

Timeline: Trump, Giuliani, Bidens, and Ukraine (updated)

by Viola Gienger and Ryan Goodman November 27, 2019

(Editor's note: The following timeline, originally published on Sept. 24, 2019, was updated on Sept. 30, Oct. 8, Oct. 17, Nov. 7, Nov. 18, Nov. 27, Dec. 3, and Dec. 4, 2019, to add new items. The most recent updates, still underway, include information from the House Intelligence Committee's [Trump-Ukraine Impeachment Inquiry Report](#), and are indicated in red.)

A months-long campaign by President Donald Trump and his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani to pressure the Ukraine government to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden, Trump's potential rival in the 2020 election, has gripped the nation's capital. The situation escalated following the Sept. 13 [revelation](#) of an intelligence community whistleblower complaint related to a ["series of events,"](#) including a phone call between President Trump and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

As these events unfold, the aim of the chronology below is to provide a useful reference for the context and timeline on Ukraine, the roles of Joe Biden and his son Hunter there, and Trump and Giuliani's efforts to persuade Ukraine to pursue investigations against them. We attempt to present an accurate picture of events, favorable and unfavorable to the players involved. Our assessments and views of the available public information are reflected in two pieces: Viola Gienger's ["Trump and Giuliani's Quest for Fake Ukraine 'Dirt' on Biden: An Explainer"](#) and our piece ["The Swiftboating of Joe Biden."](#)

This chronology will be updated as new information becomes available.

November 2013 – Political revolution in Ukraine

Tens of thousands of Ukrainians [begin protests](#) in central Kyiv's Independence Square (the "Maidan") against the government of then-President Viktor Yanukovich. The protesters' main concern is the government's decision to abandon a planned "association agreement" with the European Union and to instead accept assistance from Russia. The protests grew to encompass broader concerns, especially about rampant corruption in Ukraine. The movement became known as the "Maidan Revolution" or the "Revolution of Dignity," referring to the daily indignities Ukrainians suffered as a result of government corruption and ineptitude.

February 2014 – Pro-Russian government falls

Yanukovich's security forces crack down on the demonstrators, killing more than 70 civilians and spurring a political backlash. The president, who had been in office since February 2010, flees to Russia.

March 2014 – Russian military invasion

Russian forces invade Crimea and stage an illegal and dubious referendum and declare their annexation of the peninsula. That month, the United Nations General Assembly [votes](#) to condemn Russian actions, including the referendum.

April 2014 – Russian and pro-Russian forces invade the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine and take control, starting a war that continues today and has killed more than 13,000 people.

April 2014 – Hunter Biden joins Ukrainian firm Burisma

Joe Biden's younger son, Hunter Biden, [joins](#) the board of Burisma Holdings, the [largest](#) private oil and gas extracting company in Ukraine, controlled by founder Mykola Zlochevskiy, who had served as a Cabinet minister under former pro-Russian Presidents Leonid Kuchma and Yanukovich. Both administrations had been suspected of corruption, and once they were ousted, successor administrations pledging reforms targeted previous officials, including Zlochevskiy, for investigation. Allegations against Zlochevskiy center on the funding schemes he used to form the company in 2002. But cases against him stall in each instance.

An American business partner of Hunter Biden, Devon Archer, also joins the board. The company issues a press release about the Biden appointment in May (see below). The appointment [draws criticism](#) for the [potential perception of a conflict of interest](#) with Vice President Biden's role as the White House's point man on Ukraine. [News reports](#) later in 2014 reveal that Hunter Biden had been discharged from the Navy in February for testing positive for cocaine (clearly just months before the Burisma board appointment).

April 16, 2014 – U.K. investigates Burisma owner Mykola Zlochevskiy

The U.K.'s Serious Fraud Office (SFO) [blocks accounts](#) of Burisma's majority shareholder, Mykola Zlochevskiy. A British court conducts a hearing on Dec. 3-5, 2014, and unblocks the accounts in a Jan. 21, 2015 judgment, ([full text](#)), finding that none of the evidence "establishes reasonable grounds for a belief that his assets were unlawfully acquired as a result of misconduct in public office." The SFO apparently continued its investigation until at least May 2015, when a spokeswoman told [The Guardian](#), "We are disappointed we were not provided with the evidence by authorities in the Ukraine necessary to keep this restraint order in place." The newspaper said she "declined to comment further because she said the investigation was ongoing." (In September 2015, U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt heavily criticizes officials in the Office of Prosecutor General in a public speech for not cooperating sufficiently with and even undermining the British investigation. See below.)

Special note: In his [congressional deposition](#), George Kent explained that the administration had worked with British authorities on the case to seize Zlochevskiy's assets. "That was an issue of our interest because we had made a commitment to the Ukrainian Government in 2014 to try to recover an estimated tens of billions of dollars of stolen assets out of the country. The first case that U.S., U.K., and Ukrainian investigators worked on was a case against Zlochevsky."

May 12, 2014 – Burisma Holdings issues a [press release](#) saying Hunter Biden has

joined its board, and that he will be “in charge of the Holdings’ legal unit and will provide support for the company among international organizations.” The release cites his then-current positions as counsel to New York-based law firm Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP and co-founder and a managing partner of investment advisory firm Rosemont Seneca Partners, where he also served as board chairman.

May 25, 2014 – Chocolate and confectionary magnate/oligarch Petro Poroshenko wins the presidency in Ukraine in an election to succeed Yanukovich on a platform of turning Ukraine back to the West. Poroshenko previously had served as foreign minister and minister of trade and economic development.

June 7, 2014 – Petro Poroshenko takes office as president of Ukraine.

June 19, 2014 – The Ukrainian Parliament [approves](#) Poroshenko’s appointment of former law enforcement officer and member of Parliament Vitaly Yarema as prosecutor general.

Aug. 5, 2014 – Ukraine investigation of Burisma

Ukrainian Prosecutor General Vitaly Yarema opens an investigation of Burisma owner Mykola Zlochevskiy on suspicion of “unlawful enrichment.” (The investigation is referenced in the January 2015 U.K. [court judgment](#), which concludes that the Ukrainian probe might have been started as a result of a misinterpretation of the British account freeze.) Zlochevskiy’s American lawyer, John Buretta, a former U.S. deputy assistant attorney general, says in a 2017 [Q&A on the Burisma website](#) that a court in Kyiv ordered the case closed in September 2016 because no evidence of wrongdoing had been presented. While suspicions remain over how Zlochevskiy obtained his wealth and what happened to taxpayer money while he held public office, the British judge in the January 2015 U.K. judgment observed, “Allegations of corruption against political opponents appear to have been a feature of Ukrainian political life at this time.”

Oct. 14, 2014 – Ramping up Ukraine anti-corruption forces

Ukraine’s Parliament passes a law establishing the [National Anti-Corruption Bureau \(NABU\)](#), a priority of anti-corruption campaigners who’d helped lead the revolution and of the U.S. government (led by Biden) and other international backers of Ukraine. The bureau, which is to include a special prosecutor for certain corruption cases, was created in part because of the recognized ineffectiveness and corruption of the Prosecutor General’s Office and the country’s judiciary. The country’s anti-corruption plans also include a special High Anti-Corruption Court, which Poroshenko and Parliament slow-rolled until domestic and foreign advocates again exerted pressure [over the past year](#). In fact, [the U.S. and Europe required the Ukrainian government to fund NABU](#) in exchange for financial aid. NABU’s early years are an uphill battle in the face of documented efforts by Parliament and the Prosecutor General’s Office to undermine its work.

NABU later becomes a target of Giuliani’s (see Aug. 14, 2016 item below).

Early February 2015 — U.S. administration conveys harsh criticism of prosecutor general office for its coverup of Zlochevsky/Burisma

George Kent, who was then-senior anti-corruption coordinator in the State Department's European Bureau and had at the time been selected for deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, met in the Ukrainian capital with a deputy prosecutor from Prosecutor General Yarema's office, according to his [congressional testimony](#). Kent, who had [long pushed](#) Ukrainian prosecutors for investigations into Zlochevsky, "scolded" the deputy prosecutor for having "shut the criminal case" that had been the basis for a U.K. court freezing Zlochevsky's assets, demanding, "Who took the bribe and how much was it?," Kent asked. Kent's effort was coordinated with the Justice Department,

Feb. 10, 2015 – Viktor Shokin [takes office](#) as Ukraine's prosecutor general, replacing Yarema.

Sept. 24, 2015 – U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt [excoriates](#) officials in the Prosecutor General's Office for stymying anti-corruption investigations, including those involving Burisma

Pyatt's speech was part of a regular drumbeat by U.S. and other Western leaders, including Vice President Biden, and a swath of Ukrainian civil society seeking to pressure President Poroshenko to force his officials, especially in the Prosecutor General's Office (PGO) to crack down *more*, not less, on corruption. "Corruption kills," Pyatt said in the address to the Odesa Financial Forum for business leaders. "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."

While giving Shokin a last chance to shape up (Pyatt says, "We want to work with Prosecutor General Shokin so the PGO is leading the fight against corruption."), the ambassador criticizes "officials at the PGO's office" for not providing documents that were needed for the British investigation of Burisma owner Zlochevskiy and effectively allowing Zlochevskiy to transfer \$23 million of what Pyatt says were Ukrainian taxpayer assets to Cyprus. In other words, Pyatt is critical of the prosecutor's office for *not* aiding in investigations of Burisma's owner, which was in line with Biden's criticism that the office was blocking corruption investigations. **Pyatt specifically called for the investigation and removal of officials who were involved in the failure to help the British authorities investigate Zlochevskiy:**

"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 [cq], 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.”

[Full text](#) of Ambassador Pyatt’s speech. [See also [early February 2015 entry](#) for then-deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv George Kent’s scolding deputy general prosecutor for corrupt protection of Zlochevsky.]



Oct. 8, 2015 – U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland continues the drumbeat on the need for stepped-up anti-corruption efforts in Ukraine, [telling](#) the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in [testimony](#) that “the Prosecutor General’s Office (PGO) has to be reinvented as an institution that serves the citizens of Ukraine, rather than ripping them off.” She continues, “That means it must investigate and successfully prosecute corruption and asset recovery cases, including locking up dirty personnel in the PGO itself.”

Fall 2015 – Biden, along with the EU, publicly calls for ouster of Prosecutor General Shokin for failure to work on anti-corruption efforts.

John E. Herbst, U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine under George W. Bush, later [testified](#) before Congress:

“By late fall of 2015, the EU and the United States joined the chorus of those seeking Mr. Shokin’s removal as the start of an overall reform of the Procurator General’s Office. U.S. Vice President Joe Biden **spoke publicly** about this before and during his December visit to Kyiv.”

Dec. 8, 2015 – Vice President Biden makes a [speech](#) to Ukraine’s Parliament urging the country to step up anti-corruption measures.

In a speech covered widely in [news media](#), Biden implores Ukrainian lawmakers to move more quickly to fight the country’s “historic battle against corruption” and “make real the Revolution of Dignity.” (Many of the lawmakers themselves were former businessmen and suspected of corruption and therefore that much less interested in fighting graft.) He says, “The only thing worse than having no hope at all

is having hopes rise and see them dashed repeatedly on the shoals of corruption...Not enough has been done yet.” Specifically citing Shokin’s Office of the General Prosecutor for lagging on corruption investigations, he continues:

“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

The United States is with you in this fight...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.”

[Full text](#) of Biden’s speech.



Jan. 21, 2016 – Vice President Biden meets with Ukrainian President Poroshenko and discusses “the need to continue to move forward on Ukraine’s anti-corruption agenda,” according to a [readout](#) on the website of the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv.

Feb. 11, 2016 – Vice President Biden speaks with Poroshenko by phone. A U.S. Embassy [statement](#) said the two agreed “that it is essential for Ukraine to continue to take action to root out corruption and implement reforms.”

Biden later boasts about the pressure he exerted on Ukraine during that time to address corruption. In a Jan. 23, 2018, Q&A following a speech at the [Council on Foreign Relations](#) (CFR) in Washington, Biden touts his tough stance with Ukraine in 2016. He says he told Ukrainian leaders that the U.S. would withhold \$1 billion in loan guarantees unless they fired Prosecutor General Shokin. President Trump and Rudy Giuliani have cited that boast repeatedly as proof that Biden admitted pushing for Shokin’s firing, even though Biden was calling for the prosecutor to be fired because he *wasn’t* pursuing corruption cases vigorously enough. In the CFR appearance, Biden makes the comments in the context of expressing his concern that Ukraine still was not getting tough enough on corruption. “I looked at them and said: I’m leaving in six hours. If the prosecutor is not fired, you’re not getting the money. Well, son of a bitch. (Laughter.) He got fired. And they put in place someone who was solid at the time.” Biden continued, “So they made some genuine substantial changes institutionally and with people. But ... there’s now some backsliding.” (Biden had boasted about this episode in an [interview](#) in Aug. 2016.)

“The United States and other Western nations had for months called for the ousting of Mr. Shokin, who was widely criticized for turning a blind eye to corrupt practice,”

the *New York Times* [reported](#) at the time.

Steven Pifer is a career foreign service officer who was ambassador to Ukraine under President Bill Clinton and deputy assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian Affairs under President George W. Bush. He told [PolitiFact](#) that “virtually everyone” he knew in the U.S. government “felt that Shokin was not doing his job and should be fired. As far as I can recall, they all concurred with the vice president telling Poroshenko that the U.S. government would not extend the \$1 billion loan guarantee to Ukraine until Shokin was removed from office.”

