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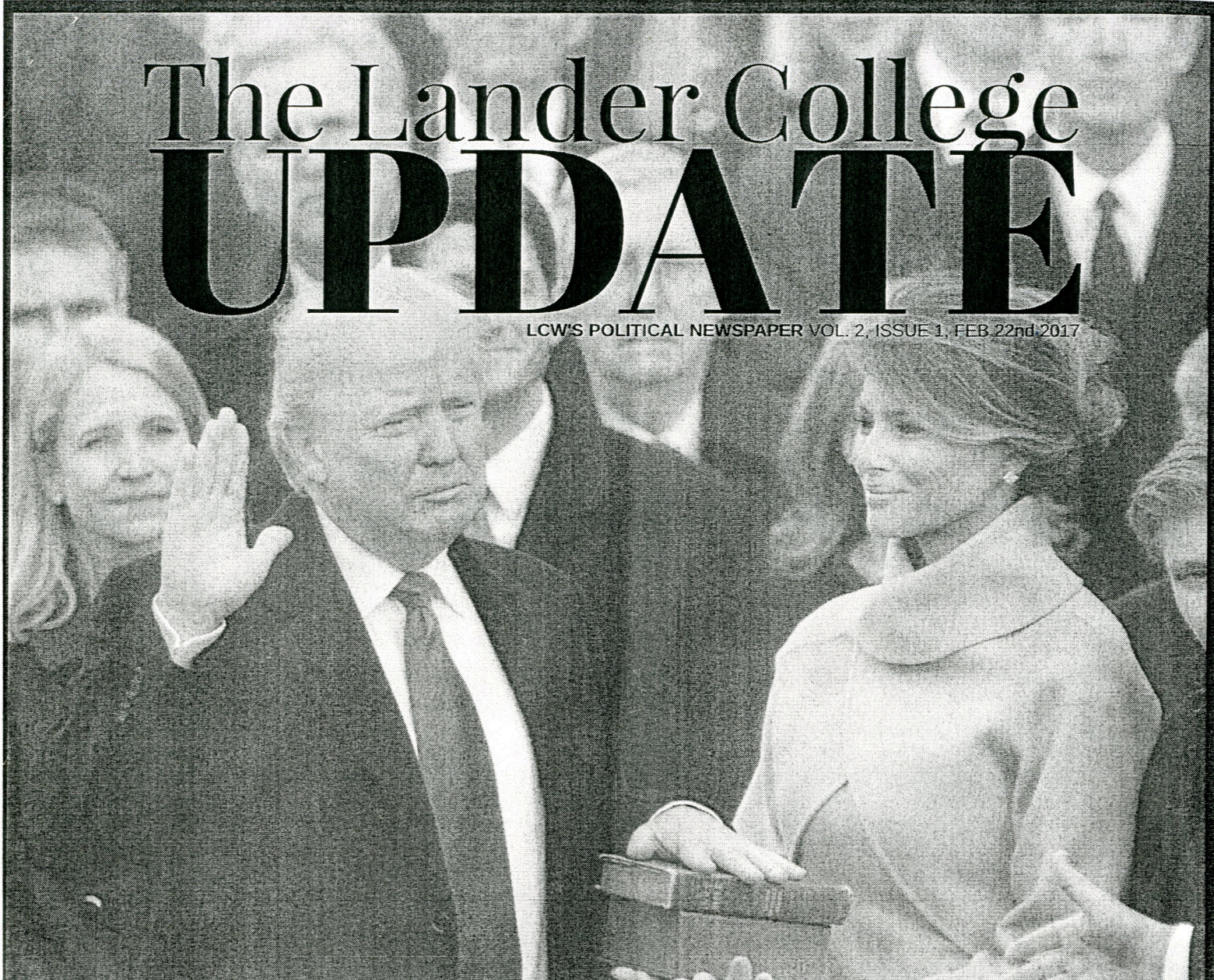
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The Lander College **UPDATE**

LCW'S POLITICAL NEWSPAPER VOL. 2, ISSUE 1, FEB 22nd 2017



THE TRUMP PRESIDENCY

The Syrian Refugee Crisis

President Trump, the Public, and "Alternative Facts"

Free Speech in Trump's America

General Mattis and ISIS

Bannon, the Man on Trump's Shoulder

The LCW Political Update is bi-weekly newsletter about Politics and Current Events that is written and compiled by students at the Lander College for Women. We are committed to producing an honest news source and educating our student body. The writers and editors of the LCW Political Update seek to fulfill the highest standards of academic integrity. If you are interested in getting involved, please send us your information at: lcwupdate@gmail.com.

