

The Anti-Trump Hysterics Roll On

Journalists froth as the Mueller special-counsel investigation rumbles toward its third year.

by Conrad Black



Contrary to the reasonable hopes and the expectations of some that the midterm elections would accelerate a normalization of the American political climate, nothing of the kind seems to be happening. Almost no one is saying much that is sensible. The chief justice, John Roberts, claimed with a straight face that once aboard a federal bench, judges and justices shed any previous political or public-policy biases they might previously have had. His own Supreme Court and the titanic struggles over confirming nominees of administrations of either party to it, make nonsense out of such a claim. Roberts's own record in his present exalted office indicates that his theory of the miraculous immaculate transformation of incoming federal judges is bunk, apart from his rescue of

Obamacare by his spurious finding that it was a tax (presumably to avoid a massive confrontation of the kind that Presidents Jefferson and Jackson had with Chief Justice Marshall and President Franklin D. Roosevelt had with Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes).

Equally fictitious, though from a less prominent person, was Fox News's Chris Wallace's theory, repeated as if on autocue in his interview with President Trump, that the label "Fake News" demeaned every practicing journalist in Washington and, unspecifically, beyond Washington because the craft of political journalism covering the U.S. federal government is indivisible. Wallace is an intelligent and fair professional of great experience and engaging public manner; why he would put forth such an absurd proposition escapes comprehension. It might as well be argued that encountering a car that was a lemon meant that all cars from that manufacturer were bad, or swallowing a bad oyster meant that oysters were inedible. The president tried admirably to liberate the ordinarily sensible Wallace from the grip of this mad dogmatism.

An oceanic volume of tears was shed over the cruel and barbarous fate of Jamal Khashoggi, the *Washington Post* contributor and recent American resident, Muslim Brotherhood member, and Saudi critic of the Saudi regime, apparently in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul by Saudi officials allegedly directed by the prince regent, Mohammad bin Salman. It appears to have been a disgusting and thoroughly premeditated crime. There is plenty of precedent among America's allies for such crimes. The Soviet Union, which suffered 95 percent of the human casualties and 99 per cent of the physical damage in subduing Nazi Germany, was led by the almost incomparably barbarous Josef Stalin, who murdered more people than our common enemy, Hitler, but was no less valuable an ally for that. The "Free World," which the United States led to victory in the Cold War, included in its ranks Spain's dictator, Francisco Franco, Portugal's Salazar, the Shah of Iran, Chiang

Kai-shek, South Korea's Syngman Rhee, the feudal monarchic despotisms of Arabia, and many of the bemedaled but often blood-stained juntas and strongmen of Latin America, Turkey, Greece, Pakistan, and post-Sukarno Indonesia. The fact that Mao Tse-tung was responsible for the deaths of scores of millions of Chinese did not make him any less prestigious in the United States, nor a less desirable party with whom to triangulate the relationship with the USSR starting in 1972.

Khashoggi had recently become an American resident of convenience, but that did not make his fate at the hands of the government of his country any particular business of the United States. Life is cheap in the Middle East, the hypocrisy of the high-handed Erdogan regime in Turkey is especially grating, geopolitical realities make Saudi Arabia a valuable ally opposite the Iranians and Palestinians, and the remonstrations of the U.S. government have driven the Saudis to denounce and disown their own actions and purport to try individuals responsible for Khashoggi's murder. The purists who imagine that if everything is hinged on holding others to ideal standards, the United States can conduct any foreign policy at all beyond tourism, a little trade, and a few cultural agreements are dreaming. The rotten criminal justice system of the United States itself (99 percent conviction rate, 97 percent without trial) does not meet standards distinctly higher than some despotisms. And the United States has to outgrow this tendency of questioning every relationship it has except with squeaky-clean democracies, every time the heat comes up. We were in a time-warp last week, when the inevitable, imperishable Noam Chomsky blamed illegal immigration on the United States for not providing the funds and expertise to eradicate poverty in Latin America.

The hardest perennial of all was the lambasting by the anti-Trump media of the president's dismissal of the latest National Climate Assessment, predicting the virtual incineration of the Earth in the balance of this century if we

don't abolish the use of fossil fuels. The same or similar people said almost the same thing in my own memory about over-population, insecticide use, nuclear after-effects, famine, pollution, a new ice age, global warming and climate change (i.e., weather). Helene Cooper of the *New York Times* advocated becoming "hysterical" as a logical response. Paul Krugman of the same newspaper accused Trump of "depravity" for not listening to Dr. Mann, author of the infamous fictitious "hockey stick" of skyrocketing world temperatures. Slightly related was the brief claim by Hawaii's Democratic senator Brian Schatz that the administration had violated international protocols banning chemical weapons by using tear gas at the Mexican border, as the Obama administration had uncontroversially done dozens of times.

The arrival of the migrant caravan at Tijuana substantially validated all the predictions the administration had made about it, and even the anti-Trump media had some trouble with mobs throwing rocks at U.S. border officials and concentrated attempts to scale walls. The Democrats are edging closer every week to acknowledging a desire to admit anyone who seeks entry, the release of local authorities from any obligation to enforce border-rules, and the prohibition of census-takers from inquiring into citizenship, even though that will make the calculation of the population for purposes of allocating numbers of congressmen and Electoral College members impossible. (There are now 22 million people living in the United States illegally.)

And the Mueller special-counsel rumbles toward its third year. So desperate have Mueller's efforts and those of his rabidly Democratic staff members become that in trying to extort and suborn inculpatory perjury about the president, they are facing a revolt from the victims, led by Paul Manafort from his solitary confinement cell, but emulated now by Jerome Corsi. Rather than cooperate (i.e., lie) after being catechized by Mueller, to avoid facing the extremes of the

American kangaroo courts, they are refusing Mueller, and effectively betting on the failure of Mueller to make good on his mission to take down or seriously discommode the president. Mueller is escalating the terror campaign against Manafort by inciting state prosecutions, insusceptible to the president's power of pardon. The Democrats have been shouting from the housetops about protecting Mueller, but Trump has no interest in shutting him down. Mueller has nothing, and his terrors don't impress its victims. What is inexplicable is the president's delay in naming an attorney general. He must have been considering this question since it became clear that Jeff Sessions was a prosecutorial eunuch 18 months ago. The only reason that comes to mind for his waiting is because he wants to see if the Democrats are going to be stupid enough to try to impeach him, which would not only fail and backfire, it would be a gold-edged invitation to send the Clinton campaign and Obama Justice Department in droves to the grand jury, and on from there on the conveyer-belt of American criminal justice to the fate they deserve.

The chief subject of any such activity had a little-publicized setback in Canada this week. The Clintons attempted to pack out the stadium where the Toronto big-league basketball and hockey teams perform, and it was a fiasco. Less than half the tickets sold, scalpers were almost giving them away in the hours before the occasion. The questions were very soft, and Bill had to filibuster while Hillary had a coughing spell. Between them, the Clintons devised a new charge against the man who won the last election: Donald Trump and his family are fronting corrupt Saudi interests. Hillary accused Trump of being a Russian agent in her last book but has shuffled the puppet-masters responsible for the injustice of her defeat. This tired road-show, at least, seems no longer to have legs. Let no one deny progress when we see it. Why they imagined the Canadians would have any interest in their itinerant soap opera is another mystery.

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