

Biden's Tenuous Hold on Our Political Imagination

America can enjoy settling down, but if the Democrats are going to be contenders in the deciding round, they are going to have to do much better than they have done in the last 50 days.

by Conrad Black



As we ease into the second half of the new administration's much-touted "First 100 Days"—the comforting New Deal expression of nearly 90 years ago reassuring us that Joe Biden is a traditional Democrat and not a tailgating born-again radical who actually believes such political illusions as America's "systemic racism" or the "existential crisis" of climate change or the "white supremacist" assault on the Capitol on January 6—I do not unsay any of the [skeptical words](#) I've written about the prospects of this administration.

Biden's election has been tainted by illegalities on a scale never surpassed in the history of the United States, by a level of intellectual corruption not equaled by the national political media before, and by a vote-counting process more thoroughly compromised than any in the country's history with the possible exception of 1876 (which was ultimately resolved by the candidates).

With that bracing caveat, some positive developments can be discerned.

Despite what he obviously considers to be the obligatory lip service and virtue signaling to his peppier supporters, and the geriatric pleasure he takes in being "the most progressive U.S. president in history," Biden does manage to convey the impression that he actually likes the United States more than the Obamas did. There was about them always the suspicion that the Barack Obama who cheerfully wasted \$100 million of Walter Annenberg's money with Bill Ayers [teaching Marxism](#) to black Chicago elementary school students, and the Michelle Obama who avowed that the first pride she felt in her country was when the Democrats nominated her husband for president, spent a part of each day in the official residence contemplating in astonishment their elevation by a country they chiefly liked for how they thought they might be able to transform it.

Joe Biden's America is the one that was revived from the depths of economic and psychological depression by Franklin D. Roosevelt's programs of reforming the existing system, and that led the Western allies in World War II.

They Can't Blame Trump Forever

The country's quest for "normalcy" and a reduction in the ultimately intolerable level of contestation of the Trump years is well underway. The former president was constantly under siege, frequently illegally harassed and undermined, and replied with unrelenting resistance and counter-controversy

day and night for four years. He was what the Scots call “a bonny fighter” but he exhausted the country.

The bipartisan political establishment was so traumatized by Trump’s victory in 2016 that it spontaneously generated an anti-Trump movement designed to render his life impossible as president and drive him from the White House. And when that was unsuccessful, the movement ensured he was not reelected.

They achieved that goal by seizing upon the coronavirus pandemic after they initially accused Trump of xenophobia for ending direct flights from China in January 2020. Then they marched in lockstep with the scientists demanding the country be shut down, in order to produce an economic depression that they could, with invaluable aid from the Trump-hating media monopoly that conducted Biden’s campaign for him, hang around the president’s neck like an asp. It was bad science but good politics and Dr. Anthony Fauci has been a useful idiot, as the World Health Organization was for China.

As the Democrats will not be able to suppress widespread concern about the integrity of the last election and their insurrection charge has no traction, Trump-hate will pass and they will have to try to govern. It will be harder to prop up Biden as a credible president than it was to defame Trump as a thug and an incompetent. And as they work toward the deadlines of the next elections, they should know that it will not be possible to rig them again. The widely predicted tragedy on the southern border should convince somebody around the president that blind obedience to Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) produces a Blitzkrieg-paced race to disaster

Indefinite Investigations?

Donald Trump’s great battle with the political establishment now stands at 1-1. The Democratic effort to pretend they won the election fairly and that Trump whipped his followers into

an attempt to stage an insurrection and intimidate or suborn the Electoral College and Congress has been a complete failure. (Though Trump's absurd demand that the vice president ignore the vote of the Senate certifying the electors was one of his many self-inflicted wounds).

Attorney General Merrick Garland has implausibly stated that the investigation of the vandalization of the capital on January 6 is one of the most complicated in the department's history and will go on indefinitely. In fact, FBI Director Christopher Wray said in his testimony at the Capitol 10 days ago that there is no evidence whatsoever connecting the Trump organization to those events.

If the Democratic managers had been more astute, they would have had one of the U.S. attorneys in the District of Columbia prosecute the president. He received approximately five percent of the votes of the District of Columbia and juries may be relied upon there to convict people of crimes based solely on the fact that they are Republicans; it would have taken Trump three years going through appeal to get rid of such a charge.

There is no judicial validation of the election. There were 29 cases launched by the Trump campaign in several of the swing states; none of the decisions rejecting them addressed the questions raised. The judiciary showed its usual reluctance to deal with politically explosive issues.

In 1937, FDR frightened the Supreme Court with the specter of increasing the number of justices and they never bothered him again. He was trying to conserve the system, not destroy it, and he had the pleasure of naming the next eight justices to the high court. The American system is not only constitutional, it is also political.

Maybe the Supreme Court made the correct decision in not overturning the 2020 election by acting on the Texas case,

supported by 18 other states, about the failure of three of the swing states to adhere to the constitutional requirement for fair elections. Doing otherwise would have brought enormous pressure upon the three Trump nominees to that court and led to court-packing if the Democrats had won.

Trump warned of ballot-harvesting and the other skulduggery and provided neither the election staff to film and rebut it nor the legal team ready to assail it. Whatever the Constitution says, the most intense aspect of elections is a bare-knuckles ground game and Trump failed that test. As he has often said, it must never happen again. Nor can anything like the Trump-Russia collusion fraud, which special counsel John Durham has been so contemptibly dilatory in investigating. It's hard to be optimistic that it will end justly, but there is room for hope that the FBI, at least, will be more careful in the future, having had its leadership sacked and disgraced as its moral authority putrefied in the Comey-McCabe era.

The Next Test

Trump has gone, for the time being, but he remains the 900-pound gorilla in the American political saloon. America can enjoy settling down, but if the Democrats are going to be contenders in the deciding round, they are going to have to do much better than they have done in the last 50 days.

The next test will be the visits by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to Japan, South Korea, and India, and Blinken's meeting with the Chinese foreign minister in Anchorage, Alaska. If they promote the national interest sensibly, it will be a welcome sign that this administration is growing into the great responsibilities it faces. If Blinken wastes the time of the Chinese minister agreeing to a whitewash of the coronavirus (whose release on the West appears to have been not far from an act of chemical warfare) and waffling about the climate, which the Chinese

regard as nonsense (and which, strategically, it is), then the world will have to watch in consternation the continuing tilt toward China of the correlation of forces that President Trump had arrested.

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