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Trump's End

By Joseph Natoli
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“He’s not going anywhere.”

— Michael Moore

Some are hopefully expecting the Trump Days to end before he tweets us into a nuclear blitz with North Korea.

President Trump’s declaration that “North Korea best not make any more threats to the United States” of course resulted in another threat from North Korea. *The New York Times* reported, “The ad-libbed comments embodied Mr. Trump’s overall approach to foreign policy, an improvisational style that often leaves his national security team in the dark about what he is going to say or do.” (Glenn Thrush and Peter Baker, “Trump’s Threat to North Korea was Improvised,” Aug. 9, 2017).

Defense Secretary Mattis rushed in to revise Trump’s words: “actions” not “threats” would be the line Kim Jong Un had to cross before we engaged in “overwhelming response.” Cease any consideration of actions that would lead to the end of its regime and destruction of its people,” Mattis’s words should have been Trump’s words. But they were not because Trump is impervious to the counsel of others, perhaps because his experience and erudition regarding international diplomacy is so remarkable. Of course, if he was elected to “deconstruct” any such qualifications, his sort of shoot from the hip diplomacy should appeal to his supporters.

Regardless of all that, it is clear that Kim Jong Un uses the same style as Trump so it is possible to imagine that our end is in the hands of two warring volatile ego maniacs, avoiding any armchair psychiatry and employing the same school yard analytics as Trump and Kim Jong Un.

Those hopefully expecting that Trump will deconstruct the Administrative State are of course not looking forward to his end, nor are they contemplating that he might lead them to their own end. Once all that deconstruction, pace Derrida, is ended then presumably, Trump will have made America great again. That may take two terms, a full eight years. And then Trump will end and his face will go on Mt. Rushmore. If that has not dissolved in “fire and fury.”

Those who discount politics and keep their eye on the Dow might then discount the importance of Trump in or out of the presidency.

But that is a ruse thrown about by those whose hands are controlling more and more of the governmental throttles that could obstruct their market free play. And President Trump is their enabler, the one issuing their *carte blanche*.

The climbing stock market would most likely climb faster with Pence at the helm as a *Pax Republican* would settle on two branches of government. The Republican Party could breathe easier over its pet projects, namely, globalized free trade and entitlement “reformation,” if Trump were gone and Pence was in his place. But the Republican Party will earn the ire of the Trump supporters if they bring impeachment charges against Trump. That would put them on about an equal level of opprobrium as the Democratic Party.

This brings us to the realization that Trump supporters would prefer to see the end of both political parties and all politics and all government run by politicians than the end of Trump’s presidency. How U.S. politics has gotten to this vanishing point takes us from and beyond the scope of the topic of Trump’s end to a time before, a “Path to Trump” exploration.

Conservative purists would like to see Trump gone.

They are offended by Trump’s violation of “true” Conservatism, which David Brooks describes grandly: *The very essence of conservatism is the belief that politics is a limited activity, and that the most important realms are pre-political: conscience, faith, culture, family and community.* (“The Conservative Intellectual Crisis,” *NYTimes*, Oct. 28, 2016). These “most important realms” are trashed with every new Trump tweet, which unnerves all those who go on as if some ideal, conscionable, compassionate Conservatism ever existed.

For all those unnerved by Trump’s presidency, he is a crisis that must end.

Following Naomi Klein’s “shock doctrine,” we could surmise that the Trump presidency is the shock, “creating chaos daily” in her words, and that what comes in response will be a more deeply etched plutocratic order that will make all already resident plutocrats happy.

In short, what is envisioned here is an entrenchment of Trump’s pro-corporate, government deregulating, environmental degrading policies, including corporate leadership of government

departments and agencies. But without Trump. He was the crisis that brought Neoliberal economic policies to the rescue, with so much gratitude from all.

What else lies in the wake of Trump's end?

What Trump has torn apart and ridiculed, the Democratic Party included, to the joy of his supporters, will not be re-built easily, just as those supporters will not easily go away. Trump's end will not be theirs. But they will inherit from Trump a presidential establishment of a world of xenophobia and racism, of mockery of government and politics, of deregulating toward prosperity, of global warming denial, of Twitter as public discourse, of personal attacks as presidential and a tearing of a cohering fabric of a civil society.

Trump ends but the world he has suddenly shifted us into is not one we can just wish away.

