

Trump, Biden, Hunter, Chaos

Is disapproval of a president's personality sufficient reason to transfer power to the Democrats?



By
Daniel Henninger
Oct. 21, 2020 5:28 pm ET

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Wonder Land: Joe Biden's campaign depends on enough people hating Trump to transfer national power to the Democratic left. Images: Getty Images/NY Post Composite: Mark Kelly

If Donald Trump loses, a question for the ages will be: Did he tank his own election? As a conspiracy theory, it has more going for it than the Steele dossier.

Just two weeks from Election Day, with October surprises adding to already routine chaos, the baseline reality in front of the incumbent president is that some 90% of the electorate is already committed either to him or Joe Biden, and so his victory depends on squeezing votes out of the remaining undecided turnips.

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So what has the president done since the bizarre first presidential debate to turn the turnips in his direction?

To reassure their concerns on Covid-19, he called Anthony Fauci an "idiot." Dr. Fauci is a maddening media hog, but why would an 11th-hour assault on a nominal leader of his own coronavirus team do anything for the president but subtract votes?

Even Mr. Trump's most ardent supporters acknowledge the reality of ambivalence about the president's routine belligerence. At a recent Pennsylvania rally, Mr. Trump called out to suburban women: "Will you please like me?" Within days of asking undecided women to vote for him, he calls the Bidens "a criminal family." Appalling swamp creatures, perhaps, but the Gambinos?

Outside the world of Never Trumpers, it has been difficult not to marvel at Mr. Trump's refusal to bow to political convention. But one evident price for this

persistent anti-convention is that from day one, and despite a quite remarkable record of economic vitality, his presidential approval rating has never crossed 50%. Why not? Again, the Biden campaign's not-irrational conclusion is that Mr. Trump simply rubs enough of the American public the wrong way to ensure his inability to win re-election.

So it is not unreasonable to wonder if the president has decided that if he's going down, it will be in a final Trumpian blaze of invective and defiance.

We aren't there yet. The undecided turnips can't go to sleep until they resolve what the 2020 election has come down to: Is hating Trump enough? Is disapproval of a president's personality sufficient reason to transfer power to Joe Biden and the Democratic Party?

For some, and this includes voters who admire most of Mr. Trump's policies, the blunt answer is yes. Many of them have a personal final-straw story, for instance Mr. Trump's shabby dismissal of former Defense Secretary and Marine Gen. Jim Mattis.

Still, elect Joe Biden? Has any candidate for the U.S. presidency ever run on less than Joe Biden this year?

Mr. Biden's campaign has consisted almost entirely of riffing variations on the first words in his convention acceptance speech. "The current president has cloaked America in darkness for much too long," Mr. Biden said, asserting that if voters "entrust" him with the presidency, "I will be an ally of the light, not the darkness."

Less than two weeks from the vote, that is pretty much the four-year deal on offer from Mr. Biden: release from Donald Trump in return for "an ally of light."

You wouldn't be saying much either if you were going into the final presidential sprint carrying as much baggage as the former vice president—a Democratic Party gone too far left to talk about and, unexpectedly, the Hunter Biden darkness.

Whatever else, Hunter Biden is the story of a life lost to compulsions and addiction. Joe Biden's inability, once informed in 2015 by State Department officials about the Ukraine deals, to direct his son to pull back from his descent into self-destruction shows significant weakness of judgment. Instead, he let Hunter rip. That poor judgment is not going to improve.

Mr. Biden has made a Faustian bargain with his party's activist left, and should he win, their price will be putting the U.S. on a fast track toward significant income confiscation and "distributive justice." The Obama presidency got close, and economically, it was not a good experience for lower-middle-class workers or the unemployed. The creation of economic opportunity is why the possibility of support for Mr. Trump among black Americans and Hispanics may be one of the election's sleeper issues.

At its finish, this presidential election is of a piece with everything else in 2020—the desire that some things just go away. So which is it, Donald Trump or the Democratic Party?

I think the greater national need is for the Democratic Party to go away and rethink what has become its profound alienation from the history, traditions and identity of the United States. If they win, the divisions will get deeper. In our invaluable system of checks and balances, it's a bigger risk to have one of America's two major parties this far off the tracks than any single personality.

Write henninger@wsj.com.

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Appeared in the October 22, 2020, print edition.