

# Enter Stage Right

## Trumped for a hundred days?

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A hundred days have now passed since the inauguration of President Trump.

There were some hopes, some of which I addressed on July 4 last year. Let's have a look at status. We hear statements that are tantamount to saying that it is the end of the world – and of freedom. There are – granted – severely problematic issues with Trump, but the end of the world. Seriously?

Karen Kwiatkowski back in January said that Trump is the perfect President, in large part because “suddenly everyone is wide awake and nervous,” whereas previously people supported the government. The inauguration was praised, amongst others, by Gary North. He debunked the reigning political regime, saying Washington was broken, with the outgoing President and a few other former Presidents sitting just few feet behind him.

It has been claimed that Trump is a poor speaker. That may be so, but at least he fills his speeches with distinct content, not establishment claptrap. Obama was a good speaker in form – at least when he had a teleprompter. Did that make his terms good for America and the world?

There is always the question of whether an incoming President with a new agenda will actually implement any of his new policies, or if things in practice will be business as usual. This time we saw – at least initially – clear tendencies of action in a different direction. Eric Margolis told us there were some good cuts.

Reportedly Steve Bannon has vowed to deconstruct the “administrative state.” He has reportedly also dismissed Austrian economics and limited government.

When Democratic politicians nominate Hispanics or non-whites as justices of the law, it is apparently OK to refer to the nominee's ethnic background and its relevance for the service to be. But when it's turned on its head, i.e., when the ethnic background is used against the judge, by a presidential candidate, it's all bad.

How the Trump administration rails against the judicial branch may be problematic. It must, however, be kept in mind that we are living in some sort of mix between legislative tyranny by legislatures and extensive legislating from the bench by judges. Some seem to suggest that we are in a golden age of the rule of law, and that Trump is threatening to end it. Hardly! Charles Murray said at an event in Oslo on Thursday last week that the judiciary isn't really a bulwark against what's unconstitutional, but rather a bulwark against what the judges deem as unacceptable.

President Trump has met with Judge Napolitano. You can say a lot about Donald Trump and his policies. There are indeed troublesome features in the mix. It is a mixed bag. There are problematic inconsistencies. Even some consistencies are problematic. But I do not think it is very exaggerated to say that other Presidents would not touch people like Judge Napolitano with a barge pole. Neil Gorsuch has probably been amongst the very better choices made by President Trump. Judge Napolitano concurs it was a good choice.

Trump also met with John Allison, former CEO of the Cato Institute, follower of Ayn Rand, and proponent of a gold standard, ahead of his pick for Treasury Secretary. Now, we should always retain an amount of skepticism towards such phenomena. We should not let ourselves be easily flattered by such meetings, but the fact that the President-to-be, now sitting President, meets with such people is a small sea change.

The sitting POTUS may be the closest we might have hoped to come to a remedy against the crazy easy money policies of the federal capital on the Potomac. But David Stockman, Reagan's OMB Director, says there is troubled water ahead. There have been signs that Trump would be reasonable when it comes to the Keynesianism on steroids, but here too there have been inconsistencies, and it is not easy to tell where we have the President.

Global trade has been a target of the new President. Tho Bishop is very correct when he writes:

While the Trump administration's embrace of anti-trade policies is a very real concern for the global economy, it is worth noting that the G-20's desire for free trade was every bit as sincere as the UN's commitment to human rights. What the G-20 members call "free trade" is really government managed trade, complete with complex multinational trade agreements that Trump is right to oppose.

And then we have the immigration issue. Lew Rockwell recently addressed this issue. Certainly there are problems ahead with more restrictions at borders. The stories we hear about visitors being requested to hand over cell phone codes, online account passwords, etc. do not promise well. Will building a physical wall solve the problem of over-stayed visas? Probably not. There are a lot of problems with restricting immigration, but there are a lot of problems with unrestricted mass immigration as well. Wanting to live largely amongst those of your own culture and language does not anti-freedom make.

Wrote Stefan Lundberg back in January:

I hope when Trump becomes president he acts more mature and bombs 7 different countries and drones American citizens instead of sending out mean tweets all the time.

There is not much to add on the question of Twitter "aggression" compared to real aggression. Unfortunately, it turned out real aggression came along too.

One of the big hopes for the new administration was foreign policy. The establishment, hawkish foreign policy was challenged by Trump. Regrettably, this got a big blow in early April, in the centennial week of the U.S. declaration of war on Imperial Germany and decision for America to militarily enter World War One. Surprising? No, not really! We know Trump was not coherent on this issue, as with many other issues. Disappointing? Yes, indeed! Walter Block,

who initiated Libertarians for Trump and Scholars for Trump, is now considering rooting for the impeachment of Donald Trump.

