

IMPEACHMENT HEARINGS: DAY 3 - WITNESSES TO THE JULY 25 CALL [UPDATE-2]

[NB: Updates to this post will appear at the bottom. /~Rayne]

Today's hearings are already under way, the first scheduled to begin at 9:00 a.m. ET and the second at 2:30 p.m.

Per NPR, the witnesses for the first panel:

- *Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, the top Ukraine specialist on the National Security Council. Vindman listened to the July 25 telephone conversation in the White House Situation Room and reported his concerns about the president's mention of political investigations to the top NSC attorney, John Eisenberg. He said the attorney decided to move the record of the call onto a highly classified system that few could access. (heard the July 25 phone call)*
- *Jennifer Williams, a*

foreign service aide detailed to Vice President Pence's office who listened in on the July 25 call between Trump and Zelenskiy. (heard the July 25 phone call)

Bold mine.

The witnesses for the second panel:

- *Kurt Volker, the former special envoy to Ukraine, who along with Sondland and Energy Secretary Rick Perry was part of the "three amigos" tasked by the president to handle Ukraine policy. He was on the list of witnesses requested to appear by Republican members of the Intelligence Committee.*
- *Tim Morrison, the former National Security Council aide who heard the July 25 call but in closed-door testimony told the committees conducting the impeachment inquiry that he didn't view the president's actions as*

illegal or inappropriate. Republicans say his testimony supports the president's position that there was nothing improper about the July 25 call, and they included him on a list of witnesses they asked the Intelligence Committee chairman, Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., to call. (heard the July 25 phone call)

Trump supporters whining about hearsay should be treated as just that, whining, given the number of witnesses who have heard the July 25 call between Trump and Zelensky directly.

If these same supporters question these witnesses' testimony about the July 25 call, they could demand the actual word-for-word transcript which had been placed in the secured server in an exception to past practice.

Schiff's opening statement can be found at this link.

Let's do this.

UPDATE-1 – 11:00 A.M. ET –

If you're not able to stream the hearing today you can follow these live Twitter threads in progress:

Marcy's live twitter thread

Emma Loop-BuzzFeed's thread

Jennifer Taub's thread

Brandi Buchman-Courthouse News's thread

Aaron Rupar-Vox's thread

My Trump-Russia Twitter list which includes most of the above folks.

UPDATE-2 – 11:23 A.M. ET –

In response to Lt. Col. Vindman's closing remarks in his written statement, I'm adding to this post a comment I left in another thread:

Vindman's point about the threat to witnesses in other countries who give testimony against a government shouldn't be treated as a throw-away.

A Russian journalist and opposition politician died mysteriously this past Saturday while traveling on a train. Nikita Isaev was only 41 years old; in 2017 he'd made some waves insisting Russia release kompromat on Trump after Trump failed to lift sanctions on Russia.

What odd timing of this death from undetermined causes – Isaev looked okay in the last selfie he tweeted from the train.

The risk to witnesses is serious because they are essentially testifying about a continuation of the Russian interference program.

Vindman's closing remarks, in case you missed them:

Next month will mark 40 years since my family arrived in the United States as refugees. When my father was 47 years old he left behind his entire life and the only home he had ever known to start over in the United States so that his three sons could have better, safer lives. His courageous decision inspired a deep sense of gratitude in my brothers and myself and instilled in us a sense of duty and service. All three of us have served or are currently serving in the military. Our collective military service is a special part of our family's story in America.

I also recognize that my simple act of appearing here today, just like the courage of my colleagues who have also truthfully testified before this Committee, would not be tolerated in many places around the world. In Russia, my act of expressing my concerns to the chain of command in an official and private channel would have severe personal and professional repercussions and offering public testimony involving the President would surely cost me my life. I am grateful for my father's brave act of hope 40 years ago and for the privilege of being an American citizen and public servant, where I can live free of fear for mine and my family's safety.

Dad, my sitting here today, in the US Capitol talking to our elected officials is proof that you made the right decision forty years ago to leave the Soviet Union and come here to the United States of America in search of a better life for our family. Do not worry, I will be fine for telling the truth.