

POLITICS

NOVEMBER 14, 2019 / 6:09 AM / A MONTH AGO

U.S. envoy Sondland did not link Biden probe to aid: Ukraine minister



FILE PHOTO: U.S. Ambassador to the EU Gordon Sondland attends the EU-U.S. High-Level Forum on small modular reactors at the European Commission headquarters in Brussels, Belgium October 21, 2019. REUTERS/Francois Lenoir

KIEV (Reuters) - Ukraine's Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko said on Thursday that U.S. ambassador Gordon Sondland did not explicitly link military aid to Kiev with opening an investigation into former Vice President Joe Biden and his son, Interfax Ukraine reported.

Trump and his allies are accused by Democrat opponents of freezing nearly \$400 million in security aid to Ukraine to pressure President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to open investigations into Biden, Trump's main rival for the 2020 presidential race.

Trump calls the inquiry a witch hunt.

"Ambassador Sondland did not tell us, and certainly did not tell me, about a connection between the assistance and the investigations. You should ask him," Prystaiko said about Sondland, the U.S. ambassador to the European Union.

Prystaiko's comments came a day after William Taylor, the acting ambassador to Ukraine, testified in the first televised hearing of the impeachment inquiry.

In a disclosure that drew the most attention, Taylor pointed to Trump's keen interest in getting the eastern European ally to investigate Biden and reiterated his understanding that \$391 million in U.S. security aid was withheld from Kiev unless it cooperated.

Taylor said a member of his staff had overheard a July 26 phone call between Trump and Sondland in which the Republican president asked about investigations into the Bidens, and Sondland told him that the Ukrainians were ready to proceed.

That call occurred a day after Trump had asked Zelenskiy during a phone call to conduct the investigations.

"I have never seen a direct relationship between investigations and security assistance," Prystaiko was quoted as saying by Interfax. "Yes, the investigations were mentioned, you know, in the conversation of the presidents. But there was no clear connection between these events."

Reporting by Matthias Williams; Editing by Gareth Jones

Our Standards: The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles.

REUTERS NEWS NOW

Subscribe to our daily curated newsletter to receive the latest exclusive Reuters coverage delivered to your inbox.

PAID PROMOTIONAL LINKS

Promoted by **Dianomi**

Avoid High Taxes by Retiring in These 7 States
From Merrill

Peloton's sexist Christmas advert has another problem
Financial Times

The Dangers of an untimely retirement
PIMCO Investments LLC

10 tips for safe online shopping
Zurich on Financial Times

Economist: Tiny Gold Stocks Seeing 3x The Gains Of Gold
The New Case For Gold

Sponsored Video by FISHER INVESTMENTS

How Far Does \$1 Million Go in Retirement?

Video Ad by dianomi

MORE FROM REUTERS

California governor rejects PG&E bankruptcy reorganization plan
14 Dec

China's Ant Financial, Vanguard announce China advisory venture
14 Dec

Mexico objects to labor enforcement provision in North American...
14 Dec

U.S.-China trade deal cuts tariffs for Beijing promise of big farm...
14 Dec

I need a break, says globetrotting Greta
13 Dec

MORE FROM REUTERS

U.S. Justice Department preparing legal action against Live Nation...
14 Dec

Mnuchin says trade deal with China to boost global economy
15 Dec

Morgan Stanley CEO says no immediate plans to step down
13 Dec

Hong Kong leader Lam visits Beijing as pressure mounts at home
14 Dec

USTR files notice suspending Dec. 15 tariffs on Chinese goods
14 Dec

Apps Newsletters Advertise with Us

Advertising Guidelines Cookies Terms of Use Privacy

All quotes delayed a minimum of 15 minutes. See here for a complete list of exchanges and delays.