

# The Election Is Coming Down to Two Questions

Does distaste for Trump trump political desecration of the criminal justice system? And will voters overlook the Democrats' policy failures?



by Conrad Black

The great unspoken fact of the contemporary American political scene is that Donald Trump is leading the polls for next year's presidential election. This is despite his indictment on a charge that virtually every legally knowledgeable person, including partisan Democrats, acknowledges to be spurious; the consequence of a politically corrupted criminal justice system.

And Mr. Trump leads despite having received more obloquy than

any other public official in American history, including Vice President Burr and President Nixon. (Burr killed Treasury Secretary Hamilton in a duel, not an image-builder, and was falsely charged with treason by President Jefferson and acquitted in a trial presided over by Chief Justice Marshall. More than 50 years after the Watergate incident, there remains no probative evidence that Nixon, an outstanding president, committed any crimes.)

It is almost a foregone conclusion that there will be additional indictments generated by prosecutors who are effectively the vanguard hitmen of the 2024 Democratic presidential campaign. Despite the learned caution of some observers, they will not be significantly better founded than the outrage perpetrated against Mr. Trump in New York.

The Never Trump Republicans have been less realistic in grappling with the Trump phenomenon than the Democrats. They think they can take over Mr. Trump's repositioning of the comfortable old fraternity of sportsmanlike losers that the Bush-McCain-Romney faction fashioned out of the generally victorious party of Presidents Eisenhower, Nixon, and Reagan, (six presidential elections won out of seven contested in 32 years, and a popular vote plurality in all seven, if the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon votes are counted properly).

The press has scarcely commented on the fact that would have been unthinkable in pre-Trump America: almost everyone now agrees that the justice system and its now routine harassment, defamation and spurious prosecution of opposing politicians does not compromise America's claim to be the world's leading democracy.

Except for the woke Americophobic, nihilists who now exercise the greatest influence on the Biden gerontocracy, no one who remains in the broad center of American political thinking seems to have reconsidered for a moment the star-spangled, national, self-regarding litany that America is admirably

exceptional, that it has the world's best justice system, and that everyone in the world, and not just the desperately poor, wish they were Americans.

The Trump-haters of both parties are now in a state of suspensive denial. At first, and especially after the political bonanza at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, they all thought that the dreadful trump meteor had passed and it was back to Bush-McCain-Romney: the Republicans win sometimes but the Democrats rule all the time.

They thought they had the winning formula when the justice system was effectively used to replicate the invasion of Normandy at the former president's Florida home. Docile opinion was not overly offended by FBI agents rummaging through Melania's closet ostensibly looking for violations of the Espionage Act.

This gambit brought back to mind the endless contestation of the Trump era, and the Democrats did not lose badly at the midterms, though they lost the overall national vote and control of the House of Representatives.

The defeat of several Trump-endorsed candidates who should have won appeared to be a rejection of Mr. Trump and semi-endorsement of President Biden. But neither was on the ballot and Trump is a stronger candidate than he is a chooser of candidates. The midterm elections apparently elevated Governor DeSantis of Florida as someone whose bandwagon the Never Trumpers could clamber aboard and leave Mr. Trump behind. It would be Mr. Trump's policies, which won wide approval, without the ogre who devised them and then riveted the Republican Party on top of previously inaccessible Democratic fiefdoms amongst the minorities in the economically disadvantaged.

The Democrats were naturally less enthused at the prospect of running the superannuated Mr. Biden against the young

thoroughbred of Mr. DeSantis. From time to time, as if in a little ritual of self reassurance, Mr. Biden would announce to no one in particular that it would be his rare good fortune to run against Trump again. The country has Mr. Biden (and itself) to thank for an impending recession; for the absence of an exit strategy in Ukraine; for the endless Chinese insults of America at every opportunity in a manner that the United States has not endured since the French invasion of Mexico in 1861.

It is Mr. Biden's policy that Illegal immigrants are pouring across the southern border in a human wave of approximately 10,000 per day, an induced invasion of the destitute that the administration denies is happening. The dollar is losing about one percent per month in its comparative value opposite other important currencies, (none of which is being well-managed other than relatively to the dollar).

The Green Terror is hobbling the country strategically and impoverishing millions of people. The appeasement of Iran has been an unmitigated disaster and turning against Israel has helped to incite Saudi Arabia to mend fences with Iran under the aegis of China and rain unprecedented affronts on the United States. The country couldn't deal with any of this at the midterms, apart from evicting the very complicit Nancy Pelosi from the speaker's chair.

In all of this slapstick cavalcade, Mr. Trump is the only protagonist who isn't sleepwalking. The effort to replicate the disgrace at Mar-a-Lago with the Stormy Daniels-Michael Cohen nonsense has been a terrible fiasco. Mr. DeSantis has practically flamed out with his ungracious response to the pseudo-legal persecution of Mr. Trump and his insane six-week cap on legal abortions in Florida.

Mr. Trump is leading him for the Republican nomination by 20 to 30 points in all polls. Noisy terriers aspiring to be great beasts, like Governors Sununu and Hutchinson of New Hampshire

and Arkansas, have proclaimed the end of the Trump era and their own eligibility to succeed him, oblivious of what this next presidential contest has become – even in New Hampshire, Mr. Trump leads Mr. Sununu by 20 points.

More than 70 percent of Americans do not want this president to run again, but he is apparently running again. No Democrat could be reelected against any serious Republican on the track record of this administration, but the somnolent forces of Trump-hate are ignoring that too. This is not an election prelude that has any precedents. It is now down to only two questions.

One is: will the country reelect the party responsible for the most incompetent administration since before the Civil War? And the other is: will there prove to be more Americans whose distaste for Mr. Trump causes them to overlook the political desecration of the criminal justice system, than there are Americans so concerned by that mortal threat to constitutional democracy that they will overlook their reservations about the former president?

Everything else is the normal tedious quadrennial, political bloviations. The arithmetic that addresses these two key questions is emerging, and the answer to both is “No.” The most mindless voters will soon have to think the unthinkable.