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THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

by Liad Yitzchak

In 2011, Aleppo was Syria's largest city with a population of 2.5 million people. Once a prosperous and flourishing place, Aleppo was Syria's commercial capital. Diana Darke, Middle East cultural expert and journalist, has written that "the [multi-cultural] city has long been a complex mix of Kurds, Iranians, Turkmen, Armenians and Circassians overlaid on an Arab base in which multi-denominational churches and mosques still share the space." This continued into the first year of the Syrian uprising, and remained relatively peaceful, until July 2012. The government and rebel forces began fighting in Aleppo and in the Syrian capital of Damascus. The two cities "had been the two significant holdouts in the fighting that has gradually engulfed the rest of Syria...[but] whoever controls the two jewels-in-the-crown controls Syria."

The Battle of Aleppo is an ongoing military conflict between the Syrian Opposition (aka rebels), in partial cooperation with the Army of Conquest and other various Sunni militants, and the Syrian Armed Forces, who are being supported by Hezbollah and other various Shi'ite militants. The rebels had swift successes, seizing several government-controlled districts in almost every direction.

Nationwide protests began back in March 2011, against the Syrian government headed by President Bashar al-Assad. In Aleppo itself, however, large protests started more than a year later in May 2012. During this period, self-supporting government rallies began popping up all over the place. Aleppo had remained undisturbed by the 16-month-long conflict until July 22nd, 2012, when rebel fighters entered and took control of the city. After years of war between forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and the opposition seeking to overthrow him and his government, the city of Aleppo has been all but destroyed.

For months, the Syrian government, along with the Russians, have relentlessly been bombarding eastern Aleppo, trying to take back the part of the city which has been in rebel control for nearly four years.





Aleppo - especially eastern Aleppo, which is currently under rebel control - has been besieged, bombarded, and depleted of many of its people, who have either been killed or forced to flee. Many neighborhoods in Aleppo have been under fire for 80 consecutive days, with more than 6,000 people (mostly civilians) killed or injured. Rebel fighters have also done likewise with artillery and bombings, but can't match the firepower of the Syrian Armed Forces.

Last October, the Syrian and Russian and governments announced a three-day ceasefire, which would have opened a route for those who wished to leave eastern Aleppo. However, residents trapped inside the besieged part of the city reported that they had been prevented from fleeing the city by rebel forces. The rebel coalition put out a statement rejecting the deal from the government. Still, thousands of leaflets dropped on eastern Aleppo by helicopters urged the thousands of residents to leave the rebel neighborhood, and promised fighters' deaths if they did not lay down their arms. Since then, at least two major pathways and six more safe exits were set up by the Syrian Armed Forces. Various media outlets reported that only a "small number" were evacuated. Disputes about different attacks have broken out between different informational sources; whereas ITV, a government-controlled news outlet has claimed that Aleppo rebels have sent mortar rockets at various checkpoints, rebel activists at Aleppo Media Center claimed that information streaming from government sources was totally false. The UN has requested that the ceasefire be extended; currently, eastern Aleppo is running dangerously low of medical supplies, fuel and

food.

There are still approximately 250,000 people living in Syria's eastern Aleppo, an area which is blockaded by government forces, who are dangerously close to running out of supplies. The last remaining food rations are being distributed in rebel-held eastern districts of the city. Jan Egeland, humanitarian adviser to the U.N, reported this past Friday that without a re-supply, there will be no food left to hand out in Aleppo next week. As the last rations were being handed out, Egeland said he had never seen such "politicization and manipulation" of humanitarian aid. "The consequences of no help, no supplies would be so catastrophic that I cannot even see that scenario." He urged Russia, the Syrian government, and opposition fighters to allow medical and food supplies into besieged areas, and to allow evacuations of the ill and injured. Additionally, the beginning of winter will make this "the worst in this cruel war."

