

# United States - Trump and the “National Interests” of the U.S.

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**The Democratic impeachment inquiry began when a “whistle blower” revealed that President Trump had pressured Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to open an investigation of former vice-president Joe Biden and his son Hunter.**

Trump suspended military aid to Ukraine, and made a White House visit by Zelensky — which the new Ukrainian president dearly wanted — conditional on him stating publically that such an investigation was underway.

Since the elder Biden is a possible Democratic opponent of Trump in 2020, the purpose of Trump’s demand was to get material Trump could use against Biden should he become the Democratic nominee.

To demand of a foreign government that it work to help Trump personally, is against the law.

A few days after the whistle blower’s complaint was made known to the public, Trump beat a hasty retreat: he released the military aid and Zelensky never made the statement.

Trump’s violation of the law is relatively unimportant compared to Trump’s crimes that are not part of the impeachment inquiry, especially his administration’s war on asylum seekers on the Mexican border, where Trump literally has blood on his hands; his Muslim ban; increasing the extraction of fossil fuels; racism; misogyny and much more.

From the beginning of the inquiry, the Democrats and the pro-Democratic media have introduced another theme: Trump’s withholding military aid was, they say, an attack on “national security” or “America’s interests”. In the final weeks of testimony before the House committee conducting the inquiry, this charge has been highlighted and emphasized.

When capitalist politicians use terms like “national security” they are invariably referring to the interests of U.S. imperialism. Withholding military aid to Ukraine was a violation of U.S. imperialism’s interests, but not of the interests of the majority of the American people.

The interests of U.S. imperialism in Ukraine are both economic and political.

Ukraine is rich in natural resources, especially its fertile “black soil” agricultural lands, and its natural gas. It was a prized possession of the Russian Tsarist empire. It was known as the Soviet Union’s “bread basket”. German imperialism sought to capture these resources in both the First and Second World Wars.

Following the overthrow of the USSR by its bureaucratic caste led by the misnamed Communist Party, and the return to capitalism, Ukraine sought relations with the U.S.-led West as well as with capitalist Russia.

Ukraine has two main ethnic groups, Ukrainian-speakers and Russian-speakers. The former are mainly in western Ukraine, and the latter in the east and south. At times Ukrainian-speakers occupied the presidency, and before 2014 a Russian-speaker.

This equilibrium was upset in 2014 when the Russian-speaking president was overthrown, and a more right-wing government was installed, which began to restrict democratic rights, especially of Russian-speakers. One example was that Russian, which had been one of the officially recognized national languages was stripped of that status. A civil war ensued between the east and west, with Russia supporting the Russian-speakers, and the West the government in Kiev.

This provided an opening for the U.S. to move in, reducing Ukraine to a subordinate country dependent on Washington, with two Russian-speaking breakaway areas in the east forming their own governments.

Contrary to U.S. promises made at the time of the overthrow of the Soviet Union, the U.S. has brought into NATO a number of East European countries formerly in the Soviet orbit, as well as some former soviet republics. If Ukraine were to become part of NATO, that would bring the military alliance right up on the Russian border.

In 2014, it appeared that the new Ukraine would join NATO. That is a possible explanation of one reason why Putin backed the breakaway regions of eastern Ukraine.

It would also explain why Russia then proceeded to re-annex Crimea.

A bit of history of Crimea is useful. Russia under Catherine the Great conquered Crimea from the Ottoman Empire in 1783. In 1853 Britain and its allies invaded and for a time conquered Crimea from Russia, but the war exhausted Britain. When the war was finally ended in 1856, Crimea was once again Russian, with the proviso that Russian warships would not be stationed at the Sevastopol port in Crimea.

After the Russian Revolution in 1917, and the subsequent establishment of the USSR, Ukraine became a separate Soviet Socialist Republic within the USSR, under the Bolshevik's policy of national self-determination for nations under the former Tsarist empire. Crimea became part of the Russian SSR, because of its mainly Russian population.

In 1954, the Soviet government under Nikita Khrushchev made Crimea part Ukraine largely for administrative reasons. This was hardly noticed internationally as it was still part of the USSR. No one claimed that Ukraine had "stolen" Crimea from Russia.

When Ukraine became independent in 1991, various agreements were made between it and Russia. One was that Russia would have control over the former Soviet naval base in Sevastopol. If Ukraine became part of NATO, that base, the only Russian warm water port, would fall into NATO and U.S. hands, something Russia could not tolerate.

The U.S. still wants to get its hands on the Sevastopol naval base. Which is why it is pushing for Crimea to be part of Ukraine.

Trump, with the Republicans dutifully in tow, is claiming that it was the Ukrainians, not the Russians, who "meddled" in the 2016 U.S. elections, to help Hillary Clinton. The Democrats claim the opposite, that the Russians meddled, giving the victory to Trump.

In fact, every government which has the technology to do so, "meddles" in other countries' politics, with Washington being the Meddler in Chief. At times, when elections in other countries don't go in

the way the U.S. wants, it “meddles” by overthrowing the government of the offending country.

Trump is an American phenomenon. Not a Russian or Ukrainian one.

A basic feature of modern monopoly capitalism and imperialism has been the increasing centralization of power in the hands of the executive at the expense of the legislative and judicial branches. This has been true in the U.S. beginning in the early twentieth century under both Democratic and Republican administrations.

However, the growth of executive power is not without its own perils to the ruling class. If a leader of the executive starts to put his or her personal interests above those of the capitalist class as a whole, which is what would-be dictator Trump has done by withholding the military aid and attacking Ukraine as corrupt while going soft on Putin, then that leader is truly harming the “national interest” of U.S. imperialism.

Trump should be impeached on the charge of attempting to force Ukraine to further his electoral ambitions, not for harming the “national interest” of dominating Ukraine, which is not in the interests of the workers and other producers of the U.S.

All this is only one aspect of the deep divisions in the ruling class concerning Trump. How this plays out in conjunction with other issues in the upcoming election campaign remains to be seen.

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