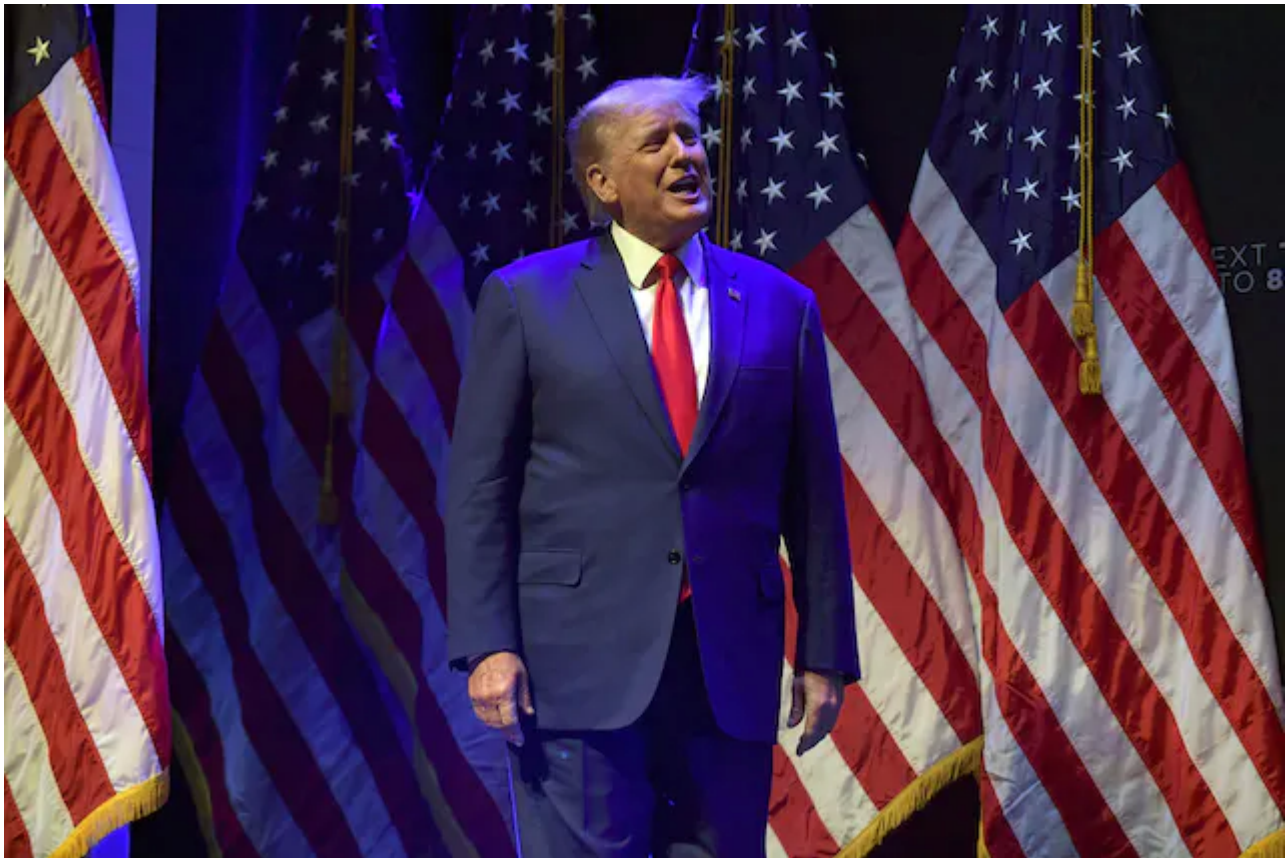


Only Donald Trump Can Defeat Donald Trump

The race for the GOP nomination is coming into focus even before it has really begun.



by Conrad Black

The race for the Republican presidential nomination is becoming clearer, even before it has really begun. Apart from President Trump and Governor DeSantis, all the other declared or exploring candidates are running for vice president, apart from Vice President Pence, who seems to be preoccupied with justifying his ambiguity about the validity of the 2020 election.

Polls show Mr. Trump running narrowly ahead of President Biden should they face off again for the presidency, and Mr. DeSantis is running well ahead of the incumbent president, but trailing Mr. Trump appreciably for the Republican nomination, apart from in Florida, the home state of both candidates.

Republican voters face a conundrum. Mr. DeSantis is essentially identical to Mr. Trump in policy terms, and has shown his talent as governor of Florida, a splendid administrative and political success story, where he multiplied his previous plurality by approximately fifty in his thunderous reelection as governor last November, over a prominent former governor who trotted out all the arguments of the contemporary soft-left neo-Bidenists.

Mr. DeSantis thus brings all the credentials of the Trump-Republicans, particularly the uprooting of the old, easily defeated post-Reagan Republicans of the country clubs and congressional appeasement; the perfect losers of the President Bush, Speaker Ryan, and Senators McCain, Romney, and McConnell variety.

The Florida governor could be relied upon to continue the Trump program of using the tax system to incentivize job-creating investment in disadvantaged areas, poaching heavily in the smugly manipulated Democratic African-American and Hispanic fiefdoms by applying the enlightened capitalism of Theodore Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan, who won the Republicans seven of eight presidential elections.