Since mid-January, approximately 1.8 million people in Aleppo, and in nearby areas, have been cut off from their main source of water after the Syrian government took control of the water supply. Restoring the water supply is a top priority, says Radek Rzehak, UNICEF's (the United Nations Children's Fund) chief field officer in Syria. In addition, Rzehak also said that the organization is working on "rehabilitating the schools themselves and bringing children back to school. It's about them catching up on two, three, sometimes four years of being out of school." Rzehak has reported that classrooms are so overcrowded that children have to attend schools in shifts and the teachers themselves are traumatized by ongoing conflict.

"They don't have electricity, they don't have running water at home, it's cold," said Rzehak. "No windows, no doors. The biggest problem is cold now, it's very challenging to live there but still they want to go back to their houses and establish a new life."

As of last February, one in ten Syrians have been wounded or killed since the beginning of the conflict. So far, over 470,000 deaths have been caused by the war, either directly or indirectly. A great majority of those deaths - approximately 400,000- were caused directly by violence, and about 70,000 were caused by indirect means of the war, such as the collapse of the healthcare infrastructure, lack of access to medicine, poor sanitation, the spread of communicable diseases, falling vaccination rates, food scarcity, etc. Life expectancy in Syria has dropped dropping from 70.5 years in 2010 to an estimated 55.4 years in 2015. All in all, an estimated total of 11.5% of the Syrian population has been wounded or killed since 2011...there is crisis in Aleppo.

Approximately 11 million Syrians have fled their homes since the outbreak of the civil war. Now, after six years of war, 13.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance within the country. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that 4.8 million people have fled to nearby countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq, and 6.6 million are internally displaced within Syria.

On January 27th, the Trump administration announced a ban on Syrian refugees (as well immigrants from six other Muslim-majority countries) from entering the United States. This ban has prevented many refugees from escaping the violence and devastation. Though the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security have since challenged this "Muslim Ban," the attitude of the Trump administration towards refugees leaves many lives in danger. The refugees in Syria will be trapped, and Trump will do nothing to help them.

THIS ISSUE IN NUMBERS

1000+

number of Yemenite-owned
Bodegas closed in NYC last week
in protest of Trump's immigration
ban.

100,000+

number of visas revoked since the
beginning of Trump's presidency.

61

number of minutes former
Norwegian Prime Minister Kjell
Magne Bondevik was held in
custody at the Washington, D.C.
airport for his visit to Iran in
2014.

227,000

number of jobs added to the U.S.
market in the month of January,
leading President Trump off to an
easy start on combating
unemployment.



PRESIDENT TRUMP, THE PUBLIC, AND "ALTERNATIVE FACTS" by Rivka Arno

Over the course of the last year, media coverage, political conversations, and the minds of the American public have been predominantly occupied by the antics of Donald Trump. Throughout the campaign, Trump has had a difficult, to say the least, relationship with the public. According to Gallup polls, his ratings during the campaign were by far the worst in recent election years. For example, in 2008, 66% of those surveyed said they were satisfied with the way Barack Obama's campaign was conducted, while only 31% were dissatisfied. Similarly, in 2000, 58% of those surveyed were satisfied with the way George Bush's campaign was conducted, while 31% were dissatisfied. In stark contrast, the same survey found that a mere 29% of those surveyed were satisfied with the Trump campaign, while a staggering 69% expressed dissatisfaction with the campaign.

The last month since Donald Trump assumed the office of the presidency have been politically confusing from many standpoints. However, one thing has become clear: his fractious relationship with the public has carried over

from his campaign into his presidency.

In fact, from the day that Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 45th President of the United States, the schism between his view of the world and the view of the public was immediately obvious. In 2009, at the inauguration of Barack Obama, the official estimate is that there were 1.8 million people in attendance. The National Park Service has further said that this is believed to be the largest turnout in American history. In contrast, crowd-counting experts believe that approximately 160,000 people were present at the National Mall in the hour leading up to Trump's inauguration. Crowd-scientists further say that the Women's March in Washington, which took place the day after the inauguration on Saturday, January 21st and was a protest in response to the inauguration, drew a crowd of approximately 470,000 people, three times as many as the inauguration.

