

## Washington plunges into Trump impeachment investigation

Required Annotations	Student-Created Annotations	Summary / Questions / Reflection
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Required (bold)

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Donald Trump repeatedly pushed Ukraine's president to "look into" Democratic rival Joe Biden, according to a rough transcript of a summer phone call that is now at the center of Democrats' impeachment probe into Trump.

Trump urged Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to work with Attorney General William Barr and Rudy Giuliani, Trump's personal lawyer. At one point in the conversation, Trump said: "I would like for you to do us a favor."

The president's words set the **parameters** for the debate to come — just the fourth impeachment investigation of an American president in the nation's history. The initial response highlighted the deep divide between the two parties: Democrats said the call amounted to a "shake down" of a foreign leader, while Trump — backed by the vast majority of Republicans — dismissed it as a "nothing call."

The call is one part of a whistleblower complaint on the president's activities, though the administration has blocked Congress from getting other details of the report, citing presidential privilege. Negotiations were underway to release the complaint publicly within a few days of the inquiry announcement and it was released on September 26.

Trump spent September 25, meeting with world leaders at the United Nations, a remarkable split screen even for the turbulence of the Trump era. On his schedule: a meeting with Zelenskiy.

In a lighthearted appearance before reporters, Zelenskiy said he didn't want to get involved in the American election, but added: "Nobody pushed me." Trump **chimed** in: "In other words, no pressure."

After months of resistance, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi launched the impeachment probe on Tuesday, spurred on by the support of several moderate members in swing districts. After viewing the **transcript** on Wednesday, September 25, Pelosi declared: "Congress must act."

Trump, who thrives on combat, has all but dared Democrats to move toward impeachment, confident that the specter of an investigation led by the opposition party will bolster rather than diminish his political support.

"Just so you understand, it's the single greatest witch hunt in American history, probably in history," Trump said during a meeting with foreign leaders in New York.

Republicans largely stood by the president and dismissed the notion that the rough transcript revealed any wrongdoing by Trump.

"I think it was a perfectly appropriate phone call, it was a congratulatory phone call," said Representative Liz Cheney, the No. 3 House Republican. "The Democrats continually make these huge claims and allegations about President Trump, and then you find out there's nothing there."

In the rough transcript of the 30-minute phone call with Zelenskiy, Trump encourages the Ukrainian leader to talk with Giuliani and Barr. Immediately after saying they would be in touch, Trump references Ukraine's economy, saying: "Your economy is going to get better and better I predict. You have a lot of assets. It's a great country."

In the days before the call, Trump ordered advisers to freeze \$400 million in military aid for Ukraine — **prompting** speculation that he was holding out the money

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as leverage for information on the Bidens. Trump has denied that charge and the aid package does not come up in the conversation with Zelenskiy.

Trump has sought to **implicate** Biden and his son in the kind of corruption that has long plagued Ukraine. Hunter Biden served on the board of a Ukrainian gas company at the same time his father was leading the Obama administration's diplomatic dealings with Kyiv. Though the timing raised concerns among anti-corruption advocates, there has been no evidence of wrongdoing by either the former vice president or his son.

Biden said it was "tragedy" that Trump was willing to "put personal politics above his sacred oath." He singled out Trump's attempts to pull Barr and the Justice Department into efforts to investigate Biden, calling it "a direct attack on the core independence of that department, an independence essential to the rule of law."

While the possibility of impeachment has hung over Trump for many months, the likelihood of a probe had faded after special counsel Robert Mueller's Trump-Russia investigation ended without a clear **directive** for lawmakers.

Since then, the House committees have revisited aspects of the Mueller probe while also launching new inquiries into Trump's businesses and various administration scandals that all seemed likely to drag on for months.

But details of Trump's dealings with Ukraine prompted Democrats to quickly shift course. By the time Pelosi announced the probe, about two-thirds of House Democrats had announced moving toward impeachment probes.

The burden will probably now shift to Democrats to make the case to a scandal-weary public. In a highly **polarized** Congress, an impeachment inquiry could simply showcase how clearly two sides can disagree when shown the same evidence rather than approach consensus.

On September 25, the Democratic-controlled House voted on a symbolic but still notable resolution insisting the Trump administration turn over to Congress the whistleblower's complaint. The Republican-led Senate, in a rare bipartisan moment, unanimously approved a similar resolution September 24.

The lawyer for the whistleblower, who is still anonymous, released a statement saying he had asked Trump's director of national intelligence to turn over the complaint to House committees and asking guidance to permit the whistleblower to meet with lawmakers.

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## Questions

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## Questions

1. Read the following sentence from the article. "Republicans largely stood by the president and dismissed the notion that the rough transcript revealed any wrongdoing by Trump." Which sentence from the article BEST supports this idea?
  - a) "Just so you understand, it's the single greatest witch hunt in American history, probably in history," Trump said during a meeting with foreign leaders in New York.
  - b) "I think it was a perfectly appropriate phone call, it was a congratulatory phone call," said Representative Liz Cheney, the No. 3 House Republican.
  - c) In the rough transcript of the 30-minute phone call with Zelenskiy, Trump encourages the Ukrainian leader to talk with Giuliani and Barr.
  - d) The Republican-led Senate, in a rare bipartisan moment, unanimously approved a similar resolution September 24.
2. Read the following selection from the article. "Trump, who thrives on combat, has all but dared Democrats to move toward impeachment, confident that the specter of an investigation led by the opposition party will bolster rather than diminish his political support." Which of the following conclusions can be drawn from the selection above?
  - a) Trump is concerned that the impeachment inquiry might hurt his reputation.
  - b) Trump wants Democrats to impeach him because he is secretly tired of being president.
  - c) Trump thinks that the impeachment inquiry could work in his favor politically.
  - d) Trump believes that there is a high probability that he will get impeached.
3. What role did the transcript of Trump's call with Zelenskiy play in the impeachment inquiry?
  - a) The House Speaker and other Democrats felt hesitant about going forward with an impeachment inquiry after reading the transcript of Trump's call with Zelenskiy.
  - b) The House Speaker and other Democrats felt the need to open an impeachment inquiry after reading the transcript of Trump's call with Zelenskiy.
  - c) The transcript of Trump's call with Zelenskiy was important evidence in the impeachment inquiry but the inquiry had started long before the call.
  - d) The transcript of Trump's call with Zelenskiy had no effect on the impeachment inquiry because the inquiry started once the whistleblower's complaint was read.
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