

The US Republican Establishment and Steve Bannon's Crystal Ball: A Split in the GOP?

By [Dr. Binoy Kampmark](#)

Global Research, September 13, 2017

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

Rarely does the virus speak so formidably to the condition he is a product of. The soiling, devastating strategist Steve Bannon, despite exiting the Trump administration, remains within it (symbolically at least), moving about with effect and influence. But it is a legacy of mixed curses that bodes ill for the Republican Party.

The one call he repeats with truncheon carrying persistence is one of division. This is not a man who believes, let alone tolerates, unified fronts. Disunity is his bread, butter and caviar. Where a front of consensus appears, his shock methods seek to disrupt it. And nothing, for Bannon, would be more reflective of failure than a united GOP, lips moving in synchronous agreement, all on that one vast page of political thought. Unless, of course, they agreed with him.

His performance on the *60 Minutes* show was nothing short than pure in its protest.[1] In his discussion with Charlie Rose, the familiar terms were deployed with weaponized zeal. Targets were identified, elites excoriated. There were those troublesome individuals, the “swamp”, the establishment. All were given a generous verbal lashing.

The personal targets were predictable enough: old stalwarts such as Speaker Paul Ryan and the human personification of the detested swamp, that veteran insider Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell. They supply the stifling set, keen to submit Trumpism, or Trumpism envisaged by Bannon, to gradual strangulation.

“They do not want Donald Trump’s populist, economic nationalist agenda to be implemented.”

The theme of frustrated revolution proves constant in the interview, and here, the revolutionary was speaking as a combatant in exile, gazing over a world that refused to change.

“In the 48 hours after we won, there’s a fundamental decision that was made... We embraced the establishment.”

Everything else followed: the stuttering, the plodding, the meandering of the Republicans.

“I think their choice,” he predicts of the GOP functionaries in response to such instruments as the Affordable Care Act, “is going to be you’re not going to be able to totally repeal it.”

As, indeed, it is proving to be.

For Bannon, purity, despite being in a country of the energetic melting pot, is a genuine concept, the very product of a form of archaic Americanism. Amnesty for the undocumented, he blustered, was non-negotiable. “Economic nationalism” was indispensable to the American character. But the impure are in the ranks, laying out the pillboxes and road blocks.

“The Republican establishment,” he shot at Rose with conspiratorial suggestiveness, “is trying to nullify the 2016 election.”

Of course, nothing would be Bannon without the crystal ball, the gloomy prediction with its rich wafting of apocalypse. The GOP, he surmises, will duly be divided, and will suffer come the 2018 elections. He expressed particular worry about how the Republicans will fall on their sword regarding the matter of immigration and undocumented labour, the great poisoned chalice of US politics.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, introduced by President Barack Obama in 2012, is a point of considerable demurral. President Donald Trump promised on September 5 to repeal the measure, which allows applicants who arrived in the US before the age of 16, subject to various conditions (continuous residence, study, lack of a criminal record), the chance to receive work permits. There was one softening concession: a six month grace period before the program joins the ranks of history.

For Bannon, any approach to such programs should be unequivocal and swift, necessarily brutal and decisive. Opponents, such as the Catholic Church, were merely keen to fill the pews with the faithful. (The church, as an economic liberal entity, is a curious Bannonism indeed.)

DACA, however, risks being the bomb that goes off within GOP ranks, with its ticking device set. Leaving it linger will have lethal results:

“if this goes all the way down to its logical conclusion, in February and March, it will be a civil war inside the Republican Party.”

When the ashes settled, the interview concluded, the fumes could still be seen. Bannonism remains furious and unbowed, and most of all, angrily unrepentant. But his one persistent illusion remains: Trump is not a Bannonist, an ideologue, a person who will sport his own variant of Mao’s Little Red Book to wave with dedication. (*The Art of the Deal* hardly counts.)

The current US president remains an opportunistic misfit, never one to play by the code of any specific philosophy, any credo that is not a self-interested one. It is for that very reason that Bannon had to go, to assume the visage of the indignant, philosophical monk, where he will continue to rail and pontificate about race, the undrained swamp of Washington, economic irrationalism and “the pearl-clutching mainstream media.”

Dr. Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He lectures at RMIT University, Melbourne. Email: bkampmark@gmail.com

Note

[1] <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/09/11/politics/bannon-60-minutes/index.html>

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Dr. Binoy Kampmark](#), Global Research, 2017

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Dr. Binoy
Kampmark](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca