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QUOTE OF THE DAY

“First you say you do, and then you don’t. You’re undecided now, so what are you going to do?” 1938 song by Sydney Robin and Charles Shavers.

INDEED, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

That very popular song which most of us fondly remember could either be addressed to a young lady or a young man. In this usage, the “you” in “What are you going to do?” is the United States – it is us.

It’s one thing to have our political debates. People change their minds, or not, but at the end of the day decisions get made and laws and programs get approved and acted on –

right? Not so fast there. This is the good old USA. We vacillate and blow with the wind.

Item1: Keystone XL pipeline. The original pipeline cost \$5.2 Billion. In 2008 the XL portion was proposed – 1200 miles of pipeline at a cost of \$7 Billion to be completed in 2012. With all the political tugs of war, in the two year period between 2019-2020 only \$1.5 Billion on costs had been incurred. Those against the pipeline had as their major objection the threat to a great variety of endangered wildlife. Those for the pipeline argued that it would be about the last step necessary for the U.S. to become wholly energy self- supporting. So there we have it, people on both sides with good arguments. Perhaps saying “we’re undecided now” is a bit inaccurate. “now” is only until we have another change of party in the White House/Congress, and then the currently scrapped project gets turned on again.

Interesting side bar here: for years, if not decades, as a country, we have talked of reducing our reliance on fossil fuels to help save the planet from climate disaster. Here’s

the report card on that: 81% of the world's energy consumption in 1991 came from oil and gas. Guess what it was in 2020? 80%. Sounds like we have a way to go.

In the meantime, there are those who think we are trying to do too much all at the same time. President Biden assures that in the pursuit of climate goals many new jobs will be created, but others counter, those new jobs will not materialize tomorrow. In the meantime, 11,000 pipe fitters, welders and specially trained pipeline workers will find themselves unemployed in the midst of a terrible economy and pandemic. And guess who is the new Chairman of the Senate Energy Committee? Senator Manchin of W. Virginia will now be wearing that hat, and he's just got a ton (no pun intended) of coal miners as constituents.

Item 2: Iran – no need to go into the whole history here, but once again the U.S. waffles on a very sensitive nuclear proliferation issue and the new administration, wanting back into the old nuclear deal has all our allies scratching their heads, and Iran feeling they are in a great position to play hard ball.

Item 3: Weapons sales to our allies. While the deals haven't yet been cancelled, we are apparently now having seller's remorse at having agreed to sell 50 F 35s to the UAE, which was an inducement for them to make nice with Israel. Of course Israel is none too thrilled at having a recent antagonist with that kind of weaponry. Similarly, we're now reviewing an agreement to sell drones and other deadly equipment to the Saudis - why? Because just now we are realizing those weapon systems might be used in the continuing war in Yemen where many civilians are getting killed? Of course we are not just now becoming aware of these issues, and, yes, the original decisions were made in the Trump administration, but here we are, once again presenting the image of an "undecided" and, therefore, unreliable, partner.

Executive Order du jour

President Biden has issued a record number of Executive Orders in his first week in office in an understandable effort to get his programs up and running. Unfortunately Executive

Orders can get things up and running, but they are very feeble instruments. They need to be backed up by legislation. LBJ for instance, was reluctant to use Executive Orders, preferring legislation which is of a much more durable nature. With a change in administrations yesterday's Executive Order is today's history. You only have to look at the cutting room floor to see what waste has been laid to president Trump's Executive Orders already.

As noted above, there is bound to be ongoing controversy regarding the XL Pipeline, but that pales by comparison compared to the firestorm president Biden has unleashed with regard to transgender women competing against biological women. The president's Executive Order mandates that any school that receives federal funding must allow biological boys who self-identify as girls onto girl's sports teams.

"Finished. Done" said Olympic Track and Field coach, Linda Blade. "The leadership skills, all the benefits society gets from letting girls have their protected category so that competition can be fair, all the advances of women's rights-

that's going to be diminished." How diminished? Well, women's issues writer, Abigail Shrier, tells us exactly how and president Biden would do well to understand the science/biology. As Ms. Shrier points out, "In contests of strength and speed, the athletic chasm between the sexes which opens at puberty, is both permanent and unbridgeable. Once male puberty is complete, testosterone suppression doesn't undo the biological advantages men possess: larger hearts, lungs and bones, greater bone density, more oxygenated blood, more fast twitch muscle fiber and vastly greater muscle mass."

Reading Ms. Shrier's comments, one can only conclude that president Biden has just undone much of what Title IX had accomplished and, in the process, wreaked havoc with the lives of many women athletes.

SO MUCH FOR UNITY

President Biden is no doubt sincere in wanting to unify the country. By her actions, Speaker Pelosi, is doing everything in her power to make certain that doesn't happen. The issue of

course is her engineering the impeachment of a president who cannot be tried while still in office as required by the Constitution. Constructionists, or those who take the Constitution at its word, hold to that position whereas, others, would have you believe that the framers of the Constitution really would have wanted this or that clarification to be added. Their point is that the framers certainly would have wanted to be able to punish any president who committed some heinous act in his last days of the presidency and would be able to escape punishment simply by no longer being in office. That approach totally ignores the fact that any such terrible act by a departing president would surely be covered by the criminal code and, being out of office, the former president would have no protection against prosecution. Perfect example, is Nixon, having resigned before he got impeached. He could have easily faced criminal charges, but president Ford pardoned him, which initially created some dissension, but caused the country to heal much more quickly. Speaker Pelosi, take notes.

The constructionists would argue that if the Congress were able to pursue a president after his term of office ended it would be a political weapon without a statute of limitations that could be used capriciously against any political target.

The invasion of the Capitol was a very serious matter, but in getting her instant impeachment with virtually no testimony, Speaker Pelosi has overplayed her hand. She really thought she had a chance to get 17 Republican Senators to vote to convict, and with that, go on to a simple majority vote that would remove Mr. Trump from running for national office for the rest of his life. Well, she blew it big time. Senator Kaine (D) has said in effect, "Let's just get this thing over and done with. It's a losing proposition." In support of the Constitution the constructionists would tell you, "If the Department of Justice believes there are grounds, they should seek an indictment of Mr. Trump on criminal charges, but you don't have a Senate trial of a man no longer in office."

In a similar vein, the Constitution mandates that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

must preside over the Senate Trial of a sitting president. Chief Justice Roberts has refused to preside. Strong views on both sides of this issue – would love to see it go to SCOTUS for a ruling, but probably won't happen. In the meantime, Speaker Pelosi has cranked up the animosity level to a degree that is hurtful to the new president's best efforts and wishes.

“HONEY, STOP IT THAT HURTS”

Cries of husband, as wife repeatedly stabs him with a pen- knife. Wife is enraged because she finds photos on his cell phone of him in a very romantic embrace with another woman whose face is not directly in the camera. Turns out photo is of the husband and his wife several years earlier and she did not recognize herself. They are both resting comfortably, he at home, she, in jail.

HERMIT ENDS PURSUIT OF ELECTION

Your scribe has abandoned his third party (Fervent Moderate Party) election effort. The proposed financing vehicle (dollars in exchange for Ambassadorships) netted a \$20

**contribution from a reader wanting to be
named Ambassador to the Kingdom of Elbonia.**

Your faithful scribe, PB