



AMERICA NODDING AND NIGHTMARING TOWARDS WAR: BEDDING DOWN AND MAD-MAXING WITH TRUMP

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IT IS AN IRONY OF HISTORY AND A TRAGEDY for the world that before we can finish making resolutions for a new and promising future, let alone begin building one, pathologies and problems of the past continue to pursue us, impose themselves on the present and threaten our very existence. And so, now we are confronted with the real possibility of a war in West Asia (the Middle East) which will no doubt, not only engulf the region, but also extend around the world. To speak of the pathologies and problems of the past is to speak of not only Trump's thuggish act of war of assassinating Gen. Qassim Suleimani, commander of the Quds Force of the Iranian Army and perhaps the second highest ranking government member, but also of the continuing legacy and brutal practice of empire, imperialism, raw and unrepentant.

What right did Trump believe he had to assassinate a high-ranking Iranian government official, brag childishly about it and threaten a greater attack on the Iranian people and their cultural sites, if they responded to this blatant act of war and thuggery? Of course, there is no right, only the might or capacity to do it and the absence of moral restraint and political wisdom not to do so. But also, he operates within an American conception of the "right" of empire, the conquest and occupation of other peoples and lands for ruthless exploitation of their human and material resources for the benefit of the conquering and occupying country.

Trump may be its crude, unmasked and grossly incompetent representative, but the lies and illusions he espouses and the practices he engages in daily, strike a cord and find common ground with more Americans, especially Whites, than we'd like to admit. Deny it or not, Trump and his most ardent allies know how to tell the Hitlerian big lie about what he has done, is doing and will do. Hitler and his propaganda minister, Goebbels, advised that "people will believe a big lie sooner than a little one, and if you repeat it frequently enough, people will come to believe it." Indeed, Goebbels stated, "It would

not be possible to prove with sufficient repetition and a psychological understanding of the people concerned that a square is in fact a circle."

Moreover, the Office of Strategic Services during WWII offered a psychological profile of Hitler which reminds us, not only of Trump, but of the regular propaganda empire and imperialism use to wage psychological and physical war. For as Aimé Césaire says, Hitler emerges from the prior practices and ideas of European empire against people of color. It says Hitler's commitment and practices were "never to admit a fault or wrong; never concede that there may be good in your enemy; never leave room for alternatives. Never accept blame. Concentrate on one enemy at a time and blame him for everything that goes wrong."

In spite of the current demonization of Gen. Suleimani now, the U.S. collaborated with him to defeat ISIL, and has to concede his critical role in not only defeating ISIL, but also preventing their resurgence. Moreover, even if Trump and his lemming-like allies don't want to concede it, it is clear that Iran and its leaders are not afraid of him or his high tech killing machines. Both their religion and political resolve make them commit to become willing martyrs in the cause of self-determination and defense against those they deem foreign aggressors. And thus, they will respond, regardless, fighting the asymmetrical war they and their global network of allies are well-prepared for, which even their enemies concede.

In spite of the awesome and inevitable casualties and varied costs of war with Iran, the U.S. seems bent on nodding and nightmaring towards it, bellying up and bedding down with Mad Max Trump, who appears on the scene unhinged and unrestrained, not after the apocalypse, as in the movie, but before it, recklessly "leading" the country into it. I used the word *nodding* here in two senses: nodding in agreement and assent and nodding in drowsiness from sleepiness, intoxication or being drugged. For the thoughtless consent and dismissal of consequences regarding Trump's erratic, irrational,

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reckless and grossly immoral behavior by so many seems eerily similar to those with an opioid addiction. It must be said here that this addiction is not simply a cult-like allegiance to a man, but a deep addiction to the opioid of lies and illusions, rooted in deformed conceptions of imperial right and racial and religious superiority and thus, the inability to imagine others who are different as equal in human worth, human rights and the shared good and goods of the world.

Key here is the need to accept, even reluctantly, that too many Americans share Trump's racial, racist, religious, political and imperialist views of domination, deprivation and degradation of those different and vulnerable. They might mask it in claims of fear, security, national interest, even false concern for those they kill, seek to dominate or destroy. But in the end, they reveal that it's all about them, their interests and aspirations regarding power, wealth and status. In a word, power "over," not "with;" wealth privatized and limited, not shared; and status racially and religiously inherited, not inherent, equal and inalienable as human beings, and built on as social beings by the good we do in and for the world.

So, many Americans and the political, religious and social leaders are lining up like lemmings with Trump on his doomsday train toward war with all its catastrophic consequences for this country and the world. Some are shamelessly loud with thuggish threats and irrational justifications of all kinds. Some are animated and upset, but won't speak out. Instead, they gather on the margins of where things matter, whispering impotently on the side about how sad and sick things are. But they don't prescribe or apply the remedy of righteous and relentless resistance.

Then, there are others who are simply silent, refusing to speak out or sacrifice their comfortable place in the system, regardless of its flaws, failures and harm. And of course, there are those who remain religiously, racially and

politically committed to dominance as a way of life and would rather pull down the temple of the country and the world and kill all, including themselves, rather than concede the rights, equality and shared good of the world with others.

So, here we are in the midst and maze of lies and illusions of those who lie as a way of life, who claim good-doing and God and practice grotesque evil and Goebbels. Here we are being convinced that a square is a circle, that we are safer by the assassination but are put on high alert and troop presence is increased everywhere, and that a blatant act of war was to prevent war. Again, we are offered square circle reasoning.

The Iraqi Parliament voted to expel U.S. troops for assassinating, not only Gen. Suleimani, but also the Deputy Commander of the Popular Mobilization Forces of Iraq and Commander of Kataib Hezbollah, Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis, and thus, also for violating Iraqi's sovereignty in this roguish and unlawful act. But Trump denies their right to do so and the media plays down the vote for expulsion. And Trump arrogantly declares that if they attempt to enforce the expulsion, he will impose brutal sanctions reminiscent of those of 1990-2003 which killed more than a million Iraqi, many of whom were children.

SO, THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES, Trump is committed to thugging his thoughtless way through the world. And he nor we should be surprised where this will take him and the country, if he is not resisted, restrained and removed from office. Our task as a people, if we honor our fundamental transformative historical role in this country, is to be in the vanguard and rear-guard of the struggle, not only to change presidents, but also to radically reconstruct society, bringing an end to empire and all the savagery, suffering, lies and illusions, and religious and racial supremacist ideas and practices it is based and built on.▲