

Our So-called 'Experts' and their Silly Group-speak Letters

From Victor Davis Hanson

One of the most preposterous recent trends has been the political use of supposed expert letters and declarations of support from so-called "authorities."



These pretentious testimonies of purported professionalism are different from the usual inane candidate endorsements from celebrities and politicians.

Instead, they are used by politicians to impress and persuade the public to follow the "expertise," "science," or "authorities" to support all sorts of injurious initiatives and policies—of dubious value and otherwise without much political support.

Think of all the health experts who collectively swore to us that the COVID mRNA vaccinations would give us ironclad and lasting protection from being either infectious or infected and were without any side effects.

Other "authorities" assured us the first nationwide lockdown

in U.S. history would stop COVID without hurting the social or economic life of the country.

Ditto testimonies about the pangolin-bat origins of COVID or the authenticity of the bogus Steele dossier.

Do we still remember the 1,200 healthcare “professionals” who in June 2020 told us that hitting the streets in mass numbers to protest during the post-George Floyd riots was a legitimate exemption from their own prior insistence on a complete nationwide quarantine? Or as these ideologues lectured us as “experts”:

“We wanted to present a narrative that prioritizes opposition to racism as vital to the public health, including the epidemic response. We believe that the way forward is not to suppress protests in the name of public health but to respond to protesters demands in the name of public health.”

To convince the public to get behind the agendas of politicians—increasingly on the left—ideologues round up groups of politically kindred professors, researchers, retired officials, and former bureaucrats to show off their supposed expertise and convince the public by means of their “authority”.

Perhaps one of the most notorious examples was the “70 arms control and nuclear experts,” who in 2015 were gathered together by Obama subordinates to persuade Americans to support the administration’s bankrupt Iran Deal—the so-called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

It was clearly a treaty designed to appease and empower Iran on empty promises that the theocracy would slow down its nuclear bomb program. And it was railroaded, illegally, through Congress without the constitutionally required two-thirds treaty vote of the Senate.

But what followed from the deal was an empowered Iran. Freed

from the burden of embargoes, it subsequently raked in billions of dollars in oil revenues—to lavish upon its terrorist appendages Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis.

Trump withdrew from the farce in 2018. His actions quickly bankrupted the terrorist state with embargoes and sanctions—only to see Biden-Harris beg Iran, in vain, to reenter the deal in 2021.

What followed was a second round of U.S. appeasement and the greatest Iranian-fueled terrorist wave in the Middle East since the 1980 theocratic Iranian revolution.

None of those Iran-Deal experts have weighed in since.

Do we remember Joe Biden's disastrous "Build Back Better" and related huge spending packages? Coupled with additional borrowing, they contributed to well over a combined \$4 trillion deficit from 2021 to 2022.

The public at least knew well enough that the economy was beginning to boom after the gradual decline of COVID. Pent-up consumer demand was starting to skyrocket. Still low interest rates encouraged reckless borrowing. Supply chains were still backed up and had not recovered from the national quarantines.

Stuff that the now cash-laden public wanted was often in short supply.

In other words, people wished to splurge on things that were scarce—just as Biden printed \$4 trillion of new "stimulus" to boil an already overheating economy.

The result would soon be hyperinflation topping out at a 9% percent annual inflation rate. During the Biden-Harris administration's four years, the price surge would leave key staple costs some 20-30 percent higher than in 2021.

Yet to ensure such madness, in 2021, we were assured there would be *no* such inflation. To convince us of the

unconvincing, Team Biden rounded up “Seventeen recipients of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences” to sign an implausible letter to reassure the public that the massive spending (called “investments”) was “long overdue.”

Worse still, the illustrious left-wing economists blindly doubled down on public fears of what soon would be crippling price hikes due to the massive borrowing: “Some, however, have invoked fears of inflation as a reason to not undertake these investments. This view is shortsighted.”

None of the seventeen Noble Prize winners ever apologized for their wrongheaded predictions and assessments that greenlighted destructive inflation.

In 2024, the academic economists were back at it again, this time manifested in media speak as “sixteen of the world’s most notable economists—all Nobel Prize winners.”

They were now signing another letter for the very opposite agenda: warning that a putative President Trump’s second term would spur inflation by way of his supposedly reckless spending proposals!

