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7 PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,

8 joint with the

9 COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

10 and the

11 COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,

12 U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

13 WASHINGTON, D.C.

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17 DEPOSITION OF: PHILIP REEKER

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22 Saturday, October 26, 2019

23 Washington, D.C.

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1 The deposition in the above matter was held in Room HVC-304,
2 Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 11:03 a.m.

3 Present: Representatives Schiff, Swalwell, Heck, and Wenstrup.

4 Also Present: Representatives Engel, Connolly, Maloney, Lynch,
5 Raskin, Malinowski, Meadows, and Perry.

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2 Appearances:

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5 For the PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE:

6 [REDACTED]

7 [REDACTED]

8 [REDACTED]

9 [REDACTED]

10 [REDACTED]

11 [REDACTED]

12 [REDACTED]

13 [REDACTED]

14 [REDACTED]

15 [REDACTED]

16 [REDACTED]

17 [REDACTED]

18 [REDACTED]

19 [REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED]

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23 For the COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM:

24 [REDACTED]

25 [REDACTED]

UNCLASSIFIED

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2 For the COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

3 [REDACTED]

4 [REDACTED]

5 [REDACTED]

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8 For PHILIP REEKER:

9 MARGARET E. DAUM, PARTNER

10 SQUIRE PATTON BOGGS LLP

11 2550 M STREET, NW

12 WASHINGTON, DC 20037

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning, Ambassador Reeker, and welcome to
2 the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence which, along with
3 the Foreign Affairs and Oversight Committees, is conducting this
4 investigation as part of the official impeachment inquiry of the House
5 of Representatives. Today's deposition is being conducted as part of
6 the impeachment inquiry.

7 In light of attempts by the State Department and the
8 administration to direct you not to cooperate with the inquiry, the
9 committee had no choice but to compel your appearance today. We thank
10 you for complying with a duly authorized congressional subpoena as
11 other former and current officials from across the Federal Government
12 have done.

13 Ambassador Reeker is the Acting Assistant Secretary of European
14 and Eurasian Affairs and has held this position since earlier this year.
15 Ambassador Reeker joined the Foreign Service in 1992 and has served
16 with distinction in various positions through his long career in public
17 service.

18 Ambassador Reeker, we are grateful your being here and we thank
19 you for your service. We look forward to your testimony today,
20 including your knowledge of and involvement in key policy discussions,
21 meetings, and decisions on Ukraine that relate directly to areas under
22 investigation by the committees. This includes developments related
23 to the recall of Ambassador Yovanovitch, the President's July 25th,
24 2019, call with Ukrainian President Zelensky, as well as the
25 documentary record that has come to light about efforts before and after

1 the call to get the Ukrainians to announces publicly investigations
2 into two areas President Trump asked Zelensky to pursue, the Bidens
3 and Burisma and the conspiracy theory about Ukraine's purported
4 interference in the 2016 U.S. elections.

5 We'll also have questions about the Department's response to the
6 impeachment inquiry, including the committee's subpoena, which the
7 Department continues to defy, despite the fact that we know it has
8 already collected significant documentary evidence that goes to the
9 heart of our inquiry.

10 Finally, to restate what I and others have emphasized in other
11 interviews, Congress will not tolerate any reprisal, threat of
12 reprisal, or attempt to retaliate against any government official for
13 testifying before Congress, including you or any of your colleagues.
14 It is disturbing that the State Department, in coordination with the
15 White House, has sought to prohibit Department employees from
16 cooperating with the inquiry and with Congress and have tried to limit
17 what people can say.

18 This is unacceptable. Thankfully, consummate public servants,
19 like you, have demonstrated remarkable courage in coming forward to
20 testify and tell the truth.

21 Before I turn to committee counsel to begin the interview, I
22 invite the ranking member, in his absence, a minority member of the
23 Foreign Affairs or Oversight Committee, to make any opening remarks.

24 MR. MEADOWS: Thank you, Chairman Schiff.

25 Ambassador Reeker, thank you for being here.

1 Certainly as we look to today's hearing, it is my understanding,
2 Mr. Chairman, that this is, I guess, a joint deposition. Is that
3 correct?

4 THE CHAIRMAN: It is of the character I described in my opening
5 statement.

6 MR. MEADOWS: All right. And so as a joint deposition, one of
7 the concerns I have, as you know, you and I had a very respectful
8 conversation as it relates to the rules, and access to the deposition
9 transcripts is a key component. It is my understanding that you and
10 your staff have access to the deposition transcripts currently. And
11 under the rules, maybe I will quote it here, under paragraph 9 in the
12 rules it says, the chair and the ranking minority member shall be
13 provided with a copy of the transcripts of the deposition at the same
14 time.

15 And so, Mr. Chairman --

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry.

17 MR. MEADOWS: That's all right.

18 So, Mr. Chairman, in light of the rules, I think it's critically
19 important that if we're going to have fair and equal access and follow
20 the rules, that those deposition transcripts be provided to the
21 minority at the same time.

22 And to date, it has been very laborious, I think, in a best case
23 scenario, and impossible in a worse case scenario, to have access to
24 those transcripts.

25 And so I would just bring to the chairman's attention the rules,

1 and, respectfully, and I mean that respectfully, let's look and see
2 if we can have an accommodation as it relates to the deposition.

3 I just find it very difficult to have sat in over 60 hours of
4 transcribed interviews and then have it be very difficult for me to
5 go back and compare notes or refresh my memory when I've actually been
6 in the depositions.

7 I'm not saying wide access to those outside of the three
8 committees of jurisdiction, but certainly the three committees of
9 jurisdiction. And under the guidelines that you set forth in your
10 opening statement, I think that would be appropriate.

11 I respectfully yield back.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: I think the gentleman.

13 My understanding is that under the rules the chairman and ranking
14 member, so myself and Mr. Nunes, have access to the transcript in
15 electronic form. All Members of the three committees have access to
16 transcripts in hard copy, but they are not allowed to take the hard
17 copy out of the spaces.

18 We don't print numerous copies because the very first transcript
19 that the minority was allowed to print was then leaked to a conservative
20 newspaper in very short order.

21 The point of doing the depositions in closed session -- and as
22 you know, there are almost 50 Republican Members entitled to
23 participate -- is so that witnesses are not influenced by the testimony
24 of others. When transcripts are released, as the transcript of
25 Mr. Volker's testimony was, it obviously undermines the integrity of

1 the investigation and we're trying to prevent that.

2 MR. MEADOWS: And undermining the integrity of the investigation
3 is certainly not what I'm suggesting.

4 And so with that, this is either a joint deposition or it's not.
5 The House rules are very clear. You know full well that this rule was
6 actually not put in place for this type of hearing as much as it was
7 what I call the Issa rule. You were very familiar with that during
8 the Benghazi hearings. It was put in place under a Republican
9 majority, primarily because of the classified nature of those and the
10 desire of Congressman Issa to be part of that.

11 I'm not asking for a printed copy. I've not seen a printed copy
12 of any transcript. But what I am asking is, is that we're allowed with
13 our staff to go in and review those depositions as we prepare for further
14 witnesses. I think that would certainly be in keeping with the rules.
15 I think it is in spirit with the rules.

16 My understanding is right now is that we can set up a time and
17 have your staff come in and supervise that. That's not laid out in
18 the rules, Mr. Chairman.

19 And again, I think when we look at this, it's paragraph 9,
20 paragraph 10. I'm just saying respectfully, let's find a way to make
21 an accommodation. And I'm not asking you to rule right now. Certainly
22 we can have a further discussion off-line.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: And let's have that further discussion off-line
24 so we don't have to use up the witness' time.

25 MR. MEADOWS: I'll yield back.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: We'll see if we can reach an accommodation.
2 Again, I'm happy to entertain any accommodation that doesn't expose
3 us to the same risk of what happened with the first transcript that
4 was made available.

5 And of course we have a problem with people willy-nilly ignoring
6 the House rules as we saw when some of your colleagues came into the
7 SCIF the other day.

8 MR. MEADOWS: Certainly the chairman and this ranking member are
9 both committed to keeping the rules. And so I guess in that spirit
10 is why I'm making the respectful appeal.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: I thank you.

12 I will now turn it over to Mr. Goldman to begin the deposition.

13 MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 This is a deposition of Ambassador Philip Reeker conducted by the
15 House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence pursuant to the
16 impeachment inquiry announced by the Speaker of the House on September
17 24th.

18 As you know, Ambassador Reeker, the committees had to adjust our
19 schedule due to the memorial events the past two days in honor of our
20 dear colleague, Representative Elijah Cummings. And we appreciate
21 your flexibility in accommodating our schedule in order to conduct this
22 deposition on a weekend.

23 Ambassador Reeker, if you can now please state your full name and
24 spell your last name it for the record.

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: My name is Philip Thomas Reeker,

1 R-e-e-k-e-r.

2 MR. GOLDMAN: And if you just want to pull the microphone in a
3 way that makes you comfortable that you just speak and it goes into
4 the microphone. Thank you.

5 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Got it.

6 MR. GOLDMAN: Along with other proceedings in furtherance of the
7 inquiry to date, this deposition is part of a joint investigation led
8 by the Intelligence Committee in coordination with the Committee on
9 Foreign Affairs and Oversight and Reform. In the room today are
10 majority staff and minority staff from all three committees, and this
11 will be a staff-led deposition. Members, of course, may ask questions
12 during their allotted time as has been the case in every deposition
13 since the inception of this investigation.

14 My name is Daniel Goldman. I'm the director of investigations
15 for the HPSCI majority staff. And I want to thank you again for coming
16 in today.

17 Let me do some brief introductions. To my right Nicholas
18 Mitchell. He is the senior investigative counsel for the Intelligence
19 Committee. Mr. Mitchell and I will be conducting most of the interview
20 for the majority.

21 And I'll now let my counterparts from the minority staff introduce
22 themselves?

23 MR. CASTOR: Steve Castor with the Republican staff of the
24 Oversight Committee.

25 [REDACTED]

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MR. GOLDMAN: This deposition will be conducted entirely at the unclassified level. However, the deposition is being conducted in HPSCI secure spaces and in the presence of staff with appropriate security clearances. We also understand that your attorney has her security clearance as well.

It is the committee's expectation that neither questions asked of you nor answers provided by you will require discussion of any information that is currently or at any point could be properly classified under Executive Order 13526. You are reminded that EO 13526 states that, quote, "In no case shall information be classified, continue to be maintained as classified, or fail to be declassified," unquote, for the purpose of concealing any violations of law or preventing embarrassment of any person or entity.

If any of our questions can only be answered with classified information, please inform us of that before you answer the question and we can adjust accordingly.

Today's deposition is not being taken in executive session, but because of the sensitive and confidential nature of some of the topics and materials that will be discussed, access to the transcript of the deposition will be limited to the three committees in attendance.

Under the House deposition rules, no Member of Congress nor any staff member can discuss the substance of the testimony that you provide

1 today. You and your attorney will have an opportunity to review the
2 transcript of today's deposition?

3 Before we begin, I'd like to go over some ground rules. We will
4 be following the House regulations for depositions, which we have
5 previously provided to your counsel. The deposition will proceed as
6 follow. The majority will be given 1 hour to ask questions, then the
7 minority will be given 1 hour to ask questions. Thereafter, we will
8 alternate back and forth between majority and minority in 45-minute
9 rounds until questioning is complete. We will take periodic breaks,
10 but if you need a break at any time, please just let us know.

11 Under the House deposition rules, counsel for other persons or
12 government agencies may not attend. You are permitted to have an
13 attorney present during this deposition. And I see that you have
14 brought a personal attorney.

15 At this time, if counsel could please state her appearance for
16 the record?

17 MS. DAUM: Margaret Daum, Squire Patton Boggs, for Ambassador
18 Reeker.

19 MR. GOLDMAN: There is a stenographer taking down everything that
20 is said here today in order to make a written record of the deposition.
21 For that record to be clear, please wait until each question is
22 completed before you begin your answer and we will try to wait until
23 you finish your response before asking you the next question. The
24 stenographer cannot record nonverbal answers, such as shaking your
25 head, so it is important that you answer each question with an audible

1 verbal answer.

2 We ask that you give complete replies to questions based on your
3 best recollection. If a question is unclear or you are uncertain in
4 your response, please let us know. And if do not know the answer to
5 a question or cannot remember, simply say so.

6 You may only refuse to answer a question to preserve a privilege
7 that is recognized by the committee. If you refuse or object to a
8 question -- refuse to answer or object to a question on the basis of
9 privilege, staff may either proceed with the deposition or seek a ruling
10 from the chairman on an objection. If the chair overrules any such
11 objection, you are required to answer the question.

12 Finally, you are reminded that it is unlawful to deliberately
13 provide false information to Members of Congress or staff. It is
14 imperative that you not only answer our questions truthfully, but that
15 you give full and complete answers to all questions asked of you.
16 Omissions may also be considered as false statements.

17 As this deposition is under oath, Ambassador Reeker, would you
18 please now stand and raise your right hand to be sworn?

19 Do you swear that your testimony here today will be the whole truth
20 and nothing but the truth?

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I do.

22 MR. GOLDMAN: Let the record reflect that the witness has been
23 sworn.

24 And you may be seated?

25 Ambassador Reeker, if you have an opening statement or your

1 attorney has any matters to discuss before we proceed, now is the time.

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I have no opening statement.

3 MR. GOLDMAN: All right. Then I will recognize myself for 60
4 minutes.

5 EXAMINATION

6 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

7 Q Ambassador Reeker, before we get into the substance of
8 today's deposition, we would like to just briefly go through your
9 background.

10 As we understand, you joined the Foreign Service in 1992. And
11 can you describe for us, generally speaking, some of your foreign posts
12 and your more recent positions?

13 A Sure. I joined in 1992 after finishing graduate school.
14 Actually went through the Foreign Service process and joined with the
15 United States Information Agency, which at that time was separate.

16 My first assignment was to Budapest, Hungary, where I was the
17 assistant information officer or press attache. I moved on then to
18 be the public affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Skopje, what is
19 now North Macedonia.

20 From there, I went back to Washington to become the director of
21 the press office, the Office of Press Relations at the Department of
22 State, and subsequently became the deputy spokesman, first under
23 Secretary of State Albright and then through the transition for 3 more
24 years under Secretary of State Powell.

25 From there, I went back overseas, returning to Budapest as the

1 Deputy Chief of Mission from 2004 to 2007. From 2007 to 2008, I served,
2 [REDACTED] in Baghdad at
3 the U.S. Embassy there, as the Counselor for Public Affairs to
4 Ambassador Ryan Crocker, working very closely with Ambassador Crocker
5 and General David Petraeus on the so-called surge in that period in
6 Iraq.

7 I was then nominated to be the United States Ambassador to again
8 what is now called North Macedonia, confirmed by the Senate, and arrived
9 at post in September 2008.

10 After a normal 3-year tour as Ambassador, in 2011 I was asked to
11 come back and become the Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of
12 European and Eurasian Affairs covering the Balkans, South Central
13 Europe, as it's known, and then later expanded to include Central Europe
14 and the office of Holocaust Initiatives.

15 And then after that assignment I followed [REDACTED], who had been
16 assigned to Italy, to become counsel general in Milan. I served there
17 from 2014 to 2017, at which time I moved. I had been asked to become
18 the civilian deputy commander of the United States European Command,
19 the U.S. military forces in Europe, serving as deputy to General Curtis
20 Scapparotti, who was at that time the commander of U.S. European
21 Command, based in Stuttgart, and was serving in that capacity as his
22 civilian deputy and foreign policy advisor until in late January I was
23 approached or called by the Department upon the sudden resignation of
24 the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, Wess Mitchell.
25 Secretary Pompeo asked me to come back to Washington to take over

1 running the Bureau of European Affairs after Wess had departed.

2 So I -- formally I came back on the 18th of March to be able to
3 be here for the NATO 70th anniversary ministerial, and then I was
4 semi-dual-hatted. My technical assignment at European Command ended
5 at the 26th of May, I believe, but I travel about 50 percent of the
6 time back and forth to our various posts.

7 We have, as you know, 50 countries in the European -- under the
8 European Bureau. That includes 49 missions, including NATO, the
9 European Union, the OSCE, and 28 consulates or constituent posts as
10 well. Back here in Washington we have about 300 employees under the
11 Bureau of European Affairs. I have seven deputy assistant
12 secretaries, a principal deputy who came on in August and then six more
13 deputy assistant secretaries, and as I said, about 300 staff here.
14 Overseas, the Bureau has about 11,500 personnel for which I'm broadly
15 responsible.

16 Q Thank you for that background. We are going to focus
17 primarily on your time as Acting Assistant Secretary in 2019.

18 A And if I may clarify, I think it's at least worth noting for
19 the record, I am formally assigned as the Principal Deputy Assistant
20 Secretary in the Bureau and in that capacity serve as Acting Assistant
21 Secretary since I'm not confirmed.

22 Q Understood.

23 Are you -- prior to testifying here today, did you have
24 any -- you, yourself, have any conversations with anyone at the State
25 Department about your testimony?

1 A The fact that I was doing it?

2 Q Let's start with the fact -- the fact that you were asked
3 and whether or not you should testify.

4 A I let my supervisor, my boss, the Under Secretary, David
5 Hale, know, as well as the Office of the Legal Advisor and my principal
6 deputy know. I think I sent an email the night that I received the
7 request to testify. One of my deputies had already testified, George
8 Kent. And I certainly didn't keep it a secret that I'd been asked
9 to -- requested to give a deposition as the email stated. And
10 originally the request was for Wednesday.

11 Q Did anyone, other than in formal letters to you, did anyone
12 discourage you from testifying?

13 A No, sir.

14 Q Did you have any discussions with anyone else about the
15 substance of your testimony?

16 A No, sir.

17 Q Are you aware that the committees have subpoenaed the
18 Department for documents related to this investigation?

19 A I do understand that from the press reporting, yes.

20 Q Only from the press reporting?

21 A Yeah, to the best -- well, I know we were -- when this began,
22 I was traveling in Italy on official travel. And I recall that there
23 was -- we needed to at least review files for documents relevant to
24 this, and I understood that my emails were reviewed automatically.

25 Q Were you asked to collect any documents related to the

1 subject of this investigation?

2 A There was a general request. And so, since I was traveling,
3 my assistant went through files. And I really didn't have anything
4 relevant. Everything I had was in email.

5 Q Okay. And I see you do have a binder of materials here today.
6 Can you just generally describe what's in that binder?

7 A It's my emails.

8 Q Your emails.

9 A Not all of them obviously, because I get upwards of 300 or
10 400 a day. But it's emails that I thought may be relevant to help me
11 trace and recall.

12 Q And just for the record, it's a 4-inch binder, it appears
13 that it's quite full of perhaps a couple hundred pages of documents.
14 Is that accurate?

15 A Yes, that's accurate.

16 Q And you are aware of --

17 MR. MEADOWS: 3-inch binder.

18 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

19 Q -- are you not, that the Department has not provided the
20 committees with any documents pursuant to the subpoena. Is that right?

21 A That is my understanding, yes.

22 Q Have you had any conversations with anyone at the State
23 Department about whether the Department should --

24 A No, sir.

25 Q -- produce any documents?

1 A No, sir.

2 Q Okay. But you've reviewed the relevant emails prior to
3 testifying here today?

4 A Well, I've tried to review to the best -- I have a fairly
5 fulsome job. And so in between, in preparing what was initially a short
6 period and then with a couple of extra days, I did try to go through
7 emails just to try to be able to recall and track the general timeline
8 of things that I believe you may be interested in.

9 Q Okay. And that review, I assume, has helped you prepare for
10 your interview today.

11 A I think so, yes.

12 Q Your testimony today.

13 A I may be able to refer to some of them.

14 Q So just so you're aware, because we don't have those
15 documents and don't have any documents, we may be asking a lot of
16 questions just to get some of the basics and the foundation. So it
17 may seem basic, it may seem redundant, but we ask your indulgence as
18 we try to determine the facts here.

19 In addition to emails, did you have any electronic
20 communications, such as WhatsApp messages, related to the topic of the
21 investigation?

22 A I do have some -- a few pages of WhatsApp, I guess you
23 could -- would that be call a transcript? -- WhatsApp things which I
24 converted to, as we're required to do, converted to archives -- I'm
25 not very technically inclined here -- and sent to my email. So -- and

1 I think those -- I reviewed those.

2 Q And generally speaking, who were those WhatsApp messages
3 with?

4 A I think I have four people with whom they are relevant.
5 Masha Yovanovitch. Let me just check to be accurate here. Sorry, I'm
6 being a terrible witness. I apologize. Masha Yovanovitch, Bill
7 Taylor, George Kent, and Kurt Volker.

8 Q All right. So you said that in January you were asked by
9 Secretary Pompeo to return to D.C. to take on this new role. Is that
10 right?

11 A Specifically, I can't actually find in my calendar the
12 specific day, but I had been in Washington for a chief of mission
13 conference. I was invited to join the European Bureau's chief of
14 mission conference in my capacity as the civilian deputy at European
15 Command where the focus was on trying to integrate defense and
16 diplomacy, our State, DOD, EUCOM, EUR, the European Bureau work. So
17 I was back for that. Returned to Stuttgart.

18 And it was several days later. I think it was close to the very
19 end of January, Wess Mitchell had suddenly announced his resignation
20 as Assistant Secretary. And I received a call from him saying: Sorry
21 I didn't tell you this before. And then he suggested I was going to
22 get another phone call because a new idea had come up. And I received
23 that call from the Counselor of the State Department, Ulrich Brechbuhl,
24 who talked to me for a little while and said they were interested in
25 having me come back to take over for Wess.

1 Q Could you just move your microphone a little closer to your
2 mouth?

3 A I'm sorry.

4 Q You can pull it even closer to you just so you're comfortable.
5 It's a large room.

6 A Lapel mikes or something. That's better. Is that all
7 right? Sorry.

8 So he suggested that I come back to Washington. In fact, I was
9 scheduled, I think, to come back for something EUCOM related. And I
10 did return to D.C. then. I left -- I flew on the 6th of February and
11 on the 7th and 8th I had a variety of meetings, including with Wess
12 Mitchell, with Counselor Brechbuhl, and ultimately a short meeting with
13 Secretary of State Pompeo. They asked me if I would do this. That
14 was their desire, that my new assignment would be to come back and do
15 that.

16 And so then I returned to Stuttgart on the 9th of February. The
17 Secretary had suggested that I join him, along with Wess, who was of
18 course still in his capacity as Assistant Secretary, on the trip to
19 Central Europe that they took immediately after.

20 So I went back to Stuttgart, arriving on the 10th of February,
21 changed my suitcase and then went to Budapest to join the Secretary's
22 party on the 11th. We were in Budapest, Bratislava, then Warsaw.
23 Stopped in Brussels later that week. And then the Secretary visited
24 Iceland, Reykjavik, Iceland, and I accompanied on that trip. And then
25 I went from there back to Munich actually on the -- I think it was the

1 15th of February -- for the Munich security conference in my existing
2 job as EUCOM deputy commander.

3 Q You mentioned a trip, part of that European swing was to
4 Warsaw. What was in Warsaw? Do you recall?

5 A In Warsaw there was the Ministerial on the Future of the
6 Middle East and bilateral meetings. I think we were there two nights
7 as I recall.

8 Q Were you aware that Rudy Giuliani attended that conference?

9 A I do recall hearing somebody mention that Rudy Giuliani was
10 in town. I do recall that. It had no particular significance to me
11 or to the conference site. But I do recall that I never saw him or
12 met him.

13 Q How did you hear that he was there? Who told you, do you
14 recall?

15 A I just remember hearing it in the -- it's possible I may have
16 read it in the press, but I do recall hearing that.

17 Q Do you know if he met with any employees of the State
18 Department?

19 A I do not know.

20 Q When you were asked to take the job, what did you know about
21 Ukraine?

22 A Well, I mean, I followed some developments in Ukraine. I
23 think I had visited there twice in my life. The first time, in my very
24 first assignment, I went to Kyiv, it must have been 1995, newly
25 independent country from the Soviet Union of course after the collapse

1 of the Soviet Union. I think that was when the President at that time
2 made the first visit to independent Ukraine by a U.S. President. I
3 just worked on the press support.

4 And then I accompanied Secretary Albright in my capacity as
5 spokesman, deputy spokesman. I think I must have been Acting at that
6 point. So traveled with her.

7 I was, of course, aware of the Russian -- the general current
8 events in Ukraine and then the Russian, shall we say, invasion,
9 attempted annexation of Crimea in 2014, our efforts to support Ukraine.

10 I was aware of the general policy. It wasn't particularly
11 relevant to my working in Italy, although we often focused on the
12 sanctions that the United States put in place, helping to explain those
13 and encourage the support, because the European Union also had put
14 sanctions in place against Russia because of their invasion of Ukraine,
15 their occupation of Crimea, and the war that they had started in the
16 Donbas in the eastern part of Ukraine.

17 And, you know, the extensive programs we've had, supported and
18 funded by Congress, to help the Ukrainians over time in terms of their
19 reforms and development.

20 And then at EUCOM I was familiar with Ukraine generally.
21 Obviously EUCOM had a role there in terms of some of the military support
22 that we were providing. I knew the Ambassador, Masha Yovanovitch. I
23 knew the previous Ambassador. And that was part of my job at EUCOM,
24 was to maintain a liaison there.

25 Q Did you have -- what was your relationship with Ambassador

1 Yovanovitch like?

2 A I've know Masha for, I think -- she's been in the Foreign
3 Service longer than I, but, you know, probably 20 years. We both have
4 served in the broad -- broadly same region. When I was nominated and
5 came for my confirmation hearing, we were on the same panel. She was
6 being confirmed for Armenia, to be Ambassador to Armenia. She had
7 already been, I believe, Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan. And so we were on
8 the same panel. We knew each other. We're friends, colleagues.

9 Q And what was her general reputation as a Foreign Service
10 officer?

11 A Outstanding. I mean, she's one of the Foreign Service great
12 leaders. Outstanding diplomat, very precise, very -- very
13 professional, considered an excellent mentor, you know, a good leader.
14 And this was, of course, Ukraine was her third ambassadorship. We had
15 served together in the European Bureau when I was Deputy Assistant
16 Secretary for the Balkans and in Central Europe. She was another one
17 of the DAS's. I think she had the Nordic and Baltic portfolio at that
18 time. And then she became the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
19 and Acting for a period toward the end of my time in the Bureau.

20 Q Had you ever heard any complaints within the State Department
21 about the job that she was doing as Ambassador of Ukraine?

22 A No, sir. And at European Command she had an excellent
23 reputation. The commander found her extremely professional and worked
24 closely with her.

25 Q Soon after your official start date in this role as the Acting

1 Assistant Secretary, I'm sure you're aware there became a lot of or
2 there was a lot of publicity related to her and her role in Ukraine
3 toward the end of March. I assume -- you became aware of that as well
4 at the end of March, right?

5 A Yes, sir. I arrived late in the evening of the 17th of March
6 from Stuttgart. Went home to my apartment and reported to work in the
7 European Bureau on the 18th.

8 One of the first tasks that I had at hand, because my
9 responsibility largely in sort of shepherding this bureau, the large
10 bureau I described to you, is making sure the personnel issues at the
11 top level are handled and the -- Masha was coming to the end of her
12 3-year tour and we needed to find a new candidate, the chief of mission
13 process, the usual Foreign Service process, which had been conducted
14 and identified a candidate for nomination.

15 That candidate had been redirected to a different job and so there
16 was then an opening. And one of my first tasks was to work within the
17 Bureau and the bureaucracy to try to identify candidates to
18 submit -- you know, there is a standard process for this -- to submit
19 then to what's known as the Deputies Committee that then selects the
20 Department's candidate, which then goes on to become, after the
21 appropriate vetting, et cetera, become a nominee.

22 So we were focused on that. There were two posts that needed
23 quickly to get new candidates.

24 Q Were you aware that she had been asked to stay a little longer
25 than her usual tour?

1 A I was aware that that had been considered, because when the
2 candidate, the person that was -- had been selected and was working
3 towards, you know, submitting the necessary papers for nomination was
4 revectorred, I had had conversations with Masha about -- you know,
5 timing of confirmation is always a challenge. And I believe Under
6 Secretary Hale had approached her about whether, you know, was she able
7 to stay.

8 We go through this a lot with a number of our ambassadors in posts.
9 Some have onward assignments, some of them are retiring, some of them
10 have personal reasons. Others, when there's a gap because of, you
11 know, a slow confirmation process we try to see if we can have them
12 carry on. We have a number of posts right now, for instance, that are
13 covered by the deputies in the capacity as Charge d'Affaires pending
14 confirmation of that.

15 So I know that she had been approached as to the possibility of
16 that certainly in the earlier period.

17 Q Was there anything unusual about the reassignment of the
18 other candidate that you are aware of?

19 A Look, let me just be very candid, I was that candidate. So
20 I had been approached by Assistant Secretary Mitchell as he was doing
21 the annual chief of mission process, as we call it, and was I interested
22 in any of the jobs that were open or coming open.

23 To be honest, I was ambivalent because I was extremely happy at
24 European Command. It was a 3-year assignment and I was just finishing
25 the first year of it. [REDACTED]

1 [REDACTED]
2 [REDACTED] Worked out reasonably well. The commute was
3 tolerable.

4 But Wess was quite eager and so encouraged me to consider the
5 Ukraine job. And ultimately I was -- I was the candidate and I had
6 gotten as far, December 21st, I recall, just before the Christmas
7 weekend, I got word that the White House had approved moving forward
8 with potential nomination, which means they send you hundreds of pages
9 of documents to fill out.

10 And I did not do that over Christmas and got through the holiday.
11 And then as I was doing -- starting to work on those forms, and in fact
12 when Wess Mitchell called me, I got a message, you know, Assistant
13 Secretary Mitchell wants to call you. I said, oh, he's calling to say,
14 where do you stand on those forms? And they weren't done, of course.
15 And that's when he said, you know, we have this other -- we would like
16 you to do this instead. So --

17 Q You said that Wess Mitchell's resignation was somewhat
18 sudden or surprising. Why did you frame it that way?

19 A I mean, I knew Wess. Wess is a friend, a colleague I have
20 known him even prior to his time as Assistant Secretary. And we had
21 a good rapport. I made sure that he and the commander were well knitted
22 up in terms of the task at hand, that is the integration of State and
23 DOD, diplomacy and defense. And he had expressed a number of times
24 he's got young children and that maybe he was coming toward the end.

25 So it wasn't a complete surprise that he chose to do that, but

1 it was unexpected, I guess is the better word. Obviously it was his
2 decision.

3 Q But it wasn't from -- as far as you knew, there was no policy
4 or other reason that he --

5 A Not that I'm aware of. He always told me he was -- you know,
6 again, little kids and more time with the family.

7 Q Are you -- what happened related to Ambassador Yovanovitch
8 after you assumed duty, the duties of this job on March 18th?

9 A So that week, of course, there came this sort of avalanche
10 of very, very negative press stories. There was a public prosecutor
11 in Ukraine who was alleging things about the Ambassador. Ukraine was
12 in a highly politicized period prior to their Presidential election.

13 I had actually been there in my EUCOM capacity, further to the
14 question you started and we got partially through it in terms of any
15 experience I had with Ukraine. I had visited there once with General
16 Scaparrotti for a ship visit, the USS Mount Whitney, that paid a port
17 call in Odessa, probably in the summer, late summer of 2018.

18 And then in February when I already had -- knew that I had been
19 revectoring, I similarly took a trip down for another U.S. ship visit
20 in Odessa and talked to Masha at that time. And we'd had a little
21 conversation about what was she doing, what were her plans. And in
22 fact one of the conversations we had was she expressed an interest in
23 possibly succeeding me at EUCOM, because obviously that job was now
24 suddenly coming open.

25 And so with her tour ending, you know, in the coming months, in

1 the summer of 2019, I was quite enthused about that. In fact the
2 commander at EUCOM was also quite enthused about that opportunity.

3 So then this storm of, as I literally arrived in the first days,
4 all of these stories were coming out, lots of press inquiries to the
5 European Bureau press office, to the Department as a whole, allegations
6 of all kinds of what seemed to me very outlandish and unrealistic
7 stories were coming out about this.

8 And it, you know, became kind of one of these media frenzies, lots
9 of efforts to figure out where is this coming from, what is this about,
10 and the press operation generating, of course, trying to generate
11 responses to the queries from press.

12 Q Was there internal discussion within the State Department
13 about the allegations themselves against her?

14 A I discussed with -- primarily with the Counselor, Ulrich
15 Brechbuhl, this, and also with David Hale, the Under Secretary, who
16 is, of course, responsible for all of the -- the Under Secretary for
17 Political or Policy Affairs and oversees all of the geographic bureaus.

18 And Ulrich did say: Any idea where this is coming from, what this
19 is about? We started sort of trying to look into that, talking to the
20 post, of course to Masha. My deputy for Eastern Europe, which includes
21 Ukraine, George Kent, who is a real expert on the whole region actually,
22 as well as the Caucasus that he covers, and he had been the Deputy Chief
23 of Mission under Masha Yovanovitch until a year prior when he came back
24 to be the DAS, he kind of led and coordinated a look into that.

25 I did understand from Ulrich that there had been, I think a year

1 previously or sometime in 2018, a letter from Congressman Sessions
2 which had criticized Ambassador Yovanovitch and accused her of being
3 partisan, to which Ulrich said they had never found anything to suggest
4 any foundation to those allegations.

5 And he had thought after that that perhaps that had sort of ended,
6 but clearly this was coming back again. And I believe some of the press
7 coverage in March referred to that letter from Congressman Sessions.
8 And in fact, it was -- the letter was released with sort of some not
9 so great blacking out of the name, but it was clearly that letter from
10 2018.

11 Q Did the Department determine whether or not any of the
12 allegations that came out about Ambassador Yovanovitch at the end of
13 March had any merit?

14 A The general -- not even general -- the view was there was
15 never any proof, was one word that was used, there was no documentation
16 to suggest this. Ultimately -- and I don't have the full timeline
17 right in front of me. Ultimately, the Prosecutor, who had alleged that
18 she as Ambassador had given him a do-not-prosecute list, he ultimately
19 recanted that. There was never anything to suggest this.

20 And I think certainly the Counselor underscored that. And I
21 think efforts were made at his level and with the support of the
22 Secretary to push back on some of these journalists and their reporting,
23 to simply ask: Where are you getting this? On what basis are you
24 writing this or tweeting this? Because, of course, this is common now,
25 some tweet comes out and then is retweeted with no basis at all and

1 it generates more questions.

2 And some of them were really not just highly, highly inaccurate
3 and inflammatory, but threatening also to Ambassador Yovanovitch. And
4 this affects not only, you know, our policy, our standing, the work
5 of the embassy, which was, you know, extremely busy.

6 It's a large mission with a lot of very hardworking people working
7 on programs to fight corruption, to promote economic reforms, to work
8 on energy diversification, to promote antitrust, and try to help
9 Ukraine emerge from the oligarchical system that has kept them far from
10 their potential, to help them pursue their clearly Western orientation,
11 with obviously fighting literally a hot war on their eastern front from
12 Russia.

13 All that work is vitally important. That was key to our policy
14 and that was being certainly distracted from. In fact, because the
15 Prosecutor had put out these nasty allegations, these untrue
16 allegations about the Ambassador, and he was known to be close to
17 President Poroshenko, on my third day -- in fact, I guess it would be
18 technically my fourth day -- Thursday, March 21st, with the advice of
19 my Ukraine folks, we called in -- the Ambassador was not available,
20 but -- the Deputy Chief of Mission of the Ukrainian Embassy here in
21 Washington, we called her in to deliver a stern demarche, saying, this
22 was unacceptable, to have Government of Ukraine figures maligning our
23 Ambassador in this way.

24 Q Who met with the Ukrainian official?

25 A I did, as the --

1 Q Just you?

2 A Well, I'm sure I would have had staff with me from the
3 Ukraine --

4 Q You were the highest ranking --

5 A Yes.

6 Q -- Department official?

7 A Yes.

8 Q You mentioned something about there being follow-on press
9 related to these allegations. Do you know who was amplifying these
10 allegations and accusations in the media around this time?

