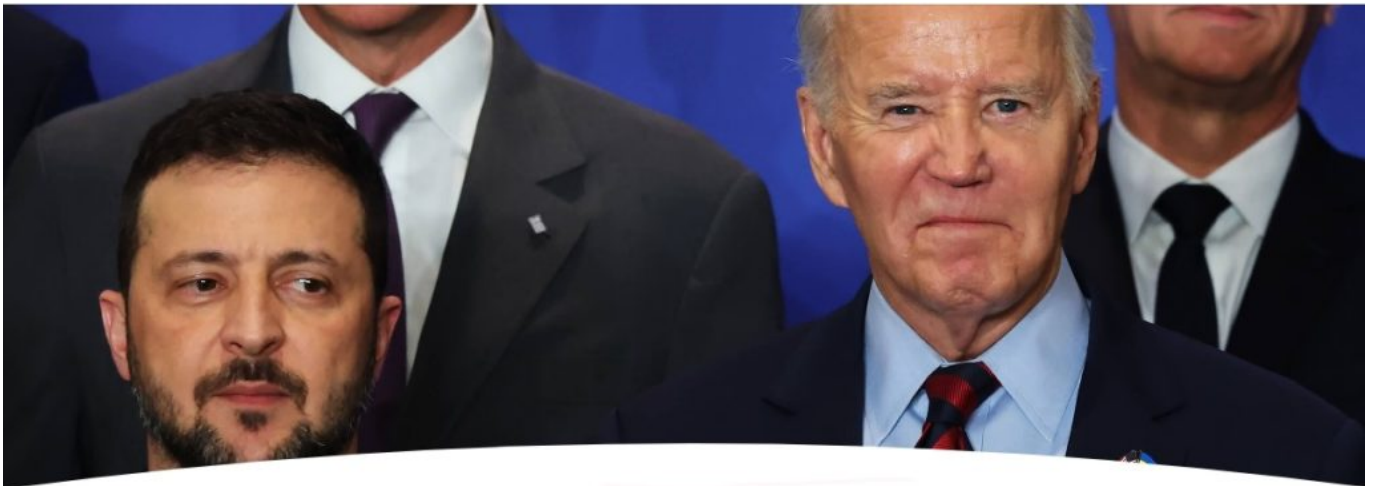


October/September Surprises!

By Victor Davis Hanson

An October surprise is usually defined as the well-known (and more often left-wing) tactic of manufacturing or unloading a news story right before voting to surprise a rival without allowing them time sufficiently to respond or recover.



Think of the last-minute bombshell disclosure, five days before the 2000 election, that candidate George W. Bush had been cited for drunk driving over a quarter-century earlier. That surprise may have cost Bush the popular vote that year.

Sometimes, an incumbent can use his powers of office to warp the election. Joe Biden benefited before the 2022 midterm elections when leftist activists leaked the impending Supreme Court repeal of *Roe v. Wade*.

Closer to the actual voting, Biden sought to cancel hundreds of billions of dollars of student debt owed to the federal government. He also began draining the strategic petroleum reserve to lower gas prices (as he is doing again this election year as well). No wonder the predicted Republican midterm red wave ended up a tiny ripple.

More often, October surprises are more ad hominem and unleashed on a rival candidate's supposedly previously

undisclosed failings.

At the end of the 2016 campaign, Hillary Clinton's team leaked news of her purchased bogus "Steele Dossier" as supposed proof of Trump-Russian "collusion."

On the eve of the last 2020 presidential debate, Joe Biden delegated now Secretary of State Antony Blinken to work with former interim CIA Director Mike Morrell to round up "51 former intelligence authorities." They were to lie that the incriminating Hunter Biden laptop was likely a product of a Russian intelligence "disinformation" operation.

The ruse worked—turning potential proof of Biden family corruption into a replay of the fake 2016 Trump-Russian collusion hoax.

This time around, apparently the Harris campaign could not wait until October or early November to spring their surprises.

Perhaps the Harris campaign's impatience is due to Democratically-inspired radical changes to state voting laws.

Remember that in 2020, under the cover of COVID, Democrat legal teams got state laws altered to institutionalize early and mail-in voting in key states. Those changes reduced our once iconic Election Day into a mere construct when only 30 percent of voters cast their ballots.

So, former October surprises—both the embarrassing disclosures and the use of incumbency to warp the election—are now becoming earlier and more frequent preemptive "September" shocks.

Suddenly, the Federal Reserve Bank, just 50 days before the election, decided that interest rates that spiraled under Biden-Harris in reaction to their hyperinflation right now need to be slashed—as supposed proof that the Biden-Harris inflation is now over and the economy needs a sudden revving up.

Just as abruptly, on September 23, just 43 days before Election Day, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was flown by the Biden-Harris administration—at U.S. government expense—into the United States.

More amazingly, Zelensky landed first in the critical swing state of Pennsylvania, where most observers believe the currently deadlocked election will be decided.

No surprise, Zelensky immediately toured a Pennsylvania munitions plant making artillery shells likely destined for his Ukraine—at a time when the state's voters are concerned about job losses.

The Harris-Biden administration was sending the not-so-subtle message that providing billions of dollars in arms to Zelensky's Ukraine translates into jobs for voting Pennsylvanians.

But that was not all to this crass September surprise.

In an interview with the left-wing pro-Biden-Harris *New Yorker* magazine, Zelensky plunged right into the current neck-and-neck presidential race. He trashed Harris's rival Donald Trump as someone who "doesn't really know how to stop the war even if he might think he knows how."

Not satisfied with that putdown, the Ukrainian president hit even harder Trump's running mate and vice presidential candidate, J.D. Vance, as "dangerous" and "too radical." The left still talks nonstop about nonexistent 2016 Trump-Russia "collusion" and equally bogus 2020 Trump-Russian "disinformation."

Yet it would be hard to define any clearer "election interference" than the current Zelensky surprise.

After all, has any vice president incumbent running for president ever flown in a foreign leader on a U.S. military jet to the one key U.S. state that will likely decide the

impending election?

And furthermore, has any paraded him around that state's weapons export plant while he trashed current Vice President Harris's two opponents with invectives like "dangerous" and "radical?"

And why else was Zelensky's Pennsylvania trip arranged by the Biden-Harris administration but to coincide with the traditional dates that mail-in and early-voting balloting start?

Yet were the Zelensky sudden Pennsylvania drop-in and his crude domestic politicking and trashing of Trump and Vance all that wise?

After all, Harris's opponent Donald Trump had just escaped an assassination attempt from a pro-Ukrainian gunman—furious over Trump's purported preference for a negotiated settlement to the 30-month-long, one-million-casualties war?

Add it all up, and sometimes September surprises backfire—when they appear to voters as crude and insulting rather than just conniving.

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