

# Daniel Goldman's opening statement

## I. PRESIDENT TRUMP ABUSED THE POWER OF HIS OFFICE

Chairman Nadler, Ranking Member Collins, Members of the Committee:

We are here today because Donald J. Trump, the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, abused the power of his office—the American presidency—for his personal political benefit.

President Trump directed a months-long scheme to solicit foreign help in his 2020 reelection campaign, withholding official acts from the government of Ukraine in order to coerce and secure political interference in our domestic affairs. As part of the scheme, President Trump applied increasing pressure on the president of Ukraine to publicly announce two investigations helpful to his personal reelection efforts. He applied this pressure himself and through his agents within and outside of the U.S. government by conditioning a desperately-sought Oval Office meeting and \$391 million in taxpayer-funded, congressionally-appropriated military assistance—vital to Ukraine’s ability to fend off Russian aggression—on the announcement of political investigations helpful to his personal interests.

When the President’s efforts were discovered, he released the military aid, though it would take congressional action for the money to be made fully available to Ukraine. The Oval Office meeting still has not happened. And when faced with the opening of an official impeachment inquiry into his conduct, President Trump launched an unprecedented campaign of obstruction against Congress, ordering executive branch agencies and government officials to defy subpoenas for documents and testimony. To date, the investigating Committees have received no documents from the Trump Administration pursuant to our subpoenas. Were it not for courageous public servants doing their duty and testifying, the President’s scheme might still be concealed today.

The central moment in this scheme was a telephone call between President Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on July 25 of this year. During that call, President Trump asked President Zelensky for a personal favor: to initiate the two investigations that ultimately could help President Trump’s reelection in 2020. The first investigation involved former Vice President Joe Biden and was an effort to smear his reputation as he seeks the Democratic nomination in next year’s presidential election. The second investigation sought to elevate an entirely debunked conspiracy theory promoted by Russian President Vladimir Putin that Ukraine interfered in the last presidential election to support the Democratic nominee. In truth, as made clear by irrefutable evidence, Russia interfered in the last election in order to help then-candidate Trump.

The allegations about Vice President Biden and the 2016 election are patently false. That did not deter President Trump during his phone call with the Ukrainian president, and it does not appear to deter him now. Just two days ago, President Trump stated publicly

that he hopes that his personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, will report to the Department of Justice and to Congress the results of Mr. Giuliani's efforts in Ukraine last week to pursue these false allegations meant to tarnish Vice President Biden. President Trump's persistent and continuing effort to coerce a foreign country to help him cheat to win an election is a clear and present danger to our free and fair elections and to our national security.

The overwhelming evidence of this scheme is described in detail in a nearly 300-page document entitled "The Trump-Ukraine Impeachment Inquiry Report," formally transmitted from the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence to this Committee. The report relies on testimony from numerous current and former government officials, the vast majority of whom are non-partisan, career professionals responsible for keeping our nation safe and for promoting American values around the globe. The evidence presented by these witnesses cannot be seriously disputed: the President placed his personal interests above the nation's interests in order to help his own reelection efforts.

Before I highlight the evidence and the findings of the report, I want to take a moment to introduce myself and discuss today's testimony. I joined the House Intelligence Committee as Senior Advisor and Director of Investigations at the beginning of this Congress. Previously, I served for 10 years as a prosecutor in the Southern District of New York, joining the Department of Justice under the George W. Bush Administration. The team that I lead on the Intelligence Committee includes other former Federal prosecutors, a retired FBI agent, and investigators with significant national security expertise.

The report I am presenting today is based entirely on the evidence that the Intelligence Committee, in coordination with the Oversight and Foreign Affairs Committees, gathered as part of the investigation into President Trump's actions—nothing more and nothing less. The three investigating Committees ran a fair, professional, and thorough investigation. We followed the House rules for the depositions and the public hearings, and Members and staff from both parties had equal time to ask questions.

This investigation moved swiftly and intensively—as all good investigations should. To the extent that other witnesses would be able to provide more context and detail about this scheme, their failure to testify is due solely to the fact that President Trump obstructed the inquiry and refused to make them available.

Nevertheless, the extensive evidence the Committees uncovered during this investigation led to the following critical findings:

1. President Trump used the power of his office to pressure and induce the newly-elected president of Ukraine to interfere in the 2020 presidential election for President Trump's personal and political benefit.

