PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

DEPOSITION OF: CATHERINE CROFT

Wednesday, October 30, 2019
Washington, D.C.

The deposition in the above matter was held in Room HVC-304, Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 9:15 a.m.

Present: Representatives Schiff, Himes, Carson, Speier, Quigley, Swalwell, Heck, Welch, Demings, Krishnamoorthi, Nunes,
Wenstrup, Stefanik, and Ratcliffe.

Also Present: Perry, Massie, Jordan, Zeldin, Kelly, McCaul, Bera, Armstrong, Raskin, Malinowski, Cicillini, Espaillat, Keating, Maloney, Meeks, Stewart, Wasserman Shultz, and Meadows,
Appearances

For the PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE:
For the COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM:

For the COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

For CATHERINE CROFT:
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THE CHAIRMAN: Let's come to order. Good morning, Ms. Croft, and welcome the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, which, along with the Foreign Affairs and Oversight Committees, is conducting this investigation as part of the official impeachment inquiry of the House of Representatives. Today's deposition is being conducted as part of the impeachment inquiry. In light of attempts by the Department of State and the administration to direct you not to cooperate with the inquiry, the committee had no choice but to compel your appearance today.

We thank you for complying with the dually authorized congressional subpoena, as other current and former officials from across the Federal Government have done.

Ms. Croft is a career Foreign Service officer. In relevant parts, she has served on the U.S. Mission to NATO as Ukraine desk officer, at the National Security Council as Ukraine director, and most recently, she currently serves as the special adviser for Ukraine negotiations. Ms. Croft, thank you for your service.

We look forward to your testimony today, including your knowledge of and involvement in key policy discussions, meetings, and decisions on Ukraine that relate directly to areas under investigation by the committees. This includes developments related to the recall of Ambassador Yovanovitch; the President's July 25, 2019 call with the Ukrainian President Zelensky; as well as the documentary record that
has come to light about efforts before and after the call to get the
Ukrainians to announce publicly investigations into two areas
President Trump asked President Zelensky to pursue, the Bidens and
Burisma, and the conspiracy theory about Ukraine's purported
interference in the 2016 U.S. elections.

We will also have questions about the Department's response to
the impeachment inquiry, including the committee's subpoena, which the
Department continues to defy, despite the fact that we know that it
has already collected significant documentary evidence that goes to
the heart of our inquiry.

Finally, to restate what I and others have emphasized in other
interviews, Congress will not tolerate any reprisal, threat of
reprisal, or attempt to retaliate against any U.S. Government official
for testifying before Congress, including you or any of your
colleagues. It is disturbing that the State Department, in
coordination with the White House, has sought to prohibit Department
employees from cooperating with inquiry and with Congress, and have
tried to limit what they can say.

This is unacceptable. Thankfully, consummate public servants
like you have demonstrated remarkable courage in coming forward to
testify and tell the truth.

Before I turn to the committee counsel to begin the interview,
I invite Ranking Member Nunes to make any opening remarks.

MR. NUNES: I thank the gentleman. Welcome, Ms. Croft, for being
here. Hopefully, today's an improvement over yesterday, that won't
be any coaching of the witnesses, or sidebars, with the witness' attorneys, and then interrupting the questions that we have on our side.

That's what occurred yesterday, Ms. Croft, and for your counsel. We don't tend to accept that as a proper way of a functioning interview. It's not how it should go. We'd appreciate it if the majority would not interrupt our side. And if this continues, I can tell you that my colleagues that are not allowed in this room will continue to express frustration, as we had last week when we -- when this room and the entire committee is continually being bombarded with unclassified material, people want to come down here. It's not appropriate to have these hearings down in the Intelligence Committee. This is not an Intelligence Committee matter.

And in fact, the only piece of the Intelligence Committee matter that we actually had in jurisdiction we had in this, was the whistleblower, who only the majority and their staff have met with. And so, it's quite concerning this inquisition is going on down here. We don't really want to be part of the cult, but we have no options, so we are here. So hopefully today, Ms. Croft, you will be able to answer all of our questions. With that, I will yield the chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: I thank the gentleman for his opening statement. Mr. Goldman, you are recognized.

MR. GOLDMAN: This is a deposition of Catherine Croft, conducted by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence pursuant to the impeachment inquiry announced by the Speaker of the House on September 24, 2019.
Ms. Croft, could you please state your full name and spell your last name for the record, and if you could just pull the microphone close to you. It remains on, and you can just speak normally.

MS. CROFT: Catherine Croft, the last name, C-r-o-f-t.

MR. GOLDMAN: So if I could just ask you to lift the microphone a little and pull it a little bit closer and then --

MS. CROFT: Is that better?

MR. GOLDMAN: Yes.

MS. CROFT: Okay. Catherine Croft, the last name, C-r-o-f-t.

MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you. Along with other proceedings and furtherance of the inquiry to date, this deposition is part of a joint investigation lead by the Intelligence Committee, in coordination with the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Oversight and Reform. In the room today are majority staff and minority staff from all three committees and this will be a staff-led deposition. Members, of course, may ask questions during their allotted time as has been the case in every deposition since the inception of this investigation.

My name is Daniel Goldman, I'm the director of investigations for the Intelligence Committee's majority staff, and I want to thank you again for coming in today.

Let me do some brief introductions. To my right here is Nicolas Mitchell, senior investigative counsel for the Intelligence Committee. Mr. Mitchell and I will be conducting most of the interview for the majority. And now, I'll let my minority counterparts introduce themselves.
MR. CASTOR: Good morning. Steve Castor, Republican staff of the Oversight Committee.

MR. GOLDMAN: This deposition will be conducted entirely at the unclassified level. However, the deposition is being conducted in HPSCI's secure spaces and in the presence of staff with appropriate security clearances. And we understand that your attorneys also have their security clearance. It is the committee's expectation that neither questions asked of you, nor answers provided by you, will require discussion of any information that is currently, or at any point, could be properly classified under Executive Order 13526. You are reminded that EO 13526 states that, quote, "In no case shall information be classified, continue to be maintained as classified, or fail to be declassified," unquote, for the purpose of concealing any violations of law, or preventing embarrassment of any person or entity.

If any of our questions, however, can only be answered with classified information, please inform us of that fact before you answer the question, and we can adjust accordingly.

Today's deposition is not being taken in executive session, but because of the sensitive and confidential nature of some of the topics and materials that will be discussed, access to the transcript of the
deposition will be limited to the three committees in attendance.

Under the House deposition rules, no Member of Congress nor any
staff member can discuss the substance of the testimony that you provide
today. You and your attorney will have an opportunity to review the
transcript after today's deposition.

Before we begin, I'd like to go over some ground rules. We will
be following the House regulations for depositions, which we have
previously provided to your counsel. The deposition will proceed as
follows: The majority will be given 1 hour to ask questions, then the
minority will be given 1 hour. Thereafter, we will alternate back and
forth between majority and minority in 45-minute rounds until
questioning is complete. We will take periodic breaks, but if you need
a break at any time, please let us know.

Under the deposition rules, counsel for other persons or
government agencies may not attend. You are permitted to have an
attorney present during this deposition and I see that you have brought
two. At this time, if counsel could please state their appearance for
the record.

MR. MACDOUGALL: Mark MacDougall, Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer and
Feld, Washington, D.C.

MS. MCNAUGHTON: Abbey McNaughton, Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer
and Feld, Washington, D.C.

MR. GOLDMAN: There is a stenographer taking down everything that
is said here today in order to make a written record of the deposition.
For that record to be clear, please wait until each question is
completed before you begin your answer, and we will wait until you
finish your response before asking the next question.

The stenographer cannot record nonverbal answers such as shaking
your head, so it is important that you answer each question with an
audible verbal answer.

We ask that you give complete replies to questions based on your
best recollection. If a question is unclear, or you are uncertain in
your response, please let us know. And if you do not know the answer
to a question or cannot remember, simply say so.

You may only refuse to answer a question to preserve a privilege
recognized by the committee. If you refuse to answer a question on
the basis of privilege, staff may either proceed with the deposition,
or seek a ruling from the chairman on the objections. If the chair
overrules any such objection, you are required to answer the question.

Finally, you are reminded it is unlawful to deliberately provide
false information to Members of Congress or staff. It is imperative
that you not only answers our questions truthfully, but that you give
full and complete answers to all questions asked of you. Omissions
may be also considered as false statements.

Now as this deposition is under oath, Ms. Croft, will you please
stand and raise your right-hand to be sworn.

Do you swear that your testimony provided here today will be the
whole truth and nothing but the truth?

MS. CROFT: I do.

MR. GOLDMAN: Let the record reflect that the witness has been
sworn.

Now, Ms. Croft, if you have an opening statement or your attorney has any matters to discuss, now is the time.

MR. MACDOUGALL: Mr. Chairman, thank you so much. Before Ms. Croft begins her testimony, I would like to make a brief statement for the record. Catherine Croft is a career Foreign Service officer currently working as special adviser for Ukraine negotiations. On October 28th, 2019, Ms. Croft received a letter through her lawyers from Under Secretary of State Brian Bulatao, in which we were instructed that Ms. Croft cannot participate in the impeachment inquiry being conducted by the House of Representatives and these committees.

Under Secretary Bulatao’s letter stated that these instructions were issued pursuant to a directive from the Office of White House Counsel. Nonetheless, Ms. Croft has been served with a valid subpoena, and so she is obliged to be here today.

While Ms. Croft is prepared to respond to all of the committee’s questions to the best of her ability, I need to address one consideration at the outset. A great deal of attention has been directed to the information submitted to the Office of the Inspector General of the Intelligence Committee by an unnamed government employee pursuant to the Intelligence Community Whistleblower Protection Act. Ms. Croft is not the whistleblower.

As the committee’s well aware, the governing statute permits whistleblowers to preserve their anonymity. We believe that Ms. Croft is obligated to respect in her testimony today the legal standards and
equities that protect whistleblower anonymity in the Intelligence Community. So the extent we reasonably conclude that any questions directed to Ms. Croft this morning are intended to assist anyone in establishing the identity of the whistleblower, we will make the necessary objections and give the witness appropriate instructions. With that, Ms. Croft has a brief opening statement.

THE CHAIRMAN: If I could, Counsel, before the opening statement. None of the members of this committee or staff should ethically seek to out the whistleblower through this witness' testimony. We will not countenance any effort to do so. And if you or your client believe questions are directed in that manner, you should object. We will certainly not the require the witness to answer questions that would violate the whistleblower's right of anonymity.

MR. MACDOUGALL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MS. CROFT: Thank you for the opportunity to provide my statement today. For the last 9 years it has been my honor to serve my country as a Foreign Service officer. In that capacity, it has been a privilege to serve along colleagues of intelligence, integrity, and determination to advance U.S. interests, some of whom have already spoken to this committee. I'm not sure that I have anything to add to the testimony of those who came before me, but I will answer your questions to the best of ability.

My work on Ukraine started in 2013 when I was posted to the U.S. mission to NATO. My portfolio included Ukraine -- NATO-Ukraine relations when the citizens of Ukraine took to the streets to demand
a European future and an end to corruption. When Russian tanks rolled
into Crimea, I was assigned to NATO headquarters in Brussels. At that
time, we did not know where the tanks would stop. Russia's aggression
in Ukraine posed, and continues to pose, a real and immediate threat
to our national interests and a Europe free, whole and at peace.

My firm belief in the importance of Ukraine's future to U.S.
national interests led me to the Ukraine desk. From August 2015 to
July 2017, I was one of several Ukraine desk officers at the State
Department headquarters. In my portfolio, I focused on security
assistance, arm sales, and defense reform. But like all desk officers,
my work also included supporting efforts to combat corruption in
Ukraine, and holding leader accountable for lack of high level
prosecutions.

In July 2017, as the Trump administration was considering
overturning the ban on providing Ukraine defensive weapons I was asked
to join the National Security Council staff at the White House. As
the director covering Ukraine, I staffed the President's December 2017
decision to provide Ukraine with Javelin anti-tank missile systems.
I also staffed to September 2017 meeting with then-President Poroshenko
on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly. Throughout both, I heard,
directly and indirectly, President Trump describe Ukraine as a corrupt
country.

During my time at the NSC, I received multiple calls from lobbyist
Robert Livingston who told me that Ambassador Yovanovitch should be
fired. He characterized Ambassador Yovanovitch as a, quote, "Obama
holdover," end quote, and associated with George Soros. It was not
clear to me at the time, or now, at whose direction or at whose expense
Mr. Livingston was seeking the removal of Ambassador Yovanovitch.

I documented these calls and told my boss, Fiona Hill, and George
Kent, who was in Kyiv at the time, I am not aware of any action that
was taken in response. I left the NSC in July 2018, and started
studying Arabic at the Foreign Service Institute in preparation for
a tour in Baghdad. That plan was cut short in May 2019 when I was asked
to take over as Ambassador Volker's adviser. I spent the month of June
embedded in our embassy in Kyiv to prepare, and then spent the week
of July 8th overlapping with my predecessor, Christopher Anderson.
That week was the first time I became aware that are Ambassador Volker
was in touch with Rudolph Giuliani. However, Ambassador Volker's
conversations with Giuliani were separate from my work and I was
generally unaware of when they spoke or what they spoke about. I have
never had any contact with Rudolph Giuliani.

On July 18 I participated in a sub PCC video conference where an
OMB representative reported that the White House chief of staff, Mick
Mulvaney, had placed an informal hold on security assistance to
Ukraine. The only reason given was that the order came at the direction
of the President. I had heard about the hold before that date, but
I do not remember the specific date. During the July 25 phone call
between President Trump and President Zelensky, I was traveling with
Ambassador Volker in Kyiv. I did not listen in on the call. I
accompanied Ambassador Volker in meetings with Ukraine officials, and
to the line of contact between Ukrainian armed forces and Russian-led forces in eastern Ukraine.

The only readout I got of the July 25 call was based on what President Zelensky told Ambassadors Volker, Taylor, and Sondland about the call at a meeting on July 26th. The focus of the call, as I understood it, was to schedule a face-to-face meeting between President Trump and President Zelensky. We hope that such a meeting would help undue President Trump's long-held view of Ukraine as a corrupt country.

Since July, my sole focus has been supporting efforts to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Zelensky's election and his mandate to tackle corruption ignited a new energy and to stall talks. Right now, even as Ukrainians face casualties nearly every day in defense of their own territory against Russian aggression, decide they are making progress in disengaging at key crossing points.

Zelensky has shown a willingness to take political risk to bring Russia back to the table. His best chance at success is with our support, along with our European partners. It is my hope that even as this committee's process plays out, we do not lose sight of what is happening in Ukraine, and its great promise as a prosperous and democratic member of the European Community.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak, and I welcome your questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Goldman is recognized for 1 hour.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

UNCLASSIFIED
Q: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Croft, welcome again. So just so we're clear about your background, you were at the -- on the Ukraine desk at the State Department in D.C. here from 2015 to July 2017. Is that right?

A: That's correct.

Q: So if you want to just pull the microphone toward you and leave it on, then you can just and it will be easier.

THE CHAIRMAN: It will be pointed right at your mouth, it will be picked up.

MR. GOLDMAN: It is for the folks in the back.

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q: And then July 2017 to July 2018 you were the Ukraine director at the National Security Council?

A: That's correct.

Q: From July 2018 until May 2019, what, if anything, did you have to do with Ukraine?

A: Nothing in any official capacity.

Q: Did you still maintain an interest and keep up to date on what was going on?

A: Yes.

Q: How come?

A: I had been working on Ukraine for several years. I was interested as a foreign policy professional, and I remained friends with those who work in the field.

Q: And who did you speak to in order to keep up to date on what
was happening with Ukraine?

A I followed closely on Twitter, which is a pretty good source of information. And I remained in contact with my predecessor, Chris Anderson. I remained in contact with friends that were serving on the Ukraine desk at the State Department; and I remained in touch with my colleagues at the Ukrainian embassy, my Ukrainian colleagues.

Q You said in your opening statement -- let me ask you this: How aware were you in real time of the issues that arose in March and April of this year with Ambassador Yovanovitch?

A To the extent those events were reported in the media, I was tracking that.

Q Did you speak to anybody at the State Department about what was going on?

A Not that I recall.

Q Did you speak to Ambassador Yovanovitch?

A I sent her one email just telling her I was sorry for what was happening.

Q And you said in your opening statement that when you were at the NSC, you received some messages that were critical of Ambassador Yovanovitch. Is that right?

A That's correct.

Q From Bob Livingston. Is that right?

A That's correct.

Q And who is Bob Livingston?

A I had never met Bob Livingston, I understood him to being
1 a lobbyist.
2 Q Prior to being a lobbyist, do you know what he did?
3 A By virtue of googling, I did, yes.
4 Q And what was that?
5 A That he had served in Congress.
6 Q And do you recall when he first contacted you?
7 A Not specifically, no.
8 Q And how many times did you hear from him?
9 A I can say with certainty at least twice, but I believe more times than that.
10 Q What exactly do you recall him saying to you?
11 A As I reported in my opening statement, I recall him saying that she had to go, she should be fired, that she was an Obama holdover, and made mention of her somehow being connected with George Soros.
12 Q Other than being an Obama holdover, or an alleged connection do George Soros, did he -- did he mention anything about her performance, or any positions that she had taken?
13 A I don't specifically recall.
14 Q Anything else you can remember about what he had said to you?
15 A Not without looking at the notes that I took contemporaneously but no longer have access to.
16 Q And what did you do after he -- after you spoke to him?
17 A I reported the conversations both to my then-boss Fiona Hill, and then to George Kent who was then deputy chief of mission at our embassy in Kyiv.
Q What was their reaction?
A They were, I think, dismayed at the maligning of her character, but no direct action was taken that I was aware of.
Q You had -- you knew Ambassador Yovanovitch from your work on the Ukraine desk?
A Yes.
Q And at the NSC?
A That's correct.
Q And what was your assessment of her competence and capabilities as a diplomat?
A I assessed her to be an extraordinarily competent and skillful diplomat, and a pleasure to work for and with.
Q What did you understand the allegations about George -- related to George Soros to be?
A At the time, conspiracy theories were floating in the media about George Soros, including allegations that Fiona Hill was affiliated, in some fashion, with George Soros. So I understood this to be part of a broader narrative used to malign public officials that somebody of some interest disagreed with.
Q And you indicated the conspiracy theory. Did you understand that there was any validity to any of the concerns that Mr. Livingston raised?
A Not that I was aware of, no.
Q Did you receive any other complaints about Ambassador Yovanovitch while you were at the National Security Council?
A Not that I can specifically recall without reviewing my notes from the time.

Q Do you know if there were any other complaints made by anyone else or to anyone else? Did you hear anything about that?
A Not that I can specifically recall right now.

Q Were you aware of a letter written by Representative Pete Sessions in the middle of 2018?
A I don't have a recollection of that letter right now.

Q Why are you smiling?
A Because I simply don't remember it. It seems like I should, but I don't.

Q Okay. So, you said that you were following the issues related to Ambassador Yovanovitch earlier this year from the media?
A That's correct.

Q And based on your knowledge and expertise about Ukraine and your working relationship with Ambassador Yovanovitch, were you aware of any factual basis for any of the allegations that were made against her?
A No.

