

Stormy Days for the President and the Republic

The president will stay the course and defeat the unholy coalition of improvident events and the shopworn Democrats who, in their desperation, have allied themselves with pestilence and mayhem.

by Conrad Black



No president since Abraham Lincoln has had such a relentless sequence of crises to deal with as President Trump has had. Franklin D. Roosevelt had constant overarching crises: the Great Depression and the recovery from it, the approach of a world war, and the war itself. But never in his more than 12 years as president, even when he grappled with the collapse of the financial system and after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had severely damaged the U.S. Navy's battle fleet, did he seem in the slightest beleaguered. Every day of his

presidency, Abraham Lincoln was dealing with the horrible crisis of the secession of the southern states and the terrible war that ended the insurrection.

Some presidencies seem reasonably serene, like the folklorically resurrected Calvin Coolidge, who said little and spent little and did little. Dwight D. Eisenhower is remembered as the happy combination of the smiling, avuncular, golfing president of whom the nation twice said with their votes "I like Ike." He was, after all, the victorious five-star general who conducted the greatest military operation in the history of the world and received the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany in the West. The 1950s seem now as they seemed at the time, an era of peace and prosperity despite the regular threats of recourse to nuclear war coming from the leaders of the unlamented Soviet Union: Joseph Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev. Bill Clinton, coasting on Ronald Reagan's immense economic boom and his almost bloodless and complete victory in the Cold War, as well as on the very competent foreign policy of the senior President Bush, had the most carefree time of any president since Coolidge.

We now know that President Trump is the only holder of his great office whose election was schemed against at the highest levels of the Justice Department and intelligence services of the preceding administration, and who was the subject of a spurious special counsel investigation set up even after it had been established that the grounds for it—a possible conspiracy between the Trump campaign and the Russian government—were known to be complete fiction.

Fatuous Exercises

When that fraudulent enterprise collapsed, Trump was briefly the subject of the most ludicrous impeachment proceeding in American history.

Andrew Johnson was impeached and came within one vote of

removal because he ignor

ed a statute that was completely unconstitutional. Richard Nixon had articles of impeachment reported out of the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee and, although he had mishandled the Watergate and related investigations, and some of his aides committed acts of perjury and obstruction of justice, he was a very distinguished and successful president and no convincing evidence has emerged these 48 years that he himself committed any crimes. He was traduced by Democratic Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) at a meeting of the judiciary committee on Wednesday. President Clinton probably lied to a grand jury about his extramarital sex life, but the United States Senate correctly concluded that his peccadilloes and subsequent lies about them did not reach the level of high crimes and misdemeanors required by the Constitution for the removal of a president.

The impeachment of President Trump was for abuse of office and contempt of the Congress, offenses that are not impeachable, are unspecific, and there was no probative evidence that he had committed them. The entire exercise was fatuous.

The teapot of that tempest was scarcely calm before his presidency was assaulted by the COVID-19 crisis and the consequent severe economic repercussions including the generation of nearly 40 million unemployed by a two-month shutdown.

Just as the pandemic began to subside, a video of the brutal killing of African American George Floyd by a white policeman in Minneapolis was universally circulated and we have seen how acute racial sensibilities have quickly escalated into national and highly destructive urban violence. The spectacle of world-famous streets of great American cities being trashed and torched horrified the nation and embarrassed it in front of the world.

Fiction vs. Fact

Every time that President Trump's position has appeared to be settling into normal incumbency, a new upheaval has arisen that has disturbed the politics of America.

No president since Coolidge (who didn't promise anything except stability) has so thoroughly honored his pre-election promises as has President Trump. He has, as promised, drastically reduced illegal immigration, cut taxes, deregulated, revived the concept of nuclear non-proliferation for irresponsible states, shaped up the NATO alliance, withdrawn the country from hopeless Middle Eastern wars, spared the country the green terror, and ended oil imports and unemployment. He promised to drain the swamp—and is doing that—and as the waters descend the swamp-creatures are exposed and become psychotically aggressive in defense of their right to wallow and frolic in the public trough.

In these latest freighted days, Trump's enemies have been more overtly numerous and vocal.

The Trump-hating media have descended to an hysterical level of partisan propaganda; if the ostensible reporting of CNN and MSNBC were presented as paid advertisements for the Democratic Party they would be rejected for breach of advertising standards. They instantly invented the fiction that the president had ordered that crowds in Lafayette Park be tear-gassed and subjected to fusillades of rubber bullets in order to clear his way to St. John's church on Monday evening. This falsehood was repeated by the unrelievedly banal Senator Maizie Hirono (D-Hawaii) at the judiciary committee hearing on Wednesday.

Washington D.C.'s Episcopalian bishop and Roman Catholic archbishop issued rabidly partisan and insolent statements about the president's visit to "the president's church" the day after the arson attack on it, and his and Mrs. Trump's

visit to the St. John Paul II Shrine on the anniversary of an interfaith agreement sponsored by the late pope the following day. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper read to the press a prepared statement that categorically opposed the use of the armed forces in any restoration of public order as the politicization of the military and criticized what he sarcastically described as the presidents “photo-op” at St. John’s Church on Monday, even though he himself participated in it. (He should be fired and presumably will be, at the latest when the urban violence fully subsides, but the sooner the better.)

Meanwhile, former Defense Secretary James Mattis flipped his cork and wrote [a churlish statement](#) published in *The Atlantic* (which has been in a neck-and-neck race with the *New Yorker* throughout this presidential term for the “honor” of being the most Trumpophobic of American magazines). Mattis accused the president of deliberately dividing Americans. The conduct of both Esper and Mattis are disgraceful affronts to the president who had conferred such high honors upon both of them. Most news reporting and comment bore little resemblance to events as they unfolded.

Embarrassments Aplenty—for Democrats

COVID-19 is ebbing and the riots have caused hundreds of thousands of people to jostle together at close quarters, which I suspect will fail to produce a marked upsurge of the illness; this disorder as it subsides may thus help to embolden authorities throughout the country to hasten the end of the shutdown.

The most important events of this week, though not the most publicized, were economic and legal. Tentative unemployment figures for May came in more than [6 million below](#) the totals that had been feared and the stock exchanges responded positively. The administration’s plans for a swift economic recovery are off to a good start.

In an awkward and barely credible appearance before the Senate Judiciary Committee, former Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein acknowledged that he regretted having approved the counterintelligence operation conducted against the president. He feebly defended the plausibility of conducting Robert Mueller's investigation, but it was clear that he had no response to the fact that those who agitated for it knew at the outset that there was no evidence whatsoever to justify such a lengthy and malicious harassment of the president. The attempts at aggressive questioning by Democratic Senators Dianne Feinstein (Calif.), Patrick Leahy (Vt.), and Richard Durbin (Ill.) were pathetic. The exposure of the wickedness and lawlessness of the former administration's senior justice and intelligence officials can only become starker.

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