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PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,

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joint with the

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COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

8

and the

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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,

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U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

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DEPOSITION OF: WILLIAM B. TAYLOR

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Tuesday, October 22, 2019

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Washington, D.C.

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The deposition in the above matter was held in Room

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HVC-304, Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 9:50 a.m.

1 Present: Representatives Schiff, Himes, Sewell, Carson,
2 Speier, Quigley, Swalwell, Castro, Heck, Welch, Maloney,
3 Demings, Krishnamoorthi, Nunes, Conaway, Wenstrup, Stewart,
4 Stefanik, Hurd, and Ratcliffe.

5 Also Present: Representatives Clay, Cooper, DeSaulnier,
6 Gomez, Hice, Kelly, Khanna, Krishnamoorthi, Lawrence, Lynch,
7 Maloney, Plaskett, Raskin, Rouda, Sarbanes, Tlaib, Wasserman
8 Schultz, Bass, Bera, Cicilline, Deutch, Espaillat, Keating,
9 Levin, Lieu, Malinowski, Meeks, Omar, Phillips, Titus, Trone,
10 Jordan, Armstrong, Cloud, Gibbs, Grothman, Higgins, Keller,
11 Meadows, Miller, Norman, Roy, McCaul, Buck, Burchett, Curtis,
12 Fitzpatrick, Guest, Mast, Perry, Rooney, Wagner, Watkins, and
13 Zeldin.

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For the COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM:

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SUSANNE SACHSMAN GROOMS, CHIEF COUNSEL

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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For the COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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For WILLIAM B. TAYLOR:

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JEFFREY H. SMITH

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JOHN B. BELLINGER III

23

ARNOLD & PORTER

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601 Massachusetts Avenue, NW

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Washington, D.C. 20001-3743

1 THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Let's come to order.

2 Good morning, Ambassador Taylor. And welcome to the
3 House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, which along
4 with the Foreign Affairs and Oversight Committees is
5 conducting this investigation as part of the official
6 impeachment inquiry of the House of Representatives. Today's
7 deposition is being conducted as part of the impeachment
8 inquiry.

9 In light of attempts by the State Department and the
10 administration to direct witnesses not to cooperate with the
11 inquiry, including efforts to limit witness testimony, the
12 committee had no choice but to compel your appearance today.
13 We thank you for complying with the duly authorized
14 congressional subpoena.

15 Ambassador Taylor has served our country as a
16 distinguished diplomat and Ambassador. Prior to returning to
17 Embassy Kyiv as Charge d'affaires in June 2019, Ambassador
18 Taylor served as executive vice president of the U.S.
19 Institute for Peace.

20 From 2006 to 2009, he served as U.S. Ambassador to
21 Ukraine and also held important positions across the State
22 Department coordinating U.S. assistance efforts, including to
23 Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. He is also a
24 West Point grad, I believe, and a Vietnam veteran. And we're
25 very grateful for your lifetime of service.

1 Ambassador Taylor, we will ask you to introduce yourself
2 and your career experience more fully at the outset of
3 today's interview for the benefit of the record and all those
4 present.

5 Finally, to restate what I and others have emphasized in
6 other interviews, Congress will not tolerate any reprisal,
7 threat of reprisal, or attempt to retaliate against any U.S.
8 Government official for testifying before Congress, including
9 you or any of your colleagues.

10 It is disturbing that the State Department in
11 coordination with the White House has sought to prohibit
12 Department employees from cooperating with the inquiry and
13 have tried to limit what they can say. This is unacceptable.
14 Thankfully, consummate professionals have demonstrated
15 remarkable courage in coming forward to testify and tell the
16 truth.

17 Before I turn to committee counsel to begin the
18 interview, I invite Ranking Member Nunes to make any opening
19 remarks.

20 MR. NUNES: I thank the gentleman.

21 Once again, we're here for what you're calling an
22 impeachment inquiry, but there are no rules governing an
23 impeachment inquiry. There's been no organization of this
24 impeachment inquiry, and so we're essentially operating under
25 a lawless situation.

1 We sent a letter last week to the majority requesting a
2 number of things, but that is to be notified with documents
3 to at least all three committees under the structure. Only
4 two of the three committees continue to get the documents for
5 some odd reason that's not explainable.

6 But in addition to that, now typical customs of this
7 committee in review of the transcripts are now being put
8 under lock so that no one has access to the transcripts. And
9 I want to make a request to the court reporters to ensure
10 that no tapes disappear being that we have no access to these
11 transcripts.

12 And, with that, I'll yield to Mr. Jordan.

13 MR. JORDAN: I thank the gentleman for yielding.

14 I would just too echo the notice that we got yesterday
15 that the minority will not be given access to the transcript,
16 and even members of this committee or these three committees
17 can only view the transcript in the presence of someone from
18 the majority. I don't know that I've seen that happen
19 before. And just when I thought this process couldn't get
20 any more unfair, we find out how the transcripts are going to
21 be treated.

22 Ambassador, I want to thank you for being here. I also
23 want to thank you for your service to our country.

24 On September 24th, Speaker Pelosi unilaterally announced
25 that the House was beginning a so-called impeachment inquiry.

1 On October 2nd, Speaker Pelosi promised that the so-called
2 impeachment inquiry would, quote, treat the President with
3 fairness. However, Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Schiff, and the
4 Democrats are not living up to that basic promise. Instead,
5 Democrats are conducting a rushed, closed-door, and
6 unprecedented impeachment inquiry.

7 Democrats are ignoring 45 years of bipartisan procedures
8 designed to provide elements of fundamental fairness and due
9 process in past impeachment inquiries: The majority and
10 minority had coequal subpoena authority, the right to require
11 a committee vote on all subpoenas. The President's counsel
12 had a right to attend all depositions and hearings, including
13 those held in executive sessions. The President's counsel
14 had the right to cross-examine witnesses and the right to
15 propose witnesses. The President's counsel had the right to
16 present evidence, object to the admission of evidence, and to
17 review all evidence presented, both favorable and
18 unfavorable.

19 Speaker Pelosi and Chairman Schiff's so-called
20 impeachment inquiry has none of these guarantees of
21 fundamental fairness and due process. Most disappointing,
22 Democrats are conducting this so-called impeachment inquiry
23 behind closed doors, and as the ranking member of the
24 Intelligence Committee just suggested, with no access given
25 to the -- no transcripts given to the minority party.

1 This seems to be nothing more than hiding this work from
2 the American people. If Democrats intend to undo the will of
3 the American people just a year before the next election,
4 they should at least do so transparently and be willing to be
5 accountable for their actions.

6 With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. McCaul.

8 I would only say, because I don't want to get into
9 extended debate, and we can discuss this without taking up
10 the witness' time, that members of three committees have
11 access to the transcripts when the transcripts are completed
12 and they have had a chance to be finalized.

13 The one transcript that the minority was able to
14 download and print was leaked to the press promptly. That's
15 a problem, and that is part of the reason we have to maintain
16 the security of the transcripts.

17 Finally, unlike the past impeachments where there was a
18 special counsel doing these proceedings before the grand
19 jury, there is no special counsel here because the Department
20 of Justice declined to even investigate the matter so we have
21 to do that work ourselves.

22 I'll now turn to committee counsel.

23 MR. NUNES: Mr. McCaul had an opening statement.

24 MR. MCCAUL: I'll just be very brief.

25 To your point, the Foreign Affairs Committee has

1 jurisdiction over the majority of these witnesses. We have a
2 SCIF at the Foreign Affairs Committee that can handle
3 classified information and electronically as well. And I
4 would ask that you reconsider this new rule that you've
5 issued to allow us to have those documents in the Foreign
6 Affairs SCIF and to make it more accessible.

7 I agree with my colleagues, there's no House rule or
8 resolution authorizing this. I talked to Ken Starr last
9 weekend. There's a way to do this right, and I think we
10 should do it the same way we did the Clinton and Nixon
11 administration. I think, in your words, you'll say that --

12 [Disruption in hearing room.]

13 MR. MCCAUL: The committee is not in order -- you will
14 say that there's no special counsel. So I guess my question
15 is, are you the special counsel, slash, prosecutor and the
16 grand jury of this inquiry?

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Are you finished with your opening
18 remarks?

19 MR. MCCAUL: Yes.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Then let's proceed.

21 Mr. Goldman.

22 MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a
23 deposition of a --

24 THE CHAIRMAN: No further remarks will be entertained at
25 this time. Mr. Goldman.

1 MR. GOLDMAN: This is a deposition of Ambassador William
2 B. Taylor, Jr., conducted by the House Permanent Select
3 Committee on Intelligence pursuant to the impeachment inquiry
4 announced by the Speaker of the House on September 24th.

5 Ambassador Taylor --

6 MR. ROY: There are members of this committee that are
7 unable to participate --

8 THE CHAIRMAN: If the gentleman will suspend.

9 MR. ROY: I'm going to have to be in the Subcommittee --

10 THE CHAIRMAN: The gentleman will --

11 MR. ROY: -- instead of being in here. And then I've
12 got to schedule access -- to get access as a Member of
13 Congress to transcripts on a committee on which I sit when
14 rules have never been put forward?

15 THE CHAIRMAN: If the gentleman will suspend.

16 MR. ROY: What is this?

17 THE CHAIRMAN: The gentleman is not recognized. You can
18 take your comments outside, sir.

19 MR. ROY: Take them outside to whom? You're the judge
20 and jury sitting in here deciding who can see this clown
21 show. When can we actually -- when can my colleagues who
22 aren't on this committee see the materials in question?

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Sir, this witness has come all the way
24 from Ukraine. If you could suspend so we can get to the
25 matter at hand.

1 MR. ROY: Well, why won't you address the legitimate
2 concerns of this --

3 VOICES: Out of order.

4 MR. ROY: This whole hearing is out of order. We've got
5 members of this committee --

6 MRS. DEMINGS: You really don't want to hear from this
7 witness, do you?

8 MR. ROY: I would like the entire Congress to hear from
9 this witness.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Members will suspend. Members will
11 suspend.

12 Mr. Goldman, you're recognized.

13 MR. ROY: What rules are we even operating under?

14 MR. GOLDMAN: Ambassador Taylor, could you please state
15 your full name and spell your last name for the record?

16 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: William Brochenbrough Taylor, Jr.,
17 T-a-y-l-o-r.

18 MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you.

19 Now, along with other proceedings in furtherance of the
20 inquiry, this deposition is part of a joint investigation led
21 by the Intelligence Committee in coordination with the
22 Committees on Foreign Affairs and Oversight and Reform.

23 In the room today are majority staff and minority staff
24 from both the Foreign Affairs Committee and Oversight
25 Committee, as well as majority and minority staff from the

1 Intelligence Committee. This is a staff-led deposition, but
2 members, of course, may ask questions during their allotted
3 time, as has been the case for every deposition and interview
4 since the inception of this investigation.

5 My name is Daniel Goldman. I'm the director of
6 investigations for the HPSCI majority staff, and I want to
7 thank you very much for traveling from Ukraine to appear for
8 this deposition today.

9 I would like to do some brief introductions. To my
10 right is Daniel Noble, senior investigative counsel for
11 HPSCI. Mr. Noble and I will be conducting most of the
12 interview for the majority.

13 And I will now let my counterparts from the minority
14 staff introduce themselves who will be conducting the
15 interview for the minority.

16 MR. CASTOR: Morning, Ambassador. Steve Castor with the
17 Republican staff of the Oversight Committee.

18 MS. CASULLI: Good morning. Laura Casulli, deputy
19 general counsel, minority on the HPSCI.

20 MR. KOREN: Michael Koren, House Oversight, Republican
21 committee staff.

22 MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you.

23 This deposition will be conducted entirely at the
24 unclassified level. However, the deposition is being
25 conducted in HPSCI's secure spaces and in the presence of

1 staff with appropriate security clearances. We also
2 understand that your attorneys have the appropriate security
3 clearances as well. Is that correct?

4 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct.

5 MR. GOLDMAN: Okay. It is the committee's expectation,
6 however, that neither the questions asked of you nor the
7 answers provided by you will require discussion of any
8 information that is currently or at any point could be
9 properly classified under Executive Order 13526.

10 You are reminded that E.O. 13526 states that, quote, in
11 no case shall information be classified, continue to be
12 maintained as classified, or fail to be declassified,
13 unquote, for the purpose of concealing any violations of law
14 or preventing embarrassment of any person or entity.

15 If any of our questions can only be answered with
16 classified information, please inform us of that before you
17 answer the question and we will adjust accordingly.

18 Today's deposition is not being taken in executive
19 session, but because of the sensitive and confidential nature
20 of some of the topics and materials that will be discussed
21 access to the transcript of the deposition will be limited to
22 the three committees in attendance, which we have mentioned
23 before.

24 Under the House deposition rules, no Member of Congress
25 nor any staff member can discuss the substance of the

1 testimony you provide today with the public or the media.
2 You and your attorney will have an opportunity to review the
3 transcript if we can figure out an arrangement, given that
4 you are in post in Ukraine.

5 Before we begin, I'd like to go over some of the ground
6 rules for this deposition. We will be following the House
7 regulations for depositions, which we have previously
8 provided to your counsel.

9 The deposition will proceed as follows: The majority
10 will be given 1 hour to ask questions, and then the minority
11 will be given 1 hour to ask questions. Thereafter, we will
12 alternate back and forth between majority and minority in
13 45-minute rounds until questioning is complete.

14 We will take periodic breaks, but if you need a break at
15 any time, please do let us know.

16 Under the House deposition rules, counsel for other
17 persons or government agencies may not attend. You are
18 allowed to have an attorney present of your own during this
19 deposition, and I see that you have brought two. Would
20 counsel please now state their appearance for the record?

21 MR. SMITH: Jeffrey Smith, Arnold & Porter.

22 MR. BELLINGER: John Bellinger, Arnold & Porter.

23 MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you.

24 There is a stenographer to your left taking down
25 everything that is said in this deposition in order to make a

1 written record. For that record to be clear, please wait
2 until each question is completed before you begin your
3 answer, and we will wait until you finish your response
4 before asking you the next question.

5 The stenographer cannot record nonverbal answers, such
6 as a shaking of your head, so it is important that you answer
7 each question with an audible, verbal answer.

8 We ask that you give complete replies to questions based
9 on your best recollection. If a question is unclear or you
10 are uncertain in your response, please let us know. And if
11 you do not know the answer to a question or cannot remember,
12 simply say so.

13 You may only refuse to answer a question to preserve a
14 privilege that is recognized by the committee. If you refuse
15 to answer a question on the basis of privilege, staff may
16 either proceed with the deposition or seek a ruling from the
17 chairman on any objection in person or by telephone during
18 the deposition at a time of the majority staff's choosing.
19 If the chair overrules any such objection, you are required
20 to answer the question.

21 And, finally, you are reminded that it is unlawful to
22 deliberately provide false information to Members of Congress
23 or staff. It is imperative that you not only answer our
24 questions truthfully but that you give full and complete
25 answers to all questions asked of you. Omissions may also be

1 considered as false statements.

2 As this deposition is under oath, Ambassador Taylor,
3 would you please stand and raise your right hand to be sworn.
4 Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to
5 give is the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

6 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I do.

7 MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you. Let the record reflect that
8 the witness has been sworn.

9 And, with that, Ambassador Taylor, if you have any
10 opening remarks to make, now is the time.

11 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, members, I appreciate
12 the opportunity to appear here today to provide my
13 perspective on the events that are the subject of the
14 committees' inquiry. My sole purpose is to provide the
15 committees with my views about the strategic importance of
16 Ukraine to the United States, as well as additional
17 information about the incidents in question.

18 I have dedicated my life to serving U.S. interests at
19 home and abroad, in both military and civilian roles. My
20 background and experience are nonpartisan, and I have been
21 honored to serve under every administration, Republican and
22 Democratic, since 1985.

23 For 50 years, I've served the country starting as a
24 cadet at West Point; then as an infantry officer for 6 years,
25 including with the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam; then

1 at the Department of Energy; then as a member of a Senate
2 staff; then at NATO; then with the State Department here and
3 abroad in Afghanistan, Iraq, Jerusalem, and Ukraine; and,
4 more recently, as executive vice president of the nonpartisan
5 United States Institute of Peace.

6 While I have served in many places and in different
7 capacities, I have a particular interest in and respect for
8 the importance of our country's relationship with Ukraine.
9 Our national security demands that this relationship remain
10 strong.

11 However, in August and September of this year, I became
12 increasingly concerned that our relationship with Ukraine was
13 being fundamentally undermined by an irregular, informal
14 channel of U.S. policymaking and by the withholding of vital
15 security assistance for domestic political reasons. I hope
16 my remarks today will help the committees understand why I
17 believed that to be the case.

18 At the outset, I would like to convey several key
19 points: First, Ukraine is a strategic partner of the United
20 States, important for the security of our country as well as
21 Europe; second, Ukraine is, right at this moment, while we
22 sit in this room, and for the last 5 years, under armed
23 attack from Russia; third, the security assistance we provide
24 is crucial to Ukraine's defense against Russian aggression,
25 and, more importantly, sends a signal to Ukrainians and

1 Russians that we are Ukraine's reliable strategic partner;
2 and, finally, as the committees are now aware, I said on
3 September 9th, in a message to Ambassador Gordon Sondland,
4 that withholding security assistance in exchange for help
5 with a domestic political campaign in the United States would
6 be crazy. I believed that then, and I still believe that.

7 Let me now provide the committees a chronology of the
8 events that led to my concern. On May 28th of this year, I
9 met with Secretary Mike Pompeo who asked me to return to Kyiv
10 to lead our Embassy in Ukraine. It was and is a critical
11 time in the U.S.-Ukraine relations.

12 Volodymyr Zelensky had just been elected President, and
13 Ukraine remained at war with Russia. As the summer
14 approached, a new Ukrainian Government would be seated,
15 parliamentary elections were imminent, and the Ukrainian
16 political trajectory would be set for the next several years.

17 I had served as Ambassador to Ukraine from 2006 to 2009,
18 having been nominated by George W. Bush. And in the
19 intervening 10 years, I have stayed engaged with Ukraine
20 visiting frequently since 2013 as a board member of a small
21 Ukrainian, nongovernmental organization supporting good
22 governance and reform.

23 Across the responsibilities I have had in public
24 service, Ukraine is special for me, and Secretary Pompeo's
25 offer to return as chief of mission was compelling. I am

1 convinced of the profound importance of Ukraine to the
2 security of the United States and Europe for two related
3 reasons: First, if Ukraine succeeds in breaking free of
4 Russian influence, it is possible for Europe to be whole,
5 free, democratic, and at peace. In contrast, if Russia
6 dominates Ukraine, Russia will again become an empire,
7 oppressing its people, and threatening its neighbors and the
8 rest of the world.

9 Second, with the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the
10 continued aggression in Donbas, Russia violated countless
11 treaties, ignored all commitments, dismissed all the
12 principles that have kept the peace and contributed to
13 prosperity in Europe since World War II. To restore
14 Ukraine's independence, Russia must leave Ukraine. This has
15 been and should continue to be a bipartisan U.S. foreign
16 policy goal.

17 When I was serving outside of government during the
18 Obama administration and after the Russian invasion of
19 Ukraine in 2014, I joined two other former Ambassadors to
20 Ukraine in urging Obama administration officials at the State
21 Department, Defense Department, and other agencies to provide
22 lethal defensive weapons to Ukraine in order to deter further
23 Russian aggression. I also supported much stronger sanctions
24 against Russia.

25 All to say I cared about Ukraine's future and the

1 important U.S. interests there. So, when Secretary Pompeo
2 asked me to go back to Kyiv, I wanted to say yes. But it was
3 not an easy decision. The former Ambassador, Masha
4 Yovanovitch, had been treated poorly, caught in a web of
5 political machinations, both in Kyiv and in Washington. I
6 feared that those problems were still present. When I talked
7 to her about accepting the offer, however, she urged me to go
8 for both policy reasons and for the morale of the Embassy.

9 Before answering the Secretary, I consulted both my wife
10 and a respected former senior Republican official who has
11 been a mentor to me. I will tell you, my wife, in no
12 uncertain terms, strongly opposed the idea. The mentor
13 counseled: If your country asks you to do something, you do
14 it -- if you can be effective.

15 I could be effective only if the U.S. policy of strong
16 support for Ukraine, strong diplomatic support, along with
17 robust security, economic, and technical assistance were to
18 continue, and if I had the backing of the Secretary of State
19 to implement that policy. I worried about what I had heard
20 concerning the role of Rudolph Giuliani, who had made several
21 high-profile statements about Ukraine and U.S. policy toward
22 the country.

23 So, during my meeting with Secretary Pompeo, on
24 May 28th, I made clear to him and the others present that if
25 U.S. policy toward Ukraine changed, he would not want me

1 posted there and I could not stay. He assured me that the
2 policy of strong support for Ukraine would continue and that
3 he would support me in defending that policy.

4 With that understanding, I agreed to go back to Kyiv.
5 Because I was appointed by the Secretary but not reconfirmed
6 by the Senate, my official position was Charge d'affaires ad
7 interim. I returned to Kyiv on June 17th carrying the
8 original copy of a letter President Trump signed the day
9 after I met with the Secretary.

10 In that letter, President Trump congratulated President
11 Zelensky on his election victory and invited him to a meeting
12 in the Oval Office. I also brought with me a framed copy of
13 the Secretary's declaration that the United States would
14 never recognize the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea.

15 But once I arrived in Kyiv, I discovered a weird
16 combination of encouraging, confusing, and ultimately
17 alarming circumstances. First, encouraging: President
18 Zelensky was taking over Ukraine in a hurry. He had
19 appointed reformist ministers and supported long-stalled
20 anticorruption legislation. He took quick executive action,
21 including opening Ukraine's High Anti-Corruption Court, which
22 was established under previous Presidential administration
23 but was never allowed to operate.

24 He called snap parliamentary elections -- his party was
25 so new it had no representation in the Rada -- and later won

1 an overwhelming mandate controlling 60 percent of the seats.
2 With his new parliamentary majority, President Zelensky
3 changed the Ukrainian constitution to remove absolute
4 immunity from Rada deputies, which had been the source of raw
5 corruption for decades. There was much excitement in Kyiv
6 that this time things could be different. A new Ukraine
7 might finally be breaking from its corrupt, post-Soviet past.

8 And, yet, I found a confusing and unusual arrangement
9 for making U.S. policy towards Ukraine. There appeared to be
10 two channels of U.S. policymaking and implementation, one
11 regular and one highly irregular.

12 As the chief of mission, I had authority over the
13 regular, formal diplomatic processes, including the bulk of
14 the U.S. effort to support Ukraine against the Russian
15 invasion and to help it defeat corruption.

16 This regular channel of U.S. policymaking has
17 consistently had strong bipartisan support, both in Congress
18 and in all administrations since Ukraine's independence from
19 Russia in 1991.

20 At the same time, however, there was an irregular,
21 informal channel of U.S. policymaking with respect to
22 Ukraine, one which included then-Special Envoy Kurt Volker,
23 Ambassador Sondland, Secretary of Energy Rick Perry, and as I
24 subsequently learned, Mr. Giuliani. I was clearly in the
25 regular channel, but I was also in the irregular one to the

1 extent that Ambassadors Volker and Sondland included me in
2 certain conversations.

3 Although this irregular channel was well connected in
4 Washington, it operated mostly outside of official State
5 Department channels. This irregular channel began when
6 Ambassador Volker, Ambassador Sondland, Secretary Perry, and
7 Senator Ron Johnson briefed President Trump on May 23rd upon
8 their return from President Zelensky's inauguration.

9 The delegation returned to Washington enthusiastic about
10 the new Ukrainian President and urged President Trump to meet
11 with him early on to cement the U.S. Ukraine relationship.
12 But from what I understood, President Trump did not share
13 their enthusiasm for a meeting with Mr. Zelensky.

14 When I first arrived in Kyiv in June and July, the
15 actions of both the regular and irregular channels of foreign
16 policy served the same goal, a strong U.S.-Ukraine
17 partnership, but it became clear to me by August that the
18 channels had diverged in their objectives. As this occurred,
19 I became increasingly concerned.

20 In late June, one of the goals of both channels was to
21 facilitate a visit by President Zelensky to the White House
22 for a meeting with President Trump, which President Trump had
23 promised in his congratulatory letter of May 29th.
24 Ukrainians were clearly eager for the meeting to happen.

25 During a conference call with Ambassador Volker, Acting

1 Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian
2 Affairs Phil Reeker, Secretary Perry, Ambassador Sondland,
3 and Counselor of the U.S. Department of State Ulrich
4 Brechbuhl on June 18th, it was clear that a meeting between
5 the two Presidents was an agreed-on -- agreed-upon goal.

6 But during my subsequent communications with Ambassadors
7 Volker and Sondland, they relayed to me that the President
8 wanted to hear from Zelensky before scheduling the meeting in
9 the Oval Office. It was not clear to me what this meant.

10 On June 27th, Ambassador Sondland told me during a phone
11 conversation that President Zelensky needed to make clear to
12 President Trump that he, President Zelensky, was not standing
13 in the way of investigations.

14 I sensed something odd when Ambassador Sondland told me
15 on June 28th that he did not wish to include most of the
16 regular interagency participants in a call planned with
17 President Zelensky later that day.

18 Ambassador Sondland, Ambassador Volker, Secretary Perry,
19 and I were on this call dialing in from different locations.
20 However, Ambassador Sondland said that he wanted to make sure
21 no one was transcribing or monitoring as they added President
22 Zelensky to the call.

23 Also, before President Zelensky joined the call,
24 Ambassador Volker separately told the U.S. participants that
25 he, Ambassador Volker, planned to be explicit with President

1 Zelensky in a one-on-one meeting in Toronto on July 2nd about
2 what President Zelensky should do to get the meeting in the
3 White House.

4 Again, it was not clear to me on that call what this
5 meant, but Ambassador Volker noted that he would relay that
6 President Trump wanted to see rule of law, transparency, but
7 also, specifically, cooperation on investigations to get to
8 the bottom of things.

9 Once President Zelensky joined the call, the
10 conversation was focused on energy policy and the
11 Stanysysia-Luhanska bridge in Donbas. President Zelensky
12 also said that he looked forward to the White House visit
13 President Trump had offered in his May 29th letter.

14 I reported on this call to Deputy Assistant Secretary of
15 State George Kent who had responsibility for Ukraine, and I
16 wrote a memo for the record, dated June 30th, that summarized
17 our conversation with President Zelensky.

18 By mid-July, it was becoming clear to me that the
19 meeting President Zelensky wanted was conditioned on
20 investigations of Burisma and alleged Ukrainian influence in
21 the 2016 elections. It was also clear that this condition
22 was driven by the irregular policy channel I had come to
23 understand was guided by Mr. Giuliani.

24 On July 10, Ukrainian officials Alexander Danyliuk, the
25 Ukrainian National Security Advisor; Andrey Yermak, an

1 assistant to President Zelensky; and Secretary Perry;
2 then-National Security Advisor John Bolton; Ambassador
3 Volker; and Ambassador Sondland met at the White House. I
4 did not participate in the meeting and did not receive a
5 readout of it until speaking with the National Security
6 Council's then-senior director for European and Russian
7 affairs, Fiona Hill, and the NSC's director for European
8 affairs, Alex Vindman, on July 19th.

9 On July 10, in Kyiv, I met with President Zelensky's
10 Chief of Staff, Andrei Bohdan, and then-foreign policy
11 adviser to the President and now Foreign Minister Vadym
12 Prystaiko, who told me that they had heard from Mr. Giuliani
13 that the phone call between the two Presidents was unlikely
14 to happen and that they were alarmed and disappointed. I
15 relayed their concerns to Counselor Brechbuhl.

16 In a regular, NSC secure video conference call on
17 July 18th, I heard a staff person from the Office of
18 Management and Budget say that there was a hold on security
19 assistance to Ukraine but could not say why. Toward the end
20 of this otherwise normal meeting, a voice on the call, the
21 person who was off screen, said that she was from OMB and her
22 boss had instructed her not to approve any additional
23 spending of security assistance for Ukraine until further
24 notice.

25 I and the others on the call sat in astonishment. The

1 Ukrainians were fighting the Russians and counted on not only
2 the training and weapons but also the assurance of U.S.
3 support. All that the OMB staff person said was that the
4 directive had come from the President to the Chief of Staff
5 to OMB. In an instant, I realized that one of the key
6 pillars of our strong support for Ukraine was threatened.

7 The irregular policy channel was running contrary to the
8 goals of longstanding U.S. policy. There followed a series
9 of NSC-led interagency meetings starting at the staff level
10 and quickly reaching the level of Cabinet Secretaries. At
11 every meeting, the unanimous conclusion was that the security
12 assistance should be reassumed, the hold lifted.

