

1 [5:25 p.m.]

2 MR. MEADOWS: And so Zelensky didn't see it as a big
3 deal is what he said?

4 MS. YOVANOVITCH: He said that President Zelensky, that
5 he noted that, you know, some of the things that President
6 Trump was talking about happened, you know, under the
7 previous administration, and that he would have his own
8 person, you know, as prosecutor general.

9 And, you know, I don't think that Mr. Kent was on the
10 call either, and so maybe he didn't have full information,
11 but he took that to mean that President Zelensky had not
12 accepted the proposal.

13 MR. MEADOWS: Do you recall how he shared with you how
14 he found out about the call since he wasn't on it?

15 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No, I don't know.

16 MR. MEADOWS: So he just said it's water cooler talk? I
17 mean, how would George Kent -- how would Mr. Kent, Ambassador
18 Kent know about that?

19 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I don't know.

20 MR. MEADOWS: Okay. And then finally, I guess, is, once
21 the characterization he made of the call when you read the
22 transcript for yourself, was that consistent with the way
23 that he characterized it?

24 MS. YOVANOVITCH: It didn't seem to -- well, I think
25 that the call, the summary of the call is a little bit -- you

1 can interpret it in different ways. And so it seemed that
2 Mr. Zelensky was more open to the various proposals than I
3 had understood.

4 MR. JORDAN: Ambassador, did he call you to talk about
5 the corruption element of the phone call, or did he call to
6 tell you that you were mentioned in the phone call?

7 MS. YOVANOVITCH: As I said, I am pretty sure it was not
8 a phone call, number one.

9 MR. JORDAN: Okay. But the conversation, what was it
10 about, both of those issues or -- because I'm not exactly
11 sure what he communicated to you other than that there was
12 this call between President Trump and President Zelensky, and
13 then he characterized elements of, you know, what took place
14 on that phone call in a meeting with you. What did he tell
15 you?

16 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Well, he told me what I just relayed
17 to your colleague. He did not say, however, anything about
18 me. I had no idea that I featured in this conversation.

19 MR. JORDAN: So he didn't tell you that you were
20 mentioned in the phone call between President Zelensky --

21 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No.

22 MR. JORDAN: Interesting, okay. Thank you.

23 MR. MEADOWS: And since we're out of time, I just want
24 to know one thing. Ambassador Volker said awful nice things
25 about you, and he said that you're called Masha.

1 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes.

2 MR. MEADOWS: Where did you get that name from?

3 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Well, despite my posting to Ukraine,
4 I'm actually half Russian, and it's a Russian nickname.

5 MR. MEADOWS: I yield back.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Would you like to take a little break?

7 MS. YOVANOVITCH: How much longer?

8 MR. ROBBINS: How close are we to being done is the key
9 question?

10 THE CHAIRMAN: I would hope -- although I can't
11 guarantee, I would hope that maybe a 45-minute round, a
12 45-minute round, we should be close to done, but I don't want
13 to promise, depending on -- but we're going to do our very
14 best. Do you want to just keep motoring through?

15 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Well, why don't we keep motoring
16 through, but if it's another 45 minutes after that, I am
17 going to have to take a break.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, that sounds good.

19 I just had a quick follow-up question before I yielded
20 to my colleagues. You were Ambassador to Ukraine for how
21 long?

22 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Almost 3 years.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Almost 3 years. And did you develop in
24 these 3 years a deep interest in Ukraine and its future?

25 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I did. And I would also just say that

1 this was my second tour in Ukraine, so yes.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: And when you stop being an Ambassador to
3 a country, does that mean that you no longer have any
4 interest in that country?

5 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: And people in the Diplomatic Corps would
7 know you were still interested in the happenings in that
8 country, would they not?

9 MR. ROBBINS: That is correct.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: And, indeed, when you left prior posts in
11 Armenia and elsewhere, people would continue to keep you
12 informed on how Armenia was doing, I imagine.

13 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Still do.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Still do. So not unusual at all once you
15 leave a post for colleagues to continue sharing with you
16 information about how that country is doing and how relations
17 are between the U.S. and that country?

18 MS. YOVANOVITCH: That is correct.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Maloney.

20 MR. MALONEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 Ambassador Yovanovitch, my name is Sean Maloney. I
22 represent a district in New York. We've been here for more
23 than 7 hours so, first of all, thank you very much for your
24 patience with us.

25 And I think it's useful sometimes at that point in the

1 day just to summarize, and so I just have a few summary
2 questions and I just want to make sure I understand your
3 testimony. And so please disagree with me if you think I'm
4 misstating anything, but you spent more than 30 years in the
5 Foreign Service. Is that correct?

6 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Thirty-three years.

7 MR. MALONEY: And you were the United States Ambassador
8 to Ukraine; and having spent hours listening to you, it sure
9 seems like you were committed to that job. Is that fair to
10 say?

11 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes, very much so.

12 MR. MALONEY: And you were good at it, weren't you,
13 ma'am?

14 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I think so.

15 MR. MALONEY: And you had the approval of your bosses at
16 the State Department. In fact, they wanted to extend your
17 tour. Is that fair to say?

18 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes.

19 MR. MALONEY: And then along came Rudy Giuliani, and he
20 represented a group of American businessmen, now indicted,
21 who believed that you were somehow in their way. Is that
22 fair to say, that you were in the way of their business
23 interests in Ukraine?

24 MS. YOVANOVITCH: That appears to be the case.

25 MR. MALONEY: We're talking about Mr. Parnas and

1 Mr. Fruman?

2 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes.

3 MR. MALONEY: And he was also, of course, advancing
4 President Trump's desire and interests, which the President
5 has admitted in getting an investigation of the Bidens going
6 in Ukraine. That's true as well, isn't it?

7 MS. YOVANOVITCH: It appears to be the case.

8 MR. MALONEY: But, again, you were in the way, at least
9 in the minds of Mr. Giuliani and Mr. Trump and Mr. Parnas and
10 Mr. Fruman. You were an obstacle, it seems, to President
11 Trump's political interests and the financial interests of
12 Mr. Giuliani's now-indicted associates. Is that the sum and
13 substance of your testimony today?

14 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Well, that appears to be how events
15 have unfolded.

16 MR. MALONEY: And so, they partnered -- I believe that
17 was your word -- they partnered with Mr. Lutsenko to get you
18 fired. Isn't that right?

19 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes.

20 MR. MALONEY: They got a story in The Hill newspaper
21 about you. They fired up Sean Hannity. They got a
22 Republican Congressman, Pete Sessions, to write a letter
23 criticizing you. They made a bunch of illegal -- apparently
24 illegal campaign contributions we now know about. They even
25 tried to dump a bunch of dirt on you, as I understand,

1 through the State Department IG. Is that all correct? You
2 want me to leave off the last one?

3 MR. ROBBINS: Well, she's not a lawyer. She can't
4 comment on whether these are campaign finance violations or
5 not.

6 MR. MALONEY: I appreciate that, Mr. Robbins.

7 There was a story in The Hill newspaper. Sean Hannity
8 got involved, Pete Sessions wrote a letter, and there are
9 apparently illegal campaign contributions, all related to
10 you, isn't that right, and the desire to get you fired?

11 MS. YOVANOVITCH: That appears to be the case.

12 MR. MALONEY: Well, and it worked, didn't it,
13 Ambassador?

14 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes.

15 MR. MALONEY: They got you out of the way. It seems to
16 me they threw you to the wolves. Is that what happened?

17 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Well, clearly, they didn't want me in
18 Ukraine anymore.

19 MR. MALONEY: And so, if you were going to sum up why
20 you were such a problem for the political interests of the
21 President in trying to get this investigation started of the
22 Bidens and the financial interests of Mr. Giuliani's
23 now-indicted associates, why were you such a thorn in their
24 side that you had to be fired?

25 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Honestly, it's a mystery to me; but

1 all I can conclude from everything that I've seen over the
2 last 5 or 6 months is that they felt that our policy to try
3 to make Ukraine stronger and more resilient, through the
4 anticorruption policies as well as through, you know, the
5 other assistance that we've talked about today, and that our
6 policies and our actions, and specifically my actions, as the
7 leader of the U.S. embassy, were, you know, problematic for
8 them. I don't know why that would be, though, because it is
9 our policy.

10 MR. MALONEY: Well, Madam Ambassador, I want to tell you
11 that I've spent years working at the White House in State
12 government, years now in the Congress. I've spent a lot of
13 time around a lot of senior government officials, a lot of
14 members of the Foreign Service. I attended the Georgetown
15 School of Foreign Service.

16 I want to let you know that I don't recall ever seeing
17 someone treated as poorly as you've been treated, and I think
18 you're owed an apology by your government. And I think
19 you've served the country well and honorably for a long, long
20 time, and you didn't deserve this. And I appreciate your
21 appearance today, and I just want to let you know that some
22 of us feel very badly about what's happened to you.

23 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Thank you.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: I'd just like to say amen to that.

25 Representative Heck.

1 MR. HECK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 Madam Ambassador, my name is Denny Heck. I have the
3 privilege to represent the 10th District of Washington State.

4 My questioning will be brief, beginning with: Once you
5 reach ambassadorial ranking at the State Department, does the
6 Department have any systematic feedback or performance for
7 ambassadors, however formal or informal?

8 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes. We have an evaluation process
9 every year that is written, and then there are counseling
10 sessions, you know, three or four during the year. But
11 there's a written document of how you have done that year.

12 MR. HECK: Did you have that evaluation performed while
13 you were in Ukraine?

14 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes.

15 MR. HECK: Once or twice or three times?

16 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Actually, I'm not even sure, because
17 there was -- it was at least four times, maybe even more,
18 because there was a change of administration. So the direct
19 supervisor, the Assistant Secretary changed, et cetera, et
20 cetera. So a number of evaluations.

21 MR. HECK: Were any of those evaluations negative?

22 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No.

23 MR. HECK: Did any of them cite serious concerns for any
24 aspect of your performance?

25 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No.

1 MR. HECK: Is that also true of your entire 33 years at
2 the State Department?

3 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Pretty much.

4 MR. HECK: Is it fair or accurate to say that during
5 your 33 years at the State Department, more or less, you had
6 a steady progression of responsibilities given to you?

7 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes.

8 MR. HECK: Thank you for your service, ma'am.

9 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Thank you.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Malinowski.

11 MR. MALINOWSKI: Thank you.

12 Ambassador, I first want to echo Representative
13 Maloney's comments.

14 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Thank you.

15 MR. MALINOWSKI: As you know, we served in the same
16 institution on two separate occasions. I served at the NSC.
17 What you're describing is completely alien to me, I guess
18 with the caveat that I have seen it in other countries, but
19 not in the United States of America, and shocked and dismayed
20 is very diplomatic language that you used for what you
21 described ensued.

22 I want to spend a little bit of time running through
23 with you some of the things you said about our anticorruption
24 policies. I want to have -- I want to make sure that
25 everyone has a better understanding of what we as a country,

1 we as a government are actually about.

