

The Delray Democrat

Death of Baghdadi - Trump Turns Victory into Loss¹

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President Trump authorized a successful raid that resulted in ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi exploding himself rather than be captured. Baghdadi was among the world's most dangerous and evil individuals and his death makes us all a little safer. Trump could have basked in a rare success and a real moment of unity. Instead, he took victory and created defeat. As a veteran who strongly supports the targeting of such insidious terrorists, I was appalled by the President's 50 minute extremely unprofessional presser in which he revealed classified information, denigrated our allies, and offered gratuitous, false partisan drivel.

According to Pentagon officials, the mission succeeded in spite of, not because of, President Trump. Because of Trump's ill-advised, hasty withdrawal from Syria, they had to scramble and accelerate the timetable for the mission, greatly increasing the risk of failure and more importantly the risk to our forces. More importantly, Trump inappropriately released an extensive amount of sensitive, classified information in his continuing pattern of national security violations. He reprehensibly placed our people in significant jeopardy and greatly threatened their ability to perform essential functions in the future. He also engaged in unprofessional bravado, speaking about Baghdadi crying, which he apparently made up. No sympathy for Baghdadi, but Presidential words and behavior have consequences and we should expect better.

While heaping praise on Russia, Iraq, and Turkey, Trump again denigrated our allies. All Russia, Iraq, and Turkey did was allow short flights over their territory – in other words nothing. He downplayed the role of the Kurds, whose intelligence and ground support on both ends made this mission possible. He gratuitously attacked our NATO allies for not doing enough when they have provided meaningful support for us between Iraq, Afghanistan, and ISIS. They have also suffered from many heinous ISIS attacks in their countries. Whatever the circumstances, that was absolutely not the time or place to disparage our closest friends and allies.

Former Presidents, including Bush and Obama, addressed the nation under similar circumstances, providing brief, solemn, and professional remarks. They reminded people what we were fighting for, the importance of the mission, and most importantly thanked and credited the courage and ability of the military. They represented the dignity of the office. Trump characteristically turned what could and should have been a 9-minute address into a 50-minute dishonorable circus. He sacrificed dignity, honor, and professionalism for his all too common bombast, self-aggrandizement, foolish attacks, and of course dishonesty. Trump also willfully and unjustifiably violated the law requiring that he notify Congressional leaders (Gang of 8). He turned a victory into a loss, threatened national security, and cost us trust among friends. He

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again demonstrated his complete unfitness for office.