Q But it's your testimony that you didn't say anything close to that --

A I don't remember --

Q -- during the meeting?

A I don't remember saying that. I don't remember saying a lot in the main meeting in Ambassador Bolton's office. There were a lot of people there, and it wasn't my meeting to preside over.

Q Did you ever have any conversations with Rick Blair -- I'm sorry, Rob Blair, Mr. Mulvaney's deputy?

A Yes, a couple, very innocuous, I believe.

Q Anything relating to Ukraine or a White House meeting for President Zelensky?

A I may have said when I saw him: We're working on a White House meeting with President Zelensky, do you have any updates? Because he was involved in scheduling, and I don't recall getting any definitive, again, it was we're working on it sort of answer. I'm trying to remember. I don't remember I had a meeting with him or anything like that.

Q In those conversations with Mr. Blair, did the subject matter of these investigations ever come up?

A Not that I recall.

THE CHAIRMAN: Just to follow up, in the July 10th meeting -- and there were two meetings, one main meeting and then a followup meeting in the Ward Room.

In the first meeting, is it your testimony you have no recollection of saying words to the effect that: No, we have an agreement for a White House meeting as long as Ukraine does the investigations, we already have a meeting, we already have an agreement on the meeting. You have no recollection of saying any words to that effect?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't recall it.

THE CHAIRMAN: And do you have any recollection of making a similar point in the follow-on meeting in the Ward Room?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: No. Again, I don't recall that. In the Ward Room, we were talking about a phone call, I think, that still hadn't been made.

THE CHAIRMAN: So you don't have any recollection of in either meeting raising the issue of the desire for Ukraine to commit to these investigations?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: In that timeframe, and I think that was even before the press statement, because I don't think the investigation issue began to arise until after the press statement was shelved, as I recall.

THE CHAIRMAN: So you don't have any recollection in either of those meetings on July 10th raising the issue of Ukraine conducting an investigation or ever mentioning the word "Burisma"?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't remember that, no. I

don't remember that.

BY MR. NOBLE:

Q Ambassador Sondland, in the Ward meeting do you remember ever mentioning the word "Burisma"?

A I can't say that the word "Burisma" wasn't mentioned. I don't know if I mentioned it or if Ambassador Volker did or if Mr. Vindman -- I have no idea.

Q So the word "Burisma" may have come up in the Ward Room?

A It may have.

Q And can you walk us through who was present during the Ward Room meeting?

A All I can remember is Mr. McCormack, Dr. Hill, myself, Vindman, Perry. I think Volker was there, too. I don't recall if the Ukrainians were there. I can't remember. And we asked them to wait or if we brought them in, I honestly can't remember.

Q Was Ambassador Volker's assistant Katherine Croft present? Do you recall that?

A I don't recall. I don't recall.

Q You don't recall.

What about any assistant of Secretary Perry?

A That would have been Brian McCormack --

Q Brian McCormack.

A -- who was his chief of staff.

Q Okay. And he would be the only aide to Secretary Perry that was present in the Ward Room?

A Well, there were other aides, but I don't know if they were in the Ward Room or standing outside the door. As I said, it wasn't a formal meeting. It was sort of a stand in the room and talk kind of thing.

Q Okay. So I'd like to turn to page 37 of the text messages. And to set the scene, this is around July 19th.

Were you aware around that date that Ambassador Volker had introduced Rudy Giuliani to Andrey Yermak?

A I believe I was. Is that the meeting in Madrid?

Q No, I believe that came later. But were you aware that -- did you have any conversations with Ambassador Volker about his plans to introduce Andrey Yermak to Rudy Giuliani around mid-July?

A I thought that the first introduction was when Giuliani and Yermak met in Madrid. That was my recollection, unless you have something to refresh my memory.

Q Okay. So on page 37, I want to direct your attention to July 19th.

A Yes.

Q And do you see, it's at 11:31 a.m., you say: "Talked to White House. This is moving but post election." And then Ambassador Taylor says: "If we can get a congratulatory call postelection, that could begin to

establish the relationship."

A Yeah. I mean, this call for the 20th, I believe, was scheduled like a week before that. I thought we had finally won and gotten this call done. And then, as I recall, the call got pulled down at the last minute, because someone didn't want the call to occur before the parliamentary elections.

Q And this ended up being the July 25th call, correct?

A Ultimately, yes.

Q Ultimately?

A Yeah.

Q Do you recall who you spoke to at the White House about scheduling the call, here where you say "talked to White House"?

A Let's see. It could have been Emma Doyle, the deputy chief of staff. It could have been -- I don't know. It could have been Morgan. I don't know. Someone.

And I think the -- I think the NSC was involved in the scheduling. We had gotten an email, I think, because when they do these calls they put it through an NSC scheduling protocol and then there's 50 people on the email.

And it was all set for the 20th. And I think they had gotten Zelensky ready for the 20th. And then somebody blew it up at the last minute.

Q Okay. And then later on, on July 19th, at 6:50 p.m., you write: "It looks like POTUS call tomorrow. I spike" -- I think you met spoke -- "directly to Zelensky and gave him a full briefing. He's got it."

A Yeah.

Q Do you recall that conversation with President Zelensky?

A Vaguely.

Q Okay. Tell us what you remember about it.

A It was a short call. I think I said: It looks like your call is finally on, and I think it's important that you, you know, give President Trump -- he wanted this -- some kind of a statement about corruption.

I think this was when we were at the general statement about corruption. I don't know that the Burisma/2016 issue had entered the conversation. I can't recall. But I think I said, you know: You guys will get along great.

And, you know, it was just sort of a "I'm handing it off to you now, we finally got this done." And he was very happy and said: Great, we'll have a good call tomorrow. And then, as I said, it got pulled down and never happened. And I never -- I don't think I spoke to him since after, you know, he had the 25th call.

Q At 7:01 p.m. here Kurt Volker writes: "Good. Had breakfast with Rudy this morning."

A Right.

Q "Teeing up call with Yermak Monday."

Does that refresh your recollection about when Ambassador Volker introduced Giuliani to Andrey Yermak?

A "Had breakfast" -- he said he had breakfast with Giuliani without -- it doesn't say he had breakfast with Yermak, right?

Q But then it says: "Teeing up call with Yermak Monday."

A Yeah. I think this was the call that he mentioned where he was going to introduce Yermak and Giuliani so that they could meet independently.

Q Okay. And then he writes: "Must have helped. Most important is for Zelensky to say that he will help investigation and address any specific personnel issues if there are any."

So here Ambassador Volker is not just talking about general corruption, but he's talking about some particular investigation. Do you know what he was referring to here?

A I don't.

[3:38 p.m.]

BY MR. NOBLE:

Q Do you know what specific personnel issues he was referring to?

A Yeah, this had to do with someone in Zelensky's cabinet who was apparently close to Kolomoisky that Volker was concerned about and others were concerned about. They knew this person and didn't think that it would be easy for Zelensky to distance himself from Kolomoisky with this person as a senior role in the Zelensky administration, so I think they were talking about that. I remember that conversation.

Q Do you recall whether the investigation that Volker was referring to was either Burisma or 2016?

A I -- I don't.

Q But then down on July 21st, 2019 -- and Mr. Goldman asked you about this earlier -- you see at 1:45 a.m. Bill Taylor writes, "Gordon, one thing talked about yesterday was Sasha Danylyuk's point" --

A Danylyuk.

Q "Danylyuk's point that Zelensky is sensitive about Ukraine being taken seriously, not merely as an instrument in Washington domestic reelection politics."

A Right.

Q Does this refresh your recollection that at least around mid-July you and Ambassador Volker were talking with

the Ukrainians about particular investigations that Giuliani and President Trump wanted Ukraine to pursue?

A I don't recall that I had any conversations. I mean Taylor may have. And I think that when this went from corruption to other things, I think the Ukrainians just didn't won't to get involved in our election politics under any circumstances at that point.

Q And by making a statement about pursuing particular investigations that would be of political help to President Trump, they would be interfering with our domestic politics?

A I think they wanted to stay as far away from our domestic politics as they could. That was my impression.

Q And Ambassador Taylor seems to relaying that concern to you and Ambassador Volker?

A I mean he's on the front lines and he's talking to them multiple times a day. I mean, his level of contact with the Ukrainians and mine -- mine is a fraction of his.

Q So if we wanted to know what the Ukrainians were thinking and feeling and their concerns about what was being asked of them, Ambassador Taylor would be a good source for them?

A I would imagine.

Q Let's turn to page 42. At 4:27, July 22nd, near the top?

A Uh-huh.

Q Volker writes "orchestrated a great phone call with Rudy and Yermak they are going to get together when Rudy goes to Madrid in a couple of weeks. In the meantime, Rudy is now advocating for phone calls. I have called in Fiona's replacement and will call Bolton, if needed. But I can tell Bolton and you can tell Mick that Rudy agrees on a call, if that helps." You replied, "I talked to Tim Morrison, Fiona's replacement, he is pushing but feel free as well."

So during this time, did you or Ambassador Volker to your knowledge speak with Andrey Yermak in order to give him and idea of what it was that Giuliani wanted the Ukrainians to do?

A I don't remember having any conversations with Yermak about it, but I do remember that when I talked to Morrison, there seemed to be a sea change in the NSC's position on the call. Dr. Hill was, I think, less excited about doing the call, and Mr. Morrison, I think, was more supportive of doing the call. That's what I remember from this exchange.

Q And you see where Volker wrote "Rudy is now advocating for the phone call?

A Yeah. That was after he met with Yermak?

Q I believe so, but you tell us.

A Yeah.

Q Or after he spoke to him on the phone?

A All I remember is once he and Yermak made contact, whether it was the meeting or the phone call, whatever they discussed, Rudy was happier about Ukraine than he was prior to having spoken with Yermak. And I have no idea what they talked about.

Q So -- and then, I'm sorry to skip around, but in order to do this chronologically, the text is out a little out of order. If we go back to page 37, and on July 24th, it's going to be near the bottom. Do you see at the very end you wrote, "Call me, just spoke to Danylyuk, I have clarity."

A Let's see --

Q It's the last line.

A Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q Do you recall that conversation with Danylyuk and whey you -- what you had clarity about?

A Hang on just a second.

MR. LUSKIN: It will take him a minute to read through the thread.

MR. NOBLE: Sure.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: The only thing I can remember is maybe it was the logistics of the call. We thought we had the call nailed down after it was taken down. And then I might have spoken to Danylyuk about how that was going to happen. I don't -- I don't remember exactly.

BY MR. NOBLE:

Q Okay. So around this time you were involved in trying to help arrange what turned out to be the July 25th call?

A I was trying to do whatever I could to use whatever influence I had at NSC and the White House to keep people focused on making the call and getting the meeting. That's what I was trying to do.

Q Okay. Let's go back to page 42. Now we're going to be July 25th, the day of the phone call.

A Yep.

Q You see the first entry July 25th at 7:54, it looks like you tried to called Ambassador Volker and then you wrote him, "call as soon as possible."

A Yep.

Q Do you recall what you were trying to reach Ambassador Volker about?

A I don't know was that -- was this on the 25th? Yeah, I don't know if that might have been the day I made the call to President Trump when I was on my way to Kyiv and again, it was a -- kind of a nothing call. He didn't really -- he wasn't really interested in -- and then I found out he had made the call later that day. I don't even think he told me he was making the call. Maybe he didn't know that it had been scheduled.

Q In advance of the call between President Trump and

President Zelensky were you and Ambassador Volker trying to, so to speak, prime the Ukrainians and President Zelensky as to what to expect and how to respond to the President's request during the phone call?

A Well, again, the only request I think we had heard at that point that I recall was that they wanted a strong public statement about anticorruption. That's what I had recalled knowing. And if we would have primed him, it would have been to that -- to that degree.

Q So if you turn to page 19, and we're still on July 25th, this is at 8:36, I believe,

A Yep.

Q Do see that? Ambassador Volker, and this is east coast time, and I believe the phone call with President Trump was at 9:00 a.m.?

A Uh-huh.

Q Is that right? So a little before, less than a half hour before President Trump and President Zelensky speak, Volker writes "good lunch, thanks. Heard from White House. Assuming President Z convinces Trump he will investigate slash 'get to the bottom of what happened' in 2016. We will nail down date for a visit to Washington. Good luck, see you tomorrow, Kurt." So he's writing that to Andrey Yermak, Correct?

A Uh-huh.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is that a yes or no?

MR. NOBLE: Is that a yes?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yes. I'm sorry. Yes.

BY MR. NOBLE:

Q Is Kurt Volker telling Andrey Yermak that President Zelensky just needs to talk about corruption, or is he telling him that President Zelensky needs to commit to investigating the things that President Trump wanted him to investigate?

A I don't know. Am I -- is this one of my texts? I'm not on this text, am I?

Q No. I'm just asking -- well, let me ask it like this. Does this refresh your recollection that around the time right before the July 25th call you and Ambassador Volker were priming President Zelensky and Andrey Yermak that President Trump was going to be asking President Zelensky to investigate the two things that he and Rudy Giuliani had been pushing, 2016 and Burisma?

A I don't know that the Burisma in 2016 came up then. And the call I think by President Trump was made when I was in the air. I think I was on my way to Kyiv.

Q But doesn't this suggest that at least Ambassador Volker was aware that President Trump was going to ask President Zelensky to commit to investigating 2016? I mean, this text message is in advance of the July 25th call.

Correct?

A It appears to say that, but again, I wasn't -- I don't recall that.

Q So is it your testimony you had no knowledge that Kurt Volker was priming President Zelensky and Andrey Yermak to expect President Trump to make these requests and that in order to get the White House meeting, President Zelensky would have to, quote, convince Trump he will investigate/get to the bottom of what happened in 2016?

A I don't recall it happening that early. I thought it happened in August when we were negotiating the press statement.

Q But now that you see this, it seems pretty obvious that Volker, at least, was telling Andrey Yermak what President Zelensky was going to have it do to get a White House meeting, correct?

A Well, he says get to the bottom of what happened. I don't know whether that means an investigation, or -- I don't know what it means.

Q Well, get to the bottom, isn't that another way of saying look into, which are the words that President Trump used?

A Where did President Trump use the words look into?

Q In the July 25th call, at least according to the call readout.

A Oh, you mean the transcript of the call?
Q Yes.
A Yeah, I -- if that's what he said, that's what he said.
Q And in this text message itself is says Trump wants Zelensky to investigate. Doesn't it?
A It appears to, it says what it says. Yeah.
Q So is it your testimony that this wasn't a message that you'd relayed to Ambassador Volker to tell Andrey Yermak?
A No.
Q You never told Ambassador Volker that he needed to tell Andrey Yermak that to relay this message to President Zelensky?
A I don't believe so. I think -- I think Volker was talking to Mr. Giuliani. I don't remember telling Volker anything like that. Not -- again, not that soon. I don't think that happened.
MR. MEADOWS: What page are you on? What page are you on?
MR. NOBLE: Page 19.
MR. MEADOWS: So he's on these text messages, is that what you are you are what saying, because I can't find that.
MR NOBLE: No. These there text messages between Andrey Yermak and Kurt Volker. I'm just asking about his

conversations with Kurt Volker around at that time.

MR. MEADOWS: Okay. But he wasn't party to the text message. Okay.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah, I wasn't on -- this wasn't a group, this was just Volker and Yermak, right?

Yeah, maybe they started talking about the 2016 issue back then, I don't know. I don't recall it coming up that early, as I said.

THE CHAIRMAN: If I can clarify. The text messages indicate that Volker was in communication with Yermak, and that he needed to be prepared for a conversation with the President about investigating, or looking into 2016, correct? Is that what the text message indicates?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: What it appears to indicate.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is it your testimony that you were out of the loop when it came to Volker communicating that with Andrey Yermak?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't recall whether I was in or out. I just don't remember this. As I said, I spoke with President Trump before I got on the plane, I believe, to Kyiv and it was a nothing call. I said we're headed to Kyiv to go see Zelensky and he was like, no, great, whatever. That was sort of the end of the call. We never discussed anything substantive.

BY MR. NOBLE:

Q So is it your testimony that you never asked Kurt Volker to pass a message to Andrey Yermak around this time?

A I don't remember that.

Q Okay. Let's turn to page 42, this is the same day, a half an hour after the call.

A Okay.

Q So if you go to page 42, we're looking at July 25, 2019?

A Okay.

Q At 9:35 a.m.

A Uh-huh.

Q After you had tried to call Ambassador Volker, and then after the call between President Trump and President Zelensky, he writes you back, "Hi Gordon, got your message, had a great lunch with Yermak and then passed your message to him. He will see you tomorrow, think everything in place." Does that refresh your recollection that you'd asked Ambassador Volker to pass a message to Andrey Yermak in advance of the call with President Trump?

A No, because I don't know where I would have gotten that message. I never got that from President Trump. That's the only place I could have gotten it from, because I wasn't talking to Giuliani.

Q Were you talking to other people in the White House?

A No, not that I recall. And I think Yermak and I were getting together for lunch or something that next day for a drink because we were -- I think we were going to meet the President, President Zelensky the next day as well.

Q On July 26th you gave an interview to --

MR. LUSKIN: Just a moment, please.

THE CHAIRMAN: Please go ahead.

[Discussion off the record.]

MR. NOBLE: Is there something you want to clarify?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Well, only that I'm not denying these texts occurred between Yermak and Volker. I don't recall passing that message along. That would have been out of -- out of context, or out of order. Because the first time I recall hearing about 2016 and Burisma was during the negotiations of the press statement. Again, unless there's some text that I've completely have forgotten about, that's when I first remember getting into those issues. It was always just about corruption prior to that. It kept -- it kept getting more insidious as timeline went on, and back in July, it was all about just corruption.

