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Only Impeachment can Restore our Constitution

By Gil Villagrán, MSW

Our nation is in a Constitutional crisis with a president and vice-president who conspired to catapult our nation into a war using intelligence they knew to be false while suppressing assessments contradicting their rationale for the invasion of Iraq. As we enter the sixth year of this war, the costs stand at: 4,000 American soldiers killed, 60,000 critically wounded (many suffering amputations and brain injuries), 700,000 Iraqis killed, four million refugees, and $477 billion.

While our military courageously terminated Saddam’s brutal regime, in doing so it cracked open centuries of sectarian hatred, with fanatic mass murders at mosques, marketplaces and homes. In the middle of this quagmire, fiasco, a quicksand of murder and mayhem we have placed up to half a million U.S. troops, mercenaries, and other personnel we are responsible for, often for the rest of their shattered, disabled lives.

The cheerleader President may claim that the tide is turning in our favor, with a decreased the death toll; but such a claim may prove as ill- advised as his “mission accomplished” claim on an aircraft carrier half a world away from blood soaked Iraq.

The Petraeus success, commendable in decreasing daily death tolls, results from the questionable tactic of buying off the Sunni and other militias who were killing Americans and other Iraqis as recently as last summer with arms and training. For the time being, they have chosen not to kill their new U.S. weapons suppliers and trainers. This highly praised surge may yet turn out to be a Pyrrhic victory of mythic proportions in this land called Babylon.

When President Clinton was impeached for perjury about an extra-marital affair with an adult White House intern, the Republican controlled Congress set the lowest of bars for debate. Before this, the last impeachment proceeding, against President Nixon, resulted from the Watergate break-in of the Democratic Party Headquarters, and the subsequent efforts to impede the criminal investigation. Nixon’s defense strategy was to stonewall the Congress, until secret recordings exposed the ugly truth of a criminal presidential clique, ending with indictments against the Attorney General, CIA operatives, and other presidential advisors. The final act was the resignation of the president himself to avoid an ignominious impeachment, trial and possible incarceration.

We are now in a much worse situation than the Watergate conspiracy or an adulterous president. The alleged crimes committed by this Oval Office include:
1. manufactured intelligence to plunge our nation into an illegal and unnecessary war; 2. kidnap and torture at secret prisons in violation of international law; 3. unconstitutional violations against American citizens imprisoned without due process; 4. illegal wiretapping of phone calls and emails without warrant; 5. obstruction of honest elections since 2000; 6. leaking classified intelligence—including exposing CIA covert agent Valerie Plame; 7. subverting the Constitution with “signing statements,” defying laws passed by Congress and signed by the president himself; 8. gross negligence and incompetence in preventing massive death and destruction and the recovery from Hurricane Katrina.

Yet impeachment of this president and his puppetmaster Dick Cheney, is in the words of Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi: “off the table.” It will not happen because the Democratic leadership is focused on its legislative agenda of decreasing the deficit, increasing the minimum wage, providing health insurance for children, improving energy efficiency—all commendable goals! Yet, what are these in the context of a war sucking up half a trillion dollars, with no end in sight? This war has impoverished our nation morally and financially, and has grotesquely subverted our Constitution.

Without impeachment proceedings Congress complicitly enables the Bush and Cheney power grab which imperils the co-equal branches of our democracy. Pelosi is not listening to the American peoples’ shout: “Our democracy cannot survive another year of the Bush-Cheney trample upon our Constitution!” Call her at: 415-556-4862.

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