

The Tweeting President: Madman or Master Manipulator?

What are we to make of our tweeting commander in chief? Has he proven himself to be mentally unstable to the point of being unqualified to be president? Or is he a genius who is always several steps ahead, tweeting with brilliant purpose and plan?

Rather than backing down after the brouhaha concerning his Joe and Mika tweets, he redoubled his efforts, defending his use of Twitter and going one step farther, posting his instantly infamous CNN-takedown video. What are we to make of this?

Those who believe this is all part of a brilliant strategy will point to the following.

First, he managed to get elected like this, defying all odds and overcoming all opposition. As the old saying goes, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Second, he can get the media to turn on a dime, changing their focus to cover his latest tweet rather than pursuing their own agenda. So, it may look like he's being harassed, but he's really sending the media on a wild goose chase of his choosing.

Third, while his critics rage, his most loyal supporters cheer him on. "We've wanted a fighter like this for years," they say. "The media is just plain evil."

Fourth, it's remotely possible that he's sending subtle signals to hostile world leaders, telling them to tread carefully. "After all," he's allegedly suggesting, "you don't want to mess with me. I'm a little crazy and you have no idea what I might do if you cross me."

Those attributing this level of genius to Trump would qualify

as true Trump fans, according to a funny piece on the satirical Christian website the Babylon Bee. The piece listed seven multiple choice questions, including: "President Trump trips and tumbles down the steps of Air Force 1, knocking all of his front teeth out. What do you think?"

According to a true Trump fan, the correct answer is: "*I guarantee* he did it on purpose to outmaneuver his enemies. This is classic Trump 4-D chess!"

It's funny, but fairly accurate in terms of how Trump can do no wrong in the eyes his most devoted followers.

Those who believe that the president's tweets reveal a deeply disturbing pattern will point to the following.

First, ask yourself how people would look at you if you vilified others as he has, using the same descriptions and insults. He has degraded himself and the office of the presidency by his remarks.

Second, it's obvious that he's out of control, since he's very thin-skinned and would never do anything to generate more insults. That means that he's not calculating at all; instead, he's just reacting like a little child.

Third, many of his supporters can't defend some of his recent tweets. If he's so smart, why would he push away his base?

Fourth, without the support of world leaders, his effectiveness will be greatly limited. Why alienate our allies and further provoke our enemies? That's not brilliant; that's buffoonish.

What, then, should we make of our tweeting president?

For me, it's pretty simple, and I can boil it down to six words: This is who the man is. As he recently tweeted, "My use of social media is not Presidential – it's MODERN DAY PRESIDENTIAL. Make America Great Again!"

Or, to state this more accurately, these tweets are “modern-day presidential” because of our current “modern-day president.” In other words, while tweeting presidents may be here to stay, the types of tweets sent out by this president are uniquely his own. To repeat: This is who the man is.

Like many others who voted for him, I hoped he would become more presidential (in the traditional sense of the word) once in office, but for the moment, I’ve given up that hope. (I’m not saying it won’t or can’t happen; I’m just resigned to the fact that, right now, that’s not the case.)

He is who he is, and it’s gotten him this far, like it or not. He’s the most powerful elected official on the planet, and certainly the most talked-about political figure on earth, not to mention *Time* magazine’s most recent man of the year.

Is there any single brand-name better known than “Trump” right now?

On the one hand, he obviously knows what he is doing, and it is anything but totally out of control. There is a method to the apparent madness.

On the other hand, his fleshly failings are there for all to see, and there is much to regret in what he does.

In his tweets and actions, there’s definitely a mixture of carnality and calculation. That’s just who the man is.

So, he can appoint a fine justice like Neil Gorsuch, deliver a powerful speech in Saudi Arabia, call out the hypocrisy of Mahmoud Abbas to his face, stand shoulder-to-shoulder with evangelical Christians and show them deep respect, just to name a few of the very good things he has done in his first six months. Yet he can call Joe Scarborough “psycho” and mock Mika Brzezinski as “crazy” (and mention her allegedly “bleeding,” post-facelift face), then post edited footage from his appearance at WrestleMania (!), where he is beating up

CNN.

That means that, while we should pray fervently for our president, who could potentially do great harm or great good, we should also get used to the new reality. This is who the man is. {eoa}