

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

UNITED STATES SENATE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

- - - - - x

INTERVIEW OF: :

VICTORIA NULAND :

:

- - - - - x

Room SD-342 and via Webex  
Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C.  
Thursday, September 3, 2020  
9:31 a.m.

INTERVIEW OF VICTORIA NULAND

1 APPEARANCES

2

3 For the Witness:

4 BLAKE ROBERTS, ESQUIRE

5 SHEILA MENZ, ESQUIRE

6 ANYA OLSEN, ESQUIRE

7 Wilmer Hale

8 1875 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

9 Washington, D.C. 20006

10

11 For Senator Johnson:

12 JOSEPH C. FOLIO, III, Chief Counsel, HSGAC

13 SCOTT WITTMANN, Senior Professional Staff Member, HSGAC

14 BRIAN DOWNEY, Senior Investigator, HSGAC

15 LYDIA WESTLAKE, Senior Advisor, HSGAC

16 SARAH SMERLING, Professional Staff Member, HSGAC

17 WILLIAM SACRIPANTI, Research Assistant, HSGAC

18

19 For Senator Grassley:

20 JOSHUA FLYNN-BROWN, Deputy Chief Investigative Counsel,

21 Finance Committee

22

23

24

25

1 APPEARANCES: (Continued)

2

3 For Senator Peters:

4 ZACHARY SCHRAM, Minority Chief Counsel, HSGAC

5 ROY AWABDEH, Minority Senior Counsel, HSGAC

6 SOUMYALATHA DAYANANDA, Minority Senior Investigative

7 Counsel, HSGAC

8 VALERIE SHEN, Investigative Counsel, HSGAC

9

10 For Senator Wyden:

11 DAVID BERICK, Minority Chief Investigator, Finance

12 Committee

13 DAN GOSHORN, Minority Senior Counsel, Finance Committee

14 JOSH HEATH, Minority Investigator, Finance Committee

15 MICHAEL OSBORN-GROSSO, Minority Investigator, Finance

16

17 For the Department of State:

18 WILLIAM K. KILLION

19 Bureau of Legislative Affairs

20

21 KENNETH A. THOMAS

22 Office of the Legal Advisor

23

24

25

1	MAJORITY EXHIBITS	MARKED
2	1) Pyatt remarks at Odesa Financial Forum, 9/24/15	80
3	2) New York Times article, 11/10/19	82
4	3) Email, Bedingfield to Pyatt, et all, 12/6/15	90
5	4) Biden remarks to Ukrainian Rada, 12/9/15	93
6	5) Email, Tramontano to McDonough, 3/28/16	99
7	6) Email, Kent to Brink and Andrews, 9/6/16	102
8	7) Email, Redacted to Nuland, Brink, et all., 12/8/15	122
9		
10	MINORITY EXHIBITS	MARKED
11	A) Letter, various Senators to Poroshenko, 2/12/16	64
12	B) The Hill news article, 10/3/19	65
13	C) Letter, Johnson to Jordan and Nunes, 11/18/19	74
14	D) Letter, Johnson and Grassley to Pompeo, 4/30/20	75
15	E) Statement on the Ukranian-American Strategic	78
16	Partnership, 5/22-23/20	
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. FOLIO: Good morning, everyone. This is a  
3 transcribed interview of Ambassador Victoria Nuland  
4 conducted by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and  
5 Governmental Affairs and the Senate Committee on Finance.

6 This interview was requested by Chairman Ron Johnson  
7 and Chairman Charles Grassley as part of the committees'  
8 investigation of whether there were any actual or apparent  
9 conflicts of interest or any wrongdoing with regard to the  
10 Obama administration Ukraine policy or Burisma Holdings as  
11 well as related matters.

12 On December 16th, Chairmen Grassley Johnson requested  
13 Ambassador Nuland's appearance for a voluntary transcribed  
14 interview and certain categories of documents.

15 In response, Ambassador Nuland notified the committees  
16 that she was not in possession of any responsive records  
17 that we requested.

18 Ambassador Nuland, can you please state your full name  
19 for the record.

20 MS. NULAND: Victoria Nuland.

21 MR. ROBERTS: Joe, this is Blake Roberts representing  
22 Ambassador Nuland.

23 Before we get under way, I just wanted to make a record  
24 that on August 31st, shortly after we had been retained,  
25 when we learned that you all had outstanding document

1 requests to the State Department and that Ambassador Nuland  
2 had not been afforded an opportunity to review all of the  
3 relevant materials from her service, we suggested delaying  
4 her voluntary transcribed interview until your committees  
5 had collected all the documents you had requested from the  
6 State Department in order to afford you the opportunity to  
7 question her about all the documents that you considered  
8 relevant to your inquiry and to give her the opportunity to  
9 offer testimony informed by a full review of the relevant  
10 materials.

11       You have declined that suggestion and informed us that  
12 you believed you had enough documents to proceed and wanted  
13 to move forward, and that's why we're here today cooperating  
14 with the inquiry.

15       MR. FOLIO: Thanks, Blake. Yes, that's correct because  
16 I think we had exchanged emails and spoken on the phone  
17 about--the chairmen's requests originated in November 2019.  
18 We received productions that at this point we believe put us  
19 in a position where we'd like to speak with Ms. Nuland about  
20 what we've learned so far but appreciate your concern.

21       No productions are ever perfect. So you never know  
22 what's coming down the pike and especially when it's going  
23 to come down the pike, especially from agencies. So we have  
24 to make that decision, and that's where we are.

25       I think we're all operating in good faith here. So I

1 think if anything were to change later in further testimony,  
2 obviously we would to provide folks with the opportunity to  
3 address that.

4 But, again, our assessment sitting here today, this  
5 would be the appropriate time for us to move forward  
6 speaking with Ambassador Nuland.

7 MR. ROBERTS: Thank you, Joe.

8 Joe, can you pause just for a second? We're trying to  
9 get some better sound quality.

10 MR. FOLIO: Sure thing. Let's go off the record.

11 [Discussion off the record.]

12 MR. FOLIO: All right. Back on the record, please.  
13 Thank you.

14 One clarification. I think I misstated the date we've-  
15 -Chairman Grassley and Chairman Johnson first contacted  
16 Ambassador Nuland. It was December 18th, 2019.

17 My name is Joseph Folio. I'm the Chief Counsel for the  
18 Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. I'm  
19 going to introduce the rest of Chairman Johnson's staff and  
20 then take the opportunity to ask the other staff to  
21 introduce themselves.

22 I am joined today by Scott Wittman, Brian Downey, Will  
23 Sacripanti, and Sarah Smerling, all of Chairman Johnson's  
24 staff.

25 And I'll ask Chairman Grassley's staff to introduce

1 themselves.

2 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Good morning, Ms. Nuland. My name is  
3 Josh Flynn-Brown. I'm deputy chief investigative counsel  
4 for Chairman Grassley. Thank you for your time today.

5 MS. NULAND: Thank you.

6 MR. FOLIO: I'll ask Ranking Member Peter's staff to  
7 introduce themselves.

8 MR. SCHRAM: Ambassador Nuland, my name is Zack Schram.  
9 I'm chief counsel for Ranking Member Peters.

10 Thank you for your participation in today's interview.  
11 The Minority's participation today is not an endorsement of  
12 the investigation. As the Ranking Members have said  
13 publicly, they believe this investigation advances a rush-  
14 in-disinformation campaign and is intended to interfere in  
15 our 2020 presidential election.

16 We are now 61 days away from that election. On August  
17 7th, the director of the National Counterintelligence and  
18 Security Center, William Evanina, issued an unclassified  
19 assessment of foreign election threats stating, quote,  
20 "Russia is using a range of measures to primarily denigrate  
21 former Vice President Biden. For example, pro-Russia  
22 Ukrainian Parliamentarian Andrii Derkach is spreading claims  
23 about corruption, including through publicizing leaked phone  
24 calls to undermine former Vice President Biden's candidacy  
25 and the Democratic Party," end quote.



1           The chairman's investigation has provided the  
2 committees as a platform to amplify the Russian attack on  
3 our election described by Mr. Evanina. Chairman Johnson has  
4 repeatedly admitted that this investigation is targeted at  
5 influencing voters and hurting Vice President Biden's  
6 presidential candidacy.

7           In March, hours after Joe Biden became the top  
8 Democratic contender, Chairman Johnson stated, quote, And if  
9 I were a Democrat primary voter, I'd want these questions  
10 satisfactorily answered before I cast my final vote.

11          Last month in describing the investigation, Chairman  
12 Johnson said, quote, I would think it would certainly help  
13 Donald Trump win reelection and certainly be pretty good, I  
14 would say, evidence about not voting for Vice President  
15 Biden.

16          I would also note we are conducting this interview  
17 remotely because we are in the midst of a pandemic that has  
18 created an extraordinary public health crisis in the United  
19 States. Since this investigation started, more than 186,000  
20 Americans have died of COVID. The Homeland Security and  
21 Governmental Affairs Committee has jurisdiction over  
22 pandemic preparedness and response, and yet this committee  
23 has now spent more than twice as much time on the record in  
24 this investigation than it has devoted to all of its COVID  
25 hearings combined.

1           As Chairman Johnson told a radio host on August 12th,  
2 quote, Whether I am in D.C. or not, I'm working on this  
3 almost nonstop, okay? So is my staff.

4           Ranking Member Peters believes that this investigation  
5 is a misuse of committee resources that does not advance the  
6 health, safety, or economic security of Americans,  
7 consistent with our committee's mission. We have a right  
8 and responsibility to be here, and we will do our best to  
9 ensure that you are treated fairly, that the record is  
10 accurate and complete, and that the national security  
11 interest of the United States is protected.

12          I am joined by my colleagues, Valerie Shen, Roy  
13 Awabdeh, and Soumya Dayananda.

14          MR. FOLIO: And for the record, we've responded to this  
15 opening statement by the Minority in each of the interviews.  
16 There are also numerous public responses by the committee  
17 and Chairman Johnson.

18          But to be clear, the committee remains very focused on  
19 COVID 19, has held several hearings, which is by the  
20 Minority script has changed to time on the record with  
21 witnesses. But as Chairman Johnson--I think we have dozens  
22 of staff members, two of--three of whom, if you count me,  
23 are dedicated to the investigation, and we also do work on  
24 the pandemic issues.

25          And I can't speak for Ranking Member Peters, but the

1 committee and the staff spend an extraordinary amount of  
2 time working on pandemic issues in a public hearing.

3 I'll also note that with regard to the investigation,  
4 the investigation began November 2019. As everyone  
5 understands and appreciates getting records of the agencies  
6 [inaudible-audio difficulties]. With regard to the  
7 Minority's allegations that this is somehow linked to any  
8 disinformation campaign, that allegation is simply  
9 untethered from any facts.

10 This investigation has been focused virtually on  
11 getting information from U.S. government agencies, U.S.  
12 government officials, former officials like Ambassador  
13 Nuland, and it is simply undisputed as a matter of fact that  
14 Hunter Biden took a well-paid position on the board of  
15 Burisma at the time his father was managing U.S. policy, and  
16 as we will discuss with Ambassador Nuland, that U.S.  
17 government officials had to deal with that issue as they  
18 pursued their anticorruption agenda.

19 And Senate Resolution 70(e)(1)(A) authorizes this  
20 committee to study and investigate, among other things, how  
21 that took place.

22 Ranking Member Wyden's staff, can you please introduce  
23 yourself?

24 MR. GOSHORN: Ambassador Nuland, my name is Dan Goshorn  
25 with Senator Wyden's staff on the Senate Finance Committee.

1           We'd like to note for the record that we associate  
2 ourselves with Ranking Member Peters' staff's comments about  
3 this investigation and the appropriateness of conducting it  
4 at this time.

5           I'm joined today by Dave Berick, Josh Heath, and  
6 Michael Osborn-Grosso.

7           Thank you for your time.

8           MR. FOLIO: Thank you, everyone.

9           I will now explain a little bit how the interview today  
10 will proceed.

11          The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure do not apply to  
12 the committees' investigative activities, including  
13 transcribed interviews.

14          The way questioning will proceed is that we will  
15 alternate between the Majority and Minority staffs for one  
16 hour each. The Majority staff will begin and proceed for an  
17 hour, and then the Minority staff will have an hour to ask  
18 its questions. Then we will rotate back and forth until  
19 there are no more questions, and the interview will be over.

20          During the interview, we will do our best to limit the  
21 number of people who are directing questions, and again,  
22 that said, from time to time, a follow-up question or  
23 clarifying question may be useful. And if that's the case,  
24 Ambassador Nuland, you may hear from other staff around the  
25 virtual table. Because we are virtual, I ask everyone to

1 please speak slowly and provide the opportunity for everyone  
2 to complete what they're saying before you jump in.

3 The reporter with us today is going to create a  
4 verbatim record of what we discussion, and I remind you,  
5 Ambassador Nuland, it's important that you respond to  
6 questions verbally. The reporter cannot properly record  
7 nonverbal responses or gestures. Do you understand this?

8 [No response.]

9 MR. FOLIO: Ambassador Nuland?

10 MS. NULAND: I do. Thank you.

11 MR. FOLIO: We encourage witnesses that appear before  
12 the committee to freely consult with counsel. Your counsel  
13 has introduced himself, but just to confirm, are you here  
14 today with counsel?

15 MS. NULAND: I am.

16 MR. FOLIO: And, counsel, can you please state your  
17 name for the record.

18 MR. ROBERTS: Yes. It's Blake Roberts of Wilber Cutler  
19 Pickering Hale and Door.

20 MR. FOLIO: Thank you, Blake.

21 Ambassador Nuland, we want you to answer our questions  
22 today in the most complete and truthful manner possible. So  
23 we're going to take our time. If you have any questions  
24 about what we're asking or if you do not understand, just  
25 let us know, and then we will do our best to clarify. Do

1 you understand?

2 MS. NULAND: I do, Joe, but your microphone is still  
3 really--I don't know. You sound like you are under water.  
4 The other folk are easy to understand. So I'm not sure  
5 what's happening on your side. So maybe you can speak a  
6 little slower.

7 MR. FOLIO: I will try and speak more slowly and  
8 loudly.

9 Ambassador Nuland, this interview is unclassified. So  
10 if the question calls for any information that you know to  
11 be classified, please state that for the record as well as  
12 the reason for the classification, and once you've clarified  
13 to the extent possible with as much unclassified information  
14 as possible, we can then discuss whether or not it makes  
15 sense to have a classified forum in which you can answer the  
16 remainder of the question.

17 It is the committee's practice to honor valid common  
18 law privileges as an accommodation to a witness or a party  
19 when those privileged claims are made in good faith and  
20 accompanied by sufficient explanation so the committees can  
21 evaluate the claim. When deciding whether to honor a  
22 privilege, the committees weigh their need for the  
23 information against any legitimate basis for withholding it.

24 This interview is occurring without prejudice to any  
25 further discussions with the committees, and we reserve the

1 right to request participation in future interviews or to  
2 compel testimony.

3       Ambassador Nuland, if you need to take a break, just  
4 let us know. Ordinarily, we will take a five-minute break  
5 in between each hour session, but if you need something in  
6 between, we're happy to try and accommodate you.

7       Ambassador Nuland, you are required to answer questions  
8 before Congress truthfully. Do you understand that?

9       MS. NULAND: I do.

10       MR. FOLIO: This also applies to questions posed by  
11 congressional staff in an interview. Specifically, 18 USC  
12 Section 1001 makes it a crime to make any materially false,  
13 fictitious, fraudulent statement or representation in the  
14 course of a congressional investigation. This state applies  
15 to your statements today. Do you understand that?

16       MS. NULAND: I do. Thank you.

17       MR. FOLIO: Is there any reason that you are unable to  
18 provide truthful answers to today's questions?

19       MS. NULAND: No.

20       MR. FOLIO: And finally, we ask that you not speak  
21 about what we discuss in this interview with anyone outside  
22 of who here is in the virtual room today in order to  
23 preserve the integrity of our investigation, and we also ask  
24 that you or your counsel member not remove any exhibits or  
25 any other documents from the interview. Do you understand

1 and agree?

2 MS. NULAND: I do, and I agree.

3 MR. FOLIO: Do you have any questions before we begin?

4 MS. NULAND: I do not.

5 Blake?

6 MR. ROBERTS: Joe, two points. One, is the State  
7 Department on? I believe they were invited to this, but we  
8 didn't hear anyone from State introduce themselves.

9 MR. FOLIO: Thank you for the reminder.

10 Will representatives from the State Department please  
11 identify themselves for the record.

12 MR. KILLION: Bill Killion, Legislative Affairs.

13 MR. THOMAS: Ken Thomas, Office of the Legal Advisor.

14 MR. FOLIO: Good morning, Ken and Bill.

15 MR. ROBERTS: Thank you.

16 MS. NULAND: Good morning, State colleagues.

17 MR. KILLION: Good morning.

18 MR. FOLIO: And I'd also like to clarify that there is  
19 another member of Chairman Johnson's staff who is not with  
20 us in the room, but she is on as well, Lydia Westlake.

21 MS. NULAND: Good morning, Lydia. Long time no talk.

22 MS. WESTLAKE: Good morning.

23 MR. ROBERTS: Joe, the other thing--

24 MR. FOLIO: Blake, go ahead.

25 MR. ROBERTS: The other thing I wanted to note is that



1 when you all agreed to schedule this interview with  
2 Ambassador Nuland, she had been available for 9:30 to 1:00.  
3 So that gives us about three and a half hours, and you all  
4 felt that was sufficient time to cover the topics you wanted  
5 to discuss. So we should try to keep to that schedule. So  
6 we'll have to move efficiently through the material.

7 MR. FOLIO: You're correct. That's what we discussed,  
8 and we will do our best. Thank you.

9 MR. ROBERTS: Thank you.

10 MR. FOLIO: All right. We'll start the Majority's  
11 hour.

12 Ambassador Nuland, what was your position at the State  
13 Department during the Obama administration?

14 MS. NULAND: Three positions at the State Department  
15 during the Obama administration. I assume you're just  
16 asking about my last position. Yes?

17 MR. FOLIO: If you wouldn't mind describing all three  
18 to us, that would be helpful. Thank you. And the times you  
19 were in each position.

20 MS. NULAND: Yes. I was first special envoy for  
21 Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, treaty negotiations.  
22 That was approximately January 2010 to March of 2011,  
23 something like that. I was then spokesperson for the State  
24 Department from May of 2011 until, I think, March or April  
25 of 2013, and then from September 2013 until January 2017, I

1 was Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian  
2 Affairs, confirmed by the Senate.

3 MR. FOLIO: And what were your roles and  
4 responsibilities as Assistant Secretary of State for  
5 European and Eurasian Affairs?

6 MS. NULAND: I was responsible for implementing the  
7 President and the Secretary's policy towards the 50 nations  
8 of Europe and Eurasia, spanning the UK to Russia, as well as  
9 NATO, the European Union, and the Office of Security and  
10 Cooperation--Organization of Security and Cooperation in  
11 Europe, the OSCE.

12 I also had management and personnel oversight over the  
13 men and women of the State Department and our embassies  
14 overseas in that region.

15 MR. FOLIO: Approximately how many State Department  
16 bureaus did you oversee in this mission?

17 MS. NULAND: I only oversaw the one State Department  
18 bureau. I oversaw some 50-plus embassies as well.

19 MR. FOLIO: Ms. Nuland, if my terminology is confused--  
20 so it's just one bureau. Were there any other offices or  
21 mission centers from the embassies that you were responsible  
22 for?

23 MS. NULAND: Well, the bureau had some 20 offices, if  
24 that's what you're asking, under it.

25 MR. FOLIO: Yes, that's it.

1           Can you give us a high-level explanation of how those  
2 20 offices were broken down or organized?

3           MS. NULAND: Yes. They were largely regional, so  
4 Office of Russian Affairs, Office of Balkan Affairs, Office  
5 of Northern European Affairs. There were also some  
6 functional offices. We had two press functional offices.  
7 We had an office with regard to assistance for countries in  
8 our region. We had a general office of multilateral  
9 affairs. We had a NATO office, et cetera, et cetera.

10          MR. FOLIO: And which of those offices were responsible  
11 for U.S. policy towards Ukraine?

12          MS. NULAND: I would say during this period, almost  
13 every office in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs  
14 had some role to play in implementation of Ukraine policy.

15          MR. FOLIO: And why was that?

16          MS. NULAND: Because the policy was not simply a U.S.  
17 policy. It also was a policy where we were endeavoring to  
18 stay tightly coordinated with all of our allies and partners  
19 around the world but particularly our NATO and EU partners.  
20 So Ukraine would come up in bilateral relations with almost  
21 every country--every country, in fact, in the region, and  
22 then the various functional offices also had pieces of the  
23 policy, whether you're talking about assistance, whether  
24 you're talking about congressional relations, whether you're  
25 talking about press relations, et cetera.

1 MR. FOLIO: What offices were functional offices would  
2 you identify as having primary responsibility or, I guess,  
3 the majority of the responsibility for Ukraine policy at  
4 this time?

5 MS. NULAND: The Office of Ukraine, Belarus, and  
6 Moldova Affairs.

7 MR. FOLIO: And what were your responsibilities with  
8 regard to U.S.-Ukraine policy?

9 MS. NULAND: I was responsible for overseeing  
10 implementation of the policy. I was responsible for  
11 maintaining a collaboration and coordination across the  
12 interagency at my level. I was responsible for creating  
13 policy--working on policy ideas and initiatives. I was  
14 responsible for public relations and congressional relations  
15 for the policy. I was responsible for working intensively  
16 with various--the various involved international  
17 interlocutors from Ukrainians to Russians to all of the  
18 European governments involved in international  
19 organizations.

20 MR. FOLIO: Did your responsibilities include U.S. loan  
21 guarantees to Ukraine?

22 MS. NULAND: So the U.S. loan guarantee policy was an  
23 interagency policy that a lot of the agencies around  
24 government had responsibility for, including, first and  
25 foremost, the Treasury Department. But yes, we were part of

1 the interagency process on deciding on the use of loan  
2 guarantees as a tool of policy with Ukraine.

3 MR. FOLIO: And what part of the loan guarantee policy  
4 fell within State's area of responsibility?

5 MS. NULAND: So the main impetus of policy after  
6 Yanukovich flees Ukraine and you have a new Democratic  
7 president was to support increasing democratization,  
8 Europeanization, reform anticorruption in Ukraine while also  
9 supporting Ukraine in its security and hot war against  
10 separatists and Russian supporters in the East.

11 With regard to the loan guarantee, it was one tool of  
12 policy for providing reform support for Ukraine. So to the  
13 extent that my office and I myself were integral to creating  
14 and implementing policy ideas for how to support Ukraine,  
15 that was one such, including ensuring that there was reform  
16 conditionality attached to U.S. economic support for  
17 Ukraine, including the loan guarantees.

18 MR. FOLIO: So you mentioned attaching conditions to  
19 the loan. Is that the primary way in which the U.S.  
20 Government used the loan guarantees as a policy tool?

21 MS. NULAND: Well, we were not going to give U.S.  
22 taxpayer money to a Ukraine that was not reforming. We were  
23 not going to give taxpayer money when we were concerned that  
24 it would disappear in unclean ways. So to the extent that  
25 we were providing large-scale economic support, budget

1 support to Ukraine, we wanted to ensure that Ukraine was  
2 staying on a reform track. So with each of the loan  
3 guarantees that we gave--there were three of them--we  
4 attached reform conditionality to the loan guarantees, and  
5 that conditionality was tightly coordinated with the  
6 International Monetary Fund's requirements, the World Bank's  
7 requirements, and the requirements of EU countries and  
8 others providing support to Ukraine.

9 MR. FOLIO: How important were these loan guarantees to  
10 the government of Ukraine?

11 MS. NULAND: They felt that they were essential for  
12 keeping Ukraine from defaulting, in the first instance,  
13 which was a real risk in 2014, and then for stabilizing the  
14 budget and allowing Ukraine to be credit-worthy in  
15 international markets.

16 MR. FOLIO: And why was that--

17 MS. NULAND: I would also remind that this was a time  
18 of intense Russian pressure, economic pressure, on Ukraine.

19 MR. FOLIO: And why was that important to Ukrainian  
20 government at the time?

21 MS. NULAND: Had they defaulted it would have been  
22 another way of Russia defeating reform and democracy in  
23 Ukraine. They would have had no choice but to go back under  
24 the orbit of Putin.

25 MR. FOLIO: You mentioned that there were three loan

1 guarantees and that there were discussions of conditions for  
2 each of them. Our focus is going to be on the third loan  
3 guarantee, but before we get there can you just give us some  
4 examples of some of the conditions that the United States  
5 Government sought to attached to the loan guarantees, the  
6 first and second loan guarantees?

7 MS. NULAND: Yeah. I would have to have gone back and  
8 reviewed the records on all of that, and I didn't have  
9 access to that, but I can give you--I'm not going to  
10 remember precisely what's attached to loan guarantee one and  
11 what's attached to loan guarantee two, but I can give you an  
12 example.

13 So I'm pretty sure it's attached to loan guarantee one,  
14 and then there was a second version of this. The  
15 Ukrainians, in order to balance their budget, had to agree  
16 to raise energy prices on Ukrainian consumers and end the  
17 massive government subsidy, which was a budget buster and  
18 unaffordable. So over the first and second loan guarantees  
19 there were increasing reduction of the state subsidy.

20 Another condition was that they had to raise the  
21 pension age. I can't remember whether that was loan  
22 guarantee second or third. But again, allowing folks to  
23 retire at too early an age, well below international  
24 standards, was unaffordable for Ukraine.

25 They had to settle with their private debtors, which

1 they did, I think, against the first loan guarantee. And  
2 then there were anticorruption standards against all three  
3 loan guarantees. Whether it was one or two I don't  
4 remember, but against one of them they had to establish the  
5 National Anticorruption Bureau to separately and  
6 independently investigate high-level corruption. They were  
7 also supposed to establish a special prosecutor. We did  
8 not, in the Obama administration, succeed in getting that  
9 done, although it finally did get done in 2019.

10 MR. FOLIO: Thank you for those examples. So following  
11 up on the conditions that related to anticorruption, one of  
12 the conditions for the third U.S. loan guarantee, that the  
13 U.S. eventually placed, was the removal of Ukraine's then  
14 prosecutor, General Viktor Shokin. When did the U.S.  
15 Government decide to condition that third loan guarantee on  
16 the dismissal of then Prosecutor General Shokin?

17 MS. NULAND: So the initial expectation, when we began  
18 talking about the third loan guarantee, which I believe was  
19 in the summer of 2015, was that Prosecutor General Shokin  
20 make more progress than we had seen to clean up corruption  
21 inside the Prosecutor General's Office itself--I'll now  
22 refer to that as the PGO--and that he make more progress in  
23 mounting big corruption cases, including against Yanukovych  
24 cronies, that he make more progress in investigating the  
25 hundred dead on the Maidan by snipers during 2013-2014.



1           So the first press was to see him make the Prosecutor  
2 General's Office, the PGO, clean and effective, so that's  
3 what we started pressing in August, September, October. You  
4 see that pressed in the speech that Ambassador Pyatt gives  
5 in Odessa. You see it in my testimony before the Senate  
6 Foreign Relations Committee in October of 2015. Lydia will  
7 remember that. It was the subject of many phone calls  
8 between us and senior Ukrainians. It was a policy that was  
9 coordinated tightly with the Europeans, with the  
10 International Monetary Fund, the World Bank. But not only  
11 did we not see progress, we saw the PGO go backwards in this  
12 period.

13           And so by the time we get to December of 2015, we've  
14 concluded that the PGO is not going to get cleaned up under  
15 Shokin and that there needs to be--and to encourage  
16 Poroshenko to demonstrate his commitment by replacing  
17 Shokin.

18           MR. FOLIO: And when you said "we" made that  
19 determination, who is "we"?

20           MS. NULAND: We had worked on this in the interagency  
21 at all levels for many, many months, as we did with all of  
22 these loan guarantees. So, you know, traditionally there  
23 were four levels of interagencies that were responsible for  
24 policy formation. I can go through that if you'd like.

25           MR. FOLIO: That would be helpful. Thank you.

1 MS. NULAND: Good. So the level below me was called  
2 the Sub-Interagency Policy Committee, so deputy assistant  
3 secretary level. They would begin the process of looking at  
4 new policy initiatives like the loan guarantee and what  
5 conditionality was appropriate. They would begin the  
6 consultation with Europeans and the IPC, et cetera.

7 Then when they had recommendations they would come up  
8 to the IPC, the Interagency Policy Committee, which was at  
9 my level. It was chaired by the National Security Council.  
10 Celeste Wallander sat that committee. And when we had  
11 unanimity, which we generally did, we would push proposal,  
12 policy proposals to the Deputies Committee, which was  
13 comprised of responsible deputies in the National Security  
14 interagency. And if they had any issues they would send it  
15 to principal Cabinet members or the President, and/or the  
16 President, but generally they would just have consensus at  
17 their level and inform or advise the President of intended  
18 next steps in policy.

19 MR. FOLIO: So you're saying as a general matter the  
20 policy decisions were decided at that third level, the  
21 Deputies Committee.

22 MS. NULAND: I can't speak to this particular one,  
23 because again, I didn't have the opportunity to review my  
24 records, classified and unclassified, as to how this  
25 particular decision evolved. But generally we had unity at

1 both the deputies and the principals level. Sometimes the  
2 principals wanted to ventilate issues. Sometimes the  
3 President wanted time to review issues. It's possible that  
4 that was the case this time. I frankly don't know because I  
5 haven't seen my records. It was a lot of money, by the way,  
6 right, so it was a big commitment by the United States.

7 I would also note that throughout the period of the  
8 loan guarantees, as Lydia knows well, these were consulted  
9 intensively with Congress.

10 MR. FOLIO: So turning back to then Prosecutor General  
11 Shokin, you said in the summer of 2015, you determined that  
12 when you said it was made that he needed to make more  
13 progress. Can you provide us additional detail as to the  
14 U.S. Government's assessment at that point in time, summer  
15 of 2015, what progress had not been made that you were  
16 looking to see?

17 MR. ROBERTS: Joe, I'm sorry. Could you repeat that a  
18 little more slowly? I at least had a hard time hearing the  
19 first part of your question.

20 MR. FOLIO: Sure. I just want to--in summer of 2015,  
21 Ambassador, you stated that they wanted to see--the U.S.  
22 Government wanted to see then Prosecutor General Shokin make  
23 more progress. And I wanted to ask, what were the issues  
24 that you identified, "you" being the U.S. Government State  
25 Department, identified in the summer of 2015 the areas where

1 you wanted to see more progress, and what was that progress  
2 you wanted to see?

3 MS. NULAND: So I would set the timeline at summer of  
4 '15 into the fall of '15, and there's considerable detail in  
5 the Pyatt speech that he gives in Odessa in the middle of  
6 September. But we had not seen Shokin bring to the courts  
7 any high-profile corruption cases. We knew of significant  
8 corruption within the PGO itself already at that period, in  
9 part because we had FBI and Justice Department advisors  
10 there who were concerned about it and who were working with  
11 deputies of Shokin who were trying to clean up the PGO, and  
12 they reported that he was resisting.

13 We also had wanted to see more progress, as I said, or  
14 some progress on the investigation with regard to the  
15 killing of Maidan demonstrators.

16 MR. FOLIO: How did then Prosecutor General Shokin  
17 compare to his predecessor, Prosecutor General Yarema?

18 MS. NULAND: Prosecutor General Yarema was also  
19 ineffective at cleaning up the PGO, and as you know, he  
20 didn't last a full year with President Poroshenko either.  
21 He was also replaced.

22 I would also note that both in the case of Yarema, and  
23 then by the fall of 2015 with regard to Shokin, there was  
24 huge pressure in Ukraine itself on the PGO, and concerns  
25 from anticorruption activists, members of the Ukrainian

1 parliament, the Rada, other politicians, the public at  
2 large, that neither of these prosecutors, in their  
3 particular time period, was doing the job. I think Shokin's  
4 public opinion ratings in the fall were, you know, almost in  
5 single digits.

6 MR. FOLIO: What were the issues with Prosecutor  
7 General Yarema?

8 MS. NULAND: Again, that he did virtually nothing.

9 MR. FOLIO: When the United States sought to condition  
10 the loan guarantee, the third loan guarantee, on the  
11 dismissal of Prosecutor General Shokin, with whom did that  
12 idea originate?

13 MS. NULAND: Joe, I frankly don't remember, but I do  
14 know, as I said to you, that we were in an intensive process  
15 throughout the fall of trying both privately and in public  
16 statements to highlight the fact that the cleaning up of the  
17 PGO was not happening, that it needed to happen if  
18 Poroshenko was going to meet his commitment to the  
19 international community to root out corruption and to meet  
20 his commitment to the Ukrainian people. At what point we  
21 actually gave up on Shokin being able to reform it or  
22 choosing to reform it himself, I don't recall, but it was  
23 pretty clear by the end of November that with him in charge  
24 things were not going to get better. That was our view.

25 And there had been a number of incidents between the

1 summer and then that actually led us to think that it was  
2 getting worse.

3 MR. FOLIO: And what were those incidents?

4 MS. NULAND: So in the Pyatt speech, among other  
5 things, he points out that the Prosecutor General's Office  
6 under Yarema had refused to cooperate with the case against  
7 Zlochevsky and Burisma, and as a result the London court had  
8 had to close the case and some \$23 million had gone missing.  
9 Pyatt publicly says, and we're saying to them privately,  
10 that one indication that the PGO is getting cleaned up under  
11 Shokin would have been if he had investigated and/or removed  
12 those members of the PGO who had been responsible for  
13 dismissing the case against Burisma. He did not take any  
14 steps in that direction.

