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President CJ's Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

The election excitement for me began the Saturday before November 5th when I was offered expedited entry into the Trump Rally in Salem, VA. Of course I said, "Yes" for myself and a guest. So, Madeleine Chandler (W.A.C. Treasurer) and I, dressed in our Trump gear, headed off at 9:00 am Saturday morning for what seemed like a short drive, on a very beautiful day. The "stars were aligned, and all was right with the world" – at least until arriving at the parking lot to find that 20,000 supporters had parked before 6:00 am and all lots were full. So, along with hundreds of other late arrivals, we drove to an open field where we left our car, hoping for the best.

As I walked past the 20,000 early birds who had waited in line for hours, I felt just a little bit guilty. Doors opened at noon and by 12:15 pm we were inside the Salem Civic Center. Once inside, we were herded to an area to be seated that was "no man's land." By that, I mean it was a section with restricted viewing. (The ushers had been told that CNN would count every empty seat, so they must be filled.) I was determined not to be a seat-filler. That's when the hustling began. I was not about to squander the privilege of entering early. Leaving Madeleine to hold our place in one line, I hurried back and forth past the section entrances to find the perfect seats. Using my arm-twisting skills, I was able to shmooze an usher ... and voila! Great seats were ours – in the section above the floor, stage left, over the ramp where the President would enter. Perfect!

And so, the excitement began! Granted, we had to wait at least 4 ½ hours before President Trump took the stage. No matter – the atmosphere was infectious. The music, the people, the speakers (beginning at 2pm), the hoopla of all that has been pent-up for 4 long years was on display in the arena. We were told that although Virginia was not quite a swing state, it might be "in play" this election year. (And little did we know at the time, how ALL seven swing states

would swing RED.) If I had to sum things up, it was on this day, at this Rally, in this arena where I was convinced that former President Trump could/would win the 2024 election.

Afternoon speakers included VA Attorney General Jason Miyares, Lt. Governor Winsome-Sears, Candidate for Senate Hung Cao, Candidate for 5th District House John McGuire, Governor Glenn Youngkin, and many more before the main event. Timewise, the afternoon flew by.

Then it happened! The song, "Proud to be an American," the entrance of President #45, and the exhilarating feeling of FREEDOM. His speech was thoughtful, funny, engaging, and hopeful. He shared many poignant "real-life stories and introduced the ladies swim team from Roanoke College who have taken a stand against trans-identifying males competing in women's sports (a policy supported by Biden-Harris). Trump promised, if elected, to restore sanity to women's sports. An hour and a half after entering the stage, the former President waved goodbye with his famous Trump dance, moving to the tune of "YMCA."

It was electrifying to see and hear this extraordinary man in person. I believed he would win. But never dreamed it would be the biggest presidential election come-back in American history.

– *CJ Hatcher*, W.A.C. President



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In September, WAC Members Heard from Colonel Dan Moy about National Security Priorities in 2025; and in October, We Heard from then- GOP Candidate for the 5th District John McGuire

In September, Colonel Dan Moy, who is a UVA lecturer on terrorism, counterterrorism and decision-making in crises, spoke to WAC members about the current conflict in Israel and Gaza, and other national security concerns. Among the many issues discussed was the fact that religious wars are more difficult to resolve than other types of wars: money and other secular enticements don't talk in religious wars. Thus, the reasons the seemingly endless wars continue. We also discussed the Biden administration's labelling of certain people and groups in the U.S. who disagree with leftist orthodoxy as domestic terrorists. It's a scary and shocking time for those who have been targeted in this unAmerican way.

In October, we heard from then-GOP candidate for Virginia's 5th District John McGuire who spoke about his background, campaign, and how he will be a supporter of President Trump's America First agenda. John believes that teamwork is one of the greatest keys to success in life. From his experience in the Navy SEALs, running a successful business, and raising a family, John has experienced that by bringing people together anything is possible through hard work and determination. He intends to put this skill to good work in Congress. Fortunately, he won a resounding victory on November 5! Congratulations John!!





Note from Our Election Integrity Committee Chair Karen Juul-Nielsen:

November 2024, Election Integrity Committee (EIC) Reaches Goal

What an amazing season of faith, work and celebration! Many thanks to the army of folks (many of whom are in this organization) who stepped forward to contribute – in many ways. But all of this happens again next year when we go to the polls to elect a Governor and other legislators. We need YOU to reach our goal of maintaining and improving party parity in the precincts.

The goal of parity for Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs at each voting precinct in Albemarle County has been a year long struggle. With diligent work on the part of many, and the help of very effective legal aid, the General Election had parity in all precincts. This matters especially as the Virginia Code 24.2-115(C) requires Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs to be of different parties. One precinct still had an Independent Chief, but for now, we are claiming a win!