2 That there was a comprehensive anticorruption policy
3 being pursued by the administration through you, through the
4 embassy and other agencies. That would have involved
5 providing financial support, grants through USAID to
6 anticorruption organizations operating in Ukraine. Is that
7 correct?

8 MS. YOVANOVITCH: That is correct.

9 MR. MALINOWSKI: It would have involved a lot of
10 advocacy aimed at strengthening the various anticorruption
11 institutions in the country. You mentioned the National
12 Anticorruption Bureau of Ukraine, NABU, for example, which
13 was, would you agree, good in concept but needed improvement
14 in terms of how it was operating?

15 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes, that is correct.

16 MR. MALINOWSKI: More support, more resources.

17 My understanding -- there's also an anticorruption
18 court, which was an important reform, but also would you say
19 something that needed significant improvement?

20 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Well, and it's only just been stood
21 up. It just started working in September of this year.

22 MR. MALINOWSKI: Understood. My understanding is that
23 over 100 cases, specific cases, have been referred from NABU
24 to the anticorruption court that have not yet been acted on.
25 Does that sound right to you?

1 MS. YOVANOVITCH: That sounds right as of about the time
2 that I left, but I don't know what the status is now.

3 MR. MALINOWSKI: Understood. So we would have been
4 pushing these institutions to accelerate, intensify that work
5 to show better results. Is that correct?

6 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yeah. That's what the Ukrainian
7 people want.

8 MR. MALINOWSKI: There was a law on illicit enrichment
9 of public officials which was struck down by the courts, and
10 then we were advocating that it be reintroduced by the new
11 administration. Is that correct?

12 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes, and it was specifically one of
13 the issues that I mentioned in that March 5th speech.

14 MR. MALINOWSKI: And I think you also mentioned in that
15 speech the need to fight corruption in the defense sector.
16 You mentioned Ukroboronprom, the main defense company.

17 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Uh-huh.

18 MR. MALINOWSKI: And there have been a lot of, you know,
19 illicit contracts, people profiting on the side from arms
20 acquisitions, and you were very concerned about that. You
21 asked for an audit of that company. Is that correct?

22 MS. YOVANOVITCH: That is correct, because this was all
23 taking place at a time when Ukraine was actually in a
24 shooting war with Russia.

25 MR. MALINOWSKI: And then we have discussed the

1 all-important office of the special anticorruption
2 prosecutor, Mr. Kholodnitsky.

3 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Kholodnitsky.

4 MR. MALINOWSKI: Kholodnitsky. And in that speech, you
5 pointed to the coaching of suspects in anticorruption cases,
6 and you pointed out that nobody could serve effectively in
7 that capacity who was caught doing such things.

8 The day after actually you gave that speech, Under
9 Secretary Hale visited Ukraine. Is that --

10 MS. YOVANOVITCH: He arrived that night.

11 MR. MALINOWSKI: And so, those issues might -- were
12 those issues raised by Under Secretary Hale?

13 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes, they were raised in bilateral
14 meetings. And I obviously told him about the speech and gave
15 him a copy and so forth.

16 MR. MALINOWSKI: And was that speech cleared in the
17 Department?

18 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No.

19 MR. MALINOWSKI: But you did discuss it, as you
20 mentioned before, with folks back home?

21 MS. YOVANOVITCH: It wasn't a surprise to anybody. I
22 can't remember whether I had the conversation or somebody
23 else did.

24 MR. MALINOWSKI: And nobody objected to the thrust
25 of it?

1 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No. We were quite concerned about the
2 rollback of these reforms.

3 MR. MALINOWSKI: So this was a comprehensive
4 anticorruption strategy with a lot of asks, probably many
5 that I didn't mention and don't know about.

6 So my next question is, to your knowledge, did Mayor
7 Giuliani, in any of his meetings with Ukrainian officials, in
8 any of his public statements or interviews, did he press the
9 Ukrainians to pursue those reforms to this system of
10 corruption, these specific things that the U.S. Government,
11 under the Trump administration, was asking the Ukrainians to
12 do?

13 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I'm not sure, but I did notice that
14 the -- one of the papers that you provided, which was
15 Mr. Giuliani's speech at the YES Conference, he talked about
16 the importance of fighting corruption and so forth. But I'm
17 not sure --

18 MR. MALINOWSKI: In general terms, but did he --

19 MS. YOVANOVITCH: In general terms.

20 MR. MALINOWSKI: Did he raise the anticorruption court?
21 Did he raise the need to strength NABU and to --

22 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Not that I'm aware of.

23 MR. MALINOWSKI: Did Ambassador Sondland, in his
24 engagements with the Ukrainian authorities, press on these
25 specific, not anticorruption in general, but press on these

1 specific reforms and changes that we were seeking?

2 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I don't think so. Recalling that, you
3 know, his sort of interest in Ukraine or engagement with
4 Ukraine started sort of at the end of February, and I was
5 gone by April 20th -- or May 20th.

6 MR. MALINOWSKI: To your knowledge, did the President or
7 anyone purporting to speak for the President press the
8 Ukrainians on these specific reforms?

9 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Well, of course --

10 MR. MALINOWSKI: I mean you, of course.

11 MS. YOVANOVITCH: -- we. We represent the President.

12 MR. MALINOWSKI: But, I mean, these emissaries, these
13 sort of more informal folks who were coming in who were not
14 you the ambassador or the State Department, were they
15 pressing on this specific reform agenda?

16 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I do feel that Ambassador Sondland, as
17 a businessman himself, understood that corruption was taking
18 a heavy toll on Ukraine, and so he did the top note.

19 MR. MALINOWSKI: Right. But as far as specifics --

20 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I don't recall the specifics, yeah.

21 MR. MALINOWSKI: But as far as specifics, did these
22 individuals raise any specific cases or issues other than
23 Burisma and this theory about what may have happened in 2016,
24 to your knowledge?

25 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Not to my knowledge.

1 MR. MALINOWSKI: So it's been argued, you know, since
2 this has become a major public issue, that perhaps the
3 subsequent decisions that were made to hold up the provision
4 of the Javelins, military aid, to hold a potential
5 Presidential meeting with President Zelensky, that they were
6 linked to broader concerns about corruption in Ukraine.

7 Is there any evidence that the folks who were
8 communicating those decisions were, again, raising any
9 specific concerns with regard to corruption, policy
10 corruption reforms in Ukraine, other than Burisma and what
11 they think happened in 2016?

12 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Not to my knowledge.

13 MR. MALINOWSKI: I mean, that's interesting, don't you
14 think, that with all this rhetoric about corruption, and we
15 have highly specific policies pursued by the Trump
16 administration through the State Department, through official
17 channels, and yet, with military assistance at stake, none of
18 those issues get discussed. Do you find that odd?

19 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yeah. I mean, there are a lot of
20 important bilateral issues that need to be discussed at the
21 highest levels.

22 MR. MALINOWSKI: So, speaking of the subsequent
23 decisions -- and I know you were not there for the ultimate
24 discussions about the aid being suspended, but I did want to
25 ask you how you believe the Ukrainians would have perceived

1 those decisions in this context.

2 You have, at the time that you were there, signs that
3 there is perhaps a parallel policy. You've said that the
4 official administration policy, as represented by the State
5 Department, was very positive towards Ukraine. You strongly
6 supported it, that it was, in one respect, better than the
7 Obama administration's policy.

8 But did it begin to seem as if there was, perhaps, a
9 parallel policy, represented by Mr. Giuliani and those around
10 him, that had a different set of priorities?

11 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Well, in retrospect, you know, that
12 characterization seems to be correct. But at the time, you
13 know, we weren't seeing, you know, all of the pieces. I
14 mean, we could feel that there was stuff out there, but we
15 hadn't put it all together.

16 And so, you know, I mean, I was telling everybody, you
17 know, keep on charging forward. This is our policy. This is
18 agreed policy that Republicans, Democrats have all approved.

19 MR. MALINOWSKI: And before the aid was suspended, it
20 would have been fair, perhaps, for the Ukrainian Government
21 to share your view that the official policy was as you were
22 representing it. Is that fair to say?

23 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Except I think that there were other
24 emissaries, you know, perhaps sharing other things or
25 focusing on other things that would have maybe confused

1 people.

2 MR. MALINOWSKI: But would the knowledge on the part of
3 the Ukrainians that there were now consequences, aid was
4 suspended, a meeting was being held up, would that not have
5 raised the level of alarm?

6 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes. Yes, absolutely.

7 MR. MALINOWSKI: And so in a sense the parallel policy,
8 no pun intended, started to trump the official policy at that
9 point, in retrospect, based on what you know?

10 MS. YOVANOVITCH: In retrospect, yes.

11 MR. MALINOWSKI: And if you're a foreign government, and
12 you're receiving a message from people who you believe are
13 emissaries of the President, would you believe that if it's
14 coming from the President, then that's what you listen to
15 above what you may be hearing from the State Department or
16 other agencies that, again, no pun intended, the President
17 trumps all others?

18 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes.

19 MR. MALINOWSKI: Thank you.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Eleanor Holmes Norton.

21 MS. NORTON: Madam Ambassador, I want to commend you on
22 the way you've handled yourself here today and as Ambassador,

23 I'd really like you -- my question really goes to your
24 role as ambassador during such change in leadership in
25 Ukraine, whether you felt your role was changing at all

1 during that kind of upheaval in the country itself and, if
2 so, how?

3 MS. YOVANOVITCH: You mean with regard to elections,
4 Presidential elections?

5 MS. NORTON: No, with regard to the -- you are the
6 ambassador. These changes are occurring during your tenure.
7 You have to relate to not only these changes, but to changes
8 in personnel. I'm trying to find out how you related to
9 changes in personnel during your time as Ambassador.

10 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes, during -- with the new Zelensky
11 team?

12 MS. NORTON: Excuse me?

13 MS. YOVANOVITCH: With the new Presidential team?

14 MS. NORTON: Yes.

15 MS. YOVANOVITCH: So that didn't fully occur until
16 actually the day I left, because the day I left permanently,
17 May 20th, was the day of President Zelensky's inauguration.
18 But, again, we could see it coming, and so you want to make
19 sure the relationships are solid, that there is, you know,
20 some kind of a game plan, at least, for how we're going to be
21 engaging with the new team and so forth.

22 And so, you know, after that first meeting that I had
23 with President Zelensky in September where I still didn't
24 believe that Poroshenko wouldn't be the -- you know,
25 reelected, but we started, you know, having meetings with

1 him. And in November, we started introducing him to visiting
2 U.S. VIPs, as appropriate.

3 So when -- we've mentioned the David Hale visit. When
4 David Hale was in town in March, we made sure that he had
5 some time with Zelensky, because we wanted to, first of all,
6 socialize Washington to the fact that there might be a pretty
7 significant change; but secondly, you know, let Zelensky know
8 that we -- you know, our foreign -- our leaders, we want our
9 leaders to be able to meet with you, engage with you, and
10 start that process.

11 And, you know, we had a whole team that was covering,
12 obviously, the elections. And as Zelensky's team members
13 became evident, people in the political section were reaching
14 out to -- you know, to their appropriate contacts and so
15 forth, because we want to make sure -- we have a very
16 strong -- despite everything we've discussed today, we have a
17 very strong bilateral relationship with Ukraine.

