

Paul Manafort, President Trump's former campaign chairman who was sentenced last week to nearly four years in prison, was ordered on Wednesday to serve an additional three and a half years for conspiracy.

OPINION

Did Clinton impeachment hurt Republicans?

By Philippe Reines*

The impeachment of Bill Clinton backfired on Republicans. It's a sentiment repeated daily without question on cable news, in Congress and probably inside the White House.

But exactly how did impeachment backfire? With two decades of hindsight, it's not clear the Republicans faced any lasting consequences — a perspective that should inform any Democrat considering whether to undertake the same effort against President Trump.

The case for why impeachment hurt the Republicans is straightforward. Most obviously, it didn't work: President Clinton was not convicted and removed from office. In fact, in early 1999, at the height of the impeachment process, he was more popular than at any other time of his presidency.

Furthermore, in the fall of 1998, at the first opportunity for voters to express their feelings at the ballot box after the House voted to begin an impeachment inquiry, the Democrats picked up five seats in the House of Representatives, an embarrassment that drove Newt Gingrich from the speaker's office.

But consider what followed.

First, the Republicans went on to take or hold the White House in three of the next five presidential elections — including the 2016 race between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton.

And while Democrats did gain a handful of House seats in midterm elections in 1998, the Republicans maintained control for eight more years, until disapproval of the Iraq war finally tipped Congress to the Democrats in 2006.

On the Senate side in 1998, the Republicans maintained their 55-45 majority. With the exception of a 17-month window in 2002 and 2003, Republicans controlled the Senate until 2006. In short, the Republican wave of 1994 endured for nearly a decade after the failed impeachment.

It's true that Mr. Clinton was not removed from office, but Republicans used the fact of his impeachment as a cudgel first against his vice president, Al Gore, and later against his wife. While its impact can't be quantified, it sure didn't help either in their election bids.

Finally, and most important, the very myth that the 1998 impeachment hurt Republicans protects them today, when pressure to move against Mr. Trump is met with concerns about the political fallout. Clearly, we need to reconsider that myth.

Basically, a high crime committed by a Republican won't be prosecuted because a Democrat was persecuted over a misdemeanor.

There are many reasons for Democrats to contemplate impeachment today that go beyond politics. Substantial evidence has already emerged showing that the president has abused his office to the detriment of the American public. That evidence deserves a thorough and transparent airing in Congress, arguably the only venue available for trying a sitting president.

Still, as pundits never tire of saying, impeachment is a political process, not a legal one — and the House speaker, Nancy Pelosi, and Senator Chuck Schumer are right to wonder whether it makes sense to seek impeachment, especially given the unlikelihood of enough Republicans breaking ranks in the Senate. On Monday, Ms. Pelosi said that, for now, Mr. Trump was "not worth" the cost of impeachment to the country.

But impeachment is worth it, politically, and not just because of what history shows us. If anything, Democrats are in an even better position than Republicans were in 1998 to benefit, or at worst not suffer, politically.

For one thing, 22 Republican senators are up for reelection in 2020, against just 12 Democrats. Especially if the public support for impeachment continues to grow, a Republican vote to acquit the president could tip at least a few vulnerable Republican seats.

Also, one reason people think the Republicans suffered for 1998 is that everyone knew, then and later, that it was a crassly political move — Mr. Clinton's lapses, however you judge them, were personal, not the sort of "high crimes and misdemeanors" that impeachment is intended to address.

Most voters today, whether they support Mr. Trump or not, will probably see a potential impeachment against him differently. Especially as the evidence mounts, reasonable people will more and more conclude that the Democrats are doing their civic duty by pursuing impeachment (and those who disagree probably wouldn't vote Democratic anyway).

There is also a mounting political cost to not impeaching Mr. Trump. He will hail it as exoneration and he will go into the 2020 campaign under the banner "I Told You So," declaring that for all their talk of removing him from office, Democrats had merely been playing politics for three years.

All this assumes that impeachment won't happen. But the political case is so strong, and the evidence against Mr. Trump so persuasive, that however unlikely, it is not impossible that 20 Republican senators join the Democrats.

But perhaps the most persuasive political case for impeachment is the long view. Set aside what it would mean for the 2020 elections. Mr. Trump is a pernicious, divisive figure who is poisoning our politics, and hopes to do so for years to come. Should he lose in 2020, he has already laid the groundwork for an all-out assault against the media, the political establishment and the Democratic Party itself.

