

Is second term for Trump inevitable?

EDITORIAL

AS MATTERS STAND, two things appear to be inevitable: former U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden's nomination as the Democratic party's presidential candidate and his loss next November to the incumbent, Donald Trump.

Mr. Biden's nice-guy image might see him do better than Hillary Clinton, but his age and tendency to obfuscate leave him no match for the bluster of Mr. Trump, who has managed to achieve an approval rating in recent polls of about 43 per cent, a lot better than he scored a year or so ago, when the rating was just slightly over 30 per cent.

Historians will certainly fault the Trump administration for its failure to respond quickly to the threat posed by the COVID-19 outbreak in China, the single move being to halt flights from China.

This week's latest move by the president was to halt U.S. funding of the World Health Organization in the midst of the pandemic, on grounds it has mismanaged the crisis and favours China.

That was a classic move by a politician who has never been able to acknowledge having made a mistake and now blames WHO, China, U.S. state governors and the 'fake news' media for the fact that as of Wednesday more than 26,000 Americans have been killed by the same virus that has reportedly taken just 3,342 lives in China and 225 and 146, respectively, in South Korea and Japan.

There seems little doubt that authorities in South Korea and Japan got no earlier warning than their colleagues in the U.S. The big difference seems to be the earlier actions both countries took, particularly in massive testing for the new virus.

While all this was taking place, little or nothing was heard from the Biden camp, the main developments being the withdrawal of Bernie Sanders as the only other contender and more recently the public endorsement of Mr. Biden by his old boss, former president Barack Obama, which hardly came as a surprise.

Yet to be finally decided is when or whether the Democrats will hold their nominating convention, the current expectation being that it will be in mid-August in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with only a tiny fraction of the normal number of delegates attending in the circumstances and Mr. Biden as certain to win the nomination.

But back to the original question: is a Trump victory in the November presidential election a virtual certainty?

We think so, unless something happens that is likely unprecedented in U.S. politics, and Joe Biden withdraws as a candidate, perhaps citing personal reasons such as his doctor's advice.

Should that happen, the door would be open for a candidate who has a better chance of beating Mr. Trump. And while at one point there were more than 20 men and women seeking the party's nomination, none of them would fit the bill.

Indeed, there is only one politician we see as having the ability, and he has persistently denied any interest in taking the job.

But he is a lot younger than Joe Biden and has demonstrated an ability to deal capably in the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak. And unlike Mr. Biden he has been enjoying a high profile, with daily televised press conferences in Albany, N.Y., with the state's top health officials.

Andrew Cuomo, 61, has been governor of New York State for nine years and would likely have no difficulty in retaining that office if he so wished.

Unlike Mr. Trump, whose background was in real estate and television, Mr. Cuomo comes from a political dynasty, his late father having served three terms as the state's governor, and perhaps because of this he has thus far made few mistakes.

During his governorship, he oversaw passage of a law legalizing same-sex marriage; creation of the United States Climate Alliance, a group of states committed to fighting climate change by following the terms of the Paris Climate Accords; passage of the strictest gun control law in the U.S.; Medicaid expansion; a new tax code that raised taxes for the wealthy and lowered taxes for the middle class; paid family leave; an increase in the minimum wage; wage equality; and legislation legalizing medical marijuana.

Should a miracle happen and a ?draft Cuomo? campaign be launched, Mr. Trump would have good reason to be fearful.