Allow me to review the regular voting process in order to help you understand why this is an important step in Election Integrity. When voters enter the polling place, they are checked into the polls using a statewide data base, and an ID check or sworn statement by the voter of who they are. If the voter is registered in the precinct, they are given a ballot which they fill in and enter into the scanning machine, and that person just voted – straight forward process. However, if the voter's name does not show up on the voter rolls, then a number of different scenarios play out. At this point, the Chief or Assistant Chief plays a critical role. Sometimes, a consultation with the Registrar is required, other times a same day registration is required or other forms are used to deal with absentee ballots or address/moving issues. All these decisions are at the discretion and judgement of the Chief, Assistant Chief or a trained specialist that the Chief appoints.

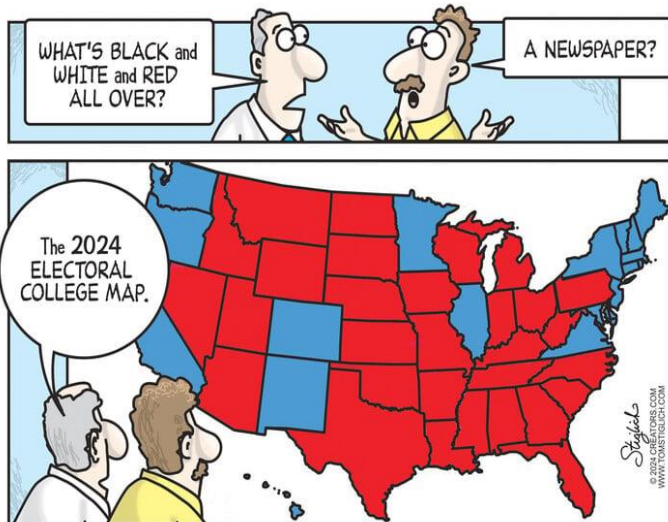
Even though all Election officers are sworn to uphold the law, the added protection of both parties being represented is important to the process of Election Integrity. The presence of each party serves as an effective 'check and balance' for the voting process. It also adds a level of trust for the public to know that both parties are represented, being careful and diligent in their work. This is also true for poll watchers, the observers in the polling place who scan the operation for proper protocol and report violations or questionable practices first to the Chief, and if not resolved by the Chief, to the Election Hotline.



There are multiple processes where two parties are required: for example, Logic and Accuracy (L&A) Testing, Ballot Table, Statement of Results Tabulation, and setting up the scanning machine. During L&A Testing, observing all machines used to count votes is critical. This of course happens before every election, including primaries and early voting. After testing and inspection all machines are sealed with a security tag which is not broken until the morning of the election. Again, when breaking the seal of the machines on Election Day, both parties are represented. The Ballot Table is responsible for counting, distributing and reconciling ballots with the poll book and scanner numbers. The Statement of Results is a tabulation of the votes from the scanner closing tapes, and these results are reported to the Registrar before anyone can leave the polling place – a very long and busy day. With all these steps, both parties are required.

As you can see there are a lot of ‘moving parts’ and all require diligence and attention to detail to ensure a fair and safe election. We are celebrating that God has heard our prayers and allowed us the opportunity to take back our country. But the fight is not over and we need everyone to do their part. Please consider what role you would like to play and how you can contribute. Our goal for next year is to maintain parity with Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs, as well as to achieve parity of election officers in every precinct by having an additional 50 Republican election officers approved by the Electoral Board. It’s a mighty high goal, but with God’s help and your work, we will be successful.

Respectfully,
Karen Juul-Nielsen, EIC Chairman, 713-806-8385



Why Trump’s Victory is Cathartic for Millions of Us

By Michael Shellenberger, Real Clear Politics



People who voted for Kamala Harris are reacting with shock, anger, and sadness at the election results. They're asking themselves why so many Latinos, Gen Xers, men and women, not only voted the way they did, but why so many of us feel enormous relief at Trump's historic victory. But do they really not understand, or do they not want to understand?

After all, over the last decade, many of us who have moved away from the left have been explaining our concerns at length. We didn't appreciate being told we were bigots for not wanting to defund the police, open the borders, or mandate racial quotas. We didn't enjoy being called phobic for not wanting doctors to experiment on children with pseudo-scientific transgender medicine, and we didn't like being labeled conspiracy theorists for asking hard questions about Covid policies, or why the FBI/CIA/DHS were involved in mass censorship.

We're not suggesting that those were the only reasons most voters or swing voters voted for Trump, the polls indicate the top issues were the economy and immigration, but elections are won on the margins and what made the difference between 2020 and 2024 is the defection of so many traditionally Democratic voters to Trump and the Republicans. And many of those who defected were, like us, alienated by the transformation of the Democratic Party into a mob of woke scolds and persecutors.

