

How Far Has Obama Gone Down Richard Nixon's Road?

by Nancy Spannaus and Edward Spannaus

Jan. 10—With his signing of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which gives him the authority he demanded to indefinitely detain, if not kill, American citizens, President Barack Obama has become increasingly identified as the Hitlerian tyrant he intends to be. Liberal and conservative spokesmen alike are pointing to the history of his violations of the U.S. Constitution—ranging from the illegal Libyan War, to secret police-state measures, to the bald nullification of Congress's lawful power—as equivalent to that of the very monarchical system which the American Revolution was fought to end, and declaring him impeachable.

Indeed, as the LaRouche movement began pointing out as early as April 2009, Obama's retention of the power of Presidency endangers the very existence of the United States. Not only does he have a Nero complex, but his Constitutional violations are totally blatant.

Yet, up to this point, no Congressman has been willing to directly threaten impeachment, or insist that the President resign. Congress is awash in a sea of cowardice, marking it as one of the most shameful Congresses in our nation's history.

The situation was different almost 40 years ago, when another arguably mentally unstable President threatened both dictatorship and war. At that time, the Congress—eventually members of both parties—responded to the threat to the nation by preparing bills of impeachment, which ultimately “convinced” Nixon to resign from office, rather than face an inevitable im-

peachment and conviction. It is instructive to review that process, step by step, as it highlights both where we stand now, and the immediate options for dealing with the existential crisis we face.

The Start of the Process

The triggering event of what became known as “Watergate” was the burglarizing of Democratic National Committee offices at the Watergate Hotel in June 1972, during the Presidential election campaign; one of the purposes of the break-in was to plant wiretap devices.

However, Nixon's targetting of his adversaries and the creation of his “enemies list” went back to the very beginning of his Administration, and after his efforts failed to keep secret the illegal bombing of Cambodia, he defied the law by continuing the bombing after Congress had withdrawn its approval. By January 1973, the direct ties of the White House to the Watergate break-in were clear, with the guilty pleas and sentencing of five of the Watergate burglars. By April, two grand juries had been empanelled, and in May, Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox was appointed, and the Senate had created a Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities (known as the “Watergate Committee”).

As the revelations were disclosed of wiretapping, break-ins, and other “dirty tricks” and targetting of enemies, Nixon and his spokesmen defended his actions on the grounds of “the President's inherent power to



Richard Nixon leaves Washington, Aug. 9, 1974, after his resignation the day before. Key Senators convinced him to leave; yet today, none have yet displayed the courage to make a move like that to oust Obama.

protect national security”—the same rationalizations asserted by the Bush-Cheney gang, and now wholeheartedly adopted by Obama.

When Nixon defied a court order to provide the White House tapes to the Special Prosecutor, even after the Federal Court of Appeals upheld the subpoena, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) made a speech on the Senate floor in mid-September 1973, warning that if Nixon continued to defy the courts, “a responsible Congress would be left with no recourse but to exercise its power of impeachment.” (No Senator today has had the nerve to do the equivalent.) And as Vice President Spiro Agnew’s problems also multiplied, journalist Elizabeth Drew reported in her day-by-day account in the *Washington Journal*, that by early October, people were beginning to discuss the possibility that both the offices of President and Vice President could be vacated before their terms expired.

In the House, the first step toward impeachment had been taken in July, by Rep. Robert Drinan (D-Mass.), who had introduced a resolution of impeachment based upon Nixon’s secret bombing of Cambodia and his concealment of it from Congress and the public. The House took no action on Drinan’s resolution at the time. However, over the Summer, House Judiciary Committee chairman Peter Rodino, seeing that impeachment could become a real possibility, directed his staff to begin brushing up on the subject.

In the context of the Watergate revelations, a special Senate committee undertook a probe of Presidential emergency powers, coming up with the alarming finding that there were at least 470 statutes giving the President special powers in cases of national emergency, including declaring martial law, deploying troops anywhere in the world, and seizing property. This also added to the urgency of getting the Presidential administration under control.

