

Getting past politics

The old Republican versus Democrat argument has now become passé. We said our final goodbyes in 2020 as we lowered the partisan political casket into the dirt following the election of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. America has narrowed its options to a series of two-choice possibilities on a wide variety of different fronts. The first, and the most fundamental, rests on an existential decision to either fight for our individual freedoms or surrender them to the collectivists (formerly known as the Democrats). Details to follow.

The second is: will we resist attempts to 're-globalize' us by the Left by jettisoning our 'America First' policy and re-joining failed agreements like the Paris Climate Accords and re-entering the Iran Nuclear Deal, to name but two. There are others waiting in the wings, but these two are the principal ones that would place us on path to de-sovereignizing the country.

Staying with the globalization possibility, we must realize that there is a broad middle ground between being global and isolationist. The America First policy of the Trump Administration was never meant to push America towards a 'state apart' from the rest of the world, neither was Trump's prodding of NATO nations to pay their fair share of the organization's costs an effort to leave NATO. His (implied) threat of disengaging from NATO was a negotiating tactic. Repeat, negotiating tactic. To continue, our entire foreign policy these last four years was an effort to return to the 'old days' of *realpolitik* (a system of politics or principles based on practical rather than moral or ideological considerations).

And before you immediately think Kissinger or Reagan, you ought to know that the concept goes back to the 19th century and referred less to a philosophy than to a method for working through the contradictions emerging across Europe as the competing forces of liberalism and nationalism gave shape to modern states. We have a history of practicing *realpolitik* here. Woodrow Wilson tried it until WWI came along and, I would argue, Eisenhower used it, too, when confronting the incursions into Korea and with the Soviets and Chinese. Later Reagan adapted it with his 'trust but verify' approach to dealing with Gorbachev, etc.

Trump's version of *realpolitik* involves a liberal use of the 'iron hand in a velvet glove'. Think trade sanctions against China and Iran along with a particularly Thoreau-like move ("When a dog runs at you, whistle for him") with North Korea. We might as well face facts; a Biden Administration will be comprised of little white doves instead of high-flying hawks. Talk will be the preferred weapon of choice for Bidenites. The 'Biden Doctrine' will be Joe's own - "why use a hundred words when a thousand will do?"

This week, the ink was drying on the Brexit agreement between the UK and the EU, and it was the result of a national referendum on supporting a 'Britain First' agenda or capitulation to a hegemonic EU that continued to churn out thousands of regulations every year that ultimately squeezed the life out of a few of its member states (remember the olive oil and cucumber brouhaha of 2014 when the European Commission tried to impose severe restrictions on these two foodstuffs - cucumbers were to have a specific curvature and leeks needed to conform to colors "between white and greenish white")? So much for the vaunted EU principle of 'subsidiarity' (the belief that the best decisions are those that are made closest to home). The handwriting was on the wall for Britain and other member states that are re-thinking their membership at this very moment.

And that is a prime example of how globalism (or regionalism in the case of the EU) can be hazardous to a country's health. The same is true of the European Court of Human Rights - a supranational court that many on America's Left want us to join (we are official observers). Doing so would, however, cede our sovereignty to a body that would come in conflict with our Constitution which clearly states that our laws shall not be superseded by those of other nations. There's nothing wrong with having a global view of the world, but giving over control to nations that don't have OUR interests at heart (like China and Iran) is a non-starter.

And THAT'S another reason why we need a Congress that will respect our laws and understand the need for a national *realpolitik*. Hopefully, the Senate runoff elections in Georgia next week will return two Republican Senators to their posts and give us the necessary balance to prevent a Biden Administration's attempts to return us to two failed 'agreements' (which are really treaties).

We've also seen how an overarching collective/global view has influenced our politics here at home, especially with the massive multi-state Covid-19 lockdowns that imitated those of other nations by many of our governors. I realize that the collectivists in America will point to our system of a federal republic as being THE problem when it comes to crushing the Coronavirus and that more should have been done by our President to FORCE us all into a federalized top-down compliance regimen of mask-wearing, quarantining, etc., but they would be wrong from a Constitutional standpoint. Would such a system have been easier? Sure, but it would still have been wrong. We should never make decisions out of an abundance of expediency.

