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March 10, 2020

Rose Clara White

La Crosse, WI 54601

MUR # 7705  
SupplementU.S. Department of Justice  
Suite 11050  
1425 New York Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20530

MUR 7705

Gentlemen:

This is a request to obtain a copy of the unredacted transcript of the July 25, 2019 phone call between U.S. President, Donald J. Trump and President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskiy. As a U.S. citizen, I believe that I am entitled to copies of open records under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Please send the written copy of the transcript to me at the above address. If this document is classified, please tell me why that is so.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. I look forward to receiving the transcript.

Sincerely,

*Rose Clara White*

Rose Clara White

March 10, 2020

Rose Clara White

La Crosse, WI 54601

Federal Election Commission  
Office of Complaints Examination and Legal Admin.  
Attn: Christal Dennis, Paralegal  
1050 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20463

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RE: MUR 7705

Please include the enclosed additional documents in my complaint (MUR 7705), alleging possible violations of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended, by U.S. President Donald John Trump.

Before the 2016 presidential election, I watched the President solicit "something of value from a foreign national in connection with an election." On television on July 27, 2016, he said, "Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 (Hillary Clinton) emails that are missing." Thereafter, I believe Russia began to try to search out those e-mails.

I believe that the President solicited assistance from a foreign government as part of a political strategy to harm his 2020 Democratic opponent, former Vice President, Joseph R. Biden, Jr. and assist his own re-election campaign. I believe he did so in a July 25, 2019 phone call with the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy by soliciting two investigations—one of "CrowdStrike" and the other of Biden's son, Hunter and Burisma (a Ukrainian company on whose Board Hunter Biden sat).

While I did not personally witness substantiation of my complaint that President Trump solicited something of value in connection with the 2020 presidential election (except for watching him on television referenced above and on September 26, 2019 suggesting that China investigate Hunter Biden's business dealings), I searched out articles on the subject from a number of reputable news sources, including "C-span," "The New York Times," "The Wall Street Journal," "USA Today," "U.S. News and World Report," and "ABC News." I believe that this documentation substantiates my complaint.

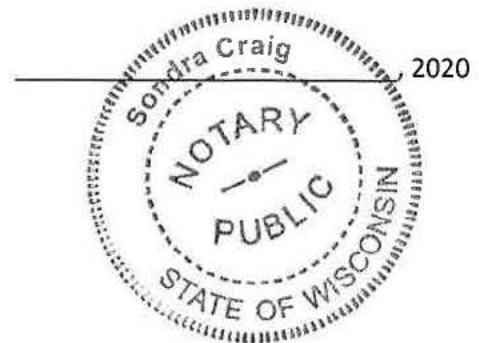
*Rose Clara White*

Rose Clara White – March 10, 2020

Su STATE OF WISCONSIN ) ss  
COUNTY OF LA CROSSE )  
Personally appeared before me this 10<sup>th</sup> day of  
March, 2020, the above named  
known to me to be the person(s) who executed the  
foregoing instrument and acknowledged the same.

*Sondra Craig*  
Sondra Craig, Notary Public  
La Crosse County, WI

My Commission Expires: 11/11/2021



*The New York Times*

**Donald Trump Calls on Russia to Find Hillary Clinton's Missing Emails**

Video

transcript

1:31/1:07, July 27, 2016 By Ashley Parker and David E. Sanger

**Trump Urges Russia to Locate Clinton Emails**

Donald J. Trump encouraged Russia at a news conference to find Hillary Clinton's missing correspondence.

I will tell you this: Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing.

**The New York Times**

***Trump Envoys Pushed Ukraine to Commit to Investigating Biden***

By [Kenneth P. Vogel](#) and [Michael S. Schmidt](#)

- Published Oct. 3, 2019 Updated Oct. 8, 2019

WASHINGTON — Two of President Trump’s top envoys to Ukraine worked on a statement for the country’s new president in August that would have committed Ukraine to pursuing investigations sought by Mr. Trump into his political rivals, according to three people briefed on the effort and documents released Thursday night.

Their [work on the statement](#) is new evidence of how Mr. Trump’s fixation with conspiracy theories linked to Ukraine began driving senior diplomats to bend American foreign policy to the president’s political agenda in the weeks after a July 25 call between the two leaders.

