratcliffe. My time is short. Yes or no?

1 Ambassador Taylor. I have no reason to doubt what the President said in his
2 press --

3 Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Very good.

4 So, in this impeachment hearing today, where we impeach Presidents for treason
5 or bribery or other high crimes, where is the impeachable offense in that call? Are
6 either of you here today to assert there was an impeachable offense in that call? Shout
7 it out. Anyone?

8 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Ratcliffe, if I can just respond, let me just reiterate that
9 I --

10 Mr. Ratcliffe. I've got 1 minute left.

11 Ambassador Taylor. I know you do.

12 Mr. Ratcliffe. Let me --

13 Ambassador Taylor. I know you've only got a minute left.

14 Mr. Ratcliffe. Let me just make this point.

15 Ambassador Taylor. I've just got 30 --

16 Mr. Ratcliffe. I --

17 The Chairman. Please allow the witness -- you asked the witness a question.

18 Mr. Ratcliffe. I'll withdraw the question. Let me just make this point.

19 Ambassador Taylor. And I'm not here to take one side or the other. This is
20 your decision.

21 Mr. Ratcliffe. Ambassador, let me answer this -- let me ask you this question.

22 The Chairman. The gentleman will suspend.

23 Mr. Ratcliffe. Suspend the time, please.

24 The Chairman. Ambassador Taylor --

25 Mr. Ratcliffe. Suspend the time, please.

1 The Chairman. -- would you like to answer the question?

2 Mr. Ratcliffe. Suspend the time, please. I withdrew the question.

3 The Chairman. The gentleman will suspend. We will suspend the clock.

4 Mr. Ratcliffe. Suspend the clock --

5 The Chairman. Suspend the clock.

6 Mr. Ratcliffe. -- at 1 minute, please.

7 The Chairman. Ambassador Taylor, would you like to respond to the question?

8 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Ratcliffe, I would just like to say that I am not here to do
9 anything having to do with -- to decide about impeachment. That is not what either of
10 us are here to do. This is your job.

11 Mr. Ratcliffe. Will you restore --

12 Ambassador Taylor. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 Mr. Ratcliffe. -- time to the clock to 1 minute?

14 The Chairman. No, but you may continue. You have 22 seconds.

15 Mr. Ratcliffe. Fine.

16 Mr. Ambassador, I think everyone knows that House Democrats have made up
17 their mind to impeach one President. The question that we've just learned is whether
18 or not they're prepared to impeach two. Because, to be clear, if House Democrats
19 impeach President Trump for a quid pro quo involving military aid, they have to call
20 President Zelensky a liar. If they impeach him for abusing his power or pressuring or
21 making threats or demands, they have to call President Zelensky a liar to do it. If they
22 impeach President Trump for blackmail or extortion or making threats or demands, they
23 have to call President Trump a liar to do it.

24 I yield back.

25 The Chairman. The chair recognizes Representative Sewell.

1 Ms. Sewell. I yield a few minutes to my esteemed chairman.

2 The Chairman. Thank you.

3 Ambassador Taylor, I don't know if you've had a chance to read some of the
4 transcripts that have been released. Are you aware that other witnesses have testified
5 that Ukraine, in fact, found out the aid was being withheld before it became public
6 knowledge?

7 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Chairman, I have read that. I think there's still some
8 question about when they may have heard.

9 The Chairman. And, ultimately, they did find out when the Politico story came
10 out, to your knowledge -- but others have said even sooner -- but they did find out, right,
11 Ambassador?

12 Ambassador Taylor. They did, Mr. Chairman.

13 The Chairman. And at the time they found out, they knew what President Trump
14 wanted from them, that he wanted these investigations, correct?

15 Ambassador Taylor. Ambassador Sondland informed President Zelensky's
16 staff -- that is, Mr. Yermak -- of what was required, yes.

17 The Chairman. So Ukraine finds out about the hold. You're not able to give
18 them a reason for the hold; no one is able to give them a reason for the hold. They
19 know the President wants these investigations. And then they're told in Warsaw by
20 Ambassador Sondland, essentially, you're not getting the aid unless you do these
21 investigations, correct?

22 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

23 The Chairman. So, you know, you've been asked how could there be
24 conditioning if the Ukrainians didn't know, but the Ukrainians were told by Ambassador
25 Sondland, were they not?

1 Ambassador Taylor. They were. They were.

2 They didn't know, as near as I can tell, the Ukrainians did not know about the hold
3 on the phone call on July 25th. That's true. But they were told, as you said,
4 Mr. Chairman, on the 1st of September.

5 The Chairman. And, in fact, while they may not have known during the time of
6 the call, they would find out. And when they did find out, they would know what the
7 President wanted, correct?

8 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

9 The Chairman. Representative Sewell.

10 Ms. Sewell. So, Mr. Kent, I'd like to refer you to the discussion of the May 23rd
11 meeting in the Oval Office when the President met with those who had gone to the
12 Ukraine for the inauguration.

13 You briefly testified that you helped propose names for individuals to go to that
14 inauguration. Was Ambassador Sondland, who was the Ambassador to the European
15 Union, one of the names that you submitted?

16 Mr. Kent. No, it was not.

17 Ms. Sewell. But he ultimately attended that inauguration; is that not right?

18 Mr. Kent. That is correct.

19 Ms. Sewell. And do you know how he ended up as a part of that official
20 delegation?

21 Mr. Kent. I do not know for sure, but my understanding is, once the list left the
22 NSC staff, it went through a review through the part of the White House that determines
23 Presidential delegations.

24 Ms. Sewell. You also testify that, upon returning, Ambassador Sondland used
25 his, quote, "connections with Mulvaney," end quote, in order to secure this meeting in

1 the Oval Office. Is that correct?

2 Mr. Kent. That is my understanding, yes.

3 Ms. Sewell. It seems that this Oval Office meeting was a pivotal turning point in
4 the Ukraine policy. Coming out of that meeting, who was given responsibility -- to your
5 recollection, who was given responsibility for the Ukraine policy?

6 Mr. Kent. I never saw any document that changed the nature of policy
7 determination. In the U.S. Government, under the Trump administration, there's the
8 national security Presidential memorandum --

9 Ms. Sewell. But didn't you also say -- I'm --

10 Mr. Kent. Please.

11 Ms. Sewell. I have little time.

12 You did say in your testimony that you felt that -- you testified that Secretary
13 Perry, Ambassador Sondland, and Ambassador Volker, quote, "felt that they had a
14 mandate to take the lead," end quote, on Ukraine policy, did you not?

15 Mr. Kent. That was an accurate statement. Their feeling doesn't mean that
16 they actually got delegated responsibility.

17 Ms. Sewell. Have you ever heard the term "three amigos"?

18 Mr. Kent. I referenced that after watching Gordon Sondland say that on
19 Ukrainian TV on July 26th.

20 Ms. Sewell. And what do you come to mean by "three amigos"?

21 Mr. Kent. My understanding of Ambassador Sondland's use of that term is that
22 the three people that were in charge of Ukraine policy during the summer were he,
23 Gordon Sondland, Ambassador Volker, and Secretary Perry.

24 Ms. Sewell. When did you come to learn about Mr. Giuliani's role? And what
25 do you consider his role to have been?

1 Mr. Kent. I first heard about former Mayor Giuliani's interest in Ukraine in
2 January of this year. That was a different phase than what happened during the
3 summertime.

4 Ms. Sewell. Was it normal to have a person who is a private citizen take an
5 active role in foreign diplomacy?

6 Mr. Kent. I did not find his particular engagement normal, no.

7 Ms. Sewell. Now, Ambassador Taylor, you testified that there are two channels,
8 regular and irregular. What did you see as Rudy Giuliani's role in Ukraine policy?

9 Ambassador Taylor. Congresswoman, I came to see that Mr. Giuliani had a large
10 influence on the irregular channel.

11 Ms. Sewell. And was that normal? Is that normal, to have a private citizen of
12 the United States take an active role in diplomacy?

13 Ambassador Taylor. It is not normal. It is not unusual to ask for people outside
14 the government to give opinions to help form the policies of the U.S. Government. It is
15 unusual to have a person put input into the channel that goes contrary to U.S. policy.

16 Ms. Sewell. Thank you.

17 I yield back.

18 The Chairman. Mr. Turner, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

19 Mr. Turner. Thank you.

20 Mr. Kent, Ambassador Taylor, thank you for your service. I have a great deal of
21 appreciation for your profession. You have very little direct contact with
22 decision-makers, a tremendous amount of responsibility, and not a lot of authority to
23 affect U.S. policy, bilateral engagements or multilateral engagements. You're trying to
24 shepherd through issues with our allies.

25 One example of that, Ambassador Taylor, is that you testified in your prior

1 testimony that you have not had any contact with the President of the United States. Is
2 that correct?

3 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct, sir.

4 Mr. Turner. Mr. Kent, have you had any contact with the President of the United
5 States?

6 Mr. Kent. I have not.

7 Mr. Turner. So not only no conversations with the President of the United States
8 about Ukraine, you've not had any contact with the President of the United States,
9 correct?

10 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

11 Mr. Turner. Okay.

12 So you both know that this impeachment inquiry is about the President of the
13 United States, don't you? I mean, the man that neither one of you have had any contact
14 with -- you're the first-up witnesses. I just find that a little amazing, that the first up
15 would be two people who've never had any contact with the President himself.

16 Now, Kurt Volker did have contact with the President and contact with the
17 President on Ukraine.

18 Ambassador Taylor, you said that he is a man of highest integrity. Well, I know
19 Kurt Volker, and I know -- you know, he served as the NATO Ambassador. He served as
20 the director of the McCain Institute. He has the highest professional ethics. He's one
21 of the most knowledgeable people about Europe. He's absolutely a truthful man.

22 Mr. Kent, would you agree with Ambassador Taylor that he is of the highest
23 integrity?

24 Mr. Kent. I believe Kurt Volker has served the U.S. as a public servant very well.

25 Mr. Turner. Do either of you have any evidence that Mr. Volker committed

1 perjury or lied to this committee in his testimony to this committee? Do either of you
2 have any evidence that Kurt Volker perjured himself or lied to this committee in his
3 testimony?

4 Ambassador Taylor, any evidence?

5 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Turner, I have no evidence.

6 Mr. Turner. Mr. Kent?

7 Mr. Kent. I believe Ambassador Volker's deposition was over 400 pages, and I
8 don't have it in front of me, so I can't make a judgment --

9 Mr. Turner. But you have no evidence that he lied or perjured himself, right, Mr.
10 Kent?

11 Mr. Kent. I have no basis to make that judgment, no, sir.

12 Mr. Turner. Great.

13 Well, we're not in a court, gentlemen. And if we were, the Sixth Amendment
14 would apply, and so would rules on hearsay and opinion, and most of your two
15 testimonies would not be admissible whatsoever.

16 But I understand in your profession you deal in words of understanding, words of
17 beliefs and feelings, because in your profession that's what you work with to try to pull
18 together policy and to go in and out of meetings to try to formulate opinions that affect
19 other people's decision-making.

20 Ambassador Taylor, have you ever prepared for a meeting with a President or a
21 Prime Minister of a country where you were told one thing before you went into the
22 meeting as to what it was to be about and the meeting would be about another thing or
23 you get in there and the beliefs or opinions of the President or the Prime Minister were
24 other than you believed?

25 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Turner, you're asking if I ever learned something new in

1 a meeting?

2 Mr. Turner. Have you ever walked in with a belief that you thought about the
3 country that you were serving in and find out that they were wrong?

4 Ambassador Taylor. I learn something in every meeting, Mr. Turner, but I, you
5 know --

6 Mr. Turner. Ambassador Taylor, the reason why the Sixth Amendment doesn't
7 allow hearsay is it's unreliable. It's unreliable because, frequently, it's untruthful. It is
8 not factual. It might be beliefs or understandings.

9 Ambassador, you testified about a number of things that you heard. Isn't it
10 possible that the things that you heard were not true; that some of the beliefs and
11 understandings that you had are not accurate; that, in fact, you're mistaken about some
12 of the things that you testified today on a factual basis versus a professional assessment?

