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IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY: AMBASSADOR MARIE "MASHA" YOVANOVITCH

Friday, November 15, 2019

U.S. House of Representatives,

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence,

Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 9:05 a.m., in Room 1100, Longworth House Office Building, the Honorable Adam Schiff (chairman of the committee) presiding.

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

The Chairman. The committee will come to order.

Good morning, everyone. This is the second in a series of public hearings the committee will be holding as part of the House's impeachment inquiry.

Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess of the committee at any time. There is a quorum present.

We will proceed today in the same fashion as our first hearing. I will make an opening statement, and then Ranking Member Nunes will have the opportunity to make a statement. Then we will turn to our witness for an opening statement and then to questions.

For audience members, we welcome you and respect your interest in being here. In turn, we ask for your respect as we proceed with today's hearing. It is the intention of the committee to proceed without disruptions. As chairman, I will take all necessary and appropriate steps to maintain order and to ensure that the committee is run in accordance with House rules and House Resolution 660.

With that, I now recognize myself to give an opening statement in the impeachment inquiry into Donald J. Trump, the 45th President of the United States.

In April 2019, the United States ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, was in Kyiv when she was called by a senior State Department official and told to get on the next plane back to Washington. Upon her return to D.C., she was informed by her superiors that although she had done nothing wrong, she could no longer serve as ambassador to Ukraine because she did not have the confidence of the President.

It was a stunning turn of events for this highly regarded career diplomat, who had done such a remarkable job fighting corruption in Ukraine at a short time earlier she had

been asked by the State Department to extend her tour.

Ambassador Yovanovitch has been in the Foreign Service for 33 years and served much of that time in the former Soviet Union. Her parents had fled Stalin and later Hitler before settling in the United States. She is an exemplary officer who is widely praised and respected by her colleagues. She is known as an anticorruption champion whose tour in Kyiv was viewed as very successful.

Ambassador Michael McKinley, who had served with her in the Foreign Service for several decades, stated that from the earliest days of her career in the Foreign Service she was "excellent, serious, committed. I certainly remember her being one of those people who seemed to be destined for greater things."

Her successor as acting chief of mission in Ukraine, Ambassador Bill Taylor, described her as "very frank. She was very direct. She made points very clearly, and she was, indeed, tough on corruption. And she named names, and that sometimes is controversial out there, but she's a strong person and made those charges."

In her time in Kyiv, Ambassador Yovanovitch was tough on corruption, too tough on corruption for some, and her principled stance made her enemies. As George Kent told this committee on Wednesday, "You can't promote principled anticorruption action without pissing off corrupt people."

And Ambassador Yovanovitch did not just "piss off" corrupt Ukrainians, like the corrupt former Prosecutor General Yuriy Lutsenko, but also certain Americans, like Rudy Giuliani, Donald Trump's personal attorney, and two individuals now indicted who worked with him, Igor Fruman and Lev Parnas.

Lutsenko, Giuliani, Fruman, Parnas, and others, who would come to include the President's own son, Don, Jr., promoted a smear campaign against her based on false allegations. At the State Department, there was an effort to push back, to obtain a

statement of support from Secretary Pompeo, but those efforts failed when it became clear that President Trump wanted her gone.

Some have argued that a President has the ability to nominate or remove any ambassador he wants, that they serve at the pleasure of the President, and that is true. The question before us is not whether Donald Trump could recall an American ambassador with a stellar reputation for fighting corruption in Ukraine, but why would he want to? Why did Rudy Giuliani want her gone? And why did Donald Trump?

And why would Donald Trump instruct the new team he put in place, the "Three Amigos," Gordon Sondland, Rick Perry, and Kurt Volker, to work with the same man, Rudy Giuliani, who played such a central role in the smear campaign against her?

Rudy Giuliani has made no secret of his desire to get Ukraine to open investigations into the Bidens, as well as a conspiracy theory of Ukrainian interference in the 2016 election. As he said in one interview in May 2019, "We're not meddling in an election. We're meddling in an investigation, which we have a right to do."

More recently, he told CNN's Chris Cuomo, "Of course I did," when asked if he had pressed Ukraine to vetting Joe Biden.

And he has never been shy about who he is doing this work for, his client, the President.

One powerful ally Giuliani had in Ukraine to promote these political investigations was Lutsenko, the corrupt former prosecutor general, and one powerful adversary Lutsenko had was a certain United States ambassador named Marie Yovanovitch.

It is no coincidence that in the now infamous July 25th call with Zelensky, Donald Trump brings up a corrupt Ukrainian prosecutor and praises him. Against all evidence, Trump claims that this former prosecutor general "was very good, and he was shut down, and that's really unfair."

But the woman known for fighting corruption, his own former ambassador, the woman ruthlessly smeared and driven from her post, the President does nothing but disparage, or worse, threaten. "Well, she's going to go through some things," the President declares. That tells you a lot about the President's priorities and intentions.

Getting rid of Ambassador Yovanovitch helped set the stage for an irregular channel that could pursue the two investigations that mattered so much to the President: the 2016 conspiracy theory, and most important, an investigation into the 2020 political opponent he apparently feared most, Joe Biden.

And the President's scheme might have worked but for the fact that the man who would succeed Ambassador Yovanovitch, whom we heard from on Wednesday, Acting Ambassador Taylor, would eventually discover the effort to press Ukraine into conducting these investigations and would push back, but for the fact also that someone blew the whistle.

Ambassador Yovanovitch was serving our Nation's interest in fighting corruption in Ukraine, but she was considered an obstacle to the furtherance of the President's personal and political agenda. For that, she was smeared and cast aside.

The powers of the Presidency are immense, but they are not absolute, and they cannot be used for corrupt purpose. The American people expect their President to use the authority they grant him in the service of the Nation, not to destroy others to advance his personal or political interests.

I now recognize Ranking Member Nunes for his remarks.

[The statement of The Chairman follows:]

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Mr. Nunes. I thank the gentleman.

It's unfortunate that today, and for most of next week, we will continue engaging in the Democrats' day-long TV spectacles instead of solving the problems we were all sent to Washington to address.

We now have a major trade agreement with Canada and Mexico ready for approval, a deal that would create jobs and boost our economy. Meanwhile, we have not yet approved funding for the government, which expires next week, along with funding for our men and women in uniform.

Instead, the Democrats have convened us once again to advance their operation to topple a duly elected President. I'll note that five -- five -- Democrats on this committee had already voted to impeach this President before the Trump-Zelensky phone call occurred. In fact, Democrats have been vowing to oust President Trump since the day he was elected. So Americans can rightly suspect that his phone call with President Zelensky was used as an excuse for the Democrats to fulfill their Watergate fantasies.

But I'm glad that on Wednesday, after the Democrats staged 6 weeks of secret depositions in the basement of the Capitol like some kind of strange cult, the American people finally got to see this farce for themselves. They saw us sit through hours of hearsay testimony about conversations that two diplomats who had never spoken to the President heard secondhand, thirdhand, and fourthhand from other people. In other words, rumors.

The problem of trying to overthrow a President based on this type of evidence is obvious, but that's what their whole case relies on, beginning with secondhand and thirdhand information cited by the whistleblower. That's why on Wednesday, the

Democrats were forced to make the absurd argument that hearsay can be much better evidence than direct evidence.

And just when you thought the spectacle couldn't get more bizarre, committee Republicans received a memo from the Democrats threatening ethics referrals if we out the whistleblower. As the Democrats are well aware, no Republicans here know the whistleblower's identity because the whistleblower only met with Democrats, not with Republicans.

Chairman Schiff claimed not to know who it is, yet he also vowed to block us from asking questions that could reveal his or her identity. Republicans on this committee are left wondering how it's even possible for the chairman to block questions about a person whose identity he claims not to know.

The American people may be seeing these absurdities for the first time, but Republicans on this dais are used to them. Until they secretly met with the whistleblower, Democrats showed little interest for the last 3 years in any topic aside from the ridiculous conspiracy theories that President Trump is a Russian agent.

When you find yourself on the phone, like the Democrats did with Russian pranksters offering you nude pictures of Trump, and afterwards you order your staff to follow up and get the photos, as the Democrats also did, then it might be time to ask yourself if you've gone out too far on a limb.

Even as they were accusing Republicans of colluding with the Russians, the Democrats themselves were concluding with the Russians by funding the Steele dossier, which was based on Russian and Ukrainian sources. Meanwhile, they turn a blind eye to Ukrainians meddling in our elections because the Democrats were cooperating with that operation.

This was the subject of a July 20th, 2017, letter sent by Senator Grassley to then

Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein. The letter raised concerns about the activities of Alexandra Chalupa, a contractor for the Democratic National Committee, who worked with Ukrainian Embassy officials to spread dirt on the Trump campaign.

As Senator Grassley wrote, quote, "Chalupa's actions appear to show that she was simultaneously working on behalf of a foreign government, Ukraine, and on behalf of the DNC and the Clinton campaign in an effort to influence not only the U.S. voting population, but U.S. Government officials," unquote.

After touting the Steele dossier and defending the FBI's Russia investigation, which are now being investigated by Inspector General Horowitz and Attorney General Barr, Democrats on this committee ignore Ukrainian election meddling even though Chalupa publicly admitted to the Democrats' scheme.

Likewise, they are blind to the blaring signs of corruption surrounding Hunter Biden's well-paid position on the board of a corrupt Ukrainian company while his father served as Vice President and point man for Ukraine issues in the Obama administration. But the Democrats' media hacks only cared about that issue briefly, when they were trying to stop Joe Biden from running against Hillary Clinton in 2015.

As I previously stated, these hearings should not be occurring at all until we get the answers to three crucial questions the Democrats refuse to ask.

First, what is the full extent of the Democrats' prior coordination with the whistleblower, and who else did the whistleblower coordinate this effort with?

Second, what is the full extent of Ukraine's election meddling against the Trump campaign?

And third, why did Burisma hire Hunter Biden, what did he do for them, and did his position affect any government actions under the Obama administration?

I will note that House Democrats vowed they would not put the American people

through a wrenching impeachment process without bipartisan support, and they have none. Add that to their ever-growing list of broken promises and destructive deceptions.

In closing, Mr. Chair, the President of the United States released his transcript right before the hearing began. I think it's important that I read this into the record so that there's no confusion over this first phone call that occurred on April 21st with President-Elect Zelensky, and I'd like to read it.

The President: I'd like to congratulate you on a job well done, and congratulations on a fantastic election.

Zelensky: Good to hear from you. Thank you so very much. It's nice to hear from you, and I appreciate the congratulations.

The President: That was an incredible election.

Zelensky: Again, thank you so very much. As you can see, we tried very hard to do our best. We had you as a great example.

The President: I think you will do a great job. I have many friends in Ukraine who know you and like you. I have many friends from Ukraine and, frankly, expected you to win, and it's really an amazing thing that you've done. I guess in a way, I did something similar. We're making tremendous progress in the U.S. We have the most tremendous economy ever. I just wanted to congratulate you. I have no doubt you will be a fantastic President.

Zelensky: First of all, thank you so very much again for the congratulations. We in Ukraine are an independent country, an independent Ukraine. We're going to do everything for the people. You are, as I said, a great example. We are hoping we can expand on our jobs as you did. You will also be a great example for many. You are a great example for our new managers. I'd also like to invite you, if possible, to the

inauguration. I know how busy you are, but if it's possible for you to come to the inauguration ceremony, that would be great, great for you to do to be with us on that day.

The President: That's very nice. I'll look into that. And give us a date. At the very minimum, we'll have a great representative or more from the United States will be with you on that great day. So we will have somebody at a minimum, a very, very high level, and will be with you. Really an incredible day for an incredible achievement.

Zelensky: Again, thank you. We're looking forward to your visit, to the visit of a high level delegation, but there's no words that can describe our wonderful country, how nice, warm, and friendly our people are, how tasty and delicious our food is, and how wonderful Ukraine is. Words cannot describe our country, so it would be best for you to see it yourself. So if you can come, that would be great. So again, I invite you to come.

The President: Well, I agree with you about your country, and I look forward to it. When I owned Miss Universe, they always had great people, Ukraine always very well represented, was always very well represented. When you are settled in and ready, I'd like to invite you to the White House. We'll have a lot of things to talk about, but we're with you all the way.

Zelensky: Thank you for the invitation. We accept the invitation and look forward to the visit. Thank you again. The whole team and I are looking forward to the visit. Thank you for the congratulations, and I think it will still be great if you could come and be with us on this important day. The results are incredible. They're very impressive for us. So it will be absolutely fantastic if you could come on that day.

The President: Very good. We'll let you know very soon. And we will see you very, very soon regardless. Congratulations. And please say hello to the Ukrainian

people and your family. Let them know I send my best regards.

Well, thank you -- Zelensky: Well, thank you. You have a safe flight and see you soon.

The President: Take care of yourself and give a great speech today. You take care of yourself, and I'll see you soon.

Zelensky: Thank you very much. It's difficult for me, but I will practice English, and I will meet in English. Thank you very much.

The President, laughing: Oh, that's beautiful to hear. That's really good. I could not do it in your language. I'm very impressed. Thank you so much.

Zelensky: Thank you so much.

The President: Good day. Good luck.

I was able to read that into the record so now the American people know the very first call that President Trump had with President Zelensky.

And with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

[The statement of Mr. Nunes follows:]

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Ms. Stefanik. Mr. Chairman, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The Chairman. The gentlewoman is not recognized.

I do want to comment and allow --

Ms. Stefanik. Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order under H. Res. 660.

The Chairman. The gentlewoman will state her point of order.

Ms. Stefanik. The point of order is, will the chairman continue to prohibit witnesses from answering Republican questions as you've done in closed hearings and as you did --

The Chairman. The gentlewoman will suspend. That is not a proper --

Ms. Stefanik. -- this week when you interrupted our question?

The Chairman. That is not a proper point of order. The gentlewoman will suspend.

Mr. Jordan. Mr. Chairman, I have --

The Chairman. The gentleman is not recognized.

Mr. Jordan. Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order.

The Chairman. The gentleman is not recognized.

Mr. Jordan. I have a point of order, though.

The Chairman. The gentleman is not recognized.

I do want to respond and allow the ranking member --

Mr. Jordan. I have a point of order.

The Chairman. The gentleman is not recognized.

Mr. Jordan. Mr. Chairman --

The Chairman. The gentleman --

Mr. Jordan. -- there are four transcripts that have not been released.

The Chairman. The gentleman is not recognized.

Mr. Jordan. Holy cow.

The Chairman. The ranking member was allowed to exceed the opening statement, and I was happy to allow him to do so.

I do want to respond to the call record. First of all, I'm grateful that the President has released the call record. I would now ask the President to release the thousands of other records that he has instructed the State Department not to release, including Ambassador Taylor's notes, including Ambassador Taylor's cable, including George Kent's memo, including documents from the Office of Management and Budget about why the military aid was withheld, including --

Mr. Jordan. Mr. Chairman, I want you to release the four transcripts of depositions.

The Chairman. The gentleman is not recognized. The gentleman will suspend.

Mr. Jordan. That's my point of order.

The Chairman. The gentleman will suspend.

Mr. Jordan. Gee.

The Chairman. We would ask the President to stop obstructing the impeachment inquiry. And while we are grateful he has released a single document, he has nonetheless obstructed witnesses in their testimony and the production of thousands and thousands of other records.

And finally, I would say this: Mr. President, I hope you'll explain to the country today why it was after this call and while the Vice President was making plans to attend the inauguration that you instructed the Vice President not to attend Zelensky's inauguration.

Today --

Ms. Stefanik. Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I have a point of order under --

The Chairman. The gentlewoman is not recognized.

Ms. Stefanik. So we know clearly you're going to interrupt us throughout this hearing.

The Chairman. The gentlewoman is not recognized.

Today --

Mr. Conaway. Mr. Chairman, I have a unanimous consent request.

The Chairman. Today -- no.

Mr. Conaway. Mr. Chairman, I have a unanimous consent request.

The Chairman. The gentleman is not recognized.

Today we are joined by Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch. She was born in Canada to parents who fled the Soviet Union and the Nazis. Ambassador Yovanovitch emigrated to Connecticut at 3, became a naturalized American at 18, and entered the U.S. Foreign Service in 1986.

She has served as U.S. ambassador three times and has been nominated by Presidents of both parties. George W. Bush nominated her to be ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic, where she served from 2005 to 2008. President Obama then nominated her to be U.S. ambassador to Armenia, where she served from 2008 until 2011, and U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, where she served from 2016 until she was recalled to Washington by President Trump this May.

Beyond these ambassadorial posts, she has held numerous other senior positions at the State Department, including in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. She served as a dean at the Foreign Service Institute and taught national security strategy at the Defense University. She also previously served at U.S. Embassies in Kyiv, Ottawa,

Moscow, London, and Mogadishu.

Ambassador Yovanovitch has received multiple honors from the Department for her diplomatic work, including the Presidential Distinguished Service Award and the Secretary's Diplomacy in Human Rights Award.

Two final points before our witness is sworn.

First, witness depositions as part of this inquiry were unclassified in nature and all open hearings will also be held at the unclassified level. Any information that may touch on classified information will be addressed separately.

Second, Congress will not tolerate any reprisal, threat of reprisal, or attempt to retaliate against any U.S. Government official for testifying before Congress, including you or any of your colleagues.

If you would please rise and raise your right hand, I will begin by swearing you in.

Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I do.

The Chairman. Let the record show that the witness has answered in the affirmative.

Thank you, and please be seated.

Without objection, your written statement will be made part of the record.

With that, Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch, you are recognized for your opening statement.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Nunes, and other members of the committee --

The Chairman. And, Ambassador, you'll need to speak very close to the microphone.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Thank you for the opportunity to start with this statement, to reintroduce myself to the committee, and to highlight parts of my biography and experience.

I come before you as an American citizen who has devoted the majority of my life, 33 years, to service to the country that all of us love.

Like my colleagues, I entered the Foreign Service understanding that my job was to implement the foreign policy interests of this Nation as defined by the President and Congress and to do so regardless of which person or party was in power. I had no agenda other than to pursue our stated foreign policy goals.

My service is an expression of gratitude for all that this country has given to me and to my family. My late parents did not have the good fortune to come of age in a free society. My father fled the Soviets before ultimately finding refuge in the United States. My mother's family escaped the USSR after the Bolshevik Revolution, and she grew up stateless in Nazi Germany, before also eventually making her way to the United States.

Their personal histories, my personal history, gave me both deep gratitude towards the United States and great empathy for others like the Ukrainian people who want to be free.

I joined the Foreign Service during the Reagan administration and subsequently served three other Republican Presidents as well as two Democratic Presidents. It was my great honor to be appointed to serve as an ambassador three times, twice by George W. Bush and once by Barack Obama.

There is a perception that diplomats lead a comfortable life, throwing dinner parties in fancy homes. Let me tell you about some of my reality. It has not always been easy. I have moved 13 times and served in 7 different countries, 5 of them

hardship posts.

My first tour was Mogadishu, Somalia, an increasingly dangerous place as that country's civil war kept grinding on, and the government was weakening. The military took over policing functions in a particularly brutal way, and basic services disappeared.

Several years later, after the Soviet Union collapsed, I helped open our embassy in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. As we were establishing relations with a new country, our small embassy was attacked by a gunman who sprayed the embassy building with gunfire.

I later served in Moscow. In 1993, during the attempted coup in Russia, I was caught in crossfire between Presidential and parliamentary forces. It took us three tries, me without a helmet or body armor, to get into a vehicle to go to the embassy. We went because the ambassador asked us to come, and we went because it was our duty.

From August 2016 until May 2019, I served as the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine. During my tenure in Ukraine, I went to the front line approximately 10 times during a hot war to show the American flag, to hear what was going on, sometimes literally as we heard the impact of artillery, and to see how our assistance dollars were being put to use.

I worked to advance U.S. policy, fully embraced by Democrats and Republicans alike, to help Ukraine become a stable and independent democratic state with a market economy integrated into Europe.

A secure, democratic, and free Ukraine serves not just the Ukrainian people, but the American people as well. That's why it was our policy and continues to be our policy to help the Ukrainians achieve their objectives. They match our objectives.

The U.S. is the most powerful country in the history of the world in large part because of our values, and our values have made possible the network of alliances and partnerships that buttresses our own strength.

Ukraine, with an enormous land mass and a large population, has the potential to

be a significant commercial and political partner for the United States as well as a force multiplier on the security side.

We see the potential in Ukraine. Russia sees, by contrast, sees the risk.

The history is not written yet, but Ukraine could move out of Russia's orbit. And now Ukraine is a battleground for great power competition with a hot war for the control of territory and a hybrid war to control Ukraine's leadership.

The U.S. has provided significant security assistance since the onset of the war against Russia in 2014, and the Trump administration strengthened our policy by approving the provision to Ukraine of antitank missiles, known as Javelins.

Supporting Ukraine is the right thing to do. It's also the smart thing to do. If Russia prevails and Ukraine falls to Russian dominion, we can expect to see other attempts by Russia to expand its territory and its influence.

As critical as the war against Russia is, Ukraine's struggling democracy has an equally important challenge: battling the Soviet legacy of corruption which has pervaded Ukraine's government.

Corruption makes Ukraine's leaders ever vulnerable to Russia, and the Ukrainian people understand that. That's why they launched the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, demanding to be a part of Europe, demanding the transformation of the system, demanding to live under the rule of law.

Ukrainians wanted the law to apply equally to all people, whether the individual in question is the President or any other citizen. It was a question of fairness, of dignity.

Here again, there is a coincidence of interests. Corrupt leaders are inherently less trustworthy while an honest and accountable Ukrainian leadership makes a U.S.-Ukrainian partnership more reliable and more valuable to the United States.

A level playing field in this strategically located country, bordering four NATO

allies, creates an environment in which U.S. business can more easily trade, invest, and profit.

Corruption is also a security issue, because corrupt officials are vulnerable to Moscow.

In short, it is in America's national security interest to help Ukraine transform into a country where the rule of law governs and corruption is held in check. It was and remains a top U.S. priority to help Ukraine fight corruption, and significant progress has been made since the 2014 Revolution of Dignity.

