

Democrats Charge Into a Political Cul-de-Sac

Democrats don't have much hope to cling to, but they don't deserve better.

by Conrad Black



President Trump's almost total silence on the matters being investigated by special counsel John Durham, and his gentlemanly remark concerning the allegations against Joe Biden coming from his former aide, Tara Reade, that sometimes people make false allegations, is an enactment of Napoleon's advice not to interrupt an enemy while he is making a mistake.

Just as he studiously avoided any comment when Christine Blasey Ford testified against Supreme Court nominee Brett

Kavanaugh, other than that she seemed pleasant and credible, when a nasty word would have blown up Kavanaugh's candidacy, he sometimes surprises his opponents and even his supporters by acts of unusual tactical discretion.

The Flynn Cul-de-Sac

Trump's opponents are advancing down several *cul-de-sacs* simultaneously. They are standing firmly on the legality and propriety of the prosecution of General Michael Flynn and the applications for warrants to conduct espionage against junior Trump campaign aide Carter Page and the campaign and transition team.

This position cannot be sustained. The prosecution was an outrage which the Justice Department has withdrawn as not only the prosecution of an innocent person, but a prosecution of one whom the prosecutors *knew* to be not guilty.

The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) activity, as Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz has determined, was in gross breach of department practices and customs. It is not his position to determine legality, but he pointed out 17 areas that were, he determined, illegal. The whole operation was based on the infamous Steele dossier, which was exposed years ago as a tissue of lies funded and shopped to the media via the intelligence agencies in a sequence of monstrous improprieties, to influence the election and then destabilize the incoming administration.

There is no longer any serious doubt about any of this and those who follow these things are waiting for the special counsel's indictments. But this past weekend, former President Obama leaked to the country his view that when someone has pleaded guilty to a criminal offense if the charge is withdrawn without being tried, this shakes his confidence in American justice. At about the same time, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) issued a press statement accusing Attorney

General William Barr of using the Justice Department to maintain “the president’s cover-up.” This is both bizarre and insane conduct.

Obama was intimately familiar with the entire investigation of Flynn and knew what bunk it was; he received—with then-Vice President Biden—the full summary of these activities on January 5, 2017, from then-FBI director James Comey. Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates was astonished to learn that the president was aware of the interception of (innocuous) telephone conversations between Flynn as national security advisor-designate and the Russian ambassador.

Pelosi betrayed the addiction of the Democrats to what, in more civil times, was called the “character issue.” The Democrats cannot run against Trump on any basis other than the aggressively shouted supposition that he is an unindicted criminal. The speaker did not specify what the president is covering up. He’s not now under investigation. Obama, Biden, their Justice Department and CIA, and the Clinton campaign *are*.

Pelosi is convinced Trump’s entire presidential incumbency is a cover-up of something, but the Democrats, having struck out swinging on collusion with Russia, obstruction of justice, and inciting a foreign government to interfere in a U.S. election, in their spurious impeachment, have now just dispensed with the inconvenient relic of bourgeois formalism of identifying what it is that is being concealed.

Pelosi and the House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), are babbling like malicious idiots about the president’s crimes, of which even desperately partisan inquiries have failed to produce a shred of evidence. Schiff still claims to have “hard evidence” of the president’s collusion with Russia during the 2016 election. He is the most relentlessly dishonest member of either house of Congress in living memory, effortlessly surpassing Joseph R. McCarthy.

And, after all, there were a few communists in the government then—though Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, George Marshall, and Dean Acheson were not among them.

It is now clear that when Trump fired Comey as FBI director (in spite of the latter's insistence that he was neither "a leaker or sneaker") the president and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein knew as well as Comey did that the Russian collusion claim was a complete fraud.

(Rosenstein, who named Robert Mueller special counsel to look into the collusion matter, had recommended that Trump fire Comey.)

The special counsel was named to try to provoke the president into something the Democrats in Congress could construe as impeachable obstruction of justice (that they soon jumped at the Ukraine nonsense showed their desperation) and produce some sort of justification for the Obama regime's attempt to fix and then invalidate the election, through illegal domestic espionage and use of the intelligence agencies to circulate the defamatory fiction of the Steele dossier to the media. Mueller was the cover-up, and he failed even at that.

All of this is about to be exposed. Indicted people deserve to be presumed to be innocent, though in practice they are rarely accorded that right. If the trials have to be held in the District of Columbia, since it is a 95 percent Democratic-voting jurisdiction, there may be an increased chance of acquittals. (Under ordinary circumstances, prosecutors enjoy a 98 percent conviction-rate in the kangaroo court of the American system of justice, where we see chronic abuse of the plea bargain to extort incriminating evidence with immunity from perjury for "cooperating" witnesses.) But the stench of wrongdoing, which was confected and sprayed over the president like tear gas, will lay heavily on the Democrats this fall.

The Shutdown Cul-de-sac

The other main cul-de-sac is the coronavirus shutdown.

The Democrats attacked the president for not taking it seriously, attacked him for blaming China, gave him no credit for cleaning up in a couple of weeks the utter decrepitude of the emergency medical response system bequeathed to him by Obama, give him no credit for “flattening the curve,” and are now proposing endless testing and the impossible elimination of the virus, while tens of millions more people are thrown out of work and the Congress authorizes trillions more of borrowed dollars to pay the victims of the shut-down they wish to extend to the election.

It is a fatuous policy that will blow up.

The #MeToo Cul-de-sac

As these debacles unfold, the Democrats are not going to find it easy to shake loose from the anger of the militant feminists who want every pubescent male in the country to spend his life quaking in fear of a denunciation, however fraudulent or stale, dated or completely uncorroborated, of sexual misbehavior.

They wouldn't let Senator Al Franken (D-Minn.) even get to the ethics committee; he was sacked when accused of a minor lapse of taste. The looming, raving, arm-flailing Marxist presence of Bernie Sanders seems to prevent the Democrats from tossing Biden out like a dead mouse (like Franken); and Biden may be innocent, but this issue is yet another albatross to the basement-ridden candidate's necklace of yokes and weights.

As the Democrats disappear through these trap-doors on the electoral gallows, if anyone remembers normal policy issues, Democrats will not find much shelter in open borders and the Green Terror.

This looks like a close election now, but the only chance it will stay that way is if the Swedish experience doesn't apply here, and the coronavirus spikes dramatically as the economy reopens. There is no reason to believe this will happen, and a death-dealing renaissance of the pandemic is the only hope the Democrats have left. It isn't much to cling to, but they don't deserve better.

First published in