

Transcript: Kent and Taylor public testimony in front of House Intelligence Committee

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By Washington Post Staff

This is a transcript of the Nov 13, 2019, hearing at the House Intelligence Committee in the [impeachment inquiry of President Trump](#).

SPEAKERS:

REP. ADAM B. SCHIFF, D-CALIF., CHAIRMAN

REP. JIM HIMES, D-CONN.

REP. TERRI A. SEWELL, D-ALA.

REP. ANDRE CARSON, D-IND.

REP. MIKE QUIGLEY, D-ILL.

REP. JACKIE SPEIER, D-CALIF.

REP. ERIC SWALWELL, D-CALIF.

REP. JOAQUIN CASTRO, D-TEXAS

REP. DENNY HECK, D-WASH.

REP. VAL B. DEMINGS, D-FLA.

REP. RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY, D-ILL.

REP. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY, D-N.Y.

REP. PETER WELCH, D-VT.

REP. NANCY PELOSI, D-CALIF., EX OFFICIO

REP. DEVIN NUNES, R-CALIF., RANKING MEMBER

REP. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY, R-TEXAS

REP. CHRIS STEWART, R-UTAH

REP. MICHAEL R. TURNER, R-OHIO

AD

REP. BRAD WENSTRUP, R-OHIO

REP. JIM JORDAN, R-OHIO

REP. WILL HURD, R-TEXAS

REP. ELISE STEFANIK, R-N.Y.

REP. JOHN RATCLIFFE, R-TEXAS

AD

REP. KEVIN MCCARTHY, R-CALIF., EX OFFICIO

DANIEL GOLDMAN, MAJORITY DIRECTOR OF INVESTIGATIONS, HOUSE

INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

STEVE CASTOR, MINORITY CHIEF INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL, HOUSE

INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

WITNESSES:

AMBASSADOR WILLIAM B. TAYLOR, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES AD INTERIM,

KYIV, UKRAINE, DEPARTMENT OF STATE

GEORGE KENT, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EUROPEAN

AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS

SCHIFF: The committee will come to order.

Good morning, everyone. This is the first in a series of public hearings the committee will be holding as part of the House's impeachment inquiry.

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Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess of the committee at any time there is a quorum present.

Here's how the committee will proceed for this hearing. I will make an opening statement, and then Ranking Member Nunes will have the opportunity to make a statement. Then we will go to witness statements, and then to questions.

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For audience members, we welcome you and we respect your interest in being here. In turn, we ask for your respect as we proceed with today's hearing.

RATCLIFFE: Mr. Chairman?

SCHIFF: It is the intention of the committee to proceed without disruption.

RATCLIFFE: Mr. Chairman? Before...

SCHIFF: What purpose?

RATCLIFFE: May I make a parliamentary inquiry?

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SCHIFF: Gentleman will state the inquiry.

RATCLIFFE: Mr. Chairman, this is our first hearing under these new set of rules. House Resolution 660 gives you the discretion to allow yourself and the ranking member periods of extended questions of up to 45 minutes each before other members are allowed to ask questions.

If possible, we'd like to know the rules of engagement before we get started. Have you made a decision yet as to how many 45-minute rounds you will allow yourself and the ranking member?

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SCHIFF: I have not.

As we informed the minority yesterday, we will see how the first period goes and how much material we're able to get through. At that point, the chair will announce the period -- if there is a period of the second round, which may be up to 45 minutes, or we'll go straight to five-minute questions by members.

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SCHIFF: For audience members, again, we welcome you and your interest. In turn, we expect and will insist on decorum in the committee. As chairman, I will take all necessary and appropriate steps to maintain order and ensure 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.

In 2014, Russia invaded the United States' ally Ukraine to reverse that nation's embrace of the West and to fulfill Vladimir Putin's desire to rebuild a Russian empire. In the following years, 14,000 Ukrainians died as they battled superior Russian forces.

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Earlier this year, Volodymyr Zelensky was elected president of the Ukraine on a platform of ending the conflict and tackling corruption. He was a newcomer to politics and immediately sought to establish a relationship with Ukraine's most powerful patron, the United States.

The questions presented by this impeachment inquiry are whether President Trump sought to exploit that ally's vulnerability and invite Ukraine's interference in our elections; whether President Trump sought to condition official acts, such as a White House meeting or U.S. military assistance, on Ukraine's willingness to assist with two political investigations that would help his reelection campaign; and if President Trump did either, whether such an abuse of his power is compatible with the office of the presidency. The matter is as simple and as terrible as that.

Our answer to these questions will affect not only the future of this presidency, but the future of the presidency itself and what kind of conduct or misconduct the American people may come to expect from their commander in chief.

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There are few actions as consequential as the impeachment of a president. While the founders did not intend that impeachment be employed for mere differences over policy, they also made impeachment a constitutional process that the Congress must utilize as necessary.

The facts in the present inquiry are not seriously contested.

Beginning in January of this year, the president's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, pressed Ukrainian authorities to investigate Burisma, the country's largest national (sic) gas producer, and the Bidens, since Vice President Joe Biden was seen as a strong potential challenger to Trump.

Giuliani also promoted a debunked conspiracy that it was Ukraine, not Russia, that hacked the 2016 U.S. election. The nation's intelligence agencies have stated unequivocally that it was Russia, not Ukraine, that interfered in our election. But Giuliani believed this conspiracy theory, referred to as CrowdStrike, shorthand for the company that discovered the Russian hack, would aid his client's reelection.

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Giuliani also conducted a smear campaign against the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch. On April 29, a senior State Department official told her that, although she had done nothing wrong, President Trump had lost confidence in her.

With the sidelining of Yovanovitch, the stage was set for the establishment of an irregular channel in which Giuliani, and later others, including Gordon Sondland, an influential donor to the president's inauguration now serving as ambassador to the European Union, could advance the president's personal and political interests.

Yovanovitch's replacement in Kyiv, Ambassador Bill Taylor, is a West Point graduate and a Vietnam veteran. As he began to better understand the scheme through the summer of 2019 he pushed back, informing Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent and others about a plan to condition U.S. government actions and funding on the performance of political favors by the Ukrainian government, favors intended for President Trump that would undermine our security and our elections.

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SCHIFF: Several key events in the scheme took place in the month of July.

On July 10th, Ambassador Sondland informed a group of U.S. and Ukrainian officials meeting at the White House that according to Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney, a White House meeting desperately sought by the Ukrainian president with Trump would happen only if Ukraine undertook an investigation into the energy sector, which was understood to mean Burisma, and specifically the Bidens.

National Security Advisor Bolton abruptly ended the meeting and said afterwards that he would not be, quote, "part of whatever drug deal Sondland and Mulvaney are cooking up on this," end quote.

A week later, on July 18th, a representative of the Office of Management and Budget, the White House agency that oversees federal spending, announced on a video conference that Mulvaney, at the direction of the president, was freezing nearly \$400 million in security assistance authorized and appropriated by Congress, and which the entirety of the U.S. national security establishment supported.

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One week after that Donald Trump would have the now-infamous July 25th, phone call with Ukrainian President Zelensky.

During that call Trump complained that the U.S. relationship with Ukraine had not been reciprocal. Later, Zelensky thanks Trump for his support in the area of defense and says that Ukraine is ready to purchase more Javelins, an anti-tank weapon that was among the most important deterrents of further Russian military action.

Trump's immediate response, "I would like you to do us a favor though." Trump then requested that Zelensky investigate the discredited 2016 CrowdStrike conspiracy theory and, even more ominously -- ominously, look into the Bidens.

Neither of these investigations was in the U.S. national interest. And neither was part of the official preparatory material for the call. Both, however, were in Donald Trump's personal interest and in the interest of his 2020 reelection campaign.

And the Ukrainian president knew about both in advance, because Sondland and others had been pressing Ukraine for weeks about investigations into the 2016 election, Burisma and the Bidens.

After the call multiple individuals were concerned enough to report it to the National Security Council's top lawyer. The White House would then take the extraordinary step of moving the call record to a highly classified server exclusively reserved for the most sensitive intelligence matters.

In the weeks that followed, Ambassador Taylor learned new facts about a scheme that Sondland -- even Sondland would describe as becoming more insidious. Taylor texted Sondland, quote, "Are we now saying that security assistance and White House meeting are conditioned on investigations?"

As summer turned to fall, it kept getting more insidious, Mr. Sondland testified. Mr. Taylor, who took notes of his conversations, said the ambassador told him in a September 1st phone call that everything was dependent on the public announcement of investigations, including security assistance. President Trump wanted Mr. Zelensky in a public box.

President Trump is a business man, Sondland said later. When a businessman is about to sign a check to someone who owes him something, the businessman asks that person to pay up before signing the check.

SCHIFF: In a sworn declaration after Taylor's testimony, Sondland would admit to telling Ukrainians at a September 1st meeting in Warsaw, quote, "The resumption of U.S. aid would likely not occur until Ukraine provided the public anti-corruption statement that we have been discussing for many weeks."

The president's chief of staff confirmed Trump's efforts to coerce Ukraine by withholding aid. When Mick Mulvaney was asked publicly about it, his answer was breathtaking. "We do that all the time with foreign policy," he said. "I have news for everybody: Get over it. There's going to be political influence in foreign policy. That is going to happen." The video of that confession is plain for all to see.

Some have argued in the president's defense that the aid was ultimately released, and that is true. But only after Congress began an investigation, only after the president's lawyers learned of a whistleblower complaint, and only after members of Congress began asking uncomfortable questions about quid pro quos.

A scheme to condition official acts or taxpayer funding to obtain a personal political benefit does not become less odious because it is discovered before it is fully consummated.

In fact, the security assistance had been delayed so long it would take another act of Congress to ensure that it could still go out.

And that Oval Office meeting that Zelensky desperately sought? It still hasn't happened.

Although we have learned a great deal about these events in the last several weeks, there are still missing pieces.

The president has instructed the State Department and other agencies to ignore congressional subpoenas for documents. He has instructed witnesses to defy subpoenas and refuse to appear. And he has suggested that those who do expose wrongdoing should be treated like traitors and spies. These actions will force Congress to consider, as it did with President Nixon, whether Trump's obstruction of the constitutional duties of Congress constitute additional grounds for impeachment.

If the president can simply refuse all oversight, particularly in the context of an impeachment proceeding, the balance of power between our two branches of government will be irrevocably altered. That is not what the founders intended, and the prospects for further corruption and abuse of power in this administration or any other will be exponentially increased.

This is what we believe the testimony will show, both as to the president's conduct and as to his obstruction of Congress.

The issue that we confront is the one posed by the president's acting chief of staff when he challenged Americans to get over it. If we find that the president of the United States abused his power and invited foreign interference in our elections, or if he sought to condition, coerce, extort or bribe an ally into conducting investigations to aid his reelection campaign and did so by withholding official acts, White House meeting or hundreds of millions of dollars of needed military aid, must we simply get over it?

Is this what Americans should now expect from their president? If this is not impeachable conduct, what is? Does the oath of office itself, requiring that our laws be faithfully executed, that our president defend the Constitution that balances the powers of its branches, setting ambition against ambition so we become no monarchy, still have meaning?

These are the questions we must ask and answer, without rancor if we can, without delay regardless, and without party favor and without prejudice if we are true to our responsibilities.

SCHIFF: Benjamin Franklin was asked what kind of country America was to become. "A republic," he answered, "if you can keep it." The fundamental issue raised by the impeachment inquiry into Donald J. Trump is: Can we keep it?

Now recognize Ranking Member Nunes for any remarks he may wish to make.

NUNES: Thank the gentleman.

In a July open hearing of this committee following publication of the Mueller report, the Democrats engaged in a last-ditch effort to convince the American people that President Trump is a Russian agent. That hearing was the pitiful finale of a three-year-long operation by the Democrats, the corrupt media, and partisan bureaucrats to overturn the results of the 2016 election.

After the spectacular implosion of their Russia hoax on July 24th, in which they spent years denouncing any Republican who ever shook hands with a Russian, on July 25th, they turned on a dime and now claimed the real malfeasance is Republicans dealing with Ukraine.

In the blink of an eye, we're asked to simply forget about Democrats on this committee falsely claiming they had more than circumstantial evidence of collusion between President Trump and Russians. We should forget about them reading fabrications of Trump-Russia collusion from the Steele dossier into the Congressional Record. We should also forget them trying to obtain nude pictures of Trump from Russian pranksters who pretended to be Ukrainian officials. We should forget about them leaking a false story to CNN, while he was still testifying to our committee, claiming that Donald Trump Jr. was colluding with

WikiLeaks. And forget about countless other deceptions, large and small, that make them the last people on Earth with the credibility to hurl more preposterous accusations at their political opponents.

And yet now, here we are. We're supposed to take these people at face value when they trot out a new bath of allegations, but anyone familiar with the Democrats' scorched-earth war against President Trump would not be surprised to see all the typical signs that this is a carefully orchestrated media smear campaign.

For example, after vowing publicly that impeachment requires bipartisan supports, Democrats are pushing impeachment forward without the backing of a single Republican.

The witnesses deemed suitable for television by the Democrats were put through a closed-door audition process in a cult-like atmosphere in the basement of the Capitol, where Democrats conducted secret depositions, released a flood of misleading and one sided leaks, and later selectively released transcripts in a highly staged manner.

Violating their own guidelines, Democrats repeatedly redacted from the transcripts the name of Alexandra Chalupa, a contractor for the Democratic National Committee who worked with Ukrainian officials to collect dirt on the Trump campaign, which she provided to the DNC and the Hillary Clinton campaign.

The Democrats rejected most of the Republicans' witnesses -- witness requests, resulting in a horrifically one-sided process where the crucial witnesses are denied a platform if their testimony does not support the Democrats' absurd accusations.

Notably, they are trying to impeach the president for inquiring about Hunter Biden's activities, yet they refuse our request to hear from Biden himself.

NUNES: The whistleblower was acknowledged to have a bias against President Trump, and his attorney touted a coup against the president and called for his impeachment just weeks after the election.

At a prior hearing, Democrats on this committee read out a purely fictitious rendition of the president's phone call with President Zelensky. They clearly found the real conversation to be insufficient for their impeachment narrative, so they just made up a new one.

And most egregiously, the staff of the Democrats on this committee had direct discussions with the whistleblower before his or her complaint was submitted to the inspector general.

Republicans can't get a full account of these contacts because Democrats broke their promise to have the whistleblower testify to this committee. Democrat members hid these contacts from Republicans, and then lied about them to the American people on national television.

I have noted before, the Democrats have a long habit of accusing Republicans of offenses they themselves are committing. Let's recall, for years, they accused the Trump campaign of colluding with Russia when they themselves were colluding with Russia by funding and spreading the Steele dossier, which relied on Russian sources.

And now, they accuse President Trump of malfeasance in Ukraine when they themselves are culpable. The Democrats cooperated in Ukrainian election meddling and they defend Hunter Biden's securing of a lavishly paid position with a corrupt Ukrainian company, all while his father served as vice president. Despite this hypocrisy, the Democrats are advancing their impeachment sham.

But we should not hold any hearings at all until we get answers to three crucial questions the Democrats are determined to avoid asking. First, what is the full extent of the Democrats' prior coordination with the whistleblower? And who else did the whistleblower coordinate this effort with?

Second, what is the full extent of Ukraine's election meddling against the Trump campaign? And third, why did Burisma hire Hunter Biden and what did he do for them? And did his position affect any U.S. government actions under the Obama administration?

These questions will remain outstanding because Republicans were denied the right to call witnesses that know these answers.

What we will witness today is a televised theatrical performance, staged by the Democrats.

Ambassador Taylor and Mr. Kent, I'd like to welcome you here. I'd like to congratulate you for passing the Democrats' Star Chamber auditions, held for the last weeks in the basement of the Capitol. It seems you agreed, witting or unwittingly, to participate in a drama. But the main performance, the Russia hoax, has ended and you've been cast in the low-rent Ukrainian sequel.

I'll conclude by noting the immense damage the politicized bureaucracy has done to Americans' faith in government. Though executive branch employees are charged with implementing the policies set by our president, who is elected and responsible to the American people. Elements of the civil service have decided that they, not the president, are really in charge.

Thus, as we'll learn in these hearings, after expressing skepticism of foreign aid and concern about foreign corruption on the campaign trail, President Trump outraged the bureaucracy by acting skeptically about foreign aid, and expressing concerns about foreign corruption.

Officials' alarm at the president's actions was typically based on secondhand, thirdhand and even fourthhand rumors and innuendo. They believed it was an outrage for the president to fire an ambassador, even though the president has full authority to retain or remove

diplomats for any reason at any time.

Officials showed a surprising lack of interest in the indications of Ukrainian election meddling that deeply concern the president, at whose pleasure they serve.

Despite all their dissatisfaction with President Trump's Ukraine policy, the president approved the supply of weapons to Ukraine. Unlike the previous administration, which provided blankets as defense against invading Russians.

By undermining the president who they are supposed to be serving, the elements of the FBI, the Department of Justice and now the State Department have lost the confidence of millions of Americans who believe that their vote should count for something. It will take years, if not decades, to restore faith in these institutions.

This spectacle is doing great damage to our country. It's nothing more than an impeachment process in search of a crime.

With that, I yield back.

SCHIFF: Today, we are joined by Ambassador William Taylor and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent, both of whom are appearing under subpoena.

Ambassador William Taylor has served our country for over half a century. He attended U.S. Military Academy at West Point, graduating in the top 1 percent of his class before serving as an infantry officer in the U.S. Army for six years, including with the 101st Airborne Division during the Vietnam War. Ambassador Taylor led a rifle platoon in Vietnam and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and the Air Medal for valor.

Following his military service, he worked at the Department of Energy as a staffer in the U.S. Senate; as an advisor as well to U.S. ambassador to NATO.

In the 1990s, Ambassador Taylor coordinated U.S. assistance to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and later served in Afghanistan, Iraq and worked on the Middle East peace process. In 2006, President Bush nominated him as ambassador to Ukraine, where he served until 2009 and then was appointed by President Barack Obama to be special coordinator for Middle East Transitions.

Ambassador Taylor was serving as the executive vice president of the nonpartisan U.S. Institute for Peace when, in June 2019, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo asked him to return to lead the U.S. embassy in Kiev as charge d'affaires.

Mr. George Kent currently serves as deputy assistant secretary in the Department of State's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, overseeing policy towards Ukraine and other countries. He has served twice in Ukraine from 2004 to 2007. He was the deputy political

counselor including during the Orange Revolution. And from 2015 to 2018, he served as deputy chief of mission in Kiev.

Since joining the foreign service in 1992, Mr. Kent has served in Poland, Uzbekistan, and Thailand. He also served as the senior anti-corruption coordinator and oversaw programs to strengthen the rule of law.

All witness depositions as part of this inquiry were unclassified in nature and all open hearings will also be at the unclassified level. Any information that may touch on classified information will be addressed separately.

Congress will not tolerate any reprisal, threat of reprisal or attempt to retaliate against any U.S. government official for testifying before Congress, including you or any of your colleagues.

SCHIFF: If you would both rise and 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?

TAYLOR: I do.

KENT: I do.

SCHIFF: Let the record show that the witnesses answered in the affirmative. Thank you, and please be seated.

STEFANIK: Mr. Chairman, before we hear from the witnesses I have a parliamentary inquiry.

SCHIFF: The gentlewoman will state her parliamentary inquiry.

STEFANIK: Mr. Chairman, when can we anticipate a response to our November 9th letter requesting certain individual witnesses to be called?

SCHIFF: The gentleman should -- gentlewoman should be aware that three of the witnesses the minority has requested are scheduled for next week, and for...

STEFANIK: Those were your witnesses, Mr. Chairman. What about the additional six witnesses?

SCHIFF: The gentlewoman may inquire about additional witnesses or make a request for a vote on (ph) additional witnesses following the witness testimony.

STEFANIK: And Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order under H.Res. 660.

SCHIFF: Gentlewoman will -- will state her point of order.

STEFANIK: Mr. Chairman, will you be prohibiting witnesses from answering members' questions as you have in the closed-door depositions?

SCHIFF: As the gentlewoman should know -- she was present for the depositions...

STEFANIK: Which I was. Mr. Chairman...

SCHIFF: For some of them, yes.

STEFANIK: Correct.

SCHIFF: The -- the only times I prevented witnesses from answering questions, along with their counsel, was when it was apparent that members were seeking to out the whistleblower. We will do everything necessary to protect the whistleblower's identity, and I'm disturbed to hear members of the committee, who have in the past voiced strong support for whistleblower protections, seek to undermine those protections by outing the whistleblower.

(CROSSTALK)

SCHIFF: So provided (inaudible)

STEFANIK: Mr. Chairman, only one member and their staff...

SCHIFF: The gentlewoman's -- and the gentlewoman...

STEFANIK: ... on this committee has direct knowledge of the identity of the whistleblower.

SCHIFF: Gentlewoman will suspend. You asked a parliamentary inquiry, and I am responding -- or point of order, and I'm responding.

We will not permit the outing of the whistleblower, and questions along those lines, counsel will inform their clients not to respond to. If necessary, I would -- will intervene. Otherwise, I want members to feel free to ask any questions they like.

(CROSSTALK)

CONAWAY: Mr. Chairman...

SCHIFF: (inaudible)

CONAWAY:...I'd like to make a motion, Mr. Chairman.

SCHIFF: I'm sorry.

CONAWAY: To subpoena (inaudible)

SCHIFF: This is an opportunity for members...

CONAWAY: ... the whistleblower and get all the rest of the questions they like.

SCHIFF: The -- the gentleman is not recognized.

(UNKNOWN): (OFF-MIKE) Mr. Conaway.

(UNKNOWN): Mr. Conaway.

CONAWAY: Mr. Chairman?

SCHIFF: I'm -- I'm responding to the gentlewoman's point of order. Otherwise, members will have every opportunity to ask any questions they like.

Mr. Conaway, do you seek recognition? For what purpose?

CONAWAY: I seek recognition to make a motion that we actually subpoena the whistleblower for a closed-door, secret deposition so that the questions that should be appropriately asked the whistleblower by our side and your side may be asked. And I would prefer that rather than it be your single decision, that the committee speak to that issue, rather than just the chairman. And I move that we...

SCHIFF: I -- I think the gentleman -- it won't be my single decision.

CONAWAY: (inaudible) subpoena the -- the whistleblower.

SCHIFF: It won't be my single decision. We will entertain a motion to subpoena any witness, but after the witnesses have had an opportunity to testify.

CONAWAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SCHIFF: That motion will be in order, but that motion will be suspended until after the witnesses (inaudible)

(CROSSTALK)

CONAWAY: All right, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

JORDAN: Mr. Chairman, do -- do you anticipate when we would vote on that?

SCHIFF: For what purpose does Mr. Jordan seek recognition?

JORDAN: Just to ask a -- a clarifying question. Do you anticipate when we might vote on the ability to have the whistleblower in front of us, something you -- the 435 members of Congress, you are the only member who knows who that individual is, and your staff is the

only staff of any member of Congress who's had a chance to talk with that individual. We would like that opportunity. When might that happen in this proceeding today?

SCHIFF: First, as the gentleman knows, that's a false statement. I do not know the identity of the whistleblower, and I'm determined to make sure that identity is protected. But as I said to Mr. Conaway, you will have an opportunity after the witnesses testify, to make a motion to subpoena any witness and compel a vote.

And with that, I now recognize the witnesses. Before I do, I want to just emphasize the microphones are sensitive, so please speak directly into them. Without objection, your written statements will be made part of the record.

And with that, Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent, you are recognized for your opening statement. Ambassador Taylor, you are recognized immediately thereafter for your opening statement.

Read Kent's opening statement

Read Taylor's opening statement

SCHIFF: I thank you both for your testimony and I now recognize myself and majority counsel for 45 minutes of questions.

MALE: Mr. Chairman ...

SCHIFF: Mr. Taylor, I'd like to begin my following up on something that you have disclosed today you disclosed earlier to both majority and minority but it is some new information for the committee. You said in your testimony that one of your staff was present with Ambassador Sondland on the day after the July 25th phone call. Is that right?

TAYLOR: That's correct Mr. Chairman.

SCHIFF: And as your staff related the event to you, your staff member could overhear Mr. Sondland on the phone, could overhear the President on the phone with Mr. Sondland, is that right?

TAYLOR: That's correct.

SCHIFF: So, the President must have been speaking loud enough on the phone, this was a cell phone I take it?

TAYLOR: It was a cell phone.

SCHIFF: The President must have been speaking loud enough for your staff member to be able to overhear this?

TAYLOR: It was.

SCHIFF: And what you staff member could overhear was President Trump asking Ambassador Sondland about "the investigations" is that right?

