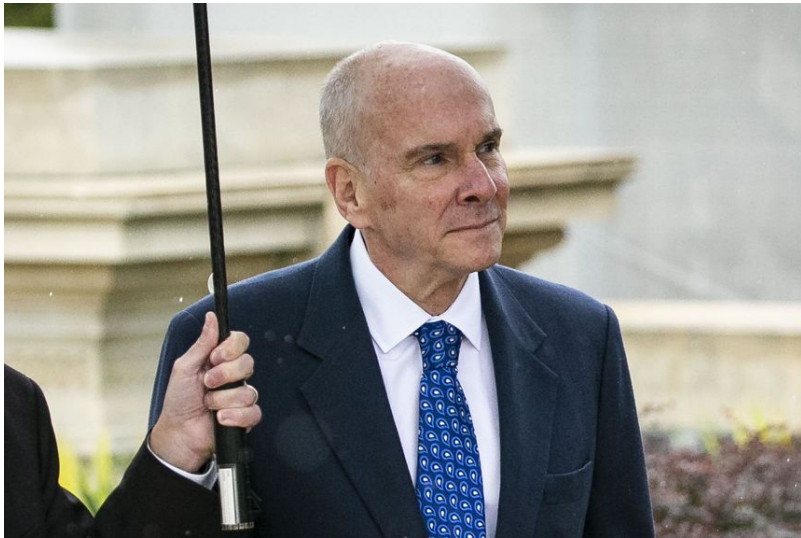


POLITICS

Former Pompeo Aide McKinley Testifies in Ukraine Probe

Michael McKinley, who resigned from State Department last week, faces questions from House committees



Michael McKinley, former senior adviser to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, arrived to testify before three committees leading the impeachment investigation against President Trump on Wednesday. PHOTO: AL DRAGO/BLOOMBERG NEWS

By Natalie Andrews and Courtney McBride

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WASHINGTON—A former senior adviser to Mike Pompeo told lawmakers that he left his post over frustration with the secretary of state regarding the treatment of the ousted U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, according to people familiar with the testimony.

Michael McKinley made the comments Wednesday in an interview with House committees pursuing an impeachment probe against President Trump.

Mr. McKinley said that in the past month he asked Mr. Pompeo repeatedly to show support for the former ambassador, Marie Yovanovitch, but Mr. Pompeo didn't respond, according to the people familiar with the testimony. The people said Mr. McKinley testified that the lack of response was a key reason he decided to retire from the State Department last week.

Ms. Yovanovitch, who was recalled from her post in May, testified to the House committees last week that she had been told that Mr. Trump had pressured the State Department for months to remove her from the post.

The State Department didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump and Ukraine: A Guide to the Key Players



VALENTYN OGIRENKO/REUTERS

Mr. McKinley traveled frequently with Mr. Pompeo, participating in meetings with foreign counterparts in Washington and abroad. He has previously declined to comment on Ukraine matters.

The Democrats' impeachment probe centers on a July 25 phone call between President Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, whom Mr. Trump asked to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden and his son, Hunter. Mr. Pompeo

said he listened in on the call.

One of the people familiar with Mr. McKinley's testimony said that Mr. McKinley sought a public defense by the State Department of Ms. Yovanovitch after he read the rough transcript of the Trump-Zelensky call. In that call, according to the transcript released by the White House in late September, Mr. Trump called Ms. Yovanovitch "bad news," and Mr. Zelensky concurred, saying he agreed "100%."

This person said Mr. McKinley, dismayed by the portrayal, then asked Mr. Pompeo to issue a statement of support for Ms. Yovanovitch, citing her long career as a U.S. diplomat, but received radio silence.

Mr. McKinley's appearance for a transcribed interview follows Tuesday's deposition of George Kent, a career foreign-service officer who is currently the senior department official with oversight of Ukraine. Lawmakers said Mr. Kent, who previously served as the No. 2 official at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, expressed concern over the role of Rudy Giuliani, the president's personal attorney and his efforts to operate outside normal diplomatic channels.

Mr. McKinley's testimony, as with other recent witnesses, is taking place in a closed session, but he isn't under subpoena, a Republican aide said.

Democratic and Republican members of the Intelligence, Foreign Affairs and Oversight committees and staff are all entitled to attend the closed sessions, with staffers from both parties leading the questioning. House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff (D., Calif.) said Tuesday that everyone is allowed to ask questions until they are exhausted, which is why the testimony of witnesses has typically lasted all day.

Among the lawmakers who were seen entering the room where Mr. McKinley was testifying Wednesday were Republican Reps. John Ratcliffe of Texas and Devin Nunes of California as well as Democratic Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida and Ro Khanna of California.

Democrats say the hearings are held behind closed doors so as not to allow those testifying to see what the others have said. Mr. Schiff said Democrats plan to release transcripts of the testimony.

Meanwhile, Kurt Volker, the former U.S. special representative for Ukraine negotiations, returned to Capitol Hill on Wednesday, after giving testimony last week in front of the House committees.

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Text messages turned over by Mr. Volker to the committees last week indicated that the Trump administration sought to use a potential meeting between the president and his Ukrainian counterpart as leverage to press Kyiv to investigate the Bidens.

Mr. Volker came back to review the transcript of his testimony, according to the Republican aide. He was accompanied by his attorney.

Mr. Trump has said there was nothing wrong with what he said on the Ukraine call and has called the Democratic impeachment probe a witch hunt.

Hunter Biden served on the board of Ukrainian natural-gas company Burisma Holdings Ltd., while his father, now running for the Democratic presidential nomination, oversaw U.S. policy on Ukraine as vice president. Both have denied wrongdoing.

Before his appointment as an aide to Mr. Pompeo in May 2018, Mr. McKinley served as U.S. ambassador to Brazil. A career foreign-service officer, he previously served as ambassador to Afghanistan, Colombia and Peru, and held senior diplomatic posts in Washington, Europe and Africa.

In a farewell note sent Friday to colleagues, Mr. McKinley and his wife, Fatima, said they “are leaving the Department to pursue other opportunities, wherever they may lead.” Citing their 37 years of service, the couple said “the decision is personal.” The brief message made no reference to politics or the Ukraine matter.

THE UKRAINE WITNESSES

- Oct. 3: Kurt Volker, former U.S. special representative for Ukraine negotiations, **testifies and hands over** text messages with other State Department officials that showed officials attempting to use a potential meeting between Mr. Trump and his Ukrainian counterpart as leverage to press Kyiv to investigate Joe Biden.
- Oct. 11: Marie Yovanovitch, former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, **testifies that Mr. Trump sought** for over a year to remove her and that his allies, including Mr. Giuliani, targeted her in a “concerted campaign.”
- Oct. 14: Fiona Hill, President Trump’s former top Russia adviser, **testifies that she and other White House officials grew so alarmed** by the administration’s efforts to push Ukraine to open certain investigations that they raised objections with a White House lawyer.
- Oct. 15: George Kent, deputy assistant secretary of state, **gives testimony that supports the findings** in the August whistleblower complaint that sparked the impeachment inquiry, a Democratic lawmaker says.
- Oct. 16: Michael McKinley, former top aide to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, testifies.

Scheduled to Testify:

- Oct. 17: Gordon Sondland, U.S. ambassador to the European Union
 - Oct. 18: Laura Cooper, Defense Department official overseeing Ukraine
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—Siobhan Hughes
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article.*

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