13 At one point the Defense Department was asked to perform
14 an analysis of the effectiveness of the assistance. Within a
15 day, the Defense Department came back with the determination
16 that the assistance was effective and should be resumed.

17 My understanding was that the Secretaries of Defense and
18 State, the CIA Director, and the National Security Advisor,
19 sought a joint meeting with the President to convince him to
20 release the hold, but such meeting was hard to schedule, and
21 the hold lasted well into September.

22 The next day on the phone, Dr. Hill and Mr. Vindman
23 tried to reassure me that they were not aware of any official
24 change in U.S. policy toward Ukraine, OMB's announcement
25 notwithstanding. They did confirm that the hold on security

1 assistance for Ukraine came from Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney
2 and that the Chief of Staff maintained a skeptical view of
3 Ukraine.

4 In the same July 19th phone call, they gave me an
5 account of the July 10th meeting with the Ukrainian officials
6 at the White House. Specifically, they told me that
7 Ambassador Sondland had connected investigations with an Oval
8 Office meeting for President Zelensky, which so irritated
9 Ambassador Bolton that he abruptly ended the meeting, telling
10 Dr. Hill and Mr. Vindman that they should have nothing to do
11 with domestic politics.

12 He also directed Dr. Hill to brief the lawyers.
13 Dr. Hill said that Ambassador Bolton referred to this as a
14 drug deal after the July 10th meeting. Ambassador Bolton
15 opposed a call between President Zelensky and President Trump
16 out of concern that it would be a disaster.

17 Needless to say, the two Ukrainians in the meetings were
18 confused. Ambassador Bolton, in the regular Ukraine policy
19 decisionmaking channel, wanted to talk about security,
20 energy, and reform. Ambassador Sondland, a participant in
21 the irregular channel, wanted to talk about the connection
22 between a White House meeting and Ukrainian investigations.

23 Also, during our July 19th call, Dr. Hill informed me
24 that Ambassador Volker had met with Mr. Giuliani to discuss
25 Ukraine. This caught me by surprise. The next day, I asked

1 Ambassador Volker about that meeting but received no
2 response. I began to sense that the two decisionmaking
3 channels, regular and irregular, were separate and at odds.

4 Later on July 19th and in the early morning of
5 July 20th, Kyiv time, I received text messages on a three-way
6 WhatsApp text conversation with Ambassadors Volker and
7 Sondland, a record of which I understand has already been
8 provided to the committees by Ambassador Volker.

9 Ambassador Sondland said that a call between President
10 Trump and President Zelensky would take place soon.
11 Ambassador Volker said that it was most important for
12 Zelensky to say that he will help investigation and address
13 any specific personnel issues, if there are any.

14 Later on July 20th, I had a phone conversation with
15 Ambassador Sondland while he was on a train from Paris to
16 London. Ambassador Sondland told me that he had recommended
17 to President Zelensky that he use the phrase, "I will leave
18 no stone unturned" with regard to investigations when
19 President Zelensky spoke with President Trump.

20 Also, on July 20th, I had a phone conversation with
21 Mr. Danyliuk, during which he conveyed to me that President
22 Zelensky did not want to be used as a pawn in a U.S.
23 reelection campaign. The next day, I texted both Ambassadors
24 Volker and Sondland about President Zelensky's concern.

25 On July 25th, President Trump and President Zelensky had

1 the long-awaited phone conversation. Strangely, even though
2 I was chief of mission and was scheduled to meet with
3 President Zelensky along with Ambassador Volker the following
4 day, I received no readout of the call from the White House.
5 The Ukrainian Government issued a short, cryptic summary.

6 During a previously planned July 26th meeting, President
7 Zelensky told Ambassador Volker and me that he was happy with
8 the call, but he did not elaborate. President Zelensky then
9 asked me about the face-to-face meeting in the Oval Office as
10 promised in the May 29th letter from President Trump.

11 After our meeting with President Zelensky, Ambassador
12 Volker and I traveled to the frontline in northern Donbas to
13 receive a briefing from the commander of the forces on the
14 line of contact. Arriving for the briefing in the military
15 headquarters, the commander thanked us for security
16 assistance, but I was aware that this assistance was on hold,
17 which made me uncomfortable.

18 Ambassador Volker and I could see the armed and hostile
19 Russian-led forces on the other side of the damaged bridge
20 across the line of contact. Over 13,000 Ukrainians had been
21 killed in the war, one or two a week. To this day, that
22 continues. More Ukrainians would undoubtedly die without
23 U.S. assistance.

24 Although I spent the morning of July 26th with President
25 Zelensky and other Ukrainian officials, the first summary of

1 the Trump-Zelensky call that I heard from anybody inside the
2 U.S. Government was during a phone call I had with Tim
3 Morrison, Dr. Hill's recent replacement at the NSC, on
4 July 28th. Mr. Morrison told me that the call could have
5 been better and that President Trump had suggested that
6 President Zelensky or his staff meet with Mr. Giuliani and
7 Attorney General William Barr. I did not see any official
8 readout of the call until it was publicly released on
9 September 25th.

10 On August 16, I exchanged text messages with Ambassador
11 Volker, in which I learned that Mr. Yermak had asked that the
12 United States submit an official request for an investigation
13 into Burisma's alleged violations of Ukrainian law, if that's
14 what the United States desired.

15 A formal U.S. request to the Ukrainians to conduct an
16 investigation based on violations of their own law struck me
17 as improper, and I recommended to Ambassador Volker that we
18 stay clear. To find out the legal aspects of the question,
19 however, I gave him the name of a Deputy Assistant Attorney
20 General whom I thought would be the proper point of contact
21 for seeking a U.S. referral for a foreign investigation.

22 By mid-August, because the security assistance had been
23 held for over a month for no reason that I could discern, I
24 was beginning to fear that the longstanding U.S. policy of
25 strong support for Ukraine was shifting. I called Counselor

1 Brechbuhl to discuss this on August 21st. He said that he
2 was not aware of a change of U.S. policy but would check on
3 the status of the security assistance.

4 My concern deepened the next day, on August 22nd, during
5 a phone call with Mr. Morrison. I asked him if there had
6 been a change in policy of strong support for Ukraine, to
7 which he responded: It remains to be seen.

8 He also told me during this call that the President
9 doesn't want to provide any assistance at all. That was
10 extremely troubling to me. As I had told Secretary Pompeo in
11 May, if the policy of strong support for Ukraine were to
12 change, I would have to resign. Based on my call with
13 Mr. Morrison, I was preparing to do so.

14 Just days later, on August 27th, Ambassador Bolton
15 arrived in Kyiv and met with President Zelensky. During
16 their meeting, security assistance was not discussed.
17 Amazingly, news of the hold on security assistance did not
18 leak out until August 29th. I, on the other hand, was all
19 too aware of and still troubled by the hold.

20 Near the end of Ambassador Bolton's visit, I asked to
21 meet him privately, during which I expressed to him my
22 serious concern about the withholding of military assistance
23 to Ukraine while the Ukrainians were defending their country
24 from Russian aggression.

25 Ambassador Bolton recommended that I send a first-person

1 cable to Secretary Pompeo directly, relaying my concerns. I
2 wrote and transmitted such a cable on August 29th describing
3 the folly I saw in withholding military aid to Ukraine at a
4 time when hostilities were still active in the east and when
5 Russia was watching closely to gauge the level of American
6 support for the Ukrainian Government.

7 I told the Secretary that I could not and would not
8 defend such a policy. Although I received no specific
9 response, I heard that, soon thereafter, the Secretary
10 carried the cable with him to a meeting at the White House
11 focused on security assistance for Ukraine.

12 The same day that I sent my cable to the Secretary,
13 August 29, Mr. Yermak contacted me and was very concerned,
14 asking about the withheld security assistance. The hold that
15 the White House had placed on the assistance had just been
16 made public that day in a political story. At that point, I
17 was embarrassed that I could not give him any explanation for
18 why it was withheld.

19 It had still not occurred to me that the hold on
20 security assistance could be related to the investigations.
21 That, however, would change.

22 On September 1st, just 3 days after my cable to
23 Secretary Pompeo, President Zelensky met Vice President Pence
24 at a bilateral meeting in Warsaw. President Trump had
25 planned to travel to Warsaw but at the last minute had

1 canceled because of Hurricane Dorian.

2 Just hours before the Pence-Zelensky meeting, I
3 contacted Mr. Danyliuk to let him know that the delay of U.S.
4 security assistance was an all-or-nothing proposition, in the
5 sense that if the White House did not lift the hold prior to
6 the end of the fiscal year, September 30th, the funds would
7 expire and Ukraine would receive nothing.

8 I was hopeful that, at the bilateral meeting or shortly
9 thereafter, the White House would lift the hold, but this was
10 not to be. Indeed, I received a readout of the
11 Pence-Zelensky meeting over the phone for Mr. Morrison,
12 during which he told me President Zelensky had opened the
13 meeting by asking the Vice President about security
14 cooperation.

15 The Vice President did not respond substantively but
16 said he would talk to President Trump that night. The Vice
17 President did say that President Trump wanted the Europeans
18 to do more to support Ukraine and that he wanted Ukrainians
19 to do more to fight corruption.

20 During this same phone call I had with Mr. Morrison, he
21 went on to describe a conversation Ambassador Sondland had
22 with Mr. Yermak at Warsaw. Ambassador Sondland told
23 Mr. Yermak that the security assistance money would not come
24 until President Zelensky committed to pursue the Burisma
25 investigation.

1 I was alarmed by what Mr. Morrison told me about the
2 Sondland-Yermak conversation. This was the first time I had
3 heard that security assistance, not just the White House
4 meeting, was conditioned on the investigations.

5 Very concerned, on that same day, I sent Ambassador
6 Sondland a text message asking if we are now saying that
7 security assistance and a White House meeting are conditioned
8 on investigations. Ambassador Sondland responded asking me
9 to call him, which I did.

10 During that phone call, Ambassador Sondland told me that
11 President Trump had told him that he wants President Zelensky
12 to state publicly that Ukraine will investigate Burisma and
13 alleged Ukrainian interference in the 2016 U.S. election.

14 Ambassador Sondland also told me that he now recognized
15 that he had made a mistake by earlier telling Ukrainian
16 officials to whom he spoke that a White House meeting with
17 President Zelensky was dependent on a public announcement of
18 investigations. In fact, Ambassador Sondland said everything
19 was dependent on such an announcement, including security
20 assistance. He said that President Trump wanted President
21 Zelensky in a box by making public statement about ordering
22 such investigations.

23 In the same September 1st call, I told Ambassador
24 Sondland that President Trump should have more respect for
25 another head of state and that what he described was not in

1 the interest of either President Trump or President Zelensky.
2 At that point, I asked Ambassador Sondland to push back on
3 President Trump's demand. Ambassador Sondland pledged to
4 try.

5 We also discussed the possibility that Ukrainian
6 prosecutor general, rather than President Zelensky, would
7 make a statement about investigations, potentially in
8 coordination with Attorney General Barr's probe into the
9 investigation of interference in the 2016 elections.

10 The next day, September 2nd, Mr. Morrison called to
11 inform me that Mr. Danyliuk had asked him to come to his
12 hotel room in Warsaw where Mr. Danyliuk expressed concern
13 about the possible loss of U.S. support for Ukraine.

14 In particular, Mr. Morrison relayed to me that the
15 inability of any U.S. officials to respond to Ukraine's
16 explicit questions about security assistance was troubling
17 them. I was experiencing the same tension in my dealings
18 with the Ukrainians, including a meeting that I had had with
19 Defense Minister Andriy Zagordnyuk that day.

20 During my call with Mr. Morrison on September 2nd, I
21 also briefed Mr. Morrison on what Ambassador Sondland had
22 told me during our call the day prior.

23 On September 5th, I hosted Senators Johnson and Murphy
24 for a visit to Kyiv. During their visit, we met with
25 President Zelensky. His first question to the Senators was

1 about the withheld security assistance. My recollection of
2 the meeting is that both Senators stressed that bipartisan
3 support for Ukraine in Washington was Ukraine's most
4 important strategic asset and that President Zelensky should
5 not jeopardize that bipartisan support by getting drawn into
6 U.S. domestic politics.

7 I had been making, and continue to make, this point to
8 all of my Ukrainian official contacts. But the push to make
9 President Zelensky publicly commit to investigations of
10 Burisma and alleged interference in the 2016 elections showed
11 how the official foreign policy of the United States was
12 undercut by the irregular efforts led by Mr. Giuliani.

13 Two days later, on September 7th, I had a conversation
14 with Mr. Morrison in which he described a phone conversation
15 earlier that day between Ambassadors Sondland and President
16 Trump. Mr. Morrison said that he had a sinking feeling after
17 learning about this conversation from Ambassador Sondland.

18 According to Mr. Morrison, President Trump told
19 Ambassador Sondland that he was not asking for a quid pro
20 quo. But President Trump did insist that President Zelensky
21 go to a microphone and say he is opening investigations of
22 Biden and 2016 election interference, and that President
23 Zelensky should want to do this himself. Mr. Morrison said
24 that he told Ambassador Bolton and the NSC lawyers of this
25 phone call between President Trump and Ambassador Sondland.

1 The following day, on September 8th, Ambassador Sondland
2 and I spoke on the phone. He said he had talked to President
3 Trump, as I had suggested a week earlier, but that President
4 Trump was adamant that President Zelensky himself had to
5 clear things up and do it in public. President Trump said it
6 was not a quid pro quo.

7 Ambassador Sondland said that he had talked to President
8 Zelensky and Mr. Yermak and told them that, although this was
9 not a quid pro quo, if President Zelensky did not clear
10 things up in public, we would be at a stalemate. I
11 understood a stalemate to mean that Ukraine would not receive
12 the much-needed military assistance. Ambassador Sondland
13 said that this conversation concluded with President Zelensky
14 agreeing to make a public statement in an interview with CNN.

15 After the call with Ambassador Sondland on
16 September 8th, I expressed my strong reservations in a text
17 message to Ambassador Sondland stating: My nightmare is that
18 the Ukrainians give the interview and don't get the security
19 assistance. The Russians love it. And I quit.

20 I was serious.

21 The next day I said to Ambassadors Sondland and Volker
22 that the message to the Ukrainians and Russians we send with
23 the decision on security assistance is key. With the hold,
24 we have already shaken their faith in us. I also said, I
25 think it's crazy to withhold security assistance for help

1 with a political campaign.

2 Ambassador Sondland responded about 5 hours later that I
3 was incorrect about President Trump's intentions. The
4 President has been crystal clear: No quid pro quos of any
5 kind.

6 Before these text messages, during our call on
7 September 8th, Ambassador Sondland tried to explain to me
8 that President Trump is a businessman. When a businessman is
9 about to sign a check to someone who owes him something, he
10 said, the businessman asks that person to pay up before
11 signing the check.

12 Ambassador Volker used the same terms several days later
13 when we were together at the Yalta European Strategy
14 Conference in Kyiv. I argued to both that the explanation
15 made no sense. The Ukrainians did not owe President Trump
16 anything, and holding up security assistance for domestic
17 political gain was crazy, as I had said in my text message to
18 Ambassador Sondland and Volker on September 9th.

19 Finally, I learned on September 11th that the hold had
20 been lifted and security assistance would be provided. After
21 I learned that the security assistance was released on
22 September 11th, I personally conveyed the news to President
23 Zelensky and Foreign Minister Prystaiko. And I again
24 reminded Mr. Yermak of the high strategic value of bipartisan
25 support for Ukraine and the importance of not getting

1 involved in other countries' elections.

2 My fear at the time was that, since Ambassador Sondland
3 had told me President Zelensky had already agreed to do a CNN
4 interview, President Zelensky would make a statement
5 regarding investigations that would have played into domestic
6 U.S. politics. I sought to confirm through Mr. Danyliuk that
7 President Zelensky was not planning to give such an interview
8 to the media.

9 While Mr. Danyliuk initially confirmed that on
10 September 12th, I noticed during a meeting on the morning of
11 September 13th, at President Zelensky's office, that
12 Mr. Yermak looked uncomfortable in response to the question.
13 Again, I asked Mr. Danyliuk to confirm that there would be no
14 CNN interview, which he did.

15 On September 25th, at the U.N. General Assembly session
16 in New York City, President Trump met President Zelensky
17 face-to-face. He also released a transcript of the July 25th
18 call. The United States gave the Ukrainians virtually no
19 notice of the release, and they were livid.

20 Although this was the first time I had seen the details
21 of President Trump's July 25th call with President Zelensky
22 in which he mentioned Vice President Biden, I had come to
23 understand well before then that "investigations" was a term
24 Ambassadors Volker and Sondland used to mean matters related
25 to the 2016 elections and to investigations of Burisma and

1 the Bidens.

2 Mr. Chairman, I recognize this is a rather lengthy
3 recitation of the events of the past few months, told from my
4 vantage point in Kyiv. But I also recognize the importance
5 of the matters your committees are investigating, and I hope
6 that this chronology will provide some framework for your
7 questions.

8 I wish to conclude by returning to the points I made at
9 the outset: Ukraine is important to the security of the
10 United States. It has been attacked by Russia, which
11 continues its aggression against Ukraine. If we believe in
12 the principle of sovereignty of nations on which our security
13 and the security of our friends and allies depends, we must
14 support Ukraine in its fight against its bullying neighbor.
15 Russian aggression cannot stand.

16 There are two Ukraine stories today, Mr. Chairman. The
17 first is the one we are discussing this morning and that you
18 have been hearing for the past 2 weeks. It's a rancorous
19 story about whistleblowers, Mr. Giuliani, side channels, quid
20 pro quos, corruption, interference in elections. In this
21 story Ukraine is an object.

22 But there's another Ukraine story, a positive,
23 bipartisan one. In this second story, Ukraine is the
24 subject. This one is about young people in a young nation
25 struggling to break free of its past, hopeful their new

1 government will finally usher in a new Ukraine, proud of its
2 independence from Russia, eager to join Western institutions
3 and enjoy a more secure and prosperous life.

4 This story describes a Nation developing an inclusive,
5 democratic nationalism, not unlike what we in America, in our
6 best moments, feel about our diverse country -- less
7 concerned about what language we speak; what religion, if
8 any, we practice; where our parents and grandparents came
9 from -- more concerned about building a new country.

10 Because of the strategic importance of Ukraine and our
11 effort to create a whole, free Europe, we, through Republican
12 and Democratic administrations over three decades, have
13 supported Ukraine. Congress has been very generous over the
14 years with assistance funding, both civilian and military,
15 and political support.

16 With overwhelming bipartisan majorities, Congress has
17 supported Ukraine with harsh sanctions on Russia for invading
18 and occupying Ukraine. We can be proud of that support and
19 that we have stood up to a dictator's aggression against a
20 democratic neighbor.

21 This second story, Mr. Chairman, is the one I would like
22 to leave you with today. And I'm glad to answer your
23 questions.

24 [The information follows:]

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1 THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, thank you. We're just trying
2 to process what you said. Thank you for your detailed
3 opening statement.

4 I recognize Mr. Goldman now for an hour of questions by
5 the majority to be followed by an hour of questions from the
6 minority.

7 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

8 Q Thank you, Ambassador Taylor. Thank you for the
9 detailed opening statement. We obviously just received it,
10 and we'll do our best not to be too repetitive.

11 It is incredibly detailed, and I note that you mention
12 that you wrote a memo to file on June 30th and that you sent
13 a cable to Secretary Pompeo on August 27. Can you tell us
14 whether there were any other documents that you relied upon
15 in putting together this opening statement today?

16 A Yes. Three sources, I guess. One you are familiar
17 with are the texts of WhatsApp messages that Ambassador
18 Volker, Ambassador Sondland, and I exchanged. There were
19 other WhatsApp messages that I exchanged with Ukrainian
20 officials and other American officials, all of which, like
21 Ambassador Volker's package, I have provided to the State
22 Department. That's number one.

23 Number two, I've always kept careful notes, and I keep a
24 little notebook where I take notes on conversations, in
25 particular when I'm not in the office. So, in meetings with

1 Ukrainian officials or when I'm out and I get a phone call
2 and I can -- I keep notes.

3 The third documents are handwritten notes that I take on
4 a small, little spiral notebook in my office of phone calls
5 that take place in my office. So those, I think, are the
6 three sources of information that you see here. You will see
7 some quotes and those are quotes from either the WhatsApp
8 texts or from my notes.

9 Q And have you provided all of those documents to the
10 State Department?

11 A I have.

12 Q At their request. Is that right?

13 A At their request. I think in response to your
14 subpoena to the State Department, they did a document search
15 which came, of course, to Embassy Kyiv, applied to the State
16 Department. We did a search of all of our documents,
17 including the ones I just mentioned, and sent them into the
18 State Department.

19 Q Okay. And I assume that you are aware that, other
20 than the WhatsApp messages that Ambassador Volker provided to
21 the committees, the committees have not received any of these
22 documents from the State Department?

23 A I assumed that, but I didn't know that until you
24 confirmed it.

25 Q Okay. But you remain in possession of your

1 personal documents?

2 A I do.

3 Q Okay. Prior to your testimony here today, did you
4 have any discussions with anyone at the State Department
5 about your testimony?

6 A No.

7 Q Did you receive any instructions from the State
8 Department about your testimony?

9 A Yes. Let me be clear, I had no substantive
10 conversations with anyone about testimony. I have been in
11 touch. As soon as I got your invitation, I, as instructed,
12 talked to our congressional liaison and in turn our legal
13 office, which John Bellinger knows something about. And they
14 gave me instructions on how I was to proceed. So I've had
15 those conversations with them, with what we call H and L.
16 People in the room are probably familiar with both.

17 Q Right. But you did not show this opening statement
18 to anyone at the State Department?

19 A That's correct.

20 Q And you did not receive any guidance about what you
21 could testify about here today?

22 A The guidance I got was to be sure not to talk about
23 classified material or anything having to do with privilege,
24 and I think I've abided by those. I'm not sure exactly what
25 the privilege constraint is. I don't think I have violated

1 that, and I've certainly not violated anything else.

2 [Discussion off the record.]

3 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Ah, good point. I was also
4 instructed not to appear. That's an important instruction.

5 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

6 Q Okay.

7 A And in that message, that letter, it said not to
8 appear under current circumstances. My interpretation of
9 that is, when I got a subpoena, that those were different
10 circumstances.

11 Q Right. A subpoena compels your testimony, correct,
12 and that's why you're here today?

13 A Yes, sir.

14 Q You indicated that you struggled a little bit over
15 the decision whether or not to take the offer to be the
16 Charge to the mission in Kyiv. Can you describe in a little
17 bit more detail why you struggled with that decision?

18 A Yes. A couple of reasons. So I was approached
19 with the idea of going back out to Kyiv by Ambassador Volker
20 and then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent
21 about the time, this would have been like April, May, when it
22 was possible that Ambassador Yovanovitch would be coming back
23 before the regular end of her term.

24 I, of course, was following events in Ukraine, not as
25 closely then as I do now, but was certainly -- as I mentioned

1 in my statement, I cared a lot about the place. I had seen
2 press reports of the intent of Mr. Giuliani to travel to
3 Ukraine, to pursue these investigations that I've mentioned a
4 couple times in my opening statement, with the intent of
5 using that information in political campaigns.

6 I knew of the -- I knew the people that Giuliani had
7 been talking to in Ukraine. I knew the prosecutor general,
8 Mr. Lutsenko. I knew that Mr. Lutsenko had given interviews
9 to American media which were pretty negative about both
10 United States and about the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, in
11 particular the Ambassador and the deputy chief of mission.

12 So I knew that they were -- I put it -- I knew there
13 were problems in Kyiv, and I knew there were problems in
14 Washington. I knew that Secretary Pompeo had received a
15 letter from a Member of Congress or maybe a former Member of
16 Congress -- he's certainly a former Member of Congress now --
17 saying that Masha Yovanovitch, Ambassador Yovanovitch, should
18 be removed. All to say that I was concerned that there
19 was -- I think I put it -- a snake pit in Kyiv and a snake
20 pit here, and I was not sure that I could usefully serve in
21 that context.

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1 [10:53 a.m.]

2 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

3 Q That letter you referenced is from former
4 Representative Pete Sessions? Is that what you're talking
5 about?

6 A Correct.

7 Q In May of 2018?

8 A Correct.

9 Q How did you know about that?

10 A I suppose I had heard that from the State
11 Department -- from Mr. Kent. I don't know that.

12 Q What did you know about the circumstances
13 surrounding Ambassador Yovanovitch's removal?

14 A So I met Ambassador Yovanovitch in Kyiv on several
15 occasions that spring, last spring. From my position at the
16 United States Institute of Peace, I was an election observer,
17 an international election observer, for the two rounds of the
18 Presidential election. And on both those visits to Kyiv,
19 those were separated by 3 weeks. So both of those visits I
20 would check in of course with the embassy and sat down with
21 Masha Yovanovitch, with Ambassador Yovanovitch.

22 We talked in Kyiv about what was going on there and this
23 was disturbing to her. When I came back from those trips, I
24 didn't think much more about that until I got a phone call
25 from George Kent, Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent,

1 asking hypothetically, he said, would I be willing to go back
2 out to Ukraine, which was odd because we have an Ambassador
3 out there and this gave me some sense that something was
4 going on here. Shortly thereafter, he called up and said,
5 it's not hypothetical anymore. Will you go back out? And
6 that prompted me to do some checking and this kind of
7 business.

8 When Ambassador Yovanovitch came back in what, late May,
9 I think that's right, I talked to her about this and she
10 described the circumstances under which she came back.

11 Q Did you have any understanding as to whether the
12 allegations that were levied against her had any basis in
13 fact?

14 A No, because I don't think there were allegations --
15 well, as she's testified, she was told by the deputy
16 secretary of State that she had done nothing wrong. So there
17 were no allegations of -- as far as any official channel that
18 she had done anything wrong.

19 Q Were you aware of allegations in the media against
20 her?

21 A The allegations in the media were that she was
22 tough on corruption. Now, that doesn't sound so bad, that's
23 what an Ambassador out there has do. She was very frank, she
24 was very direct. She made points very clearly, and she was
25 indeed tough on corruption, and she named names and that

1 sometimes is controversial out there, but she's a strong
2 person and made those charges.

3 Q When you say name names, did she generally name
4 names of people or entities to prosecute or not to prosecute?

5 A No, neither. She named Ukrainians who were
6 standing in the way of reform of the judiciary in particular.

7 Q I want to show you a -- what's been marked as
8 Exhibit 1, which is a May 9th, New York Times article.

9 [Taylor Exhibit No. 1
10 Was marked for identification.]

11 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

12 Q You just testified a second ago that you were aware
13 of efforts by Mr. Giuliani to go to Ukraine to push for
14 investigations. Do you recognize this article?

15 A I do.

16 Q Okay. Was this what you were referring to?

17 A It was.

18 Q All right. And if you could just read for us the
19 highlighted paragraph, the second paragraph?

20 A Mr. Giuliani said he plans to travel to Kyiv, the
21 Ukrainian capital, in the coming days and wants to meet with
22 the nation's President-elect to urge him to pursue inquiries
23 that allies of the White House contend could yield new
24 information about two matters of intense interest to Mr.
25 Trump.

1 Q Continue, please.

2 A One is the origin of the Special Counsel's
3 investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016
4 election. The other is the involvement of former Vice
5 President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.'s son and a gas company owned
6 by a Ukrainian oligarch.

7 Q And then if you could read the quotation from Mr.
8 Giuliani, two paragraphs down?

9 A We're not meddling in an election, we're meddling
10 in an investigation, which we have a right to do, Mr.
11 Giuliani said.

12 Q All right. And then if you go to the next page and
13 just read the two lines that are highlighted?

14 A He said that his efforts in Ukraine have the full
15 support of Mr. Trump. He declined to say specifically
16 whether he had briefed him on the planned meeting with
17 Mr. Zelensky but added he basically knows what I'm doing,
18 sure, as his lawyer.

19 Q And then if you could go to the last page and the
20 last line and just read that.

21 A My only client is the President of the United
22 States, he said. He's the one I have an obligation to report
23 to, tell him what happened.

24 Q So this article is dated May 9th, which as I
25 understand it was during the period that you were considering

1 whether or not to return to Kyiv?

2 A That's correct.

3 Q Okay. And what was your reaction to seeing this
4 article?

5 A This was one of the several concerns I had when --
6 considering whether to accept the offer to go back out to
7 Kyiv. This was part of the -- one of the two snake pits,
8 this is the Washington snake pit that I was concerned I would
9 be stepping into if I were to accept the offer. So this made
10 me less interested, this made me concerned, it troubled me
11 that this is what was affecting U.S. policy towards Ukraine.

