

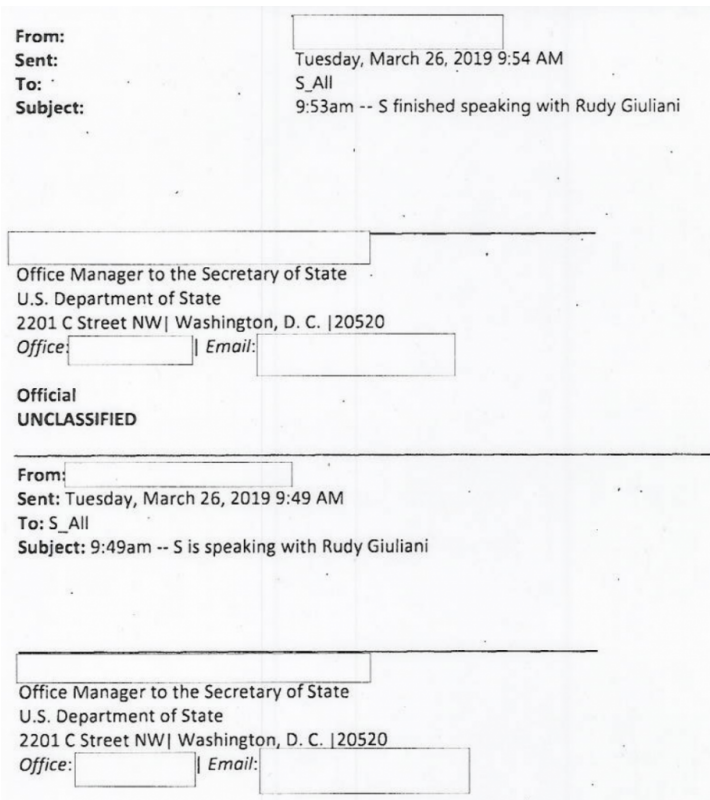
THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF THE FIRST RUDY GIULIANI-MIKE POMPEO CALL

In its story on the packet of State Department documents pertaining to Rudy Giuliani on Friday, NYT makes a significant error. It claims that Trump's then-personal assistant, Madeleine Westerhout, helped arrange the *first* call between Rudy and Mike Pompeo.

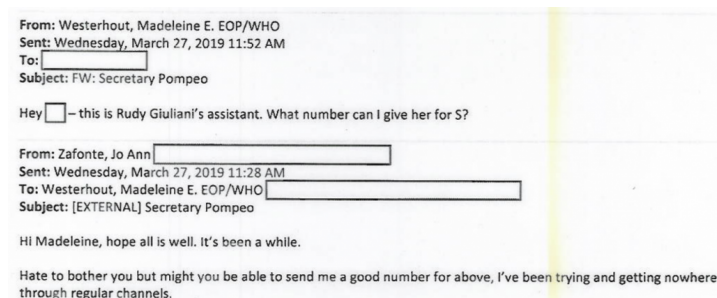
The emails indicate that Mr. Pompeo spoke at least twice by telephone with Mr. Giuliani in March as Mr. Giuliani was urging Ukraine to investigate Mr. Trump's rivals, and trying to oust a respected American ambassador to Ukraine, Marie L. Yovanovitch, who had been promoting anticorruption efforts in the country. Mr. Pompeo ordered Ms. Yovanovitch's removal the next month. **The first call** between Mr. Giuliani and Mr. Pompeo was arranged with guidance from Mr. Trump's personal assistant, the documents suggest. [my emphasis]

That's an error that obscures one of the key questions that should arise from the packet: how the first call did get arranged.

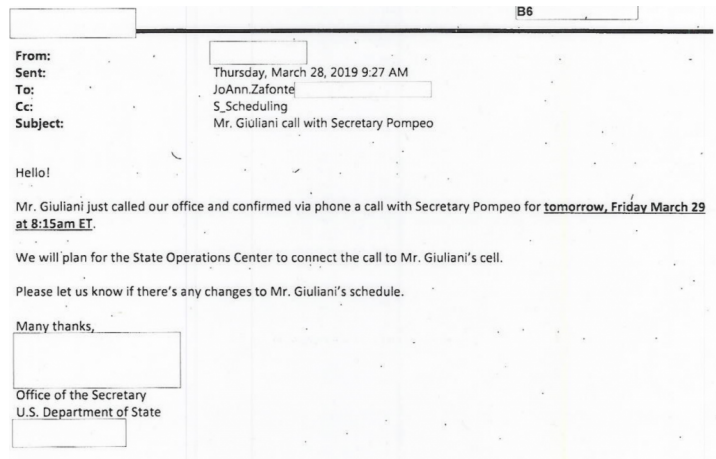
The first call between Rudy and Pompeo happened on March 26 from 9:49 to 9:54 (PDF 39).



Westerhout's first email in the packet was sent the next day, March 27, at 11:52, forwarding a request for a good contact for Pompeo from Rudy's assistant Jo Ann Zafonte (PDF 55).



Then, on March 28, Rudy *himself* calls the number State gave his assistant, State's schedulers, and schedules a call for the next morning. State informs his assistant about it via email (PDF 44).



I laid all this out in this post.

From that point forward, the second call with Rudy, which took place on March 29, shows up over and over again, as Pompeo's schedulers record it in multiple versions of his schedule for the day and State's control people arrange for it and discuss whether a monitor will be on the call. It, unlike the first call, also shows up in the metrics on Pompeo's calls for the month.

That tells us two things: the first call happened without any formal planning, or even the involvement of Trump's or Rudy's assistants; Rudy's assistant did not have any good phone number to call on March 27, the day after the first call, and Rudy himself used the number State gave Zafonte, so he obviously didn't have a number for Pompeo either. And the first call happened without all the formal tracking that control the Secretary of State's calls.

There's a very likely explanation for all this, one that would explain so much else about how State dealt with the campaign against Marie Yovanovitch: that Trump put that call through and told Pompeo he wanted the Secretary of State to take Rudy's efforts seriously.

Update: The NYT has removed any description of which call this was, without noting the correction or explaining why it matters.