2. In order to increase the pressure on Ukraine to announce the politically-motivated investigations that President Trump wanted, he withheld a coveted Oval Office meeting and \$391 million of essential military assistance from Ukraine.
3. President Trump's conduct sought to undermine our free and fair elections and poses an imminent threat to our national security.
4. Faced with the revelation of his pressure campaign against Ukraine, President Trump directed an unprecedented effort to obstruct Congress' impeachment inquiry into his conduct.

With that context in mind, I would like to turn to the evidence of President Trump's conduct concerning Ukraine.

## II. PRESIDENT TRUMP SOUGHT AN INVESTIGATION INTO A 2016 ELECTION CONSPIRACY THEORY

On July 25, 2019, President Trump held his second phone call with the new Ukrainian president. The first, in April, was short and cordial, following the Ukrainian president's election success. The second call would diverge dramatically from what those listening in had expected.

Just prior to this call, President Trump spoke to Gordon Sondland, the U.S. Ambassador to the European Union and who donated \$1 million to the President's inaugural campaign, and who had been directed by President Trump to take on a leading role in Ukraine issues. Ambassador Sondland relayed the President's message to President Zelensky through Ambassador Kurt Volker, who had lunch that day with President Zelensky's top aide, Andriy Yermak. Ambassador Volker texted Mr. Yermak with President Trump's direction:

*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 visit to Washington. Good luck! See you tomorrow - kurt

So even before the phone call with President Zelensky took place, President Trump directed that Ukraine initiate the "investigation" into the debunked conspiracy theory about the 2016 election as a condition for President Zelensky to visit the White House.

Ambassador Sondland was clear in his testimony about this quid pro quo:

I know that members of this committee frequently frame these complicated issues in the form of a simple question: "Was there a quid pro quo?"

As I testified previously with regard to the requested White House call and the White House meeting, the answer is yes.

During his call with the Ukrainian leader, President Trump did not discuss matters of importance to the United States, such as Ukraine's efforts to root out corruption. Instead, President Trump veered quickly into the personal favor he wanted from

President Zelensky: two investigations that would help his reelection effort. Witnesses who listened to the call described it as “unusual,” “improper,” “inappropriate,” and “concerning.” Two of them immediately reported their concerns to White House lawyers.

Let me spend a few minutes taking you through that important call step-by-step, because it is evidence that is central to the President’s scheme. Near the beginning of the call, President Zelensky said:

I would also like to thank you for your great support in the area of defense. We are ready to continue to cooperate for the next steps specifically we are almost ready to buy more Javelins from the United States for defense purposes.

The “great support in the area of defense” included nearly \$400 million of U.S. military assistance to Ukraine, which one witness said was nearly 10 percent of Ukraine’s defense budget. This support comes as a result of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2014, when Russia illegally annexed roughly seven percent of Ukraine’s territory. Since then, the United States and our allies have provided support for Ukraine, an emerging post-Soviet democracy, to fend off Russia to the east.

Yet just a few weeks before his July 25 telephone call, President Trump had inexplicably placed a hold on military assistance to Ukraine without providing any reason to his own cabinet members or national security officials. The evidence the Committees collected showed that there was unanimous support for the aid from every relevant agency in the Trump Administration.

Nevertheless, during the call, President Trump complained that U.S. support for Ukraine was not reciprocal. Later, immediately after President Zelensky brought up U.S. military support and purchasing Javelins anti-tank weapons, President Trump responded:

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.

The favor involved two demands. First, President Trump stated:

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. There are a lot of things that went on, the whole situation. I think you’re surrounding yourself with some of the same people.

I would like to have the Attorney General call you or your people and I would like you to get to the bottom of it. As you saw yesterday, that whole nonsense ended with a very poor performance by a man named Robert Mueller, an incompetent performance, but they say a lot of it started with Ukraine. Whatever you can do, it’s very important that you do it if that’s possible.

Here, President Trump was referring to the baseless conspiracy theory that the Ukrainian government—and not Russia—was behind the hack of the Democratic National Committee server in 2016. Not a single witness testified that there was any factual support for this allegation.

To the contrary, a unanimous assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community found that Russia alone interfered in the 2016 U.S. election. Just one day before this telephone call, as President Trump himself mentioned, Special Counsel Robert Mueller had testified before Congress about his finding that the “Russian government interfered in the 2016 presidential election in sweeping and systematic fashion.”

