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IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY: MS. JENNIFER WILLIAMS AND  
LIEUTENANT COLONEL ALEXANDER VINDMAN

Tuesday, November 19, 2019

U.S. House of Representatives,  
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence,  
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 9:08 a.m., in Room HVC-304, Capitol Visitor Center, 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 third in a series of public hearings the committee will be holding as part of the House of Representatives 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 witnesses for their opening statements 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 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.

Last week, we heard from three experienced diplomats, who testified about President Trump's scheme to condition official acts, a White House meeting and hundreds of millions of dollars of U.S. military aid to fight the Russians, on a deliverable by the new Ukrainian President Zelensky to politically motivated investigations that Trump believed would help his reelection campaign. One of those investigations involved the Bidens, and the other involved a discredited conspiracy theory that Ukraine and not Russia was responsible for interfering in our 2016 election.

As Ambassador Sondland would later tell career Foreign Service Officer David Holmes immediately after speaking to the President, Trump did not give a -- he then used

an expletive -- about Ukraine. He cares about big stuff that benefits the President, like the Biden investigation that Giuliani was pushing.

To press a foreign leader to announce an investigation into his political rival, President Trump put his own personal and political interests above those of the Nation. He undermined our military and diplomatic support for a key ally and undercut U.S. anticorruption efforts in Ukraine. How could our diplomats urge Ukraine to refrain from political investigations of its own citizens if the President of the United States was urging Ukraine to engage in precisely the same kind of corrupt and political investigations of one of our own citizens.

At the White House, career professionals became concerned that President Trump, through an irregular channel that involved his acting chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney, EU Ambassador Gordon Sondland, and Rudy Giuliani, was pushing a policy towards Ukraine at odds with the national interest.

This morning, we hear from two of the national security professionals who became aware of those efforts. Lieutenant Colonel Alex Vindman, whose family fled oppression in the Soviet Union when he was a toddler, is a career Army officer, an Iraq war veteran, who was awarded a Purple Heart, and an expert in Russia and Ukraine who has worked at the highest levels of the Pentagon. In July 2018, he was detailed to the White House, in part, to coordinate policy on Ukraine.

Jennifer Williams is a career Foreign Service Officer who is currently detailed to the Office of the Vice President and responsible for Europe and Eurasia-related issues.

Following his initial and congratulatory phone call with Ukrainian President Zelensky on April 21st, President Trump asked Vice President Pence to represent him at Zelensky's upcoming inauguration. Ms. Williams was working on logistics for the trip. Pence would be a coveted attendee, second in significance only to the President, and

would have sent an important signal of support to the new Ukrainian President.

In early May, however, Rudy Giuliani had been planning to go to Ukraine to pursue the President's interest in having the Bidens investigated, but had to call off the trip after it became public. Among others, Giuliani blamed people around Zelensky for having to cancel, and claimed that they were antagonistic to Trump.

Three days later, the President has called off the Vice President's attendance at Zelensky's inauguration. Instead, a lower-level delegation was named: Energy Secretary Rick Perry, Ambassador Sondland, and Ambassador Kurt Volker, the Three Amigos. Senator Ron Johnson and Lieutenant Colonel Vindman would also attend.

After returning from the inauguration, several members of the delegation briefed President Trump on their encouraging first interactions with Zelensky. They urged Trump to meet with the Ukrainian President, but Trump instead criticized Ukraine and instructed them to work with Rudy.

A few weeks later, on July 10th, Ambassador Sondland met at the White House with a group of U.S. and Ukrainian officials, including Colonel Vindman, and informed the group that, according to Chief of Staff Mulvaney, the White House meeting sought by the Ukrainian President with Trump would happen if Ukraine undertook certain investigations. National Security Advisor Bolton abruptly ended the meeting and said afterwards that he would not be part of whatever drug deal Sondland and Mulvaney are cooking up on this.

Undeterred, Sondland brought the Ukrainian delegation downstairs to another part of the White House, and was more explicit, according to witnesses. Ukraine needed to investigate the Bidens or Burisma if they were to get a White House meeting with Trump.

After this discussion, which Vindman witnessed, he went to the National Security

Council's top lawyer to report the matter. Vindman was told to return in the future with any concerns. He would soon find the need to do so.

A week later, on July 18th, a representative of the Office of Management and Budget announced on a video conference call that Mulvaney, at Trump's direction, was freezing nearly \$400 million in military assistance to Ukraine, which was appropriated by Congress and enjoyed the support of the entirety of the U.S. national security establishment.

And 1 week after that, Trump would have the now infamous July 25th phone call with Zelensky. During that call, Trump complained that the U.S. relationship with Ukraine had not been reciprocal. Later, Zelensky thanks Trump for his support in the area of defense, and says that Ukraine was ready to purchase more Javelins, an antitank weapon that was among the most important deterrence of further Russian military action. Trump's immediate response: I would like you to do us a favor, though.

Trump then requested that Zelensky investigate the discredited 2016 conspiracy theory, and even more ominously, look into the Bidens. Neither was part of the official preparatory material for the call, but they were in Donald Trump's personal interest and in the interest of his 2020 reelection campaign. And the Ukrainian President knew about both in advance, because Sondland and others had been pressing Ukraine for weeks about investigations into the 2016 election, Burisma, and the Bidens.

Both Colonel Vindman and Ms. Williams were on the July 25th call. Vindman testified that due to the unequal bargaining position of the two leaders and Ukraine's dependency on the U.S., the favor Trump asked of Zelensky was really a demand. After the call, multiple individuals, including Vindman, were concerned enough to report it to the National Security Council's top lawyer. It was the second time in 2 weeks that Vindman had raised concerns with NSC lawyers.

For her part, Williams also believed that asking Zelensky to undertake these political investigations was inappropriate, and that it might explain something else that she had become aware of, the otherwise inexplicable hold on U.S. military assistance to Ukraine.

Both Colonel Vindman and Ms. Williams also took note of the explicit use of the word "Burisma" by Zelensky, a fact conspicuously left out of the record of the call now locked away on an ultra secure server. Colonel Vindman believed that Zelensky must have been prepped for the call to be able to make the connection between Biden and Burisma, a fact that other witnesses have now confirmed.

In the weeks that followed the July 25th call, Colonel Vindman continued to push for a release of the military aid to Ukraine, and struggled to learn why it was being withheld. More disturbing, word of the hold had reached Ukrainian officials prior to its becoming public. By mid-August, the Ukrainian Deputy Ambassador asked Vindman why the United States was withholding the aid. Although Vindman didn't have an answer, Sondland made it explicit to Ukrainians at a meeting in Warsaw. They needed to publicly commit to these two investigations if they hoped to get the aid.

Ms. Williams, we all saw the President's tweet about you on Sunday afternoon and the insults he hurled at Ambassador Yovanovitch last Friday. You are here today, and the American people are grateful.

Colonel Vindman, we have seen far more scurrilous attacks on your character, and watched as certain personalities on FOX have questioned your loyalty. I note that you have shed blood for America, and we owe you an immense debt of gratitude. I hope no one on this committee will become part of those vicious attacks.

Today's witnesses, like those who testified last week, are here because they were subpoenaed to appear, not because they are for or against impeachment. That

question is for Congress, not the fact witnesses. If the President abused his power and invited foreign interference in our elections, if he sought to condition, coerce, extort, or bribe an ally into conducting investigations, to aid his reelection campaign and did so by withholding official acts, a White House meeting, or hundreds of millions of dollars of needed military aid, it will be up to us to decide whether those acts are compatible with the Office of the Presidency.

I now recognize Ranking Member Nunes for any remarks he'd like to make.

Mr. Nunes. I thank the gentleman.

I'd like to address a few brief words to the American people watching at home. If you watched the impeachment hearings last week, you may have noticed a disconnect between what you actually saw and the mainstream media accounts describing it when you saw three diplomats who dislike President Trump's Ukraine policy, discussing secondhand and thirdhand conversations about their objections with the Trump policy. Meanwhile, they admitted they had not talked to the President about these matters, and they were unable to identify any crime or impeachable offense the President committed.

What you read in the press were accounts of shocking, damning, and explosive testimony that fully supports the Democrats' accusations. If these accounts have a familiar ring, it's because this is the same preposterous reporting the media offered for 3 years on the Russian hoax. On a nearly daily basis, the top news outlets in America reported breathlessly on the newest bombshell revelations showing that President Trump and everyone surrounding him were Russian agents. It really wasn't long ago that we were reading these headlines: From CNN: Congress investigating Russian investment fund with ties to Trump officials. This was false. New York Times, Trump campaign aides had repeated contacts with Russian intelligence, also false. Slate: Was a Trump server communicating with Russia? This was false. New York Magazine: Will Trump

be meeting with his counterpart or his handler? This was false. The Guardian: Manafort held secret talks with Assange in Ecuadorian Embassy, also false. BuzzFeed: President Trump directed his attorney to lie to Congress about the Moscow Tower project. All of these were false.

There was no objectivity or fairness in the media's Russia stories, just a fevered rush to tarnish and remove a President who refuses to pretend that the media are something different from what they really are, puppets of the Democratic Party. With their biased misreporting on the Russia hoax, the media lost the confidence of millions of Americans; and because they refuse to acknowledge how badly they botched the story, they've learned no lessons and simply expect Americans will believe them as they try to stoke yet another partisan frenzy.

In previous hearings, I've outlined three questions the Democrats and the media don't want asked or answered. Instead of shedding light on these crucial questions, the media are trying to smother and dismiss them. Those questions start with: What is the full extent of the Democrats' prior coordination with the whistleblower and who else did the whistleblower coordinate this effort with?

The media have fully accepted the Democrats' stunning reversal on the need for the whistleblower to testify to this committee. When the Democrats were insisting on his testimony, the media wanted it too. But things have changed since it became clear the whistleblower would have to answer problematic questions that include these: What was the full extent of the whistleblower's prior coordination with Chairman Schiff, his staff, and any other people he cooperated with while preparing the complaint? What are the whistleblower's political biases and connections to Democratic politicians? How does the whistleblower explain the inaccuracies in the complaint? What contact did the whistleblower have with the media, which appears to be ongoing? What are the

sources of the whistleblower's information, who else did he talk to, and was the whistleblower prohibited by law from receiving or conveying any of that information? The media have joined the Democrats in dismissing the importance of cross-examining this crucial witness. Now that the whistleblower has successfully kick-started impeachment, he has disappeared from the story as if the Democrats put the whistleblower in their own witness protection program.

My second question: What was the full extent of Ukraine's election meddling against the Trump campaign? In these depositions and hearings, Republicans have cited numerous indications of Ukraine meddling in the 2016 elections to oppose the Trump campaign.

Many of these instances were reported, including the posting of many primary source documents by veteran investigative journalist John Solomon. Since the Democrats switched from Russia to Ukraine for their impeachment crusade, Solomon's reporting on Burisma, Hunter Biden, and Ukraine election meddling has become inconvenient for the Democratic narrative, and so the media is furiously smearing and libeling Solomon.

In fact, the publication, The Hill, told its staff yesterday it would conduct a review of Solomon's Ukraine reporting. Coincidentally, the decision comes just 3 days after a Democrat on this committee told a Hill writer that she would stop speaking to the Hill because it had run Solomon's stories. And she urged the writer to relay her concerns to Hill's management. So now that Solomon's reporting is a problem for the Democrats, it's a problem for the media as well.

I'd like to submit for the record John Solomon's October 31st story entitled "Debunking Some of the Ukraine Scandal Myths About Biden and Election Interference." I encourage viewers today to read this story and draw your own conclusions about the

evidence Solomon has gathered.

I ask unanimous consent that we put this into the record, Mr. Chair.

The Chairman. Without objection.

Mr. Nunes. The concerted campaign by the media to discredit and disown some of their own colleagues is shocking, and we see it again in the sudden denunciations of New York Times Reporter Ken Vogel, as a conspiracy theorist, after he covered similar issues, including a 2017 Politico piece entitled "Ukrainian efforts to sabotage Trump backfire."

My third question: Why did Burisma hire Hunter Biden? What did he do for them? And did his position affect any U.S. Government actions under the Obama administration? We have now heard testimony from the Democrats' own witnesses that diplomats were concerned about a conflict of interest involving Hunter Biden. That's because he had secured a well-paid position, despite having no qualifications, on the board of a corrupt Ukrainian company while his father was Vice President charged with overseeing Ukrainian issues.

After trying out several different accusations against President Trump, the Democrats have recently settled on bribery. According to widespread reports, they replaced their quid pro quo allegation because it wasn't polling well. But if the Democrats and the media are suddenly so deeply concerned about bribery, you would think they would take some interest in Burisma paying Hunter Biden \$83,000 a month, and you'd think they would be interested in Joe Biden threatening to withhold U.S. loan guarantees unless the Ukrainians fired a prosecutor who was investigating Burisma. That would be a textbook example of bribery.

The media, of course, are free to act as Democrat puppets and they're free to lurch from the Russia hoax to the Ukraine hoax at the direction of their puppet masters,

but they cannot reasonably expect to do so without alienating half the country who voted for the President they're trying to expel.

Americans have learned to recognize fake news when they see it, and if the mainstream press won't give it to them straight, they'll go elsewhere to find it, which is exactly what the American people are doing.

With that, I yield back.

The Chairman. I thank the gentleman.

Today, we are joined by Lieutenant Colonel Vindman and Jennifer Williams. Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Vindman is an Active Duty military officer who joined the Army after college and served multiple tours overseas, serving in South Korea, Germany, and Iraq. He was deployed to Iraq at a time of heavy fighting, and was awarded a Purple Heart after being wounded by a roadside bomb. Since 2008, Colonel Vindman has served as a Foreign Area Officer specializing in Eurasia, serving both at home and in U.S. Embassies in Ukraine and Russia. He has served as a Political Military Affairs Officer for Russia for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He joined the Trump administration in July 2018, when he was asked to serve on the National Security Council.

Jennifer Williams began her career in government service in 2005, shortly after graduating from college, when she joined the Department of Homeland Security as a political appointee during the George W. Bush administration, and after working as a field representative on the 2004 Bush-Cheney Presidential campaign. She joined the Foreign Service the following year, completing tours in Jamaica, Beirut, and Lebanon.

Prior to joining the Office of the Vice President, she served at the U.S. Embassy in London as a Public Affairs Officer. In April 2019, Ms. Williams was detailed to the Office of the Vice President, Mike Pence, where she serves as a special adviser on his foreign policy team covering Europe and Russia issues. In that capacity, she keeps the Vice

President aware of foreign policy issues in Europe and Russia, and prepares him for foreign policy engagements and meetings with foreign leaders.

Two final points before our witnesses are sworn. The 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 both please rise and raise your right hand, I will begin by swearing you in.

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

Ms. Williams. I do.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I do.

The Chairman. Let the record show the witnesses have answered in the affirmative. Thank you and you may be seated. The microphones are sensitive, so please speak directly into them. Without objection, your written statement will be made part of the record.

With that, Ms. Williams, you are now recognized for your opening statement, and when you are concluded, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, you are recognized immediately thereafter for your opening statement.

Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams. 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 subpoena, and am prepared to answer your questions to the best of my abilities.

I have had the privilege of working as a Foreign Service Officer for nearly 14 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 who 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 serve millions of victims of the Syria conflict and served as an adviser 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 adviser to the Vice President for Europe and Russia.

Over the past 8 months, I have been privileged to work with the dedicated and capable men and women of 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, 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.

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, providing 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 would be -- 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.

On July 3rd, I learned that the Office of Management and Budget 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.

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.

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 phone call.

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

[The statement of Ms. Williams follows:]

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Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, thank you for the opportunity to address the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence with respect to activities relating to Ukraine and my role in the events under investigation.

I have dedicated my entire professional life to the United States of America. For more than two decades, it has been my honor to serve as an officer in the United States Army. As an infantry officer, I served multiple overseas tours, including South Korea and Germany, and I was deployed to Iraq for combat operations.

Since 2008, I have been a Foreign Area Officer specializing in European and Eurasian political military affairs. I served in the United States Embassies in Kyiv, Ukraine, and Moscow, Russia. In Washington, D.C., I was the political military affairs officer for Russia for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, where I drafted the Armed Forces global campaign plan to counter Russian aggression and Russian malign influence.

In July 2018, I was asked to serve at the White House National Security Council. At the NSC, I'm the principal adviser to the National Security Advisor on Ukraine and other countries in my portfolio. And my role at the NSC is to develop, coordinate, and implement plans and policies to manage the full range of diplomatic, informational, military and economic national security issues for the countries in my portfolio.

My core function is to coordinate policy with departments and agencies. The committee has heard from many of my colleagues about the strategic importance of Ukraine as a bulwark against Russian aggression. It is important to know that our countries' policy of supporting Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity, promoting Ukrainian prosperity, strengthening a free and democratic Ukraine as a counter to Russian aggression has been a consistent, bipartisan foreign policy objective and strategy

across various administrations, both Democratic and Republican, and that President Zelensky's election in April 2019 created an unprecedented opportunity to realize our strategic objectives.

In the spring of 2019, I became aware of two disruptive actors, primarily Ukraine's then-prosecutor Yuriy Lutsenko, and former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, the President's personal attorney, promoting false narratives that undermined the United States' Ukraine policy. The NSC and its interagency partners, including the State Department, grew increasingly concerned about the impact that such information was having on our country's ability to achieve our national security objectives.

On April 21st, 2019, Volodymyr Zelensky was elected President of Ukraine in a landslide victory on a unity, reform, and anticorruption platform. President Trump called President Zelensky on April 21st, 2019, to congratulate him on his victory. I was the staff officer who produced the call materials and was one of the staff officers who listened to the call. The call was positive and President Trump expressed his desire to work with President Zelensky and extended an invitation to visit the White House.

In May, I attended the inauguration of President Zelensky as part of the Presidential delegation led by Secretary Perry. Following the visit, the members of the delegation provided President Trump a debriefing, offering a positive assessment of President Zelensky and his team. After this debriefing, President Trump signed a congratulatory letter to President Zelensky and extended another invitation to visit the White House.

On July 10, 2019, Oleksandr Danylyuk, then Ukraine's National Security Advisor, visited Washington, D.C., for a meeting with National Security Advisor Bolton. Ambassador Volker and Sondland -- Ambassadors Volker and Sondland and Secretary Rick Perry also attended the meeting. I attended with Dr. Hill.

We fully anticipated the Ukrainians would raise the issue of a meeting between the Presidents. Ambassador Bolton cut the meeting short when Ambassador Sondland started to speak about the requirement that Ukraine deliver specific investigations in order to secure the meeting with President Trump. Following this meeting, there was a short debriefing, during which Ambassador Sondland emphasized the importance of Ukraine delivering the investigations into the 2016 elections, the Bidens, and Burisma. I stated to Ambassador Sondland that this was inappropriate, and had nothing to do with national security. Dr. Hill also asserted these comments were improper. Following the meeting, Dr. Hill and I agreed to report the incident to NSC's lead counsel, Mr. John Eisenberg.

On July 21st, 2019, President Zelensky won a parliamentary election in another landslide victory. The NSC proposed that President Trump call President Zelensky to congratulate him. On July 25th, 2019, the call occurred. I listened in on the call in the Situation Room with White House colleagues. I was concerned by the call. What I heard was inappropriate, and I reported my concerns to Mr. Eisenberg.

It is improper for the President of the United States to demand a foreign government investigate a U.S. citizen and a political opponent. I was also clear that if Ukraine pursued an investigation -- it was also clear that if Ukraine pursued an investigation into the 2016 elections, the Bidens and Burisma, it would be interpreted as a partisan play. This would undoubtedly result in Ukraine losing bipartisan support, undermining U.S. national security, and advancing Russia's strategic objectives in the region.

I want to emphasize to the committee that when I reported my concerns on July 10th relating to Ambassador Sondland, and then July 25th relating to the President, I did so out of a sense of duty. I privately reported my concerns in official channels to the

proper authority in the chain of command. My intent was to raise these concerns because they had significant national security implications for our country. I never thought that I would be sitting here testifying in front of this committee and the American public about my actions. When I reported my concerns, my only thought was to act properly and to carry out my duty.

Following each of my reports to Mr. Eisenberg, I immediately returned to work to advance the President's and our country's foreign policy objectives. I focused on what I have done throughout my military career, promoting America's national security interests.

I want to take a moment to recognize the courage of my colleagues who have appeared and are scheduled to appear before this committee. I want to state that the character attacks on these distinguished and honorable public servants is reprehensible. It is natural to disagree and engage in spirited debate, and this has been the custom of our country since the time of our Founding Fathers, but we are better than personal attacks.

The uniform I wear today is that of a United States Army -- is that of the United States Army. The members of our all-volunteer force are made up of a patchwork of people from all ethnicities, regions, socioeconomic backgrounds, who come together under a common oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America. We do not serve any political party; we serve the Nation.

I am humbled to come before you today as one of many who serve in the most distinguished and able military in the world. The Army is the only profession I have ever known. As a young man, I decided I wanted to spend my life serving this Nation that gave my family refuge from authoritarian oppression. For the last 20 years, it has been an honor to represent and protect this great country.

Next month will mark 40 years since my family arrived in the United States as refugees. When my father was 47 years old, he left behind his entire life and the only home he had ever known to start over in the United States so his three sons could have better and safer lives. His courageous decision inspired a deep sense of gratitude in my brothers and myself, and instilled in us a sense of duty and service. All three of us have served, or are currently serving in the military. My little brother sits behind me here today. Our collective military service is a special part of our family's history, story in America.

I also recognize that my simple act of appearing here today, just like the courage of my colleagues who have also truthfully testified before this committee, would not be tolerated in many places around the world. In Russia, my act of expressing concern to the chain of command in an official and private channel would have severe personal and professional repercussions, and offering public testimony involving the President would surely cost me my life.

I am grateful to my father -- for my father's brave act of hope 40 years ago and for the privilege of being an American citizen and public servant, where I can live free, free of fear for mine and my family's safety.

Dad, I am sitting here today in the U.S. Capitol talking to our elected professionals. Talking to our elected professionals is proof that you made the right decision 40 years ago to leave the Soviet Union and come here to the United States of America in search of a better life for our family. Do not worry. I will be fine for telling the truth.

Thank you again for your consideration. I will be happy to answer your questions.

[The statement of Lieutenant Colonel Vindman follows:]

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

The Chairman. Thank you, Colonel. Thank you, Ms. Williams. Colonel, your brother and family are more than welcome here. We're grateful to have them with us.

We will proceed with the first round of questions, as detailed in the memo provided to committee members. There will be 45 minutes of questions conducted by the chairman or majority counsel, followed by 45 minutes for the ranking member or minority counsel. Under House Resolution 660, that time may not be delegated to other members. Following that, unless I specify an additional equal time for extended questioning, we will proceed under the 5-minute rule and every member will have a chance to ask questions.

I now recognize myself or majority counsel for the first 45 minutes.

Before we get into the substance of your testimony, Ms. Williams, I want to ask you about a phone call between Vice President Pence and President Zelensky of Ukraine on September 18th. Were you on that call?

Ms. Williams. I was.

The Chairman. And did you take notes of the call?

Ms. Williams. Yes, sir.

The Chairman. Is there something about that call that you think may be relevant to our investigation?

Mr. Shur. Mr. Chairman, as we previously discussed with the committee, the Office of the Vice President has taken the position that the September --

The Chairman. Sir, could you move the microphone a little closer to you.