In other words, when Biden wished to print trillions of dollars, partisan Nobel Prize winners in advance discounted the crippling hyperinflation that followed. But now, given their dislike of Trump, they reversed course, warning the country that Trump’s likely deficit spending was “irresponsible.”

Would that such suddenly tight-fisted, inflation-hawk Nobel laureates had earlier warned us of their concerns in 2021, before the inevitable Biden inflation emasculated the middle class.

Yet the worst groupthink letter of supposed authorities was the now infamous and abject lie spread by the supposedly illustrious “51 former intelligence officials.” In weaselly

language, they pontificated that Hunter Biden's laptop had "all the classic earmarks of a Russian information operation"—an emphatic assertion designed, however, by the word "earmarks" to shield them from the charge of lying, which, in fact, they knew that they were.

The signees were supposedly our best and brightest—headed by former CIA directors John Brennan (who previously had confessed to lying twice to Congress) and Leon Panetta, and former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper (who previously also confessed he had lied once to Congress).

The point of the letter, like the aim of all such disingenuous politicking masked by supposed academic credentials and past government expertise, was political: to help Joe Biden's evasions in his last 2020 debate on the eve of the election.

Armed with the fraudulent letter, Biden on the stage trashed Trump's charge of Biden family corruption by citing the letter's professional authentication that his son's incriminating laptop was cooked up in Moscow.

The charge of "Russian disinformation" was, of course, a blatant lie—given the FBI already had taken possession of the laptop and knew it was genuine.

Everything about the letter stunk.

It was cooked up by then-Biden campaign aide Antony Blinken (later rewarded by becoming our current Secretary of State). He wrote Michael Morrell, a past interim CIA director, asking him to round up supposedly retired intelligence grandees to thwart Trump's plausible accusations that the authentic laptop's contents proved the corruption and tax evasion of the Biden family.

In a close election, the purpose was to prevent a Biden debate disaster and thus the perception that the Biden family was crooked. Such convincing charges might have lost him the

election.

Many of the supposed disinterested “retired” authorities were actually still employed as contractors by the CIA.

In the end, none of the experts apologized for their misinformation, even when one post-election poll revealed that their deliberate efforts to mislead the voting public had affected the outcome of the 2020 election. Our experts’ charge of “Russian disinformation” turned out to be classic “American election interference.”

More recently, we saw another such letter with the same-old, same-old boilerplate. Lots of names (100!) of supposedly “retired” Republican “national security figures” emphatically endorsed Kamala Harris.

Given the predictably corrupt genre, almost anyone could have anticipated the letter’s contents. The list of “former” national security signees broadcast their bloated titles (but did not disclose whether any are now still contracting for the government) to assure us of their exalted expertise.

Like all such letters, the public has no idea who these obscure supposed expert national security figures are or even who they were when they worked for past Republican administrations. The point is simply to scare the public into voting for Democrat Harris because supposed experts, who have titles and were once insider Republicans, now despise Donald Trump and want to use their former positions and supposedly conservative credentials to convince us he’s dangerous. But it does not take a Ph.D. or J.D. to fathom that Afghanistan, Gaza, Israel, the wider Middle East in general, Ukraine, North Korea, and Iran were all quiet during the Trump administration. And all have blown up during the derelict Harris-Biden tenure. In the case of Russia, Vladimir Putin invaded other countries on his border in three of the last four administrations—except Donald Trump’s.

We no longer have a southern border, given the directorship of Border Czar Kamala Harris. We have no idea where or who some 10 million illegal aliens are who entered the country under Harris—after she and Joe Biden blew up an inherited 2020 secure border from Trump.

No matter. Our Republican experts nevertheless assure us that Trump “is unfit to serve again as President, or indeed in any office of public trust,” while Harris, they insist, has “consistently championed the rule of law, democracy, and our constitutional principles.”

In such Orwellian language, destroying the border and federal immigration law with it, helping to unleash an unprecedented lawfare at election time to ruin a presidential rival, or urging court packing, an end to the electoral college and the senate filibuster are all championing “the rule of law, democracy, and our constitutional principles.”

In sum, as a general rule, anytime we read an election-cycle solicited letter from retired functionaries, replete with their grandiose former titles, we should completely discount it.

They inevitably were rounded up by politicians. The signees in many cases are likely angling for a return to government; in others, they are loudly virtue-signaling—and in nearly all instances, are usually wrong but will never issue a second letter of apology when their concocted expertise and pretentiousness are thoroughly discredited by subsequent events.

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