Q Now, you said in your opening statement that you were -- that you staffed President Trump's meeting with President Poroshenko in September 2017. Was that right?
A That's correct.

Q And you said that President Trump had concerns that Ukraine was a corrupt country at the time?
A Yes.
Q Can you explain a little bit more about what his concerns were?
A The President, at the time, didn't elaborate what his own concerns were. He just simply described Ukraine as corrupt.
Q And based on your experience working Ukraine issues, did you also believe that in the past, Ukraine had been -- had suffered from serious corruption?
A Yes. I think it was well-known that there was a lot of corruption among senior leadership in Kyiv.
Q In fact, U.S. official policy towards Ukraine has been -- one significant aspect of U.S. official policy related to Ukraine has been to stamp out corruption. Is that right?
A That's correct.
Q You said you were also involved in the decision to provide Javelins to Ukraine at the end of 2017. Is that right?
A Yes.
Q And that was a significant endeavor to provide lethal defensive assistance to Ukraine in their war to fend off its aggression from Russia. Is that right?
A Yes, that was a very significant policy change.
Q When was the -- when were the Javelins ultimately approved to be provided to Ukraine. Do you recall with any specificity?
A That was in December of 2017.
Q And at that time, when were they supposed to be delivered?
1 A The decision did not include a specific delivery date
2 that -- because that requires planning and, you know, moving equipment
3 around and things like that. So until we had the decision, we weren't
4 able to physically move the equipment or anticipate a deployment date.
5 Q Soon after the decision was made, was there a plan put in
6 place about the timing of the delivery?
7 A Yes.
8 Q And do you recall the first target date?
9 A I don't recall.
10 Q Do you recall if there were ever any delays related to
11 providing the Javelins to Ukraine?
12 A From the date of the President's decision to the delivery,
13 no I'm not aware of any delays.
14 Q Are you aware of -- so when, ultimately, were the Javelins
15 provided? Do you recall?
16 A I don't recall the specific date, no.
17 Q If -- would it -- if I told you there's been some reporting
18 that it was towards the end of March of 2018, would that sound correct
19 to you?
20 A That sounds -- that sounds reasonable, yeah.
21 Q Were you also aware, at that time as Ukraine director, that
22 Ukraine somewhat suddenly ceased to cooperate with the Special
23 Counsel's investigation?
24 A I'm sorry.
25 Q Special Counsel Robert Mueller?
A Can you repeat the question?
Q Around that same time, March, April, 2018, there was reporting that Ukraine stopped -- announced that they were going to stop cooperating with Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation. Were you aware of that?
A No.
Q You were on the National Security Council as Ukraine director at that time?
A Yes. I don't have any specific memory of any conversations with Ukrainians about the Mueller investigation, or participation or cooperation.
Q Did you read it in the press?
A I imagine I would have at the time.
Q You just don't remember it sitting here today?
A I do not.
Q Understood.

Let's move ahead to 2019, we'll go back. So the one other question I had on Ambassador Yovanovitch: When did you hear that she was going to be recalled from Kyiv?
A I would have read it in the news along with everybody else.
Q Did you have any conversations with George Kent or anyone else at the State Department about the allegations against Ambassador Yovanovitch?
A Other than what was in my opening statement, no.
Q And so you only followed it from the media?
A That's correct. As far as I recall, yeah.

Q When were you asked to become the special assistant for Ukraine negotiations?

A In May of this year.

Q Who asked you?

A Christopher Anderson.

Q And what was his role at the time?

A He was special adviser to Ambassador Volker.

Q So he asked you to replace him?

A That's correct.

Q And -- just one second.

[Discussion off the record.]

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q What did Mr. Anderson say to you?

A He asked me if I wanted his job.

Q And did you agree immediately?

A No.

Q What was your -- what was your process before you ultimately agreed?

A I said, no, in more or less that tone of voice. And then thought about it for a little while and said, maybe I will think about it. And so we spoke again a couple of times, I think, in the following week or two.

Q And when did you ultimately agree to take the job?

A I don't remember the specific date, but it was roughly early
to mid-May.

Q  And when did you officially come on board?
A  I think you could measure it by when I traveled to Kyiv, which I believe was May 29th, but there I was embedded in the political section for a month, and then officially started here in Washington on July 8.

Q  So you were in Kyiv from May 29th until when?
A  July 1, I believe.

Q  One thing I just want to go back to before I move ahead to your time in Kyiv, the Javelins -- the provision of the Javelins in 20 -- late 2017, early 2018, do you recall whether there was ever a hold or a freeze put on the Javelin provision?
A  There was a PCC process, and there was one hold -- sorry, at the PC level, excuse me, the principals committee, and there was one agency that put a hold on that decision.

Q  And which was that agency?
A  OMB.

Q  Did you understand why?
A  I understood the reason to be a policy one.

Q  What was the policy one?
A  In a briefing with Mr. Mulvaney, the question centered around the Russian reaction.

Q  What was the concern about the Russian reaction?
A  That Russia would react negatively to the provision of Javelins to Ukraine.
Q What was the reaction to that concern from the other agencies?

A I don't know that I can provide that information in an unclassified setting.

Q Okay. Is there any way to provide broadly?

A I can broadly say that all of the policy agencies were in support.

Q And you mean in support of providing the Javelins?

A Correct.

Q So how long was this hold placed?

A I don't recall specifically, perhaps a week or two.

Q And just to be clear, this policy went all the way up the chain from sub PCC, to PCC, to DC, to principals committee. Is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q And at all of the prior levels, so to speak, was there any -- was there any concern expressed about this policy change?

A I think to go into specific details about what was discussed at those meetings I would need to be in a classified setting.

Q I was just asking was there any concern expressed by anybody that --

A All of the agencies were in agreement.

Q Okay. Including OMB up until the principals committee?

A I don't recall OMB expressing a policy objection at those levels.
Q Just so we understand, what role does OMB have in making foreign -- official foreign policy?

A I think, typically, its role is usually limited to the budget side of things. So it was rather unusual to have OMB expressing concerns that were purely policy-based and not budget-oriented.

Q And your experience, either on the Ukraine desk at the State Department or at the National Security Council, were you aware of OMB, in any other circumstance, expressing policy reservations?

A At the beginning of the Ukrainian Javelin process, I had been told that OMB was taking a policy interest. And OMB began sending working level officials to attend meetings, even at the sub PCC level, which was very unusual at the time. And they weren't just attending Ukraine-related meetings, they were coming to all of our meetings, which, as an aside, is quite taxing on a very small organization.

Q Small organization being the National Security Council?

A No, on OMB to staff that number of meetings.

Q Got it. Got it. So they -- OMB took an interest in countries other than Ukraine policy as well?

A Yes.

Q How -- you said that the hold was a week or two. How -- what was the process for the hold to be lifted? What did you understand the reasoning to be?

A I was asked, along with my colleague, Richard Hooker to go brief Mick Mulvaney on the decision. We did so, and then within a day or two, the hold was lifted.
Q And can you, without getting into classified material, can you explain what your broad message was to Mr. Mulvaney?

A Broadly, the message was that the policy process had worked, that the potential issues on all fronts had been thoroughly discussed and sussed out, and that had the agencies were in agreement about the policy moving forward -- or about their recommendation to the President.

Q Did you address the concerns that he had expressed about Russia's reaction to this policy change?

A Yes.

Q What did you say?

A I think that's the part that I can't refer to here.

Q Who directed you to go brief Mr. Mulvaney?

A I believe it was a staffer at OMB that said that Mr. Mulvaney wanted to be briefed.

Q And do you -- if the decision was made at the end of December to provide the Javelins. Did that decision go through the whole PCC process?

A I'm sorry, the Javelin decision?

Q Yes.

A Yes. Sub PCC, PCC, DC, PC.

Q So at that point, the decision at the end of the December had already been through this process?

A That's correct.

Q So what was the process that Mr. Mulvaney intervened in if

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it had already approved?

A At the PC level, he objected.

Q So he objected in December? I'm asking if he objected to the initial decision, or did he object to the release or provision of the Javelins?

A I see. I understand the question now. He objected in the PC, it was a paper PC, but he objected in the PC.

Q The original one about the decision ultimately in December?

A Before the decision in December, in the tee-up to that decision.

Q So that had nothing to do with the timing of the actual provision of the Javelins to Ukraine?

A It held up the overall decision-making timeline.

Q Understood. Okay.

Now in -- did Rob Blair have a role in this process with Mr. Mulvaney?

A I understood him to be playing some sort of policy role in briefing Mr. Mulvaney.

Q What was that role that you understood?

A I don't know specifically.

Q Did you ever have any conversation with Mr. Blair about this?

A I did not, no.

Q Do you know whether the President weighed in, in any respect, on this decision?

A The decision was made by the President.
Q I understand. But do you know whether the President -- let me ask you it a different way. Do you know whether the President -- whether Mr. Mulvaney was relaying the President's concerns when he put the hold on for fear of the impact on Russia?

A I don't know if the President and Mr. Mulvaney spoke on this.

Q Okay.

A I don't have any independent knowledge.

Q In your meeting with Mr. Mulvaney, did he reference the President's views at all?

A Not that I recall, but the President's views were pretty well-known.

Q And what were they?

A The President was skeptical of providing weapons to Ukraine.

Q Why?

A When this was discussed, including in front of the Ukrainian delegation, in front of President Poroshenko, he described his concerns being that Ukraine was corrupt, that it was capable of being a very rich country, and that the United States shouldn't pay for it, but instead, we should be providing aid through loans.

Q Okay. And so how did that relate to the provision of Javelins?

A I'm sorry. What do you mean?

Q You said the President's views on Ukraine were very well-known. And I'm trying to understand how the views that you just expressed, might impact the ultimate decision to provide Javelins to
the Ukraine?

A So those views were expressed directly to President Poroshenko in response to his desire for Javelins.

Q Ah, okay. And were the Javelins, at that time, that were being provided, a -- what -- a gift, or were they being sold to Ukraine?

A They were being provided using grant assistance through foreign military financing.

Q So just so we understand, ultimately it was U.S. financial support to Ukraine that Ukraine used to purchase the Javelins?

A Yes.

Q So you indicated the President's views that Ukraine should pay for their own -- pay their own way, effectively, in reaction to President Poroshenko's request for lethal military assistance? Is that an accurate summary?

A That's how I understood the President's comments, yes.

Q After that meeting with President Poroshenko, did you have any occasion to learn the President's views more specifically on -- during the policy process to provide the Javelins?

A Inasmuch as I was tasked, and retasked, and retasked, and retasked by General McMaster to write paper to help him make the case to the President, I started to get a sense of what the President's concerns were.

Q And what were those concerns?

A That Ukraine is corrupt, and that Europe should be stepping up to do more to provide security assistance to Ukraine.
Q: Did you have an understanding at that time as to how much security assistance Europe was providing to Ukraine?

A: Yes.

Q: And I mean, taking all the European -- EU countries together, how did it compare to how much security assistance the United States was providing?

A: The -- our European partners in general their security assistance is significantly less than U.S. security assistance. We are, by far, the lead.

Q: That's on an individual country basis, or all told?

A: Even all told.

Q: Because there's been reporting that all told -- does that change over time, I guess, is the question since 2017 to the present?

A: So our Ukrainian partners do provide security assistance, and they do partner with us in training the Ukraine armed forces, and they do provide separately some equipment and other financial assistance. But the quantities are significantly less than what the United States provides. One of the cases that we were attempting to make at the time was that even though we lead on security assistance, our European partners lead on providing overall economic assistance, which, I think, it's fairly easy to make the case that in these Ukrainian circumstances in 2015, 16, 17, economic security and national security were closely tied.

Q: Okay. So just so we're clear, the European countries led on what you were calling economic assistance, and the United States
led on what you're calling security assistance?

A I think that's correct, yes.

Q And how -- can you explain the difference between the two?

A So World Bank, IMF, EBRD, EU generally, then bilaterally, several of our European partners -- also credit to Japan -- were providing economic -- loan guarantees and other forms of sort of economic aid to help stabilize the country, immediately following Russia's invasion in 2015.

Q Would you say both are important to Ukraine's viability as a democracy?

A Absolutely. I think without that, that assistance, Ukraine wouldn't be in the relatively stable position that it is in now.

Q And would you say that the security assistance -- how should I say this -- is more specifically appropriated than economic assistance? In other words, does security assistance, is it tied more directly to particular aspects of support than the economic assistance would be?

A Yes. I think bipartisan support for Ukraine in Congress has meant tremendous support, specifically on security assistance, and that has meant some specific conditionality, including on defense reform and provision of defensive weapons, and/or counter artillery radar is part of the overall legislative package.

Q As part of that legislative package, in order to provide the security assistance, there are a number of conditions that Ukraine must meet. Is that right?
A That's right.

Q And you -- I think you described a couple of them, but could you just list the ones that you're aware of?

A I think the key one is with regard to the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative or USAI, which is the DOD pot of money, which is specifically tied to DOD making a certification that Ukraine has made adequate progress in defense reform. And then, sort of, implementation of that legislation, the State Department and DOD have worked together to, sort of, set standards for what it is we expect Ukraine to do to reform its defense sector.

Q And does that also include anticorruption efforts?

A Yes.

Q But economic assistance that Europe is the lead on, does it have the same -- are you aware of whether Europe insists on some of the same conditionality?

A The conditionality for economic assistance tends to be set sort of which IMF in the lead and then with other economic or international financial institutions an countries like the United States sort of falling behind on the IMF's lead on what conditionality would look like.

Q Okay. So just to close the loop on this, Mr. Mulvaney's concerns about the impact on Russia, do you know whether the -- did you hear after your meeting with Mr. Mulvaney, whether he had a conversation with the President about this issue before the decision was made?
A I'm sorry, before the Javelin decision in 2017?

Q Yes.

A No, I'm not aware of any conversations directly between the two of them that I recall being told about.

Q And it was General McMaster's strong view that the U.S. should provide the Javelins to Ukraine. Is that correct?

A Yes, also General Mattis at the time.

Q General Mattis. What about Secretary of State Tillerson?

A He also agreed.

Q So all the principals of the interagency agreed. Is that correct?

A Yes.

Q And to your knowledge, it was a pretty -- other than OMB's unusual intervention, it was broadly supported by the policymakers?

A Yes -- sorry, I need to revise. Yes, everybody agreed except for OMB.

Q All right. And could you just explain why -- I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before counsel goes on to a different subject, I want to ask a few follow-up questions. You mentioned that -- at one point that you had taken notes contemporaneously with events. Is that a pattern of yours, or a practice of yours?

MS. CROFT: I try to.

THE CHAIRMAN: And did you receive a request from the State Department for all of notes and documents and records related to the
investigation?

MS. CROFT: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: So the notes that you would have taken relevant to Ukraine during the course of your time working on this, would those have been provided to the State Department?

MS. CROFT: Yes, those have all been provided.

THE CHAIRMAN: My colleague asked you about concerns that were raised by Mulvaney. If I understand correctly, Mr. Mulvaney didn't raise these concerns in person, they were raised on paper. Is that right?

MS. CROFT: Yes, in an objection on -- in -- during the course of a paper PC.

THE CHAIRMAN: So during the course of the paper PC, Mr. Mulvaney objected in writing to the provision of the Javelins at that point?

MS. CROFT: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: And are you able to tell us in an unclassified forum the nature of his objection?

MS. CROFT: I can say that it was a policy based objection. And then as I said before, when we spoke to him, Robert Hooker and I, he asked about the Russian reaction.

THE CHAIRMAN: When you say he asked -- he asked in person or he asked in writing?

MS. CROFT: He blocked -- he blocked the decision at the PC level in writing, and then subsequently we briefed him in person, and that was the conversation where he -- where he asked questions about the
Russian reaction.

THE CHAIRMAN: And as best you can remember, when did the OMB first put its hold on the provision of the Javelins? And when was the decision made to release the hold?

MS. CROFT: I don't recall the very specific dates without access to my files from that time, which I don't have access to.

THE CHAIRMAN: That would be documented in the records you provided to the State Department?

MS. CROFT: No. Those would be records from my time at the National Security Council, which would be -- which are in the National Archives.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Well, given that we don't have those with us today, let's ask for the best of your recollection. About when was the hold put in place? About how long elapsed before the decision was made to release the Javelin?

MS. CROFT: My best guess, without access to my notes, is I believe that that would have probably been in November or early December, when, I think, back to when the President made his decision. In the time that it took to facilitate the President's decision, I don't recall specifically when the paper PC went out, what those dates were.

THE CHAIRMAN: So you're talking about November, December, 2017?

MS. CROFT: That's correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: And can you give us sort of your best estimate of the range of how long the hold would have been put in place, how many weeks?
MS. CROFT: My recollection is about 2 weeks, but like I said, without my notes, it's hard to refresh my memory.

THE CHAIRMAN: And what was going on with respect to Ukraine during those 2 weeks, in terms of what you were following in press accounts? Do you remember?

MS. CROFT: I don't. I was very focused on the Javelin decision. I don't have a specific memory of what was happening in the press at the time.

THE CHAIRMAN: During the period, either before the hold, during the hold, or after the hold, were you aware of any discussions going on about Ukraine's participation or nonparticipation in assisting the Mueller investigation?

MS. CROFT: Nothing that I was doing in my work at the National Security Council in any way related to what was happening in the Mueller investigation.

THE CHAIRMAN: No, I understand that. But we're obviously looking at allegations concerning the hold-up of military assistance in 2019. We're looking at a call record in which the President of Ukraine asks -- says he's almost ready to get more Javelins. And we know during this period there is a hold put on military assistance. And as I'm sure you're aware from public accounts, there are questions about why that hold was placed, and testimony that was related to political demands by the President.

So what I'm asking you is, did it come to your attention in any way, shape, or form, through conversation, open reporting or otherwise,
that there may have been factors behind the first hold on the Javelins, the 2017 hold on the Javelins, that were not related to policy, that may have been related to investigations that the President wanted the Ukraine to do, or work that the President wanted Ukraine to refrain from doing in connection with the Mueller investigation?

MS. CROFT: I was not aware of any connection between those two things, and don't recall having any conversations with anybody about the Mueller investigation at that time. I would say that OMB's decision to hold on the Javelin decision at the PC level, given OMB's signaled interest in engaging in a policy basis came as a surprise, but had -- was proceeded by OMB engagement on the issue.

And in fact, I had, throughout from the beginning of my time at the NSC, engaged OMB regularly to inform them about we were doing on the Javelins in order to try to over -- overcome any policy concerns that I could through the work of the interagency. So, in my mind, because I hadn't heard any connection between what was happening in terms of the Mueller investigation and security assistance, I had not made that connection, and nobody had made that connection to me.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm jumping forward a bit here, but in 2019, you were not a part of the conversations about specific investigations, the President had sought in connection with White House meeting or military assistance, that you were largely not in the loop on that?

MS. CROFT: I was largely not in the loop on that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Jumping back to 2017 again, the policy rationale that you have articulated in terms of not wanting to anger the Russians
by providing Javelins to Ukraine, there was a strong policy consensus
to do it, OMB objected to it. Did any of the OMB objections that were
raised with you differ from the concern about angering or upsetting
the Russians?

