

# OP-ED: Remembrance Of Things Current: The Disgraceful Legacy Of President Donald John Trump, A Would-Be Dictator

*(Author's Note: This is the tenth in a series of occasional political columns that I'll be writing for CommPRO.biz until Inauguration Day, January 20. Previously, I wrote 17 political columns leading up to Election Day. FYI – My first public relations job was with a political firm, where I worked on local, statewide and presidential campaigns. In this column I list a few of what I consider some of Trump's most disgraceful actions.)*

Arthur Solomon

As Donald Trump is nearing the end of his disastrous presidency, there are many actions that he will be remembered for on the national and international scenes.

Below is a sampler that should be accepted by all non-partisan Americans, as they certainly will be by non-revisionist presidential historians.

## **A Few Major Disgraceful National Actions**

- He will be remembered for his bungling of the coronavirus pandemic, which resulted in the deaths of more than 318,000 Americans as of this writing on December 21.
- He will be remembered for being the most divisive and racist president in U.S. history, making Andrew Johnson look like a boy scout.

- He will be remembered as a president who has probably lied more than all the other presidents' lies combined in our history.
- He will be remembered as a president who has caused many people to distrust our legal system.
- He will be remembered as a president who enriched himself at the expense of tax payers.
- He will be remembered as a president who ran the White House like a family employment organization.
- He will be remembered as the president who demanded complete loyalty, firing people who had different opinions.
- He will be remembered as the president whose vitriolic comments about a stolen election resulted in his supporters engaging in violent actions, including a riot in Olympia, Wash., where one person was shot, and did nothing to calm them down.
- And most of all he will be remembered as the president who attempted a coup to keep him in office.

## **A Few Major Disgraceful International Actions**

- He will be remembered as a president who cozied up to dictators.
- He will be remembered as a president who has frayed relations with our long time allies.
- He will be remembered as a president who pulled the U.S. out of the World Health Organization during the time of an international Covid-19 pandemic.
- He will be remembered as the president who said that NATO was no longer viable.
- He will be remembered as the president who scuttled an Asian compact, meant to keep China in check by pulling the U.S. out of it.
- He ignored the exposure that Russia has offered money to the Taliban for killing U.S. troops.

- He will be remembered for ignoring Russian hackings of U.S. government departments.
- He will be remembered as the president who asked Chinese President Xi Jinping to help him win reelection, as former National Security Advisor John Bolton reported.
- He will be remembered as the president whose famous telephone call to President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine, during which he said, "I would like you to do us a favor, though" led to his impeachment."

From the moment he was inaugurated as president in 2016, and all during the 2015 campaign, President Trump has shown his true persona. It encompassed traits of egotism, dishonesty, deception, slander, hyperbole, mendacity, and vilification. But the most frightening aspect of his character was his totalitarian instincts, which he has never attempted to hide

After he soundly was defeated on November 3 by Joe Biden, Trump commenced on a campaign to undermine the democratic American election process. Republican power-brokers in and out of government excused the president's actions, saying that they just want to give him time to grieve and that all will be well in time. But that didn't happen.

Trump's many statements that the election was stolen from him are reminiscent of Hitler's Big Lie technique that vaulted the Nazi to power: Repeat the lie often enough and people will believe it.

Trump has encouraged violence among his supporters. Many of his actions are carbon copies of Hitler's rise to power by using the Big Lie technique and constantly blaming scapegoats. He still is a threat to American democracy. His totalitarian instincts must not be forgotten now that he has been kicked out of office by voters who have had enough of his dangerous actions. History will remember him as America's would be dictator, abetted by what was one of America's great political

parties.

*(As I wrote in a previous column, the comparison of Trump's actions and what occurred in the early days of Nazi Germany is chronicled in books written by reporters and historians who were on the scene (and the similarity is scary to everyone who believes in democracy). I suggest the following books, "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich" and "Berlin Diary" by William Shirer, and the story of the American ambassador to Germany in the 1930's, William Dodd, told by Erik Larson in his "In The Garden of The Beast.")*

There weren't many, if any, bright spots that occurred during the Trump administration. One was the speed at which a vaccine that can inoculate people against the coronavirus was developed. But that accomplishment needs a footnote: His "warp speed" program was necessitated because of his originally declaring the coronavirus a "democratic hoax," keeping the seriousness of it from the American public for many weeks, and by telling his supporters to disregard the advice of medical scientists urging everyone to wear a mask and to practice social distancing.

Other bright spots were the anti-Trump responses to his attempted coup by Republican office holders in Georgia, dozens of judges at local and federal levels and, especially, by a conservative Supreme Court (which included three justices appointed by President Trump) that twice rejected his efforts to rule that the election was rigged against him and was unconstitutional.

Historians will also remember Trump as the "Fake News" president, whose claims of "Fake News" was directed at reporters and publications, when they ran an article that he didn't like. *(Fact checking the stories he didn't like showed that the "Fake News" was his declarations of "Fake News.")* Of course the impeached president had allies among right wing news outlets that backed up whatever ridiculous lies he told.

