

Trump and Ukraine: A Guide to the Key Players

A Wall Street Journal Roundup

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President Trump's phone call this summer with Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky has touched off an impeachment inquiry that is roping in politicians and diplomats in Washington and Kyiv.

Here's a guide to the key players:



Donald Trump

U.S. President

Mr. Trump is facing an impeachment inquiry in the House of Representatives that stems in large part from his dealings with Ukraine. His administration delayed sending military aid to Ukraine around the same time that Mr. Trump, on a phone call with his Ukrainian counterpart, pushed for an investigation into former Vice President Joe Biden and his son, Hunter Biden.

PHOTO: TASOS KATOPODIS/PRESS POOL

A whistleblower, whose identity remains unknown, filed a complaint alleging that the president sought to use his office to hurt a Democrat who is seeking to challenge him in the 2020 election.

Mr. Trump has defended his actions on the call and criticized the whistleblower. He has also said he has an obligation to urge foreign governments to investigate what he says is corruption, and he publicly called on China to probe Mr. Biden and his son.



PHOTO: SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES

Volodymyr Zelensky

Ukraine President

Mr. Zelensky, a political newcomer, won a landslide victory in an April election on a promise to root out corruption and end a conflict with Russia-backed separatists in the east. Mr. Zelensky has been thrust into the middle of a partisan fight in the U.S., one of his country's most important backers financially and politically. Trump allies and U.S. diplomats have pressed the Ukrainian leader to investigate the Bidens.

Rudy Giuliani

Mr. Trump's private attorney

Mr. Giuliani, the president's most vocal defender, has been a central figure in advancing Mr. Trump's

agenda in Ukraine. Mr. Giuliani has pressed Ukraine to pursue an investigation into former Vice President Joe Biden and his son, and he has coordinated with officials from both countries over the matter. Ukrainians seeking influence in Washington viewed him as a direct conduit to Mr. Trump.

Mike Pompeo

U.S. Secretary of State

Mr. Pompeo was one of the U.S. officials listening to Mr. Trump's July call with Mr. Zelensky, in which the president urged his counterpart to investigate Mr. Biden. Mr. Pompeo has defended the State Department's conduct in dealing with Ukraine, and he has criticized lawmakers for seeking to question current and former State Department officials over the matter. He has dismissed the impeachment inquiry as politically motivated.

William Barr



PHOTO: ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES

U.S. Attorney General

Mr. Barr has gone outside the usual channels to seek help from allies in reviewing the origins of the U.S. probe into Russian election interference in 2016, sowing discord in several foreign capitals by seeking direct meetings with leaders. Mr. Trump has said he expects the review of the Russia probe will show that crimes were committed by his political opponents, but no evidence of that has emerged. Mr. Trump has asked several foreign leaders, including in Ukraine and Australia, to assist Mr. Barr.



PHOTO: COSTAS BALTAS/PRESS POOL

In the July phone call, Mr. Trump complained about the Russia probe and suggested that Ukraine might be able to provide information to the U.S., telling Ukraine's president that Messrs. Giuliani and Barr would call to follow up on the matter. A Justice Department spokeswoman has said that Mr. Trump didn't ask Mr. Barr to call the Ukrainian president and that the attorney general hasn't communicated with Ukraine.

Mike Pence

U.S. Vice President

Mr. Pence is known to have had two calls and a meeting with Mr. Zelensky, and House Democrats have asked him to provide



PHOTO: JOHN BAZEMORE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

information about the administration's dealings with Ukraine. Mr. Pence's Sept. 1 meeting with Mr. Zelensky in Poland came amid a hold-up in U.S. military aid to Ukraine.

Asked by a reporter the next day about whether he had made any reference to Mr. Biden in the conversation with Ukraine's leader, Mr. Pence said no, but he said he did raise concerns about corruption in the country.

Kurt Volker

Former U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine

Mr. Volker served as special envoy to Ukraine—an unpaid volunteer post—before resigning in late September. Mr. Volker, a former foreign service officer and

NATO ambassador, tried to help the new Ukrainian administration navigate the demands coming from Washington. He introduced Mr. Giuliani to a top aide to Ukraine's president.

Ahead of the July phone call between Messrs. Trump and Zelensky, Mr. Volker wrote in a text message to U.S. colleagues about goals for the call: "Most imp't is for Zelensky to say that he will help investigation—and address any specific personnel issues—if there are any." Mr. Volker also wrote to a top aide for Mr. Zelensky that "assuming President Z convinces trump he will investigate / 'get to the bottom of what happened' in 2016, we will nail down date for visit to Washington."

Mr. Volker told House lawmakers that he was unaware that Mr. Trump mentioned Mr. Biden during the July phone call.

