Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 5, 2019

The Honorable John Michael "Mick" Mulvaney
Acting Chief of Staff
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Mulvaney:

Pursuant to the House of Representatives' impeachment inquiry, we hereby write to request your appearance at a deposition on **November 8, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at The Capitol, HVC-304.**

This deposition will be conducted jointly by the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence under the Rules of the House of Representatives in exercise of its oversight and legislative jurisdiction and after consultation with the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Oversight and Reform. The deposition transcript shall be collected as part of the House's impeachment inquiry and shared among the Committees, as well as with the Committee on the Judiciary as appropriate.[1] Your failure or refusal to appear at the deposition, including at the direction or behest of the President, shall constitute further evidence of obstruction of the House's impeachment inquiry and may be used as an adverse inference against you and the President.

The Committees are investigating the extent to which President Donald J. Trump jeopardized U.S. national security by pressing Ukraine to interfere with our 2020 election and by withholding a White House meeting with the President of Ukraine and security assistance provided by Congress to help Ukraine counter Russian aggression, as well as any efforts to cover up these matters.

Based on evidence gathered in the impeachment inquiry and public reporting, we believe that you possess substantial first-hand knowledge and information relevant to the House's impeachment inquiry. Specifically, the investigation has revealed that you may have been directly involved in an effort orchestrated by President Trump, his personal agent, Rudolph Giuliani, and others to withhold a coveted White House meeting and nearly $400 million in security assistance in order to pressure Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to pursue investigations that would benefit President Trump's personal political interests, and jeopardized our national security in attempting to do so.

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[1] *See* Letter from Chairman Jerrold Nadler, House Committee on the Judiciary, to Chairman Adam B. Schiff, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; Chairwoman Maxine Waters, House Committee on Financial Services; Chairman Elijah E. Cummings, House Committee on Oversight and Reform; and Chairman Eliot L. Engel, House Committee on Foreign Affairs (Aug. 22, 2019) (online at https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/democrats.judiciary.house.gov/files/documents/FiveChairsLetter8.22.pdf).

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Evidence gathered in the impeachment inquiry and public reporting suggest that you may have coordinated with U.S. Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland, Mr. Giuliani, and others to carry out President Trump's scheme to condition a White House meeting with President Zelensky on the Ukrainians' pursuit of investigations of the Bidens, Burisma Holdings, a natural gas company on whose board former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s son, Hunter Biden, once sat, and purported Ukrainian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

For example, it has been publicly reported that during a July 10, 2019, meeting at the White House, Ambassador Sondland "told Ukraine officials ... that Kyiv needed to deliver specific investigations in order to get a hoped-for meeting with Mr. Trump."[2] Following that meeting, former National Security Advisor John R. Bolton told a National Security Council (NSC) staffer "to notify the chief lawyer for the National Security Council about a rogue effort by Mr. Sondland, Mr. Giuliani, and Mick Mulvaney" to pressure Ukraine for political help.[3]

Ambassador Bolton, who appears to have believed that you were directly involved in the President's scheme, reportedly instructed the NSC staffer to tell the NSC lawyers, "I am not part of whatever drug deal Sondland and Mulvaney are cooking up."[4] The "drug deal" appears to be a reference to the scheme to pressure Ukraine to pursue the investigations for the political benefit of President Trump.

In addition, the evidence and public reporting suggest that you played a central role in President Trump's attempt to coerce Ukraine into launching his desired political investigations by withholding nearly $400 million in vital security assistance from Ukraine that had been appropriated by Congress and approved by the national security interagency for disbursement. According to multiple press reports, at some point in July 2019, President Trump ordered you to freeze security assistance to Ukraine, and you reportedly conveyed the President's order "through the budget office to the Pentagon and the State Department, which were told only that the administration was looking at whether the spending was necessary."[5]

Moreover, at a White House press briefing on October 17, 2019, you admitted publicly that President Trump ordered the hold on Ukraine security assistance to further the President's own personal, political interests, rather than the national interest. Specifically, in discussing the reasons President Trump ordered the hold, you stated, "Did [President Trump] also

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[2] *Gordon Sondland's Testimony About Ukraine Investigations Under Scrutiny*, Wall Street Journal (Oct. 29, 2019) (online at www.wsj.com/articles/gordon-sondlands-testimony-about-ukraine-investigations-under-scrutiny-11572378583).

[3] *Bolton Objected to Ukraine Pressure Campaign, Calling Giuliani 'a Hand Grenade,'* New York Times (Oct. 14, 2019) (online at www.nytimes.com/2019/10/14/us/politics/bolton-giuliani-fiona-hill-testimony.html)

[4] *Id.*

[5] *Trump Said to Have Frozen Aid to Ukraine Before Call with Its Leader*, New York Times (Sept. 23, 2019) (online at www.nytimes.com/2019/09/23/us/politics/trump-un-biden-ukraine.html).

mention to me in pass [sic] the corruption related to the DNC server? Absolutely. No question about that. But that's it. And that's why we held up the money."[6]

President Trump's desire for Ukraine to investigate the "DNC server"—which President Trump specifically demanded President Zelensky pursue during their July 25, 2019, phone call—appears to be an allusion to a thoroughly debunked conspiracy theory that the Democratic National Committee's server that was hacked by Russia during the 2016 U.S. election was actually hacked by Ukraine in order to frame Russia and was thereafter secreted to Ukraine.[7] After referencing the baseless DNC server conspiracy theory, you then engaged in the following colloquy with a reporter:

> Q: So the demand for an investigation into the Democrats was part of the reason that he ordered to withhold funding to Ukraine?
>
> A: The look back to what happened in 2016—
>
> Q: The investigation into Democrats.
>
> A: —certainly was part of the thing that he was worried about in corruption with that nation. And that is absolutely appropriate.
>
> Q: And withholding the funding?
>
> A: Yeah. Which ultimately, then, flowed. By the way, there was a report that we were worried that the money wouldn't—that if we didn't pay out the money, it would be illegal, okay? It would be unlawful. That is one of those things that has the little shred of truth in it, that makes it look a lot worse than it really is.
>
> ...
>
> Q: But to be clear, what you just described is a quid pro quo. It is: Funding will not flow unless the investigation into the Democratic server happens as well.
>
> A: We do that all the time with foreign policy. ... And I have news for everybody: Get over it. There's going to be political influence in foreign policy.[8]

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[6] The White House, *Press Briefing by Acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney* (Oct. 17, 2019) (online at www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/press-briefing-acting-chief-staff-mick-mulvaney/).

[7] *President Trump's Alternate Reality on Ukraine*, Washington Post (Oct. 29, 2019) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/10/29/president-trumps-alternative-reality-ukraine/).

[8] The White House, *Press Briefing by Acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney* (Oct. 17, 2019) (online at www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/press-briefing-acting-chief-staff-mick-mulvaney/).

Despite your subsequent attempts to walk-back this clear admission,[9] your statements to the American public on October 17 were nothing less than a televised confession that President Trump's order to freeze Ukraine security assistance was explicitly linked to Ukraine pursuing investigations as part of an effort to bolster the President's 2020 re-election campaign.

Accordingly, we hereby request your appearance at a deposition on November 8, 2019, at 9:00 a.m. Because the House deposition regulations do not permit agency counsel to participate in depositions, please have your personal counsel contact us to arrange for your appearance. As you know from your previous service in the House of Representatives, both Republican and Democratic-led committees have conducted depositions without agency counsel for decades with high-level White House aides—including White House Chiefs of Staff.[10]

If you have any questions, please contact staff for the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence at (202) 225-7690.