13 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Turner, I am here to tell you what I know. I'm not
14 going to tell you anything I don't know. I'm going to tell you everything that I do know.
15 And that's --

16 Mr. Turner. But since you learned it from others, you could be --

17 Ambassador Taylor. That's exactly --

18 Mr. Turner. -- you could be right -- you could be wrong --

19 Ambassador Taylor. That's exactly --

20 Mr. Turner. -- right, Mr. Taylor?

21 Ambassador Taylor. That's exactly why I am here.

22 Mr. Turner. But since you learned it from others, could you be wrong, correct?

23 Ambassador Taylor. I am telling you what I heard them tell me, Mr. Turner.

24 Mr. Turner. And they could be wrong, or they could be mistaken, or they
25 could've heard it incorrectly, right, Ambassador Taylor?

1 Ambassador Taylor. People make mistakes.

2 Mr. Turner. Right. So you could be wrong.

3 I yield the rest of my time to Mr. Jordan.

4 Mr. Jordan. Thank you. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

5 Ambassador Taylor, the gentleman asked if you could be wrong. Were you
6 wrong when you said you had a clear understanding that President Zelensky had to
7 commit to an investigation of Bidens before the aid got released, and the aid got released
8 and he didn't commit to an investigation?

9 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Jordan, I was not wrong about what I told you, which is
10 what I heard. That's all I've said. I've told you what I heard.

11 Mr. Jordan. And that's the point. What you heard did not happen. It didn't
12 happen. You had three meetings with the guy; he could've told you. He didn't
13 announce he was going to do an investigation before the aid happened.

14 It's not just, could it have been wrong? The fact is, it was wrong, because it
15 didn't happen.

16 The whole point was, you had a clear understanding that aid will not get released
17 unless there's a commitment. Not maybe, not I think the aid might happen, it's my
18 hunch it's going to get released. You used clear language, clear understanding and
19 commitment. And those two things didn't happen. So you had to be wrong.

20 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Jordan, the other thing that went on when that
21 assistance was on hold is we shook the confidence of a close partner in our reliability.
22 And that --

23 Mr. Jordan. That's not what this proceeding's about, Ambassador Taylor --

24 The Chairman. The time of the gentleman has expired.

25 Ambassador Taylor --

1 Mr. Jordan. That is not what this whole thing started on.

2 The Chairman. The time of the gentleman has expired.

3 Ambassador Taylor, did you want to finish your answer?

4 Ambassador Taylor. No, that's good, Mr. Chairman.

5 The Chairman. I now recognize Mr. Carson for 5 minutes.

6 Mr. Carson. Thank you, Chairman. I yield to the chairman.

7 The Chairman. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

8 I just wanted to follow up on some of the earlier questions

9 about Ambassador -- sorry -- about President Zelensky's statements after this scandal
10 came to light, when he was asked, you know, were you pressured, how did the phone call
11 go, et cetera.

12 The Ukrainians, Mr. Kent, are pretty sophisticated about U.S. politics, are they
13 not?

14 Mr. Kent. Perhaps.

15 The Chairman. You would agree that if President Zelensky contradicted
16 President Trump and said, "Of course I felt pressured, they were holding up 400 million in
17 military assistance, we have people dying every day," if he were to contradict President
18 Trump directly, they would be sophisticated enough to know they may pay a very heavy
19 price with this President, were they not?

20 Mr. Kent. That's a fair assessment.

21 The Chairman. And President Zelensky not only had to worry about retribution
22 from Donald Trump should he contradict Donald Trump publicly, he also has to worry
23 about how he's perceived domestically, doesn't he, Ambassador Taylor?

24 Ambassador Taylor. President Zelensky is very sensitive to the views of the
25 Ukrainian people, who, indeed, are very attentive to Ukrainian-U.S. politics, yes.

1 The Chairman. And so, if President Zelensky were to say, "I had to capitulate and
2 agree to these investigations, I was ready to go on CNN until the aid got restored," that
3 would obviously be hurtful to him back home, would it not?

4 Ambassador Taylor. He cannot afford to be seen to be deferring to any foreign
5 leader. He is very confident in his own abilities, and he knows that the Ukrainian people
6 expect him to be clear and defend Ukrainian interests.

7 The Chairman. Mr. Carson.

8 Mr. Carson. Thank you, Chairman.

9 My colleague touched briefly on the campaign to remove career diplomat
10 Ambassador Yovanovitch.

11 Mr. Kent, you stated in previous testimony that you were aware of the, quote,
12 "campaign of slander" against the Ambassador in real-time which basically unfolded in
13 the media. Where do you understand this misinformation campaign was coming from,
14 and who was essentially perpetuating it?

15 Mr. Kent. To my understanding, the then-Prosecutor General of Ukraine, now
16 ex-, Yuriy Lutsenko, met Rudy Giuliani in New York on a private visit in January. They
17 had a second meeting in February. And through the good auspices of the former mayor
18 of New York, Yuriy Lutsenko gave an interview to John Solomon, then of The Hill, in early
19 March, and the campaign was launched on March 20th.

20 Mr. Carson. A corrupt Ukrainian prosecutor gave an interview to a reporter in
21 the United States and made claims that the Ambassador provided officials with a, quote,
22 "do not prosecute" list.

23 Sir, do you have any reason to believe this is true?

24 Mr. Kent. I have every reason to believe it is not true.

25 Mr. Carson. What was the reputation of the man who made these allegations,

1 sir?

2 Mr. Kent. Yuriy Lutsenko was a politician of long standing. He had been
3 Minister of Interior after the Orange Revolution. The U.S. Embassy had good relations
4 with him for years. He was imprisoned by President Yanukovich, came out, was elected
5 majority leader of Poroshenko, the then-President's, party, and then became Prosecutor
6 General in the spring of 2016.

7 Mr. Carson. What was your experience with Ambassador Yovanovitch? Was
8 she working hard to combat corruption in Ukraine, sir?

9 Mr. Kent. She was dedicated, as is every U.S. Government official in Ukraine, to
10 help Ukrainians overcome the legacy of corruption, which -- they actually have made a
11 number of important steps since 2014.

12 Mr. Carson. So, in fact, before all of this happened, you and your superiors at
13 the State Department asked the Ambassador to extend her time in the Ukraine, correct,
14 sir?

15 Mr. Kent. That is correct.

16 Mr. Carson. Did you support her extension?

17 Mr. Kent. I asked her to extend until the end of this year to get through the
18 election cycle in Ukraine. And then Under Secretary Hale, in March, asked her to stay
19 until 2020.

20 Mr. Carson. Now, some in Ukraine probably disliked her efforts to help Ukraine
21 root out corruption. Is that correct?

22 Mr. Kent. As I mentioned in my testimony, you can't promote principled
23 anticorruption action without pissing off corrupt people.

24 Mr. Carson. Fair enough. Now, some of those people helped Giuliani smear
25 her, did they not?

1 Mr. Kent. They did.

2 Mr. Carson. So, ultimately, that smear campaign pushed President Trump to
3 remove her, correct, sir?

4 Mr. Kent. I cannot judge that. What I can say is that Rudy Giuliani's smear
5 campaign was ubiquitous in the spring of 2019 on FOX News and on the internet and
6 Twittersphere.

7 Mr. Carson. So, Ambassador Taylor and Mr. Kent, in all of your combined
8 decades at the State Department, have you ever before seen an instance where an
9 ambassador was forced out by the President following a smear campaign of
10 misinformation orchestrated by the President's allies?

11 Mr. Kent. I have not.

12 Ambassador Taylor. Nor I.

13 Mr. Carson. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

14 The Chairman. Dr. Wenstrup.

15 Dr. Wenstrup. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 Mr. Taylor, this should be easy because I'm going to use a lot of your words from
17 the previous deposition as we go forward.

18 In your deposition, you spoke of support for Ukraine and its relationship to the
19 United States and how much you support that. In 2014, you -- and I'm quoting
20 this -- urged the Obama administration to provide lethal defensive weapons in order to
21 deter further Russian aggression.

22 Did the Obama administration provide lethal weapons?

23 Ambassador Taylor. No, sir.

24 Dr. Wenstrup. They provided MREs and blankets and things like that.

25 In your deposition, you also said President Obama's objection was because it

1 might provoke the Russians. And, in fact, you testified in your deposition that the
2 Obama administration didn't have a good argument since Russia had already provoked
3 and they have invaded Ukraine. Is that correct?

4 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct, sir.

5 Dr. Wenstrup. It's a shame he didn't take the advice of a combat veteran like
6 you, sir, someone who understands what deterrence provides, because a lot of Ukrainian
7 lives could've been saved if he had taken your advice.

8 In your deposition, you said, and I quote, "happy," you were "happy" with the
9 Trump administration's assistance. And it provided both lethal and financial aid, did it
10 not?

11 Ambassador Taylor. It did, sir.

12 Dr. Wenstrup. And you also stated that it was a substantial improvement. Is
13 that correct?

14 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct, sir.

15 Dr. Wenstrup. So now we're providing Javelins, which kill Russian tanks. MREs
16 and blankets do not do that.

17 Today, you said, "I was beginning to fear that the longstanding U.S. policy of
18 strong support for Ukraine was shifting." I have a little trouble with "longstanding"
19 based on what we just talked about, because it wasn't really longstanding strong support.
20 It seems to me the strong support came with this administration.

21 Would you agree with that, sir? Unless you consider MREs and blankets strong
22 support, I wouldn't call it longstanding.

23 Ambassador Taylor. The "longstanding" that I'm referring to there,
24 Dr. Wenstrup, is the longstanding political support, economic support, and increasing
25 military support.

1 Dr. Wenstrup. Well, certainly, that strong support came from Congress, but it
2 didn't --

3 Ambassador Taylor. It did.

4 Dr. Wenstrup. -- come from the previous administration as compared to what
5 this administration has decided to do. The strong support came with this
6 administration, not the Obama administration.

7 And maybe now we understand what President Obama meant when he told
8 Russian President Medvedev that he'd have more flexibility after his election. Maybe
9 that flexibility was to deny lethal aid to the Ukraine, allowing Russia to march right in and
10 kill Ukrainians.

11 Again, at your deposition, you urged the Obama administration officials to provide
12 lethal defensive weapons to Ukraine in order to deter further Russian aggression. And
13 now they have that under this administration, don't they, Mr. Ambassador?

14 Ambassador Taylor. They have the Javelins, yes, sir.

15 Dr. Wenstrup. Thank you.

16 And I would like to yield the remainder of my time to Mr. Ratcliffe.

17 Mr. Ratcliffe. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

18 So no pressure, no demands, no conditions, nothing corrupt, no -- nothing,
19 nothing on the call. That's what we heard President Zelensky say.

20 And because House Democrats' charges against President Trump have been
21 publicly, repeatedly, consistently been denied by President Zelensky, you heard the
22 defense now from Chairman Schiff: He's lying because he has to. He has to lie
23 because the threats, the demands, the blackmail, the extortion that House Democrats are
24 alleging, if he didn't do that -- he couldn't possibly risk military aid. He would have to do
25 anything he had to secure it.

1 The problem with that, the hole in that argument is, you have to ask yourself,
2 what did President Zelensky actually do to get the aid? The answer is, nothing. He did
3 nothing. He didn't open any investigations. He didn't call Attorney General Bill Barr.
4 He didn't do any of the things that House Democrats say that he was being forced and
5 coerced and threatened to do. He didn't do anything, because he didn't have to.

6 I yield back.

7 The Chairman. Ms. Speier, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

8 Mr. Speier. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 Thank you both for your true heroic efforts, both today and also throughout your
10 careers.

11 I'd like to start with you, Mr. Kent. In your testimony, you said that you had -- "In
12 mid-August, it became clear to me that Giuliani's efforts to gin up politically motivated
13 investigations were now infecting U.S. engagement with Ukraine, leveraging President
14 Zelensky's desire for a White House meeting."

15 Mr. Kent, did you actually write a memo documenting your concerns that there
16 was an effort underway to pressure Ukraine to open an investigation to benefit President
17 Trump?

18 Mr. Kent. Yes, ma'am. I wrote a memo to the file on August 16th.

19 Ms. Speier. But we don't have access to that memo, do we?

20 Mr. Kent. I submitted it to the State Department, subject to the September 27th
21 subpoena.

22 Ms. Speier. And we have not received one piece of paper from the State
23 Department relative to this investigation.

24 Both of you have made compelling cases of the importance of Ukraine to Europe,
25 to the 70 years of peace, the benefit that it has to the United States' national security,

1 and our goal to continue to support sovereignty of nations.

2 Meanwhile, Russia is violently attacking people in Ukraine in the Donbas area.

3 So withholding military aid, does that weaken Ukraine?

4 Mr. Kent. Well, I think it sends the wrong signal, and it did for a short period of
5 time. Again the assistance from the FY '19 was released and is in the process of heading
6 towards Ukraine.

