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The soul of the GOP is at stake: Here are 3 lessons conservatives MUST learn from 2016

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While the fog of political war clears, and pundits begin to spin, there are several overlooked takeaways stemming from the 2016 election that deserve a finer point, especially before we conservatives gear up for a battle for the soul of our party.

Here are three of them:

1. The antidote to elections like 2016 is smaller government

The public has an overwhelmingly negative view of politicians generally. Large swaths of Americans were heavily unsatisfied with the idea that Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump were the best the country could offer in terms of presidential options in 2016 specifically. But [as I have argued before](#), if the people think their political class is corrupted, the rational response is not just to “throw the bums” out (something the public rarely does, mind you), but to support the devolution of power from politicians to the people. The usurpation of power by government is *regressive* – totalitarianism is “progressivism’s” end.

Real progress would entail the restoration of power to the individual. Yet, is there a massive outcry for the abolition of the administrative state? How about the reduction of the federal workforce by 50 percent, or the slashing of the federal budget by an equal or greater percentage? Where are the million man marches on Washington, D.C. and sit-ins nationwide for free markets and federalism? Just as the value of political goods to be bought attracts a proportional amount of money in politics, so too does power attract the corrupt and absolute power the absolutely corrupted.

Reduce the size and scope of government and you will attract a less corrupted class of leaders able to do far less damage. Absent a smaller government that does less, we can expect criminals and/or narcissists *ad infinitum* running for president and all other offices for years to come.

I think Americans, at least the True Conservatives, will carefully watch the Republicans this next year.

The Republican Party ALMOST committed SUICIDE these last 6 months. It will have ONE MORE Chance.

If they don't do what we just Voted For (see Trump's Contract With The American Voter)

there will be an ENORMOUS Rejection of the Republican ESTABLISHMENT.

We will either **Form a New Party** OR, **Vote them ALL out.**

2. Republicans will likely take the wrong lessons from Trump

While this is more a prediction than takeaway, I believe the Republican Party is going to ignore the lessons of Trump's candidacy, viewing it as an outlier rather than a signal in the political marketplace.

The Establishment is quite content with their POWER & WEALTH - obtained by Obfuscation of what they REALLY do - every single day. **They are NOT going to give all this up WILLINGLY.**

Among the lessons of Trump is that there is a large constituency of Americans at odds with the prevailing bipartisan elite consensus on immigration, national security/foreign policy, and, to a lesser degree, free trade.

Multiculturalism is not an ethos held by all Americans versus the notion of a common American creed.

Spreading democracy around the world is not a higher priority for all Americans than **doing what is first and foremost in our national interest.** International trade, and with it the declining prices of goods and services, is not viewed as an economic panacea for all Americans given

the relatively higher value many ascribe to

protecting existing American jobs and industries. I believe that many of Trump's supporters and detractors read into his candidacy things that are not there based on what they wish to see.

But **the sentiment** reflected in Trump's supporters — that is, **an opposition to the political class in large part due to a belief that it prioritizes its own interests over the American interest, and is incapable of learning from its failures — seems clear.**

The Republican **establishment** will see Trump's success largely as Democrats do, as being based in hatred, bigotry, and an appeal to talk radio-listening deplorables.

However, this time will be DIFFERENT - the American Public will NOT stand for it -

They WILL Rebel - **DIRECTLY** against the Republican Establishment.

Republicans in general, and conservatives in particular, will have to **decide whether winning ugly** sometimes is better than **losing respectfully most all of the time.**

Trump particularly irks much of the GOP since he represents a middle finger to the GOP's 2012 autopsy, both stylistically and substantively. **The GOP establishment will view Trump as an aberration, while neglecting the concerns of millions of Americans** instead of either adopting the most popular and merit-worthy of their positions, or engaging them and presenting a viable alternative in good faith.

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Likewise, **GOP elites will ignore** one other critical part of Trump's candidacy: A belief in fighting fire with fire.

In primaries, **Establishment Republicans go all out to defeat True Conservatives** — everything is fair game. In past general elections, our nominees have failed to lay a glove on Democrats.

John Q Public has to realize - somehow - that **Voting in PRIMARIES is the MOST IMPORTANT.** It is our ONLY means of controlling WHO & WHAT we have for Elected Representation.

ONLY in Primaries do we have the ABILITY to CHOOSE the candidates that WE WANT.

Regular Elections are "too late" - the Parties have ALREADY chosen THEIR Crooks - we get to rubber-stamp one or the other.

Donald Trump's willingness to throw everything but the kitchen sink at Hillary Clinton may have been done ham-handedly, but it **was effective and landed several blows on Hillary Clinton.**

This error notwithstanding, if our candidates wish to defeat Democrats in the future, every line of attack must be on the table. Politics is a full contact sport. Republicans in general, and conservatives in particular, will have to decide whether **winning ugly sometimes** is better than **losing respectfully most all of the time**. Until and unless our culture changes, this is the sad reality of the situation in which we find ourselves.

Fighting according to suicidal rules of engagement against an opponent who counters unconstrained by any morals will more often than not prove just that — **suicidal**.

3. Yes, the media are the communications arm of the Democratic Party — but we have known it for years and done nothing about it

Among other things, **WikiLeaks has provided us with some of the most damning evidence in recent memory of collusion between the media and the Democratic Party**. But all of that said, the media almost singularly consist of Democrats to begin with. It would organically skew coverage in favor of Democrats without any official communication by way of: (1) story selection; (2) panel selection; (3) “man-on-the street” interviewees; (4) relative airtime given to campaigns; (5) overall slant of campaign coverage in terms of language and tone.

Conservatives are AWOL from Andrew Breitbart’s #War. Here’s how to win

Donna Brazile’s brazen receipt and sharing of debate questions in advance with the Clinton campaign, or CNN’s soliciting of questions for Donald Trump from the DNC confirms that **the collusion is direct**, but **the assumption should have always been that the media is largely the communications arm of the Democratic Party**.

Its denizens are **true believing progressives** whether cognizant of it or not as would be predicted by their backgrounds, educations and associations.

If Republicans operated on this premise, we would be far better off. **Living at the mercy of Democrats is not a winning strategy**.

And with the threats to the proliferation of conservative voices on social media — not to mention the monolithic progressivism of the academy — conservatives better start thinking about how to handle the quelling of our perspective in the public square but quickly.

You cannot win in politics if you do not have a viable plan to take back the culture.

There is **nothing new** under the sun. **Human nature is unchanging**.

The writings of the Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers tell us that **the Founders considered the possibility of all of the maladies that ail us today**, though **perhaps they could not have expected the extent of our cultural decay** and the speed at which it has occurred.

Our ignorance as a nation, of their warnings, is our undoing

"If the American people ever lose their virtue, they will fall to eating each other as they did in the old country"

— Thomas Jefferson

"The price good men pay for indifference to public affairs is to be ruled by evil men"

— Plato

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We don’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it was once like in the United States"

— Ronald Reagan

- See more at: https://www.conservativereview.com/commentary/2016/11/the-soul-of-the-gop-is-at-stake-here-are-3-lessons-conservatives-must-learn-from-2016?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=110916crcontentemail&utm_campaign=newslettertraffic#sthash.IVxNf013.dpuf