

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

'America the Beautiful' may require rebranding as 'America the Amazing'

Once it became clear that a red wave was washing across American shores on election night, some Democratic voters reportedly began planning their exit strategy before Canadian officials consider building their own border wall.

Such thoughts were part of the November 5 postmortem and the resultant hand-wringing that accompanied news that the most polarizing figure in American politics would soon be returning to the Oval Office for what many fear will be his "revenge tour."

There, of course, is good reason for such concern, as the President-elect has said repeatedly that he plans to even the score against those who have crossed swords with him since he grudgingly left the White House in January 2021.

His parting that month four years ago was marked by an insurrection at the Capitol that he helped incite, followed by his decision to brazenly take hundreds of highly classified government documents that rightfully belonged to the National Archives. Those actions sparked a pair of separate criminal investigations into the former president, leading to two federal indictments.

But all that was of little matter, evidently, to more than 75.6 million American voters, who cast their ballots

for the Republican candidate in the 2024 presidential election, as he prevailed in both the popular vote and Electoral College tallies over Democratic challenger, Kamala Harris. No amount of misconduct or alleged criminal wrongdoing was too much for his rock-solid base of supporters, who have expressed their political pleasure by hitching their wagon to a man without a moral compass.

Some political observers have called his win a "mandate," made even more convincing by the Republican control of both branches of Congress. The U.S. Supreme Court, thanks to three conservative appointments during his first presidency, already has a decidedly Republican bent with a 6-3 majority led by Chief Justice John Roberts.

To add an exclamation point to the President-elect's political intentions, he recently announced that he plans to nominate a Florida Congressman with a particularly checkered past to become the next U.S. attorney general. The nominee is a controversial right-wing firebrand with no prosecutorial experience, who now appears headed toward leading a U.S. Department of Justice that he has spent years railing against.

In light of all that, it seems that there are no guardrails left to keep the incoming



president in check as he goes about his business of governing a deeply divided nation that is riven with social fissures, economic disparities, and racial and religious strife.

Is it really "America the Beautiful," as poet Katharine Lee Bates envisioned in her 1893 poem "America," or are we about to embark on a dark and disturbing era in U.S. history that we are destined – and condemned – to forget?

The answer, almost certainly, can be drawn from our past, which is dotted with examples of seemingly insurmountable challenges and especially trying times.

In fact, the nation was created in the midst of war, a military conflict between a royal power and a loose but determined band of colonists that lasted seven years and claimed tens of thousands of American lives.

Almost eight decades later, the country erupted in chaos again during a four-year Civil War that cost upward of 750,000 lives, dividing a nation over the issue of slavery in American society.

Upcoming election to test our desire, determination to defend democracy

Thankfully, a partial mending of fences took place during the Reconstruction Era, when the United States grappled with questions of how best to integrate newly freed slaves into the social, political, and labor systems of a country torn by war.

Greater military and economic challenges were posed during the 20th century, when two World Wars, the Great Depression, the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and the Cold War put America to supreme tests, before we then became consumed by the War on Terror that officially began on 9/11 at the onset of the 21st century.

Through it all, America somehow stood tall, putting up a united front to wage battles near and far, setting aside deep-

seated differences for the good of the nation.

That form of resiliency is perhaps our most enduring quality, helping stitch a sense of unity in even the most uncertain of times. It is especially evident in times of crisis and inexplicable loss, when neighbor helps neighbor and stranger aids stranger in Good Samaritan-esque acts of kindness that cuts across political and cultural lines.

America, for all its faults and shortcomings, remains the envy of the world, the foremost economic and military power that is known around the globe as the “land of opportunity” where business dreams are spawned and fortunes can be made.

We are the beacon of freedom and liberty in a world racked by war, climate catastrophes, hunger, and homelessness.

We are the land of invention, of medical and technological advancement, a place made rich by its diversity of thought and thirst for knowledge.

Foremost, we are – and we must be – a country with a strong sense of purpose to counter acts of evil and ill-intent, a law-abiding nation now standing at the precipice of yet another set of daunting challenges that can be answered only if we prove to be amazing once again.

Best regards,

Jack Buchanan, President