

If They Impeach Trump ... Who Loses?

Once again Donald Trump has done what he does so well: show bad judgment.

Quid pro quo or no quid pro quo, he should not have encouraged the leader of a foreign country to investigate a domestic political opponent, “especially,” as an editorial in the Wall Street Journal points out, since Mr. Trump is “a President whose opponents sought foreign dirt to defeat him in 2016.”

You’d think a “stable genius” would have thought about that.

But is what he told the President of Ukraine in that phone conversation an impeachable offense? That depends on whether the Democrats want to make it an impeachable offense. A lot of them, after all, would impeach the president if he dropped a chewing gum wrapper on the sidewalk. The allegations here, to be fair, are more serious than littering.

But Democrats might want to think twice before jumping on the impeachment train. It might careen off the rails and do more harm to them than to the president.

Polls show that most voters are against impeachment, especially voters in the 43 Republican districts Democrats won in 2018. But the biggest loser if Democrats actually cross the Rubicon and impeach the president, may be the “moderate” Democratic frontrunner who wants his job: Joe Biden.

You can be sure that when Democrats start investigating Donald Trump’s relationship with Ukraine, Republicans won’t just sit there like potted plants.

They will remind everyone that in 2016 then-vice president Biden threatened to withhold \$1 billion in U.S. loan

guarantees to Ukraine if the government did not fire the country's top prosecutor. Here's how the New York Times reported the episode: "Among those who had a stake in the outcome was Hunter Biden [the vice president's son] ... who at the time was on the board of an energy company owned by a Ukrainian oligarch who had been in the sights of the fired prosecutor general."

Perhaps you've seen the video of Biden bragging about how he got the prosecutor fired. "I looked at them and said, 'I'm leaving in six hours. If the prosecutor is not fired, you're not getting the money.' Well, son of a bitch. He got fired."

Just a few days ago, a reporter asked Biden if he ever talked to his son about his involvement with the Ukrainian energy company? "I have never spoken to my son about his overseas business dealings," Biden replied.

Really? Then why did his son tell the New Yorker that his father expressed concern about his job with the Ukrainian energy company? "Dad said, 'I hope you know what you are doing,' and I said, 'I do.'" Someone's not telling the truth and it looks like it's Hunter's dad who's lying.

The New Yorker goes on to tell us that in December 2015, as Joe Biden was preparing to return to Ukraine, Amos Hochstein, the Obama Administration's special envoy for energy policy, raised the sticky matter of his son's position on the board of the energy company with the vice president.

As Mark Thiessen puts it in his Washington Post column, "So, Biden was fully aware of his son's involvement with Burisma when he pressured Ukraine to fire the prosecutor in 2016. He should have known that his using U.S. aid as leverage to force the prosecutor's dismissal would create, at a bare minimum, the appearance of a conflict of interest."

So whether Joe Biden actually did anything improper is almost beside the point. The appearance of impropriety is bad

enough.

And the firing of the prosecutor aside – many countries, not just the U.S., were unhappy with how he was handling corruption in Ukraine – there's still the suspicious matter of how Hunter Biden got the job in the first place ... which he secured just a few weeks after his father, the vice president, went to Ukraine in 2014 to urge the government to increase its production of national gas. How much experience did Hunter have when it comes to the natural gas business? Try, none. And still, he reportedly got paid \$50,000 a month for doing who knows what.

How's any of this going to make Joe Biden look good?

So if the ever-growing Impeach Trump wing of the Democratic Party wants to make a big deal out of Donald Trump's phone call with the Ukrainian president, they might want to play the movie through all the way to the end. How, for example, would candidate Joe Biden be able to stand on the stage, side by side with Mr. Trump, and bring up Ukraine at a presidential debate – without it ricocheting back and smacking him right in the face?

Despite all the potential pitfalls, there's a good chance Democrats will impeach the president – and he might actually deserve to be impeached if we learn that there's more yet to be uncovered – but he won't be convicted ... and he'll remain in office.

But Joe Biden, with his own Ukrainian baggage, may be seen as a problem for Democratic primary voters, a distraction they can do without ... which means he may lose the nomination along with his last chance to be president.

Imagine that: Democrats try to bring down the president and in the process they knock off the candidate with the best shot at defeating him.

It's called irony.