

Unasked questions on '60 Minutes'

What problems did Joe Biden solve during his decades in government?

By Cal Thomas

The "60 Minutes" interviews of the presidential and vice-presidential candidates last Sunday were more revealing for questions not asked and for sidestepping than for what inquiring minds really want to know prior to Election Day.

First, there was the presumption that government has all the answers to contemporary problems. There was nothing said about liberty, personal responsibility, or accountability for one's actions. The presumption among Democrats is that no one can do anything without government and if they succeed independent of Washington they will be penalized with higher taxes and more regulations to discourage initiative and risk-taking.

Systemic racism? Mr. Biden's response was to promise more spending to, writes Forbes, "make public colleges and universities, as well as private Historically Black Colleges and Universities, tuition-free for students coming from families making less than \$125,000 annually." But Mr. Biden opposes "federal funding going to for-profit charter schools" and "vouchers for private school tuition," which might allow children trapped in failing public schools to have the intellectual foundation necessary to achieve in college.

Second, Mr. Biden said free college would be paid for by taxing corporations. Corporations employ people. If they are taxed more, they are more likely to lay off workers, or not hire people at all.

In her interview with Sen. Kamala Harris, Norah O'Donnell noted: "The nonpartisan GovTrack has rated you as the most liberal senator. You supported the Green New Deal, you supported Medicare for All. You've supported

legalizing marijuana. Joe Biden doesn't support those things. So are you going to bring the policies, those progressive policies that you supported as senator, into a Biden administration?"

Ms. Harris gave a nonsensical answer while cackling and talking about her mother and how Ms. Harris loves hip-hop. There was no follow-up.

Ms. O'Donnell didn't ask and Ms. Harris didn't offer anything about cutting spending and reducing the size of

government. Are there no agencies or programs she and Mr. Biden would eliminate for failure to perform? The U.S. Treasury continues to take in record amounts of tax dollars, but Congress and administrations under both parties keep over-spending, adding to the debt.

Ms. O'Donnell did bring up the long-promoted claims by Trump allies that Hunter Biden's laptop contained emails that proved illegal influence peddling among Biden family members and foreign entities, but she let Mr. Biden get away with another allegation that he is the victim of a "smear campaign" involving Vladimir Putin and Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani. She failed to follow up.

Asked to respond to assertions that he is a "Trojan Horse" for liberals like Sens. Bernie Sanders, Vermont independent, Elizabeth Warren, Massachusetts Democrat, and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, New York Democrat, Mr. Biden responded: "(Trump would) love to run against them, wouldn't he? Mr. President, you're running against Joe Biden. Joe Biden has a deep, steep, and successful record over a long, long time."

Ms. O'Donnell might have reminded him of Mr. Trump's statement that he has done more in 47 months than Mr. Biden did in 47 years. What problems did Mr. Biden solve during his decades in government? Alas, the question wasn't asked.

Here's another unasked question: Mr. Biden, you and President Obama promised "shovel-ready" jobs as part of your administration's infrastructure spending. Later, President Obama acknowledged that those promised jobs in the stimulus bill weren't shovel ready after all. He laughed and so did the audience. You are again calling for infrastructure spending. Why should people believe you will do this time what you failed to do before?

The president is correct that there is a double media standard when it comes to him and his opponents. Media credibility may be higher than that of Congress, but not enough to be encouraging. It's certainly nothing to brag about.

Cal Thomas, a nationally syndicated columnist, is the author of "America's Expiration Date: The Fall of Empires, Superpowers and the United States" (HarperCollins/Zondervan, January 2020).

Thoughts on the divided states of America

This election comes down to the personal character of the presidential candidates

By Andrew P. Napolitano

During the darkest days of the American Revolution, Thomas Paine, the British-born-turned-American political philosopher, wrote of his adopted country, "These are the times that try men's souls." He was referring to the hard choices that were facing the colonists.

History is filled with hard choices. They are often made hard by fear — fear of making the wrong choice, fear of chaos, fear of loss.

Paine argued that a true patriot could love his country and despise its government because he understood that government negates liberty, and liberty — not government — is our lifeblood.

He comes to mind this week as Americans decide who will be the most powerful person on earth for the next four years. Will this election bring four years of contrived chaos or nagging socialism?

Americans are in two politically warring camps; each side hates the other and fears darkness if the other side wins.

Many folks who rely on government largesse fear that their government benefits might stop or change. Others fear that their income and wealth will be devoured by taxes and inflation. These are real fears because the federal government today gives away more than it collects. It has borrowed \$3 trillion in the past year — more money borrowed per minute than at any time in history. All that new cash in the money supply chasing the same amount of goods and services will surely raise the price of everything.

And taxes will go up no matter who is elected president because the government simply cannot survive long on borrowing. Someday, people will stop lending it money. Someone — today, tomorrow, this year, next year — must pay interest on the \$30 billion that the feds borrowed to fund World War I — so far, \$15 billion in interest and growing.

I make these observations because the choice next week is less about policy and more about personality. The government's misdeeds of the past — endless wars, endless welfare, endless government — have dictated a future that will be divisive, bleak and broke.

I have argued in these columns that we don't really have a two-party system in America. We have one party — the Big Government Party. It has a Democratic wing that likes war and individual welfare and borrowing and taxes and staying in power, and a Republican wing that likes war and corporate welfare and borrowing and taxes and staying in power.

The feds have borrowed so much money and have so much debt that there is little room for policy differences between these two party branches when it comes to governing.