MR. NOBLE: Okay. I think my time is up.

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q Any idea what the message was there that Volker conveyed to Yermak?

A I have no idea. No, I don't. I know that I was

planning to see Yermak at the Zelensky bilateral the next day.

Q Right.

A So, I don't know.

Q Do you remember --

A Does it indicate that Volker was talking to the White House?

Q Just flipping back to the --

A Yeah, I mean, I don't know. Everyone was talking to everyone. That was the problem.

Q So seeing these messages between you and Volker, the second half of the message doesn't refresh your recollection about what?

A Yeah, my only recollection is that the only thing that we were coaching Zelensky on, or someone was coaching Zelensky on was to tell President Trump he would be vigorously working on corruption issues at that point. That's the only thing I can recall.

Q Before you came in today, you said you collect all your text messages and you produced them to the State Department?

A Correct.

Q Did you review them?

A Some of them, yeah.

Q Okay. So when these texts are ready, are these

texts that you had recently reexamined?

A I looked at -- there were a lot of texts. I looked at some of them.

Q Okay. But not all of them?

A No. As I said, one of the problems with my involvement in this is I kept dropping in, dropping out. I was just trying to help get these meetings set up, and I was doing a lot of other thing unrelated to Ukraine at the same time.

Yeah, again, I'm not denying that the issue was raised. I just don't remember it. I honestly don't.

Q Okay.

A The 2016 issue.

Q Okay.

A I mean if everyone is saying it was raised in all these multiple texts then it probably was raised. I just don't remember the conversation because none of it seemed remarkable to me.

Q Okay. Did you ever have a conversation with Yermak about 2016?

A I don't remember. I honestly don't. There were so many conversations with Yermak, and Danylyuk, and Prystaiko and the others, I don't remember.

Q You were talking to them separate from Volker?

A No, no. We were all talk together when we were in

Kyiv.

Q Okay. But were you testing or having telephone calls?

A I think I was having some directly and some with Volker and some group, everything. But again, that may have occurred, there may have been a conversation about 2016. I don't -- I honestly don't remember.

Q Flipping back to page 19, 7/25, 8:36 a.m. text?

A Uh-huh.

Q This Volker to Yermak again.

A Okay.

Q I want to be clear, you're not on this. He says, just heard from White House. Do you have any idea where Ambassador Volker was getting that?

A I don't.

Q Who he was talking to?

A I don't.

Q You were in constant communication with him during that time, is it possible to -- who were the possibilities that he's talking to?

VOICE: I'm sorry, I don't understand who he is at this point.

MR. CASTOR: Volker, Ambassador Volker. We're trying to decipher --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: It could have been the NSC, I

don't -- I don't know.

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q Was he talking to anybody else at the White House?

A I don't know.

Q I don't know that in these discussions we've --

A I don't know who --

Q Established that Volker was --

A The problem was no one owned this file. Everyone had a little hand in it. You know, the NSC, the White House staff, everybody was involved in, you know, everyone was pushing for these meetings and the phone calls.

Q Okay.

A And I don't know who was talking to whom. All I can tell is what I was doing or what I can remember I was doing, which was trying to get the meeting. In this case, I think I was trying to get the phone call.

Q We're going to make sure our members get a chance to ask you some questions and so I want to --

MR. MEADOWS: So Ambassador, this is Mark Meadows. I want thank you for your service. Thank you, obviously, for your candor. My colleagues opposite have been consistently trying to lead you down a path to suggest that you knew that President Trump was asking to investigate the Bidens based on knowledge that you have now. But based on knowledge that you had when you met on the 26th with President Zelensky, did

investigating the Bidens come up at all during that meeting?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Not to the best of my recollection.

MR. MEADOWS: Not to the best of your recollection. Did investigating the Bidens come up in your conversations on the 26th with Ambassador Volker?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Again, not to the best of my recollection.

MR. MEADOWS: So as we look at this, this whole context of where we are, and I'm just trying to make sure that somewhere between the questions that get added to a little bit on the end of it that they are going to try to use to say something that I have not heard you say today. I want to make sure we're just getting this very clear. When you met with President Zelensky, did he indicate that the phone call that he had with the President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, was a positive phone call and he presented in positive terms to you?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That's all I heard was we had a great call.

MR. MEADOWS: And you and Ambassador Volker were not sent over there as a condition of a bad phone call. You were already planning to be there and this meeting you had with President Zelensky on July 26th of this year was -- was already in the works, and you were already on your way there,

or you were there when the phone call happened. Is that correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Well, first of all, I was invited to join Ambassador Volker in his bilateral meeting in early July. So the meeting was schedule for the week of, I believe, the 22nd of July. There wasn't even a date nailed out yet and I was invited sometime around the 8th, 9th, 10th, 12th of July.

MR. MEADOWS: So the early part of July you were invited to participate in a meeting that was going to be held with then president I guess the inauguration had happened so it would have been President Zelensky at that point.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct, sometime during the week of July 27th.

MR. MEADOWS: And that happened long before the phone call actually of July 25th, that was already in the planning stages and you had been invited. Is that correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That's correct.

MR. MEADOWS: And so when you start to look at this chronological step of a phone call and what happened, all the asking you about aid and everything else in hindsight, at that particular time, the aid being held up was certainly, it did not cross your mind -- is this correct, that it did not cross your mind, that the aid was being held up because of an investigation into the Bidens?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Not at that time.

MR. MEADOWS: Okay. And so I -- I also -- there's a whole lot of back and forth between text messages and what was included. Some of these text messages that you've been asked to opine on just, in the previous hour, were actually text messages that you were hot a part of. Is that correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That's correct.

MR. MEADOWS: And so it was actually text messages between Ambassador Volker, who's already testified here for over 10 hours and given very clear indication of what he thought. So they are asking you to opine on what Ambassador Volker might have meant on text messages that you were not a party to. Is that correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Appears to be correct.

MR. MEADOWS: So I guess where I'm going with all of this is that there continues to be this leading question-and-answer process to suggest that you somehow knew that there was this quid pro quo that had happened in the early parts of May and June of 2019. Were you aware of any quid pro quo for aid or anything else that early in May or June?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I -- the only thing I was aware of that was that there was to be some kind of acknowledgment of corruption investigation at that point, I believe.

MR. MEADOWS: And does the Ukraine have a history of

corruption?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yes, they do.

MR. MEADOWS: Have there been prosecutors, multiple prosecutors who were going to clear up corruption in the Ukraine who never cleared up the corruption in Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That's what I understand.

MR. MEADOWS: All right. Is that a concern, not just to the United States, is that a concern to the European Union as well?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah it is a huge concern to them. That's one of reasons they are not all in.

MR. MEADOWS: And so, that's one of the reasons why, I guess, they send money for pillows and we send money for military defense systems. Is that correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't know why they send their money.

MR. MEADOWS: All right. Do you know if they contribute to a large part to the defense of Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Apparently not enough to suit President Trump.

MR. MEADOWS: All right. How about enough to actually appease Ambassador Sondland. Do you think that they are doing their fair share, the EU?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Well, in my discussions with the EU, they would like to do more. They would like to see some

things cleaned up before they contribute more has been my impression.

MR. MEADOWS: So, you mean the EU has an quid pro quo in terms of their foreign aid to the Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't know if it is a quid pro quo. I think it is one of their conditions.

MR. MEADOWS: So they have a condition to giving additional foreign aid. So you're saying -- this is groundbreaking -- so you're saying that someone other than --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I walked right into that one.

MR. MEADOWS: -- other than Donald J. Trump is concerned with corruption, and they might withhold foreign aid based on that. Is that correct, Ambassador? I can tell by your smile it's a yes, is that correct. Are we correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: This is like My Cousin Vinny.

MR. MEADOWS: Yeah. There are two positive track tire marks here it looks like.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: To answer your question, Representative, the Ukrainians -- the Europeans are always very careful about when they contribute money to anything and they always have a list of requirements, some of which are a mile long.

MR. MEADOWS: So in your diplomatic speak, is that a yes?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yes.

MR. MEADOWS: Thank you. I yield back.

MR. ZELDIN: And President Zelensky, Ambassador, won his election based on an anticorruption campaign primarily, correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Among other things, yes.

MR. ZELDIN: What was the anticorruption aspect of President Zelensky's campaign?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I think a general commitment to transparency to having less influence by the oligarchs, potentially buying the oligarchs out, or kicking the oligarchs out of some of the key industries in Ukraine, getting boards of directors that had well-recognized international figures on them that would be appealing to the Wall Street and London investment banks, and a whole host of things like that.

MR. ZELDIN: And what were some of the corruption problems plaguing President Poroshenko?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: The opposite of what I just said. Cronies on the boards, too many oligarchs involved in taking bribes and kickbacks and all kinds of bad stuff.

MR. ZELDIN: And this corruption within Ukraine government was something that you were concerned about?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Well, I was concerned about it from the standpoint that, again, my goal was two things: was to get the Europeans aligned with us, because it was one of

the few things where we had very little daylight between us on -- we have a lot of issues with the EU, but Ukraine wasn't one of them. And the second was to get President Zelensky and President Trump together because I figured that they would hit it off, and that the United States and all the interagency, once they saw the two presidents meet, all the interagency nerve endings would start to grow together and we'd have a real solid partnership. The whole idea here is to counter Russia. Russia is the problem. Russia is what needs it be countered. And the more we bear-hug Ukraine, the less influence Russia has. So that was my strategic objective and part of my portfolio?

MR. ZELDIN: And Ambassador Volker was very concerned about corruption in Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Ambassador Volker? Yes.

MR. ZELDIN: Did you get any readouts of the July 25th call at all from the Ukrainian Government?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I think the only readouts I remember seeing were the ones from my team, which were very innocuous, and did not represent what was actually said on the call that I found out once the transcript was a released.

MR. ZELDIN: Was there any reference to a hold on aid or a quid pro quo in those readouts?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Not in the readouts I saw.

MR. ZELDIN: You met with President Zelensky on July

26th?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MR. ZELDIN: Did President Zelensky make any reference in the July 26th meeting to hold on aid or a quid pro quo?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Not that I remember.

MR. ZELDIN: Tell us about Ambassador Volker. You worked closely with him? Was it a positive experience working --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah, I had a great relationship with him he's a very smart guy, he's clearly very well-liked by all the Ukrainians, the old administration, the new administration. He really understands the country and he was a tremendous assets I think to the United States.

MR. ZELDIN: And he was professional at all times as far as you know from your interactions with him?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: All times when I was with him.

MR. ZELDIN: And candid and honest, is that part of your assessment, too?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah, he's one of those people I would hand my wallet to. That's how I describe him.

MR. ROY: I want to clarify one thing you referenced a couple of times today. You repeatedly testified that at the outset, going back to May, going back to conversations that you've been referencing, that your perspective on the -- the only thing that you were aware of, I should say, regarding

any asks, right, out of Ukrainians, or any connection to foreign aid or anything else is you specifically said corruption, that that was the early outset. And you've referenced a continuum. And I'm trying to understand your perspective of continuum.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't believe I ever referenced in May that he there was any tie to aid. I wasn't even aware of the aid I don't think back then.

MR. ROY: Right. But from the very beginning, right, you talked about this very specifically, you've referenced only -- you've only referenced corruption, right? And you haven't referenced anything beyond that. What I'm trying to understand is your perspective of the continuum.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: The continuum was, first of all, an unconditional phone call and an unconditional invitation to the White House, and then I believe the next part of the continuum was some kind of a commitment to investigate corruption generally. And then the next part of the continuum was talking about the Burisma and the 2016 election, which as I recall, was heavily discussed during the negotiation of the short-lived press statement, which only lasted a few days, and then it died. And then at the end of that continuum I became aware that there might be a link between the White House visit and aid to the Ukraine that was being held up when I couldn't get a straight answer as to why

the aid was being held up, both Senator Johnson and Ambassador Taylor raised the possibility that there might be a link. And then the aid was released, and then this whole thing blew up. That's the best I can recall the sort of progression.

MR. ROY: Going back to my colleague from North Carolina's questions, to be clear you have said that with respect to conditions that a public embrace by the Ukraines of their anticorruption activities, was a fine precondition from the standpoint of your perspective?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Absolutely.

MR. ROY: And so to his point about conditions often being placed on aid, that's not troubling to you at all?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Not at all.

MR. ROY: And at any point in any of these --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Did you say aid or did you say the White House meeting?

MR. ROY: I said aid.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I'm sorry. I missed that. I didn't think there should by any preconditions on aid. And the reason I didn't think there should be any preconditions on aid was I thought it would send the absolute wrong message to the Russians if we held up aid for any reason.

MR. ROY: But that's a policy choice.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MR. ROY: Right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MR. ROY: But from the standpoint of putting preconditions on a White House meeting or putting preconditions on aid, that might be a policy choice. But in respect to terms of attaching any kinds of conditions to aid that's not an unusual thing to occur, right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That's correct. And so you're correct, my distinction was I didn't agree with the policy of holding up the aid for any reason whereas others may have said yes, we should condition the aid on corruption.

MR. ROY: And you testified there were debates about --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Exactly.

MR. ROY: -- what the policy choices should be?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Exactly.

MR. ROY: Thanks. That's all.

MR. ZELDIN: Ambassador, it is U.S. law to, when providing aid to Ukraine to be assessing the anticorruption efforts that are correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't know what the law is relating to aid. I'm not an expert on preconditions for aid?

MR. ZELDIN: But I think that's an important point before declaring that there should be no conditionality on aid related to corruption; it's important to know what the United States law is as it relates to aid to Ukraine and as

it relates to corruption.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: My -- my response, Congressman, was strategic, not legal.

MR. ZELDIN: We are concerned about the legal as well. Now you're the U.S. Ambassador to the EU, So you have interaction with a number of countries all across the European continent. I imagine you're engaging with countries on a whole host of issues all day, right, your portfolio's enormous.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That's correct.

MR. ZELDIN: Okay. And as far as conducting U.S. diplomacy, whether it is aid or other discussions, you probably have asks into countries all across the entire continent, correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: True.

MR. ZELDIN: Can you give us an idea of your portfolio as it relates to your priorities of getting other countries to do things that are important to the United States?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Well, my portfolio as I said encompasses 28, currently 28 EU countries, unless something happened in the last few hours with the U.K. And it involves trade, it involves security, it involves energy independence. It involves their actions in various other parts of the world, Iran, Venezuela, et cetera, et cetera. I'm not sure what your question --

MR. ZELDIN: As far as you doing your job interacting and the United States State Department interacting with foreign countries, we identify priorities that are important to the United States and try to get other countries to make decisions to adopt their policies and behaviors to our asks to the extent possible, correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That is correct and I have a long list of those asks.

MR. ZELDIN: And you have seen foreign aid get leveraged in countries all around the world for different reasons, correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That is correct.

MR. ZELDIN: For example, Congress recently passed, and the President signed into law legislation called the Taylor Force Act. I don't know, have you heard of that?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I have not.

MR. ZELDIN: So where there is a policy -- would it be appropriate where the American taxpayer would not want their tax dollars to go to the Palestinian authority if they are financially rewarding terror, that would be an appropriate prioritization of how to leverage our tax dollars, correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Appears to be, yes.

MR. ZELDIN: Now, as far as Fiona Hill, did you and the NSC -- did you sense that they felt threatened at all, that you were, say, stepping on their turf by having a passion for

Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Well, they testified earlier, my first sort of extracurricular trip to Ukraine I met regularly with the Ukrainians in Brussels, and I don't even know that the NSC was involved in those meetings, they normally wouldn't be. But my first trip to Ukraine, which was to Odessa in February, I believe, of 2019, I mentioned to Dr. Hill that I was going with Ambassador Volker and Secretary Reeker, and she sent back a very laudatory note saying, I'm glad you're supporting Ukraine and this is great, or something to go that effect.

MR. ZELDIN: At any point did Dr. Hill ever push back on it your interest in Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Not to me. Not to anyone that contacted me and said the NSC is not happy with your involvement in Ukraine. I've never heard that.

MR. CASTOR: I will mark as exhibit 8 the whistleblower complaint.

[Minority Exhibit No. 8
Was marked for identification.]

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q The whistleblower complaint was released publicly I think on the day after the call transcript was released?

A Uh-huh.

Q Did anyone talk to you about the whistleblower

complaint before it was released?

A I believe I testified that I heard from the White House counsel's office that my name -- they were giving me a heads-up a few hours before it was released. Yes.

Q Anybody else? Anybody at the National Security Council?

A I don't recall that, no.

Q In that time period?

A I don't recall.

Q Did anyone give you an advanced copy of the complaint?

A I don't think so.

Q When you saw your name was mentioned, I think it's on page 4, and then again on page 7, what was your reaction?

A I was pretty upset.

Q And why?

A Because it almost implies I was doing something wrong when I was doing my job.

Q On page 4 of the complaint under the ongoing concerns Roman III, the last sentence of that first paragraph there beginning with the word based on multiple readouts of these meetings recounted to me by various U.S. officials, Ambassadors Volker and Sondland reportedly provided advice to Ukrainian leadership about how to navigate the demands that President Trump had made of Mr. Zelensky. Does that have any

basis in fact?

A I didn't know that the President had made any demands.

Q Okay.

A I wasn't aware of any demands that he had made of Mr. Zelensky until I saw the --

Q Okay. So this statement as it relates to you is just not true. Is that true?

A Well, I think to be fair to the whistleblower, I was involved in the file. I'm not sure what he's really trying to say here. This sentence confounds me because I'm not quite sure what he's trying to say.