TAYLOR: That's correct.

SCHIFF: I think you testified also that you had come to understand that the term investigations was a term that Ambassador Sondland as well as Volker used to mean matters related to the 2016 elections and to the investigations of Burisma and Biden, is that correct?

TAYLOR: That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

SCHIFF: So your staff member overhears the President asking about the investigations, meaning Burisma and the Biden's in 2016 and Ambassador Sondland told President Trump that the Ukrainians were ready to mover forward?

TAYLOR: He did.

SCHIFF: And I think you said that after the call when you're asked Ambassador Sondland what President Trump thought of Ukraine his response was that President Trump cares more about the investigations of Biden, is that right?

TAYLOR: And Burisma, yes sir.

SCHIFF: And I take it the import of that is he cares more about that then he does about Ukraine?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

SCHIFF: During our testimony Ambassador Taylor you also said that more Ukrainians would undoubtedly die without US assistance, why is that?

TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, the security assistance that we provide takes many forms. One of the components of that assistance is counter-battery radar. Another component are sniper weapons. These weapons and this assistance it allows the Ukrainian military to deter further incursions by the Russians against their own, against Ukrainian territory. If that further incursion, further aggression were to take place, more Ukrainians would die. So it is a deterrent effect that these weapons provide. It's also the ability, it gives the Ukrainians the ability to negotiate from a position of a little more strength when they negotiate an end to the war in Donbass, negotiating with the Russians. This also is a way that would reduce the number of Ukrainians who would die.

SCHIFF: I take it if the provision of the US Military assistance would save Ukrainians lives that any delay in that assistance my also cost Ukrainian lives. Is that, is that true?

TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman of course it's hard to pro - to draw any direct lines between any particular element of security systems and any particular death on the battlefield. But it is certainly true that that assistance had enabled Ukrainian arm forces to be effective and deter and to be able to take countermeasures to the attacks that the Russians had -

SCHIFF: I think you said that a Ukrainian soldier lost their life while you were visiting Donbass.

TAYLOR: We keep very careful track of the casualties and I noticed on the next day, the information that we got that one was killed four soldiers were wounded on that day.

SCHIFF: And indeed Ukrainians lose their lives every week.

TAYLOR: Every week.

SCHIFF: I think you also testified that Russian was watching closely to gauge the level of American support for the Ukrainian government. Why is that significant?

TAYLOR: This is significant, Mr. Chairman, because the Ukrainians in particular under this new administration are eager to end this war. And they are eager to end it in a way that the Russians leave their territory. These negotiations like all negotiations are difficult. Ukrainians would like to be able to negotiate from a position of strength or at least more strength that they now have. Part of the strength part of the ability of the Ukrainians to negotiate against the Russians with the Russians for an end to the war on Donbass depends on United States and other international support. If we withdraw or suspend or threaten to withdraw our security assistance that's a message to the Ukrainians but it's at least as important as your question indicates Mr. Chairman.

To the Russians who are looking for any sign of weakness or any sign that we are withdrawing our support for Ukraine.

SCHIFF: And so when the Ukrainians learned of the suspension of the military aid either privately or when others learned publicly the Russians would be learning also. And they would take that as a lack of robust US support for Ukraine. Is that right?

TAYLOR: That's correct, sir.

SCHIFF: And that would weaken Ukraine in negotiating an end to the war in Donbass?

TAYLOR: It would.

SCHIFF: People watching I'm sure are interested in how military assistance and diplomatic support for Ukraine affects Ukraine, but even more so interested in how does this affect our national security.

Now I -- I think you said that if we believe in a principle of sovereignty of nations where countries get to determine their own economy, political, and security alliances, we have to support Ukraine in its fight, that the kind of aggression we see by Russia can't stand. How is it important to American national security that we provide for a robust defense of Ukraine's sovereignty?

TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, as -- as my colleague, Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent described, we have a national security policy, a national defense policy that identifies Russia and China as adversaries. The Russians are violating all of the rules, treaties, understandings that they committed to that actually kept the peace in Europe for nearly 70 years. Until they invaded Ukraine in 2014, they had abided by sovereignty of -- of -- sovereignty of nations, of -- of inviolability (ph) of borders. That rule of law, that order that kept the peace in Europe and allowed for prosperity as well as peace in Europe was violated by the Russians, and if we don't push back on that, on those violations, then that will continue.

And that, Mr. Chairman, affects us, it's -- it -- it affects the world that we live in, that our children will grow up in and our grandchildren. This affects the kind of world that we want to -- to see overall (ph). So that affects our national interest very directly.

Ukraine is on the frontline of that -- of that conflict.

SCHIFF: I want to (ph) thank you both for your decades of service to the country, and I will now recognize Mr. Goldman for questioning.

GOLDMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Taylor, on the heels of your discussing the importance of the security assistance to Ukraine, I want to go to the end of the timeline where you learned that that security assistance was conditioned on Ukraine announcing the investigations that the president wanted. And in particular, on September 9th of this year, you texted Ambassador Sondland and Volker, and the text message should be on the screen in front of you, and if you could read what you wrote?

TAYLOR: "As I said on the phone, I think it's crazy to withhold security assistance for help with a political campaign."

GOLDMAN: What did you mean when you said you thought it was "crazy"?

TAYLOR: Mr. Goldman, I meant that the important -- because of the importance of security assistance, that we had just described and had a conversation with -- with the chairman, because that was so important, that security assistance was so important for Ukraine as well as our own national interest, to withhold that assistance for no good reason other than help with a political campaign, made no sense. It was -- it was counterproductive to all of what we had been trying to do. It was illogical, it could not be explained, it was crazy.

GOLDMAN: When you say all of what "we" were trying to do, what do you mean by "we"?

TAYLOR: I mean that the United States was trying to support Ukraine as a frontline state against Russian attack. And again, the -- the whole notion of a rules-based order was being threatened by the Russians in Ukraine. So our security assistance was designed to support Ukraine. That's -- it -- that -- and it was not just the United States. It was all of our -- of our allies.

GOLDMAN: When you reference "help with a political campaign" in this -- in this text message, what did you mean?

TAYLOR: I meant that the investigation of Burisma and the Bidens was clearly identified by Mr. Giuliani in public for months as a way to get information on -- on the -- on the two Bidens.

GOLDMAN: And those -- that investigation at the very least was mentioned by President Trump in the July 25th phone call with President Zelensky? Is that right?

TAYLOR: As we now know, yes. I -- yes, on -- on September 25th, that transcript was released.

GOLDMAN: Ambassador Taylor, in your decades of military service and -- and diplomatic service representing the United States around the world, have you ever seen another example of foreign aid conditioned on the personal or political interests of the President of the United States?

TAYLOR: No, Mr. Goldman, I have not.

GOLDMAN: Mr. Kent, that vital military assistance, that was not the only thing that President Trump was withholding from Ukraine. What else was contingent on Ukraine initiating these investigations?

KENT: Well as we've talked -- earlier today, the possibility of a White House meeting was being held contingent to an announcement.

GOLDMAN: How important to President Zelensky was a White House meeting?

KENT: New leaders, particularly countries that are trying to have good footing in the international arena (ph) see a meeting with the U.S. President in the Oval Office at the White House as a -- as the ultimate sign of endorsement and support from the United States.

GOLDMAN: President Zelensky was a relatively new president, is that right?

KENT: That's correct, he was elected on April 21st and his government was formed after parliamentary elections in July.

GOLDMAN: Would a White House meeting for President Zelensky boost his legitimacy as a new president in Ukraine?

KENT: It would primarily boost his leverage to negotiate with Vladimir Putin about the Russian occupation of 7 percent of Ukrainian territory.

GOLDMAN: Mr. Kent, is -- is pressuring Ukraine to conduct what I believe you've called political investigations a part of U.S. foreign policy to promote the rule of law in Ukraine and around the world?

KENT: It is not.

GOLDMAN: Is it in the national interest of the United States?

KENT: In my opinion, it is not.

GOLDMAN: Why not?

KENT: Because our policies, particularly in promoting the rule of law, are designed to help countries -- and in Eastern Europe and Central Europe, that is overcoming the legacy of communism. In the communist system, in particular the prosecutor general office, was used to suppress and persecute citizens, not promote the rule of law. So in helping these countries reach their own aspirations to join the Western community of nations and live lives of dignity, helping them have the rule of law with strong institutions is the purpose of our policy.

GOLDMAN: So in other words, it is a purpose of our foreign policy to encourage foreign nations to refrain from conducting political investigations, is that right?

KENT: Correct. And, in fact, as a matter of policy, not of programming, we often times raise our concerns, usually in private, with countries that we feel are engaged in selective political prosecution and persecution of their opponents.

GOLDMAN: Ambassador Taylor, now that we've established that you ultimately did understand that President Trump was withholding the securities assistance, and a White House meeting from Ukraine until they announced these investigations to benefit his

reelection campaign, let's go back a little bit in time, to when you first learned about this conditionality.

And on September 1st, so a little more than a week before that text we just read, you sent another text to Ambassador Sondland and Volker, which should be -- also be on the screen in front of you, and if you could read what you wrote to them.

TAYLOR: Are we now saying that security assistance and White House meeting are conditioned on investigations?

GOLDMAN: And Ambassador Sondland responded, call me. Now, what information had you learned that prompted you to write this text message?

TAYLOR: I had learned that in Warsaw, after the meeting Vice President Pence had with President Zelensky, Ambassador had had meetings there.

And had described to Mr. Yermak, the assistant to President Zelensky, that the security assistance was also held, pending announcement by President Zelensky in public of these investigations.

Before that, I had only understood from Ambassador Sondland that the White House meeting was condition, and at this time, after I heard of this conversation, it struck me -- it was clear to me that security assistance was also being held.

GOLDMAN: You said previously that you were alarmed to learn this. Why were you alarmed?

TAYLOR: It's one thing to try to leverage a meeting in the White House, it's another thing, I thought to leverage security assistance -- security assistance to a country at war, dependent on both the security assistance and the demonstration of support. It was -- it was much more alarming, the White House meeting was one thing, security assistance was much more alarming.

GOLDMAN: Now, Ambassador Taylor, you -- in your opening statement you outlined a very detailed timeline, and in fact, we have a written copy here and you included some phrases and words in quotations. Did you take notes of this conversation on September 1st with Ambassador Sondland?

TAYLOR: I did.

GOLDMAN: And did you take notes related to most of the conversations, if not all of them, that you recited in your opening statement?

TAYLOR: All of them Mr. Goldman.

GOLDMAN: And what -- what are those quotations that you include in your opening statement reflect?

TAYLOR: They reflect my notes on the exact words that I heard on that call. So, it was -- if I put those in quote, that meant that those are the words used on that phone call or in that conversation.

GOLDMAN: Did you review those notes before you drafted your opening statement and came here to testify?

TAYLOR: I did.

GOLDMAN: Now is that how, for example, you remember that Ambassador Sondland was on a train from Paris to London, you know, during a call in July?

TAYLOR: That's correct.

GOLDMAN: And you are aware, I presume, that the State Department has not provided those notes to the Committee, is that right?

TAYLOR: I am aware.

GOLDMAN: So, we don't have the benefit of reviewing them to ask you these questions?

TAYLOR: Correct. I understand that they may be coming, sooner -- sooner or later.

GOLDMAN: Well, we would welcome them. You also testified earlier Ambassador Sondland - or Ambassador Taylor, that President Trump had delegated some matters overseeing Ukraine policy to Ambassador Sondland, who is a big inaugural supporter of President Trump, even though Ukraine is not in his domain of the European Union, is that right?

TAYLOR: Several members -- several participants in the meeting in the Oval Office with President Trump, with the delegation to the inauguration of President Zelensky, told me of that conversation and it was at that meeting, as I understand it from several participants, that President Trump asked the participants to work with Mr. Giuliani on Ukraine policy.

GOLDMAN: Did you come to understand that Ambassador Sondland had a direct line of communication into President Trump?

TAYLOR: I did.

GOLDMAN: And you testified, or rather in that text message, Ambassador Sondland says to call him after you wrote that. Did you, in fact, call him?

TAYLOR: I did.

GOLDMAN: And what did he say to you?

TAYLOR: He said that, I had -- I was wrong about President Trump's intent. That there was no quid pro quo.

GOLDMAN: And -- but did he say anything after that? Did he describe to you, I believe you said, I'll refresh your memory, that --

TAYLOR: Thank you.

GOLDMAN: -- he mentioned something -- in your opening statement you said that he said that everything, I believe -- and you had that in quotes, was actually contingent on the initiation of these investigations. What did he mean by everything?

TAYLOR: Mr. Goldman, what he meant by everything was, the securities assistance and the White House meeting.

GOLDMAN: And I believe you -- you also testified that he said he had made a mistake in relaying a message to the Ukrainians. What was that mistake?

TAYLOR: The mistake he told me was, earlier he had told, presumably President Zelensky and Mr. Yermak, that what was necessary for the White House meeting was the pursuit of these investigations. And he said, he recognized that that was a mistake. It was not just the White House meeting that was dependent on the investigations, he said it was now everything. It included the security assistance.

GOLDMAN: So, it was not just the White House meeting, it was also the security assistance?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

GOLDMAN: And so, even though President Trump was saying repeatedly that there is -- there is no quid pro quo, Ambassador Sondland relayed to you that the facts of the matter were that the White House meeting and the security assistance were conditioned on the announcement of these investigations. Is that your understanding?

TAYLOR: That's my understanding.

GOLDMAN: Now, you reference a television interview and a desire for President Trump to put Zelensky in a public box, which you also have in quotes. Was in that your -- your notes?

TAYLOR: It was in my notes.

GOLDMAN: And what did you understand that to mean, to put Zelensky in a public box?

TAYLOR: I understood that to mean that President Trump, through Ambassador Sondland, as asking for President Zelensky to very publicly commit to these investigations. That it was not sufficient to do this in private, that this needed to be a very public statement.

GOLDMAN: And did you understand why it was needed to be in public as opposed to a private conformation?

TAYLOR: I had no further information on that.

GOLDMAN: Now during this time period in early September, did you come to understand that from your conversations with the Ukrainians or other individuals that Ukraine felt pressure to initiate these investigations because of the conditionality of the White House meeting and the security assistance?

TAYLOR: Mr. Goldman, here -- here's what I know. I got several questions -- other officials got several questions as well from Ukrainians asking about the security assistance. So what I know is this security assistance was very important to the Ukrainians, they had begun to hear from Ambassador Sondland that the security systems was not going to come until the investigations were pursued.

What I heard from the defense minister, what the senators -- what Senator Johnson and Senator Murphy heard in their conversation with President Zelensky was the strong -- the clear concern -- the urgent concern that Ukrainians had about the security assistance.

GOLDMAN: Now you also described a conversation that you had with Ambassador Sondland a week later in -- on September 8th and in that conversation in your opening statement you described how Ambassador Sondland used the term stalemate, what did you understand the concern about a stalemate to be?

TAYLOR: Ambassador Sondland said that if President Zelensky did not clear things up in public, we would be at a stalemate. He had -- he -- he perm -- he began that again by repeating this is not a quid pro quo, but if the -- if President Zelensky did not clear things up in public we would be at a stalemate, and what I understood for -- and that meaning -- and the meaning of stalemate was the security systems would not come.

GOLDMAN: So even though he said the words there were no quid pro quo, he then went on to say but the security assistance will not come unless these investigations are done, is that what you're saying?

TAYLOR: My understanding that's what was meant by a stalemate.

GOLDMAN: You also described in your opening statement a -- a discussion you had about President Trump being a business man who wanted to have people pay up before signing the check. Now, what is -- what did you understand that to mean?

TAYLOR: This was an explanation that -- that Ambassador Sondland gave me about his understanding of President Trump's thought process. Ambassador Sondland is a business man, and then (ph) Trump's a business man, he was explaining to me the -- the relationship -- the understanding that the -- that the -- a business man would have when he's about to sign a check.

And by that he clearly meant that President Trump was thinking about, or had in front of him the -- the possibility of providing security assistance to Ukraine, it was similar to writing a check to a -- someone who you were (ph) about to send.

He used -- he used that analogy, very clearly, to indicate that this would be -- this would require something. If that person owed him something, before he signed the check he wanted to get that -- get whatever he was owed paid back to him. And Ambassador Volker used very similar language about a week later, which indicates to me that they had that conversation as well.

GOLDMAN: Did Ukraine owe anything to the United States?

TAYLOR: Mr. Goldman, they didn't. They owed appreciation for the support, and they -- they were getting support and they appreciated that. But there was not -- there was not -- there was nothing owed to President Trump on that.

GOLDMAN: But, you understood the upshot of this comment, given -- made by both Ambassador Sondland and Ambassador Volker, to be that President Trump believed that Ukraine owed him something personally. Is that accurate?

TAYLOR: It's hard to understand, but there was a feeling on -- by President Trump that he -- and this came out in the -- in the transcript -- I'm sorry, this came out in the discussion with the inaugural delegation, when they came back to have a conversation with President Trump on May 23rd, that he had a -- he had a feeling of having been wronged by the Ukrainians. And so, this was something that he thought they owed him to fix that wrong.

GOLDMAN: Right, but what he -- what he was talking about, as you understood it, because in the context of the conversation is that what he owed him were these investigations that he wanted. Is that right?

TAYLOR: That -- that would have been to fix the wrong, exactly.

GOLDMAN: And those investigations into the 2016 election and Biden and Burisma?

TAYLOR: That's correct.

GOLDMAN: Now, during this early period in September, we've talked a little bit about the fact that you continually heard that the president was repeatedly saying that there was no quid pro quo, is that right?

TAYLOR: That's correct.

GOLDMAN: And he still says that repeatedly today. But regardless of what you call it, whether it's a quid pro quo, bribery, extortion, abuse of power of the Office of the Presidency, the fact of the matter, as you understood it, is that security assistance and the White House meeting were not going to be provided unless Ukraine initiated these two investigations what would benefit Donald Trump's reelection. Is that what you understood the facts the to be?

TAYLOR: Mr. Goldman, what I can do here for you today is tell you what I heard from people. And in this case it was what I heard from Ambassador Sondland. He described the conditions for the security assistance and the White House meeting in -- in those terms. That is, that dependent upon, conditioned on pursuing these investigations.

GOLDMAN: And you heard that from Ambassador Sondland himself, correct?

TAYLOR: Correct.

GOLDMAN: And you also heard a similar story from Mr. Morrison as well, is that right?

TAYLOR: Who also talked to Ambassador Sondland about the conversations that he had in Warsaw with Ukrainians.

GOLDMAN: And what Mr. Morrison recounted to you was substantially similar to what Mr. Sondland recounted to you, right?

TAYLOR: Yes.

GOLDMAN: And so, regardless of what Ukrainians may say now, now that everything is out in the public and we're here in this public hearing, that they felt no pressure from President Trump, it was your clear understanding, was it not, that in early September, when the pressure campaign was still secret, that the Ukrainians believed that they needed to announce these public investigations, is that right?

TAYLOR: Mr. Goldman, I know that the Ukrainians were very concerned about the security assistance, and I know that they were prepared or preparing to do -- to make a public statement that is with a CNN interview, that that was being planned. Those are the two pieces that I know.

GOLDMAN: And that CNN interview was to announce these investigations as you understood it, right?

TAYLOR: That was the implication. That was certainly the implication.

GOLDMAN: We've been focused a lot on the September timeframe, but I want to go back two months, to July, before the July 25th call. And you testified, Ambassador Taylor, in your - your opening statement that it was in the middle of July when you understood that the White House meeting was first a condition on these investigations. Is that -- is that accurate?

TAYLOR: Yes. We were preparing -- and I agree, that the White House meeting was going to be an important step in U.S.-Ukrainian relations. So, in -- in June and in early July attempts to work out a way to get that meeting included a phone call. And so, there were several conversations about how to have this phone call, that eventually happened on July 25th.

GOLDMAN: And you described in your opening statement, a -- a July 10th White House meeting with a number of officials, where Ambassador Bolton used the term that something was a drug deal. What did you understand him to mean in hearing that he said that -- used this term drug deal?

TAYLOR: Mr. Goldman, I don't know. I don't know what Ambassador Bolton had in mind.

GOLDMAN: And was that in reference to a discussion in that meeting related to the White House meeting that President Zelensky wanted in connection to the investigations?

TAYLOR: The context of that comment was the discussion that Mr. Danilov (ph), who was Mr. Bolton's counterpart, Ukrainian counterpart, his National Security Advisor, had had with Mr. Bolton, and that conversation was very substantive up until the point where the White House meeting was raised and Mr. Ambassador Sondland intervened to talk about the investigations.

It was at that point that Ambassador Bolton ceased the meeting, closed the meeting, finished the meeting and told his staff to report this meeting to the lawyers, and he also later then indicated to Fiona Hill, who was also participant on NSC staff, that he -- he, Ambassador Bolton, didn't want to be associated with this drug deal.

So it was -- the implication was, it was the -- the -- the domestic politics that was being cooked up.

GOLDMAN: And, did Ambassador Sondland say this in front of the Ukrainian officials, to your understanding?

TAYLOR: Ambassador Sondland, in the meeting where Ambassador Bolton was having the conversation with his counterpart, raised the issue of investigations being important to come before the White House meeting that had just been raised.

GOLDMAN: And Ukrainian officials were there?

TAYLOR: And Ukrainian officials were in that meeting, yes sir.

GOLDMAN: Now, around this same time, in mid-July, did you have any discussions with Ukrainian officials about these investigations?

TAYLOR: I don't recall.

GOLDMAN: Well let me show you a text message that you wrote on July 21 where you wrote it again to Ambassadors Sondland and Volker. And if you could just read what you -- what you wrote here on July 21.

TAYLOR: "Gordon, one thing Kurt and I talked about yesterday was Sasha Danyliuk's point that President Zelensky is sensitive about Ukraine being taken seriously, not merely as an instrument in Washington domestic reelection politics."

GOLDMAN: And Sasha Danyliuk, I think you just said, is Ambassador Bolton's counterpart, right --

TAYLOR: He's the national security advisor to the -- he was, he's no longer, but was at the time.

GOLDMAN: What did you understand it to mean when -- that Zelensky had concerns about being an instrument in Washington domestic reelection politics?

TAYLOR: Mr. Danyliuk understood that these investigations were pursuant to Mr. Giuliani's request to develop information, to find information about Burisma and the Bidens. This was very well-known in public. Mr. Giuliani had made this point clear in several instances in the beginning -- in -- in the -- in the springtime, and Mr. Danyliuk was aware that that was a problem.

GOLDMAN: And would you agree that because President Zelensky is worried about this, they understood, at least, that there was some pressure for them to pursue these investigations? Is that fair?

TAYLOR: Mr. Danyliuk indicated that President Zelensky certainly understood it, that he did not want to get involved in these type of activities.

GOLDMAN: Now I'm going to move ahead now to July 25, which is when President Trump and President Zelensky had the phone call. But before we get to the phone call, I want to show both of you a text message, neither of which -- neither of you is on this text message. It is between Ambassador Volker and Andre Yermak, a top aide to President Zelensky. I will read it because neither of you is on it. Ambassador Volker says, "good lunch. Thanks. Heard

from White House. Assuming President Z convinces Trump he will investigate/get to the bottom of what happened in 2016, we will nail down date for visit to Washington. Good luck. See you tomorrow. Kurt."

And this was a half hour -- less than a half hour before the call actually occurred. Now, Ambassador Taylor, was Ambassador Volker with you in Ukraine at this time?

TAYLOR: He was.

GOLDMAN: Did you know that he was prepping President Zelensky for this phone call with President Trump in this way?

TAYLOR: Not in this way, Mr. Goldman, but I knew that Ambassador Volker was prepping Ukrainians for the phone call earlier on. That is in -- at a meeting in Toronto on July 2, Mr. -- Ambassador Volker had a conversation with President Zelensky and had indicated in a phone call that he, at that time, was going to talk Mr. Zelensky -- President Zelensky through the -- the steps that need to be taken in order to get to the phone call.

GOLDMAN: Understood. And you testified earlier that the security assistance had already been frozen, to your knowledge, at least by July 18, is that right?

TAYLOR: That's correct.

GOLDMAN: So that was just a week earlier than this.

TAYLOR: That's correct.

GOLDMAN: So, just so we're clear, Ambassador Taylor, before this July 25 call, President Trump had a frozen the security assistance that Ukraine needed and the -- the White House meeting was conditioned on Ukraine initiating this investigation, and that had been relayed to the Ukrainians. Is that an accurate state of play at this time?

TAYLOR: That's an accurate state of play. I at that point had no indication that any discussion of the security assistance being subject to condition -- conditioned on the investigations had taken place.

GOLDMAN: Right, but you understood that the White House meeting was --

TAYLOR: That's correct.