While this sheds light on public response to the Trump presidency, the administration's response to these figures seems to give more

insight into what the relationship between the President and the public could be going forward. Before the inauguration, Trump declared that the crowds would be “unbelievable,” and “perhaps record-setting.” In a press conference following the inauguration, Press Secretary Sean Spicer insisted that “this was the largest audience ever to witness an inauguration, period, both in person and around the globe.” Of course, this statement was not corroborated by any sort of evidence, while photographs and estimates clearly suggest the opposite. Furthermore, the facts clearly show that fewer people tuned in to watch the 2017 inauguration than previous years, and that metro ridership in Washington was lower than in 2009.

In an interview with NBC following this statement, Trump’s Senior Advisor Kellyanne Conway described the statement as not untrue, but rather as “alternative facts.” The backlash and response to this Orwellian phrase was immediate, with sales of 1984 by George Orwell spiking dramatically. In fact, the publicity director at Penguin USA said that sales increased by 9,500%, and the book jumped to No. 1 on the Amazon bestseller list. In 1984, a dystopian novel, the prominent themes are newspeak, doublethink, and reality control, all of which are employed by the fictional government in order to control the perceptions of its subjects. According to the novel’s protagonist, “The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command.” To the American people, the parallels between the themes of 1984 and the “alternative facts” of the Trump administration are undeniable, and terrifying.

Of course, the relationship between the fledgling Trump administration and the public is just beginning, and whether the controversy over the inauguration crowds and “alternative facts” is indicative of a trend in this relationship remains to be seen. Nevertheless, these events definitely represent a continuation of the tempestuous relationship between Donald Trump and the public, and bode ill for the coming four years.

TRUMP’S CURRENT CABINET

Secretary of State:
Rex Tillerson

Secretary of
Treasury:

Steven Mnuchin

Attorney General:

Jeff Sessions

Secretary of
Agriculture:

Sonny Perdue

(pending
confirmation)

Secretary of Labor:

Alexander Acosta

(pending
confirmation)

Secretary of Energy:

Rick Perry

(pending
confirmation)

Secretary of
Housing and Urban
Development:

Ben Carson

(pending
confirmation)

Secretary of
Veterans Affairs:

David Shulkin

Secretary of
Defense:

James Mattis

Secretary of
Interior:

Ryan Zinke

(pending
confirmation)

Secretary of
Commerce:

Wilbur Ross

(pending
confirmation)

Secretary of Health
and Human
Services:

Tom Price

Secretary of
Transportation:

Elaine Cho

Secretary of
Education:

Betsy DeVos

Secretary of
Homeland Security:

John F. Kelly

Director of National
Intelligence:

Dan Coats

Administrator of the
Environmental
Protection Agency:

Scott Pruitt

Director of the
Central Intelligence
Agency:

Mike Pompeo



OPINION:

FREE SPEECH IN TRUMP'S AMERICA

by Tehila Aryeh

Ever since President Trump pulled off a stunning victory in what proved to be a precedent-setting election, both in its ugliness and astounding breakthrough of a non-establishment candidate, resistance towards his presidency has been both fierce and bitter. What was meant to be a shoe-in for the “Better Together” campaign instead turned into a triumphant takeover by the baseball-cap-wearing “Make America Great Again” supporters. And no one will let it go.

Every four years, the Presidential election provides the right for millions of Americans to cast their votes, as ordained by each state; the results are considered the binding choice. Some election years have yielded tightly contested results, yet when a winner was declared, that person was then irrevocably the President-Elect. While the outcome was not always received quietly, it was accepted, and the American people have always been able to express their pleasure or displeasure publicly with no fear of retribution. However, this time has been different. In a twist of irony, the very same people who called for unification have taken to the streets in protest, carrying signs that read “Not My President” and “Dump Trump.” Protests in Washington D.C. on Inauguration Day resulted in widespread rioting; people resorted to smashing storefront windows, setting cars on fire, and attacking law enforcement agents, and over 230 people were arrested and charged with felony rioting. Late last month, students at UC Berkeley gathered to protest guest speaker Milo Yiannopoulos, an ardent Trump supporter and controversial conservative figure; but the protests quickly turned violent – causing \$100,000 in damages. The inability of the police and campus security to disperse the crowds meant that Yiannopoulos was unable to get onto campus due to the unsafe conditions and inability to guarantee his safety, and his speech was subsequently cancelled.

