

Quelling the Mutiny on the MAGA

By Bruce Gilley

In naval warfare, the fainthearted officers often rush to the lifeboats when the battle turns nasty. The Good Ship MAGA is experienced such a mutiny. And those craven officers will look foolish four years hence.

It is little more than 100 days into this mission, but many clever deck officers have lost their way. Take your pick of



frightened conservative academics, journalists, think tank analysts, or political operatives. They have flinched like lowly deck hands. It is as if they forget the reasons for the historic return of their disgraced captain on November 5, 2024. The reasons,

let us be reminded, were not to keep their hedge funds flush, or to serve drinks at the officers club. Nor did they have anything to do with the preservation of some long-gone “liberal world order.”

Skipper Trump is at the helm for a much simpler reason: he is the only person up to the task of restoring the republic by engaging its enemies at home and abroad, at least until his

first mate has done a four-year tour and is ready to take command.

I am not surprised to see the retired admirals of the Republican establishment crowing about a “historic” chastening of Trump, forgetting that they no longer control the vessel for a reason. Nor am I dismayed by the many liberal allies of the Good Ship MAGA who wrongly believed that the ills of our age could be cured by some high-minded Socratic statesman of the right.

But the panic on the poop deck is different, a threatened mutiny of what should be core MAGA supporters just as the gales and currents of the passage become severe. It is a reminder of why we need a master who will hold a steady helm when all around him panic.

Consider the critical domestic policy issues where Trump has sailed a fair course already: immigration, higher education, deregulation, the tax and spend death spiral, gender insanity, climate insanity, school choice, federal workforce accountability, Medicaid fraud, voting integrity. Despite having navigated these shoals, Trump finds his officers complaining that he has wet the deck with his trade war, as if he was elected to ensure sunbathing on the forecastle.

On foreign policy too, we see Trump doing exactly what he was elected to do: defending Israel and Taiwan, forcing negotiations over Ukraine, re-arming the U.S., perking up NATO, solving strategic vulnerabilities in Greenland and the Panama Canal, battering down Iran, ending the global tax racket, shaking alive Canada, terminating failed foreign aid, and halting China’s cyber-espionage.

And this does not even touch on the critical constitutional reforms where Trump has already forced a reckoning by his mere presence: on executive immunity, district court injunctions, states’ rights, and birthright citizenship.

George Yeo, the former foreign minister of Singapore, told the BBC earlier this month that the world should want MAGA to succeed because a stronger American would be good for every peace-loving nation. Trump was also correct, Yeo remarked, in seeing that the international system was no longer inherently friendly to U.S. interests. He was “fast-forwarding the future” by re-negotiating tough new bargains for a multipolar world.

How is it that Yeo, a faithful Catholic with an MBA from Harvard, knows better the importance of the Good Ship MAGA than the commentariat scribbling their advice from the quarterdeck?

How is it that the short-termism that afflicts TV news has now bled into the sober thinking of would-be allies of Trump? They forget that long-term gains in national security, labor productivity, and human freedom require the scuttling of the armada of what First Officer Vance called “brain-dead liberalism.” As Matt Schlapp, chair of the American Conservative Union, [told](#) *Politico* in early April: “For the country, if we don’t do some hard things that make people nervous to avoid that short-term pain, we’ll never get the country on the right path.”

The markets will ultimately capture the bounty of the Good Ship MAGA by the time it returns to port in November 2028. Until then, C.O. Trump had better ignore the chatter from the officers who think they know better.

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