GOLDMAN: All right. Let's move ahead to this July 25 call and -- between the presidents. Now, am I correct that neither of you were on this call. Is that right, Mr. Kent?

KENT: That's correct.

GOLDMAN: And you were neither, as well? So you both read it after it was released publicly

at the end of September?

TAYLOR: Yes.

KENT: Yes.

GOLDMAN: I want to spend just a little time reading the transcript, as we've been encouraged to do. And I want to particularly note four excerpts of the transcript, one that relates to the security assistance we've been talking about, another that discusses a favor that President Trump asked of President Zelensky, a third where President Trump asks the Ukrainian president to investigate his political opponent, former Vice President Biden, and then a final one where the Ukrainian president directly links the desired White House visit to the political investigations that President Trump wanted. So let's look at the first excerpt, which is near the beginning of the call, when President Zelensky discusses the military aid that the U.S. provides to Ukraine.

He says, "I would also like to thank you for your great support in the area of defense. We are ready to continue to cooperate for the next steps. Specifically, we are almost ready to buy more Javelins from the United States for defense purposes." Now, at the time of this phone call, Ambassador Taylor and -- and Mr. Kent, you -- you both knew that the aid had been frozen, is that right?

TAYLOR: That's correct.

KENT: Yes.

GOLDMAN: And Ambassador Taylor, you testified that President Trump obviously also knew the aid had been frozen as well, since he was responsible for doing that, is that correct?

TAYLOR: That's what I had been told, that's what we heard on that conference call, yes.

GOLDMAN: But to neither of your knowledge, the Ukrainians were not aware of that at that point?

TAYLOR: Not to my knowledge.

KENT: Not to my knowledge.

GOLDMAN: But right after President Zelensky thanks Presidents Trump for his great support in the area of defense, President Trump then says -- and we'll go to the next excerpt -- "I want 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."

And then at the end of the paragraph, he says, "Whatever you can do, it's very important that you do it, if that's possible." Now Mr. Kent, you've testified a little bit about how important this White House meeting was to President Zelensky. How would you expect a new Ukrainian president to interpret a request for a favor from the president of the United States?

KENT: I cannot interpret the mind of President Zelensky other than to say that it was very clear that what they were hoping to get out of this meeting was a date and a confirmation that he could come to Washington.

GOLDMAN: Obviously you can't put yourself in the mind, but if the Ukrainian president, for a country that's so dependent on the United States for -- for all things, including military assistance is requested to do a favor, how do you think Ukrainians would interpret that?

KENT: Well if you go further into the call record as part of this -- and we don't have it on screen, but to the best of my recollection reading it after was released in September 25, President Zelensky went into having whatever your problems were, that was the old team, I've got a new team and we will do whatever is appropriate and be transparent and honest about it. I don't remember the exact words, but he was trying to be in his own words and response -- be responsive to conduct the business of Ukrainian government in a transparent and honest manner.

GOLDMAN: Now, when he talks about this CrowdStrike and the server, what do you understand this to be a reference to?

KENT: To be honest, I had not heard of CrowdStrike until I read this transcript on September 25th.

GOLDMAN: Do you now understand what it relates to?

KENT: I understand it has to do with the story that there's a server with missing emails, I also understand that one of the owners of -- or -- of CrowdStrike is a Russian American. I am not aware of any Ukrainian connection to the company.

GOLDMAN: Now, are you aware that this is all part of a larger allegation that Ukraine interfered in the 2016 election?

KENT: Yes, that is my understanding.

GOLDMAN: And to your knowledge, is there any factual basis to support the allegation that Ukraine interfered in the 2016 election?

KENT: To my knowledge, there is no factual basis, no.

GOLDMAN: And in fact, who did interfere in the 2016 election?

KENT: I think it's amply clear that Russian interference was at the heart of the interference in the 2016 election cycle.

GOLDMAN: Let's move to the third excerpt that I mentioned related to Vice President Biden. And it says -- the other thing, there's a lot of talk about Biden's son -- this is President Trump speaking -- 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's sounds horrible. Now, at the time of this call, Vice President Biden was the front runner for the Democratic nomination in the 2020 election. Mr. Kent, are you familiar as you indicate in your opening statement about these allegations related to Vice President Biden?

KENT: I am.

GOLDMAN: And to your knowledge, is there any factual basis to support those allegations?

KENT: None whatsoever.

GOLDMAN: When Vice President Biden acted in Ukraine, did he act in accordance with official U.S. policy?

KENT: He did.

GOLDMAN: Now, let's go to then the last excerpt that I wanted to highlight, which is President Zelensky speaking, and he says, I also wanted to thank you for your invitation to visit the United States, specifically Washington DC. On the other hand, I also want to ensure you that we will be very serious about the case and we will work on the investigation. Now, Ambassador Taylor, right after President Zelensky mentions his much desired Washington visit, he says on the other hand, and then says that Ukraine will be very serious about the investigation.

Is this the same link between the White House visit and the investigations that Ambassador Volker had texted to Andriy Yermak just a few minutes before this conversation?

TAYLOR: That's my assumption.

GOLDMAN: Now, just to summarize what we've just read in this July 25th call between the presidents, the Ukrainian president thanked President Trump for security assistance that President Trump had just frozen, to which President Trump responded that he wanted President Zelensky to do him a favor though by investigating the 2016 U.S. election and the Biden's. Then President Zelensky says that he'll pursue these investigations right after he mentions the White House visit, is that your understanding Ambassador Taylor of what we just read?

TAYLOR: Yes.

GOLDMAN: And Mr. Kent, is that yours?

KENT: Yes.

GOLDMAN: I yield back.

SCHIFF: The majority time has expired. Would you gentlemen like a brief recess? Let's take a five minute recess and then we'll resume with minority questioning.

(RECESS)

SCHIFF: The committee will come back to order. The Chair now recognizes the ranking member and minority counsel for 45 minutes.

DEVIN NUNES: Thank you. The call summary for which the democrats want to impeach President Trump is dramatically different from their nefarious depiction of it. What it actually shows is a pleasant exchange between two leaders who discussed mutual cooperation over a range of issues. The democrats claim this call demonstrates extortion, bribery and a host of other monstrous crimes being committed against President Zelensky. Yet President Zelensky himself insists there was nothing improper whatsoever about the conversation. Indeed the routine nature of the call helps to explain why in this committee's last public hearing democrats recited a fictitious version of the call. Instead of reading the actual transcript.

The democrats depicted the President saying "I want you to make up dirt on my political opponent understand, lots of it, on this and on that" The transcript did not show President Trump saying anything remotely like that. The President did not ask Ukraine to make up dirt on anyone. But the democrats are not trying to discover facts they're trying to invent a narrative. And if the facts they need do not exist then they'll just make it up. Not only does President Zelensky deny the democrats characterization of the call but as Ambassador Taylor testified to this committee the Ukrainians did not even know at the time of the call that a temporary delay was put on the security assistance for them.

Furthermore, as the Ambassador testified these holds occur from time to time. Both he and Ambassador Volker were confident the delay would be lifted. And in fact military aid to Ukraine has actually substantially improved since President Trump took office. Ambassador Taylor testified that President was the first President to see that Ukraine was afforded Javelin anti-tank weapons. This was a very strong message that Americans are willing to provide more than blankets. This was the Obama's administrations approach.

Note this important fact, the security assistance was provided to Ukraine without the Ukrainians having done any of the things they were supposedly being blackmailed to do. So we're supposed to believe that President Trump committed a terrible crime that never actually occurred and which the supposed victim denies ever happened.

I'd like to briefly speak about the core of mistruth at the heart of the democrats impeachment drive. They claim the President tried to get the Ukrainians to "manufacture dirt against his political rivals". This is supported by precisely zero evidence. Once again the democrats simply made it up. But let's consider the broader question about why President Trump may have wanted answers to questions about Ukraine meddling in 2016.

The democrats (downplay) it nor outright deny the many indications that Ukrainian actually did meddle in the election. A shocking about face for people who for three years argued that foreign election meddling was an intolerable crime that threatened the heart of our democracy. While the brazen suddenness of this u-turn is jarring this denial's a necessary part of their argument. After all if there actually were indications of Ukraine election meddling and if foreign election meddling is a dire threat then President Trump would have a perfectly good reason for wanting to find out what happened. And since the meddling was aimed against his campaign he'd have good reason for sending his personal attorney to make inquiries about it.

What's strange is that some of the witnesses at these hearings and previous depositions who express alarm about these inquiries were remarkably uninformed about these indications about Ukrainian election meddling. And why the President may have been concerned by them. For example I noted previous Alexandra Chalupa former staffer for the democratic national committee admitted to Politico that she worked with officials at the Ukrainian Embassy in Washington, D.C. to dig up dirt on the Trump campaign, which she passed on to the DNC and the Hillary Clinton Campaign.

Chalupa revealed that Ukrainian Embassy officials themselves were also working directly with reporters to trade information and leads about the Trump campaign. Ambassador Kent you didn't seem to be too concerned about it in the last round of questioning so I'll just skip you. Because we know that wasn't a concern. But Ambassador Taylor you testified to this committee to you only recently became aware of reports of this cooperation between Ukrainian Embassy officials and Chalupa to undermine the Trump campaign in your last deposition. Is that correct?

TAYLOR: Mr. Nunes, is it correct that I had not known about this before.

NUNES: Just going over your last deposition.

TAYLOR: Exactly right.

NUNES: The Politico article sites three named Ukrainian officials asserting that the Ukrainian

Embassy supported the Hillary Clinton campaign. It quotes "Ukrainian Parliamentary Andriy Artemenko saying "It was clear they were supporting Hillary Clinton's candidacy they did everything from organizing meetings with the Clinton team to publicly supporting her to criticizing Trump. I think that they simply did, didn't meet with the Trump campaign because they thought Hillary would win," unquote. Ambassador Taylor, you testified you were unfamiliar with that statement. Is that correct?

TAYLOR: That is correct.

NUNES: You also said you were unaware that then-Ukrainian Ambassador to the U.S. Valeriy Chaly wrote an op-ed in The Hill during the 2016 presidential campaign criticizing then-candidate Trump. Is that correct?

TAYLOR: That is correct.

NUNES: You said you did not know that Serhiy Leshchenko, then a Ukrainian Parliamentarian, had admitted that part of his motivation in spreading information about the so-called black ledger, a disputed document purporting the reveal of corruption by a former Trump campaign official, was to undermine the Trump's candidacy. This was in your deposition. Is that still correct?

TAYLOR: That is still correct, sir.

NUNES: Thank you, Mr. Taylor. Fusion GPS contractor Nellie Ohr testified to Congress that Leshchenko was a source for Fusion GPS's operation to dirty up the Trump campaign, including the compilation of the Steele dossier on behalf of the DNC and the Clinton campaign.

You testified you were unaware that Leshchenko served as a source for that project. Ambassador Taylor, is this still correct?

TAYLOR: It is, sir.

NUNES: You said you did not know that Ukrainian Internal Affairs Minister Arsen Avakov mocked and disparaged then-candidate Trump on Facebook and Twitter. Is that still correct?

TAYLOR: That is correct.

NUNES: Ambassador Taylor, in your testimony to this committee, you said you were never briefed on these reports and statements, that you did not do due diligence before taking your post to discover that President - the President's and Mayor Giuliani's concerns may have been and that you did - what they may have been and that you did not discuss them with Ambassador Yovanovitch. Is that still correct?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

NUNES: Furthermore, you said it upset you to hear about the many indications of Ukrainian election meddling. Your precise words were, I'm going to read them back to you, "based on this political article, which again surprises me, disappoints me because I think it's a mistake for any diplomat of government official in one country to interfere in the political life of another, that's disappointing," unquote. Ambassador Taylor, is that still your testimony?

TAYLOR: Mr. Nunes, it is. Subsequent to that, I looked into the circumstances for several of the things that you just mentioned. In 2016, candidate Trump had made a statement saying that it was possible that he would allow Crimea to go back to Russia. He expressed that - he expressed the - the sentiment or the opinion that it was possible that Crimea wanted to go back to Russia.

What I can tell you, Mr. Nunes, is that those - that sentiment is amazingly inflammatory to all Ukrainians. So ...

NUNES: So I think - so I can understand that. Are you aware during the - I believe it was the 2012 election when, at the time, President Obama leaned over on a hot mic to the then-Russian President and said that he'd have to wait until after the election? Did that - was that inflammatory to the Ukrainians also?

TAYLOR: I don't know, sir.

NUNES: I just want to be clear that some government officials opposed President Trump's approach to Ukraine but many had no idea what concerned him. In this case, it was numerous indications of Ukrainian - Ukrainian interference in the 2016 election to oppose his campaign and support Hillary Clinton.

Once you know that, it's easy to understand the President's desire to get to the bottom of this corruption and to discover exactly what happened in the 2016 election. And with that, I'll turn to Mr. Castor.

CASTOR: Ambassador Taylor, Mr. Kent, President Trump's concerns about Ukraine's role in the 2016 election, you believe he - he genuinely believed they were working against him. Right, Ambassador Taylor?

TAYLOR: Mr. Castor, I - I don't know what President - or candidate Trump was thinking about the Ukrainians.

CASTOR: I mean, didn't he, in his - in his Oval Office meeting in May 23rd after the - the Zelensky inauguration, didn't he - didn't he lament that the Ukrainians were out to get him?

TAYLOR: I heard that his response to the suggestion that Mr. Zelensky visit Mr. Trump - President Trump in the Oval Office was not well received and that he had concerns about Ukrainians, yes.

CASTOR: But from the President's perspective, if - if the Ambassador - Ukraine - Ukrainian Ambassador to the United States, one of the most influential diplomats, is - is penning an op-ed, certainly with the OK of President Poroshenko, the - this - the DNC consultants are - are - are conferring with Ukrainian officials at the embassy, Foreign Prime Minister Yatsenyuk (ph) is saying things on social media, Interior Minister Avakov, who has spanned both the Poroshenko and the Zelensky realm, is also saying some very unkind things on social media about the President, you certainly can appreciate that President Trump was very concerned that some elements of the Ukrainian establishment were not in favor of him, did not support him and were out to get him.

SCHIFF: If I could - and I'll - I'll allow the question but are you asking ...

(CROSS-TALK)

(UNKNOWN): ... inquiry, are you seriously interrupting our time here?

SCHIFF: No, I - I will allow the question, I won't - I won't dock this from the time. I just want to be clear, Ambassador, if you're able to verify the things that counsel has asked you and the prerequisite of the question, that's fine.

Otherwise, in questions from the majority or the minority, that may assume facts not in evidence before you, you should be cautioned about that.

(UNKNOWN): Mr. Chairman, point of order?

SCHIFF: The time is with Mr. - minority counsel.

(UNKNOWN): Mr. Ratcliffe?

RATCLIFFE: Chairman, I sat here through the first 45 minutes and literally had an objection to almost the foundation of every question that Mr. Goldman asked regarding facts not in evidence, leading, but House Resolution 660 does not say that we under - we are under the federal rules of evidence.

If it is your position that I should be asserting objections to questions that violate the federal rules of evidence, let me know now because this hearing's going to change significantly.

SCHIFF: As - as I said, Mr. Ratcliffe, I will allow the question.

NUNES: I think the gentleman has a different question about the rules. So what are the rules that are going to govern this?

SCHIFF: Does the Ranking Member seek recognition?

NUNES: I'm - I'm asking - I'm yielding to you for - for a question - to the question I just asked you.

SCHIFF: For what purpose do you seek recognition?

NUNES: I'm asking -- I'm yielding you for a question -- to the question I just asked you.

SCHIFF: What purpose do you seek recognition?

NUNES: To answer Mr. Ratcliffe's question.

SCHIFF: I have answered it. (Inaudible) your question.

RATCLIFFE: Respectfully, Mr. Chairman, you haven't answered my question whether or not I should be asserting, assumes facts not in evidence or leading objections to questions that are posed from this point forward. That's my question.

SCHIFF: Mr. Ratcliffe, I say once again, I'm not objecting the question, but I am instructing the witness that they should not presume questions from the majority or the minority that may represent facts not in evidence are correct. This is -- I have -- I have answered your questions. We will resume the questioning and resume the clock.

(OFF-MIC)

RATCLIFFE: So, you can certainly appreciate President Trump's concerns?

TAYLOR: Mr. Castor, I -- I don't know the exact nature of President Trump's concerns. I have -- I -- in my deposition I recall you handed me the political article, which listed at least three of the -- of the elements that you have described earlier.

And I -- you've recognized and I have confirmed with -- with the Ranking Minority Member, that -- that I -- that's the first I'd heard of those and was surprised by those. I don't know -- I don't know President Trump's reaction to those.

CASTOR: In the information published by Serhiy Leshchenko, former Ukrainian Investigative Journalist and then he was a member of the Parliament, about the Manafort black ledgers in August of 2016. I mean, the very day that was published, Mr. Manafort resigned from the campaign, correct?

TAYLOR: I don't know, Mr. Castor.

CASTOR: But, certainly that gives rise to some concern that there are elements to the Ukrainian establishment that were out to get the president. That's a very reasonable belief of his. Correct?

TAYLOR: I -- I don't know.

CASTOR: The -- the run-up to the 2016 election, there's many facts that remain unresolved, agreed?

TAYLOR: I'm sorry, what's the question?

CASTOR: There are many facts relating to the run-up of the 2016 election that remain unresolved?

TAYLOR: Any further --

CASTOR: Well, Attorney General Barr, in May of 2019, tasked the U.S. Attorney for Connecticut, John Durham, to broadly examine the government's collection of intelligence involving the president's campaign.

That effort initially was an administrative review, has turned into a criminal probe, and U.S. Attorney Durham is -- is casting a wide net and is following the facts where they may lead. Are you aware of that?

TAYLOR: I'm aware that there is an investigation, that's as much as I'm aware.

CASTOR: And so to the extent any information resides in Ukraine, it's perfectly appropriate for the Ukrainians to try to get to the bottom of that, for the Ukrainians to cooperate with -- with the United States through official channels to share that information, correct?

TAYLOR: Mr. Castor, can you say that one again? I -- I'd appreciate if you would restate the question.

CASTOR: To the extent Ukraine has facts related to the run-up of the 2016 election that are under the U.S. Attorney Durham's probe, Ukraine should -- should cooperate with the United States, and to the extent there are Ukrainians doing improper things, the Ukrainians ought to investigate that themselves, correct?

TAYLOR: Mr. Castor, the Ukrainian-American relations are -- are very supportive. The Ukrainians will -- will certainly be responsive to requests.

CASTOR: So, when the president, on the call transcript of July 25th, raises this with President Zelensky and he -- he urges that there be a connection between the Ukrainian government and the Justice Department officially, I mean, that's the appropriate way to raise and issue with the Ukrainian president, correct?

TAYLOR: It's appropriate for the Justice Department and the prosecutor general to cooperate and to exchange information, yes.

CASTOR: But, to the extent the president has concerns, and to the extent the Attorney General is -- is having U.S. Attorney Durham look into that, isn't it entirely appropriate for the president to flag this for President Zelensky, and -- and say that you should be in touch with our official channels?

TAYLOR: Mr. Castor, I don't know the precise appropriateness of these kinds of -- of relations.

CASTOR: Now, were you involved -- either of you involved with the preparation for the 7/25 call?

TAYLOR: I was not.

KENT: I was not.

CASTOR: And how do you account for that? I mean, you're the -- you are the -- two of the key officials with responsibility for Ukrainian policy. I mean, if the President of the United States is going to have a call with the leader of Ukraine, why -- what -- why wouldn't you ordinarily be involved with the preparation?

KENT: Sir, we work for the Department of State in an Embassy overseas, and in preparation for a presidential phone call, that responsibility lies within the staff of the National Security Council.

Normally, if there is enough sufficient time, National Security Staff can solicit information, usually from the State Department, and we can draw on the Embassy, but that's only background information, and my understanding, having never worked with the National Security Council, is that National Security staff write a memo to the president and none of us see that outside of the National Security staff.

CASTOR: OK, so the -- the charge or the U.S. Ambassador to the country wouldn't ordinarily be on a call with a foreign leader?

TAYLOR: That's correct. Would not.

CASTOR: And did Colonel Vindman or anyone at the National Security staff reach out to you Mr. Kent in preparation for the call?

KENT: I was given notification the day before, on July 24th, and to the extent I had any role, it was to reach out to the Embassy, give them a heads up and ask them to ensure that the secure communications link in the Office of the President of Ukraine was functional so the call could be patched through from the White House Situation Room.

CASTOR: Did you provide any -- any substantive advice to -- to Colonel Vindman about -- about the call and what ought to be the -- the official position?

KENT: I was not asked and I did not provide.

CASTOR: OK. Same with your, Ambassador?

TAYLOR: The same.

CASTOR: And, the call was schedule -- you know, you testified earlier that the call was on again, off again, and after the July 10th meeting with Ambassador Bolton, the consensus was the call was not going to happen, is that correct?

KENT: I would not say that was the consensus. The State Department's position was that a call between the two presidents would be useful, and once Zelensky's Party won the first ever absolute majority in parliamentary elections on July 21st, the idea of a congratulatory call made imminent sense from our perspective.

CASTOR: OK. And the call was schedule, and did you get a readout, Ambassador Taylor, initially from the call?

TAYLOR: I didn't, Mr. Castor. I read the -- we all read the statement that the Ukrainians put out. I got a readout several days later from Mr. Morrison National Security Council.

CASTOR: OK. And how about you, Mr. Kent?

KENT: I, likewise, first saw the Ukrainian statement, and I believe the next day, July 26th, which would have been a Friday, I did get a partial readout from Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, yes.

CASTOR: Ambassador Taylor, you said that the Ukrainian readout was cryptic. Is that just because it's initially written in Ukrainian and translated to the U.S.?

TAYLOR: No, it's -- as a general rule, both United States and other countries, including Ukraine, will put out very short summaries that kind of hit the highlights of the discussion, but without going into detail.

CASTOR: OK. And you mentioned it was cryptic, why did you think it was cryptic?

TAYLOR: Knowing now what -- having read the transcript and looking back at their summary as I recall -- I don't recall the exact words but they said that there were issues to be pursued in order to improve relations between the two countries, or something like that.

CASTOR: That seems pretty ordinary.

TAYLOR: It seems pretty ordinary.

CASTOR: You were with President Zelensky the very next day?

TAYLOR: We were -- we had a meeting with him the very next day.

CASTOR: And did President Zelensky raise any concerns about his views of the call?

TAYLOR: He said -- so right -- so I, Ambassador Volker, Ambassador Sondland were in his office and we asked him, I think how the call -- he said, the call was fine, I was happy with the call.

CASTOR: OK. And did you get any additional read outs subsequently of the call -- like when did you first learn that the call contained things that concerned you? Was that not until September 25th?

TAYLOR: Mr. Morrison -- as I say (ph) briefed me several days later before the end of July and he -- I think this is where I said in my testimony that he said it could've gone better --

CASTOR: Yes.

TAYLOR: -- and said it mentioned -- that the call mentioned Mr. Giuliani --

CASTOR: Yes.

TAYLOR: -- we also said that the call mentioned the former ambassador. Both of those were concerning.

CASTOR: Giuliani was first raised on the call by President Zelensky, correct?

TAYLOR: I don't recall.

CASTOR: OK.

TAYLOR: It -- it could have been. Well I -- I have it here if you'd like.

CASTOR: Yes, it's on page --

TAYLOR: Very good.

CASTOR: Page three. The first mention of Giuliani is from President Zelensky, it's on page three. And President Zelensky says I will personally tell you that one of my assistants spoke with Mr. Giuliani just recently and we're hoping very much that Mr. Giuliani will be able to travel to Ukraine and we will meet once he comes to Ukraine. Did that surprise you?

TAYLOR: Again, I didn't have the transcript at the time, all I was that Giuliani was mentioned -- Mr. Marson said that Giuliani was mentioned in the call.

CASTOR: But the way that Zelensky states it here, it sounds like he's very much looking forward to speaking with Americas Mayor.

TAYLOR: That -- that's what I found out when I read the transcript on the --

CASTOR: Yes.

TAYLOR: -- 25th of September or so.

CASTOR: OK. Now, Mr. Kent, corruption in Ukraine's endemic, correct?

KENT: That's correct.

CASTOR: And it affects the courts, the prosecutors, and there have historically been problems with all the prosecutors in Ukraine, correct?

KENT: I would say up until the new set of prosecutors appointed by President Zelensky in the last two months, correct.

CASTOR: OK, and so the U.S. government -- the consensus over at the State Department and the National Security Council and the White House is that Zelensky's the real deal. He's a real reformer; he's genuinely interested in rooting out corruption, prosecuting the bad guys, correct?

