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Pandemic and Presidential Recriminations



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The election is over, and we're back to reality. Namely a lame-duck president until January 20, who also happens to be a dangerous reactionary with a short fuse and a long list of fictitious grievances about how his throne was stolen. In the days immediately following Biden's win, GOP senators displayed a singular lack of grace – only a handful congratulated Biden. He would do well to remember that. Blather about “reaching across the aisle” and bipartisanship mean nothing to Republicans, as they revealed long ago, for instance and very notably, with their lies about not calling a vote on Obama's supreme court pick, Merrick Garland, because 10 months was supposedly too close to the 2016 election. But a little over 10 days to election 2020 wasn't too close for them to ram through Trump's radical right-wing SCOTUS choice. They are liars and hypocrites. Dems often are too, but they usually nod to propriety and conceal it better.

Biden has a soft spot for bipartisanship. This is a mistake, possibly an Achilles heel. It may work when the people across the aisle are capable of compromise and like to horse trade. It will not when they are rabid reactionaries fanatically determined to destroy anyone to the left of Benito Mussolini. Unfortunately, there are those in the Dem tent, centrist ideologues like former CIA employee and current Virginia Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger and recent Dem political migrant John Kasich, who have invented tales of how democratic socialists caused House seats to flip Republican.

The only problem here is that this is untrue. Every co-sponsor of Medicare For All won reelection. As Brian Kahn reported in *earther*, of the House's 93 co-sponsors of the Green New Deal that ran for reelection, only one lost. Overall 99 percent of these agile Green New Deal sponsors won their races. Lots of down-ballot progressives and socialists triumphed. They surpassed arthritic centrists, who are allergic to reality: younger voters, the future, prefer progressives and leftists. They shun bipartisan war-party hacks to the right of Eisenhower.

But we've now entered an era where elections may be irrelevant. You watch. The Trump Show has been cancelled. It's been replaced by the Warlord in the Whitehouse. This person refuses to concede an election he unambiguously lost and blocks release of information to the incoming team on such vital matters as the pandemic. People could die of covid because of this, but the Warlord in the Whitehouse is not concerned.

This warlord fired his defense secretary for, among other things, refusing to turn troops loose on civilian protesters. Then he fired the top civilian leadership at the defense department, causing the usually staid and tepid mainstream media to refer to this action as an institutional "decapitation." Liberals fretted that this was an ominous fusillade; but it probably is not, in fact it appears to be a long overdue step toward ending America's forever wars. But we can't ignore the long shadows cast by trouble to come. This warlord is building a wall around the white house. He spouts lies about the election being riddled with fraud. He sacked the widely lauded head of cybersecurity at Homeland Security for daring to call the vote fair and clean. He unleashes his personal attack-dog justice department on the election certification process to halt it.

These are not the actions of a leader who respects the republic and its democracy. They are the actions of a demagogue recalcitrantly fixed on defying a legitimate election. Trump ain't going anywhere. He's dug in. He intends to raise the drawbridge and prepare for a siege. He doesn't care if he causes a civil war and neither does Mitch McConnell. Trump is fully prepared to demolish America. The warlord got possession of the castle and he won't let anybody take that away from him. Democrats worried that Trump would burn the house down on his way out; he's perfectly happy to burn everything down, apparently even ready to incite insurrection, but he has no intention of exiting.

Very soon the U.S. may resemble a reverse image of Venezuela. There, Maduro's duly elected and constituted government is harassed by a pretender, Juan Guaido, crowned in

absentia by only a few other countries, including the U.S., aka regime-change central. Here, in North America, the duly elected government of Joe Biden can't get in the white house door. Foreign governments have recognized Biden as the next legal president, but Trump the pretender, won't stop trolling and harassing – and he won't acknowledge his loss. Americans may well be treated to the spectacle of him being dragged, kicking and screaming, out of the white house in January.

So two clouds hang sullenly over the U.S.: plague and the recriminations of a presidential sore loser. To cope with covid, Biden has appointed a coronavirus task force and called on citizens to wear masks. For him to proceed, next he needs access to transition funds. But a little-known Trump bureaucrat, Emily Murphy, chief of the General Services Administration, prevents that. She refuses to recognize Biden's win. However, according to the *Washington Post* on November 16, she has applied for a new job, assuming she won't be at GSA after Biden takes office. Interesting move for someone who says Biden lost. In addition, the Trump-appointed chief of USAID reportedly told colleagues not to assist the incoming presidential team. Will Biden set up a parallel government? That's not as bonkers as it sounds. How else can he prepare to take charge, when Trump, with the institutional backing of the military, the police, the senate and the supreme court may try to lock him out of the palace? One poster out of Venezuela asks: "Who's the Banana Republic Now?"

Meanwhile the virus burns through Trump country like nowhere else on earth. It also jumped from there and now rages across the rest of the nation. On November 13, the U.S. smashed records with over 181,000 new covid cases. Two days earlier, the U.S. had over 142,000 new cases, over 1500 additional covid deaths and 65,000 infected patients in hospital beds. On November 9, North Dakota hospitals burst through 100 percent capacity, so the governor announced that covid-positive nurses would stay on the job. Hospitals in other western states are full also. The U.S. has surpassed 11 million coronavirus cases and reached roughly a quarter of a million dead. Over a thousand deaths a day for weeks, and no end in sight. A thoroughly tested vaccine can't come soon enough – but no matter how soon it comes, we could have close to one million dead by spring. This is what 73 million Americans voted for.

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