Sincerely,

Eliot L. Engel
Chairman
House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Adam B. Schiff
Chairman
House Permanent Select Committee
on Intelligence

Carolyn B. Maloney
Acting Chairwoman
House Committee on Oversight and Reform

Enclosure

[9] *See, e.g.*, *Read Mulvaney's Conflicting Statements on Quid Pro Quo*, New York Times (Oct. 17, 2019) (quoting statement released by the White House from Acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney) (online at www.nytimes.com/2019/10/17/us/politics/mulvaney-transcript-quid-pro-quo.html).

[10] *See* House Committee on Oversight and Reform, *Congressional Depositions in the House of Representatives: Longstanding Republican and Democratic Practice of Excluding Agency Counsel* (Nov. 5, 2019) (online at https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/Committee%20Depositions%20in%20the%20House%20of%20Representatives_Longstanding%20Republican%20and%20Democratic%20Practice%20of%20Excluding%20Agency%20Counsel.pdf) (describing depositions of previous White House Chiefs of Staff Mack McLarty and Erskine Bowles, among other White House officials).

cc: The Honorable Michael McCaul, Ranking Member
House Committee on Foreign Affairs

The Honorable Devin Nunes, Ranking Member
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

The Honorable Jim Jordan, Ranking Member
House Committee on Oversight and Reform

SUBPOENA

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To THE HONORABLE JOHN MICHAEL ("MICK") MULVANEY

You are hereby commanded to be and appear before the

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

of the House of Representatives of the United States at the place, date, and time specified below.

☐ **to produce the things identified on the attached schedule** touching matters of inquiry committed to said committee or subcommittee; and you are not to depart without leave of said committee or subcommittee.

Place of production: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

☑ **to testify at a deposition** touching matters of inquiry committed to said committee or subcommittee; and you are not to depart without leave of said committee or subcommittee.

Place of testimony: PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE, HUC-304, U.S. CAPITOL

Date: NOVEMBER 8, 2019 Time: 9:00AM

☐ **to testify at a hearing** touching matters of inquiry committed to said committee or subcommittee; and you are not to depart without leave of said committee or subcommittee.

Place of testimony: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

To The U.S. Marshals Service, or any authorized Member or congressional staff

_____ to serve and make return.

Witness my hand and the seal of the House of Representatives of the United States, at the city of Washington, D.C. this 4TH day of NOVEMBER, 2019.

_____
Chairman or Authorized Member

Attest:

_____
Clerk

PENGAD 800-631-6989

DEPOSITION EXHIBIT 7

PROOF OF SERVICE

Subpoena for THE HONORABLE JOHN MICHAEL ("MICK") MULVANEY

Address

before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

U.S. House of Representatives
116th Congress

Served by (print name) Maher Bitar

Title General Counsel

Manner of service Electronic Mail

Date 11/7/2019

Signature of Server

Address Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, HVC-304, U.S. Capitol

[redacted]

From: William Pittard <[redacted]>
Sent: Friday, November 8, 2019 8:59 AM
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Purpura, Michael M. EOP/WHO; Chris Muha
Subject: Subpoena to Mick Mulvaney
Attachments: PAC Letter to Mr. Pittard 11.8.2019.pdf; Mulvaney Immunity Letter.pdf

Mr. [redacted]

My firm has been retained by Mick Mulvaney to represent him in connection with the subpoena that you emailed to him last night. Since receiving that subpoena, Mr. Mulvaney has been provided the attached letter by the White House Counsel and an accompanying opinion from the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel, also attached. In light of all of that, Mr. Mulvaney will not be attending the deposition today, and he is considering the full range of his legal options.

Thank you,

--Bill Pittard

William Pittard
KaiserDillon PLLC
1099 Fourteenth St., N.W.; 8th Floor—West
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) [redacted] (office)
(202) [redacted] (mobile)
[redacted]

This communication is from a law firm and may contain confidential or privileged information. Unauthorized retention, disclosure, or use of this information is prohibited and may be unlawful under 18 U.S.C. §§ 2510-2521. Accordingly, if this email has been sent to you in error, please contact the sender by reply email or by phone at 202-640-2850.

PENGAD 800-631-6989
DEPOSITION EXHIBIT
#3

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 8, 2019

Mr. William Pittard
KaiserDillon PLLC
1099 14th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Pittard:

I write in response to your request regarding the subpoena issued to your client, Mick Mulvaney, by the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the United States House of Representatives (the "Committee") on November 7, 2019. The subpoena directs Mr. Mulvaney to appear to testify at a deposition at 9:00 a.m. on November 8, 2019.

The Department of Justice (the "Department") has advised me that Mr. Mulvaney is absolutely immune from compelled congressional testimony with respect to matters related to his service as a senior adviser to the President. *See* Letter to Pat A. Cipollone, Counsel to the President, from Steven A. Engel, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel (Nov. 7, 2019). The Department has long taken the position—across administrations of both political parties—that "the President and his immediate advisers are absolutely immune from testimonial compulsion by a Congressional committee." *Immunity of the Former Counsel to the President from Compelled Congressional Testimony*, 31 Op. O.L.C. 191, 191 (2007) (quoting *Assertion of Executive Privilege with Respect to Clemency Decision*, 23 Op. O.L.C. 1, 4 (1999) (opinion of Attorney General Janet Reno)); *Immunity of the Counsel to the President from Compelled Congressional Testimony*, 20 Op. O.L.C. 308, 308 (1996). That immunity arises from the President's position as head of the Executive Branch and from Mr. Mulvaney's position as a senior adviser to the President, specifically Assistant to the President and Acting White House Chief of Staff.

As the Department's letter states, Mr. Mulvaney qualifies as a senior presidential adviser entitled to immunity. The Department's opinions on this topic have consistently recognized that this immunity extends to immediate advisers "'who customarily meet with the President on a regular or frequent basis,' and upon whom the President relies directly for candid and sound advice." *Immunity of the Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Political Strategy and Outreach from Congressional Subpoena*, 38 Op. O.L.C. __, at *2 (June 15, 2014) (quoting Memorandum from William H. Rehnquist, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel, *Re: Power of Congressional Committee to Compel Appearance or Testimony of "White House Staff"* at 7 (Feb. 5, 1971)). Accordingly, Mr. Mulvaney cannot be compelled to appear before the Committee because "[s]ubjecting a senior presidential advisor to the congressional subpoena power would be akin to requiring the President himself to appear before Congress on matters

relating to the performance of his constitutionally assigned executive functions." *Assertion of Executive Privilege with Respect to Clemency Decision*, 23 Op. O.L.C. at 5. The constitutional immunity of current and former senior advisers to the President exists to protect the institution of the Presidency and, as stated by former Attorney General Reno, "may not be overborne by competing congressional interests." *Id.*

Accordingly, in order to protect the prerogatives of the Office of President today and in the future, and in response to your request, the President directs Mr. Mulvaney not to appear at the Committee's scheduled deposition on November 8, 2019. This long-standing principle is firmly rooted in the Constitution's separation of powers and protects the core functions of the Presidency, and this office is adhering to this well-established precedent in order to allow future Presidents to effectively execute the responsibilities of the Office of President. I also attach the letter opinion provided by the Department regarding Mr. Mulvaney's immunity.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Mike Purpura if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Pat A. Cipollone

Pat A. Cipollone
Counsel to the President

U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legal Counsel

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

November 7, 2019

Pat A. Cipollone
Counsel to the President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Cipollone:

On November 7, 2019, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives issued a subpoena seeking to compel Mick Mulvaney, Assistant to the President and Acting White House Chief of Staff, to testify at a deposition on Friday, November 8. The Committee subpoenaed Mr. Mulvaney as part of its impeachment inquiry into the conduct of the President. *See* H.R. Res. 660, 116th Cong. (2019). You have asked whether the Committee may compel him to testify. We conclude that Mr. Mulvaney is absolutely immune from compelled congressional testimony in his capacity as a senior adviser to the President.

