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When Canadians Become Alarmed, It's Serious.

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My sister phoned me from Canada this morning. I can't remember her being so upset. It's not about the grandchildren; it's not anything I said, not a recurrence of her cancer, not winter's icy roads or frozen pipes.

"What are you going to do if he becomes president? Can your Congress vote him out?" she asked determinedly. "What are you going to do?"—*you* being 'you out-of-control Americans'. My sister was talking about Donald Trump's ascendancy (if not his ascension).

This concern uttered by a woman who rarely talks politics, not even Canadian politics, from the same sister who routinely dismisses my political outrages, conspiratorial analyses, and opposition to Zionist occupation. I could never draw this lifelong sibling into a debate, especially about American politics. (She's more of a royalist—they still exist in Ontario, I suppose in British Columbia too– than a party member, left or right.)

Canadians habitually view their giant neighbor as excessive and unpredictable, not simply a source of new market delights which they travel south to buy, but also an easy target for Canadian satire. Preferring to avoid acknowledging their own military coalitions with the Pentagon, their diplomatic alliances with US imperialist polices, their membership in 'The Five Eyes' global intelligence spy program, and their acquiescence to US anti-terror strategies, Canadians try to ignore the race-based dramas and costly principled struggles that beset USA. 'It will pass like any teenage tantrum', they snicker.

So, if my sister is alarmed about the emergence of the flashy Manhattan billionaire as the frontrunner in the US election campaign, this is serious. Despite themselves Canadians, impatient with last year's drawn out 10-week election cycle that overthrew their Harper administration, are now following America's 15-month election drama with growing distress. Like many of us here, the personalities and volatility of the presidential campaign is no longer a laughing matter. Trump could actually win the Republican nomination, and the White House.

Unlike in Canada where parliament can simply force a vote of no confidence if their leadership is off-track, to rid ourselves of a problematic leader is more problematic.

Stateside, confronting this specter, we ourselves are desperately seeking options. Friends who favored Bernie Sanders announce they're shifting to Clinton because she would seem to have a better chance against 'The Donald', allied as she is with the Democratic Party machine and Corporate America. Others assert they'll sit out this election altogether. On the conservative side of the political arena, voters and the Republican Party itself (the GOP), admitting that 'The Donald' has become an embarrassment, appear to be mobilizing around young Mark Rubio.

Then there's the gorilla in the room, the unparalleled American political force underlying everything in our lives—our media. US media is a formidable power which my sister and others watching from a safe distance may not appreciate. Media network leaders now acknowledge that their romance with Trump and their initial delight in his celebrity skills helped create the monster he's become. (Their profits have soared with his rise.)

This brash contender would not be the first rising star to become the target of a vicious media assault. I expect the new game in town will be between 'The Donald' and our media. Journalists have a toolbox of weapons to politically assassinate brash and bombastic contenders. They can create scandals and saturate the public with misinformation, poisoning any name and cause; they can uncover buried facts to blow them out of portion to intimidate and embarrass. They can summon any comedic talent to ridicule. They can suggest alliances with the most extreme elements, having already begun with a suggestion he is allied with the discredited Ku Klux Klan.

And of course citizens can reject the spectacle that drugs them into spectator status, and get to work in their political constituencies. They might organize to overturn the composition of two houses of congress. Just as the GOP has hobbled Obama by taking control of Congress in the 2012 mid-terms; the Democratic Party can do the same if a Trump or any Republican wins the presidency.*

Our MalcolmX event last week was videoed and live-streamed; click here to access the 2 hour program http://livestream.com/schomburgcenter/events/4862758

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