USING THE DEMS' INFAMOUS BOLAND AMENDMENT TO DEWEAPONIZE THE DEEP STATE

[I've known Mike Waller since the 1980s in the middle of the struggle to overcome the Boland Amendment preventing aid to the Contras. Now, Mike wants to use a Boland strategy against the Dems. It's very clever and I'm encouraging him to expand on and "unpack" his strategy. The picture on the cover above is of Carlos Fitzeral, the Contra who saved my life in a firefight with the Sandinistas. --JW]

The House "weaponization of government" hearings kicked off an excellent start for public awareness. But without a legislative agenda, the short-staffed subcommittee will show little enduring accomplishment.

House reformers don't believe they can force some of the necessary changes because the Senate and Joe Biden oppose them. So they haven't prepared a strategic legislative agenda.

Yet, there is reason for hope and change.

An earlier generation of House Democrats blazed the trail for today's House Republicans. Some lateral thinking and historical precedent can help today's House leaders hack away at the weaponization of the federal government.

Under House Speaker Tip O'Neill (D-Mass.), those earlier Democrats derailed President Ronald Reagan and the Senate Republican majority by banning any appropriated funds from being used for a purpose they didn't like.

It was a narrow measure on a project close to the president's heart. White House attempts to circumvent the restrictions wound up damaging the great Reagan presidency.

The measure was called the Boland Amendment. Named after an otherwise forgotten Massachusetts congressman who opposed a Reagan initiative to oust a Soviet puppet regime near our southern border in Nicaragua, the first Boland Amendment was attached as a rider to the Defense Appropriations Act of 1983.

The Democrats denied Reagan's repeated request for a line-item veto, giving the president no choice. Reagan needed key elements of the appropriations bill as a cornerstone of his strategy to challenge the Soviet Union's nuclear military buildup. If Reagan wanted the defense bill, he had to eat the Boland Amendment. Reluctantly he signed the whole package.

The Boland Amendment banned any appropriated defense and intelligence funds from being used

to help Nicaragua's resistance army of mountaineers and farmers to "overthrow" the Marxist-Leninist dictatorship of Daniel Ortega and his Sandinistas.

House Democrats kept the ban in place with more Boland Amendments through fiscal year 1986. That forced the White House to circumvent the law by supporting private funding and seeking foreign support for the Nicaraguan Resistance, or Contras, and to make a deal with the devil that became the Iran-Contra scandal.

Now forward to today.

Because they have promised no more omnibus spending, House Republicans can do their own version of the Boland Amendment this year to roll back the weaponization of the federal government.

They can attach a Boland-style amendment to the 2024 Justice Department appropriations bill. They can attach one to appropriations bills for the Pentagon, homeland security, the IRS, and the intelligence community.

The House Republicans can attach Boland-style amendments to ban federal spending across the entire government on different elements of weaponized wokeness like climate change, ESG, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

They can do it to block certain politicized actions of the Justice Department. They can block any funding toward a new FBI headquarters until the bureau is cleaned up and cleaned out.

They don't need to bargain with the Senate or the White House if they just hold firm. As long as they keep up the heat on the weaponization of government, the public can redirect that heat on their elected officials.

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