For example, how easy will it be to go back to the idea that "fake" news can be objectively assessed to be true or false? Or how easy will it be to get a rational response to an argument based on "alternative facts"? How quickly will a legacy press be able to shut down an online moshpit of screeds and venomous screams? He's a buffoonish leader in the eyes of those who eye the U.S. closely and who must surely conclude that U.S. electorate is indeed a very malleable body, rather like Robert Mugabe whom many Zimbabweans support regardless of what chicanery he is up to. It is difficult to see who will get us out of this total collapse in worldwide respect.

However, the Dow Jones is not collapsing. Ending Trump might equate with ending the Dow's climb. We can return to globalization and entitlement reformation and other Neoliberal desires after Trump ends but right now, he is a crisis that is already energizing a bullish market.

Wishing for Trump's end would be like wishing for the end of the goose laying the golden eggs. It may be that Steve Bannon has a sort of U.S. *Uber Alles* mission, which Trump sees as a workable discourse to latch onto. But Trump's real goal is transparent: monetize the presidency and leave office with the coffers of the Trump Empire overflowing. This is not an indictable matter in a country whose business is business, or, more descriptively, making a profit, for the "general Welfare," any way and any where you can. Regardless of what Mueller's investigation reveals, Trump's financial arrangements may not seem at all reprehensible to those who engage in the same.

In short, it would be very much against the grain of the way we do business in the U.S. to end Trump's days by going after his profit making, even when he is monetizing the presidency right in front of our faces.

Wage earners are not looking for Trump's regime to end because it promises them so much that political parties, government, and Wall Street cannot give them. They expect Trump will be the leverage positioned against all employers to win for them their piece of the pie. This is surely a kind of hope in a noblesse oblige felt by super-luminaries like Trump who dispense their beneficence as the mood inclines them.

On a darker side, Trump has promised to purge the country of the “unhomogeneous” elements, which in an already seriously multi-cultural country can only mean anyone who does not share *your* delineation of the necessary homogeneous attributes. That is a mission that has endured in the loathsome abyss of the American mass psyche and one that Trump has brought into the Oval Office. Trump’s ending then would end that easy and presidentially championed access of the worst in our natures into the light of day.

Because Trump comes on the scene promising to end so much that so many hate, that a focus should be on his presence not his end. His presence on the political scene is a welcomed relief; his end would be mourned.

Those who believe this are desperate for anything and anyone who does not resemble in any way a forty odd year status quo that has thrown their middle class security out the window and frozen an underclass in place. Zizek preferred Trump to Hillary because he would surely shake up the system and she would run in the same ruts that have led to plutocracy.

If there was a common attitude pervading the American mass psyche of wage earners on the eve of the presidential election, I believe it was: “Anything is better than what we’ve got now.” This was destruction of the status quo without any rationale or rationalizing of such destruction. It was just better in the way you just want something wiped clean without thinking of consequences.

If you travel about the U.S., most certainly in the Rust Belt states, you will clearly see evidence supporting the case for ending whatever over the past forty or so years has led to this. You can Uber, of course, to only the gentrified, gated compound areas of any American town but beware if your car breaks down in *Bonfire of the Vanities* manner.

But in a plutocracy which extends to the “obscenely” rich (although Americans are in no way hardwired to view a lot of money as obscene) and the 20% professional class serving them, both doing nicely on their dividends, interests, retainer fees, royalties, everything but wages, there is little reason to venture outside the Green Zone of prosperity. Only, perhaps, like in a raiding Viking manner to make a strictly financial engagement to gentrify potentially gentrifiable real estate.

Trump’s end may only come when those greedily waiting for the cookies he promises to drop in their laps are ready to end that reign. With a Congress ready and able to pass the dream legislation of Neoliberals, the legislation that will return to them the kind of financial speculative wilding” that led to the 2007 Great Recession, there is no power consensus to end Trump’s regime. The White House drama, most especially Trump’s own, is no more than an annoyance to those waiting for the slots to give out the big wins.

Trump’s end comes when this crowd wakes up one day and thinks Trump is a bigger liability to conservative, neoliberal ideology than he’s worth, that he’s so imploded himself that he can’t give them what they want. That power consensus then is that he was all along a crisis generating only a daily chaos, via twitter, that will now be repaired and resolved by the recuperative powers of The Market.

The difficult work of destroying a democratic political order, a trust in its elections, a bonding level of civility, a respect for the importance of the Fourth Estate, and a comprehension of the “general Welfare” is work already being done by President Trump. It is a legacy that has weakened any Liberal/Leftist platform, even beyond how that Democratic Party has weakened itself since Clinton announced the end of “Big Government. What Trump has not weakened and endures beyond Trump’s end is profit as a plan, monetizing everything from ties and steaks to the presidency as a way forward.