

Op-Ed: Trump's Threat To Democracy; It's Not A Fairy Tale And Can Happen Here

(The Resemblance To What Happened To The Democratic Government of Germany That Vaulted Hitler to Power Should Not Be Forgotten)

(Author's Note: This is the third 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 write on why it's obvious that President Trump has and is displaying his dictatorial instincts that must be taken seriously.)

Arthur Solomon

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. It has always been at the forefront of his decisions, many of which have been rejected by the courts. In fact, it's only the courts that have kept him at bay. *(The same was true during the early days of the Hitler era.)*

But now, as I write this on November 16, Trump's dictatorial instincts have reached an alarming level: He seeks the destruction of American democracy by voiding the results of an

election.

In his desperate effort to remain in power, Trump has continually said the election was stolen from him and has launched a bevy of law suits claiming voting irregularities. Courts have said otherwise and have dismissed the lawsuits. But he keeps on shouting "fraud and stolen election."

Now the president has instructed his loyalists to turn to individual state legislatures, hoping that they would set aside the wishes and votes by citizens of their states and appoint delegates to the Electoral College who would vote to keep Trump in power on December 8.

Egged on by right wings commentators as Sean Hannity and Mark Levin, the president's loyalists have urged state legislatures to disenfranchise the rightful electors and replace them with pro-Trump ones. Joining the anti-democratic throng was Donald Trump Jr., who is just another loud mouth provocateur tied to his daddy's aprons. But what was truly fearful was the comment by a high-ranking elected official, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis who asked legislatures with Republican majorities to "provide remedies."

President Trump has also demonstrated his dictatorial instincts by refusing to let president-elect Joe Biden's reps proceed, as in past elections, in transition talks with the current administration.

Republican power-brokers in government, and particularly in the U.S. Senate, have excused the president's actions, saying that they just want to give him time to grieve and that all will be well in time.

To students of history, that scenario is familiar and dangerous. In the early 1930's, the political leaders of Germany's democratic Weimar Republic believed that they could control Hitler by giving him a limited role in government. Six months later he became dictator.

It's not unthinkable that the same situation could happen here. Trump has already shown admiration for dictators in China, Russia, North Korea, Turkey and other countries.

Trump has continually told members of his administration to disobey legal subpoenas. He has continually dismissed members of his administration for thinking for themselves; other have resigned, for disagreeing with him. He has continually called for his political opponents to be jailed. He has refused to condemn white nationalists and other neo-Nazi groups. (*So did the democratic leaders of Germany, who believed once they controlled Hitler that they could control the Nazi Storm Troopers.*) Trump has consistently demonstrated that his loyalty to him is the pathway to an important government job.

On November 14, when a group of pro-Trump defenders gathered for a march in Washington, D.C., Anthony Scaramucci, who briefly served as the White House Director of Communications in 2017, but has since become a critic of the president, said on CNN that the marchers were a small group of maybe 15-to 25,000 people and shouldn't be a cause for concern.. The marchers included member of the Proud Boys, the far-right, neo-fascist organization, white supremacists, Women for America First, right-wing activists and conspiracy theorists, according to news reports.

I disagree with what Scaramucci said about the event. It included marchers who have resorted to violence in the past. Saying that it's not a problem is similar to what German politicians said about the Storm Troopers in Hitler's early days – "they're a small group that can be controlled." There's an English proverb that says, "Large streams from little fountains flow, Tall oaks from little acorns grow." Extremist groups of both the right and left are a danger to our democracy. They must be taken seriously.

(Reprising her daily "I cannot tell the truth" role, the Wall Street Journal reported that "White House press secretary

Kayleigh McEnany said in a Twitter message more than 1-million people participated in the pro-Trump gathering, although reporters estimated the crowd as ranging from several thousand to over 10,000 people." Some observers pointed out that Trump's first press secretary, Sean Spicer, also lied to the media about the number of people attending the president's inauguration and that Trump's administration is ending with his latest press secretary also lying about a crowd size. A permit for the space designated for the rally was issued for 10,000 people but can accommodate about 13,000.

("Accounts on the ground suggested that her estimate was wildly inflated," reported the New York Times. "It's not like the Fourth of July or anything," said a police officer who was stationed near Freedom Plaza at 13th and G Streets. He declined to give his name because he was not authorized to speak to the news media. "But yeah," he added, "there's a crowd down there."

(And The Hill, the politically-oriented Washington website, reported, "While the number of protesters did not appear to reach that total capacity, some of the president's supporters and staff celebrated the turnout as a success.)

Trump's many statements that the election was stolen from him are reminiscent of Hitler's Big Lie technique that vaulted him to power: Repeat the lie often enough and people will believe it. Many of the pro-Trump supporters at the march repeated the president's remarks, despite assurances from Department of Homeland Security officials responsible for voting integrity nation-wide refuting the president's false claims of voter fraud. A joint statement from the Elections Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council & The Election Infrastructure Sector Coordinating Executive Committees, a component of the Department of Homeland Security, issued on November 12 said, "The November 3rd election was the most secure in American history. Right now, across the country, election officials are reviewing and double checking the entire election process

prior to finalizing the result.”

“There is no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes, or was in any way compromised,” said the statement.

Nevertheless, despite knowing that his words can cause violence by his supporters, by his words, by his deeds, the president is a threat to democracy. His actions prior to his securing the Republican nomination for president, and to this day, are not only shameful, they are the antithesis of democracy and are dangerous and inflammatory.

Mr. Trump’s delusional and destructive personalities were never more evident than on Sunday, November 15, when he tweeted at 7:47.a.m. that Biden won. But at 9:16 a.m. he tweeted, “RIGGED ELECTION. WE WILL WIN!” And at 9:19 a.m. he tweeted that Biden “only won in the eyes of the FAKE NEWS MEDIA. I concede NOTHING! We have a long way to go. This was a RIGGED ELECTION!” (*Time to consider the 25th Amendment?*)

After the 1960 election, in which John F. Kennedy defeated Richard Nixon, there were accusations of voter fraud. In Nixon’s memoir, “Six Crises,” he wrote, “If I were to demand a recount...the orderly transfer of responsibility from the old to the new might be delayed for months. The situation within the entire federal government would be chaotic.” Nixon did not demand a recount. No matter what you think of him, he put the interest of the United States above his own self interest – the exact opposite of Trump.

The hallmark of the Trump administration is “Me first, country last.”

Yes, Trump, Giuliani and other fascist-leaning Republicans are correct when they say this election has “fraud” written all over it.. But it was they who did the writing.

By his words and actions President Trump has acted as the dictators he has so admired.

Actions – He has refused to admit that he was defeated by Joe Biden and insists the election was stolen from him.

Words – On August 17, he said, “We are going to win four more years.”... “And then after that, we’ll go for another four years because they spied on my campaign. We should get a redo of four years.” On September 12 he said, he is entitled to a third term “based on the way we were treated.”

Americans of all political persuasions who believe in democracy must call out the president for what he is – **A Delusional Dictator In Wanting.**

Addendum – The comparison of what is happening in the United States today and during the early days of Nazi Germany is chronicled in books written by reporters and historians who were on the scene. For readers wanting much more information than is in my column, 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.” Also of interest to Olympic enthusiasts might be how prominent Americans unsuccessfully fought against the U.S. Olympic team from participating in the 1936 Nazi Olympics. I’m not familiar with any book on this subject but details are available on the web.



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.