Mr. Shur. As we previously discussed with both majority and minority staff of the committee, the Office of the Vice President has taken the position that the September 18 call is classified. As a result, with respect to the call, I'd refer the

committee to the public record, which includes Ms. Williams' November 7th testimony, which has been publicly released, as well as the public readout of that call, which has previously been issued by the White House.

Beyond that, given the position of the Vice President's office on classification, I have advised Ms. Williams not to answer further questions about that call in an unclassified setting.

The Chairman. I thank the counsel.

Ms. Williams, I would only ask you in this setting whether you think there is something relevant to our inquiry in that call and whether, if so, you'll be willing to make a classified submission to the committee?

Ms. Williams. I would also refer to my testimony that I gave in the closed session, and I am very happy to appear for a classified setting discussion as well.

The Chairman. It may not be necessary for you to appear if you'll be willing to submit the information in writing to the committee.

Ms. Williams. I'll be happy to do so.

The Chairman. I thank you.

Colonel Vindman, if I could turn your attention to the April 21st call, that is the first call between President Trump and President Zelensky, did you prepare talking points for the President to use during that call?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, I did.

The Chairman. And did those talking points include rooting out corruption in Ukraine?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

The Chairman. That was something the President was supposed to raise in the conversation with President Zelensky?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Those were the recommended talking points that were cleared through the NSC staff for the President, yes.

The Chairman. Did you listen in on that call?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, I did.

The Chairman. The White House has now released the record of that call. Did President Trump ever mention corruption in the April 21st call?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. To the best of my recollection, he did not.

The Chairman. On the April 21st call, President Trump told President Zelensky that he would send a high-level U.S. delegation to the inauguration. Following that call, Ms. Williams, was it your understanding that the President wanted the Vice President to attend the inauguration in Kyiv?

Ms. Williams. Yes, that was my understanding.

The Chairman. And did the President subsequently tell the Vice President not to attend the inauguration?

Ms. Williams. I was informed by our chief of staff's office, by the Vice President's chief of staff office that the President had told the Vice President not to attend. I did not witness that conversation.

The Chairman. And am I correct that you learned this on May 13th? Is that right?

Ms. Williams. That is correct.

The Chairman. Am I also correct that the inauguration date had not been set by May 13th?

Ms. Williams. That is correct.

The Chairman. Do you know what accounted for the President's decision to instruct the Vice President not to attend?

Ms. Williams. I do not.

The Chairman. Colonel Vindman, you were a member of the U.S. delegation to the inauguration on May 20th. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, Chairman.

The Chairman. And during that trip, did you have an opportunity to offer any advice to President Zelensky?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, Chairman.

The Chairman. What was the advice that you gave him?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. During a bilateral meeting in which the whole delegation was meeting with President Zelensky and his team, I offered two pieces of advice: To be particularly cautious with regards to Ukraine -- to be particularly cautious with regards to Russia, and its desire to provoke Ukraine; and the second one was to stay out of U.S. domestic policy.

The Chairman. Do you mean politics?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Politics, correct.

The Chairman. And why did you feel it was necessary to advise President Zelensky to stay away from U.S. domestic politics?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Chairman, in the March and April timeframe, it became clear that there were -- there were actors in the U.S., public actors, nongovernmental actors that were promoting the idea of investigations and 2016 Ukrainian interference.

And it was consistent with U.S. policy to advise any country, all the countries in my portfolio, any country in the world, to not participate in U.S. domestic politics. So I was passing the same advice consistent with U.S. policy.

The Chairman. I know Mr. Goldman will have more questions about that when I

turn to him. But let me turn, if I can, to the hold on security assistance which I think you both testified you learned about in early July.

Am I correct that neither of you were provided with a reason for why the President put a hold on security assistance to Ukraine?

Ms. Williams. My understanding was that OMB was reviewing the assistance to ensure it was in line with administration priorities, but it was not made more specific than that.

The Chairman. Colonel Vindman?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is consistent. The review was to ensure it remained consistent with administration policies.

The Chairman. Colonel Vindman, you attended a meeting in John Bolton's office on July 10th where Ambassador Sondland interjected to respond to a question by senior Ukrainian officials about a White House visit. What did he say at that time?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. To the best of my recollection, Ambassador Sondland said that in order to get a White House meeting, the Ukrainians would have to provide a deliverable, which is investigations, specific investigations.

The Chairman. And what was Ambassador Bolton's response or reaction to that comment?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. The -- we had not completed all of the agenda items and we still had time for the meeting, and Ambassador Bolton abruptly ended the meeting.

The Chairman. Did you report this incident to the National Security Council lawyers?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, I did.

The Chairman. Based on Ambassador Sondland's remark at the July 10th

meeting, was it your clear understanding that the Ukrainians understood they had to commit to investigations President Trump wanted in order to get the White House meeting?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. It may not have been entirely clear at that moment. Certainly Ambassador Sondland was calling for these meetings, and he had -- he had stated that his -- he had this -- this was developed per a conversation with the chief of staff, Mr. Mick Mulvaney, but the connection to the President wasn't clear at that point.

The Chairman. But the import of what Ambassador Sondland said during that meeting was that there was agreement with Mick Mulvaney that Zelensky would get the meeting if they would undertake these investigations?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

The Chairman. About 2 weeks after that July 10th meeting, President Trump and President Zelensky had their second call, the now infamous July 25th call.

Colonel Vindman, what was your real-time reaction to hearing that call?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Chairman, without hesitation, I knew that I had to report this to the White House counsel. I had concerns, and it was my duty to report my concerns to the proper -- proper people in the chain of command.

The Chairman. And what was your concern?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Chairman, as I said in my statement, it was inappropriate. It was improper for the President to request -- to demand an investigation into a political opponent, especially a foreign power where there's, at best, dubious belief that this would be a completely impartial investigation, and that this would have significant implications if it became public knowledge, and it would be perceived as a partisan play. It would undermine our Ukraine policy, and it would undermine our

national security.

The Chairman. Colonel, you've described this as a demand, this favor that the President asked. What is it about the relationship between the President of the United States and the President of Ukraine that leads you to conclude that when the President of the United States asks a favor like this, it's really a demand?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Chairman, the culture I come from, the military culture, when a senior asks you to do something, even if it's polite and pleasant, it's not -- it's not to be taken as a request, it's to be taken as an order.

In this case, the power disparity between the two leaders, my impression is that, in order to get the White House meeting, President Zelensky would have to deliver these investigations.

The Chairman. Ms. Williams, I think you've described your reaction in your deposition when you listened to the call as you found it unusual and inappropriate, but I was struck by something else you said in your deposition. You said that it shed some light on possible other motivations behind a security assistance hold. What did you mean by that?

Ms. Williams. Mr. Chairman, I was asked during the closed-door testimony how I felt about the call. And in reflecting on what I was thinking in that moment, it was the first time I had heard internally the President reference particular investigations that previously I had only heard about through Mr. Giuliani's press interviews and press reporting.

So in that moment, it was not clear whether there was a direct connection or linkage between the ongoing hold on security assistance and what the President may be asking President Zelensky to undertake in regard to investigations. So it was noteworthy in that regard. I did not have enough information to draw any firm conclusions.

The Chairman. But it raised a question in your mind as to whether the two were related?

Ms. Williams. It was the first I had heard of any requests of Ukraine which were that specific in nature. So it was noteworthy to me in that regard.

The Chairman. Both of you recall President Zelensky in that conversation raising the issue or mentioning Burisma, do you not?

Ms. Williams. That is correct.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

The Chairman. And yet the word "Burisma" appears nowhere in the call record that's been released to the public. Is that right?

Ms. Williams. That's right.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

The Chairman. Do you know why that's the case, why that was left out?

Ms. Williams. I do not. I was not involved in the production of that transcript.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I attribute that to the fact that this transcript that is being produced may have not caught the word "Burisma," and it was -- in the transcript that was released, it was released as the company, which is accurate. It's not a significant omission.

The Chairman. Colonel, you pointed out the fact that that word was used, did you not?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

The Chairman. And yet, it was not included in the record released to the public?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That's right. It's -- I'd say it's informed speculation that the folks that produce these transcripts do the best they can, and they just didn't catch the word. And that was my responsibility to then make sure that the

transcript was as accurate as possible; and that's what I attempted to do by putting that word back in, because that was in my notes.

The Chairman. I think, Colonel, you testified in your deposition that you found it striking that Zelensky would bring up Burisma, that it indicated to you that he had been prepped for the call to expect this issue to come up. What led you to that conclusion?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. It seemed unlikely that he would be familiar with a single company in the context of a call that had -- that was on the broader bilateral relationship. And it seemed to me that he was either tracking this issue because it was in the press or he was otherwise prepped.

The Chairman. Mr. Goldman.

Mr. Goldman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning to both of you.

On July 25th, at approximately 9 a.m., you both were sitting in the Situation Room, probably not too much further away than you are right now, and you were preparing for a long-awaited phone call between President Trump and President Zelensky.

Now, Colonel Vindman, in advance of this phone call, did you prepare talking points, as you did for the April 21st call?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, I did.

Mr. Goldman. What were those talking points based upon?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. They were -- so this is not in the public record, and I can't comment too deeply, but what is -- the areas that we've consistently talked to, talked about in public was cooperation on supporting a reform agenda, anticorruption efforts, and helping President Zelensky implement his plans to end Russia's war against Ukraine.

Mr. Goldman. In other words, they're based on official U.S. policy?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Goldman. And is there a process to determine official U.S. policy?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes. That is -- my job is coordinate U.S. policy.

So throughout the preceding year that I had been on staff, I had undertaken an effort to make sure we had a cohesive, coherent U.S. policy.

Mr. Goldman. And as you listened to the call, did you observe whether President Trump was following the talking points, based on the official U.S. policy?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Counsel, the President could choose to use the talking points or not. He's the President. But they were not consistent with what I provided, yes.

Mr. Goldman. Let's take a look at a couple of excerpts from this call. And right after President Zelensky thanked President Trump for the United States' support in the area of defense, President Trump asks President Zelensky for a favor, and then raises this theory of Ukrainian interference in the 2016 election.

He says in the highlighted portion: "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."

Now, Colonel Vindman, was this statement based on the official talking points that you had prepared?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No.

Mr. Goldman. And was this statement related to the 2016 Ukraine interference in the 2016 election part of the official U.S. policy?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No, it was not.

Mr. Goldman. Now, at the time of this July 25th call, Colonel Vindman, were you aware of a theory that Ukraine had intervened or interfered in the 2016 U.S. election?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I was.

Mr. Goldman. Are you aware of any credible evidence to support this theory?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I am not.

Mr. Goldman. Are you also aware that Vladimir Putin had promoted this theory of Ukrainian interference in the 2016 election?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I am well aware of that fact.

Mr. Goldman. And ultimately, which country did U.S. intelligence services determine to have interfered in the 2016 election?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. It is the consensus of the entire Intelligence Community that the Russians interfered in U.S. elections in 2016.

Mr. Goldman. Let's go to another excerpt from this call where President Trump asks President Zelensky to investigate his political opponent, Vice President Joe Biden. Here, 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," he said.

Again, Colonel Vindman, was this included in your talking points?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. It was not.

Mr. Goldman. Is such a request to investigate a political opponent consistent with official U.S. policy?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. It was not consistent with the policy, as I

understood it.

Mr. Goldman. Now, are you aware of any credible allegations or evidence to support this notion that Vice President Biden did something wrong, or against U.S. policy with regard to Ukraine?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I am not.

Mr. Goldman. Ms. Williams, are you familiar with any credible evidence to support this theory against Vice President Biden?

Ms. Williams. No, I'm not.

Mr. Goldman. Now, Ms. Williams, prior to the July 25th call, approximately how many calls between the President of the United States and foreign leaders had you listened to?

Ms. Williams. I would say roughly a dozen.

Mr. Goldman. Had you ever heard a call like this?

Ms. Williams. As I testified before, I believe what I found unusual or different about this call was the President's reference to specific investigations that struck me as different than other calls I had listened to.

Mr. Goldman. You testified that you thought it was political in nature. Why did you think that?

Ms. Williams. I thought that the references to specific individuals and investigations, such as former Vice President Biden and his son, struck me as political in nature, given that the former Vice President is a political opponent of the President.

Mr. Goldman. And so you thought that it could potentially be designed to assist President Trump's reelection effort?

Ms. Williams. I can't speak to what the President's motivation was in referencing it, but I just noted that the reference to Biden sounded political to me.

Mr. Goldman. Colonel Vindman, you said in your deposition that it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see the political benefits of the President's demands. For those of us who are not rocket scientists, can you explain what you meant by that?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. So, my understanding is that it was -- the connection to investigating a political opponent was inappropriate and improper. I made that connection as soon as the President brought up the Biden investigation.

Mr. Goldman. Colonel Vindman, you testified that President Trump's request for a favor from President Zelensky would be considered as a demand to President Zelensky. After this call, did you ever hear from any Ukrainians, either in the United States or Ukraine, about any pressure that they felt to do these investigations that President Trump demanded?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Not that I can recall.

Mr. Goldman. Did you have any discussions with officials at the Embassy here, the Ukrainian Embassy here in Washington, D.C.?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, I did.

Mr. Goldman. Did you discuss at all the demand for investigations with them?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I did not.

Mr. Goldman. Did you discuss at all, at any point, their concerns about the hold on security assistance?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. To the best of my recollection, in the August timeframe, the Ukrainian Embassy started to become aware of the hold on security assistance, and they were asking if I had any comment on that or if I could substantiate that.

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[10:08 a.m.]

Mr. Goldman. And that was before it became public. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. And what did you respond?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I believe I said that -- I don't recall, frankly. I don't recall what I said, but I believe it may have been something along the lines of, "I'm not aware of it."

Mr. Goldman. You testified that one of your concerns about the request for investigations related to U.S. domestic politics was that Ukraine may lose bipartisan support. Why was that a concern of yours?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Ukraine is in a war with Russia, and the security assistance that we provide Ukraine is significant. Absent that security assistance and, maybe even more importantly, the signal of support for Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity, that would likely encourage Russia to pursue -- to potentially escalate to pursue further aggression, undermining -- further undermining Ukrainian sovereignty, European security, and U.S. security.

Mr. Goldman. So, in other words, Ukraine is heavily dependent on United States' support, both diplomatically, financially, and also militarily?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Goldman. Colonel Vindman, what languages do you speak?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I speak Russian and Ukrainian and a little bit of English.

Mr. Goldman. Do you know what -- do you recall what language President Zelensky spoke on this July 25th phone call?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I know he made a valiant effort to speak English. He had been practicing up his English. But he also spoke Ukrainian.

Mr. Goldman. I want to look at the third excerpt from the July 25th call. And Chairman Schiff addressed this with you in his questioning. And you see in the highlighted portion, it says, "specifically to the company that you mentioned in this issue."

Is that the portion of the call record that, Colonel Vindman, you thought President Zelensky actually said "Burisma"?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Goldman. And you testified earlier that his use of -- or his understanding that when President Trump mentioned the Bidens that that referred to the company Burisma, sounded to you like he was prepped or prepared for this call. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Goldman. I want to go to the next slide, if we could, which is actually a text message that neither of you is on, but this is from Ambassador Kurt Volker to Andriy Yermak.

And, Colonel Vindman, who's Andriy Yermak?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Andriy Yermak is a senior advisor within the Presidential administration, Ukrainian Presidential administration. He's a senior advisor to President Zelensky.

Mr. Goldman. Now, this text message is less than a half-hour before the call on July 25th. And since neither of you were on it, I'll read it.

It says, from Ambassador Volker: "Good lunch. Thanks. Heard from White

House. Assuming President Z convinces Trump he will investigate, 'get to the bottom of what happened' in 2016, we will nail down date for a visit to Washington. Good luck. See you tomorrow. Kurt."

Now, is this the sort of thing that you're referring to when you say that it is sounded like President Zelensky was prepared for this call?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. This would be consistent, yes.

Mr. Goldman. Now, turning to the fourth excerpt from the July 25th call, where Ukraine's President Zelensky links the White House meeting to the investigations that President Trump requests, President Zelensky says, "I also wanted to thank you for your invitation to visit the United States, specifically Washington, D.C. On the other hand, I also wanted to ensure you that we will be very serious about the case and will work on the investigation."

Colonel Vindman, when President Zelensky says, "on the other hand," would you agree that he's acknowledging a linkage between the White House visit that he mentions in the first sentence and the investigations that he mentions in the second sentence?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. It could be taken that way. I'm not sure if I -- it seems like a reasonable conclusion.

Mr. Goldman. And if that is the case, that would be consistent with the text message that Ambassador Volker sent to Andriy Yermak right before the call. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Seemingly so.

Mr. Goldman. Now, you've testified in your deposition that a White House visit, an Oval Office visit, is very important to President Zelensky. Why is that?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. The show of support for President Zelensky, still a brand-new President, frankly, a new politician on the Ukrainian political scene, looking to

establish his bona fides as a regional and maybe even a world leader, would want to have a meeting with the United States, the most powerful country in the world and Ukraine's most significant benefactor, in order to be able to implement his agenda.

Mr. Goldman. It would provide him with some additional legitimacy at home?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. So, just to summarize, in this July 25th call between the Presidents of the United States and Ukraine, President Trump demanded a favor of President Zelensky -- to conduct investigations that both of you acknowledge were for President Trump's political interest, not the national interest -- and in return for his promise of a much-desired White House meeting for President Zelensky.

Colonel Vindman, is that an accurate summary of the excerpts that we just looked at?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. Ms. Williams?

Ms. Williams. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. Colonel Vindman, you immediately reported this call to the NSC lawyers. Why did you do that?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. So, at this point, I'd already been tracking this, initially, what I would describe as alternative narrative, false narrative, and I was certainly aware of the fact that it was starting to reverberate, gain traction. The fact that it, in the July 10th call, ended up being pronounced by a public official, Ambassador Sondland, had me alerted to this. And I was -- subsequent to that report, I was invited to follow up with any other concerns to Mr. Eisenberg.

Mr. Goldman. And we're going to discuss that July 10th meeting in a moment. But when you say "alternative/false narratives," are you referring to the two

investigations that President Trump referenced in the call?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. Now, at some point, did you also discuss how the written summary of the call record should be handled with the NSC lawyers?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. There was -- following the report, there was a discussion in the legal shop on the best way to manage the transcript, yes.

Mr. Goldman. What did you understand they concluded?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. My understanding is that this was viewed as a sensitive transcript and to avoid leaks and, if I recall the term properly, something along the lines of "preserve the integrity of the transcript." It should be segregated to a smaller group of folks.

Mr. Goldman. So "preserve the integrity of the transcript," what did that mean?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm not sure. I mean, it seemed like a legal term. I'm not an attorney. But it was -- I didn't take it as anything nefarious. I just understood that they wanted to keep it in a smaller group.

Mr. Goldman. If there was real interest in preserving the integrity of the transcript, don't you think they would've accepted your correction that Burisma should've been included?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Not necessarily. The way these edits occur, they go through, like everything else, an approval process. I made my contribution. It was cleared by Mr. Morrison. Then, when I returned it -- you know, sometimes that doesn't happen.

There are administrative errors. I think that, in this case, I didn't see -- when I first saw the transcript without the two substantive items that I had attempted to include, I didn't see that as nefarious. I just saw it as a: "Okay. No big deal. You know,

these might be meaningful, but it's not that big a deal."

Mr. Goldman. You said two substantive issues. What was the other one?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. There was a reference in a section -- one second. On page 4, the top paragraph -- let me find the right spot. Okay. Yes. "You can look into it" -- ellipse -- "there are videos" is what I recall. Or there were recordings -- recordings.

Mr. Goldman. So, instead of an ellipses, it should have said, to what you heard, that there are recordings?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Goldman. Did you ultimately learn where the call record was put?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I understood that it was being segregated into a separate system, a separate secure system.

Mr. Goldman. Why would it be put on a separate secure system?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. This is not definitely not unprecedented, but, at times, if you want to limit access to a smaller groups of folks, you put it on the secure system to ensure that a smaller group of people with access to the secure system have it.

Mr. Goldman. But can't you also limit the number of people who can access it on the regular system?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. You can do that. But, to the best of my recollection, the decision was made, frankly, on the fly, after my -- after the fact I -- after I conveyed my concerns to Mr. Eisenberg, Mr. Ellis came in. He hadn't heard the entire conversation. And when it was mentioned that it was sensitive, it was kind of an on-the-fly decision to just segregate it into this other system.

Mr. Goldman. Mr. Eisenberg and Mr. Ellis are the NSC lawyers?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Goldman. But it was your understanding that it was not a mistake to put it on the highly classified system. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm not sure I understand.

Mr. Goldman. Was it intended to be put on the highly classified system by the lawyers, or was it a mistake that it was put there?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I think it was intended, but, again, it was intended to prevent leaks and to limit access.

Mr. Goldman. Now, you testified, both of you, about the April 21st call a little earlier.

And, Colonel Vindman, you indicated that you did include in your talking points the idea of Ukraine rooting out corruption but that President Trump did not mention corruption.

I want to go to the White House readout from the April 21st call. And I'm not going to read the whole thing, but do you see highlighted portion where it says, "root out corruption"?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. So, in the end, this readout was false? Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That's -- maybe that's a bit of a -- it's not entirely accurate, but I'm not sure if I would describe it as false. It was consistent with U.S. policy. And these items are used as messaging tools also. So a statement that goes out, in addition to, you know, reading out the meeting itself, is also a messaging platform to indicate what is important with regards to U.S. policy.

Mr. Goldman. So it is a part of U.S. official policy that Ukraine should root out corruption even if President Trump did not mention it in that April 21st phone call. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Certainly.

Mr. Goldman. And he also did not mention it in the July 25th phone call. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Goldman. So, even though it was included in his talking points for the April 21st call and presumably even though you can't talk about it for the July 21st call, it was not included in either. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. For the April 21st call --

Mr. Goldman. He did not mention it in either, rather.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Goldman. So, when the President says now that he held up security assistance because he was concerned about rooting out corruption in Ukraine, that concern was not expressed in the two phone conversations that he had with President Zelensky earlier this year. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Goldman. Now, Ms. Williams, you testified earlier that, after this April 21st call, President Trump asked Vice President Pence to attend President Zelensky's inauguration. Is that right?

Ms. Williams. That's correct.

Mr. Goldman. And that on May 13th you were just informed by the Chief of Staff's Office that Vice President Pence should not -- will not be going, per request of the President. Is that right?

Ms. Williams. That's what I was informed, yes.

Mr. Goldman. And you didn't know what had changed from April 21st to May 13th. Is that right?

Ms. Williams. No, not in terms of that decision.

Mr. Goldman. Well, Colonel Vindman, since you in particular are a little bit more, perhaps, than Ms. Williams, who has a broader portfolio, focuses on Ukraine, I want to ask you if you were aware of the following things that happened from April 21st to May 13th.

Were you aware that Ambassador Yovanovitch was abruptly recalled from Ukraine in that time?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Goldman. Were you aware that President Trump --

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm sorry. To correct it, so she was recalled prior -- let me see -- so the notification occurred toward the end of April, and she was finally recalled in the May timeframe, I think May 20th, if I recall correctly.

Mr. Goldman. Right. So she learned about it after April 21st, on April 24th. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Goldman. And were you aware that President Trump had a telephone call with President Putin during this time period in early May?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I was.

Mr. Goldman. And were you aware that Rudy Giuliani had planned a trip to go to Ukraine to pressure the Ukrainians to initiate the two investigations that President Trump mentioned on the July 25th call in this time period?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I was aware that he was traveling there and that he had been promoting the idea of these investigations.

