

ANOTHER VIEW

Vaping crisis should be a cause of alarm

A public health crisis underscores the urgency of coming to grips with the dangers and benefits of vaping. There are still more questions than answers about the electronic devices that vaporize fluids in an alternative to the known hazards of burning tobacco, but both the immediate crisis and the longer-term regulatory and health issues suggest much more scrutiny needs to be given to vaping, and especially to the health risks for young people.

Federal and state health authorities are investigating 450 cases in 33 states of lung illness among people who have used e-cigarette products — devices, liquids, refill pods or cartridges. Five deaths have occurred. There are no signs of infectious disease; more likely, the illnesses stem from exposure to a chemical substance. Many patients report having used e-cigarette products with liquids that contain cannabinoid, a class of diverse compounds stemming from substances in marijuana, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says it does not yet know what is causing the sicknesses.

Getting to the bottom of this is an obvious priority. The practice of vaping has so many techniques that it is possible an illicit compound is the culprit — a contaminant, an additive or perhaps some home-brew methods. Vaping has been around for some years and until this summer had not caused a cluster of lung illnesses; nor has vaping caused illness in Britain, where it is tightly regulated. The warnings of the CDC and Food and Drug Administration should be heeded: Young people should not use vaping products, nor adults who do not currently use tobacco, and if you do vape, do not buy vaping products off the street.

From the start, vaping was seen as an alternative that would help smokers kick the habit, especially those for whom patch, gum and drug therapy did not work. If continued research reinforces the validity of vaping for this purpose, it will have public-health benefits for a specific population that should be considered.

But everyone should be alarmed about the rapid growth in popularity of vaping among teenagers and young people. The FDA has taken big steps to counter this danger, and it must maintain its aggressive effort against abuse. There is no reason vaping products should be available in bubble-gum flavor except to induce young people who are most at risk. The FDA sent a warning letter on Monday to the most popular vaping manufacturer, Juul Labs, complaining the company has made claims in school presentations that its products are less dangerous than tobacco without an appropriate FDA order. The FDA must remain vigilant against marketing to and use of vaping by young people. Overall, this is a complex problem of science, business, technology, culture and public health. Vaping began with very little regulation. Whatever the outcome of the current spate of illness, it is now clear that in the public interest, it must be rigorously scrutinized and controlled.

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MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

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United States Constitution, Amendment I:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievance.

THE THURSDAY COLUMNS

Ex-Trump officials keep piling up

One of Republicans' most frequent rationalizations for supporting President Trump, a blatantly unfit commander in chief, was that "the best people" he picked would keep everything on the level. Men such as Jim Mattis, John Kelly, Daniel Coats and H.R. McMaster would keep things normal.



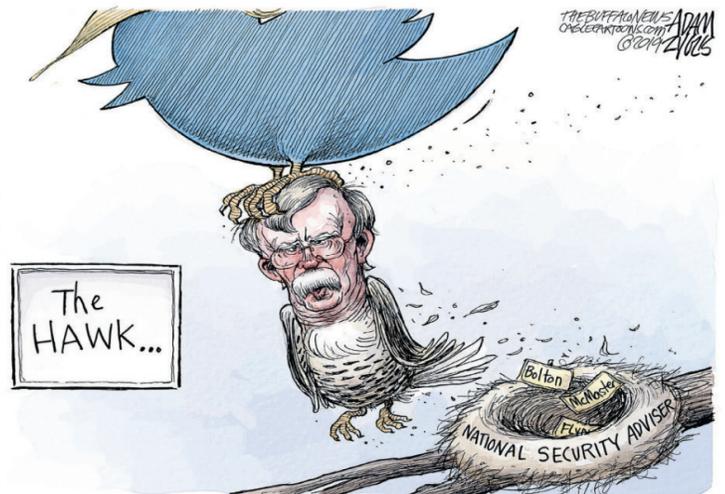
Jennifer Rubin

Gone. Well then, John Bolton. Gone. How to explain both vouching for Trump by relying on senior advisers and still supporting him when he summarily dismisses them for weird ideas like preserving NATO, keeping the Taliban out of Camp David, demanding we address Kim Jong Un's resumption of missile tests (despite the love letters), refusing to abandon the Kurds abruptly in Syria and objecting to a replay of the Kim debacle in the form of Trump talks with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani?

You see, all of those positions are deeply (if quietly) held by the uber-hawks, who for years have been calling Democrats fools and weaklings when it comes to national security. Now they face a dilemma: Trump's positions, the ones about which he clashed with his advisers, are insane from the vantage point of those same Republican hawks.

Someone should ask Sens. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., or Ted Cruz, R-Texas, whether Trump's instinct to bring the Taliban up to Camp David was brilliant or idiotic. Maybe Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., can explain — especially to South Carolinians hurt by Trump's trade war — why he doesn't favor grabbing back the power to levy tariffs.

A former national security official tells me, "John Bolton was unpopular in many foreign policy circles, but he had consistent principles and stood up for them, including against the president. That's a lot more than you can say for just about everyone else in the president's circle." And that's the problem with those left in the administration as well as Republicans on the Hill.



The HAWK...

I am 100 percent certain these Senate Republicans believe Trump's ideas are loony and dangerous, but they will refuse to speak out against arguably the stupidest idea (inviting the Taliban over) to pop into Trump's head (and there is stiff competition). Cruz, in a series of mind-numbing tweets, pretended this was all the work of the Deep State. His assumption that voters are dumb enough to buy this is disturbing, but not as disturbing as his need to push out gibberish to maintain the facade of Trump's normalcy.

