

Impeachment Hearing Day 5 Transcript – Fiona Hill and David Holmes Testimony

[rev.com/blog/impeachment-hearing-day-5-transcript-fiona-hill-and-david-holmes-testimony](https://www.rev.com/blog/impeachment-hearing-day-5-transcript-fiona-hill-and-david-holmes-testimony)

November 21,
2019



Former National Security Council official Fiona Hill and Ukrainian Embassy US Department of State official David Holmes testified before the House of Representatives as a part of the Donal Trump Impeachment Hearings. Read the full transcript of Hill and Holmes' testimonies right here on Rev.com.

Impeachment Hearing Transcript Series

November 13: [Bill Taylor, George Kent Testimony Transcript](#)

November 15: [Marie Yovanovitch Testimony Transcript](#)

November 19 AM: [Alexander Vindman, Jennifer Williams Testimony Transcript](#)

November 19 PM: [Kurt Volker, Tim Morrison Testimony Transcript](#)

November 20: [Gordon Sondland Testimony Trancript](#)

November 21: [Fiona Hill, David Holmes Testimony Transcript](#)

Part 1

Adam Schiff: (00:00)

Ask for your respect as we proceed with today's hearing. It's the intention of the committee to proceed without disruptions. As chairman, I'll take all necessary and appropriate steps to maintain order and ensure that the committee is run in accordance with House rules and House Resolution 660. With that, I now recognize myself to give an opening statement in the impeachment inquiry into Donald J. Trump, the 45th president of the United States.

Adam Schiff: (00:23)

Yesterday morning, the Committee heard from Ambassador Gordon Sondland, the American Ambassador to the European Union, the de facto leader of the three amigos, who had regular access to President Donald Trump and pressed the new Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, for two investigations, Trump believed would help his reelection campaign. The first investigation was of a discredited conspiracy theory that Ukraine and not Russia was responsible for interfering in our 2016 election. The second investigation was into the political rival Trump apparently feared most, Joe Biden. Trump sought to weaken Biden, and to refute the fact that his own election had been helped by a Russian hacking and dumping operation and Russian social media campaign directed by Vladimir Putin.

Adam Schiff: (01:12)

Trump's scheme stood in contrast to the longstanding bipartisan foreign policy of the United States by undermining military and diplomatic support for a key ally, and set back US anti-corruption efforts in Ukraine. In conditioning a meeting with Zelensky and then military aid on securing an investigation of his rival, Trump put his personal and political interests above those of the United States. Ambassador Sondland would later tell career Foreign Service Officer, David Holmes, immediately after speaking to the president, Trump did not give a expletive about Ukraine. He cares about big stuff that benefits him, like the Biden investigation that Giuliani was pushing.

Adam Schiff: (01:54)

David Holmes is here with us today. He is a Foreign Service Officer currently serving as the Political Counselor at the US Embassy in Kyiv. Also with us is Dr. Fiona Hill, whose job as the National Security Council's Senior Director for European and Russian Affairs encompassed the coordination of US policy towards Ukraine. Dr. Hill left the NSC in July, after more than two years in that position. Dr. Hill and Mr. Holmes each provide a unique perspective on issues relating to Ukraine, Dr. Hill from Washington, DC, and Mr. Holmes from on the ground in Kyiv.

Adam Schiff: (02:29)

In early 2019, Dr. Hill became concerned by the increasing prominence of Rudy Giuliani, the president's personal lawyer, who was, as she has testified, asserting quite frequently on

television in public appearances that he had been given some authority over matters related to Ukraine. Hill was not alone in her concerns. Her boss, National Security Advisor, John Bolton, was also paying attention, as were other NSC and State Department officials, including Holmes at the US Embassy in Kyiv. Bolton viewed Giuliani as a hand grenade that is going to blow everybody up, and was powerless to prevent the former mayor from engineering former US Ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch's firing in late April or the recall. Holmes was stunned by the intensity and consistency of the media attacks on Yovanovitch, by name as a US Ambassador and the scope of the allegations that were leveled against her.

Adam Schiff: [\(03:28\)](#)

Yovanovitch's dismissal as a result of Giuliani's smear campaign was one of several things that unsettled Dr. Hill. Another was the role of Gordon Sondland, who emerged as a key player in Ukraine policy in May when he was named as part of the US delegation led by Secretary, Rick Perry, to President Zelensky's inauguration. Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Vindman, also attended the inauguration, and as Holmes recalls, during a meeting with President Zelensky, took the opportunity to advise the new Ukrainian leader to stay out of US domestic politics.

Adam Schiff: [\(04:05\)](#)

Another concern that arose for Dr. Hill around this time was her discovery of a potential NSC back channel on Ukraine. Hill learned that an NSC staff member who did not work on Ukraine and for her may have been providing Ukraine-related information to President Trump that Dr. Hill was not made aware of. According to Holmes, following the Zelensky inauguration, Sondland and Perry took a very active and unconventional role in formulating our priorities for the new Zelensky administration and personally reaching out to President Zelensky and his senior team. Sondland's newfound assertiveness also concerned Dr. Hill, who previously had enjoyed a cordial working relationship with the ambassador.

Adam Schiff: [\(04:47\)](#)

On June 18, 2019, Hill had a blow-up with Sondland when he told her that he was in charge of Ukraine policy. Dr. Hill testified that Sondland got testy with me. And I said, "Who has put you in charge of it?" He said, "The President." On July 10th, Dr. Hill was part of a meeting at the White House with a group of US and Ukrainian officials, including Bolton, Sondland and Energy Secretary, Perry, another of the three amigos. The meeting was intended, among other things, to give the Ukrainians an opportunity to convey that they were very anxious to set up a meeting, a first meeting between their new president and President Trump. Sondland interjected to inform the group that according to White House Chief of Staff, Mick Mulvaney, the White House meeting sought by the Ukrainian president with Trump would happen if Ukraine undertook certain investigations. Hearing this, Bolton abruptly ended the meeting.

Adam Schiff: (05:43)

Undeterred, Sondland brought the Ukrainian delegation and the NSC Director for Ukraine, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Vindman downstairs to another part of the White House, where they were later joined by Dr. Hill. In this second meeting, Sondland was more explicit. Ukraine needed to conduct investigations if they were to get a meeting at all. Bolton directed Dr. Hill to report this to NSC legal advisor, John Eisenberg, telling her, "You go and tell Eisenberg that I am not part of whatever drug deal Sondland and Mulvaney are cooking up on this, and you go ahead and tell him what you've heard and what I've said." Dr. Hill did so, as did Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, who separately approached the same lawyers with his concerns.

Adam Schiff: (06:26)

On July 18, the day before Dr. Hill left her post at the NSC, Holmes participated in a secure interagency videoconference on Ukraine. Towards the end of the meeting, a representative from the Office of Management and Budget announced that the flow of nearly \$400 million in security assistance for Ukraine was being held up. The order had come from the president and had been conveyed to OMB by acting White House Chief of Staff, Mick Mulvaney, without further explanation. Holmes, unaware of the hold prior to the call, was shocked. He thought the suspension of aid was extremely significant, undermining what he had understood to be longstanding US national security goals in Ukraine.

Adam Schiff: (07:12)

One week later, on July 25th, President Trump spoke with President Zelensky by phone. When President Zelensky brought up US military support and noted that Ukraine would like to buy more Javelin anti-tank missiles from the United States, Trump responded by saying, "I would like you to do us a favor, though." Trump then requested that Zelensky investigate the discredited conspiracy theory that Ukraine interfered in the 2016 US election. Even more ominously, Trump asked Zelensky to look into the Bidens. Neither request had been included in the official talking points for the call prepared by the NSC staff, but both were in Donald Trump's personal interest, and in the interests of his 2020 re-election campaign. And the Ukrainian president knew about both in advance, in part because of efforts by Ambassadors Sondland and Volker to make him aware of President Trump's demands.

Adam Schiff: (08:06)

The next day, July 26, in Kyiv, Holmes served as a note-taker during a meeting between acting Ambassador Bill Taylor, Volker and Sondland, with President Zelensky and other senior Ukrainian officials. Zelensky said that on the previous day's call, President Trump had "three times" raised some very sensitive issues that he would have to follow up on those issues when they met in person. Although he did not realize it at the time, Holmes came to understand that the sensitive issues were the investigations that President Trump demanded on the July 25th call.

Adam Schiff: (08:52)

Following the meeting with Zelensky, Holmes accompanied Sondland to a separate meeting with one of the Ukrainian president's top advisors, Andriy Yermak. But Holmes was not allowed into the meeting and waited for thirty minutes while Sondland and the Ukrainian met alone without any note-takers to record what they said. After the meeting, Sondland, Holmes and two other State Department staff went to lunch at a nearby restaurant and sat on an outdoor terrace. At some point during the meal, Sondland pulled out his cell phone, placed a call to the White House, and asked to be connected to the President.

Adam Schiff: (09:29)

When Trump came on the line, Holmes could hear the President's voice clearly. Holmes recalled that "the President's voice was very loud and recognizable, and Ambassador Sondland held the phone away from his ear for a period of time, presumably because of the loud volume." Sondland said he was calling from Kyiv. He told the President that President Zelensky loves your ass. Holmes then heard President Trump ask, "So he's going to do the investigation?" Ambassador Sondland replied, "He's going to do it," adding that, "President Zelensky will do anything you ask him."

Adam Schiff: (10:07)

After the call ended, Holmes took the opportunity to ask Sondland for his candid impression of the President's views on Ukraine. It was at this point that Sondland revealed that President Trump doesn't give a expletive about Ukraine. The President only cares about big stuff, that benefits the president, like the Biden investigation that Mr. Giuliani was pushing. A month later, National Security Advisor, Bolton, traveled to Kyiv. Between meetings with Ukrainian government officials, Holmes heard Bolton express to Ambassador Bill Taylor his frustration about Mr. Giuliani's influence with the President. Bolton made clear, however, there was nothing he could do about it. Bolton further stated that the hold on security assistance would not be lifted prior to the upcoming meeting between President Trump and Zelensky in Warsaw, where it would hang on whether Zelensky was able to favorably impress President Trump.

Adam Schiff: (11:03)

Trump canceled his trip to Warsaw, but Sondland, Volker and others continued to press for a public announcement of the opening of investigations by Zelensky. On September 8, Taylor told Holmes that, "Now they're insisting Zelensky commit to the investigation in an interview with CNN." Holmes was surprised the requirement was so specific and concrete, since it amounted to nothing less than a "demand that President Zelensky personally commit to a specific investigation of President Trump's political rival on a cable news channel."

Adam Schiff: (11:41)

On September 9, this Committee along with the Foreign Affairs and Oversight committees, launched our investigation of this corrupt scheme. President Trump released the hold on aid two days later. As CNN's Fareed Zakaria has revealed, the Ukrainians canceled the CNN interview shortly thereafter. Two weeks later, on September 25, the transcript of the July 25th call was released by the White House, and the details of the President's scheme started coming into view.

Adam Schiff: (12:10)

In the coming days, Congress will determine what response is appropriate. If the President abused his power and invited foreign interference in our elections, if he sought to condition, coerce, extort, or bribe a vulnerable ally into conducting investigations to aid his reelection campaign and did so by withholding official acts, a White House meeting or hundreds of millions of dollars of needed military aid, it will be for us to decide whether those acts are compatible with the Office of the Presidency. I now recognize ranking member Nunes for any remarks he would like to make.

Devin Nunes: (12:46)

Thank you. Throughout these bizarre hearings, the Democrats have struggled to make the case that President Trump committed some impeachable offense on his phone call with Ukrainian president Zelensky. The offense itself changes depending on the day ranging from quid pro quo to extortion, to bribery, to obstruction of justice, then back to quid pro quo. It's clear why the Democrats have been forced onto this carousel of accusations. President Trump had good reason to be wary of Ukrainian election meddling against his campaign and of widespread corruption in that country. President Zelensky, who didn't even know aid to Ukraine had been paused at the time of the call, has repeatedly said there was nothing wrong with the conversation. The aid was resumed without the Ukrainians taking the actions they were supposedly being coerced into doing.

Devin Nunes: (13:47)

Aid to Ukraine under President Trump has been much more robust than it was under President Obama. Thanks to the provision of Javelin anti-tank weapons. As numerous witnesses have testified, temporary holds on foreign aid occur fairly frequently for many different reasons. So how do we have an impeachable offense here when there's no actual misdeed and no one even claiming to be a victim? The Democrats have tried to solve this dilemma with a simple slogan, "he got caught." President Trump, we are to believe, was just about to do something wrong and getting caught was the only reason he backed down from whatever nefarious thought crime the Democrats are accusing him of almost committing.

Devin Nunes: (14:44)

I once again urge Americans to continue to consider the credibility of the Democrats on this Committee, who are now hurling these charges for the last three years. It's not president

Trump who got caught, it's the Democrats who got caught. They got caught falsely claiming they had more than circumstantial evidence that Trump colluded with Russians to hack the 2016 election. They got caught orchestrating this entire farce with the whistleblower and lying about their secret meetings with him. They got caught defending the false allegations of the Steele dossier, which was paid for by them. They got caught breaking their promise that impeachment would only go forward with bipartisan support because of how damaging it is to the American people.

Devin Nunes: (15:52)

They got caught running a sham impeachment process between secret depositions, hidden transcripts, and an unending flood of Democrat leaks to the media. They got caught trying to obtain nude photos of President Trump from Russian pranksters pretending to be Ukrainians, and they got caught covering up for Alexandra Chalupa, a Democratic National Committee operative, who colluded with Ukrainian officials to smear the Trump campaign by improperly redacting her name from deposition transcripts, and refusing to let Americans hear her testimony as a witness in these proceedings. That is the Democrats pitiful legacy in recent years. They got caught.

Devin Nunes: (16:53)

Meanwhile, their supposed star witness testified that he was guessing that President Trump was tying Ukrainian aid to investigations despite no one telling him that was true, and the president himself explicitly telling him the opposite, that he wanted nothing from Ukraine. Ladies and gentlemen, unless the Democrats once again scramble their kangaroo court rules, today's hearing marks the merciful end of this spectacle in the Impeachment Committee, formerly known as the Intelligence Committee. Whether the Democrats reap the political benefit they want from this impeachment remains to be seen, but the damage they have done to this country will be long lasting. Will this wrenching attempt to overthrow the president? They have pitted Americans against one another and poison the mind of fanatics who actually believe the entire galaxy of bizarre accusations. They have level against the president since the day the American people elected him.

Devin Nunes: (18:06)

I sincerely hope the Democrats in this affair as quickly as possible so our nation can begin to heal the many wounds it has inflicted on us. The people's faith in government and their belief that their vote counts for something has been shaken. From the Russia hoax to this shotty Ukrainian sequel, the Democrats got caught. Let's hope they finally learn a lesson, give their conspiracy theories a rest, and focus on governing for a change. In addition, Mr. Chairman, pursuant to House Rule XI, clause 2(j)(1), the Republican members transmit a request to convene a minority day of hearings. Today you have blocked key witnesses that we have requested from testifying in this partisan impeachment inquiry. This rule was not displaced by H.Res.660, and therefore under House Rule 11 clause 1(a), it applies to the

Democrats impeachment inquiry. We look forward to the chair promptly scheduling an agreed upon time for the minority day of hearings so that we can hear from key witnesses that you have continually blocked from testifying.

Devin Nunes: (19:26)

I'd also like to take a quick moment on an assertion Ms. Hill made in the statement that she submitted to this Committee, in which she claimed that some Committee members deny that Russia meddled in the 2016 election. As I noted in my opening statement on Wednesday, but in March, 2018, Intelligence Committee Republicans published the results of a year long investigation into Russian meddling. The 240 page report analyzed 2016 Russian meddling campaign, the US government reaction to it, Russian campaigns in other countries and provided specific recommendations to improve American election security. I would asked my staff to hand these reports to our two witnesses today just so I can have a recollection of their memory. As America may or may not know, Democrats refused to sign on to the Republican report. Instead, they decided to adopt minority views, filled with collusion conspiracy theories. Needless to say, it is entirely possible for two separate nations to engage in election meddling at the same time, and Republicans believe we should take meddling seriously by all foreign countries regardless of which campaign is the target. I'd like to submit for the record, a copy of our report titled Report on Russian Active Measures. I yield back.

Adam Schiff: (21:22)

Today we are joined by Dr. Fiona Hill and David Holmes. Dr Fiona Hill is a former deputy assistant to the president and senior director for Europe and Russia on the National Security Council. Before returning to government, she was a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution where she directed the center on the United States in Europe. She previously worked at the National Intelligence Council, the Eurasia Foundation, and the John F. Kennedy School of Government. David Holmes is the Political Counselor at the US Embassy in Kyiv, where he serves as the Senior Policy and Political Advisor to Ambassador Taylor, who testified earlier in these hearings. He is a career Foreign Service Officer. He has previously served in Moscow, New Delhi, Kabul, Bogota and Pristina. He has also served on the staff of the National Security Council as special assistant to the United States Secretary of State.

Adam Schiff: (22:19)

Two final points before our witnesses are sworn. First witness depositions as part of this inquiry were unclassified in nature, and all open hearings will also be held at the unclassified level. Any information that may touch on classified information will be addressed separately. Second, Congress will not tolerate any reprisal, threat of reprisal or attempt to retaliate against any US government official for testifying before Congress, including you or any of your colleagues. If you would please rise, raise your right hand, I will

begin by swearing you in. Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God. Let the record show that the witness has answered in the affirmative. Thank you and you may be seated.

Adam Schiff: [\(23:11\)](#)

The microphones are sensitive, so you'll need to speak directly into them. Without objection, your written statements will be made part of the record. With that Mr. Holmes, you are now recognized for your opening statement and when you conclude, Dr. Hill, you'll be immediately recognized thereafter for your opening statement.

David Holmes: [\(23:34\)](#)

Thank you. Good morning Mr. chairman, Ranking Member Nunes, and members of the Committee. My name is David Holmes, and I'm a career Foreign Service Officer with the Department of State. Since August 2017, I have been a political counselor at the US Embassy in Kyiv, Ukraine. While it is an honor to appear before you today, I want to make clear that I did not seek this opportunity to testify today. Since you determined that I may have something of value to these proceedings and issued a subpoena, it is my obligation...

David Holmes: [\(24:03\)](#)

... something of value to these proceedings and issued a subpoena. It is my obligation to appear and to tell you what I know. Indeed, as secretary Pompeo has stated, I hope everyone who testifies will do so truthfully and accurately. When they do, the oversight role will have been performed, and I think America will come to see what took place here. That is my only goal, to testify truthfully and accurately to enable you to perform that role. To that end, I have put together this statement to lay out as best I can, my recollection of events that may be relevant to this matter.

David Holmes: [\(24:35\)](#)

By way of background, I have spent my entire professional career as a foreign service officer. Like many of the dedicated public servants who have testified in these proceedings, my entire career has been in the service of my country. I'm a graduate of Pomona College in Claremont, California and received degrees in international affairs from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland and from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

David Holmes: [\(25:02\)](#)

I joined the foreign service in 2002 through an apolitical merit-based process under the George W. Bush administration, and I have proudly served administrations of both parties and worked for their appointees, both political and career. Prior to my current post in Kiev, Ukraine, I served in the political and economic sections at the US embassy in Moscow, Russia. In Washington, I served on the national security council staff as director for Afghanistan and as a special assistant to the Under Secretary of State.

David Holmes: (25:33)

My prior overseas assignments include New Delhi, India, Kabul, Afghanistan, Bogota, Colombia, and Pristina, Kosovo. As the political counselor at the US NBC Embassy in Kiev, I lead the political section covering Ukraine's internal politics, foreign relations and security policies. I serve as the senior policy and political ambassador to the advisor to the ambassador.

David Holmes: (25:57)

The job of an embassy political counselor is to gather information about the host country's political landscape, to report back to Washington, to represent US policies to foreign contacts, and to advise the ambassador on policy development and implementation. In this role, I'm a senior member of the embassy's country team and continually involved in addressing issues as they arise. I'm also often called upon to take notes in meetings involving the ambassador or visiting senior US officials with Ukrainian counterparts.

David Holmes: (26:29)

For this reason, I've been present in many of the meetings with President Zelensky and his administration, some of which may be germane to this inquiry. While I'm a political counselor at the embassy, it is important to note that I am not a political appointee or engage in US politics in any way. It is not my job to cover or advise on US politics. On the contrary, I'm an apolitical foreign policy professional, and my job is to focus on the politics of the country in which I serve, so that we can better understand the local landscape and better advance US national interests there.

David Holmes: (27:06)

In fact, during the period that we'll cover today, my colleagues and I followed direct guidance from Ambassador Yovanovitch and Ambassador Taylor to focus on doing our jobs as foreign policy professionals and to stay clear of Washington politics. I arrived in Kiev to take up my assignment as political counselor in August, 2017, a year after Ambassador Yovanovitch received her appointment. From August, 2017 until her removal from post in May, 2019, I was Ambassador Yovanovitch's chief policy advisor and developed a deep respect for her dedication, determination, decency and professionalism.

David Holmes: (27:44)

During this time, we worked together closely, speaking multiple times per day, and I accompanied Ambassador Yovanovitch to many of her meetings with senior Ukrainian counterparts. Our work in Ukraine focused on three policy priorities: peace and security, economic growth and reform, and anticorruption and rule of law. These policies match the three consistent priorities of the Ukrainian peoples since 2014, as measured in public opinion polling, namely an end to the conflict with Russia that restores national unity and

territorial integrity, responsible economic policies that deliver European standards of growth and opportunity, and effective and impartial rule of law institutions that deliver justice in cases of high level official corruption.

David Holmes: [\(28:32\)](#)

Our efforts on this third policy priority merit special mention because it was during Ambassador Yovanovitch's tenure that we achieved the hard-fought passage of a law establishing an independent court to try corruption cases. These efforts strained Ambassador Yovanovitch's relationship with former president Poroshenko and some of his allies, including Prosecutor General Yuriy Lutsenko, who resisted fully empowering truly independent anti-corruption institutions that would help ensure that no Ukrainians, however powerful, were above the law. Despite this resistance, the ambassador in the embassy kept pushing anticorruption and other priorities of our policy towards Ukraine.

David Holmes: [\(29:15\)](#)

Beginning in March, 2019 the situation at the embassy and in Ukraine changed dramatically. Specifically, the three priorities of security, economy and justice, and our support for Ukrainian democratic resistance to Russian aggression became overshadowed by a political agenda promoted by former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani, and a cadre of officials operating with a direct channel to the White House.

David Holmes: [\(29:42\)](#)

That change began with the emergence of press reports, critical of Ambassador Yovanovitch and machinations by then-Prosecutor General Lutsenko and others to discredit her. In mid-March, 2019, an embassy colleague learned from a Ukrainian contact that Mr. Lutsenko had complained that Ambassador Yovanovitch had "destroyed him" with her refusal to support him until he followed through with his reform commitments and ceased using his position for personal gain.

David Holmes: [\(30:10\)](#)

In retaliation. Mr. Lutsenko made a series of unsupported allegations against Ambassador Yovanovitch, mostly suggesting that Ambassador Yovanovitch improperly used the embassy to advance the political interests of the democratic party. Among Mr. Lutsenko's allegations were that the embassy had ordered the investigation of a former Ukrainian official solely because that former official was allegedly the main Ukrainian contact of the Republican Party and of president Trump personally, and that the embassy had allegedly pressured Lutsenko's predecessor to close a case against a different former Ukrainian official solely because of an alleged connection between that official's company Burisma and former Vice President Biden's son.

David Holmes: [\(30:51\)](#)

Mr. Lutsenko also claimed that he had never received \$4.4 million in US funds intended for his office, and that there was a tape of a Ukrainian official saying that he was trying to help

Hillary Clinton win the 2016 election. Finally, Mr. Lutsenko publicly claimed that Ambassador Yovanovitch had given him a “do not prosecute” list containing the names of her supposed allies, an allegation the State Department called an outright fabrication and that Mr. Lutsenko later retracted.

David Holmes: [\(31:21\)](#)

Mr. Lutsenko said that as a result of these allegations, Ambassador Yovanovitch would face serious problems in the United States. Public opinion polls indicated that Ukrainians generally did not believe Mr. Lutsenko’s allegations, and on March 22nd, President Poroshenko issued a statement in support of Ambassador Yovanovitch. Following Mr. Lutsenko’s allegations, Mr. Giuliani and others made a number of public statements critical of Ambassador Yovanovitch, questioning her integrity and calling for her removal from office. Mr Giuliani was also making frequent public statements pushing for Ukraine to investigate interference in the 2016 election and issues related to Burisma and the Bidens.

David Holmes: [\(32:04\)](#)

For example, on May 1st, 2019 The New York times reported that Mr. Giuliani had discussed the Burisma investigation and its intersection with the Bidens with the ousted Ukrainian Prosecutor General and the current prosecutor. On May 9th, The New York times reported that Mr. Giuliani said he planned to travel to Ukraine to pursue investigations into the 2016 election interference and into the involvement of former Vice President Biden’s son in a Ukrainian gas company.

David Holmes: [\(32:33\)](#)

Over the next few months, Mr. Giuliani also issued a series of tweets asking “why Biden shouldn’t be investigated, attacking “the new president of Ukraine Zelensky for being silent on the 2016 election and Biden investigations and complaining about The New York times attacking him for “exposing the Biden family history of making millions from Ukrainian criminals.”

David Holmes: [\(32:57\)](#)

Around this time, the Ukrainian presidential election was approaching, and political newcomer and entertainer Volodymyr Zelensky, who had played a president on television, was surging in the polls, ahead of Mr. Lutsenko’s political ally, President Poroshenko. On April 20th, I was present for Ambassador Yovanovitch’s third and final meeting with then-candidate Zelensky ahead of his landslide victory in the runoff election the next day. As in her two prior meetings that I also attended, they had an entirely cordial, pleasant conversation and signaled their mutual desire to work together.

David Holmes: [\(33:31\)](#)

However, the negative narratives about Ambassador Yovanovitch had gained currency in certain segments of the United States press. On April 26th, Ambassador Yovanovitch departed for Washington DC, where she learned that she would be recalled early. The

barrage of allegations directed at Ambassador Yovanovitch, a career ambassador, is unlike anything I've seen in my professional career. Following President Elect Zelensky's victory, our attention in the embassy focused on getting to know the incoming Zelensky administration and on preparations for the inauguration scheduled for May 20th, the same day that Ambassador Yovanovitch departed post permanently.

David Holmes: (34:10)

It quickly became clear that the White House was not prepared to show the level of support for the Zelensky administration that we had originally anticipated. In early May, Mr. Giuliani publicly alleged that Mr. Zelensky was "surrounded by enemies of the US president" and canceled a visit to Ukraine. Shortly thereafter, we learned that Vice President Pence no longer planned to lead the presidential delegation to the inauguration.

David Holmes: (34:35)

The White House then whittled down an initial proposed list for the official presidential delegation to the inauguration from over a dozen individuals to just five. Secretary Perry as its head, Special Representative for Ukraine negotiations, Kurt Volker, representing the State Department. National Security Council Director Alex Vindman, representing the White House, temporary acting Charge d'Affaires, Joseph Pennington, representing the embassy, and ambassador to the European Union, Gordon Sondland.

David Holmes: (35:04)

While Ambassador Sondland's mandate as the accredited ambassador to the European Union did not cover individual member states, let alone non-member countries like Ukraine, he made clear that he had direct and frequent access to President Trump and Chief of Staff, Mick Mulvaney, and portrayed himself as the conduit to the President and Mr. Mulvaney for this group. Secretary Perry, Ambassador Sondland and Ambassador Volker later styled themselves the Three Amigos and made clear they would take the lead on coordinating our policy and engagement with the Zelensky administration.

David Holmes: (35:37)

Around the same time, I became aware that Mr. Giuliani, a private lawyer, was taking a direct role in Ukrainian diplomacy. On April 25th, Ivan Bakanov, who was Mr. Zelensky's childhood friend and campaign chair, and was ultimately appointed as the head of the security services of Ukraine, indicated to me privately that he had been contacted by "someone named Giuliani who said he was an advisor to the Vice President." I reported Mr. Bakanov's message to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent.

David Holmes: (36:08)

Over the following months, it became apparent that Mr. Giuliani was having a direct influence on the foreign policy agenda that the Three Amigos were executing on the ground in Ukraine. In fact, at one point during a preliminary meeting of the inaugural delegation,

someone wondered aloud why Mr. Giuliani was so active in the media with respect to Ukraine. My recollection is that Ambassador Sondland stated, "Dammit, Rudy. Every time Rudy gets involved, he goes and F's everything up."

David Holmes: [\(36:38\)](#)

The inauguration took place on May 20th, and I took notes in the delegations meeting with President Zelensky. During the meeting, Secretary Perry passed President Zelensky a list that Perry described as "people he trusts." Secretary Perry told President Zelensky that he could seek advice from the people on this list on issues of energy sector reform, which was the topic of subsequent meetings between Secretary Perry and key Ukrainian energy sector contacts. Embassy personnel were excluded from some of these later meetings by Secretary Perry's staff.

David Holmes: [\(37:09\)](#)

On May 23rd, Ambassador Volker, Ambassador Sondland, Secretary Perry, and Senator Ron Johnson, who had also attended the inauguration, though not on the official delegation, returned to the United States and briefed President Trump. On May 29th, President Trump signed a congratulatory letter to President Zelensky, which included an invitation to visit the White House at an unspecified date. It is important to understand that a White House visit was critical to President Zelensky. President Zelensky needed to show US support at the highest levels in order to demonstrate to Russian President Putin that he had United States backing, as well as to advance his ambitious anticorruption reform agenda at home.

David Holmes: [\(37:54\)](#)

President Zelensky's team immediately began pressing to set a date for that visit. President Zelensky and senior members of his team made clear that they wanted President Zelensky's first overseas trip to be to Washington to send a strong signal of American support and requested a call with President Trump as soon as possible. We at the embassy also believed that a meeting was critical to the success of President Zelensky's administration and its reform agenda, and we worked hard to get it arranged.

David Holmes: [\(38:23\)](#)

When President Zelensky's team did not receive a confirmed date for a White House visit, they made alternative plans for President Zelensky's first overseas trip to be to Brussels instead, in part to attend an American Independence Day event Ambassador Sondland hosted on June 4th. Ambassador Sondland hosted a dinner in President Zelensky's honor following the reception, which included President Zelensky, Jared Kushner, Secretary Pompeo's counselor Ulrich Brechbuhl, senior European Union officials, and comedian Jay Leno, among others.

David Holmes: [\(38:57\)](#)

Ambassador Bill Taylor arrived in Kiev as Chargé d'Affaires on June 17th. For the next month, a focus of our activities along with those of the Three Amigos, was to coordinate a

White House visit. To that end, we were working with Ukrainians to deliver things that we thought President Trump might care about, such as commercial deals that would benefit the United States, which might convince President Trump to agree to a meeting with President Zelensky.

David Holmes: [\(39:22\)](#)

The Ukrainian policy community was unanimous in its recommendation in recognizing the importance of securing the meeting and President Trump's support. Ambassador Taylor reported that Secretary Pompeo had told him prior to his arrival in Kiev, "We need to work on turning The President around on Ukraine." Ambassador Volker told us that the next five years could hang on what could be accomplished in the next three months. I took that to mean that if we did not earn President Trump's support in the next three months, we could lose the opportunity to make progress during President's Zelensky's five year term.

David Holmes: [\(39:58\)](#)

Within a week or two, it became apparent that the energy sector reforms, the commercial deals, and the anticorruption efforts on which we were making progress were not making a dent in terms of persuading the White House to schedule a meeting between the presidents. On June 27th, Ambassador Sondland told Ambassador Taylor in a phone conversation, the gist of which Ambassador Taylor shared with me at the time, that President Zelensky needed to make clear to President Trump that President Zelensky was not standing in the way of "investigations." I understood that this meant the Biden Burisma investigations that Mr. Giuliani and his associates had been speaking about in the media since March.

David Holmes: [\(40:39\)](#)

While Ambassador Taylor did not brief me on every detail of his communications with the Three Amigos, he did tell me that on a June 28th call with President Zelensky, Ambassador Taylor, and the Three Amigos, it was made clear that some action on Burisma by an investigation was a precondition for an Oval Office visit. Also on June 28th, while President Trump was still not moving forward on a meeting with President Zelensky, we met with ... He met with Russian President Putin at the G20 Summit in Osaka, Japan, sending a further signal of lack of support to Ukraine.

David Holmes: [\(41:15\)](#)

We became concerned that even if a meeting between Presidents Trump and Zelensky could occur, it would not go well, and I discussed with embassy colleagues whether we should stop seeking a meeting altogether. While the White House visit was critical to the Zelensky administration, a visit that failed to send a clear and strong signal of support likely would be worse for President Zelensky than no visit at all.

David Holmes: [\(41:41\)](#)

Congress has appropriated \$1.5 billion in security assistance for Ukraine since 2014. This assistance has provided crucial material and moral support to Ukraine in its defensive war with Russia and has helped Ukraine build its armed forces virtually from scratch into arguably the most capable and battle-hardened land force in Europe. I've had the honor of visiting the main training facility in Western Ukraine with members of Congress and members of this very committee, Ms. Stefanik, where we witnessed firsthand US National Guard troops, along with allies, conducting training for Ukrainian soldiers.

David Holmes: [\(42:22\)](#)

Since 2014, National Guard units from California, Oklahoma, New York, Tennessee, and Wisconsin have trained shoulder to shoulder with Ukrainian counterparts. Given the history of US security assistance to Ukraine and the bipartisan recognition of its importance, I was shocked when on July 18th, an office of management and budget staff members surprisingly announced the hold on Ukraine's security assistance. The announcement came toward the end of a nearly two hour National Security Council secure video conference call, which I participated in from the embassy conference room.

