

Never Trump Hysteria Reaches Fever Pitch

by Conrad Black



The frenzy of the Never Trump movement becomes more demented every week. This last weekend, former national-intelligence director James Clapper (no friend of Donald Trump) said that there had been no evidence of any collusion between Trump people and any Russians when, after months of investigating, he left office with the old administration 45 days ago. When asked by Chuck Todd of NBC at what point the absence of fire would establish that there was no fire and only smoke, he acknowledged that that was a “good question.” Republican members of the congressional intelligence committees repeatedly confirm that there is “no evidence” that has been brought forward of any such collusion.

Democratic senator Chris Coons of Delaware may have signaled the next retreat for the Democratic elected and media character-assassination squads by telling Chris Wallace on the weekend that, while nothing has turned up so far, he thought

it would in Trump's tax returns. This is what the Democrats are reduced to: a confident assertion that conclusive evidence of pre-election collusion between Trump and Putin will be clear in the president's tax returns. They are mad. This is the madness that caused Elizabeth Warren to promise personal vengeance on every one of her 52 colleagues who confirmed Jeff Sessions as attorney general; that caused Chuck Schumer to burst into tears and claim that the Statue of Liberty was weeping, too, over the migrant order. And it was this same lunacy, of which the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States is the only known cause, that made Schumer demand that Sessions resign (even though Sessions's explanation of his answer about meeting the Russian ambassador is perfectly plausible) and that caused Nancy Pelosi to go the distance and demand that Trump resign. I have a better idea: Why don't *they* resign? They are malignant, shopworn, hyper-partisan blowhards, embarrassments to their surroundings and instrumental in dragging respect for the Congress into single figures in the polls. (It has risen a bit under Republican leadership.)

There is absolutely nothing to the Russian story. It began with Wolf Blitzer's indulgence in the Golden Shower affair, in which he had Carl Bernstein and CNN higher-ups confirm what a diligently enterprising bit of journalism it was to pick up what no other media outlet would – the fatuous story from *BuzzFeed* that Trump had arranged for a group of prostitutes to urinate in a hotel bed in Moscow because the Obamas once slept there. A couple of Trump aides had had some dealings in Russia years ago, when U.S.-Russian commercial contacts were officially encouraged under the Great Obama-Biden Reset. One-time Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort had worked with Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich before he became the Putin entry in Ukraine politics and before Manafort knew Trump. Susan Glasser claimed in the *New York Times* recently that there were “striking similarities” between Trump and Putin. Holman Jenkins wryly confirmed this in

the *Wall Street Journal*: "The similarities are indeed striking. Mr. Putin and Mr. Trump both have arms and legs."

It is for this empty canard that the Democratic leadership is screaming for resignations and a special prosecutor. Even Bob Woodward told Fox News on Sunday that you needed some indication that a crime had occurred before calling for a special prosecutor. (He wasn't always so fastidious.) It all reminds me of an episode in the 1960s sitcom *Car 54, Where Are You?* about two New York policemen, in which one perpetrated an April Fool's joke that his precinct sergeant took seriously and reported to the chief of police, and before the day was out, the chief, the mayor, the governor of New York, and the president had all taken to the airwaves to reassure the city, state, and nation that the problem was under control. But that was comedy and this is a Saint Vitus' dance of the old Democratic party. It is responding to the specter of its unimaginable enemy about to try to dismantle the tyrannies of the teachers' unions, the climate-change frauds, the Democratic welfare-for-votes dispensary, the Obamacare monstrosity, the sanctuaries for the electoral harvest of illegal migrants, and the Wall Street fiscal massage parlor.

Trump's success in all these ambitions is far from assured. The Republican Senate majority is hostage to some vulnerable egos that were battered by the Trump campaign for nomination, including those of Senators Rubio, McCain, Graham, and Paul. Some of the abrasions of the past two years were painful, but presumably Republican senators can be appealed to on some materially sweetened version of the national and party interest. Mr. Trump will earn his spurs, or not, as an LBJ-style legislative dealmaker, but it will be difficult in the atmosphere created by his assault on the entire political class and almost everyone in Washington, both parties and elected or unelected. The war he began rages on.

The Democrats have little chance of winning by a preemptive strike, and that was obvious in their dejected response to his

boffo performance at the Capitol last week, as they saw him poaching many of their electoral fiefdoms and giving the lie to their portrayal of him as a madman and an ignoramus. His tactical skills are already evident. He didn't take the bait to ignore the Seattle judge, complied, and has issued a new and bulletproof order on entry of foreigners. No one will remember what the ninja vandals were doing at Berkeley, or the mobs at airports, or Schumer sniveling publicly. His accusation that Obama tapped his telephones is presumably based on something, and is a response to the Democratic moles in the administration, leaking on a scale that in ancient times caused Noah to build an ark. The administration will have to send large numbers of suspects in the public service, under a hailstorm of subpoenas, to grand juries and prosecute the main apparent offenders. It might even be time to unleash serious prosecutors on the Clintons, though it would be a regrettable indignity. This is siege warfare, and wars are not won by passivity. The credibility of the Democratic media is fungible and depleting and they can only cry "Wolf" for no reason so many times before only the detritus of their supporters pays any attention to their false alarms. The Democrats are already fumbling over the extent of the Obama administration's surveillance of Trump.

It was clear when Trump spoke to CPAC on February 24 that the Gorsuch nomination and some of his policy positions had won back the conservatives. He was booed there two years ago, but this year he could have been carried in on a *sedia gestatoria* like Pius XII, given the veneration he received. The highbrow conservative writers who have not changed their tune were left at the end of the branch; Trump sawed off the branch, and they are now chirping grumpily at each other on the inhospitable ground. Friendship prevents me from identifying some of them, but I cannot help but refer to the amiable David Brooks's invocation of the Enlightenment in the *New York Times* on February 28. He offered a fanciful pastiche of cultural revisionism with the American mythos. The

Enlightenment pursued pure reason and encouraged religious skepticism and the dilution of the power of great offices and institutions and their occupants. It hovers between atheism and agnosticism but can tolerate deism, and politically is best satisfied with decentralization bordering on libertarianism.

Yet David Brooks credits it as the sole inspiration for democracy, though the constitutional monarchies of Europe had as much democracy as the new United States, especially if American slavery is taken into account. "The Enlightenment project" (that was hardly what it was) "gave us the modern world," yet the "Nietzscheans attacked the separation of powers," and among their number were Hitler and Putin. The only parts of Nietzsche that Hitler bought into, apart from his talents as an epigrammatist, were atheism and notions of racial superiority. Putin claims to be an active Christian, and Nietzsche can be ransacked without finding any references to a separation of powers. Brooks writes that it was "Enlightenment leaders [who] extended the project globally, building rules-based multilateral institutions like the European Union and NATO." But in fact, Richelieu and Bismarck were greater exemplars of the Enlightenment than the infestation of bureaucratic tinkerers in the crumbling Euro-structure of Brussels.

But the greatest of these whoppers was that "Abraham Lincoln was a classic Enlightenment man" and that the Civil War "seemed to vindicate ... the entire Enlightenment cause." Lincoln famously suggested that slavery was an "offence," that God had given Americans "this terrible war" as a chastisement for that offence, and that "if God wills that ... every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said that 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'" He was a sublime and enlightened leader, but this explanation of the Civil War would have

horrified the chief propagators of David Brooks's "Enlightenment project."

Inevitably, David Brooks produced the latest American application of that project: "I'd add that anti-Enlightenment thinking is also back in the form of Donald Trump." They are scraping the bottom of the barrel already.

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