

Donald Trump: Is He Too Dangerous to be Head of State?

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"We [the United States] spent \$2 trillion, thousands of lives. ... Obviously, it was a mistake... George W. Bush made a mistake. We can make mistakes. But that one was a beauty. We should have never been in Iraq. We have destabilized the Middle East..."

—They [President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney] lied... They said there were weapons of mass destruction. There were none. And they knew there were none. There were no weapons of mass destruction." Donald Trump (1946-), during a CBS News GOP presidential debate, on Saturday, Feb. 13, 2016.

"Mental impairment and criminal-mindedness are not mutually exclusive; not only can they happen at the same time, when combined, these two characteristics become particularly dangerous." Bandy X Lee (1970-), an internationally recognized psychiatrist at the Yale School of Medicine and editor of the book 'The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump: 27 Psychiatrists and Mental Health Experts Assess a President,' 2017.

"An autocrat in the making is typically an elected outsider who disdains norms, questions the legitimacy of political foes, tolerates violence, and shows a willingness to curtail the free press." Steven Levitsky (1968-) and Daniel Ziblatt (1972-), (in their book *How Democracies Die*, 2018, 312 p.)

"...An empire is a despotism, and an emperor is a despot, bound by no law or limitation but his own will; it is a stretch of tyranny beyond absolute monarchy. For, although the will of an absolute monarch is law, yet his edicts must be registered by parliaments. Even this formality is not necessary in an empire." John Adams (1735-1826), 2nd American President, (1797-1801), (in 'The Political Writings of John Adams: Representative Selections', 2003)

"To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which canceled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them, to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it..."

To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just as long as it is needed, to deny the existence of objective reality..." George Orwell (Eric Arthur Blair) (1903-1950), English novelist, essayist, and social critic, (in his book '1984', 1949, chap. 2)

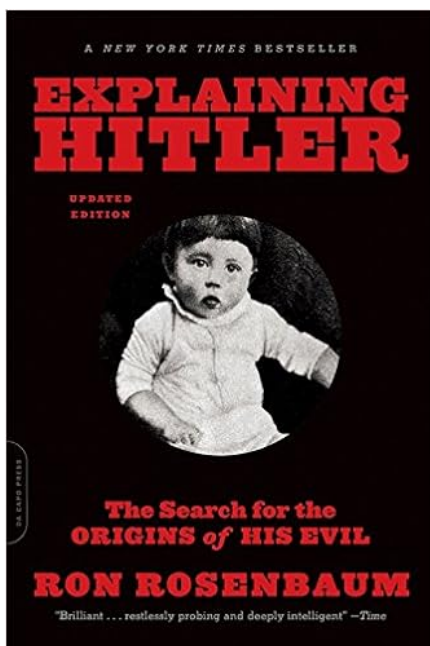
Introduction

US President [Donald Trump](#) (1946-), as a politician, has succeeded in attracting voters who are dissatisfied or partially dissatisfied with their economic or social situation, especially working class white voters without college degrees. [Income inequality and wealth inequality](#) is growing in the United States, and the balance leans toward the winners, even though the losers are more numerous and have not been compensated through job training or social services. In other words, many Americans are disillusioned regarding their chance of living the American dream and about the way the [system](#) and public policies disadvantage them. Trump attracts also [single-issue voters](#).

All this creates a fertile ground for a populist politician. This has happened elsewhere and it is now a political reality in the United States. It is also normal that Donald Trump is strongly opposed by various establishments and attacked by those to whom his populism is repugnant.

But beyond the purely personal considerations people have to support or oppose him, what are the characteristics of this neophyte in politics that many, and not only in the United States, consider scary?

For example, some [observers](#) have drawn a parallel between the current occupant of the White House and the decadent emperor [Caligula \(12-41 CE\)](#) of Ancient Rome. Caligula was autocratic, unpredictable, unhinged and a self-conscious populist who lacked self-restraint. He was a sociopath who enjoyed hurting and humiliating people. Moreover, he treated politics like a show. He indulged in pornography and depravity. He was disruptive and contemptuous of existing institutions, and he was a warmonger who courted the military.



