

# **HERMIT HERALD**

## **ISSUE 142**

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### **QUOTE FOR THE DAY**

**“The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.”**

**John Milton, author of Paradise Lost.**

### **A MODERN TRANSLATION**

**Columnist Maureen Dowd points out, “Milton’s line is a great insight in a world where illusion rules, and where social media can amplify misperceptions and spark depressions. What you see is not necessarily what is happening. It all depends on your perspective.”**

### **DEJU VU, ALL OVER AGAIN**

**We have been to this place in other issues. Essentially, we perceive what we want to perceive, and now, probably to the annoyance**

**of any of our readers who are arch liberals or arch conservatives, it's time to mess around with what you "know" to be the truth.**

**70 %, WOW, THAT'S A PRETTY BIG MAJORITY**

**That's how many Republicans, obviously more than just the arch conservatives, have been made to believe, and still believe, that the election was stolen, absent a scintilla of evidence of election fraud.**

**All of this, notwithstanding that the protestations of election fraud were led by a clearly misguided, if not unhinged, Rudy Giuliani and a lawyer from no where, John Eastman, who conceded before Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>, that his scheme to overthrow the election results was illegal, unconstitutional and would lose 9-0 in front of the Supreme Court, but then, as violence erupted, sought a presidential pardon for his clear role in creating the problem.**

**All of this, while, at the same time, the Attorney General, Trump's chief of staff, Mitch McConnell, Betsy DeVos and members of the president's family advised him he had lost the**

**election. Reluctance to concede in the immediate aftermath of the election was understandable, but after many weeks of audits and recounts, Mr. Trump simply perceived what he wanted to perceive, the evidence to the contrary be damned.**

**Do Mr. Trump and Republicans deserve to be mad? They certainly do. Mr. Trump's four years were a constant badgering by a hostile media, a bogus Russian investigation fueled by Hillary Clinton dollars, a pompous, failed, one party impeachment proceeding, and a "bury the story" cover up of the Hunter Biden laptop, which featured two of the country's top intelligence officers, Brennan and Clapper, twisting the arms of 48 other intel officers to attest that the Biden laptop was Russian disinformation, when they had not even seen the subject of their derision.**

**Yes, Mr. Trump and the Republicans had every right to be mad, but the election was not stolen by voter fraud, it was stolen by media bias, which caused voters to elect Mr. Biden.**

**Fast forward to the made for Hollywood production put on by the senate committee investigating the attack on the Capitol on January 6<sup>th</sup>. Yes, it is a slick production, but got the riveted attention of 20 million people. And, you know what? According to the polls, very few Republicans watched it. Why? They didn't want anyone messing with their perceptions.**

**All the valid reasons Mr. Trump had to be angry do not, however, excuse his behavior and the constitutional crisis caused by his actions and the January 6<sup>th</sup> siege on the Capitol.**

**Mr. Trump's take on the whole proceeding, "It's a one way street. It's a rigged deal, it's a disgrace." Dismissing the gravity of the January 6<sup>th</sup> riots, Mr. Trump blithely says, "It's a simple protest that got out of hand." Understatement of the century- but that's your scribe's perception.**

**WHERE TO NOW?**

**Clearly, the mostly Democratic committee conducting the investigation of Jan. 6, would**

**like to see the Justice Department pick up on their findings and bring a criminal prosecution against Mr. Trump. There are a number of reasons why some think criminal prosecution is possible, but there are a lot of cautionary statements by legal experts about how difficult such a prosecution would be, coupled with a further major destabilization within the American citizenry.**

**Absent a criminal prosecution, however, Mr. Trump is made to look very bad in these presentations, a highly desired outcome for the Democrats as they look to 2024 in the hopes that they can once again defeat Mr. Trump should he decide to run again.**

**Notwithstanding all the Democrat baggage; inflation, immigration, gas prices, baby formula and several other issues, the combination of Republicans, in general, being blamed for the pending overturn of Roe V Wade and Mr. Trump's terrible, if not indictable behavior, in conjunction with January 6<sup>th</sup>, a Trump candidacy in 2024 looks highly problematic.**

**That's not your scribe's opinion, that's the murmuring going on in many segments of the Republican party, with few willing to come out and challenge Mr. Trump's leadership position.**

**Except for one, and what an exception it is. The NY Post, arguably, one of the most conservative papers in the country, has called on the GOP, "To move on from Trump" This is not some letter to the editor or an op ed piece. This is written by the NY Post Editorial Board.**

**The editorial board says, "Even though the liberal media will never admit it, he (Trump) oversaw a term of mostly peace and prosperity. But Trump has become a prisoner of his own ego. He can't admit his tweeting and narcissism turned off millions. He won't stop insisting that 2020 was 'stolen', even though he's offered no proof." And further, "Meanwhile reports that Trump was pleased that the Jan 6 crowd chanted for vice president Pence to be hanged – a truly reprehensible sentiment- makes him unworthy for the office. Trump can't look past 2020. Let him remain there. Look forward! The 2024 field is rich.**

**You have Florida Governor, Ron DeSantis, former Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, former UN Ambassador, Nikki Haley... the list goes on.” Concluding their opinion that the GOP should not stick with Mr. Trump, the Editorial Board writes, “Let’s make America sane again.”**

