

Narcissistic Rage in the White House

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The term "narcissistic rage" gets 26,000 citations in Google Scholar. It is a common feature of extreme or pathological narcissism.

While psychiatrists often say they can't do long-distance diagnosis, it really isn't that hard if you have a lot of information about a person and can watch how he operates from day to day. Intelligence agencies around the world have psychiatric staffs for exactly that purpose.

While most people are pretty hard to predict, extreme narcissists are comparatively simple. They constantly hunger for ego gratification, they are immature, constantly need to demonstrate their own superiority, often need endless sexual conquests (like Bill Clinton), are manipulative, constant liars, are completely cold about the human beings they harm (like John Edwards), and they deal with frustration by uncontrollable fits of rage.

I think that's what we saw last week with the White House lashing out at Fox News.

According to the New York Times,

"Speaking privately at the White House on Monday with a group of columnists and commentators, including Rachel S. Maddow and Keith Olbermann of MSNBC and

Maureen Dowd, Frank Rich and Bob Herbert of The New York Times,

President Obama himself gave vent to sentiments about the (Fox) network, according to people briefed on the conversation... " (italics added).

So Obama didn't even keep this thing on background. He allowed himself to be quoted in his favorite rag, the New York Times. Dowd, Maddow, Herbert, and Rich did their part by going into attack-dog mode against conservatives. They know exactly what Obama needs and wants, and to keep in good stead with this White House, they feed that hungry ego with the most outrageous flattery and imitation.

It is a perfect symbiosis. Obama is easy to manipulate, and liberal commentators are used to demonizing the opposition. They've all been raised on Rules for Radicals.

Obama's thin skin is shared by his coterie. US News and World Report wrote:

Team Obama was pushed over the brink by a growing list of what it considered outrageous anti-Obama conduct by Fox that showed no sign of stopping. Obama's advisers say that they seethed while Fox commentators used their shows to encourage protests against Obama's healthcare proposals last summer. Team Obama fumed as Fox personalities tried to pressure some controversial Obama advisers to resign.

White House officials say that Fox has continued to stir the pot against Obama in a regular pattern -- raising a criticism, having Republican congressional leaders comment on it, and then using those comments to keep the criticism alive.

A break point came when Fox tried to create the impression that angry anti-Obama protesters at congressional town hall meetings last summer signaled that Obama's healthcare proposals were dying, a story line that other news organization picked up. White House officials say this was untrue, that those proposals were not dying at all.

Another break point came when Fox commentator Chris Wallace called White House officials "crybabies." A senior Obama adviser tells U.S. News that White House staffers developed "a growing realization" that the president would never get a fair shake from Fox.

Notice the need to have total obedience from the whole press. Fox News is a small part of the total media, but they've driven the Obees into a fit. Of course, every single president in American history has been targeted by the media, and generally much, much worse than Obama has. Take George W. Bush, for example. (But I forgot...Bush was Evil, and Obama is Good. Well, that explains it.)

Last week's coordinated Obama attack on Fox News made no PR sense. Fox

increased its viewership by 10%. Obama lost points in the polls; you can give the American people only so many demonstrations of the Chicago Way before they figure out you aren't the Great Healer after all.

Obama is far and away the biggest and most naïve narcissist in living memory to occupy the White House. He hasn't been smoothed and polished by years of deal-making in the Senate like LBJ. The outrage looks like it was just an uncontrollable expression of who Obama and his crew are. If we get more of this, Obama's carefully buffed sheen will be permanently damaged for the saner 70% of the population. The other 30% will always fall for him anyway.

Pathological narcissism is a reflection of weakness, not strength. Tom Bevan at RealClearPolitics points out how much of it has been happening in less than a year of this administration, including months of a honeymoon period. Obama constantly uses wild and irresponsible accusations against his perceived enemies. Bevan writes:

In the first nine months in office President Obama and/or members of his administration have accused doctors of performing unnecessary medical procedures for profit; demonized bond holders as 'speculators'; produced a report suggesting military veterans are prone to becoming right wing extremists; attacked insurance companies and threatened them with legislative retribution; ridiculed talk show hosts and political commentators by name from the White House podium; dismissed and demeaned protesters and town hall attendees as either unauthentic or fringe characters; maligned a white police officer for arresting a black man without knowing the facts of the case; launched an orchestrated campaign to marginalize the country's biggest pro-business group; and publicly declared war on a news organization.

When Obama runs into brick walls, he seems to reflexively go into a state of rage. Bill Clinton was the same way, and so was LBJ. But Clinton and LBJ had a lot of time to learn to moderate their own worst instincts. The best thing that ever happened to Bill Clinton as president was the election of the Gingrich Congress in 1994, which forced him to deal with reality. Jimmy Carter has been on a constant narcissistic revenge campaign since he lost to Ronald Reagan and never got a second term. It explains a lot about Jimmy's amazing destructiveness against his favorite whipping boy, Israel.

The same thing will happen to Obama if and when he loses the election in 2012. Since narcissists in power keep people around them in a constant state of fear -- everybody gets targeted and feels insecure -- you can expect a ton of dirty tricks in elections to come. But then Democrats constantly use dirty tricks.

I fear two things with Obama. One is if the GOP fails to elect a House majority in 2010 to keep Obama within the bounds of sanity. A GOP majority is essential for the safety of the country and the world. But even if Obama is defeated in 2012, he will

just turn into an angrier version of Al Gore and Jimmy Carter. He will haunt the political future of this country as long as he is alive, because that famished ego never gets enough. Malignant narcissism often gets worse over time. And on the Left and among blacks, Obama will still have love and adoration enough to keep him supplied. He is an easy target for flattery by the Saudis, even the Iranians -- in fact, by all the real enemies we have.

So even if the voters throw out this very dangerous cult-like administration, you can expect Obama to be popping up in our politics for years to come. He will haunt the Democrats, which might be a good thing. But he will haunt the United States as well, even if he is defeated in 2012.

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