Politically, we — the country, not just the Democratic Party — cannot accept that risk. Impeachment might be the only remedy we have.

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The opinion was first published in *The New York Times*.



Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addresses the supporters of his ruling Justice and Development Party, AKP, during a rally in Istanbul, on March 12, 2019, ahead of local elections scheduled for March 31, 2019.

Erdogan calls Netanyahu 'thief' and 'tyrant'

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a "thief" and a "tyrant" in their latest spat. The dispute comes after Erdogan's spokesman denounced Netanyahu as a racist. Netanyahu then

struck back calling Erdogan a dictator and criticizing the country for imprisoning journalists, miamiherald.com reported.

Speaking at an election campaign rally on Wednesday, Erdogan addressed Netanyahu as "the

thief who heads Israel" in reference to corruption allegations against him.

Erdogan continued, "You are a tyrant. You are a tyrant who slaughters seven-year-old Palestinian kids."

At least eight killed in Brazil shooting

Two gunmen opened fire at a school in southeastern Brazil, killing at least six students and two employees, officials said.

The shooting happened at about 09:30 local time (1230 GMT) when the students were on a break at the state school in Suzano, near Sao Paulo, according to BBC.

The gunmen, who were wearing masks, killed themselves after the attack, police said. While gun crime is common in Brazil, shootings of this nature are not.

Far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, who took office in January, has signed a decree making it easier for law-abiding citizens to own a gun, a key campaign promise, even though many restrictions remain in place.

The identities of the victims and the alleged attackers — who were said to be former students at the school aged between 20 and 25 — have not yet been released. The motive for the shooting is not clear, police said.



REUTERS

The school has some 1,000 primary and secondary students, aged between six and 18, and a language center. It is located in downtown Suzano, some 50km (31

miles) from Sao Paulo.

"It's a very sad scene, the saddest thing I've seen in my entire life. The teenagers who were brutally murdered," Sao Paulo state governor, Joao Doria, said after visiting the school.

Only secondary students were reportedly at the school at the time of the shooting. Police said they also found a bow and arrow as well as items that appeared to be explosives.

"I was in the classroom during our break. I thought [the sound] was from bombs. When I realized they were gunshots, I stayed there. I only left when the police arrived," teacher Sandra Perez told O Estado de Sao Paulo newspaper (in Portuguese).

A man was injured in another shooting near the school earlier, but police said they are still investigating if both cases are connected.

The last major school shooting in Brazil happened in 2011, when 12 students were shot dead by a gunman in Rio de Janeiro.

Children die in Lagos building



REUTERS

Rescuers work frantically to free those trapped under the rubble.

At least eight children died and many more were feared trapped after a building containing a school collapsed in the Nigerian city of Lagos.

The school, which was on the top floor of the three-story building, in Ita Faji on Lagos Island, reportedly had more than 100 pupils, BBC reported.

Images from the scene showed rescuers searching through piles of broken concrete and twisted metal. The cause of the collapse was

not immediately clear.

The collapsed building was a residential block containing a number of apartments as well as the school, residents and rescue officials at the scene told the BBC. Emergency teams pulled several injured children from the rubble, but many worried parents have arrived at the scene while others have gone to a local hospital to look for their children.

Ibrahim Farinloye, a spokesman for the National Emergen-

cy Management Agency, said the collapse happened at about 10:00 local time (0900 GMT).

"It is believed that many people including children are currently trapped in the building," he said.

It is not unusual for buildings to collapse in Nigeria. Materials are often substandard and the enforcement of regulations lax.

In 2016, more than 100 people died when the roof of a church in Uyo, in the south of Nigeria, caved in.

Nearly 3,000 Daesh terrorists in Syria surrender

About 3,000 Daesh members in the terrorist group's last holdout in Syria surrendered.

Thousands of terrorists and their relatives surrendered in Baghoutz on Tuesday, according to Kurdish-led forces per AFP, after the Daesh encampment in the eastern village came under fire the night before, washingtonexaminer.com reported.

Daesh declared itself a caliphate in 2014, as it once spread across large areas in Syria and Iraq.



REUTERS

"Number of Daesh members surrendered to us since yesterday evening has risen to 3,000," so-called Syrian Democratic Forces spokesman Mustafa Bali tweeted Tuesday evening.

Baghoutz was under fire for three nights in a row, killing terrorists and prompting the surrender.