**Article(s) 4: How has President Trump responded to
the impeachment inquiry so far?**

# Trump Makes Clear He’s Ready for a Fight He Has Long Anticipated

September 25, 2019 Doug Mills/The New York Times

He knew it was coming. It almost felt inevitable. No other president in American history has been seriously threatened with impeachment even before his inauguration. So when the announcement came on Tuesday that the [House would consider charging](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/25/us/politics/trump-impeachment-inquiry.html?module=inline) him with high crimes and misdemeanors, President Trump made clear he was ready for a fight.

He lashed out at the opposition Democrats, denouncing them for “crazy” partisanship. He denounced the allegations against him as “[more breaking news Witch Hunt garbage](https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1176604222709751809).” And he proclaimed that even if the impeachment battle to come will be bad for the country, it will be “a positive for me” by bolstering his chances to win a second term in next year’s election…

…Mr. Trump gave a desultory speech and shuffled between meetings with leaders from Britain, India and Iraq while privately consulting with aides about his next move against the House. Shortly before heading into a lunch with the United Nations secretary general, he decided to release a transcript of his July telephone call with the [president of Ukraine](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/25/world/europe/ukraine-trump-whistleblower-zelensky.html?module=inline) that is central to the allegations against him. In effect, he was pushing his chips into the middle of the table, gambling that the document would prove ambiguous enough to undercut the Democratic case against him.

By afternoon, as [Speaker Nancy Pelosi](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/25/us/politics/ukraine-phone-call-transcript.html?module=inline) prepared to announce the impeachment inquiry, the president retreated to Trump Tower, his longtime home and base of operations, to contemplate his path forward. A telephone call between the president and speaker failed to head off the clash, and now the two are poised for an epic struggle that will test the limits of the Constitution and the balance of power in the American system…

…Mr. Trump asserted that he blocked the aid to Ukraine because European countries have not paid their fair share. He pointed to the fact that the money was eventually released as evidence that he did nothing wrong. What he did not mention was that European countries have chipped in $15 billion for Ukraine in the last few years and that he released the American aid only after senators from both parties threatened punitive legislation if he did not.

What he also did not say was that he had changed his explanation for withholding the money from just a day before. On Monday, he linked his decision to block the aid to his concerns about corruption in Ukraine, citing Mr. Biden as an example. By emphasizing instead his overall concern about foreign aid, he was advancing a rationale less tied to his demand for an investigation.

“I’m leading in the polls and they have no idea how to stop me,” Mr. Trump said. “The only way they can try is through impeachment.”

In fact, Mr. Trump is trailing Mr. Biden and other Democrats seeking their party’s nomination in most polls, which is why Democrats assert he was so intent on obtaining dirt from Ukraine on the former vice president…

# Trump Attacks Whistle-Blower’s Sources and Alludes to Punishment for Spies

September 27, 2019

President Trump told staff members at the United States Mission to the United Nations on Thursday that he wants to know who provided [information to a whistle-blower](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/26/us/politics/whistleblower-complaint-released.html?module=inline) about his phone call with the president of Ukraine, saying that whoever did so was “close to a spy” and that “in the old days” spies were dealt with differently.

The comment stunned people in the audience, according to a person briefed on what took place and a partial audio recording of Mr. Trump’s remarks. Mr. Trump made the statement several minutes into his remarks before the group of about 50 mission employees and their families. At the outset, he condemned former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr.’s role in Ukraine at a time when his son Hunter Biden was on the board of a Ukrainian energy company.

Mr. Trump repeatedly referred to the whistle-blower and condemned the news media as “crooked” for reporting on an explosive [complaint](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/09/26/us/politics/whistle-blower-complaint.html?module=inline) by the whistle-blower. The president then said the whistle-blower never heard the call in question.

“I want to know who’s the person who gave the whistle-blower the information because that’s close to a spy,” Mr. Trump said. “You know what we used to do in the old days when we were smart with spies and treason, right? We used to handle it a little differently than we do now.”

The president’s comments were a broadside against an [intelligence whistle-blower law](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/20/us/whistleblower-law-explained.html?module=inline) that shields intelligence officials from reprisal — like losing their security clearance or being demoted or fired — as long as they follow a certain process for bringing allegations of wrongdoing to the attention of oversight authorities.