MS. CROFT: Not that I recall.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Goldman.

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q Moving back to 2019, I just want to --

[Discussion off the record.]
[10:15 a.m.]
BY MR. GOLDMAN:
Q You said that you initially told Mr. Anderson no and you had reservations. What were your reservations?
A I'd already done a lot of work on Ukraine. I was looking forward to my assignment in Baghdad, and I think the nature of corruption in Ukraine always made it a tricky country to work on.
Q By May, and you were -- were you aware of -- withdrawn.
You have already testified about you were following the press accounts related to the false allegations against Ambassador Yovanovitch, right?
A Yes.
Q Were you also aware of other narratives in the media related to some of these other investigations that are the subject of this inquiry?
A I was following the John Solomon reporting in The Hill with concern and interest.
Q And what do you recall about the John Solomon reporting, separate and apart from anything in connection with Ambassador Yovanovitch?
A He appeared to be building a case based on sourcing through then-Prosecutor General Lutsenko, and a former employee of the Ukrainian Embassy in the United States, at the time, I think, very focused on those two, that there was some connection between Ukraine and interference in the 2016 elections, and the then-Ukrainian
administration having a preference for the outcome of the 2016

election.

Q And were you aware of any factual basis to support those
allegations, based on your time focused on Ukraine around 2016?

A I was aware that Paul Manafort was associated with the
Yanukovych regime, which, of course, had been ousted and then-President
Poroshenko would have been a rival of Yanukovych. So I anticipated
that that might be sort of an angle of inquiry.

Q I don't understand. What does that have to do with the
allegations of -- Yanukovych was removed in 2014, right?

A Right.

Q Okay. So the -- what are the -- can you explain a little
more to me?

A It's a little bit weird. So Poroshenko and Yanukovych were,
of course, rivals. Poroshenko saw that Trump's campaign manager was
affiliated with Yanukovych, and so I could imagine at the time that
Poroshenko would have concerns about potential policy shifts on Ukraine
following the 2016 election.

I was also aware that the Republican platform had changed with
regard to provision of security assistance in the lead-up to that
election. So I imagined that Poroshenko was paying attention to that
fact as well.

Q Okay. So you understand why there might be a motivation,
but you were not aware of any factual basis for those allegations?

A Correct, absolutely.
Q And were you aware by May that Rudy Giuliani was also promoting some of these narratives?
A Yes. I started to see some of the same narratives pop up.
Q And then were you aware at that time about a narrative related to Burisma Holdings and Vice President Biden?
A I was aware of Hunter Biden's role in the Ukrainian energy sector from my time on the Ukraine desk.
Q And were you aware that that was -- that whole subject was one of the things that Mr. Giuliani was promoting in the media?
A I became aware when he started tweeting about it.
Q And do you recall that there was a fairly -- there was an article May 9th in The New York Times that got a fair amount of attention, where Mr. Giuliani said that he was going to go to Ukraine to pressure the Ukrainian Government for investigations?
A Yes. I --
Q Was this during the time that you were considering whether or not to take this job?
A Yeah. I don't actually remember the day that Chris and I had that conversation, but it was probably around that time.
Q And how, if at all, did these narratives that were being played out in the media, through Mr. Giuliani and others, affect your thinking on whether you were going to take this job?
A They made me certainly a lot more trepidatious.
Q Why?
A I knew from my experience on the Ukraine desk and from working
at the NSC that, like I said before, the nature of the corruption in
Ukraine makes it a particularly difficult country to work on, because
it is difficult to know at any given time what interests are behind
what actions.

But one of the reasons that I ultimately agreed to take the job
was because I felt I was probably better positioned than most to help
and advise the Department to manage those tricky waters, and because
I didn't want anyone else to get exposed to what I'm doing today.

Q  What do you mean by that? You took one for the team?
A  Yes.

Q  What were you concerned about others having to deal with?
A  That I was watching those narratives play out in the media,
and I thought at the time that it was possible that the Trump
administration would choose to change its policy to suit domestic
politics.

Q  Did you have any conversations with Ambassador Volker before
you took the job?
A  Actually, no. I'd already -- I'd worked with him before.
We knew each other from before.

Q  Do you recall when you first spoke with him?
A  In this capacity or in general?

Q  Sorry. Yes, in this capacity, after you -- I guess after
you accepted the job, when was the first time that you spoke with
Ambassador Volker?
A  It would have been when I got back from Kyiv the week of the
8th, but I'm not certain specifically. Oh, it was when we had a meeting with [REDACTED]. So whatever date that was. I don't have the specific date with me.

Q Was that in D.C.?
A That was here in D.C., yes.

Q So you didn't speak with Ambassador Volker from May until you returned to D.C. after July 1st, even though you were going to be working directly for him?
A No, I spoke with Chris. He was in touch with Kurt.

Q Did you speak with Mr. Anderson about these narratives that were playing out in the media related to Mr. Giuliani?
A Not until I got back.

Q When you -- during the time that you were in Kyiv -- well, when you arrived in Kyiv, who was leading the Embassy?
A The now DCM, Kristina Kvien, had just arrived around the same time that I did, I think.

Q So Ambassador Yovanovitch was gone?
A She was gone.

Q The former DCM was gone?
A That's right.

Q And Ambassador Taylor had not yet arrived?
A Correct.

Q When Ambassador -- during your time in Kyiv in June, did you have any conversations with Ambassador Taylor about the narratives that were playing out in the media?
A I had a conversation with Ambassador Taylor before he went to Ukraine as he was considering taking the position.

Q And can you describe for us that conversation?

A As he's -- as I understand from media reports that he has testified before, he had come to the Department with concerns that the U.S. policy on Ukraine might change and wanted to get the Department's views on that.

I sat down with him and shared my very frank assessment that the White House was not likely to change its policy on Ukraine except in the event that the President viewed it -- the -- that Biden was going to be a credible rival for him in the upcoming election, and that he -- that furthering the narrative that Russia was for the Republicans and Ukraine was for the Democrats would be in his interest, and that might push him to change the policy on Ukraine. But I said that, otherwise, I saw no reason that our policy would change.

Q And were you aware at that -- well, when was that meeting with Ambassador Taylor, do you recall?

A That would have been in May, very shortly before I headed out to Kyiv.

Q So just before May 29th?

A Yeah.

Q And were you aware by that point that Vice President Biden had announced his candidacy for President?

A I don't remember when he announced his candidacy for President.
Q: But you knew that he was --

A: Of course, yes.

Q: -- a potential candidate?

A: Yes.

Q: So I just want to understand this. When you say the White House policy towards Ukraine, do you mean official U.S. policy supporting Ukraine in a bipartisan basis?

A: No, I mean the President's views.

Q: You mean the President's views?

A: Yes.

Q: And so what -- when you said the President's views were not going to change, what were the President's views that you understood at that time?

A: What I've articulated so far, that he was skeptical of Ukraine as a corrupt country, but he had reversed the decision on Javelins. So I didn't take him to be sort of anti-Ukraine, aside from, obviously, this very strongly held view that it is a corrupt country. But I knew that the rest of the interagency remained united in its support for Ukraine.

Q: And so, can you explain how the Biden candidacy would potentially -- how you thought the Biden candidacy would potentially impact the President's views on Ukraine, as you explained it to Ambassador Taylor?

A: Yeah. This was just sort of my speculation, as somebody who has watched Ukraine for a while and as somebody who had worked in the
White House, but that my understanding was that, you know, in an attempt
to -- that it seemed logical to me that in an attempt to counter the
narrative about Russian support for the Trump administration in the
2016 election or Russian interference in the 2016 election that -- that
it would be useful to shift that narrative by shifting it to Ukraine
as being in support of the Clintons.

Q And how would that affect the President's policy views
towards Ukraine?

A The way I thought about it was that painting sort of Ukraine
as being against Trump would help distract from a narrative or balance
out a narrative that he had gotten help in the 2016 election from Russia.

Does that answer your question?

Q Understood. I guess the question is, if he already had
negative views of Ukraine, how would the effect of Vice President
Biden's candidacy change his views, which I think you said that's the
only way --

MR. RATCLIFFE: Just to be clear, are you asking the witness to
speculate as to the President's frame of mind?

MR. GOLDMAN: No. I'm asking the witness, based on her
experience for several years related to Ukraine, how she interpreted
the narratives that were in the media at the time related to
investigations.

MR. RATCLIFFE: You used the words "the President's thinking."

THE CHAIRMAN: Excuse me. Excuse me. She's describing a
conversation she had with Ambassador Taylor. I'll permit the
question. You may answer.

   MR. RATCLIFFE: Let the record reflect the chairman -- I'll withdraw that.

   THE CHAIRMAN: You can answer the question.

   MS. CROFT: Sorry, can you repeat the question?

   BY MR. GOLDMAN:

   Q You testified that you indicated to Ambassador Taylor that the only way that the White House policy would change was somehow related to this Biden narrative.

   A Yes, thank you.

   Q And I'm just asking how the Biden narrative would change what you've described as the President's negative views towards Ukraine?

   A That, I think, in order to sort of credibly paint Ukraine as the enemy in both the 2016 elections and potentially moving forward to 2020 elections, that that would not be consistent with supporting Ukraine, in terms of providing lethal assistance or other forms of political support. Is that responsive?

   Q It is responsive, but it goes back to, I think, the earlier question I said, which is that the policy change would be from the overall support for Ukraine to less support for Ukraine. Is that true?

   The policy change that would flow from that would be to reverse the support for Ukraine.

   A That is correct. That was as Ambassador Taylor sort of articulated his concern to me, and that was the question that I was responding to when I gave that answer.
Q And how did Ambassador Taylor articulate the concern to you?
A To the best of my recollection, he said, I want to do this job, but only -- or I'm willing to do this job, only as long our policy on Ukraine remains the same, meaning support for Ukraine. But if that changes, or if that's going to change, then I would quit.
Q Did he bring up Rudy Giuliani or the Biden narrative to you?
A I raised the Biden narrative with him. I don't recall whether we discussed Giuliani or not.
Q Do you know whether he had already met with Secretary Pompeo by the time that you had this conversation?
A I believe he was due to meet with Pompeo after that conversation.
Q And did he tell you what he expected to speak to Secretary Pompeo about?
A My understanding is he was going to ask Secretary Pompeo the same question.
Q And in that meeting with Ambassador Taylor, did he discuss with you at all a May 23rd meeting at the White House with President Trump related to Ukraine?
A I believe that we did discuss it with regard to how he saw his role on Ukraine policy vis-à-vis Ambassador Volker specifically, given the role I was taking on.

THE CHAIRMAN: We're going to come back to that next round. I just have a couple questions before our time expires.
       Going back to the Javelins, it was the consensus of U.S.

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policymakers within the NSC and State Department that the Javelins should be provided. The lone objector was OMB. Is that right?

MS. CROFT: The lone objector in the paper PC on the Javelin decision was OMB.

THE CHAIRMAN: So it was the view of -- apart from OMB, it was the unanimous view that providing Javelins to Ukraine would help Ukraine in its defense against Russia and would, therefore, be in U.S. national security interest?

MS. CROFT: Correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: If we didn't provide Javelins to Ukraine, would that serve Russia's interest?

MS. CROFT: In my opinion, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Our time has expired. One hour to the minority.

MS. CROFT: Sorry. I don't want to interrupt you once we start on your hour. I wonder if I could use a break?

THE CHAIRMAN: Of course. Let's take a 5-minute break.

[Recess.]

THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Let's come to order.

One hour with the minority.

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q Ms. Croft, I'm Steve Castor with the Republican staff. Thanks for being here today. I know this is not the most comfortable environment, so thank you for your willingness to sit through this and be helpful with your questions.

I'm an investigative person. I work on investigations of all
types, not necessarily those relating to the State Department, so if I get any of these pronunciations wrong or if I don't have a sufficient understanding of how things really work at the State Department, I hope -- I mean no disrespect, and I hope you'll just help me understand.

Before becoming Ambassador Volker's -- before joining his team, you were in Arabic language training. Is that right?

A That's right.

Q And you were aiming to head to Baghdad?

A That is correct.

Q Okay. And how did you break that -- that assignment, you know, in terms of going over to help Ambassador Volker?

A So for certain high-danger posts, the Department will allow you to break assignment without any explanation, and that was the case here.

Q Okay. And was it your initiative to break that or did -- other than Mr. Anderson, I know you mentioned him.

A Yes, I broke the assignment to take this position. But interestingly, just a few days later, I got the notice that my position was removed in the drawdown.

Q Okay. And you had worked with Ambassador Volker before?

A Yes.

Q And you had a good working relationship with him?

A Yes.

Q How long have you known the Ambassador?

A I believe I would have met him in or around July of 2017,
when he became the special rep.

Q  Okay. That was the first time you met him?
A  I believe so, yeah.

Q  Okay. He's a person of high integrity?
A  Yes.

Q  A person that in all aspects of his work would do things that he believed were in the best interest of the United States?
A  Yes. In my opinion, yes.

Q  You were on detail to the National Security Council, if I have this correct, between July 2017 and July 2018?
A  That's right.

Q  How do those postings work or detailees when you're a State Department official? How do you get selected or how do you bid for those opportunities?
A  In my case, I was approached by my predecessor, who asked me to take on the role. And I was, of course, also hesitant. But then, I agreed to sit down with Fiona Hill and Richard Hooker for an interview.

Q  Who was the predecessor?
A  [redacted].

Q  And you interviewed with Fiona Hill?
A  Yes, and Richard Hooker.

Q  And how does the process work inside of the State Department, in terms of getting permission to be a detailee?
A  I think poorly. I can't illuminate, but it's a lot more than that.
Q What are the mechanics of it?

A As I understood it, there was a formal request from the executive secretary at the NSC to the executive secretary at the State Department, and then it is a black box until I'm told to report for duty.

Q Okay. And how long was that? Like, how long were you in limbo before you reported to the NSC?

A Longer than would be normal. I don't remember specifically how long, but because at the time, Tillerson had put a block on all NSC -- or on all State detailees to the NSC.

Q Okay. And was the block ultimately lifted? Is that what allowed you to go over there?

A I believe it was lifted, if I recall correctly, on sort of a case-by-case basis. So specifically, my detail was authorized.

Q Okay. And did you know anybody when you went over to the NSC, or just those you interviewed with?

A I knew several members of the previous team.

Q Okay.

A In Pound (ph), Russia.

Q And did you know Dr. Hill?

A Only when I interviewed for the job.

Q Okay, that was the first time you met her?

A Yes.

Q And how did the reporting relationship work? You reported to Dr. Hill, and then she reported to -- who did she report to?
I reported to Dr. Hill, and then she reported to the National Security Advisor, sometimes through the Deputy National Security Advisor.

At the time, it was General McMaster?

I worked under both General McMaster and under Ambassador Bolton.

If my dates are right, General McMaster was there until April of 2018?

That sounds right. I don't remember the specific date.

Okay. Were things different under General McMaster and Ambassador Bolton, in terms of how the NSC worked?

Oh, yeah.

And can you describe those differences?

General McMaster had very strong views about process and how process should work, and had worked hard to establish a process and create a series of strategies and implementation plans. And, you know, it was sort of -- it was sort of like being at war college, though I've never been at war college, but that's how I imagine it felt; whereas, under Ambassador Bolton, there were -- that process slowed down significantly.

Okay. And you were at the NSC for a year?

That's right.

And what were the circumstances of you leaving NSC?

When I took the position at the NSC, because we, as Foreign Service Officers, bid a year out, I had already -- or at some point
very early on in my tenure, I had agreed to go to Baghdad following
the assignment.

Q Okay. So it was a 1-year posting?
A It was a 1-year posting. The NSC did actually ask me to stay
on for a second year, and I agreed to do it. But then with the
transition from McMaster to Bolton, I decided not to.

Q Okay.
A Not because of Bolton.
Q Okay. Why did you decide not to?
A I specifically had wanted to work for General McMaster, but,
also, because I had sort of decided that that transition was going to
create a lot of chaos and work, and that I needed some downtime.

Q And how was your working relationship with Dr. Hill?
A Excellent.
Q And did she include you in all the matters related to Ukraine
and your portfolio?
A Yes. As far as I'm aware, yeah.
Q And what was your portfolio?
A Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, the Caucasus and OSCE.
Q And who took your job when you left the NSC?
A My job was divided up into different portfolios. So nobody
took my full portfolio.
Q Did you transition out of your job when you left the NSC and
went back to State Department with the incoming person?
A On the Caucasus side, no, that position was left vacant for
a period of time. On the Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus side, I had a brief overlap with Alex Vindman.

Q  Okay. And did you have -- how long was the overlap?
A  I think it was a week.

Q  Okay. And was that a good transition period? Was that enough time to get Lieutenant Colonel Vindman up to speed on the issues?
A  It's more than NSC directors usually get.

Q  Okay. And then when you were back at the State Department working for Ambassador Volker, how did that situation work? He was an unpaid official, correct?
A  That's right.

Q  Okay. And so, your organization, was it, you and him or did you have additional staff support?
A  We had an office management specialist, like a secretary.

Q  But you were his only direct report?
A  Yes.

Q  And I'm going to go through some of the events that have been part of the committee's inquiry, just to see if you have any firsthand information on them. Were you part of the trip, did you participate at all in the inaugural which was in May of 2019? I think that is slightly before your posting began.
A  That is correct, that was before my posting began.

Q  Okay. Did your predecessor participate in that trip?
A  I believe so, yeah.

Q  So Mr. Anderson, he traveled to Ukraine?
A That's my recollection, but I think he'd have to answer that.

Q Okay. And during the -- so you said that in the month of June, you traveled to Kyiv and worked out of the embassy there?

A That's right.

Q Was that for the full month?

A Yeah. I got in -- I flew out May 29th or 28th, or something like that, and I left, I believe, July 1.

Q Okay. And during your time in Kyiv, was Ambassador Volker, was he traveling to Kyiv at the same time?

A Ambassador Volker was not in Kyiv while I was there on that trip.

Q Okay. And what was the purpose of your going to Kyiv for that one-month period?

A So while I had worked on Ukraine issues quite a bit in D.C., I had never actually served at our Embassy in Kyiv. So this was for me -- we'd had a lot of turnover at the Embassy, so partly for me to get to know the new team out in Kyiv and, in part, just to have some time on the ground.

Q Okay. And that was effective for you?

A Yeah.

Q The -- Ambassador Volker had pretty good relationships with the Ukrainian officials. Is that fair to say?

A Yes, I think that's fair to say.

Q Which Ukrainian officials did he have relationships with that he kept in regular contact?
A I understood him to be in very regular contact with Andrey Yermak, as well as the now-foreign minister, Vadym Prystaiko. I believe he met with President Zelensky four, five, six times, something like that.

