

Trump for the Win

Barring another catastrophe on the scale of the coronavirus, this president will be reelected and be the only chief executive whose second term was more successful than his first.

by Conrad Black



The Republicans have now forced the Democrats to change course and tactics, shed their narcissistic complacency, and recognize that they are in the fight of their lives.

When the history of this astonishing political year is written, there will be amazement that the Democrats ever imagined that they could preserve the entire election as a referendum on Trump based on the question of whether the population is content, and leave the president floundering in blustery self-justification while their nominee fielded soft pre-agreed questions from his home.

The Democratic National Convention was essentially centered in a Wilmington catacomb and featured an unexciting procession of former officeholders, incanting that Donald Trump had completely failed in the coronavirus crisis and was personally responsible for 180,000 unnecessary deaths and massive unemployment. The nominees socially distanced from each other and the party heaved a sigh of relief when their candidate limped monotonously through a teleprompter acceptance speech. The Obamas, the Clintons, and the nominees all repeated variations of the theme that it was self-evident that the incumbent president was a corrupt and incompetent reactionary, and they adjourned to wave to a parking lot and serenely await the voters' confirmation of their victory in November.

This will be exposed as the most mistakenly overconfident launch of a major party campaign for the White House since the renomination of Governor Thomas Dewey of New York against President Harry Truman in 1948. The combination of the two sequential conventions and the performance of the Democratic media in covering them will be a shattering blow to the Democratic strategists who retrieved Joe Biden and Kamala Harris from the prenomination ash heap and put them forward as a respectable camouflage for the party's outright Marxist program. Whatever possessed them to imagine that they could avoid any comment on the most widespread and most destructive urban rioting in America in over 50 years, could lay the public health crisis entirely upon the president, could maintain their advocacy of an immigration policy that would ultimately result in every poverty-stricken person in the world moving to the United States, while ignoring this administration's reduction of illegal immigration by 90 percent; all of this and many other issues will be as much a matter of interest to psychiatrists as to historians.

Donald Trump demonstrated again his talents as a showman; he actually turned a virtual convention to advantage: an extraordinarily interesting group of speakers succeeded each

other with brief and highly informative scripts. No time was wasted with windy *ex officio* speeches, floor demonstrations, and public tumult, as occurs in regular conventions. Most of the speakers told interesting and sometimes heartrending stories about themselves and each was targeted precisely at a block of voters.

Victims of foreign terrorists and mob violence made their points with great eloquence. A female surgeon who had also been a full colonel in the United States Army, and was now a nun, spoke (in her habit) to the nearly half of Americans who are pro-life. Farmers, small businessmen, sports promoters, manufacturers, a fisherman, police chiefs, all unpretentious and persuasive advocates of their particular interests, alternated with the most attractive coming politicians in the Republican Party. Women and representatives of minority groups together vastly outnumbered white males, who were chiefly represented by members of the articulate and highly presentable Trump family.

No one from the Bush administrations or the failed McCain and Romney campaigns was in evidence and were not missed. In the ragged procession of Democratic convention speakers, none was more pitiful than the second runner-up to the Republican nomination for years ago, former Ohio Governor John Kasich. In American politics, traitors to their party have a brief afterlife as useful idiots and then vanish.

The Republicans made the most powerful pitch in their party's history to women, African-Americans, and Latinos. Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina and Kentucky Attorney General David Cameron led a long succession of outstanding African American speakers who recounted the positive initiatives that the Trump Administration has taken for their community, especially economic incentives, and penal reform.

Where the Democratic speakers falsely stated that America's COVID-19 performance was the worst of any country in the

world, the Republican response from the president and many others naturally dwelt on the shambles of public health emergency response bequeathed to them, on Biden's noisy denunciation of the closing of direct air travel from China and then Europe, and the recitation of this administration's success in producing everything necessary to combat the virus, the enormous expansion, and facilitation of testing, and the acceleration of the pursuit of a vaccine. Biden made a catastrophic error in promising to shut down the country if the coronavirus could not be exterminated, and he will not be allowed to forget it. And the Republicans hung the urban rioting and corrupt Democratic municipal misgovernment around Biden's neck like a putrid albatross.

After Melania Trump's tour de force on Tuesday night, the Democratic networks were reduced to speculating that there was a rift between the conciliatory Mrs. Trump and her bombastic husband. After the president's somewhat overlong (70 minutes) closing on Thursday night, the same desperately predictable and rabidly biased commentators complained that the president's audience on the White House lawn were not masked social distancers.

It was indicative of the dilapidation of Democratic confidence that their nominees went before television cameras and minimal numbers of viewers on Thursday afternoon, trying to preempt what they had finally realized would be a heavy blow from the president on Thursday evening. Biden attacked urban violence directly and let it be known that he would campaign in some of the so-called battleground states.

But the Democratic National Committee issued an unimaginably fatuous complaint as the Republicans closed with one of the greatest fireworks displays in American history over the Washington Monument that the absence of precautions against COVID-19 for the president's speech was illustrative of his "complete corruption." Their campaign of terror about the pandemic has failed with Biden's quasi-promise to shut down

the country again. They will pay for their ambiguity about urban violence and their encouragement of defunding of police forces. Their cleverest and most egregious strategist, David Axelrod, whined that the Republicans were verging on racism by upholding the police (though most newsworthy police chiefs are black).

The Democratic convention was full of gloom and national self-criticism and nominated relatively unafrightening figureheads and the Republican convention exposed this as scaffolding for a giant pustule of policy extremism, and countered with a comprehensive and optimistic program. "Orange Man Bad" won't do it; this is a choice between a quavering geriatric mediocrity riding a mad tiger and an unabashed impresario who, like him or not, is a great star. Trump exaggerates when he says this is the most important election in American history and he has had the most productive first term of any president in American history. Without the election of Lincoln in 1860 the country would have broken up, and without the reelection of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1940 Britain and Canada would have had to make peace with Germany and leave Hitler in control of most of Europe.

Trump has had the *fourth* most successful first term in history, after Lincoln, FDR, and Richard Nixon. And barring another providential catastrophe to favor the Democrats on the scale of the coronavirus, this president will be reelected, and he will finally enjoy a honeymoon and be the only chief executive in U.S. history whose second term was more successful than his first.

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