Dr. Fiona Hill, an expert on Russia and President Putin who served on the NSC until July, testified that the President was told by former senior advisors, including his Homeland Security Advisor and his former National Security Advisor, that the “alternative theory that Ukraine had interfered in the election was false.”

Although no one in the U.S. government knew of any factual support for this theory, it did have one supporter: Russian President Vladimir Putin. In February 2017, he said:

Second, as we all know, during the presidential campaign in the United States, the Ukrainian government adopted a unilateral position in favor of one candidate.

More than that, certain oligarchs, certainly with the approval of the political leadership, funded this candidate, or female candidate, to be more precise.

If there was any doubt about who benefits from this unfounded theory, President Putin made it clear recently, when he said:

Thank God no one is accusing us anymore of interfering in U.S. elections. Now they’re accusing Ukraine.

In the face of clear evidence—not only from Intelligence Community experts but from his own national security team—that Russia, not Ukraine, interfered in the 2016 election, President Trump still pressed the Ukrainian president to announce an investigation into this conspiracy theory because it would help his own political standing. And President Trump sought to withhold an Oval Office meeting from the president of Ukraine until he fell in line with President Putin’s lies—the leader who had invaded Ukraine.

### III. PRESIDENT TRUMP SOUGHT AN INVESTIGATION INTO HIS POLITICAL RIVAL

The second demand that President Trump made of President Zelensky during the July 25 call was to investigate the front runner for the Democratic nomination for President in 2020—former Vice President Biden and his son, Hunter Biden. President Trump stated:

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.

Witnesses unanimously testified that there was no factual support for this claim. Rather, they noted that Vice President Biden was acting in support of an international consensus and official U.S. policy to clean up the prosecutor general's office in Ukraine.

Despite these facts, by the time of the July 25 call, Mr. Giuliani had been publicly advocating for these two investigations for months, while also using back channels to press Ukrainian officials to initiate them in support of President Trump. Ambassador Sondland understood Mr. Giuliani's role clearly:

Mr. Giuliani was expressing the desires of the President of the United States, and we knew these investigations were important to the President.

To others, Mr. Giuliani was working at cross-purposes with official policy channels toward Ukraine even as he was working on behalf of President Trump. According to former National Security Advisor Ambassador John Bolton, Mr. Giuliani was a "hand grenade who's going to blow everybody up."

Near the end of the July 25 call, President Zelensky circled back to the pre-cooked message that Ambassador Volker had relayed to President Zelensky's top aide before the call, saying:

I also wanted to thank you for your invitation to visit the United States, specifically Washington DC. 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.

In other words, on one hand is the White House visit, while "on the other hand," he agreed to pursue the investigations. This statement shows that President Zelensky fully understood—at the time of this call—the quid pro quo between these investigations and the White House meeting that President Trump required.

Numerous witnesses testified about the importance of a White House meeting with the President of the United States, specifically a meeting in the Oval Office—an official act by President Trump. As David Holmes, senior official in the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, said:

It is important to understand that a White House visit was critical to President Zelensky. President Zelensky needed to show U.S. support at the highest levels in order to demonstrate to Russian President Putin that he had U.S. backing as well as to advance his ambitious anticorruption reform agenda at home.

That support remains critical as President Zelensky meets today with President Putin to try to resolve the conflict in the east.

The day after the phone call, President Trump sought to ensure that President Zelensky got the message. On July 26, U.S. officials met with President Zelensky and other Ukrainian officials in Kyiv, and President Zelensky mentioned that President Trump had brought up some “very sensitive issues” three times during the call. After that meeting, Ambassador Sondland had a private meeting with Mr. Yermak, the top Ukrainian aide, during which they “probably” discussed “the issue of investigations.”

At lunch with Mr. Holmes and two other State Department officers immediately after the meeting, Ambassador Sondland pulled out his cellphone and called President Trump.

Somewhat shocked, Mr. Holmes recounted the conversation that followed:

I heard Ambassador Sondland greet the President and explain he was calling from Kyiv. I heard President Trump then clarify that Ambassador Sondland was in Ukraine. Ambassador Sondland replied, yes, he was in Ukraine, and went on to state that President Zelensky, quote, “loves your ass.” I then heard President Trump ask, “So he’s going to do the investigation?” Ambassador Sondland replied that he is going to do it, adding that President Zelensky will do “anything you ask him to do.”

After the call, Ambassador Sondland told Mr. Holmes that President Trump “did not give a s--- about Ukraine” and only cares about the “big stuff” that benefits the President, like the “Biden investigation” that Mr. Giuliani was pushing.

