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### THIS DAY IN HISTORY:

**1945: Nuremberg Trials Begin In Germany.** On November 20, 1945, the Nuremberg trials began in Nuremberg, Germany. Lord Justice Geoffrey Lawrence "presided over the proceedings, which lasted 10 months and consisted of 216 court sessions." The trials "were conducted by an international tribunal made up of representatives from the United States, the Soviet Union, France and Great Britain."

### WHISTLEBLOWING NEWS:

**Trump Says He Will "Strongly Consider" Providing Written Responses To House**

**Impeachment Questions.** In a [tweet](#) Monday morning, President Trump said he would "strongly consider" consider submitting written testimony to the House impeachment inquiry "in order to get Congress focused again." Trump wrote, "Our Crazy, Do Nothing (where's USMCA, infrastructure, lower drug pricing & much more?) Speaker of the House, Nervous Nancy Pelosi, who is petrified by her Radical Left knowing she will soon be gone (they & Fake News Media are her BOSS), suggested on Sunday's DEFACE THE NATION that I testify about the phony Impeachment Witch Hunt. She also said I could do it in writing. Even though I did nothing wrong, and don't like giving credibility to this No Due Process Hoax, I like the idea & will, in order to get Congress focused again, strongly consider it!"

[Reuters](#) (11/18, Wolfe, Lynch) reports lawmakers "have not formally called Trump as a witness in the impeachment inquiry," but House Speaker Pelosi said on CBS' Face The

Nation Sunday, "The President could come right before the committee and speak all the truth that he wants if he wants to take the oath of office...or he can do it in writing. He has every opportunity to present his case."

Norah O'Donnell said on the [CBS Evening News](#) (11/18, story 3, 1:30, 4.62M) that Trump "surprised his own White House staff" with the tweet. [Bloomberg](#) (11/18, 4.73M) says Trump's tweet "contrasts with his defiant approach to the impeachment inquiry thus far," and [The Hill](#) (11/18, Samuels, 2.98M) that it comes "despite his repeated refusal to cooperate with the investigation thus far." [USA Today](#) (11/18, Jackson, 10.31M) reports, "Some legal analysts expressed skepticism about Trump's sincerity."

Lester Holt said on [NBC Nightly News](#) (11/18, story 4, 0:50, 6.22M) that "there are questions if it would really happen," and Jim Acosta said on [CNN's Situation Room](#) (11/18, 838K), "Democratic aides at this point say they are not taking" Trump's comments "very seriously." Similarly, on [ABC World News Tonight](#) (11/18, story 4, 2:50, Muir, 6.97M), Mary Bruce also said Trump's testifying "seems unlikely."

Likewise, Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-CA) said on [CNN's Situation Room](#) (11/18, 838K), "He hasn't turned over his taxes despite saying for years that he would do that. He didn't show up in person with Bob Mueller despite saying he would do that. He sent written answers, which hit looks like he may have falsified, to the Mueller team. But more than that, we would like him to just allow the witnesses we have subpoenaed to come to Congress and the documents we have subpoenaed to be provided to the committee. So, he's not serious in this process and I don't think it's worth our time engaging with him on this other than to say we have a lot of evidence right now and we shouldn't allow him to dictate the terms for this investigation."

[Politico](#) (11/18, Marshall, 4.29M) says that if Trump "were to submit a written statement rather than appearing in person, he would avoid live questioning that could put him in danger of accidentally perjuring himself." However, "his answers would still be considered under oath." The [AP](#) (11/18, Miller) says Trump "provided written answers to questions from special counsel Robert Mueller during his probe into Russian interference in the 2016 election." But, Mueller "found many of Trump's answers in the Russia probe less than satisfying."

**House Investigators Looking Into Whether Trump Lied In Written Answers To Mueller.** The [New York Times](#) (11/18, Savage, 18.61M) reports that Douglas Letter, the general counsel for the House, told a federal appeals court Monday that House impeachment investigators are "exploring whether President Trump lied in his written answers" to then-Special Counsel Robert Mueller, thereby "raising the prospect of bringing an additional basis for a Senate trial over whether to remove" Trump from office. Letter "told a federal appeals court panel that impeachment investigators have an 'immense' need to swiftly see the grand jury evidence –

redacted portions of the Mueller report, as well as the underlying testimony transcripts they came from."

The [Washington Post](#) (11/18, Marimow, Hsu, 14.2M) reports that Letter's "request followed closely on the heels of Friday's conviction of longtime Trump friend Roger Stone." According to the Post, "Testimony and evidence at his trial appeared to cast doubt on written replies from Trump to Mueller about the president's knowledge about attempts by his 2016 campaign to learn more about the release of hacked Democratic emails by the anti-secrecy group WikiLeaks."

[Reuters](#) (11/18, Wolfe) says that during Stone's trial, Rick Gates, Trump's former deputy campaign chairman, "suggested in testimony during a jury trial in a criminal case that Trump talked to...Stone about WikiLeaks during the 2016 campaign." According to Reuters, Gates' testimony "appeared to conflict with sworn written statements that Trump gave Mueller." Mueller wrote to Mueller, "I do not recall discussing WikiLeaks with [Stone]. Nor do I recall being aware of Mr. Stone having discussed WikiLeaks with individuals associated with my campaign."

**Pelosi Argues Leaving Trump's Fate To The Election Would Be "Dangerous."** The [Washington Post](#) (11/18, Wagner, Shammas, 14.2M) reports that in a letter to House Democrats Monday, House Speaker Pelosi asserted that "the facts of the impeachment inquiry are 'uncontested,'" and that Trump "abused his power for his own personal, political benefit, at the expense of our national security interests." Pelosi "also argued that it would be "dangerous" to leave Trump's fate to next year's election because "the President is jeopardizing the integrity of the 2020 elections."

**ABC Poll: 70% Call Trump's Ukraine Actions "Wrong"; 51% Support Impeachment And Removal.** [ABC News](#) (11/18, 2.97M) reports on its website that according to a new ABC News/Ipsos poll, "an overwhelming 70% of Americans think President Donald Trump's request to a foreign leader to investigate his political rival...was wrong," and 51 percent believe Trump "should be impeached and removed from office." [Politico](#) (11/18, Forgey, 4.29M) reports that "13 percent also deemed the president's push for foreign investigations of his rivals to be wrong, but believed he should neither be impeached nor convicted by Congress. A quarter of respondents, 25 percent, said Trump did nothing wrong." The [New York Times](#) (11/18, Stolberg, 18.61M) reports, "The survey found 58 percent of Americans are following the [impeachment] hearings closely or somewhat closely."

**Impeachment Inquiry To Hear From Officials Who Were On Trump-Zelensky Call.** Mary Bruce reported on [ABC World News Tonight](#) (11/18, story 4, 2:50, Muir, 6.97M) that Congress on Tuesday will "hear from three officials who were on that call between Trump and the Ukrainian President. Jennifer Williams, a special adviser to the Vice President, called it 'unusual and inappropriate,'" and Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, who told investigators, "I did not think it

was proper to demand that a foreign government investigate a US citizen." Bruce added that "he most anticipated witness of the week is Gordon Sondland, the Trump mega-donor turned US Ambassador to the EU. Sondland has already revised his testimony once, admitting he personally told the Ukrainians that if they wanted nearly \$400 million of military aid, they would have to publicly commit to investigate the Bidens." Bruce added that democrats announced Monday that David Holmes, who "testified he overheard one of their phone calls in a restaurant in Kiev," will "testify in public on Thursday."

**State Officials Heard Of Zelensky's Concerns About Biden Probe Pressure In May.** The [AP](#) (11/18, Butler, Biesecker) reports that State Department officials were informed that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky "was feeling pressure from the Trump administration to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden even before the July phone call that has led to impeachment hearings in Washington." According to the AP, in May, "officials at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, including then-Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch," were told Zelensky "was seeking advice on how to navigate the difficult position he was in," and "was concerned" Trump and "associates were pressing him to take action that could affect the 2020 U.S. presidential race."

**Embassy Staffer Who Says He Overheard Trump-Sondland Call To Testify Tuesday.** The [CBS Evening News](#) (11/18, story 2, 2:30, O'Donnell, 4.62M) reported, "Democrats added a new witness to the impeachment inquiry late today: the embassy staffer who says he overheard the President on the phone asking about investigations into the Bidens. David Holmes will be the ninth witness in a rapid-fire round of hearings that kick off tomorrow." The [AP](#) (11/18) reports Holmes "overheard Trump talking about the investigations on a phone call" with US Ambassador to the EU Gordon Sondland. The [Washington Post](#) (11/18, Zapotosky, Demirjian, Nakashima, Viebeck, 14.2M) reports Holmes "told lawmakers last week that he was shocked to overhear" the call in which Sondland "assured President Trump that Ukrainian officials would pursue an investigation of interest to the U.S. commander in chief – a probe which the diplomat later suggested was of" former Vice President Joe Biden. Holmes "also testified that the Ukrainians 'gradually came to understand that they were being asked to do something in exchange' for a White House meeting or military aid."

