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President Trump’s Impeachment

News of President Trump impending impeachment and possible removal from office has thrown the state to a state of political quagmire. Impeachment is enshrined in the constitution. There are four major characteristics prevalent in any impeachment discussion in the United States of America (Charles, Black and Phillip). One of the reasons for impeachment of a president as enshrined in the constitution is the protection of separation of powers. The government is separated into three branches including the legislative, executive and the judiciary. Each branch is obligated to perform its own unique and identifiable functions as spelt out in the constitution.

Impeachment protects the integrity of the government in the face of political offenses. These offenses result from disregard of guidelines of the constitution which does not necessarily call for criminally liable offenses. Impeachment is limited to political characters, crimes committed by politicians and minor wrong doings. In addition, these crimes and misdemeanors are also confined to political punishments (Edwin and Collins 1). Moreover, impeachment, as enshrined in the constitution, allows for the arrest of the president in the event that he misuses his powers and violates the laws of the land or the Constitution. The mandate of the congress is to arrest any abuse of political office. It represents the citizens and has liberty to exercise the political power bestowed upon it by its people (Edwin and Collins 2).

Third, impeachment was advocated due to the need to safeguard the basic structure of society. Though political in nature, impeachment was meant to safeguard the state from political misjudgment. According to Hamilton, safeguarding the structure of society because of impeachable offenses driven by politics which majorly causes harm to that structure. Impeachment was meant to cushion the state against actions that may destroy the society. According to Madison, impeachment was a measure against a president distorting his office into a scheme of embezzlement and unjust treatment (Edwin and Collins 3)

The fourth tenet of impeachment is that it is purely a political process. The impeachment process is devoid of any criminal inclination. Impeaching a president does not necessarily equate him or her to a criminal. According to Joseph Story, impeachment is wholly based on politics. The aim of impeachment is to cushion the state from gross misuse of office. The constitution shields the offenders from unjust punishment. His personal life and property is not questioned. Impeachment questions the offender in his political capacity (Edwin and Collin 4).

Against this interpretation of impeachment, this paper carries out a critical analysis of Donald Trump’s impeachment. President trump is accused of abuse of power by undue influence to the government of Ukraine. The president is accused of pressuring the Ukrainian government to submit damaging information on Joe Biden, a major contender in the 2020 U.S. presidency. The advocates of his impeachment argue that he withheld 400 million dollars of military aid, already allocated by Congress to Ukraine, in order to compel the country to release information about Joe Bidden. President Trump is further accused of interfering with congress’ duty by failing to co-operate with the congress inquiry.

The senate bases its quest to impeach President Trump on the constitution. The provisions are depicted in the constitution under article II, Section 4 which points out that politically elected leaders are liable to impeachment in case of gross misconduct such as treason, extortion and bribery and other high crimes or wrong doings. These political leaders include the presidents, vice presidents and civil officers in the State (Albert).

The power to impeach is bequeathed to the Senate under Article 1, section 3 and clause 6. This article provides that the Senate has the sole mandate of carrying out all impeachments. The process of impeachment is carried out with the Senators, under oath. Once the impeachment process goes through to trial, the Chief Justice presides over the trail. In order to be convicted, two thirds of the members present in the sitting should agree unanimously (Philip).

The article governing sanctions, Article 1, section 3, Clause 7 states that in case of a president’s impeachment, judgment should be confined to removal of office, the offender forfeiting the privilege to hold office and enjoy any office honors, and losing the right to enjoy profit or trust under the United States. However, the impeached individual is liable to being removed from office, subjection to trail, judgment and relevant punishment as dictated by the constitution.

Impeaching the president has both positive and negative repercussions. The constitution calls for a majority for the removal of a president by congress. Partisan politics play a significant role in influencing congress’ deliberations (Michael 1). The house managers in the trial of President Clinton’s did not attain the threshold of proving that the crime committed by Clinton warranted his removal from office. Michael pointed that Clinton’s case did not have the variables required in an impeachment case. The case did not prove that his actions led to damage to the state or the constitution. The case failed to link the effect it had on his formal duties. There was no proof that his relationship with Monica Lewinsky affected his ability to perform his duties.

Democrats, therefore, still have an uphill task if they are to realize the impeachment and removal of office of Donald Trump. In fact, Alexander Hamilton looked at the depth and means of impeachment in his Federal papers (Edward 1). He pointed out that courts do not look forward to impeachment cases as they are difficult to preside over. He observed that achieving a fully ready court to listen to an impeachment case was an uphill task. The consequences of an impeachment, whether successful or not, were far reaching (Edward 2).

As opined above, party politics are at play in the Trump’s debate. First, Republicans declined to discuss the merits of the allegations against Trump. Instead, they attacked the process and argued that the Democrats were interested in undermining the results of the 2016 election. Recent polls conducted in the United States, revealed a divided nation. Even with a successful impeachment, there is still debate on the success of his removal from office.

Sometimes, impeachment of a president can be marred by threats of instability in a country. In 1986, Congress impeached President Andrew Johnson of Tennessee. The impeachment brought the nation to a potential second civil war (David 1). This is because former rebels were irked by the suffering of the former slaves in the hands of their former owners. The threats by the rebels led to congressional republicans taking advantage of a legal technicality to impeach President Johnson.

A critic of the impeachment argued that the Tennessean squandered Lincoln’s political legacy of equality and fairness because they refused to acknowledge Johnson as the appropriate political heir. David observed that when the conflict between the Congress and the President culminated to a divisive nation, the process of impeachment led to legal fights for violent confrontation. Both sides of the political divide fought to give their opinion on the requirements of removal of a president. Finally, the impeachment process toned down the conflict and the nation survived (David 2).

This is the same scenario playing out in the Trump’s case. Critics argue that if the United States political elite succeed in removing from office, a legitimately elected president, it will worsen an already polarized nation into something equal to a cultural war. Moreover, opponents of the motion might argue that there is no sufficient evidence to prove that Trump committed the offence. Half the country, as it stands, does not believe that the Trump-Zelensky call released by the White House warrant his removal from office.

The impeachment process could turn out as an advantage to President Trump. We are told that President Clinton took advantage of his impeachment to popularize his presidency (Mark). The Republicans impeached President Clinton in 1998. When he was cleared by the Senate, his last two years in office were the highlights of his career. He liberated Kosovo from the Serbs and saw the country go through an economic boom. If President Trump’s impeachment is upheld by the Senate, then he could successfully run for a second term in office.

The Two-Step flow of communication theory opines that the citizen’s behavior towards politics is influenced by the discussions they have with their family, friends and opinions from social media groups. Citizens make political inclinations according to the anticipated benefits of supporting certain political views. In case of impeachment, it is argued that majority of the citizens are disconnected from impeachment politics, and continue supporting the leader of their party of choice and opinion leaders (Cass).

This assumption is proven by the latest Gallup’s polling which indicates that polling points on Trump’s impeachment and removal is divided by half. Trump’s approval ratings remain 45%, close to the 46% of the popular vote which made him declared as the US President. It is possible that Trump might be re-elected if his impeachment does not go through. He is already accused of riling support from the impeachment. As revealed by public opinion polls, Americans support or oppose the impeachment in line with their parties of choice.

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