To repeat—and this is very important—Ambassador Sondland spoke to President Trump before the July 25 call with President Zelensky and relayed to Ukrainian officials President Trump’s requirement of political investigations in exchange for a White House meeting.

During that call, President Trump asked for the “favor” of these two political investigations immediately after the Ukrainian president brought up U.S., military support for Ukraine. At the end of the call, President Zelensky made a point of acknowledging the link between the investigations President Trump requested and the White House meeting President Zelensky desperately wanted.

The following day, Ambassador Sondland confirmed to President Trump that the Ukrainians would indeed initiate the investigations discussed on the call, which were the only thing about Ukraine that President Trump cared about.

#### IV. THE PRESIDENT CONDITIONED AN OVAL OFFICE VISIT ON INVESTIGATIONS

The July 25 call was neither the start nor the end of President Trump’s efforts to use the powers of his office for personal political gain. Prior to the call, the President had removed the former Ambassador, Marie Yovanovitch, to clear the way for three hand-picked agents to spearhead his agenda in Ukraine: Secretary Perry, Ambassador Sondland, and Ambassador Volker, who attended President Zelensky’s inauguration on

May 20. All political appointees, they proved to be more than willing to engage in what Dr. Hill later described as an improper “domestic political errand” for the President.

On April 21, President Zelensky won the Ukrainian election with 73 percent of the vote. He had two primary platforms: to resolve the war in the east with Russia and to root out corruption. That same day, President Trump called to congratulate him on his win. Even though the White House press release following the call stated that President Trump expressed his shared commitment to “root out corruption,” President Trump in fact did not mention corruption at all, just like he did not mention corruption on the July 25 call.

Shortly after this call, President Trump asked Vice President Mike Pence to attend President Zelensky’s inauguration. But on May 13, President Trump did an about-face and directed Vice President Pence not to attend. An advisor to Vice President Pence testified that the inauguration had not yet been scheduled, and therefore the reason for the abrupt change of plans was not related to any scheduling issues.

What happened in the three weeks between the April 21 presidential call and May 13, when Vice President Pence was removed from the delegation? A few things:

- First, on April 25, Vice President Biden formally announced his bid for the Democratic nomination for President.
- Second, on May 3, President Trump spoke with President Putin of Russia. One senior State Department official testified that Presidents Trump and Putin discussed Ukraine on that phone call.
- Third, on May 9, Mr. Giuliani told The New York Times that he intended to travel to Ukraine on behalf of his client, President Trump, in order to “meddle in an investigation.”
- After public backlash, and apparent pushback from Ukraine, Mr. Giuliani canceled his trip on May 10, claiming President Zelensky was surrounded by “enemies” of President Trump.

At a May 23 meeting in the Oval Office, President Trump said that Ukraine was corrupt and “tried to take him down in” 2016—the same false narrative pushed by President Putin and Mr. Giuliani. In order for the White House meeting to occur, President Trump told the delegation they must “talk to Rudy” to get the visit scheduled.

In the weeks and months following, Mr. Giuliani relayed to both Ukrainian officials and the government officials that President Trump designated at the May 23 meeting the directive from President Trump that a White House meeting would not occur until Ukraine announced the two political investigations that President Trump required. Before the July 25 call, Ambassadors Sondland and Volker also relayed this quid pro quo to the Ukrainians, including to President Zelensky. Ambassador Volker conveyed the message directly to President Zelensky at the beginning of July, urging him to reference “investigations” associated with the “Giuliani factor” with the President.

In meetings at the White House on July 10, Ambassador Sondland told other U.S. officials and two of President Zelensky's advisors that he had an agreement with Acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney that the White House visit would be scheduled if Ukraine announced the investigations. One witness testified that, during the second of the meetings, Ambassador Sondland began to "review what the deliverable would be in order to get the meeting," referring to an "investigation of the Bidens." The witness told the Committee that the request "was explicit. There was no ambiguity" and that Ambassador Sondland also mentioned "Burisma," a major Ukrainian energy company. To witnesses that testified before the Committee, references to "Burisma" was shorthand for an investigation into the Bidens.

Ambassador Bolton, as well as his staff members, objected to the meeting-for-investigations trade, and Ambassador Bolton told Dr. Hill:

You go and tell Eisenberg that I am not part of whatever drug deal Sondland and Mulvaney are cooking up on this, and you go and tell him what you've heard and what I've said.

