

Comey Firing Hysteria

Monday, May 15, 2017

Liberal Democrats like Trump nemesis Charles Schumer have been quick to analogize the Comey firing to the “Saturday Night Massacre” of Watergate fame. The analogy is flawed. The firing of a special prosecutor investigating the Watergate break-in orchestrated by operatives at the White House and the President’s cover-up of that crime have no parallels in the Trump administration’s dismissal of Director Comey.

After President Richard Nixon ordered Attorney General Elliot Richardson to fire Independent Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox, who had subpoenaed White House tapes potentially inculcating President Nixon in obstruction of justice, including the cover-up of the Watergate break-in, Attorney General Richardson refused and resigned. President Nixon then asked Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus to fire Cox but Ruckelshaus refused and tendered his resignation as well. The Solicitor General, Robert Bork, was the official next in line at the Department of Justice and, so, Nixon turned to him to fire Cox. The President had a limousine pick up Bork, take him to the White House and then, before having him sworn in as the new Acting Attorney General, asked Bork to fire Cox. With reluctance, Bork did just that. These events transpired on Saturday, October 20, 1973. The firing of Cox was eventually held in violation of the statute giving rise to the Independent Special Prosecutor by U.S. District Court Judge Gerhard Gesell.

Four months before the Saturday Night Massacre, as it was termed by the press, on June 13, 1973, White House aide Alexander Butterfield had famously testified before the Senate Watergate Committee, in a somewhat nonchalant manner, to the existence of a White House taping system wherein most conversations with the President were captured on tape. On

June 25, 1973, former White House Counsel John Dean testified to that same Committee that he had advised the President he could be guilty of obstruction of justice and that there was a "cancer growing on the presidency" which could eventually kill the presidency.

In short, "Watergate" involved direct and circumstantial evidence that the President of the United States was actively involved in a cover-up of a burglary conducted by former CIA operatives at the Democratic National Committee's Watergate headquarters at the behest of White House and Committee to Re-Elect the President officials. The Saturday Night Massacre was itself an illegal firing by the President after evidence came to light of his potential involvement in that cover-up and the Independent Special Prosecutor had served the White House with a subpoena for White House tapes.

Unlike Watergate, the firing of the Director of the FBI came not following adduction of evidence inculcating the President in any crime and came not against the wishes of the Attorney General of the United States, Jeff Sessions, and the Deputy Attorney General of the United States, Rod J. Rosenstein. The firing of the Director of the FBI arose from the FBI Director's own actions and at the urging of the Attorney General and the Deputy Attorney General. Unlike Watergate, there is no credible evidence offered by any U.S. intelligence official tying the President of the United States to any criminal activity involving the Russian government or its operatives.

What we should observe is that while former U.S. Senator Sam Ervin and his committee conducted the Watergate investigation with solemnity and decorum and investigated the facts of Watergate meticulously before drawing any conclusions, the same is not true of current Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi. Indeed both Schumer and Pelosi have become famous for suggesting that the President is guilty of unlawful complicity with the Russians

without a shred of supporting evidence and for analogizing President Trump's firing of FBI Director James Comey to President Nixon's "Saturday Night Massacre" when the two events have nothing substantive in common. Moreover, both have contradicted the testimony of key intelligence officials who have said there is no evidence of the President's complicity with the Russians by holding press conferences and making public statements that there is such evidence.

It is thus not President Trump who is acting improperly but those who have chosen to condemn him of complicity with the Russians without evidence and those who have chosen to compare the firing of FBI Director Comey whose public reveals of FBI investigations caused him to lose the confidence of the sitting Attorney General and the Deputy Attorney General. Like Richardson and Ruckelshaus before them, Sessions and Rosenstein are men of impeccable integrity. To presume the firing of Comey improper one must first confront the reality that Sessions and Rosenstein are not the kind of people who would recommend the firing of the FBI Director without just cause for so doing.

© 2017 Jonathan Emord – All Rights Reserved