Unfortunately, as the past couple of months have underlined, not all Ukrainians embraced our anticorruption work. Thus, perhaps, it was not surprising that when our anticorruption efforts got in the way of a desire for profit or power, Ukrainians who preferred to play by the old corrupt rules sought to remove me.

What continues to amaze me is that they found Americans willing to partner with them, and working together, they apparently conceded in orchestrating the removal of a U.S. ambassador.

How could our system fail like this? How is it that foreign corrupt interests could manipulate our government? Which countries' interests are served when the very corrupt behavior we have been criticizing is allowed to prevail?

Such conduct undermines the U.S., exposes our friends, and widens the playing field for autocrats like President Putin. Our leadership depends on the power of our example and the consistency of our purpose. Both have now been opened to question.

With that background in mind, I'd like to briefly address some of the factual issues I expect you may want to ask me about, starting with my timeline in Ukraine and the events about which I do and do not have firsthand knowledge.

I arrived in Ukraine on August 22nd, 2016, and left Ukraine permanently on May

20th, 2019. There are a number of events you are investigating to which I cannot bring any firsthand knowledge. The events that predated my Ukraine service include the release of the so-called black ledger and Mr. Manafort's subsequent resignation from President Trump's campaign and the departure from office of former Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin.

Several other events occurred after I returned from Ukraine. These include President Trump's July 25th, 2019, call with President Zelensky, the discussions surrounding that phone call, and any discussions surrounding the delay of security assistance to Ukraine in the summer of 2019.

As for events during my tenure in Ukraine, I want to reiterate first that the allegation that I disseminated a do not prosecute list was a fabrication. Mr. Lutsenko, the former Ukrainian prosecutor general who made that allegation, has acknowledged that the list never existed. I did not tell Mr. Lutsenko or other Ukrainian officials who they should or should not prosecute.

Instead, I advocated the U.S. position that rule of law should prevail, and Ukrainian law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges should stop wielding their power selectively as a political weapon against their adversaries and start dealing with all consistently and according to the law.

Also untrue are unsourced allegations that I told unidentified embassy employees or Ukrainian officials that President Trump's orders should be ignored because he was going to be impeached or for any other reason. I did not, and I would not say such a thing. Such statements would be inconsistent with my training as a Foreign Service officer and my role as an ambassador.

The Obama administration did not ask me to help the Clinton campaign or harm the Trump campaign, nor would I have taken any such steps if they had. Partisanship of

this type is not compatible with the role of a career Foreign Service officer.

I have never met Hunter Biden, nor have I had any direct or indirect conversations with him. And although I have met former Vice President Biden several times over the course of our many years in government service, neither he nor the previous administration ever raised the issue of either Burisma or Hunter Biden with me.

With respect to Mayor Giuliani, I have had only minimal contact with him, a total of three, none related to the events at issue. I do not understand Mr. Giuliani's motives for attacking me, nor can I offer an opinion on whether he believed the allegations he spread about me. Clearly, no one at the State Department did.

What I can say is that Mr. Giuliani should have known those claims were suspect, coming, as they reportedly did, from individuals with questionable motives and with reason to believe that their political and financial ambitions would be stymied by our anticorruption policy in Ukraine.

After being asked by the under secretary of state for political affairs in early March 2019 to extend my tour until 2020, the smear campaign against me entered a new public phase in the United States. In the wake of the negative press, State Department officials suggested an earlier departure, and we agreed upon July 2019. I was then abruptly told, just weeks later in late April, to come back to Washington from Ukraine on the next plane.

At the time I departed, Ukraine had just concluded game-changing Presidential elections. It was a sensitive period, with much at stake for the United States, and called for all the experience and expertise we could muster.

When I returned to the United States, Deputy Secretary of State Sullivan told me there had been a concerted campaign against me, that the President no longer wished me to serve as ambassador to Ukraine, and that, in fact, the President had been pushing

for my removal since the prior summer.

As Mr. Sullivan recently recounted during his Senate confirmation hearing, neither he nor anyone else ever explained or sought to justify the President's concerns about me, nor did anyone in the Department justify my early departure by suggesting I had done something wrong. I appreciate that Mr. Sullivan publicly affirmed at his hearing that I have served capably and admirably.

Although then and now I have always understood that I served at the pleasure of the President, I still find it difficult to comprehend that foreign and private interests were able to undermine U.S. interests in this way.

Individuals who apparently felt stymied by our efforts to promote stated U.S. policy against corruption, that is, to do our mission, were able to successfully conduct a campaign of disinformation against a sitting ambassador using unofficial back channels.

As various witnesses have recounted, they shared baseless allegations with the President and convinced him to remove his ambassador despite the fact that the State Department fully understood that the allegations were false and the sources highly suspect.

These events should concern everyone in this room. Ambassadors are the symbol of the United States abroad. They are the personal representative of the President. They should always act and speak with full authority to advocate for U.S. policies. If our chief representative is kneecapped it limits our effectiveness to safeguard the vital national security interests of the United States.

This is especially important now when the international landscape is more complicated and more competitive than it has been since the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Our Ukraine policy has been thrown into disarray, and shady interests the world

over have learned how little it takes to remove an American ambassador who does not give them what they want.

After these events, what foreign official, corrupt or not, could be blamed for wondering whether the U.S. ambassador represents the President's views? And what U.S. ambassador could be blamed for harboring the fear they can't count on our government to support them as they implement stated U.S. policy and protect and defend U.S. interests?

I'd like to comment on one other matter before taking your questions.

At the closed deposition, I expressed grave concerns about the degradation of the Foreign Service over the past few years and the failure of State Department leadership to push back as foreign and corrupt interests apparently hijacked our Ukraine policy. I remain disappointed that the Department's leadership and others have declined to acknowledge that the attacks against me and others are dangerously wrong.

This is about far, far more than me or a couple of individuals. As Foreign Service professionals are being denigrated and undermined, the institution is also being degraded. This will soon cause real harm if it hasn't already.

The State Department, as a tool of foreign policy, often doesn't get the same kind of attention or even respect as the military might of the Pentagon. But we are, as they say, the pointy end of the spear. If we lose our edge, the U.S. will inevitably have to use other tools even more than it does today, and those other tools are blunter, more expensive, and not universally effective.

Moreover, attacks are leading to a crisis in the State Department as the policy process is visibly unraveling. Leadership vacancies go unfilled, and senior and midlevel officers ponder an uncertain future.

The crisis has moved from the impact on individuals to an impact on the

institution itself. The State Department is being hollowed out from within at a competitive and complex time on the world stage. This is not a time to undercut our diplomats.

It is the responsibility of the Department's leaders to stand up for the institution and the individuals who make that institution still today the most effective diplomatic force in the world.

And Congress has a responsibility to reinvest in our diplomacy. That's an investment in our national security. It's an investment in our future, in our children's future.

As I close, let me be clear on who we are and how we serve this country. We are professionals, we are public servants who by vocation and training pursue the policies of the President, regardless of who holds that office or what party they affiliate with. We handle American citizen services, facilitate trade and commerce, work security issues, represent the U.S., and report to and advise Washington, to mention just some of our functions. And we make a difference every day. We are people who repeatedly uproot our lives, who risk and sometimes give our lives for this country.

We are the 52 Americans who 40 years ago this month began 444 days of deprivation, torture, and captivity in Tehran.

We are the dozens of Americans stationed at our embassy in Cuba, in consulates in China, who mysteriously and dangerously, and in some cases perhaps even permanently, were injured and attacked from unknown sources several years ago.

And we are Ambassador Chris Stevens, Sean Patrick Smith, Ty Woods, and Glen Doherty, people rightly called heroes for their ultimate sacrifice to this Nation's foreign policy interests in Libya 8 years ago.

We honor these individuals. They represent each one of you here and every

American. These courageous individuals were attacked because they symbolized America.

What you need to know, what Americans need to know, is that while, thankfully, most of us answer the call to duty in far less dramatic ways, every Foreign Service officer runs the same risks.

And very often so do our families. They serve, too. As individuals, as a community, we answer the call to duty to advance and protect the interests of the United States.

We take our oath seriously, the same oath that each one of you takes to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and to bear true faith and allegiance to the same.

I count myself lucky to be a Foreign Service officer, fortunate to serve with the best America has to offer, blessed to serve the American people for the last 33 years.

I thank you for your attention. I welcome your questions.

[The statement of Ambassador Yovanovitch follows:]

\*\*\*\*\* COMMITTEE INSERT \*\*\*\*\*

The Chairman. Thank you, Ambassador. We count ourselves lucky to have you serve the country as you have for decades.

We will now move to the 45-minute rounds. I recognize myself and majority counsel for 45 minutes.

Ambassador Yovanovitch, thank you again for appearing today. All Americans are deeply in your debt. Before I hand it over to Mr. Goldman, our staff counsel, I want to ask you about a few of the pivotal events of interest to the country.

First of all, was fighting corruption in Ukraine a key element of U.S. policy and one on which you placed the highest priority?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, it was.

The Chairman. And can you explain why?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. It was important -- and it was actually stated in our policy and in our strategy -- it was important because corruption was undermining the integrity of the governance system in Ukraine.

And as I noted in my statement, countries that have leaders that are honest and trustworthy make better partners for us. Countries where there is a level playing field for our U.S. business makes it easier for our companies to do business there, to trade and to profit in those countries. And what had been happening since the Soviet Union, and this is very much a Soviet legacy, is that corrupt interests were undermining not only the governance, but also the economy of Ukraine.

We see enormous potential in Ukraine and would like to have a more capable, more trustworthy partner there.

The Chairman. And I know this may be awkward for you to answer since it's a question about yourself and your reputation, but is it fair to say that you earned a

reputation for being a champion of anticorruption efforts in Ukraine?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. Yes.

The Chairman. I don't know if you had a chance to watch George Kent's testimony yesterday, but would you agree with his rather frank assessment that if you fight corruption, you're going to piss off some corrupt people?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

The Chairman. And in your efforts fighting corruption to advance U.S. policy interests, did you anger some of the corrupt leaders in Ukraine?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

The Chairman. Was one of those corrupt people Prosecutor General Yuriy Lutsenko?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, I believe so.

The Chairman. Was another one of those corrupt people Lutsenko's predecessor, another corrupt prosecutor general named Viktor Shokin?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Apparently so, although I've never met him.

The Chairman. At some point, did you come to learn that both Lutsenko and Shokin were in touch with Rudy Giuliani, President Trump's lawyer and representative?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

The Chairman. In fact, did Giuliani try to overturn a decision that you participated in to deny Shokin a visa?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. That is what I was told.

The Chairman. And that denial was based on Mr. Shokin's corruption?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that's true.

The Chairman. And was it Mr. Lutsenko, among others, who coordinated with Mr. Giuliani to peddle false accusations against you as well as the Bidens?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that is my understanding.

The Chairman. And were these smears also amplified by the President's son, Donald Trump, Jr., as well as certain hosts on FOX?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. Yes, that is the case.

The Chairman. In the face of this smear campaign, did colleagues at the State Department try to get a statement of support for you from Secretary Pompeo?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

The Chairman. Were they successful?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

The Chairman. Did you come to learn that they couldn't issue such a statement because they feared it would be undercut by the President?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

The Chairman. And then were you told that though you had done nothing wrong, you did not enjoy the confidence of the President and could no longer serve as ambassador?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that is correct.

The Chairman. And, in fact, you flew home from Kyiv on the same day as the inauguration of Ukraine's new President?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's true.

The Chairman. That inauguration was attended by three who have become known as the Three Amigos, Ambassadors Sondland, Volker, and Perry, was it?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

The Chairman. And 3 days after that inauguration, in a meeting with President Trump, are you aware that the President designated these Three Amigos to coordinate Ukraine policy with Rudy Giuliani?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Since then, I have become aware of that.

The Chairman. This is the same Rudy Giuliani who orchestrated the smear campaign against you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

The Chairman. And the same Rudy Giuliani who, during the now infamous July 25th phone call, the President recommended to Zelensky in the context of the two investigations the President wanted into the 2016 election and the Bidens?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

The Chairman. And finally, Ambassador, in that July 25th phone call the President praises one of these corrupt former Ukrainian prosecutors and says they were treated very unfairly. They were treated unfairly, not you who was smeared and recalled, but one of them.

What message does that send to your colleagues in the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I'm just not sure what the basis for that kind of a statement would be, certainly not from our reporting over years.

The Chairman. Did you have concern, though, and do you have concern today about what message the President's action sends to the people who are still in Ukraine representing the United States when a well-respected ambassador can be smeared out of her post with the participation and acquiescence of the President of the United States?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, it's, I think, been a big hit from around both at U.S. Embassy Kyiv, but also more broadly in the State Department.

The Chairman. Is it fair to say that other ambassadors and others of lesser rank who serve the United States in embassies around the world might look at this and think, "If I take on corrupt people in these countries, that could happen to me"?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think that's a fair statement, yes.

The Chairman. Mr. Goldman.

Mr. Goldman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Yovanovitch, on April 24th of this year, at approximately 10 p.m., you received a telephone call while you were at the embassy in Kyiv from the director general of the State Department. This was just 3 days after President Zelensky's election and the call between President Trump and President Zelensky that we just heard from Ranking Member Nunes.

At the time that this urgent call came in, what were you in the middle of doing?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I was hosting an event in honor of Kateryna Handziuk, who is an anticorruption activist -- was an anticorruption activist in Ukraine. We had given her the Women of Courage award from Ukraine. And, in fact, the worldwide Women of Courage event -- at the worldwide Women of Courage event in Washington, D.C., Secretary Pompeo singled her out for her amazing work in Ukraine to fight corrupt interests in the south of Ukraine.

She very tragically died because she was attacked by acid, and several months later died a very, very painful death. We thought it was important that justice be done for Kateryna Handziuk and for others who fight corruption in Ukraine because this is -- it is not a, you know, kind of a tabletop exercise there. Lives are in the balance.

And so we wanted to bring attention to this. We held an event and gave her father -- who, of course, is still mourning her -- that award, the Women of Courage event.

Mr. Goldman. And her Women of Courage award stemmed from her anticorruption efforts in Ukraine?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that is true.

Mr. Goldman. Was it ever determined who threw the acid and killed her?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. There have been investigations, but while some of the

lower ranking individuals that were involved in this have been arrested, those who ordered this have not yet been apprehended.

Mr. Goldman. After you stepped away from this anticorruption event to take this call, what did the director general tell you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. She said that there was great concern on the seventh floor of the State Department. That's where the leadership of the State Department sits. There was great concern. They were worried. She just wanted to give me a heads up about this. And, you know, things seemed to be going on, and so she just wanted to give me a heads-up.

I -- you know, it's hard to know how to react to something like that. I asked her what it was about, what did she think it was about. She didn't know. She said that she was going to try and find out more, but she had wanted to give me a heads-up. In fact, I think she may have even been instructed to give me a heads-up on that.

And so I asked her, you know, kind of what is the next step here. So she said she would try to find out more, and she would try to call me by midnight.

Mr. Goldman. What happened next?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Around 1 o'clock in the morning she called me again, and she said that there were great concerns, there were concerns up the street, and she said I needed to get on -- come home immediately, get on the next plane to the U.S.

And I asked her why, and she said she wasn't sure, but there were concerns about my security. I asked her, my physical security? Because sometimes Washington knows more than we do about these things. And she said no, she hadn't gotten that impression that it was a physical security issue, but they were concerned about my security, and I needed to come home right away.

You know, I argued this is extremely irregular, and no reason given. But in the

end, I did get on the next plane home.

Mr. Goldman. You said there were concerns up the street. What did you understand that to mean?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. The White House.

Mr. Goldman. Did she explain in any more detail what she meant by concerns about your security?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No, she didn't. I did specifically ask whether this had to do with the -- Mayor Giuliani's allegations against me and so forth, and she said she didn't know. It didn't even actually appear to me that she seemed to be aware of that. No reason was offered.

Mr. Goldman. Did she explain what the urgency was for you to come back on the next flight?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. The only thing that's pertinent to that was that when she said that there were -- there were concerns about my security. That's all. But it was not further explained.

Mr. Goldman. Now, prior to this abrupt call back to Washington, D.C., had you been offered an extension of your post by the State Department?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. Under secretary -- the under secretary for political affairs had asked whether I would extend for another year, departing in July of 2020.

Mr. Goldman. When was that request made?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. In early March.

Mr. Goldman. So about a month and a half before this call?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. Did anyone at the State Department ever express concerns about

your job performance?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Goldman. Now, after you returned to Washington a couple days after that, you met with the deputy secretary of state, and at your deposition, you said that the deputy secretary of state told you that you had done nothing wrong but that there was a concerted campaign against you. What did he mean by that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I'm not exactly sure, but I took it to mean that the allegations that Mayor Giuliani and others were putting out there, that that's -- that that's what it was.

Mr. Goldman. And who else was involved in this concerted campaign against you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. There were some members of the press and others in Mayor Giuliani's circle.

Mr. Goldman. And who from Ukraine?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. In Ukraine, I think -- well, Mr. Lutsenko, the prosecutor general. Mr. Shokin, his predecessor, certainly.

Mr. Goldman. And at this time, Mr. Lutsenko was the lead prosecutor general. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Goldman. And had President Zelensky indicated whether or not he was going to keep him on after the election?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. He had indicated he would not be keeping on Mr. Lutsenko.

Mr. Goldman. And I believe you testified earlier that Mr. Lutsenko had a reputation for being corrupt. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's correct.

Mr. Goldman. Now, during this conversation, did the deputy secretary tell you about your future as the ambassador to Ukraine?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, he told me I needed to leave.

Mr. Goldman. What did he say?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. He said that -- I mean, there was a lot of back and forth, but ultimately he said the words that, you know, every Foreign Service officer understands: The President has lost confidence in you. That was, you know, a terrible thing to hear. And I said well, you know, I guess I have to go, then.

But no -- no real reason was offered as to why I had to leave and why it was being done in such a manner.

Mr. Goldman. Did you have any indication that the State Department had lost confidence in you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

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[10:06 a.m.]

Mr. Goldman. And were you provided any reason why the President lost confidence in you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Goldman. Now, you testified at your deposition that you were told, at some point, that Secretary Pompeo had tried to protect you, but that he was no longer able to do that. Were you aware of these efforts to protect you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No, I was not, until that meeting with Deputy Secretary Sullivan.

Mr. Goldman. Did you understand who he was trying to protect you from?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, my understanding was that the President had wanted me to leave, and there was some discussion about that over the prior months.

Mr. Goldman. Did you have any understanding why Secretary Pompeo was no longer able to protect you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No. It was just a statement made that he was no longer able to protect me.

Mr. Goldman. So just like that, you had to leave Ukraine as soon as possible?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. How did that make you feel?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Terrible, honestly. I mean, after 33 years of service to our country, it was terrible. It's not the way I wanted my career to end.

Mr. Goldman. Now, you also told this Deputy Secretary that this was a dangerous precedent. What did you mean by that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I was worried -- I was worried about our policy, but also personnel, that -- and I asked him, how -- how are you going to explain this to people in the State Department, the press, the public, Ukrainians? Because everybody is watching. And so, if people see somebody who -- and, of course, it had been very public frankly, the attacks on me by Mayor Giuliani and others and Mr. Lutsenko in Ukraine -- if people see that I, who have been, you know, promoting our policies on anti-corruption, if they can undermine me and get me pulled out of Ukraine, what does that mean for our policy? Do we still have that same policy? How are we going to affirmatively put that forward, number one.

Number two, when other countries, other actors, and other countries see that private interests, foreign interests, can come together and get a U.S. ambassador removed, what's going to stop them from doing that in the future in other countries? Often the work we do, we try to be diplomatic about it, but as Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent said, you know, sometimes we get people really angry with us. It's uncomfortable. And we are doing our jobs, but sometimes people become very angry with us. And if they realize that they can just remove us, they're going to do that.

Mr. Goldman. How did the Deputy Secretary respond?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. He said those were good questions, and he would get back to me.

Mr. Goldman. Did he ever get back to you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. He asked to see me the following day.

Mr. Goldman. What did he say to you then?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. He -- really the conversation was more -- and, you know, again, I'm grateful for this -- but really more to see how I was doing, and, you know, what would I do next, kind of -- how could he help.

Mr. Goldman. But he didn't address the dangerous precedent that you flagged for him?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Goldman. Now, you understood, of course, that the President of the United States could remove you and that you served at the pleasure of the President. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's right.

Mr. Goldman. But in your 33 years as a Foreign Service officer, have you ever heard of a President of the United States recalling another ambassador without cause based on allegations that the State Department itself knew to be false?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Goldman. Now, you testified in your opening statement that you had left Ukraine by the time of the July 25th call between President Trump and President Zelensky. When was the first time that you saw the call record for this phone call?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. When it was released publicly at the end of September, I believe.

Mr. Goldman. And prior to reading that call record, were you aware that President Trump had specifically made reference to you in that call?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Goldman. What was your reaction to learning that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I was shocked. Absolutely shocked. And devastated, frankly.

Mr. Goldman. What do you mean by "devastated"?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I was shocked and devastated that I would feature in a phone call between two heads of state in such a manner where President Trump said

that I was bad news to another world leader, and that I would be going through some things. So I was -- it was -- it was a terrible moment. A person who saw me actually reading the transcript said that the color drained from my face. I think I even had a physical reaction. I think, you know, even now, words kind of fail me.

Mr. Goldman. Well, without upsetting you too much, I'd like to show you the excerpts from the call, and the first one, where President Trump says, "The former ambassador from the United States, the woman, was bad news, and the people she was dealing with in the Ukraine were bad news, so I just want to let you know." What was your reaction when you heard the President of the United States refer to you as "bad news"?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I couldn't believe it. I mean, again, shocked, appalled, devastated, that the President of the United States would talk about any ambassador like that to a foreign head of state. And it was me. I mean, I couldn't believe it.

Mr. Goldman. The next excerpt when the President references you is a short one, but he said, "Well, she's going to go through some things." What did you think when President Trump told President Zelensky and you read that you were going to go through some things?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I didn't know what to think, but I was very concerned.

Mr. Goldman. What were you concerned about?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. She's going to go through some things. It didn't sound good. It sounded like a threat.