**Vindman To Appear Before Impeachment Panel Tuesday.** The [Washington Post](#) (11/18, Hamburger, Leonnig, Bade, 14.2M) reports, "The House impeachment hearing Tuesday is set to feature one of the Democrats' star witnesses: Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, a Purple Heart recipient who is expected to testify about his alarm at President Trump's request that Ukraine investigate his political opponents." Republicans "are also seizing on Vindman's testimony as an opportunity, signaling that they

plan to try to discredit one of the key witnesses in the inquiry by questioning his motives and his loyalty to the president." The Post says the "high-stakes appearance could provide some of the most contentious moments in the public hearings."

**"Sources" Tell CNN Trump Has Said He Wants To Fire Impeachment Witnesses.** Anderson Cooper said on [CNN's Anderson Cooper 360](#) (11/18, 969K), "Sources tell CNN that President Trump has again said he wants to fire witnesses who have testified against him in the impeachment hearings, prompting his aides to consider moving those witnesses, some of them out of the White House, and back to their home departments within the government."

**McConnell Predicts Impeachment Trial Will Carry Into 2020.** [Politico](#) (11/18, Everett, 4.29M) reports Senate Majority Leader McConnell said Sunday that the House will likely be considering impeachment until Christmas, which will push a trial in the Senate into 2020. McConnell told reporters in Louisville, "It looks to me like the House is going to be on this until Christmas, then it comes over to the Senate. It displaces all other business. ... I don't know how long senators will want to continue the trial, but I'm pretty confident that in the end impeachment will not lead to ouster." Politico says that timeline means the trial "is almost certain to conflict with the efforts of a half-dozen Democratic senators to win the party's nomination for president."

**How House Staffers Learned US Aid To Ukraine Was Frozen And What They Did Next.** [NBC News](#) (11/18, 6.14M) reports on the events that led to the discovery that financial assistance to Ukraine had been frozen and actions taken to get the money released. Two days after "a whistleblower secretly filed a complaint about President Trump's dealings with Ukraine in August, two top congressional staffers arrived in Kyiv on a routine business trip that ended up setting off alarm bells on Capitol Hill." The aides "work for the Democratic leadership of the House Appropriations Committee, which is responsible for federal spending." They had been "dispatched to make an on-the-ground assessment of the cash Congress has been pumping into former Soviet states – including Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine – to aid their defenses against Russian aggression." But after traveling from Chisinau, the staffers "were shocked to learn from US embassy officials that there was no new money coming into Ukraine."

**Witnesses Offer First-Hand Accounts Of Trump-Zelensky Call.** According to the [AP](#) (11/19), "Republicans have consistently criticized the House impeachment inquiry by saying witnesses didn't have firsthand knowledge of" President Trump's "role in trying to persuade Ukraine to investigate a chief political rival." However, the AP says that after today's public hearing, "that posture is suddenly more difficult to maintain" because "the two witnesses in Tuesday morning's session each listened to

the July 25 phone call in which Trump prodded his Ukrainian counterpart to investigate Democratic rival Joe Biden."

Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman testified before the House Intelligence Committee today that Trump's call with Ukrainian President Zelensky was "improper" and he considered it his "duty" to pass along his concerns. However, the [AP](#) (11/19, Mascaro, Jalonick) says Republicans on the panel "tried to undercut the national security official with pointed exchanges questioning his loyalty." The AP also says Vindman "deflected repeated Republican efforts to divulge everyone he told about it – thwarting Trump allies' attempts to identify the anonymous whistleblower who spurred the impeachment probe."

[Politico](#) (11/19, Bertrand, Forgey, Marshall, 4.29M) reports that Vindman "explained that he had already 'alerted' White House lawyer John Eisenberg to Gordon Sondland's push for political investigations during a July 10 meeting at the White House with Ukrainian officials, and that subsequent to reporting the contents of that meeting to Eisenberg he was 'invited to follow up with any other concerns.'" Politico adds, "So he reported Trump's July 25 comments to Eisenberg 'without hesitation,' he testified."

The [New York Times](#) (11/19, Hakim, 18.61M) reports that "because [Vindman] was a key point of contact with Ukrainian officials, they sought his guidance on" Rudy Giuliani's "efforts to push the investigations." According to the Times, Vindman, "reflecting the National Security Council's policy...advised Ukrainian officials, including Mr. Zelensky, to steer clear of American politics."

The [AP](#) (11/19, Mascaro, Jalonick) says the Republicans' lead counsel "asked at one point about an offer to Vindman from a Ukrainian official to become the country's defense minister." According to the AP, Vindman "called it 'comical' and said he swiftly reported it up his chain of command." [Politico](#) (11/19, Bertrand, Forgey, Marshall, 4.29M) reports that Vindman "testified that Alexander Danyliuk, Zelensky's national security adviser, on at least three occasions offered him the role of Ukrainian defense minister." [Bloomberg](#) (11/19, 4.73M) reports that Danyliuk said today that "the suggestion 'was made in joking manner, which was clear by the context and tone,'" and "added that it was also clear that Vindman took it as a joke."

[Reuters](#) (11/19, Zengerle, Freifeld, Landay) reports that "even as he was testifying, the White House's official Twitter account attacked [Vindman's] judgment – even though he is a current White House official, and the president's son Donald Trump Jr. assailed him in a separate Twitter post as 'a low level partisan bureaucrat and nothing more.'"

***Pence's National Security Adviser: Williams Never Voiced Concerns About Trump-Zelensky Call.*** [Politico](#) (11/19, Desiderio, Cheney, 4.29M) reports that Jennifer Williams, an adviser to Vice President Pence described the Trump-Zelensky phone call as "unusual" because it "involved discussion of what appeared to be a domestic political

matter,' rather than U.S. foreign policy goals in the region. The references to Biden 'struck me as political in nature given that the former vice president is a political opponent of the president,' Williams said, but she declined to speculate about Trump's motives."

[Bloomberg](#) (11/19, 4.73M) reports that Keith Kellogg, Pence's national security adviser, "said in a statement Tuesday that he listened to Trump's July 25 phone call with...Zelenskiy and that he 'heard nothing wrong or improper.'" Bloomberg says Kellogg issued the statement after Williams testified that she "didn't inform him of any concerns after the call." Kellogg said, "In fact, she never reported any personal or professional concerns to any other member of the vice president's staff, including our chief of staff and the vice president."

The [New York Times](#) (11/19, Baker, Shear, 18.61M) reports that Marc Short, Pence's chief of staff, "went on Fox News to make the same point. 'She said she found the call unusual yet she never raised any concerns with her supervisor General Kellogg, she never raised any concerns with the chief of staff, she never raised any concerns with the vice president,' he said."

In a profile of Williams published before her appearance today, the [New York Times](#) (11/19, Shear, 18.61M) says Democrats are "interested in what Mr. Pence knew about the effort to withhold security aid in exchange for a commitment to investigate the Bidens." According to the Times, "During the closed-door deposition, Ms. Williams told lawmakers that she was not aware that the vice president was involved in any discussions about the investigations. She said Mr. Pence did not mention investigations to Mr. Zelensky."

***Morrison: Trump-Zelensky Call Included Nothing Illegal.*** The [New York Times](#) (11/19, Baker, Shear, 18.61M) reports that Timothy Morrison, the former senior director for Europe and Ukraine at the National Security Council, "said he did not think the president's July 25 call...was inherently wrong or illegal, but feared it would ignite a political storm if it became public." Morrison is quoted as saying, "I feared at the time of the call on July 25 how its disclosure would play in Washington's climate. ... My fears have been realized."

***Volker Says He Misunderstood Import Of Push For Burisma Probe.*** The [Washington Post](#) (11/19, Wagner, Itkowitz, 14.2M) reports that Kurt Volker, a former envoy to Ukraine, testified before the House Intelligence Committee today that he "should have realized President Trump's true motives in demanding that Ukraine investigate Burisma, a natural gas company that employed former vice president Joe Biden's son Hunter." Volker is quoted as saying, "I did not understand that others believed that an investigation of the Ukrainian company Burisma, which had a history of accusations of corruption, was tantamount to investigating Vice President Biden. I drew a sharp distinction between the two." However, the Post says Volker's testimony is "belied by text messages that he turned over to the House Intelligence

Committee last month, which show acting U.S. ambassador to Ukraine William B. Taylor Jr. raising precisely that concern."