12 Q Did you have any conversations with anyone, any
13 executives or senior officials at the State Department about
14 your multifaceted concerns?

15 A I did. I had a conversation with the Counselor
16 Ulrich Brechbuhl and then a conversation with Secretary
17 Pompeo. And they were -- they were similar in both -- in
18 both meetings I let them know up front going into the meeting
19 that I had not decided whether to accept the offer to go back
20 out to Kyiv because I was troubled by what I was hearing, not
21 just this Giuliani article, but I was troubled by other
22 things as well and I made this clear to both, both Mr.
23 Brechbuhl and Secretary Pompeo.

24 And the concern was that the strong support, the policy
25 of strong support for Ukraine, that as I said in my

1 statement, bipartisan, House, Senate, Republicans, Democrats
2 administrations Republicans, Democrats all the way through,
3 that strong support I was worried could change. And if it
4 did change, I told them both, I couldn't serve. The counsel,
5 I mentioned that I'd consulted with a mentor, and he said,
6 Bill, if your country asks you to do something you could do
7 it, if you can be effective. And the if you can be effective
8 clause is really important.

9 And I could not be effective if our strong support for
10 Ukraine policy were to change and if we were -- if for some
11 reason, I couldn't imagine this would happen, but I was
12 worried that there could be some dramatic change where we
13 would agree with the Russians, that well maybe Crimea is
14 Russian after all, you know, or something like that. And if
15 that were to happen, and I made this clear to the Secretary
16 and others in the room, I would have to come back, I would
17 have to resign, I would have to leave post.

18 Q And what did Secretary Pompeo say in response to
19 your expression of these concerns?

20 A He said that he supported the strong U.S. policy
21 and that he would continue to support that strong U.S.
22 policy, and that he would make this case to President Trump.

23 Q What, if anything, did he say about the snake pit
24 in Washington that you described?

25 A He said that I should, as the Ambassador, as the

1 Charge out there, that I should follow the guidance and
2 pursue the foreign policy of the U.S. -- of the
3 administration, of the government, well established. And he
4 said, and that policy is strong support, economic support,
5 military support, political support, Democratic support
6 and -- and that he would do his best to keep that strong
7 support.

8 Q Did he in any way mention Mr. Giuliani?

9 A He didn't.

10 Q What did Counselor Brechbuhl say to you in response
11 to these concerns?

12 A Same thing. Well, he said you need to -- I saw him
13 about 3 days, the Thursday before the Monday meeting with
14 Secretary Pompeo, he said, you'll have an opportunity to ask
15 the Secretary about that.

16 Q What was Mr. Brechbuhl's view, personally?

17 A He agreed, he's is not directly in the Ukraine
18 policymaking channel. He was more in the executive
19 personnel, which is why I was having my -- an interview with
20 him, a meeting with him before seeing the Secretary.

21 Q Did you specifically mention Mr. Giuliani to either
22 Counselor Brechbuhl or Secretary Pompeo?

23 A Mr. Goldman, I don't remember if I did, I don't
24 remember if I did or not.

25 Q Okay.

1 A Not that I remember.

2 Q What ultimately led you to take the job?

3 A The Secretary's assurance that he would continue
4 that strong support and that he would continue to push that
5 strong support within the government. And frankly one of my
6 concerns had been that there had not been a letter to
7 President Zelensky congratulating him on his victory. And
8 Secretary Pompeo looked over at Counselor Brechbuhl and said,
9 what, no letter? And within 48 hours there was a letter.
10 Now -- and it was a good letter -- it's the letter I
11 mentioned in my statement that congratulated President
12 Zelensky and invited him to a meeting in Washington.

13 Q Okay. That was the May 29th letter that you
14 referenced?

15 A Correct, correct. That's right, because I saw
16 Secretary Pompeo on the 28th.

17 Q By the time you had seen Secretary Pompeo, were you
18 aware that there was a meeting related to Ukraine with the
19 President in the Oval Office on May 23rd?

20 A Yes. I think I had heard that. I know I've heard
21 about that -- I have -- I've gotten reports of that meeting.
22 This was the --this is the meeting of the delegation that
23 went -- the U.S. delegation that went to the inauguration in
24 Kyiv and they came back to brief President Trump, that's the
25 one you're talking about.

1 Q Yes.

2 A Yeah. So your question is whether or not I knew of
3 that meeting when I saw the Secretary on the 28th. I don't
4 know when I heard -- I can't remember. I heard several
5 reports of, descriptions of that May 23rd meeting, but they
6 might -- may have come after my meeting with Secretary
7 Pompeo.

8 Q Who did you get reports of that meeting from?

9 THE CHAIRMAN: If I could just interrupt. And I don't
10 know all the Members so I apologize. Only members of three
11 committees and their staff and committee staff are authorized
12 to be present. If there is any Member here who is not a
13 member of the three committees, they need to absent
14 themselves.

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: So who did I hear from --

16 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

17 Q -- Yeah.

18 A -- about the May 23rd meeting, yes?

19 Q Right.

20 A I'm sure Kurt Volker -- I imagine -- we had several
21 conversations about this, this is an important meeting. And
22 okay -- and Ambassador Sondland, because it was at that
23 meeting that Ambassador Sondland, Volker and Secretary of
24 Energy Perry, Rick Perry were given some responsibilities by
25 the President to work on Ukraine policy.

1 So I'm sure in answer your question, Mr. Goldman, I'm
2 sure I heard it from Kurt and Gordon, Kurt Volker and Gordon
3 Sondland.

4 Q And in addition to the fact that the President had
5 asked the three of them to work on Ukraine policy, did you
6 learn anything else about the conversation at that meeting --

7 A I --

8 Q -- from either Ambassador Volker or Ambassador
9 Sondland?

10 A I did. So they described how enthusiastic they
11 were coming back from Kyiv, from the inauguration, how
12 enthusiastic they were about the new President, President
13 Zelensky. And they described their attempts or their
14 attempts to pass on this enthusiasm to President Trump.

15 President Trump, I think I mentioned in my statement,
16 was sceptical of Ukraine in general, but -- of the new
17 Ukrainian administration. And when Secretary Perry,
18 Ambassador Volker, and Ambassador Sondland suggested that it
19 would be a good idea for the two Presidents, President Trump
20 and President Zelensky to get together in a meeting. This
21 now is before the letter was signed. Right, but so the idea
22 to get together for a meeting was a good idea so that
23 President Trump could see himself, what they had seen when
24 they were in Kyiv, and what they had seen in their meetings
25 with President Zelensky.

1 President Trump didn't agree, but what he did say was
2 work with Rudy Giuliani. he told the three of them to work
3 with Rudy Giuliani.

4 Q Did he say what he wanted them to work with Rudy
5 Giuliani about from your readouts?

6 A No, not that I recall.

7 Q By this point you understood that in part based on
8 that article, but you indicate in your opening statement
9 other press statements, did you understand what Rudy Giuliani
10 was pushing for in Ukraine?

11 A This article that we just talked about was probably
12 the best description and it -- it may have been the only
13 direct description of what Mr. Giuliani was interested in.

14 Q And were you familiar with Burisma or the Ukrainian
15 role at all in the 2016 --

16 A I became familiar, but I -- I think at that time I
17 was not. In the past several months since seeing this and
18 hearing how it piped up I became more familiar with it so now
19 I'm pretty familiar. At the time, it is hard to say, exactly
20 what you knew at a particular time. I don't think so. I --
21 I don't think I understood other than you know, that Giuliani
22 was out doing some things along these lines that this was
23 what he was after.

24 Q And what was your reaction to hearing that the
25 President had directed the Ambassador to the European Union,

1 the Special Envoy to the Ukraine conflict, and the Secretary
2 of Energy to take a role in Ukraine policy and to speak to
3 his personal lawyer?

4 A Actually, I wasn't disturbed by that. It's not
5 unusual to ask people outside the government to play a role.
6 In some sense Kurt Volker was kind of outside the government
7 and he was playing a very important role. He kind of came
8 into the government, a very important role in the
9 negotiations. There have been examples, we've heard about
10 them recently of other civilians doing work for the State
11 Department. And as long as the people pulled in from the
12 outside, consulted from the outside, giving advice or ideas
13 on policy, that's -- we see that all the time. We all have
14 seen that, and that's okay, as long as it's consistent with
15 and supports the main thrust of U.S. foreign policy.

16 And so at the time I didn't think that that was a
17 problem.

18 Q Over time, did your view of that change?

19 A It did.

20 Q And we'll get into that a little bit later. Did
21 you come to understand whether any of those three individuals
22 spoke to Mr. Giuliani after the President directed them to do
23 so on May 23rd?

24 A I know Kurt, Ambassador Volker, spoke to him on the
25 phone a couple of times, I think had a breakfast with him

1 during the summer. And as we know, put Rudy Giuliani in
2 touch with Andrey Yermak, the assistant to President
3 Zelensky.

4 So I know that Ambassador Volker had some -- did follow
5 up. And I'm pretty sure that Ambassador Sondland had some
6 contact with Rudy Giuliani as well.

7 Q And what about Secretary Perry?

8 A I don't know. I've had almost no dealings -- let
9 me see if it's even -- no dealings with Secretary Perry.

10 Q You testified that you returned to Kyiv on June
11 17th?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And you described in your opening remarks a phone
14 conversation that you had 10 days later on June 27th with
15 Ambassador Sondland about Ukraine matters. Do you recall
16 anything more about that phone conversation with Ambassador
17 Sondland?

18 A This phone call, Mr. Goldman, was in preparation
19 for a larger phone call the following day on June 28th. And
20 I can -- I'd be happy to check my notes on anything else.
21 When preparing this statement, I did check my notes and, as I
22 said in my statement, Ambassador Sondland told me during a
23 phone conversations President Zelensky, needed to make clear
24 to President Trump that he, President Zelensky, was not
25 standing in the way of investigations, there could have been

1 other parts of the conversation. That was the one piece that
2 stuck out -- sticks out to me that I included here.

3 Q And did you know at that time what
4 investigations Ambassador Sondland was referring to?

5 A I did not. I didn't, you know, I knew that these
6 were -- that Mr. Giuliani was pursuing some investigations
7 and I hadn't -- again, this was 10 days after arriving there
8 I hadn't put this together. So no I wasn't sure what he was
9 talking about, nor was I sure the next day, in this larger
10 phone call, what people were referring to when they talked
11 about investigations.

12 Q And I believe you testified in your opening
13 statement that the call the next day there was a reference to
14 investigations to, quote, "Get to the bottom of things."
15 unquote.

16 A That's correct. And that was -- Ambassador Volker
17 intended to say to President Zelensky when Ambassador Volker
18 sat down with President Zelensky in Toronto at an assistance
19 conference, at a reform conference that was coming up the
20 following week. And yes, it was -- and again, from my notes
21 in preparing this -- from my notes preparing this, this
22 actually was in the little spiral notebook by my desk in the
23 office where I had that meeting -- had that phone call is
24 where I have that quote.

25 Q Was the reference to investigations by Ambassador

1 Sondland on June 27th the earliest date or time that you can
2 recall any discussion of investigations?

3 A And again, before I came out there, we'd had some
4 conversations -- I'm sure that I had conversation with Deputy
5 Assistant Secretary Kent about the Giuliani role, which made
6 me concerned and the role was an investigation so I wanted to
7 be careful about how I answer your question.

8 When I got out there in the first 10 days -- let me see,
9 I did have a meeting -- I had a phone call the day after I
10 got there, which was on -- I got there on the 17th. And on
11 the 18th we had a phone call -- yeah, but it was about -- it
12 was about the meeting, it was about the meeting that the
13 Ukrainians wanted with -- that President Zelensky wanted with
14 President Trump. And I don't recall any discussion on that
15 day, on the 18th, which is again the day after I arrived of
16 investigations and I show nothing else in my notes about
17 that. So I think that's the answer.

18 Q Okay. And you do reference specifically in your
19 opening remarks that President Zelensky needed to make it
20 clear to President Trump that he was not standing in the way
21 of investigations. And that was a preview to the call that
22 you had with President Zelensky the day after?

23 A Right. On June 27th, correct.

24 Q And do you recall whether or not that message was
25 conveyed to President Zelensky on the call on the 28th?

1 A It was not. And -- and Ambassador Volker intended
2 to pass that message in Toronto several days later.

3 Q Okay. And did you speak to Ambassador Volker after
4 he went to Toronto in early July?

5 A Many times. But about that?

6 Q Specifically about a conversation that he had with
7 President Zelensky?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And what did he tell you about that conversation?

10 A He said that he had been in a broader conversation,
11 a larger conversation with many officials on both sides. And
12 then he had an opportunity to have a smaller conversation
13 with President Zelensky and President Zelensky's Chief of
14 Staff, Andriy Bohdan, where Kurt said that he had -- Kurt
15 told me that he had discussed how President Zelensky could
16 prepare for the phone call with President Trump. And without
17 going into -- without providing me any details about the
18 specific words, did talk about investigations in that
19 conversation with -- in Toronto with Zelensky and Bohdan.

20 Q In what context did he tell you that he spoke about
21 investigations?

22 A So when did he tell me --

23 Q No, in what context did the issue or topic of
24 investigations come up? Was it in connection with an
25 interaction between President Zelensky and President Trump?

1 A Yes, it was specifically in preparation for the
2 phone call and Kurt suggested to President Zelensky that
3 President Trump would like to hear about the investigations.

4 Q Okay. And at that point did you know what
5 investigations he was talking about?

6 A No.

7 Q It was -- it was just described as investigations?

8 A Correct.

9 Q Understood. You just --

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Is there anything more you could tell us
11 about that conversation when he -- when Ambassador Volker
12 said that he discussed investigations with Zelensky's Chief
13 of Staff. Did you ask him what about that, what are you
14 talking about, you were aware at that time of what Giuliani
15 had said, did it come up in that conversation?

16 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, the conversation I had
17 with Ambassador Volker about that -- about the Toronto
18 conversation took place probably -- let's see, so it was --
19 July 2nd was the Toronto conversation. Kurt arrived, he and
20 I talked a lot, and he also visited a couple of times in this
21 timeframe. And it was during those conversations and visits
22 that we had this conversation. So nothing specific came out
23 of those conversations describing this.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

25 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

1 Q On July 10th you testified that you had a meeting
2 in Kyiv with President Zelensky's Chief of Staff Andriy
3 Bohdan who had indicated to you that he had heard from Mr.
4 Giuliani that the phone call between the two Presidents was
5 unlikely to happen and that they I think you said were
6 alarmed and disappointed. Oh, and the meeting also was the
7 Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko?

8 A Yeah.

9 Q Did they indicate to you who had heard from Mr.
10 Giuliani and how that message had been relayed?

11 A You know, I was going over my notes last night.
12 Yes, it was relayed through the then prosecutor general, this
13 fellow I mentioned earlier, Lutsenko and it was -- and as we
14 know, Giuliani and Lutsenko talked a lot. And so Prystaiko
15 and Bohdan had heard from Giuliani through Lutsenko.

16 Q What do you know about Mr. Lutsenko?

17 A When I was in Kyiv 2006 to 2009, Yuriy Lutsenko was
18 the Minister of Interior so he headed up all the police. And
19 frankly he did a pretty good job at the time. He was a
20 controversial choice for President Poroshenko as the
21 Prosecutor General because he -- he had law enforcement with
22 police but had no legal training. So he was an unusual
23 choice.

24 Mr. Lutsenko was loyal to President Poroshenko and so
25 kept his job there. But was a very kind of a person who

1 listened carefully to what was going on in Washington, what
2 was going on in Kyiv, the politics. He wanted to stay in the
3 job and of course this is 2016 when he is the Prosecutor
4 General and no one knows about the outcome of the election.
5 So I mean a lot of Ukrainians, probably a lot of
6 internationals around the world were trying to figure out
7 American politics at the time, but Lutsenko was also tuned
8 into those.

9 Q But clearly the senior officials for President
10 Zelensky were interested in anything that Mr. Giuliani had to
11 say. Is that accurate?

12 A That's accurate, because they understood, as did
13 Kurt and -- Ambassador Volker and Ambassador Sondland, that
14 at President Trump's direction, Rudy Giuliani was
15 influential, was influential with that team. And they were
16 sure, and I think Lutsenko had the same view that in order to
17 have this meeting, get this meeting between the two
18 Presidents that Mr. Giuliani was going to be an important
19 player.

20 Q Did they understand why Mr. Giuliani had indicated
21 that there would -- the phone call was unlikely to happen?

22 A I don't know.

23 Q Okay. And you said that you relayed these concerns
24 to Counselor Brechbuhl?

25 A I did.

1 Q And what did he say to you?

2 A He -- first he'd heard -- I was hoping I could find
3 out something from Washington that indicated whether or not
4 this phone call was going to happen and he didn't know.

5 Q Did he get back to you?

6 A No.

7 Q You describe a phone conversation that you had with
8 Fiona Hill and Alex Vindman on July 19th at some length in
9 your opening statement.

10 A Yes.

11 Q And you refer back to a meeting that occurred on
12 July 10th, while you were in Kyiv, so you were not there. Is
13 that right?

14 A That's correct.

15 Q And based on the phone -- well, let me ask this,
16 did you hear about that meeting from anyone other than Dr.
17 Hill and Mr. Vindman on the 19th?

18 A Yes. Let's see, so at that meeting -- that meeting
19 included Mr. Danyliuk, as well as Mr. Yermak. And I think
20 Ambassador Sondland, and it might have been Secretary Perry,
21 and of course Ambassador Bolton were in that meeting. I will
22 find that there -- yeah. Yes.

23 So, Oleksandr Danyliuk is the National Security Advisor
24 so he is Ambassador Bolton's counterpart. And they had a
25 good meeting there. So your question was had -- did I hear

1 from other people? The answer is certainly yes, again with
2 -- back and forth with Kurt Volker so at least those three
3 recounting of that meeting.

4 Q Did you have any discussions with any Ukrainian
5 officials about that meeting?

6 A Yes. When are -- when Oleksandr Danyliuk got back
7 I'm sure we had conversations about it. I had also had set
8 him up again as the National Security Advisor for Ukraine. I
9 also set him up to see in Washington Steve Hadley who had of
10 course had that job earlier, and they had a good meeting as
11 well.

12 So I did have a conversation with Danyliuk when he got
13 back about with meetings with Hadley and -- but not in great
14 detail about the meeting with Ambassador Bolton and team.

15 Q Okay. So you outlined in some detail what Dr. Hill
16 and Mr. Vindman describe to you about that meeting. Is there
17 anything else that you recall that they said about that
18 meeting that comes to mind?

19 A No.

20 Q What was your reaction when you heard their
21 description of how Ambassador Sondland had connected
22 investigations with the Oval Office meeting and that
23 Ambassador Bolton had directed Dr. Hill to brief the lawyers
24 and Ambassador Bolton's reference to a drug deal? What was
25 your reaction?

1 A My reaction was that the opportunity for Oleksandr
2 Danyliuk and John Bolton to have a good conversation was
3 important for Danyliuk. For him to understand how NSCs work,
4 number one. And two, what the substantive policy issues in
5 particular the war in the East, and energy security, probably
6 economic reform, the substance -- and they apparently were
7 having a good conversation Bolton and Danyliuk were having a
8 good conversation along these lines.

9 Maybe toward the end, but certainly after they'd had
10 part of that -- a good amount of that conversation,
11 programmatic conversation, substantive conversation, what I
12 call the regular channel conversation, Fiona Hill and Alex
13 Vindman describe how Ambassador Sondland in that meeting with
14 John Bolton mentioned investigations.

15 And John Bolton understood what the reference was and
16 walked out of the meeting, ended the meeting abruptly. Not
17 wanting to have that kind of -- he understood, more than I, I
18 guess at the time, that this was -- this could lead to
19 interference in U.S.- political life and he wanted nothing of
20 it.

21 Q And that was the description that you had received
22 from Dr. Hill and Lieutenant Colonel Vindman?

23 A That's correct.

24 Q So at this point then then did you have a better
25 understanding as to what these investigations were that

1 President Trump and Rudy Giuliani wanted in connection with
2 an Oval Office meeting?

3 A So this is getting into July -- this is, yeah, July
4 10th -- yes, I'm beginning to understand that there -- that
5 the investigations, again I'm not sure if there's a crystal
6 time, a specific time, but I'm beginning to understand that
7 these investigations of Burisma and the 2016 elections are
8 what the term investigations refer to.

9 Q And what did you know about the Burisma
10 investigation?

11 A So Burisma, a London based company that -- energy
12 company that invests a lot and has dealings in Ukraine, in I
13 think mainly -- it's in energy, I'm not sure if it's got gas
14 -- had Hunter Biden on its board at an earlier time, maybe
15 back in 2016. I am not an expert on this but this is you
16 asked what I know, this is what I know.

17 This of course is the time that Vice President Biden was
18 pushing the Ukrainians very hard on corruption and the
19 allegation -- you know the allegation. The allegation is
20 that the Vice President wanted to get a Prosecutor General
21 fired in order, the allegation was, to stop the investigation
22 of the Burisma -- the Burisma was a bit of a shady
23 organization I'm told. Again, I'm not an expert on this.
24 But it had been accused of money laundering and those kinds
25 of things so there were some investigations of it. I think

1 they may have been closed, the investigation may have been
2 closed under one or the other of the Prosecutors General in
3 the previous time.

4 Q Did you understand whether the investigation
5 desired by Mr. Giuliani related to Burisma was connected to
6 the Bidens role in Ukraine and that company in particular?

7 A It became clear to me with press reports or other
8 discussions, but that emerged, yes.

9 Q Okay. I want to give you what we've marked as
10 Exhibit 2, which is a stack of the WhatsApp messages that
11 Mr. Volker had provided to us.

12 [Taylor Exhibit No. 2
13 Was marked for identification.]

14

15 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

16 Q And I would ask you to go to 37, page 37, if you
17 could. And if you go to 7/21 at 1:45 a.m., which is Eastern
18 time.

19 A 7/21.

20 Q 1:45:54 a.m., right sort of in the middle page. Do
21 you see it?

22 A Yes, yes.

23 Q And if you could read. This is a text from you on
24 a chain with Gordon Sondland and Kurt Volker and you're
25 writing here can you read it?

1 A And I'm writing, right -- Gordon, one thing Kurt
2 and I talked about yesterday was Sasha Danyliuk's point that
3 President Zelensky is sensitive about Ukraine being taken
4 seriously, not merely as an instrument in Washington domestic
5 reelection politics.

6 Q Okay. And when you had that conversation with
7 Mr. Danyliuk, what did you understand him to be referring to,
8 when you say Washington domestic reelection politics?

9 A I'm sure that was a reference to the investigations
10 that Mr. Giuliani wanted to pursue.

11 Q What was your view of the potential telephone call
12 between President Zelensky and President Trump?

13 A Initially, as I said in late like June when I first
14 arrived, this sounded like a good idea. A good idea to have
15 the two Presidents talk. In particular if President Trump
16 were skeptical about Ukraine in general and President
17 Zelensky in particular, I thought that would be a good idea.

18 President Zelensky is a smart man, a good politician. I
19 would even say charming and he could have a good conversation
20 with President Trump so I thought it was a good idea to have
21 that.

22 As the month of July went on and some of these suggest
23 this, I was less convinced. I became less convinced that
24 that meeting was worth what Giuliani was asking. Yes, it
25 would be fine to have the two Presidents talk, but if

1 President Zelensky, in order to get that meeting were going
2 to have to intervene in U.S. domestic policy or politics by
3 investigated -- by announcing an investigation that would
4 benefit someone in the United States, then it's not -- it
5 wasn't clear to me that that would be worth it. That the
6 meeting would be worth it.

7 Q Ambassador Sondland then responds to your text 3
8 hours later. Can you read what he reads?

9 A Yes, he writes, absolutely. But we need to get the
10 conversation started and the relationship built irrespective
11 of the pretext. I am worried about the alternative.

12 Q What did you understand him to mean by the pretext?

13 A I thought about -- I'm not sure I understood, but
14 my -- my guess looking back on it is the pretext for the
15 phone call, that is Gordon wanted -- he thought that the
16 phone call would be a good idea and wanted it to happen. And
17 if the discussion of the investigations was what it took,
18 then it's -- this suggests that that's what he had in mind.

19 Q And when he says, I'm worried about the
20 alternative. What did you understand --

21 A I guess -- again, I'm not sure what is in Gordon's
22 mind, but I guess he was worried that if they didn't have the
23 meeting it would not be good for the relationship between the
24 two countries.

25 Q And is this in reference to the meeting or the

1 phone call?

2 A Phone call. I'm sorry, phone call.

3 Q And that was what was at stake at this point?

4 A It was at stake at this point. And the idea was
5 that the phone call would be a step toward the meeting.

6 Q All right. Now this is 2 months after -- almost
7 2 months after the letter inviting President Zelensky to the
8 White House. Is that right?

9 A That's correct. The letter from -- it was May 29th
10 and this is July 21st.

11 Q And as the Charge de mission, you're meeting with a
12 number of Ukrainian officials, did you get the sense of
13 whether or not they were getting a little worried or nervous
14 or what was their reaction to the delay in time?

15 A Yes, they were eager for this meeting. They wanted
16 the meeting. They wanted the invitation to the White House.
17 And when it was suggested that a phone call would be a good
18 step toward that, they were willing to do that. But in
19 answer to your question, they were very eager to have this
20 meeting. That was high on their list.

21 Q Why were they so eager?

22 A A meeting -- people in this room will know as well
23 as I, a meeting with the head of state with a U.S. President
24 in the Oval Office suggests a relationship. It suggests a
25 relationship between the two countries that the Ukrainians

1 wanted. The Ukrainians value, valued and they value a
2 relationship with the United States as their main strategic
3 partner, as their mainstream partner.

4 So a meeting with President Trump or any President for
5 that matter, but President Trump in the Oval Office doesn't
6 happen regularly -- doesn't happen to very many heads of
7 state. And if you get that, you can be sure or you can think
8 or people might be able to believe that you've got a good
9 relationship between the two countries and I think that's
10 what they were looking for.

11 Q If I could direct your attention to page 42 now.
12 On July 22nd, near the top at 4:27. This is a text exchange
13 between Kurt Volker and Gordon Sondland. You are not on
14 this. Volker writes to Sondland, orchestrated a great phone
15 call with Rudy and Yermak. They are going to get together
16 when Rudy goes to Madrid in a couple of weeks. In the
17 meantime Rudy is now advocating for a phone call. And Volker
18 explains how he's also advocating for the phone call and then
19 Gordon Sondland responds I talked to Tim Morrison, Fiona's
20 replacement he is pushing, but feel free as well.

21 Volker had said, but I can tell Bolton and you can tell
22 Mick that Rudy agrees on a call, if that happens. I assume
23 that means Mick Mulvaney. Right?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Were you aware that Ambassador Volker had connected

1 Mr. Giuliani and Mr. Yermak?

2 A Not at that point. I was made aware later.

3 Q Do you recall when you were made aware?

4 A No.

5 Q Did you learn that they had a meeting in Madrid?

6 A Later.

7 Q After their meeting?

8 A Well after.

9 Q Well after their meeting?

10 A Yeah.

11 Q Okay. And then if we go to page 19 on 7/25 at 8:36
12 in the morning. This is a text exchange between Volker and
13 Yermak. Volker writes to Yermak, good lunch, thanks. Heard
14 from White House. Assuming President Z convinces Trump he
15 will investigate/ quote, "get to the bottom of what happened"
16 unquote, in 2016, we will nail down date for visit to
17 Washington. Good luck see you tomorrow. Kurt.

18 Have you seen this text before?

19 A Yes. I think I've seen it in the paper.

20 Q As part of this investigation?

21 A Right, right. I wasn't on it.

22 Q So you were not on this one?

23 A Correct.

24 Q But were you aware that this message, that Volker
25 texted to Yermak, were you aware that that message was

1 relayed to the senior Ukrainian officials in advance of the
2 phone call?

3 A Yes. This is the basic message that Kurt -- that
4 Ambassador Volker provided to President Zelensky and Bohdan
5 in Toronto on the 2nd of July, it's very consistent.

6 Q And is it your view that by this point the White
7 House meeting between President Zelensky and President Trump
8 was conditioned on the initiation of these investigations by
9 Ukraine?

10 A I am sure that happened based on all the things I
11 said. So Mr. Goldman, you asked me did I know it at that
12 point or on 7/25?

13 Q Right.

14 A The answer must be yes, yeah. I knew it in July it
15 became clearer and clearer.

16 Q Okay. And you did not -- you said it was I think
17 somewhat strange that you did not get a readout of the July
18 25th call. Is that right?