11 A I mean, you can look at all those media reports and they quote
12 a number of people. There was -- Mr. Giuliani, of course, was one of
13 the main voices of this and he, himself, was on air. There was Mr.
14 diGenova, I recall, who was also there and a stream of press reports
15 which then, you know, they sort of feed on each other. And that really
16 was lasting that whole week, and through the next week we continued
17 to be bombarded with this. And I was pushing for responses, what we
18 were going to say about this in terms of the pushing back, defending
19 our Ambassador and our mission there.

20 Q Who did you have those conversations with?

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Could I before we -- before you answer that. What
22 was the Ukrainian response when you did that demarche with the Ukrainian
23 counterparts to raise these concerns?

24 A The Deputy Chief of Mission was mortified. And she was a
25 young diplomat who did report that immediately back. And I believe

1 the President himself or certainly his staff in Ukraine offered some
2 apologies and tried to tone things down on the Ukrainian side. The
3 Ambassador, who returned, I think, a day or 2 later, called me. I was
4 in the midst of just sort of meeting these people, because, as I said,
5 it was literally my first week on the job, and he came in to underscore
6 that, you know, this was nasty politics in Ukraine and, you know, they
7 valued the Ambassador, they valued the U.S. relationship, and all that
8 the United States was doing to support Ukraine's progress and their
9 efforts to defend themselves against the Russia aggression.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: And this was relayed to you by the Ukrainian
11 Ambassador to the United States?

12 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah, he came in, he followed up the
13 demarche. He was not available when we called. The standard
14 procedure would have been to call him in. He was, I think, traveling
15 on the West Coast or someplace and that's why his deputy came to receive
16 the demarche and our stern concerns about this. And then I had a
17 meeting with him at some point.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: And what's the Ambassador's name?

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: He's now gone. I can probably find it.
20 Chalyy, Ambassador Chalyy, C-h-a-l-y-y.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: And was it Ambassador Chalyy who informed you that
22 it would have been then President Poroshenko had expressed his regret
23 as well.

24 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think we heard that through our embassy in
25 Kyiv.

1 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

2 Q You said that Rudy Giuliani was one of the foremost
3 individuals discussing these allegations in public. Were you aware
4 of whether the President had commented or tweeted about these
5 allegations for the article in the paper?

6 A I do not recall specifically. I know his son Donald Trump,
7 Jr., retweeted or tweeted something to that -- the same thing with some,
8 in my view, incorrect statements about Ambassador Yovanovitch.

9 Q Were you aware of whether this received some prominent
10 attention on FOX News around this time?

11 A Yes. I mean, if I look through emails -- my -- the Ukraine
12 office, and George Kent sort of overseeing that, he being the senior
13 guy on my team, also with the knowledge and the expertise on Ukraine,
14 knows all the players, all the -- knows the language, the political
15 dynamics.

16 So they were with the embassy and his office compiling all of these
17 reports and forwarding me volumes, of which I didn't have a chance to
18 read everything, but we were trying to keep track of the stories and
19 how it was generating and where was this coming from, which was the
20 question that the Counselor was asking.

21 And I was forwarding not all, but summaries, ones that I thought
22 captured well the context, you know, what was happening, who it was
23 coming from, and how it was demonstrably wrong. I was forwarding those
24 to Under Secretary Hale and to Counselor Brechbuhl.

25 Q You said over the next week or two there were internal

1 discussions within the Department about a potential response to defend
2 the Ambassador. Can you describe what conversations you had and what
3 recommendations you made?

4 A Most of the process of developing press guidance or
5 statements starts with our press office in conjunction with the subject
6 matter experts drafting potential guidance or statements, with the
7 embassy obviously contributing, and I think Ambassador Yovanovitch
8 herself who had a clear interest in getting some solid push back on
9 this.

10 And that goes through a clearance process in the Department and
11 I would -- often it would get through the Bureau up to my deputies and
12 myself, and then it would move upstairs to what we call the seventh
13 floor for the "P," known as the Under Secretary for Political Affairs,
14 David Hale, and then "C," Ulrich Brechbuhl, the Counselor, who were
15 kind of in the main my senior go-to people on this.

1 [12:03 p.m.]

2 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

3 Q And what -- describe the conversations that you had -- well,
4 withdrawn.

5 There was an immediate statement issued by the Department
6 specifically rejecting the allegations. Were you aware of that, that
7 followed very closely on to the publication of the first article?

8 A Yeah, if you give me a chance here, I'll --

9 Q And by the way, feel free to review your emails as we go on
10 today if they are helpful to you.

11 A Exactly. That's why I brought them. So I think I should
12 try to use them. Let's see.

13 Okay. So by Wednesday, March 20th, when a lot of this stuff had
14 come out -- and the way the press operation usually works, it's response
15 to particular queries from journalists.

16 And we did get a response to the query that there were rumors at
17 that time circulating around the dismissal of the Ambassador to
18 Ukraine, and citing articles in The Hill publication.

19 And so we had a statement -- a response. Just to be technical,
20 it's a response to the press query, versus a formal statement that is
21 released by the Department. And they sent me a draft, which was cleared
22 by Deputy Assistant Secretary, DAS Kent, by D staff, that's the Deputy
23 Secretary of State; P staff, the Under Secretary of State, and by the
24 NSC. And then they came to me looking for clearance.

25 This was actually in response to a Ukrainian TV query, this

1 question on rumors circulating about the dismissal of the Ambassador,
2 because that was a theme that had emerged, was, oh, she's already been
3 fired or she's gone. And, obviously, that was of particular interest
4 in Ukraine as a story line.

5 And I did make a suggestion here that afternoon, just switching
6 the order of sentences in a particular paragraph. And I can read you
7 that statement if you want -- or, again, it's not technically a
8 statement -- read you the response, the particular paragraph that I
9 asked to be moved.

10 Q Who was on this email chain with you?

11 A Oh, this is lots of staff throughout the Bureau, the press
12 office staff. And then I forwarded those up to Ulrich, I think. I
13 was sending him emails, you know, fairly often.

14 The office for Ukraine on the Thursday then, the 21st, forwarded
15 up a package of this providing sort of -- this was up to the seventh
16 floor, to the Secretary's office, giving kind of the story, what had
17 transpired over the last couple of days, what The Hill had published,
18 this op-ed which really kind of started this, an op-ed by a journalist
19 called John Solomon, relating to the Ukrainian Prosecutor General,
20 Lutsenko, whom I mentioned earlier, and then providing some facts in
21 terms of what we knew about it.

22 Q Was a response to the press query ultimately provided?

23 A Yes, I believe -- I believe it was. And then there were
24 further -- there were further questions, queries by the media, and we
25 continued to use -- sometimes, I think, with minor

1 refinements -- language that we had.

2 Q What was the approved language that ultimately was issued?

3 A I'm just trying to make sure. The cleared guidance, this
4 is on Thursday the 21st of March, cleared guidance from last night,
5 so as of the evening of the 20th, as all this had come out. I mean,
6 it begins: "Ambassador Yovanovitch represents the President of the
7 United States here in Ukraine" -- this is what the embassy was
8 authorized to put out -- "and America stands behind her and her
9 statements. The allegations by the Ukrainian Prosecutor General are
10 not true and are intended to tarnish the reputation of Ambassador
11 Yovanovitch. Such allegations only serve the corrupt. Ukraine, like
12 the United States, is a free country with a free press. That is one
13 of the fantastic and unifying qualities of U.S. and Ukrainian society.
14 Politicians, pundits, and the media are entitled to share their
15 opinions as part of the political process. It does not mean the claims
16 are true. Such attacks redouble our resolve to help Ukraine win the
17 struggle against corruption."

18 Q Now, following this statement or response to a query, did
19 you have additional conversations with anyone above you in the State
20 Department about issuing a statement to defend Ambassador Yovanovitch
21 more persuasively and powerfully?

22 A I did. We were trying for a statement. As this went on,
23 dealing with this kind of press thing, you know, you give your response,
24 and certainly in my experience it was wise to then see where the story
25 goes, if it continues, and it did continue on.

1 Q And just to be clear, you have, in your career, you've had
2 a lot of experience dealing with press matters in the State Department,
3 having worked --

4 A Yeah.

5 Q -- at that office multiple times, right?

6 A To be clear and fair, the press world, the world of the media,
7 has changed dramatically since the days when I conducted daily
8 briefings and dealt with the press as the focus of my job. We didn't
9 have Twitter. There was a news cycle.

10 But that's -- and just to interject here, because it gets to the
11 point you made earlier, I found the statement by the Ministry of Foreign
12 Affairs in response to the demarche, that as the chairman asked, we
13 demarched and said we really expected the Ukrainian Government to step
14 up and say something about this. And the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
15 did put out a statement through their ministry spokesperson, Zelenko,
16 saying how: The ministry fruitfully cooperates with the U.S.
17 Ambassador and thanks the American diplomat and her team for their
18 contribution to building strategic partnerships between our states.

19 So that was an important piece.

20 But this -- so getting back to my point about, you know, where
21 does the story go? It kept coming.

22 So by Friday night, March 22nd, I was sent then Saturday morning
23 a roundup of Friday night U.S. media developments. And our press
24 office information officer in Kyiv was trying to monitor everything
25 for us and send in bundles that sort of captured this.

1 And this included some of the nastiest of the tweets that included
2 some implied violence, references to "lynching" against the
3 Ambassador, which we turned over, or were turned over, obviously, to
4 the security people as well. Some details, the program about -- by
5 Laura Ingraham that referenced then the letter that then-Congressman
6 Sessions had sent in May of 2018.

7 Q And just so the record is clear, you're reviewing emails that
8 you had from that time where you're --

9 A Yes, sir.

10 Q -- summarizing what is included in them?

11 A Exactly, yes.

12 Q And so I had asked you earlier about conversations about
13 issuing a more formal defense of Ambassador Yovanovitch from the
14 executives or from the seventh floor and you indicated you did have
15 those conversations.

16 Can you describe a little bit more generally the nature of those
17 conversations?

18 A So by the weekend, as I noted, you know, with this still
19 going, so now we are on the weekend of the 23rd, I've been in town 5 days,
20 and my team was, as I said, passing the stuff to me, excerpts from the
21 various press things, trying to sort of compile it. And I did forward
22 it up to Under Secretary Hale, copying the Counselor on the 23rd in
23 the afternoon: "Looping you in" -- this is to Ulrich
24 Brechtbuhl -- "Looping you in on the latest I've received." And the
25 references I mentioned before that include Twitter-based threats

1 against the Ambassador.

2 And then Under Secretary Hale said he "deferred to coms people,"
3 or the communications folks, "but I believe Masha" -- that is,
4 Ambassador Yovanovitch -- "should deny on the record saying anything
5 disrespectful and reaffirm her loyalty as Ambassador and Foreign
6 Service officer to POTUS and the Constitution."

7 And we transmitted --

8 Q What is the date of that email?

9 A That is the 23rd of March.

10 Q Is Ambassador Yovanovitch on that email or is that just --

11 A No, that was his reply to what I had forwarded up to him and
12 to --

13 Q Can you just tell us who else was on that email?

14 A Under Secretary Hale and Counselor Brechbuhl.

15 Q And you?

16 A He was replying to me.

17 Q So the three of you --

18 A Yes.

19 Q Okay.

20 A Let's see here.

21 Q While you're looking through, if I could follow up on
22 something else. You said Rudy Giuliani was one of the people
23 prominently promoting these allegations in the media.

24 Prior to the publication of these articles and Mr. Giuliani's
25 comments on them, were you aware of Mr. Giuliani's interest in issues

1 related to Ukraine?

2 A I would say I had a vague awareness through the press. I
3 mean, mind you, I had been back now 5 days, and I think I was aware
4 of things he had said broadly regarding Ukraine, but it certainly wasn't
5 something that I was tracking particularly. It didn't have a
6 relevance.

7 Q So when you assumed the job on March 17th --

8 A 18th.

9 Q Or 18th, rather, did you have any specific knowledge from
10 within the Department as to any involvement or interest by
11 Mr. Giuliani?

12 A No, I got a better idea of it later on with George, my Ukraine
13 expert, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Ukraine and Eastern Europe,
14 who later had sort of, with his team, gone through and tried to capture
15 what he then described as four different narratives that were being
16 pushed in all of this.

17 So by April the 1st, by the end of the second week, essentially,
18 after 2 weeks of this, George had kind of identified four strands, as
19 he called them, four narratives that were emerging.

20 This one that had started it, the anticorruption, that there had
21 been undue pressure by the U.S., by Ambassador Yovanovitch on -- in
22 the efforts against corruption.

23 Narrative two was a theme about 2016 collusion between Ukraine
24 and the Clinton campaign.

25 The third was -- there was -- how he wrote it here was, this "Biden

1 (Burisma)" -- Biden as in Hunter Biden, and Burisma he put in
2 parentheses, because I don't think I knew what Burisma was at that
3 point, corrupt gas company.

4 And the fourth narrative that we sort of identified as a general
5 theme that was in all of this was regarding the Soros organization,
6 because one NGO, called AnTAC, that had received grants through U.S.
7 assistance programs had also received a grant from the Open Society
8 Institute.

9 Q And based on what Mr. Kent explained to you, either in email
10 or otherwise, and any other information that you gathered about these
11 four different strands, were you aware of any validity to any of these
12 four strands of accusations or allegations?

13 A I was not.

14 Q Was Mr. Kent, to your knowledge?

15 A No. And, again, he was positioned to be able to sort of
16 provide context because he had served at the embassy in Ukraine and
17 was familiar with these narratives and some of these things that are
18 happening.

19 And I think, just from reading more recent press reports, he
20 described that to you in his own deposition before you.

21 Q Right. I just was asked -- the question just related to,
22 at that time, did you have any indication from him or anyone else that
23 there was any validity to these allegations?

24 A No, sir.

25 Q Okay. I think our time is up, and I will now yield --

1 A Well, maybe we can come back to something else regarding the
2 question of a statement.

3 Q Yes. We'll pick that up next time.

4 MR. GOLDMAN: Great.

5 Mr. Castor.

6 BY MR. CASTOR:

7 Q Ambassador, if you have something on the tip of your tongue
8 regarding a statement, it might be helpful to just continue on that.

9 A Okay. Just because I am dealing with these reams of paper.
10 And, you know, if these are just emails about Ukraine, one of my 50
11 countries, you can imagine the number of binders. And this was in the
12 first week. So, yeah, exactly.

13 So this, again, is March 25th, where we had tried by the end of
14 that first week of all of this to say, you know, can we put out -- and
15 Masha was interested in some kind of statement, not just the response
16 to queries that we were doing, but a formal statement from the
17 Department.

18 And, you know, queries continued to come in following, for
19 instance, the -- specifically on some of the FOX News programs of Laura
20 Ingraham and Sean Hannity, we got a lot of questions about the
21 allegations there.

22 And we forwarded it around for clearance, to put it out. And I
23 was sent from the staff on Monday the 25th, 12:04 p.m., from the Special
24 Assistant to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs: "P" -- that
25 would be the Under Secretary -- "says no statement."

1 And then that actually -- that was not sent to me. That was sent
2 to the European Bureau press office, which then forwarded it to me,
3 highlighting the response of P.

4 Q So that was no statement?

5 A Correct. He said there will be no statement. "P says no
6 statement."

7 Q Do you have any additional information about why that
8 decision was made?

9 A I don't. There would be no statement. We would continue
10 to use the press guidance that we had, that had been cleared.

11 Q Okay. Did you ever come to learn why there was a reluctance
12 to offer a statement, an additional statement?

13 A No, that was the decision that came down.

14 Q And the Ambassador was subsequently recalled early.

15 A Actually, I do not believe that that is a factual statement.

16 Q Okay.

17 A The Ambassador remained -- we are talking now March.

18 Q Right.

19 A We got through this period, which was about 2 weeks.

20 I -- and as I indicated, I think as we looked at why now, where is all
21 of this coming from, Ukraine was in a highly political season with
22 Presidential elections around the -- around the corner.

23 As I said, in that period, the first week of March 18th into the
24 second week of March 25th through 30th, my interlocutors were the
25 Counselor and Under Secretary Hale in terms of what could be the press

1 guidance, what potential statements.

2 By the end then of the month, the 31st of March, was the Ukraine
3 Presidential election, the first round, and that's when Mr. Zelensky
4 had an extremely strong showing and things, I think, kind of died down
5 a bit maybe as there was more of a focus on Zelensky and the 3 weeks
6 until the runoff.

7 We had, of course, in Washington the NATO ministerial. I know
8 I was extraordinarily tied up and focused on that. Masha Yovanovitch
9 remained as Ambassador and at post, albeit I know that this continued
10 to hum below. And as you can imagine, the embassy was extremely busy
11 focused on covering the elections, doing the analysis and diplomatic
12 reporting that is their bread and butter.

13 And I returned then to Europe, my first trip after having come
14 back to cover this. I left on the 8th of April and was in -- back in
15 Stuttgart, where, of course, I remained still technically assigned.

16 I had a forum I had to speak at in Brussels, the Daimler Forum,
17 and there were farewells that week for General Scaparrotti, the
18 commander, who was leaving, both in Berlin, honored by the Germans.

19 And then it was while I was still in Germany that the story picked
20 back up again in, I think, in anticipation of the second round of
21 elections, which were held on our Easter holiday, April 21st.

22 And, in fact, from my calendar, I recall that on April 21st, I
23 spoke with Masha Yovanovitch in Kyiv. The focus of that phone call
24 was about her interest -- I think I mentioned earlier -- in possibly
25 succeeding me as her next assignment, you know, given that her tour

1 was coming to its 3-year conclusion.

2 And I believe it was in that phone call where she told me that
3 she had thought about it and it wasn't the right fit for her. She wasn't
4 going to pursue it. And, in fact the commanders had all said, oh, they
5 would love to have Masha there again. Her reputation was such that
6 European Command commanders were eager to have her take over that
7 position. But she had decided against that.

8 And then it was on that weekend that the media storm happened
9 again, and I got some urgent calls from Counselor Brechbuhl. I spoke
10 to him in a phone call on the 24th of April, as well as with the Under
11 Secretary and the head of human resources, that things had gotten, in
12 their words, suddenly much worse.

13 There was a lot of unhappiness -- without anything explicit,
14 because we were speaking on open lines -- there was unhappiness from
15 the White House that Ambassador Yovanovitch was still there, and the
16 belief that she needed to come back, the belief in the State Department
17 that she needed to come back to Washington for consultations. And the
18 head of human resources, the Director General of the Foreign Service,
19 Ambassador Carol Perez, made that call to her.

20 And I talked to Masha. I think we had a WhatsApp conversation.
21 So we just had this conversation about, you know, was she interested
22 in coming to EUCOM? She had said, no, she was grateful, but that was
23 it.

24 Here from the WhatsApp texting, it's okay to share that with
25 General Scaparrotti and Wolters, she told me, and let me know -- I asked

1 her to let me know when you feel comfortable with me speaking to Carol,
2 the head of human resources, and with the Political Military Bureau
3 to let them know we need to continue to focus on a successor at EUCOM.

4 And Masha said: Fine, fine to do that.

5 Then on the 24th after these calls with Ulrich, and then Masha
6 had been told she needed to come into the embassy to take an important
7 call from the Director General and she was asking me if she knew what
8 was going on. And I did tell her in a call with Ulrich he said things
9 had suddenly, quote, "changed for the worse," unquote, but he couldn't
10 share anything on an open line.

11 Then I had a call from Carol -- that would be Ambassador
12 Perez -- who also offered no details, but was about to call you, Masha,
13 next.

14 And I said to Masha in text message: "So I'm largely in the dark,
15 but it doesn't sound good. Let me know if you want to talk."

16 And she was at that time hosting a large reception and she was
17 going into the embassy to talk to Carol. And I believe Carol told her
18 that she really should come back to Washington. Carol didn't have a
19 picture of this, but just that she needed to -- she felt Masha should
20 come back to Washington.

21 So that's when she came back to Washington. That would not be
22 considered recalled. She was told to come back to Washington, which
23 I believe she did on Friday, the 26th of April.

24 I, myself, returned to Washington, arriving Sunday evening, the
25 28th of April. And then we had a series of meetings on the 29th, where

1 the discussion was about what to do.

2 You know, at this point, I should add, the expectation -- I
3 believe Masha had set a date of, I think it was around July 5th or
4 July 8th, and in terms of the planning that I was doing with Counselor
5 Brechbuhl in a separate track, but, obviously, related because it had
6 to do with the chief of mission job in Ukraine, we had a couple of plans.

7 That was what I was tasked with doing, was how do we cover our
8 mission. We were trying to identify a new person to be proposed for
9 nomination as Ambassador, and then we were trying to figure out how
10 we cover, after Masha would depart.

11 The date of early July was out there because July is, typically,
12 in the Foreign Service, a transition day for these things. You have
13 your Independence Day reception as a sort of farewell, and then you
14 leave. I think she was looking at July 5th or 6th, possibly 8th,
15 something in that range.

16 And, well, why don't I let you, if you have more questions.

17 Q So you said that the term "recall" wasn't accurate. What
18 would be the word to describe her departure from the embassy?

19 A So, when she met on the 29th with the Deputy Secretary of
20 State, I was asked to sit in with that, and I joined that meeting. I
21 read the press reports of her deposition to you where the Deputy
22 Secretary is quoted as telling her: "You've done nothing wrong." And
23 that is what I heard sitting there as well.

24 The problem at hand was that, essentially, the President had lost,
25 what we term, had lost confidence in her as Ambassador in Ukraine. And

1 the question then was, what comes next? And the Deputy Secretary of
2 State, to my recollection, gave her the option to decide what date she
3 wanted to return, understanding -- and I think we all
4 understood -- that with the media storm and the focus on this, that
5 going back to Kyiv and staying through July could be, you know,
6 difficult.

7 Masha was staying on in Washington for a preplanned event. In
8 fact, she had already asked for, before she came back at the behest
9 of the Director General so quickly on the 26th, she had asked for
10 permission to come back to Washington, be away from post, to receive
11 an award, to be honored at the National Defense University and inducted
12 into their hall of fame, an event we were looking forward to, and, again,
13 something which speaks to the esteem within which she is regarded both
14 professionally and personally.

15 She determined at this meeting she would stay through the -- that
16 event, which was on the 9th of May. I was able to get back from travel
17 with the Secretary to actually be there for that event. And then I
18 think she went back to Kyiv on the 10th of May, and then decided to
19 depart fully. She packed out and left on the 20th of May, which,
20 coincidentally, was the day of the inauguration of President Zelensky.

21 Q And so you said the term "being recalled" wasn't the right
22 word. Is there a better word?

23 A There is a term of that, her -- again, my greatest concern
24 was for Masha as a person and a professional. None of us -- well, I
25 certainly, and I know many of other colleagues, were not pleased about

1 this. No one wants to see someone go through this and such, you know,
2 inaccurate and unpleasant things being said about a colleague, a
3 professional, about a United States Ambassador in the press,
4 particularly in her own country.

5 And -- but I wanted to make sure Masha was going to be okay.
6 Obviously, I had two responsibilities. One was to the post, making
7 sure our post was properly and legally covered, and one was to Masha
8 as a human being, as a colleague, as a United States Ambassador.

9 So when she made the decision to make her last day the 20th of
10 May, I fully supported that. And so I think the best term would be
11 to say that she ended her assignment on the 20th of May, which was
12 6 weeks earlier than the date we had been focusing on.

13 Q What was your role in helping select Ambassador Taylor to
14 serve as the Charge?

15 A So that was something I was assigned, worked closely with
16 Ulrich Brechbuhl, the Counselor. Also the Under Secretary wanted to
17 always be involved.

18 Once we realized that the nomination process was not -- there was
19 no possibility that that was going to produce an Ambassador in time
20 to take over for Ambassador Yovanovitch, we realized we needed some
21 coverage.

22 And I want to note why. Ambassador Yovanovitch had a deputy, a
23 chief of mission, who had moved into that spot from another position
24 when George Kent had left the year before to come be Deputy Assistant
25 Secretary under Wess Mitchell. That deputy was assigned to move in

1 the spring to become the Deputy Chief of Mission at our embassy in
2 Stockholm, Sweden.

3 At first I said: Well, she's been really good. She knows the
4 place. She should stay. You know, we don't need -- it turned out we
5 had no Ambassador in Stockholm. He was in the process, but not through
6 the confirmation process, and there was no other senior Foreign Service
7 officer at post. So we felt we had to let the DCM leave Kyiv to go
8 to Stockholm.

9 Another senior Foreign Service officer in Kyiv -- did I just
10 misspeak? -- she needed to leave Kyiv to go to Stockholm. Another
11 officer in Kyiv stepped up, Senior Officer Joseph Pennington, to be
12 the Acting Deputy Chief of Mission, and the new Deputy Chief of Mission
13 was coming from Embassy Paris, and she, a great officer, had no Ukraine
14 experience, no language.

15 And my feeling, supported by my higher-ups, was that it was
16 absolutely unfair to throw her into this situation which was in focus.
17 So we were trying to find someone who could act as Charge d'Affaires.
18 We have a roster of people known as WAE, while actually employed, who
19 are usually retired senior Foreign Service officers, retired
20 ambassadors. There were a number there. And we, as part of this
21 process, sort of who could be, we got out the list of former ambassadors
22 to Ukraine.

23 And the one guy on there who was potentially available who was
24 not involved in business or aligned with, you know, one political side
25 or another in Ukraine was Ambassador Bill Taylor, who was at that time

1 executive vice president at the U.S. Institute of Peace.

2 And so we approached him: Would you be interested and available,
3 potentially, to do this job? And he said yes. And so we pursued that.
4 And it was a complicated administrative, bureaucratic thing to do it,
5 but ultimately -- ultimately, he agreed and he was approved.

6 They looked at different ways he could be sent, under what -- what
7 official title. Finally, they worked that out. And he did agree to
8 go and got there in June, early June.

9 Q Did you have any discussions with Under Secretary Hale or
10 Counselor Brechbuhl about the tricky external environmental factors
11 in play that led to the Yovanovitch situation?

12 A What do you mean by tricky?

13 Q Well, the Rudy Giuliani, the President's unhappiness, the
14 statements made by the Prosecutor General. It was -- I think it has
15 been described to us, variously, as a bit of a snake pit.

16 A I don't recall that term specifically, but it's not a bad
17 description, I suppose.

18 Yeah. No, I mean that was -- clearly, part of the challenge was,
19 you know, a difficult time in Ukraine to be putting someone in, all
20 of these allegations about the U.S. Embassy or Ambassador, which were
21 making difficult our very important tasks there, things that were, you
22 know, I think, critical to the U.S. interest, national security
23 interest, foreign policy priorities, remembering that, you know,
24 Ukraine is a country that is partially occupied by Russia and in a hot
25 war.

1 And so that, combined by the political scenario in the States,
2 the press, the allegations there, made it a very difficult and delicate
3 position, which is why we were viewing, you know, who would be -- who
4 would have the background and capabilities, who would be willing to
5 send themselves into this, as you describe it, snake pit. And I think
6 we were very fortunate that Ambassador Taylor was willing to take that
7 on.

8 Q Did the Department make any commitments to Ambassador Taylor
9 that they would have his back or help him with these external
10 environmental factors?

11 A He wanted to be very clear -- or he was very clear that he
12 wanted to be sure that Ukraine policy was going to continue as it was,
13 that our support for Ukraine and its Western orientation and its desire
14 to reform and our support for them against the Russian malign and
15 military actions was going to continue.

16 And he was worried. He did express concerns. You know, some of
17 the WhatsApps I had with him reflect that -- about that. Because he
18 felt if the policy was not going to remain, then he wasn't the guy.
19 But as he was waiting for the bureaucracy, the bureaucratic processes
20 to catch up to see if this would be possible, he was also waiting for
21 this.

22 And he really wanted to see the Secretary. He was in touch with
23 Ulrich Brechbuhl. I met him for the first time on the 2nd of May, just
24 to make sure that's correct. Too many notes.

25 Yeah, the 2nd May, after I'd come back and all of this had happened

1 with Masha, I met Bill Taylor late that week, traveled again on the
2 5th of May, I departed with the Secretary. Got back in time for Masha's
3 ceremony on the 9th of May. But Bill had made clear he really wanted
4 to meet with the Secretary here, since, as Ambassador -- as Charge
5 d'Affaires, obviously, he is reporting through -- to the Secretary.

6 And we did have that meeting on the 28th of May, and he left that
7 meeting, I believe "confident" would be the right word, and
8 comfortable, and ready to do that. And then, ultimately, got out
9 to -- shortly thereafter, [REDACTED] I think, the 1st
10 of June, so he couldn't be gone that weekend. But early June he arrived
11 at post and he has been a terrific leader.

12 Q Was there any understanding among yourself, Under Secretary
13 Hale, Counselor Brechbuhl, the Secretary, that the situation needed
14 to be monitored closely?

15 A Yeah, we -- I mean, I think, obviously, Ukraine is important.
16 You know, it is one of the 50 accounts that I have. But I think, I
17 mean, I guess -- what do you mean by monitored? The situation in
18 Ukraine?

19 Q The situation, yeah.

20 A I mean, as we monitor a situation anywhere --

21 Q The situation that led to the end of Ambassador Yovanovitch's
22 tenure there?

23 A We needed to make sure -- you know, one of my concerns has
24 always been for the mission and its personnel who were, I think it is
25 fair to say, shaken by all of this, the Ambassador's abrupt early

1 departure. And Bill was -- and from the beginning, from the time he
2 landed, he was well-known still to the embassy, to the local staff,
3 to Ukrainians, and that helped. And so he certainly brought stability
4 to that.

5 And, of course, we were launching into a whole new era with the
6 new President, Zelensky having won the election, having been
7 inaugurated on the 20th of May. And at that point, I think you're all
8 aware, certainly it's been in the open media based on testimony here,
9 that for the inauguration the White House had delegated Secretary
10 Perry, the Secretary of Energy, to lead the delegation that included
11 Kurt Volker, Ambassador Volker the Special Representative for Ukraine,
12 and Ambassador Gordon Sondland, the Ambassador to the EU.

13 And there was another person, I think Mr. Vindman, from the
14 National Security Council, who went, and I believe Senator Johnson was
15 also there, in a slightly different capacity as a legislative
16 representative.

17 And they were really then pegged as the leads on Ukraine,
18 obviously, with George Kent remaining as the Deputy Assistant Secretary
19 with the great, kind of, institutional knowledge about the country,
20 about the post, in his capacity covering Eastern Europe and the
21 Caucasus.

22 And it was after that inauguration when that team came back and
23 they met with the President, I believe, on the 23rd of May, and
24 Ambassador Volker provided me a readout of that which kind of laid out
25 the path forward in terms of implementing our strategy and policy with

1 Ukraine.

2 Q What was your experience with Ambassador Volker?

3 A I had known Kurt Volker almost my entire career. Again, we
4 were -- we became ambassadors about the same time, he, to NATO, when
5 I went to what is now North Macedonia, and we have been friends and
6 colleagues.

7 And he had been useful in, as I came back to Washington, dealing
8 with, you know, 50 countries and 12,000 staff, I talked to him a couple
9 of times about Ukraine and where he saw the direction, you know, how
10 he was implementing the strategy, the role he was playing both in terms
11 of the negotiations part, to try to help bring an end to the war, as
12 well as ideas in terms of things like antitrust, moving forward on
13 continuing our push against corruption.

14 He is a pro. I mean, I was very confident that, you know, he's
15 got it, he's got the lead on this. He was doing a lot of, I think,
16 very useful messaging and communication. He was getting under the skin
17 of the Russians, which was great. They were complaining regularly
18 about his statements.

19 And he was, of course, trying to meet with a Russian counterpart,
20 and they, the Russians, had not agreed to a meeting since January
21 of 2018.

22 So I had, you know, from my perspective overseeing and shepherding
23 all of these pieces, the mission was falling into a good place with
24 Bill at the helm, the new DCM getting up to speed very quickly. So
25 on the ground, the embassy and U.S. Mission Ukraine was well taken care

1 of, and the engagement and policy management was being handled by, I
2 think they have been referred to as the Three Amigos. But Ambassadors
3 Sondland and Volker -- and Ambassador Sondland, whom I knew, of course,
4 had been very clear, I know he had the direct access to the President.
5 And I know that the Secretary had great faith in Ambassador Volker and
6 also direct contact with Ambassador Sondland. So that's where things
7 were being handled.

8 Q What was your understanding of what Ambassador Volker was
9 doing with regard to the new incoming administration? Was he trying
10 to build relationships?

11 A Yeah, he -- I mean, let me turn to a particular page which
12 is very helpful on this. Give me a second here.

13 Q And just while you're looking for it, he's a person of high
14 integrity and great experience with regard to Ukraine, correct?

15 A Absolutely, yeah.

16 Q And everything that he did during the course of these events
17 were in the best interest of the United States to the best of your
18 knowledge?

19 A Yeah, I guess I'd have -- I don't -- I don't know everything
20 he did.

21 Q To the best of your knowledge.

22 A So to the best of my knowledge, I know Kurt to be, you know,
23 an outstanding American, a fine diplomat. I would say my view -- he
24 really wanted to see Ukraine succeed and to see our policy and strategy
25 succeed.

1 And, you know, I had been brought in, my mandate was continuity.
2 You know, Wess Mitchell had helped put in place a set of policies in
3 line with the national security strategy, a set of individual
4 strategies for the eastern Med and the Black Sea, for the Arctic, for
5 the Balkans, and for Ukraine. And, of course, Kurt had been brought
6 on as a Special Representative as part of that. And he had a vision.

7 With all of this churn over Masha, I think he felt badly. He knew
8 Masha, of course, from, you know, his long -- his career at the State
9 Department and since then. And he was, you know, very dedicated to
10 this. And after the briefing with the President that they had, I
11 was -- pull this out -- I was, I believe, traveling at that time.

12 Once again, as I've mentioned, my mandate is to spend about
13 50 percent of the time on the road trying to engage with our 50
14 countries, our missions, the leadership, bilateral and multilateral,
15 the conferences, representing the -- sometimes traveling with the
16 Secretary, sometimes representing the Secretary at ministerial
17 meetings and other such things.

18 So, in fact, on that period I was back -- we were having a chief
19 of missions conference, my first opportunity to bring all of the chiefs
20 of mission from within the European Bureau together, cosponsored by
21 EUCOM in Stuttgart. But I had waiting for me an email, unclassified,
22 that Kurt had forwarded in terms of the readout of the Ukraine
23 delegation White House meeting, and it laid out the sort of key
24 takeaways and what we were going to proceed with, focusing on the
25 President signing a congratulatory letter to Zelensky, inviting

1 Zelensky to the Oval Office. Our goal had been to have that happen
2 before the July parliamentary elections to show support.

3 The delegation, that is what Ambassador Sondland referred to as
4 the Three Amigos, will work with the Ukrainian Government and contacts
5 to push for reform and flag the President's concern about corruption,
6 poor investment climate, oligarchic control over the economy, and
7 ensure that Zelensky comes prepared to demonstrate commitment to reform
8 and improving U.S.-Ukraine bilateral relations.

9 And at this point, they had -- this was relevant to my other task,
10 of course, which was the finding a long-term Ambassador. The decision
11 had been taken that there would be a political, a noncareer Ambassador
12 would be identified ASAP.

13 Secretary Perry, as part of the delegation, would focus his good
14 offices to help Ukraine find solutions to their energy and gas needs,
15 which was a real issue. I mean, already in May we were anticipating
16 if the Russians turn off the gas, they need to be stockpiling now so
17 that they could get through a winter, and media messaging discipline,
18 which Kurt took the lead on.

19 So he had really laid out what they were doing, the way forward.
20 They had the support and confidence of the President and the Secretary.
21 And that's how we headed forward.

22 Q When did the Rudy Giuliani involvement become known to you?

23 A In terms of -- in terms of what? I mean --

24 Q Mr. Giuliani was -- developed a nontraditional role here,
25 and I wonder when that first became -- you first became aware of it,

1 A, and, B, did you ever see that nontraditional role as problematic.

2 A He was certainly named and in the press himself as being
3 engaged in Ukraine. Going back to those earliest days when I first
4 arrived in March, I think he was frequently on television and promoting
5 some of these -- these allegations and narratives about our Ambassador
6 and the Embassy.

