

Trumpenparaden



By Nate Smelle

I AWOKE JUST before 8 a.m. on Saturday morning with a strange feeling about the day ahead. Outside the sun was shining, a robin was singing, a warm breeze was stirring the canopy; all the standard indicators were pointing to a perfect day.

Admiring the beautiful day shaping up outdoors, I tried to make sense of the uneasiness in the pit of my stomach. Probably just a little pre-game anxiety from thinking about the Oilers/Panthers' battle later that night, I thought to myself. As invested as I have become in cheering for Canada's home team, I knew that anxious feeling was about something more serious. Looking out the window, thinking of my to-do list I recalled that it was June 14?the day of the big ?Trumpenparaden? planned for Washington, D.C.

With the Trump regime needlessly deploying some 700 marines and 4,000+ troops from California's National Guard to deal with a manufactured crisis in Los Angeles that is still unfolding, I had been worried about whether the regurgitated American Fuherer would use his \$45-million birthday parade as a another stage for political theatre. Although the parade did not begin for another 10 hours I decided to check out the morning news and see what was being said about the charade before officially beginning my day.

As I waited for the reports from the various news agencies I follow on YouTube to load, my jaw dropped when the following headlines for each of them appeared on my screen: ?Democratic Minnesota lawmaker and husband shot dead in their home?; ?BREAKING: Minnesota lawmaker killed another injured in politically motivated assassination?; and, ?Democratic state politician killed and another injured in targeted attack.?

That was end of any plans I had for the day. Eagerly awaiting reports of the capture or killing of the domestic terrorist who committed these heinous crimes to roll in, I remained locked in for the next 48+ hours until the suspect was apprehended.

The assassination of the 61st Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives Melissa Hortman and her husband Mark Hortman has sent shockwaves across the United States and around the world?not only because of the sheer brutality of her murder, but because of the cynical, hate-fueled disinformation campaign that followed. Just hours after the news broke, right-wing influencers with millions of followers launched a propaganda blitz, falsely linking her death to yet another fabricated health-care conspiracy, smearing Democratic officials, and even insinuating that Minnesota Governor Tim Walz had ordered a ?political hit.?

Given the history of the MAGA Republicans shameless behaviour in the wake of virtually every national tragedy in the U.S., this

grotesque political theatre was not a spontaneous reaction to tragedy?it was the predictable outcome of a political culture corrupted by the rhetoric and policies of their new ?god?, President Donald Trump. It is not breaking news that since 2016, Trump has built a movement grounded in white nationalism, conspiratorial thinking, and anti-democratic tendencies. Now, in 2025, we are seeing the real-world consequences of that agenda in the shape of: elected officials assassinated, conspiracy theories weaponized against the truth, and political violence normalized.

Canadians must not ignore this irrefutable truth if we are to avoid following in our neighbour and former friend's footsteps. We are not immune to this poison, and we must resist every attempt to import Trump's brand of hatred north of the border.

The facts surrounding the Hortmans' assassination?and the attempted assassinations of Democratic member of the Seante in Minnesota John Hoffman and his wife Yvette Hoffman?should have united Americans in mourning and condemnation. Instead, far-right figures like Collin Rugg, and Mike Cernovich chose to exploit the tragedy for political gain. Ignoring the context of a bipartisan compromise on MinnesotaCare, they painted Hortman and Governor Walz as villains in a fabricated tale of betrayal and ?treason? against American citizens in favour of ?illegals.? MAGA Republican Senator Mike Lee?like the bewildered billionaire MAGA fanboy Elon Musk?even went as far as falsely blaming the assassinations on the ?far-left.?

It did not matter that any of their stories were completely fake. It did not matter that Walz had, in fact, agreed to end undocumented adult access to MinnesotaCare. It did not matter that the shooter, Vance Boelter, had a history of far-right radicalization and had previously attended Trump rallies. What mattered to Musk, the MAGA Republican Senator, and these influencers?and to the digital ecosystem that rewards such outrage and deception?was the opportunity to fan the flames of hatred and division.