**While urging the Republican electorate to move on, what the Post fails to note is that Mr. Trump has \$144 million in campaign funds in the bank and, if you haven’t noticed, Mr. Trump doesn’t like to lose.**

## **ON TO UKRAINE**

**“We do not see the whole drama unfolding behind this war, which was perhaps somehow provoked or not prevented.” Pope Francis, commenting on NATO expansion.**

**Thank you Pope Francis. I’ve come to thinking I was whistling in the wind on this issue. The Pope asks the same question as I. Could this war have been prevented? Did we exhaust all possibilities in preventing it? The answer is that we didn’t exhaust all possibilities to avoid**

**the war, and I believe history will hold this administration responsible, given the U.S. is the 800 pound gorilla in NATO.**

**While massing his troops and weapons on the Ukranian border Putin had one main requirement, that NATO, led by the U.S. agree that Ukraine would not become a NATO member. It would have been so easy to test the sincerity of that statement – sign an agreement that NATO would not expand into Ukraine. If Putin still went in, the agreement would be null and void.**

**I'm not going to reiterate in detail the many points I have made in recent HH issues. Suffice it to say that over many decades numerous U.S. officials, Secretaries of State and Presidents have either agreed in writing or advocated for a limited expansion of NATO.**

**Our readers also have to be reminded how threatened we felt by the prospect of Russian missiles going into Cuba, so much so, that I remember as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt in October of 1962, going to a briefing by the commanding General of Minot Air Force Base, “Gentlemen, as of 10AM**



**this morning we are at war with Russia.” Our B-52s were already in the air heading for Cuba and Russia when Russia backed down and turned the missiles homeward. It was OK for us to feel threatened then, but not Russia today – right? So I kept asking myself, why would we not take this last diplomatic opportunity to avoid war, a war that is killing 200 Ukranian soldiers a day, has resulted in tens of thousands of civilian deaths and unreported thousands of Russian soldiers who count 13 Generals among their dead?**

**Nobody seemed interested in answering the above question until Christopher Caldwell, a contributing writer to the NY Times, wrote an article on June 4<sup>th</sup>, “U.S. Helps Prolong Ukraine War.” The article goes beyond telling why we are prolonging the war, but tells why we wouldn’t at least take that last negotiating step. Quite simply, we didn’t want to.**

**As Caldwell writes, “In 2014 the United States backed an uprising against the legitimately elected Ukranian government of Viktor Yanukovich, which was pro-Russian. The corruption of his government has been much**

**adduced by the rebellion, but corruption is a perennial Ukrainian problem, even today. Russia, in turn annexed Crimea, a historically Russian-speaking part of Ukraine that since the 18<sup>th</sup> century had been home to Russia's Black Sea Fleet."**

**"One can argue about Russia's claims to Crimea, but Russians take them seriously. Hundreds of thousands of Russian and Soviet fighters died defending the Crimean city of Sevastopol from European forces during two sieges- one during the Crimean war and one during World War II. In recent years, Russian control of Crimea has seemed to provide a stable regional arrangement: Russia's European neighbors, at least, have let sleeping dogs lie."**

**"But, the United States never accepted the arrangement. On November 10, 2021, the U.S. and Ukraine signed a "Charter on Strategic Partnership" that called for Ukraine to join NATO, condemned "ongoing Russian aggression" and affirmed an "unwavering commitment" to the reintegration of Crimea into Ukraine."**

**How many of us ever knew of this strategic partnership, resulting in the administration's refusal to negotiate NATO membership? Yes, it was Putin's tanks that rolled into Ukraine, but we could have stopped it.**

**Henri Guaino, a top advisor to Nicolas Sarkozy, when he was president of France, warned that, "countries under the short-sighted leadership of the United States are 'sleepwalking' into war.**

**In citing Mr. Guaino, Caldwell notes that the U.S. is 'sleepwalking', "trying to maintain the fiction that arming one's allies is not the same as participating in combat." Caldwell specifically notes the U.S bragging of providing intelligence that helped in the killing of numerous Russian generals and providing targeting information that helped the Ukrainians sink the pride of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet, the Moskva.**

**While accusing Russia of using its troops as "canon fodder' and promising to retake every piece of Ukrainian territory now held by**

**Russia, Ukrainian president Zelensky is himself losing 200 soldiers per day.**

**Russia has now secured a land bridge to Crimea and the areas Russia now holds in eastern and southern Ukraine about Russia's borders – the supply lines are short and manageable. It's very difficult to imagine how or why Russia would ever give up any of that territory, but Zelensky says he won't concede an inch. Are Ukraine, Russia, NATO, the world really ready for a twenty year war of attrition? I don't think so.**

**Henry Kissinger has called for Ukraine to make some concessions to bring the killing and destruction to a halt, for which he has been criticized in some quarters. As Mr. Caldwell notes, "In this, Mr. Kissinger is on the same page as Mr. Guaino, who said, "To make concessions to Russia would be submitting to aggression. To make none would be submitting to insanity.""**

**How the tragedy of this war will be magnified if, at the end of the day, Ukraine agrees to give up aspirations for NATO membership and all**

**the death and destruction could have been avoided had the U.S. shelved the Strategic Partnership agreement and pursued that last avenue of diplomacy.**

**Your faithful scribe,**

**PB**