Q So you're not sure about what the demands were?

A No.

Q And you're also not sure about how you were helping the navigate -- helping the Ukrainians navigate the demands?

A Well, other than as I testified we tried to negotiate a press statement, the whole group?

Q Right.

A If that's navigating the demands, then I guess that's navigating the demands. And I think I also testified that I was trying to -- we're all trying to prep President Zelensky for the request that corruption be investigated.

Q On the July 26th meeting in Kyiv with Ambassador Volker, did this come up, the press statement and so forth?

A I don't think so. I don't remember that.

Q Okay. So at least at that meeting the day after the call there was no discussion that you can recall --

A No, not that I remember, and again, I saw a readout of the call, and the call was benign until I saw the transcript.

Q Okay. So it at that point, you didn't know about demands, and so it is not fair to say you were helping the Ukrainians navigate the demands?

A I don't know. I was involved in the file, and if being involved in the file means my name in the whistleblower complaint then I guess I have to accept that.

Q Flipping back to page 7. The first bullet the State Department officials, including Ambassadors Volker and Sondland had spoken to Mr. Giuliani in attempt to contain the damage.

A Is there a question?

Q I just wanted to make sure you read?

A Yes, I'm following.

Q I'm ready to ask my question now. The last hour, you walked me through all four or five conversations you had with Mr. Giuliani. Any of those conversations possibly -- could they possibly be characterized as you and Ambassador Volker trying to contain the damage to U.S. national security?

A Not the direct conversations I had with Mr. Giuliani, because, again, they just -- they were really applying to the press statement.

Q Right.

A I didn't think this the press statement constituted damage to national security.

Q Okay. So nothing that you did on a call to Rudy Giuliani could fairly be characterized as containing the damage?

A I think it's an exaggeration.

Q The second bullet, Ambassadors Volker and Sondland during this time period, meet with members of the Ukrainian administration, and in addition to discussing policy matters helped Ukrainian leaders understand and respond to the differing messages they were receiving from official U.S. channels on the one hand, and Mr. Giuliani on the other.

A Well, the problem is, I don't know what official -- I don't know what they were receiving from Mr. Giuliani --

Q Okay.

A -- because I don't know what direct conversations he was having.

Q So that also is a statement that can't be true, because you didn't know what Giuliani was doing at that point in time?

A All I know, with respect to Mr. Giuliani, is what

he told me and what I heard directly through hearsay and from Ambassador Volker.

Q But during this time period, the statement that Ambassadors Volker and Sondland sought the help of Ukrainian leaders understand and respond to the differing messages they were receiving from official U.S. channels on the one hand and Mr. Giuliani on the other can't be true if you don't know what Giuliani was telling them?

A I think a fairer thing was we were trying to assuage the Ukrainians, and as time kept going on and there were no meetings or phone calls after they had been promised. I that's probably -- we were stroking the Ukrainians a little bit in order to keep them from sort of bailing on us. I didn't want them going in the Russia direction. That was my big concern.

Q But you couldn't possibly be doing what is alleged right here because you didn't know what message Giuliani was sending to them?

A Yeah, I mean, if anything, we probably more played the role of a mediator just to try and keep things cool, while the time was going on and, you know, the meetings weren't happening. So I don't know if I would have written it exactly this way, but we're trying to help.

Q Okay. The next sentence during the same timeframe multiple U.S. officials told me that Ukraine leadership was

led to believe that a meeting or phone call between the President and President Zelensky would depend on whether Zelensky showed a willingness to play ball on the issues that had been publicly aired by Mr. Lutsenko and Mr. Giuliani. Does that strike you as something you're familiar with?

A That -- are you saying that the call that Mr. -- or President Trump and President Zelensky ultimately had on the 25th?

Q Well, during the same timeframe, multiple U.S. officials told me Ukrainian leadership is led to believe that a meeting or phone call between President Trump and President Zelensky would depend on whether Zelensky showed a willingness to play ball on the issues that had been publicly aired by Lutsenko and Mr. Giuliani.

A Well, that appears not to be true because the phone call happened without any precondition. The phone call happened on the 25th and I don't believe anything was agreed upon by the Ukrainians by the time the phone call happened.

Q Did you ever hear a U.S. official use the term "play ball"?

A I've never heard that expression from anyone.

Q Because it is in quotes?

A I don't recall ever hearing that.

Q Okay. I want to go back to the recall of Ambassador Yovanovitch. Can you tell me when you first

learned that her post was in jeopardy?

A I can't, I don't recall. As I said, I met with her when I was in Odessa, she joined us on the meetings with Poroshenko and others, and we may have had some calls after that, but I don't remember.

Q Did anyone consult with you prior it her removal?

A I don't -- I don't believe so.

Q So nobody at the White House asked for your opinion?

A I don't think so.

Q Nobody?

A I probably would have remembered that, but I don't remember that.

Q Anyone on the 7th floor of the State Department?

A No, I don't think so.

Q So nobody asked for your views on whether she was doing an effective job at that time?

A I mean I don't recall giving my views to anyone. As I said, I had a perfectly good experience with her. My limited experience that I had with her.

Q So had someone asked you, you would have --

A I can't imagine I would have said anything, but she seems great.

Q Were you surprised when she was recalled?

A A little bit. Especially after I heard from a lot

of people in the Mission that she was going good ambassador they had, as I said earlier, they had served with her.

Q Did anybody seek your input on the next ambassador?

A I don't think so, no. I don't think I ever heard of Taylor until he was in place.

Q Okay. There is an allegation, simply an allegation, I'm not endorsing it. Perhaps the Ambassador at one time or another was disparaging the President, and I think one Member of Congress wrote a letter about that, and State Department officials have been disappointed about that allegation. Did you ever hear the Ambassador disparage the President?

A Not in my presence.

Q Did you ever hear anybody in the National Security Council disparage the President?

A Yeah, Dr. Hill.

Q Okay. Could you help me understand that?

A Well, when Dr. Hill, left her post to leave the government, I happened to drop by her office to say good-bye to her. I knew she was leaving, I think, in a few days or a week. I was at the White House for some other unrelated reason and I dropped up and we sat and had coffee. And she was pretty upset about her role in the administration, about her superiors, about the President. She was sort of shaking. She was pretty mad.

Q She was mad?

A Yeah.

Q Is that the first time you saw her mad?

A First time I've seen her like that, yeah.

Q Did how long did you speak with her?

A 15, 20 minutes.

Q She wasn't mad at you?

A No, no, she gave me a big hug and said stay in touch, she was going, I think, to Brookings or something after.

Q And what did she relate to you?

A She was just upset about everything having to do the Trump administration. She was upset at the President, she was upset with Ambassador Bolton, she was upset at a lot of things.

Q What specifically did she say about the President?

A Just that the whole, you know, operation was just not well run, or something to that effect. I mean, she was kind of -- it was very unusual. I mean I've never seen her like that. She's usually pretty calm, collected, straightforward, but she was pretty emotional.

Q Was this a coffee you had with her, just you and her?

A Yeah.

MR. JORDAN: Excuse, Ambassador. When was this meeting

with Dr. Hill?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I it was a few days -- I don't know what her departure date was, but I think she mentioned she was on her way out in next few days.

MR. JORDAN: What month?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: You have tell me her departure date, and then I can tell you.

MR. CASTOR: Her last day was he 19th, July 19th.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: So it probably was sometime between, I don't know, 15, 14, 13, something like that.

MR. JORDAN: After the July 10th meeting.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah, I think it would have been after the July 10th meeting, because that's 9 days before she left. It would have been before the July 10th meeting and her departure.

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q And what were her issues with Ambassador Bolton?

A I think she was just generally upset at the way the NSC was being run, and communication, and disorder, and just she was sort of railing.

Q She was railing against President Trump?

A Yes.

Q Railing against Ambassador Bolton?

A Yes.

Q Dissatisfied with her role?

A I don't know that she said that.
Q What else did she say? What can you tell us?
A I was -- I sat and listened. I was trying to be a little bit of a shoulder, and we had coffee. And I wished her well. As I said, gave her a hug, and I don't believe I've spoken to her since.
Q Did she mention why he was leaving specifically?
A She just said she'd had enough. She wanted to go back to academia.
Q Were you surprised by this?
A A little bit, yeah, because as I said, I've never seen her that emotional.
Q Did she tell you who would be taking over for her?
A I think she did tell me that Mr. Morrison was taking her place.
Q How has your relationship being with Mr. Morrison?
A Type, very straightforward.
Q Is he your primary contact it is NSC right now?
A Yeah. Although I got to meet Director -- or Ambassador O'Brien, I chatted with him a little bit, but generally, Bolton was not as accessible as O'Brien appears to be. So it would be Morrison and O'Brien.
Q Uh-huh.
A My two primary.
Q Do you still talk with Lieutenant Colonel Vindman?

A I don't think I have spoken with him in quite some time.

Q Okay. But not because of any falling out, it is just haven't --

A Haven't had any reason to.

Q An occasion to?

A Yeah.

Q You traveled where Lieutenant Colonel Vindman to President Zelensky's inauguration. Is that correct?

A I don't know that we traveled together, but he was there, he was part of the delegation.

Q And anything notable about that travel, did you have dinner with him or share any meals?

A I think we included him in every part of the event, or most of the parts of the event. It was really Secretary Perry was the leader of the delegation, it was up to him to decide who was doing what.

Q Did you ever heard Lieutenant Colonel Vindman criticize the President?

A Not to me.

Q Have you ever heard anyone relate to you that Lieutenant Colonel Vindman has criticized the President?

A I don't -- I don't recall that, no.

MR. CASTOR: We're almost -- our time is almost up, I want to make sure if there are any members on our side that

have a couple of questions?

MR. ZELDIN: Ambassador, was there any one else at the NSC who was critical of the President?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: No, not that I recall. This was as I said it wasn't an exit interview because she didn't work for me, it was a drop-by to say good-bye, and that was the only time I heard someone being critical.

MR. ZELDIN: How was relationship with Bill Taylor?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I haven't spoken to him with whistleblower. But prior to that, it was great. In other words, he -- several times was happy that Secretary Perry, myself, and Ambassador Volker were helping support him because as he, to put in his words, he liked the high visibility support which helped his mission.

MR. ZELDIN: Why haven't you spoken to Bill Taylor after the whistleblower complaint?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I haven't really spoken to anyone on the Ukraine file at the advice of counsel.

MR. JORDAN: In your meeting with Dr. Hill shortly before she left the White House, did you discuss -- did Lieutenant Colonel Vindman come up in any of that discussion with Dr. Hill?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't think so.

MR. JORDAN: Okay.

MR. ROY: Just a quick question, is it in the national

security interest of the United States that we instill confidence with respect to our relationship with other countries, right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Exactly.

MR. ROY: And with respect to Secretary Perry, at any point in any of her engagement with him and the various trips and conversations repeatedly, you said you talked to him a lot, friends, was there anything that -- was his primary focus our status with Ukraine, improving that status vis-a-vis Russia, and making sure that our national security interests were being promoted with respect to natural gas, coal, economic interests, as well as pushing back on Russia, was that had the primary motivating factor behind your observation of what Secretary Perry was doing?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yes. My impression of the Ukrainians they were very impressed to have a cabinet level member to take such a strong interest in the country.

[4:38 p.m.]

MR. ROY: And would you characterize our current relationship with Ukraine as improved based on these engagements in trying to move the ball forward with respect to coal and natural gas, our presence vis-a-vis Russia because of those engagements?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Well, again, with 20/20 hindsight, now that I am privy to all of the different things that were going on that I wasn't at the time, I thought that with respect to my activities, first, my engagement with the Poroshenko team in Brussels, then ultimating culminating in a joint U.S.-EU visit to Odessa in February, attending the inauguration, inviting President Zelensky to Brussels to meet with other European leaders, which, as I mentioned, resulted in him getting to know the President of Poland and a couple of other leaders, that they've now had some productive -- I thought we were on a roll with Ukraine until all of this blew up. I was very pleased with where we were going.

MR. ROY: So all of those engagements all along in that process that you are part of with Governor Perry -- sorry -- Secretary Perry -- you can take the guy out of Texas, but you know -- with Governor Perry was moving the ball forward with respect to our policy objectives and what we were trying to do to strengthen our position vis-a-vis Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Again, at the time, yes.

MR. ROY: Thanks.

THE CHAIRMAN: The time of the minority has expired. Would you like to take a 5- or 10-minute break?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That would be nice.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's shoot for resuming at 4:50, if we could.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That'd be great.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

[Recess.]

THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Shall we get started again? Let's go back on the record.

And I want to recognize Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador, it's good to see you again.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Nice to see you.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: I am both a member of the Oversight Committee as well as the Appropriations Committee, and so my questions are appropriations-focused.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Okay.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: You testified today -- I've been here most of the day -- that you don't believe that preconditions for aid were appropriate, correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: As a policy matter, I agree with

that, with respect to Ukraine --

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Right.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: -- at this point, at this moment.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Yes. Yes, with respect to Ukraine at this moment.

And, generally, you know, given that you have a budget, you and your staff are aware that the Appropriations Committee does, as Mr. Zeldin referenced, the Appropriations Committee, other committees, attach conditions to aid that we provide, correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: And you're in the habit of following those instructions, correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Okay. And you testified today that you were initially unaware of the conditions that were put on Ukraine by the President and the directions from Mr. Giuliani?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Okay. What about the congressional conditions?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I wasn't aware of the congressional conditions, because that aid would've gone directly from the respective agencies to Ukraine. It would not have passed through my hand or I don't even think the

bilateral hand.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Right. And you were unaware even though you did testify today that Ukraine was a central component of your portfolio.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: The meaning of my testimony, Congresswoman, was that the situation between Russia and Ukraine was very fragile at the time. We had the ambassadorial change. We had the election in Ukraine. It was very touchy. And in the scheme of the U.S. budget, a quarter of a billion dollars, while that's a lot of money, is not a lot of money.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Sure. I'm on the Appropriations Committee.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: And you know that better than anyone.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Yeah.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I thought that, at that very moment in time, having any delay whatsoever, once I found out that there was a hold -- and I didn't know what the purpose of the hold was -- that any delay would send the wrong signal to Russia. That was my concern.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: But the delay that was occurring was not as prescribed by law. It was occurring because the President, through Mr. Giuliani, appears to have indicated that unless there were investigations against the Bidens or

the company --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I didn't know why.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Right.

However, you were or you were not aware of the Appropriations Act requiring that the Pentagon certify that when Ukraine -- when they deemed Ukraine meeting the requirements of reducing corruption, that those funds would be released? Were you aware during any of this period of time of those requirements?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Not aware.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Okay. So, at no time, even though this was a central component of your portfolio, did it come up in any conversations that the law actually required that the Pentagon certify that Ukraine had taken steps to reduce corruption.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: As I indicated, my objective was to simply secure a meeting for President Zelensky. I was not involved --

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: But that was not my question. My question is, during any of these conversations during this period of time, did it ever come up that Congress actually had required that the Pentagon certify that Ukraine had reduced corruption and then that aid could be released?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't recall that ever coming up.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Okay.

So, as you said, you didn't believe that non-lawful preconditions would be required. Would it be your testimony today that complying with the law and then the funds being released is important?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I think complying with the law is always important.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Okay. Well, are you aware that on May 23rd, the same day as the meeting that you talked about with the President after you attended the inauguration, the Pentagon did certify that Ukraine had taken steps, the steps necessary as required by the Appropriations Act, to reduce corruption and that the funds should be released?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I wasn't aware.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Okay. So, then, wouldn't you agree that, given that that occurred and that the Pentagon indicated that they had complied and corruption had been appropriately reduced, that those funds should've been released?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I'm not familiar, Congresswoman, with all of the conditions, whether it was simply that certification or there were other conditions necessary. I don't know enough about --

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: No, but --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: -- the vagaries of funds

released --

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Well, the Pentagon did. Because the Pentagon wrote a letter that I have here in my hand that specifically said, Ukraine is in compliance with this public law, and the funds, as a result, you know, should be released. And they had certified that their release was appropriate.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Let me answer your question this way. If all lawful conditions had been met for funds release, then the funds should've been released.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Right. Okay. So then it would not have been appropriate for conditions unrelated to the law to be attached further.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: If the law required the funds to be released, they should've been released.

MS. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Okay. Thank you.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah.

THE CHAIRMAN: I just have a couple followup questions before I hand it back to Mr. Goldman.

My colleagues on the minority asked you questions along the lines of, don't other countries, doesn't Europe attach conditions and sometimes those conditions involve fighting corruption, and I think you said that, yes, those kinds of conditions are imposed. Is that right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That's right.

THE CHAIRMAN: But you would distinguish between conditions to fight corruption and a condition imposed to get Ukraine to investigate a political rival for help in a reelection campaign. You can distinguish between those two things, right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I can.

THE CHAIRMAN: The one is appropriate; the one, very much not appropriate. Am I right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That's correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: And you never heard Europe, for example, express its desire to have a condition on its aid to Ukraine that Ukraine investigate the Bidens or the 2016 election in a way that would help Donald Trump. I assume Europe never expressed that view to you.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Never heard that from Europe.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to ask you a couple followups on the questions about the whistleblower complaint. You were asked whether it was fair for the whistleblower to suggest that you or others had to navigate the demands that were imposed for a call or a meeting with President Trump.

There were demands, weren't there, that an investigation take place of 2016 or Burisma? Ultimately those were demands, were they not?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Ultimately, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: And it's fair to say that you had to

navigate those demands, you had to accommodate what the President and his lawyer wanted, if you were going to set up this meeting you thought very important?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I think that's fair.

