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DEFENDING THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS GUARANTEES THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE



THERE HAS never been a U.S. president like Donald Trump. A political neophyte, he nevertheless correctly read the mood of enough of the American people to be able to introduce the nation to a new form of governance; one that relies on invective,

character assassination and late-night Twitter rants.

He was also astute enough to realize that the American public had in the main lost trust in the veracity of their media news sources. The concept of turning news into a commercial 24-hour commodity increasingly requires more opinion than facts, with ‘experts’ frequently selected for their political bias rather than meaningful input. Long gone are the days when Walter Cronkite would sign off with the line, “And that’s the way it is” and people would believe him.

The way it is with Trump is that facts are a commodity to be molded into the most convenient form to suit present requirements, frequently to be reversed to meet more pressing needs at a later date; for as a narcissist, the truth is what Trump determines it to be at any given time, a fact he has all but admitted on occasions. When you have sycophant supporters willing to peddle the current line, plus compliant social media where thumbs are engaged before brain, it is easy to spread a veil of falsehood and innuendo.

In the main I have withheld comment on the performance of America’s 45th president, but his address to the national convention of Veterans of Foreign Wars in Kansas City, on July 24th, went beyond the pale. What should have been a non-political address honoring those who had actually put their lives on the line for their country – Trump never did of course – was turned into a campaign-style speech that lauded Trump’s achievements while castigating the Democrats and the media.

It was not so much that he once more insulted



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the media by calling them ‘Fake News’, but more the audience to whom these remarks were addressed. Forget the fact that many present did applaud, for the whole event had

been pre-programmed to be conducted in an emotional campaign-like atmosphere.

Instead, very soberly think of what Trump was actually telling each and every veteran to do. Believe me and take no notice of what the media says, for that’s fake news; the rights to freedom, including the First Amendment rights, that you and your comrades fought and even died for, they’re not important, fake news; the stories that the likes of Ernest Hemingway, Ed Murrow, Martha Gelhorn, Tom Brokaw, Morley Safer, Kate Webb and many, many more reported from the front lines in wars of the past century, all fake news; it’s not true that journalists are still being killed from Afghanistan to Iraq and countless other trouble spots across the globe while documenting the terror of conflict, fake news.

I beg to differ. While the media may at times get a story wrong, there’s no hidden agenda, just genuine error in trying to exercise First Amendment rights. For freedom of the press is enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and must be vigorously defended from attacks by those who would seek to silence the voice of the people. For a free press guarantees the freedom of expression for all. 