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## Rick Perry Called Rudy Giuliani at Trump's Direction on Ukraine Concerns

President's lawyer said Ukraine had worked to hurt Trump in 2016 election, energy secretary says in interview



Secretary of Energy Rick Perry at the Energy Department's offices in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday. PHOTO: STEPHEN VOSS FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

*By Timothy Puko and Rebecca Ballhaus*

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WASHINGTON—Energy Secretary Rick Perry said he sought out Rudy Giuliani this spring at President Trump's direction to address Mr. Trump's concerns about alleged Ukrainian corruption, a sign of how closely the president's personal lawyer worked with the administration on Ukraine policy.

Mr. Perry, in an exclusive interview with The Wall Street Journal, said he contacted Mr. Giuliani in an effort to ease a path to a meeting between Mr. Trump and his new Ukrainian counterpart. He said Mr. Giuliani described to him during their phone call several concerns about Ukraine's alleged interference in the 2016 U.S. election, concerns that haven't been substantiated.

Mr. Perry also said he never heard the president, any of his appointees, Mr. Giuliani or the Ukrainian regime discuss the possibility of specifically investigating former Vice President Joe Biden, a Democratic presidential contender, and his son Hunter Biden. Mr. Trump's request for a probe of the Bidens in a July 25 call with Ukraine's president has sparked the impeachment inquiry in the House.

Mr. Giuliani, in an interview, confirmed the spring phone call and said he was telling Mr. Perry to be careful with regards to the new Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky. "Everything I said there I probably said on television 50 times," he said.

Mr. Giuliani has repeatedly accused Ukraine of interfering in the election on Democrat Hillary Clinton's behalf, allegations that Democratic lawmakers and others say are a way to undermine U.S. intelligence agencies' conclusion that Russia interfered in the 2016 election on Mr. Trump's behalf—a finding about which the president has repeatedly expressed skepticism.

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### Trump and Ukraine: A Guide to the Key Players



VALENTYN OGIRENKO/REUTERS

Mr. Perry's phone call to Mr. Giuliani came after a May meeting at the White House following the inauguration of the Ukrainian president. U.S. officials at that meeting, including Mr. Perry and Kurt Volker, the U.S. envoy for Ukraine negotiations, urged Mr. Trump to meet his new counterpart. Mr. Trump told officials there that they needed to work with Mr. Giuliani to resolve his concerns before he would agree to such a meeting, according to people familiar with

the matter.

Mr. Trump said he wasn't comfortable that the Ukrainians had "straightened up their act," a concern that Mr. Perry later understood to be related to Mr. Trump's 2016 campaign, Mr. Perry said, quoting Mr. Trump. "Visit with Rudy," Mr. Perry said the president told him.

Mr. Perry has served as one of the Trump administration's top liaisons with the new Ukrainian administration, a role that has made him a significant player in the course of events now under scrutiny in the impeachment probe into whether Mr. Trump abused his power to seek help from Ukraine digging up political dirt on rivals.

Mr. Giuliani's contact with the energy secretary adds another cabinet secretary to the list of officials he dealt with in his efforts to push for investigations in Ukraine, which he has said he did at the president's behest. Mr. Giuliani was also in contact with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, U.S. ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland and Mr. Volker, he has said.

In his most detailed account to date of the Ukraine events, Mr. Perry said Mr. Trump had dismissed his requests to meet with Mr. Zelensky to show U.S. support for the new administration.

At Mr. Trump's direction, the energy secretary said, he called Mr. Giuliani looking for a better understanding of Mr. Trump's concerns.

"And as I recall the conversation, he said, 'Look, the president is really concerned that there are people in Ukraine that tried to beat him during this presidential election,' " Mr. Perry said. " 'He thinks they're corrupt and...that there are still people over there engaged that are absolutely corrupt.' "

Mr. Perry said the president's lawyer didn't make any explicit demands on the call. "Rudy didn't say they gotta do X, Y and Z," Mr. Perry said. "He just said, 'You want to know why he ain't comfortable about letting this guy come in? Here's the reason.' "

In the phone call, Mr. Giuliani blamed Ukraine for the dossier about Mr. Trump's alleged ties to Russia that was created by a former British intelligence officer, Mr. Perry said, and asserted that Ukraine had Mrs. Clinton's email server and "dreamed up" evidence that helped send former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort to jail.

"I don't know whether that was crap or what," Mr. Perry added, "but I'm just saying there were three things that he said. That's the reason the president doesn't trust these guys."

Mr. Trump, in the July 25 call with Mr. Zelensky, raised some of the issues Mr. Giuliani described. He asked Mr. Zelensky to do a "favor" for the U.S. related to an unproven conspiracy theory about a cybersecurity firm that conducted forensic analysis of the hack of the Democratic National Committee's computer network in 2016. The firm concluded the hack was carried out by Russian intelligence officers, a finding U.S. agencies corroborated, but one about which the president has repeatedly expressed skepticism.

A rough transcript that the White House released of the president's call with Mr. Zelensky also showed that he pressed for the investigation of the Bidens. Mr. Trump has defended his call with Mr. Zelensky as "perfect" and has said the impeachment inquiry is a hoax.