Trump gained unprecedented ground across the electorate, disrupting Democrats' holds on black, Latino, and Muslim voters in key areas. Even young people, and especially young men, swung to the right. Trump won over large sections of the working class, while Harris improved over Joe Biden with high-income voters, college-educated white women, and white people in general. These results are nothing short of a massive political realignment that should put to bed once and for all the corrosive myth that Trump's coalition is driven by white supremacy or fascism. Through the democratic process, voters have resoundingly rejected elites' favored narratives about race, class, and immigration.

So, if anybody really wants to understand why so many of us—even if we have our criticisms of Trump—feel relief and vindication at his victory, they need to consider that it has more to do with the repudiation of totalitarianism than with Trump as a person or even his policies.

Woke-ism -- whatever you want to call it, progressivism, identity politics, radical leftism -- has been rampaging through society for roughly the last decade. Those of us who

have been stigmatized and ostracized by it feel like we can finally breathe again.

What we're experiencing is known as catharsis, which comes from the Greek word for "cleanse" or "purge." in Greek tragedy, the audience experiences catharsis when it feels a release of negative emotions and a sense of renewal. Many of us who have felt personally persecuted for our views -- even in small ways, such as not feeling comfortable expressing our true views and feelings with friends and family -- now feel freer to speak our minds. After all, the majority is with us. Our views are normal, mainstream, common sense.

As Democrats weaponized the government and justice system, attempting to keep Trump off the ballot and put him in prison, we identified not with Trump the Republican or the businessman, or the former president even, but rather with Trump the wrongly accused. At the bottom, he was being persecuted by the same totalitarian forces that had been rampaging through the society for a decade.

Some time between Occupy Wall Street in 2011 and the first Black Lives Matter protest in 2013, seemingly normal liberals and Democrats started to lose their minds. Everything became racist. Everything became suspicious. Nothing was more suspicious than not agreeing 100% with the official woke Democratic agenda. Trump's election in 2016 put woke-ism on steroids. Suddenly a word that in the past only extreme radical leftists had used to describe a Republican president -- "fascist" -- was now being used by very serious people like New York Times columnists, establishment Democrats, and the previously sober foreign policy establishment.

It was between 2016 and 2020 that woke-ism not only completed but intensified its grip on every major institution in society -- from news and entertainment media to schools and universities -- these institutions encouraged and participated in the mass condemnation and cancellation of heretics, which became known as the "Great Awakening," and was a new witch hunt. Ordinary and otherwise decent people behaved cruelly, they accused people they had known for years of bigotry and racism, or of wanting to "genocide trans people," or wanting millions to die from Covid. Diverging from progressive orthodoxy in any way became enough for people to not only end friendships but to insist the transgressors be ostracized and excommunicated.

Those who had made a great show of being courageously open-minded and tolerant became intolerant, incurious, and cowardly. We were asked to pretend that the people carrying the pitchforks and torches to go witch-hunting were in fact well-meaning and just cared a lot more than the rest of us. They didn't. Behind the totalitarianism were individuals who had given into base motives like hedonism,

envy, dogmatism, self-righteousness, prejudice, snobbery, psychopathy, and even sadism.

There are many underlying causes of the totalitarian Great Awakening. The growing distance between educated elites and working people, the rise of narcissism, psychopathy, and other Cluster-B personality traits, like entitlement and grandiosity, the ways in which social media dehumanizes people and normalizes behaviors that would seem psychopathic in real life, the anxiety induced by social media's fishbowl effect, where our natural fears of social disapproval are magnified to a degree we never evolved for, the counter-populist reaction from the Deep State foreign policy establishment to a populist American president and populist surprisingly around the world. The list goes on. Fully excavating the causes of the derangement of the last decade requires a book-length treatment, which we are dutifully working on right now.

The good news is we're already on the downward slope moving away from Peak Woke. If you had to point to a moment where the lies were at their greatest power, it might have been during the summer of 2020, when the public health experts who had demanded that we shut down the schools said it would be immoral not to join Black Lives Matter protesters in physical real-world events that were no different from the "super-spreader" events they had just a few weeks earlier demanded people be arrested for attending. Peak Censorship came just a few years later when former president Barack Obama gave a Stanford University speech urging government "regulation" of social media platforms.

The bad news is that much of the censorship-industrial complex remains in place. Few of the abuses of power over the last eight years have been fully investigated, and wokeism remains entrenched in every major societal institution.





After Trump's Victory, There Can Be No Unity Without a Reckoning

By John Daniel Davidson, *The Federalist*, condensed

Back in July after the first Trump assassination attempt, I wrote that there can be no national unity, no burying the hatchet or cooling the rhetoric with people who have been encouraging political violence and pushing assassination prep for years. You can't smack someone in the face with a hammer and then insist everyone calm down.