In a separate incident on the campus, two men got out of a car in the middle of an intersection to attack a twenty-one-year-old student wearing a “Make America Great Again” cap, throwing him to the ground and forcibly taking his cap. The incident was captured by a reporter who had come to cover the

aftermath of the riots. Whereas in the past either side of an issue could be decried in public, the rallying cry to demonstrate the right to free speech has become somewhat a one-sided narrative. It is accepted practice for anti-Trump protesters to freely take to the streets with their signs and slogans; yet if Trump supporters make a similar statement, they may be subject to physical and verbal attacks. This unsettling string of events has highlighted a disparity facing free speech in

America. What is a protected constitutional right appears to be a tool for only those who identify with, in this case, the anti- Trump movement. What is clear from the protests and violence demonstrated at UC Berkeley is that free speech is no longer so free, and it is sad that the students who took to the street in protest to be the proponents of free speech turned out to be the very ones who successfully managed to suppress it.

TRUMP'S EXECUTIVE ACTIONS

The Battle for the Supreme Court: Donald Trump nominated conservative justice Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court. This will continue the ongoing partisan fight that started with the death of Antonin Scalia, and the Republican refusal to consider Merrick Garland, Obama's pick for the Supreme Court.

"You're fired!": Donald Trump carries over his experience on the Celebrity Apprentice to his new gig as President of the United States, firing the acting Attorney General when she refused to order the enforcement of his questionably legal executive order on immigration.

Dismantling the Obama Legacy: Donald Trump formally withdraws from the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, the first of several steps in undoing Obama policy and actions.

City Slicker: Donald Trump signs executive order allowing the construction of the Dakota Access and Keystone XL oil pipelines, drawing fire from Native Americans and climate change activists.

"It's gonna be yuuuuge": Donald Trump advances plans to build a wall on the Mexican-American border through yet another executive order. In response to demands that Mexico pay for the wall, Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto cancels a planned trip to Washington, and Trump's press secretary announces a plan for a 20% import tax on Mexico.

Not Welcome: Donald Trump issues an executive order banning immigrants and refugees from certain Muslim-majority countries from entering the United States, and closing borders to legal travelers from these countries, in a dramatic policy shift. Confusion, chaos in airports, and severe backlash from many including former President Barack Obama immediately followed.

Nuclear Option: Trump urges Senate Republicans to block possible filibusters in order to ensure the approval of his Supreme Court pick, Neil Gorsuch.

TRENDING THIS ISSUE

Denis Leary

Actor admits he looks exactly like senior adviser Kellyanne Conway. (Seriously, Google it).

#PenceBlackHistory

Vice President Pence sends out a tweet recognizing Pres. Lincoln for signing the 13th amendment and freeing the slaves. People take to Twitter to mock Pence for recognizing the achievements of a white person during Black History month.

Stockholm

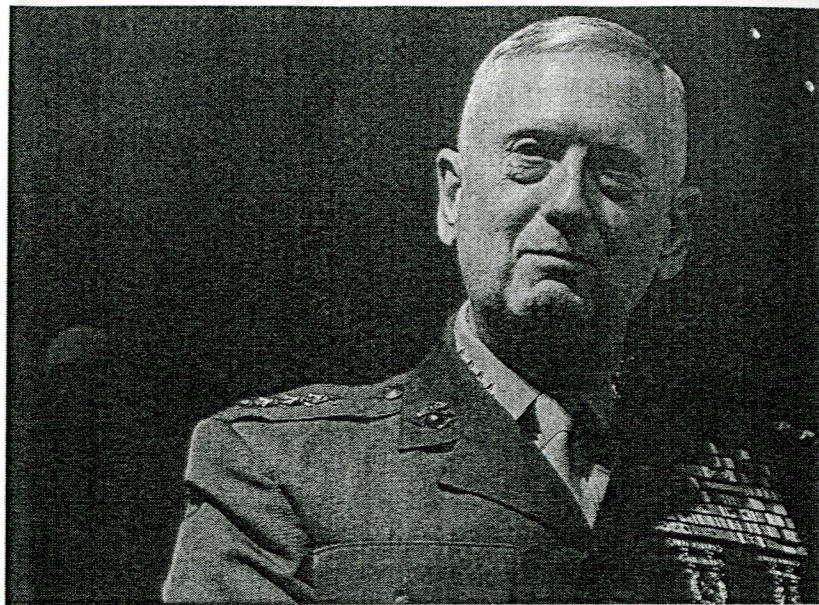
Riots break out over President Trump's immigration policies in Sweden this Tuesday.