18 And we want to make sure that that continues, because we
19 have huge equities in that country, you know, starting with
20 the fact that we don't want Russia to win that war. And so,
21 we wanted to make sure that from day one, the doors would
22 still be open to us, as the new Zelensky government, you
23 know, became acclimated to its new role.

24 Did that answer the question?

25 MS. NORTON: Yes. But were there discussions, specific

1 discussions of military aid from the United States to Ukraine
2 during -- before you left, and during those changes within
3 the country, and were there differences or was that
4 consistent with respect to how that military aid was viewed?

5 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Right. So yes, there are constant
6 discussions of military assistance to Ukraine, both on the
7 American side, on the Ukrainian side, and, you know, with
8 other international partners that also are providing security
9 and military assistance.

10 So there's a whole process that obviously is led by DOD
11 of consultations on these issues. Where do the Ukrainians
12 think they need help, which one of the foreign partners could
13 best help Ukraine with that particular request, and so forth.
14 So that goes on pretty much all year.

15 And then, of course, there is the budget process that
16 the Congress is in charge of, and there are, you know,
17 multiple discussions, as you probably know better than I,
18 about, you know, what is most appropriate, what can we do?
19 And, you know, Members have strong views and, obviously,
20 those views are incorporated as well.

21 MS. NORTON: Finally, were there any instructions from
22 Washington during these changes that you were experiencing,
23 or were you essentially left to decide for yourself how to
24 operate as ambassador?

25 MS. YOVANOVITCH: You know, that's a really good

1 question. So it's -- you know, it's kind of an iterative
2 process, that we're always in touch with each other. So
3 we're -- you know, with modern communication, whether it's by
4 email, whether it's by phone, whether it's, you know, a
5 formal cable back to the Department, whether it's, you know,
6 visitors coming, but we're always sharing what we're seeing,
7 what we're thinking, what our advice is, what the possible
8 challenges might be, how Washington can formulate the best
9 policy to meet that challenge. And it's kind of an iterative
10 process.

11 So we -- but, you know, I don't get to answer, you know,
12 the specific question. It's very rare for an ambassador to
13 get, you know, kind of a full instruction on Monday of the
14 things you need to do that -- you know, that week. I mean,
15 we might get an instruction to go in on a particular issue
16 that we feel strongly about with regard to arms control or
17 Iran or something, but usually, it's a very iterative process
18 when it comes to bilateral affairs.

19 MS. NORTON: Well, thank you, Madam Ambassador, for your
20 service in a very tough situation,

21 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Thank you.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mitchell.

23 BY MR. MITCHELL:

24 Q Madam Ambassador, are you familiar with an
25 individual named Dmytry Firtash?

1 A I know who he is.

2 Q What do you know about him?

3 A He is living in Vienna now and is fighting
4 extradition to the U.S. by the FBI.

5 Q And do you know what he's been charged with in the
6 United States?

7 A I think it's money laundering charges.

8 Q Do you know if he has any sort of -- Mr. Firtash
9 has any sort of relationship with Mr. Parnas?

10 A I'm not sure.

11 Q What about with Mr. Fruman?

12 A I'm not -- I'm not sure.

13 Q Mr. Shokin?

14 A Yes.

15 Q What's their relationship?

16 A I don't know what the relationship is, but I saw, I
17 think, it was last week that he testified in some court
18 process in Vienna.

19 Q "He" being Mr. Shokin?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And do you know who represents Mr. Firtash in the
22 United States?

23 A I'm not sufficiently confident to say.

24 Q Do you know whether Victoria Toensing and Joe
25 diGenova represent Mr. Firtash?

1 A I've read that in the press.

2 Q But you have nothing -- no other knowledge other
3 than what you've read in the press about them?

4 A No.

5 Q Okay. And you indicated that Mr. Firtash resides
6 in Vienna?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And are you aware that Mr. Parnas and Mr. Fruman
9 were arrested a couple of days ago at Dulles Airport with
10 tickets to Vienna?

11 A I read that in the news.

12 Q And are you aware that Mr. Giuliani has also said
13 that he had tickets to Vienna?

14 A I wasn't aware of that.

15 Q Are you aware of any Congressmen traveling to
16 Vienna this year?

17 A I'm sure lots of Congressmen travel to Vienna.

18 Q To meet with Mr. Firtash?

19 A That I'm not aware of.

20 Q Now, you testified earlier that you had a
21 conversation with Mr. Avakov in about February of 2019, I
22 believe, which you discussed with Mr. Avakov Mr. Giuliani's
23 activities in Ukraine. You learned about what Mr. Avakov
24 believed Mr. Giuliani was up to. Is that correct?

25 A Yeah, although, you know, he focused more on

1 Mr. Lutsenko and Mr. Fruman and Mr. Parnas.

2 Q But Mr. Giuliani was also discussed during that
3 conversation?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And you also indicated that you had at least one
6 conversation with I believe a deputy of Mr. Lutsenko about
7 the fact that Mr. Giuliani had met with Mr. Lutsenko sometime
8 in the middle of 2018. Is that correct?

9 A I didn't have that conversation. The Charge at the
10 time in Ukraine had that conversation.

11 Q And who was that?

12 A Joseph Pennington.

13 Q About what time period did you have that
14 conversation with Mr. Pennington?

15 A It would have been -- it was the week -- the week
16 that I left. So the end of April.

17 Q Did you have more than one conversation with
18 Mr. Pennington or just that one about this topic?

19 A I think on, you know, what Yenin told him,
20 Mr. Yenin told him, just the one.

21 Q But what about generally on the topic of
22 Mr. Giuliani's activities in Ukraine, did you have more than
23 one conversation with Mr. Pennington about that?

24 A I mean, the short answer is probably. I don't
25 recall any particular conversation that stands out. Again, I

1 tried to -- we were super busy at the embassy, because there
2 was a Presidential election. We were covering it. We were
3 trying to figure out how to move our policies forward in a
4 time of change. And all of this I thought, I hoped was a
5 distraction.

6 And so I tried to, you know, look at the media and not
7 dwell on it too much. And my instructions to the team were
8 full speed ahead. We have not been instructed by Washington
9 to change our policy or activities in any way, and we need to
10 be out there and demonstrating that we are still at work. We
11 are still representing the American people.

12 Q Do you recall having any conversations with Kurt
13 Volker about Giuliani's activities in Ukraine?

14 A No. About maybe a week, a week and a half after
15 The Hill article, we had a conversation, but about the
16 Donbass. And he started the conversation by saying, You
17 know, it's going to be okay. It will all blow over. I know
18 it's unpleasant now. But that was the extent of the
19 conversation.

20 Q And when you say, "it will all blow over," he was
21 referring to the article in The Hill?

22 A Yeah, the article, the -- you know, the tweets, the
23 social media, the interviews, et cetera.

24 Q And what about conversations with George Kent about
25 Giuliani's activities in Ukraine, did you have more than one

1 conversation with Mr. Kent about that topic?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Do you recall roughly when the first time would
4 have been when you had conversations with Mr. Kent about
5 Giuliani's activities in Ukraine?

6 A Probably in the November-December 2018 time period,
7 because that's when Avakov, Minister Avakov, not to me, but
8 to embassy people, or an embassy person, said, you know, that
9 there's something out there, she needs to be -- she, me,
10 needs to be careful. And so, you know, the next phone
11 conversation -- I mean, I didn't have anything specific to
12 report except for what I just told you now.

13 Q And it sounds like you had more than one
14 conversation with Mr. Kent about this topic?

15 A Yes.

16 Q So the first one would have been late 2018. When
17 was the next time that you had an occasion to talk to
18 Mr. Kent about this?

19 A Well, so the next time was probably when I was here
20 in Washington for the Chief of Mission Conference in early
21 January. And I saw, you know, George. So we discussed these
22 issues. But, you know, there wasn't anything really there at
23 that time.

24 Q That you were aware of?

25 A Yes, exactly. I mean, I didn't know at that time

1 that Mr. Lutsenko was actually in the U.S. in January to meet
2 with Mr. Giuliani.

3 Q So when you had this conversation with Mr. Kent in
4 January of 2019, you knew, generally, of Mr. Giuliani's
5 activities, but you knew a lot less then than you know now?

6 A Yeah.

7 Q Can you describe the nature of that conversation
8 that you had with Mr. Kent?

9 A Yeah. So there was, you know, as reported, that
10 there was this -- these contacts between Giuliani and
11 Lutsenko. That was very nebulous and I didn't have much to
12 go on, but there was also another issue that dealt with
13 Mr. Giuliani, where the embassy had received -- so, just
14 backing up to explain it.

15 The embassy had received a visa application for a
16 tourist visa from Mr. Shokin, the previous prosecutor
17 general. And he said that he was coming to visit his
18 children, who live in the United States. And so, the
19 consular folks, you know, got the application, recognized the
20 name, and believed that he was ineligible for a visa, based
21 on his, you know, known corrupt activities.

22 And they alerted me to this. And I said, Well, what
23 would you do if he wasn't -- if it wasn't Mr. Shokin, if it
24 was some other businessman that we didn't recognize the name?
25 And they said, We would refuse the visa. And so, my

1 understanding is that that's -- that that is what happened,
2 either a formal hard refusal, or what we call a 221G, which
3 is an administrative refusal, asking for more information.

4 The next thing we knew -- so I alerted Washington to
5 this, that this had happened. And the next thing we knew,
6 Mayor Giuliani was calling the White House as well as the
7 Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, saying that I was
8 blocking the visa for Mr. Shokin, and that Mr. Shokin was
9 coming to meet him and provide information about corruption
10 at the embassy, including my corruption.

11 Q Did you know the purported purpose of Mr. Shokin's
12 travel to the United States at the time when you had this
13 discussion with the consular folks about following normal
14 protocol --

15 A No.

16 Q -- and not making any exceptions for Mr. Shokin?

17 A No. What he told -- I mean, we can only go by what
18 a visa applicant tells us. What he told us was that he was
19 going to -- I don't know if it's child or children, but a
20 child, at least, in the United States, and so, we assumed
21 that that was the truth.

22 Q And you indicated that you notified, or you alerted
23 Washington. What do you mean by that?

24 A Well, you know, I called, again, the Deputy
25 Assistant Secretary, George Kent, to let -- you know, since

1 he's the person who is responsible day-to-day for Ukraine
2 policy, I think I called him to let him know that this was
3 out there. I wasn't sure whether there would be -- I mean,
4 what I was imagining is that maybe President Poroshenko,
5 since they have a close relationship, might complain, or that
6 maybe the Ambassador here might complain.

7 I mean, because I thought that since he was a man who
8 previously held a high position and continues to know those
9 individuals that there might be complaints, and you never
10 want to blindside Washington. So we let them know.

11 And, again, I know that Mr. Kent talked to Assistant
12 Secretary of State Wess Mitchell. And Wess -- Mr. Mitchell
13 was completely supportive, that this had been the right
14 decision.

