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QUOTE FOR THE DAY

“I worry there’s a great historical amnesia going on- that we’re overlearning the lessons of the financial crisis and forgetting the lessons of all the other economic downturns. I worry that we’re unwittingly committing ourselves to decades of higher taxes down the line that will sap American dynamism.” David Brooks, conservative columnist for the NY Times.

PRESIDENT BIDEN’S “BUILD BACK BETTER”

Thought provoking article by Mr. Brooks. He quotes a post by a progressive economist, “Public debt doesn’t matter” and “Work incentives don’t matter.” Brooks goes on to respond, “Really ? have the laws of gravity been suspended too?”

For that seeming cautionary note on massive government programs, Mr. Brooks goes on to say, “Ten years ago I would have been aghast at this leftward shift. But, like everybody else, I’ve seen inequality widen, the social fabric decay, the racial wealth gap increase.

Americans are rightly convinced that the country is broken and fear it is in decline. Like a lot of people, I’ve moved left on what I think of the role of government and income redistribution issues. We surely need to invest a lot more in infrastructure and children.”

Mr. Brooks goes on to point out that several European countries typically spend twice as much as America to help the old, the young, the sick and the disadvantaged. Today America spends 19% of GDP on social benefits while France spends 31%.

So, here we are with the well-intentioned “Build Back Better” proposal put forward by the president. What are the components and how are they to be funded? The president envisions a two- step process totaling \$3 trillion for infrastructure projects – roads,

bridges, water systems, etc. The second part would focus on education and antipoverty measures. Raising taxes on businesses would be an integral part of the funding for phase one, and tax increases for the wealthy would be a major source of funding for the human side of the project. I find initial estimates that the second phase can be funded by only minor tax increases to those making over \$400,000 a year to be incredulous – we'll see.

In any event, good intentions notwithstanding, and I salute president Biden for trying to get this major project off the ground, I really disagree on the priorities. Seven times in my 106 issues I have called for a U.S. Marshall fund focused on our 50- 75 major inner cities where education, housing, health care and recreational facilities are nothing short of terrible. We are living in a cauldron of social unrest and many think we can throw a little water (read, money) at the problem and keep everyone quiet. Aint gonna happen folks. In my opinion, rebuilding these sectors should be job number one.

The biggest issue is how it all gets funded. Mitch McConnell calls the new proposals, “a Trojan Horse” for major undisclosed future tax hikes, and traditional conservatives have always despised big government. However, I hearken back to Mr. Brooks. My friends these are no normal times. Emergency situations call for emergency action, and we’re at a point where we really need a massive improvement program.

Major problem: president Biden’s colleagues and even the president himself envision this project as an opportunity for the administration to do great things along the lines of FDR and LBJ. “Wrong”, according to columnist, Charles Cooke, who points out that “both FDR and LBJ were swept into office in landside victories alongside large congressional majorities that were on board with their agenda. Joe Biden, by contrast, won the electoral college by 45,000 votes, enjoys no majority in the Senate and has a House majority that is extremely thin.” From what I read, hear and see, huge numbers of Democrats and a large segment of Republicans, as well, recognize that some

urgent and expensive action is needed. The problem, as always, people vote their pocket books. They may all want these good projects, but, politically, how does it get paid for? There goes the filibuster. OK, the Dems can start making the Republicans stand up and speak for ten days straight to keep a bill from passing – how childish. Or, being convinced that they know where the railroad has to go, they will eventually vote for the “nuclear option” and do away with the 60 vote filibuster – Katie bar the door!!

ME LLAMO, KAMALA

OK, praise for the president in the foregoing, but failing grades on the migration crisis, as he throws a lateral to poor Kamala to take charge. The president has his own version of reality as he throws blame for his migration failures on his predecessor. BS, Mr. president. Illegal migration is at a 20 year high thanks to your campaign trail rhetoric about being kinder, gentler to those wanting to come here in total violation of our immigration laws. Interesting new statistics; the administration claims they are rejecting/ turning back, a huge percentage

of illegals – wrong! – make that 13%. Further, Mr. Biden will not even permit inspection of the jammed holding sites until he has a chance to shine them up. The WSJ reports that, unlike other migrant surges which came mainly from Central America, most of the migrants in the Biden surge are coming from Mexico. Single adults account for 82% of this year’s influx and 60% of them are from Mexico, “all looking for work such as picking fruit and vegetables, roofing and dish-washing.” That’s all just fine – the country needs these farm workers, but there are legal and illegal ways to do it. And, by the way, under no circumstances is the plea, “I just want to come to the United States for a job, a better way of life” a qualification for seeking asylum.

David Leonhardt of the NY Times reports that while polls show public opinion favors a path to citizenship for the Dreamers and the other supposed 11 million undocumented immigrants already here (surprise- that number is actually closer to 22 million), the same responders “ favor rigorous border security and the enforcement of existing immigration laws.” Mr. Biden – not so much.

Leonhardt concludes, “If Mr. Biden and his aides appear to be less steady on immigration than many other policy areas, there is a reason for that. They ARE less steady.” So the president is going to pack the VP’s saddle bags with billions of dollars to go to Central American governments and hand out big bucks to known corrupt individuals so they can make lives better for their citizens thereby quelling the desire to come to the U.S. This has already previously been done with zippo results. C’mon man – I don’t think so – bad plan.

