

"Incredible," and "Unbelievable," Indeed.
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Words are a funny thing; they sometimes morph from one meaning to its opposite over time, as we can see today. President Trump's limited vocabulary favors "incredible" and "unbelievable" every time he means "wonderful." Knowing how untrue most of his utterances are, I always take his "unbelievable" and "Incredible" literally: "not believable" and "not credible."

Among things not believable and not credible are his promotion of conspiracy theories: that the Coronavirus was created in a Chinese laboratory; that one experimental drug should be widely used (unfortunately, it can kill); and repeatedly calling the 1918 flu pandemic the "Incredible 1917 Flu Pandemic."

Numbers, which he boasted are his strong suit as a "businessman," fall into the incredible and unbelievable category. His off-the-cuff spouting of numbers is usually wrong, or at best, a moving target. Take the pandemic death toll, for example: is it really shrinking away and will soon just miraculously be gone?

His base of true believers shares a credulity and lack of critical thinking with other groups around the world. For example, when an Egyptian (woman) doctor moved into her aunt's empty apartment so that she could shelter in place and not expose her elderly parents, neighbors gathered to threaten her life. They were convinced that she had moved there to make them sick.

While our more enlightened fellow citizens erupt into evening cheers for our heroic health workers, in Egypt, India, the Philippines, Mexico, and elsewhere, mobs choose instead to attack, intimidate, and beat up doctors and nurses because of their work.

While the World Health Organization urges protecting the wellbeing and safety of the health workers, this plea does not remedy the source of the problem: fearful, mistrustful, and ignorant mobs who much prefer the colorful conspiracy theories provided by their clerics or their leaders. Poor education systems, suspicion of educated officials (deep state), and the profoundly stupid do not have "better angels."

In excellent reporting by Samy Magdy and Emil Schmall of the Associated Press, we learn of a mob in India stoning and screaming insults at a group of five health workers wearing full protective gear, attempting to contact and quarantine the infected. Also, in India, another mob stoned a funeral procession mourning a neurologist who had died while treating the sick.

In Afghanistan, a favorite conspiracy theory is that the US and China created the virus to deliberately reduce the world population. Ignoramuses later attacked the emergency unit of a hospital where a now dead doctor had worked.

I don't expect much better from the uneducated people in the countries mentioned above. But I do expect better from our well fed, at least high school-educated Americans. It is "incredible" that a young woman, interviewed at a newly reopened bar, sat there with a crowd of others (no distance), served by employees with no face masks, and professed doubt that the virus really exists. She believed that it was a hoax created by people who wanted to get rid of Trump, a conspiracy theory promoted by Trump's son, Eric.

It is "unbelievable" that mobs of demonstrators "believed" their president that they should demand "freedom" instead of respecting medical authorities. Apparently they forget that freedom must be accompanied by responsibility. Their freedom shouldn't impinge on others? wish to survive.

The decision to reopen the economy and end the shelter-at-home rules should be thoughtful, debated by informed leadership, and begun with caution. That is what intelligent people do in a democratic society. But intelligence is suspect among the demonstrators. They believe the unbelievable propaganda that only their leader, the president, is credible and the over-educated elites are conspiring against them.

What will happen when their scofflaw president gets the Coronavirus himself, and infects everyone around him because wearing a face mask is not "his look," and interferes with his elaborate hair comb-over?

If the ignorant get rid of the educated elites, who will treat them when they are

sick? Will a fellow ignoramus do their brain surgery? Who will teach their children to read and think? Who will invent the newest technologies that they now cannot do without?

Unbelievable and Incredible, isn't it?

686 words

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