

Release of CIA whistleblower complaint intensifies political civil war in Washington

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27 September 2019

The Senate Intelligence Committee released Thursday the complaint by a CIA agent assigned to the White House alleging that President Trump “is using the power of his office to solicit interference from a foreign country in the 2020 US election.”

The release of the complaint escalated the civil war atmosphere in Washington, two days after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi launched a formal impeachment investigation against Trump.

In response, Trump denounced the whistleblower as little more than a “traitor,” making a clear threat to his or her physical safety.

“I want to know who’s the person that gave the whistleblower the information, because that’s close to a spy,” Trump said to a crowd from the US Mission to the United Nations yesterday. “You know what we used to do in the old days when we were smart with spies and treason, right?” the president said. “We used to handle it a little differently than we do now.” Individuals convicted of espionage in the US, including Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, have been executed.

Democratic chairmen of the House Intelligence, Foreign Affairs and Oversight committees issued a joint statement Thursday night charging Trump with “witness intimidation” and warning, “Threats of violence from the leader of our country have a chilling effect on the entire whistleblower process, with grave consequences for our democracy and national security.”

The whistleblower complaint alleges, in an account confirmed Wednesday with the release of a transcript summary by the White House, that Trump sought to pressure Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to initiate an investigation into Hunter Biden, the son of former Vice President Joe Biden, who received hundreds of thousands of dollars for sitting on the

board of a Ukrainian energy firm.

The complaint charges that Trump’s “personal lawyer, Mr. Rudolph Giuliani, is a central figure in this effort,” and that “Attorney General Barr appears to be involved as well.”

The whistleblower, who claims he was “not a direct witness to most of the events described,” was identified by Reuters as a “CIA officer and was assigned at one point to work at the White House.”

The whistleblower claims that Trump’s actions “pose risks to US national security and undermine the US Government’s efforts to deter and counter foreign interference.”

In addition to seeking an investigation into Hunter Biden, Trump, according to the whistleblower, wanted Ukraine to “assist in purportedly uncovering that allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential election originated in Ukraine.”

The CIA whistleblower further alleged that “senior White House officials had intervened to ‘lock down’ all records of the phone call” by housing them in a secure system used for highly confidential data, which “underscored to me that White House officials understood the gravity of what had transpired in the call.”

In testimony before the House Intelligence Committee Thursday, Acting Director of National Intelligence Joseph Maguire described the whistleblower’s complaint as “unique and unprecedented,” while claiming that he had failed to provide it to Congress earlier because phone conversations between the US president and foreign leaders were “typically subject to executive privilege.” While allowing that the whistleblower “acted in good faith,” he offered no assessment as to the veracity of the accusations.

House Democratic leaders have made clear that they are keeping their impeachment investigation narrowly focused on the “national security” issues raised by Trump’s effort to recruit Zelensky into his factional battle with the Democrats.

They are seeking to exclude from the investigation Trump’s vicious persecution of refugees on the southern border, his misappropriation of Pentagon funds to build his border wall in defiance of Congress, and his broader moves to turn the United States into a personalist dictatorship.

“I think we need to focus on what this very clear threat to national security and to our Constitution is,” Democratic Representative Debbie Dingell told the *Washington Post*. “We are going to focus on this particular matter,” House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer said.

Since the beginning of Trump’s presidency, the Democrats have focused their opposition to Trump on differences over foreign policy, arguing that he has not been sufficiently aggressive against Russia and, at various times, in pursuing the US conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan and Iran.

The Democrats and their allies in the US intelligence agencies have been hostile toward any criticism of the White House that would mobilize broader popular opposition to Trump, who has maintained the lowest net approval rating of any president since World War II and who presides over a crisis-ridden, corrupt and despised government.

The *New York Times*, one of the leading mouthpieces of the Democrats and the military/intelligence apparatus, spelled out the concerns driving the impeachment investigation in an editorial Thursday.

“Congress is making clear that there are lines that cannot be crossed without repercussion,” the *Times* wrote. “This moment is different” because there are “national security issues at stake.”

The newspaper added, “House Democrats are also giving notice that every lawmaker, regardless of party, should be prepared to take a public stand on whether presidents are free to use their powers to summon foreign assistance for their political campaigns.”

These statements are a clear “signal,” as the newspaper says. There are certain lines that sections of the American state will not accept being crossed: Trump’s efforts to use defense spending as a bribe to

go after his political opponents will not be tolerated.

Left unsaid--but implied--are the deeper concerns leading substantial sections of the ruling class to seek to bring Trump into line or remove him: That the Trump administration has lost the US effort to topple the Assad government in Syria, has sought to hand Afghanistan over to the Taliban after 18 years of bloody war, and, after Iran downed a \$200 million US drone, is giving up, as one commentator put it, the “era of [US] air supremacy in the Gulf.”

At the same time, the *Times* is far from certain of the outcome of the impeachment drive. The editorial asks whether Pelosi’s impeachment inquiry is “empty political theatre” and concludes by musing, “Some ask whether it is pointless for the House to launch divisive impeachment proceedings when there’s little chance that the Republican-led Senate will vote to convict a president so popular with their party’s base.”

The *Times* opinion section contains a slew of columns along similar lines. David Brooks writes that “Trump Is Guilty, but Impeachment Is a Mistake,” declaring, “This political brawl will leave Trump victorious.”

He warns that “the impeachment process reinforces the core Trumpist deep-state message: The liberal elites screw people like us.”

“An inside-the-Beltway political brawl,” Brooks writes, will not “save the country.” He fears, moreover, that the process will only fuel popular hostility to the whole political system, emboldening the most “bellicose” political tendencies while side-lining “moderates.”

All of this makes clear that the working class must retain the fiercest independence from the brawling factions in Washington. Workers must intervene in this crisis on an independent basis, fighting for a socialist program to depose the capitalist financial oligarchy that forms the social base for both right-wing factions of the American state.



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