Hunter Biden sat on the board of a Ukrainian gas company at the same time as his father, then President Obama's vice president, was leading an international anticorruption effort in



Mr. Perry said he has no current plans to leave the Trump administration. PHOTO: STEPHEN VOSS FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Ukraine, an arrangement Mr. Giuliani and the president have described as corrupt. There is no evidence of wrongdoing by either Biden.

Mr. Giuliani's business and political dealings in Ukraine have become a focus of investigations into the Trump administration's interactions with Ukraine. Two of his associates working in the country, Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, were arrested last week on campaign-finance and conspiracy counts. The two haven't entered a plea. Federal prosecutors are examining Mr. Giuliani's dealings and finances, meetings and work for a city mayor there, The Wall Street Journal previously reported.

Several diplomats have testified in the probe about their concerns regarding Mr. Giuliani, who was working often directly on behalf of the president but outside official diplomatic channels. For months he pushed the administration to remove the ambassador, Marie Yovanovitch. She was ultimately recalled on Mr. Trump's orders in May—at the same time the White House gave more power to Mr. Perry and other political appointees to lead diplomatic efforts in the country, people familiar with the matter said.

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Mr. Perry's involvement with the new Ukrainian administration began in May,

when he led a U.S. delegation that included Mr. Sondland, Mr. Volker and Sen. Ron Johnson (R., Wis.) to Ukraine for Mr. Zelensky's inauguration.

According to the whistleblower complaint filed in August that set off the impeachment probe last month, U.S. officials said Vice President Mike Pence had been set to lead the delegation, but that around May 14, Mr. Trump instructed Mr. Pence to cancel his planned trip and tapped Mr. Perry, who had traveled to Kyiv in November, to go in his place.

Mr. Perry was already well known in Ukraine, having twice met the previous president and other leaders of the country before Mr. Zelensky was elected. Mr. Perry saw Ukraine as essential to the administration's strategy in Europe to make the region less reliant on energy from Russia, and ideally more frequent customers of U.S. energy companies.

Mr. Perry had helped forge a deal to increase U.S. coal exports to the Eastern European country, and a gas deal with Poland that would help send the fuel into neighboring Ukraine, too. Energy Department officials worked every year to prepare the country if Russia were to shut off energy supplies in the winter. And Mr. Perry helped advise Ukrainian leadership on how to start reforms in its energy sector, including at the state gas company Naftogaz.

During the May trip, Mr. Volker informed the other members of the delegation of press reports detailing Mr. Giuliani's efforts to call for investigations in Ukraine, including into Mr. Biden and possible election interference, according to a person familiar with the matter. The group was surprised to learn what Mr. Giuliani had been doing, the person said.

On May 23, back in Washington, the delegation met with Mr. Trump at the White House, where the president directed the group to work with Mr. Giuliani before he would agree to meet with Mr. Zelensky.

After that meeting, the delegation that had traveled together to Kyiv continued to stay in touch on efforts to strengthen the relationship between Mr. Trump and Mr. Zelensky, including on energy issues that had come up in their meeting with the Ukrainian president, according to people familiar with the matter. In June, Mr. Perry met Mr. Zelensky again at a dinner in Brussels.

On July 10, some members of the delegation—including Mr. Perry, Mr. Sondland and Mr. Volker—convened again at the White House for a meeting with Oleksandr Danylyuk, the secretary of

Ukraine's national security and defense council, and John Bolton, then the U.S. national security adviser.

During that meeting, U.S. officials including Mr. Volker and Mr. Perry pushed for a call to be scheduled between Mr. Trump and Mr. Zelensky as a U.S. show of support for the new administration, according to people familiar with the conversation. Also during the meeting, Mr. Sondland brought up investigations the president was interested in Ukraine pursuing, a move that so alarmed Mr. Bolton and Fiona Hill, the top Russia adviser at the time, that Ms. Hill subsequently relayed her concerns to a National Security Council lawyer, Ms. Hill told House committees earlier this week.

After that meeting, Mr. Perry learned that administration aides had been told a call between Messrs. Trump and Zelensky didn't need to be scheduled until they had something substantive to discuss, according to a person familiar with the matter. Mr. Perry called Mr. Bolton on July 11 and again pressed for the two leaders to speak ahead of parliamentary elections on July 21, stressing that a call was needed to build the relationship and help counter Russian influence in Ukraine. Mr. Perry at that point also brought up investigations, reiterating that Mr. Zelensky was committed to rooting out corruption and wouldn't prove an obstacle to any probes, the person said.

After several more days of back-and-forth on the timing of the call, the two leaders spoke on July 25, four days after Ukraine's parliamentary elections.

The next day, Mr. Sondland gave an interview to a Ukrainian broadcaster in which he described himself, Mr. Volker and Mr. Perry as the "three amigos." He said the president had tasked the three of them with overseeing the U.S.-Ukraine relationship. "We can make sure all of the reforms and all of the initiatives that we are undertaking with Ukraine stay on track and happen quickly," he said.

Mr. Perry again disputed recent reports that have claimed he was planning to leave the administration, but he did leave the door open to his departure. He said he expects to be at the Energy Department at Thanksgiving, but gave a less definitive answer when asked about staying beyond that, through year's end.

"I don't know," he said. "I'm working at the will of the president, just like I always have."

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