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OFFICE OF PRESIDENT: RECLAIMING LOST POWER?



By Steve Bakke  July 2, 2018

Here's what provoked me:

Hey SB: It's me again – so bear with me. One thing we don't often discuss is whether Presidential power and authority has actually diminished over the decades. Given the description of “W” as being a “cowboy”, Obama's allegedly elegant personality, and the bombastic style of Trump, who would guess we might have slipped into a position of having a “weak Presidential standard”? It's worth thinking about. What say you? – Stefano Bachovich – obscure curmudgeon and wise political pundit – a prolific purveyor of opinions on just about everything – SB's primary “go-to guy.”

Here's my response:

Office of President: Reclaiming Lost Power?

Has Presidential power been diminished? “W” was a cowboy, Obama allegedly expressed elegant authority, and Trump is uncontrollably bombastic. So, how could someone claim the U.S. is experiencing a “weakened presidential standard”?

One theory has Presidential authority dissolving into the abyss of government agencies – slowly and without notice. Apparently, these agencies and their overgrown bureaucracies can't be controlled by anyone, even though they are technically part of the Executive Branch which reports to the President.

Was Obama attempting to overcome this diminished power and influence when he employed executive orders to advance his agenda? He created DACA beneficiaries, made a nuclear weapons agreement with Iran, and entered the faux Paris Climate Accord – all without the Congressional approval required for permanence, certain Constitutionality, and to carry the force of law.

Trump used his executive authority to cancel those potentially invalid orders and issued his own – the temporary immigrant travel moratorium. Low-and-behold, SCOTUS found Trump's actions to be within his Constitutional authority. That was a big win for Trump personally, and perhaps for presidential power and authority in general.

Is Trump's “rough and tumble, bully pulpit style” his unique attempt to return power to a diminished Office of the Presidency? Perhaps so.