

# [***Mayorkas defends his record on the southern border and slams House Republicans after historic impeachment***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BBN-YM21-DY7V-G022-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas on Friday defended his record on the border, saying [*his impeachment by House Republicans has no basis in fact or law*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/13/politics/alejandro-mayorkas-impeachment-vote/index.html) and he has no plans to slow down his work.

In an interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour at the Munich Security Conference, his first since Tuesday's impeachment vote, Mayorkas downplayed the vote's effects on his day-to-day job, despite becoming the first Cabinet secretary to be impeached in 150 years.

"I don't let it distract me from the work - would I have preferred that correctness had prevailed? Of course," Mayorkas told Amanpour. "So, the fact that it did not, does not, slow me down in doing the work that I'm tasked to do by the president of the United States."

The embattled homeland security secretary spoke to CNN on the sidelines of the annual security conference. In a wide-ranging interview, he also commented on the reported death of Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny and defended President Joe Biden's mental acuity in the wake of special counsel Robert Hur's report.

As a member of the administration's delegation to the conference, Mayorkas rebuffed the idea that Tuesday's impeachment had compromised his standing with world leaders.

"They very, very well understand the ***politics*** of the moment - not only in the United States, but in their respective countries as well," he said. "And the leaders with whom I am meeting, the great majority of which I have met before - they know me. They know me, they know the seriousness of my purpose, and the fact that I am focused on mission. The ***politics*** are an aside."

Mayorkas left the door open to defending himself during impeachment proceedings in the Senate but declined to weigh in definitively either way, telling Amanpour, "We'll see what the process brings."

CNN reported earlier this week that the Senate is unlikely to spend much time on the impeachment trial, with sources saying that Democrats could dismiss charges on a simple majority vote before each side argues its case.

Mayorkas was impeached by House Republicans over their claims that he had committed high crimes and misdemeanors for his handling of the southern border, even though [*several*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/06/politics/house-vote-mayorkas-impeachment/index.html) constitutional experts have said the evidence does not reach that high bar. Tuesday's vote was 214 to 213. Three Republicans - Ken Buck of Colorado, Mike Gallagher of Wisconsin, and Tom McClintock of California - voted with Democrats against the measure.

Republicans have been investigating Mayorkas' handling of the border since they reclaimed the House majority, but momentum to plot a swift impeachment of the secretary picked up steam [*last month*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/08/politics/house-republicans-plot-swift-mayorkas-impeachment-as-moderates-signal-support/index.html) as key swing-district Republicans expressed fresh openness to the idea amid a [*recent surge of migrant crossings at the southern border*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/29/us/us-mexico-border-migration/index.html).

In the interview Friday, Mayorkas acknowledged "unanimity" across the political spectrum "that our system in the United States - our immigration system - is broken."

But he called on Republicans in Congress to back bipartisan immigration reform.

"I was very privileged and honored to sit with a bipartisan group of senators to fashion legislative fixes that are overdue now for decades," he said. "It is in fact what the Republicans insisted upon - the bipartisan group of senators delivered, the question that everyone is asking is, was a solution actually desired, or do people want the problem as a tool for ***politics***?"

On Navalny's reported death, Mayorkas told Amanpour in an interview on Friday that, if confirmed, it would mark "tragic news for the world."

"We are, of course, still confirming it, but it speaks to the depravity of Vladimir Putin and our need, as a world, to have resolve against authoritarianism and the invasion of another country that is just yearning for its sovereignty," Mayorkas told Amanpour.

The homeland security secretary criticized House Republicans for blocking additional aid to Ukraine, citing the administration's efforts to present "a united front against Vladimir Putin."

"The inability to continue with emphasis that leadership on the part of the United States - the uncertainty that we are bringing - only can empower Vladimir Putin, and we have to continue our leadership," he said.

The homeland security secretary also took the opportunity to push back against last week's special counsel report from Hur, taking issue with Hur's characterization of Biden as an aging president beset by memory issues.

"I've interacted with the president countless times," Mayorkas told Amanpour. "I've said publicly the most difficult part about a meeting with President Biden is preparing for it, because he is probing, exacting, and quite detail-oriented and focused."

And he called Hur's comments on Biden's ability to recall key events "inappropriate, and a deviation from Department of Justice norms."

"The responsibility of a prosecutor, including a special counsel, is to learn the facts, determine the facts, and apply the law to those facts - that was done, and the conclusion is that no case was there, and therefore the case is closed," Mayorkas said. "To add the fact that those gratuitous personal remarks were terribly inaccurate only makes it even more inappropriate."

By Donald Judd, CNN

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