KENT: I would say we are cautiously optimistic and we will work wherever there is the political will to do the right thing and put forward genuine reform.

CASTOR: And at the heart of the corruption is the oligarchic -- oligarcicial system, correct? Where -- where the oligarchs take control often by virtual theft of -- you know for example the right to certain energy licenses, correct?

KENT: That is one element, yes sir.

CASTOR: And the -- the company Burisma, its -- its leader, Zlochevsky, he has a -- a little bit of a storied history of corruption, doesn't he?

KENT: Mr. Zlochevsky was minister of energy from 2010 to 2012 under the pro-Russian government, and he used his regulatory authority to award gas exploration licenses to companies that he himself controlled. That would be considered an act of corruption in my view, yes.

CASTOR: Certainly self-dealing.

KENT: Certainly self-dealing and self-enriching.

CASTOR: And -- and how did the Ukrainian government ultimately pursue that?

KENT: In the spring of 2014, the Ukrainian government, the new government after the Revolution of Dignity, turned to partners, particularly the U.S. and the U.K., to try to recover tens of billions of dollars of stolen assets. The first case that we tried to recover that money came from Mr. Zlochevsky. Serious Crimes Office in the U.K. had already opened up an investigation. They worked with us and the Ukrainian authorities to develop more information. The -- the \$23 million was frozen until somebody in the General Prosecutors Office of Ukraine shut the case, issued a letter to his lawyer and that money went poof.

CASTOR: So essentially paid a bribe to make the case go away.

KENT: That is our strong assumption, yes, sir.

CASTOR: OK. Now, at any point in time has -- has any -- anyone in the Ukrainian government tried to reinvestigate that, or did that -- did those crimes just go unpunished, and was he free to go?

KENT: Mr. Zlochevsky spent time, as far as I understand, in -- in Moscow and Monaco after he fled Ukraine. We continue to raise, as a point of order, that because U.S. taxpayer dollars had been used to try to recover frozen assets, that we have a fiduciary responsibility, and we continue to press Ukrainian officials to answer for why alleged corrupt prosecutors had closed a case, and we have 'til now not gotten a satisfactory answer.

So to summarize, we thought that Mykola Zlochevsky had stolen money. We thought a prosecutor had taken a bribe to shut the case, and those were our main concerns.

CASTOR: And are you in favor of that matter being fully investigated and prosecuted?

KENT: I think, since U.S. taxpayer dollars were wasted, I would love to see the Ukrainian Prosecutor General's Office find who the corrupt prosecutor was that took the bribe and how much that was paid, and that's what I said to the deputy prosecutor general on February 3, 2015.

CASTOR: But in addition to prosecuting the person that took the bribe, shouldn't the organization or individual that sponsored the bribes be prosecuted?

KENT: I would agree that the Ukrainian law authorities should uphold the rule of law and hold people account for breaking Ukrainian law.

CASTOR: So this -- this company, Burisma, involved in lots -- lots of criminal activity, correct? (inaudible)

KENT: I do not know that.

CASTOR: But over the years it's been involved in -- in a number of questionable dealings, correct?

KENT: I would say that it's the largest private gas producer in the country, and its business reputation is mixed.

CASTOR: So to the extent a new regime is coming in under President Zelensky, it certainly would be fair for the -- the new prosecutor, a genuine prosecutor to -- to re-examine old crimes that hadn't sufficiently been brought to justice, right?

KENT: I believe that the new prosecutor general, Ruslan Riaboshapka, made a statement to that end; that they would be reviewing past cases.

CASTOR: Right.

KENT: But keep in mind, this is a country where those that commit crimes generally never get held to account, so there's a lot to review.

CASTOR: OK. Now, this -- the -- the bribe was paid in what year?

KENT: To the best of my knowledge, the case against Zlochevsky, the former minister, was shut down December of 2014.

CASTOR: OK. And right around that time, Burisma starts adding officials to its board. Is that correct?

KENT: Understanding is yes, that Zlochevsky invited a series of new individuals to join the board in 2014.

CASTOR: And do -- do you know what his strategy was in adding officials to his board?

KENT: I have never met Mr. Zlochevsky.

CASTOR: OK. And who were some of the folks he added to the board?

KENT: The most prominent person he added to the board was the former president of Poland, Alexander Kwasniewski.

CASTOR: And anyone else?

KENT: There were a number of others, including some Americans and the -- the most prominent one in this context is Hunter Biden.

CASTOR: OK, so Hunter Biden's added to the board of Burisma. Now, do you think that creates a -- a -- a problem that Burisma may be adding people to its board for protection purposes?

KENT: Sir, I work for the government. I don't work in the corporate sector, and so I believe that companies build their boards with a variety of reasons, not only to promote their business plans.

CASTOR: Yeah. Was -- was Hunter Biden a -- a corporate governance expert?

KENT: I have no idea what Hunter Biden studied at university or what his C.V. says.

CASTOR: Like, is he the -- the Jeffrey Sonnenfeld of -- of the Ukraine?

KENT: I have no awareness or knowledge of what his background was and what he may have done on the board of Burisma.

CASTOR: OK. So you don't know whether he has any business experience in Ukraine prior to joining Burisma's board?

KENT: I -- I have heard nothing about prior experience, no.

CASTOR: OK. Do you know if he speaks Ukrainian?

KENT: I do not.

CASTOR: Do you know if he possesses any other elements other than the fact that he is the son of, at the time, the sitting vice president?

KENT: I do not.

CASTOR: OK.

Ambassador Taylor, do you know whether Hunter Biden offers anything other than the fact his dad's the former vice president?

TAYLOR: I -- I don't.

CASTOR: Or at the time, was the vice president?

TAYLOR: I -- I have no knowledge of Hunter Biden.

CASTOR: But you would agree it raises questions, right? He was getting paid, I think, \$50,000 a month...

TAYLOR: I - I...

CASTOR: ... to -- to sit on the board. Did you know if he relocated to Ukraine?

TAYLOR: Sorry, sir. Could I ask to say again (ph)?

CASTOR: Do you know if Hunter Biden relocated to Ukraine?

TAYLOR: No knowledge.

CASTOR: Do you know, Mr. Kent?

KENT: Again, no knowledge.

CASTOR: OK. So he's getting paid \$50,000 a month, but we don't know whether he had any experience, he had any -- he spoke the language or whether he moved to Ukraine, correct?

KENT: Correct.

CASTOR: Now at this time, Vice President Biden was taking a specific interest in Ukraine, wasn't he?

KENT: He was.

CASTOR: And could you tell us about that?

KENT: I believe that while he was vice president, he made a total of six visits to Ukraine. One may have been during the old regime, Yanukovych, and that would make five visits after the Revolution of Dignity, which started February of 2014.

CASTOR: OK, and you were the -- the DCM, the deputy chief of mission at this time -- at the time, correct?

KENT: Starting in 2015, yes.

CASTOR: OK. And did Vice President Biden come when you were -- when you were at post?

KENT: He did not. I came back for Ukrainian language training, and so I missed several visits.

CASTOR: OK. Now, you -- you've seen Vice President Biden's -- his -- he sort of given a -- a -- a speech, and he's, you know, a little folksy about how he went into Ukraine and he told the Ukrainians that if they don't fire the prosecutor, they're going to lose their \$1 billion in loan guarantees. You've seen that, correct?

KENT: I have. I think it was a speech at the Council of Foreign Relations in January, 2018.

CASTOR: Right. And he also said that he's been there, you know, the Ukraine, 13 times. Do you know if that's accurate?

KENT: To the best of my knowledge, when he was vice president he made six visits.

CASTOR: And did the State Department ever express any concerns to the Vice President's Office that the vice president's role at the time in -- in engaging on Ukraine presented any issues?

KENT: No. The vice president's role was critically important. It was top cover to help us pursue our policy agenda.

CASTOR: OK, but you know Hunter Biden's role in Burisma's board of directors. At some point you testified in your deposition that you expressed some concern to the Vice President's Office. Is that correct?

KENT: That is correct.

CASTOR: And what did they do about that concern that you expressed?

KENT: I have no idea. I reported my concern to the Office of the Vice President.

CASTOR: OK. And that was the end of it, nobody...

(CROSSTALK)

KENT: Sir, you would have to ask people worked in the Office of the Vice President during 2015.

CASTOR: But after you expressed the concern of a perceived conflict of interest at the least, the vice president's engagement in Ukraine didn't decrease, did it?

KENT: Correct. Because the vice president was promoting U.S. policy objectives in Ukraine.

CASTOR: And Hunter Biden's role on the board of Burisma didn't cease, did it?

KENT: To the best of my knowledge, it didn't. And my concern was that there was the possibility of a perception of a conflict of interest.

CASTOR: Now, Ambassador Taylor, I want to turn to the discussion of the irregular channel you describe. And in fairness, this -- this irregular channel of diplomacy, it's not as outlandish as it could be. Is that correct?

TAYLOR: It's not as outlandish as it could be. I agree, Mr. Castor.

CASTOR: OK. We have Ambassador Volker, who's a former Senate-confirmed ambassador to NATO, longtime State Department diplomat. And you've known Ambassador Volker for years, correct?

TAYLOR: That's correct.

CASTOR: A man of -- of unquestioned integrity, correct?

TAYLOR: That's correct.

CASTOR: And somebody with incredible knowledge of the region.

TAYLOR: With very good knowledge of the region, yes, sir.

CASTOR: And the best interests of the United States?

TAYLOR: Yeah, I'm sure that's right.

CASTOR: And the best interests of Ukraine?

TAYLOR: His first priority is clearly the United States.

CASTOR: OK.

TAYLOR: And to the extent that Ukraine has an implication for that, yes, Ukraine (ph) as well.

CASTOR: OK. And the second member of the irregular channel is Ambassador Sondland, who is Senate-confirmed ambassador to the E.U. So his involvement here, while, you know, not necessarily part of his official duties to the E.U., is -- certainly it's not outlandish for him to be interested and engaged pursuant to the president or Secretary Pompeo's direction, correct?

TAYLOR: It's a little unusual for the U.S. ambassador to the E.U. to play a role in Ukraine policy.

CASTOR: OK. And, you know, it might be irregular, but it's certainly not outlandish.

And then Secretary Perry is the third member of the irregular channel, certainly a, you know, Senate-confirmed official, somebody with deep experience in energy markets and he was pursuing some, you know, liquified natural -- natural gas projects in Ukraine?

TAYLOR: That's correct, Mr. Castor.

CASTOR: So his involvement, Secretary Perry's involvement, is perfectly acceptable?

TAYLOR: It is.

CASTOR: OK. Now, this -- this irregular channel, as it developed, when did you determine that it became problematic? I mean, you, in your opening statement, identified yourself appropriately as the -- the leader of the regular channel.

TAYLOR: At least a participant. There's another leader of the -- of the regular channel.

CASTOR: So when did you first develop concerns that the -- the irregular channel was -- was being problematic?

TAYLOR: So I arrived in -- in Kiev in mid-September. By late September, a couple of phone calls with...

CASTOR: You arrive in Kiev in June, right?

TAYLOR: June, sorry. I said -- that's right.

CASTOR: June 17th?

TAYLOR: Mid-June.

CASTOR: Yes.

TAYLOR: June 17th, thank you. And so by the end of June, I had begun to hear references to investigations as something that would have to happen prior to the meeting that -- that President Trump had offered to President Zelensky.

CASTOR: OK. And (ph)...

TAYLOR: That began to raise questions for me.

CASTOR: OK. Now, you've known Ambassador Volker and you've certainly -- have a reason to know Ambassador Sondland. What did you do at this point? Or did you ever try to wrest control of the irregular channel?

TAYLOR: I -- I didn't try to wrest control of the irregular channel, do that. At the time, when I...

CASTOR: Well, why not -- why not though, if you had (ph)...

(CROSSTALK)

TAYLOR: Because...

CASTOR: ... these concerns?

TAYLOR: ... because, Mr. Castor, at the time, as -- as Ambassador Kent -- no, Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent testified, both channels, both of those -- both channels were interested in having a meeting between President Zelensky and President Trump. So we are -- there's no reason to kind of wrest control if we're...

CASTOR: OK.

TAYLOR: ... going in the same direction.

CASTOR: But at some point, you -- you developed concerns. I mean, your opening statement is here. I mean, you're the impeachment witness number one, and you're number two, Mr. Kent, for the case impeaching the president of the United States because of the concerns you've testified about the irregular channel, correct?

TAYLOR: I was concerned when the irregular channel appeared to be going against the overall -- the irregular channel was going against the overall direction of and purpose of the regular channel, so (ph) yes.

CASTOR: And as I understand, the record, however, you -- when you arrived in Ukraine, you had the support of the secretary and the secretary's top advisor, Counselor Ulrich Brechbuhl, correct?

TAYLOR: That is correct.

CASTOR: And they assured you that if you had any concerns, you would be able to contact them and they would have your back?

TAYLOR: That is correct.

CASTOR: And you knew, going in, that the -- the Rudy Giuliani element presented some complexities, correct?

TAYLOR: I was concerned about Rudy Giuliani's statements and involvement in the Ukraine policy, yes.

CASTOR: OK. So when it genuinely became, you know, a concern for you, what did you do to either engage Sondland and Volker and Perry, Giuliani -- by the way, have you ever met Rudy Giuliani in these -- during these times relevant (ph)?

TAYLOR: Not during the times relevant. He visited -- Mr. Giuliani visited Ukraine one time when I was there, I think in 2007 or '08.

CASTOR: OK.

TAYLOR: That's the only time I've met him.

CASTOR: OK. So you've never had any -- any communications with Rudy Giuliani as part of these irregular channel business...

(CROSSTALK)

TAYLOR: That's correct, that's correct.

CASTOR: OK. And anyway, getting back to my question, did you try to engage Brechbuhl or the secretary...

TAYLOR: I...

CASTOR: ... you know, during this time period? I know you said that you had, I believe, an August 21st or 22nd telephone call with Brechbuhl, you had a July 10th telephone call with Brechbuhl, and then you sent a first-person cable to the secretary on August 29th?

TAYLOR: That is correct.

CASTOR: Is that the -- is that sort of the universe of initiatives you took inside the State Department to raise your concerns about the irregular channel?

TAYLOR: I also raised my concerns with Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent. In particular, early on when there -- I think I may have mentioned this phone call, that -- that was odd in that it did not include the normal staff, indeed, Ambassador Sondland's staff, and that struck me as unusual.

I consulted with -- with Mr. Kent. And at his suggestion, made a note of this and also had -- I think at that point, I had a conversation with Mr. Brechbuhl.

CASTOR: That was a June 28th call, I believe?

TAYLOR: That's correct.

CASTOR: And in your opening statement, you expressed some concerns about what Ambassador Sondland had said. But then once Zelensky got on the phone, it proceeded very -- in a very regular channel way, correct?

TAYLOR: That's correct.

CASTOR: OK. So the June 28th call, at least in and of itself, didn't ultimately, as it played out, present any problems for you?

TAYLOR: The call with President Zelensky did not. The preparation for that call, the preparation included maybe 15 minutes of just the United -- just the Americans that would stay on the call. And that -- again, that was a little irregular in that it didn't have the staff. It was also in that -- in that pre-call, in that 15 minutes before President Zelensky got on the phone, where Ambassador Volker told the rest of the participants that he was planning to have a conversation with President Zelensky in Toronto in three days, four days where he would outline for President Zelensky the important components of the phone call that we were trying to establish.

CASTOR: OK. And you didn't have any issue with that, did you?

TAYLOR: The only issue I had with that, Mr. Castor, was there was reference to investigations in, I believe that's -- I'll have to check my notes on that, but there was -- it raised issues or me that I didn't understand what Ambassador Volker had in mind that he was specifically going to raise with Mr. Zelensky. That was a little bit of a concern.

CASTOR: OK. The president has expressed his interest in certain investigations, certainly relating to the 2016 election and relating to this this corrupt Burisma outfit so that wasn't inconsistent with the president's message, right?

TAYLOR: I am not sure, Mr. Castor, maybe -- can I ask you to repeat the question?

CASTOR: The president's concerns about the 2016 election and needing to get to the bottom of it, and the president's concerns, is it ultimately related to the Burisma company. I mean, if Ambassador Volker is raising that with Zelensky, that that is consistent with the direction of the president, correct?

TAYLOR: The president's interest, or I would say, Mr. Giuliani's interest, because that's what we were -- that is what was very clear at the time, Mr. Giuliani's interest in pursuing these investigation was of concern. But...

CASTOR: By the way, do you know how many times Volker met with Giuliani?

TAYLOR: I don't.

CASTOR: How many would you guess? Was he talking to him all the time or meeting with him all the time?

TAYLOR: Mr. Castor, I don't know.

CASTOR; OK. From his deposition he told us just once, he texted back and forth with the mayor, and had a call or two, but it wasn't a pervasive engagement for Ambassador Volker. Were you aware of that?

TAYLOR: I was not aware. I was aware of one breakfast, I think. That's the only one I was aware of.

CASTOR: And, Mr. Kent, before my time expires, I want to circle back to the company of Burisma. And you testified at your deposition that there was an instance where USAID had engaged with Burisma in possibly sponsoring a program. And you took issue with that and recommended USAID to pull back from that. Could you tell us about that?

KENT: So I became aware in the summer, I believe, of 2016, that as a part of what I recall was a clean energy awareness campaign, the part of the USAID mission that worked on economics and governance, including energy, had sponsored a -- some sort of contest for young Ukrainians to come up with a theme and there was a prize. I believe it may have been a camera.

And they had co-sponsored, with "public-private partnership" being a buzzword, having a co-sponsorship with Burisma. Given the past history of our in interest in recovering stolen assets from Zlochevsky, it was my view that it was inappropriate for the embassy to be co-sponsoring a contest with Burisma.

I raised that with the mission director at the embassy. She agreed, and the USAID mission kept the contest but dropped the public-private partnership sponsorship.

SCHIFF: The time of the gentleman has expired.

We will now move to five-minute member rounds. I recognize myself for five minutes.

SCHIFF: Mr. Kent, I want to follow up on my colleague's questions regarding Burisma. You testified about a time when an oligarch named Zlochevsky, I think it was, was self-dealing, awarding himself contracts. When was that?

KENT: To the best my knowledge, he was minister of energy -- sorry, minister of ecology under President Yanukovich from 2010 to 2012. And at the time licenses to have substrata exploration of gas were awarded by a subdivision of the ministry of ecology.

SCHIFF: So this corrupt self-dealing then was approximately seven years -- at least seven years before the events that bring us here today, the phone call on the 25th and the events around it?

KENT: Correct. His time as minister was 2010 to 2012. Hunter Biden joined the board of Burisma in 2014.

SCHIFF: And you've read the call transcript, have you not?

KENT: I have. And I have it in front of me. But I haven't read it for about a month.

SCHIFF: Is there any mention in the discussion with President Trump and President Zelensky of this oligarch Zlochevsky, who seven years earlier had been self-dealing?

KENT: To the best of my knowledge, no.

SCHIFF: Is there a discussion of awarding contracts to oneself or the corrupt acts in the 2012 to 2014 time frame?

KENT: To the best of my knowledge, no.

SCHIFF: What the president brings up is "Crowdstrike, "the server," and the Bidens, am I right?

KENT: That's -- I see that here, yes.

SCHIFF: There was no discussion on that call of setting up an anti-corruption court or looking into corruption among oligarchs or companies in general, the president's comments were focused on two things, 2016 and the Bidens, am I right?

KENT: I believe so, yes.

SCHIFF: Now you testified, in your opening statement: "I do not believe United States should ask other countries to engage in selective, politically-associated investigations or prosecutions against opponents of those in power. Such selective actions undermine the rule of law regardless of the country."

In "the selective politically-associated investigations or prosecutions against opponents of those in power," are you referring to the Bidens there?

KENT: I am referring as a general principle about the promotion of the rule of law.

SCHIFF: But that would apply to the president United States seeking an investigation of his political opponent, would it not?

KENT: It could be interpreted that way, yes, sir.

SCHIFF: And I take it in your discussion, Ambassador Taylor, with Ambassador Sondland or others, what was communicated to you was that the president wanted investigations into 2016 and the Bidens, not into an oligarch named Zlochevsky or self-dealing, but 2016 and the Bidens, was that your understanding?

TAYLOR: That was my understanding.

SCHIFF: And in fact when you said your staff overheard this call between Ambassador Sondland and the President, in that call, the President brings up investigation, does he not?

TAYLOR: He did.

SCHIFF: And immediately after the President gets off the phone with Sondland, Sondland is asked by your staff what does the President think about Ukraine and his answer is he's just interested in the Bidens. Am I right?

TAYLOR: He said he was more interested in the Bidens.

SCHIFF: More interested in the Bidens. No discussion of Lechesky (ph) or Chalupa or things that happened seven years ago, he was interested in the Bidens?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

SCHIFF: Now I think you also testified that Ambassador Sondland told you that President Trump wanted Zelensky in a public box. Is that right?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

SCHIFF: And by public box, did that mean that private statements, private promises to do this investigation of 2016 into the Bidens were not enough, he had to go on TV, he had to go public in some way because the President wanted him in that box? Is that your understanding?

TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I don't know exactly what he had in mind and I'm not sure what Ambassador Sondland had in mind, who was the one who mentioned that to me. That's the implication. The implication was it needed to be public as opposed to being a private assurance.

SCHIFF: And I think you've said in that same call you asked Ambassador Sondland to push back on President Trump's demand. Is that right?

TAYLOR: That's correct, sir.

SCHIFF: So you understood from your conversation with Sondland this was the President's demand - not Sondland's demand, the President's demand and you wanted Sondland to push back. Am I right?

TAYLOR: What I wanted to - so Ambassador Sondland was able - was clearly able to have conversations with the President and I thought that the pressure on another president, on President Zelensky, was not a good idea from either President's standpoint, so I suggested - I suggested in that phone call to - with - with Ambassador Sondland that he, since he regularly - or frequently had conversations with the President, could make that point.

SCHIFF: Well - and I think the way you express yourself is you wanted Sondland to push back on President Trump's demand, right?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

SCHIFF: So as you understand from talking to Sondland, this is what the President wanted - wanted him to do and you wanted Sondland to push back.

TAYLOR: I asked Ambassador Sondland to push back, that's correct.

SCHIFF: And in fact, even after the aid was ultimately released, even after the White House learns of the whistleblower complaint and the congressional investigation, the aid is released even after those events, you were still worried that Zelensky was going to feel it necessary to go on CNN and announce these investigations, were you not?

TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I was still worried that he might do that. So yes, I - I thought that would be a bad idea and so when there was some indication that there might still be a plan for the CNN interview in New York, which was upcoming at the - at - at the United Nations General Assembly meeting, I was worried - I - I wanted to be sure that that didn't happen so I addressed it with the - with the Zelensky staff.

SCHIFF: And I - I - and I think you said earlier that Danyliuk, the National Security Advisor then for Zelensky, was concerned Zelensky didn't want to be used as some tool in American politics. Is that right?

TAYLOR: That's correct, sir.

SCHIFF: So Zelensky didn't want to go on TV to announce political investigations that he thought would mire him in U.S. politics, right?

TAYLOR: He knew that - he and his advisors knew that it's a bad idea to interject, to interfere in other - other nations elections. Yes, sir.

SCHIFF: But - but nonetheless, it appeared until the aid was lifted - the hold was lifted that he felt compelled to do it.

TAYLOR: He was making plans - his staff was making plans to have him make some kind of announcement - I don't know what it would have been - on CNN in - in public.

SCHIFF: Even though he didn't want to be mired in U.S. politics?

TAYLOR: Even though he knew it was a bad idea to interfere in other people's elections.

SCHIFF: Mr. Nunes, you are recognized for seven minutes and 10 seconds.

NUNES: I thank the gentleman for that. Ambassador Taylor, you said in your deposition that the first time you heard about this issue with Rudy Giuliani - and I'm paraphrasing - but you read it in The New York Times. Is that correct?

TAYLOR: I - I do remember that first - I do remember noticing about Mr. Giuliani being involved in this in that - in that article. Yes, sir.

NUNES: OK. I think one of the mothers of all conspiracy theories is that somehow the President of the United States would want a country that he doesn't even like, he doesn't want to give foreign aid to, to have the Ukrainians start an investigation into Bidens.

With that, I yield to Mr. Jordan.

JORDAN: I thank the gentleman for yielding. Ambassador Taylor, thank you for being here. Aid's held up on July 18th, is that right?

TAYLOR: That's when I first heard about it, Mr. ...

JORDAN: Then it's - then it's released, Ambassador Taylor, on September 11th. And we know that, from your deposition, in those 55 days that aid is delayed, you met with President Zelensky three times. The first one was July 26th, the day after the famous call now between President Trump and President Zelensky.