The Democratic chairmen of the House Foreign Affairs, Intelligence, and Oversight and Reform Committees, who are seeking testimony from the whistle-blower, called the president’s remarks “reprehensible witness intimidation.” The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The whistle-blower’s complaint, which was [made public Thursday morning](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/09/26/us/politics/whistle-blower-complaint.html?module=inline), contained information about the call gathered from multiple United States officials, and described concerns that the president pressured the Ukrainian president to investigate Mr. Biden, who is running for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, and Mr. Biden’s son.

At the mission, Mr. Trump pushed back on the complaint and attacked the news media as “animals in the press.” He disparaged Representative Adam B. Schiff, the chairman of the Intelligence Committee, as well as the former vice president, whom he called “dumb as a rock.”

As Mr. Trump seethed, the president’s re-election campaign was busy raising money off the threat of impeachment as he and the White House tried to turn the tables on the Democrats.

 “Nancy’s trying to IMPEACH my father for nothing!” Donald Trump Jr., the president’s son, wrote in a text message about Speaker Nancy Pelosi as he asked supporters to join an Impeachment Defense Team on Mr. Trump’s behalf. He said any donations would be doubled. Another of the president’s sons, Eric, [said on Twitter](https://twitter.com/EricTrump/status/1177362273653919744) that the online warfare over impeachment had netted his father’s re-election campaign $8.5 million from small-dollar donors over the course of two days…

…At a fund-raiser at Cipriani 42nd Street in Manhattan immediately after the event at the mission, Mr. Trump walked out before the crowd of several hundred donors and said, clutching paper in one of his hands, “This is the call.” He then said it was “the greatest thing” to happen to the Republican Party because it had raised so much money off the controversy.

Aboard Air Force One on the way back to Washington on Thursday afternoon, Mr. Trump grew angry after watching televised news coverage about the whistle-blower, staff members said. Just before landing, Mr. Trump took to Twitter and again said the whistle-blower had “second hand information” and called the inquiry “Another Witch Hunt!” On the tarmac at Joint Base Andrews, Mr. Trump was in no mood to take questions.

Instead, he got off the plane and spoke directly into the news cameras.

“Democrats are going to lose the election and they know it,” Mr. Trump fumed. “That’s why they are doing it.” He added that there should be a way to stop the Democrats in court.

# Trump Publicly Urges China to Investigate the Bidens

October 4, 2019

WASHINGTON — President Trump, already [facing impeachment](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/24/us/politics/democrats-impeachment-trump.html?module=inline) for pressuring Ukraine to investigate his political rivals, publicly called on China on Thursday to examine former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. as well, an extraordinary request for help from a foreign power that could benefit him in next year’s election.

“China should start an investigation into the Bidens, because what happened in China is just about as bad as what happened with Ukraine,” Mr. Trump told reporters as he left the White House to travel to Florida. His request came just moments after he discussed upcoming trade talks with China and said that “if they don’t do what we want, we have tremendous power.”

The president’s call for Chinese intervention means that Mr. Trump and his attorney general have now solicited assistance in discrediting the president’s political opponents from Ukraine, [Australia](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/30/us/politics/trump-australia-barr-mueller.html?module=inline), [Italy](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/02/world/europe/mike-pompeo-italy-joseph-mifsud.html?module=inline) and, according to one report, [Britain](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/donald-trump-impeachment-president-called-boris-johnson-for-help-to-discredit-mueller-inquiry-jlkztnfpx). In speaking so publicly on Thursday, a defiant Mr. Trump pushed back against critics who have called such requests an abuse of power, essentially arguing that [there was nothing wrong with seeking foreign help to fight corruption.](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/23/us/politics/trump-ukraine-collusion.html?module=inline)..

By boldly repeating the action at the heart of the impeachment inquiry, Mr. Trump almost appeared to dare House Democrats to impeach him. But he left his own party in an increasingly uncomfortable position. Republican lawmakers largely stayed silent on Thursday, neither criticizing the president’s latest comments nor defending them as they nervously awaited other developments that they worried could change the complexion of the case…

…Mr. Trump’s comments on Thursday set off a wave of criticism from Democrats, who said he brazenly implicated himself. Representative Adam B. Schiff of California, the House Intelligence Committee chairman leading the impeachment inquiry, said the president’s latest comments were further evidence of his betrayal of duty. “The president of the United States encouraging a foreign nation to interfere and help his campaign by investigating a rival is a fundamental breach of the president’s oath of office,” he told reporters.