Mr. Goldman. Did you feel threatened?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I did.

Mr. Goldman. How so?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I didn't know exactly. It's not, you know, a very precise phrase, but I think it didn't feel like I was -- I really don't know how to answer the question any further except to say that it kind of felt like a vague threat, and so, I wondered what that meant. It concerned me.

Mr. Goldman. Now, in the same call where the President, as you just said, threatens you, to a foreign leader, he also praises, rather, the corrupt Ukraine prosecutor who led the false smear campaign against you. I want to show you another excerpt or two from the transcript, or the call record rather, where the President of the United States says, "Good, because I heard you had a prosecutor who was very good and he was shut down, and that's really unfair. A lot of people are talking about that, the way they shut your very good prosecutor down, and you had some very bad people involved."

And he went on later to say, "I heard the prosecutor was treated very badly, and he was a very fair prosecutor. So good luck with everything."

Now, Ambassador Yovanovitch, after nearly 3 years in Ukraine where you tried to clean up the prosecutor general's office, was it the U.S. embassy's view that the former prosecutor general was a very good and very fair prosecutor?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No, it was not.

Mr. Goldman. And in fact, he was rather corrupt. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That was our belief.

Mr. Goldman. The prosecutor general's office is a long running problem in Ukraine. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. So how did you feel when you heard President Trump speak so highly of the corrupt Ukrainian prosecutor who helped to execute the smear campaign to have you removed?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, it was disappointing. It was concerning. It wasn't certainly based on anything that the State Department would have reported, or frankly anybody else in the U.S. Government. There was an interagency consensus that while -- when Mr. Lutsenko came into office, we were very hopeful that he would actually do the things that he said he would set out to do, including reforming the prosecutor general's office, but that did not materialize.

Mr. Goldman. So this was not the uniform position of the official U.S. policymakers. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Right.

Mr. Goldman. Now, let's go back to the smear campaign that you referenced, and in March, when you said it became public, and you previously testified that you had learned that Rudy Giuliani, President Trump's lawyer and representative, who was also mentioned in that July 25th call, was in regular communication with the corrupt prosecutor general in late 2018 and early 2019. And at one point in your deposition, you said that they -- that being Giuliani and the corrupt foreign prosecutor general -- had plans to, quote, "do things to me." What did you mean by that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I didn't -- I didn't really know, but that's what I had been told by Ukrainian officials.

Mr. Goldman. Did you subsequently understand a little bit more what that meant?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, you know, now, with the advantage of hindsight, I think that meant removing me from my job in Ukraine.

Mr. Goldman. Who did you understand to be working with Mr. Giuliani as his associates in Ukraine?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, certainly, Mr. Lutsenko, Mr. Shokin. I believe

that they were also Ukrainian Americans, Mr. Parnas and Mr. Fruman, who have recently been indicted.

Mr. Goldman. Those are the two who have been indicted in New York?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Southern District of New York.

Mr. Goldman. Now, at the end of March, this effort by Giuliani and his associates, resulted in a series of articles in The Hill publication that were based on allegations in part from Lutsenko, the corrupt prosecutor general. And just to summarize some of these allegations, there were, among others, three different categories: One category included the attacks against you, which you referenced in your opening statement, including that you had bad-mouthed the President, and had given the prosecutor general a do-not-prosecute list. There was another that included allegations of Ukrainian interference in the 2016 election. And then there was a third that related to allegations concerning Burisma and the Bidens. Is that accurate?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. Were these articles and allegations then promoted by others associated with the President in the United States?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. They seemed to be promoted by those around Mayor Giuliani.

Mr. Goldman. I'm going to show you a couple of exhibits, including a tweet here by President Trump himself on March 20th, which was the first day that one of these articles was published. It appears to be a quote that says, John Solomon, who is the author of the articles, colon, as Russia collusion fades, Ukrainian plot to help Clinton emerges, unquote, @SeanHannity, @FoxNews.

And then if I could go to another tweet 4 days later, this is the President's son, Donald Trump, Jr., who tweets, "We need more @RichardGrenells," who is the

ambassador to Germany -- is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's correct.

Mr. Goldman. -- "and less of these jokers as ambassadors." And it's a retweet of one of John Solomon's articles, or an article referencing the allegations that says, "Calls grow to remove Obama's U.S. ambassador to Ukraine." Were you aware of these tweets at the time?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. What was your reaction to seeing this?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I was worried.

Mr. Goldman. What were you worried about?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That this didn't seem -- these attacks were, you know, being repeated by the President himself and his son.

Mr. Goldman. And were you aware whether they received attention on prime time television on Fox News as well?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, I did.

Mr. Goldman. Now, was the allegation that you were bad-mouthing President Trump true?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Goldman. Was the allegation that you had created a do-not-prosecute list to give to the prosecutor general in Ukraine true?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Goldman. In fact, didn't the corrupt prosecutor general, himself, later recant those allegations?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. Now, when these articles were first published, did the State

Department issue a response?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. As you said, there was a series of articles, so after the first article, which was an interview with Mr. Lutsenko, and was only really about me, and made certain allegations about me, the State Department came out the following day with a very strong statement, saying that, you know, these allegations were fabrications.

Mr. Goldman. So the statement addressed the falsity of the allegations themselves?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. It didn't say anything about your job performance in any way?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. You know, honestly, I haven't looked at it in a very long time. I mean, it was generally probably laudatory, but I can't recall.

Mr. Goldman. Did anyone in the State Department raise any concerns with you or express any belief in these allegations?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No. I mean, people thought it was ridiculous.

Mr. Goldman. Now, after these false allegations were made against you, did you have any discussions with anyone in leadership in the State Department about a potential statement of support from the Department or the Secretary himself?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. After the tweets that you just showed us, I mean, it seemed to me that if the President's son is saying things like this, that it would be very hard to continue in my position and have authority in Ukraine, unless the State Department came out pretty strongly behind me. And so, you know, over -- over the weekend of, like, March 22nd -- I think that's about the date -- there was a lot of discussion on email among a number of people about what could be done. I and Under Secretary -- the Under Secretary for Political Affairs called me on Sunday, and I said, You know, it's really important that the Secretary, himself, come out and be supportive,

because otherwise it's hard for me to be the kind of representative you need here. And he said he would talk to the Secretary. I mean, that was -- that's my recollection of the call. That may not be exactly how it played out, but that was my recollection.

Mr. Goldman. This is David Hale, the Under Secretary of Political Affairs, as the number three person at the State Department?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. Did he indicate to you that he supported such a statement of support for you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think he must have, because I don't think he would have gone to the Secretary if he -- if he didn't support it. I mean, you wouldn't bring a bad idea to the Secretary of State.

Mr. Goldman. And your general understanding is that you did have the full support of the State Department. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. And, in fact, during your 33-year career as a Foreign Service officer, did you ever hear of any serious concerns about your job performance?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Goldman. Was this statement of support ultimately issued for you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No, it was not.

Mr. Goldman. Did you learn why not?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. Yes. I was told that there was a concern on the seventh floor that if a statement of support was issued, whether by the State Department or by the Secretary personally, that it could be undermined.

Mr. Goldman. How could it be undermined?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That the President might issue a tweet contradicting

that, or something to that effect.

Mr. Goldman. So let me see if I got this right. You were one of the most senior diplomats in the State Department. You've been there for 33 years. You've won numerous awards. You've been appointed as an ambassador three times by both Republican and Democratic Presidents, and the State Department would not issue a statement in support of you against false allegations because they were concerned about a tweet from the President of the United States?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's my understanding.

The Chairman. Just a moment, if I could follow up on that question, it seems like an appropriate time. Ambassador Yovanovitch, as we sit here testifying, the President is attacking you on Twitter, and I'd like to give you a chance to respond. I'll read part of one of his tweets. "Everywhere Marie Yovanovitch went turned bad. She started off in Somalia, how did that go?" He goes on to say, later in the tweet, "It is a U.S. President's absolute right to appoint ambassadors."

First of all, Ambassador Yovanovitch, the Senate has a chance to confirm or deny an ambassador, do they not?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. Advise and consent.

The Chairman. What would you like to respond to the President's attack that everywhere you went turned bad?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I mean, I don't think I have such powers, not in Mogadishu, Somalia, and not in other places. I actually think that where I've served over the years, I and others have demonstrably made things better, you know, for the U.S., as well as for the countries that I've served in.

Ukraine, for example, where there are huge challenges, including, you know, on the issue that we're discussing today, of corruption. Huge challenges. But they have

made a lot of progress since 2014, including in the years that I was there, and I think in part -- I mean, the Ukrainian people get the most credit for that, but a part of that credit goes to the work of the United States, and to me as the ambassador in Ukraine.

The Chairman. Ambassador, you've shown the courage to come forward today and testify. Notwithstanding the fact you were urged by the White House or State Department not to, notwithstanding the fact that as you testified earlier, the President implicitly threatened you in that call record; and now, the President, in real time, is attacking you, what effect do you think that has on other witnesses willingness to come forward and expose wrongdoing?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, it's very intimidating.

The Chairman. It's designed to intimidate, is it not?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I mean, I can't speak to what the President is trying to do, but I think the effect is to be intimidating.

The Chairman. Well, I want to let you know, Ambassador, that some of us here take witness intimidation very, very seriously. Mr. Goldman.

Mr. Goldman. Ambassador Yovanovitch, you indicated that those same articles in March that included the smear campaign also included allegations related to Ukraine's interference in the 2016 election, and the Burisma/Biden connection. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. So I'm going to end my questioning where we were before, which was the July 25th call. And President Trump not only insults you and praises the corrupt prosecutor general, but he also, as you know by now, references these two investigations. First, immediately after President Zelensky thanks President Trump for his, quote, "great support in the area of defense," unquote, President Trump responds, "I would like you to do us a favor, though, because our country has been through a lot and Ukraine knows a

lot about it. I would like you to find out what happened with this whole situation with Ukraine. They say CrowdStrike. I guess you have one of your wealthy people, the server, they say Ukraine has it." And then he goes on in that same paragraph to say, "Whatever you can do, it's very important that you do it, if that's possible."

Now, Ambassador Yovanovitch, from your experience as the ambassador in Ukraine for almost 3 years, and understanding that President Zelensky was not in politics before he ran for President, and was a new President on this call, how would you expect President Zelensky to interpret a request for a favor?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. The U.S. relationship for Ukraine is the single most important relationship. And so, I think that President Zelensky, any president, would, you know, do what they could to, you know, lean in on a favor request. I'm not saying that that's a yes, I'm saying they would try to lean in and see what they could do.

Mr. Goldman. Fair to say that a President of Ukraine that is so dependent on the United States would do just about anything within his power to please the President of the United States if he could?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. You know, if he could. I mean, I'm sure there are limits, and I understand there were a lot of discussions in the Ukrainian Government about all of this. But, yeah, I mean, we are an important relationship on the security side and on the political side. And so, the President of Ukraine, one of the most important functions that individual has, is to make sure the relationship with the U.S. is rock solid.

Mr. Goldman. Now, are you familiar with these allegations of Ukrainian interference in the 2016 election?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I mean, there have been rumors out there about things like that; but, you know, there was nothing hard, at least nothing that I was aware

of.

Mr. Goldman. There was nothing based in fact --

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Right.

Mr. Goldman. -- to support these allegations?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. And, in fact, who was responsible for interfering and meddling in the 2016 election?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, the U.S. Intelligence Community has concluded that it was Russia.

Mr. Goldman. Ambassador Yovanovitch, are you aware that in February of 2017, Vladimir Putin, himself, promoted this theory of Ukrainian interference in the 2016 election?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. You know, maybe I knew that once and have forgotten, but I'm not familiar with it now.

Mr. Goldman. Well, let me show you a press statement that President Putin made in a joint press conference with Viktor Orbán of Hungary on February 2nd of 2017, where he says, "Second, as we all know, during the Presidential campaign in the United States, the Ukrainian Government adopted a unilateral position in favor of one candidate. More than that, certain oligarchs, certainly with the approval of the political leadership, funded this candidate, or female candidate, to be more precise."

Now, how would this theory of Ukraine interference in the 2016 election be in Vladimir Putin's interest?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I mean, President Putin must have been aware that there were concerns in the U.S. about Russian meddling in the 2016 elections, and what the potential was for Russian meddling in the future. So, you know, classic for an

intelligence officer to try to throw off the scent and, you know, create an alternative narrative that maybe might get picked up and get some credence.

Mr. Goldman. An alternative narrative that would absolve his own wrongdoing?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah.

Mr. Goldman. And when he talks about an oligarch, and he talks about the support of the Ukrainian Government, there's also a reference in the July 25th call to a wealthy Ukrainian. Is it your understanding that what Vladimir Putin is saying here, in this press statement in February 2017, is similar to what President Trump says on the July 25th call related to the 2016 election?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Maybe.

Mr. Goldman. Now, let me show you another exhibit from the call related to the Bidens, which I'm sure you're familiar with. President Trump says, "The other thing, there's a lot of talk about Biden's son, that Biden stopped the prosecution, and a lot of people want to find out about that. So whatever you can do with the Attorney General would be great. Biden went around bragging that he stopped the prosecution. So if you can look into it, it sounds horrible to me." Now, are you familiar with the allegations, these allegations related to Vice President Biden?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. Do you know whether he ever went around bragging that he stopped the prosecution of anyone?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Goldman. And, in fact, when Vice President Biden acted to remove the former corrupt prosecutor in Ukraine, did he do so as part of official United States policy?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Official U.S. policy --

Mr. Goldman. And that was --

Ambassador Yovanovitch. -- endorsed and was the policy of a number of other international stakeholders, other countries, other monetary institutions, financial institutions.

Mr. Goldman. And in fact, if he helped to remove a corrupt Ukrainian prosecutor general, who was not prosecuting enough corruption, that would increase the chances that corrupt companies in Ukraine would be investigated. Isn't that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. One would think so.

Mr. Goldman. And that could include Burisma, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. Now, at the time of this call, Vice President Biden was the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination for President, and President Trump's potential next opponent in the election. Is it your understanding that President Trump's request to have Vice President Biden investigated, was that part of official U.S. policy as you knew it?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I should say that I had, at the time of this phone call, I had already departed Ukraine 2 months prior.

Mr. Goldman. Right. But you're familiar with -- it didn't change that much in 2 months, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. It certainly would not have been the policy in May when I left.

Mr. Goldman. And were these two investigations part of the anti-corruption platform that you championed in Ukraine for 3 years?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Goldman. And those investigations, do they appear to you to benefit the President's personal and political interests rather than the national interests?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, they certainly could.

Mr. Goldman. Now, just returning to the allegations in The Hill publication in March that were promoted by Mr. Giuliani, the President's lawyer, were those two allegations similar to the two allegations that the President wanted President Zelensky to investigate?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. So ultimately in the July 25th phone call with the Ukrainian President, the President of the United States endorsed the false allegations against you and the Bidens. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Conaway. Mr. Chairman, I have a parliamentary inquiry, please.

The Chairman. The gentleman will suspend. Votes are fairly imminent. We are going to take a brief recess. I would ask everyone to remain seated to allow the witness to exit the room and we will resume after votes.

Mr. Conaway. Mr. Chairman, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The Chairman. The gentleman can seek recognition after we resume.

We're in recess subject to the call of the chair.

[Recess.]

RPTR PANGBURN

EDTR CRYSTAL

[12:20 p.m.]

The Chairman. The committee will come to order.

Mr. Conaway. Mr. Chairman, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The Chairman. The gentleman will state his inquiry.

Mr. Conaway. Thank you, sir.

It appears that counsel for the witness this morning has paper copies of the slides that were used during the questioning. If that's true, does that mean that you and/or your team has been in coordination with him and/or her with respect to her testimony this morning? And if that's true, how does that comport with H. Res 660 and the fairness that is purportedly associated with that resolution?

The Chairman. The gentlemen -- the TV for the witnesses wasn't working, so they were given copies this morning.

It is now 45 minutes to Ranking Member Nunes and minority counsel.

Mr. Conaway. You said that the screen in front of them was not working?

The Chairman. My understanding is the screen was not working in front of them, so they were given copies so they could read along since they can't see the screens that we can.

Mr. Nunes, you are recognized for 45 minutes along with minority counsel.

Mr. Nunes. First, Mr. Chair, I want to submit for the record Senator Grassley's letter to the Department of Justice dated July 20th, 2017. I read a portion of that into the record during my opening statement.

The Chairman. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

\*\*\*\*\* COMMITTEE INSERT \*\*\*\*\*

Mr. Nunes. Ambassador, I congratulate you. You've been down in the secret deposition meeting rooms. You've graduated for your performance today.

Later this afternoon, I should note that -- to the public -- that we will be back down in the basement of the Capitol doing more of these secret depositions.

Ambassador, I just have -- I don't really have very many questions for you. You admitted in your opening statement that you don't have any firsthand knowledge of the issues that we're looking into. But I do want to talk a little bit about Senator Grassley very briefly.

I assume that you know who Senator Grassley is.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, sir, I do.

Mr. Nunes. Do you believe that Senator Grassley is a serious and credible elected official?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I have no reason to think otherwise.

Mr. Nunes. Were you involved in the July 25th Trump-Zelensky phone call or preparations for the call?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No, I was not.

Mr. Nunes. Were you involved in the deliberations about the pause in military sales to Ukraine as the Trump administration reviewed newly elected President Zelensky's commitment to corruption reforms?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. For the delay in --

Mr. Nunes. For the pause.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. For the pause. No, I was not.

Mr. Nunes. Were you involved in the proposed Trump-Zelensky, later Pence-Zelensky meetings in Warsaw, Poland, on September 1st?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No, I was not.

Mr. Nunes. Did you ever talk to President Trump in 2019?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No, I have not.

Mr. Nunes. Mick Mulvaney?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No, I have not.

Mr. Nunes. Thank you, Ambassador.

I'm not exactly sure what the ambassador's doing here today. This is the House Intelligence Committee that's now turned into the House Impeachment Committee. This seems more appropriate for the Subcommittee on Human Resources at the Foreign Affairs Committee. If there's issues with employment disagreements with the administration, it would seem like this would be a more appropriate setting instead of an impeachment hearing where the ambassador is not a material fact witness to anything, any of the accusations that are being hurled at the President for this impeachment inquiry.

I have several questions I think Mr. Castor wants to get to.

I know Ms. Stefanik, you had a few quick questions for the ambassador. I yield to you, Ms. Stefanik.

Ms. Stefanik. Thank you, Mr. Nunes.

Ambassador Yovanovitch, thank you for being here today.

The Chairman. The gentlewoman will suspend. The gentlewoman will suspend.

Ms. Stefanik. What is the interruption for this time? It is our time.

The Chairman. The gentlewoman will suspend. You're not recognized.

Mr. Nunes, you or minority counsel --

Mr. Nunes. I just -- I just recognized Ms. Stefanik.

The Chairman. Under the House Resolution 660 you're not allowed to yield time except to minority counsel.

Ms. Stefanik. The ranking member yielded time to another Member of Congress.

The Chairman. No. No. That is not accurate.

Mr. Nunes. You're gagging the young lady from New York?

Ms. Stefanik. That is accurate.

Ambassador Yovanovitch, I want to thank you for being here today.

The Chairman. The gentlewoman will suspend. You're not recognized.

Ms. Stefanik. This is the fifth time you have interrupted Members of Congress, duly elected Members of Congress.

The Chairman. The gentlewoman is not recognized. The gentlewoman will suspend.

Mr. Nunes. Mr. Chair, we control the time. It's been customary to this committee that whoever controls the time can yield to whoever they wish. If we have Members of Congress that have a few questions it seems appropriate that we be able to let Ms. Stefanik ask her questions.

The Chairman. Mr. Nunes, you or minority counsel are recognized.

Mr. Nunes. All right.

Mr. Castor, you're recognized.

Mr. Castor. Thank you, Mr. Nunes.

Ambassador, welcome. Thank you for your service. Thirty-three years, an extraordinary career. It really has been a remarkable tenure for you at the State Department.

I'd also like to thank you for participating here today. This is a crazy environment. This hearing room has turned into a television studio. Before today, you

spent, on Friday, the 11th, you were with us for early in the morning until, I believe, it was 8 o'clock at night. People missed trains back to New York. And it was a complete -- a very complete day. So thank you.

You were serving a 3-year assignment in the Ukraine. Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Castor. And it began in 2016 and was scheduled to end in 2019?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Castor. And nobody disputes that it's up to the President to decide who his envoy -- who his envoys are to posts around the world, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I stated that clearly in my statement.

Mr. Castor. And you returned from the Ukraine on May 20, 2019?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's correct.

Mr. Castor. And your return coincided with the inauguration of President Zelensky?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Castor. And you remain employed by the State Department?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I do.

Mr. Castor. And after you returned to Washington, the deputy secretary, John Sullivan, asked you what you wanted to do next. Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. That's correct.

Mr. Castor. And then you met with the director general, Ambassador Perez?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Castor. To identify a meaningful new assignment?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Castor. And you now serve at Georgetown University as a fellow?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's true.

Mr. Castor. And this is a rewarding position for you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I'm very grateful to be in that position after what happened.

Mr. Castor. Today is the second big hearing for the Democrats' impeachment initiative, but we don't understand -- or we do understand that you -- you don't have a lot of facts and information relating to the part of this that we're investigating, and those are the events from May 20 up until September 11th, the release of the security assistance funds. Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Uh-huh. Yes. That's correct.

Mr. Castor. So you were not part of the delegation to the inauguration, that was the day you returned. You were not part of the Oval Office meeting May 23, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Castor. And you were not part of the decisionmaking relating to whether there would be a White House meeting with President Zelensky?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's correct.

Mr. Castor. And you were not a part of any decisionmaking in the leadup to the July 25th call?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's correct.

Mr. Castor. And you first learned about the call on September 25th. Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I heard about the call, as I indicated in the first deposition, from Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent.

Mr. Castor. And what did he tell you about the call?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, as it turns out, it wasn't correct. But what I

recall is that he said that President Trump had asked President Zelensky whether he could help him out and -- which I understood to be these investigations -- and that President Zelensky had said that he is putting in a new prosecutor general and that he doesn't control -- I mean, this is approximately what he said -- that that person is the independent individual.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And you learned about that before the call was made public?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's correct.