The Executive Branch has taken the position for decades that "Congress may not constitutionally compel the President's senior advisers to testify about their official duties." *Testimonial Immunity Before Congress of the Former Counsel to the President*, 43 Op. O.L.C. __, at *1 (May 20, 2019). The immunity applies to those "immediate advisers . . . who customarily meet with the President on a regular or frequent basis." Memorandum for John D. Ehrlichman, Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs, from William H. Rehnquist, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel, *Re: Power of Congressional Committee to Compel Appearance or Testimony of "White House Staff"* at 7 (Feb. 5, 1971) ("Rehnquist Memorandum"). We recently advised you that this immunity applies in an impeachment inquiry just as in a legislative oversight inquiry. *See* Letter for Pat A. Cipollone, Counsel to the President, from Steven A. Engel, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel at 2 (Nov. 3, 2019). "Even when impeachment proceedings are underway," we explained, "the President must remain able to continue to discharge the duties of his office. The testimonial immunity of the President's senior advisers remains an important limitation to protect the independence and autonomy of the President himself." *Id.*

This immunity applies in connection with the Committee's subpoena for Mr. Mulvaney's testimony. The Committee intends to question Mr. Mulvaney about matters related to his official duties at the White House—specifically the President's conduct of foreign relations with Ukraine. *See* Letter for Mick Mulvaney from Adam B. Schiff, Chairman, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, et al. (Nov. 5, 2019). And Mr. Mulvaney, as Acting Chief of Staff, is a "top presidential adviser[]," *In re Sealed Case*, 121 F.3d 729, 757 (D.C. Cir. 1997), who works closely with the President in supervising the staff within the Executive Office of the President and managing the advice the President receives. *See* David B. Cohen & Charles E. Walcott, White House Transition Project, Report 2017-21, *The Office of Chief of Staff* 15–26

(2017). Mr. Mulvaney meets with and advises the President on a daily basis about the most sensitive issues confronting the government. Thus, he readily qualifies as an "immediate adviser[]" who may not be compelled to testify before Congress. Rehnquist Memorandum at 7.

This conclusion also follows from this Office's prior recognition that certain *Deputy* White House Chiefs of Staff were immune from compelled congressional testimony. *See* Letter for Pat A. Cipollone, Counsel to the President, from Steven A. Engel, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel (Sept. 16, 2019) (former Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Implementation Rick Dearborn); Letter for Fred F. Fielding, Counsel to the President, from Steven G. Bradbury, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel (Aug. 1, 2007) (Deputy White House Chief of Staff Karl Rove). In addition, as we have noted with respect to other recently issued subpoenas, testimonial immunity is particularly justified because the Committee seeks Mr. Mulvaney's testimony about the President's conduct of relations with a foreign government. *See, e.g.*, Letter for Pat A. Cipollone, Counsel to the President, from Steven A. Engel, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel at 2–3 (Oct. 25, 2019); *see also Harlow v. Fitzgerald*, 457 U.S. 800, 812 n.19 (1982) ("[A] derivative claim to Presidential immunity would be strongest in such 'central' Presidential domains as foreign policy and national security, in which the President could not discharge his singularly vital mandate without delegating functions nearly as sensitive as his own.").

Please let us know if we may be of further assistance.

Steven A. Engel
Assistant Attorney General

PRESS BRIEFINGS

Press Briefing by Acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney

Issued on: **October 17, 2019**

★ ★ ★

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

12:39 P.M. EDT

MR. MULVANEY: Hey, guys. How are you all?

First thing's first: I want to comment very briefly on Mr. Cummings's passing. For those of you who know, I was in Congress for a couple years with Mr. Cummings, and — on the committee with him. I had a chance to work with him on a day in, day out basis. And he will be missed. He was — he was a classy guy, and I enjoyed much working with him. And the condolences from my family and all of the White House group to his family today. He will be — he will be sorely missed.

Now, getting on to the business at hand, I understand it's been a fairly slow news week — (laughter) — so I thought we'd introduce a couple of things.

I did want to come out here with my Nationals hat on, but they told me that that would violate some type of rule, so I couldn't do that. I was also going to wear my Montreal Expos hat, and then they said that would be foreign interference in the World Series, so I can't do that either.

So we're going to talk about the G7. We're going to talk about where we're going to do it. We're going to announce today that we're going to do the 46th G7 Summit on June 10th through June 12th at the Trump National Doral facility in Miami, Florida.

PENGAD 800-631-6989 DEPOSITION EXHIBIT 4

The focus of the event will be global growth and challenges to the global economy, specifically dealing with things like rejuvenating incentives for growth and prosperity; rolling back prosperity-killing regulations; ending trade barriers; and re-opening energy markets. So, taking a lot of what we have been doing here domestically with such success and trying to encourage the rest of the world to get onboard as we sit here and our economy does so well. You look all across the world right now, and the rest of the world is either at or near recession. And we really do think that we have hit on a formula that works not only here but that would work overseas, where we take the G7 as the opportunity to try and convince other nations that they can have the same successes by following the same model.

Now, let's talk about the site selection process because I know you folks will ask some questions about that. How do we go about doing this? First of all, we use a lot of the same criteria that have been used by past administrations. There's a long list of the accommodations on site: the ballrooms, bilateral rooms, the number of rooms, the photo ops, the support hotels that are there, the proximity to cities and airports, helicopter landing zones, medical facilities, et cetera.

So we use the same set of criteria that previous administrations have used. We started with a list of about a dozen, just on paper. And we sent an advance team out to actually visit 10 locations in several states. We visited California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Michigan, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Utah. Now, we got that list down to just under 10, and the advance team went out to visit those. And from there, we got down to four finalists that our senior team went out to look at. They looked at — I think it was one in Hawaii, two in Utah, and then the Mar-a-Lago facility in Florida.

And it became apparent at the end of that process that Doral was, by far and away — far and away — the best physical facility for this meeting. In fact, I was talking to one of the advance teams when they came back, and I said, "What was it like?" And they said, "Mick, you're not going to believe this, but it's almost like they built this facility to host this type of event." If any of you have been there, you know that there's separate buildings with their own rooms, separate and apart from each building, so that one country can have a building, another country can have another, you folks could have your building for the press. And obviously, the common areas are going to be perfect for our needs down there.

Again, anticipating your questions: How is this not an emoluments violation? Is the President going to profit from this? I think the President has pretty much made it very clear since he's got here that

he doesn't profit from being here. He has no interest in profit from being here. It's one of the reasons that he's not taken a salary since he's been here. He's given that salary to charity. Will not be profiting here.

We had talked about the possibility of whether or not the President could actually do it at no cost, to understand there's difficulties with doing it that way. But we'll also have difficulties, obviously, if they charge market rates. So they're doing this at cost. As a result, it's actually going to be dramatically cheaper for us to do it at Doral compared to other final sites that we had.

So we're looking forward to that meeting. Again, June 10th through 12th of next year for the 46th G7.