Q Were you in any of those meetings?
A I was not in any of those meetings.
Q Were you with Ambassador Volker during the July -- did you travel to Kyiv with Ambassador Volker on the July 25th-26th trip?
A Yes, I was with him.
Q But you weren't in the meeting with President Zelensky?
A No.
Q Do you remember who was in the meeting with Ambassador Volker and the President July 26?
A On the U.S. side?
Q Yeah.
A It was Ambassador Volker, Ambassador Sondland, Ambassador Taylor, a representative from the political section as note-taker, and I believe an interpreter from the U.S. Embassy was present as well.
Q And did you get a readout of that meeting?
A I got a very brief readout from Ambassador Taylor on the car ride away from the meeting.
Q And what do you remember from that readout?
A I remember that his recount -- so he recounted to me what Zelensky said in that meeting about the phone call with the President, and that overall it was a very upbeat readout, and the part that I was
focused on getting out of that readout was about the possibility of
scheduling a face-to-face meeting between the President and President
Zelensky.

And so we discussed the potential for an encounter at Warsaw, because they were both going to be there at the same time. We
discussed -- but we discussed the need separately for an invite to an
Oval. And I recall Ambassador Taylor being fairly optimistic about
our ability to get that meeting scheduled.

Q Okay. There's been some discussion of whether during that
meeting, President Trump's demands were, you know, discussed or whether
the, you know, Ukrainians needed help navigating what those demands
might have been. Did you hear anything of that sort?

A I believe I recall hearing Ambassador Taylor mentioning that
the President raised investigations there, but I don't have a very
specific memory of anything that was said with that regard.

Q So the Ambassador told you that President Zelensky related
to him it was an upbeat meeting, but there was a mention of
investigations?

A No. I believe that Ambassador Taylor said that the
President did raise investigations in that meeting, but my memory of
that part of the readout isn't as strong as the part about trying to
get an Oval meeting.

Q Okay. Did you have an understanding of what the
investigations were at that point?

A I understood it to be investigations into interference in
the 2016 election.

Q  Okay. But not related to the company called Burisma?
A  I do not specifically recall whether Burisma came up or not in the readout that I got.

Q  Is Burisma a company you're familiar with in your experience as a Ukrainian -- an expert with Ukraine?
A  No, not especially. I didn't deal a whole lot with energy issues, except at a very sort of high-policy level.

Q  You were on the Ukraine desk for a period of time, I think you mentioned?
A  Yes, 2 years.

Q  What was that time period?
A  August 2015 to July 2017.

Q  And during your time on the Ukraine desk, did you ever come across any information about Burisma?
A  I had heard that Hunter Biden was on the board of an energy company.

Q  Okay. Which was Burisma?
A  Yes.

Q  Okay. But you hadn't heard anything about -- I guess there was an oligarch named Zlochevsky who was a former ecology minister that ran Burisma. Did you know that?
A  Yeah, I don't know anything about Zlochevsky.

Q  Okay. So you only knew about the Hunter Biden?
A  I only knew about that, yeah.
Q And what can you tell us about that?
A Nothing more than what I've already said, that at the time, I was aware that the Vice President's son was serving on the board of an energy company. But my portfolio didn't deal in -- on the energy or the economic side at that time. I was very focused on the defense issues, and so --
Q Okay. So that was just something you learned in passing?
A Yes, exactly.
Q Okay. And were there any other -- how did you learn it? It was in cable traffic, or did a colleague mention it to you?
A I think it just came up, yeah, in conversation somebody was sort of annoyed that that was the case, but I can't remember specifically who said it, or under what circumstance.
Q And do you remember what they may have been annoyed about?
A You know, I think just sort of a general concern about the appearance of the Vice President's son doing business in Ukraine.
Q At the time, Vice President Biden, did he have an interest in Ukraine?
A Yes. I mean in a policy sense.
Q Oh, sure. What can you tell us about that?
A At the time, the Vice President was very engaged on Ukraine policy. He spoke several times with President Poroshenko, and spoke to -- if I recall correctly, spoke to other world leaders in support of Ukraine as well.
Q You mentioned earlier in the first hour some of the different
forms of assistance the United States provides to Ukraine. There's
the FMF and the USAI. Are those the two primary vehicles to provide
security assistance and economic assistance to Ukraine?
A Since -- yes, since 2015, those are the two primary vehicles.
Q And one is operated by DOD, the other is the State Department?
A That is correct.
Q And did you have any role in your dealings at the State
Department on the FMF component of this?
A Yes. My portfolio included both FMF and also the sort of
our full picture of security assistance.
Q Okay. And did the loan guarantee process also factor into
the FMF pot of money?
A No. Those were separate.
Q Okay. And how were those -- how were the loan guarantees
to Ukraine handled?
A I don't know the mechanics of how our loan guarantees worked.
Like I said, that was sort of handled by the economic side of the Ukraine
desk at the time, so I wasn't responsible for that.
Q Okay. But it was handled by State Department officials?
A There was a policy role in it, but exactly, like I said, how
the mechanics work about these loan guarantees I don't know.
Q Do you know how the loan guarantees figured into the
interagency process?
A I'm not exactly sure how to answer that question, but I think
I know what you're getting at, so I'm going to try to go there. And
that is that, in general, our loan guarantees, like all other forms of economic assistance, were conditioned on Ukraine meeting certain reform benchmarks. And, as I testified before, those reform benchmarks are usually sort of set with the IMF in the lead.

Is that responsive to you?

Q  Yes, it is?

A  Your question? Okay.

Q  If there was going to be a decision to withdraw a loan guarantee, would that go through the PCC process?

A  I believe, yeah, that all of the questions about the loan guarantees went through the interagency process. But, like I said before, I wasn't participating in it contemporaneously.

Q  Okay. Are you familiar, was there an interagency decision in 2016 or before to provide Javelins to the Ukraine?

A  No.

Q  That was a new initiative in 2017?

A  Let me be more -- try to be more specific with the question. The interagency considered the question of whether to provide Ukraine Javelins, but no positive decision was made until 2017.

Q  Okay. And can you tell us what you remember about that process?

A  My recollection is that there was a series of interagency meetings on whether we should lift the ban against providing Ukraine defensive weapons, and specifically, how we should respond to Ukraine's request for Javelin antitank missile systems.
My understanding -- I recall that going up to, I believe, at least, the PC level under the previous administration, I don't recall if that decision was blocked at the NSA or at the Presidential level, but --

Q  NSC or NSA?
A  NSA, NSA.

Q  Okay. I thought you said NSA.
A  Okay.

Q  Okay?
A  Yeah.

Q  You're not sure where it was blocked?
A  I know that the agencies broadly supported the provision of Javelins under the previous administration as well, but that the White House did not authorize it.

Q  And do you know what was the basis for that nonauthorization?
A  My understanding at the time that it was at least, in part, over concerns about how Russia would respond, and whether it would be provocative.

Q  But the interagency, what was united before it got to the White House?
A  The policy -- the policy agencies were united in their view.

Q  And that changed in 2017?
A  No, the policy agencies have always been consistent on their views on the provision of Javelins.

Q  Okay. So what changed between 2016 or earlier, and then the new administration?
A The President made a different decision than the previous President had.

Q And do you remember when that occurred? I think you may have mentioned it this morning, but just so I'm tracking it properly.

A Late December 2017.

Q Okay. So if I understood what you were testifying to this morning, there was -- it was approved, but then there was a hold on it?

A No. So the specific process was there was a sub PCC, a PCC, a DC, and a paper PC. When that paper PC went out, all of the agencies came back with their reactions. The only objector was OMB at the PC level. Does that make sense?

Q Yes, it does.

A Okay. And that was -- so that was to get all principals on the same page about what to recommend to the President. So that preceded the President's decision.

Q Okay. And then OMB ultimately lifted their concern?

A Correct. They lifted their block, yeah.

Q They lifted their block, and that was when?

A It -- like I said before, I believe it would have been in like November or early December, but I don't recall the specific dates. And I am not allowed to keep my notes from that period of time, so I have no way of refreshing my memory.

Q Okay, fair enough. Do you remember roughly how long it was?

A Like I said before, I believe it was -- you mean how long
the OMB block was?

Q  How long the hold was, yes.
A  Yeah, I believe it was roughly a couple weeks, but, again, I can't say for sure without refreshing my memory with my notes, and I don't have access to those.

Q  Okay. Was there anything unusual you remember about that time period, or was it just part of the ordinary bureaucratic speed bumps that often occur?
A  No. OMB's decision to object, and to do so on a policy basis was highly unusual.

Q  Okay. But, ultimately, OMB lifted their hold and the money was released, or the authorization for the money was released?
A  Ultimately, OMB lifted their objection at the PC level, and the decision went to the President.

Q  There was discussion this morning in the first hour that the delay of the Javelins served Russia's interest?
A  Are you referring -- sorry -- a decision to not provide Javelins --

Q  Yes.
A  -- would serve Russia's interest.

Q  Yes, right. So I'm just trying to understand the difference between the Obama and the new administration on that position. I mean, if during the Obama era, there was a reluctance to provide the Javelins, did that, too, serve Russia's interest?
A  I believe so.
Q Was that part of the evaluation of changing the position?
A Can I ask you to reframe that question?
Q Was providing lethal defensive assistance to the Ukraine, was part of the reason that was advocated for was it would help prevent Russian aggression?
A Sorry, that providing --
Q Providing the Ukraine the money for the Javelins --
A Yeah.
Q -- helped Ukraine defend themselves, right?
A I'm sorry, there was a couple double negatives in there. I just want to make sure that I answer it accurately.
Q So the Javelins help Ukraine defend themselves, right?
A The Javelins help Ukraine defend themselves. A decision to provide Javelins we believe is a counter to Russia's interests. Is that --
Q: Okay. Once you returned to the United States, I guess that was the beginning of July, do you remember any significant events relating to -- you know, involving Ambassador Volker's involvement with the Rudy Giuliani piece of this?

A: I don't know what you mean by like significant events, but that is, as I've testified to, the first time that I learned that Ambassador Volker was in touch.

Q: And when was that?

A: That would have been the week of July 8. I don't remember the specific date.

Q: Did you have any discussions with Ambassador Volker about the challenges presented by the Giuliani involvement?

A: We had one discussion in which I thanked him for keeping me out of that mess, and then, you know, I think another, you know, a couple times he mentioned sort of a need to get this Giuliani line of effort, sort of, off the table, so we can get on with the business of our actual policy. Those weren't his exact words, but that would have been the spirit of --

Q: Did he ever articulate to you his strategy with that?

A: Not very specifically. Like I said, I had thanked him for keeping me out of that mess.

Q: Did he communicate to you that he believed Mr. Giuliani was
amplifying a negative narrative and fueling the President's mistrust of Ukraine?

A Yes. You know, my interpretation of his intention was that he hoped that he could convince Giuliani and the President that the new -- the new administration in Ukraine was different from the old one, that they were serious about combating corruption, and that they merited us dealing with in a serious fashion and that it was in our interest to deal with the new administration and support their efforts to combat corruption.

Q Did Volker ever walk you through some of the investigations that were discussed at this time, or what the requests were?

A No, he never walked me through any of those conversations.

Q Did you ever hear Ambassador Volker talk about, you know, investigating the Bidens as something that, you know, some parts of the U.S. Government were interested in?

A I had one brief exchange, I think, with Ambassador Taylor and Ambassador Volker, but I don't remember the exact date. I remember that we were in Kyiv at the time. But concerned about the difference between a request for, broadly speaking, investigation into interference in the 2016 election, and then specifically, into specific cases of corruption, and our sort of shared discomfort at the line between those two things.

Q Okay. Were they interconnected or were they two separate buckets?

A I don't know the answer to that question. Like I said in
my opening statement, my work was sort of outside of that line of effort, and I sort of was not briefed on Ambassador Volker’s conversations with Giuliani.

Q: Okay. Did you know whether Ambassador Volker was advocating for investigations related to the Bidens?

A: I don’t know what he may or may not have said to Giuliani, or -- and, like I said, I wasn’t present in his conversations one-on-one with Zelensky, so I don’t know the answer to that question.

Q: Did he ever relate to you what his views on that were?

A: I think he shared our collective discomfort with the idea that we would be requesting specific investigations on a specific individual, but, like I said, we didn’t talk a lot about that. Most of my conversations with him were centered around trying to get an Oval meeting set up and trying to advance our negotiations. So I had a lot of other things to talk to him about other than this.

Q: Okay. Did he ever tell you that he told Giuliani that there’s no basis to investigate the Vice President, the former Vice President?

A: Like I said, he never talked to me about what his conversations with Giuliani were about.
[11:26 a.m.]

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q  Okay. How frequently did you interact with Ambassador Volker?

A  Almost daily, I would say.

Q  Okay. Was it mostly by email or is it telephone as well?

A  Email and WhatsApp. Mostly WhatsApp.

Q  Okay. Just texting on WhatsApp?

A  Yeah. Or in person if we were traveling together or something like that.

Q  Okay. During your time with Ambassador Volker, did you ever hear him mention the word the Bidens in connection with an investigation?

A  Oh, gosh. I don't have any specific memory of that, no.

Q  So in any of the meetings that you attended with him you don't recall the Bidens coming up -- with Ukrainians?

A  I would have to go back through my notes to try to recall if any of that ever came up.

Q  Okay. But as you sit here today you don't --

A  There's nothing that stands out in my memory right this minute, no.

Q  Okay. How about with the company Burisma?

A  Same answer.

Q  Okay. So your recollection of the discussion of investigations, to the extent it got specific, it related mostly to
the origins of the 2016 interference allegations?

A Aside from the one conversation I just told you about.

Q With Ambassador Taylor?

A Yeah. Yeah.

Q And how frequently did you witness conversations that related to the 2016 component? Was this a small number or was this a topic of some regular discourse?

A This was not a topic of anything that I engaged on in any sort of regular fashion. Like I said, this was outside of my duties, which were focused on the negotiations.

Q Okay. Are you familiar with the July 10th meeting with Ambassador Bolton that was attended by Andrey Yermak, I think, and Danylyuk?

A I'm aware of it.

Q Okay. But you didn't attend that meeting?

A I did not attend that meeting.

Q Did you help Ambassador Volker or any other State Department official prepare for that meeting?

A No. My predecessor, Chris Anderson, was still in the position at the time. That was the week that we were overlapping.

Q Oh, okay. Do you know if he went to the meeting?

A I don't believe he did, no.

Q Okay. Did you get a readout from that meeting?

A I did, but nothing very specific, just sort of a general assessment of Danylyuk's performance and whether he was successful in
convincing Bolton that the Zelensky administration was serious about reforms, because that's what related to my portfolio. I know where you're going, so that's why I answered the question that way.

Q  So what did you -- what was that readout? Was it successful on that?

A  I had met Danylyuk several times before So that's what I was mostly concerned with.

Q  Okay.

A  And whether we would get an Oval, like I said.

Q  And what was holding up the Oval Office meeting at that point. Do you know?

A  I don't know specifically. My understanding at the time was that it was, again, that we had not been successful at convincing the President that this new administration in Ukraine was different from the old one, would be serious about combating corruption, and so forth. All the reasons I've given before.

Q  At any point in time did you come into contact with Ambassador Sondland?

A  Yes.

Q  And when was that?

A  It would have been the first time that we were all in Kyiv together at the same time, which I believe was before July 25-26, that visit. I think that I had -- which was the other visit? Maybe it was July 25 and 26, I think that might have been the time I met him.
Q  And what was your understanding of his role related to Ukraine?

A  So that he had an interest in Ukraine policy, and that he had the ability to talk directly to the President, and that Ambassadors Volker and Taylor saw merit, rather than keeping him sort of outside of the tent, instead bringing him in, along with all of his energy and positive notions about Ukraine, to help sort of move the needle with the President on his views about Ukraine and corruption.

Q  Did he present any problems for Ambassador Taylor or Volker?

A  I couldn't speak to that.

Q  Okay. You know, when you mentioned bringing him in the tent, it seems like not bringing him into the tent might create problems. Is that what you were alluding to?

A  I think -- I don't -- I couldn't really speculate about that. I mean, as has been previously reported, it is unusual for the U.S. Ambassador to the EU to be playing an active role on policy with regard to a specific country that isn't in the EU. And I think there was some consternation about what that was about. But I think that Ambassador Volker and Ambassador Taylor saw an opportunity there.

Q  Okay. How many different times were you with Ambassador Sondland, in-person interactions?

A  So I spent part of the 25-26, the part where he was with Kurt on that trip, I was with that whole delegation. And then I saw him up at the U.N. General Assembly on the margins of the President's meeting with Zelensky.
Q In September?

A In September.

Q So it was mostly before September, before the issue regarding the 7/25 call became a big deal. The only time you were with Sondland in person was on the 25 and 26 of July, that trip?

A I'm trying to remember all of my --

Q To the best of your recollection.

A I'm trying to remember all of my trips to Kyiv and when I might have met with Ambassador Sondland. But that's what I'm recalling right now.

Q Do you ever recall him mentioning Bidens, Burisma, 2016, or anything relating to investigations in any of your times with him?

A Not that I recall, no. Our meetings would have been about Ukraine and reforms and Oval meeting.

Q Okay. So you never heard him mention the word Bidens?

A Not that I recall, but --

Q Okay.

A That's a pretty specific question.

Q Okay. During any of the meetings that you participated with Ambassador Sondland, did you hear him make any statements that concerned you? That maybe he was outside of his lane or he was representing communications about, you know, he had with the President, any --

A I don't think in any of the meetings that I was in I heard anything like that. I heard largely enthusiastic support for Ukraine.
But, you know, I think he was sort of objectively outside of his lane. So that's sort of a difficult question to answer.

Q  Did he ever represent to you in your presence that he was in contact with the President?

A  Yes.

Q  Okay. And what can you tell us about that?

A  Only that he would make passing reference to: I'm going to call the President after this or I've spoken with the President or something like that. But this was always, like I said, at least in my presence about the idea of getting this Oval meeting set up.

Q  Okay. So did it seem like he was in constant contact with the President?

A  I wouldn't know. I just heard passing references.

Q  Okay. Do you think Ambassador Volker, to the best of your knowledge, you know, appreciated Ambassador Sondland's ability to have communications with the President or was it a little bit of an issue?

A  I never personally witnessed any, you know, conflict between those two, but I don't know what they spoke about when I wasn't present.

Q  Okay. You mentioned that your first week on the job you had a discussion with Ambassador Volker about keeping you out of the Rudy Giuliani?

A  I don't remember if that was that week or if it was on a different occasion.

Q  Okay.

A  And it wasn't really a conversation, that was just me
declaring, keep me out of that mess, and he said okay. Well, sort of.
I said I'm really glad you're keeping me out of that mess. And he just
said, yup.
Q So you could tell by his reaction that he thought it was a
little bit of a complex situation?
A I think that's fair to say, yes.
Q Okay. I mean, he wasn't enthusiastic about Rudy Giuliani's
involvement, was he?
A Not that I understood, no.
Q Was Ambassador Sondland enthusiastic about Rudy Giuliani's
participation?
A I couldn't tell you. I don't know.
Q Was anyone?
A Not that I ever heard.
Q So nobody at the State Department, to your knowledge, was
enthusiastic by about Mr. Giuliani's role?
A I - no, not that I ever heard.
Q Before the 7 -- July 18th, 7/18 hold on the Ukraine security
assistance, were there any other meetings related to the matters under
investigation of the committees that we haven't talked about that you
were a firsthand participant in?
And that would be any meeting where Rudy Giuliani came up or
Ambassador Sondland was involved or, you know, efforts to get the White
House visit. Are there any other meetings or conversations you had
that we haven't discussed prior to July 18th that is worth talking
about?