[\[Read the text messages between U.S. and Ukrainian officials.\]](#)

The statement was worked on by [Gordon D. Sondland](#), the United States ambassador to the European Union, and Kurt D. Volker, then the State Department’s special envoy to Ukraine, according to the documents and the three people who have been briefed on the statement. Rudolph W. Giuliani, Mr. Trump’s personal lawyer and the de facto leader of a shadow campaign to push the Ukrainians to press ahead with investigations, provided the critical element of the language, Mr. Volker told House Democratic investigators on Thursday, a person familiar with his testimony said.

The Ukrainians never released the statement. But if they had, Mr. Trump’s aides would have effectively pressured a foreign government to give credence to allegations intended to undercut one of the Democratic Party’s leading 2020 presidential candidates — former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. — without leaving Mr. Trump’s fingerprints on it.

**Advertisement**

Mr. Volker spent Thursday on Capitol Hill being questioned by House investigators as Democrats pursued their [impeachment inquiry into Mr. Trump’s actions](#).

Late Thursday, House Democrats released a series of texts between Mr. Volker, Mr. Sondland and Andriy Yermak, a top aide to the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, that also showed that officials in both countries understood that Mr. Trump would not grant Mr. Zelensky an Oval Office meeting he was seeking until Ukraine agreed to make a public commitment to the investigations being sought by the American side.

The texts also showed the three men discussing language for the proposed statement. On the morning of Aug. 13, Mr. Volker sent Mr. Sondland language they wanted added to an earlier draft sent by the Ukrainians.

“We intend to initiate and complete a transparent and unbiased investigation of all available facts and episodes, including those involving Burisma and the 2016 U.S. elections, which in turn will prevent the recurrence of this problem in the future,” Mr. Volker said in what appears to be the language he was proposing.



Mr. Sondland quickly replied, "Perfect," adding that they should send it along to an adviser to the Ukrainian president.

Four days later, Mr. Sondland texted Mr. Volker, asking if they still wanted the Ukrainian president "to give us an unequivocal draft" specifically citing the two issues that Mr. Trump has been focused on: Burisma, the Ukrainian energy company that had put Mr. Biden's younger son, Hunter Biden, on its board, and Mr. Trump's belief that Ukraine had interfered in the 2016 American elections to benefit Hillary Clinton.

Mr. Volker replied: "That's the clear message so far ..."

Under questioning on Capitol Hill, Mr. Volker told House Democratic investigators that the language including specific references to Burisma and the 2016 election had come from Mr. Giuliani, the person familiar with his testimony said.

Mr. Volker told the House investigators that the Ukrainians had earlier proposed language promising a statement on fighting corruption that did not specifically mention Burisma and 2016. When Mr. Giuliani was shown that original language, Mr. Volker told the House, he indicated to Mr. Volker that it was not sufficient and said the Ukrainians should be asked for specific public commitments to investigate Burisma and 2016.

By Mr. Volker's account, according to the person familiar with his testimony, he was eventually told by Mr. Yermak that the Ukrainian government could not agree to the language being sought by Mr. Giuliani. Mr. Volker told Mr. Yermak that he was right, and the idea was dropped, according to the account Mr. Volker provided the House.

The idea behind the statement was to break the Ukrainians of their habit of promising American diplomats and leaders behind closed doors that they would look into matters and never follow through, the people briefed on it said. According to the account provided by Mr. Volker to the House, the idea of the Ukrainians providing a statement had originated with Mr. Giuliani in a conversation he had with Mr. Yermak.

It is unclear if the statement was delivered to Mr. Zelensky, but no statement was released publicly under his name. Around that time, the Ukrainian officials indicated to the Americans that they wanted to avoid becoming more deeply enmeshed in American politics.

The drafting of the statement, which came in the weeks after the July 25 phone call between Mr. Trump and Mr. Zelensky, was an effort to pacify Mr. Trump and Mr. Giuliani and to normalize relations between the two countries as Ukraine faced continuing conflict with Russia. Mr. Sondland and Mr. Volker believed that Mr. Giuliani was "poisoning" Mr. Trump's mind about Ukraine and that eliciting a public commitment from Mr. Zelensky to pursue the investigations would induce Mr. Trump to more fully support the new Ukrainian government, according to the people familiar with it.

