아주대학교 중국정책연구소 벙커 2019.11.19. 정치외교학과 최병일

A key witness could gut Trump's entire impeachment defense this week

**(CNN)***This was originally published as the November 18 edition of****CNN's Meanwhile in America****, the daily email about US politics for global readers.*[*Sign up here to receive it every weekday morning.*](https://edition.cnn.com/specials/meanwhile-in-america?utm_source=Unknown+List&utm_campaign=6481339f62-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_10_07_09_44&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-6481339f62-)

The facts just keep getting worse for President Donald Trump -- and a key witness could gut his entire impeachment defense this week.

A reminder: The US President is accused of [making military aid and diplomatic favor to Ukraine contingent on a personal one](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__cnn.us11.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3D47c9040f6ff957a59bd88396e-26id-3D4a4c4873e4-26e-3Dc21c5029d4&d=DwMFaQ&c=W8uiIUydLnv14aAum3Oieg&r=xtO6fi_5UVVCKa9Y62TpFhicEelP82mR-wxtCxeCsyo&m=Z_3QpPukLPzi1fhsKhScKNAHf915YDXxnD90VRJkM2E&s=gjSDN4qTHLyUtl0IJp_CTFiz7FULRhaEsUIuS5cdzuM&e=): Investigate his potential 2020 rival Joe Biden. Last week, new testimony from senior officials strengthened the case that Trump personally directed a plot to demand this quid pro quo, in a textbook abuse of power.

Eight more officials are expected to testify this week, and [the most devastating could be Gordon Sondland](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__cnn.us11.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3D47c9040f6ff957a59bd88396e-26id-3D5787cac860-26e-3Dc21c5029d4&d=DwMFaQ&c=W8uiIUydLnv14aAum3Oieg&r=xtO6fi_5UVVCKa9Y62TpFhicEelP82mR-wxtCxeCsyo&m=Z_3QpPukLPzi1fhsKhScKNAHf915YDXxnD90VRJkM2E&s=1CvGlWrIlnNG_l7Odow647UatRMesQLiyRKYGaS7TsA&e=). The US ambassador to the European Union is emerging as Trump's top bag carrier with the Ukrainians: Witnesses say that [Trump asked Sondland](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__cnn.us11.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3D47c9040f6ff957a59bd88396e-26id-3D0df8c7822c-26e-3Dc21c5029d4&d=DwMFaQ&c=W8uiIUydLnv14aAum3Oieg&r=xtO6fi_5UVVCKa9Y62TpFhicEelP82mR-wxtCxeCsyo&m=Z_3QpPukLPzi1fhsKhScKNAHf915YDXxnD90VRJkM2E&s=311NMw6F7brHBcJf_Y_XYUtVl7HrSojRzlxo7RRwPAY&e=) on a July phone call whether "the investigation" he wanted would be announced. Sondland allegedly replied yes, adding that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky "loves your ass."

Sondland's testimony on Wednesday could gut Trump's entire impeachment defense that there was no quid pro quo. His dilemma: Whether to protect himself or the President?

Trump is not taking any of this terribly well. In an extraordinary moment on Friday he attacked[former US ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__cnn.us11.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3D47c9040f6ff957a59bd88396e-26id-3D871f7b31c1-26e-3Dc21c5029d4&d=DwMFaQ&c=W8uiIUydLnv14aAum3Oieg&r=xtO6fi_5UVVCKa9Y62TpFhicEelP82mR-wxtCxeCsyo&m=Z_3QpPukLPzi1fhsKhScKNAHf915YDXxnD90VRJkM2E&s=oG2GxYa32y8IHWAtKa5eQN-OfLeLBDjJdaIh5n2ZVPI&e=), while she was giving televised evidence. She visibly blanched when told about his tweet, and Democrats are now considering adding a charge of witness tampering to articles of impeachment.

[***Sign up here for more analysis of US politics for global readers***](https://edition.cnn.com/specials/meanwhile-in-america?utm_source=Unknown+List&utm_campaign=6481339f62-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_10_07_09_44&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-6481339f62-)

On Sunday, Trump blasted another witness, [Jennifer Williams, who works in Vice President Mike Pence's office](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__cnn.us11.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3D47c9040f6ff957a59bd88396e-26id-3Dae65929e88-26e-3Dc21c5029d4&d=DwMFaQ&c=W8uiIUydLnv14aAum3Oieg&r=xtO6fi_5UVVCKa9Y62TpFhicEelP82mR-wxtCxeCsyo&m=Z_3QpPukLPzi1fhsKhScKNAHf915YDXxnD90VRJkM2E&s=mlf6yfux4TmWcRm-yswW15B6GpN3Qehrklz8bGc9p3Q&e=), after she criticized his call with Zelensky as "inappropriate." Pence's team -- always careful not to cross Trump -- declined to defend her.

None of this is likely to suddenly cause Republicans to dump Trump in a Senate trial early next year, which is expected to follow the House's vote on impeachment. But each revelation increases the potential political price Republicans could pay for saving him in presidential, House and Senate elections come November.