Yet this was not a rogue operation by Mr. Giuliani and Ambassadors Sondland and Volker. As Ambassador Sondland testified, "Everybody was in the loop," including Mr. Mulvaney, Secretary Pompeo, Secretary Perry, and their top advisors.

On July 19, Ambassador Sondland emailed Mr. Mulvaney, Secretary Perry, Secretary Pompeo and others after speaking with President Zelensky.

From: Gordon Sondland  
To: Robert Blair, Lisa Kenna, Brian McCormack, Mick Mulvaney, Rick Perry, Mike Pompeo  
Subject: I talked to Zelensky just now  
Time: 15:28

He is prepared to receive Potus' call. Will assure him that he intends to run a fully transparent investigation and will "turn over every stone." He would greatly appreciate a call prior to Sunday so that he can put out some media about a "friendly and productive call" (no details) prior to Ukraine election on Sunday.

Both Chief of Staff Mulvaney and Secretary Perry responded to the email, noting that a date would soon be set to schedule the White House meeting.

The evidence also unambiguously shows that the Ukrainians understood this quid pro quo and had serious reservations, particularly because President Zelensky had won the election on an anti corruption platform. In fact, a few days before the July 25 call, Ambassador William Taylor, the acting U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, texted Ambassadors Sondland and Volker:

[O]n July 20, I had a phone conversation with Mr. Danyliuk, during which he conveyed to me that President Zelensky did not want to be used as a pawn in a U.S. reelection campaign.

But President Trump's pressure campaign on President Zelensky did not relent. Just four days later, President Zelensky received the message that he needed to convince President Trump that he would do the investigations in order to get the White House meeting. And as I have described, President Zelensky tried to do exactly that during his July 25 call with President Trump.

In the weeks following the July 25 call, President Zelensky heeded President Trump's request, sending his top aide to Madrid to meet with Mr. Giuliani. In coordination with Mr. Giuliani, the President Trump's hand-picked representatives continued his pressure campaign to secure a public announcement of the investigations.

According to Ambassador Sondland—and this is very telling—President Trump did not require that Ukraine actually conduct investigations as a prerequisite for the White House meeting. Instead, the Ukrainian government only needed to publicly announce the investigations. It is clear that the goal was not the investigations themselves, but the political benefit that President Trump would enjoy from an announcement of investigations into his 2020 political rival and against a unanimous assessment that showed that he received foreign support in the 2016 election. For that reason, the facts didn't matter to President Trump, because he only cared about the personal benefit from the announcement.

Over the next couple weeks, Ambassadors Sondland and Volker worked with President Zelensky's aide, Mr. Yermak, to draft a statement for President Zelensky to issue. When the aide proposed a statement that did not include specific references to the investigations President Trump wanted—Burisma/Biden and the 2016 election—Mr. Giuliani said that would not be good enough to get a White House meeting.

#### *Yermak Draft, August 11*

We intend to initiate and complete a transparent and unbiased investigation of all available facts and episodes, which in turn will prevent the recurrence of this problem in the future.

#### *Giuliani-Volker-Sondland Draft, August 13*

We intend to initiate and complete a transparent and unbiased investigation of all available facts and episodes, including those involving Burisma and the 2016 US elections, which in turn will prevent the recurrence of this problem in the future.

Ultimately, President Zelensky's administration temporarily shelved this announcement, though efforts to press Ukraine would remain ongoing. By mid-August, Ukraine did not make a public announcement of the investigations that President Trump required, and, as a result, no White House meeting was scheduled.

## V. PRESIDENT TRUMP CONDITIONED MILITARY AID ON INVESTIGATIONS

By this time, the President was pushing on another pressure point to coerce Ukraine to announce the investigations: the hold on the vital military assistance that the President had put in place for more than a month, still without any explanation. Our investigation revealed that a number of Ukrainian officials had made quiet inquiries to various U.S. officials about the aid as early as July 25, the same day as President Trump's call with President Zelensky. Inquiries by Ukrainian officials continued in the weeks that followed until the hold was revealed publicly at the end of August. By the end of that month, the evidence revealed several facts:

1. One, the President demanded that Ukraine publicly announce two politically-motivated investigations to benefit his reelection.
2. Two, a coveted White House meeting was expressly conditioned on Ukraine announcing those investigations.
3. Three, President Trump had placed a hold on vital military assistance to Ukraine without any explanation *and* notwithstanding uniform support for that assistance from the relevant Federal agencies and Congress.
4. Ambassador Taylor testified that this quid pro quo between the investigations President Trump wanted and the security assistance that President Zelensky needed was "crazy":

As I said on the phone, I think it's crazy to withhold security assistance for help with a political campaign.

