

Rudy's New Ukraine Jaunt Is Freaking Out Trump's Lieutenants —and He Doesn't Care

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Updated Dec. 06, 2019 4:15AM ET

Rudy Giuliani's decision to travel to multiple European countries this week, during the height of an impeachment probe involving his client President Trump, was so startling to senior administration officials and national security brass that they began tracking his movements in an effort to get a read on his objectives abroad.

Other officials in the West Wing and numerous Trump associates learned about his latest foreign adventure, which included a stop in Ukraine, by reading the news. Many of them expressed exasperation at the thought of Giuliani—himself reportedly in the crosshairs of federal investigators—continuing to cause headaches for the White House. Others feared he would cause tangible damage to U.S. foreign policy.

"I do not see why [any] lawyer would see this as serving the best interests of their client," said a senior White House official. "Especially now."

Senior U.S. officials in the State Department and in the national security apparatus were concerned that Giuliani was speaking with politicians in both Budapest and Kiev who have interests in domestic American politics. According to five sources with knowledge of the situation, there is renewed fear that the president's lawyer is still shopping for dirt about former Vice President Joe Biden and his son Hunter as well as speaking with foreign officials who, against all evidence, have promoted the idea that Ukraine, not Russia, interfered in the 2016 presidential election.

The concerns about Giuliani's trip to Kiev were so pronounced that they reached officials close to President Volodymyr Zelensky, who were advised by Americans and politicians in Ukraine not to meet with Giuliani when he was in town, according to an individual familiar with those conversations.

The president's attorney, who has been defiant in the face of criticism for his prior efforts to target the Bidens, was similarly unmoved by the idea that his current expedition was both unseemly and unwise.

"I would hope they have more important things to do than intrude on the work being done by a lawyer defending his client against another set of false and contrived charges," Giuliani told The Daily Beast on Wednesday, while still overseas.

Giuliani's trip comes at a time when many in Trump's circle put blame squarely at his feet for the president's impending impeachment. But some have not bothered intervening or even reaching out directly to Giuliani about his current travel plans, in part out of concern that he would complain about them to Trump, thus prompting the president's ire, according to a senior administration official.

This official also noted that it could be “unwise” to contact the president’s lawyer at this time, given how Giuliani’s text messages and phone records have become a topic of congressional investigation and public scandal.

In addition to meeting with foreign officials, Giuliani also appears to be conducting a public relations venture on behalf of the president. As *The New York Times* first reported, he flew to Europe, in part, to participate in a pro-Trump documentary series produced by One America News Network.

“Mr. Giuliani has occasionally appeared on OAN programs, thus we have had a relationship with America’s Mayor,” One America News president Charles Herring said in an email on Wednesday. “Mr. Giuliani, along with other individuals, have been helpful to OAN’s investigative efforts.”

When asked for more details on the trip and who he was meeting with, Giuliani demurred. When asked by *The Daily Beast* if he had gotten President Trump’s blessing for this excursion or had given his client a heads-up before he flew out, he replied: “I don’t tell you or [the White House] what I tell my client or he tells me.”

While it’s unclear if the president has been made aware of Giuliani’s ventures, sources did say that other top administration officials were not in the loop right up until the moment *The New York Times* story broke.

According to the *Times*, Giuliani did meet with former Ukrainian prosecutor Yuriy Lutsenko, who pushed Giuliani and his associates Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman to push for the ouster of former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch. Giuliani also reportedly spoke with Andriy Derkach, a Ukrainian member of parliament who has publicly pushed for a probe into meddling by former President Petro Poroshenko in the U.S. 2016 elections. Derkach is also known for peddling allegations that Ukrainian government bodies misused U.S. taxpayer money, according to a former U.S. official.

On Thursday evening, Andrii Telizhenko, a former Ukrainian diplomat, posted on his Twitter account that he too had met with Giuliani to prepare for “another hard working day in meetings with Mr. Shokin and Mr. Lutcenko.”

“To all conspiracy theorist there is no secret on what we are doing. The truth will come out,” he posted on Twitter alongside a photo of him with Giuliani. Telizhenko sits at the center of allegations that Kiev meddled in the 2016 presidential election. *The Daily Beast* previously reported that Telizhenko met with Rep. Devin Nunes (R-CA).

When asked by *The Daily Beast* about who else he met with in Europe this week and what they discussed, Giuliani responded, “I will have plenty to say soon.”

On Thursday, he gave some hints of what he has in store. “The American people will learn that Biden & other Obama administration officials, contributed to the increased level of corruption in Ukraine between 2014 to 2016,” Giuliani posted to Twitter. “This evidence will all be released very soon.”

—*With additional reporting by Will Sommer*