A I mean, as I reported, I found out that Ambassador Volker was speaking to Rudy Giuliani before that, at some point, I don't remember exactly what those circumstances were.

It's difficult to answer that question fully because nearly every meeting that we had, in some way or another, was aimed at trying to get a face-to-face meeting between Zelensky and Trump.

So I would say just about every meeting I had in some way involved that, but I couldn't right now give you sort of a detailed accounting of all of my meetings. But my records have been made available pursuant to requests.

Q Okay. And during that time period what were the State Department officials, like yourself, doing to support that effort?

A So I'm trying to think about what I was doing during those specific dates.

Q Like what was the State Department's role in advocating for the meeting or trying to get the meeting to occur?

A I mean, we were, you know -- the facilitation of the July 10 meeting, I think, was aimed at having a conversation about the viability of a meeting like that.

Something like that would be sort of routine in all of our business anyway. So you would -- you'd be talking to -- I would be talking to a counterpart in Kyiv or a would be talking to a counterpart at DOD, or whatever it is, about, hey, have you heard? Have we made any progress? Do we have a date? I might have talked to the NSC. I don't
know.

But, I mean, that would have been sort of part of my daily sort of work just coordinating with my, you know, counterparts within the State Department and across the interagency about, you know, sort of what the latest is.

In terms of that specific line of effort, that was much more sort of Ambassador Volker's lead because he's obviously more senior and can do more about it than I can. I was just making sure that he was fully staffed and what I knew about who was talking to who and when and, you know.

Q Okay. But nothing you were doing --
A What was happening in eastern Ukraine, the violence, et cetera.

Q But nothing you were doing in that time period related to encouraging investigations or talking about --
A No. No. I had no involvement in anything related to -- the one exception is, I did send one email to Bruce Swantz at DOJ relaying Ambassador Volker's request for a meeting with the Attorney General.
Q Okay.
A And when asked what the topic was, I said 2016 elections.
Q Okay.
A But that's where my involvement in that ended. I just relayed that, and then I understood those two to be in contact.
Q Do you know if Ambassador Volker had tried to call Bruce Swartz?
A I believe he did.

Q And do you know if Bruce Swartz replied?

A I don't know.

Q And he instructed you to email Bruce Swartz to see about the viability of Ambassador Volker meeting with the Attorney General?

A He just sort of gave me a vague direction to get him a meeting with the Attorney General, so that was my job.

Q Okay. So you emailed Bruce Swartz?

A Yes.

Q Did you call Bruce Swartz?

A No, I don't think so. I think I just -- I think I just emailed him.

Q Did he email you back?

A Yes. And then I put him in touch with Kurt and then I was out of the --

Q You put him in touch with who?

A With Ambassador Volker.

Q And did they having a meeting?

A I don't know.

Q So you don't know --

A I don't think so. I don't think. But not that I'm aware of.

Q Do you know if they had any discussions, if they linked up?

A Who are they? Bruce Swartz --

Q Bruce Swartz and Ambassador Volker.
A I think they probably did, but I'm not entirely certain. Is it because I'm referring to everybody by their first name? I can change that. Okay. I know it gets a little confusing.

Q So you emailed Bruce Swartz, you connected him to Volker, and that was the end of it?

A Yes. That was the end of my involvement in it.

Q Okay. And then what can you tell us about the July 18th PCC meeting?

A It was a sub-PCC.

Q A sub-PCC, I'm sorry.

A And it was inexplicably about some money that had been allocated to DOE for some sort of cybersecurity line of effort, some like $1.1 million, or something like that, but where the collective interagency was not happy with DOE's implementation.

All to say, sort of very routine low-level business. But then George Kent pointedly asked: I heard that there was a hold on security assistance. And that of course -- and that was sort of towards the end of the meeting, but of course that blew up the meeting.

Q Okay.

A And the substance of it is what I reported in my opening statement.

Q Okay. Did you tell us in your opening who -- who on the OMB staff --

A I don't know.

Q -- had chimed in?
A I didn't know.
Q Okay. And were you there in person or were on a SVTC?
A I was participating via SVTC.
Q And then what was the next fact or event you can remember
after the 7/18 meeting when the hold was placed?
A It was the 18th. I remember landing in Kyiv the most -- on
my most recent trip, which was for the YES Conference, so it would have
been like September 12 or 13, whenever I landed, and seeing that the
hold had been lifted.
Q So you didn't have any -- did you sit on any of the other
meetings at the PCC level or --
A I did not sit in on the PCC or the DC.
Q Do you remember when those occurred and what the dates were?
A I don't remember.
Q Did you get readouts of what was occurring?
A I would have gotten the SOC along with everybody else, the
statement of conclusions.
Q And who attended in your -- did Ambassador Volker attend
those?
A I don't think he did, but I don't specifically remember. I'm
pretty sure he didn't, but I'm not positive.
Q Okay. Who was representing the State Department, George
Kent?
A So typically at a -- and I don't remember specifically who
it would be, but at a sub-PCC it would normally be the DAS, so in this
case George Kent. At a PCC, it would normally be the assistant
secretary, which would be Phil Reeker, but I don't recall who
represented. Like I said, I wasn't there. And at a DC it would
normally be the deputy, so -- our deputy secretary of state. But I
don't think that we met those levels at each meeting, but I don't
remember specifically.

Q During this time period was there a hope that the aid would
get released or --

A Yes.

Q Okay. So did you ever have a belief that this aid was not
going to get released?

A I believed that it would because of both bipartisan support
in Congress and the questionable sort of legality of OMB putting on
an informal hold.

Q And if the hold wasn't ultimately released, there would have
to be an effort, a rescission effort, a reprogramming, or some sort
of complicated --

A That was a discussion among the people that, you know, sort
of the legislative folks together with the legal folks and so forth, and there was a lot -- there were a lot of conversations about exactly
what the mechanics of that might look like.

Q Okay. And were you involved in any of those discussions or
were you on the periphery?

A I was on the periphery of those conversations.

Q Okay. But you had a genuine belief that this would get
worked out and the money would be released?

A Yeah, my hope was simply that it wouldn't become public in the meantime and undermine our Ukraine policy.

Q Okay. Do you remember when it did become public?

A My recollection is that it sort of became public gradually. So individual -- I think it was sort of individual Members of Congress or staff knew about it at various points. And then I recall that Kurt and I went and did a briefing at SFRC -- and I don't recall the date of that, but it would be in my notes, which I don't have -- in which we were asked about that. So we knew it was sort of inevitable that it was going to get out.

Q And do you remember when it did get out? There was I think an August --

A I don't specifically remember.

Q There was an August 29th Politico article talking about it. Do you remember if it had been public before then?

A I think it was sort of known among the circles that do Ukraine security assistance, sort of gradually, as I said. From July 18 on it was sort of inevitable that it was eventually going to come out.

Q I should correct myself, the article was on August 28th. Just for accuracy purposes, I'll add that.

And do you know if any Ukrainians knew about this or was this primarily U.S. officials?

A Two individuals from the Ukrainian Embassy approached me quietly and in confidence to ask me about an OMB hold on Ukraine security
assistance.

Q And when was that?
A I don't have those dates.
Q But it was before the August 28th time period, do you think?
A I believe it was, yes.
Q Okay. And these are -- and what did you -- what do you remember telling these folks?
A I remember telling them that I was confident that any issues in process would get resolved. And I knew that they had no interest in this information getting out into the public.
Q Okay. And did they call you together or was it two separate calls?
A Two separate.
Q So it was two separate calls close in time? And I apologize if you can't remember this.
A Yeah, I don't --
Q I'm just trying to piece some of this together.
A Yeah, I don't remember specifically. I would say maybe about a weekish apart or something like that.
Q And you said that you went to brief the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with Ambassador Volker?
A Yes.
Q When was that?
A I don't remember the date. But I could -- I have it in my notes and I could report it to the committee later.
Q Okay. Did you brief any other congressional committees during that time period?
A No.
Q And what do you remember from the briefing with SFRC?
A That this was, if I recall correctly, that this was in preparation for a codel to Kyiv, that it was convened by and that, unsurprisingly, the staffers were well-informed about Ukraine and were interested in what was happening and were just looking to get briefed.
Q Was it a briefing on the security assistance issue or was it a briefing about the codel where the security assistance had come up?
A It was mostly a briefing about the new Zelensky administration, Kurt's impressions of them, his travel to Ukraine, and what he was sort of taking away from his interactions with the new
President.

Q  And just so you're sure, I wasn't asking you to go back and find the date.
A  Oh.
Q  I'm not going to give you homework here, so -- in case you made a -- I saw you make a note. So I'm not asking for that.
A  I'm happy to, but --
Q  I think we covered it.

MR. CASTOR: We have about 5 minutes left in our round, and I want to make sure that our Members have an opportunity to -- okay. It's good staff work to ask the Members if they want to ask questions, if I do say so myself. It's not a first time I've asked, though.

MR. GOLDMAN: No.

MR. MEADOWS: It's the first time I'm not interjecting.

BY MR. CASTOR:
Q  I think we had discussed generally that Ambassador Volker was concerned Mr. Giuliani was amplifying a negative narrative about the current state of affairs in the Ukraine?
A  Yeah. I mean, without speaking for Kurt, I think that's a fair assessment, yeah.
Q  Do you think that Ambassador Volker believed that Mr. Giuliani had any, like, firsthand investigative experience about this or do you think he was just repeating issues that had been reported on?
A  I don't know the answer to that question. We didn't talk
about it, so I couldn't tell you what his views were.

Q  And did you ever discern whether this was an issue relating to Mr. Giuliani's, like, other clients, other than the President of the United States? Or did you have any idea about what Mr. Giuliani's passion was as it related to Ukraine?

A  No. I would -- no, I have no idea.

Q  Okay. Did Ambassador Volker ever communicate to you that he thought ultimately he would be able to convince the President that the negative narrative that Mr. Giuliani was amplifying could be corrected and, you know, wasn't in the best interest of the United States?

A  I would say that Ambassador Volker is a deeply and profoundly optimistic person with high hopes for the future of Ukraine policy. So, you know, whether he accurately assessed the possibility or not, he projected a great deal of optimism about it.

Q  Okay. And did he ever give you a readout -- they briefed the President after the inauguration, which is just before you came on board. Did he ever give you a readout of how that meeting went?

A  You know, the readout that I had gotten was simply that the President continued to view -- and I knew this from my own personal experience -- continued to view Ukraine as a corrupt country. And Ambassador Volker had used -- had shared with me the same line that I believe he shared in his opening statement, which was, you know, they tried to take me down. So I had heard him say that previously.

Q  Did Ambassador Volker tell you that the President referred
the delegation to Rudy to learn more or anything related to Rudy Giuliani?

A My understanding about the takeaway from the May 25 meeting with the President was that -- or the meeting following the May 25 -- when was the meeting?

Q I think it was May 23rd, was the Oval Office.

A I'm losing my dates here. But the Oval meeting was that Sondland, Volker, and sort of Perry, as a troika, or as the Three Amigos, had been sort of tasked with Ukraine policy.

Q Okay. And that was a tasking from the President or --

A From the President, yeah.

Q Okay. And did part of that tasking, to your understanding, include conferring with Mr. Giuliani?

A I believe I understood that Kurt had been asked to speak with Giuliani, but like I said, I asked no followup questions about that.

Q Okay. And my time is just about up. The terminology Three Amigos, what is that about? Like, when did you first hear the term? Like, who coined it? What do you know about that?

A Oh, gosh. I mean, I think that -- that, I think, came out, I mean, just sort of --

Q Was that just a term Ambassador Sondland liked to use?

A I think we were all sort of struggling to explain the very unusual sort of policy configuration that had been established to deal with Ukraine, and so that's sort of where some of these --

Q Did Ambassador Volker ever refer to himself proudly as part
of the Three Amigos?

A I don't --

Q If you can remember.

A It doesn't sound like something he would say. I don't think so.

Q Okay.

A I don't have any specific recollection either way.

MR. CASTOR: My time is up.

THE CHAIRMAN: It's my recommendation, because we have a second witness represented by the same counsel so we can't do these concurrently, that we work through lunch and have food brought in. We can take a short break so you can eat out of the committee room, but I will have food brought to you.

Do you want to take a quick break now, we're going to get 45 minutes rounds, or do you want to take a break after the next 45-minute round.

MS. CROFT: I think I'd like to take a very -- I can do it quickly, though --

THE CHAIRMAN: Why don't we take a --

MS. CROFT: -- because I don't want to draw this out. I could use a very short break.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's take a 5-minute break, and this time let's try to make 5 minutes be 5 minutes.


THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.
[Recess.]

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Let's go back on the record. I just have a few questions before I turn it back to counsel.

I won't ask you to go into the changed circumstances on the ground in Ukraine between the Obama administration and the Trump administration.

The invasion of Ukraine took place while Barack Obama was President?

MS. CROFT: That's correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: And that was a very hot war initially?

MS. CROFT: Absolutely.

THE CHAIRMAN: And so over time the risk of escalation may have changed?

MS. CROFT: Absolutely.

THE CHAIRMAN: But I was struck by something you said during the Trump administration, and that was that it was very unusual for OMB to weigh in on a policy decision like the provision of Javelins to Ukraine. Why was that so unusual?

MS. CROFT: I had never heard of OMB injecting itself into a purely policy discussion or decisionmaking process. What struck me about it especially is, first, that that position was in contrast to all of the traditional foreign policy-making agencies long held and long expressed views. And, secondly, that the objection or concerns expressed were not related to the money, the budget part of OMB, but rather to the policy part of the decision.
THE CHAIRMAN: I see. Now, the decision is ultimately made to provide the Javelins in 2017, at the end of the year?

MS. CROFT: Uh-huh.

THE CHAIRMAN: You should say yes.

MS. CROFT: I'm sorry. Yes. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: If we flash forward to 2019 and President Zelensky raising in the call with President Trump the desire, we're almost ready to buy more Javelins, would that have been the next increment of Javelins they would have received after the approval of the first Javelins at the end of 2017?

MS. CROFT: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: And I take it that the policy of the administration, at least as you understood it, between the first purchase and the second purchase that Zelensky referred to in that call hadn't changed. It was still the policy of the administration to provide Javelins.

MS. CROFT: Yes. I just want to be sort of clear on -- so the 2017 decision related to I guess what would technically be a purchase but was in fact a provision using FMF, as we have discussed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Right.

MS. CROFT: Whereas, the more recent decision related to an actual purchase with Ukrainian national funds.

THE CHAIRMAN: Right.

MS. CROFT: Sorry.

THE CHAIRMAN: But the policy of providing defensive weapons
either through funding that we provided or through a purchase didn't change. It was still the policy view that we should be providing Javelins to Ukraine to defend itself against Russia.

MS. CROFT: Between 2017 and 2019 that policy did not change.

Q Okay. So when President Zelensky brought up his interest in acquiring more Javelins and the President responded by saying, I want you to do us a favor, though, or words to that effect, it would have been up until that point of the conversation Zelensky's expectation that the policy hadn't changed and that they would be able to go forward with purchase of more Javelins?

MS. CROFT: In fact, the President had mentioned multiple times in the sort of immediate aftermath of the decision to provide Javelins in 2017 using FMF that Ukraine should be buying this from us. We shouldn't be giving it to them.

So we had relayed that to the Ukrainians under President Poroshenko. And it is my understanding that that process started then, and that Zelensky came into office viewing it as a do-out to the President.

THE CHAIRMAN: What do you mean by a do-out?

MS. CROFT: That his expectation was that Ukraine would go ahead and buy equipment from the United States, not just let us give them stuff.

THE CHAIRMAN: So responding to the President's comments on the first purchase of Javelins, President Zelensky was responding by saying, we're going to buy them this time and we're almost ready.
MS. CROFT: That's correct. That's right.

THE CHAIRMAN: Nevertheless, was it within the President's power to say, I'm not going to sell them to you?

MS. CROFT: That's a good question, and I don't know that I can give you a very specific answer to it.

Technically, under the Obama administration there was no bar on the sale of weapons to Ukraine. The policy bar was only on the provision, or at least that's how I understood it at the time.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry?

MS. CROFT: Sorry, I can repeat that or wait.

THE CHAIRMAN: The President could decide, could he not, I may have the lawful authority to sell you these, but I'm still not going to sell them to you?

MS. CROFT: That's correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: My counsel is pointing out to me that the sentence before President Zelensky brings up the Javelins reads, I -- this is President Zelensky -- I would also like to thank you for your great support in the area of defense.

So at this point he's thanking him for what's already been done in the past. And what kind of support in the area of defense had the Trump administration provided up until that point? Would it have been the FMF that allowed them to buy the Javelins, among other things?

MS. CROFT: I believe so, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Let me jump ahead to your comments in response to my colleagues' questions in the minority.
When in July -- it was first, you know, sort of one of the meetings you said was blown up by the news that there was hold on the military assistance. This is now in 2019. I think you made a comment along the lines that it was inevitable that people were going to find out about this. Is that right?

MS. CROFT: That was my assessment at the time, yeah.

THE CHAIRMAN: News of this kind that there was a hold on this military assistance wasn't something that's going to be kept bottled up with as many people knowing about it as they did?

MS. CROFT: That's correct, yeah.

THE CHAIRMAN: And, in fact, I think you said that word of that got to the Ukrainians, and two Ukrainian officials from the embassy reached out to you quietly to ask you about this hold?

MS. CROFT: That's right.

THE CHAIRMAN: Now, you said that these two Ukrainian Embassy officials -- and I'm not going to ask you to identify them either -- you understood they had no interest in this becoming public. Is that right?

MS. CROFT: That's correct. That's correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: And why would they not want this to become public?

MS. CROFT: Because I think that if this were public in Ukraine it would be seen as a reversal of our policy and would, just to say sort of candidly and colloquially, this would be a really big deal, it would be a really big deal in Ukraine, and an expression of declining U.S. support for Ukraine.
THE CHAIRMAN: So Ukraine had every interest in this not coming out in the press?

MS. CROFT: As long as they thought that in the end the hold would be lifted, they had no reason for this to want to come out.

THE CHAIRMAN: So as long as they thought that they could work through whatever was causing the hold, they wanted this to remain out of the public attention?

MS. CROFT: Exactly.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. I'll yield to Mr. Goldman.

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q Following up on the conversations you had with the Ukrainian officials in the embassy here in D.C., I believe you said that you could not remember the dates of those conversations. Is that right?

A Yeah, I can't remember those specifics.

Q Were they on the phone or in person?

A They were in person.

Q Did you take notes?

A I don't believe I did take notes on those occasions.

Q Did you take notes after?

A I would have to review my notes to be certain, but I don't think I did.

Q Okay. And just on the topic of your notes, while we're there, you are still in possession of your -- the notes that you --

A Yes.

Q And did you review them before you came to testify here today?
THE CHAIRMAN: If I could, counsel, sorry.
Would your calendars indicate the dates in which you would have
visited with Ukrainian officials.

MS. CROFT: No, but I believe if I dug through my emails and
other -- and other, like, sort of electronic communications, I could
probably find it, if that's of interest of the committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, it would be. Thank you.

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q And presumably these emails were turned over to the State
Department at their request to gather documents related to this
investigation?