Now, my guess is, with that official part of the briefing finished, there's going to be some questions about a variety of things that are going on in the world. So if we can do something together, that would be great. Can we take the questions about the G7 first, go through those, and then take a chance to maybe ask a couple questions about the other stuff before the end of the day?

Eamon?

Q Yeah, thank you. So, how is this not just an enormous conflict of interest for the President to host the G7 at his own resort? And how will the President continue to criticize the Biden family for self-dealing at the same time he's doing this?

MR. MULVANEY: Okay, a couple different things. First off, you're not making any profit. I think we've already established that. I think some —

Q There's marketing and branding opportunities (inaudible).

MR. MULVANEY: It's a huge — I've heard — you know, I've heard that — I've heard that before. You know, I guess I've been the Chief now for about 9 or 10 months, and I always hear: Whenever we go to Mar-a-Lago, it's a huge branding opportunity; whenever he plays at Trump Mar-a-Lago. We play golf at Trump Bedminster. He goes to play golf at Trump, up at Sterling. And everybody asks the question: Is it not a huge marketing opportunity?

I would simply ask you all to consider the possibility that Donald Trump's brand is probably strong enough as it is and he doesn't need any more help on that. This is not like it's the most recognizable name in the English language and probably around the world right now. So, no, that has nothing to do with it.

That's why — listen, I was skeptical. I was. I was aware of the political, sort of, criticism that we'd come under for doing it at Doral, which is why I was so surprised when the advance team called back and said that this is the perfect physical location to do this.

So, I get the criticisms; so does he. Face it: He'd be criticized regardless of what he chose to do. But, no, there's no issue here on him profiting from this in any way, shape, or form.

What's the difference between this and what we're talking about the Bidens? Well, first of all, there's no profit here. Clearly, there's profit with the Bidens. And, second of all, I think if there's one difference that you look at between the Trump family and the Biden family: The Trump family made their money before they went into politics. That's a big difference.

Yes, sir. .

Q You said it's going to be done at cost. Do you have any idea of the cost estimate, how much money you're looking at? And also, will it remain a G7, or do envision Russia joining?

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah, I don't have the numbers in terms of the cost. I do know that it was — it was — one of the ones I saw was it was almost half as much here. I don't want to butcher the numbers, but it was millions of dollars cheaper by doing it at Doral than it was at another facility. And that was roughly 50 percent savings.

As to the G7, G8 — look, that discussion is ongoing. The President has been very candid about that, about whether or not he wants to have Russia join the G7 again, that used to be members of that organization. And I think he's been fairly straightforward not only to you folks, but to other leaders around the world, which is we go to the G7 and what dominates so much of the discussion? Russia. Okay? Russian energy. Russian military policy. The Russian economy. It dominates a lot of the discussion. Wouldn't it be better to have them inside as part of those conversations? But I think that decision will be made later, and we'll continue to review it.

Yes, ma'am.

Q Thank you very much. G7 summits have been held for decades, so how can you make the argument that this is the best place to hold it? Surely there were other places that this could be held. And you can't make the argument that the President is not going to profit because we can't know how much he might profit in the future, right?

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah. To your first point, again, I think (inaudible) the profit one. Again, he's not making any money off of this, just like he's not making any money from working here. And if you think it's going to help his brand, that's great. But I would suggest that he probably doesn't need much help promoting his brand, so we'll put the profit one aside and deal with a perfect place.

I mean, who was here for the last time it was at Camp David? Was that the perfect place? In fact, I understand the folks who participated in it hated it and thought it was a miserable place to have the G7. It was way too small. It was way too remote. My understanding is this media didn't like it because you had to drive an hour on a bus to get there either way.

Q I take your point. But there have been other G7 summits; I've attended numerous —

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah.

Q — G7 summits that have been completely fine, according to the leaders who attended them.

MR. MULVANEY: Well, look, we looked at —

Q How can the White House really make the argument that this was the only place the G7 Summit could (inaudible)?

MR. MULVANEY: It's not the only place; it's the best place. Those are two different things. Okay?

But we had dates —

Q There had to be other good places without the President's (inaudible).

MR. MULVANEY: There's plenty of other good places in this country to hold a large event. There's no question about it. Some of the limitations: We wanted it at a specific time; we wanted it in early June. So that limits it a little bit. Then there's other — there's difficulties with going to various places. Some places don't have the transportation that you need.

I mean, there was one place — I won't say where it was — where we actually had to figure out if we were going to have to have oxygen tanks for the participants because of the altitude. So, yeah, there's just — there's limitations in other places.

We thought, of the 12 places that we looked at — and you'd recognize the names of them if we told what they were — that this was by far and away the best choice.

Yes, ma'am.

Q Very quickly. This is a business optics. How is the President going to stand on the debate stage — if, in fact, Vice President Biden wins the nomination — and try to make an argument that he profited off of his vice presidency, or his family did, when he's hosting the G7 (inaudible)?

MR. MULVANEY: He's going to do that extraordinarily well.

Yes, ma'am. Yeah.

Q Thank you, Director Mulvaney. So you were talking about how this is the best place —

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah.

Q — or one of the best places. Okay. So is this going to be self-contained just at Doral? Are there other hotel rooms you think you'll have to get? Or is there anywhere else that you'll have to (inaudible)?

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah. One of the advantages — I understand that one of the advantages that the advance team came back with about Doral was the fact that it could be sequestered off from the rest of the city, and that nearly all or all of the operations could be on that one piece of property. I think there's — I think the President said there's almost 900 acres there. So it's a huge facility. And

we'll be able — with a lot open space. I think there's three golf courses. So there's a lot of space available to us. And we do anticipate the entire thing being on that campus.

Now —

Q Including the hotel — including hotels? I'm talking about additional hotel rooms. Do you think you'll have to get additional hotels involved in that?

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah, I would — well, again, I'm not sure about the su- — when we talk about the delegations — for example, when we went to — where were we? — Biarritz, and I think we were at two or three different hotels around that city — that would not be the case here.

The American delegation would stay on campus. The British delegation will stay on campus. The Germans will stay on campus. Whether — and you folks will be there. Whether or not there'll be other folks who are using up hotel rooms in the Miami area, I can't speak to that.

Q And then a quick question about local authorities. What local authorities have you been in contact with about this?

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah, I haven't asked that question, but we do that as part of — the advance team will do that with each of the groups that we work with. But I'm not familiar with those.

Yes, ma'am.

Q Yeah. A video shown last weekend at that resort –actually, a doctored video — showed the President killing members of the news media and his political opponents. Why do you think he hasn't spoken directly about the sentiment behind that video?

MR. MULVANEY: Have you asked him?

Q I'm sure —

Q We have asked him. Yes.

Q We've asked. We've asked for comment over and over again, yes.

MR. MULVANEY: But we put out a statement. And you had a chance to ask him that question yesterday and you asked him something else, which is fine. But —

Q But to be clear, he's been asked multiple times and hasn't responded.

MR. MULVANEY: Hold on a sec. Hold on a second. Her question was why he hasn't answered. We did, as a White House, we listened to that. We didn't like that. I think we condemn that. That's not —

Q But he's the President.

Q (Inaudible) Twitter with 65 million followers, sir.

MR. MULVANEY: Do you — we didn't. We did not. Did you think that we would?

Q What has the President said about it, Mr. Mulvaney?

Q I mean, that doesn't sound like a very strong condemnation.

MR. MULVANEY: Oh, come on, Jon.