15 And when -- you know, of course, when the calls came
16 from Mr. Giuliani to the White House and to the Assistant
17 Secretary for Consular Affairs, they got in touch with the
18 European Bureau, and Mr. Mitchell, you know, held firm. I
19 mean, it was a consular decision. The consular folks felt
20 that they had made the right decision. And, you know, there
21 was the added issue that, you know, basically the notorious
22 reputation of Mr. Shokin. And, frankly, at the end of the
23 day, he lied on his visa application.

24 Q How did he lie?

25 A He told us that he was going to visit a child or

1 children, but then the next thing that we know is he was
2 really going to see Mayor Giuliani.

3 Q And you learned that?

4 A From Mayor Giuliani.

5 Q Mr. Giuliani stated such?

6 A Yeah. I mean, I didn't hear that directly,
7 obviously, but --

8 Q Did you have any conversations with Ambassador
9 Sondland about Giuliani's activities in Ukraine?

10 A The only activity I had was -- I'm sorry, the only
11 conversation I had was after The Hill article, after the
12 weekend of, you know, all the attacks and Hannity and
13 everything else and the tweet from Donald Trump Jr., I called
14 Mr. Sondland to ask him his advice of -- you know, when this
15 appeared to be a Ukraine story, when it was Lutsenko's
16 interview, the State Department was supportive. There was
17 actually a visiting delegation of Congressional Members.
18 They were very supportive and raised this in all issues, that
19 this is not the way to treat our ambassador. I really
20 appreciated that. But then when the story seemed to shift to
21 the United States, then obviously it became much more
22 delicate.

23 Q And what did Mr. Sondland say when you talked to
24 him about this topic?

25 A He hadn't been aware of it, that the story had

1 shifted, and he said, you know, you need to go big or go
2 home. You need to, you know, tweet out there that you
3 support the President, and that all these are lies and
4 everything else. And, you know, so, you know, I mean,
5 obviously, that was advice. It was advice that I did not see
6 how I could implement in my role as an Ambassador, and as a
7 Foreign Service officer.

8 Q Why not?

9 A Well, for one thing, the State Department was
10 silent. I just didn't see that there would be any advantage
11 to publicly taking on a fight with those who were criticizing
12 me in the United States.

13 Q Was that your only conversation with Mr. Sondland
14 about this?

15 A Yes. I mean, when it was a Ukraine story, I had
16 talked to him about it, and he was quite helpful. But, you
17 know, when it shifted locus, then that was the only one.

18 Q You testified earlier that Mr. Brechbuhl, I think
19 you said, was running point on -- during the time period that
20 you were recalled. Is that correct?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Did you have any conversations with Counsel
23 Brechbuhl at any time about Mr. Giuliani's activities in
24 Ukraine?

25 A No, I've never met him.

1 MR. MITCHELL: Chairman, do you have any?

2 THE CHAIRMAN: I do. How much time do we have left?

3 MR. STOSZ: Four minutes.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Four minutes.

5 Were you aware of whether Victoria Toensing or Joseph
6 diGenova played any role in assisting Mr. Giuliani with
7 getting Ukraine to conduct these two political
8 investigations?

9 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: You mentioned that there was a rumor that
11 the President may have joined, by phone, a meeting between
12 Mr. Giuliani and Mr. Lutsenko. What was the time of that
13 meeting?

14 MS. YOVANOVITCH: That was the January 2018 meeting.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: And where did you hear this particular
16 rumor from?

17 MS. YOVANOVITCH: From Mr. Yenin. And I didn't hear it
18 directly. I heard it through Joseph Pennington, the Charge
19 at the time. The --- I'm sorry, could you repeat the
20 question?

21 THE CHAIRMAN: You were telling me where you had heard
22 that rumor from.

23 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Oh, Mr. Yenin, the deputy -- well, he
24 was one of the deputy prosecutors to Mr. Lutsenko and he
25 handled international affairs.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: So this came from the Ukrainians, this
2 information or rumor that the President may have joined this
3 meeting by phone?

4 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Did you hear that from anyone else?

6 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No, I don't think so.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Did he tell you where he had heard that
8 from?

9 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Again, I didn't have the conversation,
10 but I -- my understanding was he was either -- that he had
11 heard it from Mr. Lutsenko.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: So you're saying was that Mr. Lutsenko
13 had told him that the President had phoned into their
14 meeting?

15 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Uh-huh.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Is that a yes?

17 MS. YOVANOVITCH: That's a yes.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: While you were Ambassador to Ukraine, did
19 you ever raise any concerns with the State Department about
20 Giuliani's activities in Ukraine?

21 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Well, you know, there was a series of
22 conversations, as we learned more and more. And I don't know
23 if that constitutes raising concerns. I would say it does
24 constitute raising concerns, but it's not like I sent in a
25 formal cable outlining everything. It felt very -- very

1 sensitive and very political.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: And who did you express those concerns
3 with?

4 MS. YOVANOVITCH: The European Bureau.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: And who in particular?

6 MS. YOVANOVITCH: George Kent; Phil Reeker, when he came
7 on board.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: And what was their response when you
9 raised the concerns that Giuliani was involved in activities
10 that may be at odds with U.S. policy?

11 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Well, they were concerned too.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: And how did they express their concerns
13 to you?

14 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I mean, I don't really know how to
15 answer that question. I mean, it was -- it was kind of a
16 what are you hearing, what do you think is happening? You
17 know, it was that kind of a conversation.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: And one last question before I yield to
19 the minority. Did anyone at the State Department try to stop
20 those efforts?

21 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I don't think so. I don't think they
22 felt they could.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Do you want to take a break before we --

24 MR. ROBBINS: Yes. I wonder if I can inquire how much
25 longer we're going tonight?

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Let me ask the minority, do you expect
2 you'll use the entire 45 minutes? Okay. We have a few more
3 questions I think on our side. So would you like to take a
4 break?

5 MR. ROBBINS: Well, among other things, I've got to plan
6 a trip back to New York. So are we going past 7 o'clock
7 tonight?

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah. I think we are, yeah. All right,
9 let's take a 10-minute break.

10 [Recess.]

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, let's go back on the record, and
12 the time is with the minority.

13 MR. CASTOR: Thank you.

14 BY MR. CASTOR:

15 Q Ambassador, once again, we want to you know,
16 restate our appreciation for your participation here today as
17 well as your 30-plus year career. We value your service and
18 we thank you for it.

19 The fact that we're asking questions here today and some
20 of the questions, you know, may or may not be the questions
21 you'd like to be talking about here today, we're doing our
22 best to try to find the facts, but thank you again for your
23 service, and we have the utmost respect for your career and
24 just wanted to officially say that to you.

25 A Thank you.

1 Q In your February meeting with Minister Avakov, what
2 specific issues did he say Mr. Giuliani was trying to raise
3 with him?

4 A He said that Mr. Giuliani wanted to meet him.

5 Q And Avakov was trying to avoid that meeting?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And did he ever come to learn what Giuliani was
8 trying to impart to him at that meeting?

9 A I don't believe he did. I think he assumed it
10 had -- it was related to Mr. Lutsenko's work with Mr.
11 Giuliani, because it was Mr. Lutsenko and Mr. Fruman and
12 Parnas who were trying to persuade Mr. Avakov to meet with
13 Mr. Giuliani.

14 Q To your knowledge, was Mr. Avakov, was he
15 anti-Trump?

16 A I think he was pro-Avakov.

17 Q Okay. He had some -- he had some negative
18 statements in the media about the President. Are you aware
19 of that?

20 A No. I mean, maybe I was at the time, but it
21 hasn't -- it didn't register with me.

22 Q You didn't especially identify him as an anti-Trump
23 person?

24 A I think he is a very pragmatic man.

25 Q He asserted on Twitter the President was diagnosed

1 as a dangerous misfit. Did you have any awareness of that?

2 A No. When did he do that?

3 [Exhibit No. 5
4 was marked for identification.]

5 BY MR. CASTOR:

6 Q This is in a Facebook post. I have a Politico
7 article here. Maybe it's just helpful if I pass it around.
8 I'll mark it as exhibit 5. I got copies. This is a Politico
9 article from January 2017, so this is the beginning of your
10 term. Have you ever seen this article before?

11 A I don't know. I mean, I can't read through it, and
12 I'm not sure I would remember from early 2017.

13 Q Okay. It just -- it goes through various efforts
14 of Ukrainians that were just trying to sabotage Trump, and
15 Avakov is quoted on page 14: Ukrainian's Minister of
16 Internal Affairs, Arsen Avakov, piled on, trashing Trump on
17 Twitter in July as, quote, "a clown and asserting that Trump
18 is, quote, an even bigger danger to the U.S. than terrorism."

19 The subsequent paragraph talks about the Facebook post,
20 but does this refresh any of your recollection? Did you
21 realize that he was as hotly anti-Trump as these comments?

22 A As I said, I mean, this obviously was before I
23 arrived in Ukraine, and so, I might have seen it at the time.
24 But during -- during my time in Ukraine, I mean, Avakov is a
25 very pragmatic man. He's looking for partnerships. If the

1 President of the United States is Donald Trump, he's going to
2 work with Donald Trump. If it is you, he's going to work
3 with you, and he's going to find partnerships and ways to
4 make that work.

5 Q This Politico report talks about somebody by the
6 name of Alexandra Chalupa, if I'm pronouncing that name
7 correctly. Did you ever hear of her before?

8 A Yeah.

9 Q What do you know about her?

10 A Only what is in the press.

11 Q Have you ever met her?

12 A No, or at least to the best of my knowledge, I
13 haven't met her, because, I mean, press also reported that
14 she worked at the Ukrainian Embassy. So I've been obviously
15 to the Ukrainian Embassy here, and I may have met her at an
16 event or something.

17 Q Do you know about any efforts that she undertook to
18 work with the Ukrainian Embassy to further negative
19 information about the now-President Trump?

20 A All I know is what I've read in the media.

21 Q Has Chalupa ever come up at the embassy in your
22 discussions at post?

23 A No, I don't think so.

24 Q On page 13 of this report, it talks about the
25 Ukrainian Ambassador to the U.S., Chaly, publishing an op-ed

1 chastising the President. Does that ring any bells? Do you
2 have any familiarity with that?

3 A Where does it say that?

4 Q It's on page 13 of 18.

5 A Uh-huh.

6 Q The bottom paragraph: The Ambassador Chaly penned
7 an op-ed for The Hill in which he chastised Trump for a
8 confusing series of statements?

9 A Yeah, I do remember the op-ed.

10 Q Okay. What do you know about Ambassador Chaly's
11 perspective on President Trump?

12 A Well, I think my recollection of the op-ed was that
13 he was concerned about some statements that candidate Trump
14 at the time had made with regard to, you know, whether Crimea
15 was Russian or Ukrainian. And so, I think that was the
16 reason for the op-ed. I mean, obviously, this is a very
17 sensitive issue for the Ukrainians.

18 Q The story goes on to just talk about how the
19 Ukrainian officials were, in fact, supporting Hillary
20 Clinton, not President Trump. Is that a fair assessment of
21 Ukrainian officials at the time, during the 2016 period
22 leading up to the election?

