

Donald Trump: The True Divider

By Norm R. Allen Jr.

When Barack Obama was President, conservatives complained that he was divisive, even though he went out of his way to try to work with Republicans. Conservatives have also complained that the Clintons have been divisive. However, these conservatives seem to think that anyone who does not agree with them must necessarily be divisive. (Not that being divisive is necessarily bad. After all, anti-slavery advocates were divisive, as were civil rights advocates, feminists and anyone else that has advocated for freedom, justice and equality.)

However, Donald Trump is truly divisive in a very horrible way. As a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, and as someone who has worked for organizations serving vets for years, I had heard criticisms from vets of Democratic and Republican presidents. But I had never heard a single vet say that she or he would not want to fight for any U.S. president – until Trump came to power. I shared my observation with other vets, and many of them said that they, too, would not fight for this Commander-in-Chief.

This is just my anecdotal story, though, and although I found my experience very odd, I did not think it meant much. However, there has since been a great deal of hard evidence to support my experience. For example, writing for the Washington Post Writers Group, David Ignatius observed:

Looking for perspective on this year [2017] and the one ahead, I turned to several of the nation's most experienced former military commanders. One of them put it bluntly: America is so divided politically at home that we are becoming vulnerable to our adversaries abroad. America, these retired military leaders fear, is so divided right now that it might be difficult to mobilize for war if that were necessary. ("Trump's risky divisiveness," *The Buffalo News*, December 30, 2017, p. A9)

This is a very important piece of writing. Ignatius goes on to say that if the U.S. faced a serious military threat, the divisions afflicting the country "could be paralyzing." He writes that the problem begins with Trump, "the most unpopular president in modern times."

Indeed, when in U.S. history has any president attacked the *FBI*? When has any president attacked the *mainstream media* and accused them of reporting “fake news” every time there was a story he did not like? And most astoundingly, when has a U.S. president (at least since the cold war) so warmly embraced *Russia*? What in the world is going on?

Ignatius points to a poll in December 2017 conducted by the Pew Research Center. According to the poll, Ignatius writes, “partisan divisions are now much more important than religious or educational ones in driving political views.” Only a man like Trump could manage to pull that off.

The columnist refers to a Pew study in the spring of 2017 which found that 64% of people around the world had confidence in the President at the end of Obama’s second term, while only 22 percent had confidence in the President at the beginning of Trump’s term. Ignatius writes: “Those expressing ‘no confidence’ surged from 28 percent to 74 percent.”

In the same issue of *The Buffalo News*, there was an excellent column by Washington Post Writers Group columnist Ruben Navarrette Jr. In “Fanning flames of racism,” the columnist relates:

After the election, the Southern Poverty Law Center published a report called “The Trump Effect: The Impact of the 2016 Election on Our Nation’s Schools.” After surveying more than 10,000 teachers, it found an increase in incidents involving such racist symbols as swastikas and Confederate flags. There were also multiple references to immigrants. (ibid.)

Never has large numbers of scientists expressed so much worry about a U.S. President. (Even George W. Bush did not prompt this much concern.) Never have so many mental health experts been so concerned about a sitting U.S. president (not even when Ronald Reagan was struggling with aging issues.) Never have so many Nobel laureates been so worried about a U.S. president. Trump genuinely scares a lot of people!

Trump came to power largely as a result of White racism and xenophobia. His die-hard supporters continue to be conservative and reactionary White Christians and White nationalists. They are worried that the U.S. is becoming too diverse. Trump

continues to serve this base, further dividing the country. And many pundits believe the divisions will never be healed.

How ironic that those professing to be the most patriotic U.S. citizens might be the ones most likely to destroy the nation!

Trump is a disaster for the world. The only question is: How bad will it get?