THE CHAIRMAN: My colleague also took issue with the whistleblower characterization of differing messages.

You would agree that Rudy Giuliani was meeting and talking to Ukrainians, would you not?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: And you did not have full visibility into what he was telling the Ukrainians, did you?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I did not.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you have a concern that what we might be telling the Ukrainians was not perfectly consistent with what you and Ambassador Volker or others might be telling the Ukrainians?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yes, and that's why in my statement I said we would've preferred to let the State Department handle the relationship.

THE CHAIRMAN: And, indeed, having a back channel or a second channel through the President's lawyer could cause damage if that message was inconsistent with State Department policy.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: It could.

THE CHAIRMAN: And so part of your role was to try to

contain whatever damage that second channel might cause? Is that fair to say?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Well, "containing the damage" implies that we would let the damage occur and then somehow try to fix it. I mean, our goal was never to have damage in the first place.

THE CHAIRMAN: But I think you said, Ambassador, that over time things got more and more insidious. I think those were your words. It started out with no condition, and then there was a condition for investigation into the corruption, and then there was a condition of an investigation into 2016 and Burisma, and then on the call itself it became clear the condition was investigation of 2016 and the Bidens. I think you described that as becoming more and more insidious, correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That's correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: And isn't it also fair to say that because there were added conditions to this meeting that Ukraine desperately wanted and that you wanted to make happen, that that meeting wasn't going to happen unless Ukraine played ball in meeting the demands of the President and Mr. Giuliani? Isn't that a fair use of that colloquial expression?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Well, that expression came up in previous testimony, and I'd never heard the term "play ball,"

THE CHAIRMAN: But you understand what that means, right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: If you mean that those conditions would have to be complied with prior to getting a meeting, that was my understanding.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr. Goldman.

MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you.

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q You testified in the last round that, since the whistleblower complaint was released, or the transcript of the call record was released, you haven't spoken to anyone on the Ukraine file at the advice of counsel. Is that right?

A Except, I believe, with, as I recall, just Secretary Perry. I think I testified to that earlier.

Q Okay. But Secretary Perry was one of the three amigos, no?

A Correct.

Q So he was on the Ukrainian file?

A And then I did -- I also testified I think I called Ambassador Volker to thank him for his service when he resigned.

Q Right.

You also -- I believe you said that you got a general read-out from someone on your staff of the July 25th call?

A Correct.

Q Okay. Did you get any read-out from the Ukrainian side of that call?

A I don't remember seeing a Ukrainian read-out. If someone sent me one, I didn't internalize it.

Q How about a verbal read-out?

A The only verbal read-out, Mr. Goldman, was, "It was a great call." I mean, no one thought the call was remarkable other than the fact that, A, it had finally happened after multiple attempts, and, B, that the President's -- whatever their conversation was seemed to be a pleasant conversation.

Q And you had an hour-long meeting with Mr. Zelensky the day after the call, right?

A Right.

Q And this was a significant achievement, to get the call at this point, correct?

A Correct.

Q And as part of your duties and responsibilities, you generally memorialized what occurred at meetings with high-level leaders, right?

A I always have note-takers. And, as I said, this was Ambassador Volker's meeting that he invited me to.

Q Right. So you had a note-taker there for this meeting?

A I didn't have one. I assume Ambassador Volker had one.

Q So you did not have a note-taker.

A I did not have a note-taker.

Q Do you know whether anyone from the United States delegation there for this meeting was taking notes?

A I assume someone was taking notes. There were quite a few people at the meeting.

Q And someone from the State Department?

A Probably.

Q Okay. And those notes would be transmitted back to Washington in some way?

A If they were taken by the Kyiv Embassy, they would've been put into some cable form and sent back, yeah.

Q Okay. So, presumably, there is some memorialization of that meeting within the State Department records, right?

A I believe that's correct.

Q Okay.

You also said in your opening statement that there are documents that the committee doesn't have that you think would corroborate your testimony here today. Is that right?

A I believe so.

Q Can you describe, generally speaking, what those documents would include?

A Texts, emails, et cetera.
Q Any memos that --
A No. I think they were all electronic.
Q All electronic?
A Yeah.
Q On your personal phone?
A I use a dual-SIM phone for both personal and business.
Q Okay.
Do you recall that you gave an interview on Ukrainian television the day after the call on July 25th?
A Uh-huh, I do.
Q Do you recall that you said that there were, quote, "certain things that the Ukrainians have to do, there are preconditions to anything," when describing the potential White House meeting?
A If I said that in the interview, yeah, I'm sure that's true.
Q What did you mean by that?
A At the time, I probably meant, you know, getting the schedule straight, getting the commitment. I think that was when we were still, on the corruption continuum, on the plain -- on the vanilla corruption part of the continuum.
I didn't want to imply, I believe, to the interviewer that the meeting was going to occur, you know, the next day.

I didn't want to not have credibility with the Ukrainian media. So I wanted to, sort of, thread the needle of looking like we were being very supportive of Ukraine, things were moving forward, but there still had to be some things to be done before the meeting could occur.

Q Right.

And just to be clear, the text message between Kurt Volker and Andrey Yermak where Volker specifically identifies the message that President Zelensky needs to give to Donald Trump, that does not refresh your recollection on -- which was the day before this interview -- that does not refresh your recollection as to what the state of play was as to what the conditions were for the White House --

A No. As I said, I think that part of the time we were still in the corruption -- vanilla corruption part of the continuum, as I recall.

Q Okay.

We talked a lot about the statement, so let's get to that. I want to turn your attention to page 4 of the text messages, which is exhibit 3.

A Okay.

Q And at the very bottom of that page, on August 9th at 11:27, you write to Rudy Giuliani: "Hi Mr Mayor! Had a good chat with Yermak last night" -- oh, I'm sorry. This is Kurt Volker writing this.

A Okay.

Q So you are -- but you are on the -- you were on this -- well, let me ask you this. Do you see the number [redacted] there?

A That's my number.

Q Okay, that's your number. So you're on this chain, right?

A Yes.

Q And Kurt Volker writes, "Hi Mr Mayor! Had a good chat with Yermak last night. He was pleased with your phone call. Mentioned Z making a statement. Can we all get on the phone to make sure I advise Z correctly as to what he should be saying? Want to make sure we get this done right. Thanks!"

And then you respond, "Good idea Kurt. I am on Pacific time." Do you see that?

A I do.

Q And then a little bit below it, you organize for State Ops to organize the phone call.

Do you remember having this conference call on August 9th with Kurt Volker and Rudy Giuliani?

A Vaguely. This is one of the calls I think I described in my previous testimony with Rudy. I think this was one of the conference calls.

Q Right. And this is specifically referencing a

statement, correct?

A Right.

Q And, clearly, Yermak was aware, Yermak being a senior advisor to President Zelensky, was aware of the desire for a statement based on this text. Do you agree with that?

A I do.

Q Okay. So what do you recall about that conversation?

A Again, without knowing exactly where we were on the, as I want to call it, the continuum, this might have been beginning to morph into the press statement where the Burisma/2016 election may have been introduced by Rudy.

I don't remember which call that was on, but, at some point, as I testified earlier, it went from a generic corruption requirement to a more specific requirement. And it could've been on this call; it could've been on a subsequent recall. I don't recall.

Q Okay.

If you can go to page 42, on August 9th, 5:35 p.m. -- and this is a text chain between you and Kurt Volker -- you say, "Morrison ready to get dates as soon as Yermak confirms."

Is that Tim Morrison, the NSC senior director?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

And then Kurt Volker responds, "Excellent!! How did you sway him? :)" You respond, "Not sure I did. I think potus really wants the deliverable." Volker responds, "But does he know that?" And you respond, "Yep."

What is the deliverable?

A The deliverable, I believe, was the press statement.

Q And here you're specifically referencing the President, who wants the press statement.

A That was my surmise, again, based on what I had heard through Volker from Giuliani.

Q Right. So you still were under the impression, in part based on the May 23rd meeting, that what Rudy Giuliani wanted related to Ukraine is what the President wanted related to Ukraine.

A That's the only logical connection I could make.

Q And then when Volker says, "But does he know that," and you say, "Yep," who's "he"?

A I think he was referring to Morrison.

Q Okay.

Now, later -- and then a little bit lower, at 5:51, you say, "To avoid misunderstandings, might be helpful to ask Andrey for a draft statement (embargoed) so that we can see exactly what they propose to cover. Even though Ze" -- that's Zelensky, right?

A Right.

Q -- "does a live presser they can still summarize in a brief statement. Thoughts?" And Kurt Volker says, "Agree!"

So do you know what happened? Did Volker recommend that the Ukrainians send a draft statement to you?

A As I recall -- this is refreshing my memory, and, as I recall, this is when I believe there was talk about having a live interview or a live broadcast. And what I was concerned about was that Zelensky would say whatever he would say on live television and it still wouldn't be good enough for Rudy, slash, the President, and then we would be having to go back and tell Zelensky, sorry, not good enough, and that would be extremely embarrassing.

So I had suggested, why don't you give us a summary of what you're planning to say so that it can be run by Mayor Giuliani first to nail down what it is exactly that the President was asking or Giuliani was asking versus what Zelensky was intending to say? I didn't want there to be a false press statement made live that was inadequate in some way. And I was, again, just trying to protect our reputation with the Ukrainians.

Q Okay.

And then on August 10th at 1:23 p.m., you write, "I briefed Ulrich. All good."

Who's Ulrich?

A That's Ulrich Brechbuhl, who is the counselor to the Secretary.

Q And do you recall briefing him on this?

A I may have walked him through where we were.

Q About the statement?

A Probably.

Q And what was his response?

A Based on my text, his response was probably, "Fine." If he had had an adverse reaction to what was going on, he would've said something to me and I probably would've communicated it back. So, again, I'm speculating that I briefed him and everything was copacetic.

Q Okay. Do you know if he consulted with Secretary Pompeo on this?

A His habit is to, you know, consult with Secretary Pompeo frequently. I mean, that's why he's the counselor.

Q Do you recall receiving specific authorization from Secretary Pompeo to go forward with arranging the statement with Rudy Giuliani?

A Well, we never got the final statement. There was nothing --

Q I know, but --

A There was nothing to ask Secretary Pompeo until we were ready to go.

Q Well, you felt the need to brief Ulrich Brechbuhl.

A I talk to Ulrich all the time, just to keep him in the loop.

Q Okay. And so you don't know whether or not --

A No.

Q -- Secretary Pompeo was aware of this or not?

A I wasn't going to take anything back to the higher-ups until we had a tentative commitment from the Ukrainians, again, so I wasn't wasting anyone's time.

Q And you knew you needed a commitment that satisfied Rudy Giuliani's desires, right?

A I knew I needed a commitment that, yes, that Rudy Giuliani would represent that then there would be a meeting.

Q Okay.

But the next text is a little bit later on August 10th, where Volker writes, "This came in from Andrey." Is that Andrey Yermak?

A Presumably.

Q And then he says, quote, "Hi Kurt. Please let me know when you can talk. I think it's possible to make this declaration and mention all these things. Which we discussed yesterday. But it will be logic to do after we receive a confirmation of date. We inform about date of visit and about our expectations and our guarantees for future visit. Let's discuss it."

What's going on here?

A I think this was the back-and-forth between the Ukrainians and Volker. What comes first, the chicken or the egg?

Q Uh-huh. Meaning, they wanted to get a date for the White House before they made an announcement about these investigations? Is that correct?

A Presumably that's what was going on.

Q Did you subsequently have another conversation with Andrey Yermak?

A Well, I had many conversations, but I don't know if we had any about this.

Q Well, I mean, you see that it says -- oh, I guess this might be with Kurt Volker.

A Yeah. No, but if your question was, after whatever the date was, did I have any other conversations with Yermak, I think the answer would be yes.

Q Okay.

So, at the very bottom, on the 11th, Volker says, "Hi Gordon -- ready in 10 min?" You say, "Yes." Volker says, "He needs another 15 min. So 10:15."

Do you think that's a reference to Yermak?

A I don't know.

Q You don't remember speaking to Yermak directly at this time?

A I don't. I think, again, Kurt was handling the back-and-forth on the press statement, and I kept the State Department informed through Ulrich Brechbuhl as to what was going on so that everyone was on the same page.

Q And then if I can go back to page 5 with you --

A Yeah, I was trying to navigate. Where are you, I'm sorry?

Q Page 5.

A Page 5? Oh.

Q Yeah, the group text with Mr. Giuliani and Kurt Volker. On August 11th at 10:28, Ambassador Volker writes, "Hi Rudy -- we have heard bCk" -- I assume that's "back" -- "from Andrey again -- they are writing the statement now and will send to us. Can you talk for 5 min before noon today?"

So do you know if you ever had another conversation with Mr. Giuliani about this?

A I think we had at least two conference calls, and this may have been the second one or the first one. But, again, this was when we were in the process of going back and forth on the wording of the statement.

Q And describe in those conference calls what Rudy Giuliani -- what requirements he had for the press statement.

A This was when, in mid-August? Yeah, mid-August. This was when we were in the Burisma/2016 election part of the continuum.

Q Uh-huh. So he didn't say, we need to have a statement that says that Ukraine must continue their anti-corruption efforts, right?

A I believe it then morphed -- when we started to work on the statement, it morphed from the vanilla corruption into the Burisma/2016 portion.

Q Okay.

Now, if we go to page 43 -- wait 1 second. Sorry, 23.

A Twenty-three?

Q Yeah.

So, at the bottom, the very last text -- this is a group text with you and Andrey Yermak and Kurt Volker -- Volker writes, "Special attention should be paid to the problem of interference in the political processes of the United States, especially with the alleged involvement of some Ukrainian politicians. I want to declare that this is unacceptable. We intend to initiate and complete a transparent and unbiased investigation of all available facts and episodes, including those involving Burisma and the 2016 U.S. elections, which in turn will prevent the recurrence of this problem in the future."

Is this the revised proposed statement with Rudy Giuliani's input?

A It might've been. I don't know if that language came from Giuliani or it came from Volker or if it came from

the Ukrainians. I really don't know.

Q Was this approved language by Giuliani?

A I don't know.

Q You don't know?

A I don't know if it was approved or it was draft or what.

Q But -- and so you don't know if this was sufficient -- if the Ukrainians released this statement --

A I don't know if it was sufficient.

Q You don't know if it was sufficient.

A No, I don't.

Q But is this consistent with what Rudy Giuliani had indicated he wanted in the statement?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

And so, to the extent that you were involved, in your role, in advocating for a White House meeting and whether and to whatever extent that a condition of that White House meeting was some sort of investigation, is it accurate that whatever that investigation was that the President needed was described or proscribed by Rudy Giuliani?

A All the communication flowed through Rudy Giuliani, and I can only speculate that the President was instructing his personal lawyer accordingly. I don't know. I don't know if this was coming out of Rudy Giuliani irrespective of the

President, because I wasn't involved in those conversations.

Q But when you describe this continuum --

A Yes.

Q -- as to, you know, whatever the condition is for the White House meeting and it evolves over time, whatever the evolution of it was was dictated by Rudy Giuliani.

A Correct. Either directly or through Volker or Perry or others.

Q Okay.

Now, you said the statement was never issued by the Ukrainians, correct?

A I believe the idea was shelved.

Q Do you know why?

A I don't.

Q Do you know who determined that it was shelved?

A I don't know that we ever got to a point where everyone was in agreement.

Q Okay.

Now, around this time period, in mid-August, do you recall an unofficial meeting with a Member of the House of Representatives at the Brussels airport?

A Refresh my memory.

Q Did you meet with anyone, any members of the Intelligence Committee, without staff at the Brussels airport on or about August 16th?

A I may have. I don't know. You mean in the lounge?
Q Yeah, in the lounge.
A Yeah. Who I did meet with?
Q I mean, you tell me. Do you remember?
A I don't remember. I meet with a lot of people as I'm coming and going.
Q Do you remember meeting with Representative Nunes at that time?
A I saw Representative Nunes in Brussels when he had a meeting there. I think we -- I think I saw him and we had coffee or something. But that wasn't at the airport; I think that was in the city.
Q Okay. Just the two of you?
A Yeah, I think it was just the two of us.
Q Did you discuss Ukraine at all in any way?
A No, I think it was just a, you know, shoot-the-breeze sort of conversation, as I recall it. Just sort of a friendly, he's in town kind of thing.
Q You don't recall Ukraine coming up at all?
A I don't remember Ukraine coming up.
Q Okay.
You've obviously discussed and described some of the conversations you had with Senator Johnson about Ukraine. Are there any other Congressmen or Senators that you remember discussing Ukraine issues with?

A Not that I recall. Senator Johnson, because he was on the delegation.

Q And no one else?

A Not that I can remember.

Q How about staff members from any committees in the House of Representatives?

A I mean, one of the problems with my memory is that if I wasn't in Washington I'm most often in Brussels. Unless they were in Brussels and they were coming through in a codel and asked me about it specifically, I don't know that I sought anyone out to speak to them about Ukraine.

Q Uh-huh. And did you have any conversations with any of the minority staff before your testimony here today?

A Not to the best of my knowledge, no.

Q No?

A No.

Q Did your attorney?

MR. LUSKIN: I spoke with Mr. Castor. We did not share Ambassador Sondland's statement --

MR. GOLDMAN: You want to repeat that?

MR. LUSKIN: We did not discuss the substance of his testimony, and we did not share Ambassador Sondland's statement with him in advance.

MR. GOLDMAN: All right.

THE CHAIRMAN: At this point, let me recognize the

members for questions.

Mr. Himes, do you have some questions?

Mr. Heck?

MR. HECK: Thank you very much.

