President Trump’s Conspicuous Rhetorical Pattern

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The rhetorical pattern of President Donald Trump’s speeches, tweets, impromptu comments and responses to reporter questions has become transparent. Anyone can witness what he is doing and why it is unacceptable for any politician desiring to be President of the United States.

Unfortunately, many of Trump’s ardent supporters get their information solely from sanitized and incomplete FOX News versions of his presentations and press conferences, where some important photos and context more often than not are omitted—no doubt intentionally. It shouldn’t surprise us, therefore, that Trump backers either are oblivious to what actually is happening or have deluded themselves into believing there is nothing wrong with his behavior—behavior they never would tolerate from any other president.

The problem goes beyond Trump’s rhetoric. It also is a communication problem for which his audience is equally accountable, involving both what message sources they select and how they process and interpret.
information. Case in point: The President’s alleged "White House Press Conference" on Saturday, August 8.

The event was held in Bedminster, New Jersey, one of Trump’s private golf resorts where strategically he was able to invite an obviously biased and skewed audience. The result: dues paying members of the President’s fan club attended, cheering Trump and jeering the press corps. This hardly is the appropriate venue and rhetorical form for a “White House Press Conference,” an event underwritten by tax payer money and specifically designed and formatted to inform all citizens about a timely issue.

That’s just how the White House labeled and forecasted Saturday’s occasion. This has been the pattern since the President recently decided to resume briefing the press. Why? So Trump could garner a larger national audience and hijack the news networks. From a public relations perspective, this allowed him to stage a free political rally and spend most of his time giving his base red meat by attacking Biden and the Democrats.

The rhetorical problem includes more than choice of and label for the event. It extends to the substance and form of questions and answers. For example, when reporters on Saturday asked Trump tough but fair questions about his actions and discourse, predictably he either didn’t answer or lied, even contradicting his own prior statements. When reporters then appropriately asked follow up fact checking questions, Trump totally folded and looked foolish; as he has done so many previous times, the President chose abruptly to walk off the stage in the middle of a question exposing a lie he had previously told hundreds of times about the Veterans Choice bill—a bill about health care for veterans.
Per usual, fact checks conducted after the event documented the large number of lies told by Trump as well as the misinformation he provided. This included his statements about what the Democrats proposed and didn’t as part of the failed congressional stimulus package, the executive actions Trump signed, the absence of financial relief for those without jobs, the capacity of states to provide the necessary money to complete Trump’s relief for tax payers, the lack of sufficient aid to the schools, whether the executive order signed by the President actually prevents evictions or simply recommends it, and potential legal challenges that could delay relief for those in need. Worse yet, with nearly five million cases and over 160,000 dead, Trump failed to discuss the most important issue of the day, namely, the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on the lives of millions of Americans.

The question remains: Will voters do anything to stop Trump’s despicable rhetorical conduct, behavior that should and normally would disqualify anyone desiring to be President?

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