

# Whither the movement?



April 13  
Jack and Ron,

Here is an optimistic take on the seeming low in the movement. The biggest reason for it is that energy is going into the Democratic Party in one form or another – but we expected this. But I think it's reasonable to argue that the more militant wing is saving its energy, or lying in wait, if you will. After all, this wing met the travel ban with fierce resistance, and although its defeat was ultimately legal, the mass protests certainly had their effect. Next, the attempt to repeal and replace the ACA was met by mass outpourings at town Hall meetings, and the bill, for complicated reasons, was defeated. I don't expect next weeks defend science rallies to be of the same scope, but it would be nice to see them be surprisingly bigger rather than smaller.

There are, of course, ongoing attacks at many levels. But there isn't a singular focus at the moment. This will undoubtedly emerge, and I'm not convinced that we won't see a rapid and mass mobilization.

Rod

P.S. More on 'where is the movement.' I just learned today that April 15 protests are planned in 44 states, demanding Trump reveal his tax returns. There is talk of it being the biggest national protest since the Million Women's March on January 2. I am surprised something that big would be something I knew nothing about. It

suggests to me that it may be more DP-inspired than grassroots, but I do not know if this is true. At any rate, if it is of significant size, it reinforces my view that there may be a movement 'lying in wait.'

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April 14  
Rod and Jack,

I don't think the movement is dead. I do think that, at least for now, it will remain basically liberal, electoral, and focused on the DP. Roni and Sally will be going to the tax demo here. I've hurt my foot and am trying to stay off it for a while, so have decided not to attend.

Ron

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April 16  
Jack and Ron,

I agree with this. It will take certain events (could be repression/confrontation; could be Democratic Party complicity betrayal) for radicalization.

Would you agree that, via whatever bizarre methods and motivations Trump has (I think adulation is the strongest), he has significantly pivoted toward the center (center-right, but away from the fringe right), at least for now? It could be argued that this is chaotically random, and tomorrow can bring anything, but I think his instinct for success (arguably, though in a country with base and

hollow values, something he has achieved), he is going to be the Kushner/Ivanka Trump, not the Breitbart Trump.

So far this is largely around militarism, which makes him something of Neo-con/McCain Republican/Hillary Democrat, but, still, this is away from a Lindbergh/Joseph Kennedy 'America-First'.

It could settle in to a Pence administration—right wing socially, hawk militarily.

Rod

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April 16

Ron and Rod

As far as "the movement": there's no question that there's been some motion, and I think will continue to be. I agree that at this point the motion is largely within and around the Democratic Party. Still, it points to something. For example, John Conyers has been presenting his single-payer health care proposal to Congress since 2003, and rarely has gotten even the time of day. But now, of a sudden, several Congresspeople are jumping on board. They haven't changed their world outlook. They're feeling pressure from the voters in their districts, the same kind of sentiment that Bernie Sanders based himself on. I think that we'll continue to see a process of polarization, with the left at first largely confined to the Democrats, but not uniformly or uncritically. I think that we'll see some of those new converts to DSA, for example, beginning to question and to challenge the system in general and the Democrats in particular. Beyond that, who knows? I think that if Trump continues with the militarist truculence, a mass anti-war movement

is not out of the question. There are signs of possible mass response around immigrants' rights. And I don't think that the women's marches were just a one off. We'll see.

Jack

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April 16  
Jack and Rod,

I agree with what you've both written. We'll just have to see what happens. It sure is more interesting than the Obama years, and shows how valuable the Democrats are to maintaining the stability of the system. They get a Republican (of sorts) in there, and the shit hits the fan. Hmmm.

Ron

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April 17  
Jack and Ron,

I agree with Jack's assessment.

The missing pieces for me are threefold:

1. Will a change occur on the slash and burn domestic front? Planned Parenthood, Arts, Science, climate change? The wall??
2. Does the military stance turn out to be adventurous, or is there enough of a firewall to prevent Trump from being a boy with toy soldiers and battleships?
3. Can he stick to *any* one course for six months or more?

Rod

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April 17  
Rod and Jack,

On foreign policy issues. I think there is a serious risk of the Trump administration's saber-rattling vis a vis N. Korea. A miscalculation, including a Syria-type military strike, might lead to a very hot situation on the Korean peninsula. However horrible the North Korean regime is, I think either all countries have the right to have

nuclear weapons or no one does. If the United States is serious about preventing North Korean (and Iran) from acquiring nuclear



weapons, it ought to start global negotiations among all the nuclear powers to refuse to use and then to dismantle all nuclear weapons, including its own. In fact, there has been, and I believe still is, serious support from leading figures in the US, including prominent members of both Republican and Democratic administrations, for such a policy. And as we know, throughout the history of nuclear weapons, only one country has ever used them (twice), and that is the US. Among other things, Trump is using this stuff to prove how tough he is, also to have done something, given his failure, so far, on the domestic front. I also think he's overestimating the power China has to control the Kim Jong-un regime. Kim Il-sung invaded South Korea in 1950 against the wishes of both Stalin and Mao. He seemed to have assumed that he would be welcomed as a liberator by the people of South Korea and expected that if he got into trouble, the Chinese and the Russians would bail him out.

On domestic issues. It is hard to say at this point what the administration will do. Apparently, they're not even talking about preparing a tax reform proposal until the end of the summer. And it's not clear what they'll propose for the budget. I suspect that the more moderate Republicans will oppose extreme cuts to social programs, since some of those programs help people in their states.

Ron

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April 17  
Ron and Jack,

I agree on foreign policy issues, first in relation to our refusal to give an inch of support to so-called 'democratic' (Native American killing, slave-owning, segregationist, world-wide poverty and exploitation enforcing) capitalism/imperialism, next to the dangerous situation that Trump's erratic ignorance is producing, and, lastly in relation to China. Yesterday, he learned that China is useful as opposed to the devil. Tomorrow, he will learn that China is not all-powerful. The next day, he will tell us that everything turns out to be more complicated than he thought. In the words of Kurt Vonnegut, "so it goes."

Rod

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