**Both Vindman And Williams Say Transcript Of July 25 Was Generally Accurate.** The [Federalist](#) (11/19, Marcus, 126K) says both Vindman and Williams testified that "the transcript of the July 25 phone call between President Trump and Ukrainian President Zolodmyr Zelensky was substantively accurate." According to the Federalist, "In direct response to a question as to whether the transcript was complete and accurate, neither suggested that it was not, except for minor details they found in their notes of the call." The Federalist says that "blows up a month-long lie pushed by Democrats and their media allies that the transcript was partial, or redacted, suggesting that the White House was potentially hiding important details."

**Nunes Questions Vindman's Claim To Not Know Whistleblower's identity.** The [Daily Caller](#) (11/19, 716K) reports that House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff "quickly interrupted" Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman during his testimony today after he "admitted that he had spoken to others about" President Trump's July 25 call with Ukrainian President Zelensky. The Daily Caller says Rep. Devin Nunes (R-CA), the top Republican on the panel, "ask[ed] who Vindman might have spoken to about the call and his concerns about the implications of that call." Schiff said, "We need to protect the whistle-blower. Please stop. I want to make sure that there is no effort to out the whistle-blower through these proceedings." However, Nunes "pointed out then that LTC Vindman had, in his deposition, stated that he did not know the identity of the whistleblower — which Vindman confirmed. 'How it is possible for you to name the people and then out the whistle-blower?' Nunes asked then."

The [Federalist](#) (11/19, 126K) reports that Vindman today "admitted...to leaking information to the anti-Trump whistleblower at the center of the Democrats' partisan impeachment proceedings." According to the Federalist, "When pressed on who Vindman spoke with about the call, Vindman said he spoke with two individuals not in the White House, including Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent and another individual in the intelligence community that Vindman refused to name before being cut off by...Schiff." The Federalist says Vindman "testified under oath in a private deposition last month that he was unaware of who the whistleblower was." Today, Nunes "pressed Vindman on how it is possible that he might out the whistleblower if he does not know the identity of the whistleblower."

The [New York Times](#) (11/19, Baker, Shear, 18.61M) reports that Nunes also "sought to turn the focus away from Mr. Trump to Mr. Biden, leading the witnesses through a series of questions intended to suggest that the former vice president had intervened in Ukraine's domestic affairs to benefit his son, Hunter Biden, despite the lack of evidence."

**Johnson Cites Whistleblower Attorney's Anti-Trump Comments.** The [Washington Examiner](#) (11/17, Pearce, 448K) reports that in an appearance on [NBC's Meet The Press](#) (11/17, 2.8M), Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) cited past statements from the whistleblower's attorney as evidence that the impeachment inquiry is partisan. Johnson said, "Now, if this whistleblower is to be lionized by the Washington Post, then maybe we ought to take a look at who he hired. ... He hired Mark Zaid, who said, 'Coup has started. First of many steps. Impeachment will follow ultimately.' Now, that is not an unbiased officer of the court. So, there is something going on here, Chuck. That's my point." Johnson was referring to "a tweet Zaid sent out on Jan. 30, 2017, just days after Trump was inaugurated." Zaid [wrote](#), "#coup has started. First of many steps. #rebellion. #impeachment will follow ultimately. #lawyers."

The [Washington Post](#) (11/17, Sonmez, Demirjian, Macmillan, 14.2M) reports Johnson said Administration officials who provided information to the whistleblower about the President's efforts to pressure Ukraine "exposed things that didn't need to be exposed." Johnson said, "This would have been far better off if we would've just taken care of this behind the scenes. ... We have two branches of government. Most people, most people wanted to support Ukraine. We were trying to convince President Trump."

In a [tweet](#) Sunday afternoon President Trump again called for the whistleblower to come forward. Trump wrote, "Where is the Fake Whistleblower?"

**Bannon Says He Pushed For Alleged Whistleblower To Removed From NSC.** The [Daily Caller](#) (11/17, Ross, 716K) reports former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon said in an [interview](#) with VICE published Friday "that when he was at the White House in 2017, he was involved in an effort to remove an intelligence officer suspected of being the Trump whistleblower from the National Security Council due to concerns about leaks." Bannon "said he does not believe that the whistleblower needs to be identified publicly, but he did confirm his involvement in efforts to remove an individual now rumored to be the whistleblower from the NSC." He said, "I don't think the individual naming of the whistleblower is important, although there was a story in The Washington Times...that tied me to the efforts to get, at least, the gentleman who was named out of the National Security Council." Asked if the story was true, Bannon said, "The individual that was named, absolutely true."

**Trump: Whistleblower's Identity Is "No Great Secret."** [The Hill](#) (11/15, Cohn, 2.98M) reports that on "The Dan Bongino Show," President Trump on Friday "claimed the identity of the whistleblower who first raised concerns about his relationship with Ukraine is known to everyone in D.C." Trump said, "Everyone in Washington knows who it is, by the way. The whistleblower is no great secret." He added, "Everybody knows who the whistleblower is, and [it] has to be

revealed." However, The Hill says that Trump did not state the name.

**SEC Rethinking Plans To Alter Whistleblower Program, Sources Say.** The Securities and Exchange Commission "is rethinking a proposal that could weaken a landmark whistleblower program after a pushback from whistleblower lawyers and advocates, people with knowledge of the deliberations told" [Reuters](#) (11/15, Johnson, Prentice), which reports the program "is widely considered a major success, resulting in more than \$2 billion in penalties against firms such as JPMorgan and Bank of America and \$387 million in rewards. Weakening the program would hamper the agency's ability to detect and prosecute white collar crime, say lawyers."

**Trump Highlights Taylor, Kent Reluctance To Identify "Impeachable Offense."** In a [tweet](#) Thursday, President Trump highlighted that in their testimony Thursday, Acting Ukraine Ambassador William Taylor and State Department official George Kent did not respond when Rep. John Ratcliffe (R-TX) called on them to identify the "impeachable offense" in his call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Trump wrote, "@RepRatcliffe asked the two 'star' witnesses, 'where is the impeachable event in that call?' Both stared straight ahead with a blank look on their face, remained silent, & were unable to answer the question. That would be the end of a case run by normal people! – but not Shifty!"

**Taylor, Kent Say Volker Advised Ukrainian Officials Against Investigating Political Rivals.** The [Washington Examiner](#) (11/14, Gehrke, 448K) reports that Acting Ukraine Ambassador William Taylor and State Department official George Kent testified last month that a Sept. 14 meeting led by Kurt Volker, the State Department's lead negotiator for the war in Ukraine at the time, "deteriorated into an angry confrontation." Taylor was present at the meeting along with Ukrainian presidential adviser Andriy Yermak. Taylor and Kent testified that in the meeting, "Volker discouraged Ukrainian officials from investigating former President Petro Poroshenko, whom current President Volodymyr Zelensky defeated in April." Volker "argued that it is wrong to use the judicial system to target political rivals. But Zelensky's aide dismissed that rebuke by invoking Trump's desire for investigations into Democratic politicians." The Examiner says the exchange "underscores the Zelensky team's perception that they were being pressured to accuse Biden of corruption in order to help President Trump's reelection campaign."

**Second Source Claims To Have Overheard Sondland Talking To Trump From Kiev.** The [AP](#) (11/14, Butler) reports that "a second U.S. Embassy staffer in Kyiv overheard a cellphone call between" Trump and Gordon Sondland, the US ambassador to the EU, "discussing a need for Ukrainian officials to pursue 'investigations.'" The July 26

call "was first described during testimony Wednesday by William Taylor, the acting U.S. ambassador to Ukraine," who "said one of his staffers overheard the call while Sondland was in a Kyiv restaurant the day after Trump's July 25 phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy that triggered the House impeachment inquiry." According to the AP, "The second diplomatic staffer also at the table was Suriya Jayanti, a foreign service officer based in Kyiv." The [Washington Post](#) (11/14, Wagner, 14.2M) reports that Jayanti "was the embassy official tasked with accompanying Sondland throughout the day of the call."

Mary Bruce said on [ABC World News Tonight](#) (11/14, story 6, 0:30, Muir, 6.71M) that on Friday, lawmakers will hear from David Holmes, the Taylor aide who heard Trump's phone call with Sondland. Holmes "will be pressed on what he overheard the President saying." Bruce added, "Lawmakers may want to question the other staffer who reportedly also overheard the phone call."

Peter Alexander said on [NBC Nightly News](#) (11/14, story 4, 0:55, Holt, 5.7M) that Democrats say the call "ties President Trump to the pressure campaign on Ukraine." Rep. Andre Carson (D-IN) said on [CNN's Situation Room](#) (11/14, 1.06M), "What is clear is that what" Taylor's aide "witnessed and what he overheard, I think it reaffirms what we already know, that President Trump attempted to use Congress-approved taxpayer dollars to hang over the head of the Ukrainian government in an attempt to get them to get information on a political rival, i.e. Joe Biden."