…Sally Yates, an Obama administration holdover who served as acting attorney general until she was [fired by Mr. Trump](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/30/us/politics/trump-immigration-ban-memo.html?module=inline), said the president acted as if acting in the light of day would transform corrupt actions into innocent ones. “The president is trying to hypnotize the American people into believing that it can’t be wrong if he says it out loud,” she said. “The White House counsel in a case like this would find the nearest window and jump out,” said Robert F. Bauer, who served as President Barack Obama’s top lawyer and supports Mr. Biden. “There’s no way to defend it. No way. None.”

Republicans did not even try on Thursday, and some disaffected colleagues said they should speak out against the president. “He’s asking foreign governments to interfere in our election,” former Representative Joe Walsh of Illinois, who is waging a long-shot battle for the Republicannomination, [wrote on Twitter](https://twitter.com/WalshFreedom/status/1179772643337064453). “Right out in the open. Because he thinks he can get away with it. He’s unfit. He’s dangerous.”

Left to defend himself, Mr. Trump weighed back in Thursday night, asserting he was allowed to seek foreign help. “As the President of the United States, I have an absolute right, perhaps even a duty, to investigate, or have investigated, CORRUPTION, and that would include asking, or suggesting, other Countries to help us out!”[he wrote on Twitter](https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1179925259417468928). Mr. Trump has insisted that his July conversation with Mr. Zelensky was “perfect” even after a [reconstructed transcript of the call](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/09/25/us/politics/trump-ukraine-transcript.html?module=inline) released by the White House showed him imploring the newly inaugurated Ukrainian leader to “do us a favor” by investigating the Bidens and other Democrats shortly after Mr. Zelensky discussed his need for more American aid to counter Russian aggression.

Undaunted by criticism, Mr. Trump repeated that request on Thursday morning. “I would say that President Zelensky, if it were me, I would recommend that they start an investigation into the Bidens,” Mr. Trump said. “Because nobody has any doubt that they weren’t crooked.”

Even as he seeks investigations by Ukraine and China, the president and Mr. Barr have also solicited help from Australia and Italy to uncover information undermining the origin of Mr. Mueller’s investigation. [The Times of London has reported](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/donald-trump-impeachment-president-called-boris-johnson-for-help-to-discredit-mueller-inquiry-jlkztnfpx) that Mr. Trump sought help from Prime Minister Boris Johnson of Britain, a report that has not been denied by either the White House or the British government.

In Ukraine, Mr. Biden’s son Hunter made $50,000 a month on the board of an energy company. As vice president, his father pressured Ukraine to fire a prosecutor whose office oversaw investigations into the company’s owner. But by the time the elder Mr. Biden acted, there was no public evidence that the prosecutor was actively pursuing an investigation, and no evidence has emerged that the vice president, who was carrying out Obama administration policy, was motivated by his son’s business interests.

In calling for an investigation of American citizens by China, a repressive Communist government with no rule of law, Mr. Trump referred to a business deal Hunter Biden was in that involved a fund drawing investment from the government-owned Bank of China. The fund was announced in late 2013, days after Hunter Biden flew to China aboard Air Force Two with the vice president, who was in the midst of a diplomatic mission. The president said on Thursday that Hunter Biden was not qualified for that business, noting that he had been [discharged from the Navy Reserve](https://www.wsj.com/articles/bidens-son-hunter-discharged-from-navy-reserve-after-failing-cocaine-test-1413499657) after testing positive for cocaine. “He got kicked out of the Navy,” Mr. Trump said. “All of a sudden he’s getting billions of dollars. You know what they call that? They call that a payoff.”

Mr. Trump said he had not asked President Xi Jinping for assistance. “But it’s certainly something we can start thinking about because I’m sure that President Xi does not like being under that kind of scrutiny.”

Mr. Trump’s suggestion came as senior Chinese officials were set to come to Washington next week for another round of trade negotiations. The two countries, locked in a trade war, are hoping to make progress toward a deal after a breakdown in talks in May, leading to an escalation of tariffs.

Mr. Biden is not the only candidate in the race with a child with business in China. Mr. Trump’s elder daughter, Ivanka, a senior White House adviser, has received valuable trademarks from China even after she closed her brand in 2018 because of worsening sales and questions of conflicts of interest.