

Rogues\222 Gallery for Impeachment
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Retired Admiral William McRaven, a man of sterling character, has been making the rounds of interviews to talk about his book, Sea Stories. He has said that the greatest danger that America faces is not the attacks of Russia or China, but the rhetoric of President Trump. Presidents, he said, will come and go, but our institutions remain, the bulwark of our democracy.

From President Thomas Jefferson until now (except for Nixon), presidents have supported the free press as essential to our system of checks and balances and for speaking truth to power. Every president has complained at times about bad press coverage, but we have never had one like Trump who publicly insults the journalists covering his rallies as "enemies of the people" and dismisses all news he doesn't like as "fake news." He promotes conspiracy theories instead.

We have never had a president as defiant against checks and balances, insulting judges, Democrats, and the Intelligence Community as liars and criminals. He regularly whips up his "base" at rallies to yell "lock them up," meaning the FBI, as he once urged locking up his competitor, Hillary Clinton. His agenda is clearly dictatorial, the agenda of a person with narcissistic personality disorder, who claims that he is the best, most brilliant, most powerful, richest, handsomest, and the only person who matters. Concern for others or love for anything (even his country) is not part of his makeup.

This defective man does not respect laws he does not like; threatens that elections he might lose would be "rigged;" disrespects our Intelligence Community and law enforcement; and insults our military leaders. He is abetted by Republicans, who should know better, and by his "base," not our best citizens.

The disfunction of what should be bipartisan governance was damaged before Trump became president. Several villains have contributed to this great danger: Newt Gingrich was the first who changed our politics from two-party bipartisanship to one party takes all. He attempted, but ultimately failed, to brand the Democrats as "enemies," not partners.

The worst practitioner of demonizing the Democrats today is Senator Mitch McConnell (R Kentucky), who has gone even further than Gingrich. He summoned a cabal the night our first Black president, Barack Obama, was elected, urging that they wreck Obama's presidency with total non-cooperation. His most outrageous act was to deprive President Obama of his constitutional right to appoint a Supreme Court candidate when an opening occurred. McConnell would not permit hearings, claiming lamely that a president near the end of his tenure should not appoint anyone to the Supreme Court. There is no such norm.

The Russians, once America's (and the Republicans') enemies and now adversaries, have run rampant over our election. The Republicans said nothing about the Russian attack because they approved of the Russian aim, to elect Trump and defeat Clinton. When President Obama asked McConnell to join him in a bipartisan condemnation of the Russian interference, McConnell refused. He would not want to cast any doubt about the unexpected Trump presidential win.

Trump, as expected by the Russians, seems indebted to them. He has surrounded himself with people with many ties to Russian money (including himself and family), although a number of them are now in prison for lying about it. Trump publicly accepts the words of Putin rather than those of his own intelligence community. The Russians have succeeded in planting this wrecking ball in our democracy.

Now Mitch McConnell is also being tainted by Russian money. A Russian oligarch, Oleg Deripaska, who was sanctioned by the US Congress for his election interference, has offered McConnell a gift that invites a quid pro quo, to remove the sanctions. Deripaska, in return, has announced an investment of \$200 million to build a new aluminum plant in Kentucky, McConnell's state.

Although both parties in the House of Representatives had voted nearly unanimously to protect those sanctions, McConnell and his Senate majority have repealed them at Trump's request. What a coincidence!

He, along with Trump, his family, and others now in prison, has succumbed to

corruption. This crime is impeachable, if we believe in rule of law.

685 words

Laina Farhat-Holzman is a historian, lecturer, and author of God's Law or Man's Law. You may contact her at Lfarhat102@aol.com or www.globalthink.net.