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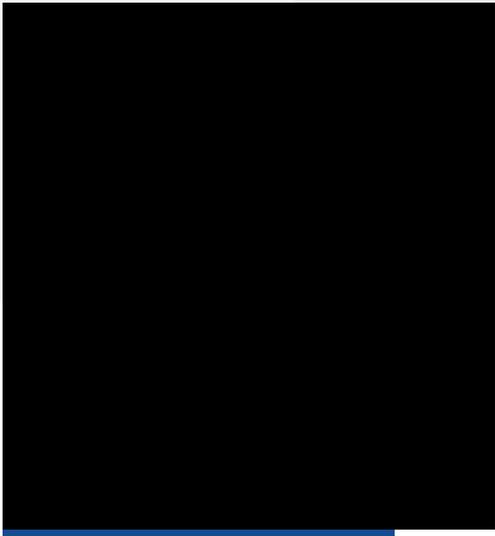
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has her say in hearing

November 16, 2019



WASHINGTON (AP) — The Latest on President Donald Trump and [House impeachment hearings](#) (all times local):

7:10 p.m.

Attorney General William Barr says congressional Democrats are drowning government agencies with an “avalanche of subpoenas” in order to “incapacitate” the executive branch.

Barr spoke Friday at the Federalist Society’s dinner in Washington. His comments came as Congress held a second public hearing in the House impeachment inquiry.

Barr says the “cost of this constant harassment is real.”

The attorney general also took a swipe at liberals who label themselves as part of “the resistance.” He said they “essentially see themselves engaged in a war to cripple by any means necessary.”

He also accused liberal lawmakers of being “engaged in a systematic shredding of norms and undermining of the rule of law.”

3:22 p.m.

The second open House impeachment hearing is over.

Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch testified for about five hours on Friday, telling investigators about her ouster in May at President Donald Trump’s direction and how she felt as she found out that he had criticized her in a July phone call with Ukraine’s president.



She also said it was “intimidating” as Trump went after her again on Twitter as she testified.

Democrats are investigating Trump’s dealings with Ukraine and a shadow foreign policy there led by his lawyer, Rudy Giuliani. They said that Yovanovitch’s ouster set the stage for the

president's appeals to Ukraine's leader to investigate Democrats.

The House Intelligence Committee will hear from eight more impeachment witnesses next week.

3 p.m.

President Donald Trump says he wasn't trying to intimidate a witness in the House impeachment inquiry with his tweet and he's entitled to speak his mind as the investigation plays out.

Trump says of impeachment, "it's a political process, it's not a legal process." He says: "I'm allowed to speak up."

Trump tweeted critically about Marie Yovanovitch, the former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, as she was testifying Friday before the House Intelligence Committee.

Yovanovitch said she found Trump's message "very intimidating" and Democratic committee chairman Adam Schiff suggested it could be used as evidence against the president. He said: "some of us here take witness intimidation very, very seriously."

2:35 p.m.

The former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine says a political ally of President Donald Trump suggested she "send out a tweet, praise the president" when it became clear she was abruptly losing her job.

Marie Yovanovitch described her exchange with Gordon Sondland at the House impeachment hearing Friday. She says she rejected the advice.

Sondland was a Trump campaign contributor who'd become a State Department envoy to the European Union but wielded influence over U.S. policy in Ukraine.

Yovanovitch said Sondland's advice was to "go big or go home," which he explained meant lauding Trump.

She says she didn't do it because, "It felt partisan, it felt political" and inappropriate for an ambassador.

Yovanovitch was removed even though State Department officials told her there'd been no

complaints about her job performance.

2:10 p.m.

The White House says President Donald Trump's tweets criticizing former U.S. Ambassador Maria Yovanovitch as she testified before the House as part of its impeachment inquiry was "not witness intimidation."

Trump has drawn criticism for tweeting early in Yovanovitch's testimony that everywhere the career diplomat was posted "turned bad."

Yovanovitch said the tweets were "very intimidating" to her and other witnesses.

But White House spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham says Trump did nothing wrong. She says in a statement that the tweets were "simply the President's opinion, which he is entitled to."

She's also criticized the hearing as a "partisan political process" and "totally illegitimate, charade stacked against the President."

1:45 p.m.

A Republican lawyer has asked former Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch about efforts by Ukrainian officials to undermine Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign.