President Zelensky meets with you, Ambassador Volker and Ambassador Sondland and again, according to your deposition and your testimony, there was no linkage of security assistance dollars to investigating Burisma or the Bidens.

Second meeting's August 27th - again, in this 55 day time frame, second meeting's August 27th. President Zelensky meets with you and Ambassador Bolton and others, and again there's no linkage of dollars - security assistance dollars to an investigation of the Bidens.

Then, of course, the third meeting is September 5th. President Zelensky meets with you and senators Johnson and Murphy, and once again there is no linkage of security assistance dollars to an investigation of Burisma or the Bidens.

Three meetings with the President of Ukraine - the new President and no linkage. That's accurate?

TAYLOR: Mr. Jordan, it's certainly accurate on the first two - first two meetings because, to my knowledge, the Ukrainians were not aware of the hold on assistance until - until the 29th of August.

JORDAN: The Politico article?

TAYLOR: The Politico article. The third - the third meeting that you mentioned with the senators, Senator Murphy and Senator Johnson, there was discussion of the security assistance but the ...

JORDAN: The linkage?

TAYLOR: With the - there was not - there was not discussion of linkage.

JORDAN: Three meetings face to face with President Zelensky, no linkage, yet in your deposition you said this and you said it again in the first hour of the majority - my clear understanding was security assistance money would not come until President Zelensky

committed to pursue the investigation, my clear understanding was they weren't going to get the money until President Zelensky committed to pursue the investigations.

Now, with all due respect, Ambassador, your clear understanding was obviously wrong because it didn't happen. President Zelensky didn't announce he was going to investigate Burisma or the Bidens, he didn't do a press conference and say I'm going to investigate the Bidens, we're going to investigate Burisma, he didn't tweet about it and you just told the Ranking Member he didn't do the CNN interview and announce he's going to investigate Burisma or the Bidens.

So three face-to-face meetings it doesn't come up, no linkage whatsoever, President Zelensky doesn't announce it before the aid is released on the 11th, and yet you said, you have a clear understanding that those two things were going to happen. The money was going to get released, but not until there was an investigation. And that, in fact, didn't happen.

So, what I'm wondering is, where'd you get this clear understanding?

TAYLOR: As I testified, Mr. Jordan, this came from Ambassador Sondland.

JORDAN: Well, can you hold on one second, Ambassador? I'm going to -- I'm going bring you a piece of paper from Ambassador Sondland's statement.

TAYLOR: Very good.

JORDAN: And you can take a look at this. Go ahead though, I want to let you finish.

TAYLOR: So, Mr. Jordan, should I read this or --

JORDAN: No, no, you -- I just want you to have it, because I'm going to read it.

TAYLOR: Oh, very good. Very good.

JORDAN: Yes, but I wanted you to go ahead and finish. You said Ambassador -- you got this from Ambassador Sondland?

TAYLOR: That is correct. That Ambassador Sondland also said that he talked to President Zelensky and Mr. Yermak, and had told them that all of this was not a quid pro quo. If President Zelensky did not clear things up in public we would be at (inaudible). That was -- that was one point. It was also the case --

JORDAN: Mr. Morrison talked to you, right?

TAYLOR: No, what I was going to say is, Ambassador Sondland also told me that he recognized that it was a mistake to have told the Ukrainians that only the meeting with the president in the -- in the Oval Office was held up on the -- in order to get these investigations. No, it was not just the meeting, it was also the security assistance. That is everything it (ph) was (ph). So, those two -- those two discussions --

JORDAN: Yes. No, I understand.

TAYLOR: OK.

JORDAN: All right, so, again, just to recap, you had three meetings with President Zelensky, no linkage in those three meetings came up? Ambassador Zelensky didn't announce that he was going to do any investigation of the Bidens or Burismas before the aide was released?

TAYLOR: That was --

JORDAN: He didn't do a tweet, didn't do anything on CNN, didn't do any of that. President Zelensky, excuse me. And then what you have in front of your is an addendum that Mr. Sondland made to his testimony that we got a couple of weeks ago.

It says, declaration of Ambassador Gordon Sondland. I, Gordon Sondland, do hereby, swear and affirm as follows. I want you to look at point number two, bullet point number two, second sentence.

Ambassador Taylor recalls that Mr. Morrison told Ambassador Taylor that I told Mr. Morrison that I conveyed this message to Mr. Yermak on September 1, 2019, in connection with Vice President Pence's visit to Warsaw and a meeting with President Zelensky. Now, this is his clarification.

Let me read it one more time. Ambassador Taylor recalls that Mr. Morrison told Ambassador Taylor that I told Mr. Morrison that I conveyed this message to Mr. Yermak on September 1, 2019, in connection with Vice President Pence's visit to Warsaw and a meeting with President Zelensky.

We've got six people having four conversations in one sentence and you just told me this where you got your clear understanding. Which I -- I mean, even though you had three opportunities with President Zelensky for him to tell you, you know what, we're going to do these investigations to get the aide, didn't tell you three different times. Never makes an announcement, never tweets about it, never does a CNN interview.

Ambassador, you weren't on the call were you? The president -- you didn't listen in on President Trump's call and President Zelensky's call?

TAYLOR: I did not.

JORDAN: You've never talked with Chief of Staff Mulvaney?

TAYLOR: I never did.

JORDAN: You never met the president?

TAYLOR: That's correct.

JORDAN: You had three meetings, again, with Zelensky and it didn't come up?

TAYLOR: And two of those they had never heard about as far as I know. There was no reason for it to come up.

JORDAN: And President -- President Zelensky never made an announcement? This -- this is what I can't believe, and you're their star witness. You're their first witness. You're the guy.

TAYLOR: Mr. Jordan --

JORDAN: You're the guy, based on this -- based on -- I mean, I've seen -- I've seen church prayer chains that are easier to understand than this. Ambassador Taylor recalls that Mr. Morrison told -- now again, this is, I hereby swear and affirm from Gordon Sondland. Ambassador Taylor recalls that Mr. Morrison told Ambassador Taylor that I told Mr. Morrison that I conveyed this message to Mr. Yermak on September 1, 20 -- this all happens, by the way -- this all happens by the way in Warsaw, where Vice President Pence meets with President Zelensky.

SCHIFF: Ambassador Taylor.

JORDAN: And guess what, they didn't talk about any linkage either.

SCHIFF: The time of the gentleman has expired. Ambassador Taylor, would you like to respond?

TAYLOR: The only response -- I have two responses, Mr. Chairman, thank you, and Mr. Jordan, glad to take those questions. Let me just say, that I don't consider myself a star witness for anything.

JORDAN: They do, you might not.

TAYLOR: No, I don't. I -- I'm just -- I'm responding to --

JORDAN: They do.

TAYLOR: -- I'm responding to your question.

SCHIFF: Please, don't interrupt the witness.

TAYLOR: As I -- I think I was clear about, I'm not here to take one side or the other, or to advocate any particular outcomes. Let me just restate that. Second thing is that, my understanding is only coming from people that I talk to.

JORDAN: We got that.

TAYLOR: And we got that. And, I think this clarification from Mr. -- from Ambassador Sondland was because he said he didn't remember this in the -- in his first deposition, so he wanted to kind of clarify. But, I think, Mr. Jordan, I -- the way I read this, he remembers it the same way I do.

JORDAN: Yes, and it's real clear, right?

TAYLOR: It's very clear to me.

SCHIFF: Thank you -- thank you Ambassador Taylor. Mr. Himes, you're recognized for five minutes.

HIMES: Gentlemen, thank you for your testimony for today. One of the things that I find startling about these proceedings is, that faced with very serious allegations of presidential misconduct, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle don't engage or defend that conduct, rather they spend theories about black ledgers and Steele dossiers and the startling revelation that Ukrainians might have been upset when a presidential candidate suggested that, perhaps, he would let the Russians keep Crimea.

Or, of course, we get the attacks so epitomized by Mr. Nunes' open statement -- opening statement when he attacked Democrats, he attacked the media, and most disgustingly attacked the extraordinary men and women of the State Department and the FBI.

When a defense does emerge, it -- it looks a little like this. Ukraine is a corrupt country and the president was just acting in a long line -- a long tradition of actually trying to address corruption in Ukraine.

Mr. Kent, you've worked on anti-corruption and rule of law for much of your 27-year career, is that correct?

KENT: I have specialized in anti-corruption and rule of law issues since 2012, correct.

HIMES: So like -- like most of us up here, I don't have a good sense of what a real anti-corruption effort, that we must engage in all over the world, all the time, what that looks like. So, let me ask you to just take a minute and just characterize for us what a real initiative, what a real program of anti-corruption might look like.

KENT: If we're doing a systemic, holistic program, you need institutions with integrity. That starts with investigators, it goes to prosecutors, it goes to courts and eventually it goes to the correction system.

In counties like Ukraine, we generally start with law enforcement, and that's what we did in 2014, '15, with the new patrol police. There also is often times needed a specialized anti-corruption agency. In Ukraine that was called that National Anti-Corruption Bureau or NABU.

There was a different body that reviewed asset declarations for unusual wealth, called the National Anti-Corruption Prevention Council. And eventually we got to helping them establish a special anti-corruption prosecutor and eventually a high court on anti-corruption. And that was to try to curate investigators, prosecutors and courts with integrity, that couldn't be bought and would be focused on high-level corruption.

HIMES: So, what I'm hearing there, Mr. Kent, is a very -- a very comprehensive effort. So, let me read you President Trump's own words to the Ukrainian President in the July 25th phone call.

And I quote, 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.

Mr. Kent, when you hear those words, do you hear the president participating in or requesting a thoughtful and well-calibrated anti-corruption program?

KENT: I do not.

HIMES: And, Mr. Kent and Mr. Taylor, the defenders of the president's behavior have made a big deal out of the fact that Vice President Biden encouraged the Ukrainians to remove a corrupt former Ukrainian prosecutor, 2016, Mr. Shokin.

In fact, Senator Rand Paul on Sunday said -- and I quote him -- they're impeaching the president, President Trump, for exactly the same thing that Joe Biden did. Is that correct? Is what the president -- what the president did in his phone call and what Joe Biden did in terms of Mr. Shokin, are those exactly the same things? And if not, how are they different?

KENT: I do not think they are the same things. What former Vice President Biden requested of former President of Ukraine Poroshenko was the removal of a corrupt prosecutor general, Viktor Shokin, who had undermined a program of assistance that we had spent, again, U.S. taxpayer money to try to build an independent investigator unit to go after corrupt prosecutors.

And there was a case called the diamond prosecutor case, in which Shokin destroyed the entire ecosystem that we were trying to help create: the investigators, the judges who issued the warrants, the law enforcement that had warrants to do the wiretapping, everybody, to protect his former driver, whom he'd made a prosecutor.

That's what Joe Biden was asking. Remove the corrupt prosecutor...

HIMES: So Joe Biden was participating in an open effort to establish -- whole-of-government effort to address corruption in Ukraine?

KENT: That is correct.

HIMES: Great. So, Mr. Kent, as you look at this whole mess -- Rudy Giuliani, President Trump -- in your opinion, was this a comprehensive and whole-of-government effort to end corruption in Ukraine?

KENT: Referring to the requests in July?

HIMES: Exactly.

KENT: I would not say so. No, sir.

HIMES: Yeah, I don't -- I don't think President Trump was trying to end corruption in Ukraine, I think he was trying to aim corruption in Ukraine at Vice President Biden and at the 2020 election. And I yield back the balance of my time.

SCHIFF: Mr. Conaway is recognized for five minutes.

CONAWAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield my time to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Ratcliffe.

RATCLIFFE: Thank you. I thank the gentleman.

And I thank you both for being here. It's obvious from your testimony today that you both care a great deal about U.S.-Ukraine relations. It's also very clear that you're optimistic about President Zelensky.

Ambassador Taylor, you related, one of his first acts in office was to remove immunity from deputies which had long been a source of corruption. I know you had a number of personal dealings with him. Has he given you any reason to question his honesty or his integrity?

TAYLOR: No, sir.

RATCLIFFE: In your prior deposition, I asked you -- and I'll read it directly -- if nobody in the Ukrainian government is aware of a military hold at the time of the Trump-Zelensky call, then as a matter of law and as a matter of fact, there can be no quid pro quo based on military aid.

And to your knowledge, nobody in the Ukrainian government was aware of the hold. And your answer was, that is correct. Is that still your testimony?

TAYLOR: Mr. Ratcliffe, at -- at some point in September...

(CROSSTALK)

RATCLIFFE: I'm talking about on July 25th.

TAYLOR: Ah, July 25th. Sorry, yes, that's correct, that's correct. They did not know this.

RATCLIFFE: All right. And as it turns out, President Zelensky agreed with you. On October 10th, President Zelensky held a press marathon with over 300 reporters, where he said repeatedly and consistently, over hours and hours, that he was not aware of a military hold during the July 25th call.

In fact, in his official press release from the Ukrainian government, available on his website, that I'll be introducing into the record, he said, our phone conversation bears no relations to arms. They blocked the provision of military assistance prior to our telephone conversation, but the issue had not been discussed during our conversation. I mean, I didn't even know.

So, now, in addition to confirming that because he had no knowledge of it, there was no quid pro quo involving military aid during that call, President Zelensky went on to confirm a number of things: that there was no pressure, that there were no conditions, that there were no threats on military aid, there were no conditions or pressure to investigate Burisma or the 2016 election, that there was no blackmail, that there was no corruption of any kind during the July 25 call. Again, from his official press release.

Therefore, there was no blackmail because it was not the subject of our conversation with the president of the United States. There were no conditions on the investigation, either because of arms or the situation around Burisma Company.

He told Reuters there was no blackmail. He told the L.A. Times there was no pressure or blackmail from the United States. He told Japan's Kyoto News, I was never pressured and there were no conditions being imposed. He told ABC News and the BBC, I'm against corruption. This is not corruption. It was just a call.

The Ukrainian president stood in front of the world press and repeatedly, consistently, over and over again, interview after interview, said he had no knowledge of military aid being withheld, meaning no quid pro quo, no pressure, no demands, no threats, no blackmail, nothing corrupt.

And unlike the first 45 minutes that we heard from the Democrats today, that's not secondhand information, it's not hearsay, it's not what someone overheard Ambassador Sondland say. That was his direct testimony.

Ambassador Taylor, do you have any evidence to assert that President Zelensky was lying to the world press when he said those things? Yes or no?

TAYLOR: Mr. Ratcliffe, if I can respond.

RATCLIFFE: My time is short.

TAYLOR: Your time is short (ph)...

RATCLIFFE: Yes or no?

TAYLOR: That's right. I have no reason to doubt what the president said in his public (ph) statements (ph).

(CROSSTALK)

RATCLIFFE: OK, very good. So in this impeachment hearing today, where we impeach presidents for treason or bribery or other high crimes, where is the impeachable offense in that call? Are either of you here today to assert there was an impeachable offense in that call? Shout it out. Anyone?

TAYLOR: Mr. Ratcliffe, if I can just respond. Let me just reiterate that I'm not here...

RATCLIFFE: I've got one minute left.

TAYLOR: I know, I know you've...

RATCLIFFE: Let -- let me just make this point.

TAYLOR: ... only got a minute left. I've just got 30 -- I've got...

RATCLIFFE: You -- I -- I...

SCHIFF: You asked the witness a question, the witness...

RATCLIFFE: I withdraw the question. Let me just make this point. The question to (ph)...

TAYLOR: And I'm not here to take one side or the other, that's your decision (ph).

RATCLIFFE: Ambassador, let me answer this -- let me ask you this question.

SCHIFF: The gentleman will suspend.

RATCLIFFE: Suspend the time, please?

SCHIFF: Ambassador Taylor, would you like to answer...

RATCLIFFE: Suspend the time, please?

SCHIFF: ... the question?

RATCLIFFE: Suspend the time, please? I withdrew the question.

SCHIFF: The gentleman will suspend. We will suspend the clock.

RATCLIFFE: Suspend the clock...

SCHIFF: Suspend the clock.

RATCLIFFE: ... at one minute, please.

SCHIFF: Ambassador Taylor, would you like to respond to the question?

TAYLOR: Mr. Ratcliffe, I would just like to say that I'm not here to do anything having to do with -- to (ph) decide about impeachment. That is not what either of us are here to do. This is -- this is your job.

RATCLIFFE: Will you restore...

TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

RATCLIFFE: ... restore time to the clock to one minute?

SCHIFF: No, but you may continue at 22 seconds.

RATCLIFFE: Fine. Mr. Ambassador, I think everyone knows that House Democrats have made up their minds to impeach one president. The question that we've just learned is, whether or not they're prepared to impeach two because, to be clear, if House Democrats impeach President Trump for a quid pro quo involving military aid, they have to call President Zelensky a liar.

If they impeach him for abusing his power or pressuring or making threats or demands, they have to call President Zelensky a liar to do it.

If they impeach President Trump for blackmail or extortion or making threats or demands, they have to call President Trump a liar to do it.

I yield back.

SCHIFF: Chair recognizes Representative Sewell?

SEWELL: I yield a few minutes to my esteemed chairman.

SCHIFF: Thank you.

Ambassador Taylor, I don't know if you've had a chance to read the - some of the transcripts that have been - been released. Are you aware that other witnesses have testified that Ukraine in fact found out the aid was being withheld before it became public knowledge?

TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I - I've read that. I think there's still some question about when they may have heard.

SCHIFF: And ultimately they did find out, when the Politico story came out, to your knowledge, but others have said even sooner. But they did find out, right, Ambassador?

TAYLOR: The - they did, Mr. Chairman.

SCHIFF: And at the time they found out, they knew what President Trump wanted from them, that he wanted these investigations, correct?

TAYLOR: Ambassador Sondland in - in informed President Zelensky's staff - that is Mr. Yermak - of - of what was required, yes.

SCHIFF: So Ukraine finds out about the hold, you're not able to give them a reason for the hold, no one is able to give them a reason for the hold, they know the President wants these investigations and then they're told in Warsaw by Ambassador Sondland essentially you're not getting the aid unless you do these investigations, correct?

TAYLOR: That's correct.

SCHIFF: So, you know, you've been asked how could there be conditioning if the Ukrainians didn't know but the Ukrainians were told by Ambassador Sondland, were they not?

TAYLOR: They were - they were. They didn't know - as near as I can tell, the Ukrainians did not know about the hold on the phone call, on July 25th, that's true, but they were told, as you said, Mr. Chairman, on the 1st of September.

SCHIFF: And in fact, while they may not have known during the time of the call, they would find out. And when they did find out, they would know what the President wanted, correct?

TAYLOR: That's correct.

SCHIFF: Representative Sewell?

SEWELL: So Mr. Kent, I'd like to refer you to the discussion of the May 23rd meeting in the Oval Office, when the President met with those who had gone to the Ukraine for the inauguration. You briefly testified that you helped propose names for individuals to go to that inauguration. Was Ambassador Sondland, who is the Ambassador to the European Union, one of the names that you submitted?

KENT: No, it was not.

SEWELL: But he ultimately attended that inauguration, is that not right?

KENT: That is correct.

SEWELL: And do you know how he ended up as a part of that official delegation?

KENT: I do not know for sure but my understanding is once the list left the NSC staff, it went through a review through the part of the White House that determines presidential delegations.

SEWELL: You also testified that upon returning, Ambassador Sondland used his quote "connections with Mulvaney" end quote to order - in order to secure this meeting in the Oval Office. Is that correct?

KENT: That is my understanding, yes.

SEWELL: It seems that this Oval Office meeting was a pivotal turning point in the Ukraine policy. Coming out of that meeting, who was given responsibility - to your recollection, who was given responsibility for the Ukraine policy?

KENT: I never saw any document that changed the nature of policy determination. In the U.S. government, under the Trump administration, there's the National Security Presidential Memorandum ...

SEWELL: But didn't you also say - I'm ...

KENT: Yes, please.

SEWELL: I have a little time - you did say in your testimony that you felt that that - that - you testified that - that Secretary Perry, Ambassador Sonderland (sic) and Ambassador Volker quote "felt that they had a mandate to take the lead" end quote on Ukraine policy, did you not?

KENT: That was an accurate statement. Their feeling doesn't mean that they actually got delegated responsibility.

SEWELL: Have you ever heard of the term three amigos?

KENT: I referenced that after watching Gordon Sondland say that on Ukrainian TV on July 26th.

SEWELL: And what do you come to mean for - by three amigos?

KENT: My understanding of Ambassador Sondland's use of that term is that the three people that were in charge of Ukraine policy during the summer were he - Gordon Sondland, Ambassador Volker and Secretary Perry.

SEWELL: What did you come to - when did you come to learn about Mr. Giuliani's role and what do you consider his role to have been?

KENT: I first heard about former Mayor Giuliani's interest in Ukraine in January of this year. That was a different phase than what happened during the summertime.

SEWELL: Was it normal to have a person who is a private citizen take an active role in foreign diplomacy?

KENT: I did not find his particular engagement normal, no.

SEWELL: Now Mr. - Ambassador Taylor, you testified that there are two channels, a regular and irregular. What did you see as Rudy Giuliani's role in - in Ukraine policy?

TAYLOR: Congresswoman, I came to see that Mr. Giuliani had a large influence on the irregular channel.

SEWELL: And was that normal? Is that normal to have a private citizen of the United States take an active role in diplomacy?

TAYLOR: It is not normal. It is - it is not unusual to ask for people outside the government to give opinions to help form the - the policies of the U.S. government, it is unusual to have a person put input into the channel that goes contrary to U.S. policy.

SEWELL: Thank you, I yield back.

SCHIFF: Mr. Turner, you're recognized for five minutes.

TURNER: Thank you. Mr. Kent, Ambassador Taylor, thank you for your service. I have a great deal of appreciation for your profession. You have very little direct contact with decision makers, a tremendous amount of - of responsibility and - and not a lot of authority on - on -

to affect U.S. policy, bilateral engagements or multilateral engagements. You are - you're trying to shepherd through issues with our - with our allies.

One example of that, Ambassador Taylor, is that you testified in your prior testimony that you have not had any contact with the President of the United States. Is that correct?

TAYLOR: That's correct, sir.

TURNER: Mr. Taylor - Mr. Kent, have you had any contact with the President of the United States?

KENT: I have not.

TURNER: So not only no conversations with the President of the United States about Ukraine, you've not had any contact with the President of the United States?

TAYLOR: That's correct.

TURNER: OK. So you both know that this impeachment inquiry is about the President of the United States, don't you? I mean, the man that neither one of you have had any contact with, you are the first up witnesses. I - I - I just find that a little amazing that - that - that the first up would be two people who have - have - who've never had any contact with the President himself.

Now Kurt Volker did have contact with the President and contact with the President on Ukraine. Mr. - Ambassador Taylor, you said that he is a man of highest integrity. Well I know Kurt Volker and I know, you know, he served as the NATO Ambassador, he served as the Director of the McCain Institute, he has the highest professional ethics, one of the most knowledgeable people about Europe, he's absolutely a truthful man.

Mr. Kent, would you agree with Ambassador Taylor that he's of the highest integrity?

KENT: I believe Kurt Volker has served the U.S. as a public servant very well.

TURNER: Do either of you have any evidence that Mr. Volker committed perjury or lied to this committee in his testimony - in his testimony to this committee? Do either of you have any evidence that Kurt Volker perjured himself or lied to this committee in his testimony? Ambassador Taylor, any evidence?

TAYLOR: Mr. Turner, I have no evidence.

TURNER: Mr. Kent?

KENT: I believe Ambassador Volker's deposition was over 400 pages and I don't have it in front of me so I can't ...

TURNER: But you have no evidence that he lied or perjured himself, right, Mr. Kent?

KENT: I have no basis to make that judgment, no, sir.

TURNER: Great. Well we're not in a court, gentlemen, and if we were the Sixth Amendment would apply and so would rules on hearsay and opinion and most of your two testimonies would not be admissible whatsoever.

But I understand in your profession you deal in words of understanding, words of beliefs and feelings because in your profession, that's what you work with to try to pull together policy and to go in and out of meetings to try to formulate opinions that -- that affect other people's decision-making.

Ambassador Taylor, have you ever prepared for meeting with a president or a prime minister of a country where you were told one thing before you went into the meeting as to what it was to be about, and the meeting would be about another thing? Or you get in there and the beliefs or opinions of the president or the prime minister were other than you believed?

TAYLOR: Mr. Turner, you're asking if I ever learned something new in a -- in a meeting?

TURNER: (inaudible) Have you ever walked in with a belief that you thought about the country that -- that you were serving in and find out that they were wrong?