The texts released by House Democrats late Thursday night corroborated this characterization.

In the hours before the July 25 phone call between Mr. Trump and Mr. Zelensky, Mr. Volker texted Mr. Yermak that he had "Heard from White House" that "we will nail down date" for the official Oval Office visit coveted by the Ukrainians, "assuming President Z convinces trump he will investigate" the claims that Ukrainian officials tried to sabotage Mr. Trump's 2016 campaign.

The topic of the investigations came up during the July call between Mr. Trump and Mr. Zelensky, and Mr. Zelensky appeared open during the conversation to Mr. Trump's request that he coordinate with Attorney

General William P. Barr and Mr. Giuliani. Within weeks Mr. Volker and Mr. Sondland were strategizing about the draft statement with Mr. Yermak.

The texts suggest that, after the presidential call, negotiations picked up about a statement that would mention the investigations and satisfy Mr. Trump.

On Aug. 10, Mr. Yermak expressed a willingness “to make this declaration and mention all these things,” but noted that, first, the Ukrainians wanted to receive “guarantees for future visit” to Washington. “Once we have a date, will call for a press briefing, announcing upcoming visit and outlining vision for the reboot of US-UKRAINE relationship, including among other things Burisma and election meddling in investigations,” Mr. Yermak texted.

Mr. Volker replied, “Sounds great!”

Mr. Giuliani said he was aware of the statement but that it was not written at his behest.

Mr. Giuliani said that the statement was being handled by Mr. Sondland and Mr. Volker, and that he was not sure if Mr. Trump was involved in it.

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“I don’t have any information that would suggest that it was at his request, but I can’t tell you it wasn’t, either,” he said.

He said he believed that the statement was intended to be delivered as part of a series of announcements by Mr. Zelensky’s government about the confirmation of new prosecutors and other officials.

“He was supposed to do something, or say something, to assure everybody — meaning our people — that he was going to take serious action about corruption,” Mr. Giuliani said. “I know that the investigations — which would be the collusion, the Burisma investigation — would be included in it, but it would have been part of an overall statement about dealing with corruption in an aggressive way.”

The White House did not respond to a request for comment. Aides to Mr. Zelensky did not immediately respond to requests for comment sent in the overnight hours in Ukraine.

Despite Mr. Trump’s accusations of corruption on the part of the Bidens, no evidence has surfaced that the former vice president knowingly took any steps to help his son or the gas company that paid him as a board member.

Mr. Trump’s regular suggestions that Ukraine, rather than Russia, was responsible for the 2016 hacking of the Democratic National Committee have been thoroughly debunked. While some Ukrainian officials expressed opposition to Mr. Trump in 2016, claims by Mr. Trump and his former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, that documents released in Ukraine that year implicating Mr. Manafort in financial fraud were falsified or doctored have not been substantiated.

But Mr. Trump’s continued efforts to press Ukraine to investigate those matters have drawn in a growing number of his aides, including Mr. Volker, who stepped down last week at the State Department’s special envoy for Ukraine, and Mr. Sondland, who has taken an increasingly prominent role in dealing with Kiev.

Mr. Sondland, 62, made a fortune in hotels, and has been a prominent Republican donor and fund-raiser for years.

He backed out of his role as a host of a fund-raiser for Mr. Trump in 2016 citing Mr. Trump’s disparaging comments toward immigrants and the family of a slain Muslim American soldier.

But Mr. Sondland donated \$1 million through his companies to the inaugural committee for Mr. Trump, who subsequently tapped Mr. Sondland last year to be United States ambassador to the European Union.

The role traditionally has not focused heavily on Ukraine, which is not part of the European Union, but Mr. Sondland increasingly worked to establish himself as a central figure in Ukraine policy, administration officials said.

Mr. Sondland came to be seen in the administration as more loyal to Mr. Trump than was Mr. Volker, an acolyte of Senator John McCain, an outspoken critic of the president.

Mr. Sondland told reporters last month that he saw Ukraine as among a handful of “low-hanging fruit” policy areas where the European Union could work together with Washington to improve relations.

