

Harry's Rant of the Month

"The Case for Impeachment"

Several members of Congress have stated recently, in frustration, "We don't have a king in this country." They are expressing concern about the various attempts in our time to increase the powers of the Presidency. They are concerned about the division of powers set up by the Constitution, the system of "checks and balances" put in place to limit the powers of the executive branch of the government.

The fact that we don't have a king in this country needs to be made clear, now more than ever, and that is the heart of the case for the impeachment of the current acting president. Actually we've been needing impeachment for more than thirty years, but especially lately.

Take Nixon, for starters. He was guilty of aiding and abetting the burglary of the Democratic National Headquarters in the Watergate Hotel, and then lying about it in the attempted cover-up. His lies about the Vietnam War were never part of the case for impeachment. But he wasn't impeached. He was allowed to resign, even though there's no provision for such a thing in the Constitution. The public never found out exactly what he was accused of, what really had happened, what was or was not allowed. Future presidents had no opportunity to learn exactly what behavior was not permitted. When Ford pardoned Nixon, it was made worse. There was no trial, no verdict, no way to learn what had gone wrong.

Take Reagan, for another blatant instance of the need for impeachment. Congress had expressly forbidden any U.S. involvement in the war in Nicaragua. Reagan himself had imposed an arms embargo against Iran. Iran was an oil-rich country which had thrown out the U.S.-installed king ["Shah" in their language], who had been put in place after the CIA had arranged the coup which removed the elected president of that country earlier. Reagan broke both laws at once, selling arms to the Ayatollah of Iran and funneling the money to the Somocista "contras" in Nicaragua.

There was no impeachment, although it was badly needed, not to punish Reagan, who was already far advanced into Alzheimer's syndrome, but to clarify what is and what is not permitted in presidential behavior. And once again, pardons of all and sundry, especially Weinberger, made it worse. There was no way for future presidents to learn from the situation.

Take Clinton. Ken Starr's fishing expedition from Whitewater to the White House kept Clinton off balance, and he finally was impeached. But the nation decided that a blow job in the Oval Office was not quite the same as the previously unpunished high crimes and misdemeanors of his predecessors, which had left thousands of innocent people quite dead. The result was that Clinton was not removed from office, and the impeachment process itself was made to seem silly in the eyes of many.

Take the Acting President. The case for impeachment is now crucial. The nation needs to ascertain what is permitted in a president and what isn't. What is permitted?

- Pre-emptive War
- Lying about the reasons for going to war
- Torture
- Domestic spying on U.S. citizens
- Suspension of habeas corpus
- Politicization of the justice system

Elections do not have any effect on the Acting President. Why would they? He is in office because of two stolen elections. What the sovereign people believe and want doesn't matter one bit to him. So, he must be removed. The impeachment process is not a distraction from our serious problems. We can't get at any serious problems until he is gone, and waiting almost two years is unwise. We as a nation need to decide, and make clear to this president and all future presidents that this power grab will not be permitted. We do not have a king in this country. Some object that impeachment will weaken the Presidency. Yes! That's exactly the idea. The imperial presidency [they first used that phrase when another consummate liar, Lyndon Johnson, held the office] must be repudiated. When the Second American Republic is organized, perhaps sometime after this interim Imperial Period is concluded, the Executive Branch should be headed by a Committee of Five, any four of whom must agree before any action at all can be taken. Impeachment papers should be drawn up in advance, with the blanks for the date and the listing of high crimes and misdemeanors to be filled in later, as needed. Weaken! Weaken! We don't have a king in this country. We don't want one. We don't believe in them. Or queens either.

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