

Center for American Progress



Newsletters: Special Coverage of Impeachment Hearings

By Elena Berger

From Center for American Progress

SUBJECT LINE: InProgress: The Impeachment Hearings

Yesterday, the U.S. House Intelligence Committee held the first in a series of public hearings in the impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump. CAP is providing special reports to subscribers of InProgress to help our readers digest each day's events. Read the first issue below, and [sign up for InProgress to continue receiving them](#).

SUBSCRIBE

Problems viewing this email? [View it in your web browser.](#)



What We Learned

Acting Ambassador to Ukraine William Taylor and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent gave testimony to the House Intelligence Committee yesterday, on the first day of public hearings in the impeachment inquiry of President Trump. The two career diplomats stressed the importance of a strong U.S. partnership with Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression and the harm caused by undermining that partnership—not just harm to Ukraine but also to the United States and to the rule of law the world over.

Here are three important takeaways from the hearing:

1. **President Trump was directly involved in trying to quarterback the investigations into Ukraine.**

AMB. TAYLOR: "[I]n the presence of my staff at a restaurant, Ambassador Sondland called President Trump and told him of his meetings in Kyiv. The member of my staff could hear President Trump on the phone, asking Ambassador Sondland about 'the investigations.' Ambassador Sondland told President Trump the Ukrainians were ready to move forward. Following the call with President Trump, the member of my staff asked Ambassador Sondland what President Trump thought about Ukraine. Ambassador Sondland responded that President Trump cares more about the investigations of Biden, which Giuliani was pressing for." [[Watch the clip](#)]

2. **Contrary to what Mick Mulvaney [stated](#) in the White House briefing room, it is virtually unheard of for the president's political interests to have an effect on foreign aid.**

COUNSEL DANIEL GOLDMAN: "[H]ave you ever seen another example of foreign aid conditioned on the personal or political interests of the president of the United States?"
AMB. BILL TAYLOR: "No, Mr. Goldman, I have not." [[Watch the clip](#)]

3. **Interfering in aid to Ukraine may have put Ukrainian lives at risk and strengthened Russia's hand in the region.**

CHAIRMAN SCHIFF: "During your testimony, Ambassador Taylor, you also said that more Ukrainians would undoubtedly die without U.S. assistance. Why is that?"

AMB. TAYLOR: "Mr. Chairman, the security assistance that we provide takes many forms.... These weapons and this assistance allows the Ukrainian military to deter further incursions by the Russians against Ukrainian territory. If that further incursion, further aggression, were to take place, more Ukrainians would die. So it is a deterrent effect that these weapons provide."

CHAIRMAN SCHIFF: "I take it if the provision of U.S. military assistance would save Ukrainian lives, that any delay in that assistance may also cost Ukrainian lives. Is that true?"

AMB. TAYLOR: "Mr. Chairman, of course, it is hard to draw any direct lines between any particular element of security assistance and any particular death on the battlefield. But it is certainly true that that assistance had enabled Ukrainian armed forces to be

effective and deter and to be able to take countermeasures to the attacks that the Russians had." [[Watch the clip](#)]

[Read CAP's full coverage of the November 13 hearings »](#)

How To Watch

CAP's experts will be watching every moment of these historic hearings to bring you insights and background explainers. Here's how you can follow along:

1. On hearing days, [stay tuned to our live online coverage](#) for up-to-the-minute commentary and links to important resources.
2. [Follow @amprog on Twitter](#), where our social media team is posting the most noteworthy video clips and expert comments.
3. [Subscribe to InProgress](#) for morning-after recaps and announcements.

Be sure to forward this email to anyone who would find it useful!

Next up...

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Marie Yovanovitch, former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine

Testimony before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Estimated start time: **9:00 a.m.** | [Watch live »](#)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19

Jennifer Williams, aide to Vice President Mike Pence

Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, director for European Affairs for the U.S. National Security Council

Tim Morrison, former Russia official on the U.S. National Security Council

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20

Gordon Sondland, U.S. ambassador to the European Union

Laura Cooper, deputy assistant secretary of defense for Russia, Ukraine, Eurasia

David Hale, under secretary of state for political affairs

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Fiona Hill, former senior director for European and Russian affairs for the U.S. National Security Council

FOLLOW US ON:



[Support CAP](#) | [Manage Email Preferences](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

Center for American Progress | 1333 H Street NW, 10th Floor | Washington, D.C. 20005

SUBJECT LINE: InProgress: Ambassador Yovanovitch Speaks

Problems viewing this email? [View it in your web browser.](#)



What We Learned

On Day Two of the public hearings in the impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump, Marie Yovanovitch, former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, testified before the House Intelligence Committee. As the Center for American Progress' Sam Berger [noted](#), her testimony succeeded in "laying bare Trump's culture of corruption. Those who are honest or call out corruption are cast aside. Those who participate in corruption or look the other way are promoted." In events that Ambassador Yovanovitch [said](#) left her "shocked and devastated," President Trump called her reputation into question on a call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, used threatening language against her, and finally recalled her from Ukraine without explanation.

