

Donald Trump and America's fundamental greatness

By Conrad Black

No one should doubt that in the American presidential election on Tuesday and the long campaign towards it, and in much of the international as well as domestic reaction to the result, we see again that the United States is a partially mad country that provokes frequently insane responses from people who are



Donald Trump PHOTO BY ANGELA WEISS/AFP

normally somewhat sensible (such as the demented ravings of Andrew Coyne in the Globe and Mail). This election also demonstrates that corrupt, vulgar and outrageous though it often is, the American system works: the constitution of

the United States has been in operation for 235 years and in that time the jurisdiction that it governs has risen 130-fold from under three-million to approximately 340-million people and it has gone from a bold experiment in republican government and egalitarian society (apart from a million slaves who were only emancipated 75 years later after a terrible civil war in which 750,000 people died in a population of 31 million), to be the most powerful and influential jurisdiction in the history of the world, which for more than a century has operated on a scale that the world had never before imagined to be possible.

I inadvertently rediscovered the mad element of that extraordinary American melange of Norman Rockwell and Walt Disney's amicable and virtuous America with the country's garish showmanship and artifice and unutterable hucksterism, and a pervasive commercialism and avarice that is a constant assault on both ethics and good taste. But through it all, there is an irrepressible spirit, an unshakable motivation to do more and be greater, and within it there lurks still, though generally obscured, the puritanical solidity of the first settlers and the nation's founders.

This rediscovery came in a number of parts, starting with clicking on to the podcast of my glamorous and eccentric friend, political commentator Ann Coulter. She is a conservative ideological perfectionist and, as her splendid inflection, like a contemporary Eleanor Roosevelt, indicates, she is disdainful of that vast majority of people who do not meet her exacting standards, and that includes almost all politicians. She has for many years been a mordant critic of the shambles and hypocrisy of the American immigration system, in which Democrats seeking a huge block of reliable votes (regardless of whether they are citizens entitled to vote), and Republican employers seeking a large pool of very cheap labour, combined to tolerate unfeasible numbers of illegal migrants entering the country. This made her an early supporter of Donald Trump, who highlighted this issue in his initial quest for the presidency in 2016. But she shortly found him to be a *déclassé* vulgarian.

She sends me her podcast, which is sponsored by a company that produces various non-lethal weapons for the deterrence and repulse of intruders and boasts that it is not only cheap but can be delivered to the buyer's home with no notice to any authority and no imposed requirements of criteria for an eligible buyer. She stated on it last week that she agreed with most of Trump's policies but could not wholeheartedly support him because "he often says and does dumb things." He should be supported however as preferable to his opponent, "a communist dingbat" (not an unreasonable assessment). But those who could not chin themselves on voting for Trump could justify voting for Harris as long as they also voted for Republican senators and congressmen, as they would paralyze and render impotent a Democratic presidency. This is humorous

and Coulter has a huge number of readers and listeners, but it is nonsense. The objective of politics is not acrimoniously inert government.

I believe this is germane for those who think that the Americans are like us. Individual Americans often are but it is a revolutionary, terribly over-commercialized, but also over-achieving society whose concept of freedom effectively encourages a good deal of sociopathic behaviour. The money spent directly on the last presidential election was over \$16 billion. The outgoing administration subjected its opponent to a deluge of defamatory propaganda likening him to the most evil people in history, particularly Adolf Hitler, who was chiefly responsible for 60-million war-dead and operated death camps in which 12-million innocent people, half of them Jews, were gassed and incinerated. Respectable people like Oprah Winfrey and the tapped-out one-time historian Michael Beschloss and many others, profess to believe that Trump would abolish elections and revoke constitutional liberties. This is mad, slanderous and fatuous.

Yet, with all, the system works. Donald Trump has staged the greatest political comeback in the history of any advanced modern democracy. He has also won the greatest single-combat personal triumph over adversity since Franklin D. Roosevelt overcame polio to win two terms as governor of New York and four consecutive terms as president. Trump has personally defeated 95 per cent of the morally bankrupt and utterly worthless national political media, thoroughly routed an opponent waging the tools of incumbency including a partisan perversion of the criminal justice system and has routed the serried forces of Wall Street, Silicon Valley, Hollywood and the intellectually atrophied American academy. He was unfazed by two assassination attempts that would not have occurred if the regime that he has defeated had handled his security arrangements responsibly.

In that astounding American way, the office has sought the man. He will do what needs to be done: cut taxes and generate roaring economic growth as almost all the rest of the world stagnates, end the Ukrainian war by giving Russia some of what it has taken while Russia finally unconditionally accepts the legitimacy of Ukraine in its revised borders, and Ukraine will then enter NATO and the European Union. The West will then

gradually and without embarrassment outbid China for the attentions of the Kremlin. Trump will support Israel in exterminating terrorist forces that have sworn never to accept the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state, the only road to peace, and he will ensure that the totalitarian theocrats in Tehran do not become a nuclear military power. He will end the suicidal lunacy of climate change hysteria. There has been no talk of China surpassing the United States economically since he was first inaugurated eight years ago; there will be no talk of China taking over Taiwan after his next inauguration in January. And he has buried under an avalanche of freely cast and honestly counted votes, the gimcrack superficiality of the Clinton era, the boobocracy of the locker-room towel-snapper George W. Bush and the faux eloquent passive-aggressive racism of the Obamas, which subdivided America into innumerable subgroups of aggrieved minorities. Donald Trump has reminded his countrymen of the fundamental greatness and benignity of America. The incoming president is only the fifth who has been nominated to the presidency in three consecutive elections, the second who has won non-consecutive terms and he will, four years from now, rank as one of America's 10 or so outstanding presidents. The American system is appalling in many respects, but it is magnificent in its way, and it works. Americans can run their democracy, including its corrupt justice system, any way they want, and they are right not to care a rap what any foreigner thinks of it.

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