A So my understanding is that the process in response to
the -- the information request is that the bureau that handles our
technology automatically looks through all of our email, so those are
automatically available to the committee through that, whatever that
process is, and I don't have visibility on it.

Separately, any of my communications that I've had with
Ukrainians or Ambassador Volker or otherwise via WhatsApp, I have
exported to the State Department system per State Department
guidelines. Those would have been made available in the same fashion.

Q So they did collect your documents to respond to the
subpoena, as far as you know?

A Separately, I made my handwritten documents all available
in response to the subpoena.
Q Now, I want to try to go through a couple of dates to try
to jog your memory as to when these meetings might have been?
A Yeah.
Q Okay. You talked about an email that you sent to Bruce
Swartz at OIA to set up a meeting with the AG. Do you recall whether
your conversations with either of the Ukrainian officials happened
before or after that meeting?
A I don't recall the sequence, I'm sorry.
Q Do you take any vacation in August?
A No.
Q Okay.
A Sorry. I was told I was allowed to take vacation as long
as I could work anywhere that I was. So --
Q Do you have an approximate estimation of how far apart these
two conversations were?
A With the two different Ukrainians? I thought it was roughly
a week. But again, I can look up those dates and get back.
Q Okay. And the last question is, whether you know the date
or not of when it became public, do you remember it becoming public?
A I honestly don't specifically remember when it was reported
in the public.
Q But you remember at some point it became public?
A Yes, yes, I do remember that.
Q So do you recall how far before it became public you had these
conversations, the second of the conversations?
I remember being very surprised at the effectiveness of my Ukrainian counterparts' diplomatic tradecraft, as in to say they found out very early on or much earlier than I expected them to.

Q In light of when it became public?

A In light of when it became public.

Q And last question. Do you remember if these meetings were before or after your briefing at SFRC?

A I could only guess right now, and to say that it was before, but I'm not certain.

Q Okay. That -- all right. Well, we would appreciate if you would try to look through your notes and emails and perhaps your attorney can send a letter to the committees identifying the dates of the meetings.

You mentioned that email to Bruce Swartz to set up a meeting with the Attorney General, and I believe you testified that you did not believe that Ambassador Volker met with the Attorney General himself. Do you know whether Ambassador Volker met with anyone at the Department of Justice?

A Other than attempts to connect him with Bruce Swartz, which -- I'm not aware of any other contact.

Q So once you connected him after that, do you know whether there was any follow up from Ambassador Volker with the Department of Justice?

A I just kept reminding Ambassador Volker to call Bruce Swartz. I have no idea what happened after that. So I don't -- I don't know.
Q Why were you reminding him repeatedly to call him?
A Because he kept forgetting.
Q And Bruce Swartz said that he should call him?
A Yes, yes, Bruce Swartz had said, have him call me. And so I just kept telling Kurt, hey, remember to call Bruce.
Q And do you know what the request related to in any way?
A I inferred that it was interference in the 2016 investigations, and I don't know remember exactly how I knew that, but that's what I relayed to Bruce in my email to him.
Q And around the time that you reached out to Bruce Swartz did you have a meeting with George Kent where you discussed whether there was an ongoing investigation in the Department of Justice related to the 2016 election?
A I believe we did have a brief pull-aside in which George relayed his concerns about sort of everything that was going on to me, but I don't -- I mean, that was on the margins of some other meeting, and I don't remember the specific date, I'm sorry.
Q No, I'm not asking for the date. I'm just -- you do remember --
A Yeah. I remember around what time that was.
Q Putting aside just for the moment the date of that conversation, was it close in time to when you reached out to Bruce Swartz?
A I expect it probably was, yeah.
Q And can you give us as much detail as you recall about the
conversation you had with George Kent at the pull-aside?

A  My recollection is that Kurt had asked me something along the lines of: Have we ever done an investigation like this before? Like an investigation before or something like that into, you know -- or, no, I'm sorry, I just want to make sure I get this exactly accurately.

I believe the question that Kurt asked me was: Have we ever asked another country to do an investigation for us before? And I think that I relayed that question to George, and that that prompted George, I think, to just express his displeasure at the role of sort of Rudiani and any involvement of the State Department in any conversations about investigations.

Q  Did you mean Rudy Giuliani?

A  What did I -- I'm sorry, what did I say? I'm getting tired.

Q  I won't repeat it. It was a combination of names.

VOICE: You coined a new term.

MS. CROFT: I'm just going to sip my Coke for a second here.

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q  What do you recall more specifically, as specifically as you can, George Kent saying to you in response to your inquiry of him?

A  The message that I got back was, broadly, we should be staying out of this, we shouldn't have anything to do with it. And I knew him to be unhappy with the fact that Rudy Giuliani was playing -- I think I got it right this time -- any role in this process at all.

Q  Did he understand that the question about investigations
that you asked him related to Rudy Giuliani and what he had been advocating?

A I remember at the time asking the question in a very sort of generic sense, because the question as relayed to me wasn't about investigating anything in particular or anything specific. But the strength of George's reaction suggested to me that George was thinking of something much more specific when I asked the question.

Q And when he referenced Rudy Giuliani did you know --

A I'm not -- I'm sorry -- I'm not positive he referenced Rudy Giuliani by name or if he just referenced sort of this whole investigation situation, all of the conversations about investigation.

Q And what did you understand him to mean, whatever he said about the investigation?

A Yeah. What I understood him to mean was that he was very unhappy in the role that Rudy Giuliani was playing and that he was unhappy that Kurt was talking to Giuliani.

Q And these were -- did you understand more specifically what these investigations -- what the subject of these investigations were at that point?

A At that point I just understood it to sort of be broadly investigations into the 2016 elections. But the question that I was responding to from Kurt wasn't about anything specifically.

Q And when you say investigation into 2016 election, do you mean Ukraine --

A Ukrainian --
Q -- interference?
A Ukrainian interference in the 2016 election.
Q And with George Kent at that meeting, did you discuss an investigation into Burisma or the Bidens?
A No.
Q Did you ever discuss with George Kent --
A No.
Q -- the specifics of the investigations?
A No.
Q To your recollection, is this the only conversation you had with George Kent about these investigations and Rudy Giuliani?
A To my recollection, yeah, that's the only conversation that we had.
Q Okay. Did you take notes of that conversation?
A No, it wasn't a planned meeting or conversation, it was just a pull-aside in the hallway or --
Q Understood.
A -- something like that.
Q If George Kent took notes of that conversation, would you expect them to be accurate, to accurately reflect what you discussed with him?
A Not necessarily.
Q And why is that?
A Not for any reasons of malice, but I know that George feels very strongly about these issues, and he has a lot of emotion tied into
it, and so sometimes our perceptions of things aren't the same.

Q So he feels very strongly against any sort of political interference in foreign policy. Is that an accurate way of reflecting it?

A He feels very strongly in all aspects of our policy with regard to Ukraine.

Q Prior to your meeting with Mr. Kent, did you become aware at any point of a potential statement that the Ukrainians might put out related to a -- a potential statement about U.S. relations that the Ukrainians were considering to issue?

A I believe I only heard one passing reference to it as an outcome perhaps from a conversation between Kurt and -- I'm sorry, Volker and Sondland -- that I wasn't party to. But I believe that by the time I heard that passing reference it was well after the fact and well after a decision was made not to produce any sort of such statement.

Q Do you recall where you were when you heard that passing reference?

A I don't recall.

Q Were you in Kyiv in the --

A I don't --

Q -- July 26th?

A Oh, yeah, I was in Kyiv on July 26th, sorry.

Q No, no, is that when you heard this conversation, this passing reference?

A I don't think so. I think it was well after all of that.
Q And what was the passing reference that you recall hearing?
A I think simply that it wasn't in Zelensky's interest to make a specific statement about specific investigations and tie himself to, you know, the outcome of U.S. domestic politics.
Q Who said that?
A Kurt did.
Q And how did Sondland respond?
A I wasn't party to that conversation, I just heard a reference to it.
Q Meaning Ambassador Volker referred to a conversation that he had previously had with Ambassador Sondland?
A I believe so. In the course of talking about something else he just made a reference to the fact -- or he might have been on the phone or something like that. I don't remember what it was. But I remember being surprised, because I wasn't aware of that conversation before that.
Q So --
A Which is why --
Q So you didn't hear the conversation between Ambassadors Volker and Sondland?
A Correct.
Q Got it.
A Not on the statement. Not that I recall.
Q You mentioned that YES conference?
A Uh-huh.
Q Were you aware of any possibility that President Zelensky might do a CNN interview or another television interview at that YES conference?

A There was a lot of media at the conference. And, in fact, Ambassador Volker did quite a lot of media himself. I was not party to any specific, that I recall, any specific Ukrainian plans with regard to press conferences.

Q Do you remember Ambassador Volker discussing either with you or anyone else whether or not President Zelensky might do a television interview in that September timeframe?

A I don't have any specific recollection, but that's not something that would have stood out in that context, just because, like I said, it was a media-heavy event.

Q I want to go back now to the conversation that we ended on the last round where you were talking to Ambassador Taylor right before you left to Kyiv.

A Uh-huh.

Q And where we ended is that you were relaying to him -- or he was relaying to you, I think, what he had heard about the May 23rd Oval meeting from Ambassador Volker. Is that right?

A I'm so sorry, can you ask the question again?

Q Sure. In that meeting that you had with Ambassador Taylor, why don't you remind us what he told you that he understood occurred at the May 23rd Oval meeting?

A I'm not sure that we discussed the May 23rd Oval meeting when
I spoke with Ambassador Taylor. What I recall him saying was that he broadly supported what Ambassador Volker was trying to do, which was relevant to my job.

Q And what was that?

A To advance U.S.-Ukraine relations in a positive direction, Increase U.S. support for Ukraine, whether it would be security assistance or diplomatic means, and then to go somewhere positive in terms of our negotiations -- or the Minsk -- negotiations on the conflict in eastern Ukraine, and then also to continue rallying European support for Ukraine.

Q Understood. And you've mentioned this a couple times, I just want to say something at this point.

A Sure.

Q We fully understand that the vast majority of your job had nothing to do with the questions that we're focused on here today. So we understand that most of your conversations would relate to other things.

A Uh-huh.

Q We are obviously interested in a particular aspect of your experience, and so that's why we're asking these questions. We fully understand that there would be other things that you would discuss, particularly with Ambassador Volker.

So in the context of your discussion with Ambassador Taylor related to Ambassador Volker, did anything related to these investigation narratives, Rudy Giuliani, Ambassador Taylor's
concerns, arise in connection with Ambassador Volker?

A  In connection with Ambassador Volker, no. I think we were
both very confident that we understood what Ambassador Volker's views
were on U.S. interest in Ukraine, and that they were, as I said,
advancing U.S. interests.

Q  When you were in Kyiv for the month of June, did you have
any discussions with Ukrainian counterparts about these investigations
that were in the media at that point?

A  I did not, no.

Q  Did you have any discussions with your colleagues about
conversations they may have had with Ukrainians about these
investigations?

A  No.

Q  Were you aware of whether or not, you know, that these
were -- these investigations were a consideration of President
Zelensky and his senior team when you were in Kyiv?

A  I have no recollection of that being the case.

Q  When did Ambassador Taylor arrive in Kyiv?

A  Mid-June, I don't know the specific date, but about halfway
through my time there.

Q  And for the time that he was there until the end, did you
have any discussion with Ambassador Taylor about any of the issues that
we've been discussing here today?

A  No. I think my only conversation with Ambassador Taylor was
about the morale at the embassy.
In connection to what was going on with U.S. policy or just broadly?

In connection to the impact of Ambassador Yovanovitch's departure, and the circumstances around that, and the hit that that took to morale in the embassy, and the impact of Ambassador Taylor's arrival.

Were you aware of a -- so how frequently were you meeting or talking to Ambassador Taylor when you were over there?

Not frequently. We just encountered each other in the hallway.

But you didn't have any sort of --

No.

-- official meetings or discussions about policy or other things that are going on?

No. I don't think we had any real one-on-ones after that -- after his arrival.

You arrived in D.C. on the 1st of July.

No, I'm sorry, I departed Kyiv on the 1st of July. I made a stop in Brussels and in Vienna on my way back.

Okay. When did you return to D.C.?

My first day on the job was July 8. I think I returned the 7th, if that's correct.

Did you learn whether -- well, did you learn that Ambassador
Volker had gone to a conference in Toronto in early July?

A Yes.

Q Do you know who else was there from the U.S. Government?

A I know Christopher Anderson was there.

Q And did you discuss this conference with Mr. Anderson?

A Not in great detail, but yes.

Q Were you aware of whether or not Ambassador Volker had a private meeting with President Zelensky?

A Yes, I understood that he had, yes.

Q And what did you understand about that meeting?

A Only Ambassador Volker's assessment of President Zelensky and his intentions with regard to reforms and so forth, the things I've talked about before.

Q What do you mean by that?

A That Ambassador Volker took away from that meeting that he was impressed with President Zelensky, he was impressed with the seriousness, and that he was serious about combating corruption.

Q And that was pretty much the unanimous view of everybody who met him. Is that right?

A That's my understanding.

Q And that's what you heard when you were in Kyiv in June?

A In Kyiv, I think there was a lot more sort of wariness about Zelensky's ties to this oligarch, Kolomoisky, and his appointment of Bogdan, who was Kolomoisky's lawyer. I mean, I can go into it, but I don't know how interesting that is to you. There was a little more
skepticism in Kyiv.

Q But you also understood that Zelensky had acted on some of his promises of reform very quickly. Is that right?
A Yeah, he set a very ambitious reform agenda right at the jump.
Q Do you know whether or not -- were you informed at all that Ambassador Volker had discussed these investigations with President Zelensky at that pull-aside in Toronto?
A I would not have been aware of that. I was -- I am not aware.
Q Mr. Anderson did not relay that to you?
A No.
Q You've discussed that July 10th meeting in the Oval with Ambassador Bolton, and you got a readout [redacted]
[redacted]
And you also said that there was a discussion of whether or not there would be an Oval Office meeting?
A So that was my understanding of the goal of that meeting. I don't know what specifically was said about an Oval.
Q And who gave you this readout?
A Kurt did in the context of the meeting that we had after with the German National Security Advisor, Hecker.
Q Meaning how it would affect Germany or --
A Right, because the Germans and French are sort of the negotiators, along with Ukraine and Russia, in terms of resolving the
situation in the east.

Q And did you get any detail about the discussion with
Ambassador Bolton and Danylyuk and any of the Ukrainians about that,
the White House meeting?

A Not anything that would sort of pertain to this. Sort of
just impressions of Andrey Yermak, impressions of Danylyuk,
impressions of how serious they were about reforms, all the sort of
normal stuff.

Q So Ambassador Volker did not tell you any details about the
discussion about getting a White House meeting?

A Only that they were making the case for it.

Q Who was making the case for it?

A The Ukrainians and Kurt and everyone else. We understood
that Bolton also favored getting the meeting.

Q And did you -- did Ambassador Volker say anything to you
about anything that Ambassador Sondland said at that meeting?
[11:33 a.m.]

MS. CROFT: No.

MR. GOLDMAN: Now you were in Kyiv --

THE CHAIRMAN: Before you go on with that topic, if I could just follow up.

So when Ambassador Volker gave you a readout on that July 10 meeting, did he tell you anything about why it ended abruptly?

MS. CROFT: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: So the only feedback you got was [REDACTED], but nothing about what might have upset Mr. Bolton?

MS. CROFT: No, nothing about that, but I would also note that we were with the Germans at the time.

THE CHAIRMAN: So this would not have been a suitable place for Ambassador Volker to tell you about things that happened in that meeting that were irregular, to put a diplomatic term on it.

MS. CROFT: Right.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Goldman.

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q In this -- well, are you aware that Fiona Hill left the NSC in mid-July?

A Yes, late July.

Q Do you know the date?

A I thought it was the transition with her successor was the week of that, the week that ended with that phone call so that same
week of July 25th, that was my -- that's my recollection.

Q  Did you -- she was your former boss at the NSC?
A  Right, uh-huh.

Q  Did you have any conversations with her after you took this job as a special assistant?
A  I sent her a note after I took the position just to say that I took it and she said congratulations, that's it.

Q  So when you were back in D.C. in July and before she left you didn't have any conversations or meetings with her?
A  I went to her farewell, but we didn't talk about Ukraine policy.

Q  Now, you said that the -- you were in Kyiv around the time of the July 25th call, and there was a meeting on the 26th with President Zelensky, Ambassadors Volker, Sondland, and Taylor, and a note taker and an interpreter, is that right?
A  Yes.

Q  Was there a premeeting that you attended before that?
A  We attended a meeting chief of staff Bohdan.

Q  Did you discuss the White House meeting at that meeting?
A  Yes, yes.

Q  And what was the nature -- can you describe with as much detail as you can what that conversation entailed?
A  It was about the prospect for some sort of touch in Warsaw, as well as a potential for a meeting on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly. And the Ukrainians, as I recall, were pushing to have an
Oval meeting somewhere around, immediately before or after UNGA. And we were sort of -- or Kurt was counseling them that that almost -- you know, that an Oval meeting would be better diplomatically than a meeting on the margins of UNGA, and that the dates are too close to each other, then it could look like they are not getting their own Oval meeting, but rather, they happened to be in town. Is that responsive?

Q Understood, yes. Was -- this meeting was the day after the call, right?
A Yes.

Q And did Bohdan mention anything about the call?
A He said it was a very good call, very positive, they had good chemistry, so the readout that I got was just that it was good.

Q And by that point, had you gotten a readout from any of the ambassadors?
A No. So that meeting was the prebrief for the meeting with Zelensky. So the only readout that I got was the one from Ambassador Taylor based on the meeting with Zelensky so that was after that.

Q Understood. And at the premeeting, was there any discussion of investigations?
A I don't recall that there was. I can double-check my notes, but I don't think so.

Q And then -- and so you think you did take notes?
A I did take notes at that meeting, and I supplied them pursuant to the request.

Q So the meeting with President Zelensky happened and you're

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not there?

A Correct.

Q But you then describe a readout of that meeting that you got from who?

A From Ambassador Taylor, with Ambassador Volker.

Q And where were you when you got this readout?

A Squished between the two of them in the back of a car on our way to the airport, and I was very car sick. It was very tight.

Q Were you able to take notes if you were squeezed in there?

A I tried, but I got really sick so I had to stop.

Q Did you review those notes before you came today?

A I -- I did.

Q And so you described a little bit about that conversation. You said you didn't specifically recall anything related to Burisma or the Bidens, or whether that came up in the conversation with Zelensky. But you did say is that right, that Ambassador Taylor said that President Zelensky told them that President Trump had mentioned investigations? Is that an accurate --

A So in reviewing my notes, what I saw was a reference to three questions, and quote no mention of B. My recollection, I believe, is that my note about three questions is that that was the President raising investigations, but I can't say that with 100 percent certainty. And separately my note to myself about no mention of B, I honestly do not remember if that was Barr, Biden, or Burisma.

Q And why would it be Barr?
A Because I -- there had been talk at some point about the Attorney General making a visit to Kyiv.

Q But you think it is one of three, either Barr, Biden, or Burisma?

