

Breitbart Billionaire Board Bashes Steve Bannon.

The Traditional Elite vs. The Right Populist Challengers

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Global Research, January 08, 2018

Region: [USA](#)
Theme: [History](#)

Since the run-up to the election of 2016, the ruling elite in America who control the two wings of the single Corporate Party of America (CPA)—the Republican and Democratic Parties—have been battling it out with ‘right populist’ challengers over who will define US policy in the decade ahead. Thus far in 2017 the elite have been clearly winning.

The likely sacking this coming week of Breitbart News’s CEO, Steve Bannon—which follows his banishment from the White House earlier in 2017—is but the latest example of the elite’s post-election objective of bringing their right populist challengers to heel, and in the process herding Trump himself back under their policy umbrella. (see my prior prediction, ‘Taming Trump’, this blog November 30, 2016)

The history of the traditional elite vs. right populist challengers goes back at least to the emergence of the so-called ‘Contract with America’ in 1994 followed soon thereafter by their effort to impeach then president, Bill Clinton. Clinton’s hard shift to the right after 1994 on economic, social and foreign policy deflated the challengers’ offensive, albeit temporarily. Then there was the so-called ‘Tea Party’ faction after 2001 that ran primary candidates and disrupted the elite Republican wing’s electoral strategy. With the assistance of the Business Council and US Chamber of Commerce, the Teaparty version of ‘right populist’ challengers were purged in 2014 from Republican primary races and candidacies. The challengers were not defeated, however. With the financial and organizational aid of the power behind the so-called ‘populist right’—i.e. the Koch brothers, the Mercers, Adelsons, Paul Singers and other radical right big financial supporters backing them—they returned with a vengeance in the 2016 election backing Trump, who opportunistically welcomed their organizational, media and ideological support as the traditional elite consistently rejected him. They bet their Trump Card and gained the White House. The contest did not stop there, however.

In 2017 the contest with the Republican wing of the elite continued. The ‘right populist’ mouthpiece within Congress, the US House ‘Freedom Caucus’, was able to prevail over other Republican colleagues and launch a full frontal assault on repealing Obamacare, the Affordable Care Act. They recklessly rolled the dice on their first toss...and lost. Check one for the traditional elite right out of the box in early 2017.



Another subsequent 2017 ‘win’ by the Republican wing of the elite was to get Trump to go slow on reversing NAFTA and other free trade agreements. Another was the driving of Steve Bannon and his allies from their perch as White House advisers. Yet another elite 2017 success was to convince Trump to back off from campaign promises to reorganize NATO and

reset relations with Russia, and instead to continue providing strategic weapons to east Europe and, most recently, the Ukraine. That policy shift is now in acceleration mode. Then there was the defeat of Moore for Senator in Alabama, who Trump and the right populists both endorsed. The Republican wing of the traditional elite—both in and out of Congress—abandoned Moore and joined with the Democrat wing to ensure Moore's defeat. To have supported Moore would have signaled that the Republican elite's strategy since 2014, a strategy denying right radicals from formal Republican (and Chamber of Commerce) support, was no longer in effect. A Moore victory would have brought even more radicals from the right demanding to run on Republican electoral tickets. The Chamber could not permit that again.

But the very latest event in the internal battle was last week's public rift between former right populist Trump election strategist and White House adviser, Steve Bannon, and Trump himself. A rift that, this writer predicts, will almost certainly lead to Bannon's sacking as CEO of the influential right populist media organ, Breitbart News, this coming week or soon thereafter.

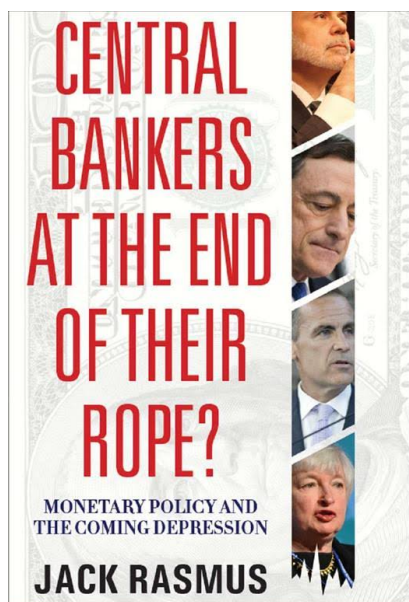
The Bannon sacking will clearly reveal that Bannon is not the driving force behind Breitbart. Nor is the radical 'right populist' movement itself an independent force. Bannon and Breitbart are but a mouthpiece. For what? For the real force behind the Breitbart media outlet, Bannon, and similar media organizations and talking heads pushing far right political alternatives and economic policies—i.e. the billionaire money interests that fund them and make the strategic decisions for them behind the scenes. It is the billionaires who sit on the Breitbart board, and other boards of similar right populist organizations who fund the Breitbarts, the Bannons, and those like them that came before and will come after.

It is those billionaires in particular who have become super-wealthy since the 1990s by speculating in commercial property and trusts and shadow banking; the billionaires over-represented from the ranks of private equity firms, real estate REITs, hedge fund capitalists, asset management companies, etc. On the level of individual capitalists, it is the Adelsons, Paul Singers, the Mercers, the Mays, and others—all billionaires—who have been bankrolling the 'right populists' from the very beginning, giving them a public soapbox with which to promote their views, ideology, and mobilize public opinion. More traditional economic sector billionaires, like the Kochs, are also among their ranks, of course. But they are especially over-populated with speculators and financial manipulators (much like Trump himself) who want a more deregulated, winner-take-all kind of capitalism they see as necessary to compete with challengers globally in the coming decades.