19 A That's correct. It's a little strange, it's not a
20 lot strange. We didn't get very many readouts, but --

21 Q And I believe you were in Kyiv and so was
22 Ambassador Volker and Sondland?

23 A Correct.

24 Q At this time?

25 A That's correct.

1 Q Did any Ukrainian official whether it was Zelensky
2 or any of their senior officials say anything to you during
3 their visit, perhaps at a dinner that you had with
4 Mr. Danyliuk about these investigations, was that on their
5 mind at that point?

6 A We did have dinner with Gordon Sondland, and
7 Danyliuk, and Kurt the night before the discussion -- so
8 yeah, that -- the night before the discussion, so on the
9 25th, yes. But the brief conversation that we had with
10 Danyliuk about that was that they seemed to think that the
11 call went fine, the call went well. He wasn't disturbed by
12 anything. He wasn't disturbed that he told us about the
13 phone call.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, our time has expired. It's
15 my intention after the minority has their 1 hour to take a
16 brief lunch break. Would you like a rest room break now
17 before we begin?

18 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm fine, I'm fine. I appreciate
19 the offer.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. 1 hour to the
21 minority, sir.

22 BY MR. CASTOR:

23 Q Thank you, Ambassador. Thank you for your service
24 50 years of faithful service to the United States. We truly
25 appreciate that. To the extent any of our questions here

1 today you belie that, let me just state at the outset we
2 appreciate your service.

3 A Thank you, Mr. Castor.

4 Q I also want to express condolences to Mr. Cummings'
5 staff, they rejoined us today, Susanne Grooms, Peter Kenny.
6 Mr. Cummings treated his staff like family and his staff
7 treated him like family as well. So they are hurting and we
8 are glad they are back today.

9 You're here today under subpoena. Is that correct?

10 A Yes, sir.

11 Q Would we be able to have a copy of the subpoena?
12 We've never seen it. A lot of these subpoenas -- some of
13 them we have seen, others we have not.

14 MR. GOLDMAN: The HPSCI minority saw the subpoena before
15 it was --

16 MR. CASTOR: Could we make it like an exhibit? Usually
17 when a witness is appearing per subpoena, you make it an
18 exhibit. Can we do that?

19 MR. GOLDMAN: We'll consider that and get back to you.

20 MR. CASTOR: So the answer is no?

21 MR. GOLDMAN: No, I said we'll consider that and get
22 back to you.

23 MR. CASTOR: So -- okay.

24 BY MR. CASTOR:

25 Q When did you first learn the subpoena was coming?

1 A This morning.

2 Q Okay. What time?

3 A 8:30? 8:30.

4 Q Was it your understanding all along that a subpoena
5 was likely to --

6 A I'd seen the pattern of other witnesses who were
7 under the same instruction I was and presumably we were under
8 the same constraint and that when they received the subpoena
9 right before they appeared, so I was anticipating the same
10 thing.

11 Q And a handful of State Department officials have
12 come in so far, Ambassador Yovanovitch, Deputy Assistant
13 Secretary Kent, Ambassador McKinley. Although I don't think
14 --

15 A Ambassador Sondland.

16 Q Ambassador Sondland. And they all had subpoenas,
17 correct?

18 A Correct, that's my understand.

19 Q Not Ambassador McKinley. So the State Department
20 is well aware of this pattern?

21 A Very well aware.

22 Q Okay. You mentioned the circumstances. If the
23 circumstances changed, you believe you would be allowed to
24 testify pursuant to the subpoena. They weren't ordering you
25 not to appear over the subpoena, were they?

1 A No.

2 Q Okay. Did anyone at the State Department reach out
3 to you either in H or L when it became a foregone conclusion
4 that these subpoenas are coming? Did anybody reach out to
5 you to communicate that should a subpoena be issued, you
6 should not testify?

7 A Can I ask counsel to answer that, because they had
8 interaction with the State Department lawyers.

9 MR. CASTOR: Okay.

10 MR. BELLINGER: After his initial conversations with H,
11 then all further conversations were from the L lawyer to me.
12 They sent us the directive that said that he should not
13 appear under I think the quote is under the present
14 circumstances. We told the majority that we could not
15 appear; he'd been instructed not to. We saw the pattern.

16 The L said to us, if you get a subpoena, we're not
17 prohibiting you from appearing, but if you do appear,
18 ultimately under a subpoena then you have to protect
19 classified information and other information. So that was
20 the back and forth with the lawyers at the State Department.

21 MR. CASTOR: Okay, thank you.

22 BY MR. CASTOR:

23 Q I apologize for asking you some of these details a
24 lot of those, on the Republican side of things, we're in the
25 dark about many of these blow by blow when the subpoena, is

1 the subpoena going to go. And that leads to mistrust. Some
2 of the other machinations about you can't -- we can't have
3 copies of the transcript, we're only allowed two staffers in
4 the room from the Oversight Committee, leads to questions of
5 this sort. So that's why I ask. So I appreciate that.

6 You mentioned that the company Burisma was a bit of a
7 shady organization?

8 A Mr. Castor, I don't want to say more than I know.
9 And again, as I mentioned to Mr. Goldman, I learned about
10 Burisma -- I don't think I knew about Burisma before spring,
11 before this past spring when I was thinking about coming back
12 out to Kyiv. So what I know about Burisma is recent and you
13 and I have probably read the same thing.

14 Q Okay. So you're aware that after you left your
15 first tour as Ambassador, I think it's in 2014 this former
16 ecology minister Zlochevsky, it's alleged that he improperly
17 obtained certain licenses.

18 A I've heard that.

19 Q Okay. And there are a number of allegations
20 surrounding the company since 2014 relating Zlochevsky,
21 you're familiar with those?

22 A Not in any detail.

23 Q Do you have any reason to dispute that these things
24 occurred?

25 A I have no reason.

1 Q When you arrived at the embassy did your staff
2 brief you about about some of the oligarchs and the
3 environment of corruption?

4 A In general certainly. I don't recall a specific
5 briefing on Burisma.

6 Q Okay. Was the name everybody mentioned in any of
7 those briefings?

8 A It has certainly been mentioned since, you know,
9 and over the past couple of months when it has shown up in
10 the papers.

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1 [11:53 a.m.]

2 BY MR. CASTOR:

3 Q And what you can you tell us about other oligarchs
4 that might allegedly be involved with corruption in Ukraine?

5 A A general question, okay.

6 Q Is it an issue?

7 A It's a big issue. It's a big issue. And it's
8 particularly a big issue today with this new administration.
9 The one problem, the one concern, the one issue that we have,
10 the U.S. Government and the international community more
11 broadly, with this administration, with the Zelensky
12 administration, is the influence of oligarchs.

13 Now, the influence of one particular oligarch over Mr.
14 Zelensky is of particular concern, and that's this fellow
15 Kolomoisky, so -- and Kolomoisky has growing influence. And
16 this is one of the concerns that I have expressed to
17 President Zelensky and his team on several occasions very
18 explicitly, saying that, you know, Mr. President, Kolomoisky
19 was not elected. You were elected and he, Mr. Kolomoisky, is
20 increasing his influence in your government, which could
21 cause you to fail. So I've had that conversation with him a
22 couple of times.

23 Q And you're aware from -- at various points in time
24 some these oligarchs, some of these companies have been under
25 investigation?

1 A Yes.

2 Q For various reasons?

3 A Yes.

4 Q We understand Burisma, from additional witness
5 testimony, has been -- either Burisma or Zlochevsky has been
6 under investigation for money laundering, for tax evasion,
7 among other things. And you're familiar with that generally?

8 A I am familiar with that generally.

9 Q What can you say about the integrity of the
10 criminal justice system in Ukraine?

11 A Flawed.

12 Q So is it fair to say that if some of these
13 companies, some of these oligarchs had been under
14 investigation at some point in time that the investigation
15 may have been closed for improper purposes?

16 A Yes. It could have been closed for payments, yes.

17 Q So, inherently, the interest of somebody in the
18 United States of wanting to -- wanting Ukraine to get to the
19 bottom of corruption is not a problem, right?

20 A We have long made it, over -- certainly while I was
21 there in 2006-2009 and subsequently, have long made it clear
22 to the Ukrainian Governments over time that their ability to
23 integrate into Europe and succeed in that goal was challenged
24 by, was threatened by, a lack of credible rule of law, which
25 included courts, investigations.

1 So yes, that's been a constant theme of U.S. policy
2 towards Ukraine.

3 Q Okay. So, to the extent somebody in the United
4 States, whether it be at the State Department or the National
5 Security Council or even the White House, has questions about
6 whether investigations were properly closed and ought to be
7 reopened is something that is a product of the environment,
8 correct?

9 A We look very carefully at the operation and the
10 implementation of the justice system in Ukraine, again,
11 because of its importance for investment, because of its
12 importance for trust in the government, because of the
13 importance of having confidence that an objective rule of law
14 system, a judiciary system, was so important for it.

15 So that, in general -- now, you know -- yeah, that, in
16 general, has been our policy.

17 Q But if Zlochevsky or Burisma is under investigation
18 for money laundering, tax evasion, and those cases are
19 closed, as you suggest, because they were paid off, the
20 prosecutors were paid off, then certainly it's okay to want
21 those cases to be reopened?

22 A The policy that I've been aware of has been a
23 general policy of the importance of honest judges, of the
24 selection process for judges, the selection process for
25 prosecutors, the institutions. It has been less a focus on

1 individual cases. Individual cases, in my view, is not what
2 U.S. -- what U.S. foreign policy. What we need to press on
3 is strengthening the institutions in Ukraine, but in other
4 countries as well, so that the population, the society has
5 confidence in it. So it's more the institution than the
6 specific case.

7 Q Are you aware of the effort of Burisma in 2014 to,
8 you know, assemble a high-profile board of directors?

9 A So 2014, I was not paying great attention to that
10 aspect. So what I know, probably what we all know is that
11 they put some very high-profile people on their board.
12 Again, I've only come to know that over the past couple of
13 months because of all the attention. So I know this -- I
14 didn't know it in 2014 because I was at the Institute of
15 Peace trying to do Iraq or Afghanistan, whatever.

16 Q And one of the folks they put on the board was
17 Hunter Biden, right?

18 A That's my understanding.

19 Q Do you know if he has any experience in corporate
20 governance?

21 A I don't know. I don't know Hunter Biden. I don't
22 know what he --

23 Q Do you think it's possible that he was tapped for
24 the board because his dad was the Vice President?

25 A So, Mr. Castor, I'm here as a fact witness. I

1 don't have any facts on that. I don't have an opinion on
2 that, and you don't want me -- my --

3 Q But a reasonable person could say there are
4 perceived conflicts of interest there, right?

5 A Sure.

6 Q In your time as Ambassador, the first stint '06 to
7 '09 and then again, have any -- has anyone asked the Embassy
8 whether you had an issue about putting certain officials on
9 their board?

10 A Recently, there have been questions about -- well,
11 recently there have been questions about boards of Naftogaz.
12 So the answer is yes, in that case.

13 Another set of issues are the corporate boards of the
14 state-owned banks. And decisions about who is appointed to
15 the state-owned bank boards has been an issue for the -- for
16 the independence of the National Bank of Ukraine, the NBU, in
17 conflict with the administration.

18 So the short answer is yes, the board membership has
19 been an issue that we've paid some attention to.

20 Q Okay. And what's the Embassy's ordinary posture
21 when it comes to that?

22 A The --

23 Q Do you --

24 A The selection process -- so what -- again, the
25 examples I just gave you, the Naftogaz and the state-owned

1 banks, our policy on those, being -- both being state-owned,
2 all of those being state-owned banks and Naftogaz, the
3 selection process, open, competitive, transparent.

4 I don't know that that -- I don't remember seeing any
5 specific of privately owned companies that -- or the boards
6 on privately owned companies. So the interest in board
7 membership is of -- that I'm familiar with is state-owned
8 companies, the ones I've mentioned.

9 [Discussion off the record.]

10 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, it's actually -- the open
11 competition is for contracts as well as an open competitive
12 selection process for board members.

13 BY MR. CASTOR:

14 Q You mentioned in your opener that you're on the
15 board of a small Ukrainian --

16 A I was. I'm not on, but I was, yeah. It's called
17 the East Europe Foundation. Yeah.

18 Q Okay. Any other board memberships for you?

19 A I was, again, on the board of the American
20 Councils, both nongovernmental organizations here in
21 Washington.

22 Q Okay. Any of these boards pay you \$50,000 a month
23 for your service?

24 A No. They pay nothing.

25 MR. CASTOR: I want to mark as exhibit 3 a Politico

1 article from January.

2 [Minority Exhibit No. 3
3 was marked for identification.]

4 MR. CASTOR: Anybody need copies of this? We try to
5 bring enough copies for at least four or five people, and so
6 to the extent you guys could reciprocate, we'd appreciate
7 that. You've been handing us one copy, and I have to share
8 it with our members, and it gets tricky.

9 BY MR. CASTOR:

10 Q This is a Politico article dated January 2017. Can
11 you identify the article -- or the author for the record?

12 A Mr. Castor, I don't know the two authors.

13 Q Yes, could you just say their name?

14 A Oh, sorry. Kenneth Vogel and David Stern.

15 Q Going back to exhibit 1, the New York Times story.

16 A Yes.

17 Q Who wrote that one?

18 A Kenneth Vogel.

19 Q Would you mind reading the highlighted paragraph?

20 A "Ukrainian Government officials tried to help
21 Hillary Clinton and undermine Trump by publicly questioning
22 his fitness for office. They also disseminated documents
23 implicating a top Trump aide in corruption and suggested that
24 they were investigating the matter, only to back away after
25 the election, and they helped Clinton's allies research

1 damaging information on Trump and his advisers, a Politico
2 investigation found."

3 Q Now, you weren't in the Ukraine in 2017. Had you
4 been aware of any of these issues --

5 A No.

6 Q -- from your post at --

7 A At the Institute, no.

8 Q Are you aware of the allegation that a
9 DNC-connected consultant was communicating with the Ukrainian
10 Embassy here in D.C.?

11 A I have recently heard that.

12 Q And have you ever heard the name [REDACTED]

13 [REDACTED]?

14 A Again, I think in that same connection where I've
15 recently heard that issue that you -- the connection that you
16 just described, I think that's the name. That's about the
17 limit of my knowledge on that.

18 Q Fair enough. When you arrived at post, did anybody
19 give you briefings about --

20 A They didn't.

21 Q -- [REDACTED] or --

22 A They didn't.

23 Q -- efforts of the DNC to influence Ukrainians in
24 the U.S.?

25 A They didn't.

1 Q Okay. So your sum total of knowledge of that comes
2 from news accounts?

3 A I think that's right. It's -- I think that's
4 right. It's -- I could have also had a conversation with
5 somebody about that, but that was also based on news
6 accounts.

7 Q Were you aware that the Ukrainian Ambassador to the
8 U.S., Chaly, had entered the fray, the political fray, and
9 wrote an op-ed in opposition to then-candidate Trump?

10 A I was not aware.

11 Q Is that ordinary or --

12 A It's not. Ambassadors do not -- are not supposed
13 to and should not interfere in or participate in domestic
14 elections, the host country elections.

15 Q Did anyone at the Embassy ever call to your
16 attention the issue with Ambassador Chaly?

17 A In this context, no. In other contexts, in
18 particular the Zelensky administration, the new
19 administration was looking to replace him as soon as they
20 could once they came into office. This, of course, was this
21 past summer.

22 Q Okay. And is that common? Had Chaly served for a
23 couple Presidents or was he linked to Poroshenko?

24 A He -- I think he only served under Poroshenko. He
25 was a professional Foreign Service officer, so he undoubtedly

1 had earlier in his career in other things, but in terms of
2 that Ambassadorship.

3 Q On page 11 of this story, there's a reference to a
4 Ukrainian investigative journalist and, at the time, a
5 Parliamentarian named Serhiy Leschenko. What do you know
6 about Mr. Leschenko?

7 A So Mr. Leschenko is a known reformer journalist
8 who, in 2014, when the so-called Revolution of Dignity,
9 decided to join the government -- well, run for office and
10 was elected to the Rada, to the Parliament, where he
11 continued to be associated with a group of reformers.

12 Q And is he still in the Parliament?

13 A Is he in the Parliament? I think he's not.

14 Q Do you know if he's ever been investigated or
15 prosecuted?

16 A He has been. He has been investigated. Again,
17 this is not my -- this is before I arrived.

18 Q If you know.

19 A Yeah. He has been investigated, and a court -- I
20 don't remember which court -- dismissed the charge.

21 Q Okay. Are you aware of the allegations relating to
22 Leschenko and the Manafort ledgers?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And what do you know about that?

25 A As I understand it, he was the one who -- Serhiy

1 Leschenko was the one who either found or identified the
2 ledger, and either he or someone in law enforcement turned
3 that ledger over to the Anticorruption Bureau. That's what I
4 remember.

5 Q On page 11, there's a paragraph that begins, "The
6 scrutiny around the ledgers" --

7 A Yes.

8 Q -- "combined with that from other stories about his
9 Ukraine work -- proved too much, and he stepped down from the
10 Trump campaign less than a week after the Times story."

11 And that's relating to Manafort.

12 A Yes.

13 Q "At the time, Leschenko suggested that his
14 motivation was partly to undermine Trump."

15 Was it well-known that Leschenko was, indeed, trying to
16 undermine candidate Trump at the time?

17 A So this would have been what year? Not to me.
18 Yeah, it was a 2017 article, but I don't know when they were
19 talking about here.

20 Q These things were occurring during the 2016
21 election.

22 A 2016 election, right. Not known to me.

23 Q Okay. When you arrived at post, did your political
24 adviser there or anybody give you a briefing on some of the
25 issues relating to Leschenko?

1 A One of the questions was -- so I mentioned he was a
2 reformer. One of the -- and he had supported Zelensky,
3 President Zelensky, and had given him, had given Zelensky
4 some credibility as a reformer. The other reformer, by the
5 way, we've already talked about is a man named Alexander
6 Danyliuk. And so those two people joined Zelensky's team
7 early as reformers.

8 What I was told, in answer to your question,
9 Mr. Counselor, was that Leschenko took himself off of the
10 Zelensky team because of these -- this controversy.

11 Q Okay. At the bottom of page 11, the report, the
12 Politico report notes that Leschenko told the Financial
13 Times, you know, about 2 weeks after the news conference that
14 he was trying to undermine candidate Trump.

15 The newspaper goes on to note, the Financial Times, that
16 Trump's candidacy had spurred Kyiv's wider political
17 leadership to do something they would never have attempted
18 before, intervene, however indirectly, in a U.S. election.

19 What do you know about attempts of the Ukrainian
20 Government or Ukrainians to intervene in the 2016 election?

21 A Mr. Castor, I don't know about those attempts.

22 Q Okay. And has that been part of any briefings that
23 you received once you arrived at post?

24 A No.

25 Q Okay. And so that's not a concern that's been

1 communicated to you as you've settled in?

2 A Correct.

3 Q Flipping over to page 14, the paragraph begins
4 "Ukraine's Minister of Internal Affairs, Arsen Avakov." You
5 with me?

6 A Fourteen. Yes. Yep.

7 Q Okay -- piled on, trashing Trump on Twitter as a
8 clown and asserting that Trump is an even bigger danger to
9 the U.S. than terrorism.

10 The Politico story goes on to report that Avakov also
11 disparaged the President in Facebook posts.

12 What do you know about Avakov?

13 A So he is the Minister of Internal Affairs and was
14 the Minister of Internal Affairs under President Poroshenko
15 as one of only two carryovers from the Poroshenko Cabinet to
16 the Zelensky Cabinet. He, as I think I mentioned earlier
17 when we were talking about Lutsenko, the Minister of
18 Interior, which Avakov is now, controls the police, which
19 gives him significant influence in the government.

20 Q Avakov, he's a relatively influential Minister. Is
21 that right?

22 A That is correct.

23 Q Does it concern you that at one time he was being
24 highly critical of candidate Trump?

25 A It does.

1 Q And did you ever have any awareness of that before
2 I called your attention to this?

3 A I haven't. This is surprising. Disappointing,
4 but --

5 Q Flipping to page 15, the paragraph that begins with
6 "Andriy Artemenko."

7 A At the top, yeah.

8 Q Ukrainian Parliamentarian associated with
9 conservative opposition, you know, met with Trump's team
10 during the campaign. And he was quoted saying: It was clear
11 they were supporting Hillary Clinton's candidacy. They did
12 everything from organizing meetings with the Clinton team to
13 publicly supporting her to criticizing Trump. I think they
14 simply didn't meet because they thought Hillary would win.

15 This is yet another Ukrainian Parliamentarian, you know,
16 going on the record in a news account asserting that the
17 Ukrainian Government establishment was, in fact, supporting
18 Hillary Clinton.

19 Is this a new fact for you?

20 A This is a new fact for me. I've not read this
21 article. So this was a 2017 article. So I didn't know
22 that -- I don't know Artemenko, so I haven't had a chance to
23 deal with him. And the answer is yes, new fact.

24 Q Does it concern you?

25 A Yes. Same thing, for the same reason.

1 Q Now, is it reasonable for someone in the Trump
2 administration to conclude that if Artemenko -- and I
3 apologize if --

4 A No, you're doing fine.

5 Q -- any of my pronunciations are --

6 A You're doing fine.

7 Q If Artemenko, Chaly, Avakov, Leschenko were
8 engaged -- these are all legitimate people in the Ukraine,
9 right?

10 A I don't know how legitimate Artemenko is, but --

11 Q He's an elected member of the Parliament?

12 A He's an elected member of the Parliament, which
13 means -- which may mean that he could -- you can buy your way
14 into the Parliament.

15 Q Okay. But certainly a government official?

16 A Certainly a -- a deputy, a Rada deputy, yeah.

17 Q Avakov is a legitimate power player in Ukraine?

18 A At least a power player, that's right. That's
19 right.

20 Q And Chaly is the Ambassador to the U.S.?

21 A Chaly is the Ambassador.

22 Q Okay. And Leschenko was a man of some
23 significance, right?

24 A Leschenko was a well-known reformer and a well --
25 and a good journalist beforehand, so yes, well-recognized.

1 Q So isn't it possible that Trump administration
2 officials might have a good-founded belief, whether true or
3 untrue, that there were forces in the Ukraine that were
4 operating against them?

5 A Mr. Castor, based on this Politico article, which,
6 again, surprises me, disappoints me because I think it's a
7 mistake for any diplomat or any government official in one
8 country to interfere in the political life of another
9 country. That's disappointing.

10 Q So the question is, isn't it fair to say that, if
11 you're aligned with the Trump administration, isn't it
12 legitimate to have a good-faith belief that Ukrainians were
13 operating against you in the 2016 election?

14 A That's certainly the thrust of this article.

15 Q And this isn't an opinion piece. I mean, this is
16 not an opinion piece. This is a journalist --

17 A This is a journalist. And, as you pointed out,
18 it's Kenneth Vogel, who also writes for The New York Times.

19 Q So it's not a fringe, you know, journalist. I
20 mean, this is a mainstream journalist for Politico and now
21 the New York Times, not an opinion piece. And to the extent
22 he's reporting and documenting these facts, I mean, isn't it
23 fair to say that if you're aligned with the Trump
24 administration, you might have a good-faith belief that the
25 Ukrainians were supporting Hillary Clinton and trying to

1 undermine him?

2 A You could have that opinion, that some were. If
3 this reporting is correct, you could certainly have the
4 opinion that some Ukrainians were.

5 Q Okay. And do you have any -- since you've arrived
6 at post, has anyone briefed you to try to debunk any of these
7 allegations?

8 A No.

9 Q Okay. So nobody at the Embassy has sat you down in
10 briefings and said, "Ambassador, there are allegations out
11 there that the Ukrainians were working for Clinton and
12 against Trump, but I want to tell you that didn't happen";
13 nobody came and briefed you on that?

14 A Correct.

15 Q Since your time considering the post, which I think
16 you I think you mentioned was the end of May, and then you
17 arrived relatively quickly, to your credit, in June, did you
18 get any background on some of the concerns that the folks
19 aligned with the President had about the Ukrainians
20 interfering with the election, or allegedly?

21 A No. Mr. Giuliani and his -- who is influential
22 with the President, and his efforts were known. I wouldn't
23 say -- I wouldn't say "briefed." What the Embassy tries to
24 do, as a general rule, is stay out of either our domestic or
25 Ukraine internal politics. So we have not -- we have tried

1 to avoid dealing certainly with Mr. Giuliani and the kind of
2 efforts that he was interested in. So that's, again, for --
3 we don't get involved in election campaigns on either side.

4 Q But you describe a difficult environment leading up
5 to Ambassador Yovanovitch's recall, and you testified about
6 some of the concerns you had before accepting the post.

7 Did anyone give you any additional background about what
8 the issues are that concerned the President or was motivating
9 Mr. Giuliani?

10 A No.

11 Q Okay. Did you have a general understanding of what
12 Giuliani's concerns were?

13 A Again, our focus has -- we've attempted to keep the
14 focus on our bilateral relations and away from domestic
15 politics or Ukrainian internal politics, to the degree we
16 can. So --

17 Q Just forgive me. If there was a concern about the
18 2016 election and concern about investigations, did you ever
19 try to do some due diligence and find out exactly what the
20 concerns were before you arrived at post?

21 A No.

22 Q Did you have any conversations with Yovanovitch
23 about this?

24 A About --

25 Q The environment, the snake pit I think you called

1 it.

2 A Certainly, we had -- I had a conversation with her
3 in Kyiv and then again in Washington about the -- about that
4 environment, about how the domestic, our domestic politics
5 had gotten into the -- into affecting her career.

6 Q Okay. But did you ever have a discussion about
7 what, you know, when you're -- did you ever try to get into
8 the -- what was the genuine concern from Giuliani, other
9 than --

10 A No.

11 Q Okay. You met with Yovanovitch a couple times, you
12 said --

13 A Yes.

14 Q -- when you were over there as an election
15 observer.

16 A Yes.

17 Q And then you met with her again after she came
18 home --

19 A Correct.

20 Q -- before you went out?

21 A Correct.

22 Q So is that roughly three conversations?

23 A Three conversations, at least, yeah.

24 Q And what do you recall her telling you?

25 A I recall in particular the last conversation, which

1 was in my office at the Institute of Peace. She was very
2 emotional about having been pulled out early. As she has
3 indicated, she didn't think she had made mistakes or done
4 something wrong. She felt like someone had -- she felt that
5 someone or some people may have had other motives for wanting
6 her not to be there.

7 And I think she's indicated that maybe in her testimony
8 or the papers or something that has described her testimony.
9 She made that same point to me in May.

10 Q Did she say who?

11 A I don't recall her mentioning any specific names.
12 I'm not even sure she knew the people. She had a sense that
13 there were people who wanted to invest in Ukraine or wanted
14 to sell things to Ukraine that thought that her
15 anticorruption stance was getting in their way. I don't
16 remember -- if she mentioned any names, I don't remember
17 them.

18 Q Okay. Did you have any discussions -- how many
19 discussions did you have with Brechbuhl before taking the
20 post?

21 A Two.

22 Q And during those two discussions, did you have any
23 dialogue with him about what was going on over there?

24 A Again, he -- with Counselor Brechbuhl, it was
25 more -- the two conversations were on like the 23rd of May

1 and the 28th of May, and the second with the Secretary. And
2 they were focused more on my interest, my qualifications,
3 rather than anything about Ukraine policy.

4 Q Did they ever tell you they'd have your back?

5 A Secretary Pompeo did say that he'd support me on
6 this strong Ukraine policy. That was my condition for going
7 out, and he said he would.

8 Q And did you have a relatively open communication
9 with both Counselor Brechbuhl and the Secretary?

10 A Yes.

11 Q So, if you needed them, they would engage with you,
12 right?

13 A They would. And I didn't -- and the Secretary said
14 any time. I didn't abuse that and I only -- but I did call
15 the counselor a couple of times, you know, and -- from Kyiv.
16 So I met with him twice while I was -- before I left, called
17 him a couple times to check in when I started to get
18 concerned about the security assistance, for example. But
19 yes, he was available and responsive.

20 Q Okay. Did you ever have any discussions with the
21 Secretary or the counselor about the circumstances of
22 Ambassador Yovanovitch being recalled?

23 A That was a concern I had before I agreed with them
24 to take the job. So it may -- it could have been part of
25 that conversation, Mr. Castor. I don't recall specifically

1 talking to them about Ambassador Yovanovitch.

2 Q Did they ever give you any assurances that this
3 won't happen again and --

4 A No, no. I didn't ask for and didn't receive any.

5 Q Okay. The issues that motivated her recall, did
6 they give you any indication that they were still viable
7 issues that made the environment tricky?

