

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نېاشد تن من مېباد بدین یوم ویر زنده یک تن مېباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/03/16/an-american-nightmare-president-donald-trump-faces-a-national-security-crisis/print/>

An American Nightmare: President Donald Trump Faces a National Security Crisis

By David Rosen
March 16, 2016

Close your eyes and imagine a worse case scenario. Its 2020 and a crisis of unimaginable proportion grips the nation and the world. Capitalism is in free fall.

The Chinese economy is collapsing; the European Union is breaking up, with the U.K. and France pulling out; right-wing governments have taken power in France, Poland and Hungary; Afghanistan and Iraq have collapsed and ISIS/Daesh has expanded control over Syria and Libya.

Domestically, oil prices have dropped to their lowest level in history, the NYSE has fallen by over 3,000 point, unemployment is rising and the all-mighty dollar is losing value daily; a right-wing militia restages the Oklahoma City bombing, commemorating the 25th anniversary of the first attack; alleged lone-wolf Muslim terrorists have blow up power stations; and undercover federal *agents provocateurs* infiltrate a Black Lives Matter group and stage shoot outs against NYC police causing a citywide lock down.

Now open your eyes and picture the U.S. in free fall, gripped in a “national security” alert — and Donald Trump is president.

* * *

The presidential nomination derby hit a new low – high? — on Friday, March 11th, at the Chicago’s electoral slugfest. Recalling the grand old days of 19th century political fist-a-cuffs, Trump supporters and angry protesters violently confronted one another forcing the Republican candidate to cancel a planned rally. Fistfights broke out inside and outside of the University of Illinois campus venue, leading to five arrests. Earlier, 31 protesters were arrested in St. Louis. On Saturday, police fired pepper spray at demonstrators protesting outside a Trump rally in Kansas City.

In Cleveland, Trump insisted that “Bernie’s People” were behind the escalating violent confrontation at his rallies. Regarding Bernie Sanders (I-VT), the Republican candidate referred to him as “Bernie our communist friend” and called him a “lousy” senator. Trump not only encouraged violence against protesters, but said he’d pick up the lawyer’s bill to defend any of this supporters who were busted.

Trump is a shrewd, calculating politician trained in the ways of power having grown up in the real estate business, one of the most cutthroat sectors of the capitalist economy. Everything he says or does is part of a well-orchestrated and financed plan to capture the White House. And he may succeed.

If we were to play poker with Trump’s at one of his once-grand Atlantic City casinos, he’d be holding three aces – the race card, the fear card and the promise card. The race card, “white skin privilege,” has been an effective political rallying cry for centuries; now it’s facing both economic and demographic challenges. The fear card combines both real and fictitious international and domestic threats; 9/11, the failed wars in Afghanistan and Iraq along with the persistent threat represented by ISIS/Daesh are complemented by domestic fears of lone-wolf terrorists and undocumented immigrants. And the promise card consists of a false memory of what has allegedly been lost (i.e., life was better yesterday) and the prospect of a better tomorrow – America can be made “great again.”

Now picture a 2020 nightmare scenario with Trump as president. He’s commander-in-chief of the U.S. armed forces — both military and civilian –for engagements both international and domestic. Now imagine what actions such a blustering, egomaniacal president might undertake to stabilize the global world-order and quell civil disturbance.

Such nightmare thinking may well be the material for a bad thriller and unlikely to actually happen. But who knows.

With regard to international disruptions, members of the U.S. military and intelligence high command are likely to refuse to honor as unacceptable a direct order (e.g., nuke ISIS targets) from a “Pres. Trump.” But one can well imagine the vast apparatus of domestic policing forces – including federal, state and local agencies as well as private contractors – being deployed to combat local terrorists of all political, ideological and ethnic stripes. And has happened in the past, a handful of courageous bureaucrats — like John Dean (testifying about Nixon’s tapes) and James Comey (opposing Bush-Gonzales pressure) – may block a would-be tyrant’s tyranny.

If Trump was president while a worst-case 2020 scenario befell the nation, one could well imagine him borrowing lessons from the past. Faced with a major social crisis, Trump — an ever-opportunist hustler, a 21st-century entrepreneur — can be expected to draw upon old forms and create new forms of social terror.

* * *

They are numerous historical examples from which a Pres. Trump — supported by a very conservative Congress — could draw upon as models if faced with a “national security” crisis. Among these are:

- * Martial law — presidents, governors and mayors have imposed martial law during perceived crises, including Pres. Lincoln suspend *habeas corpus* during the Civil War (1863) and Pres. Wilson in the wake of the labor strikes following the Ludlow Massacre (1914).

- * Legislation — faced with WW-I, Congress passed the Espionage Act (1917) that prohibited false statements that interfered with the nation’s military or promoted the efforts of an enemy; and the Sedition Act (1918) that forbade any expression of disrespect toward the U.S. government, the Constitution, the flag or the military.