Mr. Goldman. I want to move now to that July 10th meeting that you referenced, Colonel Vindman. What exactly did Ambassador Sondland say when the

Ukrainian officials raised the idea of a White House meeting?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. As I recall, he referred to specific investigations that the Ukrainians would have to deliver in order to get these meetings.

Mr. Goldman. And what happened to --

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. The White House meeting.

Mr. Goldman. What happened to the broader meeting after he made that reference?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Ambassador Bolton very abruptly ended the meeting.

Mr. Goldman. Did you have any conversations with Ambassador Bolton about this meeting?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No, I did not.

Mr. Goldman. Did you follow Ambassador Sondland and the others to the Ward Room for a meeting followup?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. There was a photo opportunity that we leveraged in order to demonstrate U.S. support, so the White House visit demonstrating U.S. support for Ukraine and the new national security advisory, who was a technocrat. And then, after that, we went down to a short post-meeting huddle or debrief.

Mr. Goldman. Were the investigations, the specific investigations that Ambassador Sondland referenced in the larger meeting, also discussed in the Ward Room meeting?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. They were.

Mr. Goldman. And what did Ambassador Sondland say?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Ambassador Sondland referred to investigations into the Bidens, Burisma, and 2016.

Mr. Goldman. How did you respond, if at all?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I said that this request to conduct these meetings was inappropriate -- these investigations was inappropriate and had nothing to do with national security policy.

Mr. Goldman. Was Ambassador Volker in this meeting as well?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I don't recall specifically. I believe he was there for at least a portion of the time. I don't recall if he was there for that -- the whole meeting.

Mr. Goldman. Was this statement made in front of the Ukrainian officials?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I believe there was some discussion prior to the Ukrainians leaving. When it was apparent there was some discord between the senior folks, Ambassador Sondland and other White House staff, myself, they were asked to step out. So I don't recall if they were there for the entire discussion.

Mr. Goldman. The senior White House staff you're referring to, does that include Fiona Hill, your immediate supervisor at the time?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Goldman. Now, you said you also reported this incident to the NSC lawyers. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Goldman. And what was their response?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. John Eisenberg said that he -- he took notes while I was talking, and he said that he would look into it.

Mr. Goldman. Why did you report this meeting and this conversation to the NSC lawyers?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Because it was inappropriate. And, following the

meeting, I had a short conversation -- following the post-meeting meeting, in the Ward Room, I had a short conversation with Ambassador -- correction -- Dr. Hill, and we discussed the idea of needing to report this.

Mr. Goldman. So am I correct, Colonel Vindman, that at least no later than that July 10th meeting the Ukrainians had understood or at least heard that the Oval Office meeting that they so desperately wanted was conditioned on these specific investigations into Burisma and the 2016 election?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That was the first time I was aware of the Ukrainians being approached directly by a government official.

Mr. Goldman. And directly linking the White House meeting to the investigations?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Goldman. Ms. Williams, you testified in your opening statement that you attended the September 1st meeting between Vice President Pence and President Zelensky in Warsaw. Is that right?

Ms. Williams. That's correct.

Mr. Goldman. What was the first thing that President Zelensky asked Vice President Pence about at that meeting?

Ms. Williams. President Zelensky asked the Vice President about the status of security assistance for Ukraine, because he had seen the Politico article and other news reporting that the security assistance was being held.

Mr. Goldman. And you testified in your deposition that, in that conversation, President Zelensky emphasized that the military assistance, the security assistance, was not just important to assist Ukraine in fighting a war against Russia but that it was also symbolic in nature. What did you understand him to mean by that?

Ms. Williams. President Zelensky explained that, more than -- or just equally with the financial and fiscal value of the assistance, that it was the symbolic nature of that assistance that really was the show of U.S. support for Ukraine and for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. And I think he was stressing that to the Vice President to really underscore the need for the security assistance to be released.

Mr. Goldman. And that if the United States was holding the security assistance, is it also true, then, that Russia could see that as a sign of weakening U.S. support for Ukraine and take advantage of that?

Ms. Williams. I believe that's what President Zelensky was indicating, that any signal or sign that U.S. support was wavering would be construed by Russia as potentially an opportunity for them to strengthen their own hand in Ukraine.

Mr. Goldman. Did Vice President Pence provide a reason for the hold on security assistance to the Ukrainian President in that meeting?

Ms. Williams. The Vice President did not specifically discuss the reason behind the hold, but he did reassure President Zelensky of the strongest U.S. unwavering support for Ukraine. And they talked about the need for European countries to step up and provide more assistance to Ukraine as well.

Mr. Goldman. Did Vice President Pence report back to President Trump on that meeting, to your knowledge?

Ms. Williams. The Vice President conveyed to President Zelensky that he would follow up with President Trump that evening, and conveyed to President Trump what he had heard from President Zelensky with regard to his efforts to implement reforms in Ukraine. I am aware that the Vice President spoke to President Trump that evening, but I was not privy to the conversation.

Mr. Goldman. Are you also aware, however, that the security assistance hold

was not lifted for another 10 days after this meeting?

Ms. Williams. That's correct.

Mr. Goldman. And am I correct that you didn't learn the reason why the hold was lifted?

Ms. Williams. That's correct.

Mr. Goldman. Colonel Vindman, you didn't learn a reason why the hold was lifted either. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Goldman. Colonel Vindman, are you aware that the committees launched an investigation into Ukraine matters on September 9th, 2 days before the hold was lifted?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I am aware, and I was aware.

Mr. Goldman. And, on September 10th, the Intelligence Committee requested the whistleblower complaint from the Department of National Intelligence. Are you aware of that?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I don't believe I aware of that.

Mr. Goldman. Were you aware that the White House was aware of this whistleblower complaint prior to that date?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. The first I heard of the whistleblower complaint is, I believe, when the news broke. I was only aware of the committees investigating the hold on security assistance.

Mr. Goldman. So is it accurate to say, Colonel Vindman, that whatever reason that was provided for the hold, including the administrative policies which -- well, which would support the hold, is that -- would support the security assistance. Is that right, to your understanding?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm sorry. I didn't understand that question.

Mr. Goldman. I was just asking, the administrative policies of President Trump supported the security assistance. Is that your understanding?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. So the interagency policy was to support security assistance for Ukraine.

Mr. Goldman. Thank you.

I yield back.

The Chairman. I now recognize Ranking Member Nunes or minority counsel for 45 minutes.

Mr. Nunes. Thank you.

Ms. Williams, welcome. I want to just establish a few basic facts about your knowledge of Ukraine, Burisma, and the role of the Bidens. You spend an extraordinary amount of your time on Ukraine, correct?

Ms. Williams. Ukraine is one of the countries in my portfolio. I would not say an extraordinary amount of time, but certainly the Vice President has engaged on Ukraine policy quite a bit in my 8 months.

Mr. Nunes. And it's in your portfolio.

Ms. Williams. That's correct.

Mr. Nunes. First off, were you aware, in September of 2015, then-U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Jeffrey Pyatt publicly called for an investigation into Zlochevsky, the president of Burisma? Were you aware of these public statements?

Ms. Williams. No, not at the time.

Mr. Nunes. You are today, though.

Ms. Williams. I have since heard them, yes.

Mr. Nunes. Did you know of anti-Trump efforts by various Ukrainian officials as

well as Alexandra Chalupa, a DNC consultant?

Ms. Williams. No, I was not aware.

Mr. Nunes. Did you know about the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Kent's concerns about potential conflict of interest into Hunter Biden's sitting on the board of Burisma?

Ms. Williams. I did not work on Ukraine policy during that timeframe, so I've become aware of it through --

Mr. Nunes. In the last year or so.

Ms. Williams. I have become aware of it through Mr. Kent's testimony through this process.

Mr. Nunes. Did you know that financial records show a Ukrainian natural gas company, Burisma, routed more than \$3 million to American accounts tied to Hunter Biden?

Ms. Williams. No, I was not aware.

Mr. Nunes. Until?

Ms. Williams. Until --

Mr. Nunes. You prepared for this hearing?

Ms. Williams. Until others have been testifying in more detail on those issues. That's correct.

Mr. Nunes. And you've been following it more closely.

Ms. Williams. Correct.

Mr. Nunes. Did you know that Burisma's American legal representatives met with Ukrainian officials just days after Vice President Biden forced the firing of the country's chief prosecutor?

Ms. Williams. Again, sir, I was not working on Ukraine policy during that time, and I was not --

Mr. Nunes. And I'm not -- none of these are trick questions. I'm just trying to get through them on the record.

Ms. Williams. I understand.

Mr. Nunes. Did you know that Burisma lawyers pressured the State Department in February 2016 after the raid, a month before the firing of Shokin, and that they invoked Hunter Biden's name as a reason to intervene?

Ms. Williams. I was not aware.

Mr. Nunes. Did you know that Joe Biden called Ukrainian President Poroshenko at least three times in February 2016 after the president and owner of Burisma's home was raided on February 2nd by the state prosecutor's office?

Ms. Williams. Not at the time. Again, I've become aware of that through this proceeding.

Mr. Nunes. Thank you, Ms. Williams.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, I'm going to ask you the same questions just to establish some basic facts about your knowledge about Ukraine, Burisma, and the role of the Bidens.

In September 2015, U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Jeffrey Pyatt publicly called for an investigation into Zlochevsky, the president of Burisma. Were you aware of these public statements?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I wasn't aware of them at the time.

Mr. Nunes. When did you become aware of them?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. During the course of the testimony and depositions after this impeachment inquiry began.

Mr. Nunes. Did you know of anti-Trump efforts by various Ukrainian Government officials as well as Alexandra Chalupa, a DNC consultant?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm not aware of any of these interference efforts.

Mr. Nunes. Did you know about Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Kent's

concerns about potential conflicts of interest with Hunter Biden sitting on the board of Burisma?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. The only thing I'm aware of pertains to his deposition.

Mr. Nunes. Did you know that financial records show a Ukrainian natural gas company, Burisma, routed more than \$3 million to the American accounts tied to Hunter Biden?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm not aware of this fact.

Mr. Nunes. Until recently.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I guess I didn't independently look into it. I'm just not aware of, you know, what kind of payments Mr. Biden may have received. This is not something I'm aware of.

Mr. Nunes. Did you know that Burisma's American legal representatives met with Ukrainian officials just days after Vice President Biden forced the firing of the country's chief prosecutor?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm not aware of these meetings.

Mr. Nunes. Did you know that Burisma lawyers pressured the State Department in February 2016 after the raid and a month before the firing of Shokin and that they invoked Hunter Biden's name as a reason to intervene?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm not aware of any of these facts.

Mr. Nunes. Did you know that Joe Biden called Ukrainian President Poroshenko at least three times in February 2016 after the president and owner of Burisma's home was raided on February 2nd by the state prosecutor's office?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm aware of the fact that President Biden -- or Vice President Biden was very engaged on Ukraine and had numerous engagements.

That's what I'm aware of.

Mr. Nunes. Ms. Williams and Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, as you may or may not know, this committee has spent nearly 3 years conducting various investigations, starting with the Russia collusion hoax, FISA abuse, Democratic hysteria over the lack of collusion in the Mueller report, and now this impeachment charade.

One of the most concerning things regarding all of these investigations is the amount of classified or otherwise sensitive information I read in the press that derive either from this committee or sources in the administration.

To be clear, I'm not accusing either one of you leaking information. However, given that you are the first witnesses who actually have some firsthand knowledge of the President's call by listening in on July 25th, it's imperative to the American public's understanding of the events that we get a quick matters -- few matters out of the way first.

Ms. Williams, let me just go to you first. For the purposes of the following questions, I'm only asking about the time period between -- from July 25th through September 25th.

Ms. Williams. Okay.

Mr. Nunes. Did you discuss the July 25th phone call between President Trump and President Zelensky or any matters associated with the phone call with any members of the press?

Ms. Williams. No.

Mr. Nunes. To be clear, you never discussed these matters with The New York Times, The Washington Post, Politico, CNN, or any other media outlet?

Ms. Williams. No, I did not.

Mr. Nunes. Did you ask or encourage any individual to share the substance of

the July 25th phone call or any matter associated with the call with any member of the press?

Ms. Williams. I did not.

Mr. Nunes. Do you know of any individual who discussed the substance of the July 25th phone call or matter associated with the call with any member of the press?

Ms. Williams. No, I do not.

Mr. Nunes. Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, the same questions for you. Did you discuss the July 25th phone call between President Trump and President Zelensky or any matter associated with the phone call with any member of the press?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I did not.

Mr. Nunes. Just to be clear, you did not discuss this with The New York Times, The Washington Post, Politico, CNN, or any other media outlet?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I did not.

Mr. Nunes. Did you ask or encourage any individual to share the substance of the July 25th phone call or any matter associated with the call with any member of the press?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I did not.

Mr. Nunes. Do you know of any individual who discussed the substance of the July 25th phone call or any matter associated with the call with any member of the press?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. We have an NSC press shop, and they field any of these types of questions. I do not engage with the press at all.

Mr. Nunes. Let me ask the question again. Do you know of any individual who discussed the substance of the July 25th phone call or any matter associated with the call with any member of the press?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. We have an NSC press shop whose job is to engage

on any of these types of questions. I am not aware, but it is possible and likely that the press shop would have had -- would field these types of questions.

Mr. Nunes. Right, but the question is --

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. After -- I'm sorry.

Mr. Nunes. The question is, do you know any individual -- do you personally know any individual who discussed the substance of the July 25th phone call or any matter associated with the call with any member of the press?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Thank you, Ranking Member, for clarifying. I do not.

Mr. Nunes. Thank you.

Ms. Williams, did you discuss the July 25th phone call with anyone outside the White House on July 25th or July 26th? And, if so, with whom?

Ms. Williams. No, I did not discuss the call with anyone outside or inside the White House.

Mr. Nunes. Ms. Williams, during your time on the NSC, have you ever accessed a colleague's work computer without their prior authorization or approval?

Ms. Williams. I have not. And just to clarify, I'm in the Office of the Vice President, so I'm not on the NSC.

Mr. Nunes. Right, but representing --

Ms. Williams. No, I have not.

Mr. Nunes. -- the Vice President.

Ms. Williams. No.

Mr. Nunes. Thank you for that clarification.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, did you discuss the July 25th phone call with anyone outside the White House on July 25th or the 26th? And, if so, with whom?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, I did. My core function is to coordinate U.S. Government policy, interagency policy, and I spoke to two individuals with regards to providing some sort of a readout of the call.

Mr. Nunes. Two individuals that were not in the White House?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Not in the White House. Cleared U.S. Government officials with the appropriate need to know.

Mr. Nunes. And what agencies were these officials with?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Department of State -- Department of State Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent, who is responsible for the portfolio, Eastern Europe, including Ukraine. And an individual from the Office of -- an individual in the Intelligence Community.

Mr. Nunes. As you know, the Intelligence Community has 17 different agencies. What agency was this individual from?

The Chairman. If I could interject here, we don't want to use these proceedings --

Mr. Nunes. It's our time, Chairman.

The Chairman. I know, but we need to protect the whistleblower. Please stop. I want to make sure that there's no effort to out the whistleblower through these proceeds.

If the witness has a good-faith belief that this may reveal the identity of the whistleblower, that is not the purpose that we are here for, and I want to advise the witness accordingly.

Mr. Nunes. Mr. Vindman, you testified in your deposition that you did not know the whistleblower.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Ranking Member, it's Lieutenant Colonel Vindman,

please.

Mr. Nunes. Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, you testified in the deposition that you did not know who the whistleblower was or is.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I do not know who the whistleblower is. That is correct.

Mr. Nunes. So how is it possible for you to name these people and then out the whistleblower?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Per the advice of my counsel, I've been advised not to answer specific questions about members of the Intelligence Community.

Mr. Nunes. This is -- are you aware that this is the Intelligence Committee that's conducting an impeachment hearing?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Of course I am.

Mr. Nunes. Wouldn't the appropriate place for you to come to to testify would be the Intelligence Committee about someone within the Intelligence Community?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Ranking Member, per the advice of my counsel and the instructions from the chairman, I've been advised not to provide any specifics on who I have spoken to inside the Intelligence Community.

What I can offer is that these were properly cleared individuals -- or was a properly cleared individual with a need to know.

Mr. Nunes. Well, this is -- I mean, you could really -- you could plead the Fifth, but you're here to answer questions, and you're here under a subpoena. So you can either answer the question or you can plead the Fifth.

Mr. Volkov. Excuse me. On behalf of my client, we are following the rule of the committee, the rule of the chair, with regard to this issue. And this does not call for an answer that is invoking the Fifth or any theoretical issue like that. We're following the

ruling of the chair.

Mr. Nunes. Counselor, what ruling is that?

The Chairman. If I could interject, counsel is correct. The whistleblower has the right -- statutory right to anonymity. These proceedings will not be used to out the whistleblower.

Mr. Volkov. And I've advised my client accordingly, and he's going to follow the ruling of the chair. If there's an alternative or you want to work something out with the chair, that's up to you, Mr. Nunes.

Mr. Nunes. Well, we've attempted to subpoena the whistleblower to sit for a deposition. The chair has tabled that motion and then has been unwilling to recognize those motions over the last few days of this impeachment inquisition process.

With that, I'll go to Mr. Castor.

Mr. Castor. Thank you, Ranking Member Nunes.

The call transcript as published on September 25th is complete and accurate.

Will both of you attest to that?

Ms. Williams?

Ms. Williams. I didn't take a word-for-word --

Mr. Castor. Of course.

Ms. Williams. -- accounting. When I first saw the publicly released version, it looked substantively correct to me.

Mr. Castor. And Colonel Vindman?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I think -- I certainly would describe it as substantively correct or --

Mr. Castor. I think in your testimony, your deposition, you said "very accurate"?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

And you flagged a couple edits, Colonel Vindman. I think you had "Burisma" on page 4, where President Zelensky was talking about the company mentioned in the issue?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm sorry. Could you say that question --

Mr. Castor. I believe in your testimony you explained that you offered an edit that on page 4 of the transcript that was ultimately published you thought President Zelensky mentioned the word "Burisma"?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Oh, I had it in my notes. I know that's what he said. Yes.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

And, Ms. Williams -- and that was on page 4, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct. Correct.

Mr. Castor. And, Ms. Williams, I believe after your deposition you went back and checked your notes, and you had President Zelensky using the term "Burisma" as well. Is that correct?

Ms. Williams. That's correct.

Mr. Castor. But that came up on a different part of the transcript than what Colonel Vindman was relating to, correct?

Ms. Williams. Yes, I believe so.

Mr. Castor. Yours came up on page 5, and it would've been in substitution for the word "case"?

Ms. Williams. That's right. That's where I have it in my notes.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Colonel Vindman, we've had some discussion earlier today and also at your deposition about whether the President had a demand for President Zelensky. And, you

know, I suggested to you in the deposition that the President's words are, in fact, ambiguous, and he uses some phrases that certainly could be characterized as hedging.

On page 3, in the first paragraph, he talks about "whatever you can do." He talks about "if that's possible." On page 4, he mentions "if you could speak to him," talking about the Attorney General or Rudy Giuliani. And then, at the end of the first paragraph on page 4, he says, "whatever you can do." The President also says, you know, "if you can look into it."

And I asked you during your deposition whether you saw or acknowledged the fact that certain people could read that to be ambiguous.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. And I said, correct, yes.

Mr. Castor. And I believe you said, "I think people want to hear what they have already preconceived." Is that what you testified?

Mr. Volkov. Actually, if I could ask for just a page cite?

Mr. Castor. 256.

Mr. Volkov. 256?

Mr. Castor. Yeah.

Mr. Volkov. And a line? Thank you. Just a minute, please.

Mr. Castor. And --

Mr. Volkov. Just a minute, please.

Okay. We got the page.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

And then you went on to say, "Yeah" -- you agreed with me. You said, "Yeah, I guess you could interpret it different ways." Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Turning attention to the preparation of the transcript, that followed the ordinary process, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. So I think it followed the appropriate process in terms of making sure that eventually it came around for clearances, for accuracy --

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. -- but it was in a different system, so --

Mr. Castor. Well, I'll get to that in a second. That relates to the storage of it.

You had some concerns, Mr. Morrison articulated his concerns, about if the transcript was leaked out. And I think both you and Mr. Morrison agreed that it needed to be protected?

Mr. Volkov. Just a correction. I don't think it was Mr. Morrison. It was Mr. Eisenberg, right?

Mr. Castor. Mr. Morrison testified at his deposition --

Mr. Volkov. Okay. We don't have that in front of us. If you can give us that, we'll take a look.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I think in this -- but I could say for myself, I -- there were --

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. The concerns about leaks seemed valid, and I wasn't particularly critical. I thought this was sensitive, and I was not going to question --

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. -- the attorney's judgment on that.

Mr. Castor. Right. And even on the codeword server, you had access to it.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Castor. So at no point in time during the course of your official duties were you denied access to this information.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Castor. Is that correct?

Ms. Williams, I want to turn to you for a moment. And you testified that you believed the transcript is complete and accurate, other than the one issue you mentioned?

Ms. Williams. Substantively accurate, yes.

Mr. Castor. Now, did you express any concerns to anyone in your office about what you heard on the call?

Ms. Williams. My supervisor was listening on the call as well. So, because he had heard the same information, I did not feel a need to have a further conversation with him about it.

Mr. Castor. And you never had any concerns with anyone else in the Vice President's Office?

Ms. Williams. I did not discuss the call further with anyone in the Vice President's Office.

Mr. Castor. Okay. So you didn't flag it for the Chief of Staff or the Vice President's counsel or anyone of that sort?

Ms. Williams. Again, my immediate supervisor, Lieutenant General Kellogg, was in the room with me.

Mr. Castor. Right. And, after the call, did you and General Kellogg ever discuss the contents of the call?

Ms. Williams. We did not, no.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Now, in the run-up to the meeting in Warsaw -- the Vice President was meeting with President Zelensky September 1st in Warsaw -- you were involved with the preparation of the Vice President's briefing materials?

Ms. Williams. I was.

Mr. Castor. And did you flag for the Vice President, you know, parts of call that had concerned you?

Ms. Williams. No, we did not include the call transcript in the trip briefing book. We don't normally include previous calls in trip briefing books.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And so I'm just wondering, if the concerns were so significant, how come nobody on the Vice President's staff at least alerted him to the issue that President Zelensky might be on edge about something that had been mentioned on the 7/25 call?

Ms. Williams. Again, my supervisor had been in the call with me, and I ensured that the Vice President had access to the transcript in the moment on that day.

As we were preparing for the September meeting with the President Zelensky, the more immediate issue at hand was, 2 days prior, the news had broken about the hold on the security assistance. So we much more focused on the discussion that was likely to occur about the hold on security assistance for that meeting.

Mr. Castor. And, to your recollection -- you were in the meeting with President Zelensky and Vice President Pence?

Ms. Williams. I was.

Mr. Castor. And Burisma didn't come up or the Bidens or --

Ms. Williams. No.

Mr. Castor. -- any of these investigations?

Ms. Williams. No. They did not.

Mr. Castor. Colonel Vindman, you testified that the President has well-standing -- or longstanding concerns about corruption in Ukraine, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I don't recall, but there are concerns. There are broad concerns about corruption, yes.

