

Ex-Obama Official Suggests ‘Military Coup’ Against Trump



Win McNamee/Getty

by [Aaron Klein](#)

In a blog post for Foreign Policy magazine, Rosa Brooks, a former Obama administration official, outlined four ways to “get rid” of President Trump, including declaring him mentally unfit for command or carrying out a military coup.

Brooks is a Schwartz senior fellow at the New America Foundation, which is [funded](#) by billionaire George Soros’s Open Society Foundations and Google. She served from 2009-2011 as Counselor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and served as a senior adviser at Obama’s State Department.

Her [posting](#) is titled “3 Ways to Get Rid of President Trump Before 2020,” although the piece actually outlines four ways.

In what seems to be a deliberate tactic, Brooks repeatedly questions Trump's mental stability, claiming that the president's first week in office "has made it all too clear: Yes, he is as crazy as everyone feared."

Brooks, who is not a mental health professional, offered no evidence for her armchair psychological evaluation other than citing policies that she doesn't like.

Remember those optimistic pre-inauguration fantasies? I cherished them, too. You know: "Once he's president, I'm sure he'll realize it doesn't really make sense to withdraw from all those treaties." "Once he's president, surely he'll understand that he needs to stop tweeting out those random insults." "Once he's president, he'll have to put aside that ridiculous campaign braggadocio about building a wall along the Mexican border." And so on.

Nope. In his first week in office, Trump has made it eminently clear that he meant every loopy, appalling word — and then some.

Brooks listed four ways to get rid of a "crummy" president.

- Elect him out of office after his four-year term. "But after such a catastrophic first week, four years seems like a long time to wait," she wrote.
- Impeachment. However, she lamented, "impeachments take time: months, if not longer — even with an enthusiastic Congress. And when you have a lunatic controlling the nuclear codes, even a few months seems like a perilously long time to wait."
- Utilizing a claim of mental instability to invoke the 25th Amendment of the Constitution, which sets the path for the commander-in-chief's removal if the "president is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office."
- A military coup. She writes: "The fourth possibility is one that until recently I would have said was unthinkable in the United States of America: a military coup, or at least a refusal by military leaders to obey certain orders."

Regarding her suggested military coup, a creative Brooks proposes preposterous scenarios that she fears Trump might try to play out:

What would top U.S. military leaders do if given an order that struck them as not merely ill-advised, but dangerously unhinged? An order that wasn't along the lines of "Prepare a plan to invade Iraq if Congress authorizes it based on questionable intelligence," but "Prepare to invade Mexico tomorrow!" or "Start rounding up Muslim Americans and sending them to Guantánamo!" or "I'm going to teach China a lesson — with nukes!"

When it comes to invoking the 25th Amendment, Brooks argues for appealing to the "ambitions" of Vice President Mike Pence.

That Amendment states:

Whenever the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President.

“Surely Pence wants to be president himself one day, right?” Brooks writes. “Pence isn’t exactly a political moderate — he’s been unremittingly hostile to gay rights, he’s a climate change skeptic, etc. — but, unappealing as his politics may be to many Americans, he does not appear to actually be insane. (This is the new threshold for plausibility in American politics: ‘not actually insane.’)”

During the 2016 presidential campaign, opponents of Trump similarly attempted to delegitimize his policies by raising questions about his mental health. As I [wrote](#) at the time, the template for such attacks may have been set more than five decades ago when such claims were deployed against Senator Barry Goldwater during his 1964 presidential campaign, which was widely considered a threat to the political establishment.

That theme has continued into Trump’s first two weeks in office.

Earlier this week, U.S. News and World Report ran a [story](#) titled, “Temperament Tantrum: Some say President Donald Trump’s personality isn’t just flawed, it’s dangerous.”

Apparently violating the so-called Goldwater Rule, established by the American Psychiatric Association after similar attacks against Goldwater, the magazine quoted numerous health care professionals attempting to categorize Trump’s mental stability. The APA’s Goldwater Rule forbids psychiatrists from commenting on someone’s mental status unless they first carry out an examination and the doctor is authorized by the patient to speak to the public.

The U.S. News story, for example, quotes John D. Gartner, described as a “practicing psychotherapist who taught psychiatric residents at Johns Hopkins University Medical School” as claiming Trump is “dangerously mentally ill and temperamentally incapable of being president.”

The Independent newspaper this week ran a [story](#) that also attempted to diagnose Trump. It was titled, “‘Malignant narcissism’: Donald Trump displays classic traits of mental illness, claim psychologists.” The article similarly cited mental health professionals commenting on Trump’s alleged psychological disorder.

The Independent article partially drew from a New York Daily News [story](#) from this week titled, “President Trump exhibits classic signs of mental illness, including ‘malignant narcissism,’ shrinks say.”

“Narcissism impairs his ability to see reality,” Dr. Julie Futrell, a clinical psychologist, told the newspaper while pointing out that she never actually treated Trump.

During Goldwater’s candidacy, the campaign to distort the public’s perception of the politician culminated in an infamous 1964 article in Fact Magazine, which surveyed members of the American

Psychiatric Association, or APA, on Goldwater's mental stability, though none of the psychiatrists had personally examined the presidential candidate.

The New York Times [reported](#) on the Goldwater smear:

The survey, highly unscientific even by the standards of the time, was sent to 12,356 psychiatrists, of whom 2,417 responded. The results were published as a special issue: "The Unconscious of a Conservative: A Special Issue on the Mind of Barry Goldwater."

The psychiatrists' assessment was brutal. Half of the respondents judged Mr. Goldwater psychologically unfit to be president. They used terms like "megalomaniac," "paranoid," and "grossly psychotic," and some even offered specific diagnoses, including schizophrenia and

Only 27 percent of the respondents said Mr. Goldwater was mentally fit, and 23 percent said they didn't know enough about him to make a judgment.