Note: Investigation of Burisma laid dormant at the time

Vitaliy Kasko, a former deputy prosecutor general who had worked under Shokin and resigned in frustration at his stymying of corruption investigations, told Bloomberg News (in a May 2019 interview) that the office’s probe into Burisma Holdings had been [long dormant](#) by the time Joe Biden issued his ultimatum in 2016. “There was no pressure from anyone from the U.S. to close cases against” Burisma owner Zlochevskiy, Bloomberg quoted Kasko as saying. “It was shelved by Ukrainian prosecutors in 2014 and through 2015,” Kasko said.

“Shokin was not investigating. He didn’t want to investigate Burisma,” Daria Kaleniuk a leading Ukrainian anti-corruption advocate, [told](#) the *Washington Post*. “And Shokin was fired not because he wanted to do that investigation, but quite to the contrary, because he failed that investigation.”

See also entries above: At time of British investigation in 2014-2015, Shokin’s Office sent letters to Zlochevsky’s attorneys attesting that there was no case against him.

Feb. 16, 2016 – Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin resigns, then returns to office before finally being ousted

Ukrainian news media report on Feb. 16 that Viktor Shokin [resigned](#) as Prosecutor General after months of intense criticism for failing to adequately pursue any major corruption cases. But wait ... despite President Poroshenko’s public call that day that Shokin resign and the apparent submission of a resignation letter on Feb. 19, [media](#) cited a prosecutor in Shokin’s office on March 16 saying the chief prosecutor was back after a “long leave.” Finally, on March 29, the Parliament [voted](#) overwhelmingly to approve Poroshenko’s recommendation to dismiss Shokin.

The European Union [issued](#) a statement hailing his departure. The respected English-language *Kyiv Post* [writes](#), “By the end of his term, he was likely one of the most unpopular figures in Ukraine, having earned a bad reputation for inaction and obstructing top cases.” The paper also says it “wasn’t able to find any public comments that Shokin made about [Burisma] during his 14 months in office.”

Feb. 18 and 19, 2016 – Vice President Biden speaks by phone with Ukrainian President Poroshenko. The Feb. 19 [U.S. Embassy statement](#) says Biden again urged the Ukrainian leader to “to accelerate Ukraine’s efforts to fight corruption, strengthen justice and the rule of law, and fulfill its IMF requirements.”

April 4, 2016 — George Kent, then charge d’Affaires in Kyiv, writes [letter](#) to Deputy

Prosecutor General Yuriy Stolyarchuk re apparent pressure campaign on anti-corruption work and advocates inside and outside the office. Kent demands, essentially, that the PGO stop harassing entities and individuals with investigations based on the fact that they are involved in anti-corruption projects supported by the United States. [Note: The Hill's John Solomon later twists this in a [March 26, 2019 article](#) to make it look like the Embassy was trying to suppress investigations.]

April 14, 2016 – Vice President Biden speaks with Ukrainian President Poroshenko by phone, [emphasizing](#) “the urgency of putting in place a new Prosecutor General who would bolster the agency’s anti-corruption efforts and strongly support the work of its reformers.” Biden does the same in a [call the same day](#) with newly elected Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman.

May 12, 2016 – A new General Prosecutor

Yuriy Lutsenko, who had headed Poroshenko’s political bloc in Parliament, [takes office](#) as prosecutor general, after Parliament changed the law to allow someone without a law degree and legal experience to hold the position. According to the [New York Times](#), “Lutsenko initially took a hard line against Burisma.”

May 13, 2016— [Biden speaks with Poroshenko](#) to commend the appointment of Lutsenko and the creation of an inspector general for the PGO, and informed the Ukrainian President that the U.S. would finally sign the \$1 billion loan guarantee program. The guarantee was signed on June 3, with Ambassador Pyatt representing the United States.

Aug. 14, 2016 – Evidence surfaces of payments to Paul Manafort

Paul Manafort by this time was Trump’s campaign chairman, and the evidence appeared to show off-the-books payments by the discredited, pro-Russian former Ukrainian President Yanukovich when Manafort served as his political consultant. The payments were recorded in a “black ledger” of Yanukovich’s political party that was turned over to Ukraine’s National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU). On Aug. 19, 2016, days after the [New York Times](#) reported the story, Serhiy Leshchenko, a member of Ukraine’s Parliament who had been swept into office with the 2014 revolution, holds a news conference to discuss the ledger and criticize the payments to Manafort.

Rudy Giuliani has cited the revelations as evidence that certain Ukrainians, supported by the Obama administration at the time, were colluding with Hillary Clinton’s campaign to reveal information tainting Manafort and, by association, Trump, in order to influence the election. Giuliani in May 2019 [accused](#) Leshchenko personally on [Fox News](#) of colluding with Democrats.

Aug. 22, 2016 — Marie Yovanovitch arrives in Ukraine as the new U.S. ambassador. [Note this is after the “black ledger” with Manafort’s payments became public earlier in the month, and months after Prosecutor General Shokin left office and Lutsenko took his place.

September 2016 – Case against Burisma closed

In a 2017 [Q&A on the Burisma website](#), Zlochevskiy's American lawyer, John Buretta, a former U.S. deputy assistant attorney general, says that a court in Kyiv ordered a case closed in September 2016 because no evidence of wrongdoing had been presented.

May 10, 2017 — Trump hosts Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Ambassador Sergey Kislyak in the Oval Office at the White House, just months after taking office and the day after he fired FBI Director James Comey. A photographer for the official Russian news agency [Tass](#) was the only journalist allowed into the meeting. The [Washington Post](#) reported the following week that Trump had “revealed highly classified information” that “jeopardized a critical source of intelligence on the Islamic State.” On Sept. 26, 2019, the [Post reported further](#) that Trump told the Russian officials that he “was unconcerned about Moscow’s interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election because the United States did the same in other countries,” and that the president even “seemed to invite Russia to interfere in other countries’ elections.”

June 8, 2017 – Giuliani meets with Ukrainian leaders

Giuliani, who has had business of his own in Ukraine in the past, meets with President Petro Poroshenko and Prosecutor General Lutsenko, among other officials, during a [visit to Kyiv](#), hosted by the foundation of billionaire Ukrainian metals magnate [Victor Pinchuk](#), for a lecture on democracy and the rule of law. The meetings are [cited](#) in the joint U.S. House committee investigation launched later in September 2019 (see below) into Trump and Giuliani’s efforts to pressure Ukraine.

July 25, 2017 – **President Trump issues a public call for an investigation of the 2016 Manafort revelations in Ukraine**

Trump [tweets](#) a reference to what he calls “Ukrainian efforts to sabotage Trump campaign — ‘quietly working to boost Clinton.’ So where is the investigation A.G.,” he writes, referencing then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions and tagging *Fox News* host Sean Hannity. The tweet was [referenced](#) in Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s report on possible obstruction of justice by the U.S. president to block the investigation into Trump campaign collusion with Russia’s 2016 election interference. It also is cited in the September 2019 joint U.S. House committee letter (see below) on the investigation into Trump and Giuliani’s pressure campaign against Ukraine.

Fast forward to early 2018

April 30, 2018 — At an exclusive dinner with President Trump organized at his Washington hotel by the America First super PAC, Ukrainian-American businessman Lev Parnas and Belarusian-American associate Igor Fruman, both residents of Florida, tell Trump “that they thought the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine was unfriendly to the president and his interests,” according to the [Washington Post](#), which cites people who heard Parnas describe the interaction. Parnas reportedly said **Trump immediately declared that the ambassador, Marie Yovanovitch, should be fired.** “People who spoke to Parnas and Fruman said that they spoke often of their displeasure with Yovanovitch and claimed they had personally discussed the ambassador with Trump on more than one occasion,” the Post reported.

The dinner for about 15 people included Donald Trump Jr., Jack Nicklaus III (grandson of the golfer), New York real estate developer Stanley Gale, Republican fundraiser and close friend of Don Jr. Tommy Hicks Jr., and Texas businessman and Trump fundraiser Roy Bailey, who is close to Giuliani, according to the Post, which cited unidentified sources.

“The president was updated regularly by Giuliani on what he was learning about Parnas’s and Fruman’s efforts in Ukraine, according to a former senior administration official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the ongoing investigation,” the Post reported.

May-June 2018 — [Lev Parnas presses then-U.S. Congressman Pete Sessions](#), a Texas Republican, to urge the administration to remove or recall Ambassador Yovanovitch from her post in Kyiv, around the same time as Parnas and associate Igor Fruman commit to raising money for Session’s re-election campaign. Parnas and Fruman are later arrested on Oct. 10, 2019, on [federal charges](#) of violating prohibitions against foreign funding of election campaigns in that scheme and others. The indictment alleges their funding came from a Russian businessman who isn’t identified in the indictment (see Oct. 10, 2019 entry). Sessions denied any wrongdoing to the [New York Times](#) and said he wrote to Pompeo “separately, after several congressional colleagues reported to me that the current U.S. ambassador to Ukraine was disparaging President Trump to others as part of those official duties.”

July 25, 2018 — **Trump worries about Biden candidacy.**

Axios’ Mike Allen publishes a [story](#) that “Trump fears Biden” as his most formidable opponent in 2020.

Aug. 1, 2018 — **Polls show Biden would beat Trump.**

A POLITICO/Morning Consult [poll](#) shows Biden would beat Trump in a head to head general election, with 44 percent of voters saying they’d choose Biden and 37 percent saying that they’d vote for Trump.

August 2018 — Lev Parnas’ company, Boca Raton, Florida-based Fraud Guarantee (its website says it aims to “reduce and mitigate fraud”), hires Giuliani Partners, the former mayor’s management and security consulting firm, according to [Reuters](#). “Giuliani said he was hired to consult on Fraud Guarantee’s technologies and provide legal advice on regulatory issues,” Reuters reported. Giuliani ultimately is paid \$500,000 for the work. Parnas and Fruman work with Giuliani in spring 2019 to press for Ambassador Yovanovitch’s ouster (see below).

Sept. 28, 2018 — Congress passes a [spending bill](#) for the Department of Defense that includes \$250 million in military aid under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI). The money must be disbursed by Sept. 30, 2019.

Late 2018 — Parnas and Fruman arrange a Skype call between Giuliani and Shokin, according to [a joint investigation by the nonprofit Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project \(OCCRP\) and BuzzFeed News, as published by OCCRP](#). The two businessmen also connect Giuliani with then-Prosecutor General Lutsenko. Giuliani invites Lutsenko to his office in New York, a meeting they arrange for January.

Lutsenko told the *LA Times* that he had [numerous conversations](#) with Giuliani on the phone. He also tells the paper that Giuliani pressed him repeatedly to open an investigation on the Bidens and Burisma, even though Lutsenko had seen no evidence of legal wrongdoing.

Nov. 30 to Dec. 3, 2018 — Nunes, Harvey reportedly meet Shokin secretly in Vienna.

U.S. Representative Devin Nunes, then-Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, and three aides, including Derek Harvey, travel to Europe, according to [congressional travel records](#). Nunes meets with Shokin in Vienna **to dig up dirt on Biden**, according to Parnas, who helps arrange the meeting and whose attorney, Josephy Bondy, later tells [CNN](#) that Parnas is willing to provide congressional testimony to that effect. “Nunes had told Shokin of the urgent need to launch investigations into Burisma, Joe and Hunter Biden, and any purported Ukrainian interference in the 2016 election,” Bondy tells CNN. (Asked during a Nov. 24, 2019, interview on Fox News whether he met with Shokin in Vienna, Nunes [refused to answer](#). The [Washington Post](#) cites “an individual close to Shokin” as saying the prosecutor has never heard of Nunes and that no such meeting took place.)

The timing of the trip was designed to keep its details **secret** from Congress, Bondy says.

Sometime shortly after Dec. 3, 2018: Harvey meets Parnas at the Trump International Hotel in Washington, where they discuss claims about the Bidens as well as allegations of Ukrainian election interference, according to Bondy ([CNN](#)). In a follow-up communication, “Bondy said that in a phone conversation **Nunes told Parnas** that he was conducting his own investigation into the Bidens and asked Parnas for help validating information he’d gathered from conversations with **various current and former Ukrainian officials**, including Shokin,” [CNN](#) reports.

Dec. 5, 2018 — Giuliani brings Parnas with him to the state funeral service for former President George H.W. Bush at the National Cathedral in Washington, [BuzzFeed News reports](#).

Dec. 6, 2018 — At the White House annual Hannukah party, Parnas and Fruman hold a private meeting with President Trump and Giuliani, where Trump tasks Parnas and Fruman to pressure the Ukrainian government to investigate the Bidens, according to associates Parnas told around the time and in the ensuing days, according to [CNN](#).

Jan. 23, 2019 — Giuliani, with Parnas and Fruman, conduct a phone or Skype interview with Shokin, after the State Department [refuses](#) Shokin a visa to travel to New York, allegedly [because of corruption allegations](#) against him. They transcribe Shokin’s allegations against Biden and later include these in a package of what amounts to disinformation on Biden, Burisma and the 2016 election, intended for Pompeo ([FOIA release](#)).

A fourth person on the call is George Boyle, a former NYPD detective who works for Giuliani Partners.