GUN CONTROL

Hey readers, I need your input on this one. As a gun owner and former Special Agent of the FBI, I am a supporter of the second amendment. For the life of me, I can’t figure out why the Republicans refuse to push for more thorough background checks on gun purchasers. The point is always made that its bad people who do bad things with guns and good people do good things –target shooting, and legal hunting. So what is the objection if you have to wait two weeks to pick up your new gun, instead of one? What is the objection for the

same waiting period if you go and buy a gun at a gun show where, today, in most states, you can pay on the spot and walk out with your gun? And, what's wrong with an individual wanting to sell his gun to another, abiding by the same rules? If you are one of the good guys – no problem. If you have a felony record or other disqualifications – no sale, and the country is safer. Every purchase of every gun, regardless the type of sale should be subject to thorough vetting.

Several of our readers – good friends to boot – are owners of assault rifles. Hate to say it, but I just don't understand it. Home defense? I don't think so unless you're sleeping with the gun under your bed and not in the garage. Hunting? What? Get yourself 30 aught 6 and give the deer a chance instead of essentially machine gunning it. Target shooting? I don't think so – a great sniper rifle at 200 yards properly retrofitted with scopes. Look, this is a weapon of war – just don't understand why people need it. The answer is always, "guns don't kill people – bad people kill people." Canada is in the process of outlawing 11 categories of assault weapons and Australia

has had a blanket ban on most firearms for quite some time. It is very difficult to get a license and no one is permitted to buy a gun for “self defense”. Just don’t see how that would ever be possible in the U.S. After the law abiding citizens turn in their guns, the only remaining firearms would be in the hands of the criminals – not going to happen. The thorough vetting of buyers of all types of firearms, however, should be a no brainer.

OUR NOT SO FRIENDS, THE EUROPEANS

Everyone remember how president Trump kicked butt with the NATO countries? Essentially, he said, “You guys have not been paying your share and not properly preparing for your own defense.” How outraged the Europeans were to be lectured like that and how shocked our diplomatic corps by Trump’s impolitic behavior. Guess what? He was looking out for the interests of the U.S. That’s exactly what our allies have been doing for themselves; looking out for their own self interests.

We pleaded with Germany not to go through with the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline going from Russia to Germany, pointing out that Russia is an antagonist and Germany/Europe would become too dependent on Russia. Result- Germany blew us off.

Turkey is in discussion with Russia to buy more batteries of S400 anti-aircraft missiles. We're threatening sanctions over that one, but Turkey doesn't seem to be in much of a listening mode.

Although the U.S. was a signatory to the original Iranian nuclear agreement, Mr. Trump saw it as deeply flawed, primarily because it enabled Iran to continue to develop advanced missile technology and foster military conflicts throughout the Gulf region. Our European allies refused to support the U.S. with sanctions as they don't have any where near the entanglements and economic interests that the U.S. has in the region.

China is a major trading partner with Germany and other allies as well. Ms. Merkel refuses to

be drawn into the U.S. effort to weaken the influence of China.

Our new Secretary of State, Mr. Blinken, recently had friendly, but unproductive meetings with our NATO allies and warned, “that to maintain and sustain American support, the alliance must also serve American interests.” Wrong, Mr. Secretary. That will only happen when our interests are aligned with those of the various countries. Just as with ourselves, our allies will always look out for their self interest first.

THE MEDIA OWNS OUR MINDS

Your scribe has previously made the point that I am fascinated by all types of media and their various (isn't there a stronger word?) points of view. I believe the majority of the country, including many of our readers, do not share that view – not a criticism, but a statement of fact. When you are certain your side is in the right, why put up with the gibberish from the other side? To paraphrase a famous quote, “He who only knows his side of the argument knows only half the story and none of that too

well.” I’m certain over 106 issues I have succeeded in annoying many of my liberal and my conservative readers and, as punishment, I’m sure I get a number of instant “deletes”. Fine, but it was never my idea to give you all a daily portion of CNN or FOX red meat. Because of the media, who knows where the truth is today. “facts” are no longer facts. We are being fed whatever that particular media outlet views as factual. I would recommend a starter kit for anyone wanting to experience how distorted and non- factual the media has become. Everyone should watch one hour a day of CNN and FOX news, subscribe to the NY Times, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal and the NY Post.

That which has caused me to focus again on these “objective” news stories is the subjective, highly editorialized coverage of president Biden’s last Thursday’s news conference. If it weren’t for the fact that the NY Times and the NY Post were both reporting on president Biden’s comments you would not have a clue they were reporting about the same thing. The NY Times exults, “Biden hails, ‘Art of the Possible’” and, “A sober political veteran

contrasts with his predecessor.” The accompanying text goes on to assure the reader that we are listening to a man who is Mr. “gravitas” defined.

Coverage of the same news conference by the NY Post carries the front page head line, “Glazed and Confused”, as the article goes on to describe the president relying on note cards and pre selected journalists from whom to solicit soft ball questions and, even at that, disjointed, rambling answers. The takeaway from that read is, “Gosh, this is kind of scary. Is this guy OK?”

So there you have it, dear readers. Is one article totally truthful and the other totally false? Or, is the truth somewhere in between? The point of this example being that we are all being manipulated by the media. Tell me one that doesn’t have an agenda. Please sign up for your starter kit subscriptions today to keep your mind your own.

Your faithful scribe,

PB

