

Eleven Months From the Election It Looks as If Trump's Enemies Might Have To Start Thinking the Unthinkable



ANKENY, IOWA – DECEMBER 02: Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump speaks at a commit to caucus campaign event at the Whiskey River bar on December 02, 2023 in Ankeny, Iowa. Iowa Republicans will be the first to select their party's nominee for president when they go to caucus on January 15, 2024. (Photo by Scott Olson/Getty Images)

by Conrad Black

The battle-scarred and exhausted forces of Trump-hate must have reached their last extremity – the fatuous theory that “Making America Great” is fascistic and that there is some similarity between Trump and Hitler and Napoleon (as if there were any significant similarities between Hitler and Napoleon). It is surely the last trench before they throw down their weapons and flee on foot.

This invocation of Hitler began with Secretary Clinton, who is on record as believing that half of Trump supporters are deplorable and maladjusted sociopaths. She claimed to find some similarity between Leni Riefenstahl’s film of a million uniformed Germans raising their arms in the Nazi salute to Hitler at an annual Nazi rally at Nuremberg and perhaps 10,000 random Trump supporters holding up an arm at one of his rallies with the index finger extended.

That’s a familiar gesture of sports fans exulting that their favorite team is number one. Observant readers will have no difficulty recalling the political reenactment of the Bataan Death March that the Trump-haters have trod these last three years. First came the frenzied celebrations like a high school football team jumping and jiving and high-fiving and dancing wildly over a game ending touchdown: the monster was dead, (politically). It was impossible that he could return. January 6, 2021, was a bonus.

The 95 percent anti-Trump press locked arms over the sacrosanct notion that the 2020 had been an unquestionably virtuous presidential election. Never mind the mailing out of 81 million ballots to the always partially obsolete voters list and the tens of millions of ballots that were impossible to verify or even to establish in whose hands they had been prior to being stuffed into improvised drop boxes in the dead of night.

The press represented Mayor Giuliani’s trick or treat operation as the sole legal claim against the accuracy of the

result that Mr. Trump could mount. The fact that the courts at various levels declined to judge on their merits any of the 19 lawsuits taken on the constitutionality of the voting and vote-counting changes in the swing states, that were not conducted and approved by the state legislatures as the Constitution requires, went unnoticed. Mr. Trump had had his day, except that – he hadn't.

By no means were all of those celebrating the political death of Mr. Trump Democrats. The Republican Never Trumpers, who had been traumatized when their party was taken over by Mr. Trump and many of them temporarily dumbstruck when he was elected president, had never ceased their scheming against him.

Senator McConnell and Speaker Ryan misled and betrayed Mr. Trump on the issue of repealing and replacing Obamacare. He took them at their word when they voted many times to do so under the Obama administration when there was no danger of any such actions being adopted.

Yet when the Republicans had the White House and the congressional votes to do it, they hid behind the vindictiveness of Senator McCain in voting down the Republican measure they had pledged to support. When Joe Biden was inaugurated president and Kamala Harris vice president, Mr. McConnell was purring like a tabby on Inauguration Day, celebrating the elevation of "two distinguished former colleagues in the Senate."

The Republican Senate leader openly preferred Mr. Biden to Mr. Trump and was so influenced by his antagonism to the official leader of his party that he directed all funding in the Alaska Senate race to an anti-Trump independent, thus defeating the pro-Trump official Republican candidate.

The militant Democratic and Republican opponents of President Trump were for over a year complacently convinced that Mr. Trump could not rise again, that his support was aberrant, his

election was a fluke, and that the people had come to their senses.

At first, the indifferent results of the 2022 midterm elections reinforced Trump's enemies that his star had set, and the Democrats began briefly to concentrate their fire on the likely next Republican nominee, the governor of Florida, Ron DeSantis. Yet Mr. Trump bounced back quickly and although the midterm results were of no benefit to him, they were not directly about him either.

All of his enemies heaved a window-rattling sigh of relief as the indictments against Mr. Trump by the almost uniformly Democratic prosecution service started to come down on the ex-president. There were the predictable complacent platitudes as these charges accumulated: this was the unsurpassable Democratic strategy in action.

This would knock out the candidate and punish his impudence with years of being dragged through the courts and presumably incarcerated, his political career a receding memory. The false and unctuous piety that "nobody is above the law" resonated with numbing frequency. The Sun warned that should nobody be "below the law" either.

The dismayed stupefaction of Mr. Trump's enemies as his standing in the polls rose was memorable and hilarious. It was also one of the most uplifting moments in modern American politics, as the American public appears to be more discountenanced by the politicization of the justice system into an arm of the dirty tricks division of the Democratic National Committee than it is by the alleged infelicities of Candidate Trump himself.

The discomfort of the former president's enemies has been seriously torqued up by the slippage in Mr. Biden's apparent physical and mental capacity to execute his office, as well as by the steadily mounting evidence that he and his family have

been for decades conducting an intercontinental influence-peddling operation.

Even more serious has been the splitting apart of the extremist woke anti-Israel and BLM factions of the Democrats from the traditional, reasonably moderate members of that party, under the pressure of events in the Middle East and American reactions to them.

For a time, the Democrats were obviously counting on their Republican allies to complete the burial of their former party leader, and the Republican Never Trumpers were also wildly overconfident. The most ludicrous exemplar of this is the candidacy of Governor Christie. As a conscientious voice of reform, he is a paragon of blowhard hypocrisy.

The never Trumpers appear to be placing all their bets on the former United Nations ambassador, Nikki Haley. She is articulate and plausible and deserves credit for raising the issue of government debt in a nonpartisan way, as well as for holding the line on Ukraine and resisting the mindless isolationists who afflict the Republicans in significant numbers.

Yet Ms. Haley is vulnerable on the gender issues involving collegiate sports and other trans questions and on the subject of authoritarian government oversight of the Internet and of the privacy of individual Internet messages. If, as seems likely, the Democratic powers that be send Mr. Biden to the showers in time to primary out Ms. Harris, and use their domination of the press to popularize a new face (Governor Newsom won't cut it), a Haley surge to challenge to Mr. Trump is conceivable.

If Trump's trials go badly in public relations terms – no one will pay much attention to the legal arguments or initial verdicts – then the 45th president could be vulnerable. More likely, his long glidepath to reelection can only possibly be

derailed by an orgy of vote-rigging. Minus a pandemic and unverifiable vote counting, this will be a much greater challenge for the Democrats than it was in 2020. Mr. Trump's enemies won't go quietly but they are soon going to have to begin thinking the unthinkable.

First published in the [*New York Sun*](#).