15 Second, there was the case of members of Shokin's  
16 prosecutorial team who were caught with diamonds in their  
17 houses, the so-called "diamond prosecutors." Obvious  
18 corruption somewhere down the line. And the two deputies  
19 who we were working closely with in the PGO were endeavoring  
20 to try to investigate that case and get justice against  
21 those members of the PGO team, and Shokin was blocking that  
22 at every stage. And that case was particularly emblematic  
23 in Ukrainian public opinion and helped increase the public's  
24 real concern that not only was it business as usual but that  
25 Shokin himself was corrupt.

1 MR. FOLIO: So you mentioned a bribe of \$23 million,  
2 and it had been paid to help Burisma avoid a case in the  
3 United Kingdom. Can you provide more detail of that, and  
4 was that under Prosecutor General Yarema?

5 MS. NULAND: So it was during the tenure of Prosecutor  
6 General Yarema. A case was brought in the London courts  
7 against the head of Burisma, Zlochevsky, for embezzling some  
8 \$23 million. The Ukrainian prosecutors under Yarema himself  
9 were asked to provide supporting documentation to the London  
10 court. Instead of doing so, they closed the case and said  
11 they had nothing, which required the London court also to  
12 close the case.

13 When Shokin comes in, he had an opportunity to reopen  
14 that case. He did not. He also had an opportunity to  
15 investigate those within the PGO who protected Zlochevsky,  
16 and he did not. And that was what Biden--I'm sorry--that  
17 was what Pyatt, Ambassador Pyatt was recommending in  
18 September of 2015, that, at a minimum, Shokin investigate  
19 who had protected Burisma within the PGO.

20 MR. FOLIO: After the bribe was paid under Yarema's  
21 tenure, did the U.S. Government seek the dismissal of  
22 Prosecutor General Yarema?

23 MS. NULAND: We discussed our concern with the  
24 Ukrainian government, and Poroshenko himself made the  
25 decision to dismiss Yarema. So obviously our concerns were

1 registered. We didn't get as far as having to condition any  
2 of our support on Yarema's dismissal because Poroshenko took  
3 the moves himself.

4 MR. FOLIO: You mentioned concern about Prosecutor  
5 General Shokin, that he did not reopen the case against  
6 Burisma. How could he have reopened the case if it was a  
7 case in London?

8 MS. NULAND: There was also a case in Ukraine, and the  
9 case in Ukraine was what would have provided evidence to the  
10 London court.

11 You know, because the courts had been so corrupt in the  
12 Yanukovich period, it was often the case that Ukrainians  
13 would take each other to court in London because they  
14 thought they would do better, which is not to say that there  
15 weren't parallel cases often in Ukraine.

16 MR. FOLIO: So in the instance in which the bribe was  
17 paid and the case against Mr. Zlochevsky and London went  
18 away, are you saying there was also a parallel case in  
19 Ukraine against Mr. Zlochevsky?

20 MS. NULAND: There was, and it was closed under Yarema.  
21 That's my understanding, anyway.

22 MR. FOLIO: Yarema both--or under Yarema's watch at  
23 least, the prosecutor both failed to cooperate with London  
24 such that the London case was dismissed and then also  
25 dismissed the Ukrainian investigation of Mr. Zlochevsky?



1 MS. NULAND: Correct. And the individuals within the  
2 PGO who had made those two bad decisions were still in their  
3 posts when Shokin takes over. So if you look carefully at  
4 the text of the Pyatt speech in Odessa in September of 2015,  
5 he uses this as an example of Shokin not cleaning up his own  
6 house. Had he opened an investigation into his own staff  
7 who had been part of letting Burisma off the hook, as we  
8 were asking at that time, that might have led to a reopening  
9 of the criminal prosecution against Zlochevsky himself.

10 MR. FOLIO: So [inaudible-audio difficulties] decision  
11 to basically not--

12 MS. NULAND: Joe, I'm not--

13 MR. FOLIO: Sorry.

14 MS. NULAND: One more time, can you--

15 MR. FOLIO: The decision to not pursue the case in  
16 Ukraine and not to help United Kingdom authorities pursue  
17 the case was made by individuals under Yarema's watch, and  
18 you said Shokin, once he became prosecutor general, he did  
19 not dismiss those persons. How does the U.S. government  
20 determine at the point in time that it would attribute the  
21 actions or omissions--basically the actions of others to the  
22 prosecutor general?

23 MS. NULAND: Again, as I said, we had U.S. advisors--  
24 FBI and Justice--as part of our assistance program to  
25 Ukraine, working closely with two deputies to Shokin, who

1 Mr. Kasko and Mr. Sakvarelidze--I'm going to mangle his  
2 Georgia name--and both of them were trying to prosecute or  
3 at least investigate those in the PGO who had declined to--  
4 declined to assist the London court under Yarema, and they  
5 were quite concerned that those two were--that those  
6 individuals were still active. And they reported to us that  
7 they were blocked by Shokin in doing that.

8 MR. FOLIO: And how so?

9 MS. NULAND: I frankly don't have any further details  
10 on that.

11 MR. FOLIO: Turning back to the decision to condition  
12 the third loan guarantee on Prosecutor General Shokin's  
13 removal, at what levels of the interagency that you've  
14 described was this discussion discussed?

15 MS. NULAND: Joe, again, I didn't have the opportunity  
16 to review records from this period, classified or  
17 unclassified, so I cannot speak precisely, but if it were  
18 true to most decisions with regard to Ukraine, as I said, it  
19 would have been initiated at the sub-IC level going through  
20 the IPC, been affirmed by deputies, and then gone up at  
21 least in a briefing form to principals and the President and  
22 certainly with regard to this kind of money, which would  
23 involve, you know, taxpayer resources that were significant.  
24 The President would certainly have been part of the policy  
25 process.

1 MR. FOLIO: Were you part of the IPC process that  
2 discussed whether or not the third loan guarantee should be  
3 conditioned on the removal of Prosecutor General Shokin?

4 MS. NULAND: I was.

5 MR. FOLIO: And what was your view of the discussion at  
6 your level?

7 MS. NULAND: My view was that we had been pushing and  
8 warning along with the Europeans, along with the  
9 International Monetary Fund, along with the World Bank for  
10 months and months and months that the PGO needed cleaning up  
11 and needed to do its job, and we were not only not making  
12 any progress there, but we had had this shocking new diamond  
13 prosecutor's case, which was taking them in the wrong  
14 direction, and that as long as Shokin as the head of the PGO,  
15 we were not going to get significant anticorruption reform  
16 in Ukraine. And we should not be putting more U.S. tax  
17 dollars into Ukraine in that circumstance.

18 MR. FOLIO: Was it a significant decision to condition  
19 an entire \$1 billion loan guarantee on the removal of one  
20 person?

21 MS. NULAND: There were other conditions for that loan  
22 guarantee at the time. I can't recall all of the  
23 conditions. I believe one of them had to do with the  
24 pension funds. There were at least three conditions that  
25 were coordinated with the IMF. As I said, I haven't been

1 able to review the documents, so I can't tell that  
2 particular story precisely. But this is only one of several  
3 conditions.

4 The Ukrainians were on track to meet the rest of them,  
5 as I recall.

6 MR. FOLIO: So you shared with us your view of  
7 Prosecutor General Shokin, the decision to condition loaning  
8 at that time. Who else participated in that discussion at  
9 your level, and what were their views?

10 MS. NULAND: Again, this was 5 years ago. I don't  
11 think I can characterize the views of others without having  
12 reviewed the record, but at my level in the interagency,  
13 there would have been my NSC counterpart, Celeste Wallander,  
14 usually Charlie Kupchan who was responsible for--actually,  
15 Charlie was responsible for Ukraine, Celeste was responsible  
16 for Russia, as we worked in tandem with both of them.

17 There would have been Mr. Tallui [phonetic] at  
18 Treasury. Commerce would have been involved. Who else?  
19 Office of Vice President would have been involved. Defense  
20 was involved. There were other things that we were talking  
21 about with regard to security support for Ukraine at that  
22 time. So that would have been Elissa Slotkin. I'm trying  
23 to think. Not USTR, I guess. The intelligence agencies,  
24 obviously, would have been involved.

25 MR. FOLIO: At your level, who participated from the

1 Office of the Vice President?

2 MS. NULAND: It would either have been Carpenter, Mike  
3 Carpenter, Anna Makanju, or it might have been the National  
4 Security Advisor, Colin Kahl, although I think he usually  
5 came to deputies.

6 But, again, I just want to be clear that I'm  
7 speculating now based on the habits of the interagency at  
8 that time. I haven't reviewed the record. So I can't speak  
9 to who sat in individual IPCs.

10 MR. FOLIO: So in--

11 MS. NULAND: I would also note that I myself did a huge  
12 amount of travel in that job. I would often try to pipe in  
13 by video to IPCs, but occasionally, my deputy is at the  
14 chair.

15 MR. FOLIO: So at your level at the IPC on the issue of  
16 whether to condition a third loan guarantee on the removal  
17 of prosecutor general, were there any dissenting views from  
18 other agencies?

19 MS. NULAND: I think, as I said, the view of the  
20 interagency at our level was to give the Ukrainian and  
21 Shokin and Poroshenko every opportunity throughout the fall  
22 to fix these problems and demonstrate their commitment to a  
23 clean, effective PGO. That was our first preference, but I  
24 believe that we were pretty well aligned towards the end of  
25 November and particularly after the diamond prosecutor case

1 that this was an irredeemable situation.

2 And I would argue--I would note that the International  
3 Monetary Fund was equally concerned, as were the Europeans.

4 MR. FOLIO: All right. What--

5 MS. NULAND: By the way, in almost weekly contact with  
6 British, French, and German counterparts on Ukraine in this  
7 period because we were also working on the Donbass war, and  
8 they were in agreement as well.

9 MR. FOLIO: And what role did Ambassador Pyatt have in  
10 developing this condition?

11 MR. ROBERTS: John, I'm sorry. I couldn't get the  
12 first part of that. Could you restate it?

13 MR. FOLIO: Sure. What role, if any, did Ambassador  
14 Pyatt have in developing this condition on the third loan  
15 guarantee?

16 MS. NULAND: Ambassador Pyatt and the embassy, because  
17 remember he also had responsibility for the U.S. advisors  
18 who were sprinkled throughout the Ukrainian government,  
19 including the two in the PGO, was firmly of the view that  
20 the first option ought to be to clean--to see if Shokin  
21 would clean up the PGO, to see if President Poroshenko would  
22 put sufficient pressure on Shokin to clean up the PGO. It  
23 really was a last resort to conclude that that was not going  
24 to happen.

25 MR. FOLIO: And did Bridget Brink have a role in these

1 discussions?

2 MS. NULAND: Bridget Brink was my Deputy Assistant  
3 Secretary for Ukraine. So at the sub-IPC level, she would  
4 sit the chair on interagency deliberation.

5 MR. FOLIO: And what was her position on this  
6 condition?

7 MS. NULAND: I frankly don't recall, but I also don't  
8 recall that we were at variance on this.

9 MR. FOLIO: So would it be fair to say that she  
10 reflected the position that you had in the sub-IPC meetings?

11 MS. NULAND: Yes. We would generally coordinate on  
12 major issues, but just to underscore, throughout the fall,  
13 we're trying to fix it.

14 It's quite unusual for an ambassador to give a speech  
15 of detail on the Office of Prosecutor General as Pyatt did  
16 in September with such specific public suggestions, and none  
17 of those was taken up by Shokin.

18 MR. FOLIO: In that speech, did Ambassador Pyatt not  
19 identify Mr. Zlochevsky by name?

20 MS. NULAND: I'm sorry. I didn't understand you, Joe.

21 MR. FOLIO: In Ambassador Pyatt's speech, did he not  
22 mention Mr. Zlochevsky and his corruption issues by name?

23 MS. NULAND: I don't remember. I think he does, does  
24 he not?

25 MR. FOLIO: We'll turn to that document in a minute.

1           And then--so you mentioned the U.S. government was  
2 providing opportunities for Prosecutor General Shokin to  
3 reform, and you mentioned the diamond prosecutor's case  
4 providing evidence to the contrary. Was the diamond  
5 prosecutor's case the straw that broke the proverbial  
6 camel's back?

7           MS. NULAND: It caused a huge hue and cry in Ukraine  
8 itself, and the population that had supported the change  
9 felt betrayed. And it resulted in a mass--you know, in a  
10 sort of evaporation of what was left of Shokin's public  
11 opinion ratings.

12          MR. ROBERTS: And, Ambassador Nuland, when you say the  
13 change, what change are you referring to?

14          MS. NULAND: I'm sorry.

15          MR. ROBERTS: When you said the population that support  
16 the change felt betrayed.

17          MS. NULAND: I'm sorry. The population which had  
18 supported Maidan had supported the new elections, the new  
19 government, the ousting of Yanukovych, the Ukrainian  
20 aspiration to associate with Europe, all of that, a clean  
21 Ukraine, the supporters of the Revolution of Dignity, as the  
22 Ukrainians called it, and one aspect of dignity very much  
23 was clean justice.

24          MR. FOLIO: And when did the prosecutor--or I'm sorry--  
25 the diamond prosecutor scandal become public?



1 MS. NULAND: I don't recall, Joe. My memory is it was  
2 that fall

3 MR. FOLIO: And were there any other issues that moved  
4 the U.S. government policy at that time, as you described  
5 it, from reforming the office to dismissal of then  
6 Prosecutor General Shokin?

7 MS. NULAND: I'm sorry. Were there any other issues  
8 what?

9 MR. FOLIO: Were there any other issues that you would  
10 point to that motivated the U.S. government to move from a  
11 policy of seeking to reform the office to seeking the  
12 removal of then Prosecutor General Shokin?

13 MS. NULAND: Again, by that time, Shokin had had  
14 another three, four months to bring large corruption cases  
15 to the courts, including cases against Yanukovych cronies or  
16 his son-in-law. No cases had been made. Again, there had  
17 been the opportunity over four months to begin serious work,  
18 demonstrable work, to investigate who had been behind the  
19 sniper killing of some 100 innocent bystanders during  
20 Maidan, and nothing had happened there.

21 So there was not only corruption within the office  
22 itself. There was no movement, demonstrable movement,  
23 against big fish by the Shokin PGO.

24 MR. FOLIO: Taking the examples that you offered seem  
25 to be examples of failures to act, omissions. Were there

1 any affirmative examples of then Prosecutor General Shokin  
2 acting corruptly?

3 MS. NULAND: It was the view of both his two deputies,  
4 Kasko and Sakvarelidze, and of the two U.S. advisors inside  
5 the PGO at that time that he was actively protecting those  
6 involved in the diamond prosecutor case.

7 I obviously didn't have direct knowledge of that, but  
8 that was their view.

9 MR. FOLIO: When was the--this condition, in  
10 particular, for the third loan guarantee communicated to the  
11 government of Ukraine?

12 MR. ROBERTS: Joe, I'm sorry. Can you repeat that?

13 MS. NULAND: Communicated to the government. I got it.

14 MR. ROBERTS: You go tit?

15 MS. NULAND: Yes.

16 Again, I would have to review the classified and  
17 unclassified records of this period. Whether we began by  
18 November to say this is not working, we don't see a way to  
19 clean up this place while Shokin is still in place, what are  
20 you going to do about it, or whether it was later, I frankly  
21 can't speak to when the actual turn is made.

22 But what we were seeking was for Poroshenko himself--  
23 and he had responsibility for dismissing the prosecutor--to  
24 come to the conclusion that the work this subordinate was  
25 engaged in was not up to the standard that he had promised

1 either the Ukrainian people or the international community.

2 MR. FOLIO: Did he ever come to that view?

3 MS. NULAND: When--I would say that it was--he--I don't  
4 want to speak for him, and I don't want to get into  
5 classified conversations that we had with him. Let's put it  
6 that way. I would say that it was difficult for him to  
7 think about making a change because he and Shokin were  
8 close, and there is always the question of when you bring  
9 in a new prosecutor, as he would have had to do if he were  
10 going to fire Shokin, whether that person would be loyal.  
11 And I don't want to go further than that in an unclassified  
12 setting, if you don't mind.

13 MR. FOLIO: Understood. But the U.S. government  
14 actually moved forward with the condition, and then the  
15 decision was made to have Shokin removed, correct?

16 MS. NULAND: So we conveyed at various levels, late  
17 November, December, January '16, into early February that we  
18 did not see asking the American taxpayer to give another  
19 billion-dollar loan guarantee to a country with an obviously  
20 corrupt prosecutor general and prosecutor general's office,  
21 and so the choice was put to the Ukrainians, "If you'd like  
22 the money and the support, you're going to have to clean up  
23 the PGO."

24 MR. FOLIO: Who conveyed that message?

25 MS. NULAND: That message was conveyed at all levels, I

1 would say.

2 Now, when that begins, when we actually make that turn  
3 that we think he needs to go, that there's no other way, as  
4 I said, I can't speak to the precise timing without access  
5 to the records, but certainly, it was being conveyed at the  
6 embassy level, at my level, at Secretary Kerry's level, and  
7 ultimately at the Vice President's level privately to the  
8 Ukrainians, "Do something here, or it's going to be hard for  
9 us to move this money."

10 MR. FOLIO: What is Vice President Biden's role in  
11 deciding to impose this condition on the third loan  
12 guarantee?

13 MS. NULAND: I don't recall, and again, I would need  
14 access to the classified records and a reminder of what  
15 interagency meetings were held in this period, none of which  
16 I have seen, but I know that by the time we went to Ukraine  
17 for the Vice President's trip on 7, 8 December 2015, he was  
18 firmly of the view that he could not represent to your  
19 bosses in the U.S. Congress and to American taxpayers that  
20 it was a good bet to put another billion-dollar loan  
21 guarantee into Ukraine with this level of corruption and  
22 dirt in the prosecutor general's office.

23 MR. FOLIO: And was it in that time period when the  
24 Vice President communicated that condition to his  
25 counterpart in Ukraine?

1 MS. NULAND: Yes. So again, this was sensitive. We  
2 did not want to make the decision for the Ukrainians. We  
3 could not. It was their country, their government,  
4 Poroshenko's government. We also didn't want to humiliate  
5 or embarrass Poroshenko unnecessarily. We wanted him to  
6 come to the right conclusion himself that this Prosecutor  
7 General was letting him down and was destroying the  
8 anticorruption reputation of Ukraine, which was the view of  
9 Ukrainian population, our view, the International Monetary  
10 Fund, the World Bank, and the Europeans.

11 So the decision was made that the Vice President would  
12 make general reference to needing to clean up the PGO  
13 publicly, and in his meetings with Ukrainian officials, but  
14 that the hard message--no money unless Shokin is replaced  
15 with somebody cleaner--would be made one-on-one to  
16 Poroshenko, so as not to embarrass him, to give him the  
17 opportunity to make the decision himself. And that was  
18 conveyed in a one-on-one meeting between the Vice President  
19 and Poroshenko during that December 7-8 trip.

20 MR. FOLIO: And what was the response of the Ukrainian  
21 officials?

22 MS. NULAND: So again, my information is second-hand.  
23 The Vice President, whenever I worked with him in diplomacy,  
24 was always quite good at debriefing his one-on-one meetings  
25 with leaders. My memory of it, Joe--and again, I would have

1 to see the memcons, the memorandums of conversations, the  
2 records that we kept contemporaneously, and I don't have any  
3 of my own records, and I did not see any of the records that  
4 were kept by the White House. But my memory of it is that  
5 President Poroshenko made clear that he understood the  
6 concern. He did not defend Shokin, but he made clear that  
7 it was going to be a very difficult decision for him and his  
8 party, for issues of loyalty, and that he would have to  
9 decide.

10 And, you know, again, we weren't forcing this issue.  
11 We were simply saying, "You have a choice. If you need this  
12 U.S. money, this is the condition. If you don't need it,  
13 proceed as you want."

14 MR. FOLIO: So you talk about the effect that this was  
15 having on anticorruption efforts in Ukraine, but we also  
16 talked about the anticorruption problems that existed with  
17 the prior Prosecutor General, Prosecutor General Yarema.

18 MS. NULAND: Yes.

19 MR. FOLIO: So two Prosecutor Generals in a row. What  
20 convinced the United States Government at this time that  
21 seeking yet another dismissal would lead to something  
22 better?

23 MS. NULAND: Again, we couldn't continue to put money  
24 into Ukraine at that level of corruption in the PGO. So the  
25 only option was to try a third time, or to ask Poroshenko to

1 try a third time, to get somebody who was truly committed to  
2 a clean justice system. Did we--were we sure it would work?  
3 Were we sure he would find somebody better? Were we sure  
4 Ukraine would clean up? Of course not. But again, the  
5 decision for us was pour more U.S. taxpayer money into a  
6 leaky bucket or ask that they try again to fix the bucket.

7 MR. FOLIO: And at this time it was the assessment of  
8 the U.S. Government that this issue, with Prosecutor General  
9 Shokin, was serious enough such that the government was  
10 willing to condition the third \$1 billion loan guarantee on  
11 his removal.

12 MS. NULAND: As I said, there were a number of  
13 conditions, including economic conditions, but this was the  
14 main rule-of-law condition, yes.

15 MR. FOLIO: I think you also testified that the other  
16 conditions had been met by this time, in the fall of 2015.  
17 Right?

18 MS. NULAND: Frankly, I need--I would have to again  
19 review the record. There was some legislation that had to  
20 be passed by the Rada on the economic side. I don't recall  
21 whether it was passed in December or whether it was passed  
22 in January. But it was on its way to passage. And there  
23 was also, if I remember, at least one issue having to do  
24 with decreasing subsidies, which Poroshenko had already made  
25 the executive decision but it needed implementation.

1           Anyway, we were confident that on the timeline we were  
2 on, which was spring disbursal, they would meet the other  
3 conditions. This was the one that required Poroshenko's  
4 commitment, and we hadn't seen it.

5           MR. FOLIO: Could President Poroshenko fire the two  
6 deputies that were in the Prosecutor General's Office, that  
7 were of such concern under Yarema and then Shokin?

8           MS. NULAND: I'm sorry. Did Poroshenko fire--

9           MR. FOLIO: Could he have.

10          MS. NULAND: No. It would have had to have been  
11 Shokin. And you will recall that one of them does get  
12 fired--I can't remember which was which--and the other one  
13 resigned.

14          MR. ROBERTS: I think Joe is referring to the--Joe, are  
15 you referring to the deputies involved in the diamond case  
16 or the reform deputies?

17          MR. FOLIO: I'm referring to the deputies that  
18 Ambassador Nuland identified as I think being problems under  
19 Yarema when the case against Burisma was not pursued--the  
20 cases against Burisma were not pursued, and how they  
21 persisted in their position. And maybe they're different or  
22 the same as the diamond prosecutors. But regardless, for  
23 any of the people that were problems I guess my question is,  
24 why could President Poroshenko not have fired those  
25 individuals, or demanded their dismissals, since they seem



1 to have been the people with the issues?

2 MS. NULAND: So those guys were not deputies, the  
3 diamond. They were prosecutors on the PGO staff, is my  
4 understanding. You confused me because the two deputies who  
5 we were working with were the reformers.

6 It was not within his writ to reach down over Shokin's  
7 head--my understanding, his legal writ, Poroshenko's--to  
8 make personnel changes within the PGO. The head of the PGO  
9 had to make those changes.

10 MR. FOLIO: And why did the U.S. Government not demand  
11 the firing of specific individuals that it knew to be  
12 corrupt, or to be taking corrupt actions, rather than seek  
13 the firing of their boss?

14 MS. NULAND: We did, Joe. If you read the speech by  
15 Pyatt, he specifically recommends investigating or removing  
16 those who blocked the Burisma case.

17 MR. FOLIO: And the only position from the U.S.  
18 Government's perspective, the only person that could have  
19 affected that was Shokin.

20 MS. NULAND: Legally, my understanding in Ukraine is it  
21 was in his chain of command and he was the one who would  
22 have had to have done it.

23 MR. FOLIO: And was the U.S. Government expressed the  
24 government of Ukraine that those were the individuals that  
25 [inaudible-audio difficulties]. I don't think the speech

1 called them out by name.

2 MS. NULAND: I'm sorry. You garbled up at the end  
3 there.

4 MR. FOLIO: Was the U.S. Government clear about the  
5 individuals who were problematic in the Prosecutor General's  
6 Office, that they believed needed to be dismissed?

7 MS. NULAND: Yes. If you read the speech that Pyatt  
8 gives--you know, we can find the section if you'd like--he  
9 doesn't name them, but it's pretty clear who we're talking  
10 about, and certainly Shokin and his deputies knew who we  
11 were talking about.

12 And then we also, when the diamond prosecutor case hits  
13 the street, we were very clear, at my level, at Pyatt's  
14 level, but here was another example where it would be very  
15 easy for Shokin to prove his anticorruption bona fides by  
16 either investigating, prosecuting, or removing those  
17 individuals.

18 MR. FOLIO: And for the last few minutes we have I'm  
19 going to hand the questioning over to my colleague, Scott  
20 Wittmann. Thank you.

21 MR. WITTMANN: Hi, Ambassador Nuland. My name is Scott  
22 Wittmann. Can you hear me?

23 MS. NULAND: I can, Scott.

24 MR. WITTMANN: Oh, I'm sorry. Maybe I couldn't hear  
25 you. Can you hear me now?

1 MS. NULAND: Yes. And can you hear me?

2 MR. WITTMANN: Yes. Thank you. We just have a couple  
3 more minutes left in our time so I'll be--I'll only be going  
4 through a few questions.

5 Just to follow up, regarding the individuals that  
6 Ambassador Pyatt referred to in the Prosecutor General's  
7 Office that were problematic, why were they problematic?

8 MS. NULAND: I'm sorry. You're talking about in the  
9 September speech, or later?

10 MR. WITTMANN: Yes, ma'am. In the September 2015  
11 speech.

12 MS. NULAND: Ambassador Pyatt specifically notes, as an  
13 example, of corruption and incompetence in the Prosecutor  
14 General in general, the fact that the PGO declined to  
15 cooperate with the London court's case against Zlochevsky  
16 and Burisma, and that they closed their own case. And he  
17 suggests in that speech that the prosecutors within the PGO,  
18 who were still on duty then, should be investigated for  
19 those decisions and/or fired.

20 MR. ROBERTS: Scott, you all had identified Ambassador  
21 Pyatt's speech as an exhibit that you may want to use in  
22 your interview. Ambassador Nuland, would it be helpful for  
23 her to read the relevant paragraph?

24 MS. NULAND: I think that would be helpful to read it  
25 into the record so we're all clear what we're talking about.

1 How about that?

2 MR. WITTMANN: Sure.

3 MS. NULAND: So again, this is a speech that Ambassador  
4 Pyatt is giving on September 24, 2015 in Odessa, one of the  
5 historically most corrupt cities in Ukraine. It's largely  
6 about the importance of staying on the anticorruption track.  
7 About halfway through he says the following:

8 "For example, in the case of former Ecology Minister  
9 Mykola Zlochevsky, the UK authorities have seized \$23  
10 million in illicit assets that belong to the Ukrainian  
11 people. Officials at the PGO's office were asked by the UK  
12 to send documents supporting the seizure. Instead, they  
13 sent letters to Zlochevsky's attorneys attesting that there  
14 was no case against him. As a result, the money was freed  
15 by the UK court and shortly thereafter the money was moved  
16 to Cyprus.

17 "The misconduct by the PGO officials who wrote those  
18 letters should be investigated, and those responsible for  
19 subverting the case by authorizing those letters should, at  
20 a minimum, be summarily terminated."

21 MR. WITTMANN: Thank you, Ms. Nuland.

22 MS. NULAND: Let me actually do--if you wouldn't mind,  
23 I would like to read one more paragraph, because it's  
24 useful.

25 MR. WITTMANN: Of course. Go ahead.

1 MS. NULAND: Okay. The next paragraph:

2 "Even as we support the work of the new Anticorruption  
3 Commission and the recruitment of new prosecutors, we have  
4 urged Prosecutor General Shokin to empower deputy  
5 prosecutors, Sakvarelidze and Kasko, to implement reforms  
6 and bring to justice those who have violated the law,  
7 regardless of rank or status. We are prepared to partner  
8 with reformers within the PGO in the fight for  
9 anticorruption."

10 So again, a very calm and clear warning of what we are  
11 seeking in the PGO.

12 MR. WITTMANN: Understood. And from your perspective  
13 at that time, do you know why those prosecutors in the PGO  
14 took those steps that led to the closure of the UK case  
15 against Zlochevsky?

16 MS. NULAND: I cannot. I do not. There was press  
17 speculation that they were bribed by Zlochevsky. I can't  
18 speak to that.

19 MR. WITTMANN: Are you aware of any State Department  
20 officials specifically raising that concern about a bribe?

21 MS. NULAND: I have subsequently--I didn't  
22 contemporaneously know of this, but I've subsequently read  
23 public statements by George Kent that he raised that with  
24 Shokin.

25 MR. SCHRAM: Scott, we are tight on time today and you

1 guys are over your hour, so I would just ask that you wrap  
2 up quickly, please.

3 MR. WITTMANN: Sure. Thanks, Zack. Just one more  
4 question and then we'll hand the baton over. Ms. Nuland,  
5 were the views expressed by Ambassador Pyatt his personal  
6 beliefs or were these the views held by the State Department  
7 at the time?

8 MS. NULAND: An American ambassador does not give a  
9 public speech based on his personal beliefs. His speech  
10 would have been cleared by the interagency in Washington, so  
11 they were the views of the U.S. Government.

12 MR. WITTMANN: Thank you. Zack?

13 MR. SCHRAM: Ms. Nuland, would you like a break?  
14 Pardon me. Ambassador Nuland, would you like a break?

15 MS. NULAND: Why don't we take a quick one, five  
16 minutes. Is that all right? Great. Thank you.

17 MR. ROBERTS: Thank you.

18 [Recess.]

19 MR. SCHRAM: Ambassador Nuland, I think the majority  
20 got very close to the key question in their last hour, so  
21 I'd like to pick up where they left off.

22 MR. ROBERTS: Zack, before you do that I just realized  
23 I erred by not identifying two colleagues of mine that are  
24 also participating. Sheila Menz is participating virtually  
25 and Anya Olsen is here with me, participating. Sorry for

1 interrupting.

2 MR. SCHRAM: Thank you, Blake.

3 Ambassador Nuland, I'd like to pick up where the  
4 majority left off. I think they got very close to asking  
5 the key question. Was the U.S. Government's position  
6 advocating for the removal of Prosecutor General part of an  
7 effort to stop an investigation into Burisma?

8 MS. NULAND: Absolutely no. On the contrary. We were  
9 dissatisfied that past investigations of Burisma had not  
10 been brought to conclusion.

11 MR. SCHRAM: And when you say "we," who are you  
12 referring to?

13 MS. NULAND: The interagency community, I would say.

14 MR. SCHRAM: Was it your view at the time that the  
15 dismissal of Prosecutor General Shokin would protect  
16 Burisma?

17 MS. NULAND: I'm sorry. Can you repeat the question?

18 MR. SCHRAM: Was it your view at the time that the  
19 dismissal of Prosecutor General Shokin would somehow help  
20 protect Burisma?

21 MS. NULAND: No. It was our conclusion by then that,  
22 in fact, the dismissal of Prosecutor Shokin would be counter  
23 to Burisma's interests, because not only was he not pursuing  
24 the Burisma case, he was responsible for protecting those  
25 who had helped get the case dismissed.

1 MR. SCHRAM: Was the policy advocating for the  
2 dismissal of Prosecutor General Shokin formulated by Vice  
3 President Biden in an effort to assist his son?

4 MS. NULAND: It was not.

5 MR. SCHRAM: I'd like to turn to your background. The  
6 majority started with your background in the Obama  
7 administration, but I'm wondering if you could quickly walk  
8 through your career prior to the Obama administration.

9 MS. NULAND: Certainly. After graduating from college  
10 I worked on the Hill as a legislative assistant for a year.  
11 I joined the foreign service at age 23, in 1984, and then  
12 proceeded to have a standard foreign service career. I  
13 worked for five Presidents, from Ronald Reagan through  
14 President Obama, of both parties. I served overseas in  
15 China, in Mongolia, in Russia, and twice at NATO in  
16 Brussels. I've spent about two-thirds of my foreign service  
17 career in Washington, in a variety of positions, which we  
18 can go through if you'd like.

19 But just to say, we talked about my service in the  
20 Obama administration. In the George W. Bush administration  
21 I served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. mission to  
22 NATO, I served as Deputy National Security Advisor to Vice  
23 President Cheney, and I served as President George W. Bush's  
24 ambassador to NATO from 2005 to 2008.

25 Is that helpful?



1 MR. SCHRAM: Yes. Thank you. When you were confirmed  
2 as Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs,  
3 did you have bipartisan support?

4 MS. NULAND: Yes, sir.

5 MR. SCHRAM: Do you remember the exact outcome, or  
6 something close to it?

7 MS. NULAND: I don't. I think it was a voice vote,  
8 wasn't it?

9 MR. SCHRAM: You covered your responsibilities as  
10 Assistant Secretary from 2013 to 2017, if I have the dates  
11 correct, and you mentioned that you managed diplomatic  
12 relations with 50 countries. Was that the number?

13 MS. NULAND: Yes.

14 MR. SCHRAM: And did that include relations with NATO?

15 MS. NULAND: Yes.

16 MR. SCHRAM: And the European Union?

17 MS. NULAND: Yes.

18 MR. SCHRAM: And the Organization for Security and  
19 Cooperation in Europe?

20 MS. NULAND: Yes.

21 MR. SCHRAM: Is it fair to say that you were one of the  
22 administration's lead policy experts on the region?

23 MS. NULAND: I certainly came to the job with two  
24 decades of experience working on Russia, Ukraine, Europe  
25 policy, arms control, economic support for reform, NATO

1 enlargement.

