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Why Trump Could Be Gone Before 2020

By Paul Street
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A story that appeared in the leading inside-Washington political journal *The Hill* last week bore a headline that ought to send a chill down the spine of anyone who believes in democracy: “Half of Republicans Would Back Postponing 2020 Election if Trump Proposed It.” Read the report’s opening 90 words and let them sink in:

“Slightly more than half of Republicans say they would support postponing the 2020 presidential election if President Trump proposed it to make sure only eligible American citizens can vote, according to a new survey. According to a poll conducted by two academic authors and published by *The Washington Post*, 52 percent of Republicans said they would back a postponement of the next election if Trump called for it. If Trump and congressional

Republicans proposed postponing the election to ensure only eligible citizens could vote, support from Republicans rises to 56 percent.”

Throw in a financial collapse, major civil disturbances, and/or a significant domestic terror attack (real or “false flag”) and expect that number to go closer to 75 percent if not higher.

Does it all smell a little fascistic? You betchya!

Increasingly, though, one really must wonder if the arch-authoritarian racist idiot Donald Trump will make it to 2020. The supreme madness and evil of the rolling atrocity that is the Insane Clown Trump presidency has just now reached a new level of bizarre and scary-weird ruling-class dysfunction. Just last week, the demented, Twitter-addicted brute in the White House engaged in a reckless game of thermonuclear chicken with North Korea’s dictator Kim Jong-un. The orange-tinted beast threatened “*fire and fury like the world has never seen.*” Trump’s aptly nicknamed war chief Jim “Mad Dog” Mattis threatened “actions that will lead to the end of the [North Korean] regime *and destruction of its people.*”

So what if such outlandish bravado could trigger events leading to the deaths of millions on and around the Korean peninsula? Trump later told reporters that “maybe” his “fiery and fury” statement “wasn’t tough enough,” Herr Donald threatened “an event the likes of which nobody’s ever seen.” When asked what he might do in response to North Korea’s defiance, the president said “Well, you’ll see, you’ll see.”

Statements of shock and concern over this Not Normal presidential lunacy came from both sides of the major party aisle. Speaking on CNN, the former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper (of whom I am of course no fan) worried (all too reasonably) that Trump’s overheated rhetoric could lead the U.S. into war on its own accord. As Clapper told Don Lemon on “CNN Tonight”: “I do worry that this game of rhetoric chicken is going to become a self-fulfilling prophecy...It’s somewhat reminiscent to me of the history of World War I and how the world kind of blundered into that.” That was no joke.

Then, just as the Clockwork Orangutan seemed ready to radioactively enflame East Asia, Charlottesville happened. Without exactly saying so – but saying so saying so in “dog whistle” ways clearly understood by his many white-nationalist backers – Trump showed himself to be on the side of armed white-nationalists and fascists who marched with torches lit chanting “blood and soil” in defense of a statue of the top Confederate (Slave Power) military commander Robert E. Lee. Once again, top talking heads and politicians shook their heads and rolled their eyes over the Not Normal insanity of the President of the United States.

It’s not just that the madness of Herr Donald has revolted millions of ordinary citizens and people at home and abroad. His bigger and more relevant problem is that he has significantly alienated a rising share of those atop the nation’s unelected and interrelated “deep state” dictatorships of money and empire. Three days ago, the New York Times reported as follows on the “Widen[ing] Rift Between Trump and Business Leaders”:

“The chief executive of Walmart, the world’s largest retailer, criticized President Trump in front of his 1.5 million American employees, widening a rift between the White House and the business community that has been growing since the weekend’s violence in Charlottesville, Va. ‘As we watched the events and the response from President Trump over the weekend, we too felt that he missed a critical opportunity to help bring our country together by unequivocally rejecting the appalling actions of white supremacists,’ Douglas McMillon, the Walmart C.E.O., wrote in a letter to employees late Monday.”

“The rebuke from Mr. McMillon came as six other business leaders stepped down from presidential advisory councils — including two late on Monday, the C.E.O.s of Intel and Under Armour — citing their own values as the primary motivation for distancing themselves from Mr. Trump....The departures represent a rare spectacle in which prominent executives are looking for ways to pull back from an American president who campaigned, and won, partly on the strength of his pro-business stance. This has created an unusual calculus: Whether or not to stay on as advisers to a president, a role that traditionally is a coveted position with little to no attendant risk.”

“The willingness of [Intel CEO Brian] Krzanich and other C.E.O.s to walk away from the advisory panels highlights an uncomfortable reality for Mr. Trump: He billed himself as the businessman-president, but some executives no longer want to work with him. ‘This should be his strong suit: courting C.E.O.s,’ said Douglas Brinkley, a presidential historian at Rice University. ‘Instead, Trump finds himself with C.E.O.s not wanting to be in a photo op with the president. What should have been an honor has become an albatross.’”