Mr. Sondland raised some hackles at the State Department and in the National Security Council when he asked to be included in the United States delegation that attended Mr. Zelensky’s inauguration, according to people familiar with the events. Mr. Sondland attended an Oval Office meeting afterward with other members of the delegation — which also included Mr. Volker; the energy secretary, Rick Perry; and Senator Ron Johnson, Republican of Wisconsin — to brief Mr. Trump on the delegation’s impressions of Mr. Zelensky.

When the delegation praised Mr. Zelensky and urged Mr. Trump to fully support the new Ukrainian government, the president was dismissive. “They’re terrible people,” Mr. Trump said of Ukrainian politicians, according to people familiar with the meeting. “They’re all corrupt, and they tried to take me down.”

Mr. Sondland continued building a relationship with Mr. Zelensky, hosting him at a June dinner at the United States mission to the European Union in Brussels, and meeting him again in Kiev in July with Mr. Volker on the day after Mr. Trump’s phone call with Mr. Zelensky.

Reporting was contributed by Nicholas Fandos and Peter Baker from Washington, Maggie Haberman from New York, and Matina Stevis-Gridneff from Brussels.

A version of this article appears in print on Oct. 4, 2019, Section A, Page 1 of the New York edition with the headline: U.S. Envoys Pushed Kiev to Commit to Inquiries.

**Published** October 3, 2019

**Trump calls for China to investigate Biden family**

By Tyler Olson | [Fox News](#)

[President Trump calls on Ukraine and China to investigate the Bidens](#)

[President Trump](#) said Thursday that China should investigate the business dealings of 2020 rival [Joe Biden's](#) son, Hunter, as he doubled down on his prior -- and controversial -- call for Ukraine to do the same.



The Daily Beast

*Trump Wanted Zelensky to Publicly Announce He Was Investigating Biden*

**A private pledge to investigate a political rival's clan wasn't enough. Donald Trump wanted Volodymyr Zelensky to "go to a microphone" and commit to investigating.**

Betsy Swan, Political Reporter

Adam Rawnsley

Updated Oct. 22, 2019 11:04PM ET / Published Oct. 22, 2019 4:00PM ET

President Donald Trump wanted his Ukrainian counterpart to declare publicly that he was embarking on an investigation into Hunter Biden's work in Ukraine.

That's according to William Taylor, America's top diplomat to Ukraine, who also told Congress on Tuesday that Ukraine's president agreed to make the announcement on CNN.

Taylor, according to a copy of his opening statement obtained by The Daily Beast, said that Trump told [Gordon Sondland](#), his ambassador to the European Union, that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had to "clear things up and do it in public" as [Ukraine waited for the U.S. to release a shipment of military aid](#).

Tim Morrison, who helms the National Security Council's Eurasia desk, told Taylor about a phone call between Trump and Sondland. "According to Mr. Morrison... President Trump did insist that President Zelensky go to a microphone and say he is opening investigations of Biden and 2016 election interference, and that President Zelensky should want to do this himself."

According to Taylor, the call gave Morrison a "sinking feeling."

The NSC had a series of meetings about the decision to withhold military support from Ukraine, including meetings that included cabinet secretaries. "At every meeting, the unanimous conclusion was that the security assistance should be resumed, the hold lifted," Taylor said. [Mike Pompeo](#), CIA Director Gina Haspel, National Security Adviser John Bolton, and the secretary of defense tried to meet with Trump to urge him to release the assistance. "[S]uch a meeting was hard to schedule, and the hold lasted well into September," Taylor said.

NSC officials later told him that acting [Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney](#) directed that the aid be withheld, and that he "maintained a skeptical view of Ukraine."

Taylor also described a dramatic July 10 White House meeting between Ukrainian officials, Bolton, and Sondland. NSC officials described the meeting to Taylor, who was not present for it. According to Taylor, Sondland told Ukrainians that "investigations" were connected to their quest for an Oval Office meeting between Trump and Zelensky. The comment "so irritated Ambassador Bolton that he abruptly ended the meeting," told the officials to stay away from domestic politics, and directed one of the officials to "brief the lawyers."

