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The State of Trump's Brain

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In a previous brief publication (Posted on www.counterpunch.org May 17, 2017, Diagnostic Conclusions) I discussed the diagnosis “Narcissistic Personality Disorder.” While I mentioned no name (adhering to the psychiatric admonition that one should not diagnose a patient without having completed a direct thorough examination), it was perfectly clear about whom I was referring. I now believe that not only does he fulfill all of the criteria for this disorder to a remarkable degree, but that his behavior has become worse than I thought and that not all of this can be ascribed to his personality disorder, but there is adequate evidence of deteriorating brain function.

Sharon Begley in a brief but wonderful paper, (MEDPAGE TODAY Neurology-General Neurology, “Does the Way Trump Speaks Reveal an Underlying Problem?” By Sharon Begley, STAT News, May 23, 2017) presents compelling evidence of Trump’s cognitive decline. She bases her opinion on several studies that analyze his previous language productions that were articulate with sophisticated vocabulary and construction as contrasted with his current verbal productions and tweets that are frequently incoherent, often rambling and never, except in reading prepared material, display any of his previous superior use of language. This contrast between past and current functioning is detailed strikingly in this paper and I urge everyone to read it.

The other striking phenomena that I observe is that President Trump’s productions are frequently destructive of his own goals and contrary to many earlier positions including earlier warm and complimentary statements about Hillary Clinton and recent vicious attacks continuing long after the election. His obvious and frequent lies, often are so obvious as to lack any degree of credibility and often at the sophistication and intellectual level of a young child. He also attacks almost everyone of importance to him in a self-destructive manner. These are not behaviors of a rational individual.

Sadly one is forced to the conclusion that we have a president whose brain health is not what we would want of our leader. This seems particularly dangerous because of his bellicosity as well as his resistance to advise.

Ms. Begley’s paper also briefly comments on President Ronald Reagan’s speech suggesting decline in brain function prior to his diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease.

I have specific memories of personal concern about Reagan. When it came out that serious and illegal activities had occurred under his watch his genial good disposition and willingness to accept advice precluded violent opposition. The reaction was more like “there goes goofy but beloved grandpa again.” I didn’t realize it at the time but there seemed to be a belief that he was under the control of a well-functioning administration. If anything the public anger was principally directed at wayward staff members and the president was given a pass.

The situation with Trump is quite different. I believe that he has a serious personality disorder as well as a brain disorder. I believe that it is time to call a spade a spade. This man is not only not fit to be the President, but he is a serious menace to the whole country.

Trump's verbal production not only daily exhibits his language disorder as well as his personality disorder, but also features several other disturbing trends. One, as mentioned above, is frequently counterproductive to his very goals. He does not appear to be able to evaluate how they will be received. This is statistically evident in his dropping ratings, even when in the typical "honeymoon" early phase of a presidential term. In spite of all of the evidence that his approach is failing his response is to "double down." Another frightening aspect of Trump is his omnipotence and great difficulty in accepting advice from his own hand picked staff. If I had to characterize which group he is trying to please (other than himself of course) it would be to the folks with a militia orientation or membership and a danger to our society. Trump's response to the recent events in Charlottesville appears to support this notion.

I am terribly frightened. The amount of power that this man can unleash may produce a disaster of totally unprecedented proportions. The threats he issues have a grade school mentality. This has escalated in their potential severity in his childish "I dare you" responses to North Korea. As the polling numbers drop further, and I believe they will, President Trump is likely, in my opinion, to attempt to achieve the popularity and status he desires by an act of war and, I predict it will not be on the scale as our silly invasion of Grenada.

What should we do? This brief paper is my way of speaking out. I ask everyone with similar views find ways to speak out, including writing to your congressional representatives. I believe that this man is serious disturbed and dangerous and must be removed from office. Are there grounds for impeachment? I sure hope so.