Then there’s the military elite. Two days ago, the *Los Angeles Times* reported on how the heads of the nation’s separate military branches were prompted by recent events to take not-so veiled online digs at the orange-tinted, nuke-wielding beast in the White House, who poses as a manly military leader but never served a day in the Armed Services:

“America’s top-ranking military officers spoke out forcefully against racial bigotry and extremism, a rare public foray into domestic politics that revealed growing unease at the Pentagon with some of President Trump’s policies and views. The members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — the senior uniformed brass of the Navy, Marine Corps, Army and Air Force — all posted messages on their official Twitter accounts to denounce the far-right extremists behind Saturday’s violence in Charlottesville, Va. The messages did not mention Trump, who is the commander in chief, by name. But the rebuke seemed clear in several posts given the bipartisan furor over Trump’s insistence Tuesday that “both sides” were at fault for the violence...*The social media posts suggest the growing discomfort at the top ranks of the Pentagon, which supports Trump’s calls for a new military build-up but has not implemented his sudden call on Twitter last month to block transgender troops from the armed forces.*”

Trump’s yet-to-be enforced transgender ban took the nation’s military leaders by shocked surprise. So, one suspects, did the extent to which he chose to engage in preposterous and wild verbal one-upsmanship with North Korea’s bizarre dictator Kim Jong-un.

Meanwhile, the U.S. military has one shining “Good War” in its long and criminal imperial record of intervention abroad: its belated but real engagement in the global struggle to defeat the fascist Nazi Third Reich in World War II. Much of the Pentagon elite is sufficiently history-conscious to recoil from a president who is ready to associate himself with Nazi-allied white nationalists.

The Democratic Party obviously opposes Trump for partisan and other reasons and is looking forward to the coming Mueller Report (on alleged Russian interference in the United States’ purported “great democracy”) and the aftermath of the 2018 mid-term elections in the hope of initiating impeachment proceedings. Democrats will need support from Republicans to pull off removal (which requires 2/3 of the U.S. Senate) and it is not entirely far-fetched to imagine them being able to pull enough Republicans over to their side to get rid of the great national embarrassment that is Trump. U.S. Senator Jeff Flake’s (R-AZ) new and widely read book *Conscience of a Conservative* (named after Barry Goldwater’s previous book of the same title) is a right-wing libertarian Republican assault on Trump as an “unprincipled” and “authoritarian” “tyrant” and “populist” committed to the politics of “hate,” “destruction,” “xenophobia,” “racism,” and “demonization.” Given the serial feuding Trump has conducted on and off-line with Flake, John McCain (R-AZ), Mitch McConnell (the Senate Majority Leader from Kentucky) and numerous other Congressional Republicans, it’s hard not to believe that a decent number of GOP elites will be willing to dump Herr Donald with the hope of getting the more agreeably tamed, Christian, and professional right-wing Republican Mike Pence into the Oval Office – no appetizing outcome for those who believe in social justice, peace, and democracy.

The Republican deal with the Trump phenomenon has always been based on opportunism. The Trumpeinstein’s growingly evident status as an irreversibly deadly liability for the Republican agenda could make it easy for top GOP players to unsheathe their knives and sink them into the president’s back.

With Trump having already exasperated numerous key players in the nation’s corporate and financial ruling class, military command, and major party elite, it’s not inconceivable that he could get flown off the White House grounds for good before January 20, 2021 – through impeachment and Senate removal, resignation, or even (the last likely mode of removal) 25th Amendment removal (on grounds of incompetence). He’s toxic bad for the national brand – an emperor with no convincing democratic or humanitarian clothes to cloak the ugly imperial and capitalist nakedness of the American System.

Trump smells too much of neo-fascism – a clownish and highly venal version, to be sure – for the tastes and needs of the U.S. ruling class. He’s not how the American wealth and power elite rolls. If the U.S. is “fascist,” its fascism cooks on a low flame and small burner. It exhibits a distinctly “inverted” (demobilized and neoliberal, plutocratic, “market”-mediated and corporate-managed) form of the disease. To say this, however is not to praise to the contemporary U.S., with its vicious, eco-cidal ruling class and its reigning sociopathic institutions. Under the “inverted totalitarianism” (U.S. political scientist Sheldon Wolin’s term) that is 21st century America’s “corporate-managed democracy” (Wolin again), many of the basic objectives of fascism – the defeat of unions and the working class, the degradation of democracy, the enforcement of hierarchy and savage inequality, racial subordination, the marginalization of the

Left, racial divide and rule, militarization of society, and permanent arms and war economy – are achieved without the discomfort and uncertainty imposed by barking dictators, and marching, torch-carrying brown-shirts. Chilling as it may sound to say, fascism would be redundant in the United States today. The U.S. ruling class doesn't need it. It doesn't need Dear Leader authoritarians even just of the dog-whistle variety. It gets the same results with a different – more atomized, privatized, apathetic, consumerized, and “inverted” – model of authoritarian rule, one that makes an insistent and deceptive claim to be a great force for modern Western democracy, Enlightenment values (even if U.S. presidents end every major speech with “God Bless America”), and freedom at home and abroad.

Long story short, I would not be all that surprised to see Trump successfully removed from office before 2021. I say that with no glee. A white-Christian-nationalist Mike Pence presidency would probably be more effective at pushing the right-wing Koch Brother agenda through Washington than would a second Trump administration. A President Pence would be a much better corporate-managed inverted totalitarian than his current boss.