In addition, "Ambassador Sondland said that he had talked to President Zelenskyy and Mr. Yermak and told them that, although this was not a quid pro quo, if President Zelensky did not 'clear things up' in public, we would be at a 'stalemate.' I understood a 'stalemate' to mean that Ukraine would not receive the much-needed military assistance," Taylor told Congress.

Sondland told Zelensky that when he discussed investigating Hunter Biden's company and 2016 election meddling with Trump, he should promise to "leave no stone unturned."

The attempt to pressure the Ukrainian president into a public declaration of an investigation into Biden is one of many revelations in Taylor's testimony on Tuesday. That testimony is currently underway.

Taylor also cast doubt on President Trump's repeated descriptions of his July 25 call with President Zelensky as "perfect," an opinion some of his aides did not share. Taylor had not been listening in on the call and did not receive a readout but he said that Tim Morrison, the top Eurasia staffer on the National Security Council, told him the call in which Trump asked Zelensky to investigate the Bidens, "could have been better."

#### Trump Fires Gordon Sondland, Boots Alexander Vindman

Bolton opposed the idea of a Trump/Zelensky call and, per Taylor, thought it "would be a disaster."

Zelensky told both Taylor and Volker afterwards that he was "happy with the call but did not elaborate."

When the White House finally released a rough transcript of the call, however, Taylor said Ukrainian officials were "livid" and had been given "virtually no notice" that it would be published.

Taylor described two different—and conflicting—channels of diplomacy between the U.S. and Ukraine: the official channel and an unofficial channel, which included Volker, Sondland, and Trump's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani. Some members of the unofficial channel tried to push the Ukrainians to investigate the company where Hunter Biden was a board member.

Taylor took over as chargé d'affaires to Ukraine in May after a whisper campaign lead by Rudy Giuliani prompted Trump to recall Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch. A career diplomat, Taylor wasn't among the "three amigos"—Energy Sec. Rick Perry, Special Representative Kurt Volker, and Sondland—deputized by Trump to take the lead on the U.S.-Ukraine relationship. He told Congress he was concerned about the direction of Ukraine policy before taking the job.

Taylor said he accepted the job of chief diplomat with hesitation, as he was "worried" about rumors of Giuliani's back-channel diplomacy with Ukrainian officials and felt Yovanovitch had been "treated poorly" and "caught in a web of political machinations both in Kyiv and in Washington."

As Sondland and Volker kept pressing Zelensky over the summer, Taylor appeared to be a voice of caution, if not open hostility, towards the effort to squeeze Ukrainian officials into a politically tinged corruption

investigation. In July, he told the two that "Zelensky is sensitive about Ukraine being taken seriously, not merely as an instrument in Washington domestic, reelection politics," according to text messages released the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Taylor said that the weight of the Trump administration's decision to halt military aid to Ukraine as part of the apparent pressure campaign weighed on him during a visit to the front lines of Ukraine's war with Russian-backed rebels. "More Ukrainians would undoubtedly die without the U.S. assistance," Taylor recalled in his testimony.

As the Trump administration put the brakes on military aid designed to hold off Russia's occupation of Eastern Ukraine, Taylor grew more resistant to the pressure campaign. In a September text message to Sondland, he called it "crazy" to withhold aid in exchange for domestic political favors.

In his statement on Tuesday, Taylor stood by that characterization. "I believed that then, and I still believe that."



## **The New York Times**

### ***Bolton and Trump Met Privately Over Withheld Aid, White House Official Testified Bolton and Trump Met Privately Over Withheld Aid, White House Official Testified***

John R. Bolton, who left the White House in September, has emerged as perhaps the most conspicuous witness who has evaded House Democrats as they build their case.

By [Nicholas Fandos](#) and [Sheryl Gay Stolberg](#)

- Published Nov. 16, 2019 Updated Feb. 8, 2020

WASHINGTON — [John R. Bolton](#), President Trump's national security adviser, met privately with the president in August as part of a bid to persuade Mr. Trump to release \$391 million in security assistance to [Ukraine](#), a senior National Security Council aide told House impeachment investigators last month.

