

Shellacking, The Sequel

Midterms, like the Olympics and February 29th, come around every four years. Even though the president is not on the ballot, the quadrennial elections tell us a great deal about the mood of the country. And right now that mood is grim. According to exit polls, 65% of Tuesday's voters believe the USA is on the wrong track, and a majority disapprove of President Obama's job performance.

How could they not? The administration responded to the Ebola situation with confusion and incompetence. Things are a mess overseas, with Putin poking us in the eye, ISIS terrorists beheading Americans, and Islamic terror an omnipresent threat. ObamaCare remains chaotic, racial tension abounds, and there are more scandals than even Teddy Roosevelt could shake his big stick at.

But what always matters most to voters is dollars and cents, and seven in ten Americans believe the economy is in bad shape. The stock market has boomed under President Obama, great news for his Wall Street and Hollywood donors, but overall economic growth is anemic. Most important, American workers pocket less take-home pay than they did when the president took office nearly six years ago.

That's not entirely the president's fault, nothing is. But Mr. Obama's big-government prescriptions have turned a cold into pneumonia. Despite what Hillary Clinton recently said about corporations and businesses, it is the private sector and entrepreneurs that create jobs, not bureaucrats sitting in cubicles at the Department of Labor. The problem is that right now private companies are not expanding, partly because of the burdens imposed on them by regulation and taxation. And as fewer high-paying jobs are created, workers have less bargaining power in the marketplace.

President Obama and the Democrats repeatedly assure us that government will provide, and it's true that a record number of Americans are receiving government assistance. That is one area where the two parties differ most starkly. Many liberals believe that having more Americans on welfare is a positive sign of government compassion. In contrast, most conservatives say true compassion is getting people *off* welfare, making them less dependent and more self-reliant.

Tuesday's voters agreed that government is careening out of control – 53% say the feds are doing too many things that should be left to businesses and individuals. But will President Obama get the hint? Initial signs are not encouraging. In his day-after post mortem, the president bizarrely referred to the two-thirds of voters who didn't go to the polls Tuesday. It's as if he believes those non-voters are all in his corner. Of course, his ever-dependable echo chamber, the editorial board of the New York Times, also brought up that two-thirds statistic. The Times also warned Republicans that voters don't want to “erase the progress made in the last six years.”

Progress? Smaller paychecks, more taxation, global chaos? Americans are not demurely asking for a minor course adjustment. They are demanding that the ship of state be turned around completely. And our captain, to belabor the metaphor, doesn't seem to have gotten that message.

When asked about the election, President Obama conceded, “Republicans had a good night.” But our pal Charles Krauthammer put it a much different way: “This was the worst wall-to-wall, national, unmistakable, unequivocal, shellacking that you will ever see in a midterm election.” To any sane and reasonable observer, Charles' description seems a lot closer to the truth.

Perhaps Tuesday's drubbing will eventually sink in and President Obama will moderate some of his ideological

rigidity. If not, if he insists on pushing still more left-wing policies, we could all be headed for a very rough two years. It's up to him.