The new foreign policy ended before one hundred days had passed of the new President. Sad! But neoconservative foreign policy may still have gotten a permanent blow. A considerable number of supporters did not support this turnaround, notably Ann Coulter. It's still too early to tell, but public discourse on foreign policy may have changed permanently, which also may be thanks to Ron Paul.

Writes Stefan Lundberg:

A small silver lining of encouragement is seeing overwhelming opposition to military escalation in Syria, even from prominent Trump supporters. The principled anti-war libertarians and progressives will always be vocal about peace, but now combine those groups with the rest of the left who will undoubtedly condemn Trump's actions considering they go so far as to criticize the way he eats his steak.

Have the majority of Americans changed their attitude on intervention? Let's hope.

We certainly want to avoid World War Three. We want no confrontation with North Korea. There is a lot of talk of Donald Trump having his "finger on the nuclear button." While the checks on the American commander-in-chief's ability to launch nuclear arms on his own are probably often understated in public discourse, a good thing that might come out of the Trump presidency is the increase of such checks.

Donald Trump's relationship with truth has been a constant theme of his critics. Maybe he has taken lying to a completely new level. But consider what consequences the lies have and what proportions they have. Wrote Stefan Lundberg back in February:

I'll reserve my outrage for if and when Trump makes a lie like: "Iraq has weapons of mass destruction," or "If you like your doctor you can keep him," or if he decides to blame a terrorist attack on a YouTube video.

This may change with the April Syria intervention. Speaking of which, all of a sudden the skepticism towards fake news turns around and becomes a complete embrace of what could be an unverified claim that the Assad regime was responsible for the chemical attacks. You might say it was certain that it was Assad? Shouldn't we have learned by now at least to be skeptical of such claimed-to-be-certain information in times of war?

Perhaps the principle is: Don't believe anything you hear that contradicts the establishment agenda, but if it supports neon foreign policy, ignore or turn off all warning lights. Moreover, if something runs contrary to the climate change orthodoxy, never listen, no matter how convincing the material is.

Some people believe that they impose their progressive agenda on society, and that that is in keeping with democracy, but if the people choose another direction that is not democratic. Is it not ironic that the main opposing candidate to Donald Trump was the wife of a former President who gave a speech going out stating the "the people are supposed to be in the driver's seat?"

Now a considerable number of her supporters can't accept the election of the President through the rules that exist to elect the President for a Union of States?

Instead of having the people choose policy, they're supposed to be in on the identity politics. But perhaps not voluntarily? Other nations have had women both as Presidents and Prime Ministers for decades. And we were supposed to be impressed that the first woman President of the United States was to be a wife a former holder of the same office?!?

And certainly in a democracy, of which a representative democratic republic is one form, the people are not to be able to choose a totally different set of policies. One could wonder if electing Trump would disqualify people from electing a head of state. But would that not disqualify them on a permanent basis? What are the qualifications of the electorate really?

Jeff Deist says it perhaps most clearly:

Why doesn't the #neverTrump movement take its arguments to their logical conclusion, and insist an electorate that would install Donald Trump never be allowed to vote again or have any say in organizing society?

The reality is becoming clear, even as it remains uncomfortable for many: democracy is a sham that should be opposed by all liberty-loving people. Voting and elections confer no legitimacy whatsoever on any government, and to the extent a democratic political process replaces outright war it should be seen as only slightly less horrific.

Donald Trump is married to his third wife. Some make this an issue. I don't endorse the revolution that has taken place over the recent decades in this field. The question is what priority does it have with all the mess we have in the political system. Carol and Ron Paul celebrate their diamond wedding anniversary this year. Where were the opponents of Donald Trump's marriage history when Ron Paul ran for President in 2008 and 2012? Trump does not have excellent character, but that is way too often blown out of proportions compared to everything else that matters.

If only people could care as much about policy issues as they do about non-policy issues, and that includes the issue bringing in his daughter and son-in-law to advisor positions. Jared Kushner's policy positions are a far more serious concern than his being the President's son-in-law. I'm not saying nepotism and taking care of personal and family interests as the head of state do not matter at all. What I am saying is that compared to policy matters they are much less important.

Not too long ago, I told a friend that there are a lot of problems with Trump, but there are also a lot of problems that need a bit of a shaking. He responded swiftly by saying that there were a lot of problems in Germany of the 1930s, but that didn't imply Hitler being the solution. Is Trump the new Hitler, a term, by the way, that has become a form of crying wolf? I doubt it. Sure, we should always stay wide awake. New fascism may come sneaking, and before we know it, it may be there, too strong to do away with.

Friends of liberty, such as the Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity, are doing an important job in keeping an open eye.

The sage of Baltimore, H.L. Mencken, once said:

Under democracy one party always devotes its chief energies to trying to prove that the other party is unfit to rule—and both commonly succeed, and are right.

It is tempting to paraphrase:

The #NeverTrump movement claims Trump is unfit to rule. Trump supporters claim the #NeverTrump movement is unfit to rule. Both are right.