

Donald Trump's Mental State

(Or, The Emperor Has No Mind.)

Ron Tabor

January 22, 2017

One of the things about the events of the past weekend I find striking is that Donald Trump seems incapable of perceiving reality. More specifically, he seems not to be able to recognize: (1) that many, many more people showed up in Washington to attend the two inaugurations of Barack Obama than showed up for his; (2) that many, many, many more people showed up for the massive women's marches in Washington and other cities around the country (and around the world) than showed up for his swearing-in; (3) that he was elected by a small percentage (at best, 27%) of the voting age population; and (4) that (therefore) he does not have a popular mandate for either his presidency or his policies. In fact, he is probably the most unpopular president in the history of his country. This is something that should be glaringly obvious to any objective observer, but Trump not only refuses to accept this but also appears incapable of even perceiving it.

Trump's difficulty in accurately gauging reality has been clearly revealed in his and his team's claim that some sort of plot on the part of the mass media exists to denigrate him personally, that the media is conspiring to deny that his inauguration was the biggest in history, that he's immensely popular, that he has a mandate, etc. This seems not to be pure "spin" but a deeply felt (almost panicky) attempt to deny a reality that is deeply threatening to his self-image.

It suggests that what some commentators described as a paranoid facet of Trump's mentality is, in fact, much more serious. Up until now, it has been possible to claim that, while Trump is narcissistic, vain, insecure, impetuous, aggressive, sociopathic, and paranoid (as well as colossally arrogant and ignorant), he is on the sane side of the sane/insane boundary. Now, this is not so clear. Speaking personally, I'm coming to believe that Donald Trump, the 45th president of the United States and the purported leader of the free world, is, or is very close to being, completely unhinged. One would think that this would be of some concern to the elite that rules the country. After all, the president is the commander-in-chief of the largest and most powerful military apparatus in the world. He's the fellow who has his finger on the proverbial "nuclear button." He's the guy who can throw the world economy into a depression by a poorly thought-out decision and destroy in a very short time the international institutions — political, military, social, and cultural structures, treaties, and organizations that were painstakingly assembled at the end of World War II and carefully defended by the global elite in the years since — of global capitalism. And this is the man who is currently running their system!

Perhaps some of the more perspicacious individuals in the ruling class already see how dangerously unbalanced their new president is. It's also possible that it's beginning to seep into the consciousness of somewhat broader circles. After all, most of them thought Trump would "pivot" from "campaign mode" to a more poised, presidential stance after he won the election or at least after he was sworn in. But he hasn't done so. On the contrary, he continues his stream of silly tweets and vocal ejaculations, lavishing praise on himself and lashing out at any perceived challenge or even a hint of disrespect. Trump seems completely incapable of glimpsing how he is seen by the vast majority of the people of the country (and, one might surmise, around the world), how ridiculous and disgusting he is, how utterly laughable.

Stalin, the long-time dictator of the Soviet Union was often described as paranoid. (Whenever he suspected disloyalty, even or especially among his closest "comrades", he would have the individual, and usually the individual's extended family, dispatched.) But Stalin, with a long history of involvement in the revolutionary underground, two revolutions, a civil war, and years of factional struggle inside the increasingly Byzantine Bolshevik/Communist Party, had his feet planted firmly to the ground compared the clown who now occupies the Oval Office.

In light of this, one can understand why the current Russian strongman, Vladimir Putin, would want Donald Trump to be the president of the United States. Putin had a long career in the Soviet Union's intelligence/counter-intelligence apparatus. Like all KGB agents, Putin was extremely well and thoroughly trained, in foreign languages, history, economics, international affairs, science, psychology, and the many, many tools of spy-craft. Putin is extraordinarily intelligent, knowledgeable, sly, crafty, and without a hint of the "softer" human emotions. He is thoroughly and completely amoral. What can a boob like Donald Trump possibly have that can possibly measure up to a man like that? (This is why they're drinking champagne in Moscow.)

In my previous piece on the developing political crisis in the country, I referred to but did not discuss Donald Trump's personality, his mental state. We are now seeing that condition much more clearly, and I expect it will show itself in an increasingly dazzling manner in the coming days, weeks, and months. The election and presidency of Donald J. Trump represents an acute stage of the leadership crisis of the US ruling class. While it might give ordinary people nightmares, it makes me happy, even optimistic. (I can't watch Trump on TV without breaking out into hysterical laughter.) Most important, it may offer revolutionaries some serious opportunities.

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