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November 25, 2020

**Will the Trump era come to an end?**

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“Incredible!” “Unbelievable!” These are the most frequently used adjectives Donald Trump pulls out of his limited vocabulary to describe his businesses, his family members, his actions, or himself. He has always been self-congratulatory, modesty never having crossed his mind.

Having watched his carefully choreographed press conference just a few days before his inauguration (his first in six months and the only one since his surprise victory in 2016), and the subsequent meltdown during the Q&A session, these two words could best describe his own behaviour. For a man who built a career out of deception, lies and fakery to accuse members of the press of fake news has been a recurring bad joke. Especially since he can never back up his claims with much evidence.

At that time, he branded those who published news of the secret intelligence dossier on him as Nazis, while behaving like a tyrant and dictator, refusing to answer any questions he didn’t like and ignoring or insulting reporters. His first press briefing was quite a performance and, as a sign of things to come, it was terrifying.

Trump’s behaviour and actions after he was elected reinforced the worst fears of his detractors and did not do anything to support the optimistic view that he may change and not keep some of his more outrageous promises once he was president. The list of his appointees, from the beginning to the present, reads like a who’s who of the alt-right, the far right, the ultra conservative, and the downright crazy. Most of them could not have been more inappropriate to head the department or office he chose for them.

Starting with his first chief adviser and White House chief of staff Steve Bannon, an ultra-right-wing man who created and headed the most virulently racist, sexist, Islamophobic and anti-Semitic website Breitbart News. There was the climate change denier who headed the Environmental Protection Agency (General Scott Pruitt); the Department of Energy was headed by a man who had pledged just a couple of years prior to his appointment to shut down that very department (Rick Perry); and a secretary of state who had major business interests in several countries, most notably in Russia, and who had no foreign policy experience (Rex Tillerson)

Then there was a treasury secretary who while with Goldman Sachs bilked thousands of low income families of their homes and life savings, and until his appointment was best known as a film producer (Steve Mnuchin); a secretary of education who had pledged to shut down public schools in favour of private charter schools and who could not answer any question posed by the selection committee coherently (Betsy DeVos), and who also happens to be the sister of the man who heads and owns the infamous Blackwater firm (Erik Prince).

And there was a secretary of defense whose nickname ‘mad dog’ was totally appropriate (Jim Mattis); an attorney general who had spent most of his career working against racial equality and against the Voting Rights Act (Jeff Sessions); a paranoid conspiracy theorist was chosen to head the National Security team (Michael Flynn), a man whose son spread the fake news of a peadophile ring being run by the Clintons out of a pizza shop (the Pizzagate scandal) – the list of ‘deplorables’ in the first Trump cabinet was endless.

Unfortunately, this was just the beginning. It got worse over the years. Every subsequent appointment – and there have been many, too many to recall – has been abysmal. The musical chairs at the White House in less than four years of Trump would require someone with an uncanny memory to recall. Most subsequent appointees were worse, some marginally, but many much more so. The list was never-ending. The rare times he chose someone that may have been an improvement their tenure lasted less time than one could breathe a sigh of relief and say: at last, someone that doesn’t deserve to be incarcerated for some kind of crime. All have been guilty of actions against decency, and many against humanity itself.

In the few years of the Trump era, the president turned the US into one that resembles more than any other in the Western world a country with a bleak future, a banana republic, a sycophantic dictatorship, isolated and alone, marginalized, and a joke. A country riddled with corruption, and nepotism; racist, regressive, and unenlightened. Lest we start believing that all of this happened in just a few years, it is fair to remind ourselves that the pre-conditions had been there for some time. It took one man and his ways to strip the veneer and unleash the worst that was hiding below the surface. And to turn a country that was for many, rightly or otherwise, the promised land, the one and only United States of America, into a bitterly divided country. Trump turned the US into a country that could be renamed Trumpistan; turning the American Dream into a nightmare for millions.

But is Trump alone responsible? Not by any means. His enablers have been many, and many continue to support him. The election results are almost all in, the president-elect has been proclaimed by all the media, and been congratulated by most of the world’s leaders, yet Trump has not conceded, refuses to do so, is hunkered down in his fantasy world playing golf, tweeting endlessly about fraud and the illegality of the electoral process and has proclaimed himself the winner against evidence to the contrary. His lawyers, led by Rudy Guiliani, and supported by Senators McConnell and Graham, along with many other lawmakers, have started legal proceedings to contest the results in several key States. Without any credible evidence, it is unlikely that many of the suits will prosper, but that has not deterred the man from pursuing his agenda. Trump’s similarity to despots and dictators is there for all to see but he remains admired and loved by millions of US citizens.

To undo the damage done by Trump will require more than just a change of president. The upper and lower houses of Congress remain bitterly divided, the so-called Red and Blue States at loggerheads, and almost all branches of the administration stacked with sycophants several layers down from the top. And while all US administrations do appoint their own people across all departments, none in recent years has done it as relentlessly as the current one. And the irreversible appointments to the Supreme Court are something the US will have to live with for decades to come. As the new administration comes to grips with all the problems, their primary difficulty will be prioritizing all that needs to get done. The dark cloud that Trump and his minions have cast over the nation will require necessary and urgent attention.

But before they get to that task they need to get to the White House. Trump has never admitted defeat, and being officially declared a loser will be resisted by him as long as possible. His behaviour over his entire term has been more akin to what one expects from a despotic dictator. Anyone who dares to oppose him, or even say anything that he perceives to be against him is sacked, cast aside, marginalized, and if none of that were possible, vilified in his endless tweets. His Twitter feed alone would keep a host of psychologists busy for years. One can only hope for the sake of the US that the shadow cast by him over that country goes away as soon as possible.

The rest of the world has a very different relationship with that country, and each country will have to deal with whatever serves the self-interest of the US. That has always been the case and will continue. All the rest of the world can hope for is a more decent, measured and responsible approach to geopolitical and international concerns. For that alone, supporting a change in the US administration is worthwhile.