The Fox News hosts and the rest of the right-wing media will either ignore or praise Trump — while trying to avoid endorsing the idea that a Camp David invite was just the thing to finish up a "peace deal" (which consisted of pulling out all troops in exchange for a promise the Taliban would continue terrorist attacks, but just a few here and there).

There is literally no limit to what Trump will now give away to China or Iran or North Korea to deliver a photo op for his increasingly dismal re-election campaign. Kori Schake of the International Institute for Strategic Studies observes that "because his hardline views were so well known,

Bolton served an incredibly important purpose for President Trump, which was as shield against claims the administration was too yielding to our adversaries." She adds, "It will be much harder for the president to defend his capitulations to Russia, North Korea, and Iran without Bolton in the administration."

And, of course, it will not simply be the perception of critics; we already know Trump is all too willing to give up leverage for deals the contents of which he is ignorant and uninterested.

It remains a mystery why McMaster, Bolton, Coats, Mattis, Kelly and Rex Tillerson don't come before Congress to explain to the American people that the president is unfit. If they think this will disturb allies, they are mistaken. Our allies already know that. If they think this hobbles Trump, one has to question at this point whether hobbling Trump is the patriotic thing to do.

Remaining silent enables his renomination and deprives voters of critical information. And it might just allow him another four years. When exactly do they tell us what they know — before or after the next Taliban invitation?

Rubin writes reported commentary from a center-right perspective for *The Washington Post*.

Trump and his Republican challengers

Mark Sanford, the former representative and governor of South Carolina, has now joined former representative Joe Walsh and former Massachusetts governor Bill Weld in challenging President Trump for the 2020 Republican presidential nomination.



Byron York

Of course they have no chance. But the hope of some Democrats and Never-Trumpers is that a primary challenge will weaken the president enough that he will lose to his Democratic opponent in the general election.

Trump adversaries often note that no president who has faced a significant primary challenge in the last 50 years has gone on to win re-election.

They point to President George H.W. Bush, who lost in 1992 after a primary challenge by Pat Buchanan. To Jimmy Carter, who lost in 1980 after a primary challenge by Ted Kennedy. To Gerald Ford, who lost in 1976 after a primary challenge by Ronald Reagan. And to Lyndon Johnson, who withdrew in 1968 after a primary challenge by Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy.

How can Donald Trump have a chance to win in 2020, now that he is facing challengers of his own?

The answer is that there are primary challenges and then there are primary chal-

lenges.

To say the least, there is a significant stature gap between Sanford-Walsh-Weld and the challengers of the past. Robert Kennedy, Ronald Reagan and Ted Kennedy were major political figures at the height of their careers when they decided to take on sitting presidents. Buchanan was a well-known White House aide, commentator, television personality and all-around legend among conservatives.

Sanford, Walsh and Weld are all former officeholders whose best years in politics are behind them.

"Let me ask you something," Buchanan told me in a recent conversation. "If Trump were not running in 2020, how would Joe Walsh and Bill Weld and Mark Sanford do in the New Hampshire primary? They would do nothing. Their calling card is, we can't stand Trump and he ought to be thrown out. If that's all it is, it's wholly negative."

Buchanan stunned Bush in New Hampshire in February 1992, taking 37 percent of the vote against the president's winning total of 53

percent. Buchanan went on to chip away at Bush, winning between 20 percent and 35 percent of the vote in primary after primary. When it was over, Buchanan totaled 22 percent of the vote overall.

He did it on the strength of a solid agenda. Reading Buchanan's Dec. 10, 1991, speech announcing his candidacy, one is struck today by how contemporary it sounds — Buchanan staking out positions on trade, nationalism, interventionism, culture and the economy that seem remarkably current. "We will put America first," Buchanan declared.

Besides his obvious talent, Buchanan had other advantages over today's challengers. Perhaps the biggest is that he was the only GOP opponent of the president. The other was that Bush had always had a problem with the more conservative wing of the Republican Party.

"That's where the vacuum was," Buchanan recalled. "It was among conservative Republicans dissatisfied with Bush, who believed Bush had promised certain things, and hadn't delivered, and didn't care about them."

That is how Buchanan, a conservative favorite, won 37 percent of the vote in New Hampshire against a president of his own party. But is there an analogous situation today with Trump, not among conservatives,

with whom Trump is quite popular, but with moderate Republicans? Perhaps there is an opportunity for a hypothetical not-Trump candidate. But it seems unlikely that Weld, or Walsh, or Sanford would be that candidate.

The president has serious reasons to worry about losing in the general election. In the RealClearPolitics average of polls, his job approval rating stands at 43 percent, against a 53.9 percent disapproval rating. Even though Trump won in 2016 with a high personal disapproval rating, there's no assurance the states that gave him the election by narrow margins last time — Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin — will go for him again next year.

But a Trump defeat, should there be one, would be the result of Trump himself, and not his GOP opponents. Separately or as a whole, today's challengers are simply not on the level of the Kennedys, Reagan or Buchanan.

Still, some of Trump's opponents hope a primary challenge might cripple Trump. Nothing is impossible, but the fact is, 2020 is not 1992, or 1980, or 1976. Trump might indeed lose, but it won't be at the hands of the retreads who are challenging him in the GOP primaries.

York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.

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