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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

September 24, 2019

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.,  
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney:

I request immediate details regarding the role that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and you personally, played in blocking nearly \$400 million in security assistance to Ukraine. Critical security assistance funds that were recommended by the Departments of Defense and State, passed with bipartisan majorities in both chambers of Congress, and signed into law by the President were unexplainably held up earlier this year by your office. The President's recent admission that he raised one of his domestic political opponents in a call with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky, and sought to link him to unfounded corruption claims, adds new urgency to Congress' existing questions about why security assistance funds were blocked.

In late June 2019, the State Department and Department of Defense recommended and prepared to obligate \$141.5 million and \$250 million, respectively, to support a range of military and security efforts. These funds, among other things, are designed to help Ukraine bolster training, equipment, and advisory efforts for Ukraine's armed forces, better equip Ukraine to defend against Russian aggression, and improve maritime security in the Black Sea. Yet, OMB blocked the funds from reaching Ukraine. A routine notification from the State Department to OMB, which usually serves as a courtesy, was seized upon in an effort to withhold these funds indefinitely. Ukrainian officials were reportedly "blindsided." For months, despite repeated inquiries from my office and others, administration officials have been unable to offer any policy justification for why these funds were blocked.

Now, as details continue to come out about what the President said on his July 25, 2019, call to President Zelensky, as the President's own lawyer confirms that he was also pushing Ukraine to take action against one of the President's political opponents, and as it is becoming clear that the President in fact pressured Ukrainian officials, we must immediately understand whether, and to what extent, the President and his team converted duly-appropriated United States foreign assistance funds for his personal and political benefit, and what role federal agencies may have played in it.

I request that you respond to the following no later than September 27, 2019:

1. Who made the decision to withhold the funds?
2. Did the President direct you to withhold these funds? If so, what reason did he give?
3. In blocking or approving the blocking of these funds, were you acting as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, or Acting White House Chief of Staff?
4. Did OMB conduct or direct any review of Ukrainian assistance or U.S. policy towards Ukraine?
5. How was the decision communicated to the State Department and to which officials at the State Department was the decision communicated?
6. What reason did OMB or the White House provide to the State Department for blocking the funds?
7. What changed from the time the funds were withheld until they were released in early September, other than the fiscal year was about to come to a close?
8. Please provide all records<sup>1</sup> in OMB's custody or control relating to Ukraine or to any of the funds referenced above received, created, sent, or dated from September 1, 2018, through and including the date of complete response.

I look forward to your complete and prompt response.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez  
Ranking Member

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<sup>1</sup> The term "record" means any written, typed, recorded, graphic, printed, or audio material of any kind, including documents, memoranda, cables, letters, facsimiles, calendar items, spreadsheets; transcripts, notes, or minutes of any meetings, telephone conversations or discussions; and electronic communications and attachments thereto, including emails, text messages, instant messages, direct messages (such as messages over iMessage, WhatsApp, Signal, Viber, Facebook, or Twitter) regardless of whether maintained, sent, or received on a government or non-government (i.e. personal) account.