



A Judicial Watch Election Bulletin:

# The Militant Left's Plan to Disrupt the 2020 Presidential Election



Seizing Power by Abandoning the Lawful Election Process



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## **Introduction**

In August 2020, a group calling itself the “Transition Integrity Project” (TIP) released a 22-page report, titled “*Preventing a Disrupted Presidential Election*,” outlining four 2020 presidential election crisis models. TIP describes the election crisis modeling as “war gaming.” The war-gamed election scenarios were: 1. A decisive Trump win; 2. A decisive Biden win; 3. A narrow Biden win; and, 4. A period of extended uncertainty after the election. The outcome of each TIP scenario results in street violence and political impasse.

TIP purports to be “a bipartisan group of over 100 current and former senior government and campaign leaders and other experts.” It is a collection of professional Democratic political operatives and Republican “Never-Trumpers.” Organizers and leaders include Georgetown law professor Rosa Brooks, Nils Gilman of the “independent” Berggruen Institute in California, and John Podesta, the longtime fixer and handler of the Clinton political dynasty. The nominally Republican members of group include former Republican National Chair Michael Steele, journalist David Frum, and former magazine editor Bill Kristol.

The Trump opponents met via Zoom for four days in June and strategized their reported political crisis and authored a report that reads like a cross between a Marxist organization’s protester guide and a Democratic National Committee talking points paper.<sup>i</sup> The title of the paper appears to be an exercise in disinformation, as the report’s focus appears to be the Left’s plans to deny President Trump reelection at all costs.

## **Discussion**

Judicial Watch investigative journalist Micah Morrison discussed the TIP report in an August 25, 2020, column titled, “Left Threatens Violence Over Election Loss.”<sup>ii</sup> He notes:

**“The report can be read simply as an occasionally hilarious guide to the Left’s id. After spending many pages trashing the president as a violent racist democracy-stealing criminal and worst-person-ever, TIP states that it ‘takes no position on how Americans should cast their votes.’**

**But the document also provides some interesting clues about how the Left would handle a close contest.”**

We will take a closer look at both the explicit statements of TIP and the historical context for their postulated scenarios. America has had close and hotly contested elections before – it is not a new phenomenon. The present circumstances are different. The leadership of the American Left and their allies have published a paper advocating strategies that are outside the law and regular electoral process.

Publication of the TIP report is an information warfare strategy employed for revolutionary political purposes. The strategy is sophisticated and multifaceted. The TIP document:

- Lays the groundwork for “consensus” news media and social media narratives;
- Rationalizes “unconventional strategies” for generating maximum confusion and turmoil over “unfavorable” election outcomes;
- Projects accusations of unlawful/criminal conduct on President Trump and those voting for him;
- Co-opts the (already politically sympathetic) Washington DC federal bureaucracy to support their strategy from the headquarters of every department and agency of the Executive;
- Relies (correctly) on a low-awareness/low-energy response from the political Right to counter the TIP program.

Is it possible that the leadership of the American Left, along with their Never-Trumper allies, are busy talking themselves into advocating and promoting street violence as a response to a presidential election?

Will the militant American Left resort to unlawful and irregular practices to achieve an extraconstitutional political outcome?

When you examine what the leadership of the American Left has committed to writing in the TIP report, the answer is clear: Yes.

That has been ratified by the opinion page of the *New York Times*: “If Trump tries to corrupt the election, we’re going to need the people who want to abolish the police and those who want to defend the integrity of the F.B.I. to work together. **They may have to put their bodies on the line in a way that few living Americans have experienced.**”<sup>iii</sup> [Emphasis added].

*New York Times* media reporter Ben Smith gleefully reported on August 2, 2020 about yet another Democrat Party-led secession to destroy the Union. He provided details on one of the TIP war-gaming scenarios:

**“But Mr. Podesta, playing Mr. Biden, shocked the organizers by saying he felt his party wouldn’t let him concede. Alleging voter suppression, he persuaded the governors of Wisconsin and Michigan to send pro-Biden electors to the Electoral College.**

**In that scenario, California, Oregon, and Washington then threatened to secede from the United States if Mr. Trump took office as planned. The House named Mr. Biden president; the Senate and White House stuck with Mr. Trump. At that point in the scenario, the nation stopped looking to the media for cues, and waited to see what the military would do.”<sup>iv</sup>**

The American Left is not upholding and defending the Constitution. They view it as a troublesome document. It is an impediment to the power they seek. It is a handy tool

that occasionally provides leverage. It is something to be taken off the shelf and used on occasion, then quickly stowed for more “progressive” instruments, such as the Cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt School’s Critical Theory. Political correctness and the cancel culture are the poisonous fruits of that twisted and deadly philosophy.