Since the pandemic was considered a national emergency, was there justification to suspend the people's individual rights like Lincoln did when he suspended a writ of habeas corpus? (*On April 27, 1861, Lincoln's suspension of HC gave military authorities the necessary power to silence dissenters and rebels. Under this order, commanders could arrest and detain individuals who were deemed threatening to military operations*). Or what about FDR's internment of Japanese-Americans from 1942-45 (*FDR forced the relocation and incarceration in work camps of 120K people of Japanese ancestry out of fear that they might be spies for Imperial Japan*)? These, too, were emergencies. Were they justified? You tell me.

Fortunately, both wars ended and people returned to their homes and Constitutional rights were restored. I'm not so sure, that given our current political polarization a nationalization of the healthcare effort to fight a pandemic would end well. Historically, powerful people have great difficulty in giving back power once it's given to them. They find other uses for it and ample justification for retaining it. Other choices have to do with our social construct, especially that which provides protection for the free expression of dissent and freedom from censorship. The next Congress, the next Administration and the Supreme Court will be facing some formidable challenges as regards our First Amendment protection.

During the last four years we have seen a steady erosion of fairness in media coverage of national events and national issues (not to mention the coverage of our President). To add to that, we have experienced a dramatic increase in the amount and extent of censorship of our social media postings by big tech oligarchs. Both have had a negative effect on our ability to maintain peace in our communities and on our streets to say nothing of how they have influenced our election process. A fourth choice we must make is how we will re-establish trust in our institutions. No one would argue that America was once a nation of laws that were, for the most part, respected and routinely applied. Unfortunately, that is no longer the case. Exceptions have become the rule.

Criminals are being released from our prisons before their sentences have been served. Records are being expunged, and many lawmakers and officials are giving in to pressure from Left-leaning groups to forgive and forget lawlessness. Witness the violent protests, burning and looting of some of our once-great cities and the subsequent token 'slap on the wrists' administered (if at all) by rogue mayors and prosecutors. These people are the tip of the molly-coddlers' iceberg in our society today and their numbers are increasing. Their actions and this wholesale breakdown of trust in our ability to govern ourselves, nationally and locally, have given rise to more crime and civil disobedience. Capital crimes are reaching new heights as are property crimes. And this *laissez faire* attitude has given tacit permission to certain special interest groups to choose anarchy over peaceful governance. It has to stop, but will it? Can it?

Then there are the problems of race in America. Do we believe how dire our circumstances are and how prejudiced we've become (or always were)? How will we handle a rise in illegal immigration during the pandemic and after it subsides?

Will it be a variant of Ronald Reagan's remarks in Berlin: "Mr. Biden, tear down this wall?" Or will we simply put in a turnstile and hang out a sign down south that says "Open 24-hours" and give up controlling our borders? Will we issue all illegal immigrants currently in the U.S. a pardon? Will we accept a two-state solution and dumb down our language requirements out of 'compassion?'

Then there is big number five - the economy. The choices are: A. acknowledge capitalism's contributions and continue on the same path with watchdog agencies and reasonable regulations or B. make a 180-degree turn and embrace a breakup of our major industries and institute a form of 'benign' socialism, shifting more control to the socialist wannabes and government bureaucrats. The first and most vulnerable industry is the energy industry where all the gains we've made in the last four years could be dissolved overnight by anti-fossil fuel activist pressure on the 'big guy' and a Left-wing Congress. The second is the healthcare industry. 'Medicare for all' is the war cry, and the example of the pandemic will be used as the Trojan Horse to roll the issue onto the House floor.

There are many more two-choice issues at stake, and I am sure we will be seeing a flurry of Executive Orders written on January 20th that will address them. I would hope that before these orders are committed to paper that the new President remembers that his mandate - his majority - is only five million people or roughly the combined population of L.A. and Dallas.

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