

Guilt for January 6 Belongs With Those Most Eager to Condemn It

George Will, Peggy Noonan, and other estimable friends bear a heavy responsibility in the disaster that has now been riveted on the backs of the American people and the world.

by Conrad Black



It is once again with great regret that I take issue with my friend of more than 40 years, George Will. From my perspective of unambiguous admiration and personal liking for him, I am distressed that on the subject of President Trump, he seems to have taken complete leave of his senses. Last week, he said on television that the events at the U.S. Capitol on January 6 should be seared into the minds of Americans as 9/11 was, as the two are equally profound assaults on the country.

Let us examine that statement. On September 11, 2001, four airliners were hijacked and three were flown directly into the

two World Trade Center towers in New York while another slammed into the Pentagon in Washington and the fourth plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania after some of the hijacked passengers bravely charged the cockpit of the airliner. Approximately 3,000 people perished in what was a meticulously planned, barbarously executed assault—one that its ultimate architect, Osama bin Laden, described as “a massacre of the innocents.” It was designed to intimidate the entire country and to force the United States into a more accommodating policy toward terrorists and their preferred causes, especially the destruction of the State of Israel.

On January 6 of this year, some members of a crowd of over 200,000, attending an address by President Trump—who detailed the questionable aspects of the apparent result of the presidential election—marched on to the U.S. Capitol and some hundreds of them penetrated the building and caused relatively minor damage to it. Five people died, but only one, a Trump supporter, died of unnatural causes—shot in the neck by a still unidentified Capitol Police officer. There were many vivid photographs of the occasion including the spectacle of some of America’s leading legislators hiding under their desks wearing tinfoil protective gear. The FBI (no reservoir of goodwill for Trump) has confirmed there was no coordination with the Trump campaign or anyone associated with the ex-president. Indeed, Trump urged his followers to “demonstrate patriotically and peacefully.”

If House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), or the egregious mayor of Washington D.C., Muriel Bowser, had responded to the requests in the preceding days from the chief of the Capitol Police for reinforcements, the incident likely would not have occurred. In their desperation to represent the episode as an attempt by the outgoing president to incite an insurrection, (which requires taking over the armed forces, police, and media outlets as happens in countries that have *coups d'état*), the media falsely represented the death of one Capitol

policeman as a result of having been beaten over the head by Trump supporters with a fire extinguisher, a [complete fabrication](#). Legislative buildings are attacked fairly often, as in Paris in 1934; smashing into some of the world's most famous buildings with hijacked airliners has only happened once.

Trump did not incite anything, except a peaceful demonstration after a very questionable election result. None of the 18 lawsuits that directly challenged the constitutional or legal integrity of the vote or the vote-counting system were adjudicated. They were not heard for technical reasons. Neither was the case launched by the attorney general of Texas with the support of 18 other states alleging failure by several of the swing states to follow the constitutional requirement to ensure fair presidential election results.

There were no problems in 44 states, but in six swing states, there were extraordinary anomalies where voting or vote-counting had been altered with questionable constitutional legality, supposedly to accommodate voters inconvenienced by the COVID-19 pandemic, which made a number of key results practically unverifiable. If 42,000 votes were switched in Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Wisconsin, it would have given Trump victory in the Electoral College.

The 2020 election, next to that of 1876 which was resolved by an agreement between the candidates after a partisan vote in a congressional commission, was the most dubious presidential result in American history. The real issue here is that the Trump-haters, like George Will, want to charge Trump falsely with seeking an insurrection after losing an unexceptionable election, when he was merely expressing the anger of his partisans over a dubious vote-counting process, aggravated by the abdication of the judiciary from its constitutional co-equal role with the legislative and executive branches.

On the same television program, Will said that on January 6 he

urged his employees in Georgetown to go home, as if the malcontents at the Capitol would be trolling through Georgetown afterward and singling out George Will and his helpers for their five years of anti-Trump vitriol. A man of Will's influence has an ethical and professional obligation to avoid the willful propagation of defamatory nonsense. He said on the same program that for the first time in American history many members of Congress are afraid of their own voters. They were elected because those same voters agreed with what they said: they all found Trump the preferable candidate.

The Biden Administration has been a disaster on every score and Donald Trump has not simply gone away like a dreadful meteor as Will and other Trump-haters predicted. Those who generally approved of Trump's policies but couldn't bear him now have to wear the odium of having helped elect Biden, as well as the cold terror that Trump will be back.

When I first knew George Will, he was a champion of the Reagan Revolution. I accept that Trump is much harder to warm to than Reagan, but in policy terms, he is Reagan's continuator, after seven terms of indifferent or inept government. Trump's revolution is just as necessary and just as worthy of support as Reagan's, though his public persona is much less amiable. George Will, Peggy Noonan, and other estimable friends who are normally sensible bear heavy responsibility in the disaster that has now been riveted on the backs of the American people and the world. As Bill Clinton might say, I feel your guilt. As the ghastly current jargon goes, you own this debacle. Donald Trump isn't the problem, you are.

A presidential election result that was highly questionable, despite the frenzied efforts of an air-tight media pretense that all the late drops of unverifiable heavy Biden votes in a few key states were squeaky clean, and which the judicial system at every level refuses to judge for process reasons (a divided Wisconsin Supreme Court said the challenge in that

state had to start at the lower courts and work up—impossible given those deadlines), naturally leaves the 75 million voters who supported the ostensibly losing candidate upset. That they would demonstrate is understandable, and when the speaker of the House and mayor of Washington refused the capitol police chief's request for reinforcements, some hooliganism was predictable.

If January 6 is to be memorialized, it should be as an event illustrative of the *strength* of American democracy—that it can endure such strains and continue quite normally.

I hope we're still on speaking terms. Smashing hijacked civilian airliners into large and famous buildings is a more egregious and sanguinary act of war than was the attack on Pearl Harbor—or the events of January 6.

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