David Holmes: [\(42:59\)](#)

The official said that the order had come from the president and had been conveyed to OMB by Mr. Mulvaney with no further explanation. This began a week or so of efforts by various agencies to identify the rationale for the freeze, to conduct a review of the assistance, and to reaffirm the unanimous view of Ukraine policy community of its importance. NSC counterparts confirmed to us that there had been no change in our Ukraine policy but could not determine the cause of the hold or how to lift it.

David Holmes: [\(43:33\)](#)

On July 25th, President Trump made a congratulatory phone call to President Zelensky after his party won a commanding majority in Ukraine's parliamentary election. Contrary to standard procedure, the embassy received no readout of that call, and I was unaware of what was discussed until the transcript was released on September 25th. Upon reading the transcript, I was deeply disappointed to see that the President raised none of what I understood to be our inner agency agreed-upon foreign policy priorities in Ukraine and instead raised the Biden Burisma investigation and referred to the theory about CrowdStrike and its supposed connection to Ukraine in the 2016 election.

David Holmes: [\(44:13\)](#)

The next day, July 26th, 2019, I attended meetings at the presidential administration building in Kiev with Ambassador Taylor, Ambassador Volker, and Ambassador Sondland, and I took notes during those meetings. Our first meeting was with President Zelensky's chief of staff. It was brief, as he had already been summoned by President Zelensky to prepare for a

subsequent broader meeting. But he did say that President Trump had expressed interest during the previous day's phone call and President Zelensky's personnel decisions related to the Prosecutor General's office.

David Holmes: (44:45)

The delegation then met with President Zelensky and several other senior officials. During the meeting, President Zelensky stated that during the July 25th call, President Trump had "three times, raised some very sensitive issues" and that he would have to follow up. He, Zelensky, would have to follow up on those issues when he and President Trump met in person. Not having received a readout of the July 25th call, I did not know at the time what those sensitive issues were. After the meeting with President Zelensky, Ambassador Volker and Ambassador Taylor quickly left the presidential administration building for a trip to the front lines. Ambassador Sondland, who was to fly out that afternoon, stayed behind to have a meeting with Andriy Yermak, a top aide to President Zelensky.

David Holmes: (45:29)

As I was leaving the meeting with President Zelensky, I was told to join the meeting with Ambassador Sondland and Mr. Yermak to take notes. I had not expected to join that meeting and it was a flight of stairs behind Ambassador Sondland as he headed to meet with Mr. Yermak. When I reached Mr. Yermak's office, Ambassador Sondland had already gone into the meeting. I explained to Mr. Yermak's assistant that I was supposed to join the meeting as the embassy's representative and strongly urge her to let me in, but she told me that Ambassador Sondland and Mr. Yermak had insisted that the meeting be one-on-one with no note-taker.

David Holmes: (46:02)

I then waited in the ante room until the meeting ended, along with a member of Ambassador Sondland's staff and a member of the US embassy Kiev staff. When the meeting ended, the two staffers and I accompanied Ambassador Sondland out of the presidential administration building. Ambassador Sondland said that he wanted to go to lunch, and I told him that I'd be happy to join him and the two staffers for lunch if he wanted to brief me out on his meeting with Mr. Yermak or discuss other issues, and Ambassador Sondland said that I should join.

David Holmes: (46:29)

The four of us went to a nearby restaurant and sat on an outdoor terrace. I sat directly across from Ambassador Sondland, and the two staffers sat off to our sides. At first, the lunch was largely social. Ambassador Sondland selected a bottle of wine that he shared among the four of us, and we discussed topics such as marketing strategies for his hotel business. During the lunch, Ambassador Sondland said that he was going to call President Trump to give him an update.

David Holmes: (46:56)

Ambassador Sondland placed a call on his mobile phone, and I heard him announce himself several times along the lines of Gordon Sondland holding for the President. It appeared that he was being transferred through several layers of switchboards and assistance, and I then noticed Ambassador Sondland's demeanor changed and understood that he had been connected to President Trump. While Ambassador Sondland's phone was not on speaker phone, I could hear the president's voice through the ear piece of the phone.

David Holmes: (47:23)

The President's voice was loud and recognizable, and Ambassador Sondland held the phone away from his ear for a period of time, presumably because of the loud volume. I heard Ambassador Sondland greet the President and explained he was calling from Kiev. I heard President Trump then clarify that Ambassador Sondland was in Ukraine. Ambassador Sondland replied, yes, he was in Ukraine and went on to state that President Zelensky "loves your ass." I then heard President Trump ask, "So he's going to do the investigation?"

David Holmes: (47:52)

Ambassador Sondland replied that, "He's going to do it," adding that "President Zelensky will do anything you ask him to do." Even though I did not take notes of these statements, I have a clear recollection.

David Holmes: (48:03)

Even though I did not take notes of these statements, I have a clear recollection that these statements were made. I believe that my colleagues who were sitting at the table also knew that Ambassador Sondland was speaking with the president.

David Holmes: (48:13)

The conversation then shifted to Ambassador Sondland's efforts on behalf of the president to assist a rapper who was jailed in Sweden. I can only hear Ambassador Sondland's side of the conversation. Ambassador Sondland told the president that the rapper was quote, "Kind of eff'd there and should have pled guilty." He recommended that the president, "Wait until after the sentencing or it will only make it worse." He added that the president should, "Let him get sentenced, play the racism card, give him a ticker tape when he comes home." Ambassador Sondland further told the president that Sweden, "Should have released him on your word, but that you can tell the Kardashians you tried."

David Holmes: (48:54)

After the call ended, Ambassador Sondland remarked that the president was in a bad mood as Ambassador Sondland stated was often the case early in the morning. I then took the opportunity to ask Ambassador Sondland for his candid impression of the president's views on Ukraine. In particular, I asked Ambassador Sondland if it was true that the president did not give a expletive about Ukraine. Ambassador Sondland agreed that the president did not give an expletive about Ukraine.

David Holmes: (49:20)

I asked, "Why not?" Ambassador Sondland stated that the president only cares about big stuff. I noted there was big stuff going on in Ukraine, like a war with Russia. Ambassador Sondland replied that he meant big stuff that benefits the president like the Biden investigation that Mr. Giuliani was pushing. The conversation then moved on to other topics.

David Holmes: (49:43)

Upon returning to the embassy, I immediately briefed my direct supervisor, the deputy chief of mission about Ambassador Sondland's call with President Trump and my subsequent conversation with Ambassador Sondland. I told others at the embassy about the call as well. I also emailed an embassy official in Sweden regarding the issue with the US rapper that was discussed on the call.

David Holmes: (50:04)

July 26th was my last day in the office ahead of a long planned vacation that ended on August 6th. After returning to the embassy, I told Ambassador Taylor about the July 26th call. I also repeatedly referred to the call and the conversation with Ambassador Sondland in meetings and conversations where the issue of the president's interest in Ukraine was potentially relevant.

David Holmes: (50:26)

At that time, Ambassador Sondland's statement of the president's lack of interest in Ukraine was of particular focus. We understood that in order to secure a meeting between President Trump and President Zelensky, we would have to work hard to find a way to explain Ukraine's importance to President Trump in terms that he found compelling.

David Holmes: (50:47)

Over the ensuing weeks, we continued to try to identify ways to frame the importance of Ukraine in ways that would appeal to the president, to determine how to lift the hold on security assistance and to move forward on the scheduling of the White House by President Zelensky.

David Holmes: (51:01)

Ukrainian Independence Day, August 24th, presented another good opportunity to show support for Ukraine. Secretary Pompeo had considered attending as National Security Advisor Bolton had attended in 2018 and Defense Secretary Mattis had attended in 2017. But in the end, nobody senior to Ambassador Volker attended.

David Holmes: (51:21)

Shortly thereafter on August 27th, Ambassador Bolton visited Ukraine and brought welcome news that President Trump had agreed to meet President Zelensky on September 1st in

Warsaw. Ambassador Bolton further indicated that the hold on security assistance would not be lifted prior to the Warsaw meeting where it would hang on whether President Zelensky was able to “Favorably impress President Trump.”

David Holmes: (51:45)

I took notes in Ambassador Bolton’s meetings that day with President Zelensky and his chief of staff. Ambassador Bolton told Zelensky’s chief of staff that the meeting between the president and Warsaw would be, “Crucial to cementing their relationship.” However, President Trump ultimately pulled out of the Warsaw trip, so the hold remained in place with no clear means to get it lifted.

David Holmes: (52:05)

Between the meetings on August 27th, I heard Ambassador Bolton express to Ambassador Taylor and National Security Council Senior Director Tim Morrison his frustration about Mr. Giuliani’s influence with the president, making clear there was nothing he could do about it. He recommended that Mr. Lutsenko’s replacement as prosecutor general open a channel with his counterpart, Attorney General Barr, in place of the informal channel between Mr. Yermak and Mr. Giuliani. Ambassador Bolton also expressed frustration about Ambassador Sondland’s expansive interpretation of his mandate.

David Holmes: (52:41)

After President Trump canceled his visit to Warsaw, we continued to try to appeal to the president in foreign policy and national security terms. To that end, Ambassador Taylor told me that Ambassador Bolton recommended that he, Ambassador Taylor, send a first-person cable to Secretary Pompeo articulating the importance of the security assistance. At Ambassador Taylor’s direction, I drafted and transmitted the cable on Ambassador Taylor’s behalf on August 29th, which further attempted to explain the importance of Ukraine and the security assistance to US national security.

David Holmes: (53:13)

By this point however, my clear impression was that the security assistance hold was likely intended by the president either as an expression of dissatisfaction with Ukrainians, who were not yet agreed to the Burisma-Biden investigation, or as an effort to increase the pressure on them to do so. On September 5th, I took notes at Senator Johnson and Senator Chris Murphy’s meetings with President Zelensky in Kyiv where president Zelensky asked about the security assistance. Although both senators stressed strong bipartisan congressional support for Ukraine, Senator Johnson cautioned President Zelensky that President Trump has a negative view of Ukraine and that President Zelensky would have a difficult time overcoming it.

David Holmes: (53:56)

Senator Johnson further explained that he had been, “Shocked by President Trump’s negative reaction during an oval office meeting on May 23rd when he and the three amigos

proposed that President Trump meet President Zelensky and show support for Ukraine.” On September 8th, Ambassador Taylor told me, “Now they’re insisting Zelensky commit to the investigation in an interview with CNN,” which I took to refer to this three amigos. I was shocked the requirement was so specific and concrete.

David Holmes: (54:25)

While we had advised our Ukrainian counterparts to voice a commitment to following the rule of law in generally investigating credible corruption allegations, this was a demand that President Zelensky personally commit on a cable news channel to a specific investigation of President Trump’s political rival.

David Holmes: (54:46)

On September 11th, the hold was finally lifted after significant press coverage and bipartisan congressional expressions of concern about the withholding of security assistance. Although we knew the hold was lifted, we were still concerned that President Zelensky had committed in exchange for the lifting, to give the requested CNN interview. We had several indications that the interview would occur.

David Holmes: (55:07)

First, the YES conference in Kyiv was held from September 12th to 14th and CNN’s Fareed Zakaria was one of the moderators. Second on September 13th, an embassy colleague received a phone call from another colleague who worked for Ambassador Sondland. My colleague texted me regarding that call, that, “Sondland said the Zelensky interview was supposed to be today or Monday. They plan to announce that a certain investigation that was on hold will progress.” Sondland’s aid did not know if this was decided or if Sondland was advocating for it. Apparently he’s been discussing this with Yermak.

David Holmes: (55:46)

Finally also on September 13th, Ambassador Taylor and I ran into Mr. Yermak on our way out to a meeting with President Zelensky in his private office. Ambassador Taylor again stressed the importance of staying out of US politics and said he hoped no interview was planned. Mr. Yermak did not answer, but shrugged in resignation as if to indicate that he had no choice.

David Holmes: (56:06)

In short, everybody thought there was going to be an interview and that the Ukrainians believed they had to do it. The interview ultimately did not occur. On September 21st, Ambassador Taylor and I collaborated on input he sent to Mr. Morrison to brief President Trump ahead of a September 25th meeting that had been scheduled with President Zelensky in New York on the margins of the UN General Assembly. The transcript of the July 25th call was released the same day. As of today, I have still not seen a readout of the September 25th meeting.

David Holmes: (56:39)

As the impeachment inquiry has progressed, I've followed press reports and reviewed the statements of Ambassadors Taylor and Yovanovitch. Based on my experiences in Ukraine, my recollection is generally consistent with their testimony. I believe the relevant facts were therefore being laid out for the American people. However in the last couple of weeks, I read press reports expressing for the first time that certain senior officials may have been acting without the presence, knowledge or freelancing in their dealings with Ukraine. At the same time, I also read reports noting that the lack of first-hand evidence in the investigation and suggesting that the only evidence being elicited at the hearings was hearsay.

David Holmes: (57:20)

I came to realize that I had first-hand knowledge regarding certain events on July 26 that had not otherwise been reported and that those events potentially bore on the question of whether the president did in fact have knowledge that those senior officials were using the levers of diplomatic power to influence the new Ukrainian president to announce the opening of a criminal investigation against President Trump's political opponent. It is at that point that I made the observation to Ambassador Taylor that the incident I had witnessed on July 26th had acquired greater significance, which is what he reported in his testimony last week and is what led to the subpoena for me to appear here today.

David Holmes: (58:03)

In conclusion, I'd like to take a moment to turn back to Ukraine. Today, this very day marks exactly six years since throngs of pro-Western Ukrainians spontaneously gathered on Kyiv's Independence Square to launch what became known as the Revolution of Dignity. While the protest began in opposition to a turn towards Russia and away from the West, they expanded over three months to reject the entire corrupt repressive system that had been sustained by Russian influence in the country. Those events were followed by Russia's occupation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and invasion of Ukraine's Eastern Donbass region, and an ensuing war that to date has cost almost 14,000 lives.

David Holmes: (58:53)

Despite the Russian aggression over the past five years, Ukrainians have rebuilt a shattered economy, adhered to a peace process and moved economically and socially closer to the West, toward our way of life. Earlier this year, large majorities of Ukrainians again chose a fresh start by voting for a political newcomer as president, replacing 80% of their parliament and endorsing a platform consistent with our democratic values, our foreign priorities and our strategic interests.

David Holmes: (59:27)

This year's revolution at the ballot box underscores that despite its imperfections, Ukraine is a genuine and vibrant democracy and an example to other post-Soviet countries and

beyond from Moscow to Hong Kong. How we respond to this historic opportunity will set the trajectory of our relationship with Ukraine and will define our willingness to defend our bedrock international principles and our leadership role in the world.

David Holmes: [\(59:57\)](#)

Ukrainians want to hear a clear and unambiguous reaffirmation that our long-standing bipartisan policy of strong support for Ukraine remains unchanged and that we fully back it at the highest levels. Now is not the time to retreat from our relationship with Ukraine, but rather to double down on it. As we sit here today, Ukrainians are fighting a hot war on Ukrainian territory against Russian aggression. This week alone since I have been here in Washington, two Ukrainian soldiers were killed and two injured by Russian-led forces in Eastern Ukraine despite a declared ceasefire. I learned overnight that seven more were injured yesterday.

David Holmes: [\(01:00:42\)](#)

As Vice President Pence said after his meeting with President Zelensky in Warsaw, the US-Ukraine relationship has never been stronger. Ukrainians and their new government earnestly want to believe that. Ukrainians cherish their bipartisan American support that has sustained their Euro-Atlantic aspirations. They recoil at the thought of playing a role in US domestic politics or elections.

David Holmes: [\(01:01:08\)](#)

At a time of shifting allegiances and rising competitors in the world, we have no better friends than Ukraine, a scrappy, unbowed, determined and above all dignified people who are standing up against Russian authoritarianism and aggression. They deserve better. We're now at an inflection point in Ukraine and it is critical to our national security that we stand in strong support of our Ukrainian partners. Ukrainians and freedom loving people everywhere are watching the example we set here of democracy and the rule of law. Thank you.

Adam Schiff: [\(01:01:48\)](#)

Thank you, Mr. Holmes. Dr. Hill.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:01:51\)](#)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do I need to adjust the microphone?

Adam Schiff: [\(01:01:56\)](#)

Is the microphone on?

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:01:59\)](#)

I believe it is now. Is that right?

Adam Schiff: [\(01:02:01\)](#)

Yes, perfect.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:02:04\)](#)

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, ranking member Nunes and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify before you today. I have a short opening statement. I appreciate the importance of Congress's impeachment inquiry. I'm appearing today as a fact witness as I did during my deposition on October 14th in order to answer your questions about what I saw, what I did, what I knew and what I know with regard to the subjects of your inquiry.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:02:33\)](#)

I believe that those who have information that the Congress deems relevant have a legal and a moral obligation to provide it. I take great pride in the fact that I'm a nonpartisan foreign policy expert who was served under three Republican and Democratic presidents. I have no interest in advancing the outcome of your inquiry in any particular direction except toward the truth. I will not provide a long narrative statement because I believe that the interest of Congress and the American people is best served by allowing you to ask me your questions. I'm happy to expand upon my October 14th deposition testimony and respond to your questions today.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:03:13\)](#)

But before I do so, I'd like to communicate two things. First, I'd like to show a little bit about who I am. I'm an American by choice having become a citizen in 2002. I was born in the Northeast of England in the same region that George Washington's ancestors came from. Both my region and my family have deep ties to the United States. My paternal grandfather fought through World War I in the Royal Field Artillery surviving being shot, shelled and gassed before American troops intervened to end the war in 1918.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:03:47\)](#)

During the second World War, other members of my family fought to defend the free world from fascism alongside American soldiers, sailors and airmen. The men in my father's family were coal miners whose family has always struggled with poverty. When my father Alfred was 14, he joined his father, brothers, brother, uncles and cousins in the coal mines to help put food on the table. When the last of the local mines closed in the 1960s, my father wanted to emigrate to the United States to work in the coal mines in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. But his mother, my grandmother, had been crippled from hard labor and my father couldn't leave. He stayed in Northern England until he died in 2012. My mother still lives in my hometown today.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:04:32\)](#)

While his dream of emigrating to America was thwarted, my father loved America, its culture, its history, and its role as a beacon of hope for the world. He always wanted someone in the family to make it to the United States. I began my university studies in 1984. I just learned that I went to the same university as my colleague here, Mr. Holmes in St.

Andrews in Scotland. Just thought I would add that. In 1987, I won a place on an academic exchange to the Soviet Union. I was there for the signing of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces INF Treaty and when president Ronald Reagan met Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:05:07\)](#)

This was a turning point for me. An American professor who I met there told me about graduate students scholarships to the United States. The very next year thanks to his advice, I arrived in America to start my advanced studies at Harvard. Years later, I can say with confidence that this country has offered me opportunities I never would have had in England. I grew up poor with a very distinctive working class accent. In England in the 1980s and 1990s, this would have impeded my professional advancement. This background has never sent me back in America.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:05:38\)](#)

For the best part of three decades, I've built a career as a nonpartisan, nonpolitical, national security professional focusing on Europe and Eurasia and especially the former Soviet Union. I've served our country under three presidents. My most recent capacity under President Trump, as well as in my former position as national intelligence officer for Russia and Eurasia under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. In that role, I was the intelligence community senior expert on Russia and the former Soviet Republics including Ukraine.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:06:11\)](#)

It was because of my background and experience that I was asked to join the National Security Council in 2017. At the NSC, Russia was part of my portfolio, but I was also responsible for coordinating US policy for all of Western Europe, all of Eastern Europe, including Ukraine and Turkey, along with NATO and the European Union. I was hired initially by General Michael Flynn, K.T. McFarland and General Keith Kellogg. But then I started working April 2017 when General McMaster was the national security advisor.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:06:43\)](#)

I, and they, thought that I could help them with President Trump's stated goal of improving relations with Russia while still implementing policies designed to deter Russian conduct that threatens the United States, including the unprecedented and successful Russian operation to interfere in the 2016 presidential election. This relates to the second thing I want to communicate.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:07:04\)](#)

Based on questions and statements I have heard, some of you on this committee appear to believe that Russia and its Security Services did not conduct a campaign against our country and that perhaps, somehow for some reason, Ukraine did. This is a fictional narrative that has been perpetrated and propagated by the Russian Security Services themselves. The

unfortunate truth is that Russia was the foreign power that systematically attacked our democratic institutions in 2016. This is the public conclusion of our intelligence agencies confirmed in bipartisan congressional reports. It is beyond dispute, even if some of the underlying details must remain classified.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:07:45\)](#)

The impacts of the successful 2016 Russian campaign remains evident today. Our nation is being turned apart. Truth is questioned. Our highly professional and expert career Foreign Service is being undermined. US support for Ukraine, which continues to face armed Russian aggression has been politicized. The Russian government's goal is to weaken our country, to diminish America's global role and to neutralize a perceived US threat to Russian interests. President Putin and the Russian Security Services aim to counter US foreign policy objectives in Europe, including in Ukraine, where Moscow wishes to reassert political economic dominance.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:08:24\)](#)

I say this not as an alarmist, but as a realist. I do not think long-term conflict with Russia is either desirable or inevitable. I continue to believe that we need to seek ways of stabilizing our relationship with Moscow even as we come to their efforts to harm us. Right now, Russia's Security Services and their proxies have geared up to repeat their interference in the 2020 election. We're running out of time to stop them. In the course of this investigation, I would ask that you please not promote politically driven falsehoods that so clearly advance Russian interest.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:08:57\)](#)

As Republicans and Democrats have agreed for decades, Ukraine is a valued partner of the United States. It plays an important role in our national security. As I told the committee last month, I refuse to be part of an effort to legitimize an alternate narrative that the Ukrainian government is a US adversary and that Ukraine, not Russia, attacked us in 2016. These fictions are harmful even if they're deployed for purely domestic political purposes.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:09:22\)](#)

President Putin and the Russian Security Services operate like a super PAC. They deploy millions of dollars to weaponize our own political opposition research and false narratives. When we are consumed by partisan rancor, we cannot combat these external forces as they seek to divide us against each other, degrade our institutions, and destroy the faith of the American people in our democracy.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:09:47\)](#)

I respect the work that this Congress does in carrying out its constitutional responsibilities, including this inquiry. I'm here to help you to the best of my ability. If the president or anyone else impedes or subverts the national security of the United States in order to

further domestic, political, or personal interests, that's more than worthy of your attention. But we must not let domestic politics stop us from defending ourselves against the foreign powers who truly wish us harm.

Dr. Fiona Hill: [\(01:10:14\)](#)

I'm ready to answer your questions. Thank you.

Part 2

Adam Schiff: [\(00:01\)](#)

Thank you, Dr. Hill. I will now proceed to the first round of questions. As detailed in the memo provided the Committee members, there'll be 45 minutes of questions conducted by the Chairman or Majority Counsel, followed by 45 minutes for the ranking member or Minority Counsel. Following that, unless I specify additional equal time for extended questioning, we will proceed under the five minute rule and every member will have a chance to ask questions. I now recognize myself or Majority Counsel for the first round of questions.

Adam Schiff: [\(00:28\)](#)

First of all, thank you both for being here. Thank you for testifying. Dr. Hill, your story reminds me a great deal of what we heard from Alexander Vindman. The few immigrant stories that we've heard just in the course of these hearings are among the most powerful I think I've ever heard. You and Colonel Vindman and others are the best of this country, and you came here by choice, and we are so blessed that you did. So, welcome.

Adam Schiff: [\(01:07\)](#)

My colleagues took some umbrage with your opening statement, but I think the American people can be forgiven if they have the same impression listening to some of the statements of my colleagues during this hearing; that Russia didn't intervene in our election, it was all the Ukrainians. There's an effort to take a tweet here, and an op-ed there, and a newspaper story here, and somehow equate it with the systemic intervention that our intelligence agencies found that Russia perpetrated in 2016 through an extensive social media campaign, and a hacking and dumping operation. Indeed, the report my colleagues gave you that they produced during the investigation calls into question the accuracy of the Intelligence Committee's finding that Russia intervened to help one side, to help Donald Trump at the expense of Hillary Clinton. No one in the Intelligence community questions that finding, nor does the FBI, nor does the Senate bipartisan Intelligence Committee report, nor does the Minority Committee report of this Committee. The house Republican report is an outlier.

Adam Schiff: [\(02:09\)](#)

But let me ask you, Dr. Hill, about your concern with that Russian narrative; that it wasn't the Russians that engaged in interfering in our election in 2016; and of course this was given a

boost when President Trump in Helsinki, in the presence of Putin, said that he questioned his own intelligence agencies. But why are the Russians pushing that narrative, that it was Ukraine? How does that serve Russian interests?

Fiona Hill: [\(02:36\)](#)

The Russians' interests, frankly, to de-legitimize our entire Presidency. So I want an issue that I do want to raise, and I think that this would resonate with our colleagues on the Committee from the Republican party, is that the goal of the Russians was really to put whoever became the President by trying to tip their hands on one side of the scale under a cloud. So if Secretary, former First Lady, former Senator Clinton, had been elected as President, as indeed many expected in the run up to the election in 2016, she, too would have had major questions about her legitimacy. And I think that what we're seeing here as a result of all of these narratives is this is exactly what the Russian government was hoping for. If they seed misinformation, they seed doubt. They have everybody questioning the legitimacy of a Presidential candidate, be it President Trump or potentially a President Clinton; that they would pit one side of our electorate against the other; that they would pit one party against the other.

Fiona Hill: [\(03:42\)](#)

And that's why I wanted to make such a strong point at the very beginning, because there was certainly individuals in many other countries who had harsh words for both of the candidates; who had harsh words for many of the candidates during the primaries. We had a lot of people who were running for President on the Republican side. There were many people who are trying themselves to game the outcome. As you know, in the United Kingdom, the bookies take bets. You can go to Logbrooks or William Hill and lay a bet on who you think is going to be the candidate. So the Russian government were trying to land their own bets, but what they wanted to do was give a spread. They wanted to make sure that whoever they had bet on or whoever they'd tried to tip the scales, would also experience some discomfort; that they were beholden to them in some way; that they would create just the kind of chaos that we have seen in our politics. So I just want to again emphasize that we need to be very careful as we discuss all of these issues, not to give them more fodder that they can use against us in 2020.

Adam Schiff: [\(04:40\)](#)

And I quite agree. There's an additional benefit, and I think you're absolutely right, the Russians are equal opportunity meddlers. They will not only help one side, but they'll also just seek to sow discord in the United States along ethnic lines, religious lines, geographic lines. But there's also a benefit now, isn't there, for Russia to put the blame on Ukraine; to cast doubt on whether they intervened at all in our election and blame it on a U.S. ally as a way of driving a wedge between the U.S. and Ukraine? Isn't that true?

Fiona Hill: (05:12)

Well, that's absolutely the case, and in fact you just made the point about U.S. allies. The Russians like to put a lot of blame on U.S. allies for incidents that they have perpetrated. We saw that recently with the United Kingdom in the Russian secret services attack on a former spy, Mr. Scripholland, his daughter in Salisbury in England. Well, you may recall that the Russians actually accused the British government of perpetrating this themselves. So this falls into a long pattern of deflection, and of the Russian government trying to pin the blame on someone else. And as my colleague, Mr. Holmes, here has laid out, the Russians have a particular vested interest in putting Ukraine and Ukrainians and Ukrainian leaders in a very bad light.

Fiona Hill: (05:52)

All of the issues that we started to discuss today, and that you on the Committee have been deeply involved in, began with Russia's illegal annexation of the peninsula of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014; in response in 2015, and all of the different acts of aggression that Russia's engaged in since starting a war in the Donbas; shooting down Russian operatives, a plane MH-17 over the Donbas at a later period. There is a great deal of hostility and malign intent towards the Ukraine, and it suits the Russian government very much if we are also looking at Ukraine as somehow a perpetrator of malign acts against us.

Adam Schiff: (06:33)

Thank you. Mr. Holmes, I want to ask you a quick couple of questions, and I think as often is the case for people ... You know, I was obviously at your deposition, I've read your opening testimony; but as you learn more facts, you start to see things in different light, even though your opening statement is very much consistent with your opening statement during the deposition. And I was struck in particular by something you said on page 10 of your opening statement. "While we had advised our Ukrainian counterparts to voice a commitment to following the rule of law and generally investigating credible corruption allegations, this was a demand that President Zelensky personally commit on a cable news channel to a specific investigation of President Trump's political rival."

Adam Schiff: (07:18)

This gets to a point I made at the close of our hearing yesterday about hypocrisy. Here we are, and we are urging Ukrainians to commit to following the rule of law as you said, and only investigate genuine and credible allegations. And what are we doing? We're asking them to investigate the President's political rival. Ukrainians are pretty sophisticated actors, aren't they? They can recognize hypocrisy when they see it. What does that do to our anti-corruption efforts when the Ukrainians perceive that we're engaging in corruption ourselves?

David Holmes: (07:57)

Yes sir. So our long standing policy is to encourage them to establish and build a rule of law institutions that are capable, and they're independent, and that can actually pursue credible allegations. That's our policy and we've been doing that for quite some time with some success. So focusing on particular cases, including particular cases where there is an interest of the President's, is just not part of what we've done. It's hard to explain why we would do that.

Adam Schiff: (08:25)

And it hearkens back to that conversation Ambassador Volker testified about when he urged Ukraine not to investigate or prosecute Poroschenko, and the reply from Mr. Yermack was, "Oh, you mean like you want us to do with the Bidens and the Clintons?" They're sophisticated enough actors to recognize when we're saying 'do as we say, not as we do,' are they not?

David Holmes: (08:48)

Yes, sir.

Adam Schiff: (08:50)

You also in your testimony, and I was struck by this anew today, when even after the aid is lifted, Ukraine still felt pressured to make these statements, and you and Ambassador Taylor were worried that they were going to do it on CNN. And you said that, "Ambassador Taylor again stressed the importance of staying out of U.S. politics, and said he hoped no interviews, no interview was planned. Mr. Yermack did not answer, but shrugged in resignation as if to indicate that they had no choice. In short, everyone thought there was going to be an interview and that the Ukrainians believed they had to do it." So you're acknowledging, I think Mr. Holmes, are you not that Ukraine very much felt pressured to undertake these investigations that the President, Rudy Giuliani, and Ambassador Sondland and others were demanding?

David Holmes: (09:45)

Yes, sir. And although the hold on the security assistance may have been lifted, there were still things they wanted that they weren't getting, including a meeting with the President in the Oval Office. Whether the hold, the security assistance hold continued or not, the Ukrainians understood that that's something the President wanted and they still wanted important things from the President. So, and I think that continues to this day. I think they're being very careful. They still need us now going forward.

David Holmes: (10:09)

In fact, right now President Zelensky is trying to arrange a summit meeting with President Putin in the coming weeks; his first face-to-face meeting with him to try to advance the peace process. He needs our support. He needs President Putin to understand that America

supports Zelensky at the highest levels. So this is, this doesn't end with the lifting of the security assistance hold. Ukraine still needs us, and as I said, still fighting this war this very day.

Adam Schiff: [\(10:35\)](#)

Well, and I would underscore again as my colleague did so eloquently, they got caught. That's the reason the aid was finally lifted. Mr Goldman.

Daniel Goldman: [\(10:45\)](#)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning to both of you. Yesterday we heard testimony from Ambassador Gordon Sondland from the European Union, who testified that President Trump wanted Ukraine to announce the investigations into Biden, the Bidens of Barisma and the 2016 elections because they would benefit him politically, and that he used the leverage of that White House meeting and the security assistance to pressure President Zelensky to do so. Dr. Hill, you testified I believe that in mid-June Ambassador Sondland told you that he was in charge of Ukraine policy. Is that right?

Fiona Hill: [\(11:22\)](#)

That's correct, sir. Yes.

Daniel Goldman: [\(11:23\)](#)

Who did he tell you had put him in charge of Ukraine policy?

Fiona Hill: [\(11:28\)](#)

He told me it was the President.

Daniel Goldman: [\(11:30\)](#)

Mr. Holmes, did you also understand that Ambassador Sondland had been given some authority over Ukraine policy from the President?

David Holmes: [\(11:40\)](#)

We understood that he had been told to work with Mr. Giuliani.

Daniel Goldman: [\(11:45\)](#)

And did he hold himself out as having direct contact and knowledge of the President's priorities and interests?

David Holmes: [\(11:53\)](#)

Yes, sir.

Daniel Goldman: [\(11:55\)](#)

Now Mr. Holmes, I'm going to go to that July 26th date when you overheard the conversation between Ambassador Sondland and President Trump, and I'm going to ask

you a little bit about the lead up to that conversation. Before the lunch that you described, you said that you accompanied Ambassadors Sondland, Volker, and Taylor to a meeting with President Zelensky. Is that right?

David Holmes: [\(12:22\)](#)

That's correct.

Daniel Goldman: [\(12:24\)](#)

And you took notes at that meeting?

David Holmes: [\(12:25\)](#)

Yes, sir.

Daniel Goldman: [\(12:26\)](#)

And you reviewed those notes before you came here to testify today?

David Holmes: [\(12:30\)](#)

Yes.

Daniel Goldman: [\(12:30\)](#)

And they were helpful to refresh your recollection as to what happened, is that right?

David Holmes: [\(12:34\)](#)

Yes.

Daniel Goldman: [\(12:35\)](#)

During that meeting, President Zelensky said that on his phone call with President Trump the previous day, that three times President Trump had mentioned 'sensitive issues.' Did you understand what President Zelensky was referring to when he said the 'sensitive issues?'

David Holmes: [\(12:55\)](#)

I couldn't be sure what he was referring to until I later read the transcript of the July 25th call, but I was aware of various contacts between the Three Amigos and his government about this set of issues.

Daniel Goldman: [\(13:09\)](#)

And after you read the call, what did you determine to be the sensitive issues that President Zelensky referenced?

David Holmes: [\(13:14\)](#)

The Barisma-Biden investigation.

Daniel Goldman: (13:16)

After this meeting with President Zelensky, you testified that Ambassador Sondland had a one-on-one meeting with Andre Yermack, a top aide to Zelensky, and that you were prohibited from going into that meeting to take notes. Is that right?

