

Biden's Honeymoon is Over

by Bill Herbst

Version 1.5 (posted on 9 November 2021)

© 2021 by the author, all rights reserved

Joe Biden's formal, statutory term of office as President of the United States is four years. He was elected by the skin of his teeth in November 2020 (reversal of a relatively small number of votes in a couple key states would have switched the outcome and given Trump another four years). He was then sworn in as President in January 2021, and his official term of office as the U.S. Chief Executive will not expire until January 2025. From a different perspective, however, the nitty gritty of what the French call *realpolitik*, Biden's effective term may be much shorter. His momentum is already slowing to a crawl as 2022 approaches. Sure, Biden will still be President technically for another three years, but will he sink into irrelevance as a ghost figure who is mocked and rejected by the electorate?

In the spring of 2020, Neptune crossed Biden's natal Lower Heaven, the nadir or "midnight Sun position" in his chart. This is the most personal and private point in any chart. It's the fortress of the self, the last bastion of an individual's protection against an outer world that can be cruel, harsh, and uncaring.

The Lower Heaven (or I.C., the abbreviation in astrology for *Imum Coeli*, the angle's designation in Latin, meaning "bottom of the heavens") contrasts with its complementary opposite, the Midheaven, or M.C. (for *Medium Coeli* or "middle of the heavens"). Together they comprise the Meridian — the vertical axis in the chart. Visually, the Meridian looks like it's up-and-down, but that's an illusion because charts are graphed as flat, two-dimensional maps. Actually, since the earth is a ball, the vertical axis of any point on the earth's surface points *outward* (up into the cosmos of sky) and *inward* (down toward the center of the earth). It symbolizes *macrocosm* (big world) and *microcosm* (tiny world).

This is the axis of security and power in charts (as distinguished from the east-west horizon, which is the axis of awareness). The upward into-the-sky direction represents collective power or social security, symbolizing ambition and leadership. Pragmatically, that means career — status in the culture judged through one's position in the marketplace. The downward toward-the-center-of-the-earth direction represents personal security and private identity, symbolizing home, family, and roots — domicile, biological ancestry, and historical lineage.

In Joe Biden's chart, Neptune was overhead at birth, aligned closely to the Midheaven. This position carries numerous implications, including an attraction

to religion or spirituality, along with an emphasis on the saint/martyr complex, but its most obvious and relevant meaning, at least in terms of this commentary, is the fantasy of powerful impact in the collective through leadership. Joe Biden probably always felt that paradoxical motivation — the merging of immensely powerful selfhood with selfless service (Neptune in the 10th, 12th-house Sun).

Over Biden's almost 80 years of life, Neptune, which has a 165-year cycle around the zodiac, has moved halfway through the circle. Starting at the top of his chart, Neptune is now at the bottom. In the poetic sense, that means that Biden's fantasy of ambition has finally come home, so that his dream can be realized.

The passage of Neptune over Biden's Lower Heaven is a once-a-lifetime event (which half of humanity never even gets). This transit in Biden's chart represents the culmination of his long-held dream to become President. Despite seemingly impossible odds, that fantasy — near and dear to Biden's heart since childhood and nurtured over a 50-year career as a politician — quite improbably came true.

The bad news for Biden is that this dream fulfillment is only temporary, not permanent. How long will it last? Astrologically, until the transit is over, meaning two years — one year of great potency, and a second year of waning influence. The first year was from spring of 2020 until spring of 2021, the period that covered the Presidential campaign, the election, and Biden's first months as President. That was the honeymoon. Despite his age, track record, and long history of verbal gaffes, Biden enjoyed a very high public approval rating.

Exhausted after four years of Trump mayhem, the American public (or about half of it, anyway) was relieved to once again have a President who was an institutionalist and not an egomaniacal narcissist. Biden was given a free ride to work his magic. He longed to be the Consoler-in-Chief, and he gave that his best shot. Sadly, though, Neptune is a trickster who dangles imaginary carrots in front of our ego-donkeys, which are all too easily fooled.

Biden's free ride began to erode in March of 2021 and has gradually stalled over the past eight months. Most of Biden's promises have evaporated, undone by a toxic political climate and Biden's inability to actually fight for anything:

- *\$2,000 relief checks for Americans hurting due to the pandemic?* — Nope, only \$1,200
- *\$15-per-hour minimum wage?* — Dead on arrival
- *Medicare for all or at least lower prescription drug prices?* — Fat chance
- *Paid family leave for workers?* — Jettisoned
- *Forgiving student loan debt and free community college tuition?* — Sorry, no way
- *Taxing corporations and the ultra-rich?* — Not a snowball's chance in hell
- *Substantive climate change legislation?* — Forget it

The list of broken promises goes on and on. And yet, none of this is surprising. Why? Because Biden has been living out a fantasy. Was he insincere about this? No, he was just deluded about his ability to reunite the country, discourage wholesale corruption, and wean us away from hating one another.