Mr. Castor. But would you agree that if the U.S. is giving, you know, hundreds of millions of dollars to a foreign nation that has a corruption problem, that that's certainly something that the U.S. Government officials and the President would want to be concerned about?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Castor. And if a foreign country has a problem with oligarchs taking money, taking U.S. taxpayer dollars, that's something that the President ought to be concerned about in advance of dispensing the aid?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Castor. And I believe you did testify that corruption is endemic in Ukraine?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Castor. Are you also aware of the President's skepticism of foreign aid generally?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I am.

Mr. Castor. And it's something that he's made part of his priorities, to make sure that U.S. foreign aid is spent wisely?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Castor. And you're also aware the President has concerns about burden-sharing among our allies?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Castor. And, with respect to Ukraine, he was very interested and engaged in

seeing if there was a possibility for our European allies to step up and contribute more?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes. I think that would be in the context of military assistance. In terms of burden-sharing, the European Union provides over \$15 billion.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Or has provided since 2014.

Mr. Castor. Okay. But you are aware of the President's concern of burden-sharing, right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, I am.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Turning our attention specifically to the company of Burisma, Mykola Zlochevsky, the co-founder of Burisma, is one of Ukraine's largest natural gas producers, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is my understanding, yes.

Mr. Castor. And it's been subject to numerous investigations over the years?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm not aware of -- I guess I couldn't point to specific investigations, but there is what I would call a pattern of questionable dealings and questions about corruption.

Mr. Castor. Zlochevsky had served as the Minister of Ecology during President Yanukovich's tenure?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I came to learn that that is correct, yes.

Mr. Castor. And are you aware -- and George Kent testified a little bit about this last week -- that, under the Obama administration, the U.S. Government encouraged Ukraine to investigate whether Zlochevsky used his government position to grant himself or Burisma exploration licenses? Are you aware of that?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I would defer to George Kent. He's a fount of

knowledge on Ukraine, much deeper knowledge than I have. And --

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. -- if he attested to that, then I'd take his word for it.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And he testified that the U.S., along with the United Kingdom, was engaged in trying to recoup about 23 million in taxpayer dollars from Zlochevsky and the Burisma entity?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I understand he testified to that, yes.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

And Mr. Kent also testified that the investigation was moving along and then all of a sudden there was a bribe paid and the investigation went away. Did you hear him mention that?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I heard him mention that. These are events that occurred before my time, so, frankly, beyond what he said, I don't know much more.

Mr. Castor. Fair enough.

Right around the time the bribe was paid, the company sought to bolster their board. Are you aware that they tapped some luminaries for their corporate board?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Certainly I learned that at some point, yes.

Mr. Castor. Including the President of Poland, I believe?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Castor. And Hunter Biden?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, I came to learn that as well.

Mr. Castor. And are you aware of any specific experience Hunter Biden has in the Ukrainian corporate governance world?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I don't know much about Mr. Hunter Biden.

Mr. Castor. And we talked a little bit at your deposition about whether Mr. Biden was qualified to serve on this board, and, you know, I believe you acknowledged that apparently he was not, in fact, qualified?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. As far as I can tell, he didn't seem to be. But, like I said, I don't know his qualifications.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

And, Ms. Williams, I want to turn our attention to the inaugural trip. At one point, the Vice President and the Vice President's Office was focusing on attending that, correct?

Ms. Williams. That's right.

Mr. Castor. And it was somewhat complicated because, as I understand it, the White House doesn't want the President and the Vice President to be out of the country at the same time?

Ms. Williams. Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Castor. And during the timeframe, the President was in Japan. I believe he was in Japan May 24th to the 28th. And then he returned to Europe for the D-Day ceremonies June 2nd to 7th. And I think you told us that there was a window you provided of 4 days at the end of May, that if the Vice President was going to attend the inauguration, it had to be the 29th, 30th, 31st, or 1st?

Ms. Williams. Our Embassy in Kyiv had been in discussions with the Ukrainian -- with President Zelensky's team. And, as we had learned, obviously, the Ukrainian parliament wasn't going to come back into the session until mid-May, and so we wouldn't know formally what the date would be, but we understood that the initial thinking was that they were looking at dates at the end of May.

And so, homing in on that timeframe, we were aware of President Trump's plan to

travel on either end. And so that's why we advised the Ukrainians that, if Vice President Pence were to be able to participate, the only really available days would be May 30th, May 31st, or June 1st.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And before the Vice President travels to a foreign nation, you have to send the Secret Service, do advance work, book hotels, and it's a relatively involved preparation experience, right?

Ms. Williams. That's correct.

Mr. Castor. And do you know if the Secret Service ever deployed, booked hotels, or anything of that sort?

Ms. Williams. My understanding is that our advance team was looking in those preparations, including hotel availability, and we were trying to determine when it would be appropriate to send out Secret Service and other advance personnel to lay groundwork for a trip. But because we weren't sure yet when the date would be, we hesitated to send those officials out.

Mr. Castor. Okay. But, ultimately, the Secret Service, as I understand it, did not deploy?

Ms. Williams. I don't believe they did, no.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

And President Zelensky's inauguration was May 20th, if I'm not mistaken?

Ms. Williams. Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Castor. And you had about 4 days' notice?

Ms. Williams. In the end, the Ukrainian parliament decided on May 16th to set the date for May 20th. That's correct.

Mr. Castor. Okay. So you would acknowledge that that made it quite difficult for the Vice President and the whole operation to mobilize and get over to Ukraine,

correct?

Ms. Williams. It would have been, but we had already stopped the trip planning by that point.

Mr. Castor. And when the did that happen?

Ms. Williams. Stopping the trip planning?

Mr. Castor. Yeah.

Ms. Williams. On May 13th.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And how did you hear about that?

Ms. Williams. I was called by a colleague in the Vice President's Chief of Staff's Office and told to stop the trip planning.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And, as I understand it, it was the assistant to the Chief of Staff?

Ms. Williams. That's correct.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And so you didn't hear about it from General Kellogg or the Chief of Staff or --

Ms. Williams. Correct.

Mr. Castor. -- the President or the Vice President. You heard about it from Mr. Short's assistant?

Ms. Williams. That's right.

Mr. Castor. And did you have any knowledge of the reasoning for stopping the trip?

Ms. Williams. I asked my colleague why we should stop trip planning and why the Vice President would not be attending, and I was informed that the President had decided the Vice President would not attend the inauguration.

Mr. Castor. Okay. But do you know why the President decided --

Ms. Williams. No. She did not have that information.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And, ultimately, the Vice President went to Canada for a USMCA event --

Ms. Williams. That's right.

Mr. Castor. -- during this window of time, correct?

Ms. Williams. Correct.

Mr. Castor. So it's entirely conceivable that the President decided that he wanted the Vice President to go to Canada on behalf of USMCA instead of doing anything else, correct?

Ms. Williams. I'm really not in a position to speculate what the motivations were behind the President's decision.

Mr. Castor. Well, you know the Vice President's done quite a bit of USMCA events, correct?

Ms. Williams. Absolutely. Yes, sir.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And are you aware of whether anyone at the State Department inquired with your office about the Vice President's availability for the trip to Canada?

Ms. Williams. For the trip -- at what point?

Mr. Castor. Early May. Maybe May 8th?

Ms. Williams. I was not involved in the trip planning for Canada. One of my colleagues who covers Western Hemisphere was in charge --

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Ms. Williams. -- of that. So I'm not aware of specific --

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Ms. Williams. -- requests about --

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Ms. Williams. -- the Vice President's availability. I was aware from my colleague who was planning that trip that we had competing trips, potentially, for the same window --

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Ms. Williams. -- but I was told that the Ukraine trip would take priority.

Mr. Castor. Okay. But, ultimately, you don't know.

Ms. Williams. I don't know about the Canada trip? Or --

Mr. Castor. You don't know the reason as to why the Vice President was sent to Canada for a USMCA event instead of going to the Ukraine.

Ms. Williams. I would say I don't know the reason behind why the President directed the Vice President not to go to Ukraine. I can't speak to the motivations about the Canada trip.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Colonel Vindman, I'd like to turn a little bit to the July 10th meeting in Ambassador Bolton's office and the subsequent post-meeting in the Ward Room.

Who all was in the July 10th meeting, to the best of your recollection?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Are we talking about the Ward Room, or are we talking about the actual meeting with Ambassador Bolton?

Mr. Castor. We'll start with the first meeting in the Ambassador's office.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. So, from the U.S. side, we had Ambassador Bolton, Dr. Hill. I believe there was another -- a special assistant to the President. Wells Griffith was in there.

Mr. Castor. Uh-huh.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. From our -- and myself.

From the Ukrainians --

Mr. Castor. Who from the Ukrainians? Oh, sorry.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yeah. For the Ukrainian side, we had Oleksandr Danylyuk; Andriy Yermak; and I think Oleksandr Danylyuk's advisor, Alexey Simeni (ph).

Mr. Castor. Okay. And you testified that you couldn't recall exactly why Ambassador Bolton stopped the meeting short and you only learned it subsequently in talking to Dr. Fiona Hill?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yeah, I noted that, you know, it ended abruptly, but I didn't, frankly, you know -- I didn't exactly know why.

Mr. Castor. And, in the Bolton meeting, you don't remember Ambassador Sondland using the word "Biden"?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He did not.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. To the best of my recollection, I don't think he did.

Mr. Castor. And then the group decamped to take a photo, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Castor. Okay. So the general feeling of the group was a positive one at that time, even though it may have ended abruptly.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I think Ambassador Bolton was exceptionally qualified, and he understood the strategic communications opportunity of having a photo. And we prompted him to see, before we completely adjourned, to see if he was willing to do a photo, and he did.

Mr. Castor. Okay. So you went out to West Executive Ave or wherever in the White House and you took a photo. I think you said you took it?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I certainly took a couple of them, yes.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And in the photo is Secretary Perry, Ambassador Bolton, Ambassador Volker, Mr. Danylyuk, and Mr. Yermak?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

And I apologize. When I was running through the U.S. side, of course Ambassador Bolton, Volker, and Sondland were there, and Secretary Perry was there.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Now, you testified that before the July 10th meeting you had developed concerns about the narrative, you know, involving Rudy Giuliani. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Castor. And had you heard, like, a firsthand account from anyone on the inside, or had you just been following news accounts?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. So I certainly was following news accounts. And that's from the Ukrainian side, Ukrainian press, and U.S. press.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. And my colleagues in the interagency also were concerned about this, as this had started in the March timeframe, kind of emanating from the John Solomon story all the way through. So there had been ongoing conversations. So several different sources, Counsel.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And so, when Ambassador Sondland mentioned the investigations, you sort of had a little bit of a clue of what the issue was?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Oh, definitely.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And then you took the photo, a very nice photo, and then you went to the Ward Room?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Castor. And do you remember -- I think you conceded to us that you had a

hard time remembering exactly what was said in the Ward Room. Again, it's 4 months ago; it's hard to be precise about whether Sondland -- what specific words he used, whether he used "Burisma," "2016," "investigations." Is --

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yeah. So I believe it's in the deposition. The three elements -- Burisma, Bidens, and the 2016 elections -- were all mentioned.

Mr. Castor. In the Ward Room?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Castor. And I think -- you know, I think -- we can maybe go back to this, but I think on page 64 of your testimony you told us that you don't remember him using "2016" in the Ward Room?

Mr. Castor. I believe that I actually followed up and -- when you -- because this question was asked multiple times --

Mr. Castor. Uh-huh.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. -- I said all three elements were in there.

Mr. Castor. Okay. So, when we asked the question, it sort of refreshed your recollection?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, I guess that's the term now.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

There was some discussion of, you know, whether, when Mr. Morrison took over the portfolio for Dr. Hill, whether you were sidelined at all. Did you feel like you were?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. So I certainly was excluded or didn't participate in the trip to Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus --

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. -- at the end of August . And I wasn't -- initially, before it changed from a POTUS trip to a Vice President trip to Warsaw,

I wasn't participating in that one. So I didn't miss that, no.

Mr. Castor. Okay. Did you express any concerns to Mr. Morrison about why you weren't included on those trips?

RPTR BRYANT

EDTR HOFSTAD

[11:08 a.m.]

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. So Mr. Morrison -- I was on leave. I was supposed to be on leave from the 3rd of August through about the 16th or so of August. And he called me and asked me to return. There was, obviously, high-priority travel to the region, and he needed my assistance to help plan for it.

And, in asking me to return early from leave, which I take infrequently, I assumed that I'd be going on the trip. So when I was -- after returning from leave early, when I was told I wasn't going, I inquired about it, correct.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And what feedback did he give you?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He initially told me that the aircraft that was acquired, the MILAIR, was too small and there wasn't enough room.

Mr. Castor. Had you ever had any discussions with Mr. Morrison about concerns that he or Dr. Hill had with your judgment?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Did I ever have any conversations with Mr. Morrison about it?

Mr. Castor. Yes.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No.

Mr. Castor. Okay. Did Mr. Morrison ever express concerns to you that he thought maybe you weren't following the chain of command in all instances?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He did not.

Mr. Castor. And did Dr. Hill or Mr. Morrison ever ask you questions about whether you were trying to access information outside of your lane?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. They did not.

Mr. Castor. And another, you know, aspect of the Ukraine portfolio that you were not a part of were some of the communications Mr. Morrison was having with Ambassador Taylor?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Castor. And did you ever express concern that he was leaving you off those calls?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Well, certainly it was concerning. He had just come onboard. He didn't have the -- you know, he wasn't steeped in all the items that we were working on, including the policy that we had developed over the preceding months. And I thought I could contribute to that, to his -- to the performance of his duties.

Mr. Castor. Okay. When you were -- you went to Ukraine for the inauguration?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Castor. At any point during that trip, did Mr. Danylyuk offer you a position of Defense Minister with the Ukrainian Government?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He did.

Mr. Castor. And how many times did he do that?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I believe it was three times.

Mr. Castor. And do you have any reason why he asked you to do that?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I don't know. But every single time, I dismissed it. Upon returning, I notified my chain of command and the appropriate counterintelligence folks about this, the offer.

Mr. Castor. I mean, Ukraine is a country that's experienced a war with Russia. Certainly, their Minister of Defense is a pretty key position --

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yeah.

Mr. Castor. -- for the Ukrainians. For President Zelensky, Mr. Danylyuk to bestow that honor on you, at least asking you, I mean, that was a big honor, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I think it would be a great honor. And, frankly, I'm aware of servicemembers that have left service to help nurture the developing democracies in that part of the world. Certainly in the Baltics, former officers -- and, if I recall correctly, it was an Air Force officer that became Minister of Defense.

But I'm an American. I came here when I was a toddler. And I immediately dismissed these offers --

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. -- did not entertain them.

Mr. Castor. When he made this offer to you initially, did you leave the door open? Was there a reason that he had to come back and ask a second and third time, or was he just trying to convince you?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Counsel, you know what? The whole notion is rather comical, that I was being asked to consider whether I'd want to be the Minister of Defense. I did not leave the door open at all.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. But it is pretty funny for a lieutenant colonel in the United States Army, which really is not that senior, to be offered that illustrious a position.

Mr. Castor. When he made this offer to you, was he speaking in English or Ukrainian?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Oh, Mr. Danylyuk is an absolutely flawless English speaker. He was speaking in English.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. And just to be clear, there were two other staff officers, Embassy Kyiv staff officers, that were sitting next to me when this offer was made.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And who were they?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. So one of them you may have met. It was Mr. David Holmes. And the other one was -- I don't know. I mean, I guess I could -- it's another Foreign Service officer, Keith Bean.

Mr. Castor. Okay. Yeah, we met Mr. Holmes last Friday evening.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I understand. He's a delightful fellow.

Mr. Castor. And you said, when you returned to the United States, you papered it up, given your -- you know, with SCI clearance, whenever a foreign government makes an overture like that, you have to -- you paper it up and you tell your chain of command?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I did. But I also don't know if I fully entertained it as a legitimate offer. I was just making sure that I did the right thing in terms of reporting, yes.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And did any of your supervisors, Dr. Hill at the time or Dr. Kupperman or Ambassador Bolton, ever follow up with you about that? It's rather significant; you know, the Ukrainians offered you the post of Defense Minister. You know, did you tell anyone in your chain of command about it?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. After I spoke to -- and I believe our Deputy Senior Director, John Erath, was there. Once I mentioned it to both of them, I don't believe there was ever a followup discussion.

Mr. Castor. Okay. So it never came up with Dr. Kupperman or Dr. Hill?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Following that conversation I had with Dr. Hill --

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. -- I don't believe there was a subsequent conversation.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. And I don't recall ever having a conversation with Dr. Kupperman about it.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And did you brief Dr. -- or, sorry, Director Morrison when he came onboard?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No. I completely forgot about it.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And subsequent to the May trip, did Mr. Danylyuk ever ask you to reconsider? Were there any other offers?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No.

Mr. Castor. When he visited for the July 10th meeting with Ambassador Bolton, did it come up again?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. It never came up again.

Mr. Castor. Okay. And did you ever think that possibly if this information, you know, got out that it might create at least the perception of a conflict, that the Ukrainians thought so highly of you to offer you the Defense Ministry post, you know, on one hand, but on the other hand you're responsible for Ukrainian policy at the National Security Council?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. So, frankly, it'd be -- it's more important about what my American leadership, American chain of command thinks than any of the -- and this is -- these are honorable people. I'm not sure if he meant it as a joke or not. But it's much more important what my civilian White House National Security Council chain of command thinks more so than anybody else. And, frankly, if they were concerned

about me being able to continue my duties --

Mr. Castor. Oh, of course.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. -- they would have brought that to my attention. Dr. Hill stayed on for several more months, and we continued to work to advance U.S. policy.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

And during the times relevant of the committees' investigation, did you have any communications with Mr. Yermak or Danylyuk outside of the July 10th meeting?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I recall a courtesy note from Mr. Yermak within days of his return to -- July -- in which he wanted to preserve an open channel of communication. And I said, you know, please feel free to contact me with any concerns.

Mr. Castor. And were you following this -- you know, there were, sort of, two tracks. Ambassador Taylor walked us through it during his testimony last Wednesday. There was a -- he called it a regular channel, and then he called it an irregular but not outlandish channel with Ambassador Sondland and Ambassador Volker.

Were you tracking the Sondland and Volker channel during this time period?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yeah, so I'm trying to recall at which point I became aware of Ambassador -- certainly I was aware of the fact that they were working together -- Ambassador Sondland, Ambassador Volker, and Secretary Perry were working together to advance U.S. policy interests that were in support of what had been agreed to.

But I didn't really learn, like I said, until the July 10th -- actually, it may have been at a slightly earlier point. I recall a meeting in which Ambassador Bolton facilitated a meeting between Ambassador Volker and Ambassador Bolton in the June timeframe, and there may have been some discussion about this external channel. But --

Mr. Castor. Okay.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. -- I, frankly, didn't become aware of these particular U.S. Government officials being involved in this alternate track until July 10th.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

And I think we had some discussion that, you know, Mr. Giuliani was promoting a negative narrative about the Ukraine, and certain officials were trying to help the President understand that, with Zelensky, it was a new day and Ukraine's going to be different. Is that your understanding?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct. That is exactly what was being reported by the Intelligence Community, by the policy channels within the NSC, and the concerted voices of the various people that have actually met with him, including foreign officials.

Mr. Castor. And to the extent that you're aware of what Ambassador Sondland's goals were here and Ambassador Volker's goals were here, I mean, do you think they were just trying to do the best they could and try to advocate in the best interests of the United States?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is what I believed, and that is what I still believe, frankly.

Mr. Castor. And so, to the extent Mr. Giuliani may have had differing views, they were trying to help him understand that it was time to change those views?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I think they were trying to bring him into the tent and have him, kind of, support the direction that we had settled on.

Mr. Castor. And you never conferred with Mr. Giuliani?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No.

Mr. Castor. You never had any meetings, phone calls, or anything of that sort?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I did not.

Mr. Castor. And did you have any --

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I only know him as New York's finest mayor.

Mr. Castor. America's mayor.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. America's mayor.

Mr. Castor. And did you have any discussions, communications during this relevant time period with the President?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I have never had any contact with the President of the United States.

Mr. Castor. Okay.

My time has expired, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

The Chairman. I thank the gentleman.

We are going to now move to the 5-minute member rounds.

Are you good to go forward, or do you need a break?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I think we'll elect to take a short break.

The Chairman. Okay. Let's try to take a 5- or 10-minute break, and we will resume with the 5-minute rounds.

If I could ask the audience and members to please allow the witnesses to leave the room first.

[Recess.]

The Chairman. The committee will come back to order.

We'll now begin a period of 5-minute questions from the members. I recognize myself for 5 minutes.

I wanted to ask you both about some of the questions you were asked by my colleagues in the minority.

First, if I could ask you, Ms. Williams and Colonel Vindman, you were asked a series of questions by the ranking member at the outset, "Were you aware of the fact that," and then there was a recitation of information about Burisma, Zlochevsky, the Bidens. Is it fair to say you have no firsthand knowledge of any of the matters that were asked in those questions?

Ms. Williams. That's correct.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

The Chairman. Ms. Williams, you were also asked a series of questions about the Vice President's schedule and whether he could've made the inauguration or was the President traveling or the trip to Canada.

Let's be clear about something. The President -- you were instructed that the President had told the Vice President not to go before you even knew the date of the inauguration. Is that correct?

Ms. Williams. Yes, that's correct.

The Chairman. So, at the time that he was told not to go, there was no calculation about where he might be or where the President might be, because the date hadn't even been set yet. Is that right?

Ms. Williams. That's right. The date had not been set, so we were weighing a number of different scenarios of when the inauguration might fall.

The Chairman. Now, I think you said that originally the President had told him to go, and then you received the instruction that the President no longer wanted him to go.

Were you aware, in the interim between the President telling him to go and the President telling him not to go, that Rudy Giuliani had to abort a trip that he was going to make to Ukraine?

Ms. Williams. I had seen that in the press, yes.

The Chairman. And had you seen in the press that Rudy Giuliani blamed people around Zelensky for having to cancel the trip?

Ms. Williams. For having to cancel his trip?

The Chairman. Yes.

Ms. Williams. I'd read that in the press reporting, yes.

The Chairman. And did you read in the press reporting also that Giuliani wanted to go to Ukraine to, as he put it, not meddle in an election but meddle in investigations?

Ms. Williams. I did read that, yes.

The Chairman. And that occurred prior to the President canceling the Vice President's trip to the inauguration?

Ms. Williams. It did. I believe it was around May 10th or so.

The Chairman. Colonel Vindman, you were asked by the minority counsel about the President's words in the July 25th call and whether the President's words were ambiguous.

Was there any ambiguity about the President's use of the word "Biden"?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. There was not.

The Chairman. It was pretty clear that the President wanted Zelensky to commit to investigating the Bidens, was it not?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

The Chairman. That is one of the favors that you thought should be properly characterized as a demand?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

The Chairman. And there's no ambiguity about that?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. In my mind, there was not.

The Chairman. It's also true, is it not, that these two investigations that the

President asked Zelensky for into 2016 and into the Bidens were precisely the two investigations that Rudy Giuliani was calling for publicly, were they not?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

The Chairman. So, when people suggest, well, maybe Rudy Giuliani was acting on his own and maybe he was a freelancer or whatever, the President referred to exactly the same two investigations Rudy Giuliani was out pushing on his behalf. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

The Chairman. Now, Ms. Williams, you were asked about the meeting the Vice President had with Zelensky in September in which Ukrainians brought up their concern about the hold on the security assistance. Is that right?

Ms. Williams. That's right.

The Chairman. And you were asked about whether, in that meeting between the Vice President and Zelensky, the Bidens or Burisma came up, and I think you said they did not, correct?

