'DONALD, YOU'RE FIRED': The Trump presidency will end on Wednesday when Joe Biden is sworn is as the 46th US president

Good riddance to Trump, who debased America and its democracy

Chris DONNELLY

AND so it came to pass that Donald Trump would become the first United States President to be impeached not once but twice.

For a man widely and justifiably mocked for the absurd manner in which he regularly proclaims himself to be an expert on all matters, part of his legacy will now be knowing more about impeachments than any of his 44 predecessors.

This Wednesday, Joe Biden will be sworn in as the 46th President of the USA, finally marking the end of the Trump presidency.

The Donald won't be there, but the thousands of American military personnel who will be in the nation's capital to prevent any violence illustrates how toxic American political culture has become as a result of the spectacular rise and calamitous fall of the former television celebrity.

It is a stain on a proud nation that more than 74 million people voted for Trump just two months ago in spite of observing the manner in which he conducted himself and the nation's affairs over the previous four years.

Difficult as it may be to accept, not least given how Trump has mishandled the Covid-19 crisis in America, but the past four years could have been even worse. George W Bush, the last Republican president before Trump, took the United States into two wars, destroying Afghanistan and Iraq, leading to tens of thousands of deaths, further destabilising the Middle East and fuelling the fire of anti-western sentiment that helped propel the Jihadist organisations and their terror campaigns in subsequent years. Imagine what might have happened had Trump been in the Oval Office after the Twin Towers fell.

Trump has demeaned the office of president, and therefore it was in a perverse way not surprising that his followers would seek to trash the seat of legislative power in the country.

That assault on the US Capitol was more beer hall putsch than Bastille storm. The truly miserable coalition of misfits constituting his ground forces included white supremacists, religious fundamentalists, militia loons and conspiracy theorists that have been the backbone of Trump's support base since he rose to power.

Five lives were lost as a consequence of violence directly attributable to the callous and incendiary utterances of a man unfit for office, high or low.

Just as hope (ultimately mostly unfulfilled) propelled Barack Obama into the White House, it was anger, fear and loathing that provided the fuel powering Trump to the shock win four years ago.

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Trump consistently resorted to dangerous and divisive rhetoric as a strategy to galvanise supporters. His agenda was explicitly racist from the earliest days of his campaigning right through to the final months, when he clearly implied that the votes registered from majority black cities could not be trusted.

Little wonder ex-Klan leader David Duke rallied to his cause so quickly. He labelled Mexican immigrants "rapists" and accused them of "bringing crime" into the country.

His legacy will be felt in many ways. He handed the Democrats control of both the House and Senate, the latter being confirmed through a remarkable double victory in the southern state of Georgia after Trump's post-election petulance helped tilt the balance decisively in favour of his opponents.

He has left the Republican Party in a state of turmoil, devoid of a moral compass since embracing Trump and torn as to whether to wholly disavow him or continue to endorse his divisive agenda. If Biden and Congressional Democrats play it right over the next two years they have a chance to further consolidate the party's advantage and implement a legislative agenda which can begin to address many of the deep-rooted causes of inequality and injustice in a wounded and deeply fractured nation.

Trump's criminally negligent mishandling of the pandemic crisis is the high price Americans have paid for embracing him. The US regularly records between 3,000 and 4,000 Covid deaths each day, with the overall death total in the country likely to race well past the 450,000 lives lost by month's end.

Trump debased America and its democracy. Now that the American people have fired him, the world will have good reason to feel relieved when he walks through the Oval Office doors for the last time.

ON THIS DAY

JANUARY 18 1921

Derry Unionists and Partition

A COMMUNICATION from the Local Government Board [Dublin] on Saturday brought home to the Derry Board of Guardians and the Derry Number Two Rural District Council the effect of Partition. Derry Number Two Rural District is situated in Donegal and it is proposed to annexe it to Letterkenny, a proposal against which the Unionist members of the Council protested.

The cutting-off of this district from the area administered by the Guardians was also objected to on the ground that, while the Board will be deprived of the income from that part of Donegal, no reduction could be effected in the working expenses of the institution in Derry.

The Local Government Board informed the Guardians that, as under the Government of Ireland Act [1920], the county of Derry would form part of the Northern area and the county of Donegal part of the Southern area, it became essential for administrative purposes to alter the present boundaries of the Union. As a result, the Board had given instructions for the issue of an Order separating the townlands comprised in Derry Number Two Rural District from the Union of Derry and adding them to the Union of Letterkenny from 1st April next.

The chairman (Mr AJ Irwin) – It is a very serious matter because we will lose our contributions from Donegal.

Mr Mitchell (Unionist) moved and Mr Alexander (Unionist) seconded a resolution asking the Local Government Board to allow Derry Number Two District to continue as a separate council and not to amalgamate it with Letterkenny. An amendment that no action be taken was moved by Mr Bradley (Nationalist). The voting was equal and the chairman gave his casting vote in favour of the motion which was carried.

Troop Train Ambushed

A TROOP train proceeding to Dungloe (Co Donegal) was ambushed at Kincasslagh on Wednesday. It was derailed by large boulders which had been placed across the line and heavy fire was opened upon it. According to information, it reached its destination without casualty to its occupants but the train was riddled with bullets.

The attack was carefully planned. It is rumoured that the attacking party suffered heavy casualties. **The unwelcome consequences of partition clearly came as a shock to the Derry Unionists who had long controlled the Derry Rural Council covering the strongly Unionist Laggan in East Donegal. Partition required major administrative and legal changes along the new proposed new border as Derry and Enniskillen Poor Law Unions lost their hinterlands in Donegal, Cavan and Leitrim and Clones, along with Derry, faced economic ruin.**

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