

No Politician Is More Popular or Unpopular Than Trump

The last laugh could be the president's. But even if it isn't, his achievements in becoming president and as president vastly exceed those of his unimpressive enemies.

by Conrad Black



America is sleepwalking into the next chapter of its history. A president who has had one of the most successful first terms of any—surpassed only by Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, and Richard Nixon—is being replaced in a seriously tainted election by the most unimpressive person ever elected president, and one who has not, in fact, even campaigned for the office.

It remains a mystery as Donald Trump apparently enters his last 10 weeks as president, why 95 percent of the national

political media detest him to the point of regularly inventing false and malicious news stories about him, though it presumably has something to do with his contempt for them and their failure to prevent his election.

Despite some plausible efforts to explain it, another mystery is why the very wealthy people of America prefer a traditional liberal Democrat standing on an outright socialist program to a tax-cutting fellow billionaire, and author of an immense non-inflationary economic boom. Thanks to them, the incumbent president has been outspent two to one by more or less socialistic candidates promising sharp tax increases, wealth redistribution, and socialized medicine.

Fifty-six percent of voters said they were better off now than they had been four years ago thanks to Trump. Yet he has been sent packing in favor of a completely unprepossessing, terribly tired, congressional political journeyman best known for plagiarizing from an unsuccessful British opposition party leader, assisting Teddy Kennedy in the character assassination of an outstanding Supreme Court nominee (Robert Bork), and subjecting another distinguished Supreme Court nominee (Clarence Thomas) to a disgraceful series of unsubstantiated allegations of lewd comments, in what [Thomas described](#) as “a high-tech lynching for uppity blacks,” and then apologizing 30 years later for that justice’s confirmation.

On its face, it all seems too implausible to believe. It is only the context that makes it understandable: Donald Trump attacked the entire system, all factions of both parties, the political media, the lobbyists, and the bipartisan society of placemen and official servitors that move back-and-forth between high appointive office and the private sector, especially academia and the think tanks.

All readers are familiar with the spurious attempts to deprive Trump of his 2016 victory. Against this backdrop of unprecedented harassment and the relentless vilification of

the president by the nation's media and leading entertainment and sports figures—a litany that pegged the president as racist, sexist, compulsively dishonest, and incompetent—Trump did radically cut taxes, reduce regulation, practically ended illegal immigration, oil imports, and unemployment, and emancipated the country from the Green Terror imposed by the international Left's attack on capitalism from a new angle following the decisive overthrow of international communism.

The president's policies effectively have been ratified in the congressional elections and in Republican gains in most of the states. He probably won reelection, too, but the COVID pandemic permitted the Democrats to legislate in four or five key swing states rules for postal voting, and what has become known as ballot-harvesting. Those changes, coupled with the dilatory tactics of secretaries of state in those individual states, seem to have been practically immune to judicial overthrow in the six weeks between Election Day and the identification of the members of the Electoral College for the purpose of choosing the next president and vice president.

Nor does the Trump legal team look like it was well organized and had taken all the preventive measures it could, or could attack with the strength and the speed that would be required to challenge the result. The jubilantly triumphant Trump who campaigned so hard and effectively in the last few weeks has been reduced to a sort of King Lear shaking his fist at the sky and promising [revenge](#).

This is the other side of the Trump story: good and effective president though he has been, he has been constantly in the face of the American public. He never grew tired of himself and imagined that no one else did either.

Trump is the first president since FDR who could have scores of thousands of people stand in the rain for hours waiting to see him in person. Yet there never came a time when he could really speak for the nation. His two efforts at addresses from

the Oval Office were fiascoes, and his uproarious harangues of scores of thousands of followers across the country were good entertainment but they were repetitive and unserious. He was a bulldozer, and in Washington bulldozers do not do as well as more cunningly operated and subtle instruments, and that is what he was facing.

When the Democrats looked like they were about to nominate socialist Bernie Sanders, the party elders extracted Joe Biden from the ditch where his opponents had run him and proclaimed him as the candidate. They took advantage of the COVID hysteria spread by their media allies as a justification for their nominee spending the campaign in his basement taking the odd softball question and speaking haltingly from a teleprompter.

Thus, the Democrats prevented it being a choice between Trump and Joe Biden—it was, instead, a referendum on Trump.

There were riots all summer in Democratic governed cities all across America that the Democratic media faithfully called peaceful protesting of racial outrages, and never mentioned that it killed scores of people, injured 700 policemen, and by looting, vandalism, and arson inflicted about \$2 billion of damage on unoffending third parties. The Democrats in New York, Los Angeles, and elsewhere reduced the funding of the police as crime rates skyrocketed. Trump wanted to use the National Guard but Democratic governors wouldn't ask for it; he was tempted to use the armed forces but the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and secretary of defense both publicly declared that they were opposed to this. Chaos reigned, but, we were reminded by the obliging media that this was Trump's America.

That was the message: he was President Chaos.

There has been a presumably unspoken agreement amongst almost the whole ruling class of America to sandbag the president.

The complacency and triumphalism of Trump's enemies these days is nauseating but it is not the whole story. Joe Biden obviously is not competent to be president, and Kamala Harris—who also failed in the nominating process, and who will complete the term if the quavering 78-year-old is unable to do so—has also demonstrated no conceivable competence to execute such a great office, though she has been far enough to the left as California's junior senator to stand without awkwardness on the socialist program concerted by Biden and Sanders. Where the great and spontaneous unity of view in the American political establishment failed, are Trump's victories at almost every level except the presidency.

Many Americans are tired of Donald Trump and he leaves in an acrimonious atmosphere, but he is also by far the most popular politician in the United States, at the head of scores of millions of devoted followers. The incoming administration is almost certain to be a disaster, and the question that will be uppermost in Americans' political thoughts as soon as the celebration of the departure of the great ogre has subsided, is whether Trump wishes to take the prize back. If he does and if he will study it carefully and not simply lunge out of a shower of frequently abrasive and irritating tweets, he could do it.

The last laugh could be Trump's. But even if it isn't, his achievements in becoming president and as president vastly exceed those of his generally very unimpressive enemies, now celebrating their fleeting moment of brutish triumph.

First published in