**The US in crisis**

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OCTOBER 8, 2019

The US, the world’s most powerful country, is in crisis. It is in crisis because President Donald Trump has it wrapped in his own personal/political life. At the basic level, Trump sees himself as a genius destined to make America great again.

Which implies that, before he became President, the US was in decline as his predecessors were incompetent and lacking in what he has—whatever it is.

He is increasingly seeing America in binary terms of Trump era, which is still playing out, and the period before him, though it lacks precise definition. His favorite target, though, is the Obama administration.

During much of the Obama administration, he had sought to cast doubt on Obama’s legitimacy as the country’s president by questioning if he was American by birth.

His obsession with Obama has been so over-powering that he started his presidential victory with comparing the size of crowds that attended their respective celebrations. Which led him to pronounce that public participation in his celebrations were larger that with Obama’s victory. Which was not true, clearly seen from the newsreels of the time.

But Trump is not concerned with truth. In his view, there simply is fake news or his news, which is the new truth.

Which reminds me of the narrative during the Bush period at the time of the Iraq invasion in 2003 when Saddam Hussein’s Iraq was supposed to have weapons of mass destruction.

When the journalists at the time questioned the veracity of it, a senior Bush aide, believed to be Karl Rove, reportedly said, “We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality…we’re history’s actors, and you, all of you [journalists and others] will be left to just study what we do.”

In other words, Trump is not entirely new in creating alternative reality.

The important difference, though, is that he believes that he is engaged in a life and death (politically speaking) battle against the “deep state” (which includes the country’s security and intelligence apparatus) that has been trying to stage a ‘coup’ against a ‘much loved’ and so ‘convincingly elected’ President (Trump).

Trump is convinced that there is a conspiracy against him. He believes that he is so brilliant and successful that his political opponents and the country’s establishment just can’t let him succeed.

That is why they have been conspiring from the time of his candidacy and right through his incumbency. Hence, the “witch hunt” of the Mueller inquiry into claims of Russian interference during the election leading to Trump’s victory.

The Mueller inquiry did find that Russia had interfered in the 2016 election, which seemingly helped Trump win the election. Trump denies it, of course, calling it a “witch hunt.”

Trump is so defensive about the legitimacy of his election that he needs to be on the offensive all the time. Hence, his obsession to discredit Mueller inquiry.

*With the presidential election due next year and Joe Biden, the former vice president, emerging as the likely Democratic Party nominee, Trump is working overtime to discredit him*

It is in this context that he made a phone call to Prime Minister Scott Morrison of Australia, seeking his government’s cooperation to investigate the alleged role Australian agencies might have wittingly or unwittingly played leading to the Mueller inquiry into Russian interference.

According to reports, Alexander Downer, then Australian High Commissioner in London, might have played a part by passing on the information from a Trump campaign foreign policy adviser, which said that Russia had dirt on the presidential contender Hillary Clinton.

Not long after, the Wiki Leaks put up a trove of emails that gave Trump the decisive edge in the last stages of the presidential campaign.

The information from the Australian High Commissioner in London allegedly led to the Mueller inquiry, which, in turn, established that Russia had interfered in the 2016 presidential election, apparently hacking the Clinton emails and passing them on to the Wiki Leaks.

In other words, Trump’s election victory was compromised.

At the same time, with Hillary Clinton polling 3 million more votes than Trump, and Trump winning only through the US system of Electoral College, he has been shouting for all to hear that he won fair and square and in his own right.

In other words, the Mueller inquiry, and all the noise about Russian interference to sway the election in his favor is a conspiracyby the “deep state”.

At another level, with the presidential election due next year and Joe Biden, the former vice president, emerging as the likely Democratic Party nominee, Trump is working overtime to discredit him. In this he has been seeking help from Ukraine to investigate Biden’s son’s business dealings in that country to establish a pattern of corruption, including Biden.

Trump’s phone call with the Ukrainian president regarding this has led the Democrats in the House of Representatives to start the process of impeaching President Trump.

It is reported that he has even approached Beijing to help investigate Biden’s son’s business dealings in that country during the period his father was vice president.

In other words, the US is in the midst of a deep political crisis where one branch of the political system is investigating the other.

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