The key to the Democrats avoiding the historically high probability of devastation at the polls in the midterm elections followed by defeat in the next Presidential election is simple and obvious: Deliver to the American public what it wants, and do so materially, through legislation or executive action that provides real benefits. Will the Democrats do this? No, not as long as the party continues to sell its soul to Big Money corporate and private donors (which Joe Biden did long ago and still believes in, same as 95% of his Democratic colleagues).

The Progressive Dems in Congress (aka "the squad") should wield powerful leverage, given the razor-slim Democratic majority. But they have utterly failed to hold the party's feet to the fire. Meanwhile, two "centrist" Dem Senators — West Virginia's Joe Manchin and Arizona's Kyrsten Sinema — have blocked nearly everything that helps ordinary Americans. These two might just as well fess up and call themselves Republicans. That's true for most of the party.

The result is that nothing noteworthy has been enacted, nor will it be, and the country's slide into ruin will accelerate. Most Americans — meaning the 300 million of us who are not wealthy — are fed up with a corrupt system rigged against us. The public will turn on the feckless Democrats — who seem to have learned nothing since the 2008 financial meltdown — with a vengeance. [The sad gubernatorial election in Virginia last week was a predictable first salvo.] Having been offered no viable alternative from the left, we can anticipate that Americans will drink the kool-aid of right-wing fake populism, setting the stage for the next Trump-like pied piper waiting in the wings.

Biden can't see any of this because he's still buoyed by the false optimism of a nearly year-long Jupiter-Sun transit, but two other concurrent transits (Saturn opposite his natal Pluto and square his natal Mars) pretty much insure that he's screwed — blocked by powerful forces that frustrate his desires, plans, and intentions. As the Democrats' promises are steadily gutted, Biden's poll numbers are tanking, with no bottom in sight. His honeymoon is clearly coming to an unhappy end.

But wait. Another narrative is on the way. An astrological wild-card coming up in Biden's chart could potentially change the equation and significantly alter his future as President. That wild-card is transiting Uranus opposite Biden's natal Mars from May 2022 through April 2023. Even though that transit might end up invalidating this commentary's basic thematic assumption (that Biden is toast), it's important to discuss.

Any of the quarterly activations of the Uranus-Mars cycle qualify as major wild-cards with considerable explosive potential for changing the direction of a life. Like all cycle activations in astrology, these four transits can take shape from inside-out or outside-in. That is to say, any transit or progression may indicate a change that triggers from within our psyches and motivates us to change our goals and shift our outward behavioral strategies and tactics. Or the triggers

may originate from outside ourselves, from our external circumstances beyond ourselves, and impel us to make changes in response. Either or both directions can occur, and the chart itself doesn't specify which. In the Uranus-Mars cycle, these triggers tend to be sudden, unexpected, and often dramatic, regardless of the origin of their triggers. With Presidents, however, (as opposed to regular people), Uranus-Mars transits are almost always linked to external rather than purely internal triggers.

Over the past century, eight American Presidents have undergone a significant Uranus-Mars transit during their terms of office. In all but one case, the transit occurred during a provocative external event happening in the country at large — wars, economic crises, or other difficult situations.

Two examples: President Jimmy Carter's 1980 Uranus-Mars square occurred at the end of his term, during the Iranian hostage dilemma. By contrast, President Barack Obama's 2009 Uranus-Mars opposition occurred at the beginning of his first term and coincided with the bubble-bursting financial meltdown caused by the subprime mortgage fiasco, abuse of derivatives, and subsequent failure of big investment banks (Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers, etc.). Both Presidents tried to resolve the respective crises, but I'd argue that neither did so effectively.

The hostage crisis eventually ended, but Carter resisted taking decisive action and was defeated in his bid for a second term by Ronald Reagan. Rather than follow through with his "hope and change" rhetoric, Obama chose the status quo, bailing out the banks (under the "too big to fail" rationale). No banking executives were prosecuted. No one went to jail. Quantitative easing by the Fed and super-low prime interest rates became permanent fiscal policy, setting the stage for the almost unimaginable wealth inequality that followed.

In Joe Biden's case, his Uranus-Mars opposition transit in 2022-2023 coincides with the Pluto Return in the USA chart. Oh my. That's provocative, to say the least. Judged solely from the symbolism of those independent but simultaneous events, dramatic events are likely to transpire that will affect the country as a whole and challenge Biden to respond assertively. Will something major happen, and, if so, what will it be? I don't know, but we already have numerous arenas of vulnerability. Geopolitical strife, economic and/or financial meltdown, and a resurgent pandemic are all blatantly obvious possibilities. In March and April of this year, I wrote a series of four commentaries about America's Pluto Return. That was when this extraordinary transit reached its initial 1° orb, which marks the beginning of its three-year effective period, according to technical astrology.

Having improbably come to fruition, Joe Biden's dream of becoming President is ending, and the hard realities of his Presidency are about to kick in. If a significant collective crisis does arise in 2022 (no matter what it is), will Joe Biden step up to the plate and take decisive action? If so, will his actions be effective? Or will Biden drop the ball, as Carter and Obama did? I'm less than optimistic, but time will tell on all that...