

# Four Things to Expect as the Trump Impeachment Inquiry Goes Public

After a month of closed hearings, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence is slated to hold public impeachment hearings Wednesday and Friday.

The committee, under Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., will hear testimony from three witnesses regarding President Donald Trump's July 25 phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Democrats seek to find out whether the Trump administration's hold on more than \$300 million in congressionally authorized aid to Ukraine was tied to pushing the country to investigate a Ukrainian energy company's employment of the son of former Vice President Joe Biden.

In their phone conversation, Trump and Zelenskyy refer to Hunter Biden's work on the board of Burisma, the energy company.

After the hearings, the House Intelligence Committee will issue a report to the House Judiciary Committee, which ultimately will decide whether to recommend articles of impeachment to the full House.

Here are four things to expect this week and as the public impeachment proceedings move forward.

## 1. Who Is Testifying and About What?

Ambassador William Taylor, who served as the chargé

d'affaires – or top U.S. diplomat – for Ukraine, is scheduled to testify in public Wednesday.

According to a transcript, Taylor said during [closed-door testimony](#) that Trump wanted to withhold military aid to Ukraine, and that Trump personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani as well as European Union Ambassador Gordon Sondland placed pressure on Ukraine to investigate the Bidens.

He also said the Trump administration wanted to put Zelenskyy “in a public box” by having him announce a probe of Burisma and Hunter Biden, according to the transcript.

Taylor, however, was not on the July 25 call between Trump and the Ukrainian president. Taylor told the committee, according to the transcript of the testimony last month, that he didn't interact with Trump, acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney, or Giuliani.

Taylor responded, “That's my understanding” to the suggestion that Ukraine was not aware that military aid was on hold at the time of the phone call.

Addressing corruption has “been a constant theme of U.S. policy towards Ukraine,” he said.

Taylor, a West Point graduate and Vietnam veteran, also told the committee that there was a “connection between the meeting and investigations,” referring to a proposed Oval Office meeting between Trump and the Ukrainian leader.

“The delegation returned to Washington enthusiastic about the new Ukrainian president and urged President Trump to meet with him early on to cement the U.S.-Ukraine relationship. But from what I understood, President Trump did not share their enthusiasm for a meeting with Mr. Zelenskyy,” he said. “ ... President Trump, I think I mentioned in my [opening] statement, was skeptical of Ukraine in general, but—of the new Ukrainian administration.”

Taylor took the top post in Ukraine after Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch, set to testify publicly Friday, was recalled back to the United States.

In a text message to Sondland, the European Union ambassador, Taylor wrote: "As I said on the phone, I think it's crazy to withhold security assistance for help with a political campaign."

Sondland responded in a text to Taylor that his characterization was "incorrect."

George Kent, the deputy assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, also is scheduled to testify publicly Wednesday. In closed-door testimony last month, Kent [told lawmakers](#) about his concerns in 2015 regarding Hunter Biden's membership on the board of Burisma.

"When I was on a call with somebody on the vice president's staff—and I cannot recall who it was, just briefing on what was happening [in] Ukraine—I raised my concerns that I had heard that Hunter Biden was on the board of a company owned by somebody that the U.S. government had spent money trying to get tens of millions of dollars back, and that could create the perception of a conflict of interest," Kent told the House Intelligence Committee, according to the transcript.

Kent added: "The message that I recall hearing back was that the vice president's [other] son Beau was dying of cancer and that there was no further bandwidth to deal with the family-related issues at that time."

To a question that characterized as a "quid pro quo" Biden's threat in 2016 as vice president to withhold \$1 billion in aid unless the Ukraine government fired state prosecutor Viktor Shokin, Kent replied: "That is—sounds more or less like what he said on that stage."

He was referring to on-camera remarks the former vice

president made in a [January 2018 speech](#) to the Council on Foreign Relations.

However, Kent also said that Mulvaney, the acting White House chief of staff, told him to to defer to Energy Secretary Rick Perry, EU Ambassador Sondland, and then-special envoy to Ukraine Kurt Volker.