7 Ms. Speier. Does it embolden Russia, when there was no aid being sent to
8 Ukraine?

9 Mr. Kent. I think the signal that there is controversy and question about the U.S.
10 support of Ukraine sends the signal to Vladimir Putin that he can leverage that as he
11 seeks to negotiate with not only Ukraine but other countries.

12 Ms. Speier. Thank you.

13 Ambassador Taylor, I think you mentioned that a White House meeting for
14 Zelensky would boost his ability to negotiate for a peaceful settlement with Vladimir
15 Putin and Russia in general. Is that true?

1 RPTR PANGBURN

2 EDTR HOFSTAD

3 [2:18 p.m.]

4 Ambassador Taylor. Ms. Speier, it is certainly true that U.S. support for Mr.
5 Zelensky, President Zelensky, in his negotiations with the Russians is very important and
6 will enable him to get a better agreement with that support from the United States, both
7 from the military assistance but also just from the political assistance that we can
8 provide.

9 Ms. Speier. But he has not yet had that White House meeting, has he?

10 Ambassador Taylor. He has not.

11 Ms. Speier. I think it's ironic that Soviet-born Lev Parnas, who has now been
12 indicted, had a meeting with the President in the White House after participating in a
13 number of campaign events for the President and contributing \$325,000 to the
14 President's PAC. So maybe it's actually the requirement that you give money to the
15 President's PAC in order to get that meeting at the White House.

16 Ambassador Taylor, is it true that the Prosecutor General now has opened an
17 investigation in Ukraine?

18 Ambassador Taylor. Ms. Speier, the new Prosecutor General that President
19 Zelensky has appointed is indeed investigating crimes in general. Is that your question?

20 Ms. Speier. Yes. But is he --

21 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, he is in office and is investigating criminal activity.

22 Ms. Speier. Has he specified what investigations he's undertaken?

23 Ambassador Taylor. No.

24 Ms. Speier. He has not. All right.

25 I yield the rest of my time to Chairman Schiff.

1 The Chairman. Just a quick question. A couple of my colleagues referenced a
2 conversation, the hot mike conversation between President Obama and President
3 Medvedev. That was in 2012. There was a suggestion that he was saying he was going
4 to go easy on Russia over the invasion of Ukraine, but that invasion took place 2 years
5 after that conversation.

6 You don't have any reason to believe that President Obama was referring to going
7 easy on Russia for an invasion that hadn't happened yet, do you?

8 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Chairman, I have no knowledge of what was in --

9 The Chairman. It was more or less a rhetorical question.

10 I will yield now to Mr. Stewart -- or, I'm sorry -- Mr. Stewart.

11 Mr. Stewart. Thank you.

12 To the witnesses, thank you. Time is precious, so I'm going to go very, very
13 quickly.

14 Welcome, I think, to year 4 of the ongoing impeachment of President Trump.
15 I'm sorry that you have been dragged into this. I think this sign behind me says it very
16 well, by the whistleblower's attorney. "The coup has started, and impeachment will
17 follow."

18 But after listening for what is going on, now, 4 hours and 21 minutes, after all of
19 the secret hearings, after all of the leaks, after hearing witnesses such as yourselves give
20 your opinions, it really comes down to this. One thing -- one thing it comes down to.
21 This is the transcript that the President has released of this phone call. There is one
22 sentence, one phone call. That is what this entire impeachment proceeding is based
23 upon.

24 And I've got to tell you, if your impeachment case is so weak that you have to lie
25 and exaggerate about it to convince the American people that they need to remove this

1 President, then you've got a problem. And the American people have been lied to again
2 and again on this.

3 We first heard a lot about quid pro quo. And then many people realized that
4 was meaningless, so they said, let's go for the fences then, let's talk about extortion, let's
5 talk about bribery, let's talk about cover-up and obstruction -- for which there is zero
6 evidence of any of that.

7 We heard a characterization of the President's phone call that was so
8 outrageously inaccurate it had to be described as a parody.

9 And none of those things matter. None of it matters. It comes down to this:
10 We appreciate your insight, we appreciate your opinion, but all you can do is give your
11 opinion of this, this one phone call.

12 Let me ask you, gentlemen. Both of you have said here today, you have testified,
13 corruption in the Ukraine is endemic. Would we agree on that? Simple question.
14 The problem is, isn't it?

15 Mr. Kent. It's a problem, and they're taking steps to address it.

16 Mr. Stewart. Okay. Earlier in the hearing, both of you used the word
17 "endemic" or agreed to it. It's in the courts, it's oligarchs, it's prosecutors, it's
18 everywhere.

19 And I think we can also agree that that's not the only place in the world where we
20 experience and see corruption. There's dozens and dozens of nations around the world
21 that are steeped in corruption. Would you agree with that?

22 Ambassador Taylor. I would say that there's corruption in every country,
23 including ours.

24 Mr. Stewart. Okay. Thank you. And some we're clearly more concerned
25 about than others.

1 So, in these corrupt nations, of which there are probably hundreds of corrupt
2 individuals, hundreds of corrupt government officials, can you give me an example, any
3 time where the Vice President of the United States shows up and demands that a specific
4 prosecutor be fired and gives them a 6-hour time limit to do that? Are you aware of
5 that ever happening any other place?

6 I guess the answer is no.

7 And I just think it's interesting that, out of hundreds of corrupt individuals, dozens
8 of corrupt nations, that happened one time, and it happened with the individual whose
9 son was being paid by the organization that was under investigation.

10 One other thing very quickly. If someone was a candidate for a political office,
11 even for President of the United States, should they be immune from investigation?

12 Mr. Kent. No one is above the law, sir.

13 Mr. Stewart. Thank you. I agree with that. I think we all would agree with
14 that. And yet I think some presume that because some of the individuals we're talking
15 about here were candidates that they are immune from any questions or any
16 investigation. I think it's absurd. For heaven's sakes, if those of us in public office,
17 those of us who find ourselves up for reelection, or all the time, as a candidate, I think we
18 have a higher standard, not immunity from asking these types of questions.

19 And last thing, and then I'm going to yield my time. Availability of funds -- I'm
20 quoting from the NDAA in 2019. The language is specific: Availability of funds, under
21 assistance to the Ukraine, it has to be certified. And what has to be certified? Quote,
22 "for the purposes of decreasing corruption."

23 Are you surprised that there would be questions about corruption in Ukraine and
24 that it would be discussed, withholding some of this aid, that's actually required by law
25 that it be withheld if they can't certify that corruption has been eliminated or is being

1 addressed?

2 Mr. Kent. The certification in that case is done by the Secretary of Defense upon
3 advice of his staff in consultation with the interagency community. We were fully
4 supportive of that conditionality, and the Secretary of Defense had already certified that
5 that conditionality had been met.

6 Mr. Stewart. And so we agree that we should withhold funds if there's questions
7 about corruption that have not been addressed.

8 I'm going to yield the rest of my time to Mr. Jordan.

9 Eighteen seconds, are you going to let that go?

10 In that case, I will yield back. Thank you.

11 The Chairman. Mr. Quigley.

12 Mr. Quigley. So that certification, that took place in May. Is that correct, Mr.
13 Kent?

14 Mr. Kent. I do not believe it was certified by May. I would defer to my
15 colleague Laura Cooper, who's testified --

16 Mr. Quigley. But it was an earlier time?

17 Mr. Kent. It had not been done by May, because when I was visiting in May, I
18 was asked by Laura to raise a specific issue that would meet the conditionality.

19 Mr. Quigley. But DOD did meet -- say that they met the certification?

20 Mr. Kent. Yes, sir. I think it may have been in the July timeframe.

21 Mr. Quigley. Thank you.

22 So it's interesting and curious that we're talking about hearsay evidence. It is
23 extraordinary to me that the committees have been able to get as much information as
24 they have, direct or hearsay, given the obstruction.

25 You gentlemen were both asked by the State Department not to appear for your

1 depositions. Is that correct?

2 Mr. Kent. We both received, I believe -- I received, initially, a letter directing me
3 not to appear. And once the committees issued a subpoena, I was under legal
4 obligation to appear, and I am here today under subpoena.

5 Mr. Quigley. Ambassador, were you also asked not to be part of the deposition?

6 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Quigley, I was told by the State Department: Don't
7 appear under these circumstances. That was in the letter to me. And when I got the
8 subpoena, exactly as Mr. Kent said, that was different circumstances and obeyed a legal
9 subpoena. So, yes, sir, I'm here for that reason.

10 Mr. Quigley. Absolutely. But we are not able to hear testimony by Chief of
11 Staff Mulvaney, John Eisenberg, Michael Ellis, John Bolton, more than a dozen witnesses.

12 So I suspect, if you have a problem with hearsay, you'd have a lot more direct
13 testimony and direct evidence if you weren't blocking that ability. You'd have a lot more
14 documents, documents that you referred to with my colleagues' questions that have not
15 yet been turned over by State or any other agency.

16 Is that correct, to your knowledge, gentlemen?

17 Mr. Kent. We're both here under subpoena. I don't think either of us is going
18 to comment on why others have not shown up.

19 Mr. Quigley. But has any of the documents that you turned over, to your
20 knowledge, been turned over to the committee?

21 Ambassador Taylor. No.

22 Mr. Quigley. Mr. Kent, following the July 25th call and through the first 2 weeks
23 of August, were you involved in any efforts to arrange for President Zelensky to make a
24 statement announcing the two investigations that the President, President Trump, had
25 talked about in the July 25th call?

1 Mr. Kent. I was not. And I would never have participated in an arrangement to
2 have them announce investigations.

3 Mr. Quigley. Ambassador Taylor, were you involved in any such efforts?

4 Ambassador Taylor. No, sir.

5 Mr. Quigley. I want to show you a text of the exchange. This one's between
6 Ambassador Volker and Andriy Yermak, the same aide to Zelensky that Volker texted
7 before the July 25th call. You weren't involved with it, so I'll read it.

8 The first text is from August 10th. Ambassador Volker texts: I agree with your
9 approach. Let's iron out the statement and use that to get date and Pres. can go
10 forward with it.

11 Then at 5:42, Mr. Yermak responds: Once we have a date, we'll call for a press
12 briefing announcing upcoming visit and outline a vision for a reboot of U.S.-Ukraine
13 relationship, including, among other things, Burisma and election-meddling
14 investigations.

15 Andriy Yermak says that, once we have a date, they will announce the
16 investigations in Burisma and election meddling.

17 Mr. Kent, are these the same two investigations President Trump asked the
18 Ukrainian President to initiate in the July 25th meeting -- 25th call?

19 Mr. Kent. Those appear to be the same issues that were mentioned in the call,
20 as well as the media campaign that started in March led by Rudy Giuliani.

21 Mr. Quigley. Mr. Kent, as the day-to-day State Department point person in
22 Washington on Ukraine policy, were you aware of this effort to persuade President
23 Zelensky to issue a statement in order to get a White House meeting while they were
24 happening?

25 Mr. Kent. When this exchange happened on August 10th, I was not.

1 Mr. Quigley. When did you learn about them?

2 Mr. Kent. As Ambassador Taylor referenced earlier in his testimony in oral
3 answering, he heard on August 16th. He then called me, and we had a conversation.
4 And, at that point, I memorialized my concerns in a note to the file.

5 Mr. Quigley. Ambassador Taylor, as the point person on the ground in Ukraine,
6 were you aware of this effort to get Ukraine to issue this written statement in early
7 August?

8 Ambassador Taylor. Not the written statement, no, sir.

9 Mr. Quigley. So the entire discussion about a public statement about the two
10 investigations President Trump wanted was done in what you have described as an
11 irregular channel involving Ambassadors Sondland and Volker, and they were tasked to
12 take on Ukraine policy by the President.

13 Isn't that correct, Mr. Kent?

14 Mr. Kent. That would be my understanding.

15 Mr. Quigley. Ambassador?

16 Ambassador Taylor. The same.

17 Mr. Quigley. And I guess to close the primer on hearsay, I think the American
18 public needs to be reminded that countless people have been convicted on hearsay,
19 because the courts have routinely allowed and created needed exceptions to hearsay.
20 Hearsay can be much better evidence than direct, as we have learned in painful instances,
21 and it's certainly valid in this instance.

