

Reducing Trump's Destruction, Rethinking Impeachment After The Midterm Elections

by Elliot Benjamin, Ph D.
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NOTE: The present article is a modified and updated version of my previous article: *Reducing Trump's Destruction, Rethinking Impeachment: A More Integrative Perspective*, which is available at www.integralworld.net/benjamin96.html References and notes for the present article are available from lavoza@esperanzacenter.org

In my previous La Voz article, I conveyed the following in regard to my perspective on instituting impeachment proceedings in the House of Representatives to impeach President Donald Trump [1]:

In this present political United States climate, I feel that I have no choice but to stake my own territory and speak up loud and clear that the Trump presidency should not be “normalized.” My call for impeachment is a statement in support of the moral integrity of the United States, as I feel that if impeachment proceedings were at least seriously undertaken in the Congressional House, a message would be conveyed that a good portion of our country shares the outrage with much of the rest of the world of having Donald Trump as the President of the United States.

However, soon before the recent U.S. midterm elections, I changed my perspective about impeachment, as I believed that in order to have any real chance of achieving a Democratic takeover of the House of Representatives, it was imperative that the Democrats refrained from promoting the topic of impeachment as part of their candidates' agendas. For I realized that the winning or losing of this tremendously significant test of Trump's power was essentially in



the hands of the Independents and people on the fence, and it has been warned by many political analysts that talking about impeachment at this time would have been counterproductive to the Democrats' efforts [2], both in terms of failing to sway the necessary middle-of-the roaders to vote for the Democrats, as well as stimulating and escalating the Republican voter turnout even more than was done by Trump's intensified pace campaign rallies that targeted fear of immigrants [3].

As the midterm elections approached, nobody “knew” what the outcome of the elections would be in regard to the Democrats taking over the house, as on one hand we had the “booming economy” and on the other hand we had the public's concern about health care and Trump's alienation of women, minorities, and educated voters in general [4]. Of course the fact that the economy is doing well is much more complicated than the picture that Trump and the Republicans are painting, as the economy is essentially continuing its upward rising trend that Obama initiated, and it is way too early to know the more permanent effects of Trump's drastic tax cuts to the wealthy [5]. In an oversimplified version, this election could be described as a contest between

Trump's hateful immigration rhetoric appealing to his right wing base, and the growing concerns of a wide range of voters about Trump's various ethical quagmires, as well as what a number of people viewed as his excessively harsh and uncaring treatment of immigrants [6]. My own concerns about the Democrats not taking over the House and Trump



Donald Trump embraces former rival Ted Cruz at Houston rally during the 2018 midterm elections.



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continuing and expanding his policies were especially focused upon Trump's destruction of the environment and the planet, and the horrifying prospect of war with Iran. But I understood that my concerns were not what was at the forefront of the issues that the middle-of-the-roaders were most concerned about, and I had to acknowledge that it was precisely these middle-of-the-roaders who would end up deciding whether or not Trump would get to continue on what I viewed as his platform of destruction. And it is for this reason that I changed my tune about impeachment.

I wholeheartedly think that there are serious grounds for impeaching Trump and that it is the justifiable, ethical, and "right" thing to do, as I have written about previously [1]. However, in spite of the cautiously optimistic picture that I previously painted about the possibility of removing Trump from office [1], I must now say that I do not think that it is feasible that Trump could be removed from office even if he were impeached, given the fact that two-thirds of an even more Republican controlled Senate in the aftermath of the midterm elections would need to vote to remove him from office (which has never occurred in the history of the United States).

And I have to ask myself the question: Is impeachment without removal from office worth the horrific surge of violence that would likely erupt from Trump being impeached? And perhaps even more gripping, a number of political analysts believe that undertaking impeachment proceedings could result in alienating the middle-of-the-roaders as it gets closer to 2020 and Trump's

bid for a second term of four years as the president of the United States [2]. So I must weigh the integrity of doing what is the "right" thing to do to preserve the "conscience" and moral values of the United States vs. the possibility of excessive violence and promoting another four years of "President Trump." And in spite of my earlier views [1], I must now yield to the pragmatic forces of working to reduce Trump's destruction. As

much as I hate to have to come to this, yes I now believe that this means to not promote impeachment.