Q This was a —

MR. MULVANEY: I mean, it was — it was awful. I mean, I've never seen the movie. No, no — we — that has no place here. I think we've condemned that.

Q Has he watched the video?

MR. MULVANEY: I don't know if he's seen it or not. I have.

Q Will the President go before the cameras and say the same, Mr. Mulvaney?

Q I understand that you're trying to put it in a place that you think is the best.

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah.

Q And maybe save the taxpayers some money, which is important for all of us. But sometimes you — because of the appearance of impropriety, you don't make that call. Can you at least understand and acknowledge that just the appearance of impropriety makes this wince-inducing and maybe this is something that you want to reconsider? How did that conversation go in the room?

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah. The President knows that. Listen, the President — we know the environment we live in. You all know the environment that we live in. And he knows exactly that he's going to get these questions and exactly get that reaction from a lot of people.

And he's simply saying, "Okay, that's fine. I'm willing to take that." The same way he takes it when he goes to Trump Mar-a-Lago. The same place when he goes to play at Trump Bedminster. He got over that a long time ago. We absolutely believe this is the best place to have it. We're going to have it there. And there's going to be folks who will never get over the fact that it's a Trump property. We get that. But we're still going to go there.

Yes, ma'am.

Q Thank you, Mr. Mulvaney. Aside from what your advance team did to look for the perfect place, what role did the President play in selecting Doral, including getting it on the initial list of 10 or 12 places in the first place?

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah. I think we — that's a fair question. We sat around one night. We were back in the dining room and I was going over it with a couple of our advance team. We had the list, and he goes, "What about Doral?" And it was like, "That's not the craziest idea. It makes perfect sense."

Q So he's the one that initially brought it up.

MR. MULVANEY: We're all familiar with it, so it's not like he said, "Oh, this is what Doral...Do I have to explain..." He said, "No, what about Doral?" Like, you know what, that's not the craziest idea we ever heard. And we sat down and went to go look at it.

Yes, sir.

Q Yes. Thanks, Mick. I wanted to ask you as it relates to this decision that you've made. As the host country, couldn't the President simply, as the host country, invite President Putin to represent Russia at the G7?

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah, I think we can, because I think we — as I understand how the G7 works, there will be other leaders there anyway. For example, I met with Scott Morrison, the Prime Minister of Australia, at the G7, even though they're not there. I assume he came at the invite of President Macron. And we could do the same thing. But in terms of — I think the question I got originally was turning it from the G7 into the G8.

Q That's not my question.

MR. MULVANEY: Okay.

Q My question was: Could he simply invite President Putin to attend?

MR. MULVANEY: I think he probably — yes. If the question is, can he physically do that? Yeah. I think he can.

Q It's not about whether he can. Of course, he can; he's President. But would he consider doing that?

MR. MULVANEY: That has not come up. I think the conversation we've had about whether or not we'd turn it from the G7 to G8, that could be an intermediate step.

Yes, sir.

Q You mentioned that the President is willing to take the criticism on this. But what about the country itself? Is there any value to sending a message to the world, especially given that all that's happened with foreign interference and attempts at foreign interference in our country, that this President and this country is not open for the kind of self-dealing that happens in other countries? Is that not an important message to send when you're inviting the world to come here to the United States?

MR. MULVANEY: No.

What's your question?

Q I have a non-G7 question.

Q Yeah, so do I.

MR. MULVANEY: Any G7 — any last G7 questions?

Q I got one more.

Q About the G7 property — a couple of things. One, you say it's the best property for this to take place. So the first question is: Why has no other G7 ever been held there before?

MR. MULVANEY: Because they didn't go look at it. So —

I don't know, why did they have it at Camp David? I mean, seriously. I mean, for those of you who were there, I'm a little bit familiar with it; I've talked with the folks up at Camp David because I was up there recently and asked. I said, "Didn't you guys go up..." — I think it was a G8 back then. 2004, something like that. And they said it was a complete disaster. I'm like, "Okay, I wonder how that happened. How did that decision get made?"

Q Last — last G7 question then, if I can. You were talking about the President's — this video, where the President was seen shooting members of the media and others that was played at the Doral property there that said that we haven't had the chance to ask him that question yet, which we have. But broadly, the President has tweeted 45,000 times. Forty-five thousand times. How come the President hasn't used that Twitter account to more than 60 million followers to condemn it? You're his Chief of Staff.

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah. The White House put out a statement about it. I mean, that's —

Q But why hasn't the President? Because he's tweeted 45,000 times.

MR. MULVANEY: I'll tell you what, the next time you ask him — again, it's not like the man hides from you folks, okay? I think he's done almost 100 face-to-face interviews with you.

Q We've asked him and he's ignored the question, sir.

MR. MULVANEY: Okay. Anybody else on G7?

Q I got one more. Is there any precedent in your studying of the G7 of a G7 Summit being held at a property owned by the President or a President?

And my second question is: As you're looking at the content of what you want to do next year, it's probably going to be hot in Florida in June. Will climate change be one of the issues that you discuss?

MR. MULVANEY: The first question is, no. I don't know if another President has ever done it. I don't know if another President has owned a property that was even considered for G7. So, no, we haven't — I don't know the answer to that question.

Climate change will not be on the agenda.

Yes, sir.

Q Thank you. President Trump has called for the exposure of the whistleblower on Ukraine —

MR. MULVANEY: Are we done on G7 then? Is that the collective — is that the collective will?

Q Yes. That was (inaudible), sir.

MR. MULVANEY: I've got one gentlemen — yes, sir. Go ahead. Last one on G7.

Q Well, you began your remarks talking about the passing of Mr. Cummings. Just to show the American people that this is above board, are you going to share documents that show how you arrived at this decision with the Congress?

MR. MULVANEY: No. But I would imagine we would share dollar figures with you afterwards. I mean, that's — that's ordinary course of business.

Q (Inaudible) paper exists that shows the merits of (inaudible)?

MR. MULVANEY: By the way, you're going to get this answer a lot, okay? I don't talk about how this place runs on the inside. So, if you ask if us — if you want to see our paper on how we did this, the answer is: Absolutely not.

Yes, sir.

Q Yes. There will almost certainly be a House Judiciary Committee hearing about this site selection.

MR. MULVANEY: You think so?

Q Jerry Nadler has already talked about that. Will —

MR. MULVANEY: Do you, though? Do you really think so? Do you think they have time to do that?

Q I really think so. Yeah. Will the administration participate, cooperate, with that?

MR. MULVANEY: You know, that's a — by the way, that's a fascinating question. I had not thought that — that this would prompt a Judiciary Committee investigation. On one hand, I'm thinking to myself, "They don't have time to do it because they're too busy doing impeachment." Right. And then I think to myself, "No, this is entirely consistent with how they've spent the first 18 months in office." Right? Or 12 months — however long they've been here. I guess it's been a year, right?

That, yeah, they'd rather do that than talk about tax policy, than talk about drug policy, than talk about opioids; talk about healthcare. So, that's a fascinating question. I don't know if there will be a Judiciary Committee inquiry into this. My guess is there probably will be. And we look forward to participating in it.

Is anybody — this is all — these are all G7 questions that are out now? Okay. Now we're moving on to something else.

Q Yes.

MR. MULVANEY: So, who hasn't asked me? Jon Karl has not asked a question yet.

Q So, actually, a clarification on your first statement on the G7. You said five finalists, and you said Mar-a-Lago was one of the finalists?

