Ave Atque Vale, Trump

by Conrad Black

Assertions that 2020 was a crazy year are literally true. It is clear that we should never have listened to, or at least taken seriously, the advice of public-health experts to shut down the economy of the Western world in order to “flatten the curve” of the increase in the incidence of the coronavirus. There was early evidence of the inordinate vulnerability of elderly people and those with other significant ailments, and there was also plenty of evidence that a great many people had minimal symptoms or none at all, that we were only detecting a small minority of those who contracted the coronavirus, and that 80 percent of those who were deemed to have died from it had in fact died *with* it and other ailments, making the identification of the cause of death difficult. Unjustified fear of a shortage of hospital beds is officially blamed for the decision of the governors of New Jersey and New York to send COVID patients to homes for the elderly, needlessly causing the deaths of many people. There was no thought or audible public discussion of what would happen after

“flattening the curve”: If we opened up the economy, as the president promised and largely succeeded in doing, the curve would rise again, as it has done.

But the Democrats, facing a lost election due to the full-employment, no-inflation, robust-lower-income-growth economy that President Trump’s policies created, generated panic and hysteria through their parrot media. Enough of the population was screaming for an economic shutdown to make it happen. Many millions were thrown out of work, hundreds of thousands of small businesses failed, and terrible hardship was inflicted on the country, along with an unbearable strain on the Treasury and the money supply and the deficit. This was all done to reduce the chances of mortality of the 1 percent of the population that was vulnerable to the coronavirus. Their average age was 78, the life expectancy of male Americans. The other 99 percent were cured and were then immune at least until the distribution of a vaccine, which, thanks to Trump’s executive talents and superhuman energy, has been produced one and a half to two years ahead of what the scientists’ advice that we were otherwise following had predicted. The Western world’s response to the coronavirus was insane.

The most insane aspect of the pandemic was that it is clear that China knew in January the dangers of the coronavirus; that it suborned the World Health Organization, largely financed by the United States, into assisting it in disguising the effects of the coronavirus; and that it clamped down on it within China as only a totalitarian government can do, but deliberately exported the virus to the rest of the world. This technically is biological warfare, a Pearl Harbor or 9/11, and a replication of those assaults on America that has proved 100 times more costly in American lives than either of those acts of war. Yet the international commission of investigation is being stonewalled by the Chinese and no one is calling them out for what they did, except to some extent President Trump. He was denounced by Joe Biden for xenophobia when he closed

off direct flights from China on January 31, and was accused by a reporter at a press conference at the time for referring to the “China flu.” Trump at least sensed what was happening and reopened the economy as quickly as he could, and he did supercharge the quest for a vaccine. He was rewarded for his trouble by widespread comment that if the vaccine was developed by him, it couldn’t be trusted and shouldn’t be taken.

As serious progress began towards an economic relaunch, cellphone film emerged of the death of Minneapolis African American George Floyd on May 25, apparently as a result of a white policeman holding him on the ground with his knee on Floyd’s neck. It was a disgusting video, and the nation erupted in riots that continued across the country all summer, described by the media as “peaceful protests,” often with arsonist-lit fires raging behind the television reporters as they inflicted this description on their viewers. Approximately 50 people were killed, 700 police officers were injured, and over $2 billion in property damage was done by vandals and arsonists, none of whom, as far as could be deduced, cared a fig about George Floyd. The Democratic National Convention declined to mention these riots; they were simply put out of mind. The response from the great Democratic-governed cities where the riots were worst – New York, Los Angeles, Portland, Minneapolis, Chicago, and elsewhere – was to defund the police. In the balance of the year, the cities just mentioned and many others have enjoyed a rise in violent crime of between 40 and 170 percent. The overwhelming majority of the victims of these crimes have been African Americans, and not only have the numbers of police been reduced by restrictive budgeting, but the morale of almost all police forces fell like a soufflé as throughout the country officers routinely avoid responding to calls that could easily be misrepresented as racist white behavior. The United States has had the greatest percentage annual increase in violent crime in its history, African Americans are the

chief victims, and most metropolitan police forces are having terrible problems of resignation and recruitment. The country's response to the death of George Floyd was insane.

To round out the year, the United States had an election in which the Democratic candidate was the most inarticulate major-party nominee for national office in the history of recorded speech, and he spent the entire campaign in his own home (apart from a handful of ventures out to address people in their cars in parking lots in modest numbers). Prior to being vice president, Democratic nominee Joe Biden had run twice for his party's nomination but never gained the support of more than 2 percent of the people. He dropped out of his first race after it was discovered that he had cribbed an election promotional comment from one of the most unsuccessful opposition leaders in the United Kingdom in the 20th century, Neil Kinnock. He misspoke about the university he attended and his academic performance, and about other imagined moments in his career. Biden's real campaign was conducted by the rabidly partisan national political media, who devoted themselves almost entirely to the defamation of the incumbent. With the support of 95 percent of the national political media, and outspending the incumbent by more than two to one, in order to oust the incumbent the Democrats still had to exploit COVID-inspired election-law facilitations of mailed ballots, with reduced levels of verification and vastly enhanced possibilities for the harvesting of fraudulent ballots in six key, closely contested states.

Half the population believes the election was dishonest, but the Supreme Court and the Congress ducked the issue and the media have banned any reference to a contention of the results. The outgoing president addressed thousands of his angry followers on January 6 and urged them to march to the Capitol and show "strength," but to be "peaceful." There is no evidence that Trump wanted the violence, though Democrats accuse him of stoking it in their latest impeachment drive.

The proposal to impeach the president with no due process and try him later to remove him from an office from which he will have retired, for an offense he did not commit, completes the idiocy. Like almost everything else about the 2020 election, this is insane.

American democracy is at the lowest point in its post-segregation history: corrupt elections, abdicated courts, cowardly legislators, dishonest media, a prosecutocracy that terrorizes the whole country and wins 99 percent of its cases (95 percent without a trial), crumbling standards of education, skyrocketing crime rates, and a president-elect who looks and sounds like a waxworks dummy who has in his over-long career faced in all four directions on every major issue. Adam Smith wrote that there is “a great deal of ruin in a nation,” meaning that it can survive a lot of official incompetence and misfortune. The U.S. will undoubtedly prove that adage to be true, but it is putting it to a good test, and in politics as in other spheres it has its own collective misjudgment to blame for the nation’s decline. It is not irreversible, but it will not be reversed by continuation of the lunacies and absurdities of the last year.

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