

Commentary

The Antagonist by Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'



The story of Donald Trump will reverberate in the annals of history for centuries. This is the kind of stuff that classics are made of. There will be movies made, dramas and novels written and folklores created bearing his name for dubious reasons.

I just finished reading an article by Eliot Cohen in The Atlantic where he compared Trump with Henry III and I quote, "Trump does elicit torrid metaphors, and in this case, some of those gloating observers (in concealed or open fashion, to their particular taste) seem to have in mind something like Act V, Scene iii of Richard III, in which the villainous king, before the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485, is visited by the ghosts of those

he has murdered. One by one, they make disobliging remarks such as "Let me sit heavy on thy soul tomorrow" and "Tomorrow in the battle think on me, and fall thy edgeless sword," and, simply, "Despair and die." The equivalent, one supposes, would be the ghosts of John McCain, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and John Lewis giving the president a bad night of it during a fevered sleep."

I won't go to that extreme, but Mr. Trump's provocation and defense of an insurgent crowd, who ransacked the Capitol building, threatened our elected lawmakers, and, in the process, caused the deaths of five U.S. citizens are inexcusable and criminal. In a democracy, the executive branch can disagree with the legislature and veto their

bills, but waging a war against them? That's tribal. The whole incident made a mockery of our democratic system and tarnished our lustrous image. Someone called me and said, "I feel ashamed to call myself an American." True, we all felt demeaned.

What was Trump thinking? I am tempted to draw a comparison of Trump with King Lear (a Shakespearean tragedy). King Lear being fond of flattery, divided his kingdom among his unfaithful daughters, Goneril and Regan disowning his sincere and loving daughter, Cordelia. Later, his first two daughters betrayed King Lear driving him to insanity. Trump is not used to losing. As a matter of fact, he tends to scorn those who lose including Mitt Romney and John McCain. The November loss threw him in King Lear's state of mind, angry, resentful, and betrayed. He falsely believes that he won the election and the victory was unjustifiably taken from him and given to Mr. Biden.

Trump and his base also feel obscured and obliterated by liberal media and far-left who totally ignored his successes which included unprecedented recognition of Israel by five Arab countries, American withdrawal from wasteful wars in Afghanistan and Syria, criminal reform and record funding for black colleges, pre-COVID economy, elimination of ISIS, operation Warp Speed to develop Corona vaccine, to name a few. If you watched CNBC, CNN or read The New York Times, you'd not know any of the above facts. You'd be living in an entirely different universe.

All said and done, there is no justification for the way Trump reacted to his critics in the past and to his own loss in November 2020. He has confirmed his critics' assumption that he is unfit to hold the highest job in the nation. His behavior undermines his successes. Lear's madness was tragic but ultimately unimportant because he was by then powerless. So is Trump.