Mr. Castor. Likewise, you were not involved in any discussions surrounding the security sector assistance funds to Ukraine? They were paused for about 55 days from July 18th to September 11th?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No discussions.

Mr. Castor. Okay. In your opening statement, on page 9, you stated: Although, then and now, I've always understood that I served at the pleasure of the President, I still find it difficult to comprehend that foreign and private interests were able to undermine U.S. interests in this way. Individuals who apparently felt stymied by our efforts to promote stated U.S. policy against corruption, that is, to do the mission, were able to successfully conduct a campaign of disinformation against a sitting ambassador using unofficial back channels.

Do you believe that President Trump was aiming to weaponize corruption in Ukraine by removing you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I don't know that.

Mr. Castor. Okay. Do you believe your removal was part of some scheme to make it easier for elements of the Ukrainian establishment to do things counter to U.S. interests?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think that's certainly what the Ukrainian establishment hoped. I think that, in addition, there were Americans, these two individuals who were working with Mayor Giuliani, Mr. Parnas and Mr. Fruman, who have recently been indicted by the Southern District of New York, who indicated that they wanted to change out the ambassador, and I think they must have had some reason for that.

Mr. Castor. And do you think they were seeking a different type of ambassador that would allow them to achieve some of their objectives?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I don't know what other reason there would be.

Mr. Castor. Okay. Is Ambassador Taylor the type of person that would facilitate those objectives?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Castor. So Ambassador Taylor is a man of high integrity?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Absolutely.

Mr. Castor. And he's a good pick for the post?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. He is. I would note that he is the charge out there as, of course, you understand. So no ambassador has yet been -- or no candidate has yet been named to the position.

Mr. Castor. But he certainly has had a decorated career serving his country?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Absolutely. A man of the highest integrity.

Mr. Castor. You testified about when you first learned that Mayor Giuliani and some of his associates were -- had a concerted campaign against you. When did that first come to your attention?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. We were picking up rumors from Ukrainians. I think, you know, kind of in the November-December 2018 time period, but then in

January-February, and, of course, March, it became more obvious.

Mr. Castor. At some point I believe you testified that Minister Avakov alerted you to this campaign?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Castor. And when was that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. He had -- he had a conversation with me in February of 2019.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And do you remember what he related to you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. He said that Mr. Lutsenko was working with Mayor Giuliani through these two individuals, Mr. Parnas and Mr. Fruman, that they basically wanted to remove me from post, and that they were -- they were working on that.

Mr. Castor. And did you have any awareness at that point in time of precisely why they were seeking your ouster?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. You know, I didn't. I didn't understand that at all, because I had never met Mr. Parnas and Mr. Fruman, and so it was unclear to me why -- why that they were interested in doing this.

Mr. Castor. Were you especially influential implementing policies that stymied their interests in Ukraine, were advocating for the -- some sort of environment or policies that would be adverse to them?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think that just the general idea that obviously U.S. ambassadors, U.S. embassies, one of our most important functions is to facilitate U.S. business abroad, right? Whether it's trade, whether it's commerce, that's one of the things that we do. And -- but, you know, everything has to be aboveboard. We believe in a level playing ground and so forth, but we obviously advocate for U.S.

business.

These two individuals, you know, with hindsight in what we learned later, looking to open up a new energy company exporting liquefied natural gas -- natural gas -- to the Ukraine, never actually came to the embassy, which is unusual because that would usually be a first stop, going to the American Chamber of Commerce, going to the U.S. Embassy, get the lay of the land, see how we could provide assistance.

Mr. Castor. And was that source of frustration ever expressed to you or did you just learn that separately?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Source of frustration?

Mr. Castor. Right.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. What do you mean? On whose part?

Mr. Castor. On Fruman and Parnas.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I don't know that they were frustrated. I mean, I -- frustrated by what?

Mr. Castor. Okay. Well, you mentioned that there were -- they had business interests. And I asked you whether they had been stymied by anything in particular that you had advocated for or you were a roadblock to them being successful. I wondered if there was any connection.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I've never met them. When I heard those names for the first time, which was in February of 2019, I asked my team -- the econ and the commercial sections are the ones who would usually meet with American businessmen and -women -- and nobody had heard of them.

So all I can conclude is that it was the general -- general U.S. policies that we were implementing that might have been of concern to them.

Mr. Castor. Okay. At any point, did you ever try to reach out to the prosecutor

general, Mr. Lutsenko, and find out why he was participating in this concerted campaign?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Castor. And why didn't you do that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I didn't feel that there was any purpose to it.

Mr. Castor. Why not?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. He is -- he clearly had, I would say, a -- an animus for doing this. And he was working with Americans, so I reached out to the American side, in this case the State Department, to try and find out what was going on.

Mr. Castor. When did you first realize that your relationship with Lutsenko had reached an adversarial point?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Probably around that time, maybe a little bit earlier.

Mr. Castor. And this is March?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. And what I would say, adversarial, that's a really strong word. We at the U.S. Embassy or visiting key people from the State Department and other agencies, we were pushing the Ukrainians, including Mr. Lutsenko, to do what they said that they were going to do when Mr. Lutsenko entered office -- that he was going to clean up the PGO and make reforms, that he was going to bring justice to the -- what they call the Heavenly Hundred, the people who died on the Maidan in 2016 -- 2014 -- the Revolution of Dignity, and he was going to prosecute cases to repatriate the approximately \$40 billion it's believed that former President Yanukovich and his cronies fled the country with.

And he didn't do any of that. And we, you know, kept on trying to encourage him to do the right thing. That's what the Ukrainian people wanted him to do and we thought it was a good plan and that he should do it.

Mr. Castor. And then you mentioned you contacted the State Department in

late March. Was that Under Secretary Hale?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. So contacted about what?

Mr. Castor. About the concerns you had about the campaign against you.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I contacted the State Department much earlier than that. I mean, it was an ongoing, sort of -- discussion makes it sound very formal. We had many ways of going back and forth with Washington. And so, you know, on phone calls or DVCs we would have this discussion.

Mr. Castor. When did you realize this --

Ambassador Yovanovitch. And if I could just amplify my answer. We had the discussion because we were concerned that Ukrainian policymakers, Ukrainian leaders were hearing that, you know, I was going to be leaving, that, you know, there was maybe somebody else waiting in the wings, et cetera, and that undermined not only my position, but our U.S. position. The Ukrainians didn't know what to think. And we need to be out there all the time firing on all cylinders to promote our national security interests. So it was a concern.

Mr. Castor. And when did you realize this concerted campaign against you was a real threat?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. A threat?

Mr. Castor. A threat to your ability to do the job in Kyiv.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I would say that the -- you know, when you go into a meeting with somebody and they ask, "Are you going to be leaving?" that is concerning.

So that probably -- I don't know exactly when that started happening, but in that timeframe.

Mr. Castor. And did you undertake any efforts to push back on this narrative

either inside the State Department or publicly?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, certainly with the Ukrainians I said, you know, there's nothing to this, this is, you know, a distraction, and we are focused on the job, our policy remains the same.

And, yes, we had discussions in the State Department about this.

Mr. Castor. In hindsight, do you think you did enough inside the State Department to alert them to this mounting campaign against you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I did what I could.

Mr. Castor. And what was that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Reached out to the European Bureau. I think you've also heard that Dr. Fiona Hill was aware of this as well, so the NSC, and they had other discussions with more senior people.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And did you get any feedback from your chain of command? I mean, did you engage Ambassador Reeker, Under Secretary Hale?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. Yes.

Mr. Castor. And did you develop sort of a game plan to push back against these allegations?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. So, I mean, there are different timeframes here that we're talking about.

So fast-forwarding to March, I did, when Under Secretary Hale asked whether I would consider extending, I did raise, because I wasn't sure that he was aware of it, I wanted to make sure that he knew that Mayor Giuliani had been out there saying things about me, untrue things, and I wanted him to be aware of that. And he said he understood. He still was hoping that I could extend for another year.

So that was early March. And then fast forward to, you know, late March, and,

you know, the discussions about this issue continued, but obviously it became -- once it became a public political story here in the United States the tenor of everything changed, because I think that the State Department felt that it wasn't manageable anymore and that the more prudent thing would be for me to come back in July.

Mr. Castor. Do you think there's anything you could have done differently to get ahead of the story and to lobby the secretary and his counselor, Mr. Brechbuhl, that these -- there was a concerted campaign against you, that you didn't believe the allegations lodged were accurate, and you needed their assistance?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think that, sure, maybe I could have done that, but I think they were aware. And as I subsequently learned from Deputy Secretary Sullivan, the Secretary of State had been well aware of this since the summer of 2018.

Mr. Castor. Corruption's endemic in the country of Ukraine, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I would say that corruption is a serious issue everywhere in the former Soviet Union. It's a post-Soviet legacy. And we talk about it a lot in Ukraine because there's actually an opportunity to do something, to actually help the Ukrainians tackle the issue. They want to tackle the issue.

In other countries, like Russia, you can't even talk about it. So I think it's a post-Soviet legacy and it's important to deal with it.

Mr. Castor. You testified rampant corruption has long permeated Ukrainian's political and economic systems?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that's a fair statement.

Mr. Castor. And it's your belief that it should be the U.S. foreign policy to help Ukraine curb its corruption problem?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, because it's good for the Ukrainians, but it's also in our interest.

Mr. Castor. And anticorruption efforts, you mentioned, serve a national security purpose?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I believe that to be true.

Mr. Castor. Are oligarchs a big part of the problem in Ukraine?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Probably, because so much wealth is concentrated in the hands of a very, very few, six or seven individuals, and they also have political power and control the media.

Mr. Castor. And a lot of their power has been acquired through what we here in the U.S. would consider improperly, improper ways?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah, I think that's a fair comment.

Mr. Castor. The head of Burisma, Mr. Zlochevsky, you familiar with him?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I don't know him, but I know who you're talking about.

Mr. Castor. George Kent testified a couple days ago that he was investigated for stealing millions and millions of dollars, some of which had been supplied by the U.S., Great Britain. He was subject to an investigation, trying to get the money back. That was a big part of Mr. Kent's initiatives when he was there, that a bribe was paid to the prosecutors and Zlochevsky was left off the hook. This was in 2014.

Is this something that you're familiar with?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I've heard about it. This was before my arrival. And I would just say my understanding, but, you know, please correct me if I'm wrong, is that the U.S. money that you're referring to was the money that we -- that we used to fund an FBI team that was embedded with the prosecutor general's office to go after -- not to go after, but to do the investigation of Burisma and Zlochevsky.

Mr. Castor. Mr. Kent testified that this bribe was paid, the prosecution went

away, and, you know, essentially nothing has been further done with regards to Burisma. During your tenure in Ukraine, has there ever been any focus on reexamining allegations, whether it's at Burisma or other powerful interests like Zlochevsky, reexamining it?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Is that on the part of the Ukrainian Government? Is that what you're talking about?

Mr. Castor. Yeah. Trying to lean on the various prosecutors general to clean up the oligarchical system?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think, yes, there have been some efforts. And as I mentioned earlier in my testimony, the U.S. was welcoming of Mr. Lutsenko's nomination to the position of prosecutor general because we were hoping he would clean that up. That, in fact, is not what happened.

And because, you know, it's kind of hard to explain to a U.S. audience, but in Ukraine and in the former Soviet Union more broadly, including in Russia, justice -- the justice system, whether it's the -- whether it's cops on the beat, whether it's investigators, whether it is prosecutors, whether it is judges, are used as a tool of the political system to be used against your political adversaries.

And so I think that, going back to your question about Burisma and Zlochevsky, my understanding -- this was, as I told you earlier in the previous deposition, this did not loom large when I arrived. I arrived in 2016, August 2016, but over time my understanding was that the -- that the case was basically sort of on a pause, that it wasn't an active case, but it also was not fully closed.

And that is a way, as I mentioned before, for those in power to keep a little hook into Burisma and Mr. Zlochevsky.

Mr. Castor. And right around the time the bribe was paid Burisma undertook an effort to spruce up their board and they added, I believe, the President of Poland and

some other luminaries. Are you familiar with that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. I don't exactly know what the timing of all this was.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. But yes, I mean, to the elements.

Mr. Castor. And one of the folks they added to the board was the Vice President's son, Hunter Biden, which, you know, raises questions, is he a genius on the corporate governance front, is he a genius with the Ukrainian oligarchical systems in cleaning that up, or was he just added to the board because he's the Vice President's son? Was that ever, you know, a concern or at least the perception of that concern addressed?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. As I said, I arrived in August of 2016, several months before the elections and several months before President Trump took office, and it was not a focus of what I was doing in that 6-month period.

Mr. Castor. Okay. Was the issue ever raised at all?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. You know, not --

Mr. Castor. He was still on the board, I think, at the time?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. My understanding from newspaper accounts is that he just recently left, in 2019.

I never met him, never talked to him. And, I'm sorry, what was your question?

Mr. Castor. He was still on the board when you arrived at post. And I was just wondering if at least the perception problem was brought to your attention as the ambassador.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I was aware of it because, as I told you before in the deposition, there had been a -- in terms of the preparation for my Senate confirmation hearings for Ukraine, there was a question about that and a select answer. So I was

aware of it, yes.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

In your deposition, you acknowledged that the President has longstanding concerns about corruption in Ukraine. Is that true?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's what he says.

Mr. Castor. Well, going back to there was a meeting with President Poroshenko in September of 2017 in the Oval Office, and I believe you testified that, you know, he expressed his concerns then.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. He said that a friend of his had told him that Ukraine was the most corrupt country in the world.

Mr. Castor. Okay. Several witnesses have testified that the President has concerns that there are certain elements of the Ukrainian establishment that during 2016 were out to get him. Is that something you were aware of at any point in time?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I'm certainly aware of it now. Obviously, there's been a lot of press attention on that. It was not -- it was not brought to my attention during the two and a half years that I served under President Trump as our ambassador to Ukraine.

Mr. Castor. We've gone through at the deposition some of these elements that, you know, maybe they loom larger now, but, you know, in hindsight was there any discussion at the embassy that there's these indications of some Ukrainians trying to, you know, at least advocate against then candidate Trump?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Actually, there weren't. I mean, we didn't really see it that way.

Mr. Castor. And were you aware of -- I know Mr. Nunes mentioned this earlier -- the consultant, Alexandra Chalupa, had reportedly, at least according to her and

according to Ken Vogel at the Politico, was trying to work with the Ukrainian embassy in D.C. to trade information, share leads of that sort, sort of thing?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I saw the article. I, you know, didn't have any further information about that.

Mr. Castor. Did you see the article at the time or did you only -- did that only come to your attention subsequently?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. It's certainly been brought to my attention subsequently. I think I did see something to that effect at the time as well.

Mr. Castor. And you're the ambassador in country at this point, did you aim to get to the bottom of that? Because, you know, if true, if the reporting's true, if what Ms. Chalupa told Mr. Vogel is accurate, that would be concerning, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I was the ambassador in Ukraine starting in August of 2016, and what you're describing, if true as you said, what you're describing took place in the United States. So if there were concerns about what Ms. Chalupa was doing, I think that that would have been handled here.

Mr. Castor. And do you know Ms. Chalupa?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I don't believe so.

Mr. Castor. Have you ever met her?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I don't think so. I mean, if she worked for the Ukrainian Embassy, it's possible that I met her in a large group or something, but I don't -- I don't believe I know her.

Mr. Castor. Okay. Are you aware of the role that investigative journalist Mr. Leshchenko played in publicizing the Manafort black ledgers?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Castor. And he publicized some information in a pretty grand way in August

of 2016 that almost immediately coincided with Mr. Manafort leaving the Trump campaign. Was there anything about that issue when it was occurring that concerned you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I certainly noticed it because I was, you know, a week or so away from arriving in Ukraine.

I think that from the Ukrainian perspective -- I realize we are looking at this from an American perspective -- from a Ukrainian perspective, I think that what Mr. Leshchenko and others who were looking into the black ledger were most concerned about was actually not Mr. Manafort, but former President Yanukovich and his political party and the amount of money that they allegedly stole and where it went and so forth.

I mean, I think, there's just a difference in perspective depending on which country you're in.

Mr. Castor. But you can understand the President, at least from his perspective, looking at these facts, it certainly is reasonable to conclude that there are elements of the Ukrainian establishment that are advocating against him at this point in time, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, you know, just speaking about Mr. Leshchenko, he's an investigative journalist, as you said, and he got access to the black ledger, and he published it, as I think journalists would do. And again, I'm not sure that that -- I don't have any information to suggest that that was being -- that was targeting President Trump.

Mr. Castor. But the way the events unfolded, I mean, Mr. Manafort was -- you know, subsequently left the campaign. And it certainly did begin a period of interest in Manafort's ties to Russia and so forth.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think -- again, I think that that may have been the effect here in the United States, and obviously it was of interest to journalists and others

here that Mr. Manafort was former President Yanukovich's political adviser and he was the political adviser, head of a campaign here. And so we all know that there have been court cases and so forth where Mr. Manafort was found guilty of certain actions. But at the end of the day, President Trump won the election.

Mr. Castor. With Mr. Leshchenko's reporting, I mean, there's been a question of whether all the information that he published was authentic, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I'm sorry. Could you repeat that?

Mr. Castor. There's been a -- some have questioned whether the information Mr. Leshchenko published was all correct or whether it was doctored.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Okay. I wasn't aware of that.

Mr. Castor. Okay. You know, Ambassador Chaly during the August timeframe, he wrote an op-ed in The Hill taking issue with then candidate Trump. Were you aware of that when it occurred?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Castor. And did you have any communications with the ambassador to express concerns?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Castor. And how frequently did you communicate with the ambassador? Obviously, you're in different posts in different countries?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. Didn't actually see him or talk to him that often.

Mr. Castor. So you weren't in frequent communication?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Castor. Can you see how writing an op-ed, even -- you know, given the substance -- we've discussed the substance of it, that there's some sensitivities. But can

you see how just the simple fact of writing an op-ed, the Ukrainian ambassador to the U.S., might create a perception that there are elements of the Ukrainian establishment that were advocating against then candidate Trump?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. My recollection of that op-ed was that he was taking a -- he was critical of a policy position that President Trump had with regard to Crimea and whether Crimea was, you know, a part of Ukraine or a part of Russia.

That's a tremendously sensitive issue in Ukraine, and my recollection is that that is what Ambassador Chaly was writing about.

Mr. Castor. And do you know whether the ambassador or anybody from the embassy tried to make contact with the Trump camp to talk about their concerns before lodging an op-ed?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I don't know.

Mr. Castor. Okay. During the same time period in the run-up to the election, Minister Avakov had said some especially candid things about then candidate Trump on some various social media platforms. Are you aware of that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, as a result of the deposition, the previous deposition.

Mr. Castor. But during the relevant time period when it was happening, you weren't aware of that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. You know, I don't recall it.

Mr. Castor. Okay. He's one of the more influential officials in the Ukraine, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Castor. I believe he's one of the few that span both the Poroshenko administration and the Zelensky administration?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Castor. Looking back on his comments in hindsight, do you see how that might create a perception that a very influential Ukrainian was, you know, advocating against then candidate Trump?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That he was doing what, I'm sorry?

Mr. Castor. Just advocating -- he was out to get him. I mean, he was -- he was -- he said some real nasty things.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, sometimes that happens on social media. And I -- you know, are you asking me whether it's appropriate? Probably not.

But I would say that Minister Avakov has been -- as well as others, both in President Poroshenko's administration as well as in the Zelensky administration -- has been a good partner to the United States. As I think I told you before, he's a very practical man in looking for partners and getting the job done.

Mr. Castor. I'm shocked that social media would be the site of negative comments.

You certainly can understand that the President aware of Minister Avakov's statements, aware of what Mr. Leshchenko was up to, what Ambassador Chaly was up to, and these other elements that we've discussed, that there certainly forms a reasonable basis to wonder whether there are influential, you know, elements of the Ukrainian establishment that were out to get the President?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. You know, again, I mean, I can't speak for what President Trump thought or what others thought. I would just say that those elements that you've recited don't seem to me to be the Ukrainian, you know, kind of a plan or a plot of the Ukrainian Government to work against President Trump or anyone else.

I mean, they're isolated incidents. We all know -- I'm coming to find out

myself -- that public life can be -- you know, people are critical. And that does not mean that someone is or a government is undermining either a campaign or interfering in elections.

And I would just remind, again, that our own U.S. Intelligence Community has conclusively determined that those who interfered in the election were in Russia.

Mr. Castor. Turn our attention to Ambassador Volker. He's been a friend and colleague of yours for many years. Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that's true.

Mr. Castor. And I believe you testified he's a man of honor?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I believe that to be true.

Mr. Castor. And a brilliant diplomat?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Castor. And you have no reason to think that he would be undertaking any initiatives that was counter to U.S. interests?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think that he tried to do what he thought was right.

Mr. Castor. Turning our attention to the Trump administration's policy of aid, the aid package to Ukraine. You've testified that during your tenure as ambassador America's policy actually got stronger toward Ukraine. Is that accurate?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. With the provision of Javelins to the Ukrainian military, yes. That was really positive.

Mr. Castor. And why was that important?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, two things. They are obviously tank busters. And so if the war with Russia all of a sudden accelerated in some way and tanks come over the horizon, Javelins are a very serious weapon to deal with that. That's number one.

But really the more important issue is the symbolism of it, that the United States is providing Javelins to Ukraine. That makes Ukraine's adversaries think twice.

Mr. Castor. And the provision of Javelins to Ukraine was blocked during the previous administration. Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think they made a determination -- I was not a part of those discussions, but obviously they had not yet made a determination about whether to provide Javelins.

Mr. Castor. But do you have any understanding of what the interagency consensus was with regard to Javelins during the previous administration?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think that most in the interagency wanted to provide Javelins to Ukraine.

Mr. Castor. And so in the new administration under President Trump, the ability to afford Ukraine this weaponry is a significant advantage, significant step forward?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. We thought it was important.

Mr. Castor. And has it played out that way?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, it has.