**Longtime OMB Employee To Break Ranks, Testify In Impeachment Inquiry.** The [Washington Post](#) (11/14, Werner, 14.2M) reports Mark Sandy, "a longtime career employee" at OMB "is expected to break ranks and testify Saturday in the House Democrats' impeachment inquiry, potentially filling in important details on the hold-up of military aid to Ukraine." The Post says OMB has so far "served as a bulwark for President Trump against the impeachment inquiry, since top officials have refused to testify." The Post adds that a "senior Administration official...discounted the importance of Sandy's testimony and criticized" House Speaker Pelosi and House Intelligence Chairman Adam Schiff "for calling him to testify." The official said, "With nothing to show after three years trying to impeach the President, Speaker Pelosi and Rep. Schiff have resorted to threatening dedicated civil servants with subpoenas and depositions without the ability to even have agency counsel present."

**WPost: Yovanovitch Testimony Injects Gender Into Impeachment Inquiry.** The [Washington Post](#) (11/14, Viebeck, 14.2M) reports former Ukraine ambassador Marie Yovanovitch "has crucial knowledge to impart when she testifies at Friday's impeachment hearing." Yovanovitch "enters the spotlight as the latest woman who has refused to acquiesce to Trump in the face of personal and gender-specific attacks." The story of her "removal as Ukraine

ambassador reflects some of the most complicated gender and political dynamics of Trump's presidency. Now the impeachment probe is magnifying those dynamics as the first woman to publicly testify prepares to confront Trump's fiercest congressional defenders, nearly all men, about a campaign by other male allies of the president to force her from her post."

**Ukraine FM: Sondland Never Linked Aid To Biden Investigations.** The [Washington Examiner](#) (11/14, Pearce, 448K) reports Ukraine Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko said Thursday that US Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland never tied military aid to Ukraine to that country's government launching investigations into Burisma. Prystaiko "told reporters...that Sondland never asked him for investigations into Joe Biden's son's role with the energy company while Biden was vice president, according to Interfax-Ukraine." Prystaiko said, "Ambassador Sondland did not tell us, and did not tell me exactly, about the relation between the [military] assistance and the investigations. You should ask him. ... I do not recall any conversation with me as with foreign minister. It was not we, the Ukrainian officials [who were told this]. ... I have never seen a direct link between investigations and security assistance. Yes, investigations were mentioned, you know, in a Presidential conversation. But there was no clear connection between these events."

**Pelosi Claims Trump Committed "Bribery."** The [AP](#) (11/14, Mascaro, Jalonick) reports House Democrats are "refining part of their impeachment case against the president to a simple allegation: Bribery." House Speaker Pelosi on Thursday "brushed aside the Latin phrase 'quid pro quo' that Democrats have been using." Pelosi said of Trump's July 25 phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in which he asked the Ukrainian leader for a favor, "It's perfectly wrong. It's bribery." Mary Bruce said on [ABC World News Tonight](#) (11/14, story 4, 1:00, Muir, 6.71M) that Pelosi's use of the word "bribery" is "a new and explicit allegation, and a major step for the Speaker." Nancy Cordes said on the [CBS Evening News](#) (11/14, story 3, 1:10, O'Donnell, 4.08M) that this was the first time Pelosi used the term, which "has been gaining steam in her party."

Peter Alexander said on [NBC Nightly News](#) (11/14, story 3, 1:10, Holt, 5.7M) that Pelosi called Wednesday's testimony from Ambassador William Taylor and State Department official George Kent "devastating." [Politico](#) (11/14, Cayle, 4.29M) quotes Pelosi as saying the testimony "corroborated evidence of bribery uncovered in the inquiry and that the President abused power and violated his oath by threatening to withhold military aide and a White House meeting in exchange for an investigation into his political rival." Politico says Pelosi nevertheless "cautioned" that she "isn't yet ready to say whether the House will vote to impeach Trump, an outcome many lawmakers think is all but certain to happen by the end of this year."

[The Hill](#) (11/14, Lillis, 2.98M) says Pelosi "accused Trump of committing offenses more severe than those of President Nixon, who resigned in 1974 amid an impeachment proceeding." She said, "What President Trump has done on the record – in terms of ... [asking] a foreign power to help him in his own election and the obstruction of information about that, the cover up – makes what Nixon did look almost small."

**McCarthy Says Schiff Has "Lied Numerous Times."** The [Washington Post](#) (11/14, Wagner, 14.2M) reports that House Minority Leader McCarthy on Thursday "accused" House Intelligence Chairman Adam Schiff "of lying when he said Wednesday that he does not know the identity of the whistleblower." According to the Post, when "pressed for evidence to back up his claim, McCarthy did not directly answer the question but instead repeatedly accused Schiff of lying." Speaking at his weekly news conference, McCarthy said, "I think Adam Schiff has lied numerous times." The [Washington Examiner](#) (11/14, Ferrechio, 448K) says McCarthy "said Schiff has a history of lying, and he pointed to Schiff's public, unsubstantiated claims that there is evidence Trump colluded with Russians ahead of the 2016 election."

**WPost Analysis: GOP's Hearsay Impeachment Defense Is "Extremely Risky."** A [Washington Post](#) (11/14, Bade, Debonis, Dawsey, 14.2M) analysis says the White House and Republicans "have seized on the lack of witnesses with firsthand knowledge of President Trump's actions on Ukraine to try to undermine the Democrats' case for impeachment." But the strategy "is extremely risky. ... While it is true that the diplomats testified that they were told by others that Trump pressured Ukraine, a witness with firsthand information – possibly former national security adviser John Bolton – could still emerge." The Post adds that "if Republicans were so concerned about secondhand accounts, Democrats say, they should allow Trump associates who do have firsthand information – acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney and Energy Secretary Rick Perry, for example – to testify." Mary Bruce said on [ABC World News Tonight](#) (11/14, story 5, 2:10, Muir, 6.71M), "Democrats say they want to talk to firsthand witnesses," including Mulvaney and Bolton, "but Trump is blocking them from testifying."

**Aides Move To Cast Trump As Presidential, Above Impeachment Fray.** [Politico](#) (11/14, Cook, 4.29M) reports that while the President "typically mocks the idea of acting too presidential – equating it with being boring," that is "exactly what Trump appears to be attempting this week during the first public impeachment hearings." Aides "have sought to cast Trump as presidential, busily focused on his policy work and above the fray of the impeachment proceedings." Politico cites a "senior Administration official" who said that the White House "has been making a concerted effort to schedule presidential work and meetings on Syria, opioid abuse and the trade talks with China in an effort" to highlight the contrast

"between who he is and what he is focusing on versus the partisan impeachment underway in the House."

**Senate Republicans Divided Over How To Proceed With Impeachment Articles.** The [New York Times](#) (11/14, Hulse, 18.61M) reports some Senate Republicans are "arguing for a speedy vote" on impeachment articles, which are expected to come from the House, while others see "an opportunity to drag out the historic proceedings and tie down some Democratic senators at a prime moment in their presidential campaigns." According to Republican senators, "the split over how to approach what is likely to be the first presidential impeachment trial ever to unfold in an election year has been on vivid display in their private weekly lunches in the Capitol."

### Trump Dismisses Impeachment "Hoax," Will Release Transcript Of First Zelensky Call.

[Politico](#) (11/13, Forgey, Okun, 4.29M) reports that at the White House yesterday alongside Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President Trump "dismissed the House's impeachment proceedings as a 'hoax' and said he was 'too busy to watch' – and then blasted Democrats' choice of questioners at a hearing he said he hadn't been briefed on." Trump is quoted as saying, "I'm sure I'll get a report. ... I have not been briefed, no. There's nothing there. I see they're using lawyers that are television lawyers. They took some guys off television. I'm not surprised to see it because Schiff can't do his own questions." The [Washington Times](#) (11/13, Boyer, 492K) says the comment "was an apparent reference to Democratic counsel Dan Goldman, who is conducting much of the questioning." [Fox News](#) (11/13, Re, 27.59M) also reports on its website that Trump slammed "the hearsay-laden 'witch hunt'" and said, "I'm going to be releasing, I think on Thursday, [another] transcript, which actually was the first of the two [phone calls with Ukraine's leader]."

The [AP](#) (11/13, Colvin) casts Trump as "professing disinterest and disdain," but adds that "even as" he "tried to suggest that he was above the fray, the president repeatedly laid out his many grievances against the process playing out on the opposite end of Pennsylvania Avenue." Said Trump, "I hear it's a joke. I haven't watched for one minute. ... This is a sham, and it shouldn't be allowed." The [Washington Examiner](#) (11/13, Crilly, 448K) reports that the White House has "been keen to portray an image of a president intent on delivering his promises to the American people, continuing to work on overhauling the healthcare system, striking a trade deal with China, and mulling further tax cuts even as Democrats pursue impeachment." However, the Examiner adds, "as a heavy consumer of TV news, White House watchers are keeping a close eye on Trump's Twitter feed to see how he reacts to the hearings."

