

December 02, 2019 - 09:24 AM EST

Ukraine's Zelensky: I never talked to Trump about 'quid pro quo'

BY JOHN BOWDEN

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Ukraine's president says in a new interview that he never discussed a "quid pro quo" with [President Trump](#), but criticized any blocking of U.S. security aid for his country at a time when it is at war with Russia.

"I never talked to the president from the position of a quid pro quo. That's not my thing," Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky said in an interview [with Time](#) published Monday.

"I don't want us to look like beggars. But you have to understand. We're at war," he said. "If you're our strategic partner, then you can't go blocking anything for us. I think that's just about fairness. It's not about a quid pro quo. It just goes without saying."

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Trump's dealings with Ukraine are at the center of the impeachment inquiry engulfing Washington. Democrats are seeking to make the case that Trump withheld security assistance to Ukraine to get that country to announce investigations into former Vice President [Joe Biden](#) and his son Hunter.

The aid was eventually sent to Ukraine, but not until the White House was aware of an anonymous whistleblower's complaint about the issue.

Trump pressed Zelensky in a July 25 call from the White House to do the investigations, a conversation that alarmed some of the officials listening in on the call.

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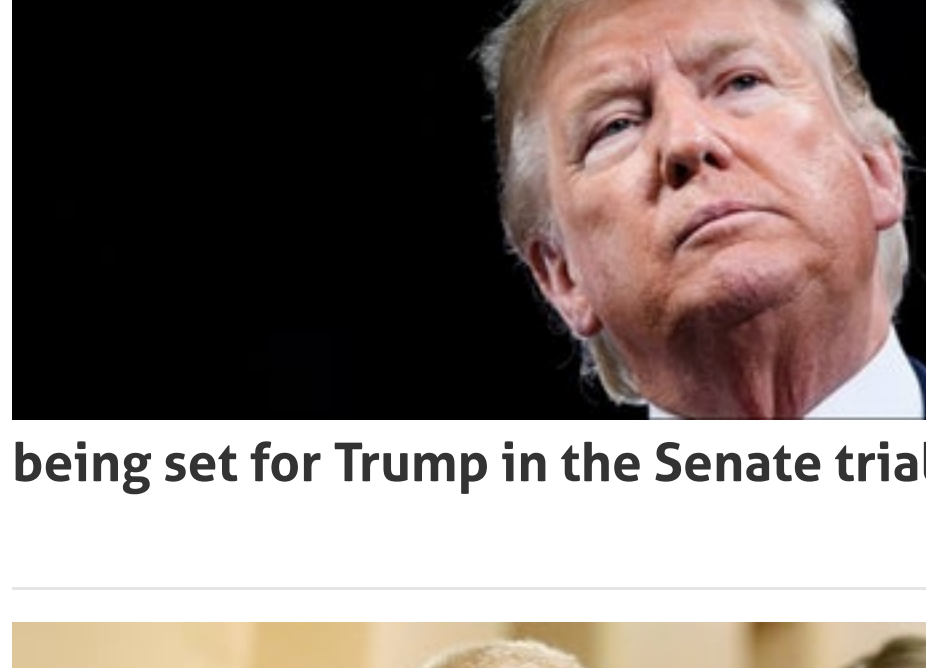
Trump has said he did nothing wrong on the call, and Republicans have attacked the Democrats' impeachment case by noting that the aid to Ukraine was eventually sent.

In the interview with [Time](#), Zelensky added that he wanted to improve Ukraine's image on the world stage, pointing to Trump's frequent insistence that the country is rife with corruption.

"When America says, for instance, that Ukraine is a corrupt country, that is the hardest of signals," the president said. "It might seem like an easy thing to say, that combination of words: Ukraine is a corrupt country. Just to say it and that's it. But it doesn't end there. Everyone hears that signal. Investments, banks, stakeholders, companies, American, European, companies that have international capital in Ukraine, it's a signal to them that says, 'Be careful, don't invest.' Or, 'Get out of there.'"

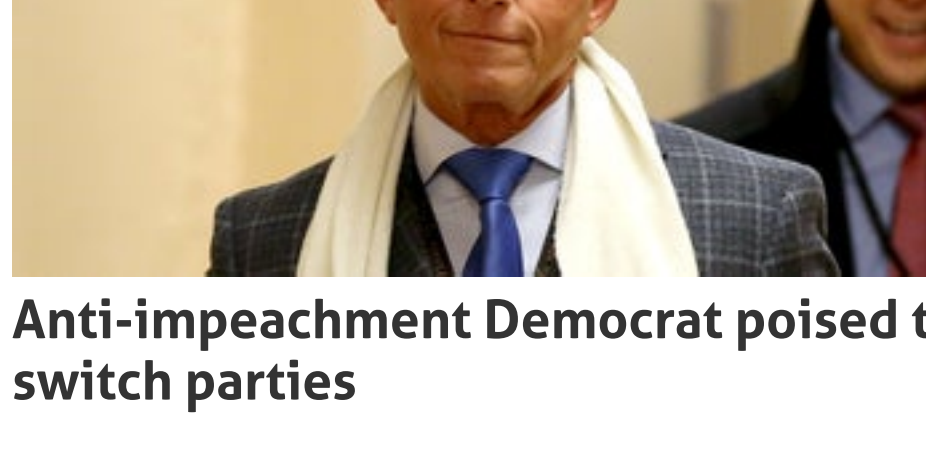
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