

# Biden's Advancement of Trump's Worst Policies



President Biden doesn't need help producing bad policies. The self-inflicted crisis at the border is daily proof of that. So is his inclination to blow up parts of his own agenda to try and appease the progressive wing of his party, like when he killed the bi-partisan infrastructure deal he brokered with the Senate (supported by 19 Republican senators) by suddenly making it contingent on another \$3.5 trillion in "human infrastructure."

But what gets me, beyond the expected bad outcomes of liberal governance and limitless spending, is Biden's adoption and advancement of certain Trump policies – not the good ones, but the really bad ones. After all, in Biden, millions of Americans believed they were voting for the *anti-Trump* candidate, and they had good reason to think that because it was essentially the platform the guy ran on.

Yet, once in office, despite both men's military advisors loudly advising against it, Biden took over the reins on

Trump's Afghanistan policy, made it his own, and carried it to fruition in what will assuredly be recognized as one the biggest U.S. foreign policy blunders in American history.

Biden apparently liked Trump's eviction moratorium too – so much that he extended it, even after acknowledging that it was probably unconstitutional. In a break for small landlords across the country, who'd been devastated by the policy, the Supreme Court later agreed.

And just this week, the Biden administration outlined its approach to U.S.-China trade policy, revealing that it's basically the same as Trump's. Despite that policy proving to be a big net-loss for America, the U.S. will keep its existing tariffs on Chinese exports (with U.S. importers flipping the bill), while continuing to call on China to meet the terms of the Trump administration's "Phase One" deal (which they weren't doing, wasn't really serious, and isn't enforceable anyway).

Scott Lincicome of the CATO Institute recently revisited the results of the trade war:

"...several rigorous academic studies have conclusively demonstrated that the tariffs that the Trump administration imposed on Chinese imports harmed U.S. consumers and manufacturers, deterred investment (mainly due to uncertainty), lowered U.S. GDP growth, and hurt U.S. exporters (especially farmers but also U.S. manufacturers that used Chinese inputs). At the same time, they did little to promote the reshoring of 'essential industries' to the United States because global supply chains primarily shifted final assembly of covered goods to other foreign countries, not the USA."

Lincicome also cites a 2021 report from the Atlantic Council that bluntly concludes what just about every statistic has: "After four years, the outcome of the trade war using tariffs is becoming clear: The United States seems to have suffered

worse consequences than China.”

Especially in light of the Chinese government’s gross negligence that led to the COVID-19 pandemic, it would seem inexplicable that if the U.S. is going to have a trade relationship with China, we would continue to pursue what was billed as a punitive trade strategy that weakens our own country more than it does them. Yet, Biden is doubling down on the initiative, and saddling himself with the continued self-defeating outcome.

Now, to be fair, when Biden ran as the “anti-Trump” candidate, he wasn’t as focused on Trump’s policies as much as he was the former president’s toxicity, dishonesty, violations of presidential norms, and reckless incompetence (of which the electorate had grown even wearier during the pandemic). But ironically, as Bernard Goldberg has been doing a good job of documenting on this very website, Biden’s been having some serious trouble distinguishing himself from those leadership failures as well (even to those of us who never had high hopes for him to begin with).

Heck, Biden’s now even sitting at the same approval rating Trump had pretty much throughout his entire presidency.

But let’s get back to those policies...

When you think about it, it perhaps shouldn’t be all that surprising that Biden followed in Trump’s footsteps. After all, we’re talking about initiatives that were always much more in line with liberal sensibilities than they were conservative ones. President Obama and the anti-war left wanted out of Afghanistan long before Trump did, costly government overreach like the eviction moratorium is a traditional liberal precept, and Trump’s trade war was strikingly similar to the trade policies Bernie Sanders had long advocated for. Not to mention that after \$8 trillion was added to the national debt under a *Republican* administration,

it was a safe bet that the next Democratic administration would casually try to top even that number.

In that sense, one could argue that this is more about populist pandering – the notion that the path of least resistance (or the one most prone to demagoguery) is the best path. And maybe that's true purely in political terms, being that so many elected leaders on both sides of the aisle have come to rely almost exclusively on it. The problem is that these paths have led, in large part, to baseline capitulation to big-government liberalism, as well as astonishingly neglectful approaches on matters of dire national importance. In other words, the antithesis of conservatism.

As Chris Stirewalt wrote a few months back (in a piece I keep going back to), “The best way to gauge the success of American political movements is not by the depth to which they shape their native party, but the breadth to which they extend into the opposing side.”

