

## Opening Statement before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

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Thank you, Chairman Schiff, Ranking Member Nunes, and other Members of the Committee for the opportunity to provide this statement. I appear today pursuant to a subpoena and am prepared to answer your questions to the best of my abilities.

I have had the privilege of serving as a Foreign Service Officer for nearly fourteen years, working for three different presidential administrations—two Republican and one Democratic. I joined the State Department in 2006 after serving in the Department of Homeland Security under Secretary Michael Chertoff. It was with great pride and conviction that I swore an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution, administered by a personal hero of mine, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. As a career officer, I am committed to serving the American people and advancing American interests abroad, in support of the President's foreign policy objectives. I have been inspired and encouraged in that journey by the thousands of other dedicated public servants whom I am proud to call colleagues across the Foreign Service, civil service, military, and federal law enforcement agencies.

I have served overseas tours in Kingston, Jamaica; Beirut, Lebanon; and London, United Kingdom. I have worked to implement humanitarian assistance programs to millions of victims of the Syria conflict, and served as an advisor on Middle East issues to the Deputy Secretary of State. And this spring, it was the greatest honor of my career to be asked to serve as a Special Advisor to the Vice President for Europe and Russia. Over the past eight months, I have been privileged to work with the dedicated and capable men and women in the Office of the Vice President to advance the Administration's agenda. I have also worked closely with talented and committed colleagues at the National Security Council ("NSC"), State Department, Department of Defense, and other agencies to advance and promote U.S. foreign policy objectives. In this capacity, I have advised and prepared the Vice President for engagements related to Ukraine.

As you are aware, on November 7th, I appeared before the Committee for a closed-door deposition pursuant to a subpoena. I would like to take this opportunity to briefly summarize my recollection of some of the events I expect the Committee may ask me about.

### *President Zelensky's Inauguration*

On April 21st, Volodymyr Zelensky won the Ukrainian presidential election. On April 23rd, the Vice President called to congratulate President-elect Zelensky. During the call, which I participated in, the Vice President accepted an invitation to attend President-elect Zelensky's upcoming inauguration, provided that the scheduling worked out. The Vice President had only a narrow window of availability at the end of May, and the Ukrainian parliament would not meet to set a date for the inauguration until after May 14th. As a result, we did not expect to know whether the Vice President could attend until May 14th at the earliest, and we made only preliminary trip preparations in early May. On May 13th, an assistant to the Vice President's Chief of Staff called and informed me that President Trump had decided that the Vice President would not attend the inauguration in Ukraine. She did not provide any further explanation. I

relayed that instruction to others involved in planning the potential trip. I also informed the NSC that the Vice President would not be attending, so that it could identify a head of delegation to represent the United States at President-elect Zelensky's inauguration.

#### *Hold on Ukraine Security Assistance*

On July 3rd, I learned that the Office of Management and Budget ("OMB") had placed a hold on a tranche of security assistance designated for Ukraine. According to the information I received, OMB was reviewing whether the funding was aligned with the Administration's priorities.

I subsequently attended meetings of the Policy Coordination Committee where the hold on Ukrainian security assistance was discussed. During those meetings, representatives of the State and Defense Departments advocated that the hold should be lifted, and OMB representatives reported that the White House Chief of Staff had directed that the hold should remain in place.

On September 11th, I learned that the hold on security assistance for Ukraine had been released. I have never learned what prompted that decision.

#### *July 25th Call Between President Trump and President Zelensky*

On July 25th, along with several of my colleagues, I listened to a call between President Trump and President Zelensky—the content of which has since been publicly reported. Prior to July 25th, I had participated in roughly a dozen other presidential phone calls. During my closed-door deposition, Members of the Committee asked about my personal views and whether I had any concerns about the July 25th call. As I testified then, I found the July 25th phone call unusual because, in contrast to other presidential calls I had observed, it involved discussion of what appeared to be a domestic political matter.

After the July 25th call, I provided an update in the Vice President's daily briefing book indicating that President Trump had a call that day with President Zelensky. A hard copy of the memorandum transcribing the call was also included in the book. I do not know whether the Vice President reviewed my update or the transcript. I did not discuss the July 25th call with the Vice President or any of my colleagues in the Office of the Vice President or the NSC.

#### *September 1 Meeting Between the Vice President and President Zelensky*

On August 29th, I learned that the Vice President would be traveling to Poland to meet with President Zelensky on September 1st. At the September 1st meeting, which I attended, President Zelensky asked the Vice President about news articles reporting a hold on U.S. security assistance for Ukraine. The Vice President responded that Ukraine had the United States' unwavering support and promised to relay their conversation to President Trump that night. During the September 1st meeting, neither the Vice President nor President Zelensky mentioned the specific investigations discussed during the July 25th call.

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Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this statement. I would be happy to answer any questions.