A I'm guessing it was one of the three.

Q And you said there were three questions that you understood to be questions related to investigations?

A That the President had raised investigations multiple times.

Q So --

A I think that that is my memory of what is in my nodes but honestly, like I said, A, the circumstances were not ideal, and B, that's not really what I was listening for.

Q Understood. So you do recall -- you believe that the reference to three questions was that the President raised investigations three times?

A I believe so.

Q And then your note right underneath that is no mention of B?

A Correct, correct.

Q They are close in proximity?

A Yes.

Q So as you sit here today, you don't remember whether the B related to those investigations?

A I don't specifically remember what the B related to. But in reviewing my notes, my impression is that it would have been either,
likely Biden or Barr, or maybe Burisma, but I'm not certain.

Q By that point, you were aware of this desire from some people
in the United States for Ukraine to initiate these investigations? Is
that right?
A Yes.

Q And you understood that these investigations one related to
the potentially Ukrainian interference in the 2016 election. Is that
one of them?
A Yes, yes.

Q And what was the other one that you understood?
A Into potential sort of Ukraine support for Bidens or some,
you know, sort of idea, some conflict of interest or something like
that, Biden and Burisma.

Q So you understood that Biden and Burisma were the same
investigation?
A Yes.

Q And by that point, July 25th, you knew that whatever -- did
you understand that whatever investigation was being advocated for
Burisma related to Joe Biden?
A Correct, yes. So regardless whichever B that is, sort of --
Q Understood. You said that you, at some point, thanked
Ambassador Volker for keeping you out of the mess, I think is your quote,
related to Rudy Giuliani. Is that accurate?
A Yeah, I don't know if I specifically used the word "mess,"
but just general business, yes, with Giuliani.
Q And you don't have a specific recollection as to when that conversation was?
A I do not, no.
Q Was it before this trip to Kyiv for where you met with Zelensky on July 26th?
A If I had to guess, I would say probably, but I don't specifically remember.
Q And so, you believe -- probably you said you believe that Ambassador Volker was in touch with Mr. Giuliani prior to the July 25th call?
A Yes, yes.
Q You feel pretty confident about that?
A Yeah, I heard about it, like I said, earlier on. The first I heard about it was as soon as I got back from Ukraine.
Q When you were in Ukraine --
A Sorry, in June. After my June trip to Ukraine, I made a lot of trips.
Q You heard about it pretty soon after you started the job --
A Exactly, exactly.
Q And what did Ambassador -- what did Ambassador Volker respond when you said, Thank you for keeping me out of the Giuliani thing?
A Nothing necessarily. It's sort of a non specific affirmation.
Q When you were in Kyiv around that July 25th, 26th period,
1 did you overhear any mention of Mr. Giuliani from any of the
2 ambassadors?
3 A Not that I specifically recall, but that doesn't mean, I
didn't.
4 Q Okay. Were you aware of whether Ambassador Sondland had
5 spoken to President Trump while he was in Kyiv around that time?
6 A I believe that he either did or intended to speak with the
7 President after his call with Zelensky.
8 Q And do know whether -- did Ambassador Sondland ever talk
9 about having conversations with chief of staff Mick Mulvaney?
10 A Yes, I understood Ambassador Sondland to be in touch with
11 Mick Mulvaney.
12 Q How did you understand that?
13 A From his staff.
14 Q Whose staff?
15 A I'm sorry. From Ambassador Sondland's staff.
16 Q What did they say to you?
17 A Just that he has contact with Mick Mulvaney and that he
somehow knew him. But I didn't have specifics on that.
18 Q And who is the staff member?
19 A So it transitioned while I was in this position, his chief
20 of staff, when I started, was [redacted] and then there was
21 a transition to [redacted], both Foreign Service
22 officers.
23 Q After this, I just have 1 minute left. After this trip to
Kyiv, did Ambassador Volker ever discuss with you that Rudy Giuliani was meeting with Ukrainians officials, including Andre Yermak?

A  Not that I specifically recall. I think I read about it in the newspaper, along with everybody else. I knew that -- I knew that Ambassador Volker was directly in contact with both Giuliani and with Yermak and, in fact, Kirk -- or Ambassador Volker talked to Andrey Yermak regularly.

Q  Do you know if he spoke to Andrey Yermak right before the July 25th call?

A  I would be surprised if he didn't. I think they spoke very frequently to such an extent that I wouldn't have been aware of every single time they talked at all.

Q  And do you know whether they had any conversations other than resolving the conflict in the east?

A  I don't remember if I had -- like I said, Kurt kind of kept me out of that channel of communication. So I don't recall having any conversation with Kurt about his conversations with Yermak, other than about trying to get an Oval and the conflict, and, sort of, what their plan was for resolving the conflict in the East. Also, Yermak had a role in the big prisoner exchange that happened so they would have talked about that I would imagine.

Q  Did you intentionally try to keep yourself removed from Ambassador Volker's activities related to what we call the other channel?

A  The Giuliani channel.
Q: The Giuliani channel.

A: Yes. I deliberately stayed out of that.

Q: And did he respect that?

A: Yes.

Mr. Goldman: Our time is up.

The Chairman: Our time is up. What I would suggest is that we take a 15 minute break, so you can eat, we have food for you. Let's try to resume promptly at 1:05. And just for our member's planning purposes, we'll go to 45 minutes for the minority. When we return to the majority we'll go to our members for further questions. So we're in recess until 1:05.

[Recess.]
[1:16 a.m.]

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's go back on the record. Forty-five minutes to the minority.

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q Thank you. Welcome back. Hope you had a delicious lunch.

A Yes. Thank you for providing it.

Q That was certainly not me, that was Chairman Schiff and the majority.

A Thank you to Conrad.

Q I just have a couple of questions and then our Members do have some ones for you.

You'd mentioned the influence of the oligarch Kolomoisky on President Zelensky and the concern as to whether President Zelensky would influenced by him when he assumed the Presidency. Can you tell us what you know about that?

A Nothing necessarily more specific than what's in the press. But Kolomoisky owned the 1-Plus-1 (ph) television channel that Zelensky's television show was on, and then subsequently hired Kolomoisky's attorney as his chief of staff.

Q Okay. And his attorney, did you say his name was Bogdan?

A Yes.

Q Does he remain as chief of staff?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And was there ever any discussion among your interagency partners about monitoring that situation to see if
Kolomoisky's influence would have a negative effect on Zelensky?

A  I think not just among my interagency colleagues, but sort of globally everybody who's watching Ukraine is watching that situation quite closely.

Q  And since he assumed the Presidency in May, what's been your assessment of Kolomoisky's influence on Zelensky?

A  Mixed record. We were fairly confident I think until about mid-September that Zelensky was genuine in his commitment to combat reform -- I'm sorry, combat corruption and remain independent of Kolomoisky.

But Kolomoisky's appearance at the YES conference in mid-September, combined, you know, with some not as strong as like -- as we would like to see messages on the future of PrivatBank, have at least raised I think yellow flags among those of us in the Ukraine policy community.

Q  In your time working with Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, did you ever notice that he was not as involved in things -- not as involved with things as you may have been when you were serving in the same role?

A  I think from my vantage point, Alex -- sorry, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman was very engaged.

Q  Okay. So you never witnessed him being cut out of things?

A  I think you're referring to sort of the Giuliani, sort of Volker conversations. I wouldn't have had visibility on that in the first place.

But in terms of the normal policy process, he was very engaged
and, in fact, drove a very, very intense Ukraine policy agenda.

Q What do you mean by intense Ukraine policy agenda?

A Lots of meetings and lots of taskings out of each of those meetings.

Q And who was he tasking?

A The interagency, as a director at the NSC normally would, so State, DOD, et cetera, et cetera.

Q And so he was having State Department officials perform certain tasks or assignments? Or what do you mean by drive?

A He convened a regular -- very regular schedule of sub-PCCs and PCCs on Ukraine to check in on our engagement to Ukraine, our Ukraine policy, and to sort of drive the overall work of the interagency.

Q Did Lieutenant Colonel Vindman ever express concerns to you about the 7/25 call?

A We never spoke about it.

Q You indicated that you went to Dr. Hill's farewell party?

A Yes.

Q Did she express any concerns during the course of the event about her current situation, about Ambassador Bolton or the President or why she was leaving?

A I think that she was less than thrilled with the circumstances of her departure. I think she wanted to leave on her own terms and she might have felt a bit edged out.

But we never had any very direct conversation about that, just sort of I got that sense from that conversation. But we did not discuss
policy at any point during that event.

Q Who was she edged out by?

A Her replacement was Tim Morrison, as you know.

Q So Mr. Morrison had edged her out is your understanding?

A I think she didn't feel like she got to leave at the time that she wanted to, and so --

Q And that was something driven by Ambassador Bolton?

A I don't know. I don't know the answer to that question.

Q Okay. Did she express any concerns about the President at her farewell party?

A No, we didn't talk about anything like that at the party.

Q Okay. That didn't come up?

A No, no.

MR. CASTOR: Mr. Meadows.

MR. MEADOWS: Thank you, Ms. Croft.

I've been, as you were going through, whether it's questions by the majority or the minority, we've -- I've been tracking with you, and I love the foreign policy. I love the fact that you call balls and strikes and it is yes/no. It's refreshing. And I just want to say thank you.

The other thing that I want to say thank you is you have been the expert on Ukraine policy during probably one of most difficult times as a student of foreign policy, one of the most difficult times if you're going to be a Ukraine expert. Your tenure has been at a critical, critical time. And so to be able to manage that, I just want to say
thank you. Our world is a safer place obviously because you have been willing to serve. I want to acknowledge that as we go.

And what I'd like to do is kind of just go in a little bit of reverse order and maybe at a 10,000-foot level, so I'm not going to drill down quite as close to some of the other questions that have happened.

Russia invades Crimea when?


MR. MEADOWS: The spring of 2015. At what point were you in charge of Ukraine's -- the expert in terms of Ukraine policy?

MS. CROFT: So as I said in my opening statement, so I was covering Ukraine at NATO in August -- from August 2013 until, I think, Januaryish 2015. Because of the events surrounding Ukraine I was pulled into the front office. So I continued to track Ukraine from the perspective of our U.S. mission to NATO, but then from the ambassador's office as opposed to from the political section.

MR. MEADOWS: So at this critical time, Russia comes into Crimea, you get pulled in as the expert, and says, you know, golly, fix this problem with a superpower invading Ukraine.

MS. CROFT: Well, at the time I was a second tour political officer, but I was doing my best.

MR. MEADOWS: And so as you come in, I know -- well, so let me ask the question. Was there a lot of back and forth in terms of what the proper response would be? You've got Russia being the aggressor, you've got Ukraine on the defense, you have at that time, I believe, the belief that Russia may even come further than where they are today.
Was there a whole lot of back and forth?

MS. CROFT: If you mean within the U.S. interagency --

MR. MEADOWS: Yes.

MS. CROFT: -- or among NATO allies, I would say both are true.

MR. MEADOWS: Both are true.

MS. CROFT: Both are true. Both are true.

I think, from my perspective in Brussels, it took a while for us to have a very clear sense of exactly what was happening, not just in Crimea, but also in eastern Ukraine.

As we all know looking back on it, Russia was sort of sending in what we now refer to as sort of the little green men to take this territory. And since we hadn't seen anything quite like this before, it took a while for us to figure out -- and I say us, the United States, but also our NATO allies -- to figure out exactly what was happening and how we were going to respond.

MR. MEADOWS: In fact, we had not seen it for decades. And so this was kind of a resurgence of Russian aggression, even though in their mind all they were doing was annexing a Russian part of Ukraine.

Would you agree with that assessment?

MS. CROFT: Except to the extent that this did mirror some of what was happening, of course, in Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, as well as arguably what's happening -- what was happening before that in Transnistria in Moldova.

MR. MEADOWS: Okay. And so would it be fair to say that everybody in the region, not just our NATO allies, not just the U.S., but everybody
in the region was very nervous as to where this, I will use the term politely, acquisition would ultimately stop?

MS. CROFT: Absolutely, I think that's fair to say.

MR. MEADOWS: Okay. And so as we looked at that, our U.S. policy in trying to figure out a deterrent that did not get us into a superpower war between two nuclear powers was probably the question of the day. Is that correct?

MS. CROFT: I think that's accurate to say, yes.

MR. MEADOWS: So as they're relying on your expertise, here you are, you've been at NATO, now you're in the U.S. trying to help us do this, the idea of foreign assistance for Ukraine and how we can essentially show support for Ukraine without doing a direct confrontation with the Russians, was that part of the calculus?

MS. CROFT: Yes, I think so.

MR. MEADOWS: And so when you looked at this under the previous administration, because you've served in both this administration and the previous administration, so as they started to do that, would you say that there was an agreement among the agencies in terms of what they believed the best nonlethal deterrent to be?

MS. CROFT: In terms of the nonlethal deterrence, I can't speak to sort of -- I think it evolved over time, but I think we landed on the idea that the best nonlethal deterrent was our training efforts and our efforts at defense reform, so building the capacity, if you're talking in strictly the security sense, in the military --

MR. MEADOWS: Yeah, because you didn't focus as much on the
economic or anything else.

MS. CROFT: Correct.

MR. MEADOWS: So on some of the defense side of things.

MS. CROFT: The defense side, yes.

MR. MEADOWS: So giving additional foreign aid for defense was certainly on the table and something that was widely supported. Is that correct?

MS. CROFT: Yes, yes.

MR. MEADOWS: So as that was widely supported, and as we looked at that, it has been suggested by you and by other people that this aid, as it gets approved, you know, there are certain reforms that have to happen within the Ukrainian Government.

Would you say that sometimes those reforms were more of a footnote than they were the very top thing, that they were a box we had to check, but we really looked more from a national security standpoint instead of saying fix corruption or you're not going to get the aid, because that would be more of a secondary theme?

MS. CROFT: I guess it depends on which conditionality you're talking about, whether it's the sort of broader conditionality as tied to our -- tied to our general economic aid or specifically the defense reforms.

MR. MEADOWS: Yeah, I'm going to stick strictly with defense, because I think that that's the crux of why we're here today, is more of a defense mode, putting aside the loan guarantee of Joe Biden and pulling that back out, because that was actually a different type of
assistance.

Wouldn't you agree with that? The Joe Biden thing is a -- it was not military assistance as much as it was loan guarantee. Is that correct?

MS. CROFT: I believe the conditionality that you're talking about that was related to the loan guarantee, yes, that was a separate conditionality.

MR. MEADOWS: So if we focus just strictly on the military side of things, take me back to 2015-16. What were we doing at that particular point? Were we saying we were going to provide -- well, were Javelins off the table at that point or did you all discuss Javelin support, which would be --

MS. CROFT: I'd sort of have to break it down package by package.

So we did these sort annual reviews with Ukraine and with our international partners where we established, you know, what from a policy perspective made the most sense to do with the money that Congress was supplying for the Department -- for State and DOD to be able to sort of help Ukraine build its defense capacity.

The conversations about whether that should include defensive weapons were ongoing, and I couldn't speak to necessarily specific packages, specific times, without sort of going back through notes.

MR. MEADOWS: Right. So the defensive methods that you're just now mentioning -- and for our purposes I'm going to just say Javelins, okay -- so the discussions under the previous administration as it relates to whether Javelins should be provided or not was a back and
forth. It said, well, should we do it, should we not?

And I believe from your earlier testimony you said ultimately they decided not to give Javelins just because they were concerned about the message that Russians might see that as provocative. And "provocative" is my word.

MS. CROFT: Yeah, I would say -- I would say, just to be very specific in terms of language or very precise in terms of language, that the Ukrainian request for Javelins was not approved under the Obama administration and discussions included concerns about the Russia reaction.

MR. MEADOWS: All right. And so did you agree with that decision? Were you advocating for Javelins or against Javelins?

MS. CROFT: I was advocating for Javelins --

MR. MEADOWS: Okay. And so you --

MS. CROFT: -- personally, but in my role.

MR. MEADOWS: Personally. As the Ukrainian expert you were advocating for Javelins and the administration said -- ultimately said no.

MS. CROFT: Ultimately said no. I was one of many Ukraine experts advocating for Javelins. But, yes.

MR. MEADOWS: All right. So you're saying most of the Ukrainian experts were advocating for Javelins.

MS. CROFT: I think broadly the Ukraine policy community that I worked with was in favor of that decision.

MR. MEADOWS: All right. So broadly they were in favor of that.
So then we fast forward a little bit to now 2017 and that issue comes up again. You're saying, okay, we've got a new administration, so now we're going to take another try at getting defensive weapons, even though the threat was probably not as great as it was under the Obama administration, just because we were so uncertain.

Is it correct or -- let me ask this. Is it correct to say that the advance of Russian military forces and the uncertainty of that was greater in 2015 and '16 than it would be in 2017 and 2018?

MS. CROFT: I would say that the line of contact here, to your question, the line of contact was relatively static by 2017.  

MR. MEADOWS: All right. And so -- but you still thought it was important that we provide Javelins as a defensive message as a deterrent to possible Russian aggression?

MS. CROFT: Yes.

MR. MEADOWS: And so as you put forth that early on in the Trump administration, essentially within 12 months that determination had been made that, yes, we will change U.S. policy and to allow for defensive weapons. Is that correct?

MS. CROFT: Yes. I started in July and the decision was taken in December.

MR. MEADOWS: Okay. Were you surprised by that decision? Because it's a real shift, I mean, and it's a substantial shift, from a foreign policy guy, it's a real substantial shift that obviously made
headlines at the time.

MS. CROFT: It was a big decision. I was very happy about it.

I don't know if I was surprised or not, but I was happy with the decision.

MR. MEADOWS: But you were happy about it.

MS. CROFT: Yes.

MR. MEADOWS: All right. And so we have no Javelins under the previous administration. We have a decision for Javelins to move forward. And this is in spite of what I think you characterized earlier a deep-seated concern by the President that the Ukrainians were a corrupt country.

MS. CROFT: Yes.

MR. MEADOWS: And so did you hear on more than one occasion that the President felt like the Ukrainian Government was corrupt?

MS. CROFT: Yes.

MR. MEADOWS: Is that a position that Ambassador Kurt Volker held as well or did -- let me rephrase it. Did you and Ambassador Kurt Volker talk about the fact that the President had this deep-seated concern about corruption broadly in the Ukraine?

MS. CROFT: Kurt and I were both present with the President in his pre-brief ahead of his meeting with Poroshenko in September in which the President described Ukraine as corrupt.

MR. MEADOWS: And was he pretty emphatic that he believed that?

MS. CROFT: The President?

MR. MEADOWS: Yes.

MS. CROFT: Yes.
MR. MEADOWS: Okay. And so we have this deep-seated belief that Ukraine is corrupt, but yet you and your team were persuasive enough to convince the President to allow for the sale of Javelins to go to Ukraine? That's pretty impressive. Because, I mean -- go ahead.

MS. CROFT: The provision, using U.S. security assistance.

MR. MEADOWS: Right. And so -- but at that time it was not just that we were going to allow them to purchase things. We were actually going to give U.S. taxpayer dollars to them in order to attain Javelins. Is that correct?

MS. CROFT: That's correct.