23 A I mean, when you say supporting Hillary Clinton, I
24 mean, I've read these articles, but, you know, I'm not sure
25 that -- I mean, I can't judge the validity of what was

1 happening here in the United States.

2 Q Fair enough. We spoke a couple different times
3 about the communication you had with George Kent.

4 A Uh-huh.

5 Q And I thought it might be helpful to just go
6 through the whole episode again from beginning to end, where
7 you could just tell us exactly what happened, where it
8 happened, anything you remember about that communication?

9 A I don't think I have anything to add to what I've
10 told you previously.

11 Q So I guess we're asking you to just recount it
12 again, because it came up during the questioning of a couple
13 different Members and at a couple different times, and we're
14 just trying to get a full accounting of it, if we may.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Can I just suggest, because it's getting
16 late, that she has talked about this quite a lot. If you
17 have a specific question, I think, rather than having her
18 repeat everything she's already said.

19 MR. MEADOWS: Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, we
20 don't tell you how to ask questions and we haven't all day.
21 And I don't think when it's the minority's time, it is
22 appropriate, Mr. Chairman, to instruct us on how to ask
23 questions.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm making a recommendation to my
25 colleague. He can follow it or not follow it. And the

1 witness can say she's already answered the question if she
2 wishes or she can go through it all over again, but in the
3 interest of time -- it's been a long day for the
4 Ambassador -- I'm recommending that we not simply retread
5 ground we've already covered.

6 MR. JORDAN: Ambassador, what specifically did Mr. Kent
7 tell you about the phone call between President Zelensky and
8 President Trump?

9 MR. ROBBINS: I think we've covered this and I'll
10 instruct the witness not to answer it yet another time.

11 MR. MEADOWS: Your objection, Counselor, is based on
12 what? I mean, I'm just telling you, based on the transcripts
13 that we have to date, it is unclear exactly what the full
14 scope of her testimony is.

15 And so, I would suggest that there's been a lot of
16 redundant questions here by the majority, and if you will
17 just allow us to clarify, we want to make sure that we don't
18 have the ambassador's words tangled up with our
19 understanding.

20 MR. ROBBINS: Yeah. I don't accept the premise that --
21 I'm sorry, I wasn't quite finished. I don't accept the
22 premise that the witness needs to clarify anything. I don't
23 accept the premise that there have been lots of redundant
24 questions.

25 And the predicate of the question that was pending is, I

1 know you've said this several times, but just so I can hear
2 it one more time. That sounds like a question that lawyers
3 call -- I'm not done.

4 MR. MEADOWS: Well, I'm not done either. We can ask it
5 in a different way, Counselor, if that's what we need to do.

6 MR. ROBBINS: All right. Well, I've stated my objection
7 and the objection is pending, and I'll let the chairman rule
8 as he wishes.

9 MR. JORDAN: Ambassador, when I asked you the question
10 earlier, you said he did not talk to you about the fact that
11 you were mentioned in the call. So we know that wasn't what
12 happened. And all we're asking is -- we know that wasn't
13 discussed. So all we're asking is, what was specifically
14 discussed?

15 If it wasn't -- I think many people would think the
16 first thing he would tell you is, Hey, there was a call
17 between President Trump and President Zelensky, and you were
18 mentioned in the call. That would seem to me to be the most
19 obvious thing. But you told me directly a couple hours ago
20 that that was not the case. He did not tell you that you
21 were mentioned in the call. So all we're asking is, what did
22 he say specifically about the call?

23 MR. ROBBINS: You can answer it one more time and that's
24 it.

25 MS. YOVANOVITCH: The reason I was so emphatic about the

1 fact that he didn't say that, that I was featured in this
2 phone call, is that I would have remembered that. I mean, I
3 can tell you that for sure. So --

4 MR. JORDAN: And if he knew that, Ambassador, you would
5 have thought Mr. Kent would have probably told you that first
6 thing, right?

7 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I think he would have told me.

8 MR. JORDAN: Okay. So all we're asking is, he made a
9 point to talk to you about the call, but he didn't tell you
10 the most obvious thing. Maybe he didn't know that, I don't
11 know. So what did he tell you?

12 MS. YOVANOVITCH: So, you know, he -- this was a
13 relatively short conversation. He said that the two
14 Presidents had spoken. I said, good, because, you know,
15 that's the sort of thing you always want, right, to
16 strengthen a bilateral relationship, that kind of leadership
17 engagement.

18 And what I recall him saying is that Trump had --
19 President Trump had asked for -- you know, for some
20 assistance on the investigations, and that President Zelensky
21 had said that, you know, all of the concerns that President
22 Trump had, that happened, you know, in the previous
23 administration and this was a new team and that he was going
24 to be having his own prosecutor general. That's what I
25 recall of the conversation.

1 MR. JORDAN: Okay, thank you.

2 MR. CASTOR: Mr. Perry had some questions.

3 MR. PERRY: Thank you.

4 Ambassador Yovanovitch, I want to talk to you a little
5 bit about social media activities. During your tenure in
6 Ukraine, did your -- you talked about this a little bit, but
7 I'm -- did your staff monitor social media accounts unrelated
8 to visa applications? And I know you said you didn't get
9 into the nuts and bolts of it, but --

10 MR. ROBBINS: May I just ask -- she'll answer the
11 question. I just want to understand what the Member means by
12 the word "monitor," because there have been some stories
13 floating around the internet suggesting all kinds of
14 surreptitious monitoring, and that word can --

15 MR. PERRY: I'm not going to use "surreptitious."

16 MR. ROBBINS: I understand, but the word connotes a
17 number of different kinds of things, and I just want to be
18 sure that the record is clear as to what the Member means
19 when he uses the word "monitor."

20 MR. PERRY: Well, I would ask the ambassador to let us
21 know what the scope of their monitoring was, but to me it
22 would mean that you check on a regular basis the accounts and
23 the activities of certain individuals that you're interested
24 in.

25 MR. ROBBINS: That's fair enough. Please.

1 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yeah. I think -- I mean, that's what
2 our press section did on issues that were of, you know,
3 interest to the Ukraine-U.S. relationship, to other related
4 issues. Obviously, when this whole set of issues came up, we
5 were also following that.

6 I don't know exactly -- you know, discuss what the word
7 "monitor" is and so forth. I don't know exactly how they --
8 how the press team did it, but I think they -- they knew who
9 was most active, for example, on issues of, say, NATO
10 membership, or IMF issues, et cetera, that would have been of
11 interest. And I think over time, these things, you know, who
12 we would follow -- I think that's the word we use -- might
13 change over time, because an issue becomes less interesting
14 over time for whatever reason.

15 MR. PERRY: Okay, let me ask you this: Who in the press
16 office that would do this following or monitoring should we
17 be interested in talking to, you know, to find out the scope?
18 Is there a person that we can address that to, these
19 questions?

20 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Well, I guess I would say, you know,
21 the head of the section.

22 MR. PERRY: You don't know the name?

23 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I'm sorry, I'm getting tired, but I
24 will remember by the end of this.

25 MR. PERRY: Do you know how they selected the specific

1 people -- and I think you just said, but I want to clarify --
2 based on the subject they might be covering, whether it was
3 the IMF or -- is that how they selected the individuals?

4 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yeah. So we have -- you know, the
5 press section is obviously very integrated into the rest of
6 the work of the embassy. So they know what is of interest to
7 us, you know, whether it's somebody in the econ section, the
8 defense attache, somebody else. And so, they will, you
9 know -- is it FOX News that's covering them most? Is it the
10 New York Times? And so, they will -- you know, again, the
11 term I know is "follow," but I don't precisely know what that
12 means. They will follow those accounts, whether it's
13 Facebook, whether it's Twitter or whatever.

14 MR. PERRY: Okay. So would that include following
15 Americans?

16 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yeah. I mean, many of -- you know,
17 New York Times, FOX.

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1 [6:47 p.m.]

2 MR. PERRY: Let me -- I'm going to give you a list of
3 names, and you can just say yes or no, if you know.

4 Did your staff request assistance from any D.C. bureau
5 to monitor or follow the social media account of Jack
6 Prezobiak (ph)?

7 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I don't know.

8 MR. PERRY: Donald Trump, Jr.?

9 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I'm not into that level of detail in
10 terms of --

11 MR. PERRY: I'm just going to, if you don't mind, I'm
12 going to ask you a list of names. You can say, I don't know,
13 no, yes, but I want to go through the list of names.

14 So you said, "I don't know" to Donald Trump, Jr., right?

15 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Uh-huh.

16 MR. PERRY: Laura Ingraham.

17 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I don't know.

18 MR. PERRY: Sean Hannity.

19 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I don't know.

20 MR. PERRY: Michael McFaul.

21 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I don't know.

22 MR. PERRY: Dan Bongino.

23 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I don't know.

24 MR. PERRY: Ryan Sevettera (ph).

25 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I don't know.

1 MR. PERRY: Rudy Giuliani.
2 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Don't know.
3 MR. PERRY: Sebastian Gorka.
4 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Don't know.
5 MR. PERRY: John Solomon. I'm getting to the end.
6 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Okay. Don't know.
7 MR. PERRY: Lou Dobbs.
8 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No, I don't know.
9 MR. PERRY: Pam Gellar.
10 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Pam Gellar?
11 MR. PERRY: Pam Gellar.
12 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No.
13 MR. PERRY: Sara Carter.
14 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No. I mean, I don't know.
15 MR. PERRY: Okay. Do you know if -- or did you promote
16 the use of any following --
17 MS. YOVANOVITCH: And can I -- excuse me, sir.
18 MR. PERRY: Yes, ma'am.
19 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Can I just say that just because I
20 don't know doesn't mean that a request wasn't made. There's,
21 you know, lots of people doing this --
22 MR. PERRY: And I understand that. We're just trying
23 to -- just trying to establish who knew what at what level
24 and so on and so forth so we have a full view of what was
25 happening and why it was happening. It's not meant to be

1 intrusive or invasive or derogatory or anything like that.
2 We're just -- and like I said, that's why I asked, too, if
3 not you, who would know this information, because we're going
4 to have to find out.

5 Do you know if you promoted the use of the following
6 search terms intersecting with the above people:
7 Yovanovitch, Ukraine ambassador, Ukraine Soros, or Ukraine
8 Biden?

9 And I'm just going to -- well, I'm going to let you
10 answer. Do you know if that was included in the mechanics of
11 the search intersection?

12 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No, I don't know.

13 MR. PERRY: Okay. Can you just explain how any of this
14 following or searching would be related to your official
15 duties as ambassador?