In an effort to move the White House meeting and the military aid along, Ambassador Sondland wrote an email to Secretary Pompeo on August 22:

Mike, Should we block time in Warsaw for a short pull-aside for Potus to meet Zelensky?

I would ask Zelensky to look him in the eye and tell him that once Ukraine's new justice folks are in place (mid-Sept) Ze should be able to move forward publicly and with confidence on those issues of importance to Potus and to the US. Hopefully, that will break the logjam.

Ambassador Sondland testified that this was a reference to the political investigations that President Trump discussed on the July 25 call that Secretary Pompeo eventually admitted that he had listened to. Ambassador Sondland hoped that this would help lift the "logjam"—the hold on critical security assistance to Ukraine and the White House meeting. Three minutes after Ambassador Sondland's email, Secretary Pompeo replied: "Yes."

After the hold on military assistance became public on August 28, senior Ukrainian officials expressed grave concern, deeply worried about the practical impact on their efforts to fight Russian aggression, but also about the public message it sent to the Russian government.

On September 1, at a pre-briefing with Vice President Pence before he met President Zelensky, Ambassador Sondland raised the issue of the hold on security assistance. He said:

I mentioned to Vice President Pence before the meetings with the Ukrainians that I had concerns that the delay in aid had become tied to the issue of investigations. I recall mentioning that before the Zelensky meeting. During the actual meeting, President Zelensky raised the issue of security assistance directly with Vice President Pence, and the Vice President said that he would speak to President Trump about it.

Vice President Pence nodded in response, expressing neither surprise nor dismay at the linkage between the two.

Following Vice President Pence's meeting with President Zelensky, Ambassador Sondland pulled aside President Zelensky's advisor to explain that the hold on security assistance was also conditioned on the public announcement of the Burisma/Biden and the 2016 election interference investigations.

Ambassador Sondland explained to Ambassador Taylor later that day that he had previously made a "mistake" in telling Ukrainian officials that only the White House meeting was conditioned on a public announcement of the political investigations beneficial to President Trump. In truth, "everything"—the White House meeting and the vital security assistance to Ukraine—was now conditioned on the announcement. President Trump wanted President Zelensky in a "public box." A private commitment was not good enough.

Nearly one week later, on September 7, the hold remained and President Trump and Ambassador Sondland spoke on the phone. The President told Ambassador Sondland that "there was no quid pro quo," but—and this is important—President Zelensky would be required to announce the investigations in order for the hold on security assistance to be lifted, "and he should want to do it." In effect, this is the equivalent of saying that there is no quid pro quo—no "this for that"—before describing precisely the "this for that" requirement.

Immediately after this phone call with President Trump, this was the precise message that Ambassador Sondland passed directly to President Zelensky. According to Ambassador Taylor:

Ambassador Sondland also said that he had talked to President Zelensky and Mr. Yermak and had told them that, although this was not a quid pro quo, if President Zelensky did not clear things up in public, we would be at a stalemate. I understood a 'stalemate' to mean that Ukraine would not receive the much-needed military assistance."

Needing the military assistance and hoping for the White House meeting, President Zelensky finally relented to President Trump's pressure campaign, and arrangements were soon made for the Ukrainian President to make a public statement during an

interview on CNN where he would make a public announcement of the two investigations that President Trump wanted in order to secure a White House meeting and the much-needed military assistance.

Although there is no doubt President Trump had ordered the military aid held up until the Ukrainians committed to the investigations, on October 17, Acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney confirmed that there was such a quid pro quo. Let's watch what he said:

MR. MULVANEY: ...So that was — those were the driving factors. Did he also mention to me in the past the corruption related to the DNC server? Absolutely. No question about that. But that's it. And that's why we held up the money. Now, there was a report —

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

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

Q: The investigation into Democrats.

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

There you have it. By early September, the President's scheme was unraveling. On September 9, the Intelligence, Oversight and Foreign Affairs Committees announced an investigation into President Trump and Mr. Giuliani's efforts. Later that same day, the Intelligence Committee learned that a whistleblower had filed a complaint nearly a month earlier related to this issue, and that the Trump Administration was withholding it from Congress. The White House had been aware of the whistleblower complaint for several weeks.