The [Washington Times](#) (11/13, Muñoz, 492K) reports that in advance of Wednesday's hearing, "the Trump 'war room' kicked off the defense" of the President, "releasing a

[video](#) targeting House Speaker Nancy Pelosi." The video "threads together clips of the California Democrat toeing the line on impeachment, warning that it would be divisive for the country, before showing the stark party-line vote that formalized the impeachment inquiry." Also Wednesday, Trump [tweeted](#) a campaign ad with the caption, "DEMOCRATS ARE PUTTING POLITICS BEFORE COUNTRY!"

[NBC Nightly News](#) (11/13, story 3, 2:00, Holt, 6.34M) described the President "and his White House [as] downplaying what they describe as a witch hunt, decrying it as boring, and disputing" witness William Taylor's claims in his testimony. Trump was shown saying, "I know nothing about that. First time I've heard it. ... I don't recall. No, not at all. Not even a little bit." The [CBS Evening News](#) (11/13, story 3, 2:10, O'Donnell, 4.47M) further pointed out Trump "denied ever talking to EU Ambassador Gordon Sondland about investigations in Ukraine." [ABC World News Tonight](#) (11/13, story 5, 1:25, Muir, 7.16M) showed Trump adding, "The one thing I've seen that Sondland said was that he did speak to me for a brief moment and I said, 'no quid pro quo under any circumstances,' and that's true. And the other, I've never heard this." [The Hill](#) (11/13, Chalfant, 2.98M) reports "Trump has aggressively pushed back against the inquiry, accusing Democrats of a partisan effort to damage his political prospects." He "has also taken aim at witnesses like Taylor, a member of his administration, accusing them of being 'Never Trumpers.'"

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (11/13, story 6, 0:40, Karl, 7.16M) reported "the bottom line from the White House perspective is that nothing changed" Wednesday, as "House Democrats are still on the road to impeaching the President, but not a single Republican has shown any indication of breaking ranks. That means" that "without significant, dramatic changes, there's no way the Senate would vote to remove the President, and his fate ultimately will be determined by voters next November."

However, [Politico](#) (11/13, Orr, Cook, Kumar, 4.29M) says while White House aides "dismissed the landmark event as a tedious affair," the "attempt to project calm within the West Wing was belied throughout the morning by a cascade of combative email blasts, tweets and statements that flowed from Trump's outside allies and his campaign war room." John Roberts said on [Fox News Special Report](#) (11/13, 1.53M), "The White House's rapid response organization was buzzing today, pushing back against every piece of evidence the Democrats extracted from their witnesses, criticizing Taylor for relying on hearsay and conjecture, some 17 times during his opening statement, insisting that" Kent "contradicted the Democrats' assertion that there was a quid pro quo."

[Politico](#) (11/13, Kumar, 4.29M) reports, however, that "frustrated allies are urging Trump to stop talking about himself and focus on his army of supporters." According to

Politico, Trump's advisers "want the president to hammer Democrats for trying to subvert the will of the voters in 2016, depriving the country of Trump's strong economy and America First foreign policy." A "former Trump adviser who remains close to the White House" is quoted as saying, "What it does is go to the broader argument: Partisan Democrats are trying to undo an American election. ... It's 'us against them' instead of 'him against the world.'" The [CBS Evening News](#) (11/13, story 3, 2:10, O'Donnell, 4.47M) reported "two spokespeople...are slated to join the White House staff, including the former Attorney General of Florida, Pam Bondi, don't have start dates." CBS News "has learned they're in the process of completing paperwork, which takes time. And a senior White House official told us it won't make much difference because they say the current messaging plan is working."

Also on the [CBS Evening News](#) (11/13, story 4, 0:40, O'Donnell, 4.47M), Major Garrett said "the President knows and his staff knows for this week and next week, this will be Washington's biggest story. What does that mean for...Trump? Awkwardly, he'll be the sub-headline in Washington's biggest headline story. Not accustomed to being there." The White House also "knows this complicates his entire domestic agenda, and talks to avert a government shutdown possibly next week. And, all these other things bleed away at the margins what political clout he has on Capitol Hill."

**Taylor Testifies Zelensky Told Him Right After Trump Call That It Was "Fine" And He Was "Happy" With It.** [Breitbart](#) (11/13, Pollak, 673K) reports "Ambassador Bill Taylor testified Wednesday that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky told him July 26 that his July 25 call with President Donald Trump had been 'fine' and that he was 'happy' with it." Taylor, "appearing alongside the State Department's George Kent, was answering questions from Republican counsel Steve Castor in the House Intelligence Committee on the first day of public hearings in the 'impeachment inquiry.'" Asked whether he was "with...Zelensky the very next day" after the call, Taylor said he was. Pressed on whether "Zelensky raise any concerns about his views of the call," Taylor replied, "He said – so, right, so – so I, Ambassador [Kurt] Volker, Ambassador [Gordon] Sondland, were in his office, and we asked him, I think, how the call [went]. He said, 'The call was fine. I was happy with the call.'"

**Eric Trump: No One Outside Beltway "Gives A Damn" About Hearings.** Eric Trump said on [Fox News' The Story](#) (11/13), "There is not a single person outside the Washington Beltway that gives a damn about what happened today. It's boring. ... No one was watching it. No one cares. This is going to change one person's mind. They flopped horribly."

**Rove: Impeachment Effort Could Help Trump Win Reelection.** In his [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/13, Subscription

Publication, 7.57M) column, Karl Rove criticizes Democrats' handling of the impeachment inquiry and argues the probe could actually help the President's reelection effort.

**Lawmakers Question OMB's Sandy, Release Transcripts From Another Two Closed-Door Impeachment Hearings.** On the [NBC Nightly News](#) (11/16, story 2, 2:28, Diaz-Balart, 5.31M), which was the sole network newscast to broadcast last night, Jose Diaz-Balart said Congress "wrapp[ed] up an historic week in the impeachment inquiry into President Trump with a rare Saturday session" that featured the "career budget official" Mark Sandy, the deputy associate director for national security programs at the White House Office of Management and Budget, who "broke ranks with the President to tell his side of the story." Garrett Hake added that in "another crack in the White House impeachment fire wall."

The [Washington Post](#) (11/15, Demirjian, Bade, Itkowitz, Werner, 14.2M) reports Sandy "testified...that the White House decision to freeze military aid to Ukraine in mid-July was highly irregular and that senior political appointees in the Office of Management and Budget were unable to provide an explanation for the delay." The Post adds that his testimony "appeared to confirm Democrats' assertion that the decision to withhold nearly \$400 million in congressionally approved funds for Ukraine, including millions in lethal aid, was a political one."

In a front-page article, the [New York Times](#) (11/16, A1, Fandos, 18.61M) reports that Sandy "testified that he was instructed to sign the first of several apportionment letters in which budget officials formally instituted the freeze on funds, according to two people familiar with his testimony who spoke on the condition of anonymity to speak frankly. He was never given a specific reason as to why the letter was being sent out, the people added." The Times says that after their interview with Sandy "concluded, Democrats released transcripts of two more witness interviews that took place in recent weeks. They included Timothy Morrison, the senior director for Europe and Russia for the National Security Council, and Jennifer Williams, a longtime State Department employee with expertise in Europe and Russia who is detailed to Vice President Mike Pence's national security staff."

[Bloomberg](#) (11/16, House, 4.73M) reports Morrison "told House impeachment investigators Ukrainians were advised Sept. 1 that U.S. military aid was being withheld until their president announced an investigation of a company that had hired former Vice President Joe Biden's son, Hunter." Bloomberg adds Morrison "said Gordon Sondland, the ambassador to the European Union, told him how he had informed a high-ranking Ukrainian official that release of \$400 million in aid was being linked to the investigations, according to a transcript of his closed-door testimony released

Saturday." The [Washington Post](#) (11/16, A1, Itkowitz, Jaffe, Kranish, Harris, 14.2M) reports on its front page that Morrison also "told House investigators in sworn testimony that he feared leaks of the contents of the July 25 call between President Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky would be damaging, so he recommended restricting access to the transcript." According to the Post, "Morrison, an expert on Russia and Ukraine who served on the National Security Council before leaving the job at the end of October, said he knew immediately after listening to the call in which Trump asks Zelensky to investigate former vice president Joe Biden and his son Hunter that they needed to keep it under wraps."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/16, Volz, Duehren, Andrews, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports Morrison's claim that he spoke to the NSC's top lawyer, John Eisenberg, and his deputy, Michael Ellis, collaborates the whistleblower's complaint in August that the White House took action to limit access to the call transcript. In addition, [USA Today](#) (11/16, Wu, 10.31M) reports that although the President recently "attempted to distance himself from Sondland, telling reporters 'I hardly know the gentleman,'" Morrison's account "suggests close contact between Trump and Sondland on Ukraine."

