Trump: A Master of Political Communications

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Donald Trump is a truly unique figure. The far-right demagogue who finds himself America's 47th President and Leader of the Free World has spent his return to office making sweeping reforms, cutting thousands of governmental staff and bulldozing anything that stands in his way, human or otherwise. Armed with his right-hand man Elon Musk and his control of the app-formerly-known-as-Twitter, the disinformation age is upon us, with fake news the order of the day, and the federal government pumping out misleading and downright false fallacies at will. Trump has always made a space for himself to do exactly as he wishes and has persuaded millions of Americans to follow at his every word. Love him or hate him, he may be the political communicator of our age.

I don't say this lightly; trust me, giving Donald Trump any single scrap of praise hurts my soul, but it is undeniably true. Trump has taken the world's third largest population and largest economy in a sweeping campaign on a platform of lies and disinformation. But shockingly, this comes with overwhelming evidence against many of the things Trump has claimed, and at a time in history where access to information is near limitless. A simple search can often disprove much of what the President claims, but millions flock to him regardless.

This is troubling, yes, but is also something we all must grit our teeth and respect. With everything humankind has ever known in the palm of our hand, millions were, and continue to be, force-fed fantasy and fiction, all in the name of the MAGA cause. Donald Trump, and his campaign team, have found a way to crack through the fact-checking and accountability measures that for so long have restrained world leaders to pump out whatever it is the President wants to project, for people across the world to simply accept, with real-world consequences for nations and individuals as a result.

So how has he achieved this? First of all, we must accept that Trump is an isolated, but not unique case. Many far-right figures across the world are increasingly using the rise of dis- and mis-information, if not utilising it directly, to play with the truth and manipulate the desires and fears of their electorates. Trump does have the increased power of social media, through both Truth Social and Elon Musk's X, but with Musk meddling ever-more directly in international political affairs, most notably with Alternative für Deutschland and Reform UK, it's only a matter of time until more countries possess control of the digital space.

But Trump has also managed to position himself as the anti-establishment figure, one on a crusade for the rights of ordinary Americans and putting his country first, unlike previous figures, as he posits. The man who has run a milieu of businesses, is an increasingly rich figure and has always taken even a passive



interest into the political dealings of his country (usually to find legal loopholes), Donald Trump is a central tenet to the exact establishment he so fervently fights against. Yet, because he is able to pivot himself as the non-political figure, he is treated more favourably than long-term politicians, such as Hilary Clinton and Kamala Harris.

Finally, Trump is only able to function how he does because of the furore he creates within the media and political environments whenever he speaks. Whenever he creates any form of policy, releases his latest bombshell tweet or gives his opinion on any subject he deems interesting this hour, the media talk; the public talk; we talk – we're doing it here. And in all the chaos that is generated, Trump continues to do whatever he wants to, under the smokescreen that we all create for ourselves by focusing selectively on what he does. This effect continues through our own politics as well; consider how many times since his re-election the news cycle has been pivoted off-kilter, and away from local or national issues, to debate or discuss whatever the President is doing.

This all culminates into Trump's true genius – the world talks about him, but not about what he is doing. Combine this with his arms-length domination of a huge range of social media platforms, the ability to produce endless propaganda, use of mis- and dis-information, and his general disposition of a lack of care about any of the consequences, and you create what we see now. Trump maintains near-limitless influence over his country and the countries of others, as world leaders scramble to find a suitable response to his tirades.

The next four years will be a rollercoaster, with Trump's policies set to become even more harmful. But despite everything he does and says, he will forever remain a prime example of effective political communication, and what complete nonsense can achieve in the right conditions.