GOP lawyer Steve Castor cited a 2016 op-ed in The Hill newspaper, written by Ukraine's then ambassador to the U.S., which criticized Trump for comments that appeared to suggest Russia's annexation of Crimea was valid. Ukraine strongly opposes the annexation.

Castor said the op-ed showed that Ukrainian officials supported Hillary Clinton in the 2016 campaign, adding that the ambassador "said some nasty things" about Trump in the op-ed and on Twitter.

Yovanovitch replied, "Sometimes that happens on social media."

Her comment came hours after Trump attacked Yovanovitch on Twitter as she began her testimony in the impeachment inquiry. Trump tweeted, "Everywhere Marie Yovanovitch went turned bad."

Democrats call the tweet witness intimidation.

1:20 p.m.

Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Maria Yovanovitch is rejecting the notion that Ukraine tried to interfere in the 2016 presidential election, as President Donald Trump has proposed.

Trump has said that Ukraine tried to “take me down.”

Testifying in Friday’s impeachment hearing, Yovanovitch said “we didn’t really see it that way.”

She noted that the U.S. intelligence community “has conclusively determined” that those who interfered in that election were in Russia.

Yovanovitch also pushed back against Trump’s suggestions that former Vice President Joe Biden was pursuing his own interests in Ukraine during President Barack Obama’s administration. She said he was pursuing “official U.S. policy.”

12:50 p.m.

The top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee is arguing that former U.S. Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch “is not a material fact witness” in the House impeachment probe of President Donald Trump.

California Rep. Devin Nunes said the details of her May ouster at Trump’s direction are a human resources issue, instead of a matter relevant to the Democrat-led investigation.

Democrats are investigating Trump’s dealings with Ukraine and his direct appeals to the country to investigate Democrats. They say Yovanovitch’s dismissal set the stage for a separate policy channel lead by Trump’s lawyer, Rudy Giuliani. Giuliani pushed for her firing.

Nunes noted that she had not talked to Trump this year or been part of preparations for a July phone call in which Trump asked the Ukrainian president for the investigations.

12:35 p.m.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi says witness intimidation is a crime.

But she’s stopping just short of saying that President Donald Trump crossed that line with a tweet attacking the former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine as she testified in the House impeachment hearings.

The California Democrat told reporters she'd not seen Trump's tweet. He wrote that every country where Marie Yovanovitch worked as an envoy "turned bad."

Asked if that tweet was witness intimidation, Pelosi said, "Witness intimidation is a crime."

She said one question was if such actions by Trump were "keeping people from giving facts and then saying, 'You don't have the facts.'"

Asked if Trump's tweet was appropriate, she says, "Appropriate and president in the same sentence? Come on. Why would we start making that judgment now?"

12:15 p.m.

Two Republican lawmakers at Friday's impeachment hearing with former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch say they think her testimony is irrelevant.

Rep. Scott Perry of Pennsylvania said Yovanovitch is "a very nice lady" but he believes Democrats are using her. Rep. Mark Meadows of North Carolina says the public is just learning about her feelings.

Yovanovitch described her ouster in May at Trump's direction and a campaign against her by Trump's lawyer, Rudy Giuliani. The impeachment investigation is looking at Trump and Giuliani's efforts to push Ukraine to investigate Democrats. She was ousted before a July call in which Trump asked Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy for the investigations.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff said Yovanovitch's ouster "helped set the stage for an irregular channel" of conducting Ukraine policy that was used to push for the investigations.

11:35 a.m.

The No. 3 Republican in the House says President Donald Trump "was wrong" to post tweets critical of former Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch during her testimony in the impeachment hearings.

Rep. Liz Cheney said Yovanovitch "clearly is somebody who's been a public servant to the United States for decades and I don't think the president should have done that."

The Wyoming Republican served in senior State Department roles when her father, Dick

Cheney, was vice president and she has been more supportive of the career diplomats that have so far testified than some other Republicans.

Trump tweeted about Yovanovitch as she was answering questions from lawmakers, noting that she'd once served in Somalia and adding, "How did that go?" He tweeted: "Everywhere Marie Yovanovitch went turned bad."

10:55 a.m.

Former Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch says President Donald Trump's tweets about her during her testimony in the impeachment hearings are "very intimidating" to her and other witnesses.