David Holmes: (13:30)

Yes.

Daniel Goldman: (13:32)

And yesterday, Ambassador Sondland testified that he probably discussed the investigations with Mr. Yermack. Did Ambassador Sondland tell you at all what they discussed?

David Holmes: (13:43)

He did not.

Daniel Goldman: (13:45)

Now after this meeting with Mr. Yermack, you went to lunch; and can you just describe where you were sitting at the restaurant?

David Holmes: (13:53)

Yes, sir. The restaurant has sort of glass doors that open onto a terrace, and we were at the first tables on the terrace; so immediately outside of the interior of the restaurant. The doors were all wide open. There were, there was tables, a table for four, although I recall it being two tables for two pushed together. In any case, it was quite a wide table, and the table was set with sort of a table runner down in the middle. I was directly across from Ambassador Sondland. We were close enough that we could, you know, share an appetizer between us. And then the two staffers were off to our right at this next table.

Daniel Goldman: (14:33)

Now you said that at some point Ambassador Sondland pulled out his cell phone and called President Trump. This was an unsecure cell phone, is that right?

David Holmes: (14:44)

Yes, sir.

Daniel Goldman: (14:45)

In the middle of a restaurant in Kiev?

David Holmes: (14:47)

Yes.

Daniel Goldman: (14:49)

Now you said that you were able to hear President Trump's voice through the receiver. How were you able to hear if it was not on speaker phone?

David Holmes: (15:01)

It was, there's several things. It was quite loud when the President came on, quite distinctive. I believe Ambassador Sondland also said yesterday he often speaks very loudly over the phone, and I certainly experienced that. When the President came on, he sort of winced and held the phone away from his ear like this, and he did that for the first couple exchanges. I don't know if he then turned the volume down, if he got used to it, if the President moderated his volume. I don't know, but that's how I was able to hear it.

Daniel Goldman: (15:31)

And so you were able to hear some of what President Trump said to President Zelensky, is that right?

David Holmes: (15:38)

The first portion of the conversation, yes.

Daniel Goldman: (15:39)

And what did you hear President Trump say to ... I'm sorry, not President Zelensky, to Ambassador Sondland?

David Holmes: (15:47)

What did I hear the-

Daniel Goldman: (15:47)

The President say to Ambassador Sondland?

David Holmes: (15:50)

Yeah, he clarified whether he was in Ukraine or not, and he said yes, I'm here in Ukraine. And then Ambassador Sondland said, said "He loves your ass. He'll do anything you want." He said, "Is he going to do the investigation?"

Daniel Goldman: (16:02)

So you heard President Trump

David Holmes: (16:03)

... He said, "Is he going to do the investigation?"

Daniel Goldman: (16:03)

So you heard President Trump ask Ambassador Sondland, "Is he going to do the investigation?"

David Holmes: (16:08)

Yes, sir.

Daniel Goldman: (16:11)

What was Ambassador Sondland's response?

David Holmes: (16:14)

He said, "Oh, yeah. He's going to do it. He'll do anything you ask."

Daniel Goldman: (16:20)

And was that the end of the Ukraine portion of the conversation?

David Holmes: (16:24)

Yes.

Daniel Goldman: (16:26)

Afterwards, you described a follow on conversation that you had with Ambassador Sondland where you asked him, I think, generally what did President Trump think of Ukraine. Is that right?

David Holmes: (16:38)

Correct.

Daniel Goldman: (16:39)

What did Ambassador Sondland say to you?

David Holmes: (16:42)

He said he doesn't really care about Ukraine.

Daniel Goldman: (16:44)

Did he use slightly more colorful language than that?

David Holmes: (16:47)

He did.

Daniel Goldman: (16:48)

What did he say that he does care about?

David Holmes: (16:50)

He said he cares about big stuff.

Daniel Goldman: (16:52)

Did he explain what he meant by "big stuff?"

David Holmes: (16:55)

I asked him, "What kind of big stuff? We have big stuff going on here, like a war with Russia," and he said, "No, big stuff like the Biden investigation that Mr. Giuliani is pushing."

Daniel Goldman: (17:07)

Now, were you familiar with the Biden investigation that he referenced at that point?

David Holmes: (17:15)

Yes, sir.

Daniel Goldman: (17:18)

And how do you have such a specific and clear recollection of this conversation with the President and your conversation with Ambassador Sondland.

David Holmes: (17:30)

Yeah. So this was a very distinctive experience. I've never seen anything like this in my foreign service career. Someone at a lunch in a restaurant making a call on a cell phone to the President of the United States. Being able to hear his voice, his very distinctive personality, as we've all seen on television. Very colorful language was used. They were directly addressing something that I had been wondering about working on for weeks and even months. A topic that had led to the recall of my former boss, the former Ambassador. And so here was a person who said he had direct contact with the President, and had said that over the course of time. Here he is actually having that contact with the President, hearing the President's voice, and them talking about this issue of the Biden investigation that I had been hearing about.

Daniel Goldman: (18:28)

So just to summarize, during the phone call that you overheard Ambassador Sondland have with President Trump, you heard President Trump himself ask the only question you really heard him ask, I believe, is whether he was going to do the investigation, to which Ambassador Sondland responded that he would, and he would, in fact, do anything that President Zelensky wants. Is that an accurate recitation of what happened?

David Holmes: (18:57)

That's correct.

Daniel Goldman: (18:59)

And then after that call, you had a subsequent conversation with Ambassador Sondland where he, in sum and substance, told you that the President doesn't care about Ukraine, he only cares about big stuff related to himself, and particularly the Biden investigation that Giuliani was pushing?

David Holmes: (19:15)

Correct.

Daniel Goldman: (19:18)

Now, a day before your lunch with Ambassador Sondland, President Trump did speak with President Zelensky, as you referred, and certainly the President made it clear to President Zelensky that he cared about the Biden investments. Now, neither of you did listen to this call, but as you testified, you both read it subsequent to its publication.

Daniel Goldman: (19:42)

Dr. Hill, you, during your time, two and a half years in the White House, listened to a number of presidential phone calls. Is that right?

Fiona Hill: (19:50)

That's right.

Daniel Goldman: (19:51)

Can you estimate approximately how many?

Fiona Hill: (19:53)

I can't actually. Sometimes there would be multiple calls during a week. I was there for more than two years, so it's a fair number.

Daniel Goldman: (20:01)

Have you ever heard a call like this one that you read?

Fiona Hill: (20:05)

I don't want to comment on this call because this is, in my view, executive privilege. In terms of the testimony ... Yes.

Speaker 1: (20:14)

Yeah, I think that as a threshold matter, I think that there are issues of classification regarding head of state communications that we do want to be sensitive to in this forum, among other issues.

Daniel Goldman: (20:26)

Understood. I'm really just focused on this one call that has been declassified and published, and just asking you whether you'd ever heard any presidential phone call along these lines.

Fiona Hill: (20:36)

Well, again, I'd like to just focus in this testimony on this particular call, and I will just say that I found this particular call subject matter and the way that it was conducted surprising.

Daniel Goldman: (20:50)

You said in your deposition testimony that you were very shocked and very saddened to read it.

Fiona Hill: [\(20:54\)](#)

That's correct.

Daniel Goldman: [\(20:55\)](#)

Why was that?

Fiona Hill: [\(20:56\)](#)

Because of the nature of the discussion, the juxtaposition of the issues in which they were raised, and also given the fact that I, myself, had actually imposed, along with Ambassador Bolton for some period, having a call unless it was very well prepared, and we were confident that the issues that Ukraine and the United States were most generally together interested in were going to be raised. And I saw in this call that this was not the case.

Daniel Goldman: [\(21:25\)](#)

You also testified that you were concerned that this call was turning a White House meeting into some kind of asset. Do you recall that testimony?

Fiona Hill: [\(21:38\)](#)

I don't think it was specifically about that call, but I recall the testimony because this was clearly the discussion preceding the call. Remember, I left on July 19th, and the call took place the following week. In the months leading up to that, from May onwards, it became very clear that the White House meeting itself was being predicated on other issues, namely investigations and the questions about the election interference in 2016.

Daniel Goldman: [\(22:06\)](#)

Mr. Holmes, you indicate in your opening statement that the Chief of Staff to President Zelensky had indicated to you that in this phone call on July 25th, there was a discussion about personnel issues related to the Prosecutor General's office. After you read the call, did you understand who and what that was referring to?

David Holmes: [\(22:30\)](#)

Yes, sir. In that brief meeting with the Chief of Staff, it was very confusing to me why, in only the few minutes we had, that would've been the issue he raised. So it wasn't until I read the transcript of the call on the 25th that I understood that the President had specifically mentioned Prosecutor General Lutsenko, who the Zelensky administration was in the process of replacing and carving out all his underlings who had been collaborating with him on some of the corruption we saw there.

Daniel Goldman: [\(23:00\)](#)

And I believe you also said that President Lutsenko was the source of some of Mr. Giuliani's public views and allegations, is that right?

David Holmes: [\(23:09\)](#)

Yes, sir. About two weeks before the press wave that we saw targeting Ambassador

Yovanovitch became public, an embassy contact had reported to us privately that Mr. Lutsenko was sending these messages, and had met with an American journalist to try to get those messages out.

Daniel Goldman: [\(23:31\)](#)

What was the US embassy, in Ukraine's view, of Prosecutor General Lutsenko?

David Holmes: [\(23:39\)](#)

He was not a good partner. He had failed to deliver on the promised reforms that he had committed to when he took office, and he was using his office to insulate and protect political allies while presumably enriching himself.

Daniel Goldman: [\(24:00\)](#)

Is another way to describe that "corrupt?"

David Holmes: [\(24:02\)](#)

Yes.

Daniel Goldman: [\(24:04\)](#)

Now, I'm going to take a look at a couple of excerpts from this July 25th call with you, and the first one occurs right after President Zelensky thanked President Trump for the United States' support in the area of defense. And President Trump immediately then says, "I would like you to do us a favor though, because our country has been through a lot, and Ukraine knows a lot about it. I would like you to find out what happened with this whole situation with Ukraine, they say CrowdStrike. I guess you have one of your wealthy people, the server, they say Ukraine has it."

Daniel Goldman: [\(24:39\)](#)

Now, Dr. Hill, is this a reference to this debunked conspiracy theory about Ukraine interference in the 2016 election that you discussed in your opening statement as well as with Chairman Schiff?

Fiona Hill: [\(24:54\)](#)

The reference to CrowdStrike and the server, yes, that's correct.

Daniel Goldman: [\(24:57\)](#)

And it is your understanding that there is no basis for these allegations, is that correct?

Fiona Hill: [\(25:04\)](#)

That's correct.

Daniel Goldman: [\(25:06\)](#)

Now, isn't it also true that some of President Trump's most senior advisors had informed him that this theory of Ukraine interference in the 2016 election was false?

Fiona Hill: [\(25:18\)](#)

That's correct.

Daniel Goldman: [\(25:20\)](#)

So is it your understanding then that President Trump disregarded the advice of his senior officials about this theory, and instead listened to Rudy Giuliani's views?

Fiona Hill: [\(25:30\)](#)

That appears to be the case, yes.

Daniel Goldman: [\(25:35\)](#)

And I also then want to just show one other exhibit that goes back to what you were testifying earlier, Dr. Hill, about Russia's interest in promoting this theory. This is an excerpt from a February 2nd, 2017, news conference with President Putin and Prime Minister Orban of Hungary, where Putin says, "Second, as we all know, during the presidential campaign in the United States, the Ukrainian government adopted a unilateral position in favor of one candidate. More than that, certain oligarchs, certainly with the approval of the political leadership, funded this candidate, or female candidate, to be more precise."

Daniel Goldman: [\(26:17\)](#)

Mr. Holmes, you spent three years as well in the US embassy in Russia. Why would it be to Vladimir Putin's advantage to promote this theory of Ukraine interference?

David Holmes: [\(26:27\)](#)

First of all, to deflect from the allegations of Russian interference. Second of all, to drive a wedge between the United States and Ukraine, which Russia wants to essentially get back into its sphere of influence. Thirdly, to besmirch Ukraine and its political leadership, to degrade and erode support for Ukraine from other key partners in Europe and elsewhere.

Daniel Goldman: [\(26:49\)](#)

And, Dr. Hill, by promoting this theory of Ukrainian interference in the 2016 election, was President Trump adopting Vladimir Putin's view over his own senior advisors and intelligence officials?

Fiona Hill: [\(27:03\)](#)

I think we have to be very careful about the way that we phrase that. This is a view that President Putin and the Russian Security Services and many [inaudible 00:27:13] in Russia have promoted, but I think that this view has also got some traction, perhaps in parallel and separately here in the United States, and those two things have, over time, started to fuse together.

Daniel Goldman: [\(27:28\)](#)

Well, back in May of this year, do you recall that President Trump had a phone conversation in early May with President Putin?

Fiona Hill: [\(27:38\)](#)

I do.

Daniel Goldman: [\(27:39\)](#)

And that he also then met in mid May with Prime Minister Orban, who had joined President Putin at this press conference?

Fiona Hill: [\(27:45\)](#)

That's correct.

Daniel Goldman: [\(27:46\)](#)

Now, that happened in between the time when President Zelensky was elected on April 21st and his inauguration on May 20th, is that right?

Fiona Hill: [\(28:00\)](#)

Correct.

Daniel Goldman: [\(28:01\)](#)

And in fact, isn't it true that President Trump had asked Vice President Pence to attend the inauguration after his phone call with President Zelensky on April 21st?

Fiona Hill: [\(28:14\)](#)

I'm not sure that I can say that President Trump had asked the Vice President Pence. I was not in any meeting in which that took place. I can say that I, myself, and many others at the NSC and in the State Department were quite keen, very eager to have Vice President Pence go to Ukraine to represent the United States government and the President.

Daniel Goldman: [\(28:35\)](#)

And is that also your recollection, Mr. Holmes, that you wanted Vice President Pence to attend?

David Holmes: [\(28:39\)](#)

Yes, sir, and we understood that that was the plan.

Daniel Goldman: [\(28:43\)](#)

Now, Jennifer Williams from the Office of the Vice President testified here that on May 13th, which is the same day that President Trump met with Prime Minister Orban, that the President called off Vice President Pence's trip for unknown reasons, but before the inauguration date had been scheduled. And, Dr. Hill, were you aware also that during that period, there was a lot of publicity, and I think, Mr. Holmes, you referenced this in your opening statement as well, about Rudy Giuliani's interest in these investigations in Ukraine?

Fiona Hill: [\(29:23\)](#)

I was certainly aware, yes.

Daniel Goldman: (29:26)

And around this time, Dr. Hill, you also, I believe, testified that Ambassador Bolton had expressed some views to you about Mr. Giuliani's interest in Ukraine. Do you recall what you said?

Fiona Hill: (29:46)

That's correct. Yes.

Daniel Goldman: (29:47)

What he said to you, rather?

Fiona Hill: (29:49)

I do recall, yes. It was part of a conversation about the things that Mr. Giuliani was saying very frequently in public. We saw him often on television making these statements, and I had already brought to Ambassador Bolton's attention the attacks, the smear campaign against Ambassador Yovanovitch, and expressed great regret about how this was unfolding. And, in fact, the shameful way in which Ambassador Yovanovitch was being smeared and attacked, and I'd asked if there was anything that we could do about it. And Ambassador Bolton had looked pained, basically indicated with body language that there was nothing much that we could do about it, and he then, in the course of that discussion, said that Rudy Giuliani was a hand grenade that was going to blow everyone up.

Daniel Goldman: (30:40)

Did you understand what he meant by that?

Fiona Hill: (30:42)

I did, actually.

Daniel Goldman: (30:43)

What did he mean?

Fiona Hill: (30:44)

Well, I think that he meant that obviously what Mr. Giuliani was saying was pretty explosive in any case. He was frequently on television making quite incendiary remarks about everyone involved in this, and that he was clearly pushing forward issues and ideas that would probably come back to haunt us. And in fact, I think that that's where we are today.

Daniel Goldman: (31:04)

Now, Mr. Holmes, did the Ukrainians understand that Rudy Giuliani represented the President's views?

David Holmes: (31:12)

I believe they did. First, he was reaching out to them directly. Ambassador Yovanovitch's removal, I think, is relevant to this portion of the inquiry because she was removed

following this media campaign in which Rudy Giuliani and his associates were very prominent, and criticizing her for not taking seriously some of the theories and issues that later came up. And so when she was removed, commentators in Ukraine believed that Lutsenko, working with Giuliani, had succeeded in getting her removed.

David Holmes: (31:50)

So they were already aware of Mr. Giuliani and his influence, the issues that he was promoting, and, ultimately, that he was able to get an Ambassador removed partly because of that. So he was-

David Holmes: (32:03)

... ambassador removed, partly because of that, so he was someone to contend with. Then in addition, immediately after the inauguration, he began reaching out to this Zelensky administration, key figures in the Zelensky administration, and continue to do that.

Daniel Goldman: (32:16)

Let's focus on the inauguration for a minute. You had escorted, for lack of a better word, the US delegation around?

David Holmes: (32:25)

I joined them in in some of their meetings, but not for the entire day.

Daniel Goldman: (32:29)

Who was on the official delegation?

David Holmes: (32:32)

Yes, sir. It was five people. It was: The head of the delegation was Secretary Perry, and then it was Ambassador Volker representing the State Department, Ambassador Sondland, our temporary [sharjay 00:32:43], Joseph Pennington and Alex Vindman representing the White House.

Daniel Goldman: (32:48)

Did the delegation have a meeting with President Zelensky that you attended?

David Holmes: (32:51)

Yes.

Daniel Goldman: (32:53)

You testified previously that Secretary Perry gave a list of some sort to President Zelensky at that meeting. Do you recall that?

David Holmes: (33:03)

Yes. In the meeting with the president, Secretary Perry as the head of the delegation opened the meeting for the American side and had a number of points he made, and during that

period he handed over a piece of paper. I did not see what was on the paper, but Secretary Perry described what was on the paper as a list of trusted individuals and recommended that President Zelensky could draw from that list for advice on energy sector reform issues.

Daniel Goldman: (33:33)

Do you know who was on that list?

David Holmes: (33:36)

I didn't see the list. I don't know. There are other other people who have been in the mix for awhile on that set of issues, other people Secretary Perry has mentioned as being people to consult on reform.

Daniel Goldman: (33:52)

Are they Americans?

David Holmes: (33:53)

Yes.

Daniel Goldman: (33:55)

Now, do you also recall that Colonel Vindman spoke to Presidents Zelensky in that meeting?

David Holmes: (34:00)

Yes.

Daniel Goldman: (34:02)

What did he say to President Zelensky in terms of some of the issues that we're addressing here in this investigation?

David Holmes: (34:09)

Yes, sir. He was the last to speak. He made a general point about the importance of Ukraine, joint national security, and he said it's very important that the Zelensky administration stay out of us domestic politics.

Daniel Goldman: (34:24)

Was it your understanding that President Zelensky and the Ukrainians were already starting to feel some pressure to conduct these political investigations?

David Holmes: (34:32)

Yes.

Daniel Goldman: (34:33)

Those were the ones related to Biden and Burisma and the 2016 election?

David Holmes: (34:38)

Correct.

Daniel Goldman: (34:39)

Now, Dr. Hill, you also testified that around this same time in May, you learned that President Trump was receiving information from someone else at the National Security Council. Is that right?

Fiona Hill: (34:50)

That's not quite right. I was told in passing that someone else at the National Security Council, that president may want to speak to them because of some materials related to Ukraine.

Daniel Goldman: (35:06)

Did that person indicate that the president thought that was the director of Ukraine?

Fiona Hill: (35:09)

That was correct. It was a very brief conversation, just to be clear.

Daniel Goldman: (35:12)

Who is the director of Ukraine?

Fiona Hill: (35:13)

The director for Ukraine is Alex Vindman, Colonel Vindman.

Daniel Goldman: (35:20)

Who did this individual in the Executive secretary's office refer to?

Fiona Hill: (35:25)

The individual just said the name Kash.

Daniel Goldman: (35:31)

Did you know who that was?

Fiona Hill: (35:31)

Initially, when I was thinking about it, I had to search my mind, and the only Kash that I knew at the National security council was Kash Patel.

Daniel Goldman: (35:36)

Kasha Patel did not work on Ukraine matters that you oversaw, is that right?

Fiona Hill: (35:40)

Not that I oversaw. No.

Daniel Goldman: (35:43)

The indication is that Kash Patel had provided some information directly to the president without your knowledge?

Fiona Hill: (35:49)

That seemed to be the indication.

Daniel Goldman: (35:52)

Now, I want to go back to the July 25th call right now where President Trump, in another excerpt, asked President Zelensky about his potential political opponent, Vice President Joe Biden. In this excerpt, the president said "The other thing, there's a lot of talk about Biden's son, that Biden stopped the prosecution, and a lot of people want to find out about that. So whatever you can do with the attorney general would be great. Biden went around bragging that he stopped the prosecution. So if you can look into it, it sounds horrible to me."

Daniel Goldman: (36:27)

Now, Dr. Hill, this was, of course, one of the allegations that Rudy Giuliani was pushing, is that right?

Fiona Hill: (36:34)

That's correct.

Daniel Goldman: (36:34)

Now confirmed in this July 25th call that the president was also interested in it?

Fiona Hill: (36:40)

Yes.

Daniel Goldman: (36:41)

Ambassadors Volker and Sondland have tried to draw a distinction between their understanding of the connection between Burisma and the Bidens. But Dr. Hill, was it apparent to you that when President Trump, Rudy Giuliani, or anyone else was pushing for an investigation into Burisma that the reason why they wanted that investigation related to what President Trump said here, the Bidens.

Fiona Hill: (37:06)

It was very apparent to me that that was what Rudy Giuliani intended. Yes. Intended to confer that Burisma was linked to the Bidens, and he said this publicly, repeatedly.

Daniel Goldman: (37:15)

Mr. Holmes, you also understood that Burisma was code for Bidens?

David Holmes: (37:19)

Yes.

Daniel Goldman: (37:21)

Do you think that anyone involved in Ukraine matters in the spring and the summer would understand that as well?

David Holmes: (37:25)

Yes.

Daniel Goldman: (37:30)

Dr. Hill, are you aware of any evidence to support the allegations against Vice President Biden?

Fiona Hill: (37:35)

I am not. No.

Daniel Goldman: (37:38)

In fact, Mr. Holmes, the former Prosecutor General of Ukraine, who Vice President Biden encouraged to fire was actually corrupt, is that right?

David Holmes: (37:54)

Correct.

Daniel Goldman: (37:55)

And was not pursuing corruption investigations and prosecutions, right?

David Holmes: (38:01)

My understanding is the prosecutor general at the time, Shokin, was not at that time pursuing investigations of Burisma or the Bidens.

Daniel Goldman: (38:11)

In fact, removing that corrupt prosecutor general was part of the United States anti-corruption policy. Isn't that correct?

David Holmes: (38:20)

That's correct, and not just us, but all of our allies and other institutions that were involved in Ukraine at the time.

Daniel Goldman: (38:24)

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Daniel Goldman: (38:26)

Now, Dr. Hill, you indicated earlier that you had understood that a White House meeting was conditioned on the pursuit by Ukraine of these investigations, and I want to focus on the July 10th meeting in the White House where that came to light. You indicated that, in your testimony, that there was a large meeting that Ambassador Bolton ran where Ambassadors Sondland, Volcker and Secretary Perry also attended. Is that right?

Fiona Hill: (38:54)

That's correct. Yes.

Daniel Goldman: (38:55)

Why were they included in that meeting with two Ukrainian officials about national security matters?

Fiona Hill: (39:03)

Well, the initial intent had not been to include them. We'd anticipated that the two Ukrainian officials would have a number of meetings, as is usually the procedure, and that there would be meetings at the State Department, potentially also at the Energy Department. Then there was a request to have Ambassadors Sondland and Volker included, coming directly from their offices. As a result of that, clearly given the important role that Secretary Perry was playing in the energy sector reform in Ukraine and the fact that he'd also been in the delegation to the presidential inauguration in Ukraine, we decided that it would be better than to include all three of them.

Daniel Goldman: (39:43)

Now, toward the end of this meeting, the Ukrainians raised their ongoing desire for an Oval Office meeting. Is that right?

Fiona Hill: (39:51)

That's correct.

Daniel Goldman: (39:52)

What happened after they did that?

Fiona Hill: (39:55)

Well, I listen very carefully to Ambassador Sondland's testimony yesterday, so I want to actually point out something where I think it's easy to explain why he had a different interpretation of how this came into being.

Fiona Hill: (40:08)

The meeting had initially been scheduled for about 45-minutes to an hour, and it was definitely in the wrap-up phase of the meeting when this occurred. We'd gone through a series of discussions, Alexander Daniluk, who is at this point the designated National Security Advisor of Ukraine, really wanted to get into the weeds of how he might reform a national security council. He talked to me about this prior to the meeting. He was hoping and had had this opportunity with the National Security Advisor of the United States to get his firsthand opinions and thoughts on what might happen.

Fiona Hill: (40:45)

We'd also wanted to go through a discussion about how important it was for Ukraine to get its energy sector reform underway, and clearly Secretary Perry had some talking points to this. This is an issue that Ambassador Bolton was also interested in.

Fiona Hill: (40:58)

And then we knew that the Ukrainians would have on their agenda, inevitably, the question about a meeting. As we get through the main discussion, we are going into that wrap-up phase. The Ukrainians, Mr. Daniluk, starts to ask about a White House meeting and Ambassador Bolton was trying to parry this back. Although he's the National Security Advisor, he's not in charge of scheduling the meeting. We have input recommending the meetings, and this goes through a whole process. It's not Ambassador Bolton's role to start pulling out the schedule and start saying, "Right, well, we're going to look and see if this Tuesday in this month is going to work with this." He does not as a matter of course like to discuss the details of these meetings, he likes to leave them to the appropriate staff for this. So this was already going to be an uncomfortable issue.

Fiona Hill: [\(41:45\)](#)

As Ambassador Bolton was trying to move that part of the discussion away, I think he was going to try to deflect it onto another wrap-up topic, Ambassador Sondland leaned in basically to say, "Well, we have an agreement that there will be a meeting if specific investigations are put underway." That's when I saw Ambassador Bolton stiffen. I was sitting behind him in the chair, and I saw him sit back slightly like this. He'd been more moving forward, like I am, to the table. For me, that was an unmistakable body language, and it caught my attention. Then he looked up to the clock and at his watch, or towards his wrist in any case ... Again, I was sitting behind him ... and basically said, "Well, it's been really great to see you. I'm afraid I've got another meeting."

Daniel Goldman: [\(42:34\)](#)

Did Ambassador Sondland say who his agreement on this White House meeting was with?

Fiona Hill: [\(42:39\)](#)

In that particular juncture, I don't believe so. It was later, which I'm sure you'll want to talk about, that he did say more specifically.

Daniel Goldman: [\(42:46\)](#)

What did he say later?

Fiona Hill: [\(42:48\)](#)

Later he said that he had an agreement with Chief of Staff Mulvaney that in return for investigations this meeting would get scheduled.

Daniel Goldman: [\(42:57\)](#)

Was he specific at that point, later about the investigations that he was referring to?

Fiona Hill: [\(43:03\)](#)

He said the investigations in Burisma.

Daniel Goldman: [\(43:04\)](#)

Now, did you have a conversation with Ambassador Bolton after this subsequent meeting

with Ambassador Sondland?

Fiona Hill: [\(43:09\)](#)

I had a discussion with Ambassador Bolton both after the meeting in his office, a very brief one, and then one immediately afterwards, the subsequent meeting.

Daniel Goldman: [\(43:18\)](#)

The subsequent meeting, or after both meetings when you spoke to him and relayed to him what Ambassador Sondland said, what did Ambassador Bolton say to you?

Fiona Hill: [\(43:28\)](#)

Well, I just want to highlight first of all that Ambassador Bolton wanted me to hold back in the room immediately after the meeting. Again, I was sitting on the sofa with colleague and everybody else was at the table.

Daniel Goldman: [\(43:41\)](#)

Right. But just in that second meeting, what did he say?

Fiona Hill: [\(43:41\)](#)

Yes, but he was making a very strong point that he wanted to know exactly what was being said. When I came back and relayed to it to him, he had some very specific instruction for me. I'm presuming that that's the question that you're asking.

Daniel Goldman: [\(43:53\)](#)

What was that specific instruction?

Fiona Hill: [\(43:54\)](#)

The specific instruction was that I had to go to the lawyers, to John Eisenberg, our senior counsel for the National Security Council, to basically say, "You tell Eisenberg Ambassador Bolton told me that I am not part of this, whatever drug deal that Mulvaney and Sondland are cooking up."

Daniel Goldman: [\(44:12\)](#)

What did you understand him to mean by the "drug deal that Mulvaney and Sondland were cooking up?"

Fiona Hill: [\(44:17\)](#)

I took it to mean investigations for a meeting.

Daniel Goldman: [\(44:22\)](#)

Did you go speak to the lawyers?

Fiona Hill: [\(44:24\)](#)

I certainly did.

Daniel Goldman: (44:27)

You relayed everything that you just told us and more?

Fiona Hill: (44:30)

I relayed it precisely, and then more of the details of how the meeting had unfolded as well, which I gave a full description of this in my October 14 deposition.

Daniel Goldman: (44:40)

Mr. Holmes, you have testified that by late August you had a clear impression that the security assistance hold was somehow connected to the investigations that President Trump wanted. How did you reach that clear conclusion?

David Holmes: (45:00)

We'd been hearing about the investigation since March, months before. President Zelensky had received a letter, a congratulatory letter, from the president saying he'd be pleased to meet him following his inauguration in May. We hadn't been able to get that meeting, and then the security hold came up with no explanation. I'd be surprised if any of the Ukrainians ... you said earlier, we discussed earlier, sophisticated people ... when they received no explanation for why that hold was in place, they wouldn't have drawn that conclusion.

Daniel Goldman: (45:41)

Because the investigations were still being pursued?

David Holmes: (45:44)

Correct.

Daniel Goldman: (45:44)

And the hold was still remaining without explanation?

David Holmes: (45:47)

Correct.

Daniel Goldman: (45:48)

This to you was the only logical conclusion that you could reach?

David Holmes: (45:51)

Correct.

Daniel Goldman: (45:52)

Sort of like two plus two equals four?

David Holmes: (45:55)

Exactly.

Daniel Goldman: (45:56)

Chairman. I yield.

Adam Schiff: (45:58)

That concludes the majority questioning. We are expected to have votes, I think fairly soon. This would be a appropriate time to break and we'll resume with the minority 45-minutes. If people before they leave could allow the witnesses to leave first, and if committee members could come back promptly after votes.

Part 3

Devin Nunes: (00:03)

Thank you, gentlemen. I want to get a few basic facts on the table of individuals that were involved in the 2016 election, just to see who you know and who you've met with. I'll start with you. Mr. Holmes, have you met with or do you know Alexandra Chalupa?

Adam Schiff: (00:26)

Mr. Holmes, can you put your microphone on?

David Holmes: (00:32)

No.

Devin Nunes: (00:35)

Do you know Nellie Ohr? Have you met with Nellie Ohr?

David Holmes: (00:41)

No.

Devin Nunes: (00:41)

Bruce Ohr?

David Holmes: (00:42)

No.

Devin Nunes: (00:44)

Glenn Simpson?

David Holmes: (00:45)

No.

Devin Nunes: (00:46)

Thank you. Same question for you, Dr. Hill, do you know or have you met with Alexandra Chalupa?

Fiona Hill: (00:52)

No.

Devin Nunes: (00:54)

Nellie Ohr?

Fiona Hill: (00:55)

No.

Devin Nunes: (00:56)

Bruce Ohr?

Fiona Hill: (00:57)

Only in the course of my previous position as the national intelligence officer for Russia, where he attended some of the meetings I presided over.

Devin Nunes: (01:05)

Years ago.

Fiona Hill: (01:06)

That's a long time ago, correct.

Devin Nunes: (01:08)

Glenn Simpson?

Fiona Hill: (01:08)

No.

Devin Nunes: (01:08)

Okay. Dr. Hill, in your testimony, you said that ... in your deposition, excuse me, that Christopher Steele was your counterpart at one time, is this correct?

Fiona Hill: (01:28)

That's correct, yes.

Devin Nunes: (01:30)

You testified that you met with Christopher Steele in 2016. I assume that's still correct?

Fiona Hill: (01:36)

That's correct, yes.

Devin Nunes: (01:37)

And the only thing we didn't get on that is do you know about when that was in 2016 and how many times?

Fiona Hill: (01:44)

I'm afraid I don't. I actually had met with him ... you asked me actually in the deposition when the most recent time that I'd met with him in 2016. And he retired from the British Intelligence Services in 2009, which is the same time-

Devin Nunes: (01:57)

I'm asking about in 2016.

Fiona Hill: (01:58)

2016, I don't recall, but I did meet with him some times before 2016.

Devin Nunes: (02:04)

But you don't remember the date?

Fiona Hill: (02:05)

I don't, I'm afraid, no.

Devin Nunes: (02:06)

Okay. You stated in your deposition that a colleague had showed you the Steele Dossier before it was published. Who was that colleague?

Fiona Hill: (02:17)

That was one of my colleagues at the Brookings Institution.

Devin Nunes: (02:21)

And who was that?

Fiona Hill: (02:23)

That was the Brookings Institution president, Strobe Talbott, who had been sent a copy of this.

Devin Nunes: (02:28)

And he shared it with you.

Fiona Hill: (02:29)

That was the day before it was published in BuzzFeed.

Devin Nunes: (02:32)

Thank you. You mentioned in your deposition also that you thought that it was a, let's get the exact quote, that "the dossier was a rabbit hole." Is that still your testimony?

Fiona Hill: (02:45)

That's correct.

Devin Nunes: (02:49)

Do you know who paid Christopher Steele to do, to generate the Steele Dossiers? There were several of them.