So did Nixon’s determination to nullify the actions of the Special Prosecutor. In October 1973, Nixon ordered Special Prosecutor Cox fired—and when both the Attorney General and his deputy refused to do so, he appointed a new acting Attorney General, Robert Bork, who dutifully carried out the order. The dismissal of Cox, and the resignations of

Attorney General Elliot Richardson and Deputy Attorney General William French Smith, all on Oct. 20, came to be known as the “Saturday Night Massacre.”

The Threat of War

There was a lot more going on in October 1973, of course, especially on the strategic front. With the intimate involvement of Nixon’s Secretary of State (and British agent) Henry Kissinger, the Arabs launched, and Israel won, the Yom Kippur war, which was used by London financial interests, working through Saudi Arabia, to perpetrate the Oil Hoax. In the same time frame, on Oct. 10, Vice President Agnew resigned under pressure, and Nixon put forward the nomination of House Republican leader Gerald Ford, to be his replacement.

Nixon was also in the midst of a major conflict with Congress over war powers. At the end of October, he announced his intention to veto the War Powers Resolution, an attempt to codify the Constitution’s requirement that only Congress can authorize and declare war. Congress passed it, overriding Nixon’s veto. Subsequent Presidents have all complied, if reluctantly, with the Resolution’s requirements, up until President Obama, who deployed U.S. military forces against Libya last year without seeking Congressional authorization.

Then, things got even wilder.

On Oct. 25, Nixon declared a worldwide military

alert—after a cease-fire had been reached in the Israeli-Arab War. Questions were immediately raised about Nixon's purposes and (not for the first time) his emotional stability. Elizabeth Drew reported behind-the-scenes discussion of removing Nixon under the Presidential disability provisions of the 25th Amendment, and also fears that a coup was in the offing. One person referred to it as "a Strangelove day." Drew wrote: "There is the inescapable feeling that things have changed.... The talk of impeachment has been more serious. More people have seemed to be suggesting plans for replacing the President." This talk was not just among Democrats, but was quietly beginning to take place among Congressional Republicans.

Again, we see precursors for the case of Obama, who is pursuing the British agenda of thermonuclear confrontation against Russia and China.

Into Receivership

By the end of October, impeachment was being discussed more openly in Congress and its environs (21 impeachment resolutions were filed in the House in the wake of the Saturday Night Massacre), and as the confirmation hearings for Gerald Ford began on Nov. 1, a realization was sinking in, that the Congress might not just be confirming a Vice President, but also a President-in-waiting.

On Nov. 3, columnist Joseph Alsop, a supporter of Nixon, regarded as reflecting the hard-line views of the U.S. military establishment, called for Nixon's resignation, warning that the Soviet Union might try to exploit the President's weakness. Other influential journalists and newspapers also began calling for Nixon to go, and concern was rising in the business community and Wall Street. On Nov. 4, Sen. Edward Brooke of Massachusetts became the first GOP Senator to call for Nixon to resign.

One Democrat told Drew that the pressure on Nixon to resign would intensify after Ford was confirmed as Vice President, and that Republicans were talking to each other, and to the business and financial community. "They are very concerned, especially, about the military alert last month," he said. "That alert did it. For us, too."

But, at the same time, Drew reports, there was a deep fear of moving against Nixon too soon, since he still held the levers of power, and there were worries about retaliation if a move to oust him failed.

On Nov. 27, the Senate confirmed Ford by a vote of

92 to 3, and on Dec. 6, the House confirmed him on a 387-35 vote; Ford was sworn in later the same day.

With Ford's entrance into the White House, the Nixon Administration was effectively put into receivership, and it was only a matter of time until Nixon would be replaced. To some degree, Nixon had been put under control, similar to what Lyndon LaRouche says must be done with Obama, by starting the process of applying the 25th Amendment, as a stop-gap measure in lieu of immediate removal from office.

Drew reported that "a wise man" familiar with the ways of Washington told her at the time, that the President's support had been eroded. "He's helpless now," the source said. "He can't push buttons or do something mad. That would be the 'tilt' and the end of him."