The meeting, which has not been previously reported, came as Mr. Bolton sought to marshal Mr. Trump's cabinet secretaries and top national security advisers to convince the president that it was in the United States' best interest to unfreeze the funds to help [Ukraine](#) defend itself against Russia. But [Mr. Bolton](#) emerged with Mr. Trump unmoved, and instructed the aide to look for new opportunities to get those officials in front of Mr. Trump.

"The extent of my recollection is that Ambassador Bolton simply said he wasn't ready to do it," said the aide, Timothy Morrison, referring to Mr. Trump, according to [a transcript of his testimony](#) released by House Democrats on Saturday.

## **THE INQUIRY**

Mr. Bolton, who [left the White House in September](#), has emerged over weeks of interviews as [perhaps the single most important witness](#) who has evaded House Democrats as they build a case that Mr. Trump abused the powers of the presidency by withholding vital military assistance and a coveted White House meeting from Ukraine until it delivered investigations he wanted. The new disclosure only makes clearer the significance of his potential testimony.

## **Advertisement**

[Continue reading the main story](#)

It also underlines the dilemma that House Democrats face over their decision to press ahead with proceedings without his testimony. Last week, Mr. Bolton's lawyer told House investigators that his client [could discuss "many relevant meetings and conversations"](#) of interest to their inquiry, but he has so far refused to appear without a subpoena and a court order. Democrats have said that Mr. Bolton should show up as is, and that they would not waste their time in court.

The outpouring of public testimony and growing political pressure could push Mr. Bolton to change his mind. But for now, there are no signs that either he, or House Democrats, will budge.

The release of the transcript was part of a flurry of activity by House Democrats on Saturday, including a rare weekend of closed-door deposition where investigators questioned for the first time a senior budget official about the aid freeze.

Mr. Trump unexpectedly withheld the aid in July, despite overwhelming support in Congress and his own administration for its allocation. He only released the money in September, after Mr. Bolton departed and in the face of intense political pressure from Republicans.

Mr. Morrison described witnessing Mr. Sondland approach an aide to Mr. Zelensky during a high-level meeting in Warsaw in September. The conversation took place just after a meeting in which Mr. Pence assured Mr. Zelensky that the United States still fully supported Ukraine and would decide on the security aid soon. The vice president did not mention the investigations during the meeting, Ms. Williams said.

Mr. Sondland was blunter, though, he later told Mr. Morrison. He told Mr. Zelensky's adviser that "what could help them move the aid was if the prosecutor general would go to the mic and announce that he was opening" the investigation Mr. Trump wanted.

Mr. Morrison's account already prompted Mr. Sondland to revise his own private testimony, but it also underscored the importance both to Mr. Trump and to Democrats of his public appearance next week, as one of the few cooperating witnesses who directly spoke to Mr. Trump about his interest in Ukraine.

Both Ms. Williams and Mr. Morrison listened in on a July 25 phone call between Mr. Trump and Mr. Zelensky.

She told investigators she was taken aback by the mention of investigations of the Bidens and Burisma, a Ukrainian energy firm that Mr. Biden's son worked for. She found the discussion to be "more political in nature," and therefore "unusual and inappropriate."

Mr. Morrison had a different reaction. He testified he found nothing inherently problematic about the call, but he still went to White House lawyers to express concerns that a record of the call could leak and would be unflattering for the president. He recommended that access to it be limited, and eventually a reconstructed transcript was placed on the White House's most secure server.

Mr. Morrison testified that John A. Eisenberg, the council's top lawyer, told him that had been a mistake and that he had intended only for access to the document to be restricted. He "related that he did not ask for it to be put on there, but that the Executive Secretariat staff misunderstood his recommendation for how to restrict access," Mr. Morrison said.

Republicans believe the testimony undercuts Democrats' allegation that the White House was trying to cover up the call. But it does not explain why the call summary was not removed from the highly secure server when Mr. Eisenberg learned it was there.

The president's allies are also likely to use Mr. Morrison's closed-door interview to try to undercut Lt. Col. Alexander S. Vindman, the White House's top Ukraine expert, when he testifies publicly next week about his deep alarm over the July 25 call and other matters.

Mr. Morrison told investigators, "I had concerns that he did not exercise appropriate judgment as to whom he would say what."