Fiona Hill: (02:57)

At the time I did not know. I understand from the media that it was through GPS Fusion. If that's not correct-

Devin Nunes: (03:03)

Do you know who was, and there was a law firm involved, but you know who the source of the money was?

Fiona Hill: (03:09)

I didn't at the time, no, I did not.

Devin Nunes: (03:10)

But do you know who-

Fiona Hill: (03:11)

Well now I've read it in reports and thanks to your colleagues as well that it was the DNC as I'm led to believe.

Devin Nunes: (03:18)

And the Clinton campaign.

Fiona Hill: (03:23)

I don't know that for sure.

Devin Nunes: (03:23)

Okay. Mr. Castor.

Steve Castor: (03:25)

Good afternoon, welcome back from lunch. Hope you had some sandwiches or something delicious.

Fiona Hill: (03:30)

Hope you did too.

Steve Castor: (03:32)

Dr. Hill, thank you for your service. Also thank you for your participation in the deposition on October 14th, Columbus day. We were with you most of the day, so I appreciate that. Mr. Holmes, thank you as well. You're a late entrant into this situation and things sure did escalate quickly. We spoke with you last Friday night about what we thought was going to be

a 30 second vignette about a two minute phone call. And it turns out with your 40 minute opener today, you have a lot of information to share. So we appreciate you being here. Dr. Hill, your last day at the National Security Council was July 19th, is that correct?

Fiona Hill: (04:19)

That's correct, yes.

Steve Castor: (04:20)

So you weren't involved with the July 25th call and you weren't involved with any of the relevant activities related to the pause in the aid?

Fiona Hill: (04:30)

I was not, that's correct.

Steve Castor: (04:32)

And as of July 19th, did you believe that a call was going to be scheduled for the 25th?

Fiona Hill: (04:40)

I personally did not believe that it was going to be scheduled at that date, no.

Steve Castor: (04:44)

And what was the thinking at the NSC as of July 19th about such a call?

Fiona Hill: (04:49)

Well, I've learned from other depositions to be clear here that perhaps there was some awareness that there might be a call. Ambassador Sondland, if you may recall, showed an exchange with the person who was taking over from my position, Tim Morrison, in which he indicated that there would be a call coming up. I was not aware of that.

Steve Castor: (05:07)

Okay, were you in favor-

Fiona Hill: (05:08)

There were differences let's just say, obviously, in understanding about that call.

Steve Castor: (05:12)

And where are you in favor of such a call as of the 19th?

Fiona Hill: (05:16)

Actually, I was not, and I did say something about that in the opening part of the sessions today.

Steve Castor: (05:23)

Okay. And how about Ambassador Bolton to your knowledge?

Fiona Hill: [\(05:25\)](#)

Well, I know that Ambassador Sondland said in that email that Bolton was in agreement. To my knowledge, Bolton was not in agreement at that particular juncture, to my knowledge.

Steve Castor: [\(05:32\)](#)

Do you know what his opposition was?

Fiona Hill: [\(05:34\)](#)

It was based on the fact that he didn't feel the call had been properly prepared. And as I said earlier, that we wanted to make sure that there was going to be a fulsome bilateral U.S., Ukraine agenda that was discussed, which is usual with these calls.

Steve Castor: [\(05:46\)](#)

And were you surprised that a call ultimately was scheduled?

Fiona Hill: [\(05:51\)](#)

I was when I learned about it, that's right.

Steve Castor: [\(05:54\)](#)

And did you have any communications with anyone back at your old staff with about how that came to be?

Fiona Hill: [\(05:58\)](#)

I did not, no.

Steve Castor: [\(06:00\)](#)

Okay. You did learn about the pause in the security assistance aid-

Fiona Hill: [\(06:05\)](#)

I learned about that on July 18th, so the day before I left, that's correct.

Steve Castor: [\(06:09\)](#)

And there were several meetings about this, I believe you testified to.

Fiona Hill: [\(06:14\)](#)

I said that I knew there was going to be a meeting in that timeframe and there was one put onto the schedule for the following week, but of course I had left and so I didn't attend that.

Steve Castor: [\(06:25\)](#)

And is it fair to say that stops and starts in aid like this sometimes do happen?

Fiona Hill: [\(06:29\)](#)

That's correct.

Steve Castor: (06:32)

And I believe you had testified that there was a freeze put on all kinds of aid and assistance because it was in the process, at that time there were significant reviews of foreign assistance going on.

Fiona Hill: (06:43)

That's also correct, yes.

Steve Castor: (06:45)

And what else can you tell us about that?

Fiona Hill: (06:47)

About the foreign assistance review?

Steve Castor: (06:54)

Yeah.

Fiona Hill: (06:54)

As I understood there'd had been a directive for a whole scale review of our foreign policy assistance and the ties between our foreign policy objectives and the assistance. This has been going on actually for many months. And in the period when I was wrapping up my time there, there had been more scrutiny then specific assistance to specific sets of countries as a result of that overall review.

Steve Castor: (07:18)

And at this time as well, Ambassador Volker and Ambassador Sondland, they had become a little bit more involved with Ukraine policy?

Fiona Hill: (07:25)

Well, Ambassador Volker was always involved in Ukraine policy, at least since the beginning of his appointment as the Special Envoy for negotiations towards the war between Ukraine and Russia and Donbass.

Steve Castor: (07:36)

What can you tell us about Ambassador Volker?

Fiona Hill: (07:40)

Ambassador Volker is an extraordinary accomplished diplomat. I've worked with him in many capacities previously. You know his bio, he's been the ambassador to NATO. He's had a number of positions at the State Department and actually I know him personally. So the truth that we're trying to get at of who knows who and who's met. I know Ambassador Volker really well on a personal level as well.

Steve Castor: (08:01)

Okay, and you said he's a man of integrity?

Fiona Hill: (08:04)

That's correct.

Steve Castor: (08:05)

And always acted in the best interests of the United States.

Fiona Hill: (08:07)

Absolutely, yes.

Steve Castor: (08:08)

When did you first learn of Ambassador Sondland's involvement?

Fiona Hill: (08:13)

Well, it came in different ways. Ambassador Sondland as the ambassador to the E.U. had some perfectly logical involvement in the Ukraine portfolio. We work very closely with the European Union on matters related to Ukraine. The Ukrainian dialogue with Russia was in a format known as the Minsk Process, which was led by the French and the Germans. And Ambassador Volker was trying to find out ways in which he could work closely with the French and Germans to move along on the resolution of the conflict between Ukraine and Russia. And obviously the European Union, as the umbrella organization for Europe in terms of funding an assistance, was heavily active in offering financial assistance to the Ukrainian government as well as humanitarian assistance in the conflict. So it was perfectly logical that Ambassador Sondland would play some kind of role as our ambassador to the European Union.

Steve Castor: (09:11)

Did you have any concerns when he presented himself to you as somebody with a major role?

Fiona Hill: (09:21)

I did at the time in which he presented it to me. This was after Ambassador Yovanovitch had been pushed out of her position and it was at that juncture that Ambassador Sondland's role seem to grow larger.

Steve Castor: (09:34)

And did you express any concerns to him directly?

Fiona Hill: (09:36)

I did express concerns to him directly.

Steve Castor: (09:38)

What were those concerns?

Fiona Hill: (09:39)

I asked him quite bluntly in a meeting that we had in June of 2019, so this is after the presidential inauguration when I'd seen that he had started to step up in much more of a proactive role in Ukraine. What was his role here? And he said that he was in charge of Ukraine and I said, "Well, who put you in charge, Ambassador Sondland? And he said, "The President."

Steve Castor: (10:03)

Did that surprise you when he told you that?

Fiona Hill: (10:05)

It did surprise me, we'd had no directive. We haven't been told this. Ambassador Bolton had never indicated in any way that he thought that Ambassador Sondland was playing a leading role in Ukraine.

Steve Castor: (10:17)

Right. I believe you used the term, "a large remit," that he characterized. He had been given "a large remit" from the President.

Fiona Hill: (10:24)

I can't remember where I said, "remit," but it was portfolio. He was constantly, you know, these are all synonyms. He was talking to us about the fact that he'd been given a very broad portfolio by the President. He said his job was to go out and make deals in Europe. And as you know yourself, I listened to his testimony yesterday very carefully as well. He said that anything that had to do with the E.U. itself and the European Union member states was within his portfolio.

Steve Castor: (10:49)

Right. We asked Ambassador Sondland about that at his deposition and he conceded that he may have been spinning a little bit when he said that the President specifically gave him that role and he indicated that his authority was coming at least a little bit more from the Secretary of State. At any point in time, was that relayed to you?

Fiona Hill: (11:12)

At different points, he mentioned talking directly to the Chief of Staff Mulvaney and he also talked about Secretary Pompeo. In fact, there were other people in the room in the meeting in which he asserted this to me, that it was the President who had put him in charge of this.

Steve Castor: (11:29)

Were you encouraged, as of your last day in the office, that U.S. policy towards the Ukraine was headed in the right direction?

Fiona Hill: [\(11:37\)](#)

I was not.

Steve Castor: [\(11:38\)](#)

And why was that?

Steve Castor: [\(11:40\)](#)

Well, I was concerned about two things in particular. One was again, the removal of our ambassador, and again, I will say for the record that the President has a perfect right to remove any ambassador at any time for any reason. But I was very concerned about the circumstances in which her reputation had been maligned repeatedly on television and in all kinds of exchanges. I felt that that was completely unnecessary. If the President wanted to remove an ambassador, which he did quite frequently, there was a number of ambassadors removed, who were not political but career officials that was done, but without these kinds of interventions. I wondered what that message was being sent. So there was that.

Steve Castor: [\(12:20\)](#)

And then on the second front, it was very clear at this point that there was, let's just say a different channel in operation and relations to Ukraine. One that was domestic and political in nature, and it was very different from the channel or the loop, however you like it, that I and my colleagues were in, where we were focused on bilateral relations and the U.S. foreign policy toward Ukraine. And these two things had diverged at this point

Steve Castor: [\(12:46\)](#)

In the run up to Ambassador Yovanovich's separation from post, did you have any communications with officials at the State Department about your concerns?

Fiona Hill: [\(12:54\)](#)

I did.

Steve Castor: [\(12:56\)](#)

And who did you relate those concerns to?

Fiona Hill: [\(12:58\)](#)

I related those concerns directly to my counterpart who was Acting Assistant Secretary, Phil Reeker, who I know you've spoken to. I also spoke to David Hale in the context of larger meetings about many other issues. I mean, again, I covered a broad portfolio myself and we often would talk about individual items. And I had private discussions with Deputy Secretary Sullivan and he of course appeared before committees here in the course of his nomination to be ambassador to Russia and has spoken about that himself.

Steve Castor: [\(13:32\)](#)

Okay. And you advocated to all those officials about your concerns about the information

being spread about Ambassador Yovanovitch?

Fiona Hill: [\(13:39\)](#)

I did, that's correct.

Steve Castor: [\(13:42\)](#)

The Trump administration changed courses from its predecessor and provided lethal defensive assistance to the Ukraine. Were you in favor of arming the Ukrainians with the javelins?

Fiona Hill: [\(13:54\)](#)

I was not initially in 2015 before I joined the government. And I'm sure that many people on the committee have seen that I wrote an opinion piece with a colleague at the Brookings Institution in that juncture. Because I was very worried at that particular point in time that the Ukrainian military was not in a fit state to really take on board sophisticated weapons, be they defensive or offensive weapons. And I worried that there was not a longterm sustainable plan given the overwhelming force that the Russians could apply against the Ukrainians. However, when I came into government in 2017 and started to interact with all of my colleagues in the Pentagon and you had Laura Cooper here yesterday, I realized in fact that there'd been an awful lot of work done on this. And that there was a clear and consistent plan for the sustainability long term of the Ukrainian military so I changed my mind.

Steve Castor: [\(14:45\)](#)

Okay. And you're in fact, one of the, I believe the only witness that we've spoken to that has been able to articulate the opposition to providing the javelins. And as we understand it during the Obama administration, the interagency consensus was in fact to provide the javelins but they were not provided. Are you aware of the decision back then?

Fiona Hill: [\(15:05\)](#)

I was, and I think it was very much made on a political basis about concerns that this would provoke the Russians depending on how this was presented. And we were very mindful of that also when there were the discussions internally about the lethal defensive weapons inside of the administration.

Steve Castor: [\(15:22\)](#)

And Mr. Holmes, you're on the ground in Kiev and the javelins have now been authorized, provided. What's the view from the field, the U.S. embassy as to the effectiveness of the javelins?

David Holmes: [\(15:39\)](#)

They're an important strategic deterrent. They're not actively employed in combat operations right now, but the mere idea that were the Russians to advance substantially

using certain kinds of armor that the Ukrainians would have this capability deters them from doing so. And it also thereby sends a very important symbolic message to the Ukrainian military that they have access to these high end technology and that we trust them to do it. I would only add also they've offered to buy some using their own funds. The initial traunch was provided through basically a program to do that, but they've now offered to spend their own money to buy more, so I think they think they're important.

Steve Castor: [\(16:16\)](#)

And Ambassador Taylor has testified, Mr. Kent has testified that this is in fact the consensus of the inner agency of providing the javelins. In your experience of working with Ambassador Taylor, was he also very much an advocate for this?

David Holmes: [\(16:34\)](#)

Yes.

Steve Castor: [\(16:44\)](#)

Do you have something?

Devin Nunes: [\(16:45\)](#)

Mr. Holmes, I want to go back to name some Americans. Now I want to talk a little bit about Ukrainians, Ukrainian government officials.

David Holmes: [\(16:54\)](#)

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Devin Nunes: [\(16:55\)](#)

Are you familiar with Serhiy Leshchenko?

David Holmes: [\(16:58\)](#)

Yes.

Devin Nunes: [\(16:59\)](#)

Have you met with him?

David Holmes: [\(17:00\)](#)

I have.

Devin Nunes: [\(17:01\)](#)

He was a journalist then he was in the parliament. Is he currently in the parliament?

David Holmes: [\(17:08\)](#)

Journalist again.

Devin Nunes: (17:09)

Journalist again. Are you aware that when he was in the parliament that he had provided information to a Fusion GPS operative named Nellie Ohr?

David Holmes: (17:26)

I'm not aware of Nellie Ohr, I'm not aware of who he provided information to. I'm aware that as a journalist he's provided information.

Devin Nunes: (17:33)

Well, he was in the parliament at the time. This is in the 2016 campaign. He provided a widely known as the "black ledger." Have you ever heard of the "black ledger?"

David Holmes: (17:44)

I have.

Devin Nunes: (17:45)

And the "black ledger," is that seen as credible information?

David Holmes: (17:51)

Yes.

Devin Nunes: (17:52)

The "black ledger" is credible?

David Holmes: (17:53)

Yes.

Devin Nunes: (17:56)

Bob Mueller did not find it credible. Do you dispute what Bob Mueller's findings were? They didn't use it in the prosecution or in the report.

David Holmes: (18:05)

I'm not aware of that Bob Mueller did not find it credible. I think it was evidence in other criminal proceedings. Its credibility was not questioned in those proceedings, but I'm not an expert on that matter.

Devin Nunes: (18:14)

So the motivation for Leshchenko as it was reported was to go after a Trump campaign official and undermine Trump's candidacy. Are you aware of that?

David Holmes: (18:28)

If you mean by the release of the "black ledger", I think Leshchenko's motivation was the same motivation he's always expressed, which is to expose corruption in Ukraine.

Devin Nunes: [\(18:37\)](#)

Right, but he's admitted motivation was to partly at least undermine the Trump candidacy that he did not support.

David Holmes: [\(18:44\)](#)

He has not said that to me. If he said that to you, I'll take your word for it.

Devin Nunes: [\(18:53\)](#)

And you're aware that the ... you heard Dr. Hill's testimony, but the Steele Dossier that contained initially that initial information that was fed in the F.B.I., were you aware that the Democrats had paid for that information?

David Holmes: [\(19:12\)](#)

So sir, I never had any involvement directly with-

Devin Nunes: [\(19:14\)](#)

I'm not accusing of involvement, I'm just asking if you, not even if you knew at the time, but you now know today that the Democrats had paid for that information.

David Holmes: [\(19:22\)](#)

So I do want to be clear that all that happened before I arrived in Ukraine. So I don't have any firsthand-

Devin Nunes: [\(19:26\)](#)

Not accusing any involvement of you with the Steele Dossier.

David Holmes: [\(19:29\)](#)

Understood, but I do want to be clear about that. And then in addition, I have read about those issues, but I'm not an expert on them.

Devin Nunes: [\(19:37\)](#)

But you're not disputing that the Democrat and the Clinton campaign were the source of funds that funded the Steele Dossier.

David Holmes: [\(19:46\)](#)

I wouldn't be in a position to dispute that, sir.

Devin Nunes: [\(19:49\)](#)

Do you think it's appropriate for political parties to run operatives in foreign countries to dig up dirt on their opponents?

David Holmes: [\(19:59\)](#)

No.

Devin Nunes: (20:01)

Dr. Hill, do you think it's appropriate for political parties to pay operatives to dig up dirt on their opponents?

Fiona Hill: (20:07)

I do not.

Devin Nunes: (20:07)

Thank you. Mr. Castor.

Steve Castor: (20:10)

I want to turn to President's Zelensky's inauguration. Ambassador Volker testified that he was very pleased with the size of the delegation, although the Vice President was unable to make the trip. Secretary Perry, Ambassador Volker, Ambassador Sondland. And I understand Dr. Hill, you were involved with some of the logistics and putting the delegation together.

Fiona Hill: (20:37)

That's correct.

Steve Castor: (20:38)

What can you tell us about the Vice President's role in attending or not attending?

Fiona Hill: (20:46)

Well, I know that you've heard the testimony of Jennifer Williams from the Vice President's office and I defer to her as being much closer to the decision making about the Vice President's attendance. I will say that I and many others hope that the Vice President would be able to attend. And what I know from my perspective, because I was not involved intimately in discussions with the Vice President or his immediate staff was that there were some questions about the schedule. As you all know, the president and Vice President cannot be out of the country at the same time. And there were some questions about presidential travel in the same timeframe. And you know there was a quite a bit of back and forth as to whether it would be really feasible for the Vice President in that timeframe to go. So that was what I was aware of. I wasn't aware to the extent of the discussions that obviously Ms. Williams was involved in.

Steve Castor: (21:35)

Right. The President was traveling in Japan and then he was headed to Europe for the D-Day anniversary. The Vice President's office, according to Ms. Williams, provided four days. The end of end of May, the 29th, 30th, 31st, June 1st. And as it turned out the Ukrainians decided, I believe it was on May 16th to schedule the inauguration for four days later. And

by this point in time the the Vice President had been rerouted for a trip to Canada about the USMCA. And I just want to ask you, you don't have any evidence that the Vice President was encouraged not to attend for any other reason, do you?

Fiona Hill: (22:23)

I personally do not, but again, I defer to Ms. Williams.

Steve Castor: (22:29)

And Ms. Williams testimony was that she just heard from the chief of staff's assistant that the Vice President one was not able to go. The leap, that the reason for that was related to any of these investigations hasn't been fully established. I want to just note from the materials you provided for your deposition, there was a discussion whether President Orban may have influenced President Trump's decision on that May 13th day. Do you remember when the meeting was with President Orban?

Fiona Hill: (23:07)

I do.

Steve Castor: (23:07)

When was that?

Fiona Hill: (23:09)

That was in May, that's correct.

Steve Castor: (23:10)

So do you remember what time of day it was on the 13th?

Fiona Hill: (23:17)

To be honest usually, these meetings are around lunchtime, sometime in that timeframe, in the kind of early to mid part of the day. But I can't speak for sure and I just want to be very clear that I cannot speak about head of state engagements.

Steve Castor: (23:30)

Okay. Jennifer Williams testified that she learned about 11:00 AM or 11:15 AM, the meeting with President Orban was not scheduled until later in the afternoon. According to your schedule, it was right around 1:45 PM, is that consistent with your recollection?

Fiona Hill: (23:49)

About the lunchtime timeframe, yeah, depending on when one has lunch, I guess.

Steve Castor: (23:50)

Okay. All right. Overall, given the four days notice, given Secretary Perry's involvement, do you think that delegation was a good sized group?

Fiona Hill: (24:04)

I do and let me also make a point that we don't try to make these delegations large. This is on the taxpayer's dime and it's pretty expensive getting people there. If you have to get military [inaudible 00:24:16] and we try to keep them small. If we had a longer lead time, perhaps we would have made other arrangements. But four days is not a lot of time to make an arrangement.

Steve Castor: (24:26)

And Secretary Perry had become interested in some of the energy related issues in the Ukraine, is that correct?

Fiona Hill: (24:30)

I actually recommended that Secretary Perry be the leader along with others.

Steve Castor: (24:34)

And what can you tell us about his involvement in some of the Ukrainian policy?

Fiona Hill: (24:40)

Well, Secretary Perry's engagement, and this made again perfect sense given his role as a Secretary of Energy, also his deep knowledge of the energy industry, his former governorship, Secretary Perry himself is an extraordinary good advocate of U.S. interest, particularly in the energy sphere. And one of Ukraine's achilles heel in addition to its military disadvantage with Russia is in fact energy. Ukraine remains for now the main transit point for a Russian oil and gas and pipelines to Europe. And this has been manipulated repeatedly, especially since 2006 by the Russian government. And in fact, I mean many of you here will remember in the Reagan era, there was a huge dispute between the United States and Europe about whether it made sense for Europe to build pipelines from the then Soviet Union to bring gas to European markets.

Steve Castor: (25:40)

Mr. Holmes, what was your view of the delegation? Do you think it was the right sized group, a right level of prestige to signal to the incoming Zelensky administration that the U.S. stands behind them?

David Holmes: (25:53)

I think it was fine in that regard.

Steve Castor: (25:54)

Okay. [inaudible 00:25:55].

Devin Nunes: (26:02)

Since we're on the topic of Ukraine energy, I think it's a good way for us to segue into Burisma, which I assume both of you are familiar with. You've heard about it for many, many years. You're on the ground there now, Mr. Holmes, I know you weren't there, but at

the time, that in September, 2015 then Ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt, Obama appointed career ambassador, I'm sure you know him.

David Holmes: [\(26:30\)](#)

I do.

Devin Nunes: [\(26:30\)](#)

Credible?

David Holmes: [\(26:31\)](#)

Yes.

Devin Nunes: [\(26:32\)](#)

Successful ambassador, I'm sure. He called for an investigation into Zlochevsky the owner of Burisma, president of Burisma. Are you familiar that?

David Holmes: [\(26:43\)](#)

Yes.

Devin Nunes: [\(26:43\)](#)

Okay. Did you know about Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Kent's concerns about the potential conflict of interest with Hunter Biden sitting on the board of Burisma?

David Holmes: [\(26:58\)](#)

I would defer to George Kent, who was involved at the time and is an expert on those issues.

Devin Nunes: [\(27:04\)](#)

Did you know that the financial records show that this Ukrainian natural gas company, Burisma routed more than three million dollars to the American accounts of Hunter Biden?

David Holmes: [\(27:13\)](#)

I've heard that.

Devin Nunes: [\(27:14\)](#)

Were you familiar with that, Dr. Hill?

Fiona Hill: [\(27:18\)](#)

Only from newspaper reports.

Devin Nunes: [\(27:19\)](#)

Okay. Did you know that Burisma's American ... and this is back to you, Mr. Holmes. Did you know that Burisma's American legal representatives met with Ukrainian officials just days after the Vice President forced the firing of the country's chief prosecutor?

David Holmes: (27:35)

No.

Devin Nunes: (27:38)

Did you know that Burisma's American lawyers tried to secure a meeting with the new state prosecutor the same day the predecessor Viktor Shokin's firing was announced?

David Holmes: (27:47)

No.

Devin Nunes: (27:49)

Did you know that Joe Biden called the Ukrainian President Poroshenko at least three times in February, 2016, shortly after the president and owner of Burisma's home was raided on February 2nd by the state prosecutor's office?

David Holmes: (28:01)

No.

Devin Nunes: (28:01)

Did you know that Devon Archer and Hunter Biden reached out to the Deputy Secretary of State, Tony Blinken, shortly after the raid on Burisma?

David Holmes: (28:11)

No.

Devin Nunes: (28:18)

Dr. Hill, did you know about. I don't want to go through and ask all those questions over again.

Fiona Hill: (28:22)

I also did not know-

Devin Nunes: (28:23)

You did not know about any of those.

Fiona Hill: (28:30)

I did not know, no.

Devin Nunes: (28:32)

Okay. So you obviously know that the President had concerns about Burisma. Had concerns about 2016 election meddling by the Ukrainians. When you were in there as the head of the Ukraine desk, did you ever raise any of these ... did you ever brief the President or raise it up to Ambassador Bolton about any concerns through 2017 and 18 that concerned 2016 election meddling or Burisma concerns?

Fiona Hill: [\(29:14\)](#)

The whole briefing process didn't really work in the way that you're suggesting there. So if the President had asked about any of this information it would have been provided for him. Just to be very clear, Ukraine was not a top foreign policy priority in this period in the same way that many other issues that we could talk about from Syria to Turkey and others are, so there weren't that frequent briefings on Ukraine. The briefings would take place when there was a scheduled meeting with a Ukrainian head of state. And as we know there haven't been too many of those.

Devin Nunes: [\(29:48\)](#)

So as far as you know, you did no briefings, no papers, answered no questions as it relates to the 2016 election or Burisma during your time there?

Fiona Hill: [\(30:00\)](#)

No, I did not know.

Devin Nunes: [\(30:02\)](#)

Okay. Okay, Mr. Castor.

Steve Castor: [\(30:03\)](#)

Dr. Hill, you told us during your deposition that indeed that there are perceived conflict of interest troubles when the child of a government official is involved with something that that government official has a official policy role in, correct?

Fiona Hill: [\(30:19\)](#)

I think any family member of any member of the U.S. government, congress or the Senate is open to all kinds of questions about optics and of perhaps undue outside influence, if they take part in any kind of activity that could be misconstrued as being related their parent or the family member's work. So as a matter of course, yes, I do think that's the case.

Steve Castor: [\(30:43\)](#)

And back to Ambassador Sondland, you testified that every now and then he made a habit of name dropping his interactions with the President?

Fiona Hill: [\(30:51\)](#)

That's correct, yes.

Steve Castor: [\(30:52\)](#)

And I believe you also had told us that there were instances where you would run into him on the campus and he would say, "Oh, I'm here to see the President, or I've been in to see the President." And you had an occasion to circle back and found out that wasn't the case.

Fiona Hill: [\(31:05\)](#)

That's correct.

Steve Castor: (31:07)

And I just want to give you an opportunity, he testified about some sort of coffee he had with you on your last day and I think when the deposition transcript was released, your counsel indicated that that was completely fabricated on Ambassador Sondland's part. And I just want to give you an opportunity to address that.

Fiona Hill: (31:31)

Yes, I mean, unfortunately this is the federal government. We don't have coffee machines readily in our office. If you'd come to my office in that time, the best I could have offered you was a cup of water from the water fountain outside of my office. So the coffee that Ambassador Sondland and I shared was actually, we'd run into each other or rather he found out I was going to be there and then asked me to meet him for coffee in Jackson Hole, Wyoming in 2018 in August. So this is a full year before I left. And that was a very nice coffee so perhaps he conflated those two meetings together. The meeting that he was referring to, he had come in to meet with our director for the European Union.

Fiona Hill: (32:10)

This was in my last week in the office. And as I was in the office at the same time for a brief period before going into another meeting, and it was my last week in the office, we agreed to sit down with the director of the European Union, with actually Colonel Vindman and the assistant that Ambassador Sondland had brought with him from the State Department. So there were actually four of us in that meeting, and unfortunately it wasn't over coffee.

Steve Castor: (32:41)

And he went on to indicate that you were upset and you were upset with-

Fiona Hill: (32:43)

Actually there were five of us really, I mean obviously I can't do math, sorry.

Steve Castor: (32:46)

Fair enough. He indicated you were upset and you were upset with Ambassador Bolton and upset with the way things are going. And I believe your counsel said that was an outright fabrication.

Fiona Hill: (32:57)

Well, I think you might recall in my deposition on October 14th that I said that very unfortunately I had a bit of a blowup with Ambassador-

Fiona Hill: (33:03)

[inaudible 00:33:00] that I said that very unfortunately I had a bit of a blowup with ambassador Sondland and I had a couple of testy encounters with them. One of those was in June '18 when I actually said to him, "Who put you in charge of Ukraine?" And I'll admit I was a bit rude. And that's when he told me the president, which shut me up. And this other

meeting, it was about 15, 20 minutes exactly as he depicted it was, I was actually, to be honest, angry with him. And I hate to say it, but often when women show anger, it's not fully appreciated. It's often pushed onto emotional issues perhaps or deflected onto other people. And what I was angry about, was that he wasn't coordinating with us. Now actually realize having listened to his deposition, that he was absolutely right, that he wasn't coordinating with us because we weren't doing the same thing that he was doing.

Fiona Hill: [\(33:55\)](#)

So I was upset with him that he wasn't fully telling us about all of the meetings that he was having. And he said to me, "but I'm briefing the president. I'm briefing chief of staff Mulvaney, I'm briefing secretary Pompeo and I've talked to ambassador Bolton. Who else do I have to deal with?" And the point is we have a robust interagency process that deals with Ukraine. It includes Mr. Holmes, it includes Ambassador Taylor, the [inaudible 00:34:21] in Ukraine, it includes a whole load of other people. But it struck me one yesterday when you put up on the screen ambassador Sondland's emails and who was on these emails and he said, these the people who need to know that he was absolutely right. Because he was being involved in a domestic political errand and we were being involved in national security foreign policy. And those two things had just diverged.

Fiona Hill: [\(34:46\)](#)

So he was correct. And I had not put my finger on that at the moment, but I was irritated with him and angry with him that he wasn't fully coordinating. And I did say to him, "Ambassador Sondland, Gordon, I think this is all going to blow up." And here we are. And after I left to my next meeting, our director for the European Union talked to him much further for a full half hour or more later trying to ask him about how we could coordinate better. How all of us could coordinate better, after I had left the office. And his feeling was that the National Security Counsel was always trying to block him. What we were trying to do, was block us from straying into domestic or personal politics. And that was precisely what I was trying to do. But Ambassador Sondland is not wrong that he had been given a different remit than we had been.

Fiona Hill: [\(35:34\)](#)

And it was at that moment that I started to realize how those things are diverged. And I realized in fact that I wasn't really being fair to Ambassador Sondland because he was carrying out what he thought he had been instructed to carry out and we were doing something that we thought was just as, or perhaps even more important, but it wasn't in the same channel.

Devin Nunes: [\(35:54\)](#)

Dr. Hill... If you mind, transfer. Sorry. Dr. Hill, I just want to drill down on this a little bit. The president of the United States, Commander and Chief, was concerned about the 2016 elections in Burisma. He had his personal attorney working these issues because he was under investigation by Robert Mueller, special counsel, partly beginning with an

investigation that started with the Steele dossier that we've already established that the Democrats had paid for and had then fed into the FBI. So the end of the day, the Commander and Chief concerned about 2016 election meddling by Ukraine, it sounds like you had just earlier testified that you weren't aware of that, but if that was the concern of the president to try to get to the bottom of it and it's the concern of Ambassador Sondland who was trying to set up meetings on behalf of... To ensure really that meetings occurred and phone calls occurred to strengthen the relationship... I'm a little... I mean, I understand the people at the NSC, people at State Department had issues with that, but at the end of the day, isn't it the Commander and Chief that makes those decisions?

Fiona Hill: [\(37:20\)](#)

My point Mr. Nunes is that we at the National Security Council were not told either by the president directly or through Ambassador Bolton that we were to be focused on these issues as a matter of US foreign policy toward Ukraine. So when you're talking about Ukraine in 2016, I never personally heard the president say anything specific about 2016 and Ukraine. I've seen him saying plenty of things publicly, but I was not given a directive. In fact, I was given a directive on July 10th by Ambassador Bolton very clearly to stay out of domestic politics.

Steve Castor: [\(37:55\)](#)

Just for sake of the timeline, I think as of July 19th, they hadn't even engaged with Rudy Giuliani yet. I don't believe that happened until a little bit later. So you believe by July 19th, they were already engaged in those types of activities?

Fiona Hill: [\(38:11\)](#)

We'd already had a discussion with Kurt Volker, which was in the deep positions of his assistant, Chris Anderson, that indicated that he had met with Rudy Giuliani at this point. And Ambassador Sondland and made comments about meeting with Giuliani. And as we know in the May 23rd meeting, they had been instructed to meet with Giuliani. They give us every impression that they were meeting with Rudy Giuliani at this point and Rudy Giuliani was also saying on the television and indeed has said subsequently, that he was closely coordinating with the State Department. So it was my belief that they were meeting with him.

Steve Castor: [\(38:45\)](#)

Okay. And there's some, I mean, there's some ambiguity in the direction to work with Rudy Giuliani. Ambassador Volker said, the president dismissed Ukraine and said, oh, if you want to work on it, just go talk to Rudy. And Ambassador Sondland took that a little bit differently. And I believe that Ambassador Volker was primarily the interlocutor with Mr. Giuliani and that was happening. It didn't start until the end of July.

Fiona Hill: (39:13)

I only learned that subsequently from Ambassador Volcker's deposition. So I just want to tell you in that particular timeframe, I was not aware of that. And in fact, Gordon Sondland did refer to Rudy Giuliani. And again, Ambassador Bolton had warned Ambassador Volker not to meet with Rudy Giuliani in a meeting.

Steve Castor: (39:35)

Mr. Morrison, told us both in his deposition and at his public hearing that you had related concerns about Colonel Vindman's judgment?

