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Trump is Crazy, Invoke the 25th

Never mind the policies. For the purpose of this discussion—a discussion our country desperately needs to have—politics are an annoying, distracting rabbit hole.

Donald Trump should be removed from office under the 25th Amendment.

The reason Trump should be de-presidented has nothing to do with his legislative actions or foreign policy initiatives. Unlike George W. Bush in 2000 (and arguably in 2004), Trump won fairly. Unlike Barack Obama, he has kept his promises. His presidency is legitimate.

It has nothing to do with his alleged ethical and legal breaches. Impeachment is the proper instrument for charging and possibly removing a sitting president.

The 25th Amendment was ratified in 1965 following the Kennedy assassination. It provides a mechanism for replacing a president who has become incapacitated physically—or, as seems to be the case for Trump, mentally.

“Section 4 stipulates that when the vice president and a majority of a body of Congress declare in writing to the president pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House that the president is unable to perform the duties of the office, the vice president immediately becomes acting president,” according to the History channel. Currently then, Mike Pence and a majority (currently Republican) either of the House or the Senate would write to Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah and Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin.

Nancy Pelosi of California will probably replace Ryan after the new Congress is sworn in January.

The VP and a majority of Trump's 24 cabinet members could begin the process instead of Congress. "It would only take 14 people to depose the president" in that scenario, according to Business Insider.

Trump could appeal. "The president can then submit a written declaration to the contrary and resume presidential powers and duties—unless the vice president and a majority body of Congress [i.e. both houses] declare in writing within four days that the president cannot perform his duties, in which case Congress will vote on the issue."

High-ranking officials inside the Trump Administration have been so concerned about the president's fitness to serve that they thought about invoking the 25th Amendment just two weeks after Trump's inauguration. After the president fired FBI director James Comey, deputy attorney general Rod Rosenstein went to Comey's then-acting replacement Andy McCabe, whom he told he thought "that he might be able to persuade Attorney General Jeff Sessions and John F. Kelly, then the secretary of homeland security and now the White House chief of staff, to mount an effort to invoke the 25th Amendment," according to The New York Times." Rosenstein floated the idea of wearing a wire to catch audio of Trump talking crazy.

An anonymous Times op-ed by a Trump official claimed that several cabinet members had considered invoking the 25th Amendment.

Trump has called himself "a very stable genius." Genius? This is a native-born American who attended college, who said his mom "gestated" her Thanksgiving turkey. But stable? Trump's manic blizzard of strangeness on Thanksgiving 2018 made the case for the 25th Amendment better than anything I've read in an inside-Trump tell-all book.

Asked what he was most thankful for, he said himself: "I made a tremendous difference in our country."

Trump's CIA had just issued a report concluding that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman ordered the murder and dismemberment of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi at the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul. "I hate the crime, I hate the coverup," Trump told reporters. "I will tell you this: The crown prince hates it more than I do, and they have vehemently denied it." Why would the prince hate his own crime?

Bizarrely, Trump blamed "the world" for the killing. "Maybe the world should be held accountable because the world is a very, very vicious place," Trump said insanely. For the record, "the world" did not kill Khashoggi. Bin Salman did.

Later he discussed one of his favorite topics, The Wall with Mexico.

“We took an old, broken wall and we wrapped it with barb wire plus,” Trump said. “I guess you could really call it barb wire plus. This is the ultimate. And nobody’s getting through these walls. And we’re going to make sure they’re the right people because that’s what you and your family want and all of your families. That’s what they want. And that’s why we’re all fighting. You know, we’re fighting for borders. We’re fighting for our country. If we don’t have borders, we don’t have a country. So we’re doing very well on the southern border. We’re very tough. We get a lot of bad court decisions from the Ninth Circuit, which has become a big thorn in our side. We always lose, and then you lose again and again, and then you hopefully win at the Supreme Court, which we’ve done. But it’s a terrible thing when judges take over your protective services, when they tell you how to protect your border. It’s a disgrace. So we’re winning. And you’re winning. And I appreciate very much.”

Oh. My.

God.

Psychiatrists have openly speculated that Trump is mentally ill or suffers from at least one serious personality disorder, typically severe narcissism. One even calls him a sadist, “the essence of evil.”

I am a cartoonist and columnist, not a psychologist. I don’t know what exactly is wrong with Trump. Former presidential aide Omarosa Manigault Newman thinks he is succumbing to dementia; it’s certainly possible. Trump is 72. His father developed Alzheimer’s, which points to an increased chance for the president.

It’s probably several things.

What I know is that Trump is not mentally fit enough to serve as president. I think those closest to him know it too. The vice president, his aides and advisors, his cabinet members, members of Congress—they all know that this behavior does not fall within the normal range for a 72-year-old man and that it puts the nation and the world at risk.

It is grossly irresponsible to allow a crazy person to sit in the Oval Office.

“In a time like this of unusual crisis, one has to count on leaders in the executive branch and Congress to really be patriots, not partisans,” Joel Goldstein, a constitutional expert at St. Louis University, told a symposium where the 25th Amendment was discussed.

Republican leaders should act soon. Trump’s mental deterioration, so evident now, will only become worse by the height of the 2020 reelection campaign. If Trump is removed now, Pence will have more than a year to earn the voters’ trust and make his case for four more years.