2 MR. SCHRAM: What are some of the achievements in your  
3 time as Assistant Secretary that you are most proud of?

4 MS. NULAND: I'm most proud of the fact that the United  
5 States and its allies thwarted Russian efforts to regain  
6 political, economic, and security control of Ukraine, that  
7 we stopped the advance of Russian-supported separatists who  
8 wanted to carve off even more of Ukraine, and might have  
9 attacked all the way to Kiev. I'm very proud of the work we  
10 did with Europeans to diversify supplies of energy away from  
11 Russia.

12 I'm proud of the efforts that we made in negotiations  
13 with the Europeans, and bilaterally with Russia, to try to  
14 de-escalate, and Ukrainians obviously, the conflict in  
15 Ukraine. I'm proud of the fact that Ukraine was stabilized.  
16 We also had an intensive round of negotiations in support of  
17 the UN peace process in Cyprus, and came very close to a  
18 deal there. And the United States helped broker a couple of  
19 important moments of political de-escalation in the Balkans  
20 as well in that period.

21 MR. SCHRAM: In the majority's round of questions you  
22 spent some time discussing the interagency process. Did the  
23 Vice President have a role, personally and directly, with  
24 respect to the interagency process regarding the development  
25 of Ukraine policy?

1 MS. NULAND: He had members of staff who participated  
2 at the appropriate levels throughout the interagency  
3 process, yes.

4 MR. SCHRAM: In the preliminary remarks, the majority  
5 said it was undisputed that the Vice President managed our  
6 foreign affairs in Ukraine. Is that an accurate assessment?

7 MS. NULAND: You know, all the United States foreign  
8 policy is made by the President with the support of his  
9 subordinates. In terms of managing day-to-day, no, I would  
10 not describe the Vice President's role that way.

11 MR. SCHRAM: As Assistant Secretary for European  
12 Affairs, was one of your responsibilities briefing Members  
13 of Congress and testifying in front of Congress?

14 MS. NULAND: Yes.

15 MR. SCHRAM: And in the Senate, what was the main  
16 committee of jurisdiction for your portfolio?

17 MS. NULAND: The Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

18 MR. SCHRAM: Was there a subcommittee with  
19 jurisdiction?

20 MS. NULAND: Yes. The European Subcommittee, which  
21 was, by 2015, chaired by Senator Johnson, and the Ranking  
22 Member was Senator Murphy.

23 I would ask--

24 MR. SCHRAM: Could you tell--

25 MR. SCHRAM: --I would say that if you--I'm sorry, to

1 volunteer. I would say that one of the other issues I was  
2 proud of during my tenure was strong bipartisan support for  
3 Ukraine policy across the Congress.

4 MR. SCHRAM: Did you testify in front of the European  
5 and Regional Security Cooperation Subcommittee about  
6 Ukraine?

7 MS. NULAND: Are you talking about the Subcommittee of  
8 SFRC or the OSCE committee?

9 MR. SCHRAM: SFRC.

10 MS. NULAND: Yes. I testified many times before full  
11 committee and subcommittee.

12 MR. SCHRAM: And did that include testifying in front  
13 of Chairman Johnson?

14 MS. NULAND: It did.

15 MR. SCHRAM: Did you also brief Senators and staff on  
16 U.S. interests and policies related to Ukraine?

17 MS. NULAND: I did.

18 MR. SCHRAM: Did that include briefing Senator Johnson  
19 and his staff?

20 MS. NULAND: Yes.

21 MR. SCHRAM: Did your testimony and briefings include  
22 the U.S. Government's position on reforming the Prosecutor  
23 General's Office in Ukraine?

24 MS. NULAND: It did if you go back and look at that  
25 October 2015 testimony, and again in March of 2016 I'm on

1 the public record. I'm quite confident that I also was  
2 ensuring that the key members of the committee, and  
3 particularly the members of the Ukraine caucus were kept up  
4 to speed on the third loan guarantee.

5 MR. SCHRAM: And we covered this in some detail in the  
6 last hours, but just if you could summarize it briefly.  
7 What was U.S. policy with respect to reforming the Office of  
8 Prosecutor General in Ukraine over the course of your tenure  
9 at Assistant Secretary?

10 MS. NULAND: We wanted to support the Ukrainians in  
11 their desire to have a clean, transparent, non-corrupt  
12 Prosecutor General's Office that would bring cases against  
13 past incidents of corruption and that would support the  
14 confidence of the Ukrainian people in judicial independence.

15 MR. SCHRAM: And that reform agenda came to include  
16 conditioning a loan guarantee on the removal of Prosecutor  
17 General Shokin. Correct?

18 MS. NULAND: Correct.

19 MR. SCHRAM: Was our reform agenda in Ukraine  
20 communicated to members of the Senate Foreign Relations  
21 Committee?

22 MS. NULAND: Yes.

23 MR. SCHRAM: And that would include Chairman Johnson?

24 MS. NULAND: Yes.

25 MR. SCHRAM: Was that policy supported by the Senate

1 Foreign Relations Committee?

2 MS. NULAND: It was, in large measure. We had one  
3 incidence of significant friction with the Committee, but it  
4 did not involve economic policy. It involved security  
5 policy. There was a bipartisan consensus that emerged, I  
6 would say, in 2014, and was persistently conveyed throughout  
7 the Obama tenure that we should be providing--the U.S.  
8 should be providing lethal security assistance to Ukraine.  
9 The President's policy was to stop short of lethal  
10 assistance.

11 But otherwise we had very, very strong support from the  
12 Committee, and, in fact, I believe--and from the Congress  
13 overall. We had a huge number of Senators, including  
14 Senator Johnson repeatedly, visit Ukraine to express their  
15 support during this period, work with Europeans at the  
16 Munich security conference and others opportunities, on  
17 Ukraine policy. We also--I can't remember where my train of  
18 thought was going. Anyway, you get the idea.

19 MR. SCHRAM: So you were speaking about congressional  
20 support for U.S. reform policy in Ukraine. So that would  
21 include the anticorruption efforts in Ukraine?

22 MS. NULAND: Absolutely. If anything, the Congress was  
23 pushing us to do more, faster, to help the Ukrainians clean  
24 up the judiciary.

25 MR. SCHRAM: And the Prosecutor General's Office

1 specifically?

2 MS. NULAND: Correct, and that's evidenced in the  
3 hearings that I did and that hearings that Secretary Kerry  
4 did in this period.

5 MR. SCHRAM: And that policy was--was that policy, in  
6 your view, also supported by Chairman Johnson at the time?

7 MS. NULAND: I have to say that I would have to go back  
8 in my records and look at notes of meetings with Senator  
9 Johnson, but he was a strong supporter, and a very important  
10 supporter in the Senate of overall U.S. policy towards  
11 Ukraine. He made a number of trips. I briefed him  
12 personally and made myself available to him and to his staff  
13 director for these issues, Lydia Westlake, whenever they  
14 needed. So yes, I was very grateful for his support at that  
15 time.

16 MR. SCHRAM: And the policy that Congress was so  
17 supportive of, by late 2015 and early 2016, that included  
18 conditioning a third loan guarantee to Ukraine on the  
19 removal of Prosecutor General Shokin. Correct?

20 MS. NULAND: I'm quite confident that the Congress was  
21 fully briefed on the conditionality at that point. I would  
22 note that there was a bipartisan letter sent to President  
23 Poroshenko in February of 2016, from members of the Senate  
24 Foreign Relations Committee, including both Democrats and  
25 Republicans, which Senator Johnson signed, which included a

1 reference to more anticorruption progress by the PGO.

2 MR. SCHRAM: Let's mark that letter as Exhibit A.

3 [Nuland Exhibit A was marked  
4 for identification.]

5 MR. SCHRAM: Is this the letter that you're referring  
6 to?

7 MS. NULAND: Yes. I think so. You'd have to scroll  
8 down to the--this is about after Obama--this is, yes. So  
9 yes.

10 MR. SCHRAM: As you mentioned--

11 MS. NULAND: It's like one, two, three, fourth  
12 paragraph, they very helpfully say--because this is before  
13 Shokin has actually tendered his resignation, so we're still  
14 pushing. "We similarly urge you to press ahead with urgent  
15 reforms to the Prosecutor General's Office and judiciary."

16 MR. SCHRAM: And you understood that to include the  
17 removal of Prosecutor General Shokin?

18 MS. NULAND: I don't know whether they were  
19 specifically referring to that, but it indicates that they  
20 shared the administration's concern that the PGO needed  
21 cleaning up.

22 MR. SCHRAM: And when did Mr. Shokin resign, to the  
23 best of your recollection?

24 MS. NULAND: So refresh my memory on this a bit. It  
25 seems to have been a little bit messy, but he resigns later



1 that month. But then resignations of senior officials under  
2 the Ukrainian constitution at this time had to be ratified  
3 by the Parliament, had to be accepted by the Parliament.  
4 And between the period that he tenders his resignation and  
5 when the Rada votes, he shows back up at the office a month  
6 later, claiming he was just on health leave. But then the  
7 Rada ultimately accepts his resignation. I believe it's in  
8 late March of '16. I can't quite recall.

9 MR. SCHRAM: Is it fair to say that this letter was  
10 roughly contemporaneous to, or just before the matters you  
11 just described, with respect to Prosecutor General Shokin  
12 and whether or not he would resign or be forced out?

13 MS. NULAND: Correct.

14 MR. SCHRAM: Marking as Exhibit B, an article published  
15 in The Hill on October 3, 2019, entitled "GOP Senator says  
16 he doesn't remember signing 2016 letter urging reform of  
17 Ukraine prosecutor's office."

18 [Nuland Exhibit B was marked  
19 for identification.]

20 MR. SCHRAM: I want to draw your attention to a quote  
21 in this article. It's covered slightly by the box.  
22 Starting at the bottom of the first page, "The whole world,  
23 by the way, including the Ukrainian caucus, which I signed  
24 the letter, the whole world felt that this Shokin wasn't  
25 doing a [good enough job] so we were saying, hey, you have

1 got to rid yourself of corruption." So that's a quote by  
2 Senator Johnson.

3 Is this consistent with your understanding of Senate  
4 support and the Ukrainian caucus's support for the Obama  
5 administration's reform agenda in Ukraine at that time?

6 MS. NULAND: Yes. And then I testify again in March  
7 2016, and there are a number of questions from both sides of  
8 the aisle still on how we're doing on justice reform in  
9 Ukraine.

10 MR. SCHRAM: So we've talked about the congressional  
11 support for the policy. What about international support?  
12 Was our anticorruption agenda in Ukraine supported by our  
13 international partners?

14 MS. NULAND: Yes. Throughout this period in Ukraine,  
15 we endeavored to work in lock step with all of our European  
16 and Asian allies on policy towards Ukraine, both the support  
17 for Ukrainian reform and the conditionality, but also  
18 support, security support for Ukraine in its war in Donbass.

19 So at every--I would say in every semester, so from  
20 January to summer, from summer to December, we would work  
21 with our European and Asian allied counterparts, the  
22 European Union. We would work with the International  
23 Monetary Fund and the World Bank to set the same  
24 conditionality for each of the organizations and regional  
25 entities' support for Ukraine against a very short list of

1 reform conditions and in an effort to keep them on task and  
2 keep them moving.

3       So with regard to the prosecutor general's office,  
4 throughout the fall of '15, it was the unified policy of all  
5 of us--United States government, International Monetary  
6 Fund, World Bank, European Union, Japan, Australia--that the  
7 PGO needed cleaning up.

8       MR. SCHRAM: Was there anything controversial about  
9 conditioning loan guarantees on anticorruption reforms at  
10 the PGO?

11       MS. NULAND: No. I think it would have been  
12 controversial if we hadn't conditioned use of the taxpayers'  
13 money against cleaning up of the justice sector.

14       MR. SCHRAM: In your view, did Chairman Johnson support  
15 conditionality on aid to Ukraine?

16       MS. NULAND: My recollection is that he was a strong  
17 supporter of conditionality throughout this period.

18       MR. SCHRAM: Are you aware that in a June 5th, 2014,  
19 Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, Senator Johnson  
20 stated, quote, If we have to tie aid or help to make sure  
21 that anticorruption laws are passed, I think we should do  
22 that?

23       MS. NULAND: I didn't recall that, but it's consistent  
24 with his general approach. He made clear to me throughout  
25 this that he was a fiscal hawk and didn't want U.S. taxpayer

1 money wasted.

2 MR. SCHRAM: Ambassador Nuland, Hunter Biden was  
3 pointed to the board of Burisma in May of 2014. From May of  
4 2014 until you left government in 2017, did Senator Johnson  
5 ever raise concerns to you, publicly or privately, about  
6 Burisma?

7 MS. NULAND: Not in my recollection.

8 MR. SCHRAM: Did he ever raise concerns to you publicly  
9 or privately about Mykola Zlochevsky, the principal owner of  
10 Burisma?

11 MS. NULAND: Not in my recollection.

12 MR. SCHRAM: From May of 2014 until you left government  
13 in 2017, did Senator Johnson ever raise concerns to you  
14 publicly or privately about Hunter Biden's position on the  
15 board of Burisma?

16 MS. NULAND: Not in my recollection.

17 MR. SCHRAM: Did he ever raise an issue about a  
18 potential conflict of interest that Hunter Biden's position  
19 on the board of Burisma might have on U.S. policies towards  
20 Ukraine?

21 MS. NULAND: No, not in my recollection.

22 MR. SCHRAM: During your appearances in front of the  
23 Senate Foreign Relations Committee or its subcommittees, did  
24 any member ever raise concerns about a potential conflict of  
25 interest because of Hunter Biden's position on the board of

1 Burisma?

2 MS. NULAND: No.

3 MR. SCHRAM: In your view, did a conflict of interest  
4 related to Hunter Biden's role on the board of Burisma  
5 impact your ability to pursue an anticorruption agenda in  
6 Ukraine?

7 MS. NULAND: It did not impact policy at all. On the  
8 contrary, the policy that we were pursuing was, if anything,  
9 counter to Burisma's interests because it had been protected  
10 by Shokin.

11 MR. SCHRAM: When did you become aware of Senator  
12 Johnson's concerns about Hunter Biden's role on the board of  
13 Burisma?

14 MS. NULAND: Well after the Obama administration was  
15 over and I had left government. I can't be sure precisely.  
16 At least it wouldn't have been earlier than 2018, I don't  
17 believe.

18 MR. SCHRAM: Ambassador Nuland, in the chairman's open  
19 letter of August 10th, he wrote, "Many in the media in an  
20 ongoing attempt to provide cover for former Vice President  
21 Biden continue to repeat the mantra that there is no  
22 evidence of wrongdoing or illegal activity related to Hunter  
23 Biden's position on Burisma's board. I could not disagree  
24 more," end quote.

25 Are you aware of any evidence of wrongdoing or illegal

1 activity by Vice President Biden related to Hunter Biden's  
2 position on the board of Burisma?

3 MS. NULAND: I am not.

4 MR. SCHRAM: Knowing what you know about Vice President  
5 Biden and the development and execution of our foreign  
6 policy in Ukraine, do you regard that claim as credible?

7 MS. NULAND: I'm not a lawyer. I'm not in a position  
8 to evaluate legality or legitimacy with regard to conflict of  
9 interest at that period.

10 I would simply say that I was proud to work with Vice  
11 President Biden on Ukraine policy and especially on trying  
12 to help the Ukrainian people root out corruption in their  
13 country. He was a warrior on these subjects, and I never  
14 saw any influence on policy as a result of Hunter Biden's  
15 board seat.

16 MR. SCHRAM: Was the foreign policy that Vice President  
17 Biden pursued in Ukraine intended to advance the interests  
18 of the United States of America?

19 MS. NULAND: It was.

20 MR. SCHRAM: Are narratives that suggest otherwise  
21 false?

22 MS. NULAND: I don't support narratives that suggest  
23 otherwise.

24 MR. SCHRAM: Was the foreign policy pursued by Vice  
25 President Biden in Ukraine corrupt?

1 MS. NULAND: It was not, in my view. On the contrary.

2 MR. SCHRAM: Did Vice President Biden alter United  
3 States government foreign policy concerning Ukraine in order  
4 to assist Burisma or his son?

5 MS. NULAND: I never saw any evidence of that.

6 MR. SCHRAM: Did you witness any efforts by any U.S.  
7 official to shield Burisma from scrutiny?

8 MS. NULAND: No. On the contrary, the actions that we  
9 were recommending would have been counter to Burisma's  
10 interests.

11 MR. SCHRAM: And, again, was the policy advocating for  
12 the dismissal of Prosecutor General Shokin formulated by  
13 Vice President Biden in an effort to assist his son?

14 MS. NULAND: It was not.

15 MR. SCHRAM: Your testimony, which is consistent with  
16 all of the available evidence that I've reviewed, at the  
17 narrative that Vice President Biden intervened in our  
18 foreign policy to benefit his son is false. Let's spend  
19 sometime exploring the origin and purpose of that narrative.

20 As part of your responsibility for U.S. policy in  
21 Europe, were you aware of Russian disinformation efforts in  
22 the region?

23 MS. NULAND: I was as well as Russian disinformation  
24 efforts in the United States.

25 MR. SCHRAM: Can you speak generally to Russian malign

1 influence methods and objectives in the region?

2 MS. NULAND: So Russia sought to undercut Ukraine's  
3 effort to associate with Europe to break free of security,  
4 economic, and political influence from Moscow. It sought to  
5 keep Ukraine, at best, in Moscow's orbit, at worst, you  
6 know, confused, chaotic, impoverished, et cetera. And the  
7 Russians deployed pretty well every tool in their arsenal  
8 from "Little Green Men" security support provision of  
9 weapons in Eastern Ukraine, the seizing of Crimea, to  
10 corrupt practices vis-à-vis time to buy members of  
11 Parliament, buy members of the economic elite, have  
12 influence inside Ukraine, stymie reform in the Parliament,  
13 spread false narratives within Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia.  
14 We could go on for a long time, Zack, on this subject, if  
15 you'd like.

16 MR. SCHRAM: And you have some direct personal  
17 experience of their malign influence efforts, correct?

18 MS. NULAND: I am. I do. David Danger, the  
19 journalist, declared me patient zero in the Russian hack and  
20 release strategy that became obvious in 2014. They put on  
21 the street a phone call between me and Ambassador Pyatt in  
22 February where I, much to the chagrin of my mother and  
23 others, used a barnyard epithet with regard to a sister  
24 entity.

25 MR. SCHRAM: And what was the consequence of that



1 release, that release of a recording, the conversation you  
2 had with the ambassador?

3 MS. NULAND: It was designed to sow doubts about our--  
4 about my, at least, motives and intent, credibility,  
5 legitimacy as an advocate for U.S. policy, as a partner with  
6 Europe, as a partner with the Ukrainian reformers, to  
7 undercut my effectiveness. I had to--and appropriately--  
8 publicly apologize to individual European leaders, to the  
9 European Union, to the Ukrainian opposition. I even wore a  
10 button for a while that said "I Love the EU."

11 But over time, it did not--largely because I was  
12 gratified to retain the support of the President, the Vice  
13 President Biden, and Secretary Kerry, ultimately it did not  
14 undercut my effectiveness and may even have helped.

15 MR. SCHRAM: Did you regard it as an attack by Russia  
16 no American interests?

17 MS. NULAND: Yes. Certainly on me.

18 MR. SCHRAM: And as patient zero in hack and release,  
19 as you described it, was that demonstrating a capability of  
20 attacking American national security interests in the  
21 region?

22 MS. NULAND: Yes.

23 MR. SCHRAM: Are you familiar with the August 7th  
24 assessment released by director of National  
25 Counterintelligence and Security Center, William Evanina

1 that, quote, Russia is using a range of measures to  
2 primarily denigrate former Vice President Biden. For  
3 example, pro-Russian Ukrainian Parliamentarian Andrii  
4 Derkach is spreading false--pardon me--is spreading claims  
5 about corruption, including through publicizing leaked phone  
6 calls, to undermine former Vice President Biden's candidacy  
7 and the Democratic Party?

8 MS. NULAND: I am familiar with that assessment.

9 MR. SCHRAM: Who is Andrii Derkach?

10 MS. NULAND: Andrii Derkach, I believe he's still a  
11 member of the Ukrainian party, the Ukrainian Rada, from the  
12 Party of Regions, the pro-Russian party.

13 He's also alleged to have ties to Russian intelligence.  
14 I'm not in a position to assess that myself.

15 MR. SCHRAM: Is it fair to say he's a supporter of pro-  
16 Russian interests in Ukraine?

17 MS. NULAND: As a member of the Party of Regions, yes.

18 MR. SCHRAM: I'm going to walk you through a timeline  
19 of correspondence and events, and I'll draw your attention  
20 to the relevant portions of that correspondence. My  
21 questions will be at the end.

22 Marking as Exhibit C, a November 18, 2019, letter form  
23 Chairman Johnson to Congressman Jordon and Congressman Nunes  
24 related to the impeachment proceedings.

25 [Nuland Exhibit C was marked

1 for identification.]

2 MR. SCHRAM: On page 9, at the bottom of page 9,  
3 Chairman Johnson writes--this is the second sentence of the  
4 last full paragraph--The release of transcripts of  
5 discussions between the President of the United States and  
6 another world leader sets a terrible precedent that will  
7 deter and limit candid conversations between the President  
8 and world leaders from now on.

9 Marking as Exhibit D is an April 30, 2020, letter from  
10 Chairman Johnson and Chairman Grassley to Secretary Pompeo.

11 We'll pause for a moment while we pull it up.

12 [Nuland Exhibit D was marked  
13 for identification.]

14 MR. ROBERTS: Zack, what was the date on that again?

15 MR. SCHRAM: April 30th, 2020.

16 [Pause.]

17 MS. NULAND: Do you want to just read it to us?

18 MR. SCHRAM: Are we having a technical difficulty, Roy?

19 MS. NULAND: We can't see it.

20 MR. SCHRAM: Give us just a moment.

21 MS. NULAND: Here we go.

22 MR. SCHRAM: The second request, all records including  
23 call transcripts and summaries related to then Vice  
24 President Biden's phone calls with then president of Ukraine  
25 Petro Poroshenko, from March 2015 through April 2016,

1 especially with regard to any mention of the Ukrainian  
2 prosecutor general's investigation of Burisma or Viktor  
3 Shokin. I would note that this letter provides a response  
4 date of May 15th, 2020.

5       On May 13th, 2020, Chairman Johnson provided notice of  
6 a committee business meeting to authorize the subpoena of  
7 Blue Star Strategies of what to be held on May 20th, 2020.  
8 That subpoena included a request for records that the  
9 chairman--included some records that the chairman first  
10 sought to obtain from the Ukrainian operative named Andrii  
11 Telizhenko. The chairman had previously pulled down a  
12 scheduled committee vote on a subpoena of Andrii Telizhenko  
13 due to bipartisan concern about Russian disinformation  
14 efforts.

15       On May 19, 2020, hours before the vote on the Blue Star  
16 subpoena, Mr. Derkach released excerpts of alleged tapes of  
17 conversations between Vice President Biden and Ukrainian  
18 Poroshenko, including some calls that were responsive to the  
19 chairman's request, the Secretary of State.

20       In other words, although Secretary Pompeo did not  
21 answer this mail in time, Andrii Derkach did.

22       On the same day, Andrii Telizhenko released a  
23 transcript from a call between then former Vice President  
24 Biden and President Poroshenko.

25       At the May 20th markup, Senator Peters made a motion to

1 table consideration of a subpoena until committee members  
2 received briefings related to this investigation from the  
3 FBI and the intelligence community. The chairman voted  
4 against that motion, and it failed on a party-line vote.

5       Ambassador Nuland, in your view, at the actions of Mr.  
6 Derkach and Mr. Telizhenko consistent with Russian malign  
7 influence operations?

8       MS. NULAND: I'm not in a position without access to  
9 classified or intelligence briefings to evaluate the length  
10 between these individuals and the Russian Federation.

11       I would simply note that any unauthorized release of  
12 presidential phone calls is counter to the interests of  
13 Ukraine or to the interests of the United States, no matter  
14 who is in office. And certainly would be consistent with  
15 tradecraft we've seen from Russia in other instances.

16       MR. SCHRAM: Would you regard it as a cause for concern  
17 if Ukrainian actors, including a KGB-linked parliamentarian  
18 assessed by the Office of the Director of National  
19 Intelligence, to be advancing a Russian attack on our  
20 election, timed the release of records of Vice President  
21 Biden and President Poroshenko to influence a committee  
22 vote?

23       MS. NULAND: Any efforts by outside actors to influence  
24 U.S. politics or U.S. elections is deleterious to the U.S.  
25 national interests and ought to be both investigated and

1 responded to.

2 MR. SCHRAM: Marking as Exhibit E, an open letter from  
3 the Ukrainian-American Strategic Partnership, published on  
4 May 23, 2020.

5 [Nuland Exhibit E was marked  
6 for identification.]

7 MR. SCHRAM: Ambassador Nuland, are you familiar with  
8 the Ukrainian-American Strategic Partnership?

9 MS. NULAND: I have to say, Zack, I am not. I'm  
10 familiar with many of the names at the bottom of this  
11 letter.

12 MR. SCHRAM: Are there any that you would like to draw  
13 to our attention?

14 MS. NULAND: Let me read the statement, if I may.

15 MR. SCHRAM: Sure thing.

16 [Pause.]

17 MS. NULAND: Yes. I would draw your attention to the  
18 former Prime Minister of Ukraine, the first name Arseniy,  
19 Yatsenyuk, somebody with whom we all worked very closely.  
20 Oleksandr Turchynov, Speaker of the Rada right after Maidan  
21 and a hero of the Maidan, as well as Ivanna Klympush-  
22 Tsintsadze, who is chair of the parliamentary committee on  
23 European Union, and with whom we worked closely on sanctions  
24 policy towards Russia. Valeriy Chaly, the former  
25 ambassador. Hannah Hopko, very strong anticorruption

1 advocate and chairwoman of the parliamentary committee on  
2 foreign affairs of the Rada. I could go on and on.

3 MR. SCHRAM: The individuals that you mentioned, do  
4 they represent pro-Western interests in Ukraine?

5 MS. NULAND: Those I know on this list do.

6 MR. SCHRAM: Drawing your attention to the body of the  
7 letter, the central paragraph which starts, "We call on  
8 American leaders to distinguish between the position of new  
9 Ukraine, which stands for the unity of the West and acts to  
10 unite democracies around the world with those forces to seek  
11 to turn the political developments in our country into a  
12 toxic narrative to sow discord among our partners. We  
13 oppose the dishonest attempts to use the political  
14 controversies in the United States. We do not choose any  
15 side but support each of them in the same way that they  
16 together help Ukraine's independence."

17 I would note that this letter indicates it was signed  
18 starting on May 22, two days after our vote to authorize a  
19 subpoena of Blue Star, three days after the release of the  
20 recordings and transcripts that we've been discussing.

21 Do you agree with the concerns that they address in  
22 this letter?

23 MS. NULAND: I have been concerned about the  
24 politicization of Ukraine policy in the United States for  
25 more than three years now. It is in America's national

1 security interest, no matter which party is in power, in the  
2 Executive or in the legislature, that Ukraine succeed as an  
3 increasingly clean, democratic European state, independent  
4 of the influence or malign activities of Moscow. That ought  
5 to be the subject of bipartisan consensus in the United  
6 States, and I really hate to see Ukraine policy used as a  
7 football in our own debates with each other.

8 MR. SCHRAM: Is it in the United States' national  
9 interest to promote the false narrative that the Obama  
10 administration policy in Ukraine was corrupt?

11 MS. NULAND: Again, I don't want to pick and choose  
12 which aspect of perverting Ukraine policy for U.S. political  
13 gain is unacceptable. I think they're all unacceptable.

14 MR. SCHRAM: Joe, noting that it's 11:45, and that we  
15 will expect equal time after our next round, I'll wrap now,  
16 with the expectation that we be provided equal time when  
17 you're done with your next round.

18 MR. DOWNEY: Hi, Ms. Nuland. My name is Brian Downey  
19 with Chairman Johnson's office. We're going to enter into  
20 the record Exhibit 1, which is Ambassador Pyatt's September  
21 24, 2015, remarks in Odessa.

22 [Nuland Exhibit No. 1 was  
23 marked for identification.]

24 MR. THOMAS: I'm sorry to interrupt. This is Ken  
25 Thomas at the State Department. Is there going to be a



1 break at this point?

2 MR. DOWNEY: We are going to go ahead.

3 MR. THOMAS: Okay. That's fine. I just want to, at  
4 this juncture then, make a couple of notations for the  
5 record.

6 MR. DOWNEY: Go ahead.

7 MR. THOMAS: The Department of State has not, pursuant  
8 to this administration's instructions, provided any material  
9 to the Committee, that is in the hands of the Department,  
10 that is potentially covered by presidential communications  
11 privileges, and until there is a change in administration  
12 instruction we will not do so. I also note that in the  
13 session before, Mr. Schram concluded there were discussions  
14 relating to Vice President Biden. The administration's  
15 position is that we are not asserting privileges but we are  
16 not waiving privileges, and that privileges related to those  
17 communications have to be asserted by a representative of  
18 President Obama, and that that representative is aware of  
19 this investigation. But I note there is no such  
20 representative on this call, and so I would--I won't say  
21 "caution," but I would remind people that when they are  
22 asking about those things we are not in a position to assert  
23 or waive privilege. It should be heard through the forum of  
24 a President's representative.

25 MR. DOWNEY: Thank you, Ken, for those comments.

1 MR. ROBERTS: Brian, before you start, this is Blake.  
2 I realize I made a misstatement previously in connection  
3 with the exhibits. You all had indicated that there was a  
4 news article concerning the speech that you wanted to use as  
5 an exhibit. We just had a copy of the speech right nearby  
6 it, and I misspoke. You all had not identified that copy of  
7 the speech as something that you planned to use as an  
8 exhibit, but hopefully the actual underlying source material  
9 is not a concern. Apologies for that.

10 MR. DOWNEY: No problem. We're going to go to Exhibit  
11 2, which is a December 2019--or November 2019 New York Times  
12 article.

13 [Nuland Exhibit No. 2 was  
14 marked for identification.]

15 MR. ROBERTS: Brian, I'm sorry. Did we actually get  
16 Exhibit 1 into the record? I think you were interrupted by  
17 Ken. I'm not sure you did.

18 MR. DOWNEY: No, I think we got it into the record.

19 MR. ROBERTS: Okay. Great.

20 MS. NULAND: What's the year of this exhibit?

21 MR. DOWNEY: Ms. Nuland, this is a November 2019 New  
22 York Times article, and we can have someone scroll up to  
23 show you the title of this.

24 MR. ROBERTS: Yeah, and Brian, are you using the  
25 version that was available at the link that Joe had sent us

1 last night? It was updated--yeah, there you go--updated  
2 March 6, 2020. So you're referring to whatever version is  
3 publicly available right now that was updated. Correct?

4 MR. DOWNEY: That's correct.

5 So if we could turn to page 5 of this news story, so  
6 according to this article, Vice President Biden flew to  
7 Ukraine to deliver an anticorruption speech to Ukraine's  
8 parliament, and several aides recalled a surreal split  
9 screen of activity on board. As Mr. Biden's team focused  
10 mostly on the speech, he urged them to make it tougher but  
11 peeled off for intermittent huddles on how to handle the  
12 Hunter story. Mr. Biden dismissed the story as a  
13 distraction and did not engage. The group defaulted to the  
14 pushback plan used the year before when the story had first  
15 emerged, issuing a statement that Hunter Biden was a private  
16 citizen and a lawyer.

17 Ms. Nuland, did you travel with Vice President Biden to  
18 Ukraine in December of 2015?

19 MS. NULAND: I met Vice President Biden in Ukraine for  
20 that visit. I did not travel on Air Force Two. I had been,  
21 that week, with Secretary Kerry at NATO, in Kosovo and  
22 Serbia, in Cyprus and Greece, and I arrived in Ukraine just  
23 ahead of the Vice President for his visit.

24 MR. DOWNEY: So during that time, in December of 2015,  
25 there's obviously news inquiries regarding Hunter Biden's

1 membership on Burisma's board. Do you remember discussions  
2 with other vice presidential staffers about what occurred on  
3 the flight over to Ukraine in December of 2015?

4 MS. NULAND: So I was on an email chain with regard to  
5 the press guidance, and I remember discussing, not with the  
6 Vice President's staff but with Amos Hochstein, sometime  
7 just before the trip or when I was on the road in that week--  
8 -I'm frankly not sure--that a New York Times reporter was  
9 reopening, or opening this question and that we might get it  
10 as a question to the Vice President during the trip. And  
11 then I saw my own staff was involved in the press guidance  
12 process, and I had a watching brief over it from the road.

13 MR. DOWNEY: Did you have a reaction to these inquiries  
14 regarding Hunter Biden on Burisma's board? Did you offer  
15 any advice to your team on how State Department should  
16 respond to such inquiries by the press?

17 MS. NULAND: We, in the documents that were shared with  
18 you and shared with me, there's an indication that I made  
19 clear to my staff that OVP thought this was old news and  
20 that Amos Hochstein could give them the back story. I did  
21 not comment on the press guidance per se. I don't appear to  
22 have commented on it.

23 MR. DOWNEY: Okay. Thank you. I'm going to turn the  
24 questioning over to Chairman Grassley's staff, Josh Flynn--  
25 Brown.

1 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Ms. Nuland, can you hear me okay?

2 MS. NULAND: I can.

3 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: What kind of relationship did the  
4 Ukrainian government have with the natural gas sector?

5 MS. NULAND: What kind of relationship did the  
6 Ukrainian government have with the natural gas sector? So  
7 energy overall was a fraught subject in Ukraine from the  
8 moment of independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, all  
9 the way through this period, and to this day, because they  
10 are energy dependent on Russia, and the vast majority of  
11 their gas comes to them through Russia, which gives Russia  
12 the ability to turn on and off the spigot.