Fiona Hill: (39:42)

I did not relate any concerns in general terms about Colonel Vindman's judgment. So I was somewhat surprised when I heard Mr. Morrison make that assertion. And when I read his deposition there was a very specific point that was made. And again, these are personnel issues and I'm sure that nobody here would like to have their private personnel issues put before a committee. But you've asked me about this. So I had a couple of very short transition meetings with Mr. Morrison. And again, Mr. Morrison did not work in our directorate. He was taking over the position, which he held for three months. I had worked as the senior director for Europe and Eurasia it was at the time, for more than two years at this point. And I'd been working for a year with Colonel Vindman with Mr. Vindman and in the course of one of the meetings, sometime in the June timeframe, I sat down with Mr. Morrison and with a deputy referred to him in his deposition, John Erath, who was also working and we went through our organizational chart.

Fiona Hill: (40:41)

We went through who was staying, who was rotating out and leaving in the summer and we talked about everybody's strengths and weaknesses. And I always ask my staff to do upward feedback as well to talk about what I wasn't doing my tithe or I'd like to learn too. And I said that I was concerned about the way things were trending in Ukraine policy. So Colonel Vindman, is a highly distinguished, decorated military officer. He came over to us from the chairman's office in the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And we were evaluating and looking at him in the context of what his future positions would be in the context of the US Army. And I was concerned that if, for example, Colonel Vindman might decide to leave the military, that perhaps he wasn't as well suited for something that will be much more political. I did not feel that he had the political antenna to deal with something that was straying into domestic politics.

Fiona Hill: (41:36)

Not everyone is suited for that. That does not mean in any way that I was questioning his overall judgment nor was I questioning in any way his substantive expertise. He is excellent on issues related to Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, on Russian defense issues, he had been in charge of the Russia campaign, thinking through at the chairman's office and in the

Pentagon. This was a very specific issue because by June, we saw that things were diverging and you needed completely different sensitivity. Some people in my office have worked at the highest levels of advisory positions and Mr. Morrison had come from Capitol Hill, he knew politics inside out. And we said that Colonel Vindman did not and we were concerned about how he would manage what was becoming a highly charged and potentially partisan issue, which had not been before.

Steve Castor: [\(42:31\)](#)

And Colonel Vindman related to us during his deposition that he subsequently was sort of cut out of a lot of the decision making and involvements with the embassy in Ukraine. Was that something you recommended?

Fiona Hill: [\(42:45\)](#)

Not with the embassy in Ukraine. I mean we did pull him back from the meeting in the oval office. And subsequently we were very concerned about these political aspects to this and we did not feel... July 10th, Colonel Vindman was justifiably alarmed when he realized that there was this highly political aspect of the meeting that we were looking for eventually with President Zelensky.

Steve Castor: [\(43:11\)](#)

And Mr. Holmes, at the end of August, we understand that Ambassador Taylor was engaged in obtaining some information for the president about European allies burden sharing in the region as the decision about aid was being debated.

David Holmes: [\(43:35\)](#)

So sir, after the hold was placed on the security assistance, many people I think, were scrambling to try to understand why. I believe it was Senator Johnson who had said that the president was concerned about burden sharing, perhaps others as well. And so trying to interpret why this might've happened and we were looking into the facts of what the Europeans have provided and what we have provided. It was very illuminating what we learned. The United States has provided combined civilian and military assistance to Ukraine since 2014 of about \$3 billion plus three \$1 billion loan guarantees that's not... Those get paid back largely. So just over \$3 billion. The Europeans at the level of the European Union plus the member States combined since 2014, my understanding have provided a combined \$12 billion to Ukraine.

Steve Castor: [\(44:25\)](#)

And you were able to communicate that information back at the end of August?

David Holmes: [\(44:30\)](#)

I believe so, yeah. This was done in collaboration with other missions, the EU to NATO and others. Yes.

Steve Castor: (44:36)

And do you think that was the information the White House was looking for?

David Holmes: (44:40)

We don't know. If the concern was that others weren't spending as much as we were to support Ukraine, then that information showed a different story.

Steve Castor: (44:50)

Okay. And the aid was subsequently lifted, the pause in the aid was lifted shortly thereafter?

David Holmes: (44:57)

Yes in mid September. [inaudible 00:12:05].

Mr. Schiff: (45:04)

That concludes the 45 minute rounds. We'll now go to member questioning. I'll recognize myself for five minutes. First, as a threshold matter, I want to say to the witnesses to be a bit cautious when members represent, are you aware of this fact? Are you aware of that fact? Do you know that so-and-so testified to this or testify to that? If you have personal knowledge of it, that's fine, and I'm not saying this is deliberate, sometimes members get it wrong. So let me just clear the record on one of the things that was suggested to you that the vice president canceled his trip because of a conflict with a trip to Canada. That was not Ms. Williams testimony.

Mr. Schiff: (45:41)

Her testimony was, "I asked my colleague why we should stop trip planning and why the vice president would not be attending. And I was informed that the president had decided the vice president would not attend the inauguration." So just offer that caution. Dr. Hill, I'm going to ask you, you may be aware of some of the attacks on Colonel Vindman suggesting that he has a dual loyalty, that he's not really loyal to America, he's loyal to Ukraine. I wanted to ask you, as a fellow immigrant, what you think of those kinds of accusations when they're leveled against Colonel Vindman or other Americans?

Fiona Hill: (46:21)

I think it's very unfortunate. I mean, this is a country of immigrants, with the exception perhaps of very few people still here. Everyone emigrated to the United States at some point in their family history. And this is what for me, really does make America great. I mean, I'm sure that every single person here, some people perhaps came reluctantly, others came by choice as I did. But this is, for me, this is the essence of America. It's why I wanted to be here and why I wanted to stay here and I think it's unfair to castigate anyone. Everyone has some kind of [inaudible 00:46:54] to them. I'm an Anglo American perhaps or I'm a British American, I'm a naturalized citizen. I do not believe that my loyalty is to the United Kingdom, my loyalty is here to the United States. This is my country and the country that I serve and I

know for a fact that every single one of my colleagues and there were many naturalized citizens in my office and across the National Security Council felt exactly the same way. I think it's deeply unfair.

Mr. Schiff: [\(47:19\)](#)

Thank you. You mentioned something in your testimony, and I might not have this exactly right, that I think Ambassador Sondland at one point told you his role was to make deals. Is that right?

Fiona Hill: [\(47:29\)](#)

That's correct.

Mr. Schiff: [\(47:30\)](#)

I want to ask you-

Fiona Hill: [\(47:31\)](#)

And he told other people that as well to be clear.

Mr. Schiff: [\(47:34\)](#)

I want to ask you about one of those deals. The one that Ambassador Bolton described as a drug deal. I had the suggestion, or the indication rather, when Mr. Goldman was asking you questions about the July 10th meeting and the fact there were two meetings, one in Ambassador Bolton's presence and another in the Ward Room, that there was more you had to say about that. Do you want to walk us through that in a little more detail?

Fiona Hill: [\(47:57\)](#)

Well, the reference that Ambassador Bolton made was after I returned from the Ward Room and related to him what I had heard. So there was a there the sequencing of meetings, which I know that there's been some concern about the sequencing here and discrepancies between various depositions. So what happened immediately after the meeting that Ambassador Bolton caught a little shot, was that he told me to hold back in the room. And he was escorting out the Ukrainian visitors along with Secretary Perry and Ambassadors Volker and Sondland. And I guess they wanted to take a quick photograph outside of his office. And I know that Secretary Perry and others have tweeted out that photograph, beautiful sunny day and there's a picture of all of them standing just outside of Ambassador Bolton's office. This is very quick. He came back in and at that point I guess they were already moving down to the Ward Room because on the way out of Ambassador Bolton's office, Ambassador Sondland had said, let's regroup in the Ward Room for a quick huddle on next steps, which to be honest, was quite unusual.

Fiona Hill: [\(49:06\)](#)

You don't usually huddle in a room in the White House to discuss next steps with foreign delegations. Because we took it to mean next steps on setting up the meeting, which

already, as I'd said, Ambassador Bolton wasn't prepared to do. And when Ambassador Bolton came back into the office, that's when he gave me the very strong instruction to go downstairs, find out what was being discussed and to come right back up and report it to him. And as I came into the Ward Room, Colonel Vindman and Ambassador Sondland were in an exchange. And that's when I noticed that Colonel Vindman looked quite alarmed. Now I know that Ambassador Sondland was asked yesterday because again, I watched all of his testimony and I watched it very carefully, that there was some questions about yelling and shouting. I certainly never said that and there was no yelling and shouting.

Fiona Hill: [\(49:57\)](#)

That's some embellishment that's crept in perhaps in media depictions or how people like to retell these stories and add things to them. When I came in, Ambassador Sondland was in an exchange with Colonel Vindman along the lines of, well we have an agreement to have this meeting. And I came in and I asked what's going on here? And he said, and this is again the Ukrainians are there, Ambassador Volker was there, but at this point I also want to stress, Secretary Perry had left. He was not in the Ward Room when I came. As I was coming in, Secretary Perry and his colleagues were leaving. So Secretary Perry has no recollection of this meeting because he was not in it. And so when I came in, Gordon Sondland was basically saying, well look, we have a deal here that there will be a meeting. I have a deal here with the Chief of Staff Mulvaney. There will be a meeting if the Ukrainians open up or announce these investigations and into 2016 in Burisma.

Fiona Hill: [\(50:57\)](#)

And I cut it off immediately there because by this point, having heard Mr. Giuliani over and over again on the television and all of the issues that he was asserting by this point, it was clear that Burisma was code for the Bidens because Giuliani was laying it out there. I could see why Colonel Vindman was alarmed. And he said, this is inappropriate. We're the National Security Council, we can't be involved in this. And I've learned since from Mr. Holmes' rendition here today, that Colonel Vindman has already warned the Ukrainians or in fact President Zelensky no less to stay out of American politics, domestic politics. So I cut off this line and I said to Ambassador Sondland, look, we need procedures for here.

Fiona Hill: [\(51:43\)](#)

Ambassador Bolton just made it clear we can't set up the meeting right now. We have to properly prepare this through the proper process. I know this sounds all very boring but we have a national security procedures to do this. And I said, we really shouldn't be litigating this or talking about this in front of our colleagues from Ukraine. It was completely inappropriate for us to be thrashing this out in front of them. And he agreed and we asked our Ukrainian colleagues to move into the corridor outside the Ward Room and I explained where this is in the deposition. Which is also extraordinary awkward because they shouldn't

have been standing around in a corridor in the basically in West Wing at this particular juncture. And that's when I pushed back on Ambassador Sondland and said, look, I know there's differences about whether one, we should have this meeting.

Fiona Hill: [\(52:26\)](#)

We're trying to figure out whether we should have it after the Ukrainian democratic, sorry, parliamentary elections, the [inaudible 00:52:33] elections, which by that point I think had been set for July 21st. It must have been, because this is July 10th at this point. And Ambassador Bolton would like to wait until after that to basically see whether President Zelensky gets the majority in the parliament, which would enable him to form a cabinet and then we can move forward. And Ambassador Sondland then said, okay, fair enough. He realized he wasn't going to be able to push this further. Ambassador Volker didn't say anything at this particular juncture. and then he said he had another meeting and they all left. And I went back up and relate this to Ambassador Bolton, which is when he gave me the very specific instruction that we've already been through to go to talk to Mr. Eisenberg, John Eisenberg in the NSC counsel's office.

Mr. Schiff: [\(53:21\)](#)

Thank you. Mr. Nunes.

Devin Nunes: [\(53:24\)](#)

I assume we're getting eight minutes there.

Mr. Schiff: [\(53:28\)](#)

Mr. Nunes, I don't cut off a witness in the middle of their answer. You may proceed.

Fiona Hill: [\(53:31\)](#)

Sorry, that was a long answer.

Mr. Schiff: [\(53:34\)](#)

Mr. Jordan.

Jordan: [\(53:35\)](#)

Mr. Holmes, why didn't your boss talk about it?

David Holmes: [\(53:38\)](#)

Was that sir?

Jordan: [\(53:40\)](#)

Why didn't your boss bring up the call that you overheard? The reason you're here today. I mean you're their closing witness. Yet their star witness, their first witness, Ambassador Taylor didn't even bring it up. And when we deposed you, you said this was extremely distinctive experience, one of the most remarkable events of my life. You described it like this. You said, "after the call happens, I immediately told Deputy Chief of Mission and others

at the embassy about the call." Then you said, you went on vacation, you told several friends and family about the call. Then you come back on August six and you tell Ambassador Taylor about the call. And then in your deposition statement, you said in your statement today as well, "I repeatedly refer to the call in meetings and conversations where the issue of the president's interest in Ukraine was relevant. I repeatedly referred to the call in meetings and conversations where the issue of the president's interest in Ukraine was relevant." That sounds like government speak for you told everybody. Yet their star witness, their first witness Ambassador Taylor, when he came here, he related 13 different conversations he had between July 18th when the aid is frozen and September 11th when it's released. 13 different conversations, never once mentioning this call. July 19th, Dr. Hill and Colonel Vindman told Taylor what Sondland told them. July 19th, Sondland told Taylor about the upcoming Trump/Zelensky call. July 20th, Sondland told Taylor what Sondland told Zelensky to tell Trump. July 20th, [inaudible 00:55:00] tells Taylor what Zelensky told [inaudible 00:22:01]. July 28th, Morrison tells Taylor what happened on the Trump/ Zelensky call. August 16th, Volker tells Taylor what Yarmack told Volker. August 21st, [inaudible 00:55:12] talks to Taylor.

Jordan: (55:12)

August 22nd, Morrison talks to Taylor. August 29th, Yarmack talks to Taylor. September 1st, Morrison tells Taylor what Sondland told Morrison about what Yarmack told Sondland. September 2nd, Morrison tells Taylor what [inaudible 00:55:23] told Morrison. September 7th, Morrison tells Taylor what Sondland told Trump. And September 8th, Sondland tells Taylor what Trump told Sondland. Nowhere, nowhere is there a Holmes tells Taylor what the president of the United States told Sondland. 13 conversations-

David Holmes: (55:41)

May I answer that question?

Jordan: (55:41)

Yeah, I'll get to you, I'll give you a chance here in a second.

David Holmes: (55:43)

Thank you.

Jordan: (55:43)

But 13 conversations. 13 conversations from their star witness. You're their closing witness and he can't remember a call from a guy he works with every single day. Why?

David Holmes: (55:57)

Yes sir. So immediately when I went back to the embassy after this lunch on the 26th, I told my direct supervisor, the Deputy Chief of Mission. I would have told Ambassador Taylor immediately, except he was on the front lines that afternoon. I then went on, as I've testified, my vacation on Saturday, came back the following Monday and on Tuesday I was

back in the ambassador's office where I referred to the call. In that week plus that I was away, it was my assumption that the Deputy Chief of Mission would've informed other people about the call as well.

David Holmes: (56:32)

So my recollection is when I did refer to the call in that meeting, that ambassador Taylor nodded knowingly as though he had been briefed on it. So I referred to the call and I mentioned some of my takeaways from the call. And at the time the main takeaway from the call was, the president doesn't care about Ukraine. So we're going to have a tough road ahead to convince him that it's important enough for him to schedule an Oval Office meeting for president's Zelensky and ultimately to release this hold on security assistance. That was the takeaway. And that's what I referred to repeatedly in the coming weeks whenever it came relevant. And I'll remind you sir that, one more important point, throughout this time, as I testified, we were trying to find a formula, things we could do with Ukrainians that would convince the president that they were worth talking to.

Jordan: (57:23)

Maybe Mr. Holmes the takeaway was, he thought it was no big deal because he already knew. He didn't remember it because we already had the transcript.

David Holmes: (57:34)

No, actually sir-

Jordan: (57:35)

He didn't remember that... We had the Trump/Zelensky transcript had been out for two months.

David Holmes: (57:40)

Sir, I believe that when I-

Jordan: (57:41)

Even though you're repeatedly bringing this conversation up, as you said to everybody, anytime there's a talk about Ukraine, you recall this conversation. Maybe it was the transcript... The call happened on the July 25th, that's four months ago. The transcript's been out for two months. Maybe the ambassador thought, this is nothing new here. But shazam, last week you come forward with supposedly this new information. There is nothing different in there than what we had on the transcript. Maybe that's the reason their star witness, their first witness didn't bring it up, but they had to have something. So you're their closing witness because you overheard the president talking to Ambassador Sondland.

David Holmes: (58:21)

Sir, if I could answer, I see four seconds left on the clock. I believe-

Mr. Schiff: (58:26)

Mr. Holmes, you may take as long as you need.

David Holmes: (58:27)

Thank you sir. I believe that Ambassador Taylor did already know when I briefed him, when I returned from vacation on the sixth, it was not news to him that the president was pressing for a Biden investigation.

Jordan: (58:38)

That's not what I asked. I asked why he didn't share with us.

Mr. Schiff: (58:40)

Ms. Jordan, please do not interrupt the witness any further. Mr. Holmes, Mr. Jordan's time has expired, but yours has not. You may answer the question.

David Holmes: (58:46)

Okay thank you. It's exactly my point. I briefed the call in detail to the Deputy Chief of Mission, went away for a week, come back, I refer to the call and everyone is nodding. Of course, that's what's going on. Of course the president is pressing for a Biden investigation before he'll do these things the Ukrainians want. There was nodding agreement. So it did I go through every single word in the call? No, because everyone by that point agreed. It was obvious what the president was pressing for and Ambassador Taylor, as you've just outlined, had all those other interactions-

Jordan: (59:18)

But he didn't share it with us.

Mr. Schiff: (59:20)

Mr. Jordan, please do not interrupt.

David Holmes: (59:23)

But sir, my vivid recollection of an event I was involved with was a touchstone experience that to me, validated-

Jordan: (59:32)

And-

Mr. Schiff: (59:32)

Mr. Jordan, please do not interrupt.

David Holmes: (59:32)

What we believed. And Ambassador Taylor was not in that call.

Jordan: (59:38)

And so all of a sudden last week, you've got to come tell us, right?

Mr. Schiff: (59:41)

Mr. Jordan, you will allow the witness to answer the question.

David Holmes: (59:44)

I'll finish with this.

Mr. Schiff: (59:45)

Thank you.

David Holmes: (59:46)

He was involved in a number of other interactions as you've outlined, that brought him to the same conclusion. It is quite possible-

Jordan: (59:53)

That he doesn't share the one that [crosstalk 00:59:56] the guy he works with, he doesn't share that one?

Mr. Schiff: (59:56)

Mr. Jordan, you may not like the witness's answer, but we will hear it.

Jordan: (01:00:01)

There wasn't an answer, it was a filibuster.

Mr. Schiff: (01:00:02)

Mr. Jordan, we will hear the witness's answer. Have you concluded Mr. Holmes?

David Holmes: (01:00:06)

I have sir. Thank you.

Mr. Schiff: (01:00:06)

Thank you, Mr. Himes.

Himes: (01:00:08)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Hill and Mr. Holmes, thank you for your testimony. Dr. Hill, you made a fairly dramatic comment in your opening statement to which the ranking member took some exception. I'm more interested in the Ukraine piece of this, but you said some of you on this committee appear to believe that Russia and its security services did not conduct a campaign against our country and that perhaps somehow for some reason Ukraine did. I'm really much more interested in the Ukraine piece of this, but I do want to defend you briefly. I don't know what my colleagues believe, but I do have a pretty good sense of what the effects are of creating ambiguity, of lacking clarity and conviction around the Russian attack on the election of 2016. In response to your comment, the ranking member offered up a report which varies in material respects from the report that was

created by the 17 agencies of the intelligence community. A day does not go by in which ranking member Nunes does not speak of the Russia hoax. And this is an area in which context is pretty important.

Himes: [\(01:01:15\)](#)

Dr. Hill, let me read you a comment by another senior official. "Why did Democratic National Committee turn down the DHS offer to protect against tax? It's all a BIG DEM HOAX. All caps. Why did the DNC refused to turn over its server to the FBI? It's all a Big Dem scam." Dr. Hill, do you know who said those things?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:01:38\)](#)

I don't.

Himes: [\(01:01:39\)](#)

That's the president of the United States, Donald J. Trump. So you might be forgiven for your-

Fiona Hill: [\(01:01:43\)](#)

I might've missed that.

Himes: [\(01:01:43\)](#)

You didn't miss much. But my point is, and tell me if you agree or disagree, ambiguity, a failure to name and shame the Russians for the attack in 2016, that is not in the service of our national security, is it?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:01:57\)](#)

It's not. No.

Himes: [\(01:01:58\)](#)

It's not. So let's turn to Ukraine. Dr. Hill, you characterize the idea that Ukraine interfered in the election as a fictional narrative, have you seen any evidence at all that Ukraine interfered in the 2016 election?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:02:15\)](#)

Well, I brought with me two exhibits that I was pointed to in fact, by our colleagues, during the deposition that I gave on October 14th. And actually I'm quite grateful that they pointed me in this direction. I was presented, during my deposition, with two articles, or at least two pieces of information. One was a op ed that the Ukrainian Ambassador Charlie wrote in 2016 in the Hill. So this is during the presidential campaign when President Trump was then the nominee for the Republican Party. And this is Ambassador Charlie who was then, still the Ukrainian ambassador to the United States being critical of President Trump, who was then the nominee for the Republican Party for making comments about Ukraine, Crimea and Russia.

Himes: (01:03:11)

May I interrupt you there? Let me be very specific about what those comments were. The president, when he was a candidate said quote, "The people of Crimea, from what I've heard, would rather be with Russia than where they were." So Ambassador Charlie is responding to that in that article, correct?

Fiona Hill: (01:03:27)

That's correct. And he just uses this as a peg because to be honest, the whole article is actually about Ukraine. And this is classic standard for anyone who wants to write an op ed, I've written plenty of them myself, you pick a peg by something that you or somebody else might've said and then you proceed to say what you want to say.

Himes: (01:03:42)

Right. So here it is.

Fiona Hill: (01:03:44)

So this is what Ambassador Charlie does, is he talks about Ukraine's position vis a vis Russia and Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Himes: (01:03:51)

Let me just read, because it's worth people hearing what this severe attack on candidate Trump, who is suggested that the Crimeans would rather be with Russia. Ambassador Charlie writes, "Even if Trump's comments are only speculative and do not really reflect a future foreign policy, they call for appeasement of an aggressor and support the violation of a sovereign country's territorial integrity and another's breach of international law." That the attack on candidate Trump.

Fiona Hill: (01:04:20)

That's correct.

Himes: (01:04:20)

Does that sound like election interference to you?

Fiona Hill: (01:04:23)

Well, I would say that it's probably not the most advisable thing to do for an ambassador because you never know who's going to win. And I think that the second piece that was presented to me at great length, and I want to thank Mr. Costa for making me go back and read it again because when you asked me the questions about it, I did remember the piece. Kenneth Vogel is a very well-known and as you've pointed out, extremely good journalist, and I'd remembered reading this back in the day in January of 2017 but it'd been a long time between then and October. And you gave me a copy and I went back and read it again. Because I think it actually is extraordinary important, it gets to this issue here. Mr. Vogel

points out that the Ukrainian government, again, they wouldn't have done very well at the [inaudible 00:32:11], I'm picking up the issue I pointed out at the beginning of today, they bet on the wrong horse.

Fiona Hill: (01:05:15)

They bet on Hillary Clinton winning the election. And so they were trying to carry favor with the Clinton campaign, it's quite evident here. And he relates to some extent, individuals and some Ukrainian officials like Mr. Avakov, the Interior Minister and a number of other people that he names here and that have been named at various points. And talks about how they were trying to collect information as a ranking member Nunes said on Mr. Manafort and on other people as well. However, I do want to point out that the crux of the article here by Mr. Vogel, as he said, there was little evidence of a top-down effort by Ukraine. And he makes a distinction between the Russian effort that was personally directed by Russian President Putin and involve the country's military-

Fiona Hill: (01:06:03)

... personally directed by Russian President Putin and involve the country's military and foreign intelligence services. Now, I don't think that those two things are exactly the same. I also mentioned in my deposition of October 14th that in fact many officials for many countries, including Ukraine, bet on the wrong horse. They believe that Secretary Clinton, former Senator Clinton, former First Lady Clinton was going to win. Many said some pretty disparaging and hurtful things about President Trump, and I can't blame him for feeling aggrieved about them. And when we were setting up head of state visits ... And remember, I have a portfolio of 50 plus countries plus NATO and the European Union ... we thought it prudent to collect as much as possible about comments that people might've said about the president during the campaign, when he was either one of the candidates to be the nominee for the Republican party or when he was actually the candidate running against Hillary Clinton.

Fiona Hill: (01:07:03)

I'm sorry to say that an awful lot, and perhaps I shouldn't name them here because it will have consequences, an awful lot of senior officials in many governments, including our allied governments, said some pretty hurtful things about the president. I would also personally take offense at some of the things that were said if I were the president. Now, the difference here, however, is that that hasn't had any major impact on his feelings towards those countries. Not that I have seen. But I've also heard the president say ... And he said it in public, so I'm not revealing any kind of executive privilege here ... that Ukraine tried to take me down.

Fiona Hill: (01:07:39)

What I have seen [inaudible 01:07:40] ill-advised Ukrainian officials ... Ambassador Charlie's been removed as being the ambassador from here ... made some pretty, you know, unpleasant statements or ill-advised op-eds. But I could list a whole host of ambassadors

from allied countries who tweeted out, who had public comments about the president as well, and it did not affect security assistance, having meetings with them. If it would, there'd been a lot of people he wouldn't have met with.

Mr. Hines: [\(01:08:08\)](#)

Thank you, Dr. Hill. Mr. Chairman, I seek unanimous consent to add to the record a political article of December 1st, 2016, entitled, Russia accuses Ukraine of sabotaging Trump. It outlines Russian senior officials making allegations that there was Ukrainian interference in the 2016 election.

Mr. Schiff: [\(01:08:28\)](#)

Without objection. Mr. Conaway.

Mr. Conaway: [\(01:08:30\)](#)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield to Mr. Ratcliffe five minutes.

Mr. Ratcliffe: [\(01:08:33\)](#)

Thank the gentleman for yielding. I want to pick up where my colleague across the aisle, Congressman Himes, left off earlier. Respectfully, Dr. Hill, he was not defending you. He was defending himself and Democrats. I want to make sure the record's very clear. Ranking member Nunes was correct. He correctly noted in his opening that Republicans, not Democrats on this committee, were the first ones to raise the issue of Russian interference in the 2016 election.

Mr. Ratcliffe: [\(01:09:05\)](#)

The disagreement wasn't about Russian meddling. The disagreement was about whether or not President Trump conspired with Russia, a false allegation pedaled by the Democrats generally and specifically by some Democrats on this committee. With that, Mr. Holmes, I want to turn to you and the part of the conversation, your testimony, where you said you heard President Trump say, "Is he going to do the investigation?" And Ambassador Sondland said, "He's going to do it. He'll do anything you ask him to." Is that right?

David Holmes: [\(01:09:41\)](#)

Yes, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe: [\(01:09:42\)](#)

What did President Trump say next?

David Holmes: [\(01:09:49\)](#)

He said, "Good. What about Sweden?"

Mr. Ratcliffe: [\(01:09:51\)](#)

He said what?

David Holmes: (01:09:52)

Sir, he ... I'm sorry. I need to look at back where we are in the middle of the conversation here. Where are we from the testimony? Exactly. Then, they turn to the Sweden conversation.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:10:10)

What did President Trump say next?

David Holmes: (01:10:12)

He said, "Good. What about Sweden?"

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:10:14)

Good. What about Sweden? Good. What about Sweden? Why isn't that in your statement.

David Holmes: (01:10:22)

Sir, it's not a word for word, every single word in the conversation.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:10:25)

But it's the most important part of the conversation.

David Holmes: (01:10:29)

Well, then they turn to Sweden. They turn to the other topic.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:10:34)

Respectfully, Mr. Holmes, this impeachment inquiry is based on the call the day before, where President Trump, as part of a bribery scheme, as part of an extortion scheme, as part of a quid pro quo according to the Democrats, demanded investigations in exchange for either military aid or a White House meeting. And the next day, you were witness to President Trump receiving word that the bribery scheme was successful. The extortion scheme was successful. And his response was, "Good. What about Sweden?"

David Holmes: (01:11:11)

Yes, sir. The Ukraine portion of that conversation was extremely brief.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:11:17)

What was the first thing the president said on the call?

David Holmes: (01:11:26)

They ...

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:11:26)

[crosstalk 01:11:26] you had a clear recollection of his conversation?

David Holmes: (01:11:30)

Yes, sir.

Mr. Conaway: (01:11:30)

Mr. Ratcliffe, please let Mr. Holmes answer.

David Holmes: (01:11:32)

Yes, sir. Sondland greeted the President.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:11:35)

How?

David Holmes: (01:11:36)

He said, "Hello, Mr. President. I'm in Kiev," and the president said, "Are you in Ukraine?"

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:11:44)

You think he said, "I think you're in Ukraine?" He said what?

David Holmes: (01:11:48)

He said, "Are you in Ukraine?"

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:11:51)

What did you hear President Trump say about ASAP Rocky?

David Holmes: (01:11:55)

I did not hear President Trump's side of the conversation about ASAP Rocky.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:11:59)

You said ... How did we go from the conversation was very loud and his voice was recognizable to, as you say here, "When the conversation shifted, I could only hear Ambassador Sondland's side of the conversation."

David Holmes: (01:12:11)

Yes, sir. As I've testified, the initial part of the call, Ambassador Sondland sort of ... When the president came on the call, he sort of winced and held the phone away from his ear for the initial portion of the call. And then at some point in the call, he stopped doing that. I don't know why. I don't know if he turned the volume down. I don't know if the president spoke more quietly. I don't know if he got used to the volume. I don't know what changed.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:12:33)

What did change? It's important. This was memorable.

David Holmes: (01:12:36)

I don't know, sir. Ambassador Sondland stopped moving the phone away from his ear. That's what ...

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:12:40)

That's what it was?

David Holmes: (01:12:41)

Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:12:41)

Okay. How did the conversation end?

David Holmes: (01:12:53)

I only heard of Ambassador Sondland's side of the conversation, sir. And at the end of the conversation, he was giving the president advice on how to deal with this ASAP Rocky situation. And he said, "You know, they should have released him on your word, and you can tell the Kardashians you tried."

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:13:10)

Okay. So to be clear, when President Trump received word that President Zelensky had agreed to the investigations, he said, "Good. What about Sweden?"

David Holmes: (01:13:22)

Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:13:23)

Okay. When exactly did Gordon Sondland ask President Zelensky about the investigations?

David Holmes: (01:13:32)

I'm sorry, sir?

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:13:33)

When did he ask about the investigations?

David Holmes: (01:13:35)

When did Gordon Sondland ask Zelensky about the investigations?

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:13:38)

Yeah.

David Holmes: (01:13:43)

You're asking in which meeting did he raise the investigations?

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:13:46)

Well, it was raised the day before on a call. And the next day, Gordon Sondland said the answer to that was he's going to do the investigation. So when did he ask about the investigation?

David Holmes: (01:13:55)

My assumption is he did it in the closed-door meeting with Yermak.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:13:57)

Well, I don't want to ...

Mr. Schiff: (01:13:58)

The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:13:59)

I appreciate that, but I want to make sure the record's clear that yesterday, Ambassador Sondland testified ...

Mr. Schiff: (01:14:03)

The time of the gentleman ...

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:14:04)

... that the topic of conversations did not come up on that day.

Mr. Schiff: (01:14:06)

Time of the gentleman.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (01:14:06)

I yield back.

Mr. Schiff: (01:14:07)

The time of the gentleman has expired. Ms. Sewell, You're recognized.

Ms. Sewell: (01:14:10)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank both of our witnesses for being here today. I'd like to turn our discussion to the campaign to remove career diplomat, Ambassador Yovanovitch. Both of you in your various capacities had to work with her, and both of you witness what I would call a smear campaign. I wanted to know your thoughts, Dr. Hill. What was your view of Ambassador Yovanovitch's experience and quality of her work in the Ukraine? And do you consider it to be a smear campaign?

Fiona Hill: (01:14:48)

I have the highest regard for Ambassador Yovanovitch, both in terms of her integrity and the high standards of work that she was carrying out as ambassador in Ukraine and across her whole career. I do believe that there was a smear campaign. I just want to say again for the record that I think it was unnecessary. If there was a decision to have a political ambassador put in place in Ukraine, that would be perfectly acceptable. It's exactly the right of the president to be able to do that. I did just did not see why it was necessary to malign Ambassador Yovanovitch to such an extent.

Ms. Sewell: (01:15:26)

Mr. Holmes, would you agree with that? And can you talk about the character integrity and performance of Ambassador Yovanovitch both in Ukraine?

David Holmes: (01:15:37)

Yes, ma'am. She was extremely professional, respected in Ukraine by Ukrainians. I think also by visiting American senior officials, including members of this committee and of Congress who came to visit. She was extremely dedicated, hardworking.

Ms. Sewell: (01:15:53)

Did you see it as a smear campaign as well?

David Holmes: (01:15:55)

I did, yes.

Ms. Sewell: (01:15:57)

And what was the effect that it had on the morale of other professionals that you worked with in the Ukraine?

David Holmes: (01:16:03)

It was a very confusing time. As I've said before, a president has the right to remove an ambassador for any or no reason at all. It was not clear to us why this was happening or why people weren't standing up for her.

Ms. Sewell: (01:16:18)

I'd like to now turn, Dr. Hill, to your boss. Your boss was Ambassador Bolton, right?

Fiona Hill: (01:16:26)

That's correct, yes.

Ms. Sewell: (01:16:27)

And did your boss, Ambassador Bolton, tell you that Giuliani was, "a hand grenade?"

Fiona Hill: (01:16:34)

He did, yes.

Ms. Sewell: (01:16:35)

What do you think he meant by his characterization of Giuliani as a hand grenade?

Fiona Hill: (01:16:41)

What he meant by this was pretty clear to me in the context of all of the statements that Mr. Giuliani was making publicly, that the investigations that he was promoting, that the storyline he was promoting, the narrative he was promoting was going to backfire. I think it has backfired.

