

## Impeachment Time by Dan Jacoby

Following is the text of a letter I sent to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi last week. Since then, George W. Bush has decided to escalate the war in Iraq, threatened Iran and Syria, and ordered an invasion of the Iranian consulate in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq in violation of international law (the consulate is Iranian territory).

Feel free to send a similar letter, with copies to your representatives in Congress – and your friends, so they can do the same.

The longer George W. Bush remains in the Oval Office, the more dangerous things become for all Americans. He is putting our security, our safety and our sovereignty at risk. This is why impeachment was written into our Constitution.

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Dear Speaker Pelosi:

There is a story about a person who was scalded with second-degree burns in a bathtub and didn't even know it was happening. It seems that this person allowed hot water to continue to flow in, while the drain was letting the cooler water out at the same rate. As a result, the water temperature rose at such a slow rate that the bather didn't realize what was happening.

Since 1981, when Ronald Reagan took office, our civil liberties have been slowly, gradually, and inexorably reduced. From weakening the posse comitatus act to domestic NSA wiretaps to the latest Presidential signing statement regarding the opening of first-class mail, each single reduction in our freedom is so small as to be almost unnoticeable. Yet the cumulative effect is undeniable. Furthermore, in recent years under the current administration the pace has increased markedly.

At some point, President Bush's actions must be considered not only unconstitutional, but a clear set of deliberate political crimes against the United States, which is the original definition our founding fathers used for the phrase "high crimes and misdemeanors." I know that during the campaign season you took the question of impeachment off the table. I now ask you to put it back.

Despite the overwhelming "trampling" the Republican party took last November, President Bush has refused to acknowledge the will of the people. It is clear that his continuation in office poses a direct threat to the safety, security and sovereignty of both America and Americans. This is, and should be, the only real determinant for considering impeachment, and is, I believe, clearly met.

I know that you are trying to maintain at least the appearance of the spirit of bipartisanship, but there comes a time when you must place the needs of the country ahead of the desires for peace in the Congress. Besides, any remaining semblance of bipartisanship went out the window during the votes on H. Res. 6. The early debate was extremely rancorous, and the vote on Title IV was nearly a straight party-line vote.

Obviously, there will need to be a full set of hearings in the Judiciary Committee in order to draft a formal set of charges, and this will take time. During that time, Republicans will be forced to choose between backing their party's leader and doing what is right for America. In other words, they will be the ones who will have to choose bipartisanship.

Meanwhile, the House can also hold a concurrent investigation into the no-bid contract awarded to the Halliburton subsidiary of Kellogg, Brown & Root (KBR) to provide food and water to American troops serving in Iraq. KBR allotted only three liters of water per person per day, an amount insufficient to maintain our troops in the desert heat. I know, because during the summer I often drink three liters of water a day, and I weigh 140 pounds and spend most of the day lightly dressed and inside an air-conditioned apartment.

As a result of KBR's decision to deny our people the water they needed, many Americans died of heatstroke and related conditions. If the Vice President had anything to do with the no-bid contracts awarded to his former company, this would be grounds for his impeachment as well.

I remember when President Ford pardoned Richard Nixon. I felt then, and feel now, that it was a well-intentioned mistake. Since then, we have allowed our commanders in chief to get away with flouting the laws of our land with increasing impunity, and we have gotten to the point where the current occupant of the Oval Office clearly feels he is above the law, and his second in command solidly defends that attitude.

We must fix this problem before it is too late.

I am sending this letter to many other members of Congress, and other interested parties. I hope it will help you take the proper action swiftly, surely, and without fear of short-term political consequences.

Sincerely,  
Dan Jacoby

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