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## What Would A Donald Trump Presidency Actually Look Like?

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Donald Trump was in the middle of serving up his pungent stew of personal insults, demagoguery and braggadocio at a rally here on Friday when a woman in the crowd decided that she'd had enough.

"Quit talking nonsense, Donald!" the woman shouted. "Tell us your actual plan! What are you gonna do?"

The woman wasn't a protester, she explained to the unimpressed people standing in her vicinity. Given Trump's position as the prohibitive favorite to win the Republican nomination, she genuinely was curious to hear about what he planned to do as president.

But with Trump still engaged in his usual shtick, the woman soon gave up and joined the ranks of the hundreds of people who were already streaming out of the Fort Worth Convention Center.

The woman's frustration with Trump reflected the tack that he has stuck to ever since entering the race in June: making a lot of promises without explaining in any detail how he intends to keep them.

Trump says that he will defeat the Islamic State. How? He'd "bomb the shit out of them."

Trump vows that he'll repeal Obamacare. And with what will he replace it? Something that's "so much better," of course.

Trump brags that he's going to build a big, beautiful wall on the Mexican border. And how will he get the Mexican government to pay for it? He'll just tell them to.

For anyone seeking to acquire a reasonable understanding of what a Trump administration would actually look like, the candidate's strategy of speaking in generalities presents a high hurdle.

“The thing about Trump that makes him difficult to speculate about is that it’s all rhetoric, in a way,” said Cato Institute Vice President John Samples. “I mean, there’s nothing there. And he also hasn’t been held responsible for anything he says, so you don’t know how anything is going to work down the line.”

It may be hard to guess how many of Trump's proposals would work in practice, but it is easy to conclude that the world would become a different place the moment he places his hand on the Bible.

The international outrage that he sparked over his proposed ban on Muslims from entering the United States is just one example of that.

And Trump has left no doubt that as president, he would govern with an authoritarian approach that would entail satisfying his own personal vendettas, seeking new ways to work around Congress and challenging the role of the courts.

Consider what Trump has suggested about curtailing press freedoms at his rally in Fort Worth.

“I’m going to open up our libel laws, so when they write purposely negative and horrible and false articles, we can sue them and win lots of money,” he said. “We’re going to open up those libel laws. So when The New York Times writes a hit piece, which is a total disgrace, or when The Washington Post, which is there for other reasons, writes a hit piece, we can sue them and win money instead of having no chance of winning because they’re totally protected.”

In order for President Trump to make good on that particular promise, he would have to petition the Supreme Court, which in the 1964 New York Times v. Sullivan decision laid out broad protections for journalists to report on public figures without fear of legal repercussions.

And if he fails in his attempts to convince all facets of the federal government to do what he wants? That’s when the real national crisis would begin.

Already, there are signs of tension. Former NSA and CIA head Michael Hayden said on Friday that if President Trump were to make good on his vow to kill terrorists’ family members, the U.S. military would “refuse to act.”

"You are required not to follow an unlawful order," Hayden said during his appearance on “Real Time with Bill Maher.” “That would be in violation of all the international laws of armed conflict.”

Even if he manages to avoid the constitutional calamity of a standoff between the White House and the military, Trump has not done much to hide his fondness for authoritarian rule.

This is, after all, a man who has lavished praise on Vladimir Putin, singling out the Russian strongman’s leadership skills for particular admiration.

While other Republican candidates offer consistent criticism of President Barack Obama's executive actions, Trump has made it abundantly clear that he intends to use executive authority to act when Congress won't.

His position on the North American Free Trade Agreement is a case in point.

"We will either renegotiate it, or we will break it," Trump said when asked about NAFTA during an interview with "60 Minutes."

Many of Trump's supporters believe that his ideological flexibility is one of the greatest assets that he would bring to the White House. That is a troubling reality for Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), both of whom have been trying to paint the frontrunner as insufficiently conservative.

Former New Hampshire Republican gubernatorial candidate Andrew Hemingway, for instance, told HuffPost that he expects President Trump to be "a combination of Reagan and Kennedy."

"A Trump presidency would be a laser focus on eliminating waste and fraud," Hemingway said. "He shows that in how he has run his own campaign: lean, mean and highly effective. He also will be the hardest-working, hardest-driving president in history. He will do big things that most everyone will say is impossible."

Conversations with supporters at his rally on Friday revealed a similar expectation that Trump will resolve the nation's fiscal plight and end what many of them consider to be the U.S. government's long-running scams against its citizens.

And they aren't particularly keen on the idea of continuing to work within the established norms of government.

"He's a businessman, so looking at his presidency with that in mind, I'm hoping that he would run the country like a business," said Phyllis Goodman of Fort Worth. "I hope he throws the bums out."

Outside the event, where he was selling Trump hats and T-shirts for \$20 apiece, Dyron Miller predicted that President Trump would find ways to cut the red tape at the Veterans Administration and would utilize his confrontational approach to achieve other objectives.

"I'm a veteran, and he supports veterans, and if you look at the system, the [VA] is not set up to go as fast as it could be," Miller said. "We need Trump. We need this style right now. Because everything else, we're backing down from. He's going to be the guy that goes in full force."

Indeed, to many of his supporters, Trump's abject disdain for the idea of checks and balances is a central element of his appeal.

Carole Ann Brooks -- a former public school secretary who is now employed by her father's roofing business -- described herself as "so not political" but added that Trump's candidacy has brought her into the process.

Brooks said she was "amazed" at the waste she saw while working in her former job, and that she expected Trump to apply his business techniques in making government run more efficiently.

"I think somebody like Trump that doesn't have this entitlement attitude would be great," she said.

But what if Congress doesn't share his goals?

Asked about the prospect that an obstinate legislative branch might decline to act on much of President Trump's agenda, Brooks was unmoved.

"He's going to be the president," she said. "They're going to have to listen to him or get out."