13 So when, in the context of the effort to associate with  
14 Europe, and then the Maidan controversy, and then Yanukovich  
15 fleeing the country, and the taking of Crimea, and the  
16 invasion of Donbass, relations between Ukraine and Russia  
17 cratered. There were deep concerns about another--there had  
18 been, in the past, cutoffs of gas from Russia to Ukraine,  
19 cold winter, et cetera. I could go on and on.

20 But anyway, protecting energy supplies, and  
21 particularly gas supplies, for the people of Ukraine, and  
22 protecting the income that Ukraine got in transit fees,  
23 because the pipelines from Russia to Europe went through  
24 Ukraine, was vitally important to the effectiveness of the  
25 Ukrainian state and their support for the population.

1 Does that answer your question?

2 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Yes. Thank you. Was the Ukrainian  
3 government supported by corruption in the natural gas and  
4 energy sector?

5 MS. NULAND: Were they supportive of corruption?

6 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Supported by corruption.

7 MS. NULAND: Supported by corruption?

8 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Yes. I can restate the question in  
9 full if you would like.

10 MS. NULAND: Yes, please.

11 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Was the Ukrainian government  
12 supported by corruption in the natural gas and energy  
13 sector?

14 MS. NULAND: Certainly in the Yanukovich era it was.  
15 One of the major lines of effort for the Poroshenko  
16 government and for international support of Ukraine during  
17 the period of the Poroshenko government was to try to break  
18 the corrupt hold that Russia and oligarchs in Ukraine had on  
19 the natural gas sector. It was a very complicated, and  
20 remains a very complicated unwinding.

21 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: What kind of relationship did Burisma  
22 have with the Ukrainian government?

23 MS. NULAND: I have no idea.

24 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Did Burisma's economic importance or  
25 success benefit the Ukrainian government in any way?

1 MS. NULAND: I have to tell you that I had really very  
2 little knowledge of Burisma at all until it came up in the  
3 context of the continued corruption in the PGO.

4 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Did the Ukrainian government have a  
5 strong interest in the United States taking a favorable  
6 position regarding Burisma?

7 MS. NULAND: I don't think so, but I have no idea.  
8 You'd have to ask them. It never came up in any  
9 conversation that I was party to between American officials  
10 and Ukrainian officials. The word "Burisma" never passed a  
11 Ukrainian's lips, to my knowledge, in any conversation I was  
12 in.

13 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: So this may answer my next question,  
14 but I'm going to go ahead and ask it for the record. To  
15 your knowledge, did the Ukrainian government or any  
16 Ukrainian political party express concerns about Burisma's  
17 reputation in the United States?

18 MS. NULAND: Not to me.

19 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Are you aware of that being expressed  
20 to any of your colleagues?

21 MS. NULAND: Frankly, only later in the context of the  
22 lobbyists that they hired and the documents that I found in  
23 the record in preparation for this.

24 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: And you're referring to Blue Star  
25 Strategies. Is that correct?

1 MS. NULAND: Correct.

2 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Do you know whether Burisma served as  
3 a vehicle to enrich Ukrainian government officials?

4 MS. NULAND: I do not.

5 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Would it surprise you if it did?

6 MS. NULAND: In the Yanukovych period it would not  
7 surprise me. In the Poroshenko period, it would have been  
8 very disappointing but I just don't know.

9 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Do you know whether Burisma served as  
10 a vehicle to enrich Ukrainian political parties?

11 MS. NULAND: I do not know.

12 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Are you aware of whether or not  
13 Burisma and Zlochevsky took directions from Ukrainian  
14 government or any Ukrainian officials?

15 MS. NULAND: I am not aware.

16 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Would it surprise you if they did?

17 MS. NULAND: In the Yanukovych era it would not have  
18 surprised me. I, again, if that was going on under  
19 Poroshenko it would have been quite disappointing. I was  
20 not aware of it.

21 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: And would you be surprised if it did  
22 happen in the Poroshenko era?

23 MS. NULAND: Again, it would not have been in keeping  
24 with the stated policy and other actions that I was aware of  
25 by the Poroshenko government to break oligarchic and



1 monopolistic control of the energy sector.

2 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Are you aware of whether or not  
3 Burisma and Zlochevsky took directions from any political  
4 party?

5 MS. NULAND: I'm not aware.

6 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Would it surprise you if they did  
7 take those directions?

8 MS. NULAND: Again, I had no knowledge of how the  
9 company operated.

10 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Aside to owners and shareholders, who  
11 would benefit the most from improving Burisma's reputation  
12 in the United States?

13 MS. NULAND: Apart from the owners and shareholders?

14 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Correct.

15 MS. NULAND: I have no idea.

16 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Would the Ukrainian government  
17 benefit from improving Burisma's image?

18 MS. NULAND: The current Ukrainian government or  
19 Poroshenko's government? It was a private company. I don't  
20 think that they cared one way or the other.

21 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Zlochevsky was a member of the Party  
22 of Regions; is that correct?

23 MS. NULAND: I don't know.

24 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: I may revisit some of these questions  
25 later, but my line of questioning is done at this point.

1 I'm going to hand it to Scott. Thank you, Ms. Nuland.

2 MS. NULAND: Thank you. Thank you.

3 MR. FLYNN-BROWN: Actually, we're going to hand it to  
4 Brian. Sorry for the confusion there. We are actually  
5 going to Scott. Thank you.

6 MR. WITTMANN: Thank you, Josh.

7 Ambassador Nuland, I'm going to turn to our next  
8 exhibit that we'll enter into the record as Exhibit No. 3.  
9 Tab 4, please, Will.

10 [Nuland Exhibit No. 3 was  
11 marked for identification.]

12 MR. WITTMANN: Ambassador Nuland, for you and your  
13 counsel, that's the exhibit that ends in Bates numbers 553  
14 to 57.

15 MR. ROBERTS: Scott, give me a minute, if you don't  
16 mind.

17 MR. WITTMANN: Sure. Just let me know when you're  
18 ready.

19 [Pause.]

20 MS. NULAND: Go ahead.

21 MR. WITTMANN: Thank you.

22 In this email that you can see on the screen--it's on  
23 the very first page--Ambassador Pyatt writes, "I assume all  
24 have the DOJ background on Zlochevsky." What was the DOJ  
25 background on Zlochevsky?

1 MS. NULAND: I wasn't aware of it until this email that  
2 DOJ was in it with the London court, but he goes on to say  
3 what it was in unclass version. Do you want me to read  
4 that, or do you want to read that?

5 MR. WITTMANN: The short unclass version is that the  
6 U.S. and UK were cooperating on a case? Is that what you're  
7 referring to?

8 MS. NULAND: Yes. Mm-hmm.

9 MR. WITTMANN: Do you know why DOJ created this  
10 background on Zlochevsky?

11 MS. NULAND: My understanding, but I only learned this  
12 later--is that some of the--the allegation was that some of  
13 the illegally gained assets were laundered through the  
14 United States, and therefore, the London court reached out  
15 to DOJ to help support the case. I obviously wouldn't have  
16 known that at the time and didn't, given that it was a  
17 matter of law enforcement.

18 But we only get involved in these things if there's a  
19 U.S. angle.

20 MR. WITTMANN: Understood.

21 I think you mentioned that it touched on the illegally  
22 gained assets belonging to Mr. Zlochevsky. Ambassador Pyatt  
23 wrote that he considered it to be corrupt assets. Did you  
24 share Ambassador Pyatt's view that Zlochevsky had corrupt  
25 assets?

1 MS. NULAND: Well, again, this had been the subject of  
2 a court case in London that was closed for lack of  
3 cooperation by Ukrainian authorities. So when I became  
4 aware of all of this, if there was enough evidence to win a  
5 case in London, then the case should have been pursued to  
6 the end, but it would not be for me to be judge and jury  
7 over Zlochevsky.

8 MR. WITTMANN: Did you discuss Mr. Zlochevsky with  
9 Ambassador Pyatt?

10 MS. NULAND: I don't recall doing so at that time.  
11 Obviously, you know, I saw the speech after he gave it.

12 MR. WITTMANN: Did you view Mr. Zlochevsky as an  
13 oligarch?

14 MS. NULAND: You know, again, to the degree to which I  
15 was thinking about him at all, I would say that among the  
16 oligarchic class in Ukraine, he was not a major figure. A  
17 wannabe oligarch maybe.

18 MR. WITTMANN: Do you know whether Ambassador Pyatt  
19 viewed Mr. Zlochevsky as an oligarch?

20 MS. NULAND: You'd have to ask Ambassador Pyatt.

21 MR. WITTMANN: I'm going to turn it over to my  
22 colleague, Mr. Downey.

23 MR. DOWNEY: Hi, Ms. Nuland.

24 We're going to go to Exhibit 4, and that will be Tab 4,  
25 Will.

1 [Nuland Exhibit No. 4 was  
2 marked for identification.]

3 MR. DOWNEY: And as we pull that up, on December 9th,  
4 2015, Vice President Biden gave a speech to Ukraine's Rada.  
5 I'm going to turn specifically to these remarks on page 5.

6 MR. ROBERTS: Sorry. Brian, what is Exhibit 4?

7 MS. NULAND: A Rada speech.

8 MR. DOWNEY: It's Vice President Biden's speech to  
9 Ukraine's Rada.

10 MS. NULAND: We're ready.

11 MR. DOWNEY: Just a little bit, Will. Okay.

12 So on page 5, in the paragraph that starts with "As the  
13 prime minister," Vice President Biden said senior elected  
14 officials have to remove all conflicts--

15 MS. NULAND: I'm sorry. What? I'm sorry. Which  
16 paragraph? Oh, "As the"--yeah. Okay. It's my page 6. "As  
17 the prime minister and president heard me say often"? No.

18 MR. DOWNEY: Yes. We're going to start--I'm going to  
19 quote something at the end of his speech--or end of that  
20 paragraph.

21 MS. NULAND: Got it. Got it.

22 MR. DOWNEY: Vice President Biden said senior elected  
23 officials have to remove all conflicts between their  
24 business interests and their government responsibilities.  
25 Every other democracy in the world, that system pertains.

1 Did you assist in preparing Vice President Biden's  
2 remarks to the Rada?

3 MS. NULAND: I did.

4 MR. DOWNEY: Did you work on this specific section of  
5 the speech?

6 MS. NULAND: I remember working on all of the speech.  
7 So I assume this section was part of it. I mean, I saw all  
8 the draft.

9 MR. DOWNEY: What was the purpose of Vice President  
10 Biden telling elected Ukrainian officials to remove all  
11 conflicts between their business interests and their  
12 government responsibilities?

13 MS. NULAND: Well, it was routine, both in the Soviet  
14 period and unfortunately in the post-Soviet period, in  
15 Ukraine for sitting elected officials to also keep their  
16 hand in business or get kickbacks from businesses and to  
17 legislate or conduct their executive branch duties  
18 accordingly. So he was reminding them that that was not  
19 consistent with democratic politics and rule of law in a  
20 European-style democracy for those who had accepted the  
21 people's trust themselves to be corrupt.

22 MR. DOWNEY: Was Hunter Biden's board position on  
23 Burisma consistent with Vice President Biden's message to  
24 the Rada?

25 MS. NULAND: Hunter Biden was not an elected official

1 in any country. He was a private citizen.

2 MR. DOWNEY: When working on this speech, was Hunter  
3 Biden's position on Burisma's board a factor in writing up  
4 this section about conflicts of interest?

5 MS. NULAND: I have no memory of Hunter Biden coming up  
6 at all except in the context of the press guidance.

7 MR. DOWNEY: Did the fact of Hunter Biden's position on  
8 Burisma's board undermine Vice President Biden's message on  
9 conflicts of interest?

10 MS. NULAND: Again, the policy that we were conducting  
11 and that Vice President Biden was representing here at that  
12 second highest level of governance in the United States was  
13 one of rooting out corruption completely, and in the case of  
14 the prosecutor general's office was inconsistent with the  
15 interest of Burisma itself, which had been protected as part  
16 of the corrupt system. So he was actually working against  
17 the interests of the company on which his son sat on the  
18 board.

19 MR. DOWNEY: That sounds fairly awkward.

20 MS. NULAND: It was consistent with his principled  
21 position that corruption had to be rooted out in Ukraine if  
22 it was going to survive in the European democracy.

23 MR. DOWNEY: But did you or other members of the State  
24 Department while formulating this speech to the Rada--did  
25 you think this was awkward that Hunter Biden served on a

1 corrupt company in Ukraine?

2 MS. NULAND: Again, he was a private citizen. He was  
3 not making policy, and not only was policy not affected by  
4 his board position, policy went against the interests of  
5 this company.

6 MR. DOWNEY: How do you think the Ukrainian members of  
7 Parliament, who I would assume knew that Hunter Biden served  
8 on Burisma's board--do they see this as fairly awkward?

9 MR. ROBERTS: Brian, are you asking her whether she  
10 observed something that gave her a basis to judge their  
11 reaction, or are you asking her to speculate as to their  
12 reaction?

13 MR. DOWNEY: Were you there when the speech was  
14 delivered by Vice President Biden?

15 MS. NULAND: I was. I was proud to be there.

16 MR. DOWNEY: Did you see any reaction to Vice President  
17 Biden's speech by members of the Rada?

18 MS. NULAND: Yes. The speech was very powerful and  
19 powerfully received by the Rada. There were two parts to  
20 the message if you read the entire speech.

21 I would say that they were largely chastened by how  
22 strong the Vice President's criticism was of how far Ukraine  
23 still had to go in terms of reform and anticorruption, and  
24 they were not expecting a speech that would be so hard  
25 hitting, especially because many in the Rada were still



1 practicing the old ways and knew he was speaking to them.

2 I would say they applauded more loudly for the anti-  
3 Russian parts of the speech and those that pledged to defend  
4 Ukraine security.

5 But this was essentially a speech on the reform side  
6 where the Vice President said, "We supported you for a long  
7 time. You've made some progress, but there's a huge amount  
8 more to do." And he intentionally did it in the Rada  
9 because they had responsibility for--they shared  
10 responsibility with the executive for getting the job done.

11 MR. DOWNEY: Ms. Nuland, do you believe Hunter Biden's  
12 role on Burisma's board was a conflict of interest?

13 MS. NULAND: Again, I'm not a lawyer. I was not privy  
14 to the standards of the White House at that time.

15 What I was concerned about was whether there was any  
16 impact on policy, and to my view, there was not only no  
17 impact on policy, but the Vice President championed policies  
18 that were not in Burisma's interest.

19 MR. DOWNEY: Did you raise concerns about potential  
20 conflicts of interest of Hunter Biden being on Burisma's  
21 board to anyone in the State Department?

22 MS. NULAND: I did not.

23 MR. DOWNEY: To the Office of Vice President?

24 MS. NULAND: I did not. That was being raised by  
25 others was my understanding.

1 MR. DOWNEY: Did you raise any concerns to members of  
2 the National Security Council?

3 MS. NULAND: I did not.

4 MR. DOWNEY: Going back to what you just said, who was  
5 raising concerns of conflicts of interest at the State  
6 Department?

7 MS. NULAND: My understanding was from him directly  
8 when I first learned about this that Amos Hochstein had had  
9 a conversation with the Vice President and his staff about  
10 this, and he also he also had another conversation on the  
11 plane ride to Ukraine for that December 2015 trip.

12 MR. DOWNEY: Do you know when mental health first  
13 raised concerns to Vice President Biden about Hunter being  
14 on Burisma's board?

15 MS. NULAND: I do not. You'll have to ask him that.  
16 My understanding from my memory was that it would have been  
17 in the fall of 2015, but I don't know when or if that's  
18 accurate.

19 MR. DOWNEY: So Hunter had already been on Burisma's  
20 board for over a year as he joined the board in April of  
21 2014, and you're saying Mr. Hochstein raised concerns to  
22 Vice President in the fall of 2015?

23 MS. NULAND: That's my recollection, but you'll need to  
24 ask Mr. Hochstein.

25 MR. DOWNEY: Thank you.

1 I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Wittmann for  
2 questioning. Thank you very much.

3 MS. NULAND: Hey, guys, can we have a coffee break?

4 MR. WITTMANN: Sure. How long would you like a break?

5 MS. NULAND: Two minutes. I just want to get a cup of  
6 coffee.

7 MR. WITTMANN: Absolutely. No problem.

8 MS. NULAND: Great.

9 [Recess.]

10 MR. WITTMANN: Ambassador Nuland, I want to go back to  
11 Exhibit No. 4, that will hopefully appear on your screen.  
12 It's the photograph that was right underneath the paragraph  
13 that Mr. Downey had referenced earlier. It begins with  
14 "Oligarchs and non-oligarchs must play by the same rules.  
15 They have to pay their taxes, settle their disputes in  
16 court, not by buying judges. That's basic. That's how  
17 nations succeed in the 21st century."

18 So my question is, by confronting oligarchs, would that  
19 send an anticorruption message?

20 MS. NULAND: That was the hope.

21 MR. WITTMANN: Thank you. I'm going to turn it back  
22 over to my colleague, Mr. Downey.

23 MR. DOWNEY: We're going to go to, I believe this is  
24 Exhibit 5. It will be Tab 8, Will.

25 [Nuland Exhibit No. 5 was

1 marked for identification.]

2 MR. DOWNEY: So on March 30, 2016, Ambassador Pyatt  
3 forwarded you a meeting request from Ms. Karen Tramontano of  
4 Blue Star Strategies that Ms. Tramontano had sent to Denis  
5 McDonough, President Obama's chief of staff. In Ambassador  
6 Pyatt's email he wrote, "So I see below Ukraine hired a new  
7 lobbying, the same firm that saw Kathy Novelli complaining  
8 about my pressure on the PGO's coverup of the disgraced  
9 Yanukovych-era environmental minister."

10 Ms. Nuland, who was the disgraced Yanukovych-era  
11 environmental minister?

12 MS. NULAND: I assume he's referring to Zlochevsky.

13 MR. DOWNEY: What did Mr. Pyatt mean when he wrote,  
14 "Ukraine hired a new lobbyist"?

15 MS. NULAND: Meaning that the government of Ukraine had  
16 hired a lobbyist in Washington. In this particular case, I  
17 think he's peeved that rather than going to government-to-  
18 government asking for meetings they were using their  
19 lobbyist, which is always sloppy trade practice.

20 MR. DOWNEY: And who was that lobbyist?

21 MS. NULAND: It looks, from this email, that it was  
22 Blue Star Strategies. So again, the Ukrainian government  
23 did not need to be spending money on a lobbyist in order to  
24 get this meeting.

25 MR. DOWNEY: Do you know who Kathy Novelli is, who

1 Ambassador Pyatt references in this email?

2 MS. NULAND: Yes. She was the Under Secretary for  
3 Economic Affairs at the State Department. I believe she has  
4 appeared before you.

5 MR. DOWNEY: Do you know why Blue Star was complaining  
6 to Kathy Novelli?

7 MS. NULAND: I don't know in this context, no.

8 MR. DOWNEY: What was Ambassador Pyatt's pressure on  
9 the PGO?

10 MS. NULAND: Well, we've already gone over this. You  
11 know, it was the speech that he gave in Odessa, where he  
12 complaints that they allowed the Zlochevsky case to be  
13 dismissed in the London court, by refusing to cooperate, and  
14 they never go back under Shokin to investigate their own  
15 house and figure out who was responsible for that happening.

16 MR. DOWNEY: What was Blue Star Strategies concern with  
17 this pressure by Ambassador Pyatt on the PGO?

18 MS. NULAND: I don't know. You'd have to ask them.

19 MR. DOWNEY: Does it seem to you that Blue Star  
20 Strategies has a different goal than Ambassador Pyatt's with  
21 regards to the PGO and their cases against Burisma?

22 MS. NULAND: You're asking me answer about the goals of  
23 Blue Star and the goals of Ambassador Pyatt. You'd have to  
24 talk to each of them about their goals.

25 MR. DOWNEY: Was Ms. Novelli aware of Ambassador

1 Pyatt's pressure on the PGO?

2 MS. NULAND: I don't know. You'll have to ask her.

3 MR. DOWNEY: Ms. Nuland, what was your awareness of Ms.  
4 Novelli speaking to Blue Star Strategies employees about  
5 Ambassador Pyatt?

6 MS. NULAND: I frankly didn't know that this meeting  
7 between her and Blue Star had even happened. I had no  
8 memory of it or recollection of it until we got to this  
9 whole procedure and I saw the documents.

10 MR. DOWNEY: We're going to go to Exhibit 6, which is  
11 Tab 9, Will.

12 [Nuland Exhibit No. 6 was  
13 marked for identification.]

14 MR. DOWNEY: And Exhibit 6 is a September 6, 2016,  
15 email by George Kent to Bridget Brink, Jorgan Andrews, and  
16 Maria Yovanovitch, with a subject line, "Bullying,  
17 threatening call by Blue Star's Sally Painter regarding  
18 Lutsenko." Although we do not have the full email chain  
19 available to us today, we can represent, for the record,  
20 that Ms. Nuland, you forwarded--that you were forwarded this  
21 email. Does this email look familiar?

22 MS. NULAND: I was forwarded it by whom? By Ambassador  
23 Yovanovitch?

24 MR. DOWNEY: I do not know, but we know that it was  
25 forwarded to you.

1 MS. NULAND: I believe this is an email that I saw when  
2 I reviewed classified documents that the State Department  
3 had given to you in the context of this inquiry.

4 MR. DOWNEY: Prior to receiving this email, were you  
5 aware of any effort by Blue Star to contact George Kent  
6 about one of their clients?

7 MS. NULAND: I was not.

8 MR. DOWNEY: Prior to receiving this September 6, 2016,  
9 email by George Kent, were you aware that according to Mr.  
10 Kent Blue Star Strategies had been arranging a trip to  
11 Washington for Prosecutor General Lutsenko to meet high  
12 levels of the Clinton campaign and attend other meetings?

13 MS. NULAND: I was not.

14 MR. DOWNEY: What was the State Department's view on  
15 private parties arranging a meeting like that?

16 MS. NULAND: It was always our view that meetings  
17 between government officials in a foreign country and  
18 government officials in the United States should be arranged  
19 between governments, but that meetings between foreign  
20 government officials and private citizens should be arranged  
21 either by their embassies or by other folks representing  
22 them.

23 MR. DOWNEY: So what do you think about this call  
24 summary that Mr. Kent emailed to Maria Yovanovitch and other  
25 members of the State Department?

1 MS. NULAND: I think he was mostly upset that Sally  
2 Painter appeared to have been rude to him, and he seems to  
3 have been somewhat intemperate back, which doesn't--yes.

4 MR. DOWNEY: Was, from your view of this email, the  
5 conversation between Mr. Kent and Ms. Painter of Blue Star  
6 Strategies about Prosecutor General Lutsenko scheduling a  
7 meeting to come to Washington, and Blue Star had been  
8 apparently arranging?

9 MS. NULAND: I'm sorry. Was there a question there?

10 MR. DOWNEY: What did you think the meat of the phone  
11 call between George Kent and Sally Painter was about?

12 MS. NULAND: Can I tell you, it's unlikely that I paid  
13 much attention to this email at the time.

14 MR. DOWNEY: Why is that?

15 MS. NULAND: Are you asking me now to analyze it, based  
16 on reading it?

17 MR. DOWNEY: Yes.

18 MS. NULAND: Let me just take another look at it.

19 MR. ROBERTS: Brian, obviously the exhibit kind of  
20 speaks for itself. Is there an ambiguity in this that  
21 you're looking for Ambassador Nuland to clarify, based on  
22 her State Department experience?

23 MR. DOWNEY: Was it out of the ordinary for a lobbying  
24 firm to arrange such a trip for Ukraine's Prosecutor General  
25 without the involvement of the State Department?



1 MS. NULAND: It would be out of the ordinary for a  
2 foreign government official, including the Prosecutor  
3 General, to be seeking government meetings through a  
4 lobbyist rather than through the Embassy. That's a bad  
5 idea. In terms of seeking outside meetings, you know, that  
6 can be done by their Embassy in Washington is the  
7 traditional way. You know, I think the notion that the  
8 government of Ukraine was spending money on lobbyists that  
9 it didn't need was probably irksome to Mr. Kent, but I  
10 frankly can't speak to that. He seems--as I read this,  
11 Sally Painter felt that George Kent had somehow maligned the  
12 firm and that they might lose the Ukrainians' business, and  
13 that was what was going on in that phone call. But I'm only  
14 surmising that from the reading.

15 MR. DOWNEY: On the second page of this exhibit, Mr.  
16 Kent wrote, "The presence of Hunter Biden on the Burisma  
17 board was very awkward for all U.S. officials pushing an  
18 anticorruption agenda in Ukraine." At this time, in  
19 September 2016, were you aware of other State Department  
20 officials sharing this same concern?

21 MS. NULAND: I was not. Again, the policy that we were  
22 conducting was, if anything, antithetical to Burisma's  
23 interests.

24 MR. DOWNEY: So if State Department officials felt this  
25 way, who should they have reported their concerns to?

1 MS. NULAND: They would have been welcome to report  
2 them to me. They did not.

3 MR. DOWNEY: George Kent did not raise concerns of  
4 conflicts of interest regarding Hunter Biden on Burisma's  
5 board to you?

6 MS. NULAND: He did not, in my memory.

7 MR. DOWNEY: As we discussed, Hunter Biden's position  
8 on Burisma's board received significant attention in  
9 December of 2015, exhibited by the press articles, but here,  
10 nine months later, the Deputy Chief of Mission, George Kent,  
11 is still describing it as very awkward for all U.S.  
12 officials pushing an anticorruption agenda in Ukraine. Did  
13 anything change?

14 MS. NULAND: What do you mean, did anything change?

15 MR. DOWNEY: So Shokin is now gone and Lutsenko is in,  
16 and it's still awkward, according to George Kent, that U.S.  
17 officials are pushing an anticorruption agenda while Hunter  
18 Biden serves on the board of Burisma. So has anything  
19 changed? Did Lutsenko go after Burisma?

20 MS. NULAND: To my knowledge, I frankly don't recall  
21 whether Lutsenko cleaned up the staff of the PGO. He may  
22 well have. I frankly don't recall. He did initiate some  
23 high-level cases, but I would say that, once again, this  
24 third effort at a Prosecutor General was not as successful  
25 as most Ukrainians would have liked either.

1 MR. DOWNEY: So did Lutsenko prosecute anyone connected  
2 to Burisma, or prosecute Zlochevsky?

3 MS. NULAND: I frankly don't know, Brian. I don't  
4 think so.

5 MR. DOWNEY: As the Assistant Secretary of the European  
6 Bureau, did you communicate or meet with officials on the  
7 National Security Council?

8 MS. NULAND: Of course.

9 MR. DOWNEY: What individuals of the NSC did you  
10 communicate with?

11 MS. NULAND: On what?

12 MR. DOWNEY: Regarding Ukraine.

13 MS. NULAND: A broad cross-section of National Security  
14 Council colleagues. Charlie Kupchan was my main  
15 counterpart. Celeste Wallander, who did Ukraine. The  
16 Deputy NSA, Avril Haynes. The National Security Advisor,  
17 Susan Rice. At various times we worked with the National  
18 Economic Council on pieces of policy that involved funding  
19 and reform. We often worked with other directorates in the  
20 NSC, the Asia Bureau, et cetera, who were trying to maintain  
21 unity with Asian allies. I could continue if you'd like,  
22 Executive Secretary in arranging meetings.

23 MR. DOWNEY: Do you know who made up Charlie Kupchan's  
24 team on the NSC?

25 MS. NULAND: I did. Can I make my brain remember? I

1 can't. Do you want to refresh my memory? And he had--you  
2 know, those positions tended to turn over every year,  
3 because they were detailed from other agencies, so different  
4 people were on his staff at different times.

5 MR. DOWNEY: Did you or your staff communicate or meet  
6 with Elisabeth Zentos on the NSC?

7 MS. NULAND: Of course. She had also been in the  
8 Embassy in Ukraine. She had been on my staff. She was a  
9 State Department detailee. I believe you've already spoken  
10 with her as well.

11 MR. DOWNEY: Same with Eric Ciaramello.

12 MS. NULAND: Yes.

13 MR. DOWNEY: Who, below Charlie Kupchan, ran--who was  
14 in charge of Ukraine policy under Charlie Kupchan?

15 MS. NULAND: Again, it varied at various times. Both  
16 were involved. Both Ciaramello and Zentos were involved at  
17 various times.

18 MR. DOWNEY: Were you aware of a Ukrainian delegation  
19 that included Ukraine's prosecutors and anticorruption  
20 officials meeting with U.S. officials, including the State  
21 Department officials, in January of 2016?

22 MS. NULAND: I'm not remembering that but it's highly  
23 possible. Again, I haven't had the opportunity to review  
24 all my records and calendars. Who did they meet with?

25 MR. DOWNEY: I believe they met with a couple of the

1 bureaus within the State Department, and they also met with  
2 officials at the NSC, the Department of Justice, and the  
3 Federal Bureau of Investigation.

4 MS. NULAND: And was this at the Lutsenko level or  
5 lower?

6 MR. DOWNEY: This occurred in January of 2016.

7 MS. NULAND: Oh, so--but Shokin didn't come then. It  
8 would have been his deputies?

9 MR. DOWNEY: We're still trying to figure that out.

10 I'm going to pause one second. Thank you.

11 [Pause.]

12 MR. DOWNEY: So according to White House visitor logs,  
13 on June 17, 2016, you met with Eric Ciaramello.

14 MS. NULAND: I'm sorry. January 16--January what?

15 MR. DOWNEY: June 17, 2016.

16 MS. NULAND: June 17, 2016.

17 MR. ROBERTS: Brian, do you have the White House  
18 visitor logs to use as an exhibit?

19 MR. DOWNEY: They are public documents. We can  
20 probably pull it. I don't have it on me right now.

21 MR. ROBERTS: Okay. I just want to understand if we're  
22 relying on your representation of what's in the logs or if  
23 you actually have them to show Ambassador Nuland, to refresh  
24 her recollection, or whatever you're trying to do.

25 MR. DOWNEY: Yeah, it's an Excel spreadsheet.

1 MS. NULAND: Again--

2 MR. DOWNEY: Go ahead.

3 MS. NULAND: Again, Brian, we would have to check  
4 against my calendars as well, because Eric was regularly the  
5 clearing authority to get me into the White House for  
6 interagency meetings on Ukraine or for meetings with foreign  
7 visitors who we were jointly meeting on the compound, or I  
8 may have been coming to see any number of NSC staffers,  
9 Ciaramello included.

10 MR. DOWNEY: So you--

11 MS. NULAND: It is unlikely that I went over there for  
12 a specific meeting only with Ciaramello. He would normally  
13 come to me.

14 MR. DOWNEY: So, yeah, and I apologize for not having  
15 the Excel spreadsheet to put in front of you. But I believe  
16 on June 17, 2016, according to those logs, yourself and  
17 Ambassador Pyatt met with Mr. Ciaramello. Does that ring  
18 any bells in your memory?

19 MS. NULAND: It does not. Again, if Pyatt and I were  
20 jointly going to the compound it's likely that we were going  
21 either for an interagency meeting or to see one of  
22 Ciaramello's bosses, and he was the clearing authority. If  
23 it were just him he would normally have come to us.

24 MR. ROBERTS: Yeah. Ambassador Nuland, maybe can you  
25 explain how it works for you to submit a request to visit

1 the White House, and then for the NSC staff to put you into  
2 the WAVE system? I think that might help explain, when you  
3 say he's the clearing person, what that means.

4 MS. NULAND: Yeah. So if you don't have a White House  
5 badge and you want to visit the compound as a government  
6 official, from another agency, whether it's for an  
7 interagency meeting, whether it's to join a meeting, when I  
8 would go brief the Vice President, for example, you have to  
9 be cleared onto the compound by a staff member with  
10 clearance authority. So every time I went to the White  
11 House, whether it was for a meeting with an individual or  
12 for an interagency meeting, I had to have a clearance. So  
13 when I talk about being the clearing authority, since he was  
14 the junior staffer on covering Ukraine, anything having to  
15 do with Ukraine he probably had to submit a request to let  
16 me onto the compound, which is why his name appears.

17 Does that make sense?

18 MR. DOWNEY: So to be clear, you never discussed  
19 Ukraine policy, the prosecutor general's office with Mr.  
20 Ciaramello?

21 MS. NULAND: Of course, I did. He was part of the  
22 interagency process. He was also on my negotiating team for  
23 the six, seven rounds of negotiations I did with the  
24 Russians on Donbass.

25 MR. DOWNEY: When were you made aware that the

1 condition of Shokin's removal would be met? What date?

2 MS. NULAND: I don't remember precisely, but as you can  
3 tell from the record, the Ukrainians did not move  
4 immediately. Shokin doesn't actually resign the first time  
5 until February 19th.

6 My memory of this refreshed by preparation for this  
7 session was that the Vice President Biden made another call  
8 to President Poroshenko around February 10th, 11th, and  
9 Poroshenko had yet to make the decision. And the decision  
10 was made thereafter.

11 MR. DOWNEY: Were you present for those phone calls  
12 between Vice President Biden and President Poroshenko?

13 MS. NULAND: I sometimes sat in with the Vice President  
14 at his office. I sometimes was connected by classified  
15 phone from my own office. I sometimes missed them because I  
16 was on the road. I frankly can't remember this one, one way  
17 or the other. We'd have to check my calendars.

18 MR. DOWNEY: Thank you.

19 What is the Kyiv task force?

20 MS. NULAND: I don't know. What's the context?

21 MR. DOWNEY: I don't know. That's why I asked you. It  
22 came up on some documents, and it might just be an email  
23 contact list of everyone who's involved at the Ukraine  
24 embassy.

