

The Age of Mediocrity Supremacy



By Steven Yates

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“One thing that every late-stage ruling class has in common is a high tolerance for mediocrity. Standards decline, the edges fray, but nobody in charge seems to notice. They’re happy in their sinecures and getting richer. In a culture like this, there’s no penalty for being wrong. The talentless prosper, rising inexorably toward positions of greater power, and breaking things along the way.” —Tucker Carlson, *Ship of Fools* (2018), p. 83.

Mediocrity supremacy? Why not? In this age of paranoia about “supremacies,” this one is real.

Carlson settles on author and arch-warmonger, *Washington Post* columnist, and Council on Foreign Relations member Max Boot as his primary example.

Boot has defended every ill-advised foreign war of the past 20 years, and then some. He’s promoted ventures that even the pro-war Bush and Obama administrations 2001–2016 weren’t eager to pursue. He didn’t just favor launching the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq following 9/11, but went on to urge invasions of Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Pakistan, North Korea, and Ukraine; probably more.

In other words, this lunatic would have Americans fighting wars on a dozen fronts at once, saying we have the money, the

weaponry, and the manpower.

I couldn't turn up evidence Boot has ever been on a battlefield.* He's an academic type, with degrees from Berkeley (1991) and Yale (1992); and past tenure at superelite outfits like the CFR.

I've not seen anything Boot has written this month, but I'm sure he's salivating at the mouth over the prospects of bombing Gaza into a new Stone Age.

Mainstream corporate media loves him, of course. This is evidenced by his regular columns in the *über*-Establishment *Washington Post*. He was hired there in 2018, doubtless paid an income that vastly exceeds anything your present humble narrator can ever expect. He once wrote a column entitled "What the Heck is a Neocon?" which appeared in several "conservative" publications (*Wall Street Journal*, *National Review*) shortly after 9/11. How intellectually dishonest do you have to be to write something with that title, having simultaneously penned "The Case for American Empire" (*Weekly Standard*, October, 2001)?

Boot is just one example, though, the one Carlson singled out to begin his chapter, on how America's ruling elites embraced the U.S. war machine to the point where the Republican and Democrat Party Establishments' foreign policies were virtually indistinguishable (as they'd become indistinguishable on trade policy and monetary policy).

The Republicans in the House surely qualify as mediocrities. It took them four tries to settle on Mike Johnson as Speaker; his and other names floated after the candidacies of Steve Scalise and Jim Jordan crashed and burned are practically unknown outside their districts. Kevin McCarthy was a mediocrity. Scalise and Jordan might have been better choices. Who knows? The latter is pro Trump, and that killed his support from TDS types in both parties.

House Republicans doubtless went with Johnson out of desperation! At least he's said to be a conservative!

How can I deride all these people as mediocrities with such confidence? Because that's pretty much all you have in today's Asylum on the Potomac. The last *statesman* to grace Congress retired in 2013. That was Dr. Ron Paul.

The present Republican Party's critics, including some of its own (think Liz Cheney), are trying to blame Donald Trump for their recent woes.

This would be mediocrity supremacist criticism.

Had there not been a sense of suffocating mediocrity throughout the political Establishment – both parties, going back at least two decades – there wouldn't have been a Trump presidency.

In a system where there are actual statesmen who aren't simply ignored (as Dr. Paul was), where competence and beneficence are core values, a complete outsider with no previous political experience wouldn't have gotten to first base. Voters would not have supported him. The Hollywood Access tape, moreover, might actually have doomed his candidacy.

But as was said when Bill Clinton was the target, we weren't electing a saint. Funny how serious personal flaws (some of them involving *proven* abusive treatment of women) don't seem to matter when a Democrat is in the White House. But that's not my subject today.

This is an age of mediocrity supremacy. Mediocrity is supreme in the Asylum on the Potomac. Not merely accepted but *expected*.

You could probably get elected to office today if you have money and connections and *aren't* mediocre, but your ability to get things done and advance would be strictly limited.

One of the characteristics of mediocrity supremacy is promotion of its own based on personal networks, not real accomplishment. What, after all, did Joe Biden really accomplish in all his years in Congress? We know what he's done since January 21, 2021!

Mediocrity supremacy screws up everything it touches.

One way to recognize it is to see how those in its grip blame others for their failings, or for the failings of those under their wing. For example, woke academics (academia being another haven of mediocrity supremacy!) blame racism / *white* supremacy for black teenagers' leaving high school unable to do basic arithmetic.

Math is now racist!

Blaming Trump for the present predicament in the Republican Party is a much larger-scale example.

