

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نېاشد تن من مېباد بدین بوم و پر زنده یک تن مېباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

BY RICHARD C. GROSS

18.02.2021

Republicans Hide Behind Constitution

“WAR IS PEACE

“FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

“IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH”

George Orwell, 1984

The failure of Republican senators to convict a twice impeached pathological liar of “incitement of insurrection” despite chilling videos showing he encouraged an army of thugs to unleash a maelstrom against the crucible of American democracy will forever stain our proud history of freedom.

“Just look what Republicans have been forced to defend,” Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York said after the 57-43 vote against conviction. “Look what Republicans have chosen to forgive.”

The verdict underscored Donald Trump’s incomparable cult-like hold on the weak Republican Party, which stabbed the majority of Americans who voted for President Joe Biden in the back. It took 67 votes to convict.

As sure as Trump will tell another lie, those Republicans who backed him for four tumultuous years and acquitted him are co-conspirators in one of the most heinous crimes conducted by Americans against the United States. It’s second only to the terrorist strike against the World trade Center and Pentagon on 9/11 that killed nearly 3,000 people. And those terrorists were foreigners.

“And the fact that he didn’t stop it, the fact that he incited a lawless attack and abdicated his duty to defend us from it, the fact that he actually further inflamed the mob . . . attacking his vice president while assassins were pursuing him in this Capitol more than requires conviction and disqualification” [from running for federal office] –Rep. Joe Neguse, D-Colo., a House manager of the impeachment trial.

The 10 House Republicans who voted to impeach Trump and the seven Senate Republicans who voted to convict him are true American heroes. They stood steadfast against the majority of their kowtowing colleagues. They voted for the good of the country, not for a decrepit extremist political party of cowards that should go out of business.

“The evidence shows clearly that this mob was provoked over many months by Donald J. Trump. And if you look at the evidence, his purposeful conduct, you’ll see that the attack was foreseeable and preventable” – Rep. Joaquin Castro, D-Tex., a House manager.

And those soldiers of misfortune described themselves as “patriots,” a surefire misnomer and slogan that propelled them to fight for Trump’s lies of a “rigged” and “stolen” election. Sad.

“Oh, Nancy,” shouted one of the insurgent predators hunting for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California in a scene from a Stephen King horror novel. “Oh, Naaaancy. We’re looking for you.”

Those who voted essentially for an extremism and white supremacy that laid siege to the castle of our democracy, while its vastly outnumbered defenders in blue fought valiantly, wielded the Constitution – our founding document — to excuse themselves of having forgiven the “unpardonable sin,” to quote Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Those Republicans who slavishly bow to a disgraced former president, afraid they will lose the 74.2 million people who voted for Trump, copped out of a conviction for the second time in over a year. They voted in favor of a corrupt fraud who deserved to be held accountable for the worst crime in history carried out by Americans, the Confederate secession and launch of a treasonous war aside.

“He’d assembled thousands of violent people, people he knew were capable of violence, people he had seen be violent. They were standing now in front of him. And then he pointed to us [in Congress], lit the fuse and sent an angry mob.” – Rep. Madeline Dean, D-Pa.)

The scarlet letter “C” for coward is writ large on the chest of those Republicans who insisted on ignoring facts in favor of a flaccid defense that rested on freedom of speech. They equated the word “fight,” as in fighting for the right to vote, with Trump’s urging his private army to “fight like hell.”

The Supreme Court ruled in 1969 in *Brandenburg v. Ohio* that freedom of speech is not protected when it is “directed at inciting or producing imminent lawless action” and is “likely to incite or produce such action.” The Republicans ignored that.

Just like you can’t yell “fire” in a crowded theater to cause a panic.

“Just like to build a fire, it doesn’t just start with the flames. Donald Trump for months and months assembled the tinder, the kindling, threw on logs for fuel to have his supporters believe that the only way their victory would be lost was if it was stolen – so that way President Trump was ready, if he lost the election, to light the match.” – Rep. Eric Swalwell, D-Calif., House manager.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the chief enabler of the president he coddled for four years to get his tax cut and more than 200 conservative judges and deregulation, severely criticized Trump's actions. It's as if his words were meant to excuse his vote to acquit. Words are cheap. One can't take both sides and remain relevant.

"There's no question – none – that President Trump is practically and morally responsible for provoking the events of the day," he said after the acquittal vote. Big deal.

But McConnell noted that Trump may face criminal charges in the courts. That probably would include Washington, D.C., and Fulton County, Ga., the latter for his intimidation of election officials there.

The inability, for whatever reason, of Republicans to seize the opportunity to convict a mafia-like don bent on overthrowing the government jeopardizes an already stricken democracy, wounded by a failure from the founding of the country to protect itself with stricter laws.

That must be remedied as swiftly as possible.

Shamed Republicans may yet get a comeuppance.

"Dozens of former Republican officials" are negotiating the possibility of forming a "center-right breakaway party" because the current one refuses to stand up to Trump "and his attempts to undermine U.S. democracy," said the Reuters news agency in an exclusive report Feb. 10.

More than 120 of the former officials from four Republican administrations, including Trump's, conducted a Zoom call Feb. 5 to discuss the group, the agency said. Its members would run for election on "principled conservatism" and adhere to the Constitution and the rule of law," Reuters said.

Bless them, and may they succeed.

George Orwell, in a statement made in the United States shortly after the June, 1949 publication of *1984*. (The Orwell Society):

"I do not believe the kind of society I describe [in *1984*] necessarily will arrive, but I believe . . . that something resembling it could arrive. . . . Totalitarianism, if not fought against, could triumph anywhere."

So it nearly did in America.

FEBRUARY 17, 2021

Richard C. Gross, a correspondent, bureau chief and foreign editor for United Press International, retired as the opinion page editor of The Baltimore Sun.