Anne Frank Center

Holocaust memorial organization criticizes Trump's 'weak' response to rising anti-semitism, noting that he is 'infected' by his own administration.

Statue of Liberty

Large banner reading "REFUGEES WELCOME" is hung over the landmark for all to see.



THE FUTURE OF THE WAR AGAINST ISIS UNDER TRUMP & MATTIS

by Rena D. Winick

As President Obama passed the baton and the nuclear codes onto the next Commander in Chief, the conflict in the Middle East is at a crossroads. The United States-led Coalition claims that since its peak, ISIS has lost 27% of its territory in Syria, and 61% of its territory in Iraq. However, while ISIS has certainly been damaged over the past couple of years, they have in no way been defeated. Their de facto capital in Raqqa, Syria remains under their control. While Iraqi forces have made a strong push in Mosul, ISIS has put up a strong fight, with some analysts predicting that the battle over Mosul could continue well into March or April of 2017.

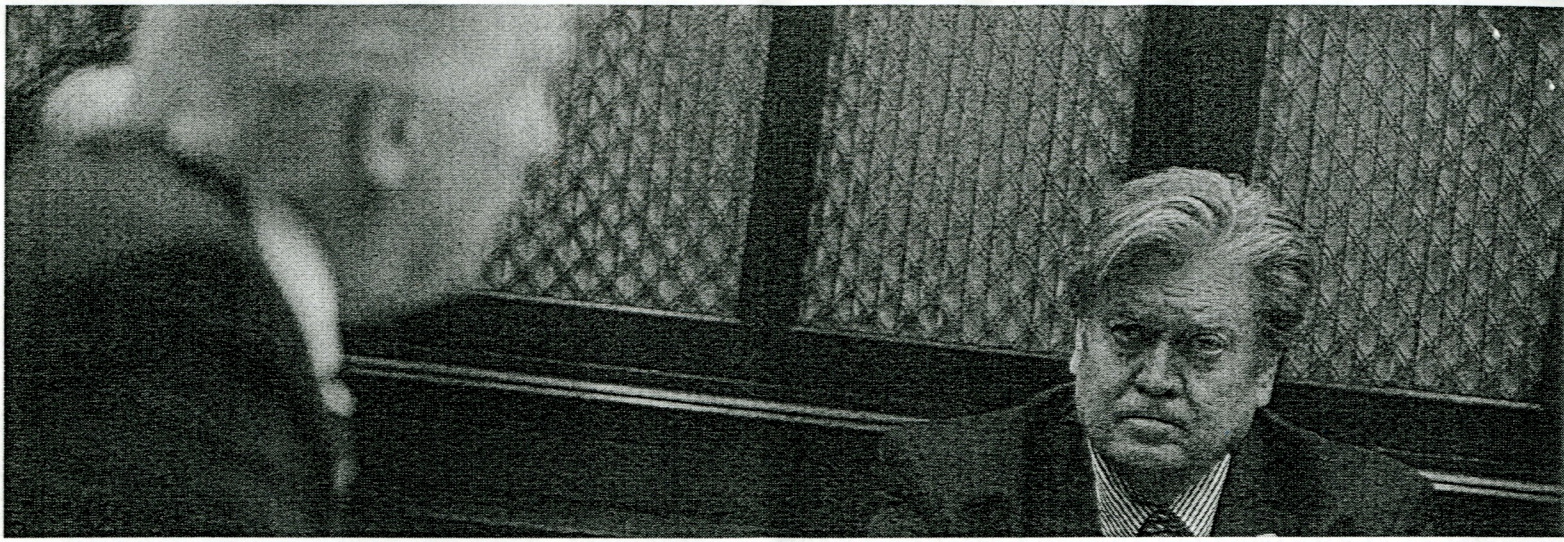
What does this reality on the ground mean for the new Commander in Chief, who during the election, promised to "quickly and decisively bomb the hell out of ISIS?" It appears that President Trump's vision of the fight against ISIS will look vastly different from the "light footprint" strategy of former President Obama. As with many policy areas, in order to find a detailed, action-oriented description of the

