



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on December 9, 2019

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## Clinton Impeachment: Should Treason Have Been the Reason?

*In a previous issue, we looked at the first impeachment of a U.S. president, with our article on Andrew Johnson. In this article, we look at the second impeachment, that of William Jefferson Clinton — the first elected president to undergo impeachment.*

In one of the most memorable lines from George Orwell's classic dystopian novel *1984*, it is said that those who control the present control the past, and those who control the past control the future. The American Left well understands the truth of the tactic of influencing what the public thinks about the past, for it is a useful tool to winning political and cultural battles in the present.

A prime example of the truth of Orwell's proposition is the way the average American misunderstands what the Bill Clinton impeachment was all about. Were we to ask the average person to state why Clinton was impeached, there is little doubt that the number one response would be that he was impeached because he had an adulterous affair with a White House intern, Monica Lewinsky, who was less than half his age. The somewhat more informed would suggest that Clinton's impeachment was a result of his "lying about sex."

But the actual charge against the nation's 42nd president was that he lied *under oath* — that he committed perjury — when he lied both in a sworn deposition and to a grand jury. Perjury is a felony, a serious crime for which a perpetrator can receive prison time.

Paula Corbin Jones had sued Clinton for a sexual advance that he made against her while he was governor of Arkansas and she was an employee of the state. In an effort to demonstrate a pattern of behavior by Clinton, Jones' lawyers surprised him with a question about whether he had ever had sexual relations with Lewinsky, who was a 21-year-old White House intern at the time. Clinton's lie, therefore, provided a substantial roadblock in Jones' efforts to achieve a just settlement in her case.

As such, the lie was no small matter to Jones, and to allow any individual to lie with impunity, under oath, in a civil case is to undermine the entire system of justice.

It is also grounds for impeachment under the Constitution of the United States, which provides that a president is liable for impeachment for treason, bribery, and high crimes and misdemeanors. The Constitution provides that the U.S. House of Representatives impeaches (brings charges) by majority vote, but to find a president guilty of the charge, a vote of two-thirds of the U.S. Senate is necessary. Upon conviction in the Senate, a president would be removed from office.





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While the House, then controlled by the Republican Party, did return articles of impeachment, the Senate vote was 50-50, 17 votes short of the needed two-thirds to find Bill Clinton guilty of the impeachment charge.

Of course, Clinton's defenders argue that the entire case against him was a result of prosecutorial excess. In fact, it could be reasonably argued that Ken Starr, a "special prosecutor" who was given the job of investigating another of Clinton's alleged misdeeds in the sordid Whitewater real estate deal, went beyond the scope of that investigation when he began inquiring into Clinton's sexual misconduct with Lewinsky, without which there would have been no perjurious statements by Clinton. Certainly, impeachment should never be used for raw, political purposes, or simply because many in Congress and in the country do not like what they consider the president's boorish behavior, or even disagree with his policies.

## **Why Congress Should Have Impeached Clinton**

Be that as it may, not to downplay the seriousness of what was done to frustrate Paula Jones' civil action against Clinton, there were much more egregious actions taken by Clinton during his eight years in office that were far more damaging to the Republic, for which he should have been impeached and removed from office.

In fact, had the Republicans who pushed Clinton's impeachment through the House chosen to vote impeachment for those far more serious crimes, it is much more likely that the American public would have been aroused to support his removal from office. While it is still possible that enough Democrats in the Senate would have still refused to return a guilty verdict to save Clinton's hold on the Oval Office, his historical reputation would have been much more seriously damaged.

It is not that the Congress had a shortage of reasons to impeach Clinton. In addition to the Whitewater real estate deal that was the initial subject of the Starr investigation, a string of scandals engulfed the Clinton presidency — Travelgate, Filegate, Troopergate, Hubbellgate, Coffeegate, Lippogate, Chinagate — including other credible accusations of a sexual nature. Paula Jones' accusations against Clinton were that he had pressured her (a subordinate) to commit a sexual act with him, but other women claimed that Clinton had actually perpetrated a sexual assault, with one woman accusing him of having raped her.

Of course, as serious as these charges were, they were in the past, and were difficult to prove. But the Congress did not have to prove the veracity of these women's accusations — they could have pursued other non-sexual charges that would not have allowed Clinton's defenders to argue that it was "just about sex." A quick review of what the Founders had to say about the reasons for impeachment should give us an idea of how appropriate it would have been to impeach Clinton for his serious *non-sexual* scandals, particularly Chinagate, which involved the compromise of our nation's national security in exchange for Chinese cash — a matter far more detrimental to the Republic than lying about sex. James Madison, whose contributions to the Constitution were so important that he has rightly been called "the father of the Constitution," wrote that impeachment could become necessary "for defending the community against the incapacity, negligence or perfidy of the chief magistrate." The president, Madison observed, "might betray his trust to a foreign power."

This would explain the inclusion of "treason" as a ground for impeachment. The Founders were very



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careful about charges of treason, placing its definition in the Constitution itself. They knew that, historically speaking, English kings and their judges were quick to consider any utterance against the king or his official policies as treasonous. Because of this, they narrowly defined treason as consisting “only in levying war against them [the United States], or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort.”