The American Left seeks to organize, direct and exploit “human resources” (a Marxist term) to their advantage for seizing power. That is it. It is a framework unencumbered with what they consider the archaic thinking infused throughout the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Clause 4 of Section 1 of Article 2 of the U.S. Constitution sets a national election day. The Left does not like that. They want an election week or month or season. The aim is to keep counting and counting and counting votes until you get to the right number that assures you victory. This strategy was explained well in *Axios* reporting concerning a Democratic analytics firm called Hawkfish – a company funded by Michael Bloomberg and that works for the Democratic National Committee as well as pro-Biden Super PACs – has warned of a “red mirage.” The “red mirage” is the Democratic operatives’ term for an apparent Trump landslide victory on election night – until “all the votes are counted.”<sup>v</sup> Hawkfish and their clients want “election season.” They project the need to use days, and perhaps weeks to count mail-in ballots, absentee ballots, provisional ballots, contested ballots, and then “other” ballots. Keep counting until their candidate wins.

### Analysis

In early June 2020, Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden claimed President Trump will try to “steal this election,” and that access to voting was his “single greatest concern.”<sup>vi</sup> Those are strong words.

No such words were used to describe the unmitigated disaster of the Democrat Caucuses in Iowa in February 2020. Days of chaos followed the caucus. There was no reliable vote count. The voting “experts” of the Democrat Party failed. Pete Buttigieg was eventually declared the winner. Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez called for the elimination of caucuses in all states by 2024. The disaster in Iowa is not featured in the doomsday scenarios reported by TIP.

In the opening paragraph of their “bipartisan” report, TIP states: “We assess with a high degree of likelihood that November’s elections will be marked by a chaotic legal and political landscape.”

Frankly, that is not too shocking given recent election history. In late August 2020, a New Jersey state court threw out election results in Patterson, NJ and order new elections because of mail-in voting irregularities. Four men, including a city councilman and a councilman-elect, were charged with vote fraud.<sup>vii</sup>

The TIP report goes off the rails quickly after their first assessment. Their opening anti-Trump salvo states: “President Trump is likely to contest the result by both legal and extra-legal means, in an attempt to hold onto power.” We have organized TIP claims and quotes as both a reference and a visual analytical tool.

Here are excerpts from the TIP report ...

<b><u>Claim/Postulated Scenario</u></b>	<b><u>Quote(s)</u></b>
Trump will act illegally and encourage others to do so.	<p>President Trump is likely to contest the result by both legal and extra-legal means, to hold onto power.</p> <p>We assess that there is a chance the president will attempt to convince legislatures and/or governors to take actions – including illegal actions – to defy the popular vote.</p>
Trump will prioritize personal gain at the end of his administration.	<p>Participants in our exercises of all backgrounds and ideologies believed that Trump would prioritize personal gain and self-protection over ensuring an orderly administrative handoff to his successor.</p> <p>Trump may use pardons to thwart future criminal prosecution, arrange business deals with foreign governments that benefit him financially, attempt to bribe and silence associates, declassify sensitive documents, and attempt to divert federal funds to his own businesses.</p> <p>Participants in the scenario exercises universally believed that self-preservation for President Trump and his family will be Trump’s first and possibly only priority if he is forced to concede electoral defeat. Before he leaves office he might maximize the flow of federal money into Trump businesses (moves played: direct COVID-19 relief package for Trump hotels; relocate to Mar-a-Lago for the final months of his presidency); negotiate business deals with foreign countries; and purge documents that might incriminate foreign governments and business partners (for example, documents related to Jamal Khashoggi’s murder). President Trump could also launch his next business venture from the White House (speculations include “MAGA TV,” possibly headed by Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner).</p>
Trump will encourage chaos and violence.	<p>The potential for violent conflict is high, particularly since Trump encourages his supporters to take up arms.</p> <p>The Trump Campaign understood that its most effective strategy was not just to create more doubt about the validity of votes for Biden, but also to sew more chaos and disruption so that President Trump could position himself as the only one capable of ensuring law and order. The Trump Campaign stoked chaos and mayhem by urging local police forces to break up Black Lives Matter and pro-</p>