The Standard for Impeachment

The threat of impeachment still hung over Nixon, however, and following Ford's accession to the White House, Nixon and his aides, including Ford, demanded that the Democratic-controlled Congress quickly "either impeach him, or get off his back." Many Republicans were worried about having impeachment proceedings drag into the months preceding the 1974 mid-term elections. House Judiciary Committee chairman Peter Rodino said the committee would complete its inquiry by April 1, and on Dec. 20, John Doar, a Republican who had served in the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division under President Eisenhower, and who remained in the DOJ under Attorney General Robert Kennedy, was named as counsel for the Judiciary Committee's impeachment inquiry.

On Feb. 6, 1974, the full House approved a Resolution of Inquiry by a vote of 410-4, instructing the Judiciary Committee to begin an inquiry to determine whether sufficient grounds existed for impeachment of the President by the House. The Committee was given the subpoena power, the right to hold hearings, and funding to carry out its investigation.

Over the Winter, the White House and the Congress sparred over the issue of what constitutes an impeachable offense. The White House argued that impeachment requires a criminal offense, and a serious one at that.

A House Judiciary Committee staff report, issued in late February, rejected that argument, asserting correctly that "Impeachment is a Constitutional remedy addressed to serious offenses against the system of government." In terms that are extremely relevant today in

the case of Obama, the staff report identified three major Presidential duties specified in the Constitution: to “take care that the laws be faithfully executed,” to “faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States,” and to “preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States”—the latter two as stated in the President’s mandated oath of office.

The report also stated that the Framers of the Constitution provided for impeachment as a means of seeking to “build in safeguards against executive abuse and usurpation of power.” Buttressing this Constitutional argument, Committee chairman Rodino declared, following the issuance of the staff report, that “grounds for impeachment need not arise out of criminal conduct.”

During March, as the White House stonewalled the Judiciary Committee’s requests for documents and tapes, Federal judge John Sirica ruled that the Judiciary Committee could have access to the White House materials provided to the Special Prosecutor. Congressional Republicans, fearful of their own re-election chances in November, were beginning to view Nixon’s defense as a lost cause, and it is reported that there was a dramatic shift of sentiment toward impeachment during this time.

In early April, Sen. Jacob Javits (R-N.Y.) went public with the suggestion that Nixon step aside under the disability provisions of the 25th Amendment, so that the Vice President would serve as President. Javits warned Nixon not to play “impeachment politics” with foreign policy and domestic legislation.

On April 1, the Judiciary Committee issued a formal subpoena to Nixon, and a week later, Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski subpoenaed the White House tapes for almost the full year following the June 1972 Watergate break-in. At the end of April, Nixon released over 1,200 pages of transcripts of selected White House tapes, which only made things worse for him. On May 1, the Judiciary voted 20-18 to find Nixon in non-compliance with its subpoena—but not yet in contempt. Only one Republican voted with the majority of Democrats.

On May 7, the White House, invoking “Executive privilege,” announced that Nixon would not give up the tapes. On May 9, the *Chicago Tribune*, heretofore a strong Nixon backer, called upon the President to resign. The same day, Vice President Ford spoke publicly of “a crisis of confidence” in our government. By the end of the month, Ford was letting it be known that he would no longer defend Nixon’s defiance of the courts and Congress, and he said he had warned Nixon that his “stonewalling” could lead to “an emotional in-

stitutional confrontation.”

On May 29, the Judiciary Committee completed its hearing of evidence presented by committee counsel Doar. Eight Republicans on the Judiciary Committee now voted in favor of sending a letter to Nixon warning that his failure to comply with committee subpoenas could constitute grounds for impeachment. On June 10, the White House announced that it would not comply.

Meanwhile, Nixon tried to shore up his position, with foreign policy trips to the Middle East, Europe, and Russia. Even as of mid-July, it appeared that Republicans on the Judiciary Committee remained opposed to impeachment, and that a vote to impeach would be on party lines—something the Democrats were anxious to avoid. A turning point came in meetings of the “swing group” of three Southern Democrats, including Rep. James Mann (D-S.C.), and four Republicans; the group decided in favor of impeachment.