This alone is a terrible breach of trust with the nation's foreign service members, whose work on behalf of U.S. national security is often, as Ambassador Yovanovitch reminded the committee in her [opening statement](#), a matter of life and death. But even further, getting rid of her—a dedicated public servant who was trying to fight corruption in Ukraine—was part of the groundwork that enabled President Trump to engage in his own corruption, withholding military

support and meetings in order to get Ukraine to dig up dirt on the Bidens. ([Read all about that](#) in CAP's previous coverage of Wednesday's hearings.)

[Read CAP's full coverage of the November 15 hearing »](#)

What we're reading

VOX

[Trump attacked Marie Yovanovitch on Twitter during her testimony. She responded in real time.](#)

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

[Federal Prosecutors Probe Giuliani's Links to Ukrainian Energy Projects](#)

THE MOSCOW PROJECT

[The Stone Indictment Shows the Trump Campaign Directed Collusion](#)

Next up...

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19

Morning testimony before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

Jennifer Williams, aide to Vice President Mike Pence

Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, director for European Affairs for the U.S. National Security Council

Afternoon testimony before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

Kurt Volker, former U.S. special representative for Ukraine

Tim Morrison, former Russia and Europe official on the U.S. National Security Council

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20

Gordon Sondland, U.S. ambassador to the European Union

Laura Cooper, deputy assistant secretary of defense for Russian, Ukrainian, and Eurasian Affairs

David Hale, under secretary of state for political affairs

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Fiona Hill, former senior director for European and Russian affairs for the U.S. National Security Council

Subscribe today

Did someone forward this to you? [Sign up for InProgress here](#) to continue receiving it.

FOLLOW US ON:



[Support CAP](#) | [Manage Email Preferences](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

Center for American Progress | 1333 H Street NW, 10th Floor | Washington, D.C. 20005

SUBJECT LINE: InProgress: The Facts Accrue

Problems viewing this email? [View it in your web browser.](#)



What We Learned

The third day of public hearings in the impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump began with two witnesses in the morning—National Security Council (NSC) official Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman and Vice President Mike Pence's aide Jennifer Williams—both of whom were listening in on the July 25 call between President Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and were in a position to provide a firsthand account. Both witnesses confirmed what others have alleged: President Trump specifically demanded that President Zelensky investigate Burisma Holdings and the Bidens; there is no factual basis for the allegations against the Bidens; and Trump's request was additionally [inappropriate](#) because it was in the president's personal interests rather than the interests of U.S. national security.

In the afternoon, the U.S. House Intelligence Committee heard from two witnesses—former special envoy to Ukraine Kurt Volker and former NSC official Tim Morrison—whose testimonies were requested by the Republican committee members. Far from defending President Trump, Volker [testified](#) that the White House's allegations about the Bidens were false and that the call for an investigation was unacceptable. Volker's only excuse for not intervening is that he didn't

understand at the time what the president was asking. Morrison [testified](#) that he had been disappointed by the July 25 call because President Trump did not state his support for President Zelensky's reform agenda; his testimony contradicts the argument from Trump's supporters that the president was keen to take on corruption.

Notably, President Trump's defenders are not saying that he didn't do the things of which he is accused. As their arguments in support of the president have proven thin, they have instead resorted to attacking the witnesses, the process, the whistleblower, and the idea of [impeachment](#) itself.

[Read CAP's full coverage of the November 19 hearing »](#)

What we're reading

MOTHER JONES

[Impeachment Day 3: Republicans Continue Their Attack on Reason and Reality](#)

VOX

[Kurt Volker, impeachment witness requested by Republicans, debunks many of their arguments](#)

THE MOSCOW PROJECT

[Trump ran the extortion campaign](#)

Next up...

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20

9:00 a.m. testimony before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

Gordon Sondland, U.S. ambassador to the European Union

2:30 p.m. testimony before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

Laura Cooper, deputy assistant secretary of defense for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia

David Hale, under secretary of state for political affairs

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21

9:00 a.m. testimony before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

Fiona Hill, former senior director for European and Russian affairs for the U.S. National Security Council

David Holmes, counselor for political affairs at the U.S. embassy in Ukraine

Subscribe today

Did someone forward this to you? [Sign up for InProgress here](#) to continue receiving it.

FOLLOW US ON:



[Support CAP](#) | [Manage Email Preferences](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

Center for American Progress | 1333 H Street NW, 10th Floor | Washington, D.C. 20005

SUBJECT LINE: InProgress: "Everyone Was in the Loop"

Problems viewing this email? [View it in your web browser.](#)



What We Learned

On Wednesday, the public hearings in the impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump continued with a long day of testimony beginning with Gordon Sondland, U.S. ambassador to the European Union and a Trump ally, million-dollar donor, and political appointee. Ambassador Sondland's [testimony](#) made clear that there was a quid pro quo communicated to Ukraine: Military aid as well as a meeting with President Trump were conditioned upon an announcement from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky of an investigation into Burisma Holdings and the 2016 U.S. election. While President Trump at times used coded language, much like a mob boss, Ambassador Sondland conveyed that they all understood his demand as a quid pro quo, and that they were working at the express direction of the president.