7 So I think that was probably when I first was aware that he was
8 involved. I know our press line, our response from the Department when
9 I got there, so what do we say about Giuliani, was that, you know, he
10 is not a government employee, we refer you to Mr. Giuliani's office
11 for comment on him.

12 Q Did you ever come to learn that Volker was having
13 communications with Giuliani?

14 A Kurt mentioned at some point that he was going to, I think,
15 telephone, or maybe meet with Giuliani. I think his goal very much
16 was to -- you had this harsh critic of Ukraine, and his goal was to
17 help explain our strategy, our process, and the fact that Zelensky
18 represented a whole new chapter in Ukraine and new opportunities to
19 implement U.S. strategy and policy in Ukraine.

20 I wasn't a part of that conversation. I had never met
21 Mr. Giuliani or spoken to him.

22 Q Did you ever learn from Ambassador Taylor that he had
23 concerns about Giuliani's role?

24 A I do recall -- I think in a little of our WhatsApping -- is
25 that a verb? -- WhatsApp -- because when -- before Bill finally went

1 out, you know, we had identified him, as I've already described. We
2 were going through just, you know, from a bureaucratic standpoint,
3 Herculean efforts with the personnel people and the lawyers in figuring
4 out how -- how we could send Bill out as the Charge d'Affaires. That
5 ultimately all worked.

6 But he was -- he had expressed some concerns about that stuff.
7 I will just take a minute here to try to find if I can find a specific
8 reference. Just that, you know, this was such a distraction.

9 So in an exchange with Bill Taylor on the 26th of March -- I'm
10 sorry, May, 5-26-19, this is before we have met with Secretary Pompeo
11 and which then reassured Bill. He said to me: "I'm still struggling
12 with the decision whether to go. Basically, whether the politics back
13 here will let me or anyone succeed." Referring to this very political
14 era around Ukraine.

15 Generally, I mean, when you said Ukraine in the public or the
16 media, this is what people focused on. When you said Ukraine to me,
17 it was like, we have got an embassy, we have got this country with
18 enormous potential that is being, you know, at war. There's just all
19 kinds of implications.

20 That was what, I think, Bill was worried about, and he said, again
21 I quote: "The Giuliani Biden issue will likely persist for the next
22 year. I'm not sure S," the Secretary, "can give me reassurance on this
23 issue."

24 And then I was at my cousin's wedding. I said: Oh, I'll try to
25 offer more response later. And at one point then Bill said: While

1 you think about this, let me make another suggestion. You could send
2 Kurt. He would be perfect. Knows the issues better than anyone.

3 And I just said: Well, Kurt has said no before. He didn't want
4 to be Charge or Ambassador. And noted that he had met with the
5 President, along with the rest of the delegation, and come away fairly
6 optimistic. What I just described to you is about that.

7 And Bill said: We should definitely talk to him.

8 And I said: Kurt will be joining us for the meeting with the
9 Secretary on Tuesday.

10 And Bill said: Perfect.

11 And then there was another little snag where there was some
12 confusion that Bill got the impression that Kurt really did want to
13 take the job. We clarified that.

14 Kurt said, no, he did not want to be Ambassador, he wanted to stay
15 as Special Representative. And Bill made very clear at that time that
16 the Secretary needed to hear Kurt's description of the debrief with
17 the President on return from the inauguration.

1 [1:00 p.m.]

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Based on that he said, I can't go, he was
3 hesitant about going. Then we had the meeting with the Secretary, and
4 Bill came away confident then that he would do it and at the same time,
5 right about the same time on the 30th of May, I reported to Bill -- I
6 was on the way to Berlin this time -- that the Legal Advisor's Office
7 had found a way for you to go out as the Charge d'Affaires with Christina
8 as your Deputy Chief of Mission. And Bill said -- I checked back in
9 with him while I was on that trip, and I just said, Checking in, is
10 everything in order for your adventure, I called it. Bill Taylor said,
11 All on track, thank you.

12 And in fact I was on the way to Brussels that night, the 4th of
13 June, and I noted to Bill, I expected to meet President Zelensky at
14 a dinner that Ambassador Sondland was hosting, and so that was the first
15 time I met President Zelensky.

16 BY MR. CASTOR:

17 Q You were at that -- I believe the dinner was around June 4th?

18 A June 4th, correct.

19 Q Let me just, as we try to sketch out our day of questions
20 here, it might be helpful to just take stock of certain areas that you
21 may or may not have firsthand information about.

22 A Uh-huh. Sure.

23 Q Firsthand information can take two forms. It can take the
24 form that you may have been copied on an email which you may have read,
25 or you may not have because you extraordinarily have a vast portfolio;

1 and then there is firsthand information that you had actual
2 conversations and so forth. And so let me just sort of run through
3 some things if I may.

4 Did you have any firsthand information about the delay in funds
5 and the PCC process? It started on July 18th, and ended around
6 September 11th.

7 A Correct. I became -- to answer your question, yes, I had
8 firsthand information on that. My staff notified me. We have a, in
9 fact, he is a Congressionally mandated position, our assistance
10 coordinator who reports directly to me as well almost like an eighth
11 DAS in the Bureau, and he reported that there were holds on a lot of
12 assistance. This was in July. And every day, there was sort of an
13 update, and there was this hold on the military assistance for Ukraine,
14 and there was sort of a puzzlement as to, you know, where is that coming
15 from? Is that general?

16 There were holds on all kinds of stuff. I know they were really
17 eager to get moving on some projects in Armenia, et cetera, so I was
18 aware of that. And the decision was how do we handle this?

19 It wasn't clear where that was coming from as we pushed this into
20 the PCC process, which is the best way to come to a decision, and if
21 somebody is blocking this, they need to sort of show their hand.

22 Q So maybe we can go through that at some point today.

23 How about communications with National Security Council
24 officials? Like did you have any phone calls or in-person interactions
25 with some of the National Security Council officials on these issues?

1 I can give you names or --

2 A Why don't you try to, and I will tell you.

3 Q Starting with Ambassador Bolton?

4 A No. I had no direct contact with Ambassador Bolton.

5 Q And his deputy, Mr. Kupperman?

6 A I have met Kupperman, but not in capacity -- not in
7 connection with Ukraine, I don't believe.

8 Q Then Dr. Fiona Hill?

9 A Fiona, I dealt with from the time arrived, I have known her
10 going back years. Again, I didn't have a lot direct discussion on
11 Ukraine because that was handled by George and the Ukraine team, and,
12 of course, the delegation as we would call it, Sondland and Volker.

13 Q So maybe, we will go back and try to unpack the communications
14 you had with Dr. Hill.

15 How about Tim Morrison?

16 A Yeah, and he succeeded her. Again, I don't know that we have
17 talked a lot specifically about Ukraine. I tended to have George from
18 the State point take the lead on all of that, and I believe Tim was
19 in contact with the team, the delegation, Kurt, Sondland, and perhaps
20 Secretary Perry too.

21 Q And then there was a Lieutenant Colonel Vindman who had the
22 Ukraine portfolio in the National Security Council?

23 A I don't believe -- I know him, I know we have met, but I didn't
24 have conversations with him.

25 Q [REDACTED]

1 A Not to my recollection no.

2 Q [REDACTED]

3 A It really doesn't and that could, I mean it is possible, I
4 did attend a PCC meeting, not the one on the assistance process, it
5 was another PCC that was about other issues in Ukraine. And some was
6 those people may have been there, there was a huge interagency group,
7 and that was on the 31st of July.

8 Q Okay.

9 A I couldn't tell you who all the people were there.

10 Q Going back to the PCC process, it is our understanding there
11 was, began on July 18th, and there were meetings the 23rd, the 26th,
12 and then, possibly, the 31st as well?

13 A That was, it was a PCC about Ukraine, but it was not focused
14 on the assistance. The question of assistance came up because I
15 specifically remembered, since she was sitting next to me, Laura Cooper
16 from OSD did raise -- she said, I need to raise this because we were
17 still wondering, you know, when is this, you are watching, first of
18 all, it is vitally important to the Ukrainians; this is a key component
19 of our policy, and second of all, you are watching the fiscal year
20 calendar ticking away as you head toward August, which tends to be a
21 somewhat of a down month.

22 So it came up, one piece on that, but there was still no
23 resolution, and I know we were hoping that there would be a, there had
24 been the, on the 26th I believe, and you may have had referenced that,
25 this, the deputy small group, which Under Secretary Hale had attended.

1 I wouldn't go to that anyway, but I was traveling. And I understand
2 he had gone, and there was still no resolution of this, and there was
3 anticipated to be a principals small group. But getting Secretary
4 Pompeo and the Secretary of Defense together just wasn't happening
5 until -- and then the lift was, the hold was, seemed to be gone.

6 The understanding was that, without definitive knowledge, but my
7 understanding, or our operating understanding was that this was being
8 held by Mr. Mulvaney, the White House Acting Chief of Staff.

9 Q So of those PCC-related meetings, you participated in one,
10 is that --

11 A Yes. I was at the one on the 31st of July.

12 Q And did you ever have any communications with Acting Chief
13 of Staff Mulvaney?

14 A No. I have never met him, to my knowledge.

15 Q Okay. Any communications with the President?

16 A No. I have never met the President.

17 Q And then Ambassador Sondland, what is your experience with
18 him?

19 A So I got to know Gordon Sondland when I was still at EUCOM,
20 because one of my jobs there, of course, was to engage our missions,
21 our posts, our ambassadors throughout the AOR, area of responsibility,
22 and that included the EU. We were really trying to pursue a lot of
23 things, and have our EU mission be more robust in terms of engagement
24 on things like military mobility, the European defense initiative, and
25 the European defense fund, and some other aspects, and he was very

1 welcoming of that. He was eager to do that. So I met him at
2 gatherings. I paid a call on him when I went to Brussels, and knew
3 him a bit, and then, I think, I mentioned the trip I took to Odessa
4 in February of this year. I already knew, I had already been revectoring
5 to come back to take this job, but I was still technically at EUCOM
6 and we were going to do the ship visit. And Gordon joined me because
7 we were trying to show U.S./EU solidarity for Ukraine. This was the
8 ship visit largely done in response to the Kerch Strait incident when
9 the Russians took some small Ukrainian craft in the Kerch Strait going
10 into the Azov Sea illegally, I might add, and took hostages essentially,
11 25 Ukrainian sailors.

12 So a U.S. ship was visiting, and Gordon had arranged to bring
13 senior EU officials along. I met him in Brussels, and then we flew
14 together to Odessa.

15 Q Did you ever have any discussions with Ambassador Sondland
16 about the aid or the White House visit?

17 A The White House visit, yes. I mean he was clearly part, this
18 was, his, he had the political lead as he told the Ukrainians as we
19 talked about regularly, he had conversations with the President, with
20 Ambassador Bolton, with Mr. Mulvaney, as far as he told me. Again,
21 I talked to you about the readout I got from the meeting after the
22 inauguration on the May 23rd meetings, so we talked about that way
23 forward, what he was working on, and the, you know, getting a White
24 House visit for Zelensky and he was determined to get that done.

25 Q The Ambassador Sondland has, he gave a TV interview, or he

1 described that he has a rather large remit from the President?

2 A Yes. I have heard that phrase.

3 Q Was it your understanding that was, in fact, the case?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Okay.

6 A That was my understanding that he had the remit. I'm not
7 exactly sure what that means, but certainly had the remit, the access,
8 was very much in the lead.

9 Q And that he also had the support of the Secretary to get
10 involved with some issues that may not traditionally be part of the
11 EU portfolio?

12 A Yes, to undertake activities that would not, I think, when
13 I asked Under Secretary Hale about this, he said it is irregular,
14 irregular is the word.

15 Q Did you have any concerns about that?

16 A Well, it was irregular, but I knew Gordon, and I understood
17 that he was given this task, and that is what you work with when the
18 Secretary and the President have a team of Volker, Sondland, Perry,
19 that was where the focus was.

20 Q I like to make sure our Members don't have questions as we
21 approach the end of the hour. It is a very wise staff thing to do.

22 MR. MEADOWS: Go ahead.

23 BY MR. CASTOR:

24 Q We are just coming up on the end of the hour.

25 A How quickly time flies.

1 Q While you're having fun.

2 Did you ever have any discussions with Under Secretary Hale about
3 anything more than what you just offered about the irregular --

4 A Over time, you know, I would comment occasionally that, well,
5 Gordon is doing X or Y, which would not necessarily be, as I said, the
6 regular remit of the Ambassador to the EU, but starting in June, I know
7 I reported on having been, Gordon had invited me and it worked out
8 because I was with the Secretary at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit
9 in The Hague, and so, I went down to Brussels, I think that is, I'm
10 giving you the sequence right. Anyway, I was there for the June 4th
11 dinner he had for his national day celebrations, and then this dinner
12 with President Zelensky, as well the prime ministers of Jordan,
13 Rumania, and the President of Poland.

14 Q Did Ambassador Taylor or DAS Kent ever communicate with you
15 about Sondland's role and whether it is irregular or not? Or the issues
16 they had?

17 A Yes, it was a regular topic of, well, Gordon handles this.
18 It was irregular. It was, then it became normal, because that's what
19 the mandated arrangement was. He and Ambassador Volker were in regular
20 contact I think, coordinating.

21 Q At any point, did Ambassador Taylor develop a real issue with
22 this?

23 A You know, I was looking back at, say, the WhatsApp, And once
24 Bill was out at post, I didn't have a lot of contact with him. A few
25 times he mailed and said, When are you going to visit? And I was just

1 never able to get into the calendar. We were waiting to get through
2 the elections, the government elections and other things. But he
3 really was dealing directly with, as far as I knew, Kurt and Sondland,
4 they would refer to that and, of course, George Kent was my point person
5 on that. He was kind of keeping track and having, I think, quite
6 regular interaction with Bill Taylor.

7 Q Ambassador Taylor, some of the text messages that have been
8 posted at various news accounts, and his opening statement, which has
9 also been made part of the media accounts --

10 A Uh-huh.

11 Q -- he clearly talks about his frustrations.

12 Did you see any of those news stories?

13 A I've seen the news stories since his testimony.

14 Q Were you aware, contemporaneously, that he was having issues
15 to the point where he had even raised the prospect of resigning?

16 A I don't believe I was, I knew there was sometimes
17 frustrations, but I was not -- again, I wasn't doing this sort of
18 day-to-day interaction with him or with the posts, so it was kind of
19 him working with --

20 Q So if he was seeking support from Washington --

21 A He did not go through me. He was -- I also knew, which was
22 another point of, okay, that's being handled, he was, I think, in fairly
23 regular contact every week or two with Counselor Brechbuhl.

24 Q Did George Kent ever flag this for you as an issue that needed
25 to be solved or worked through?

1 A He would just sort of bring up the latest, depending on what
2 was happening in Ukraine, I mean, things like the White House meeting,
3 that became almost any news on the White House meeting, you know, I
4 was looking at, in terms of the Ukraine account and my focus on it,
5 you know, we had the leadership in place at the mission, we had a policy
6 and a way forward, a team that was with the full support of the President
7 and the Secretary of State working on this, and there were a few things
8 to do. And one was the Zelensky White House meeting was very much in
9 the fore, and, you know, "Is it scheduled? Is there any news?" would
10 come up and still no news.

11 And that sort of proceeded throughout the summer until, of course,
12 there was the expectation when the President was going to Poland on
13 the 1st of September, that there would be a bilateral meeting in Poland.
14 Of course, the President canceled because of the hurricane.

15 Q But for these issues, you were largely in the background?

16 A Yeah. My task, all of these 50 countries and the travel and
17 the engagement, is to make sure things are being handled. So I have
18 seven, potentially eight deputies, and 50 missions, and making sure
19 people are plugged in so the seventh floor Hale and Brechbuhl are aware
20 of what is going on.

21 MR. CASTOR: I think my time is up, Mr. Chairman.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Why don't we take a 5- or 10-minute break and then
23 we will resume.

24 [Recess.]

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, I have a few questions I want to go

1 through before I hand it back to our counsel.

2 You used a phrase in connection with the -- is "curtailment" the
3 better word than "recall" of Ambassador Yovanovitch's tenure in
4 Ukraine?

5 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to -- I'm not
6 trying to be pedantic here.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: She was told by Secretary Perez to get on the next
8 plane.

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, but that was to come back to Washington
10 for consultation.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: And during those consultations, she was told:
12 You've done nothing wrong --

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: -- but the White House has lost confidence in you?

15 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: An Ambassador that's told the President's lost
17 confidence in them is pretty much being told your service is no longer
18 required at your post. Is that fair?

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That is a fair characterization that
20 technically she was given a choice of exactly what date, I mean, there
21 were 6 weeks left until she was already scheduled to depart and finish
22 her tour.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: But that is only part of the story right,
24 Ambassador, because wasn't she asked if she would be willing to, in
25 fact, extend her tour before all this happened?

1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I do understand that Under Secretary Hale had
2 discussed whether she was willing and able to do that when the change
3 in the process of identifying her successor was derailed because of
4 the reassignment of that person, of myself. And as I noted, we do do
5 that in some cases, the existing Ambassador does stay on.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: But here we're talking about going from a
7 situation in which she is asked whether she can stay for a much longer
8 period of time to being told to get on the next plane, come back to
9 Washington and is informed that the President has lost confidence in
10 her and then she ends up leaving that post prior to even her desired
11 date in July.

12 Is that a fair summary?

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct. Yes.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Now, the term the President has lost confidence
15 is somewhat of a term of art. That can mean a lot of things, is not?

16 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah, I wouldn't, I don't know that I could
17 speculate. It is a term that we use. You see it in government, I
18 guess, or in other situations. Certainly for an Ambassador, yes, that
19 is, or it happens also within the embassy, we have had I know many cases
20 where the Ambassador has lost confidence in somebody in his or her team
21 and that person is sent home, finds a new position, curtails the
22 assignment.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: But in this case, where the Ambassador is told
24 you've done nothing wrong, these allegations against you are
25 essentially meritless. On what basis can you say the President lost

1 confidence in the Ambassador when the Ambassador has done everything
2 she was supposed to do?

3 It seems like it is not quite the right description for what
4 happened here.

5 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I did not use that term. The term was what
6 the Deputy Secretary used in speaking with Masha.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, do you know if that is really not the best
8 description of what happened here?

9 What was the reason the President no longer wanted her to be U.S.
10 Ambassador to Ukraine?

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I do not know, sir.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: And there was an effort to get a statement at the
13 top level of the State Department from the seventh floor expressing
14 support for Ambassador Yovanovitch; the answer was no.

15 Did you find out why the answer was no?

16 AMBASSADOR REEKER: What I got was the Under Secretary had said
17 no to putting out a statement, and that we would stick with the cleared
18 agreed response that we had used that I described earlier.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, no, I understand that the decision was made
20 that no, she would not be given that statement of support from the top
21 of the State Department.

22 My question is why?

23 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't know.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: So you were never given an explanation even though
25 you were in the chain of command responsible for Ukraine among 49 other

1 countries?

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't know that the -- that that was
3 germane, particularly to the decision of how to handle this particular
4 case in response to the press and these allegations. I had urged --

5 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm asking you, though, given your
6 responsibility, you were never given an explanation for why the seventh
7 floor refused to issue a statement of support for their own embattled
8 Ambassador, and Ambassador to which they believed had done nothing
9 wrong?

10 AMBASSADOR REEKER: The guidance that we were given, the response
11 to the press was where I was told they felt comfortable going.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: I think you referenced an email or a text message
13 in which the Ambassador were told that she should express public support
14 for the President, did I understand that correctly?

15 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I can, give me a moment, Mr. Chairman, I'll
16 find for you that particular email.

17 Yes, what I quoted, I believe earlier, was an email from Under
18 Secretary Hale. I had forwarded on the 23rd of March, as I mentioned,
19 I tried to send updates because that is what I was asked to do about
20 all of this negative, this -- these narratives. And so that morning,
21 or that, it was afternoon according to this, although I said, good
22 morning, I'm not sure why it shows 5 o'clock p.m.

23 But I say, good morning, looping you in on the latest I received
24 this morning -- and this was regarding what diGenova/Ingraham are
25 stating and claiming and this was also where there was reference to

1 Twitter-based threats against Masha, which had me extremely concerned,
2 and that we had passed that information to diplomatic security in the
3 RSO. And the response from Under Secretary Hale was, defer to our coms,
4 communications people, but I believe Masha should deny on the record
5 saying anything disrespectful and reaffirm her loyalty as an Ambassador
6 and FSO to POTUS and Constitution.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: So Ulrich Brechbuhl, I'm sorry this was Under
8 Secretary Hale --

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Under Secretary Hale.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Under Secretary Hale is recommending to a U.S.
11 Ambassador that she make a public expression of support for the U.S.
12 President and our Constitution?

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I have read to you, sir, the quote from the
14 email and --

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Were you aware of any conversation that Ambassador
16 Sondland may have had with others about telling the Ambassador to go
17 big and issue a statement of support for the President?

18 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Ambassador Sondland? No. I'm not aware of
19 that at this time.

20 I'm not aware of that in general.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Have you ever seen a circumstance where a U.S.
22 Ambassador was asked to give a personal expression of support for the
23 President of the United States or the Constitution?

24 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, we all swear an oath to the
25 Constitution to protect and defend --

1 THE CHAIRMAN: That is not my question. Everybody takes an oath
2 when they are sworn in.

3 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Right.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: But my question is have you ever seen a
5 circumstance where a U.S. Ambassador, under false attack, is asked to
6 defend themselves by making a public expression of support for the
7 President or the Constitution?

8 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I cannot think of another instance of that.
9 No, sir. I can't say it hasn't happened, but --

10 THE CHAIRMAN: You mentioned that Ambassador Sondland had direct
11 access to the President and regular communications with Chief of Staff
12 Mulvaney, is that right?

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: He told me such, and I was aware of his, you
14 know, ability. He would be in Washington and go to meetings at the
15 White House, and then with the President. Yes.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: And I think you said that, essentially, he,
17 although it was not part of his EU charter, he was given a commission
18 of sorts, a remit of sorts, along with Ambassador Volker and Secretary
19 Perry, to be the lead on Ukraine in this pivotal period?

20 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Did you ever have a chance to read Ambassador
22 Taylor's written testimony?

23 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, sir, I did. I definitely read the whole
24 thing once.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: He makes a number of very disturbing -- oversights

1 a number of disturbing facts involving an effort to coerce Ukraine to
2 do two political investigations that would be helpful to the
3 President's reelection campaign by withholding a desperately sought
4 White House meeting between the two Presidents and military aid.

5 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Uh-huh.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: I take it you would think that if those facts are
7 correct, that coercing an ally to engage in political investigations
8 to help a President's reelection campaign is a terribly wrong thing
9 to do.

10 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Can you just repeat? I want to make sure I
11 get the exact context of the question.

12 MR. PERRY: I question the premise of the question, reelection
13 campaign. It is never stated and it is all hypothetical, Mr. Chairman.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm making reference to Ambassador Taylor's
15 testimony.

16 But let me ask you this way, Ambassador: Would you agree that
17 pressuring an ally to conduct political investigations that would be
18 useful to a President's reelection campaign by withholding a White
19 House meeting or withholding military aid would be wrong?

20 AMBASSADOR REEKER: May I have I second?

21 I was going to answer, I recall this from my day, it really is
22 a hypothetical question.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: It is actually not hypothetical at all. But can
24 you agree, as a decades-long State Department official, that it would
25 be wrong to withhold military aid from an ally fighting the Russians

1 for political favors in a Presidential reelection campaign?

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Again, it would depend on the exact context
3 of that and what decisions may go with something like that, so I don't
4 feel comfortable giving a definitive answer to that.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Really. So you think under certain
6 circumstances, it is okay to withhold --

7 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That is not at all what I said, sir.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: You're asking me to give a definitive answer
10 to a hypothetical question.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: I wish it were hypothetical but nonetheless
12 Ambassador Reeker, I think it is a fairly simple question.

13 The Ukrainians were deeply interested in having a meeting between
14 the two Presidents, were they not?

15 AMBASSADOR REEKER: It was our strategy, our goal. We were very
16 interested in having a meeting take place.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: And so were the Ukrainians, right?

18 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: It was very important to Ukraine, was it not?

20 AMBASSADOR REEKER: To my understanding, it was, yes.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: And it was important to Ukraine, because a meeting
22 with the United States President in the Oval Office shows that the new
23 President of Ukraine has a relationship with the President of the United
24 States, right?

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: And that is an important signal to send to
2 adversaries like the Russians, who are were occupying Ukrainian land,
3 right.

4 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That was one of the reasons it was part of
5 our strategy was to demonstrate support for President Zelensky and the
6 new chapter of Ukraine moving forward in accordance with the strategy
7 that Kurt Volker had outlined had emerged from the meeting that those
8 three, the delegation, had had with the President on the 23rd of May.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: And because that was in the best interests of the
10 United States, our national security that that meeting happened, you
11 would agree, would you not, to withhold that meeting for help of the
12 Presidential campaign would be wrong.

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: If that was the case. I don't know that that
14 was the case.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah, but if that was the case, you would agree
16 that would be wrong.

17 AMBASSADOR REEKER: It is the prerogative of the President to
18 determine what meetings he schedules or doesn't.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Is it the prerogative of the President to coerce
20 an ally to help with a Presidential campaign.

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I mean, under the -- I don't think, I don't
22 want to -- excuse me.

23 MR. GOLDMAN: Let the record reflect that the witness is
24 consulting with his attorney.

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: The witness has consulted his attorney

1 because the witness is not a lawyer.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm just asking about right and wrong. And
3 wouldn't you agree that it would be wrong for the President of the United
4 States to withhold either a summit meeting with a foreign leader, or
5 withhold military assistance as leverage to get help with his
6 Presidential campaign. Wouldn't you agree that that is wrong.

7 AMBASSADOR REEKER: If that were indeed the case in a
8 hypothetical situation, that -- particularly when that was running
9 counter to what was our described strategy for implementing policy,
10 what we had determined was the way forward, I would find that
11 disappointing.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Well. Okay.

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Again, sir, you are asking me to comment on
14 something that I don't know to be the fact.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I'm not asking you about a hypothetical
16 here. You've read the call record of the July 25th call between the
17 President of the United States and President Zelensky, haven't you.

18 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I read what was released, I was not on that
19 call.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: And you read Ambassador Taylor's testimony.

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, his released statement that he
22 released.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: And the most you can say about a President who
24 would use his office to coerce an ally to undertake political
25 investigations to his advantage is that it would be disappointing?

1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm trying to refer to the released portion.

2 MR. MEADOWS: Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, what he is
3 reviewing is not the full testimony of Ambassador Taylor. I want to
4 make that clear. We sat in here for 7 hours. And so, unless he has
5 the deposition. I haven't been able to see it. I don't know what he
6 is referring to other than a leaked partial testimony of Ambassador
7 Taylor.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm not directing him to review anything.
9 Would you read the question back for me?

10 MR. MEADOWS: So, Counselor, is he reviewing the deposition
11 there?

12 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm not asking for what he is reviewing, I'm just
13 waiting for the reporter to read back the question.

14 AMBASSADOR REEKER: If you want to know, I'm reviewing the
15 opening statement that was released publicly by Ambassador Taylor.

16 MR. MEADOWS: Well, two points: One, it wasn't necessarily
17 released by Ambassador Taylor. I don't know that we --

18 THE CHAIRMAN: No, I don't mean to imply that it was released by
19 Ambassador Taylor. I don't believe it was released by Ambassador
20 Taylor.

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think I pulled it off the internet.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: And do you factually dispute anything you saw in
23 the copy of Ambassador Taylor's written testimony.

24 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'd have to go over it in far greater detail.
25 Much of it was stuff I was not aware of, he described his impressions

1 and other things I --

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, Ambassador Taylor does describe, I think,
3 in a text message and in his written testimony, are we really going
4 to hold up military aid for purposes of a political campaign or words
5 to that effect? You are aware of that.

6 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Uh-huh.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: And that Ambassador Taylor threatened to resign
8 over that.

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I was not aware that he had, I read that he
10 considered that, I was not aware that this was happening at the time.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: So this conduct that the Ambassador thought
12 serious enough to potentially resign over, am I to understand that you
13 think that conduct would be okay or only disappointing.

14 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, sir, I never said that.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, then tell me, do you think that conduct that
16 Ambassador Taylor described would be wrong.

17 AMBASSADOR REEKER: He would be justified fully in taking that
18 decision to resign if that was the way he felt, that is a decision for
19 him. Again, the conduct is, I don't know what the conduct was. You
20 are describing for me what he questioned and wondered if that was what
21 was taking place, and it may have been. I was not aware of that at
22 the time. Subsequently, we have seen lots of reporting to that effect.
23 So I'm not comfortable as a career foreign service officer, you know,
24 to comment on something that I'm not familiar with, specifically, what
25 the details or circumstances of any particular situation might be.

1 As a general rule, I want to see our policies followed and
2 implemented, and certainly promoting the White House meeting,
3 supporting President Zelensky, providing the military assistance that
4 had been appropriated and approved by the Congress of the United States
5 was critical to our efforts to help Ukraine, and we had a tremendous
6 opportunity, we still have, to support a whole new direction there.
7 And that's -- as I got updates, and as I mentioned already, was asking
8 regularly is there any news on the White House meeting, we were
9 monitoring for that. We were monitoring formation of the government.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: I hate to cut you off, but you're a long distance
11 from my question. I can you are very reluctant to express an opinion
12 on this subject.

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Because my opinions are not what I understood
14 this to be for.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, you were in charge of the policy of
16 Ukraine among other countries.

17 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I was not, sir, in charge of the policy in
18 Ukraine.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, you had the responsibility in the chain of
20 command for what was going on vis-à-vis Ukraine as one of your, as part
21 of your portfolio, did you not?

22 AMBASSADOR REEKER: The Ukraine policy implementation was being
23 handled, as I have described by Ambassador Sondland, Ambassador
24 Volker in conjunction with --

25 THE CHAIRMAN: It was part of your area of responsibility, was

1 it not.

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: The Ukraine is one of the countries in the
3 Europe and Eurasia bureau.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm asking your opinion about what was happening
5 to subvert U.S. policy vis-à-vis the Ukraine is important. But I
6 understand your reluctance to express an opinion about the conduct of
7 the President. But it is important, given your responsibility in this
8 area, to know what you believe is right and what you believe is wrong.

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I do not know what the conduct of the
10 President was. I have not met or spoken to the President or been part
11 of the discussion involved in the phone calls or the specific meetings.
12 What I was monitoring and tracking was, you know, accomplishing the
13 things that had been set out, according to Ambassador Volker, embraced
14 by the Secretary and the President to my understanding, in terms of
15 moving forward.

16 To say that I was dismayed, frustrated that the White House
17 meeting had not yet taken place is a fair, is a good statement. There
18 was definitely concern, as I have already mentioned, that the
19 assistance, particularly the military assistance, was held up. We
20 didn't know exactly where or why, so we were pursuing this PCC process
21 to try to force a decision and a movement forward on that, and that
22 that was, indeed, through that period in July going into August was
23 of concern to I think all of us working on Ukraine trying to figure
24 out why, where the original idea had been to have a White House meeting
25 before the parliamentary elections in Ukraine. That came and passed.

1 It was very successful.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Again, I hate to cut you off, Ambassador, but you
3 are far afield from my question. So let's turn to the documents that
4 you have indicated in your binder several yellow tagged pages. Could
5 you go to the first yellow tagged page you have in your binder.

6 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Can you tell us what that document is.

8 AMBASSADOR REEKER: It is an email, from let's see, David Hale,
9 the Under Secretary, responding to my forwarding to my forwarding to
10 him, we had had an earlier engagement in terms of the broad question
11 in March, for a couple weeks.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: What's the date of the email.

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: 26th of March.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Can you read us what that email contains.

15 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Ambassador Yovanovitch had told us -- sent
16 an email noting to us that Ukrainian television had conducted public
17 opinion polling regarding the level of trust to Lutsenko, he had been
18 the Prosecutor who had raised all of these accusations, some of which
19 he later recanted, about Ambassador Yovanovitch versus statements
20 issued by the U.S. side, the statements, the embassy and the Department
21 had put out in response to questions. And 83.4 percent of respondents
22 trust Ambassador Yovanovitch, 5.5 percent trust Lutsenko, and
23 11.1 percent do not care. And Masha had sent that to us noting the
24 subject line, a bright spot in my day, which, indeed, underscored the
25 fact that the Ukrainian people were, you know, understood the sort of

1 nasty politics afoot in Ukraine.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: And what is the gist of the email that is in
3 response to that.

4 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I forwarded further to Under Secretary Hale,
5 you know, we had been discussing over this period why, and why now,
6 was this happening in March.

7 Why did all this barrage of stuff begin?

8 And George Kent, the deputy who manages Ukraine, provided some
9 insights from some Ukrainian journalists that he had meet in an event
10 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and they were commenting on the dynamic
11 known as the Giuliani-Lutsenko dynamic and --

12 THE CHAIRMAN: And what was that? Would you read that paragraph?

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Sure. So I'm quoting here, from, now just
14 to be very clear this is --

15 MR. MEADOWS: So is this an exhibit we have, Mr. Chairman? I
16 guess what I'm saying is, is this a fishing expedition? Are we just
17 going to ask him to read 400 pages of 3 inch --

18 THE CHAIRMAN: We may have to, Mr. Meadows, because these are
19 documents that have not been provided the committee.

20 MR. MEADOWS: But they are government documents, Mr. Chairman,
21 and from what I understand they were brought in to help him refresh
22 his memory, not as an investigative tool.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Representative Meadows, I'm asking the witness to
24 read from the documents and --

25 MR. MEADOWS: Well, I guess --

1 MS. DAUM: Mr. Chairman, I'm perfectly happy to let him read this
2 one document. May I note that those yellow flags were placed by counsel
3 as part of our discussions prior to this meeting. Asking him to review
4 individual yellow flagged document and read them in the record, as
5 Mr. Meadows has stated, was not the intention of bringing these
6 documents. They are to help assist the committee in providing in
7 helping Mr. Reeker understand the events in which he was participating.
8 They are to help him refresh his recollection. We were more than happy
9 to cooperate and provide assistance but, again, asking him to refer
10 to each individual document is going to be -- is not the intention of
11 this.

12 If you don't want him to refer to his binder, and if you don't
13 want him to be able to provide you the detailed information --

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Counsel, you disclosed the substance of the
15 yellow-tagged pages, I did not. That was your choice to disclose that
16 attorney-client communication.

17 But the witness is referring to documents to refresh his memory.

18 We are entitled to know what those documents are that refresh his
19 memory.

20 MS. DAUM: You are.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: And no proper objection is laid.

22 So the witness will answer the question.

23 MS. DAUM: I'm not sure what the question was.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: If the question was, what does the email say
25 pertaining to the Giuliani discussion?

1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: So to provide the appropriate context, this
2 is an excerpt of something that was forwarded to me by George Kent,
3 our Deputy Assistant Secretary for Ukraine, who, as he described it,
4 provided color commentary from Cambridge, where he was that long
5 weekend in March, met with Ukrainian journalists, and they both -- he
6 talked about two journalists who offered -- shared their views, quote,
7 "offline" separately.

8 And I will quote what he wrote. He said they had talked to players
9 extensively in Kyiv the past 5 days and knew that the Kyiv dynamic was
10 Giuliani-Lutsenko. Both thought that Giuliani had probably initiated
11 the relationship. Parenthetical note, (I remain unsure, and I think
12 it was Lutsenko) close parenthesis. But even if Lutsenko had reached
13 out, they felt that Giuliani shaped the dynamics of the, quote,
14 "reveal." Of most note, Giuliani allegedly told Lutsenko that he was
15 acting fully on the President's behalf and the President wanted Masha
16 gone.

17 This alleged message feeds the determination of Lutsenko to
18 proceed with the attacks, feeling they can validate their usefulness
19 by delivering.

