

Only the People Can End This Democratic Horror Show

by Conrad Black



It is impossible for the Democrats to plumb more profound depths than those they have in accusing President Trump of causing hurricanes while being responsible for thousands of hurricane-related deaths in Puerto Rico, even as they impugn a Supreme Court nominee at five minutes to midnight because of an uncorroborated, and vehemently denied, drunken grope 36 years ago.

President Trump is correct that when he left Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria had come through last year, the reported deaths were six to 18, every one a tragedy but not a high number for such a terrible storm striking such a vulnerable place. The manner in which it grew to about 3,000 deaths in the aftermath and propelled the unfeasibly obnoxious mayor of

San Juan, Carmen Yulin Cruz, to accuse the president of genocide, is questionable. The "excess mortality," as post-crisis deaths allegedly caused by crisis events are called, moved the number to 3,000 and higher, and includes mainly people who died indirectly from lack of electricity and other services after the event. There is [a great deal of surmise and wild guesswork](#) in these numbers and the number can be taken as an ambitiously high citation of the number of deaths Hurricane Maria actually caused in Puerto Rico. Not all of the post-storm clean-up is the responsibility of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the multiplication of the number of people apparently dead when the storm had departed Puerto Rico by a factor of nearly 200, is highly suspect.

It is illustrative of the low, churlish, unedifying tone of public discussion that any such controversy should arise. It was in questionable taste and was poor judgment for the president to congratulate himself on brilliant handling of the Maria crisis in Puerto Rico last year, as Hurricane Florence bore down on the Carolinas. Even if his self-directed praise was justified, and the federal relief performance in Puerto Rico has been generally reported as fairly effective, it was untimely and unseemly.

But as so often with this president, a self-serving comment that may have been somewhat accurate, was no comfort to those fleeing their homes in the hundreds of thousands or hunkering down in fear of Florence, and it gave the president's numberless enemies another irresistible target to fire at, down to the harridan-mayor of San Juan. The claim that the president's policies have aggravated hurricanes is reserved to the demonstrably insane in the nether regions of Sandersism. This might work for the precociously spent meteor, Bronx congressional candidate Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, to accompany her theory that universal health care would end the need for funerals.

No Shame Evident

The Kavanaugh affair is, to cite that Lincolnian pillar of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Cory Booker (D-N.J.), the Spartacus moment of all the Democrats. They can all claim to lead a slave revolt against the tyranny of the Constitution, the service and retention of which is all that Judge Kavanaugh and his supporters are seeking.

There has already been ample reference to the fact that Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) waited tactically to the last minute before raising this matter of Kavanaugh's alleged drunken grope of a fellow high school student 36 years ago, of which the senator became aware in July. Neither in public nor private hearings nor in a private one-hour meeting did she bother to raise the subject. Kavanaugh denies it, no one corroborates it, no illegality is alleged, no subsequent claimants of like behavior have come forward, and scores of women who have known the judge for decades have attested to his irreproachable behavior and character.

It is nonsense; many men have done such a thing, and so have many women, and it absolutely does not, in itself, even if the incident happened, disqualify this nominee or anyone else, at this remove in time, from any office, even in the celibate clergy.

The supporting evidence is the notes, contradictory in places, of the complainant's psychotherapist from a psychoanalytic session, 26 years *ex post facto*—i.e. the complainant herself a generation later from a psychiatric couch. This has as much probative value as Hillary Clinton's citations from the Steele dossier, which she commissioned and paid for, and when exposed, described as "campaign information." Where is the shame? Where does this demeaning idiocy stop? Obviously nothing is now sacred, but must every act and every public office, be profane?

A Revolution Against Both Parties

That this preposterous red herring should even be taken into

account is indicative of the fragile condition of the Washington process.

The immense tragedy of Vietnam: the ill-considered entry, mismanaged war strategy, poorly focused dissent, and outright betrayal of all Indochina once peace had been made by leaving the non-communist majority defenseless, helped shatter public trust in government. Watergate, both the tawdry behavior of several echelons of the Nixon campaign and administration, but also the bloodless assassination of a distinguished and overwhelmingly reelected president, scarred the whole process more deeply. Neither the well-intentioned dithering of President Carter, nor even the hugely successful focus on the incentive economy and a tighter containment and preparedness strategy that successfully ended the Cold War under President Reagan restored faith in the ultimate decency and commendable motivations of most people in public life.

These problems could only be aggravated by charlatans like Ross Perot, and by the peccadilloes and untruths of the Clintons, the terrible failures of the George W. Bush and Obama administrations. In most policy areas, President Trump is doing what he promised and he is generally succeeding. The economy is splendid, there is progress in the North Korean peninsula, trade renegotiations are generally progressing, and the Western Alliance is inching away from the intercontinental free pass on the American deterrent that it had become.

But President Trump led a revolution against both parties, and is opposed by most of the entrenched elements of both parties, and a take-no-prisoners atmosphere is becoming reciprocally more intense. The public hearing pitting Judge Kavanaugh against his high school accuser, and the declassification of the FISA material and FBI texts and documents escalates the pre-electoral atmosphere to the ultimate state of combat. The obscenely sociopathic U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) says Trump only attacks her because she is black. The inimitable bumbler Joe Biden, whose nose grows when he isn't saying

something foolish, disparaged a large section of the president's supporters as "the dregs of society."

American history can be ransacked to find such widespread contumely. The people will have to decide, as is appropriate in a democracy. The country wants an end to the riven animosity in Washington and wants its legislators and national office-holders to behave like disinterested leaders of a great nation. To make this happen, the voters will have to elevate one side over the other.

At this point, I believe there is no practical choice, nor any valid counterargument, to giving the president the mandate he needs to complete his program. No president since Nixon has absorbed a greater partisan and media onslaught, yet in the absence of anything except the bile and distaste of his enemies, his record supports him at a barely viable level in public opinion.

Now is the time for the honeymoon that was withheld two years ago. And if he receives it, he will have a legitimate mandate to govern with dignity and calm in the bipartisan national interest. It is time for the people to announce the end of the Terror and the dawn of Thermidor. Even bloodless revolutions must end.

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