

Trump Tells Rudy to Keep Pushing the Biden Conspiracies

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Rudy Giuliani's investigation into Ukraine-related matters is largely why his client, Donald Trump, is hours away from becoming one of only three American presidents ever to be impeached by the House.

Yet somehow, Trump hasn't instructed his personal lawyer to knock it off. In fact, the president has told the former New York City mayor to kick things up a notch, even as the impeachment process continues to bedevil his administration.

Shortly after Giuliani arrived at the White House on Friday, he met with the president and discussed some of the findings from his recent travel to multiple European countries, where the Trump attorney had collected documents and interviews with Ukrainian figures claiming to have dirt on Trump's political enemies and the Bidens. During their private discussion, the president approved of the work his lawyer had conducted, and told him to keep digging and pushing the narrative on former vice president and 2020 Democratic contender Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden, according to two people with knowledge of the conversation.

One of these sources described Trump as telling Giuliani to "keep at it" and to not let up, even in the face of intense public criticism.

In the West Wing, the president's enthusiasm puts him at odds with some of his top lieutenants. One senior White House official told The Daily Beast this week that they go out of their way to not be involved with, or read-in on, the ongoing Biden and Ukraine-related work between Trump and Giuliani, out of concern that doing so could potentially drag them into the scandal.

"I do not want my name showing up in a [news] story about what Rudy and the president discuss," said the official. "I don't want my text messages with [Giuliani] being all over cable news," the senior official added, a reference to how Trump's lawyer had revealed on Fox News private texts between him and former U.S. special envoy to Ukraine Kurt Volker.

When asked on Monday about Giuliani's investigation and jaunt overseas, the president told reporters at the White House, "He's a great person who loves our country, and he does this out of love, believe me. He does it out of love." When asked about the material that Giuliani had shared with Trump, the president simply said, "not too much," without elaborating.

Of course, not everybody in Trumpworld appreciates Giuliani's act of "love" as much as the president does, apparently.

"I think [Giuliani] adds a distracting sideshow which he should postpone until the Senate is finished with their trial," said former Rep. Jack Kingston (R-GA), a current Trump surrogate. "It's not about the senators who are from conservative states; it's about the moderate three GOP senators. If he makes them feel uncomfortable or detracts from their message, it's not helpful."

Trump himself, however, has often acted as his own messaging and communications director, with results frequently veering into flamboyant, unhinged territory. On Tuesday, the president sent a letter to Capitol Hill trashing Democratic lawmakers and bizarrely claiming that “more due process was afforded to those accused in the Salem Witch Trials.”

“It is a terrible thing you [House speaker Nancy Pelosi] are doing, but you will have to live with it, not I!” Trump’s six-page letter reads. “You are offending Americans of faith by continually saying ‘I pray for the president’ when you know this statement is not true, unless it is meant in a negative sense.”

Trump’s encouragement of Giuliani’s ongoing antics, which have included the trip to Ukraine earlier this month, is the latest instance of the president continuing to egg on the very same activity and shadow foreign policy that landed his inner circle in the middle of scandal and impeachment hearings in the first place. Trump keeps encouraging this not only in the face of the impending impeachment vote, but as his own senior administration officials and national-security aides are internally expressing their horror at what the president’s personal attorney has continued to do.

It got to the point earlier this month that top officials in the State Department and the national-security apparatus began tracking Giuliani’s movements abroad out of fear that his activities in Europe would bring the administration yet more grief or disrupt American foreign policy.

Predictably, the former New York mayor remains unmoved by their concerns.

“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 said early this month.

Two other knowledgeable people said that Giuliani was at the White House late last week in his capacity as the president’s outside counsel, and that Giuliani deemed the conversation covered by attorney-client privilege. These sources added that the Trump lawyer is reviving his work on his “counter-report,” a thus-far unreleased document that Giuliani and other Trump attorneys, including Jay Sekulow, had worked on starting last year as a rebuttal to Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s probe and to attack the very legitimacy of that two-year Russia investigation.

The “counter-report” has yet to be publicly released, even though its creation was personally approved by the president last year—and some of its contents are highly relevant to Giuliani’s ongoing crusade.

“That outline that I gave to the State Department was originally prepared to be included in the counter-report,” Giuliani told The Daily Beast in October. “It was prepared to provide a guide for text that could be included in the [finalized] counter-report.” He continued, “I undertook the [Ukraine] investigation” as part of a broader mission “to find out how much evidence existed that could exonerate” Trump.

It is unclear how much of Giuliani’s more recent findings would find its way into this “counter-report,” and if Trump’s lawyer has a timeline for release or distribution. White House spokespeople and Giuliani did not provide comment for this story.

Still, Trump's insistence that his lawyer charge forth, despite the precarious and historic impeachment proceedings slated for this week in the Democratic-held House, is likely driven, at least in part, by the president's desire to flood as much media as possible with his pro-Trump messaging.

"Control the agenda," Trump has privately told Giuliani on numerous occasions since the days of the Mueller investigation, according to three people who've heard the president say this. Trump has said this specifically while reviewing with his personal attorney the vast amount of TV hits and media appearances that Giuliani has been willing to do to defend his embattled client.