Mr. Castor. Provision of Javelins?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. But it's a symbol of our strong support for Ukraine. But when then, you know, this year there are questions as to whether or not our security assistance is going to go through, that kind of undermines that strong message of support.

Mr. Castor. Ukraine still has the ability to acquire the Javelins, though, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Are you now talking about purchasing Javelins by the Ukrainian Government?

Mr. Castor. Purchasing, yeah.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah, they do, that is my understanding.

Mr. Castor. And the security sector assistance did go through. It was paused for 55 days, from July 18th to September 11th, but it ultimately went through, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. It's my understanding.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

You testified during your deposition that you were proud of the efforts of the United States during your tenure to, you know, supply this type of aid to Ukraine. Do you still -- are you still happy with the decisions?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Are you talking about the Javelins?

Mr. Castor. The Javelin and also just the whole aid package.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Castor. Do you think it's sufficient? Do you think we're giving Ukraine enough money?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's a hard question because one can always use additional funding.

That said, I think that the Congress has been very generous in voting for security assistance and other forms of assistance for Ukraine.

Mr. Castor. I see my time is coming to an end, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman. I thank the gentleman.

We'll now go to member 5-minute rounds. I recognize myself for 5 minutes.

Ambassador Yovanovitch, I want to follow up on some of the questions from my colleagues. Some of the early questions seemed to suggest that your testimony here was completely irrelevant to the issues at hand. Why are you even here? Isn't this just some small matter that should have been referred to HR?

So I want to bring our attention to someone who thought you were actually very

important to this whole plot or scheme, and that is the President of the United States. There was only one ambassador, I believe, who was discussed by the President in the July 25th call, and that was you, Ambassador Yovanovitch, and I want to refer back to how you were brought up in that conversation.

At one point during the conversation the President brings up this prosecutor who was very good and was shut down and that's really unfair. And I think you indicated earlier that that was a likely reference to Mr. Lutsenko, the corrupt prosecutor. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I believe that is the case, but I don't know.

The Chairman. So immediately after the President brings up this corrupt former prosecutor, only one -- I'm sorry, my staff has corrected me -- only one American ambassador is brought up in the call.

Immediately after the President brings up this corrupt prosecutor that he praises and says he was treated very unfairly, he then encourages Zelensky to speak with Giuliani, the guy who orchestrated the smear campaign against you, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

The Chairman. And he then brings you up. So he praises the corrupt prosecutor, he says I want you to talk to Giuliani, the guy who smeared you, and then he brings you up. He obviously thought you were relevant to this.

But what is even more telling is immediately after he brings you up and says that you, the woman, was bad news, he says there's a lot to talk about about Biden's son, that Biden stopped the prosecution and a lot of people want to find out about that, so whatever you can do with the attorney general would be great.

Immediately after praising this corrupt prosecutor, he attacks you, and then he goes right to Biden. That would indicate to you, would it, Ambassador, that he connects

you somehow with this prosecutor you were at odds with and his desire to see this investigation of Biden go forward, would it not?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Again, you're absolutely right that that is the thought progression.

The Chairman. My colleagues also asked, in pushing you out of the way ultimately Ambassador Taylor got appointed, is Ambassador Taylor the kind of person that would further Giuliani's aims? And I think we can all agree that Ambassador Taylor is a remarkable public servant.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Absolutely.

The Chairman. But what if the President could put someone else in place that wasn't a career diplomat? What if he could put in place, say, a substantial donor to his inaugural? What if he could in place someone with no diplomatic experience at all? What if he could put in place someone whose portfolio doesn't even include Ukraine? Might that person be willing to work with Rudy Giuliani in pursuit of his investigations?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah, maybe.

The Chairman. That's exactly what happened, wasn't it?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

The Chairman. Now, my colleagues also say, well, the security assistance ultimately went through, so if they sought to condition or bribe Ukraine into doing these investigations by withholding security assistance, they ultimately paid the money.

Are you aware, Ambassador, that the security assistance was not released until after a whistleblower complaint made its way to the White House?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, I'm aware of that.

The Chairman. Are you aware that it was not released until Congress announced it was doing an investigation?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, I'm aware of that.

The Chairman. And finally, I want to ask you about the call record that my colleague read at the outset. I'm curious about this.

And just for people watching at home so they're not confused, there are two calls here. There's the perfunctory congratulatory call after Zelensky's inaugurated, which my ranking member read this morning, and then there's, of course, the very problematic call in July. And one of the reasons we are here is what happened between April and July.

But there was a readout put out by the White House at the time the April congratulatory call was made and the White House readout said that the President discussed with Zelensky helping Ukraine root out corruption.

Now that, in fact, doesn't appear anywhere in that call. So I wanted to ask you, Ambassador, why would the White House put out an inaccurate reading? Why would the White House represent that the President said something about corruption when he said nothing about corruption in that call or, in fact, in the one in July?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I can't answer that question. I don't have visibility into that.

The Chairman. I thank you.

I yield 5 minutes now to recognize the ranking member.

Mr. Nunes. I just remind the gentleman there's actually three calls. There's the two calls with President Trump and the one that you reiterated in our last hearing a couple weeks ago.

Ambassador, I just want to clarify something before I yield. Are you against political-appointed ambassadors? Is it not the President's prerogative to appoint whoever he wants in any country?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. First of all, I am not against political ambassadors, to be clear.

Mr. Nunes. I just wanted to clear that up.

Now, can I yield to Ms. Stefanik? Do I need your permission?

The Chairman. You may yield.

Ms. Stefanik. Thank you.

Ambassador, before I was interrupted I wanted to thank you for your 30 years of public service from Mogadishu to Ottawa to Moscow to London to Kyiv. I also wanted to thank you for hosting the numerous bipartisan delegations. I led one of those delegations in Ukraine.

My questions today will focus on three key themes. The first is the role of the President when it comes to appointing our ambassadors, the second is longstanding corruption in Ukraine, and the third is aid to Ukraine.

Earlier this week, as you know, we heard from George Kent. And I know that Mr. Kent is a colleague, a friend, and someone who you deeply respect.

In his testimony he stated: All ambassadors serve at the pleasure of the President. You would agree with that statement, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Ms. Stefanik. And, in fact, he elaborated and went on to emphasize that this is without question. Everybody understands that. You would agree with that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I would agree with that.

Ms. Stefanik. And in your own deposition under oath, you stated, quote: "Although I understand, everyone understands, that I serve at the pleasure of the President." Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Ms. Stefanik. And just so there's no public confusion, you are still an employee of the State Department, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Ms. Stefanik. And in the deposition you say that you personally asked whether it would be possible to be a fellow at Georgetown University and that was arranged for me and I'm very grateful. That's where you're posted today, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Ms. Stefanik. Georgetown students are lucky to have you, we are lucky to have you in foreign service, and I, again, want to thank you for your tremendous public service.

Shifting gears to corruption in Ukraine. In your powerful deposition you described, quote: "We have long understood that strong anticorruption efforts must form an essential part of our policy in Ukraine and now there is a window of opportunity to do that. And so why is this important and why is this important to us? Put simply, anticorruption efforts serve Ukraine's interests, but they also serve ours as well."

Is that still your testimony?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Ms. Stefanik. And particularly at the critical time in 2014 after the Ukrainian elections, you testified that the Ukrainian people had made clear in that very election that they were done with corruption, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Ms. Stefanik. And you also testified that the Ukrainians thought it would be a good idea to set up this architecture of a special investigative office that would be all about the crimes of corruption, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Ms. Stefanik. And I know this was before you arrived in Ukraine, but you are

aware that the first case that the U.S., U.K., and Ukraine investigators worked on was, in fact, against the owner of Burisma?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Ms. Stefanik. And that was during the Obama administration?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Ms. Stefanik. And in your testimony and you said today, the investigation was never formerly closed because, quote: "It's frankly useful to keep that company hanging on a hook, right?" That's your quote.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. The Ukrainian investigation was never closed --

Ms. Stefanik. Partnered with the U.S. and the U.K.?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. -- as I understand it. Yeah, although, because we didn't see the Ukrainians moving forward on that, we no longer partner with them on that case or in that way.

Ms. Stefanik. But let's take a first step -- a step back. The first time you personally became aware of Burisma was actually when you were being prepared by the Obama State Department for your Senate confirmation hearings, and this was in the form of practice questions and answers. This is your deposition. And you testified that in this particular practice Q&A with the Obama State Department, it wasn't just generally about Burisma and corruption, it was specifically about Hunter Biden and Burisma. Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, it is.

Ms. Stefanik. And the exact quote from your testimony, Ambassador, is, quote: "The way the question was phrased in this model Q&A was, what can you tell us about Hunter Biden's, you know, being named to the board of Burisma?"

So for the millions of Americans watching, President Obama's own State Department was so concerned about potential conflicts of interests from Hunter Biden's role at Burisma that they raised it themselves while prepping this wonderful ambassador nominee before her confirmation. And yet our Democratic colleagues and the chairman of this committee cry foul when we dare ask that same question that the Obama State Department was so concerned about. But we will continue asking it.

And lastly, in my 20 seconds left, I just want to get it on record. In terms of defensive lethal aid, which you were an advocate for, that was not provided by President Obama, it was provided by President Trump.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's correct.

Ms. Stefanik. I yield back 5 seconds.

The Chairman. Mr. Himes, you're recognized.

Mr. Himes. Ambassador, thank you for your testimony today.

Those of us who sit up here are supposed to be dispassionate and judicial and measured, but I'm angry, and I've been angry since I learned about your summary and unexplained dismissal after a lifetime of excellent and faithful service to this country. I'm angry that a woman whose family fled Communism and Nazism, who served this country beautifully for 33 years, not in Paris or in Rome, but literally under fire in places like Mogadishu and Kyiv, I'm angry that a woman like you would be not just dismissed, but humiliated and attacked by the President of the United States.

And I'm not just angry for you, I'm angry for every single Foreign Service officer, for every single military officer, for every intelligence officer who right now might believe that a lifetime of service and sacrifice in excellence might be ignored by the President of the United States, or worse yet, attacked in language that would embarrass a mob boss.

Now, it's the President's defense and it's emerging from my Republican colleagues

today that this is all okay because, as the President so memorably put in his tweet this morning, it is a U.S. President's absolute right to appoint ambassadors. I'm a little troubled by this idea of an absolute right, because that doesn't feel to me like the system of government we have here. I think that how and why we exercise our powers and rights matters.

Ambassador, when you're ambassador somewhere, do you have the right to ask the Intelligence Community, the CIA in an embassy, what operations they're doing?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. We talk about these things collaboratively. There are some things that -- in short, yes.

RPTR MERTENS

EDTR SECKMAN

[1:18 p.m.]

Mr. Himes. So you have the right to ask the Intelligence Community in your Embassy what they're doing. Why might you do that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Because sometimes operations have political consequences.

Mr. Himes. Right. So the performance of your duties in the interests of the United States gives you the right to ask very sensitive questions of our Intelligence Community in your Embassy. But what if, instead of working through the issues that you just described, you went to dinner that night and handed over that information to a Russian agent for \$10,000? Would that be an appropriate exercise of your right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No, it would not.

Mr. Himes. It would not. And what would happen to you if you did that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I can't even begin to imagine, but I would imagine that I would be pulled out of post.

Mr. Himes. Right. And this is not about ambassadors, right? A police officer has the right to pull you over. But if the police officer pulls over his ex-wife because he's angry, that's probably not right. I have the right; in fact, today, I cast a bunch of votes, but if I cast those votes not in the interest of my constituents but because somebody bribed me, that is a severe abuse of my power. Wouldn't you agree?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Himes. So I guess the question is, why after an exemplary performance as Ambassador to Ukraine did the President decide that you should be removed? Because I think we just agreed that, if that was not done in the national interest, that's a problem.

Ambassador, if you had remained Ambassador to Ukraine, would you have recommended to the President of the United States that he ask the new Ukrainian President to investigate, and I'm quoting from the transcript here, CrowdStrike or the server?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No. I would repeat, once again, that the U.S. Intelligence Community has concluded that it was the Russians who --

Mr. Himes. So, Ambassador, if you had remained as Ambassador and not been summarily dismissed, would you have supported a 3-month delay in congressionally mandated military aid to Ukraine?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Himes. Ambassador, if you had remained as Ambassador of Ukraine, would you have recommended to the President that he ask a new President of Ukraine to, quote, find out about Biden's son?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Himes. I have no more questions. I yield back the balance of my time.

The Chairman. Mr. Conaway.

Mr. Conaway. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a Dear Colleague letter from Speaker Pelosi, dated September 23rd. The relevant part reads: We expect -- we also expect that he will establish a path for the whistleblower to speak directly to the House and Senate Intelligence Committees as required by law.

The Chairman. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

\*\*\*\*\* COMMITTEE INSERT \*\*\*\*\*

Mr. Conaway. Thank you. I look forward to you honoring that statement from the Speaker.

Turning to the Ambassador, Ambassador, I, for one, want to thank you so very much for a long service, exemplary service for -- to our country and on behalf of our Nation. A lot has been said about what was going on around the phone call. I'd like to focus more on what's happened since then to you and your career and what's going on.

And so, when you got the word -- any time an ambassador changes post, there's a process you go through to pick what you do next, and that happened in this instance. Can you give us a quick statement as to how -- what happened when you came back here as to what your next assignment would be at State?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. So, when I came back, obviously, it was sort of out of cycle. There was nothing set up.

Mr. Conaway. Sure.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. And, again, I am grateful that Deputy Secretary Sullivan asked me what I would like to do next. I recall that there was the fellowship at Georgetown and asked whether that might be something that could be arranged.

Mr. Conaway. Was that your only choice?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I'm not sure. We didn't really discuss other options.

Mr. Conaway. My understanding is Georgetown is fertile ground for State Department recruitment of future fledgling Foreign Service officers, and so they now benefit from your experience and your inspiration to inspire them to perhaps spend their professional life in service to our Nation.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Thank you.

Mr. Conaway. You're a fellow there. You teach classes. How many classes do

you teach?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, this semester, I was supposed to teach two. I am still teaching one on national security. The other one was on Ukraine, and I asked whether I could, you know --

Mr. Conaway. Defer that.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. -- postpone that --

Mr. Conaway. How many students in your class, approximately?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. There are -- let's see. I think 14, 14 or 15.

Mr. Conaway. All right. Any other responsibilities at State other than the fellowship at Georgetown?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I will tell you that all of this has kept me very busy.

Mr. Conaway. Okay. I got that. But not necessarily day-to-day things that you would be responsible for?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Conaway. Other than not qualifying for overseas stipends and other things, has your compensation been affected by being recalled the way you were?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No, it has not.

Mr. Conaway. Okay. I'm worried about the way you might be treated by your fellow employees at State. Any negative -- do they hold you in less high regard than they used to as a result of this? Do they shun you at the lunch counter? Do they treat you badly as a result of the way you were treated by the President?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I've actually received an outpouring of support --

Mr. Conaway. Okay.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. -- from my colleagues.

Mr. Conaway. So the folks that you respect the most still respect you and appear to hold you in high regard and high affection?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. They do.

Mr. Conaway. Okay. George Kent was in here a couple of days ago. He made some exemplary statements about you, really glowing. All of us, I think, would like to be the recipient of something that worthy, and I believe you are as well. Any reason on Earth that you can think of that George Kent would be saying that because of some reason other than the fact that he believes it in his heart of hearts?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Like -- like what?

Mr. Conaway. Well, I mean, like somebody paid him to do it.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Oh. No. Absolutely not.

Mr. Conaway. Okay. So you and I agree that we think he was sincere in that bragging on you, and that's all post -- recall an episode that was mentioned in the discussion this morning. Well, I'm glad that your colleagues -- I would have expected nothing any different from your colleagues at State to continue to treat you in the high regard that you've earned over all of these years of great service, and I hope that whatever you decide to do after the Georgetown fellowship, that you're as successful as you've been in the first 33 years.

And, with that, I yield the balance of my time to Mr. Jordan.

Mr. Turner. I have a unanimous consent request that an article entitled "Whistleblower is Expected to Testify Soon, House Intelligence Chairman Schiff Says," Wall Street Journal, September 29, 2019, being put in the record.

The Chairman. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

\*\*\*\*\* COMMITTEE INSERT \*\*\*\*\*

Mr. Turner. I have a unanimous consent request that an article entitled "Whistleblower Reaches Agreement to Testify, Will Appear Very Soon, Representative Adam Schiff Says," USAToday, September 29, 2019.

The Chairman. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

\*\*\*\*\* COMMITTEE INSERT \*\*\*\*\*

Mr. Turner. I have a unanimous consent request, an article entitled "Schiff Confirms Tentative Agreement for Whistleblower to Testify before House Intelligence Committee," CNN, September 29, 2019.

The Chairman. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

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Mr. Turner. I have a unanimous consent request, "Intelligence Panel Has Deal to Hear Whistleblower's Testimony, Says Schiff," Washington Post, September 29th of 2019.

The Chairman. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

\*\*\*\*\* COMMITTEE INSERT \*\*\*\*\*

Mr. Turner. I have a unanimous consent request, an article entitled "Whistleblower Reportedly Agrees to Testify Before House Intelligence Committee Reported by Schiff," Huffington Post, September 29, 2019.

The Chairman. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

\*\*\*\*\* COMMITTEE INSERT \*\*\*\*\*

Mr. Turner. I have a unanimous consent request, an article entitled "Schiff, Panel Will Hear from Whistleblower," Arkansas Democrat Gazette, September 29, 2019.

The Chairman. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

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The Chairman. The time of the gentleman has expired. I now recognize Ms. Sewell.

Ms. Sewell. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador, in your prior testimony, you spoke so movingly about your family background. You stated that your parents fled Communist and Nazi regimes and that they valued freedom and democracy offered in America, having experienced totalitarian regimes. Did that have any effect on your desire to enter into the United States Foreign Service?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, it did.

Ms. Sewell. Did you always know you wanted to be in the Foreign Service? I look at your background, and it is perfectly suited for what you're doing. I note that you have studied at the Pushkin State Russian Language Institute in Russia to learn Russian.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Ms. Sewell. That you also have an M.S. from the National Defense University, National War College.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Ms. Sewell. I even noticed that you earned your undergraduate degree in history and Russian studies in college, and, coincidentally, that was also my college, but I wanted -- and you definitely are doing Princeton and the Nation service by --

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Thank you.

Ms. Sewell. -- what you do every day. But I really want to know how it felt to have your reputation sullied, not for State and Nation but for personal gain. You spoke about how your service is not just your own personal service. It affects your family. And, today, we've seen you as this former ambassador, this 33-year veteran of the

Foreign Service, but I want to know about you personally and how this has affected you personally and your family.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. It's been a difficult time. I mean, I'm a private person. I don't want to put that all out there, but it's been a very, very difficult time because the President does have the right to have his own or her own ambassador in every country in the world.

Ms. Sewell. But does the President have a right to actually malign people's character? I mean, it may not be against any law, but I would think that it would be against decorum and decency.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I mean, there is a question as to why the kind of campaign to get me out of Ukraine happened because all the President has to do is say he wants a different ambassador. And in my line of work, perhaps in your line of work as well, all we have is our reputations, and so this has been a very painful period.

Ms. Sewell. How has it affected your family?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I really don't want to get into that, but thank you for asking.

Ms. Sewell. Because I do care. I also want to know how you think it affected your fellow colleagues in the Foreign Service. My Republican colleagues have said that since you received such adulation from and embracing from your own fellow colleagues that what occurred, the incident that occurred with the President and his cronies, you know, maligning your reputation, has that had a chilling effect on the ability and the morale within the Foreign Service? Can you speak to that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. I think that -- I think that it has had exactly that, a chilling effect, not only in Embassy Kyiv but throughout the State Department because people don't know kind of

whether their efforts to pursue our stated policy are going to be supported, and that is a dangerous place to be.

Ms. Sewell. Now, for the record, my Republican colleagues will probably try to paint you as a Never Trumper. Are you a Never Trumper?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Ms. Sewell. As a Foreign Service officer, you took an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States without regard for who was in office. Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that's true.

Ms. Sewell. Have you also served in your 33 years for not just Democratic Presidents but also Republican Presidents?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Four Republican Presidents.

Ms. Sewell. Four Republican Presidents. In fact, you joined the Foreign Service under Reagan. Is that not right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that's true.

Ms. Sewell. Now, why do you think it's really important that Foreign Service officers are nonpartisan? Can you talk to us about why it's important for you to do your job and your fellow Foreign Service officers to do your job that you're nonpartisan?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. Because our work is essentially nonpartisan, and you know, Senator Vandenberg, a Republican Senator who actually partnered with President Truman, coined a phrase that politics should stop at the water's edge. And I think that's exactly right because while obviously the competition of ideas in a democracy with different parties, different individuals is hugely important, but at the end of the day, when we are dealing with other countries, it needs to be about what is right for the United States. Those are our national security interests. And whether an individual

works for the CIA or the military or the State Department, we've got to be nonpartisan and thinking about what is right for the United States.

Ms. Sewell. Well, on behalf of a grateful Nation, I want to say thank you for your service.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Thank you.

The Chairman. Mr. Turner.

Mr. Turner. Ambassador, I want to say I have a great deal of respect for what you do. I serve on the Armed Services Committee, the Intelligence Committee. I've worked with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, including being its president, and I know the complexity of what you do. I know you have little access directly to decisionmakers, little resources, but you have still a great deal of responsibility. It's a complex task, and I want to take us from just the concept of one dimensional Ukraine being corrupt to the other issues that you had to deal with as the Ukraine Ambassador.

You had to deal with more than just our bilateral relationship with Ukraine. For example, and I'd like confirmation that -- I mean, obviously I know you know these, but these were on your portfolio. You had to deal with the issue of the OSCE Budapest Agreement and the denuclearization of Ukraine and the issues of its territorial integrity of the signatories, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Could you run that by me again?

Mr. Turner. The OSCE, the Organization for Security and Cooperation for Europe, and the Budapest Agreement under which Ukraine gave up its nuclear weapons and believed they had its territorial integrity guaranteed by the United States and Russia, you would have had that in your portfolio.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, that -- yes.

Mr. Turner. Was that an issue that you had to deal with Ukrainians on?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah, when the Ukrainians would ask about our policy and whether it was in keeping with the Budapest Agreement.

