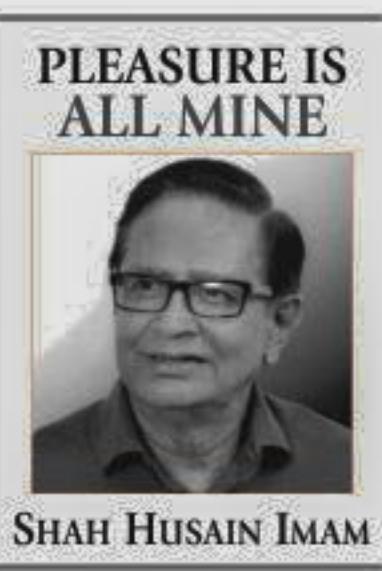


# Trump's 100 days in western media



**Trump's best asset seems to be his unpredictability. He literally appears to thrive on conflict and unpredictability using these to a point of brinkmanship, but short of crossing the line, ends up being conciliatory.**

**D**ONALD Trump made his preference clear as to whose company he would keep on the celebratory night marking his first 100 days in office. He said he wanted to remain a hundred miles away from the press corps dinner in Washington, left to counselling by a White House representative, preferring instead to attend a celebrative gathering of his loyalists.

Even though he seldom misses an opportunity to grill the press—he depends heavily on social media, Twitter to be precise, to keep his ties warm with his constituency—the media for its part is obliged to be reporting and commenting on what's happening. That is its professional duty, and if in the process it is facilitating informed judgment it is truly playing its role as the Fourth Estate.

That said, quite easily, the US president has been the most named leader, both in the US and globally, in his first 100 days which came to a close at the end of last month. For all his glib talk and 180-degree somersaults, or maybe because of them, he remains the focal point of attention. This is not so much because the US is the mightiest military power or the biggest market in the world as it is for the unconventionality of his presidency.

There is a method in his madness though. This is dawning now on keen observers of the office of the US presidency. He appears to be deliberately projecting an anti-hero image to pro-establishment status quo protagonists as it resonates with the populist impulse for change.

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Here are some examples of his changing tacks. He springs surprises

every now and then as purely tactical overtures to keep the world guessing about his next move. He says now he is ready for talks with his sabre-rattling nemesis, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, under what he termed "right circumstances". After having given Jong-un a free run with his missile launches (some aborted en route) and aligned forces on North Korean borders and in the adjacent seas courtesy of South

return" by conducting another nuclear test. Jong-un paid no heed to the cautionary words of Beijing, his one-time mentor. So what if the defiant young man on China's backyard gets punished!

An editorial in the *Global Times*, regarded as a mouthpiece for China's ruling Communist Party, however said, Beijing was hoping for a peaceful outcome but had "very limited

and Trump under clouds of controversy centred on Moscow's alleged interference in US presidential polls, both have been in touch to say that endless bombing in Syria should be brought to a stop.

The *Guardian* in an article by Tom Engelhardt on April 26 presented what it called the Trump doctrine "forever war". Its elaborations make a highly interesting, if a worrisome, reading! The

difference, a tremendous difference—a hyperbolic repetition of phrases that is so typical of the US president.

Then you get to hear this: "These days from Syria to Afghanistan, the Koreans to Somalia, Yemen to Iraq, it's easy enough to see Commander-in-Chief Donald Trump as something new under the sun."

The *Guardian* article commented, "Trump's enthusiasm for war is the logical end-point of a grim process started years ago by his predecessors in the White House."

According to an article on Trump's first 100 days published in *The Independent*, history professor Peter Shulman described a White House release boasting the US president's achievements in his first 100 days in office as "catastrophically wrong". Trump claimed to have signed more executive orders than the renowned 32nd President Franklin D Roosevelt. The latter had signed, the White House release claimed, only nine executive orders. Actually Roosevelt signed 99 orders of which nine were significant, substantive and forward-looking. Critics argue if the same measures are applied to the raft of measures signed by Trump then that will expose a number of pretty vindictive and mundane measures, their backlash being poised to linger.

But one claim made in the White House press release merits closer examination for corroboration. This concerns an assertion that the president "has done more to stop the government from interfering in the lives of Americans in his first 100 days than any other President in history".

