

# Desperate Times and Desperate Measures

(10/28/20)

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The idiom “desperate times call for drastic measures” has been attributed to Hippocrates. The philosophy has become a staple for those who will resort to any measure to justify their actions. There are some who believe that the expression was a staple of an American revolutionary fervor. I received in the mail a Biden advertisement that reminded me of just how desperate the anti-Trump forces are. In the minds of the political handlers, present times are desperate and therefore call for nearly any measure in order that the opponent be defeated. The ad showed a woman sitting alone in a dark room with the quote: “My husband didn’t get to go to Walter Reed. He died alone in a county hospital. We thought Donald Trump would protect us, he couldn’t even protect himself.” The other side of the frightening message was that COVID-19 has killed 210,000 Americans and: “Because of Trump’s lies, millions suffer with grief, debt and isolation.” In other words, it is Trump’s fault that people are dying from COVID-19. Never mind that infection and death rates are spiking around the world due to the winter resurgence of the virus. The message is plain and simple: in order to end the COVID-19 disease and death, vote for Joe Biden and the pandemic will disappear.

The Trump forces, for their part, rely upon the early estimate of 2.2 million deaths from COVID-19 and simply urge people not to be overly worried about the future.

I could not help but think of the attack on Pearl Harbor and the Philippines when the United States military was virtually decimated. Clearly, the Roosevelt administration, which was negotiating with the Japanese at the time, had every reason to fear the Imperialistic ambitions of the Japanese Emperor. Nevertheless, the Roosevelt Administration missed all the signs of the impending disaster. Americans rallied together, and never did Roosevelt’s political enemies blame him for the attack or World War II.

Is it fair game to blame an opponent for a disease unleashed in China and which has spread throughout the world? While COVID-19 is not nearly as destructive as most of its predecessor diseases, it cannot be dismissed as irrelevant either. Never mind the facts. The political hucksters of the present age care not about the reality. The bottom line is, what sort of crude and demonic message can be hurled against the opposition in a political contest?

The ad that I received, undisguisedly blaming President Trump for 210,000 deaths, “because of Trump’s lies”, only seems like a new low to those who care. When I asked a friend of mine what he thought of the ad, he commented: “Well, you have to fight fire with fire. Trump lies also.” In other words, desperate times call for desperate measures and it matters not how destructive those desperate measures are.

Like most Americans, the revulsion which we feel for the current political environment is only matched by the realization that the behavior of the candidates who run for President of the United States will be emulated by our children in the next generation. What are we

teaching our kids and those who may not be in touch with why the future matters? We, those of us that nominate and vote for this flotsam and jetsam, are sending the message that it pays to be a jerk. It is legitimate to be dishonest and the ends justify the means. We should all be ashamed. The candidates who are running for President of the United States are us. Not U.S., but us. Most people with whom I have discussed this reject the notion that they have any individual or personal responsibility for the current revolting political status. Rather, most Americans feel that what is going on in the body politic is caused by somebody else. Biden has been in Washington too long. Trump is arrogant and rude. It is always about someone else, and not about ourselves.

The hard truth is that the negative and dishonest messaging by our political parties occurs because it works. In my experience, working on and managing a few political campaigns, it was always easier to raise money for negative ads than for positive ones. In fact, there were people with lots of money to spend who were not interested in giving money unless they knew it was going to be used to decimate an opponent with scurrilous irrelevancies. The big-time givers, and the politicians who they control, believe that the electorate is dumb. They can say anything they want, and maybe some of the garbage will stick to the wall. There is no limit to what can be said or how it is articulated. Once again, the ends justify the means; desperate times call for desperate measures.

Although I have considered not voting in numerous elections, or perhaps trying to find a third-party candidate, I will vote again. I will not merely hold my nose, but I also will hold my tongue. Like most Americans, I will make a decision that I am not happy with, and I will pray that perhaps we can teach our kids and grandkids something about the grandeur of being responsible citizens.

The “bottom line,” as our accountant friends like to say, is that Donald Trump did not cause the virus and there is little else that anyone could have done, other than to have curtailed even more of our liberties than has already been the case. It is doubtful that anyone else would have embarked upon the Warp Speed project, which emulates both the Manhattan Project and the race for the first moon landing.

These are indeed desperate times, but they do not call for desperate measures. Desperate times that call for desperate measures lead to the loss of liberty wherever that twisted philosophy has triumphed.

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