

Trump is Rising – and so is Boris Johnson

Both the United States and Great Britain crossed historic thresholds last week. I will get to the British in a few paragraphs. No Republican candidate who has won the New Hampshire and South Carolina primaries has ever been denied his party's nomination, and the only people who have never before run for political office who have been nominated for president by a major political party (apart from senior military officers) have been Horace Greeley (1872) and Wendell Willkie (1940). Karl Rove is correct that support for Trump slipped slightly from New Hampshire to South Carolina, and the votes of those who withdraw from the race do not seem to be going to him. As has been written here before, and by other commentators, it may be time for Trump to downplay his Yes I Can, I Do It My Way singularity, and start vacuuming up the supporters of the trailing candidates. He could also shore himself up by making an alliance for the vice-presidential nomination with whoever is running third or fourth. But Donald Trump has arrived at the commanding position he now enjoys by ignoring all advice except his own, and may not think a course correction necessary. To paraphrase his new friend Pope Francis, after last week's scuffle, who are we to judge?

Ironically, the Bush dynasty seems to have ended just as the best expression of it finally emerged, in the town-hall encounter of Jeb Bush on the eve of the South Carolina primary. There never really was a Bush dynasty. Prescott Bush was a U.S. senator from Connecticut in the Eisenhower years, and retired voluntarily. His son, George H. W. Bush, had removed to Texas and was successful in the oil business and in the then-primitive Republican organization in Texas, and undertook the unpromising task of seeking election as a U.S. senator from that state in the teeth of the great Lyndon

Johnson preeminence there in 1964, the year of his immense sweep over Senator Barry Goldwater. Bush ran as an integral Goldwaterite conservative and lost respectably. He became a two-term congressman from a prosperous Houston suburb and, at President Nixon's urging, ran again (unsuccessfully) for the Senate in 1970. Nixon and his successor, Gerald Ford, rewarded him with appointments as ambassador to the United Nations, Republican-party chairman, representative to China, and director of the Central Intelligence Agency. He was passed over for vice president by Gerald Ford, in favor of Nelson Rockefeller in 1974 and Robert Dole in 1976. Bush sought the presidential nomination in 1980 and trailed Ronald Reagan throughout the primaries until, when Reagan had sewn up the nomination, he was about to win in Pennsylvania and instead withdrew and urged his followers to support Reagan, whom he had accused of championing "voodoo economics." After some discussion of bringing back Gerald Ford as vice president, Reagan invited Bush, who coasted diligently through eight years as vice president. He stood on the long Reagan coattails three elections in a row, the last as the presidential nominee in 1988.

Despite assembling and leading a coalition, with great skill, that evicted Saddam Hussein from Kuwait, Bush backtracked on his promise to avoid new taxes and had no serious idea how to avoid a recession in an election year, and the implausible and apparently egomaniacal billionaire Ross Perot splintered the Republican party. By attracting 17 million votes in 1992, Perot dumped Bush, who had been an above-average president, and brought on the Clinton era in America, and the Clintons are even now struggling to avoid the same fate that has apparently befallen the Bushes.

President Bush had not been gone from the White House two years when his son George W. Bush was elected governor of Texas, and, four years later, another son, John E. (Jeb) Bush, was elected governor of Florida. The Bushes were both easily

re-elected and were in charge of the country's second- and fifth-most-populous states; they are generally reckoned to have been good governors. The senior Bush's campaign manager and secretary of state, James A. Baker, masterminded the judicial victory that awarded (through Nixon, Reagan, and Bush appointees to the Supreme Court), the 2000 presidential election to George W. Bush, carrying Florida by 557 votes out of 5,825,000 cast in the state for the major candidates, one one-hundredth of 1 percent of the vote. The Democratic candidate, Al Gore, won the national vote by 544,000 votes, only the fourth time in U.S. history that a candidate was elected president with fewer votes than his chief opponent. (John F. Kennedy had fewer votes than Richard Nixon in 1960 also, but votes cast for a renegade Southern Democrat in Alabama were allocated to Kennedy. This did not affect the outcome, but vote tampering in Illinois, Texas, and elsewhere probably did.)

The George W. Bush presidency continued through two terms, but the catastrophic second war in Iraq and the Great Recession starting in 2008 marred that administration and left the outgoing president seriously unpopular when he left office. Jeb Bush started slowly this past year and, in the first week of his campaign for the nomination, bobbled the question that he must have seen coming for seven years, about whether his brother made a mistake invading Iraq. He was steamrolled by Donald Trump, and generally surpassed by Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, and John Kasich also, all men who have gone out of their way, in toe-curlingly embarrassing paupers' oaths, to proclaim the absence of anything dynastic in their backgrounds, except penurious economic nomadism. Yet Jeb looked more like a president and spoke more fluently than his presidential kinfolk, and on the eve of the South Carolina primary, with his wife and mother and son in the audience, looked and sounded like a president: elegant, well-spoken, informed, courteous, and good-humored. He was all of these sufficiently that I am not so sure that the Bushes are

finished. It isn't a dynasty, exactly, because its history has been too lurching and tenuous, yet there is something imperishable about the Bushes. Jeb Bush is a good candidate; he just wasn't a good campaigner this time. He could be a vice president or a cabinet secretary, and he could be back in the first league again. As George Shultz, one of America's longest-serving cabinet members, always reminds: U.S. presidential politics is a bouncing football – an American football of irregular shape and unpredictable bounces.