Ms. Sewell: (01:16:58)

Was that narrative also inclusive of falsehoods about Ambassador Yovanovitch?

Fiona Hill: (01:17:04)

At the particular juncture that Ambassador Bolton made that comment, absolutely, because that was in the context of my discussions with him about what was happening to Ambassador Yovanovitch.

Ms. Sewell: (01:17:14)

I was particularly struck by your testimony, Dr. Hill, about receiving hateful calls and being accused of being a source mole in the White House. Are you a never Trumper or have you been true to your profession and remain a nonpartisan?

Fiona Hill: (01:17:32)

I honestly don't know what the definition of a never Trumper is, as I think many of my colleagues are feeling the same way. That is a puzzling term to be applied to career or nonpartisan officials. I chose to come into the administration. I could easily have said no when I was approached [crosstalk 01:17:50] ...

Ms. Sewell: (01:17:50)

Yes, but you didn't sign up to have hateful calls and the like.

Fiona Hill: (01:17:55)

I guess, unfortunately, where we are today in America that's coming with the territory. They're continuing, honestly. I mean, we're constantly having to block Twitter posts of my name and address on the internet. We've been doing this over the last couple of days.

Ms. Sewell: (01:18:09)

I think that you [crosstalk 01:18:10] ...

Fiona Hill: (01:18:10)

And as I said in my deposition, this could happen to any single person in this room, be it members of the press, be it members of Congress, and be at the staff. I think we have to find ways of combating this. And again, this gets back sadly to things that our adversaries can also exploit.

Ms. Sewell: (01:18:24)

Exactly. I think you would agree with me that this shouldn't become the new normal. Would you agree?

Fiona Hill: (01:18:28)

It should not.

Ms. Sewell: (01:18:30)

I also think that this kind of behavior, instead of keeping you down, would make you undeterred. Are you more determined to continue to do your work and to do it professionally?

Fiona Hill: (01:18:42)

I am, and I think that all of my colleagues are as well because, just as you said, we can't let this stand. I don't think anyone here wants to let this stand. I actually don't believe that this is a partisan issue. I don't think anybody wants to come under personal attack.

Ms. Sewell: (01:18:54)

Yeah. I unfortunately think that this become the new norm. And we're being led by the very top of the food chain, which is our president, which is unfortunate. I'm especially disheartened by his treatment of women. I think that the fact of the matter is that there's a long line of strong, talented women who have been smeared and victimized by this president. We can either choose to ignore it or do something about it. Frankly, I think that, whether you voted for him or whether you supported him or not, that doing so is wrong. You could simply just remove someone. You don't have to smear them. Thank you. I yield back my time.

Mr. Schiff: (01:19:32)

Mr. Turner.

Devin Nunes: (01:19:33)

Right. I just want to echo that sentiment and certainly lament the attacks that have been levied against our colleague, Elise Stefanik, on this panel, which have been vile and hateful. For those of you keeping score at home, the effort to accuse our president of coercion, extortion, or bribery with these witnesses, as we now come to the closing session of this, basically break down as follows. We have Kent and Ambassador Taylor who spoke of hearsay. Their hearsay of these matters that they said that they had heard were all statements that they'd heard from others who have also testified in front of us, so there's no one that's missing. There's no one out there. Kent and Taylor basically said that they'd heard it from Morrison and Sondland. Morrison had indicated he'd heard it from Sondland. Sondland testified yesterday. He'd heard it from no one on the planet.

Devin Nunes: (01:20:24)

Vindman and Morrison both have direct testimony of the phone call with the president of the United States. Beyond that, they only had contact with Sondland. And again, Sondland indicated he had contact with no one on the planet. Volker testified that he did have direct contact both with the Ukrainians and with the president of the United States and indicated that the president of the United States did not condition either a phone call, a meeting, or aid upon Ukraine undertaking investigations and also testified that the Ukrainians did not believe that either.

Devin Nunes: (01:20:59)

We also have the direct statements from the president of Ukraine and the foreign minister, that they did not feel any pressure to undertake investigations. We also have the evidence, that we're all very much aware of, which is they did not undertake any investigations. We also have Yovanovitch and Dr. Hill. Yovanovitch obviously left before the time period. Dr. Hill, we appreciate your being with us today, and Mr. Holmes. Dr. Hill, you have provided me probably the greatest piece of evidence that's before us to illustrate the problem with hearsay. You said, "Based on questions and statements, I have heard some of you on this committee — that'd be us — appear to believe that Russia and its security services did not conduct a campaign against our country." And perhaps somehow for some reason, it was Ukraine.

Devin Nunes: (01:21:48)

This — It was held up by Devin Nunes — is the report on Russian active measures that was voted on by all of us. It begins with this sentence. In 2015, Russia began engaging in a covert influence campaign aimed at the U.S. presidential election. Every one of us. Little small, you know, effort on your part, Dr. Hill, and you would have known that what you just said was not true, what you had heard. But you felt the need to put it in your eight-page statement before you went on to tell us a bunch of other things that you heard about other people, no matter how convinced you were of, also which were not necessarily true. One of which was that you said that Ambassador Sondland met with Giuliani.

Devin Nunes: (01:22:26)

Actually, Ambassador Sondland testified here that he had not, as ambassador, met with Giuliani. He'd briefly met him in his lifetime by shaking his hand, and Giuliani issued a statement that they had never met either. This is the problem with no matter how convinced we are, Dr. Hill, no matter how much we believe we know that what we've heard is true, it is still just what we've heard. But so far in this hearing, in these series of hearings, the only thing that we have is Volker saying, "I spoke to the president and I've spoke to the Ukrainians, neither of which believed that aid was conditioned, neither of which believed that the president was requiring it," and Ambassador Sondland, which said no one on the planet told him that that was the case. That's the sole evidence.

Devin Nunes: (01:23:11)

Now, I got to tell you, the one that gets interesting is Ambassador Sondland did say it's his belief that a meeting with the president was conditioned upon investigations. Ambassador Volker, who I think is a man of very civic integrity, said that that was not the case. Now, even if Ambassador Sondland is correct that somebody ... And Dr. Hill, you testified. And again, it's hearsay. You don't know ... that supposedly Mulvaney told him that, because he didn't testify to that. But let's say somebody beside the president told him that. You guys want to be the laughing stock of history to impeach a president of United States because he didn't take a meeting? Oh, please, dear God. Please undertake that.

Devin Nunes: (01:23:50)

Now, Mr. Holmes. I got to tell you. You say that you're ...

Mr. Schiff: (01:23:58)

Is there a question for Dr. Hill?

Devin Nunes: (01:24:00)

Mr. Holmes, in your testimony, you said that Sondland said, "He loves your ass," and also said, "He'll do anything that you want." Mr. Holmes, that information had nothing whatsoever to do with the subject matter of any of these hearings. It was anecdotal. It was extraneous. Your statements that your interests are protecting Ukraine are very dubious when you embarrass President Zelensky by making those statements you didn't have to make. Who cares that Ambassador Sondland said that? And you know you didn't embarrass Ambassador Sondland. You embarrassed Zelensky, because you know he got asked this question in his own country and people are hearing that statement as if it's true.

Mr. Schiff: (01:24:40)

The time of the gentleman has expired.

Devin Nunes: (01:24:41)

It's totally dubious if you do that for [crosstalk 01:24:43].

Mr. Schiff: (01:24:43)

Mr. Carson, you are recognized.

Devin Nunes: (01:24:44)

I yield back.

Speaker 1: (01:24:45)

[crosstalk 01:24:45] get to answer.

Mr. Carson: (01:24:45)

Thank you, Chairman. Thank you both for your service. Dr. Hill, I'd like to talk a little more in depth about Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney's role in the events under investigation. You testified, ma'am, that Mr. Mulvaney and Ambassador Sondland were both involved with a letter President Trump sent to the Ukrainian president on May 29th, congratulating him on his inauguration. Do you recall that, ma'am?

Fiona Hill: (01:25:10)

I did, yes.

Mr. Carson: (01:25:12)

And towards the end of that letter, President Trump closed with, "I would like to invite you to meet me at the White House in Washington DC as soon as we can find a mutually

convenient time." Dr. Hill, was this congratulatory letter drafted through the normal procedures that the NSC uses to send letters to foreign heads of state?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:25:33\)](#)

The first part of it was, except the last paragraph.

Mr. Carson: [\(01:25:37\)](#)

You also testified that Ambassador Sondland told you that he had dictated that line to the president and that he told Mr. Mulvaney to add that to the letter. Is that correct, ma'am?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:25:49\)](#)

That's correct.

Mr. Carson: [\(01:25:50\)](#)

You said that you were nervous about that. Why were you nervous, Dr. Hill?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:25:55\)](#)

Because at this juncture, it had become quite apparent that the president wasn't very keen on having a meeting with Mr. Zelensky, for all the reasons that we've been trying to lay out today. Once one puts in a letter like that, you raise the expectation of an invitation coming shortly.

Mr. Carson: [\(01:26:18\)](#)

Dr. Hill, you also testified, ma'am, that Ambassador Sondland was frequently meeting with Mr. Mulvaney. Mr. Giuliani's campaign of lies ultimately led to Ambassador Yovanovitch being recalled from her post in April 2019. You've also testified, ma'am, that her removal was pretty dispiriting and a turning point for you. Can you explain to us why, ma'am?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:26:40\)](#)

Well, again, as we've all made clear, Ambassador Yovanovitch, and you saw for yourselves in her deposition, is a person of great integrity. She's one of our finest foreign service officers, career foreign service officers. And if it had been a decision to remove her to replace her with a political appointee, again, that was perfectly within the rights of the president. Sometimes, it's highly advisable, in fact, to emphasize to a country just exactly how close the relationship is likely to be, to have an appointee who is close to the president if it's an important relationship.

Fiona Hill: [\(01:27:16\)](#)

But what was dispiriting was all of the accusations that were being fired at Ambassador Yovanovitch, leading her to be tweeted, including by members of the president's family. We all firmly believe that Mr. Giuliani and others, including the people who were recently indicted, the Ukrainian-American gentleman, had for some reason decided that Ambassador Yovanovitch was some kind of personal problem for them and that they had then decided to engage in just the kinds of things we've been discussing about. And frankly, she was an

easy target as a woman. I'm very sorry to hear about what's happened to Congressman Stefanik, and I think that this just illustrates the point and the problem that we're dealing with here today.

Mr. Carson: [\(01:28:01\)](#)

Certainly. I was also struck by your testimony that you were also the target of false accusations during your time in the Trump administration. You testified, ma'am, about receiving hateful calls and being accused of being, "a mole in the White House." You testified about death threats and calls at your home. Is that right?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:28:20\)](#)

That's correct. That was in 2017.

Mr. Carson: [\(01:28:22\)](#)

Well, I'm sorry you've had to go through all this, ma'am. You don't strike me as a woman who is easily deterred. You're not easily deterred, are you, Dr. Hill?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:28:29\)](#)

I'm not, no.

Mr. Carson: [\(01:28:31\)](#)

Thank you both for your service. I yield back, Chairman.

Fiona Hill: [\(01:28:33\)](#)

Thank you, sir.

Mr. Schiff: [\(01:28:34\)](#)

I thank the gentleman for yielding. Just another fact check and, again, my caution to both of you that representations about what prior witnesses said or what you have even said may not be consistent with the facts. This was from Ambassador Sondland's opening statement. After this Zelensky meeting, I also met with Zelensky's senior aide, Andre Yermak. I don't recall the specifics of our conversation, but I believe the issue of investigations was probably a part of that agenda or meeting. Now recognize Dr. Wenstrup.

Dr. Wenstrup: [\(01:29:08\)](#)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you both for being here. You know, in 1998, I voluntarily joined the United States Army Reserve because I saw our country under attack time and time again. Bill Clinton was the president. I didn't vote for Bill Clinton, but he was my commander in chief. It didn't matter that I didn't vote for him. I was grateful to live in a country that gets to legitimately elect our leaders.

Dr. Wenstrup: [\(01:29:35\)](#)

I've been to places where people don't get to, and it's not pretty. And I respect our system, and I accept the results that are determined by the American people. I deployed to Iraq,

2005, 2006, as an Army surgeon with soldiers from many backgrounds. The most important thing was we were all Americans. That was first and foremost. In our mission, we treated our troops, we treated the enemy, winning over the hearts and minds of people that never knew us because of their dictator, Saddam Hussein, who told them that we were responsible for all their problems. That was his narrative.

Dr. Wenstrup: [\(01:30:12\)](#)

And speaking of narratives, Dr. Hill, I'm sorry. I have to say this. You said based on statements you've heard that some in this committee believe Russia did not conduct a campaign against our country is false. That's Mr. Schiff's narrative. That's where you've heard it. We did a whole report on it, and we agree that Russia has done this since the Soviet Union and they've actually gotten better at it. That's a problem. But at the same time, certain Ukrainians did work against candidate Trump, some with the DNC. And if that's debunked, why is it Mr. Schiff has denied DNC operative Alexandra Chalupa from testifying to come forward and debunk it?

Dr. Wenstrup: [\(01:30:55\)](#)

I ask America, "Was it good for the country, for the DNC and the Clinton campaign, to pay Christopher Steele to dig up fake dirt with other foreign service sources on their political rival?" Was it good for America to claim having evidence of the president colluding with Russians when he did not, costing the taxpayer millions and being debunked by special counsel? I'd say the false narrative got caught.

Dr. Wenstrup: [\(01:31:23\)](#)

Was it good for the country, for Americans and foreigners alike, to attempt to entrap members of the United States presidential campaign, specifically the Trump campaign? Sadly, I've come to believe through all this that some in power do think it's good. They think it's okay. And now we're here in an impeachment proceeding, certainly a right that Congress has, and apparently even with very partisan rules. But I'm curious. This impeachment inquiry was announced by the Speaker before the whistleblower complaint was even out. I'm curious why the lawyer for the whistleblower announced that the coup to impeach the president, he announced that right after Trump won. That's pretty damning.

Dr. Wenstrup: [\(01:32:07\)](#)

I know it hurts after losing an election, especially as Americans. We usually get over it. And I imagine it would hurt even more if you were promised a position in the next administration and lost, and your hopes and your dreams are dashed. You know, I've seen hatred for political reasons, specifically on June 14th, 2017, at a ball field in Virginia. I've seen hatred in war, and I know that hatred blinds people. I've been in war, and I've studied war, and coups create division. And it's time for this phase of the publicly announced and proclaimed Democrat coup to end. Thank you for your service. Thanks for being here, and I yield back.

Fiona Hill: (01:33:00)

Could I actually say something? Because we've had three [crosstalk 01:33:03] ...

Mr. Schiff: (01:33:03)

Doctor, I was going to ask you if you'd like to respond. There have been a number of gentlemen ...

Speaker 2: (01:33:07)

[inaudible 00:27:07].

Dr. Wenstrup: (01:33:08)

I yielded back. [crosstalk 01:33:10] answer the question.

Mr. Schiff: (01:33:11)

Gentlemen will suspend. Dr. Hill, you may respond.

Dr. Wenstrup: (01:33:14)

[crosstalk 01:33:14] statement.

Fiona Hill: (01:33:14)

No, I think that what Dr. Wenstrup said was very powerful, about the importance of overcoming hatred and certainly partisan division. It's unfortunate that Congressmen Turner and Ratcliffe have both left as well, because I think all of us who came here under a legal obligation also felt we had a moral obligation to do so. We came as fact witnesses. When I was referring to questions that I'd heard, it was in the context of the deposition that I gave on October 14th, because I was very worried about the turn in which some of the questions were taking. And I understand that the point has been reared about individuals, as you've just said, Dr. Wenstrup, and that these articles lay out, taking different positions in our elections.

Fiona Hill: (01:34:06)

I don't believe there should be any interference of any kind in our election. I think it was unfair for people to already call the election and to make attacks, also, on candidate Trump and on President Trump. I know that this has put a huge cloud over this presidency and also over our whole democratic system. That's actually why as a nonpartisan person and as an expert on Russia and an expert on Vladimir Putin and on the Russian security services, I wanted to come in to serve the country to try to see if I could help.

Fiona Hill: (01:34:40)

I heard President Trump say that he wanted to improve the relations with Russia. I believe we have to. We can't be in this unending confrontation with Russia. We have to find a way to stabilize that relationship and to professionalize that relationship as well as to stop them from doing what they did in 2016 again in 2020. This is really the crux of the issue that I and others are trying to put across, and I think that you've put across very eloquently. The other

matters related to this inquiry, we're here just to provide what we know and what we've heard. I understand that for many members, this may be hearsay. I've talked about things I heard with my own ears.

Fiona Hill: [\(01:35:20\)](#)

I understand that Ambassador Sondland has said a lot of things. I've told you what he told me and what others told me. A lot of other people have said things to me again as well and also to Mr. Holmes. We're here to relate to you what we heard, what we saw, and what we did, and to be of some help to all of you in really making a very momentous decision here. We are not the people who make that decision. And I do again want to underscore what you said here, Dr. Wenstrup. It was very eloquent and very moving about your service and trying to bring us all together again as Americans. We need to be together again in 2020 so the American people can make a choice about the future and make their vote in a presidential election without any fear that this is being interfered in from any quarter whatsoever. So I just want to thank you for making what I think was also a very elegant and eloquent and heartfelt defense.

Mr. Schiff: [\(01:36:21\)](#)

Thank you, Dr. Hill. Ms Speier.

Ms. Speier: [\(01:36:23\)](#)

Mr. Chairman, thank you. And Dr. Hill, Mr. Holmes, thank you both for being fact witnesses. We are here as fact finders and we appreciate very much your presentations. Dr. Hill, I want to verify this story. I understand that when you were 11 years old, there was a school boy who set your pigtails on fire and you were taking a test. You turned around and, with your hands, snuffed out the fire and then proceeded to finish your test. Is that a true story?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:36:57\)](#)

It is a true story. I was a bit surprised to see that pop up today. It's one of the stories I occasionally tell because it had some very unfortunate consequences afterwards. My mother gave me a bowl haircut. So for the school photograph later in that week, I looked like Richard III or as if I'm going to be in a permanent [crosstalk 01:37:14] ...

Ms. Speier: [\(01:37:14\)](#)

Well, I think it underscores the fact that you speak truth, that you are steely, and I truly respect that. Let me move to your testimony and your deposition. You had indicated you are deeply troubled by Ambassador Yovanovitch's ... The attacks on her. You underscored again today that all ambassadors serve at the pleasure of the president. And certainly, in the case of Ambassador Yovanovitch, he could have just asked her to come home, but that didn't happen.

Ms. Speier: (01:37:49)

In fact, there was a systematic character assassination that went on and went on from 2018, if I'm not mistaken. But you say, "And the most obvious explanation at this point, it has to be said, seem to be business dealings of individuals who wanted to improve their investment positions inside of Ukraine itself." You were then asked, "Who do you understand was responsible for her removal?" And you said, "I understand this to be the result of the campaign that Mr. Giuliani had set in motion in conjunction with people who were writing articles and, you know, publications that I would have expected better of. And also, you know, just the constant drum beat of these accusations that he was making on the television."

Ms. Speier: (01:38:41)

Rudy Giuliani was playing fast and furious in Ukraine, it would appear. Is that correct?

Fiona Hill: (01:38:48)

That's correct.

Ms. Speier: (01:38:50)

He had no official tasking within the administration, is that correct?

Fiona Hill: (01:38:55)

Not that I had been told of.

Ms. Speier: (01:38:56)

But he frequently met with Ukrainian officials to request that they open an investigation?

Fiona Hill: (01:39:01)

So I was led to understand, yes.

Ms. Speier: (01:39:03)

... in an investigation.

Fiona Hill: (01:39:03)

So I was led to understand. Yes.

Ms. Speier: (01:39:04)

You testified that Mr. Giuliani's involvement was quote, "A massive complication in terms of our engagement with Ukraine."

Fiona Hill: (01:39:12)

That's correct.

Ms. Speier: (01:39:12)

Would you like to explain that?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:39:15\)](#)

Well, I think I already laid that out in only a part of a response to some of the questions. We were actually conducting, which for a lot of the American people might seem to be a rather boring standard bilateral policy towards Ukraine, pushing them on issues of reform in the energy sector, and more broadly we were concerned obviously about corruption in Ukraine. We were trying to help Ukraine regain its sovereignty after the attacks by Russia.

Ms. Speier: [\(01:39:46\)](#)

So how did Mr. Giuliani's involvement affect?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:39:50\)](#)

Well, we basically had worked out over a course of two years and in close conjunction with the embassy in Kiev, an interim agency agreed action plan. These are things that in fact Colonel Vindman and others were working on, basically moving forward on the various issues that were on the list of items. Clearly Rudy Giuliani and other people didn't care at all about this.

Ms. Speier: [\(01:40:13\)](#)

All right.

Fiona Hill: [\(01:40:14\)](#)

Frankly, Ambassador Sondland wasn't particularly interested in it either. It's quite boring. It wouldn't make for good copy in the press. And it's the kind of thing that everybody on a routine moves forward on.

Ms. Speier: [\(01:40:25\)](#)

Mr. Holmes, you talked about the extraordinary power that Russia tries to assert against Ukraine. So since President Zelensky never got his White House meeting, doesn't that make Ukraine look weak, and doesn't that benefit Russia?

David Holmes: [\(01:40:47\)](#)

Absolutely it does.

Ms. Speier: [\(01:40:48\)](#)

All right, so promoting Putin's false claim of Ukraine intervention into the U.S. election also benefits Russia, doesn't it?

David Holmes: [\(01:40:55\)](#)

It does.

Ms. Speier: [\(01:40:57\)](#)

So when President Trump meets privately with Vladimir Putin at the G20 Summit, who does that benefit?

David Holmes: (01:41:05)

Well, it doesn't help Ukraine.

Ms. Speier: (01:41:06)

It doesn't help Ukraine. And by President Trump calling Ukraine corrupt and not North Korea, for instance, does that accrue to Russia's benefit?

David Holmes: (01:41:16)

Again, doesn't help Ukraine.

Ms. Speier: (01:41:18)

All right. I thank you, and Mr. Chairman, I'll yield the rest of my time to you.

Mr. Chairman: (01:41:23)

You're yielding me three seconds. Not even I can make use of three seconds. Mr. Stewart.

Mr. Stewart: (01:41:29)

Thank you. Dr. Hill. Mr. Holmes, thank you for being here. I actually have no questions for you that haven't already been asked or made any points that haven't already been made. And I guess I'll just conclude by something I've said before. This Impeach-a-Palooza tour finally comes to an end. A year of resistance, two and a half years of these absurd accusations against the president of Russia and collusion. We've gone from quid pro quo to bribery to extortion, seven weeks of hearings, 16 secret closed-door sessions, 12 public hearings, now of which you are the last, hundreds of hours of testimony. And I really think that for those who hate the president, they haven't changed their minds, but there's a lot of Americans who look at this and they think, "Is that it? Really? You're going to impeach and remove a president for this?"

Mr. Stewart: (01:42:25)

Now, like I said, if you don't like the president, you've already come to that conclusion. Many people wanted this three years ago. But for a lot of Americans, they really look at that, and they can see this. No evidence, zero evidence of any bribery, zero evidence of extortion, zero evidence firsthand of any quid pro quo, and yet impeachment is almost inevitable. And why? Because the leadership of this committee has been unfair and dishonest. And I know we hear these crocodile tears from some of my colleagues who are heartbroken because they finally have to impeach this president, and we know that's absurd. There's no heartbroken. There's no prayerful tears over this. They're giddy over this. And there's not a person in the country who doesn't know that. Everyone knows what they're going to do next. They're going to impeach the president, and they're going to send it onto the Senate. But that is the good news. That's good news.

Mr. Stewart: (01:43:24)

We've all been to a concert. You got the warm-up band, and then you got the main act. And what we've seen here is the warm-up band. This is kind of like the Sioux City Crooners. This is a band that no one's ever heard of, but the warm-up band is over, and now we're going to go on to the main event, and that's in the U.S. Senate.

Mr. Stewart: (01:43:40)

In the U.S. Senate, there won't be any secret testimony. There's not going to be dishonest leadership for a chairman who refuses to let us ask appropriate questions or to deny a defense. Where in the world, where in the country do you have a trial where the prosecution presents their case and the defense isn't able to. We'll finally be able to get to the truth.

Mr. Stewart: (01:44:03)

I'm talking now to my colleagues in the Senate. These are some of the witnesses that you need to call, and these are some of the questions that you need to ask. First, you have to hear from the whistle blower. Now, they can choose to do that in closed session if they want to. I leave that up to them, but you can't initiate an impeachment of the President of the United States and not have to answer some questions.

Mr. Stewart: (01:44:28)

Who did he get his information from? Did he have the classification and the clearances to get that information? What's his relationship with Vice President Biden? Who has he shared that information with, including some members of the committee here? I think our own chairman needs to be called. What interactions did he or his staff have with the whistleblower? Did they help to coordinate or in any way facilitate the complaint? Did they coordinate and facilitate him counsel?

Mr. Stewart: (01:44:57)

What about Hunter Biden? How did he get his job? What did he do to earn his salary? And here's the key to this. Look, if he goes there and makes money, knock yourself out. I don't care. But I want to know, did he have conversations with government officials, and was government policy changed at a particularly high level because of some of those? Devon Archer, former board member from Burisma. Alexandra Chalupa, former DNC official who admitted she provided anti-Trump information to the DNC and to Hillary Clinton. Nellie Ohr from Fusion GPS to help to create the ridiculous Steele dossier.

Mr. Stewart: (01:45:37)

I'd like to remind us what I said yesterday. The American people expect a lot in politics. They understand the tussle, the fight, the debate, but they also expect basic fairness, and these proceedings have been anything but fair. The Senate has an opportunity to fix that. I am confident they will, and I look forward to them completing the job that we could have done here. With that, I will yield back.

Mr. Chairman: (01:46:02)

Mr. Quigley.

Mr. Quigley: (01:46:03)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you both for being here. Dr. Hill, when we last left July 10th, I believe Ambassador Bolton said to you, "You go and tell Eisenberg that I am not part of whatever drug deal Sondland and Mulvaney are cooking up on this, and you go tell them what you heard and what I've said." That's correct, is that right?

Fiona Hill: (01:46:26)

That's correct, sir, yes.

Mr. Quigley: (01:46:27)

And John Eisenberg, he's the chief lawyer for the National Security Council, correct?

Fiona Hill: (01:46:31)

He is, yes.

Mr. Quigley: (01:46:32)

And you went to see him.

Fiona Hill: (01:46:33)

I did go to see him.

Mr. Quigley: (01:46:35)

And what did you say to him that day?

Fiona Hill: (01:46:36)

I basically gave him the same summary that I've given to you on the 10th of July.

Mr. Quigley: (01:46:40)

Of what took place?

Fiona Hill: (01:46:42)

Of what took place. Correct. Including some of the details that I shared with you as well, the sequencing and what transpired as I was walking in.

Mr. Quigley: (01:46:50)

Now, did you have one or two meetings with him at about that?

Fiona Hill: (01:46:55)

He did not have a great deal of time on the 10th, and I gave him the quick summary. We agreed that we would meet again on the 11th, on July 11th the next day. And I also wanted to bring in with me my colleague, Wells Griffith, who was senior director for energy who'd been sitting with me on the sofa for the first portion of the meeting. And I also suggested

that he speak to Colonel Vindman separately as well, because Colonel Vindman was in the wardroom when I arrived and had obviously been engaged in some discussion before I got there, because as as I got into the room, they were clearly in the course of ... sorry with the microphone ... clearly in the course of conversation. I thought it was important for John Eisenberg to hear from Colonel Vindman himself, what his recollections of the meeting were.

Mr. Quigley: (01:47:43)

Did you raise the concerns that Ambassador Bolton had raised to you to Mr. Eisenberg?

Fiona Hill: (01:47:49)

I certainly did. The first thing I related to him was exactly and precisely what Ambassador Bolton had asked me to.

Mr. Quigley: (01:47:53)

In the course of those two meetings, what was Mr. Eisenberg's response?

Fiona Hill: (01:47:58)

Mr. Eisenberg took it all very seriously. He said, for example, that Colonel Vindman should feel free ... He said this to me ... in future to go and bring any concerns to him about these meetings. Similarly myself and any others, if there was any subsequent followup in terms of these issues being raised again with any of the parties in the future.

Mr. Quigley: (01:48:23)

He didn't say anything in response about how he took that meeting or how he would describe it? Did he raise any concerns about what you told him that took place?

Fiona Hill: (01:48:34)

No, he did not. He listened very carefully to all of the information that we imparted.

Mr. Quigley: (01:48:38)

Now, back to that July 10th meeting, the second meeting that's in the wardroom, correct?

Fiona Hill: (01:48:43)

That's correct.

Mr. Quigley: (01:48:44)

Who's in that meeting besides yourself? The two Ukrainians?

Fiona Hill: (01:48:49)

Mr. Danyliuk, [inaudible 01:48:51], Ambassador Volker, Ambassador Sondland, and then a couple of people I think were from the State Department.

Fiona Hill: (01:48:58)

I wondered for a while if one of Secretary Perry's group had been there too, but I honestly cannot remember.

Mr. Quigley: (01:49:07)

But Ambassador Volker was there during that entire [crosstalk 01:49:07]-

Fiona Hill: (01:49:07)

He was there, but he didn't actually speak very much during that meeting. I heard his deposition, and I read his deposition where he didn't really recall that encounter. Again, he didn't really speak. Ambassador Sondland was doing most of the speaking.

Mr. Quigley: (01:49:24)

I think you described it as you came in, Ambassador Sondland was talking about how he had an agreement with Chief of Staff Mulvaney for a meeting with the Ukrainians, if they were going forward with the investigations. While this was taking place and afterwards, how were the Ukrainians reacting to what was being said?

Fiona Hill: (01:49:40)

Well, at the time Mr. Yermak was quite impassive. I said that he had an aide with him, and his aide was sitting next to him in the original meeting with Ambassador Bolton and was from time to time ... actually he was on this side ... whispering to him.

Fiona Hill: (01:49:56)

So I wasn't sure myself, because I had not met Mr. Yermak before, about how good his English was. So I wasn't sure. Perhaps Mr. Holmes might be able to reflect on that as to whether he was having some points of clarification from the aide.

Mr. Quigley: (01:50:10)

He understood what was happening?

Fiona Hill: (01:50:10)

Yeah, so I wasn't entirely sure if he was following all of the back-and-forth. Mr. Danylyuk, who I know very well and speaks very good English, looked quite alarmed. I think he was more alarmed at the fact that there was this back-and-forth between Ambassador Sondland and Colonel Vindman, than with me about the meeting. They very much wanted to have this meeting, and here are some U.S. officials arguing about the meeting in front of him, and that was obviously very uncomfortable for him.

Mr. Quigley: (01:50:38)

Did you have any followup to that, sir?

David Holmes: (01:50:39)

Just to add that Danylyuk speaks perfect English and Yermak can get by in meetings but often does ask for clarifications.

Mr. Quigley: (01:50:47)

Given the time, I would yield back.

Mr. Chairman: (01:50:48)

Ms. Stefanik.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:50:52)

Before I turn to our witnesses, I just wanted to say to my democratic colleagues, not a single Republican member of this committee has said that Russia did not meddle in the 2016 elections. As the ranking member stated, we published a report focused on Russian active measures in 2016 with policy recommendations as to how we strengthen our cyber resiliency and election security to counter Russia. I myself have worked with members of this very committee on this issue but also on the House Armed Services Committee, so to have our democratic colleagues say these untruthful statements just reeks of political desperation in their continued obsession to manipulate mainstream media coverage.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:51:32)

But the good news is the American people understand that this has been a partisan process from the start, the democratic coordination with the whistleblower, the incessant and astounding leaks, the unprecedented closed-door process closed to the majority of members, closed to the press, closed to the people. Starting this inquiry without taking a vote. And then when finally forced to take a vote, the vote was with bipartisan opposition.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:51:55)

Now, with four minutes left, I'm going to turn to our two witnesses. Thank you both for your service. Thank you, Dr. Hill, for your comments on the personal attacks. I wanted to ask you each fact-based questions. Dr. Hill, you testified that you handed over your duties on the NSC to Tim Morrison on July 15th and that you physically left the White House on July 19th. Correct?

Fiona Hill: (01:52:16)

That is correct. Yes.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:52:18)

So that means that by the time there was the July 25th call with President Trump and President Zelensky, you are no longer on the NSC. Correct?

Fiona Hill: (01:52:27)

Actually, I was still technically on the payroll of the NSC until the end of August, August 30th of 2019, but I was not physically in the building, and I'd handed over my duties to Mr.

Morrison.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:52:39)

And you were not on the call?

Fiona Hill: (01:52:40)

I was not on the call. That is absolutely correct.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:52:42)

And it's also correct that you did not participate in the preparation of talking points or the specific coordination of setting up the call?

Fiona Hill: (01:52:50)

Not for that call, but let me just say for the record that there had been a long anticipation that eventually there would be a call, so there was a call package that was prepared in advance. I just cannot say how much of that call package that had perhaps been prepared since, for example, the inauguration of President Zelensky was then used as the basic material for that call. So I did take part in the preparation of that standard call package, but I did not take part in any preparation for the specific call on July 25th.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:53:19)

And the first time you actually read the transcript of the call was when it was released to the public?

Fiona Hill: (01:53:24)

That is correct.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:53:25)

Mr. Holmes, I wanted to turn to you. Good to see you again. Thank you for mentioning the bipartisan delegation that I led on behalf of the House Armed Services Committee with my friend Representative Anthony Brown from Maryland. We did have an exceptionally informative visit where we highlighted the bipartisan congressional support for Ukraine, in particular the importance of countering Russian aggression. And we discussed in the briefings at the embassy the importance of defensive lethal aid in the form of Javelins, which I think you stated today, is quote, "an important strategic deterrent to Russia."