Ms. Williams. That's correct. They did not come up.

The Chairman. Now, that bilateral meeting was a large meeting that involved two or three dozen people, wasn't it?

Ms. Williams. It was.

The Chairman. So, in the context of this meeting with two or three dozen people, the Vice President didn't bring up those investigations, correct?

Ms. Williams. No, he did not bring up those investigations. He's never brought up those investigations.

The Chairman. Were you aware that immediately -- and I mean immediately -- after that meeting broke up, Ambassador Sondland has said that he went

over to Mr. Yermak, one of the top advisors to Zelensky, and told Yermak that if they wanted the military aid they were going to have to do these investigations or words to that effect?

Ms. Williams. I was not aware at the time of any meetings, side meetings, that Ambassador Sondland had following the Vice President's meeting with President Zelensky. I've only learned that through Ambassador Sondland's testimony.

The Chairman. So, at the big public meeting, it didn't come up, and you can't speak to the private meeting that was held immediately thereafter.

Ms. Williams. Correct. The Vice President moved on with his schedule immediately after his meeting with President Zelensky.

The Chairman. Now, Colonel Vindman, I want to go back to that July 10th meeting or meetings, the one with Ambassador Bolton and then the one in the Ward Room that followed quickly on its heels.

Were you aware that Ambassador Bolton instructed your superior, Dr. Hill, to go talk to the lawyers after that meeting?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I learned shortly after she was finished talking to Ambassador Bolton and after we wrapped up with the Ward Room that she did have a meeting with him and that that's what was expressed.

The Chairman. Now, you thought you should go talk to the lawyers on your own, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is my recollection, yes.

The Chairman. But Bolton also thought that Dr. Hill should go talk to the lawyers because of his concern over this drug deal that Sondland and Mulvaney were cooking up. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is my understanding.

The Chairman. And, in fact, this drug deal, as Bolton called it, involved this conditioning of the White House meeting on these investigations that Sondland brought up. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is my understanding.

The Chairman. And, in fact, the same conditioning or the same issue of wanting these political investigations and tying it to the White House meeting, this came up in the July 25th call, did it not, when the President asked for these investigations?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

The Chairman. So the very same issue that Bolton said to Hill, "Go talk to the lawyers," the very same issue that prompted you to go talk to the lawyers, ends up coming up in that call with the President. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

The Chairman. And it was that conversation that, once again, led you back to the lawyers' office?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

The Chairman. I now yield to the ranking member.

Mr. Nunes. A parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Chairman. You took 7 minutes, so I assume you're going to give us equal time?

The Chairman. Yes, Mr. Nunes.

Mr. Nunes. I thank the gentleman.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, before I turn to Mr. Jordan, I asked Ms. Williams about this, about if she had ever accessed without authorization a fellow employee's computer system. She answered "no" to the question.

Have you ever accessed anyone's computer system at the NSC without authorization?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Without their knowledge? No.

Mr. Nunes. Knowledge or authorization?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm sorry?

Mr. Nunes. Knowledge or authorization? You never accessed someone's computer without their knowledge or authorization?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Nunes. Mr. Jordan.

Mr. Jordan. I thank the ranking member.

Colonel, I want to thank you for your service and sacrifice to our great country.

This afternoon, your former boss, Mr. Morrison, is going to be sitting right where you're sitting and he's going to testify. And I want to give you a chance -- I think we're bringing you a copy. I want to give you a chance to respond to some of the things Mr. Morrison said in his deposition.

Page 82 of the transcript from Mr. Morrison, Mr. Morrison said this: "I had concerns about Lieutenant Colonel Vindman's judgment. Among the discussions I had with Dr. Hill in the transition was our team, its strengths, its weaknesses, and Fiona and others had raised concerns about Alex's judgment."

When Mr. Morrison was asked by Mr. Castor, "Did anyone ever bring concerns to you that they believed Colonel Vindman may have leaked something?", Mr. Morrison replied, "Yes."

So your boss had concerns about your judgment. Your former boss, Dr. Hill, had concerns about your judgment. Your colleagues had concerns about your judgment. And your colleagues felt that there were times when you leaked information.

Any idea why they have those impressions, Colonel Vindman?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, Representative Jordan. I guess I'll start by

reading Dr. Hill's own words, as she attested to in my last evaluation that was dated middle of July, right before she left.

"Alex is a top 1 percent military officer and the best Army officer I have worked with in my 15 years of government service. He is brilliant, unflappable, and exercises excellent judgment."

Mr. Jordan. So --

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. "He was" -- I'm sorry.

Mr. Jordan. Okay. I'm sorry.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. -- "exemplary during numerous visits" -- so forth and so on, but I think you get the idea.

Mr. Morrison -- yeah, the date of that was -- let's see. I'm sorry. July 13th.

So, Mr. Jordan, I would say that I can't say what Mr. Morrison -- why Mr. Morrison questioned my judgment. We had only recently started working together. He wasn't there very long, and we were just trying to figure out our relationship. Maybe it was a different culture, military culture versus --

Mr. Jordan. And, Colonel, you never leaked information?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I never did, never would. That is preposterous, that I would do that.

Mr. Jordan. Okay. Colonel, it's interesting. We deposed a lot of people in the bunker in the basement of the Capitol over the last several weeks, but, of all those depositions, only three of the individuals we deposed were actually on the now-somewhat-famous July 25th phone call between President Trump and President Zelensky. There was you; there was the individual sitting beside you, Ms. Williams; and then there, of course, was your boss, Mr. Morrison, who I just read from his deposition.

When we asked Ms. Williams who she spoke to after the call about the call, she

was willing to answer our questions, and Chairman Schiff allowed her to answer our questions.

When we asked Mr. Morrison who he spoke to after the call about the call, he was willing to answer our question, and Mr. Schiff allowed -- Chairman Schiff allowed him to answer our question.

But when we asked you, you first told us three individuals at the NSC, your brother and the two lawyers. And then you said there was a group of other people you communicated with, but you would only give us one individual in that group, Secretary Kent. And the chairman would only allow you to give us that name. When we asked you who else you communicated with, you would not tell us.

So I want to know, first, how many other people are in that group of people you communicated with outside the four individuals I just named?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. So, Mr. Jordan, on a call readout, certainly after the first call, there were probably half a dozen or more people I read out. Those are people with the proper clearance and the need to know.

In this case, because of the sensitivity of the call and Mr. Eisenberg told me not to speak to anybody else, I only read out, outside of the NSC, two individuals.

Mr. Jordan. Two individuals.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. DAS Kent and one other person.

Mr. Jordan. And you're not willing to tell us who that other individual is?

Mr. Swalwell. Mr. Chairman, point of order.

Mr. Volkov. Mr. Chairman --

Mr. Swalwell. Mr. Chairman, point of order.

The Chairman. The gentleman will suspend.

Counsel?

Mr. Volkov. Mr. Chairman, I would ask you to enforce the rule with regard to the disclosure with regard to the intelligence --

The Chairman. Thank you, Counsel.

You know, as I indicated before, this committee will not be used to out the whistleblower. That same necessity of protecting the whistleblower --

Mr. Jordan. Mr. Chairman, can you please stop the time so I don't lose the time?

The Chairman. -- will persist.

You are recognized again, Mr. Jordan.

Mr. Jordan. Mr. Chairman, I don't see how this is outing the whistleblower. The witness has testified in his deposition that he doesn't know who the whistleblower is. You have said -- even though no one believes you -- you have said you don't know who the whistleblower is.

So how is this outing the whistleblower, to find out who this individual is?

The Chairman. Mr. Jordan, this is your time for questioning. You can use it any way you like, but your question should be addressed to the witness, and your question should not be addressed to trying to out the whistleblower.

Mr. Jordan. Well, okay. Okay.

Colonel Vindman, there's another thing Mr. Morrison told us in his deposition. He said he was not concerned about the call itself. He said there was nothing illegal or improper on the call. But he was concerned about the call leaking, the contents of the call leaking.

Mr. Volkov. Excuse me --

Mr. Jordan. He said this. He was concerned how it would play out in Washington's polarized environment, how the contents would be used in Washington's political process.

Mr. Volkov. Excuse me --

Mr. Jordan. Mr. Morrison was right.

Mr. Volkov. Excuse me, Mr. Jordan. Could I get a page?

Mr. Jordan. Mr. Morrison was right. The call leaks. The whistleblower goes to Chairman Schiff's staff. Then he runs off to the lawyer, the same lawyer who said in January of 2017 the coup has started against President Trump.

The one thing the Democrats didn't -- the one thing they didn't count on -- one thing they didn't count on was the President releasing the call transcript and letting us all see what he said. They didn't count on that.

The transcript shows no linkage. The two individuals on the call have both said no pressure, no pushing, no linkage of the security assistance dollars to an investigation.

Ms. Williams, after the call on the 25th, we know that Colonel Vindman talked to several people. After the call on the 25th, how many people did you talk to about the call?

Ms. Williams. I did not speak to anybody about the call.

Mr. Jordan. You didn't speak to anybody.

Ms. Williams. No.

Mr. Jordan. I yield back.

The Chairman. Mr. Himes.

Mr. Himes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter the lieutenant colonel's performance review into the record.

The Chairman. May I inquire of Colonel Vindman whether you would like us to do that? If you would, we're happy to. If you would prefer it not be in the record, I'd leave that to you.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I guess with redactions. It has PII in it that should be protected. And maybe the only elements that are relevant are the actual narrative, Chairman.

The Chairman. Did you read the relevant portions?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I mean, that was the short version. There were some other paragraphs in there, but --

Mr. Himes. Mr. Chairman, I'll withdraw my request.

The Chairman. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Himes. Thank you both for your testimony.

Ms. Williams, you joined the Foreign Service in 2006, correct?

Ms. Williams. Correct.

Mr. Himes. Prior to becoming a nonpartisan career official, you worked as a field representative for the Bush-Cheney campaign in 2004, and then you held a political appointment in the Department of Homeland Security under Secretary Chertoff. Is that correct?

Ms. Williams. That's correct, sir.

Mr. Himes. And, now, as a Foreign Service officer, you have served three Presidents, two Republicans and one Democrat, in a variety of roles, correct?

Ms. Williams. Yes, sir.

Mr. Himes. And in your current position, you're detailed from State to advise the Vice President on foreign policy towards Europe and Russia, correct?

Ms. Williams. That's right.

Mr. Himes. Ms. Williams, on Sunday, the President personally targeted you in a tweet. This is after he targeted Ambassador Yovanovitch during her hearing testimony. I'd like to show and read you the tweet.

It reads, "Tell Jennifer Williams, whoever that is, to read BOTH transcripts of the presidential calls, & see the just released statement from Ukraine. Then she should meet with the other Never Trumpers, who I don't know & mostly never even heard of, & work out a better presidential attack!"

Ms. Williams, are you engaged in a Presidential attack?

Ms. Williams. No, sir.

Mr. Himes. Ms. Williams, are you a Never Trumper?

Ms. Williams. I'm not sure I know an official definition of a Never Trumper, but --

Mr. Himes. Would you describe yourself that way?

Ms. Williams. I would not, no.

Mr. Himes. Did that make -- did that tweet make an impression on you when you read it?

Ms. Williams. It certainly surprised me. I was not expecting to be called out by name.

Mr. Himes. It surprised me too. And it looks an awful lot like witness intimidation and tampering and an effect -- an effort to try to get you to perhaps shape your testimony today.

Lieutenant Colonel, you previously testified that you've dedicated your entire professional life to the United States of America. Colonel, above your left breast, you are wearing a device which is a Springfield musket on a blue field. What is that device?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. It's a Combat Infantryman's Badge.

Mr. Himes. How do you get the Combat Infantryman's Badge?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. You have to be serving in a brigade and below a tactical unit -- that means a fighting unit, frontline unit -- in combat.

Mr. Himes. Under fire.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Himes. You're also wearing a Purple Heart. Can you tell us in 20 or 30 seconds why you're wearing a Purple Heart?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. In 2014, in the ramp-up to probably the largest urban operations -- urban operation in decades, outside of Fallujah, we were conducting a reconnaissance patrol in conjunction with the Marines, and my vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device that penetrated the armor.

Mr. Himes. Were you injured?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I was.

Mr. Himes. The day after you appeared for your deposition, Lieutenant Colonel, President Trump called you a Never Trumper. Colonel Vindman, would you call yourself a Never Trumper?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Representative, I'd call myself "never partisan."

Mr. Himes. Thank you.

Colonel Vindman, in your military career, you've served under four Presidents, two Democrats and two Republicans. Have you ever wavered from the oath you took to support and defend the Constitution?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Never.

Mr. Himes. Do you have any political motivations for your appearance here today?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. None.

Mr. Himes. Colonel Vindman, multiple right-wing conspiracy theorists, including Rudy Giuliani, have accused you of harboring loyalty towards Ukraine. They make these accusations based only on the fact that your family, like many American families, immigrated to the United States. They've accused you of espionage and dual loyalties.

We've seen that in this room this morning. The three minutes that were spent asking you about the offer made to make you the Minister of Defense, that may have come cloaked in a Brooks Brother suit and in parliamentary language, but that was designed exclusively to give the right-wing media an opening to question your loyalties. And I want people to understand what that was all about.

It's the kind of attack -- it's the kind of thing you say when you're defending the indefensible. It's what you say when it's not enough to attack the media, the way the ranking member gave over his opening statement, or to attack the Democrats, but it's what you stoop to when the indefensibility of your case requires that you attack a man who is wearing a Springfield rifle on a field of blue above a Purple Heart.

I, sir, thank you for your service and yield back the balance of my time.

The Chairman. Mr. Conaway.

Mr. Conaway. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I yield my 5 minutes to Mr. Ratcliffe.

Mr. Ratcliffe. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

In a press conference last Thursday, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi said that President Trump committed the impeachable offense of bribery, evidenced in his July 25th call transcript with President Zelensky.

In concert with that, multiple Democratic members of this committee gave TV and radio interviews over this past week discussing how the President's conduct supported his impeachment for committing bribery, all of which struck me as very odd, because for the longest time this was all about quid pro quo, according to the whistleblower complaint.

But after witness after witness began saying there was no quid pro quo or even that quid pro quo was not even possible, we saw a shift from the Democrats. They briefly started to refer to the President's conduct on the July 25th call as extortion, and

now it shifted again last week to bribery.

Ms. Williams, you used the word "unusual" to describe the President's call on July 25th.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, you used the word "inappropriate" and "improper."

Now, I've word-searched each of your transcripts, and the word "bribery" or "bribe" doesn't appear anywhere in that.

Ms. Williams, you've never used the word "bribery" or "bribe" to explain President Trump's conduct, correct?

Ms. Williams. No, sir.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Colonel Vindman, you haven't either?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Ratcliffe. The problem is, in an impeachment inquiry that the Speaker of the House says is all about bribery, where bribery is the impeachable offense, no witness has used the word "bribery" to describe President Trump's conduct. None of them.

These aren't all of the deposition transcripts; these are just the 10 that have been released. Six weeks of witness interviews in this impeachment inquiry, hundreds of hours of testimony, thousands of questions asked, thousands of answers given. The number of times that witnesses have been asked any question about whether or not President Trump's conduct constituted bribery, before Ambassador Yovanovitch was asked by my colleague Congressman Stewart last Thursday, is zero.

The number of times witnesses have used the word "bribery" or "bribe" to describe President Trump's conduct in the last 6 weeks of this inquiry is zero. In fact, in these 3,500 pages of sworn deposition testimony in just these 10 transcripts released thus far, the word "bribery" appears in these 3,500 pages exactly 1 time. And, ironically, it appears not in a description of President Trump's alleged conduct; it appears in a

description of Vice President Biden's alleged conduct.

This is important, because as early as next week my Democratic colleagues are going to say, we need to vote on the evidence from this impeachment inquiry on the impeachment of the President for bribery, and they're going to send a report to the Judiciary Committee, and because there's more Democrats than Republicans, it's going to likely pass. And when that happens, the American people need to be clear that when the Democrats -- what they are describing as bribery, not a single witness is describing as bribery.

We've heard many times in the course of this proceeding that the facts of the President are not in dispute. But the American people are asking, if the facts are the same, why do the crimes that the President is being accused of keep changing? Why do we go from quid pro quo to extortion, now to bribery?

Chairman Nunes told you the answer. The answer is: polling. The Washington Times asked Americans, what would be the most damning accusation? And it didn't come back "quid pro quo," it didn't come back "extortion," it came back "bribery," so this case is all about bribery.

Look, it's bad enough that the Democrats have forbidden White House lawyers from participating in this proceeding. It's hard enough to defend yourself without your lawyers present. But what's even worse is trying to defend yourself against an accusation that keeps changing in the middle of the proceeding.

If Democrats accuse the President of a high crime or impeachable offense, he at least ought to know which one it is. And when Speaker Pelosi says this is all about bribery, she's promised us evidence of bribery that would be compelling and overwhelming, and, instead, it's invisible.

I yield back.

The Chairman. Ms. Sewell.

Ms. Sewell. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to join everyone in thanking both of our witnesses for your service.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, as part of your policy portfolio in the White House, you maintain a relationship with Ukrainian officials, do you not?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Ms. Sewell. You explained earlier in your testimony that your job within the White House was to coordinate United States and Ukraine policy. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. It is to coordinate United States policy vis-à-vis Ukraine, correct.

Ms. Sewell. You testified in the spring of this year that these officials, these Ukrainian officials, began asking you, quote, "advice on how to respond to Mr. Giuliani's advances," end quote. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Ms. Sewell. What do you understand they meant by "Mr. Giuliani's advances"?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I understood that to mean both his public commentary, so publicly calling for investigations into 2016, Burisma, and Hunter Biden, as well as his direct overtures to the Government of Ukraine, directly and through proxies. That's what I understood.

Ms. Sewell. And, as you understand it, under whose authority do you think Mr. Giuliani was acting under?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Congresswoman, I don't know.

Ms. Sewell. Did the Ukrainian officials you spoke to understand that Mr. Giuliani was telling them to investigate Vice President Biden's son and debunk the 2016 conspiracy theories?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm sorry. Can you say that again, ma'am?

Ms. Sewell. Do you think that the Ukrainians officials that you spoke to understood the underlying meaning of Mr. Giuliani's advances to be both investigating the Bidens as well as debunking the 2016 conspiracy theories?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, I think -- to be clear, I think you're referring to debunking that it was Russian interference --

Ms. Sewell. Exactly. Now, was this --

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. -- and somehow implicating themselves, that it was Ukrainian interference. I'm not sure.

Ms. Sewell. Exactly.

Now, was this official U.S. foreign policy, to push for investigation into the Bidens?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. It was not part of any process that I participated in.

Ms. Sewell. Now, Ms. Williams, do you agree that pressing these two investigations was inconsistent with official U.S. Ukraine policy?

Ms. Williams. Obviously, anticorruption reforms is a big part of our policy --

Ms. Sewell. I --

Ms. Williams. I understand. I was not in a position to determine whether these particular investigations were appropriate.

Ms. Sewell. That's fair.

Colonel, is it true that President Trump directed the Ukrainian President on the call on July 25th to work with Mr. Giuliani on these investigations?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Ms. Sewell. In fact, Mr. Giuliani has made no secret of the fact that he is acting on behalf of President Trump. As Mr. Giuliani told The New York Times -- and I'm going

to put this on the screen -- he told them, quote, "My only client is the President of the United States. He's the one I have the obligation to report to and to tell him what happens."

He added that the investigations would be, quote, "very, very helpful to my client and may turn out to be helpful to my government," end quote.

Colonel, is it fair to say that the Ukrainian officials that you are on a daily basis -- well, you are in contact with, given your portfolio, were concerned about Mr. Giuliani's advances?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, they were.

Ms. Sewell. In your assessment, did they understand the political nature of the requests being asked of them?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I believe they did.

Ms. Sewell. Did they understand that it was affecting U.S. domestic policy?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm not sure what they, frankly, understood about U.S. --

Ms. Sewell. And you --

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I think they understood the implications, yes.

Ms. Sewell. Now, you testified earlier that you warned the Ukrainians not to get involved in U.S. domestic policy. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I counseled them, yes.

Ms. Sewell. Counseled them. In fact, you testified that you felt like it was important, that you were espousing not just what you thought but tradition and policy of the United States to say that.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. It is what I knew for a fact to be U.S. policy.

Ms. Sewell. Now, why do you think it's important for foreign governments not to

get involved in political affairs of a nation like the United States?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Congresswoman, the first thought that comes to mind is Russian interference in 2016, the impact that had on internal politics and the consequences it had for Russia itself.

Ms. Sewell. Exactly.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. This administration enforced sanctions, heavy sanctions, against Russia for their interference. And that would not be in U.S. policy to --

Ms. Sewell. And so, Colonel -- I'm running out of time.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I understand, ma'am.

Ms. Sewell. Is it normal for a private citizen, a non-U.S. Government official, to get involved in foreign policy and foreign affairs, like Mr. Giuliani?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I don't know if I have the experience to say that, but it certainly wasn't helpful, and it didn't help advance U.S. national security interests.

Ms. Sewell. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The Chairman. Mr. Turner.

Mr. Turner. Ms. Williams, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, I want to thank you also for your service. Your knowledge and expertise is incredibly important as we look to formulating policy with both our allies and to try to counter those who are not our allies.

I think we're all very concerned about our European policy and how it can thwart Russian aggression.

Ms. Williams, you are responsible -- as you said, as part of your portfolio you advise the Vice President about Ukraine, correct?

Ms. Williams. Correct.

Mr. Turner. Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, you said that you are the principal -- in

your opening, you say you are the principal advisor to the President on Ukraine and you coordinate U.S. Ukraine policy, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Congressman, in this statement I issued this morning, I probably eased that back. I took that off my job description that I have on my eval. But I certainly spent much more time advising the Ambassador than I did the President.

Mr. Turner. But your statement, as you submitted it and read it today, says, "At the NSC, I am the principal advisor to the National Security Advisor and the President on Ukraine," correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is not what I read into the transcript. That might have been what I had in there yesterday when I was drafting it, but I chose to ease back on that language, even though it was in my evaluation, just because I didn't want to overstate my role.

Mr. Turner. But you wrote what I just read.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. But, Congressman, what I'm saying is, what I read into the record this morning didn't say that.

Mr. Turner. Okay. Noted.

Because you know Ukraine, you know that we work through our allies and our multilateral relations, and you know that the Ukraine is an aspiring member of the EU and NATO.

Right, Ms. Williams?

Ms. Williams. Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Turner. Lieutenant Colonel Vindman?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, correct.

Mr. Turner. And you know, probably, that the EU and NATO both have offices in

the Ukraine and that we try to advance our policy with the EU and NATO. And you would agree that our Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison and Ambassador Sondland would be responsible for advancing our policy interests with Ukraine at the EU and at NATO.

Right, Ms. Williams?

Ms. Williams. I would say that, certainly, in terms of the specific relationship between NATO and Ukraine, that would fall to Ambassador Hutchison, and between the EU and Ukraine to Ambassador Sondland. But, obviously, we have an Ambassador in Ukraine as well.

Mr. Turner. Right.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, you would agree?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I agree with Ms. Williams.

Mr. Turner. Great.

Now, Lieutenant Colonel, you said in your written statement that Mayor Rudolph Giuliani promoted false information that undermined the United States Ukraine policy. Have you ever met Giuliani?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Just to be, again, accurate, I said "false narrative," just because that's what I said in the record this morning.

Mr. Turner. Okay.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. But I have not met him.

