

CONSIDER HOW PAUL MANAFORT'S FATE MAY HAVE AFFECTED MARIE YOVANOVITCH

WaPo has published fired Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch's prepared statement from her deposition today. It's a powerful statement from a committed public servant – so go read it yourself.

But reporters have started focusing on a detail Yovanovitch included, but exclusively as it relates to yesterday's events. When she asked Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan why she had been withdrawn with almost no notice, he told her Trump had been pressuring State to do so since Summer 2018.

Finally, after being asked by the Department in early March to extend my tour until 2020, I was then abruptly told in late April to come back to Washington from Ukraine "on the next plane." You will understandably want to ask why my posting ended so suddenly. I wanted to learn that too, and I tried to find out. I met with the Deputy Secretary of State, who informed me of the curtailment of my term. He said that the President had lost confidence in me and no longer wished me to serve as his ambassador. He added that there had been a concerted campaign against me, and that the Department had been under pressure from the President to remove me since the Summer of 2018. He also said that I had done nothing wrong and that this was not like other situations where he had recalled ambassadors for cause.

It is true that these events would have shortly followed the first efforts from Lev Parnas and

Igor Fruman to cultivate Trump and his “free” lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, whom Trump “hired” (for free) in April.

At almost precisely that time, in April 2018, Ukraine stopped cooperating with Mueller on the Manafort prosecution, possibly in response to the approval of an export license for Javelin missiles, one of the same things Trump used again this summer to extort Ukraine.

Nevertheless, Trump’s efforts to fire Yovanovitch took place even while – in spite of Ukraine’s halt to their cooperation – things started going south for the President’s former campaign manager.

The government first moved to revoke Manafort’s bail because he was tampering with witnesses on June 4. Amy Berman Jackson sent him to jail (first club fed, then after his lawyers got cute, Alexandria jail) on June 15. Jurors in EDVA returned a guilty verdict on August 21. And on September 14, Manafort entered into what purported to be a cooperation agreement with Mueller’s prosecutors (but what, instead, turned out to be an intelligence gathering effort on what they knew and wanted to know, intelligence he shared with Trump). Throughout that period, Trump expressed real worry that Manafort would really flip on him.

As I will show, virtually everything we know about Manafort’s purported cooperation effort connects, in some way, to this Ukraine affair. Plus, we know that Rudy Giuliani was consulting with Manafort as he pursued his schemes. And Manafort’s lawyer Kevin Downing – the same one coordinating on these issues with Rudy – represented Parnas and Fruman in their EDVA appearance yesterday.

This Ukraine story is nothing more than the continuation of the Russian story, and much of it goes through Paul Manafort. Thus, it’s not surprising that as it looked increasingly likely that Manafort would pay for his crimes, and might implicate Trump in them, Trump tried to

shut down one area of pressure.

Parnas and Fruman are likely just facilitators to make that happen.