

Three Paths Forward for Trump and the GOP

Republicans can't pin their disappointing midterm results solely on the former president.



by Conrad Black

In a column in *American Greatness* on December 10, Paul Gottfried built upon a piece of mine last week that effectively ascribed the disappointing results for the Republicans in the midterm elections jointly to an abhorrence of the climate of unlimited controversy and near chaos induced by President Trump's presence at the forefront of events, and the inability of the Republicans up to now to respond

effectively to the changes in voting and vote counting that were largely instituted in response to the Covid pandemic, and with some modification, have now been enacted durably in many states.

He makes the point that there is very little evidence that Mr. Trump's presence as a potential ultimate beneficiary of Republican votes actually cost the Republicans anything in the midterm elections, and instead emphasizes in a very recondite manner the comparative and increasing failure of the Republicans to make an effective pitch to various voting blocs, including younger well-educated voters and unmarried women voters of practically all ethnic, age, economic, and education brackets.

The Democrats' abortion stance, reduction of marijuana penalties, and attempt to forgive a trillion dollars of student loans certainly helped assure that 70 percent of university students would vote, 63 per cent of those for the Democrats. He makes a strong case that the deterioration of the Republican appeal to those voters more than compensates for the substantial progress of the Republicans with Hispanic American voters, and to a lesser degree, with African-Americans also.

He perceptively writes that "There is no indication that the electorate cares about Democratic scandals and failures. Republican attempts to call attention to such issues" (as the flood of illegal immigration, skyrocketing crime and inflation, and the long-term dubious international financial grifting of the Biden family), "or to the damaged brain of our new Pennsylvania senator or to Joe Biden's obvious decrepitude, fall on deaf ears with these voters."

He again perceptively argues that the Republicans are reticent about challenging questionable votes because they do not want to be accused of "election denial or suppressing minority votes. This hesitancy puts them at a disadvantage against a

radical leftist party that shows no compunctions about cheating or election denial. The fact that Democratic Party organizers and politicians can engage in their legerdemain with unfailing media protection makes them even more brazen." Mr. Gottfried argues, quite persuasively, that the Republicans should steel themselves to the deluge of righteous hypocrisy they would receive and attack all suspicious ballots as soon as they detect them.

Where I part company to some extent with Mr. Gottfried is his statement that "There is no convincing evidence the Trump support for a candidate was the decisive factor in any person's defeat." Strictly speaking, I do agree with that, but the prolonged defamation of Mr. Trump that seems to have been the principal motivation in the outrageous occupation of his home at Palm Beach by the FBI in August, rather than any nonsense about violating the Espionage Act, did not inspire anyone except the usual virulently anti-Trump half of the electorate to imagine that he was guilty of anything. Yet it did remind all of the voters, including his supporters, of the terribly contentious and abrasive nature of all American politics where Mr. Trump is a protagonist.

This fact is the only believable reason I can find for the shrinkage of Mr. Biden's status in job-approval ratings to 10 percent negative from 20 percent negative. This seems to have been the principal reason for hurling the profoundly debased justice system onto the electoral scales, and it must be said that it was a well executed surgical strike, without which the Democrats would surely have lost more congressmen and would probably not have retained control of the Senate. And Mr. Gottfried appears to believe that most voters in America have now become so detached from any traditionally recognizable notion of respectable standards of civic conduct that they don't care that the Justice Department is simply a tool of the dirty tricks division of the Democratic National Committee.

This indifference to spectacular and continuous lapses of

ethical government and impartial justice, supported by the ethically bankrupt national political and social media, now swanning through a full frontal exposure in the unsurprising revelation of the shameful hypocrisy of Twitter in the last presidential election, is extremely dangerous. If true, the potential for an elevation of a regime even more malignant, if not more incompetent, (that would be a stratospheric hurdle to surmount), than the present one, would inevitably be realized eventually.

These are marginally conflicting intuitions rather than disputes of fact between Mr. Gottfried and me, but my impression is that most Americans are appalled by the corruption of the Justice Department and the intelligence agencies in their interventions in both the 2016 and 2020 elections. Yet, as I wrote, that concern and the fact that three-quarters of Americans think the country is going in the wrong direction, are compensated for by the extreme distaste that 10 to 20 percent of Americans have at any thought of a return of Mr. Trump as president, not out of extreme dislike of him, but of the controversy he brings with him.

If the Republican Party was so severely disadvantaged by the loss of support of voting blocs Mr. Gottfried cites, I don't think that the gubernatorial results in Florida, Georgia, and even Texas would have been so robustly Republican as they were. There are three possible deliverances from the gloomy Republican future the Mr. Gottfried foresees. First, another well-qualified Republican than Mr. Trump is nominated in 2024 supporting Trump policies and runs with the former president's support. Second, Mr. Trump continues in the good-humored and polite manner exhibited in his announcement that he was seeking renomination and runs as a "new Trump" as Richard Nixon in 1968 ran as a "new Nixon."

Third, and this is a serious gamble, the Trump we know is nominated again and the Republican self-familiarization with the new voting and vote counting techniques, which must be

accomplished in any event, suffices to put him across one last time. All conscientious and sensible people who wish America well, whatever their notions of spirituality, should start praying for one of these outcomes this Christmas season, and keep it up until next election day.

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