On September 11, in the face of growing public and congressional scrutiny, President Trump lifted the hold on security assistance to Ukraine. As with the implementation of the hold, no reason was provided. Put simply, President Trump got caught, so he released the aid.

Since this investigation began, the President has demonstrated no contrition or acknowledgment that his demand for a foreign country to interfere in our election is wrong. In fact, he has repeatedly called on Ukraine to investigate Vice President Biden, his political rival. Here is one example:

Mr. President, what exactly did you hope Zelensky would do about the Bidens after your phone call? Exactly.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I would think that, if they were honest about it, they'd start a major investigation into the Bidens. It's a very simple answer.

They should investigate the Bidens, because how does a company that's newly formed — and all these companies, if you look at — And, by the way, likewise, China should start an investigation into the Bidens, because what happened in China is just about as bad as what happened with — with Ukraine.

And in a brazen demonstration of disregard for the rule of law and our free and fair elections, the President's agent, Rudy Giuliani, even traveled to Ukraine just last week to attempt to manufacture more dirt against President Trump's political rival. This weekend, the President publicly touted Mr. Giuliani's information.

These and other actions by the President and his associates demonstrate that his determination to solicit of foreign interference in our election continues today. It did not end with Russia's support for Trump in 2016, which President Trump invited by asking for his opponent to be hacked by Russia. And it did not end when his Ukrainian scheme was exposed in September of this year. The question for you, the members of this Committee, and the other members of Congress, is whether you think it is okay to use the power of the Office of the Presidency to get foreign assistance to win an election. Or whether we should just "get over it," as Mick Mulvaney suggested.

## VI. PRESIDENT TRUMP OBSTRUCTED THE IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY

Before I finish, I would like to take a moment to discuss President Trump's unprecedented efforts to obstruct this investigation. The Constitution vests the "sole power of Impeachment" with the Congress, not the President. Yet in response to this impeachment inquiry, the President refused to recognize Congress' authority and has refused to cooperate. Instead, he has directed all Federal agencies to stonewall Congress.

Following President Trump's order, not a single document was produced by the White House, the Office of the Vice President, the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, or the Department of Energy in response to 71 specific, individualized requests or subpoenas. In total, 12 witnesses did not appear for their scheduled testimony before the Committees, and 10 of those individuals defied duly-authorized subpoenas.

Nine Top Aides to President Trump Defied Subpoenas at His Direction

Three Top Aides Refused to Testify

## V. CONCLUSION

The Intelligence Committee has produced to you a nearly 300-page report, and you have afforded me the opportunity today to walk you through some of the evidence underlying it. Admittedly, it is a lot to digest. But let me say this: the President's scheme is actually quite simple, and it can be boiled down to four key takeaways:

First, President Trump directed a scheme to pressure Ukraine into opening two investigations that would benefit his 2020 reelection campaign, not the U.S. national interest.

Second, President Trump used his official office and the official tools of U.S. foreign policy—the withholding of an Oval Office meeting and \$391 million in security assistance—to pressure Ukraine into meeting his demands.

Third, everyone was in the loop—from the Vice President and the Acting Chief of Staff, to the Secretary of State and Secretary of Energy.

Fourth, despite public discovery of this scheme, which prompted the President to release the aid, he has not given up. He and his agents continue to solicit Ukrainian interference in our election, causing an imminent threat to our elections and our national security.

In June of this year, while sitting in the Oval Office, President Trump told a reporter that “he’d take” information on his political opponent from a foreign country. This followed a nearly two-year investigation by Special Counsel Robert Mueller that found that Donald Trump’s 2016 political campaign expected that it would “benefit electorally” from foreign help, which it knew about and utilized to win the election. Candidate Trump welcomed the help in 2016, but in 2019, he launched an extensive scheme to use the awesome power of the Presidency to leverage official presidential acts in order to get that help again.

President Trump’s actions and words show that there is every reason to believe that he will continue to solicit foreign interference in our elections. This undermines the very foundation of our democracy: our independent and sovereign right to choose our elected officials, including and especially our Commander in Chief. Ultimately, this Committee and the House of Representatives must determine whether such conduct poses a clear and present danger to our elections and to our national security such that it warrants the impeachment of the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, Donald J. Trump.

I look forward to answering your questions so that you can make the best-informed decision for our country on this critical issue before you.