

Daily Iowegian

Trump and war

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Yikes. We now know why President Trump has begun a trade war – because he couldn't start a real one with Venezuela. Before the Trump minions out there begin the chant of fake news, the story was even covered by the White House public relations organ, Fox News. It reported that according to a senior administration official, Trump asked during a meeting last August in the Oval Office why couldn't the U.S. just invade the troublesome country.

“The suggestion stunned those present at the meeting, including Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and national security adviser H.R McMaster,” Fox reported.

Trump pointed to the all the fun past presidents got to have, such as the invasions of Panama and Grenada in the 1980s. Remember, this is the same guy who once repeatedly asked a nuclear weapons expert why, if we have nuclear weapons, we don't use one?

Later at a dinner in September, Trump met with four Latin American ally leaders. He was briefed ahead of time not to bring the topic up, seeing how it made our friends to the south nervous about any neighborhood invasions by the U.S. So of course the first thing Trump does, according to Fox News, is exclaim, “My staff told me not to say this...” and then went around to each leader asking if they were sure they didn't want a military solution. They didn't.

So now we have the beginnings of a trade war, which even most Republican members of Congress are against. It could get ugly. Trump has repeatedly shown how thin skinned he is. When Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau politely spoke against Trump's tariffs on Canadian goods, the president went on a tweet storm accusing Trudeau of being “very dishonest and weak” and making up “false statements.” Coming from a president who has made more than 3,000 verifiable false statements, his charges carry just a bit of irony.

He is now going ballistic on Harley Davidson, which says it will move some production of its motorcycles out of the country. The action is only for bikes destined for foreign markets and it is in response to retaliatory tariffs that could tack on \$2,000 to each motorcycle – all caused by Trump. The president has attacked Harley Davidson for its move, countering that he is now working with foreign motorcycle companies to come to the U.S. Again, irony – the vast majority of products he and family members sell are not made in America. A Chinese factory has revealed that it is making Trump's 2020 campaign flags.

Trump is the king of hypocrisy. When the Red Hen restaurant refused service to White House spokesperson Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Trump tweeted that the restaurant was filthy and badly

needing a paint job. In reality, the most recent inspection of the Red Hen found no violations, while records show Trump dining properties having numerous sanitary violations.

Of course when Trump's misdeeds and lies are reported in the mainstream press, they are greeted by cries of fake news. Trump hates bad press – meaning truthful reporting. He has called the news media the enemy of the American people. He had to be shamed into finally calling for flags to be flown at half-mast for the five victims of Capital Gazette shootings. I am a bit sensitive to attacks on news personnel. It was a dozen years ago that I was stomped two blocks from the Daily Iowegian office in response to several paragraphs in a city council meeting, resulting in a concussion, 16 stitches to my forehead and an ankle broken in two places.

A common question by non-Trump fans is how can he continue exhibiting such major character flaws and ongoing lies and still maintain his base supporters. If Obama had been guilty of just a fraction of Trump's actions and misstatements, Pox and Fiends would be going crazy.

Liberals aren't the only ones puzzled by the Trump cult. Conservative radio show host Joe Walsh recently said he was "pretty damn sad" some of his callers dismiss Trump's "lying" because he's "their guy."

Former John McCain's 2008 campaign manager Steve Schmidt recently announced he was leaving the Republican Party because the party of Trump had "become a "danger to our democracy and values." In a Twitter thread, he called the party "corrupt, indecent and immoral" and filled with "feckless cowards."

"The reality is that our Founders always predicted that one day there would be a president like Trump, and that's why they designed the system of government the way they designed it," he continued. "What they never imagined is the utter abdication of co-equal branch of government, which we're seeing now..."

Two years ago conservative columnist George Will announced he was leaving the Republican Party in response to Trump's candidacy. "This is not my party."

"Reckless, outrageous and undignified behavior has become excused and countenanced as 'telling it like it is' when it is actually just reckless, outrageous and undignified," said Republican Senator Jeff Flake. "When the next generation asks us: Why didn't you do something? Why didn't you speak up? What are we going to say?"

Mean while Trump continues to lie about the smallest of things, as well as ones dangerous to a civil society. Contrary to what he claims, the crime rate among immigrants is actually lower than that of U.S. citizens (Koch-funded Cato Institute findings), there is global warming, the Russians have and will continue to interfere in U.S. elections, he has not drained "the swamp" and instead has flooded it, and the recent tax cuts do overwhelmingly benefit him and his wealthy cronies.

And now he abuses our allies and what some see as treasonous, refuses to admit and respond to Russia's digital attacks on our democracy.

As Walsh says, it's pretty damn sad.