Mr. Sandy was the first budget official to speak with impeachment investigators. At least three higher-profile Trump administration officials connected to the budget office have stiff-armed the inquiry: Russell T. Vought, the agency's acting director; Michael Duffey, who helped carry out Mr. Trump's directive to freeze the aid; and Mick Mulvaney, who retains the title of budget director and is the acting White House chief of staff.

He testified that he was directed to sign paperwork on July 25 enforcing the hold, but that Mr. Duffey, a political appointee, signed such paperwork going forward, a highly unusual intervention by his account.

Why precisely Mr. Trump withheld the funding as he pressed Ukraine for the politically beneficial investigations and what Mr. Mulvaney told the agency about the decision remain central unanswered questions in the inquiry.



In addition to Mr. Morrison's transcript, House Democrats released the transcript of a November interview with [Jennifer Williams](#), a longtime State Department employee with expertise in Europe and Russia who is detailed to Vice President Mike Pence's national security staff.

Earlier in the day, lawmakers and their staffs privately questioned Mark Sandy, a senior budget official, who told investigators that political appointees above him did not provide a rationale for the hold and that he had never encountered a similar situation in his time at the agency, according to two people familiar with his testimony.

Mr. Sandy also said that he had sought guidance on the legality of the move, echoing testimony from a Defense Department official who said [that she had raised legal concerns](#).

Many of the most significant elements of testimony by Mr. Morrison and Ms. Williams have already been publicly reported, including [Mr. Morrison's account](#) of how a top diplomat close to Mr. Trump informed a top Ukrainian official that the country would probably need to publicly announce investigations Mr. Trump sought before the security money would be released.

Still, the transcripts filled in many new details, some of them colorful, about the events under scrutiny by the House and clarified the set of facts both parties were working with as they prepared for another week packed with public hearings.

In her hourslong interview, Ms. Williams helped explain why Mr. Pence, who had been scheduled to attend the inaugural of President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine in late May, abruptly canceled his trip: She said an assistant to the vice president's chief of staff, Marc Short, told her that Mr. Trump had asked Mr. Pence to stay home. That fact was included in [an anonymous whistle-blower complaint](#) about the Ukraine matter that [helped prompt the impeachment inquiry](#).

Mr. Morrison's testimony added a portrait of how of Mr. Bolton has worked feverishly to ensure the regular interagency policymaking of the executive branch prevailed over an irregular policy channel that appeared meant to serve Mr. Trump's personal political interests. That channel included the United States' ambassador to the European Union, the president's private lawyer and a handful of others pressing Ukraine to commit to investigations of former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and a debunked conspiracy theory about Ukraine and the 2016 election.

In his testimony, Mr. Morrison said that Mr. Bolton advised him to be wary of the president's irregular policymaking channel, including the envoy to the European Union, Gordon D. Sondland.

"My consistent direction from Ambassador Bolton was, 'Do not get involved, and make sure the lawyers are tracking,'" Mr. Morrison said, referring to Mr. Sondland and the efforts he was involved in. Mr. Morrison's predecessor as the National Security Council's senior director for Russia and Europe told investigators that Mr. Bolton [issued a similar instruction](#) after a run-in with Mr. Sondland, who will testify publicly himself next week.

Mr. Morrison's testimony made clear that he and Mr. Bolton were deeply skeptical of Mr. Sondland, a wealthy hotelier and political donor turned ambassador. He said he suspected Mr. Sondland's stated influence with the president might be exaggerated. Following Mr. Bolton's directions, he reported interactions he had with the ambassador to White House lawyers. But when he followed up, Mr. Sondland seemed to be telling the truth and appeared to have Mr. Trump's ear on Ukraine matters.

"Ambassador Sondland believed and at least related to me that the president was giving him instruction," Mr. Morrison testified.

[FactCheck.org](#)® A Project of The Annenberg Public Policy Center Zelensky's Remarks About Trump, In Context

By [Robert Farley](#)

Posted on December 2, 2019

President Donald Trump said the impeachment inquiry should be "case over" because Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky told reporters "very strongly that President Trump did absolutely nothing wrong." But that's not what Zelensky said.

In [an interview](#) with Time magazine and three European news outlets published on Dec. 2, Zelensky was asked to "clarify this issue of the quid pro quo." Zelensky responded by saying he "never talked to the president from the position of a quid pro quo," and he mildly chastised Trump for temporarily holding up military aid to his country.