Mr. Turner. Excellent. NATO. Ukraine is an aspiring NATO country, and, of course, you have the Bucharest Summit, where the U.S. and the NATO allies made a statement that they would get membership. That would have been on your portfolio. They would have been discussing with you -- absolutely.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, certainly aspirations to NATO membership.

Mr. Turner. Right. And it's also consistent with U.S. policy that the U.S. supports Ukraine joining the EU, and they have a great deal of interest and desire for joining the EU, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Turner. And they just had a summit in Ukraine in July where they talked about the Associated Agreement on Economic Integration between the Ukraine and the EU, and they also had a discussion about the illegal annexation of Crimea and the blocking by Russia of the Ukrainian sailors that came out of the Azov Sea and that were captured. Those would have all been issues that would have been in your portfolio and that were consistent with what the EU's issues are, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. We work closely with our EU partners.

Mr. Turner. In addition to Ukraine, you'd have to work with France and U.K. and Germany, all of which who have different ideas of those. The Ambassadors to the Ukraine of France, Germany, and England, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. Did you say they all have different ideas about these issues?

Mr. Turner. Some of them, yes.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. But mostly there's a consensus.

Mr. Turner. You'd have to work with NGOs, nongovernmental organizations on issues that we heard about, legal aid, human trafficking, building democratic institutions, and even HIV AIDS, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Turner. You've spoken at several NGOs while you were the Ambassador to Ukraine?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Turner. Now, the U.S. Ambassador to the EU, they would have under their portfolio aspiring nations to the EU. Would they not?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah.

Mr. Turner. Okay. So EU Ambassador Sondland, then, would have had Ukraine in his portfolio because they're an inspiring nation, and he's our U.S. Ambassador to the EU, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think he testified that one of his first --

Mr. Turner. But you agree that it's within his portfolio, correct?

Counsel. She was answering the question.

Mr. Turner. You would agree that it's in his portfolio. Would you not? Yes?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. I would agree that --

Mr. Turner. Yes. Thank you. Now, I want to go to the next --

Counsel. I'm sorry. Could you let her finish her answer?

Mr. Turner. Richard Holbrooke, a gentleman who I have a great deal of --

The Chairman. The gentleman will suspend.

Mr. Turner. -- reverence for --

The Chairman. The gentleman will suspend. The gentleman will suspend.

Ms. Yovanovitch did not finish her answer.

You may finish your answer, Ambassador.

Mr. Turner. Not on my time. You're done.

The Chairman. No. The ambassador -- the ambassador will be recognized.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I would say that all EU Ambassadors deal with other countries, including aspiring countries, but it is unusual to name the U.S. Ambassador to the EU to be responsible for all aspects of Ukraine.

Mr. Turner. I'll take your additional answer. It's still in his portfolio, which was my question.

You knew Ambassador Holbrooke, probably. I did. He's a man of great integrity, one of our most successful ambassadors. You knew him probably by his reputation. You would agree that he was a man of great reputation, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Turner. Yes. Madam Ambassador, would it surprise you if, in 2004, John Kerry had a member of his campaign who was a foreign policy adviser who traveled to the Ukraine in July and met with Ukrainian officials and the U.S. Ambassador. Would that surprise you? A member of John Kerry's campaign team for President of the United States in 2004 traveled to Ukraine, met with the U.S. Ambassador in July.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Not necessarily. What was the context?

Mr. Turner. Would you have taken that meeting? If a member of John Kerry's campaign traveled to the Ukraine, would you have taken that meeting?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I guess it would depend on what the purpose of the meeting was.

Mr. Turner. Well, that meeting actually occurred, and it was with John Holbrook. John Holbrook was a private citizen, traveled to Ukraine, met with the U.S. Ambassadors,

met with Ukrainian officials. He was also there about HIV AIDS which was, in addition, something that the Clinton Foundation was working on. So we have an official of the John Kerry campaign in 2004 that's a private citizen meeting with our Ambassador in Ukraine.

The Chairman. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. Turner. Is that unusual?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. We meet with private individuals all the time.

Mr. Turner. It probably wasn't unusual for --

The Chairman. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Carson, you're recognized.

Mr. Carson. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Madam Ambassador. Madam Ambassador, returning to the topic of corruption, we heard evidence that you were successful at promoting efforts to address corruption. On Wednesday, in testifying about your very sterling career as a champion of anticorruption efforts in Ukraine, Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent said, quote: You can't promote principled anticorruption action without pissing off corrupt people, end quote.

It seems that your efforts as Ambassador to essentially reform the powerful Prosecutor General's Office in Ukraine did exactly that. Madam Ambassador, what concerned you about the Prosecutor General's Office when you were the Ambassador in Ukraine?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. What concerned us was that there didn't seem to be any progress in the three overall objectives that Mr. Lutsenko had laid out, most importantly for the Ukrainian people but also the international community.

So the first thing was reforming the Prosecutor General's Office. It's a tremendously powerful office where they had authority not only to conduct

investigations, doing FBI-like functions, but also to do the actual prosecution. So very, very wide powers, which is part of that Soviet legacy. And there just wasn't a lot of progress in that. There wasn't a lot of progress in handling personnel issues and how the structure should be organized and who should have the important jobs because some of the people in those jobs were known to -- were considered to be corrupt themselves.

Secondly, the issue that was tremendously important to the Ukrainian people of bringing justice to the over 100 people who died on the Maidan during the Revolution of Dignity in 2014. Nobody has been held accountable for that, and that is, you know, kind of an open wound for the Ukrainian people.

And, thirdly, Ukraine needs all the money that it has, and there is a strong belief that former President Yanukovich and those around him made off with over \$40 billion. \$40 billion. That's a lot in the U.S. It's a huge amount of money in Ukraine. And so, again, nobody has -- none of that money has really been -- I think maybe \$1 billion was repatriated, but the rest of it is still missing.

Mr. Carson. Madam Ambassador, was the head of that office corrupt?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. We believe so.

Mr. Carson. And you got the sense, did you not, that he was a driving force behind some of the attacks against you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I did.

Mr. Carson. Which ultimately led to your removal, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Carson. But it wasn't just him. His allegations were picked up and spread by Mr. Giuliani and Donald Trump, Jr. Were they not?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Carson. So let me get this straight. You were effective at fighting

corruption in the Ukraine, fighting that corruption was important to the national security of the United States, and you were punished for that, ultimately being removed from your post by the President of the United States. So, in your opinion, Madam Ambassador, why is it important to have a nonpartisan career in the Foreign Services?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think it's important to have a nonpartisan career Foreign Service office -- or service, I should say --

Mr. Carson. Sure.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. -- because what we do is inherently nonpartisan. It is about our national security interests. It's not about what is good for a particular party at a particular time. It has to be about the greater interest of our security in, frankly, what is an increasingly dangerous world.

Mr. Carson. Could you briefly describe for us what broad U.S. policies you have sought to advance in your 33 years of service and specifically in post-Soviet states like Ukraine?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, that's a broad question, but I think that certainly in my time in Russia, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, all of these countries are very different as is Ukraine, but I think that establishing positive, constructive relations to the extent that we can with those countries is really important, and that -- you know, I mean, there are three basic areas. One is security. The second is economic, and the third is political. And so working all the sub issues -- your colleague mentioned many of them -- you know, we certainly did that in Ukraine as well.

Mr. Carson. Thank you for your service.

I yield to the chairman.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Thanks.

The Chairman. Dr. Wenstrup.

Dr. Wenstrup. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Madam Ambassador, thank you very much for being here. And I want to start by saying I appreciate your years of service and enduring years of moving around the world to dangerous places. And hearing from you today, I realize that we share some of the same feelings and experiences. As an Army Reserve surgeon, I received a call on a Monday afternoon in March of 2005 that told me I was being deployed to Iraq, and I had to be out the door in the next 2 to 3 days. I had patients scheduled for months. I had surgeries scheduled and had to give, so I understand that shocking feeling that can come with some abrupt change like that. I was processing a few days later, and I was told my orders would say: You're going for 18 months, but it may be a little shorter than that.

I served a year in Iraq, 2005, 2006, one of the bloodiest times of the war, and this is where I have another personal relationship with what you were talking about.

I saw a nation in Iraq of people that craved a noncorrupt government. And, sadly, today, even though it helped to remove Saddam Hussein, they still have corruption concerns in Iraq. And I can relate to what you said just a few moments ago, that it feels like an unopened wound when it hasn't been resolved. But you might imagine with that military experience and background, I take an interest in military strategy and capabilities and the thoughts of those with boots on the ground like you and Mr. Volker and Mr. Taylor.

In your deposition, on page 144, you're quoted as saying in terms of lethal assistance, we all felt it was very significant that this administration made the decision to provide lethal weapons to Ukraine. Just real quick, who in general makes up we all? Would that be the team I mentioned?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Just one second. What line is that?

Dr. Wenstrup. Well, I have to move on. You said we all felt it was very

significant that this administration made the decision to provide lethal weapons to Ukraine. I assume that is those that have boots on the ground. And then this administration, I assume you meant the Trump administration.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Dr. Wenstrup. In your deposition, also on page 144, you spoke about the generosity of Congress. You mentioned it today, increasing aid to Ukraine. In part of your deposition, after that statement that I quoted before, you were asked did you advocate for that? You responded yes. And then you were asked did you advocate for that prior to the new administration in 2016? And you responded well, yeah.

On page 148, the question was, were you satisfied that the administration was doing what was necessary to support Ukraine? You said: In what respect?

And they said: In, you know, helping them deter Russia aggression, helping them with foreign aid and foreign assistance.

And you said: Yeah.

And I agree that lethal assistance was very significant, as you said, and I thank you for that, and I thank Mr. Volker, and I think Mr. Taylor.

You know, Acting Ambassador Taylor was here Wednesday. He testified about the President's decision to withhold lethal aid, and he said the President felt it might provoke Russia. And Mr. Taylor contested, then, that Russia has already been provoked and they have invaded the Ukraine.

You know, President Obama had the right to make his own foreign policy and make his own decisions as President of the United States, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. I mean, there's an interagency process, and, obviously, Congress has control as well.

Dr. Wenstrup. But he has the right as President. I respect the interagency

process. I'm getting to that, actually. But he has the right to make his own foreign policy and make his own decisions as President of the United States, as do all Presidents, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Dr. Wenstrup. So we have one President, Obama, who denied lethal aid altogether in spite of ambassadors and other boots on the ground recommending -- making that recommendation such as you did. We have another President, Trump, who vetted those that were going to receive the aid and provided it consistent with your interagency recommendations and that of your colleagues.

Let me just ask you from a military standpoint. Without Javelins, would you agree the Russians had much greater military offensive options and flexibility in their effort to attack the Ukraine? Without the Ukraine having Javelins.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. I mean, they had another option, although the tank war has -- is no longer the war that is being fought in Ukraine.

Dr. Wenstrup. But I'm just saying with the Javelins.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. It's another option.

Dr. Wenstrup. And there's another reason for that, because the Javelins are there, and so I think that that changes the scenario. But I just wanted to make that point that the President has a right to have their own foreign policy and to make their own decisions.

And, with that, I yield back.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. If I could just supplement one of my answers.

Dr. Wenstrup. Of course.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. So I want to thank you for your service as well, but what I'd like to say is, while I obviously don't dispute that the President has the right to

withdraw an ambassador at any time for any reason, but what I do wonder is why it was necessary to smear my reputation falsely.

Dr. Wenstrup. Well, I wasn't asking you about that, but thank you very much, ma'am.

The Chairman. Representative Speier.

Ms. Speier. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ambassador, so very much. You were confirmed by the Senate on a voice vote, weren't you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Ms. Speier. So unanimous. Republicans and Democrats, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Ms. Speier. No dispute. You said that, in the summer of 2018, the smear campaign began, in your testimony earlier today. Did Secretary Pompeo at any time come to your aid?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, my understanding from Assistant Secretary Phil Reeker and Deputy Secretary Sullivan is that, you know, sort of the rumors about me, for lack of a better word, the smear campaign, which was behind closed doors at that point, that there were a number of discussions between the President and Secretary Pompeo and that he actually did keep me in place for as long as he could. That's what I was told.

Ms. Speier. So it appears that, back in 2018, the President was already making noises that he wanted you out of there. It appears that, as early as April of 2018, Mr. Parnas was at a fundraiser for the President and recommended that you be removed and then, subsequently in May of 2018, was pictured at a White House dinner with the President and then, later in May, made a contribution of over \$325,000 illegally to the President's reelection campaign. Are you aware of that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I'm aware of the press about those things.

Ms. Speier. Does that help you understand a little bit more why the smear campaign was underway?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. I mean --

Ms. Speier. All right. You made some very riveting comments in your statement this afternoon -- this morning that I just want to repeat because I think we should have you expand on it. You said: I've always understood that I served at the pleasure of the President. I still find it difficult to comprehend that foreign and private interests were able to undermine U.S. interests in this way. Individuals who apparently felt stymied by our efforts to promote stated U.S. policy against corruption, that is, to do our mission, were able to successfully conduct a campaign of disinformation against a sitting ambassador using unofficial back channels.

Now, as I listened to you make that statement, I was thinking of all the other persons in the Foreign Service who now have to be concerned that it's not good enough to follow the stated U.S. foreign policy but also to be aware that maybe the President has a back channel of interests that he is promoting that is diametrically opposed to our stated foreign policy. Can you expand on that, please?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I think that it's important that whoever is representing the President, an ambassador speaks with the full authority of the President and our foreign policy establishment. And if there are others who are also helping with the responsibilities in that country, for example, Ambassador Kurt Volker with his important mission to bring peace to the Donbas, that we all speak with one voice, that it's all about our common security interests and that it's not about, you know, personal gain or commercial gain or anything else, that it's about our national security.

Ms. Speier. But in this case, the tres amigos appeared to be more interested in getting an investigation than into promoting an anticorruption effort in Ukraine. Is that

correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That appears to be the case.

Ms. Speier. You were told at one point in 2019, in February earlier this year, you spoke to a minister in Ukraine who warned that when it came to Rudy Giuliani, you needed, to, quote, watch your back. What did you understand him to mean?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I didn't exactly know, but, you know, the rumor was out there at that time, and in fact, I think this minister also shared that information with me that the mayor was working to have me removed.

Ms. Speier. Let me just say to conclude that you have endured an orchestrated character assassination, that it was hatched over a year and a half ago, and that it's laced with enormous campaign contributions to the President's reelection campaign. And you deserve more from the American people, and you deserve more from Congress in supporting you.

I yield back.

Mr. Turner. I ask unanimous consent.

The Chairman. Mr. Stewart, you're recognized.

Mr. Turner. I ask unanimous consent, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman. We can take that up later.

Mr. Stewart, you're recognized.

Mr. Stewart. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and others.

And Ambassador, thank you for being with us here today. Welcome -- as I said last -- a couple days ago to the witnesses, welcome to year four of the impeachment proceedings. I'm sorry that you've gotten dragged into this. For 3 years, we've heard these outrageous and, frankly, unbelievable accusations regarding Russian collusion, accusations that we now know are absolute nonsense. There was no basis at all, despite

promises from some members of this committee that they had secret proof that would prove this collusion. And, granted, we know that it was nonsense, but now in year four, we apparently move on to Ukraine and quid quo pro, culminating yesterday when the Speaker announced that the President would, indeed, be impeached and removed from office for bribery.

And with that statement, I would now feel compelled to ask you, Madam Ambassador. As you sit here before us, very simply and directly, do you have any information regarding the President of the United States accepting any bribes?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Stewart. Do you have any information regarding any criminal activity that the President of the United States has been involved with at all?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Stewart. Thank you. Thank you for answering that directly. The American people know this is nonsense. The American people know this is unfair. And I have a prediction regarding this. I think that public support for impeachment is actually going to be less when these hearings are over than it is when the hearings began because finally the American people are going to be able to see the evidence. They're going to be able to make their own determination regarding that.

Now, I want to ask you one thing very quickly, and you've been asked this again and again, but my question is slightly different. You've been asked as you recognize that the President, any President, has the ability to ask his ambassadors to serve at will. I'm curious. Do you think that's the right policy?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. I probably think it is.

Mr. Stewart. I do as well. It may be imperfect. There may be times when it's not used perfectly, but I agree with you. It is the right policy. I don't think that we

should change that.

Now, I'd like to read from some previous statements, including one of your own as well as others, regarding the appropriateness of investigating corruption in the U.K. from Ms. Fiona Hill. So, again, the fact that there are investigations into corruption in the energy sector in Ukraine as well as in Russia and many other countries is not a surprise.

From yourself, your previous testimony.

Question: Was it the general understanding that Burisma was a company that suffered from allegations of corruption?

Your answer was yes.

From Ambassador Sondland: I am -- I just am generally aware that Burisma is considered a potentially corrupt company.

Would you agree, then, that it's appropriate to investigate corruption?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think it's appropriate if it's part of our national strategy. What I would say is that we have a process for doing that. It's called the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty. We have one with Ukraine, and generally it goes from our Department of Justice to the Ministry of Justice in the country of interest.

Mr. Stewart. Okay.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's the usual pattern.

Mr. Stewart. And I appreciate that. Regardless of the process, though, it's appropriate for us to investigate potential corruption, and especially, look. We're about to give these -- some of these countries hundreds of millions of dollars. The U.S. taxpayers said: Here is a dollar line. Go ahead and give it to this other country, but please only do it if you know it's not going to be used for corrupt purposes or against our national interests.

And I'll conclude with this because I promised my friend, Mr. Jordan, I would save

him a little bit of time. We had mentioned earlier that the Vice President when he was -- went to the Ukraine and called for the specific firing of a specific prosecutor, that he was, as they say, completing official U.S. policy, but the interesting thing is this. The Vice President had exactly two countries that were his responsibility at that time: China and the Ukraine. And he has bragged and been very proud of his influence in the previous administration. He says again and again that the Obama administration listened to him, so it doesn't surprise me that they would be fulfilling a policy that this Vice President certainly helped to formulate.

Mr. Jordan, I leave you -- in Cyprus. I'm sorry. Cyprus. Thank you.

Clarification. And I will yield for unanimous consent.

Mr. Turner. I have a unanimous consent, Mr. Chairman, that doesn't involve you this time. It's three articles. A New York Times Article, "2004 Campaign: The Advisers; Kerry Foreign Policy as a Clintonian" --

The Chairman. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. Turner. Kyiv post Holbrooke meets with --

The Chairman. I may recognize you later. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Turner. I'd like to have unanimous consent.

The Chairman. Mr. Quigley, you're recognized. Mr. Quigley, you're recognized.

Mr. Quigley. Thank you. Madam Ambassador, it's like a Hallmark movie: You ended up at Georgetown; this is all okay.

But it wasn't your preference 7, 8 months ago, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No, it was not.

Mr. Quigley. It wasn't your preference to be the victim of a smear campaign, was it?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Quigley. It wasn't your preference to be defamed by the President of the United States, including today, was it?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Quigley. It wasn't your preference to be ousted at seemingly the pinnacle of your career, was it?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Quigley. You wanted to finish your extended tour, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I did.

Mr. Quigley. What did you want to do after that, did you know?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I wasn't sure.

Mr. Quigley. There's nothing wrong with Georgetown. It's a fine place, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. It's a wonderful place.

Mr. Quigley. But it's your only choice at the end of the distinguished career after all that. It's not the end of a Hallmark movie. It's the end of a really bad reality TV show brought to you by someone who knows a lot about that.

Why did you -- you previously testified that you sought advice from Ambassador Sondland at this time about what to do. Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I did.

Mr. Quigley. Why did you reach out to the Ambassador?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Because this was clearly so political and was not going to be -- you know, the State Department was not in a position, shall we say, to manage the issue, it didn't appear to me. And so I asked Ambassador Sondland, who said that he -- you know, he was a political appointee. He said he was close to the President, and so he had just been in Ukraine for a ship visit with some of his EU colleagues from Brussels, and so I reached out to him for advice.

When this was no longer a Ukraine -- kind of an interview with Mr. Lutsenko, kind of a Ukrainian, but it became sort of the American -- American politicians and pundits, et cetera, were repeating those allegations, I asked him for advice.

Mr. Quigley. And it meant a lot to you. This was an extraordinary time. It meant -- the advice meant a lot, and what was his advice?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, he suggested that I needed to go big or go home, and he said that the best thing to do would be to, you know, send out a tweet, praise the President, that sort of thing.

Mr. Quigley. And what was your reaction to that advice?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, my reaction was that I'm sure he meant well, but it was not advice that I could really follow. It felt partisan. It felt political, and I just -- that was not something that I thought was in keeping with my role as ambassador and a Foreign Service officer.

Mr. Quigley. Did he give you any specific suggestions on what to say about the President of the United States or just say something nice about him?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah, just praise him.

Mr. Quigley. Thank you. I yield the balance to the chairman.

The Chairman. I want to follow up on Mr. Quigley's line of questions and also harken back to something you were asked by minority counsel earlier. You were asked a couple of questions: Do you think you could have done more to push back against this smear campaign? And I'm not suggesting this is what the counsel was getting at, but sometimes victims are asked, aren't you responsible for your own victimization? What would you say to people who say, isn't it kind of your fault, Ambassador, that you didn't fight your own smear harder?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I think that, you know, I've been a Foreign

Service officer for a long time, and just like the military, we have our own culture. We have our own kind of chain of command, so to speak, and I did everything that I could to -- you know, to address these issues and ask the State Department to do what I felt was the right thing, which was support me when it was important to do so because it was also about supporting the policy. I think it was for others to stand up for me.

The Chairman. I quite agree.

Representative Stefanik.

Ms. Stefanik. Thank you. Since the chairman has gavelled out all of my colleagues with their unanimous consent, I am going to read for the record many of the chairman's comments in September of the importance of hearing from the whistleblower. Again, Ambassador, thank you for your patience. Thank you for your service. But since we haven't been able to conduct ourselves in normal procedures, I'm just going to use the 5 minutes for this.

September 29th in The Wall Street Journal, quote: The whistleblower at the center of the impeachment investigation of President Trump will testify in the House very soon.