Readers of this column know that I fervently believe that our rights come from our humanity and not from the government. The highest of our rights is the right to live from the moment of conception. I believe that you can think as you wish,

say what you think, publish what you say, worship or not as you please, defend yourself using guns and marry without the government's permission. I believe that government is too big, too intrusive and too expensive.

Everything the government has it has stolen and much of what it says are lies. It pays only lip service to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

I also believe that Black lives matter, that immigrants raised here are as American as the rest of us and that all persons — like three of my four grand-

parents — have the moral right to better their lives by coming here and should be welcomed. I believe that government should not separate immigrant children from their parents, that most police are fair and courageous, some are racists and none should have snooping gear or military equipment.

I don't want a government strong enough to take care of me. But I expect a government truthful enough to reveal what it knows so I can care for myself. If an assault — man-made or of natural origin or even a phony fear concocted by evildoers — is coming, and the government knows of it, the government cannot morally keep this knowledge to itself.

I believe — with Thomas Jefferson — that that government is best which governs least.

Yet, as Matthew Arnold asked in "Dover Beach," why are we like two armies in the night? Why do we experience struggle and flight? Why are we as bitterly divided today as we were back in the late 1960s? Where is happiness? Why do good people fear criticizing the government? Why does the government spy on us? Have we really consented to give to the government all the powers that it exercises?

This election comes down to the personal character of the presidential candidates. Who is more honest? Who is more modest? Who has a better concept of pain and fear? Who understands

the Constitution? Who is disruptive and chaotic? Who is peaceful and embracing? Who belittles? Who explains? Who embraces? Who rejects?

Who is one of us? Should power be put into the hands of a divider or a uniter? If the emperor has no clothes, we must acknowledge it. If we made mistakes, we must correct them. If we need change, we must embrace it. If change is worse than the present, we must reject it.

Thomas Paine reminded the beleaguered colonial army, on the verge of freezing to death in New Jersey at Christmastime in 1776, that those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must undergo the fatigues of supporting it.

Andrew P. Napolitano, a former judge of the Superior Court of New Jersey, is a regular contributor to The Washington Times. He is the author of nine books on the U.S. Constitution.



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Whither vaccine policy?

Toward ending restrictions that devastate small businesses, strangle education and cause mental health crises

By Gary Anderson

Not being a touchy-feely sort, I was into social distancing before social distancing was cool. Not so much regarding masks, but I wear one in stores even in states where they are not required as a courtesy to those people who are worried about COVID-19 infection. But this brings up the question of what to do after there is a government-approved vaccine.

If polls are to be believed, about half the nation's population will not take the vaccine. Sen. Kamala Harris says she will not be inoculated if President Trump recommends it. This brings up the question of public policy. Will an approved vaccine be made mandatory nationwide? If not, will lockdowns and masks remain mandatory along with limits on attendance at public events and the number of patrons allowed in bars and restaurants?

This is not an inconsequential issue. States such as New York with severe restrictions are set to lose upwards of 60 percent of their restaurant industry within the year if relief is not forthcoming. Distance learning is threatening to produce an undereducated generation; this is particularly true among minorities, the poor and other groups with limited or no Internet access. If projections are true, we may have to begin wrestling with these issues by late November.

Who should be required to take the vaccine? Health care professionals — particularly those dealing with the elderly — and the military should, but vaccination should be voluntary for the rest of the population. I will take it as soon as it is offered.

Nevertheless, those who opt out should not be given any special consideration. They can take their chances or continue to bubble wrap themselves if they so desire. Those who want to continue to work from home and home school should do so, but no



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special treatment should be given. That means no Zoom classes or special Zoom meetings should be allowed for public education or conferences. Sporting events and concerts should resume without social distancing, and movie theaters should reopen with no mask requirements. The same should hold true with airlines and public transportation.

These limitations should not be set in place immediately. Best case, it will take at least three months from

emergency approval before enough vaccine is available for all those who are required or want it to be vaccinated. After that grace period, any federal restrictions on gatherings and mask requirements should be lifted. Obviously, states are free to keep restrictions as their governments see fit. But national public policy should be able to get beyond the economic restrictions that are devastating small business, strangling education and causing unprecedented mental health crisis — particularly

among the elderly who have been separated from loved ones for months.

Like him or lump him Dr. Anthony Fauci, recently acknowledged the toll that lockdowns take in a "60 Minutes" interview and said that he would only recommend another national lockdown in the direst of circumstances. There is a difference between prudence and babying an entire population. New York, California and Michigan have tried babying, and it is not surprising that large elements of their populations are drifting into civil disobedience and — in some cases — open revolt. The plots against the governor of Michigan are extreme cases and such behavior cannot be tolerated, but governors and other officials who overplay their hands weaken respect for the rule of law; and that is a slippery slope.

If there is any good to come out of the current pandemic, it has certainly improved public hygiene in this nation and probably the world. It has also raised the level of public consciousness regarding having a reserve of protective gear and medical supplies in the event of a future biological incident. What it has not done is create a consensus among Americans about the best way to handle a biological emergency. When I was in the business of looking at military futures, I did not think that any rational foe would use a biological threat as a weapon of deterrence. Having watched what this lockdown did to the American economy and morale, I am not so sure.

Some cynics believe that the COVID-19 pandemic will magically disappear after Nov. 3, and that it has largely been a left-wing plot to discredit President Trump. I am not willing to go that far, but I am prepared to bet that media coverage will decrease significantly because it will no longer be a useful tool with which left-leaning politicians and media can exploit public misery.

Gary Anderson lectures on Alternative Analysis at the graduate level