Clinton interviewed by CBS news--the impeachment cover-up continues

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In an extraordinary television interview broadcast Wednesday evening President Bill Clinton said the investigation of Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr and the impeachment proceedings that followed were a politically motivated assault on constitutional processes. But he concluded the entire matter should be dropped.

Questioned by CBS news anchor Dan Rather on the "60 Minutes II" program, Clinton said, "I do not regard this impeachment vote as some great badge of shame." He accused those who spearheaded the attempt to remove him from office of using "what should have been a constitutional and legal process for political ends."

He went on the characterize "what has occurred here over the last four or five years" as "horribly wrong."

But having suggested that the political crisis which paralyzed the federal government for more than a year amounted to a massive violation of democratic and constitutional processes, Clinton went on to say, "I just think that it's past us and we need to put it behind us, and we need to go on."

In other words, there should be no investigation into the individuals and groups that promoted the campaign to bring down his administration, no examination of the role of the Republican Party, the media and the judiciary, and no exposure of the political agenda that underlay this unprecedented "dirty tricks" operation against a sitting president.

In one breath Clinton made an admission with astounding implications for the American people, indicating on its face that the foundations of democracy in the US have become so fragile that a cabal of right-wingers could very nearly topple the government. Yet in the next breath he concluded that the perpetrators should go unpunished and the political underpinnings of their conspiracy remain concealed.

He even had the effrontery to ascribe his own cowardice to concern for the public good: "We owe that to the American people, to let it go," he told Rather.

How the continued cover-up of the impeachment conspiracy could benefit the American people, whose democratic rights are at risk, Clinton did not bother to explain. Needless to say, Rather did not pursue the issue.

Clinton's insistence on keeping the American people in the dark is nothing new. Some 14 months ago, shortly after the media launched the Monica Lewinksy scandal, Hillary Clinton went on national television and warned of a "vast right-wing conspiracy." Immediately thereafter she fell silent, and from that point on Clinton and the Democratic Party refused to challenge the legitimacy of the Starr investigation or expose the extreme right-wing forces that were behind it.

The ultimate failure of the impeachment drive came despite, not because of, the response of the White House and the Democrats. The stubborn opposition of the bulk of the American people to the Starr inquisition and Republican impeachment campaign was the major factor in thwarting what was in essence a political coup.

Right up to the end of the Senate trial, the Democrats concentrated their efforts in lending credibility to the impeachment process, attempting, unsuccessfully, to pass a censure resolution that placed the entire onus for the political crisis on the White House, and exonerated Starr and his allies.

In its commentary and analysis, the *World Socialist Web Site* has placed great emphasis on the manifest unwillingness and inability of Clinton and the Democrats to mount a defense of democratic rights, characterizing their political role as a "conspiracy within a conspiracy."

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Clinton's interview on "Sixty Minutes II" underscores the aptness of this assessment, and makes clear that the conspiracy of silence--and threat to democratic rights--continues.

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