

The Impeachment Farce Limpes Along to Its Anticlimax

All but the most committed Trump haters have grown tired of the spurious investigation and its unvarnished bias against the president.

by Conrad Black



You may read it here first: This sordid, contemptible impeachment ruse is finally disintegrating. It was another fraud, and I predict that this time the polls will move clearly in the president's favor. There are limits to how often his enemies can get the public and the world to the edges of their chairs with their fantastic accusations. *The Economist*, a long-respected magazine in earlier times, told us a year ago that the Trump presidency was hanging on the thread of Michael Cohen's testimony. Most of the U.S. media gave the public to understand for two years that there was a high

chance that he would be thrown out once the Mueller investigation established his "treasonous" links to the Russians. Trump appalls many reasonable people by some of his antics and utterances, but his supporters are rock-solid at only slightly less than half the country, and enough to have got him elected. But the vitriolic antagonism of about 90 percent of the media, and the fear and loathing of the political class, which he assaulted in its entirety, have sustained an artificial levitation of morbid expectation that he will be overthrown and removed.

My research and intuition indicate that we have reached a turning point, and that all but the outright Trump-haters are disconcerted, and in growing numbers disgusted, by the cumulative pettiness, nastiness, and dishonesty of the assault on this president. As the longest-serving occupant of the office, Franklin D. Roosevelt, said, "The president is, preeminently, the head of the American people." This fact is frequently lost sight of in partisan skirmishing, but it is always capable of being asserted if the facts warrant. This president has only, to my recollection, addressed the whole country on a national issue from his office once, and his appearance then was unexceptionable. However ill-considered some of his comments may have seemed (and been), he has not squandered or abused his ability to ascend to that role and has endured these three years of contumely and spurious challenge somewhat equably. He has presumably believed that eventually the effort to portray and convict him as an illegitimate felon would be seen as an outrage.

I believe the country is now sick of it. To be sure, Trump has exhausted even his supporters; it is hard work defending him, and that is why he generally outperforms the polls. But the country is beginning to see that it has been duped. There are a couple of almost hidden traits of the American people that are profound and imperishable and capable of being stirred, and that once aroused are invincible. One is the puritanical

conscience of the country. Despite cynicism, hucksterism, all the gaucheries and inanities of banal and often craven political hacks, the plagues of bad taste, and the inundation of public life with money, often in unwholesome interests, almost all Americans fundamentally believe in America and all its legitimate institutions. For reasons as familiar to readers as they are to me, this presidency has not been the beneficiary of this inbred respect for the institutions of national public life. But the instantly confected fraud of an impeachable offense in the president's relations with Ukraine and its president has now snapped the patience and indulgence of all but the Trump-haters so rabid they should be in straitjackets and padded cells. (There are millions of them, but they aren't more than about a quarter of the adult population.)

A shabby fraud launched by a partisan whistleblower who is acting on hearsay about an innocuous telephone call whose summary, though perhaps not entirely complete, was immediately released to the public cannot go much farther. It has been kept alive by a Star Chamber in which the president is not represented and the Republican questioning and calling of witnesses is done at the behest of the Democratic leadership. It cannot produce a serious offense that the president could actually be accused of committing, and now it is to be sustained by a dubious vote that will only slightly alter its almost totalitarian one-sidedness. This ghastly farce has been presided over by a pathological public liar, Representative Adam Schiff (D., Calif.), who has outdone even his previous fiasco of failing to produce his "conclusive evidence" of the president's "treason" with Russia. The country will not tolerate seeing its elected leader defamed and smeared by odious little people who would strip him of his elected office.

It is one thing to resent and disparage some of the president's foibles, and it is regrettable but inevitable that

many are so offended by what they take to be his garishness and bluster that they are prepared to believe negative views of Trump despite his undeniable successes in dealing with the economy, illegal immigration, nuclear non-proliferation, trade, avoidance of Green madness, and intelligent judicial appointments. But the American people will not stand for the president and his wife being booed at a baseball game; they will not stand for morally bankrupt congressmen operating a constitutional desecration of an impeachment inquiry; they will not stand for national political media that denounce the president of the United States for describing as a coward an infamous terrorist who murdered three children as he committed suicide. They will not abide a long-influential newspaper (the *Washington Post*) that headlined the violent death of the world's leading terrorist as "Austere Religious Scholar Dies at 48."

In these wildly unjustified orgies of hate and misinformation, the country will consider Trump describing some of his enemies as "human scum" as the lesser of evils, or even excusable (and accurate). The country wants the president to address national questions with calm and reasonable displays of leadership, as when President Franklin Roosevelt called for the country to be "the great arsenal of democracy," President Truman revealed the use of the atomic bomb, President Eisenhower deployed elite Army units to integrate schools in Little Rock, Ark., President Kennedy explained the Cuban missile crisis, President Johnson called for the enactment of civil-rights legislation, President Nixon asked the support of the "silent majority" in disengaging from Vietnam, and President Reagan spoke of the astronauts who had died. And now, finally, the majority realizes that the chief culprits for the venomous indignity of the political atmosphere are the president's enemies. At a certain point, very late and very far down on the behavioral scale, the country demands that the president be treated with the dignity due to the person they have chosen to be not just the leader of the government but the

personification of the state, the head of the people, as Roosevelt said. Whatever else he may be, Donald Trump is the rightful president, and those who don't like it can vote against him next year.

The media terror has gone too far, and the executioners of the innocent are about to be executed by the survivors; this is the pattern of revolutionary movements that frighten and revolt their former partisans. The reassuring thing is that the system is working, as the eminent lawyer Alan Dershowitz has remarked. The executive branch and part of the legislative branch are at loggerheads. I doubt that the House of Representatives can pass an article of impeachment that accuses the president of an offense worthy of his removal from office, not that there is any chance on what is now public that he will be convicted of anything by the Senate. If the Schiff sleaze-cabal can't get a real charge adopted, there may instead be a pallid attempt at a vote of censure, which will not be taken up by the Senate.

Under any scenario, the wheels are coming off this disgraceful Democratic garbage cart in all directions. Impeachment will fizzle ignominiously while the former administration is arraigned on serious charges from the Russian scandal, and the Democrats will wallow in their squalid failure to produce a feasible candidate for the White House. Normalcy, for which the country longs, is not dead; it is reawakening at last.

First published in