16 MR. ROBBINS: That, of course, assumes that any of that
17 happened.

18 MR. PERRY: Okay.

19 MR. ROBBINS: Right? So we don't know that and neither
20 does she. She already told you that, right?

21 MR. PERRY: Well, she's told me she didn't know.

22 MR. ROBBINS: Right. So how is she going to possibly
23 know the answer to that question?

24 MR. PERRY: I'm not going to put any words in her mouth
25 or thoughts in her mind. I'm just asking the question, sir.

1 All right. Did you discuss any of this activity with
2 George Kent?

3 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I don't know how to answer that
4 question, because I wasn't involved in requesting, you know,
5 these kinds of --

6 MR. PERRY: Well, it seems to me if -- you either
7 weren't involved or it wasn't happening, or if it was
8 happening and you didn't know, then there would be no reason
9 for you to discuss it, but so --

10 MS. YOVANOVITCH: So let me just go back to your
11 previous conversation, where I did -- you know, when my staff
12 -- because you put this in the context of the embassy
13 requesting help --

14 MR. PERRY: Right.

15 MS. YOVANOVITCH: -- from Washington. So when that
16 help -- and I don't know whether this is exactly what they
17 were requesting or whether it was something else or in
18 addition to, but when they didn't get the support they felt
19 they needed --

20 MR. PERRY: The assistance.

21 MS. YOVANOVITCH: -- I -- you know, they told me. And
22 so I talked to George about that. But that level of detail
23 and whether that is exactly the same thing, I cannot --

24 MR. PERRY: Okay. Fair enough. But you did ask main
25 State Department resources be made available on a 24/7 basis

1 for following or monitoring?

2 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I don't recall putting it quite like
3 that. The conversations we --

4 MR. PERRY: How would you put it?

5 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Well, what we were saying is because
6 of the 7-hour time difference, that they could pick up when
7 we went home type thing.

8 MR. PERRY: Okay. Let me ask you a couple other
9 questions that are unrelated to the social monitoring or
10 following.

11 Did you or anyone on your staff request unmasking of any
12 individuals?

13 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Is that a technical term?

14 MR. PERRY: Unmasking. You're not familiar?

15 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Sorry.

16 MR. PERRY: Okay. Is there a better way to describe
17 that?

18 MS. YOVANOVITCH: What does it mean?

19 MR. PERRY: If someone is -- their identity is unknown,
20 you can make a -- and their -- and that identity is involved
21 in official classified conversations, then there can be a
22 request be made to see who that individual is, because they
23 won't be listed by name in the description, it will be listed
24 a different way, and so you can ask.

25 MR. BITAR: I'm sorry. One administrative matter. This

1 is an unclassified briefing, so I just want to make that
2 clear. If your question relates to unmasking of
3 intelligence-related products or reports, that's going to be
4 a separate matter that we --

5 MR. PERRY: Okay. I'm asking about unmasking of any
6 kind, so not necessarily related to --

7 MR. MEADOWS: But it could include that.

8 MR. PERRY: It could include that.

9 MR. MEADOWS: And that wouldn't be classified.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: I don't think there is such a term of art
11 apart from intelligence products, so --

12 MR. MEADOWS: Yeah, but we're not asking who,
13 Mr. Chairman. We're just asking if the request was made, and
14 so I don't know how that would be classified. It appears
15 that she doesn't know anything about that, but the very fact
16 that she asked is not classified unless we're talking about
17 whom she asked to have unmasked.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I think she said she's not even
19 familiar with that term.

20 MR. MEADOWS: Well, let her answer. But, I mean --

21 THE CHAIRMAN: As long as it doesn't involve anything in
22 the classified realm, you certainly may answer if you know.

23 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Okay. So --

24 MR. MEADOWS: You can answer. He's got to run.

25 MR. PERRY: I'll be back.

1 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Okay.

2 MR. PERRY: Sorry. Thank you.

3 MR. MEADOWS: It's nothing you said.

4 MR. CASTOR: Welcome to Congress.

5 MS. YOVANOVITCH: So I got lost a little bit in the
6 conversation. Are we talking about --

7 MR. GOLDMAN: Let's ask him to repeat it. Oh.

8 MR. MEADOWS: You can ask the pecans.

9 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Would you mind repeating the question?
10 Or -- we can't. Okay. So --

11 MR. MEADOWS: So I think the gentleman from Pennsylvania
12 was talking about in general terms as it relates to
13 monitoring, was there any -- let me phrase it this way.

14 Was there any special request to look at potential
15 conversations that may not be normally monitored through open
16 source methods? How about that?

17 MS. YOVANOVITCH: So it sounds --

18 MR. MEADOWS: Is that qualified enough?

19 THE CHAIRMAN: If you're just talking about what is the
20 press section following in terms of what newspapers and what
21 columns, whatever, I don't really think that's generally
22 described as monitoring, but the witness can certainly answer
23 to the best of her ability.

24 MS. YOVANOVITCH: So, you know, the press section just
25 by its very name, it's all unclassified stuff, right? And

1 all the press section did was look at, you know, what does
2 The New York Times publish, The Wall Street Journal publish
3 about Ukraine or U.S. bilateral relations with Ukraine, that
4 sort of thing.

5 And now with the advent of social media, obviously there
6 are many other kinds of outlets that are reviewed for, you
7 know, what's out there in the news, what do we know, what do
8 we need to take action on, et cetera.

9 MR. MEADOWS: But in the nonclassified realm. Is that
10 what you're saying?

11 MS. YOVANOVITCH: It's all unclassified. It's press,
12 yes. It's press review.

13 MR. MEADOWS: Right. So let me follow up, then, on one
14 thing. This extraordinary activity that you asked the State
15 Department to do, the 24/7, or however you want to classify
16 it, when did that happen?

17 MR. ROBBINS: Okay. So I want to object to the
18 insertion of the word "extraordinary" as if it's something
19 not routine in some respect.

20 MR. MEADOWS: Well, the additional request -- I'll
21 rephrase it, counselor -- the additional request that she
22 made of the State Department to provide additional resources
23 to monitor social media of certain individuals, when was that
24 made?

25 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I'm not sure. At some --

1 MR. MEADOWS: Was it made after the Hill article that --

2 MS. YOVANOVITCH: At some point after that, yes.

3 MR. MEADOWS: So was it directly related to the negative
4 publicity that you were getting this request?

5 MS. YOVANOVITCH: It was related to the news blowing up
6 around us.

7 MR. MEADOWS: Yeah. It seemed to relate all to the
8 negative stories about you and the request for additional
9 resources, is what it appeared. So you're saying the timing
10 came after the Hill article?

11 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Uh-huh.

12 MR. MEADOWS: All right. I'll yield back.

13 MR. ZELDIN: I have one quick question, hopefully.

14 Earlier on, answering questions from the majority with
15 regards to the July 25th call, you testified that it is your
16 belief that President Trump was referring to Lutsenko. Do
17 you know, in fact, he was referring to Lutsenko and not
18 Shokin on that phone call?

19 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No.

20 BY MR. CASTOR:

21 Q Hello again. Our round ends at 7:11, in case
22 you're looking at the clock.

23 Is it fair to say -- it's been related to us that at all
24 times U.S. officials involved in this matter have acted with
25 the highest degree of personal and professional integrity and

1 with the best interests of the United States. Is that
2 something you can --

3 A Which matter?

4 Q The matter we're here discussing, about the, you
5 know, the call and the subsequent activities.

6 A So the July 25th call?

7 Q Uh-huh.

8 A Um --

9 Q And the relationship with Zelensky and the various,
10 you know, efforts to, you know, bring him in for a White
11 House meeting, some of the back and forth that there has been
12 with the statement that occurred after you left.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: So clarification, counsel. Are you
14 asking the witness if --

15 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yeah. I'm not --

16 THE CHAIRMAN: -- she thinks that what took place on the
17 call was appropriate?

18 MR. CASTOR: Subsequent to the call.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Subsequent to the call? I'm not sure
20 what you're asking, and I'm not sure the witness understands
21 what you're asking, either.

22 MR. CASTOR: You know, Ambassador Volker testified about
23 the difficulties that Rudy Giuliani presented, you know, in
24 U.S.-Ukrainian relations, but he was very clear that at all
25 times, he told us, U.S. officials acted with the highest

1 degree of personal and professional integrity.

2 Is that something that you would agree with, based on
3 the facts that you have at your disposal?

4 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I would say two things. In my
5 dealings with -- in my dealings with Kurt Volker, and we are
6 friends as well as colleagues, over the last 30-something
7 years, I have -- I consider him to be a man of honor and
8 somebody who's a brilliant diplomat. And, you know, I think
9 he is working in the interests of our country.

10 With regard to the specific question that you are
11 asking, I just -- you know, I wasn't there. I don't have the
12 knowledge to be able to address it properly.

13 MR. CASTOR: But you think the individuals at the --

14 [Discussion off the record.]

15 BY MR. CASTOR:

16 Q Ambassador Volker mentioned the fact that to the
17 extent there are corrupt Ukrainians and the United States is
18 advocating for the Ukraine to investigate themselves, that
19 certainly would be an appropriate initiative for U.S.
20 officials to advocate for. Is that right?

21 A If that's what took place.

22 Q Have you ever used WhatsApp?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Is that a texting app? Is that something that's
25 used by diplomats to communicate with -- back and forth

1 across the overseas communications?

2 A I mean, it's used by lots of people.

3 Q Okay. So you don't attach a negative connotation
4 to anybody that uses WhatsApp?

5 A No.

6 Q That's a legitimate app to use?

7 A So do you want to be more specific in your
8 question?

9 Q Well, the Federal Records Act -- in compliance with
10 the Federal Records Act, you know, texting over WhatsApp
11 presents some unique issues for those that are, you know,
12 concerned about -- from a Federal Records Act perspective.

13 A In terms of retention of documents?

14 Q Yes.

15 A Well, we were told that we needed to -- and forgive
16 me, you know, I don't know all the technical terms -- but
17 that we needed to kind of upload our texts to the cloud. And
18 I got a special, I don't know what the right word is, but it
19 was somehow done for me.

20 So, you know, my belief is based on, you know, the
21 conversations when this first came out, that we needed to
22 retain our texts, I mean, I think that that was being done
23 for me and my texts are somewhere safe.

24 Q So assuming people are keeping their texts, the use
25 of WhatsApp is completely appropriate, as far as you know?

1 A Yeah. That's what the State Department told us. I
2 mean, if I could just clarify, assuming it's not confidential
3 or classified.

4 MR. CASTOR: Mr. Jordan, are you ready?

5 BY MR. CASTOR:

6 Q On Monday, we're going to be hearing from Fiona
7 Hill.

8 A On Monday?

9 Q Uh-huh. And I just -- as we try to prepare for
10 that interview, what do you think are the types of issues
11 Dr. Hill can contribute to this discussion?

12 A Well, she is -- she was the director, obviously, as
13 you know, of the National Security Council, the European
14 division at the -- and she is a well known expert not only in
15 the region, but on Russia itself, and has written a landmark
16 book on President Putin.

17 So she would obviously have a lot of firsthand knowledge
18 about our relations and what took place with regard to
19 Russia, with regard to Ukraine, and other European countries.

20 Q How frequently did you speak with her in your --

21 A Not that -- not that often.

22 Q Not that often?

23 A Yeah. I mean, you know, I would call on her when I
24 was in Washington. You know, she would run some of the NSC
25 meetings. And sometimes she was on emails as well, you know,

1 in the back and forth with Washington.

