

He May Lose the Impeachment Battle ... But Win the Re-election War

Let me begin, my friends, by telling you what this column is *not* about. It is not about whether President Trump should be impeached. Your mind is already made up on that and there's not much I could offer, either for or against, that would sway your opinion. Besides, just between us, I'm not sure how I feel about impeaching a president over anything short of treason, bribery or shooting someone on Fifth Avenue.

And bribery should be something clear. Like pornography it should be something we can all viscerally grasp – something like the president taking money in an envelope from a sleazy lobbyist who wants him to issue an executive order that would help his client.

Or actually colluding with a foreign power, like the Russians, to throw a presidential election; that's clearly an impeachable offense.

It sure looks like President Trump strong-armed the Ukrainian president; that he implied that Ukraine would only get the U.S. financial aid it desperately needed if their government agreed to announce an investigation into the Bidens.

But is that a clear-cut case of bribery? Or is that phone call just the latest excuse the president has given his political enemies to bring him down? And wouldn't we all feel better about Democrat motives if they weren't trying to impeach the president from the moment he took the oath of office?

Right after his inauguration, Mr. Trump's opponents were concocting plans to impeach him based on what they saw as

conflicts of interest stemming from his ability to use his position as president to promote "Trump-branded businesses" – a violation, they said, of the Emoluments Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Then they wanted to impeach him because he colluded with the Russians. Except Robert Mueller said he didn't.

Then there was obstruction of justice in connection with the Mueller investigation.

Some Democrats even want the president impeached for his supposedly racist remarks.

Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib tweeted that, "The words 'racist abuse of power' should be part of the articles of impeachment. Not including this type of abuse based on racism will be unjust to the children caged at the border & all the communities who have faced violence b/c of his actions."

And Congressman Al Green, the first House member to support impeaching the president, made a similar argument, saying he wants to see "at least one article of impeachment concerning the president's bigotry infused into policy that is harming our society."

So the resistance wanted Donald Trump out from the moment he was in. To them, his real impeachable offense was beating Hillary Clinton. And now they finally crossed the Rubicon. Any day now Donald Trump almost certainly will be only the third president in our entire history to be impeached.

As for bribery, which will be one of the articles of impeachment, Adam Schiff told NPR that bribery, when it was written into the Constitution, "connoted the breach of the public trust in a way where you're offering official acts for some personal or political reason, not in the national interest."

If that's the definition of bribery, then why isn't Joe Biden also guilty of bribery?

As the Wall Street Journal puts it in an editorial that runs under the headline, "Schiff Impeaches Biden," Joe Biden "has admitted that he threatened Ukrainian officials with the denial of U.S. aid if they didn't fire a prosecutor who was investigating Burisma, which was paying Hunter Biden some \$50,000 a month. That sure looks like an official act that had 'some personal or political reason,' under the Schiff definition."

In other words, isn't it possible that the president wasn't asking for an investigation into a *political rival* as Democrats and their media allies like to describe Mr. Biden?

What if he was asking for an investigation into a *former vice president* who while he was supposed to be pushing Ukraine to clean up its corruption, he allowed his son to receive a hefty salary from a Ukrainian company under investigation for ... *corruption* – a son, by the way, who had no qualifications for the job, other than his last name?

Democrats may dismiss that contention as nothing more than a nice try by Republicans to cover up Donald Trump's supposed abuse of power. But we probably will hear something like it from the president's defense team when he stands trial in the Senate.

And as I recently wrote, Democrats might want to consider the possibility that when one of their own is president some day, his or her political enemies might find throwing a gum wrapper on Pennsylvania Avenue a high crime or misdemeanor.

For the record, if being vulgar and nasty and petty and chronically dishonest were impeachable offenses, I'd vote to throw Donald Trump out of the Oval Office. Until that day, I'm with Nancy Pelosi – the Nancy Pelosi who worried about what partisan impeachment would do to our country.

“Unless there’s something so compelling and overwhelming and bipartisan, I don’t think we should go down that path, because it divides the country.”

Yes, she said that last March, before the president had that controversial phone chat with his Ukrainian counterpart. Still, the impeachment of President Trump will not be bipartisan and it will divide the country. If you think we’re polarized now just wait until Democrats impeach Donald Trump.

And before this is over, Nancy Pelosi may come to regret her newfound support for impeachment. Adam Schiff and Jerry Nadler and the rest of Mrs. Pelosi’s caucus may salivate at the idea of humiliating a president who spends way too much time humiliating his enemies – but polls show that while America in general is split on impeachment, voters in battleground states, where the election will be won or lost, don’t share the Democrat’s passion for impeaching the president.

In battleground states like Arizona, Florida, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina and Wisconsin, a least a dozen polls found that an average of 44 percent of those surveyed supported impeachment while 50 percent opposed.

Right now, it looks like Donald Trump will lose the impeachment battle. But before this is over, the partisan decision to impeach the president may lead him to victory in the 2020 election war.

Stay tuned.