Trump's election victory doesn't change that. Those in the news media who spent years calling Trump a fascist and comparing him to Hitler, claiming he represents a threat to democracy and that he'll use his presidential powers to go after his enemies, should not be forgiven. Their lies and nonstop propaganda should not be forgotten. No one should ever take them seriously again. When they try to engage the public square, they should either be ignored entirely or met with a wall of mockery and derision. They are enemies of the American people, whom they openly despise, and there can be no real unity with them no matter what they might say in the future.

Going forward, it should be a mark of shame to be associated with MSNBC, CBS News, and CNN. Same goes for The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Atlantic, and Politico. All the "prestige" media outlets that perpetrated lies, distortions, and unhinged rhetoric about Trump should lose so much credibility that their reader and viewer bases collapse, advertisers abandon them, and they get broken up and sold off for parts. If Laurene Powell Jobs wants to run a vanity magazine for her own entertainment, fine. But let's not pretend it's a serious place where serious journalists work. We all know what it is now.

Legacy media outlets, the polling industry, the Democrat-funded nonprofits and the academics and activists who run them have all now been exposed as cogs in a giant propaganda machine. Kamala Harris was never ahead. She never had a chance of winning. There was no "joy." She wasn't "brat." She didn't even win the Democrat Party nomination; it was handed to her in a backroom deal. She isn't relatable or cool, she's the most cringey and fake person ever to run for president. Corporate media and the Democrats ran a massive psy-op on the American people to make them believe something that wasn't true. And it failed. We should never forget that these people will say anything for the sake of power, so we should never trust them again.

For the government officials and institutions who tried to bankrupt and jail Trump, there should be more severe and formal consequences. It has been reported that the Justice Department will be dismissing special counsel Jack Smith and dropping his cases against Trump before Trump takes office. That's great, but Smith should not be allowed to simply walk away. He and everyone else at Biden's DOJ who was involved in these lawfare cases against Trump needs to be investigated and held accountable for their actions.

And, of course, the problem goes far beyond Smith. What the Justice Department and the FBI did to Trump was one of the most egregious abuses of power in American history, and we shouldn't just shrug our shoulders at it because Trump won. These agencies need to be dismantled entirely and re-built from scratch. The FBI in particular has shown itself to be an enemy of the American people and a danger to the republic. Its director, Christopher Wray, should not simply be allowed to resign. He should be removed and placed under criminal investigation.

Same goes for New York Attorney General Leticia James, whose lawfare against Trump is an ongoing scandal. James said on Wednesday that her office is preparing to "fight back" against the incoming Trump administration. She should be disbarred, at a minimum for trying to bankrupt Trump with a bogus fraud case in which there were no fraud victims.

Then there's Liz Cheney, who in her role as vice chair of the Jan. 6 Committee has been accused of inducing witness perjury, destroying documents, and suppressing exonerating evidence. Cheney posted what seemed like a message of conciliation on X Tuesday night, saying we must accept the results of the election. But she shouldn't get off so easily either. Her role in the Jan. 6 Committee should be fully investigated and she should face criminal charges if warranted.

The truth is, if Trump hadn't won he'd be going to prison. For supporting Trump, Elon Musk would have been targeted by the government, bankrupted, and subjected to years of lawfare. The people who howled loudest about Trump weaponizing the government against his political opponents have spent years doing just that to Trump and his associates.

The idea that we should just forget all that now for the sake of unity is deeply misguided and naïve. If those responsible aren't held accountable, they will never stop trying to destroy their enemies by any means they can. Before we ever achieve anything like unity in America again, there must be a reckoning and there must be justice. Without those things, the divisions in our country won't be able to heal.

Even with a reckoning, unity will be difficult. We can't just say "Oh well we're all Americans in the end." That won't cut it. The stark reality is that there are a large number of our countrymen who are no longer Americans in any meaningful sense. As Glenn Ellmers has written, they "do not believe in, live by, or even like the principles, traditions, and ideals that until recently defined America as a nation and as a people. It is not obvious what we should call these citizen-aliens, these non-American Americans; but they are something else."

After those who broke the law are held accountable, and those who lied are ostracized and ignored, we will still face the problem of disunity and division among our people. We will still be two nations occupying the same territory, with two irreconcilable visions of what the country should be. We can't paper over those differences, and we shouldn't.

To achieve real and lasting unity we'll need a counter-revolution in America, a re-founding of the country. That in turn will require a conversion of the American people and a return to the ideals, principles, and way of life that made our republic possible in the first place.



