



Classified State Department email declared Hunter Biden ‘undercut’ U.S. efforts in Ukraine

Description

USA/UKRAINE: In an email kept from public view for more than five years, a top U.S. State Department official in Kiev wrote to Washington superiors at the end of the Obama-Biden administration that Hunter Biden’s business dealings in Ukraine “undercut” U.S. efforts to fight corruption in the former Soviet republic.

The email, obtained by Just the News, was written on Nov. 22, 2016 by former U.S. embassy official George Kent, one of the Democrats’ star witnesses in their first effort to impeach former President Donald Trump.

It was classified “confidential,” the lowest level of secrecy, by then-U.S. Ambassador to Kiev Marie Yovanovitch, another of the Democrats’ impeachment witnesses, and was not produced as evidence to House lawmakers during impeachment. Contrary to federal law, the State Department failed to acknowledge the existence of the document to the court or to Just the News in its multiple Freedom of Information Act lawsuits against the State Department seeking records on Hunter and Joe Biden’s dealings in Ukraine.

Most importantly, the email’s stark message directly conflicts with the narrative the mainstream media, State Department witnesses and Democratic congressmen gave the public two years ago, when they insisted Hunter Biden’s lucrative job with the allegedly corrupt Ukrainian gas company Burisma Holdings — while creating the appearance of a conflict of interest — had no impact on U.S. efforts to fight corruption in that country.

“The real issue to my mind was that someone in Washington needed to engage VP Biden quietly and say that his son Hunter’s presence on the Burisma board undercut the anti-corruption message the VP and we were advancing in Ukraine,” Kent wrote multiple high-ranking officials in the State Department in Washington.

The recipients of the email included [Jorgan K. Andrews](#), then the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

Kent's email described an intense pressure campaign by advocates for Burisma — including a former U.S. ambassador — to rehabilitate the Ukrainian company's corrupt reputation and to get Ukraine prosecutors to drop their criminal investigations of the company.

Kent even relayed to higher-ups that he had confirmed with Ukrainian prosecutors that Burisma officials had paid a \$7 million "bribe" to make one of the cases against the company disappear. The bribe was allegedly paid at a time when Hunter Biden was serving on the Burisma board, a job that landed his firm more than \$3 million from the Ukrainian energy company.

Kent explained to the officials in Washington that Burisma's long reputation for alleged corruption and anecdotes like the bribe were one of the main reasons Hunter Biden's affiliation with the company proved harmful to U.S. efforts to fight Ukrainian corruption.

"Ukrainians heard one message from us," Kent wrote, "and then saw another set of behavior, with the [Biden] family association with a known corrupt figure whose company was known for not playing by the rules in the oil/gas sector."

You can read Kent's email here:

The email chain also showed that State officials were acutely aware that Hunter Biden had an affiliation with an American business partner also accused — and eventually convicted of — corruption.

"I should note that there were two American members of the Burisma board: Hunter Biden and Devon Archer," another State official on the email chain wrote Kent and Andrews. "Archer was recently indicted in a federal fraud case."

Ohio GOP Rep. Jim Jordan, the ranking member on the House Government Oversight and Reform Committee, played a key role in defending President Trump in the 2019-20 Ukraine impeachment scandal. He told Just the News Tuesday night that lawmakers and Trump's defense team were not given the Kent email as best he could tell.

"This is frightening," Jordan told the new [Just the News television show on Real America's Voice network](#). "And the fact that we didn't have this information during the impeachment, I think is maybe the biggest concern. I mean, the President of the United States is defending himself from a ridiculous impeachment process that the Democrats bring on him, where he wasn't allowed to be in the depositions, wasn't allowed to have his counsel there."

"And now we find out wasn't allowed to have information that he's entitled to have to put on his defense. I mean, frankly, we Republicans who were in the rooms in that bunker in the basement of the Capitol, we'd have liked to have this information that you just described, and other information that wasn't available to us as well, that you've written about."

State Department officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment Tuesday about the memo.

Alan Dershowitz, the famed Harvard law professor who was a member of Trump's impeachment defense team, said the withholding of Kent's email and other evidence Just the News reported earlier this week was a "very serious constitutional violation" of what is known as the Brady rule requiring all potentially exculpatory evidence be turned over to defendants.

"The United States Supreme Court in the Brady decision ruled that when a defendant is on trial, the prosecutors cannot withhold evidence that could be exculpatory, or in any way helpful to the defendant," Dershowitz said.

"And obviously, that has to apply to impeachment proceedings even more so," he added. "Because in impeachment proceedings, the American public has the right to know all the evidence. And if the people who impeached President Trump — obviously I was one of the lawyers on the other side — were aware of exculpatory evidence or evidence that would in some way mitigate the charges, they had an obligation to turn it over to us so that we could use this information in defending our client."

Officials who served in the State Department back in 2019-20 said they do not believe the email was produced to the impeachment investigation and was definitely not produced after the successful FOIA lawsuits filed by Just the News and the Southeastern Legal Foundation seeking all records related to Hunter Biden and Burisma.

They said the email — though once classified at the confidential level — was circulated in non-classified settings towards the end of the Trump administration and was produced to Senate investigators in late 2020 to be read in a secure reading room.

Kimberly Hermann, the general counsel for the Southeastern Legal Foundation, said the Kent email was clearly responsive to the FOIA requests and should either have been produced to Just the News during the litigation or identified on a privilege log as a document being withheld by the government. She vowed to seek penalties against the government.

"The State Department should have produced these documents years ago when SLF and JTN first requested them," Hermann said. "Instead, they denied their existence, hid them, and arguably did so in bad faith. These bad actors must now be held accountable for what the documents show, for hiding them, and for misleading the American public."

Jordan said his congressional investigators will be reviewing testimony from the impeachment trial and a separate Senate investigation into the Biden family led by Sen. Ron Johnson in 2020 to see if any of the new evidence conflicts with sworn testimony given to Congress.

"Well, it's something we're going to have to look at," Jordan said. "We've got to go back and review their transcripts."

Just the News reviewed testimony given by more than two dozen people during the impeachment proceedings and Johnson's Senate probe and found no mention of the Kent email but found numerous statements that Hunter Biden's role with Burisma had no effect on U.S.-Ukraine policy.

Kent in both proceedings testified that Hunter Biden's affiliation with Burisma created the appearance of a conflict of interest for Joe Biden and that one time he tried to raise the issue with Biden's vice

presidential office and was rebuffed. He also sharply criticized this reporter's articles for The Hill that raised questions about the Bidens' business dealings in Ukraine.

"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 in Ukraine," [Kent told impeachment investigators in 2019](#). "I raised my concerns that I had 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.

"The message that I recall hearing back was that the Vice President's son Beau was dying of cancer and that there was no further bandwidth to deal with family related issues at the time."

Kent gave a similar answer to Johnson's Senate investigators a year later.

"Burisma's owner was a poster child for corrupt behavior, and Hunter Biden's position on the board could create the perception of a conflict of interest at the time when Vice President Biden was leading the policy charge, pushing President Poroshenko and Prime Minister Yatsenyuk to take more decisive anti-corruption action," he testified.

But Democrats pressed on whether that conflict had any impact on U.S. policy.

"You know, for a fact, that Hunter Biden's role on the board had zero impact on the decisions of the Embassy," Kent was asked.

"To the best of my experience and knowledge that is correct," the respected career diplomat answered.

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