According to the [AP](#) (11/16, Mascaro), Morrison's account "provided new insight on what others have called a shadow diplomacy being run by Trump's personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, often at odds with U.S. national security interests." The AP adds Morrison "described a Sept. 1 meeting Sondland held with a top Zelenskiy aide, Andriy Yermak, on the sidelines of a summit in Warsaw," and that Sondland later "told him that 'what could help them move the aid was if the prosecutor general would go to the mike and announce that he was opening the Burisma investigation.'" [Politico](#) (11/16, Cheney, Hounshell, 4.29M) reports Morrison's account "adds weight to the version of events that the current top U.S. envoy to Ukraine, William Taylor, told lawmakers both in a closed door deposition and during public testimony on Wednesday."

Meanwhile, [Politico](#) (11/16, Desiderio, Zanona, 4.29M) reports Williams "told investigators in early November that she took notes while she listened in on Trump's July 25 phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky from the White House Situation Room, adding that she viewed Trump's requests for investigations as politically motivated." [Reuters](#) (11/16, Wolfe, Bose) reports Williams "testified...Trump's insistence that Ukraine carry out politically sensitive investigations 'struck me as unusual and inappropriate.'"

The [Washington Post](#) (11/16, Sonne, Dawsey, 14.2M) states that Sondland's actions "after Trump called Zelensky and exhorted him to investigate...Biden – will be scrutinized in public testimony Sondland is scheduled to give this week at the impeachment inquiry."

***WSJournal Analysis Examines Origins Of Trump's Skepticism Toward Ukraine.*** In an analysis headlined "Trump's View Of Ukraine As Corrupt Took Shape Early," the [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/16, Salama, Ballhaus, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) considers how the President came to hold critical views of Ukraine, according to Administration and foreign officials.

**Additional Commentary On Whistleblower Issues.** The [Washington Post](#) (11/13, Stanley-Becker, 14.2M) reports in an analysis that as the impeachment inquiry "has unfolded behind closed doors, two dueling narratives about the president's actions have remained distinct." One hinges on "a whistleblower complaint...about a shadow foreign policy to undermine conclusions about Russian interference in the 2016 election and damage one of Trump's 2020 rivals, former vice president Joe Biden." The other "has played out in conservative media and on Trump's own Twitter feed." It "relies largely on conspiracy theories and cover stories...about Ukraine's influence in the 2016 election and Biden's reasons for going after a Ukrainian prosecutor, who was widely viewed by Western powers as corrupt." The Post says the "two divergent worlds collided on Wednesday in stark fashion with the start of the probe's public hearings."

***Politico's Harris: Hearing Was "Brutal" For Trump.*** [Politico](#) (11/13, 4.29M) founding editor John Harris writes in his column that impeachment is "a brutal exercise in psychological exposure." Wednesday's hearing "was a portrait – a vivid one, in an especially grave setting – of Trump being Trump: obsessive, hectoring, contemptuous of process and propriety, as bluntly transactional about military aid to a besieged ally as he would be about a midtown real estate deal."

***Breitbart: Democrats Suffered "Clear Political Loss" Wednesday.*** [Breitbart](#) (11/13, Boyle, 673K) reports Wednesday's hearing "was widely panned as the two career diplomats who testified failed to offer clear allegations of wrongdoing against President Donald Trump, and Democrats running the show found themselves on defense in response to the Republicans in the minority who were aggressive and effective in pushing their counter-narrative." However, "despite the clear political loss on Wednesday, Schiff is persisting. The next hearings begin on Friday, and then next week there will be another round of public testimony."

***Opinion: Government Deep State Isn't What You Think, And America Really Needs It.*** In an op-ed in [USA Today](#) (11/14, 10.31M), Angela Kendall-Taylor writes, "Trump and administration officials have sought to distract attention from the allegations against the president by questioning the whistleblower's motives and portraying the person, reported to be a U.S. intelligence officer, as part of a so-called deep state conspiracy. As a former CIA analyst and Deputy National Intelligence Officer for Russia and Eurasia who worked on Russia and Ukraine for nearly a decade, I believe

the president's accusations are wrong. They also are dangerous." She concludes, "America's institutions are robust, but the administration's response to the whistleblower poses significant risks. Americans cannot afford to take the resilience of our national security process or U.S. democracy for granted. And that means we must recognize the professionalism of the whistleblower and others who have come forward and not let the President's attack distract from the damage being done to our democracy."

**Opinion: All CIA Analysts Are Whistle-blowers, Committed To Absolute Objectivity.** In an op-ed in the [Livingston County \(MI\) Daily Press & Argus](#) (11/14), former CIA officer Jay Grusin writes, "After a 29-year career with the CIA...I can state unequivocally that attempts to discredit the whistleblower with these charges are inconsistent with why and how analysts do their work and conduct themselves. I believe these qualities made the memo so credible." He contends, "I know the whistle-blower is passionately committed to that oath, to telling truth to power, and to absolute objectivity in providing decision-making support to the president and his team 24/7 regardless of who is in the White House." He concludes, "The whistle-blower's memo holds to the highest analytic standards. Note upfront the clear explanation of why it was written and the careful description of sources and the forthright acknowledgment of the absence of direct access to events. Most important, rather than coming to any judgment, the memo clearly explains what is known and calls for further investigation."

**WPost A1 Examines How CIA Analyst Led To Impeachment Inquiry.** In a more than 5,300-word front-page article headlined "How A CIA Analyst, Alarmed By Trump's Shadow Foreign Policy, Triggered An Impeachment Inquiry," the [Washington Post](#) (11/15, Miller, Jaffe, Sonne, 14.2M) reflects on how the "relatively junior CIA employee" in August spent two weeks looking at "notes of alarming conversations with White House officials, reviewed details from interagency memos on the U.S. relationship with Ukraine and scanned public statements by President Trump. He wove this material into a nine-page memo outlining evidence that Trump had abused the powers of his office to try to coerce Ukraine into helping him get reelected. Then, on Aug. 12, the analyst hit 'send.'" The Post bases its article "on interviews with dozens of U.S. and Ukrainian officials, the whistleblower report, the White House call record and thousands of pages of impeachment hearing transcripts. Many officials and others spoke on the condition of anonymity, citing the sensitivity of the issue and fear of retaliation."

**Conway: Trump Is Being Deprived Of Due Process.** Appearing on [CNN](#) (11/14, 802K) Thursday, White House Counselor Kellyanne Conway described President Trump as "very placid" after Wednesday's testimony. Conway continued, "I'll tell you why. There was nothing new yesterday. ... In a real court of law we'd not be referring to

something as evidence that is, 'Oh, someone on my staff recalled overhearing a conversation between someone else and the President where they think they heard the President use the word 'investigations.' This is not what due process and the rule of law in our great democracy allows. And we can't have a lower standard for the President of the United States. We certainly shouldn't have a lower standard for the impeachment and removal of a democratically elected President." According to Conway, Taylor "admitted he had no idea what the President was thinking about Ukraine." Conway added, "He wasn't on the original call and he has never been in a meeting with the President. He's never met the President. That's important."

On [Fox News' Fox & Friends](#) (11/14, 831K), Conway said as a result of Wednesday's hearing, "We learned Democrats have really no case against the President. If this was a real court of law and not Adam Schiff's kangaroo court, objections would have been flying from any reasonable attorney to saying, 'hey, we just discovered that a staffer of mine overheard a conversation somebody else was having with the President in a restaurant.' This is not admissible in a court of law. I think that is why the President and people like Sen. Lindsey Graham, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, have said, 'we want to know what the whistleblower said in the first place because we need to confront our accuser.'" Conway added, "The President is being treated unfairly. I think those 31 Democrats who won in 2018 in districts Trump and Pence carried in 2016 are watching this most closely, much more closely than the country is."

**Franklin Graham: Impeachment Hearing "Day Of Shame For America."** The [Washington Times](#) (11/13, Harper, 492K) reports "evangelist Franklin Graham has not been shy about rallying the faithful to support President Trump and his administration," and now "has issued both a judgment call on the events and another plea for prayer." Graham said in a statement, "It's a day of shame for America. The media is calling the Democratic-led impeachment inquiry 'historic' and it is – historically shameful. That our politicians would bring this kind of harm to our country over a phone call, with the world watching, is unbelievable. ... As Christians, as those who follow and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, let us pray throughout the day and all of these proceedings. Pray for our nation, pray for our leaders, and pray for President Donald J. Trump." The President took to [Twitter](#) to write, "Thank you @FranklinGraham. It is a time of 'shame' for our Country. The Democrats know what they are doing is wrong!"