2 Q Now, do you have any personal knowledge or direct
3 information regarding why the President curtailed your term?

4 A Only what Deputy Secretary of State Sullivan told
5 me.

6 Q And you don't know if it actually was the
7 President, then, that was responsible for curtailing your
8 tour?

9 A Well, I guess I assumed that the deputy secretary
10 was telling the truth.

11 MR. CASTOR: That's all I have. Does anybody --

12 MR. MEADOWS: Yeah. Just one.

13 There was a bicameral, bipartisan code of conduct to the Ukraine,
14 I think, where they had the honor of your presence. And the
15 way it was characterized by some of my colleagues was that
16 they believed that you had a pro-Poroshenko mindset. Would
17 you agree with that characterization or disagree with it?

18 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Well, that's really interesting.

19 I thought that he was -- we could obviously continue to
20 work with him, but it was clear that he was unpopular, and we
21 did not believe at that time that he was going to be
22 reelected president.

23 What I would also say, though, is that with regard to
24 Zelensky, who was the other top candidate there, we didn't
25 know what kind of a President he was going to be. He'd never

1 held elective office. So, you know, there was a big question
2 mark there. You know, he's very engaging, he, you know, said
3 many of the right things, but we just didn't know.

4 MR. MEADOWS: The way it was characterized to me -- and
5 you correct this, because, obviously, I'm just trying to
6 figure out how accurate that is -- the way it was
7 characterized to me was that you believed that the United
8 States had made a substantial investment in the existing
9 President, and that it was a known quantity, and that it was
10 in the U.S. best interests if he were to remain as President,
11 because of the unknown nature of Mr. Zelensky.

12 Would you agree with that?

13 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Not -- no. Not --

14 MR. MEADOWS: What part would you disagree with?

15 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I -- I thought that over time -- in
16 the beginning, President Poroshenko was, as everybody was,
17 was really driven by the inspiration of the Revolution of
18 Dignity. And they moved on reforms and so forth in part
19 because they were inspired, in part because their backs were
20 up against the wall, there's this war with Russia, they were
21 going bankrupt, and we were conditioning our assistance that
22 they had to do certain things in order to receive the money
23 that they needed to keep the country afloat.

24 So they were desperate, they were scared that if they
25 didn't take action people would turn against them again, and

1 I think they were inspired. So there were many, many
2 motivations.

3 But as time passed and the country, you know, got a
4 little bit of breathing space, they weren't, you know,
5 fearing that they were going to go bankrupt, things were
6 getting a little bit better, I think that space which, you
7 know, in any country is never, you know, forever, the space
8 for making reform, the kinds of things that we thought were
9 best for Ukraine and our bilateral relationship with Ukraine
10 and the reforms the Ukrainian people wanted, that space got
11 narrower and it was harder to move things forward.

12 MR. MEADOWS: So it would be fair to say that my
13 colleagues were wrong, in that you were more in the
14 pro-Zelensky camp?

15 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Well, I would never want to say that a
16 Member of Congress is wrong, but --

17 MR. MEADOWS: I can, but go ahead.

18 MS. YOVANOVITCH: But I -- you know, it's interesting to
19 see how --

20 MR. MEADOWS: So you were more pro-Zelensky?

21 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I was more, you know, here is the
22 analysis. We don't get to vote in this election.

23 MR. MEADOWS: Yeah, but you have an opinion, Ambassador.
24 Come on. You've been here 30 years. You get paid to give
25 your opinion from a foreign ops standpoint.

1 So you had no opinion on who the President -- what would
2 be in the best interests of the United States, which
3 President would be the best fit for us going forward? You
4 had no opinion?

5 MS. YOVANOVITCH: So I'll answer it with two sentences.

6 I thought we could work with any of the top three
7 candidates. I think I said that before, and I continue to
8 believe that.

9 I thought that Poroshenko's time was up, because the
10 Ukrainian people were so angry with him, and that we needed
11 to make the best efforts we could to work with Zelensky so
12 that it would be a strong bilateral relationship.

13 MR. MEADOWS: So let me finish with this last question,
14 then. So there was never a communication from you to anyone
15 else in the State Department that you can recall where you
16 said it would -- where you indicated that it was not better
17 for the United States that Poroshenko would stay in office?
18 You never communicated that to anybody at the State
19 Department?

20 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I mean --

21 MR. MEADOWS: That you can recall.

22 MS. YOVANOVITCH: When?

23 MR. MEADOWS: Well, prior to his election.

24 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I mean, there were -- there was a lot
25 of discussion. Who are these people? What would be the

1 best for Ukraine? Best for us? How do we move the
2 relationship forward? And so forth.

3 I think, you know, from a conservative point of view, I
4 think there were a number of people who thought that we know
5 Poroshenko, we are comfortable with him, et cetera.

6 MR. MEADOWS: And that's exactly my point. That's what
7 my colleagues were saying.

8 So was that the prevailing thought that you had and
9 others had, so --

10 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I don't think from the embassy point
11 of view, because we could see that his number was up.

12 And so from our point of view, I mean, one just has to
13 go with what you can see is going to happen and position the
14 United States in the best way possible.

15 MR. JORDAN. Ambassador, which of the three top
16 candidates were viewed as the reformer and more of the
17 outsider?

18 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I think President Zelensky was viewed
19 as the outsider, but also as the reformer.

20 MR. JORDAN. That's consistent with what Special Envoy
21 Volker told us, that he was the reformer. And as the
22 reformer, he would be viewed as the one most likely, as you
23 said in your statement, that would be focused on making -- or
24 ending corruption would be his number one priority. Is that
25 fair to say as well?

1 MS. YOVANOVITCH: That's what he said his platform was.

2 MR. JORDAN. Okay. So he's the outsider, he's the
3 reformer, and his entire campaign was about ending corruption
4 in Ukraine?

5 MS. YOVANOVITCH: And bringing piece to the Donbass.

6 MR. JORDAN. Thank you.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: We are almost to the end. This is the
8 lightning round. We just have a few more questions.

9 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Okay.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: And then hopefully we'll be done.

11 My colleagues in the minority asked you quite a bit
12 about the press operation.

13 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Uh-huh.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: That's not an operation that's unique to
15 the Ukraine embassy, is it? This is something that almost
16 every embassy of any size around the world would engage in,
17 and that is, monitoring the press to see what issues are
18 Ukrainians talking about, what are other people talking
19 about, what rumors may be going viral, what issues are coming
20 up? That's something every embassy does, is it not?

21 MS. YOVANOVITCH: It is. And every embassy has to do it
22 to be current.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: You were also asked by my colleagues
24 whether everyone in the State Department acted in the best
25 interests of the Department, or something along those lines.

1 We now know from text messages that have been produced
2 that there was an effort to condition that sought-after
3 meeting between President Zelensky and President Trump with
4 getting a deliverable from Ukraine, and that deliverable was:
5 We want Ukraine to investigate the Bidens and we want Ukraine
6 to investigate 2016.

7 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Uh-huh.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: I think you've said that it was not in
9 the interests of Ukraine to be pulled into the next
10 Presidential election. Is that right?

11 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: So an effort to condition a meeting that
13 Ukraine desperately wanted and it was Ukraine's best
14 interests on sucking them into the 2020 election would not
15 have been good policy or conduct by the State Department?

16 MS. YOVANOVITCH: It was certainly not good policy,
17 especially since, as I understand those texts and what
18 occurred, is that this was not a foreign policy goal,
19 something that is in the interests of all of us, a public
20 good, but it was kind of a partisan game.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: It was in the interest of a political
22 goal?

23 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Uh-huh.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: And that is to help the Presidential
25 campaign in -- I'm sorry. You have to answer "yes" or "no."

1 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I think -- I think the answer was
2 "yes."

3 THE CHAIRMAN: And the goal was a political one to
4 assist the President's campaign in 2020 through these two
5 investigations?

6 MS. YOVANOVITCH: That's how I understand, you know,
7 what is in the media and what was in the texts.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: And if it would not be appropriate to
9 condition a sought-after meeting with the White House on
10 these political investigations, I assume you would also --
11 you would also share the view that it would be even more
12 damaging to condition vital military support on these two
13 political investigations?

14 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: I have just a couple more questions, and
16 if these repeat anything, I apologize, so just tell me I
17 already went there and I won't bother it.

18 Were you aware that Kurt Volker introduced Andrey
19 Yermak, one of President Zelensky's senior advisers, to
20 Mr. Giuliani?

21 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I'm aware of that because of the media
22 reports of that.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: But that took place after you had left?

24 MS. YOVANOVITCH: After I departed.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. In the call record, the President,

1 after President Zelensky talks about the need for more
2 Javelins, our President says that he would like to ask a
3 favor, though.

4 How would the President of Ukraine take a request from a
5 U.S. President for a favor?

6 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I think, as we stated before, or as we
7 discussed before, we are the single most important partner
8 for Ukraine. And so I think a Ukrainian President would try,
9 if at all possible, to do whatever an American President
10 requested.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Did anyone from the Trump administration
12 or anyone acting on its behalf encourage the Ukrainian
13 government or law enforcement officials not to cooperate with
14 the investigation of Special Counsel Mueller?

15 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Not to my knowledge. I'm not aware of
16 that.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: And do you know whether Mr. Giuliani
18 played any role in that?

19 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I'm unaware.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: After President Zelensky in the call
21 record says, "The former ambassador from the United States,
22 the woman, was bad news and the people she was dealing with
23 in Ukraine were bad news, so I just wanted to let you know
24 that" -- I'm sorry, that's President Trump speaking -- the
25 President thereafter, referring to you, says, "Well, she is

1 going to go through some things."

2 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: What did you -- what was your reaction
4 when you saw the President had said that to his Ukrainian
5 counterpart, that you were going to go through some things?

6 MS. YOVANOVITCH: I was shocked. I was shocked and I
7 was -- I was shocked and I was apprehensive about what that
8 meant.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Malinowski.

10 MR. MALINOWSKI: Thank you. Just one question.

11 You mentioned, Ambassador, that Ambassador Sondland at
12 one point had advised you to, quote, "go big or go home," and
13 "go big" meant putting out a tweet or public statement saying
14 that, I think you mentioned, that you supported President
15 Trump and rejected all of these false accusations. Did he --

16 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Something like that.

17 MR. MALINOWSKI: Did he actually say, "support President
18 Trump"? Was that his advice, that you publicly say something
19 to that effect?

20 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yes. I mean, he may not have used the
21 words "support President Trump," but he said: You know the
22 President. Well, maybe you don't know him personally, but
23 you know, you know, the sorts of things that he likes. You
24 know, go out there battling aggressively and, you know,
25 praise him or support him.

1 MR. MALINOWSKI: Is that a normal request from a
2 political appointee to a career ambassador, in your
3 experience?

4 MS. YOVANOVITCH: He said that in response to my request
5 for advice on, How do I deal with this? I've never seen
6 anything like this. I don't know what to do. And that was
7 his response.

8 So, I mean, I have to admit that the advice took me
9 aback, but I did ask him.

10 MR. MALINOWSKI: Okay.

11 Finally, I would say to all of my colleagues on both
12 sides that I would be honored if you followed me on Twitter,
13 and I will not accuse you of monitoring me. My handle is
14 @malinowski.