Another ground for impeachment — bribery — would also have been a proper charge for Congress to have made. Professor Rauol Berger, a constitutional scholar, noted that bribery was an appropriate impeachment charge because it is “destructive of confidence in the integrity” of the government. Sir Edward Coke, a 17th-century British jurist, noted that “though the bribe be small, yet the fault is great.”

## **The Chinagate Scandal**

Evidence for Clinton being guilty of these two crimes — bribery and treason — could have been advanced by the House in a Senate trial, concentrating on Clinton’s Chinagate transgressions.

For example, John Huang, a U.S. citizen who was born in Communist China, and a longtime friend of Clinton, raised \$3 million for the Democratic National Committee (DNC). The Democrats were forced to return over half of that money because it came from foreign sources and was therefore illegal under federal law. But was it bribery, or even treason?

The Lippo Group was an Indonesian conglomerate half-owned by the Communist Chinese government, and Huang was one of its many agents who made very large contributions to the Clinton-Gore campaign and to the DNC. In 1996, Clinton used an executive order to lock up the Kaiparowitz Plateau, America’s largest coal field, which contained over \$1 trillion in low-sulfur coal. His stated reason was to create the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah, consisting of 1.7 million acres.

But his action reeked of payback: It left as the only comparable and accessible coal field in the world one in South Kalimantan, Indonesia.

Huang was also given a high post in the U.S. Department of Commerce, despite the complaint of former Undersecretary of Commerce Jeffrey Garten that Huang was “totally unqualified.” In any case, Huang was given a top secret clearance, which allowed him to attend over 100 CIA security briefings, where he was given the opportunity to help make U.S. policy with Indonesia, Vietnam, and China. Lippo benefited from these deals, and official records show that Huang was in frequent contact with Lippo and the Chinese Embassy, and even met with Chinese Communist officials immediately after receiving intelligence briefings and top secret reports concerning China.

Understandably, Clinton denied that he had even heard of Huang. But considering that Huang had visited the White House 94 times, it soon became apparent that this was not true. On one documented visit, Huang met in the Oval Office with Clinton, Lippo President James Riady, Clinton lawyer Bruce Lindsey (a former Rose Law firm associate with Hillary Clinton), and Joseph Giroir, a Lippo consultant.

Senator Fred Thompson, a Tennessee Republican who chaired the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, conducted an investigation into illegal campaign fundraising, and accused the Chinese government of pouring “substantial sums of money” into U.S. political campaigns in order to “buy access and influence in furtherance of Chinese government interests.”



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## Clinton Sells Influence to Communist China

After winning the 1992 presidential race largely because the independent candidacy of Texas billionaire Ross Perot severely damaged the reelection effort of President George H.W. Bush, it was uncertain if Clinton could win his own second term in 1996, without Perot on the ballot. At the time, the Republicans had won five of six presidential elections up to the 1992 campaign. It was expected that Clinton would need vast amounts of money in his campaign coffers.

One way that Clinton raised that cash was through 44 fundraising coffees held at the White House, in itself a violation of federal law. It is illegal to hold fundraisers inside U.S. government buildings, including the White House. In fact, White House Counsel Bernard Nussbaum sent a memo to Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, and other White House personnel, warning them, “Soliciting or receiving campaign contributions on Federal property or in Federal buildings is a crime. This means that fundraising events may not be held in the White House.”

On one video of a White House coffee, Arief Wiriadinata is seen shaking hands with President Clinton, saying, “James Riady [the head of the previously mentioned Lippo Group] sent me.”

Wiriadinata and his wife, Saroya, were large contributors to the 1996 campaign, donating almost a half-million dollars. The actual money, however, came from the Riady family of Indonesia. Wiriadinata, on the other hand, had no known source of independent income to make such large contributions. When Senate investigators issued a subpoena for him to appear, he quickly left for Indonesia.

Two other major Democratic fundraisers, Nora and Gene Lum, were also frequent White House guests — before they were convicted of illegal campaign funding.

Former Clinton presidential advisor George Stephanopolous said on the ABC news program *This Week*, “There was a decision in the White House that people would get access in return for contributions. And it went on a lot. It went on all the time.”

Former White House counsel Boyden Gray told *Human Events* that the sale of “access” in this fashion is “illegal under the campaign finance laws.” He noted that the Oval Office “coffees” were “fundraisers. They were explicit quid pro quos.... There was an explicit connection — you give me the money and I’ll get you the meeting.”

Another Chinese businessman in California, Johnny Chung, with extensive business interests in Communist China, explained to the *New York Times* his giving more than \$360,000 to the DNC: “I see the White House as like a subway. You have to put in coins to open the gates.” He managed to get through the White House gates 51 times.

All of this would be sufficient to have held a formal impeachment inquiry in the House of Representatives to investigate the extent of President Clinton’s involvement in bribery, which alone would have been more than a sufficient reason to impeach — and convict — Clinton.

And it could have been deemed treason as defined by the Constitution — “adhering” to the enemies of the United States, “giving them aid and comfort.”

