

Senate impeachment trial: a 'bipartisan' coup d'état

by Edward Spannaus

President Clinton is facing a treasonous, bi-partisan effort to blackmail him to “cut a deal” and accept censure by the Senate, or face possible conviction in a rigged Senate trial—and then, further, to face indictment by Kenneth Starr as soon as he leaves office. Despite the lulling reports in the news media, there is no reason at this point to believe that the Senate proceeding will be any less of a Kangaroo Court than the just-completed farce in the House of Representatives.

The pressure for a “censure” deal in the Senate, which is intended to force the weakened President into a power-sharing “co-Presidency” arrangement with Vice President Al Gore, is coming from traitorous Senate Democrats as well as Confederate-loving Republicans. Shamefully, no more than one or two Democratic Senators have publicly opposed a deal involving censure.

During the House impeachment hearings, many Democratic members of Congress publicly labelled the proceedings as a “coup d'état.” (A number of Republicans countered that it was not a “coup,” because another nominal Democrat, Al Gore, would replace Clinton if the President were removed from office!) However, in the Senate, no one has stepped forward to tell the truth about what the impeachment actually represents, and the Democratic Party apparatus is more concerned about raising money for the next round of elections, than defending the President from this treasonous and unconstitutional effort to drive him from office.

At this point, the only alternative the White House has is to go for a full-scale trial, in which Starr and the “Get Clinton” apparatus behind him are effectively put in the dock, tried, and convicted of conducting an illegal and unconstitutional attempt to overthrow the U.S. government.

The ‘censure’ trap

What is shaping up, in the period leading into the opening of the 106th Congress on Jan. 6, is the following, as *EIR* has put the picture together.

The President is being offered a “global settlement”—worked out between the Senate Republicans and independent counsel Starr, with the complicity of Senate Democrats—which would involve a quick “trial” lasting no more than two weeks, and perhaps only one week. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott would then proceed to a vote, either a vote on the Articles of Impeachment, or a “straw vote” as to whether to proceed further. Following this, a censure motion would be presented and voted upon, which the President would have to accept.

Amidst this maneuvering, *both* the Senate Democratic and Republican caucuses are urging the President to postpone the State of the Union address, scheduled for Jan. 19, until after Jan. 22.

What the news media are not reporting, is the secret clause of the deal. If the President doesn't agree to a censure with an admission of wrong-doing, he is being told that both he and First Lady Hillary Clinton will be indicted by Starr after Clinton leaves office. And, he is further being threatened that, if he goes for a protracted trial, he is likely to also be convicted and removed from office by an “unpredictable” Senate—which could prove true, if the White House sticks to the rigged rules of the game.

Of course, what the President is *not* being told, is that if he were to capitulate to the blackmail, admit to the charges and accept censure, there would be no relief from the demand that he be removed from office. “The President admitted he committed perjury!” the Republicans would scream. “How

can we have a confessed felon and perjurer in the White House?”

Not to mention the new charges that would likely be thrown at him. For, as we showed in *EIR*'s last issue, the drive to impeach President Clinton and expel him from office has nothing to do with Monica Lewinsky or any of the specific offenses of which he has been accused. The Anglo-American financial oligarchs have been committed to bringing Clinton down since the day he took office—and Kenneth Starr and his friends in the “Get Clinton” salon have sought one pretext after another to carry this out. And it is guaranteed that the demands for the President to resign, or to yield power to Vice President Gore in a “co-Presidency” arrangement, will only intensify, should the White House make any concession to the coup d'état cabalists.

Reading from Starr's script

Although the White House and many Congressional Democrats were in a fighting mood at the time of the Dec. 19 impeachment vote in the House, much of that combativeness appeared to have evaporated over Christmas week. And, during the weekend after Christmas, the news media and the Sunday talk shows kept up a steady drum-beat for the President to forego a long trial and cut a deal. The Dec. 28 *Washington Post* sent the message loud and clear in its lead headline proclaiming: “Senators Envision Swift Clinton Trial: Need to Call Witnesses Is Discounted.” The *Post* article cited statements by Senators Orrin Hatch, Tom Daschle, and others, saying that there is no need for a long trial, or to call any witnesses.

The insane argument being put forward was that the President should simply accept the “evidence” submitted by Kenneth Starr—even though that “evidence” would be subject to challenge in any court in the land. Much of it was gathered illegally and in derogation of the constitutional rights of the parties involved—for example, the illegal Linda Tripp tapes, or the entrapment and bullying of Monica Lewinsky by Starr's thugs. And then there is the illegal collusion between Starr's office and Paula Jones's lawyers, designed to set up a perjury trap for the President in the Paula Jones case deposition.

In any normal criminal proceeding in a relatively honest court, a defendant can move to suppress illegally gathered evidence, and he can seek complete dismissal of the charges because of prosecutorial abuse and misconduct, or on grounds of selective and vindictive prosecution. There have been many cases (including the first, failed prosecution of Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. and his associates in Boston 1987-88), in which the prosecutors have been put on the witness stand and grilled over misconduct and prosecutorial abuses. Why should the President of the United States have fewer rights than any other person accused of a criminal offense?

Furthermore, most of Starr's “evidence” that the Senate wants to use, consists of grand jury testimony that was never subject to challenge or cross-examination. This is never ad-

missible as primary evidence in a criminal trial—yet the President and the White House are being told that they should simply “stipulate” to the accuracy of Starr's transcripts.

As Tom Daschle, the Senate Democratic leader, said on NBC television on Dec. 27: “We already know the facts. They've probably been reported and analyzed and debated, considered as much as perhaps anything in history.” Likewise, another Democratic Senator, John Breaux of Louisiana, argued against the need for a long trial, during a CBS appearance on Dec. 27, asserting that “the American people and the Congress already know what happened, when it happened, how it happened.”

The “facts,” of course, are Kenneth Starr's facts. It is as if a criminal trial would be limited to the prosecutor's opening and closing statements, without any burden of proof or rules as to admissibility of evidence.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, is claiming that there is no need for a long trial, or to call a lot of witnesses, with the not-so-subtle warning: “I'll tell you, things do change. Sometimes things go from bad to worse, and if they do, nobody knows how this is going to come out at this point.”

Secret FBI files

Indicative of the corrupt nature of the proceedings is the matter of the so-called “secret evidence” which is in the possession of the House Judiciary Committee. On Dec. 19, the day of the impeachment vote in the House, it was reported that Republican members of the Judiciary Committee had urged their GOP colleagues to inspect sealed documents—apparently consisting largely of unverified FBI reports—which were not part of the Starr documents made public. Some of the documents reportedly related to a witness in the Paula Jones case who claimed she had been sexually assaulted by Clinton in the late 1970s. A number of Republican Congressmen said that a look at the FBI reports convinced them to vote for impeachment.

On Dec. 23, House majority whip Tom DeLay said publicly that there are “reams of evidence” which have not been made public and which are available only to Congress. DeLay said that before Senators try to cut a deal with the White House, they should spend plenty of time in the Judiciary Committee's evidence room. “If this were to happen,” DeLay said, “you may realize that 67 votes may materialize out of thin air.”

After the meeting of the House “managers” (the team which will prosecute the case in the Senate trial) on Dec. 29, some of the managers and their spokesman also left open the possibility that the “secret evidence” could be introduced into the Senate proceedings. This is only further proof of the rigged and corrupt nature of the Senate proceedings—and why the only course at this point is an all-out offense, by the White House, and the American people, to tell the truth and to put an end to this travesty.