

Are the Good Times Over for Joe?

“When sorrows come,” said King Claudius, “they come not single spies but in battalions.” As the king found out. So it seems with President Joe Biden, who must be asking himself the question Merle Haggard asked: “Are the good times really over for good?”

Consider the critical issue with voters today: the state of the economy. Inflation in September stood at 5.4 percent year on year. With prices of food and fuel rising, the supply chains for goods entering the country and headed for stores, shelves, and showrooms before Thanksgiving and Christmas are clogged. Container ships are backed up in ports, waiting to unload on both coasts. Many of the trucks to carry the goods to inland markets sit idle for lack of drivers. The latest employment figures show 10.4 million U.S. jobs going begging in August as 4.3 million workers dropped out of the labor force.

How are Democrats responding to the return of inflation? By trying to pile a \$3.5 trillion social spending package on top of a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package on top of the \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief act Biden signed in March. Coupled with an easy-money Fed policy, this hand could play out for Biden the way it played out for former President Jimmy Carter.

A second issue that appears beyond the capacity of the Biden people to solve is the invasion from across our southern border. Nightly film of border crossers and their encounters with the Border Patrol have riveted the attention of the nation.

Lately, there has been a new feature. Sporadic small arms fire at U.S. Border Patrol agents by cartel coyotes who are

enriching themselves by steering migrants from all over the world to crossing points on the Rio Grande. By year's end, some 2 million illegal immigrants will have crossed under the de facto open borders policy of the Biden administration. Entering with them are scores of thousands of "got aways" who have avoided contact with U.S. authorities on the way into our country.

Another issue for Biden is the surge of both random and purposeful violence in liberal Democratic cities where knifings, shootings, and killings are approaching new records. With almost everyone carrying a phone camera, the daily photos of urban shootings have turned the country against the "defund the police!" crowd and the political party that is associated with them.

The George Floyd summer is over. Police departments are being refunded, and cops are being defended and demanded in neighborhoods that have suffered from their resignations, retirements, and removal.

Then there is the new culture-war issue of race and education and whether America's children should be taught in their schools about the goodness and greatness of their country or about its sins and crimes. Civic gatherings have erupted, with parents facing off against teachers and school boards in Northern Virginia communities near where historic battles of the Civil War were fought.

Former Gov. Terry McAuliffe, seeking to regain his office, may have put his campaign in peril by telling parents they have no legitimate role in decisions about what their children should be taught, and not taught, in Virginia's public schools. "I'm not going to let parents come into schools and actually take books out and make their own decisions," said McAuliffe. "I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach."

Biden's political fortunes and his party's future are likely to hinge upon the fate of his Build Back Better legislation, currently in the custody of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Capitulating to the demands of progressives, Biden and Pelosi agreed to delay passage of the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill, which had easily passed in the Senate, until the \$3.5 trillion social safety net bill could catch up and travel in tandem to approval in both Houses.

Biden has wagered his presidency on passage of both the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill and as large a share of the \$3.5 trillion social safety net program as he can convince Democratic Sens. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona to approve. By caving to the both-or-nothing ultimatum the progressives issued to her, which caused Pelosi to hold up certain and swift passage of the infrastructure bill, she may have imperiled them both.

Meanwhile, other priority agenda items of both Democratic moderates and progressives appear headed for the boneyard. The \$15 minimum wage is gone. A "path to citizenship" for millions of illegal immigrants seems dead. Police reform appears to have been abandoned. Federal legislation to give the Department of Justice veto power over state GOP voting reforms appears no longer viable.

With all his chips now in the middle of the table as this session of Congress winds down, Biden's hand looks weaker and weaker.

Wednesday, four polls found that half the nation—and in three of them, more than half—now disapprove of his presidency. In the 10th month of his four-year term, are the good times really over for good—for Joe Biden? Starting to look that way.

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