22 Mr. Turner. Will the gentleman yield? Because none of those exceptions
23 would apply to this testimony.

24 The Chairman. This is not the time for a colloquy.

25 Mr. -- sorry -- Representative Stefanik, you're recognized.

1 Ms. Stefanik. Thank you.

2 For the millions of Americans viewing today, the two most important facts are the
3 following: Number one, Ukraine received the aid; number two, there was, in fact, no
4 investigation into Biden.

5 Mr. Kent and Ambassador Taylor, you both spoke eloquently and passionately
6 about the need to support Ukraine to counter Russian aggression, particularly during this
7 very critical time. I agree with you in that assessment.

8 And isn't it the case that the Trump administration has indeed provided
9 substantial aid to Ukraine in the form of defensive lethal aid, correct?

10 Ambassador Taylor. That is correct.

11 Ms. Stefanik. And that is more so than the Obama administration, correct?

12 Ambassador Taylor. The Trump administration --

13 Ms. Stefanik. Defensive lethal aid.

14 Ambassador Taylor. Yes.

15 Ms. Stefanik. And in the transcript of the President's July 25th call with President
16 Zelensky, President Zelensky tells Trump they are ready to buy more Javelins. This is,
17 indeed, the most effective weapon for fighting insurgent armored Russian tanks. Is that
18 correct?

19 Ambassador Taylor. That is correct.

20 Ms. Stefanik. And those Javelins were not made available to Ukraine under the
21 Obama administration? The Javelins were not made available --

22 Ambassador Taylor. They were not.

23 Ms. Stefanik. Correct.

24 Shifting gears to corruption, one of the themes here today is that of rooting out
25 corruption, which is an important tool for the President as we provide taxpayer-funded

1 aid to foreign countries.

2 Mr. Kent, you would characterize Ukraine as having longstanding corruption
3 issues, correct?

4 Mr. Kent. I did.

5 Ms. Stefanik. And, in fact, you testified, quote, "I would say that corruption is
6 part of the reason why Ukrainians came out to the streets in both 2004 when somebody
7 tried to steal the election and again in 2014 because of a corrupt, kleptocratic,
8 pro-Russian government which eventually collapsed. The Ukrainians decided enough
9 was enough."

10 Is that your testimony?

11 Mr. Kent. It remains so.

12 Ms. Stefanik. And you testified that you first came to learn about Burisma in
13 2015 when you were the senior anticorruption coordinator, correct?

14 Mr. Kent. Correct, detailed to the Embassy in Kyiv as the Acting Deputy Chief of
15 Mission.

16 Ms. Stefanik. And you testified that the issue of corruption in Burisma was in the
17 U.S.'s interest because, quote -- and this is from your deposition -- "we had made a
18 commitment to the Ukrainian Government in 2014 to try to recover an estimated tens of
19 billions of dollars of stolen assets out of the country." Is that correct?

20 Mr. Kent. That is a -- of stolen assets that were in the name of the owner of
21 Burisma, Mykola Zlochevsky. He was the one who we believed had stolen the money.

22 Ms. Stefanik. Sure.

23 So the first case -- this was the first case -- that the U.S., the U.K., and Ukraine
24 investigators worked on was against the owner of Burisma.

25 Mr. Kent. That is correct.

1 Ms. Stefanik. And this was during the Obama administration.

2 Mr. Kent. That's correct.

3 Ms. Stefanik. So, for the millions of Americans viewing, the first investigation
4 against the owner of Burisma was under President Obama's administration.

5 Mr. Kent. That's correct.

6 Ms. Stefanik. You testified also, quote, "We spent roughly half a million dollars
7 of State Department money in support of the FBI and this investigation to build capacity
8 and track down stolen assets," end quote. Is that correct?

9 Mr. Kent. That's correct. It was launched in May 2014 by the Attorney General
10 of the U.S. and U.K. in conjunction with the World Bank.

11 Ms. Stefanik. And, in fact, by 2016, you were so concerned about corruption
12 questions related to Burisma that, when there was an effort by Burisma to sponsor an
13 essay contest with USAID, you asked USAID to stop it.

14 Mr. Kent. That's correct.

15 Ms. Stefanik. And you testified that it was because, quote, "Burisma had a poor
16 reputation in the business" and that you didn't think it was appropriate for the
17 U.S. Government to be cosponsoring something with a company that had a bad
18 reputation, correct?

19 Mr. Kent. Correct.

20 Ms. Stefanik. You are also aware and you testified today that Hunter Biden
21 served on the board of Burisma.

22 Mr. Kent. Correct.

23 Ms. Stefanik. And you also testified that you were indeed concerned about the
24 appearance of conflict of interest.

25 Mr. Kent. That's correct.

1 Ms. Stefanik. And, broadly -- this is very important -- you testify in your
2 deposition that when the State Department evaluates foreign assistance it is appropriate
3 for them to look at levels of corruption in countries.

4 Mr. Kent. That's correct.

5 Ms. Stefanik. And, lastly, you also testified that -- and this is your
6 quote -- "issues of corruption have been part of high-level dialogue between U.S. leaders
7 and Ukrainian leaders regardless of who is the U.S. leader and who is the Ukrainian
8 leader, and that is a normal issue of diplomatic discussion at the highest level," end
9 quote.

10 Is that correct?

11 Mr. Kent. That's correct.

12 Ms. Stefanik. I will yield 30 seconds -- you know what? I will yield back after
13 that. Thank you.

14 The Chairman. Mr. Swalwell?

15 Mr. Swalwell. Both of you have testified that you are not direct witnesses who
16 have spoken with President Trump; however, you are witnesses to a shakedown scheme
17 that others participated in who spoke with President Trump.

18 However, Ambassador Bolton and Mick Mulvaney both spoke directly to President
19 Trump, and, unlike you, they have refused to honor our requests for them to be a part of
20 these proceedings.

21 Nonetheless, we do know how Acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney feels about aid
22 because, on October 17, at a press conference, he discussed the hold on security
23 assistance for Ukraine.

24 Ambassador Taylor, I'd like you to listen to what he said. I'll read it for you. It's
25 in response to a question.

1 "But, to be clear, what you just described is a quid pro quo. It is, funding will not
2 flow unless the investigation into the Democratic server happens as well."

3 In response to that question, Mr. Mulvaney said, Mr. Taylor, "We do that all the
4 time with foreign policy."

5 My question, Ambassador Taylor: The President conditioning security assistance
6 on an investigation into his political opponent, prior to this administration, is this
7 something we would do all the time?

8 Ambassador Taylor. No, sir.

9 Mr. Swalwell. Why not?

10 Ambassador Taylor. We condition assistance on issues that will improve our
11 foreign policy, serve our foreign policy, ensure that taxpayers' money is well-spent.

12 Those are the -- and those conditions are either coming from the Congress or from
13 policy decisions stemming from authority Congress has given us to make sure that the
14 taxpayers' money is well-spent or that the receiving company -- country takes the actions
15 in our national interest.

16 Mr. Swalwell. And you described in your text-message exchanges that engaging
17 in a scheme like this is, quote, "crazy." Can we also agree that it's just wrong?

18 Ambassador Taylor. Yes.

19 Mr. Swalwell. Why is it wrong?

20 Ambassador Taylor. Again, our holding up of security assistance that would go
21 to a country that is fighting aggression from Russia, for no good policy reason, no good
22 substantive reason, no good national security reason, is wrong.

23 Mr. Swalwell. Mr. Mulvaney in the same news conference said, quote, "If you
24 read the news reports and you believe them, what McKinley said yesterday -- well,
25 McKinley said yesterday that he was really upset with the political influence in foreign

1 policy. That was one of the reasons he was so upset about this. And I have news for
2 everybody: Get over it. There's going to be political influence in foreign policy."

3 Ambassador Taylor, should we get over it?

4 Ambassador Taylor. If we're talking about "political influence" meaning
5 attempts to get information that is solely useful for political campaigns, if that's what he's
6 talking about, we should not get used to that.

7 Mr. Swalwell. Finally, Mr. Mulvaney said, "Again, I was involved with the process
8 by which the money was held up temporarily, okay? Three issues for that: the
9 corruption of the country, whether or not the countries were participating in the support
10 of Ukraine, and whether or not they were cooperating in an ongoing investigation with
11 our Department of Justice. That's completely legitimate."

12 Mr. Kent, were you aware of any formal Department of Justice cooperation
13 request made to the Ukrainians?

14 Mr. Kent. I am not aware that there was any formal Department of Justice
15 request in this matter, no.

16 Mr. Swalwell. Was Mr. Mulvaney's statement false?

17 Mr. Kent. I think you'd refer that question, again, to the Department of Justice
18 since I don't have full knowledge of whatever they may have been working on.

19 Mr. Swalwell. Just about an hour before the two of you sat down to testify
20 today, the President tweeted multiple times about this hearing, and he put in all caps,
21 "NEVER TRUMPERS."

22 Mr. Kent, are you a Never Trumper?

23 Mr. Kent. I am a career nonprofessional who serves whatever President is duly
24 elected and carries out the foreign policies of that President and the United States. And
25 I've done that for 27 years for three Republican Presidents and two Democrat Presidents.

1 Mr. Swalwell. Ambassador Taylor, are you a Never Trumper?

2 Ambassador Taylor. No, sir.

3 Mr. Swalwell. Ambassador Taylor, finally, you said in your statement, on page
4 19, "Mr. Chairman, there are two Ukrainian stories today. The first is the one we are
5 discussing this morning and that you have been hearing about for the past 2 weeks. It's
6 a rancorous story about whistleblowers, Mr. Giuliani, side channels, quid pro quos,
7 corruption, and interference in elections. In this story, Ukraine is merely an object."

8 Is it also true that in this story it's about the President of the United States?

9 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Swalwell, I am here to tell you what I know and I'm here
10 to tell you what I heard and what I said. And, in that regard, I can't answer that
11 question.

12 Mr. Swalwell. But you're -- what you've testified to also involves the President of
13 the United States. Is that correct?

14 Ambassador Taylor. The President of the United States was on the telephone
15 call on the 25th of July, yes, sir.

16 Mr. Swalwell. Thank you.

17 I yield back.

18 The Chairman. Mr. Hurd?

19 Mr. Hurd. Thank you, Chairman.

20 Gentlemen, I appreciate you all's decades of service. As the fabled Foreign
21 Service officer Ambassador Ryan Crocker says, because we have pumps and wingtips on
22 the ground, meaning diplomats, that prevents us from having the need to have boots on
23 the ground -- military. You all are an important role in our national security, and thank
24 you and your colleagues.

25 Mr. Taylor, my first questions are to you. And these are questions that are on

1 years prior to your time in the Ukraine, but I'm pretty sure you can answer them.

2 Did the Ukrainians get military -- get aid in FY '17?

3 Ambassador Taylor. Did they get any aid in FY '17?

4 Mr. Hurd. Any aid.

5 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir, they did get assistance.

6 Mr. Hurd. And they got security assistance as well?

7 Ambassador Taylor. They did.

8 Mr. Hurd. And if I said that number was circa, you know, in military assistance,
9 around 270 million, would that probably be accurate?

10 Ambassador Taylor. Close.

11 Mr. Hurd. About right?

12 Ambassador Taylor. Yeah.

13 Mr. Hurd. Did they get aid in FY '18?

14 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

15 Mr. Hurd. Including security assistance?

16 Ambassador Taylor. Including security assistance.

17 Mr. Hurd. We've already talked about the Javelins, the antitank missiles that
18 they were not able to purchase in previous administrations.

19 Have they gotten security assistance in FY '19?

20 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

21 Mr. Hurd. Prior to the 400 million or so that we're discussing or have been
22 discussing a lot here today?

23 Ambassador Taylor. They got some previous-year -- some probably FY '18
24 assistance.

25 But, George, you may know --

1 Mr. Kent. It takes a while, once money is obligated, to actually reach the
2 country. There were two Island-class ships that just arrived in the Port of Odessa --

3 Mr. Hurd. Sure.

4 Mr. Kent. -- and that was with prior-year money. So there's about a lag of a
5 year.

6 Mr. Hurd. My point is that we have been supporting the Ukrainians under this
7 administration in order to help them kick out the Russians who invaded their country.

8 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

9 Mr. Kent. 100 percent.

10 Mr. Hurd. Ambassador Taylor, earlier you were testifying that Ukrainian officials
11 did not become aware of potential U.S. assistance being withheld until August 29th. Is
12 that accurate?