"We're at war," Zelensky said. "If you're our strategic partner, then you can't go blocking anything for us. I think that's just about fairness. It's not about a quid pro quo. It just goes without saying."

Speaking to reporters before leaving for a NATO Summit in London, [Trump said](#) Zelensky's comments "should end everything" with the impeachment probe.

**Trump, Dec. 2:** *If you noticed, there was breaking news today. The Ukrainian president came out and said very strongly that President Trump did absolutely nothing wrong. That should be case over. But he just came out a little while ago and he said President Trump did absolutely nothing wrong. And that should end everything.*

Zelensky's comments were not as definitive as Trump proclaimed.

We reached out to the White House to ask which of Zelensky's statements Trump was referring to, but we got no response. Here, however, is Zelensky's response to the question about U.S. security aid to Ukraine and a quid pro quo:

**Reporter:** *When did you first sense that there was a connection between Trump's decision to block military aid to Ukraine this summer and the two investigations that Trump and his allies were asking for? Can you clarify this issue of the quid pro quo?*

**Zelensky:** *Look, I never talked to the president from the position of a quid pro quo. That's not my thing. ... I don't want us to look like beggars. But you have to understand. We're at war. If you're our strategic partner, then you can't go blocking anything for us. I think that's just about fairness. It's not about a quid pro quo. It just goes without saying.*

Zelensky also chided Trump for calling Ukraine a corrupt country, a characterization that he said sends a "signal" to the international financial community, "Be careful, don't invest." Zelensky allowed that, "All branches of government were corrupted over many years, and we are working to clean that up."

Those comments from Zelensky came in response to questions about how he views the role of the U.S. in the peace process between Ukraine and Russia.

**Reporter:** *How do you see the U.S. role in the peace process? How has it changed in the last few months, and how do you see it going forward?*

**Zelensky:** *First off, I would never want Ukraine to be a piece on the map, on the chess board of big global players, so that someone could toss us around, use us as cover, as part of some bargain... As for the United*



*States, I would really want – and we feel this, it's true – for them to help us, to understand us, to see that we are a player in our own right, that they cannot make deals about us with anyone behind our backs. Of course they help us, and I'm not just talking about technical help, military aid, financial aid. These are important things, very important things, especially right now, when we are in such a difficult position.*

*The United States of America is a signal, for the world, for everyone. When America says, for instance, that Ukraine is a corrupt country, that is the hardest of signals. It might seem like an easy thing to say, that combination of words: Ukraine is a corrupt country. Just to say it and that's it. But it doesn't end there. Everyone hears that signal. Investments, banks, stakeholders, companies, American, European, companies that have international capital in Ukraine, it's a signal to them that says, 'Be careful, don't invest.' Or, 'Get out of there.' This is a hard signal. For me it's very important for the United States, with all they can do for us, for them really to understand that we are a different country, that we are different people. It's not that those things don't exist. They do. All branches of government were corrupted over many years, and we are working to clean that up. But that signal from them is very important.*

**Reporter:** Yet last week President Trump said on live television that Ukrainians are corrupt, and they steal money. Do you have a plan for changing his mind?

**Zelensky:** *I don't need to change his mind. During my meeting with him, I said that I don't want our country to have this image. For that, all he has to do is come and have a look at what's happening, how we live, what kinds of people we are. I had the sense that he heard me. I had that sense. At least during the meeting, he said, 'Yes, I see, you're young, you're new, and so on.'*

Back in early October, Zelensky told reporters, "There was no pressure or blackmail from the U.S. I had no idea the military aid was held up [at the time of his July 25 call with Trump]. When I did find out, I raised it with [Vice President] Pence at a meeting in Warsaw" on Sept. 1. (On the July call, Trump asked Zelensky to open up a corruption investigation of Joe and Hunter Biden, and to look into CrowdStrike, a cybersecurity firm hired by the Democratic National Committee to determine who hacked into its servers during the 2016 election.)

But at no point in this more recent conversation did Zelensky say, "President Trump did absolutely nothing wrong." That may be Trump's interpretation of Zelensky's words, but it is not what the Ukrainian president said.