This is a quote by the chairman.

USA Today, September 29th, talking with ABC News "This Week," Schiff, the Democrat who chairs the House Intelligence Committee, said: The whistleblower would testify very soon. And the only thing standing in the way was getting security clearances for the attorneys representing the whistleblower so they could attend the testimony.

From Fox, September 29th: Rep Adam Schiff said Sunday the whistleblower at the center of a growing scandal surrounding President Donald Trump will testify before the House Intelligence Committee very soon.

On CNN, September 29th: Schiff said Sunday on ABC as well as NBC's "Meet the

Press" that he expects the whistleblower to testify very soon.

The Washington Post, September 29th: In an appearance on ABC News "This Week," Schiff echoed Pelosi's message. He also said he expected the Intelligence Committee to hear from the whistleblower very soon pending a security clearance from Acting Director of National Intelligence Joseph Maguire.

In the Huffington Post, Schiff told ABC's "This Week" that he expects the whistleblower to appear before this committee very soon.

In The New York Post, quote: We'll get the unfiltered testimony of that whistleblower.

In The Washington Times, quote, that whistleblower will be allowed to come in.

These are all quotes from Chairman Adam Schiff.

In Talking Points Memo, the question was posed -- actually, this was by George Stephanopoulos: Have you reached an agreement yet with the whistleblower and his or her attorneys about coming before the committee and providing the information firsthand? Quote, yes, we have, Schiff responded, and as DNI Maguire promised during the hearing, that whistleblower will be allowed to come in and come in without a minder from the Justice Department or from the White House to tell the whistleblower what they can and cannot say. We'll get the unfiltered testimony of that whistleblower.

In Daily Coast: We're ready to hear from the whistleblower as soon as that is done, and we'll keep obviously riding shotgun to make sure that the Acting Director doesn't delay in that clearance process.

In CNBC: We'll get the unfiltered testimony of that whistleblower.

In Market Watch: House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff said Sunday that an agreement has been reached under which the whistleblower will testify before the committee very soon.

I can keep going, but, again, the chairman refused to allow us to put these into the record with unanimous consent, so I've read those out. And as we know, it is important to protect whistleblowers from retaliation and from firing, and we want to make sure whistleblowers are able to come forward. But in this case, the fact that we are getting criticized by Chairman Adam Schiff for statements that he himself made early on in this process shows the duplicity and just the abuse of power that we are continuing to see.

With a minute, 54 seconds, left, I'll yield to my colleague, Mr. Jordan.

Mr. Jordan. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

I would also add that the chairman has promised we'll get to see the transcripts, but there's still four people we've deposed that we have not been able to use or see their transcripts, have their transcripts released, and, therefore, the testimony they provided we're not able to use in these open hearings. If it's an open hearing, all of the available testimony from depositions that has been taken by the committee should be available to be discussed for the American people to see, but no, no, no. Mr. Morris and Mr. Hale and two other -- Ms. Williams. Two others and another one have not yet been released. So I hope the chairman releases that.

One other point I would make in the last minute of Ms. Stefanik's time. The Democrats have asserted that this whole thing with Ambassador Yovanovitch was some part of sinister scheme by the White House to get Mr. Zelensky to do an investigation, President Zelensky to do an investigation. If recalling Ambassador Yovanovitch was part of some scheme by Trump and Pompeo and Giuliani to get President Zelensky to do an investigation, why would they replace her with the Democrats' first witness, their star witness, Bill Taylor? I mean, if that's the plan, it's not the best plan I've ever seen put together. Their star witness, their first witness, Mr. Taylor, was here Wednesday. That's what they were up to? I think it just demonstrates that that is not what went on

here. Mr. Zelensky never undertook any investigations, and the reason the aid was released, as we discussed on Wednesday, was because Vice President Pence, Ambassador Bolton, and U.S. Senators all talked with President Zelensky, and they were convinced he was the real deal as the Ambassador has alluded to in her testimony. That's why the money was released.

With that, I yield back.

The Chairman. Mr. Swalwell.

Mr. Swalwell. Mr. Chairman, a lot has changed since the whistleblower came forward, two things in particular. First, most of what the whistleblower has alleged has been corroborated by the witnesses that we have heard from. Second, the President, who my colleagues so shamelessly continue to defend, continues to pressure, threaten, and intimidate the whistleblower.

So I'd like unanimous consent to put into the record a September 26, 2019, article from Business Insider: Trump suggested the whistleblower who filed a complaint against him is guilty of treason, which is punishable by death.

The Chairman. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

\*\*\*\*\* COMMITTEE INSERT \*\*\*\*\*

Mr. Swalwell. How about September 26, 2019, Vanity Fair: Trump suggests executing the whistleblower sources like, quote, in the good old days.

Third --

The Chairman. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

\*\*\*\*\* COMMITTEE INSERT \*\*\*\*\*

Mr. Swalwell. September 29th: Whistleblower's lawyer raises fear for client's safety --

The Chairman. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

\*\*\*\*\* COMMITTEE INSERT \*\*\*\*\*

Mr. Swalwell. -- from Axios.

Mr. Chairman, the whistleblower has an absolute right to anonymity. The whistleblower's lawyer has said that he fears for his personal safety and will only answer questions now in writing. I wish my colleagues would join me in protecting the whistleblower's right to anonymity.

But here, Ms. Yovanovitch, we are here to talk about you and what you witnessed. And you saw a lot as it related to Mr. Giuliani, and I want to read a quote to you from Mr. Giuliani but first ask you, when you were in Ukraine, you understood that Rudy Giuliani was Donald Trump's personal lawyer. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that's right.

Mr. Swalwell. Are you familiar with Rudy Giuliani's quote in The New York Times describing himself as the lawyer saying, quote: He basically knows what I'm doing, sure, as his lawyer.

Were you familiar with that quote?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. It sounds familiar.

Mr. Swalwell. And you have a lawyer with you today, Ms. Yovanovitch, and you understand that lawyers act on their client's behalf. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Swalwell. That it would be improper for a lawyer to go outside any directive that a client gives. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's my understanding.

Mr. Swalwell. Are you familiar with a New York Times story on May 9, 2019, where Rudy Giuliani says that he intends to visit Ukraine and says: We're not meddling in an election, we're meddling in an investigation. Are you familiar with that quote?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Swalwell. That's 11 days before you were removed as ambassador. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Swalwell. He is talking publicly about designs on coming to Ukraine, but what I think is interesting is that Mr. Giuliani says "we're" as in we are. He doesn't say "I am not meddling in an election." He doesn't say "I'm not meddling in an investigation." He says "we." He is speaking for himself and his client, and I want to talk about that quote: We're not meddling in an election; we're meddling in an investigation.

Is it proper for you or anyone who acts on behalf of the United States Government to meddle in an investigation?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No. I don't believe so.

Mr. Swalwell. Why not?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, there are law enforcement channels, and things need to be handled properly and without any kind of political bias.

Mr. Swalwell. Now, this anticorruption crusader, President Trump, whom my colleagues have touted out as having such a great interest in anticorruption, in both the calls that have been referenced today, the August 21 call and the July 25 call, isn't it true that President Trump never mentions the word "corruption"?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that's true.

Mr. Swalwell. And as far the foreign aid that my colleagues keep saying, "Well, he can't be guilty. He didn't complete the cheat. The aid went to the Ukrainians." Isn't it true that the only reason the aid or the only time the aid went to the Ukrainians was after the whistleblower complaint became public?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. It was after the whistleblower complaint

became public.

Mr. Swalwell. So you don't really get points when you get your hand caught in the cookie jar, and someone says, "Hey, he's got his hand in the cookie jar, and then you take your hand out," which is essentially what my Republican colleagues and the President are trying to take credit for.

Finally, I want to put up the disgusting tweet from the President today where he attacks your character, but I think I know who you are, Ambassador. I think the country knows who you are. He smeared you when you were in Ukraine. He smeared you on that phone call with President Zelensky on July 25. He is smearing you right now as you are testifying. Ambassador Yovanovitch, are the President's smears going to stop you from fighting corruption?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I will continue with my work.

Mr. Swalwell. And if your country asks you again to fight corruption, will you still do that despite the smears?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Swalwell. Thank you. I yield back.

The Chairman. Mr. Hurd.

Mr. Hurd. Your Excellency -- I'll move over here. 33 years, six senior Foreign Service performance awards, five State Department superior honor awards, the Presidential Distinguished Service Award, and the Secretary's Diplomacy in Human Rights Award. You're tough as nails, and you're smart as hell, and you're a great example of what our ambassadors should be like. You're an honor to your family. You are an honor to the Foreign Service. You are an honor to this country. And I thank you for all that you have done and will continue to do on behalf of your country.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Thank you.

Mr. Hurd. Now, I'm nervous about what I'm getting ready to do. I want to do a 5-year history of Ukraine in about 45 seconds, and now I'm not sure, but Professor, you can grade my paper, okay?

Valentine's Day 2014, Ukrainian people get fed up with the Ukrainian President Yanukovich and basically overthrow him. He goes on the run. This was the Revolution of Dignity. Who was the acting President during that time when Yanukovich went out?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think it was --

Mr. Hurd. Turchynov. Is that how you say it?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Turchynov. Thank you for helping me.

Mr. Hurd. Turchynov. Okay. Excellent. Then, in March of 2014, that is when we saw little green men coming into Ukraine, and ultimately the Russians invade the Ukraine and not only annex -- try to annex Crimea but also try to -- they invade the entire country and the eastern Donbas as well.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

RPTR MOLNAR

EDTR CRYSTAL

[2:17 p.m.]

Mr. Hurd. Then there was an election, and the Ukrainian President was Poroshenko. That was in June of 2014. Then you came to post in 2016 of August. Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Two years later.

Mr. Hurd. January 2017, Trump was elected. And in December of 2017 is when the Javelins were approved, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Uh-huh.

Mr. Hurd. And we saw those Javelins delivered in April of 2018 to be put to first use.

Then we had Zelensky elected in 2019, April, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Uh-huh.

Mr. Hurd. Now, the -- Zelensky defeated the previous President, Poroshenko?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Hurd. There's no love lost between those two dudes, is there?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I don't think so.

Mr. Hurd. Okay. And then in May of 2019 Zelensky is sworn in.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Hurd. So my questions, we talk a lot about Rudy Giuliani. Do we know what officials within the Zelensky regime he actually met with? I know two. A gentleman name by Yermak, who was one of Zelensky's senior advisers, and then we also know of the former attorney general that we've already established here was corrupt, Lutsenko, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Lutsenko.

Mr. Hurd. And Mr. Lutsenko served under Zelensky for a couple of months, up until April -- I mean, excuse me, August. Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that's right.

Mr. Hurd. And their parliament basically voted him out. Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that's right.

Mr. Hurd. So if Rudy Giuliani is trying to influence the Zelensky regime, would a guy that worked under the previous regime, under Poroshenko, be the right guy to do it?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. So are you saying Mr. Lutsenko?

Mr. Hurd. Yes.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That he -- could you --

Mr. Hurd. So did Mr. Lutsenko have much credibility within the Zelensky regime, the current -- the current regime?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I don't think so.

Mr. Hurd. He didn't. And Mr. Yermak, do you know of any other Ukrainians that Mr. Giuliani was meeting with that was part of the Zelensky regime?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, just to remind, I would have already have left Ukraine by that point. But, no, I'm not aware.

Mr. Hurd. But there was -- even with the administration to come, right, Zelensky won the election, there was a 2-month period of preparing to be installed as President, even during that time, were you aware of any contact?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. There was -- so there is a -- one of the oligarchs, as we've heard about, one of the oligarchs is named Mr. Kolomoisky, and he met with Mr. Fruman and --

Mr. Hurd. Sure.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. -- Mr. Parnas, and that was apparently to get a meeting for Mr. Giuliani.

Mr. Hurd. And those -- but those are not people that were actually in government or became in the Zelensky regime. Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Hurd. Okay.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Thank you.

The Chairman. Mr. Castro.

Mr. Castro. Thank you, Chairman.

And thank you, Ambassador, for your 33 years of service to our Nation.

A big question here today is why you were pushed aside as ambassador. For example, Americans know that an employer has a right to fire an employee, but they shouldn't do it for certain reasons. You shouldn't be fired because you're disabled, because you're a woman, because you're Black, and for other reasons.

And I think most Americans agree that a President shouldn't fire an ambassador, or recall an ambassador, because the ambassador's standing in his way of doing a corrupt act.

So I want to ask you, did the President ever tell you why he was recalling you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Castro. Did anybody at the White House ever tell you why you were being recalled?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Castro. Did the President ever consult you about who the good guys and the bad guys were in Ukraine?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Castro. Did Secretary Pompeo ever tell you why you were being recalled?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Castro. And it appears in the testimony that we've heard in the Intelligence Committee so far that there were a group of the President's men, perhaps Secretary Perry, Rudy Giuliani, and Ambassador Sondland, who were in on this scheme to help the President get the Bidens and Burisma investigated.

And I want to put aside President Trump for just a second and ask you, in all of your years of service have you ever come across a President, been asked by a President, or have known of colleagues who were asked by an American President to help that President get an American investigated overseas?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I'm not aware of that.

Mr. Castro. And if a President asked you to investigate a former Vice President for this purpose, what would you have said?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I mean, with what I know today, I would have said no.

Mr. Castro. And would you have considered it an unlawful act?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I don't know that it's unlawful, per se, but I think, again, that there are channels for conducting proper investigations, and that that would have been the best way to handle something like this.

Mr. Castro. But certainly it would be -- it's bizarre for a President to ask that some American be investigated by another government?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. It's very unusual.

Mr. Castro. And also you mentioned that there is corruption in Ukraine. Ukraine isn't the only country that confronts corruption.

If the people in power in a country where corruption is rampant are being asked by a foreign leader, who's got a lot of leverage over them, to conduct an investigation,

could that be dangerous because they could trump up charges against someone, if they wanted?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. They could.

Mr. Castro. And I also want to ask you, I spoke to Ambassador Kent. He made a comment yesterday about selective prosecutions and what it means going forward, what kind of precedent it sets. And you've spoken about a dangerous precedent for the State Department and for diplomats. But I want you to help us consider the precedent going forward if there's no consequences for President Trump, or really any President who does this.

What are the consequences for this country and for any American, not just a former Vice President or a Presidential candidate or even somebody in politics, but a person in business who does business in Saudi Arabia or some other country, if a President is going to speak to another head of state, or some foreign official, and try to get that person investigated, what does that mean for the future of the country and for Americans?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I think that investigations, prosecutions, judicial decisions, properly should remain with investigators, prosecutors, and the courts. And I think that, as I said before, I think Senator Vandenberg, when he said that politics needs to stop at the water's edge, I think he was right in that.

Mr. Castro. I yield back to the chairman.

The Chairman. Mr. Ratcliffe.

Mr. Ratcliffe. I thank the chairman.

And, Ambassador Yovanovitch, I'd like to join all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in thanking you for your service.

I'd like to ask you about your earlier testimony about your Senate confirmation.

And Congresswoman Stefanik had asked you how the Obama-Biden State Department had prepared you to answer questions about Burisma and Hunter Biden specifically. You recall that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. And she mentioned that you had been asked or been prepared for a question about Hunter Biden's role on the board of Burisma, but I don't think that you gave us the answer or answers that the Obama-Biden State Department prepared you to give in response to that question. Do you remember what those answers were?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. It was something along the lines of, I would defer you to the Vice President's office on that.

Mr. Ratcliffe. So did they, in the course of that, brief you about the amount of money that Hunter Biden was being paid by Burisma?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No. This wasn't part of a briefing. I mean, I had sort of big old books with --

Mr. Ratcliffe. Right.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. -- questions that might come up.

Mr. Ratcliffe. In preparation for your confirmation. And they thought that Hunter Biden's role at Burisma might be significant enough that it would come up during your confirmation. Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Apparently so. I mean, there were hundreds of questions.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Well, hundreds of questions, but were there hundreds of companies? How many companies other than Burisma did the Obama-Biden State Department prepare you to give answers for? And if so, if there were others, which ones?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I just don't recall.

Mr. Ratcliffe. You don't recall that there were any other companies. Is that correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I'm quite sure there probably were some companies, but, I mean, you know, this is a while ago and I don't recall.

Mr. Ratcliffe. But you specifically recall Burisma?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. All right. Out of thousands of companies in the Ukraine, the only one that you recall the Obama-Biden State Department preparing you to answer questions about was the one where the Vice President's son was on the board. Is that fair?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. You understood from Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent's testimony, as it's been related to you that he testified a few days ago, do you understand that that arrangement, Hunter Biden's role on the Burisma board, caused him enough concern that, as he testified in his statement, that "in February of 2015, I raised my concern that Hunter Biden's status as a board member could create the perception of a conflict of interest." Then he went on to talk about the Vice President's responsibilities over the Ukraine -- or over Ukraine -- Ukrainian policy as one of those factors.

Do you recall that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Did you ever -- do you agree with that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. That it was a legitimate concern to raise?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think that it could raise the appearance of a conflict

of interest.

Mr. Ratcliffe. And did you discuss that ever with Mr. Kent?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I don't believe so.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Shortly before your confirmation in August of 2016, Prosecutor General Shokin was fired by President Poroshenko, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. And President -- or Prosecutor General Shokin was the one who had opened the investigation into Burisma, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think that's right, but I'm not actually sure.

Mr. Ratcliffe. He was in charge of it at least at that point in time as the prosecutor general?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Uh-huh.

Mr. Ratcliffe. And are you aware of the very public statements by the Vice President that that firing of the prosecutor general occurred in March of 2016, 6 hours after the Vice President told President Poroshenko that he needed to fire the prosecutor general or that he wouldn't receive \$1 billion from the United States? Do you recall that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. All right. And do you think that that raises a potential concern or conflict of interest, that the Vice President of the United States was ordering the firing of the prosecutor in charge of a company that had been identified as one that is substantially corrupt?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I actually don't. I don't think that the view that Mr. Shokin was not a good prosecutor general fighting corruption, I don't think that had anything to do with the Burisma case.

Mr. Ratcliffe. But the legitimate concern about Hunter Biden's role was legitimate, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think it creates a concern that there could be an appearance of conflict of interest.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Well, based on your testimony, Ambassador, I'd like to renew my request, Mr. Chairman, that Hunter Biden's testimony that has been requested --

The Chairman. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. Ratcliffe. -- requested by the Republicans be considered --

The Chairman. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. Ratcliffe. -- as legitimate rather than as a sham --

The Chairman. The gentleman will suspend.

Mr. Ratcliffe. -- as has been referred to by the chairman.

The Chairman. Your time is expired.

Mr. Ratcliffe. I have a unanimous --

The Chairman. Mr. Heck, you are recognized.

Mr. Ratcliffe. I have a unanimous consent request.

The Chairman. You are not recognized.

Mr. Heck, you are.

Mr. Heck. Ambassador, I'd like to thank you very much, add my voice of gratitude for your years of service. Frankly, you're the best of this Nation, and I cannot think of anybody else I would rather have representing us in a foreign capital than you.

My colleagues have gone to a great deal of effort to better understand the facts surrounding your removal. I think the facts are pretty clear. There was a smear campaign, and it was orchestrated by a corrupt Ukrainian prosecutor, the President's attorney, the President's son, and even some of the President's allies at his favorite TV

station. So that campaign led to your removal, despite 33 years of outstanding service, progressive responsibility, and awards.

And so I kind of sit here with a mix of emotions. On the one hand, there's some pride and gratitude for all your outstanding service, and on the other hand, I'm angry, like my friend from Connecticut. In fact, I'm very angry about how it is the most powerful person on the face of the Earth would remove you from office after your stellar service and somehow feel compelled to characterize you as bad news, and then to ominously threaten that you're going to go through some things.

So I am angry. But I'm not surprised. After all, as was suggested earlier, he said the whistleblower may have committed treason, a crime punishable by death, even though the whistleblower strictly adhered to the letter of the law, as independently attested to by both the Trump-appointed inspector general and the acting DNI.

After all, he even demeaned the memory of Senator McCain after he lied in his grave at the Naval Academy grounds, despite a lifetime of public service, and serving 6 years as a prisoner of war in a tiny cell in Hanoi, being beaten and tortured every day.

And after all, he belittled the Gold Star Khan family whose son, Captain Khan, gave his last full measure of devotion out of love for this country. And let me tell you, as somebody whose older brother never saw his 35th birthday because of service in the Vietnam war, those words are deeply offensive.

Words matter, and the words leveled against you constitute bullying of the worst order. Your good character, your outstanding reputation have been besmirched in a way that is devoid of common decency.

But here's my message to you. There is nothing, Ambassador Yovanovitch, nothing he can say or do, not a thing, that will in any way diminish the nature and quality of the service you have rendered to our great Nation, not a thing. And there's not a

thing he can say or do that will diminish our gratitude to you for that service. And I thank you again for it.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Thank you.

Mr. Heck. So as to the larger point, I would like you to answer what does this mean to Ukraine when the United States actually engages in the kind of behavior that we are attempting to discourage them from engaging in, namely, a politically motivated prosecution? What does that mean to -- what does that mean to them in their struggling efforts to become a robust democracy? What's the impact in Ukraine for this behavior?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I think Ukraine, like many countries, looks to us for the power of our example. And I think that when we engage in questionable activities, that raises a question, and it emboldens those who are corrupt, who don't want to see Ukraine become, you know, a democracy, a free market economy, a part of Europe, but want Ukraine to stay in, you know, under Russia's thrall. And that's not in our national security interest.

Mr. Heck. Thank you, Ambassador Yovanovitch. Thank you so very much.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Thank you.

Mr. Heck. I yield the balance of my time to the chair.

The Chairman. I thank the gentleman.

I understand that either the witness or counsel would like to take a short break. Let's take a 5-minute recess. If members of the audience could please remain in their seats to allow the witness or counsel to leave ahead of us, we will resume in a few minutes. We are in recess.

[Recess.]

The Chairman. The committee will return to order.

Mr. Jordan, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. Jordan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador, thank you for being here. Thank you for your service to our country.

Ambassador, should ambassadors ever try to influence host country elections?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Probably not. No.