13 Ambassador Taylor. That's my understanding, Mr. Hurd.

14 Mr. Hurd. Would you find it surprising if a Ukrainian official knew about that
15 sooner and did not contact you?

16 Ambassador Taylor. I can answer that it was only after August 29th, when the
17 Politico article came out, that I got calls from several of the Ukrainian officials.

18 Mr. Hurd. Good copy.

19 Mr. Kent, had you had any Ukrainian official contacting you, concerned
20 about -- when was the first time a Ukrainian official contacted you, concerned about
21 potential withholding of USAID?

22 Mr. Kent. It was after the article in Politico came out, in that first intense week
23 of September.

24 Mr. Hurd. Gotcha. So after that August 29th conversation.

25 There's a lot of talk about Rudy Giuliani and who he was and wasn't meeting. Do

1 we know or have an idea of the Ukrainian officials that he was meeting with over the last
2 couple of years?

3 Ambassador Taylor. I don't, sir.

4 Mr. Hurd. Have you had any Ukrainian officials call you after a meeting with
5 Rudy Giuliani, concerned about the nature or the context of that conversation?

6 Ambassador Taylor. Yes. Mr. Yermak has expressed concern about his
7 interactions with Mr. Giuliani.

8 Mr. Hurd. And I believe that meeting was somewhere in late August. Is that
9 correct?

10 Ambassador Taylor. It was -- there were meetings, and there were, I think, also
11 phone calls.

12 Mr. Hurd. And y'all have talked many times that y'all are still concerned about
13 corruption in the Ukraine. Is that correct?

14 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

15 Mr. Hurd. Have we seen whatever this anticorruption statement we wanted the
16 Ukrainians to make?

17 Mr. Kent. Are you referring to the statement that was being negotiated between
18 Kurt Volker, Gordon Sondland, and Andriy Yermak?

19 Mr. Hurd. Yes.

20 Mr. Kent. That was not an anticorruption statement, sir.

21 Mr. Hurd. What was the statement?

22 Mr. Kent. I think, if you go back to the back-and-forth of WhatsApps that were
23 shared by Kurt Volker, they shared a draft with Rudy Giuliani, and Rudy Giuliani said it
24 would not be acceptable if it didn't mention Biden, Burisma, and 2016.

25 Mr. Hurd. But that statement was never agreed to or was never issued by the

1 Ukrainian officials? Is that correct?

2 Mr. Kent. No statement of that sort was issued, correct.

3 Mr. Hurd. And have U.S. businesses ever contacted y'all, concerned about
4 corruption within the Ukraine?

5 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

6 Mr. Hurd. As, you know -- as of this year, even?

7 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

8 Mr. Hurd. Because the concern is not just how Ukrainian businesses run by
9 oligarchs are being operated; it's also concerns about how the Ukrainian Government is
10 dealing with American businesses trying to operate in the Ukraine. Is that accurate?

11 Ambassador Taylor. American businesses are very concerned about the judicial
12 system in particular, yes, sir.

13 Mr. Hurd. I yield back the time I do not have, Mr. Chairman.

14 The Chairman. I thank the gentleman.

15 Mr. Castro.

16 Mr. Castro. Thank you, Chairman.

17 Thank you, gentlemen, for your testimony today and for your service to our
18 country.

19 Listening to all the evidence, everything I've heard and read in this investigation, it
20 seems to me that the President of the United States either committed extortion and
21 bribery of a foreign official or attempted extortion and bribery of a foreign official.

22 When President Trump got President Zelensky on the phone on July 25th, he was
23 talking to a desperate man, wasn't he? President Zelensky was desperate to protect his
24 country and make sure that he had foreign assistance from the United States. Is that
25 right?

1 Ambassador Taylor. President Zelensky is very interested in U.S. support, both
2 assistance and political support.

3 Mr. Castro. What would have happened if the aid had gotten cut off,
4 Ambassador? What would have happened to President Zelensky's career, and what
5 would have happened to the Ukraine?

6 Ambassador Taylor. The assistance -- if the assistance had been cut off, he
7 would've been much weaker in his negotiations with the Russians, he would've been
8 much weaker on the battlefield --

9 Mr. Castro. The Russians may have taken it as an invitation to actually take
10 military action against Ukraine. Is that right?

11 Ambassador Taylor. The Russians always look for vulnerabilities. And they
12 know that the United States has supported Ukraine. If the Russians determined or
13 suspect that that support is lessened or not there, they will likely take advantage of it.

14 Mr. Castro. They could've pounced.

15 Ambassador Taylor. They could've taken advantage.

16 Mr. Castro. So he had a desperate man on the phone, and he asked a desperate
17 man for a favor. And based on your testimony, it sounds like, begrudgingly, President
18 Zelensky may have actually agreed to do that favor and investigate the Bidens and
19 Burisma. Is that right?

20 Ambassador Taylor. President Zelensky does say, in the transcript, that he will
21 pursue the investigations.

22 Mr. Castro. So we know that President Trump asked for a favor to help his
23 political career, and it appears as though the President of the Ukraine agreed to that
24 favor.

25 Do we know why it didn't actually happen? Do we know why there was no

1 announcement in front of CNN -- or to CNN about an investigation?

2 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Castro, as we've determined, as we've discussed here,
3 on September 11th, just before any CNN discussion or interview, the hold was released,
4 the hold on the security assistance was released.

5 Mr. Castro. But we don't -- so the hold was released. Is it possible that the
6 White House released that hold because they knew that a whistleblower had basically
7 turned this in?

8 Ambassador Taylor. I don't know, sir.

9 Mr. Castro. Do you think that's possible?

10 Ambassador Taylor. I'm not in a position to judge.

11 Mr. Castro. So we have a President who -- the other side has claimed or has
12 defended the President, saying that the aid went through, that there was never any
13 investigation. But the President attempted to get those things done. And it looks like
14 there was an initial agreement by the President of Ukraine to actually do those things.

15 So, Ambassadors, is attempted murder a crime? Is attempted murder a crime?

16 Ambassador Taylor. Attempted murder is a crime.

17 Mr. Castro. Is attempted robbery a crime?

18 Ambassador Taylor. Neither of us is a lawyer, but --

19 Mr. Castro. I think anybody in this room could answer that question.

20 Ambassador Taylor. I think that's right, and I'll go out on a limb and say, yes, it is.

21 Mr. Castro. Is attempted extortion and bribery a crime?

22 Ambassador Taylor. I don't know, sir.

23 Mr. Castro. In the minute that I have left, I want you to speak to the Nation
24 about what's at stake, Ambassador Kent. You said in your opening statement, you
25 warned about selective prosecutions and a President of the United States going after

1 specific Americans abroad.

2 If this Congress clears President Trump, does it mean that he can go ask another
3 foreign country to investigate another Presidential candidate, a Member of Congress, a
4 Governor, a Senator, or any private American citizen doing business overseas?

5 If there's no consequence for a President who does that, then it means there's a
6 green light, doesn't it, for any President to ask any country to go prosecute or investigate
7 an American citizen for political and personal gain of that President, doesn't it?

8 Mr. Kent. Thank you for the question. First of all, I'm not an ambassador.

9 Mr. Castro. I'm sorry. Deputy Secretary.

10 Mr. Kent. I will repeat, I think, on principle, regardless of the country, whether
11 it's Ukraine, the U.S., or any country, the facts of law, criminal nexus, should drive
12 investigations by law enforcement officials, and it is not the role of politicians to be
13 involved in directing the judicial systems of their own country or other countries.

14 Mr. Castro. I yield back, Chairman.

15 The Chairman. Mr. Ratcliffe.

16 Mr. Ratcliffe. I thank the chair.

17 Mr. Kent, in your prior deposition, on page 159, you were asked about the
18 President's authority to release an ambassador for any reason. And your response was,
19 quote, "All ambassadors serve at the pleasure of the President. And that is without
20 question. Everybody understands that," end quote.

21 Do you remember saying that?

22 Mr. Kent. I do, and it's true.

23 Mr. Ratcliffe. The President very clearly has that constitutional authority,
24 correct?

25 Mr. Kent. He does.

1 Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Well, most everybody, apparently, understands that, but
2 that doesn't include House Democrats.

3 In the context of this impeachment inquiry, specifically addressing Ambassador
4 Yovanovitch, who I know is a friend of yours, in alleging an abuse of power, in a nationally
5 televised interview, a member of this committee said, quote, "It's an abuse of power to
6 remove an ambassador for political reasons because you don't like what they're doing,
7 period," end quote.

8 That's not true, is it?

9 Mr. Kent. Again, I go back to what I said. The President has the right to have
10 ambassadors serve at his pleasure.

11 Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So you agree with me that we shouldn't impeach a
12 President for exercising his constitutional authority?

13 Mr. Kent. I am here as a fact witness to answer your questions. Your
14 constitutional obligation is to consider the evidence before you.

15 Mr. Ratcliffe. So when did Ambassador Yovanovitch get recalled from Ukraine?

16 Mr. Kent. I believe a message was sent on or about April 24th.

17 Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. Certainly well before the July 25th call that's in question
18 here, correct?

19 Mr. Kent. Without a doubt.

20 Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. And she had no remaining responsibilities with respect to
21 Ukraine policy for that 3 or 4 months in between, I take it?

22 Mr. Kent. She is now a -- she was transferred to a teaching slot at Georgetown,
23 where her responsibilities, among others, were to teach a class on Ukraine.

24 Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay.

25 So if President Trump had the constitutional authority to remove her, as he did

1 months before the call, and she wasn't in the Ukraine or have any responsibilities on
2 July 25th, do you have an explanation for why Democrats are calling her as a witness on
3 Friday?

4 Mr. Kent. I'm here as a fact witness under subpoena, and that's a question you
5 could perhaps direct towards your Democratic colleagues.

6 Mr. Ratcliffe. Ambassador Taylor, we've established that on July 25th both
7 participants in the call, both Presidents, expressly have stated there was no pressure, no
8 demand, no conditions, no blackmail, no corruption.

9 And I asked you again specifically about quid pro quo even being possible, and I
10 think we've agreed that it wasn't possible, a quid pro quo involving military aid, on
11 July 25th, given President Zelensky's lack of knowledge, correct?

12 Ambassador Taylor. President Zelensky, to my knowledge, did not have any idea
13 that the security assistance was on hold.

14 Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So do you have an explanation for why, within days of that
15 phone call, when no quid pro quo was even possible, a person who later became a
16 whistleblower walked into Chairman Schiff's staff to discuss what Chairman Schiff's
17 spokesman, Patrick Boland, said were the, quote, "outlines" of the whistleblower's
18 accusations?

19 Ambassador Taylor. I'm sorry. What's the question, sir?

20 Mr. Ratcliffe. The question is, do you know or have an explanation for why that
21 person would walk in a few days later --

22 Ambassador Taylor. I do not.

23 Mr. Ratcliffe. -- to Chairman Schiff's office?

24 Ambassador Taylor. I do not.

25 Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay.

1 Earlier, Chairman Schiff made reference to a colloquy. And, for the public, a
2 colloquy is a way for legislators to clarify an important issue to the public.

3 And so, without jeopardizing the whistleblower in any way, in an effort to find out,
4 Chairman, what you knew and when you knew it about the whistleblower, I'd like you to
5 engage in a colloquy with me.

6 The Chairman. My colleague will address his questions to the witnesses.

7 Mr. Ratcliffe. I'll take that as a no, you're not interested in a colloquy?

8 The Chairman. Mr. Ratcliffe, you can take it any way you like it, but,
9 appropriately, your questions should be directed to witnesses.

10 Mr. Ratcliffe. Well, I guess my question to the witnesses, then, is, when are
11 House Republicans going to find out what House Democrats already know? When are
12 we going to find out the details of the contact between Chairman Schiff and the
13 whistleblower, what they met about, when they met, the number of times they met, the
14 discussions that were had --

15 Mr. Swalwell. Mr. Chairman, point of order.

16 The Chairman. The gentleman will state his point of order.

17 Mr. Swalwell. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman is questioning the chair, which is not
18 permitted under the resolution applicable to the hearing or the rules of the House or the
19 committee. The efforts to undermine lawful whistleblowing is, moreover, contrary to
20 the law and practice of this committee. And I would like to also quote, Mr. Chairman,
21 last Congress --

22 Mr. Ratcliffe. I'm not trying to find out the identity. I just want to find out the
23 date that this happened.

24 The Chairman. If both gentlemen could suspend.

25 Mr. Ratcliffe has resumed questioning of the witness, so I would just recommend

1 we move on.