Trump Should Revive His Pro_American 1776 Commission on Day One

By Robert Busek, The Federalist, condensed

While other media outlets focused on the historic reelection of Donald Trump, the thrill of victory, and the agony of defeat, The Hill offered its readers a summary of what the president-elect has said he intends to do on Day One. This extensive to-do list includes restoring American energy independence, pardoning the Jan. 6 protestors, and, of course, cracking down on illegal immigration.

I would like to offer a modest addition to this impressive agenda: Trump should issue an executive order to restore his all-but-forgotten 1776 Commission. Given the Democrats' efforts to gaslight the electorate into believing that Trump's reelection is a "threat to democracy," young Americans' historical and civic illiteracy is a clear and present danger to the Republic and it cannot be allowed to continue.

A Doomed Initiative

Trump created the commission the day before Election Day in 2020 with the purpose of "[establishing] a clear historical record of an exceptional Nation dedicated to the ideas and ideals of its founding." Its goal was to provide a much-needed corrective to anti-American propaganda masquerading as history such as the "1619 Project" whose "radicalized view of American history lacks perspective, obscures virtues, twists motives, ignores or distorts facts, and magnifies flaws, resulting in the truth being concealed and history disfigured." The commission's report, published two days before Trump left office, sketched out a basic curriculum that balanced American exceptionalism as reflected in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution with the darker aspects of our history, such as slavery and Jim Crow.

Predictably, the usual suspects had a hissy fit. NBC News accused the commission of "whitewashing historical narratives," while professional race-baiter Ibram X. Kendi called the report "the last great lie from a Trump administration of great lies." The journal Foreign Policy published a hatchet job from a grad student "expert" likening the commission's recommendations to the educational policies of authoritarian regimes like Russia and China.

The unkindest cut of all came from the American Historical Association, which abandoned all pretense of scholarly objectivity by slandered the report as a "call for a form of government indoctrination of American students [that would] elevate ignorance about the past to a civic virtue."

The new administration heard the message loud and clear. A day after taking the oath of office, President Biden spiked the commission along with most of the other common-sense policies of his predecessor.

You Can't Love Something You Don't Know

Leftist educrats have spent decades undermining their students' love for their native land. The goal of this continuing subversion is to ensure that, in the words of Trump's executive order, "authoritarian visions of government and society ... become increasingly alluring

alternatives to self-government based on the consent of the people.”

Montesquieu made a critical point about education in republics in Book IV of his masterpiece *The Spirit of Laws*:

It is in a republican government that the whole power of education is required...Virtue is a self-renunciation, which is ever arduous and painful. This virtue may be defined as the love of the laws and of our country. As such love requires a constant preference of public to private interest, it is the source of all private virtues...This love is peculiar to democracies. In these alone the government is entrusted to private citizens. Now a government is like everything else: to preserve it we must love it...Everything therefore depends on establishing this love in a republic; and to inspire it ought to be the principal business of education. [emphasis added]

The educational establishment’s rejection of this sage advice has borne bitter fruit. In the 30 years since the National Assessment of Educational Progress has been measuring scores in history and civics, American middle schoolers have never been declared “proficient” in these subjects.

In an unsurprising correlation, over the past 20 years the number of people claiming to be “extremely proud” to be an American has dropped from 70 percent to a paltry 39 percent. This collapse of patriotism is most notable among Americans ages 18 to 34, where the percentage drops to a mere 18 percent. No wonder the American military is struggling to meet recruitment goals. Why would any young person elect to serve a nation they have been brainwashed into thinking is evil?

A Necessary Inoculation against Tyranny

The Democrats have taken full advantage of this cultivated ignorance to attack our nation’s institutions. When party leaders clutch their pearls about the fate of American democracy in the face of a Trump presidency, they are engaging in a level of projection rarely seen outside of an IMAX theater.

Even if their hypocrisy wasn’t blatant in their multi-pronged yet futile efforts to defeat Donald Trump, there is more than enough cause for concern in their rhetoric. This is the party whose members now routinely call for the abolition of the Electoral College and the packing of the Supreme Court. Flirtations with even more radical “reforms,” such as making Senate representation based on a state’s population, are becoming more common. Add to this the left’s penchant for political violence and you have a party on the edge of embracing tyranny.

The only antidote for this extremism is a body politic that understands the whys and hows behind the American system. Anyone with a solid grasp of American history and civics will instantly see authoritarian ideas for the betrayal that they are and reject them accordingly.

Making America great again starts with reminding the American people why the nation was and is great. The mandate Trump received on Election Day proves that the patient is not yet past all hope. As our country approaches its 250th birthday, a revived 1776 Commission can provide the strong medicine it needs to survive and thrive.