Kent wrote a memorandum about his “concerns that there was an effort to initiate politically motivated prosecutions that were injurious to the rule of law, both in Ukraine and the U.S.”

Yovanovitch, the recalled ambassador to Ukraine, is slated to testify Friday.

President Barack Obama named Yovanovitch to the post in August 2016. Giuliani pushed for her removal, and Trump eventually recalled her. She clashed with Yuriy Lutsenko, the Ukrainian state prosecutor who took Shokin’s place after Shokin was ousted as a result of the Biden threat to withhold U.S. aid.

In closed-door testimony, Yovanovitch said she was warned that Giuliani’s business associates viewed her as an obstacle.

“One of the senior Ukrainian officials was very concerned, and told me I really needed to watch my back,” she [told the committee](#) in the closed session.

## **2. Who Else Could Testify in Future Hearings?**

Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif., ranking member of the Intelligence Committee, [requested in a letter](#) to Schiff that he call Hunter Biden and the anonymous whistleblower who first drew attention to the July 25 phone conversation between Trump and Zelenskyy.

In previous impeachment inquiries, the House minority was able

to call witnesses. However, Schiff [rejected](#) the request to call either witness.

House Republicans requested that several others publicly testify, including Volker, Morrison, and Nellie Ohr, who worked for opposition research firm Fusion GPS, which was responsible for the “dossier” compiled against Trump by former British spy Christopher Steele. Nellie Ohr is the wife of former Justice Department official Bruce Ohr.

*Republicans have requested a list of witnesses for the impeachment hearings (alphabetical order):*

- Devon Archer*
- Hunter Biden*
- Alexandra Chalupa*
- David Hale*
- Tim Morrison*
- Nellie Ohr*
- Amb. Volker*
- The “Whistleblower” & their sources*

*Will [@RepAdamSchiff](#) permit them to testify?*

*– Rep. Jim Jordan (@Jim\_Jordan) [November 9, 2019](#)*

Schiff has complained that Trump is blocking certain current and former administration officials from testifying, such as Perry, the outgoing energy secretary.

*Far from transparent, Trump has engaged in unprecedented obstruction.*

*He’s blocking more than a dozen witnesses from testifying.*

*His White House, State Dept, DOD, OMB, and Energy Dept are defying subpoenas for thousands of documents.*

*The American people see through this. <https://t.co/VbyP5gRBIR>*

– Adam Schiff (@RepAdamSchiff) [November 12, 2019](#)

Others [testified](#) before the House Intelligence Committee behind closed doors, and they may be called to do so publicly.

They include Sondland, the EU ambassador; Volker, the former U.S. envoy to Ukraine; Michael Atkinson, the intelligence community inspector general; Michael McKinley, a former senior adviser to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo; Laura Cooper, deputy assistant secretary of defense for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia; and Phillip Reeker, acting assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs.

Also possible: Fiona Hill, a former Russia expert with the National Security Council who testified that Bolton, when he was national security adviser, strongly objected to the Trump administration's policy toward Ukraine.

Perhaps the most damaging [testimony](#) behind closed doors came from Army Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, director of European affairs for the National Security Council, who was among the national security officials who listened in on the call between Trump and the Ukraine president.

“There was no doubt,” Vindman said, that Trump was pressuring the Ukraine president for an investigation.

Christopher Anderson, a former Volker adviser, and Tim Morrison, senior director for Europe and Russia at the National Security Council, also testified in secret to the committee.

### **3. Who Are the Key Lawmakers to Watch?**

Schiff has been the public face of the impeachment inquiry since September. Chairman of the House Intelligence

Committee since Democrats captured the majority in the 2018 midterm elections, Schiff also doggedly pursued Trump during the Russia investigation in 2017 and 2018.

That was one of at least three probes that found no evidence of a conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russian operatives to influence the 2016 presidential election.

Schiff has the benefit of experience in leading [two judicial impeachments](#), in 2009 and 2010. He was elected in 2000, [defeating](#) incumbent Rep. James Rogan, a Republican, in a campaign based largely on Rogan's leading role in the 1998 impeachment of President Bill Clinton.