While the Congress has never declared a state of war with the communist dictatorship in China, it is clear that they are an enemy of the United States, and much of the building up of Communist China into the powerful nation, economically and militarily, that it now is, began with the Clinton administration.



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For example, Chung's contributions opened the gates at the White House not only for himself, but also for key leaders of the Chinese regime. In 1995, Hauren Sheng, the head of a Chinese energy business called China Petro-Chemical Corporation, asked Chung for a meeting with Hazel O'Leary, then secretary of energy in the Clinton Cabinet. The *Los Angeles Times* reported in September 1995, "Chung immediately contacted the Democratic National Committee.... DNC Chairman Donald L. Fowler sent a letter urging O'Leary to meet Sheng and calling Chung 'one of the top supporters' of the DNC."

In March 1995, Chung and some Communist Chinese officials met with Fowler, who arranged for them to have a private meeting and a photo opportunity with President Clinton. Three days later, the Bank of China (owned by the Chinese Communist government) wired \$150,000 to Chung's bank account. Then, three days later, Chung gave a check for \$50,000 to the DNC, which he gave to Maggie Williams, chief of staff for Hillary Clinton.

Former DNC financial chief Richard Sullivan admitted in testimony before the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee that Chung had offered \$50,000 in exchange for a photo opportunity and private meeting for his Chinese associates with Clinton. He said he "had a sense that he might be taking money from [Communist Chinese officials] ... and then giving it to us."

While Bill Clinton was raising cash from the Chinese to enable him to defeat any Republican challenger in 1996, what were the goals of the Chinese? What did they hope to accomplish?

## **Clinton Administration Allows Chinese Espionage**

One Chinese official of the China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO), Hongye Zheng, was able to obtain access to the White House. COSCO essentially served as the merchant marine for the Chinese military, and its ships have been used to transport tanks to the Marxist regime in Burma, and to ship North Korean rocket fuel to Pakistan. They have also smuggled heroin into Canada.

In March 1996, a COSCO ship was intercepted near Oakland, carrying a cargo of AK-47s that were bound for street gangs in California.

The COSCO container ships were also believed to have been used in smuggling technology to benefit China's military. The Clinton administration aided COSCO by expediting a \$138 million, taxpayer-underwritten loan guarantee for COSCO to build four new container ships.

Zheng showed up at at least one White House fundraising coffee in early 1996.

Clinton demonstrated great enthusiasm for COSCO. The September 8, 1996 issue of *Insight* magazine, citing "U.S. intelligence sources working closely with the FBI," reported that COSCO "plans to use the old Long Beach Naval Yard for a joint Chinese-Russian intelligence operation as part of a spy partnership formed when the two countries signed a secret agreement in 1992."

Ominously, the COSCO-run facility was next door to Sea Launch, another joint Chinese-Russian venture. *Insight* explained, "The concern is that Beijing, teamed with Russia, eventually will own a West Coast rocket-launching pad and a naval base on U.S. soil from which to transfer secret high-tech equipment back to the [Chinese] People's Liberation Army ... in concealed containers aboard huge COSCO ships."

Understanding that the Communist Chinese take a very long view of events, one investigator told *Insight* that "COSCO has specific roles in the PLA's contingency plan of dominating East Asia and future war with Taiwan. Their primary goal is to get stuff out of here in peacetime. Their strategic thinking is





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very similar to the Japanese in the 1930s. Sooner or later they are going to confront us on who is going to be the boss out in East Asia.”

Major General Zheng Quinsheng explained this long view in the July 16, 1996 issue of the *Liberation Army Daily* (publication of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army), noting that the Chinese military must “adhere to the Confucian ideology of winning victory in a war before actually going into it,” and that “the design and building of military strength during peacetime” is the central focus of that ideology. It is the same ideology employed by King Philip of Macedonia against the ancient Greeks, and by Adolf Hitler in Germany in the 1930s.

About a quarter century later, we can see the damage that has been done to America as part of the 1996 Clinton reelection campaign effort. These concessions made to the Communist Chinese have helped that totalitarian regime pilfer high technology out of the United States. One investigator told *Insight*, “They are going to steal [technology] and ship it to China. You need a place to do the paperwork and that’s the port. They will have their own military base to change labels and have no accountability.”

The Chinese army needed to modernize in 1996, and this assistance from the Clinton administration has helped them do that. The architect of the modernization of the Chinese military was General Chi Hoatian who was the man who ordered the tanks to roll over anti-communist demonstrators in Tiananmen Square, yet President Clinton received Hoatian with honors in December 1996.

This aid and comfort to the Chinese Communists, in exchange for campaign cash, then, was the reason that Bill Clinton should have been impeached. As despicable as Clinton’s sexual escapades were, Clinton’s selling out the interests of our country to a hostile foreign power — Communist China — was his greatest crime while occupying the Oval Office. Certainly, charges of bribery and treason had a better chance of success than talking about a stained blue dress. Surely the case could have been made to convince the American people, and maybe even the U.S. Senate, that Bill Clinton was guilty of at least bribery, and maybe even treason.

*Photo: AP Images*

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