

James L. Holly, M.D.

President Trump plays chess and he changes style without announcement

By James L. Holly, MD

Opponents of President Trump are so upset because he is playing chess and they are playing checkers. Checkers is a fun game but is impossible to win unless someone makes a mistake. In checkers, there are only two kinds of pieces, while in chess there are six. Checker pieces can only move in one direction until late in the game. Chess pieces can move in many different directions and in many different ways throughout the game.

While there are numerous combinations of moves in checkers, in chess, there are 400 different positions after each player makes one move. There are 72,084 positions after each player makes two moves. There are more than nine million positions after three moves apiece. And after four moves each, there are over 288 billion different possible positions. Whether there are an infinite number of possibilities in chess is argued, but the game's complexities are obvious.

Democrats and some "Republicans in Name Only" are frustrated with President Trump because he does not even play chess the same way all of the time. The movie entitled, *Searching for Bobby Fischer*, is a true story about a young chess prodigy named, Josh, who is taught by two very different men. First, there is the sidewalk, speed player. Then there is the "chess-master" teacher. The speed player is aggressive and always attacking, moves are made in seconds and a game lasts only a minute or two. The chess master employs subtlety, stealth and strategy. The latter is more contemplative, and the former is more combative. Neither appreciates the other.

Josh's mother wants her son to be kind and compassionate; his father wants him to win at all costs. The father employs the chess master to teach his son but the boy is also attracted to the sidewalk speed teacher. When Josh competes in the national chess championship for his age group, he plays like both mentors. He first, seemingly, makes a colossal error and loses his queen. The speed chess mentor announces, "I taught him that; he is only setting his opponent up." The chess master wilts thinking the match is over. As the game develops, Josh springs the trap he had set for his opponent and takes the opponent's queen. The speed-chess mentor shouts, "There it is," as he sees the seeming disaster turned to advantage.

Now, the chess-master mentor re-engages and after several moves watches the young opponent make a move, after which the master announces, "That was a mistake." Speed ceases to be the advantage now; Josh moves from being a speed player to be an analytical player. The chess master says out loud, "You've got him, Josh. It's twelve moves away but you have him." Though Josh cannot hear him, the chess master adds, "Don't move until you see it!"

Josh studies the board and thinks, “I can’t see it.” He keeps looking until suddenly, the chest master says, “He’s got it.” Following the nature of his mother, Josh reaches his hand across the board to his opponent. The opponent asked, “What?” Josh said, “I am offering you a draw, we can share the championship.” The young prodigy knows that he has won but his opponent objects and said, “Look at the board.” Josh said, “I have, you lose, you just don’t know it yet.” Not able to “see it,” the opponent said, “Play.” After ten quick moves, the opponent realizes what Josh already knew. He has lost.

This is like President Trump, the Democrats and the “Republicans in Name Only.” As the latter two groups play checkers, which no one can win, President Trump switches back and forth, at once playing at high-speed chess like the street player, but then without announcement switching to the chess-master method, only to switch back to speed chess without announcement.

Pundits media and opponents declare the President “unstable” because they can’t keep up, or figure out what he is doing, until, like our young prodigy’s opponent, they realize that they have lost. Sometimes even those of us who now admire President Trump can be caught off guard as he switches strategies, back and forth.

Even after opposing his election until the last minute, it is a pleasure to watch President Trump work. Sometimes, he makes mistakes but quickly he makes corrections. It is my hope and expectation that in the end, he, and, thus we, will win.

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(Founder and CEO of Southeast Texas Medical Associates, LLP (SETMA, www.jameslhollymd.com), Dr. Holly is a 1973 graduate of the UT Health San Antonio Long School of Medicine, where he is an Adjunct Professor of Family and Community Medicine. In 2013, Dr. Holly was named the HIMSS Physician IT Leadership Award winner and in 2014, received the inaugural Patient- Centered Medical Home Practice Award from the Patient-Centered Primary Care Collaborative (PC-PCC). Dr. Holly writes and lectures extensively on health policy, informatics and healthcare transformation. Dr. and Mrs. Holly endowed the first Distinguished Chair in Patient- Centered Medical Home at UT Health San Antonio, and an Annual Distinguished Lectureship in PC-MH. SETMA has been visited by delegations from China, Australia and numerous universities, medical schools and practices from across the United States. In 2012, Dr. Holly received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from UT Health San Antonio, and in 2016, was named to the Long Purple Line, The Hall of Distinction, at his undergraduate school, Northwestern State University. In 2017, Dr. and Mrs. Holly were elected the first members of the Aesculapian Laureate Society at UT Health for philanthropy.)