

# References for Rational Inquirer

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### PAGE 2 SHORT TAKES

#### Text



#### **Surrounded himself with sympathetic to Russia**

Revelations that Senior Advisor Jared Kushner is a point of focus in the FBI's Russia investigation and that FBI Director James Comey was fired to ease the "pressure" of the Congressional probe could at some point result in more calls for Trump's impeachment. (Newsweek) [1]

#### **"Reveal tax returns or forget reelection"**

64 percent of self-identified Republicans say the president should release his tax filings. (Politico) [2] Bills in Democrat-controlled states, including New York and California that would require tax returns to be disclosed by all candidates in the general election are likely to be signed before the next presidential election. (ThinkProgress) [3]

#### **Approval Falls to 40%**

The latest poll isn't the first to find white working class voters and Republicans have begun to jump off the Trump train just four months into its planned four-year trip. A Reuters/Ipsos poll last week found disapproval of Trump among Republicans jumped 7 percentage points to 23 percent. A Quinnipiac University survey this month found support among whites without a college degree had dropped 10 percentage points in just one month to 47 percent. (Newsweek) [4]

#### **Republicans Turning Against Trump**

Republican Senators calling for an independent investigation: Susan Collins (Maine), Lindsey Graham (S.C.), Dean Heller (Nev.), John McCain (Ariz.), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska)...plus 10 members of the house. (Washington Post) [5]

#### **Voters blasting Republicans over healthcare**

New Jersey representative Tom MacArthur took a beating during his mid-May town-hall after helping to pass the GOP health-care bill. "You have been the single greatest threat to my family in the entire world. You are the reason I stay up at night," one constituent told him amidst a cacophony of boos, jeers, and deprecatory chants. When admonished for be disrespectful, another voter asked "Can I be disrespectful on behalf of all the people you're going to kill?" When one attendee asked people to stand if they had a preexisting condition, nearly everyone in the room rose. (The Atlantic) [6]

#### **World leaders no longer taking U.S. seriously**

After the U.S. president signaled his willingness to withdraw from America's traditional role in European affairs, German Chancellor Angela Merkel openly speculated about a future for Europe without U.S. leadership. "The times when Europe could rely solely on others is somewhat in the past," she said at a political rally. "...Europe must take its fate into its own hands." (U.S. News & World Report) [7]

### **Qualified professionals shun White House posts**

Donald Trump is struggling to find new staff to work for him because everyone thinks he is “crazy”, said Mr Steele, who served as chairman of the Republican National Committee between 2009 and 2011. Potential White House employees are hard to find because “The talent pool is shrinking, because who wants to sign up for crazy?” (The Independent) [8]

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## PAGE THREE: WAFLING TRUMP DISMAYS SWING VOTERS

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### Text

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Many moderate voters, while not thrilled with Trump's election, nonetheless hoped that he might break the Washington log jam and solve some long-festered national problems. At the end of the first 100 days, however, those hopes are fading. In swing counties across the nation, voters who gloated over Trump's win are experiencing a steadily humbling as the President lumbers between legislative defeats, ethical blunders, and ill-informed statements. [1]

Even staunch conservative Republicans in Congress are now distancing themselves from the new President who appears increasingly disoriented in the halls of power. Their former zeal to dismantle long-standing Federal institutions melted in the face of main-street voters who belatedly realized that they in fact rely upon those very same programs. [2] The outlook for the next 100 days portends further tarnish on the luster of the man who believed that healthcare reform would be easy and that international conundrums could be resolved with deft deal making and an occasional bomb.

First, the business community continues to file and strengthen law suits against Trump for conflicts of interest and unfair competition. [3] Party affiliation does not matter when a proprietor decides it is wrong for those in power to use their position as advantage to garner customers and to carve out sweetheart deals for their goods overseas. [4]

Second, investigations into Russian meddling in the 2016 election are gathering steam and portend to reveal his surprise election was due to more than just bad polling. Two former directors of national intelligence agencies and a former attorney general will be testifying before Congress in early May. [5] The fact that the FBI was able to get a FISA warrant to track Trump's prior foreign-policy advisor, Carter Page, signals that investigators and courts believe the currently unverified dossier from British intelligence has in fact substantive credibility. [6] More ominous yet is the fact that former national security adviser Michael Flynn has offered to testify against the administration in exchange for immunity. [7]

Perhaps most chilling to the feuding White House team, however, is the fact that middle America is growing increasingly wary of a man who so easily abandons his campaign promises. Apparently, Trump the president does not hold the same values as Trump the candidate. China is no longer a "currency manipulator," NATO is no longer "obsolete," Janet Yellen now has his "full respect," and the Export-Import Bank is actually a "very good thing." [8] He now uses American power to intervene in Syria, gainsaying his pre-election positions to put American first.

This waffling on issues does not inspire confidence on Main Street. Whereas 12 out of 20 Americans believed Trump keeps his promises in February, the number has now fallen to 9. [9] Moreover, the oscillations on policy are clearly undermining his ability to deliver. In the past three months, satisfaction with way things are going in the U.S. has fallen to 32%, and dissatisfaction with his poor leadership has nearly doubled. [10]

Middle American is beginning to see through the Trump veneer to glimpse someone who has other priorities than the people's business. Independent, non-partisan watchdogs point out that Trump has placed his business holdings in a revocable trust run by his children, flaunting a requirement for severing financial interests that all but the most besotted partisans demand.

Trump's team stated in January that "he wants there to be no doubt in the minds of the American public that he is completely isolating himself from his business interests." However, in February we learned that Trump's recent revision to his trust allow him to quietly withdraw profits and principal from his businesses. [11]

Moderate voters experienced some unease when the President refused to release his tax returns, fatuously citing an audit by the IRS—an agency he now fully controls. Their alarm jumped even further when Trump announced the White House will no longer publish its visitor's log, forcing the public into the dark concerning who has lobbying the administration. [12]

Perhaps the icing on a “most beautiful piece of chocolate cake” came when the public learned shortly after President Xi visited Mar-a-Lago that Trump’s daughter had been speedily granted trademark protection in China for her line of handbags, jewelry and spa services. [13]

In the midst of all this seemingly self-serving behavior, voters in the battleground states still wait for the President to honor his pledge and restore jobs to their communities. In the face of the Trump family’s continuing prosperity while ostensibly working as public servants, the voters in the middle are starting to grumble “Perhaps we’ve been played for fools.”

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