



## Are We on the Ramp to Impeachment Road?

After a stroke felled Woodrow Wilson during his national tour to save his League of Nations, an old rival, Sen. Albert Fall, went to the White House to tell the president, "I have been praying for you, Sir."

To which Wilson is said to have replied, "Which way, Senator?"

Historians are in dispute as to whether Wilson actually said it.

But the acid retort came to mind on hearing that Nancy Pelosi, hours after accusing President Donald Trump of "engaging in a cover-up," a felony, piously volunteered, "I pray for the president of the United States."

For, by now, the hostile investigations of Trump by Pelosi's House are becoming too numerous to list.

Subpoenas have been issued to the IRS demanding Trump's tax returns. New York has enacted a law to gain access to Trump's state tax returns, to pass them on to the comrades on Capitol Hill. Democrats are not seeking these records for guidance on how to reform the tax code.

House committees want the files of his accountants. Subpoenas have been issued to lending institutions where Trump borrowed, such as Deutsche Bank, going back to the last century.

The Mueller investigation found that neither Trump nor anyone in his campaign colluded with the Russians in 2016. Yet that exoneration is insufficient for the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Jerrold Nadler. He wants public hearings with present and past White House aides under oath to put on a show trial for a national TV audience.

The euphemism for this swarm attack is "Congressional oversight of the executive." And Trump is not wrong to see in it a conspiracy to bring down his presidency and impeach and remove him.

And if Trump believes, not without reason, that Pelosi's caucus is out to kill his presidency, should he cooperate with the co-conspirators or use all of the actual and latent powers of his office to repel them?

These are the alternatives the president faces.

Out in the Rose Garden, Trump declared there would be no further cooperation on a legislative agenda with Democrats until a halt is called to their investigations:

"I told Senator Schumer and Speaker Pelosi, 'I want to do infrastructure. I want to do it more than you



Written by [Patrick J. Buchanan](#) on May 24, 2019

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want to do it.... But you can't do it under these circumstances. So get these phony investigations over with."

Where, then, are we headed?

To gridlock first, then almost surely down the impeachment road.

For if Trump continues to defy subpoenas and denounce those who issue them, and Pelosi cannot deliver on the Democrats' agenda, the louder will be the clamor of the Democratic base to remove Trump. At some point, Pelosi will have to go along or lose control of her rebellious caucus.

Consider Trump's immigration plan, which was introduced to no great enthusiasm among his supporters.

In April in Las Vegas, after 75,000 asylum seekers had crossed the U.S. border in February and 100,000 in March — an average of a million crossers a year — Trump declared:

"There is an emergency on our southern border.... It's a colossal surge and it's overwhelming our immigration system, and we can't let that happen.... We can't take you anymore.... Our country is full."

But if the country is "full," and we cannot stop the illegal crossings swamping the southern border, how can we take in and hand out green cards to another million legal immigrants every year?

What is the carrying capacity of a country whose debt is larger than its economy and whose social welfare system is overflowing with applicants?

Given the lukewarm reception among Republicans, the refusal of Democrats to back an immigration bill that does not put millions of undocumented migrants on a path to citizenship, and the animosity that has arisen between Trump and Pelosi, the bill seems stillborn.

Pelosi and her leadership in the House, it is said, do not want impeachment. They see it as a dead end. And understandably so.

For if the House holds hearings and fails to impeach, Democrats would be seen as impotent. And if they did impeach the president and the Senate swiftly acquitted him, House Democrats would be seen as having wasted their two years, only to make Trump a political martyr.

Still, as Emerson wrote, things are in the saddle and ride mankind.

The left and its media allies are demanding more subpoenas, and Trump is growing more defiant. And if Pelosi continues to argue that impeachment is not justified now, the anti-Trump sentiment in her party could turn against her.

The left's ultimatum: Lead, follow, or get out of the way.

Impeachment is how a democratic republic does regicide, the dethroning and beheading of a sovereign like England's Charles I.

For the left, Trump's fate is decided. The only lingering question is whether proceeding with impeachment now is premature for the progressives' cause in 2020.

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