

Trump Has Had a Historically Great First Term

You would never guess any of this from the Trump-hating media in full campaign for Joe Biden, but the voters will have reason to reflect on it before the electoral die is cast.

by Conrad Black



As the latest Democratic assassination effort—the bunk about President Trump disparaging American war dead on the centenary of the end of World War I—fades into ignominy with its propagator, the egregious Jeffrey Goldberg, acknowledging that anonymous denunciators are insufficiently convincing, we may dare to hope that in the last seven weeks of this tumultuous campaign, some serious, legitimate questions will be addressed. One of them is that, like all incumbents, President Trump is seeking reelection on the basis of his record in office.

The demonic efforts of the Democrats (and particularly of the rabidly Democratic national political media) who are

conducting their party's campaign in the masked and highly self-distanced absence of the inarticulate nominee, to avoid a discussion of what this administration has achieved, will not make it all the way to election day.

This president is the 28th who has sought reelection after an entire, or almost complete, term in the White House, (Theodore Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman, sought reelection after serving almost whole terms, having acceded to the presidency as vice presidents upon the death in office of their predecessors.) Of these 27 previous presidents who sought reelection, 18 were successful, and among the nine who were not were a number who were more than adequate in the office, including both presidents Adams, Grover Cleveland, William Howard Taft, and George H. W. Bush.

After an extensive review of the claims to reelection of all of these presidents, I believe that President Trump has had the most successful first term of all but three or four of his predecessors, and of those, one candidate, James K. Polk, did not seek reelection in 1848 for health reasons.

President Trump, in his rather unseemly manner of self-serving evaluations, claims to have achieved more in one term than any other president. He also claims to have done more for African-Americans than any president except Abraham Lincoln, and with Fox News Channel's Harris Faulkner, wondered about Lincoln, to which she gently replied: "We are free, Mr. President." This is what Trump himself describes as his "constructive hyperbole," and he has paid a heavy price for allowing his enemies to represent his exaggerations as lies.

They are generally not lies, unlike in 90 percent of the heinous slanders his enemies have leveled against him, but they aren't entirely truthful either. This is an important distinction: the habitual boosterism of a New York developer, though often irritating and frequently imprudent, is not remotely equivalent to the satanic defamatory calumnies of the

Trump hating-media.

In assisting the cause of African-Americans, Trump ranks behind Lincoln as the emancipator of the slaves and Lyndon Johnson for passing the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts that finally enfranchised all African-Americans and funneled billions of dollars of assistance to African-Americans through a wide variety of programs (not all of which were successful). He probably also ranks behind Franklin D. Roosevelt, who treated the African-Americans with material equality in his workfare programs, social legislation, and the Social Security system; they were segregated but at least they were equal, and that was immense progress.

All in all, Trump is fourth and Polk is fifth, with Truman and Eisenhower close behind.

Also in contention are Harry Truman for integrating the armed forces, and Richard Nixon for ending, on a cooperative locally organized basis, segregation, and sparing the country the nightmare of busing tens of millions of schoolchildren around metropolitan areas out of their neighborhoods in a quest for court-ordered ethnic balance in the schools, regardless of the wishes of parents. It was this nightmare that Nixon spared the country—a nightmare for which Kamala Harris reproached her running-mate Joe Biden for having opposed. Joe Biden at least got that one right in 1972 but has lost his bearings in the intervening 48 years.

In overall performance as a first-term president, Lincoln again comes first. The southern states were peeling off in secession as his inauguration approached and his second inauguration occurred just a month before the Confederate surrender at Appomattox transacted between those perennially favored subjects of statue sculptors, Robert E. Lee, and U.S. Grant.

Franklin D. Roosevelt probably must come second. The country

had suffered an almost complete economic and psychological collapse when he was inaugurated in 1933. Unemployment was approximately 30 percent and there was no direct federal relief for it; all commodity and stock exchanges and almost all banks had been closed for over a week. After four years, he had reduced unemployment by about half, and most of the remaining unemployed were engaged in massive conservation and public works projects that greatly enhanced the nation's infrastructure at a bargain cost. These programs brought electricity to most of rural America, trained up the workforce, and were accompanied by the implementation of Social Security, farmer-approved stabilization of agricultural production and prices, and low-interest government loans to protect residential mortgages and avoid the eviction from their homes of millions of Americans. The last 4 percent of unemployed were covered by newly created unemployment insurance, and the economy had expanded by nearly 50 percent and stock market values by over 100 percent, with a solid, reconstructed banking system.

Richard Nixon should come third, for ending the constant recent anti-war rioting, skyjackings, and assassinations he inherited, withdrawing the United States from Vietnam while conserving a non-Communist government in Saigon, opening relations with China, signing the greatest arms control agreement in world history, starting the deescalation of the Cold War, ending segregation and the draft, founding the Environmental Protection Agency, and beginning a Middle Eastern peace process.

President Polk is a rival to Trump because he added 1 million square miles to American territory in a well-executed war with Mexico, roughly as much as the 13 colonies had and as much as the Louisiana Purchase. He also amicably settled the Northwestern frontier with the British and Canadians and enacted a useful partial reestablishment of a central bank.

But President Trump, subjected to unprecedented harassment by

unconstitutional attempts to rig and undo his election and a spurious impeachment, eliminated unemployment and oil imports, reduced illegal immigration—a profound and intractable national scandal—by 90 percent, departed the insane Paris climate and Iran nuclear agreements, reduced almost all income taxes, vastly deregulated commerce, is reviving the concept of nuclear non-proliferation in respect of Iran and North Korea, has successfully renegotiated the country's principal trade arrangements, has recognized and gained international support for containment of the geopolitical challenge of China, and has moved fearlessly against the tide of political correctness by supporting non-unionized schools, imposing some fairness standards on universities, and suppressing the national self-hate doctrine of critical race theory throughout the U.S. government. He is restoring a constitutionalist federal judiciary. All in all, Trump is fourth and Polk is fifth, with Truman and Eisenhower close behind.

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