

Talk of Impeachment

By Alan Caruba

“Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It would be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience.”

-- C. S. Lewis (1898 - 1963)



Jeffrey T. Kuhner, president of the Edmund Burke Institute, a Washington, D.C. think tank, and a columnist at The Washington Times, might as well have rolled a grenade down the main aisle of the House of Representatives chamber. On March 19 he wrote a column titled, “Impeach the President?”

It is a bold proposal and would end much of the agony that President Obama has inflicted on Americans. In lesser developed nations a leader as unpopular as Obama would risk being seized by a mob and dragged through the streets before being hung.

Of course, we don't do that kind of thing and, truth be told, impeachment proceedings have been rare in American history and both have failed.

Only two presidents have faced impeachment. One was Andrew Johnson who became president upon the assassination of Lincoln. Taking power in the wake of the Civil War, he was deemed to be too friendly to the defeated South. His removal from office in 1868 was defeated by a single vote.

The other president to be impeached was Bill Clinton in 1998. The charges brought against him included perjury, obstruction of justice, and malfeasance in office. He was no doubt guilty of all three, but the proceeding was initiated primarily as the result of the Monica Lewinsky scandal and a lawsuit brought by Paula Jones.

It was the considered judgment of the Senate that his failure to keep his penis in his pants did not rise to the punishment of losing his job. In hindsight, the senators might have been mindful that they would be installing Al Gore, the vice president, if they removed Clinton.

I cite this to demonstrate that impeaching Barack Obama—while probably the right thing to do—would be an impossibility in a Senate and House controlled by Democrats.

Not to go all legal on you, but Article II, Section 4 of the Constitution says, “The President, Vice President, and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and, Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.”

Constitutional lawyers deem “High Crimes and Misdemeanors” as acts of criminality in which a law was broken; abuses of power; and something called a “violation of public trust” as defined by Alexander Hamilton in the Federalist Papers. The definition of this is, for all intents and purposes, whatever the House of Representatives say it is. These are,

after all, folks who can't even kick Charlie Rangel out on his kiester.

The two acts of impeachment issued in the past cited exceeding the constitutional bounds of the powers of the office of president; behavior that is considered grossly incompatible with the function and purpose of the office; and using the power of the office for an improper purpose or for personal gain.

Being fellated in the Oval Office by a White House intern did not turn out to be sufficiently grossly incompatible in 1998. Clinton finished his second term, pardoned a lot of felons, and probably had to be restrained from leaving with the White House silver and chinaware.

Kuhner, however, made a very strong case for impeaching Obama. He accused the president of "imposing a leftist revolution" with the de facto nationalization of "key sectors of American life—the big banks, financial institutions, the automakers, large tracts of energy-rich land from Montana to New Mexico" were cited as examples.

The ugliness concerning the healthcare "reform" legislation and the proposed Cap-and-Trade legislation was cited as Obama's willingness "to devour his presidency, his party's congressional majority and—most disturbing—our democratic institutional safeguards to enact" both pieces of legislation.

"He is a reckless ideologue who is willing to sacrifice the country's stability in pursuit of a socialist utopia."

That is, in fact, what both Stalin did in Russia and Mao did in China. Both inflicted death in the millions and economic ruin on both societies.

The question, however, is whether the process of impeachment can be initiated and, once commenced, whether a case could be made to depose Obama. That is not likely to happen. It has nothing to do with whether a just case can be made, but because of the vast corruption of the political process and the moral decay Americans are witnessing in the Democrat Party.

We are now living in a state of constant crisis in America. That is precisely the way the White House likes it. Such conditions could lead to a complete seizure of power in the name of protecting the Republic.

It worked in Nazi Germany in the last century. It worked in Saddam Hussein's Iraq. It worked in Cuba. And it is at work today in Venezuela.

Despotism never sleeps.

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