Schiff came under scrutiny for [mischaracterizing](#) the phone conversation between Trump and the Ukrainian president. Only after being criticized did the committee chairman say his performance was "parody."

Several fact-checkers also took Schiff to task for not telling the truth when he said neither he nor his office had previous [contact with the whistleblower](#) in the case.

Another key lawmaker to watch in the hearing is the newest member of the committee, Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio. Jordan, one of the president's biggest defenders, is also the ranking member of the House Oversight and Reform Committee and a former chairman of the House Freedom Caucus.

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., decided to [put](#) Jordan on the committee and take off Rep. Rick Crawford, R-Ark.

McCarthy told Fox News: "Jim Jordan has been on the front lines in the fight for fairness and truth. His addition will ensure more accountability and transparency in this sham process."

Nunes, chairman of the committee during the first two years of

the Trump administration, also may be a key figure to watch since he may renew his calls for Hunter Biden and the whistleblower to testify.

Nunes has said the president has the right to face his accuser.

Rep. Jim Himes, D-Conn., one of the loudest critics of Trump, has been a regular on the talk show circuit. After the 2016 election, Himes [called](#) for the Electoral College to step in and prevent Trump from being president because, he said, “this man is not only unqualified to be president, he’s a danger to the republic.”

Before Trump’s inauguration: Himes added: “I do think the Electoral College should choose someone other than Donald Trump to be president. That will lead to a fascinating legal issue, but I would rather have a legal issue, a complicated legal problem, than to find out the White House was now the Kremlin’s chief ally.”

Himes said Sunday on NBC’s “Meet the Press” that Democrats should stop talking about a “quid pro quo” and stick with talking about “corruption” and “abuse of power.”

*WATCH: Rep. [@Jahimes](#) says that the use of the word quid pro quo “is complicated,” adding “what we are dealing with here is corruption, abuse of power in a way that damaged American national security.” [#MTP](#)*

*“... It is probably best not to use Latin words to explain it.”  
[pic.twitter.com/uPKFiqMgMh](https://pic.twitter.com/uPKFiqMgMh)*

*– Meet the Press (@MeetThePress) [November 10, 2019](#)*

Rep. Eric Swalwell, D-Calif., who briefly ran for Democrats’ presidential nomination, also has been one of Trump’s fiercest critics. Swalwell regularly accused Trump of conspiring with



Russians well before the release of special counsel Robert Mueller's report finding no evidence of such a conspiracy.

*ICYMI: [@RepSwalwell](#) says he doesn't see "any relevance" in bringing [@JoeBiden](#) and his son Hunter before House Intelligence following GOP requests for their own witnesses in the [#impeachment](#) probe. <https://t.co/SVJLKh4mMJ> [pic.twitter.com/s89t3X0nBE](https://pic.twitter.com/s89t3X0nBE)*

*– Face The Nation (@FaceTheNation) [November 11, 2019](#)*

## 4. What Are the Key Facts in Dispute?

Democrats and Republicans will clash over some basic facts. Some Republicans aren't entirely on the same page, either.

Democrats say that the July 25 phone call between the two leaders was only one part of a broader Trump effort to pressure Ukraine to interfere in a U.S. election by digging up dirt on a political opponent, in this case the former vice president.

Republicans argue that Ukraine was not aware of the delay on congressionally appropriated funds. However, Democrats have argued that the Ukrainian government was clearly [aware](#), since it did not yet have the money.

Trump, who released an official transcript of the call weeks ago, insists that his conversation with Zelenskyy was not to convey a threat nor a "quid pro quo" about more than \$300 million in funding in exchange for investigations.

Although most House Republicans back that up, some GOP lawmakers have said a quid pro quo always has been a part of foreign aid, no matter who is president – and that corruption is a legitimate basis for holding up aid.

Republicans also contend that the aid eventually flowed to Ukraine without its promise of an investigation.

Republicans likely will highlight Joe Biden's on-camera boast that he threatened to withhold \$1 billion in aid to Ukraine unless the government fired the prosecutor.

Republicans contend the Shokin firing occurred because he was investigating Burisma, the energy company employing Biden's son. Democrats dispute that such an investigation was underway.

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