20 I don't feel comfortable using the names of two journalists. Is
21 it all right just to refer to two people who told him this?

22 THE CHAIRMAN: That is fine.

23 AMBASSADOR REEKER: These two people also felt that regardless
24 of how much Poroshenko knew or authorized the operation, the team was,
25 quote, "all in" and would not stop, in reference to the attacks on Masha.

1 Each was appalled at what Lutsenko had done and did not see any winner
2 in this gambit except Moscow.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: If we could go to next yellow tabbed document.
4 You can tell us, is that an email and who it is to and from.

5 AMBASSADOR REEKER: This is just a list of, let me figure out,
6 this is forwarding George Kent's updates on the Wednesday, the 27th
7 to Counsel Brechbuhl and Under Secretary Hale, for the Wednesday
8 updates on The Hill article, and it is just a lot of press pieces.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Is that the one you referenced earlier that had
10 the four subject matters.

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: The four narratives, I think, was the word
12 I think I used, or George had another term for it for --

13 THE CHAIRMAN: So, I'm sorry, what date is that document.

14 AMBASSADOR REEKER: This one is the 27th of March, so it is in
15 the second week as all that story was coming out. Yeah. I had come
16 on the, started on the 18th, and this is the following week. And so
17 it is -- this is not that specific one, I think it was from these, and
18 I would have to find, again, the one where George sort of had, he and
19 his team had looked at all of this with the embassy, because one of
20 the questions posed to me by the Counselor, and the Under Secretary
21 was exactly sort of what is prompting this and why now? I think the
22 why now was very tied to the Ukrainian political season, and the
23 presidential election. And so, he was forwarding these up. And I
24 didn't send every single item because there were lots of them. I
25 couldn't possibly read all of them, but I sent ones that seemed to

1 capture sort of where the story was.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's go to the next yellow tab then.

3 AMBASSADOR REEKER: And that is just simply me saying I inquired
4 as to --

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Can you tell us is it an email to and from and the
6 date.

7 AMBASSADOR REEKER: It is an email from me responding to an email
8 from David Hale.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: On what date.

10 AMBASSADOR REEKER: The 28th, the next day.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: I can see that is a short email. What does it
12 provide.

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: This is just the Under Secretary saying I
14 have tried to get guidance from the Counselor, and suggesting to me
15 if --

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Do you want to just read it for us. It would be
17 simpler than paraphrasing.

18 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I have tried several times to get guidance
19 from Ulrich, to no avail. I suggest Phil call to see if we can okay,
20 one, her -- Masha's -- use of social media in self-defense and, B,
21 release of a Department statement.

22 And as we talked earlier, ultimately, the answer from David Hale
23 was no statement.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's go on to the next yellow tab.

25 MR. MALINOWSKI. Excuse me, seeking guidance, what was the

1 seeking guidance all about?

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I couldn't tell you that definitively. All
3 I have is just this email, just, "I tried several times to get guidance
4 from Ulrich." I think at that time we were still in this issue of,
5 how do we push back on this, and what can Masha do? And so his reference
6 to using social media in self-defense to make that case, we discussed
7 earlier, he had suggested she might want to put out some kind of
8 statement, and then the question of releasing a Department statement.
9 But I can't -- I think that is in the context of what he was seeking
10 guidance on but I can't say that definitively, since it is from the
11 Under Secretary. And here is the one that describes the, sort of, the
12 comprehensive. So this is by now 2 weeks, so this is the April 1st.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: You are referring to another email now. Can you
14 tell us who that is to and from and the date.

15 AMBASSADOR REEKER: This is from George to myself and others
16 within the Bureau where he has put together this, what I described
17 earlier, this four main narratives that were coming out of this barrage,
18 the four narratives that he could see that all of this, these stories
19 belonged to essentially one of these four major narratives.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: My colleagues may want to go through it more in
21 detail, but let's go on to the next yellow tab.

22 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think it is the last yellow tab.

23 Mr. MEADOWS: Mr. Chairman, again, what questions are we asking
24 other than trying to get him to read emails so that you can ask different
25 questions? I don't -- it really will have a chilling effect on every

1 single witness if what you are going to tell them to do is don't bring
2 in documents to refresh your memory, because I may get you to read them
3 all. I can't imagine that in a --

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Representative Meadows, do you know what has a
5 chilling effect? The White House sending letters to witnesses like
6 this saying don't show up. So if you want to --

7 MR. MEADOWS: I don't know of a single witness that has not shown
8 up.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: -- encourage the witnesses --

10 MR. MEADOWS: Has a single witness not shown up at this point?

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

12 MR. MEADOWS: They could be litigated --

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

14 MR. MEADOWS: Which one.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, we can fill you in when we are not taking
16 up the time of the witness.

17 MR. MEADOWS: I'm not aware of one.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: We just heard from one yesterday who is not going
19 to show up.

20 MR. MEADOWS: I'm saying to date every single witness has shown
21 up --

22 THE CHAIRMAN: That is not even remotely accurate, Mr. Meadows.
23 But let's discuss this outside the presence of the witness. The
24 witness has testified, Mr. Meadows, that he used these documents to
25 refresh his recollection. We have every right to find out what he has

1 used to refresh his recollection.

2 MR. MEADOWS: But recollection on what question, Mr. Chairman?

3 THE CHAIRMAN: On his testimony today. So, Mr. Meadows, I'm
4 sorry, but there is no legitimate objection to lodge here, nor has there
5 been one lodged. I can appreciate that members may not want the
6 contents of these documents to become known to the committee, but there
7 is no other reason to prevent this witness --

8 MR. MEADOWS: I don't object. I don't object to anything that
9 actually furthers the transparency. What I do object to is you have
10 got a counselor and a witness who have obviously gone through and tried
11 to highlight things so that in the event that you or the minority ask
12 a question where they can quickly refer to it, to suggest that they
13 should go through and --

14 MS. DAUM: I do object to the characterization of the reason why
15 those yellow flags are there.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, you have given the characterization of why
17 the yellow flags are there, and I accept your representation --

18 MS. DAUM: The reason why has not been --

19 THE CHAIRMAN: But, in any event, there is no proper objection
20 lodged here. The witness will go back to the document we were referring
21 to, and please describe the date --

22 MR. MEADOWS: So, Mr. Chairman, let me ask one other thing, then.
23 You are not trying to induce the witness here to breach attorney-client
24 privilege by asking them to read that out, is that correct.

25 Because that is what it appears --

1 THE CHAIRMAN: My colleague, it is the lawyer's prerogative to
2 disclose to the committee, her attorney-client privileges. She has
3 done so in part. That was her decision, not mine. So if we can return
4 to the document.

5 MR. MEADOWS: I don't recall it. Maybe she could read that.
6 Could we have the clerk read that back, because I'm not aware of that.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Meadows, I'm not going to allow any further
8 delay.

9 MS. DAUM: Might I just say you are assuming that the reason why
10 those flags were there is covered by the privilege.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm not assuming anything, Counselor.

12 I'm just asking the witness to answer the question.

13 There will be no further interruptions, please.

14 MS. DAUM: It is an assumption.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm not assuming anything except what you told us,
16 so Ambassador Reeker, you may tell us what that document is, the to
17 and from and the date on it, please.

1 [2:32 p.m.]

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: This is an email that I pulled out. I
3 remember specifically pulling this out because that pertains to the
4 question you asked and I answered earlier about the role of Ambassador
5 Sondland.

6 There was stuff not at all connected to Ukraine, but I also asked
7 the Under Secretary, reminding you that I've been on the ground in this
8 job for 2 weeks, to understand better why Gordon is involved and the
9 Under Secretary responded --

10 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, can you tell us the date?

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: April 2nd.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: April 2nd. And it's from you to --

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, it's a string so it --

14 THE CHAIRMAN: A string between you and whom?

15 MR REEKER: And David Hale, the Under Secretary. My -- the head
16 of policy.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: And if you could read us the string from the -- in
18 chronological order, in terms of the time.

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: It has nothing do with this case, the other
20 things, until separately I asked to understand better why Gordon is
21 so involved.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Can you tell us what you asked about that and what
23 the reply was?

24 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I just told you. I asked him: Separately,
25 I'd like to understand why Gordon is so involved.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That's another thing. And he responded:
3 Yes, Sondland angle is irregular. And I believe I already testified
4 to that as the characterization of the role when I had asked, coming
5 new into this, why the Ambassador to the European Union was that
6 involved. And that was the answer from the Under Secretary.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: And was that the sum to total on that document of
8 the discussion of Ambassador Sondland or Ukraine?

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. The rest was separate stuff about
10 George Kent and had do with Georgia, different thing.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. If we could move on to the next yellow
12 tagged page.

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Okay. This was -- again, this had to do with
14 keeping -- the date here is April 22nd. So I was at this time in -- back
15 in Germany. Yeah. Yeah, I was in Stuttgart. The problem with email,
16 it doesn't tell you where you are.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah, you don't need to look up your location. If
18 you could just --

19 MR REEKER: Well, I want to be complete if I'm going to read you
20 all my emails.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: I didn't ask you the location.

22 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I was in Stuttgart. So there had been a
23 question about making sure Under Secretary Hale was getting all of
24 the -- you know, he wanted to make sure he was getting information.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: So this is an email from you or is this another

1 chain?

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: This is a chain that begins: I'm not even
3 a part of it. I had called back to the office to say, you know, Under
4 Secretary Hale wants to be more tightly lashed up in the Ukraine
5 decision information cycle. So this is back to the team that's
6 handling Ukraine, George Kent and his team there, which, as I put it,
7 have been whirring -- whirring, w-h-i-r-r-i-n-g -- at warp speed the
8 last several weeks.

9 That's from George to the Under Secretary's staff. And this was
10 sort of making sure how we were -- we broadly, how the Ukraine team
11 was feeding information to the Under Secretary. And the response from
12 the Chief of Staff was: That sounds right. The current flow is fine.
13 If you flag things for the staffer and me when needed, we will be in
14 good shape. Phil can reach out directly to P -- the Under
15 Secretary -- or me -- the Chief of Staff -- whenever needed to ensure
16 he is looped in, especially with regard to anything for the Secretary,
17 because the Under Secretary handles that.

18 And then George has forwarded to me saying: Per the below and
19 our evening telcon -- telephone conversation -- I engaged the Chief
20 of Staff on how much he wanted and we've been shoveling information
21 to the staffers, the staffers' way.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: And the date on that document again?

23 AMBASSADOR REEKER: April 22nd.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. And is that the gist of the communication?

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That is, yes, very much. And it includes a

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1 string of information, condensed versions of the press stories, a
2 number of bylines, some tweets, various things that he just was
3 demonstrating.

4 I was -- and I can remember being in -- that's why it was relevant
5 where was I -- I was back in Stuttgart. And I wanted to make sure that
6 the team, which had been feeding me stuff, was feeding it to the Under
7 Secretary, who was really the -- you know, is the head of policy -- and
8 filter stuff to the Secretary as appropriate.

9 MR. LYNCH: Could we know if Ambassador Sondland is on that chain?

10 AMBASSADOR REEKER: He is not. This was really the
11 internal -- you know, the stuff was still coming, we're now about a
12 month from this initial deluge, and how process-wise, we're just making
13 sure everybody was in the loop, which, of course, is what leads to these
14 complex email chains.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's go to the next document.

16 AMBASSADOR REEKER: And this is George forwarding to me on the
17 26th.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: The 26th of --

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: April, I'm sorry, 26th of April this year.
20 Just let me get reference of where I was, what I was doing.

21 Yeah, so this was -- I was still in Stuttgart. I had described
22 for the record as part of the deposition earlier it was the 24th of
23 April where things took a turn. I can't remember the quote that I read
24 you, but I had lot of calls about the situation, unhappiness --

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Tell us.

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1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: -- about the situation. And so George was
2 then forwarding to me on Friday the 26th new stuff. This is forwarding
3 from Embassy Kyiv's press collection. So they had forwarded it
4 throughout the embassy.

5 Subject: President Trump discusses Ukraine on the Hannity
6 program and a new Ukraine-related column in The Hill, the publication.
7 And George just pointed out for me -- again, I'm over in Germany trying
8 to make sure we're generally there -- it says: No mention of the
9 Ambassador, i.e., Ambassador Yovanovitch, focus instead on the alleged
10 Clinton 2016 collusion and the Boden -- I think that's supposed to be
11 Biden, but it's a typo -- Burisma strands of the story line. As I
12 described the four strands that George had identified, what I
13 identified as strands two and three, with the attack on the Ambassador
14 and the anticorruption programs as strand one, and the attack on the
15 anticorruption NGO as a Soros organization as strand four. So that's
16 why I flagged this. It was reiterating --

17 THE CHAIRMAN: And who's in that chain of communication?

18 AMBASSADOR REEKER: George Kent sent it to myself, the Acting
19 Principal Deputy, [REDACTED] was head of the press office.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, who's the Acting?

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: His name is Michael Murphy. While I was gone
22 he was the Acting -- another one of the seven DAS's, and he was Acting
23 while I was away. And the head of our press office, [REDACTED], who
24 has since moved on to a new assignment.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's go on I think to maybe the last.

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1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think you've expired the yellow tabs. And
2 this is from the director, so he would be essentially the deputy to
3 George Kent.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: What's the date?

5 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Friday, March -- May, excuse me, May
6 the 10th. So context here. Ah, yes. I was -- I had gotten back.
7 You'll recall I mentioned May the 9th I had returned with the Secretary.
8 We traveled to Rovaniemi, Finland, for the Arctic Council meeting, to
9 Berlin -- Berlin had been postponed. We'd had to go to Baghdad
10 unexpectedly because of the Iranian issues there. And then we'd gone
11 to London and I'd arrive at Andrews the morning of the 9th, gone to
12 the --

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, we don't really need your whole travel
14 schedule, just interested in the document. Can you tell us --

15 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, it helps give me context, sir, into why
16 they were sending me things and why I pulled them out. So this was
17 forwarding on a Newsweek story, "How Rudy Giuliani's unfounded claims
18 of an anti-Trump conspiracy in Ukraine may have ousted an Ambassador."

19 THE CHAIRMAN: And --

20 AMBASSADOR REEKER: And it just noted this Newsweek piece
21 highlights the Giuliani-Lutsenko connection that is at the root of all
22 this, as you'll recall, one of the sort of strands that George had
23 described. There is also he refers to a New York Times article today
24 that says, "Giuliani plans to go to Kyiv to meet with Zelensky and urge
25 him to continue investigating the alleged Ukrainian collusion with the

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1 Clinton campaign and the case again Hunter Biden." So it's just
2 informational on what was in the press.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: And did you get a reply when you sent that out from
4 anyone?

5 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I did not send that out. This is an incoming
6 email to me.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Oh, it is. Okay.

8 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Sorry if I did not make clear. This is an
9 email from the office director, who is essentially the deputy to the
10 head of Ukraine, the DAS, George Kent.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Did you receive a copy of the cable that Ambassador
12 Taylor sent to the Secretary?

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I did not receive it because it was sent
14 "NODIS," but I have seen it since.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: And what's the nature of that cable? And when you
16 say you've seen it since, when does that mean you've seen it?

17 AMBASSADOR REEKER: This past week.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Is that something you reviewed to prepare for your
19 testimony?

20 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah, I think that's a fair -- fair to say.
21 I went back to find it. I had not seen it in the original that I recall.
22 I think the date of it was -- let's see here -- August 29th. And this
23 was -- again, it's a classified cable, so I won't speak to it under
24 anything that is classified.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Did you know about the cable at the time?

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1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: On August 29th, I don't believe I did, no.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: So was the first time you actually learned about
3 the cable either when you read about Ambassador Taylor's testimony or
4 when you went to review it last week?

5 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I believe it was the first time and that's
6 why I went to review it. If I had seen it or been aware of it, I did
7 not recall that. And it was when I read reference to it that I looked
8 it up to find it, because --

9 THE CHAIRMAN: And how did you obtain it if you only saw it last
10 week?

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I asked my staff to get it from the watch.
12 You know there's lots of emails, lots of cables online.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Were there other documents you also sought to
14 review in preparation for your testimony today?

15 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Really just as much of the email as I could
16 go through.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: So apart from the cable and the binder, were there
18 other -- in the binder of documents you have with you today -- were
19 there other documents you sought to review that you do not have with
20 you today?

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Calendars mostly, which I have brought to try
22 to sort of put together the timeline into -- which is, I was hoping,
23 would be helpful to you to understand my engagement and involvement.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Let me ask one more question and I'm going to hand
25 back -- or are we out of time? We're out of time. Okay. Then I will

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1 yield to the minority.

2 MR. MEADOWS: If you need to eat.

3 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm fine with that. No, really, truly,
4 Scout's honor. I'm been trying to figure out how to diet. No,
5 absolutely, sir. Thank you for the consideration.

6 MR. MEADOWS: The deposition diet.

7 AMBASSADOR REEKER: This is not an
8 appetite-inducing experience.

9 BY MR. CASTOR:

10 Q Always if you need to consult with your lawyer, step out,
11 you know, please feel free to let us know. Because these depositions
12 aren't super comfortable. So to the extent we can make them more
13 comfortable, we try to do it.

14 A I finished my coffee, so by 45 minutes I'll probably need
15 to step out.

16 Q Okay.

17 When you took your post as the Acting Assistant Secretary, what
18 was your understanding of the U.S. policy towards Ukraine was at a high
19 level?

20 A We were dedicated to supporting Ukraine, a democratic
21 Ukraine, Western-oriented, supporting its reforms, which we had,
22 supporting it against the Russian not only malign influence, but
23 military attack, which was ongoing. That included of course a very
24 robust sanctions policy. And our diplomacy more broadly across Europe
25 included working with other countries to continue the broad support

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1 for those sanctions, European Union sanctions, from the public
2 diplomacy standpoint, explaining that, trying to help others see,
3 against the face of a lot of Russian disinformation, what was really
4 going on in Ukraine.

5 And of course then the transition, you know, supporting free, fair
6 elections, which were remarkably free and fair, and fairly resounding
7 in terms of electing Zelensky. So that was all the broad thing. And
8 as I've stated before, my marching orders, as it were, were continuity
9 of supporting all of the policy aspects in regard to the whole portfolio
10 in all 50 countries and NATO and EU engagement and other things.

11 Q And that was on track and proceeding according to the U.S.'s
12 plan when you took your post?

13 A Yeah. I mean, when I arrived, the big focus was on the
14 elections. As I mentioned briefly, I'd had the short trip down to
15 Odessa in my EUCOM capacity, accompanied by Ambassador Sondland. Of
16 course Ambassador Yovanovitch was there, Ambassador Volker was there,
17 and these EU officials in a show of support by having this ship visit
18 in the Odessa port.

19 So I think that was on track. We knew that these elections were
20 crucial and we wanted to get through them and be able to move forward
21 depending on the outcome.

22 And then, of course, what I did understand once I got on the ground
23 was the role that Ambassador Volker played, I hadn't had as much of
24 a grasp of that, but that he had a very leading role, and that Ambassador
25 Sondland would play a big role.

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1 And, of course, that all became clearer and more defined after
2 they had sort of been named as the delegation to the Zelensky
3 inauguration and then met to brief the President afterwards and took
4 the lead, with the full support of the Secretary and the President,
5 in implementing the sort of way ahead that I described earlier.

6 Q And part of implementing the U.S. policy with Ukraine was
7 financial assistance and military assistance with the use of lethal
8 defensive weapons?

9 A That is correct, yes.

10 Q And that was a slight change in policy from the previous
11 administration?

12 A I wasn't tracking particularly closely at that time the
13 previous administration's Ukraine policy, but I do know that the
14 lethal -- the provision of -- now I'm going to -- maybe I do need to
15 eat -- went blank on the Javelins. The defense systems was a new aspect
16 under this.

17 And I do know, I keep this note card all the time actually with
18 me, that State and USAID assistance for Ukraine, which is earmarked
19 by the Congress and so those allocations are different than our regular
20 IEECA funding, or the assistance for Eastern Europe and Central Asia,
21 was for fiscal year 2019 approaching \$450 million, \$445.7 million.

22 Q And the provision of lethal defensive weapons was a
23 substantial upgrade in the overall policy?

24 A Yeah. Again, I don't -- I wouldn't want to get into
25 characterizing too much because I just don't -- I wasn't familiar with

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1 what was. I inherited -- this is what I inherited and where we were
2 and that's really what I was focused on.

3 Q Do you know what the thinking was behind providing lethal
4 defensive weapons to Ukraine?

5 A I think those were debates and discussions that were had
6 certainly before my time.

7 Q Okay. Was it to prevent further Russian incursion?

8 A It was certainly to help Ukraine defend itself from exactly
9 that.

10 Q And has that aid done what it was intended to do?

11 A I'm not sure. I think the simple, broad answer is yes, that
12 it's helped. The Russians are still there, there is still a war going
13 on. There are various political and diplomatic processes at work,
14 Ambassador Volker was very much a part of one, which have not moved
15 anywhere, and I think that's largely because of Moscow's role.

16 Q When Ambassador Taylor went out to Ukraine, arriving in June,
17 was the U.S. policy on track to meet its objectives?

18 A I mean, again, we had outlined, as I outlined for you, several
19 goals more immediate, an immediate strategy. That included support
20 for Zelensky, who was then new, and that included having the White House
21 meeting, which was not on track. The hope had been to have that before
22 the parliamentary elections in Ukraine. That did not occur.

23 Q Taylor had raised the prospect of resigning. Did you -- did
24 I hear you say you that you only learned about that secondhand in the
25 course of his statement or the news accounts?

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1 A Correct. You know, I think I described some reluctance he
2 had had about taking the position, and he wanted to meet with the
3 Secretary and to be reassured that Ukraine policy was not changing.
4 And I believe he found that reassurance, because after the May 28th
5 meeting with the Secretary he was ready to go, and then subsequently
6 then arrived and took charge at Embassy Kyiv.

7 Q And since his arrival, U.S. policy has not changed, has it?

8 A No, sir.

9 Q And it remains on track?

10 A Again, there were some, going back to what I described as
11 the goals that Kurt Volker briefed me on following the meeting May 23rd,
12 there were some -- some -- I can refer back to it. It does not have
13 a yellow tag.

14 So, again, these were takeaways on the way forward, indeed the
15 President has signed a congratulatory letter to Zelensky. He did
16 invite --

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Could the witness let us know what the witness is
18 referring to, what document?

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: This is what I referred to earlier, sir.
20 This is the readout I got from Ambassador Volker after the Thursday,
21 May 23rd, meeting of the Ukrainian, what we called the delegation that
22 had been appointed by the President to attend the inauguration of
23 Zelensky, that is Volker, Sondland, Secretary Perry. And they had gone
24 to the White House, met with the President. And I think I described
25 earlier that this was sort of the way ahead.

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1 And we have, in fact, as I said, the goal had been to invite
2 Zelensky and have an Oval Office meeting before the July parliamentary
3 elections. That didn't happen. The idea had been to -- that there
4 would now be seeking a noncareer ambassadorial candidate.

5 That process is still underway. So that is not quite there yet
6 is my understanding. I think that's been handled by Counselor
7 Brechtbuhl and others.

8 And I do understand that on the energy side, with help from experts
9 and others, Ukraine has fully stocked up to meet its winter gas needs
10 in order to get through the winter should the Russians try to turn off
11 the gas flow.

12 And, of course, I think it's worth saying that our goal is engaging
13 this new government and Zelensky on the reforms, continuing the press
14 for countering corruption and moving forward, much of that accomplished
15 through our various aid programs.

16 BY MR. CASTOR:

17 Q Ambassador Taylor, how long is his posting expected to last?

18 A I'm hesitating because I do not recall if there was a finite
19 date to it. One answer, which would be correct, would be upon the
20 appointment of an Ambassador, since he is not Ambassador, he's Charge.

21 I would have to go back to check. There may be a sort of 1-year
22 parameter, possibly extendable, but I would have to double-check the
23 administrative detail and I don't recall.

24 Q Do you know if there's any efforts ongoing at present to pick
25 a permanent Ambassador?

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1 A Yes. I'm sorry if I wasn't clear. That is an ongoing
2 process. And I believe, having talked to the Counselor, Brechbuhl,
3 who I think has sort have been spearheading that, they are narrowing
4 down on names. I know he and I had one meeting where he floated a number
5 of names that had emerged in their discussion, some of whom I was -- some
6 of the names I was familiar with.

7 Q Okay. So if a name emerges in the next several months, we
8 shouldn't be surprised?

9 A Correct. I think that's fair to say, yes.

10 Q You mentioned this morning a meeting that you had after March
11 21st, you had a meeting with the Deputy Chief of Mission of the
12 Ukrainians?

13 A On March 21st, correct.

14 Q 21st, right. And then when Ambassador Chalyy returned to
15 Washington, you met with him?

16 A On March 26th, correct.

17 Q Were you aware that during the campaign he had been outspoken
18 against candidate Trump?

19 A No, sir, I was not aware of that.

20 Q Okay. He wrote an op-ed during the 2016 election period,
21 in August, critical of candidate Trump, and that's something you're
22 not familiar with?

23 A No, sir.

24 Q Okay. Is that unusual for a sitting U.S. Ambassador --

25 A He's not the U.S. Ambassador.

1 Q I'm sorry. A sitting Ukrainian Ambassador to the U.S. I
2 apologize.

3 A I really couldn't say. I don't --

4 Q Can you think of a time when the sitting Ambassador to the
5 U.S. has taken on a candidate in the U.S. election for President?

6 A Oh, I can think of instances certainly in Europe, I was
7 covering during the 2016 election, where certain political figures,
8 prime ministers from different countries, endorsed
9 essentially -- endorsed one candidate or another in our elections. But
10 for ambassadors, one doesn't come to mind, I certainly can't say.

11 Q Did you ever have an awareness of some of the President's
12 skepticisms about Ukraine and their corruption environment?

13 A Yes, I had heard that quite regularly, that the President
14 was not a fan of Ukraine.

15 Q And what had you heard and who had you heard it from, to the
16 best of your recollection?

17 A I had heard -- as this started, when I came and it was
18 arriving March 18th and was sort of hit with this deluge of the negative
19 press about Ambassador Yovanovitch, essentially the four narratives
20 that George Kent described, which pretty much capture most of what was
21 out there, within that discussion.

22 And I think it was clear from some of his own statements or tweets,
23 certainly his attorney's commentary, that he was not -- I think the
24 general view that had been given to me from Ambassador Volker and
25 Ambassador Sondland that I sensed from certainly the media coverage,

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1 that the President was not a big fan of Ukraine. And from the meeting
2 that the delegation had, they said, you know, he's not a big fan of
3 Ukraine.

4 Q Did Ambassador Volker ever communicate with you about his
5 concerns that Mr. Giuliani may have been amplifying a negative
6 narrative to the President?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And Ambassador Volker's engagement subsequently with Mr.
9 Giuliani was in part to try to assuage those concerns?

10 A I think that is certainly what I took away from that, that
11 he was going to -- because I do recall him telling me, I can't say
12 specifically when, that, well, he was going to reach out to or was going
13 to speak to Giuliani. And I think Ambassador Volker felt that there
14 was this very good story to tell about President Zelensky and a new
15 chapter in Ukraine. And that was his goal, was to hopefully take away
16 some of that, what we sensed was a very negative stream coming from
17 Mr. Giuliani to the President.

18 Q What was your outlook on President Zelensky as he was elected
19 on his campaign of anticorruption?

20 A As I read more about him, it seemed impressive. The support
21 that he gained in the electorate was interesting and I think a strong
22 statement that he didn't win by a hair or a nose or whatever cliché
23 you want to use. He had a fairly strong and resounding mandate from
24 the first round and then underscored at the second round.

25 Then there was a lot of question, well, we'll see what happens

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1 in the parliamentary elections because they may not reflect the same
2 support. But in fact they did.

3 I met him, albeit very briefly, it was his first trip outside of
4 Ukraine since his inauguration. You're familiar with the dinner that
5 Ambassador Sondland hosted in Brussels, and I was there. So I met him
6 very briefly and his wife. And he seemed -- struck me as smart and
7 pragmatic, young, a different, very different kind of leader, a new
8 generation, I think, is a fair characterization of leader in Ukraine.

9 Q And he's genuinely interested in the Ukrainian people and
10 not himself, was that your impression?

11 A I do believe so, yes. He made very clear at that dinner in
12 what he was saying to us, saying to all of those gathered, including
13 other leaders who I mentioned earlier, that his priority as he had
14 campaigned was to try to bring an end to the war in the east, which,
15 as you know, has taken more than 13,000 Ukrainian lives and continues
16 to disrupt lives and economic potential there. And I think he's
17 genuine about that.

18 Q So he wasn't running for President to get rich and to steal
19 money from the government and to do all those corrupt things that maybe
20 some other leaders have been accused of?

21 A That was not my impression, but I can't -- I've met him twice,
22 so I don't -- that was not my impression.

23 Q But the information that you've heard from the field, and
24 from DAS Kent and Ambassador Taylor, Ambassador Sondland, Ambassador
25 Volker, you're encouraged by President Zelensky?

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1 A Yes. And that was the broad consensus that the experts were
2 briefing me, is this is -- we've got this new President with a full
3 mandate and we're going to our best to work with him and support our
4 goal, you know, Ukraine, and offer U.S. friendship. Obviously we had
5 done this with previous governments, too, more or less -- more and less
6 success, and that, of course, remains by definition work in progress.

7 Q So to the extent Ambassador Volker had to engage more with
8 Mr. Giuliani than a lot of traditional State Department officials would
9 have liked, ultimately are you comfortable Ambassador Volker was trying
10 to do the right thing?

11 A Yeah. I don't know that I can characterize what people would
12 have liked or not in regards to that. It certainly was -- I had never
13 had any contact with Mr. Giuliani. I do believe that what Kurt was
14 doing, I mean broadly, was a very good-faith effort to move us forward
15 on this policy. And I think he was reaching out there to try to, as
16 I described already, tell the good story that there is to tell with
17 the hope that that would get Mr. Giuliani to a different place in terms
18 of what he was saying about Ukraine.

19 Q And Ambassador Volker had developed strong relationships
20 with some of the key people close to Zelensky. Is that something you're
21 aware of?

22 A Broadly. I mean, Kurt could rattle off names of key
23 officials that he engaged with and I couldn't probably. I just, you
24 know, 50 countries and I --

25 Q Sure.

1 A -- you know.

2 Q When he resigned at the end of September, was that a loss
3 to the Department?

4 A Yes, I believe it was.

5 Q Was there any effort to try to convince him to stay?

6 A I have had no contact with him other than to wish him well
7 on his wedding day, which I was unable to attend due to travel. And
8 I can't speak for anybody else.

9 Q We were almost able to wish him well on his wedding day as
10 he was here.

11 A We were -- my wife and I were invited to his wedding.
12 Unfortunately, I was on official travel again, so I couldn't go.

13 Q I think when we spoke in the first round you identified some
14 communications you had with Ambassador Sondland. Were there any other
15 communications that you had with Ambassador Sondland during the time
16 period of July 18th and September 11th when the aid was in the process
17 of being held up, that you can remember?

18 A Yeah. I'm sure I did because that's a pretty big period of
19 time and Gordon was in or out. Tell me the dates that you are
20 referencing again?

21 Q July 18th is when the aid was initially subject to the hold.

22 A The hold, yeah.

23 Q And it was released in September 11th through 12th. News
24 came on September 11th and the State Department --

25 A Yeah. Because the parliamentary elections in Ukraine were

1 the 21st, and, of course, the President and Zelensky had a phone call
2 on the 25th, as you all know now. And I do recall knowing that there
3 was a phone call. I was not on that phone call or part of it.

4 Q Did you get a readout of that phone call from anybody?

5 A I know Kurt sent me a WhatsApp message and just said: Great
6 POTUS-Ze -- we referred to him as Ze, Z-e -- POTUS-Ze call.

7 Q Anyone else?

8 A So, again, back to your specific question about Gordon
9 Sondland, you know, I saw him here and there at things he would be in
10 Washington once in a while or we would be in occasional touch, because
11 there were also lots of other issues with the European Union. The
12 presidency was changing, of course, in the summer to Finland, from
13 Romania to Finland. We did some things there.

14 Yeah, Gordon's pretty energetic and active. So I can't specify
15 when and exactly where I may have bumped into him, but we were in touch
16 occasionally.

17 Q During that time period, what did you see as the likely
18 outcome? Did you think the aid was ultimately going to be permanently
19 held up and not delivered or did you think there was a way out?

20 A I was focused to the extent that it would come up to me, I
21 mean, every day we'd kind of -- there were two sides. There was one,
22 there was the assistance coordinator saying everything is held and
23 today's instruction is you may release 2 percent or there were various
24 aspects. On the Ukraine specifically, it was, "Any news?" And we were
25 pursuing the PCC process, as I said, to hopefully push forward a

1 decision on that.

2 And I don't -- I do have here a note that I had a call with
3 Ambassador Sondland on the 30th of July, but I don't remember anything
4 specific about that. I think it may have also had to do with -- that
5 was around the time I had gone on the -- I went on the 31st to the PCC
6 about other aspects of Ukraine.

7 Q If the aid was not going to be delivered there would have
8 to be some sort of official process, whether that's rescission or
9 reprogramming. Do you know if either of those efforts ever got
10 underway?

11 A I do not. I just remember the conversation with Laura Cooper
12 who was focused and brought it up at the PCC I attended on the 31st,
13 even though the focus of that PCC was not the assistance. But she said
14 on the assistance, we need -- we at DOD have to intend to keep moving
15 forward on this. Because, you know, they had a separate legislative
16 mandate to do that.

17 So we continued to be hopeful, I know, in terms of the PCC process.
18 I already mentioned the expectation was hopefully there would be a
19 small -- a principal small group that could help force the decision.
20 The general idea that I recall was that if it's Mr. Mulvoney -- excuse
21 me, Mulvaney -- blocking we need to get to that point and then have
22 a real decision taken rather than this unknowing.

23 Q Okay. And for the principals that were involved in that
24 decision, was it the hope that this would get resolved and the aid would
25 be released?

1 A I don't know that for a fact. It was certainly our policy,
2 so that was my --

3 Q Okay.

4 A -- my understanding. But I can't speak -- I did not discuss
5 it with the Secretary.

6 Q Okay. Were you genuinely concerned that the aid would be
7 not -- not delivered?

8 A I was focusing on trying to get there. So I think I
9 reserved -- you know, it's like, well, we've got time, we've got to,
10 you know, we'll keep hoping. There was that and it was a question of
11 the White House meeting where things we were hoping for news on.

12 Q How unusual is it for these types of holdups to occur? Was
13 this extremely unusual or is this something that the system was built
14 to withstand and work through?

15 A I'm not sure I could characterize it particularly well. I
16 mean, again, I've been back and focusing on these broad issues of -- you
17 know, assistance is one element in the European AOR. I've been back
18 for a couple of months. So I don't think I could --

19 MR. MEADOWS: Can I ask it a different way then? Obviously
20 you're involved with a lot of other aid components. Are there other
21 countries where aid has been held up that you're aware of?

22 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes.

23 MR. MEADOWS: Under your portfolio?

24 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. And we were --

25 MR. MEADOWS: More than one?

1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think, as I described, there was a period
2 where everything was held up and then we would get instructions that,
3 as I recall, you know, they are were allowed to --

4 MR. MEADOWS: Dribble it out?

5 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That's a good description I think. Again,
6 it's not a process I'm an expert on.

7 MR. MEADOWS: Right. So you're saying that under your portfolio
8 all foreign aid was held up. Is that what you're saying?

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: For a brief period there were -- I thought
10 I had made a note of that -- a few days where -- where the assistance
11 was -- I want to try to be correct and specific. Hold on 1 sec.

12 There was an OMB pause on all funds that came into effect on August
13 3rd and was lifted on August 9th. At that point OMB -- and, again,
14 I'm reading from what my staff passed to me from the assistance
15 coordinator's office in recalling, because I asked them about
16 this -- at that point OMB imposed restrictions on how much we could
17 obligate at any time. So from the 3rd to the 9th. And then they
18 lifted, but that was when they, as you described it, sir, dribbled out.

