

Liz Cheney and the 'Big Lie'

by Conrad Black



The vote this week on Representative Liz Cheney's (R-Wyo.) status as House Republican conference chairman vastly transcends her. All sides are correct that it is a battle over the "Big Lie."

Cheney, the Democrats, and NeverTrumpers all say the Big Lie is the contention that 2020 was not a fair election. They argue further that Donald Trump tried to promote the violent overthrow of the government on January 6 at the Capitol. They support Joe Biden's claim in his address to Congress last month, that his (unnamed) predecessor had left the country "staring into the abyss of insurrection and autocracy."

Trump supporters and many independents say this series of false and defamatory allegations is the actual Big Lie. It is already clear that Cheney, deservedly, will be thrown out of

her leadership and presumably defeated in her bid to remain the representative from Wyoming. She voted with the former president on most occasions; their differences are not primarily over public policy. For her own reasons, she has not only come out of the Trump-hate closet, but declined even to bother testing the air as Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and some others did, by squealing with joy that Trump was gone and then noting that perhaps he had not gone and abruptly returning to the closet of ambiguity.

No one outside of Wyoming, except Peggy Noonan, cares a whit about Liz Cheney. The question is whether the NeverTrumpers, abetted by the Democrats, can kill Trump's chances of a political resurrection. Success will be impossible unless they can both stamp out the belief of approximately half the voters that 2020 was a tainted election, and keep alive the fiction that Trump was actively promoting an insurrection on January 6.

The Real Falsehood

This is bunk and the cornerstone of what is really the Big Lie—the Trump-haters' theory that he is just a hooligan and a sore loser of a fair election. In truth, the only reason that has any traction at all is due to the failure of the judiciary to address the constitutional and electoral controversies Trump raised. Trump warned of the dangers of ballot harvesting, but his campaign wasn't ready on the ground or in the courts to tackle the issue when it presented itself. And he didn't help his case with his nonsense about having won the popular vote. In these respects, he is not blameless.

Yet we are endlessly told about the "86 cases" thrown out of court which, because of that fact alone, debunk Trump. This is part of the real falsehood: There were only 28 cases in six seriously contested states by or on behalf of President Trump, as well as the lawsuit brought by the attorney general of Texas, supported by 18 other states, against Pennsylvania,

Georgia, Michigan, and Wisconsin. The Texas allegation was that those states had violated the Constitution by altering election and vote-counting methods outside of legislation, and had failed in their duty to assure an honest election. The Supreme Court seemed interested at first, but then determined that Texas had no standing to challenge an election in another state (a preposterous finding, whatever the merits of the allegations—the high court was just chickening out). Of the other cases, 12 of the 28 cases were in Pennsylvania and [none of the 29 was actually adjudicated.](#)

In Georgia, Trump sued “an improper party” over the 90 percent decline in the ballot-rejection rate. The argument over the alleged 20,000 Georgia non-residents who voted couldn’t be heard because Georgia’s secretary of state, the respondent, was not himself a candidate for office.

Trump’s lawsuit in Michigan over failure to allow access to his observers was ruled moot because it was filed late. That was when we saw people applauding as Republican observers were evicted and plywood placed over the windows. The judge also ignored a recent ruling requiring surveillance of all drop boxes installed after October 1. The allegation in Pennsylvania that between 144,000 and 288,000 possibly illegal absentee ballots were accepted was rejected because the request came in 11 days late. Judicial allegations by the Trump campaign of widespread irregularities in Wisconsin were not adjudicated because a divided state Supreme Court determined that the case had to start in the lower courts and wind its way upwards, completely impossible within the constitutional deadlines.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court overruled a lower court and determined that in Philadelphia all that was necessary was for one representative of each party to be in the room where votes were counted, not necessarily to verify the counting process itself. In Arizona, it was determined that the Trump claim was untimely because the same methods objected to had been used in

the August Democratic primary election, of which the Trump campaign was apparently supposed to be fully aware. In the same case, a number of other odd developments were ignored to reach the conclusion that “the evidence does not show illegal votes,” in a state where more than 400,000 foreign citizens who entered the United States illegally reside, and many were believed to have voted, and which went to Biden by 10,000 votes out of more than 3.2 million cast.

The Foundering January 6 Narrative

The Democrats’ effort to produce evidence that January 6 was a Trump planned assault on democratic government will be as complete a failure as the *New York Times*’ Tom Friedman’s theory of four years ago that Trump’s collusion with Russia in the 2016 election was as great an assault on American sovereignty as Pearl Harbor or 9/11.

Liz Cheney has unwittingly helped to clarify the issues arising from last year’s election. The country must decide that it was an entirely fair and unquestionable election and that Trump was trying to incite insurrection on January 6 or it must acquiesce in the possibility that he will return as president. The McConnell faction seems determined to close ranks to fight oppression by the radical Left in the Democratic congressional caucuses and work for Republican victories next year.

Peggy Noonan’s theory that the Republicans are tearing themselves apart is also bunk. Republicans can get a candidate other than Trump if they want but not on the false charge that he has no legitimate complaint about the 2020 election, or that he was trying to stir up a revolt on January 6. McConnell and most of the wiser anti-Trump elements in the Republican Party leaped back into their trenches and presumably will return to the comparative discretion most of them observed while Trump was president. Those unable to contain their Trump-hate will bite the dust if they have to deal with a

primary opponent—e.g., Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska). Senators Mitt Romney (R-Utah) and Ben Sasse (R-Neb.), and one or two others can grumble, but presumably even they realize that being useful idiots for the Democrats is not what they were sent to Washington to accomplish.

Trump's enemies are going to have to face the facts: They defeated him with a tainted election—assisted by the abdication of the judiciary from its constitutional status as a coequal branch of government with the executive and the legislature, and with a sandbag job from almost the entire media. The attempt to hang January 6 around his neck has been a complete fiasco, led, appropriately, by the director of the much-diminished FBI, Christopher Wray. The dawning awareness that Trump or a candidate approved by him can only be kept out of the White House in 2024 will, on past form, lead his enemies to an even more frenzied assault. It won't fly. This is an incompetent administration seriously mismanaging the most dubious mandate any president has ever had. (Hayes and Tilden reached a compromise in 1876.) When Cheney gets the high jump this week the real loser will be the attempt to suppress any real examination of what happened last election.

There were a lot of other improprieties in the 2020 election; if 42,000 votes for Biden in three states had shifted to Trump, he would have been reelected. These are the indisputable facts and the Democratic propaganda machine will not succeed in exterminating the truth which is that 2020 was rivaled only by 1876 as the most dubious presidential election result in the country's history. Here, the thieves are the self-righteous. Trump isn't the problem, his enemies are.

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