Mr. Jordan. I think you said in your opening statement, partisanship of this type is not compatible with the role of a career Foreign Service officer. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah.

Mr. Jordan. But that's exactly what happened in 2016. In August of 2016, the very month you went to Ukraine as our ambassador, the Ukrainian ambassador here in the United States, Ambassador Chaly, wrote an op-ed in The Hill, said this: Trump's comments send wrong message.

So the very month you're over there as our ambassador to Ukraine, Ambassador Chaly writes that op-ed. And it wasn't just that attack, as Mr. Castor got into earlier, it wasn't just that attack on the President. We had former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yatsenyuk, who criticized candidate Trump.

We had Mr. Avakov. I believe earlier you said, Ambassador, that Mr. Avakov was the individual who first alerted you to the efforts of Mr. Giuliani. Mr. Avakov, back during this same time period in the months just prior to the 2016 election, called Mr. -- or excuse me -- called then candidate Trump all kinds of names, called him a terrorist.

And of course we have Mr. Leshchenko, a member of parliament, who was a source for Fusion GPS and the now somewhat famous dossier that flowed from Fusion's work. He said this in the Financial Times, again, in August of 2016, when you first arrived in Ukraine, he said this: The majority of Ukrainians, the majority of Ukrainian

politicians are on Hillary Clinton's side.

So you had several high ranking officials in the government, in the Ukrainian government, and President Poroshenko was President of Ukraine, criticize President Trump, then candidate Trump, all in the late summer and fall of 2016.

And what I want to know, Ambassador, when this was all happening, did you go talk to anyone in the Ukrainian government about this? Did you go say to some of these officials: Hey, you guys, you guys need to knock this off. This perception that we got, as Mr. Leshchenko said, the majority of Ukrainian politicians on Hillary Clinton's side, that's not good. Did you have that conversation?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Jordan. Didn't talk to anyone in the government? Did you talk to President Poroshenko?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Jordan. Didn't alert anyone in the government?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Jordan. Well, one of the things we've heard so much over the last 6 weeks in depositions and, frankly, in the hearing on Wednesday, is how important bipartisan support is for Ukraine. Democrats and Republicans agree that we want to help Ukraine. In fact, the Democrats' first witness, their star witness on Wednesday, Mr. Taylor, said Ukraine's most important strategic asset is this bipartisan support. And you would agree with that, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I do.

Mr. Jordan. He said this in his testimony on Wednesday, "On September 11th, I learned that the hold had been lifted. The next day," Ambassador Taylor said, "I conveyed this news to President Zelensky and the Ukrainian foreign minister, and I

reminded Mr. Yermak of the high strategic value of bipartisan support for Ukraine and the importance of not getting involved in other countries' elections."

So what I'm wondering is, this is the day after the aid's been lifted that Ambassador Taylor made this statement to the Ukrainian government, and he makes this after there has nothing been done by Ukraine to influence our election, because President Zelensky didn't announce he was doing an investigation and the aid was lifted. But he felt he needed to say that.

But in 2016, when we know that the majority of Ukrainian politicians want Clinton to win, because it was said by a Member of Parliament, when the ambassador to the United States from Ukraine writes an op-ed criticizing then candidate Trump, when Mr. Avakov calls candidate Trump all kinds of names, nobody goes and talks to him and tells him to knock it off.

Did you have any conversations, Ambassador, with Victoria Nuland or Secretary of State Kerry about what was going in 2016 and this majority of Ukrainian politicians being for candidate Clinton and not -- and opposed to President Trump?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No, I did not.

Mr. Jordan. No one did anything. No one did anything.

Do you see why maybe, maybe the President was a little concerned about what went on in Ukraine? And you couple that with the corruption level that we know exists in Ukraine, you add to that this idea that he's not a big fan of foreign aid, why he might be a little concerned about sending the hard-earned tax dollars of the American people to Ukraine?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I'm sorry. Is there a question in there?

Mr. Jordan. There was.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Okay. Could you repeat it, please.

Mr. Jordan. I'm asking --

The Chairman. The time of the gentleman has expired, but I'll allow you to repeat the question.

Mr. Jordan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm asking, maybe we can kind of see why the President was a little concerned when you have the highest ranking officials in the government, the ambassador criticizing him, Parliamentary Member Leshchenko criticizing him, when you have Avakov, the guy who first told you about Giuliani, criticizing, all this going on, and when you couple that with the concerns he has about corruption, the concerns he has about Europe not doing enough, the concerns he has about -- reluctant to sending the hard-earned tax dollars to any country --

The Chairman. Mr. Jordan, I have indulged you with extra time, but --

Mr. Jordan. I appreciate it.

The Chairman. -- my indulgence is wearing out.

Mr. Jordan. I appreciate it.

The Chairman. There is a question here, right?

Mr. Jordan. Our indulgence wore out with you a long time ago, Mr. Chairman. I will tell you that.

The Chairman. I'm about to gavel you down, so if you have a question, I suggest you --

Mr. Jordan. I'm asking her, do you think there is maybe a reason that this was -- that President Trump's concern was justified.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. You know, I can't speak for the President on this. But what I would say is, you've listed a number of actions. I think from my point of view that doesn't -- that doesn't create a Ukrainian government strategy to interfere in our

elections.

Mr. Jordan. I didn't say that.

The Chairman. Mr. Jordan, please allow the ambassador to answer the question.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. So I would just say that, you know, U.S. politicians will often criticize policies of foreign counterparts, even perhaps during their elections.

You know, this happens in politics, and I think that it doesn't necessarily constitute interference.

Mr. Jordan. Would you ever write an op-ed --

The Chairman. Mr. Jordan, your time has expired.

Mr. Jordan. -- critical of a Presidential candidate in Ukraine?

The Chairman. Mr. Jordan, your time has expired.

Mr. Welch, you're recognized.

Mr. Welch. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Like everybody here, I'm extraordinarily grateful to you for your career of public service, and I feel very badly about what you've had to endure.

Like your colleagues, you don't complain. You're doing your job. I feel badly about the insults, the tweet this morning, the fact that you were smeared, fired.

But the question, as you know, is not how you were treated. The question is why the President did what he did and whether what he did was a breach of trust. The question, really, is about whether the President of the United States, any President, has the authority to withhold congressionally approved aid to condition a White House meeting on extracting from a foreign leader a willingness to assist him in his political campaign. That's the question.

And that brings us to you, as part of the story, because the question is, why were you fired from that position?

I want to read a portion of the President's call on July 25th with President Zelensky, and this is the painful part when you first heard about it: "The former ambassador from the United States, the woman, was bad news, and the people she was dealing with in Ukraine were bad news, so I just wanted to let you know that.

"The other thing" -- he goes right into this -- "there's a lot of talk about Biden's son, that Biden stopped the prosecution, and a lot of the people want to find out about that. So whatever you can do with the attorney general would be great."

You indicated in response to my colleague Mr. Castro's question that if you were asked to approach a foreign leader and condition American support on their being involved in our campaign, you would refuse to do that.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. Yes.

Mr. Welch. And you're aware now, but I don't know if you were then, but that July 25th phone call occurred the day after Director Mueller reported that the interference in our 2016 campaign was not from Ukraine, it was active, concerted, energetic, and by the Russians, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Welch. Now, as ambassador you had no knowledge of whatever it is President Trump ultimately seems to have wanted to get for cooperation in this investigation. Isn't that -- that's correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Welch. Now, you've been asked about whether a President has authority to replace an ambassador, and you have agreed that that's the President's prerogative.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes, that's true.

Mr. Welch. But that assumes that the reasons are not related to the personal, private, political interests of the President at the expense of our national security, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Welch. And you've been the target of insults from the President. You joined some very distinguished company, by the way, Senator McCain, General Kelly, a man I admire, I think all of us do, General Mattis.

We're not here to talk about that unless the reason you get insulted as you did today, essentially blaming you for Somalia, is if this is another step by the President to intimidate witnesses.

He didn't intimidate you. You're here. You've endured. But there are other people out there that can expect the Trump treatment if they come forward. That's a question for us.

Now, you also indicated that the President has a prerogative to appoint a noncareer person, and to be candid, Republican Presidents and Democratic Presidents have done that. Mr. Sondland's transcript is out, and he was someone who indicated that everything hinged, the White House meeting and the release of the vital defensive aid, everything hinged on the President, President Zelensky, being willing to do that investigation that would benefit the Trump campaign. You're aware of that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Welch. And you've indicated that's something that you would not agree to do?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Welch. And Sondland was quite willing to do?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Apparently so.

Mr. Welch. I thank you for your professional service.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Thank you.

Mr. Welch. And I yield back.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Thank you.

The Chairman. Mr. Maloney.

Mr. Maloney. Ambassador Yovanovitch, thank you for being here. It's been a long day. You know, the first time we met it wasn't clear, and so I just want to start with a quick comment, but, you know, your testimony in this inquiry broke the dam. You were the first one through that stone wall that the President was trying to set up. And I just want to thank you for that because others have followed your example. And there's an old expression that the first person through the wall gets a little bit bloody, and I think you must understand that expression in a new way, but thank you.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Thank you.

Mr. Maloney. I want to ask you about the day you were let go, and I know this is a painful series of events. So forgive me, but I think it's very important. It's April 24th, and you told us a few things that really stuck with me. You said you were at the Embassy in Ukraine. You were honoring a Ukrainian woman, an anticorruption activist. I believe her name is Kateryna Handziuk. That's correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah.

Mr. Maloney. Am I saying that correctly?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Uh-huh. I was at my house.

Mr. Maloney. You were at your house, excuse me.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah, uh-huh.

Mr. Maloney. And you were giving her the Woman of Courage Award, I believe.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah. Embassy Kyiv's Woman of Courage Award.

Mr. Maloney. Right. And of course that's the day you get a call from Carol Perez, a senior member of the Foreign Service. Did you know Carol Perez?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Maloney. You're both senior women in the Foreign Service. You had an opportunity to meet her before.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Maloney. And she says: There's trouble coming. I want to give you heads-up -- correct me if I get this wrong -- and I don't know a lot, but it's coming from the White House. I'll call you later.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Uh-huh, yeah. That sums it up.

Mr. Maloney. But you're literally that evening honoring this anticorruption activist. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Maloney. And not just any woman but a woman who was, you said, horribly attacked and killed for her efforts. And she wasn't just killed, you said she -- you said, I believe, that someone threw acid on her.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's correct.

Mr. Maloney. And I went and I checked during the break, and it turns out she was horribly injured, and it took 4 months for her to die. Is that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. A very painful death.

Mr. Maloney. Why would somebody attack her with acid? There are easier ways to kill people. Why do you think they did it with acid?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I think they wanted her out of the way, but I think the message was: This could happen to you, too, if you continue her work.

Mr. Maloney. That's what happens when you go up against corrupt people in Ukraine?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. It is something that can happen. I mean, there are other ways of sidelining people.

Mr. Maloney. Do you remember speaking at that event?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I do.

Mr. Maloney. I went and looked at what you said. You said: Kateryna paid the ultimate price for her fearlessness in fighting against corruption and for her determined efforts to build a democratic Ukraine. Do you remember saying that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Maloney. And then your phone rings, and you hear there's trouble up the street. And Carol Perez called you back later that night, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Uh-huh.

Mr. Maloney. It was 1 a.m., I believe.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Maloney. Were you sleeping?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mr. Maloney. You had stayed up?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Maloney. To get the phone call?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Maloney. And that's when she says two things, I believe, that really stuck with me. She said: We're worried about your security.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Maloney. You've just been honoring a woman who was killed for fighting -- for her anti-corruption efforts, and she says: You got to get on the next plane.

Was she speaking euphemistically, "get on the next plane, you know, when you get time," or did she mean literally the next plane?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, I think she meant, you know, as soon as

possible. But pretty much it was the next plane.

Mr. Maloney. And that's a pretty good flight back from Kyiv to Washington, and you're on your way to meet with Deputy Secretary Sullivan.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Maloney. And he says to you two things. He says: There was a concerted effort against you.

And he says: You've done nothing wrong.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Right.

Mr. Maloney. And what I'm fascinated about is when he says, "You've done nothing wrong," what did you expect the United States Government would do next?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. You know, it was pretty clear that a decision had been made by the President, implemented by the State Department, that I had to leave Ukraine. But I, you know, I had hoped that there would be more public support.

Mr. Maloney. Did you expect them to have your back?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Maloney. And were you surprised when you found out they weren't going to?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Not at that point anymore.

Mr. Maloney. Why?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, because over the last several months, that had not been the case.

Mr. Maloney. Ma'am, in your opening statement, you said: How could our system fail like this?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah.

Mr. Maloney. How is it that a foreign -- excuse me. How is it that foreign

corrupt interests could manipulate our government? How could our system fail like this? How is it that foreign corrupt interests could manipulate our government?

I want you to know, ma'am, that that is the very question we are determined to get an answer for, and I want to thank you on behalf of your country for your service and with our work in answering that question. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Thank you.

The Chairman. Mrs. Demings?

Mrs. Demings. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Ambassador, everyone in this room should be thankful for your service to our Nation. I have four little girls in my life, and as I sit here thinking about them and as a woman, I could not be prouder of you, and I consider you an inspiration for women around the world.

I just have to say before I get into my questioning, is, I think it's disgraceful to hear my colleagues refer to your sworn testimony as a performance today or speak in a condescending way basically suggesting that "the woman" because I think that's how the President referred to you -- I'm not sure he knows your name, or there's some other meaning there -- but to basically suggest that the woman should be thankful for whatever she was left with, smear campaign and all, after you were recalled. But I want you to know today that we thank you for your service, your 33 years of service.

Ambassador, on a press conference call, on October 17th, Acting White House Chief of Staff Mulvaney discussed his belief that it's entirely appropriate to politicize U.S. foreign policy. Here's what he said: If you read the news reports and you believe them, what did McKinley say yesterday? Well, McKinley 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.

Ambassador Yovanovitch, do you share the concern raised by Ambassador McKinley in testimony before this committee about political influence in foreign policy?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, as I said before, I think it's important to keep political influence out of foreign policy, because we all, whether we are Republican or Democrats or something else, have common security interests, and that needs to be safeguarded and advanced.

Mrs. Demings. And what message do you think it sends to other Foreign Service officers and public servers, which we so desperately need good ones, when an administration refuses to support its own officials in the face of a smear campaign?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, it's deeply troubling. It's deeply troubling, and there are morale issues at the State Department.

Mrs. Demings. Morale issues at the State Department. I can understand why. On March 20th of 2019, President Trump tweeted an article that included a letter from Representative Pete Sessions that said you had, and I quote, spoken privately and repeatedly about your disdain for the current administration, in a way that might call for the expulsion of you as Ambassador to the Ukraine immediately.

Did you speak publicly and privately about your disdain for the Trump administration?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No.

Mrs. Demings. Why do you think the President would want to push such a lie?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I don't know. I don't know.

Mrs. Demings. Policies change, but U.S. interests don't, not for those who are seeking to do the work of protecting our Nation, the work you have done for decades. The President, his Chief of Staff, and his allies seem to want nothing more than to smear the good people trying to protect this country and to hijack our institutions for their

personal and political gain. Again, Ambassador, we thank you so much for your service.

And I'll yield my remaining time to the chairman.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Thank you.

The Chairman. I thank the gentlewoman. I'm going to go to Mr.

Krishnamoorthi.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Good afternoon, Ambassador, and thank you to the family as well --

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Thank you.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. -- for being here in support of you today. I'd like to direct you to an area of bipartisanship, namely, aid to Ukraine.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Uh-huh.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Congress on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis had appropriated hundreds of millions of dollars in military assistance to Ukraine, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. And that aid is being used by Ukraine to fight a common adversary, namely, Russia, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. The U.S., in fact, has consistently partnered with other European countries to keep Russia at bay and maintain the peace in Europe, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. As Ambassador Taylor suggested earlier this week, supporting Ukraine helps maintain peace so that Americans don't have to go to war again in Europe, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Suspending that aid and weakening Ukraine can increase

the likelihood of the opposite, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. It is extremely shortsided.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. The last time you were in Ukraine was May 20th of this year, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. In his opening statement, Ambassador Taylor said he took charge in Ukraine on June 17th.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Therefore, there was almost a 1-month gap between the time you departed and when Taylor took over, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. During that time, on May 20th, Ambassador Sondland, Rick Perry, and others came to the inauguration of President Zelensky, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. And during that gap in time, Ambassador Sondland visited the White House, along with others, and got directions from President Trump to talk to Rudy -- those were his words -- talk to Rudy about what to do in Ukraine, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. That's my understanding.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. In other words, isn't it the case that your departure and the 1-month gap between the time you left and when Ambassador Taylor arrived, provided the perfect opportunity for another group of people to basically take over Ukraine policy? Isn't that right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Ambassador, you're going to have to speak a little louder into the mike.

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Thank you.

On page 10 of your opening statement you mentioned, quote/unquote, corrupt interests apparently hijacking our Ukraine policy, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. A couple suspect individuals in that regard were Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. You mentioned in response to minority counsel earlier that you learned that Fruman and Parnas were attempting to open a liquefied natural gas company, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. How did you learn that, by the way?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I heard it from the Minister of Interior.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Interestingly at noon today, The Wall Street Journal reported that Federal prosecutors in Manhattan are investigating whether Rudy Giuliani stood to personally profit from that liquefied natural gas venture. Do you have any knowledge of that?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. No, I do not.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Maybe we should talk to Rudy, huh?

Ambassador, I'd like to direct you to another line of questioning that I had for Ambassador Taylor earlier this week. He said that there were irregular channels of diplomacy at work in Ukraine circumventing normal diplomatic channels and threatening American interests in favor of private interests.

I asked him the question, can you rule out the possibility that these irregular

channels of diplomacy are being used in other countries where we conduct foreign policy?

In response, he said that he could not rule it out.

Ambassador Yovanovitch, I ask you, and I assume that you can't rule it out either, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I can't, but I would also add, I have no knowledge of that.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. I understand. Are you concerned that these irregular channels of diplomacy may be at work elsewhere?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. I think it's a possibility.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. You testified that it was a, quote/unquote, dangerous precedent that private interests and people who don't like a particular ambassador could combine to replace that ambassador.

Are you concerned that other ambassadors may suffer the same fate as you?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Ambassador, in your service as an American diplomat you have encountered various dictators and strongmen ruling other countries, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. In your personal life, your parents fled the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany and they became familiar with despots and dictators as well, correct?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Indeed, you're an authority on authoritarianism, right?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Well, maybe.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Is it a feature of authoritarianism to allow corrupt interests to hijack foreign policy?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yeah.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Is it a feature of authoritarianism for the rulers there to claim absolute rights?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. And is it a hallmark of authoritarianism for those rulers to smear their opponents?

Ambassador Yovanovitch. Sometimes, yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Thank you.

The Chairman. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. Nunes, do you have any concluding remarks?

Mr. Nunes. I would just say to the American people, today's show trial has come to an end. We're headed down now to the basement of the Capitol to go until I don't know what time, and we'll be back there hiding again behind the closed doors, interviewing more witnesses that you may or may not be able to see in the public.

I hate to break it to my colleagues, if there's anyone else out there watching television ratings, but they must be plummeting right now, and I would suggest that we get back to the work of the Intelligence Committee, that we pass a trade agreement with the United States, Mexico, and Canada that would actually help the American people out, because this is an embarrassment.

I'll yield back.

Mr. Conaway. Mr. Chairman, may I be recognized for a motion?

The Chairman. No. I have some concluding remarks.

Ambassador, I want to thank you for your decades of service. I want to thank you, as Mr. Maloney said, for being the first one through the gap. What you did in coming forward and answering a lawful subpoena was to give courage to others that also

witnessed wrongdoing, that they, too, could show the same courage that you have, that they could stand up, speak out, answer questions, they could endure whatever threats, insults may come their way.

And so in your long and distinguished career you have done another great public service in answering the call of our subpoena and testifying before us today.

I think you gathered from our comments that we not only grieve for what you went through, but what damage is being done to the State Department, to career Federal Foreign Service officers all over the country.

I am profoundly grateful to you and Mr. Kent and Ambassador Taylor who have done so much in the last 2 days or 3 days to show the American people the face of our diplomatic corps, the extraordinary public servants who work all around the world in very dangerous places, as you have.

And so I'm glad they have gotten to see you, because you're often vilified as bureaucrats, or diplomacy is diminished as unimportant, anything other than military doesn't really matter, when it's your efforts that often prevent us from going to war. Sometimes you're disparaged as the deep state.

But what you are is what holds this country together, what holds our foreign policy together, what makes it seamless, what makes it work. And I'm glad America gets to see that.

I will just emphasize once again about the importance of your testimony. Mr. Kent and Ambassador Taylor gave us the broad outlines of this story. This is a story about an effort to coerce, condition, or bribe a foreign country into doing the dirty work of the President, investigations of his political rival, by conditioning U.S. taxpayer money, by conditioning a meeting that President Zelensky desperately wanted and needed to establish that relationship with the most powerful patron of Ukraine, the United States of

America.

The fact that they failed in this solicitation of bribery doesn't make it any less bribery, doesn't make it any less immoral or corrupt. It just means it was unsuccessful. And to that we owe other dedicated public servants who blew the whistle. Had they not blown the whistle, we wouldn't be here.

And I think it is appalling that my colleagues continue to want to out this whistleblower so that he or she can be punished by this President.

But let's underscore once again, while you are the beginning of this story, you're not the end of it. But nonetheless the beginning is important, because the beginning of the story is an effort to get you out of the way, an effort by Rudy Giuliani and Fruman and Parnas and corrupt Ukrainians like Lutsenko to get you out of the way, because they felt you were an impediment to these political investigations the President so desperately wanted.

Giuliani has made it abundantly clear he was in Ukraine on a mission for his client, for the President, to investigate the Bidens, and you were viewed as an obstacle that had to go, not just by Giuliani, but by the President of the United States.

And if people had any doubt about it, they should do what the President asks -- read the transcript. And what they'll see in that transcript is the President praises the corrupt, he praises the corrupt Lutsenko, he condemns the just, you, and then he asks for an investigation of the Bidens.

There is no camouflaging that corrupt intent.

We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:22 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]