25 MS. NULAND: You mean at our embassy?



1 MR. DOWNEY: I believe so.

2 Hold on just a second. Thank you.

3 MR. SCHRAM: Scott, Brian, just noting that we went off  
4 the record at 11:45, a little courtesy time, because  
5 Ambassador Nuland took a coffee break, but you're in your  
6 final minutes here.

7 [Pause.]

8 MR. DOWNEY: How often, Ms. Nuland, did you assess  
9 whether Mr. Shokin was making meaningful progress on  
10 anticorruption reforms?

11 MS. NULAND: Well, throughout that period where we were  
12 conditioning further assistance on progress in the PGO, I  
13 would say that as an interagency, certainly at the level  
14 below me, it was looked at on an every-other-week basis at  
15 my level. I would guess, although I'd have to look at my  
16 calendars in terms of when we had meetings, we were talking  
17 about it pretty consistently and evaluating it pretty  
18 consistently, so once every three weeks or so, September,  
19 October, November, heading towards the vice presidential  
20 trip.

21 MR. DOWNEY: So in December of 2015 when Vice President  
22 Biden traveled there and delivered his speech to the Rada,  
23 he also famously gave the ultimatum to Poroshenko that if  
24 you do not fire Shokin, you will not get the aid? Is that  
25 your recollection?

1 MS. NULAND: I've already spoken to that, right, in the  
2 previous round extensively?

3 MR. DOWNEY: Did he tell that to his staff or to you  
4 that he did that in December 2015?

5 MS. NULAND: Yes. He did it in the one-on-one session,  
6 which was done to allow Poroshenko to make his own decision,  
7 and then he debriefed that he had delivered the message, as  
8 I said earlier.

9 MR. DOWNEY: So we asked you about when--what date the  
10 determination was made that Shokin was not adhering to  
11 anticorruption reforms. Do you approximately know when this  
12 information was shared with Vice President Biden or his  
13 office?

14 MS. NULAND: Well, his office would have been involved  
15 throughout the policy effort as part of the interagency,  
16 right? They were represented on the sub-IPC, on the IPC as  
17 deputies.

18 Based on how we generally operated and how government  
19 usually operates in the foreign policy sphere, when you have  
20 a principal making a trip, it's a forcing function for  
21 deciding what the messages of the trip are going to be.

22 So I'm going to guess that in preparation for the trip,  
23 which would have been late November, we were deciding as an  
24 interagency what we thought the Vice President needed to  
25 achieve and could achieve by going to Ukraine. So I'm going

1 to guess that's when we made the turn, sometime in late  
2 November, but I don't know for sure. And I wouldn't know  
3 for sure unless I obtained the interagency records and my  
4 own emails at the time that we just didn't think Shokin was  
5 going to clean up his act.

6 And, again, we didn't make this decision. This was a  
7 decision we put to the Ukrainians. If you want more money  
8 from us, you need to clean this up.

9 MR. DOWNEY: I think earlier in your testimony, you  
10 discussed George Kent's knowledge of a bribe to Yarema's  
11 prosecutors that he learned of in February 2015.

12 MS. NULAND: I didn't mention that. The documents  
13 indicate that he asked Yarema or Yarema's people about that.  
14 I wasn't aware of that at the time. I'm not sure it was  
15 proven.

16 MR. DOWNEY: And when did you become aware of  
17 allegations that Yarema's prosecutors accepted bribes from  
18 Zlochevsky?

19 MS. NULAND: Frankly, I don't remember hearing about  
20 any of that until we got into the preparation for this  
21 process.

22 MR. DOWNEY: All right. Thank you.

23 Zack, if you have some questions, the floor is yours.

24 MR. SCHRAM: Sure thing.

25 Ambassador Nuland, I don't expect I'll take long, but

1 would you like a break as we're between rounds?

2 MS. NULAND: No. I think we're good. Thanks.

3 MR. SCHRAM: Ambassador Nuland, how much did Hunter  
4 Biden's interests impact your policy work at the State  
5 Department?

6 MS. NULAND: Zero.

7 MR. SCHRAM: You seem certain of that answer. How can  
8 you be so certain?

9 MS. NULAND: I never had any contact with him. I never  
10 even knew what he was up to until very late. The policy  
11 that we were conducting, as I had said again and again here,  
12 would have been counter to the interests of the company that  
13 he--on whose board he served. So his name never came up in  
14 any contact with Ukrainian or the interagency.

15 MR. SCHRAM: At the risk of making you repeat yourself,  
16 was the policy to condition a loan guarantee on the removal  
17 of Prosecutor General Shokin a U.S. government policy?

18 MS. NULAND: It was.

19 MR. SCHRAM: And that was developed through the  
20 interagency process?

21 MS. NULAND: It was.

22 MR. SCHRAM: It was supported by our international  
23 partners?

24 MS. NULAND: Very much so and the International  
25 Financial Institution.

1 MR. SCHRAM: Why was that policy communicated by Vice  
2 President Biden to President Poroshenko?

3 MS. NULAND: Because we had failed to get any action at  
4 lower levels of interaction with the Ukrainians.

5 Generally, we would push issues to Secretary Kerry,  
6 Vice President Biden, President Obama when we had failed to  
7 get action at our own level.

8 MR. SCHRAM: The Majority began their last hour of  
9 questioning discussing the December 2015 trip Vice President  
10 Biden made to Ukraine. You were also present on that trip,  
11 correct?

12 MS. NULAND: Correct.

13 MR. SCHRAM: In the Chairman's August 10th open letter,  
14 he asked, How could former Vice President Biden look any  
15 Ukrainian official or any world leader in the face and  
16 demand action to fight corruption?

17 Ambassador Nuland, were you present when Vice President  
18 Biden met with Ukrainian officials and discussed  
19 anticorruption reforms?

20 MS. NULAND: Yes. I was present in virtually all of  
21 his meetings with Ukrainian officials throughout the period,  
22 September 2013 to January 2017, with the exception of those  
23 one-on-one encounters.

24 MR. SCHRAM: Was Vice President Biden a credible  
25 spokesperson to demand anticorruption reforms?

1 MS. NULAND: The Ukrainians certainly thought he was.

2 MR. SCHRAM: Did you think he was?

3 MS. NULAND: I did.

4 MR. SCHRAM: You said the position to advocate for  
5 anticorruption reforms was part of his principled views.  
6 Can you explain what you meant?

7 MS. NULAND: Vice President beginning--during his  
8 tenure in the Senate and over my long government career, I  
9 first encountered him as a Senator. Of course, particularly  
10 during the period of NATO enlargement in the Clinton  
11 administration was when I first began watching him work.  
12 Going back at least that far, if not farther, he has been a  
13 champion of democratic reform, of breaking the Soviet and  
14 post-Soviet and Russian chokehold on third countries. He's  
15 been a champion of conditioning assistance on  
16 democratization on anticorruption, et cetera. He had--  
17 around the world as Vice President, he was pushing an  
18 anticorruption message in the interest of strengthening  
19 partners and allies and ensuring that their political and  
20 economic systems couldn't be corrupted from the outside  
21 because just to remind that authoritarian states used  
22 corruption as a tool of foreign influence, not just in the  
23 United States, but all around the world.

24 MR. SCHRAM: Who benefits from promoting the false  
25 narrative that Vice President Biden's actions in Ukraine

1 were corrupt?

2 MS. NULAND: Again, I'm not going to speculate as to  
3 who's trying to gain here. I'm simply telling you that as a  
4 lifetime career professional, I was proud to be associated  
5 with Vice President Biden's anticorruption campaign, not  
6 just in Ukraine, but around the world.

7 MR. SCHRAM: Do you have any reason to dispute the  
8 statement of the direct or National Intelligence that  
9 Russian-based Ukrainian actors are supporting these  
10 narratives?

11 MS. NULAND: I don't have any reason to dispute it, and  
12 it takes a lot, as you know, in our system for intelligence  
13 professionals to go public. The standard of evidence is  
14 pretty high.

15 MR. SCHRAM: And allegations of corruption by an  
16 American Vice President in Ukraine would benefit Russian  
17 interests in the region, correct?

18 MS. NULAND: Certainly.

19 MR. SCHRAM: You've been very generous with your time  
20 today and patient with our questions. Is there anything  
21 that you would like to add on the subjects that we've  
22 covered?

23 MS. NULAND: I don't think so, except to say, again,  
24 that I was very proud during my tenure to be part of a  
25 policy of protecting and defending and pushing a Ukraine

1 that wanted to be more European, more democratic, cleaner,  
2 and I was very proud that it was a policy that was supported  
3 in a very strong bipartisan way in the United States, and  
4 particularly in the House and in the Senate, I was very  
5 proud to work with Senator Johnson on these issues as well.

6 MR. SCHRAM: On behalf of Senator Peters and all of us  
7 on his staff, we're very grateful for your service to this  
8 country and for the many sacrifices that you've made in your  
9 career. And we appreciate your work, and we appreciate your  
10 time today.

11 MS. NULAND: Thank you.

12 MR. WITTMANN: Ambassador Nuland, we just have a few  
13 more questions before our time runs out.

14 You mentioned earlier, I believe--and feel free to  
15 correct me if I'm wrong--that Hunter Biden's position on the  
16 board of Burisma had no effect on U.S. policy; is that  
17 correct?

18 MS. NULAND: That's correct.

19 MR. WITTMANN: I'm sorry. We're having technical  
20 difficulties here.

21 Ambassador Nuland, I didn't hear your last response.  
22 Do you mind repeating?

23 MS. NULAND: That's correct.

24 MR. WITTMANN: So his position had no effect on U.S.  
25 policy, but at the same time, based on the previous document



1 we presented, the George Kent email, Mr. Kent mentioned that  
2 it created awkwardness for all U.S. officials pushing an  
3 anticorruption agenda.

4 So from your perspective, how can both be true?

5 MS. NULAND: You are giving back to me the personal  
6 opinion of George Kent, which I didn't share.

7 MR. WITTMANN: So from your perspective, you had never  
8 heard any of those types of concerns?

9 MS. NULAND: George Kent did not raise those concerns  
10 with me to my recollection.

11 MR. WITTMANN: Had you been made aware of those types  
12 of concerns, what would you have done?

13 MR. ROBERTS: Scott, are you asking her to engage in a  
14 hypothetical and speculate?

15 MR. WITTMANN: I'm just asking her information about  
16 from her position, her responsibilities, what she would have  
17 done.

18 MS. NULAND: I mean, again, it is a hypothetical  
19 question. It depends how the concerns were raised. I was  
20 always open to hearing the concerns of subordinates and  
21 trying to address them in an open and transparent manner.

22 MR. WITTMANN: What if you had been forwarded an email  
23 that had those concerns?

24 MS. NULAND: Again, clearly, way deep down in an email,  
25 late in 2016, there were those concerns, but they were not

1 brought to my specific attention by George Kent who is an  
2 old friend and had plenty of opportunity to do so, had he so  
3 wanted.

4 MR. WITTMANN: I want to introduce our final exhibit  
5 and mark it as Exhibit No. 7.

6 Tab 6, please. Will.

7 [Nuland Exhibit No. 7 was  
8 marked for identification.]

9 MR. WITTMANN: Ambassador Nuland, this is an exhibit  
10 that I believe you referenced earlier regarding the recent  
11 New York Times article. I want to turn to page--Bates No.  
12 61, and it goes on to 62. And just let me know when you're  
13 ready.

14 MS. NULAND: I'm ready.

15 MR. WITTMANN: You mention in this email chain that  
16 this is regarding the inquiry. It's an old story, Amos has  
17 more. What were you referring to when you said Amos has  
18 more?

19 MS. NULAND: So there had been press inquiries in the  
20 spring of 2014 when Hunter Biden first joined the Burisma  
21 board, which had been addressed from the White House podium  
22 by Jay Carney and had also been addressed by the Office of  
23 the Vice President Biden. So from that perspective, this  
24 was not the first time this had come up.

25 I frankly have no recollection of being aware of them

1 at the time. When I went back and looked at my calendars, I  
2 was on the road almost nonstop in 2014, spring, and also  
3 trying to work on ending the hot war in Eastern Ukraine.

4 So from the perspective of old story, meaning it's been  
5 asked and answered already from the White House, and I had  
6 understood in the context of getting ready for the trip from  
7 Amos that this reporter was asking them again, and that we  
8 were going to have to prepare press guidance again for the  
9 trip. So that's what my response refers to.

10 MR. WITTMANN: Just so I understand, Amos has more in  
11 terms of how to respond? Is that what you're saying?

12 MS. NULAND: I think he has more in terms of reminding  
13 my people that this was asked and answered in 2014. He has  
14 more in terms of how OVP is planning to prepare.

15 If you look at this email, my response appears to be--I  
16 don't think you have it here, but it's just like four  
17 o'clock in the morning, Washington. So I was on the road in  
18 Europe when I wrote this.

19 So I'm telling my people to talk to Amos to get the  
20 back story, including the fact that my press people  
21 shouldn't be trying to answer this question. It's a  
22 question to OVP.

23 I'm going to turn it over to my colleague, Joe.

24 MR. ROBERTS: Joe, are we--how much more do you have?  
25 We're past one.

1 MR. FOLIO: I just have one or two more questions, and  
2 then we can conclude today.

3 MR. ROBERTS: Okay. You're very garbled.

4 MR. FOLIO: Sorry. I had a problem with my microphone  
5 on my computer.

6 Ms. Nuland, just a few more questions. So my colleague  
7 asked about your testimony that Hunter Biden's position on  
8 the board had no effect on U.S. policy, and we just looked  
9 at another email where you and others were having to respond  
10 to a reporter and address these issues at the time, I think,  
11 the Vice President was traveling to Ukraine to make a speech  
12 on, among other topics, anticorruption.

13 So, again, how do you square that circle to say that it  
14 had no effect, but yet this is something that, you know,  
15 high-level officials, including officials in the Vice  
16 President's office, are exchanging emails about and trying  
17 to understand how to address and resolve these issues before  
18 an important speech before the Ukrainian Parliament?

19 MS. NULAND: Again, I think the press guidance speaks  
20 for the position of the government, which was that Hunter  
21 Biden was a private citizen. He was not a member of  
22 government. But as I've said repeatedly during this  
23 interview, if anything, part of the bill of indictments  
24 against Prosecutor General Shokin was that he was not  
25 pursuing the investigation of Burisma, on which Hunter Biden

1 was on the board, that he was not cleaning out his own staff  
2 of those who had protected Burisma in the past.

3       So the policy that we were conducting was antithetical  
4 to Burisma in trying to get rid of Shokin, who was  
5 protecting Burisma, and, therefore, the Vice President's  
6 actions in advocating for getting rid of Shokin one could  
7 argue were antithetical to the interests of his son as a  
8 board member. So that is the best evidence that there was  
9 no influence on policy.

10       MR. FOLIO: I understand that position, but I guess  
11 what I'm trying to understand is that you had, at this time,  
12 one and now two Prosecutor Generals who were not able to  
13 successfully move forward cases against Burisma. So  
14 although the message from the United States made it clear,  
15 I'm wondering how effective was that message, and could that  
16 message have been undermined by the fact that the Vice  
17 President's son sat on the board of the company against whom  
18 at least two Prosecutor Generals, if not three, seemed  
19 reluctant to bring cases against?

20       MS. NULAND: On the contrary. I think when you have  
21 the American ambassador to a country, confirmed by the U.S.  
22 Senate, make a speech saying that those who protected a  
23 company on which the Vice President's son serves on the  
24 board, should be fired, we are saying that nobody is immune,  
25 that no family relationship should protect you from

1 corruption. We say that first with Pyatt. We say it in my  
2 testimony. We say it when the Vice President goes to  
3 Ukraine.

4 So the message we were sending to Ukrainians is this  
5 may be how you do business. It's not how we do business. I  
6 hope it's not how we do business now.

7 MR. FOLIO: Did any Ukrainian officials raise with you  
8 the issue of Hunter Biden serving on Burisma's board?

9 MS. NULAND: No.

10 MR. FOLIO: Are you aware of any Ukrainian officials  
11 raising that matter with any other State Department official  
12 in your area?

13 MS. NULAND: I am not aware of that.

14 MR. FOLIO: So is it your testimony today that you did  
15 not witness any effect that Hunter Biden's position on the  
16 board had on the Ukrainian government?

17 MS. NULAND: I did not witness any impact. On the  
18 contrary, Ukrainians saw us going after a prosecutor that  
19 had protected the company on which the Vice President's son  
20 served on the board.

21 MR. FOLIO: And do you believe, from all of your  
22 knowledge and experience in working this issue, do you  
23 believe that the Ukrainians would have seen the Vice  
24 President's son on the board of Burisma and thought that it  
25 didn't matter?

1 MS. NULAND: I have no idea. You would have to talk to  
2 Ukrainians. I don't know what Ukrainians were even talking  
3 about. All I'm telling you is that the message we were  
4 sending was that Burisma should not have been protected, and  
5 those on the PGO who protected Burisma should be fired.

6 MR. FOLIO: I understand well the message that we were  
7 sending. What I'm trying to understand better is how that  
8 message was received. And I have to imagine that part of  
9 the responsibility is to engage, right, how messages are  
10 being received such that you can send the most effective  
11 messages possible.

12 So from that perspective, in that experience, was it  
13 your assessment that Hunter Biden's position had absolutely  
14 no effect on how the Ukrainians were viewing the seriousness  
15 of the anticorruption message being sent by the United  
16 States?

17 MR. ROBERTS: Joe, I think Ambassador Nuland has  
18 answered this. I think she said both that she saw no effect  
19 from Hunter Biden's position on the shaping of the policy  
20 that the United States was advocating for in Ukraine, and I  
21 think she's also testified that, if anything, Hunter's  
22 service on Burisma's board and the fact that notwithstanding  
23 that, United States officials were criticizing Ukrainian  
24 officials who protected the company, if anything bolstered  
25 the credibility of the message.

1           So I don't know what else you're asking for.

2           MR. FOLIO: I'm just asking for--

3           MS. NULAND: Put yourself in the shoes of a Ukrainian.  
4 You know, would President Poroshenko, or would any prior  
5 Ukrainian leader have gone public criticizing for corruption  
6 a company in which his son was involved? I don't think so.  
7 So to the extent that Ukrainians knew this connection, this  
8 was further bona fides for the Vice President that nobody  
9 was immune, including the company that his son was part of.

10          MR. FOLIO: My question is, I understand the U.S.  
11 message part. I want to understand your assessment, how  
12 that message was received by Ukrainians. And is it your  
13 testimony--

14          MS. NULAND: It was received by the Ukrainians that we  
15 were deadly serious about not putting more money into  
16 Ukraine until it cleaned up its justice system. It was  
17 coming from the top of the U.S. Government. It wasn't  
18 coming from me. It was coming from the top.

19          MR. FOLIO: And how did the Ukrainians view the fact  
20 that Hunter Biden was sitting on the board of Burisma? Did  
21 that undermine the message?

22          MS. NULAND: Again, you're asking me to get into the  
23 head of individual Ukrainians. I'm telling you how the  
24 message overall was received in Ukraine. I'm not sure what  
25 Ukrainians' brains you'd like me inside of, but it doesn't



1 sound like a place I can go.

2 MR. FOLIO: I'm just asking for your assessment, and if  
3 that's what you've already provided us then that's fine.

4 MS. NULAND: The assessment is that this move to  
5 withhold money because the PGO was still corrupt gave us  
6 extra credibility, extra legitimacy with the Ukrainian  
7 people that we were not going to stand by and pour U.S.  
8 taxpayer money into a system that was not reforming.

9 MR. FOLIO: So despite the fact that the U.S.  
10 Government had called across three different Prosecutor  
11 Generals for corruption, as represented by Mr. Zlochevsky,  
12 the head of Burisma, to prosecute it, was Burisma or Mr.  
13 Zlochevsky ever prosecuted?

14 MS. NULAND: I don't know the answer to that in the  
15 current period.

16 MR. FOLIO: During your--

17 MS. NULAND: I know that the case was moved after the  
18 establishment of the National Anticorruption Bureau, which  
19 was also a condition of lending by the international  
20 community and was finally stood up in '16. I know the case  
21 was moved to the NABU. I frankly don't know what they have  
22 done with it. I also know that it was very difficult for  
23 the NABU to make cases without the second piece that the  
24 international community was asking for, which was the  
25 establishment of an anticorruption prosecutor, because where

1 do you send the case? And that condition was only met in  
2 the last five months, I think.

3 MR. FOLIO: So with regard to your time as Assistant  
4 Secretary, it sounds like sitting here today you were not  
5 aware of any successful prosecution against Mr. Zlochevsky  
6 or Burisma.

7 MS. NULAND: Again, I have not gone back and reviewed,  
8 nor would I necessarily have been privy to all the law  
9 enforcement records on what may or may not have been done by  
10 Lutsenko, the successor, or the Zlochevsky-era Prosecutors  
11 General. So I really can't speak to it.

12 MR. FOLIO: Ms. Nuland, you have been very generous  
13 with your time. We appreciate you very much taking the time  
14 to speak with us. That's all the questions we have from the  
15 majority, and I think Zack was done as well. So unless  
16 there's anything from anyone else I want to thank you again  
17 for your time, and have a good day.

18 MS. NULAND: And thank you for the professional spirit  
19 of this, and give my best regards to your members as well.

20 MR. FOLIO: We will.

21 MS. NULAND: Thank you.

22 MR. ROBERTS: Thank you all.

23 MR. FOLIO: Great. Thank you.

24 MS. WESTLAKE: Thanks, Victoria.

25 [Whereupon, at 1:13 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

## Remarks by US Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt at the Odesa Financial Forum on September 24, 2015

Good morning. Thank you, Andy, for your kind introduction. It is my pleasure to be here at the Odesa Financial Forum with such distinguished experts from across Ukraine. I welcome the leadership of the Association of Ukrainian Stock Traders and the Financial Markets Association of Ukraine for organizing this forum. Special thanks to the American Chamber of Commerce for its strong support.

Today's event is about highlighting the potential of the Odesa region and determining how you, business leaders and investors, can work to sustain progress. How you can demand that things get better, by insisting on accountability, transparency, and fair rules. Without these, business cannot survive and investors will not invest.

During my tenure as U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, I have been inspired by the Ukrainian people's demand for accountability. During the Revolution of Dignity, and every day since, Ukrainians have persevered, often at great personal cost, in order to determine their own future.

And Ukraine's leaders are listening. Despite an invader in the east – using weapons and words to weaken, dispirit, and distract – national, regional, and local officials are moving forward with difficult political and economic reforms to bring Ukraine closer to its chosen European future.

However, they – we – must not ignore an equally tenacious enemy dead set on undermining Ukraine's economic success. One that is equally dangerous to Ukraine's future. That enemy is corruption.

Corruption kills.

It kills productivity and smothers inspiration. Ideas are lost in its shadow. Innovation and entrepreneurship lag under the weight of bribery, back room dealing, and bullying.

These old ways are not worthy of today's Ukraine.

Those who gave their lives last year on the Maidan, or in recent weeks the ATO, did not sacrifice themselves for business as usual. The sons, brothers, sisters and mothers defending Ukraine in Donbas today are not there to preserve the status quo. They deserve and demand better.

All of us here today know that Ukraine can, and must, address the problem of corruption now. You, Ukraine's business leaders, investors, prospective investors and partners, all who want to do business here, can help. You can refuse to participate in corrupt business practices. You can insist that when corruption is found, arrests are made and followed by thorough, properly implemented investigations. And then, when warranted, the guilty should be convicted and punished according to the law.

Imagine the impact if – instead of lining corrupt officials' pockets – the resources being zapped by corruption were freed up and reinvested in Ukraine's economy. Imagine what those resources could do to fuel the development and broad-based prosperity the Ukrainian people want and deserve.

The United States is helping to build Ukraine's capacity to fight corruption, expose the guilty and see them punished appropriately. And we are helping to do it, here in Odesa. Let me give you a few examples.

First, the U.S. government is developing a program to provide training for every judge, prosecutor, and defense attorney in Odesa Oblast on the adversarial process in criminal proceedings as envisioned by the new Criminal Procedure Code.

We hope that this pilot project will demonstrate how Ukraine's criminal process can be made more effective. If it is successful, the project can be a model for the rest of Ukraine.

Second, we partnered with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Odesa to deploy the new Patrol Police in Odesa. The presence of these officers on the streets is a concrete demonstration of how Ukraine is changing, but more importantly, they are building trust with the public. That trust will give rise to

confidence – the confidence to work together to expose and fight the petty corruption that stifles small business and intimidates average citizens.

Third, we are funding a team of Ukrainian, regional, and international experts who are working with Governor Saakashvili to flesh out an anticorruption and deregulation agenda for Odesa oblast. Odesa's vision for reform is transformative. If successful, Odesa can be a model of transparent, accountable government and business.

It will be a symbol of success in the new Ukraine. Odesa, long known for corruption, will come clean. Investment and opportunity will follow.

I know that President Poroshenko and Prime Minister Yatsenyuk understand the importance of this issue and recognize the threat that business as usual represents for Ukraine's hopes of political and economic transformation.

However, there is one glaring problem that threatens all of the good work that regional leaders here in Odesa, in Kharkiv, in Lviv, and elsewhere are doing to improve the business climate and build a new model of government that serves the people.

That problem threatens everything that the Rada, the Cabinet, the National Reform Council, and others are doing to push political and economic reforms forward and make life better for Ukrainians, and it flies in the face of what the Revolution of Dignity is trying to achieve.

That obstacle is the failure of the institution of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine to successfully fight internal corruption. Rather than supporting Ukraine's reforms and working to root out corruption, corrupt actors within the Prosecutor General's office are making things worse by openly and aggressively undermining reform.

In defiance of Ukraine's leaders, these bad actors regularly hinder efforts to investigate and prosecute corrupt officials within the prosecutor general's office. They intimidate and obstruct the efforts of those working honestly on reform initiatives within that same office.

The United States stands behind those who challenge these bad actors.

We applaud the work of the newly-established Inspector General's office in the PGO led by David Sakvarelidze and Vitaliy Kasko. Their investigations into corruption within the PGO, have delivered important arrests and have sent the signal that those who abuse their official positions as prosecutors will be investigated and prosecuted.

I encourage all of you to speak up in support of these brave investigators and prosecutors. Give them the resources and support to successfully prosecute these and future cases.

We have learned that there have been times that the PGO not only did not support investigations into corruption, but rather undermined prosecutors working on legitimate corruption cases.

For example, in the case of former Ecology Minister Mykola Zlochevsky, the U.K. authorities had seized 23 million dollars in illicit assets that belonged to the Ukrainian people. Officials at the PGO's office were asked by the U.K to send documents supporting the seizure.

Instead they sent letters to Zlochevsky's attorneys attesting that there was no case against him. As a result the money was freed by the U.K. court and shortly thereafter the money was moved to Cyprus.

The misconduct by the PGO officials who wrote those letters should be investigated, and those responsible for subverting the case by authorizing those letters should – at a minimum – be summarily terminated.

Even as we support the work of the new Anti-Corruption Commission, and the recruitment of new prosecutors, we have urged Prosecutor General Shokin to empower Deputy Prosecutors Sakvarelidze and Kasko to implement reforms and bring to justice those who have violated the law, regardless of rank or status. We are prepared to partner with reformers within the PGO in the fight for anticorruption.

That's why, on August 10, the United States signed a Joint Action Plan with Deputy Prosecutor General Sakvarelidze to provide 2 million dollars in U.S. assistance to support reform, anticorruption, and capacity building at the PGO.

It is critical that these reforms be undertaken in an open and transparent manner – consistent with the Procuracy Reform Law, international standards, and in coordination with national and international stakeholders – so that the Ukrainian people can have full faith and confidence in their laws and in those who have sworn to enforce them.

There are other cases as well, like those involving Former Deputy Chief Prosecutor Volodymyr Shapakin and Former Prosecutor Korniyets that clearly demonstrate that it is critical to cease intimidation and investigations of investigators, prosecutors and witnesses.

We want to work with Prosecutor General Shokin so the PGO is leading the fight against corruption.

We want the Ukrainian people to have confidence in the Prosecutor General's Office, and see that the PGO, like the new patrol police, has been reinvented as an institution to serve the citizens of Ukraine.

Ukraine has every reason to succeed. This country has resources in abundance. Its highly educated workforce can supply Europe and its neighbors with human capital and competitive products. Its famous black earth already feeds the world. Ukraine exported a record-breaking 33.5 million tons of grain last year, and the agricultural sector has tremendous potential to grow even more.

The Deep and Comprehensive Trade Area Agreement with the European Union will help leverage these natural resources and help build even more economic success. Ukraine's government, spurred on by an active, engaged, and committed civil society, is continuing difficult reforms in the face of armed aggression and economic hardship.

But as I said before, it is up to citizens, business and investors to hold those standing in the way of reform and progress accountable.

Work with the reformers, with new, trustworthy authorities like the patrol police and honest civil servants to make change happen. Think creatively about how to overcome the roadblocks being put up by those, like the bad actors in the Prosecutor General's office I mentioned before, who want to keep the status quo. Do not take no for an answer, but rather work to strengthen your democracy and push for Ukraine's European future.

The United States is with you in this difficult process. Through training programs and other assistance, we are working with Ukraine to make judges independent so they can uphold the law free from political pressure. We continue to support your efforts to build a modern police force and public prosecution service focused on serving the citizens, and providing an equal playing field for all.

And U.S. businesses – with the support of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce – will continue to look for opportunities to invest in Ukraine, a Ukraine committed to reform, transparency, accountability, and clear rules properly enforced.

I ask you all to be committed to putting a stop to corruption, wherever it is found.

Ukrainians demanded an end to business as usual on the Maidan. Business leaders here today can help by demanding a better, fairer, corruption-free environment to invest and create opportunities for the future.

In closing, and speaking of creating opportunities for the future, I take great pleasure in announcing that U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker will return to Ukraine in October. During her visit, Secretary Pritzker will take a serious look at what Ukraine has accomplished since her last visit. I am confident that she will see a government and business community serious about reforms, and ready to establish more connections and partnerships with U.S. businesses and investors.

As the United States Ambassador to Ukraine, I tell you, we stand with you.

Slava Ukraini.

THE LONG RUN

## What Joe Biden Actually Did in Ukraine

By Glenn Thrush and Kenneth P. Vogel

Published Nov. 10, 2019 Updated March 6, 2020

When Russia invaded Ukraine in early 2014, Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. pressed President Barack Obama to take decisive action, and fast, to make Moscow “pay in blood and money” for its aggression. The president, a Biden aide recalled, was having none of it.

Mr. Biden worked Mr. Obama during their weekly private lunches, imploring him to increase lethal aid, backing a push to ship FGM-148 Javelin anti-tank missiles to Kiev. The president flatly rejected the idea and dispatched him to the region as an emissary, cautioning him “about not overpromising to the Ukrainian government,” Mr. Biden would later write in a memoir.

*[Trump, Ukraine and impeachment: The inside story of how we got here.]*

So, Mr. Biden threw himself into what seemed like standard-issue vice-presidential stuff: prodding Ukraine’s leaders to tackle the rampant corruption that made their country a risky bet for international lenders — and pushing reform of Ukraine’s cronyism-ridden energy industry.

“You have to be whiter than snow, or the whole world will abandon you,” Mr. Biden told the country’s newly elected president, Petro O. Poroshenko, during an early 2014 phone call, according to former administration officials.

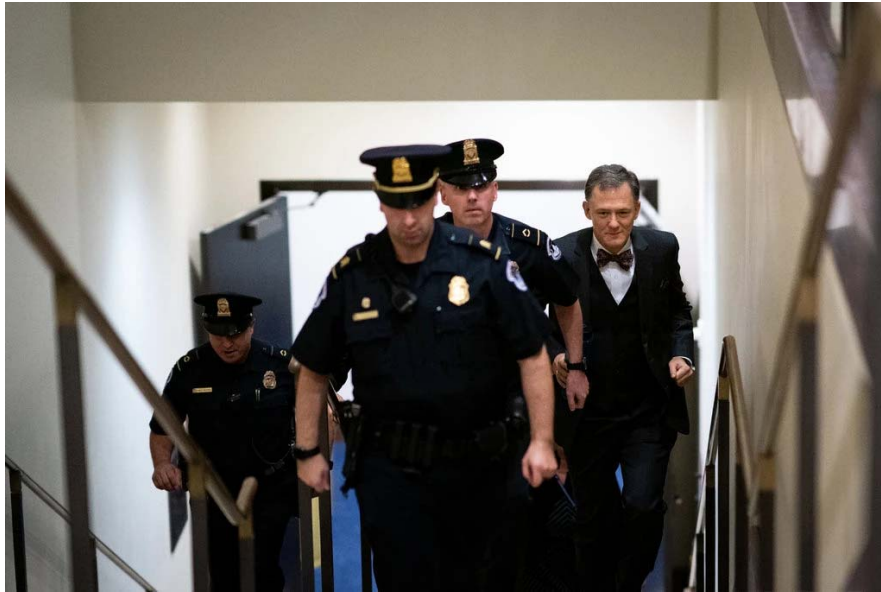
That message was delivered just as Mr. Biden’s son Hunter joined the board of a Ukrainian gas company that was the subject of multiple corruption investigations, a position that paid him as much as \$50,000 a month and — in the view of some administration officials, including the ambassador to Kiev — threatened to undermine Mr. Biden’s agenda.

Thanks to President Trump and his lawyer Rudolph W. Giuliani, that subplot has now swallowed the story line. Their efforts to press Ukrainian officials to investigate unsubstantiated charges against the Bidens have propelled Mr. Trump to the brink of impeachment. They have also put Mr. Biden on the defensive at a critical moment in the Democratic presidential primary campaign. As the impeachment hearings go public this week, the Republicans are hoping to redirect the spotlight onto the Bidens.

A look at what the former vice president actually did in Ukraine (he visited six times and spent hours on the phone with the country’s leaders) tells a different story, according to interviews with more than two dozen people knowledgeable about the situation. It casts light on one of Mr. Biden’s central arguments for himself in the primary: his eight years of diplomacy as Mr. Obama’s No. 2.

