

Trump says his ‘gut’ is more reliable than everyone else’s ‘brains’

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By [Steve Benen](#)

The *Washington Post* yesterday asked Donald Trump why he’s “skeptical” of his own administration’s National Climate Assessment. “One of the problems that a lot of people like myself – we have very high levels of intelligence, but we’re not necessarily such believers,” the president [said](#). “You look at our air and our water, and it’s right now at a record clean.”

This, of course, didn’t make any sense – I’m not at all sure what “a record clean” even means – though Trump couldn’t have cared less. In fact, in [the same interview](#), the Republican offered a peek into his broader perspective. While complaining about the Federal Reserve raising interest rates, Trump added:

“I’m doing deals, and I’m not being accommodated by the Fed. I’m not happy with the Fed. They’re making a mistake because I have a gut, and my gut tells me more sometimes than anybody else’s brain can ever tell me.”

When looking for Trump quotes that help define who he is and how he operates, one could do worse than focusing on this gem. The president seems convinced that his instincts and intuition are more valuable than evidence and reason. Indeed, he hasn’t been subtle on this point.

In July 2016, for example, Trump conceded that he doesn’t often read [because he doesn’t think he has to](#). The then-candidate [told](#) the *Washington Post* at the time that he believes he reaches the right decisions “with very little knowledge other than the knowledge I [already] had, plus the words ‘common sense,’ because I have a lot of common sense.”

The arrogance is less a problem than the willful ignorance. Genuine experts can make sensible snap judgments by leaning on their scholarship and experience, but Donald Trump is a hapless amateur whose “gut” instincts are based on little more than Fox News segments he sometimes struggles to understand.

It’d be one thing if the president, realizing that he’s in over his head, turned to subject-matter experts to help guide him through incredibly difficult challenges, but Trump does the opposite. He’s convinced himself that his “gut” tells him more than “anybody else’s brain” could ever tell him.

It’s why Trump assumes he knows more about the military than his generals, more about climate science than his administration’s climate scientists, and more about Saudi Arabia’s murder of an American journalist than the CIA.

The *Washington Post*’s Dana Milbank recently wrote [a good column](#) along these lines, explaining that from the president’s perspective, he’s a polymathic genius, surrounded by fools.

It’s why, as a practical matter, Trump has embraced an anti-knowledge posture. He’s not just uncomfortable with expertise and evidence, the president is actively hostile toward them because of the degree to which they contradict his “gut.”

It helps explain his antipathy toward fact-checkers. Why listen to reason when Trump’s innate understanding of everything already provides him with everything he wants to know?