



**Carl Golden, 5/7/2018 [Archive]**

**The Stunning Hubris of Nancy Pelosi**

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**By Carl Golden**

That renowned 20th Century sage and philosopher Satchel Paige once offered this bit of advice: "Don't look back. Something might be gaining on you."

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi might have pondered the ageless Paige's advice before she began traveling the country to announce her return as Speaker and - in a stunning act of hubris - naming the chairpersons of several House committees.

She and the Democratic Party are increasingly confident that predictions of a blue wave this fall will materialize, sweeping them back into power and re-installing her in the presiding officer's chair.

Her optimism, perhaps, has convinced her there is no need to look back. For if she glanced over her shoulder, she would find, first, that Republicans are gaining on her and, second, that a growing band of her fellow Democrats are distancing themselves from her and seeking leadership turnover.

With Democrats needing just 23 seats while maintaining their current number to become the majority, the risk to Republicans of losing control is very real. But, not inevitable.

The most recent Real Clear Politics polling average, for instance, places President Trump at just over 43 percent, indicating that not only has the country become slightly more comfortable with him but that he is becoming less a drag on the party's Congressional candidates as well.

The results of the generic ballot test in which respondents are asked to express support for a party rather than an individual also hold promise for Republicans. The Democratic lead, once in the mid-teens, has fallen sharply to as little as six percent, a clear sign of greater competitiveness.

More compelling, perhaps, is the RCP average measuring Trump's handling of the economy in which he enjoys majority support, a crucial measure heading into the mid-term elections in which Republicans are expected to campaign heavily on the vastly improved tax, business and job creation record of the Administration.

Pelosi has pledged a Democratic Congress will swiftly repeal the tax cut/tax reform law, in effect raising taxes on corporations and individuals, despite a good deal of empirical and anecdotal evidence that the law has resulted in substantial benefits, including job growth, higher wages, and business investment and expansion.

A Congress under her leadership will also deny further funding for construction of a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border as well as provide protections and eventual citizenship for some one million undocumented immigrants brought to the country illegally.

While she has shied away from talk of instituting impeachment proceedings against the President, a raft of new and more activist Democrats is expected to push the issue vigorously.

While Pelosi has embraced the anti-Trump strategy, it is not at all clear that the country fully shares her view - something the polling averages support.

At the same time, the party is chewing on its own and potentially damaging its chances through heavy-handed attempts to cleanse the primary process of candidates party leaders feel stand no real prospect of winning in November.

The anger of Bernie Sanders supporters from 2016 has never really dissipated and they've reacted negatively to what they believe are efforts to reject their philosophy and move the party toward the more moderate center.

That disaffected wing of the party is vocal, committed and here to stay, convinced that edging toward the middle is tantamount to abandoning principle and denying that fundamental change is necessary.

And, there is Pelosi herself, a figure of controversy in her own party and who enjoys less than warm support from many.

The increasing calls for her and the remainder of her leadership team to stand down and make way for the younger elements will likely grow. Her announcement that she will be Speaker in a Democratic House - not merely a candidate for Speaker, mind you, but that the deal is done as far as she's concerned - didn't win her any friends among the restive insurgent group.

The smart money is still behind a Democratic victory, banking on the history of the party in power losing seats in mid-term contests and the traditional lower voter turnout compared to presidential years.

Further, it would be foolhardy, indeed, to underestimate the possibility that Trump will do or say something so outrageous that it will change the entire course of the campaign and its outcome.

In the meantime, though, should Pelosi glance over her shoulder hoping to see a blue wave, she might also glimpse in the distance a red tide - one that's gaining on her.

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