Mr. Biden dived into Ukraine in hopes of burnishing his statesman credentials at a time when he seemed to be winding down his political career, as his elder son, Beau, was dying and his younger one, Hunter, was struggling with addiction and financial problems. It turned out to be an unforgiving landscape — threatened by Russia, plundered by oligarchs, plagued by indecisive leaders and overrun by outsiders hoping to make a quick buck off the chaos.

Writing in his 2017 memoir, Mr. Biden said Ukraine gave him a chance to fulfill a childhood promise to make a difference in the world. It also came to serve a political purpose, as “a legacy project, something he could run on,” said Keith Darden, an associate professor at American University who studies Ukraine policy.



George P. Kent, right, the deputy assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian Affairs, told impeachment investigators that he had raised concerns about Hunter Biden in 2015. Erin Schaff/The New York Times

In the end, it was an unglamorous holding action, but one that suited Mr. Biden's Mr. Fix-It approach to the vice presidency — and his view of Ukraine as the front line in a larger battle to contain the Russian president, Vladimir V. Putin.

“People forget it now, but at that time period, 2014 and 2015, it wasn't clear Ukraine would survive,” Mr. Darden said. “They were teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. They had only 8,000 battle-ready troops.”

A key to Mr. Biden's relevance as vice president was his willingness to take jobs nobody else wanted. In early 2014, as others on Mr. Obama's team raced to finish big-splash deals with Cuba and Iran, Mr. Biden told the president he wanted to take on three of the most unappetizing foreign-policy tasks left undone: containing the Islamic State, curbing immigration from Central America and keeping Russia from devouring Ukraine.

Mr. Biden had deep contacts in Europe, and as a senator in the 1990s had had some success persuading President Bill Clinton to take action in the Balkans. He considered himself to be among the few people in Mr. Obama's orbit who understood Europe and were willing to challenge Mr. Putin — a counter to the national security adviser, Susan E. Rice, who repeatedly warned the president against escalating a conflict with Russia that the United States could not win.

Yet on Ukraine, as elsewhere, Mr. Biden was less an architect of policy than the empowered executor of Mr. Obama's policy.

“He was the vice president, not the president,” said Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Democrat of New Hampshire, part of a bipartisan group of lawmakers allied with Mr. Biden who pressured Mr. Obama to help Ukraine's military.

Indeed, the drive to provide lethal aid to Kiev was a group effort, pushed by senators and two powerful State Department officials: Geoffrey R. Pyatt, who was the ambassador in Kiev, and Victoria J. Nuland, then the hawkish assistant secretary for European and Eurasian affairs.

Ms. Nuland was overheard telling Mr. Pyatt they needed Mr. Biden “for an attaboy” to encourage Ukrainian leaders to fulfill their promises, during a 2013 phone conversation about Ukraine, bugged and released to the media.

## **Bribes, Shakedowns and ‘Sweetheart Deals’**

Mr. Biden applied his Amtrak charm to local players like Ukraine's embattled president, Viktor Yanukovich, with limited effect. Former White House aides recall watching an agitated Mr. Biden ducking in and out of a secure phone booth outside the situation room in early 2014, trying to reach Mr. Yanukovich on his cellphone.

“Where the hell is this guy?” he kept asking, before learning that Mr. Yanukovich had fled Kiev, ultimately for Russia, as huge street protests erupted against his regime's corruption and his pivot away from Europe and toward Moscow.



Pro-Russian forces in Crimea in March 2014. Sergey Ponomarev for The New York Times

Mr. Putin then rushed in, annexing Crimea and backing paramilitaries who invaded the country's east. While Mr. Biden's pitch for missiles was rebuffed, he eventually helped sell Mr. Obama on sending about 100 American service members to train Ukraine's security forces.

Things seemed to be looking up in May 2014 with the election of Mr. Poroshenko, an oligarch who billed himself as a reformer. At first, the vice president's hard-edged messages to him on corruption were coated with kibbitz — demands accompanied by Bidenesque inquiries like whether the puffy-eyed president was getting enough sleep, aides recalled.

Within months, though, the State Department began suspecting that the office of Mr. Poroshenko's first prosecutor general was accepting bribes to protect Mykola Zlochevsky, the oligarch owner of Burisma Holdings, the gas company where Hunter Biden was a board member. In a February 2015 meeting in Kiev with a deputy prosecutor, a State Department official named George P. Kent demanded to know "who took the bribe and how much was it?"

The prosecutor general was fired soon after. But it wasn't long before the new prosecutor, Viktor Shokin, was drawing allegations of corruption, including from State Department officials who suspected he was shaking down targets and intentionally slow-walking investigations to protect allies.

Sign up to receive our **On Politics** newsletter, a daily guide to the political news cycle.

Sign Up

Mr. Giuliani has claimed, without evidence, that Mr. Biden's push to oust Mr. Shokin was an attempt to block scrutiny of his son's actions. In fact, Mr. Biden was just one of many officials calling for Mr. Shokin to go. Good-government activists were protesting his actions in the streets, as were eurozone power players like Christine Lagarde, then the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, along with Ms. Nuland and Senate Republicans.

"The position regarding getting rid of Shokin was not Vice President Biden's position; it was the position of the U.S. government, as well as the European Union and international financial institutions," said Amos J. Hochstein, former coordinator for international energy affairs at the State Department and one of the few administration officials who directly confronted Mr. Biden at the time about his son.

---

Election 2020 ›

Live Updates ›

22m ago U.S. government debt soars near levels not seen since immediately after World War II.

29m ago Post-convention polls show Biden's national lead tightening.



1h ago

A Louisiana Republican congressman threatened to kill anyone arriving at a Black Lives Matter rally armed.

Is this helpful?

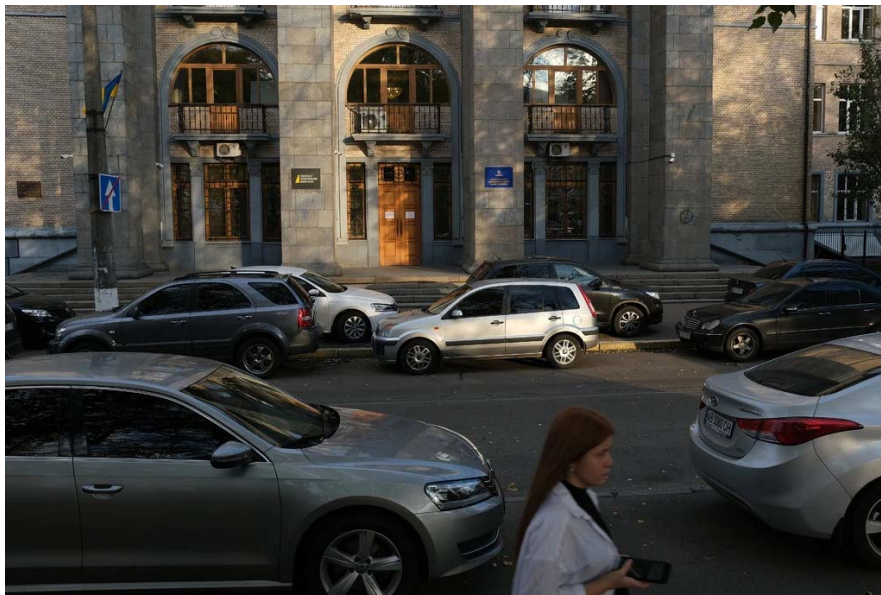


Ukraine's energy industry, the country's geopolitically crucial economic engine, was a central point of contention between the Obama administration and Kiev. Mr. Biden and Mr. Hochstein, echoing a similar effort by European officials, pressured Mr. Poroshenko to reform the operations of the state-owned natural gas company Naftogaz, which controlled about two-thirds of the country's energy resources.

(Burisma, a smaller, privately owned company, played no role in Mr. Biden's pressure campaign, and administration officials could not recall whether the company was even mentioned in meetings the vice president attended on energy matters.)

By late 2015, American officials had grown so frustrated with Mr. Poroshenko's sluggish response on all fronts that Mr. Biden was dispatched to make the case publicly for reforms to the Ukrainian Parliament.

That December, in a speech that he later described as one of the most important he had ever delivered, the vice president told legislators they had "to remove all conflicts between their business interest and their government responsibilities." He also singled out the natural gas industry, saying, "The energy sector needs to be competitive, ruled by market principles — not sweetheart deals."



The National Anti-Corruption Bureau in Kiev. Sean Gallup/Getty Images

His words, like his work in Ukraine over all, were important but hardly decisive.

"A lot of good things would not have happened if Biden hadn't been focused on Ukraine, but his work did not fundamentally change the overall institutional corruption," said Edward C. Chow, an expert on geopolitics and energy policy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a nonpartisan Washington think tank. "And having his son doing what he did was a distraction that undermined his message."

Mr. Shokin was eventually fired, but only months later, after I.M.F. officials threatened to withdraw funding.

In the intervening years, there has been much churn and less change. Mr. Putin, facing sanctions, has mostly stayed in check. Mr. Poroshenko was beaten at the polls by Volodymyr Zelensky in April, and remains bitter toward Mr. Biden for calling him out over his handling of Naftogaz during a meeting shortly before the 2016 elections, according to a person to whom he recently complained.

Some reforms have been put in place at the energy giant: Ukrainian officials agreed to appoint an international oversight board (Mr. Hochstein is now a paid I.M.F. appointee to the panel), but the issue of sweetheart deals remains unresolved.

The battle over Naftogaz has also become wrapped up in the House impeachment inquiry. Two of Mr. Giuliani's associates in his pressure campaign against the Bidens — Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman — were part of an effort to remove Mr. Pyatt's successor as ambassador to Kiev, Marie L. Yovanovitch, who had called for reforms to the energy giant.

For his part, Hunter Biden remained on Burisma's board until his term expired in April.

It was Mr. Trump, ironically, who signed off on Mr. Biden's request to send the Javelins.

## Handling the Story

Mr. Biden wants to move on.

"I carried out the policy of the United States government," he said during the most recent Democratic debate. "That's what we should be focusing on."

But he did not take advantage of a chance to eliminate the distraction four years ago, when the threat resurfaced — in the form of questions from The New York Times and follow-ups from other news organizations — as he flew to Kiev on Air Force Two to deliver the anti-corruption speech to Parliament.

Several aides recalled a surreal split-screen of activity onboard, as Mr. Biden's team focused mostly on the speech (he urged them to make it tougher), but peeled off for intermittent huddles on how to handle the Hunter story (Mr. Biden dismissed the story as a distraction, and did not engage). The group defaulted to the pushback plan used the year before when the story had first emerged, issuing a statement that Hunter Biden was "a private citizen and a lawyer."

They emphasized "private citizen," many former aides said, because the vice president would not even discuss taking the step that could make all questions vanish: asking his son to quit the Burisma board, as editorial boards and Ukraine experts were suggesting.



Hunter Biden, the former vice president's son, served on the board of the Ukrainian energy company Burisma Holdings. Ozier Muhammad/The New York Times

Mr. Biden's advisers say that he and his son had informally agreed years earlier not to discuss anything pertaining to the younger Mr. Biden's business activities, as a way to insulate them both.

Bob Bauer, former Obama White House counsel and Biden adviser, said that even pressuring Hunter Biden to quit the board would have constituted a breach of that firewall, and suggested that was one of the reasons the vice president chose not to do it. "The independent activities of an adult child simply don't create a 'conflict of interest' for the parent who is a public

official,” he said. “And as a matter of sound ethical practice, it is important for officials in this position to maintain that distance: to be able to show that, in doing their jobs, they could not have been affected by discussions or involvement with their adult children relating to private business matters. Their posture has to be, ‘Whatever you decide to do, I am going to do what I have to do.’”

Mr. Biden has said he first learned of his son’s activities in Ukraine when the story broke in 2014. He told his son, “I hope you know what you are doing,” according to Hunter Biden’s account of their discussion in *The New Yorker* earlier this year.

If that settled matters between father and son, Hunter Biden’s activities struck many of the officials working on Ukraine policy as an unnecessary distraction, or worse. Mr. Biden’s own aides were so worried about the optics, they enlisted State Department officials to gather facts to determine how to handle the story, according to people who worked with his office.

Yet few, if any, had raised the issue with Mr. Biden directly when it first arose. Most viewed the revelation — unseemly, but not illegal or a violation of ethics rules — as simply not worth risking a scolding from Mr. Biden, who had reacted angrily when Mr. Obama’s aides raised the issue of his son’s lobbying during the 2008 campaign. One person who briefly discussed the matter with Mr. Biden said he was anguished by his son’s personal problems and unsure how to help him recover.

Mr. Hochstein, reflecting the concerns of State Department officials, including Mr. Pyatt, tried to get several of Mr. Biden’s aides to broach the subject with him in 2014. When they declined, he took matters into his own hands, according to three Obama administration officials with knowledge of the situation. It is not clear how Mr. Biden responded; Mr. Hochstein did not disclose details of their interaction.

But former administration officials involved in the response to the story, speaking on the condition of anonymity, cited one reason above all others for backing off: the vice president’s shaky emotional state over Beau’s illness and death. Mr. Kent, now the deputy assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, told House investigators that his concerns had not been addressed by a White House official, who told him that Mr. Biden lacked the “further bandwidth to deal with family-related issues at that time.”

Mr. Biden’s mood in 2019 is no longer grief but anger. His aides accuse the news media of abetting Mr. Trump by aiming the story, now the catalyst for impeachment, back at the former vice president.

“Let’s not forget that this was covered on A22 of *The Times* in 2015, because it did not fall outside the White House’s ethical guidelines and was simply not a major story,” said Kate Bedingfield, the Biden campaign’s communications director.

She added: “What’s different now? It’s that Donald Trump is aggressively lying about it every day in the hopes that it winds up on the front page.”

Andrew E. Kramer and Nicholas Fandos contributed reporting.

A version of this article appears in print on Nov. 11, 2019, Section A, Page 1 of the New York edition with the headline: Biden Tried to Buttress Ukraine, And a Subplot Became the Story

---

## Our 2020 Election Guide

Updated Sept. 2, 2020

---

### The Latest


President Trump struggled to stay on message as he visited Kenosha. The Trump and Biden campaigns launch dueling ads on law and order. [Read live updates.](#)

### How to Win 270

Joe Biden and Donald Trump need 270 electoral votes to reach the White House. Try [building your own coalition of battleground states](#) to see potential outcomes.

### Voting by Mail

Will you have enough time to vote by mail in your state? Yes, but it's risky to procrastinate. [Check your state's deadline.](#)





**Joe Biden**  
Democrat



**Donald Trump**  
Republican

**Keep Up With Our Coverage**

✉ Get an [email](#) recapping the day's news

📱 Download our mobile app on [iOS](#) and [Android](#) and turn on Breaking News and Politics alerts

**From:** Bedingfield, Kate J. EOP/OVP  
**Sent:** Sun, 6 Dec 2015 16:23:56 +0000  
**To:** Pyatt, Geoffrey R; Carpenter, Michael R. EOP/OVP; Kahl, Colin H. EOP/OVP; Hochstein, Amos J; Nuland, Victoria J  
**Subject:** RE: Podrobnosti.biz : The Ukrainian scam of the Biden family (information on the website included)

Thx

-----Original Message-----

From: Pyatt, Geoffrey R [<http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=mailto:> ]  
Sent: Sunday, December 6, 2015 11:13 AM  
To: Bedingfield, Kate J. EOP/OVP >; Carpenter, Michael R. EOP/OVP >; Kahl, Colin H. EOP/OVP >; Hochstein, Amos J >; Nuland, Victoria J >  
Subject: Re: Podrobnosti.biz : The Ukrainian scam of the Biden family (information on the website included)

I'd adjust the last sentence to change our desired end state. Something like "...begin rooting out the cancer of corruption that has done so much over the years to hold back economic growth and sap the confidence of Ukrainians in those who govern them."

I assume all have the DoJ background on Zlochevsky. The short unclas version (in non lawyer language) is that US and UK were cooperating on a case to seize his corrupt assets overseas (which had passed through the US). The case fell apart when individuals in the PGO acted to thwart the UK case.

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: Bedingfield, Kate J. EOP/OVP  
Sent: Sunday, December 6, 2015 6:04 PM  
To: Carpenter, Michael; Pyatt, Geoffrey R; Kahl, Colin H. EOP/OVP; Hochstein, Amos J  
Subject: RE: Podrobnosti.biz : The Ukrainian scam of the Biden family (information on the website included)

Proposed TPs for the VP if he gets asked after the stories break in the next few days. Especially interested in your feedback on how to answer the third Q if he gets asked. He is not currently slated to take any questions from reporters on the record on the trip, but he will talk to our traveling press at length off the record and will need to be prepared to answer these kinds of questions.

#### TALKING POINTS

· My son is a private citizen and I'm not going to get into discussing his personal business, it has no impact on my work.

· What I will say, though, is that no one has been tougher in pushing Ukrainian leaders to root out corruption than I have. It has been a primary focus of my discussions, both publicly and privately, for years. And I think you can see from the substance of this trip it remains a major priority for me and for the US government.

· Important strides have been made – the appointment of a Special Anti-Corruption Prosecutor and the establishment of an independent Inspector General to prosecute corrupt prosecutors are two good ones. But much more needs to be done and we will continue to encourage everyone involved to commit to meaningful reforms.

Q: Have you asked Hunter to step down from the board? Has he discussed that with you?

A: I'm not going to discuss private conversations with my family. Hunter is a private citizen and does independent work.

Q: Do the optics of this situation undermine your credibility when you're pushing the Ukrainians to clean up their own house?

A: No. I have long pushed and will continue to push for the Ukrainian government to root out corrupt practices. My record on this speaks for itself. I have called on Ukrainian leadership to root out corruption, encouraged civil society reformers to remain focused on this and push the government themselves, and I welcome the news that the government will appoint a Special Anti-Corruption Prosecutor. Important steps have been taken, but there is so much left to be done. Corrupt officials must be brought to justice and reformers must work together to ensure this happens

Q: Do you think Zlochevsky is corrupt?

A: I'm not going to get into naming names or accusing individuals. We have been working consistently to push the Ukrainian leadership to make meaningful changes in the Prosecutor General's office and across the government to help ensure that the Ukrainian people are represented fairly and fully.

-----Original Message-----

From: Carpenter, Michael

[><http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=mailto:> [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] <

Sent: Sunday, December 6, 2015 6:23 AM

To: 'PyattGR [REDACTED]' <[REDACTED]>; Kahl, Colin H. EOP/OVP <[REDACTED]>;

Bedingfield, Kate J. EOP/OVP <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Re: Podrobnosti.biz : The Ukrainian scam of the Biden family (information on the website included)

Ugh.

+ Kate, CK

From: Pyatt, Geoffrey R  
[>[http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=mailto: \[REDACTED\]](http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=mailto: [REDACTED])]  
<

Sent: Sunday, December 06, 2015 01:45 AM

To: Carpenter, Michael

Subject: FW: Podrobnosti.biz : The Ukrainian scam of the Biden family (information on the website included)

A really nasty Russian outlet on the same issue

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: lbi@lbicompany.com.ua  
[><http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=mailto:lbi@lbicompany.com.ua>]  
<

Sent: Saturday, December 05, 2015 7:05 PM

To: Kyiv, Media Alerts

Subject: Podrobnosti.biz : The Ukrainian scam of the Biden family (information on the website included)

this web site is very similar (stile, shrifts etc) to Ukrainian Podrobnosti that belongs to Inter TV Channel - the same name as its TV summary news block at 8pm

but we checked contacts and there is a Russian address there

Podrobnosti.biz

The Ukrainian scam of the Biden family

05.12.2015

Author: Eugene Prosvirin

The news that the son of the US Vice President Joe Biden was appointed to the board of directors of the Ukrainian gas company Burisma Holdings, for the first time appeared in media last spring.

The Internet marked this new appointment unequivocally - a massive stamping folklore entertainment began in social networks. The story had got a special piquancy - Joe Biden's visit to Kyiv in April, where he took a place of the president of Ukraine, not the guest at the negotiation table.

There were even such headlines: "Hunter Biden: a rape of Ukraine with a special cynicism."

The hatred among the public was coursed by the fact that Biden's tandem participates not only in Ukrainian politics, but in the Ukrainian business as well. However, neither Joe nor Hunter weren't ashamed of their imperial approach. On the contrary, they have demonstrated that this could be and should be.

Hunter demonstrated his true management potential in six months after the appointment. In mid-October 2014 it became clear that he failed out of the US Navy Reserve. Hunter failed an ordinary drug test - it was accused of cocaine use. A failed sailor, but a successful businessman due to family ties, said then that he was "deeply sorry" about the incident.

He still owns an investment-consulting company Rosemont Seneca Partners. Nobody took his place in the chair Board of the US World Food Programme, which, with other things, works directly with the UN World Food Programme. He still heads the Burisma Holdings, part of Kolomoisky's financial empire.



A tandem of the influential father and the enriched son opened not a small window but a real portal of capabilities for the Biden family in Ukraine. Analysts make an unnerving forecast : it is quite possible that the Biden family will begin a large-scale privatization in Ukraine, which in fact would be a banal raider seizure of state enterprises. The family has already watched their six at the politician field - it's time to do American business .

>>[>>http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://podrobnosti.biz/news/12432-ukrainskaya-afera-semeystva-bayden/?\\_utl\\_t=vk](http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://podrobnosti.biz/news/12432-ukrainskaya-afera-semeystva-bayden/?_utl_t=vk)<<

--

With best regards,

LBI Team

>>[http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://www.lbicompany.com.ua](http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://www.lbicompany.com.ua)<<

(044) 501 58 41

[REDACTED]

--

With be

st regards,

LBI Team

>><http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://www.lbicompany.com.ua><<

(044) 501 58 41

[REDACTED]



[Briefing Room](#)

[Your Weekly Address](#)

**[Speeches & Remarks](#)**

[Press Briefings](#)

[Statements & Releases](#)

[White House Schedule](#)

[Presidential Actions](#)

[Executive Orders](#)

[Presidential Memoranda](#)

[Proclamations](#)

[Legislation](#)

[Pending Legislation](#)

[Signed Legislation](#)

[Vetoed Legislation](#)

[Nominations & Appointments](#)

[Disclosures](#)

## The White House

Office of the Vice President

For Immediate Release

December 09, 2015

SHARE THIS:



# Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden to The Ukrainian Rada

The Rada

Kyiv, Ukraine

11:58 A.M. (Local)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. What a great honor for me to be able to represent my country before such an august audience.

Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Chairman, members of the Rada, ladies and gentlemen, I am deeply honored to be invited to speak to you today at a moment marked by great opportunity, as well as great uncertainty for the people of Ukraine. The stakes for your country and the expectations of your people have never been higher because Ukraine, as you know better than I, has been here before.

In the West, as here we remember, the Orange Revolution -- young men and women who filled the Maidan a decade ago demanding that their voices and their votes both be respected. They refused to back down in the face of rigged elections, and they succeeded.

But as history tells us and shows, and as we know, Ukraine's leaders proved incapable of delivering on the promise of democratic revolution. We saw reforms put in place only to be rolled back. We saw oligarchs uninterested in change ousted from power only to return. Reformers persecuted, thrown in prison as political retribution. And the bright flame of hope for a new Ukraine snuffed out by the pervasive poison of cronyism, corruption, and kleptocracy.

Nearly a decade later, that flame of hope was reignited by thousands of brave Ukrainians, some of you in this room, storming the Maidan, demanding a Revolution of Dignity. The world was transfixed. This time they were not going to be denied the future that so many of your country have longed for, for so long.

And the world was horrified when peaceful patriots were met by violence. They stayed at the Maidan day and night, facing down the Berkut in riot gear. For the first time since the Middle Ages, the bells of St. Mary [\*sic] raised the alarm, calling the citizens of Ukraine to reinforce their brothers and sisters on the Maidan. Tens of thousands heeded the call bringing with them food, clothing, blankets, medical supplies, and their support. As the world watched -- and I was literally on the phone with your former President urging restraint -- as the world watched, the final assault came. Amidst fire and ice, snipers on rooftops, the Heavenly Hundred paid the ultimate price of patriots the world over. Their blood and courage delivering to the Ukrainian people a second chance for freedom. Their sacrifice -- to put it bluntly -- is now your obligation.

You have a historic opportunity to be remembered as the Rada that finally and permanently laid in place the pillars of freedom that your people have longed for, yearned for, for so many years.

I need not tell you this is a joint responsibility. The President, the Prime Minister, the members of this august body -- all of you must put aside parochial differences and make real the Revolution of Dignity.

My country, too, was born of revolution. But the battle for our independence was underway well before the first shots were fired. It began when men of conscience stood up in legislative bodies representing every region in what was then Colonial America -- Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Virginia, very different interests -- and declared in each of their regions the inherent rights of free people in different documents, in different language -- but the inherent right to be free.

They took a vast continent and a diverse people -- what John Adams, one of our Founding Fathers and future Presidents once said -- called "an unwieldy machine". And they molded that unwieldy machine into a united representative democracy where people saw themselves as Americans first and citizens of their region second.

But our union remained imperfect, our democracy incomplete. Seventy years later we went through a second testing during the American Civil War, which nearly tore our still young country asunder. Winning on the field of battle wasn't sufficient to unite our country. To end slavery and the regional differences we had, to grant former slaves citizenships and rights, the United States Congress assembled -- had to amend our Constitution.

Individual members of that Congress lost their jobs standing up to do the right thing. Everyone took real political risks to overcome entrenched opposition for the good of achieving a truly United States of America.

In the end, it came down to extraordinary patriots -- individuals putting their personal needs behind the needs of their nation, their narrow interest behind unity.

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe the President, the Prime Minister, every member of this body now faces a similar test of courage.

To quote an early American patriot, Thomas Paine, "These are the times that try men's souls." These are the times that try men's souls.

This is your moment. This is your responsibility. Each of you -- if you'll forgive me for speaking to you this way in your body -- each of you has an obligation to seize the opportunity that the sacrifices made in the Maidan, the sacrifices of

the Heavenly Hundred. Each of you has an obligation to answer the call of history and finally build a united, democratic Ukrainian nation that can stand the test of time.

Edmund Burke said it best in 1774, speaking to his constituency in Bristol, England. Here's what he said: "Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest -- that of the whole; where not local purpose, not local prejudice ought to guide, but the general good."

I respectfully suggest this is a standard for which each of you will be judged. This is the standard by which your grandchildren and great grandchildren, your progeny will judge whether or not you had the moral courage to put the general good above local prejudice. And this is all within your power. It's within your hands. Nobody else's -- yours.

You can bend the arc of history of this nation toward greater justice and opportunity for the Ukrainian people, and you can do it now.

I've had the great privilege and opportunity afforded to me by all of you over the past two years to meet with representatives representing all sectors of this country -- east and west, including the illegally occupied Crimea -- from all walks of life -- civil society, members of this body, your military leaders, your clergy. I've met with souls who stood on the Maidan -- some of you are now in this chamber -- a place which I visited yesterday. All one has to do is look at the photographs of the Heavenly Hundred at that spontaneously erected monument where I stood yesterday. Just look at the photographs. This is not hyperbole. I'm not trying to be unduly -- this is real. As a foreigner, all I have to do is look at the photographs. See the photographs of young men as early as their early 20s to those in their early 80s. Every one of them were joined in common purpose, a Revolution of Dignity.

My father had an expression he repeated a thousand times growing up: Every man and woman is entitled to be treated with dignity. Everyone. That's what your new revolution was about: dignity.

And those martyrs still give voice to the timeless ideals and the timeless ideas, the universal values that unite free people all around the world. I visited every part of this world. There's fewer than a handful of countries I've not been in. I've traveled over 1.3 million miles just since being Vice President. The whole world is watching you. That's a fact. They're watching you because their hopes for your success as you fight both the unrelenting aggression of the Kremlin and the cancer of corruption will impact on them.

In both these struggles you have the unwavering support of the United States of America and the American people -- including nearly 1 million proud Ukrainian Americans. You have the united support of Europe -- Western, Central, and Eastern Europe -- all invested in your democratic success because your success goes to the heart of an enduring commitment to a Europe whole, free, and at peace. If you fail, the experiment fails. It is no exaggeration to say that the hopes of freedom-loving people the world over are with you because so much rides on your fragile experiment with democracy succeeding.

It's equally important, by the way, for aggressors around the world to understand that they can't use coercion, bribery, sending tanks and men across a border to extinguish the dreams and hopes of a people. For if you succeed, that message is sent around the world.

The President asked me back in the late winter, 2009, to come to Europe to speak at the Munich Conference to lay out the principles that would guide our administration; the fundamental elements of American foreign policy under the Obama-Biden administration. And what I said then I will repeat now. I said, we will not recognize any nation having a sphere of influence. Sovereign states have the right to make their own decisions and choose their own alliances. Period. Period. (Applause.)

In the 21st century, nations cannot -- and we cannot allow them to redraw borders by force. These are the ground rules. And if we fail to uphold them, we will rue the day. Russia has violated these ground rules and continues to violate them. Today Russia is occupying sovereign Ukrainian territory. Let me be crystal clear: The United States does not, will not, never will recognize Russia's attempt to annex the Crimea. (Applause.) It's that saying -- that simple. There is no justification.

And as Russia continues to send its thugs, its troops, its mercenaries across the border, Russian tanks and missiles still fill the Donbas. Separatist forces are organized, commanded and directed by Moscow -- by Moscow. (Applause.)

So the United States will continue to stand with Ukraine against Russian aggression. We're providing support to help and train and assist your security forces, and we've relied on and rallied the rest of the world to Ukraine's cause.

I have spent hours -- as the President has -- talking to heads of state in Europe and around the world, making it clear that one of the tests for whether or not they are our allies is are they allied with your purpose.

America and Europe now stand together united in our commitment to impose tough economic sanctions on Russia. And while Russian aggression persists, the cost imposed on Moscow will continue to rise. The false propaganda that the Kremlin is disseminating in an attempt to undermine Ukraine and fracture Europe's resolve will not work. No one should mistake saber rattling and bombast for strength. Let me say that again, no one should mistake saber rattling and bombast for real strength.

We're taking steps to bolster Europe's resilience to Russian coercive tactics. We are strengthening NATO as I speak, improving energy security as I speak, and attempting to help spur an economic revival throughout Europe.

The United States and Europe will maintain pressure until Moscow fulfills its commitments under the Minsk Agreement. While there has been some progress in deescalating the violence, there can be no sanctions relief unless and until Russia meets all of its commitments under the Minsk Agreement. (Applause.)

And I might add parenthetically, I don't think the Russian people fully understand what Putin is doing. That's why he spends so much time hiding at home the presence of Russian forces here in your country. Heavy weapons must be withdrawn from the frontlines. The OSCE must be granted full, unencumbered access. Russia must press the separatists to hold elections according to Ukrainian law and OSCE standards and disavow the illegal election that's just taken place. Hostages held by Russia and its proxies must be returned. Russian troops must leave. The Ukrainian side of the border must be returned to Ukrainian control. Unless all -- if they do all of that, and only if they do, Ukraine also has a responsibility it still has to fulfill -- including amnesty for those who have not committed capital offenses; granting devolved administration to the Donbas. But we've made it clear to Russia and the world that continued delay and foot-dragging is unacceptable. That includes elections in the Donbas. They can only go forward as stipulated under the Minsk Agreement. Full access to the media must be provided. Ukrainian political parties allowed to compete openly. Full and unobstructed OSCE election monitoring. Full voting rights for the people displaced from their homes in the Donbas and living elsewhere in Ukraine. And all weapons contained and kept under OSCE supervision. That only happens if Russia lives up to its commitments, if Russia does its part. If it does, then you must follow through with yours because this is the best chance to keep Donbas in Ukraine, end the conflict, and begin restoring Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. (Applause.)

It's hard. There's nothing easy about what you have to do. There's nothing easy. The pressure you will all get will be immense.

I'd like to also speak directly to the people in the Donbas. The alternative to what I just said is to continue to live under separatists thugs, criminals who deny humanitarian aid, keep out organizations like Doctors Without Borders, stealing lifesaving medicine to sell on the black market. That's not a future. That's not a future I believe any Ukrainian wants for their children.

That's why the Minsk Agreement needs to be implemented in full. And truly free and fair elections are exactly what the Kremlin fears the most. It's not just your territory they covet; it's your success that they fear. For if free elections occur, and the people determine, as I am confident they will, that they want to remain and integral part of Ukraine, that they are Ukrainians first, that's what Russia fears. That's what Putin fears.

Because as all of you know the struggle for Ukraine's freedom is not confined to the battlefields of the east. Constitutional reform that includes judicial reform and decentralization does not compromise your sovereignty. It enhances it. It's an important step to building a strong, new nation. And it's important to the Ukrainian-European future.

This issue of federalism is the thing that almost prevented our nation from coming into being. Autonomous independent states, their determination to have their own police forces, their determination to have their education system, to have their own government under the united Constitution.

But in addition, you also have a battle, a historic battle against corruption. Ukraine cannot afford for the people to lose hope again. The only thing worse than having no hope at all is having hopes rise and see them dashed repeatedly on the shoals of corruption.

And if the people resign themselves to exploitation and corruption for fear of losing whatever little they have left, that would be the death knell for Ukrainian democracy. We've taken so many critical steps already. But all of you know there's more to do to finish this race. Not enough has been done yet.

As the Prime Minister and the President heard me often say, I never tell another man or another nation or another woman what's in their interest. But I can tell you, you cannot name me a single democracy in the world where the cancer of corruption is prevalent. You cannot name me one. They are thoroughly inconsistent. And it's not enough to set up a new anti-corruption bureau and establish a special prosecutor fighting corruption. The Office of the General Prosecutor desperately needs reform. The judiciary should be overhauled. The energy sector needs to be competitive, ruled by market principles -- not sweetheart deals. It's not enough to push through laws to increase transparency with regard to official sources of income. Senior elected officials have to remove all conflicts between their business interest and their government responsibilities. Every other democracy in the world -- that system pertains.