Ambassador Yovanovitch later testifies that Giuliani unsuccessfully tried to appeal the routine visa decision on Shokin to Pompeo and the White House.

Jan. 25-26, 2019 — Giuliani and Ukraine Prosecutor General Lutsenko meet for first time, New York.

Giuliani and Lutsenko meet in New York over the space of two to three days. They discuss “the Ukrainian political situation and the fight against corruption,” [Bloomberg News](#) reports, paraphrasing Lutsenko. “Giuliani asked him about investigations into the owner of Burisma, Mykola Zlochevsky, as well as whether the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, was ‘not loyal to President Trump,’” the article says.

The two met “multiple times” during those days in New York, and Lutsenko told associates that, during their first meeting in January, Giuliani excitedly called Trump to brief the President on what he had found, the *New York Times* [reported](#). Giuliani “acknowledged that he has discussed the matter with the president on multiple occasions,” the *Times* [wrote](#).

Feb. 16, 2019 — Biden “very close” to announcing presidential run.

In an [interview](#), Biden says he is “very close” to a final decision on whether to run, and that his family approves. “There is a consensus that they want me to run,” he says.

Mid-February 2019 — Giuliani and Ukraine general prosecutor Lutsenko meet for second time, Warsaw

Giuliani meets with Lutsenko again in Warsaw, joined by Parnas, according to the OCCRP/BuzzFeed report, as [published by BuzzFeed](#). U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Russian President Vladimir Putin reportedly were in town, too, for a U.S.-led Middle East conference.

Late February 2019 — Parnas and Fruman’s quid pro quo to President Poroshenko.

At Giuliani’s behest, Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman press then-President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko to initiate an investigation of Hunter Biden and a debunked theory of Ukrainian interference in the 2016 U.S. election, the [Wall Street Journal](#) reported. They said the action would be rewarded by a state visit at the White House for Poroshenko, who was fighting a tough campaign for re-election against Zelenskyy. Prosecutor General Lutsenko also attended the meeting.

Spring 2019 — The creation of a “team”: Giuliani, Parnas, Fruman, Solomon, diGenova, Toensing and, occasionally, Nunes’s top aide Harvey.

“Parnas became part of what he described as a ‘team’ that met **several times a week** in a private room at the BLT restaurant on the second floor of the Trump Hotel. In addition to giving the group access to key people in Ukraine who could help their cause, Parnas translated their conversations, Bondy said,” according to [CNN](#).

The team includes six regular members: Giuliani, Parnas, Fruman, John Solomon,

and Washington lawyers Joe diGenova and Victoria Toensing. Nunes's top aide, Harvey, occasionally joins the meeting as proxy for Nunes (by this point no longer chairman of the House Intelligence Committee but still its top Republican), according to Parnas ([CNN](#); [Washington Post](#)).

Solomon confirmed the meetings to [CNN](#), but said calling the group a team was a bit of a mischaracterization because the connections happened more organically.

When did the group start? Solomon told [CNN](#) that diGenova and Toensing introduced him to Parnas in **early March**.

Spring 2019 — Nunes aides plan a trip to Ukraine in the spring to speak with two Ukrainian prosecutors who claimed to have evidence to help Trump's 2020 re-election campaign, [CNBC reported](#), citing Bondy on information that Parnas is willing to provide in congressional testimony. But Nunes staff allegedly call off the trip when they realize Schiff would get wind of the plan. Instead, Nunes's office asks Parnas to set up telephone or Skype calls with Harvey.

Early March 2019 — State Department asks Ambassador Yovanovitch to extend her term in Ukraine until 2020, according to her [prepared remarks](#) to the House investigation.

March 4, 2019 — Trump worries about Biden candidacy.

Trump huddles with closer advisors in a private meeting where he “seemed to indicate to some of his confidants that he is concerned about the prospect of facing Biden,” [CNBC](#) reports.

March 2019 -- Ukraine Prosecutor General Lutsenko opens two investigations — one into the 2016 U.S. presidential election and a second into Burisma and Biden.

Following his meetings with Giuliani, Prosecutor General Yuriy Lutsenko announces he is opening two investigations.

“The decision to **reopen the investigation into Burisma** was made ... by the current Ukrainian prosecutor general [Lutsenko], who had cleared Hunter Biden's employer more than two years ago. The announcement ... was seen in some quarters as an effort by the prosecutor general, Yuriy Lutsenko, **to curry favor from the Trump administration** for his boss and ally, the incumbent president,” the *New York Times* [reported](#) (in May 2019).

Lutsenko also [tells](#) the Hill's conservative columnist John Solomon, “Today we will launch a criminal investigation about” the Manafort disclosure in the 2016 election. (See following entry on March 20).

March 20, 2019 — *The Hill's* conservative opinion writer [John Solomon](#) publishes an [interview](#) with Ukrainian Prosecutor General Lutsenko, who by this point has been widely criticized as ineffective and likely corrupt.

[**Note:** Solomon and *Fox News's* Sean Hannity are among a constellation of conservative media figures who regularly help spread Trump and Giuliani's Biden

and Manafort theories as well as other [right-wing conspiracy theories](#), such as [Uranium One](#), which have been debunked and shown to exclude vital information. Solomon was moved to the [opinion section](#) at *The Hill*, and announced Sept. 18, 2019, that he was [leaving](#) the publication. (See also an [examination](#) of Solomon in the *Washington Post* on Sept. 26.)]

The full video wasn't available at this publication, but the text accompanying it says Lutsenko alleged that U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch, who took office in August 2016, gave him a "do not prosecute" list at their first meeting. The State Department says the claim was "an outright fabrication." The *Hill* article says Lutsenko was examining Ukrainian civil society activists who he suspected were misusing U.S. aid funding they had received, but he says Yovanovitch told him the U.S. Embassy is confident the funding was secure.

Lutsenko also reportedly [says](#) he would investigate the head of NABU for the 2016 Manafort disclosure. "Today we will launch a criminal investigation about this," he says. Ukraine expert Melinda Haring of the Atlantic Council [says](#) Lutsenko is "woefully unqualified (he doesn't have a law degree), [has dragged his feet](#) on every serious anti-corruption case since being installed, and protected his friends, including Poroshenko." She continues, "Sean Hannity made Solomon the star of his prime-time show that evening. Trump watches Hannity, reportedly speaks with him multiple times daily, and [tweeted](#) the title of Solomon's story. More than 25,000 retweets later, the Ukrainian collusion narrative went viral."

Solomon later [airs](#) part of the video interview in which Lutsenko raises allegations against Biden and Burisma, and says he wants to present his information to Attorney General William Barr.

Trump [tweets on March 20 in response to Solomon's report](#) and [cites](#) the headline: "As Russia Collusion fades, Ukrainian plot to help Clinton emerges." Giuliani tweets: "keep your eye on Ukraine."

[**Note:** Lutsenko later retracts many of his allegations, including against the Bidens ([May 16 Bloomberg interview](#), [Sept. 29 LA Times interview](#)) and the [U.S. Embassy's](#) involvement in the 2016 election.]

March 24, 2019 – Donald Trump Jr. [tweets criticism of U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Yovanovitch](#), calling her a "joker" and linking to a conservative media outlet's article about calls for her ouster. The two incidents are part of a pattern of conservative attacks against the ambassador. Within less than two months, Yovanovitch is [recalled](#) to Washington.

March 26, 2019 morning — Giuliani and Pompeo have a conversation shortly before 10AM according to State Department records ([FOIA release](#)).

March 26, 2019 afternoon — At 12:52 p.m., Solomon sends an [email](#) to **Parnas, Toensing, and diGenova**, with a preview of a full draft of an article that Solomon would publish later that day in [The Hill](#). The article includes an interview with Lutsenko as part of an effort to smear Yovanovitch.

Late March 2019 — Nunes' senior aide Harvey speaks with Kulyk and

Kholodnytsky (arranged by Parnas)

After the trip to Ukraine is scrapped, Parnas arranges for Harvey to speak by phone and Skype with two Ukrainian officials who said they had evidence that could help Trump's reelection campaign, Bondy told [CNBC](#). The late-March conversations included one over Skype with Ukraine prosecutor Nazar Kholodnytsky. The second was a phone call Parnas arranged for Harvey with Kostiantyn Kulyk, a deputy in the Ukraine Prosecutor General's office. Both Kulyk and Kholodnytsky have been accused of corruption and pursuing politically motivated prosecutions. The [New York Times](#) has reported that Kulyk created a seven-page dossier on Biden in late 2018 filled with disinformation and theories that played a role in ousting Ambassador Yovanovitch.

March 28, 2019 — Giuliani hands off disinformation packet to Pompeo.

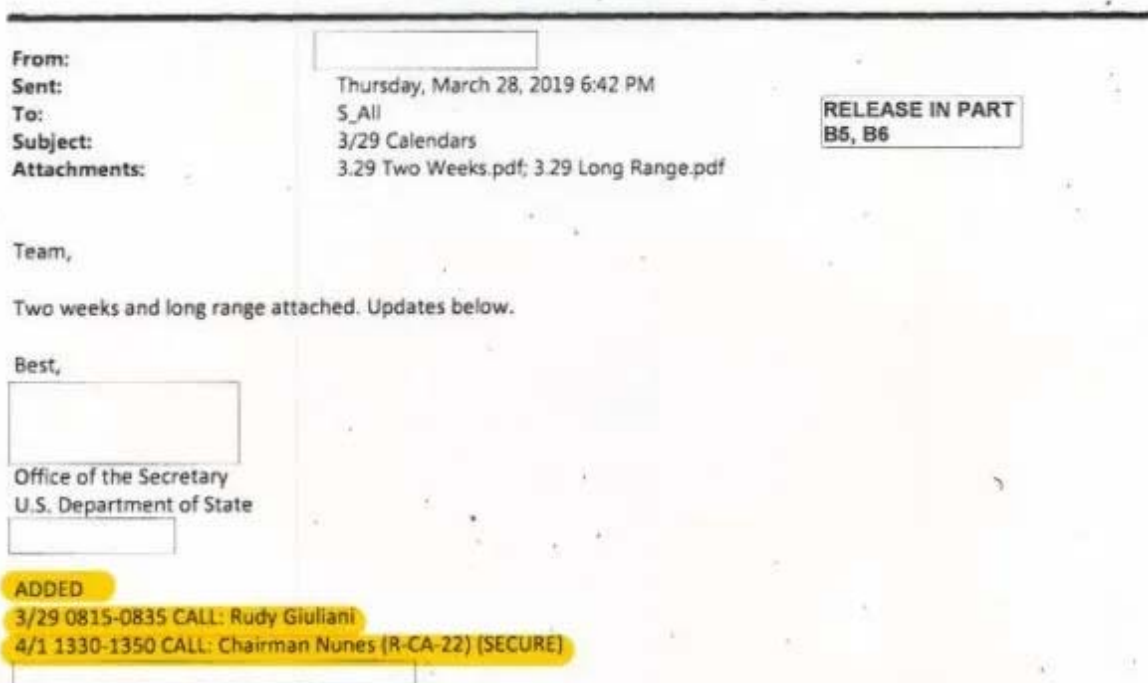
Giuliani provides a packet of what amounts to disinformation on Biden, Burisma, the 2016 election, and Yovanovitch that he intends for Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Giuliani later tells [NBC News](#) that he handed the packet "directly to the Secretary of State," but [CNN](#) has cited a source saying Giuliani had given the packet to the White House so that it could be "routed" to Pompeo. The packet includes notes from interviews that Giuliani and his team conducted with Viktor Shokin and Yuriy Lutsenko (see entries in Jan. 2019).

Giuliani's packet also [includes](#) Solomon's March 26 [email](#) to Parnas, Toensing, and diGenova with the draft of the March 26 article, as well as a copy of Solomon's March 20 article in The Hill.

Important note: The disinformation packet contained information that closely overlapped with Kulyk's dossier of disinformation on Biden (see "Late March" item above). "Lutsenko, the former prosecutor general, said in an interview that he never gave Mr. Kulyk's dossier to Mr. Giuliani. But notes taken by Mr. Giuliani during their meeting in January **mirror the ideas laid out in Mr. Kulyk's memo,**" the Times reported (on Oct. 15).

March 28, 2019 — Giuliani's and Nunes' phone calls with Pompeo.

On Thursday, March 28, two phone calls are added to Pompeo's calendar: a 20-minute phone call with Giuliani on Friday, March 29, and a 20-minute phone call with Nunes on Monday, April 1, according to State Department records ([FOIA release](#)).



March 31, 2019 — First round of Ukraine’s presidential election, which results in runoff between Zelenskyy and Poroshenko scheduled for April 21.

April 1, 2019 – *The Hill* newspaper publishes another [article online](#) by the same conservative investigative columnist **John Solomon** that **advances the Trump-Giuliani story about Biden**. (See entry on March 20 about Solomon and conspiracy theories.) The article reports that Shokin had said in written answers to questions that he had planned an investigation of Burisma before he was fired, including questioning all executive board members. The article says Lutsenko, Shokin’s successor, and “a case file” indicate that the Prosecutor General’s Office had handled three cases related to Burisma, and that the “most prominent” case was transferred to the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU), which Solomon describes suggestively as “closely aligned with the U.S. Embassy in Kiev,” even though it had long been public knowledge that Western supporters of Ukraine and Ukrainian anti-corruption activists strongly backed the bureau. The article says NABU closed that case.