	<p>Biden demonstrations and encouraging Alt Right / Boogaloo supporters to confront liberal protestors.</p>
<p>Electoral fraud is not a genuine problem.</p>	<p>Voting fraud is virtually non-existent, but Trump lies about it to create a narrative designed to politically mobilize his base and to create the basis for contesting the results should he lose (Note: Heritage has an excellent compilation of voter fraud cases here: <a href="https://www.heritage.org/voterfraud/search">https://www.heritage.org/voterfraud/search</a>)</p>
<p>Trump will use the military and other instruments of government to his end.</p>	<p>Using federal agencies to justify or support Trump campaign tactics. In one of the more aggressive moves undertaken in one of the TIP exercises, Team Trump had Attorney General Bill Barr order the seizure of mail-in ballots to ensure that vote counting would stop.</p> <p>Many participants expressed concern that the Department of Justice has been politicized and would be used to provide legal cover for the President's actions. In one TIP simulation, the teams playing the Department of Justice and the Postmaster General took action to seize ballots going through the mail, allegedly to "safeguard" the ballots pursuant to a fraud investigation.</p> <p>The one area of genuine uncertainty related to whether Team Trump could convince the military to deploy active duty troops domestically. In the scenario, the military refused to support Team Trump, but there was concern that this reflected "recency bias" given that the exercises were run shortly after participants observed the military's cautiousness in the wake of the June 1, 2020 events in Lafayette Square.</p> <p>In some scenarios examined by TIP, Team Trump succeeded in invoking the Insurrection Act and sending active duty military troops into US cities to "restore order," "protect" voting places, or confiscate "fraudulent" ballots.</p> <p>One participant expressed concern that Attorney General Barr could launch a bogus investigation into "terrorist ties" of the Biden transition team in order to justify surveillance, and/or facilitate a false flag operation before the election or when the election is still being contested.</p> <p>The President deployed agents from Homeland Security to Portland to suppress racial justice protestors</p>
<p>Trump may initiate a crisis for his own benefit.</p>	<p>There was quite a bit of speculation that Trump might himself initiate a foreign crisis shortly after the election or during the transition, perhaps to change the media narrative around a contested election, attempt to rally nationalist feelings to himself, or placate foreign leaders to whom he may feel beholden, such as Vladimir Putin.</p>

<p>Trump, with assistance of “right-wing” media, may launch a disinformation campaign.</p>	<p>The Trump Campaign engaged in a large and coordinated disinformation campaign primarily focused on the legitimacy of the mail-in ballots. This campaign used the media to amplify “stolen election” and “voter fraud” narratives, and launched noisy DoJ investigation into voter fraud . . . Trump Campaign surrogates released false information that Joe Biden had suffered a heart-attack in an attempt to undermine perceptions of Biden’s fitness to hold office. The Biden Campaign quickly dispelled this information, but Facebook kept posts about the heart-attack up.</p> <p>Sensing the election slipping away, right-wing media pursued particularly aggressive and provocative strategies. Infowars published a list of addresses, phone numbers, and other personal information of electors pledged to vote for Joe Biden. The announcement included spurious claims linking 88 of these electors to Soros and 14 to child sex trafficking. Rush Limbaugh and others accused the Biden campaign of accepting help from China, a message picked up by the mainstream media.</p>
<p>Trump may physically refuse to leave the White House.</p>	<p>Biden’s electoral victory was certified but Trump refused to leave the White House. He began to burn documents and potentially incriminating evidence, and continued to launch attacks against the legitimacy of the election. President Trump released a series of pardons for members of his administration as well as himself before the Secret Service escorted him out of the White House.</p>
<p>White supremacists are responsible for Trump’s success.</p>	<p>More broadly, there needs to be a robust, intentional, and specific strategy to challenge the white supremacist and extremist networks that enabled Trump’s rise to power and were in turn enabled by Trump’s administration. This base will not automatically demobilize if and when Trump leaves office, and it is inimical to the kind of pluralist democracy the founders intended.</p>
<p>Trump is “ruthless,” Biden is “constrained.”</p>	<p>Team Trump was consistently more ruthless than Team Biden – more willing to ignore existing democratic norms, to make use of disinformation, to deploy federal agencies to promote Trump’s personal and electoral interests, and to engage in intimidation campaigns. Team Biden generally felt constrained by a commitment to norms and a desire to tamp down violence and reduce instability.</p>

The single greatest irony of the TIP report is the overwhelming use of “projection” in framing and characterizing various claims against President Trump (and his supporters) as a means to justify the Left’s “irregular” plans to disrupt the election process.

