



[Bolton Claims Trump Tied Ukraine Funds to Political Investigations](#)

In one of the latest developments with the ongoing impeachment inquiry against President Trump, former National Security Advisor John Bolton claims in a forthcoming book that the president told him he wanted to withhold security aid from Ukraine until the nation helped him with politically-charged investigations into his rivals. The allegation contradicts Trump's assertion that his actions with Ukraine were intended to root out corruption, not produce dirt on his opponents. Trump denied the allegations in a series of tweets, while his defense lawyer Alan Dershowitz argued that abuse of power was a "political weapon," not an impeachable offense – even if the president in fact demanded a quid pro quo. Nevertheless, the new revelations have ramped up the push for witnesses, including Bolton, in the current Senate impeachment trial. Bolton recently stated that he would be willing to testify if subpoenaed. Following the conclusion of a 16-hour Q&A period on Wednesday and Thursday, the vote regarding witnesses in the Senate impeachment trial is expected to take place on Friday.

President Trump's legal team had repeatedly insisted that he never tied the Ukraine funds to investigations into political rivals, including former Vice President Joe Biden and his son Hunter. However, his defense attorneys seemed to alter their tone in the wake of these new Bolton allegations, instead arguing now that even if there was a quid pro quo involved, that did not constitute impeachable behavior. Trump defense lawyer Alan Dershowitz stated that "quid pro quo, alone, is not a basis for abuse of power" and that "you cannot turn conduct that is not impeachable into impeachable conduct, simply by using words like quid pro quo and personal benefit." Despite these attempts to normalize the president's behavior, analysts have pointed to the fact that Dershowitz's argument failed to mention a key point: that the quid pro quo Trump is accused of revolves around the corrupt activity of leveraging military funds for personal political favors.

Democrats were quick to use these new revelations to bolster the need for witnesses in the Senate impeachment trial. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer tweeted "John Bolton has the evidence so it's up to four Senate Republicans to ensure that John Bolton, Mick Mulvaney, and the others with direct knowledge of President Trump's actions testify in the Senate trial," referring to the need for at least four GOP senators to break with party lines and vote in support of these new witnesses. Schumer also added that Trump's defenders in the Senate are "talking out of both sides of their mouth" since they are complaining that the case against the president lacks evidence while simultaneously resisting efforts to gather more credible information.

The vote on whether or not to allow new witnesses like Bolton to testify will depend on the stance taken by moderate Republicans such as Mitt Romney (R-UT), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), and Susan Collins (R-ME) – who indicated they may be open to hearing from witnesses but have not yet made a final decision. At least four Republicans would need to join with all Democrats in order to seek new witnesses and evidence in the upper chamber trial.