The best known among them were the Fox News trio of Sean Hannity, Tucker Carlson and Laura Ingraham, all of whom defended the president regardless of the facts regarding the “democratic hoax” coronavirus (even though Carlson also urged his viewers to take the virus seriously before other right wings commentators did.)

History books normally give little space to one term presidents. President Trump will be the exception. He will be remembered for mishandling the coronavirus epidemic in the U.S., as well as spreading a virus of his own, which has polluted the political scene and the American landscape by espousing totalitarian, undemocratic positions and sought to undo a democratic election. The damage he has done to our democratic traditions will take years to repair.

Historians will remember Trump as a dictator in waiting, who instructed his allies to disregard legal subpoenas, supported anti-democratic allies, caused distrust in American institutions, whose job it was to protect us from domestic and foreign anti-Americans foes and organizations, deliberately created a rift among Americans, urged Americans to liberate themselves from their democratically elected state governors and attempted to install himself as an autocratic president by attempting a coup to change the outcome of the 2020 election, which is still on-going.

He will be remembered as the president who attempted to kill the democratic republic we live in.

He will also be remembered as the “scam president,” who enriched himself by instructing government agencies to take their business to his hotels, established the rip-off Trump University, and misused funds from his Donald J. Trump Foundation to pay off his business debts and promote his presidential campaign. (*Legal actions forced the closure of both the foundation and his so-called Trump University*). But his newest scam continues by his falsely asking people to

donate money so he can continue his fight to prove that he was the true winner of the 2020 election.

But politics aside, Donald John Trump will be remembered as the appalling, vindictive human being that he is.

On January 20, 2021, President Donald Trump will become citizen Trump. But the political plague of his essence will not soon disappear. His name will live on, but not in the manner that he will like.

## **A Few Hopeful Signs**

- Trump's autocratic style of governing was rejected not only by the margin of his Electoral College defeat, but by more than 7-million voters who preferred Joe Biden over the would-be dictator. The popular vote differential was the most since the 1932 election, when Franklin Delano Roosevelt defeated Herbert Hoover.
- Republican judges, including three Trump appointees to the Supreme Court, decided election cases on their merit, ignoring their personal political beliefs.
- So did Republican state elections officials in battleground states, despite the pressure that emanated directly from the White House.

But the bottom line from President Trump's 2020 election defeat is that our democracy is fragile and when a candidate's rhetoric sounds autocratic, as Trump's did in 2015 when he was campaigning for the GOP nomination, it should not be considered "campaign talk." It should be taken at face value.

A reading of history shows that Hitler's poisonous speeches were not overly worrisome by many democratic political leaders in Germany until he took office; neither were President Trump's until he attempted to put them into practice after his election. But once Hitler took over the reign of the Weimer Republic, he did what he said he would so. Trump attempted to,

but was prevented from doing so by a free press and the courts, despite his efforts being supported by more than 100 members of GOP congressmen and 18 Republican state attorney generals, while less than a handful of Republican senators spoke in support of democracy.

This time the fabric of our democracy, while tattered, held. American's must remember that what happened in the totalitarian countries that Trump so frequently admired can happen here.

During his lifetime, Benjamin Franklin made many memorable statements. The one that should be most remembered was said in 1789: "Our new Constitution is now established, everything seems to promise it will be durable; but, in this world, nothing is certain except death and taxes."

The Trump administration and his autocratic attempt to overturn the 2020 election must be remembered as a Lesson Learned that should never be forgotten: Our democracy is only assured by the actions of people who believe in democracy. Donald John Trump does not.

On January 3, news stories broke that President Trump threatened the Secretary of State of Georgia for refusing to change the votes of its citizens so that they would show a Trump victory. But even after that story broke, none of the more than 100 GOP House members and 11 Senators who said that they would challenge the Electoral College vote on Wednesday condemned the Trump threat. They, along with Donald Trump, will forever be remembered as foes of a democratic election. and proves that U.S. democracy can not be taken for granted.

Margaret Atwood the Canadian poet and novelist said, "The fabric of democracy is always fragile everywhere because it depends on the will of citizens to protect it, and when they become scared, when it becomes dangerous for them to defend it, it can go very quickly." Americans should not forget that.



**About the Author:** Arthur Solomon, a former journalist, was a senior VP/senior counselor at Burson-Marsteller, and was responsible for restructuring, managing and playing key roles in some of the most significant national and international sports and non-sports programs. He also traveled internationally as a media adviser to high-ranking government officials. He now is a frequent contributor to public relations publications, consults on public relations projects and is on the Seoul Peace Prize nominating committee. He can be reached at [arthursolomon4pr \(at\) juno.com](mailto:arthursolomon4pr@juno.com) or [artsolomon4pr@optimum.net](mailto:artsolomon4pr@optimum.net).