

Sulzberger's Perception

Selective

by James Como



Not long ago, in an op-ed piece in the Wall Street Journal, Arthur Sulzberger attacked Donald Trump for his use of the word 'treason' as directed against some elements of the press. A powerful, deadly accusation for Sulzberger, who, sanctimoniously, adduced the Constitution. The usage crossed Sulzberger's red-line, a crossing so menacing that he considered it an attack, not only on his own newspaper but on *the press* – the whole shebang. He was answered in "quotable quotables" with a list of instances in which the president was accused of treason. Now, I did not vote for Donald Trump, but we should recall all the lines that have been crossed in attacking him. (E.g. Anderson Cooper – a journalist? – calling him "shmuck" on a national broadcast, with nary a word of rebuke from Mr. Sulzberger, is among the mildest of the cataract of verbal abuse directed towards the president *and his family*). Thus does Mr. Sulzberger's response to the president, as well as his self-righteous defense of his own

newspaper, bespeak the One-Way Street thinking now so common among journalists. The press is simply unaccustomed to a gasbag as big as itself talking back. "Officials," Mr. Sulzberger tells us, "did not have any objections" to the Times running the cyber incursion story. But what if they had? We should recall how, shortly after 9/11, the Times – *in spite of* the objections of the Bush administration – *did* reveal the administration plan to track terrorist money through foreign banks. As for "putting his threats into action," which for Sulzberger is Trump's very next step and close at hand, I would say two things: 1/ what threats, exactly? What threats of action has Donald Trump made that would mitigate the first amendment? And 2/ remember that sentence the next time the president is accused of fear-mongering. In short, the president has no "campaign against a free and independent press" but against its unreliability.