Restoring Deterrence Can Prevent Endless Wars

By Victor Davis Hanson, American
Greatness, condensed

On Jan. 3, 2020, the Trump administration conducted a drone strike near Baghdad International Airport, killing Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

Soleimani had a long record of waging surrogate wars against Americans, especially during the Iraq conflict and its aftermath.

After the Trump cancellation of the Iran Deal, followed by U.S. sanctions, Soleimani reportedly stepped up violence against regional American bases—most of which President Donald Trump himself ironically wished to remove.

A few days later, Iran staged a performance-art retaliatory strike against Americans in Iraq and Syria, assuming Trump had no desire for a wider Middle East war.

So, Iran launched 12 missiles that hit two U.S. airbases in Iraq. Supposedly, Tehran had warned the Trump

administration of the impending attacks that killed no Americans. Later reports, however, suggested that some Americans suffered concussions, while more damage was done to the bases than was initially disclosed.

Nonetheless, this Iranian interlude seemed to reflect Trump's agenda of avoiding "endless wars" in the Middle East while restoring deterrence that prevented, not prompted, full-scale conflicts.

Yet in a second Trump administration, rethreading the deterrence needle without getting into major wars may become far more challenging. The world of today is far more dangerous than when Trump left in 2021.

An inept Biden administration has utterly destroyed U.S. deterrence abroad through both actual and symbolic disasters: the Chinese dressing down of U.S. diplomats in Anchorage; the humiliating skedaddle from Afghanistan; the brazen flight of a Chinese spy balloon across the U.S.; the invasion of Ukraine by Russia; the Oct. 7, 2023 massacre of 1,200 Israelis; the serial Houthi attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea; the visible restraint of Israel from fully replying to Iranian missile attacks on its homeland; and renewed bellicosity on the part of both North Korea and China toward American allies such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Of course, a second-term Trump must radically reform the Pentagon and beef up the military while warning enemies of the consequences to follow from any unwise aggression.

But if opponents believe such admonitions remain only vocal threats, then empty verbiage surely will erode deterrence further—such as President Joe Biden's serial and empty braggadocio, "Don't!"

Biden's past theatrical finger-shaking translated into aggressors like Russian President Vladimir Putin going into Ukraine, Iran sending missiles into Israel, and the Houthis serially hitting shipping in the Red Sea.

Given the past messes of the Iraqi, Libyan, and Syrian interventions, and the catastrophic Biden humiliation in Afghanistan, Trump in 2024 is much more emphatic about the need to avoid such overseas dead-end entanglements or even the gratuitous use of force that historically can sometimes lead to tit-for-tat entanglements.

Still, Trump's selection of JD Vance as vice president, along with Tulsi Gabbard, RFK Jr., and Tucker Carlson as close advisers, coupled with the announcements that former

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and prior U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley will not be in the administration, may be misinterpreted by scheming foreign adversaries as proof of Trump neo-isolationism.

Moreover, the U.S. is battered by an unsustainable \$37 trillion national debt and a nonexistent southern border that saw 12 million illegal aliens enter with impunity.

So, the use of force abroad is now often seen in a zero-sum fashion as coming at the expense of unaddressed American needs at home.

Moreover, a woke, manpower-short military has not achieved strategic advantages from wars abroad, while disparaging and alienating the very working-class recruits who disproportionately fight and die in them.

Recently, even as President-elect Trump's inner circle emphasized an end to endless conflicts, Trump warned Putin not to escalate his attacks against Ukraine. Yet that advice was followed by a Russian massive drone onslaught against civilian Ukrainian targets.

Putin no doubt wishes to encourage American enemies to test Trump's deterrent rhetoric against his campaign's domestic promises to mind America's own business at home.

Is there a way to square the deterrence circle?

Trump will have to speak clearly and softly while carrying a club. And for the first few months of his administration, he will be tested as never before to make it clear to Iran and its terrorist surrogates, China, North Korea, and Russia, that aggression against U.S. interests will be swiftly and quietly met with disproportionate and overwhelming repercussions.

Yet Trump will likely have to rely on drones, missiles, and airstrikes and not on major engagements, to deter enemies from aggression—and his domestic critics from claiming he turned into a globalist interventionist.

He is not.

Trump remains a Jacksonian. But such deterrence entails warning from time to time the reckless and adventurous abroad that our allies have no better friend than America and our adversaries no worse enemy.

In other words, Trump must remind Americans only by periodically deterring enemies can he prevent endless wars.



The Decline and Fall of the University

By **Garrett Sheldon, Professor Emeritus at the University of Virginia, The Jefferson Council**

Since retiring from the university, several people have asked if I miss it. I tell them I miss what it was, but not what it has become. Higher education in America has gone from being the best in the world to one of the most pathetic. Why? It's hard to describe what academia was to me and to millions in the past. It was not just a job, but a way of life, and of Western Civilization; and I'm so close to it, that it's hard to describe—like trying to describe one's own mother (hence alma mater!).

