

# Democratic demands test Trump impeachment strategy

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J. Scott Applewhite/AP Photo

**House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., joins Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., right, at a news conference as House Democrats move on depositions in the impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump. In an unusual show of anger, Trump defended his phone call with the president of Ukraine and said Schiff may have committed treason by investigating the matter.**

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is rapidly confronting a decision at the core of House Democrats' nascent impeachment inquiry: Should he comply with congressional demands and risk disclosure of embarrassing information? Or should he delay and possibly deepen his legal and political predicament?

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Rep. Adam Schiff, the intelligence committee chairman, issued a blunt warning to the president Wednesday, threatening to make White House defiance of a congressional request for testimony and documents potential grounds for an article of impeachment.

With the prospect of new subpoenas coming as soon as Friday, Trump's official policy of deliberate non-cooperation, and his view of executive power, could be tested quickly.

"We want to make it abundantly clear that any effort by (Secretary of State Mike Pompeo), by the president or anyone else to interfere with the Congress' ability to call before it relevant witnesses will be considered as evidence of obstruction of the lawful functions of Congress," Schiff said in a Wednesday news conference.

For his part, Trump maintained, "Well, I always cooperate," without explicitly saying he would comply with the request. He then derided Pelosi, saying she "hands out subpoenas like they're cookies."

The White House strategy toward congressio-

nal oversight has often been open scorn. The president's aides have ignored document requests and subpoenas, invoked executive privilege — so far as to argue that executive privilege extends to informal presidential advisers who've never held White House roles — and all but dared Democrats to hold them in contempt.

As the impeachment inquiry accelerates, the White House's stonewalling appears likely to continue.

"This is a hoax," Trump said, immediately after professing his commitment to cooperation. He then launched into a diatribe on the impeachment inquiry, which has centered on his request for Ukraine's president to assist in digging up dirt on former Vice President Joe Biden. "This is the greatest hoax. This is just a continuation of what's been playing out since my election."

In public and private, Trump has angrily dismissed the impeachment investigation as an illegitimate,

purely partisan effort to topple him, according to three White House officials not authorized to speak about private conversations. And he praised Pompeo's initial, combative response to the Democrats' requests this week, one of the officials said.

It's part of an emerging political and legal strategy informed by Trump's time in the two-year crucible of the special counsel's Russia investigation.

The president's first team of lawyers was inclined to cooperate with Robert Mueller, believing it would help bring the investigation to a swift conclusion. But once Jay Sekulow and Rudy Giuliani took over, they largely ceased cooperation, attacked Mueller's integrity and shielded Trump from testifying in person. They believe the moves inoculated the president legally and solidified his standing politically. Giuliani and Sekulow remain part of the president's outside counsel.

Trump's legal team privately cheered as the Mueller investigation bled into its third year in 2019 — in part because of their stall tactics on whether Trump would consent to the Mueller interview. Now they are bent on ensuring the current probe is anything but the quick process desired by Democrats, who are wary of its impact on the 2020 presidential campaign.

"We're not fooling around here," Schiff said. "We don't want this to drag on for months and months, which appears to be the administration's strategy."

White House allies argue that the Democratic demands are overly broad and raise issues of executive privilege and immunity, jeopardizing the longstanding interests of the co-equal branch of government. But Democrats are making the precise counter-argument, that Trump is claiming superiority of the executive branch over the legislative in a manner that defies the Constitution.

It's a foot-dragging response that also serves Trump's political interests — he has hoped to use impeachment as a rallying cry for his supporter base in the election year.

Democrats have sought to use their declared impeachment investigation to bolster their case to access all sorts of documents from the administration, most recently secret grand jury information that underpinned Mueller's report. And where courts have generally required congressional oversight requests to demonstrate a legitimate legislative purpose, impeachment requests could be wide-ranging.

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## Brewery: 'We walk into an abandoned property, pick it back up (and) create jobs'

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George on Duane Street. With a growing reputation as one of the Pacific Northwest's top craft breweries, the partners in 2009 purchased the entire city block, including the Fort George and Lovell buildings.

Harris and Nemlowill also purchased a plot of land at the North Coast Business Park in Warrenton for a distribution center and pub. But rumors have long swirled they had eyes for Astoria Warehousing.