Sometime in April 2019 – **Hunter Biden** [leaves the board](#) of **Burisma Holdings**, as his father announces his candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination.

April, 7, 2019 — Solomon [publishes](#) an interview with **Kulyk** airing his disinformation.

April 18, 2019 — Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s redacted report is publicly released, outlining the findings of his investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election.

April 21, 2019 – **New Ukrainian President elected on anti-corruption agenda**

Volodymyr Zelenskyy is elected president of Ukraine, to succeed Petro Poroshenko. He ran on a [“zero tolerance”](#) anti-corruption agenda.

April 21, 2019 – First Trump-Zelenskyy Phone Call

President Trump calls to congratulate President-elect Zelenskyy, their first known direct communication. At the time, the White House released a brief report of the call, known as a [readout](#), saying in part, “President Trump underscored the unwavering support of the United States for Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity – within its internationally recognized borders – and expressed his commitment to work together with President-elect Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people to implement reforms that strengthen democracy, increase prosperity, and root out corruption.” But a [White House memo of the call](#), essentially a rough transcript, that was released on Nov. 15 shows Trump made no reference to corruption.

The memo indicates Trump called from Air Force One, and the two leaders spoke for 16 minutes, with each in the mode of flattering the other, and Trump interjecting comparisons to bolster his own image, e.g. “That was an incredible election...I guess, in a way, I did something similar.”

Interestingly, Trump twice refers to his own contacts in Ukraine. “I have many friends in Ukraine who know you and like you. I have many friends from Ukraine and they think — frankly — expected you to win.” It’s unclear what friends he is referring to.

Zelenskyy works hard to flatter Trump and urges him several times to attend his inauguration. Trump demurs but says if he can’t make it, he will send “a great representative” at a “very, very high level.” (In the end, Trump nixed Vice President Mike Pence’s trip to the inauguration and opted to send a delegation led by Energy Secretary Rick Perry instead. See May 20-24, 2019, entry below.)

Trump invites Zelenskyy to the White House, a major goal for any new Ukrainian president to demonstrate to his constituents, other foreign supporters and, most importantly, Ukraine’s adversary, Vladimir Putin, that the United States still stands with Ukraine. “When you’re settled in and ready, I’d like to invite you to the White House. We’ll have a lot of things to talk about,” Trump says. As of Dec. 3, 2019, the meeting still hasn’t been scheduled.

Trump asks Vice President Mike Pence to attend Zelenskyy’s inauguration, Jennifer Williams, special advisor to Pence for Europe and Russia, told the [House impeachment inquiry](#).

April 23, 2019 — Pence accepts the invitation in a call with Zelenskyy.

The same day, Giuliani sends Parnas and Fruman to meet with Ihor Kolomoisky, a Ukrainian oligarch who owns the television station that carried Zelenskyy’s comedy show and who helped finance Zelenskyy’s presidential campaign. Kolomoisky also once owned Ukraine’s largest bank, Privatbank, before it nearly collapsed and the Ukrainian government seized it in a rescue. They meet in Israel, where Kolomoisky is living at the time. They try to persuade him to arrange a meeting between Giuliani and Zelenskyy. Kolomoisky [declines](#).

April 24, 2019 — Ambassador Yovanovitch receives orders to “come back to Washington from Ukraine `on the next plane,” she tells [the House investigation in her Nov. 11, 2019, public testimony](#). Once in Washington, Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan tells her “the President had lost confidence in me and no longer wished me to serve as his ambassador,” according to an Oct. 11 closed [deposition](#). “He added that there had been a concerted campaign against me, and that **the Department had been under pressure from the President to remove me since the Summer of 2018**. He also said that I had done nothing wrong and that this was not like other situations where he had recalled ambassadors for cause.”

The *Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) (Oct. 3): “President Trump ordered the removal of the ambassador to Ukraine after months of complaints from allies outside the administration, including his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, that she was undermining him abroad and **obstructing efforts to persuade Kyiv to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden**.” The *Journal* continued: “State Department officials were told this spring that Ms. Yovanovitch’s removal was a priority for the president” and “Secretary of State Mike Pompeo supported the move,” the *Journal* adds.

April 25, 2019 – Joe Biden formally announces campaign for President.

April 25, 2019 – President Trump tells *Fox News*’s Sean Hannity that Attorney General Bill Barr is considering allegations that Ukrainians sought to help Hillary Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign by revealing damaging information about Paul Manafort. “I would imagine [Barr] would want to see this. ... I would certainly defer to the attorney general, and we’ll see what he says about it,” Trump said. “He calls ’em straight” ([transcript](#)). *Fox News* [reports](#) that “Trump echoed his personal attorney Rudy Giuliani, who wrote on Twitter on Wednesday [April 24]: `Keep your eye on Ukraine.’”

On or about April 29, 2019 — “U.S. officials with direct knowledge of the situation” told the [whistleblower](#) that U.S. **Ambassador Yovanovitch was being “suddenly recalled”** to Washington for “consultations” and “would most likely be removed from her position.” The **State Department announced on May 6 that she would be ending her assignment**. They said it was “as planned,” but in fact, her assignment had been curtailed because of Lutsenko’s allegations (See April 24 item above). Giuliani told a Ukrainian journalist in an interview published May 14 that Yovanovitch was “removed...because she was part of the efforts against the President,” the whistleblower wrote.

Around the same time, the whistleblower writes that he “learned from a U.S. official that `associates’ of Mr. Giuliani were trying to make contact with the incoming Zelenskyy team.” He didn’t know whether the associates were the same two businessmen (Parnas and Fruman (see entry under “late 2018”)) who connected Giuliani with Shokin and Lutsenko.

April 29, 2019 — Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Bill Taylor [texts](#) U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations Kurt Volker to say that Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent has asked him to go to Kyiv as chargé d’affaires to temporarily replace Yovanovitch. “George described two snake pits, one in Kyiv and one in Washington,” Taylor wrote. “He described much more than I knew. Very ugly.”

Sometime in May 2019: The Defense Department, in coordination with the State Department, certifies that Ukraine had “taken substantial actions to make defense institutional reforms for the purposes of decreasing corruption, increasing accountability, and sustaining improvements of combat capability,” therefore meeting the requirements to receive \$250 million in funding from DoD’s congressionally approved Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USIA), according to [public testimony](#) to the House impeachment inquiry on Nov. 20, 2019, by Laura Cooper, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for Russian, Ukrainian, and Eurasian Affairs. DoD posted a public notice of that funding in June (see June 18 item below). Cooper said she became aware only in July of a hold placed on that and separate State Department funding.

Sometime in May 2019 — Parnas and Fruman press incoming Zelenskyy administration to announce investigations on Biden, threatening aid suspension and Pence withdrawal from inauguration

Lev Parnas tells a Ukraine representative in a small meeting in Kyiv sometime in May that “the United States would freeze aid” and Pence would not attend the inauguration if Ukraine does not announce an investigation into the Bidens, according to what Parnas’s lawyer [tells](#) the *New York Times* his client would tell Congress. “Parnas’s lawyer ... said the message to the Ukrainians was given at the direction of Mr. Giuliani, whom Mr. Parnas believed was acting under Mr. Trump’s instruction.” The other three participants in the meeting, Fruman, Giuliani, and Serhiy Shefir, deny Parnas’s account. The *Times*’s description of Shefir’s denial is unusual: “Mr. Shefir acknowledged meeting with Mr. Parnas and Mr. Fruman. But he said they had not raised the issue of military aid;” and at the same time, the *Times* reports, “the statement from Mr. Shefir, issued in response to an inquiry from The New York Times, did not directly address Mr. Parnas’s claims that he had delivered an ultimatum about American aid in general and Mr. Pence’s attendance at the inauguration.”

May 1, 2019 — Attorney General William Barr stumbles and appears to try to avoid answering U.S. Senator Kamala Harris during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing when [she asks](#), “Has the President or anyone at the White House ever asked or suggested that you open an investigation of anyone?” He finally states in his answer, “I don’t know.”

May 3, 2019 — Trump speaks with Putin.

In what the *New York Times* [reports](#) they described as “a lengthy, positive conversation,” they “dismissed two years of investigations into Russia’s intervention in the 2016 presidential campaign as a ‘Russian Hoax.’” Putin “**extensively talked Ukraine down,**” Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent later said in his [September closed testimony](#) to the House impeachment inquiry. Kent also explained that Putin was influential, along with Giuliani and Prime Minister Orban (see May 13 entry), in having “**shaped the President’s view** of Ukraine and Zelenskyy.”

May 7, 2019 — Ukraine Presidential advisers meeting on handling pressure from United States on Biden investigations

Worried about pressure from Trump to investigate Biden, Zelenskyy gathers his

advisors in Kyiv where they discuss the **issue of how to handle Trump's and Giuliani's demands for investigations of the Bidens**, according to the [Associated Press](#). The meeting includes two of his top aides, Andriy Yermak and Andriy Bogdan, as well as Andriy Kobolyev, head of the state-owned natural gas company Naftogaz, and Amos Hochstein, a former U.S. diplomat who serves on the Naftogaz supervisory board. (The AP reports that Hochstein advised Biden on Ukraine matters during the Obama administration, but it's unclear to what extent.)

Hochstein notifies Yovanovitch in advance that he is being called to the meeting. Afterwards, he [separately briefed](#) two officials at the U.S. Embassy, Suriya Jayanti and Joseph Pennington, as well as Yovanovitch, about Zelenskyy's concerns, according to the AP.

May 9, 2019 – Giuliani plans trip to Kyiv as part of pressure campaign

Giuliani tells the [New York Times](#) he plans to travel to Kyiv and meet with President-elect Zelenskyy to urge him to investigate the Bidens as well as Ukrainians who might have worked with Hillary Clinton's campaign to reveal the Manafort information. Giuliani also says his pitch to Ukrainian officials is "that information will be very, very helpful to my client, and may turn out to be helpful to my government." "We're not meddling in an election, we're meddling in an investigation, which we have a right to do," Giuliani tells the newspaper. "There's nothing illegal about it," he said. "Somebody could say it's improper."

The newspaper notes the trip is "part of a **months-long effort** by the former New York mayor and a small group of Trump allies working to build interest in the Ukrainian inquiries. Their motivation is to try to discredit the special counsel's investigation; undermine the case against Paul Manafort, Mr. Trump's imprisoned former campaign chairman; and potentially to damage Mr. Biden, the early front-runner for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination." The news ignites a firestorm of **bipartisan condemnation** that Giuliani is improperly seeking the help of a foreign government to benefit Trump's re-election campaign.

In a later editorial for the [Washington Post](#) (on Sept. 21, 2019), former Ukrainian anti-corruption activist and member of Parliament Serhiy Leshchenko writes:

"Giuliani attempted to visit Ukraine in May 2019 with the express purpose of involving Zelensky [cq] in this process. His aim was quite clear: He was planning to ask Zelensky to intervene in an American election on the side of Trump.

...

I had been helping Zelenksy's team since January

...

As a person who has had direct experience of many of these events, I express my readiness to testify to the U.S. Congress about what has been happening for the past six months."

May 9, 2019 – Giuliani, in an [interview with Fox News](#), raises his theory of Ukrainian collusion with Hillary Clinton's campaign in 2016 to smear Trump with Manafort payments allegations. Giuliani says he received such information "about **three or four months ago**." Giuliani also discusses his theory about the Bidens in

Ukraine, and he tries to implicate the U.S. Embassy in both.

May 10, 2019 – President Trump says in an interview with [Politico](#), “Certainly it would be an appropriate thing” for him to ask Attorney General Barr to open an investigation on Biden. “I have not spoken to him about it. Would I speak to him about it? I haven’t thought of that,” he adds. Trump says he sees Biden as the clear front-runner in the Democratic race and likens it to his own surge toward the Republican nomination in 2016. He also says he will speak with Giuliani about the former mayor’s planned trip to Ukraine and that they hadn’t discussed it “at any great length.”

May 11, 2019 – Giuliani cancels trip to Ukraine

Giuliani [tells Fox News](#) he called off his trip to Ukraine because he believes he would be “walking into a group of people that are enemies of the president, and in some cases, enemies of the United States,” a particularly harsh reference that sounds like it is meant for Ukrainian anti-corruption reformers who are rejecting his and Trump’s conspiracy theories. The decision follows bipartisan backlash in the United States over Giuliani’s seeking foreign support for Trump’s re-election (see May 2 above).

Former Ukrainian member of Parliament [Serhiy Leshchenko](#) and former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine John Herbst say Zelenskyy actually had declined Giuliani’s request for a meeting, which could explain Giuliani’s tone of rejection. Herbst [commented](#), “My understanding is that the president-elect’s party and his group said that the President-elect [Zelenskyy] sees no reason to have a meeting about an issue which is so transparently an American domestic political issue.”

May 13, 2019 — Trump meets with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, a frequent critic of Ukraine who often sides with Russian President Vladimir Putin, over the objections of then-National Security Advisor John Bolton and then-Senior Director of Eurasian and Russian Affairs Fiona Hill. Acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney supported Trump’s wish to conduct the meeting. George Kent, in his impeachment inquiry [deposition](#), cited the meeting as influencing Trump’s negative view of Ukraine.

