

Trump Vows To Release Ukraine Transcript Amid Impeachment Crescendo

September 24, 2019 2:29 PM ET
TAMARA KEITH (via NPR.org)

President Trump tweeted on Tuesday that he will unveil the unredacted text of his much-discussed July phone conversation with Ukraine's leader.



President Trump vowed on Tuesday that he will release a transcript of his phone call from earlier this year with Ukraine's president. The July 25 call is at the heart of a rapidly intensifying controversy over whether Trump improperly pressured another country to investigate a political opponent, former Vice President Joe Biden. Trump's tweet came shortly before House Democrats were set to meet to discuss launching an impeachment inquiry over possible abuse of power by Trump as relates to Ukraine, and it appeared to be an effort to undercut an expected announcement from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Despite Trump's promise, Pelosi later announced a formal impeachment inquiry.

Trump [tweeted](#) that he will release a "complete, fully declassified and unredacted transcript of my phone conversation with President Zelensky of Ukraine." This will prove it was a "totally appropriate call," he wrote. He says the transcript will be released Wednesday.



@realDonaldTrump

....You will see it was a very friendly and totally appropriate call. No pressure and, unlike Joe Biden and his son, NO quid pro quo! This is nothing more than a continuation of the Greatest and most Destructive Witch Hunt of all time!

Trump has repeatedly called for an investigation by Ukrainian authorities into Joe Biden and his son, Hunter Biden, despite there being no evidence of wrongdoing. Trump confirmed earlier Tuesday that he ordered military aid to Ukraine blocked a week before his call with the president of Ukraine. The aid was held up for months, and Trump has offered conflicting explanations for why. Acting White House Chief of Staff and Director of the Office of Management and Budget Mick Mulvaney instructed the State Department and Pentagon not to move forward with \$400 million in aid for Ukraine, according to a congressional aide.

The administration did not provide any details on why it was withholding the funds. Neither the State Department nor the Pentagon had any policy objections to the funds being provided to Ukraine. The State Department first informed OMB on June 21 of its intent to obligate the funds to Ukraine. OMB usually has five days to give what is seen as a rubber stamp "yes." In this case, OMB did not provide the green light until Sept. 11. Trump's call with

Ukraine is also reportedly the subject of an intelligence community whistleblower complaint that the administration has been refusing to turn over to Congress.

Democrats are unlikely to be satisfied with the call's transcript alone. Speaking at a forum sponsored by [The Atlantic](#), Pelosi dismissed Trump's claim that the transcript will prove he did nothing wrong.

"It's really important to know this: There is no requirement there be a quid pro quo in the conversation. If the president brings up [that] he wants them to investigate something ... that is self-evident [that] it is not right. We don't ask foreign governments to help in our elections," Pelosi said...

The much-anticipated transcript

Trump has acknowledged discussing Biden with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy this summer. That followed his decision to suspend military assistance to Ukraine. Trump has insisted that there was never a "quid pro quo" in which he said he'd agree to release aid to Ukraine in exchange for dirt on Biden or his family.

One question the transcript could answer is what, specifically, Trump said to Zelenskiy about investigating Biden's son, Hunter, who once sat on the board of a Ukrainian gas company.

Trump has gone back and forth about whether he might release the transcript, saying on one hand that it might clear up the Ukraine affair but on the other hand that he was worried about the precedent it might set.

Trump has also said that it was a "perfect" call, mostly congratulatory about Zelenskiy's election two months before, and that it contained nothing "inappropriate," because the president was mindful about the number of U.S. officials and others who might hear it or be briefed on its contents.

At the same time, Trump acknowledged on Tuesday that he had suspended U.S. assistance to Ukraine before the phone call. The reason the president gave in New York City on Tuesday was that he wanted European governments to give more support to Ukraine's government.

Respond to the following in thoughtful, complete sentences in your notebook.

1. Who is Nancy Pelosi and what has she decided to do? Describe each step of the impeachment process.
2. What is Trump being accused of? Explain why this is illegal.
3. Explain how Impeachment relates to Separation of Powers.

