

Trump: Opportunity Lost

✘ By *Virgil Scudder, President, [Virgil Scudder & Associates](#)*

If you're a Trump supporter who believes that America is in dire shape and that Trump can fix the problems, you probably liked the new president's inaugural address. Few others, however, are likely to find it comforting or uplifting. Isolationist in tone, it was more a campaign stump speech than the show of leadership and vision that could help unite an angry and divided nation. In short, it was divisive.

There was no reaching out to non-Trump supporters, foreign leaders, business, or the media. Suppose you were a government official sitting in Berlin, Beijing, Paris, Mexico City, Brussels, Tehran, or Tel Aviv: how would you react to these words?: "A new vision will govern our land—only America first!" That's hardly comforting to our friends, allies, and trade partners, whose friendship and cooperation he will need.



(Photo Source: Twitter)

The incoming president presented a dreary picture of the U.S. today, citing crime gangs, drug epidemics, the economy, the state of education, and "the sad depletion of our military."

Many of his points, just as in the campaign, were at odds with the facts. For one, the economy continues to improve. The housing industry is booming and auto sales are on the rise. Once again, Trump ignored the admonition of the late Sen Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) who said “everyone is entitled to his own opinion but not his own facts.”

He insulted members of Congress and former presidents seated in the audience. Trump spoke of “returning government to the people,” a slap in the face to all who now serve or have recently served. He can expect some payback for that, especially when he wants to get a bill through Congress that could give representatives problems on the home front. Members of the House are constantly aware that they face election every two years and that one or two unpopular issues can bring any one of them down. Ask Eric Cantor.

And, just as in the campaign, he made promises that will be very hard to keep such as, “We will eradicate radical Islamic terrorism from the face of the earth.” Easy to say; not so easy to do. The same is true with promises to bring back manufacturing jobs. Even a tough, no-nonsense president can’t stop job loss caused by globalization or technology.

And, even though he stayed on script, the new president couldn’t resist a bit of hyperbole: “This is an historic movement the likes of which the world has never seen before.” Talk about over-reach!

As I said in yesterday’s [CommPRO posting](#), it’s one thing to win an election and another to govern successfully. President Trump will need the trust, help, and good will of a lot of people here and around the world if he is to succeed. This was not a good start.

About the Author: Often referred to as “The Dean of Media

Trainers," Virgil is considered one of the world's foremost communication experts. In a 30-year career that has covered 26 countries on five continents, he has provided coaching and counsel to heads of some of the world's largest corporations and government leaders. Virgil is a prolific writer and speaker. His book, World Class Communication: how great CEOs win with the public, shareholders, employees, and the media, written with his son Ken, was named one of the 25 best business books of 2012. His column, In the C-Suite, appears in every quarterly issue of the Public Relations Strategist and is read by leaders of major public relations agencies and global heads of public relations of large companies. He has written or been featured in articles that have appeared in The New York Times, The International Herald Tribune, Reuters, Investors Business Daily, and numerous professional publications. Two of his speeches have been reprinted in the prestigious Vital Speeches of the Day. Prior to founding Virgil Scudder & Associates in 1990, Virgil headed the media training units of two of the world's largest public relations firms, Hill & Knowlton and Carl Byoir & Associates. Earlier, he was an award-winning news broadcaster at major radio and television networks and stations in New York City. He was a first-night Broadway drama critic for six years during that period, broadcasting reviews on NBC's all-news radio network and all-news WINS radio.