

ability, needed to hear. Late last week there was a sense of new determination among the 21-member GOP majority to vote out a bill containing "articles of impeachment."

That won't displease chairman Henry Hyde, who is leading something of a political double life. Publicly, he portrays himself as a reluctant warrior, trapped by duty to lead proceedings he's desperate to end. But some of his closest friends have told NEWSWEEK that Hyde actually harbors deep antipathy toward Clinton, whom he regards as evil and corrupt—and that Hyde, for the moment, will do little to rein in the more obstreperous right-wingers on his committee. Rather than voice his anger publicly, he is speaking through his old friend majority counsel David Schippers, who has been denouncing the president in the gravest terms.

Still, antipathy doesn't amount to an investigative strategy, and the committee Republicans don't seem to have one. Last week they floated the idea of calling fundraiser John Huang, then backed off—and then, NEWSWEEK learned, began floating it again over the weekend. There's no reason to pursue Whitewater, Filegate and Travelgate—all blind alleys, according to Starr. The GOP was left where it didn't want to be: looking into matters that trace back to the Paula Jones sexual-harassment suit and to the president's efforts to hide details of his sex life. The GOP majority decided late last week to subpoena four witnesses. Its apparent aim: to delve into whether the president's allies sought to silence Kathleen Willey, who claimed to have been groped by Clinton in the White House. But three of the witnesses are attorneys who seem likely to do little more than clam up by citing claims of lawyer-client privilege.

The House itself is likely to be even more confused. This is an endgame with no obvious game plan. Almost everybody's favorite compromise—a "censure" resolution of some sort—seems to be losing popularity, at least for the moment. Three key factions in Congress are forming up to oppose it. Conservative Republicans in the House regard censure as a cop-out, too wimpy to serve any real purpose. Constitutionalists of the left and right, Democrat and Republican, see it as a bad precedent. Congress, they fear, will become a censure-happy place, making denunciations of the president willy-nilly and inching the country closer to a parliamentary-style dependence on no-confidence votes. Finally, there are the liberals—mostly in the black and Hispanic caucuses—who are reluctant to see Clinton suffer any form of reprimand. "Censure could go down in flames," says a top GOP staffer.

But if censure is dead, so is impeachment: the GOP just doesn't have the votes on the floor without highly unlikely mass defections from the Democrats. If the Hyde

Listening In on Girl Talk

Why men and women heard two different tales on the Tripp tapes. BY DEBORAH TANNEN

IT WAS THE AUTUMN OF 1997, AND TWO FRIENDS—MONICA LEWINSKY AND LINDA Tripp—were debating life and love. In one exchange, Monica was recounting a conversation she had with Betty Currie about trying to see the president. "And blah blah. And I [Monica] said, 'Well, what—' and then I sort of hesitated and she [Currie] goes, 'Well, did you mention that you wanted to see him in the note?' And I said, 'Well, yeah, but I asked him if I could come by on Saturday morning. I didn't know what time he was leaving.' And she said, 'Oh, well, I think he's leaving too early.' I said, 'Well, then, you know, maybe tomorrow (inaudible).' And she goes, 'There are a lot of people around.' So—"



JOHN BARRETT—GLOBE PHOTOS

"Linda, if I ever want to have an affair with a married man again, especially if he's president, please shoot me."

—MONICA LEWINSKY, on the Tripp tapes, and above, with her mother in November

Many women heard themselves on that crackly phone line, listening to the breathy urgency of friends going over and over who said what, and how that made her feel, and what that made her think; what she could do, should do, might do; what she should wear, and whether it makes her look fat. Many men were puzzled to hear talk about relationships in such detail. They found it boring. Why the difference?

Watch children at play. Little girls' social lives tend to center on a best friend, and they spend a lot of time sitting and talking—and telling secrets. Your best friend is the one you tell everything to. And since talk is the glue that holds relationships together, the nuances of talk are important: you need to know exactly what was said, in what tone of voice, to gauge the relationship.

Boys' friendships center more on activities. Your best friend is the one you do everything with, the one who will stand up for you if there is a fight. Boys talk to negotiate their positions in a group: if you can tell other boys what to do and make it stick, your status goes up, and you have more independence. If you aren't good at challenging other boys and resisting challenges, you get pushed around.

Conversations about who said what just aren't that important, so boys don't learn to pay attention to exactly what was said—unless it meant they got put down or pushed around. It's not that boys and men don't spend hours exchanging seemingly unimportant details—it's just that the details aren't about relationships and conversations. They're more likely to be about sports or games. If a man is having an affair, he might not tell anyone at all, because his idea of friendship doesn't require that he disclose what's going on in his life. For many women, though, intimacy entails keeping friends informed of what's going on in your life. That's what Linda Tripp was counting on.

TANNEN is university professor at Georgetown and author of "You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation." Her most recent book is "The Argument Culture."