The results of the midterm elections were a great sigh of relief for progressives like myself. The Democrats strongly gained control of the House, and the checks and balances, investigations, and safeguards to reduce what I perceive as Trump's agenda of destruction will soon be underway [7]. No



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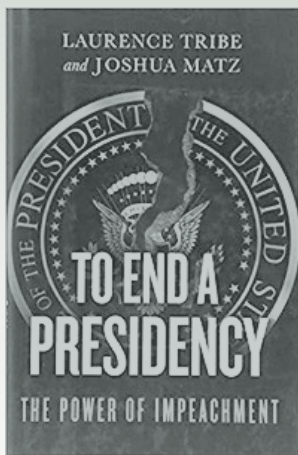
51 TO MAJORITY

are a great sigh of relief for progressives and control of the House, and the checks and balances to reduce what I perceive as Trump's way [7].



the victory is not complete, as Trump will continue to be able to fill up the judicial branch with Conservative judges through the Republicans' retention and expansion of their control of the Senate. But in regard to my change of perspective on impeachment, it is now even more crystal clear to me that there is virtually no chance that Trump could be removed from office, unless the Mueller investigation comes up with downright direct traitor activities by Trump himself in regard to collusion with Russia, and even then—I would not bet on Trump's base and enough Republican senators thinking that Trump should be removed from office. I think that the whole topic of impeachment is a very delicate and complicated situation—as I believe it still is important to talk about the viable grounds for impeachment and all the violations of the constitution that Trump has done to warrant removing him from office—firing up the anti-Trump voter block as much as possible. But I also think it is important to stop short of actually undergoing impeachment proceedings in the Congressional House—and this is consistent with the excellent description of the pros and cons of impeachment discussed by Laurence Tribe and Joshua Matz in their book *To End A Presidency: The Power of Impeachment* [8]:

Where Congress is vested with constitutional powers, it is almost always vested with corresponding discretion about whether and when to use them. . . . the Framers knew how to issue commands—and nowhere did they instruct the House and Senate to take aim at every potentially impeachable offender. Instead, they endowed legislators with the option of acting, but not with the duty to act in every instance where removal would be justifiable. Congress thus bears the heavy burden of exercising judgment. . . . Lacking an affirmative duty to impeach, the House is never obliged to take that drastic step unless it concludes that doing so is in the greater interest of the nation. . . . House members may decline to impeach because the nation faces more urgent issues; they definitely lack two-thirds support in the Senate; they don't believe a decisive majority of the public would support their decision; or they have good reason to believe other political remedies can better address the president's misconduct going forward.



In the case of President Trump, it is my belief that all four of Tribe and Matz's considerations in the last sentence of the above quote are relevant: 1) there are more urgent issues—namely the avoidance of nuclear war and further destruction of the planet, to name the first two for me; 2) yes there is most definitely a lack of two-thirds support in the Senate; 3) over 40% of the country is still strongly supportive of President Trump [9] so it is hard-pressed to conclude that a “decisive” majority of the public would support impeachment and removing him from office; and 4) I do think that “other political activities”—such as House investigative hearings related to Trump's impeachable offenses [10] as well as possible new legislation passed by the House, both of which are currently being advocated for and promoted in the second phase Indivisible “offense” guide [7], can “better address the president's misconduct going forward.”

Make no mistake about it—I will miss being on the impeachment bandwagon. But in the interest of what I believe is best for the United States as well as for the rest of the world, since I feel strongly that reducing Trump's destruction necessitates that he not become president for a second term of four years, and I believe that this requires a strong vote against Trump in 2020 by the middle-of-the-roads—as occurred in last week's midterm election, and I also believe that undertaking impeachment proceedings in the House will run counter to this happening, my perspective on impeachment is now changed.

NOTE: Email *LaVoz*, lavoz@esperanzacenter.org for complete article footnotes.

BIO: Elliot Benjamin is a philosopher, mathematician, musician, counselor, writer, with Ph.Ds in mathematics and psychology and the author of over 150 published articles in the fields of humanistic and transpersonal psychology, pure mathematics, mathematics education, spirituality & the awareness of cult dangers, art & mental disturbance, and progressive politics. He has also written a number of self-published books, such as: *The Creative Artist*, *Mental Disturbance*, and *Mental Health*. See also: www.benjamin-philosopher.com.