

Election Becomes a Referendum 'TwiXt the Trump Haters and Those Appalled at the Corruption of the Legal System

By Conrad Black

For 18 months I have predicted that the next presidential election will be in large measure a referendum between those who are so pathologically hostile to President Trump that they will tolerate any means to keep him from returning to the White House, and those who are so appalled at the corruption of the legal and political systems by the Democrats that they are prepared to vote for Trump whatever their misgivings about him, to preserve constitutional democracy.



President Trump arrives after a lunch break at his criminal trial for allegedly covering up hush money payments at Manhattan Criminal Court at New York City, May 28, 2024. Spencer Platt/Getty Images

President Biden had already publicly chastised his attorney

general, Merrick Garland, for not having indicted Trump earlier. The prosecutors were so incompetent and Trump's counsel adequately successful in getting some of the cases reviewed by higher courts, that only the most spurious of these hijackings of the legal system for partisan political purposes got off the ground.

Distinguished legal analysts, including Alan Dershowitz and Jonathan Turley, have been almost unanimous that the New York prosecution was nonsense. In their desperation, the Democrats appear to have made no effort to produce a case that could be defended on appeal to a serious court; they placed all their bets on being able in the campaign to describe the former president as "a convicted felon."

So rotten is the American justice system that such a conviction is frequently a badge of honor; 98 percent of those accused of crimes in federal courts are convicted, 95 percent of those without trial, so monstrously abused is the plea-bargain system and so lopsided are the rules of criminal procedure.

America has 5 percent of the world's population and 25 percent of its incarcerated persons and at least until recently most Americans toiled under the illusion that its criminal justice system was anything other than a regime of denunciation and capricious targeting at the beginning of an ever-moving conveyor belt to the bloated and corrupt prison system.

At this early stage, polls indicate that the great majority of Americans will not be influenced by the show trial in New York and of those who are, the numbers are approximately even between those made more and those made less likely to vote for Trump.

Scores of millions of dollars have spontaneously flooded into the Trump campaign, about a third of it from first-time donors. As this is the only partisan hijacking of the justice

system that will get through Trump's defenses prior to the election, it must be said, at least tentatively, that Trump has met yet another ambush and survived it politically.

The most nauseating single episode in this entire perversion of justice was perhaps the effusive announcement by a Trump-hating lawyer, Andrew Weissman, the voice behind the curtain in the Mueller Trump-Russia collusion fraud, that he had a "man-crush" on Judge Juan Merchan, a tandem that incarnates the corruption of American criminal justice tangled with political chicanery.

The best outcome for the Democrats would be for Judge Merchan to impose a light custodial sentence and then for Mr. Biden to ask Governor Hochul to commute it, masquerading as a jauntily sportsmanlike opponent having abused the system sufficiently to facilitate the unceasing chorus of "convicted felon."

The Biden team has shown no such imagination up to now; if they had, they would have dumped their candidate and the vice president with him. Trump's reaction so far has been to denounce as corrupt the judge and prosecutor and to say it is an honor to be the person who will grasp this nettle and fight for the restitution of constitutional democracy, and if he is incarcerated, it will be a further honor to share, however briefly, the fate of Nelson Mandela. In the circumstances, he has been temperate and thoughtful.

This will make it easier for Americans to see this outrage in the broader context of the accelerating collapse of American society. The wokeness, the replacement of the quest for national unity with atomization and incitement of minority complaints; the redefinition of theft as socially justified wealth redistribution while molly-coddling violent criminals; the official championship of a third sex and the defeating of female athletics by allowing musculoskeletal men to participate in them; all of these are symptoms of a deconstruction which probably began with the takeover of the

state school system by unionized and anti-American socialists, and of most of higher education by quasi-Marxists and inverse racists.

The quest for national unity has given way to a quest for intergroup vengeance and the designation of anything remotely objectionable as "racist," anything unjust as "white." Fatuous arguments about climate have rigidified into a powerful weapon against capitalism and economic growth in the name of saving the planet. The country is accelerating towards a desperate fiscal crisis as its deterrent power in the world shrinks; the armed forces are blighted and demoralized with racist and sexist nonsense and recruitment has crumbled.

Since these questions are not much directly posed by polltakers, intuition must be used to determine how many people are alarmed and disgusted by the Trump-Russian collusion hoax, fake impeachments, the generous use of harvested ballots to permit millions of unverified votes in the close election in 2020, and the admission into the country of ten million people illegally, undoubtedly including a good many undesirables, with the declared intention of making them eligible presidential election voters despite their failure to go through the citizenship process the Constitution requires for the right to vote.

Because Trump's personality has become such an immense issue in the election campaign, it obscures other questions that will probably determine the election result. It was fashionable until about six months ago for moderately anti-Trump commentators to say that since Mr. Biden had defeated him before he would likely do it again. Most such people have now retreated to the position that both candidates are inadequate as if their shortcomings created an equality in their electability.

Legal analysts who retain sufficient integrity to denounce the recent New York trial as the shameful mockery that it is, can

rarely resist prefacing their views with a recitation of Trump's infelicities, as if, *inter alia*, Presidents Jefferson, Cleveland, Harding, Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Clinton, and Biden had only miniature skeletons in their closets.

The corrosiveness of Trump-hate does not allow them to take into their calculation the fact that more than three years of the Biden presidency expose an almost unmitigated disaster in every major policy area, while accusations have been raised that Mr. Biden himself is a public liar and he and his family have conducted a tawdry intercontinental influence-peddling business for decades.

This administration has been a catastrophe and the country knows it, and this president is not fit to serve another four years by any serious criterion, and the country knows that too. Rebuilding American greatness is an admirable objective, and persecution by a corrupt justice system is a distinction. Five months from now the country will show that it knows that as well.

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