Mr. Ambassador, just to nail down a couple foundational facts, you were confirmed by the Senate on June 28th of last year in a presumably unanimous voice vote?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MR. HECK: And a short 12 days later, you were packed up and had moved to Brussels?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah. I was confirmed quickly because that was the NATO summit and I had to be Europe for the NATO summit.

MR. HECK: Where were you living prior to that?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Seattle, Washington.

MR. HECK: Is that your legal residence?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: It is.

MR. HECK: Do you have a driver's license?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I do.

MR. HECK: What State issued it?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Washington.

MR. HECK: Are you registered to vote?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I am.

MR. HECK: In which State?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Washington.

MR. HECK: Thank you, sir. That's all I have.

THE CHAIRMAN: Representative Rouda.

MR. ROUDA: Thank you, Chairman.

Thank you, Ambassador, for being here.

I know it's tough to remember all these conversations and texts and the essence of it over many, many months. And, you know, I can't even remember what I had for lunch yesterday, and I know you had a tough time remembering your conversation with Secretary Perry yesterday.

So I really want to focus on the continuum. And when President Zelensky came into office and won the election, he won based on a platform of fighting back against corruption, right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MR. ROUDA: And I think the diplomatic consensus, your consensus with your fellow leaders, Volker, Dr. Hill, Yovanovitch, Bolton, everyone felt this was a good change to address corruption in Ukraine.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That's right.

MR. ROUDA: And that this was better than the previous President, the previous President who many believed was very corrupt, including the people who voted in Ukraine.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MR. ROUDA: So, in that continuum, as you talked about, where it moved from corruption to Burisma, what was so

special about Burisma? I mean, when that name came up, what was your reaction? Why Burisma?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't know. In hindsight, I should've asked more questions about Burisma. But it was something that was important, apparently, to Mr. Giuliani and to the President. And, again, my focus was on getting the meeting and getting the phone call.

MR. ROUDA: But corruption has been rampant in Ukraine for decades. And if a new President is coming in who's, we hope, better positioned to address corruption, why is it moved to a single company and not multiple companies with a long history of corruption?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: First of all, I agree with you, I think there should not have been any preconditions to the meeting. I think the meeting should've just taken place shortly after the inauguration.

MR. ROUDA: But were you curious as to why this name of one company came up?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Well, as I said, also Naftogaz came up, and there was a general consensus or list of apparently a bunch of investigations relating to corruption that had been suspended under the previous President that President Zelensky, I believe, in his platform had said, I'm going to restart all of these investigations. And I don't even know what they related to.

MR. ROUDA: But I guess the part I'm struggling with is, you're a really smart guy. You've been incredibly successful, so successful, you're able to give a million dollars to the inauguration for Trump. And you're in this diplomatic position where it's really important that you understand all of the information so that you can put the best foot forward for our country in the relations with not just Ukraine but all the countries in your portfolio. You want to make sure that you don't step into anything accidentally that would reflect poorly on the country.

So, again, I'm just kind of curious, why aren't you curious to know more about Burisma?

A Yeah, I mean, this was -- without sounding like I'm passing the buck, this was primarily Ambassador Taylor and Ambassador Volker's file. And in terms of this issue, I was there to lend support. I'm not, you know, shirking my responsibility, but it did not rise to the point, until the meeting never occurred, that I began to get more and more suspicious about what was going on.

MR. ROUDA: So you didn't ask anybody, hey, why Burisma?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I did not.

MR. ROUDA: Okay. Did you ask anybody about, why the 2016 election, what about the server, what's that all about?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Well, that -- President Trump, when he brought it up, you know, "They tried to take me

down," I assumed it had something to do with that.

MR. ROUDA: So with Zelensky coming into the Presidency and his administration, the hope is that corruption is going to go down. How long did President Trump freeze the aid to Ukraine in 2018?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I'm not aware.

MR. ROUDA: You're not aware?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Are you saying in 2019 or 2018?

MR. ROUDA: I'm saying 2018.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I'm not aware.

MR. ROUDA: Did he freeze the aid?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't know.

MR. ROUDA: You don't know.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't know.

MR. ROUDA: But you were --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I only became Ambassador in middle of 2018. I wasn't --

MR. ROUDA: Right.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah.

MR. ROUDA: So you think if he did freeze the aid you would've known about it?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: No.

MR. ROUDA: You represent 29 countries in your portfolio. How many of those countries receive aid from the United States?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Again, the aid flows through the bilateral ambassador, not through the EU. So I wouldn't know whether a country is getting aid or not getting aid.

MR. ROUDA: But you knew Ukraine was getting aid.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I did not know Ukraine was getting aid until this all came up in 2019 and I heard that there was a freeze on the aid and it was in the context of another obstacle to getting the meeting.

MR. ROUDA: So, to the best of your knowledge, President Trump, in 2018, when, arguably, Ukraine is under a more corrupt administration, no aid was withheld from Ukraine under President Trump's administration?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: If you say so, Congressman. I don't --

MR. ROUDA: Okay. And you're not aware of any aid being withheld to the other 28 countries in your portfolio under President Trump in 2018 or 2019. You're not aware of it.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I haven't received any complaints.

MR. ROUDA: Okay.

And I know it's really tough to recall all this stuff, you know, these conversations. Some of them have taken place in the past. But I am kind of curious, because when you recalled your conversation with Ambassador Yovanovitch, you were very specific. A lot of detail there about how emotional she was, how mad she was, how she was railing on

Trump and Bolton.

Why do you think you had such greater recollection on your conversation with her? I'm sorry. Hill. Sorry. Hill.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That was Dr. Hill.

MR. ROUDA: Dr. Hill. My apologies.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Only because it stuck out to me because it was so unusual. That was not her usual deportment.

MR. ROUDA: Even thought many of the things we've talked about today are highly unusual, that one seemed to really resonate?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: It resonated with me because I've never seen anyone so upset.

MR. ROUDA: Okay.

The last thing I want to ask you: My understanding is Secretary Perry resigned.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I didn't know that. I haven't had any -- I haven't had any phone access.

MR. ROUDA: Don't hold me to it. The reports may not be correct, but -- so you weren't aware of that? That's a --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: No.

MR. ROUDA: -- surprise to you?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Absolutely.

MR. ROUDA: Okay. Thank you.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: In fact, we are scheduled to meet

on Sunday in Brussels for an energy conference. So, all news to me.

MR. ROUDA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Krishnamoorthi.

MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: Mr. Sondland, on April 21st, President Zelensky was elected President of Ukraine, and around that time Donald Trump made a phone call to him, congratulating him, right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I believe that's true.

MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: And were you a part of that phone call?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I was not.

MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: Were you briefed before or after that phone call about the contents of the call?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I was not.

MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: I wanted to ask you about Ukraine. Do you have any interests in Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: None.

MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: No business interests?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: None whatsoever.

MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: When you said in your statement, on page 8 of your statement, you did not understand until much later that Mr. Giuliani's agenda might have also included an effort to prompt the Ukrainians to investigate Vice President Biden or his son or to involve Ukrainians directly or

indirectly in the President's 2020 reelection campaign, why did you -- why do you think that either of those activities are problematic?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Because I believe I testified that it would be improper to do that.

MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: And illegal, right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I'm not a lawyer, but I assume so.

MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: Sir, one last question, which is: Do you believe that, with regard to Burisma, that the effort by Giuliani to investigate Burisma, now that we know that it was actually intended to go after Mr. Biden's son Hunter, was ever a proper inquiry?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I mean, I think I testified to that at the beginning, that it would not be proper.

MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: And illegal, correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Again, I'm not a lawyer. I don't know the law exactly. It doesn't sound good.

MR. KRISHNAMOORTHI: Thank you.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: You're welcome.

THE CHAIRMAN: I don't remember the order in which people came in. Who would like to be recognized next? I'll leave it to either one of you.

MR. ESPAILLAT: Ambassador, I want to go along the same line of questioning. I mean, obviously, the acknowledgement of corruption seems to be a prominent issue.

First, in your testimony, for example on page 6, you say, "Corruption poses challenges to the legitimacy and stability of government. Corruption is also an economic issue."

Then on page 7, you again state that "to make reforms necessary to attract Western economic investment and to address the Ukraine's well-known longstanding corruption issues."

Again on page 7, you refer to President Zelensky as "a reformer who received a strong mandate from the Ukrainian people to fight corruption and pursue greater economic prosperity."

So corruption seems to be an important issue, as you've highlighted in your testimony today, in your statement. And, furthermore, it seems to be of greater importance when the names of Burisma and the 2016 election continuously pop up, as you've stated in your statement and in your testimony today.

How many folks do you have working for you? What's your team like? How many people do you have working for you?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: About 150.

MR. ESPAILLAT: You have 150 people working for you. At any time when you heard the word "Burisma," as it was connected to corruption, did you ever instruct any of your 150 staffers to research the company?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: No, I did not. Again, Ambassador Taylor and Ambassador Volker were, sort of, on the front lines of this.

MR. ESPAILLAT: Did anybody google the word "Burisma," yourself or a staffer?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I didn't do it. I don't know about anyone else.

MR. ESPAILLAT: So none of your 150 staffers, nor yourself, after being deliberately concerned about corruption in the Ukraine and hearing consistently the name "Burisma" come up, not one of your staffers, 150 of them, nor yourself, ever researched the company or googled the company or find out who was on its board of directors? Is that accurate?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That's correct.

MR. ESPAILLAT: Okay. Now --

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry. Our time has expired, but we'll be happy to come back to you in the next round.

Mr. Castor.

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q Going back to exhibit No. 8, the whistleblower complaint, exhibit 8 --

A Exhibit 8?

Q Exhibit 8.

A Okay.

Q Page 4. I just want to clarify that the last

sentence of the first paragraph under Roman III -- this is the sentence we reviewed before with "navigate" and "demands." "Based on multiple readouts of these meetings" -- and "these meetings" refer to the meetings on July 26th?

A Yes.

Q -- "Ambassadors Volker and Sondland reportedly provided advice to the Ukrainian leadership about how to 'navigate' the demands that the President had made."

But on July 26th, you were not aware the President had any demands. Is that correct?

A Well, I think we were aware at that point that the President wanted -- I think this was still in the vanilla corruption part of the continuum. Because, again, we didn't get a transcript of the actual call until, I think, September.

Q Right.

A So this whole notion of investigating the Bidens I don't believe would've come up in that meeting because we weren't aware of it.

Q Okay. So, during that meeting, I mean, if I understand your testimony, the statement didn't come up and --

A I don't remember it coming up.

Q Okay.

A Didn't flag it for me.

Q And then just flipping back to page 7, the first bullet point: "that State Department officials, including [yourself and] Ambassador Volker, had spoken with Mr. Giuliani in an attempt to 'contain the damage.'"

I mean, none of your communications with Mr. Giuliani were trying to contain any damage, because you didn't know any damage had occurred. Is that correct?

A Well, as I said, my conversations -- because they're lumping Volker and me together -- my conversations with Giuliani really centered around negotiating this press statement.

Q Okay.

A If you want to call that containing the damage, I guess you could, but I don't see it as that.

Q Yeah. I don't understand how that could be containing the damage.

The next sentence: "During this same timeframe, multiple U.S. officials told me that the Ukrainian leadership was led to believe that a meeting or phone call between the President and President Zelensky would depend on whether Zelensky showed willingness to 'play ball.'"

Now, as far as you know, the July call was scheduled without any preconditions, right?

A Ultimately, yes.

Q The company Burisma has been the subject of a

number of investigations in Ukraine over the years. You're aware of that, right?

A I am now.

Q And to the extent Ukrainians are investigating other Ukrainians for wrongdoing in the company of Burisma, that would be perfectly acceptable, correct?

A Presumably.

Q Okay. Now, you're aware that Hunter Biden was asked to serve on the board of Burisma, correct?

A Based on press accounts, yes.

Q Yeah. Do you know whether Mr. Biden has any corporate governance experience?

A I don't.

Q Okay. And, you know, is it conceivable that Ukrainians could have decided to place Mr. Biden on the board because they wanted to curry favor with the U.S.?

A Conceivable.

Q Okay. And if they did and if the decision to place him on the board was improper and the Ukrainians found evidence of that, wouldn't it be fair that they would investigate that?

A Are you asking for my opinion?

Q Well, it's just, if there was wrongdoing associated with placing Hunter Biden on the board, wouldn't that be something worth investigating?

A Seems to be.

Q Okay.

I'm going to ask you a very odd fact that came up in another interview. I just want to get your reaction to it. Have you ever encouraged Romanians to show up at the White House without an appointment?

A No.

Q Okay. If someone were to suggest that, would you have any idea what the basis for that was?

A Well, one of the things that I wound up doing was helping bilateral ambassadors -- what do you call it? -- advocate for meetings of their country's leaders. So, occasionally, I would get a phone call from a bilateral ambassador and say, "Our President would like to meet with President Trump. I've had a request in for months. Could you help? Could you help push?

Q Now, when you --

A So that's the context in which I would join with my bilateral colleague and call someone at the White House and say, I think this is very important that we get the President of fill-in-the-blank EU country in to see President Trump.

But have I ever said, you just show up at the White House without an appointment?

Q Yes.

A No. No.

Q And by bilateral ambassador, you mean the U.S. ambassador?

A The U.S. ambassador to the particular country.

Q Like another State Department employee.

A Correct.

Q Okay.

And you can't just show up to the White House and get in, right?

A Correct.

Q You've got to have a meeting. And before the meeting, you've got to do certain things, correct?

A That's right.

Q Okay.

Did anyone in the National Security Council ever express concern to you that you were using an unsecure mobile device in your discussions with other international leaders?

A Never.

Q President Zelensky's inauguration was scheduled relatively quickly. Is that fair to say?

A I think that's right.

Q A matter of days, even?

A Yeah, I think the date was sort of floating, and they nailed it down somehow.

Q And the U.S. delegation, in advance of the trip, was in flux?

A Correct.

Q And at one point, it's been related to us, that Vice President Pence was considering going? Is that something you --

A I had heard that, yes.

Q Okay. And then, as it turned out, he was unable to go. Do you know why?

A I don't.

Q Do you know if his decision not to attend was related to any of the things we've been discussing today, such as the Burisma matter, the 2016 --

A I don't know why he didn't go.

Q Okay. So there's no reason -- you have no evidence to suggest that Vice President Pence's participation in the inaugural was withheld from Ukraine as an admonishment for not playing ball or something of that sort?

A I don't remember anything to that effect.

Q Okay.

MR. CASTOR: Mr. Zeldin.

MR. ZELDIN: I'm picking up where my colleague was just asking you some additional questions about Burisma. Do you know why Burisma and -- do you know whose Zlochevsky is?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Who?

MR. ZELDIN: Zlochevsky.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: No.

MR. ZELDIN: Do you know why -- so Zlochevsky was an oligarch with ownership stake in Burisma. Do you know why Burisma and Zlochevsky were under investigation for corruption in the Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I do not.

MR. ZELDIN: But you are aware that Hunter Biden was hired for a paid position on the board of directors?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Again, based on press accounts, recent press accounts, yes.

MR. ZELDIN: Those press accounts, did they indicate that Hunter Biden was getting paid at least $50,000 per month?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I recall a figure close to that, yeah.

MR. ZELDIN: Did any of those press accounts indicate that he had no energy experience or Ukraine experience?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yes.

MR. ZELDIN: Are you aware that Vice President Joe Biden went to Ukraine in 2016 and successfully got the prosecutor general, the state prosecutor, fired?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Again, based on press accounts.

MR. ZELDIN: The name of that state prosecutor, Viktor Shokin.

Are you aware, based on those press accounts, that the Vice President threatened Ukraine with the loss of $1 billion

if they didn't immediately fire that state prosecutor?

[5:50 p.m.]

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Again, based on recent press accounts, yes.

MR. ZELDIN: Is it fair that there's a lot about Burisma, Zlochevsky, Hunter Biden and Joe Biden that you don't know about?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MR. ZELDIN: Do you have a problem with the Vice President's son being paid $50,000 a month in Ukraine?

THE CHAIRMAN: We're getting very far afield if we're asking the Ambassador's opinion on what someone should be paid to serve on a board.

MR. ZELDIN: But you have asked for his opinion on a lot of things related to this, and I'm going to --

THE CHAIRMAN: You know, I don't think I have. The Ambassador can venture an opinion on this, but --

MR. ZELDIN: Well, he has been asked many questions about his assessment of whether it was right or wrong. So we are going to get into just what basis of information he has --

THE CHAIRMAN: We're talking about diplomatic efforts and shadow foreign policy, but I'll let the witness answer. It just seems an odd opinion question to be asking of this witness.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I have no opinion.

MR. ZELDIN: Do you believe that it would be appropriate for the son of the Vice President to be paid $50,000 a month from an entity in one of the countries in your portfolio, run by an oligarch under corruption, and that person is -- has no energy experience or no Ukraine experience? You don't have any opinion? You have no problem with that?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Congressman, I can't speculate as to why they hired him or what they paid him. That wouldn't be right on my part to speculate.

MR. ZELDIN: Do you believe that there would be any conflict of interest for the Vice President to be having the -- let me backtrack a moment.

Are you aware that Viktor Shokin, that state prosecutor, had an open investigation into Burisma and Zlochevsky at the time that he made that threat?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Only through recent press accounts.

MR. ZELDIN: And do you have any -- do you see any issue with the Vice President issuing that threat if his son is being paid $50,000 a month from that entity?