Gordon Sondland

U.S. Ambassador to the European Union

Mr. Sondland, a prominent Republican donor, was confirmed to the EU ambassador post last year. Although Ukraine falls outside the normal jurisdiction for the top U.S. diplomat to the EU, Mr. Sondland positioned himself as one of Mr. Trump's key links to the new government in Kyiv.



PHOTO: PETER SUMMERS/PRESS POOL

Along with Mr. Volker, he tried to help Ukrainian leadership navigate demands coming from Washington.

Republican Sen. Ron Johnson said Mr. Sondland had described to the lawmaker a quid pro quo ordered by the president that tied U.S. military aid to a guarantee of an investigation from Ukraine. The lawmaker said that when he asked the president, Mr. Trump rejected that notion. In recently revealed text logs released by Democratic lawmakers, Mr. Sondland wrote in a message to colleagues that Mr. Trump “has been crystal clear no quid pro quo’s of any kind.”

Mr. Sondland was scheduled for a closed-door deposition with lawmakers on Tuesday but was blocked by the State Department from appearing.

Andriy Yermak

Top aide to Mr. Zelensky

Mr. Yermak has been a key point of contact for Mr. Giuliani and Trump aides working on Ukraine. Mr. Volker texted Mr. Yermak on the morning of July 25, ahead of the phone call between Messrs. Trump and Zelensky, and dangled the possibility of a visit to Washington for the Ukrainian president if he would “get to the bottom of what happened” in



PHOTO: MICHAEL REYNOLDS/EPA/SHUTTERSTOCK

2016. After the presidents’ phone call, Mr. Yermak wrote to Mr. Volker to assure him that the



PHOTO: DANIEL MIHAILESCU/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

phone call “went well” and that Mr. Trump had asked Mr. Zelensky to choose dates for a visit.

In early August, Mr. Giuliani met with Mr. Yermak in Madrid as a “direct followup” to Mr. Trump’s call with Mr. Zelensky about the “cases” they discussed, according to the whistleblower’s report.

Viktor Shokin

Former Ukrainian Prosecutor General

Mr. Shokin had investigated the private Ukrainian gas company, Burisma Group, of which Hunter Biden was a board member.

Messrs. Trump and Giuliani have claimed that as vice president, Joe Biden called for the ouster of Mr. Shokin in order to protect his

son. But Mr. Shokin was the target of widespread criticism from the U.S. and other countries that he had slowed corruption investigations, including a probe of Burisma. Mr. Shokin was fired from his post by Ukraine’s Parliament, following pressure from Mr. Biden and European leaders, who accused Mr. Shokin of being ineffective.

A Ukrainian official this year said he had no evidence of wrongdoing by Mr. Biden or his son. Ukraine’s current top prosecutor, Ruslan Ryaboshapka, now says his office will review the Burisma probes as part of a wider audit of investigations that were closed or dismissed by his predecessors.

Marie Yovanovitch

Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine

Ms. Yovanovitch was pushed out of her post earlier this year after months of complaints from Trump allies outside the administration, including Mr. Giuliani, that she was undermining him abroad and obstructing efforts to persuade Kyiv to investigate Mr. Biden, according to people familiar with the matter. The recall of Ms. Yovanovitch in the spring has become a key point of



PHOTO: NEMESH YANOSH/EPA/SHUTTERSTOCK

interest in the House impeachment inquiry. Ms. Yovanovitch hasn't responded to requests for comment.

Joseph Maguire

Acting Director of National Intelligence

Mr. Maguire, a retired Navy vice admiral and former Navy SEAL, was named by Mr. Trump in August to be acting director of national intelligence after the president pushed his predecessor, Dan Coats, to step down. Mr. Maguire was caught in a standoff with congressional Democrats and the Trump administration over the release of a whistleblower complaint describing concerns over the president's dealings with Ukraine.

After House Speaker Nancy Pelosi demanded that he turn over the complaint or face legal consequences, the White House released the document to lawmakers.

Michael Atkinson

Intelligence community's inspector general

Mr. Atkinson determined in August that the whistleblower's complaint represented an "urgent concern" and forwarded it to Mr. Maguire, who under law was required to transmit the



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PHOTO: OVSYANNIKOVA YULIA/UKRINFORM/ZUMA PRESS

material to the House and Senate intelligence committees within seven days. Mr. Maguire's general counsel and the Justice Department disagreed with Mr. Atkinson's assessment that the matter was an urgent concern, resulting in the standoff over the release of the document.

Mr. Atkinson told lawmakers in a closed-door session that the whistleblower had followed complaint procedures to the letter, people familiar with the issue said.



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What lingering questions do you have regarding President Trump's call with Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky? Join the conversation below.

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