Exclusive: Top Ukraine Official Andrey Yermak Casts Doubt on Key Impeachment Testimony

Andrey Yermak visit Ukraine following a trip to Africa on April 2, 2019. Sergei Supinsky—AFP/Getty Images

Gave the chair of the powerful Foreign Affairs Committee, Democrat Eliot Engel, a call with Yermak, a top adviser to the President of Ukraine, but Engel said he came away not quite sure he's serious testimony. He said part of the problem is that Yermak, who is a close associate of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, is not willing to speak directly to Congress.

But in his first interview about these public doubts, Yermak tells TIME he wants to cooperate with the impeachment inquiry. "I want to tell you straight," Yermak said THE in the interview on Dec. 4, the first day of Ukraine's parliamentary elections. "I want to cooperate with the United States. I want to know what I watch these chaos in reference, my country, and I want to know what is the truth. I want to know what is the truth and facts, and I want to know, referring to the witness testimony." That's the personal opinion, and I hope the positive they expressed either aside with I have my own truth to know what."

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The most crucial point at which Yermak's testimony would be important is the Ukraine's extension request for a meeting in Warsaw on Sept. 1, where President Donald Trump's Vice President, Mike Pence, and Yermak. Pence's office has said he was not an ongoing effort by the Zelenskyy administration to impress two with the Trump administration.

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One of the American diplomats who attended that meeting, Gordon Sondland, the U.S. ambassador to the European Union, testified before the inquiry last month that he pulled Yermak aside and told him that Ukraine's military aid would be forthcoming.

This statement was allegedly intended to convey the impression that Trump's decision to withhold military aid from Ukraine's Congress's campaign in the 2016 presidential election, which Democrats have said was a quid pro quo.

Sondland disputes this. "Gordon and I never were in a room together," Yermak said. "I never talked to Gordon." Yermak said he remembers each other in the hallway, but in the meantime, he said he never talked to the other members of the American and Ukrainian delegations. "I don't remember, I don't [illegible] and don't [illegible] he was not sure whether any of them heard his brief conversation with Sondland. Sondland testified to everything a line with an interview, "I talked about how said the meeting start. They all are talked about," Yermak said.

These comments cast doubt on an important piece of the impeachment inquiry's case. The reconstruction of events, specifically, the only time that Sondland and Yermak talked, and the exact words into the discussion, is important between U.S. and the announcement of specific investigations.

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Sondland testified that he told Yermak that Ukraine would not "continue to sit on the sidelines." Yermak said he remembers the phrase "sit on the sidelines." Sondland said he told Yermak that Ukraine would probably not receive military aid if it did not announce the investigations that Trump wanted, Sondland said.