Trump tweeted about Yovanovitch as she was answering questions from lawmakers, noting that she'd once served in Somalia and adding, "How did that go?" He tweeted: "Everywhere Marie Yovanovitch went turned bad."

Yovanovitch responded to Trump's charge, saying, "I don't think I have such powers." She said she and her colleagues have improved conditions in places where they've served.

Yovanovitch was abruptly dumped as U.S. ambassador to Ukraine this spring. State Department officials never criticized her performance.

The career diplomat testified Friday that she'd been felled by a smear campaign orchestrated by Trump and his allies.

10:35 a.m.

Former Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch says she was told by a colleague that "the color drained from my face" as she read a rough transcript of a phone call between President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy in which Trump said Yovanovitch was "going to go through some things."

The rough transcript was released in September, months after Yovanovitch was ousted from the job at Trump's direction. She told lawmakers at the second House impeachment hearing Friday that it felt like a vague threat.

Yovanovitch said it was a "terrible moment" and that words fail her even now to describe it.

She said it was hard to believe "the president would talk to any ambassador like that to a

foreign head of state, and it was me. I mean, I couldn't believe it.”

10:30 a.m.

Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch says she was devastated when she learned President Donald Trump wanted to remove her from her post.

A top State Department official told Yovanovitch in April to come back to Washington from Ukraine “on the next plane.”

Yovanovitch told Congress Friday that Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan “said the words that every foreign service officer” fears: “‘The president has lost confidence in you.’ That was a terrible thing to hear.”

Sullivan told her that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo “was no longer able to protect” her from attacks led by Trump’s personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani.

Yovanovitch said the call “made me feel terrible. After 33 years of service to our country ... it was not the way I wanted my career to end.”

10:20 a.m.

Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch says she was told last April by a State Department official to return to the United States “on the next plane” because of concerns “up the street” — a phrase she understood to mean the White House.

Yovanovitch said she received the call at 1 a.m. from an official who said she needed to come home right away. The person said there were concerns about her security.

She asked if that meant her physical security. The person said no.

Yovanovitch said this was “extremely irregular” and she argued. But she eventually returned, where she learned that President Donald Trump no longer wanted her to serve.

10:15 a.m.

Marie Yovanovitch says she had a reputation for championing anti-corruption interests in Ukraine.

Yovanovitch, who was recalled last spring from her job as U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, said under questioning from Rep. Adam Schiff that that work may have upset certain officials in Ukraine.

She says State Department officials tried to produce a statement of support for her after her abrupt recall from her post, but she was told that effort was unsuccessful because the officials feared their message would be undercut by the president.

She says she was told that she had lost the president's confidence and flew from Ukraine on the same day as the inauguration of Ukraine's president.

10:10 a.m.

President Donald Trump is attacking a witness in House Democrats' impeachment inquiry while she is testifying before lawmakers.

Trump tweets that "everywhere" that former Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch went "turned bad."

Noting her postings in the foreign service, Trump says: "She started off in Somalia, how did that go?"

Trump says he has the "absolute right" to appoint ambassadors.

Yovanovitch is a career foreign service officer with a solid reputation. She testified Friday that she was the victim of "a campaign of disinformation" that used "unofficial back channels" leading to her removal from Ukraine.

9:45 a.m.

Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch has told Congress that attacks from corrupt interests have created a crisis at the State Dept.

Yovanovitch is testifying openly before the House Intelligence Committee in its impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump.

She told lawmakers that she was the victim of "a campaign of disinformation" that used "unofficial back channels" leading to her removal from Ukraine. She says it "continues to amaze" her that Americans partnered with "Ukrainians who preferred to play by the old corrupt rules" in pushing for her removal.

Yovanovitch is also sounding alarm that senior State Department officials did not defend her from attacks from the president's allies, including former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani. She is telling lawmakers about a "crisis in the State Department."

She says: "The State Department is being hollowed out from within at a competitive and complex time on the world stage."

9:35 a.m.

The top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee has read aloud a memo circulated by the White House that summarizes the first conversation between President Donald Trump and his newly elected Ukrainian counterpart.

The first conversation took place in April after the election of Volodymyr Zelenskiy. It consists largely of pleasantries and words of congratulations.

The White House made a record of the conversation public at the start of the House impeachment hearing on Friday.

