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### May 23, 2016: The Shining Hour of Conservative Columnists

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Title: The Shining Hour of Conservative Columnists

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5/23/2016--This will ever be known as the shining hour of conservative columnists. I have four in mind: George F. Will, Ross Douthat, David Brooks and Charles Krauthammer. I don't read these four every day, so it's possible I have missed something. But as far as I have seen, these four have bucked the trend inside the Republican Party to come to terms, and support in some form, Donald Trump as the Party nominee for President. Now, you may say that this is hardly a test--that anyone smart enough to be a columnist would understand how dangerous Trump is. But that attitude misunderstands how politics works. William Safire, a great conservative columnist, once wrote that he supported Republican Party positions even when he had doubts about them because in American politics, to have any influence, you have to be on one side of the two party system. That is basically true. If Trump wins in November, opponents in the Democratic Party will continue to work and will have a home. These four men, conversely, would be marginalized in such an event. Eventually, one way or another, they would cease to have the position they have now. And they know it. Furthermore, at least Will loathes Hillary Clinton and the others have really grave doubts about her fitness to be President. Yet, none of them is criticizing Republicans who are planning to vote for her. The reason they are acting in this way is that they believe what they have been saying for a year--that Trump is not another politician. Not only is his word worth nothing--this is actually not true of politicians in general because they need to be loyal to their Party's coalition--but he has no democratic instincts. Trump really does not understand the restraints of the constitutional system in a way that most politicians take for granted. Think of an even less principled Richard Nixon. Think of putting the IRS in Trump's hands. Well, think of putting any power into his hands, really. Yet, the crawl toward Trump of Republican Party officials is what you would expect of the Party establishment. They know how bad Trump is, but they have nowhere else to go. Right now, they are just hoping he is defeated and they can get back to normal politics. Nor do I believe a Paul Krugman or other liberal columnists would do the same thing if the situation were reversed. These four columnists are loyal to a political tradition independent of Party that I am not sure liberals have. Liberals agree with each other on some policy points, but when they disagree with each other--as on free trade, for example--liberals don't have an abiding ideology to fall back on. So three cheers for the big four: Will, Douthat, Brooks and Krauthammer. Their country owes them a debt.