

Foreign press rips Starr witch-hunt as threat to international security

Former Brazilian Justice Minister **Saulo Ramos** asked “Is This Justice?” in a commentary for the Aug. 14 issue of *Folha de São Paulo*.

“Some Brazilians are fascinated by U.S. law, which permits a public prosecutor . . . to interrogate the President of the U.S. and threaten that he will be charged with perjury, lying, or obstruction of justice, if he does not confess to having sexual relations with some girl. All in a simple investigation, of a clearly political character, coming out of another investigation, which was shelved.” The United States has the best technology of the modern world, he says, but it suffers from a disease without cure: the worst legal system in the civilized world—not the U.S. Constitution, but its legal system.

In judicially civilized countries, no one can be forced to incriminate themselves, and it is a crime to give false witness. But in the United States, the accused commits perjury if he denies the act which is attributed to him. In another country, Clinton would simply be absolved, if he admitted that he lied to save the reputation of the girl, and that of his family.

If the “park maniac,” referring to a São Paulo serial killer who has murdered nine women, were to face trial in the United States, and to declare that he killed the women to relieve them of their suffering, because, say, they were unemployed, he would stand a good chance of being acquitted, Ramos noted.

“And, the girl in the White House is not suspected of anything?” She saved the dress; she taped conversations. “All carefully premediated. . . . In that judicial order, is this not classed as blackmail?” Not when we are talking about the President. “Is this justice? And, if Clinton were innocent, what would happen to Starr? Nothing. . . . In the U.S., the President has the right to suffer everything, including being assassinated, with total impunity guaranteed for the assassins.”

Following President Clinton’s televised address on Aug. 17, the Danish daily *Politiken* carried an editorial on Aug. 19, headlined “A Serious Case: Not for Clinton—But for All of Us.”

“No filmmaker, no fantasizer would have been able to make up the absurd case, which is at the top of the U.S.—and therefore the world’s—agenda. The entertainment value is high, but the perspectives are serious—for us all. The question is not, if the President is ‘guilty’ of having had an ‘inappropriate relationship’ to Monica Lewinsky. . . . The serious question—and problem—is, how can the U.S. have gone so far, that such a case can be put on the agenda, and can have grown



Independent Inquisitor Kenneth Starr. International commentators are denouncing his vendetta against President Clinton, and the institution of the U.S. Presidency.

to the current gigantic dimensions? How has it swollen to such a size, that it engulfs the world’s most important position, paralyzes the world’s most powerful democracy, and pushes everything else in the world media aside?”

Politiken describes how the Watergate scandal created a machinery to ensure that the President would not be above the law. “It is this control system, which was created with the background of that exemplary scandal, which has now run amok at the hands of Kenneth Starr. The Congress appointed him as public investigator to expose Whitewater. . . . Despite the investigation’s methods, which are worthy of the Inquisition, Starr did not find anything on Bill and Hillary Clinton, and was on his fourth or fifth fishing expedition in totally different areas, when Linda Tripp surfaced and offered herself as a camouflaged tape recorder for Monica Lewinsky’s sexual confessions.”

The editorial details how the Supreme Court allowed a civil suit to proceed against President Clinton, and that it didn’t stop when the Paula Jones case was dropped. “This judicial madhouse—including calling as a witness anyone who had ever talked with the President about the case, or simply had spoken critically of Kenneth Starr—is one of the main causes of the catastrophe. The other main reason is the media’s catastrophic lack of proportion and self-control in this case. Statements from anonymous sources, quoting statements from other anonymous sources, are made into ‘facts’ and repeated again and again, turned inside-out, and outside-

in again, with the right to free speculation about the most facile subjects of all—sex and power. The necessary control function of the media has here become a sort of self-running circus, where the only thing not being put to use is common sense and a critical distance from that web of uninteresting quarter-truths, which they themselves have created. The result has become a scandal of enormous proportions. A scandal that has consequences for all of us, because it paralyzes the U.S.A.—the U.S.A. that still is crucial for peace and security in the world, from Kosova to Iraq. The main characters in the scandal are not Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky. The main characters in the scandal are the jurists and journalists, politicians and editors, who have let a proud American tradition—the self-control of democracy—run amok, to become a devastating caricature of itself.”

The Danish daily Berlingske Tidende devoted its Aug. 19 editorial to “the disruptive forces” hampering the United States.

“While circles in the U.S. seem to want the case to continue, the rest of us can only regret once again, that such disruptive forces have been let loose on the nation’s most important position, with harm to all. The United States, as well as the rest of the world, is in need of a strong Presidency, and it is immediately noticed in other countries when the superpower is not able to focus with the necessary sharpness. The list of pressing international problems is growing fast, with the economic crisis in Asia and Russia, the war in Kosova, and the gridlock in the Middle East at the top of the list. With that background, Americans should, not least for their own sake, and also for ours, get the soap opera behind them as fast as possible, and come back to the world of reality.”

In the Aug. 25 issue of the Paris daily Le Monde, Alexandre Adler wrote a front-page commentary, “Defend Bill Clinton from Kenneth Starr.” Adler is the editor in chief of the weekly Courier International, an adviser to RPR party chairman Philippe Séguin, and a senior foreign policy specialist.

“Let’s not equivocate, there is a plot, of the gravest sort, not only against Bill Clinton . . . but against the American Presidential system . . . and that plot is taking place before our very eyes, terrified by this mixture of cruel execution and unserious show.” Can one imagine Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, or John Kennedy being undermined at crucial moments of their Presidency with prosecutors revealing their various love affairs, wonders Adler?

Aristocratic pseudo-Anglophiles are Clinton’s enemies, among whom Adler names pharmaceutical and insurance companies, which are furious at the Clintons’ attempt to “create social safety for all Americans”; those who don’t like him because of his past and his culture: “’68, the people, the blacks, the Jews, and China”; those who hate him for not following the rules of politics-as-usual (“he was the governor of a small state, he always avoided Washington”), and the fact that he and his friends are “regular guys” and “self-

made men.”

“None of these attitudes in themselves is sufficient, but altogether they have undoubtedly consolidated a lot of hatred from a WASP establishment, hypocritical and cruel, in which an aristocratic pseudo-Anglophilia, indignant at the fact that the new White House had snubbed John Major, turned into burning fire what would have been a bearable irritation.”

Were it not for public opinion, continues Adler, “we are heading toward the gravest attack against American constitutional principles since the McCarthyite wave in the beginning of the ’50s.”

Adler blasts the hypocrisy of Clinton’s detractors, including House Speaker Newt Gingrich, who divorced his wife when she was dying of cancer, in order to marry another woman, and “the neo-fascist plutocrat banker [Richard] Mellon Scaife, providing the funding for slanders.” Adler concludes by warning the “East Coast so-called liberal press, which is already consenting to the legal murder of the President of the greatest democracy on earth, that this attack is ultimately not against one man, but against an institution, that of the Presidency.”

Clinton’s attackers have “the will to deprive, little by little, the largest developed society in the world, of all its leverages of transformation, so that the social Darwinism of the new feudalists triumphs over the ruins of what used to be the democratic state, through which Lincoln gave freedom to slaves, and Roosevelt delivered Europe.”

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