

Editorial: Not-so-stealthy ‘coup’?

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You may have missed it this past week if you blinked, but historians surely will take note:

A full 58 House Democrats voted to approve impeachment proceedings against Donald Trump just 10 months into his presidency.

They were rightly and mercifully overwhelmed immediately and completely by 364 other members. But consider the implications of the fact that nearly five dozen members of Congress actually voted to rend this nation in two with not only the impeachment of a sitting president, but one for whom there has been absolutely no showing of cause for impeachment.

This is the stuff of unstable Third World countries and rickety banana republics. But it happened in Washington, D.C.

George Washington University Law School professor Jonathan Turley – a self-described Barack Obama supporter – did more than scoff at the unforgivable congressional stunt led by Rep. Al Green, D-Texas. Turley painted an ominous picture of the kind of nation where a lawmaker would do such a thing.

Turley correctly predicted that Green and Co. had no chance of success (though they proceeded anyway, which pretty much defines “stunt”), noting that they “don’t have any evidence to support” impeachment.

The four “counts” against Trump included inciting bigotry; his claiming that “three to five million people voted illegally in the 2016 presidential election”; and encouraging lawless police actions.

Notably absent in any of the Trumped-up counts is anything remotely fitting the constitutional prescription for impeachment, which is that a president or other civil officer “shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.”

“Some of these (impeachment) counts are clearly overbroad,” professor Turley went on in a television interview. “They could’ve been used to impeach half the presidents of the United States. ...

“This idea that you can impeach someone for these types of ambiguous charges is a dangerous precedent to set.”

Supporters of impeaching Trump complained he has undermined the courts and press. You want undermining? Turley – again, an Obama supporter – noted that the Obama administration went after a Fox News reporter – and we would add that Obama also spied on the Associated Press.

Moreover, even *Washington Post* editor Martin Baron was reported to have said at a recent journalism conference that, “We do better with the current president in terms of access than the last one.”

In addition, Mr. Obama was rebuked by the courts and even the Supreme Court on more than one occasion, on such issues as immigration and recess appointments. In an article titled “Obama Has Lost In The Supreme Court More Than Any Modern President,” Ilya Shapiro – senior fellow in constitutional studies at the Cato Institute and editor-in-chief of the *Cato Supreme Court Review* – noted that, late in its term, the Obama administration’s record before the courts was 79-96, “a win rate of just above 45 percent.”

Should he have been impeached for “undermining the courts” with such bad legal arguments? In contrast, a preliminary Supreme Court ruling recently sided with Mr. Trump in his most controversial legal fight, defending his moratorium on travel from terror-prone nations.

As absurd, irrational and dangerous as Green’s comical impeachment resolution was, it’s even more sinister considering the context of the current political and cultural climate. It is just one of many moves by Democrats and the liberal media that have undermined, and even sought to overturn, the current government. From the street to the suite, Democrats have openly embraced a mantra of “resisting” the outcome of last year’s presidential election. At any cost, and by any means necessary.

Most prominently, they’ve tried it in protests, insider “deep state” leaks, paranoia-fueled investigations, and shrill 24-hour “what Trump said/did wrong today” media hysterics.

All the while, congressional Democrats have essentially been staging what appears to be at least a two-year, if not four-year, sit-in. They obstruct when they can and otherwise withdraw from the business of governance – despite having a president who has attempted to make deals with them and no doubt would make more.

And in a story headlined “Team Obama attempted ‘stealth coup’ by undermining Trump,” *The Washington Times* alleges that “From the moment Donald Trump secured the Republican nomination and then the presidency, national security officials under President Obama have shown themselves to be intense adversaries in public and behind the scenes. ...

“The anti-Trump moves by Obama aides began in July 2016 during his campaign for the presidency.

“Then-FBI Director James B. Comey began a criminal investigation of the Trump campaign, in whole or part, based on a dossier financed by the Democratic Party with an aim to destroy the Republican candidate.”

The CIA, the *Times* says, cooperated with the FBI investigation of Trump in 2016. And recently, we learned that a top FBI investigator who worked on both the exoneration of Hillary Clinton and the current special counsel probe of Mr. Trump had to be dismissed from the latter investigation for being an unabashed pro-Clinton/anti-Trump partisan.

The farcical, grotesque attempt to impeach the president in Congress without the least bit of grounds for it may have been duly quashed. But the effort to overturn the government goes on.

Perhaps only history can judge the extent of the damage.

