

President is the enemy of the people

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MY TURN - BETH F. COYE

In 1960, I took the oath of office given to all U.S. military officers: "to defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic." Given my naval family history and national security expertise, my 1960 oath has been a piece of my soul ever since.

Not until back-to-back assignments to the Intelligence Division, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic (SACLANT), and, subsequently, the Naval War College faculty, did I fully appreciate the solemnity of this oath.

The number one foreign enemy at that time was the Soviet Bloc. And, as an intelligence officer, I constantly analyzed threats from Soviet naval strategies and forces and learned the real meaning of a hostile enemy and the necessity — and comfort — of working side-by-side with allies with similar values.

In recent months a new concept has haunted me: Donald Trump and some of his counselors closely match the definition of a "domestic enemy" to our Constitution.

An assessment of this threat would include at least six components that are significantly weakening our nation:

- The president's character. His behavior rejects traditional morality and Judeo-Christian values upon which our Constitution was founded. Presidential attacks on American culture reflect a president who is often vulgar, without grace or respect for the dignity and worth of his opponents or his subordinates. He lacks an understanding of how to behave as an American president. His compulsive lying and bullying tactics exemplify not only conduct unfitting for the office but also unbecoming for the commander in chief.
- Poor leadership. The president and his inner circle have minimal knowledge of the basics of democratic leadership and seem uninterested in earning the trust of most Americans. Such trust requires competence, good listening skills, compassion, reliability and honesty.
- Institutional takedowns. "Deconstruction" of U.S. institutions a transparent goal for the administration. It assaults top national security institutions, the State department, the media and the Department of Justice. "The president follows his own rule of law, deriding the constitutional goal of justice.
- The Trump candidacy and administration have had peculiar, suspicious connections with Russia, a proven foreign enemy.
- Encouragement of conflict. The president inflames the innate differences among political parties and the public at large in lieu of promoting compromise and unity. Presidential actions and words cause constant mental and spiritual unrest for the majority of Americans, rejecting at least two constitutional goals: "domestic tranquility" and the people's welfare.
- Betrayal of core national values. President Trump's policies and behaviors challenge and negate long-standing American values embedded in our Constitution: liberty, democracy, self-government, unity and equal opportunity.

What drove me to write this was the president's recent trip to England, Brussels and Helsinki, during which he questioned our NATO allies, declared the European Union an economic foe, and behaved like a Russian ally.

With regret, I declare our American president to be a domestic threat to our democracy and a force hostile to its underlying values, political infrastructure and beliefs. This assessment is based upon my experience developing military intelligence assessments and serving 21 years as an American naval officer, including three intelligence assignments. Also, I'm the daughter of the late Rear Admiral John Coye, who fought in World War II as a submarine skipper and later served as a flag officer at NATO's AFSOUTH command.

What must be done ? Now is the time for Americans, especially current and former public servants, to defend our constitutional government. Leaders and organizations must speak directly to the American people about this dangerous domestic threat to our nation.

They must set forth solutions to address the country's deteriorating state of affairs caused by its president, a man who leads by requiring loyalty to the man and not to the Constitution, pummeling allies, and praising authoritarian enemies.

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