On May 13, 2019 — President Trump instructs Vice President Mike Pence “to cancel his planned trip to Ukraine to attend President Zelenskyy’s inauguration. Secretary of Energy Rick Perry led the U.S. delegation instead,” writes the whistleblower, who cites unnamed “U.S. officials.” Pence’s aid Jennifer Williams confirms this account in her [testimony](#). “According to these officials, it was also ‘made clear’ to them that the President did not want to meet with Mr. Zelenskyy until he saw how Zelenskyy ‘chose to act,’” the whistleblower wrote.

May 14, 2019 — Attorney General Barr [appoints](#) John Durham, the U.S. attorney in Connecticut, to lead a probe into the origins of the Russia investigation. Barr had reportedly initiated the investigation of the investigation about three weeks earlier.

May 16, 2019 – Ukraine’s Prosecutor General Lutsenko tells [Bloomberg News](#) that he has “no evidence of wrongdoing” by either of the Bidens and that neither Hunter Biden nor Burisma were the focus of any current investigation. He said he planned to give U.S. authorities information about Burisma board

payments, so that the U.S. could check whether Hunter Biden had paid taxes on his income, though there were no restrictions in Ukraine on how much a company could pay to its board members.

May 18, 2019 — Giuliani confirms on [Twitter](#) that Parnas and Fruman are his clients. He writes, “An American analyst describes Kolomoisky as “super dangerous.” The notorious oligarch returned from a long exile and immediately threatened and defamed two Americans, Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman. They are my clients and I have advised them to press charges.” A minute later, Giuliani repeats [on Twitter](#) his claim that Zelenskyy “has surrounded himself with some people that are enemies of Pres.Trump.”

May 20, 2019 — Forced out by President Trump, Ambassador **Yovanovitch leaves Ukraine permanently, the same day Zelenskyy is inaugurated.** She would later [tell](#) State Department Counselor Michael McKinley, who resigned in October over the department’s treatment of career diplomats, that no senior department officials had contacted her as news emerged of the whistleblower complaint and the criticism of her during President Trump’s July 25 phone call.

May 20-24, 2019 – Zelenskyy is inaugurated as president on May 20, taking over from Poroshenko. Shortly afterwards, the whistleblower writes, “it was publicly reported that Mr. Giuliani met with two other Ukrainian officials: Ukraine’s Special Anticorruption Prosecutor, Mr. Nazar Kholodnytskyy, and a former Ukrainian diplomat named Andriy Telizhenko.” (Public reports of these meetings included Ukrainian and [US media](#) outlets.) Both, the whistleblower continues, “are allies of Mr. Lutsenko and made similar allegations” in a series of articles in *The Hill*. The two businessmen Parnas and Fruman who connected Giuliani with Shokin and Lutsenko (see entry for “late 2018”) [reportedly](#) join the meeting with Giuliani and Kholodnytskyy in Paris.



Nazar Kholodnytskyy (L), Rudolph Giuliani (C), and Charles Pratt (R), May 22, 2019, Paris, France

Mid May to early July – According to the whistleblower’s complaint, in this period, “multiple U.S. officials told me that the Ukrainian leadership was led to believe that a meeting or phone call between the President and President Zelenskyy would depend on whether Zelenskyy showed willingness to ‘play ball’ on the issues that had been publicly aired by Mr. Lutsenko and Mr. Giuliani.”

May 23, 2019 — White House meeting including U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations Volker, Energy Secretary Perry, and U.S. Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland. Deputy national security adviser Charles Kupperman was present according to Volker’s deposition testimony. The meeting is referenced without elaboration in a Sept. 30, 2019 House of Representatives [subpoena](#) to Giuliani. On May 23, Volker [tweeted](#) that the meeting was to brief the White House on their and Republican Senator Ron Johnson’s recent trip to Ukraine.

Volker and Sondland aimed to persuade Trump that Ukraine under Zelenskyy would be a reliable ally and would address corruption, and that the presidents should meet to signal to Russia that the U.S. continued to support an independent Ukraine, according to sources who spoke with [CNN](#), though it’s unclear why Volker and Sondland thought an anti-Russia argument could be persuasive with Trump. “The President was very skeptical,” Volker told the House committees in his Sept. 30 deposition for the impeachment investigation, CNN reported. “He was clearly receiving other information from other sources, including Mayor Giuliani, that was more negative, causing him to retain this negative view” of a corrupt Ukraine, Volker added. It became clear in the meeting that Trump wanted them to work through Giuliani, and if the former mayor could be persuaded, Trump might heed his advice.

Sondland says later in [prepared testimony](#) for the House investigation that “It was

apparent to all of us that the key to changing the President's mind on Ukraine was Mr. Giuliani." He also says, "I did not understand until much later that Mr. Giuliani's agenda might have also included an effort to prompt the Ukrainians to investigate Vice President Biden or his son."

In what appears to be a separate White House meeting organized by White House Chief of Staff Mulvaney for the same day, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent and other U.S. officials [are told](#) that three people would be in charge of Ukraine policy, according to [CNN](#), which cited senior Oversight Committee member Rep. Gerry Connolly's account of Kent's closed-door testimony to the House investigation. The three were Volker, Sondland and Energy Secretary Perry. After the meeting, Connolly said, the three officials conveyed to Zelenskyy that they were handling Ukraine policy. Connolly told reporters that Volker called Sondland, Perry and Volker the "three amigos."

May 26, 2019 — Taylor [texts](#) Volker that he is "still struggling" with a decision on whether to accept the temporary post as head of the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv and suggests Volker take the position instead, as a more natural pick. **"Can anyone hope to succeed with the Giuliani-Biden issue swirling for the next 18 months? Can [Secretary of State Pompeo] offer any reassurance on this issue?"** Taylor asks. Volker responds, "Let's see how it looks on Tuesday ... I don't know if there is much to do about the Giuliani thing, but I do think the key thing is to do what we can right now since the future of the country is in play right now." (ellipses cq)

June 4, 2019 — Jared Kushner, President Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, is [seated next to Zelenskyy](#) at a [dinner](#) in Brussels hosted by U.S. Ambassador to the EU Sondland, part of an early Embassy [celebration](#) of the U.S. Independence Day. Kushner had dropped off from Trump's visit to the U.K. to attend the occasion in Brussels.

When Sondland later [testifies to the House investigation](#) on Oct. 17, he names some of the U.S. officials who attended, but omits Kushner's name. "We hosted a smaller, separate dinner for about 30 people. President Zelenskyy and several other leaders of EU and non-EU member states attended the dinner, along with Secretary Perry, U.S. State Department Counselor Ulrich Brechbuhl on behalf of Secretary Pompeo, and numerous other key U.S. and EU officials," Sondland wrote. "Though planned long in advance with the focus on improving transatlantic relations, we also viewed this event as an opportunity to present President Zelenskyy to various EU and U.S. officials and to build upon the enhanced government ties."



June 11, 2019 – Zelenskyy sends a motion to Parliament asking that it [dismiss](#) sitting Prosecutor General Lutsenko.

June 13, 2019 — **President Trump says he would [accept dirt](#) on his political rivals from a foreign government**, a statement noted by the whistleblower, whose complaint references the relevant [interview](#) of the president with ABC News’s George Stephanopoulos.

June 17, 2019 — Taylor arrives in Kyiv to take up his post as chargé d’affaires. He would later tell the House impeachment inquiry that he was carrying a **letter dated May 29 and signed by President Trump congratulating Zelenskyy on his election and inviting him to the White House for a meeting**. But despite that and rapid reforms that Zelenskyy was making “I found a confusing and unusual arrangement for making U.S. policy towards Ukraine. There appeared to be **two channels of U.S. policy-making and implementation, one regular and one highly irregular.**” He was in charge of the regular channel. The irregular channel consisted of Sondland, Volker, Perry, and Giuliani. He dated the start of the irregular channel to the May 23 meeting in the Oval Office after the group had returned from Zelenskyy’s inauguration. “It became clear to me by August that the channels had diverged in their objectives,” he said in his [deposition opening statement](#).

June 18, 2019 — The Department of Defense [announces](#) its \$250 million plan “for additional training, equipment, and advisory efforts to build the capacity of Ukraine’s armed forces,” under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI).

Days later, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Cooper’s office received [questions about the funding from the White House](#) that she was told came from a meeting with President Trump, Cooper testified to the House impeachment inquiry. The White House asked whether U.S. companies were providing any of the

equipment, what other countries were doing to contribute, and who provided the funding. Fact sheets that Cooper's office provided in response explained that most of the equipment providers were American, that at least four other countries were providing training and equipment, and that the funding had been directed by Congress with bipartisan support. Cooper says she heard no response from the White House and wasn't aware until later that OMB had placed a hold on the funding.

June 19, 2019 — The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) first asks the Pentagon about its \$250 million funding plan, according to Politico, which cites a summary of documents the House Budget Committee released Nov. 26, 2019, and testimony by Mark Sandy, the deputy associate director for national security programs in OMB. Sandy told the impeachment inquiry that Trump was looking for “a description of the program.”

June 21, 2019 — David Hale, undersecretary of state for political affairs, “first started to hear that there was a problem” with security funding for Ukraine, “that OMB had stopped the aid,” he [told House investigators](#). That day, the State Department sent the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) a routine congressional notification for its Foreign Military Financing program, including more than \$100 million in funding (separate from the DoD USAI funding), to get OMB approval to forward the document to Capitol Hill.

June 21, 2019 — Giuliani [tweets](#), “New Pres of Ukraine still silent on investigation of Ukrainian interference in 2016 election and alleged Biden bribery of Pres Poroshenko. Time for leadership and investigate both if you want to purge how Ukraine was abused by Hillary and Obama people.”

June 27, 2019 — Sondland tells Taylor in a phone conversation that Zelenskyy needs to make clear to Trump that Zelenskyy “was not standing in the way of `investigations,” according to Taylor's [deposition opening statement](#).

June 28, 2019 — Sondland [tells](#) Taylor in a call “that he did not wish to include most of the regular interagency participants in a call planned with President Zelenskyy later that day. Ambassador Sondland, Ambassador Volker, Secretary Perry, and I were on this call, dialing in from different locations. However, Ambassador Sondland said that he **wanted to make sure no one was transcribing or monitoring as they added President Zelenskyy to the call**. Also, before President Zelenskyy joined the call, Ambassador Volker separately told the U.S. participants that he, Ambassador Volker, planned to be explicit with President Zelenskyy in a one-on-one meeting in Toronto on July 2 about what President Zelenskyy should do to get the White House meeting. Again, it was not clear to me on that call what this meant, but Ambassador Volker noted that he would relay that President Trump wanted to see rule of law, transparency, but also, specifically, cooperation on investigations to `get to the bottom of things.”

Late June 2019 — Giuliani group joins up with Kremlin-linked Dmitry Firtash

At Giuliani's direction, Parnas and Fruman offer Dmitry Firtash, a fugitive Ukrainian oligarch living in Vienna, help with the Justice Department in exchange for dirt on the Bidens, according to the [New York Times](#), which cited Firtash and Bondy. Firtash

has been fighting extradition to the United States on federal bribery and racketeering charges related to an Indian titanium mining project.

Giuliani's proposal is that Firtash hire Toensing and diGenova as his lawyers. The married couple were already working with Giuliani on his effort to find dirt on the Bidens.

"Mr. Parnas reasonably believed Giuliani's directions reflected the interests and wishes of the president, given Parnas having witnessed and in several instances overheard Mr. Giuliani speaking with the president," Bondy told the Times.

In a 2017 court filing, federal prosecutors [stated](#) that Firtash and his co-defendant in the alleged scheme, Andras Knopp, have been identified by United States law enforcement as two upper-echelon associates of Russian organized crime. "Senator Roger Wicker, (R-Miss.) [wrote](#) in an April 2018 letter to then-Attorney General Sessions that Firtash had served as a "direct agent of the Kremlin."

Sometime in July 2019 — Firtash hires Giuliani associates and sets to work on getting dirt on Bidens

Firtash hires Toensing and diGenova and says later that he has paid the couple \$1.2 million as of November 2019, including a referral fee for Parnas. The [New York Times](#) reports that "a person with direct knowledge of the arrangement said Mr. Parnas's total share was \$200,000." The paper also reported that "there was a brief discussion about Mr. Giuliani's taking on that role himself, but Mr. Giuliani said he decided against it." [Bloomberg News](#) reported in October 2019 that Firtash paid the couple around \$1 million, and that "Firtash's associates began to use his broad network of Ukraine contacts to get damaging information on Biden."

July 2, 2019 — Volker [meets](#) with Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian leader's chief of staff, Andrei Bohdan, during the Ukraine Reform Conference in Toronto, and explains to them that Giuliani is spreading "a negative narrative about Ukraine" to President Trump and that it was hurting Ukraine's image in the United States "and our ability to advance the bilateral relationship," Volker told the House impeachment inquiry.

July 3, 2019 — Staff in the office of Laura Cooper, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for Russian, Ukrainian, and Eurasian Affairs, receive an email from the State Department saying OMB was blocking the congressional notification of the more than \$100 million in State's FMF funding, according to Cooper's [testimony](#) to the House inquiry. Army Lt. Col. Alex Vindman, who oversees Ukraine policy on the National Security Council, also is "concretely made aware of the fact that there was a hold placed by OMB," [according to his testimony](#). Jennifer Williams, special adviser for Europe and Russia in Vice President Mike Pence's office, also learns of the OMB hold on Ukraine military assistance, according to her [testimony](#).