Formal Proceedings Begin

On July 24, the Supreme Court ruled against Nixon’s assertion of Executive privilege, holding that he must comply with the Special Prosecutor’s subpoena. On the same day, the Judiciary Committee began formal impeachment proceedings, and on May 27, three Articles of Impeachment were approved by the committee:

Article I, pertaining to obstruction of justice in the cover-up of the Watergate break-in, was approved 27 to 11, with 6 of 17 Republicans voting in favor.

Article II, pertaining to abuse of power, including Nixon’s use of warrantless wiretaps and the targeting of those on his “enemies list,” was approved by a vote of 28 to 10.

Article III, pertaining to Nixon’s stonewalling of the Congressional impeachment inquiry and refusal to comply with subpoenas, was approved by a narrower margin, 21 to 17.

Two other Articles failed, one dealing with Nixon’s tax violations and personal enrichment, the other dealing with his concealment of the bombing of Cambodia.

With three Articles having been sent to the full House, and the likelihood that the House would vote to impeach, a delegation of senior Republicans, including Sen. Howard Baker of Tennessee, went to the White House and told Nixon in no uncertain terms that, unless he stepped down, the House would vote overwhelmingly to impeach, and the Senate would vote overwhelmingly to convict. This is precisely the type of action that patriotic senior Democrats should take with

respect to Obama today.

On Aug. 8, President Nixon resigned, and on the morning of Aug. 9, he flew back to his home in San Clemente for the last time.

And Obama?

A review of Nixon's offenses against the Constitution should put the current offenses by President Obama in sharp perspective. Many of the offenses are the same—the police-state powers, the disregard of Congress, among them—but one cannot help but be struck by the fact that Obama is a lot more “in your face” about his violations. In fact, in many cases—the NDAA, for example—he has succeeded in bullying the Congress to go along with his unconstitutional powers, in a way Nixon never could get away with.

The difference comes down to two crucial matters. First, that, in the midst of the current terminal breakdown of the global financial system (a process Nixon only began, by taking the dollar off gold in 1971), the consequences of leaving Obama in office are much more threatening to the United States, and the world, than in the case of Nixon. Second, that the character of the cur-

rent members of Congress, and the people who elect them, has undergone a huge degradation, to the point where elected officials today *refuse* to fight on matters of Constitutional principle, or the nation's survival.

So, where do we stand in terms of getting Obama to follow Nixon out of the Oval Office? In terms of formal proceedings, not very far. But in terms of intolerable violations of our Constitution, we have reached the point of decision. A simple action, such as threatening impeachment or removal by the 25th Amendment, can function like a spark in a gas field, bringing about an explosion of popular support to remove this President. That's what the American population has to demand, in an all-out campaign to save this nation.

Memo to the President

Intelligence Veterans: Avoid Another Long War

Jan. 6—*Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS)*, a group of former U.S. intelligence officials, was formed in January 2003 as a “coast-to-coast enterprise” to protest the use of faulty intelligence “upon which the US/UK invasion of Iraq was based.” On Jan. 4, 2012, VIPS issued the following memorandum, addressed to President Obama, under the title “Avoiding Another Long War,” which is now widely posted on the Internet.

As retired professionals with collectively hundreds of years of experience in intelligence, foreign policy, and counterterrorism, we are concerned about the gross misrepresentation of facts being bruited about to persuade you to start another war.

We have watched the militarists represent one Muslim country after another as major threats to U.S. security. In the past, they supported attacks on Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, Pakistan, Libya and Afghanistan, as well as Israel's attacks on Syria and Lebanon—nine Muslim countries—and Gaza.

This time, they are using a new IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] report to assert categorically that Iran is building a nuclear weapon that allegedly poses a major threat to the U.S. Your intelligence and



Sam Vaknin, author of *Malignant Self-Love*, is interviewed in a 46-minute LPAC-TV video, on President Obama's narcissistic personality disorder, a condition which Vaknin says is increasingly controlling the President's mental outlook. Agreeing with Lyndon

LaRouche, Vaknin believes that Obama poses a grave danger to the United States and the world, unless he is immediately removed from office.