One more important note on Ambassador Sondland's time in front of the committee: He told many senior officials about the request to Ukraine, including Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Secretary of Energy Rick Perry, and acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney. "Everyone was in the loop. It was no secret," he [said](#) in his opening

statement. As CAP's Neera Tanden [noted](#), this testimony "underscores that Trump's web of corruption extended across the U.S. government."

Delayed by the extended time with Ambassador Sondland, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Laura Cooper and Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale testified in the evening. Cooper had a new piece of information to [offer](#) the committee: The Ukrainians were asking about the hold-up of assistance as far back as July 25, the day of the call in which President Trump asked them to open an investigation. This undercuts one of the House Republicans' main arguments: that the Ukrainians didn't know about the hold-up and therefore couldn't have interpreted the July 25 request as a quid pro quo. Though the Minority committee members continued to hit on the notion that withholding foreign aid is routine, Hale—while he testified that he knows of no nefarious reasons for the hold—[conceded](#) that a hold on foreign aid for the purposes of extracting a political investigation is not routine, and is not appropriate.

And while House Republicans argued that the aid was eventually released, Chairman Adam Schiff (D-CA) [made the reason plain](#): The White House released the aid because they got caught.

[Read CAP's full coverage of the November 20 hearing »](#)

What we're reading

POLITICO

[What did Pompeo know and when did he know it?](#)

THE WASHINGTON POST

[Sondland's testimony advances likely impeachment charge of obstruction](#)

SLATE

[What Twitter Has to Say About the Wednesday Impeachment Hearing](#)

Next up...

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21

9:00 a.m. testimony before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

Fiona Hill, former senior director for European and Russian affairs for the U.S. National Security Council

David Holmes, counselor for political affairs at the U.S. embassy in Ukraine

Subscribe today

Did someone forward this to you? [Sign up for InProgress here](#) to continue receiving it.

FOLLOW US ON:



[Support CAP](#) | [Manage Email Preferences](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

Center for American Progress | 1333 H Street NW, 10th Floor | Washington, D.C. 20005

SUBJECT LINE: InProgress: "The Only Logical Conclusion"

Problems viewing this email? [View it in your web browser.](#)



What We Learned

On Thursday, two more witnesses testified in front of the U.S. House Intelligence Committee in this week's final public impeachment hearings. Fiona Hill, former top Russia expert on the National Security Council, [confirmed](#) that U.S. Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland had openly spoken about a quid pro quo between the United States and Ukraine in which a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky would be contingent upon an announcement of investigations into Burisma Holdings and the 2016 U.S. presidential election. David Holmes, a U.S. State Department official stationed at the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, also [understood](#) there to be a quid pro quo. He testified that it was **"the only logical conclusion you could reach."**

The two issues that President Donald Trump wanted President Zelensky to investigate—purported wrongdoing by the Bidens and Ukrainian interference in the 2016 U.S. election—seem to be evergreen talking points of the House Republican committee members despite being widely debunked. Holmes and Hill both reiterated in their testimony that the national security community has concluded that Russia was responsible for the election interference. What's more, as Hill [reminded](#) the committee, the Ukraine conspiracy theory is a narrative advanced by Russia, and anyone still trotting it out is playing right into the Russian government's interests.

And what of the interests of the United States? Hill [said](#) that when she read the transcript of the July 25 call, she was "very shocked and very saddened"—not only because of what it said, but also because Trump didn't reference any of the topics staff had prepared Trump to discuss. There's another U.S. interest at stake as well: our electoral process. "Russia's security services and their proxies have geared up to repeat their interference in the 2020 election," Hill [said](#) in her opening statement. **"We are running out of time to stop them."**

[Read CAP's full coverage of the November 21 hearing »](#)

What we're reading

THE NEW YORK TIMES

[Republicans Seek to Muddy Impeachment Evidence as Their Defense of Trump](#)

THE NEW YORKER

[Ambassador Sondland's Revenge](#)

THE MOSCOW PROJECT

[Debunking Trump's Defenses: It Was Russia, not Ukraine, That Interfered in the 2016 Election](#)

Next up...

There are currently no additional impeachment hearings scheduled by the House Intelligence Committee. Stay tuned for further details. As CAP's Max Bergmann posted in Thursday's live chat, "The House has indicated that they would wrap up by the end of the year. Then it is up to the Senate to determine the length of the trial. The Clinton impeachment hearing lasted about six weeks. Some Republicans in the Senate have indicated that this trial could also last six weeks."

Here are some great ways to follow along:

- Catch up on all the hearing coverage and find more resources on [CAP's page dedicated to Trump's constitutional crisis](#).
- Follow [@amprog](#) and its partner organization [@CAPAction](#) on Twitter.

- Check out CAP Action's podcast, "[The Tent](#)," for weekly political news hosted by Daniella Gibbs Léger and Ed Chung.

Subscribe today

Did someone forward this to you? [Sign up for InProgress here](#) to continue receiving it.

FOLLOW US ON:



[Support CAP](#) | [Manage Email Preferences](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

Center for American Progress | 1333 H Street NW, 10th Floor | Washington, D.C. 20005