

Impeachment: No More Investigations Please !

Kidnapping innocent people, denying justice to prisoners, torturing, murdering, circumventing U.S. and international law...

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In a December 31, 2007, editorial, the New York Times faulted the current president and vice president of the United States for kidnapping innocent people, denying justice to prisoners, torturing, murdering, circumventing U.S. and international law, spying in violation of the Fourth Amendment, and basing their actions on "imperial fantasies."

Bush's and Cheney's crimes stand open on the table before us. Their lies about Iraqi ties to al Qaeda are on videotape and in writing, and they continue to make them to this day. Their claims about Iraqi weapons have been shown in every detail to have been, not mistakes, but lies. Their threats to and lies about Iran are on videotape. Bush being warned about Katrina and claiming he was not are on videotape. Bush lying about illegal spying and later confessing to it are on videotape. A federal court has ruled that spying to be a felony. The Supreme Court has ruled Bush and Cheney's system of detentions unconstitutional. Torture, openly advocated for by Bush and Cheney and their staffs, is documented by victims, witnesses, and public photographs. Torture was always illegal and has been repeatedly recriminalized under Bush and Cheney. Bush has reversed laws with signing statements. Those statements are posted on the White House website, and a GAO report found that with 30 percent of Bush's signing statements in which he announces his right to break laws, he has in fact proceeded to break those laws. For these and many other offenses, no investigation is needed because no better evidence is even conceivable. And rather than taking three months, the impeachment of Cheney or Bush could be completed in a day.

But the investigations that Congress has pursued at its glacial pace over the past 12 months, while thousands upon thousands died, have produced another impeachable offense, the refusal to comply with subpoenas. That is what President Richard Nixon did; and his refusal to comply with subpoenas constituted the offense cited in one of the three Articles of Impeachment approved by the House Judiciary Committee on July 27, 1974 as warranting "impeachment and trial, and removal from office."

Bush and Cheney are claiming executive privilege. Nixon also tried that one. It didn't work then; and it won't work now. Condoleezza Rice is claiming, with more frankness, that she's just not inclined to comply. Even Nancy Pelosi ought to understand by now that the removal of the threat of impeachment is what empowers the White House to ignore subpoenas, and that the threat of impeaching the White House for its stonewalling would break down the wall even before we reached impeachment.

And Bush and Cheney have gone further by announcing on July 19, 2007, that the Justice Department will not enforce any contempt of Congress proceedings. So, that alternative to

impeachment would be out even if Pelosi were willing to allow a vote on it.

There are well-intentioned impeachment advocates who want to hold yet more hearings without the I word, with the idea that then the public will demand impeachment (as if the public hasn't already demanded impeachment).

These people are largely oblivious to the fact that the Congress has held dozens of hearings on impeachable offenses over the past 12 months. Holding more will do nothing but eat up the clock. Most of the ones they've already done didn't even make it onto C-Span. Most invited witnesses refused to show. Most subpoenaed witnesses refused to show. Most of the significant witnesses who have shown up have either refused to answer questions or have arrogantly asserted unconstitutional power knowing Congress would not do anything about it.

There is zero chance of new information making impeachment happen. That claim has been made over and over again as we've learned of war lies, spying, detentions, torture, murder, gang rape, political firings, signing statements, refusals to comply with subpoenas, destruction of tapes, commuting of sentences, etc.

The only thing likely to put hearings on TV or to compel witnesses to appear is to make the hearings impeachment hearings. I wish this were not the case, but it is. Congressman Jerrold Nadler held hearings on "The Constitution in Crisis" last summer. Did you know that?

My brothers and sisters, you can't crawl out from under a rock at this late date, go to one meeting, hear about good intentions to find a compromise and have confidence you're not being played. At least I wouldn't if I were you.

What will help make contempt or moderately interesting hearings happen will be unrelenting public pressure for impeachment.

Yes, we need good cops as well as bad cops in this effort. We have to talk with the committee members. But we don't have to believe every word they say or fail to do minimal research.

Contempt votes don't happen without Pelosi, and the Justice Department has already said it will not enforce anyway.

What can happen is impeachment, but the enemy is the clock. We don't have time to waste on the same things we've wasted the past few years on. I'm honestly sorry about that. It's not my fault.

If you want impeachment, insist on impeachment, and do it now.

Robert Wexler is pushing forward within the Judiciary Committee. Ask your representative to sign his letter to Conyers.

Dennis Kucinich will introduce Bush Articles of Impeachment on Monday. Ask your representative to co-sponsor, and ask the media to wake up!

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