

Trump Haters Should Prepare for Disappointment

There is a widespread aversion to the president, but his record in office is increasingly hard to dispute and his attractions as the ultimate single combat warrior are slowly growing.

by Conrad Black



It is not too soon to consider how to assist the millions of Trump-haters in the country in adjusting to the imminent collapse of their hopes and dreams. Their entire political world now rests on a series of absurd suppositions; it is a levitation that defies all laws of nature and politics.

They have propelled themselves into an insane impeachment trial over non-offenses the president did not commit—a trial over matters which are not legally actionable and for which there is no evidence. For this, the Senate and the chief justice of the United States will be tied up for weeks. When it fizzles ignominiously, the anti-Trump media will squawk

like hungry parrots that there was a real case, but that the Republican senators refused to recognize it. That hackneyed line is wearing very thin.

The Democrats will not be liberated easily from their addiction to having destructive partisan investigations riveted on the president's back permanently. This will be a painful process, like all addictive treatments, with desperate cravings, fantasies, relapses, and the torment of cold turkey withdrawals. At some point in the next two or three months, the Democrats are also going to have to face up to the prodigious inadequacy of all their leading presidential candidates.

When Donald Trump was contemplating seeking the presidential nomination of the improvised Progressive Party in 2000, he referred to the four main contenders of the Democrats and Republicans, Vice President Al Gore, Senator Bill Bradley (D-N.J.), Governor George W. Bush (R-Texas), and Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), as "a bunch of stiffes." That was a fairly apt description, as his pejorative comments about people often are (and it was the beginning of his prolonged altercation with John McCain, which continued through to McCain's funeral). But that foursome was a Brobdingnagian cluster of potential candidates for elevation to Mount Rushmore compared to Joe Biden, Pete Buttigieg, Bernie Sanders, and Elizabeth Warren.

None of these people is remotely plausible as president. Presumably, Michael Bloomberg and perhaps Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) will gain ground as the frightening unfeasibility of the current frontrunners inexorably sinks in. Klobuchar is no world-beater but she's not terrifying. Nobody would dispute Bloomberg's competence and three terms as mayor of New York City is serious experience in the complexities of government. Historically, mayors of major American cities have been unsuccessful in seeking the presidency. The only one to get to the White House was Grover Cleveland, the mayor of

Buffalo, New York, but he was also governor of New York state. The only other ex-mayors of sizeable cities who were presidential candidates were Hubert Humphrey (1968) and DeWitt Clinton (1812). It is a curious fact, for which there is no obvious explanation, that mayors have not got farther as John Lindsay and Rudolph Giuliani have demonstrated in recent times.

If this is to change, it will be Bloomberg and not Buttigieg who does it. Bloomberg has his handicaps; the country might feel that one New York billionaire at a time is enough.

Bloomberg says he is running because of the incompetence of the present field of Democratic candidates; this has the virtues of both truthfulness and accuracy. But it might not endear Bloomberg to the party elders who did not hesitate to sandbag Hillary Clinton in favor of Barack Obama in 2008, or to turn the screws on Bernie Sanders in 2016. There is also likely to be some backlash against Bloomberg's outright effort to buy the election, and traditionalist Democrats will recall Bloomberg's relatively late adherence to their party, only three years ago; prior to that, he was running to be Jeb Bush's secretary of state.

I suspect that Klobuchar will start to rise after inconclusive results between the present frontrunners in Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Nevada. Bloomberg presumably will make a serious showing in his first primary appearance on Super Tuesday, and Klobuchar could emerge as the Democratic establishment's stop-Bloomberg candidate.

In such a fragmented field, it is certainly possible that the Democratic nominee would not be known before the convention. Scenarios of last-minute candidates, especially Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama, are far-fetched. Mrs. Obama has absolutely no demonstrable qualifications, and the bloom is off the Clintons.

To defeat the president, the Democrats are going to have to do better than scream variants of “corruption!” at him. They’ve been slinging that muck for nearly four years—including Bloomberg’s bombastic performance at the Democratic National Convention in 2016—but they can never substantiate it. This absurd impeachment is their last trip to that well and the Obama Administration and Clinton campaign will have to answer for their skulduggery in 2016 and for the fraudulent Russian collusion allegations. They have enjoyed a one-way shooting gallery for three years and they may not be so chipper after they have to account for the apparently illegal antics of former FBI Director James Comey, CIA Director John Brennan, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, and others.

Michael Bloomberg would pass as sensible in most policy areas, but he has gone cock-a-hoop over the environment and would festoon the country with solar panels if he could. A Trump-Bloomberg election would be a memorable slanging match, like two New York taxi drivers arguing as they tried to pick up the same fare. Despite his wealth and former position, Bloomberg would start out a long way behind Trump. He would round up all the Trump-haters without much difficulty, but he has no following himself, and no reliable counterweight to the unshakeable army of the tens of millions of militant Trump followers.

Trump has cut most people’s taxes, helped drive unemployment to historic lows, and, coupled with the drastic reduction in illegal immigration, has brought more assistance to the country’s lower-income groups than any president since Franklin D. Roosevelt. Trump is aggressively poaching directly from traditionally Democratic voting blocs.

True, the president’s public personality is still an acquired taste and many people will not close that deal. But all the wild charges of racism, misogyny, and warmongering have not amounted to anything. Those offended by the proportions of Trump’s ego will not find Bloomberg much of an improvement.

There is a widespread aversion to Trump, but his record in office is increasingly hard to dispute and his attractions as the ultimate single combat warrior are slowly growing.

First published in