- * Congressional hearings — both Houses of Congress have held hearings regarding dissidents; the House’s Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) operated between 1938 and 1975; the Senate’s Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS) only operated between 1952-1953.

- * Immigration restrictions — presidents have imposed immigration restrictions, include Pres. Arthur with the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) and Pres. Coolidge with the Immigration Act (1924) to bar Chinese, and Pres. Truman with the Immigration and Nationality Act (1952) to bar alleged communists.

- * Alien registration — In 1940, Pres. Roosevelt signed the Alien and Registration Act (1940) requiring some 5 million foreign-born aliens to register in terms of their occupational status and political beliefs.

- * Round-ups & deportations — in the wake of WW-I and the Bolshevik Revolution, the U.S. targeted domestic radicals, undertook the Palmer Raids in which thousands of innocent people were rounded up and nearly 300 “aliens,” including Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, were deported. Under Pres. Obama, deportation of “undocumented immigrants” has reached unprecedented levels.

- * Revoking passports — during the Cold War, the State Department revoked the passports of Paul Robeson, W. E. B. Du Bois, Rockwell Kent, Charlotta Bass, Howard Fast, Albert Kahn and Lisa Sergio.

- * Censorship — during the Cold War, federal and local governments banned the works of alleged subversives from libraries of the works of Howard Fast, Dashiell Hammett, Helen Kay (aka Helen Colodny Goldfrank), Jerre Mangione, Langston Hughes and others.

* Loyalty oaths – In March '47, Truman issued Executive Order 9835 formally establish the loyalty commission and created the “Attorney General’s List of Subversive Organizations” (AGLOSO).

* Enemies lists – in 1939, the FBI established the Custodial Detention Index (CDI) to track subversives. The CDI consisted of seven volumes totaling about 2,000 pages and identified approximately 250 groups as Communist front organizations and 22,000 suspected individuals.

In 1950, Sen. Joe McCarthy announced in Wheeling, WV, “I have in my hand a list of 205 cases of individuals who appear to be either card-carrying members or certainly loyal to the Communist Party.” McCarthy’s list was never formally made public and he kept changing the number of alleged communist suspects depending on the audience he was addressing.

* Blacklists — *Red Channels*, a scurrilous anticommunists publication, listed 151 actors, radio commentators, musicians and theatre personalities with alleged communist affiliation.

* Undercover spying — on September 1, 1939, five days after Germany invaded Poland, Pres. Roosevelt issued an oral Presidential Directive “providing that the FBI of the Department of Justice should take charge of investigative work in matters relating to espionage, sabotage, and violations of the neutrality regulations”

In 1955, the New York, Los Angeles, Detroit and other cities established Bureau of Special Services (BOSS), popularly known as the “Red Squads,” “to drive the pinks out of the country.”

In August 1956, the FBI established COINTELPRO designed “to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit or otherwise neutralize” groups and individuals it categorized as “subversives, opposed to the national interest.”

In 1960, the FBI established a parallel program, the Communist Infiltration Program (COMINFIL), that sought to prevent radicals from infiltrating “legitimate mass organizations” like the Boy Scouts and the NAACP. Under COMINFIL, the FBI investigated the Socialist Workers party (1961), “White Hate Groups” (1964), “Black Nationalist Hate Groups” (1967) and the “New Left” (1968).

* Surveillance – the NSA’s PRISM program involving the clandestine collection of personal data (e.g., phone calls, Internet use) could be easily expanded.

* Trials of dissidents – American government has gone after “subversives” since its earliest days, from Peter Zenger (1735) to “Big Bill” Haywood (1907), Marcus Garvey (1923) and to the Catonsville Nine (1968), including the Berrigan brothers, the Chicago Seven (1969) and the Wounded Knee trial (1973) of Dennis Banks and Russell Means to whistleblowers today.

* Executions & assassinations – executions of dissidents has played an important role in enforcing state power and providing an object lesson for those who question its authority; among those who’ve paid the ultimate price are Joe Hill (executed, 1915), Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti (executed, 1920) and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg (executed, 1953). Federal agencies

(i.e., CIA and FBI) and local law enforcement have been linked to the assassination of foreign leaders (e.g., Patrice Lumumba) and U.S. activists (e.g., Malcolm X, Fred Hampton).

These are but a dozen or so example of government actions from the past that a ruthless president could draw up as models to quell civil unrest.

* * *

Donald Trump as president is an American nightmare — a nightmare with teeth. He is an ever-opportunist hustler, a 21st-century entrepreneur, who appears to be capable of using old forms of social terror and creating new forms to meet whatever crisis he faces.

One can only hope the American electorate will wake up from this possible nightmare before it becomes a reality.