



POLITICS

# Giuliani associate Parnas wants to testify that Nunes aides hid Ukraine meetings on Biden dirt from Schiff

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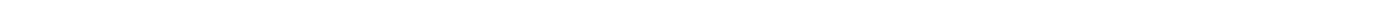


## KEY POINTS

Lev Parnas, a business associate of Rudy Giuliani, wants to testify to Congress that aides to Rep. Devin Nunes called off a trip to Ukraine this year when they realized they would be required to notify Democratic committee Chairman Adam Schiff.

The purpose of the trip was to interview two Ukrainian prosecutors who claim to have evidence that could help President Trump’s reelection campaign, according to Parnas’ lawyer.

Parnas also alleges that Nunes, a leading Trump ally, himself traveled to Vienna last year to interview a potential source of political dirt on Joe Biden.





WASHINGTON — The lawyer for [an indicted business associate](#) [Rudy Giuliani](#) said he is prepared to testify under oath that he and his firm helped a top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, scrapped a trip to Ukraine this year when they realized it would mean notifying Democratic Chairman Adam Schiff.

Lev Parnas would tell Congress that the purpose of the planned trip was to interview two Ukrainian prosecutors who claimed to have evidence that could help President [Donald Trump](#)'s reelection campaign, Parnas' attorney, Joseph Bondy, told CNBC. Nunes is one of Trump's most outspoken defenders in Congress.

But when Nunes' staff realized that going to Ukraine themselves would mean alerting Schiff to their plans, they instead asked Parnas to set up the meetings for them over phone and Skype, which he did, according to Bondy.

The Intelligence Committee is leading the [House's impeachment inquiry into Trump](#). It wrapped up two weeks of public hearings Thursday during which several Trump administration officials described a pressure campaign to influence Ukraine into saying it would investigate former Vice President Joe Biden, a front-runner for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, and a discredited conspiracy theory regarding the 2016 election.

Bondy is representing Parnas against federal campaign finance charges in New York.



**VIDEO** 02:56

**Impeachment witness Fiona Hill: Sondland was being involved in a ‘domestic political errand’**

For more than a year, Parnas has also worked closely with Giuliani, Trump’s personal attorney, to dig up dirt on Biden and his son Hunter in Ukraine in advance of the 2020 presidential election, according to Bondy. During that time, Trump and his allies in Congress have pushed unfounded claims that Biden intervened in a Ukrainian criminal investigation and that Ukraine meddled in the 2016 U.S. presidential election to help Hillary Clinton.

The Nunes team’s scrapped trip to Ukraine has not been previously reported, nor have the meetings that Bondy said his client arranged in place of the overseas trip. The meetings took place in late March, and Derek Harvey, a senior investigator for Nunes, represented the congressman, according to Bondy. One of the meetings was with Ukraine’s chief anti-corruption prosecutor, Nazar Kholodnytsky, and it was held over Skype, Parnas would tell Congress, according to Bondy. The second was a phone call Parnas arranged for Harvey with a deputy in Ukraine’s Prosecutor General’s office, Konstantin Kulik, Bondy added.

Both Kulik and Kholodnytsky have repeatedly [claimed they witnessed](#) corruption by Democratic operatives in Ukraine during the 2016 election. Neither official has



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several requests for comment about what Parnas would reveal to Congress.

According to Bondy, Parnas says he began working with Harvey after Nunes and his staff traveled to Vienna in late November to meet with another potential source of political dirt on Democrats: former Ukrainian prosecutor Viktor Shokin, who claims that Biden demanded his firing because Shokin was secretly investigating a gas company, Burisma, whose board included Hunter Biden.

[CNN first reported Friday](#) that Parnas wanted to testify before the House Intelligence Committee about [the Vienna trip](#). Since then, Nunes has threatened to sue CNN and The Daily Beast, which also reported on Parnas' allegations.

Asked point blank during a Fox News interview Sunday whether he met with Shokin in Vienna, the California congressman refused to answer, saying that Parnas was “a criminal” and that he would not “debate this out with the public media when 90% of the media are totally corrupt.”

The latest allegations about the planned trip to Ukraine this spring, however, suggest that Nunes' purported efforts to dig up dirt on Biden and Democrats did not end with the Vienna trip.

They also potentially implicate Nunes and his committee staff in the same events the committee is currently investigating — specifically, the monthslong effort by Trump, Giuliani and others to get Ukrainian officials to help them dig up dirt on Biden, and to validate far-right conspiracy claims about Ukraine and the 2016 election.

Trump raised both of these issues on a phone call July 25 with Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, prompting a whistleblower complaint that sparked the impeachment investigation into the president.

During the past two weeks, nearly a dozen current and former officials in the Trump administration testified before Nunes and the rest of the Intelligence Committee about what they say was a far-reaching effort to exert pressure on Ukraine to announce the investigations Trump wanted, up to and including withholding congressionally



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**Fiona Hill, the National Security Council's former senior director for Europe and Russia, arrives to testify before the House Intelligence Committee in the Longworth House Office Building on Capitol Hill November 21, 2019 in Washington, DC.**

*Chip Somodevilla | Getty Images*

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Over the course of three days of public hearings last week, Nunes used the bulk of his allotted time to attack Democrats and the media and to repeat the same unfounded claims about Democrats and Biden. At no point did Nunes ever mention that he or his staffers met with the three Ukrainian officials, some of whom were mentioned by name during testimony.

Speaking to CNBC, Bondy said Parnas merely wants an opportunity to testify under oath before the Intelligence Committee about his and Giuliani's activities in Ukraine. But so far, it's not clear whether Schiff will call him in. Bondy said Parnas has responded to a subpoena he received this fall from the committee by turning over thousands of pages of records to back up his account of events.

Asked whether he planned to ask Parnas to testify, Schiff said Sunday that the committee wants to review the documents he produces first before deciding whether to proceed with an interview. The California Democrat [appeared on NBC's "Meet the](#)



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said Sunday that Nunes [would likely face a House ethics probe](#) over allegations he sought to dig up dirt on Biden.

Reached for comment about Parnas' latest allegations, a spokesman for the Intelligence Committee referred CNBC to Schiff's earlier remarks.

Bondy told CNBC that Parnas wants to provide the committee with "truthful and important information that is in furtherance of justice."

"We have great faith that, in the end, the proper choice will be made as to when and whether to hear Mr. Parnas," he said.

**VIDEO** 02:56

**Impeachment witness Fiona Hill: Sondland was being involved in a 'domestic political errand'**



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