administration's policy, it appears more helpful to listen to members of the cabinet than the strategic political rhetoric of the President. During the campaign, then-Republican nominee Donald Trump stated that he would give his top generals "30 days to submit to the Oval Office a plan for defeating ISIS." According to insiders in the administration, this is exactly what the new President instructed his new Secretary of Defence General James Mattis.

So what exactly would a Trump-Mattis battle plan look like? In a speech given in 2015 at Australian National University, General Mattis laid out a comprehensive, four-pronged strategy to deal with ISIS. First, he addressed the political side of the fight, stressing the importance of gathering together and creating a political agreement with anyone willing to fight this enemy. By putting aside ideological differences, General Mattis stated that we will have the greatest opportunity to defeat ISIS in the quickest time possible and with the least amount of casualties. The next component of the strategy is the military part for the fight. After joining forces and building up the political will, the world must go into the Middle East and deliver ISIS a significant military blow. However, while the General sees the United States as playing an important role, he sees us playing a supporting role and not that of the main character. We need to "go in and bring a sense of confidence to the air forces that are there, make certain they're under the command of a competent Arab leader, and fight a battle of annihilation, not one of attrition". He stressed that the United States would not fight a long battle of attrition, but bring its troops in and out when needed and to incite the bravery of the Arab forces. The third prong of General Mattis's strategy is to take on the economic resources of ISIS. Every banking system and country needs to unite and take a strong stand in not tolerating any financial transactions to or from individuals or groups tied to the Islamic State or its sympathisers. Concurrent with, and just as important as the political military and economic battles is the counter-message campaign that is required to fully defeat ISIS. Stating that "we need to have Sunni Arabs who can turn this message around", General Mattis cited the examples of Arab leaders such as Egyptian president Al-Sisi and his speech given at Al-Azhar University, Prince Mohammad Bin Nayef and his strong stance against Al-Qaeda, and the UAE and its military support in Yemen fighting against The Iranian backed Houthis.

While Trump's executive order on immigration has greatly overshadowed and taken all the air in the room relating to ISIS and the war on terror, it will be interesting to watch and see how President Trump and his Secretary of Defense deal with the foreign front of this war in the weeks and months ahead.





BANNON, THE MAN ON TRUMP'S SHOULDER

by Carla Loebenstein

Two weeks ago, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi announced that “what is making America less safe is having a white supremacist as a permanent member of the National Security Council.”

Pelosi is referring to Donald Trump’s former campaign manager and now right-hand man Steve Bannon. Bannon, who headed conservative news outlet *Breitbart*, is a self-proclaimed ‘American Nationalist,’ and has worked closely with the Tea Party and other anti-establishment organizations. Just like Trump, Bannon preaches against mainstream politics and holds “outsider-ism” to be the ultimate advantage in government. Currently, as Nancy Pelosi mentioned, Steve Bannon has been appointed as a permanent member of the National Security Council, which advises the President on national security and foreign affairs. Bannon is also President Trump’s Chief Strategist, meaning he personally gives advice on big executive actions directly to the President.

The irony in Bannon’s position as Chief Strategist is that he is neither anti-establishment nor an outsider. Having worked for Goldman Sachs, Bannon rose to fame by utilizing his elite

resources, and has tugged at the heartstrings of working class Tea Partiers by stepping over high-rollers and big bankers. And this is exactly the same sort of irony in Trump’s appeal to the masses: the rally against big-money interests is what has attracted so many people, despite the fact that Trump is big money himself. It is also ironic that while Trump recently declared “war on the media,” [and even more recently, Bannon has as well], Bannon comes directly from the media.