TAYLOR: I've learned something in every meeting, Mr. Turner, but I, you know, (inaudible)

TURNER: Well, Ambassador Taylor, the reason why the -- the Sixth Amendment doesn't allow hearsay is because it's unreliable. It's unreliable because frequently it's untruthful. It is not factual. It might be beliefs or understandings.

Ambassador, you testified about -- about a number of things that you've heard. Isn't it true - - possible that the things that you've heard were not true? That some of the beliefs and understandings that you had are not accurate? That in fact, you're mistaken about some of the things that you testified today in a factual basis versus a professional assessment?

TAYLOR: Mr. Turner, I'm here to tell you what I know. I'm not going to tell you anything I don't know. I'm going to tell you everything that I do know.

(CROSSTALK)

But that's -- that's -- that's -- that's exactly -- that's exactly...

TURNER: But since you learned it from others, you could -- you could be right -- you could be wrong, right, Mr. Taylor?

TAYLOR: That's exactly why I'm here.

TURNER: But since you learned it from others, you could be wrong, correct?

TAYLOR: I am telling you what I heard them tell me.

TURNER: And they could be wrong, or they could be mistaken, or they could have heard it incorrectly, right, Ambassador Taylor?

TAYLOR: People make mistakes.

TURNER: Right, so you could be wrong.

I yield the rest of my time to Mr. Jordan.

JORDAN: Mr. -- thank you. Thank (inaudible) for yielding.

Ambassador Taylor, the gentleman asked if you could be wrong. Were you wrong when you said you had a clear understanding that President Zelensky had to commit to an investigation of Bidens before the aid got released, and the aid got released, and he didn't commit to an investigation.

TAYLOR: Mr., I was not wrong about what I told you, which is what I heard. That's all I've said. I've told you what I heard.

JORDAN: And that's the point.

TAYLOR: That's the point.

JORDAN: What you heard did not happen. It didn't happen. You had three meetings with the guy. He could have told you. He didn't announce he was going to do an investigation before the aid happened. It's not just could it have been wrong. The fact is it was wrong, because it didn't happen. The whole point was you had a clear understanding that aid will not get released unless there's a commitment, not maybe, not I think the aid might happen, and it's my hunch it's going to get released. You used clear language, clear understanding and commitment, and those two things didn't happen, so you had to be wrong.

TAYLOR: Mr. Jordan, the other thing that went on when that -- when that assistance was on hold is we shook the confidence of a -- of a close partner in our reliability, and that...

JORDAN: That's not what this proceeding's about, Ambassador Taylor.

SCHIFF: The time of the gentleman has expired. Ambassador Taylor (inaudible)

JORDAN: That's not what this whole thing started on.

SCHIFF: The time of the gentleman...

(GAVEL)

... has expired.

Ambassador Taylor, did you want to finish your answer?

TAYLOR: No, that's good, Mr. Chairman.

SCHIFF: I now recognize Mr. Carson for five minutes.

CARSON: Thank you, Chairman. I yield to the chairman.

SCHIFF: I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I just want to follow up on some of the earlier questions about Ambassador -- sorry, about President -- President Zelensky's statements after this scandal came to light, when he was asked, you know, "Were you pressured? How did the phone call go?", et cetera.

Ukrainians, Mr. Kent, are pretty sophisticated about U.S. politics, are they not?

KENT: Perhaps.

SCHIFF: You would agree that if President Zelensky contradicted President Trump and said, "Of course I felt pressured. They were holding up \$400 million in military assistance. We have people dying every day." If he were to contradict President Trump directly, they would be sophisticated enough to know they may pay a very heavy price with this president, were they not?

KENT: That's a fair assessment.

SCHIFF: And President Zelensky not only had to worry about retribution from Donald Trump should he contradict Donald Trump publicly; He also has to worry about how he's perceived domestically, doesn't he, Ambassador Taylor?

TAYLOR: President Zelensky is very sensitive to the -- the views of Ukrainian people who, indeed, are very attentive to Ukraine-U.S. politics, yes.

SCHIFF: And so if President Zelensky were to say, "I had to capitulate and agree to these investigations. I was ready to go on CNN until the aid got restored," that would obviously be hurtful to him back home, would it not?

TAYLOR: He cannot afford to be seen to be deferring to any -- any foreign leader. They are -- he is very confident in his own abilities, and he's -- and he knows that the Ukrainian people expect him to -- to be clear and defend Ukrainian interests.

SCHIFF: Mr. Carson?

CARSON: Thank you, Chairman. My colleague touched briefly on the campaign to remove career diplomat Ambassador Yovanovitch. Mr. Kent, you stated in previous testimony that you were aware of the, quote, "campaign of slander against the ambassador in real time," which basically unfolded in the media. Where do you understand this misinformation campaign was coming from, and who was essentially perpetuating it?

KENT: To my understanding, the then-prosecutor general of Ukraine, now ex-, Yuriy Lutsenko, met Rudy Giuliani in New York on a private visit in January. They had a second meeting in February, and through the good offices of the former mayor of New York, Yuriy Lutsenko gave an interview to John Solomon, then of The Hill, in early March, and the campaign was launched on March 20th.

CARSON: A corrupt Ukrainian prosecutor gave an interview to a reporter in the United States and made claims that the ambassador provided officials with a, quote, "do not prosecute list". Sir, do you have any reason to believe this is true?

KENT: I have every reason to believe it is not true.

CARSON: What was the reputation of the man who made these allegations, sir?

KENT: Yuriy Lutsenko was a politician of long-standing. He had been minister of interior after the Orange Revolution. The U.S. embassy had good relations with him for years. He was imprisoned by President Yanukovich; came out; was elected majority leader of Poroshenko, the then-president's party, and then became prosecutor general in the spring of 2016.

CARSON: What was your experience with Ambassador Yovanovitch? Was she working hard to combat corruption in Ukraine, sir?

KENT: She was dedicated, as is every U.S. government official in Ukraine, to help Ukrainians overcome the legacy of corruption, which they actually have made a number of important steps since 2014.

CARSON: So in fact, before all of this happened, you and your superiors at the State Department asked the ambassador to extend her time in the Ukraine, correct, sir?

KENT: That is correct.

CARSON: Did you support her extension?

KENT: I asked her to extend until the end of this year to get through the election cycle in Ukraine, and then under Secretary Hale in March, asked her to stay until 2020.

CARSON: Now, some in Ukraine probably disliked her efforts to help Ukraine root out corruption. Is that correct?

KENT: As I mentioned in my testimony, you can't promote principled anticorruption action without pissing off corrupt people.

(LAUGHTER)

CARSON: Fair enough. Now, some of those people helped Giuliani smear her, did they not?

KENT: They did.

CARSON: So ultimately, that smear campaign pushed President Trump to remove her, correct, sir?

KENT: I cannot judge that. What I can say is that Rudy Giuliani's smear campaign was ubiquitous in the spring of 2019 on Fox News and on the Internet and Twittersphere.

CARSON: So Ambassador Taylor and Mr. Kent, in all of your combined decades at the State Department, have you ever before seen an instance where an ambassador was forced out by the president following a smear campaign of misinformation orchestrated by the president's allies?

KENT: I have not.

TAYLOR: Nor I.

CARSON: Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

SCHIFF: Dr. Wenstrup?

WENSTRUP: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Taylor, this should be easy because I'm going to use a lot of your words from the previous deposition as we go forward. In your deposition, you spoke of support for Ukraine and its relationship to the United States and how much your support that.

In 2014, you -- and I'm quoting this -- urged Obama administration to provide lethal defensive weapons in order to deter further Russian aggression. Did the Obama administration provide lethal weapons?

TAYLOR: No, sir.

WENSTRUP: They provided MREs and blankets and things like that.

In your deposition, you also said President Obama's objection was because it might provoke the Russians. And in fact, you testify in your deposition that the Obama administration didn't have a good argument since Russia had already provoked and they have invaded Ukraine. Is that correct?

TAYLOR: That's correct, sir.

WENSTRUP: It's a shame he didn't take the advice of a combat veteran like you, sir, someone who understands what deterrence provides. Because a lot of Ukrainian lives could have been saved if he had taken your advice.

In your deposition, you said -- and I quote -- happy, you were happy with the Trump administration's assistance. And it provided both lethal and financial aid, did it not?

TAYLOR: It did, sir.

WENSTRUP: And you -- you also stated that it was a substantial improvement. Is that correct?

TAYLOR: That's correct, sir.

WENSTRUP: So now we're providing Javelins, which kill Russian tanks. MREs and blankets do not do that. Today, you said, I was beginning to fear that the longstanding U.S. policy of strong support for Ukraine was shifting.

I have a little trouble with "longstanding," based on what we just talked about. Because it wasn't really longstanding strong support. It seems to me, the strong support came with this administration. Would you agree with that, sir?

Unless you consider MREs and blankets strong support, I wouldn't call it longstanding.

TAYLOR: The longstanding that I'm referring to there, Dr. Wenstrup, is the longstanding political support, economic support and increasing military support.

WENSTRUP: Well, certainly, that strong support came from Congress, but it didn't come from...

TAYLOR: It did.

WENSTRUP: ... the previous administration as compared to what this administration has -- has decided to do. The strong support came with this administration, not the Obama administration.

And maybe now we understand what President Obama meant when he told Russian President Medvedev that he'd have more flexibility after his election. Maybe that flexibility was to deny lethal aid to the Ukraine, allowing Russia to march right in and kill Ukrainians.

Again, in your deposition, you urged the Obama administration officials to provide lethal defensive weapons to Ukraine in order to deter further Russian aggression. And now they have that, under this administration, don't they, Mr. Ambassador?

TAYLOR: They have the Javelins, yes, sir.

WENSTRUP: Thank you.

And I would like to yield the remainder of my time to Mr. Ratcliffe.

RATCLIFFE: I thank the gentleman for yielding.

So, no pressure, no demands, to conditions, nothing corrupt, no -- nothing, nothing on the call. That's what we heard President Zelensky say. And because House Democrats' charges against President Trump have been publicly, repeatedly, consistently been denied by President Zelensky, you heard the defense now from Chairman Schiff. He's lying because he has to. He has to lie because the threats, the demands, the blackmail, the extortion that House Democrats are alleging, if he didn't do that, he couldn't possibly risk military aid. He would have to do anything he had to secure it.

The problem with that, the hold in that argument is, you have to ask yourself what did President Zelensky actually do to get the aid? The answer is nothing. He did nothing. He didn't open any investigations, he didn't call Attorney General Bill Barr, he didn't do any of the things that House Democrats say that he was being forced and coerced and threatened to do. He didn't do anything because he didn't have to.

I yield back.

SCHIFF: Ms. Speier, you're recognized for five minutes.

SPEIER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both for your true heroic efforts, both, today and also throughout your careers.

I'd like to start with you, Mr. Kent. In your testimony, you said that you had -- in mid-August, it became clear to me that Giuliani's efforts to gin up politically motivated investigations were not infecting (ph) U.S. engagement with Ukraine, leveraging President Zelensky's desire for a White House meeting.

Mr. Kent, did you actually write a memo documenting your concerns that there was an effort under way to pressure Ukraine to open an investigation to benefit President Trump?

KENT: Yes, ma'am. I wrote a memo to the file on August 16th.

SPEIER: But we don't have access to that memo, do we?

KENT: I submitted it to the State Department, subject (ph) to the September 27th subpoena.

SPEIER: And we have not received one piece of paper from the State Department relative to this investigation.

Both of you have made compelling cases of the importance of Ukraine to Europe, to the 70 years of peace, the benefit that it has to the United States' national security, and our goal to continue to support sovereignty of nations.

Meanwhile, Russia is violently attacking people in Ukraine in the Donbass area. So withholding military aid, does that weaken Ukraine?

KENT: Well, I think it sends the wrong signal. And it did for a short period of time. Again (ph), the assistance from the F.Y. '19 was released and is in the process of heading towards Ukraine.

SPEIER: Does it embolden Russia when there was no aid being sent to Ukraine?

KENT: I think the signal that there is controversy and question about the U.S. support of Ukraine sends the signal to Vladimir Putin that he can leverage that as he seeks to negotiate with not only Ukraine, but other countries.

SPEIER: Thank you.

Ambassador Taylor, I think you mentioned that a White House meeting for Zelensky would boost his ability to negotiate for a peaceful settlement with Vladimir Putin and Russia in general. Is that true?

TAYLOR: Ms. Speier, it is certainly true that -- that U.S. support for Mr. Zelensky, President Zelensky, in his negotiations with -- with Russians is very important and will -- will enable him to get a better agreement with that support from the United States, both from the military assistance but also just from the political assistance that we can provide.

SPEIER: But he has not yet had that White House meeting, has he?

TAYLOR: He has not.

SPEIER: I think it's ironic that Soviet-born Lev Parnas, who has now been indicted, had a meeting with the president in the White House after participating in a number of campaign events for the president and contributing \$325,000 to the president's pack. So, maybe it's

actually the requirement that you give money to the president's pack in order to get that meeting at the White House.

Ambassador Taylor, is it true that the Prosecutor General now has opened an investigation in Ukraine?

TAYLOR: Miss Speier, the new Prosecutor General that President Zelensky has appointed, is indeed investigating crimes in general. Is that -- is that your question?

SPEIER: Yes. But is he --

TAYLOR: Yes, he is -- he is in office and is investigating criminal activity.

SPEIER: Has he specified what investigations he's undertaken?

TAYLOR: No.

SPEIER: He has not? All right. I yield the rest of my time to Chairman Schiff.

SCHIFF: Just a quick question. My colleagues -- a couple of my colleagues referenced the conversation, the hot mic conversation between President Obama and President Medvedev.

That was in 2012, there was a suggestion that he was saying he was going to go easy on Russia over the invasion of Ukraine, but that originally took place two years after that conversation. You wouldn't have any reason to believe that President Obama was referring to going on easy on Russia for an invasion that hadn't happened yet, do you?

TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I have no knowledge of what was in --

SCHIFF: It was more less a rhetorical question.

(LAUGHTER)

I will yield now to Mr. Stewart -- or, I'm sorry, Mr. Stewart.

STEWART: Thank you. To the witnesses, thank you. Time is precious, so I'm going to go very, very quickly. Welcome, I think, to year four of the ongoing impeachment of President Trump. I'm sorry that you have been drug into this. I think the sign behind me says it very well, by the whistleblower's attorney, the coup has started and impeachment will follow.

But after listening for, what is going on now, four hours and 21 minutes, after all of the secret hearings, after all of the leaks, after hearing witnesses, such as yourselves, give your opinions, it really comes down to this one thing, one thing it comes down to. This is the transcript that the president has released of this phone call. There is one sentence, one phone call, that is what this entire impeachment proceeding is based upon.

And I've got to tell you, if your impeachment case is so weak that you have to lie and exaggerate about to convince the American people that they need to remove this president, then you've got a problem. And the American people have been lied to again and again on this.

We first heard a lot about quid pro quo, and then many people realized that was meaningless, so they said let's go for the fences then, let's talk about extortion, let's talk about bribery, let's talk about cover-up and obstruction, for which there is zero evidence of any of that.

We heard a characterization of the president's phone call that was so outrageously inaccurate it had to be described as a parody, and none of those things matter. None of it matters, it comes down to this. We appreciate your insight, we appreciate your opinion, but all you can do is give your opinion of this, this one phone call.

Let me ask you gentlemen, both of you have said here today, you have testified, corruption in the Ukraine endemic. Would we agree on that? Simple question. Problem is -- isn't it?

KENT: It's a problem and they're taking steps to address it.

STEWART: OK. Earlier in the -- earlier in the -- in the hearing both of you said, use the word endemic agree to it. It's in the courts, it's oligarchs, it's prosecutors, it's everywhere. And I think we can also agree that that's not the only place in the world where we experience and see corruption. There's dozens and dozens of nations around the world that is steeped in corruption. Would you agree with that?

TAYLOR: Mr. -- I would say that there is corruption in every country, including ours.

STEWART: Ok, thank you. And some we're clearly more concerned about than others. So, in these corrupt nations, of which there are probably hundreds of corrupt individuals, hundreds of corrupt government officials, can you give me an example anytime where the Vice President of the United States shows up and demands that a specific prosecutor be fired and gives them a six hour time limit to do that? Are you aware of that ever happening in any other place? I guess the answer is no.

And I just think it's interesting that out of hundreds of corrupt individuals, dozens of corrupt nations, that happened one time. And it happened with the individual who's son was being paid by the organization that was under investigation.

One other thing, very quickly, if someone was a candidate for a political office, even for President of the United States, should they be immune from investigation?

KENT: No one is above the law, sir.

STEWART: Thank you. I agree with that. I think we all would agree with that. And yet, I think some presume that because some of the individuals we're talking about here were candidates, that they are immune from any questions or any investigation.

I think it's absurd. For heaven's sake, if those of us in public office, those of us who have -- find ourselves up for reelection or all the time as a candidate, I think we have a higher standard, not immunity from asking these types of questions.

And last thing, then I'm going to yield my time. Availability of funds, I'm quoting from the NDAA in 2019, the language is specific, availability of funds under assistance to the Ukraine, it has to be certified. And what has to be certified? Quote, for the purposes of decreasing corruption.

Are you surprised that there would be questions about corruption in Ukraine, and that it would be discussed withholding some of this aide, that's actually required by law that it be withheld if that can't certify that corruption has been eliminated or is being addressed?

KENT: The certification in that case is done by the Secretary of Defense upon advice of his staff in consultation with the Interagency Community. We were fully supportive of that conditionality and the Secretary of State had already certified that that conditionality had been met.

STEWART: And so, we agree that we should withhold funds if there's -- if there's questions about corruption that have not been addressed. I'm going to yield my -- rest of my time to Mr. Jordan. Sir. Eighteen seconds, you going to let that go. Thank you. In that case, I will yield back. Thank you.

SCHIFF: Mr. Quigley.

QUIGLEY: So, that certification, that took place in May. Is that correct, Mr. Kent?

KENT: I do not believe it was certified by May. I would defer to my colleague, Laura Cooper, who's testified and I'm --

QUIGLEY: But it was -- it was an earlier time?

KENT: -- it had not been done by May, because when I was visiting in May, I was asked by Laura to raise a specific issue that would meet the conditionality.

QUIGLEY: But the DOD did meet -- say that they met the certification?

KENT: Yes, sir. I think it may have been in the July timeframe.

QUIGLEY: Thank you. So, it's interesting and curious that we're talking about hearsay evidence, and it's extraordinary to me that the Committee's been able to get as much information as they had, direct or hearsay, given the obstruction.

You gentlemen were both asked by the State Department not to appear for your depositions, is that correct?

KENT: We both received, I believe -- I received initially a letter directing me not to appear and once the Committees issued a subpoena, I was under legal obligation to appear, and I am here today under subpoena.

QUIGLEY: Ambassador, were you also asked not to be part of the deposition?

TAYLOR: Mr. Quigley, I was told by the State Department, don't appear under these circumstances, that was in the letter to me, and when I got the subpoena, exactly as -- as Mr. Kent said, that was different circumstances and I obeyed a legal subpoena, so that, yes sir, I'm here for that reason.

QUIGLEY: Absolutely. But we were not able to hear testimony by chief of staff Mulvaney, John Eisenberg, Michael Ellis, John Bolton, more than a dozen witnesses. So I suspect if you have a problem with hearsay, you'd have a lot more direct testimony and direct evidence if weren't blocking that ability. You'd have a lot more documents, documents that you referred to with my colleague's questions that had not yet been turned over by state or any other agency, is that correct to your knowledge, gentlemen?

KENT: We're both here under subpoena. I don't think either of us is going to comment why others have not shown up.

QUIGLEY: Has any of the documents that you turned over, to your knowledge, been turned over to the committee?

TAYLOR: No.

QUIGLEY: Mr. Kent, following the July 25th call and through the first two weeks of August, were you involved in any efforts to arrange for President Zelensky to make a statement announcing that two investigations that the president, President Trump had talked about in the July 25th call?

KENT: I was not and I would never participate in an arrangement to have them announce investigations.

QUIGLEY: Ambassador Taylor, were you involved in any such efforts?

TAYLOR: No, sir.

QUIGLEY: I want to show you a text of the exchange. This one is between Ambassador Volker and Andrey Yermak, the same day to Zelensky that Volker texted before the July 25th call. You weren't involved with it, so I'll read it. The first text from August 10th. Ambassador Volker texted: "I agree with your approach. Let's iron out the statement and use that to get date and prez (ph) can go forward with it."

Then at 5:42 Mr. Yermak responds: "Once we have a day, we'll call for a press briefing announcing upcoming visit and outline a vision for reboot of U.S.-Ukraine relationship, including, among other things, Burisma and election-meddling investigations." Andrey Yermak says that: "Once we have a date, they will announce the investigations in Burisma election-meddling."

Mr. Kent, are these the same two investigations President Trump asked Ukrainian president to initiate in the July 25th meeting -- the 25th call?

KENT: It does appear to be the same issues that were mentioned in the call, as well as the media campaign that started in March, led by Rudy Giuliani.

QUIGLEY: Mr. Kent, as the day-to-day State Department point person in Washington on Ukraine policy, were you aware of this effort to persuade President Zelensky to issue a statement in order to get a White House meeting while they were happening?

KENT: When this exchange happened on August 10th, I was not.

QUIGLEY: When did you learn about them?

KENT: As Ambassador Taylor referenced earlier in his testimony, in oral answering, he heard on August 16th. He then called me and we had a conversation. And at that point I had memorialized my concerns in a note to the file.

QUIGLEY: Ambassador Taylor, as the point person on the ground in Ukraine, were you aware of this effort to get Ukraine to issue this written statement in early August?

TAYLOR: Not the written statement, no, sir.

QUIGLEY: So the entire discussion about a public statement about the two investigations President Trump wanted was done in what you have described as an irregular channel involving Ambassador Sondland and Volker, and they tasked to take on Ukraine policy by the president, isn't that correct, Mr. Kent?

KENT: That would be my understanding.

QUIGLEY: Ambassador?

TAYLOR: The same.

QUIGLEY: And if -- I guess to close, a primer on hearsay. I think the American public needs to be reminded that countless people have been convicted on hearsay because the courts have routinely allowed and created needed exceptions to hearsay. Hearsay can be much better evidence than direct, as we have learned in painful instances. And it's certainly valid in this instance.

(UNKNOWN): Will gentleman yield? Because none of those exceptions would apply to this testimony.

SCHIFF: It's not the time for colloquy. Mr. -- sorry, Representative Stefanik, you're recognized.

STEFANIK: Thank you.

For the millions of Americans viewing today, the two most important facts are the following. Number one, Ukraine received the aid, number two, there was in fact no investigation into Biden.

Mr. Kent and Ambassador Taylor, you both spoke eloquently and passionately about the need to support Ukraine to counter Russian aggression, particularly during this very critical time. I agree with you in that assessment. And isn't it the case that the Trump administration has indeed provided substantially to Ukraine in the form of defensive lethal aid, correct?

TAYLOR: That is correct.

STEFANIK: And that is more so than the Obama administration, correct?

TAYLOR: The...

(CROSSTALK)

STEFANIK: Defensive lethal aid.

TAYLOR: Yes.

STEFANIK: And in the transcript of the president's July 25th call with President Zelensky, President Zelensky tells Trump they are ready to buy more Javelins. This is indeed the most effective weapon for fighting insurgent armor, Russian tanks, is that correct?

TAYLOR: That is correct.

STEFANIK: And those Javelins were not made available to Ukraine under the Obama administration? The Javelins were not made available?

TAYLOR: They were not.

STEFANIK: Correct.

Shifting gears to corruption. One of the themes here today is that of rooting out corruption, which is an important tool for the president as we provide taxpayer-funded aid to foreign countries, Mr. Kent, you would characterize Ukraine as having long-standing corruption issues, correct?

KENT: I did.

STEFANIK: And in fact, you testified: "I would say that corruption is part of the reason why Ukrainians came out to the streets in both 2004 when somebody tried to steal the election and again in 2014 because of a corrupt kleptocratic pro-Russian government, which eventually collapsed. The Ukrainians decided enough was enough." Is that your testimony?

KENT: It remains so.

STEFANIK: And you testified that you first came to learn about Burisma in 2015 when you were the senior anti-corruption coordinator, correct?

KENT: Correct. Detailed to the embassy in Kyiv as the acting deputy chief of mission.

STEFANIK: And you testified that the issue of corruption in Burisma was in the U.S. interest because, quote, and this is from your deposition: "We had made a commitment to the Ukrainian government in 2014 to try to recover an estimated tens of billions dollars of stolen assets out of the country." Is that correct?

KENT: That is a -- stolen assets that were in the name of the owner of Burisma, Mykola Zlochevsky. He was the one who we believed had stolen the money.

STEFANIK: Sure. So the first case -- this was the first case that the U.S., the U.K., and Ukraine investigators worked on was against the owner of Burisma.