19 I recall specifically that Armenia was one. There was a \$9.2
20 million budget there and I, on a trip to Tbilisi, Georgia, I met with
21 our Ambassador to Armenia, who had traveled to Tbilisi, and one of her
22 concerns was, again, we are getting down toward the end of the fiscal
23 year, we really want -- you know, again, we talk about Ukraine, but
24 there were so many other things happening across the AOR. One was
25 Armenia, where there was a new government, that we were trying to see

1 if that government would be more responsive.

2 MR. MEADOWS: So what you're saying is the aid was being held up
3 in Armenia because of a new government that had come into --

4 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, it was being held up in this broad OMB
5 restriction. It had nothing to do with the government. Our
6 Ambassador was expressing to me concerns --

7 MR. MEADOWS: Because it was a new government.

8 AMBASSADOR REEKER: -- because we really want to get these new
9 programs going. And if can't get the money, then our strategy and our
10 policy goals are not there.

11 MR. MEADOWS: So are you aware of any U.S.-Ukrainian policy
12 directive from the State Department's point of view that's not being
13 implemented right now?

14 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm trying to think broadly. Well,
15 technically, I guess that President Zelensky had not come to the White
16 House. But that's not to say --

17 MR. MEADOWS: Yeah, but that's not a broad policy.

18 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, I agree with you.

19 MR. MEADOWS: I'm just saying that from a broad policy
20 standpoint, because you put out initiatives, I was on Foreign Affairs
21 for a number of years, you put out initiatives, that this is our
22 Ukraine-U.S. or our U.S.-Ukraine policy.

23 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Uh-huh.

24 MR. MEADOWS: And I guess what I'm saying is, is there any
25 U.S.-Ukraine policy initiative that's decided at your level and above

1 that's not being deployed right now?

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: At this point, I'm not aware of any, but I
3 would have to go back and ask if there were certain initiatives that
4 are for one reason or another --

5 MR. MEADOWS: But Mr. Kent has not raised anything with you, to
6 your knowledge?

7 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Nothing comes to mind, sir, but I
8 wouldn't -- you know, I'd have to go back and double-check or ask him
9 if there's something there.

10 MR. MEADOWS: Thank you.

11 Steve.

12 BY MR. CASTOR:

13 Q Since the funds were released on September 11th or 12th, have
14 the other aspects of the U.S.-Ukrainian policies been moving forward
15 as you would like?

16 A I think our engagement once those funds were released, and
17 that was an important step, under Ambassador Taylor's leadership the
18 mission is busy and active. I would say that the current focus, the
19 current issue surrounding Ukraine has made it a little more difficult.
20 But I think our team is working away on all of the different strands,
21 energy diversification, energy security in terms of the stockpiling,
22 military reforms.

23 One of things I know Ambassador Volker was hopeful to start
24 working on was an antitrust thing, how do we deal with the oligarchy
25 system in the bigger term, and of course now Ambassador Volker is no

1 longer on the account.

2 Q Who is performing his duties?

3 A So we've looked at that, and for now, in the last -- is it
4 3 weeks at this point? I can't remember the date when he left.

5 Q His last day I think was the 27th of September.

6 A Was while we were in Italy, yeah. So 3 weeks, 4 maybe.

7 George Kent remains the primary person in discussions with Ulrich
8 Brechbuhl. We discussed whether we would -- whether the Secretary or
9 the President would want to appoint another Special Representative on
10 certain -- at this point I don't think there is a decision per se. We
11 cover it through the regular channels now that we have, the embassy,
12 obviously, with the Charge, the DAS, and lower levels, office directors
13 and desks as appropriate, myself, if there's meetings that one would
14 need to go to for some reason.

15 The Europeans have asked this too: Hey, who is our point person
16 on Ukraine? I have pointed primarily to George Kent, but at the
17 political director level, then David Hale would be the appropriate guy.

18 Q Were you tracking some of the events related to the statement
19 that Ambassador Volker was working on, working with the Ukrainians,
20 as a vehicle to demonstrate their --

21 A I recall Gordon talking about I think he used the term
22 "script," but I wasn't particularly tracking it.

23 Q Okay.

24 A They were -- you know, again, it was Gordon, and Kurt, Perry,
25 the team in charge that were moving forward on this. And I would

1 occasionally ask: Do we have a date yet for the meeting or how is this
2 going? But I wasn't tracking the day-to-day approach on that.

3 Q There were a handful or a couple of different vehicles
4 discussed possibly for the Ukrainians to demonstrate that they were
5 sufficiently committed to anticorruption efforts. One was
6 potentially a statement, the other that has been talked about is a TV
7 interview where the President would --

8 A I've seen reference to those. I was not tracking that --

9 Q Okay. So you don't have --

10 A -- or involved at my level, no.

11 Q So nobody engaged you --

12 A No, again --

13 Q -- as that was in --

14 A I think Gordon may have referenced that we're working with
15 Zelensky, Volodymyr, as he called him. But I just don't know
16 granularity on that.

17 Q When he mentioned that to you, did it give you any concerns
18 or did you think it was just ordinary effort to achieve --

19 A You know, these were the guys that were tasked with this work.
20 This is what I inherited. This is what we had, the structure moving
21 forward, with the support of the Secretary and the President, to work
22 on this stuff. It was irregular. We've already established that.

23 And, you know, as all these things come together, you know, I often
24 wondered -- I would ask regularly, when's the meeting? Just the
25 update.

1 I think my view is they've got this. I mean, Kurt Volker is an
2 absolute professional who I know, I was very confident was very
3 dedicated to seeing Ukraine policy through. He took this role very
4 seriously. You know, he was an unpaid special government employee
5 doing this. He was extremely admired by other European diplomats both
6 in Washington, but in capitals, for his response and his briefings.
7 And so I was very comfortable with that. And Gordon, I knew, was, you
8 know, was acting on behalf of the President and the Secretary.

9 Q Okay. We have a little bit of time left before our round
10 ends. I want to make sure that our Members have an opportunity to
11 answer ask you some questions if they have any.

12 Mr. Perry.

13 MR. PERRY: Thank you.

14 Thanks, Ambassador, for your service and for your patience here
15 today.

16 In the last round there was some conversation about Ukraine
17 desiring a meeting with the President of the United States, that it
18 would bode well and that they desired it. Not only did we desire it,
19 but the President of Ukraine would desire it for his own reasons,
20 whatever they may be. Would you agree on that?

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes.

22 MR. PERRY: Would you also agree that -- I think you showed up
23 is it March, March 17th or something --

24 AMBASSADOR REEKER: 18th was my first day.

25 MR. PERRY: 18th, right, by the evening. And the Presidential

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1 election was in May?

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct. May 21st I think was the first
3 round.

4 MR. PERRY: Right, May 21st. But would it also be in the Ukraine
5 President's best interest to have that meeting prior to the 21st, which
6 is their parliamentary election?

7 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No. I'm sorry, Congressman, there's
8 some -- some of that's not correct. So the first round of the Ukrainian
9 Presidential election was March 31st.

10 MR. PERRY: Right.

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: The second round of the Presidential
12 election was 3 weeks later on our Easter, it was the 20 -- here it is,
13 21st of April. And the Ukrainian government elections were then --

14 MR. PERRY: July 21st.

15 AMBASSADOR REEKER: July 21st, thank you. Yes, correct,
16 parliamentary.

17 MR. PERRY: So getting a meeting prior to July 21st would be
18 advantageous to the new President of Ukraine?

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That had been the goal when I talked about
20 the readout I got going forward after the May --

21 MR. PERRY: That would be one of his considerations for wanting
22 a meeting, but it also could be a consideration for the United States
23 to maybe hold off beyond the 21st to not influence the Ukrainian
24 parliamentary election.

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That's a reasonable --

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1 MR. PERRY: Could be, right, could be?

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah. I mean, I think that the idea,
3 certainly what Kurt was working toward, was to try to get this meeting
4 early before that election, but he came through the election quite
5 strongly. It was a validation of his Presidential victory.

6 MR. PERRY: Now, Ambassador Taylor, he showed up in country
7 around June 17th. Would he talk to you about any of his concerns
8 regarding Ukraine?

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I had very little contact with Ambassador
10 Taylor. He talked to Ulrich Brechbuhl, I know, on a fairly regular
11 basis and his main interlocutor in Washington would have been George
12 Kent.

13 MR. PERRY: George Kent, right.

14 Did you -- I mean, you had heard -- had you heard prior to seeing
15 his statement that he wanted to know that the policy would stay the
16 same or he would not take the job?

17 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. I mean, that was a concern and
18 something he talked about from the beginning of the first time I met
19 him when he had indicated his willingness to consider it, which was
20 May 2nd. And I knew him a little bit from years past when he was at
21 State. So that had continued to be a concern and he was -- his concerns
22 were satisfied --

1 [3:30 p.m.]

2 BY MR. PERRY:

3 Q Right.

4 A -- by the meeting with the Secretary on the 20th -- I want
5 to make sure I get it -- the 28th of May.

6 Q And prior to the publication of the phone call between the
7 President of the United States and President Zelensky, did Ambassador
8 Taylor ever call you to express his concerns that there wasn't a
9 meeting, or that funding was being --

10 A No, sir. I'm not the channel for Ambassador Taylor.

11 Q So he never talked to you about that?

12 A Not to my recollection.

13 Q And he never did resign, did he?

14 A No, no. In fact, he is back in Kyiv now.

15 Q Did you ever believe or tell anyone that you believed that
16 the assistance, the security assistance, wouldn't be forthcoming?

17 A I don't believe I ever said that. I was, you know, focused
18 on what can we do to try to break this impasse.

19 Q Okay. Thank you.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Why don't we take a half-an-hour lunch break and
21 resume at 4:00 o'clock.

22 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Sounds good to me.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: We should try to be prompt. So that -- we
24 don't -- because we still have a long afternoon ahead of us.

25 [Recess.]

1 [4:03 p.m.]

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Let's go back on the record.

3 Minority counsel asked you about a brief suspension of aid by OMB,
4 which I think you said was between August 3rd and August 9th. Is that
5 right?

6 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, that's -- excuse me. I'm sorry,
7 Mr. Chairman. Yes, that's what my recollection is, based on what my
8 assistance coordinator had said, and then it was completely suspended.
9 And then after August 9th, it was being -- I believe, as the Congressman
10 said -- dribbled out bit by bit.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Now, that was with respect to a broad range of
12 foreign assistance?

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That's correct.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: But the suspension of the Ukraine military
15 assistance, that actually took place in July, did it not?

16 AMBASSADOR REEKER: The date that that began, or that that came
17 to light was the 18th of July, I believe. That was the sub-PCC, which
18 has been referred to. I was traveling. I wouldn't go to a sub-PCC
19 normally anyway, but I believe that's what others have referenced. And
20 it was right around that time I was advised that there is a -- I think
21 the term "hold" was used. Nobody was quite sure where it was coming
22 from. The speculation, certainly, was that this was coming from
23 Mr. Mulvaney.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: And the freeze in Ukraine aid wasn't lifted until
25 some point in mid-to-late September.

1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: September 11th, I believe, sir.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: So this is quite separate and distinct from the
3 brief interlude for a more general hold between August 3rd and
4 August 9th?

5 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. The Ukraine aid was a particular
6 thing, and then, of course, the Ukraine aid is a unique thing, along
7 with the Georgia aid, because it is, to my understanding, it is
8 appropriated quite separately.

9 It is legislated, and I know that's why my DOD colleague was
10 anxious to keep this moving. He said, absent some explanation, we have
11 an obligation under law to move forward with this.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: So she or others raised at that meeting a concern
13 of the legality of withholding that aid?

14 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Not being an expert on the term "legality,"
15 but I think that's a fair -- a fair description. I know -- again, this
16 is DOD, so I don't want to speak for them, but that was -- my impression
17 was that they needed to move forward because they were required to do
18 that by law.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Goldman.

20 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

21 Q Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ambassador Reeker, we're going to
22 try to move through.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, I have one more question, if I could.

24 You made reference earlier in response to the minority questions
25 about Ambassador Sondland referring to a script. Can you tell us what

1 you meant by that?

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I recall that he was working with Zelensky
3 to -- to work, you know, as he prepared for phone calls and engagement
4 with the President toward this meeting, he had sort of a script. That's
5 how he described it.

6 I don't know the specifics of what he meant by that, but he
7 described it as a script for Volodymyr to help him as we move forward
8 in this.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: So this was a script that Sondland had for Zelensky
10 to use in the phone call with the President?

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Again, I couldn't say that that was
12 specifically to that, or more broadly, as a script for Zelensky. Here
13 is our script moving forward. You know, Gordon was very involved
14 working directly with Zelensky to try to move forward on all of the
15 things that we had -- they had discussed after the meeting of the 23rd
16 of May.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Or do you know if this was a script after the call
18 to -- for him to use publicly in order to get a White House meeting?

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't know, sir.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: And how did it come to your attention? Did
21 Ambassador Sondland use that term in a conversation with you?

22 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, and recall, and I couldn't tell you if
23 it was in a phone call or something. He is like, I'm working with -- and
24 I'm paraphrasing here. I cannot quote specifically, but I recall:
25 I'm working with Volodymyr. We have got a script moving forward. I

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1 just remember the term "script."

2 THE CHAIRMAN: And do you recall what timeframe you had that call,
3 and would reference to your calendar assist you in finding the date
4 of the call?

5 AMBASSADOR REEKER: It wouldn't, I'm afraid, because I talked to
6 Gordon here, there.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Is there any mention of this in your documents that
8 would refresh your recollection?

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Not -- no, no, sir, not that I recall.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Goldman.

11 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

12 Q Thank you. So just to follow up on this, you have no frame
13 of reference in terms of the timing of this conversation with Ambassador
14 Sondland?

15 A I mean, I had conversations with Ambassador Sondland over
16 time about a lot of things. He was the U.S. Ambassador to the EU, so
17 we had lots of things to talk about. Here and there, he was in
18 Washington a couple of times. I saw him a couple of times in Europe.

19 Q Right. But you don't know, in terms of when over the last
20 6 months, this conversation about a script may have occurred?

21 A It was certainly since -- since the elections, since
22 President Zelensky was in office, and post the 23rd of May, in light
23 of the sort of strategy, the way forward that Kurt Volker had read up.

24 Q Do you know what the context was? If he said: I've got a
25 script to work with President Zelensky, or he called him Volodymyr,

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1 you said. Do you know what the context of that script was for?

2 A Exactly as I tried to describe to the chairman. I just
3 remember the use of the word "script" as in Gordon, Ambassador Sondland,
4 was working. He had always said he would take -- he was sort of the
5 political lead for our engagement with the Ukrainians at the highest
6 level, including President Zelensky.

7 Q I don't want to go back through all of the yellow tabs, but
8 I do want to refer back to a few things that you read from them. And
9 the first one that you referred to was a March 26th email that related
10 some information from Ukrainian journalists in which, at some point,
11 you read that there was a reference to the fact that Giuliani, I believe,
12 had told Ukrainians that he represent the President.

13 Do you recall that?

14 A Yes, I recall being told that by my team. I believe, by Mr.
15 Kent, George Kent, based on the conversations he was having with some
16 journalists.

17 Well, how would one describe it? Journalists in the know,
18 relating to him at an event he was attending in Cambridge, talking about
19 where all of this was coming from. We were still in those weeks -- and
20 to a degree, we still are -- what was generating, what generated this
21 deluge of stories, false stories, accusations, threats against Masha
22 Yovanovitch, an outstanding, you know, professional diplomat, and just
23 a terrific human being. And as I alluded to several times, George and
24 his team had been pulling together all of this, had identified kind
25 of all of these stories seemed to -- seemed to distill into four -- four

1 narratives. They pursue one or the other, or a combination of them.

2 Q I understand. But I just wanted to focus on the fact that
3 the Ukrainians understood, or at least the information that DAS Kent
4 gave to you from interactions that he had with Ukrainian sources, is
5 that the Ukrainian officials were told that Rudy Giuliani represents
6 the President of the United States?

7 A Correct.

8 Q Now, and as DAS Kent was able to flesh out these four strands
9 that you described, I believe you said that two of them included an
10 investigation related to the Bidens and the Burisma company, and an
11 investigation related to the 2016 election in some fashion. Is that
12 accurate?

13 A That's right. And I'm happy to refer.

14 Q No, I don't want you to because otherwise we will be here
15 all night. So, we are trying to move forward as quickly as we can.
16 I just want to recap a little bit.

17 And the four strands, as DAS Kent laid them out, and you read,
18 were from an April 1st email. And then, I think, shortly thereafter,
19 you had a conversation, or an email communication with Under Secretary
20 Hale where he acknowledged to you that Ambassador Sondland's
21 involvement with Ukrainian policy was, quote, "irregular," unquote.
22 Is that right?

23 A Correct.

24 Q Now, in May, you referred to a Newsweek article about -- that
25 had in its title "Rudy Giuliani's Unfounded Claims." And you, am I

1 correct that you testified as you read a May 10th email that Giuliani
2 planned to go to Kyiv to press Zelensky to pursue these investigations.

3 Is that the sum and substance without being --

4 A That is, I believe, what the press report recounted.

5 Q Right.

6 A I did not know anything about Mr. Giuliani's plans myself.

7 Q But you were aware, at least as of receiving that email, that
8 that was reported publicly, correct?

9 A That it was reported in -- I think you referenced that it
10 was Newsweek in that one.

11 Q Were you aware of a New York Times article that also addressed
12 Rudy Giuliani's potential trip on or about May 9th?

13 A It does sound broadly familiar. I mean, I was aware of the
14 press that was reporting that, I think -- again, I don't get much
15 opportunity to watch television, to be honest, but I do believe there
16 were -- Giuliani himself was saying I'm going to -- or at least widely
17 quoted as saying he was going to Ukraine.

18 Q But based on your emails that you have now recited to us,
19 you routinely receive press clippings related to issues of relevance
20 to your portfolio, correct?

21 A At that particular time, because my -- my superiors, my chain
22 of command were asking: Do you have any feel for where this is coming
23 from, and why now?

24 And so, again, being a week, 2 weeks on the ground, I was turning
25 to George and his team to -- can we figure all of this out?

1 I couldn't possibly read even all of the emails and tweets and
2 stuff that they forwarded up, but it was to give me an idea of, again,
3 these four, what they had distilled into four seeming narratives.

4 Q And part of the reason that you were asking Mr. Kent to
5 compile this information is that you were getting questions from your
6 superiors about it, too, right?

7 A Right, and as I did, and then as I think I mentioned clearly,
8 there was a question while I was in -- traveling. I think I was in
9 Germany at the time -- to make sure that Under Secretary Hale was
10 receiving the right amount, you know, that he was getting what he needed
11 too, to keep him broadly abreast of what was being talked about in the
12 press on this.

13 Q Right. And there was an email to you that said that Under
14 Secretary Hale wanted to be more, quote, "tightly lashed up," unquote,
15 with Ukraine matters, right?

16 A I believe that's what the email said without looking at it.

17 Q So there was a desire for more information about what's going
18 on in Ukraine from your superiors?

19 A What the press was reporting. We get reporting from our
20 embassy on an -- Embassy Kyiv is a mill that does excellent analysis
21 and reporting.

22 What we were trying to track in those early weeks was: What is
23 all of this coming out, and where is it coming from, and what are the
24 themes so that we could at least be aware and know.

25 Q Of course. That makes perfect sense. Let me show you what

1 is marked as deposition exhibit 1.

2 [Majority Exhibit No. 1
3 was marked for identification.]

4 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

5 Q It is an article from The New York Times dated May 9th. Just
6 take a quick look at this if you could.

7 A Uh-huh.

8 Q Are you familiar with this article?

9 A It sounds familiar. I know that I don't know Kenneth Vogel
10 himself, but I know his byline.

11 Q Right. I'm not asking if you know Kenneth Vogel himself.
12 I'm wondering if this is familiar to you because you saw it around the
13 time that it was published.

14 A I couldn't say on May 9th. I arrived back on a, you know,
15 red-eye flight from Baghdad and London, and went almost directly to
16 Masha Yovanovitch's honoring ceremony at the National Defense
17 University.

18 Q Right. So this is similar to that Newsweek article that you
19 had in your email. I don't know whether you would have received this
20 article in your email as well, but --

21 A Probably not, because I think it probably would have been
22 a normal press clips and we get lots of these compilations.

23 Q So what was the difference in the Newsweek article versus
24 this New York Times article?

25 A You would have to ask the people that sent it to me.

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1 Q All right, because notably, and I will read the second and
2 third paragraphs.

3 It says: "Mr. Giuliani says he plans to travel to Kyiv, the
4 Ukrainian capital in the coming days, and wants to meet with the
5 Nation's President-elect to urge him to pursue inquiries that allies
6 of the White House contend could yield new information about two matters
7 of intense interest to Mr. Trump.

8 "One is the origin of the special counsel's investigation into
9 Russia's interference in the 2016 election. The other is the
10 involvement of former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.'s, son in
11 a gas company owned by an Ukraine oligarch."

12 Do you know which gas company that is referring to?

13 A That is Burisma, right?

14 Q So this is consistent with what you were hearing at the time,
15 Correct?

16 A Can I write on this, or is this yours?

17 Q I will give you another copy that you can write on. This
18 is consistent with what you were hearing at the time, correct?

19 A Yeah, I mean, I think this was very much the narrative that
20 was out there at that time. This was after the late April
21 post-election. It means Zelensky was now fully elected. He was the
22 20th of May would have been inaugurated, and this is very much similar
23 stories that were circulating.

24 Q Now, earlier today you also -- you read, actually, a WhatsApp
25 message between you and Ambassador Bill Taylor on May 26th, where

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1 Ambassador Taylor referenced something, the Giuliani-Biden issue. Do
2 you recall that?

3 A Yes.

4 Q So when you received that text message from Ambassador
5 Taylor, you understood what he was referring to. Right?

6 A Yeah. I mean, I think the general idea is, this is one of
7 those strands, one of those narratives that was very much there. I
8 think Ambassador Volker described it as a distraction from our focus
9 on Ukraine and policy.

10 Q And Ambassador Volker would have described it to you as a
11 distraction to the policy around this same time, in May?

12 A When Bill was -- Bill Taylor, that is -- was expressing his
13 concerns and reservations about, you know, I can't take this job if
14 there's going to be a change of policy and approach to Ukraine. That's
15 why he wanted to meet with the Secretary. Ulrich Brechbuhl had
16 confirmed that would happen and they were looking for a date.

17 Q Right. I understand that. I'm just asking, when you said
18 that Ambassador Volker also reiterated something along this line -- if
19 I can pin a time on that.

20 A When I said to him, Ambassador Volker, you know, I think Bill
21 has got some cold feet, and I may have even shared with him some of
22 the WhatsApps or messages. Here is what Bill is concerned about. He
23 was saying, yes, that's -- that's distraction. We need to focus on
24 moving our policy forward. I mean, I think that's the, you know,
25 Giuliani, his distraction.

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1 Q Right. But like you, Ambassador Volker indicated he
2 understood that this was -- that Rudy Giuliani was fomenting this
3 interest in these investigations at that time, right?

4 A Correct. I think that's what Mr. Giuliani was saying
5 himself quite publicly.

6 Q Correct. So that's on May 26th, and then you go into the
7 May 28th meeting with Secretary Pompeo. And who was at that meeting
8 that you recall?

9 A To the best of my recollection, it was the Secretary, of
10 course, Bill Taylor; Kurt Volker joined us; Ulrich Brechbuhl was there;
11 myself; and I think George was there, but I don't know that. And I
12 haven't wanted to ask him in this last week because I didn't think it
13 was appropriate.

14 Q And during that meeting, was there discussion about the
15 May 23rd White House meeting?

16 A Yes.

17 Q And what do you recall being discussed with the Secretary
18 about the May 23rd meeting?

19 A Kurt Volker gave a readout of the meeting because
20 Gordon -- well, Gordon had been in the May 23rd meeting, and they -- you
21 know, the general tone was the President, was the inaugural team, or
22 the Three Amigos -- his term, not mine -- had come back, gone to this
23 briefing, and the President was not in a good mood.

24 He was just unhappy about Ukraine, did not like Ukraine, and
25 expressing a lot of skepticism, and then Kurt outlined, you know, we

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1 just kept pressing ahead and saying, but Mr. President, there are these
2 opportunities. We have got Zelensky. This is a new Ukraine. We need
3 to keep working on this. And that produced the readout that Kurt had
4 given to me on the 23rd, and was considered the way forward.

5 Q Right. And it was a pretty unanimous view from those who
6 went to the inauguration that Zelensky was a true reformer and would
7 be good for Ukraine, correct?

8 A I think that is fair to say, yes.

9 Q Did Ambassador Volker, or -- well, let me ask you this: At
10 that meeting with Secretary Pompeo on the 28th, did the name Rudy
11 Giuliani come up?

12 A I cannot say for sure. I really can't.

13 Q In any of your conversations with Ambassador Volker about
14 the May 23rd meeting, did the name Rudy Giuliani come up?

15 A I know that there was an understanding, certainly, from Kurt
16 and others that were there that Rudy Giuliani is feeding the President
17 a lot of very negative views about Ukraine. And --

18 Q Did you understand that that was, at least, part of the basis
19 for the President's displeasure with Ukraine?

20 A Yes. That's fair to say. That was my -- that was what the
21 takeaway was.

22 Q Did -- in any of the conversations related to, or that
23 followed that May 23rd meeting, did Ambassador Volker, Ambassador
24 Sondland, did anyone give you the impression that they -- that the
25 President wanted them to coordinate or consult with Mr. Giuliani about

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1 Ukraine?

2 A Not specifically. I mean, I've seen that reported since,
3 so I know that that idea is out there. But I did understand that Kurt,
4 for instance, had mentioned he was talking -- talking to Rudy, and the
5 goal was to try to help. I think Kurt felt -- I don't want to speak
6 for him too much, but, certainly, the understanding from the -- it was
7 the tail end of a conversation, I recall. And he said, you know, I
8 can -- I can help him understand that this is a new Ukraine, and I think
9 he just felt he could talk to him and change his view, which would then,
10 hopefully, change the President's view.

11 Q Right. So just to recap. Entering that May 28th meeting,
12 you were aware that Mr. Giuliani wanted Ukraine to investigate Burisma
13 in connection with the Bidens and the 2016 election in some fashion?

14 A He said that very publicly, yeah.

15 Q But you were aware of that. That's what I just want to be
16 clear about.

17 A Yeah.

18 Q And you had had a conversation with Ambassador Volker to that
19 effect as well, prior to this meeting?

20 A Not specifically on Biden Burisma, this and that, but
21 Rudy's -- Kurt, I think, called it several times a distraction.

22 Q So, but he was aware that Rudy Giuliani was posing a
23 distraction in Ukraine?

24 A Yes.

25 Q And he was aware, as you just testified, that the President,

1 that he needed to convince Giuliani about Ukraine in order to convince
2 the President?

3 A I think he thought that at least would be helpful.

4 Q Right. So it would be, I mean, it's pretty basic deductive
5 reasoning, that in order to convince someone of something, you have
6 to know what they think, right?

7 A Well, I'm not -- I'm not a cognitive scientist. I mean, I
8 think you can go into not knowing what somebody thinks and go about
9 convincing them before they -- before you know what their view is.

10 Q Well, let me ask you: Was it your understanding as of this
11 May 28th meeting, that Ambassador Volker understood what Rudy Giuliani
12 was advocating in relation to Ukraine?

13 A As of May 28th, I do not know that for sure. I cannot read
14 Kurt Volker's mind, nor did we have in-depth conversations on that.
15 I do know that we all were aware from press reports, from everything
16 else, his own television statements that Rudy Giuliani --

17 Q There's no question it was a secret. There's no question
18 it was a secret. I'm trying to understand everyone's basis of
19 knowledge going into this meeting. And Bill Taylor, you said you had
20 a conversation, or at least WhatsApp?

21 A Bill Taylor had said, you know, I'm concerned that this
22 Giuliani-Biden, as he called it again -- I won't go back to the
23 email -- is going to cause a change in the policy, and if that's going
24 to be the case, I'm not -- I'm not your guy.

25 Q And you understood that the Biden was a reference to this

1 Burisma investigation. Right?

2 A I think broadly, yeah. That it was all Hunter Biden,
3 Burisma, the company.

4 Q So if Ambassador Taylor's, one of his main concerns was this
5 Giuliani-Biden issue that may influence Ukraine policy, and as you
6 testified earlier, he wanted reassurances from Secretary Pompeo that
7 the policy wouldn't change, you still have no recollection as to whether
8 or not Mr. Giuliani was discussed at that May 28th meeting with the
9 Secretary?

10 A I actually don't specifically.

11 Q Well, what did the Secretary say to Ambassador Taylor at that
12 meeting?

13 A The Secretary reiterated what we were trying to do with
14 Ukraine and the opportunities we had with Zelensky, and that that was
15 the basis on which we were going to move forward.

16 I think he welcomed the opportunity to talk to Bill Taylor as well.
17 I don't believe they had met before. And I think by the end of the
18 meeting, he came away feeling, yep, Bill was the guy he wanted to go
19 out in this role as the Charge, and Bill was, in his own words,
20 paraphrasing, reassured and felt he could go out and do this job in
21 good faith.

22 Q And just to be put a pin on it, what was he reassured about?

23 A You would have to ask him, but he told me, "I'm good to go."

24 Q That's all he said to you? And you don't remember how --

25 A He came out of that saying, good to go, you know. My problem

1 set was to take care of the mission. Was Bill going to be the guy?
2 We were still working on the bureaucraties of it, but shortly
3 thereafter, even that worked out. That he -- they found a mechanism
4 through a law that they hadn't looked at before that allowed him to
5 be --

6 Q I understand. And you described that already. And I don't
7 mean to be the rude. We just are going to be here all night if we don't
8 start moving through.

9 A Believe me, my weekends are rare, so I will also be happy.

10 Q So then following that meeting, was it your understanding
11 that these -- was it your understanding that these Three Amigos, as
12 you've described them -- I know not your words --

13 A Yeah, as Ambassador Sondland has described them.

14 Q -- would lead the Ukraine policy for the State Department?
15 How was this going to be --

16 A For the State Department and the White House. They were the
17 three leads.

18 Q And did you have an understanding that the President had
19 directed that?

20 A Yes, Gordon was very clear in that, that the President has
21 asked me to do this; we will lead this up here. That was very clear
22 in the readout I got after the May 23rd meeting.

23 Q And you had also said several times today that Secretary
24 Pompeo had also affirmed that arrangement too. Is that right?

25 A Yeah. And I know Gordon was in touch with him. I know

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1 Secretary Pompeo thought very highly of Ambassador Volker. I mean
2 he -- Ambassador Volker reported to the Secretary.

3 Q And so the President directed this relationship, Secretary
4 Pompeo approved of it, and this was the, sort of, I think what Under
5 Secretary Hale called the irregular arrangement?

6 A No. His reference to "irregular" was Ambassador Sondland's
7 engagement in things that were outside the regular purview of the
8 Ambassador to the European Union.

9 Q So in June and July, and I'm going to ask a general question,
10 and then if we can try to drill down -- in June and July, do you recall
11 having any conversations with anyone or receiving any emails that might
12 have given you some information related to this idea that the President
13 or Rudy Giuliani wanted Ukraine to initiate these investigations to
14 the Biden and Burisma and the 2016 election, and that that was a message
15 that was conveyed to the Ukrainians by anyone on behalf of the United
16 States?

17 A I'm sorry to do this, but can you say that again?

18 Q Are you aware of whether any U.S. official relayed to any
19 Ukrainian official that the United States, writ large, and perhaps the
20 President specifically --

21 A Yeah.

22 Q -- wanted those two investigations to be the initiated by
23 the Ukrainians?

24 A By an official, an American official, no, I'm not aware of
25 that.

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1 Q So you are not aware of whether or not Ambassador Volker had
2 any conversations with any Ukrainian officials about them initiating
3 these investigations?

4 A No. Kurt and I did not discuss that.

5 Q And you're not aware of whether Ambassador Sondland had any
6 conversations with any Ukrainian officials?

7 A No. I mean, I know he was having conversations with
8 Ukrainian officials, but exactly what he was saying, I don't know.

9 Q All right. Well, let me ask this question: At what point,
10 in the year 2019, did you come to understand that anyone, any American
11 official, had been advocating to Ukrainian officials to initiate these
12 investigations?

13 A I did not come to that understanding. I heard that. I saw
14 that in the press, the suggestions of it. That was, certainly, you
15 know, things we were asking, but there was no clear indication of that.
16 That was not the policy that I was aware of, the strategy that we were
17 moving forward on. This was a Rudy Giuliani thing.

18 Q Were you aware -- but you did indicate that you were aware
19 that Ambassador Volker was speaking to Rudy Giuliani, correct?

20 A Correct, that he was -- what he indicated to me was, he was
21 going to talk to Rudy and try to, sort of, clear up some of his
22 misconceptions -- Rudy's misconceptions -- about Ukraine.

23 Q And did he ever report back to you on what happened in those
24 conversations?

25 A I think I remember him saying once or twice, I spoke to Rudy,

1 but, you know, again, I was not in this -- in this loop.

2 Q No, I'm just asking. I understand. That's very clear.
3 The question is just: What readouts, or what reports are you getting
4 back from Ambassador Volker about any of his conversations with Rudy
5 Giuliani?

6 A Really, none. We did not, you know, we didn't have an
7 opportunity to discuss it in any great detail unless, I mean, I
8 can -- the WhatsApp, I have all of the WhatsApps with Kurt, and I think
9 he may have mentioned he met with -- that's George -- I don't think
10 he ever -- let's see, that's April, that's May.

11 He is asking about Bill Taylor going out. Yeah. So he's talking
12 to -- he wants to -- knowing that I was going to -- his approach was,
13 you know, Poroshenko will soon be gone. Zelensky is going into his
14 place. This is on the 15th of May -- he will be inaugurated soon.

15 Q Can you move forward to sort of the end of June, early July.
16 Do you have any conversations with him around then?

17 A Let's see. No, late June was totally about Georgia. I had
18 nothing to do with that. One of the things we were in regular touch
19 with, is I kind of tried to touch base on where things were. It was
20 Kurt's role in this -- negotiated with the Russians, because we had
21 talked for a long time, including at the May 28th meeting, that, you
22 know, we were waiting for the Russians to respond about another meeting,
23 Kurt and his counterpart, and they had been pushing off.

24 And up until the time he resigned, they never agreed to meet again.
25 They told me when I was in Moscow a few weeks ago, Oh, yeah, we'll do

1 it, we're getting ready. But they never had. So that was a question.

2 Q Well, let me try it this way: Were you aware that Ambassador
3 Volker and DAS Kent went to Toronto in early July for a Ukrainian --

4 A Yeah, there was a big Ukrainian aid conference in July.
5 Originally, I think the Deputy Secretary was possibly going. There
6 had been a possibility of -- that I might go, and I was traveling on
7 something else, and I know Kurt went, and --

8 Q Did you get a readout or a report back from Ambassador Volker
9 about what transpired there and any meetings he may have had with
10 Ukrainian officials?

11 A I don't recall anything from that, no.

12 Q He didn't tell you about a private conversation he had with
13 President Zelensky?

14 A Not that I'm recalling.

15 Q Were you familiar with a July 10th meeting at the White House
16 where Ambassador Sondland attended, along with Secretary Perry,
17 Ambassador Bolton, and a couple of Ukrainian officials?

18 A That does sound familiar. I'm sorry to do this, but let's
19 try to put myself -- yeah, I was speaking at a conference on freedom
20 of the press, a ministerial meeting in London. I don't think there
21 was any -- again, those were the guys that were charged in doing
22 Ukraine, and I don't -- it sounds familiar, but I don't have any
23 recollection of that.