A biographer in the know has also linked Trump's outrageous behavior, as a politician, to [Adolf Hitler](#) (1889-1945), the subject of his book '*Explaining Hitler: The Search for the Origins of His Evil*', 1998. Indeed, author Ron Rosenbaum (1946-) [explains](#) how a constant attack on the media and the courts by Trump was also a tactic used by Hitler to gain power, in Germany. History has a way of repeating itself, and no one should think that disastrous past experiences cannot be repeated.

Whether all this is the case or not, what can be safely said is that never in its entire history has the United States faced a president in the White House of the sort that Mr. Trump

represents. [Persons closed to him](#) have warned us: Donald Trump is “*deeply mentally ill*” and “*no longer connected to reality*” and what is more, he is prone to loose his temper and act in anger, sometimes in [pure madness](#). These are, we will all agree, very dangerous character traits for any U.S. President, if they are true.

It has been observed that the White House under Trump’s direction is often in turmoil, in disarray and sometimes, in complete [chaos](#), and that the American president is [mentally unstable](#) and that he is prone to act impulsively, like an unmoored [loose cannon](#), in most anything he does. It is said that Trump often acts in a [bluffing](#) and [vengeful](#) way, [firing](#) people right and left for any motive, sometimes in a most nefarious way. That should certainly be another reason for alarm and consternation.

It may be worth [recalling](#) here what the former Director of the CIA under Barack Obama, John Brennan (1955-), said, referring to Donald Trump and his mean dismissal of the FBI’s No. 2, Andrew McCabe (1968-), Friday night, March 16, 2018, a few hours before the latter was to become eligible for a pension:

“When the full extent of your venality, moral turpitude, and political corruption becomes known, you will take your rightful place as a disgraced demagogue in the dustbin of history. You may scapegoat Andy McCabe, but you will not destroy America...America will triumph over you.”

Recently, for example, he was reported to want to launch an international [trade war](#) for the childish reason that he did not want to be “*laughed at*”. This is unsettling, because all this is based on [faulty economic thinking](#) and [wrong facts](#). A protectionist U.S. President can do great harm to the world economy. —Trump’s top economic adviser Gary Cohn had enough of that craziness, and he [resigned](#). Trump only wants “[sycophants](#)” around him.

In the coming months, I fear that American consumers and the world stock markets will give their own assessment of Trump’s economic folly, and it won’t be pretty.

Consequently, many people have concluded that the current occupant of the White House is not mature enough and not competent enough to be president of the United States. In his book, ‘[Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House](#)’, author Michael Wolff writes that “*Trump lived... as a real-life fictional character*”, that he is a man detached and mostly cut off from reality, being comfortable in relying on so-called false and subjective “[alternative facts](#)”. For such a person, only appearances matter, not reality.

People who know him well have labeled him [unpredictable](#) and [inconsistent](#). Trump is the [flip-flopper](#) par excellence. Indeed, Trump’s intellectual inconsistency is beyond comprehension. He can adopt, almost simultaneously, two opposite positions without flinching... and without apology.

And, as if this is not enough, Donald Trump is also besieged by huge [conflicts of interest](#), not the least is a level of [nepotism](#) not seen in the White House in modern times.

Let us try to get a more complete picture of the political situation in the United States:

1. The American electoral system favors Republicans

First of all, let us say that it is one of the peculiarities of the American democratic system

that it happens quite often that the winning candidate in a presidential election becomes president while receiving fewer votes than the losing candidate. It sometimes happens that the losing candidate receives even a majority of votes, but is still not elected. This happened in the 1876 election.

In fact, American presidential elections are not necessarily decided by the popular vote. According to the rules of the [Electoral College](#), a few hundred “grand electors”, chosen in each of the 50 states, are the ones who elect the U.S. President.

Such a system tends to advantage the Republican candidates and it disadvantages the Democratic candidates, because it gives less weight to the votes in the most populated states than to those cast in the less populated states.

For example, according to the official results of the [2016](#) election, the Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton received 48.5% of the popular votes (65,953,516 votes) but received the support of only 232 “grand electors” out of a total of 538, or 45.12% of these. However, the Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump only collected 46.09% of the national votes (62,984 825 votes), but received 306 or 56.9% of the “grand electors” votes. Consequently, it was Donald Trump who became U.S. president and not Hillary Clinton.

