

A Conversation with JONAH GOLDBERG

Jonah Goldberg is a senior editor at *National Review* and a best-selling author and political commentator. In this conversation, Goldberg and Kristol reflect on Trump's candidacy and its meaning for conservatism and the Republican Party. Goldberg also discusses his best-selling book *Liberal Fascism* (2008) and how subsequent events, including Trump's campaign, have affected his thinking. Finally, Goldberg recommends a few books and essays that played an important role in his political education.

On the “Trump non-sequitur”, Goldberg says: I am really sympathetic [to] most of the arguments for Trump, until you get to the “and therefore Trump” part. So if it’s “oh, we need to shake up the beltway elite.” Yes, absolutely. “Let’s talk more about national sovereignty.” Sure, absolutely. “We need to break out of this nostalgic 1981 Reaganite tax reform model.” Yes. And then they say “and therefore we have to vote for Donald Trump.” I say: “are you high?”.

On Obama and Trump, Goldberg says: Obama was a classic “charismatic” leader, on whom a diverse group of people could all project their expectations. I think that is also true of Trump.

On what comes next, Goldberg says: I think there’s a significant silver lining to Trump. Sometimes you have to burn the village to save it. If Trump is the nominee and he loses, what we will have seen is a bubble. When you have a bubble in the private sector, the smart money goes to quality. If and when the bubble bursts, people are going to be looking around for people who didn’t lose their heads, and who have serious public policy proposals that they can bring to bear...The people who stuck to arguments and the importance of character will be better equipped [for what comes next].

On “liberal fascism,” Goldberg says: There’s this tendency in liberalism to idealize what William James called the “moral equivalent of war.” Once you start listening for it, it is everywhere in the rhetoric and the writing of American liberalism going back one hundred years. FDR explicitly said that we’re going to take the war powers that Wilson used to fight the Great Depression...[Progressives] liked this idea that war would cause regimentation...There’s this technocratic, authoritarian tendency. They don’t like war, but they like everything else about war. That is the liberal fascist tendency.

Chapters in JONAH GOLDBERG Conversation

[On Trump and Conservatism](#)

[Liberal Fascism Revisited](#)

[Liberalism, Conservatism, and 2016](#)

[Suggested Reading](#)