Oligarchs and non-oligarchs must play by the same rules. They have to pay their taxes, settle their disputes in court -- not by bullying judges. That's basic. That's how nations succeed in the 21st century.

Corruption siphons away resources from the people. It blunts the economic growth, and it affronts the human dignity. We know that. You know that. The Ukrainian people know that. When Russia seeks to use corruption as a tool of coercion, reform isn't just good governance, it's self-preservation. It's in the national security interest of the nation.

Russia is trying to undermine the stability and sovereignty of Ukraine any way they can't, including squeezing Ukraine financially, trying to undermine your economy. They view that as a cheaper way than sending tanks across the line of contact.

So Ukraine must be strong enough to choose its own future, strongly. Strong defensively. Strong economically. A strong system of democratic governance.

The United States is with you in this fight. We understand we're with you afar. It's much harder for you than it is for us. We've stepped up with official assistance to help backstop the Ukrainian economy. We've rallied the international community to commit a total of \$25 billion in bilateral and multilateral financing to support Ukraine. It includes \$2 billion in U.S. loan guarantees and the possibility of more.

Yesterday I announced almost \$190 million in new American assistance to help Ukraine fight corruption, strengthen the rule of law, implement critical reform, bolster civil society, advance energy security. That brings our total of direct aid to almost \$760 million in direct assistance, in addition to loan guarantees since this crisis broke out. And that is not the end of what we're prepared to do if you keep moving.

But for Ukraine to continue to make progress and to keep the support of the international community you have to do more, as well. The big part of moving forward with your IMF program -- it requires difficult reforms. And they are difficult. Let me say parenthetically here, all the experts from our State Department and all the think tanks, and they come and tell you, that you know what you should do is you should deal with pensions. You should deal with -- as if it's easy to do. Hell, we're having trouble in America dealing with it. We're having trouble. To vote to raise the pension age is to write your political obituary in many places.

Don't misunderstand that those of us who serve in other democratic institutions don't understand how hard the conditions are, how difficult it is to cast some of the votes to meet the obligations committed to under the IMF. It requires sacrifices that might not be politically expedient or popular. But they're critical to putting Ukraine on the path to

a future that is economically secure. And I urge you to stay the course as hard as it is. Ukraine needs a budget that's consistent with your IMF commitments.

Anything else will jeopardize Ukraine's hard-won progress and drive down support for Ukraine from the international community, which is always tenuous. It's always tenuous. We keep pushing that support.

The Ukrainian people have long struggled to direct their own destinies, to carve out a place besides the mighty Dnipro, to claim their own identity, proud and distinct.

A great poet Taras Shevchenko wrote verse after verse declaiming the spirit of Ukraine, urging his fellow Ukrainians rise up and claim their liberty. His poem "The Testament" ends with this reflection. And I quote:

Then, in the mighty family

Of all men that are free,

May be sometimes, very softly

You will speak of me?

May be sometimes very softly you will speak of me. (Applause.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, I will speak of Ukraine. I will speak of the writer who took a beating on the Maidan to put him in the hospital. When asked why he sustained those injuries, why he was willing to endure it, he wrote: "People who don't protest injustice, they have no future."

I will speak of the young mother who gave up a lucrative career working on government reform. And then when asked why, she replied: "I have two small children and I cannot fight in the east. So this is what I can do for my country." (Applause.)

I will speak up for the university student who handed out food on the Maidan and later spoke about how those months changed. She said: "Now people don't think about what Ukraine can give them but about what they can give Ukraine."

I will speak of the men and women of this institution, a freely elected representative body of the people. I will speak of the sacrifices you've made. Nadiya Savchenko, the pioneering Ukrainian helicopter pilot who was elected to the Rada, despite being unjustly imprisoned in [sic] to this day. I will speak of her bravery, and many others will, as well. I will speak about how it's up to all of you to ensure the people of this land, once and for all -- that mighty family of all men that are free.

Ukraine's moment. It may be your last moment. Please for the sake of the rest of us, selfishly on my part, don't waste it. Seize the opportunity. Build a better future for the people of Ukraine.

There was a famous American politician when I was a young senator. He was in the other party -- very different ideology. But he said -- once in response to a question, he said, in your heart, in your heart, you know it's right. In your heart, you know what's right. You know. Do it. As long as you remain on that path, as long as you honor the obligation to the Ukrainian people, you never have to worry or doubt America and the United States will be by your side.

I hesitated to come to make this speech. The reason I did is not because a lack of affection for your country. But as a man who sat where you're sitting for 36 years as a United States senator, sometimes when a foreign leader would come to speak, I resented when he or she appeared to lecture us. I hope I don't come across as hectoring or lecturing you. Because that's not my intention. I just have -- as a fellow human being, I just have such hope in the promise of what you could deliver. It will spread far beyond the borders of Ukraine.

I used to wonder as a young senator when I first stood up on the Senate floor, and I've never been frightened of standing and speaking, I stood up and all of a sudden I realized that my desk is exactly where a senator, Daniel Webster, spoke from. I mean this sincerely. And for the first and only time in my career, I was seized with, my God, one of the great men in our history stood in this spot. And I wondered what it'd have been like to be in that first Congress that gave us our freedom, created what I consider to be a great and decent nation. Well, that's where you are. It's not hyperbole. That's

where each of you sit. If you succeed, you will be the founders of the first truly free, democratic, united Ukraine. An awesome responsibility, but what an incredible, incredible opportunity to serve your country.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to speak to you today. May God bless our two great nations and may God protect our troops. (Applause.)

END

12:33 P.M. (Local)

\*St. Michael's



**[HOME](#)** **[BRIEFING ROOM](#)** **[ISSUES](#)** **[THE ADMINISTRATION](#)** **[PARTICIPATE](#)** **[1600 PENN](#)**

[En Español](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Copyright Information](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [USA.gov](#)



**From:**Nuland, Victoria J  
**Sent:**Wed, 30 Mar 2016 16:28:04 -0400  
**To:**Pyatt, Geoffrey R [REDACTED]  
**Subject:**RE: UA lobbyist

And they can't spell the President's name

---

**From:** Pyatt, Geoffrey R  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 30, 2016 12:18 AM  
**To:** Nuland, Victoria J; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** UA lobbyist

So I see below Ukraine hired a new lobbyist – same firm that saw Kathy Novelli complaining about my pressure on the PGO's cover-up of the case against the disgraced Yanukovich era environment minister....

From: Karen Tramontano [<http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=mailto:Karen.Tramontano@bluestarstrategies.com>]  
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2016 11:21 AM  
To: McDonough, Denis R. EOP/WHO <[REDACTED]>  
Subject: Possible meeting

Dear Dennis,

I know you are extraordinarily busy – so I hesitate to even write. I am assisting the Office of the President (Ukraine) with his upcoming visit to the US. His Chief of Staff, Boris Lozhkin has asked whether it would be possible to meet you. While Lozhkin will be with President Porachenko throughout the visit, he will not be attending the dinner President Obama is hosting on 3/31 and wondered whether it would be possible to meet you during that time or if there is another time that would be more convenient for you ?Currently, Lozhkin arrives with the President on 3/30 and leaves with him on 4/1. Thank you Dennis for your consideration. I do hope you are doing well.

My best regards

Karen

Karen A. Tramontano

Blue Star Strategies

(+1) 202-833-1265 direct

 mobile

(+1) 202-822-9088 fax

[karen.tramontano@bluestarstrategies.com](mailto:karen.tramontano@bluestarstrategies.com)  
<<http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=mailto:patrick.boland@bluestarstrategies.com>>

888 17th Street NW, Suite 800

Washington, DC 20006

>[www.bluestarstrategies.com](http://www.bluestarstrategies.com)<

The information in this transmittal is privileged and confidential and is intended only for the recipient(s) listed above. If you are not the intended recipient(s) for the delivery of this transmittal, you are hereby notified that any unauthorized distribution or copying of this transmittal is prohibited. If you have received this transmittal in error, please notify me at (+1) 202-833-1281

SBU  
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

**From:**Kent, George P  
**Sent:**Tue, 6 Sep 2016 09:55:14 -0400  
**To:**Brink, Bridget A;Andrews, Jorgan K  
**Cc:**Yovanovitch, Marie L  
**Subject:**Bullying, threatening call by Blue Star's Sally Painter (Re Lutsenko)

Bridget, Jorgan:

Need to give you a heads up that I took a call just now from Sally Painter from Blue Star Strategies, the first time we have interacted. I am confident it will be the last. Nearly simultaneously her boss, Karen Tramontano, called on the other line asking to talk to the Ambassador (who is out on the run the rest of the day, event to event).

Painter adopted a hostile, aggressive tone from the outside, and was rude and accusatory throughout. It was unlike any conversation I have had in my 24+ years in the foreign service, and completely inappropriate on her part. She ended the conversation by saying that she would take the matter up with "The Under Secretary." (NFI)

The topic/issue was Prosecutor General Yuri Lutsenko, and his now cancelled plans to come to Washington – a trip that Blue Star had apparently been arranging.

I wasn't able to scribble notes to follow the specific accusations and bullying remarks. The crux of the accusation was that I had allegedly damaged her/firm's reputation to Lutsenko, and allegedly told him not to have anything to do with them (for the record: I did not tell him that. Full stop). She then proceeded to make rambling reference to "not representing Nikolai in the US" (I presume this is Zlochevsky), "because he has legal representation in the US, or Burisma" (Zlochevsky's company), and that she had represented Yushchenko's interests in the US for five years, and knew what was legal and what was not, and when it was required to register, that she was on the board of the Atlantic Council, and on a pro bono basis had been happy to arrange something with John Herbst (ie, for Lutsenko to speak), and that they also had offered a private dinner for Lutsenko that she and her partner Tramontano would have hosted for Lutsenko at no cost, to invite various people, important people, including Melanne Veveer, who was by the way close to former Secretary Clinton.

After I let her vent for close to five minutes and she reached a pause, I pointed out that we had never previously talked. I noted that her tone and accusations, including outright misrepresentations of my conversations with Lutsenko, was an odd way of initiating a first time conversation. I stated that the first time I had ever heard her name had been earlier this summer, when Dan Fried called and asked me if I would be willing to talk to her. I told Dan I would, and had passed my number. Painter jumped in and said: "you never called back." I reiterated that Dan had asked me if I would be willing to talk to her; I had said yes, and passed him my number, and never heard anything further.

I told her that, given the aggressive, threatening, bullying tone she had adopted and her misrepresentations of what I had said in the course of diplomatic discussion, I was within norms and my rights simply to wish her good day and hang up. I instead offered a partial reset, if she were interested (she was). I told her that I had met the Prosecutor General to talk about his proposed trip. I had given him the general advice that for a trip to Washington on which he would look to engage the USG, it made sense to work primarily through the US embassy here and the Ukrainian embassy in Washington. We

became aware of the trip because a senior DOJ official had reached out to the embassy for our reaction and what we knew of the trip.

Painter broke in at this point and said: “we know that. Government to government meetings would be the responsibility of the Ukrainian embassy.” This is in fact a false statement by Painter. Blue Star, through an associate who traveled with Tramontano to Kyiv in July and was previously a DOJ political appointee, reached out to DOJ itself; Bruce Schwartz then called RLA Jeff Cole about the visit. That is how we learned of the trip. I subsequently reached out to the Ukrainian acting DCM, Oksana, who indicated she knew nothing of the request to DOJ.

Beyond arranging govt-govt meetings, I continued, I had suggested to Lutsenko that the proposed timing of his trip (25-27 Sept) was not the best, because of UNGA and attention on international relations focused on New York in the second half of September, and the election season, with key people on the Hill out on the stump six weeks before the general election. That suggested an earlier or later trip.

Ukrainian officials had been known to have relations with third parties for other events, and that was their business. Ours was bilateral relations, and that had been my focus.

When Painter went back into interrogative mode, asking whether I had mentioned her company, I told her that it would not be appropriate to share the content of my conversation with the Prosecutor General. She referenced an email that Lutsenko sent “her” (Blue Star), and said I would have to answer if I damaged the reputation of her company, and that she would take it up with the Under Secretary (unspecified).

At that point, I told her I could not and would not presume to characterize Lutsenko’s private correspondence, while reminding that she had mischaracterized my conversations with Lutsenko. I wished her good day, and told her the conversation was over. And went back to my regularly scheduled business, since I had kept the visiting regional medical officer waiting in the meantime.

--

Footnote1: Lutsenko told me he did not know who exactly had come to Kyiv and talked to him in July about coming to Washington. He said Blue Star had promised they could arrange access to high levels of the Clinton campaign, including someone who might lead her White House (my guess: Podesta, head of the campaign, for whom Tramontano worked in the last year of the Bill Clinton White House). The political angle of the trip is what interested him. I pulled up the Blue Star website on my phone and showed him photos of Tramantano (he said: “that’s her”). I showed him a picture of Painter (right underneath); he shook his head and replied: “never seen her.”

Footnote 2: When Dan Fried called me in the summer, asking if I would be willing to talk to Painter, the subject was Zlochevsky, and allegedly the bad reputational deal he was getting. I warned Dan this was a sticky wicket, that Zlochevsky was viewed as corrupt, not just in Ukraine but by the USG/FBI, that he almost certainly had paid a bribe to the PGO office (Yarema team) to have them close a case against Zlochevsky in December 2014 and issue a letter to that effect to Zlochevsky’s lawyer, who flipped it to a UK judge, who unfroze assets that the FBI and MI5 had spent months trying to make a case for asset repatriation – the first and so far only possible case, in an effort we collectively have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars. Furthermore, the presence of Hunter Biden on the Bursima board was very awkward for all US officials pushing an anti-corruption agenda in Ukraine. Dan then said: “Sally’s apparently been asked to gather information in an attempt to convince Hunter to sever the relationship.” I said he was free to pass my name and number to her, and I would be as forthright about

Zlochevsky and Burisma as I had been to him. I heard nothing further. From the conversation today with Painter, it would appear she is on a first name basis with Zlochevsky.

Footnote 3: after we learned of the possible Lutsenko trip by the DOJ-RLA interaction, I discussed with RLA, LEGATT, and INL possible next steps. We agreed I would SMS Lutsenko to seek confirmation of his plans, both to travel to DC and to use of a third party rather than embassies to arrange the trip. He responded with a request to meet one on one to discuss. We did – it slipped from Friday to Saturday, because on Friday Lutsenko released the Illovaik report regarding the August 2014 tragedy, and who was at fault (in short: the Russians, for invading/killing hundreds of Ukrainians after offering free passage; but “mistakes were made” by the Ukrainian general staff).

Sensitive  
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tue, 8 Dec 2015 14:20:24 -0500  
**To:** Nuland, Victoria J; Brink, Bridget A; Heffern, John A; [REDACTED]; Pyatt, Geoffrey R;  
**Cc:** EUR-Press  
**Subject:** RE: The New York Times

[Adding Lalley](#)

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 08, 2015 2:13 PM  
**To:** Nuland, Victoria J; Brink, Bridget A; Heffern, John A; [REDACTED]; Pyatt, Geoffrey R;  
**Cc:** EUR-Press  
**Subject:** RE: The New York Times

[The Risen piece on Hunter Biden is out.](#)

The Knotty Ties Between Joe Biden, His Son and Ukraine

By JAMES RISEN  
DEC. 8, 2015  
The New York Times

WASHINGTON — When Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. traveled to Kiev, Ukraine, on Sunday for a series of meetings with the country's leaders, one of the issues on his agenda was to encourage a more aggressive fight against Ukraine's rampant corruption and stronger efforts to rein in the power of its oligarchs.

But the credibility of the vice president's anticorruption message may have been undermined by the association of his son, Hunter Biden, with one of Ukraine's largest natural gas companies, Burisma Holdings, and with its owner, Mykola Zlochevsky, who was Ukraine's ecology minister under former President Viktor F. Yanukovich.

Hunter Biden, 45, a former Washington lobbyist, joined the Burisma board in April 2014. That month, as part of an investigation into money laundering, British officials froze London bank accounts containing \$23 million that allegedly belonged to Mr. Zlochevsky.

Britain's Serious Fraud Office, an independent government agency, specifically forbade Mr. Zlochevsky, as well as Burisma Holdings, the company's chief legal officer and another company owned by Mr. Zlochevsky, to have any access to the accounts.

But after Ukrainian prosecutors refused to provide documents needed in the investigation, a British court in January ordered the Serious Fraud Office to unfreeze the assets. The refusal by the Ukrainian prosecutor general's office to cooperate was the target of a stinging attack by the American ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey R. Pyatt, who called out Burisma's owner by name in a speech in September.

"In the case of former Ecology Minister Mykola Zlochevsky, the U.K. authorities had seized \$23 million in illicit assets that belonged to the Ukrainian people," Mr. Pyatt said. Officials at the prosecutor general's office, he added, were asked by the United Kingdom "to send documents supporting the seizure. Instead they sent letters to Zlochevsky's attorneys attesting that there was no case against him. As a result, the money was freed by the U.K. court, and shortly thereafter the money was moved to Cyprus."

Mr. Pyatt went on to call for an investigation into "the misconduct" of the prosecutors who wrote the letters. In his speech, the ambassador did not mention Hunter Biden's connection to Burisma.

But Edward C. Chow, who follows Ukrainian policy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said the involvement of the vice president's son with Mr. Zlochevsky's firm undermined the Obama administration's anticorruption message in Ukraine.

"Now you look at the Hunter Biden situation, and on the one hand you can credit the father for sending the anticorruption message," Mr. Chow said. "But I think unfortunately it sends the message that a lot of foreign countries want to believe about America, that we are hypocritical about these issues."

Kate Bedingfield, a spokeswoman for Vice President Biden, said Hunter Biden's business dealings had no impact on his father's policy positions in connection with Ukraine.

"Hunter Biden is a private citizen and a lawyer," she said. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company. The vice president has pushed aggressively for years, both publicly with groups like the U.S.-Ukraine Business Forum and privately in meetings with Ukrainian leaders, for Ukraine to make every effort to investigate and prosecute corruption in accordance with the rule of law. It will once again be a key focus during his trip this week."

Ryan F. Toohey, a Burisma spokesman, said that Hunter Biden would not comment for this article.

It is not known how Mr. Biden came to the attention of the company.

Announcing his appointment to the board, Alan Apter, a former Morgan Stanley investment banker who is chairman of Burisma, said, "The company's strategy is aimed at the strongest concentration of professional staff and the introduction of best corporate practices, and we're delighted that Mr. Biden is joining us to help us achieve these goals."

Joining the board at the same time was one of Mr. Biden's American business partners, Devon Archer. Both are involved with Rosemont Seneca Partners, an American investment firm with offices in Washington.

Mr. Biden is the younger of the vice president's two sons. His brother, Beau, died of brain cancer in May. In the past, Hunter Biden attracted an unusual level of scrutiny and even controversy. In 2014, he was discharged from the Navy Reserve after testing positive for cocaine use.

He received a commission as an ensign in 2013, and he served as a public affairs officer.

Before his father was vice president, Mr. Biden also briefly served as president of a hedge fund group, Paradigm Companies, in which he was involved with one of his uncles, James Biden, the vice president's brother. That deal went sour amid lawsuits in 2007 and 2008 involving the Bidens and an erstwhile business partner. Mr. Biden, a graduate of Georgetown University and Yale Law School, also worked as a lobbyist before his father became vice president.

Burisma does not disclose the compensation of its board members because it is a privately held company, Mr. Toohey said Monday, but he added that the amount was "not out of the ordinary" for similar corporate board positions.

Asked about the British investigation, which is continuing, Mr. Toohey said, "Not only was the case dismissed and the company vindicated by the outcome, but it speaks volumes that all his legal costs were recouped."

In response to Mr. Pyatt's criticism of the Ukrainian handling of Mr. Zlochevsky's case, Mr. Toohey said that "strong corporate governance and transparency are priorities shared both by the United States and the leadership of Burisma. Burisma is working to bring the energy sector into the modern era, which is critical for a free and strong Ukraine."

Vice President Biden has played a leading role in American policy toward Ukraine as Washington seeks to counter Russian intervention in Eastern Ukraine. This week's visit was his fifth trip to Ukraine as vice president.

Ms. Bedingfield said Hunter Biden had never traveled to Ukraine with his father. She also said that Ukrainian officials had never mentioned Hunter Biden's role with Burisma to the vice president during any of his visits.

"I've got to believe that somebody in the vice president's office has done some due diligence on this," said Steven Pifer, who was the American ambassador to Ukraine from 1998 to 2000. "I should say that I hope that has happened. I would hope that they have done some kind of check, because I think the vice president has done a very good job of sending the anticorruption message in Ukraine, and you would hate to see something like this undercut that message."

---

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

---

**From:** Nuland, Victoria J

**Sent:** Saturday, December 05, 2015 4:44 AM

**To:** Brink, Bridget A; Heffern, John A; [REDACTED]; Pyatt, Geoffrey R; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Re: The New York Times



Old story. Amos has more.

---

**From:** Brink, Bridget A  
**Sent:** Saturday, December 5, 2015 1:39 AM  
**To:** Nuland, Victoria J; Heffern, [REDACTED], Alexander; Pyatt, Geoffrey R; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Fwd: The New York Times

Thanks, Nick. Copying Kyiv and Toria - fysa New York Times has complicated question involving VPs son and S's stepson's friend, both of whom are allegedly on the board of an Ukrainian energy company owned by a former Min of Ecology who was being pursued by UK for money laundering. The question also references Pyatts Sept speech which allegedly criticizes the GOU PGO for not supporting the UK prosecution - funds in dispute allegedly ultimately unfrozen and tranferred abroad. We're working PG below with VPs office.

Best, Bridget

---

**From:** Toner, Mark C [REDACTED]  
**Date:** December 4, 2015 at 4:39:15 PM EST  
**To:** EUR-Press [REDACTED] >, Brink, Bridget A <[REDACTED], [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] >, Kirby, John [REDACTED] >  
**Subject:** RE: The New York Times

Thanks [REDACTED] – happy to have you get back to Risen if that works.

Not sure who you're referring to by "travelers." You mean with VPOTUS?

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, December 04, 2015 1:16 PM  
**To:** Toner, Mark C; EUR-Press; Brink, Bridget A  
**Cc:** Kirby, John; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: The New York Times

Mark, following up on this Hunter Biden/Ukrainian gas company query.

We reached out to OVP/Press. Risen also pinged them on this, as did the WSJ in October—both are timed for the VP's visit to Ukraine.

OVP is tentatively planning to use the below lines to respond, but it is not finalized yet. Jonathan Lalley has been looped in from Kyiv and will have the OVP lines if it comes up locally.

"Hunter Biden is a private citizen and a lawyer. The Vice President does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company. Regarding anti-corruption efforts in Ukraine, generally speaking, the Vice President has consistently said that Ukraine must make every effort to investigate and prosecute corruption in accordance with the rule of law."

OVP is happy for us to refer to them since this is 90% about the VP's family.

Do you want to get back to Risen referring him to OVP?

Risen also mentions Devon Archer, the friend of Chris Heinz (Kerry's stepson). Don't know if you want to flag for the travelers. If so, would suggest echoing the same draft lines as OVP, mocked-up below.

"Devon Archer is a private citizen. Secretary Kerry does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company. Regarding anti-corruption efforts in Ukraine, generally speaking, the Secretary has consistently said that Ukraine must make every effort to investigate and prosecute corruption in accordance with the rule of law."

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

---

**From:** Toner, Mark C  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 03, 2015 7:00 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]; EUR-Press; Brink, Bridget A  
**Cc:** Kirby, John; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: The New York Times

Yes, good catch. Yes, please reach out to VPOTUS. We just need to figure out who will get back to Risen and what we'll tell him.

Also we need to let Geoff know about this since Risen's question is directed at him. Not sure why he didn't reach out to him directly.

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 03, 2015 6:11 PM  
**To:** Toner, Mark C; EUR-Press; Brink, Bridget A  
**Cc:** Kirby, John; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: The New York Times

Forgot to add on the timing that Biden will be in Ukraine early next week.

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 03, 2015 6:04 PM  
**To:** Toner, Mark C; EUR-Press; Brink, Bridget A  
**Cc:** Kirby, John; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: The New York Times

This is a new spin on an old story and is ultimately about VPOTUS (and S, but to a lesser degree).

Hunter Biden was named to the board of directors of this Ukrainian gas company in early 2014. There was some swirl at the time and Jay Carney said on the record that "Hunter Biden and other members of the Biden family are obviously private citizens, and where they work does not reflect an endorsement by the administration or by the vice president or president." Kendra from OVP also said on the record that the Vice-President "does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

Devon Archer is also on the board, but the relationship is little less direct—college roommate of Chris Heinz, Secretary Kerry's stepson.

The story has popped up a few times in the interim, mostly with the nepotism angle.

Imagine our lines on this would echo Carney's above—private citizens, no reflection on administration position.

We can reach out to Kendra at OVP if you would like us to.

[REDACTED]

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

---

**From:** Toner, Mark C  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 03, 2015 4:29 PM  
**To:** EUR-Press; Brink, Bridget A  
**Cc:** Kirby, John; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Fwd: The New York Times

Flagging this very complicated query from James Risen - it obviously has VPOTUS equities as well. Not sure when he's writing for. I can talk to him but I know nothing about this case or Geoff's comments. Appreciate any guidance you guys can provide on how to proceed. We obviously would also need Geoff's input.

Thanks!

Mark

---

**From:** Risen, James <[risenj@nytimes.com](mailto:risenj@nytimes.com)>  
**Date:** December 3, 2015 at 4:04:28 PM EST  
**To:** Toner, Mark C [REDACTED] >  
**Subject:** The New York Times

Hi. I'm doing a story related to the Ukraine. US Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt gave a speech in Odessa on Sept. 24th in which he criticized Ukrainian prosecutors for failing to support a British investigation of former Ukrainian Ecology Minister Mykola Zlochevsky, in which British authorities froze \$23 million from Zlochevsky's accounts and were investigating him for money laundering. Ambassador Pyatt said that Ukrainian prosecutors refused to help in the investigation, and instead told Zlochevsky's attorneys that there was no case against him. As a result the money was unfrozen and quickly moved to Cyprus by Zlochevsky. Amb. Pyatt called for the Ukrainian prosecutors involved to be investigated and terminated. Mr. Zlochevsky is the owner of Burisma Holdings, a natural gas company incorporated in Cyprus. Hunter Biden, the son of Vice President Biden, is a member of the Burisma board of directors. So is Devon Archer, a close friend of Chris Heinz, the stepson of Secretary Kerry. Ambassador Pyatt did not mention the roles played by Hunter Biden or Devon Archer with Mr. Zlochevsky's company during his speech. Does Ambassador Pyatt believe that Mr. Biden and Mr. Archer should not be involved in Mr. Zlochevsky's business? Could I talk to you about this?

Thanks very much.  
James Risen  
The New York Times  
[REDACTED]

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 12, 2016

H.E. Petro Poroshenko  
President of Ukraine  
Presidential Administration of Ukraine  
11 Bankova Street  
Kyiv, Ukraine 01220

Dear President Poroshenko,

As members of the U.S. Senate Ukraine Caucus and strong supporters of your government, we write to express our concern regarding the recent resignation of Minister of Economy Aivaras Abromavičius and his allegations of persistent corruption in the Ukrainian political system.

During the past year, Mr. Abromavičius and his team implemented tough but necessary economic reforms, worked to combat endemic corruption, and promoted more openness and transparency in government. He was known to many of us as a respected reformer and supporter of the Ukrainian cause. Minister Abromavičius's allegations raise concerns about the enormous challenges that remain in your efforts to reform the corrupt system you inherited.

We recognize that your governing coalition faces not only endemic corruption left from decades of mismanagement and cronyism, but also an illegal armed seizure of territory by Russia and its proxies. Tackling such obstacles to reforms amidst a war and the loss of much of southeastern Ukraine's economic productivity is a formidable challenge -- one which we remain committed to helping you overcome.

Succeeding in these reforms will show Russian President Vladimir Putin that an independent, transparent, and democratic Ukraine can and will succeed. It also offers a stark alternative to the authoritarianism and oligarchic cronyism prevalent in Russia. As such, we respectfully ask that you address the serious concerns raised by Minister Abromavičius. We similarly urge you to press ahead with urgent reforms to the Prosecutor General's office and judiciary. The unanimous adoption by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Basic Principles and Action Plan is a good step.

We very much appreciate your leadership and commitment to reform since the Ukrainian people demonstrated their resolve on the Maidan two years ago, and we look forward to continued cooperation in the future.

Sincerely,

*Rob Portman*

Senator Rob Portman

*Dick Durbin* *Jeanne Shaheen*

Senator Richard J. Durbin

Senator Jeanne Shaheen

*Ron Johnson*

Senator Ron Johnson

*Chris Murphy* *Mark Kirk*

Senator Chris Murphy

Senator Mark Kirk

*Richard Blumenthal*

Senator Richard Blumenthal

*Sherrod Brown*

Senator Sherrod Brown



# GOP senator says he doesn't remember signing 2016 letter urging 'reform' of Ukraine prosecutor's office

BY ZACK BUDRYK - 10/03/19 06:00 PM EDT

## Just In...

**Former No. 2 NRA exec calls for universal background checks, red flag laws**

NEWS — 5M 16S AGO

**Tyson announces plan to open medical clinics at several meat plants**

HEALTHCARE — 15M 5S AGO

**Mexico, US have had most front-line worker deaths from COVID-19**

LATINO — 15M 6S AGO

**Restore our lives using medical science, data and common sense**

OPINION — 16M 18S AGO

**Poll shows Biden and Trump neck-and-neck in North Carolina**

CAMPAIGN — 16M 21S AGO

**Trump campaign sues Montana governor over mail-in ballot directive**

CAMPAIGN — 18M 47S AGO

**Seventh US service member dies from COVID-19**

DEFENSE — 19M 14S AGO

**Schools nationwide brace for teacher shortages amid coronavirus**

NEWS — 28M 35S AGO

[VIEW ALL](#)

**5,718** SHARES

SHARE

TW

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) told reporters Thursday he did not recall signing a letter urging reforms in the office of the Ukrainian prosecutor President Trump has alleged former Vice President Joe Biden improperly had ousted, [The Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel reported](#).

Trump has repeatedly alleged Biden used his office to have Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin fired and prevent him from investigating a gas company whose board included Biden's son Hunter.

CNN on Thursday reported that three Republican senators, including Johnson, Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and then-Sen. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) [signed a 2016 letter](#) urging "urgent reforms to the Prosecutor General's office and Judiciary."

"I send out all kinds of oversight letters ... I don't know which 2016 oversight letter you're referring to so I will look at that and then we'll issue a press release, statement, or something — but I don't engage in hypocrisy. I'm looking at getting the truth," Johnson said when asked about the letter.

Johnson did acknowledge the letter in an interview Thursday on WIBA's "The Vicki McKenna Show," saying "The whole world, by the way, including the Ukrainian caucus, which I signed the letter, the whole world felt that

this that Sholkin wasn't doing a [good] enough job. So we were saying hey you've ... got to rid yourself of corruption."

In the first interview, Johnson also said there was no misconduct in Trump's call on Thursday for China to investigate Biden and his son.

"If there's potential criminal activity, the President of the United States is our chief law enforcement officer. We have proper agreements with countries to investigate potential crimes so I don't think there's anything improper about doing that," he said.

Even as he endorsed investigations by both China and Ukrainian officials, Johnson denied the July 25 call between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky at the heart of a whistleblower complaint represented Trump pressuring Zelensky to investigate the Bidens.

"I look at that transcript and I go, it's Trump being Trump," Johnson said, according to the Journal-Sentinel.

In a statement, Andrew Bates, rapid response director for the Biden campaign, told The Hill: "'The United States, the European Union, the I.M.F., and Ukraine's leading reform figures were all pressing for Viktor Shokin to be removed from office because he was one of the biggest obstacles to fighting corruption in the entire country. This was a bipartisan goal in Congress as well."

"It is unfortunate that Senator Johnson seems to have forgotten a time when he put the country's values over his own politics, but perhaps re-reading his well-articulated words whole-heartedly agreeing with Joe Biden's push to move the anti-corruption cause in Ukraine forward will help him on his journey back to intellectual consistency," Bates added.

Updated: 9:35 p.m.

TAGS DONALD TRUMP RON JOHNSON ROB PORTMAN JOE BIDEN MARK KIRK

SHARE

TWEET



Related News by |



McConnell: GOP-controlled Senate a...



Angus King: Ending election security...



Lindsey Graham: 'QAnon is bats--- crazy'



Got an Entire Year of The



THE HILL 1625 K STREET, NW SUITE 900 WASHINGTON DC 20006 | 202-628-8500 TEL | 202-628-8503 FAX  
THE CONTENTS OF THIS SITE ARE ©2020 CAPITOL HILL PUBLISHING CORP., A SUBSIDIARY OF NEWS COMMUNICATIONS, INC.



# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 18, 2019

The Honorable Jim Jordan  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Devin Nunes  
Ranking Member  
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Dear Congressman Jordan and Congressman Nunes:

I write in response to your letter dated Nov. 16, 2019. You requested “any firsthand information ... about President Trump’s actions toward Ukraine between April and September 2019.” Attached, please find an accurate accounting of the information that I believe is relevant to your request.

I hope you find this helpful.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson  
United States Senator

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 18, 2019

The Honorable Jim Jordan  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Devin Nunes  
Ranking Member  
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Dear Congressman Jordan and Congressman Nunes:

I am writing in response to the request of Ranking Members Nunes and Jordan to provide my first-hand information and resulting perspective on events relevant to the House impeachment inquiry of President Trump. It is being written in the middle of that inquiry — after most of the depositions have been given behind closed doors, but before all the public hearings have been held.