THE CHAIRMAN: If I could just state for the record, I think the evidence we've received thus far indicated there was no open investigation. You can posit an allegation, but that's not been the --

MR. MEADOWS: Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, I

don't mind you opining on your 45 minutes. And this is a deposition, and unless you want us opining on your 45 minutes, let's leave it to the questions and answers. He's got three capable counselors there that I'm sure are paid far more than you and I are paid to advise him on what he should and should not answer.

THE CHAIRMAN: The objection, if we were in court, would be facts not in evidence. And --

MR. MEADOWS: But the objections if we were in court would be on you leading the witness over and over and over again.

THE CHAIRMAN: I don't think it's fair --

MR. NOBLE: That's admissible in court.

THE CHAIRMAN: I don't think it's fair --

MR. ZELDIN: By the way, the question was, are you aware that there was an open case?

THE CHAIRMAN: I don't think it's fair to this witness to ask him if he is aware of facts which are not, in fact, facts. If you want to say, are you aware that there is an allegation, that's fine.

MR. MEADOWS: Well, Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, you have indicated facts regarding a 2020 campaign investigation that are not facts, they're merely your opinion. So if we want to get in this back-and-forth, I'm more than willing to get into a colloquy with you with the

facts, because the facts are on my side.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would just caution the witness facts represented by members may not actually be facts, but you are free to answer their questions.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I can't express an opinion on Mr. Biden's employment.

MR. ZELDIN: Are you aware -- do you know if Viktor Shokin had an open investigation into Burisma and Zlochevsky at the time that Vice President Biden threatened Ukraine with the loss of $1 billion?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I'm not aware. Again, all of my awareness comes from recent press reports.

MR. MEADOWS: So, Mr. Ambassador, let me jump in. I don't want you answering to facts that are not facts. I want to make that clear for the record. I also don't want you to give opinion on things that you're not an expert on.

And I can tell that some of your reluctance with my colleague is that you don't want to weigh in. And so, as much as we might want you to weigh in, and as much as the other side might want you to weigh in on facts that are not necessarily facts, I want you to stick to that. Can I interject?

Here is one area that I do believe that there -- we are conflating two different things. We're conflating foreign aid and javelins at times. Would you agree with that? That

foreign aid, the foreign aid that was withheld was not actually withholding javelin defense items. Are you aware of any conversation where javelins were being withheld?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: My knowledge of the aid package is very limited. Again, my focus -- it sounds very narrow, but you have a full-time bilateral Ambassador who would deal with those issues. That was Ambassador Taylor and prior to that, Ambassador Yovanovitch. That is right in the center lane of their portfolio. Then on top of that, which is unusual, you have layered over that a Special Envoy, whose sole focus is to oversee the Ukraine portfolio.

My role in this was to use whatever influence I had at the NSC and the White House to help advocate for a meeting. I did not get into the peculiarities --

MR. MEADOWS: And that advocation for the meeting, your advocating for that meeting was in the sole interest, best interest of the United States and our national security. Is that correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That is correct.

MR. MEADOWS: 100 percent?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: 100 percent.

MR. MEADOWS: Not 99, 100 percent in the best interest of our country. Is that correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: In my view, yes.

MR. MEADOWS: Okay. And so, in advocating for this

meeting, in advocating to make sure that the new President Zelensky was, indeed, set on a new path, you were very encouraged that he was serious about addressing corruption. Is that correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That is correct.

MR. MEADOWS: Because my colleague was talking about Mr. Shokin, and I guess his reputation was one that he was not serious about really rooting out corruption. Had you heard that?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Again, based on recent press reports.

MR. MEADOWS: Had you heard about the special prosecutor that replaced him, that he was not serious about rooting out corruption?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Contemporarily, yes.

MR. MEADOWS: So both of those individuals were not serious. So we were taking a leap of faith, a leap of faith that this new government was going to get rid of corruption, which was contrary to all history that we know about with Ukraine. Is that correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: You can always dream.

MR. MEADOWS: All right, we can always dream. Would you agree that the European Union, prior to May of 2019, shared a similar view with President Donald Trump that corruption was a way of life in the Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: They were concerned about corruption, I think it's fair to say.

MR. MEADOWS: All right. And had any of the European Union raised corruption issues about the Ukraine with you in your role, in your official role as Ambassador for the EU?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yes. In fact, the official that traveled with me to Odessa, who was the Secretary General of the EU, raised it himself with President Poroshenko at our bilateral meeting.

MR. MEADOWS: All right. So you're saying that people outside of this administration raised with the previous President their concern about corruption. Whether or not it had anything to do with any individual, they were just generally concerned about corruption. Is that correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Corruption per se, yes.

MR. MEADOWS: All right. I can yield back.

MR. ZELDIN: If the President of the United States has a problem with the former Vice President of the United States' son being paid $50,000 a month with no energy experience and no Ukraine experience, if the President of the United States has a problem with the Vice President running point for the Obama administration and threatening to withhold $1 billion of U.S. aid if the State prosecutor isn't fired, and if the President of the United States is aware that there was an investigation into the entity that was paying Hunter Biden

$50,000 a month, and Zlochevsky who runs that, and if the President of the United States believes that there was an open investigation into Burisma and Zlochevsky at the time of Vice President Biden's threat, if the President of the United States has a problem with all of this, is that a reasonable position, is that an acceptable position for the President of the United States to want to look into that further?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I can't express an opinion on that. I don't know legally if the President has the right to do that. Again, I'm not a lawyer. I think that's really between the President and his -- you know, the electorate, as to whether the voters think that that's proper or not. I don't know.

MR. ZELDIN: But earlier on, you were testifying to a question worded differently, where you were saying that it would be inappropriate to ask the Ukrainian Government to conduct an investigation into a 2020 political rival, correct? Did you say something to that effect earlier?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I believe I did, yes.

MR. ZELDIN: But you're not willing to explain that any further beyond that, given all of -- of what the President may believe when making that -- when making that request. Does it matter what the facts are to you?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah, the facts are critical, and I don't know all the underlying facts. And I'm really not in

the business of providing an opinion on this hypothetical as to whether it was proper or improper. I do think it was improper on the future election.

MR. ZELDIN: Did you feel pressured earlier in today's deposition to answer that it was improper to ask, based on the fact that you don't have all the facts?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't think I felt unduly pressured at this deposition at all.

MR. ZELDIN: You didn't feel unduly pressured to answer that question without your facts, but you feel like you shouldn't answer my question because you don't have your facts? It's the same exact issue.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Tell me again your question.

MR. ZELDIN: So the President of the United States, if the President of the United States believes that Hunter Biden, Vice President Joe Biden's son, is getting paid $50,000 a month from this foreign company run by a foreign oligarch, that there is a corruption investigation into Burisma and Zlochevsky; if the President of the United States believes that Vice President Joe Biden threatened Ukraine with the loss of $1 billion, if they didn't immediately fire the state prosecutor who was the state prosecutor who had an investigation into Burisma and Zlochevsky; if the President believes all of these different things, if the President believes that Burisma, Zlochevsky, Hunter Biden and Joe Biden

shouldn't be immune from scrutiny just because Joe Biden is running for President; if the President was to believe that if it's not illegal then it should be; if the President believes that U.S. aid to Ukraine should be spent as effectively as possible; if the President has longstanding issues with corruption in Ukraine, if the President believes all of these things, would it be okay for the President to want to look into this further?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: As I said, I'm not a lawyer. If it's legal for him to do so, then I assume it would be okay. If it's illegal for him to do so, then I assume it would be wrong. That's the best answer I can give you. It's really a question of law.

MR. ZELDIN: So we're talking about an earlier question you were asked and you answered one way, and another question I just asked that you're answering the opposite way. One question was worded the way that I just worded the question I just asked you, and you gave what seemed to be a candid answer. One of my colleagues earlier asked you if it would be appropriate to ask Ukraine to conduct an investigation into a political rival, and you answered a different way.

So I'm trying to understand two completely different answers to what is the same exact situation, a request by the President of the United States to Ukraine to look into a case involving an entity that was under investigation for

corruption owned by an oligarch under investigation for corruption, and the President of the United States has an issue with the entire setup and he makes the request.

So you've been asked the question on what is the same exact issue two different ways, but you're giving two totally different answers. And we need to -- I believe it would be helpful if we can better understand why it's two totally different answers to what is the same exact request.

MR. LUSKIN: With all respect, Congressman, we've now been here for eight and a half hours and Ambassador Sondland has not declined to answer a single question posed by any member or any counsel member. You've asked this question now three different times. I know you're unhappy with his answer, but if we stay until 7:30 he's not going to change his answer.

MR. ZELDIN: So you might have misunderstood my answer, Counselor, but I had no issue at all with what Ambassador Sondland just said. My issue is with his answer earlier today that was a different answer to what was a different version of the same exact question, and I'm giving the Ambassador an opportunity, if he would like to, if he would like to, help us better understand why there were two different answers to those two questions.

MR. LUSKIN: And I think, as he's made clear, he stands by his testimony today, by his answers to your questions and

by his answers to the questions by the majority earlier. And I think it's obviously the task of this committee if you perceive there to be any differences between those answers to reconcile those differences. But more questions I don't think are going to assist you any further. I think you've asked it about as many times as you can, and he's given you his best shot at an answer.

MR. ROY: Do you have something to add? No?

Ambassador, in your statement you provided, you said: "First, I knew that a public embrace of anticorruption reforms by Ukraine was one of the preconditions for securing a White House meeting with President Zelensky."

Do you stand by that?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I do.

MR. ROY: My view was and has always been that such Western reforms are consistent with U.S. support for rule of law in Ukraine, going back decades, under both Republican and Democratic administrations, right, you agree?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yes, I do.

MR. ROY: Nothing about that request raised any red flags for me, Ambassador Volker, or Ambassador Taylor.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MR. ROY: A few moments ago, though, you made a statement and I just want to make sure -- I might have misheard, but you made a statement along the lines of you

thought that there should be no preconditions for a meeting, and that there should have been a meeting immediately after the inauguration?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Well, as a policy matter, obviously, if my goal was to get the two Presidents together as quickly as possible following the inauguration, a meeting with no preconditions would have been a lot easier to handle.

MR. ROY: Right. But do you see my -- I mean, my question here is just -- I mean, you can have a policy debate about that, right? And I get -- and we had an exchange earlier about your goals and trying to, you know, get the things we want to get accomplished in Ukraine. We talked about Secretary Perry.

My question here, though, is just you have stated fairly affirmatively nothing about that request raised any red flags for you. So, just to be clear, you don't see a problem with having preconditions. Just to exercise your goal of getting a meeting as soon as humanly possible, that would have been your preference.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct. In other words, from a policy matter, there was nothing wrong with --

MR. ROY: Right.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: -- clear and straightforward preconditions that were lawful preconditions. Nothing wrong with that. My preference would have been no preconditions.

MR. ROY: Right, and that's fine. But, in other words, to carry out your objective, which is to have a meeting.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MR. ROY: But preconditions might be perfectly acceptable?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Totally.

MR. ROY: Okay. The other question I have is, if the United States Government believes, if we have reason to believe, the President down through law enforcement or otherwise and our intelligence agencies, we have reason to believe that any country in the world had any interference with our system of elections or otherwise, would that not be a basis for our government to choose to withhold funds, or to otherwise make decisions about how we handle aid and so forth, any country, hypothetically speaking, speaking as an Ambassador, would that not be a reason for a country to kind of think about how they handle aid?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I think it would create concern on our part, yes.

MR. ROY: Okay.

MR. MEADOWS: Ambassador, I'm going to go back to one thing just to make sure that we're clear. We talked about the letter earlier today, the letter that surprised you I think was your words. I don't want to put words in your mouth, but the letter from the President that said, we can

have this meeting, and you were surprised by it, based on the initial meeting in the Oval Office. Is that correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That is correct.

MR. MEADOWS: And so once you had this letter that was unconditioned in terms of meeting with President Zelensky, would you characterize that as a letter that had no conditions to it, in terms of a meeting with President Zelensky?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Other than scheduling.

MR. MEADOWS: Other than scheduling. Did you ever hear from Secretary Pompeo that the President really didn't mean that letter and that you shouldn't take the letter at face value, that the only problem was a scheduling problem?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: No.

MR. MEADOWS: Did you ever hear from President Trump that he really didn't mean what he said in the letter, that it was -- the only precondition was a scheduling problem?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: No.

MR. MEADOWS: Did you hear from anyone in authority that the President really didn't mean what he said in that letter and that he was -- that there was any problem other than scheduling and that you shouldn't believe what that letter said?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I did not hear that, to the best of my recollection.

MR. MEADOWS: All right. And I appreciate you clarifying that and helping me understand that better, and I will yield back to my colleagues.

MR. CASTOR: We yield back.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would suggest, rather than breaking, because we're nearing the end that we just motor on through. Is that okay, Ambassador?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: How much longer?

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm going to go to our members and then our staff has a few cleanup questions, and then we're done if they're done. So, hopefully, very soon.

MR. LUSKIN: Good. Let's motor through, Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Malinowski.

MR. CASTOR: We might have a followup question or two.

THE CHAIRMAN: Sure.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ambassador, for your patience and diligence in answering these questions. And let me just say I personally very much appreciate what you were trying to accomplish throughout this difficult period in getting the two Presidents together to get our relationship with Ukraine back on track, something we are all committed to in a bipartisan way.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Thank you, Congressman.

MR. MALINOWSKI: I wanted to -- my first question relates to your phone call to the President on, I believe,

September 9th, when you asked him, you said, what do you want from the Ukrainians, and you said that the President said that he wanted nothing. He repeated that there was no quid pro quo.

But then you told us at a later point that the President then added, I want Zelensky -- I just want Zelensky to do what he ran on. Is that essentially correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: In so many words, yes.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Okay. So even in that conversation in which he said there was no -- that he wanted nothing, no quid pro quo, he did actually want something. He wanted Zelensky to do something consistent with what he ran on. That's correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: If you consider that a quid pro quo, then --

MR. MALINOWSKI: Well, how did you -- what did you understand he meant by "I want Zelensky to do what he ran on"?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Again, I didn't have the time or opportunity to question him. He -- as I stated in my opening statement, he was in a very bad mood and it was a very short call. I don't want to characterize him as hanging up on me, but it was close to that.

MR. MALINOWSKI: But then in the text message that you sent reporting on that conversation, you said: "The

President is trying to evaluate whether Ukraine is truly going to adopt the transparency and reforms that President Zelensky promised."

So I think it suggests that you thought he was referring, again, to the corruption issue.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I thought it was -- based, again, on the short call, it was my interpretation of what the President was trying to tell me. I didn't have the opportunity to ask followup questions. He didn't want to talk.

MR. MALINOWSKI: So your assumption was that this was basically the same thing that had been communicated again and again. And, of course, corruption by September 9th, you know, you realize that that entails those two specific asks related to 2016 and Burisma?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Well, no. I had realized that it entailed those two specific asks, based on anecdotal evidence from a lot of other people. I had never heard it from the President. That's why I called the President.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Well, you did hear from the President at one point his interest in 2016, though, you said.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I heard on the 23rd that he wanted -- that Ukraine was trying to take him down. That was what I heard --

MR. MALINOWSKI: Got it.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: -- on the 23rd.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Second issue: You told us that you were trying to figure out why the aid was cut off when you learned that that was, in fact, true, and that nobody involved in the Ukraine file seemed to know why the aid was cut off.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: They all seemed to have different reasons. No one could give me a clear answer saying, this is our current policy.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Isn't that a bit odd that nobody involved in making and implementing policy towards this important country knew why aid had been cut off to that country?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: It's extremely odd.

MR. MALINOWSKI: One of the theories, one of the potential reasons that was stated was that the Europeans were not doing enough to help Ukraine, correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That was one reason.

MR. MALINOWSKI: You're our Ambassador to the EU. After the aid was cut, did anyone ever ask you, in your formal role as our representative to the EU, to go to the Europeans and to ask them to do more to help Ukraine as a way of getting that aid unfrozen?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: They did not.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Are you aware that any other State

Department official was asked to deliver this message to the Europeans?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I'm not aware.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Thank you.

The third issue, it's been -- we've gone back and forth on the general practice of conditioning U.S. assistance around the world, and certainly, I think we would all acknowledge it's very commonly done. We condition all kinds of things on what we want from other countries. My colleagues may know I used to be the Assistant Secretary for DRL, for the Democracy Human Rights Bureau, and I would have been on your case to condition aid in many cases on human rights and corruption issues.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: You wouldn't have needed to.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Well, thank you. But, in that context, are you aware that the State Department, through all this time, has had a comprehensive set of asks to the Ukrainian Government with regard to what it should do to improve its record on corruption?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Anecdotally, yes. I've never seen a formal list, though.

MR. MALINOWSKI: So you haven't familiarized yourself with what we have been asking the Ukrainians to do?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: No. That is exactly in the bilateral Ambassador's center lane.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Got it.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: They would not be happy if I interfered in that.

MR. MALINOWSKI: But you've heard conversations -- so would it be -- would it sound right to you to hear that we were asking them to strengthen the prosecutor's office, to clean up corruption in the defense sector, you know, defense procurement, there was corruption there, that we wanted them to do more prosecutions of oligarchs and, you know, high-level corrupt individuals, such things as that?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: None of that would surprise me.

MR. MALINOWSKI: And were any of those things in, in your experience, ever linked to the aid or the desire of the Ukrainians to have a meeting with the President?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Only in the sense of the rubric of general corruption, when we were at that part of the continuum.

MR. MALINOWSKI: But those things weren't specifically presented to the Ukrainians as needing to be addressed?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Not by me.

MR. MALINOWSKI: By anybody, to your knowledge?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Not to my knowledge, but I don't know.