And of course, as this dysfunctional faction has before, they succeeded. Their posts were amplified, lies went viral, and yet again, a grieving nation was forced to wrestle with the dual threats of political violence and disinformation.

If you have been keeping an eye and ear on politics south of our border for the past decade or so, you are aware that this is not an isolated case. These assassinations?and the deplorable response from the MAGA cult masquerading as conservative Christians?are a continuation of a pattern that has become all too familiar since Trump entered politics in 2016.

From Charlottesville to the MAGA insurrection on Jan. 6, 2021 to the violent rhetoric of sheriffs like Wayne Ivey in Florida, the Trump era has made one thing clear: political violence is no longer a fringe tactic. In the United States?like school shootings?it is just part of life. For those who may have missed Sheriff Ivey's pre-emptive strike against protestors planning to take part in the international No Kings demonstrations on June 14, here it is: ?I'm gonna break it down for you alright,? Sheriff Ivey told reporters in a press conference before the demonstartions had begun. ?If somebody wants to know what I mean by turn violent, this is what I mean: If you resist lawful orders, you're going to jail, let me be very clear about that. If you block an intersection or roadway in Brevard County you are going to jail. If you flee arrest you're gonna go to jail tired, because we are gonna run you down and put you in jail. If you try to mob rule a car in Brevard County?gathering around it, refusing to let the driver leave?in our county you're most likely gonna get run over and dragged across the street. If you spit on us, you're going to the hospital and in jail. If you hit one of us you're going to the hospital and jail, and most likely get bitten by one of our big, beautiful dogs that we have here. If you throw a brick, a fire bomb or point a gun at one of our deputies, we will be notifying your family where to collect your remains at, because we will kill you graveyard dead. We're not gonna play. If you don't wanna have any of those things happen to you, obey the law. Go protest all you want but do it peacefully. Stand on the mountain tops and yell your opinion, your views?we invite that?but don't you dare break the law because it won't go well for you.?

When Sheriff Ivey stated that protestors in Brevard County would be ?run over and dragged across the street? or ?killed graveyard dead? for disobedience, he wasn't issuing a rogue statement?he was echoing the Trumpian creed of authoritarian ?law-and-order.? It's the same message that the convicted felon Trump himself delivers when he urges supporters to see immigrants as ?animals? and political opponents not as fellow citizens, but as traitors, ?enemies of the people,? or targets.

This rhetoric does not merely corrode democratic norms, it gives licence to far-right extremists to act on their violent fantasies. In the case of Boelter, it appears to have led directly to a horrifying act of political terrorism.

As I have repeatedly pointed out over the past decade, Donald Trump's toxic influence doesn't stop at America's borders. His casual disregard for international law, his threats against Iran, and his repeated provocations toward war are dangerous for global peace. On Monday, as bombs fell on Tehran and missiles struck Tel Aviv, Trump escalated tensions by calling for the immediate evacuation of Tehran, implying knowledge of, or support for, a coming attack.

Trump's warmongering posture—cloaked in white nationalism and fear—does nothing to deter nuclear proliferation and everything to increase the chance of catastrophic conflict. He talks about nuclear weapons like toys, posts veiled threats to foreign nations from his social media site, and, in doing so, helps normalize apocalyptic intimidation tactics.

Again, what happens in the United States matters in Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, and yes, even Bancroft. A destabilized global order hurts everyone, and Trump's return to the global stage as the leader of the once "free world" is a threat to peace, justice, and democratic values everywhere. The "Trumpenparaden" that has been truthfully going on since "The Donald" first entered the political stage in 2016 may have been convincing enough to fool American voters twice, but the rest of the world see it for what it is: a smoke and mirrors show, boasting nothing more than a few dozen squeaky tanks and a roadside full of empty seats.