Or for the present divisions, in a country whose Establishment:

(1) – spent a quarter century outsourcing its manufacturing base to cheap labor countries (especially Communist China) so its corporations could get richer;

(2) – opened its borders for cheap labor (Republicans, corporations again) and votes (far left Democrats) while

(3) – it claimed it was fighting a “war on terror” (think a minute about squaring that circle); moreover, it

(4) – has almost destroyed the value of its currency through money printing, causing massive inflation; all the while

(5) – waging wars in Afghanistan (utter disaster) and Iraq (utter disaster), sending hundreds of millions to Ukraine (ongoing disaster) and now promoting the same for Israel (a disaster unfolding as I write).

Another way of recognizing mediocrity supremacy is the mediocre's lack of basic reasoning skills.

Recognize how global elite dominance of as much of the world as possible through central banks, other financial institutions and networks, their capacity to control money flows more broadly, as well as construct official narratives through media corporations they own and control, and you're a *conspiracy theorist*.

Criticize the prevailing narrative that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was "unprovoked," and you're a *cheerleader for Putin* (or some equivalent).

Criticize the narrative shaping up in the post October 7 Middle East, and you're *anti-Semitic*.

Criticize modern materialism – which I am one of the very few who are doing – and you're promoting "Christian Talibanism" (or something like that).

It's *shoddy reasoning* to attribute malicious intent, mental aberration, or simple ignorance, to those who refuse to get on board with more saber-rattling, more money printing, more money thrown down overseas bottomless wells, more condemnation of "white supremacy" (if it really exists, *show me where*, outside a handful of enclaves of a few hundred or so remaining KKK-type outcasts who aren't even allowed to meet in the local Denny's).

I once taught university-level courses in deductive logic. Supposedly, such courses are still taught. Evidently the modules on fallacies are falling on deaf ears.

Our political-economic ruling elites are not motivated to think in such terms. They are well on the way to having the power they crave. They hate Trump because he can't be controlled. They have their trained foot soldiers in the legal system. The ruling elites are terrified that next year he'll

manage to claw his way back into the White House.

Hence all the hysterics about how he's a "threat to democracy." As what Peter Turchin** calls a counter-elite, he's a threat to *them*.

No one ever said Trump was perfect, or even the ideal person to carry the torch of counter-elitism.

It may be that he's a mirror of sorts, held up and revealing our visible political class and its mass media foot soldiers to themselves. They don't dare look in that mirror!

Trump probably did arrange to have hush money sent to buy the silence of a porn star with whom he had a one-night stand, which is kind of uncouth (but not illegal!). Given our culture's fascination with sex, is the rise of someone who would do this really all that surprising?

Did he inflate the value of his New York properties? I don't know. Maybe. Deciding those matters is well outside my areas of expertise. But one thing is for sure: the Democrat lawyer going after him promised her constituents that she would "get Trump." Think about that.

Given that Dr. Paul was "too intellectual" for our mediocre world, we've had to take what that world delivered. It delivered Trump, who galvanized those conscious of (1) through (5) above, and also of one other thing Trumpism threatens: the *diversity-is-our-strength* mantra.

Did he call on his supporters to riot at the Capitol and "overturn a free and fair election" on January 6, 2021. I've written enough about this in the past that I hope I don't need to belabor the issue. What might be useful to add to previous discussions, though, is that increasing distrust of elections coming from counter-elites is something we might expect in a mediocrity-supremacist political economy.

Mediocrity supremacy is baked into our New Normal.

Sadly, it's also baked into the mindsets of a lot of voters, who would have rioted *en mass* by now at all the money our political class has sent to Ukraine, given how the rising cost of living in the U.S. is pricing Americans out of their homes – literally!

Cui bono? Who benefits? That's always the question.

The *global* ruling elites in (and atop) the world's central banks are not mediocre. They've very smart and very capable, to have planned out the decades-long strategy mapped out in [*The Great Taking*](#) which I discussed [last week](#). They understand the incentives to which most people respond, and will doubtless have a range of freebies and other goodies in place for the early adopters of CBDC, which heralds total control and loss of financial privacy.

They understand, finally, that keeping “the masses” as insouciant and distracted as possible will further instituting a *techno-feudalist* political economy in which there are global superelites, national elites, and technocrat administrators; but within which counter-elites will no longer be tolerated.

Nor will there be a middle class. Just privileged rulers and permanently cash-strapped serfs.

*In fairness, neither has your humble narrator. But your humble narrator has not championed destructive wars of choice in foreign nations none of which is a genuine threat to legitimate U.S. interests.

**Turchin's book *End Times: Elites, Counter-Elites, and the Path of Political Disintegration* (Penguin Press) is arguably the second most important book of the year, after *The Great Taking* by David Rogers Webb.

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My cosmic horror novel *The Shadow Over Sarnath* is due out on October 31. For details, stay tuned.