2 Mr. Ratcliffe. Chairman, pretty simple question. Are we ever going to be able
3 to find out the details --

4 The Chairman. I guess, Mr. Swalwell --

5 Mr. Ratcliffe. -- not anything classified --

6 Mr. Swalwell. I'll reserve my point of order.

7 The Chairman. I guess he hasn't resumed his questioning of the witness.

8 Mr. Ratcliffe, your time is dwindling. I suggest you use it.

9 Mr. Ratcliffe. I'll yield back.

10 The Chairman. Mr. Heck.

11 Mr. Heck. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Mr. Kent, some people have suggested that the real reason that President Trump's
13 pressure campaign on the Ukraine was to root out corruption in Ukraine.

14 I've gone back and read the memorandum of call two or three times, actually, and
15 I don't recall a single instance where the President ever used the word "corruption" nor
16 the word "corrupt."

17 I know in answer to the chairman's opening questions you'd indicated you had
18 gone back and read it about a month ago. Do you recall the President in that July 25th
19 phone call with President Zelensky ever uttering the word "corrupt" or "corruption"?

20 Mr. Kent. I don't recall, but it would be a matter of record now that it's been
21 released.

22 Mr. Heck. And, as a matter of record, he didn't. But he did manage to find
23 time to mention his potential political rival in 2020.

24 You also answered in response to the question from Mr. Himes that you've been
25 working on the issue of corruption literally for decades. I thank you for that on behalf of

1 the American people.

2 And, indeed, on October 15th, you testified about longstanding U.S. policy meant
3 to combat corruption in the Ukraine championed by people such as former Ambassador
4 Maria Yovanovitch.

5 But, Mr. Kent, is it not true that, rather than fighting corruption in general in
6 Ukraine, that what President Trump actually did was unceremoniously recall and remove
7 Ambassador Yovanovitch from her post in Ukraine?

8 Mr. Kent. I would say, first of all, as I repeated before, the President has the
9 right to recall ambassadors.

10 It remains a matter of policy of the United States towards Ukraine to help them
11 overcome a legacy of corruption in creating new institutions. And much of what we've
12 been discussing today, which involved an irregular channel, was a request that went
13 against U.S. policy that would've undermined the rule of law and our longstanding policy
14 goals in Ukraine, as in other countries, in the post-Soviet space.

15 Mr. Heck. Those policies which were indeed championed by Ambassador
16 Yovanovitch.

17 You also testified on October 15th, in the deposition, about fundamental reforms
18 necessary for Ukraine to fight corruption and to transform the country. And you cited
19 the importance of reforming certain institutions, notably the security service in the
20 Prosecutor General's Office.

21 Was investigating President Trump's political opponents a part of those necessary
22 reforms? Was it on that list of yours, sir? Or, indeed, was it on any list?

23 Mr. Kent. No, they weren't.

24 Mr. Heck. In fact, historically, is it not true that a major problem in the Ukraine
25 has been its misuse of prosecutors precisely to conduct the investigation of political

1 opponents? That's a legacy, I dare suggest, from the Soviet era, when, as you stated in
2 your testimony, prosecutors like the KGB were -- and I quote you now -- "instruments of
3 oppression." Is that correct?

4 Mr. Kent. I said that, and I believe it's true.

5 Mr. Heck. So, finally, Mr. Kent, for as long as I can remember, U.S. foreign policy
6 has been predicated on advancing principled interest in democratic values -- notably,
7 freedom of speech, press, assembly, religion; free, fair, and open elections; and the rule
8 of law.

9 Mr. Kent, when American leaders ask foreign governments to investigate their
10 potential rivals, doesn't that make it harder for us to advocate on behalf of those
11 democratic values?

12 Mr. Kent. I believe it makes it more difficult for our diplomatic representatives
13 overseas to carry out those policy goals, yes.

14 Mr. Heck. How is that, sir?

15 Mr. Kent. Well, there's an issue of credibility. They hear diplomats on the
16 ground saying one thing, and they hear other U.S. leaders saying something else.

17 Mr. Heck. Ambassador Taylor, would you agree with that, sir?

18 Ambassador Taylor. I would.

19 Mr. Heck. Is there anything you'd like to add about how it might make it more
20 difficult for you to do your job, sir?

21 Ambassador Taylor. Our credibility is based on a respect for the United States.
22 And if we damage that respect, then it hurts our credibility and makes it more difficult for
23 us to do our jobs.

24 Mr. Heck. Anyone looking at the facts can see what happened was an abuse of
25 power. Anyone looking at the facts can see that what happened was unethical.

1 Anyone looking at the facts can see -- anyone looking at the facts can see that what went
2 on was just plain wrong.

3 I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

4 The Chairman. Mr. Jordan?

5 Mr. Jordan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Fifty-five days, 55 days between July 18th and September 11th, that there was a
7 delay on sending hard-earned tax dollars of the American people to Ukraine. We're not
8 talking any country; we're talking Ukraine. Ernst & Young said one of the three most
9 corrupt countries on the planet. Our witness on Friday, she testified in her deposition,
10 "Corruption is not just prevalent in Ukraine; it's the system."

11 So our President said, time out. Time out. Let's check out this new guy. Let's
12 see if Zelensky's the real deal. This new guy who got elected in April, whose party took
13 power in July, let's see if he's legitimate.

14 Now, keep in mind, as has already been discussed, in 2018 President Trump had
15 already done more for Ukraine than Obama did. That's right. President Trump, who
16 doesn't like foreign aid, who wanted European countries to do more, who knew how
17 corrupt Ukraine was, did more than Obama, because he gave them Javelins, tank-busting
18 Javelins, to fight the Russians. Our witnesses have said this. Others have said this.
19 Obama gave them blankets; Trump gave them missiles.

20 But when it came time to check out this new guy, President Trump said, let's just
21 see -- let's just see if he's legit. So for 55 days we checked him out.

22 President Zelensky had five interactions with senior U.S. officials in that
23 timeframe. One was, of course, the phone call, the July 25th phone call between
24 President Trump and President Zelensky. And there were four other face-to-face
25 meetings with other senior U.S. officials.

1 And guess what? Not one of those interactions, not one, were security
2 assistance dollars linked to investigating Burisma or Biden.

3 But guess what did happen in those 55 days? U.S. Senators, Ambassador Bolton,
4 Vice President Pence all became convinced that Zelensky was, in fact, worth the risk. He
5 was, in fact, legit and the real deal and a real change. And guess what? They told the
6 President, he's a reformer, release the money. And that's exactly what President Trump
7 did.

8 Now, over the next few weeks, we're going to have more witnesses like we've had
9 today that the Democrats will parade in here, and they're all going to say this:
10 So-and-so said such-and-such to so-and-so, and therefore we've got to impeach the
11 President.

12 Actually, we can get more specific. We covered this a little bit ago. They'll say
13 something like Ambassador Sondland said in his deposition, where he said Ambassador
14 Taylor recalls that Mr. Morrison told Ambassador Taylor that I told Mr. Morrison that I
15 conveyed this message to Mr. Yermak on September 1st, 2019, in connection with Vice
16 President Pence's visit to Warsaw in a meeting with President Zelensky.

17 And if you can follow that, that's the Democrats' plan and why they want to
18 impeach the President. That's what we're going to hear over the next couple weeks.
19 That's what we're going to hear.

20 But no matter what they do, no matter how many witnesses they bring in here,
21 four facts will not change, have not changed, will never change: The call shows no
22 linkage between dollars and the investigation into Burisma or the Bidens. President
23 Trump and President Zelensky have both said on the call there was no linkage, there was
24 no pressure, there was no pushing. Ukrainians didn't even know the aid was withheld at
25 the time of the phone call. And, most importantly, as has been pointed out, the

1 Ukrainians didn't take any specific action relative to investigations to get the money
2 released.

3 Now, there is one witness -- one witness that they won't bring in front of us, they
4 won't bring in front of the American people, and that's the guy who started it all, the
5 whistleblower. Nope. Four-hundred-and-thirty-five Members of Congress; only one
6 gets to know who that person is. Only one Member of Congress has the staff that gets
7 to talk to that person. The rest of us don't.

8 Only Chairman Schiff knows who the whistleblower is. We don't. We will
9 never get the chance -- we will never get the chance to see the whistleblower raise his
10 right hand, swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth. We'll never get that
11 chance. More importantly, the American people won't get that chance.

12 This anonymous so-called whistleblower with no firsthand knowledge, who's
13 biased against the President, who worked with Joe Biden, who is the reason we're all
14 sitting here today, we'll never get a chance to question that individual.

15 Democrats are trying to impeach the President based on all that? All that?
16 Eleven and a half months before an election?

17 We'll not get to check out his credibility, his motivations, his bias.

18 I said this last week, but this is a sad day. This is a sad day for this country.

19 You think about what the Democrats have put our Nation through for the last
20 3 years. Start in July of 2016, when they spied on two American citizens associated with
21 the Presidential campaign, and all that unfolded with the Mueller investigation after that.
22 And when that didn't work, here we are. Based on this. Based on -- this is a -- the
23 American people see through all this. They understand the facts support the President.
24 They understand this process is unfair. And they see through the whole darn sham.

25 With that, I yield back.

1 The Chairman. Mr. Welch.

2 Mr. Welch. Thank you.

3 I'd say to my colleague, I'd be glad to have the person who started it all come in
4 and testify. President Trump is welcome to take a seat right there.

5 You know, the question here is not a dispute about the enormous power that a
6 President has; the question is whether, in this case, there was an abuse of that power.

7 The President can fire an ambassador for any reason whatsoever. A President
8 can change his policy, as he did when he opened the door for Turkey to go in and invade
9 Kurdistan despite opposition from many of his senior advisors. A President could
10 change his position and our position on Ukraine.

11 But is there a limit? There is. Because our Constitution says no one is above
12 the law. And that limit is that one cannot, even as President, use the public trust of high
13 office for personal gain. The law prohibits any one of us here on the dais from seeking
14 foreign assistance in our campaigns. The question for us is whether the use of power by
15 the President was for the benefit of advancing his political interests in the 2020
16 campaign.

17 And, by the way, to my colleagues, if the President wants to attack Joe Biden and
18 his son, he's free to do it. All fair and square in campaigns. He's just not free to
19 change our foreign policy unless he gets his way to assist him in that campaign. That's a
20 line he can't cross.

21 Now, you all have been very clear about what our continuous foreign policy was.

22 And, Ambassador Taylor, just very quickly, describe why us withholding aid
23 interfered with achieving our national security goals.

24 Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Welch, one of our national security goals is to resolve
25 conflicts in Europe. There is one major conflict in Europe. It's a fighting war. Our

1 national security goals, in support of Ukraine, in support of a broader strategic approach
2 to Europe, is to facilitate that negotiation, is to try to support Ukraine when it negotiates
3 with the Russians.

4 Mr. Welch. Right.

5 And I want to go back, because in the historical context, Mr. Kent, that you and
6 Ambassador Taylor provided, we had 70 years of peace after the war in which we lost
7 over 400,000 American lives. And that took care. And that was in jeopardy, as you
8 described it, Ambassador Taylor. And that threatened each and every one of us up here
9 and the constituents we represent. Is that a fair statement?

10 Ambassador Taylor. That's a fair statement.

11 Mr. Welch. I want to do three dates, too. I only have a little time, but July 24,
12 July 25, and July 26.

13 July 24th, Director Mueller testified about his investigation, and he established,
14 beyond doubt, that it was the Russians who interfered in our election, and he expressed a
15 fear that that would be the new normal.

16 On July 25th, according to the readout of the President's campaign, he asked the
17 Ukrainians to investigate Ukrainians' interference in our election that had been
18 repudiated.

19 And then, on July 26th, as I understand it, this person who reported to you heard
20 the President saying he wanted investigations again in Ukraine.

21 So this is the question. The new normal that Director Mueller feared -- is there a
22 new normal that you fear, that a President, any President, can use congressionally
23 approved foreign aid as a lever to get personal advantage in something that is in his
24 interest but not the public interest?

25 Ambassador Taylor. That should not be the case, Mr. Welch.

1 Mr. Welch. I yield back.

2 Ms. Stefanik. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record
3 the transcript from the July 25th call between President Trump and President Zelensky.