**Social Platforms Prove To Be No Place To Shield A Whistle-Blower's Name.** The [New York Times](#) (11/14, Frenkel, 18.61M) reports that social media platforms are adding a degree of difficulty to shielding the name of a government whistle-blower whose complaint set the US House on the road to an impeachment inquiry. In the past week, a possible name for that person "has been shared thousands of times on Facebook. Videos discussing the

identity of the whistle-blower have been watched by hundreds of thousands of people on YouTube. And images professing to be of the person have circulated on Instagram...under dozens of different hashtags." All told, the name has been shared by more than about half a million users of Facebook, according to an estimate from CrowdTangle.

**Morell Urges "Full-Throated" Support For Whistleblower.** In a commentary in [The Cipher Brief](#) (11/14), former CIA director Michael Morell writes, "The many directors with whom I worked at CIA regularly sent messages to the workforce. I did so when I served as Acting Director. ... I do not know whether or not the current Director of National Intelligence Joe McGuire has sent a message to the IC workforce on the whistleblower, but I sure hope so because the whistleblower deserves his full-throated support." Morell added, "I wanted to write my own note to the IC workforce and, indeed, to the American people. On Monday, a former US Attorney equated the whistleblower to John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Lincoln. I was appalled and angered by such an outrageous and despicable comment. I believe that the former US Attorney, Joe diGenova, should apologize and that all members of Congress...should denounce the comment in the strongest possible terms."

**Assange's Attorney Tells Court He Has Unsuitable Computer In Jail.** [Reuters](#) (11/18) reports from London, "WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is struggling to prepare for his case fighting extradition to the United States because he has been given an unsuitable computer in prison, his lawyer told a British court on Monday." Assange, 48, "who spent seven years holed up in Ecuador's embassy before he was dragged out in April, is wanted in the United States to face 18 counts including conspiring to hack government computers and violating an espionage law. He could spend decades in prison if convicted." According to Reuters, "Appearing at London's Westminster Magistrates' Court via video link, Assange spoke only to confirm his name and date of birth in a hearing that lasted just a few minutes." His attorney, Gareth Peirce, "told the court that her client was unable to adequately prepare for his 'very challenging case' as the computer he had been given was not suitable. 'After months of battle he was provided with a computer but it is not the sort of computer needed to work on the case,' Peirce said." Judge Vanessa Baraitser "said she had no jurisdiction over his conditions in prison."

**Swedish Prosecutor Drops Rape Investigation Against Assange.** [Reuters](#) (11/19, Ahlander, Johnson) reports that a Swedish prosecutor yesterday "dropped a rape investigation against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, ending the near decade-old case that had sent the anti-secrecy campaigner into hiding in London's Ecuadorian embassy to avoid extradition." Assange "skipped bail in Britain to avoid possible extradition and took refuge in the embassy in 2012. He was dragged out by police in April this

year, and is now in jail fighting extradition to the United States on computer hacking and espionage charges unveiled after he left the embassy."

## **ICIG IN THE NEWS:**

**Trump Criticizes Intelligence Inspector General For Seeking "Publicity For Himself."** The [Washington Examiner](#) (11/15, Chaitin, 448K) reports President Trump accused IC Inspector General Michael Atkinson "of seeking 'publicity for himself' in his handling of a whistleblower complaint that spurred impeachment proceedings." The public rebuke of Atkinson "comes days after it was reported the president discussed firing the government watchdog due to concerns about loyalty." Trump said during an appearance Friday on the new Dan Bongino Show, "The IG brought it directly to Congress. Let's get some publicity for himself." Trump "argued that if Atkinson had seen the transcript of his July 25 phone call with Ukrainian President Zelensky he would have had second thoughts about the complaint focused on that conversation." Trump said, "When he sees the call he would have been – he should have said, 'Well, there's no case here.'"

**Graham Says Horowitz Will Testify About FISA Abuse Probe On Dec. 11.** [Axios](#) (11/18, Basu, 521K) reports Senate Judiciary Chairman Graham announced Monday that Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz will testify before his committee Dec. 11 "about his investigation into alleged abuses of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) during the Russia probe." The [Washington Examiner](#) (11/18, Chaitin, 448K) says the announcement, which came "after what appeared to be multiple delays," is "a clear sign the report on FBI intelligence-gathering activities related to the 2016 presidential election is slated to be released to the public in the coming weeks."

Fox News senior political analyst Brit Hume said on [Fox News' Special Report](#) (11/18, 1.53M), "It is kind of hard to believe that this investigation by the inspector general would have gone on all this time if he did not find any wrongdoing on the part of those that were involved in the investigation into President Trump and the way they handled the warrants and so on. So I think we can probably fairly anticipate that this information will say that. It has no direct effect perhaps, on the charges against the President in his current impeachment hearing, but it does damage his critics and it does call their motives and their behavior into question. And it affects the political atmosphere, and I think that the likely outcome of this is that it makes it easier still, easier than it already is, for Republicans both in the House and the Senate to continue to support the President."

**Ratcliffe: DOJ IG's Report On Russia Probe "Likely To Be Damning."** The [New York Post](#) (11/17, Brown,

4.57M) reports Rep. John Ratcliffe (R-TX) predicted on [Fox News' Sunday Morning Futures](#) (11/17) "that the impending report on the origins of the Justice Department's probe into Russian election interference" is "likely to be damning." Ratcliffe said, "It doesn't take an Inspector General 500 pages to say that everything was done correctly and properly. ... The IG report is going to find that there were problems." Ratcliffe "predicted that the report will bruise some members of the FBI as well as the Justice Department, especially over alleged Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) violations by those investigating the Trump campaign."

The [Washington Examiner](#) (11/17, Chaitin, 448K) reports Ratcliffe said Democrats are rushing through impeachment hearings before the report is released. Ratcliffe said, "Nancy Pelosi and Adam Schiff are racing to get this done. ... That's why we have five impeachment hearings this week with eight different witnesses. They're racing the clock. They want to get this done before information that comes out that damages the Obama-Biden administration and their efforts to frame Donald Trump come out in the IG report or from John Durham's criminal investigation into those very same issues."

**Opinion: DOJ IG Report Should Detail Any FISA Abuses During FBI Investigation Of Trump.** In a commentary in [The Hill](#) (11/19, 2.98M), former US attorney Francey Hakes writes, "While lying to a federal court is a crime, lying in the context of using our nation's most secret counter-intelligence assets as part of a false narrative to oppose a political candidate is downright dangerous." She contends, "Given what we know about the predication of the warrant obtained during the FBI's investigation of President Trump, it appears it lacked reliable information, and the Inspector General may find the warrant was obtained contrary to FISA and the US Constitution." She concludes, "The DOJ Inspector General surely will be able to tell the American people the level of experience of the attorneys, agents and supervisors who signed off on this FISA warrant. His report should reveal the entire process and how it went wrong, so that it will never happen again."

## **OTHER IG NEWS:**

**Epstein Guards Charged With Falsifying Records.** The [AP](#) (11/19, Balsamo) reports that Toval Noel and Michael Thomas, "two jail guards responsible for monitoring Jeffrey Epstein the night he killed himself, were charged Tuesday with falsifying prison records to conceal they were sleeping and browsing the internet during the hours they were supposed to be keeping a close watch on prisoners." Noel and Thomas "were accused in a grand jury indictment of neglecting their duties by failing to check on Epstein for nearly eight hours, and of fabricating log entries to show they had been making checks every 30 minutes, as

required. ... During one two-hour period, the indictment said, both appeared to have been asleep."

The [CBS Evening News](#) (11/19, story 5, 1:40, Lenghi, 4.64M) reported "the union representing the two officers...say that the charges sidestep the larger problem of chronic understaffing in federal prisons," while [NBC Nightly News](#) (11/19, story 4, 2:10, Hosk, 6.37M) showed Kathleen Hawk Sawyer, Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, saying, "This incident was a black eye on the entire Bureau of Prisons." NBC added that in a Senate hearing yesterday, Sawyer also "said she couldn't comment on ongoing FBI and Inspector General investigations into Epstein's death." [ABC World News Tonight](#) (11/19, story 4, 2:00, Pilgrim, 7.39M) showed Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) asking Sawyer, "Do you concur with the opinion that it was a suicide?" Sawyer replied, "That was the finding of the coroner, sir." Pressed on whether she has "any evidence to suggest otherwise," Sawyer said, "I do not."

