

WHITE HOUSE

Trump elevates Mulvaney aide weeks after he defied impeachment subpoena

Robert Blair will be the special representative for international telecommunications policy.



Acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney. | Evan Vucci/AP Photo

By **KYLE CHENEY**

12/23/2019 06:11 PM EST



President Donald Trump has promoted a central figure in the House impeachment inquiry who defied a subpoena to testify.

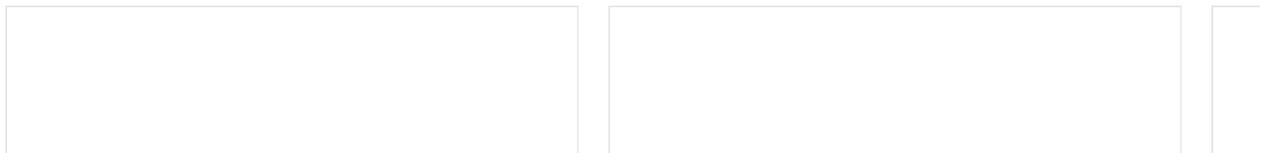
Trump on Monday named Robert Blair — a top aide to acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney — as the special representative for international telecommunications policy, a position that puts Blair in a central role atop a U.S. effort to “promote a secure and reliable global telecommunications system.”

Story Continued Below

“In this new capacity, Mr. Blair will support the Administration’s 5G efforts led by the Assistant to the President for Economy Policy, Larry Kudlow,” the White House said in a statement. “Mr. Blair will continue to serve as Assistant to the President and the Senior Advisor to the Chief of Staff.”

Democrats subpoenaed Blair on Nov. 3 to testify about his awareness of Trump’s order to hold military aid to Ukraine, which they allege was part of an effort to coerce an ally — desperately fighting off a Russian invasion — to investigate his political rivals. Blair refused to appear for a Nov. 4 deposition under orders from the White House.

MOST READ





1 DEFENSE

Trump tries to avoid his own Benghazi



2 WHITE HOUSE

Trump does New Year's Eve his way



3

<

>

“Some of that evidence has revealed that Mr. Blair was a percipient witness to the President’s misconduct,” Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, said in a closed-door meeting on Nov. 4, according to a transcript released by the panel last month. “We can only infer, therefore, that the White House’s effort to block Mr. Blair from testifying is to prevent the committees from learning additional evidence of Presidential misconduct and that Mr. Blair’s testimony would corroborate and confirm other witnesses’ accounts of such misconduct, including Mr. Mulvaney’s admission from the White House Briefing Room that the Ukraine military aid was frozen by the President in order to pressure Ukraine into initiating investigations into the Bidens and the 2016 election.”

The House impeached Trump last week for abuse of power in his posture toward Ukraine as well as efforts to thwart the Intelligence Committee’s investigation into the president’s effort to press Ukraine to investigate his political rivals. Democrats say Trump withheld \$391 million in military aid from Ukraine as leverage, but top officials who handled Trump’s order have refused to testify, acting on the president’s direction.

Senate Democrats preparing for Trump’s impeachment trial [have requested a slate of witnesses](#) previously blocked by the White House, including Blair, whose testimony they say would shed light on the decision to withhold aid.

Blair was among senior administration officials included on email threads by the U.S. ambassador to the European Union, Gordon Sondland, who helped spearhead conversations with top Ukrainians about launching investigations sought by Trump.

FILED UNDER: DONALD TRUMP, DONALD TRUMP 2020, MICK MULVANEY

SHOW COMMENTS

 NEWS ABOUT PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



How rogue can Turkey go?



Militiamen withdraw from U.S. Embassy but Iraq tensions linger



POLITICO Europe's predictions for the year ahead

Trump cuts loose with unpredictable characters at Mar-a-Lago



Trump abandons sweeping vape ban with new slimmed-down rules

SPONSORED CONTENT

Recommended by

Try This Tonight If You Have Nail Fungus (Watch)
healthbenefits.vip

The Common Signs of Colitis
Yahoo Search

Worst Colleges In America: District Of Columbia Tops
Alot Education

Experts Ranked The Best Us Presidents.
Z Today

Get the Lowest Prices of the Season with up to
Macys.com

[About Us](#)

[Advertising](#)

[Breaking News Alerts](#)

[Careers](#)

[Credit Card Payments](#)

[Digital Edition](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Feedback](#)

[Headlines](#)

[Photos](#)

[POWERJobs](#)

[Press](#)

[Print Subscriptions](#)

[Write For Us](#)

[RSS](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Terms of Service](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

© 2020 POLITICO LLC