His first 100 days, one hopes, do not leave a foretaste of the negativities to come but a positive tenor set for the rest of his tenure based on the reality checks he has undergone in a self-learning process to be wiser. "By God, he is in it now, up to his neck" and must start delivering good, effective, constructive and just governance.



Korea and Japan (he even met Philippine President Duterte) Trump leveraged what may constitute "right circumstances" for a dialogue. And Trump did not forget to massage Jong-un's ego with praise for his stand-alone courage reflecting a death wish like that of Saddam Hussein or Gaddafi which ultimately was their undoing.

Trump's softer diplomacy followed China's chilling warning to North Korea not to go past "the point of no

influence on the entire situation." The US is beholden to China by a massive USD 3 trillion worth of debts to Beijing and Trump has signalled opting out of a trade war with China. Alongside, Beijing may have earned the ire of South Korea because of Trump's comment following his meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping that historically the peninsula was part of China.

After weeks of silence between Putin

Massive Ordinance Air Blast (MOAB), nicknamed the "mother of all bombs" reportedly struck caves used by ISIS in Nangarhar province in Afghanistan. Viewing this on Fox News, Trump yelled 'thrilling' and called it a blast, an escalation, or just call it "the age of Trump".

"If you look at what happened in the last eight weeks and compare that really with what happened over the last eight years, you will see a tremendous

difference, a tremendous difference—a hyperbolic repetition of phrases that is so typical of the US president.

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## PROJECT SYNDICATE

# Press freedom isn't free

DANFORTH AUSTIN & BARBARA FRYE

**T**URKEY'S president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, is cracking down on Turkish civil society following the failed coup in July. Beyond purging thousands of military officers, judges, and educators, the government has issued arrest warrants for dozens of journalists, and shuttered more than 100 news agencies, publications, and radio and television stations.

The crackdown in Turkey is a major story, and it should make us appreciate the countless unsung reporters and editors worldwide who struggle every day to practise good journalism, no matter the stakes.

Two such journalists are Jean-Chrysostome Kijana and Wendy Funes. Kijana, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), edits and oversees eastern Congo's first online newspaper, where he reports on the near-enslavement of the region's miners and the violence of an ongoing insurgency. Funes, for her part, reports on human rights abuses, security, and corruption in Honduras – issues that the country's beleaguered press often avoids.

According to Freedom House, 2015 was the worst year for press freedom in over a decade. It estimates that only 13 percent of the world's population lives in countries "where coverage of political news is robust, the safety of journalists is guaranteed, state intrusion in media affairs is minimal, and the press is not subject to onerous legal or economic pressures."

It's a different story for the other 87 percent of the world's population. In some countries, autocratic regimes will simply jail or assassinate reporters who get too nosy. In others, governments have implemented legal and economic hurdles for honest, unfettered reporting, making the jobs of journalists like

address the other major hurdle for journalists around the world: money. Many reporters and investigators in oppressive settings are affiliated with news outlets that simply don't have the funds to support them. To carry out their dangerous and important work, these journalists need independence,

how corruption in Honduras is likely perpetuating an epidemic of violence against women. Ruslan Myatiev, the editor of *Alternative Turkmenistan News*, which is based in the Netherlands but reports on Turkmenistan, could provide an independent venue for more journalists to report from one of

lower-profile journalists working in poorer countries have fewer options. Instead, those of us who care about the fate of independent journalism should do our part to support it, by any means. One way is through crowdfunding platforms like Press Start, with which we are both affiliated. Press Start connects funders in rich countries directly to vetted, independent journalists in poor countries, starting with Armenia, the Congo, Honduras, Lebanon, and Macedonia.

The crowdfunding model is just one option, and by experimenting with it, we hope to inspire others to bring new ideas to the table. No single funding solution is going to save independent journalism. We need many new ideas to account for new technologies, new business models, and new threats to press freedom. We can all agree, however, that a free press is a prerequisite for functioning democracy, and that diligent, fearless reporting costs money: there are no shortcuts to exposing corruption and social injustice.

Many of the world's governments are stamping out press freedom. Journalists who report in these settings risk their lives and livelihoods to carry out their work. The least we can do is ensure that they don't have to worry about paying for it, too.