Rep. Devin Nunes, the top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, read the document aloud to suggest that there was nothing untoward in the conversation.

Rep. Adam Schiff, the committee chairman, said Trump should also "release the thousands of other records that he has instructed the State Department not to release."

9:30 a.m.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff says former Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch was "smeared and cast aside" by President Donald Trump because she was considered an obstacle to his personal and political agenda.

Opening the second public House impeachment hearing, Schiff said the question isn't whether Trump could recall Yovanovitch but "why would he want to?"

Yovanovitch testified behind closed doors last month that she was told to "watch her back" before she was ousted in May as Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani led a shadow foreign policy.

Schiff said pushback at the State Department failed when it became clear that Trump wanted her gone.

Republican Rep. Devin Nunes said the hearings were “spectacles” for Democrats to “advance their operation to topple a duly elected president.”

9 a.m.

The House has opened a second day of Trump impeachment hearings with Marie Yovanovitch, the former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine who was suddenly recalled back to the U.S. by President Donald Trump.

Yovanovitch is expected to testify about her ouster, which another diplomat has called a “smear” campaign against her by Trump allies.

The live public hearings by the House Intelligence Committee are being held to determine whether Trump should be removed from office over his actions toward Ukraine.

The investigation centers on Trump’s July 25 phone call when he asked the new Ukraine president for a favor — to investigate Democrats and potential 2020 rival Joe Biden — as the White House was withholding military aid to the Eastern European nation.

Yovanovitch and others have described Rudy Giuliani, Trump’s personal lawyer, as leading what one called an “irregular channel” outside the diplomatic mainstream of U.S.-Ukraine relations.

8:35 a.m.

The former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine has arrived on Capitol Hill to testify in the Trump impeachment inquiry.

Marie Yovanovitch is the witness for the second day of public hearings. She’s expected to tell lawmakers about her sudden ouster as President Donald Trump recalled the career ambassador back to the United States.

Other diplomats testifying in the investigation have defended Yovanovitch, saying she was the target of “smear” campaign by the president’s allies. She has served both Democratic and Republican presidents.

The rare impeachment inquiry is focused on Trump’s actions toward Ukraine. Democrats say it amounts to bribery, as the president withheld military aid to Ukraine while he pushed the country to investigate rival Democrats, including Joe Biden.

Trump calls the probe a hoax and says he did nothing wrong.

12:15 a.m.

The House will hear from a singular witness Friday in the Trump impeachment hearings: Marie Yovanovitch, the former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine who was targeted by the president's allies in a "smear" campaign now central to the probe.

The career diplomat, who served both Republican and Democratic presidents, is expected to relay her striking story of being suddenly recalled by Donald Trump and told to "watch my back." It was all part of a swiftly developing series of events that sounded alarms about the White House's shadow foreign policy.

Friday is the second day of public hearings to consider removing America's 45th president. Democrats and Republicans are hardening their messages to voters as they try to sway voter opinion amid a deeply polarized public.

The House will hear from a singular witness Friday in the Trump impeachment hearings: Marie Yovanovitch, the former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine who was targeted by the president's allies in a "smear" campaign now central to the inquiry.

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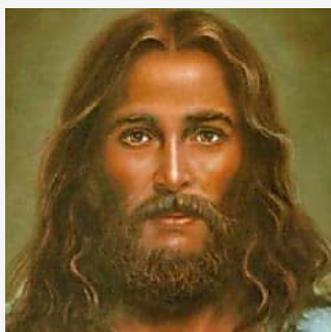
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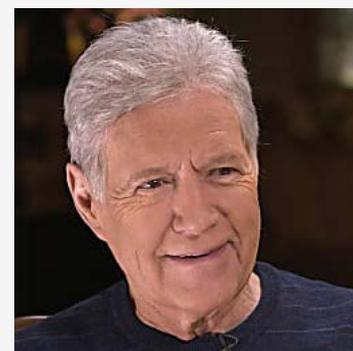
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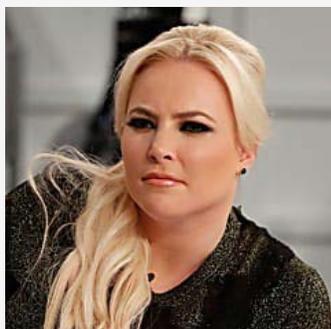
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