**Why Last Week was Important?**

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September 26, 2022

Some weeks are more important than others. Two weeks ago was one of them. But, regarding three particular stories, much of their significance has been missed.

The death of HM Queen II led to a well-established transition of the crown compared with the refusal of too many Americans to recognize Joe Biden’s election as president. And, when compared with the crown’s only official role as head of state, certain flaws, contradictions and weaknesses in the roles of the US presidency are brutally exposed.

The threatened US national railway strike, had it occurred, would have been a catastrophe for America by cutting off vast amounts of critical products and resources vital to the economy.

And the electoral victory of a right-wing Swedish government in a country that had been left of centre and socialist is indicative of voter dissatisfaction and not a coming wave of autocracy.

The only official role of the Queen, and now the King, is to serve as the UK head of state. The crown exercises no executive authority, except that afforded by legitimacy, tradition, precedence and public consensus. The president however is the head of state, government, political party and the nation’s leader. The House of Windsor peacefully co-exists with Britain’s political parties unless or until an anti-monarchist party is voted into office-a highly unlikely prospect.

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The president has no such luxury. Indeed, the president’s four roles are inherently contradictory because of the institutions that were specifically not written into the Constitution and what the Founding Fathers denigrated as “factions:” aka political parties. And the destructive influence of both political parties today is proving the Founding Fathers right.

The presidential roles as head of the party and leader of the nation are in the most direct conflict in a nation divided equally between Democrats and Republicans. Worse, both parties view the other as evil, a virus that has not crossed the Atlantic yet. Under these septic conditions, Charles’ future as a popular ruler may be brighter than that of future residents of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

To say the nation missed a bullet by averting a rail strike is an extreme understatement. According to the Association of American Railways, last year, trains moved about 40% of total US GDP and 33% of all exports. This transport is not cheap. The average annual wage of railway workers last year was over $130,000.

Suppose the threatened national train strike was called. Consider just a few of the disastrous consequences. Agriculture’s dependence on fertilizer and nitrates would mean that a majority of farms would not be able to prepare the ground for next year’s crops. Chemicals for water purification would be unavailable. Grocery shelves would be empty. And to make up the transportation gap, about 100 million new trucks would be needed.

Last year, the nation had a small sampling of what damage this disruption will cause. Food distribution of the largest US meat producer, JRS, was interrupted by a cyber attack. The Colonial pipeline providing gasoline to the northeast, likewise, was cut-off. The ability of these massive attacks of disruption, the new MAD, to paralyze the nation is obvious as Puerto Rico just experienced when a superstorm cut off all electricity.

Finally, many European countries are now leaning politically right in part because prior governments, largely of the left, failed in governing. Sweden and Italy are among the most prominent examples. However, this is not what President Biden calls the battle of our time between democracy and autocracy.

China, Russia, Iran and North Korea are among these autocracies. But each has enormous domestic problems: declining demographics, standards of living, economic growth and food availability; and Covid and swelling debt. None is doing well. Indeed many governments, irrespective of the system, are simply not meeting public expectations.

One conclusion should be drawn from these three stories. In America, as both political parties are driving this nation further apart, concurrently, destructive disruptions, caused by man and nature, from the war in Ukraine to unprecedented heat waves, storms, floods and droughts threaten the nation. How will these dual disruptive forces be contained? Answers are welcome.

Governments and the public are fixated on immediate problems and crises. In the US, inflation, gas prices, the Dobbs decision and the growing legal problems of the former president will coalesce around the November elections. Still, the broader consequences arising from last week cannot be dismissed. Will each be addressed? Hope springs eternal. But eternity is a long time away.

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