8 A They didn't.

9 Q But you expected it would be?

10 A I expected it would be.

11 Q Did you ever have any communications with Mr.
12 Giuliani --

13 A None.

14 Q -- directly?

15 A No. He visited Kyiv in 2008 or '07, while I was
16 there. 2008, I think. And I remember shaking his hand. He
17 was America's mayor. But otherwise, not.

18 Q But for times relevant, May 28th on, you've never
19 spoken to Mr. Giuliani?

20 A No, no.

21 Q Has anyone ever asked you to speak to Mr. Giuliani?

22 A No.

23 Q And if I may, have you spoken to the President of
24 the United States?

25 A I have not.

1 Q Okay. You had no communications with the President
2 of the United States?

3 A Correct.

4 Q Have you had any communications with Acting Chief
5 of Staff Mulvaney?

6 A None.

7 Q The White House officials you have had discussions
8 with, have you identified them for the most part in your
9 statement?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Okay. So it's Ambassador Bolton, Fiona Hill, Dr.
12 Hill, Mr. Vindman, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman?

13 A Vindman, right.

14 Q Any others that were --

15 A Tim Morrison took --

16 Q Tim Morrison.

17 A -- Fiona's place.

18 Q Okay.

19 A Yeah, I think those are the ones.

20 Q And once you arrived at post, did you have any
21 occasion to engage the Secretary on any of these issues, ask
22 the Secretary for his assistance in pushing back on the
23 irregular part of the policy?

24 A So I went to the Secretary at the end of August in
25 a -- in a cable expressing my concern about -- August 29th,

1 my concern about the hold on security assistance.

2 Q Okay. Was that the first time you engaged the
3 Secretary on this?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Okay. In your statement, you walk us through what
6 was a regular, formal, diplomatic process that you were the
7 point person for, and then there was an irregular, informal
8 channel, and that was concerning to you. Is that fair?

9 A Not at the beginning.

10 Q Okay.

11 A At the beginning, as I said, I felt the goals were
12 aligned. I thought the goals of having -- the overall goal
13 of having strong U.S.-Ukraine relations was supported by --
14 certainly by -- I knew by Ambassadors Sondland and Volker.

15 I didn't -- I never, as I said, haven't had much
16 dealings with Secretary Perry, but everything leads me to
17 believe that he also supported that. And so that irregular
18 is not necessarily bad.

19 Q Okay.

20 A And it wasn't -- I didn't think it was bad. I
21 didn't think it was a problem in the beginning. And,
22 actually, it could have been helpful, because Ambassador
23 Sondland is able -- is able to call the President, and that's
24 a valuable thing if you want to try to move our U.S.-Ukraine
25 relations along. So, at the beginning, it was not a problem.

1 Q How long have you known Ambassador Volker for?

2 A So probably 20 years. A long time.

3 Q And is he a man of integrity?

4 A He is a man of integrity.

5 Q And he is somebody that's always, to the best of
6 your knowledge, acted in the best interests of the United
7 States?

8 A He -- when he got involved with Mr. Giuliani, I
9 think that that pulled him away from or it diverted him from
10 being focused on what I thought needed to be focused on, that
11 is -- yeah. So, in general, yes, but the Giuliani factor I
12 think affected Ambassador Volker.

13 Q But as a man of integrity, if he genuinely believed
14 it was in the best interests of the United States to engage
15 with Giuliani, do you agree that that's -- he was acting in
16 the best interests of the United States when he did that?

17 A I think he thought he was.

18 Q There's this May 23rd briefing in the Oval
19 Office --

20 A Yes.

21 Q -- where the delegation that went to the
22 inaugural --

23 A Yes.

24 Q -- communicated with the President.

25 A Yes.

1 Q We've had some accounts of that meeting.

2 A I'm sure.

3 Q And Ambassador Volker was there. Obviously, we've
4 talked to him at some length. Ambassador Sondland. And
5 characterizations of that meeting have differed sometimes
6 between the actual participants and those reporting on what
7 they think had occurred.

8 For example, it's been -- you know, the President has
9 been characterized or has been quoted as saying, "Work with
10 Rudy." Is that something you heard?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Okay. And then it's also been related to us that
13 the President said, "Talk to Rudy," and it's in a dismissive
14 sort of way. You know, the President had his concerns about
15 corruption in Ukraine and, you know, a laundry list of
16 reasons, including the fact that the President believed that
17 there were Ukrainians trying to work against him in the
18 election, right?

19 A As we established, some Ukrainians, a couple of
20 Ukrainians. And the important point here is none of those,
21 with the exception of Avakov, who is still -- none of those
22 were in or are in the Zelensky administration.

23 So that's what -- as I understand it, that's what
24 Ambassador Volker, Sondland, Perry were coming back to tell
25 President Trump, that, you know, we just met President

1 Zelensky, and he supports what you support. I've heard
2 several people said -- made -- tried to make that point.

3 Q And the participants of the meeting have told us
4 that they briefed the President, and the President wasn't
5 having it.

6 A Right.

7 Q He said negative things about the country of
8 Ukraine.

9 A I've heard that.

10 Q And he didn't, you know, get into specifics. He
11 simply said: It's been related to us, talk to Rudy. If you
12 think Ukraine is doing such -- you know, they've turned the
13 corner and Zelensky is the reformer he says he's going to be,
14 you know, talk to Rudy.

15 Is that fair?

16 THE CHAIRMAN: If I could just interject, and I have to
17 make this advisory periodically. What counsel represents
18 prior witnesses may have said or not said, we cannot vouch
19 for the accuracy.

20 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Okay.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Unless you are a percipient witness, you
22 should not assume facts that are not in evidence before you.

23 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 BY MR. CASTOR:

25 Q You know, there's nuances that we aren't aware of,

1 you know, that occur in these meetings. There's ambiguities,
2 and in the, you know, ambiguity a lot of times people jump to
3 conclusions. And so the question is, is there a difference
4 between talk to Rudy and work with Rudy?

5 A I don't know.

6 Q Okay.

7 A I don't know.

8 Q And was that related to you by Ambassador Sondland
9 or Volker?

10 A The difference between those two?

11 Q Yes.

12 A No.

13 Q Or what had to be effectuated with Mr. Giuliani?

14 A Here's what I understood from Ambassador Volker and
15 Ambassador Sondland. In order to get President Zelensky and
16 President Trump in a meeting in the Oval Office, they took
17 from that May 23rd meeting that they needed to work with Rudy
18 Giuliani, so -- and so they did.

19 Q What did Volker relate to you about next steps
20 then? You said you talk with Volker a lot, right?

21 A I do.

22 Q And what did he -- do you remember some of the blow
23 by blow, the play by --

24 A Well, no, actually, he didn't tell me anything
25 about him reaching out to Giuliani. And about the same time

1 he had his breakfast with Giuliani, he mentioned that I think
2 in a text to me and Gordon. And about that same time, Fiona
3 Hill, Dr. Hill mentioned that same thing, that she had heard
4 that Kurt had been in touch with or met with Rudy Giuliani.
5 That was -- I think that was the first time I was aware that
6 Kurt had been in touch with Giuliani along these lines.

7 Q Did Ambassador Volker give you any readout of his
8 conversations or what he was doing?

9 A He didn't.

10 Q Okay. So he didn't tell you that he told Mr.
11 Giuliani that there was no good-faith basis to investigate
12 the Bidens?

13 A He didn't tell me anything about his conversation
14 with Giuliani.

15 Q Did you ever come to learn from Sondland or other
16 players that that was the case?

17 A No. That was the case between Volker and Giuliani?

18 Q Correct.

19 A No.

20 Q Would that surprise you if Volker had communicated
21 that to Giuliani?

22 A Communicated what?

23 Q That there is no good faith basis to investigate
24 the Bidens.

25 A No knowledge. I can't answer.

1 MR. CASTOR: I have about 8 or 9 minutes left and I
2 promised our members we would pivot to them at the end of
3 the -- at the end of our round, so I would like to do that.

4 MR. NUNES: Thank you, Mr. Castor.

5 Ambassador, welcome. You're aware that this committee
6 had an investigation into the 2016 elections, the House
7 Intelligence Committee?

8 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Am I aware that there is one? Yes.

9 MR. NUNES: Yes, that there was one that completed, and
10 now those investigations have even continued.

11 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't know much about it, Mr.
12 Chairman, but -- Mr. Nunes, but --

13 MR. NUNES: You're also aware that -- you're aware of
14 the Bob Mueller special counsel investigation --

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am aware.

16 MR. NUNES: -- of the 2016 elections.

17 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am.

18 MR. NUNES: You may not be aware, but at least the
19 Republicans on this committee were very concerned by
20 Ukraine's actions during the 2016 election, and they have
21 long been a target of our investigation and have continued
22 today to try to get to the bottom of what they were up to in
23 the 2016 election between the Ambassador's comments here and
24 between other incidents that are out there.

25 Most notably, are you familiar with -- well, I know

1 you're familiar because you talked about Leschenko earlier --
2 former journalist turned politician --

3 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Leschenko, yes.

4 MR. NUNES: Do you have any current involvement with
5 Leschenko? Do you run into him now or you're just familiar
6 with him?

7 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm familiar with him. I think I
8 met him in my -- in the 2006-2009 time period, or maybe it
9 was an earlier visit in like 2014. But he's not in the
10 government now, and he's not in the Parliament now, I'm
11 pretty sure.

12 MR. NUNES: Okay. So he's of particular interest to at
13 least the Republicans in Congress. Are you aware that he was
14 a source for the Democrats and the Clinton campaign's dirt
15 that they dug up on the President and fed to the FBI?

16 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am not aware.

17 MR. NUNES: Okay. So I didn't think you were aware of
18 that, but I wanted to make sure you knew that he is -- by
19 witnesses who have testified before this committee, he's the
20 source of that dirt that was then used -- you're familiar
21 with -- you've heard of the Steele dossier, I assume?

22 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I have.

23 MR. NUNES: Okay. So that is our real concern in
24 Ukraine over the 2016 election. So I understand that you, as
25 an Ambassador, you don't like to get involved in politics,

1 but the fact of the matter is the Ukrainians decided to get
2 involved in politics and be, in almost all cases, supportive
3 of the Democrats and helped to deliver dirt that was then
4 used by the --

5 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Nunes, the only comment I would
6 make on that is that, again, according to this Politico
7 document, which is similar to what you're describing, there
8 were a couple of Ukrainians who did what you said.

9 When you say "Ukrainians," that paints a broad brush.
10 And President -- the reason I raise this is that President
11 Zelensky wants to make it very clear to us and to President
12 Trump that it wasn't him and it wasn't his people.

13 MR. NUNES: Right. But at the time of the -- at the
14 time when Mr. Giuliani and Republicans in Congress are
15 raising these concerns about what was happening in Ukraine,
16 you know, that's when the Mueller investigation is still
17 ongoing, our probe is still ongoing, looking into getting to
18 the bottom of FISA abuse and other matters.

19 So I know you don't want to get involved in politics,
20 but those are still just ongoing concerns of the Congress.
21 Thank you for your attendance today.

22 I'll yield to Mr. Jordan.

23 MR. JORDAN: Real quick if I could, Ambassador, on that
24 last point. President Zelensky does want to clean up
25 corruption. You know, he's been viewed as a reformer, but I

1 think you said earlier to Mr. Castor's questions that
2 Mr. Avakov is still in the government. Is that right?

3 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct.

4 MR. JORDAN: And he has a pretty important position?

5 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: He does.

6 MR. JORDAN: And he's the guy who said that President
7 Trump, during the 2016 campaign, was -- I think he referred
8 to him in social media postings as a clown and as worse than
9 a terrorist. Is that accurate?

10 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Is that what -- is that the quote
11 out of this Politico document?

12 MR. JORDAN: It is.

13 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

14 MR. JORDAN: And he's currently in the government,
15 Minister of Interior, in charge of the police in Ukraine. Is
16 that right?

17 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: He is. He is. I suspect he would
18 not say the same thing today that he said then.

19 MR. JORDAN: No, I understand that, but I just want to
20 be clear.

21 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: But 2016.

22 MR. JORDAN: All right. Thank you.

23 Mr. Ratcliffe has a couple.

24 MR. RATCLIFFE: Ambassador Taylor, my name is John
25 Ratcliffe.

1 I want to read from -- direct you to your opening
2 statement this morning, page 9, the bottom paragraph, and it
3 reads: "Just days later, on August 27, Ambassador Bolton
4 arrived in Kyiv and met with President Zelensky. During
5 their meeting" --

6 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, can I get you to hold
7 on? I'm looking at a different one. Yeah, thank you.

8 MR. RATCLIFFE: Last paragraph, page 9.

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, got it. Okay, met with. Yes.

10 MR. RATCLIFFE: "During their meeting, security
11 assistance was not discussed -- amazingly, news of the hold
12 did not leak out until August 29. I, on the other hand, was
13 all too aware of and still troubled by the hold."

14 Have I read that correctly?

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

16 MR. RATCLIFFE: Okay. It sounds like, from your
17 statement today, that you were aware of the hold and troubled
18 by it but that President Zelensky was not aware of it at that
19 point in time.

20 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct.

21 MR. RATCLIFFE: Okay. So, based on your knowledge,
22 nobody in the Ukrainian Government became aware of a hold on
23 military aid until 2 days later, on August 29th.

24 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's my understanding.

25 MR. RATCLIFFE: That's your understanding. And that

1 would have been well over a month after the July 25th call
2 between President Trump and President Zelensky.

3 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

4 MR. RATCLIFFE: So you're not a lawyer, are you,
5 Ambassador Taylor?

6 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am not.

7 MR. RATCLIFFE: Okay. So the idea of a quid pro quo is
8 it's a concept where there is a demand for action or an
9 attempt to influence action in exchange for something else.
10 And in this case, when people are talking about a quid pro
11 quo, that something else is military aid.

12 So, if nobody in the Ukrainian Government is aware of a
13 military hold at the time of the Trump-Zelensky call, then,
14 as a matter of law and as a matter of fact, there can be no
15 quid pro quo, based on military aid. I just want to be real
16 clear that, again, as of July 25th, you have no knowledge of
17 a quid pro quo involving military aid.

18 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: July 25th is a week after the hold
19 was put on the security assistance. And July 25th, they had
20 a conversation between the two Presidents, where it was not
21 discussed.

22 MR. RATCLIFFE: And to your knowledge, nobody in the
23 Ukrainian Government was aware of the hold?

24 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct.

25 MR. RATCLIFFE: Great. Thank you for clarifying.

1 I yield back.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. The time of the minority has
3 expired.

4 Let's break for lunch until 1:30. I want to remind
5 members they are not to discuss the substance of the
6 Ambassador's testimony. And we will resume at 1:30.

7 [Recess.]

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1 [1:56 p.m.]

2 THE CHAIRMAN: We're back on the record.

3 Ambassador, I wanted to just ask you a few followup
4 questions to the questions you received from the minority,
5 and then I want to go through some of your opening statement.
6 Then I'll hand it over to Mr. Noble, who will go much more
7 methodically than I will through your testimony and the
8 timeline.

9 You were asked by my colleagues in the minority doesn't
10 the U.S. have a legitimate interest in fighting corruption,
11 and I think you would agree that we do. Is that right?

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct, Chairman.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: And in fact, Ambassador Yovanovitch was
14 doing exactly that. She was urging the Ukrainians at every
15 opportunity to fight corruption that had plagued Ukraine.

16 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: And it came to your attention that part
18 of the reason why people in Ukraine and maybe some in the
19 hornets' nest or vipers' nest in the United States wanted her
20 out was that her efforts to fight corruption were getting in
21 the way of some potentially corrupt business deals they
22 wanted to make happen. Is that a fair summary?

23 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That could be the case. I don't
24 know the direct links there, but there were people who were
25 concerned that she was so tough on -- it would be hard for

1 them to do the kinds of deals that they wanted to do.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Because she was fighting corruption in
3 Ukraine?

4 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, yes, and supporting reformers
5 or other people in the government who were fighting
6 corruption in Ukraine.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: And you can distinguish, can't you,
8 between a legitimate interest in getting a country to fight
9 corruption and an illegitimate interest in getting a foreign
10 government to interfere in U.S. Presidential elections?

11 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: There is a difference.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: And wouldn't you say that trying to get a
13 foreign country to intervene in a U.S. Presidential election
14 is not fighting corruption, it is in itself corruption?

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, you're taking me
16 beyond my area of expertise. Just the facts are what I can
17 attest to, but the -- what I said earlier about institutions
18 I think is -- the way to fight corruption is to fix the
19 courts and fix the judges.

20 So it's an institutional rather than, as you point out,
21 rather than individual cases, which may or may not get us to
22 a reformed, less corrupt system.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: And one of the concerns you had, though,
24 was that there were efforts being made through this irregular
25 channel to get Ukraine to interfere in U.S. politics and the

1 next election, is that right?

2 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The irregular channel seemed to
3 focus on specific issues, specific cases, rather than the
4 regular channel's focus on institution building. So the
5 irregular channel, I think under the influence of Mr.
6 Giuliani, wanted to focus on one or two specific cases,
7 irrespective of whether it helped solve the corruption
8 problem, fight the corruption problem.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: And those two cases you mentioned, the
10 Burisma and the Bidens and the 2016 election, those were both
11 individual investigations that were sought by Mr. Giuliani
12 because he believed it would help his client, the President
13 of the United States, right?

14 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's my understanding.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Let me go through -- I want to ask you
16 about the Politico article which minority counsel spent about
17 a third of their time asking you about this article. Prior
18 to today, had you ever read this article?

19 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I had not.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Are you able to confirm in any way any of
21 the allegations in the article?

22 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned to Mr.
23 Castor, I was surprised and disappointed to read what these
24 Ukrainians were reported to have said and done.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: But you're not in a position to confirm

1 or deny whether the article is right, not right, half right,
2 or anything of the sort?

3 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, sir.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: And this article didn't affect your
5 decision-making at any time, because you were unaware of it?

6 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I was unaware of it. It was 2 years
7 ago.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: There are at least a couple issues that
9 have been raised by your testimony. The first involves
10 conditionality surrounding the desperately sought meeting
11 between the two Presidents, desperately sought by the
12 Ukrainians, that is.

13 And the second involves conditionality around military
14 aid. So let me go through your testimony, if I could, and
15 ask you about a few of those -- both of those issues.

16 On page 5 of your testimony, in the third paragraph, you
17 say: "But during my subsequent communications with
18 Ambassador Volker and Sondland, they relayed to me that the
19 President, quote, "wanted to hear from Zelensky," unquote,
20 before scheduling the meeting in the Oval Office. It was not
21 clear to me what this meant.

22 Now, I take it, Ambassador, you used that word "before"
23 deliberately, that is, they wanted to hear from Zelensky
24 before they would schedule this meeting. Is that right?

25 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Now, at the time I think you said it
2 wasn't clear to you what this meant.

3 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is also correct.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: And in the two paragraphs below, you say:
5 "I sensed something odd when Ambassador Sondland told me on
6 June 28 that he did not wish to include most of the regular
7 interagency participants in the call planned with President
8 Zelensky later that day."

9 Why did you sense something odd about that?

10 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: He and I were on the phone talking
11 about the timing of this call. This call had been set up.
12 Obviously, when you're trying to get the head of state on a
13 call, get President Zelensky on a call, you had to work
14 through the timing. Was it convenient? Could he -- there
15 may have had to be interpreters present. He had to be at the
16 right phone. So we were working on when the meeting would
17 happen.

18 On the phone, Ambassador Sondland told me that the
19 timing was going to change, that the time of the phone call
20 was going to change. And I asked him something like,
21 shouldn't we let everybody else know who's supposed to be on
22 this call? And the answer was, don't worry about it. Even
23 his staff, I think, were not aware that the time had changed.

24

25

1 [2:02 p.m.]

2 THE CHAIRMAN: And what was odd to you about that?

3 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: This suggested to me that there were
4 the two channels. This suggested to me that the normal
5 channel, where you would have staff on the phone call, was
6 being cut out, and the other channel, of people who were
7 working, again, toward a goal which I supported, which was
8 having a meeting to further U.S.-Ukrainian relations, I
9 supported, but that irregular channel didn't have a respect
10 for or an interest in having the normal staff participate in
11 this call with the head of state.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: So was this an early indication to you
13 that these two channels were diverging?

14 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It was.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: And the interests of the irregular
16 channel, represented by Mr. Giuliani, may not be the same
17 interests as the State Department and what was in the best
18 interest of the United States?

19 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That second part I came to believe.
20 I'm not sure it was at this point. This is within a week, a
21 week and a half, of me -- 10 days of me arriving there. And
22 so I was still, maybe naively, but I was still of the view
23 that I was on -- I was part of a team that might have several
24 parts but we were moving in the same direction.

25 So it was not -- I think, Mr. Chairman, it was not yet.

1 That would come.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: But Ambassador Sondland made it clear not
3 only that he didn't wish to include most of the regular
4 interagency participants but also that no one was
5 transcribing or monitoring the call as they added President
6 Zelensky. What struck you as odd about that?

7 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Same concern. That is, in the
8 normal, regular channel, the State Department operations
9 center that was putting the call together would stay on the
10 line, in particular when you were having a conversation with
11 the head of state, they would stay on the line, transcribe,
12 take notes so that there could be a record of the discussion
13 with this head of state. It is an official discussion.

14 When he wanted to be sure that there was not, the State
15 Department operations center agreed. And they told us, they
16 said -- in response to his request, they said, we won't
17 monitor and will not -- and we certainly won't transcribe
18 because we're going to sign off.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: On the following page of your testimony,
20 page 6, second paragraph, you testified: "By mid-July it was
21 becoming clear to me that the meeting President Zelensky
22 wanted was conditioned on the investigations of Burisma and
23 alleged Ukrainian interference in the 2016 U.S. elections.
24 It was also clear that this condition was driven by the
25 irregular policy channel I had come to understand was guided

1 by Mr. Giuliani."

2 How had that become clear to you by mid-July?

3 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: In the subsequent paragraphs,
4 Mr. Chairman, I tried to walk through that conclusion, how I
5 came to that conclusion.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: And when you -- I'll go through that with
7 you. But when you say "conditioned on the investigations," I
8 take it by that you mean, unless President Zelensky would
9 agree to do these investigations of Burisma, meaning the
10 Bidens, and Ukrainian interference in 2016, he wasn't going
11 to get the White House meeting. Is that right?

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct. Mr. Yermak,
13 President Zelensky's assistant, came back at one point -- I
14 think I talk about it in here -- and asked to nail down a
15 date first and then he would make the statement -- he would
16 make the statement of the investigations.

17 You know, Kurt and Ambassador Sondland did not --
18 weren't able to make that offer, weren't able to nail down
19 the date. But the point is, that was -- they saw that that
20 was the condition.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: And, in fact, later on, they would insist
22 that President Zelensky speak first. That is, until you say
23 publicly you're going to do these two investigations we want
24 for the President, you're not going to get that meeting.
25 That was essentially the position that this irregular channel

1 took.

2 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Now, my colleague in the minority asked
4 you about "quid pro quo." And are you a lawyer?

5 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am not. I am not, Mr. Chairman.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Because he asked you about the legal
7 definition of "quid pro quo." So you're not in a position to
8 talk about legal definitions?

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am definitely not in the position.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

11 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't speak Latin.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: And, of course, whether it meets a legal
13 definition of "quid pro quo" or it doesn't is really
14 irrelevant to what we're focused on here.

15 But it is your testimony that, hey, you don't make these
16 public statements about these two political investigations we
17 want, you're not getting this meeting -- you make these
18 statements, you'll get the meeting; you don't make these
19 statements, you won't. Was that your understanding of the
20 state of affairs in July of 2019?

21 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Further down on page 6 of your testimony,
23 second-to-last paragraph, at the end of that paragraph, you
24 state: "All that the OMB staff person" -- now we're talking
25 about the military assistance.

1 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Right.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: "All that the OMB staff person said was
3 that the directive had come from the President to the Chief
4 of Staff to OMB."

5 That is the directive not to provide the military
6 assistance, or to hold it up. Is that right?

7 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: "In an instant, I realized that one of
9 the key pillars of our strong support for Ukraine was
10 threatened. The irregular policy channel was running
11 contrary to the goals of longstanding U.S. policy."

12 What did you mean by that?

13 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Longstanding goal of U.S. policy
14 would be to support Ukraine in its attempt to defend itself
15 against the Russians. Part of that was security assistance.
16 Security assistance had been very effective. It was weapons,
17 it was training, it was the communications equipment, it was
18 sustainables. It allowed Ukrainian soldiers to actually
19 defend themselves.

20 That was longstanding U.S. policy. Even in the previous
21 administration, the previous administration did not provide
22 lethal weapons, but they did provide all this other -- so
23 that was longstanding policy. To stop it, to hold it, for no
24 apparent reason that I could see, was undercutting the
25 longstanding U.S. policy.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: In the last paragraph on page 6, you say:
2 "There followed a series of NSC-led interagency meetings,
3 starting at the staff level and quickly reaching the level of
4 Cabinet secretaries. At every meeting, the unanimous
5 conclusion was that the security assistance should be
6 resumed, the hold lifted."

7 I take it by that there was no dissent, no disagreement
8 with that. Everyone thought that, from the point of view of
9 U.S. national security and our ally fighting the Russians,
10 that security assistance should be resumed without delay.

11 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Unanimous opinion of every level of
12 interagency discussion.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Was that it should resume without delay?

14 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Without delay.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: And you go on in that paragraph to say:
16 "My understanding was that the Secretaries of Defense and
17 State, the CIA Director, and the National Security Advisor
18 sought a joint meeting with the President to convince him to
19 release the hold, but such a meeting was hard to schedule."

20 What do you deduce from that, that our ally is fighting
21 with the Russians, but all of these agencies that support
22 this can't get a meeting with the President to discuss it?

23 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It turns out, Mr. Chairman, that
24 those principals, as we call them, were on different trips at
25 different times. I think this was also about the time of the

1 Greenland question, about purchasing Greenland, which took up
2 a lot of energy in the NSC.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. That's disturbing for a whole
4 different reason.

5 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Different story. Different story.

6 But, no, the general point was, it was a scheduling
7 issue, because they really wanted Secretary Esper to be
8 there, for obvious reasons. Most of this assistance came
9 through the Defense Department, and they wanted him to be
10 there. He was traveling. There may have been an Afghanistan
11 trip. I can't remember whether -- but the problem was
12 getting the right people in the room at the same time.

13 There actually was a meeting on Afghanistan where all of
14 the principals hoped to raise the Ukraine issue at the end of
15 the Afghanistan meeting. Didn't happen.

16 All to say that there was a strong interest in having
17 this meeting with the President to try to change the
18 position.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: You go on to say, a couple paragraphs
20 later, "In the same July 19 phone call, they gave me an
21 account of the July 10 meeting with the Ukrainian officials
22 at the White House. Specifically, they told me" -- and
23 you're referring to Dr. Hill and Mr. Vindman, I believe --

24 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: -- "that Ambassador Sondland had

1 connected 'investigations' with an Oval Office meeting for
2 President Zelensky, which so irritated Ambassador Bolton that
3 he abruptly ended the meeting, telling Dr. Hill and
4 Mr. Vindman that they should have nothing to do with domestic
5 politics."

6 Again, is this going to the conditionality of Ukraine
7 having to do these investigations if they wanted the Oval
8 Office meeting?

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That was the implication of that
10 connection, of the connection between the meeting and
11 investigations.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: You go on to say, in the second-to-last
13 paragraph, "Also during our July 19 call, Dr. Hill informed
14 me that Ambassador Volker had met with Mr. Giuliani to
15 discuss Ukraine. This caught me by surprise. The next day I
16 asked Ambassador Volker about that meeting, but received no
17 response."

18 How did you ask him about the meeting?

19 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: By text message.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: And had he been pretty good about
21 replying to you in the past?

22 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Pretty good, but, again, he's also
23 on the road a lot. And sometimes he's in an airplane.
24 Sometimes I'll get a message back. Most times I get a
25 message back, but not all the time.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: In this case, you got no reply at all, no
2 matter when he got off an airplane or whatever took place
3 thereafter?

4 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't remember getting a response.
5 I think, at the same time, that was when I heard from
6 Dr. Hill that Ambassador Volker had had a meeting with
7 Mr. Giuliani, so that I got both bits of information the same
8 time on, I think, the same meeting.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Turning to page 8 of your testimony:
10 "Also on July 20, I had a phone conversation with
11 Mr. Danyliuk, during which he conveyed to me that President
12 Zelensky did not want to be used as a pawn in a
13 U.S. re-election campaign."