The [New York Times](#) (11/19, Rashbaum, Ivory, Gold, 18.61M) reports that the indictment "for the first time laid out a detailed, official account of what happened inside the jail the night that Mr. Epstein died inside a high-security protective housing unit. It said that video evidence showed no one entered the wing where Mr. Epstein was being held between 10:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m. when he was found." According to the Times, Noel and Thomas "only discovered Mr. Epstein had hanged himself in his cell – 15 feet from their desk – when they went to give him breakfast at 6:30 a.m." The [Washington Post](#) (11/19, Barrett, 14.2M), [USA Today](#) (11/19, Johnson, McCoy, 10.31M), [New York Post](#) (11/19, Saul, Golding, 4.57M), and [Reuters](#) (11/19, Pierson), among other news outlets, also cover the indictment.

## **DOJ IG Finds Security Risks In FBI Handling Of Confidential Sources.**

[CNN](#) (11/19, Kupperman, Campbell, Duster, 83.16M) reports, "A Justice Department audit on how the FBI manages its confidential sources found security risks in the agency's handling of communications with, and information from, its sources." CNN adds, "The report, released by the Justice Department's Office of Inspector General on Tuesday, examined the FBI's confidential human source validation processes, a program to vet the credibility of a source and information they provide." The audit "examined information dating back to 2011, the office said," and "the report criticizes FBI compliance with existing guidelines for approving the use of specific sources." The audit "found inconsistent methods of communication by FBI agents with their sources," and the report "notes that FBI policy recommends against but does not prohibit the use of FBI-issued devices for contacting sources, so a number of field agents use their work phones rather than communication devices and platforms that are not traceable to the government."

The [Washington Times](#) (11/19, Mordock, 492K) reports that Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz said in a statement announcing the report, "Ineffective management and oversight of confidential sources can result in jeopardizing FBI operations, and placing FBI agents, sources, subjects of investigation, and the public in harm's way." The Times adds that the report "dinged the FBI for failing to properly supervise its confidential human sources (CHS) and ignoring both Justice Department and internal guidelines," finding that "the FBI failed to validate the credibility of its sources or assess the veracity of the information they provided. When such reviews were conducted, investigators did not 'review the full scope' of the source's long-term work for the FBI. 'FBI employees conducting CHS validation reviews told us they were discouraged from documenting conclusions and recommendations arising from the validation process,' Mr. Horowitz wrote in the report."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/19, Forrest, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports that the IG's office interviewed more than 100 FBI officials and visited FBI field offices in Philadelphia and Washington, DC. The [Washington Examiner](#) (11/19, Chaitin, 448K) also reports.

**Pentagon IG: US Withdrawal From Northern Syria Helps ISIS Reconstitute.** [Politico](#) (11/19, O'Brien, 4.29M) says the Pentagon's inspector general released a report today, which concludes that President Trump's "order to withdraw troops from northern Syria, combined with Turkey's assault against Kurdish forces, allowed the Islamic State to strengthen its position there." The report says "the withdrawal and incursion allowed ISIS to 'reconstitute capabilities and resources within Syria and strengthen its ability to plan attacks abroad.'" The IG says the DIA predicts that "without counterterrorism pressure, ISIS will probably be able to more freely build clandestine networks and will attempt to free ISIS members detained in [Syrian Democratic Forces]-run prisons and family members living in internally displaced persons...camps." [Voice of America](#) (11/19, Seldin, 48K) reports that the DIA told the DOD IG that the Turkish offensive "will provide the group with time and space to expand its ability to conduct transnational attacks targeting the West." [The Hill](#) (11/19, Kheel, 2.98M) adds that the DIA "told the inspector general ISIS exploited the Turkish incursion to regroup within Syria and strengthen its ability to plan attacks abroad, according to the report."

[Reuters](#) (11/19) reports that the report, "citing the DIA, also said that the death of Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi 'would likely have little effect on ISIS's ability to reconstitute.'"

[CQ Roll Call](#) (11/19, Donnelly, 154K) adds that the audit "was produced by Glenn Fine, the Defense Department inspector general, who is the lead IG for overseeing U.S. military operations in Syria and Iraq." The DIA "also told Fine that ISIS 'probably will attempt to free' ISIS members

detained in prisons in Syria. The terrorist group will likely have the 'time and space' to target the West and provide support to its global branches and networks, Fine wrote."

Among other news outlets reporting are the [Military Times](#) (11/19, Correll, 772K), [NBC News](#) (11/19, Kube, Kaplan, 6.14M), [Bloomberg](#) (11/19, 4.73M), and [USA Today](#) (11/19, Brook, 10.31M).

**Giuliani Offers Bizarre Explanation For "Misleading" Claims About Clinton.** [The Guardian \(UK\)](#) (11/15, Kirchgaessner, 4.19M) reports Rudy Giuliani "offered the FBI an extraordinary – and seemingly implausible – explanation for 'misleading' remarks he made on television just a month before the 2016 election about a 'surprise' that could derail the Hillary Clinton campaign." He faced justice department "scrutiny last year for remarks he made in October 2016 that strongly suggested he had insider knowledge about a secret FBI investigation into Clinton's handling of classified information." In an interview with the Guardian this week, "in response to questions about a 2018 leak investigation into the matter by the Department of Justice's inspector general's office, Giuliani acknowledged that he told the FBI that he had 'probably misled' people when he suggested he had spoken to 'current' and 'active' FBI agents about the 'surprise' Clinton was facing."

**Watchdogs Say VA Continues To Struggle With Cybersecurity Issues.** [Modern Healthcare](#) (11/15, Cohen, Subscription Publication, 214K) reported, "Two watchdog agencies told lawmakers Thursday that the Veterans Affairs Department continues to struggle with cybersecurity issues, despite recent improvements." The audits "identified numerous information security vulnerabilities – and insufficient attempts to remedy them – at the VA, leaders from the Government Accountability Office and the VA Office of Inspector General said during a hearing with the House Veterans' Affairs Committee's Technology Modernization Subcommittee." The VA was just one of an additional "18 federal agencies that had ineffective information security programs in fiscal 2018, according to a report the GAO released this summer." The report examined "24 agencies, including HHS and the VA, for compliance with the Federal Information Security Modernization Act, a 2014 law focused on information security in federal agencies."

**OIG Reports Says HHS' Failure To Modernize Data Practices Will Limit Ability To Improve Nation's Health.** [Health Data Management](#) (11/19, Slabodkin) reports, "How the Department of Health and Human Services manages, shares and secures its data is among the top management and performance challenges facing the agency," according to an "assessment of the HHS Office of Inspector General, which contends that failure to

modernize the agency's data practices will severely limit its ability to improve the health and well-being of Americans." Auditors indicate "that data silos at the agency are hampering HHS efforts to leverage data for evidence-based decision making and better managing its programs and operating divisions." The report "calls on HHS to expand its capacity to use data in policy making, program management and deployment of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence."

**DHS OIG Report USCIS "Flags Leadership, Cyber Issues."** [Politico](#) (11/19, Starks, 4.29M) reports the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) failed to complete "plans critical for evaluating election security progress last year, according to an IG report published last week." The watchdog "said the department neglected to complete plans and strategies to identify emerging threats and mitigation activities, due to senior leadership turnover and a lack of guidance, according to the report." The OIG also found in May that USCIS "did not implement adequate monitoring and system access controls to thwart cyber intrusions and potential fraud. Staff employees who were not officers had the same user access and privileges as Immigration Services Officers, generating data integrity issues and vulnerability to fraud."

**DHS IG Says Lack Of Permanent Leadership, High Attrition Hampering Agency.** The [Los Angeles Times](#) (11/18, O'Toole, 4.64M) reports the DHS Inspector General warns in [a new report](#) that "a lack of permanent leadership and high attrition under the Trump administration is hurting the federal government's third-largest agency. ... As of the end of September, 'acting' officials filled almost one-third of senior leadership positions," according to the IG report.

**DOL OIG Calls For Faster Migrant Worker Application Processing.** [Law360](#) (11/18, Subscription Publication, 8K) reports a government watchdog on Monday "called on the U.S. Department of Labor to speed up the processing of migrant guest-worker petitions and ramp up its authority to crack down on H-1B visa fraud." The Labor Department's Office of Inspector General "recommended in a report that the department 'continue its efforts' to make sure that foreign labor certification applications for the H-2B program — which lets U.S. employers hire foreign citizens for temporary nonagricultural work — are processed in time for employers to bring on those workers by the dates requested."

**DOE: Hanford Employees Lack Protections.** The [Lewiston \(ID\) Tribune](#) (11/15, Cary, 50K) reports that, according to a new DOE IG report, Hanford vitrification plant employees "do not have the same whistleblower protection as many other employees on Department of Energy projects." The DOE Office of Inspector General "released a report Tuesday looking at whether DOE had added enhanced

whistleblower protections approved by Congress to its contracts."

**Government Now Flagging Nursing Homes Recently Cited For Abuse.** The [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/19, Hayashi, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has started to flag nursing home facilities recently cited for resident neglect or abuse by adding an icon next to the facilities' names. The icon was implemented following reports by the HHS' Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office.

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