

https://www.lebanondemocrat.com/lebanon/opinions/gop-establishment-ready-to-move-on-from-trump/article_2e6ba52f-4e7c-5ae7-9c2a-4166cf0f60bd.html

GOP establishment ready to move on from Trump

Dec 1, 2020

In politics, conventional wisdom embodies a narrative created by like-minded individuals who promote it relentlessly until it achieves credibility and acceptance by a broader audience.

It is strategic effort to inject a specific theory or hypothesis into the circulatory system of the pundit population hoping it will ricochet around the echo chamber of mainstream and social media until it becomes a universal truth.

Credibility is achieved through repetition by the chattering class whose members are eager to pounce on the latest scrap of gossip to portray themselves as knowledgeable insiders plugged into the political power centers.

Such is the latest notion that after President Trump leaves office, he will slide seamlessly into the Republican Party's acknowledged leader and driving force for next four years.

He will, the speculation goes, control the Republican National Committee, its fund-raising apparatus and message all while positioning himself for another presidential run in 2024.

The media, academics, work-seeking consultants and that amorphous mass known as strategists have tripped over one another scrambling for bookings on network and cable talk shows to offer their insight and sage opinions on the party's future and its soon to be ex-president.

It's time to prick that bubble and reveal the wisdom as fool's gold.

While Trump may see himself as the colossus standing astride the party in January, establishment leaders who, while they've remained largely silent up to this point, are ready to turn the page on the Book of Donald.

They've grown weary of the erratic behavior and daily drama, his chaos theory of governance, and being blindsided by abrupt, whiplash-inducing policy decisions in late night Twitter storms. They are appalled and embarrassed by his increasingly irrational insistence that he won a landslide re-election and was robbed by international conspirators who criminally changed millions of votes to defeat him to impose a socialist government on the United States.

Republicans worry also that the potential legal entanglements facing Trump and his business organization post-presidency could drag on for years, with embarrassing revelations of financial and ethical misbehavior a constant theme in the media.

Trump in control of the national party is a terrifying prospect. Standing by without raising a hand to prevent it is not an option.

Democrats have a vested interest in perpetuating the conventional wisdom, seeing in it an opportunity to turn it to their partisan advantage. They're confident that the Trump brand has inflicted such extensive damage it will impact Republican candidates in the 2022 midterm elections and the 2024 cycle.

Their strategy is bolstered by polling which revealed that a greater percentage cast votes to defeat Trump rather than support Biden.

Trump's base of support (he received 73 million votes) will endure for a period upon his departure, but maintaining it over the longer haul is highly problematic.

Some will never abandon their conviction he was the victim of a conspiracy and insist an asterisk follow President Joe Biden's name, denoting his illegitimacy. That belief will fade over time, hastened by domestic issues, international crises, and the COVID-19 pandemic, which has devastated the economy and panicked the country.

The wiser and cooler heads in the Republican Party understand they cannot allow Trump to remain their face and voice, carrying on the uproar, chaos and ugliness into the next four years.

If Trump is seeking redemption by challenging for the presidential nomination in 2024, the response for the party couldn't be clearer or more urgent. The temptation must be resisted to become ensnared by the history of military leaders accused of fighting the last war. Coalescing behind a candidate and avoiding a repeat of the out of control primary process of 2016 is crucial for Republicans.

The conventional wisdom concerning Trump and the future will continue to live, if for no other reason than the media finds it irresistible.

The Republican Party, though, should unmask it for what it is — fool's gold.

Carl Golden is a senior contributing analyst with the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University in New Jersey.

Carl Golden is a senior contributing analyst with the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University in New Jersey.