July 10, 2019 — Sondland raises Biden investigation with Ukrainians in White House meeting.

A White House meeting is held with Sondland, Volker, National Security Advisor John Bolton, Energy Secretary Perry, Army Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman (the NSC's

top Ukraine expert), and two advisors to Zelenskyy — his top advisor Andriy Yermak and Oleksandr Danylyuk, the Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council for Ukraine.

“Amid a broader discussion in which White House officials were encouraging Ukraine to continue its work to eliminate corruption in the country’s energy sector, Sondland blurted out that there were also “investigations that were dropped that need to be started up again,” the [Washington Post](#) reported. Senior officials understood Sondland’s statement to be a reference to Burisma and Biden. “Bolton went ballistic” after the meeting, the official said.”

Earlier that day in Kyiv, Taylor meets with Zelenskyy’s chief of staff, Andrei Bohdan, and then-foreign policy advisor to Zelenskyy (now Foreign Minister) Vadym Prystaiko. They tell Taylor, according to his [deposition statement](#), that **“they had heard from Mr. Giuliani that the phone call between the two presidents was unlikely to happen and that they were alarmed and disappointed.”** Taylor says he relayed their concerns to State Department Counselor Ulrich Brechbuhl.

Later that morning in the U.S. and prior to the meeting, Volker [texts](#) Giuliani, saying, **“I think we have an opportunity to get you what you need,”** and Giuliani responds, “I’ll text some suggestions a little later.” Shortly after, Volker and Yermak meet for breakfast at the Trump Hotel, where Yermak is staying. That afternoon, Yermak [texts](#) Volker to thank him for the breakfast meeting and says, “I feel that the key for many things is Rudi and I [am] ready to talk with him at any time.”

Vindman later [tells the impeachment inquiry](#) in October 2019: “The meeting proceeded well until the Ukrainians broached the subject of a meeting between the two presidents. **The Ukrainians saw this meeting as critically important in order to solidify the support of their most important international partner.** Amb. Sondland started to speak about delivering the specific investigations in order to secure the meeting with the President, at which time Ambassador Bolton cut the meeting short. Following this meeting, there was a scheduled debriefing, during which **Amb. Sondland emphasized the importance that Ukraine deliver the investigations into the 2016 election, the Bidens, and Burisma.**”

Both Vindman and Fiona Hill, who enters the debriefing later, each tell Sondland such a demand is inappropriate, and both report the incident to National Security Council legal counsel John Eisenberg. Vindman and Hill tell Taylor about a week later that Bolton said “that they should have nothing to do with domestic politics” and referred to Sondland’s suggestion as “a drug deal.”

Taylor [texts](#) Volker that afternoon and again that night to find out how the meeting went. “Not good—lets talk,” Volker responds.

July 11, 2019 — The day after Sondland’s apparent reference to Trump’s desired Biden investigations, Energy Secretary Perry tries to persuade Bolton to schedule a Trump-Zelenskyy call and assures him that he, Sondland and Volker were certain that, as the [Wall Street Journal](#) paraphrased, “Zelensky wouldn’t prove an obstacle to any investigations into alleged corruption.”

Early to mid-July – Trump orders suspension and review of U.S. aid to Ukraine

President Trump tells his acting chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney, to hold back almost \$400 million in military aid to Ukraine at least a week before his phone call with Ukraine's President Zelenskyy, the *Washington Post* [reports](#).

July 12, 2019 — Acting White House Chief of Staff Mick **Mulvaney's office informs OMB that President Trump plans to halt Ukraine's military aid**, OMB national security program official Mark Sandy told the impeachment inquiry. Mulvaney didn't provide an explanation.

July 18, 2019 — OMB communicates the decision to put a hold on the aid to State and Defense department officials. Taylor says he learned of the suspension that day on an interagency call that included OMB. The *Washington Post* includes details of internal processes, including that “besides Bolton [the president's national security adviser], several other administration officials said they did not know why the aid was being canceled or why a meeting was not being scheduled.” CNN [reported](#) on Oct. 2 that Trump ordered the freeze in June, earlier than others have reported. The *Washington Post* reported that “administration officials were instructed to tell lawmakers that the delays were part of an ‘interagency process’ but to give them no additional information.”

The hold on the funding contradicts the Trump administration's stance in favor of aiding Ukraine's defense against the Russian-backed forces fighting to control eastern Ukraine. The administration had approved lethal defensive weapons sales in 2017, a move the Obama administration had resisted. The Department of Defense conducted the ordered review and determined that the support should continue and informed the White House of its recommendation, according to *Politico* and [CNN](#). National Security Adviser John Bolton also wanted to release the funds to help Ukraine curtail Russian aggression, the *Washington Post* [reports](#). *Fox News* [reports](#) that “the Pentagon, State Department and National Security Council were ‘unanimous’ in supporting the aid to Ukraine, and that Trump acted alone in withholding the aid over the summer.”

About July 19, 2019 — Andriy Yermak, a top aide to Zelenskyy, [reportedly](#) asks Volker to help him make contact with Giuliani.

July 19, 2019 — Volker and Giuliani meet over breakfast **with Lev Parnas**, according to Volker's [deposition testimony](#). Volker later [texts](#) Giuliani to connect him with Yermak, then immediately texts Sondland and Taylor to suggest the three speak by phone. Sondland writes, “I spike [sic] directly to Zelenskyy and gave him a full briefing. He's got it.” Volker responds, “Good. Had breakfast with Rudy this morning-teeing up call w Yermak Monday. Must have helped. **Most impt is for Zelensky to say that he will help investigation**— and address any specific personnel issues- if there are any.”

July 21, 2019 — Taylor [texts](#) Sondland to caution that Zelenskyy is “sensitive about Ukraine being taken seriously, not merely as **an instrument in Washington domestic, reelection politics**.” Sondland responds, “Absolutely, but we need to get the conversation started and the relationship built, **irrespective of the pretext**.”

I am worried about the alternative.”

July 22, 2019 — Yermak [speaks with Giuliani](#) for the first time by phone. They discuss the Trump-Giuliani demands for investigations and the new Ukrainian leader’s desire for a White House meeting to affirm continued U.S. support for Ukraine. “Mr. Giuliani in television appearances over the summer had repeatedly singled out Ukraine over corruption, putting pressure on Mr. Zelensky’s new administration. Yermak called Mr. Giuliani to ask him to tone it down, according to a person familiar with the call. Mr. Giuliani in response suggested that Ukraine investigate Hunter Biden’s relationship with Burisma,” the *Wall Street Journal* [reports](#) (on Sept. 26).

July 21, 2019 — Zelenskyy’s political party, Servant of the People, wins a landslide victory in parliamentary elections, giving him a clear majority and a mandate to carry out campaign promises to clean up corruption and end the war with Russia in eastern Ukraine.

July 23-26, 2019 — “During interagency meetings on 23 July and 26 July, OMB officials again stated explicitly that the instruction to suspend this assistance had come directly from the President, but they still were **unaware of a policy rationale**,” the whistleblower wrote.

July 24, 2019 — Special Counsel Robert Mueller testifies in two hearings before the House Judiciary and Intelligence Committees on his report.

July 25, 2019 — **Trump and Zelenskyy speak by phone for the first time since the call on April 21.**

The two presidents have their second conversation from 9:03 to 9:33 a.m. U.S. Eastern time (4:03 to 4:33 p.m. in Kyiv). An English-language [press release](#) issued by Zelenskyy’s office about the call says:

“Donald Trump is convinced that the new Ukrainian government will be able to quickly improve [the] image of Ukraine, **complete investigation of corruption cases, which inhibited the interaction between Ukraine and the USA**. He also confirmed continued support of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine by the United States and the **readiness** of the American side **to fully contribute** to the implementation of a Large-Scale Reform Program in our country.”

The two presidents “agreed to substantively discuss practical issues of Ukrainian-American cooperation during the visit of the Ukrainian head of state to the United States,” the release continued.

Zelenskyy had been hoping for a warm reception from the U.S. president and [a White House meeting](#) as an important signal to affirm continued American support for Ukraine’s war against Russian forces controlling the country’s east and for comprehensive reform and economic development efforts. Ukraine advocates in the U.S. also had thought a White House invitation would be forthcoming any day, but it was never scheduled.

On the morning of the call, Volker [texts](#) advice to Yermak: **“Heard from White House-assuming President Z convinces trump he will investigate/ “get to the bottom of what happened” in 2016, we will nail down date for visit to Washington. Good luck!”**

An intelligence community whistleblower complaint revealed in September prompted a flurry of revelations about the conversation until the declassification of [a rough transcript](#) of the call.

Before the release of the transcript, Trump admits he discussed Biden on the call (see Sept. 22 below) and says U.S. funding for Ukraine is at stake (see Sept. 22-23 below).

Sondland [has said](#) he spoke with Trump right before the President’s call with Zelenskyy. And the day after, Sondland met with Zelenskyy in Kyiv for about an hour.

U.S. officials who listened in on the call include Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (by his own subsequent [admission](#)), [reportedly](#) Vice President Mike Pence’s national security adviser retired Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, and Tim Morrison. The whistleblower complaint says approximately a dozen U.S. officials listened in on the call, including State Department Counselor T. Ulrich Brechbuhl. The department has denied Brechbuhl was on the call or had any readout of it. The Pentagon [stated](#) that no Defense officials were on the call. Hugo Gurdon, Washington Examiner, [said](#) after a November interview with Trump that the President said there were 17 people on the call, including junior staff.

Notably, neither then-National Security Advisor Bolton nor White House Chief of Staff Mulvaney were on the call, an unusual circumstance considering they usually monitor presidential calls with foreign counterparts. The two were on opposite sides of an internal White House feud over whether to acquiesce to President Trump’s campaign to press the Ukrainian government for an investigation of Biden, with Bolton opposed and Mulvaney facilitating with steps such as setting up the May 23 Trump meeting with Perry, Sondland and Volker, and scheduling the July 25 call. Bolton, a longtime hawk on Russia who wanted the U.S. to proceed with its aid to Ukraine, reportedly opposed the call and tried to get it postponed. Even though both Mulvaney and Bolton were in Washington the day of the call, Mulvaney sent his own national security adviser, deputy chief of staff Rob Blair, to monitor the call, and Bolton sent his deputy, Charles Kupperman, according to the [Wall Street Journal](#).

The same day, OMB issues the first formal notice to withhold security aid from Ukraine, according to [The Hill](#), which cites a summary document prepared by Democrats on the House Budget Committee.

Shortly before the call, at 2:31 p.m., Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Laura Cooper’s staff receives an email from the State Department saying **the Ukrainian embassy and the House Foreign Affairs Committee are asking about security assistance to Ukraine**, Cooper [told the House inquiry](#), saying she had been unaware of the email at the time. The State Department sent a second email at 4:25 p.m. saying, according to Cooper, that Congress “knows about the FMF situation to an extent, and so does the Ukrainian embassy.” The same day, a member of her staff receives a query from a Ukraine embassy contact “asking what was going on with Ukraine’s security assistance,” Cooper said. Because the staffer isn’t aware of the

OMB notice of a delay that day, the staffer tells the Ukrainian official that DoD is moving forward on the USAI funding, but recommends the embassy check with State regarding the FMF portion, Cooper said.

July 26, 2019 — Volker and Sondland meet with Zelenskyy in Kyiv.

Volker and Sondland advised the Ukrainian leader on “how to `navigate’ the demands that the President had made of Mr. Zelenskyy,” according to the [whistleblower’s complaint](#).



July 28, 2019 – Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats [submits his resignation](#), effective Aug. 15. One of President Trump’s longest-serving Cabinet members, Coats also stirred his boss’s ire at times with his policy disagreements and lukewarm endorsements of the President’s positions.

Week of July 29: White House alerted to whistleblower’s concerns.

“The week after the call, the [whistleblower] delivered a somewhat broad accusation anonymously to the C.I.A.’s general counsel” who then informed John A. Eisenberg, a deputy White House counsel, [according](#) to the *New York Times*.

July 31, 2019 – Giuliani [meets](#) in New York with Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko, who is in a power struggle with Zelenskyy over a second title he holds as head of the city’s administration. Giuliani and Klitschko have [known each other for years](#) – the former Ukrainian boxing champion hired the former New York mayor as a consultant on his Kyiv mayoral campaign in 2008. On Sept. 4, Zelenskyy [stripped Klitschko of the head of administration post](#), apparently in a move to restore checks-and-balances in the capital.

On or about Aug. 2, 2019 – Giuliani ([with Lev Parnas](#)) [meets](#) in Madrid with Andriy Yermak, a top aide to Zelenskyy.

Having been rebuffed in June for a meeting in Kyiv with Zelenskyy personally, Giuliani flies to Madrid to press the new Ukrainian president’s aide, Yermak, for an investigation of the Bidens as well as a probe of the allegation that Ukrainians conspired with Hillary Clinton’s campaign in 2016 to release damaging information about Paul Manafort. The Madrid meeting was a “`direct followup” to the July 25

Trump-Zelenskyy phone call and specifically to their discussion of the cases the U.S. president raised in that conversation, according to the [whistleblower's complaint](#). From Madrid, Giuliani resurfaces his allegations against the Bidens in a [tweet on Aug. 3](#).