But let me try. University life at its best was both the most serious, difficult, challenging and maddening existence; and yet, it was also the most exciting, lively, rewarding, and fun experience.

It was deadly serious because we constantly examined the most intense human issues: historical and personal tragedies; ethical dilemmas, philosophical complexities; theological mysteries; and scientific wonders. It was hard because it stretched you intellectually and emotionally, made you question everything and be changed by that knowledge. And it was difficult, because of the enormous workload and demands; assignments, exams, papers, presentations and seminars. I don't know of another situation, except possibly the military during a war, where one could be tested so much.

Yet this academic rigor was so exciting, lively, and fun because it developed and fulfilled the most essential part of the human soul, what the Bible calls “Logos” and Aristotle “reasoned speech” of a naturally social being. It was exciting because that individual development occurred within a discipline, but free, intellectual and social environment—full of debate, discussion, argument, and questioning in a community of tolerance and respect, but also laughter, joking, flirting, fighting, explaining, and learning.

That “community of scholars”—open, searching, teachers and students—changed one's life and prepared one for whatever came one's way. Socrates' dictum “Know Thyself” and “The Unexamined Life Is Not Worth Living” underlay the traditional liberal arts education: to learn something of every subject (“Renaissance Man”) and all perspectives on every subject and thereby to learn how to think, reason, and analyze: and then be able to handle anything in life and adapt to change.

I realize that this “life of the mind” within a rigorous but friendly community is an ideal; there were plenty of dull classes and mediocre professors at every university. But the “system” of academic freedom and its attendant experiences of intellectual growth prevailed.

Nor did the academy lack in conflict (as the old joke went: “The fights in academia are so bad because the stakes are so low”). But those battles were over policy or personalities (mostly egos), not the essential basis of the university: free thought and debate. I never can remember, even in the midst of terrible fights that led to presidents being fired or programs being altered, or board members resigning, that anyone questioned the right to free speech, academic inquiry, or liberty of conscience.

Academia was full of eccentric professors with various crazy ideas and habits (some brilliant), naïve students, and pompous administrators; but they all adhered to the same standard of knowledge. This led not just to scientific discovery and technological progress, but to every other kind of progress: economic, political, social, and ethical.

Such an open, lively, productive academic system goes back to Ancient Greece and Rome, the Medieval European monasteries and universities, and Oxford and Cambridge tutorials, but it was perfected in America. The first really modern university was the University of Virginia, founded by Thomas Jefferson (and which celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2019). Jefferson said of UVA, “Here we are not afraid to follow the Truth wherever it may lead; nor to tolerate any error, so long as reason is left free to combat it.”

That is the classic statement of academic freedom: a “free marketplace of ideas” that develops individuals and society. And it is especially important in a democracy, where the people are self-governing. It holds that the solution to bad ideas is not to censor or ignore them, but to refute them with good and reasonable ideas. Just as the best products come out of economic competition, sound religion comes out of liberty of conscience.

Jefferson experienced both the intellectual and the social aspects of this academic life at his alma mater, William and Mary College, in Williamsburg, Virginia. There, he said in his Autobiography, he had professors like his philosophy and mathematics professor “profound in most of the useful branches of Science, with a happy talent for communication, correct and gentlemanly manners, and an enlarged and liberal mind.”

Similarly, Jefferson’s law professor, George Wythe, taught legal doctrine within the liberal arts context of history, and political philosophy. Their formal instruction combined with an informal, personal mentoring that included dinners at the Royal Governor’s Palace (!), where this “partie quarree” enjoyed classical music and discussions of philosophy and literature, religion and history, forming, Jefferson remarked “the finest school of manners and morals that ever existed in America” and “fixed the destinies of my life.” And the destinies of our nation, as such education prepared Jefferson to write the Declaration of Independence.

Such a combination of formal education in classrooms and labs with informed mentoring and society became the model for Jefferson’s “academical village” at the University of Virginia and for academic freedom in America. Both effectively have been destroyed by the Liberal “political correctness” of the last 30 years, especially during the Obama Administration.

Political correctness effectively replaces free, diverse debate and a positive collegial community with Nazi-like speech control. In place of a “free-marketplace of ideas” examining all subjects and perspectives is one official ideology that eclipses all the other views. That PC doctrine, essentially, is that Western Civilization in general, and America in particular, is racist, sexist, imperialist and unjust. This means that nothing good can be said about certain figures or subjects (Jefferson, the founding, Christianity, etc.) and nothing bad or “offensive” can be said about “protected groups” (women, minorities, gays, Muslims, illegal immigrants, etc.). This ideology has pretty much captured the humanities and social sciences in American universities (as well as the most prominent academic associations and journals, and the most prestigious awards).