Projection, as a political technique, is not a secret. The American Left has never bothered to hide or disguise it, nor have they even found it desirable to do so.

The covert portion of the projection technique is the funding and organizational involvement behind the projection itself. Who is paying the bills for TIP and its affiliates? This is a highly organized, sophisticated operation with career political operatives calling the shots. No one does this for free, and someone (or some entity) is paying the bill. Who?

The TIP report is itself an exercise of power. Political intelligence information and public policy strategies are being fused through the actions of TIP. That synthesis is a demonstration of real political power, and it is being implemented in a written plan that contemplates street violence to effect the outcome of the US presidential election.

The political power resourced and generated from a document like the TIP report can be used for persuasion (through news and social media), indoctrination (of activists and other “true believers”), and introduces the threat of terror and street violence (to the general population) as a “normal” or “expected” outcome.

The very publication of the TIP report and the subsequent news media reporting about it are components of psychological warfare within the broader information warfare campaign aimed at spreading demoralizing rumors to Trump supporters. The goal is to break down and weaken support before, during and after election day. Demoralized and unmotivated supporters do not make their support for their candidate public. They do not campaign in neighborhoods or post yard signs. They do not vote. They do not volunteer at polling places. They become convinced their hopes are a lost, and highly controversial cause. They do not wish to be called a racist, or a hater, or identified with other fringe elements. They stay at home and watch TV.

Having been psychologically conditioned (through the COVID-19 pandemic) to withdraw, isolate, and lock-down – on largely *fiat* orders of various government officials, many Americans will react to the “irregular” and extra-legal tactics of the Left. The Left relies on this reaction to suppress voter turnout and use varying forms of terror, *i.e.*, reprisals and the threats of reprisals, against those who do not cooperate or who challenge the projected accusations detailed in the TIP report.

The voter suppression and reprisal campaign becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy, that will not receive news media or social media scrutiny. Those that raise the threats of violence and reprisals will be termed conspiracy theorists, marginalized and dismissed. Once again, who wants to be called a racist, a hater, or identified with some other fringe elements?

Through the release of the TIP report, the American Left has established itself and its storyline as the official narrative of the 2020 presidential election. They have alerted the militant wing of their movement to seize control of the lead-up to election day, to election day itself, and all the way out past inauguration day. This is a campaign unto itself – not an event.

As Americans cast their ballots in the coming days – by whatever lawful means, and for whatever candidates they prefer – they need to know that there are organized, well-financed, forces on the political Left who have documented a plan for electoral disruption and the “irregular” seizure of the election process by extralegal means.

Voting in-person and volunteering to be a poll worker or poll watcher are all good ways to be involved in the process and ensure lawful elections. Moving beyond the 2020 general election, there are public policy reforms and possible legislative solutions to address some of the issues raised in this election bulletin. Judicial Watch will continue its commitment to free and fair elections for the United States.

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<sup>i</sup> Garrison, Joey, “Experts held 'war games' on the Trump vs. Biden election. Their finding? Brace for a mess,” *USA Today*, August 6, 2020. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2020/08/06/election-2020-war-games-trump-vs-biden-race-show-risk-chaos/5526553002/>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.judicialwatch.org/investigative-bulletin/left-threatens-violence-over-election-loss/>

<sup>iii</sup> Goldberg, Michelle, “Trump Might Cheat. Activists Are Getting Ready -- Election sabotage needs to be met with the largest protests yet,” *New York Times*, August 17, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/17/opinion/trump-contested-election-protests.html>

<sup>iv</sup> Smith, Ben, “How the Media Could Get the Election Story Wrong,” *New York Times*, August 2, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/02/business/media/election-coverage.html#click=https://t.co/kDEzgl0eJl>

<sup>v</sup> Talev, Margaret, “Exclusive: Dem group warns of apparent Trump Election Day landslide,” *Axios*, September 1, 2020. <https://www.axios.com/bloomberg-group-trump-election-night-scenarios-a554e8f5-9702-437e-ae75-d2be478d42bb.html>

<sup>vi</sup> Nagle, Moley and John Verhovek, “Biden claims Trump will try to “steal this election,” *ABC News*, June 11, 2020. <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/biden-warns-trump-steal-election/story?id=71192753>

<sup>vii</sup> Wall Street Journal, “A Mail-Voting Redo in New Jersey,” August 21, 2020.

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<https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-mail-voting-redo-in-new-jersey-11598050780?st=0ohy0niu56xgcyo>