14 Do you remember what Mr. Danyliuk said and why he was
15 concerned he was being used as a pawn or why President
16 Zelensky was concerned he was being used as a pawn in a
17 U.S. reelection campaign?

18 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes. I think it was becoming clear
19 to the Ukrainians that, in order to get this meeting that
20 they wanted, they would have to commit to pursuing these
21 investigations. And Mr. Danyliuk, at least, understood --
22 and I'm sure that he briefed President Zelensky, I'm sure
23 they had this conversation -- believed that opening those
24 investigations, in particular on Burisma, would have involved
25 Ukraine in the 2020 election campaign. He did not want to do

1 that.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Turning to page 9 of your testimony,
3 second paragraph, about midway through: "A formal
4 U.S. request to the Ukrainians to conduct an investigation
5 based on violations of their own law struck me as improper,
6 and I recommended to Ambassador Volker that we 'stay clear.'"

7 What struck you as improper about it?

8 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It struck me as improper that the
9 United States would be asking -- if the United States were to
10 ask Ukraine to investigate an apparent violation of Ukrainian
11 law, that would be improper.

12 If, on the other hand -- what is proper and what happens
13 frequently is the United States goes to Ukraine and asks for
14 their help to pursue an investigation of violations of
15 American law, of U.S. law. That's what we have a mutual
16 legal assistance treaty, an MLAT, for.

17 But this is different. This would be -- what Kurt was
18 asking for was examples or precedent for asking the
19 Ukrainians to investigate a violation of their own law.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, there were two things that were
21 improper about this, weren't there? There was the one you're
22 mentioning now, which is that it wasn't appropriate to ask
23 Ukraine to investigate a violation of Ukrainian law, correct?

24 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: But it was also improper because the goal

1 of those investigations was to influence the U.S. election.
2 Isn't that also the case?

3 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: If you could turn to page 10 of your
5 written testimony.

6 One of my colleagues in the minority asked you about,
7 well, how could it be a quid pro quo if the Ukrainians didn't
8 know that security assistance was withheld. But Ukraine
9 found out it was being withheld, did they not?

10 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: They did.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: And once they found out it was being
12 withheld -- in the second paragraph of page 10 of your
13 testimony, you state: "The same day that I sent my cable to
14 the Secretary, August 29, Mr. Yermak contacted me and was
15 very concerned, asking about the withheld security
16 assistance. The hold that the White House had placed on the
17 assistance had just been made public that day in a Politico
18 story. At that point, I was embarrassed that I could give
19 him no explanation for why it was withheld."

20 Why were you embarrassed by that?

21 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I was embarrassed because the United
22 States, as the principal ally, the principal supporter for
23 Ukraine, in general, but in particular in its fight with the
24 Russians, was seen to be -- they found out that we had put a
25 hold on the assistance that would help them fight the

1 Russians. And, at that point, I had nothing to tell them.

2 I mean, the obvious question was, "Why?" So Mr. Yermak
3 and others were trying to figure out why this was, and they
4 thought maybe, if they were to travel, if Mr. Yermak were to
5 go to Washington to talk to someone here or -- the Defense
6 Minister also contacted me later on. He wanted the same
7 thing.

8 They thought that there must be some rational reason for
9 this being held up, and they just didn't -- and maybe in
10 Washington they didn't understand how important this
11 assistance was to their fight and to their armed forces. And
12 so maybe they could figure -- so they were just desperate.
13 And I couldn't tell them. I didn't know and I didn't tell
14 them, because we hadn't -- we hadn't -- there'd been no
15 guidance that I could give them.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: And was it your suspicion at this point
17 already that the assistance was being withheld potentially
18 because of this help they wanted to get from the Ukrainians
19 first?

20 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: You know, Mr. Chairman, same kind of
21 question about how it dawns on you. My next paragraph said
22 it had not occurred to me that the hold on security
23 assistance could be related to the investigations. As of
24 that time, it hadn't. I hadn't put those dots together. I
25 hadn't connected those dots.

1 The next couple -- the next week, from the discussion on
2 September 1st through about September 7th, it became clearer.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: So when you're asked about this by
4 Mr. Yermak on August 29th, you're embarrassed because you
5 hadn't been able to get an answer as to why the aid was
6 withheld and you felt it desperately ought to be provided.

7 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm a representative of the United
8 States Government out there, and he asked me a perfectly
9 legitimate question, why are you holding up this assistance,
10 and I couldn't tell him.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Now, at this point, when you couldn't
12 tell them, they were aware of other asks the President had
13 made in that call, right? You know that now, although you
14 didn't at the time.

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: On -- correct, on the meeting.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: And even though the Ukrainians learned on
17 August 29th that there had been a hold placed, they certainly
18 knew up through this whole period of June, July, August that
19 they hadn't yet received the aid, right?

20 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The aid -- so, right. The aid had,
21 by and large, not been put out to contract.

22 It's 1-year money, by the way. If we can make it 2-year
23 money, that would be great. This is a little plug here for
24 2-year money.

25 But it was 1-year money. It expired on the 30th of

1 September. And it was late in coming in the fiscal year, and
2 so it had not been obligated. It hadn't been put into
3 contracts yet. So, right, they -- I don't think they
4 suspected anything during that time.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah. But you said, in the middle of
6 page 10, "It had still not occurred to me that the hold on
7 security assistance could be related to the 'investigations.'
8 That, however, would soon change."

9 So let me ask you about when that began to change.

10 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yeah.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: In the middle of the following paragraph,
12 you testify, "Indeed, I received a readout of the
13 Pence-Zelensky meeting" -- that would be the meeting in
14 Poland.

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: On the 1st of September.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: On the 1st of September. You received a
17 readout "over the phone from Mr. Morrison, during which he
18 told me President Zelensky had opened the meeting by asking
19 the Vice President about security cooperation."

20 So this was -- if he opened the meeting with this, this
21 was foremost on President Zelensky's mind?

22 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Now, the final paragraph on page 10:
24 "During this same phone call I had with Mr. Morrison, he went
25 on to describe a conversation Ambassador Sondland had with

1 Mr. Yermak at Warsaw. Ambassador Sondland told Mr. Yermak
2 that the security assistance money would not come until
3 President Zelensky committed to pursue the Burisma
4 investigation." And the Burisma investigation, again, is the
5 one involving the Bidens.

6 Now, again, I want to ask you about conditionality. If
7 Mr. Morrison told you that, according to Mr. Sondland, that
8 Mr. Sondland had communicated to the Ukrainians, to
9 Mr. Yermak, security assistance money would not come until
10 President Zelensky committed to pursue the Burisma
11 investigation, the one is being conditioned on the other, is
12 it not?

13 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: You go on, at the end of that paragraph,
15 top of page 11: "This was the first time I had heard that
16 the security assistance -- not just the White House
17 meeting -- was conditioned on the investigations."

18 So both of these things you now had learned were
19 conditioned on these two political investigations, right?

20 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct, sir.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: That is, but for the Ukrainians'
22 willingness to do these two investigations, they were not
23 only not going to get the White House meeting, they were also
24 not going to get the military assistance.

25 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is what Mr. Sondland told

1 Mr. Yermak.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: So that is what's communicated by the
3 U.S. Ambassador to the EU, charged with a Ukrainian
4 responsibility to the Ukrainians, about what they have to do
5 if they want to get the White House meeting and U.S. military
6 assistance.

7 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The only qualification I would put
8 on that is that Ambassador Sondland was not the principal
9 United States representative to Ukraine. Ukraine's not in
10 the EU. He had this irregular, informal commission from
11 President Trump based on May 23rd.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: But this is someone, an ambassador --

13 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Ambassador.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: -- high rank --

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: -- having direct communication with the
17 President --

18 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: He had direct communication with the
19 President, yes.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: -- and he is communicating to the
21 Ukrainians that if they don't do these political
22 investigations that would help Mr. Trump in the next
23 election, they won't get the meeting with the President and
24 they won't get military assistance. Is that correct?

25 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: If I can go to the second full paragraph
2 on page 11 of your testimony.

3 "Ambassador Sondland also told me that he now recognized
4 that he had made a mistake by earlier telling the Ukrainian
5 officials to whom he spoke that a White House meeting with
6 President Zelensky was dependent on a public announcement of
7 investigations -- in fact, Ambassador Sondland said,
8 'everything' was dependent on such an announcement, including
9 security assistance."

10 Meaning that he had understated the matter before. Am I
11 right?

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: He thought it would -- he realized
13 that it had been a mistake to condition it only on the
14 meeting.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: That it was also -- the military
16 assistance was also going to be conditioned on the commitment
17 by Ukraine to do these two political investigations.

18 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: You go on to say in that paragraph, "He
20 said" -- he, Ambassador Sondland -- "said that President
21 Trump wanted President Zelensky 'in a public box' by making a
22 public statement about ordering such investigations."

23 By that, do you mean, Ambassador, that President Trump
24 wanted Zelensky to have to make a public commitment, to get
25 into a public box -- that is, commit publicly to these two

1 investigations -- before he was going to get either the
2 meeting or the assistance?

3 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's what Ambassador Sondland told
4 me.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: So it wasn't even enough that they make a
6 private commitment; Ambassador Sondland was saying that
7 Ukraine and President Zelensky needed to make a public
8 statement for the President.

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: In the next paragraph, you say, "In the
11 same September 1 call, I told Ambassador Sondland that
12 President Trump should have more respect for another head of
13 state and that what he described was not in the interest of
14 either President Trump or President Zelensky."

15 What did you mean that he should have more respect for
16 another head of state?

17 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: What Ambassador Sondland was telling
18 me that President Trump wanted, and, again, presumably based
19 on a phone call between Ambassador Sondland and President
20 Trump, was that President Trump wanted a public statement
21 from President Zelensky. And that struck me to be bad for
22 both, that it would not turn out well for both.

23 But, in answer to your question, Mr. Chairman, that
24 would show disrespect to another head of state. If President
25 Trump is telling you, I want you to go out and publicly say

1 you're going to do this, that was disrespectful, in my view,
2 to another head of state.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Disrespectful in the sense that he not
4 only wanted this illicit bargain but he wanted him to make it
5 public that he was going to -- in other words, that he
6 couldn't trust the Ukrainian President to honor a private
7 commitment to do these two political investigations, he
8 needed it to be public?

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I didn't go that far.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah.

11 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I mean, that was not in my mind,
12 about public/private. It was more the direction from one
13 President to another President. Two sovereign states having
14 a conversation, a respectful conversation, you would not have
15 one telling the other to go out and make a public --

16 THE CHAIRMAN: In the next paragraph -- well, let me
17 turn to the following page, page 12, of your testimony.

18 The second-to-last paragraph, in the middle of the
19 paragraph, you testify: "Ambassador Sondland said that he
20 talked to President Zelensky and Mr. Yermak and told them
21 that, although this was not a quid pro quo, if President
22 Zelensky did not 'clear things up' in public, we would be at
23 a 'stalemate.' I understood a 'stalemate' to mean that
24 Ukraine would not receive the much-needed military
25 assistance."

1 So you understood that, unless President Zelensky made
2 this public statement, they weren't going to get the military
3 assistance.

4 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: On page 13, the middle paragraph, you're
6 talking about the text messages, and you testified: "Before
7 these text messages, during our call on September 8,
8 Ambassador Sondland tried to explain to me that President
9 Trump is a businessman. When a businessman is about to sign
10 a check to someone who owes him something, he said, the
11 businessman asks that person to pay up before signing the
12 check."

13 Now, when Ambassador Sondland described to you this
14 signing of the check, did you take it by that he was
15 referring to signing the check for the military assistance?

16 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: You go on in the next sentence to say,
18 "Ambassador Volker used the same terms several days later
19 when we were together at the Yalta European Strategy
20 Conference."

21 Did he use the same "signing the check" term?

22 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Did that strike you as remarkable, that
24 that same analogy was used by both ambassadors?

25 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No. It struck me -- I concluded

1 that they had had a conversation.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: And that they both understood that if
3 President Trump was going to sign the check for military
4 assistance then they needed to pay up first and that pay-up
5 was a public declaration of these two political
6 investigations?

7 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That was the parallel.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: You go on to say, "I argued to both that
9 the explanation made no sense: the Ukrainians did not 'owe'
10 President Trump anything, and holding up security assistance
11 for domestic political gain was 'crazy,' as I had said in my
12 text message."

13 Well, I think that's self-explanatory.

14 I'm going to hand it over to Mr. Noble.

15 Oh, I'm sorry. Oh. Yeah. Okay.

16 Well, actually, I'm happy to go to members, if they
17 would like to ask some questions.

18 Mr. Quigley.

19 MR. QUIGLEY: Ambassador, at any time did anyone detail
20 what Mr. Giuliani's role was in Ukraine?

21 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, sir.

22 MR. QUIGLEY: How did you keep aware of his activities?
23 Did anyone report to you? Did anyone at all tell you what he
24 was doing? The Ukrainians, for example?

25 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, sir. The work on these

1 investigations, to make commitments to pursue these
2 investigations, was done by Ambassador Volker and Ambassador
3 Sondland. What I knew was that Ambassador -- that they both,
4 to a greater and lesser degree, extent, had conversations
5 with Mr. Giuliani. I don't know the nature of those
6 conversations.

7 MR. QUIGLEY: You described, I believe, that there were
8 divergent functions taking place, official and unofficial,
9 and the Giuliani roles were unofficial. Had you ever seen,
10 in all your years working in the field that you do, someone
11 operate in this manner?

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, I have seen
13 constructive input coming from outside the government into
14 the government decisionmaking process. In particular -- in
15 every case, that was to push forward, on trying to find ideas
16 coming from the outside, to push forward an agreed policy
17 goal or objective.

18 MR. QUIGLEY: Did they typically work together with the
19 officials?

20 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: They typically worked together.
21 That's why you -- yeah.

22 MR. QUIGLEY: They were aware of what each other was
23 doing --

24 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Absolutely.

25 MR. QUIGLEY: -- and they knew each other's role?

1 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Absolutely. And they can be --
2 often can be. I mean, there's things called -- at the
3 Institute of Peace, we do some what we call track two, which
4 is the unofficial -- track one is the official dialogue
5 between governments. Track two is unofficial, where you have
6 former members of the government talking to former members of
7 another government. And they come up with ideas that they
8 feed into the track one, to the formal, and they push that
9 forward. That's common practice.

10 MR. QUIGLEY: And, finally, did the Ukrainians ever ask
11 you about his role and what he was doing, or did --

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, sir. About Giuliani's role?

13 MR. QUIGLEY: Right.

14 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, sir.

15 MR. QUIGLEY: They never talked to you about it?

16 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Not that I recall.

17 MR. QUIGLEY: Very good. Thank you.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: I take it from your testimony,
19 Ambassador, that while there are appropriate cases to have
20 that second track, where the second track is ultimately
21 coordinated with the first track, that's not really what
22 happened here.

23 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, it's unusual. There
24 was some coordination. Occasionally I would be included in
25 some of these discussions. I was in the first track, in the

1 regular track, and as you could see from the emails, or the
2 texts, I was included on some of those. So there was some
3 coordination among that.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: You know, I guess the more accurate way
5 to ask the question is, in this actual case, not like prior
6 track two discussions, the irregular channel came to co-opt
7 the regular channel in pursuit of an objective that was not
8 in U.S. interests. Is that fair to say?

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: In one aspect of the regular
10 channel -- that is, in the security assistance component of
11 the regular channel. The regular channel is all of our
12 interactions with Ukraine, and one of the very important
13 components of that interaction with Ukraine is the security
14 assistance. And the security assistance got blocked by this
15 second channel.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, not just the one, because it was
17 also the meeting, correct?

18 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The meeting as well. Yes, sir. The
19 meeting as well.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Swalwell.

21 MR. SWALWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 And thank you, Ambassador.

23 Do you have any reason to believe, Ambassador, that
24 anytime during your communications with Ambassador Sondland
25 that Ambassador Sondland misrepresented the directives or

1 intentions of President Trump?

2 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No.

3 MR. SWALWELL: How would you assess the character of
4 Ambassador Sondland? You've assessed Mr. Volker's earlier.
5 Can you make the same assessment for Ambassador Sondland?

6 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I can do facts, you know.

7 MR. SWALWELL: Based on your facts, how would you assess
8 his integrity in this irregular process that you engaged in?

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I have no reason to believe that he
10 was not acting with integrity.

11 MR. SWALWELL: What was your concern?

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: My concern about the whole second
13 track was that, apparently at the instigation of
14 Mr. Giuliani, Ambassador Sondland and Ambassador Volker were
15 conditioning an important component of our assistance on what
16 would ultimately be a political action.

17 MR. SWALWELL: And, Ambassador, you were asked earlier
18 about President Trump characterizing this to Ambassador
19 Sondland as "no quid pro quo, no quid pro quo." But as you
20 described this here, the conditions that were laid out to
21 you, at least through Ambassador Sondland relaying President
22 Trump's wishes, you're familiar with the phrase, if it looks
23 like a duck and it walks like a duck, you can say it's not a
24 duck, but it's a duck?

25 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, I can just tell you the

1 facts. You've stated them. That is, apparently,
2 President -- well, Ambassador Sondland told me many times
3 that President Trump said it was not a quid pro quo. I
4 observed that, in order to move forward on the security
5 assistance, the Ukrainians were told by Ambassador Sondland
6 that they had to pursue these investigations.

7 MR. SWALWELL: I was moved by page 8's description of
8 your trip to Donbas, and I think you included that for a
9 reason, because you also expressed the concern that 13,000
10 Ukrainians have been killed in the war.

11 Can you just talk about the human element here and what
12 it means to Ukrainians every single day that goes by where we
13 have authorized aid, they don't see it in their bank account,
14 and Ukrainians continue to lose their lives, and what that
15 means for our security and just their livelihood?

16 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, the Ukrainians are
17 remarkably focused on the casualties in the east.

18 When Senator Johnson and Senator Murphy visited, about
19 this time, we had a meeting with the Defense Minister. And
20 it was the first meeting of the day. We went over there.
21 They invited us to a ceremony that they have in front of
22 their ministry every day. Every day, they have this
23 ceremony. And it's about a half-an-hour ceremony where
24 soldiers in formation, the Defense Minister, families of
25 soldiers who have been killed are there.

1 And the selection of which soldiers are honored, which
2 soldiers who had been killed are honored, is on the date of
3 it. So whatever today's date is, you know, if we were there
4 today, on the 22nd of October, the families of those soldiers
5 who were killed on any 22nd of October in the previous
6 5 years would be there. And --

7 MR. SWALWELL: Is it fair to say that the sooner they
8 would have received the aid from the United States, the fewer
9 the casualties would've been?

10 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: So here's what we could say. This
11 is -- I don't want to overstate this. Because it wasn't that
12 the holdup of this particular set of equipment and weapons
13 and radar and communications and vehicles, that that led to,
14 the week that I was there or even any particular -- we can't
15 make that connection.

16 What we can say is that that radar and weapons and
17 sniper rifles, communication, that saves lives. It makes the
18 Ukrainians more effective. It might even shorten the war.
19 That's what our hope is, to show that the Ukrainians can
20 defend themselves and the Russians, in the end, will say,
21 "Okay, we're going to stop." It's that saving of life.
22 That's how we would save lives.

23 MR. SWALWELL: Thank you.

24 Yield back.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Our time has expired. Forty-five minutes

1 to the minority.

2 BY MR. CASTOR:

3 Q In your statement, on page 2, you mention that,
4 when you were serving outside of government during the Obama
5 administration, after the Russian invasion, you joined two
6 other former Ambassadors to Ukraine in urging the Obama
7 administration officials at the State Department, Defense
8 Department, and other agencies to provide lethal defensive
9 weapons to Ukraine in order to deter further Russian
10 aggression?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Who were the two other officials?

13 A Ambassador John Herbst and Ambassador Steve Pifer.

14 Q What was the objection to providing lethal
15 defensive weapons at the time?

16 A The objection was that it might provoke the
17 Russians.

18 Q But you didn't think that was a good argument?

19 A I didn't. I thought that the Russians had already
20 been provoked and they had invaded Ukraine.

21 Q Uh-huh.

22 Overall, once you joined, you know, the administration
23 in Kyiv, were you happy with the package of aid?

24 A I was happy that we were providing aid. It could
25 always be more. But I was glad it was coming. I would've

1 been very unhappy if it didn't come.

2 Q But the Trump administration had a package of aid
3 to the Ukraine --

4 A Yes.

5 Q -- including lethal defensive weapons --

6 A Yes.

7 Q -- financial assistance --

8 A I was very happy about that.

9 Q Okay.

10 A Yes.

11 Q And that was an improvement of years prior?

12 A It was.

13 Q Was it a substantial improvement?

14 A It was a substantial improvement, in that this
15 administration provided Javelin antitank weapons. These are
16 defensive weapons, and they deter, and I believe successfully
17 deter, Russians from trying to grab more territory, to push
18 forward any further tank attack, number one. So there was a
19 military capability.

20 There was also a very strong political message that said
21 that the Americans are willing to provide more than blankets.
22 I mean, that was the previous. And these weapons are serious
23 weapons. They will kill Russian tanks. So these were
24 serious weapons. It was a demonstration that we support
25 Ukraine.

1 Q Uh-huh. And "the Americans are willing to provide
2 more than blankets," was that a characterization of the aid
3 in the prior administration?

4 A The prior administration had been willing to give
5 aid, but "blankets" was just kind of the more derogatory
6 version of it, but it was nonlethal weapons. So there was
7 communications equipment, there were vehicles, there were
8 maybe some rations, there were blankets, there were
9 night-vision goggles. So it was a significant package, but
10 it stopped short of weapons.

11 Q On page 5 of your statement, right around the
12 June 27th-28th timeframe --

13 A Yes, sir.

14 Q -- you stated that you sensed something odd when
15 Ambassador Sondland told me that he did not wish to include
16 most of the regular interagency participants on the upcoming
17 call with President Zelensky.

18 A Correct.

19 Q Who was excluded from that call?

20 A At a minimum, his staff in Brussels. It may have
21 also included people on the Department of Energy staff,
22 because Secretary Perry was on the call. I don't know
23 which -- I don't think the State Department -- I don't know.
24 I don't think State Department was even planning to be on the
25 call, but I -- which is another question, why would that not

1 be, but that's --

2 Q Okay. Was the National Security Council staff on
3 that call?

4 A No.

5 Q Would they ordinarily be on such a call?

6 A Not necessarily.

7 Q Okay.

8 You state that, before President Zelensky joined the
9 call, Ambassador Volker advised that he planned to meet with
10 President Zelensky in Toronto on July 2nd and discuss with
11 President Zelensky, you know, how to position Ukraine for
12 this White House meeting?

13 A It was to prepare President Zelensky for the phone
14 call, which we were trying to schedule, which, in turn,
15 would've been a step for the meeting -- would've been a step
16 towards --

17 Q Okay.

18 A -- the scheduling of the meeting. Yes.

19 Q And did you have a concern about that?

20 A I didn't.

21 Q About what Ambassador Volker would say in Canada?

22 A I didn't have a concern. As I think I've
23 mentioned, I didn't, at that time, understand what the code
24 was for investigations.

25 Q Uh-huh.

1 A And I don't even think, at that point -- I don't
2 think Kurt said anything about investigations on that call or
3 even on the prep call. So that call, that day, there were
4 two parts; one was Americans only, and then they introduced
5 President Zelensky. And it was in the preparatory call with
6 Americans only that Kurt said he was going to have this
7 conversation with President Zelensky.

8 Q Right. But Ambassador --

9 A And --

10 Q Oh, I'm sorry.

11 A No, go ahead.

12 Q "But Ambassador Volker noted that he would relay
13 that President Trump wanted to see rule of law, transparency,
14 but also, specifically, cooperation on investigations to 'get
15 to the bottom of things.'"

16 A Good point. You're exactly right. So I stand
17 corrected. He did mention investigations --

18 Q Okay.

19 A -- in that prep part.

20 Q And he indicated that this would be a topic in
21 Toronto in a couple days. Is that correct?

22 A In about 3 days, yes.

23 Q And did you have any concerns about that?

24 A I didn't. As I say, I didn't know what
25 "investigations" referred to at this point.

1 Q Okay.

2 A You know, I was starting to get suspicious.

3 Q Okay. But once President Zelensky joined the call,
4 there was no discussion of that?

5 A There was not.

6 Q At the top of page 6, you state you reported on
7 this call to Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent and you wrote a
8 memo for the record dated June 30th that summarized the
9 Zelensky call?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Did the memo you prepared have anything in it about
12 the pre-call?

13 A No.

14 Q Okay. Did you communicate with Kent anything about
15 the pre-call?

16 A I don't think so. I don't think so. I'm not
17 100 percent sure.

18 Q Now, did he ask you to write the memo or --

19 A He suggested that I write the memo.

20 So this is on the 30th of June. I got there on the 17th
21 of June. I'd had a previous call on the 18th of June when I
22 first arrived, and then there was this.

23 So I was, as I said in the testimony, realizing that
24 there are these two channels. At the time, I thought it was
25 beneficial -- benign or even beneficial to have these two,

1 because they could reinforce each other, or one could at
2 least support the other.

3 But I thought it was -- it struck me -- the reason I
4 wanted to be sure that Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent
5 knew about it was he's clearly and solely in the official
6 channel, the normal channel.

7 It wasn't at all clear to me from that phone call that
8 anyone from the State Department, the normal channel, as you
9 just pointed out -- no State, no NSC -- was on the call. I
10 just wanted to be sure that they knew that this other one was
11 going on. It could still be benign or even beneficial, but
12 it just seemed to me that there ought to be knowledge of the
13 two.

14 Q Okay. And so you discussed that with Kent?

15 A I did.

16 Q Do you remember what he said to you?

17 A I just remember him saying two things. One is, you
18 better write it down --

19 Q Okay.

20 A -- which I did. And two, he said, Bill, I'm glad
21 you're out there, I'm glad that you're there, that you can be
22 the link between these two what we're now calling channels.

23 Q Okay.

24 So did you write the memo about the call but also the
25 pre-call?

1 A I wrote the memo about the call. I'll have to go
2 back and look at --

3 Q Okay.

4 A So the memo is in the documents that I submitted to
5 the State Department, so they will be available sooner or
6 later to you.

7 Q Possibly later.

8 A This is up to Secretary Pompeo.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: We're hoping sooner.

10 BY MR. CASTOR:

11 Q By mid-July, you write, it was becoming clear that
12 the meeting with Zelensky was conditioned on the
13 investigations of Burisma and alleged Ukrainian interference
14 in the 2016 elections.

15 MR. SMITH: Which page, again, was that?

16 MR. CASTOR: It's the very next paragraph.

17 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yeah. Yeah.

18 BY MR. CASTOR:

19 Q And so my question is, what happened in between
20 that time period?

21 A So, actually, what I meant to imply -- what I meant
22 to suggest was that, right after -- by mid-July, it was
23 becoming clear. And so, on the two paragraphs to follow
24 that, Mr. Castor, I tried to describe what led me to make
25 it -- why it was becoming clear to me that that was the case.

1 Q Uh-huh.

2 A And that is the -- oh, I'm sorry. I've gone now to
3 page --

4 Q We're on page 6.

5 A You're on page 6, but I've jumped in order to
6 answer that question about why mid-July. It's on the 19th.
7 You have to skip ahead until we get to the paragraph that
8 starts, "In the same July 19 phone call," which on yours is
9 on page 7 in the middle.

10 This is a readout of the July 10th meeting, where you
11 had Danyliuk and Yermak, Bolton, Sondland, Volker.

12 Q Right.

13 A And it's at that one where Sondland connected
14 investigations to an Oval Office meeting, Bolton walked out.

15 Q And you learned that from Fiona Hill?

16 A And Alex Vindman, yes.

17 Q Okay. How frequently did you speak with Hill and
18 Vindman? Was it on an as-needed basis --

19 A Yes.

20 Q -- or was it a regular schedule?

21 A No. As needed.

22 Q Okay. Any idea why it took so long for the time
23 period between the 10th and the 19th?

24 A The reason -- I remember it well about the 19th.
25 The 18th was the NSC meeting where the hold on security

1 assistance was first --

2 Q Okay.

3 A -- broached. Troubling. I called these two NSC
4 people the next day. And on that one, they gave me the
5 readout of the July 10th.

6 Q Had you received a readout from Volker about the
7 meeting?

8 A About the July 10th meeting?

9 Q Yeah.

10 A I don't think so.

11 Q Okay.

12 A Yeah. I'll have to check my notes.

13 Q Have you ever had a readout from Volker about what
14 happened in the July 10 meeting? Or is your only information
15 coming from Dr. Hill and Lieutenant Colonel Vindman?

