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Donald Trump's Fantasy World

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi tore up Donald Trump's speech, saying he was "shredding the truth." It was quite a moment, and though she took some heat for such an impertinent act, she was right: The speech is full of lies, exaggerations, and misrepresentations. Here are some that caught my eye, arranged by topic:

The Big Lie

"... we must reject the politics of revenge, resistance, and retribution, and embrace the boundless potential of cooperation, compromise, and the common good."

If Trump is known for anything, it is revenge politics—punishing the disloyal, rewarding the sycophants. Cooperation and compromise? Not on his watch. Respect for judicial independence and the oversight function of Congress goes unmentioned.

"Here in the United States, we are alarmed by the new calls to adopt socialism in our country. . . . Tonight, we renew our resolve that America will never be a socialist country."

Trump's version of the Red Scare is what we can expect if Bernie Sanders is the Democratic nominee. But Trump might consult polls showing that "socialism" is quite popular among young people.

The Medal of Freedom to Rush Limbaugh

Rewarding a leading enemy of racial and social harmony, of humanitarianism, and of peace. A perfect example of Trump's skewed values.

The Economy

“economic boom—a boom that has rarely been seen before. There’s been nothing like it. We have created 5.3 million new jobs and, importantly, added 600,000 new manufacturing jobs.”

Vast overstatements, numbers plucked from thin air. US manufacturing has slowed, not picked up. No mention of plant closures or low-wage employment without benefits. Also no mention of Obama’s role in job creation.

“The U.S. economy is growing almost twice as fast today as when I took office. And we are considered, far and away, the hottest economy anywhere in the world. . . . African American, Hispanic American, and Asian American unemployment have all reached their lowest levels ever recorded.”

Really? Again, wild exaggerations thrown out for political effect.

“We passed a massive tax cut for working families.”

As we all know, that tax cut overwhelmingly benefited the wealthy, the only class whose tax rate has gone down in recent years. The middle class remains as badly off now as it has been since the early 1970s.

“We eliminated the very unpopular Obamacare individual mandate penalty.”

Yes, and if the administration has its way, there won’t be a health care system, with steep cuts in Medicare and Medicaid on tap if Trump is reelected.

“Companies are coming back to our country in large numbers thanks to our historic reductions in taxes and regulations.”

There is no evidence of this despite the administration’s efforts to lure multinational companies back with all kinds of favorable actions.

Politics

“This new era of cooperation can start with finally confirming the more than 300 highly qualified nominees who are still stuck in the Senate.”

May they continue to be stuck there. Under Trump hundreds of right-wing judges have been added to the bench, and often unqualified other nominees have been inserted into critical positions in the EPA, energy department, and other agencies.

“Now is the time for Congress to show the world that America is committed to ending illegal immigration and putting the ruthless coyotes, cartels, drug dealers, and human traffickers out of business. . . . As we speak, large, organized caravans are on the march to the United States. We have just heard that Mexican cities, in order to remove the illegal

immigrants from their communities, are getting trucks and buses to bring them up to our country in areas where there is little border protection. I have ordered another 3,750 troops to our southern border to prepare for this tremendous onslaught. This is a moral issue. The lawless state of our southern border is a threat to the safety, security, and financial wellbeing of all America. We have a moral duty to create an immigration system that protects the lives and jobs of our citizens. . . . Year after year, countless Americans are murdered by criminal illegal aliens.”

Racist and disgusting. This is where it all began: Trump’s (and Stephen Miller’s) virulent attack on immigrants, his twisted description of border security, his uninformed argument for a wall, and his illegal use of the military. He hasn’t changed in the slightest. Nowhere does Trump mention his goal, which is being achieved, for zero refugee admissions.

“As part of our commitment to improving opportunity for women everywhere, this Thursday we are launching the first-ever government-wide initiative focused on economic empowerment for women in developing countries.”

Under the wise leadership of Ivanka Trump, women in developing countries will surely see unprecedented US assistance. Laughable! Aside from the fact that such a program (if there really is one) would hardly be the “first ever,” this administration has abandoned Africa to the Chinese and offered precious little help to other developing-country regions.

“we recently imposed tariffs on \$250 billion of Chinese goods, and now our Treasury is receiving billions and billions of dollars.”

Another bogus claim meant to hide the real costs of the trade war, including a 20% increase in farm bankruptcies, higher consumer costs, and major losses for auto, aircraft, and other exporters. The interim trade deal with China, which Trump glossed over, was hardly a victory, and while the US trade deficit with China has been reduced, that is mainly because of reduced US imports rather than increased US exports. So where could those “billions and billions” be?

Foreign Affairs

“As part of a bold new diplomacy, we continue our historic push for peace on the Korean Peninsula. Our hostages have come home, nuclear testing has stopped, and there has not been a missile launch in more than 15 months. If I had not been elected President of the United States, we would right now, in my opinion, be in a major war with North Korea.”

Still peddling the nonsense that Korea policy is a win. Over those 15 months, North Korea has carried out numerous missile tests and worked on improving its long-range

missile capability. The denuclearization policy is dead and there is no reason to believe that the next Trump-Kim summit, announced for later this month, will result in a serious deal.

“Our approach [in the Middle East] is based on principled realism, not discredited theories that have failed for decades to yield progress. . . . Today, we have liberated virtually all of the [ISIS] territory from the grip of these bloodthirsty monsters. . . . In Afghanistan, my administration is holding constructive talks with a number of Afghan groups, including the Taliban. . . . To ensure this corrupt dictatorship never acquires nuclear weapons, I withdrew the United States from the disastrous Iran nuclear deal. And last fall, we put in place the toughest sanctions ever imposed by us on a country.”

“Principled realism” surely comes from a speechwriter with a flair for the absurd. Trump’s Middle East “policy” comes down to catering to Israel and Saudi Arabia, undermining Obama’s Iran deal, undermining what could have been a deal with the Taliban, and abandoning the Kurds and the Palestinians.

The Close

“We must choose whether we are defined by our differences or whether we dare to transcend them. We must choose whether we squander our great inheritance or whether we proudly declare that we are Americans. . . . We must keep America first in our hearts. We must keep freedom alive in our souls.”

Such blather, and never a mention of the Constitution or democracy. “Freedom” amidst official lawlessness, “America first” but never international cooperation. And how about freedom of the press?

The Glaring Omissions

The omissions were as notable as the issues that were mentioned: the climate crisis, the Ukraine scandal, Russia policy, human rights, international law, alliances, and the role of truth, facts, and accountability in a democracy.

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