

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 26, 2020

The Honorable David Malpass
President
World Bank Group
1818 H St. NW
Washington, DC 20433

Dear President Malpass,

We write you today seeking to understand the context of your visit to Kyiv on August 22-23, 2019, as well as additional information on the World Bank's plans for future engagement in Ukraine.

As members of Congress who care deeply about Ukraine, we strongly support the World Bank's initiatives to grow Ukraine's economy and strengthen faith in its democratic institutions. We welcome outreach from the World Bank meant to aid the Ukrainian people. However, we have concerns that your August 23, 2019 meeting with President Volodymyr Zelensky also coincided with the apex (July 25, 2019¹ - September 11, 2019²) of President Trump's campaign to pressure Ukraine's President Zelensky into opening a criminal investigation of his political opponents. Since your visit, the World Bank has approved no new projects in Ukraine,³ so we would like to better understand the purpose of your visit to Kyiv and to share what the Bank can do to assist Ukraine and its people going forward.

Ukraine is at a crossroads in its history. After years of Russian aggression, rampant corruption, and stagnant growth, a democratically elected government has come to power with an overwhelming mandate to deliver a better life for its people. President Zelensky represents a sharp contrast from his predecessors: a newcomer on the political scene who is able to sidestep past fights but is firmly committed to casting off the yoke of Russian oppression. We are pleased with the progress already made by the Zelensky Administration to deliver on much-needed reforms to Ukraine's agriculture and energy sectors, but we remain acutely aware of the great challenges that Ukraine faces to ensure that these reforms have a positive, lasting legacy.

¹ On July 25, 2019, President Trump asked President Zelensky to "look into" Hunter Biden's work with Burisma and urged him to connect with Mr. Giuliani. See: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Unclassified09.2019.pdf>

² After news of the whistleblower complaint reached Congress, three U.S. House committees launched a probe into the circumstances surrounding the pressure campaign (September 9, 2019). The White House released the \$141.5 million hold on military equipment to Ukraine soon after (September 11, 2019). See: <https://intelligence.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=685> and <https://www.gao.gov/assets/710/703909.pdf>

³ According to the World Bank's online repository, the latest project slated for approved in Ukraine was the "Accelerating Private Investment in Agriculture Program" on May 24, 2019. See: https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/projects-list?lang=en&searchTerm=&countrycode_exact=UA

The World Bank has an unmatched record of delivering on both economic and social reforms across the globe. It is uniquely positioned to support President Zelensky in cementing that legacy. Much has already been accomplished through both the Bank's implementation of its FY2017-21 Country Partnership Framework and its ongoing initiatives to improve Ukraine's infrastructure and strengthen its public education system. But it is clear that there is much more work left to be done. Indeed, at a time when faith in Ukrainian public institutions is low and its democratic tradition remains fragile, it is critical that the World Bank continues to engage and support the Zelensky Administration in its reform agenda.


It is for this reason that we are concerned with at least the optics of your August 23, 2019 meeting with President Zelensky. The World Bank is only as strong as the faith that others put in it. Even the perception of impropriety by leaders of the Bank has the potential to undermine its core mission—including its critically important work in Ukraine. Given the massive and multifaceted nature of President Trump's illicit scheme (which involved U.S. government officials, Trump Campaign surrogates, and private citizens who communicated with the Ukrainian Government through both official and unofficial backchannels), we worry that the intent of your trip to Kyiv may be misconstrued by those in the international community.


In light of these concerns, we would encourage you to provide more context around your trip to Kyiv six months ago and to share the World Bank's plans for future engagement in Ukraine:

1. When was the decision made that you would visit Ukraine on August 22-23, 2019?
2. Did you coordinate your visit with anyone other than your staff at the World Bank?
3. Did anyone unaffiliated with the World Bank accompany you on your trip?
4. What deliverables were either proposed or authored as a result of the meeting?
5. Did Satu Kahkonen, World Bank Director for Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine, accompany you to all your meetings?
6. Did you, or anyone on your staff, discuss Burisma, Viktor Shokin, or Hunter Biden with either President Zelensky or any other Ukrainian official?
7. What, if any, proposals for World Bank projects affecting Ukraine have been placed in the approval pipeline in the last six months?
8. What, if any, World Bank projects affecting Ukraine have been either postponed or suspended in the last six months?
9. What are the World Bank's plans for future engagement in Ukraine following the successful implementation of its FY2017-2021 Country Partnership Framework?

We thank you in advance and ask that you respond to this letter by March 31, 2020.

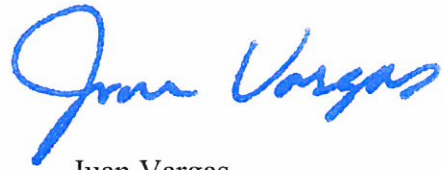
Sincerely,


Denny Heck
Member of Congress

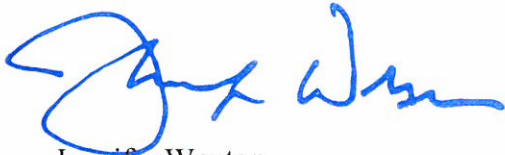

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