Mr. Turner. And so you've never had a conversation with him about Ukraine or been in a meeting with him where he has spoken to others about Ukraine?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No. Just what I saw him -- you know, his comments on TV and --

Mr. Turner. So news reports.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. -- news. Yes.

Mr. Turner. And, similarly, you've never met the President of the United States, right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Turner. So you've never advised the President of the United States on Ukraine.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I advised him indirectly. I made all his preparations for the calls and --

Mr. Turner. But you've never spoken to the President and told him advice on Ukraine.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Turner. So, in your written statement, you said, "In May, I attended the inauguration of President Zelensky as part of the Presidential delegation led by Secretary Perry. Following the visit, the members of the delegation provided President Trump a debriefing."

Well, that's not really accurate, right? Because the members didn't, because you were a member, but you weren't in that meeting, were you?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Turner. Okay. So we'll just have a note there that that meeting occurred without you.

Now, you do know that this impeachment inquiry is about the President of the United States, don't you, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I do, Representative.

Mr. Turner. Excellent.

Now, you've said that you're responsible for coordinating U.S. Ukrainian policy.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Turner. Does the Secretary of State Pompeo report to you?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He does not.

Mr. Turner. Ambassador Volker?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He does not. We coordinate.

Mr. Turner. Ambassador of Ukraine, EU, NATO, Assistant Secretary for Europe, anyone at DOD report to you with respect to your responsibilities of coordinating U.S. policy with Ukraine?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Congressman, at my level, I convene what's called a Sub-Policy Coordinating Committee. That's Deputy Assistant Secretary. I coordinate with -- I chair those meetings. And --

Mr. Turner. Does anybody need your approval, in your role on Ukraine policy, to formulate Ukraine policy? Do they seek your approval?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. According to the NSPM-4, the policy signed by the President --

Mr. Turner. So he gets to do it.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. -- policy should be coordinated by the NSC.

Mr. Turner. He gets to do it.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct. We help advise him.

Mr. Turner. Ms. Williams, do you have any information that any person who has testified as part of this impeachment inquiry, either in secret or in public, has either perjured themselves or lied to this committee?

Ms. Williams. I have not read the other testimonies, and I --

Mr. Turner. So you do not -- do you have any evidence, though, that they have perjured themselves or lied?

Ms. Williams. No, because I have not read them.

Mr. Turner. Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, do you have any evidence that anyone who has testified before this committee in the impeachment inquiry has perjured themselves or lied to this committee?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Not that I'm aware of.

Mr. Turner. Thank you.

I yield back.

The Chairman. Mr. Carson.

Mr. Carson. Thank you, Chairman Schiff.

I yield to the chairman.

The Chairman. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I wanted to just make one point clear for folks that are watching the hearing today. Bribery does involve a quid pro quo. Bribery involves the conditioning of an official act for something of value. An official act may be a White House meeting. An official act may be \$400 million in military aid. And something of value to a President might include investigations of their political rival.

The reason we don't ask witnesses that are fact witnesses to make the judgment about whether a crime of bribery has been committed or whether, more significantly, what the Founders had in mind when they itemized bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanors is, you're fact witnesses. It will be our job to decide whether the impeachable act of bribery has occurred. That's why we don't ask you those questions. For one thing, you're also not aware of all the other facts that have been educed during the investigation.

With that, I yield back to Mr. Carson.

Mr. Carson. Thank you, Chairman.

Thank you both for your service.

Colonel Vindman, you were in a July 10th White House meeting in Ambassador Bolton's office. Isn't that right, sir?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm sorry. Could you say that again?

Mr. Carson. You were in a July 10th White House meeting with Ambassador Bolton?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Carson. In that meeting, the Ukrainians asked about when they would get their Oval Office meeting, and Ambassador Sondland replied that they need to, quote, "speak about Ukraine delivering specific investigations in order to secure a meeting with the President," end quote.

Is that correct, sir?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Carson. Colonel Vindman, did you later learn why Ambassador Bolton cut the meeting short?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I did.

Mr. Carson. After Ambassador Bolton ended that meeting, sir, some of the group then attended a follow-on meeting in a different room in the White House called the Ward Room. Is that correct, sir?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Carson. And Ambassador Sondland was there with the senior Ukrainian officials. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Carson. Did NSC lawyers tell you to come directly to them, sir, if you had any other concerns after July 10th?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. They said that -- I believe the words were

something to the effect of, "If you have any other concerns, feel free to come back."

Mr. Carson. In this follow-on meeting, sir, Ambassador Sondland left, in your words, "no ambiguity" about what specific investigations he was requesting. Ambassador Sondland made clear that he was requesting an investigation of Vice President Joe Biden's son.

Isn't that correct, sir?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Carson. And he stated that he was asking these requests in coordination with Chief of Staff -- White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney, correct, sir?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is what I heard him say.

Mr. Carson. Colonel, in your career, had you ever before witnessed an American official request that a foreign government investigate a U.S. citizen who was related to the President's political opponent?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I have not.

Mr. Carson. And, Colonel, you immediately raised concerns about this, correct, sir?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Carson. What exactly happened?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. After I reported it to the -- I'm sorry. Could you say that again? I apologize.

Mr. Carson. You raised concerns about this, correct, sir?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Carson. What happened?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. To Ambassador Sondland, if I understood you correctly, I stated that it was inappropriate and had nothing to do with national security

policy.

Mr. Carson. Did you also raise concern that day with White House lawyers?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I did.

Mr. Carson. What did you tell them?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I reported the same thing that -- I reported the content of the conversation with Ambassador Sondland. At that point, I wasn't aware that Dr. Hill had had a conversation with Ambassador Bolton, so I just relayed what I had -- what I experienced to the attorney, lead legal counsel.

Mr. Carson. As we are now aware, sir, Ambassador Bolton expressed his concerns and instructed Dr. Fiona Hill, your supervisor, to also meet with the same White House lawyers to tell them what happened.

Colonel Vindman, I agree that there is no question that Ambassador Sondland was proposing a transaction to Ukrainian officials, trading White House meetings for specific investigations, with the full awareness of the President's Chief of Staff, White House attorneys, and his National Security Advisor. In my view, sir, that is appalling.

Thank you both for your service.

I yield back to the chairman.

The Chairman. I thank the gentleman.

I would just point out, as well, that when the matter does move to the Judiciary Committee -- and no decision has been made about the ultimate resolution -- the White House, through its counsel, will have the opportunity to make a submission to the Judiciary Committee.

I now turn to Dr. Wenstrup.

Dr. Wenstrup. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, thank you very much for being here.

As an Army colonel who served a year in Iraq, I appreciate your service and the sacrifice that you made during that time, and I know the environment, and I understand and appreciate the importance of chain of command. In your deposition, you emphasize the importance of chain of command.

You were a direct report to Dr. Fiona Hill and then Mr. Tim Morrison, and they were your seniors, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Dr. Wenstrup. When you had concerns about the 7/25 call between the two Presidents, you didn't go to Mr. Morrison about that, did you?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I immediately went to John Eisenberg, the lead legal counsel.

Dr. Wenstrup. So that doesn't seem like chain of command.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That's not --

Dr. Wenstrup. So, in the deposition with Mr. Morrison --

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm sorry. You said --

Dr. Wenstrup. -- page 58 to 60 --

Mr. Volkov. Could he answer the question, please?

The Chairman. Excuse me. Please allow Colonel Vindman to answer.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. So I reported it to John Eisenberg. I attempted to report it to Mr. Morrison. I --

Dr. Wenstrup. Okay. Thank you.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He didn't avail himself. And, at that point, I was told not to speak to anybody else by --

Dr. Wenstrup. Well, he did avail himself, and I'll get into that.

The Chairman. Please allow the witness to finish.

Colonel, are you finished with your answer?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes. Thank you.

Dr. Wenstrup. In the Morrison deposition, on page 58 to 60, the question was: Do you know if anyone else on the call went to Eisenberg to express concerns? And the answer was: I learned, based on today's proceedings, based on open-source reporting, which I have no firsthand knowledge, that other personnel did raise concerns.

Question: Who?

Based on open source, without firsthand knowledge, Alex Vindman on my -- Alex Vindman on my staff.

The question then: And he reports to you, correct?

Answer: He does. Lieutenant Colonel Vindman's direct report was Mr. Morrison, and it didn't happen.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, in your deposition, page 96, the question was: Okay. After the call on 7/25, did you have any discussions with Mr. Morrison about your concerns?

Answer: After the call, I -- well, per the -- per the exercise in the chain of command and expressing -- I immediately went to the senior NSC legal counsel and shared those concerns.

That would be Mr. Eisenberg, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm sorry. My lawyer was talking. Could you say that again, please, Doctor?

Dr. Wenstrup. You went to Mr. Eisenberg. You've already said that, so we can go on.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Dr. Wenstrup. And you were not a JAG officer, you're not a lawyer. And on

page 153 of your testimony, deposition, in reference to that meeting with Mr. Eisenberg, you said, "I was not making a legal judgment. All I was doing is sharing my concerns with my chain of command." Yet we've established that your direct report is to Mr. Morrison.

So let's establish your role and your title. In your deposition, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, page 200, 201, in a colloquy with Mr. Stewart, you said: I would say, first of all, I'm the director for Ukraine. I'm responsible for Ukraine. I'm the most knowledgeable. And I'm -- for the National Security Council and the White House.

Are you the only one of the entire universe of our government or otherwise that can advise the President on Ukraine? Couldn't someone like Ms. Williams also advise on Ukraine? It's in her portfolio.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That's not typically what would happen. It would be -- frankly, it would be Ambassador Bolton's --

Dr. Wenstrup. So other people can advise on Ukraine besides you.

Going on in your testimony, you said: I understand all the nuances, the context, and so forth surrounding these issues. I, on my judgment, went -- I expressed concerns within the chain of command, which I think, to me, as a military officer, is completely appropriate, and I exercised that chain of command.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, in your deposition, page 259, you said: I forwarded my concerns through the chain of command, and the seniors then decide the action to take.

Mr. Morrison's your senior. He didn't know about it. How can he decide an action to take? But that's what you said.

In Mr. Morrison's deposition, page 60, the question is: At what point did you learn that Lieutenant Colonel Vindman went to Eisenberg? About the 25th phone call?

He said, yes. In the course of reviewing for this proceeding, reviewing the open record.

So the next question: So Eisenberg never came to you and relayed to you the conversation? He said: No. He said, Ellis never did either? Not to the best of my recollection.

So Mr. Morrison was skipped in your chain of command about your other concerns.

So Mr. Morrison said he's the final clearing authority. He said he saw your edits. Do you remember if all of the edits were incorporated? And he said, "Yes, I accepted all of them." That's on page 61, 62. So he believes all your edits were accepted.

Let me ask you, in your edits, did you insist that the word "demand" be put into the transcription between the conversation of the two Presidents?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I did not.

Dr. Wenstrup. But you did say that in your opening statement today.

Thank you, and I yield back.

The Chairman. Ms. Speier.

Ms. Speier. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you both for your testimony and your service.

Colonel Vindman, wasn't it the case that Mr. Eisenberg, the attorney, had said to you after the July 5th meeting that you should come to him if you have any other concerns?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. After the July 10th meeting, yes, ma'am, that is correct.

Ms. Speier. And it is not going outside the chain of command to speak to a lawyer within the institution. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No. He is the senior between the two, certainly.

Ms. Speier. All right.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been complaining about other witnesses having only secondhand information, but, in both your cases, you have firsthand information, because you were on the July 25th phone call. Is that correct?

Ms. Williams. That's correct.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Ms. Speier. Now, Colonel, you in your comments today said, "I want to state that the vile character attacks on these distinguished and honorable public servants is reprehensible." Would you like to expand on that at all?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Ma'am, I think they stand on their own. I don't think it's necessary to expand on them.

Ms. Speier. So, in both your situations, since you have given depositions, since those depositions have been made public, have you seen your experience in your respective jobs change or have you been treated any differently?

Ms. Williams. I have not, no.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Since the report on the July 25th, as I stated, I did notice I was being excluded from several meetings that would have been appropriate for my position.

Ms. Speier. So, in some respects, then, there have been reprisals.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm not sure if I could make that judgment. I could say that it was out of the course of normal affairs to not have me participate in some of these events.

Ms. Speier. Thank you.

In preparation for the July 25th phone call, it's standard for the National Security Council to provide talking points. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Ms. Speier. Because the words of the President carry incredible weight. Is that not correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Ms. Speier. So it's important to ensure that everyone has carefully considered the implications of what the President might say to a foreign leader.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Ms. Speier. Colonel Vindman, you are the National Security Council's director for Ukraine. Did you participate in preparing the talking points for the President's call?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I did. I prepared them.

Ms. Speier. So you prepared them. They were then reviewed and edited by multiple senior officers at the NSC and the White House. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Ms. Speier. Did the talking points for the President contain any discussion of investigations into the 2016 election, the Bidens, or Burisma?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. They did not.

Ms. Speier. Are you aware of any written product from the National Security Council suggesting that investigations into the 2016 election, the Bidens, or Burisma are part of the official policy of the United States?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No, I am not.

Ms. Speier. Some of President Trump's allies have suggested that the President requested these investigations for official policy reasons as part of some plan to root out corruption in Ukraine.

In your experience, did the official policies of the United States include asking Ukraine to specifically open investigations into the Bidens and interference by Ukraine in

the 2016 election?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Nothing that we prepared or had discussed up until that point included any of these elements.

Ms. Speier. Would it ever be U.S. policy, in your experience, to ask a foreign leader to open a political investigation?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. There are proper procedures in which to do that. Certainly, the President is well within his right to do that. It is not something the NSC, certainly a director at the NSC, would do. As a matter of fact, we are prohibited from being involved in any transaction between the Department of Justice and a foreign power to ensure that there is no perception of manipulation from the White House. So it is not something that we'd participate in.

Ms. Speier. Ms. Williams, in your experience, did the official policies of the United States include asking Ukraine to open investigations into the Bidens?

Ms. Williams. I had not seen any reference to those particular cases in our policy formulation process.

Ms. Speier. All right.

Let me just say to you, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, that, in listening to your opening statement, I had chills up and down my spine. And I think most Americans recognize what an extraordinary hero you are to our country. And I would say to your father he did well.

I yield back.

RPTR FORADORI

EDTR ROSEN

[12:24 a.m.]

The Chairman. Mr. Stewart. Thank you.

Mr. Stewart. Ms. Williams and Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, I thank both of you for being here today. Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, I see you're wearing your dress uniform. Knowing that's not the uniform of the day, you normally wear a suit to the White House, I think it's a great reminder of your military service.

I, too, come from a military family. These are my father's Air Force wings. He was a pilot in World War II. Five of his sons served in the military. So as one military family to another, thank you and your brothers for your service. You're an example here.

Very quickly, I'm curious, when Ranking Member Nunes referred to you as Mr. Vindman, you quickly corrected and wanted to be called Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Do you always insist on civilians calling you by your rank?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Mr. Stewart -- Representative Stewart, I'm in uniform wearing my military rank. I just thought it was appropriate to stick with that. I'm sorry, Mr. Stewart --

Mr. Stewart. I'm sure he meant no disrespect.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I don't believe he did. But the attacks that I've had in the press, in Twitter, have kind of eliminated the fact that -- either marginalized me as a military officer or --

Mr. Stewart. Listen, I'm just telling you that the ranking member meant no disrespect to you.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I believe that.

Mr. Stewart. I'd like to go back to your previous testimony earlier today. Much has been talked about, as we have discussed, between President Trump and President Zelensky and the word "favor," and this being interpreted as a basis for impeachment. And your interpretation of the word favor, and I'll paraphrase, feel free to correct me. You said, In the military culture, which you and I are both familiar with, when a superior officer asks for a favor of a subordinate, they will interpret that as a demand.

Is that a fair synopsis of what you had previously stated?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Representative, when a superior makes a request, that's an order.

Mr. Stewart. Okay. In short, then, you think your interpretation of a favor is a demand based on your military experience and the military culture?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I think that is correct.

Mr. Stewart. I think that is correct. Is President Trump a member of the military?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He is not.

Mr. Stewart. Has he ever served in the military?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Not that I'm aware of.

Mr. Stewart. Is President Zelensky a member of the military?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I don't believe so. I don't know.

Mr. Stewart. He's not. Would it be fair, then, to take a person who has never served in the military, and to take your reevaluation of their words, based on your military experience, and your military culture, and to attach that culture and that meaning of those words to someone who has never served?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Representative, I made that judgment. I stick by that judgment.

Mr. Stewart. Okay. Well, I got to tell you, I think it's nonsense. Look, I was in the military, I could distinguish between a favor, and an order, and a demand, and so could my subordinates. And I think President Zelensky did as well. He never initiated an investigation. In fact, he's been very clear, he said: I never felt any pressure at all. So you interpreted the word "favor," but the two people who were speaking to each other did not interpret that as a demand, it was your interpretation. Is that fair?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. The context of this call, consistent with a July 10th meeting, with the reporting that was going on, including the President's personal attorney, made it clear that this was not simply a request.

Mr. Stewart. Well, that's not true at all. It's not clear at all. You say it makes it clear. It's not clear at all. And the two individuals who were talking to each other didn't interpret it that way. I'd like to go on to discuss your reaction to the phone call, and again, your previous testimony. And for brevity, and for clarity, I'm going to refer to your previous testimony. Page 155. Your attorney is welcome to follow along.

Quoting you, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman: I did not know whether this was a crime or anything of that nature. I thought it was wrong. And I'd like to key on the word wrong here, because we're going to come back to that. In my mind, did I consider this factor that could have been other implications? Yes, but it wasn't the basis of, I don't know, lodging a criminal complaint or anything like that. Then you got on to talk about policy concerns and moral and ethical judgments. So your concerns regarding this phone call were not legal, they were based on moral, ethical, and policy differences.

Let me ask you then. And what you thought were wrong, to use your word, you said this was wrong. Not illegal, but wrong. There are, as I've stated previous, sitting here a couple days ago, there are dozens of corrupt nations in the world, hundreds of corrupt government officials. Exactly one time did a Vice President go to a nation and

demand the specific firing of one individual and give a 6-hour time limit and withhold or threaten to withhold \$1 billion in aid if not -- it was the one individual who was investigating a company that was paying his son. So I'll ask you, was that also wrong?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is not what I understand. I, frankly, don't have any firsthand knowledge of that.

Mr. Stewart. You've not seen the video?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I've seen the video.

Mr. Stewart. That's all I've described was the video. Everything I said to you was in the video. Was that wrong as well?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Congressman, this is something I actually participated in, and I witnessed.

Mr. Stewart. I think you can still make a judgment.

The Chairman. The time of the gentleman has expired. Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, if you'd like to answer the question, you're more than welcome to.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I frankly don't know that much more about that particular incident. I saw the snippet of the video, but I don't know if I can make a judgment off of that.

The Chairman. Thank you. Mr. Quigley.

Mr. Quigley. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Colonel, it's one thing to ask somebody a favor like, Hey, go pick up my dry cleaning. And it's another when the Commander in Chief of the most powerful Army in the world asks an ally who's in a vulnerable position to do him a favor, is it not?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Quigley. Let me go back to that military assistance, if I could. Ms. Williams, again, when did you first learn that the security assistance was being held up, the nearly

\$400 million that was referenced?

Ms. Williams. July 3rd.

Mr. Quigley. And were you aware of any additional, or did you attend any additional meetings in which that military assistance being withheld was discussed?

Ms. Williams. I did. I attended meetings on July 23rd and July 26th, where the security assistance hold was discussed. I believe it may have also been discussed on July 31st.

Mr. Quigley. And at that point, did anyone provide a specific reason for the hold?

Ms. Williams. In those meetings the OMB representative reported that the assistance was being held at the direction of the White House chief of staff.

Mr. Quigley. And did they give reasons beyond that it was being withheld by the White House chief of staff?

Ms. Williams. Not specifically. The reason given was that there was an ongoing review whether the funding was still in line with administration priorities.

Mr. Quigley. Did anyone in any of those meetings, or in any other subsequent discussion you had discuss the legality of withholding that aid?

Ms. Williams. There were discussions, I believe, in the July 31st meeting, and possibly prior as well, in terms of -- Defense and State Department officials were looking into how they would handle a situation in which earmarked funding from Congress that was designated for Ukraine would be resolved if the funding continued to be held as we approached the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Quigley. And from what you witnessed, did anybody in the National Security community support withholding the assistance?

Ms. Williams. No.

Mr. Quigley. Colonel, again, just for the record, when did you learn that the security assistance was being withheld?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. On or about July 3rd.

Mr. Quigley. And what exactly had you learned from the State Department, I believe, that prompted you to draft the notice on July 3rd?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. So on or about July 3rd, I became aware of inquiries into security assistance funding in general. There are two typical pots, State Department and DOD. And I believe it was around that date that OMB put a hold on congressional notification.

Mr. Quigley. Had you had any earlier indications that this might be the case?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Prior to that, there were some general inquiries on how the funds were being spent, things of that nature, nothing specific. No hold, certainly.

Mr. Quigley. Were you aware of anyone in the National Security community who supported withholding the aid?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No.

Mr. Quigley. No one from the National Security?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. None.

Mr. Quigley. No one from the State Department?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Goldman. No one from the Department of Defense?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Quigley. Did anyone to your understanding raise the legality of withholding this assistance?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. It was raised on several occasions.

Mr. Quigley. And who raised those concerns?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Following the July 18th sub-PCC, which is, again, what I coordinate, or convene at my level, there was a July 23rd PCC that would have been conducted by Mr. Morrison. There were questions raised as to the legality of the hold. Over the subsequent week, the issue was analyzed, and during July 26th deputies -- so the deputies from all the departments and agencies, there was an opinion rendered that it was -- it was legal to put the hold.

Mr. Quigley. It was -- excuse me?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. There was an opinion, a legal opinion rendered, that it was okay, that the hold was legal.

Mr. Quigley. From a purely legal point of view?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Quigley. Very good. I yield back to the chairman.

The Chairman. I thank the gentleman for yielding. Ms. Stefanik.

Ms. Stefanik. Ms. Williams, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, thank you for being here, and thank you both for your service. As millions of Americans are watching, throughout the hysteria and frenzied media coverage, two key facts have not changed that are critical to these impeachment proceedings. One, Ukraine, in fact, received the aid; and, two, there was no investigation into the Bidens. My question to both of you today will focus on the following: Systemic corruption in Ukraine; two, highlighting for the public that by law, aid to Ukraine requires anti-corruption efforts; and, three, who in our government has the decisionmaking authority when it comes to foreign policy and national security matters?

So on corruption in Ukraine, as Ambassador Yovanovitch testified, one of the key reasons why President Zelensky was overwhelmingly elected by the Ukrainian people was

that they were finally standing up to rampant corruption in their country. Would you both agree with the Ambassador's assessment?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Ms. Williams. Yes.

Ms. Stefanik. And, Ms. Williams, corruption was such a critical issue from your perspective, that when you prepared the Vice President for his congratulatory call with President Zelensky, you testified that the points you wanted to communicate on the call were the following: Quote: Looked forward to seeing President Zelensky really implement the agenda on which he had run related to anti-corruption reforms. That's correct?

Ms. Williams. That is. Yes.

Ms. Stefanik. And, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, would you agree that this focus on anti-corruption is a critical aspect of our policy towards the Ukraine?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I would.

Ms. Stefanik. And, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, you are aware that in 2014, during the Obama administration, the first anti-corruption investigation partnered between the U.S., the U.K., and Ukraine, was into the owner of the company, Burisma.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm aware of it now.