In the meantime, Donald should win. Hillary is struggling, but unless she's indicted, an initiative probably too nasty even for Obama, though perhaps not unfounded legally, she should crawl across the Democratic finish line first. This will be no great triumph, against the most absurd candidate, in policy terms, to seek the White House since former vice president Henry Wallace ran against Harry S. Truman as a Progressive with overt Communist support, which Wallace did not disavow, in 1948. He and his vice-presidential candidate, the singing senator Glen Taylor of Idaho ("Oh give me a home by the Capitol dome"), sought the abolition of the Marshall Plan and of the Truman guarantee of military aid to countries menaced by Communist aggression or insurrection. They called for unilateral disarmament and massive *ex gratia* economic assistance for Stalin. On Election Day, they received 2.4 percent of the total vote. Bernie Sanders is not quite as far afield as Wallace was, but his support is astonishing given the absurdity of almost everything he says apart from his condemnation of the justice system and of the rot of political corruption generally. He in fact has a PAC, a modern campaign-financing flourish he claims he wants to abolish, and is offering the millions of college student borrowers an outright bribe of a trillion dollars. Hillary Clinton's nip-and-tuck struggle with such a nonsensical opponent incites the inference that the Clinton Dynasty is as spavined as the Bush Dynasty whose ineptitude gave birth to the Clintons by provoking the Perot schism in 1992.

In Great Britain, the defection from the Conservative government of the very colorful mayor of London, Boris Johnson, probably the most popular political figure in the country, to lead the campaign to take Britain out of the European Union has the makings of a decisive setback for the European federalist idea, and of a new turning for Britain – which remains one of the world's most important countries, fifth in GDP, and one of only four to six countries with a seriously deliverable nuclear military capacity. If Britain were to chart a new course, with associate common-market status with Europe, and with enhanced economic and political cooperation with its historic allies in the Commonwealth of Nations, Canada, Australia, India, New Zealand, and Singapore, it could be a co-leader of a fairly coherent and important force in the world, with combined GDP of about \$9 trillion (90 percent of China's, and larger than Germany and Japan combined). Such a grouping would have a political status unscarred by the sort of horrible outrages that still besmirch the respectability of the Russians, Chinese, and even the Germans and Japanese.

Johnson's move makes the outcome of the referendum, which will occur on June 23, an even bet, as he has heavy support from many Conservative members, probably half the detritus of the shattered Labour party (official opposition), and the solid U.K. Independence Party bloc of 12 percent in the election last year. It also is one of the most artful and spectacular parliamentary-coup attempts in modern British history. In the British system, the elected Members of Parliament can force out a prime minister in mid-term, as happened to the great Margaret Thatcher in 1990, when an ungrateful cabal of Euro-integrationist cringers, who have failed to lead their party or the country remotely as effectively as she did, stabbed her in the back. Anthony Eden was pushed out by Harold Macmillan and others after the Suez debacle in 1956, but that was hardly surprising given that he had achieved the almost unimaginable indignity of being humiliated by the Egyptians. Winston

Churchill came to the highest office after a revolt against the failed appeasement policy and ineffectual war leadership of Neville Chamberlain in 1940, but he had not promoted the change and retained Chamberlain as party leader and a senior cabinet member in an all-party, national-unity war government. David Lloyd George and others pushed out Herbert Asquith in the midst of World War I, but this was all within a few rooms in Whitehall and Westminster and the public knew nothing of it.

Boris is setting out to rally a national referendary majority against his ostensible leader, in a way that might, if successful, alter the history of the Western world and, almost incidentally, slice the ground out from under Prime Minister David Cameron and his semi-designated successor, Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne. The enfeeblement of Europe, where the only strong large country is Germany, now itself hobbled by Chancellor Angela Merkel's mad incitement, like an Odyssean siren, of the desperate migrants of the Middle East, is exposed for all to see. So are the unutterably irritating pretensions of the industrious little worker bees of Brussels, robotic bureaucrats from little countries, delivering the timetable of homogenizing Eurofederation to the credulous leaders of larger nations with the insolence of Prussian schoolmasters. And also now exposed are the falsity and insipidity of all those American Euro-experts who, even after the satisfactory end of the Cold War, tried to propel the United Kingdom into a centrally governed Europe by the scruff of the neck and the small of the back – the Raymond Seitzes and Richard Burts, fluent and crisply turned out, explaining on autocue as if early graduates of the Marco Rubio school of unspontaneous rapid delivery, why Britain had to strip institutions that had served it well for centuries to clothe Euro-institutions of recent date. With the present incontinent paralysis in Washington, the U.K. is rivaled only by Canada as the best governed G-7 country over the last 150 years. Instead of building on the Roosevelt-Churchill and Reagan-Thatcher

relations which brought the West victory in World War II and the Cold War, administrations of both parties mindlessly tried to dismantle that relationship, culminating in the insulting gaucheries of the Obama regime. There are stranger, and far worse, prospects than that Donald Trump and Boris Johnson could rebuild that relationship, with all the resulting benefits of olden time.