Giuliani has said Yermak seemed open to considering the investigations, but also pressed for a Trump-Zelenskyy meeting as a sign of continued U.S. support to Ukraine in its war against Russia and its economic development and internal reform efforts. **“I talked to him about the whole package,”** Giuliani told the [Washington Post](#). The Post reported that “U.S. officials and members of the Trump administration wanted the meeting [between the two Presidents] to go ahead, but Trump personally rejected efforts to set it up, according to three people familiar with the discussions.”

The House Intelligence Committee's [inquiry](#) concluded that Giuliani and Yermak “agreed that Ukraine would issue a public statement, and they discussed potential dates for a White House meeting.” The committee's report continues: “A few days later, Ambassador Volker told Mr. Giuliani that it “would be good” if Mr. Giuliani would report to “the boss,” President Trump, about “the results” of his Madrid discussion so that President Trump would finally agree to a White House visit by President Zelensky.”

Aug. 3, 2019 — Michael Duffey, associate director of national security programs at the **Office of Management and Budget and a former leader of the Wisconsin Republican Party, signs a letter** informing Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan and U.S. Agency for International Development Deputy Administrator Bonnie Glick of “a `reapportionment’ of over a dozen different funding categories, including Ukrainian military aid, and ordering an `accounting’ of the unobligated balances in each account,” according to the [Washington Post](#). **The letter served as a warning to the agencies that the administration planned to review and could potentially cancel” all \$391 million of military aid to Ukraine.**

“Without being provided explanation or justification about why the administration was delaying the aid, some career officials at the Office of Management and Budget became worried they didn’t have the legal authority to hold up the funds,” which had been appropriated by Congress, the [Wall Street Journal](#) reported. “While career civil servants put an initial hold on the aid,” **Duffey “was given the authority for continuing to keep the aid on hold after the career staff began raising their concerns to political officials at OMB.”**

Aug. 9, 2019 — Volker texts Sondland and Giuliani to suggest they have a phone call **“to make sure I advise Z correctly as to what he should be saying.”** Sondland later texts Volker that the new NSC Senior Director for European and Russian Affairs, Tim Morrison, was ready to schedule a date for a Trump-Zelenskyy meeting “as soon as Yermak confirms.” (It’s unclear what Yermak is supposed to confirm, but possibly the promised public statement from Zelenskyy authorizing the investigations Trump wants.) Volker appears to misunderstand and asks, “How did you sway him,” and **Sondland** responds, “Not sure I did. **I think potus really wants the deliverable.**” Sondland then says, “To avoid misunderstandings, might be helpful to **ask Andrey [Yermak] for a draft statement (embargoed)** so that we can see exactly what they propose to cover. Even though Ze does a live presser

they can still summarize in a brief statement.” In testimony to the House impeachment inquiry, Sondland confirms that the “deliverable” refers to the public statement announcing the political investigations that Trump and Giuliani had been seeking into the Bidens and the debunked theory of Ukrainian interference on behalf of Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election.

Aug. 10, 2019 — Ukrainian leadership pushes back, with Zelenskyy aide Yermak pressing Volker via [texts](#) to agree that Zelenskyy won’t make the required public declaration of investigations until a firm date is set for a White House visit.

The same day, Sondland briefs State Department Counselor Ulrich Brechbuhl, a top advisor to Secretary Pompeo, on the discussions about Zelenskyy making the announcement of the two political investigations, according to the House impeachment inquiry [report](#). Sondland also emails Pompeo directly, copying his executive secretary and Brechbuhl, to inform them about the agreement for Zelenskyy to give the press conference. “He expected to see a draft of the statement, which would be ‘delivered for our review in a day or two,’ ” the Intelligence Committee reported. “Ambassador Sondland noted his hope that the draft statement would ‘make the boss happy enough to authorize an invitation.’ ”

Aug. 11, 2019 — Volker [texts](#) Giuliani, asking to speak by phone about a draft statement the Ukrainians are writing that Zelenskyy would read publicly regarding the investigations that Trump wants.

Aug. 12, 2019 – President Trump comments on President Zelenskyy

Trump speaks to reporters outside the White House about a range of issues, including the following [exchange](#):

Q: Mr. President, do you plan invite your Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelensky [cq] to the White House? And what would be your advice for him —

THE PRESIDENT: Who are you talking about?

Q: The President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah.

Q: Do you plan to invite him to the White House? And what would be your advice for him on how to communicate with Vladimir Putin to stop the conflict in Eastern Ukraine?

THE PRESIDENT: **I think he’s going to make a deal with President Putin, and he will be invited to the White House.** And we look forward to seeing him. He’s already been invited to the White House, and he wants to come. And I think he will. He’s a very reasonable guy. He wants to see peace in Ukraine. And I think he will be coming very soon, actually.

The same day, Yermak [texts](#) a draft statement to Volker announcing an “investigation,” without mentioning Burisma or the 2016 elections.

Also on that day, a [whistleblower files a complaint to Intelligence Community Inspector General \(ICIG\) Michael Atkinson related to an alleged “urgent concern”](#) that news reports later reveal likely centers on activities involving President Trump and Ukraine. The ICIG determines the complaint meets the definition of an “urgent concern” and is credible, and forwards it on Aug. 26 to Acting Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Joseph Maguire, who under the law was apparently required to transmit the complaint to the congressional intelligence committees within seven days. The [Justice Department](#), however, takes the position that the statute does not apply on the ground that the complaint does not involve “an intelligence activity within the responsibility and authority of the Director of National Intelligence.” The complaint remains under wraps until House Intelligence Committee Chairman reveals its existence on Sept. 13 (see below).

Aug. 13, 2019 — Volker and Sondland [text](#) with Yermak, urging him to include what Volker calls “2 key items” — the references to Burisma and the 2016 elections. Volker says, “We will work on official request,” possibly a reference to Ukrainians conditioning such a statement on a formal U.S. government request through regular, official channels, possibly the Department of Justice.

Importantly, Volker proposes specific language that is not just about opening those investigations but is worded to strongly suggest that wrongdoing in the 2016 U.S. election occurred via Ukraine: “Special attention should be paid to the problem of interference in the political processes of the United States, especially with the alleged involvement of some Ukrainian politicians. I want to declare that this is unacceptable. We intend to initiate and complete a transparent and unbiased investigation of all available facts and episodes, including those involving Burisma and the 2016 U.S. elections, which in turn will prevent the recurrence of this problem in the future.”

[8/13/19, 12:11:19 PM] Kurt Volker: Special attention should be paid to the problem of interference in the political processes of the United States, especially with the alleged involvement of some Ukrainian politicians. I want to declare that this is unacceptable. We intend to initiate and complete a transparent and unbiased investigation of all available facts and episodes, including those involving Burisma and the 2016 U.S. elections, which in turn will prevent the recurrence of this problem in the future.

But Yermak balks at the references, concerned at getting drawn into U.S. domestic politics. Volker eventually agrees “that the announcement of the Biden/Burisma and 2016 elections investigations would ‘look like it would play into our domestic politics,’ ” and the statement is “‘shelved,’ ” the House Intelligence Committee [reported](#) Dec. 3, 2019. “Nevertheless, Ambassador Sondland, in accordance with President Trump’s wishes, continued to pursue the statement into early September 2019,” the committee found.

Aug. 14, 2019: CIA General Counsel makes “criminal referral” to the Justice Department

After conducting a preliminary inquiry and finding “reasonable basis” to believe the whistleblower’s allegations (see entry for week of July 29), CIA General Counsel Courtney Simmons Elwood makes phone call with Eisenberg to John Demers, the head of the Justice Department’s national security division referring the case for

possible criminal investigation, according to [NBC News](#) and the [New York Times](#). “Justice Department officials now say they didn’t consider the phone conversation a formal criminal referral because it was not in written form,” NBC News reported.

Aug. 15, 2019 – DNI Coats leaves office. Principal Deputy Director Sue Gordon resigns too, after it [became clear](#) that Trump would not select her to succeed Coats.

Aug. 17, 2019 – Sondland asks Volker in a [text](#) whether the U.S. side still wants Zelenskyy “to give us an unequivocal draft with 2016 and Boresma [cq]?” This may indicate Zelenskyy has balked. Volker responds, “That’s the clear message so far...I’m hoping we can put something out there that causes him to respond with that.”

Less than 10 days later, *Politico* publishes an exclusive with the headline, “Trump Holds Up Ukraine Military Aid Meant to Confront Russia.”

Aug. 26, 2019 – The Inspector General forwards the intelligence community whistleblower complaint to Acting DNI Maguire.

Aug. 22, 2019 – The Trump administration abandons its effort to slash foreign assistance programs, but the military assistance to Ukraine remains suspended until it is finally released on Sept. 11. If the funding hadn’t been released before the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30, it would have been canceled, the [Wall Street Journal](#) reported.

Aug. 28, 2019 – Then-U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton becomes the first high-level Trump administration official to [visit Kyiv](#) since President Zelenskyy’s inauguration. Bolton [says](#) the two discussed a possible meeting between the two presidents during a trip Trump planned at the time to Poland.

Aug. 28, 2019 – *Politico* breaks the [news that President Trump was delaying the distribution of \\$250 million of fiscal 2019 security assistance that Ukraine needs to fight its war with Russia](#) on its eastern flank, by asking his administration to review how it was being spent. The hold on the aid package at the same time as Trump and Giuliani were agitating publicly for Ukraine to investigate Biden raises the specter that the U.S. president was using congressionally appropriated taxpayer dollars as leverage to coerce a foreign government to investigate his potential rival in the 2020 election. It later emerges that a separate military aid package of \$141.5 million in Foreign Military Financing also was included in the suspension, for a total of almost \$400 million.

Aug. 29, 2019 – Zelenskyy [appoints](#) lawyer and former Deputy Minister of Justice Ruslan Riaboshapka as the new prosecutor general, replacing Yuriy Lutsenko, who steps down the same day.

Late August: The Acting Director of National Intelligence and Inspector General of the Intelligence Community make a **criminal referral** to the Justice Department after the Inspector General conducts an inquiry into the whistleblower’s complaint, according to Acting DNI Maguire’s congressional [testimony](#) and the [New York Times](#).

Sept. 2019 – The *Wall Street Journal* [reports](#), “Ukrainian officials earlier this month expressed concern to U.S. senators that the aid had been held up as a penalty

for resisting that pressure.”

Sept. 1, 2019 — The top U.S. diplomat in Ukraine, chargé d'affaires Bill Taylor raises the specter of a quid pro quo in a text message to Sondland and Volker: “Are we now saying that security assistance and WH meeting are conditioned on investigations?” Sondland replies only, “Call me.”

In their call, Taylor says in his [deposition statement](#), Sondland told him “that he now recognized that he had made a mistake by earlier telling the Ukrainian officials to whom he spoke that a White House meeting with President Zelenskyy was dependent on a public announcement of investigations — in fact, Ambassador Sondland said, **everything was dependent on such an announcement, including security assistance**. He said that President Trump wanted President Zelenskyy ‘in a public box’ by making a public statement about ordering such investigations.”

Sept. 2, 2019 — Vice President Mike Pence, a day after meeting with the new Ukrainian president in Warsaw, [doesn't directly answer](#) a reporter's [question](#) about whether he can assure Ukrainians that the delay in what was then understood to be \$250 million of U.S. security assistance for Ukraine is unrelated to President Trump's and Rudy Giuliani's pressure on Ukraine to investigate the Bidens.

Sept. 4, 2019 — Shokin provides a new affidavit at the request of lawyers for Ukrainian oligarch Dmitry Firtash, who is fighting extradition to the United States on federal bribery and racketeering charges. In the affidavit, Shokin says he “was forced out because I was leading a wide-ranging corruption probe into Burisma Holdings, a natural gas firm active in Ukraine and Joe Biden's son, Hunter Biden, was a member of the Board of Directors.” The affidavit was then reported on Sept. 26 in [The Hill](#) by John Solomon, by then an “opinion contributor.”



Sept. 5, 2019 — New Prosecutor General Ruslan Riaboshapka [brings Vitaliy Kasko back](#) to the office as First Deputy Prosecutor General, a move that promises to [help](#)

[restore integrity](#) to the office. Kasko is the former deputy of Shokin's who had quit out of frustration.

The same day, U.S. Senators Chris Murphy, a Connecticut Democrat, and Ron Johnson, a Wisconsin Republican, visit Kyiv and meet with Zelenskyy, accompanied by Taylor. Zelenskyy's "first question to the senators was about the withheld security assistance," Taylor later tells the impeachment inquiry. "Both senators stressed that bipartisan support for Ukraine in Washington was Ukraine's most important strategic asset and that President Zelenskyy should not jeopardize that bipartisan support by getting drawn into U.S. domestic politics," Taylor says.

Sept. 8 and 9, 2019 — Taylor repeats concerns in two [text messages](#) with Sondland about the idea of holding out U.S. military funding until Zelenskyy agrees to investigate Biden. Though Sondland had texted a month earlier that Trump "really wants the deliverable," he writes back this time about 4 ½ hours after the second such text over the two days to disavow such a deal, advising him to take any further such concerns directly to Pompeo. "The President has been crystal clear no quid pro quo's of any kind. The President is trying to evaluate whether Ukraine is truly going to adopt the transparency and reforms that President Zelensky promised during his campaign I suggest we stop the back and forth by text If you still have concerns I recommend you give [Pompeo] a call to discuss them directly."