Ms. Stefanik. And, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, you testified that you were aware that Burisma had questionable business dealings, that's part of its track record?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Ms. Stefanik. You also testified that, regarding Burisma, money laundering, tax evasion, comports with your understanding of how business is done in Ukraine. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm not aware of specific incidents, but my

understanding is that it would not be out of the realm of the possible for Burisma.

Ms. Stefanik. Well, that's page 207 from your testimony, but I'll move on. You are aware that Hunter Biden did sit on the board of Burisma at this time?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I am.

Ms. Stefanik. Well, I know that my constituents in New York 21 have many concerns about the fact that Hunter Biden, the son of the Vice President, sat on the board of a corrupt company like Burisma. The Obama administration State Department was also concerned, but yet, Adam Schiff refuses to allow this committee to call Hunter Biden despite our requests. Every witness who has testified and has been asked this has answered yes. Do you agree that Hunter Biden, on the board of Burisma, has the potential for the appearance of a conflict of interest?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Certainly the potential, yes.

Ms. Stefanik. And Ms. Williams?

Ms. Williams. Yes.

Ms. Stefanik. Now, shifting to the legal requirements that our aid to Ukraine is conditioned on anti-corruption. Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, you testified that you understood that Congress had passed, under the Ukrainian Security Assistance Initiative, a legal obligation to certify that corruption is being addressed?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Ms. Stefanik. And you also testified that it is required by the National Defense Authorization Act.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Ms. Stefanik. So for the public listening, we are not just talking about President Trump focusing on anti-corruption in Ukraine, but it is so critical, so important, that hard-earned taxpayer dollars, when given to foreign nations that, by law, overwhelmingly

bipartisan support requires anti-corruption in Ukraine in order to get U.S. taxpayer funded aid.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, you spoke extensively about the importance of defensive lethal aid to Ukraine, especially Javelins. This was in your deposition.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Ms. Stefanik. And you testified that the Javelin, in particular, because of its effectiveness in terms of influencing the Russian decision calculus for aggression, it is one of the most important tools we have when it comes to providing defensive lethal aid?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. The system itself and the signaling of U.S. support, yes.

Ms. Stefanik. And it is a fact that that aid was provided under President Trump and not President Obama?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Ms. Stefanik. And my last question, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, I know you serve at the NSC and the White House, I served in the West Wing of the White House for President Bush on the Domestic Policy Council, and in the chief of staff's office, so I'm very familiar with the policy process. I also know that as a staff member, the person who sets the policy of the United States is the President, not the staff. And you testified that the President sets the policy, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Ms. Stefanik. And I respect your deep expertise, your tremendous service to our country. We can never repay those that have worn the military uniform and served our Nation, but I was struck when you testified in your deposition. I would say, first of all, I'm the director for Ukraine. I'm responsible for Ukraine. I'm the most knowledgeable. I am the authority for Ukraine for the National Security Council and the White House. I

just want to clarification, you report to Tim Morrison, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. In my advisory --

Ms. Stefanik. Your direct report is Tim Morrison?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, in my advisory -- just to clarify. In my -- only in my advisory capacity, I advise up through the chain of command, that's what I do.

Ms. Stefanik. And the chain of command is Tim Morrison to Ambassador John Bolton, the National Security Advisor, to the President of the United States?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Ms. Stefanik. And do you agree that the President sets the policy as Commander in Chief, as you testified previously?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Absolutely.

Ms. Stefanik. Thank you. My time has expired.

The Chairman. Mr. Swalwell.

Mr. Swalwell. Thank you both. Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, I think the follow-up question that my colleague from New York did not ask you, but is relevant for everyone at home: Isn't it true that the Department of Defense had certified that the anti-corruption requirements of Ukraine had been met when the hold was put on by the President?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Swalwell. Now, Mr. Jordan suggested that the President did something none of us expected by releasing that call transcript. You listened to the call. Is that right, Lieutenant Colonel?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is.

Mr. Swalwell. Ms. Williams, you also listened to the call. Is that right?

Ms. Williams. Yes.

Mr. Swalwell. Fair to say, Ms. Williams, a lot of other people at the White House listened to the call or read the transcript?

Ms. Williams. I can't characterize how many. I believe there were four or five or six of us in the listening room at the time.

Mr. Swalwell. And the transcript was distributed to others. Is that right?

Ms. Williams. I wasn't part of that process, but that's my understanding.

Mr. Swalwell. So the President is asking for us and his defenders to give him a gold star because a number of people listened to the call or saw the call transcript, and then he released it. The difference, of course, between this and, say, his one-on-one meeting in Helsinki with Vladimir Putin, was there it was a one-on-one meeting, and he took the notes from the interpreter so none of us could see it. The point being, the President had no choice but to release a call that everyone had seen.

Now, you have been asked to also characterize what exactly legally all of this means. And Mr. Ratcliffe pointed out that no one had used the term "bribery" in our depositions. And, Ms. Williams, you're not a lawyer, are you?

Ms. Williams. I'm not, no.

Mr. Swalwell. Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, are you a lawyer?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. The lawyer is back there.

Mr. Swalwell. The lawyer is your brother?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Right.

Mr. Swalwell. Born 20 seconds after you. Is that what you said?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Nine minutes.

Mr. Swalwell. Nine minutes after you. You're the older brother?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yeah. A lifetime of wisdom there.

Mr. Swalwell. I want to give you a hypothetical here. Suppose you have a

shooting victim, and the police respond after the victim is doing a little bit better, and they ask the victim, well, tell us what happened. And the victim says, Well, someone came up to my car, shot into the car, hit me in the shoulder, hit me in the back, hit me in the neck. Miraculously, I survived, but I can identify who the person is that pulled the trigger. And the police say, Okay, you were shot. You know who it is. But, shucks, you didn't tell us that this was an attempted murder, so we're going to have to let the person go.

Is that how it works in our justice system? That unless victims or witnesses identify the legal theories of a case, we just let people off the hook? Is that how it works, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm not an attorney, but it doesn't seem so.

Mr. Swalwell. I don't think your brother would think so either. Ms. Williams, Vice President Pence was described to our committee by Mr. Morrison as a, quote, voracious reader of his intelligence read book. And after the April 21 call with President Zelensky, you put a transcript of that call in the Vice President's read book. Is that right?

Ms. Williams. That's correct.

Mr. Swalwell. And then the Vice President called President Zelensky 2 days later. Is that right?

Ms. Williams. That's correct.

Mr. Swalwell. And you told us in the deposition that he stuck pretty faithfully to what President Trump had said in the April 21 call. Is that right?

Ms. Williams. I believe his remarks were consistent, but he also spoke on other issues as well, including anti-corruption.

Mr. Swalwell. And you would describe the Vice President as somebody who would make follow-up calls to world leaders after the President had done so. Is that

right?

Ms. Williams. He has on occasion, it's not a normal practice, it depends on the situation.

Mr. Swalwell. And in that case, he stuck to President Trump's talking points?

Ms. Williams. I would say that I provided talking points for the April 23rd call for the Vice President, which included discussion of President Zelensky's inauguration, which President Trump had also discussed with President Zelensky. But I would say the Vice President discussed other issues with President Zelensky as well.

Mr. Swalwell. And as was stated earlier, the President sets the foreign policy for the United States. Is that right?

Ms. Williams. Absolutely.

Mr. Swalwell. And you told us after the July 25 call between President Trump and President Zelensky, that you put the call transcript in Vice President's intelligence briefing book. Is that right?

Ms. Williams. I ensured it was there. My colleagues prepare the book, but yes.

Mr. Swalwell. So let's flash forward to September 1. Vice President Pence meets with President Zelensky. Is that right?

Ms. Williams. That's correct.

Mr. Swalwell. You're there?

Ms. Williams. Yes.

Mr. Swalwell. And President Zelensky, with Vice President Pence, they talk about a lot of things, but you will agree that Vice President Pence did not bring up the Bidens. Is that correct?

Ms. Williams. That's correct. He did not.

Mr. Swalwell. He did not bring up investigations?

Ms. Williams. No.

Mr. Swalwell. Is one reasonable explanation that, although Vice President Pence will do a lot of things for President Trump, that he was not willing to bring up investigations on Bidens because he thought it was wrong?

Ms. Williams. I'm not in a position to speculate. We had not discussed those particular investigations in any of the preparatory sessions with the Vice President.

Mr. Swalwell. But you didn't bring it up with the Ukrainians after the July 25 call, right?

Ms. Williams. He did not in that meeting, no.

Mr. Swalwell. And you did not either?

Ms. Williams. No.

Mr. Swalwell. And, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, did you ever ask the Ukrainians to do what President Trump was asking them to do after the July 25 phone call?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I didn't render any opinion on what was asked in the 25.

Mr. Swalwell. Thank you. Yield back.

The Chairman. Mr. Hurd.

Mr. Hurd. Ms. Williams, I want to join my colleagues in thanking you for your service. We share a personal hero in Dr. Rice, great minds think alike. Did you participate in or overhear any conversations about how potential information collected from the Ukrainians on the Bidens would be used for political gain?

Ms. Williams. No, I did not participate or overhear any conversations along those lines.

Mr. Hurd. Thank you. Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, I think all of us would agree that your father made the right move to come here, and we're glad that he did.

You've talked about how part of your responsibilities is developing talking points for your principals. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Hurd. The President, and I'm assuming you also do that for your direct supervisor currently right now, Mr. Morrison. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Mr. Morrison has left the position some time ago, at least 3 weeks ago.

Mr. Hurd. But you prepare talking points for your supervisors. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Typically, frankly, at that level they don't really take talking points, especially if they have expertise. The talking points are more intended for the National Security Advisor, although Ambassador Bolton didn't really require them because of his deep expertise.

Mr. Hurd. Sure.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. The next level up, the President --

Mr. Hurd. But, traditionally, I'm just trying to establish his position is somebody that makes talking points for a number of people. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Hurd. Do they always use them?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No.

Mr. Hurd. Is President Trump known to stick to a script?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I don't believe so.

Mr. Hurd. So is it odd that he didn't use your talking points?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No, it is not.

Mr. Hurd. In your deposition, if your lawyer wants to follow on, it's page 306. You were asked about events during the temporary holds on U.S. assistance to Ukraine,

this is that 55-day period or so. And you testified that the U.S. administration did not receive any new assurances from Ukraine about anti-corruption efforts, and the facts on the ground did not change before the hold was lifted. Is that accurate in recounting your testimony?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is accurate.

Mr. Hurd. When was President Zelensky sworn in?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He was sworn in on May 20th, 2019.

Mr. Hurd. And then, he had a new parliament, too, elected after he was. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He did.

Mr. Hurd. And when was that parliament seated?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That was, I'm sorry, July 21st, 2019.

Mr. Hurd. That was when they won. They weren't properly seated until August?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That's right. They won and weren't seated until August.

Mr. Hurd. Your boss's boss, Ambassador Bolton, traveled to Ukraine in late August, August 27, 28. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Hurd. Did he take you with him?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He didn't.

Mr. Hurd. We know from other witnesses that when Ambassador Bolton was there, he met with President Zelensky and his staff, and they talked about how they were visually exhausted, because one of the things that President Zelensky did during that time period was change the Ukrainian Constitution to remove absolute immunity from Rada

deputies, right, someone of their parliamentarians, because that had been the source of raw corruption for a number of years. Is that accurate?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is accurate.

Mr. Hurd. Were you aware of this important change to Ukrainian law?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Of course.

Mr. Hurd. And you don't believe that's a significant anti-corruption effort?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No, it is significant.

Mr. Hurd. It's pretty significant, correct? Also, Ambassador Taylor testified that President Zelensky, with this new parliament, opened Ukraine's high anti-corruption court, right? This had been an initiative that many folks in our State Department had been pushing to happen, and that was established in that timeframe. Were you aware of this?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Hurd. Do you think this is a significant anti-corruption?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I do.

Mr. Hurd. When you talked about -- how many times have you met President Zelensky?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I think it was just the one time from the Presidential delegation, multiple engagements, but just the one trip.

Mr. Hurd. And that's a one-on-one meeting?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That was in a larger bilateral format, then there were a couple of smaller venues. They were all in -- there was never a one-on-one, but there were a couple of, again, touch points. So the bilateral meeting, handshake meet and greet, he had a short --

Mr. Hurd. So there were a lot of people in the room?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yeah. Yes.

Mr. Hurd. When you met with them?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, Congressman.

Mr. Hurd. But you still advised the Ukrainian President to watch out for the Russians?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Hurd. And everybody else in the room, I'm assuming the national security advisor was there, I believe, in this case, you had other members of the administration. Was that -- were your points preapproved? Did they know you were going to bring up those points?

Mr. Hurd. We had did have a huddle beforehand, and it's possible that I flagged them, but I don't recall specifically. It's possible that I didn't.

Mr. Hurd. And you counseled the Ukrainian President to stay out of U.S. politics?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Hurd. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the time I do not have.

The Chairman. The gentleman yields back. Mr. Castro.

Mr. Castro. Thank you, Chairman. Ms. Williams, thank you for your service to the country. Colonel Vindman, thank you for your service, and it's great to talk to a fellow identical twin. I hope that your brother is nicer to you than mine is to me. He doesn't make you grow a beard.

You both listened in real time to the July 25th call. In particular, you would have heard President Trump ask the President of Ukraine, quote: "I'd like you to find out what happened with this whole situation with Ukraine. They say CrowdStrike," end quote. The server, they say Ukraine has it. This is a debunked conspiracy theory that has no basis in fact.

President Trump's own former Homeland Security Advisor, Thomas B. Bossert, called the President's assertion that Ukraine intervened in the 2016 elections, quote, "not only a conspiracy theory," but, quote, "completely debunked," unquote. Colonel Vindman, are you aware of any evidence to support the theory that the Ukrainian government interfered in the 2016 election?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Congressman, I am not. And, furthermore, I would say that this is a Russian narrative that President Putin has promoted.

Mr. Castro. And are you aware of any part of the U.S. Government, its foreign policy or intelligence apparatus that supports that theory?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No, I'm not aware.

Mr. Castro. You are aware that other parts of the U.S. Government, our Intelligence Community, for example, have said definitively that it was the Russians who interfered in the 2016 elections?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Castro. It seems incredibly odd, though, unfortunately, but not inconsistent to me that President Trump would be giving credence to a conspiracy about Ukraine that helps Russia really in at least two ways: First, it ignores and frankly undermines the assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community, and seeks to weaken a state dependent on the United States' support to fight Russian aggression. It also, for the United States, hurts our national security and emboldens Russia.

And I want to look at what President Trump was doing on his call, instead of pushing back against Russian hostility. He was pressuring Ukraine to do his political work. President Trump stated on that July 25th call, quote, "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."

Colonel Vindman, when you hear those words, do you hear the President requesting a thoughtful and well-calibrated anti-corruption program consistent with U.S. policy?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I do not.

Mr. Castro. In fact, it sounds like President Trump was encouraging the Ukrainian President to engage in precisely the same type of behavior for President Trump's own political benefit that we discourage foreign leaders from undertaking in their own countries, and discouraging other countries from undertaking politically motivated investigation is, in fact, a major part of official U.S. anti-corruption policy. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Castro. And are you, in fact, aware of any evidence that Vice President Biden improperly interfered in investigation of his family members?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I am not.

Mr. Castro. These false narratives, it should be said, are damaging our country. They poison our politics and distract from the truth. And pressing another country to engage in corruption is antithetical to who we are as a Nation. You also mentioned that this request, you felt this request was wrong. And you've also said that corruption in Ukraine is endemic to Ukraine, just as it is in other places around the world.

What is the -- can you speak to -- what is the danger of a President of the United States, whether it's Donald Trump or any future President, asking another nation, where there's rampant corruption, to investigate a political rival or just any other American citizen? What would be the danger to that American?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Congressman, the Ukrainian judiciary is imperfect at the moment. And the reliance on U.S. support could conceivably cause them to tip the scales of justice in favor of finding a U.S. citizen guilty if they thought they needed to do that in their --

Mr. Castro. So they could trump up charges, if they wanted to, in a corrupt system like that?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. They could. Ukraine is making progress, certainly, more broadly in Russia, that is likely to happen where the state will be involved in judicial outcomes and drive them.

Mr. Castro. Thank you. I yield back, Chairman.

The Chairman. Mr. Ratcliffe.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Thank you, Chairman. Ms. Williams, you testified that what you noted as being unusual about the call that took place on July 25th was that the President raised what appeared to be a domestic political issue, correct?

Ms. Williams. Correct.

Mr. Ratcliffe. But raising an issue, even one that you thought was unusual is different than making a demand. Would you agree?

Ms. Williams. Yes.

Mr. Ratcliffe. And as I read your deposition, it didn't sound like, from your testimony, that you heard what took place on that call as a demand for investigations. Is that fair?

Ms. Williams. I don't believe I'm in a position to characterize it further than the President did in terms of asking for a favor.

Mr. Ratcliffe. You didn't hear a demand?

Mr. Ratcliffe. Again, I would just refer back to the transcript itself.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, you have testified and explained to us why, in your mind, it was a demand, and you've given us reasons: disparity of power between the two Presidents. And because you did feel that way, you also felt that you had a duty to report what you thought was improper. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That's correct.

Mr. Ratcliffe. Okay. So two different people, two impartial observers, one felt the need to report the call because there was a demand that was improper, and one that didn't report it to anyone. You didn't report it to anyone, right, Ms. Williams?

Ms. Williams. I ensured that the information was available to my superiors.

Mr. Ratcliffe. So while all this might seem as clear as mud, I think your honest and candid assessments of what you heard on the call tells us what we need to know. We have two independent folks, non-partisans, and I'm not hearing a consensus between the two of you about what exactly you both heard on the call that you heard at the exact same time. And if you can't reach an agreement with regard to what happened on the call, how can any of us?

An impeachment inquiry is supposed to be clear. It's supposed to be obvious. It's supposed to be overwhelming and compelling. And if two people on the call disagree honestly about whether or not there was a demand and whether or not anything should be reported on a call, that is not a clear and compelling basis to undo 63 million votes and remove a President from office.

I yield by remaining time to Mr. Jordan.

Mr. Jordan. I thank the gentleman for yielding. Colonel Vindman, why didn't you go -- after the call, why didn't you go to Mr. Morrison?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I went immediately -- per the instructions from the July 10th incident, I went immediately to Mr. Eisenberg. After that -- once I made

my -- expressed my concerns, it was an extremely busy week. We had a PCC just finish, we had the call, and then we had a deputies' meeting, which consumed all of my time. I was working extremely long days. I attempted to try to communicate -- I managed to speak to two folks in the interagency. I attempted to try to talk to Mr. Morrison. That didn't happen before I received instructions from John Eisenberg to not talk to anybody else any further.

Mr. Jordan. So the lawyer -- you not only didn't go to your boss, you said you tried, but you didn't go to your boss. You went straight to the lawyer and the lawyer told you not to go to your boss?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No, he didn't tell me until -- what ended up unfolding is, I had the conversation with the attorney, I did my coordination, my core function, which is coordination. I spoke to the appropriate people within the interagency. And then circling back around, Mr. Eisenberg came back to me and told me not to talk to anyone else.

Mr. Jordan. I'm going to read from the transcript here. Why didn't you go to your direct report, Mr. Morrison? Your response was -- this is page 102 -- because Mr. Eisenberg had told me to take my concerns to him. Then I asked you: Did Mr. Eisenberg tell you not to report, to go around Mr. Morrison? And you said: Actually, he did say that I shouldn't talk to any other people. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, but there's a whole -- there's a period of time in there between when I spoke to him and when he circled back around. It wasn't that long a period of time, but it was enough time for me to --

Mr. Jordan. Enough time to go talk to someone who you won't tell us who it is, right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I've been instructed not to, Representative Jordan.

Mr. Jordan. Here's what I'm getting -- the lawyer told you, don't talk to any other people. And you interpret that as not talking to your boss, but you talked to your brother, you talked the lawyers, you talked to Secretary Kent, and you talked to the one guy Adam Schiff won't tell you -- won't let you tell us who he is. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Representative Jordan, I did my job.

Mr. Jordan. I'm not saying you didn't. All I'm saying is, your instructions from the lawyer was you shouldn't talk to anybody, and you interpret that as, don't talk to my boss, but I'm going to go talk to someone that we can't even ask you who that individual is.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is incorrect.

Mr. Jordan. Well, I just read what you said.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is incorrect.

Mr. Jordan. You didn't talk to any other people.

The Chairman. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I'm sorry, Chairman, but that sequence is not the way it played out.

Mr. Jordan. I'm reading from the transcript, Colonel Vindman.

The Chairman. Mr. Jordan, please let Colonel Vindman --

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. The sequence played out where immediately afterwards, I expressed my concerns. I did my coordination function. Mr. Eisenberg circled back around and told me not to talk to anybody else. In that period of time, I did not --

Mr. Jordan. So that's when it happened. That's when you talked to someone?

The Chairman. Mr. Heck.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That's right.

Mr. Heck. Colonel Vindman, let's go back to that pair of meetings on July 10th in Ambassador Bolton's office and down in the Ward Room where you witnessed Ambassador Sondland inform the Ukrainian officials that as a prerequisite to a White House meeting between the two Presidents, quote, "The Ukrainians would have to deliver an investigation into the Bidens," end quote. You said that Ambassador Sondland was quote, "calling for an investigation that didn't exist into the Bidens and Burisma." Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Heck. It's that same afternoon you went to Mr. Eisenberg, the counsel, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That meeting occurred in the afternoon and within -- I'm sure it was within a couple hours I spoke to Mr. Eisenberg.

Mr. Heck. How did he react?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He was cool, calm, and collected. He took notes and he said he would look into it.

Mr. Heck. And did he not also tell you to feel free to come back if you had additional concerns?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He did, Congressman.

Mr. Heck. Ambassador Sondland had told you that his request to the Ukrainians had been coordinated with the Chief of Staff, Acting Chief of Staff, Mick Mulvaney. Did you report that to Mr. Eisenberg?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I did.

Mr. Heck. And what was his reaction?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He took notes, and he said he was going to -- he'll follow up or look into it. I don't recall exactly what he said.

Mr. Heck. Colonel, you also testified that on the July 25th call now between the two Presidents. Quote: There was no doubt, end quote, that President Trump asked for investigations into the 2016 election and Vice President Biden's son in return for a White House meeting. Within an hour of that call you reported that to Mr. Eisenberg, did you not?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I did.

Mr. Heck. Went back to him just to see if he suggested it would be appropriate?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He is an assistant to the President, it was less a suggestion and more of an instruction.

Mr. Heck. Did you tell the lawyers that the President Trump asked President Zelensky to speak to Mr. Giuliani?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Heck. And the lawyers, it was at this point, told you not to talk to anyone else?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is not correct with regards to timing. They didn't follow back -- they didn't circle back around. What ended up happening is, in my coordination role, I spoke to State, I spoke to a member of the Intelligence Community, and the general counsel from one of the intelligence bodies notified Mr. Eisenberg that there was -- that there was information on the call, on the July 25th call. At that point, Mr. Eisenberg told me I shouldn't talk to anybody else about it.

Mr. Heck. Colonel, I want to go back to 2014 in Iraq when you were blown up. I presume that given the point in your military career and what else was going on in the world, that upon recovery, there was the very real prospect or possibility that you might, once again, find yourself in harm's way. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, Congressman, it happened in 2004, but yes.