Another alarming problem regarding Bannon’s background in politics is his lack thereof: Bannon has never served on any sort of political advisory board, nor has he worked in government strategy.

Regardless, Bannon’s position arguably makes him the second most powerful man in the nation. Since Trump also has little political experience, Bannon can work behind-the-scenes and utilize the Office of the President to his advantage. Just like he did at Goldman Sachs, and just as he did at *Breitbart*, Bannon will rise to the occasion and seize power where it is available to him.

Bannon’s former colleagues at Goldman Sachs and *Breitbart* have described him as just as power

hungry as he seems. His partner, Scot Vorse, shared with TIME magazine that Bannon is “always four steps ahead of the game...he is very strategic.” Because of his cunning and calculating nature, Bannon is also described as a terrible person to work with. Ben Shapiro, conservative political personality and former writer for *Breitbart*, described Bannon as “literally one of the worst people; he regularly abuses people, and sees everything as war.” Similarly, former *Breitbart* commentator Dana Loesch described him as “one of the worst people on God’s green earth.”

The overarching issue with all of Bannon’s flaws is that he possesses a severe amount of power. As Saturday Night Live so eloquently put it during a skit several weeks ago: “President Bannon is here now, so go sit at your small desk, Donald Trump.” But having a “President Bannon” is no laughing matter: he is a man who is described as terrible by his fellow conservatives, a man who has been accused of white supremacy, and a man who now holds a great amount of influence on the National Security Council.

Watch out for the man perched on Trump’s shoulder, whispering in his ear.

FACULTY CORNER with Dr. Luchins

“You can’t judge a presidency based on one month.”

This week, we sat down with Dr. Luchins, founding dean of Lander College for Women, chair of LCW’s political science department, to discuss his views on the first month of the Trump presidency.

What are your impressions of the Trump Presidency so far?

Robert Kennedy once said the only thing worse than a sore loser is a sore winner. This applies in two ways – for those who opposed Trump’s election, we shouldn’t be sore losers. But Trump can’t be a sore winner – right now, he spends more time attacking people than gaining support.

We’ve never had a group of people with less experience running the country, and it shows. His presidency is interesting, because it’s all about optics, and appealing to his base. Whether we like it or not, and many of us don’t, he’s speaking to a real anger in a large part of the country. For example, as far as his base is concerned, he has banned Muslims, despite the fact that there has not been one recorded act of terror by an immigrant or child of from any of the seven countries. Similarly, he signed an order to “dismantle Obamacare,” despite the fact that not one change has been made. Both his approval rating and disapproval rating are incredibly high, because almost no one is neutral about him.

What about the Trump administration, cabinet, team members? What cabinet pick or nominee do you think is a problem, and why?

It depends on what issues you’re concerned about. If your priority is Israel, General Mattis has criticized Israel, saying they are heading towards apartheid and

their policies endanger U.S. soldiers.

It’s an unusual cabinet, and it’s hard to get a handle on it, but it’s important to remember that you can’t judge a presidency based on one month.

How do you see the battle over the Supreme Court nominee playing out? Do you think Gorsuch is a good choice?

Of the names on Trump’s short list, he was one of the best.

Presidents tend to pick people who reflect judicial philosophy they are committed to, and are often surprised by the way they act on the bench. Just ask the conservatives about John Roberts.

The bottom line is that the Senate should have approved Merrick Garland. If Garland had been approved, and then Trump nominated Gorsuch if another seat opened up, he would have been approved by a 99-0 vote like Scalia, and no one would have cared. Since Garland wasn’t approved, this is payback time. The Democratic liberal base will not tolerate it. Senators who dare to vote for him may find themselves primaried. It will be a messy battle, and may be just the warm up for the next opening, especially if it’s Justice Ginsburg or Justice Kennedy.

Any predictions for the future?

Since I was so sure this election would be Biden vs. Bush, I’m a little humbled against making predictions. All I can say is that I hope he will be so good that we will all vote for him in four years – there’s no benefit to America of having a bad president.



The Lander College
UPDATE