4 You yourself, Mr. Chairman, have mischaracterized the call. In fact, in the first
5 open hearing --

6 The Chairman. The gentlewoman will suspend.

7 Ms. Stefanik. -- you had a parody --

8 The Chairman. The gentlewoman will suspend.

9 By unanimous consent, we'll be happy to enter the call record into the record.

10 [The information follows:]

11

12 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

- 1 Ms. Stefanik. Thank you.
- 2 The Chairman. Mr. Maloney, you're recognized for 5 minutes.
- 3 Mr. Maloney. Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you for being here today.
- 4 Ambassador Taylor, what year did you graduate from West Point?
- 5 Ambassador Taylor. 1969, sir.
- 6 Mr. Maloney. It was the height of the Vietnam War, wasn't it, sir?
- 7 Ambassador Taylor. The height was about that time.
- 8 Mr. Maloney. What was your class rank at West Point?
- 9 Ambassador Taylor. I was number five.
- 10 Mr. Maloney. How many people were in your class?
- 11 Ambassador Taylor. Eight hundred.
- 12 Mr. Maloney. Eight hundred cadets. You were number five.
- 13 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.
- 14 Mr. Maloney. So when you're top 1 percent of your class at West Point, you
- 15 probably get your pick of assignments, but you picked the infantry --
- 16 Ambassador Taylor. I did, sir.
- 17 Mr. Maloney. -- didn't you?
- 18 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.
- 19 Mr. Maloney. You were a rifle company commander?
- 20 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.
- 21 Mr. Maloney. Where did you serve?
- 22 Ambassador Taylor. In Vietnam.
- 23 Mr. Maloney. Did you see combat in Vietnam, sir?
- 24 Ambassador Taylor. I did.
- 25 Mr. Maloney. Did you earn any commendations for that service?

1 Ambassador Taylor. I was awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge, which is my
2 highest -- I'm proudest of. There was a Bronze Star. There was an Air Medal with
3 "V" --

4 Mr. Maloney. That's for "valor," isn't it, sir?

5 Ambassador Taylor. It is.

6 Mr. Maloney. Let's talk about July 26th, a lot of years later. You go to the
7 front, you go to Donbas with Ambassador Volker, I believe. And you're on the bridge,
8 and you're looking over on the front line at the Russian soldiers. Is that what you
9 recalled?

10 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

11 Mr. Maloney. And you said the commander there, the Ukrainian commander,
12 thanked you for the American military assistance that you knew was being withheld at
13 that moment.

14 Ambassador Taylor. That's correct.

15 Mr. Maloney. How'd that make you feel, sir?

16 Ambassador Taylor. Badly.

17 Mr. Maloney. Why?

18 Ambassador Taylor. Because it was clear that that commander counted on us.
19 It was clear that that commander had confidence in us. It was clear that that
20 commander had what -- was appreciative of the capabilities that he was given by that
21 assistance but also the reassurance that we were supporting him.

22 Mr. Maloney. You don't strike me as a quitter, Ambassador, but you threatened
23 to resign, or you mentioned it in your statement.

24 Before I ask you about that, let's just talk about a couple days later, on
25 July -- excuse me -- 1 month later, on August 28th. You find yourself in Ukraine with the

1 National Security Advisor, Mr. Bolton, right?

2 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

3 Mr. Maloney. And you convey to him your concerns -- you've testified to this
4 previously -- about the withholding of military assistance. What does he say to you?

5 Ambassador Taylor. He says that he shares my concern, and he advises me to
6 express that in a very special way to the Secretary of State.

7 Mr. Maloney. Now, he's the National Security Advisor, works directly with the
8 President. But he tells you that you should bring it up with the Secretary of State.

9 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

10 Mr. Maloney. Have you ever sent a cable like that? How many times in your
11 career of 40, 50 years have you sent a cable directly to the Secretary of State?

12 Ambassador Taylor. Once.

13 Mr. Maloney. This time?

14 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

15 Mr. Maloney. In 50 years.

16 Ambassador Taylor. Rifle company commanders don't send cables, but yes, sir.

17 Mr. Maloney. So the National Security Advisor, who could tell it to the President
18 himself and who shares your concern, says you, the Ambassador serving in Ukraine,
19 should cable the Secretary of State directly. And you do so, don't you?

20 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

21 Mr. Maloney. What did the cable say, sir?

22 Ambassador Taylor. It's a classified cable.

23 Mr. Maloney. Without going into classified information.

24 Ambassador Taylor. Without going into classified, it says: Security
25 assistance -- it's what we've been talking about today. Security assistance to Ukraine, at

1 this particular time, as in previous times, is very important.

2 Ukraine -- I also make the point that we've also talked about here today.

3 Ukraine is important for our national security, and we should support it. Not to provide
4 that would be folly.

5 Mr. Maloney. Did you get an answer to your cable?

6 Ambassador Taylor. Not directly, no, sir.

7 Mr. Maloney. Do you know what happened to it?

8 Ambassador Taylor. Secretary Kent --

9 Mr. Maloney. Secretary Kent, do you know what happened to it?

10 Ambassador Taylor. -- tells me that --

11 Mr. Kent. Yeah, I was on vacation when his cable came in, but my understanding
12 is it made it to its recipient, intended recipient, Secretary Pompeo.

13 Mr. Maloney. And we know Secretary Pompeo was on the call a month earlier,
14 on July 25th. It's not like he's in the dark about any of this. What did he do with it?

15 Mr. Kent. I honestly can't say for sure what happened with the cable once the
16 message was brought in at the highest level.

17 Mr. Maloney. One other question, gentlemen. On September 1st, you recall a
18 meeting between the Vice President and the President of Ukraine, Mr. Zelensky, in which
19 right off the bat the President of Ukraine raises security assistance, and the Vice
20 President, according to your telling, says, "I'll talk to the President tonight about that.
21 I'll make a call."

22 Do you know if the Vice President made that call?

23 Ambassador Taylor. I don't know, sir.

24 Mr. Maloney. Do you know what, if anything, the Vice President had to do with
25 any of this? What more can you tell us about the Vice President's role in this? Do you

1 know if he ever raised this issue with anyone in the administration, whether he ever
2 pushed for the release of that security assistance?

3 Ambassador Taylor. I can't, sir.

4 Mr. Kent. I believe, to the best of my understanding, the Vice President was an
5 advocate for the release of the assistance.

6 Mr. Maloney. Thank you.

7 I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

8 Dr. Wenstrup. Mr. Chairman?

9 The Chairman. Mrs. Demings, you're recognized.

10 Dr. Wenstrup. Mr. Chairman, I have a unanimous consent request.

11 The Chairman. The gentleman will state his request.

12 Dr. Wenstrup. I ask unanimous consent to submit for the record the Politico
13 article on Ukraine boosting the Clinton campaign, authored by Ken Vogel, now with The
14 New York Times.

15 The Chairman. Without objection, that will be entered into the record.

16 [The information follows:]

17

18 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1 Dr. Wenstrup. Thank you.

2 The Chairman. Representative Demings?

3 Mrs. Demings. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

4 And thank you to both of you for being with us today.

5 Mr. Kent, you said that a President has the right to remove an ambassador
6 because the ambassadors serve at the pleasure of the President. Is that correct?

7 Mr. Kent. That is correct, ma'am.

8 Mrs. Demings. Does that removal usually come with a smear campaign of that
9 ambassador by the President?

10 Mr. Kent. I think the right of the President to make a decision about the
11 President's personal representative, as confirmed by the Senate, is separate from
12 whatever happens outside the confines of U.S. Government processes.

13 Mrs. Demings. Do you have any idea why it was important to discredit
14 Ambassador Yovanovitch, what she was not willing to do or to do, why that was
15 important?

16 Mr. Kent. Well, I guess it probably depends on the motivation of other people,
17 and I am not one of them.

18 Mrs. Demings. The committee's investigation has uncovered a web of shadow
19 diplomacy engaged in and executed by several State Department officials and the
20 President's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, and ultimately directed by President Trump.
21 We have heard several ways of describing this shady shadow operation: shadow
22 diplomacy, rogue back channel.

23 Ambassador Taylor, you have described what you encountered as the top
24 diplomat on the ground in Ukraine as a -- and I quote -- "highly irregular, informal channel
25 of U.S. policymaking."

1 You testified that the channel included Ambassador Volker, Sondland, Secretary
2 Perry, and, as you later learned, the President's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani. Is that
3 correct?

1

2 RPTR JOHNSON

3 EDTR SECKMAN

4 [3:19 p.m.]

5 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, ma'am.

6 Mrs. Demings. Both of you have explained that you grew seriously concerned
7 when you realized that the interests of this irregular channel diverged from official U.S.
8 policy and interests.

9 Was Mr. Giuliani promoting U.S. national interests or policy in Ukraine,
10 Ambassador?

11 Ambassador Taylor. I don't think so, ma'am.

12 Mrs. Demings. Mr. Kent?

13 Mr. Kent. No, he was not.

14 Mrs. Demings. What interest do you believe he was promoting, Mr. Kent?

15 Mr. Kent. I believe he was looking to dig up political dirt against a potential rival
16 in the next election cycle.

17 Mrs. Demings. Ambassador Taylor, what interest do you believe he was
18 promoting?

19 Ambassador Taylor. I agree with Mr. Kent.

20 Mrs. Demings. The State Department's role is to promote U.S. policies overseas,
21 not to help the current President win reelection. Is that correct, Mr. Kent?

22 Mr. Kent. All Federal Government employees are subject to the Hatch Act.
23 Interactions are supposed to be promoting policy and not involved in partisan politics.

24 Mrs. Demings. Ambassador Taylor?

25 Ambassador Taylor. I agree.

1 Mrs. Demings. What is the risk of running a separate channel of diplomacy that
2 is completely outside of normal channels and does not further U.S. policy goals,
3 Ambassador Taylor?

4 Ambassador Taylor. Mrs. Demings, it's possible to do one but not the other.
5 That is, if it's completely against U.S. policy goals, then that's a mistake, then it's not
6 helpful. What -- you can go -- you can get advice and even have conversations outside
7 of the -- of the normal channels, but then they need to be part of U.S. foreign policy and
8 approaching those goals.

9 Mrs. Demings. Mr. Kent?

10 Mr. Kent. Agree.

11 Mrs. Demings. Ambassador Taylor, you have described in your previous
12 testimony one instance shortly after you arrived in Ukraine in which Ambassador
13 Sondland asked State Department officials not to listen to a July 28th call he had planned
14 to hold with President Zelensky.

15 Did you find that unusual?

16 Ambassador Taylor. I did.

17 Mrs. Demings. What was the impact of Ambassador Sondland making that
18 request?

19 You found it unusual. What do you believe the impact was?

20 Ambassador Taylor. Mrs. Demings, I'm not sure there was an immediate impact.

21 Mrs. Demings. Was there a recording or a transcription?

22 Ambassador Taylor. There was not. That was the impact. It was not
23 recorded.

24 Mrs. Demings. Do you think that's why the request was made, so there would
25 not be normal State Department employees from the operations center would have been

1 there transcribing and taking notes?

2 Ambassador Taylor. That is the norm, but it is also -- it is not unusual to not have
3 it recorded.

4 Mrs. Demings. So you know that the State Department is holding your notes and
5 refuses to provide them to Congress, despite a duly authorized subpoena. And we know
6 that, in some instances, your notes may be the only documentary record of what
7 happened. You are aware of that, correct?

8 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, ma'am.

9 Mrs. Demings. And, Mr. Kent, you are aware that your notes have not been
10 turned over to Congress?

11 Mr. Kent. I have turned all records that I had in my possession to the State
12 Department because whatever we do is considered a Federal record, not a personal
13 record.

14 Mrs. Demings. Thank you so much.

15 Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

16 Mr. Turner. Mr. Chairman, I have a consent request.

17 The Chairman. The gentleman will state his request.

18 Mr. Turner. I have a New York Times op-ed stating why President Obama should
19 have done more on investing in Ukraine by a trio of Ambassadors, which includes William
20 Taylor.

21 The Chairman. Without objection, that will be admitted into the record.

22 [The information follows:]

23

24 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1 The Chairman. Mr. Krishnamoorthi.

2 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Good afternoon, gentlemen. I'd like to walk you through
3 a couple of points raised by my colleagues on the other side.

4 One is they claim that the July 25th call summary shows no evidence of pressure
5 on the Ukrainian Government. In fact, they argue that the Ukrainians did not feel any
6 pressure at any time to comply with any of President Trump's requests for investigations.

7 In fact, Ambassador Taylor, at your deposition in October, you stated that due to
8 the hold that President Trump placed on aid to the Ukraine, the Ukrainians became,
9 quote/unquote, desperate. Isn't that right?