16 A It might just be from that source of information.
17 I don't remember having a conversation --

18 Q Okay.

19 A -- about these other ones. Danyliuk was,
20 obviously, in that meeting. Yermak was in that meeting. And
21 I've had multiple conversations with them, more often than,
22 actually, with --

23 Q Did anyone relate to you that Danyliuk was getting
24 way into the weeds with Ambassador Bolton and it was not a
25 long meeting in --

1 A No, no. Actually, it was -- no. What I heard from
2 Vindman and Hill was that the first part of that meeting went
3 well. Substantive discussions: security, national security,
4 both sides, energy security.

5 And, apparently, according to them, their boss, John
6 Bolton was appreciating the substance of that meeting. And,
7 in their description, when Ambassador Sondland raised
8 investigations in the meeting, that triggered Ambassador
9 Bolton's antenna, political antenna, and he said, we don't do
10 politics here.

11 Q Uh-huh.

12 A And so he ended the meeting.

13 Q Okay. Did anyone provide you a readout that
14 Danyliuk was talking about establishing new types of
15 institutions in the Ukrainian Government?

16 A I don't remember that.

17 Q Okay.

18 A No.

19 Q And so no one related to you that Danyliuk was
20 getting into the weeds with Bolton?

21 A No.

22 Q On July 10th -- going back to the paragraph on
23 page 6 beginning with, "On July 10" --

24 A Yes.

25 Q -- you met with Zelensky's Chief of Staff and

1 then-foreign policy advisor, who had advised you they had
2 heard from Mr. Giuliani?

3 A Ah. Yes. This is the one where I mentioned that
4 they had heard this via -- they had heard from Giuliani via
5 the Prosecutor General Lutsenko.

6 Q Okay. And you relayed your concerns to Counselor
7 Brechtbuhl?

8 A Brechtbuhl. That's correct.

9 Q What was his feedback?

10 A Again, the Counselor to the Secretary is focused a
11 lot -- I won't say mainly, but focused a lot -- on personnel
12 issues. And yet it was he who -- I had two meetings with
13 him, one just before the one with the Secretary in May. And
14 it was he who said, "Look, Bill, call me anytime if you've
15 got questions or problems. I can check with the Secretary
16 and" -- so that's why I called him.

17 Q So he is someone who had great influence with the
18 Secretary, right?

19 A He is very close -- he and the Secretary go back a
20 long ways.

21 Q Okay. So if you, you know, communicated your
22 concerns to Brechtbuhl --

23 A Yes.

24 Q -- on July 10th --

25 A Yes.

1 Q -- wasn't that, in effect, a signal that your
2 concerns before you took the post were coming to fruition?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Okay. And did Brechbuhl have a -- did he recognize
5 that? And did he realize that this was part of having your
6 back and --

7 A He did. He did.

8 Q -- the other commitments that were made to you?

9 A And I think I talked to him a couple of times along
10 these lines. And, again, it comes up when we talk about the
11 security assistance. You know, I called him that time as
12 well. He said he would check. So he was responsive. It
13 wasn't in his area of -- he didn't do this day-to-day. So he
14 had to talk to other people about -- other people in the
15 State Department about this.

16 Q And then the next event --

17 MR. JORDAN: Can I jump in for just a second?

18 MR. CASTOR: Sure.

19 MR. JORDAN: I want to go back to the July 19th call you
20 had with Dr. Hill and Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. You said,
21 Ambassador, you initiated that call?

22 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, I think so. I know it
23 was on my -- I remember seeing it on the schedule. So,
24 again, the troubling NSC meeting was the 18th.

25 MR. JORDAN: Understood.

1 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: And the 19th, it may have been a
2 prescheduled call. I can't remember if I initiated it or
3 not. Was that the question?

4 MR. JORDAN: If it was prescheduled with the NSC, would
5 Dr. Hill or Mr. Vindman have scheduled that call with you?
6 Who would've scheduled that?

7 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I can't remember who did it.

8 MR. JORDAN: You get to Ukraine on June 17th. Is that
9 right?

10 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

11 MR. JORDAN: All right. So you're there 1 month.
12 June 17th and July 19th, how many conversations did you have
13 with Dr. Hill and/or Lieutenant Colonel Vindman in that month
14 time period?

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: This might have been the first one.

16 MR. JORDAN: This is the first one?

17 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: This could have been the first one.

18 MR. JORDAN: And you don't know who initiated it?

19 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The only reason I'm hesitating -- I
20 know that I was concerned about the 18th call.

21 MR. JORDAN: I understand.

22 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: And they were on that.

23 MR. JORDAN: Okay.

24 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: And I know that it was actually on
25 my schedule. Sometimes -- well, I remember seeing it on the

1 schedule. So sometimes when there's kind of a
2 spur-of-the-moment call it doesn't show up on my schedule.
3 But this was on my schedule. So it was scheduled to happen
4 the following day. I can't remember if it had been
5 previously scheduled and I just took advantage of it or if I
6 scheduled it right then because I wanted to talk about the
7 18th meeting.

8 MR. JORDAN: If it had been previously scheduled, do you
9 know why it would've been previously scheduled?

10 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't.

11 MR. JORDAN: Okay. So would you guess it originated
12 with the NSC calling you?

13 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I can't speculate. I can't
14 remember.

15 MR. JORDAN: Okay. But this is the only call you've had
16 with him in the month that you've been there as Ambassador?

17 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I think that's correct.

18 MR. JORDAN: And just to go back where our counselor
19 was, it was both about your concerns that you had learned the
20 day before, relative to security assistance dollars --

21 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

22 MR. JORDAN: -- and then they volunteered to tell you
23 about their July 10th meeting, right?

24 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Correct.

25 MR. JORDAN: And did you talk to them about your

1 July 10th meeting in Ukraine with the individuals you had met
2 with, Mr. Zelensky's Chief of Staff? Did you fill him in on
3 that as well?

4 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't think I did.

5 MR. JORDAN: Is it fair to say the bulk of the
6 conversation was Dr. Hill and Lieutenant Colonel Vindman
7 relating to you what happened at the July 10th meeting here
8 in the United States?

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: The first part of the conversation
10 was about what we had all heard the day before --

11 MR. JORDAN: Okay.

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: -- about this security assistance
13 being held up. And none of the three of us had any idea why.

14 MR. JORDAN: Okay.

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: And then they went into this other
16 discussion about the July 10th meeting.

17 MR. JORDAN: Okay. Any idea which took the bulk of the
18 time of the phone call?

19 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I'm sure the July 10th -- discussion
20 of the July 10th meeting took the bulk of the call.

21 MR. JORDAN: The bulk of the time was on this meeting
22 that took place at the White House.

23 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes.

24 MR. JORDAN: Okay.

25 Steve, thank you.

1 [3:05 p.m.]

2 BY MR. CASTOR:

3 Q During this time period, did Volker ever talk to
4 you about his view of whether the aid would be released?

5 A Yes, I can't remember specific conversations, but I
6 remember we had conversations, and we all agreed that it
7 would be released. We were all sure it would be released.
8 The fact is we want -- we were hoping that it would be
9 resolved, released, decided, reversed, lifted, whatever the
10 verb is, before the Ukrainians heard about it because we
11 didn't want to be in the position I found myself later on
12 being embarrassed and not be able to say. So we hoped that
13 it would be fixed, and they would never hear about it, and we
14 wouldn't have to explain.

15 Q And from time to time, this happens with aid. It
16 gets held up, right?

17 A Sometimes aid gets held up. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

18 Q For whatever reason?

19 A Mr. Castor, I don't know. So I've been in the aid
20 business for a long time.

21 Q I mean, you know you can snicker about this, but --

22 A No, no, no, I'm not.

23 Q You're not snickering at this. Let me be clear,
24 you're not snickering. But it's been related to us that this
25 happens from time to time. Aid gets held up for whatever

1 reason --

2 A So I'm trying to -- Mr. Castor, I've done a bunch
3 of aid stuff as I mentioned here. Aid can be held up when,
4 you know, if there is a CR or something, you know, if there's
5 a congressional -- it could be a congressional hold. Yes, so
6 there are instances that aid gets held up.

7 Q Okay. But in this instance, everyone was aligned
8 you thought that we ought to work through this and the aid
9 will be lift -- the hold will be lifted.

10 A Because I was convinced, and all indications were
11 that everyone in the interagency community that had anything
12 to do with this aid was in support of that aid flowing.

13 Q And bipartisan Members of Congress?

14 A And bipartisan Members of Congress.

15 Q And, ultimately, the hold was lifted, right?

16 A And, ultimately, the hold was lifted on the 11th of
17 September.

18 Q In total, the Ukrainians knew about this for what
19 about 10 days?

20 A They knew that there was a hold on the 29th, and
21 they knew it was lifted on the 11th of September.

22 Q Twelve days?

23 A [Nonverbal response.]

24 During that time, I got a lot of questions about it.

25 Q Fair enough. During the July 19th call, was it

1 discussed the status of the upcoming call between the
2 Presidents? There was a July 25th call between President
3 Trump and Zelensky that's attracted some attention?

4 A You're talking about with Fiona Hill and Alex
5 Vindman?

6 Q Right.

7 A I don't recall. I don't think so. I think
8 actually I could check my text messages. Scheduling that
9 call was a challenge.

10 Q Okay.

11 A And it went back and forth in terms of time. So I
12 don't think I had a conversation with Vindman and Hill about
13 that at that point.

14 Q What was NSC's position on the call?

15 A They opposed it.

16 Q Okay. And so Dr. Hill opposed it?

17 A Certainly her boss opposed it.

18 Q So Ambassador Bolton opposed the call?

19 A He did.

20 Q Okay?

21 A And that was clear from the July 10th meeting.

22 Q So whoever set up the call --

23 A Yes.

24 Q -- it wasn't Ambassador Bolton, right?

25 A I think that's right.

1 Q So you didn't know anything about the call on the
2 19th, and then it was scheduled on the 25th?

3 A You say I didn't know about the call? I --

4 Q You were talking to Fiona Hill. I'm going back to
5 the 19th?

6 A Yeah, yeah.

7 Q You're on the phone with Dr. Hill and Lieutenant
8 Colonel Vindman?

9 A And we were talking about two things.

10 Q Two things.

11 A We were talking about why this assistance was put
12 on the day before, and we're talking about -- and they are
13 relating the discussion of July 10th with Danyliuk and
14 Bolton.

15 Q Right.

16 A And the call was not yet locked in, scheduled.

17 Q Okay.

18 A And it was going back and forth -- there was some
19 talk. There was some -- as I recall, there was, you know --
20 it was on and off, the call's on, the call's off. It is
21 scheduled for here. Not going to happen. I could go back
22 through the records if you want.

23 Q Okay. To the extent that you can recall --

24 A Yes.

25 Q -- when did you then learn that this July 25th call

1 would be scheduled?

2 A I -- well, we were trying to schedule it for about
3 a week in advance, that whole week. As I say, back and
4 forth, yes, no, this time, that time. So that was -- I was
5 doing it on the Ukrainian side and trying to go back to the
6 -- trying to keep the NSC advised as to what was going on.
7 And I think it was kind of -- it may have been about the day
8 before that it was actually locked down, so about the 24th.

9 Q Okay. And did you find out why --

10 A Why?

11 Q -- the change.

12 A No. As you just made the point, Ambassador Bolton
13 was not interested in having -- did not want to have the call
14 because he thought it was going to be a disaster. He thought
15 that there could be some talk of investigations or worse on
16 the call. Turned out he was right. So he didn't want to
17 have the call. I think it was the Chief of Staff who helped
18 schedule that call.

19 Q Mr. Mulvaney?

20 A Mr. Mulvaney.

21 Q Okay. Do you remember when you finally found out
22 that the call was happening and you had to go alert the
23 Ukrainians?

24 A We were alerting the Ukrainians back and forth. We
25 had given them a couple of head fakes all the way through

1 about this is going to happen; this is not going to happen.
2 And probably the day before. Now the other thing is the
3 White House situation room can work directly with the
4 Ukrainians as well. Most of the time, they would come
5 through me, and I would kind of set the stage. But when it
6 gets to the actual final hours of its schedule, they will --
7 they can call directly to the Ukrainians.

8 Q Okay. Also, on the July 19th call, Dr. Hill
9 informed you that Volker had met with Giuliani to discuss
10 Ukraine?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Was that the first time that you knew Volker and
13 Giuliani were talking about?

14 A You know, Mr. Castor it was about that time -- I
15 was looking at my notes last night or the night before -- it
16 was about that time that I heard from Dr. Hill that Kurt
17 mentioned -- Kurt sends a text that I have to check to see if
18 I was on, but in some text that Kurt sent about this time, he
19 said: I had a good breakfast with Mr. Giuliani. Maybe you
20 have already pointed this out earlier today. Was that right?
21 It was in one of your text --

22 Q I don't think I pointed that out, but fair enough.

23 A So, so here's what I know. Ambassador Volker sent
24 that text to at least Ambassador Sondland and maybe -- maybe
25 the three-way -- I can't remember.

1 Q Uh-huh.

2 A But he said, had a good breakfast with Mr.
3 Giuliani. And oh, then he also -- I think I was not on this
4 one, but I've seen it in some document that says that had
5 Kurt's note back to Rudy Giuliani saying: Thanks for the
6 good breakfast and had a good time.

7 So it was about that same time. And I think that's the
8 same contact that Fiona Hill was talking about, about the
9 same time.

10 Q Okay. Did you have any direct conversations with
11 Volker about that or just the text?

12 A The text that I think I was asked and I didn't get
13 a response.

14 Q Okay. So you never had any idea what Volker was
15 communicating to Giuliani?

16 A Correct.

17 Q Also, on July 20th, which is the next day, you sent
18 or you had a phone conversation with Danyliuk where the
19 discussion of being a pawn had come up.

20 A Yes.

21 Q Did you communicate that concern to anybody, such
22 as Brechbuhl or Kent?

23 A I did it -- I expressed the concern to Volker and
24 Sondland, as I said here. I don't recall going to Brechbuhl
25 or Kent.

1 Q Okay. But that would have been another fact -- if
2 you had gone to Brechbuhl, that would have been another fact
3 that pointed to the concerns that you discussed before you
4 took the post?

5 A Yeah. The whole thrust of this irregular channel
6 was to get these investigations, which Danyliuk and
7 presumably Zelensky were resisting because they didn't want
8 to be seen to be interfering but also to be a pawn.

9 Q Right.

10 A Right.

11 Q But you said the irregular channel is -- it
12 happens.

13 A It does.

14 Q And it can be okay?

15 A It can be okay. It can be helpful. In this
16 case -- yeah.

17 Q But at some point, the irregular channel in your
18 view became a problem?

19 A It did.

20 Q And you had the facts from Fiona Hill and Volker
21 and that side, and then now you're getting the facts from the
22 Ukraine side?

23 A Correct.

24 Q And I'm wondering, at this point, did it crystalize
25 to you that the irregular path was going to be more of a

1 concern than you anticipated?

2 A Yes. The general way I have described it is,
3 during the month of July, it began to be clear --

4 Q Okay.

5 A -- that this was a problem.

6 Q Did you -- I know you sent the cable on the 29th
7 after you spoke with Ambassador Bolton, but at any point in
8 time between the 20th and learning that, did you have any
9 official State Department higher up discussions?

10 MR. GOLDMAN: Can you clarify 20th and 29th, which?

11 MR. CASTOR: July. Do you follow?

12 MR. GOLDMAN: I don't think there was a cable on July
13 29th.

14 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: August 29th.

15 MR. CASTOR: August 29th.

16 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Which makes your point?

17 BY MR. CASTOR:

18 Q So this is what I'm getting to, is, what did you do
19 between now and the 29th to alert Mr. -- Counselor Brechbuhl
20 or Kent or somebody that this is becoming a problem, this is
21 irregular?

22 A So before the cable -- so August when it was
23 becoming -- July, I started to identify the problem of the
24 second channel, in particular with regard to the meeting. So
25 then the assistance gets put on hold, and that gets to be --

1 goes a month, goes from July 18th into the middle of August
2 and still is not resolved. It is attempting to be resolved,
3 and there were descriptions to me from Tim Morrison of how
4 they tried to get the principals in the same room, couldn't
5 do it, schedules, et cetera. I then -- I did, I called
6 Counselor Brechbuhl, talked to John Bolton --

7 Q This is much later.

8 A This is in August.

9 Q Okay.

10 A This is in August.

11 Q I'm just -- after the, you know, it seems like the
12 July 20th communication you had with Danyliuk really
13 crystalized that this was also becoming a concern on the
14 Ukrainian side of things.

15 A It was a concern on the Ukrainian side.

16 Q And I'm just wondering if you did anything right
17 then and there other than Sondland, Volker channel?

18 A I will check again.

19 Q Okay. And then the July 25th call happens.

20 A Yes.

21 Q Who did you get a readout from about the July 25th
22 call?

23 A Three people. One was a very short message from
24 Danyliuk, which said: Went well. Oh, there was also the
25 Ukrainians put out -- the Ukrainian Office of the President

1 put out a short description. Turned out, looking back on it,
2 that's not a bad one because it talks about corruption and
3 working on corruption would improve relations and that kind
4 of thing, and then kind of normal working -- so that was
5 that.

6 Tim Morrison and I had a conversation on the 28th. So
7 that was, what, 3 days later. And he had -- this is one
8 where he said, "It could've gone better," or something. I
9 took it as a sarcastic comment: It could have gone better.

10 And then he described several of the things that
11 happened on that call. He mentioned that Giuliani came up in
12 the call. He mentioned that he -- he mentioned that Gordon
13 Sondland had talked to President Trump before and after the
14 call. So that was not in the call, but that was before and
15 after, he told me. And he mentioned that the so-called
16 previous Ambassador, Ambassador Yovanovitch, was a topic of
17 the call.

18 Q Okay.

19 A So there was that.

20 I got one other readout of the call and this was from
21 George Kent. And his was secondhand. So George Kent had
22 talked to Alex Vindman, who had been on the call. So George
23 hadn't been; Alex had.

24 Q Was Morrison on the call?

25 A I'm sorry, who?

1 Q Was Morrison on the call?

2 A I think so, yes, yes. I'm sure he was. I'm sure
3 he was. Yes, the answer is yes.

4 George was not. George talked to Alex Vindman, and
5 George then relayed Alex's comments to me. There was a
6 difference in their two readouts of the call in one specific
7 respect, and that is Tim Morrison was sure that President
8 Trump had asked President Zelensky to fire prosecutor general
9 Lutsenko. Lutsenko was still on the job because he had -- he
10 had to stay on the job until Rada takes him off, so he was
11 still on the job. And Giuliani, we know, wanted to keep
12 Lutsenko on the job out there. And Tim Morrison's
13 recollection or recounting of the call was that President
14 Trump asked President Zelensky to fire Lutsenko. Vindman to
15 Kent to me said the opposite, that is, that President Trump
16 said, "Keep Lutsenko," again because Lutsenko and Giuliani
17 were -- so that actually -- and that turned out to be the
18 case. We now know, going back to the transcript we saw on
19 September 25th, we know -- we think, it is a little bit
20 unclear on that transcript, but we're pretty sure that
21 President Trump in the transcript asked President Zelensky to
22 keep -- it said, I understand you fired or you're about to
23 fire or you're not going to keep this very good prosecutor
24 general, and we think that's a mistake. So it turns out that
25 the Vindman description of that aspect was the correct one,

1 and Tim Morrison actually got that one wrong.

2 Q Okay. So you spoke with Morrison and Vindman.

3 A I spoke to Kent, who had talked to Vindman.

4 Q Okay. Anybody else?

5 A And Danyliuk and the report from the --

6 Q Anybody else before the matter became public at the
7 end of September?

8 A No.

9 Q Okay. So that's sort of the roster of --

10 A That's the roster of reports.

11 MR. CASTOR: I'm at my -- there's about 10 minutes left.

12 I'd like to pivot to our members.

13 MR. ZELDIN: Ambassador Taylor, on page 9, the second
14 paragraph.

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, I'm sorry. Which page?

16 MR. ZELDIN: Page 9 of your opening statement, where you
17 discuss Mr. Yermak asking the United States to submit an
18 official request for an investigation into Burisma's alleged
19 violations of Ukrainian law.

20 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

21 MR. ZELDIN: Was that request ever made by the United
22 States?

23 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, not to my knowledge.

24 MR. ZELDIN: On page 10 of your opening statement, so
25 second paragraph from the bottom in the middle of the

1 paragraph, you say, quote, "I was hopeful that at the
2 bilateral meeting or shortly thereafter, the White House
3 would lift the hold, but this was not to be." The hold was
4 released just 10 days later, correct?

5 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

6 MR. ZELDIN: Also, on page 10, same paragraph at the
7 bottom you say, quote, "The Vice President did say that
8 President Trump wanted the Europeans to do more to support
9 Ukraine and that he wanted the Ukrainians to do more to fight
10 corruption," end quote. Doesn't that align with U.S. law and
11 policy what the Vice President stated?

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: It does. And as I understand it,
13 Congressman, when President Trump decided not to go to Warsaw
14 and ask Vice President Pence to go for him, President Trump
15 asked Vice President Pence to make those two points.

16 MR. ZELDIN: Which, as you just stated, is entirely
17 consistent with U.S. law and policy, correct?

18 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes. We want the Europeans to do
19 more for Ukraine, and we want them -- the Ukrainians -- to do
20 more to fight corruption.

21 MR. ZELDIN: And on page 11, the third paragraph down,
22 you say, quote: In fact, Ambassador Sondland said, quote,
23 "everything" was dependent on such an announcement, including
24 security assistance.

25 Ukraine never made such an announcement, correct?

1 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct.

2 MR. ZELDIN: And the hold was still released just 10
3 days later, correct?

4 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That is correct.

5 MR. ZELDIN: On page 12, first paragraph, on September
6 5th, I hosted Senators Johnson and Murphy for a visit to
7 Kyiv. During that meeting, did President Zelensky say
8 anything to Senators Johnson and Murphy about a quid pro quo?

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, sir.

10 MR. ZELDIN: Did you say anything to Senators Johnson
11 and Murphy about a quid pro quo?

12 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: No, sir.

13 MR. ZELDIN: On page 12, the middle paragraph, you
14 talked about a conversation with Mr. Morrison. And this
15 phone call, was Morrison on that call?

16 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Congressman, that's a good question.
17 I don't know what -- I don't know how he knew that. It was
18 the same -- then, in the next paragraph, Ambassador Sondland
19 told me that he had a conversation with President Trump. And
20 so I -- and I think they were talking about the same
21 conversation. I think those two paragraphs talk about the
22 same conversation. And I don't know how Tim Morrison --
23 unless he may have been on the call, or he may have talked to
24 Sondland after the call.

25 MR. ZELDIN: I might get back to that, but at the bottom

1 of page 12 and the bottom of page 13 as well, so I'm skipping
2 ahead to the bottom of page 13, it says, again, I asked
3 Mr. Danyliuk to confirm that there would be no CNN interview,
4 which he did. It seems throughout your opening statement
5 you're talking about this demand for a public statement in
6 order to release aid to Ukraine, but no announcement was ever
7 made and the aid was still released, right?

8 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That's correct.

9 MR. ZELDIN: Earlier on, you had an exchange with the
10 chairman. He asked you with regards to the legal definition
11 of the term "quid pro quo." I believe you said something to
12 the effect of "I don't speak Latin," correct?

13 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Sorry.

14 MR. ZELDIN: Correct.

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

16 MR. ZELDIN: In your opening statement, though, you do
17 use the words "quid pro quo."

18 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I only quote other people using
19 those words, Congressman.

20 MR. ZELDIN: Okay. At the very end of your opening
21 statement, you do make a reference to quid pro quo as one of
22 the two Ukraine stories. On page 14 --

23 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Ah, I do, yes, sir.

24 MR. ZELDIN: So it's an important question for us to ask
25 you, if you're going to use that term "quid pro quo," for us

1 to ask you what you mean by it, and we're not going to --
2 obviously, we wouldn't accept the answer that you don't speak
3 Latin. We want to know what you mean about it. I'll let
4 Mr. Ratcliffe get into that further with you.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's take a 5- or 10-minute break, and
6 then we'll resume.

7 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Sure.

8 [Recess.]

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1 [4:45 p.m.]

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Let's go back on the record,
3 Folks, settle down a bit. Let's go back on the record.
4 Just a few follow-up questions before I hand it over to
5 Mr. Noble, Ambassador.

6 My colleagues on the minority asked you about general
7 circumstances in which aid may be withheld, that this kind of
8 thing happens. So I want to ask you a little further about
9 that.

10 There are certainly legitimate occasions when aid is
11 withheld, such as when Congress decides in its policy
12 judgment to withhold aid. Am I right.

13 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: And there may be other circumstances,
15 changing conditions on the ground somewhere, where a decision
16 will be made to withhold aid, appropriately so, correct?

17 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: But you can distinguish between
19 appropriate circumstances in which aid is withheld and
20 illegitimate circumstances in which aid is withheld to coerce
21 another country to do something improper.

22 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: You can.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Now, my colleagues asked you, well,
24 ultimately the aid was released. I think the thinking is no,
25 you know, no harm no foul, it ultimately was released. But

1 at the time that it was released are you aware that the White
2 House was in possession of a whistleblower complaint -- now
3 public -- that alleged that the assistance may be withheld
4 for reasons of wanting leverage over Ukraine for political
5 investigations? Were you aware that at the time it was
6 released the White House already knew the existence of this
7 complaint?

8 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, I don't know that.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Were you aware at the time that it was --
10 the aid was released that in fact there were public reports
11 in newspapers that the aid may be withheld for this improper
12 reason?

13 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: When it was released, on September
14 11th, when it was released?

15 THE CHAIRMAN: When the aid was eventually released --

16 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Right.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: -- were you aware there were already
18 public reports suggesting perhaps that it was being withheld
19 for inappropriate or inexplicable reasons?

20 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: In the press? I don't recall.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

22 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I don't recall.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: And we'll check the timeline. That's my
24 recollection, but I could be wrong.

25 So if I can go back to your testimony. At the bottom of

1 page 10 you talk about a phone call you had with Mr. Morrison
2 in which "he went on to describe a conversation Ambassador
3 Sondland had with Mr. Yermak at Warsaw. Ambassador Sondland
4 told Mr. Yermak that the security assistance money would not
5 come until President Zelensky committed to pursue the Burisma
6 investigation. I was alarmed by what Mr. Morrison told me
7 about the Sondland-Yermak conversation. This is the first
8 time I had heard the security assistance -- not just the
9 White House meeting -- was conditioned on the
10 investigations."

11 At that point did you understand that unless the
12 Ukrainians did this for President Trump, that is committed to
13 these investigations, they were not going to get that
14 military assistance or that meeting?

15 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Mr. Chairman, what I know for sure
16 is what Mr. Morrison told me that he must have heard
17 Ambassador Sondland tell Mr. Yermak. And as I said, this was
18 the first time I'd heard those two put together, those
19 connected.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: And when you say that, this was the first
21 time I heard that the security assistance -- not just the
22 White House meeting -- was conditioned on the investigation,
23 when you talk about conditioned, did you mean that if they
24 didn't do this, the investigations, they weren't going to get
25 that, the meeting and the military assistance?

1 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: That was my clear understanding,
2 security assistance money would not come until the President
3 committed to pursue the investigation.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: So if they don't do this, they are not
5 going to get that was your understanding?

6 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Yes, sir.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Are you aware that quid pro quo literally
8 means this for that?

9 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: I am.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Noble.

11 BY MR. NOBLE:

12 Q Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.

13 Ambassador, just sticking in this same general
14 timeframe, still on page 10 of your statement, on September
15 1st you wrote that you had a conversation with Mr. Danyliuk
16 to let him know that the delay of the U.S. security
17 assistance was a, quote, "all or nothing proposition, in the
18 sense that if the White House did not lift the hold prior to
19 the end of the fiscal year, September 30th, the funds would
20 expire and Ukraine would receive nothing."

21 How did Mr. Danyliuk respond when you told him that?

22 A Mr. Noble, the reason I told him that, the reason I
23 made it clear that it was all or nothing, was that he had
24 sent me an earlier note, a note just before that, saying,
25 well, it's a gradually increasing problem, that we're

1 gradually missing out on this assistance.

2 And I wrote back and said, no, Alexander -- Sasha --
3 Mr. Danyliuk, if the hold is not lifted, in particular by the
4 end of the fiscal year, then it goes away. And he was
5 thinking that it was just kind of -- it would be dribbled
6 out.

