

The American Military Empire: Is Trump Its Would-be Emperor?

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Important article on the nature of the Trump Administration, first published by Global Research in August 2017

*"Fascism may be defined as a form of political behavior marked by obsessive preoccupation with community decline, humiliation or victimhood, ... in which a mass-based party of committed nationalist militants, working in uneasy but effective collaboration with traditional elites, abandons democratic liberties and pursues with redemptive violence and without ethical or legal restraints goals of internal cleansing and external expansion." Robert Paxton (1932-), American historian, (in his book *The Anatomy of Fascism*, 2004)*

*"When and if fascism comes to America, it will not be labeled 'made in Germany'; it will not be marked with a swastika; it will not even be called fascism; it will be called, of course, 'Americanism.'" Halford Edward Luccock (1885-1961), American Methodist minister and professor, (in *Keeping Life out of Confusion*, 1938)*

"Before mass leaders seize the power to fit reality to their lies, their propaganda is marked by its extreme contempt for facts as such, for in their opinion fact depends entirely on the power of man who can fabricate it." Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), German-born, Jewish-American political theorist, (in [The Origins of Totalitarianism](#), 1951)

By now, most observers have finally realized who President Donald Trump really is. After close to eight months in the White House, Trump has clearly demonstrated that he has serious character defects in his public role as an American "showman" president. His behavior, so far, has been more than bizarre. It has been clearly aberrant and frightening.

For example, people are accustomed to be lied to by politicians, but Donald Trump seems to have elevated the [art of lying](#) to new heights. He speaks and acts as if he were living in some sort of permanent fantasyland, and his first natural instinct is to invent lies. This goes hand in hand with another art that Trump has cultivated and developed to the utmost, and it is the [art of bullying](#) to get his way, with anybody, members of Congress, foreign leaders, even his own staff and subordinates, from whom he enjoys extracting public [praise](#) regarding his own persona.

What may be the most frightening realization of all, for an American president with such responsibilities, in charge of nuclear weapons, is the fact that Donald Trump seems to be a person who adopts the views of the last person he talks to, be it somebody from his immediate family who has been appointed to an official rank in his administration, or one of the generals whom he has appointed close to himself. — He seems not to have any

firm political ideas of his own. — It all depends on if he is reading from a teleprompter or not.

On the last point, Trump may have reached a [Summum of irresponsibility](#), for a democratic leader, when he transferred basic military policy on important foreign policy decisions to the military brass. I suspect that is a ploy to shed responsibility for future failures, for which he could conveniently blame the military.

This points to the fact that President Trump will be the puppet of his [military junta](#) in the coming months, as the besieged president retreats into his cocoon. He will be happy to let generals run the show in near complete [secrecy](#), and with hardly any input from Congress, as the representatives of the people. The pretext this time around: “*America’s enemies must never know our plans*”, says Trump. Indeed, an [empire](#) cannot be democratic and open. It must be run in secrecy, with no, or hardly any, democratic debate.

As for now, the Pentagon has divided the world into six separate geographic so-called [Unified Combatant Commands](#) to oversee and impose by force a global “Pax Americana”. For instance, Canada is assigned to the USNORTHCOM, and countries such as Russia, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy and France are assigned to the USEUCOM, Japan and China are assigned to the USPACOM, as well as tiny Vanuatu, etc. According to Pew Research and government statistics, the U.S. still has 73,206 troops in Asia, 62,635 troops in Europe, and 25,124 troops in the Middle East and North Africa.

This is the basic infrastructure. Then, there are operational [plans](#) to use it.

Of course, such a global military development requires a lot of resources, which have to be diverted from other domestic uses. This creates the type of “[military-industrial complex](#)”, which establishes a symbiosis between U.S. military industries and the Pentagon. That is precisely what President Dwight D. Eisenhower [warned](#) the American people against, in his farewell speech of January 17, 1961.

The transformation has been long in the making. But with Trump as a would-be autocratic emperor, it is a *fait accompli*, notwithstanding what the U.S. Constitution says or calls for, in terms of checks and balances and the division of powers, and notwithstanding the basic wishes of the American people.

The conclusion is inescapable. Americans must recognize that the United States has become a *de facto* military empire, even if not yet a *de jure* empire, and Donald Trump is its current megalomaniac figurehead, a near [neo-fascist](#) would-be emperor. Where that will lead is anybody’s guess, but this is most unprecedented and most ominous.

Empires are very costly to maintain

However, as with any empire in quest of global hegemony, the ultimate danger is [overextension](#). Military empires are [very costly](#) to maintain and they are subject to the law of diminishing returns, i.e. military investments result in lower and lower net economic returns, as negative reactions increase and the cost-benefit ratio rises. The collapse of the Soviet empire in 1991 can serve as a reminder of such a scenario. Sooner or later, indeed, the same cause and effect equation is bound to confront the current neocon-inspired American adventure as a [world empire](#).

Considering the above, it is not surprising that little leeway is left in the U.S. fiscal budget for social programs on the domestic front. In the short run, this may hardly matter, since Donald Trump does not seem to be talking to anybody in Congress, after having insulted most of its leaders and having created a vacuum around himself and his office. In the long run, however, this could be a harbinger of social troubles ahead.

Currently, Donald Trump is bound to accomplish very little as far as domestic policies are concerned. Trying to bully the Senate with ludicrous threats to [shut down](#) the U.S. government if the former does not vote his way in appropriating \$1.6 billion in border wall money, may insulate Trump even more, even if such irresponsible talk pleases his electoral base. Indeed, if the President were to carry out his threat of “*closing down our government*” by vetoing any spending bill that does not include funding for his pet project of building a wall on the U.S.-Mexican border, this would represent some dangerous brinkmanship rarely seen in politics.

Also, with the ominous threat of a possibly devastating report from U.S. special counsel Robert Mueller, sometime late in the fall or in early 2018, a president-under-siege’s main political way out may be to coach his generals into launching or expanding overseas wars. Indeed, this could be in the Middle East and/or in Asia, or even against Venezuela — it doesn’t much matter — while hoping that his unsophisticated political base, establishment journalists and the U.S. [media](#) in general will appreciate the show, and that the public’s attention can be somewhat diverted from his ineptitude.

Conclusion

All this is to say that with Donald Trump in the White House, the United States is marching more or less blindly toward a series of major crises, politically, economically and militarily. Which one will come first and how serious it will be is hard to predict. In any case, you can expect that it will be most disruptive.

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