

Trump's Bold Defense of America

He called out North Korea and Iran for the lying evildoers that they are.

by Conrad Black



It is becoming difficult to believe that the ever-more-silly entertainment world, an echo chamber of escalating primal imbecilic utterances in a hall of mirrors, festers in the same country that, as its president correctly told the United Nations on Tuesday morning, now has more people working than ever before and the highest market capitalization of its industries of all time, is striving toward increasing prosperity, and is the only force in the world trying to keep hydrogen bombs out of the hands of psychotic lunatics. It was nostalgic, though not very agreeably so, to listen to Jane Fonda, former receptionist of the Hanoi Hilton, the once

passably amusing Lily Tomlin, and Dolly Parton, who should reconnect with her roots in Locust Ridge, Tenn., reaching for the high notes and calling their country's leader a sexist bigot and hypocrite. All that was missing was Shirley MacLaine doing a reprise on past assimilations of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon to Hitler. When the Fuehrer shot himself, with his bride of one day, prior to having their corpses burned just before the arrival of the Red Army at their bunker in Berlin on April 30, 1945, he could not have imagined that he would become the alleged role model for a succession of American presidents. Johnson, Nixon, Reagan, George W. Bush, and Donald Trump have all been accorded this treatment by Hollywood ignoramuses who have incandescent emotions fixed to rigid attitudes unconnected to any historical knowledge. These frantic Hollywood philistines, erupting from our television screens at their vacuous self-awards nights to fewer and fewer people each year, adapt symbols of the past as Errol Flynn once played pirates, and imagine they have the right and competence to give political guidance to the world, the voters be damned.

Their favored candidates gave us the housing bubble, the underreaction to the early terrorist outrages, ensuring that worse would come, the Great Recession, and hopeless Middle East wars, and then flatlined the economy while doubling the national debt in eight years and groveling before North Korea and Iran. I would be prepared to contribute, as a benefit to psychological research, to a profound psychoanalysis of Stephen Colbert (which need not take longer than about 45 minutes), particularly to discover why he thinks anyone should listen to him. The long-suffering will remember his Pavlovian reaction, after publicly beseeching Donald Trump to run for president in order to be humiliated, and then his mockery of his campaign for that office as an unrelievedly and comically hopeless enterprise, his several months of pretense that the election of Trump had not really occurred, and his eight months exhibiting the banal vagaries of the self-inflating

juvenile ego. A film historian may wish to inquire into how the Hollywood of the original studio heads and wholesomely patriotic actors such as Ronald Reagan, John Wayne, Jimmy Stewart, George C. Scott, Spencer Tracy, and their accompanying female leads, generally presenting the view that the United States was a good thing, has been transformed into the vulgar national self-hate and myth-making engine that Hollywood is now. It is like a slick drama club in a mental asylum.

The chief target of their obloquy, however, President Trump, defended their right to make unmitigated asses of themselves before the world, and that of all people who enjoy the basic freedoms to continue in their exercise, with his remarks at the United Nations on Tuesday. The international community has somnambulated for decades into a condition of acute vulnerability to the unannounced detonation of hydrogen bombs by terrorists and other madmen, killing millions of unoffending people and threatening all life on this planet. The arms-control and anti-proliferation regime has been an exercise in hypocrisy for decades. The nuclear powers pledged to make progress steadily toward disarmament, but apart from South Africa, and some limited reductions of immensely oversized nuclear stockpiles by the U.S. and Russia, have not done so, and the whole concept is nonsense. As long as these weapons exist, and the knowledge of how to assemble and deliver them exists, the only assurance against their use is the power of deterrent retaliation coupled with the ability to intercept them in course.

The politically assertive boobs in Hollywood 35 years ago fell about in laughter at President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, a non-nuclear, laser-based, entirely defensive system of anti-missile protection that they called Star Wars and cited as evidence of the senility of the country's leader, now generally judged one of its greatest presidents. The enemies of the West and anarchic and nihilistic forces with

various insane motivations, in order to escape the deterrent and vindictive wrath of the civilized world, have taken to operating as non-national forces, to complicate deterrence and retribution. And a few countries have advanced, stealthily or ostentatiously, toward a nuclear-attack capability while bandying about mortal threats of extermination against nationalities they find disagreeable.

Successive political generations of leaders of nuclear powers have temporized impotently or even mischievously assisted these elements, as Pakistan has assisted Iran and North Korea, who have assisted each other. Iran threatens to obliterate Israel, and North Korea threatens the United States and Japan. This has been the bluster of countries not yet quite able to carry out those threats. In the United Nations on Tuesday, after preliminary warnings in the last few days from some of his officials, President Trump specifically threatened the destruction of North Korea, by which he meant its military capacity. Somebody in a position to say it, had to say it, and he will have to be prepared, if necessary, to do it, though it will not be a nuclear attack and there should not be extensive collateral damage or civilian casualties.

The old arms-control regime of a club that tacitly admitted new members if they seemed unlikely to behave irresponsibly was always a self-serving fraud for the benefit of its members, and in that point at least, the Iranians were correct. There will be no real disarmament, as the nuclear genie is out of the bottle. But there must be the severe discouragement of the distribution of nuclear weapons to governments or groups that cannot be trusted with them, and there must be, as Reagan foresaw, and as this week's \$700 billion defense budget indicates, steady progress toward a leak-proof, layered anti-missile defense. Before crude nuclear weapons get into the hands of outright terrorists, the acceptable nuclear powers must have practically impenetrable defenses against their delivery. (President Trump, no mean

entertainer himself – he enjoyed higher television ratings when he was in that business than most of the jerks mocking him at the Emmy awards on Sunday – is right to add a note of levity even to these grim proceedings by referring to Kim Jong-un as "Rocket Man.")

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And there is no reason for him to certify Iranian compliance with Obama's shameful nuclear green-light agreement with Iran. The current regime of that country is just as unacceptable a nuclear power as North Korea and operates a vast terrorist operation around the Middle East to boot. It was entertaining to hear the Iranian president, Rouhani, say after Mr. Trump's address that if Trump withheld certification, no one would trust the United States again. The long night of American renunciation of an international role commensurate with its great strength and formerly traditional integrity of purpose is over, just in time.

The defeatist sniveling about the absence of a military option is ending. So should pacifistic prattling such as Democratic senator Diane Feinstein's response to the president on Tuesday. The only way to produce any option except servile abdication or military enforcement of the universal human interest is for the United States to make clear that the military option will be exercised if Iran and North Korea do not abandon their nuclear ambitions or change their governments for radically improved regimes. The last time anyone in a position to speak of it threatened the destruction of another country at the United Nations was Nikita Khrushchev in 1960. It is much more welcome and plausible coming from President Trump for the delectation of Kim and Iran's Khamanei. Khrushchev said, "My hand will not tremble." Of course it did, and the threat was an outrage. Mr. Trump's hand

should be steady, and his threat is righteous and appropriate, all more placatory efforts having failed.

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