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Why I'm Not Predicting a Biden Blowout

By Matt A. Mayer

In 2016, I was one of the very few people who [publicly stated the night before the election](#) that, despite the polling data, Trump was going to win 280 to 258. I made that prediction because what I was seeing and hearing across Ohio didn't match what the polling said would happen. I put out a detailed electoral map showing which states he'd win. I got every state right except Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, which I called for Clinton, I thought New Hampshire would go for Trump. I let history overinfluence my call on Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, as no Republican had won Wisconsin since 1984 and Pennsylvania since 1988.

Right now, my gut is telling me something just isn't right again between the polling and the facts on the ground. Perhaps it is true that Trump has so alienated suburban white women that he has lost their vote no matter what happens and he won't surpass his African American and Hispanic 2016 vote totals. Maybe 2020 will look more like 2018 than 2016.

But what about the rioting and destruction occurring in democratically-controlled cities across America? Are suburban voters who see the pictures of burned-out city centers and attacks on innocent diners really going to put those aside because Trump is a boor on Twitter?

Just this past weekend, there were peaceful protesters in my largely lily white and wealthy suburban city of Dublin, Ohio, holding BLM signs downtown saying 'White silence is violence'. Do all of the suburbanites who see signs like that really agree with it, or believe the BLM and antifa bad apples couldn't possibly join the protesters and start engaging in violence like they did elsewhere?

And what about the surge in legal gun purchases over the last few months? Are those purchases totally unrelated to the rioting going on? I doubt it. People buy guns when they get nervous that the police won't be able to protect their properties or families should what they are seeing. Are those nervous gun buyers really going to cast a ballot for the Biden-Harris ticket that has largely failed to speak up about the rioting and that has at a minimum advocated for diverting police funding elsewhere and more honestly pushed to defund the police?

Then you have the continued good economic news on manufacturing activity, factory orders, and employment. Most Americans acknowledge that Trump invigorated the private sector before the pandemic hit, especially for African Americans, Hispanics, those without a college degree.

They also know that Trump was the only politician in decades

to push back on China's technology theft and manipulation of trade rules. Americans know personally the extent of the economic devastation wrought by the China-caused pandemic shutdown. With unemployment dropping faster than expected, will a majority of Americans really hand the reins back to a career politician whose leadership as vice president led to a stagnant economy for eight years?

Foreign policy rarely impacts US elections, but are Americans going to totally ignore what has happened in the last three weeks when the facts collide so radically with the media's caricature of Trump? Beyond keeping the US out of wars and bringing troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan, Trump not only secured historic peace deals between Israel and the UAE and Bahrain, he also managed to normalize relations between Serbia and Kosovo. He's earned two Nobel Peace Prize nominations so far. With an Israel-Saudi Arabia peace deal rumored to be coming, Trump is truly bringing peace to the Middle East, leaving Iran isolated and broke.

German [confirmation](#) of Russia's use of military grade chemical weapon novichok on Alexei Navalny has made German chancellor Angela Merkel look weak on Vladimir Putin, given her nonstop defense of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. The pipeline from Russia to Germany will make Germany and Europe more reliant upon Russia and put petrodollars into Putin's pocket to wreak havoc globally. Trump's aggressive push to stop the pipeline to weaken Putin and to get European countries to increase their budget commitments to Nato are being vindicated. It is Germany's Merkel who is making Nato look emasculated vis-à-vis Russia. Will that not matter at all to voters?

Finally, even on the pandemic response, with more data coming out, the US response resulted in a lower case mortality rate than in Germany and France. The media hailed the German and French responses before the data showed that the US case mortality rate was actually lower. As the virus recedes in the US and grows in Europe, does anyone really believe that had the same result occurred under Barack Obama that the media would be hailing him as near god-like? As more Americans realize the US response wasn't as bad as the media portrayed it, will they really punish Trump for doing better than the Europeans?

If I had to predict what I think will happen in seven weeks, I'd come down to a 299 to 239 Trump reelection victory. Each side would win the same states won in 2016, except I'd give Trump New Hampshire and Biden Arizona. That means

I think Trump will again sweep the blue-collar states of Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, with a smaller margin in Ohio and larger margins in the other three than in 2016. The most likely state to change columns over the next seven weeks would be Arizona, as I increasingly think that might be the closest battle of the election. The two states to watch for a surprise are Minnesota flipping to Trump and North Carolina going for Biden.

Trump has room to lose a state or two, whereas Biden must win two larger Trump states to eke out a razor-thin win. The momentum is with Trump right now, but seven weeks is a lifetime in today's Twitterized culture.

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