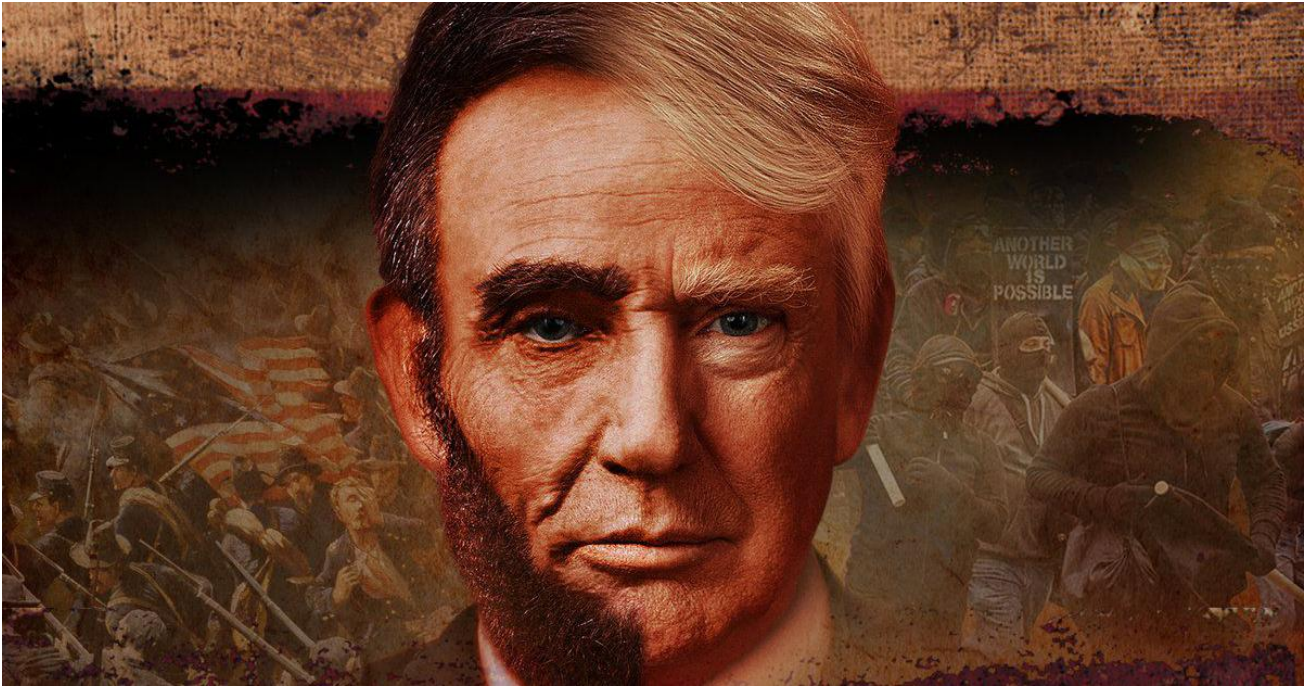


TRUMP AND LINCOLN?

by G. Murphy Donovan



Donald Trump might be the most controversial president since Abraham Lincoln.

The other day Trump compared himself to Lincoln in a civil rights context and ignited another media tantrum. Surely, Trump is no match for Lincoln's lawyerly reticence or rhetorical eloquence. As for having the courage to fire arrogant or incompetent subordinates, Trump is more than Lincoln's equal.

Trump/Lincoln parallels are coming into sharp relief as another presidential election looms. Like Lincoln, Trump has a civil war on his hands; and like Lincoln faces a second term might be more hazardous than the first.

President Trump has been besieged by domestic hate, much of it inspired by a hostile press, venal generals, and the Washington establishment from day one.

Like Trump, Lincoln was an outsider, a rural lawyer from

Kentucky, reviled by capitol insiders including senior military officers. In Lincoln's second run for the White House, Democrats selected the best failed Civil War general, George McClellan, as their standard bearer.

Alas, Lincoln's electoral victory in 1864 against General McClellan was insured by 11 southern Democrat states whose electoral votes were rendered moot by secession. The 16th president only had to contend with the McClellan cabal and the Democrat Party.

The difference between then and now seems to be that today's failed and embittered Vietnam era McClellans are more numerous.

Trump has to worry about insurgents in both political parties and disgruntled military mandarins like Clapper, Mattis, Hayden, McRaven, McChrystal, Stavridis, and Powell just to name a few of the most treacherous and politicized.

Lincoln had to contend with insurrections on both sides of the blue and grey divide before traitors delivered the *coup de grace*. In the end. John Wilkes Booth did what disloyal generals and a disgruntled Democrat Party could or would not do.

Then as now, bad losers usually inspire the worst behavior in their ideological camp followers. Today, senior seditious military malcontents slander the President, claiming that Trump belittled fallen US troops in Europe as "losers."

If Trump said anything disparaging, he probably spoke of living generals not dead American heroes. The American high command hasn't won a war since Douglas MacArthur had the Japanese General Staff taking a knee on the fantail of the *USS Missouri*. America might still have the best trained and equipped military in the world, but that force, poorly led since the Korean War, has been without a big win ever since.

The Pentagon has been mucking about with small wars in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, Southeast and South Asia since WW II leaving a global litter of failed states in its wake.

American generals have come to confuse rank with achievement where tenure is the new stand-in for victory.

The endless small war is now the only war.

This in a nutshell is the difference between Trump and his flag officers. The Commander-in-Chief believes in winning. The Pentagon is content with inertia. Indeed, the prevailing ethic under brass hats is that presidents and cabinet secretaries may come and go but the E-Ring nomenklatura, the deep state at the Pentagon, is perennial.

Apparently, Donald Trump's strategic world view is "get in it to win it" – or get out. Trump also believes in "war by other means;" quietly negotiating a political deal, a peace, or dare we say, a victory.

Hard to argue with such crystal-clear common sense and strategic logic.

The fruits of bold leadership on such matters are now apparent in the Levant. Instead of using some establishment types to cut the Middle East Gordian Knot, Trump put his baby-faced son-in-law on point to bring home a big win.



Jared Kushner has done more for peace in the Levant recently than professional politicians and generals have done in the last fifty years.

Recall that erstwhile Obama era DNI, General James Clapper and CIA director, John Brennan, a self-styled Arab "expert," predicted that moving the US embassy to Jerusalem would cause an "explosion."

Explosion indeed. The Two-State chimera is now just a cloud of smoke.

Trump defied the experts, checkmating Persian and Shia terrorists by convincing Sunni Arabs to cancel the PLA/Hamas Palestinian veto on all things Israeli. Defying conventional wisdom, Trump has taken sides with Arabia, in effect creating a new alliance with the Sunni Islamic majority. Trump and Kushner have outflanked the toxic Shia Crescent, and secured a rolling recognition of Israel with neighboring Arab countries that really matter.

Even Tom Friedman at the *NY Times*, writing about the Abraham Accords, had to admit: "You get big change when the big players do the right things."

The Palestinian blockade has been lifted now by using new ideas and real American leverage to end a long and ruinous half century of Jewish/Islamic wars and cultural stalemate.

The Jewish homeland, the Middle East, and America are now more secure.

The only national asset better than generals who win is an elected leader with the moxie to ignore the "experts" and naysayers and still bring home a win.

Abraham Lincoln had that virtue and so does Donald Trump.

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