Mr. DeSantis could be relied upon to finish Mr. Trump's wall on the southern border and end the tragedy of uncontrolled influxes of unskilled migrants by the world's most odious criminal gangs-the Mexican gangs, with whom the Biden administration is effectively colluding, and the simultaneous torrent of Chinese-developed fentanyl that now kills annually more people than America lost in the Korean, Vietnamese, and

Middle Eastern wars combined.

Mr. DeSantis could also be relied on to end the Green Terror, restore American energy self-sufficiency, impose restraint on Mr. Biden's fiscal incontinence, and as a distinguished combat veteran, get rid of the present defeatist and discredited senior echelon of officers, stop the subversive idiocy of Critical Race Theory training in the armed forces, and make up for the Pentagon's failure to develop a hyper-sonic missile and provide adequate protection for America's fleet of giant Nimitz-Class aircraft carriers.

In a word, Mr. DeSantis could be trusted to allow America to be America, to deliver everything the post-2016 Republicans seek, and to complete the interment of the putrid corpse of loser Republicanism, the mentality summarized in the words of the GOP Senate leader, Mitch McConnell, in 2016, "to drop Trump like a hot rock."

That is precisely what should happen soonest to Senator McConnell himself. He and Speaker Ryan betrayed President Trump and the Republicans by promising and often voting to repeal Obamacare and then deserting when they were in a position to do it.

Mr. McConnell misdirected party funds to the Trump-impeaching RINO in the Alaska Senate election, Lisa Murkowski, over the authentic Republican in the race. Most egregiously, Mr. McConnell last week miserably failed the litmus test of integrity by condemning the release of the film footage of the January 6 invasion of the Capitol, without being able to defend against the film's suggestion that Mr. McConnell, in lock step with the Democrats, fraudulently claimed that the regrettable episode of lawlessness was a Trump-inspired quest for an insurrection.

The immense controversy generated by the Trump phenomenon has enervated the country and produced a yearning to keep Trump

policy, but retire Mr. Trump, and, while masquerading as seeking only rejuvenation, simultaneously assisting the Democratic bosses to give Mr. Biden a polite high jump into retirement as well.

There is an emerging national consensus that this administration and its congressional supporters are such an engine for incompetence, venality, and capitulation to the woke forces of national self-hate that prop up and animate it, that the national interest and that of Western Civilization generally require that it be decisively rejected and replaced with Trumpism, with or without Mr. Trump.

Where Mr. Trump lost his obvious call on the nation's reconsideration was that despite the immigration, economy, crime, and green disasters, and the shame of Afghanistan, Mr. Biden avoided the hammering he deserved in the midterm elections by pointing at Mr. Trump and MAGA and frightening the country as if the former president was a Wagnerian monster and the palsied, antiquated waffler in the White House were Siegfried.

Mr. McConnell and Mr. Trump's other enemies in the Republican Party were not slow to align with the Democrats and represent this as the final rustication of the Ogre of Mar-a-Lago: although the Republicans won the House and the overall vote, the defeat of several Trump-backed Senate candidates who should have won, has shaken confidence that Trump can win again after two straight losses, albeit both with heavy assistance from the Democratic mastery of ballot harvesting.

Here, as elsewhere, the Republican Party has been witlessly slumbering while its opponents built an election-winning, ballot-harvesting machine. Mr. Trump himself is not blameless in this failure.

And yet: Donald Trump shouldered aside the door-mat Republican elite, defeated all its candidates in 2016, and stunned the

world with the greatest presidential upset victory in history, with the only possible exception of Harry Truman in 1948.

He ended illegal immigration, oil imports, and unemployment; creating strong non-inflationary economic growth, shut down the conventional wisdom that the United States would soon be bypassed by China, kicked the North Atlantic Treaty Organization into shape, and largely rebuilt the military.

He had won reelection until the Covid pandemic and the Democratic media treatment of it, along with the Democrats' mastery of stuffing the election urns with unsolicited and unverifiable ballots, made it impossible for Mr. Trump to win.

The dramatic apostasy from the left last week of Naomi Wolf, a pillar of Trump-hate, in which she profoundly and unconditionally apologized to the half of the country that is conservative and Republican for having bought into the outrageous defamation of Mr. Trump by the Democrats, the anti-Trump Republicans, and the Trump-obsessed mainstream press.

Ms. Wolf made a formidably persuasive confession of guilt and error over January 6, the Hunter Biden laptop, and Trump-Russian collusion. Ms. Wolf is the latest and most prominent defector to the growing school that dislikes Mr. Trump's enemies more than it dislikes Mr. Trump.

If Mr. Trump states his case civilly, avoids gratuitous attacks on Mr. DeSantis and other Republicans, and asks to be allowed to finish the work all Republicans support and he started, he should be renominated and reelected.

If Mr. Trump attacks Mr. DeSantis personally and reminds millions of Americans of why they have reservations about Mr. Trump despite his program and all he has done for the cause, he will lose and Mr. DeSantis would replace him, which he would probably do in 2028 anyway.

The country can't reelect this administration and this Senate,

whether Joe Biden is carried to the finish-line or not. Only Donald Trump can defeat Donald Trump.

Disclosure: Donald Trump and I have been friends for 25 years and I wish him success.

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