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah, it was — yeah, four finalists, I think. We started with 12 on, sort of, a list. The team visited, sort of, a — a first team visited 10 of those. And I think I identified the states. We then got our senior team down and they visited four, of which Mar-a-Lago was one. There was one in Hawaii and two in Utah.

Q So, you're telling me that in the entire United States, you came down to four finalists, and two of them were Trump properties?

MR. MULVANEY: No, one.

Q Well, Mar-a-Lago.

Q You said Mar-a-Lago.

MR. MULVANEY: I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Q Okay, so you misspoke.

MR. MULVANEY: No, I'm sorry, Jon.

Q Okay. Okay.

MR. MULVANEY: Doral. Doral. Doral.

Q Just want to (inaudible) —

MR. MULVANEY: Yes, I'm sorry. Yes.

Q Okay, so —

Q So Mar-a-Lago was not involved.

MR. MULVANEY: No, Mar-a-Lago was not involved. Mar-a-Lago is not close to being sufficient for the G7. I'm sorry that I —

Q Thank you. Thank you for clarifying.

MR. MULVANEY: If I said Mar-a-Lago about where we visited, it was Doral. I apologize.

Q Okay, the record is corrected.

MR. MULVANEY: All right.

Q So, to the question of Ukraine.

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah.

Q Can you clarify — and I've been trying to get an answer to this: Was the President serious when he said that he would also like to see China investigate the Bidens? And you were directly involved in the decision to withhold funding from Ukraine. Can you explain to us now definitively why? Why was funding withheld?

MR. MULVANEY: Sure. I'll — let's deal with the second one first, which is — look, it should come as no surprise to anybody — the last time I was up here — I haven't done this since I was Chief of Staff, right? The last time I was up here, some of you folks remember, it was for the budget briefings, right?

And one of the questions y'all always asked me about the budget is, "What are you all doing to the foreign aid budget?" Because we absolutely gutted it, right? President Trump is not a big fan of foreign aid. Never has been; still isn't. Doesn't like spending money overseas, especially when it's poorly spent. And that is exactly what drove this decision.

I've been in the office a couple times with him, talking about this. And he said, "Look, Mick, this is a corrupt place." Everybody knows it's a corrupt place. By the way, put this in context: This is on the heels of what happened in Puerto Rico, when we took a lot of heat for not wanting to give a bunch of aid to Puerto Rico because we thought that place was corrupt. And, by the way, it turns out we were right. All right? So put that as your context.

He's like, "Look, this is a corrupt place. I don't want to send them a bunch of money and have them waste it, have them spend it, have them use it to line their own pockets. Plus, I'm not sure that the other European countries are helping them out either."

So we actually looked at that, during that time, before — when we cut the money off, before the money actually flowed, because the money flowed by the end of the fiscal year — we actually did an analysis of what other countries were doing in terms of supporting Ukraine. And what we found out was that — and I can't remember if it's zero or near zero dollars from any European countries for lethal aid. And you've heard the President say this: that we give them tanks and other countries give them pillows. That's absolutely right, that the — as vocal as the Europeans are about supporting Ukraine, they are really, really stingy when it comes to lethal aid. And they weren't helping Ukraine, and then still to this day are not. And the President did not like that. I know it's a long answer to your question, but I'm still going.

So that was — those were the driving factors. Did he also mention to me in pass the corruption related to the DNC server? Absolutely. No question about that. But that's it. And that's why we held up the money.

Now, there was a report —

Q So the demand for an investigation into the Democrats was part of the reason that he ordered to withhold funding to Ukraine?

MR. MULVANEY: The look back to what happened in 2016 —

Q The investigation into Democrats.

MR. MULVANEY: — certainly was part of the thing that he was worried about in corruption with that nation. And that is absolutely appropriate.

Q And withholding the funding?

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah. Which ultimately, then, flowed. By the way, there was a report that we were worried that the money wouldn't — that if we didn't pay out the money, it would be illegal, okay? It

would be unlawful. That is one of those things that has the little shred of truth in it, that makes it look a lot worse than it really is.

We were concerned, over at OMB, about an impoundment. And I know I just put half of you folks to bed, but there's — the Budget Control Act — Budget Control Impoundment Act of 1974 says that if Congress appropriates money, you have to spend it. Okay? At least that's how it's interpreted by some folks. And we knew that that money either had to go out the door by the end of September or we had to have a really, really good reason not to do it. And that was the legality of the issue.

Q But to be clear, what you just described is a quid pro quo. It is: Funding will not flow unless the investigation into the Democratic server happens as well.

MR. MULVANEY: We do that all the time with foreign policy. We were holding money at the same time for — what was it? The Northern Triangle countries. We were holding up aid at the Northern Triangle countries so that they would change their policies on immigration.

By the way — and this speaks to an important —

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. MULVANEY: I'm sorry? This speaks to an important point, because I heard this yesterday and I can never remember the gentleman who testified. Was it McKinney, the guy — was that his name? I don't know him. He testified yesterday. And if you go — and if you believe the news reports — okay? Because we've not seen any transcripts of this. The only transcript I've seen was Sondland's testimony this morning.

If you read the news reports and you believe them — what did McKinney say yesterday? Well, McKinney said yesterday that he was really upset with the political influence in foreign policy. That was one of the reasons he was so upset about this. And I have news for everybody: Get over it. There's going to be political influence in foreign policy.

Q What about the Bidens, Mr. Mulvaney?

MR. MULVANEY: I'm talking to Mr. Karl. That is going to happen. Elections have consequences. And foreign policy is going to change from the Obama administration to the Trump administration.

And what you're seeing now, I believe, is a group of mostly career bureaucrats who are saying, "You know what? I don't like President Trump's politics, so I'm going to participate in this witch hunt that they're undertaking on the Hill." Elections do have consequences and they should. And your foreign policy is going to change. Obama did it in one way; we're doing it a different way. And there's no problem with that.

Yes, sir.

Q I just —

Q Mr. Mulvaney, what about the Bidens, though, Mr. Mulvaney? Did that come into consideration when that money was held up?

MR. MULVANEY: I'm sorry, I don't know your name, but he's being very rude. So go ahead and ask your question.

Q Just to clarify, and just to follow up on that question: So, when you're saying that politics is going to be involved —

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah.

Q — the question here is not just about political decisions about how you want to run the government. This is about investigating political opponents. Are you saying that —

MR. MULVANEY: No. The DNC — the DNC server —

Q Are you saying that it's okay for the U.S. government to hold up aid and require a foreign government to investigate political opponents of the President?

MR. MULVANEY: Now, you're talking about looking forward to the next election. We're talking —

Q Even the DNC. The DNC is still involved in this next election. Is that not correct?

MR. MULVANEY: So, wait a second. So there's —

Q So are you saying —

MR. MULVANEY: Hold on a second. No, let me ask you —

Q But you're asking to investigate the DNC, right?

MR. MULVANEY: So, let's look at this —

Q Is the DNC political opponents of the President?

MR. MULVANEY: There's an ongoing — there's an ongoing investigation by our Department of Justice into the 2016 election. I can't remember that person's name.

Q Durham.

MR. MULVANEY: Durham. Durham, okay? That's an ongoing investigation, right? So you're saying the President of the United States, the chief law enforcement person, cannot ask somebody to cooperate with an ongoing public investigation into wrongdoing? That's just bizarre to me that you would think that you can't do that.

Q And so you would say that it's fine to ask about the DNC but not about Biden? So, Biden is now — Biden is running for the Democratic nomination, right?

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah.

Q That's for 2020. So are you drawing that distinction?