MR. MEADOWS: So let's fast forward a little bit, because Javelins gets mentioned, and you've been really the very first person out of nine different witnesses to articulate what I've been trying to get to for the last 70 hours.

But is the -- the very fact that Javelins were mentioned on a July 25th phone call was not part of foreign aid, it was indeed a potential purchase that was going to be made by the Ukrainian government with their funds. Is that correct?

MS. CROFT: I have no special or independent knowledge of the phone call other than the transcript --

MR. MEADOWS: No, no, no --

MS. CROFT: -- publicly. So I'm with all of you --

MR. MEADOWS: I'm not talking about the phone call. I'm just talking about the purchase of Javelins in 2019. Was that anticipated that that would be American taxpayer dollars that purchased that or
Ukrainian dollars that would purchase that?

MS. CROFT: Ukrainian national funds.

MR. MEADOWS: So not only have we shift from the Obama administration, where they weren't providing Javelins with U.S. taxpayers, then we went to 2017 where we provided Javelins according to U.S. taxpayer dollars, to 2019 that says that, by the way, Javelins will potentially be purchased, but no longer by U.S. taxpayer dollars. Is that correct?

MS. CROFT: Yes, that's correct.

MR. MEADOWS: And so that's the official policy today, the U.S. policy was that we will continue to sell them Javelins, but they would have to do so with their own money. Is that correct?

MS. CROFT: Yeah. I'm not aware that there had been a policy decision to not use security assistance funds to provide Javelins, but I do know that the President expressed an interest in Ukraine purchasing Javelins.

MR. MEADOWS: All right. So you're saying that the President has expressed a concern that -- and I'll ask it really a double-edged question or a two-prong question.

Has the President ever expressed interest in the EU carrying more of their weight in terms of supporting Ukraine defense initiatives? Have you -- are you aware of that?

MS. CROFT: I have indirectly heard him say the Europeans need to step up, they need to do more, and have understood that to mean security assistance.
MR. MEADOWS: Do you believe that the President wants the
Ukrainian Government to do more in terms of their own self-defense as
well?

MS. CROFT: I believe that he does want to see Ukraine able to
defend itself, yes.

MR. MEADOWS: All right. So let me then finish up with this.
The meeting, the Oval Office meeting that you referred to earlier and
the other witnesses have referred to in terms of the Oval Office meeting
between President Zelensky and President Trump, is that -- it's not
that U.S. Ukrainian policy would be changed in that Oval Office meeting,
it was more of a symbolic gesture that this is a reset, that this is
different than the previous President, Poroshenko, and that this new
President is anticorruption, and it shows the level of support to the
world and I guess to the Ukrainian people if this meeting happened.
So is it more symbolic than it is policy driven?

MS. CROFT: I think originally -- I think originally it was both.
Zelensky having an Oval meeting is a powerful symbol of U.S. support
for Ukraine. I think that's unquestionable.

Later on, when the security assistance hold was put in place, I
think those in leadership circles -- and I agreed -- thought that if
Trump and Zelensky did meet face to face, that given their common
background, they would get along, and given that the President tends
to rely heavily on firsthand impressions in making policy decisions,
that he could potentially at least semi-reverse his position on Ukraine
and corruption, and that later, when we learned about the OMB hold,
that resolving the President's concerns about corruption would
hopefully lead to lifting that hold.

MR. MEADOWS: Well, I know you're an expert on Ukrainian
analysis. I think you're an expert on Oval Office analysis, because
I couldn't agree more. I mean, what you're saying is, is that you
believed if you got the two leaders together, that what all of a sudden
is your belief and the broad belief that President Zelensky was going
to attack corruption, that he would get to see that firsthand, and that
would start to do away with some of the deep-seated concerns that the
President had as it relates to Ukrainian corruption. Is that correct?

MS. CROFT: That is -- that was certainly my hope, and it was not
a hope that I -- that I had by myself, and I think it was a reasonable
hope to have.

MR. MEADOWS: So you think that was a broader -- so it's not just
the expert witness Ms. Croft that believed this, you said there's
others -- some of your other colleagues had that same belief?

MS. CROFT: Yes. That's what we were working toward.

MR. MEADOWS: And Ambassador Volker, would he have been one of
those people that believed that if you could just get the two of them
together, that things would start to work out?

MS. CROFT: Yeah. I'm reluctant to speak for him, but those were
the conversations that he and I had.

MR. MEADOWS: All right.

Steve, I'll yield to another Member.

MR. CASTOR: Mr. Perry had a lot of questions.
[1:42 p.m.]
MR. PERRY: I want to talk to you a little bit about over the last couple of weeks in this room, there have been questions about bipartisan support for Ukraine, generally speaking, and what things might diminish bipartisan support, Republicans and Democrats supportive of our goals in Ukraine. And I just -- and I want to characterize it in terms of, based on your opening statement about your time with Ukraine, so it should be things that are pretty clear to you. I understand you started at NATO in 2013, and at the desk from 2015 to 2017. In that context, was there any diminution of bipartisan Republican or Democrat support for Ukraine, let's say, during 2014, where the U.S. ambassador for Ukraine, Jeffrey Pyatt had a conversation with Victoria Nuland, where she basically -- well, she said F the EU, referring to Brussels hesitation for overthrowing the elected government in Kyiv outright, if I'm reading this report correctly.

Did those circumstances, as you remember them, would they have -- did they diminish any bipartisan support, Republicans and Democrats, for our support of Ukraine?

MS. CROFT: I mean, I don't have any firsthand knowledge, having not been on the Hill during that time, but I never saw --

MR. PERRY: Did you see any evidence?

MS. CROFT: I never saw evidence of diminished bipartisan support.

MR. PERRY: Okay. And over a decade, prior to 2014, so that gets to obviously before your time there, but allegedly spent about $5
billion on democracy promotion in Ukraine, during that period of time
is now known as pretty corrupt, but we kept on trying, spending $5
billion over that period of time for what was described as democracy
promotion efforts, even though there were corruption issues, did you
see any evidence of a lack of bipartisan support?

MS. CROFT: I don't think I can sort of sign on to sort of the
characterization of that money being exclusively for, you know -- for
Democratic support, but rather economic stability. As I testified
earlier, it was a huge part of the picture there, and a lot of that
economic aid was directed as sort of helping Ukraine remain
economically stable during this conflict.

MR. PERRY: Tumultuous time. But even as you characterize, it
is still bipartisan support?

MS. CROFT: And I haven't seen a decline in bipartisan support
or evidence of it, in my limited capacity.

MR. PERRY: And when Vice President Biden went to Ukraine and then
it was reported at the CFR where he was shown as saying, you know, I
told them you need to fire the prosecutor, or we're going to withhold
the $1 billion in IMF funds, or whatever that conversation was. Did
there continue to be bipartisan support, generally speaking, or did
you see any evidence or lack of bipartisan support for Ukraine during
that time?

MS. CROFT: I personally did not see any reduction in bipartisan
support.

MR. PERRY: Okay. I didn't think you did, but -- because it
seems like there has been a conversation about that here, and I haven't
seen any either, so as the person who's been around who seems to be
the expert on it, I just wanted to get your take on it, and I appreciate
that. I want to move on to a different subject, based on something
you said in the last round.

MS. CROFT: Yeah, I'm sorry, I just want to qualify one thing.
MR. PERRY: Sure, go ahead.
MS. CROFT: I did try to be explicit in that my limited
capacity -- I have limited personal knowledge.
MR. PERRY: I understand. Yeah, but from the knowledge that you
had, right, I asked if you saw any evidence and --
MS. CROFT: In my limited capacity, I did not.
MR. PERRY: And again, moving on, just to set this up a little
bit, I am a retired Army officer, and I know that you know Lieutenant
Colonel Vindman well. As Army officers, there's a general theme that
it's mission first. We kind of take on our mission very personally,
and it becomes personal to us if there's some way not to accomplish
the mission. I mean, it's mission first, and it comes before
everything else and it's just kind of inbred in military officers and
military personnel, in general, at least as far as I'm concerned. In
that vein, you had mentioned that Colonel Vindman drove the policy.
Did you say aggressively? I can't remember exactly what you said
there. How did you describe it?
MS. CROFT: I don't remember what word I used, but he was highly
engaged.
MR. PERRY: Okay, fair enough. Would you say he was very passionate about it?

MS. CROFT: I couldn't speak to his emotional state. I was just reflecting sort of the frequency of meetings and the number of taskings and that sort of thing.

MR. PERRY: So you can't characterize whether he took it kind of personally, and took it on as his personal --

MS. CROFT: I wouldn't be comfortable speaking to his emotional state on that.

MR. PERRY: Okay. Did he ever talk to you about his frustration when things weren't working out?

MS. CROFT: No.

MR. PERRY: All right. I yield to the next member.

MR. CASTOR: Mr. Armstrong.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you. You were working the Ukraine desk in 2016, right?

MS. CROFT: Yes.

MR. ARMSTRONG: And I know there's reports afterwards and all this, but at that time when Valeriy Chaly, Ukraine's ambassador, she wrote letter -- I mean she wrote an op-ed in The Hill. As a member of the desk, were you following some of those things?

MS. CROFT: He.

MR. ARMSTRONG: He, sorry.

MS. CROFT: Yes, I was vaguely tracking it.

MR. ARMSTRONG: How about -- and I'm going to get all of these
wrong and you can correct me, Valentin Nelenchenko (ph), who is security ambassador, there were some Facebook comments about the President. Were you aware of these at the time when you were at the desk?

MS. CROFT: I'm it not aware of what you just made reference to.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Do you know who Serhiy Leshchenko is?

MR. MEADOWS: I think it is Leshchenko.

MR. ARMSTRONG: I told you I am going to butcher the names.

MS. CROFT: Oh, Leshchenko

MR. MEADOWS: He needs a North Carolina interpreter.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Well, we've got north there. In North Dakota, we always say we have seven kinds of Lutherans so.

MS. CROFT: I was trying to work with you there, I was --

MR. ARMSTRONG: I appreciate it.

MS. CROFT: I'm aware of him. I don't know him personally.

ARMSTRONG: Were you aware at the time at the desk of anything that was going on 2016 election regarding him?

MS. CROFT: I was only vaguely aware in the same sense that everybody else was aware, you know, that there was, you know -- yes, sort of vaguely aware.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Was there conversation about Ukrainian Government officials, maybe in an irregular way, manifesting themselves into the 2016 election?

MS. CROFT: Not that I was ever part of.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Okay. Anybody else?

MR. MEADOWS: Let me, Steve, come back real quick, and then I will
give it back to you.

So as it relates to Serhiy Leshchenko, is that correct? Is that better? Is it better than my North Dakota friend there? He was -- was he a journalist?

MS. CROFT: He's a former MP.

MR. MEADOWS: Okay. And so he's -- was he an MP in 2016, do you recall?

MS. CROFT: I honestly -- I don't recall the timeline. I was focused more on security assistance at the time, so there were other folks that were responsible for tracking internal politics.

MR. MEADOWS: So let me ask one final question, what with U.S. Ukraine policy, at this point -- as with the previous administration, there was some things that you wanted to happen. I'm certain that there's probably things that you would like to happen. Other than an Oval Office meeting, is there anything that you believe that we could do currently to help with the Ukraine-U.S. relationship?

MS. CROFT: I think it's very important that Ukraine remain on the agenda of the -- of the U.S. foreign policy agenda. I think it is important our senior leadership continue to acknowledge the support for Ukraine is in the U.S. national interest. I think I certainly would like to see us step up our security assistance. I think we have done a lot. And I think, in terms of our security assistance, we get a lot of bang for our buck.

The evolution of Ukraine's armed forces over the last 5 years has been absolutely remarkable, and I think that's a credit to bipartisan
congressional support for security assistance and conditioning that on defense reforms, which have moved in a very positive direction. I also personally feel it is important that we remain -- that the United States continue to have a leadership role in the negotiations and the conflict in the east.

I think we have a unique opportunity to make forward progress on that with the -- both the popular support that Zelensky has, and Ukraine and in Russia, as well as a demonstrated willingness to take political risks in order to make progress. The United States has played an incredibly, I think, valuable role in both keeping our European partners united with us on our Ukraine policy, and maintaining our sanctions regime, while at the same time, engaging in shuttle diplomacy. And while acknowledge that the shuttle diplomacy has been stalled, I think we have a progress -- an opportunity to make progress in our coordination, on the one hand, with Ukraine in coordination with France and Germany, and then on the other hand, Russia. And I think we are best positioned to do that if we continue to have a senior level official that is empowered to engage.

MR. MEADOWS: So we need to have someone replace Ambassador Kurt Volker then?

MS. CROFT: That's my personal view, yes.

MR. MEADOWS: And -- I will yield back. I thank you. I really want to close by saying thank you for being so candid, and thank you for helping us, I believe, understand the whole process better.

MS. CROFT: Thank you.
BY MR. CASTOR:

Q Do you think this investigation has harmed or done some damage to bilateral relations?

A I think, too, in my personal view in U.S.-Ukraine relations, I think that those relationship -- that relationship, I think, continues to remain strong. And I think as long as U.S. support for Ukraine continues, that will not be diminished. I think it's a question of looking to the future to make sure that U.S. support continues.

Q Were you on the Ukraine desk during the Vice President Biden's visit to Ukraine where he made the comments about relieving the prosecutor Shokin of his duties?

A Yes. But I'm going to tell you right now, it was a long time ago, and my memory is going to be a little bit fuzzy from that time?

Q As we have discussed with the holdup in aid in July, August, September of this year, there was a relatively developed interagency set of meetings and contacts about how the aid was held up from July 18th to September 11th. And I was just wondering if you have any recollection of whether there was a robust interagency process relating to the loan guarantees?

A I would not have participated in that process at the time, because it wasn't in my portfolio, and the desk officer at that level wouldn't necessarily have participated in that.

Q Do you remember if there were PCCs on the topic, or is that something that would ordinarily be outside of a PCC process?
1 A I don't recall.
2 Q Did you happen to be on that trip?
3 A No.
4 Q Did you get involved with any of the preparation for the visit?
5 A For a visit like that, it would typically be all hands on deck. So I think we all probably did support it, but I don't have specific memories.
6 Q Do you have any recollection of whether there was a concern that given Hunter Biden's role with the Burisma company and the Vice President's engagement that there was a potential conflict of interest?
7 A No, not that I was aware of.
8 Q I will just -- I'm going to refer to Vice President Biden's remarks, you know, he was relating this at a Council on Foreign Relations speech in January 2018. He said, I remember going over convincing our team -- others to convincing that we should be providing for loan guarantees. And I went over to try, yes, the 12th, 13th time to Kyiv. Do you remember your time on the desk was the Vice President going to the Kyiv like 12 and 13 times?
9 A I don't remember how many times the Vice President went.
10 Q Does that sound like the right -- right number?
11 A I would be guessing and drawing from very old memories.
12 THE CHAIRMAN: Counselor, can you identify what you're reading from?
13 MR. CASTOR: This is former VP's remarks to council of foreign
relations on January 23rd, 2018.

THE CHAIRMAN: Right. But what are you reading from? What is reporting his comments?

MR. CASTOR: These are his comments.

THE CHAIRMAN: In The Washington Post or the New York Times?

MR. CASTOR: It was a video.

THE CHAIRMAN: So you transcribed his comments?

MR. CASTOR: It was transcribed, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: By whom? I'm just trying to understand what you're reading to the witness.

MR. CASTOR: This is a transcription of what he said on the video.

THE CHAIRMAN: By members of the minority staff?

MR. CASTOR: What's that?

THE CHAIRMAN: By members of the minority staff?

MR. CASTOR: Did we have a transcriber? It was just reported in.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. We just don't know the accuracy what's read to you, that's why we're asking.

MR. CASTOR: Have you seen the video?

MR. MEADOWS: Do transcribers stay anonymous?

THE CHAIRMAN: That's perfectly fine with me. We are just trying to identify what's being purported to speak for the Vice President.

MR. CASTOR: We have some copies. I can get some copies.

THE CHAIRMAN: The witness is asking a question, I want to understand what you were referring to.

BY MR. CASTOR:
Q  Anyway, I will jump to the end, and he said, you know, I looked
at them and said I'm leaving in 6 hours and if the prosecutor is not
fired, you're not getting the money. And then he used some colorful
language. And said, and he got fired. And I'm just trying to ask you
whether you have any recollection of this, whether this refreshes your
recolletion. Are these types of, like, loan guarantees easily -- are
these types of deal easily broken or not broken by, like, one visit
like this?
A  I don't have any sort of specific memories of being involved
in that process. And I'm not an expert on how loan guarantees --
Q  Okay. Have you had a recollection of these set of events
before, or is this the first time you're hearing of the Vice President's
statements recounting what happened?
A  I'm not entirely sure I understand your question, but this
is the first time I've heard what you read aloud.
Q  So you've never seen the video?
A  I don't -- I don't know the video you're referring to, so --
Q  I will mark it as an exhibit.
Did we have any exhibits today?
MR. GOLDMAN:  No, we did not.
MR. JORDAN:  Ms. Croft is it likely there was some kind of process
that was undertaken before the Vice President -- before Vice President
Biden went to Ukraine and made this demand or could he have just done
it?

[Minority Exhibit No. 1]
was marked for identification.]

MS. CROFT: One second, please.

I don't know is honestly the answer to that question.

MR. JORDAN: So he could have done this on his own without some kind of process, or some decision with the interagency process, he could have just decided, as Vice President, I'm going to go over there and make this demand on Ukraine?

MS. CROFT: I don't know.
[2:00 p.m.]

MR. JORDAN: If I could Steve, did you have more?

On the July 18th meeting, I think you said earlier today that, referencing Mr. Kent, Ambassador Kent, you said -- or Secretary Kent, excuse me, I heard there was a hold --

MS. CROFT: Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent, or DAS Kent.

MR. JORDAN: "I heard there was a hold on Ukraine" is I think the statement you said, that he made that statement at this meeting. I think you said you were participating via video and he made that statement. Is that right?

MS. CROFT: That wasn't a verbatim account of that moment, but he raised that he -- he raised that he had heard about a hold.

MR. JORDAN: And he had heard about it from whom? Did he hear about it from OMB, or where did he get that information, do you know?

MS. CROFT: I don't specifically recall.

MR. JORDAN: Thank you, and thanks again for being here.

MR. CASTOR: Our time is up.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we're going to break and then go to the next witness. Thank you very much for your testimony.

I did have actually one clarification I wanted to ask for the record. You mentioned in your car sick notes that you took, that there was no mention of B. Do you recall whether when you wrote that note, you were referring to no mention of B by Zelensky, no mention of B by Taylor, as you're writing down the notes, or what that notation meant?

MS. CROFT: I don't specifically recall what I meant when I wrote
that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. All right. We will recess, and as soon as the next witness is available, we will resume.

MS. CROFT: Thank you.

MR. MACDOUGALL: Mr. Chairman, is Ms. Croft excused?

THE CHAIRMAN: You are excused for today, yes, and we don't expect -- my lawyers can tell you what the terminology is in terms of the subpoena, but yes, you are excused.

MS. CROFT: Thank you. Thank you, everybody.

[Whereupon, at 2:01 p.m., the deposition was concluded.]
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