Ms. Stefanik: (01:54:01)

I just want to highlight on the record, I know this has been asked, the Javelins were provided by the Trump administration and not the Obama administration. Correct?

David Holmes: (01:54:08)

That's correct. And I would just say I think we discussed the importance of all our security assistance to Ukraine, not just the Javelin.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:54:13)

Absolutely. All of our security assistance, which I strongly support. Again, thank you for being a host on that. Dr. Hill, turning back to you, there's been discussion about the process of scheduling the meeting between President Zelensky and President Trump. And you testified that there was hesitancy to schedule this meeting until after the Ukrainian parliamentary elections. Is that correct?

Fiona Hill: (01:54:35)

That is correct, yes.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:54:36)

And that's because there was speculation in all analytical circles, both in Ukraine and outside the Ukraine, that Zelensky might not be able to get the majority that he needed to form a cabinet. Correct?

Fiona Hill: (01:54:48)

That is correct.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:54:49)

And you also testified that another aspect of the NSC's hesitancy to schedule this meeting was based on broader concerns related to Zelensky's ability to implement anti-corruption reforms, and this was in specific relation to Ukrainian oligarchs who basically were the owner of the TV company that Mr. Zelensky's program had been a part of. Is that correct?

Fiona Hill: (01:55:11)

That is correct.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:55:13)

Just distilling this down to the key facts, I wanted to ask both of you three key questions. The fact of the matter is Ukraine ultimately did receive the aid. Correct, Mr. Holmes?

David Holmes: (01:55:25)

Ultimately.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:55:25)

Yes. And Dr. Hill?

Fiona Hill: (01:55:27)

Correct. Ultimately.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:55:28)

And there was no investigation into the Bidens. Correct, Mr. Holmes?

David Holmes: (01:55:34)

They did not open a new investigation to the Bidens.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:55:36)

Correct. And Dr. Hill?

Fiona Hill: (01:55:38)

Correct.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:55:39)

And there was in fact a meeting between President Trump and President Zelensky ultimately at the U.N. Is that correct?

David Holmes: (01:55:47)

The president invited Zelensky to the Oval Office at a date undetermined that has not yet happened.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:55:53)

The meeting at the U.N. President Trump and President Zelensky met at the U.N.

David Holmes: (01:55:56)

They did, but not in the Oval Office.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:55:58)

But they did have a meeting at the U.N.

David Holmes: (01:55:59)

They did, ma'am.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:56:00)

And Dr. Hill?

Fiona Hill: (01:56:01)

They did.

Ms. Stefanik: (01:56:01)

They did? Okay, thank you. I yield back.

Mr. Chairman: (01:56:06)

Mr. Swallow.

Mr. Swalwell: (01:56:07)

Dr. Hill, yesterday I think a lot of Americans were scratching their heads as Ambassador Sondland testified that on September 9, he calls the President of the United States and just says broadly, "What do you want from Ukraine?" And the president says, "There's no quid

pro quo. There's no quid pro quo." It's like being pulled over for speeding and being asked, "Do you know how fast you're going?" and saying, "I didn't rob the bank. I didn't rob the bank."

Mr. Swalwell: [\(01:56:36\)](#)

But your testimony today is that on July 10 of this year, you told one of the president's lawyers that you had concerns that a White House meeting was linked to investigations. Is that right?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:56:48\)](#)

That's correct, based on what Ambassador Sondland said in the wardroom.

Mr. Swalwell: [\(01:56:52\)](#)

And so as early as July 10, the president's lawyers had knowledge that there was at least concern by a presidential employee about a linkage. Is that right?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:57:02\)](#)

That's correct.

Mr. Swalwell: [\(01:57:03\)](#)

Dr. Hill, just like you are, we are trying to account for all the President's men. You had that same concern when you saw Mr. Sondland's emails, and you saw people who were outside the channels that you had been working on. So I want to walk you through something you told us earlier. You said that you have evidence that as recently as this year, President Trump believes someone named Kash was the Ukraine director. Is that right?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:57:27\)](#)

It's not really evidence. And look, I want to be very clear about this. I was asked a question about this in my deposition. I did not raise it. And to be honest, I was surprised that I was asked the question.

Mr. Swalwell: [\(01:57:38\)](#)

But you heard that that name Kash. Is that right?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:57:40\)](#)

I did, but again, it was in passing, and I explained the circumstances in which it came up. But I was asked a question in the course of my deposition about it.

Mr. Swalwell: [\(01:57:50\)](#)

And the only person at the time who worked at the National Security Council was Kash Patel. Is that right?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:57:54\)](#)

That was the only person that I could think of.

Mr. Swalwell: [\(01:57:56\)](#)

And Kash Patel, prior to working for the National Security Council from 2017 to 2018, worked for ranking member Nunes. Is that right?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:58:03\)](#)

I actually only found that out after the fact. I wondered why I was being asked about him, so I went to look this up.

Mr. Swalwell: [\(01:58:10\)](#)

And Dr. Hill, you cautioned us on the dangers of members of this committee perhaps pedaling any Ukrainian conspiracy theories that could benefit Russia, and I want to ask you if you have heard the name Lev Parnas of Ukraine, someone in this investigation who was influencing President Trump and Rudy Giuliani about some of the debunked conspiracy theories you referenced earlier?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:58:34\)](#)

I have heard his name, yes.

Mr. Swalwell: [\(01:58:35\)](#)

Are you aware that Mr. Parnas was indicted on October 10 for making foreign contributions to Republicans in U.S. elections?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:58:42\)](#)

I am aware of those reports, yes.

Mr. Swalwell: [\(01:58:44\)](#)

Are you aware of yesterday's Daily Beast story reporting the indicted Ukrainian Lev Parnas has been working with the ranking member Devin Nunes on Mr. Nunes' overseas investigations?

Fiona Hill: [\(01:58:55\)](#)

I am not aware of that.

Mr. Swalwell: [\(01:58:56\)](#)

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to put into the record the Daily Beast story, Lev Parnas helped rep Devin Nunes' Investigations from yesterday, first two paragraphs reading, "Lev Parnas, an indicted associate of Rudy Giuliani, helped arrange meetings and calls in Europe for rep Devin Nunes in 2018. Parnas' lawyer, Ed McMahon, told the Daily Beast. Nunes' aide Derek Harvey participated in the meetings, the lawyer said, which were arranged to help Nunes' investigative work. McMahon didn't specify what those investigations entailed."

Mr. Chairman: [\(01:59:29\)](#)

Without objection.

Mr. Swalwell: (01:59:30)

Mr. Chairman, you have been falsely accused throughout these proceedings by the ranking member as being a quote/unquote "fact witness." Now, if this story is correct, the ranking member may have actually been projecting, and in fact he may be the fact witness if he is working with indicted individuals around our investigation.

Mr. Swalwell: (01:59:50)

But I want to go to what this is really all about. First, it's your credibility, Mr. Holmes. And can you tell us and confirm that in 2014 you received the William Rivkin Constructive Dissent Award from the Obama administration State Department?

David Holmes: (02:00:08)

Yes sir.

Mr. Swalwell: (02:00:09)

And that was for dissent that you brought up against an administration policy. Is that right?

David Holmes: (02:00:13)

That's right.

Mr. Swalwell: (02:00:14)

Congratulations, and thank you for speaking up in the way that you did. But what we're really here about is what you're working on in Ukraine, and I want you to take a look at the picture. Who do you see in the foreground of that photo?

David Holmes: (02:00:28)

President Zelensky.

Mr. Swalwell: (02:00:30)

That's a photograph in May 2019, where newly elected president Zelensky visited the Luhansk region in Eastern Ukraine. It was his first visit to the front lines of Donbass as president. Can you just tell tax-paying Americans why it's so important that our hard-earned tax-paying dollars help President Zelensky and the men standing beside him fight against Russia in this hot war?

David Holmes: (02:00:59)

Absolutely, sir. President Zelensky was elected on an overwhelming majority to defend Ukrainian interests. This is at a time when Ukrainians are defending their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, on Ukrainian soil from Russian-backed soldiers who are attacking them. As I said, 14,000 Ukrainian lives lost in this war so far, as I mentioned a few this week already, and this is a hot war. This is not a frozen conflict. People are shooting at each other and dying, being injured every single week. Despite the ongoing war, they're still trying to pursue peace. President Zelensky even right now is trying to pursue a summit meeting with President Putin in order to try to bring this war to a conclusion so they can move on with all

of the difficult things that they need to do in terms of building the economy and reforming the judiciary and what not.

David Holmes: [\(02:01:54\)](#)

And I want to add just one other thing, sir, if I may. Mr. Turner had suggested earlier that I'd somehow embarrassed President Zelensky. I have the deepest respect for President Zelensky. This is a guy of Jewish background from an post-Soviet industrial suburb in Southern Ukraine who made himself one of the most popular entertainers in the country and somehow got elected president, and he's not going to miss that opportunity. This is a Ukrainian patriot. This is a tough guy, and frankly he withstood a lot of pressure for a very long time, and he didn't give that interview. I have a deepest respect for him. The Ukrainian people also have the deepest respect for him. They've chosen him to help deliver the full measure of promise of their revolution of dignity, and I think he merits all of our respect.

Mr. Swalwell: [\(02:02:43\)](#)

Thank you. And Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter the May 27 photograph depicted on the screen into the record.

Mr. Chairman: [\(02:02:49\)](#)

Without objection. Mr. Hurd.

Mr. Hurd: [\(02:02:52\)](#)

Thank you, Dr. Hill, Mr. Holmes, for your years of service to this country, and I appreciate you all being here today. Throughout this process, I have said that I want to learn the facts so we can get to the truth. So why are we here? Because of two things that occurred during the President's July 25th phone call with Ukrainian President Zelensky. The use of the phrase, "Do us a favor," though, in reference to the 2016 presidential election and the mention of the word Biden. I believe both statements were inappropriate, misguided foreign policy, and it's certainly not how the executive, current or in the future, should handle such a call. Over the course of these hearings, the American people have learned about a series of events that in my view have undermined our national security and undercut Ukraine, a key partner on the front lines against Russian aggression.

Mr. Hurd: [\(02:03:46\)](#)

We've heard of U.S. officials carrying uncoordinated, confusing, and conflicting messages that created doubt and uncertainty in Kiev at a time when a new reformist administration has just taken office and was ready to fight corruption and work with us to advance other U.S. objectives. I disagree with this sort of bungling foreign policy. But through these hearings, many of my colleagues have unwittingly undermined the Ukrainian government by suggesting that it is subservient to the United States and without the United States, they wouldn't be able to function. The Ukrainians, as you stated, Mr. Holmes, is in a hot war with Russia, and they are holding their own. We could benefit from the experience of the Ukrainians, not the other way around.

Mr. Hurd: (02:04:31)

While I thought the Intelligence Committee would actually be engaged in oversight of the intelligence and national security communities, unfortunately we are not. We're here talking about one of the most serious constitutional duties we have as members of Congress, the impeachment and removal of the President of the United States.

Mr. Hurd: (02:04:48)

Over the past eight weeks, we've learned a few things. The officials on the July 25th call have many different opinions on whether the call was concerning or not, and just because Vice President Biden is running for president does not mean that corruption related to Burisma, Ukraine's largest natural gas company, and American's ties to it are not concerning.

Mr. Hurd: (02:05:08)

There's also a lot we do not know. We have not heard from Rudy Giuliani. We haven't heard from Hunter Biden. I'd like to know more about both of their activities, why they talked to whom and to whom. Despite promises from Chairman Schiff, we have also not heard from the whistleblower, something that can occur in a closed setting without violating his or her anonymity. We need to understand the motivations and level of coordination that happened prior to his or her submission of the complaint.

Mr. Hurd: (02:05:36)

Over the past few weeks and even today, it's been reiterated in 2017 the Trump administration made the decision to provide lethal defensive aid to the Ukraine after the Obama administration refused to do so. Ukraine is receiving all the security assistance as directed by Congress. President Zelensky has undertaken significant anti-corruption efforts including eliminating the parliamentary immunity from prosecution. And again, Mr. Holmes, you mentioned this today, under President Zelensky's leadership, we have finally seen some progress this fall towards ending the Russian occupation of Eastern Ukraine.

Mr. Hurd: (02:06:08)

Where does this leave us? An impeachable offense should be compelling, overwhelmingly clear, and unambiguous, and it's not something to be rushed or taken lightly. I've not heard evidence proving the president committed bribery or extortion. I also reject the notion that holding this view means supporting all the foreign policy choices we have been hearing about over these last few weeks. To paraphrase Tim Morrison's testimony this week, every day the national conversation on Ukraine is focused on impeachment, not the conflict in the Donbass, not the illegal occupation of Crimea, not the need for reforms in Ukraine's government economy is a day where we are not focused on our shared national security interests with Kiev. I hope that we won't let this very partisan process keep us from agreeing on how a free and prosperous Ukraine is important to the security of the Ukrainian people, the United States of America, and the rest of the world.

Mr. Hurd: (02:07:06)

Mr. Chairman, before I yield back my time, I'd like to make a statement for the record that had this committee been given proper notice as required by House rule 11 clause 2G3 that a business meeting was to follow the last night's hearing, and had Mr. Conaway's point of order been appropriately recognized, I would have voted no on the committee's first motion to table during last night's impromptu meeting. And I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman: (02:07:30)

Mr. Castro.

Mr. Castro: (02:07:32)

Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, both of you, for your testimony today. I first want to say, because I think it shouldn't go unmentioned, that the characterization just a few minutes ago by one of my Republican colleagues of this proceeding I think is vile, irresponsible, and dangerous. I want to remind us why we're here. Because somebody in government, a whistleblower felt that it was important enough to get other people in government's attention that the President may have committed a wrong act. We have now heard and seen substantial evidence that the President in fact tried to trade a political favor for official government resources. The most damning words come from no one else but the President himself on that phone call with the Ukrainian president where he asked for a favor, he mentions investigations, he mentioned the Bidens and Burisma. However, as Mr. Holmes just testified, Mr. Holmes also overheard the President speaking to his hand-picked ambassador, Ambassador Sondland, about investigations.

Mr. Castro: (02:08:42)

Mr. Holmes has also said that in the office, everybody knew, or many people knew at least, that the president wanted an investigation of the Bidens. In addition, although Mick Mulvaney and Rudy Giuliani have not come before this committee, Mick Mulvaney and Rudy Giuliani have spoken publicly on the issue investigations. Mick Mulvaney, the president's chief of staff, the person who usually works with a president the most, day in and day out, went in front of the White House press corps and basically admitted that an investigation had something to do with holding up the aid and admitted that this process was politicized.

Mr. Castro: (02:09:23)

Rudy Giuliani, the president's personal lawyer, also essentially admitted that these investigations were at issue. He said that he thinks he did nothing wrong because he was working at the direction of the president. So we have seen substantial evidence and heard substantial evidence of wrongdoing by the President of the United States, and this Congress will have to continue to take up this very important issue to the American people.

Mr. Castro: (02:09:52)

My concern today is also I feel as though the cancer of wrongdoing may have spread beyond the President and into others of the executive branch. And I want to ask you a few

questions about that. Before I do, I'd like, Chairman, to enter two articles into the record if I could. One of them is headline, "After boost from Perry, backers got huge gas deal in Ukraine." The other one is titled, "Wall Street Journal, Federal prosecutors probe Giuliani's links to Ukrainian energy projects."

Mr. Chairman: [\(02:10:26\)](#)

Without objection.

Mr. Castro: [\(02:10:26\)](#)

Mr. Holmes ... Thank you, chairman. You indicated that Secretary Perry, when when he was in the Ukraine, had private meetings with Ukrainians. Before he had those private meetings in a meeting with others, including yourself, I believe, he had presented a list of American advisors for the Ukraine energy sector. Do you know who was on that list?

David Holmes: [\(02:10:53\)](#)

Sir, I didn't see the names on the list myself.

Mr. Castro: [\(02:10:57\)](#)

Do you know if Alex Cranberg and Michael Bleyzer were on that list?

David Holmes: [\(02:11:02\)](#)

I have since heard that Michael Bleyzer's on the list.

Mr. Castro: [\(02:11:06\)](#)

Was it before Secretary Perry did this? We also heard in testimony before that Ambassador Sondland also had a private meeting with somebody. How unusual was it before these guys showed up for folks, diplomats so to speak, or U.S. government officials, to have private meetings where they insist that nobody else be in the room?

David Holmes: [\(02:11:32\)](#)

Very rare. Almost never.

Mr. Castro: [\(02:11:35\)](#)

Okay. And I want to ask you also about the precedent that we set, both of you. I know you're here as fact witnesses, but you're also public servants for this country. The precedent that this Congress would set, putting aside Donald Trump for a second, if the Congress allows a President of the United States now or later to ask a-

Mr. Castro: [\(02:12:03\)](#)

Dates now or later to ask a foreign government, head of state, to investigate a political rival. What precedent does that set for American diplomacy, for the safety of Americans overseas, and for the future of our country?

Fiona Hill: (02:12:18)

It's a very bad precedent.

David Holmes: (02:12:21)

Very bad precedent and going forward, if that were ever the case, I would raise objections.

Mr. Castro: (02:12:26)

Thank you both. I yield back, Chairman.

Mr. Schiff: (02:12:26)

Mr. Radcliffe.

Mr. Radcliffe: (02:12:30)

Thank you, Chair, want to return the favor and recognize my colleague, yield to my colleague, Congressman Conaway.

Mr. Conaway: (02:12:36)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Hill, I don't think there's a lot of questions that one of Putin's primary objectives within the United States is to foment unrest within our nation to cause us to have lost, lose confidence in our elections and the results of the elections, those kinds of things. There is tension though and conducting our business as the way we should and thought playing into Putin's hands, as an example, while I disagree with what we're doing here today, it's under our constitution and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle believe that they are functioning under that constitution. These hearings, this issue, has very divisive within our country and is continuing to push that way.

Mr. Conaway: (02:13:19)

I think that plays into Putin's hands inadvertently. Maybe nothing we can do about that, but there are certain things we can do as individuals that wouldn't play into his hands and one of them would be that the loser in the 2016 election has, for three years, continued to argue that because she won the popular vote, as she and her friends, she won the popular vote, that somehow the election was inappropriate and that we shouldn't trust it, that the electoral college victory, which was resounding, shouldn't be trusted. Does that help Putin or play into the narrative that he would like for us to do that our elections are somehow rigged and shouldn't be trusted?

Fiona Hill: (02:13:56)

Yes, it does.

Mr. Conaway: (02:13:57)

So the RT, Putin's... Would you agree with me that RT is a Putin's propaganda machine here in the United States?

Fiona Hill: (02:14:05)

I would agree with you, yes.

Mr. Conaway: (02:14:07)

So is it appropriate for the RT to be used to affect public policy on our nation? As an example, there've been a long series of advertisements, or programs on RT going against fracking, that to saying that's bad and trying to affect public policy in the United States. Is that appropriate use? Or is that should be, should Americans be paying attention to that?

Fiona Hill: (02:14:30)

In the tense that Americans should be paying attention that RT and other outlets are used to propagate this kind of information, absolutely. I wasn't quite sure what you meant about should be paying attention-

Mr. Conaway: (02:14:40)

Just that the fracking is a controversial issue within our nation. If we did away with fracking, the United States would not be in a position today to dominate the oil production within the world and would play into strengthening Putin's hands with respect to the oil-

Fiona Hill: (02:14:52)

That's correct. And actually I'd like to point out that in November 2011, I actually sat next to Vladimir Putin at a conference in which he made precisely that point. It was the first time that he had actually done so to a group of American journalists and experts who were brought to something called the Valdai Discussion Club. So he started in 2011 making it very clear that he saw American fracking as a great threat to Russian interests. We were all struck by how much he stressed this issue and it's since 2011, and since that particular juncture, that Putin has made a big deal of this.

Mr. Conaway: (02:15:26)

So they said that Americans pay attention to RT and are misguided by whatever propaganda he's going. It's not in our nation's best interest.

Mr. Conaway: (02:15:32)

Mr. Holmes, in your role, you're privileged to an awful lot of stuff. Official things and things that are best kept between you and the official folks that you deal with. Is there an expectation among the principals that you represent that you will exercise some discretion and what you share with others about what goes on?

David Holmes: (02:15:53)

Of course. Yes, sir.

Mr. Conaway: (02:15:55)

In your deposition, you made the... Well, first off, we had a hard time pinning down the number of people that you've actually had this conversation with about the conversation

that you overheard. Now our ambassador had no expectation of privacy. He's blustering around it and what it's done, but we couldn't figure out how many people you actually shared that information with. And I would argue that the information is unflattering to the president, unflattering to the ambassador. And that your discretion is at odds here. I mean your testimony or deposition said that you shared that with folks who you thought would find it interesting. Well, I'd argue that everybody on the back row would find it interesting, but I don't know that that's necessarily a criterion.

Mr. Conaway: (02:16:36)

So on a go forward basis, can you articulate that in the future when you're privileged to certain circumstances that would be embarrassing to the principal, that if it's official that you share it with the ambassador, that's fine, but the folks outside the embassy, or folks even within the embassy, that don't have a need to know, that you wouldn't regale them with your recounting of those instances?

David Holmes: (02:16:58)

Sir, I think it was Gordon Sondland who showed indiscretion by having that conversation over an open phone line [crosstalk 02:17:02]-

Mr. Conaway: (02:17:02)

No, no. You're... Well-

David Holmes: (02:17:03)

... that's the first thing.

Mr. Conaway: (02:17:03)

[crosstalk 02:17:04].

David Holmes: (02:17:03)

Second thing is, I didn't-

Mr. Schiff: (02:17:06)

Mr. Conaway, please let Mr.-

Mr. Conaway: (02:17:08)

Excuse me, Mr. Holmes. Let me clarify the question.

Mr. Schiff: (02:17:10)

Mr. Holmes. [crosstalk 00:05:12]. Your question, sir.

Mr. Conaway: (02:17:13)

It's my question. You're exactly right. And I get to clarify my question to get the answer, and I'm hopeful I get a few more seconds because of the interruption from the Chairman. His patience is growing thin. I was working hard not to irritate him again, but I failed again.

Mr. Conaway: (02:17:25)

The question is of you, Mr. Holmes. Your discretion. Gordon Sondland did not expect to have privacy, we got that. But you're going to be in rooms [inaudible 00:02:17:37], you've been in room 17 years where people trust that when whatever went on in that room had left, that you kept it to official channels, that you didn't share all that information with other folks. I'm just asking you to argue for on your own behalf, that "interesting" is not some sort of a criterion that you would use when you share information from meetings. Simple straightforward question.

David Holmes: (02:17:57)

Sir, I shared the information that I needed to share with the right people who needed to know it. I did not share any information that people didn't need to know.

Mr. Conaway: (02:18:08)

But you did use the word "interesting" in your deposition [crosstalk 02:18:09]-

Mr. Schiff: (02:18:10)

Mr. Conaway, your time to yield back.

David Holmes: (02:18:11)

It certainly was interesting. Sir, and I would also hate to think that what I brought before this process, I shouldn't have done that. I've come here because you subpoenaed me to share what I know and I've done that.

Mr. Schiff: (02:18:22)

Mr. Holmes, you were cut off when you were talking about Mr. Sondland's indiscretion. Did you want to finish that answer?

David Holmes: (02:18:29)

I think-

Mr. Conaway: (02:18:29)

Mr. Chairman, that's patently unfair.

Mr. Schiff: (02:18:32)

Mr. Conaway it's unfair [crosstalk 02:18:32] .

Mr. Conaway: (02:18:32)

As you've run this entire investigation.

Mr. Schiff: (02:18:33)

It's unfair, Mr. Conaway, to interrupt the witnesses as you have done repeat-

Mr. Conaway: (02:18:37)

But you're certainly willing to interrupt me during my five minutes. [crosstalk 00:06:40]. You're the only person on this dais has limited time. You have absolutely unlimited time. You're the only one that has abused that power and you're continuing to do that-

Mr. Schiff: (02:18:46)

Mr. Conaway. The gentleman will cease. We allow the witnesses to answer the question even if those asking the question, don't want to hear the answer. Mr. Heck, you are-

Mr. Conaway: (02:18:54)

Does that apply to you as well?

Mr. Heck: (02:18:56)

Mr. Holmes-

Mr. Schiff: (02:18:56)

Yes, it does.

Mr. Heck: (02:18:56)

... much has been made about the use of both regular and irregular foreign service or diplomatic channels. My reading of history is that American presidents have, on occasion, used irregular channels. Would you generally agree?

David Holmes: (02:19:08)

Yes, sir.

Mr. Heck: (02:19:09)

And my reading of history is that generally speaking, however, those irregular channels have either been closely coordinated with the regular ones, or at least in furtherance of American foreign policy and our national security interest. Would you agree?

David Holmes: (02:19:23)

That's right, sir.

Mr. Heck: (02:19:24)

And do you believe, sir, that Mr. Giuliani's efforts were closely coordinated with the regular channels such as the ambassador to the Ukraine?

David Holmes: (02:19:31)

No, they weren't.

Mr. Heck: (02:19:31)

And were they in furtherance of the American foreign policy as you understood it?

David Holmes: (02:19:35)

No, sir.

Mr. Heck: (02:19:37)

Mr. Holmes, if left unchecked, do you think that Russia would either by means of force or other malign means subjugate Ukraine, attempt to render it a client state, if not occupy it?

David Holmes: (02:19:54)

Absolutely, sir. It's been said that without Ukraine, Russia's just a country, but with it, it's an empire.

Mr. Heck: (02:20:02)

You know, I feel like I've been treated to a Gatling gun fire of myth propagation over the last couple of weeks and it reminds me of that old expression about the big lie. If you tell it often enough and keep repeating it, that people will come to believe it. And I think we've been subjected to some of that.

Mr. Heck: (02:20:25)

Here's a sample. The president didn't solicit campaign assistance from Ukraine in a clear violation of federal law. Yes, he did. The president didn't withhold vital military assistance in furtherance of his objective to obtain that campaign assistance. Yes, he did. Rudy Giuliani was acting just on his own, kind of as a rogue. No, he wasn't. That all this is business as usual, this happens all the time and stems from a principled interest. No, it isn't and no, it wasn't. And that it's okay to attack patriotic diplomats in public service if they stand in your way and have the courage to speak up. And no, it isn't.

Mr. Heck: (02:21:18)

Those are just some of the big lies, but here's the big truth. The president did it. He did it. We all just came from the floor, and it's a majestic chamber. In the front of the chamber there are only two portraits. On the left, looking forward, is my favorite president, George Washington. And on the right is the Marquis de Lafayette, who came to this country to help us stand up our fledgling democracy.

Mr. Heck: (02:21:54)

So here's another big truth. Without his help, we probably never would've gotten off the ground. And that assistance from many other countries who were helping us to create something that had never been created before. It was an audacious idea. This notion of a democracy, of self-governance, of freedoms such as speech and press and religion and expression and assembly, and most of all, that it would be rooted in the premise of the rule of law. Not monarchs, not military strong men, but the rule of law. Others helped us to get here and we wouldn't be here without them. And I frankly feel like we're almost in a little bit of a pay-it-forward moment.

Mr. Heck: (02:22:47)

So when the president did it, he put at risk the security of Ukraine, a strategic ally, and a nascent democracy with their masses yearning to breathe free. Who six years ago this day, when their government said, "We're not going to sign that Memorandum of Agreement with European Union" rose up and took to the streets, because they wanted, frankly, what we have.

Mr. Heck: (02:23:17)

And when the president did it, he put our own national security at risk. But what he did, most importantly, was put at risk that idea that makes us exceptional, because I do believe America's truly exceptional. We are a country rooted in something that nobody has ever tried before. Rule of law. He put that at risk when he did what he did. The president did it. And the only question that remains is, what will we do? I yield back Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Schiff: (02:24:01)

Mr. Jordan.

Mr. Jordan: (02:24:02)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Hill, during your deposition, I asked you "Was Christopher Steele's dossier a rabbit hole?" Do you remember the answer you gave to that question?

Fiona Hill: (02:24:15)

Yes, I thought it was a rabbit hole.

Mr. Jordan: (02:24:16)

Yeah, and you also said, couple of pages later in the deposition or in the transcript that I have here of your deposition, that you thought he got played. Is that fair?

Fiona Hill: (02:24:26)

That is fair, yes.

Mr. Jordan: (02:24:28)

I was struck by a number of things you said in your statement. Number of things I thought were right on the target. One was on page seven, you said this, "President Putin and the Russian security services weaponize our own political opposition research." And that is exactly what happened in 2016. Exactly what happened. You called it, you knew it, you saw it. The DNC hired Perkins Coie, who hired Fusion GPS, who hired Christopher Steele, who talked to Russians, who gave him a bunch of dirt, bunch of National Enquirer garbage that he compiled in a dossier, and our FBI used it. They used it as part of their investigation that they opened in July of 2016 where they spied on two American citizens associated with the presidential campaign. My guess is that's probably never happened in American history. And exactly what Dr. Hill talked about is what happened in 2016. Exactly what she talked about.

Mr. Jordan: (02:25:29)

And for 10 months, Jim Comey and his team did an investigation. And after 10 months they had nothing, because we deposed Mr. Comey, and he told us, "After 10 months we didn't have a thing." But that didn't matter. That didn't matter. We got the Mueller investigation, \$32 million, 19 lawyers, 40 FBI agents, 500 search warrants, 2,800 subpoenas. And they came back this spring, and what did they tell us? "No collusion, no conspiracy, no coordination." But the guys on the other side don't care. They don't care.

Mr. Jordan: (02:26:05)

They're doing what... Dr. Hill said a number of important things in her opening statement. They're doing exactly what Dr. Hill talked about. The impact of a successful 2016 Russian campaign remains evident today. Our nation is being torn apart. Torn apart. I've never seen it this divided and this is not healthy. It is not healthy for our culture, our country, not healthy for our nation. But that's what these guys are doing. No conspiracy, no coordination, no, no collusion, but they don't care.

Mr. Jordan: (02:26:37)

Now this. This whole impeachment thing, as the witness said yesterday. The witness said yesterday, "Without an announcement from Zelensky about an investigation, they weren't going to get a call with the president, they weren't going to get a meeting with the president, and they weren't going to get aid from the United States." But guess what? Ukraine, they got the call, they got the meeting, and they got the money, and there was never an announcement of any type of investigation.

Mr. Jordan: (02:27:06)

But they don't care. They're going to move forward. There's going to be some kind of report. They're going to send some, I assume, something to the judiciary committee, and the process is going to go forward and there'll be a trial in the Senate. All based on some anonymous whistleblower who came forward with no firsthand knowledge, who's biased against the president, who worked with Joe Biden. Now all this. Now all this. This is... Dr. Hill's right. She said it, we've got to stop this. But they're not going to, and they're doing it all 11 1/2 months before the next election. And I think maybe the most telling thing is what the speaker of the house said Sunday. Speaker of the house said, Sunday, this is scary. Speaker of the house said Sunday, national Sunday morning TV show, she said, "The president is an impostor." The guy that 63 million people voted for, who won the electoral college landslide. The Speaker of the House of Representatives called the President of the United States an impostor. Sad. It is sad what the country's going through. I wish it would stop, but unfortunately I don't think it is. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. Schiff: (02:28:19)

Mr. Welch.

Devin Nunes: (02:28:21)

I want to use my time to speak directly to my colleagues and to the American people. Today's witnesses and the ones we've been privileged to have before the committee over the last two weeks, have provided an invaluable service to our country. Not just in all your careers, but in having the courage and the patriotism to share your facts with the American people. And you do so at considerable risk to yourselves, but you've clearly stepped forward for the simple fact you believe it's your duty.

Devin Nunes: (02:28:52)

And all your testimony reaffirms a very central fact, President Trump conditioned our foreign policy and national security on getting a valuable political benefit from Ukraine. He wanted Ukraine's new president to create ethical questions about Joe Biden by publicly announcing investigations. And to pressure President Zelensky to take that action that would benefit his personal political interest, he withheld vital military aid to Ukraine and refused to meet with President Zelensky in the Oval Office. And as we heard from Mr. Holmes and Dr. Hill today, that meeting was extraordinarily important to Ukraine, and extraordinarily important in sending a message to Russia about our unyielding support.

Devin Nunes: (02:29:42)

The witnesses have made it absolutely clear what the president did. And it's equally clear that President Trump has launched a coverup and disinformation campaign to hide this abuse of power from the American people. That's why the administration refuses to provide documents to this committee. It's why the White House has taken the unprecedented position that senior officials could ignore congressional subpoenas and refuse to testify. That's why acting Chief of Staff Mulvaney, Secretary of State Pompeo, and others have not testified.

Devin Nunes: (02:30:22)

Now the president, and even some members of this committee, are pretending this is normal. It is not. It must never be. No other president has betrayed his office like this by putting his own small political interest above our national interest and our national security.

Devin Nunes: (02:30:43)

I asked some of our witnesses what would happen in any American city or town if the mayor stopped funding the police department until the chief of police launched an investigation into the mayor's political rival, or a governor, or a member of Congress did that, and the answer was clear.

Devin Nunes: (02:30:58)

It would be wrong. It would be illegal and it wouldn't be tolerated. It would violate the most basic trust we have in public officials. If it happened with a military commander, a court

martial would follow. If it happened with a corporation, the CEO would be fired. We all know this kind of conduct is wrong, but the president continues to say it isn't. He says it's "perfect" and he'd do it again tomorrow.

Devin Nunes: [\(02:31:22\)](#)

The same rules apply to mayors, governors, members of Congress, CEOs, and everyone else in America. They apply to the president, too. Whether you're a Republican or Democrat, you like MSNBC or FOX, I think every American believes in one of our nation's founding principles. No person is above the law, not even the president.

Devin Nunes: [\(02:31:46\)](#)

July 24th Director Mueller testified about Russian state sponsored systematic interference in our 2016 election. He expressed apprehension this could become the new normal. The day after, on July 25th, President Trump spoke to President Zelensky and asked a favor. That favor was that Ukraine interfere in our 2020 election.

