

Whiners, victims or activists?

My sense is, that in addition to being divided by political ideology, Americans also fall into three other basic categories. There are *whiners* who complain about everything that doesn't go their way; *victims* who have signed on to the legion of the disadvantaged, deprived or underprivileged in our society, and then there are the *activists*. Activists can also hail from the previous two groups, but as contrasted with the core whiners and victims, they have decided to do something about their own personal situation and that of their country.

These three groups exist in both political parties, but we rarely call them out, especially if they have signed on to our party's orthodoxy. Many in both parties simply put up with them instead of trying to understand them and what they mean to the success or failure of the party; what influence they have on who we choose as our candidates and, most importantly, the impact they have on our candidates' electability. Some do understand them, however. Unfortunately, they tend not to be the party elite, but are pollsters and political strategists. Many party decision-makers haven't a clue as to how to motivate the complainers or the victims, nor do they know how to address their issues and frustrations. While some party 'wise men' and campaign fund-raisers think they understand them well enough to solicit their financial support, that's where it ends - at the checkbook level - at least for the Republicans.

The Democrats, on the other hand, know that making a campaign contribution is just the first step, and that along with their financial support, donors must be convinced to become surrogates for their party's issues and candidates. It seems that Republicans are just grateful to get the cash and frequently *forget* or are hesitant to make the second 'ask.' Obviously, these are generalizations as some of the more astute Republican fund-raisers and political consultants have no problem in turning greenbacks into a shoulder-to-the-wheel in campaign events, rallies and lobbying of other potential donors. I have witnessed this first-hand when I headed up a Republican's campaign for governor. I even wrote about it in my second political book, co-authored with a prominent former hall-of-fame pollster, Lance Tarrance (see: "Breaking Republican: A campaign handbook for third-way candidates in 2016").

For that book we poured over polls, statistics and fifty years of our own personal experiences with Republican voters. We concluded that when the complainers (the whiners) found their inner activist they would levitate from their sofas and vote like never before. We also concluded that they would cast their ballots for a non-traditional *third-way* candidate that wasn't tainted by politics. In short, we pointed to a new populist like Donald Trump, a man we felt could mobilize the more lethargic conservatives by describing the existential threat that a Hillary Clinton presidency would create. We were right. "Breaking Republican" and the Trump candidacy proved that Americans could be motivated to take, what for many of them was the long march to the polling place, and re-enter the political *system*. In short, they re-discovered their latent activism after experiencing eight long years under a President who promised to "fundamentally transform" the United States, but not in a way that was consistent with Republican/conservative/traditional values.

2016 redux? Since 2016, the number of Americans who self-identify as victims has increased markedly. What was solely the province of racial minorities has now metastasized and includes, among others: homosexuals, transsexuals, 'non-binarians,' illegal aliens, student loan recipients, homeless persons, drug addicts, registered sex offenders, felons and shoplifters. What is different this political cycle is that the number of victims has grown to encompass all of us. The three years of 'Bidenomics,' Biden cultural warfare, failed Biden foreign policy, a destructive energy policy, a severe border crisis and the systematic weaponization of America's institutions have all put the fear of the (deep) state, national bankruptcy, another world war, continuing and escalating cultural and racial conflict as well as lawlessness into all Americans' consciousness.

Activism is increasing. Unfortunately, much of it is manifesting itself in violence, and the violent brand is spreading rapidly. Radical White supremacy teaching and re-gendering attempts by

teachers and school boards is triggering parents to push back. Shop owners and large companies are becoming activists by pulling up stakes in cities where shoplifting is the norm rather than the exception. Minority women are buying firearms to protect their families after BLM and Antifa have succeeded in reducing the police presence in minority neighborhoods. Even billionaires like Elon Musk are finding their activism (Musk purchased Twitter to clean out the radicals who were censoring free speech).

Covid and post-Covid

Americans have learned much from the Coronavirus pandemic experience. They have learned about vaccines, masks, lock-downs and pronouncements by heretofore respected organizations like the Center for Disease Control and the National Institute of Health. They have witnessed thousands of deaths, many directly due to wrong-headed policies implemented by power-hungry elected officials. They watched while supply chains broke down and interrupted the delivery of basic products and then experienced a rapid rise in consumer prices and an out-of-control inflationary spiral. They saw their Congress approve of trillions of dollars of new debt when their old appropriations (largely Covid-19 related funds) hadn't even been spent yet!

In the spirit of 'never letting a good crisis go to waste,' the Biden Administration fiddled while our cities and our border burned with real fires and with a deluge of illegal immigrants. Millions of new, faux asylum-seekers were waved into America while America's border communities suffered mightily under the weight of thousands of homeless immigrants camped out on their streets, waiting for a ride to a new destination that promised to give them free housing, free meals and free health care in a sanctuary city.

We have found ourselves in a seemingly endless proxy war with one of the world's three largest super-powers, and all indications are that that war will escalate to tactical ground-based nuclear weapons warfare. Meanwhile, America's other super-foe, the PRC, is ramping up its spy efforts with balloons, spy bases in Cuba and dangerous military confrontations in international waters with our navy and air force.

How to fight a multiple-front war

We must face facts. We cannot fight both a domestic and international war, simultaneously. The truth is that we are coming apart at the seams in a culture war to such an extent that we have taken our eye off the ball, internationally. China is putting massive pressure on our currency and on our security. The Ukrainian conflict is draining our military appropriations. Iran is edging closer to a nuclear weapons capability while our allies (and our enemies) see a doddering senior citizen in the Oval Office who is busy leading a navel-gazing America into an expedition into the cultural Twilight Zone while clear and present dangers are being ignored. The phrase, "existential election" has been used in the past to describe normal ideological differences between the Left and the Right, and while some elections may have been more existentially-relevant than others we are now approaching the poster child election for that moniker. America cannot survive another four years of divisive, ideologically-driven policies, nor can it re-elect a man to lead our country who can barely muster a coherent sentence without a teleprompter. It is time for the whiners to stop complaining and for the victims to do a side-by-side comparison of themselves with the untold millions of truly oppressed and impoverished people around the world. Then both groups should suit up and join the activists that are working to repel the *invaders* who see the American glass as empty let alone half-full.

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