These billionaires are the election campaign financiers that all the major candidates for national office trek to every election cycle, genuflect before, hold out their hats to for donations. And with their money comes a 'Faustian' bargain: they are allowed to define policies once their candidates get elected. They are the silent sources that Trump regularly calls in the early morning hours from the White House to ask their advice and input.

Late last week, the billionaire Mercer family, that bankrolls and finances Breitbart News let it be known it was breaking relations with Bannon. Bannon quickly and contritely offered a public statement supporting Trump and calling him a 'great man', which Trump just as quickly retweeted. The Bannon retreat followed a reported statement he made to author Michael Wolf, who in his new book out last week quoted Bannon as saying Trump was psychologically unbalanced and "had lost it". Calls for Breitbart News to fire Bannon as its

CEO quickly followed, and the Mercers statement was made public in turn.



So Bannon's days are numbered and perhaps in hours not days. He will be gone, relegated to the speech circuit for right wing demagogues, joining the Glenn Becks, Rush Limbaughs, and others that occasionally over-estimate their influence with the capitalist ruling elite and their usefulness to them. And then find themselves on the outside looking in.

What the Bannon sacking will represent is that the 'right populist' movement will now ebb, albeit temporarily once more. It will be resurrected when needed, with another figure(talking)head replacing Bannon. The Becks, the Limbaughs, the Hannitys and the Bannons are all expendable, and replaceable with another cookie-cutter ideologue whenever the elite consider it necessary.

The Bannon development more importantly signals that more traditional Republican elite policies and legislation will now ever further supplant the right populist initiatives in Congress. The Trump tax cuts just passed benefit clearly the wealthiest 1% and their corporations, and not the middle class, the embittered blue collar workers of the Midwest and Great Lakes, or any other voting constituency in America.

The demise of Bannon also signals that Donald Trump, if he wishes to continue as president will agree to continue his shift toward policies adopted by the Republican wing of the elite. He has been in synch totally with the recent passage of the Trump Tax Cut act—the elite's #1 policy objective which is now achieved. Trump will now continue to back off of radical restructuring of free trade, especially NAFTA. He will fall in line with NATO and policies toward east Europe and Russia. He'll provide more advanced weaponry to eastern Europe and the Ukraine. He will be satisfied with a token Wall and back off from disrupting immigration relations. And he will continue to soft-pedal his tweeting with regard to North Korea and support trade deals with China the elite want him to deliver.

This does not mean Trump's troubles with the traditional elite are over, however. The events of the past year, culminating in the Bannon purge, only reflect Trump coming to terms with the Republican wing of the elite, as he tactically moves under their political protective umbrella. The Democrat wing of the elite will continue trying to build a case against him.

The Democratic wing of the elite will continue to exert pressure on Trump through its powerful media organs and its deep connections with and influence within the State

bureaucracy (FBI, NSA, State and Justice departments, DEA, military intelligence arms, etc.). This second front against Trump and his former right populist allies is reflected in the ongoing investigation into a Russia-Trump connection during the 2016 election cycle—which that wing of the elite hopes will lead, if not to outright collusion, then to evidence of some form of obstruction of justice by Trump; or perhaps uncover in the process past criminal activity by the Trump business organization with regard to tax evasion or foreign bribes for contracts with Russian oligarchs and mafia. This second front has recorded some success over the past year, as former FBI director, Mueller, has been able to extract evidence from suspected principals, Michael Flynn, Paul Manafort, and Papadopoulos.

The second major development of the past week was the publication of the Michael Wolf book on Trump. With the publication a new issue has been thrown into the political hotpot: Now it is not just whether Trump has colluded with the Russians, or obstructed justice to stop the Mueller investigation, or engaged in illegal bribes and deals with Russian oligarchs. Now the new mantra is Trump is psychologically unbalanced—as evidenced in his own Tweets and in the constant flow of leaked statements by his own administration about his basic ‘child-like character’ (Senator Corker), his ability to function at a level of ‘an idiot’ (Secretary of State Tillerson), or that he “has lost it” (Bannon).

In the months ahead the Republican wing—for whom Trump has nicely delivered in the form of tax cuts in the trillions of dollars and with whom Trump is now playing ball with regard to free trade—will circle the wagons on behalf of Trump. The Republican party wing of the elite don’t want to drive Trump from the White House. They want him tamed and continuing to deliver to policy agenda. So they have already begun to circle the wagons on Trump’s behalf—and to launch a counteroffensive in his defense. The past week’s reopening of the investigation of Clinton’s foundation and demands to indict the author of the ‘Trump dossier’ are but two examples of the counteroffensive.

And watch what happens after Trump eventually fires FBI investigator, Mueller. They’ll block the appointment of an independent prosecutor once Mueller is gone. And that means there won’t be any impeachment in 2018. All that could change, however, should Trump’s historic low approvals slip still further and result in the Republican loss of either the House or Senate in November 2018. Then watch the two wings of the elite unite in efforts to push Trump out.

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