**No single funding solution is going to save independent journalism. We need many new ideas to account for new technologies, new business models, and new threats to press freedom.**



Kijana and Funes all the more difficult. Non-governmental organisations such as Reporters Without Borders and the Committee to Protect Journalists have championed the cause of threatened and imprisoned journalists for years. But this good work doesn't

which means they need funding with no strings attached. With funding, Kijana could tell the story of how mineral mining, the DRC's largest export industry, is likely fuelling the bloodletting in eastern Congo; and Funes could investigate

the world's most closed societies. These are just a few examples among many. And while major media organisations experiment with subscriber paywalls, membership programmes, and sponsored content to raise revenue and maintain newsrooms,

Danforth Austin is a former vice president of *The Wall Street Journal* and a member of the Press Start advisory board. Barbara Frye is Lead Editor of Press Start.

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## A WORD A DAY

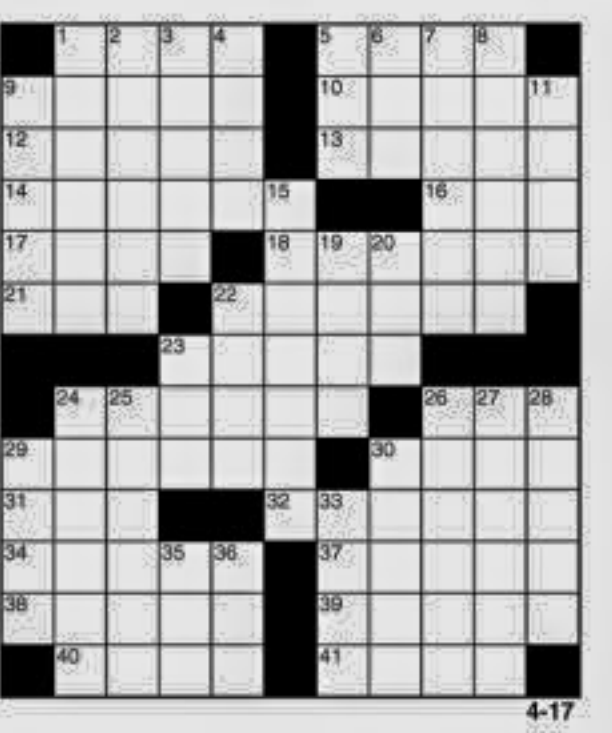


**DUENDE**  
Noun (Spanish)

A heightened state of emotion, expression and authenticity as a physical/emotional response to art.

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Paunch
  - 5 School subject
  - 9 A+, for one
  - 10 Accepted truth
  - 12 Arrested
  - 13 W. Va. neighbor
  - 14 Make cryptograms
  - 16 Barracks bed
  - 17 High cards
  - 18 Science study
  - 21 Danson of "The Good Place"
  - 22 Throws away
  - 23 Dutch bloom
  - 24 High-protein grain
  - 26 Wager
  - 29 Coercion
  - 30 In need of a mas-
- DOWN**
- 1 Where the Loire flows
  - 2 Pierced
  - 3 Baja "Bye!"
  - 4 Flex
  - 5 Atlas page
  - 6 Cut drastically
  - 7 Kevin Costner film
  - 8 Graduate's distinction
  - 9 Terrific
  - 11 Partner
  - 15 Surround
  - 19 Opera song
  - 20 Spigot
  - 22 Phoenix team
  - 23 Even score
  - 24 Arrow holder
  - 25 Suave
  - 26 Dance at the disco
  - 27 Gofer's job
  - 28 Prom group
  - 29 Pull along
  - 30 Prepare for surgery
  - 33 Nick Charles' wife
  - 35 Radio's Glass
  - 36 Went ahead



**YESTERDAY'S ANSWER**

SIRE BALSAM  
PLUGS ATOLL  
ELBOW NAVAL  
EBB EOS ICE  
DEEPEN INKY  
TRAPPINGS  
REAMS  
STRAPPING  
MARY ERNIES  
AHA ORE CAT  
NADAL SCORE  
IRENE SALEM  
CARTS BEDS

## BEETLE BAILEY



## by Mort Walker



## BABY BLUES



## by Kirkman & Scott

