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This is not the end of Trump

Chaos in the White House has not diminished the chances of a two-term presidency

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David Halberstam, in 'The Best and the Brightest,' listed the 'virtues Americans have always respected' as 'hard work, self-sacrifice, decency, loyalty.' I don't believe that's changed since 1972. President Trump, in his sublime indecency, fails the test on all these qualities except perhaps hard work, yet tens of millions of Americans still admire him.

It's tempting to dismiss this reality. It's tempting to focus instead on the pressure building on Trump from multiple sources: the Mueller investigation, Paul Manafort's cooperating with Robert Mueller, Michael Cohen's guilty plea, the wins of progressive Democratic candidates, falling poll numbers. It's tempting to think Trump's finished, even if he's already been pronounced politically dead countless times.

This would be a mistake. That the Democratic Party will take the House in the midterm November elections and start impeachment proceedings against Trump is plausible, even likely. It's unlikely, however, that the Democrats will have the numbers in the Senate to convict him. This may be a positive scenario for Trump. As the victim president, or acquitted president, he'd fire up support going into 2020.

Republicans monopolise American myths

The chances of a two-term Trump presidency remain significant. I came away from a recent stay in purple-state Colorado more persuaded of this than ever. The strong economy became strong under President Obama but to deny Trump credit for it is not going to wash with most Americans. They feel a new confidence. They see it in more clients at the hardware store, more people eating out, more business start-ups.

Saving the planet is Jamie Dimon, the chief executive of JPMorgan

important work. But an exclusive focus on environmentalism that ignores working people's immediate needs can easily look like elitist indifference.

Chase, is right to tell Democrats to stop 'pounding away at business.' The Democratic Party is long on anger but short still of a winning message. It's a big mistake for Democrats to have allowed founding American myths of can-do optimism and self-reliance to become the exclusive preserve of Republicans. A unifying Democratic candidate from the heartland could claw them back.

In small-town America, now synonymous with Republican-majority America, any Democratic voter gets asked why Democrats are intent on taking away American guns, jobs and individualism, and replacing them with handouts to every peeved interest group. Regular mass shootings answer the gun question easily enough (even if not persuasively to most gun owners). The other questions are more problematic.

Don Colcord, a pharmacist in southwestern Colorado and a lifelong Democrat, told me: 'The Democratic Party has lost the ability to communicate with people who live in small towns. It seems to have no way of understanding their issues: how to pay bills, how to have a retirement, how to feed their families, what to do about bad schools, how to get health care, how to do better at creating new jobs when environmental concerns take them away.'

Democratic elitist indifference

Saving the planet is important work. But an exclusive focus on environmentalism that ignores working people's immediate needs can easily look like elitist indifference. Colcord, whose father worked in the mines, has watched in recent years as a coal-fired power plant in his region gets regulated out of existence — 'and when all those jobs go and your tax base with it, the party just doesn't care.'

In rural Colorado, Obamacare is a disaster. Insurance companies have pulled out, and when there's only one left, premiums go way up. Few people can afford health insurance at that price. It's perhaps the No. 1 concern of voters outside big cities. Some Coloradans worry that they will lose Medicaid if they take a job. The system is an anxiety-generating labyrinth.

To take back the White House in 2020, Democrats would be better advised to

Sure, if the Republican Party had not set out to destroy the Affordable Care Act, the legislation might have been amended to address its shortcomings. But on this signature issue, the

keep their eye on Colcord than on Manafort.

Democratic Party is widely seen as the author of a policy that failed low-wage Americans. Again, this looks like elitist indifference.

The big issue: income inequality

Colorado has some of the worst funded schools in the country. Some have gone to four-day weeks because there's no tax money to support them and it costs too much to run the school buses. Imagine telling the parents of kids in affluent metropolitan Democratic strongholds, sorry, we have to skip a day a week of school. But I don't see the Democratic Party owning the education issue.

Colcord calls himself an "ultraconservative Democrat." He supported Trump's tax cuts for businesses but hated the tax cuts for the wealthiest, and he says the biggest reason he's a Democrat is growing income inequality, an issue Republicans dismiss. He believes strongly in Roe v. Wade, having witnessed a 13-year-old giving birth when he was an intern in a hospital ("That really set my feelings"). He can't stand Trump's lies. He thinks that the country desperately needs immigration — some Colorado farms can't find workers, thanks to Trump — and that Trump's proposed wall is a crazy waste of money.

At the same time, he's disillusioned with a party that can't find a political idiom comprehensible to Americans around him. To take back the White House in 2020, Democrats would be better advised to keep their eye on Colcord than on Manafort.

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