MR. MALINOWSKI: And presumably, if we wanted a country to do something on corruption to get a benefit from us, we

would want to tell them what to do specifically, right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Presumably.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Presumably, okay. So ultimately, again, it just came down to Burisma and 2016. And with regard to that, it all came to a head, you testified, with the negotiation, attempted negotiation of a press statement in which they were asked, you know, through Rudy Giuliani, to reference those specific things.

With regard to the reference to 2016 that was desired from the Ukrainians, was that ever framed -- in terms of Ukraine specifically, was that ever framed in terms of Ukraine cooperating with an ongoing Department of Justice investigation?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't recall that. It may have been, but I don't recall that wording.

MR. MALINOWSKI: So the draft press statement -- and I think we heard a draft -- as I recall it, it had the Ukrainians say that they would investigate these issues. It didn't refer to cooperating with the Attorney General or working through an MLAT to help DOJ conduct its own investigation into those issues.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah. All of the anecdotal information through Ambassador Volker from presumably Mr. Giuliani had to do with the Ukrainians conducting their own investigations.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Understood. Well, thank you.

And I yield back.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Representative Hill.

MS. HILL: Thank you. Good to see you. I met you at the Speaker's delegation.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Right. Nice to see you again.

MS. HILL: Thank you for this. This is a lot of patience and I know this is a marathon.

So my questions are really just kind of -- I want to center on what the -- when you're talking about your continuum, you sort of -- you clarified four phases. The third is when you know that we're discussing Burisma and the 2016 supposed intervention, right, or interference in the election, right? Is that what you would consider kind of three of four phases?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That's right.

MS. HILL: Okay. So during August, really around August 9th on is when it seems to escalate, based on the text messages that I've seen. And on August 9th, I just, again, wanted to clarify a few things. It looks like you had the initial conversation with where Kurt Volker wanted to -- he had a chat with Yermak and he wanted to get on the phone to talk about what we needed to advise him on with Giuliani, right?

So you said you don't remember a lot of the details of the call with Giuliani, but then later in the day, you said specifically that to avoid misunderstandings, it might be helpful to ask Andrey for a draft statement.

So it seems like -- and then when you were talking about that earlier, you said that you were concerned that whatever Ukraine produced wouldn't be good enough for what apparently earlier in the day, I would assume, Giuliani had said. Does that sound right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I think what I said was that this was the point where we went from a draft statement that was just going to be a press statement, a written statement, to some type of television interview or television broadcast.

And I was asking that whatever he was proposing to say would be put down on paper ahead of time so that we wouldn't put Zelensky in a position of where he does this on television and it's not good enough.

MS. HILL: Got it, okay. So then on the next day, you were forwarded something from Volker that was conversation from Yermak saying: Hi, Kurt, please let me know when you can talk. I think it's possible to make this declaration and mention all of these things which we discussed yesterday, but it would be logic to do after we receive confirmation of date.

So it sounds like they are getting -- Ukraine might be

getting frustrated and wanting to nail down a date before they put anything out publicly. Does that sound right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That sounds right.

MS. HILL: And what is -- given kind of what I saw when we went on the trip, the importance of Ukraine and Russia and our relationship with the EU, did that escalate the sense of urgency for you to kind of get this meeting on the books, to really move things forward with -- if Ukraine is getting more frustrated, does that -- did that raise any flags for you? Did that make you want to move?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah. I mean, we were jerking Ukraine around, and I didn't like it.

MS. HILL: Okay. What do you mean by that?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I mean we were -- we were continually putting new conditions on a meeting which should have occurred, because they had already issued an unconditional invitation.

MS. HILL: Got it, okay. And at that point, it looks like on the same date, Yermak says that -- he specifically states that they will announce the upcoming visit once there's a date locked in for the meeting and outlining the vision for the reboot of the U.S.-Ukraine relationship, including, among other things, Burisma and the election meddling investigations.

MS. HILL: So at that stage, on August 10th, you knew about Burisma and the meddling, the supposed meddling, that that was the condition that the White House wanted, right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Presumably, that's when we got to that phase of the continuum.

MS. HILL: Through Giuliani, right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MS. HILL: That was how it was indicated? Okay.

So if you continue on, then it gets to -- it looks like there's a shift in who is kind of leading things, in my opinion, on the text messages. And I'm not sure if this is right, but, given escalation, I would assume it might be, where suddenly it looks like Kurt Volker sends something to you, the statement -- this is on the text messages from August 13th.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Can you give me a page?

MS. HILL: I'm not looking at something with the same page numbers as you, so maybe --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: August 13th?

MS. HILL: August 13th at 10:26 in the morning.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Oh.

MR. LUSKIN: Which text chain?

MS. HILL: Ambassador -- let's see. Yeah, it was Volker and Sondland. Yeah. So it looks like it was just you and Sondland -- I mean you and Volker.

Okay. Well, either way, he sends the statement to you that to me seems --

MR. LUSKIN: Hold on. Give us 1 second.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: One second. Okay. Okay, what date, again?

MS. HILL: August 13th.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: At what time?

MS. HILL: At 10:26 a.m.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Wait a minute. This is all -- this is Yermak and me on page 23. It's the wrong page. Yermak and Volker and me.

MS. HILL: What I'm looking at is a longer message from Kurt Volker that says "special attention" --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah, okay, I've got that. That's the last text. Got it.

MS. HILL: Okay. And so it's a long statement, right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yep.

MS. HILL: And so it looks to me like he might be sending that to you for approval. Does that sound right? Because you say afterwards: "Perfect, let's send to Andrey after our call."

THE CHAIRMAN: Can I just interrupt, Representative Hill? And I don't know if you were here at the time, but we went through all these text messages. If you still need further clarification, but --

MS. HILL: Yes. It was mainly the approval part that I wanted to clarify, because that's where it seems to me like things are starting to shift where you're taking more of a lead role than Volker. And I just wanted to know if you had any -- if this was related to your concerns perhaps escalating.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I'm trying to find the followup where you say I said "perfect."

Oh, okay, got it, got it, got it. Okay.

MS. HILL: I'm not going to grill you on the specifics of those anyway.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I mean, again, this was -- this was not a question of who was or wasn't in charge. This was sort of a collaborative effort. I think what we were trying to do here was to get something on paper that we could tentatively say, yeah, that sounds like something Giuliani would be okay with, and Yermak could say, yeah, I think Zelensky would be okay with it.

And then -- again, I'm speculating -- once we got to some language, we would send the language off to our respective principals and figure out if we had a statement we could agree on. Not unlike negotiating a lot of different statements.

MS. HILL: Okay. And, sorry, because the reason I was asking is that by the 17th you were having direct

conversations with Yermak, whereas it looked more previously like Volker was talking with Yermak and it was coming to you.

So I was wondering if that was kind of -- that might be the crisis mitigation that we were talking about when Ukraine is getting more upset, when you're having to kind of step in and take more of a leadership role.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I will take the compliment, but I don't think that that really was the case. I think this was just circumstantial. Sometimes Yermak could reach me. Sometimes he could reach Volker. Sometimes Volker was at the McCain Institute, because he wasn't working full time. He had other duties. So I think it was catch as catch can.

MS. HILL: So by the time you had the visit -- or the President canceled the trip to Poland and you went, right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I did.

MS. HILL: You met with Zelensky. And --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: The Vice President met with Zelensky. I sat in on the meeting.

MS. HILL: Okay, got it. What was your impression by then? This was the escalation. This was the -- to me, this is kind of the critical mass moment where it's all coming to a head. How was it with Zelensky at that point?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Oh, I think Zelensky, you know, in my opinion, put on a good game face. I think he was disappointed, because I think he thought this was going to be

his first meeting with President Trump. I think he understood the hurricane was beyond President Trump's control. You know, he was being gracious, but I think he would have preferred to meet with the President of the United States then the Vice President of the United States. That's just normal.

MS. HILL: Do you feel like at this point they felt -- Ukraine felt more pressure to kind of accommodate those requests?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't know if they felt more pressure. I don't think this was a case of turning up the pressure. I think this was circumstantial. And then, again, we tried to figure out when the next opportunity would be for him to meet with the President, which turned out to be at the UNGA.

MS. HILL: Okay. And then the last thing and I'll stop is that you have -- on September 8th, it says -- these are the final text messages that I'm referring to. It's one between you, Taylor, and Volker on September 8th at 11:20 a.m.

MR. LUSKIN: And, again, we're going to have to try and find it.

MS. HILL: I know. I'm sorry.

MR. NOBLE: 53.

MR. LUSKIN: Thank you. Okay, go ahead

MS. HILL: So you say that you have multiple conversations with Zelensky and POTUS at this point, but by now you're aware that the aid had been withheld, right? Yes, that happened on August 29th.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I think I was aware that the aid had been withheld in July when Taylor sent me a text to the effect that I had just got off of a video conference and someone said something about a hold on the aid. I think that's when I became --

MS. HILL: In July?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah, in July. But I didn't have any reason to know why it was being withheld.

MS. HILL: Got it, okay, because I saw the one from Yermak on August 29th, so --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't think the Ukrainians knew it was being withheld back in July.

MS. HILL: Only in August.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah.

MS. HILL: So you knew in July that the aid was being withheld?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I knew what Taylor told me.

MS. HILL: Okay. And so by September 8th, you said: Guys, multiple conversations with Zelensky and POTUS, let's talk. Right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Which time?

MS. HILL: That was the 11:20 a.m.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah. I don't recall. I see it. I don't recall the -- I don't recall the conversations.

MS. HILL: You don't recall the conversations with Zelensky and --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't -- I don't recall the conversations. I'd need more refreshment to recall the conversations.

MS. HILL: Okay. Well, then that same day in that same text message chain, Bill Taylor says: "Gordon and I just spoke. I can brief you" -- I'm assuming this is to Volker -- "I can brief you if you and Gordon didn't connect." Does that refresh your memory at all?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Yeah. I mean, I obviously must have relayed to Bill Taylor what I talked about, but I don't remember what it is.

MS. HILL: Okay. So there's nothing right around this time of September 8th or 9th where you feel like -- is this when the red flag is really hitting for you?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: You know, this is just before I believe that -- this is just before I got the text from Taylor talking about that everything's connected. I believe that's -- this is one day before I got that text.

MS. HILL: Okay. And then --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: And that was the text that said, I

hope this isn't being, you know, withheld for political reasons, or something to that effect.

MS. HILL: Right.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: And that's when I made the phone call to --

MS. HILL: The President.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: -- the President, yeah.

MS. HILL: But that night, on the 8th, you don't recall what you and Taylor were talking about or what you and Volker were talking about?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't know if it may have led up to that text. He may have said something to warn, that I'm feeling this, but then I got the text on the 9th, and then I knew conclusively that he was concerned.

MS. HILL: But on the 8th is when you said that there were multiple conversations with Zelensky and POTUS. What do you think that was?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't know, because I don't think I would have talked to POTUS the day before I talked to him again. I don't think I talked to him twice in 2 days.

MS. HILL: So you don't know what you might have been referring to there?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: No, I don't.

MS. HILL: Okay. Okay, thank you.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Thank you. Sorry.

THE CHAIRMAN: I promise you're almost at the end. I just have a couple questions, my staff has a couple of cleanup questions.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Great.

THE CHAIRMAN: And then, unless Mr. Swalwell has a burning question, I think we're done on our side.

MR. CASTOR: And I have one or two.

THE CHAIRMAN: I wanted to ask you, at the press conference today with Chief of Staff Mulvaney, he was asked: "So he," meaning the President, "was never realistically entertaining a meeting with President Zelensky?"

And Mr. Mulvaney's answer was: "I mean, I -- we -- we get asked by foreign leaders all the time to either come visit their country or to have them come visit here, and we go -- try to be courteous and say yes. And some of them we're able to accommodate and some of them we are not, but I do not remember -- excuse me, I'm going to answer her question -- that I don't remember serious conversation about setting up an actual meeting. There were no dates discussed. There was not -- I -- I saw that as one of the typical pleasantries that we have, and I don't think it was dangling a -- a meeting or anything like that."

I take it, Ambassador, that was not your understanding of the situation when that letter went out?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Not at all.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Noble.

BY MR. NOBLE:

Q Ambassador, going back to September 1st, the meetings in Warsaw, the bilat between Vice President Pence and President Zelensky.

A Yes.

Q So this was after the July 25th call between President Trump and President Zelensky, correct?

A What was the Warsaw date?

Q September 1st.

A Yes.

Q And it's also after the Politico article made public that the U.S. had frozen the aid to Ukraine on August 28th.

A I think that's right.

Q A few days later after that, right?

A Yeah.

Q Do you recall any conversation between Vice President Pence and President Zelensky about the frozen aid or the White House visit?

A I sat in, as I said, I sat in on a bilat with about 20 people, at least, on each side, so maybe 30 or 40 people total. And I'm sure there were contemporaneous notes taken of the meeting. And as I also testified, I don't believe there was a private pull-aside. I think it was one of these

large bilats.

And I don't -- I don't remember if President Zelensky did one of his quips like, "When am I going to get my date?" which he did when he and the President had their bilat in New York. He may have done that. He's been -- he was a little snarky about it, because it had been withheld for so long. And this is new news to me about Chief of Staff Mulvaney.

As far as the aid is concerned, I don't remember him bringing it up, at least in the big bilat. Now, again, I don't know if he and Vice President Pence had a private conversation afterwards, but I don't recall.

Q So you don't recall Vice President Pence saying something to the effect that the U.S. was not going to lift the freeze at that time to President Zelensky?

A I don't -- again, he may have done -- I don't remember it. I honestly don't.

Q Do you know whether Vice President Pence had been briefed or had read the transcript of the July 25th call at that point?

A I don't know. I never asked him.

Q And then the next day, September 2nd, I believe you said Secretary Pompeo traveled to Brussels and you had meetings with Secretary Pompeo.

A Correct.

Q So that's the day after you had that text message

exchange with Ambassador Taylor where he said or asked: "Are we now saying that security assistance and White House meeting are conditioned on investigations?"

Did you discuss Ambassador Taylor's concerns with Secretary Pompeo about the linkage?

A No. And the reason I didn't was we were so consumed with the meetings, which were very fragile, getting those meetings scheduled, and then potentially losing them after President Trump decided not to travel to Warsaw, because we were all going to travel together, that I was totally focused on the EU meetings. And I didn't discuss anything with Secretary Pompeo that I can recall other than the EU meetings with the four leaders.

Q Did you ever discuss with Secretary Pompeo the linkage between security assistance, White House meeting, and the investigations?

A I think the only thing I did was encourage Ambassador Taylor to deal with it and to call Secretary Pompeo.

Q You never had any direct discussions with Secretary Pompeo?

A I don't recall any. I mean, I do recall I was highly focused on the four leaders when we were there. It was a very tight schedule.

Q Did you ever discuss Rudy Giuliani with Secretary

Pompeo?

A Only in general terms.

Q And what did you discuss?

A That he's involved in affairs. And Pompeo rolled his eyes and said: Yes, it's something we have to deal with.

Q What about his counselor, Ulrich Brechbuhl? You said you had lots of conversations with Mr. Brechbuhl?

A On and off, yes.

Q Did you discuss the linkage between the security assistance, the White House meeting, and the investigations with him?

A I don't believe I did, but I don't recall.

Q What about Rudy Giuliani, did you discuss Giuliani with Brechbuhl?

A I may have. Again, people usually smiled when they heard Rudy's name because he was always swirling around somewhere.

Q Yeah, but, I mean, he was causing serious issues in the U.S. relationship with Ukraine. Did you raise those concerns with --

A Listen, the State Department was fully aware of the issues, and there was very little they could do about it if the President decided he wanted his lawyer involved.

Q And does that include Secretary Pompeo and his counselor, Ulrich Brechbuhl?

A My speculation is yes, that they hit a brick wall when it came to getting rid of Mr. Giuliani.

Q I just want to ask you about whether you know of anything about a September 17th phone call between Secretary Pompeo and the Ukrainian Foreign Minister?

A Would that be with Mr. Prystaiko?

Q I believe so. You can pronounce it, I can't.

A What was the question?

Q Are you familiar with the September 17th call between the Secretary and the Foreign Minister?

A I'm aware they had a call. I don't believe I ever saw a readout.

Q So you don't know what the content --

A I don't.

Q What about a September 18th call between Vice President Pence and President Zelensky?

A Again, don't recall. Again, this was the disorganization. We weren't kept in the loop that the call was going to occur. We weren't asked to listen in. So a lot of this was catchup.

Q Okay. You've had some testimony today about the United Nations General Assembly and the meeting between President Trump and President Zelensky. Could you just describe for us kind of their interactions during UNGA?

A Yeah. I mean, it was a typical bilat where you had

a press scrum prior to the formal meeting and a lot of questions shouted. And, you know, we all know what President Trump said. It was widely reported. No pressure, it was a perfect meeting, you heard all of that. Then the press was ushered out.

And President Trump and President Zelensky had sort of a colloquy back and forth, and President Zelensky jokingly said: When am I going to get my date for the White House? I'm still -- I had my invitation, where's the date? And President Trump sort of deferred the -- you know, punted on the question, didn't answer it.

Q Is that -- are you referring to the press conference they held together on television, or was this the conversation that also occurred in private?

A I think it occurred in private as well, yeah. Private, I mean, there were 30 people in the room, probably.

Q Was there any discussion during the private session about the July 25th call or President Trump's interest in Ukraine pursuing the investigations that he discussed during that call?

A I don't recall that.

Q What about -- did they have -- were there any discussions about the investigations with any other officials on the side that President Trump had?

A I wasn't with President Trump for any other

discussions. I came into the bilat and then I left.