7 So in answer to your question, did he respond, nothing
8 substantive. I mean, he may have said thank you or
9 something.

10 Q Subsequently, though, did you have conversations
11 with the Ukrainians? I mean, did they become increasingly
12 concerned when the freeze remained in place and they weren't
13 getting an explanation why, and you had told that them these
14 funds may evaporate completely?

15 A Yes. And they -- I may have mentioned this
16 already, I can't remember -- they could not understand why it
17 was being held. And they suggested, well, maybe if I just go
18 to Washington and convince the President or convince the
19 Secretary of Defense that this is important that that would
20 do the trick. They were trying to figure out why this was
21 being held.

22 Q But then at some point, and again later on page 10,
23 Ambassador Sondland, it appears, told Mr. Yermak, President
24 Zelensky's adviser, that the money would not come until
25 Zelensky committed to pursuing the Burisma investigation. Is

1 that right?

2 A That is correct.

3 Q So, I mean, did the Ukrainians have an
4 understanding at that point what they had to do in order to
5 get the funds released?

6 A Certainly Mr. Yermak did. That's what he had heard
7 from Ambassador Sondland.

8 Q Okay. I want to go back now to the first time you,
9 I believe, learned of the freeze. Was that during the July
10 18th SVTC --

11 A It was.

12 Q -- you had?

13 I'd like to ask some questions about that and the other
14 interagency meetings that you had.

15 Can you just tell us how did you participate in the SVTC
16 on July 18th?

17 A So the way it works is that in the White House, in
18 the Old Executive Office Building, there is a room, there's a
19 series of rooms where they have interagency meetings.

20 MR. BELLINGER: I'm not sure all of this is public.

21 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Ah.

22 MR. BELLINGER: You guys have to scrub it later.

23 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Fair point. Thank you, Counselor.

24 You think it might be classified that there are those?

25 Anyway, yeah.

1 MR. BELLINGER: No, no, no. It used to be, it used to
2 be, but times have changed. It was classified when I was
3 there.

4 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: Okay. So --

5 THE CHAIRMAN: I am just going to interject. I want to
6 make sure we're not going it to get into classified
7 information today.

8 AMBASSADOR TAYLOR: We're not. Unless the existence of
9 these classified rooms is classified. I can't -- which I
10 don't think it is.

11 BY MR. NOBLE:

12 Q Perhaps a way to navigate this would be to shortcut
13 it and just say it's a conference call system.

14 A Thank you. That's a good idea. It is a conference
15 call.

16 Q Okay.

17 A It is a secure conference call.

18 Q Okay.

19 A I'm in Kyiv. I'm in a secure room. Can I say
20 that? And there are several other satellite officers that
21 beam in. And we're all in different parts of --

22 Q So this is a video conference?

23 A It's a video conference, a secure video conference.

24 Q Okay. So you can see who the other participants
25 are?

1 A It depends on -- so if the camera is right there,
2 all of those folks can be on the screen but I'm not, because
3 it's going right over my head. So the answer is most, but
4 not all. And I couldn't see the person who said -- the OMB
5 person who said: I've been told to stop this.

6 Q Okay. Do you know the identity of the OMB staffer?

7 A I don't.

8 Q But you believe -- I believe your testimony said
9 you believe it was a female staffer?

10 A It was.

11 Q Okay. And to this day you still don't know who it
12 was that announced it?

13 A I don't.

14 Q Did you participate in the subsequent interagency
15 meetings about the aid?

16 A One of them. As I say, there -- this was a
17 sub-PCC, so a Sub-Policy Coordination Committee. And then
18 there is a Policy Coordination Committee, and that is chaired
19 at the assistant secretary level. And then there's a
20 Deputies Committee. And then there's a Principals Committee.
21 And then there's an NSC meeting.

22 And it went -- and so I was present and beamed in from
23 Kyiv for the sub-PC and the PC, but not the ones above that.

24 Q Okay. Can you tell us what happened at the PCC
25 meeting, the second one?

1 A Yes. Around the room, observations, information
2 about the value of the assistance. In particular OSD, I
3 think it was Laura Cooper, who is probably on your list, made
4 a very strong case and continued to make a very strong case
5 for the effectiveness -- indeed, her office was the one
6 overseeing this assistance, so she made a very strong case
7 for that.

8 Others around -- the State Department representative,
9 strong statement, we made a strong statement about the
10 importance of this assistance.

11 Q And was there an OMB representative there for that
12 meeting?

13 A I don't know the answer.

14 Q Okay.

15 A Probably.

16 Q Do you recall whether there was any communication
17 from the White House or from OMB regarding the freeze and
18 whether it was going to stay in place at that meeting?

19 A I don't. I think coming out of that meeting was
20 the instruction that we're continuing -- that we're
21 continuing the policy as it had been. And, probably after
22 the PCC, the State Department and maybe the Defense
23 Department decided they were going to move forward with this
24 assistance anyway, OMB notwithstanding. This was a big
25 decision that L came to over there, over some debate as to

1 whether or not they could do it without OMB's clearance, send
2 a CN to the Hill without OMB's clearance, and they decided to
3 do that. I don't know if they've ever done that before.
4 This was a big decision for them.

5 Q So as far as you know, that was unprecedented?

6 A As far as I know.

7 Q Was that related to the FMF or USAI portions of the
8 assistance? Do you know?

9 A I think both.

10 Q Do you know whether there was any kind of written
11 documentation of kind of the decisions made at these
12 meetings?

13 A There is every time.

14 Q Okay. And State Department would have a copy of
15 those?

16 A NSC would probably have those.

17 Q NSC.

18 A And they were then sent out to the interagency,
19 including the State Department.

20 Q Okay. Are you aware whether there were any kind of
21 preconditions or certifications that had to be made with
22 respect to Ukraine before the funding could flow?

23 A In this case, for --

24 Q Yeah, for this assistance.

25 A The only thing I heard was that there was a request

1 -- and I'm not sure who it came from, but it may have come
2 from the NSC -- to the Defense Department for an evaluation
3 of the assistance to be sure that it was being well spent and
4 it was effective. And the Defense Department came back very
5 quickly with the conclusion that it was.

6 Q Well, we've heard claims that President Trump was
7 interested in corruption or concerned about corruption
8 generally in Ukraine. Are you aware that DOD, in
9 consultation with the State Department, had certified that
10 Ukraine had taken sufficient steps to address corruption such
11 that they were entitled to the aid at that time?

12 A Mr. Noble, I'm not sure. I think in the Defense
13 Authorization Act every year there are conditions that are
14 required to be met in order for that assistance to go
15 forward. And my understanding is those conditions were met.
16 On this specific one I'm not sure. I think so.

17 Q Okay. In your statement on page 4 you reference
18 several actions that President Zelensky had taken quickly to
19 address corruption in Ukraine, including opening Ukraine's
20 High Anti-Corruption Court, which had been a U.S. policy goal
21 for quite some time.

22 A We played a big role in that, yes.

23 Q And President Zelensky had done that at that point?

24 A He had done that and he showed up himself at the
25 opening of the High Anti-Corruption Court -- with the two

1 Senators, by the way. They were both there as well.

2 Q Which two Senators?

3 A Senator Murphy and Senator Johnson.

4 Q And then President Zelensky had also, after winning
5 control of the Rada, he changed the Ukrainian Constitution to
6 remove absolute immunity from Rada Deputies, which you say in
7 your statement was a source of corruption for over two
8 decades. Is that right?

9 A So Rada Deputies -- I imagine Representatives in
10 this body and in the Senate would love to have this -- but
11 the Rada Deputies in Ukraine up until the point where they
12 changed the Constitution could commit any kind of crime and
13 not be prosecuted.

14 And that was changed, he changed that right away, a
15 commitment that he'd made in his campaign, and he made good
16 on that commitment right away. And overwhelming support. It
17 had been promised every Rada by every President before, it
18 never happened. He got it done.

19 Q So not only had President Zelensky campaigned on
20 rooting out corruption, I believe his number one priority,
21 but he had taken concrete steps. And yet the OMB, the
22 President, still had decided to freeze the aid purportedly
23 because he had some concerns about corruption in Ukraine?

24 A It is certainly true that he made -- he is not only
25 fighting corruption. So he changed the -- President Zelensky

1 changed the language. He said he wants to defeat corruption.

2 So he was really focused on this, he made it his number
3 two priority. Number one priority was stopping the war on
4 Ukrainian terms and number two was defeating corruption. And
5 he did a lot on that.

6 And it was -- we talked earlier about how we're focused
7 on institutions fighting corruption. So the High
8 Anti-Corruption Court and the Special Prosecutor and all, the
9 institutional way of fighting corruption, rather than case by
10 case.

11 And so, yes, he pushed that very hard.

12 Q Okay. So I want to move, fast forward a little bit
13 to August. And I noticed in your statement that there's a
14 little bit of a time gap between -- on page 9 -- between July
15 28th to the middle of August, to August 16th, between the
16 first and second paragraphs on page 9.

17 And I also noticed that in the text messages that we
18 have in which you're a participant that Ambassador Volker
19 produced, there's also a similar gap in that timeframe.

20 So if you take the -- if you have the text messages and
21 you turn to -- let's go to page 28 first. And if you look at
22 -- I'll direct your attention to the top there. And
23 beginning on or around August 11th -- well, actually, yeah,
24 back to the top there.

25 So these are text messages between you and Ambassador

1 Volker.

2 A Okay.

3 Q There's one July 24th, 2019, where Volker says:
4 Hi, Bill. Can you talk now?

5 Do you see that?

6 A I do.

7 Q And then it skips forward till August 3rd and you
8 have a discussion about: Did Tim -- I believe that's Tim
9 Morrison -- say how he was doing on the call?

10 And then it skips forward to August 11th. And it's not
11 until August 16th, I believe, that you kind of start talking
12 again about the investigations or the requests for a White
13 House meeting. Do you see that?

14 A I do.

15 Q Okay. And then, if you move to page 38, so this is
16 the three-way text message chain between you and Ambassador
17 Volker and Ambassador Sondland. And if you look toward the
18 bottom, there's a big gap between August 6th, 2019, and it
19 then jumps to August 29th, 2019. Do you see that?

20 A I see that, right.

21 Q Do you recall whether you had any WhatsApp
22 conversations with Ambassador Sondland and Ambassador Volker
23 basically during the month of August, or the last 3 weeks of
24 August?

25 A From the 6th to the 29th?

1 Q Yeah. Do you know whether there'd be any messages
2 that might have been deleted here?

3 A Oh, I don't know if it's possible to delete on
4 these things. I don't know. I don't know the reason for the
5 gap.

6 Q Okay.

7 A Yeah, yeah, yeah. The State Department has all of
8 mine. I have them as well. But, yeah, the State Department
9 has all of these.

10 Q Okay. But in this timeframe were you aware that
11 Ambassador Volker and Ambassador Sondland were in direct
12 communication with Mr. Yermak and with Mr. Giuliani about the
13 drafting of a statement that they wanted President Zelensky
14 to release?

15 A So only after -- only after Ambassador Volker
16 released his texts. I think that's where they showed up.

17 Q So you weren't involved, as far as you can
18 remember, in the drafting of that?

19 A I was not.

20 Q Okay. So that was something that Ambassador Volker
21 and Ambassador Sondland were doing with Giuliani and Yermak?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Okay. So I would like to show you kind of the end
24 result of that process. If you turn to page 23 of the text
25 messages. And, again, these aren't ones that you were on.

1 But the last couple messages on that page, from August
2 13th, 2019, this is an exchange between Ambassador Volker and
3 Mr. Yermak.

4 And Volker writes: Hi, Andrey. Good talking.
5 Following is text with insert at the end for the two key
6 items. We will work on official requests.

7 And then Ambassador Volker drafts -- pastes the
8 statement that they want President Zelensky to release. And
9 it reads: "Special attention should be paid to the problem
10 of interference in the political processes of the United
11 States, especially with the alleged involvement of some
12 Ukrainian politicians. I want to declare that this is
13 unacceptable. We intend to initiate and complete a
14 transparent and unbiased investigation of all available facts
15 and episodes, including those involving Burisma and the 2016
16 elections, which in turn will prevent the recurrence of this
17 problem in the future."

18 So this is a draft statement that Ambassador Volker and
19 Ambassador Sondland had drafted with Rudy Giuliani for
20 President Zelensky to release. Were you involved in the
21 crafting of this?

22 A I was not.

23 Q Okay. So you had no knowledge that this was going
24 on at the time?

25 A I had no knowledge.

1 Q Were you aware of any statement generally that --

2 A I wasn't until I saw these once they were released.

3 Q Okay. How did you react when you learned, I guess
4 from seeing Ambassador Volker's text messages, that this had
5 been going on behind the scenes, given that you're the Charge
6 d'Affaires in Ukraine, and yet you have no idea that Volker
7 and Sondland are working with Giuliani and Yermak to get out
8 a statement from the President of Ukraine and you had no idea
9 that that's going on? Did that concern you?

10 A It did. When I found out about it -- again, this
11 was the irregular channel, I was in the regular channel.
12 Every now and then I would see what was going on in the
13 irregular channel, but not in this case.

14 And, yeah, I mean, I should have been involved, but I
15 knew that there were a lot of communications between
16 Ambassador Volker preceding -- and President Zelensky and
17 Yermak -- preceding my arrival. They had a relationship.

18 And similarly with Ambassador Sondland. Ambassador
19 Sondland had a relationship, he told me, I don't know -- I
20 think this is true -- that he could WhatsApp and phone and
21 call President Zelensky. And normally, in a normal
22 arrangement, the ambassador helps either facilitate that or
23 monitors that or is at least aware of that and gets
24 back-briefed on that. I had accepted that this was an
25 unusual circumstance.

1 Q I mean, is it -- would you say or would you agree
2 that these text messages and the drafting of this statement
3 was, in effect, making concrete the quid pro quo that you had
4 realized in mid-July, as you describe in your statement, that
5 a White House visit was dependent on President Zelensky
6 making a public commitment to those two specifics
7 investigations?

8 A So again, being careful about my use and
9 understanding of quid pro quo, which is imperfect at best,
10 the facts were that these relationships between the
11 announcement and the meeting -- or phone call and the meeting
12 -- and then the security assistance, it was clear to me that
13 there was that relationship.

14 What I didn't know was there were these -- this drafting
15 session, this drafting exercise to put together the language
16 that President Zelensky would use.

17 Q Okay. I want to fast forward a little bit to
18 September 7th or 8th. Do you recall sending George Kent a
19 WhatsApp message regarding your conversation with Tim
20 Morrison about what President Trump wanted Zelensky to do?
21 Do you recall telling George Kent about that?

22 A Is this mentioned in my statement --

23 Q No, but if you go to your statement --

24 A September 5th. This is with -- Senators Johnson
25 and Murphy were in town.

1 Q And then on page 12 in the middle.

2 A Right.

3 Q It says you had a call with Mr. Morrison where he
4 had a, quote, sinking feeling --

5 A Yes.

6 Q -- after learning about the conversation that
7 President Trump had with Ambassador Sondland.

8 A Yep.

9 Q Did you relay that in a written communication to
10 George Kent? Do you remember that?

11 A I don't remember.

12 Q Can we go back to the text messages and turn to
13 page 53, the last page?

14 A Okay. I'm informed that on my text message there
15 was a text back to George Kent.

16 Q Okay.

17 A So let me be clear. I didn't remember it until
18 just now and this great colleague back here reminded me that
19 this was there.

20 Q Okay. And those text messages have been turned
21 over to the State Department?

22 A They have, they have, they have.

23 Sorry, where are we now?

24 Q Sure. Last page of the text messages, page 53.

25 A Yes.

1 Q At the top of the page, I believe, on September
2 8th, 2019, 11:20 a.m. Gordon Sondland says: Guys, multiple
3 convos with ZE.

4 That's Zelensky, correct?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And POTUS.

7 A Yes.

8 Q President Trump.

9 A Yes.

10 Q Let's talk.

11 A Right.

12 Q And then you go on to have a conversation, which I
13 believe is the conversation you describe in your statement.
14 Is that right?

15 A Yes.

16 Q On page 12?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Okay. And that's where President Trump had made
19 clear that if Zelensky did not, quote, "clear things up in
20 public," there would be a, quote, "stalemate." Is that
21 right?

22 A That is correct.

23 Q And you understood that stalemate meant that
24 Ukraine would not get the military assistance?

25 A That's correct.

1 Q Okay. Was Ambassador Volker on that call with you
2 and Ambassador Sondland?

3 A I'm sure he was, yes.

4 Q During that call, did you discuss the possibility
5 of President Zelensky --

6 A Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. On the phone call?

7 Q The phone call, yes.

8 A No, no, no, no. The phone call was just --

9 Q Just you and Sondland?

10 A Yes. Right. Sorry. The text was the three of us,
11 the phone call was just the two of us.

12 Q Okay. During that phone call did you discuss the
13 possibility of President Zelensky doing the CNN interview
14 during the YES Conference in Ukraine? Is that when that
15 first came up?

16 A That's when he -- yes, that's when Ambassador
17 Sondland said that he had talked with them and they -- and
18 the Ukrainians had agreed to do a CNN interview.

19 Q Okay. Can you just describe in a little more
20 detail your recollection of that conversation with Ambassador
21 Sondland? Was this the first time you had heard the idea of
22 President Zelensky making a public announcement on CNN about
23 these investigations?

24 A It was certainly the first time I'd heard about it
25 on CNN. We'd had earlier conversations about making public

1 comments. I think that is the case here. I'm remembering
2 the thing about the interest that Ambassador Sondland had in
3 having President Zelensky go in a box, in a public box. So
4 there were those conversations on a couple of occasions.
5 This is the first time on CNN, talking about CNN interview.

6 Q And do you recall the dates of the YES Conference?
7 When was this interview supposed to take place?

8 A The interview, the CNN interview I think was going
9 to be in UNGA, which is at the end of September. The YES
10 Conference was the first week in September, as I recall,
11 maybe the first -- oh, no, no, sorry. It was the Friday,
12 Saturday -- Saturday is the 14th of September. But I
13 don't -- and there was a lot of press at the YES Conference.
14 I don't think there was talk about doing an interview there.

15 Q Okay. So you think that the interview that
16 President Zelensky was going to do that you discussed with
17 Ambassador Sondland during your call on September 8th was
18 going to be during UNGA?

19 A When we were talking about it on September 8th, I
20 think it was not clear when it was going to be.

21 Q Okay.

22 A And when it didn't -- when it didn't happen, didn't
23 happen, and then they were approaching the UNGA meeting on,
24 what, the 25th of September, then they got more serious --
25 then I started hearing about the CNN interview. And so it

1 was going to take place in New York.

2 Q Okay. Going back to the text messages, do you see
3 the message on September 8th at 12:37 p.m.? Can you just
4 read what you wrote there about "the nightmare"?

5 A I will.

6 "The nightmare" is they give the interview and don't get
7 the security assistance. The Russians love it --
8 parenthetical -- (and I quit.)

9 Q Can you unpack that a little bit for us?

10 A Sure.

11 Q What did you mean by "the nightmare" and what would
12 the Russians love?

13 A "The nightmare" is the scenario where President
14 Zelensky goes out in public, makes an announcement that he's
15 going to investigate Burisma and the election in 2016,
16 interference in 2016 election, maybe among other things. He
17 might put that in some series of investigations.

18 But he had to -- he was going -- the nightmare was he
19 would mention those two, take all the heat from that, get
20 himself in big trouble in this country and probably in his
21 country as well, and the security assistance would not be
22 released. That was the nightmare.

23 The Russians loving it. The Russians are paying
24 attention. The Russians are paying attention to how much
25 support the Americans are going to provide the Ukrainians.

1 The Russians are leaning on Ukraine. They are leaning on
2 Ukraine about Donbas. They are leaning on Ukraine about
3 sovereign -- small little sovereign countries here, little
4 statelets. They are leaning on economically, they have got
5 the Nord Stream coming through, they have got -- they are
6 putting pressure on -- they have to come to a new gas
7 agreement by the 1st of January.

8 So they are leaning on them. And they, the Russians
9 want to know how much support the Ukrainians are going to get
10 in general, but also what kind of support from the Americans.

11 So the Russians are loving, would love, the humiliation
12 of Zelensky at the hands of the Americans, and would give the
13 Russians a freer hand, and I would quit.

14 Q And why would that make you quit?

15 A That's exactly the scenario that I was worried
16 about when I had my meeting with Secretary Pompeo on the 28th
17 of May where I said: Mr. Secretary, you know, your current
18 strong policy of support for Ukraine is one I can support and
19 I would be glad to go out to Kyiv and support it and push it
20 hard.

21 However, I told him and the others who were in the room,
22 if that changes -- and this would have been a change, this
23 would have been -- it was a nightmare. This would have been
24 throwing Ukraine under the bus. And I told the Secretary:
25 If that happens, I'll come home. You don't want me out

1 there, because I'm not going to defend it, you know. I would
2 say bad things about it. And you wouldn't want me out there
3 doing that. So I'm going to come home on that. So that was
4 the message about I quit.

5 Q And did you communicate that, these concerns around
6 this time to Secretary Pompeo or --

7 A I had done so on August 29th.

8 Q In your -- in the cable?

9 A Correct.

10 Q What was the distribution on that cable?

11 A It was called "NODIS."

12 Q Okay. What's that mean?

13 A So it's very limited distribution. It's also first
14 person, which means the way it reads is: Mr. Secretary, I
15 am concerned -- I, Bill Taylor -- I am concerned about this
16 problem.

17 So that's first person. Normally these cables are not
18 first person, they are third person. So it gets attention,
19 there are not many first person cables coming, so it gets
20 attention when it comes in from the ambassador saying: I am
21 concerned.

22 And "NODIS" means that it is very limited distribution.
23 It goes obviously to the Secretary. And then if other people
24 want to read it they have to come up to the Operations Center
25 in the State Department and they can go into the special room

1 and they can read it.

2 Q And in your statement, I believe page 10, you said
3 you heard soon thereafter the Secretary carried that cable
4 with him to a meeting at the White House focused on security
5 assistance for Ukraine. Where did you hear that from?

6 A Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent.

7 Q Okay. And do you know what, if anything, else
8 Secretary Pompeo did after receiving your cable to follow up?

9 A I know that -- I know that he had been pushed -- I
10 think I mentioned that after the July 18th meeting where the
11 assistance was frozen by the OMB hand, that there were a
12 series of these meetings, up to and including Secretary of
13 State and Defense. And so I know that Secretary Pompeo was
14 working on this issue, that he wanted it resolved.

15 I was getting more and more concerned that it wasn't
16 getting resolved. And so I wanted to add my concern and my
17 arguments, from the perspective of Kyiv and the Ukrainians,
18 about how important this assistance was.

19 Q Okay. And you said -- how did you learn that the
20 aid had been unfrozen? I believe it was on September 11th,
21 is that right?

22 A It was September 11th. So, yeah, I remember
23 getting an email from a staffer, a Senate Armed Services
24 Committee staffer. And of course Senate staffers -- House
25 staffers too, I'm sure -- get the word much earlier than

1 anybody else.

2 And so I got this email, I think it was probably
3 overnight, which I then sent to Tim Morrison and I think
4 maybe to George Kent saying: Oh, this is great news. This
5 is what we've been waiting for.

6 And Tim hadn't heard it yet. So that's how I first
7 heard. And then he later that day confirmed.

8 Q Okay. Are you aware that The New York Times
9 published some communications, some emails, relating to the
10 release of the freeze that involved you on October 9th, 2019,
11 with a State Department employee, Brad Freedom (ph)?

12 A Oh, I do remember this, yes.

13 Q Do you recall those emails?

14 A This is the one where Brad said something about
15 nothing to see here, move along.

16 Q I believe the quote is: Keep moving people,
17 nothing to see here.

18 A There you go.

19 Q Did you have any communications with Mr. Freedom
20 (ph) or anyone else at the State Department about why they
21 wanted to keep the release of the funds quiet?

22 A No, I didn't have a conversation with Mr. Freedom
23 (ph) on this one. I imagine that -- my understanding -- my
24 view of this was that, as I said earlier, this was an
25 embarrassment, this freeze on assistance was a mistake, an

1 embarrassment, and it was going to be fixed, it had to be
2 fixed. And the less said and the less attention it got, the
3 less embarrassing it was.

4 So I was fine with don't talk about this or, you know,
5 let's not make a big deal of this.

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1 [4:23 p.m.]

2 BY MR. NOBLE:

3 Q Okay. On or about September 14th, so after the aid
4 was released, do you recall a meeting that you and Ambassador
5 Volker had with Andriy Yermak?

6 A I do. It was a dinner.

7 Q A dinner. Can you tell us what happened at that
8 dinner?

9 A One of the things that happened was Mr. Yermak
10 described to Kurt and me, described to Ambassador Volker and
11 me, their plans for a resolution of Donbas, how they were
12 going to get to a resolution with Donbas.

13 There was a fourth person there, another of his --
14 another Ukrainian colleague.

15 There were a couple other topics discussed, Mr. Noble,
16 but anything in particular that I should try to remember?

17 Q Do you recall anything about an investigation
18 involving former Ukrainian President Poroshenko coming up
19 during that meeting?

20 A I do.

21 Q Can you tell us about that conversation?

22 A Yes. I can. I can see Ambassador Volker has been
23 here.

24 Yes, so Ambassador Volker suggested to Mr. Yermak and
25 Mr. Novikov, the other Ukrainian, that it would be a good

1 idea not to investigate President Poroshenko, the previous
2 President. And one of the reasons Kurt said that was there
3 were indications, and maybe even some actions taken by that
4 time, that made it clear that the new government, the new
5 Zelensky government, was going to go after President
6 Poroshenko for a range of issues, on things like -- people in
7 this room will remember that President Poroshenko was in
8 office at the time of the Kerch Strait incident. This was
9 Thanksgiving a year ago, when the Russians attacked these
10 Ukrainian patrol ships, patrol boats. And President
11 Poroshenko was getting blamed for and being possibly even
12 taken to court for some of those military decisions that he
13 made.

14 And, at that dinner, both Mr. Yermak and Mr. Novikov
15 took out their cell phones -- I, of course, don't have -- but
16 took out their cell phones and pulled up pictures of their
17 relatives -- one was a brother, and one was a cousin -- who
18 had been killed or wounded in the east. And they showed this
19 to Kurt and me, and they said, Poroshenko is responsible for
20 this.

21 There was a deep-seated anger at Poroshenko at an
22 emotional level. And that was one of the things
23 motivating -- one of the things motivating the attacks on, or
24 the court cases on President Poroshenko. Not the only ones.
25 There were others. This oligarch that I mentioned earlier,

1 Kolomoisky, also had it in for Poroshenko.

2 And Kurt said, you know, you should move forward, don't
3 prosecute Poroshenko. And they responded, take a look at
4 this.

5 Q Do you recall Yermak saying anything to the effect
6 that, why shouldn't we investigate Poroshenko when you're
7 pushing us to investigate Joe Biden?

8 A Oh, I don't remember that, but -- I don't remember
9 that.

10 Q Okay.

11 After the freeze was lifted, it sounds like, from your
12 statement, you still had concerns that President Zelensky
13 might go forward with the CNN interview and still announce
14 the investigations. Is that right?

15 A That's right.

16 Q Why did you have that concern that that was going
17 to happen?

18 A I had the concern because I had a couple of
19 meetings with President Zelensky and Andrei Bohdan, his Chief
20 of Staff, about this time. It was just after -- it was on
21 the 13th, I think, of September, just after the hold had been
22 released.

23 And walking out of that meeting, Andriy Yermak was about
24 to walk in. And I had just said to President Zelensky,
25 bipartisan support of Ukraine in Washington is your most

1 valuable strategic asset, don't jeopardize it. And don't
2 intervene -- don't interfere in our elections, and we won't
3 interfere in your elections. I had just said that to
4 President Zelensky, and on the way out I said the same thing
5 to Andriy Yermak. And the body language was such that it
6 looked to me like he was still thinking they were going to
7 make that statement.

8 Q At that point, had there been a White House meeting
9 for President Zelensky scheduled?

10 A No. And there still hasn't been.

11 Q Okay.

12 Did you participate in UNGA? Were you here in New York?

13 A No.

14 Q No? Did you help prepare for President Trump's
15 meeting with President Zelensky?

16 A Yes. I sent in a suggestion to Tim Morrison on
17 what should -- you know, what he could use as the President's
18 talking points when he sat down with Zelensky, basically
19 making the point that, you know, correct, a good, solid,
20 substantive conversation. Yeah. And that's in the cables.
21 I'm sure, that the State Department is preparing.

22 Q Okay.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: I'd like to give priority to the members
24 that have been here for most of the day.

25 Mr. Welch?