"We saw 25 people let go, and what we're really trying to do is kind (of) more of what we've already been doing at Fort George," Nemlowill said. "We walk into an abandoned property, pick it back up (and) create jobs."

The property near Uniontown, listed at \$8.8 million, includes more than 5 acres of land, 7 acres over the Columbia

River and four large warehouses totaling 120,000 square feet. Fort George's purchase depended on getting \$1 million from Business Oregon, the state's economic development agency, to clean up contamination from an adjacent properties.

City councilors shared their joy at the property going to a local company with a proven track record of creating jobs and giving back to the community. Mayor Bruce Jones thanked state Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, for helping secure the grant in the last legislative session.

"I really think this is looking like this is going to be a great outcome for the property, both in local ownership, which is a positive, and that that warehouse area will actually have activity as opposed to no activity," City Councilor Tom Brownson said. "I couldn't ask for a better solution for that property."

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## Rentals: Process was somewhat unusual

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Tiffany Mitchell, D-Astoria. She said she came to see the City Council discuss what she thinks "impacts so many of our smaller communities, particularly vacation communities."

The council unanimously voted to approve the ordinance as amended, however, the process was somewhat unusual.

Earlier in the meeting,

there was not unanimous approval of the amendment. Councilor Robin Risley and Councilor Brandon Ogilvie voted against the changes, with Risley citing flaws she saw with the procedure. The councilors decided to table the motion for the next meeting.

However, later in the evening, the city attorney asked councilors to redo the motions to make sure the procedure was done cor-

rectly. When the roll was called again, Risley and Ogilvie changed their votes.

City councilors then moved to adopt the ordinance as amended.

"What I was objecting with was that we didn't get the information for the public in time, and so I wanted to make a point of that," Risley said afterward. "But as I saw how everyone was voting, I thought, 'Let's move on.'"

## Port: Moving out of Pier 1 offices next month

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The highest priority is repairing the rapidly deteriorating Pier 2, where seafood processing companies employ hundreds during busy fishing seasons. Port staff have estimated the pier needs at least \$7 million in repairs.

Commissioner Robert Stevens had taken issue with references throughout the document to the Port's past misdeeds and political dramas. McArthur took a hard line that the references to the past were a necessary acknowledgement to show the Port is making amends and moving forward. Stevens on Tuesday asked for some minor, last-minute changes but otherwise joined other Port commissioners in praising McArthur's work.

"It's just my job," McArthur responded with a smile.

"I think she's done more than her job," said Dirk

Rohne, the commission's president. "I think she's gone above and beyond to help us move forward."

Melanie Olson, a regional development officer with Business Oregon, said it would take four to six weeks to approve the plan. Approval could be delayed by the recent retirement of Dave Harlan, former director of ports for Business Oregon.

Rohne called on the Port to continually refer to the strategic plan and make changes as the agency's situation hopefully improves.

"If there's more good than bad, we'll take out bad and put in good," he said.

Sue Transue, the Port's director of terminal and commercial services, said the Port is reviewing its professional services agreement with Bruce Conner, the agency's cruise ship marketer.

Conner was recently

fined by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission for not disclosing his role with the Port and how it might benefit his company, Sundial Travel, which markets shore excursions to cruise lines. The Port is also working on new leases for Sundial Travel and the Clatsop Cruise Hosts, she said.

The Port will begin next month moving out of its offices on the third floor of Pier 1 and back into its former headquarters in the Gateway Building on Gateway Avenue. The Port will lease the third-floor offices on Pier 1 to health care group Watershed Wellness starting in December.

The Port is keeping open applications for a permanent advisory finance committee it is forming to help advise the agency. Applications for the committee closed Wednesday with only three candidates from the community out of the five necessary.

## Shooting Stars: Process will take six months

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"Because if I'm experiencing this then I'm sure there's other directors having the same issues and running into the same stumbling blocks," she said.

Giliga said the state issued Shooting Stars a 30-day temporary license. However, the process outlined in the settlement agreement will take six months.

Giliga is thankful for a resolution, but she said par-

ents are still a little on edge.

"The parents are settled," she said. "But I think they're still kind of wary because they had that scare and they know it could happen again to anywhere they go."

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