

We Are Well Beyond Hypocrisy



by Victor Davis Hanson

The abject narcissism of the insular left is startling. They apparently believe the American public is amnesiac enough to forget what leftists once did, now that they're doing the utter opposite. And they assume we are to discount their hypocrisy and self-absorption simply because they self-identify as erudite and moral and assume their opponents are irredeemable and deplorable.

Impeachment

The left is saturating the airwaves with outrage over the current House Republicans' impeachment inquiry. They allege that formally investigating President Joe Biden's role in the family grifting operation is somehow a poor constitutional

precedent, if not out of bounds entirely.

So we hear further arguments that it will be unwise to impeach a first-term president when he loses his House majority, that there is no reason to “waste” congressional time and effort when President Biden will be automatically acquitted in the Democratically controlled Senate, and that the impeachment is cynically timed to synchronize with the president’s reelection efforts.

All of these are the precise arguments many of us cited when President Donald Trump was impeached in December 2019 (as his reelection campaign began, and immediately after being cleared of the 22-month, \$40-million-special-counsel Russian-collusion hoax).

The Democrats tried to remove an elected president over a phone call without a special counsel’s report. So President Trump was impeached only after the 2018 election led to a Democratic House majority, which went from eating up nearly two years of his administration in the Russian-collusion hoax straight into the impeachment farce. There was no concern about the cost to the nation of putting an elected government into a continual state of siege.

There is one difference, though, between the Trump impeachment and the Biden impeachment inquiry. President Trump was impeached because he accurately accused the members of the Ukrainian government of paying Hunter Biden, with his zero fossil fuel expertise, an astronomical sum to serve on the Burisma board—as the costly quid that earned the lucrative quo from his dad, Vice President Joe Biden.

No one now denies that then-Vice President Biden got prosecutor Viktor Shokin fired by threatening to cancel legislatively approved U.S. aid. Mr. Shokin knew about the skullduggery through which the Biden family eventually received \$6.5 million from Ukraine—and so Vice President Biden

ensured his firing and publicly bragged about it in performance-art fashion.

In sum, President Trump had a perfect right as commander in chief to delay (he did not cancel) aid to Ukraine, to ensure that its government was not still paying off the Bidens for their lobbying efforts on its behalf.

It is also now clear that President Biden serially lied about his ignorance of Hunter Biden's shake-down operation. In fact, he was, as Devon Archer emphasized, "the brand" central to Hunter Biden's scheme to coerce money from foreign governments. Then-Vice President Biden was proverbially, in Hunter Biden's words "the man sitting next to me" and thus able to either punish or reward foreign interests, depending on the size of the checks they wrote to his various fronting family members.

Offspring Subpoenas

The left is now furious that Hunter Biden has been subpoenaed by the House to testify in private about how he earned his multimillion-dollar income, whether he fully paid taxes on it, and to whom he distributed his winnings.

Hunter Biden has refused to testify. He is now being held in contempt of the U.S. Congress—to the silence of the usually self-righteous former senator Joe "pay your fair share" Biden.

We hear sanctimonious harangues that President Biden is guilty of loving "his only son" Hunter Biden too much, or that it is way out of bounds for a Department of Justice prosecutor to hound President Biden by going "after his family," or that Republican congressional subpoenas and contempt findings should be summarily ignored.

Ask Peter Navarro or Steve Bannon whether one can simply ignore a House subpoena. Ask Ivanka Trump whether she was or

was not subpoenaed to appear before the January 6 committee. Ask the Trump sons whether they could breezily say “no” to Letitia James’s subpoenas in her farcical real-estate-valuation suit against President Trump.

Whistleblowers

Do we remember when, not long ago, whistleblowers were noble?

The alleged whistleblower Eric Ciaramella, an Obama holdover who had burrowed inside the Trump administration, had zero firsthand knowledge of the Trump phone call to Ukrainian President Zelenskyy. Ukrainian expatriate Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman was on the call, as a member of the Trump national security team. He broke the law and apparently disclosed the classified call—in outrage that President Trump was apparently too hard on his native Ukraine—to Mr. Ciaramella, and then hid the latter’s identity. Both met privately with Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) to engineer an impeachment writ.

This impeachment gambit was well-known to the media and the Democratic House. Both Mr. Vindman and Mr. Ciaramella were canonized as invaluable tools in wearing down President Trump in a way that the failed Mueller prosecution had never done.

And whistleblowers now?

IRS Supervisory Special Agent Gary Shapley and 13-year Special IRS Agent Joe Ziegler never violated any statute or disclosed classified information. They did not leak a presidential phone call to a foreign leader.

Instead, both came forward as whistleblowers to testify before Congress about how the Biden Justice Department deliberately and carefully ensured that the mountain of evidence for the prosecution of Hunter Biden that they had presented had simply been ignored—at least long enough for the statute of limitations to run out on his most egregious crimes.

When they both made their case that facts proved the Biden family received huge sums for selling access to or action from Joe Biden, they were roundly trashed by Democrats in Congress and pilloried as disgruntled politicians by a toady press.

Dictators

Never-Trumpers and leftists vie to predict the most nightmarish consequence of a 2024 Trump election win. Supposedly, he will commit every imaginable sin, from ending habeas corpus to jailing his enemies.

This fear-mongering has no basis in fact, especially given that the nation has already experienced a Trump administration for four years. And it saw none of the weaponization of the CIA, FBI, DOJ, and IRS that we have seen under the Biden and Obama administrations. There was no concerted effort to destroy the 2020 Biden campaign in the manner of the 2016 Russian-collusion caper, no FBI suppression of evidence as we saw in the case of the Hunter Biden laptop, no warping of a FISA court, no paying social media corporations FBI money to suppress news unfavorable to President Trump. And so on.

The Burden of Familial Indictments?

Suddenly yet another new narrative emerges: President Biden is unduly preoccupied, bearing the enormous burden of Hunter Biden's indictments. Apparently, we have never appreciated the supposedly unnecessary and cruel encumbrance on a president when his son is indicted.

So we are told that a son's legal exposure is an unfair weight on a president.

Have we again forgotten the subpoenaed Trump children, much less the four weaponized indictments of President Trump himself? Does anyone wish to compare the drug-addicted,

prostitute-hiring, gun-losing, pornographic-photo-taking, shake-down grifting of Hunter Biden with the conduct of the five Trump children?

What would President Biden think if the next Republican Secretary of State had once tried to ruin him by rounding up “51 intelligence authorities” to blatantly lie that a Trump son’s incriminating laptop was not his own, in order to affect the 2024 election—all in the manner of the Antony Blinken 2020 ruse? Or imagine a future national security adviser who had once tried, in Jake Sullivan’s 2016 way, to concoct a malicious yarn that Hunter Biden was engineering a computer ping correspondence from Biden headquarters to Moscow. Would those be burdens on President Biden? Were they on President Trump?

It may well be unwise to impeach a president in his first term when he loses his House majority. It may certainly set a bad precedent to subpoena the children of presidents. It may be regrettable that whistleblowers are either unduly demonized or sanctified. And it is of course wrong to smear a president as a veritable Hitlerian dictator.

But the left does not see such absolutes. Instead, once a supposedly morally superior agenda is enunciated, then any means necessary are justified to obtain it.

And that alternate reality ensures that impeaching a president, indicting him, subpoenaing his kids, praising or libeling whistleblowers, or smearing a president as a dictator become good or bad things only by determining whether they prove useful to the progressive project.

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