

General William P. Barr in opening investigations connected to a political opponent, Vice President Joseph Biden, Jr., and a debunked conspiracy theory alleging that Ukraine—not Russia—was responsible for meddling in the 2016 election.

Just weeks before the call, President Trump withheld nearly \$400 million in critical security assistance to Ukraine, which had been overwhelmingly approved by Congress. No reason was given for the hold beyond that it was directed by the president. The hold on security assistance was lifted only after the whistleblower complaint was filed and Congress opened its inquiry.

The investigation also revealed that besides withholding military aid, the president and his allies withheld White House meetings, phone calls and trade preferences from Ukraine.

We heard from nonpartisan State Department and intelligence officials who worked for the president, and they confirmed the allegations outlined in the whistleblower reporter.

I have reviewed the evidence and followed the hearings. It is clear the president's actions were a flagrant abuse of constitutional power; it was unlawful, and it jeopardized our national security.

The president had every opportunity to present contrary evidence but did not. Instead, he chose to obstruct the inquiry, preventing top officials from testifying and withholding relevant information.

Some have argued to let the voters in the next election decide. But how can we trust an election that the president is trying to corrupt?

I grew up in this country believing no one is above the law, including the president. If any president—Democrat or Republican—had committed these offenses, I would reach the same conclusion. And I ask others how they would feel if President Obama, instead of President Trump, engaged in this conduct.

Not all bad conduct is impeachable. Being rude or mean is not impeachable. Jaywalking, petty theft or infidelity does not put our national security at risk. But asking another country to meddle in our election and withholding vital security assistance to an ally is what our founders feared and why they placed impeachment in our Constitution.

The president once said that he could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody without losing any support. Clearly, he was exaggerating, but have we become so partisan, polarized, and tribal that as long as it is someone on our "team," they can defy the law?

The president is wrong to believe this is all about him. More importantly, it is about defending the rule of law and our Constitution and what signal we send future presidents of what is acceptable behavior. In short, do we want a democracy where no one is above the law, or do we want a monarchy?

The decision of whether the president should be removed from office now rests with the Senate. In the meantime, I will continue to work across party lines, tackling issues of importance like lowering health care and prescription drug costs, ending trade wars, and combating the student loan debt crisis.

IMPEACHING DONALD JOHN
TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES, FOR HIGH
CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS

SPEECH OF

HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

Mr. CONAWAY. Madam Speaker, other than authorizing an act of war, impeachment is the gravest item that we as a Congress can consider. The decision to move forward with impeachment of a United States President is so consequential that it has only been done three times in our entire nation's history prior to this year, all based on legitimate evidence of criminal behavior. Unfortunately, many of my colleagues have diminished what should be a solemn and grave proceeding into an absolute political circus, simply because they don't like the man occupying the White House.

Many Democrats have been intent on impeaching this President since the day he took office. Their actions are clearly motivated by pure hatred for President Trump. This impeachment vote today is simply the next step in their long-held plan to remove him from office.

The partisan impeachment investigation run by the House Intelligence Committee was unnecessarily held behind closed doors, in a room designed to share classified information. Nothing classified was shared during these meetings, but the result of this decision was that most Members of Congress and all Americans were blocked from hearing the facts for themselves.

It's also critical to remember that the House Intelligence Committee had no business conducting the impeachment inquiry to begin with—the House Judiciary Committee is the Committee tasked with all responsibilities surrounding impeachment in the House of Representatives. The Intelligence Committee had no business running this investigation at all, let alone running it in secret. As with past impeachment investigations, the investigation should have been led by a special prosecutor or independent counsel who then would turn over their findings to the Judiciary Committee—none of this happened here.

Chairman SCHIFF repeatedly withheld crucial information from Republicans, including the ability for anyone but himself and his staff to speak with the whistleblower at the center of this investigation. He was even called out by liberal media outlets for spreading misinformation and falsehoods throughout the impeachment process.

The public hearings were held with complete disregard for the House Rules and decades of precedent. Republicans were not allowed to call witnesses or make basic parliamentary motions. In fact, the only witnesses allowed to testify publicly were those who fit neatly within the Democrats' predetermined narrative.

Most importantly, we have not been presented with any real evidence that proves the President is guilty of "high crimes and misdemeanors," as required by the Constitution to remove a duly-elected president. If there were criminal activity, as many Democrats have claimed, then why are there no crimes listed in the articles of impeachment?

As a member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, I have had a ringside seat for not only the impeachment proceedings, but for the years of investigations into President Trump that preceded this one. When I led the Intelligence Committee's Russia Investigation, the Democrat minority led by Rep. SCHIFF was given every opportunity to participate, and they did so. They were not treated as a minority party, where their objections and right to call witnesses were denied as the Democrats did to Republicans in this impeachment investigation. I treated them with fairness and dignity and did not cast aspersions on them by calling their loyalty to our country or motivations into question. The investigation into Russia meddling was thorough and took more than fifteen months, during which we interviewed over 70 witnesses and poured over more than 300,000 documents. This impeachment investigation, by contrast, was rushed through in less than two months, with just a handful of witnesses.

The charade of a fair proceeding was further emphasized with the Democrats' refusal to let the defendant offer evidence and produce witnesses. The defendant—President Trump—has a right to defend himself, a right which was only ceremoniously and speciously offered once the investigation and report were completed.

It is clear—the verdict in the House was predetermined.

This has been a colossal waste of taxpayer dollars and of Congress' time. However, my greatest fear is that it's not over. When Democrats found no evidence of collusion during the Russia Investigation, they pivoted to the Mueller investigation. When Special Counsel Mueller's report did not include anything Democrat's found useful, they refocused their efforts once again to hone in on a supposed scandal with Ukraine. When this inevitably fails too, what will be the next casualty in their desperate attempt to destroy a president they dislike?

We have forever weakened this body by turning impeachment into a political weapon and set a terrible precedent for all future Congresses. This impeachment scheme is nothing more than an attempt to overturn the 2016 election and to conduct taxpayer-funded opposition research and damage the President's electability heading into 2020.

The American people see right through this charade, and are fed up. It's time to stop this madness and get back to the important work the American people sent us here to do.

IMPEACHING DONALD JOHN
TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES, FOR HIGH
CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS

SPEECH OF

HON. TONY CÁRDENAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, the United States House of Representatives will vote to impeach the President.

This is one of the biggest decisions I have had to make in my seven years in Congress. Since I came to Congress, my goal has always been to help the lives of the people of the San Fernando Valley.