KENT: That is correct.

STEFANIK: And this was during the Obama administration.

KENT: That is correct.

STEFANIK: So for the millions of Americans viewing, the first investigation against the owner of Burisma was under President Obama's administration.

KENT: That is correct.

STEFANIK: You testified also, quote: "We spent roughly half a million dollars of State Department money in support of the FBI and this investigation to build capacity and track down stolen assets," end-quote. Is that correct?

KENT: That's correct. It was launched in May 2014 by the attorney general, the U.S. and U.K. in conjunction with the World Bank.

STEFANIK: And in fact, by 2016, you were so concerned about corruption questions related to Burisma that when there was an effort by Burisma to sponsor an essay contest with USAID, you asked USAID to stop it.

KENT: That's correct.

STEFANIK: And you testified that it was because, quote: "Burisma had a poor reputation in the business," and that you didn't think it was appropriate for the U.S. government to be co-sponsoring something with a company that had a bad reputation, correct?

KENT: Correct.

STEFANIK: You were also aware and you testified today that Hunter Biden served on the board of Burisma.

KENT: Correct.

STEFANIK: And you also testified that you were indeed concerned about the appearance of conflict of interest.

KENT: That is correct.

STEFANIK: And, broadly, and this is very important, you testify in your deposition that when the State Department evaluates foreign assistance, it is appropriate for them to look at levels of corruption in countries.

KENT: That is correct.

STEFANIK: And lastly, you also testified that - and this is your quote - "issues of corruption have been part of high-level dialogue between U.S. leaders and Ukrainian leaders regardless of who is the U.S. leader and who is the Ukrainian leader and that is a normal issue of diplomatic discussion at the highest level," end quote. Is that correct?

KENT: That's correct.

STEFANIK: I will yield 30 seconds. You know what, I will yield back after that. Thank you.

SCHIFF: Mr. Swalwell?

SWALWELL: Both of you have testified that you are not direct witnesses who have spoken with President Trump, however you are witnesses to a shakedown scheme that others participated in who spoke with President Trump.

However, Ambassador Bolton and Mick Mulvaney both spoke directly to President Trump, and unlike you, they have refused to honor our requests for them to be a part of these proceedings. Nonetheless, we do know how Acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney feels about aid because, on October 17 at a press conference, he discussed the hold on security assistance for Ukraine.

Ambassador Taylor, I'd like you to listen to what he said. I'll read it for you. It's in response to a question. "But to be clear, what you just described is a quid pro quo. It is funny (ph) will not flow unless the investigation into the Democratic server happens, as well." In response to that question, Mr. Mulvaney said, Mr. Taylor, "we do that all the time with foreign policy."

My question, Ambassador Taylor, the President conditioning security assistance on an investigation into his political opponent, prior to this administration, is this something we would do all the time?

TAYLOR: No, sir.

SWALWELL: Why not?

TAYLOR: We condition assistance on issues that will improve our foreign policy, serve our foreign policy, use - insure that taxpayers money is well spent. Those are the - and - and those conditions are either coming from the Congress or from policy decisions, stemming from the authority Congress has given us to make sure that the taxpayers money is well spent or that the receiving company - country takes the - the actions in our national interest.

SWALWELL: And you described in your text message exchanges that engaging in a - a scheme like this is quote "crazy." Can we also agree that it's just wrong?

TAYLOR: Yes.

SWALWELL: Why is it wrong?

TAYLOR: Again, our holding up of security assistance that would go to a country that is fighting aggression from Russia, for no good policy reason, no good substantive reason, no good national security reason, is wrong.

SWALWELL: Mr. Mulvaney, in the same news conference, said quote "if you read the news reports and you believe them, what McKinley said yesterday - well, McKinley said yesterday that he was really upset with the political influence in foreign policy. That was one of the

reasons he was so upset about this. And I have news for everybody - get over it. There's going to be political influence in foreign policy."

Ambassador Taylor, should we get over it?

TAYLOR: If we're talking about political influence meaning attempts to get information that is solely useful for political campaigns, if that's what we're - he's talking about, we should not get used to that.

SWALWELL: Finally, Mr. Mulvaney said "again, I was involved with the process by which the money was held up temporarily, OK? Three issues for that - the corruption of the country, whether or not the countries were participating in the support of Ukraine and whether or not they were cooperating in an ongoing investigation with our Department of Justice. That's completely legitimate."

Mr. Kent, were you aware of any formal Department of Justice cooperation requests made to the Ukrainians?

KENT: I am not aware that there was any formal Department of Justice request in this matter, no.

SWALWELL: Was Mr. Mulvaney's statement false?

KENT: I think you'd refer that question again to the Department of Justice since I don't have full knowledge of whatever they may have been working on.

SWALWELL: Just about an hour before the two of you sat down to testify today, the President tweeted multiple times about this hearing and he put in all caps "Never Trumbers." Mr. Kent, are you a 'Never Trumper?'

KENT: I am a career non-professional who serves whatever President is duly-elected and carries out the foreign policies of that President and the United States and I've done that for 27 years for three Republican presidents and two Democrat presidents.

SWALWELL: Ambassador Taylor, are you a Never Trumper?

TAYLOR: No, sir.

SWALWELL: Ambassador Taylor, finally you said in your statement on Page 19 "Mr. Chairman, there are two Ukrainian stories today. The first is the one we are discussing this morning and that you have been hearing for for the past two weeks. It's a rancorous story about whistleblowers, Mr. Giuliani, side channels, quid pro quos, corruption and interference in elections. In this story, Ukraine is merely an object."

Is it also true that in this story, it's about the President of the United States?

TAYLOR: Mr. Swalwell, I'm here at - to tell you what I know and I'm here to tell you what I heard and what I've said and in that regard, I can't answer that question.

SWALWELL: But you're - what you've testified to also involves the President of the United States, is that correct?

TAYLOR: The President of the United States was on the telephone call on the 25th of July, yes sir.

SWALWELL: Thank you, I yield back.

SCHIFF: Mr. Hurd?

HURD: Thank you, Chairman. Gentlemen, I appreciate your all's decade of service. As the fabled foreign service officer Ambassador Ryan Crocker says, because we have pumps and wingtips on the ground, meaning diplomats, that prevents us from having the need to have boots on the ground, military. You all are an important role in our national security and thank you and your colleagues.

Mr. Taylor, my - my first questions are to you - and - and these are questions that are on years prior to your time in the Ukraine but I'm pretty sure you can answer them. Did the Ukrainians get military - get aid in FY17?

TAYLOR: Did they get any aid in FY17?

HURD: Aid, yeah.

TAYLOR: Yes, sir, they - they did get assistance.

HURD: And they got - they got security assistance, as well?

TAYLOR: They did.

HURD: And if I said that number was circa, you know, in military assistance around \$270 million, would that probably be accurate?

(CROSS-TALK)

... about right?

TAYLOR: Yeah.

HURD: Did they get aid in FY18?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

HURD: Including security assistance?

TAYLOR: Including security assistance.

HURD: We've already talked about the Javelins, the anti-tank missiles, that they were not able to - to purchase in previous administrations. Have they gotten security assistance in FY19?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

HURD: Prior to the \$400,000 - million or so that we're discussing - or have been discussing a lot here today?

TAYLOR: They got some previous year - some - probably FY18 assistance, but George, you may know ...

KENT: It takes a while once money is obligated to actually reach the country. There were two island-class ships (ph) that just arrived in the Port of Odessa and that was with prior year money. So it - there's about a lag of a year - year.

HURD: My point is that we have been supporting the Ukrainians under this administration to - in order to help them kick out the Russians who invaded their country.

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

KENT: 100 percent.

HURD: Ambassador Taylor, earlier you were testifying that Ukrainian officials did not become aware of potential U.S. assistance being withheld until August 29th. Is that accurate?

TAYLOR: That's my understanding, sir.

HURD: Would you find it surprising if a Ukrainian official knew about that sooner and did not contact you?

TAYLOR: I can answer that it was only after August 29th, when the political argument -- that I got calls from the -- from several of the Ukrainian officials.

HURD: Good copy.

Mr. Kent, had you had any Ukrainian official contacting you, concerned about -- when was the first time a Ukrainian official contacted you, concerned about potential withholding of U.S. aid?

KENT: It was after the article in Politico came out, in that first intense week of September.

HURD: Gotcha. So after that August 29th conversation.

There's a lot of talk about Rudy Giuliani and who he was and wasn't meeting. Do we know or have an idea of the Ukrainian officials that he was meeting with over the last couple of years?

TAYLOR: I don't, sir.

HURD: Have you had any Ukrainian officials call you after a meeting with -- with Rudy Giuliani, concerned about the nature or the context of that conversation?

TAYLOR: Yes. Mr. Yermak has expressed concern about his interactions with Mr. Giuliani.

HURD: And I believe that meeting was somewhere in late August, is that correct?

TAYLOR: It was -- there were meetings and there were, I think, also phone calls.

HURD: And y'all have talked many times that y'all are still concerned about corruption in Ukraine, is that correct?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

HURD: Have we seen whatever this anti-corruption statement we wanted the Ukrainians to make?

KENT: Are you referring to the statement that was being negotiated between Kurt Volker, Gordon Sondland And Andrey Yermak?

HURD: Yes.

KENT: That was not an anti-corruption statement, sir.

HURD: What was the statement?

KENT: I think if you go back to the back-and-forth, the WhatsApps that were shared by Kurt Volker, they shared a draft with Rudy Giuliani and Rudy Giuliani said it would not be acceptable if it didn't mention Biden, Burisma and 2016.

HURD: But that statement was never agreed to or was never issued by the Ukrainian officials, is that correct?

KENT: No statement of that sort was issued, correct.

HURD: And have U.S. businesses ever contacted y'all, concerned about corruption within Ukraine?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

HURD: As -- you know, as of this year, even?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

HURD: Because the concern is not just how Ukrainian businesses run by oligarchs are being operated, it's also concerns about how the Ukrainian government is dealing with American businesses trying to operate in Ukraine, is that accurate?

TAYLOR: American businesses are very concerned about the judicial system in particular, yes, sir.

HURD: I yield back the time I do not have, Mr. Chairman.

SCHIFF: I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Castro?

CASTRO: Thank you, Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for your testimony today and for your service to our country. Listening to all the evidence, everything I've heard and read in this investigation, it seems to me that the president of the United States either committed extortion and bribery of a foreign official, or attempted extortion and bribery of a foreign official.

When President Trump got President Zelensky on the phone on July 25th, he was talking to a desperate man, wasn't he? President Zelensky was desperate to protect his country and make sure that he had foreign assistance from the United States, is that right?

TAYLOR: President Zelensky is very interested in U.S. support both assistance and political support. Yes, sir.

CASTRO: What would have happened if the aid had gotten cut off, Ambassador? What would have happened to President Zelensky's career, and what would have happened in (ph) the Ukraine?

TAYLOR: The assistance -- if the assistance had been cut off, he would have been much weaker in his negotiations with the Russians. He would have been much weaker on the battlefield.

CASTRO: The Russians may have taken it as an invitation to actually take military action against Ukraine, is that right?

TAYLOR: The Russians always look for vulnerabilities. And they know that the United States has supported Ukraine. If they -- if the Russians determine or suspect that that support is lessened or not there, they will likely take advantage.

CASTRO: They could have pounced?

TAYLOR: They could have taken advantage.

CASTRO: So he had a desperate man on the phone, and he asked a desperate man for a favor. Based on your testimony, it sounds like, begrudgingly, President Zelensky may have actually agreed to do that favor and investigate the Bidens and Burisma. Is that right?

TAYLOR: President Zelensky does say in the transcript that he will pursue the investigations.

CASTRO: So we know that President Trump asked for a favor to help his political career, and it appears as though the president of the Ukraine agreed to that favor. Do we know why it didn't actually happen? Do we know why there was no announcement in front of CNN or to CNN about an investigation?

TAYLOR: Mr. Castro, as we've determined, as we've discussed here, on September 11th, just before any CNN discussion or interview, the hold was released. The hold on the security assistance was released.

CASTRO: But we don't -- so the hold was released. Is it possible that the White House released that hold because they knew that a whistleblower had basically turned this in?

TAYLOR: I don't know, sir.

CASTRO: Do you think that's possible?

TAYLOR: I'm not in a position to judge.

CASTRO: So we have a president who the other side has claimed or has defended the president, saying that the aid went through, that there was never any investigation. But the president attempted to get those things done, and it looks like there was an initial agreement by the president of the Ukraine to actually do those things.

So, Ambassadors, is attempted murder a crime? Is attempted murder a crime?

TAYLOR: Attempted murder is a crime.

CASTRO: Is attempted robbery a crime?

TAYLOR: Neither of us is a lawyer, but I suspect...

(CROSSTALK)

CASTRO: I think anybody in this room could answer that question.

TAYLOR: I think that's right. And I'll be -- I'll go out on a limb and say yes it is.

CASTRO: Is attempted extortion and bribery a crime?

TAYLOR: I don't know, sir.

CASTRO: In the minute that I have left, I want you to speak to the nation about what's at stake, Ambassador Kent. You said in your opening statement, you warned about selective prosecutions and a president of the United States going after specific Americans abroad.

If this Congress clears President Trump, does it mean that he can go ask another foreign country to investigate another presidential candidate, a member of Congress, a governor, a senator or any private American citizen doing business overseas?

If there's no consequence for a president who does that, then it means there's a green light, doesn't it? For any president to ask any country to go prosecute or investigate an American citizen for political and personal gain of that president, doesn't it?

KENT: Thank you for the question. First of all, I'm not an ambassador.

CASTRO: I'm sorry, deputy secretary.

KENT: I will repeat, I think on principal regardless of the country, whether it's Ukraine, the U.S. or any country. The facts of law, criminal nexus should drive investigations by law enforcement officials and it is not the role of politicians to be involved in directing the judicial systems of their own countries or other countries.

MALE: Are you a veteran?

SCHIFF: Mr. Ratcliffe?

RATCLIFFE: Thank the chair. Mr. Kent in your prior deposition on page 159 you were asked about the President's authority to release an ambassador for any reason. And your response was "all ambassadors serve at the pleasure of the President and that is without question. Everybody understands that". Do you remember saying that?

KENT: I do and it's true.

RATCLIFFE: President very clearly has that constitutional authority, correct?

KENT: He does.

RATCLIFFE: Okay. Well most everybody apparently understands that. But doesn't include house democrats. In the context of this impeachment inquiry specifically addressing Ambassador Yovanovitch who I know is a friend of yours. In alleging an abuse of power in a nationally televised interview a member of this committee said "It's an abusive power to removed an Ambassador for political reasons because you don't like what they're doing." That's not true is it?

KENT: Yes, I go back to what I said the President has the right to have Ambassadors serve at his pleasure.

RATCLIFFE: Okay. So you agree with me that we shouldn't impeach a President for exercising his constitutional authority?

KENT: I'm here as a fact witness to answer you questions. Your constitutional obligation is to consider the evidence before you.

RATCLIFFE: So, when did Ambassador Yovanovitch get recalled from Ukraine?

KENT: I believe a message was sent on or about April 24th.

RATCLIFFE: Okay. Certainly well before the July 25th call that's in question here, correct?

KENT: Without a doubt.

RATCLIFFE: And she had no remaining responsibilities with respect to Ukraine policy for that three or four month in between I take it?

KENT: She is now a, she was transferred to a teaching slot at Georgetown where her responsibilities among others were to teach a class on Ukraine.

RATCLIFFE: Okay, so if President Trump had the constitutional authority to remove her as he did months before the call and she wasn't in the Ukraine or have any responsibility on July 25th do you have an explanation for why democrats are calling her as a witness on Friday?

KENT: I'm here a fact witness under subpoena and that's a question you could perhaps direct toward your democratic colleagues.

RATCLIFFE: Ambassador Taylor, we've established that on July 25th both participants in the call both Presidents expressly have stated there was no pressure no demand no conditions no blackmail no corruption. And I ask you again specifically about quid pro quo even being possible and I think we've agreed that it wasn't possible. A quid pro quo involving military aid July 25th given President Zelensky's lack of knowledge, correct?

TAYLOR: President Zelensky to my knowledge did not have any idea that the security systems was on hold.

RATCLIFFE: Okay. So do you have an explanation for why within days of that phone call when no quid pro quo was even possible a person who later became a whistleblower walked into Chairman Schiff's staff to discuss what Chairman Schiff's spokesman, Patrick Boland said were the "outlines of the whistleblowers acquisitions"?

TAYLOR: I'm sorry, what's the question, sir?

RATCLIFFE: The question is do you know or have an explanation for why that person would walk in a few days later to Chairman Schiff's office?

TAYLOR: I do not.

RATCLIFFE: Okay. Earlier Chairman Schiff made reference to a colloquial and for the public a (colloquial) is a way for legislators to clarify an important issue to the public. And so without jeopardizing the whistleblower in any way in an effort to find out Chairman once you knew and when you knew it about the whistleblower I'd like you to engage in a colloquial with me.

SCHIFF: My colleague will address his questions to the witnesses.

RATCLIFFE: I'll take that as a no. You're not interested in a colloquial?

SCHIFF: Mr. Ratcliffe, you can take it anyway you like it but appropriately your questions should be directed to witnesses.

RATCLIFFE: Well, I guess my question to the witness is then is when are house republicans going find out what house democrats already know. We are we going to find out the details of the contact between Chairman Schiff and the whistleblower? What they met about, when they met, the number of times they met. The discussions that were had?

MALE: Mr. Chairman, point of order.

SWALWELL: (inaudible) point of order. The Chairman the gentleman is questioning the chair which is not permitted under the resolution applicable to the hearing or the rules of the house or the committee. The efforts to undermine lawful whistle blowing is more over contrary to the law and practice of this committee. And I would like to also quote Mr. Chairman.

RATCLIFFE: I'm not trying to find out the identity. I'm trying to find out the date that this happened?

SCHIFF: If both gentlemen could suspend. Mr. Ratcliffe has resumed questioning of the witness so I would just recommend we move on.

RATCLIFFE: Chairman pretty simple question. Are we ever going to be able to find our the details in terms.

(CROSSTALK)

RATCLIFFE: Not any classified ...

MALE: I reserve my point of order.

SCHIFF: I guess he hasn't resumed his questioning of the witness. Mr. Ratcliffe your time is dwindling I suggest you use it.

RATCLIFFE: I'll yield back.

SCHIFF: Mr. Heck.

HECK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Kent, some people have suggested that the real reason that President Trump pressure campaign on the Ukraine was to root out corruption in Ukraine. I've gone back and read the memorandum of call two or three times actually. And I don't recall a single instance where the President ever used the word corruption nor the word corrupt. I know an answer to the Chairman's opening questions you indicated you had gone back and read it about a month ago. Do you recall the President in that July 25th phone call with President Zelensky ever uttering the word corrupt or corruption.

KENT: I don't recall, but it would be a matter of record now that it's been released.

HECK: And as a matter of record, he didn't. But he did manage to find time to mention his potential political rival in 2020. You also answered in response to the question from Mr. Himes that you've been working on the issue of corruption literally for decades. I thank you for that on behalf of the American people. And indeed on October 15th you testified about long standing U.S. policy meant to combat corruption in the Ukraine. Championed by people such as former Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch. But Mr. Kent is it not true that rather than fighting corruption in general in Ukraine that what President Trump actually did was unceremoniously recall and remove Ambassador Yovanovitch from her post in Ukraine.

KENT: I would say first of all as I repeated before the President has the right to recall ambassadors. It remains a matter of policy of the United States towards Ukraine to help them overcome a legacy of corruption in creating new institutions and much of what we've been discussing today, which involved an irregular channel was a request that went against U.S. Policy that would have undermined the rule of law and our long standing policy goals in Ukraine, as in other countries in the post Soviet space.

HECK: Those policies which were indeed championed by Ambassador Yovanovitch who also testified on October 15th in the deposition about fundamental reforms necessary for Ukraine to fight corruption and to transform the country. And you cited the importance of reforming certain institutions -- notably the security service in the prosecutor general's office.

Was investigating President Trump's political opponents a part of those necessary reforms -- was it on that list of yours sir, indeed was it on any list?

KENT: No, they weren't.

HECK: In fact, historically, is it not true that a major problem in the Ukraine has been its misuse of prosecutors -- precisely to conduct investigation on [ph] political opponents. That's a legacy I dare suggest from the Soviet era -- where [ph] as you stated in your testimony, prosecutors like the KGB were, and I quote you now 'instruments of oppression.' Is that correct, sir?

KENT: I said that and I believe it's true.

HECK: So finally, Mr. Kent. For as long as I can remember, U.S. foreign policy has been predicated on advancing principled entrance in democratic values, notably freedom of speech, press, assembly, religion, free fair and open elections, and the rule of law. Mr. Kent, would [ph] American leaders ask foreign governments to investigate their potential rivals, doesn't that make it harder for us to advocate on behalf of those democratic values?

KENT: I believe it makes it more difficult for our diplomatic representatives overseas to carry out those policy goals, yes.

HECK: How is that, sir?

KENT: Well, there's an issue of credibility, they hear diplomats on the ground saying one thing, and they hear other U.S. leaders saying something else.

HECK: Ambassador Taylor, would you agree with that, sir?

TAYLOR: I would.

HECK: Is there anything you'd like to add about how it might make it more difficult for you to do your job, sir?

TAYLOR: Our credibility is based on respect for the United States and if we damage that respect then it hurts our credibility, and it makes more difficult for us to do our jobs.

HECK: Anyone looking at the facts can see what happened was an abuse of power. Anyone looking at the facts can see that what happened was unethical. Anyone looking at the facts can see -- anyone looking at the facts can see that what went on was just plain wrong. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

SCHIFF: Mr. Jordan.

JORDAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. 55 days -- 55 days between July 18th and September 11th that there was a delay on sending hard earned tax dollar of the American people to Ukraine. Not talking any country, we're talking Ukraine. Earnest and Young [ph] said one of the three most corrupt countries on the planet. Our witness on Friday, she testified in her deposition, corruption is not just prevalent in Ukraine, it's the system. So our President said time out. Time out. Let's check this new guy. Let's see if Zelensky's the real deal. This new guy who got elected in April, who's party took power in July, let's see if he's legitimate.

Now keep in mind, this has already been discussed in 2018, President Trump had already done more for Ukraine than Obama did. That's right. President Trump, who doesn't like foreign aid, and wanted European countries to do more, who knew how corrupt Ukraine was, did more than Obama because he gave them Javelins, tank-busting Javelins to fight the Russians. Our witnesses have said this. Others have said this. Obama gave them blankets; Trump gave them missiles.

But when it came time to check out this new guy, President Trump said, "Let's just see. Let's just see if he's legit." So for 55 days we checked him out. President Zelensky had five interactions with senior U.S. officials in that timeframe. One was, of course, the phone call, the July 25th phone call between President Trump and President Zelensky, and there were four other face-to-face meetings with other senior U.S. officials. And guess what? Not one of those interactions, not one were security assistance dollars linked to investigating Burisma or Biden.

But guess what did happen in those 55 days? U.S. senators, Ambassador Bolton, Vice President Pence all became convinced that Zelensky was, in fact, worth the risk. He was, in fact, legit, and the real deal, and a real change. And guess what? They told the president, "He's a reformer. Release the money." And that's exactly what President Trump did.

Now, over the next few weeks we're going to have more witnesses like we've had today that the Democrats will parade in here, and they're all going to say this: "So-and-so said such-and-such to so-and-so, and therefore, we've got to impeach the president." Actually, we can get more specific. We covered this a little bit ago. They'll say something like, "Ambassador Sondland said in his deposition, where he said Ambassador Taylor recalls that Mr. Morrison told Ambassador Taylor that I told Mr. Morrison that I conveyed this message to Mr. Yermak on September 1st, 2019 in connection with Vice President Pence's visit to Warsaw and the meeting with President Zelensky." And if you can follow that, that's the Democrats' plan and why they want to impeach the president. That's what we're going to hear over the next couple weeks. That's what we're going to hear.

But no matter what they do, no matter how many witnesses they bring in here, four facts will not change, have not changed, will never change: The call shows no linkage between dollars and the investigation into Burisma or the Bidens. President Trump and President Zelensky have both said, "On the call there was no linkage. There was no pressure. There

was no pushing." Ukrainians didn't even know the aid was withheld at the time of the phone call, and most importantly, as has been pointed out, the Ukrainians didn't take any specific action relative to investigations to get the money released.

