

How the House Impeachment Strengthened Russia and Rewarded Corruption



by John D. O'Connor

The following is an article originally published on *BizPac Review*. Read it [HERE](#).

During last fall's impeachment proceedings, we spent months hearing from shrill Democratic Representatives and pompous bureaucrats how critical it was to rid Ukraine of corruption and Russian influence. It should surprise no one that these partisans achieved precisely the opposite effect, weakening our NATO defenses in the process.

In February 2014, after the [Euromaidan Revolution](#) chased out [Viktor Yanukovych](#), the pro-Russian leader of the corrupt Ukrainian oligarchy, U.S. President Obama [appointed Vice President Joe Biden](#) to stop the endemic corruption and fight Russian influence in Ukraine, along with Secretary of State John Kerry.

Their first acts should have been to oppose the Russian annexation of the geopolitically critical Crimea, which they [did only by donating MREs](#) (Meals Ready to Eat) and blankets, while careful not to anger the Russians by displaying any United States presence. While these two cannot be blamed completely for this lack of fortitude, fighting corruption had thereby become even more crucial for a weakened Ukraine.

So amid great fanfare, on April 14, 2014, our British partners made a show of seizing \$23 million which [Mykola Zlochevsky](#), founder of corrupt Ukrainian oil lessor Burisma, was trying to spirit from Ukraine to Cyprus. U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and British Home Secretary Theresa May held a joint press conference April 29, 2014, emphasizing the importance of this test case as a western anti-corruption initiative. All that was needed to get the \$23 million returned to Ukraine was a letter from the Ukrainian prosecutor's office. But the prosecutorial personnel were afraid of someone, because when FBI agents attempted to check on the missing letter, the responsible employees were either absent or ran to avoid the agents. The letter never came, and a disgusted British judge [allowed the money to continue on to Cyprus](#) in early 2015.

How could this happen with Biden and Kerry minding the store? Well, on April 16, 2014, two days after seizure, Devon Archer, a partner of Kerry's son Christopher and Biden's son Hunter, met lengthily with Joe Biden in the White House. Two days later, Burisma hired Archer, and soon thereafter also hired Hunter Biden, ostensibly to head governmental compliance.

After these hirings, there was no action on Burisma until U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey R. Pyatt demanded it in December 2015. Ukrainian Prosecutor Viktor Shokin immediately opened a new case on Burisma, followed by an aggressive raid in early February 2016 on Zlochevsky's home. Hunter Biden and his Washington lobbyists [quickly met with State Department personnel](#). Soon Joe Biden, who claimed never to have talked business with his son, [demanded Shokin be fired](#), and as we all know now, withheld \$1 billion in U.S. aid until that firing occurred in March 2016.

After the raid on Zlochevsky's house, America supported the formation of NABU ([National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine](#)), working closely with James Comey's FBI. The three cases Shokin had against Burisma were now transferred to NABU. Two were dismissed and the final tax evasion case settled for a reported \$7 million, a bargain, right before the Obama Administration left office and after Marie Yovanovitch was appointed Ambassador to the Ukraine, [reportedly with George Soros' backing](#).

Before the Obama Administration left office it had become clear that the majority owner of Burisma and PrivatBank, [Ihor Kolomoisky](#), had caused a \$5.6 billion deficit in PrivatBank's balance sheet, [95% from phony, related-party loans](#). Earlier, after Biden and Kerry had supported a \$3 billion IMF loan for Ukraine's financial system, PrivatBank scammed \$1.8 billion of it through shell companies and phony contracts.

Kolomoisky was one of the wealthiest and [most ambitious](#) of the Ukrainian oligarchs, known for cutting deals using men wielding tire irons, baseball bats, chainsaws, and rubber bullets. Kolomoisky was represented by Hunter Biden's group, who used State Department influence to gain a previously withheld visa for Kolomoisky.

Kolomoisky fled Ukraine in 2016 as honest prosecutor [Yuriy Lutsenko](#), succeeding Shokin, took a hard stance, seizing the assets of both Burisma and PrivatBank. Lutsenko had an impeccable anti-Russian, anti-corruption credibility, having been previously jailed by Yanukovych for two years for his public protests of corruption.

Ambassador Yovanovitch tried to get Lutsenko fired, gave him an oral “[do not prosecute](#)” list, and redirected \$4.3 million of U.S. aid for anti-corruption prosecution away from Lutsenko and toward AntAC (Anti-Corruption Action Center), [a private George Soros-supported group](#). Previously fired prosecutor Viktor Shokin sought to visit the United States to complain, but was denied a visa by Yovanovitch. She turned a deaf ear to Lutsenko and his capable deputy [Kostiantyn Kulyk](#), as did Rod Rosenstein, the acting Attorney General. Finally, they reached out to Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, hoping to get his support for investigating corruption, including that of Hunter Biden.

Pro-Western President [Petro Poroshenko](#) was originally favored to beat pro-Russian challenger [Volodymyr Zelensky](#) in 2019, but Kolomoisky’s major television network, Zelensky’s patron, turned the tide and Zelensky won. The U.S. had a brief window of time to make unpalatable any Zelensky bending to the exiled Kolomoisky and to free Ukraine of his corrupting influence.

Fortunately for Kolomoisky and Zlochevsky, the ginned-up furor over Trump’s talk with Zelensky, leaked by a Biden ally, put an end to any anti-corruption pressure from Trump.

In the Trump impeachment hearings, witnesses included Marie Yovanovitch, Fiona Hill, who had [co-written a 2015 op-ed](#) praising Obama for not stopping Putin’s Crimean annexation, and [Alexander Vindman](#), who was playing footsy with the new Ukrainian regime, [blushingly describing an offer](#) to be its Defense Minister. CNN, MSNBC, the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* all publicly declared there was no proof that either of the Bidens had done anything wrong. The *New Yorker* revealed that Hunter Biden wanted to work for Zlochevsky because the oligarch supported [the humane treatment of bears](#).

In the anti-Trump furor, Kolomoisky now had cover to return to Ukraine with impunity, even going so far as to demand his bank returned to him, now solvent thanks to billions from the U.S. and IMF. The now-influential oligarch has recently noted that Ukraine [has no choice but to come under Russian influence](#), eschewing NATO and western alliances.

If the impeachment of Donald Trump was meant to influence anti-corruption and anti-Russian efforts, it was successful, but only perversely so. Congressional Democrats, in their efforts to cripple Trump, permanently harmed the national security of the United States and its allies by helping both Russia and Ukraine’s corrupt oligarchs.

These impeachment proceedings also proved to a national audience that hypocritical deceit is alive and well, and living in Washington, D.C.

*John D. O’Connor is a former federal prosecutor and the San Francisco attorney who represented W. Mark Felt during his revelation as Deep Throat in 2005. O’Connor is the author of the book, *Postgate: How the Washington Post Betrayed Deep Throat, Covered Up Watergate, and Began Today’s Partisan Advocacy Journalism*.*