

Threading the Biden Opportunity Needle

by Conrad Black

Even as the shambles of the Biden Administration opens up tremendous political opportunities for resurgent Republicans, some party spokesmen, in familiar Republican tradition, are opening themselves up to the charge of being reactionaries and even what Joe Biden, in one of his few polysyllabic adventures, might describe as “neanderthals.” COVID-19 and immigration are extremely controversial questions now and abortion has been a burning question in the country for 50 years. For different reasons, these are highly emotional issues, and because of that it is always tempting to take one end or the other of these subjects, even though it is only going to be some sort of compromise that resolves them.

An administration and a political party strong enough to turn the center of these great issues into a position of strength rather than weakness will be the one to bring that result about.

On the political side of the COVID crisis, the Democrats, through their almost totalitarian control of the national political media, whipped up public hysteria last year in order to be able to charge President Trump with anti-scientific ignorance—down to such fabrications as that he urged the ingestion of Lysol—and they disparaged any vaccine produced by his efforts: the very vaccines that the Democrats are now trying to force the population to have injected into them.

Trump played into their hands by shouldering aside Vice President Mike Pence immediately after placing him in charge of his COVID-19 task force, and Trump then allowed his daily press briefings to become baiting sessions in which rabidly partisan Democratic journalists tried to provoke and sling muck at the president.

But COVID is Biden's problem now. Administration messaging has become chaotic, and revelations of untruthfulness and disarray among the scientific leadership have effectively shattered public faith in old, self-professed sources of medical authority. Anthony Fauci and his crew had their chance and they failed.

COVID Hypocrisy Abounds

The government has a right to require vaccination for its employees or regular proof of not being afflicted by the coronavirus, but compelling everyone in a private company with 100 or more employees to be vaccinated or tested every week is probably unconstitutional, and unnecessary. A better course would be to invoke public health justification for the obligatory vaccination of everyone above the age of 60 and all people with defined states of vulnerability to any variant of

the coronavirus. Apart from that, it would be a personal choice for every healthy person between 16 and 60 and the parents' or guardians' decision for people under the age of 16.

Masks are essentially useless other than as placebos conferring some psychological virtue and protection upon the wearers. They're medically almost irrelevant, of severely questionable utility, and are an eyesore and an agent of incomprehensibility. People like the Bidens marching purposefully about in public, in open air, wearing their silly masks symbolize the submission of America to the urge to become a nation of cowardly moles, intimidated by an ailment from which over 99 percent of basically healthy people recover, 80 percent with negligible or no symptoms, and for which the proper antidote is either the antibodies of resistance or vaccination or both.

Masks are just an annoyance and a ludicrous sideshow. They've achieved a particular importance because of the slothfulness and corruption of American teachers' unions, to whom the Democratic Party is bound hand and foot, and which have demonstrated across the country that their ambition is not to teach, but to be paid not to teach. These unions are chiefly responsible for the competitive failure of American public education; in their greedy hypocrisy and the COVID crisis, they have furnished the country all the excuse it needs to decertify them and reconstruct public education on a merit basis. The teachers can finally behave like a learned profession and not an irresponsible far-left union.

The administration is undoubtedly being too authoritarian, but the Republicans who claim it is oppressive to require anyone to be vaccinated are not behaving responsibly. There is a legitimate public health argument to require the vaccination of those who are statistically most vulnerable, and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis makes a good point when he says he will

not take any lectures from Washington about restraining the spread of the coronavirus as long as it continues to let thousands of COVID carriers into the country illegally every day. But if the Republican Party goes to the wall saying that any compulsory vaccination is oppressive they are going to be outmaneuvered for attempting to place normal but secondary democratic liberties ahead of the health of the entire country.

Take Care With Immigration

There are also hazards in aspects of the immigration issue. The stupidity and the incompetence of the administration repeatedly announcing that the southern border is closed, while anyone with a television set or access to the Internet can see live, unlimited numbers of illegal entrants pouring across the southern border in totals that regularly exceed 200,000 a month is obvious. Properly amplified and exposed, this is undoubtedly a winning issue for the Republicans. But they are making a mistake complaining about the admission of Afghans who can be certified as having been helpful to the American mission in that country being admitted as immigrants.

It seems that in the complete collapse of any rational concept of what to do in the last days of August, the United States did allow some tens of thousands of Afghans access to the United States without really verifying their *bona fides* as supporters of the Americans in Afghanistan.

An effort should be made, even at this late date, to determine whether there were any terrorists or other undesirables among them. But the rest, at least, had the good judgment to wish to leave, and should be admitted. No serious person today regrets the admission of a much larger number of Indochinese after the Vietnam War. The Republicans took the United States into Iraq and Afghanistan, and smashed those countries up and cannot now be led or influenced by Know-Nothing xenophobes. The

Republicans should be careful of that issue; they are right about the southern border, but 100,000 Afghans, many of whom speak English, will be a benefit and not a burden to the country. In any case, they have earned and been promised the right to come.

A Winning Hand

Abortion is a notorious land mine. *Roe v. Wade* was an absurdly motivated judgment, because the issue isn't really a woman's control of her body so much as it is *when* the unborn achieve the rights of a person. The new Texas law that outlaws abortions once the fetus has a detectible heart rate (about six weeks) is perfectly within the right of the state of Texas, but will be too restrictive for some states.

The federal government should stop trying to hold the line at *Roe v. Wade* and leave it to each state to determine when "My body, my choice" yields to the right to life of the unborn. Other countries have set that at three to six months. There will always be jurisdictions that are more permissive.

Instead of tying themselves to the mast of the new Texas law, the Republicans should support a devolution to state jurisdictions to determine individually when a mother's rights are superseded in the question of the right to life of the child. It is a conscientious judgment, and each state and each individual must make it individually. The catastrophic and banal Bidenization of America is giving the Republicans a winning hand, but they must play it carefully.

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