

Trump Has Talented Advisors: He Should Listen to Them

Alejandro Chafuen

September 28, 2016

When Donald Trump first came on the scene during the U.S. primaries, many thought he was only trying to test the waters and give his brand a boost. And perhaps initially those were his intentions. But when the results of open and closed primaries showed overwhelming support for Trump from participating voters, it became clear he was the Republican candidate to beat. Sen. Ted Cruz (TX), also considered anti-status quo and rebellious, came out second.

Understandably, the people who represent and benefit from the political, business, and media interests that are constantly under attack by Trump continually try to highlight his worst side and gaffes. The same applies to media coverage of his team of advisors.

I do not share many positions, and even less the aggressive style, of the Republican candidate, but given media in the United States and around the world, it seems important that those who follow this election be exposed to other key actors in Trump's camp: some of his advisors who have a solid track record of promoting and defending the free society. Steve Moore, a member of Trump's economic team, has demonstrated his deep commitment to economic freedom throughout his long career. Moore had very successful years at the Cato Institute, the leading libertarian think tank, where he came to be known as a top expert on the economic and fiscal performance of the states. Moore also earned a reputation for using solid economic arguments to promote increased immigration almost to the point of defending an "open borders" policy.

Moore then founded the "Club for Growth," which became a leading free-enterprise advocacy group. Members of this group put pressure on lawmakers to vote for free-market, limited government conservative policies, often withdrawing support from lawmakers who betrayed these principles. During his tenure, a group of powerful donors criticized Moore for alleged bias in favor of pro-family and pro-life candidates. He left the Club for Growth for the *Wall Street Journal*, where he had an important role on the Journal's editorial page.

The Heritage Foundation is the most powerful conservative think tank in the United States. It has a budget of 80 million dollars supported by approximately six hundred thousand donors. A couple of years ago, when the organization needed to strengthen its image in the analytical world, they hired Steve Moore as Chief Economist. Today, the Trump campaign is Moore's

main focus, and his role at Heritage has changed from Chief Economist to Distinguish Visiting Fellow.

The former president of Heritage, Edwin J. Feulner, has impeccable conservative credentials. He is chairman of Heritage's Asian Studies Center and has also been president of leading academic pro-free society associations, such as the Philadelphia Society and the Mont Pelerin Society. He also recently jumped aboard Donald Trump's transition team. This team is led by the governor of New Jersey, Chris Christie. Christie has a reputation for moderation and bipartisanship when it comes to public policies but, like the Republican presidential candidate, he tends to be immoderate in his speeches and very hard on those who cross him.

It seems paradoxical that Steve Moore, one of the most pro-immigration economists in the country, would play such a large role in Trump's team of advisers. It is also paradoxical that David Malpass, an economist who has played a very prominent role in helping promote free trade in the Americas became one of Trump's advisers. Malpass began to work towards trade liberalization while serving as assistant secretary of state during the administration of George H. W. Bush.

Economic adviser Judy Shelton deserves special mention. She has been a research fellow at the prestigious Hoover Institution at Stanford University, a professor at Mexican universities, and one of the most prominent academics to predict the Russian currency crisis of 1997. Shelton was vice president of the board of the National Endowment for Democracy between 2010 and 2014 and is now co-director of the Sound Money Project at Atlas Network. Another collaborator, Brooke Rollins, is the president of the Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF), the fastest growing think tank in her state. Betsy McCaughey also joined the team. She is an expert in health policy and has been affiliated with the Manhattan Institute and the Hudson Institute, as well as former Lieutenant Governor of New York from 1995 to 1998.

Speaking of free-market think tanks, Michael Pence, current governor of Indiana and Trump's running mate, was also the president of a think tank. In the early 90s, he led the Indiana Policy Review Foundation. Pence has been an active participant in programs led by organizations that promote economic freedom. His calm demeanor starkly contrasts Donald Trump's temperament.

The indices that measure respect for the rule of law show a worrying decline in the United States. In conservative circles, this deterioration is cause for great alarm. A large base of conservative voters have put great pressure on the U.S. Senate to not even consider Judge Merrick Garland, President Obama's nominee to fill the Supreme Court seat left vacant by the death of Judge Antonin Scalia earlier this year.

Late last year, during a meeting of the conservative organization with more drawing power in the United States, which prefers not to be named, I witnessed Donald Trump in action. Away from the prying eyes of the press, Mr. Trump was asked: Who would you include in your administration that has similar conservative views as members of our group? Trump's answer surprised me: "I think we need more judges like Clarence Thomas in the Supreme Court."

Thomas represents the most conservative wing of the court. He is an advocate of market freedoms based on the natural and inalienable rights of the human person. However, and some would say in typical Trump fashion, a few weeks after that statement, during a public interview, Trump caused uproar among the Republican electorate when he said his sister would be a good Supreme Court justice. Trump's sister leans to the left and her policy positions are almost opposite to the positions that Justice Clarence Thomas has held throughout his tenure on the Court.

The waters not only quieted but began to move in Trump's favor when he asked lawyers' associations and think tanks involved in issues of rule of law, including the Federalist Society and The Heritage Foundation, for recommendations. His final list of candidates for the Supreme Court received unanimous support from non-statist academic and legal experts. In an area like environmental regulation, which affects both economics and the law, Trump has tapped Myron Ebell, the leading expert from fiercely pro-capitalist Competitive Enterprise Institute.

In matters of national and international security, both Trump and Hillary Clinton have teams of advisers with different political affiliations. Trump leads widely in the polls among voters who have been in the defense forces. Among the members of the Democratic Party, the most famous Trump advisers are Lt. Gen. (ret) Michael T. Flynn, former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, and James Woolsey, former CIA director during President Bill Clinton's time in office.

Woolsey is chancellor of the Institute for World Politics.

Trump's most important advisor on homeland security is the former mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani. Before he became mayor of New York, the city was suffering from huge crime rates and low growth. After Giuliani, the city began to regain its splendor. As Heather Mac Donald from the Manhattan Institute reports, 10,000 black and Hispanic males would be dead if the city's homicide rate had remained at pre-Giuliani levels.

Among those who have been added to Trump's team in the security and foreign policy areas, I am most familiar with former Ambassador Curtin Winsor Jr. (whose doctoral thesis was on Argentina), former Pentagon spokesman J.D. Gordon (both Spanish speakers) and Walid Phares, an expert on the Middle East.

I feel compelled to point out again that I do not share many of the Republican candidate's policy positions. I have more discrepancies, however, with the other leading presidential contender.

Every time I talk with friends of liberty abroad, especially in Europe and in Latin America, I find that hardly anyone knows that several experts committed to freedom, despite disagreements with Trump, have decided to collaborate with him. Most are not being paid. The general public knows about Trump's missteps, few know about some of his good political choices.

As we saw in Monday's debate, on some of the issues, Trump and Clinton seem to be battling it out to determine who's more protectionist and populist. How can we prevent U.S. companies from moving abroad? Punish them with punitive taxes rather than make the U.S. more pro-business? Trump should pay more attention to advisers like Steve Moore and David Malpass. On

wages, Clinton proposes a \$15 minimum wage, more populist than Trump's \$10 "offer." These are indeed difficult times for friends of freedom in the United States. But it is not all black and white, and I sincerely hope that Republican institutions will be strong enough to withstand the coming jolt.