

## Clash of Titanic Egos: *Comey v. Trump*

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Three hours or more of testimony boiled down to a few simple statements. President Trump kicks everybody out of his office and asks his G-man whether the FBI can go easy on Trump's "good guy" pal, Michael Flynn. Comey believes he is being "pressured" to stop a potential criminal investigation. Comey publicly labels Trump a "liar" for saying that people who work in the FBI have lost their confidence in Comey and that he was doing a poor job. Sounds like more of the same old political nonsense. People at the top pressuring their underlings, who they can easily hire or fire, to do what the boss wants while competing egos struggle for survival. Comey was hellbound and determined to protect himself and get even. He wrote detailed notes and deliberately snuck them out to a source at that great bastion of impartiality, *The New York Times*. You can bet your sweet booty, that no boss is going to trust Comey again.

Did President Donald Trump commit obstruction of justice? Was he dumb and merely abusing his power, or was he playing the political game of powerful managers in a position of control?

More than once in my political life, I received telephone calls from strong willed political people suggesting that if I wanted a political position, or did not want to get booted out of one which I already held, I should play ball nicely. Who in politics has not received such a call or in-person admonition? My response was always a lot like Comly's; "I hear what you're saying, but I will always do what is right." Well, sometimes that hurt me politically, and sometimes it did not matter at all. One of the big differences is that I was not in law enforcement but I was being urged to take action or to refrain from action based upon the wishes of the Big Dog who could easily cut my throat on a moment's notice.

Apparently Rob Rosenstein, a highly respected big-time cop himself, wrote the memo that led to Comey's demise. Was Rosenstein also a bad guy, or was he simply telling the boss that he could have his way with obstreperous hold-over employees who were not very good at reading the tea leaves?

The bigger story unfortunately is bumbled in the media feeding frenzy. One thing about President Donald Trump; he has been good for the news stations and the print media. It's like reading *People* magazine or *The National Enquirer* 50 times a day. There is always some dirt and drama to soil oneself with.

So what of Russian interference in American elections and the cozy relationship that many Americans in the current and the last several administrations have had with the Russians? Pretty smart, those Russians. They have learned to do what our CIA

perfected many years ago, and that is to get what they want through manipulation of the internal affairs of other nations. How concerned is Donald Trump about the fact that virtually everyone in law enforcement believes the Russians are up to nefarious, no good dirty tricks? Is the President freaking out about that? Does the President have some secret plan to counter-attack or to talk the Russians out of their dangerously crass intentions? No one knows. Is President Trump clever enough to give the Russians a good thrashing without telegraphing his intentions in advance? We have not seen any signs of that, and law enforcement does not seem to have any specific instructions from the Administration as to how to counter the Russian threat.

The truth is that Russia is not alone in attacking our national interest. China and North Korea have cyber attacked us many times in the past. No doubt, these attacks have “unmasked” private individuals as secret agents. Doubtless, lives have been lost because of secrets accessed by our enemies and used against us in the field of battle from Afghanistan and Iraq to the African continent. The distressing truth is that war has been waged against us by regimes that not only have no respect for democracy but also see the American way of life as a threat to their own. We have plenty of rot from within, exacerbated by those who are interested in “bringing down” the slumbering giant; America.

Long-winded hearings will continue, leaks will turn into floods, and the opponents of Donald Trump will focus more on their opposition government than what is good and safe for the United States. The “loyal opposition” has every right, and even more so a responsibility, to voice their concerns and outrage. At the same time, it would be nice if we could have an alliance of interests not only to find out what the role has been of foreign nations in degrading the American political system, but also in devising an appropriate strategy to safeguard our national interests. In view of the toxic atmosphere in Washington and throughout the nation generally, it is unlikely that our two great political parties will work together in a productive fashion. In the clash of Titanic egos, the ship of state will founder upon the shoals of foreign officious intermeddlers.

Are we, as Americans, capable of saving ourselves? So long as our only agenda item is getting rid of our political enemies and enriching our friends, there is no hope. However, our nation is full of people of goodwill, including in public office, who are occasionally capable of seeing through the fog of political warfare. We can only hope that the current investigations, undertaken by seemingly respectable and responsible government authorities, continue aggressively but without becoming a witch hunt. That will be difficult. Witness *Starr v. Clinton*, which became not about Whitewater and other financial scandals of the Clintons', but rather about the sex life of Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky. Hopefully our national finances and patience will not be wasted again but rather will be utilized on a focused, prompt and cooperative investigation which will answer the question not only as to the degree of foreign

interference in our electoral process, but also what can be done to stop it and respond in a way that our enemies will understand forever.

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