Now, there is one witness, one witness that they won't bring in front of us; they won't bring in front of the American people, and that's the guy who started it all: the whistleblower. Nope. Four hundred and thirty five members of Congress; only one gets to know who that person is. Only one member of Congress has a staff that gets to talk to that person. The rest of us don't. Only Chairman Schiff knows who the whistleblower is. We don't. We will never get the chance, we will never get the chance to see the whistleblower raise his right hand, swear to tell the truth and nothing but the -- we'll never get that chance. More importantly, the American people won't get that chance. This anonymous so-called whistleblower with no firsthand knowledge, who's biased against the president, who worked with Joe Biden, who was the reason we're all sitting here today, we'll never get a chance to question that individual.

Democrats are trying to impeach the president based on all that -- all that? Eleven and a half months before an election? We'll not get to check out his credibility, his motivations, his bias.

I said this last week, well, this is -- this is a sad day. This is a sad day for this country. You think about what the Democrats have put our nation through for the last three years; started July of 2016, when they spied on two American citizens associated with the presidential campaign, and all that unfolded with the Mueller investigation after that, and when that didn't work, here we are, based on this, based on...

This is a -- the American people see through all this. They understand the facts support the president. They understand this process is unfair, and they see through the whole darn sham.

With that, I yield back.

SCHIFF: Mr. Welch?

WELCH: Thank you. I say to my colleague, I'd be glad to have the -- the person who started it all come in and testify. President Trump is welcome to take a seat right there.

(LAUGHTER)

You know, the question here is not a dispute about the enormous power that a president has. The question is whether, in this case, there was an abuse of that power. A president can fire an ambassador for any reason whatsoever. A president can change his policy, as he did when he opened the door for Turkey to go in and invade Kurdistan, despite opposition from many of his senior advisors. A president could change his position and our position on Ukraine.

But is there a limit? There is, because our Constitution says no one is above the law. In that limit is that one cannot, even as president, use the public trust of high office for personal gain. The law prohibits any one of us here on the dais from seeking foreign assistance in our campaigns. The question for us is whether the use of power by the president was for the benefit of advancing his political interest in the 2020 campaign.

And by the way, to my colleagues, if the president wants to attack Joe Biden and his son, he's free to do it, all fair and square in campaigns. He's just not free to change our foreign policy unless he gets his way to assist him in that campaign. That's a line he can't cross.

Now, you all have been very clear about what our continuous foreign policy was, and Ambassador Taylor, just very quickly describe why us withholding aid interfered with achieving our national security goals.

TAYLOR: Mr. Welch, one of our national security goals is to resolve conflicts in Europe. There is one major conflict in Europe. It's a fighting war. Our national security goals in support of Ukraine, in support of a broader strategic approach to Europe, is to facilitate that negotiation, is to try to support...

WELCH: Right.

TAYLOR: ... Ukraine when it negotiates with the Russians.

WELCH: Right, and I want to go back because in the historical context, Mr. Kent, that you and -- and -- and Ambassador Taylor provided, we had 70 years of peace after the war in which we lost over 400,000 American lives, and that took care. And that was in jeopardy, as you described it, Ambassador Taylor, and that threatened each and every one of us up here and the constituents we represent. Is that a fair statement?

TAYLOR: That's a fair statement.

WELCH: I want to do three dates, too. I only have a little time, but July 24, July 25 and July 26. On July 24th, Director Mueller testified about his investigation, and he -- he established beyond doubt that it was the Russians who interfered in our election. He expressed a fear that would -- that would be the new normal. On July 25th, according to the readout of the president's campaign, he asked the Ukrainians to investigate Ukrainian interference in our election that had been repudiated. And then in July 26, as I understand it, this person who reported to you heard the president saying he wanted investigations again in Ukraine. So this the question. The new normal that Director Mueller feared -- is there a new normal that you fear that a president, any president, can use congressionally-approved foreign aid as a lever to get personal advantage in something that is in his interest but not the public interest?

TAYLOR: That -- that should not be the case, Mr. Welch.

WELCH: I yield back.

(UNKNOWN): Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the transcript from the July 25th call between President Trump and President Zelensky. You yourself, Mr. Chairman, have mischaracterized the call. In fact, in the first open hearing --

SCHIFF: The gentlewoman will suspend.

(UNKNOWN): -- you had a parody --

SCHIFF: The gentlewoman will suspend. By unanimous consent, be happy to enter the call record into the record. Mr. Maloney --

(UNKNOWN): Thank you.

SCHIFF: -- you're recognized for five minutes.

MALONEY: Thank you gentlemen, thank you for being here today. Ambassador Taylor, what year did you graduate from West Point?

TAYLOR: 1969, sir.

MALONEY: Was the height of the Vietnam War, wasn't that, sir?

TAYLOR: The height was about that time.

MALONEY: What was your class rank at West Point, sir?

TAYLOR: I was number five.

MALONEY: How many people in your class?

TAYLOR: 800.

MALONEY: 800 cadets, you were number five.

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

MALONEY: So when you're top one percent of your class at West Point, you probably get your pick of assignments, but you picked the infantry, didn't you (ph)?

TAYLOR: I did, sir. Yes, sir.

MALONEY: You were a rifle company commander?

TAYLOR: Sir?

MALONEY: Where'd you serve?

TAYLOR: Vietnam.

MALONEY: Did you see combat in Vietnam, sir?

TAYLOR: I did.

MALONEY: Did you earn any commendations for that service?

TAYLOR: I was awarded the combat infantryman's badge, which is my highest -- I'm proudest of. There was a bronze star, there was an air medal with V (ph) --

MALONEY: That's for valor, isn't it, sir?

TAYLOR: It is.

MALONEY: Let's talk about July 26, a lot of years later. You go to the front, you go to Donbass with Ambassador Volker, I believe. And you're on the bridge and you're looking over on the frontline at the Russian soldiers. Is that -- is that what you recall?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

MALONEY: And you said the commander there, the Ukrainian commander thanked you for the American military assistance that you knew was being withheld at that moment.

TAYLOR: That's correct.

MALONEY: How'd that make you feel, sir?

TAYLOR: Because it was clear that that commander counted on us. It was clear that that commander had confidence in us. It was clear that that commander had -- was appreciative of the capabilities that he was given by that assistance, but also the reassurance that we were supporting him.

MALONEY: You don't strike me as a quitter, ambassador, but you threatened to resign, or you mentioned it in your statement. Before I ask you about that, let's just talk about a couple days later on July -- excuse me, one month later on August 28. You find yourself in Ukraine with the national security advisor, Mr. Bolton, right?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

MALONEY: And you convey to him your concerns. You've testified to this previously, about the withholding of military assistance. What does he say to you?

TAYLOR: He says that he shares my concern and he advises me to express that in a -- in a very special way to the secretary of state.

MALONEY: Now he's national security advisor, works directly with the president, but he tells you that you should bring it up with the secretary of state.

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

MALONEY: Have you ever sent a cable like that? How many times in your career, 40, 50 years, have you sent a cable directly to the secretary of state?

TAYLOR: Once.

MALONEY: This time?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

MALONEY: In 50 years.

TAYLOR: (Inaudible) don't send cables, but yes, sir.

MALONEY: So the national security advisor, who could tell it to the president himself, and he shares your concern, says you, the ambassador serving Ukraine, should cable the secretary of state directly. And you do so, don't you?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

MALONEY: What did the cable say, sir?

TAYLOR: It's a classified cable.

MALONEY: Without going into classified information.

TAYLOR: Without going into classified -- it says security assistance -- it's the -- what we've been talking about today. Security assistance to Ukraine at this particular time, as in previously (ph), is very important. Ukraine -- I also make the point that we've also talked about here today, Ukraine is important for our national security and we should support it.

MALONEY: So --

TAYLOR: Not -- not -- not to provide that would be folly.

MALONEY: Did you get an answer to your cable?

TAYLOR: Not directly. No, sir.

MALONEY: Do you know what happened to it?

TAYLOR: I'm -- Secretary Kent.

MALONEY: Secretary Kent, do you know what happened to it?

TAYLOR: -- tells me that --

KENT: Yes, I was on -- I was on vacation when his cable came in, but my understanding is it made it to its recipient -- intended recipient, Secretary Pompeo.

MALONEY: And we know Secretary Pompeo was on the call a month early on July 25. It's not like he's in the dark about any of this. What'd he do with it?

KENT: I honestly can't say for sure what happened with the cable once the message was brought in at the highest level.

MALONEY: One other question, gentlemen. On September 1, you recall a meeting between the vice president and president of Ukraine, Mr. Zelensky, in which right off the -- off the bat, the president of Ukraine raises security assistance. And the vice president, according to your telling, says I'll talk to the president tonight about that, I'll make a call. Do you know whether the vice president made that call?

TAYLOR: I don't know, sir.

MALONEY: Do you know what, if anything, the vice president had to do with any of this? Can you -- what more can you tell us about the vice president's role in this? Do you know if he ever raised this issue with anyone in the administration, whether he ever pushed for the release of that security assistance?

TAYLOR: I can't, sir.

KENT: I believe I -- to the best of my understanding, the vice president was an advocate for the release of the assistance.

MALONEY: Thank you. I yield back, Mr. Chair.

UNKNOWN: Mister Chairman.

SCHIFF: Ms. Demings, you're recognized --

UNKNOWN: Mr. Chairman, I have a unanimous consent request.

SCHIFF: Gentleman will state his request.

(UNKNOWN): I ask unanimous consent to submit for the record the Politico article on Ukraine boosting the Clinton campaign, authored by Ken Vogel --

SCHIFF: Without objection --

(UNKNOWN): -- now with the New York Times.

SCHIFF: -- that will be entered in the record.

(UNKNOWN): Thank you.

SCHIFF: Representative Demings.

DEMINGS: Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to both of you for being with us today. Mr. Kent, you said that a president has the right to remove an ambassador because the ambassadors serve at the pleasure of the president, is that correct?

KENT: That is correct, ma'am.

DEMINGS: Does that removal usually come with a smear campaign of that ambassador by the president?

KENT: I think the right of ambassador -- the president to make a decision about the president's personal representative as confirmed by the Senate is separate from whatever happens outside the confines of U.S. government processes.

DEMINGS: Do you have any idea why it was important to discredit Ambassador Yovanovitch, what she was not willing to do or to do, why that was important?

KENT: Well I guess it probably depends on the motivation of other people, and I am not one of them.

DEMINGS: The committee's investigation has uncovered a web of shadow diplomacy engaged in and executed by several State Department officials and the president's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, and ultimately directed by President Trump. We have heard several ways of describing this shady shadow operation, shadow diplomacy, rogue backchannel.

Ambassador Taylor, you have described what you encountered as the top diplomat on the ground in Ukraine as a -- and I quote, highly irregular, informal channel of U.S. policy making.

You testified that the channel included Ambassador Volker, Sondland, Secretary Perry, and as you later learned, the president's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, is that correct?

TAYLOR: Yes, ma'am.

DEMINGS: Both of you have explained that you grew seriously concerned when you realized that the interest of this irregular channel diverged from official U.S. policy and interest. Was Mr. Giuliani promoting U.S. national interest or policy in Ukraine, Ambassador?

TAYLOR: I don't think so ma'am.

DEMINGS: Mr. Kent?

KENT: No, he was not.

DEMINGS: What interest do you believe he as promoting, Mr. Kent?

KENT: I believe he was looking to dig up political dirt against a potential rival in the next election cycle.

DEMINGS: Ambassador Taylor, what interest do you believe he was promoting?

TAYLOR: I agree with Mr. Kent.

DEMINGS: The State Department's role is to promote U.S. policies overseas, not to help the current president when reelection, is that correct Mr. Kent?

KENT: All federal government employees are subject to the Hatch Act and our actions are supposed to be promoting policy and not involved in partisan politics.

DEMINGS: Ambassador Taylor?

TAYLOR: I agree.

DEMINGS: What is the risk of running a separate channel of diplomacy, that is completely outside of normal channels and does not further U.S. policy goals, Ambassador Taylor?

TAYLOR: Ms. Demings, it's possible to do one, but not the other. That is, if it's completely against U.S. policy goals, then that's a mistake, that it's not helpful. What -- you can go -- you can get advice and even have conversations outside of the -- of the normal channels, but then they need to be part of U.S. Foreign Policy and approaching those goals.

DEMINGS: Mr. Kent?

KENT: Agree.

DEMINGS: Ambassador Taylor, you have described in your previous testimony, one instance shortly after you arrived in Ukraine, in which Ambassador Sondland asked State Department officials not to listen to a July 28th call he had planned to hold with President Zelensky. Did you find that unusual?

TAYLOR: I did.

DEMINGS: What was the impact of Ambassador Sondland making that request? And you found it unusual, what do you believe the -- the impact was?

TAYLOR: Ms. Demings, I'm not sure there was an immediate impact.

DEMINGS: Was there a record -- a recording or transcription?

TAYLOR: There was not. That was the impact, it was not recorded.

DEMINGS: Do you think that's why the request was made, so there would not be normal State Department employees from the Operation Center would have been there transcribing and taking notes?

TAYLOR: That is the norm, but it is also possible -- it is not unusual to not have it recorded.

DEMINGS: So, you know that the State Department is holding your notes and refuses to provide them to Congress, despite a duly authorized subpoena, and we know that in some instances your notes may be the only documentary record of what happened. Do you -- you are aware of that, correct?

TAYLOR: Yes, ma'am.

DEMINGS: And, Mr. Kent, you are aware that your notes have not been turned over to Congress?

KENT: I have turned over all records that I had in my possession to the State Department, because whatever we do is considered a federal record, not a personal record.

DEMINGS: Thank you so much. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

TURNER: Mr. Chairman, I have a unanimous consent request.

SCHIFF: The general (ph) state his request.

TURNER: I have a "New York Times" op-ed stating why President Obama should have done in investing in Ukraine by a trio of Ambassadors, which includes William Taylor, December 28, 2015.

SCHIFF: Without objection, that will be admitted into the record. Mr. Krishnamoorthi.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: Good afternoon gentlemen. I'd like to walk you through a couple points raised by my colleagues on the other side. One is, they claim that the July 25th call summary shows no evidence of pressure on the Ukrainian government. In fact, they argue the

Ukrainians did not feel any pressure, at any time, to comply with any of President Trump's requests for investigations.

In fact, Ambassador Taylor, at your deposition in October, you stated that due to the hold that President Trump placed on aid to the Ukraine, the Ukrainians became, quote, unquote, desperate? Isn't that right?

TAYLOR: In August, they did not know, as far as I'm aware, but at the end of August the article came out in September, the Administrator of Defense, for example, came to me, I would use the word desperate, to figure out why the assistance was being held.

He thought that, perhaps, if he went to Washington to talk to you, to talk to the -- to Secretary of Defense, to talk to the President, he would be able to find out and -- and reassure, provide whatever answer was necessary to have that assistance released.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: In fact, my colleagues on the other side suggest that President Zelensky personally did not feel any pressure at any time, and yet, later on in September, he finally relented in a conversation with Gordon Sondland, according to your deposition, in which he agreed to make a statement on CNN. Isn't that right?

TAYLOR: He had planned to make a statement on CNN, yes sir.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: My colleagues also say the hold on U.S. security assistance was lifted on September 11, without any investigations happening on the part of the Ukrainians, and therefore everything ended up fine in the end.

However, Mr. Kent, as you know, the House Intelligence Foreign Affairs and Oversight Committees began this current investigation leading to the proceedings today on September 9th.

In fact, it was only two days after this particular set of committees began their investigations, that the Trump Administration eventually released the military aid, correct?

KENT: That is the timeline, yes.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: Mr. -- Ambassador Taylor, between the time of your October deposition and now, did anyone from the Trump Administration contact you about your appearance before the Committee today?

TAYLOR: No sir.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: How about you Mr. Kent?

KENT: No sir.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: Ambassador Taylor, I would like to turn to a word, that by my account you used 13 times in your opening statement, and that word is concern. You were concerned that aid was being conditioned on political investigations, isn't that right?

TAYLOR: Yes sir.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: You were concerned that irregular channels of diplomacy were being used in our foreign policy in the Ukraine, right?

TAYLOR: Yes sir.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: Ambassador Taylor, can you rule out the possibility that these irregular channels of diplomacy are being used in other countries where we conduct foreign policy?

TAYLOR: I can't -- I've not heard of any other -- a separate channel that has this kind of influence. That is the Giuliani kind of guidance.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: But, you can't rule it out, right?

TAYLOR: No sir.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: And how about you, Mr. Kent? You can't rule it out either, right?

KENT: I have no basis to make a determination.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: You don't believe the July 25th call was perfect, did you -- do you?

KENT: I think some of the language in the call gave cause for concern.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: Ambassador Taylor?

TAYLOR: I agree.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: And what was the cause for concern for you?

TAYLOR: There was - part of the - the discussion of the previous ambassador was a cause for concern.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: Ambassador Taylor, I want to draw on your experience finally as a West Point cadet and as an infantry commander in Vietnam. In a battlefield situation, is a commanding officer allowed to hold up action placing his troops at risk until someone provides him a personal benefit?

TAYLOR: No, sir.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: Is that because if commanding officers did that, they would be betraying their responsibility to the nation and the men and women under their commands?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: And if that happened and were found out, could that person be subject to discipline?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: Could that type of conduct trigger a court marshal?

TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

KRISHNAMOORTHY: Thank you. I yield back.

(UNKNOWN): Mr. Chairman. I think the gentleman...

JORDAN: Let's have unanimous.

SCHIFF: What purpose does the gentlemen see...

JORDAN: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I have unanimous consent - I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record Mr. Mulvaney's statement where he said there's absolutely no quid pro quo from October 17, 2019.

SCHIFF: Without objection. Mr. Nunes, you're recognized for any closing...

(UNKNOWN): Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman?

SCHIFF: I recognize Mr. Nunes for his comments. Mr. Conaway, we will get your motion.

CONAWAY: OK.

SCHIFF: After Mr. Nunes' brief closing remarks and my brief closing remarks. My intention to excuse the witnesses. We'll have a very brief recess; members should not go far. We will resume and take up Mr. Conaway's motion. Mr. Nunes.

NUNES: Thank you Mr. Chair. I'll just be brief. I want to reiterate what I said earlier and that is that we really should stop holding these hearings until we get the answer to three important topics. The first being the full extent of the democrat's prior coordination with the whistle-blower and who did the whistle-blower coordinate with. Second, the full extent of Ukraine's election meddling against the Trump campaign, and third, why did Burisma hire Hunter Biden and what did he do for them and did his position affect any government actions - U.S. government actions under the Obama Administration?

You are not allowing those witnesses to appear before the committee which I think is a problem. So we'll expect, hopefully you will allow us to bring in the whistle-blower, the folks that he spoke to and also numerous democratic operatives who worked with Ukraine to meddle in the election and with that, I'll yield back.

SCHIFF: I thank the gentleman. I want to thank the witnesses for their testimony today, for your decades of service to the country. I think you exemplify so many courageous men and women who serve in the diplomatic corps, who serve in our military who represent the United States so well around the world. I appreciate how you endeavor to stay out of the fray, to relate what you heard, what you saw without additional commentary. That is as it should be. You were both compelled to appear and we are grateful that you answered the lawful subpoenas that you received.

The story that you have shared with us today and your experiences I think is a very deeply troubling one. It is the story of a dedicated ambassador, someone who served with great distinction, Ambassador Yovanovitch who was the subject of a vicious smear campaign at the beginning of the year. It is the story of once this ambassador was pushed out of the way, the creation of an irregular channel which Ambassador Taylor you described went all the way from the president through Mick Mulvaney through Ambassador Sondland, through Ambassador Volker to Rudy Giuliani.

That over time became apparent, was not serving the U.S. interest but running deeply contrary to the U.S. interest was in fact conditioning a White House meeting that the President of Ukraine desperately sought to establish himself of the new President of Ukraine and to demonstrate to friend and foe alike that he had a relationship with his most power patron, the United States of America, and conditioned \$400 million of bipartisan taxpayer-funded military support for a nation at war, on the front lines of Russian expansionism.

A suspension of which was not in the U.S. interest, not in Ukraine's interest, not in our national security interest in no way, shape or form. You've described a situation in which those in the service of the president make it clear to the Ukrainians, they need to publicly announce these investigations or they weren't going to get that meeting and they sure weren't going to get that military assistance.

Now I would point out and this may not have come to your attention but it certainly came to our attention, on September 9th, Inspector General informed our committee that the Director of National Intelligence was withholding a whistle-blower complaint in violation of the statute. By that point on September 9th, that complaint had made its way to the White House. On September 9th when the Inspector General informed Congress that that complaint had been withheld, the White House also learned that Congress now inevitably would learn about the complaint.

It was less than 48 hours later that the military aid would be released. Over the weeks to come or over the days to come rather, we will hear from other dedicated public servants about other aspects of this effort to invite foreign interference on our election, to condition a White House meeting and military aid for the performance of political favors for the president's reelection campaign. We will hear from other witnesses.

I appreciate members on both sides of the aisle who I think participated today in a serious way and in a civil way. This is as it should be. There is no shortage of strong feelings about what this means to the country. At the end of the day, we're going to have to decide based on the evidence that you and others provide whether we're prepared to accept in the presence of the United States, a situation where the president for their own personal or political benefit can condition military aid, diplomatic meetings or any other performance of an official act in order to get help in their reelection, whether we will need to accept in this president or any future president the idea that the President of the United States invites a foreign country to intervene in our affairs.

These are the decisions we will have to make when we have to decide whether this president should be impeached but I want to thank you again and just conclude by saying because I can't let it go unanswered. Some of my colleagues made this statement repeatedly that I've met with the whistle-blower, that I know who the whistle-blower is. It was false the first time they said it. It was false the second through 40th time they said it. It will be false the last time they say it.

With that, this concludes this portion of the hearing. I want to thank you gentlemen. I ask everyone to remain in their seats. The witnesses are excused. Please allow them to leave the committee room. We will, once they leave the committee room, take a brief recess and then we will resume to take up Mr. Conaway's motion.

And once again, I thank you gentlemen.

The committee is in a brief recess, subject to the call of the chair. When we resume shortly, we'll take up Mr. Conaway's motion.

(RECESS)

SCHIFF: It is now at order to take up Mr. Conaway's motion to subpoena the whistleblower.

SWALWELL: Mr. - Mr. Chairman - Mr. Chairman?

SCHIFF: Mr. Swalwell?

SWALWELL: I move to table the motion.

SCHIFF: All those in favor of table the motioning (ph) by the gentleman, say aye. All those opposed, say no.

(CROSSTALK)

SCHIFF: ... the ayes have it and the motion is tabled.

CONAWAY: Mr. Chairman, I request a recorded vote.

SCHIFF: The gentleman requests a recorded vote.

CONAWAY: Classic move. I ...

(CROSSTALK)

CONAWAY: ... stop wasting this 20 minutes ...

(CROSSTALK)

CONAWAY: ... around if you all - I had assumed that the wait was to allow us to have the debate but apparently that was not the case. I know you're afraid of - of hearing from the whistleblower ...

(CROSSTALK)

SCHIFF: Mr. Conaway, a motion to table is non-debatable.

CONAWAY: It wasn't debated.

SCHIFF: The clerk will call the roll.

CONAWAY: It was argued.

CLERK: Chairman Schiff?

SCHIFF: Aye.

CLERK: Mr. Himes?

HIMES: Aye.

CLERK: Ms. Sewell?

SEWELL: Aye.

CLERK: Mr. Carson?

CARSON: Aye.

CLERK: Ms. Speier?

SPEIER: Aye.

CLERK: Mr. Quigley?

QUIGLEY: Aye.

CLERK: Mr. Swalwell?

SWALWELL: Aye.

CLERK: Mr. Castro?

CASTRO: Aye.

CLERK: Mr. Heck?

HECK: Aye.

CLERK: Mr. Welch?

WELCH: Aye.

CLERK: Mr. Maloney?

MALONEY: Aye.

CLERK: Ms. Demings?

DEMINGS: Aye.

CLERK: Mr. Krishnamoorthi?

KRISHNAMOORTHY: Aye.

CLERK: Ranking Member Nunes?

NUNES: No.

CLERK: Mr. Conaway?

CONAWAY: No.

CLERK: Mr. Turner?

TURNER: No.

CLERK: Dr. Wenstrup?

WENSTRUP: No.

CLERK: Mr. Stewart?

STEWART: No.

CLERK: Ms. Stefanik?

STEFANIK: No.

CLERK: Mr. Hurd?

HURD: No.

CLERK: Mr. Ratcliffe?

RATCLIFFE: No.

CLERK: Mr. Jordan?

JORDAN: No.

SCHIFF: Is there any member wishing to vote or wishing to change his or her vote? The clerk shall report the vote.

CLERK: Mr. Chairman, there are 13 ayes and nine nos.

SCHIFF: On this vote, there were 13 ayes and nine nos. The motion to table is carried. We are adjourned.

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