By that measure, Stirewalt argues that the conservative movement in this country has “hit its lowest ebb in generations...” and that its defeat is “now is so abject that not only has a new Democratic president repudiated those concepts in his first address to Congress, but the Republican Party that for decades made itself synonymous with the conservative movement also increasingly rejects its core tenets.”

It's difficult to argue that he's wrong.

Yet, where has the supposedly superior populist-pandering approach gotten our leaders? It certainly didn't save Donald Trump from being defeated by a weak opponent in Joe Biden – a fellow populist-panderer whose job-approval is now just as low as Trump's.

And has the country benefited from it? Even when you ask the most enthusiastic Trump supporters what their guy's biggest

accomplishments in office were, the answers they give tend to be traditional conservative things that any Republican president would have signed off on: conservative judges and tax reform. Rarely do you hear them hail things that were unique to his administration (whether it be his foreign policy, his trade war, or even his rhetorical diatribes and insults) as actual victories. How about Biden supporters? What do they consider their guy's greatest success in his first nine months in office? I'm sure many would simply answer, "Not being Donald Trump," but as I've been arguing, he's actually a lot more like Trump than either side is comfortable admitting.

We as a people have been conditioned in many ways to view every presidential election as a choice between our nation's salvation and its implosion, and there was a time when I might have even bought into the notion. But when both major political parties have effectively resigned to ignoring our most serious threats, and are content with nominating unfit and unserious individuals who are more focused on tossing out boob-bait to their respective bases than responsible governance, it's hard to understand how anyone still buys into the phony ultimatum.

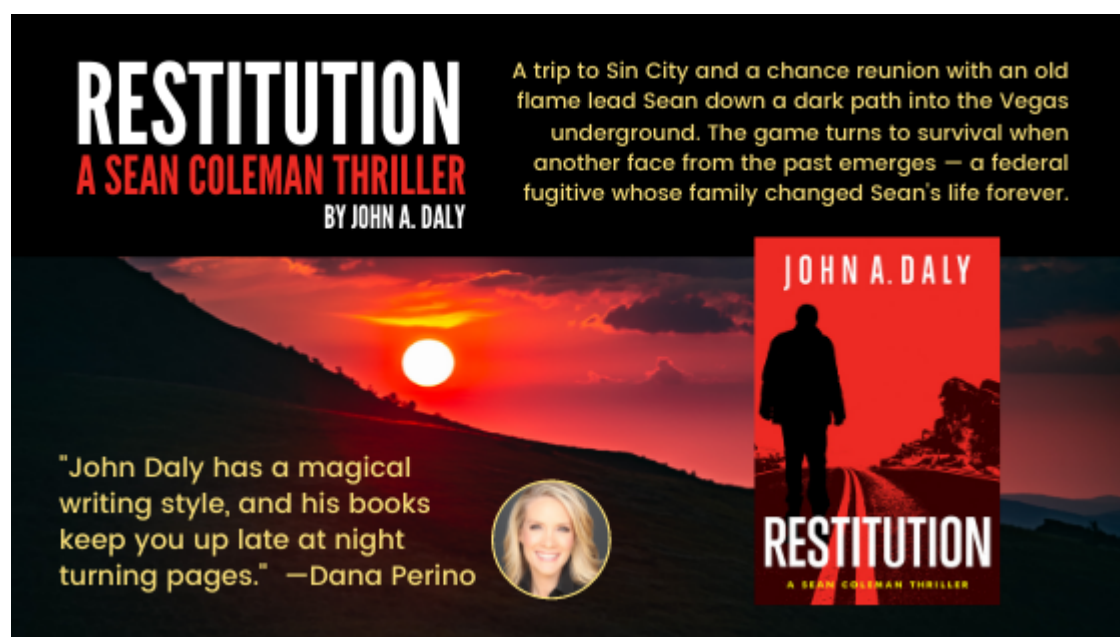
I know I sound like a broken record, but the problem is the parties themselves. These institutions were originally created to shape their members to espouse and promote certain principles and qualities that advance a set of interests. Their goal was persuasion, where institutional strength comes from; not capitulation. Today, however, the parties are primarily soapboxes from which to pander to voters' most shallow partisan instincts. These institutions are following rather than leading, even as more and more people drop their party affiliation in disgust.

What America's left with are two sides of the same ugly coin – that and hair-on-fire promises that if that coin lands wrong, *it's game over, man.*

I've got news for those who subscribe to that narrative: if you genuinely believe that the fate of America rests on the flip of that coin (and with today's major political parties), the game is *already* over.

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