15 MR. MEADOWS: How do you spell that one?

16 MR. MALINOWSKI: It's hard. Almost as hard as
17 Yovanovitch.

18 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Exactly. Thank you.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Goldman.

20 MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you. Just a few last things.
21 You ultimately --

22 THE CHAIRMAN: I thought your handle was @pecan.

23 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

24 Q You left Ukraine for good May 20th. Is that right?

25 A That's correct.

1 Q And that was the day of Zelensky's inauguration?

2 A Coincidentally, yes.

3 Q Were you aware at all of the formation of the U.S.
4 delegation to the inauguration in Ukraine?

5 A Not really. I mean, I was, you know, so busy,
6 frankly, packing out and everything. I had heard that
7 Ambassador Sondland was on the delegation, for example. But,
8 I mean, I wasn't following. I mean, I was super busy trying
9 to sort of pull everything together and leave Ukraine.

10 Q So you were not really engaged in the prep for the
11 inauguration --

12 A No.

13 Q -- in any way?

14 A Huh-uh.

15 Q Who led that?

16 A I think -- yeah. I think at that time, Joseph
17 Pennington was charge.

18 Q Were you aware of a Bloomberg article on May 14th,
19 so it would have been 6 days before you left, where Lutsenko
20 stated that he had, quote, no evidence of wrongdoing,
21 unquote, by either of the Bidens?

22 A Yes. I recall that.

23 Q You mentioned earlier Naftogaz.

24 A Yes.

25 Q What is Naftogaz?

1 A It is the gas monopoly that is owned by the
2 Government of Ukraine.

3 Q Has it had some corruption issues in the past, to
4 your knowledge?

5 A It has. You know, it's really cleaned up its act.
6 I mean, we consider it to be one of the success stories in
7 Ukraine. But that doesn't mean it's done. I mean, there's
8 still issues going forward.

9 Q Did the act cleaning up occur in conjunction with
10 the fact that they added a supervisory board to the company?

11 A I think that was important. I think the most
12 important thing, though, was actually the head of Naftogaz, a
13 guy by the name of Andrei Kobalyev, who is, you know, as
14 clean as they come, and was fearless and determined to sort
15 of shake everything up and really made some amazing steps
16 forward, I mean, from a country that was getting the vast
17 majority, something like 93 percent, of its gas from Russia
18 to importing zero from Russia.

19 So, I mean, if you think about that from a security
20 standpoint, huge steps forward.

21 Q Right. Do you know when they added a supervisory
22 board?

23 A I want to say, like, 2017.

24 Q And would that be somewhat similar to Burisma's
25 board that we were talking about earlier, same concept?

1 A Well, I don't exactly know what the, you know, the
2 duties of the board for Burisma are or how they select
3 their members, et cetera. But I suppose in principle it's
4 kind of similar.

5 Q In principle in the sense that both boards include
6 international individuals, right, non-Ukrainians? Is that
7 your understanding?

8 A Yeah. Yeah. And I assume that both boards, you
9 know, do traditionally what boards do, set direction and so
10 forth.

11 Q Are you aware of any efforts this past year by
12 Secretary Rick Perry of the Department of Energy to change
13 some of the members on the Naftogaz board?

14 A I read about that in the media.

15 Q But were you aware of that while you were at post?

16 A No. This happened after -- according to the media,
17 this was happening after I left.

18 Q And you didn't hear from any of your Department of
19 State colleagues about this?

20 A No.

21 Q Did you ever hear about a March 2019 meeting in
22 Houston between Parnas, Fruman, and a senior Naftogaz
23 executive, Andrei Favorov?

24 A Yeah. That was in the open letter that I
25 referenced many hours ago.

1 Q The Dale Perry open letter?

2 A That's right. That's where I heard of that.

3 Q And what did you understand occurred in that
4 Houston meeting?

5 A Well, you know, all I understood was what was --
6 what was said in that article. I have no way -- or open
7 letter -- I have no way of knowing whether it's true or not,
8 but that Mr. Parnas and Mr. Fruman wanted Mr. Favorov to take
9 over and become the head of Naftogaz.

10 Q Why?

11 A I don't know, but I assume that they thought that
12 that would be in their best interests.

13 Q Did you ask anyone at your embassy to follow up on
14 this Dale Perry open letter, look into this?

15 A This was at the -- I want to say it was at the end
16 of April, and I had a lot of other things going on then.

17 Q Okay. There's a new prosecutor general now,
18 correct?

19 A Yes.

20 Q It's absolutely no chance I'm going to be able to
21 pronounce the name. So am I correct that he was appointed
22 August 29th?

23 A That sounds right.

24 Q Okay. Are you familiar with him from before his
25 appointment?

1 A I've met him a couple of times.

2 Q What do you know of him by reputation or otherwise?

3 A By reputation, I think we think that he's clean and
4 he's a reformer. He spent the last couple of years -- the
5 reason I don't really know him well or better is that he --
6 his wife has a job somewhere in Europe. And so he was living
7 in Europe but came back to help President Zelensky with his
8 campaign, and so I met him in that context.

9 Q And could you just say his name for the record and
10 spell it, if you could?

11 A Is it Ryboshapka?

12 Q Sounds right. I'm not going to debate you.

13 A Spell it? R-y-a-b -- no. Sorry. Yeah.

14 Q Yeah. I think they have --

15 A So this is what I would do: R-y-b-o-s-h-a-p-k-a.

16 Q Okay. And you'll recall in that July 25th call
17 between President Trump and Zelensky that President Zelensky
18 said that the next prosecutor general was 100 percent going
19 to be his guy. Is this person 100 percent his guy, as far as
20 you know?

21 A Well, he came back from Europe to help him run the
22 election campaign and now he's in the administration. I
23 mean, when he was on the campaign he was saying that he was
24 going to go back to Europe, but evidently not.

25 Q Okay. Two more questions.

1 Are you aware of whether any other U.S. officials
2 pressed any Ukrainian officials to investigate Joe Biden or
3 the 2016 election, perhaps outside of the State Department?

4 A No.

5 Q And my last question for you is that you testified
6 in response to some of Mr. Malinowski's questions about sort
7 of parallel policies in Ukraine. One was the official U.S.
8 policy of the State Department that you were promoting and
9 one was the shadow Giuliani-Trump policy.

10 Now, looking back with the benefit of hindsight, can you
11 describe how these two policies were proceeding on parallel
12 tracks and what the impact was? Can you kind of summarize
13 for us?

14 A Well, I mean, for one thing, it was -- although we
15 really tried to keep our eye on the ball at the embassy,
16 because, again, it was a challenging time, there was an
17 election campaign, an election for president, and we needed
18 to know what was happening and we needed to manage that and
19 manage the relationship and whatever the future of the
20 relationship would be. So it was distracting in many ways.

21 But the other thing is, because there were -- there was,
22 you know, the press interview and then all of the other
23 subsequent articles, social media postings, et cetera,
24 Ukrainians were wondering whether I was going to be leaving,
25 whether we really represented the President, U.S. policy,

1 et cetera. And so I think it was -- you know, it really kind
2 of cut the ground out from underneath us.

3 MR. GOLDMAN: I yield back.

4 MR. MEADOWS: Mr. Chairman, before you close it out, I
5 think we had 4 minutes left, and I want to follow up on one
6 thing that you had --

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Please.

8 MR. ZELDIN: We had more than 4 minutes.

9 MR. MEADOWS: Okay. Okay.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Go ahead.

11 MR. MEADOWS: All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Ambassador, there's been, and Chairman Schiff kind of
13 alluded to this, and when we start talking about Javelins and
14 foreign aid, for the record, I want to make sure that we're
15 clear. The foreign aid that was -- has been reported as
16 being held up, it doesn't relate to Javelins, does it?

17 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No. At least I'm not aware that it
18 does.

19 MR. MEADOWS: Because foreign military sales, or FMS, as
20 you would call it, is really a totally separate track, is it
21 not? Foreign military sales get approved, but they're
22 actually a purchase that happens with, in this case, it would
23 have been Ukraine. Is that correct?

24 MS. YOVANOVITCH: So, yes. President Zelensky was
25 talking about a purchase. But separately, as I understand

1 it, and, again, this is from news accounts, the security
2 assistance that was being held up was security assistance, it
3 wasn't the FMS.

4 MR. MEADOWS: But it was actually aid that had been
5 appropriated and it had nothing to do with Javelins. Would
6 you agree with that?

7 MS. YOVANOVITCH: That's my understanding.

8 MR. MEADOWS: Yeah. Because it's critically important
9 in his context when he says, "We're almost ready for the
10 Javelins," that happens on cycles that are not necessarily
11 just appropriation cycles.

12 In your history as a foreign service diplomat, you've
13 seen that, I assume, over and over again. Is that correct?

14 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Yeah. I assumed that what it meant is
15 that, you know, they were getting paperwork together,
16 et cetera, and working with our military colleagues.

17 MR. MEADOWS: And when the aid ultimately came through,
18 it didn't impact the purchase of those Javelins even when the
19 aid ultimately was approved. Would you agree?

20 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Not to my -- not to my knowledge.

21 MR. MEADOWS: Right.

22 MR. ZELDIN: In response to one of the chairman's
23 questions related to aid from the United States to Ukraine
24 and investigations, you responded that that was not a good
25 policy. What policy were you referring to when you said it

1 was not a good policy?

2 MS. YOVANOVITCH: So I don't remember exactly what I
3 said, but --

4 MR. ZELDIN: If you want, I could rephrase the question
5 in a way that might make it easier for you to respond without
6 even reflecting on the question and answer.

7 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Okay. Please.

8 MR. ZELDIN: Are you aware of a policy where aid from
9 the United States to Ukraine was linked to investigating the
10 Bidens?

11 MS. YOVANOVITCH: No, I am not. An official policy.
12 There's no official policy.

13 MR. ZELDIN: Are you aware of an unofficial policy?

14 MS. YOVANOVITCH: Well, I mean, reading the texts and so
15 forth, it made me wonder whether there was an unofficial
16 policy.

17 MR. ZELDIN: Now, Ambassador Volker's testimony when he
18 was here, he was testifying that Bill Taylor's text was as a
19 follow-up to a Politico story that he had read that he was
20 concerned about.

21 The texts that you reference also include responses to
22 Ambassador Taylor where it says, the President has been
23 absolutely crystal clear there's no quid pro quo.

24 So with regards to the texts, are you talking about some
25 of the texts or all of the texts in saying that there was an

1 unofficial policy?

2 MS. YOYANOVITCH: I think that I probably should decline
3 to answer that question, because I was not in the policy
4 world at that point.

5 MR. ZELDIN: That's a fantastic answer, and I'm glad
6 you're giving that answer, because I wouldn't say that there
7 would be an unofficial policy without having all of your
8 information to be able to say there actually was an
9 unofficial policy.

10 So I think that -- I would have no further questions
11 based off of that answer to the last question.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, we want to thank you very
13 much for a very long day, and we want to thank you very much
14 for a very long and distinguished career.

15 And we are adjourned.

16 MS. YOYANOVITCH: Thank you.

17 [Whereupon, at 7:31 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

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