This system of thought was codified and weaponized by the largely illegal and unconstitutional expansion of the Title IX regulations in 2014. This was a provision of the Civil Rights Act requiring equal expenditures on college sports along gender lines. It was deftly transformed into a PC blitz by equating “discrimination” with “harassment.” When “harassment” was expanded to include “verbal” harassment, it allowed censorship and punishment of any speech that was deemed offensive or “unwanted” by anyone. Title IX offices at every American university (with names like: The Office of Conduct, Compliance, Control, Diversity, Inclusion and Demasculinization) run Gestapo-like operations of surveillance, mandatory reporting, investigations, interrogations (without due process) and reprimands, dismissals and expulsions.

Needless to say, this has had a “chilling effect” on free speech and association. Colleges have turned into social graveyards and intellectual wastelands. The US Department of Education threatened to cut off federal funding to any university that did not enforce these totalitarian policies. Terror Reigned. Sadly, the people most hurt by this were the ones it was intended to help: women and minorities. Their education was trivialized and the informal mentoring that prepared them for professional life was lost, as professors had nothing to do with them beyond purely official activity, fearing charges of harassment.

All of this has had a disastrous effect on morale and enrollment, which is down nationwide. When universities, in effect, told young people: “Come here and be continually harassed, abused and assaulted (or accused of doing such and unable to defend yourself),” it did not seem, along with the high cost and worthless teaching to be such a good deal.

Title IX Political Correctness cleverly hid many of its assaults on intellectual liberty and freedom of speech under the benign code of “civility” and “respectfulness”—meaning any talk, laughter, or behavior that offended anyone was forbidden. But what could be more truly “respectful” than presenting all sides of an issue and letting the student decide what they believe? Professors in my day, after the fashion of John Stuart Mill’s classic essay On Liberty, were objective and detached; presenting all sides fairly before presuming to criticize. After federal court rulings declared such an approach unconstitutional, the civil rights “training” at universities often began with proud statements that freedom of speech as respected absolutely, before listing 200 ways in which it was limited.

The negative effects of these Stalinist decrees (on morale, enrollment, publicity) has caused many universities to hire marketing consultants to clean up their image with slogans and gimmicks. Such fun activities as “Cookie Day” and “The Career Closet” (I’m not making this up) were to present a “safe” and happy image to higher education

institutions. But young Americans don't relish the thought of participating either in a re-education camp or a kindergarten; they want a university. Unless the academy is run by academics, not political activists or marketing consultants, the universities will not return—to the detriment of our entire country.

My guess is that in 10 years, half of America's universities will be turned into vocational-technical schools or closed entirely (or possibly turned into minimum-security prisons or drug rehab centers). The remaining, I hope, will return to a model similar to the lively, rigorous and useful universities we once had. Combinations of online efficiency with onsite community may be the best solution. And if secondary schools returned to teaching the best of Western Civilization (literature, history, art, music, philosophy) it would prepare Americans who do not go to college to be well-informed, thoughtful citizens, Jefferson's ideal for American democracy.

I, like my favorite philosophers Jefferson, Hannah Arendt, and Aristotle, remain optimistic that if human beings are rational, social creatures, the academy will survive, in some form. I hope so, because without it, American greatness will not survive.



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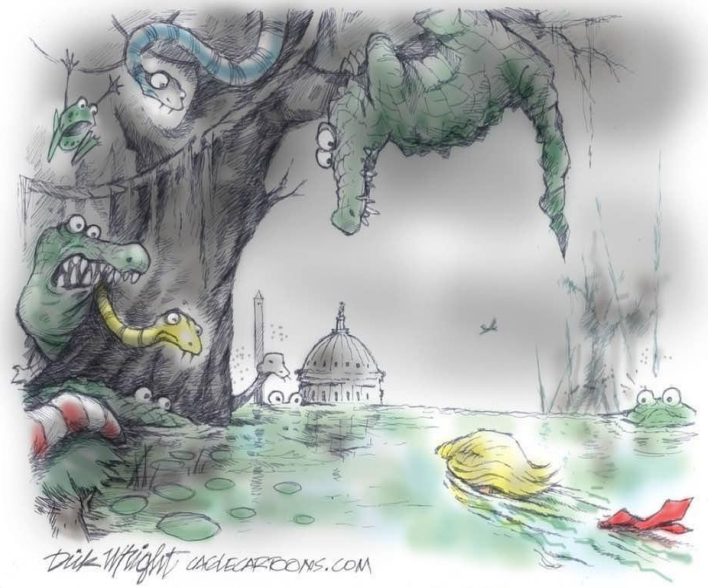
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Upcoming Event

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