24 Q You don't have any specific recollection of getting a report
25 back?

1 A No.

2 Q And the only readout you got from the July 25th call was from
3 Ambassador Volker saying that it was a great call?

4 A Yeah. I never saw -- we don't get transcripts of the
5 President's call. The President's --

6 Q I know that. I'm just asking you, that was the only readout
7 you ever got?

8 A Yeah, I don't recall having anybody ever mentioning it too
9 much.

10 Q DAS Kent didn't tell you anything about it?

11 A He might have. I just -- I don't have any specific
12 recollection of that.

13 The 25th of July, again, you know, was -- if there was something,
14 I was meeting with a new Greek Government in Athens, and that was, I
15 think, when I came back already, that was when we were in that PCC
16 process trying to push forward, find out --

17 Q So you went to the PCC meeting on July 31st?

18 A July 31st.

19 Q But not the one on July 23rd?

20 A No, because I was in Greece.

21 Q So prior to the July 31st meeting, you didn't get a download
22 as to what happened on the presidential phone call with the President
23 of Ukraine?

24 A I don't recall specifics of it, no. I knew there was a phone
25 call. I had that in my notes. And that was -- that was the 25th of

1 July, but the details of it, I don't have.

2 Q Were you aware of whether or not, or did you hear at any point
3 that Mr. Giuliani may have met with any senior Ukrainian officials in
4 early August?

5 A I don't -- I don't remember specific things. He had been
6 talking publicly about going to Ukraine, but then he didn't, if I
7 recall. So I -- I don't have any particular recollection of --

8 Q And were you -- did you have any conversations with
9 Ambassador Volker or Ambassador Sondland about a potential press
10 statement that the Ukrainians would issue in early to mid-August
11 related to any of these investigations?

12 A No, I mentioned earlier at some point in probably this
13 timeframe you're referencing broadly, Gordon talking about a script.
14 I remember the word "script" for moving forward on this, the script
15 with Zelensky.

16 And it sounds familiar now. I couldn't tell you if I'm conflating
17 something I have now read in transcripts or press, but that concept
18 sounds familiar. I don't recall somebody saying -- I mean, there's
19 no reason they would come to tell me that. But that does -- I have
20 to say that does sound familiar.

21 Q And this is now the second time that when we've asked you
22 about that early to mid-August timeframe, you've referred back to that
23 conversation with Ambassador Sondland about a script. Is it your
24 belief that the conversation you had with him about a script was in
25 that timeframe?

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1 A Again, I have to say, I just can't remember. I shared with
2 you to the best of my ability, that I remember Gordon talking about:
3 I'm working with Zelensky with Volodymyr and, you know, we have got
4 a script to move forward.

5 Q And then you were aware -- or when did you learn that the
6 hold on the Ukrainian security and military assistance became public.
7 Do you recall?

8 A Okay. No, I don't, I mean, in the -- we were hearing about
9 it, you know, as it came out. And, again, we were trying to work this --

10 Q Well, let me ask you about that. You obviously were working
11 the PCC process. Did you ever get an explanation for why the Ukraine
12 aid was being held?

13 A No.

14 Q Did you ask?

15 A We -- I was asked, and I was told through my people that we
16 think it's a Mulvaney -- that this has come from Mulvaney. There was
17 different thoughts. Nobody could -- the hope was that through the PCC
18 process, he would, sort of, determine, find that out, and force an
19 actual decision, rather than somebody says OMB is holding this, and
20 some people say it's Mulvaney has ordered that.

21 There are references that I have now since read in press reporting
22 or in transcripts to, you know, at the earlier -- earlier iterations
23 of the PCC process, the sub-PCC, or something, someone from OMB saying
24 that this is being held, but definitively, I did not know.

25 Q Were you aware at any time in August when this issue was

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1 presented directly to the President again? Did you hear?

2 A No. No, sir.

3 Q After, you know, we discussed those texts earlier that
4 Ambassador Taylor wrote that some of which have been made public.
5 Around that time, in early September, did you have any conversations
6 with anyone in the State Department about the reason why the aid was
7 being held up?

8 A I think we were in, sort of, staff meetings when we would
9 catch up on these things. And I know George was hearing different
10 things that were speculations --

11 Q What was he hearing?

12 A That these various stories that, you know, was this tied to
13 something? That was a question. Was this tied to something to do with
14 investigations? Was this tied to Rudy? But nobody knew for sure, and
15 then, of course, by September 11th, the hold was -- if you call it a
16 hold -- was lifted.

17 Q Did you ever have any conversation?

18 A This is helpful. I'm trying not go through all of my emails.

19 Q Do you want to clarify something?

20 A Yeah, let me just look at something here, because this may
21 be helpful. Oh, right. This does help. So please let me go back to
22 July 29th, and this is, I just mentioned that George was saying there
23 was this -- this idea out there that D.C. had pushed Kyiv on
24 investigating the Bidens.

25 Q I'm sorry. What are you looking at right there?

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1 A I'm looking at an email where George was updating me on
2 something he -- that another person we know out in the think tank world
3 had heard that last Thursday, so that would have been the July call,
4 that D.C. pushed Kyiv on investigating the Bidens. And George said:
5 I said it wasn't in the call, but we're working on particulars of a
6 visit, dates TBD.

7 Q Sorry. So who is this email between?

8 A This is from George Kent to myself, and copied Bill Taylor.

9 Q And this was a forward?

10 A No, this was just George saying, you know, someone else had
11 heard this. This was, again, part of this broad speculation of things
12 that was out there. It didn't clarify anything for us.

13 Q So someone at a think tank had heard from the Ukrainian side
14 that that was discussed?

15 A I can't say that for sure.

16 Q Well, maybe -- why don't you just read the email?

17 A "He'd heard that in the call last Thursday, D.C. pushed Kyiv
18 on investigating the Bidens. I said it wasn't in the call, but looking
19 forward that we were working on particulars of a visit, dates TBD."

20 Q Okay. And you've now read the call, right? The transcript,
21 the record?

22 A When we were in New York, yeah.

23 Q And is that -- the rumor that the think tank person heard,
24 accurate?

25 A I'd have to go back to the specifics of that -- that --

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1 MR. MALINOWSKI: Can I ask who the think tank person was?

2 MS. DAUM: If we could good ask for some measure of
3 confidentiality about that, if it is necessary to be publicly released.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: We need to know who it is. So you are going to
5 have to answer the question, I'm afraid.

6 I would ask all Members, again, I would reiterate to all members
7 and staff -- although I think members are the issue, not the
8 staff -- that the testimony here should not leave this room. But, you
9 know, if there are other witnesses that have sources of information
10 that are relevant, we do need to know need to know who they are.

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I mean, understanding that George Kent has
12 already spoken to you, so it was -- the subject line of his email was
13 [redacted], who is a former Ambassador to Ukraine. I'm trying to
14 remember when, and now I'm trying to remember what --

15 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

16 Q So it's not just a think tank person. It's a former
17 Ambassador --

18 A Yeah.

19 Q -- who's now with a think tank?

20 A Right.

21 Q Okay. Did you finish the email? I'm sorry?

22 A Yeah, and that's in keeping with, you know, the stories that
23 were circulating. What we had was no -- no clarity or definition.
24 What -- and sort of my Ukraine box, we are still working on getting
25 that date. Is there any, you know --

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1 Q No, I understand that's what you were doing. But just to
2 be clear because our time is up, that was a July 29th email?

3 A July 29th.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: And I'm sorry, I think when you did read a portion
5 of it, you just started with the word "he." Is that how the email
6 starts?

7 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, because the subject line says:
8 "[Redacted]: Is it true that" and then the text of the email starts
9 "He'd heard that in the call last Thursday."

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The time is with the minority.

11 MR. CASTOR: Mark exhibit 2.

12 [Minority Exhibit No. 2
13 was marked for identification.]

14 MR. CASTOR: Do you need a Politico article?

15 MR. GOLDMAN: I will take it.

16 AMBASSADOR REEKER: So I'm afraid I did a little scrawl on your
17 exhibit 1.

18 BY MR. CASTOR:

19 Q I just marked exhibit 2. That is also an article by Ken
20 Vogel.

21 A Right.

22 Q It is a Politico story by Ken Vogel before he went to The
23 New York Times.

24 A Okay.

25 Q In January of 2017.

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1 A Okay.

2 Q And it goes through various efforts of people affiliated with
3 Ukraine to, you know, sabotage candidate Trump. Are you familiar with
4 this article?

5 A I am not, no, sir.

6 Q The paragraph -- I will just read it, one of the first
7 paragraphs.

8 The second paragraph is: "Ukrainian Government officials tried
9 to help Hillary Clinton and undermine Trump by publicly questioning
10 his fitness for office. They also disseminated documents implicating
11 a top Trump aid in corruption and suggested they were investigating
12 the matter, only to back away after the election. And they helped
13 Clinton's allies research damaging information on Trump and his
14 advisors, a Politico investigation found."

15 And this is, you know, an 18-page story going through various --

16 A I didn't read it, living in Italy at the time.

17 Q And so are you familiar with the generalized allegation that
18 the President or his supporters worried that Ukrainians were working
19 against him?

20 A I am now, today, or in the last few months, yeah.

21 Q And some of the concerns -- and this goes through several
22 categories of reporting -- one involves a Ukrainian-American named
23 ██████████, a consultant for the Democratic National Committee,
24 received a bunch of money, had some outreach with the embassy.

25 Is that an allegation you are familiar with?

1 A No, it is not. Well, I should say, again, I can't help but
2 having read -- I mean, I read the press in the last few weeks and over
3 time, and it was not something I was tracking particularly on Ukraine.

4 Q Okay.

5 A I had no connectivity to Ukraine until, you know, except for,
6 sort of, focused on the Russia angle and the war until later. So I
7 don't want to be disingenuous and suggest I've never heard that. I've
8 heard it is all part of the stream of stuff out there. My focus was
9 on, you know, running, you know, staffing, running our mission, and
10 implementing U.S. policy.

11 Q The first eight or nine pages talks about [REDACTED] and some
12 of the efforts that she undertook, and some of the efforts that the
13 embassy, the Ukrainian embassy to the United States, took in helping
14 her.

15 And then the story pivots into the involvement of a Ukrainian
16 investigative journalist and subsequent parliamentarian, and I don't
17 believe he is currently in the parliamentarian, Serhiy Leshchenko, and
18 this relates to the involvement of the Manafort ledgers?

19 A The name is familiar, but I don't know.

20 Q And as part of Leshchenko's journalism, you know, the aspects
21 of the ledgers came out. Were you aware of the Ukrainian tie to
22 the -- to the Manafort work, the publication of Manafort's work in
23 Ukraine by Ukrainians?

24 A You know, I probably read The New York Times or The Wall
25 Street Journal or reports at that time. It wasn't something I was

1 focused on beyond being --

2 Q Okay.

3 A -- a broadly interested citizen.

4 Q Fair enough. The story also talks about the op ed we
5 discussed earlier, Ambassador Chaly prepared an op ed in The Hill, which
6 we have copies of that, but unless you would like me to mark it for
7 the record, we'll just stipulate to that.

8 On page 15 of this report, of this story, there's -- I'm sorry,
9 on page 14, a Ukrainian minister of internal affairs, Arsen Avakov is
10 mentioned. Are you familiar with Avakov?

11 A That name does not ring a bell, no.

12 Q He was and is a Minister of Internal Affairs in the Ukraine.
13 Anyway, he had, according to this Vogel reporting, had some negative
14 statements about the candidate Trump on Twitter and --

15 A Uh-huh.

16 Q -- called him a clown. Some Facebook posts called him, or
17 referenced him as a misfit. Were you aware that Avakov, or anyone in
18 the Ukrainian Government was engaged in an effort to making statements
19 like that about the candidate Trump?

20 A I was not until more recently when this became an issue. I
21 think as I stated, George -- and mostly George, but his team were kind
22 of my -- to the extent I needed to be aware of context in Ukraine and
23 what was going on, that this was its own strand of, you know, part of
24 what had fed into all of this. But I was not, at the time, current
25 with it, or following it with any closeness.

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1 Q If the President had concerns about Ukrainians trying to work
2 for Secretary Clinton and defeat him, would it be fair for him to want
3 somebody to look into that if he thought it improperly led to the start
4 of the Mueller probe?

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1 [5:03 p.m.]

2 BY MR. CASTOR:

3 Q And if he had a good faith belief that these issues were out
4 there, could that be -- have been a motivating factor for some of the
5 issues discussed in exhibit 1, the other Vogel article?

6 A Again, I can't prejudge the President's view. He's the
7 President. He makes his own decisions.

8 Q Was that your understanding of what was concerning the
9 President about Ukraine?

10 A I understood from -- certainly from press reports and from
11 George's background -- backgrounding and explaining the context, that
12 President Trump does not like Ukraine.

13 And that was very evident in the meeting when the delegation,
14 after the inauguration, went -- you know, I don't -- Ukraine is a bad
15 place, I don't like Ukraine -- and that Kurt and Gordon and I believe
16 Senator Johnson and Secretary Perry were continuing to try to tell him:
17 But this is a new Ukraine, this is Zelensky, and here what is we want
18 to do to move forward.

19 Q And his negative energy on Ukraine, as far as you know, it
20 didn't relate to political reasons, did it?

21 A I couldn't speculate. It was just relayed to me that he
22 didn't like Ukraine.

23 Q And his skeptical views of Ukraine, that wasn't relayed to
24 you in the context of him having political -- of thinking that if
25 he -- you know, if these issues got -- somebody got to the bottom of,

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1 it would have a political upside for him, that wasn't relayed to you,
2 was it?

3 A I mean, there was media reporting to that. I mean, that's,
4 I think, what Mr. Giuliani was saying quite publicly.

5 Q But his deep-rooted skeptical view of Ukraine was just a
6 personally held belief of the President as far as you understood?

7 A I don't know that.

8 Q Okay. During the breaks, or I guess the last break, I
9 had -- leave the SCIF, get reconnected with the communications.

10 A You couldn't let go.

11 Q Well. And I guess some of our Members brought to
12 Mr. Jordan's attention -- who can't be here today, and he apologizes.
13 He has tried to be at all of these, and he appreciates your testimony
14 here today. I'll note that.

15 A Former Ohioan. Give my regard.

16 Q He takes this investigation, all the depositions very
17 seriously, and he has attended just about every one. So he is sorry
18 that he couldn't be here today, appreciates your service.

19 Anyway, I guess the news reports had come out this morning before
20 you appeared and signaled what you might testify to. And so he
21 was -- there has been some just questions about whether that was being
22 pushed out from you, or your camp, or whether that was coming from either
23 our side or their side. I could say it wasn't coming from our side.
24 I had no idea what you were --

25 A As you can imagine, I know a lot of journalists from my days

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1 as a spokesman, and they've all been extraordinarily frustrated that
2 I will not talk to them.

3 Q Okay.

4 A They were -- I took calls regularly because they were -- or
5 responded to emails, "Can we have your opening statement?" And as you
6 know, I did not prepare one.

7 Q Okay. So to the extent there were stories written about what
8 you were going to say, it didn't come from you or your camp?

9 A I think there's lots of people that chatter about this stuff
10 and I'll be -- I saw a couple of things. There was a Daily Beast piece
11 that came out last night that I -- now I can't even recall what it said,
12 but I remember thinking, well, that's not -- I mean, it just had, like,
13 inaccuracies about me. But that's the nature of this business.

14 Q Okay. But you didn't forecast your testimony to anybody?

15 A No, sir.

16 Q So if anybody did --

17 A The only thing I've ever done was -- and, frankly, State
18 Department journalists have a much better grasp of understanding what
19 the role is of an Acting Assistant Secretary for Europe. There were
20 some press stories that were characterizing me as in charge of Ukraine
21 policy, which has not been the case.

22 Q Okay. When did you first hear about the -- you spoke to us
23 earlier this morning about George Kent's four narratives that he wrote
24 up, and I believe you related that one of them had Burisma in it.

25 A Uh-huh.

1 Q And it was in, I think you said, in paren, corrupt gas
2 company?

3 A Yeah. He was -- for me, the neophyte who arrived a week
4 before, he was laying that out, what is Burisma. At that, I think I
5 was aware of that it was a gas company. I'm not terribly familiar with
6 it.

7 Q Are you familiar, it's run by a former ecology minister,
8 Zlochevsky?

9 A I can't say I actually know that name, no.

10 Q Okay. And would it surprise you that they've been under
11 investigation at various points for money laundering, tax evasion?

12 A You're talking about Ukraine, so it doesn't surprise me at
13 all.

14 Q Okay. In 2014, the company embarked on an initiative to
15 bolster their image, I guess, and place people on their board to help
16 them govern. Are you familiar with that effort?

17 A Well, I know that Hunter Biden went on their board. I'm not
18 familiar with the effort per se, I'm just familiar with the stories
19 that he went on the board. And I had some general conversations early
20 on when I was trying to grasp what is all this about, George was able
21 to give me some basic parameters.

22 Q Okay. And did anybody ever relate to you, does Hunter Biden
23 have a particular expertise in corporate governance?

24 A I don't know.

25 Q Okay.

1 A I've never met Hunter Biden.

2 Q Do we know, does anybody at the State Department know if he
3 was put on the board for any other reason other than the fact that he's
4 related to the former Vice President?

5 A I couldn't say. I don't know the board and I don't know him.

6 Q Okay. In any of your conversations with Ambassador Volker,
7 did he ever relate to you that if there are corrupt Ukrainians or
8 Ukrainians doing bad things that, you know, if that's the subject, and
9 they're at Burisma or some other type of oligarch-affiliated
10 enterprise, that Zelensky ought to reopen those investigations?

11 A I do not recall that specifically. I know Kurt and I, long
12 before I got this kind of out-of-the-blue transplant back to Washington
13 and this job, when I was approached about and in the process of
14 potentially being the candidate for nomination to Ukraine, and that
15 Kurt had been named, I talked to him about his broad interest in what
16 he believed was the critical piece in the Ukraine puzzle was somehow
17 dealing with the oligarchs.

18 And his path toward that, I found very interesting, was looking
19 at antitrust legislation and trying to borrow from what the U.S. had
20 done, and that there is a certain difficulty in that if you go to the
21 Department of Justice right now, antitrust is not what it was back in
22 the trustbuster days, the early days of U.S. antitrust law.

23 So he needed sort of more kind of almost historical research to
24 look at that and what ways forward, and to me it was just very
25 interesting and anticipating potentially that I would end up at some

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1 point as Ambassador. We kind of looked forward to that. And I think
2 I said to him, you know, I am actually sort of disappointed that I won't
3 be able to learn all this and work with you on that.

4 But I know that was still part of his priority as he went forward,
5 and I do remember sending him one email after Zelensky won the election
6 just saying: Hey, Ukraine is a democracy, they had good elections and
7 elected this guy. And that's still where we are, is how can we carry
8 this forward.

9 Q In terms of any of the Ukrainians investigating corruption
10 or reopening cases, whether it's Burisma or any other case, that would
11 relate to Ukrainians, not investigating Americans. Is that your
12 understanding?

13 A I don't think I probably thought about it.

14 Q Okay. I mean, did anyone relate to you that somebody wanted
15 the Ukrainian prosecutors to investigate Americans?

16 A I don't recall except there was all this stuff about Hunter
17 Biden. So I don't know if that was --

18 Q And do you know whether that like was an investigation of
19 Hunter Biden or an investigation of Ukrainians and how they --

20 A I really don't, I don't. I never read the stories of all
21 this to that.

22 Q But it could have been either way?

23 A I just don't know.

24 Q Okay.

25 MR. MEADOWS: You can go ahead.

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1 BY MR. CASTOR:

2 Q Earlier this morning or this afternoon when we were going
3 through I guess the yellow tabs in your binder, I was just wondering
4 how that came about. Was that like an organic effort where the majority
5 just saw the yellow tabs and started asking you about it?

6 A So, yeah, I mean, because I find things like this amusing.

7 So when I passed these emails to my counsel, who's a very nice
8 like assistant paralegal, since I work 20 hours a day and don't have
9 time to do these things myself and couldn't ask my staff to do it, I
10 had printed a couple of things on yellow paper because I had it by my
11 printer.

12 And in a few cases actually there was too much yellow paper in,
13 so other things got printed. It was ones that I wanted that were key
14 ones, like the one I had taken out here that is the readout from the
15 23rd meeting at the White House.

16 And her very nice assistant took, when she made the copies, took
17 all the ones that were on yellow paper and stuck a yellow sticky on
18 it so that I would know.

19 Q Okay.

20 A And that's all it was, so --

21 Q Okay.

22 A And some of it was just because the paper was in the printer.
23 Sorry.

24 Q You have to understand, from the vantage point of the
25 minority when you see these things transpiring all of a sudden you're

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1 reading selected yellow-tabbed emails, our side wonders how that comes
2 to be.

3 A It wasn't -- well, now you know. I should have taken them
4 off. I don't think I even noticed they were there.

5 MR. MEADOWS: Let me jump in real quick.

6 So the email you read just a little bit ago, you mentioned that
7 a think tank individual --

8 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Whom I know a little bit, former --

9 MR. MEADOWS: -- sent an email on the 29th of July. Did you not
10 find that curious why he would be asking that kind of question on the
11 29th of July about a phone call?

12 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, I knew there was a phone call on the
13 25th.

14 MR. MEADOWS: Yeah, but how would he know?

15 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, this is Washington, I mean.

16 MR. MEADOWS: Well, but he worked for Burisma and for the Atlantic
17 Council. Did you know that?

18 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm not sure I did.

19 MR. MEADOWS: Yeah. I mean, so I find it just very curious that
20 here's a guy that has connections with Burisma, not one but multiple
21 contacts with Burisma, would know about a phone call between the
22 President of the United States and the President of Ukraine. You
23 didn't find that curious?

24 AMBASSADOR REEKER: To be honest, Congressman, I probably
25 didn't. I looked at it, and I saw what George had said, that no --

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1 MR. MEADOWS: Let me ask it in a different way then.

2 How often do think tank people call you about private phone calls
3 or your subordinates about private phone calls between two leaders of
4 sovereign states?

5 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That kind of stuff goes on all the time
6 because there's constantly speculation and rumors and leaks and
7 whispers. I mean, I couldn't put a date to it, but this town is full
8 of former officials.

9 MR. MEADOWS: So you say you know him. How do you know him?

10 AMBASSADOR REEKER: He was a former Foreign Service officer,
11 [redacted].

12 MR. MEADOWS: Is that the only context that you know him in?

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah, I mean, I think I may have seen him at
14 the Atlantic Council. I'm not sure if he is involved in other things.

15 You know, I think I had lunch with him some years ago, talking
16 about when I was going to Milan and we were supporting the U.S. pavilion
17 at the U.S. -- at the World's Fair, the Expo 2015, and he was possibly
18 interested in that. I have a vague recollection.

19 MR. MEADOWS: So the response from your team was, no, that was
20 not part of it, and to your knowledge there was no further contact?

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah. I don't know if anybody's -- how
22 often people hear from [redacted], or I may have bumped into him here
23 or there, but I'm not particularly close to him. I don't know him that
24 well.

25 MR. MEADOWS: Okay. And do you think that -- would you

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1 characterize Secretary Pompeo's leadership towards Ukraine as a good
2 thing? I mean, how would you characterize it?

3 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think he's been supportive of our policy
4 and our goals. That's what he underscored to Ambassador Taylor in the
5 meeting on the 28th. We haven't talked about it in any great detail.
6 I joined one of his meetings where Kurt -- who, as I've mentioned,
7 reported to him, and they had meetings where I wasn't able to attend.
8 And he's remained certainly interested. It's, you know, it's up there
9 in importance. You've got this hot war going on, 13,000 people already
10 killed, so --

11 MR. MEADOWS: So would you say that Secretary Pompeo has been
12 supportive of your efforts and your job overall?

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Of my broad efforts in the European Bureau?
14 Yeah.

15 MR. MEADOWS: So any headlines that would say that you're being
16 negative toward Secretary Pompeo would be misplaced then?

17 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That I'm being negative toward Secretary
18 Pompeo?

19 MR. MEADOWS: Yeah.

20 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't know if there is such a headline,
21 but --

22 MR. MEADOWS: But if there were would they be misplaced?

23 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah, I would think so. I haven't had -- it
24 looks like you're passing around the headline.

25 MR. MEADOWS: Well, I mean, it says, "Official to testify that

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1 Pompeo blocks show of support for ousted Ambassador." And then the
2 article goes on to give more of a negative connotation about your view
3 of Secretary Pompeo.

4 Would you say that that is an accurate reflection of your personal
5 views?

6 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No.

7 MR. MEADOWS: Okay. I yield back.

8 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I mean, my -- I think it's only fair to add
9 there, my view is that Ambassador Yovanovitch was subjected to just
10 really outrageous press coverage and innuendo and threats coming from
11 high levels, retweeting irresponsible journalism, which affected her
12 personally, her safety, affected our mission, reflected on the United
13 States, and it was pretty outrageous.

14 And I pushed, as you know, within the Department more robust
15 language as we were -- we proposed putting out a statement, and that
16 was not approved in that way. And so we used what we did have.

17 And I was -- you know, part of my mandate in the first week on
18 the job was to take care of the mission, but most importantly, to take
19 care of our, my people. And she was one of them and also a friend and
20 a colleague of many years. So I was concerned about her safety, her
21 future.

22 We had talked with her, of course, about the possibility of taking
23 the assignment at EUCOM, which had come open because of my move here.
24 And then, you know, I was with her in the meeting with the Deputy
25 Secretary when the decision was made in terms of the timing.

1 Of course she got her award and induction into the Hall of Fame
2 at the NDU, went back, you know, was reassured by human resources then,
3 which took over to find her the appropriate, if she wasn't going to
4 do EUCOM, what assignment might she be interested and what were the
5 possibilities, and reassured about that.

6 But I still, you know, think it is unfortunate that such a fine
7 professional Foreign Service officer, American, and, most importantly,
8 human being, had to go through that.

9 BY MR. CASTOR:

10 Q The email relating to [redacted] that Kent wrote, what date
11 was that?

12 A July 29th, he says with confidence. Is that right?

13 Q So if I have this correct, Kent wrote: D.C. pushing Kyiv
14 to investigate Bidens. Is that right?

15 A Well, let's refer to it again.

16 Q Look, on July 29th, that's relatively remarkable
17 intelligence from a call transcript that hadn't come out for 2 more
18 months.

19 A Well, the only thing I would say about that is that this story
20 line had been out there going back certainly to March and the Rudy
21 Giuliani stuff that was on live TV saying that, I mean, that was what
22 he was doing, so --

23 Q But was it in reference to the call?

24 A That is the notion of the email. I can read it to you again.
25 The subject line: [Redacted], colon, is it true that, question

1 mark -- this is George sending that to me and Bill to be aware he had
2 heard that in the call -- last Thursday D.C. pushed Kyiv on
3 investigating the Bidens. I said -- that would be George -- I wasn't
4 in the call, but looking forward, that we were working on particulars
5 of a visit, dates TBD.

6 Q Okay. But that's not a generalized Rudy Giuliani is pushing
7 these things, that is something happened on this call?

8 A And yeah, I mean, clearly he was -- he was -- I can't speak
9 for [redacted] or where leaks like that come from, but --

10 Q But somebody evidently that had firsthand account of what
11 occurred on the call is talking to [redacted], right?

12 A I can't say that with any definitiveness because I wasn't
13 on the call. I don't know how [redacted] gets his information or his
14 speculations or his trial balloons or where any of that would come.
15 So I couldn't say.

16 But, you know, leaks in this town are of that kind, and we've heard
17 of a number of people that were on the call. I don't -- I was not on
18 it and didn't see a full readout of it until much later.

19 Q Did you ever have any discussions with Tim Morrison about
20 the call?

21 A I don't recall if Tim and I ever got into details of the call.
22 I remember clearly and I've shared with you Kurt Volker saying, "Great
23 call." Sorry, that's Kurt Volker, always so upbeat. That's the
24 problem with electronic communication.

25 I just -- I couldn't say if I had any. You know, I talk to Tim

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1 once in a while but not -- anything like that wouldn't be on an open
2 line. And so it's possible that we had something, but I don't recall,
3 although I think I know -- I feel like I know, but it's probably from
4 more recent press reporting that he was on the call.

5 Q Okay.

6 A I don't know that I knew that.

7 MR. MEADOWS: So you've got a pretty detailed calendar. So you
8 don't have a record of a call with Tim Morrison shortly after the call?

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Let's just check. I'll be quick.

10 The call was on July 25th, correct? And so I was in Greece that
11 day. I was traveling from Thessaloniki up to the Republic of North
12 Macedonia. I returned the night of Saturday the 27th. I will look
13 quickly.

14 Tim Morrison? Tim Morrison?

15 I went to the PCC, of course, on the 31st of July, and Tim Morrison
16 was at that. In fact he was -- I think he chaired it or his deputy
17 was chairing at the beginning and then Tim came in, that I recall. And
18 I did talk to -- I have a note that I had a call with Ambassador Sondland
19 on the 30th.

20 And it was at the end of that week that Tim Morrison came over.
21 He was quite new at that stage. He had just taken over from Fiona Hill.
22 And we, my team, the seven DAS's, or particularly my Acting Principal
23 Deputy, Michael Murphy, we had invited Tim Morrison over.

24 And so on the 1st of August, that Thursday, he came and did a series
25 of meetings and briefings with some of our offices just to sort of get

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1 up to speed on European issues because he had moved over from the arms
2 control directorate, I think, at NSC. And so that was the first time
3 I met him in person and we had a quick sort of takeout lunch in my office,
4 he and Michael and I.

5 And I don't -- we probably touched on Ukraine, but I don't have
6 specific recollections of that. Because I do remember asking him over
7 time, you know, any news on the date for the White House meeting?

8 And then I did see Kurt Volker that day, so August 1st.

9 BY MR. CASTOR:

10 Q Who was all at the July 31st PCC meeting?

11 A It was huge. I mean, there were probably 50 people in that
12 room, or 40. It was interagency. We were late, and my -- one of my
13 team, somehow his clearance didn't get passed so they wouldn't let him
14 into the White House compound.

15 And so, finally, he said, "All right, you guys go ahead," because
16 we were already late, George and I, and he handed me the locked bag
17 with the materials we needed for the PCC, but he didn't hand me the
18 key.

19 And so we went to the meeting and literally walked in and it was
20 a full, full room, I mean very interagency. I know DOD was sitting
21 right next to me, NSC folks, and there was Treasury and Justice and --

22 Q DNI?

23 A Homeland Security, probably DNI, and associated agencies and
24 elements of that ilk. So it was a big meeting and focusing on
25 some -- again, the focus was not on the assistance, there was that

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1 separate process, and at that point they were waiting to see if they
2 could pull together the principal small group. But this was more
3 focused on some other aspects, military -- or, sorry, commercial
4 aspects in Ukraine.

5 Q Did you have any discussions with anybody offline, heading
6 in or out of that meeting, about that issue?

7 A Well, we were late, so I didn't. And then we did, at least
8 coming in and then with Laura Cooper from DOD, who I guess you've heard
9 from, she had brought up again, she said: I know this isn't about
10 assistance, but I just want to say is there any -- anybody have any
11 updates on the assistance because we need to start moving on this
12 because we have a mandate.

13 Again, it was DOD's issue. That stuff passes through State, but
14 it was really vested with them, and we were all still wondering where
15 that was going to be.

16 Q And you didn't have any communications with Morrison?

17 A At that meeting I don't believe there was anything specific,
18 no.

19 Q And in this time period did he have any communications with
20 you about his concerns about the call?

21 A I don't recall him raising anything. I don't recall knowing
22 that he was on the call until later.

23 I mean, again, I look at the number of calls and country -- you
24 know, we're talking 50 countries and the things that were going on in
25 that period. But as of right off the bat it was not something I was

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1 aware of.

2 My focus on this was, okay, the Ukraine problem set is White House
3 meeting and now assistance. We were trying to work this assistance
4 thing and figure out where the holdup is, if it's Mulvaney. We were
5 trying to have that become apparent and get a principals decision on
6 it. The scheduling, as I've already said, was difficult. And then
7 the White House meeting was still TBD.

8 Q You were originally scheduled to appear here last week and
9 that was delayed until today?

10 A Yeah, I had agreed to come on Wednesday. And then I got a
11 message saying -- it was through my counsel -- that they had asked if
12 we could delay.

13 Q And they asked you to delay it to today?

14 A There were some options. I'm scheduled to leave Tuesday to
15 go to Prague for the Velvet Revolution anniversary and to speak at a
16 CEPA conference. So I had hoped I didn't have to cancel that, which
17 is why when they offered Saturday I --

18 Q Okay. But Monday would have been a perfectly fine option?

19 A It would have been difficult to then leave and go because
20 of my having canceled everything last week to prepare and then be here.
21 My Monday is now very full, but --

22 Q Okay. Fair enough. You were scheduled to give a speech at
23 the Atlantic Council, as I understand it?

24 A I was scheduled to be on a panel about, if I recall correctly,
25 it was about on the eastern Mediterranean. And having just coming back

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1 from the Secretary's trip to Greece and all of the things we have done
2 with the new Greek Government -- which is really quite something. The
3 Secretary signed a new annex to the mutual defense cooperation
4 agreement with Greece just taking us in a whole new direction. It's
5 really quite interesting. Eastern Med is a very crucial part of our
6 AOR, eastern Med and Black Sea.

7 So we determined -- you know, I get hundreds of these invitations
8 literally for this panel, that conference, speeches, remarks, Q&A,
9 press interviews, which I don't do many of, to talk about our policies.

10 So that was assessed to be a good opportunity. It was ripe, again
11 just coming back from the Greece trip. But when I thought I was going
12 to be testifying on or doing this deposition on Wednesday I pulled out
13 of that, which I think was scheduled for Tuesday, as I recall.

14 MR. MEADOWS: I want to clear up, Ambassador, I don't know that
15 when I mentioned the think tank individual, without going back to his
16 name, certainly a connection with Burisma, I didn't mean to imply that
17 he worked for Burisma, in spite of wearing a jacket and a hat that said
18 Burisma. The only known connection that I have is that he works for
19 the Atlantic Council. And so I just want to make sure that I'm clear
20 for the record.

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Okay. I don't either, to be honest. My
22 recollection is his focus is on energy issues, which would make sense,
23 Burisma, the Caspian stuff as well, I would think.

24 MR. MEADOWS: I just want to make sure I was clear.

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Okay.

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1 MR. CASTOR: Any concern that the Atlantic Council gets some
2 funding from Burisma?

3 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't think I knew that. No. I
4 mean -- no. I mean, they get funding from lots and lots of sources.
5 I don't know if that's -- I don't know how much, I don't know that they
6 do. You're telling me that they do, but I don't know.

7 You know, now that you mention it, I went to an Atlantic Council
8 event in New York during the UNGA week, the end of September, at the
9 end of September, right around the time all this was starting. And
10 that's right, I think among the 20 sponsors, you've been to these
11 things, they had their names, I did notice that. So I take that back,
12 I should know, I did know that -- or at least I inferred because they
13 were listed among the sponsors that they gave some money to the Atlantic
14 Council.

15 MR. CASTOR: Okay.

16 I'm good, Mr. Meadows.

17 I yield back.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, do you want to take a break or do you
19 want to keep moving through?

20 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Let's just keep going. If the water kicks
21 in I'll let you know.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, at any time, no matter who's asking the
23 questions, feel free to say I could use a small break.

24 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Okay.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: You know, you've had a lot of questions about

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1 Burisma, but it was quite clear very early on from Rudy Giuliani's
2 public comments, not to mention anything he might have said to
3 Ambassador Volker or the Three Amigos in private, it was quite clear
4 from Giuliani's public comments that his interest in Burisma was the
5 Bidens, right?

6 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Uh-huh.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: You have to say yes --

8 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you were just
9 setting up. That's a question.

10 Yeah, certainly from what I was reading he referred to that a
11 number of times.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: He referred to the Bidens?

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: The Bidens and Burisma, yeah.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: So it wasn't a generic interest in all companies
15 in Ukraine or even all energy companies, he was interested in the
16 company that Hunter Biden worked on, served on the board.

17 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Based on the press reports and Giuliani's
18 statements that I saw, that was certainly true. I don't know that that
19 was his exclusive interest but --

20 THE CHAIRMAN: But that's clearly what he was talking about
21 publicly. And he made no mystery of his interest. Am I right.

