

*Real Patriotism with Terry Moran*

03/11/26

8:48 mark

5 minutes and 21 seconds

ANAND GIRIDHARADAS: And I have been thinking lately that, you know, I think it has been very important over the last year to warn, as you have, as I have, to warn of the risk of this presidency. But I do think some of that and myself included, it's very hard to get right the line between the warning and not inflating his strength beyond what it actually is. He is not invincible. He's not indomitable. He's not particularly popular. And, like, most people see through him, including growing numbers of his supporters. And so, you know, like he's — he's a weak man pretending to be a strong man. He's not up there with like the great historical dictators. Like he's not, he's trying to do that. The attempt is very much in progress. But I think it's also important that we don't, you know, concede the ground to him in advance. I think he's, like, a highly incompetent person trying to do an authoritarian attempt and trying to barnacle the authoritarian attempt with so much personal stealing or whatever which, by the way, a lot of these authoritarians have the discipline to not do. I don't know. Someone's going to call me on. Maybe I'm wrong. I don't think Hitler was selling merch.

TERRY MORAN: No.

GIRIDHARADAS: Hitler was very serious on his awful project —

MORAN: No, but —

GIRIDHARADAS: — or Stalin, and Mao and all these people were — had, like, were trying to do, like, other things. Like, serious other things in addition to the thing that looked — right?

MORAN: Yeah.

GIRIDHARADAS: So, he's, like, an unserious authoritarian who's — it's — he's like a part-time side hustle authoritarian, which I think has limited the power of the attempt.

MORAN: Yes. Although I would say that modern authoritarians — Putin became the richest man in the world without a paycheck from private enterprises and tire life. He's arguably the richest man in the world. One of them certainly, Erdogan and Orban, they all combine their authoritarianism with — Chavez, too, with a kind of, you know, with thievery, basically, with that kind of corruption. That said, his incompetence is a gift. And proof of what you're saying, I completely agree. I've said for a while that the best kept secret in American life is that most people are still normal, right? They don't want a civil war or — or national divorce or whatever crack pottery they see on social media if they look at social media, they want what they want. They want pragmatic, real solutions to the problems in their lives to make their lives and their families and their communities better. And I think of it, what you were describing is kind of the brick-wall theory of politics that if you say there's a brick wall over there, don't walk into it. And somebody walks in and smacks their head, kind of them walk into the smack head. Even with

Trump, half of them are going to say I'm not walking into that wall again. And if they do it a few times, you know, he's got nobody left. That's why in the proof of the pudding of what you're saying is that he is going to make an attempt to steal the election, to deform the election. And I don't think there's any question about that. That's really the battle. He's tried it every single election he's faced, you know. He did encourage and welcome the help of the Kremlin in 2016. They were also trying to help Hillary because they wanted chaos, so is that collusion or conspiracy? You know, it's secondary. He certainly, obviously, tried to steal the 2020 election and try to steal this one too, this midterms because he knows it's the ball game. And I think at the — at the end of — the war is the brick wall. And he doesn't know what to do about it. He does, he's, the earth is beginning to shake under his feet. It's an earthquake. And he's yelling at it to stop. And you can't do it.

GIRIDHARADAS: And may I just say, let's just take them at their word from, you take all the different shifting explanations and motives for this war. Okay. Let's suspend judgment and take them at their word. So, it sounds like if I'm taking them seriously, it sounds like they're really offended by institutionalized misogyny from what I hear about their — their motivation for going into Iran. It sounds like they don't like women being treated as second-class citizens and kept in the shadows and deprived of their rights, okay? Take — take that seriously. It sounds like they don't like religious nationalism. That, you know — that kind of, you know, single — single religion kind of being given an elevated position in, in the country. It sounds like that kind of church and state thing feels, I guess, important to them. It sounds like they don't like, you know, this kind of — this idea of like a singular leader, like a supreme kind of leader, just deciding things arbitrarily. It sounds like they don't like now that the bombing happened, they don't like, you know, the son just being anointed as like a successor, just because of birth, okay? So, I'm going to — I'm going to take — I'm going to take them at their word. If it turns out we have hundreds of millions of dollars a day, which I've heard, you probably know better than me, hundreds of millions of dollars a day to do what we're doing in Iran. We have that money around. It turns out, and we are suddenly interested as a policy matter in fighting institutionalized misogyny, religious nationalism, authoritarianism, and kind of this like, filial succession kind of vibes. Why don't we just spend that money in America to fight those things? And why don't the people who are fighting those things in Iran — who are also doing those things to America — why don't they just not do them? It's actually just so much cheaper to just not do those things here than to fight other people doing them somewhere else. Just don't do them here. It's free. You could just for free stop doing them here.

(...)

17:27 mark

1 minutes and 46 seconds

MORAN: So he — he has hubris. But then he's a megalomaniac. He is the greatest of all time. And this is something that will make him eternally great. He's got Alexander the Great notions that he's going to change the world. And it will have a Trump sign on everything in the world. I'm serious. I actually think part of that is the mechanism. I also think that in many ways, he is an idiot. He's actually an idiot. He just doesn't know stuff. And he thinks that by sheer force of will

and saying things, he can make it true. And now, he's in this and listen to how he's talking about ending the war. Well, you know, they're, they're going to knuckle under or they're going to, you know, unconditional surrender. Now, unconditional surrender turns out is not transitive or intransitive. But it's — it's, like, not something that I surrender. It's the victor decides you have surrendered that the conditions have been met, that you have surrendered, which is absurd. And that's going to go away too. Maybe he's going to have a new guy, maybe doesn't have a new guy's desperate for somebody to get out of, for someone to help him get out of it. And I think that someone is Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who was the president of Iran for a while, who apparently the United States busted out of an Iranian prison. They bombed the prison and there is some suggestion that it was a U.S. intelligence operation because he's the — he's Trump's chosen one. Ahmadinejad, who like hated the United States, was loyal to the revolution, but wanted more, a more normal Iran. And he's the guy that they're looking at, apparently he survives and they're looking at, they, they'd like to anoint him, but they don't, this is it. The enemy has a say. Or as Mike Tyson, the great American philosopher once put it, everybody's got a plan until they get punched in the mouth.