

The Problem With Peggy

by Conrad Black



Peggy Noonan's [column](#) in the *Wall Street Journal* on Saturday is a very clear exposé of the profound political division in America today. Her position is that Donald Trump is a deadly combination of crazy, dishonest, and incompetent, that there can be no possible question that he was and is unsuited to be president, and that he was unquestionably honestly defeated in the presidential election. More, he deliberately incited a violent assault upon the U.S. Capitol on January 6, his party is afraid of him even though his support is thin and diminishing, and Speaker Nancy Pelosi's investigation into the events of January 6 must be pursued with energy and thoroughness, for the chief purpose of ensuring that Trump never returns to public office.

This is the epiphany of the comparatively civilized Trump-hater and it is almost entirely false.

At no point does Noonan dispute the accomplishments of the Trump Administration, and I do not recall that she has ever

disputed them. The near elimination of illegal immigration and of unemployment and the sharply rising incomes in low-income ethnic minority areas, reduced taxes, the identification in sober terms of the Chinese challenge, the elimination of oil imports, the extermination of ISIS, shaping up of NATO, the Abraham Accords in the Middle East, and the pressure on Iran and de-escalation of the confrontation with North Korea; to the best of my recollection as a regular reader of hers, Noonan never disputed any of this.

And yet previously she has compared Trumpism to metastatic cancer. This and similarly extreme strictures establish her as one of the most perfervid of the respectable Trump haters.

President Trump's stylistic infelicities grated on all those who were not so disgusted with the former Bush-Clinton-Obama bipartisan triarchy that they found Trump's rollicking style a refreshing change from the malapropisms of the Bushes, the sleaze of the Clintons, and the somewhat anti-American flippancy of Obama. An undoubted majority of Americans approved of Trump's policies but enough of them were so appalled by his public personality that an apparent bare majority of Americans rejected him at the last election.

But Noonan knows as well as anyone that there is real doubt about the integrity of voting and the fairness of the vote-counting system in key parts of six swing states: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. On the pretext of addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, 44 million ballots were mailed or dropped with seriously inadequate or no verification; millions of these were "harvested," meaning they were collected and submitted by people other than the voters themselves. Election Day was extended to weeks. The vote-counting procedures were absurdly inadequate in a number of key polling places. In many cases, the changes to the

electoral rules in these states were taken by the executive or by courts and not by the state legislatures to whom the Constitution entrusts such changes.

Noonan also knows as well as anyone else that the judiciary ducked crucial legal questions. There were 18 lawsuits on matters of the integrity of the election itself plus the action of the attorney general of Texas supported by 18 other states and for process reasons, some of them spurious, none of these lawsuits was tried on the merits.

Instead the entire national political and social media, unable to face the prospect of an overturned election, particularly one in which Donald Trump would be the beneficiary, locked arms and declared that the election result had been duly judged in peerless impartiality and the apparent result had been sustained. For good measure, a great deal of gratuitous obloquy was disgorged onto Trump's admittedly somewhat undermanned and unserious legal team.

In fact, it is an election whose genuine result is more open to question than any in American history except that of Rutherford Hayes and Samuel Tilden in 1876, which was resolved by a commission and by agreement between the candidates, both men of unquestioned stature and integrity.

Noonan is absolutely correct in writing as she did on Saturday: "If we have a future in which such attempts" (as the attack on the Capitol on January 6) "become commonplace, everything will fall apart: no future presidential outcome will be assumed to be settled, no transfer of power peaceful. That would be a disaster."

Bingo. It *wasn't* a demonstrably fair election and

approximately half the American voters believe that it was a rigged election result, despite an almost totalitarian effort by the national political and social media to suppress and ridicule any doubt of the accuracy of the election result.

In the circumstances, the country should be grateful to Trump and his supporters that they didn't *really* organize an assault on the Capitol by armed people, and didn't respond to the election-rigging efforts with equivalently disruptive measures. Half the country agrees with Joe Biden that Trump's allegations of election irregularities are "The Big Lie," and the other half agree with President Trump that what happened was "The Crime of the Century."

No confection of Pelosi's, no commission composed entirely of Trump-hating previous impeachers of him, will achieve anything useful. The efforts by Noonan, George Will, and others to promote calling the incident "1/6" and liken it to 9/11, is fatuous.

It has already been well-established that President Trump did not seek any violence at the Capitol nor condone any of what occurred. Most of his followers were angry at what they believe to have been a rigged election and a cowardly abdication by the judiciary up to and including the Supreme Court. Yet Noonan wants a commission of rabid Trump-haters to follow faithfully upon the outrageous Trump-Russian collusion investigation and the two spurious impeachments of Trump to continue to persecute and torment a former president because of the widespread and well-founded fear that he may be reelected.

Noonan laments: "The melee, the whole crisis of 1/6, made America look unstable, hollow, all façade." She hit the bulls-eye again. That is how it looks when such questionable elections take place, the courts abdicate, and the media and

the social platforms sandbag the aggrieved candidate. (What does she think the world thinks of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris?) It was established within a few days of the episode that if Pelosi and Washington's egregious mayor, Muriel Bowser, had paid any attention to the Capitol police chief's desperate requests for reinforcements, none of it would have happened. Trump asked the crowd to behave peacefully; Chewbacca and the other feathered lunatics were hooligans not revolutionaries, and hundreds of people have been detained inexcusably and doubtless sweated unmercifully in the customary American prosecutors' efforts to extort inculpatory testimony.

The real problem for Noonan is that she begins to realize Trump's support is not fading; the Republican Party is his party now, and she and the other NeverTrumpers have lost everything: they were useful idiots for the Democrats and must now wear their responsibility for the probably dishonest election of the most incompetent administration in American history.

Completely unsustainable masses of unskilled people are pouring across the southern border, the rates of crime and inflation are skyrocketing, the administration waffles on everything as it appeases the woke radicals, and having crucified Trump unreasonably as he developed vaccines more than two years ahead of what the high priests of science said was possible, the tandem of the wax works president and a vice president permanently convulsed in laughter is sinking into the COVID quagmire that they themselves maliciously helped to invent.

Trump's policies were right in almost every area. He or a candidate approved by him will pick up the pieces when this nightmare in the White House ends. Trying (hopelessly) to bury Trump isn't the answer; restoring integrity to the electoral process is. The last election was the closest the United States has come to tanks on the White House lawn. Any such

recurrence could produce the real thing—if the generals aren't too busy teaching "antiracism" to the ranks.

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