

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE
ON INTELLIGENCE

HPSCI Republicans
HVC 304, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-4121

GROUND TRUTH

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent

MYTH #1: Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent was the “leading policymaker” focused on Ukraine.

FACT #1: In the Executive Branch, President Trump, not Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent, is the leading policymaker focused on Ukraine.

A concerning theme we heard in many of the closed-door depositions is the belief by many respected career diplomats that President Trump’s job was to execute policy in conformance with a process approved by career bureaucrats (see, e.g., Kent testimony at pp. 50-51). The opposite is true – the President decides how to engage foreign countries, and career bureaucrats execute the will of the President.

MYTH #2: Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent had firsthand knowledge of most of the information related to President Trump’s July 25 phone call with President Zelensky.

FACT #2: Kent was not a direct witness to the July 25 phone call, only received readouts from others, and could not offer insight into the meaning of what was said in the phone call.

Specifically, Kent states, “The *initial readouts I got were, yes secondhand* from the three people. It was my understanding.” (emphasis added) (p. 206). In response to Chairman Schiff’s questions about the details of the July 25 telephone call, Kent responded, “I would not have known except for the newspaper media coverage afterwards explaining what that was a reference to” and “I can only again refer to the media articles that I have read subsequently...the only basis I have to judge that passage is what I’ve read in the media. (p. 175).

MYTH #3: It would have been inappropriate for the President to consider putting conditions on U.S. foreign assistance to Ukraine related to anticorruption efforts.

FACT #3: It is common for the United States to place conditions on U.S. foreign assistance.

According to Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent, “I didn’t stay [sic] that it was a quid pro quo, but it is the case that both the IMF and *the U.S. Government do use conditionality for assistance*, whether it is macroeconomic assistance provided by the IMF, or in the case of our sovereign loan guarantees, we put conditionality that related to management of the gas system, meeting macroeconomic stability goals proposed by the IMF, social safety nets, and *issues related to anticorruption...*” (emphasis added) (p. 336).

MYTH #4: Hunter Biden’s appointment to the board of Burisma, a corrupt Ukrainian company, was normal, did not raise concerns, and is merely a conspiracy theory pushed by President Trump and his Republican allies.

FACT #4: Kent specifically raised concerns regarding a potential conflict of interest of Hunter Biden serving on Burisma’s board.

According to Kent, “And when I was on a call with somebody on the Vice President’s staff and I cannot recall who it was, just briefing on what was happening into Ukraine I raised my concerns that I heard that Hunter Biden was on the board of a company owned by somebody that the U.S. Government had spent money trying to get tens of millions of dollars back and *that could create the perception of a conflict of interest.*” (emphasis added) (p. 226-27).

MYTH #5: According to Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent, the President “wanted nothing less than President Zelensky to go to microphone and say investigations, Biden, and Clinton.” (p. 268).

FACT #5: Kent cannot reliably testify about what President Trump wanted or instructed because he was never privy to any such conversations.

All of George Kent’s testimony about President Trump was provided to Kent from secondhand and thirdhand sources. For example, Kent was not at the May 23 Oval Office meeting and did not listen to the July 25 call (p. 155). Further, any characterization that Kent’s testimony “proves” acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney was engaged in any substantive manner with Gordon Sondland is wrong. Kent specifically testified “I’m not aware of conversations between Sondland and Mulvaney.” (pp. 203-04)