Mr. Heck. Four, excuse me. Thank you. Did you consider leaving the military service at that point?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. No. Frankly, Congressman, I suffered light wounds. I was fortunate compared to my counterparts in the same vehicle, and I returned to duty, I think it may have been that same day.

Mr. Heck. But you could have been subjected to additional harm, you chose to continue service in uniform?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I continued to serve in combat for the remaining 10 or 11 months of the tour.

Mr. Heck. You know, Colonel, I have to say, I find it a rich but incredibly painful irony that within a week of the President, contrary to all advice of the senior military officials, he pardons those who were convicted of war crimes, which was widely decried in the military community. Within the week of him doing that, is engaged in an effort and allies on his behalf, including some here today, to demean your record of service, and the sacrifice and the contribution you have made.

Indeed, sir, less than 20 minutes ago, the White House officially quoted out, out of context, the comments referred to earlier by Mr. Morrison in your judgment. I can only conclude, sir, that what we thought was just the President as the subject of our deliberations in this inquiry, isn't sufficient to capture what's happening here. Indeed, what subject of this inquiry, and what is at peril is our Constitution and the very values upon which it is based.

I want to say, thank you for your service, but, you know, thank you doesn't cut it. Please know, however, that it comes from the bottom of my heart, and I know on the bottoms of the heart of countless other Americans, thank you for your service, sir.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Thank you.

Mr. Heck. I yield back.

The Chairman. Mr. Jordan.

Mr. Jordan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sunday, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives called the President of the United States an imposter. The Speaker of the House called the President an imposter. The guy 63 million people voted for. The guy who won an electoral college landslide, the Speaker calls an imposter. That's what happened to our country, to this Congress. The Speaker's statement says it all.

The Democrats have never accepted the will of the American people. The Democrats don't trust the American people. The American people who wanted to send someone to this town who was willing to shake it up a bit, they don't trust that. And they have tried to do everything they can to undo what the American people decided on November 8th, 2016. They have been out to get the President since the day he was elected.

The whistleblower's lawyer, the whistleblower's legal team, said this: January 30th, 2017, the President had been in office about a week. Coup has started. First of many steps. Next sentence, impeachment will follow ultimately. I guess we are in the final step, started 3-1/2 years ago. Congressman Tlaib started this Congress, the first day of Congress said: Impeachment the President. Representative Green said: If we don't impeach him, the President is going to win reelection. We got to do it.

Most importantly, most importantly, five Democrat members of this committee voted to move forward with impeachment before the phone call ever happened. The truth is, the attacks actually started before -- before the inauguration, even before the election. The ranking member talked about this in his opening statement.

July 2016, FBI opens an investigation, the so-called Trump-Russia coordination, collusion, which was never there. Opened an investigation, spied on two American citizens associated with the Presidential campaign. My guess is that's probably never happened in American history, but they did it.

And for 10 months, Jim Comey's FBI investigated the President. Guess what, after 10 months, they had nothing. And you know why we know that, because when we deposed Mr. Comey last Congress, he told us they didn't have a thing. No matter, Special Counsel Mueller gets appointed, and they do a 2-year, \$40 million, 19-lawyer unbelievable investigation, and guess what, they come back and they got nothing. But the Democrats don't care. So now we get this.

A bunch of depositions in the bunker in the basement of the Capitol. Witnesses who are not allowed to answer questions about who they talked to about the phone call. We get this. All based on some anonymous whistleblower. No firsthand knowledge. Bias against the President. These facts have never changed. We learned these right away. Who worked with Vice President Biden, who wrote a memo the day after somebody talked to him about the call, but waited 18 days to file a complaint. Eighteen days to file a complaint. What did he do in those 18 days? We all know. Ran off and talked with Chairman Schiff's staff.

And then, hired the legal team that I just talked about, that I just talked about, one of the steps in the whole impeachment coup, as his legal team has said.

This is scary what these guys are putting our country through. It is sad. It is scary. It is wrong. And the good news is, the American people see through it all, they know the facts are on the President's side. As Representative Stefanik said, four facts will never change. We got the transcript, which they never thought the President would release. Shows no coordination. No conditionality. No linkage. We got the two

guys on the call. President Trump and President Zelensky who have said, nothing wrong, no pressure, no pushing here. We got the fact that the Ukrainians didn't even know aid was held up at the time of the call, and most importantly, we have yet to have one witness tell us that any evidence from anyone that President Zelensky did anything on investigations to get the aid released. Those facts will never change. The facts are on the President's side, the process is certainly not.

It has been the most unfair process we have ever seen, and the American people understand. Those 63 million Americans, they understand it. And, frankly, I think a lot of others do as well. They see this for what it is, and they know this is wrong, especially wrong just 11 months before the next election.

I yield back.

The Chairman. Mr. Welch.

Mr. Welch. Thank you. What this hearing is about, I think, was best stated by Colonel Vindman's opening statement. The question before us is this: Is it improper for the President of the United States to demand a foreign government investigate a United States citizen and political opponent? Very well stated. I just listened to Mr. Jordan, as you did as well, and I heard his criticisms of the process. Nothing really happened. A lot of people are out to get the President. I didn't hear an answer to the question as to whether it's proper for the President of the United States to demand a foreign government to investigate a U.S. citizen and political opponent. And, to date, I haven't heard one of my Republican colleagues address that question.

Colonel Vindman and Ms. Williams, thank you. I want to ask some questions that go through the background. What's come out during this process is that we had two Ukraine policies, one was bipartisan and longstanding, and that was to assist Ukraine, which had freed itself from the domination of Russia, to fight corruption, and to resist

Russian aggression. Is that a fair statement, Colonel Vindman?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I think that's a fair characterization, Congressman.

Mr. Welch. And to give folks a reminder of the extent of corruption. By the way, a legacy of Putin's Russia, is it your understanding that when their prior president, Mr. Yanukovich, fled to Russia into the arms of Mr. Putin, he took with him \$30 to \$40 billion of that impoverished country?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. There are different estimates, but it's on that scale, yes.

Mr. Welch. Vast scale for a poor country. And is it your understanding that powerless but motivated Ukrainians rose up in protest to this incredible graft and theft and abuse by their President?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Welch. And that was in the Maidan, it was called the Maidan Revolution, the Revolution of Dignity, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Welch. And young people went into that square in downtown Kyiv and demonstrated for months, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct. And 100 died.

Mr. Welch. One hundred six young people died and older people died, correct? That was in -- between February 18, 2014, and February 22. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Welch. One hundred six died, including people who were shot by snipers, kids. And Yanukovich had put snipers on the rooftops of buildings to shoot into that square and kill, murder, slaughter, those young people. Is that your understanding?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Welch. In our bipartisan support -- and by the way, I want to say to my Republican colleagues, a lot of leadership to have this bipartisan support came from your side, thank you. But our whole commitment was to get rid of corruption and to stop that Russian aggression. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That amounts to some of the key pillars.

Mr. Welch. That's right. And the Giuliani, Sondland, it appears Trump policy, was not about that, it was about investigations into a political opponent, correct? I'll take that question back. We know it. And, you know, I'll say this to President Trump, you want to investigate Joe Biden, you want to investigate Hunter Biden, go at it. Do it. Do it hard. Do it dirty. Do it the way you do do it. Just don't do it by asking a foreign leader to help you in your campaign. That is your job, it's not his.

My goal in these hearings is two things: One is to get an answer to Colonel Vindman's question; and the second coming out of this is for us, as a Congress, to return to the Ukraine policy that Nancy Pelosi and Kevin McCarthy both support, it's not investigations. It's the restoration of democracy in Ukraine, and the resistance of Russian aggression. I yield back.

The Chairman. Mr. Maloney.

Mr. Maloney. Thank you both for being here. You know, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, this may be one of your first congressional hearings like this, so you may not --

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Hopefully, the last.

Mr. Maloney. I can't blame you for feeling that way, sir, particularly when I've been sitting here listening to my Republican colleagues. You know, one of the advantages of being down here at the kids' table is that you get to hear the folks above you ask their questions, and I've been listening closely to my Republican colleagues. And I've heard them say just about everything, except to contradict any of the substantive

testimony you've both given. You may have noticed, there's been a lot of complaints, and there's been a lot of insinuations, and there's been a lot of suggestions maybe that your service is somehow not to be trusted.

You know, you were treated to questions about your locality because of some half-baked job offer, I guess, the Ukrainian's made you, which you, of course, dutifully reported. I guess, Mr. Castor is implying maybe you got some dual loyalty, which is of course, an old smear we've heard many times in our history. They try to demean you as though maybe you've overstated your importance of your job, but of course, you were the guy on the National Security Council responsible for directing Ukrainian policy.

We've heard them air out some allegations with no basis in proof, but they just want to get them out there and hope maybe some of those strands of spaghetti will stick on the wall if they keep throwing them.

We even had a member of this committee question, this is my favorite, question why you would wear your dress uniform today, even though that dress uniform includes a badge, a breast plate that has a combat infantry badge on it and a Purple Heart Medal Ribbon. It seems like if anybody gets to wear the uniform, it's somebody who's got a breast plate with those commendations on it.

So let's do it again. Let's do the substance. Can we do that? Because we've had a lot of dust kicked up. Ms. Williams, you heard the call with your own ears, right?

Ms. Williams. Yes, sir.

Mr. Maloney. Not secondhand, not hearsay. You heard the President speak. You heard his voice on the call?

Ms. Williams. Correct.

Mr. Maloney. And your conclusion was what he said about investigating the Bidens was your words, unusual and inappropriate, I believe. Am I right?

Ms. Williams. That was my testimony.

Mr. Maloney. And, Mr. Vindman, you were treated to a July 10th meeting in the White House where you heard Ambassador Sondland raise investigations, conditioning a White House meeting on that, investigations that you thought were unduly political. I believe that's how you described them. And you went to the NSC counsel and you reported it, right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Maloney. And then later you two were on the White House call, am I right? You heard it with your own ears?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Maloney. Not secondhand, not from somebody else, not hearsay, right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Maloney. You heard the President's voice on the call.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I did.

Mr. Maloney. And you heard him raise that subject again that Ambassador Sondland had raised before about investigating the Bidens, right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I did.

Mr. Maloney. And I want to ask you, when you heard him say that, what was the first thought that went through your mind?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Frankly, I couldn't believe what I was hearing. It was probably an element of shock that maybe in certain regards, my worst fear of how our Ukraine policy could play out was playing out. And how this was likely to have significant implications for U.S. national security.

Mr. Maloney. And you went immediately and reported it, didn't you?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I did.

Mr. Maloney. Why?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Because that was my duty.

Mr. Maloney. Do you still have your opening statement handy?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I do.

Mr. Maloney. Would you read the last paragraph for me again, not the very last one, the second to the last one. Would you read that one again for me because I think the American public needs to hear it again.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Dad -- starting --

Mr. Maloney. That's the one.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I think my dad would appreciate this one, too. Dad, my sitting here today in the U.S. Capitol talking to our elected officials is proof that you made the right decision 40 years ago to leave the Soviet Union and come here to the United States of America in search of a better life for our family. Do not worry, I'll be fine for telling the truth.

Mr. Maloney. You realized when you came forward, out of sense of duty, that you were putting yourself in direct opposition to the most powerful person in the world? Do you realize that, sir?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I knew I was assuming a lot of risk.

Mr. Maloney. And I'm struck by that word -- that phrase, do not worry, you addressed to your dad. Was your dad a warrior?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He did serve. It was a different military, though.

Mr. Maloney. And he would have worried if you were putting yourself up against the President of the United States. Is that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He deeply worried about it because in his context there was -- there was the ultimate risk.

Mr. Maloney. And why do you have confidence that you can do that and tell your dad not to worry?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Congressman, because this is America. This is the country that I've served and defended. That all of my brothers have served. And here right matters.

Mr. Maloney. Thank you, sir. Yield back.

[Applause].

RPTR BRYANT

EDTR HOFSTAD

[1:24 p.m.]

The Chairman. Mrs. Demings.

Mrs. Demings. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, Ms. Williams, let me thank you for your service to our Nation. It truly matters.

Ms. Williams. Thank you.

Mrs. Demings. Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, I had the honor of speaking to a group of veterans this past weekend. And what I said to them was that no words -- no words are really adequate or sufficient to fully express our gratitude for their service to our Nation.

So, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, today I say to you, there are no words that are sufficient to fully express our gratitude to you for what you have done for our Nation and, amazingly, what you are still willing to do for our Nation.

It is vitally important that the American people understand how President Trump's unethical demand that Ukraine deliver politically motivated investigations in exchange for military assistance created a security risk for our -- the United States of America -- national security.

The President was not just playing a political game by withholding military aid and meetings with Ukraine. Threatening the hundreds of millions of dollars of military assistance that Congress had appropriated has real-life consequences for Ukraine and for the USA.

In your deposition, Colonel Vindman, you testified, and I quote, "A strong and

independent Ukraine is critical to our security interests."

Could you please explain why a strong and independent Ukraine is so critical and why it is so vital to U.S. interests?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. We sometimes refer to Ukraine as a frontline state. It's on the front line of Europe. They have actually described to me, the Ukrainians, that it is a -- they consider themselves as a barrier between Russian aggression and Europe. And what I've heard them describe is the need for U.S. support in order to serve this role, in order to protect European and Western security.

Mrs. Demings. Lieutenant Colonel, this is not just a theoretical conflict between Ukraine and Russia. You've already said this morning that Russia is actively fighting to expand into Ukraine, that Ukraine is in a hot war with Russia right now. Is that correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. It's stable, but it's still a hot war.

Mrs. Demings. And isn't it true, Lieutenant Colonel, that even if the security assistance was eventually delivered to Ukraine, the fact that it was delayed, just that fact, could signal to Russia that the bond between Ukraine and the U.S. was weakening?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That was the concern of myself and my colleagues.

Mrs. Demings. And was the risk of even the appearance that the U.S.-Ukraine bond is shaky is that it could embolden Russia to act with more aggression? Would you say that's correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I believe that was my testimony.

Mrs. Demings. Just last month, during an interview, President Putin joked about interfering in our political elections. I can only guess that's what we have become to Russia and its President.

I think he felt emboldened by the President's reckless actions, both attempts to hold critical military aid from Ukraine and President Trump's effort to blame Ukraine, not

Russia, for election interference.

Ms. Williams and Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, I can only say that every American, regardless of our politics, should be critically concerned about that.

And let me just say this. Yes, we do trust the American people. But you know what? The American people trust us, as Members of Congress, to support, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. And we intend to do just that.

Thank you again for your service.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The Chairman. Mr. Krishnamoorthi.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Good afternoon, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman and Ms. Williams. Thank you for your service.

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, I am concerned that your loyalty has been questioned not just because you are bringing forward evidence of wrongdoing against the President of the United States but because you're an immigrant.

Recently, FOX News host Brian Kilmeade said: He, meaning you, were born in the Soviet Union, emigrated with his family young. "He tends to feel sympatico with the Ukraine." I find this statement reprehensible because it appears that your immigrant heritage is being used against you.

Lieutenant Colonel, I came to this country when I was 3 months old. Your family fled the Soviet Union and moved to America when you were just 3-1/2 years old, right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. And I understand that your father worked multiple jobs while also learning English, right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Your father stressed the importance of embracing what it means to be an American, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. All your childhood memories relate to being an American, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. You and your family faced difficult times during your childhood, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. I can relate. That's my story too. But your father went on to become an engineer, right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He reestablished himself in his former profession in the United States.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. I can relate. I got a B.S. in engineering. Of course, some people claim I practice the B.S. part now.

You father never gave up working hard to build his very own American Dream, did he?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He did not.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Well, Lieutenant Colonel Vindman, your father achieved the American Dream, and so did you and your family. From one immigrant American to another immigrant American, I want to say to you that you and your family represent the very best of America.

I assume that you are as proud to be an American as I am, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes, sir.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Sir, I want to turn your attention to Yuriy Lutsenko. You

called him a disruptive actor in your opening statement, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Mr. Lutsenko, the former Prosecutor General in Ukraine, has made various claims about various Americans, right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. You are unaware of any factual basis for his accusations against Ambassador Yovanovitch, right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. He also was a source for an article by John Solomon in The Hill, right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. That is correct.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. And you said that key elements of that article as well as his accusations are false, right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Lutsenko is not a credible source, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Sir, the other side claims that there was absolutely no pressure on this July 25th phone call. I think that's what we heard earlier, right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I believe so.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. And you have termed what President Trump asked in terms of investigations on that phone call as a demand, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Correct.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. And you've pointed out the large power disparity between President Trump on the one hand and President Zelensky on the other, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. Yes.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. There was pressure on that phone call, right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. The Ukrainians needed the meeting. The Ukrainians, subsequently, when they found out about it, needed the security assistance.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. So pressure was brought to bear on them, correct?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I believe so.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Sir, Colonel Vindman, last week, we heard a decorated military veteran, namely Ambassador Bill Taylor, come before us. You interacted regularly with Ambassador Taylor, and you know him to be a man of integrity. And he's a patriotic American. Isn't that right?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. He's a superb individual.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. I asked Ambassador Taylor a series of questions based on his experience as an infantry commander. I asked him, quote, "Is an officer allowed to hold up action, placing his troops at risk, until someone provides them a personal benefit?" Ambassador Taylor responded, "No, sir."

Colonel Vindman, do you agree with Ambassador Taylor?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I do.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. I then asked Ambassador Taylor, quote, "Is that because they would be betraying their responsibility to the Nation?" Ambassador Taylor responded, "Yes, sir."

Colonel Vindman, do you agree with Ambassador Taylor?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I do.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. I then asked Ambassador Taylor, quote, "Could that type of conduct trigger a court martial?" Ambassador Taylor said, "Yes, sir."

Do you agree with Ambassador Taylor, Colonel Vindman?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I do.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Thank you for your service.

The Chairman. That concludes the member questioning.

Representative Nunes, you are recognized for any concluding remarks.

Mr. Nunes. Well, act one of today's circus is over. For those of you who have been watching it at home, the Democrats are no closer to impeachment than where they were 3 years ago. In the process, they've -- the Department of Justice, FBI, State Department, elements within the IC, the IC IG have all suffered long-term damage.

The Democrats can continue to put -- to poison the American people with this nonsense. We sat here all morning without any evidence for impeachment, which would be a very serious crime. High crime and misdemeanors, as it says in the Constitution. No such thing. Policy disagreements.

And the Democrats' failure to acknowledge their involvement in the 2016 election, I would say it's astonishing, but that would be putting too little emphasis on their actions.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Chairman. I thank the gentleman.

I want to thank our witnesses today, Ms. Williams, Colonel Vindman, both of you, for your service to the country, for your testimony here today.

And I just want to address, briefly, some of the evidence you presented as well as others thus far in the impeachment inquiry.

First of all, I want to join my colleagues in thanking you, Colonel Vindman, for your military service.

And I should tell you that, notwithstanding all of the questions you got on why didn't you go talk to your supervisor, why didn't you go talk to Mr. Morrison, why did you go to the National Security lawyer, as if there's something wrong with going to the National Security lawyer, are you aware that we asked Mr. Morrison whether he went to

the National Security lawyer right after the call and that he did?

Lieutenant Colonel Vindman. I am.

The Chairman. And are you aware also that we asked him, well, if you had this problem with Colonel Vindman not going to you instead of the lawyer, naturally, you must have gone to your supervisor? And do you know what his answer was? He didn't go to his supervisor either. He went directly to the National Security Council lawyer.

So I hope my colleagues will give him the same hard time for not following his chain of command that he complained about with you, apparently.

The President may attack you and has. Others on right-wing TV might attack you, and they have. But I thought you should know -- and maybe you know already -- that this is what the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had to say about you, Colonel Vindman: "He is a professional, competent, patriotic, and loyal officer. He has made an extraordinary contribution to the security of our Nation in both peacetime and combat." I'm sure your dad is proud to hear that.

My colleagues have tried to make the argument here today -- and we have heard it before -- that the President was just interested in fighting corruption. That's our goal, fighting corruption in Ukraine, this terribly corrupt country.

The problem, of course, with that is there's no evidence of the President trying to fight corruption. The evidence all points in the other direction. The evidence points in the direction of the President inviting Ukraine to engage in the corrupt act of investigating a U.S. political opponent.

Ambassador Yovanovitch was known as a strong fighter of corruption, so what does the President do? He recalls her from her post. Ambassador Yovanovitch, in fact, was at a meeting celebrating other anticorruption fighters, including a woman who had acid thrown in her face, on the day she was told to get on the next plane back to

Washington.

You prepared talking points for the President's first conversation with Zelensky. He's supposed to talk about rooting out corruption. If this President had such a deep interest in rooting out corruption in Ukraine, surely he would have brought it up in the call. But, of course, we now know that he did not.

We then see Rudy Giuliani not fighting corruption but asking for an investigation of the Bidens. And my colleagues say, well, maybe he was acting on his own; even though he says he's acting as the President's lawyer, maybe he was really acting on his own. But the two investigations that Rudy Giuliani wanted come up in the meeting you participate in on July 10th at the White House.

When Ambassador Sondland brings up the Bidens and Burisma and 2016, he tells the Ukrainians, if you want that meeting at the White House, you've got to do these investigations. Now, they would say Ambassador Sondland was acting on his own, but that doesn't quite work either because we have the call record from July 25th, which the President was forced to release, in which the President doesn't bring up corruption.

He doesn't say, "How are those anticorruption courts going?", or, "Great work in the Rada." Of course not. What does the President say? I want you to investigate the Bidens and this debunked conspiracy theory pushed by Vladimir Putin that also helps me in my reelection. So much for fighting corruption.

The message to Ukraine, the real message to Ukraine, our U.S. policy message is: Don't engage in political investigations. The message from the President, however, was the exact opposite: Do engage in political investigations, and do it for my reelection.

And it's also made clear, if they want the White House meeting and, ultimately, if they want 400 million in U.S. aid, this is what they have to do.

The only lament I hear from my colleagues is, it wasn't successful. They got

caught. They didn't get the political investigations and they still had to release the money. Now, they still haven't gotten the White House meeting, but they had to release the money. Because a whistleblower blew the whistle -- whistleblower the President wants to punish -- and because Congress announced it was doing investigations, and very soon thereafter the President was forced to lift the hold on the aid.

They argue, well, this makes it okay, that it was a failed effort to bribe Ukraine, a failed effort to extort Ukraine. That doesn't make it better. It's no less odious because it was discovered and it was stopped.

And we have courageous people like yourself who come forward, who report things, who do what they should do, who have a sense, as you put it, Colonel, of duty -- of duty -- not to the person of the President, but to the Presidency and to the country. And we thank you for that.

At the end of the day, I think this all comes back to something we heard from another career Foreign Service officer just last Friday in a conversation he overheard with the President in a restaurant in Ukraine, in which the President, not Rudy Giuliani, not anyone else, the President of the United States wanted to know, are they gonna do the investigations? This was the day after that July 25th call. Are they gonna do the investigations? And he's assured by Ambassador Sondland, they're gonna do it.

And what does Sondland relate to this Foreign Service officer after he hangs up that call? The President doesn't give a -- expletive -- about Ukraine. He only cares about the big things that help his personal interests.

That's all you need to know.

And it isn't just about Ukraine, of course. Ukraine is fighting our fight against the Russians, against their expansionism. That's our fight too. That's our fight too. At

least we thought so on a bipartisan basis. That's our fight too. That's why we support Ukraine with the military aid that we have. Well, the President may not care about it, but we do. We care about our defense, we care about the defense of our allies, and we darn well care about our Constitution.

We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:30 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]