

BANNER GRAPHIC

President Trump's first week

Robert Robinson

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To the Editor:

Donald Trump's presidency is off to a disturbing start: He bragged that his inauguration drew "the biggest crowd in history," when photographic evidence shows his audience was dwarfed not only by Obama's 2009 and 2013 inaugurations, but also by the women's march in opposition to him the day after his inauguration.

He claimed that he had won office in a "massive landslide," when his electoral college victory was among the narrowest in U.S. history, ranking 46th out of the 58 presidential elections. And he asserted that he would have won the popular vote (which Clinton actually won by more than 2.8 million votes) if 3-5 million "illegals" had not voted for Clinton (all the major news organizations, including Fox News, say there is no evidence for this claim).

Marshaling these "alternative facts" to claim a mandate from the electorate, Trump unleashed a blizzard of executive orders in his first week: He began dismantling the Affordable Care Act — with no replacement from him or his party in sight, even after seven years to come up with one. Americans are now equally divided on the law, with 47 percent wanting to keep it vs. 46 percent wanting to repeal it (Washington Post/ABC Poll, Jan. 12-15). He directed that a wall be built along the Mexican border at a cost to American taxpayers of \$12-15 billion, when only 37 percent of Americans support this (CBS Poll, Jan. 13-17). And he banned immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries, when only 32 percent of Americans support "barring most Muslims who are not U.S. citizens, from entering the U.S." (Washington Post/ABC Poll, Jan. 12-15).

The conservative Cato Institute reports that no American has been killed in a terrorist attack by a citizen of any of these seven countries, but Trump will allow immigration from Saudi Arabia, from where 15 of the 19 9/11 terrorists came, as well as from the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon and Egypt, from where the remaining terrorists came. Not surprisingly, Trump has business ties in all these countries that he excused from the ban, but (as far as we know), no ties with the seven countries included.

With Trump's blurring of the line between fact and falsehood and between his own personal/business interests and the country's interests, as well as his delusion that he has a strong

mandate from the American people for his agenda, can anyone be surprised that sitting at the top of amazon.com's best seller list now is George Orwell's 1949 dystopian novel, "1984."

In the novel, a totalitarian government engages in truth-obscuring "Newspeak," to the point that the protagonist Winston Smith expects the state to soon declare that "two plus two equals five." As Trump would tweet, "Sad."

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