22 MR. REEKER. And as I've stated, testified, that George laid that
23 out as one of these narratives. That was that Giuliani, Biden,
24 Burisma, I think that's how he described it, telling me, you know, gas
25 company, Biden, Hunter, that was Giuliani's thing, yeah.

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1 THE CHAIRMAN: And when you came back and took over this portfolio
2 and all this was happening with Ambassador Yovanovitch, your shop made
3 sure that you were aware of sort of what was going on in the press and
4 what the issues were so you could be brought up to date.

5 AMBASSADOR REEKER: We were trying to figure out where this was
6 coming from. Obviously, I was interested myself, that it started with,
7 hey, we're getting these inquiries about this. And then we found the
8 story in The Hill. In fact, I think they said we've gotten questions
9 from The Hill who were writing a story that, and that starts generating
10 the process, and then it was this deluge.

11 And so both for our interest in the Bureau to try to get a handle
12 on it, but also to feed upwards certainly to my chain of command of
13 Under Secretary Hill and Counselor Brechbuhl, the sort of what and why
14 now, they were trying to feed that. That's why I had so many, so many
15 emails of press clips from both Ukrainian and various American --

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. And those, that background, brought to
17 your attention Giuliani's interest in the Bidens and Burisma.

18 AMBASSADOR REEKER: To the degree that George mentioned there
19 were four strands, he was doing it. This was certainly not an enormous
20 focus of mine because I had, you know, 50 countries to deal with and
21 brand new to a job and then trying to deal specifically with Masha.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: And to those four strands, one was Bidens and
23 Burisma. The other -- another was 2016, the alleged Ukraine
24 involvement in 2016, right?

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Uh-huh. Right. Yes, sir. Sorry.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: And then, you know, you've read the call record,
2 that two issues the President brings up with President Zelensky are
3 the Bidens and 2016, slash, CrowdStrike, right?

4 AMBASSADOR REEKER: CrowdStrike? I'm sorry, that's not --

5 THE CHAIRMAN: 2016, the President mentions the word
6 CrowdStrike. That's -- CrowdStrike is part of the conspiracy theory
7 about 2016, that the server's in Ukraine or the hack originated from
8 Ukraine --

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Okay. I didn't remember the specific
10 reference, but, yeah, yes, sir.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: But you are aware the call, the President actually
12 does refer to Burisma, he refers to the Bidens, You're aware, you've
13 read the call record.

14 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I have looked at it some time ago when it
15 first came out. I don't have it with me. But yes. Yeah.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Now, you've said some very positive things about
17 Ambassador Volker. He is a thorough diplomat, would you say, he does
18 his homework.

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. My experience.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Develops a deep understanding of the subject
21 matter.

22 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: And so if he had been given responsibility of one
24 of the Three Amigos for Ukraine policy, he would dig into Ukraine. And
25 he already had responsibility in Ukraine, correct.

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1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: He had been the Special Representative
2 for -- I don't remember when he was appointed, long before my time,
3 but he had been doing this for some time, yeah.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: And so in particular if he was charged with or took
5 on responsibility of interacting with Giuliani he would have
6 familiarized himself with the issues Giuliani had been raising publicly
7 and the -- and their relationship to U.S.-Ukraine relations.

8 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't want to go too far because we didn't
9 have those conversations, so I don't know how much he delved into it.
10 He did mention to me that was going to try to talk to Rudy and help
11 him understand, you know, what we were trying to do now with Zelensky.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: In the same way you were being thorough, though,
13 making sure you understood the background, you would have expected that
14 he'd be doing the same, right.

15 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah. I mean, I think Kurt is thorough. I
16 just can't testify to any specifics on that because we didn't talk about
17 it.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Now, you were asked -- you had responsibility for
19 about 50 countries.

20 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Uh-huh.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Is that right?

22 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: And at this time Ambassador Volker had
24 responsibility for one.

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, he's the unpaid special government

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1 employee --

2 THE CHAIRMAN: I don't mean it as a rap, I'm just saying so he
3 had a particular focus on Ukraine.

4 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah. Correct.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: I want to ask you about the article, and I don't
6 have it with me, that came out today apparently about your expected
7 testimony.

8 You voiced support for a statement coming out from the highest
9 levels of the State Department supporting Ambassador Yovanovitch, did
10 you not?

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I did on a couple of occasions. In that
12 process we tried to push for a stronger statement.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: And Ambassador Kent was very strongly in favor of
14 a statement coming from the top of support for Yovanovitch. Is that
15 right.

16 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. Yes.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: And Ambassador McKinley felt even more strongly
18 about it. Indeed, that ended up becoming -- the failure to produce
19 that statement ended up becoming part of the reason why he would resign.

20 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Later.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Later.

22 MR. REEKER. Yeah, in September. I believe Ambassador McKinley
23 became focused on this when -- at the time that the transcript, or what
24 word do we use to describe, the telephone call --

25 THE CHAIRMAN: The call record.

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1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: The call record was released and had these
2 really unpleasant statements about Masha.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: And so there was a fairly uniform view that it
4 would be necessary, appropriate, important, helpful to have a statement
5 from the top of the State Department expressing support for this superb
6 diplomat, Ambassador Yovanovitch.

7 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: And yet the word you got back was no, correct?

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Now --

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No additional statement, from the statement
12 we had put out.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, yeah. Of course the request was not for
14 what you had already put out in terms of press guidance, it was a
15 statement on its own merits, standing on its own two feet, of support
16 for the Ambassador, right.

17 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah. We described in the draft, I think,
18 of what they sent up were the ideas, and that came back as a no from
19 the Under Secretary.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: That came back as a no from the Under Secretary.

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: From the Under Secretary's office.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: And that was Under Secretary Hale.

23 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Was Hale supportive of issuing a statement.

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't know. I just got back the answer.

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1 No, he had, as I had mentioned in earlier testimony, he had
2 suggested that Masha release her statement. In fact, I think you asked
3 me about that, sir.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: But he never expressed to you opposition to
5 issuing a statement, did he.

6 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't -- I mean, what I got back from his
7 office was the no. The process, it did not -- P says no statement.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Are you aware of whether the Under Secretary
9 actually submitted his own request or supported the request for the
10 statement.

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I do not know what he did.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: The decision to turn down the statement, that
13 wouldn't be made by Ulrich Brechbuhl on his own, would it.

14 AMBASSADOR REEKER: It may have been. I don't know.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Does the -- what's the title of his position?

16 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Ulrich.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

18 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Counselor.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Would the Counselor make a decision at odds with
20 the uniform view of top State Department officials without consulting
21 the Secretary of State.

22 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I just don't know. You'd have to ask him.
23 I really couldn't tell you. He's my superior and I --

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Do you have any reason to believe that the decision
25 not to issue the statement ultimately came from anyone other than the

1 Secretary.

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I can't speculate on that. All I know is
3 that the answer came back from the Under Secretary that there would
4 be no statement.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: I presume that if the Secretary wanted a statement
6 one would have been sent out. Is that fair to say.

7 AMBASSADOR REEKER: If the Secretary wants something, he can take
8 that initiative, yes.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Malinowski.

10 MR. MALINOWSKI: Thank you.

11 Well, just picking up on that, the Under Secretary for Political
12 Affairs is the third ranking official in the State Department, correct?

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

14 MR. MALINOWSKI. So the second ranking would be D, the Deputy
15 Secretary, and then the Secretary of State. All three outrank the
16 Counselor.

17 What is the Counselor's role in the State Department
18 traditionally? I'm not talking about a particular individual, but
19 traditionally what is that job?

20 AMBASSADOR REEKER: In some administrations there has been no
21 Counselor. Other times the Counselor has had a very prominent role.
22 I believe Counselor Brechbuhl is -- I mean, he is one of the people
23 that I deal with certainly on all personnel messages -- personnel
24 matters -- at the level that we're talking about, how to staff
25 embassies, who to put forward as potential nominees.

1 MR. MALINOWSKI: Right. But he doesn't outrank the Under
2 Secretary for Political Affairs in any formal sense.

3 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't know that to be a fact. I don't.

4 MR. MALINOWSKI: Well, you know the -- you've been in the Foreign
5 Service for --

6 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That's up to the Secretary, sir. I don't --

7 MR. MALINOWSKI: Okay. But his authority, but the Counselor's
8 authority derives from the Secretary, in other words.

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

10 MR. MALINOWSKI: In any administration.

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: He is not a confirmed position.

12 MR. MALINOWSKI. Exactly. So if an Under Secretary of State were
13 to get word from the Counselor that there should be no statement and
14 it is the consensus view of everybody working on this issue in the
15 Department that there should be a statement, it would seem to me that
16 the Counselor's view or his instructions would only be definitive if
17 everyone assumed that he was representing the Secretary of State or
18 perhaps -- is there an alternative, the White House, Mr. Mulvaney's
19 office?

20 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Again, I don't know that that was
21 determined -- I don't know anything more than what I have told you to
22 the best of my ability.

23 On my first week in this office, when we proposed a statement that
24 would include certain elements that we proposed, after waiting for
25 feedback we got back an answer from the Under Secretary, my boss, saying

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1 his office said no statement.

2 MR. MALINOWSKI. Well, but he'd consulted with Brechbuhl, and the
3 answer was no statement.

4 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't know that.

5 MR. MALINOWSKI: That's what you testified before, I believe.

6 MR. REEKER. No, I said he wrote that I had been trying to consult
7 with Brechbuhl, but it was a separate chain from the no statement thing.

8 MR. MALINOWSKI: Okay. And are you aware of any communications
9 between the State Department and the White House on this question, the
10 Chief of Staff's office or any -- or the NSC --

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I am not.

12 MR. MALINOWSKI: -- with regard to whether a statement should be
13 issued?

14 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, sir. I know we got a question
15 from -- toward the end of that week, around the 30th, there was a
16 question from the NSC, I think from Fiona Hill herself perhaps, saying:
17 Is there a statement about Masha? Is there a statement of support?
18 And I did not personally -- I wasn't personally involved in the
19 exchange, but I think they --

20 MR. MALINOWSKI: So that suggests that the NSC would have been
21 supportive of a statement.

22 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I just can't draw that conclusion. All I
23 know was --

24 MR. MALINOWSKI. Did you clear a draft statement with the NSC when
25 it was going up the chain?

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1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm not involved in that kind of -- sorry.
2 I used to be, but not anymore.

3 MR. MALINOWSKI: Let me -- so shifting subjects a little bit, I
4 want told a little bit of Presidential phone calls 101 with you.

5 When the President of the United States speaks on the phone to
6 a foreign leader, that foreign leader is on the call, right?

7 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Is this a trick question?

8 MR. MALINOWSKI: It's a simple question. It's not a trick
9 question.

10 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, that would be my assumption, or we have
11 to assume it's the foreign leader on the other end of the line.

12 MR. MALINOWSKI: That's true, sometimes it's a Russian comedian.

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: It's a radio station in Kyiv, yeah.

14 MR. MALINOWSKI: There we go.

15 And don't we also assume that that foreign leader has staff, maybe
16 their foreign minister, maybe their chief of staff, a secretary, they
17 have a team that may be listening in on the phone call too? We may
18 not know it, but we have to assume that --

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think that's usually a fair --

20 MR. MALINOWSKI: Just as we have.

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah. No, I think that's usually a fair
22 assumption. I mean, I would -- I often talk to in the Balkans prime
23 ministers on my cell phone, but for the President, a formal call, I
24 think that that would be the assumption, yes.

25 MR. MALINOWSKI: And it would be safe to assume that in that

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1 foreign government's bureaucracy they produce a summary or a
2 transcript, that they have their own way of reporting to relevant people
3 in their administration what was said on that phone call, just as we
4 do in ours?

5 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That's a fair assumption.

6 MR. MALINOWSKI: And this is one reason why we tend to be careful
7 what we say on these calls, and they're not generally classified at
8 the highest levels because we have no way of controlling what -- how
9 the details of that call are disseminated on the other side.

10 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Or who else is listening in.

11 MR. MALINOWSKI: Exactly. That was my next question. And in
12 Ukraine one would have to presume there is another great power that
13 might conceivably learn what happens on a conversation like that.

14 And isn't this one reason why most administrations --

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Do you want to have him respond to that.

16 MR. MALINOWSKI: I'm sorry.

17 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I mean, I assume that any call I make on an
18 unsecure phone is being listened to by somebody, including in this town.

19 MR. MALINOWSKI: Right. And in Ukraine, Russia has very
20 aggressive intelligence-gathering operations, we assume. We don't
21 know necessarily know in every case.

22 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That is a presumption that one would make,
23 yes.

24 MR. MALINOWSKI: Okay. And this is also one reason why most
25 administrations the contents of a Presidential phone call with a

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1 foreign leader are shared with our Ambassador to that country, with
2 the Assistant Secretary, with people who commonly deal with officials
3 from that country. Is that correct?

4 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That has been my experience in the past.
5 That has not been my experience in this current administration.

6 MR. MALINOWSKI: Correct. But it is sort of logical, because you
7 may be dealing with your counterpart in the Ukrainian Government, our
8 Ambassador may be dealing with people, and it sort of puts you all in
9 a difficult position when the folks you are talking to know what our
10 President said but you don't.

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah, I think that's a fair characterization
12 of diplomacy.

13 MR. MALINOWSKI: All that is fairly safe to assume. Is it also
14 reasonable -- and, of course, we don't know and you don't know -- but
15 is it reasonable to assume that if the President of Ukraine heard
16 something in a phone conversation with the U.S. President that
17 concerned him about perhaps U.S. policy veering in a different
18 direction from where it had been, that this news would spread within
19 the Ukrainian bureaucracy and that somebody might reach out to a
20 friendly American contact, perhaps a former U.S. Ambassador, to say:
21 What's going on here? It's not inconceivable, right?

22 AMBASSADOR REEKER: It is not inconceivable.

23 MR. MALINOWSKI: Right. And it could happen very quickly.

24 AMBASSADOR REEKER: These days everything happens very quickly.

25 MR. MALINOWSKI: Exactly. So Mr. Herbst might very -- and,

1 again, we don't know and I'm not asking you to suggest you know -- but
2 it's conceivable that he might have learned about this from his many
3 Ukrainian -- one of his many Ukrainian contacts?

4 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That is perfectly conceivable, yes.

5 MR. MALINOWSKI: Okay. And then shifting again, foreign
6 assistance getting cut happens --

7 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Frozen.

8 MR. MALINOWSKI: Frozen, suspended, as has been mentioned
9 before, it happens all the time. We suspend, hold, cut, redirect
10 assistance to foreign countries for multiple reasons, sometimes for
11 purposes of conditionality, sometimes because, you know, our
12 priorities change.

13 And you testified that you had no idea and that the team working
14 on Ukraine had no idea why the aid was held. You knew it had been held,
15 but you didn't know why. You tried to find out, you didn't know.

16 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Right, the exact, at least what was filtering
17 up to me from the assistance coordinator, from George and the Ukraine
18 desk -- you know, I was in and out. As I've said, I travel about
19 50 percent of the time. But I was back and we were getting
20 updates -- was, there's still no movement on that. There was
21 definitely a feeling that this was -- this was Mr. Mulvaney who --

22 MR. MALINOWSKI: Right, it was coming from there.

23 AMBASSADOR REEKER: -- who affected this, that's right.

24 MR. MALINOWSKI: But you didn't know why.

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: But we did not know for sure.

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1 MR. MALINOWSKI: Can you think of any, in your long Foreign
2 Service career, can you think of any instances you were involved with
3 when aid to an important country, a country you were working on, was
4 cut or suspended or held or whatever, and nobody working on that country
5 knew why? Is that regular?

6 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think it's fair to say that's not regular.

7 MR. MALINOWSKI: Right.

8 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'd have to go back. I mean, it's possible
9 that there were cases. I'm just trying to think of my experience,
10 particularly in the Balkans. Occasionally Congress will put a freeze
11 on something.

12 MR. MALINOWSKI: But you know why when we put a freeze.

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Not always, but, you know, usually.

14 MR. MALINOWSKI: There used to be secret holds, I guess.

15 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Right. Right.

16 MR. MALINOWSKI: And then finally, most of the -- many of the
17 people we've been talking about reported to or through you. Ambassador
18 Sondland is one of your ambassadors, correct?

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well --

20 MR. MALINOWSKI: I mean formally speaking.

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: You know, in the European Bureau of 50
22 countries, 49 missions, so 49 chiefs of mission, I don't want to give
23 you the exact percentage but it's extremely high, are noncareer or what
24 we refer to as political appointees.

25 Nominally, chiefs of mission, you know, they report -- they are

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1 the personal representatives of the President and the Secretary of
2 State, so they report to the Secretary. Many of these guys, the
3 noncareer people, literally do that, you know, in terms of they pick
4 up the phone and they talk to them.

5 We have a great team. I knew a number of them from my EUCOM
6 experience, which I think may have one been of the reasons they brought
7 me in. So they're great. Bringing in noncareer people brings a lot
8 of strengths, a lot of interests. We've got, you know, financiers,
9 we've got sports teams owners, and we've got former generals and
10 admirals. We've got just a very broad range of people.

11 To say that they report to me at the political level is not the
12 same as the career officers who -- for whom I write their evaluation.

13 MR. MALINOWSKI: Right. But the formal reporting chain is not
14 dependent on whether someone is a political appointee or a career
15 person.

16 AMBASSADOR REEKER: In the case of some --

17 MR. MALINOWSKI. I'm not talking about informal relationships,
18 how things really work --

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I realize, Congressman, you're alluding to
20 particularly Ambassador Sondland. I never have felt that Ambassador
21 Sondland reports to me.

22 MR. MALINOWSKI: Okay. But Ambassador Taylor, Ambassador
23 Yovanovitch would have been in the chain.

24 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. Ambassador Taylor, of course, is not
25 a chief of mission, he's a charge d'affaires at this point. But yes.

1 MR. MALINOWSKI: I mean, I wasn't so much getting at the Sondland
2 versus Yovanovitch distinction.

3 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Okay.

4 MR. MALINOWSKI: And I know you still have "Acting" in front of
5 your name, but you are playing the role of the Assistant Secretary for
6 European Affairs.

7 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct, which is why I was so focused on the
8 mission, and particularly the Ambassador in Masha's case.

9 MR. MALINOWSKI: And part of this -- I mean, you are the chief
10 advisor to the Secretary of State on policy towards all these countries,
11 are you not?

12 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, that would be the Under Secretary for
13 Political Affairs, as well as the special representatives for a variety
14 of countries. So for Ukraine I would say the chief advisor was Kurt
15 Volker.

16 MR. MALINOWSKI: Well, this is more of a comment than a question,
17 Ambassador, but I have known every person to occupy this job since Dick
18 Holbrooke.

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: So have I.

20 MR. MALINOWSKI: And I have never heard anybody in this job say
21 what you have said to us today, that I am not in charge of a country
22 in my area of operation.

23 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'd like you to clarify. I don't know where
24 I've said -- I am not in charge of what?

25 MR. MALINOWSKI: Of Ukraine policy. It's an important country

1 in the EUR.

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: A decision, as I've explained to you, was
3 taken and made clear to me that Ukraine policy was being implemented
4 and led by Ambassador Volker, Ambassador Sondland, and to an extent
5 the Secretary of Energy, with the complete support of the President
6 and the Secretary.

7 MR. MALINOWSKI: Well, that's absolutely clear. I
8 just -- again, this is more of a comment than a question. It's a
9 stunning and very important fact.

10 Who's in charge of Ukraine policy now? The Three Amigos --

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Ultimately the Secretary.

12 MR. MALINOWSKI: Well, I understand, but this arrangement is no
13 more. Is that --

14 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, correct. As I testified earlier, you
15 may have been out of the room and forgive me if you weren't, we have
16 discussed that. I've looked for guidance on how do we handle this.

17 Now, obviously, George Kent continues to play a very -- the key
18 role, as any of the seven DAS's do, where without Kurt we have to look
19 at who will take on certain roles.

20 Kurt was involved in some of the meetings with international,
21 European counterparts, and for now we've said it's between the Under
22 Secretary, myself as Acting Assistant Secretary, and the Deputy
23 Assistant Secretary and the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary as
24 needed, and there is our Deputy Assistant Secretary for Russia,
25 depending on the specific need, topic, level of a meeting, or an

1 engagement.

2 That's what we'll do pending whether there is a new Special
3 Representative for Ukraine brought on board or whether we'll just
4 manage the portfolio with existing personnel.

5 MR. MALINOWSKI: So you're in a kind of holding pattern, you don't
6 really know right now.

7 AMBASSADOR REEKER: We're just moving forward, you know.
8 Obviously, the Ambassador, or the Charge d'Affaires in the case of
9 Ambassador Taylor who has returned to Kyiv, is also crucial on the
10 ground.

11 MR. MALINOWSKI: Does he have your full confidence?

12 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Ambassador Taylor? Yes.

13 MR. MALINOWSKI: Does he have the Secretary's full confidence.

14 AMBASSADOR REEKER: You'd have to ask the Secretary.

15 MR. MALINOWSKI: Okay. Thank you.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Goldman.

17 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

18 Q Of your 50 countries that you oversee, is this the only one
19 where there was this irregular arrangement for implementing U.S.
20 policy?

21 A I just want to make sure that's correct. I mean, Ambassador
22 Sondland gets involved in a number of other places, but to a less extent.
23 There was not the unique group that was taking charge there. I'm just
24 trying to do a full thing.

25 The Secretary did recently, at my recommendation, after some

1 discussion appoint a Special Representative for the western Balkans,
2 who is also the DAS, Matthew Palmer, someone I've worked with on Balkans
3 issues for years, if not decades. And so he has a particular role,
4 still reporting to me, but it's not at all the same. I would say that
5 Ukraine is the only one, yeah.

6 Q And are there any other countries within your portfolio where
7 the President himself has directed who should handle policy for that
8 country?

9 A I couldn't say specifically in terms of, you know, exactly
10 what the President may have said in terms of selecting ambassadors and
11 others who report to him. But in terms of the broader policies they
12 know, I mean, I take that direction from the Under Secretary to the
13 Secretary.

14 Q That's the normal channel?

15 A Yes.

16 Q The fact that the President directed Ambassador Sondland,
17 Ambassador Volker, and Secretary Perry to be involved in Ukraine is
18 an irregular channel, an irregular path in U.S. diplomacy, correct?

19 A I wouldn't describe it as regular. The President himself
20 recently announced, in addition to our Special Representative for
21 western Balkans, he announced that the Ambassador to Germany would also
22 be the Special Presidential Envoy for Kosovo-Serbia Peace
23 Negotiations. There's an example, I suppose.

1 [6:03 p.m.]

2 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

3 Q I mean, but that's an official title. Ambassador Volker was
4 in his role when Ambassador Yovanovitch was there and this arrangement
5 did not exist.

6 A How do you mean?

7 Q He was in his role.

8 A Right.

9 Q And you didn't say that the President directed Ambassador
10 Yovanovitch and Ambassador Volker to handle Ukraine policy, right?

11 A Volker was -- as far as I recall, was brought in this role
12 under the Tillerson -- when Secretary Tillerson was still -- still
13 there.

14 Q I understand that. But my point is that these special envoys
15 are different than the arrangement we're talking about here today. And
16 that's the question for you. Are the special envoys that you are trying
17 to equate with the situation --

18 A I'm not -- you asked me broad questions, I'm just trying to
19 answer them. You asked am I aware are of any situation, so I'm just
20 trying to do my best to give you the broad array among these 50
21 countries. But no, this was clearly, as I've now said numerous times
22 in this deposition, this was irregular; that was the word that was used.
23 It struck me as irregular long before I got here that the Ambassador
24 to the EU was involved in this. If that was the choice of President
25 and the Secretary, then obviously, that was their choice, and Gordon

1 comes with a set of skills.

2 Q You've also discussed a lot today, DAS Kent, who you would,
3 I think, agree, wouldn't you, that he's certainly a Ukraine expert?

4 A Yes.

5 Q And how many countries does he oversee?

6 A He oversees six, three in the Office of Eastern European
7 Affairs, which is Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova, and then what is known
8 as CARC, the Caucasus and Regional Conflict. So Georgia, Armenia,
9 Azerbaijan and the Minsk process, which is under OSCE which deals with
10 the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

11 Q And is it accurate to say that he has a particular expertise
12 among those countries that he covers in Ukraine, given his experience
13 there?

14 A Yes. He speaks the language. He was the Deputy Chief of
15 Mission until -- well, my understanding is, I couldn't tell you exactly
16 when he came back, but we was brought back by Assistant Secretary Wess
17 Mitchell.

18 Q I know. I was just asking, does he have particular expertise
19 in Ukraine?

20 A Yes, absolutely. Which is why I rely on him and feel so fully
21 confident, you know. When you're a manager and an executive, you build
22 a team that you can rely on that handles these things.

23 Q Right.

24 A So George has been a critical part of that.

25 Q And in particular, given that you cover 50 countries, you

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1 rely on him, especially heavily for Ukraine matters, right, because
2 of his expertise?

3 A Right. And his team, he's got a great team of office
4 directors, deputies, desk officers.

5 Q And so what you've described here today is essentially that
6 the detailed work of State Department related to Ukraine, primarily
7 ran through George Kent. And whatever else was going on, in terms of
8 the Presidential directive and Rudy Giuliani was run through Ambassador
9 Sondland and Volker?

10 A Yeah, I think that's a fair characterization. Kurt Volker's
11 original title was Special Representative for Ukraine negotiations,
12 which is why he engaged with his Russian counterpart up until the last
13 meeting they had, which was in January of 2018, to try to move forward.
14 And why he was the point person with our European colleagues and allies
15 in Berlin and Paris through the so-called Normandy process and the Minsk
16 agreements that were supposed to be implemented but never have been
17 by Russia.

18 And that role of his expanded. He took on much more engagement
19 in terms of messaging in the press. He's very effective with it. He
20 became a point person in contact on the broader policy. And then, of
21 course, with the election, as I've described already, and the team that
22 was assembled, the delegation to attend the Zelensky inauguration, then
23 emerged this -- this triumvirate, I guess. Is that the right word?

24 Q DAS Kent is a meticulous employee, correct?

25 A I would use that word, I think. He's extremely smart,

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1 extremely collegial, knows the regions, both Ukraine, and the Eastern
2 Europe, and the Caucasus extremely well.

3 Q Did you ever come across any memos to file that he wrote
4 related to Ukraine over the past 6 months?

5 A Oh, I would have to go back and see. You know, he sent a
6 lot of email in those early days, particularly -- I was so new to it,
7 and as I've said, trying to understand where was this coming from, what
8 was this about.

9 Q But do any jump out at you, as you sit here, in terms of
10 recalling any specific memos to file and concerns that he had?

11 A No.

12 Q You don't recall a memo to file on or about August 16th that
13 he wrote related to Ambassadors Sondland and Volker, and any pressure
14 to investigate Ukraine?

15 A I don't believe so, no. August 16th.

16 Q And that memo to file is not in your 4 inch binder there?

17 A No. I would not think so. And I would imagine a memo to
18 file sounds to me like something classified, but I don't know, and this
19 is obviously not.

20 Q Well, we were informed that it was not classified. In fact,
21 there was another memo to file that he wrote on or about September 15th.
22 Does that one ring a bell related to a meeting that he had in Ukraine
23 with Ambassador Taylor and a Ukrainian official?

24 A Not ringing a bell right away. It is the kind of thing I
25 would have to go and look back and check.

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1 Q How about one more recently in early October, related
2 specifically to the subpoena that the Department received from the
3 committees in this investigation. Were you familiar with that one?

4 A I -- when the subpoena came -- I mean, George was sort of
5 the first one in this process, and I was traveling with the Secretary
6 in Italy, and the Balkans, and Greece. And I heard from the Principal
7 Deputy, who of course was acting, Ambassador Cormack, that there had
8 been some, you know, fairly acrimonious meetings, and he had laid
9 out -- I'm just -- I don't recall specifically the format or what I
10 saw or if this was relayed to me, what happened in that experience,
11 which was, you know, which he was laying out in not a positive
12 experience.

13 Q Did you have any correspondence with Ambassador McKinley
14 after this investigation came to light and before he resigned?

15 A He sent me an email in New York. I'm pretty sure it's not
16 in here, on the Saturday -- let's refer to the trusted -- ah. Thank
17 you. Thank you. I have counsel, it is in here. Okay. And all that
18 printing.

19 So Saturday, September 28th. And he did send an email saying,
20 the Department should issue a strong statement of support for her
21 professionalism and courage -- the subject line is "Masha
22 Yovanovitch." This is after the transcript of the telephone call, the
23 President's call -- for professionalism and courage, preferably today.
24 Articles are proliferating and we should comment, not least because
25 it is the right thing to do, and it is critical to send a message to

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1 our colleagues that we support our people.

2 I responded to him at 11:27 a.m. saying, I fully agree. EUR, that
3 would be the European Bureau, had proposed statements back in April,
4 May, when certain media were full throttle. And I said, you may want
5 to include Carol Perez in personnel and human resources in the
6 discussion. And I think I don't have the further, but I recall that
7 he then sent it, including Carol and she said, I agree too, and
8 that's -- that was my word from him.

9 Q Did you have any further conversations with anyone superior
10 to you about such a statement?

11 A I received a phone call from Under Secretary Hale, who
12 said -- because I was at lunch -- I left lunch, a working lunch, and
13 left that to take a call in the operations center. And he said, you
14 know, this email that -- I have to paraphrase because I don't remember
15 exactly, but it was essentially, I don't think this is going to go
16 anywhere. And I said, Well -- I responded that I think we should issue
17 a statement.

18 Q Did he explain why he didn't think it was going to go
19 anywhere?

20 A I don't recall him saying anything beyond that. The
21 spokesperson was also on this, so, when Ambassador McKinley sent the
22 email he included David Hale and both spokesperson Ortagus on that end.
23 I'm not sure I ever saw any response, further response.

24 Q Did he -- did Under Secretary Hale say that he had spoken
25 to anyone superior to him before reaching the conclusion that he didn't

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1 think it was going happen?

2 A At that stage, I don't believe so, because I think it was
3 really right after that.

4 Q Do you -- was it your impression that Under Secretary Hale
5 himself objected to the idea of a statement in support of Ambassador
6 Yovanovitch?

7 A That I couldn't characterize.

8 Q Would that be consistent with the David Hale that you know?

9 A Well, he had -- he had, you know, said earlier in the earlier
10 process back in March that we've already discussed at length, he'd said
11 his office had said no statement.

12 Q Right. But there was also an email you recall with Ulrich
13 Breckbuhl where they mentioned two things: A Yovanovitch self-defense
14 statement herself --

15 A Uh-huh.

16 Q -- and a statement from the Department. Do you recall that
17 email where there was a discussion of those two ideas that were being
18 fed up the chain?

19 A I think I cited that.

20 Q You did.

21 A Let me find it again, just to try to refresh exactly. Let's
22 see, this would have been around 31, 33.

23 Q Maybe while your lawyer looks, I can move on to something
24 else. You had -- let me ask you this: Do you recall or do you know
25 whether in your binder, other than the documents we discussed, you have

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1 any additional relevant documents from George Kent, or any SOC's that
2 came out of the interagency meetings? Is there anything else in there
3 that's particularly relevant?

4 A No, I wouldn't have SOC's. I don't believe I have anything
5 related to that. I may on other systems, but I don't.

6 Q And do you recall seeing, in your review of your emails,
7 anything else such as that July 29th email that references the President
8 asking Ukraine to conduct an investigation of the Bidens? Do you have
9 anything else that relates to the Biden investigation, or to Rudy
10 Giuliani?

11 A There's certainly lots of press things that were being
12 forwarded in this. As everyone is aware, this was circulating very
13 widely as, one might say, speculation or this was one of those
14 narratives. And, you know, as we've discussed, Mr. Giuliani was saying
15 this quite openly.

16 Q Were -- are there any emails where you and any of your
17 superiors were discussing Mr. Giuliani or these investigations that
18 he was advocating?

19 A I think only the ones that I forwarded up saying, here are
20 the -- here's the, sort of, a sampling of the press or what is driving
21 this in the early narrative the very early days in the first couple
22 of weeks.

23 Q But nothing after, let's say, May 28th in that meeting with
24 Secretary Pompeo that you recall from your review of your documents?

25 A No, just -- I don't think there were any further emails.

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1 Q But suffice it to say that you printed out this select group
2 of emails to prepare for your testimony today?

3 A I was trying to grasp. You know, I went to -- I -- these
4 came from e-files that I tried to save. So I had one that said "Masha."
5 And this Masha thing, which was, again, literally created my second
6 day or something because all this was coming out. I was very concerned.
7 I was just trying to understand, first of all, where was this going
8 on, not only for my own -- where was this coming from, and what really
9 was going on here, what was driving this, but also, focus on how do
10 we take care of her.

11 Q But would you agree that all these emails were responsive
12 to the subpoena that was sent by the committees to the State Department?

13 A I could assume that. I don't know the response to that. I
14 think it is done automatically, so I don't know what they pulled out,
15 but --

16 Q Last question before we go back to the minority on your
17 documents. In your review of your WhatsApp messages, are there any
18 other WhatsApp messages between you and Ambassador Volker, you and
19 Ambassador Taylor? I think you said who else, Masha?

20 A Masha.

21 Q Ambassador Sondland? And Masha?

22 A I don't have WhatsApp with Gordon.

23 Q Ambassador Sondland and who the fourth? There was a fourth?

24 A Taylor, Volker, Masha and Kent, George.

25 Q Okay.

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1 A And George was very brief. It was just a period when -- I
2 can't remember where he was traveling that it was difficult to --

3 Q Are there any others that reference the Biden-Burisma
4 investigation, or Rudy Giuliani, or 2016 election?

5 A I think we covered it when we went over the first one.
6 Masha's didn't. It was more the first part of my Masha exchanges on
7 WhatsApp was about whether she was interested in the position at EUCOM,
8 which was another, sort of, task I had before all this hit, and then
9 it was the exchange.

10 Q Right. I understand there are other topics. I'm asking
11 specifically if there are any other references to these investigations,
12 Biden, Burisma, Giuliani, 2016?

13 A I mentioned to you, Bill Taylor's concerns when he said, I'm
14 still struggling with the decision whether to go. I believe the
15 chairman brought up Giuliani, Biden; this was Bill referring to the
16 Giuliani-Biden issue, will likely persist for the next year. And I
17 don't know -- I'm not sure the Secretary can give me any reassurance
18 on this issue. And of course, then we did have the meeting and he did
19 feel reassured. And then Bill -- they headed off and that was the end
20 of WhatsApp with Bill.

21 Q Well, why don't we do this, our time is up. If maybe -- I
22 believe your counsel may have found that other email that we were asking
23 about.

24 A I find one mention of Giuliani, and we can find this email,
25 this is in an exchange with George, who is on the 27th of May, he had

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1 talked to Masha. He was relaying that to me. She had two asks and
2 suggestions regarding press guidance on the latest media about her.
3 She had already come back by this point. She -- she said if possible,
4 we -- she wants -- wanted us to say we stand up for the embassy. She
5 wanted us to stand up for the embassy, because Giuliani did not just
6 name her and me, that would be George, but denigrated the whole embassy.

7 And so that's the only other reference to Giuliani because he did.
8 He attacked, you know, quite -- to me, I found it personally insulting
9 and outrageous. Group of, you know, an incredibly strong embassy
10 that's well-known for having a great team that does amazing reporting,
11 whether it is essentially partially a war zone, whether it is a country
12 undergoing great change during elections, difficulty, and then get
13 swamped with all of this. And yet this gentleman who is on the -- you
14 know, all over the media denigrating our embassies, which is -- and
15 our Foreign Service officers. And you know, that's not the only place
16 that that happens.

17 MR. GOLDMAN: I yield to the minority.

18 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Oh, did you want to -- sorry, just to come
19 back, so I can be complete. The email that we were looking for was
20 the one that Hale sent on March 28th to myself copying George saying,
21 I've tried several times to get guidance from Ulrich, to no avail. I
22 suggest Phil call to see if we can okay, A, for use of social media
23 self-defense, and B, release of a Department statement.