<http://larouchepac.com/node/19464>

military advisors can certainly clarify what the report really says.

As you know, the IAEA makes regular inspection visits to Iran's nuclear facilities and has TV cameras monitoring those facilities around the clock. While there is reason to question some of Iran's actions, the situation is not as clear-cut as some allege.

Mohamed ElBaradei, a Nobel Peace Prize recipient and former IAEA director-general, said recently, "I don't believe Iran is a clear and present danger. All I see is the hype about the threat posed by Iran."

He is not alone: All 16 U.S. intelligence agencies concluded "with high confidence" in a 2007 National Intelligence Estimate that Iran had halted its nuclear-weapons program as of 2003.

We are seeing a replay of the "Iraq WMD threat." As Philip Zelikow, Executive Secretary of the 9/11 Commission, said, "The 'real threat' from Iraq was not a threat to the United States. The unstated threat was the threat against Israel."

Your military and intelligence experts can also provide information on unpublicized efforts to derail Iran's nuclear program and on the futility of attempting to eliminate that program—which is dispersed and mostly underground—through aerial bombing. Defense Secretary Panetta and other experts have stated that an air attack would only delay any weapons program for a year or two at most. Former Mossad head Meir Dagan said that an air force strike against Iran's nuclear installations would be "a stupid thing," a view endorsed in principle by two other past Mossad chiefs, Danny Yatom and Ephraim Halevy. Dagan added that "Any strike against [the civilian program] is an illegal act according to international law."

Dagan pointed out another reality: bombing Iran would lead it to retaliate against Israel through Hezbollah, which has tens of thousands of Grad-type rockets and hundreds of Scuds and other long-range missiles, and through Hamas.

We are already spending as much as the rest of the world combined on National Security and \$100 billion per year on a Long War in Afghanistan. The Israel lobby has been beating the drums for us to attack Iran for years, led by people with confused loyalties like [Sen.] Joe Lieberman, who once made the claim that it is unpatriotic for Americans not to support Israel.

Another Long War is not in America's or Israel's interests, whatever Israel's apologists claim. Those are the same people who claim that [Iranian President Mah-

moud] Ahmadinejad said he would "wipe Israel off the map."

Persian specialists have pointed out that the original statement in Persian actually said that Israel would collapse: "This occupation regime over Jerusalem must vanish from the arena of time."

What we have is a situation where Israel's actions, for example in sending 300,000 settlers into the West Bank and 200,000 settlers into East Jerusalem, are compromising U.S. security by putting us at risk for terrorist retaliation. We have provided Israel with \$100 billion in direct aid since 1975. Since this is fungible, how has funding settlements contributed to our security? You agreed to provide \$3 billion in F-35s to Israel in exchange for a 90-day freeze on settlements. What you got was 90 days of stonewalling on the peace process and then more settlers. What more do we owe Israel?

Certainly not a rush to war. We have time to make diplomacy and sanctions work, to persuade Russia and China to make joint cause with us.

James Madison once wrote that "Of all the enemies of true liberty, war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded. . . . War is the parent of armies; from these proceed debts and taxes. . . . No nation can preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare."

We are currently winding down what you labeled a "dumb war"; we should not undertake another dumb war against a country almost three times larger than Iraq, that would set off a major regional war and create generations of jihadis. Such a war, contrary to what some argue, would not make Israel or the U.S. safer.

Steering Group, Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS)

Phil Giraldi, Directorate of Operations, CIA

Ray McGovern, US Army Intelligence Officer, Directorate of Intelligence, CIA

Coleen Rowley, Special Agent and Minneapolis Division Counsel, FBI

Ann Wright, Col., US Army Reserve (ret.), Foreign Service Officer, Department of State

Tom Maertens, Foreign Service Officer and NSC Director for Non-Proliferation under two presidents

Elizabeth Murray, former Deputy National Intelligence Officer for the Near East in the National Intelligence Council

David MacMichael, former history professor and CIA and National Intelligence Council analyst