Sondland testified later that he had spoken with Trump before his response to Taylor. Sondland [told](#) the impeachment inquiry that Trump "was in a very bad mood and it was a very short call. I don't want to characterize him as hanging up on me, but it was close to that."

Sept. 9, 2019 — Inspector General for the Intelligence Community Michael Atkinson informs House Intelligence Committee Chair Adam Schiff and Ranking Member Devin Nunes of the whistleblower complaint's existence (full text of the Inspector General's [letter](#))

Sept. 9, 2019 – Three U.S. House committees launch probe into Trump and Giuliani pressure campaign

The House Foreign Affairs, Intelligence and Oversight and Reform committees announce a joint investigation of Trump and Giuliani's alleged efforts to strongarm Ukraine into pursuing two investigations for the president's political gain, including by threatening to withhold \$250 million in security assistance. The joint [press release](#) says public records show the efforts have continued "for **nearly two years**" and were conducted "under the guise of anti-corruption activity."

Sept. 10, 2019 — John Bolton steps down as National Security Advisor. Bolton says he resigned; Trump says he fired him.

Sept. 11, 2019 – Trump releases the hold on U.S. security assistance to Ukraine

State Department [notifies](#) Congress that it will provide Ukraine with \$141.5 million of military equipment and other assistance under its "Foreign Military Financing" program that is available for a number of countries. The news emerges the next day,

Sept. 12, at the same time that U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham says the administration has released its hold on the separate \$250 million of military assistance for Ukraine from the Defense Department under a program known as the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative. President Trump [gave](#) permission to the OMB's acting director, Russell Vought, to release the funds. The timing of the news on both aid packages leads to speculation that the Trump administration was topping up its bribe/extortion of Ukraine, but the [Foreign Military Financing](#) likely had been in the works for months, possibly a year.

But a summary by Democrats on the House Budget Committee released on Nov. 26, 2019, says that only the DoD assistance was freed up by Sept. 12, while the State Department funding wasn't released until Sept. 27 and Sept. 30, according to [Politico](#).

Sept. 13, 2019 – Intelligence community whistleblower complaint revealed

House Intelligence Committee Chair Schiff [announces](#) that he has issued a subpoena to Acting DNI Maguire to obtain a complaint from a whistleblower filed under the Intelligence Community Whistleblower Protection Act (ICWPA) that, [under the law](#), should have been provided to the congressional intelligence committees. Schiff says he is concerned the complaint is being withheld "to cover up serious misconduct" and "to protect the President or other Administration officials."

Sept. 17, 2019 – The Inspector General for the Intelligence Community sends [letter](#) to House Intelligence Chairman Schiff and Ranking Member Nunes outlining his disagreement with the administration's decision to withhold the whistleblower's complaint from the congressional intelligence committees. The Inspector General's letter states, "the subject matter involved in the complainant's disclosure not only falls within the DNI's jurisdiction, but relates to **one of the most significant and important of the DNI's responsibilities to the American people.**"

Sept. 18, 2019 – Vice President Pence speaks with Ukrainian President Zelenskyy by phone, discussing a scheduled meeting between the two presidents during the United Nations General Assembly meetings in New York the following week. Pence "commended President Zelenskyy's administration for its bold action to tackle corruption through legislative reforms, and offered full U.S. support for those efforts," according to a U.S. Embassy [statement](#).

Sept. 20, 2019 – A senior advisor to Ukraine's Interior Minister challenges Trump to make an official U.S. government request if he wants an investigation of Biden. The adviser, Anton Geraschenko, told [The Daily Beast](#) that "currently there is no open investigation." He adds, "Clearly, Trump is now looking for kompromat to discredit his opponent Biden, to take revenge for his friend Paul Manafort, who is serving seven years in prison."

Sept. 22 and 23, 2019 – Trump himself connects phone call on Biden to U.S. aid to Ukraine

After days of insisting there was nothing inappropriate about his telephone call with Zelenskyy, President Trump, in [two](#) sets of remarks to reporters asking about his July 25 phone call with Zelenskyy, [appears to confirm a connection](#) between U.S. financial

assistance for Ukraine and his pressure for the country's leaders to pursue the investigations he wants.

On Sept. 22, Trump [acknowledges](#) discussing Joe Biden with the Ukrainian leader during their July 25 phone call. "The conversation I had was largely congratulatory, with largely corruption, all of the corruption taking place and largely the fact that we don't want our people like Vice President Biden and his son creating to the corruption already in the Ukraine," Mr. Trump [told reporters](#). Trump says, "Certainly I'd have every right to [raise Biden with the Ukrainian President] if there's corruption and we are paying lots of money to a country."

Trump has repeatedly referred to what he falsely claims the Bidens to have done as "corruption." "It's very important to talk about corruption," Trump [tells](#) the reporters on Sept. 23. "If you don't talk about corruption, why would you give money to a country that you think is corrupt?...It's very important that on occasion you speak to somebody about corruption."

Sept. 23, 2019 – The chairmen of the three House committees conducting the joint investigation into Trump and Giuliani's efforts to pressure the Ukrainian government [write](#) Secretary of State Pompeo demanding he turn over the documents the committees had requested on Sept. 9. The [letter](#) characterizes Trump's actions as "seeking to enlist a foreign actor to interfere with an American election," and says, "if press reports are accurate, such corrupt use of presidential power for the President's personal political interest – and not for the national interest – is a betrayal of the President's oath of office and cannot go unchecked." The chairmen note the earlier deadline of Sept. 16 to produce the material had passed and give a new deadline of Sept. 26 to notify the committees whether the State Department intends to comply.

Sept. 24, 2019 – House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announces the formal opening of an impeachment inquiry.

Sept. 24, 2019 – Pompeo "was directing Kurt Volker to speak with Mr. Giuliani" as late as Sept. 24, Sondland [said](#) in public testimony in the November impeachment hearings. "In a WhatsApp message, Kurt Volker told me in part: 'Spoke with Rudy per guidance from S.'" (S is the State Department acronym for the Secretary of State) That was [after](#) the Sept. 9 announcement by the three House committees of an investigation into the pressure campaign on Ukraine, and after the Sept. 13 revelation of the whistleblower complaint.

Sept. 25, 2019 – **Trump meets with Zelenskyy for the first time**, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly opening sessions in New York. The rough transcript of their July 25 call had been released earlier in the day, but **both men tried to [downplay](#) any idea of pressure on the Ukrainian government to conduct investigations** favorable to Trump's 2020 re-election prospects. "There was no pressure," Trump said. "Nobody pushed me," Zelenskyy said. Trump went on to say that Ukraine needs to address "corruption" and repeated his argument that European countries need to provide more support. Asked why Giuliani is acting as a go-between with Ukraine, Trump said Giuliani is trying to get to the bottom of the Russia investigation "hoax."

Trump also **urged Zelenskyy to make a "deal" with Russian President Putin**

to end the war in eastern Ukraine. “I really believe that President Putin would like to do something. I really hope that you and President Putin can get together and can solve this problem. That would be a tremendous achievement, and I know you’re trying to do that.”

The meeting between the presidents had been [delayed](#) since the Ukrainians began requesting it in early summer, and still doesn’t equate to an invitation for a formal meeting at the White House that Zelenskyy has sought as an important signal of continued U.S. support for Ukraine’s war against Russia and its battle against corruption. During joint remarks after their meeting, Zelenskyy indicated Trump had invited him to the White House, “but I think you forgot to tell me the date.” Trump wasn’t forthcoming.

Sept. 26, 2019 — Solomon article in The Hill on Shokin affidavit.

John Solomon [publishes](#) a piece in The Hill amplifying [the Shokin affidavit](#) (see Sept. 4, 2019 item), without noting that Solomon was also a [client](#) of Toensing and diGenova.

Giuliani subsequently cites the affidavit and Solomon’s work as evidence against Biden. Pulitzer Prize-winning fact-checking site Politifact produced a complete [takedown of Giuliani’s claims](#).

Sept. 27, 2019 — The House Foreign Affairs, Intelligence, and Oversight and Reform committees issue subpoenas to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to produce documents he had failed to provide two weeks earlier and compelling depositions for five State Department officials over the next two weeks: former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch, U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations Ambassador Kurt Volker, Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent, Counselor T. Ulrich Brechbuhl, and U.S. Ambassador to the EU Gordon Sondland.

Sept. 27, 2019 — Kurt Volker, the U.S. special representative for Ukraine negotiations, resigns. He had been named among those in the State Department facilitating communications between Giuliani and Ukrainian President Zelenskyy’s office, and was among those subpoenaed by the House committees earlier in the day. The day before, Sept. 26, Giuliani had [tweeted images of text messages](#) that he had exchanged with Volker on July 19 to set up a telephone call between Giuliani and Zelenskyy advisor Yermak.

Sept. 30, 2019 — Three House committees issue [subpoenas](#) to Giuliani and three associates — Lev Parnas, Igor Fruman and Semyon Kislin — demanding records related to efforts to pressure Ukraine to conduct politically motivated investigations, including of Joe Biden. The committees request records starting from Jan. 20, 2017, the day Trump took office, to the present.

Oct. 2, 2019 — The State Department notifies Congress that the administration has approved a \$39 million arms sale of 150 Javelin anti-tank missiles to Ukraine, which is paying for the weapons from its own funding, according to [CNN](#). The transaction, intended to help Ukraine defend itself against the Russian incursion on its eastern flank, is separate from the \$391 million of other military financing that President Trump suspended in the summer before releasing it after a bipartisan backlash (see

above). The administration in March 2019 approved a similar \$47 million package for Ukraine for 210 Javelin Missiles and 37 launchers.

Oct. 2, 2019 — State Department Inspector General Steve Linick provides the Giuliani disinformation packet to Congress and briefs members in an [unusual urgent session](#) that he had called to discuss the documents. The packet includes emails from acting assistant secretary for European and Eurasian affairs, Phil Reeker and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent, that shows “when State Department officials saw the disinformation campaign, they attempted to ring alarm bells and strategized to correct the record,” [NBC](#) reports.

Oct 3, 2019 — John Dowd confirms Parnas and Fruman work with Giuliani on behalf of President Trump

In a [letter](#) to Congress, an attorney for Parnas and Fruman, John Dowd (who had represented President Trump in the Russian interference investigation), writes that the two men “**assisted Mr. Giuliani in connection with his representation of President Trump.**” He adds, “They also assisted Joseph DiGenova and Victoria Toensing in their law practice. Thus, certain information you seek in your September 30, 2019, letter is protected by the attorney-client, attorney work product and other privileges.” In a federal court hearing on Oct. 23 (see Oct. 10, 2019 entry regarding Parnas and Fruman’s arrest), Parnas attorney Ed MacMahon tells the judge that some of the evidence may be subject to “[executive privilege](#)” due to the connection to President Trump.

Oct. 10, 2019 — Parnas and Fruman are arrested at Washington Dulles Airport, as they are preparing to leave the country for Vienna, on [federal charges](#) of violating campaign finance laws, including prohibitions against foreign funding of election campaigns, conspiring to make contributions in connection with federal elections in the names of others, and making false statements to and falsifying records to deceive the Federal Elections Commission. (See May-June 2018 entry on the specific charges related to the recall of Ambassador Yovanovitch.

The indictment charges that “the defendants broke the law to gain political influence while avoiding disclosure of who was actually making the donations and where the money was coming from,” U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman says in announcing the arrests. “They sought political influence not only to advance their own financial interests but to advance the political interests of at least one foreign official – a Ukrainian government official who sought the dismissal of the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine.”

Oct. 11, 2019 — Michael McKinley, senior advisor to Secretary of State Pompeo and a career diplomat who had served as U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, Colombia, Peru and Brazil, [resigns](#) in protest over revelations of the treatment of Marie Yovanovitch and other career U.S. officials. “The timing of my resignation was the result of two overriding concerns: the failure, in my view, of the State Department to offer support to Foreign Service employees caught up in the impeachment inquiry on Ukraine,” McKinley [said](#) in prepared remarks to the House investigation on Oct. 16. “And, second, by what appears to be the utilization of our ambassadors overseas to advance a domestic political objective.”

Dec. 3, 2019 — Giuliani presses on with his campaign to bolster President Trump

Giuliani meets with Lutsenko in Budapest and then travels on to Kyiv the next day, Dec. 4, to meet with Shokin and Kulyk, according to the [New York Times](#), even as the House Intelligence Committee issues its [report on the impeachment inquiry](#) and the House Judiciary Committee prepares to begin public hearings to examine relevant law. (The House report had revealed the [frequency of telephone contact that Giuliani had with the White House](#) and others who were part of the campaign to pressure Zelenskyy into conducting the investigations that Trump sought.) Giuliani's trip apparently is intended "to help prepare more episodes of a documentary series for a conservative television outlet promoting his pro-Trump, anti-impeachment narrative," the *Times* reports. Accompanying Giuliani and the One America News channel crew are two former Ukrainian officials who support Trump, Andrii Telizhenko (see May 20-24, 2019 entry) and Andrii Artemenko.

Giuliani also has dinner in Budapest with U.S. Ambassador to Hungary David Cornstein, a longtime friend of the ex-Mayor and of Trump who has frequently [taken positions at odds with official U.S. policy](#) but favoring authoritarian Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, the *Times* reports. Orban, in turn, has influenced Trump's thinking against Ukraine (see May 3 and May 13, 2019 entries).