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USA

“Adults in the Room”

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Aren't we all feeling so much safer knowing about the anonymous “Quiet Resistance Inside the Trump Administration,” revealed by the bombshell New York Times op-ed, assuring us “that many of the senior officials in his own administration are working diligently from within to frustrate parts of his agenda and his worse inclinations”?

Sure we are. Thanks to these diligent country-over-party patriots who “have vowed to do what we can to preserve our democratic institutions,” so many things are safeguarded from the rampages of the Orange Apparition — women’s lives, basic voting rights, prohibitions of torture, freedom from murderous police violence against communities of color, and much more.

The core message of the anonymous writer is that the hard-right Republican agenda is being protected from the wild subjective instability in the Oval Office. “There are bright spots that the near- ceaseless negative coverage of the administration fails to capture: effective deregulation, historic tax reform, a more robust military and more.”

The writer makes valid points about the Trump regime’s accomplishments. “Historic tax reform” has deliberately put the country on the road toward bankruptcy, opening the door to wiping out Social Security and Medicare for future generations. With “effective deregulation,” corporate power is free to ride roughshod over the vestiges of consumer protection, financial institutions can gleefully head toward the next meltdown, and the fossil fuel industry can plunder the planet for at least the short time before global climate catastrophe becomes irreversible.

The rightwing seizure of the Supreme Court means that the entrenchment of corporate power can be insulated from popular political “interference,” public education gutted, health care potentially stripped from tens of millions of people receiving it under Obamacare, and ultimately *Roe v. Wade* overturned as the gift to the religious-fanatic sector of the Republican base. Meanwhile ICE rips apart immigrant families and terrorizes communities, satisfying the demands of the (closeted as well as open) extreme racist elements.

Against the record of such impressive achievements, the mere fact that the President is psycho is an inconvenient but eminently manageable problem. Trump’s lunatic orders to assassinate foreign leaders are simply ignored, drafts of executive orders to cancel NAFTA swiped from his desk, his affections for Vladimir Putin neutralized by the national security team, which “knew better” that “actions had to be taken, to hold Moscow accountable.”

We need to recognize that Trump, with all his obscene qualities, has emerged in some respects as a “transformational” president — as Barack Obama ultimately failed to become, disappointing the hopes of many on the liberal and progressive spectrum. That of course is why the Republican leadership, who know perfectly well who and what he is, continue to enable him.

It’s a strategy that can continue, even if the administration’s internal atmosphere resembles a cross between a Night of the Long Knives and the Night of the Living Dead, until something happens to rupture it. Trump’s behavior might drag the Republicans down toward electoral oblivion. More likely, some kind of crisis — e.g. the next global financial emergency — might emerge that demands competent American “leadership,” which no one believes Trump and his inner circle can provide. Or the Mueller investigation might produce indictments threatening to send Trump’s family to prison.

At that stage, the Republican leadership — not the Democrats, despite the empty chatter about impeachment —

might have to move to curb Trump in a serious way. But that’s for some presently unknown future scenario.

Right now, the left’s focus needs to be away from the daily festival of scandal and celebrity sleaze, and firmly fixed on the deadly serious issues facing working class and oppressed people. We need to be building a resistance that’s anything but “quiet.”

September 7, 2018

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