

HOUSE COMMITTEES' DEPOSITION: U.S. SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR UKRAINE KURT VOLKER

[NB: Check the byline, thanks!]

If yesterday's blizzard of disinformation tweets is any kind of measure, the GOP is worried about today's interview of the former U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine, Kurt Volker, before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Committee on Oversight and Reform. You may recall he resigned from his role as a diplomat last Friday.

In a letter sent to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on September 27, it looked as if the biggest questions for State personnel would arise from what it was Giuliani was doing in and about Ukraine.

... The Department has also acknowledged that Special Representative for Ukraine Kurt Volker played a direct role in arranging meetings between Rudy Giuliani, who has no official role in the U.S. government, and representatives of President Zelensky.⁵ In addition, the whistleblower complaint indicates that "multiple U.S. Officials" were "deeply concerned by what they viewed as Mr. Giuliani's circumvention of national security decisionmaking processes to engage with Ukrainian officials and relay messages back and forth between Kyiv and the President"⁶ These officials reported that "State Department officials" had spoken with Mr. Giuliani "in an attempt to 'contain the damage' to U.S. national security," as well as

to the new Ukrainian administration to help it “understand and respond to “Mr. Giuliani’s backchanneling.7...

Whew. When you put it that way one can well understand the frustration of former member of parliament and presidential adviser Serhiy Leschenko when he wrote in a recent op-ed,

... Giuliani and his associates are trying to drag our newly elected president, Volodymyr Zelensky, into a conflict between two foreign political parties, drastically limiting Ukraine’s room for maneuver in respect to the United States, perhaps its most important international partner. ...

Today’s deposition is part of what the letter from the committees to Pompeo called “part of the impeachment inquiry.” It’ll be valuable as part of the investigative process determining culpability and to what degree on the part of participants who may have been manipulating U.S. foreign policy for the benefit of Trump’s re-election campaign.

But it will also be valuable for our relationship with Ukraine. They need to see the U.S. living up to its promise as a democracy while identifying where our relationship with Ukraine was hijacked.

The questions may be fairly simple:

- what was the understanding of Volker or other State Department personnel about the nature of Rudy Giuliani’s relationship to the U.S. government?
- did Volker ever hear of Giuliani having meetings with Ukrainians prior to the July 25 call? What did the meetings entail and was each meeting debriefed with State?
- did Rudy Giuliani ask Volker or other State Department personnel for assistance in contacting Zelensky or other Ukraine officials?

- did Volker or the State Department ever ask Giuliani to contact Zelensky or other Ukraine officials?
- if anyone from State Department did ask, who was it and under what context did they make this request?
- were Volker and/org other State Department personnel asked by Giuliani or others to disparage former ambassador Marie Yovanovitch or in any way hamper her diplomatic work?
- did Volker and/or other State Department personnel ever see or hear Ukraine officials encouraged to disparage former ambassador Marie Yovanovitch or in any way hamper her diplomatic work?
- what did Volker know about the July 25 phone call between Trump and Zelensky, ex. attendees at the White House, or participating remotely like from Ukraine?
- did subsequent meetings between Volker and Ukraine officials imply a quid pro quo agreement, aid for a deliverable?
- did the diplomatic office in Ukraine have its own transcript, complete or partial, or a memorandum of telephone conversation for the July 25 call?

I'm sure there's more to be asked but these are pretty important questions. What about you? What would ask and how if you were in charge of this interview?

There's a strong chance Pompeo, the Department of Justice, or the White House may interfere and prevent Volker's deposition. We'll see.

Timing of the deposition isn't clear; I haven't been able to find it anywhere. The deposition doesn't appear to be open, either, as I see nothing on the calendars I've checked. If you find information please share it in comments.