MR. MULVANEY: That's a hypothetical because that did not happen here.

Q No, no, but — the President —

MR. MULVANEY: But I would ask you —

Q No, no. On the call, the President did ask about investigating the Bidens. Are you saying that the money that was held up, that that had nothing to do with the Bidens?

MR. MULVANEY: No, the money held up had absolutely nothing to do with Biden. There's no question. And that was the point I made to you.

Q And you're drawing a distinction?

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah.

Q You're saying that it would be wrong —

MR. MULVANEY: Three — three factors.

Q — to hold up money for the Bidens?

MR. MULVANEY: Again, I was involved with the process by which the money was held up temporarily, okay? Three issues for that: the corruption of the country; whether or not other countries were participating in the support of the Ukraine; and whether or not they were cooperating in an ongoing investigation with our Department of Justice. That's completely legitimate.

Yes, sir.

Q Thank you. Regarding the Secretary over at the State Department, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Asian — for European and Eurasian Affairs, George Kent, reportedly testified that you asked him to step down from any issues regarding Ukraine. Is that true? Do you —

MR. MULVANEY: Who said that?

Q It was George Kent.

MR. MULVANEY: I'm sorry. I don't know who that is. Is that somebody who testified this week?

Q Yes.

MR. MULVANEY: I don't believe I've ever talked to anybody named George Kent in my life, nor have I asked anybody to resign their position over this.

Q Okay. And also, another thing is, is that there have been reports that you had been conducting a review of the phone call with Volodymyr Zelensky, the Ukrainian President. And the question is: What are you — what are you — is that true? Do you acknowledge that you've been conducting that review?

MR. MULVANEY: Well, we're certainly —

Q Or was the call just perfect, as the President has said?

MR. MULVANEY: Again, no one here had any difficulty with the call. We do think the call is perfect. We don't think there's any difficulty with the call at all. I read it several times. By the way, I was not on the call; someone from my office was on the call. No one raised any difficulty with me on the call at all. I understand that, in fact, no one on the call in here thought there was any difficulty with it.

Let's get to your point about what we're doing inside.

Q So was this an attempt to actually uncover the whistleblower? Was that what this is about?

MR. MULVANEY: No. No, no. Here's what it is: It was like, look, if you get — if you're having the House do what they're going to do, doesn't it simply make sense for us to sort of try and find out what happened?

This is one of the questions I don't understand from you folks that we get all the time, which is: Some of you have criticized us for having a war room — okay? — which we don't, by the way. You don't have a war room when you haven't done anything wrong. Clinton certainly had a war room. I think Nixon did. But they actually did something wrong. We didn't. So we don't have a war room.

But, at the same time, then when we say that, you say, "Well, you're not taking it seriously." Yeah, we are. I mean, we do. It's part of what we do. Look, when you work for the Trump administration, you're used to this kind of attention, right? We know how to do this, and we do this and we're preparing for it. Yes, we're having lawyers look at it. Yes, we're having our PR people looking at it. If we didn't — if we weren't doing that, we would be committing malpractice. But I don't think there's anything extraordinary that we're doing.

We've been dealing with oversight from the Democrats since they took office. In fact, it's all we've been dealing with the Democrats since they took office because we certainly haven't been doing much legislating since they've been here.

Yes. Yes, ma'am. I'm trying to get folks who haven't asked a question yet.

Q Chief, in light of the depositions that we've heard, do you believe that Rudy Giuliani's role as an outside advisor to the President is problematic?

MR. MULVANEY: No, that's the President's call. I mean, I — actually, Steve Scalise got asked a similar question today on television. I thought his answer was great, which is: Look, you may not like the fact — in fact, I think — I understand, from reading his opening testimony, that Gordon Sondland didn't like the fact that Giuliani was involved and said that in his testimony.

Okay, that's great. You may not like the fact that Giuliani was involved. That's great. That's fine. It's not illegal. It's not impeachable. The President gets to use who he wants to use. If the President wants to fire me today and hire somebody else, he can.

Q Even if he's operating separately from the actual, like —

MR. MULVANEY: The President gets to set foreign policy and he gets to choose who to do so. As long as he doesn't violate any law — okay? — and he doesn't violate laws regarding confidential information or classified material or anything like that, the President gets to use who he wants to use.

Q A follow-up? A follow-up on that?

Q Did the President direct you or anyone else to work with Rudy Giuliani on Ukraine?

MR. MULVANEY: Um, yeah. The — when was it? It was the May meeting, and I think this has been widely reported. In fact, I think Sondland mentioned it in his testimony, and I'm pretty sure that Rick Perry mentioned it in his interview yesterday with the Wall Street Journal, that in the May meeting in the Oval Office that I was in — I think Senator Johnson was there, as well as Mr. Volker was there — the President asked Rick Perry to work with Mr. Giuliani.

Q And did you think that that was appropriate when you were asked as well?

MR. MULVANEY: I wasn't asked.

Q You were not asked?

MR. MULVANEY: No.

Q That was my question: Were you or anyone else asked?

MR. MULVANEY: And I think the answer to your question is that —

Q So, you were not asked? Just Rick Perry?

MR. MULVANEY: The President told Rick Perry, who I think was sort of — you know, he was — the issue — one of the reasons they were in there, obviously talking about energy — they were very interested in trying to get Ukraine as an energy partner. That's why Mr. Perry — Secretary Perry — was so heavily involved. And that's when the President said to Mr. Perry, "Go ahead and talk to Rudy."

Q Fiona Hill said that was a shadow foreign policy.

MR. MULVANEY: Yes, you haven't asked a question yet. Yes.

Q Was that a shadow foreign policy?

MR. MULVANEY: Shadow? Hold it. A shadow foreign policy? Look, that's a term you're using. That's a pejorative. That's — what is a shadow foreign policy? The President —

Q Operating outside the normal channels.

MR. MULVANEY: Normal chan- — who else was in the room? Rudy Giuli- — who's in the room when the President is having this conversation, okay? It's Gordon Sondland, our Ambassador to the EU; Kurt Volker, who is our Special Designated Envoy to the Ukraine. I sat next to Mike Pen- — Mike Pompeo yesterday at the meeting with the congressional leaders, and I said, "Look, I understand I

coordinated a coup against you by putting — by putting Sondland and Volker in charge of Ukraine policy." And he leans back to me, and he goes, "You know they both work for me?"

There's not a shadow policy here. The President is entitled to have whoever he wants to work.

Q You were comfortable with Rudy Giuliani's role?

MR. MULVANEY: I'm 100 percent comfortable with that.

Yes, sir.

Q You called on me. Director Mulvaney, you called on me.

MR. MULVANEY: Oh, I'm sorry. I did. I did. Yes, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Yes.

Q No problem. First, to follow on that question, can you describe the role that you played in pressuring Ukraine to investigate the Bidens?

And secondly —

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah, none.

Q — can you walk us through the meeting that President Trump was dangling over Volodymyr Zelensky to happen right here at the White House? What were the preconditions of that meeting? And was investigating Burisma one of them?

MR. MULVANEY: The first question to your answer — the first answer to your question is: None. I didn't have any — what was your question? What did I do to Ukraine or something? Nothing.

Q Did you do anything to pressure Ukraine to investigate the Bidens?

MR. MULVANEY: No. So what's the second question?

Q The second question is about the meeting —

MR. MULVANEY: That he "dangled"? That's an interesting —

Q — that was supposed to happen here at the White House between the two Presidents?

