

Our Predator Presidency

Shortly before the election I began reading noted economist James Galbraith's book, *The Predator State*. Shortly after the election I finished. Galbraith's book is deeply informed, highly instructive, and trenchant in its analysis and conclusions. He tells us things most of us don't know, and punctures a good many preconceptions and false myths about the economic policies and practices that have dominated and evolved since before the presidency of Ronald Reagan.

Published in 2008, the book could almost have been written yesterday. We are now seeing the apotheosis of what Galbraith describes and critiques as the Predator State, not an abstract or hypothetical entity but the United States of the early 21st century. In Galbraith's words:

The Predator State is an economic system wherein entire sectors have been built up to feast on public systems built originally for public purposes and largely serving the middle class. The corporate republic simply administers the spoils system. On a day-to-day basis, the business of its leadership is to deliver favors to their clients. These range from coal companies to sweatshop operators to military contractors. . . . Everywhere you look, the public decision is made by the agent of a private party for the purpose of delivering private gain. That is not an accident, it is a system.

In the corporate republic that presides over the Predator State, nothing is done for the common good. Indeed, the men in charge do not recognize that public purposes exist. For this reason, the concept of competence has no relevance: to be incompetent, you must at least be trying. But the men in charge are not trying: they have friends, and enemies, and as for the rest – we are the prey.

In short, those who call the shots in important sectors of the Predator State do not assume their roles in order to serve the nation, they are in the game to serve themselves. They are not public servants, they are public welfare parasites of the worst sort, crafting laws and implementing policies, or scheming to avoid or break them, precisely to seize advantage for themselves and their kind.

Now we have a predator president whose whole life has been devoted to making money and accumulating power by making deals that enrich himself at the expense of others. Although he promised to “drain the swamp,” he has clearly been stocking it with fellow predators, appointing them to high-ranking positions in his sociopathic administration

We who oppose Trump are told to look into the mirror and face the reality that we lost the election. Donald Trump needs to look into the mirror and see the man whom most Americans dislike, do not trust, and do not want to be their president. Matters must now come to a head.

Eight years ago Galbraith thought there was still hope:

The end of the Predator State will come only when the more reasonable, more progressive part of the business community insists on it and is willing to make common cause with unions, consumers, environmentalists, and other mobilized social groups to bring the predators to heel. . . . Or will action be delayed and blocked until such time as meaningful reform has no effective constituency left?

Dealing with this issue is . . . a race against time.

Rise up, reasonable and progressive business leaders! We need your help to deliver us from this servant of Mammon, this Pretender who apparently enjoys the support of the Kremlin and was clearly elected by a minority of voters. Help us all secure a livable future for ourselves and our posterity. If we do not flourish together, we shall perish separately.