Devin Nunes: [\(02:32:11\)](#)

If we allow this to stand, to become the new normal, it will be the standard for all future presidents. In good conscience, none of us can do that. This conduct corrupts our democracy. It corrupts how our country conducts foreign policy. It threatens our national security and the security of all Americans. And it is, in my view, a clear betrayal of the president's oath of office. I yield back.

Mr. Schiff: [\(02:32:47\)](#)

Mr. Maloney.

Mr. Ratcliffe: [\(02:32:48\)](#)

Mr. Chairman, two quick housekeeping matters. Ask unanimous consent to enter into the record an ABC News story. This one's from my friend, Mr. Stewart, entitled "70% of Americans say Trump's actions tied to Ukraine were wrong," dated November 18th, 2019.

Mr. Schiff: [\(02:33:02\)](#)

Without objection.

Mr. Ratcliffe: [\(02:33:05\)](#)

Also ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a New Yorker story entitled "The invention of the conspiracy theory on Biden and Ukraine: How a conservative dark money group that targeted Hillary Clinton in 2016 spread the discredited story that may lead to Donald Trump's impeachment," Jane Marrow, October 4th, 2019.

Mr. Schiff: [\(02:33:23\)](#)

Without objection.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:33:27)

Good afternoon. Thank you for being here. Dr. Hill, first of all, I thought that was some epic mansplaining that you were forced to endure by my colleague, Mr. Turner, and I want you to know some of us think it was inappropriate, but I appreciate your forbearance.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:33:43)

Let me ask something. I'm fascinated by this meeting, two meetings, really, on July 10th. You have the meeting in Mr. Bolton's office. Sondland says this thing about investigations, Bolton ends the meeting. Photo. There's a follow on meeting in the Ward Room and you get there a little late and Vindman is talking to Sondland and they're already going at it about Sondland's desire to assert that the meeting's going to happen if there's these investigations. Does that sum, in substance, what's going on?

Fiona Hill: (02:34:18)

That's [inaudible 02:34:18]. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:34:21)

And what I want to understand is, this isn't a policy disagreement, right?

Fiona Hill: (02:34:29)

No, that's not... That's correct, it was not a policy disagreement-

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:34:32)

The source of your concern is not a policy disagreement, and it's not purely a procedural disagreement either [crosstalk 02:34:35] right? About how... Excuse me.

Fiona Hill: (02:34:37)

I'm sorry. Yes, it's not correct.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:34:39)

It's neither policy nor is it procedure that's bothering you or, for that matter, the National Security Advisor, Mr. Bolton, right?

Fiona Hill: (02:34:46)

Correct.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:34:47)

I mean it's not why he sends you down there to see how the meeting's going.

Fiona Hill: (02:34:50)

Correct.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:34:51)

And in fact he instructs you to go to the lawyer. Ever been instructed to go report something to the NSC lawyer before?

Fiona Hill: (02:34:59)

That was the first time. I've self-instructed a couple of times, but that was the first time I have been instructed to go.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:35:06)

And why did he send you to report this to the lawyer?

Fiona Hill: (02:35:11)

Well, he clearly wanted to have himself on the record as not being part of what was basically an agreement to have a meeting in return for investigations. And he wanted to make sure that I, and Colonel Vindman, were also not part of this as well, because remember, there was a [inaudible 02:35:28] to this about not getting involved in domestic politics.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:35:32)

Yes, I understand. And you of course, did you concur with this concern that Mr. Bolton had?

Fiona Hill: (02:35:37)

I did because July 10th is really the first time that it crystallized for me that there was basically a different channel going on here-

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:35:48)

And I think you under-

Fiona Hill: (02:35:48)

... a foreign policy channel and a domestic policy channel and we're not in that other channel.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:35:51)

Right. I think you described it as a political errand and you were doing national security policy is how you distinguish those two channels. Is that fair?

Fiona Hill: (02:35:58)

Correct.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:35:59)

Right, and so is it fair to say that you felt it was improper, what was occurring by Mr. Sondland in the Ward Room?

Fiona Hill: (02:36:09)

It was improper and it was inappropriate, and we said that in the time, in real time.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:36:16)

Here's my point, if it was improper and you went so far as to report this to the lawyers, what was the nature of your disagreement with Mr. Sondland? Who has come here and said he had no idea that Burisma meant Bidens until much, much later than July 10th. And of course, we know that he and Ambassador Volker had a blizzard of interactions with Mr. Giuliani. They were amending statements, proposed statements for the Ukrainian president. This went on all summer. And yet, how is it that you had this disagreement in front of the Ukrainians, would send him out in the hallway. At some point did he ask, "I'm just talking about an investigation of corruption generally. What are you getting so worried about?"

Fiona Hill: (02:37:09)

He didn't put it in that way and I think from listening to him and his depositions and in what I've read of what he deposed, he made it very clear that he was surprised that we had some kind of objection. You may remember that in his deposition and when he was here, he actually didn't remember the meeting in the same way because clearly-

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:37:30)

But I thought you said it was pretty obvious to you... Excuse me, I thought-

Fiona Hill: (02:37:35)

It was obvious to me, correct.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:37:36)

I thought it was obvious to you that Burisma meant Bidens.

Fiona Hill: (02:37:38)

Yes, it was.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:37:38)

And you actually treated that as a pretty easy thing to understand. In fact, Mr. Morrison figured it out with a single Google search. But is it credible to you that Mr. Sondland was completely in the dark about this all summer? I mean, you had an argument about it. [crosstalk 02:37:51] Didn't he say-

Fiona Hill: (02:37:51)

It's not credible to me at all that he was oblivious to this.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:37:54)

I'm sorry, I couldn't hear your answer.

Fiona Hill: (02:37:55)

It is not credible to me that he was oblivious. He did not say "Bidens," however, he just said "Burisma." He said "2016" and I took it to mean the elections as well as Burisma.

Mr. Ratcliffe: (02:38:06)

Well, I want to thank you both for your appearance here today. Yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Schiff: (02:38:07)

Ms. Demings.

Ms. Demings: (02:38:12)

Thank you so much, Dr. Hill and Mr. Holmes for your service. I have no doubt after today that we're a better nation because of it. We all know by now that in July of this year, President Trump sent an order to the Office of Management and Budget that congressionally approved military aid to Ukraine be put on hold. Both of you have expressed that Ukraine is the first line of defense against Russian aggression and expansion into Europe. That Russia's priority is to undermine the United States. Is that right, Dr. Hill?

Fiona Hill: (02:38:54)

That's correct.

Ms. Demings: (02:38:55)

Would you agree with that, Mr. Holmes?

David Holmes: (02:38:57)

Yes.

Ms. Demings: (02:38:58)

Dr. Hill, in your professional opinion, is it in the national security interest of the United States to support Ukraine with the much talked about military aid?

Fiona Hill: (02:39:11)

Yes.

Ms. Demings: (02:39:12)

Mr. Holmes?

David Holmes: (02:39:12)

Yes.

Ms. Demings: (02:39:14)

We've already said it several times today and you've already testified that Ukraine is in war right now with Russia. Isn't it true, Mr. Holmes, that even though the security assistance was eventually delivered to Ukraine, the fact that it was delayed to a country that is actively in war, signaled to Russia, that perhaps the bond between Ukraine and the United States was weakening?

David Holmes: (02:39:49)

Absolutely. Absolutely.

Ms. Demings: (02:39:51)

And even the appearance that the US/Ukraine bond is shaky could embolden Russia to act in an even more aggressive way?

David Holmes: (02:40:03)

That's correct.

Ms. Demings: (02:40:04)

You also testified that it was, and I quote, "The unanimous view of the Ukraine policy community, that the aid should be released because supporting Ukraine is in our national security interests." Dr. Hill, why do you believe that the entire Ukraine policy community were unanimously in agreement?

Fiona Hill: (02:40:30)

Well, we've had this experience before and I just want you to indulge me for a moment. In 2008, Russia also attacked the country of Georgia. I was the National Intelligence Officer at that particular juncture and we had warned, in multiple documents, to the highest levels of government that we believed that there was a real risk of a conflict between Georgia and Russia. And in fact, we also believed, at that point, that Russia might attack Ukraine. This was in 2008 when both Georgia and Ukraine sought a membership action plan in NATO, and Russia threatened them openly that if they proceeded with their requests for NATO membership, that there would be consequences.

Fiona Hill: (02:41:17)

In the wake of the attack on Georgia, President Putin made it clear to the President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, at the time, and this was related to me at the highest levels of the Georgian government that Putin had said directly to Saakashvili, "Your Western allies, your Western partners, promised a great deal. They didn't deliver. I threatened, I delivered."

Fiona Hill: (02:41:43)

We had made all kinds of promises to Georgia and Ukraine in that timeframe and we didn't come through. So Putin is always looking out to see if there is any hint that we will not follow through on promises that we have made because he will always follow through on a threat. As indeed, he ultimately did. He threatened Ukraine in 2008, and it wasn't until 2014, when Ukraine tried to conclude an association agreement with the European Union, that he struck, but he had been threatening this for the whole period since 2008.

Ms. Demings: (02:42:17)

Thank you so much, Dr. Hill. And Mr. Holmes, what kind of message does it potentially send to other allies of the United States when military holds for assistance are imposed with

absolutely no explanation? What kind of message does it send to our allies in terms of the good faith and good relationship with the U.S.?

David Holmes: (02:42:42)

It calls into question the extent to which they can count on us.

Ms. Demings: (02:42:46)

Policies change, but U.S. interests don't, at least not for those true public servants who are committed and dedicated to protecting our nation. Thank you both for being two of them.

Mr. Schiff: (02:43:00)

Mr. Krishnamoorthi.

Mr. K: (02:43:04)

Good afternoon. Thank you so much for coming in and thank you for your service. Dr. Hill, you stated in your deposition you've been accused of being a mole for George Soros in the White House, correct?

Fiona Hill: (02:43:15)

That's correct.

Mr. K: (02:43:19)

You said in your deposition, specifically a conspiracy was launched against you by convicted felon, Roger Stone, on the show Infowars, led by Alex Jones, right?

Fiona Hill: (02:43:33)

I don't think he was a convicted felon at the time that he launched this, so I didn't use those exact words, but it was indeed Roger Stone-

Mr. K: (02:43:40)

Good point.

Fiona Hill: (02:43:41)

But it was indeed Alex Jones on Infowars in 2017. And in fact, just more recently before Mr. Stone endured his trial, they were at it again reprising the same Infowars video and adding embellishments.

Mr. K: (02:43:55)

And they said, I'll quote what they said about you. "We here at Infowars," this is Roger Stone speaking, "first identified Fiona Hill, the globalist leftist George Soros insider who had infiltrated McMaster's staff." He said that on May 31st, 2017. I presume you're not a globalist leftist Soros insider, correct?

Fiona Hill: (02:44:18)

I think my coal mining family would be very surprised to hear all of these things about me.

Mr. K: (02:44:22)

I'd agree.

Fiona Hill: (02:44:23)

Actually leftist, perhaps not so much, but anyway, the left in Europe is a bit different from the left here, let's put it that way.

Mr. K: (02:44:28)

I agree. Interestingly, you stated in your deposition that a similar conspiracy theory had actually been launched against Marie Yovanovitch.

Fiona Hill: (02:44:40)

That's correct.

Mr. K: (02:44:42)

And you said specifically, "When I saw this happening to Ambassador Yovanovitch, again, I was furious because this is, again, just this whipping up of what is frankly an antisemitic conspiracy theory about George Soros to basically target nonpartisan career officials." Isn't that what you said?

Fiona Hill: (02:45:01)

I did say that, yes.

Mr. K: (02:45:01)

And-

Mr. K: (02:45:01)

... those, isn't that what you said?

Fiona Hill: (02:45:01)

I did say that, yes.

Mr. K: (02:45:03)

And I'm sure you've been watching with concern what's happened to other nonpartisan career officials. We had Alex, Lt. Col. Alex Vindman, an American immigrant, questioned for his criticism of the president in a very unfair way, basically questioning his loyalty to the country. I believe that he's also of Ukrainian Jewish descent. Would you say that these different theories, these conspiracy theories that have been targeting you, spun in part by folks like Mr. Stone, as well as fueled by Rudy Giuliani and others, basically have a tinge of anti-Semitism to them at least?

Fiona Hill: (02:45:50)

Well, certainly when they involve George Soros, they do. I'd just like to point out that in the early 1900s, the Tsarist Secret Police produced something called The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which actually you can still obtain on the internet, and you can buy it, actually sometimes in bookshops in Russia and elsewhere. This is the longest-running anti-Semitic trope that we have in history. And the trope against Mr. Soros, George Soros, was also created for political purposes, and this is the new Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

Mr. K: (02:46:21)

These-

Fiona Hill: (02:46:22)

I'd actually intended to write something about this before I was actually invited to come into the administration, because it's an absolute outrage.

Mr. K: (02:46:29)

I'm sorry you've been kind of wrapped up in these crackpot conspiracy theories. Let me turn to Rudy Giuliani. You became increasingly concerned about Rudy Giuliani's increasing role in Ukraine between January and March of 2019, correct?

Fiona Hill: (02:46:46)

That's correct.

Mr. K: (02:46:47)

And I know you served in the Bush and the Obama administrations. I presume that George Bush's personal lawyer and President Obama's personal lawyers were never directing or heavily influencing Ukraine policy.

Fiona Hill: (02:47:01)

I'm not even sure I know who they were, so the answer's no.

Mr. K: (02:47:05)

And the concern for having someone like Rudy Giuliani having such a strong influence on American foreign policy is that, you know, basically that policy may be operating not in the best interests of America, but perhaps in the best interests of Rudy Giuliani or his clients or business associates, right?

Fiona Hill: (02:47:27)

I think that's correct, and that's, as I said in my deposition on October 14th, that frankly, that's what I thought it was at the very beginning when I first heard Mr. Giuliani making these statements.

Mr. K: (02:47:36)

And some of those associates included indicted folks Igor Fruman and Lev Parnas, isn't that right?

Fiona Hill: (02:47:42)

That's correct.

Mr. K: (02:47:43)

We have an interesting character in Chicago who's now been indicted. His name is Mr. Firtash, and Mr. Firtash has been indicted for federal bribery charges, another associate of Giuliani, right?

Fiona Hill: (02:47:57)

I do know Mr. Firtash, that's correct. I know of him from my work, that's correct.

Mr. K: (02:47:59)

And the question that we're all asking is whether American foreign policy in Ukraine is potentially being run in their interests and not our own.

Fiona Hill: (02:48:11)

It certainly appears that it is being used, that there's a subversion of American foreign policy to push these people's personal interests.

Mr. K: (02:48:16)

Thank you so much.

Mr. Schiff: (02:48:18)

That concludes the member questioning. We'll now go to closing statements. Mr. Nunes, do you have any closing remarks?

Devin Nunes: (02:48:26)

Thank you. I have stressed in these hearings that the whistleblower complaint was merely a pretext for Donald Trump's political opponents to do what they've been trying to do since he was elected: oust the president from office. A brief timeline will illustrate the wide range of extraordinary attacks his administration has faced. I'm going to start in June of 2016, when Donald Trump was just a candidate. On behalf of the Democratic National Committee and the Hillary Clinton campaign, Fusion GPS hires Christopher Steele to write the Steele dossiers, a collection of false allegations attributed to Russian sources claiming that Donald Trump is a Russian agent.

Devin Nunes: (02:49:05)

Fast-forward to January 6th of 2017. FBI Director James Comey briefs President-Elect Trump on the Steele dossier. The briefing is leaked to CNN, and soon afterwards, BuzzFeed publishes the dossiers. January 20th, on President Trump's inauguration day, The

Washington Post runs a story headlined, "The Campaign to Impeach Donald Trump Has Begun." January 30th, 10 days later: The whistleblower's current lawyer tweets, "#coup has started. First of many steps. #rebellion. #impeachment will follow immediately." March 22nd, Democrats on this committee falsely declare on national TV that they have more than circumstantial evidence that the Trump campaign colluded with Russia. July 12th, an article of impeachment is filed against President Trump in the House of Representatives. November 15th, Democrats file additional articles of impeachment against President Trump.

Devin Nunes: [\(02:50:13\)](#)

As you see, this was just in President Trump's first year in office. He was subjected to a coordinated smear operation designed to falsely portray him as a Russian agent, as well as attempts to impeach him. This all occurred before his now-infamous call with President Zelensky. In 2018, the attacks continued, often from Executive Branch officials charged with implementing his policies. On February 2nd, 2018, Intelligence Committee Republicans release a memo revealing that the FBI used fabrications of the Steele dossier to get a warrant to spy on a Trump campaign associate. September 5th, The New York Times prints a column by an anonymous Trump administration official, who explains that he and other senior officials are "working diligently from within to frustrate parts of Trump's agenda." December 7th, James Comey admits to Congress the Steele dossier was unverified before and after the FBI used it to get a warrant to spy on a Trump campaign associate.

Devin Nunes: [\(02:51:38\)](#)

The Russia hoax continued to be the main focus of attacks going into 2019, but when that entire operation collapsed, a new impeachment pretext had to be found. May 4th, 2019, on national television, a Democratic congressman proclaims, "I'm concerned that if we don't impeach this president, he will get reelected." July 24th of this year, Special Counsel Robert Mueller testifies to Congress about his report, which debunked the conspiracy theory that Trump campaign associates conspired with Russia to hack the 2016 election.

Devin Nunes: [\(02:52:25\)](#)

July 25th, just the very next day, a new anti-Trump operation begins as someone listens to the president's phone call with Ukrainian President Zelensky and leaks the contents to the so-called whistleblower. September 13th, Democrats on this committee take the extraordinary step of issuing a press release related to the whistleblower's complaint. October 2nd, it's revealed that Democratic staff on this committee had contact with the whistleblower before he submitted his complaint to the Inspector General, contradicting Democrat denials that such contact had occurred. October 31st, Halloween, probably the most appropriate day, Democrats in the House of Representatives vote to open an official impeachment inquiry against President Trump.

Devin Nunes: [\(02:53:26\)](#)

What you've seen in this room over the past two weeks is a show trial, a planned result of

three years of political operations and dirty tricks, campaigns waged against this president. And like any good show trial, the verdict was decided before the trial ever began. After all, after denouncing the president for years as a Russian agent and a threat to democracy, how could the Democrats not impeach him? If they don't move to overthrow him, it would indicate that they don't really believe their own dire warnings about the threat he poses.

Devin Nunes: [\(02:54:09\)](#)

The Democrats only needed a pretext. When their Russian dossiers and investigations failed to do the job, they moved to plan B, the Ukraine hoax. This spectacle, with its secret depositions and mid-hearing press conferences, is not meant to discover the facts; it was designed to produce a specific storyline to be pushed forward by the Democrats and their supporters in the media.

Devin Nunes: [\(02:54:37\)](#)

Ladies and gentlemen, as we approach Thanksgiving, Speaker Pelosi has just made clear, just today, USMCA, the free trade deal with Canada and Mexico, will boost our economy, won't be signed this year. So I hope Mr. Schiff will clarify how much longer we will waste on this effort, and what other vital legislation he's willing to sacrifice for this impeachment crusade. Will there be even more secret depositions accompanied by the usual flood of Democratic leaks? Will we have more public hearings with Democrat witnesses, but not ours? Minority are in the dark about what this committee will be doing when we return, and so is America.

Devin Nunes: [\(02:55:29\)](#)

James Madison warned us about the danger posed by the tyranny of the majority. To avoid that threat, our founders created a constitutional republic. But is there a better example of the tyranny of majority than the way this impeachment process has been run in the House of Representatives? A process that is grossly unfair can only stem from a cynical majority that is willing to break long-established precedents, trample on legitimate minority concerns, and impose their absolute will on this body through sheer force of numbers. Exploiting the Intelligence Committee as a venue for impeachment has been one of the grossest abuses in a process filled with cynical manipulations large and small. But this farce will soon move to the Judiciary Committee, where impeachment rightfully belongs. I wish my Republican colleagues well in fighting this travesty and defending the idea, which at one time received bipartisan support not long ago, that the American people's vote actually means something. Yield back.

Mr. Schiff: [\(02:56:50\)](#)

I thank the gentleman. First of all, I want to thank you both for your testimony. I want to thank you for your long years of service to the country. You're not Democratic witnesses or Republican witnesses, you're nonpartisan witnesses, and you have stuck to the facts, and that is as it should be.

Mr. Schiff: (02:57:09)

First, I want to make a couple observations about the hearing today. Dr. Hill, you were criticized several times by my colleagues for your opening statement. I'm glad you didn't back down from it. You're much more diplomatic than I am, I have to say. Anyone watching these proceedings, anyone reading the deposition transcripts would have the same impression that you evidently had from hearing my colleagues talk about the Russia hoax, that the whole idea that Russia had gotten involved in the 2016 election was a hoax put out by the Democrats. And of course, they're not alone in pushing out this idea; it is trumpeted by no one other than the President of the United States who, almost on a daily basis at times, would comment and tweet and propagate the idea that Russia's interference in our election was a hoax.

Mr. Schiff: (02:58:02)

And of course, we all remember that debacle in Helsinki when the president stood next to Vladimir Putin and questioned his own intelligence agencies. I wish I had heard just some of the righteous indignation we heard in the committee today when the president questioned that fundamental conclusion of our intelligence agencies, but of course, they were silent when the president said that. They'll show indignation today, but they will cower when they hear the president questioning the very conclusions that our intelligence community has reached.

Mr. Schiff: (02:58:38)

But we saw something interesting also today. My colleagues sought to use you, Dr. Hill, to besmirch the character of Col. Vindman, and I thought this was very interesting. Certainly wasn't unexpected, but it was very interesting for this reason: They didn't really question anything Col. Vindman said. After all, what Col. Vindman said is what you've said. He was in that July 10th meeting, he heard the same quid pro quo, the same comments by Sondland, "If you want this meeting, Ukrainians, and we have an agreement about this, you got to announce you're going to do these investigations." He heard the same quid pro quo that you did. So why are they smearing him?

Mr. Schiff: (02:59:23)

Mr. Holmes, you testified just as Vindman said, Col. Vindman said that he warned Zelensky about getting involved in US politics. They don't question that, they didn't take issue with that. So why smear this Purple Heart recipient? Just like the smear of Ambassador Yovanovitch, it's just gratuitous. They don't question the facts; it's just gratuitous. The attack on you, Mr. Holmes, that you were indiscreet in mentioning this conversation to others. Well, I think you're quite right, the indiscretion is when an ambassador to the EU calls the president on an insecure line in a country known for Russian telecommunications and eavesdropping. That's more than indiscretion, that's a security risk.

Mr. Schiff: (03:00:10)

But why attack you, Mr. Holmes? They didn't question anything you said. They didn't question what conversation you overheard. Ambassador Sondland, indeed, didn't question what you said. He acknowledged that the one thing the president wanted to know the day after that conversation with Zelensky was, "Is he going to do the investigations?" And Sondland said, "Yes, he'll do anything you ask." They don't question that. So why attack you?

Mr. Schiff: (03:00:40)

They didn't question your testimony when you said, and I think you asked Ambassador Sondland, "Does Donald Trump give a blank," and I would like to use the word here, "about Ukraine?" And he said, "He doesn't give a blank about Ukraine. He only cares about the big stuff." And you said, "Well, there's some big stuff here. Ukraine's at war with Russia, that's kind of big stuff." And his answer was, "No, no, no, no, no. He cares about the big stuff that matters to him, his personal interests, like the Biden investigation that Giuliani wants." I mean, one question posed by your testimony, Mr. Holmes, is what do we care about? Do we care about the big stuff like the Constitution, like an oath of office, or do we only care now about party? What do we care about?

Mr. Schiff: (03:01:39)

But let's go beyond your testimony today. Let's look at the bigger picture. What do we know now after these depositions, these secret depositions? Now, people watching at home might not know that in these secret depositions, which apparently no one else is allowed to hear, no members are allowed to participate, it's just secret, apparently, sounds like it's just me and the witness, only over a hundred members of Congress are able to participate in those secret depositions. And the minority was just so unable to participate, they got the same time they got in these open hearings. It was the same format. That was the secret star chamber that you've been hearing so much about.

Mr. Schiff: (03:02:27)

So, what have we learned through these depositions and through the testimony? Because so much of this is really undisputed. We learned that a dedicated public servant named Marie Yovanovitch, known for fighting corruption, widely respected throughout the diplomatic corps, was ruthlessly smeared by Rudy Giuliani, by the president's own son, by their friends on Fox prime time and a whole host of other characters. Her reputation was sullied so they could get her out of the way, which they did. And you're right, it was gratuitous. The president could've gotten rid of her any time he wanted, but that's not enough for this president. No, he has to smear and destroy those that get in his way, and someone fighting corruption in Ukraine was getting in his way, so she's gone. She's gone.

Mr. Schiff: (03:03:27)

And this makes way almost immediately thereafter, she leaves, the Three Amigos come in. The Three Amigos, two of whom never made the connection that Burisma means Biden. It

took Tim Morrison all of 30 seconds on Google to figure that out. But we're to believe, I guess, that in all the companies in all the world, that Rudy Giuliani just happens to be interested in this one? That's absurd. The interest, of course, was in an investigation of Donald Trump's rival, the one that he apparently feared the most. And they were willing to do whatever was necessary to get Ukraine to do that dirty work, to do that political investigation.

Mr. Schiff: [\(03:04:11\)](#)

And so it began, "We're not going to set up a phone call until you make certain commitments." That was Ambassador Sondland's testimony. The first quid pro quo was actually just getting on the phone with President Trump. And then there was the quid pro quo involving the White House meeting, and witness after witness, and none of my colleagues contested this, talked about just how important that meeting was to the president of Ukraine and why... They're at war with Russia, and their most important ally is the United States, and the most important person in the United States for that relationship is the president of the United States.

Mr. Schiff: [\(03:04:48\)](#)

And if President Zelensky can show that he has a good relationship with the president of the United States, it means to his people that this new president has the support of their most important patron, and it means to the Russians that we have their back. This president, this new president who is negotiating with a far superior power that has invaded his country, is going into a negotiation with Putin over how to resolve this conflict. Whether he has good leverage or lousy leverage depends on whether the Russians think he has a relationship with the president. And the president wouldn't give him that, not without getting something in return, wouldn't give him that official act, that White House meeting, without getting something in return. And that return was investigations of his rival that would help his reelection, an official act for something of clear value and something very important. The big stuff, as Sondland explained to you, Mr. Holmes, to help his campaign.

Mr. Schiff: [\(03:05:54\)](#)

Now, we also heard abundant testimony about the other quid pro quo, the withholding of security assistance, which no one can explain. There's no debate among my colleagues. Everyone in the NSC, in the State Department, the Defense Department, everyone supported this, everyone. All the reviews that needed to be done to make sure that Ukraine was meeting its anti-corruption standards had been done, and they had found to meet the criteria. The aid should've been released, but it was withheld, and no one could understand or get a clear explanation for why, until it became clear to everyone, it's all about the investigations, it's all about the leverage.

Mr. Schiff: [\(03:06:36\)](#)

And if there was any doubt about it, the man closest to the president, who meets with him every day, Mick Mulvaney, erased all doubt. "You're darn right. Yes, we talked about the

2016 election investigation, and yes, this was in the context of holding up the military aid, and you know, just get used to it," or just get over it, or whatever it was he said, "because that's how we roll." Those are my words, not his, but that's the import. "Yeah, there's going to be politics, and just get over it." Well, if we care about the big stuff, we can't just get over it.

Mr. Schiff: (03:07:24)

Now, my colleagues have had a lot of defenses to all of this evidence, which has piled up day after day after day. And it's amazing, they hear you testify, Mr. Holmes, that it was clear that the security assistance was being withheld, it was clear to all of the Americans, it was clear to the Ukrainians. You testified the Ukrainians felt pressure, they still feel pressure to this day. And what do my colleagues say in the same hearing? I mean, I guess they're not listening. "The Ukrainians felt no pressure, there's no evidence they felt pressure."

Mr. Schiff: (03:07:53)

Which gets into their next defense, which is, "It's all hearsay. It's all hearsay." Now, most of my colleagues, I guess, are not lawyers. Lawyers out there understand just how wrong they are about what hearsay is, but let's just discuss this in terms that all people can understand. The impression they would have you take from "It's all hearsay" is, because we in this committee were not in that Ward Room with you, Dr. Hill, we were not in that meeting earlier with Dr. Bolton, that because we're not in the room, it's all hearsay. After all, you're relating what you heard, and you're saying it, so it must be hearsay, and therefore, we don't really have to think about it, do we? We don't have to consider that you have direct evidence that this meeting in the White House was being withheld because the president wanted these meetings, these investigations. We can't accept that.

Mr. Schiff: (03:08:53)

Well, if that were true, you could never present any evidence in court unless the jury was also in the Ward Room. That's absurd. They don't accept the documentary evidence, all the text messages about quid pro quos, and "Are we really saying," and "That's crazy," and "My worst nightmare is the Russians will get it, and I'll quit." They don't accept the documents, the few documents that we have from the State Department that weren't produced, by the way, by the State Department, where Sondland communicates directly with the Secretary of State about this investigative interest of the president, and they don't accept the documents either. I guess the documents are also hearsay.

Mr. Schiff: (03:09:36)

Now, might be a little more convincing if they were joining us in demanding that the documents be produced, but of course they're not. And we know why not, because the documents are like that one we saw on the screen. They implicate others, including Secretary Pompeo, so of course Donald Trump and Secretary Pompeo don't want us to see those documents.

Mr. Schiff: [\(03:09:59\)](#)

But apparently, it's all hearsay. Even when you actually hear the president, Mr. Holmes, that's hearsay. We can't rely on people saying what the president said. Apparently, we can only rely on what the president says, and there, we shouldn't even rely on that either. We shouldn't really rely on what the president said in the call record. We should imagine he said something else. We should imagine he said something about actually fighting corruption, instead of what he actually said, which was, "I want you to do us a favor, though. I want you to look into this 2016 CrowdStrike conspiracy theory, and I want you to look into the Bidens."

Mr. Schiff: [\(03:10:36\)](#)

I guess we're not even supposed to rely on that because that's hearsay. Well, that's absurd. That would be like saying you can't rely on the testimony of the burglars during Watergate because it's only hearsay, or you can't consider the fact that they tried to break in because they got caught. They actually didn't get what they came for, so, you know, kind of no harm, no foul. That's absurd. That's absurd.

Mr. Schiff: [\(03:11:06\)](#)

But the other defense besides "It failed, the scheme failed, they got caught," the other defense is "The president denies it." Well, I guess that's case closed, right? The president says, really quite spontaneously, it's not as if he was asked in this way, "No quid pro quo." "What do you want from Ukraine?" "No quid pro quo." This is the "I'm not a crook" defense. You say it, and I guess that's the end of it.

Mr. Schiff: [\(03:11:45\)](#)

Well, the only thing we can say is that it's not so much that this situation is different in terms of Nixon's conduct and Trump's conduct. What we've seen here is far more serious than a third-rate burglary of the Democratic headquarters. What we're talking about here is the withholding of recognition in that White House meeting, the withholding of military aid to an ally at war. That is beyond anything Nixon did.

Mr. Schiff: [\(03:12:25\)](#)

The difference between then and now is not the difference between Nixon and Trump, it's the difference between that Congress and this one. And so, we are asking, where is Howard Baker? Where is Howard Baker? Where are the people who are willing to go beyond their party to look to their duty? I was struck by Col. Vindman's testimony because he said that he acted out of duty. What is our duty here? That's what we need to be asking, not using metaphors about balls and strikes, or our team and your team. I've heard my colleagues use those metaphors. This should be about duty. What is our duty?

Mr. Schiff: [\(03:13:25\)](#)

We are, and this gets to Mr. Heck's point, we are the indispensable nation. We still are. People look to us from all over the world. Journalists from their jail cells in Turkey, the

victims of mass extrajudicial killing in the Philippines, people who gathered in Tahrir Square wanting a representative government, people in China who are Uighurs, people in Ukraine who want a better future, they look to us. They're not going to look to the Russians, they're not going to look to the Chinese, they can't look to Europe with all its problems. They still look to us, and increasingly, they don't recognize what they see, because what they see is Americans saying, "Don't engage in political prosecutions," and what they say back is, "Oh, you mean like the Bidens and the Clintons that you want us to investigate?" What they see, they don't recognize. And that is a terrible tragedy for us, but it's a greater tragedy for the rest of the world.

Mr. Schiff: [\(03:14:43\)](#)

Now, I happen to think that when the founders provided a mechanism in the Constitution for impeachment, they were worried about what might happen if someone unethical took the highest office in the land and used it for their personal gain, and not because of deep care about the big things that should matter, like our national security and our defense and our allies, and what the country stands for. I happen to think that's why they put that remedy in the Constitution.

Mr. Schiff: [\(03:15:18\)](#)

And I think we need to consult our conscience and our constituents and decide whether that remedy is appropriate here, whether that remedy is necessary here. And as you know, notwithstanding what my colleagues said, I resisted going down this path for a long time, but I will tell you why I could resist no more, and it came down to this. It came down to, actually, it came down to timing. It came down to the fact that the day after Bob Mueller testified... The day after Bob Mueller testified that Donald Trump invited Russian interference, "Hey, Russia, if you're listening, come get Hillary's emails," and later that day, they tried to hack her server. The day after he testified that not only did Trump invite that interference, but that he welcomed the help in the campaign, they made full use of it, they lied about it, they obstructed the investigation into it, and all this is in his testimony and his report. The day after that, Donald Trump is back on the phone asking another nation to involve itself in another US election.

Mr. Schiff: [\(03:16:45\)](#)

That says to me this president believes he is above the law, beyond accountability. And in my view, there is nothing more dangerous than an unethical president who believes they are above the law. And I would just say to people watching here at home and around the world, in the words of my great colleague, we are better than that. Adjourned.

Speaker 3: [\(03:17:13\)](#)

And with the strike of that gavel, it's a wrap. The former-