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah —

Q Can you walk us through the discussions for that meeting? What was on the table for a precondition? And was the investigation of Burisma ever brought up as a condition to meet with President Trump?

MR. MULVANEY: No. Not to me. And not to anybody I know of. I was never in a conversation that had the word "Burisma" in it. But as to —

Q I'm sorry, investigating the Bidens, then?

MR. MULVANEY: Okay. Or the Bidens. That never happened with me in there.

But to the larger point about the meeting, I think one of the things that you all have missed is the President didn't want to take the meeting. The President didn't want to have a phone call. That was mis- — Rick Perry was pushing for that.

Q On the phone call, he said, "I'll see you here at the White House," didn't he?

MR. MULVANEY: At the end. Yes. But that's — I think that was a courtesy that he was extending at the time. And he's not been here yet. But the —

Q So he was never realistically entertaining a meeting with President Zelensky?

MR. MULVANEY: I mean, I think — we get asked by foreign leaders all of the time to either come visit their country or to have them come visit here. And we try to be courteous and say yes, and some of them we're able to accommodate, and some of them we are not. But I do not remember —

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. MULVANEY: Excuse me. I'm going to answer her question. That — I don't remember a serious conversation about setting up an actual meeting. There were no dates discussed. There was not — I saw that as one of the typical pleasantries that we have. And I don't think it was dangling a meeting or anything like that.

Yes, sir.

Q Is the President still planning to welcome President Erdoğan at the White House on November 13th?

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah. I think that — I think that depends on how the next couple of days go. It's still on the schedule. And I understand that Vice President Pence's meeting is going much longer than it's expected today. I hope it's not going — I hope they're not having a press conference right now. But I think that's one of those wait-and-see things.

The President has been very clear about what he wants to see out of President Erdoğan. He wants a ceasefire now. He wants prisoners protected. He — I think, go down the long list of the things the President has mentioned to President Erdoğan. And if we're able to get that, then I think that meeting can go forward. If not, then I think the President will review that possibility.

Yes, ma'am.

Q You just said you were involved in the process in which, you know, the money being held up temporarily. You named three issues for that: the corruption in the country; whether or not the country — they were assisting with an ongoing investigation into corruption. How is that not an establishment of an exchange, of a quid pro quo? You just seem to continue to be establishing this, and then —

MR. MULVANEY: It's quid pro — those are the terms that you use. I mean, go look at what Gordon Sondland said today in his testimony — was that I think, in his opening statement, he said something along the lines of they were trying to get the deliverable. And the deliverable was a statement by the Ukraine about how they were going to deal with corruption. Okay? Go read his testimony if you haven't already.

And what he says is — and he's right — that's absolutely ordinary course of business. This is — this is what you do when you have someone come to the White House, when you either arrange a visit for the President, you have a phone call with the President, a lot of times we use that as the opportunity to get them to make a statement of their policy or to announce something that they're going to do. It's one of the reasons we then — you can sort of announce that at the — on the phone call or at the meeting. This is the ordinary course of foreign policy.

Yes. I'm sorry.

Q Mr. Mulvaney, is it appropriate for any President or this President to pressure a foreign country to investigate a political opponent?

MR. MULVANEY: You know, every time I get that question, that's one of those things about —

Q It's a simple question.

MR. MULVANEY: It is, but so is, "When did you stop beating your wife?"

Q So what's the answer?

MR. MULVANEY: It assumes that the President has done that.

Q Well, what's the answer? I said "any President."

MR. MULVANEY: We haven't done that.

Q I said Mr. Trump or any President.

MR. MULVANEY: I'm not — I'm going to talk about what this President did.

Yes, ma'am.

Q The other thing I have is: The President's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, said he sees his work as the President's personal attorney as intertwined with the President's national agenda when it

comes to Ukraine. Do you see those issues as intertwined? Is his political interest as a President, as a political candidate, is that intertwined with the national interest?

MR. MULVANEY: You know, I don't know how to answer that question except that — I mean, Mr. Giuliani is his personal lawyer, and if the President wants to use him —

Q So is it appropriate for a personal attorney to be working in Ukraine on issues that are supposed to be national issues? Mr. Giuliani says there's an attorney-client privilege issue because he was working in the President's interest. Is that appropriate for his personal attorney to be working in his interest —

MR. MULVANEY: I don't know of anything inappropriate about that.

Yes, sir.

Q Thank you, Mr. Mulvaney.

MR. MULVANEY: Oh, yeah. I'm sorry, the lady in the back is very nice. Yes, ma'am.

Q Thank you, Mr. Mulvaney. You say that the U.S. foreign policy will change, not like in previous administrations. How does the President respond about the North Korea's break-off talks with the U.S. (inaudible)?

MR. MULVANEY: If the question is responding to breaking off talks, is there news in the last couple of days on that?

Q Yes. October 5th, Stockholm, in Sweden.

MR. MULVANEY: Okay. I'm sorry. I'm not — I'm just not briefed on that, and I apologize.

Yes, sir.

Q Thank you, Mr. Mulvaney.

MR. MULVANEY: Yeah. And I'll take one more after this.

Q There have been published reports that you are objecting within the President's official family to the appointment of Ken Cuccinelli to head up the Department of Homeland Security. Is that so? And if so, what is your objection to his possible appointment?

MR. MULVANEY: I have none. And I think Ken would be good at the job.

Yes, ma'am. I'm sorry. Did I really ignore you the whole time? You're sitting in the front row and I haven't asked you a question yet?

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. MULVANEY: I'm sorry.

Q Same with me, Mr. Mulvaney.

Q So, if there was no quid pro quo on the call, if it was routine, if he didn't even want to do it, and, you know, it's all — is on the up and up, why didn't it have to go into this more restricted server? Why was it moved from the one server to the other?

MR. MULVANEY: All right. Let's — let's — I'm glad we got that. It's a good one to finish on.

I'm not going to answer your question the way you want me to, but I'm going to answer your question. So give me just a second.

I am not going to sit here and talk about how we handle classified information in this building, okay? I got a couple questions before about my private conversations with the President; I don't talk about those either.

I'm not going to talk about that, but I do want to address it. And here's why: There's only one reason people care about that, right? And it's because they think there's a cover-up. They hope there's a cov- — some of them hope that there's a cover-up; that, "Oh my goodness gracious. There must have been something really, really duplicitous. Something really underhanded about how they handled this document, because there must be a cover-up" — because there's always a good cover-up when we've got an impeachment, right? Nixon had a cover-up of the tapes; Clinton had a cover-up of the relationship with Lewinsky. There must be a cover-up here, right?

Let me ask you this: If we wanted to cover this up, would we have called the Department of Justice almost immediately and have them look at the transcript of the tape? Which we did, by the way. All right? If we wanted to cover this up, would we have released it to the public? And, by the way, I'm glad that now all this concern about, "Oh, the document has been edited and what do these ellipses stand for?" Because I heard Adam Schiff go on television yesterday and — or, yesterday or the day before — and say, "You know, we don't need to hear from the whistleblower anymore because now we have the transcript," or the memorandum of communication, memorandum of document, okay?

Everyone wants to believe there's a cover-up. You don't give stuff to the public and say, "Here it is" if you're trying to cover something up. So I'm not going to answer your question by explaining how we handle documents in this building. All I'm telling you is that you can stop asking the questions there, because there's no cover-up. And I can prove it to you by our actions.

Look, I know we can do this all night. No, I'm not going to take any more. But it's nice — it's nice to see everybody. Thanks again.

END

1:18 P.M. EDT