24 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

25 Q Who was that from, sorry?

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1 A That was from David Hale to me and George Kent.

2 Q Suggesting that you call Mr. Brechbuhl?

3 A He had tried several times to get guidance. I suggest Phil
4 call to see if we can, what I just read you. And I'd -- I responded
5 that I inquired to C's availability. That was the 28th. And then,
6 of course, later that week, we got the message from his office saying
7 "no statement."

8 MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you.

9 MR. MEADOWS: Mr. Chairman, may I inquire about how much more time
10 do you have? That may dictate what we do on our side. Are you all
11 done?

12 MR. GOLDMAN: We are -- I just have a couple of follow-up
13 questions.

14 MR. MEADOWS: Is that a congressional couple?

15 MR. GOLDMAN: I think we are 5 or 10 --

16 MR. MEADOWS: -- or is that a Goldman couple?

17 THE CHAIRMAN: I don't think we'll go through whole another
18 round, I hope.

19 MR. MEADOWS: So Mr. Ambassador, I want to kind of close out. I
20 think we're going to just keep our questions very limited. I don't
21 want to -- maybe clarify a couple of things. First, thank you for your
22 service, for your continued service. And certainly, as you're going
23 through the process as acting, awaiting for confirmation --

24 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Excuse me, sir, just to clarify, I have never
25 been nominated to the position.

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1 MR. MEADOWS: Okay. So you're just in the acting role. Is that
2 correct?

3 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. Technically I was informed that
4 the -- he's leaving for -- that the Vacancies Act -- after all
5 that -- according to the Vacancies Act, I have used up the time
6 available or the time where I'm allowed to be formally known as the
7 Acting Assistant Secretary.

8 MR. MEADOWS: So you've used up over 270 --

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. That sounds right. Time flies when
10 you're having fun -- and so I was informed by the Legal Advisor's
11 Office, I think, or the human -- or the personnel people that,
12 technically, I should be referred to as the senior bureau official.
13 And I --

14 MR. MEADOWS: Well, Ambassador Senior Bureau Official.

15 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I've been called an SOB but never an SBO.

16 MR. MEADOWS: I won't refer to you in that way.

17 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I just want that on the record.

18 MR. MEADOWS: Yeah. I'm not normally speechless, but you got me.

19 So let me go back to two or three different things. Your role
20 right now, the way that you view it overseeing the 50 different
21 countries and going forward, you feel like you have fairly clear
22 direction in terms of where you need to be going? And I'll let you
23 answer that first.

24 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, sir. I mean, I came -- you know, as
25 I've testified, this was not something I expected nor aspired to. But

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1 as I said, my wife and I discussed when the Secretary of State asks
2 you to do something and you're a Foreign Service officer, you don't
3 say no. And my commander, boss at European Command, General
4 Scaparotti, understood that, fully supported the decision. And so my
5 understanding was I was coming back to provide leadership in the Bureau
6 to take care of the people, to oversee the seven --

7 MR. MEADOWS: Right.

8 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Or I would say eight DAS's continuity of the
9 policies that had been established, the strategies that had been put
10 into place. And not just leadership of the Bureau but engagement, and
11 engagement being a key word the Secretary said. And I mention it often
12 publicly when I said so, what do you want me to do? Engagement is key
13 that the Secretary said, even when we differ; if you criticize without
14 engagement, that leads to estrangement, and that's not what we want,
15 so that's partially why I spent a lot of time on the road.

16 MR. MEADOWS: And you said about 50 percent of your time on the
17 road.

18 AMBASSADOR REEKER: It has been 50/50.

19 MR. MEADOWS: You continue to travel and do that, continue to
20 travel with Secretary Pompeo from time to time?

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: When he goes to European destinations,
22 generally I do, not every single time, but usually I do. And then,
23 I often will represent him at certain things where he just can't be
24 every place that ministerials or --

25 MR. MEADOWS: So would you say that you still have the confidence

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1 of Secretary Pompeo?

2 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I believe so, as of yesterday.

3 MR. MEADOWS: Well, since you've been here today. I think that
4 probably bodes well.

5 So were you ever informed by any Ukrainian official about a delay
6 in the foreign aid?

7 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No. I just haven't had, you know, other than
8 sort of meeting President Zelensky.

9 MR. MEADOWS: It's fine. I didn't think so.

10 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm not the channel of communication.

11 MR. MEADOWS: My colleague opposite earlier was talking about a
12 readout of the phone call. Are you aware that the Ukrainians provided
13 a readout of the phone call between President Zelensky and President
14 Trump that was published? Did you get a copy of that?

15 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm -- I'm not sure that I was aware of that
16 or that I did. What I am familiar with is what was released by the
17 White House.

18 MR. MEADOWS: Right. But the Ukrainians, we're aware in
19 deposition from previous witnesses that it was actually -- I believe
20 it came from Mr. Volker -- a readout from Ukrainians, because
21 Mr. Volker and Mr. Sondland both said that the Ukrainians felt good
22 about the call. Did they convey that to you?

23 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, as I think I've testified, Kurt did
24 send me a WhatsApp message and saying, Great call with POTUS.

25 MR. MEADOWS: So Mr. Volker, did he talk about -- if he says,

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1 great call, do you believe that that was meant to be a great call from
2 President Trump's standpoint, or from President Zelensky's standpoint,
3 or both?

4 AMBASSADOR REEKER: You know, I -- I couldn't say. I really
5 couldn't. I just remember being that -- saying something to the group,
6 I said, Oh, I heard from Kurt, it was a great call --

7 MR. MEADOWS: So Ambassador Volker, Special Envoy to the Ukraine,
8 never said that he had any concerns about the phone call. Is that
9 correct?

10 AMBASSADOR REEKER: To me directly? No. You know, he had broad
11 concerns about moving forward, getting that White House meeting.

12 MR. MEADOWS: The meeting.

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: You know, moving the process forward,
14 getting the President to understand. He was very clear that when they
15 briefed the President after the inauguration on the 23rd of May, he
16 said, I just kept going back to the positive, but Mr. President, we
17 have opportunities to work with this new President of Ukraine and his
18 team.

19 MR. MEADOWS: So would you say that Ambassador Volker, Ambassador
20 Sondland, Secretary Perry, and Senator Ron Johnson all were talking
21 about how that this can be a new day for Ukraine in terms of a new
22 government, kind of a reset of the corrupt practices of the past?

23 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, I think that's a hope. And the readout
24 from the meeting that I got was that the delegation will work with
25 Ukrainian Government in context of push for reform and to flag the

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1 President's concerns about corruption, poor investment climate, and
2 oligarchic control of the economy. And ensure that Zelensky comes
3 prepared to demonstrate his commitment to reform and improving
4 U.S.-Ukraine bilateral relationship.

5 MR. MEADOWS: Yeah. So have you heard since the aid has been
6 released, and -- have you heard about concerns of possible oligarch
7 influence within the new Zelensky administration?

8 AMBASSADOR REEKER: There are reports of those kinds of things
9 where you would imagine questions ---

10 MR. MEADOWS: Specifically, people that are closely aligned with
11 oligarch, they were closely aligned with Zelensky, now getting
12 positions in the new government. I think some of your other colleagues
13 have testified to that. Have you heard any of that?

14 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah. There was always the question about
15 Mr. -- it wasn't so late I would remember, Kola --

16 MR. CASTOR: Kolomoisky.

17 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Kolomoisky, the exiled oligarch, who he was
18 said to be close with, but there is still - my understanding is that
19 there's still questions about what role and what influence he has.

20 MR. MEADOWS: And so let me close with this: Generally speaking,
21 you're -- the aid that was released on September the 11th and 12th of
22 2019, actually had a higher proportion of that money going towards
23 defensive weapons and military options, versus previous appropriations
24 and administrations. Is that correct?

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I mean, I know that the fiscal 2019 amount

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1 for Ukraine State USAID, and that includes of course State stuff that's
2 been passed to DOD for various military programs was \$445.7 million.
3 That's a plus-up of over \$30 million from fiscal 2018. The Javelins,
4 of course, was something that was new and just under this administration
5 that had not been, if I'm recalling correctly, but it is not something
6 that I was tracking at all.

7 MR. MEADOWS: That's correct, as a defensive weapon?

8 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah.

9 MR. MEADOWS: And so in that increase, would you say that proper
10 U.S.-Ukraine policy would be to continue with additional defensive
11 weapons support going forward?

12 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I mean, I would leave that specific judgment
13 and recommendation to the experts in that. And my -- many of them,
14 former colleagues at EUCOM, or at DOD in our political military bureau
15 at State, where most of that -- I wouldn't want to -- I think that's
16 an important component. But I would defer and get an expert position
17 on that before I would want -- but I do believe that that is an important
18 component of what we're doing to help Ukraine. And, of course, the
19 Ukrainians are also buying and paying for weapon systems.

20 MR. MEADOWS: I yield back.

21 Mr. Chairman, for the record, I just want to say thank you for
22 hearing me out you on some of my concerns today.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I -- and I thank you. I look forward to
24 working with you through the rest of the duration here.

25 Ambassador -- no, feel free to consult with counsel at any time.

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1 I hope this will be the lightning round to finish off here. So you
2 may know nothing about the topics I'm going to ask you about, if you
3 don't, just say so and we can move on.

4 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Okay.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: If you do, if you can be succinct, we will get to
6 it quicker. During the time when Secretary Perry was one of the Three
7 Amigos with this portfolio, did you have any interaction with him?

8 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. I met Secretary Perry when we traveled
9 from -- let me get this in the right order. We attended the Three Seas
10 Initiative Summit. This is an initiative of central European
11 countries that ties in Baltics, Black Sea, and Adriatic countries
12 focused largely on energy diversification, and so, the --

13 THE CHAIRMAN: When would that have been?

14 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That's what I will find for you. I'm sorry.
15 Just -- there it is. I traveled with the Secretary to Berlin to make
16 up for the trip, he'd have to cancel. We went on to The Hague for Global
17 Entrepreneurship Summit; and then, I was in Brussels for the dinner
18 on June the 4th.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, you're undercutting the lightning
20 round here.

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Sorry. But this gets right to it. So
22 Secretary Perry was at that dinner, and he was also at the dinner. And
23 we then flew the next morning from Brussels to Ljubljana .

24 THE CHAIRMAN: So when would that be?

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: June the 5th.

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1 THE CHAIRMAN: And during your traveling or meeting with
2 Secretary Perry during this time, did you discuss Ukraine?

3 AMBASSADOR REEKER: You know, Gordon Sondland was along with us,
4 and I think there was some general discussion, because we definitely,
5 I recall, this is where I remember the discussion about the need to
6 stockpile and to get the Ukrainian -- this is summer, and they are
7 already thinking ahead to winter. If the Russians turn off the tap
8 at the end of their contracts, will the Ukrainians have stockpiled?
9 And that was an assignment that Secretary Perry was sort of undertaking.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: During that period when you were traveling with
11 Sondland and Perry, were you present for any conversation, or
12 participate in any conversation with either Sondland or Perry about
13 Burisma, the Bidens, the 2016 -- desire to investigate 2016, did those
14 topics come up in any of those discussions?

15 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I do not recall anything specific to that.
16 It was really focused on this Three Seas and then moving forward with
17 Zelensky. Gee, didn't he seem like a good guy? I think he's on the
18 right track from the dinner.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: So you weren't present for any conversations about
20 those other investigative interests of Mr. Giuliani and others?

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, I don't recall any there. And there was
22 another time --

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Did Giuliani's name come up at any during that
24 period?

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Not -- not that I recall. I can't swear it

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1 didn't in passing, but I don't recall.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: And you mentioned you had one other interaction
3 with Secretary Perry.

4 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, it was later after we were back. And
5 on June 18th, kind of following up all of that, we went over -- Gordon
6 was back in town, so it was Secretary Sondland, Volker, and Ulrich
7 Brechtbuhl joined us, and I went, which was probably not usual, because
8 I wasn't doing that much on this with them, but they invited me along,
9 and I was in town, I had an opportunity. So we went over to DOE to
10 Secretary Perry's office to kind of follow up.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: The date of that, again?

12 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That was June the 18th, according to my
13 calendar. And I just want to --

14 THE CHAIRMAN: And then in that conversation, did the Bidens,
15 Burisma, 2016, the black ledger, DNC server, any of those issues come
16 up?

17 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No. It was a meeting and a number of other
18 people there. And by that time, Bill Taylor was on the ground in Kyiv,
19 and he came in by conference call. I think he references that in
20 his -- in his prepared statement that was officially or not officially
21 released.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: And apart from what you've already testified to,
23 did you have any other conversations, or come across any other documents
24 pertaining to an investigation of the Bidens or Burisma or the 2016
25 election?

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1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: To the best of my knowledge and recollection,
2 only the references in the various press things or references to those
3 discussions, but I'd never seen, that I can recall, any particular
4 documents about those subjects, no.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: And you never discussed specific -- you never
6 discussed with either Kent, or Volker, or Sondland, or Perry, or anyone
7 else the desire by Giuliani to investigate the Bidens?

8 AMBASSADOR REEKER: You know, it was in that oblique -- that's
9 not the right word, it was in the, like, the discussion with Kurt who
10 was trying, as he said, I'm going to try to talk to Rudy to get him
11 refocused on the now, and how we move forward.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: And did the Bidens come up in that conversation?

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: But I don't recall anybody mentioning the
14 Bidens, per se. You know, it was just one of those things it was always
15 out there, because, of course, Giuliani was talking about it and the
16 press was writing about it all the time. And George too, you know,
17 we, in our general discussions, as I have alluded to now many times,
18 he had these four strands of narrative that were coming out, some of
19 these sort of conspiracy theories, and one of them was that.

20 And so, you know, we would attribute certain things, here comes
21 another press story that's still feeding on that, or is Rudy himself
22 talking about that?

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Did you participate in a May 16 meeting at State
24 Department with David Hale and Fiona Hill?

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. That sounds familiar. I think Fiona

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1 came over -- yeah, 3:45 to 4:15 p.m., according to my calendar.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: And who set up that meeting and what was its
3 purpose?

4 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm not sure I can remember. I know I had
5 an email afterwards saying -- where David said, I found that useful,
6 it's good to do just to kind of -- I think we call it a signals check
7 or something. I know she -- I do remember one of the topics was the
8 issue of Gordon, she had had, I think a -- she was frustrated by Gordon's
9 role again, this irregular role. And that certainly came up there.
10 I know at some point. I don't know if it was that early she -- but
11 it may have been them talking about having had a real sort of clash
12 with Gordon, words -- words were exchanged, I think. And I just don't
13 remember the details of that, but it fell into the same category of
14 what I'd raised with Hale over the -- I mean, I guess I had been around
15 about almost 3 months at that point, irregular role.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: And did Fiona Hill ask whether Sondland had been
17 given a charter to be one of the leads on Ukraine?

18 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think that was part of the question. And
19 "P," or, as I know him, David Hale, the Under Secretary, focused that,
20 oh, he seems to have that role. And --

21 THE CHAIRMAN: So during the meeting, Hale affirmed that at the
22 President's direction, Sondland was, in fact, at least one of the three
23 people in charge of the Ukraine?

24 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I seem to recall, I mean, it would be David's
25 style to say something like, you know, it appears that way, or just

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1 like saying in response to my question, sort of, can you explain to
2 me this role, and he just said, irregular, isn't it? I don't remember
3 the specifics of the conversation, but --

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Is there anything else you do recall about the
5 conversation?

6 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, not --

7 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

8 Q Did you discuss the inaugural delegation to Ukraine that was
9 going on May 20th, since this was 4 days before?

10 A We very well could have, because I do remember David asking,
11 Well, who's going? Because there was a time we thought the Vice
12 President would go. I knew the Secretary couldn't go. We wanted
13 high-level participation, that was he, again, showing support, showing
14 engagement getting off to a good start. Gordon was pushing for that
15 too. And I knew the Secretary couldn't go. And there was talk at a
16 certain time that possibly the Vice President would go.

17 Q Do you know why he ultimately didn't go?

18 A I don't.

19 Q Did Dr. Hill express concern about Ambassador Sondland
20 going?

21 A I don't remember that specifically, but I -- to me it was,
22 well, of course Gordon's going to go, that was -- and then I remember --

23 Q So you --

24 A -- asking who is going now? And I think I -- I had heard
25 from the team that they were looking now at Secretary Perry, and that

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1 Kurt would go, and Gordon.

2 Q Why was it, of course, that Sondland would go before the May
3 23rd meeting?

4 A Because Sondland was, you know, he was the Zelensky -- he
5 was determined to be -- he was, I am going to lead on this, and
6 underscore his role in working on Ukraine and bringing the Europeans
7 along, being there with others. He was always eager and ready to go
8 to just about anything anywhere in the continent.

9 Q And this was just a few days after Mr. Giuliani canceled his
10 much-publicized trip over there, right?

11 A I don't recall when that was. I remember the talk about him
12 going and then that he decided not to go, but I don't recall the dates.

13 Q Well, if we look at exhibit 1, it's the New York Times
14 article, it is dated May 9th, but we can just flag that for the record.

15 A There you go.

16 MR. GOLDMAN: Mr. Chairman.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, did you speak with Volker or Kent in
18 advance of their meeting with Zelensky in Toronto?

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, in the sense -- it depends how you
20 mean. Specifically -- I mean, in advance, I mean, I spoke to them on
21 and off, I saw George Kent almost every day when I was in the office.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Did you speak about what was going to take place
23 in Toronto? What their message was going to be, that they were going
24 to speak -- that Ambassador Volker was going to speak to Zelensky, what
25 he was going to communicate to in that meeting?

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1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't recall -- specifically, I knew
2 George was going. Again, there had been questions about who might go.
3 At a time, I thought I might go, it was an opportunity to focus a little
4 more on Ukraine, but it didn't work in the travel schedule, and these
5 guys were handling it so we came to the determination that probably
6 Kurt and George were the right combo for that.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: And did Ambassador Volker tell you what he planned
8 to discuss with Zelensky before he left for the trip?

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't recall that specifically. The date
10 of that, I know --

11 THE CHAIRMAN: The conference was, I think, was July 2nd, 3rd.

12 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That sounds right.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Did he discuss with you after the conference what
14 he communicated to President Zelensky?

15 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I will take another quick look at our
16 WhatsApp, but I don't think there were any other emails that I don't
17 remember specifically. No, there was nothing in that period.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Did you ever discuss with Ambassador Volker or
19 Secretary Kent what took place, what was communicated in Toronto to
20 Zelensky?

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't recall specifically doing that.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: You may have been asked this earlier, if you have,
23 I apologize. Are you familiar with the July 10 meeting at the White
24 House between Yermak, Danylyuk and various U.S. Government officials?

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I've seen reference to it. I couldn't tell

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1 you at this moment if it's more contemporary reference recounting it,
2 in terms of all of the news coverage or some of these transcripts or
3 testimony from this process.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Did you get a readout about what happened at the
5 meeting after it took place?

6 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't recall that I did. And I don't know
7 that I would have. I don't recall if any of our guys were there, or
8 Kurt was there, or Gordon was there or not.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: I believe they both were there. But you got no
10 readout from anybody who was present?

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Sir, I don't recall any particular readout.
12 Again, I -- you know, I get 1,000 emails a day.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: I know this was a pretty significant meeting,
14 though, and it's obviously an important part of your portfolio.

15 There are text messages, Ambassador Volker to Mr. Yermak, before
16 the Trump-Zelensky call, in which Volker communicates to Yermak, Heard
17 from White House as soon as President Z convinces Trump, he will
18 investigate/get to the bottom of what happened in 2016. We will nail
19 down date for visit to Washington. Good luck. Do you know what that
20 was referring to?

21 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm not familiar with the text message.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: No, I'm not asking if you're familiar with the text
23 message. But do you understand what Ambassador Volker was referring
24 to when he said to Yermak, assuming President Z convinces Trump, he
25 will investigate/get to the bottom of what happened in 2016. We will

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1 nail down the visit, date for a visit to Washington. Do you know what
2 he's talking about there?

3 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't know specifically. I mean, based on
4 all of news reporting now, one can assume, but I wasn't aware of the
5 email or the message.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: So throughout this process and up until July 25th,
7 which was the date of the call, and the date of his text, Ambassador
8 Volker never told you that he was trying to get President Zelensky to
9 commit to President Trump that he would investigate and get to the
10 bottom of what happened in 2016?

11 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: He never brought that to your attention?

13 AMBASSADOR REEKER: They were focusing -- I mean, I did not talk
14 to Kurt that often, as you see from the texts. I don't recall anything,
15 you know -- his focus was on trying to move forward on the broad strategy
16 which --

17 THE CHAIRMAN: The question is how he was trying to move forward
18 with the strategy, and --

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: He did not consult with me on his process or
20 his steps in the process.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: And were you aware of efforts by either Ambassador
22 Volker or Ambassador Sondland to get President Zelensky to commit to
23 these two investigations, either of these two investigations the
24 President wanted, that of the Bidens, or that of 2016?

25 AMBASSADOR REEKER: What I was aware was the reference I made that

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1 Gordon had a script to move forward with Zelensky, but the specifics
2 of that, I was not part of, no.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: So throughout all the months that Ambassador
4 Sondland was working on this and Ambassador Volker was working on this,
5 neither one ever brought to your attention that they were trying to
6 get President Zelensky to commit to these two investigations the
7 President wanted either before he would get a meeting, or during that
8 call?

9 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, not the specifics of -- you know, it was
10 convincing, you know, as I read to you the idea was to convince the
11 President as I put if, flag POTUS's concern, yeah, to push for reforms,
12 flag POTUS's concern about corruption and poor investment climate, and
13 ensure that Zelensky comes prepared to demonstrate his commitment to
14 reform and improving U.S.-Ukraine bilateral relationship.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: And you're reading from what now?

16 AMBASSADOR REEKER: This again is the May 23rd readout that Kurt
17 Volker sent specifically to me.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. So you've got this official readout?

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Uh-huh.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: But then you've got this other channel that you're
21 not aware of, in which they are seeking to get a commitment from Zelensky
22 to do these investigations. Is that your testimony that you're aware
23 of the official ask, which you've referenced the memo, but in terms
24 of what Ambassador Volker is talking about in this text message you
25 had no knowledge of that going on?

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1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I did not, no.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: And did you have any knowledge of comments made
3 by Ambassador Sondland, Ambassador Volker, or others indicating that
4 the military aid itself was being withheld, as a way of getting Ukraine
5 to commit to these investigations? Did that come to your attention?

6 AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, I mean -- again, in the conversations
7 within the office of George and others, what is holding this up, why
8 Mulvaney is behind this, is that right? How do we push this --

9 THE CHAIRMAN: In those conversations did someone raise the
10 concern, Hey, is this being done to get Zelensky to do these
11 investigations?

12 AMBASSADOR REEKER: That supposition, that idea is that is that
13 possible I think was potentially one of things out there. But I had
14 no indication that that was it. Nobody knew, and I -- we kept focusing
15 on pursuing this PCC process because that's the way to get to a real
16 decision.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, who raised that concern that aid might be
18 withheld for the reason of pressuring Ukraine to do the investigations.

19 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I couldn't remember if that's something
20 George was talking about. Subsequently, I've seen the references that
21 Bill Taylor made to that.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: You said somebody contemporaneously had raised
23 this concern. Who was that?

24 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I just couldn't tell you. Probably George
25 would be the most likely person, as we looked at the, you know, where

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1 do things stand on a periodic check-in on this, what's holding up?
2 What's happening there? And the focus continued to be we keep pressing
3 forward through this PCC process to try to get this assistance.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: And after the call, after the July 25th call, were
5 you aware that there was an effort to get President Zelensky to publicly
6 commit to doing these two investigations before he could get a White
7 House meeting? Were you aware of that effort?

8 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I do not recall that specifically, no.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: You would recall it if Ambassador Volker, or
10 Ambassador Sondland, or someone had told you about it. I assume you'd
11 recall something like that?

12 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Probably. I don't, so I can't -- I can't
13 tell you if it did in the course of everything else.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Were you aware that Ambassador Volker was -- a
15 different part of chronology, but are you aware that Ambassador Volker
16 was trying to help arrange a meeting between Giuliani and Yermak in
17 Madrid?

18 AMBASSADOR REEKER: You know, I've read that since and I -- so
19 I don't -- I do not believe that was the specific -- I think as far
20 as Kurt and I got was that he was trying to, you know -- he was going
21 to talk to Rudy and try to deal with that impediment, that that would
22 perhaps help with the President's attitude towards Ukraine if he could
23 make Rudy understand.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: But he never told you he was trying to arrange a
25 meeting between Giuliani and Yermak in Madrid?

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1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't remember that specifically, no.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Is it fair to say there were a great many things
3 that Ambassador Volker didn't share with you about his efforts,
4 vis-à-vis Rudy Giuliani?

5 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah, we didn't talk about it much. He -- as
6 I said, he mentioned it. It wasn't a secret, but we weren't in touch
7 regularly. You know, he mentioned that he was going to try to do that.
8 And as this went on, I had my own, wondering what things could be. It
9 was all a little strange. We still didn't have a meeting. We still
10 didn't have the assistance, until we did.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Let me ask you, at the end of August, end of August,
12 early September, I think Senator Ron Johnson gave an interview in which
13 he said something to the effect that Sondland had indicated there was
14 a quid pro quo involving a commitment by Ukraine to investigate matters
15 related to 2016 and the frozen aid. Were you aware of that at the time
16 that article came out about that conversation?

17 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I remember reading that. I don't know if you
18 know exactly the date that was.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: I believe that was August -- interview with
20 Senator Johnson. August 30th, I believe. Did someone bring that
21 article to your attention?

22 AMBASSADOR REEKER: I -- I just -- I don't recall.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Would it have concerned you if Ambassador Sondland
24 had told a U.S. Senator that the aid was being withheld in order to
25 get Ukraine to commit to investigating matters relating to 2016?

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1 AMBASSADOR REEKER: Would it have concerned me? Yes.

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1 [7:03 p.m.]

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Goldman.

3 BY MR. GOLDMAN:

4 Q I just have one more topic. The NODIS cable that Ambassador
5 Taylor sent to Secretary Pompeo on August 29th --

6 A Uh-huh.

7 Q NODIS cables of that -- first-person NODIS cables like that
8 are pretty unusual within the Department. Is that right?

9 A I mean, they are not the most common, but they're
10 not -- they're not totally unique. I mean, you know.

11 Q Okay. Well, how many times a year do you think that one of
12 your 50 --

13 A Ambassadors?

14 Q -- ambassadors, right -- sent notice cables, first-person
15 like that to the Secretary?

16 A It would be rare. So, I mean, I'm not trying to be glib.

17 Q Right.

18 A I'm just sort of saying it's not unprecedented, but it's
19 certainly unique, by definition.

20 Q Do you know what the Secretary did with the cable at the time?

21 A No, I don't.

22 Q And --

23 A I, you know, his -- his staff give him stuff to read, so I
24 assumed, as I mentioned, I saw it later.

25 Q So just to be clear, something that's rare like this within

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1 your portfolio that goes directly to the Secretary, was not brought
2 to your attention at the time?

3 A I -- August 29th was prior to the Warsaw -- anticipating
4 Warsaw visit. It was kind of a scene setter for that, and laid out,
5 as I think I mentioned, the significance of Ukraine as a security
6 partner.

7 Q No, I'm just asking whether you think it's unusual if you
8 were not notified of a cable like that within one of your 50 countries?

9 A You know, whether it came down and was shared, I'm not sure
10 if George saw it or read it.

11 Q I'm just asking about you.

12 A Yeah, I would have -- I would have liked to see it. I would
13 have thought that, I mean, Bill might have, sort of, flagged, I'm
14 sending this. But I -- I did not have a communication from Bill at
15 that point. And he was dealing primarily with -- with George inside
16 the Bureau.

17 But now, I think I'm probably equating what -- what I have read
18 of Bill's testimony that he had met during Ambassador Bolton's visit
19 to Kyiv on that subject.

20 Q But you affirmatively did not know about this cable when it
21 came in?

22 A Not -- not that I recall.

23 Q Okay. You just testified that you travel a fair bit with
24 Secretary Pompeo when he goes to Europe. Is that right?

25 A When he does European trips, I usually accompany him. Not

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1 always --

2 Q Right.

3 A -- but I usually accompany him.

4 Q So that's a fair bit of time that you end up spending with
5 him over the past 6, 8 months, right?

6 A Not that much, I mean, we can go back through it if you look
7 at it. There have been several -- several trips, but they are short.
8 And I don't have that much actual time with him, but, you know --

9 Q Did you discuss the Ukraine-related issues with him on any
10 of those trips?

11 A No. The only time, in Rome, after all of this happened, we
12 discussed -- at one juncture, I was included in a pre-brief, I think,
13 before an -- either remarks or an interview or something, which I'm
14 not always, and I -- because I mentioned that there was a press report
15 out that said that -- I said to the spokespeople and the Secretary:
16 You may be asked. There's a press report that says you asked Volker
17 to submit his resignation.

18 And he said: I didn't ask Volker. Volker called me and told me
19 he had to submit his resignation. And he was very disturbed and
20 disappointed about that because, as he said, and I agreed, Kurt was
21 a, you know, he was the guy. He was really crucial to our moving forward
22 on this path, and now we will have to readjust that. So --

23 Q Did you get the sense that Secretary Pompeo knew about this
24 irregular channel with Rudy Giuliani, Ambassador Sondland, and
25 Ambassador Volker, and pushing these investigations?

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1 A He certainly knew about Sondland and Volker leading the
2 engagement, but --

3 Q And what about the investigations that Giuliani wanted?

4 A -- no indication.

5 Q He never said -- spoke to you about it at all?

6 A No, sir.

7 Q Was this trip to Rome when the call record came out and the
8 whistleblower complaint came out, or shortly thereafter?

9 A That occurred, I believe, the week before while we were in
10 New York for the UNGA --

11 Q Right.

12 A -- and the President was there also. And that is, of course,
13 when the President had the Zelensky meeting in New York, and Kurt had
14 emailed -- not emailed, but I think WhatsApp'd me, asking if I could
15 help get him manifested for that meeting.

16 And I just said: Well, I passed that to the Secretary's executive
17 secretary to --

18 Q And when you were on that Rome trip, did you discuss this
19 Ukraine matter at all?

20 A We really didn't. The mention I just gave about the -- the
21 question that he might get. Of course, there was a lot of press
22 questions at each of his availabilities. And, you know, to be clear,
23 when we are on these trips, I'm not hanging with the Secretary by any
24 means.

25 Q Are you aware of whether or not the Attorney General was

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1 either in Italy around the time that you were there, or had been shortly
2 before?

3 A That I learned from press, and I was being asked that by
4 Italians. I know a lot of Italians -- by Italian journalists, and I
5 really don't know anything about that. But I have read about that
6 since, you know. And that question came up at the Secretary's --

7 Q But you have no personal knowledge of --

8 A No.

9 Q -- the Attorney General's trips to Italy at all?

10 A No.

11 Q Do you know -- have you come across, since you took over this
12 role, that the two individuals, Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman?

13 A I never came across them personally. I know their names and
14 their connections to Giuliani, and, of course, their recent arrests,
15 but that's been in the news.

16 Q Did you, prior to their arrests, had you -- were you familiar
17 with their association with Giuliani?

18 A Yeah, there were press reports, some of those ones that
19 circulated in the vast numbers of --

20 Q How about other than press reports? Did you come across them
21 in any of your work?

22 A I don't believe so, no. I've never met them, no.

23 Q And then finally, earlier today when you were discussing the
24 sort of irregular nature of the arrangement with Ambassador Sondland
25 and Ambassador Volker in response to some questioning from the

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1 minority, you said at one point, you said: I've often wondered -- and
2 then you kind of trailed off and then went to a different question.

3 And I'm just wondering if you remember what you often wondered
4 about this irregular arrangement?

5 A It was -- it was irregular and you started reading all of
6 these supposed things, and I've -- I've wondered what was really going
7 on. How does this all connect?

8 You know, I've seen the outrageous smears and attacks against
9 Ambassador Yovanovitch, in particular, George, our embassy, the
10 Foreign Service, in general. We have been called Obama holdovers and
11 deep State whatever, which, of course, is personally offensive having
12 done this for 27 years through one administration to another,
13 regardless of party, and being nonpolitical and focused on, you know,
14 the foreign policy of the United States, and trying to engage, and
15 support our interests, regardless of who the President is.

16 So that is certainly a personal frustration. Talking to -- you
17 know, I feel responsibility for this large number of people,
18 particularly now that I'm old, long in the tooth, and the younger
19 generations of Foreign Service officers who, with this process and this
20 investigation, I think are really concerned.

21 The number of people that are at our embassy certainly in Kyiv,
22 but in other places, and in my Bureau who want to know if they need
23 to go hire lawyers.

24 That's difficult, and trying to know, you know, what is all going
25 on, what might be. You know, you read a lot of different things in

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1 the press. Look, I inherited what I got. I agreed to do this. This
2 was not something I asked for. I left a job I liked very much, I found
3 worthwhile and interesting at the European command.

4 I was within a 3-hour commute of my wife, and now I'm six time
5 zones away. I travel 50 percent of the time trying to maintain a
6 relationship between the United States and our European partners and
7 allies, which is strained, and help them to look at things in a more
8 holistic long-term way.

9 I try to bring in historical context. We are at the 75th
10 anniversary of the end of the Second World War, and what we have done
11 together in the three-quarters of a century to bring the transatlantic
12 space that is, you know, stable, peaceful, and has given us a level
13 of prosperity, despite challenges over the years that no one, like my
14 grandfather, who fought in World War II, would have imagined possible.

15 So, you know, that's what I do every day. I go in there and I
16 deal with all of these things. I get on the United plane in seat 42-G,
17 pray that I can get an upgrade with my points so that I can, you know,
18 fly to Georgia and engage with a brand-new prime minister there and
19 establish a relationship.

20 You know, I have to manage and try to do this to the best of my
21 ability. That's what I do every day. Ukraine is one piece of that.

22 I just remind you all that in the course of this period, you know,
23 we have also got Russia, and what they are doing. I've got the Turkey
24 problem set. Do you have any ideas how much time we spend on Turkey,
25 you know?

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1 Acting Assistant Secretary for Europe, I know more about Syria
2 than I would have imagined if I was in the Near East Bureau. You know,
3 trying to follow that, not micromanage. I cannot to take on
4 everything. So I pass on these things.

5 I have seven great deputies. I inherited a great team and
6 continuity, and I try to provide leadership and engagement to the 50
7 ambassadors of those countries here in Washington, to our 50
8 ambassadors and their team around the AOR; to go to the appropriate
9 think tanks, conferences, where these things are discussed to try to
10 tell the story of the United States.

11 And that's -- I'm sorry to go on, but that's just kind of what
12 I do.

13 Q Last question. I just want to be sure that we didn't miss
14 any documents that might be particularly relevant to these
15 investigations.

16 The Biden-Burisma, I don't know whether you or your counsel had
17 a chance to review.

18 A Did we find the one email? Yes, this was the one that I
19 think -- I think I covered this. This is going back to the Masha, trying
20 to put out a statement March 25th, so exactly a week after I started
21 where we got the word from P, the Under Secretary's office. At 12:04
22 "P says no statement."

23 Q Right.

24 A That was just somebody that asked for that and we couldn't
25 find it. I didn't know where it was.

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1 Q And, once again, you never determined whether -- who that
2 directive came from, or who that decision came from? It was relayed
3 to you by P, but you never --

4 A It was relayed. It was P staff. "P says," so I was assuming
5 that was him, himself, because his staffer was, again, not sending it
6 to me. He was sending it to the press folks who were pursuing this
7 clearance process.

8 Q Understood. All right.

9 A And I said at the top of this -- I think we talked about
10 it -- to Michael, my then acting deputy: Did you reach Masha to let
11 her know that there will not be a statement, essentially?

12 Q Okay. I have nothing else.

13 A And in terms of documents, I just, I'm not -- you know,
14 documents have not been provided. I have no authority to do that. So
15 I've --

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, I want to thank you for your testimony
17 today, and we are adjourned.

18 [Whereupon, at 7:13 p.m., the deposition was concluded.]

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