

Trump's impeachment is now certain

By: Dr. Abdullah Robin*

After completion of five days in the House of Representatives of heated public hearings into President Trump's alleged abuses of power, America waits for the date of an impeachment vote to be announced. Democrats had controlled the inquiry, which was held by the Select Committee on Intelligence, and they decided which witnesses to call. The twelve witnesses gave convincing accounts of how Trump led efforts to pressure Ukraine into illegally helping Trump in his 2020 election campaign at the expense of 'global security' and official US policy toward Ukraine. They showed that the Trump administration was holding-up vital security assistance to Ukraine, despite the fact Congress had mandated this expenditure, and also that while newly elected President Zelensky of Ukraine was desperate for a meeting with Trump to strengthen his position in the face of ongoing Russian military aggression against his country, which is considered a key US ally, that Trump was not even willing to speak to him on the telephone until he had committed to helping Trump's election campaign by announcing an investigation into the business dealings in Ukraine of his political rival's son, Hunter Biden.

Republican members of the House of Representatives, who are in the minority, failed to break the witnesses despite repeated efforts to force contradictions in their testimony or to disparage their integrity. Republicans claimed that Trump was withholding \$400 million of aid because of corruption in Ukraine, but "the evidence all points in the other direction," Committee Chairman Adam Schiff said. "The evidence points in the direction of the president inviting Ukraine to engage in the corrupt acts of investigating a US political opponent." Gordon Sondland testified that Zelensky "had to announce the investigations. He didn't actually have to do them, as I understood it," which supports Democrat claims that Trump simply wanted to create public scandal for his political opponent. Testimony was heard that showed that the former US ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, was undermined in her anti-corruption efforts by Trump's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, and that she was humiliated and forced to end her posting in Ukraine prematurely despite being characterized as an "an anti-corruption champion." On the 25th of July, Trump finally spoke at length to President Zelensky and told him, "The former ambassador from the United States, *the woman*, was bad news."

However, the 25th of July phone call has become notorious for its linkage of financial aid in exchange for a personal political favor for Trump. The Democrats had previously been trying to prove that Trump was colluding with Russia to interfere in the 2016 election, but despite evidence of that, the Mueller report was not as decisive as they had hoped, and then, the next day Trump was trying to get Ukraine to interfere in the 2020 election! Chairman Adam Schiff exploded during summing up at the enquiry: "The day after! Donald Trump is back on the phone, asking another nation to involve itself in another US election! That says to me, this president believes he is above the law—beyond accountability. And in my view, there is nothing more

dangerous.” Trump was so brazen that he even jokingly asked China to investigate the Bidens when confronted about the issue.

Republicans tried desperately to defend their leader, asking witness after witness if they actually heard Trump say directly that he wanted to bribe the Ukrainian president, but it was a Republican who did the most harm to Trump. Gordon Sondland had no diplomatic experience, but he was a Trump supporter who paid a million dollars for a special VIP ticket to attend Trump’s inauguration ceremony, and in exchange he was appointed US ambassador to the European Union. When Trump fired the former ambassador to Ukraine, Sondland became the key diplomat in charge of implementing Trump’s plans to get political gossip and scandal from Ukraine against his rival, Joe Biden, but he himself only slowly became aware of what was required from him in a process he said “kept getting more insidious” as Trump kept pushing him to talk to Rudy Giuliani until the plan became clear. “Everybody knew what we were doing and why,” Sondland said. “Everyone was in the loop,” and “we followed the President’s orders.” Some Republicans accused him of stabbing the president in the back.

A state department official, David Holmes, testified that Sondland explained with a crude expletive that the president “doesn’t care about Ukraine” and ‘only cares about the big stuff’, and when asked to clarify what the ‘big stuff’ was, Sondland replied, “big stuff that benefits the President, like the Biden investigation that Mr. Giuliani was pushing. Former senior adviser to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Michael McKinley testified that he chose to resign because of what he saw as the use of ambassadors “to advance domestic political objectives.” “The timing of my resignation was the result of two overriding concerns: the failure in my view, of the State Department to offer support to Foreign Service employees caught up in the impeachment inquiry; and, second, by what appears to be the utilization of our ambassadors overseas to advance domestic political objectives.” According to Dr. Fiona Hill, former National Security Adviser, John Bolton, resigned after describing Sondland’s efforts as a sort of “drug deal” and Rudy Giuliani as “a hand grenade that would blow everyone up”. It seems that Bolton was right about that, and he got out just in time!

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