

*'Bad Things are Going to Happen to Him'*

*Blowback:*

*A Warning to Save Democracy from Trump's Revenge*

Miles Taylor

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### **John Newsinger**

**M**iles Taylor is a 'security expert' who had worked for the George W Bush administration. In February 2017 he went to work for President Donald Trump in the Department of Homeland Security as a senior adviser to General John Kelly. The following year (5 September) he published an article, 'I Am Part of the Resistance inside the Trump Administration', using the pseudonym 'Anonymous', in the *New York Times*. In that he revealed that there were people in senior positions in the Trump administration who were doing their best to keep Trump under control and to adhere to a conventional right-wing Republican agenda. He resigned from the administration in June 2019 and later that year, also as 'Anonymous', published a book, *A Warning*, exposing Trump's character and incompetence in considerably more detail.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing, however, seemed to undermine Trump's support in the country at large or weaken his hold over the Republican Party. Eventually, Taylor decided to go public, revealing on 28 October 2020 that he was 'Anonymous', so that he could campaign more effectively against Trump in the 2020 Presidential election. He details Trump's response at a rally where he called him 'a low-level staffer, a sleaze-bag' and demanding that there 'should be major criminal liability for some scum like this'. To great applause and cheering from his 'worshippers', Trump ominously warned that 'Bad things are going to happen to him'. (p. 254) Such language was intended to both intimidate his critics and incite his more extreme supporters. Trump, as Taylor puts it, 'is a master of the politics of personal destruction'. (p. 5) And now, obviously appalled at Trump's stronger-than-ever control over the Republican Party, Taylor has published another book, *Blowback*, warning against both the authoritarian

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<sup>1</sup> For my review of this book see 'The Trump Phenomenon' in *International Socialism* 167 (Summer 2020) at <<https://isj.org.uk/the-trump-phenomenon/>>.

threat that Trump poses, and the even greater threat that the 'next Trump', a competent authoritarian, might pose.

One point worth making right at the start is that taking this sort of public stance in the United States actually puts your life at risk and this situation is certain to get worse. After he published his *New York Times* article, even though it was anonymous, Taylor was worried that his identity would be discovered and so, for the first time, he bought a gun, 'a Sig Sauer P365, the perfect concealed weapon'. (p. 165). After he revealed his identity, both he and his family received abuse and threats. As a precaution, he began going to the shooting range to practice with his weapon. (p. 237) Eventually, someone, who wants to remain anonymous, provided him with a protection team 'until things cooled down'. (p. 268) Only in America . . .

Back in 2016, according to Taylor, there was no-one in the Republican leadership who actually supported Trump's candidacy. He was just 'a foul-mouthed imbecile who was doomed to fail', someone 'just trying to create a small faction to infiltrate the Republican Party for personal gain'. (p. 20) After he secured the Republican nomination, the expectation was that Hillary Clinton was certain to defeat this obviously totally unfit crook and conman. Once Trump had been successfully elected (although it is always important to remember that Clinton won the popular vote by nearly three million votes), there were many in the party leadership and apparatus who hoped that he could be persuaded to govern as a conventional conservative Republican. Some of these people joined his administration and found themselves trying to control Trump. Taylor was one of them. They were to be speedily disillusioned: 'Trump wasn't fixable'. (p. 129)

Taylor reminds his readers of the horrors of the Trump White House and of the character of its occupant. He writes of how Trump 'fantasized about replicating North Korea's demilitarised zone on the US southern border, replete with land mines, barbed wire, electric fences and armed guards . . . He mused about US soldiers firing on civilians . . . if they blew the legs out from underneath pregnant mothers, it would keep them from reaching the border'. And he sat and listened on Air Force One while Trump 'lavished praise on America's adversaries and foreign dictators, waxing poetic about Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping'. He longed for the same power that these dictators possessed and fantasised about invoking 'the Insurrection Act, allowing him to impose a version of martial law'.

In the end, it was Trump's 'inclination towards illegality that led me to quit'. This was after he saw Trump personally telling border control agents 'to ignore the law and to send arriving migrants right back into the hot-sun desert where they could die despite their legal right to claim asylum, offering to

pardon anyone who got arrested for carrying out his directive'. (pp. 9/10). On another occasion, he tried to interest Trump in an operation to curb the surge in fentanyl use in the country, 'cracking down on the criminal networks responsible for smuggling the drug'. All Trump was interested in, however, was whether the methods, that Taylor had patiently explained to him in the simplest possible language, could be 'used to capture illegal immigrants'. One of Trump's closest advisers, Stephen Miller, wanted to know if drones could be used to bomb and sink boat-loads of migrants in international waters, something that seemed to obsess him. As Admiral Zukunft patiently explained: such attacks would be 'against international law', but this was something that Miller could not seem to get his head around. The reality was that international law 'meant nothing to the MAGA crowd'. (pp. 187/8) As Taylor points out, by the time Trump left office, nearly all those who had been trying to control his criminal authoritarianism had left the administration and it was pretty much dominated by Trump sycophants. If Trump secures re-election this year, these people, committed devotees of the Trump cult, will be in charge from the very beginning.

There is much more on the incompetence of the last Trump administration, but one particular revelation is worth noting: the administration's determination to play down and diminish the threat posed by right-wing extremist groups. The likes of the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers 'were supporters, not suspects'. The author's contribution to the administration's counter-terrorism strategy dealing with combating 'domestic violent extremists' was pretty much deleted so that neo-Nazis were casually lumped in with animal rights activists. Trump and his allies did not want the extremists who supported him investigated and this was to help produce the 6 January Insurrection. (pp. 115/6). Indeed, these extremists were turned loose on those in the Republican Party who refused to bend the knee to the Greatest President Ever.

Best known, of course, is the 6 January insurrectionists wanting to hang Vice President Mike Pence for defying Trump. But Taylor describes another powerful episode in Arizona, where Republican officials refused to overturn the 2020 election result that Biden had won in the state. Bill Gates, the election supervisor for Maricopa County and a staunch Republican, received a phone call from a friend on 6 January 2021 warning him to go into hiding. At that very time there were armed protesters on the grounds of the Arizona state capitol where they had erected a guillotine. He watched the 6 January Insurrection unfold on television in the Airbnb where he and his family had gone into hiding. There followed a battle for possession of the Arizona ballots, with Gates being threatened with jail by Republican legislators if he refused to

hand them over. In the end, a judge ordered that the ballots be handed over for a wholly partisan audit by contractors known as the 'Cyber Ninjas'. As far as Gates was concerned, the judge only gave this verdict because of 'fear that his family might also be targeted by the MAGA crowd'. He told Taylor that 'Anyone who would dare speak the truth to these people is in danger'. (pp. 42-44) Trump's extremist supporters now have complete control of the Republican Party, control which is exercised when necessary by means of intimidation and the threat of violence. And the situation can only get worse.

If Trump wins the forthcoming Presidential election, then he and his coterie will, without any doubt, set about installing an authoritarian regime in power. The Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 will provide the model for this; although we can be absolutely certain that Trump has never read the document. If he loses, then the certain expectation is another claim that the Democrats have rigged the election, inevitably accompanied by violence and gunfire. Taylor's book provides a good warning of what is likely to be coming down the road.

John Newsinger is a retired academic.

His latest book is *Chosen by God:*

*Donald Trump, the Christian Right and American Capitalism,*  
published by Bookmarks. <<https://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk/>>