

Sleeping With A Rogue Elephant



Thousands of People Across the United States Are Protesting Trump's Actions

On January 20th, I swore to myself that I would never write an op ed about Trump or trade tariffs or any of the insanity that would ensue the moment he took office. There were others who could do that, so I planned to continue focusing my attention on local and environmental issues.

But as the weeks pass and the daily destruction of American democracy proceeds, I find myself thinking about a film I worked on about Canada's relationship with the USA, featuring a 1969 trip to Washington made by former PM, Pierre Elliot Trudeau. Never one to mince words, when asked to address the Washington Press Corp, Trudeau seized the moment to describe what it's like to share a continent with the USA:

"Living next to you," he observed, "is in some ways like sleeping with an elephant. No matter how friendly and even-tempered the beast, if I can call it that, one is affected by every twitch and grunt."

I wonder how he would have reacted today now that the beast has gone rogue, bellowing out executive orders, trampling on democratic institutions and destroying any and all progress made on climate, civil rights and inclusion in the last five decades.

As of Feb. 10th the orange one had issued 89 executive orders (EO) – among them, 26 actions impacting the Federal government, including the exclusion of trans people from the military and a total shutdown of the federal hiring policy based on diversity equity and inclusion. Then there are the 6 Eos attacking climate initiatives, including withdrawal from the Paris agreement, and 9 on immigration paving the way for mass deportations and the denial of birth right citizenship.

Which doesn't even begin to touch his recent suggestion that Palestinians should be "deported" from Gaza, and that the USA should develop the land they're expelled from into some demented Trumpian version of Disneyland. This particular message delivered during a delicate hostage exchange and fragile cease fire agreement between Hamas and Isreal.

Oh, and how could I possibly forget his plan to seize Greenland, the Panama Canal and rename the Gulf of Mexico.



As of Feb. 20th the Orange One has issued 108 executive orders

Honest to God you can't keep up with this stuff. Nor should you, because many of these executive orders are already being contested in US courts.

So what's the real purpose of all those EOs? Well, from where I sit, they're a diversionary tactic designed to overwhelm and divert our attention away from what's really going on – a coup d'etat being engineered not by the military, not even by MAGA, but by a handful non-elected billionaire oligarchs with supposedly high IQ's and not a single moral compass between them.



Elon Musk offers Trump the Nazi salute

I call it a coup d'état because Musk and his GenZ DOGES are taking actions which, by law, are under the jurisdiction of the legislative branches of government. Take for example his directive to shut down 7500 federal government offices, abandoning the Americans who access their services. Add to that cancelling federal grants and accessing personal data on millions of Americans, including his competitors, by hacking into the Treasury Department's system.

And last but not least, Musk's pronouncement that government regulation – whether of polluters, drug companies or, you guessed it, tech companies - should end.

Welcome to what one writer refers to as techno-fascism, a world where the billion dollar boys from Silicon Valley - Musk, Bezos, Zuckerberg and Ramaswamy - have unfettered power to run the show.

But if all of this terrifies me and other democracy-loving people around the world, it's Trump's suggestion that our nation become the 51st state that makes me quake in my boots. Because his is no idle threat, given that Canada has exactly what the USA wants – 20% of the world's fresh water supply and a whole lot of hydroelectric power.



In fact Canada ranks ahead of the USA as the 3rd largest producer of hydroelectricity in the world. Something every American tech company knows and would love to plug into, given the staggering amount of energy needed to fuel AI systems, which ranges from 85 to 134 Terawatt hours per year.

More power than the entire nation of Sweden consumes in 365 days.

And while the USA has a more accessible water supply, it's also more vulnerable to drought, thanks to climate change. So our water also represents an increasingly vital resource.

Which doesn't even begin to cover what Canada offers in metals production for the tech, construction and auto industries.

So if you're tempted to laugh off Trump's new take on American manifest destiny, think again. And think long and hard about the upcoming federal election and which leader is prepared to fight for our country and which one will just jump into bed with the elephant.