Q Just for the -- with President Zelensky?

A Yes.

Q What about you, did you have any discussions with other officials regarding the July 25th call?

A I don't recall, no. I don't recall having.

Q I just have some final questions about, of all things, recordkeeping.

So you say you used your personal -- or you had a dual cell phone for personal and business. Are you familiar with the Federal Records Act and its requirements for recordkeeping?

A I am.

Q So, obviously, you used WhatsApp to communicate with other U.S. officials. Did you also use WhatsApp to communicate with foreign officials?

A Yeah, it's very customary in Europe. Everyone uses WhatsApp. That's one of the only mediums that foreign leaders use in Europe.

Q Did you also use -- did you ever use personal email to communicate with foreign leaders or U.S. Government officials?

A I tried to avoid it, but when I did I also tried to copy my State email, because the State email is really hard to send attachments or forward. It's just -- it's really a

cumbersome system.

Q So did you not always follow that requirement to copy your State email?

A When I didn't, I tried to remedy the situation by moving it over. But as far as my counsel is concerned, I think I'm now in complete compliance with that act.

Is that correct?

MR. LUSKIN: That is correct.

BY MR. NOBLE:

Q Did you do it within 20 days --

A I don't recall.

Q -- of when you initially sent the message or communication?

A I don't recall.

Q What did you do to comply with the recordkeeping requirements as it pertains to your WhatsApp messages?

MR. LUSKIN: They've all been forwarded to the State Department electronically.

MR. NOBLE: Did that occur within 20 days of the communication?

MR. MEADOWS: Counsel, with all due respect --

MR. SWALWELL: He's asking the question. No, no, no. Mark, he gets to ask the questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, gentlemen, gentlemen.

MR. MEADOWS: If we're going to get into the 20 days,

Adam, let me just tell you what's good for the goose is good for the gander. Okay? And I promise you if you want --

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, the gander endured 2-1/2 years of Benghazi over emails, so --

MR. MEADOWS: I'm looking for 30,000 emails, Adam, 30,000 emails.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think it is appropriate to --

MR. MEADOWS: You want to talk about 20 days? Come on.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think it is appropriate to ask -- excuse me.

MR. MEADOWS: It is 9 hours and now we're getting into this kind of crap, and that's what it is.

THE CHAIRMAN: Excuse me. I think it is appropriate to ask whether the Ambassador provided his text messages --

MR. MEADOWS: And he said yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let me finish. Contemporaneously when they were produced or only recently when this matter became under investigation.

So would you please respond, Ambassador?

MR. MEADOWS: Listen, it's under my committee. I know it. If you want to go back and forth --

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, then you should want to hear the answer.

MR. MEADOWS: I want to hear it. He said they were preserved, and now we're going to try to talk about 20 days.

THE CHAIRMAN: No. His counsel said that they were in compliance now. The question is --

MR. MEADOWS: Did you have a personal server, Ambassador Sondland?

THE CHAIRMAN: Excuse me. Excuse me. Excuse me, Mr. Meadows.

Ambassador, did you contemporaneously provide your WhatsApp messages to the State Department, per the requirements of the Federal Records Act, or was that done only recently upon the initiation of the investigation?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I was told that because of my phone having a dual SIM that everything wound up on the State server because one of the SIMs is my State SIM, my State email. That was not correct. And none of those texts or those WhatsApps wound up on the State server. They wound up just staying on the phone. So I did recently comply and put them on the State server.

THE CHAIRMAN: And how recently?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: In the last week or 2, I think.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

BY MR. NOBLE:

Q One other question on the text messages. Did you delete any of your text messages after that exchange with Ambassador Taylor on September 9th, or your WhatsApp messages or emails?

A Did I delete any --

Q Did you delete any of your WhatsApp messages, text messages, or emails after September 9th when you had that exchange with Ambassador Taylor?

A I may have, but I don't recall. I occasionally delete texts that are personal texts. I don't recall.

Q Anything pertaining to Ukraine?

A I'd have to go back and look. I don't recall.

Q Do you know whether those were preserved?

A Everything that's there was preserved.

Q But some may have been deleted before you turned over your messages?

A Again, I don't want to swear to it, because I get a lot of texts. So --

Q I mean, do you have any specific -- I mean, so at that point, right, you're sending this email that President Trump is claiming there is no quid pro quo. You're like let's stop talking about this over text message. At that point, did you delete any of your messages?

A No, at that point I did not delete anything on that stream.

Q Well, any other stream relating to Ukraine?

A Again, I don't recall. I will get back to you if you'd like me to look into it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Swalwell.

MR. SWALWELL: Thank you, Chairman.

Do you have a daily read book as an Ambassador?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I'm sorry?

MR. SWALWELL: Do you have a daily read book? Like, you mentioned cables that come across your desk.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I get them electronically, and sometimes I get a read book, depending on where I am.

MR. SWALWELL: Do you get press clippings every day?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I get a summary.

MR. SWALWELL: Who compiles that for you?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: The staff.

MR. SWALWELL: Who was compiling that for you in the spring of 2019?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't recall.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And that would -- did those press clippings, do they relate to Ukraine as well?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't read a lot of the press clippings. I have way too much to do to sit and read. I could read press clippings all day long.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. But they are routinely customarily provided for you?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: They are provided for everyone. There is a press clipping summary for the entire mission.

MR. SWALWELL: But on a daily basis, you will receive press clippings?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: No. No, it's all done electronically for the mission.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. But I'm asking, your email address, on a daily basis you receive press clippings as it relates to your duties?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I do, along with everyone else.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay.

I yield back.

THE CHAIRMAN: Over to the minority if they have any additional questions.

MR. JORDAN: Ambassador, President Zelensky wins his election, I think, April 21st, 2019, overwhelmingly, and then shortly thereafter gets a call from President Trump, a congratulatory call. Is that right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I understand that happened, yes.

MR. JORDAN: And then sort of the next -- I'm looking at your timeline -- the next event is the inauguration approximately a month later, May 20th, 2019.

Did you start working on -- I mean, based on the 8, 9 hours you've been here, you've talked about your focus was getting a second call and an official meeting between the Presidents.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: My preference would have been just to go right to a meeting, but when I found out that the meeting was going to be problematic as it kept getting

delayed, I pushed for a call at a minimum.

MR. JORDAN: Yeah. And I think you described it as you wanted to arrange a working phone call.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MR. JORDAN: Okay.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: The congratulatory call was probably a very short, "great job, talk to you soon."

MR. JORDAN: We've all got them.

So did you start working on that pretty soon in this whole continuum, as you've described it? Did you start like late April, early May, start, like, you know, we need to get these guys together?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I think the delegation when we came back from the inauguration -- are you talking about after the inauguration or between the election and the inauguration?

MR. JORDAN: I'm talking whenever you decided it was time to get a working -- to arrange a working phone call.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I think -- I don't know how much activity we really had between the election and the inauguration, because the inauguration was fairly soon after the election.

MR. JORDAN: Okay. So is it fair to say you started thinking about putting together the second phone call between President Trump and President Zelensky when you had the

delegation there in Ukraine on May 20th, 2019, for President Zelensky's inauguration?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I think we really started that in earnest after the briefing with President Trump on the 23rd.

MR. JORDAN: Was there any discussion on May 20th, 2019, with the folks who were part of the delegation in Ukraine at the inauguration?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: About a meeting or a phone call?

MR. JORDAN: Yes.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: There may have been. I mean, we had a lot of dinners and lunches, and it probably came up, but I don't remember specifically.

MR. JORDAN: Okay. And, again, and the folks at the inauguration were Mr. Perry, Secretary Perry, Senator Johnson, Ambassador Volker, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, those were the individuals that were part of the delegation?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: And myself.

MR. JORDAN: And yourself.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MR. JORDAN: Okay. And so you think you started talking about we need to get these guys together on a working phone call and at some kind of meeting, you think that started May 20th?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: It could have.

MR. JORDAN: Okay. Then the next meeting is at the

White House a few days later, where you're debriefing and you're talking about the situation, what happened a few days earlier at the inauguration, correct?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MR. JORDAN: All right. And you started to talk then to President Trump and amongst yourselves again about the idea to get this phone call, get this meeting?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Well, we only had the one conversation with President Trump, which, as I testified, didn't go very well, when he said talk to Rudy.

MR. JORDAN: Right.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Then we regrouped afterwards and said we need to really start pushing for the meeting or the phone call, because then we found out 3 or 4 days later that an invitation had been issued, which was unusual, considering President Trump's attitude toward Ukraine, that he would issue an invitation.

MR. JORDAN: Okay. So then I get to -- and that was -- and was everyone in agreement?

Everyone wanted this phone call to happen starting clear back May 20th at the inauguration. The President didn't want it.

MR. LUSKIN: Who do you mean by everyone, so we can be clear?

MR. JORDAN: Let me say it this way. Let's just jump to

the July 10th meeting.

So you wanted a phone call.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: July 10th meeting?

MR. JORDAN: Moving ahead now.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Oh, gotcha, gotcha, gotcha.

MR. JORDAN: You wanted a phone call. Ambassador Volker wanted a phone call. Ambassador Taylor wanted a phone call. Secretary Perry wanted a phone call. And you wanted a phone call with no preconditions. Is that right?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MR. JORDAN: All right. But you get to this July 10th meeting, and you made that argument, and then at the end of that paragraph in your testimony where you described that meeting, you said the NSC did not.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MR. JORDAN: And why?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: They would never really articulate it other than there's no reason to have a call.

MR. JORDAN: Okay.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: That was the only -- the only thing I could get out of them was: Why aren't we having this call? There's no reason to have a call.

MR. JORDAN: What I don't understand is the NSC was part of the inauguration, the delegation who was there for President Zelensky's inauguration. Lieutenant Colonel --

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Well, Mr. Vindman was there, and he was a, you know, low-level NSC person. Dr. Hill wasn't there. Ambassador Bolton wasn't there.

MR. JORDAN: Did Mr. Vindman express any reservations to a second phone call in the time you spent with him at the inauguration or any subsequent meetings or discussions you may have had with him?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't know. I didn't -- I didn't consider him to be a champion of the phone call. I thought everyone else in the delegation was a strong champion of the phone call.

MR. JORDAN: Was Mr. Vindman opposed to the phone call clear back in May? Did you get any indication of that?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't remember when he was opposed, but I think it became apparent during the meeting -- one of the meetings on June -- July 10th that he didn't think it was a good idea because there was no reason for it.

MR. JORDAN: And he hadn't expressed any concern in any other interactions you had?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Not prior to that, no.

MR. JORDAN: Not prior to that, and not at the May 20th inauguration in Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: I don't think he -- you know, to answer your question exactly, I don't think he expressed an opinion that we should have one or that we shouldn't have one

until the July 10th meeting.

MR. JORDAN: And was Mr. Vindman -- my understanding is he was not in the May 23rd meeting at the White House.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: He was not in the Oval, correct.

MR. JORDAN: He was not in that meeting?

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Correct.

MR. JORDAN: Okay.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, I want to thank you.

MR. JORDAN: If I could ask one thing, Mr. Chairman?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. JORDAN: Just before we close, I just want to ask you some questions. Do we know the schedule? Is there a deposition tomorrow?

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we have released the schedule, have we not?

MR. BITAR: There's noting tomorrow.

MR. JORDAN: Nothing tomorrow, okay. And then --

MR. BITAR: There's a formal notice that has gone to all committee members and staff.

MR. CASTOR: I'm in the SCIF.

MR. BITAR: No, it was already entered earlier today.

MR. JORDAN: And can I just ask, Mr. Chairman, for next week, are there any days where there are two -- we had heard rumblings of this -- any days where there are two depositions going on the same day?

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the short answer is at the moment we think there's only one, but there are witnesses that we --

MR. NOBLE: We have noticed two for 2 days.

[6:51 p.m.]

THE CHAIRMAN: So we have noticed two? Oh, okay.

MR. NOBLE: When we get confirmation, we will let the minority know right away.

MR. JORDAN: I'm guess I'm asking --

MR. ZELDIN: On 2 days.

MR. JORDAN: If two people agree to come the same day, I guess I'm asking are they going to be be simultaneous?

MR. GOLDMAN: You can't be in two places at once?

THE CHAIRMAN: We will have to decide if that should be the case, whether to move one of them, or whether to do them concurrently in different rooms.

MR. JORDAN: Mr. Chairman, I point out you guys have got a few more staff than we've got. So we would I think be a little reluctant to have two depositions happening at the -- simultaneously. If we could stack the -- - we're willing to stay all day.

THE CHAIRMAN: You know, I would just say, first of all, that -- let me go back to thanking the Ambassador for his willingness to answer the subpoena, and for his long testimony today. We appreciate your coming in and you are excused.

AMBASSADOR SONDLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for conducting a very pleasant hearing.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 6:53 p.m., the deposition was concluded.]

PAUL
HASTINGS

robertluskin@paulhastings.com

November 4, 2019

Adam B. Schiff
Chairman
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Sworn Testimony of Ambassador Gordon Sondland

Dear Chairman Schiff:

Pursuant to Rule 8 of the 116th Congress Regulations for Use of Deposition Authority and Rule 8(e)(2)(B) of the Rules for the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, please find attached the Declaration of Ambassador Gordon Sondland, which supplements his testimony of October 17, 2019. In accordance with the House and Committee rules, this letter and the attached Declaration should be included as an appendix to his sworn testimony.

Ambassador Sondland has reviewed and approved the attached Declaration and his sworn testimony. His signature on the attached Declaration shall serve, in accordance with the relevant rules, as his affirmation that he has also reviewed and approved the transcript of his testimony.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Luskin
Kwame J. Manley

PAUL HASTINGS LLP

DECLARATION OF AMBASSADOR GORDON D. SONDLAND

I, Gordon Sondland, do hereby swear and affirm as follows:

1. I have reviewed the October 22, 2019, opening statement of Ambassador William Taylor. I have also reviewed the October 31, 2019, opening statement of Tim Morrison. These two opening statements have refreshed my recollection about certain conversations in early September 2019.

2. Ambassador Taylor recalls that I told Mr. Morrison in early September 2019 that the resumption of U.S. aid to Ukraine had become tied to a public statement to be issued by Ukraine agreeing to investigate Burisma. Ambassador Taylor recalls that Mr. Morrison told Ambassador Taylor that I told Mr. Morrison that I had conveyed this message to Mr. Yermak on September 1, 2019, in connection with Vice President Pence's visit to Warsaw and a meeting with President Zelensky. Mr. Morrison recalls that I said to him in early September that resumption of U.S. aid to Ukraine might be conditioned on a public statement reopening the Burisma investigation.

3. In my October 17, 2019 prepared testimony and in my deposition, I made clear that I had understood sometime after our May 23, 2019, White House debriefing that scheduling a White House visit for President Zelensky was conditioned upon President Zelensky's agreement to make a public anti-corruption statement. This condition had been communicated by Rudy Giuliani, with whom President Trump directed Ambassador Volker, Secretary Perry, and me, on May 23, 2019, to discuss issues related to the President's concerns about Ukraine. Ambassador Volker, Secretary Perry, and I understood that satisfying Mr. Giuliani was a condition for scheduling the White House visit, which we all strongly believed to be in the mutual interest of the United States and Ukraine.

4. With respect to the September 1, 2019, Warsaw meeting, the conversations described in Ambassador Taylor's and Mr. Morrison's opening statements have refreshed my recollection about conversations involving the suspension of U.S. aid, which had become public only days earlier. I always believed that suspending aid to Ukraine was ill-advised, although I did not know (and still do not know) when, why, or by whom the aid was suspended. However, by the beginning of September 2019, and in the absence of any credible explanation for the suspension of aid, I presumed that the aid suspension had become linked to the proposed anti-corruption statement. As I said in my prepared testimony, security aid to Ukraine was in our vital national interest and should not have been delayed for any reason. And it would have been natural for me to have voiced what I had presumed to Ambassador Taylor, Senator Johnson, the Ukrainians, and Mr. Morrison.

5. Also, I now do recall a conversation on September 1, 2019, in Warsaw with Mr. Yermak. This brief pull-aside conversation followed the larger meeting involving Vice President Pence and President Zelensky, in which President Zelensky had raised the issue of the suspension of U.S. aid to Ukraine directly with Vice President Pence. After that large meeting, I now recall speaking individually with Mr. Yermak, where I said that resumption of U.S. aid would likely not occur until Ukraine provided the public anti-corruption statement that we had been discussing for many weeks. I also recall some question as to whether the public statement could come from the newly appointed Ukrainian Prosecutor General, rather than from President Zelensky directly.

6. Soon thereafter, I came to understand that, in fact, the public statement would need to come directly from President Zelensky himself. I do not specifically recall how I learned this, but I believe that the information may have come either from Mr. Giuliani or from

Ambassador Volker, who may have discussed this with Mr. Giuliani. In a later conversation with Ambassador Taylor, I told him that I had been mistaken about whether a public statement could come from the Prosecutor General; I had come to understand that the public statement would have to come from President Zelensky himself.

7. Finally, as of this writing, I cannot specifically recall if I had one or two phone calls with President Trump in the September 6-9 time frame. Despite repeated requests to the White House and the State Department, I have not been granted access to all of the phone records, and I would like to review those phone records, along with any notes and other documents that may exist, to determine if I can provide more complete testimony to assist Congress. However, although I have no specific recollection of phone calls during this period with Ambassador Taylor or Mr. Morrison, I have no reason to question the substance of their recollection about my September 1 conversation with Mr. Yermak.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the aforementioned is true.

Executed on November 4, 2019.

The Honorable Gordon D. Sondland
United States Ambassador to the European Union