I view this impeachment inquiry as a continuation of a concerted, and possibly coordinated, effort to sabotage the Trump administration that probably began in earnest the day after the 2016 presidential election. The latest evidence of this comes with the reporting of a Jan. 30, 2017 tweet (10 days after Trump's inauguration) by one of the whistleblower's attorneys, Mark Zaid: “#coup has started. First of many steps. #rebellion. #impeachment will follow ultimately.”

But even prior to the 2016 election, the FBI's investigation and exoneration of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, combined with Fusion GPS' solicitation and dissemination of the Steele dossier — and the FBI's counterintelligence investigation based on that dossier — laid the groundwork for future sabotage. As a result, my first-hand knowledge and involvement in this saga began with the revelation that former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton kept a private e-mail server.

I have been chairman of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs (HSGAC) since January 2015. In addition to its homeland security portfolio, the committee also is charged with general oversight of the federal government. Its legislative jurisdiction includes federal records. So when the full extent of Clinton's use of a private server became apparent in March 2015, HSGAC initiated an oversight investigation.

Although many questions remain unanswered from that scandal, investigations resulting from it by a number of committees, reporters and agencies have revealed multiple facts and episodes that are similar to aspects of the latest effort to find grounds for impeachment. In particular, the political bias revealed in the Strzok/Page texts, use of the discredited Steele dossier to initiate and sustain the FBI's counterintelligence investigation and FISA warrants, and leaks to the

media that created the false narrative of Trump campaign collusion with Russia all fit a pattern and indicate a game plan that I suspect has been implemented once again. It is from this viewpoint that I report my specific involvement in the events related to Ukraine and the impeachment inquiry.

I also am chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I have made six separate trips to Ukraine starting in April 2011. Most recently, I led two separate Senate resolutions calling for a strong U.S. and NATO response to Russian military action against Ukraine's navy in the Kerch Strait. I traveled to Ukraine to attend president-elect Volodymyr Zelensky's inauguration held on May 20, and again on Sept. 5 with U.S. Sen. Chris Murphy to meet with Zelensky and other Ukrainian leaders.

Following the Orange Revolution, and even more so after the Maidan protests, the Revolution of Dignity, and Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and invasion of eastern Ukraine, support for the people of Ukraine has been strong within Congress and in both the Obama and Trump administrations. There was also universal recognition and concern regarding the level of corruption that was endemic throughout Ukraine. In 2015, Congress overwhelmingly authorized \$300 million of security assistance to Ukraine, of which \$50 million was to be available only for lethal defensive weaponry. The Obama administration never supplied the authorized lethal defensive weaponry, but President Trump did.

Zelensky won a strong mandate — 73% — from the Ukrainian public to fight corruption. His inauguration date was set on very short notice, which made attending it a scheduling challenge for members of Congress who wanted to go to show support. As a result, I was the only member of Congress joining the executive branch's inaugural delegation led by Energy Secretary Rick Perry, Special Envoy Kurt Volker, U.S. Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland, and Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, representing the National Security Council. I arrived the evening before the inauguration and, after attending a country briefing provided by U.S. embassy staff the next morning, May 20, went to the inauguration, a luncheon following the inauguration, and a delegation meeting with Zelensky and his advisers.

The main purpose of my attendance was to demonstrate and express my support and that of the U.S. Congress for Zelensky and the people of Ukraine. In addition, the delegation repeatedly stressed the importance of fulfilling the election mandate to fight corruption, and also discussed the priority of Ukraine obtaining sufficient inventories of gas prior to winter.

Two specific points made during the meetings stand out in my memory as being relevant.

The first occurred during the country briefing. I had just finished making the point that supporting Ukraine was essential because it was ground zero in our geopolitical competition with Russia. I was surprised when Vindman responded to my point. He stated that it was the position of the NSC that our relationship with Ukraine should be kept separate from our geopolitical competition with Russia. My blunt response was, "How in the world is that even possible?"

I do not know if Vindman accurately stated the NSC's position, whether President Trump shared that viewpoint, or whether Vindman was really just expressing his own view. I raise this point because I believe that a significant number of bureaucrats and staff members within the executive branch have never accepted President Trump as legitimate and resent his unorthodox style and his intrusion onto their "turf." They react by leaking to the press and participating in the ongoing effort to sabotage his policies and, if possible, remove him from office. It is entirely possible that Vindman fits this profile.

Quotes from the transcript of Vindman's opening remarks and his deposition reinforce this point and deserve to be highlighted. Vindman testified that an "alternative narrative" pushed by the president's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, was "inconsistent with the consensus views of the" relevant federal agencies and was "undermining the consensus policy."

Vindman's testimony, together with other witnesses' use of similar terms such as "our policy," "stated policy," and "long-standing policy" lend further credence to the point I'm making. Whether you agree with President Trump or not, it should be acknowledged that the Constitution vests the power of conducting foreign policy with the duly elected president. American foreign policy is what the president determines it to be, not what the "consensus" of unelected foreign policy bureaucrats wants it to be. If any bureaucrats disagree with the president, they should use their powers of persuasion within their legal chain of command to get the president to agree with their viewpoint. In the end, if they are unable to carry out the policy of the president, they should resign. They should not seek to undermine the policy by leaking to people outside their chain of command.

The other noteworthy recollection involves how Perry conveyed the delegation concern over rumors that Zelensky was going to appoint Andriy Bohdan, the lawyer for oligarch Igor Kolomoisky, as his chief of staff. The delegation viewed Bohdan's rumored appointment to be contrary to the goal of fighting corruption and maintaining U.S. support. Without naming Bohdan, Secretary Perry made U.S. concerns very clear in his remarks to Zelensky.

Shortly thereafter, ignoring U.S. advice, Zelensky did appoint Bohdan as his chief of staff. This was not viewed as good news, but I gave my advice on how to publicly react in a text to Sondland on May 22: *"Best case scenario on COS: Right now Zelensky needs someone he can trust. I'm not a fan of lawyers, but they do represent all kinds of people. Maybe this guy is a patriot. He certainly understands the corruption of the oligarchs. Could be the perfect guy to advise Zelensky on how to deal with them. Zelensky knows why he got elected. For now, I think we express our concerns, but give Zelensky the benefit of the doubt. Also let him know everyone in the U.S. will be watching VERY closely."*

At the suggestion of Sondland, the delegation (Perry, Volker, Sondland and me) proposed a meeting with President Trump in the Oval Office. The purpose of the meeting was to brief the president on what we learned at the inauguration, and convey our impressions of Zelensky and the current political climate in Ukraine. The delegation uniformly was impressed with Zelensky, understood the difficult challenges he faced, and went into the meeting hoping to obtain President Trump's strong support for Zelensky and the people of Ukraine. Our specific

goals were to obtain a commitment from President Trump to invite Zelensky to meet in the Oval Office, to appoint a U.S. ambassador to Ukraine who would have strong bipartisan support, and to have President Trump publicly voice his support.

Our Oval Office meeting took place on May 23. The four members of the delegation sat lined up in front of President Trump's desk. Because we were all directly facing the president, I do not know who else was in attendance sitting or standing behind us. I can't speak for the others, but I was very surprised by President Trump's reaction to our report and requests.

He expressed strong reservations about supporting Ukraine. He made it crystal clear that he viewed Ukraine as a thoroughly corrupt country both generally and, specifically, regarding rumored meddling in the 2016 election. Volker summed up this attitude in his testimony by quoting the president as saying, "They are all corrupt. They are all terrible people. ... I don't want to spend any time with that." I do not recall President Trump ever explicitly mentioning the names Burisma or Biden, but it was obvious he was aware of rumors that corrupt actors in Ukraine might have played a part in helping create the false Russia collusion narrative.

Of the four-person delegation, I was the only one who did not work for the president. As a result, I was in a better position to push back on the president's viewpoint and attempt to persuade him to change it. I acknowledged that he was correct regarding endemic corruption. I said that we weren't asking him to support corrupt oligarchs and politicians but to support the Ukrainian people who had given Zelensky a strong mandate to fight corruption. I also made the point that he and Zelensky had much in common. Both were complete outsiders who face strong resistance from entrenched interests both within and outside government. Zelensky would need much help in fulfilling his mandate, and America's support was crucial.

It was obvious that his viewpoint and reservations were strongly held, and that we would have a significant sales job ahead of us getting him to change his mind. I specifically asked him to keep his viewpoint and reservations private and not to express them publicly until he had a chance to meet Zelensky. He agreed to do so, but he also added that he wanted Zelensky to know exactly how he felt about the corruption in Ukraine prior to any future meeting. I used that directive in my Sept. 5 meeting with Zelensky in Ukraine.

One final point regarding the May 23 meeting: I am aware that Sondland has testified that President Trump also directed the delegation to work with Rudy Giuliani. I have no recollection of the president saying that during the meeting. It is entirely possible he did, but because I do not work for the president, if made, that comment simply did not register with me. I also remember Sondland staying behind to talk to the president as the rest of the delegation left the Oval Office.

I continued to meet in my Senate office with representatives from Ukraine: on June 13 with members of the Ukrainian Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee; on July 11 with Ukraine's ambassador to the U.S. and secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, Oleksandr Danyliuk; and again on July 31 with Ukraine's ambassador to the U.S., Valeriy Chaly. At no time during those meetings did anyone from Ukraine raise the issue of the withholding of

military aid or express concerns regarding pressure being applied by the president or his administration.

During Congress' August recess, my staff worked with the State Department and others in the administration to plan a trip to Europe during the week of Sept. 2 with Senator Murphy to include Russia, Serbia, Kosovo and Ukraine. On or around Aug. 26, we were informed that our requests for visas into Russia were denied. On either Aug. 28 or 29, I became aware of the fact that \$250 million of military aid was being withheld. This news would obviously impact my trip and discussions with Zelensky.

Sondland had texted me on Aug. 26 remarking on the Russian visa denial. I replied on Aug. 30, apologizing for my tardy response and requesting a call to discuss Ukraine. We scheduled a call for sometime between 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. that same day. I called Sondland and asked what he knew about the hold on military support. I did not memorialize the conversation in any way, and my memory of exactly what Sondland told me is far from perfect. I was hoping that his testimony before the House would help jog my memory, but he seems to have an even fuzzier recollection of that call than I do.

The most salient point of the call involved Sondland describing an arrangement where, if Ukraine did something to demonstrate its serious intention to fight corruption and possibly help determine what involvement operatives in Ukraine might have had during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, then Trump would release the hold on military support.

I have stated that I winced when that arrangement was described to me. I felt U.S. support for Ukraine was essential, particularly with Zelensky's new and inexperienced administration facing an aggressive Vladimir Putin. I feared any sign of reduced U.S. support could prompt Putin to demonstrate even more aggression, and because I was convinced Zelensky was sincere in his desire to fight corruption, this was no time to be withholding aid for any reason. It was the time to show maximum strength and resolve.

I next put in a call request for National Security Adviser John Bolton, and spoke with him on Aug. 31. I believe he agreed with my position on providing military assistance, and he suggested I speak with both the vice president and president. I requested calls with both, but was not able to schedule a call with Vice President Pence. President Trump called me that same day.

The purpose of the call was to inform President Trump of my upcoming trip to Ukraine and to try to persuade him to authorize me to tell Zelensky that the hold would be lifted on military aid. The president was not prepared to lift the hold, and he was consistent in the reasons he cited. He reminded me how thoroughly corrupt Ukraine was and again conveyed his frustration that Europe doesn't do its fair share of providing military aid. He specifically cited the sort of conversation he would have with Angela Merkel, chancellor of Germany. To paraphrase President Trump: "Ron, I talk to Angela and ask her, 'Why don't you fund these things,' and she tells me, 'Because we know you will.' We're schmucks. Ron. We're schmucks."

I acknowledged the corruption in Ukraine, and I did not dispute the fact that Europe could and should provide more military support. But I pointed out that Germany was opposed to providing Ukraine lethal defensive weaponry and simply would not do so. As a result, if we wanted to deter Russia from further aggression, it was up to the U.S. to provide it.

I had two additional counterarguments. First, I wasn't suggesting we support the oligarchs and other corrupt Ukrainians. Our support would be for the courageous Ukrainians who had overthrown Putin's puppet, Viktor Yanukovich, and delivered a remarkable 73% mandate in electing Zelensky to fight corruption. Second, I argued that withholding the support looked horrible politically in that it could be used to bolster the "Trump is soft on Russia" mantra.

It was only after he reiterated his reasons for not giving me the authority to tell Zelensky the support would be released that I asked him about whether there was some kind of arrangement where Ukraine would take some action and the hold would be lifted. Without hesitation, President Trump immediately denied such an arrangement existed. As reported in the Wall Street Journal, I quoted the president as saying, "(Expletive deleted) — No way. I would never do that. Who told you that?" I have accurately characterized his reaction as adamant, vehement and angry — there was more than one expletive that I have deleted.

Based on his reaction, I felt more than a little guilty even asking him the question, much less telling him I heard it from Sondland. He seemed even more annoyed by that, and asked me, "Who is that guy?" I interpreted that not as a literal question — the president did know whom Sondland was — but rather as a sign that the president did not know him well. I replied by saying, "I thought he was your buddy from the real estate business." The president replied by saying he barely knew him.

After discussing Ukraine, we talked about other unrelated matters. Finally, the president said he had to go because he had a hurricane to deal with. He wrapped up the conversation referring back to my request to release the hold on military support for Ukraine by saying something like, "Ron, I understand your position. We're reviewing it now, and you'll probably like my final decision."

On Tuesday, Sept. 3, I had a short follow up call with Bolton to discuss my upcoming trip to Ukraine, Serbia and Kosovo. I do not recall discussing anything in particular that relates to the current impeachment inquiry on that call.

We arrived in Kyiv on Sept. 4, joining Taylor and Murphy for a full day of meetings on Sept. 5 with embassy staff, members of the new Ukrainian administration, and Zelensky, who was accompanied by some of his top advisers. We also attended the opening proceedings of the Ukrainian High Anti-Corruption Court. The meetings reinforced our belief that Zelensky and his team were serious about fulfilling his mandate — to paraphrase the way he described it in his speech at the High Anti-Corruption Court — to not only fight corruption but to defeat it.

The meeting with Zelensky started with him requesting we dispense with the usual diplomatic opening and get right to the issue on everyone's mind, the hold being placed on military support.

He asked if any of us knew the current status. Because I had just spoken to President Trump, I fielded his question and conveyed the two reasons the president told me for his hold. I explained that I had tried to persuade the president to authorize me to announce the hold was released but that I was unsuccessful.

As much as Zelensky was concerned about losing the military aid, he was even more concerned about the signal that would send. I shared his concern. I suggested that in our public statements we first emphasize the universal support that the U.S. Congress has shown — and will continue to show — for the Ukrainian people. Second, we should minimize the significance of the hold on military aid as simply a timing issue coming a few weeks before the end of our federal fiscal year. Even if President Trump and the deficit hawks within his administration decided not to obligate funding for the current fiscal year, Congress would make sure he had no option in the next fiscal year — which then was only a few weeks away. I also made the point that Murphy was on the Appropriations Committee and could lead the charge on funding.

Murphy made the additional point that one of the most valuable assets Ukraine possesses is bipartisan congressional support. He warned Zelensky not to respond to requests from American political actors or he would risk losing Ukraine's bipartisan support. I did not comment on this issue that Murphy raised.

Instead, I began discussing a possible meeting with President Trump. I viewed a meeting between the two presidents as crucial for overcoming President Trump's reservations and securing full U.S. support. It was at this point that President Trump's May 23 directive came into play.

I prefaced my comment to Zelensky by saying, "Let me go out on a limb here. Are you or any of your advisers aware of the inaugural delegation's May 23 meeting in the Oval Office following your inauguration?" No one admitted they were, so I pressed on. "The reason I bring up that meeting is that I don't want you caught off-guard if President Trump reacts to you the same way he reacted to the delegation's request for support for Ukraine."

I told the group that President Trump explicitly told the delegation that he wanted to make sure Zelensky knew exactly how he felt about Ukraine before any meeting took place. To repeat Volker's quote of President Trump: "They are all corrupt. They are all terrible people. ... I don't want to spend any time with that." That was the general attitude toward Ukraine that I felt President Trump directed us to convey. Since I did not have Volker's quote to use at the time, I tried to portray that strongly held attitude and reiterated the reasons President Trump consistently gave me for his reservations regarding Ukraine: endemic corruption and inadequate European support.

I also conveyed the counterarguments I used (unsuccessfully) to persuade the president to lift his hold: 1) We would be supporting the people of Ukraine, not corrupt oligarchs, and 2) withholding military support was not politically smart. Although I recognized how this next point would be problematic, I also suggested any public statement Zelensky could make asking for greater support from Europe would probably be viewed favorably by President Trump.



Finally, I commented on how excellent Zelensky's English was and encouraged him to use English as much as possible in a future meeting with President Trump. With a smile on his face, he replied, "But Senator Johnson, you don't realize how beautiful my Ukrainian is." I jokingly conceded the point by saying I was not able to distinguish his Ukrainian from his Russian.

This was a very open, frank, and supportive discussion. There was no reason for anyone on either side not to be completely honest or to withhold any concerns. At no time during this meeting — or any other meeting on this trip — was there any mention by Zelensky or any Ukrainian that they were feeling pressure to do anything in return for the military aid, not even after Murphy warned them about getting involved in the 2020 election — which would have been the perfect time to discuss any pressure.

Following the meeting with Zelensky and his advisers, Murphy and I met with the Ukrainian press outside the presidential office building. Our primary message was that we were in Kyiv to demonstrate our strong bipartisan support for the people of Ukraine. We were very encouraged by our meetings with Zelensky and other members of his new government in their commitment to fulfill their electoral mandate to fight and defeat corruption. When the issue of military support was raised, I provided the response I suggested above: I described it as a timing issue at the end of a fiscal year and said that, regardless of what decision President Trump made on the fiscal year 2019 funding, I was confident Congress would restore the funding in fiscal year 2020. In other words: Don't mistake a budget issue for a change in America's strong support for the people of Ukraine.

Congress came back into session on Sept. 9. During a vote early in the week, I approached one of the co-chairs of the Senate Ukraine Caucus, U.S. Sen. Richard Durbin. I briefly described our trip to Ukraine and the concerns Zelensky and his advisers had over the hold on military support. According to press reports, Senator Durbin stated that was the first time he was made aware of the hold. I went on to describe how I tried to minimize the impact of that hold by assuring Ukrainians that Congress could restore the funding in fiscal year 2020. I encouraged Durbin, as I had encouraged Murphy, to use his membership on the Senate Appropriations Committee to restore the funding.

Also according to a press report, leading up to a Sept. 12 defense appropriation committee markup, Durbin offered an amendment to restore funding. On Sept. 11, the administration announced that the hold had been lifted. I think it is important to note the hold was lifted only 14 days after its existence became publicly known, and 55 days after the hold apparently had been placed.

On Friday, Oct. 4, I saw news reports of text messages that Volker had supplied the House of Representatives as part of his testimony. The texts discussed a possible press release that Zelensky might issue to help persuade President Trump to offer an Oval Office meeting. Up to that point, I had publicly disclosed only the first part of my Aug. 31 phone call with President Trump, where I lobbied him to release the military aid and he provided his consistent reasons for not doing so: corruption and inadequate European support.

Earlier in the week, I had given a phone interview with Siobhan Hughes of the Wall Street Journal regarding my involvement with Ukraine. With the disclosure of the Volker texts, I felt it was important to go on the record with the next part of my Aug. 31 call with President Trump: his denial. I had not previously disclosed this because I could not precisely recall what Sondland had told me on Aug. 30, and what I had conveyed to President Trump, regarding action Ukraine would take before military aid would be released. To the best of my recollection, the action described by Sondland on Aug. 30 involved a demonstration that the new Ukrainian government was serious about fighting corruption — something like the appointment of a prosecutor general with high integrity.

I called Hughes Friday morning, Oct. 4, to update my interview. It was a relatively lengthy interview, almost 30 minutes, as I attempted to put a rather complex set of events into context. Toward the tail end of that interview, Hughes said, “It almost sounds like, the way you see it, Gordon was kind of freelancing and he took it upon himself to do something that the president hadn’t exactly blessed, as you see it.” I replied, “That’s a possibility, but I don’t know that. Let’s face it: The president can’t have his fingers in everything. He can’t be stage-managing everything, so you have members of his administration trying to create good policy.”

To my knowledge, most members of the administration and Congress dealing with the issues involving Ukraine disagreed with President Trump’s attitude and approach toward Ukraine. Many who had the opportunity and ability to influence the president attempted to change his mind. I see nothing wrong with U.S. officials working with Ukrainian officials to demonstrate Ukraine’s commitment to reform in order to change President Trump’s attitude and gain his support.

Nor is it wrong for administration staff to use their powers of persuasion within their chain of command to influence policy. What is wrong is for people who work for, and at the pleasure of, the president to believe they set U.S. foreign policy instead of the duly elected president doing so. It also would be wrong for those individuals to step outside their chain of command — or established whistleblower procedures — to undermine the president’s policy. If those working for the president don’t feel they can implement the president’s policies in good conscience, they should follow Gen. James Mattis’ example and resign. If they choose to do so, they can then take their disagreements to the public. That would be the proper and high-integrity course of action.

This impeachment effort has done a great deal of damage to our democracy. The release of transcripts of discussions between the president of the United States and another world leader sets a terrible precedent that will deter and limit candid conversations between the president and world leaders from now on. The weakening of executive privilege will also limit the extent to which presidential advisers will feel comfortable providing “out of the box” and other frank counsel in the future.

In my role as chairman of the Senate’s primary oversight committee, I strongly believe in and support whistleblower protections. But in that role, I am also aware that not all whistleblowers

are created equal. Not every whistleblower has purely altruistic motives. Some have personal axes to grind against a superior or co-workers. Others might have a political ax to grind.

The Intelligence Community Inspector General acknowledges the whistleblower in this instance exhibits some measure of “an arguable political bias.” The whistleblower’s selection of attorney Mark Zaid lends credence to the ICIG’s assessment, given Zaid’s tweet that mentions coup, rebellion and impeachment only 10 days after Trump’s inauguration.

If the whistleblower’s intention was to improve and solidify the relationship between the U.S. and Ukraine, he or she failed miserably. Instead, the result has been to publicize and highlight the president’s deeply held reservations toward Ukraine that the whistleblower felt were so damaging to our relationship with Ukraine and to U.S. national security. The dispute over policy was being resolved between the two branches of government before the whistleblower complaint was made public. All the complaint has accomplished is to fuel the House’s impeachment desire (which I believe was the real motivation), and damage our democracy as described above.

America faces enormous challenges at home and abroad. My oversight efforts have persuaded me there has been a concerted effort, probably beginning the day after the November 2016 election, to sabotage and undermine President Trump and his administration. President Trump, his supporters, and the American public have a legitimate and understandable desire to know if wrongdoing occurred directed toward influencing the 2016 election or sabotaging Trump’s administration. The American public also has a right to know if no wrongdoing occurred. The sooner we get answers to the many unanswered questions, the sooner we can attempt to heal our severely divided nation and turn our attention to the many daunting challenges America faces.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson  
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Michael T. McCaul  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Foreign Affairs

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney  
Acting Chairwoman  
Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Eliot Engel  
Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Affairs

The Honorable Adam Schiff  
Chairman  
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 30, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

As we explained to you in our letter on November 6, 2019, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Finance (the Committees) continue to examine potential conflicts of interest relating to the Obama administration's policy decisions with respect to Ukraine and Burisma Holdings. In addition, the Committees are examining the extent to which representatives of Burisma used individuals with close personal connections to high-level officials within the Obama administration to gain access to and potentially influence U.S. government agencies.

Based on the Committees' review of material produced by the State Department and by other agencies and related entities, we respectfully request the following additional records<sup>1</sup> and information related to this matter:

1. Please make the following State Department employees available for an interview:
  - a. Ambassador Bridget Brink;
  - b. Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt;
  - c. George Kent; and
  - d. Elisabeth Zentos.
2. All records, including call transcripts and summaries, related to then-Vice President Biden's phone calls with then-President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko from March 2015 through April 2016, especially with regard to any mention of the Ukrainian Prosecutor General's investigation of Burisma or Viktor Shokin.
3. All records between then-Vice President Biden or his office and President Poroshenko or his office after the raid on Mykola Zlochevsky's home on February 2, 2016, until the dismissal of Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin on March 29, 2016.
4. Please provide all State Department records related to the Department's assessment of Viktor Shokin, the former Prosecutor General of Ukraine, including, but not limited to:
  - a. The decision to seek his removal from office, including when that decision was made;

---

<sup>1</sup> "Records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

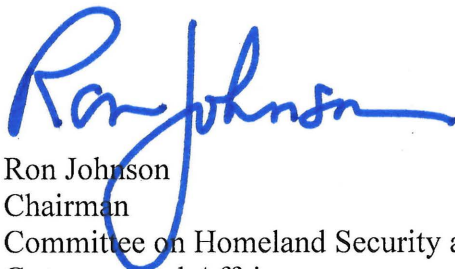
- b. When and how that decision was communicated to the Ukrainian government;
  - c. Discussions relating to the Department's or the administration's view of Shokin's effectiveness as prosecutor general;
  - d. Discussions regarding whether Shokin was implementing anti-corruption measures in Ukraine; and
  - e. Whether officials believed Shokin was an obstacle to Ukrainian reforms.
5. Former Vice President Biden previously expressed that he wanted Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin fired.<sup>2</sup> When did the United States government determine that Shokin should be removed? Please explain the justification for that decision and how and when that determination was communicated to the Ukrainian government.

We request this material and to arrange interviews with these individuals as soon as possible but no later than May 14, 2020.

We anticipate that your written response and most of the responsive documents will be unclassified. Please send all unclassified material directly to the Committees. In keeping with the requirements of Executive Order 13526, if any of the responsive documents do contain classified information, please segregate all unclassified material within the classified documents, provide all unclassified information directly to the Committees, and provide a classified addendum to the Office of Senate Security. The Committees comply with all laws and regulations governing the handling of classified information. The Committees are not bound, absent their prior agreement, by any handling restrictions or instructions on unclassified information unilaterally asserted by the Executive Branch.

If you have any questions about this request, please ask your staff to contact Brian Downey and Scott Wittmann of Chairman Johnson's staff at (202) 224-4751, and Joshua Flynn-Brown of Chairman Grassley's staff at (202) 224-4515. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security and  
Governmental Affairs



Charles E. Grassley  
Chairman  
Committee on Finance

---

<sup>2</sup> Erielle Davidson, *Watch Joe Biden Brag About Bribing Ukraine to Fire The Prosecutor Investigating His Son's Company*, The Federalist, Sept. 24, 2019, <https://thefederalist.com/2019/09/24/watch-joe-biden-brag-about-bribing-ukraine-to-fire-the-prosecutor-investigating-his-sons-company/>.

# Statement On the Ukrainian-American Strategic Partnership

23 May, 20:11

***Kyiv Security Forum expresses gratitude to the distinguished Ukrainian politicians, diplomats and civic activists for their support of the appeal to the American leaders and society on the importance of protecting the Ukrainian-American strategic partnership.***

## **Statement On the Ukrainian-American Strategic Partnership**

We, the representatives of Ukrainian politics, civil society, and the expert community, are deeply concerned to watch a campaign to involve Ukraine in the political competition in the United States unfold with renewed vigor.

Ukraine greatly appreciates the steadfast support of the American people for our independence, security, and Western course.

Our nations share the common values of national and human freedom.

The combined efforts of the two largest political parties in the United States and all concerned Americans to defend Ukraine are a major historical contribution to the creation of a united Europe and a just world order.

We call on American leaders to distinguish between the position of new Ukraine, which stands for the unity of the West and acts to unite democracies around the world, and those forces that seek to turn the political developments in our country into a toxic narrative to sow discord among our partners.

We oppose the dishonest attempts to use the political controversies in the United States. We do not choose any side, but support each of them in the same way that they together help Ukraine's independence.

We call on America's leaders to distinguish between the position of our nation from the actions of politicians instigated by Moscow.

We condemn hostile provocations aimed at alienating our nations.

We believe in the strategic partnership between Ukraine and the United States.

Let us not allow mutual distrust and doubt to erode this great and lasting relationship.

Let us stand together in times of great trials.

*Signed on May 22-23, 2020*

\* \* \*

**Arseniy Yatsenyuk**, Chairman of the Kyiv Security Forum, Prime Minister of Ukraine (2014-2016).

**Oleksandr Turchynov**, acting President of Ukraine, Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (2014), National Security Advisor (2014-2019).

**Oksana Zabuzhko**, writer, National Taras Shevchenko Prize laureate.

**Joseph Zissels**, member of the First of December Initiative Group, member of the Strategic Council of the Movement against Capitulation.

**Myroslav Marynovych**, Vice-Rector of the Ukrainian Catholic University, political dissident and prisoner of conscience under the Soviet occupation, member of the First of December Initiative Group.

**Yevhen Zakharov**, Chairperson of the Kharkiv Human Rights Group, Head of the Board of the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Group, member of the First of December Initiative Group.

**Leonid Finberg**, Director of the Research Center of the History and Culture of Eastern European Jewry at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Editor-in-Chief of the “Dukh i Litera” Publishing house.

**Ihor Kozlovsky**, prisoner of the Russian occupation regime in Donbas, President of the Center for Religious Studies, member of the First of December Initiative Group.

**Lilia Hrynevych**, Minister of Education of Ukraine (2016-2019).

**Volodymyr Vasylenko**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Judge of the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (2001-2005), Representative of Ukraine to the UN Human Rights Council (2006-10).

**Volodymyr Ohryzko**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (2007-2009).

**Danylo Lubkivsky**, Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine (2014), member of the Board of Open Ukraine Foundation.

**Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze**, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Ukraine’s integration into the EU, European Solidarity faction, Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine (2016-2019).

**Yuriy Shcherbak**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to Israel (1992-1994), the United States (1994-1998), Canada (2000-2003).

**Oleksandr Motsyk**, First Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine (2004-2005), Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to the United States (2010-2015).

**Valeriy Chaly**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to the United States (2015-2019), Chair of the Board of the Ukrainian Crisis Media Center.

**Hanna Hopko**, civic activist, Chairwoman of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs (2014-2019).

**Roman Bezsmetny**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Vice-Prime-Minister of Ukraine (2005).

**Natalia Popovych**, Co-Founder of the Ukrainian Crisis Media Center, Founder of One Philosophy Group.

**Ivan Vasyunyk**, Head of the Supervisory Board of the International Foundation for the Development of the Holodomor Victims’ Memorial, Vice-Prime-Minister of Ukraine (2007-2010).

**Solomiia Bobrovska**, member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of IX convocation, Holos / Voice faction.

**Ostap Semerak**, Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2014), Minister of Ecology of Ukraine (2016-2019), member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of VI and VIII convocations.

**Iryna Geraschenko**, member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of IX convocation, Co-Chair of the European Solidarity faction, First Deputy Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (2016-2019).

**Serhiy Kvit**, Minister of Education of Ukraine (2014-2016), professor at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

**Svitlana Voitsekhivska**, member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of VIII convocation, member of the Board of Open Ukraine Foundation.

**Maksym Burbak**, Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine (2014), member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of VII and VIII convocations.

**Iryna Friz**, member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of VIII and IX convocations, European Solidarity faction, Minister of Veterans Affairs (2018-2019).

**Mykola Kniazhytskyi**, journalist, member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of VIII and IX convocations.

**Maria Ionova**, member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of VIII and IX convocations, European Solidarity faction.

**Mykola Ryabchuk**, Honorary President of the Ukrainian PEN-Club.

**Myroslava Barchuk**, journalist, member of the Ukrainian PEN-Club.

**Vitaliy Portnykov**, journalist, writer.

**Volodymyr Yermolenko**, philosopher, Chief-editor of UkraineWorld Initiative, analytics director at Internews Ukraine.

**Vakhtang Kebuladze**, philosopher, professor at the Kyiv Taras Shevchenko National University.

**Taras Lyuty**, philosopher, professor at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

**Mykhaylo Basarab**, civic activist, Coordinator of the Movement against Capitulation.

**Victoria Ptashnyk**, member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of VIII convocation.

**Viktor Yelensky**, member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of VIII convocation.

**Borys Potapenko**, Head of International Council in Support of Ukraine.

**Serhiy Vysotsky**, journalist, member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of VIII convocation.

**Andriy Levus**, civic activist, Coordinator of the Movement against Capitulation, member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of VIII convocation.

**Oleksandr Sochka**, member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of VI, VII and VIII convocations.

**Mykhaylo Khmil**, member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of VIII convocation.

**Myroslav Hai**, civic activist, Chairman of the Peace and Co Charitable Foundation.

**Yevhen Bystrytsky**, philosopher.

**Kateryna Smagliy**, Director of the International Cooperation Department at the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine's Foreign Ministry.

**Mykola Horbal**, poet, political prisoner under the Soviet occupation.

**Volodymyr Dubrovsky**, economist.

**Borys Zakharov**, Director of "Human and Right" Charitable Foundation.

**Hennadiy Kurochka**, member of the Board of the Ukrainian Crisis Media Center.

**Oleksiy Panych**, philosopher, member of the Ukrainian PEN-Club.

**Valeriy Pekar**, Lecturer of Kyiv-Mohyla Business School.

**Kostyantyn Sigov**, philosopher, civic activist, Chair of the Center of the European Humanitarian Studies at the National University of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

**Hennadiy Buryak**, Deputy Director of the National Institute of the History of Ukraine.

**Oleksandr Skipalsky**, Lieutenant General, Honorary President of the Veterans Society of the Intelligence Community.

**Anatoliy Podolsky**, Director of the Ukrainian Center of the Holocaust Studies.

**Ukrainian Crisis Media Center**.