10 Ambassador Taylor. In August, they did not know, as far as I'm aware. But at
11 the end of August, the article came out. In September, the Minister of Defense, for
12 example, came to me -- I would use the word "desperate" -- to figure out why the
13 assistance was being held. He thought that perhaps if he went to Washington to talk to
14 you or to talk to the Secretary of Defense, to talk to the President, he would be able to
15 find out and reassure, provide whatever answer was necessary to have that assistance
16 released.

17 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. In fact, my colleagues on the other side suggest that
18 President Zelensky personally did not feel any pressure at any time. And yet, later on, in
19 September, he finally relented in a conversation with Gordon Sondland, according to your
20 deposition, in which he agreed to make a statement on CNN. Isn't that right?

21 Ambassador Taylor. He had planned to make a statement on CNN, yes, sir.

22 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. My colleagues also say that the hold on U.S. security
23 assistance was lifted on September 11th without any investigations happening on the
24 part of the Ukrainians and, therefore, everything ended up fine in the end.

25 However, Mr. Kent, as you know, the House Intelligence, Foreign Affairs, and

1 Oversight Committees began this current investigation leading to the proceedings today
2 on September 9th. In fact, it was only 2 days after this particular set of committees
3 began their investigations that the Trump administration eventually released the military
4 aid, correct?

5 Mr. Kent. That is the timeline, yes.

6 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Ambassador Taylor, between the time of your October
7 deposition and now, did anyone from the Trump administration contact you about your
8 appearance before the committee today?

9 Ambassador Taylor. No, sir.

10 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. How about you, Mr. Kent?

11 Mr. Kent. No, sir.

12 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Ambassador Taylor, I would like to turn to a word that, by
13 my count, you used 13 times in your opening statement, and that word is "concern."

14 You were concerned that aid was being conditioned on political investigations.
15 Isn't that right?

16 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

17 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. You were concerned that irregular channels of diplomacy
18 were being used in our foreign policy in the Ukraine, right?

19 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

20 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Ambassador Taylor, can you rule out the possibility that
21 these irregular channels of diplomacy are being used in other countries where we
22 conduct foreign policy?

23 Ambassador Taylor. I can't -- I've not heard of any other separate channel that
24 has this kind of influence, that is, the Giuliani kind of guidance.

25 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. But you can't rule it out, right?

1 Ambassador Taylor. No, sir.

2 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. And how about you, Mr. Kent, you can't rule it out either,
3 right?

4 Mr. Kent. I have no basis to make a determination.

5 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. You don't believe the July 25th call was perfect, do you?

6 Mr. Kent. I think some of the language in the call gave cause for concern.

7 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Ambassador Taylor?

8 Ambassador Taylor. I agree.

9 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. And what was the cause for concern for you?

10 Ambassador Taylor. There was -- part of the -- the discussion of the previous
11 Ambassador was a cause for concern.

12 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Ambassador Taylor, I want to draw on your experience,
13 finally, as a West Point cadet and as an infantry commander in Vietnam.

14 In a battlefield situation, is a commanding officer allowed to hold up action placing
15 his troops at risk until someone provides him a personal benefit?

16 Ambassador Taylor. No, sir.

17 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Is that because if commanding officers did that, they would
18 be betraying their responsibility to the Nation and the men and women under their
19 command?

20 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

21 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. If that were happened and found out, could that person be
22 subject to discipline?

23 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

24 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Could that type of conduct trigger a court martial?

25 Ambassador Taylor. Yes, sir.

1 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Thank you. I yield back.

2 Mr. Jordan. Mr. Chairman.

3 The Chairman. I thank the gentleman.

4 Mr. Jordan. Mr. Chairman, I have a unanimous --

5 The Chairman. For what purpose does the --

6 Mr. Jordan. I thank the chairman. I ask unanimous consent to enter into the
7 record Mr. Mulvaney's statement where he said there's absolutely no quid pro quo from
8 October 17, 2019.

9 The Chairman. Without objection.

10 [The information follows:]

11

12 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

1 The Chairman. Mr. Nunes, you are recognized for any closing comments you'd
2 like to make.

3 Mr. Conaway. Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman.

4 The Chairman. I recognize Mr. Nunes for his comments.

5 Mr. Conaway, we will get to your motion.

6 After Mr. Nunes' brief closing remarks and my brief closing remarks, it's my
7 intention to excuse the witnesses. We'll have a very brief recess. Members should not
8 go far. We will resume and take up Mr. Conaway's motion.

9 Mr. Nunes.

10 Mr. Nunes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll just be brief.

11 And I want to reiterate what I said earlier, and that is that we really should stop
12 holding these hearings until we get the answer to three important topics, the first being
13 the full extent of the Democrats' prior coordination with the whistleblower and who did
14 the whistleblower coordinate with; second, the full extent of Ukraine's election meddling
15 against the Trump campaign; and, third, why did Burisma hire Hunter Biden, and what did
16 he do for them, and did his position affect any government actions, U.S. Government
17 actions under the Obama administration?

18 You are not allowing those witnesses to appear before the committee, which I
19 think is a problem. So we'll expect hopefully you will allow us to bring in the
20 whistleblower, the folks that he spoke to, and also numerous Democratic operatives who
21 worked with Ukraine to meddle in the election.

22 With that, I'll yield back.

23 The Chairman. I thank the gentleman.

24 I want to thank the witnesses for their testimony today, for your decades of
25 service to the country. I think you exemplify so many courageous men and women who

1 serve in the diplomatic corps, who served in our military, who represent the United States
2 so well around the world.

3 I appreciate how you endeavor to stay out of the fray, to relate what you heard,
4 what you saw, without additional commentary. That is as it should be.

5 You were both compelled to appear, and we are grateful that you answered the
6 lawful subpoenas that you received.

7 The story that you have shared with us today and your experiences, I think, is a
8 very deeply troubling one. It is the story of a dedicated ambassador, someone who
9 served with great distinction, Ambassador Yovanovitch, who is the subject of a vicious
10 smear campaign at the beginning of the year. It is the story of, once this Ambassador
11 was pushed out of the way, the creation of an irregular channel, which, Ambassador
12 Taylor, you described went all the way from the President through Mick Mulvaney
13 through Ambassador Sondland through Ambassador Volker to Rudy Giuliani, that over
14 time became apparent was not serving the U.S. interests but running deeply contrary to
15 the U.S. interests, was, in fact, conditioning a White House meeting that the President of
16 Ukraine desperately sought to establish himself as the new President of Ukraine and to
17 demonstrate to friend and foe alike that he had a relationship with his most powerful
18 patron, the United States of America, and conditioned \$400 million of bipartisan,
19 taxpayer-funded military support for a nation at war, on the front lines of Russian
20 expansionism, a suspension of which was not in the U.S. interest, not in Ukraine's
21 interest, not in our national security interest in no way, shape, or form.

22 You have described a situation in which those in the service of the President made
23 it clear to the Ukrainians they need to publicly announce these investigations or they
24 weren't going to get that meeting, and they sure weren't going to get that military
25 assistance.

1 Now, I would point out -- and this may not have come to your attention, but it
2 certainly came to our attention -- on September 9th, the inspector general informed our
3 committee that the Director of National Intelligence was withholding a whistleblower
4 complaint in violation of the statute. By that point, on September 9th, that complaint
5 had made its way to the White House. On September 9th, when the inspector general
6 informed Congress that that complaint had been withheld, the White House also learned
7 that Congress now inevitably would learn about the complaint. It was less than
8 48 hours later that the military aid would be released.

9 Over the weeks to come -- or over the days to come, rather, we will hear from
10 other dedicated public servants about other aspects of this effort to invite foreign
11 interference in our election, to condition a White House meeting and military aid for the
12 performance of political favors for the President's reelection campaign. We will hear
13 from other witnesses.

14 I appreciate members on both sides of the aisle who I think participated today in a
15 serious way and in a civil way. This is as it should be. There is no shortage of strong
16 feelings about what this means to the country.

17 At the end of the day, we're going to have to decide, based on the evidence that
18 you and others provide, whether we're prepared to accept in the presence of the United
19 States a situation where the President, for their own personal and political benefit, can
20 condition military aid, diplomatic meetings, or any other performance of an official act in
21 order to get help in their reelection, whether we will need to accept in this President or
22 any future President the idea that the President of the United States could invite a foreign
23 country to intervene in our affairs. These are the decisions we will have to make when
24 we have to decide whether this President should be impeached.

25 But I want to thank you again and just conclude by saying, because I can't let it go

1 unanswered, several of my colleagues made the statement repeatedly that I've met with
2 the whistleblower, that I know who the whistleblower is. It was the false the first time
3 they said it, it was false the second through 40th time they said it, and it will be false the
4 last time they say it.

5 With that, it this concludes this portion of the hearing. I want to thank you
6 gentleman.

7 I ask everyone to remain in their seats. The witnesses are excused. Please
8 allow them to leave the committee room.

9 We will, once they leave the committee room, take a brief recess, and then we
10 will resume to take up Mr. Conaway's motion.

11 And, once again, I thank you gentlemen.

12 The committee is in a brief recess, subject to the call of the chair. When we
13 resume shortly, we'll take up Mr. Conaway's motion.

14 [Recess.]

15 The Chairman. The committee will come to order.

16 It is now in order to take up Mr. Conaway's motion to subpoena the
17 whistleblower.

18 Mr. Swalwell. Mr. Chairman?

19 The Chairman. Mr. Swalwell.

20 Mr. Swalwell. I move to table the motion.

21 The Chairman. All of those in favor of tabling the motion by the gentleman, say
22 aye.

23 All of those opposed, say no.

24 In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it, and the motion is tabled.

25 Mr. Conaway. Mr. Chairman.

1 The Chairman. The gentleman requests --

2 Mr. Conaway. A classic move. I --

3 The Chairman. -- a recorded vote.

4 Mr. Conaway. This could have been handled earlier. We could stop wasting
5 this 20 minutes of hanging around. I assume that the wait was to allow us to have the
6 debate, but apparently that was not the case. I know you're afraid of hearing from the
7 whistleblower.

8 The Chairman. Mr. Conaway, a motion to table is not debatable.

9 Mr. Conaway. Wasn't debating.

10 The Chairman. The clerk will call the roll.

11 Mr. Conaway. Just arguing.

12 The Clerk. Chairman Schiff?

13 The Chairman. Aye.

14 The Clerk. Mr. Himes?

15 Mr. Himes. Aye.

16 The Clerk. Ms. Sewell?

17 Ms. Sewell. Aye.

18 The Clerk. Mr. Carson?

19 Mr. Carson. Aye.

20 The Clerk. Ms. Speier?

21 Ms. Speier. Aye.

22 The Clerk. Mr. Quigley?

23 Mr. Quigley. Aye.

24 The Clerk. Mr. Swalwell?

25 Mr. Swalwell. Aye.

1 The Clerk. Mr. Castro?
2 Mr. Castro. Aye.
3 The Clerk. Mr. Heck?
4 Mr. Heck. Aye.
5 The Clerk. Mr. Welch?
6 Mr. Welch. Aye.
7 The Clerk. Mr. Maloney?
8 Mr. Maloney. Aye.
9 The Clerk. Mrs. Demings?
10 Mrs. Demings. Aye.
11 The Clerk. Mr. Krishnamoorthi?
12 Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Aye.
13 The Clerk. Ranking Member Nunes?
14 Mr. Nunes. No.
15 The Clerk. Mr. Conaway?
16 Mr. Conaway. No.
17 The Clerk. Mr. Turner?
18 Mr. Turner. No.
19 The Clerk. Dr. Wenstrup?
20 Dr. Wenstrup. No.
21 The Clerk. Mr. Stewart?
22 Mr. Stewart. No.
23 The Clerk. Ms. Stefanik?
24 Ms. Stefanik. No.
25 The Clerk. Mr. Hurd?

1 Mr. Hurd. No.

2 The Clerk. Mr. Ratcliffe?

3 Mr. Ratcliffe. No.

4 The Clerk. Mr. Jordan?

5 Mr. Jordan. No.

6 The Chairman. Is there any member wishing to vote or wishing to change his or
7 her vote?

8 The clerk shall report the vote.

9 The Clerk. Mr. Chairman, there are 13 ayes and 9 noes.

10 The Chairman. On this vote, there were 13 ayes and 9 noes. The motion to
11 table is carried.

12 We are adjourned.

13 [Whereupon, at 3:50 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

14

15

16