Note that in 2000, Republican candidate George W. Bush also received half a million fewer votes than Democratic candidate Al Gore, but the Electoral College system resulted in electing George W. Bush president. — In 1876 and in 1888, similar results ensued, when a Republican candidate was elected U.S. President, while receiving fewer votes than his Democratic opponent. — It can be said that the system of the American Electoral College tends to favor Republican candidates, who are generally more conservative.

2. Trump is egocentric and authoritarian

The current sitting American president, Donald Trump, does not seem to have deep-seated personal principles. He seems to be egocentric and he is always on the lookout to profit personally from any event: if someone or something gives him pleasure, prestige or money, he is all for it. No American president before him has dared to express openly his feelings or his [insults](#) of others, and even state his policies, on a social medium like Twitter, so much so that Donald Trump has been called the “[toddler-in-chief](#)”.



That is why Donald Trump is not your normal American president, even for the United States where [money](#) plays a larger role than elsewhere in electing public officials. Being a real estate oligarch who owns hotels and casinos, among other properties, he has brought to the

White House the [authoritarian](#) and [plutocratic](#) ethics found in some wheeler-dealer corners of that industry, an ethics of [ruthlessness](#).

Accustomed to running his real estate empire by himself, he was badly prepared to lead a democratic government, which is, by definition, decentralized. However, his authoritarian approach seems to appeal to his supporters. In fact, Trump acts as if he were the representative of [rednecks](#) in the White House.

In a new book, with the ominous title of "[How Democracies Die](#)", two political scientists (Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt of Harvard University) compiled four warning signs to determine if a political leader is a dangerous authoritarian:

1. The leader shows only a weak commitment to democratic rules;
2. He or she denies the legitimacy of opponents;
3. He or she tolerates violence;
4. He or she shows some willingness to curb civil liberties or the media. According to the authors, *"a politician who meets even one of these criteria is cause for concern."* Unfortunately, in their eyes, *"Donald Trump meets them all!"*

Regarding violence, Trump did not hesitate to name a [torturer](#) to lead the C.I.A. Torture is an immoral practice that he has personally [espoused](#) in the past.

Basically, Donald Trump is an unscrupulous [demagogue](#), being both populist and authoritarian, of the type that has become dictator in other countries. This should be a source of preoccupation because for some time now, American presidents have been stretching the law to govern through [executing edicts](#) and to keep the United States on a [permanent war](#) footing. Donald Trump has expanded that practice and brought it to a new level. In his first year in office, indeed, Trump has issued no less than [58 executive orders](#) and some 30 so-called "proclamations", without any input from Congress.

Some business leaders can be expected to line up behind the Trump administration, especially if they expect to draw financial benefits from it, when they are at the receiving end of some money largesse (such as huge tax breaks financed with more public debt). The same applies to ambitious politicians who are willing to dance with the devil, if this can advance their career. However, it is another matter when the Trump White House extends its authoritarian [cult of personality](#) to American career civil servants, supposedly sworn in to work for the nation and uphold the Constitution, not to hold allegiance to the person temporarily sitting in the White House.

Also, it could be considered odd when Donald Trump [applauds himself](#), but when he requests, in a dictator-like way, to be [applauded](#) when he speaks, whether he tells the truth or not, and pretends that it is even 'un-American' not to applaud him, this should raise alarm.

It is not at all surprising that there is a widespread [distaste](#) in the United States for Trump's personality and for his obnoxious character. A [majority of Americans](#) who cherish their democracy simply cannot stand him. He is an embarrassment even for his supporters.

3. Trump acts and speaks like a sociopath who enjoys making other people miserable

It would be [comical](#) if it were not potentially so tragic. Trump is in a permanent state of [self-](#)

[admiration](#), constantly relying on exaggerations, on overstatements and on illogical statements. No previous American president could have matched him as an adept of self-congratulation. He shows himself as a self-aggrandizing individual. He seems to be suffering from an advanced case of [megalomania](#). In fact, Trump is an expert in erroneously declaring himself an [expert](#) in about everything. And, he does not hesitate to qualify himself a “[genius](#)”!

Trump has also confessed that he likes to “*make the life of people miserable*”, i.e. the life of journalists, authors, competitors and anyone who opposes him. An example, among hundreds if not [thousands](#) of frivolous and gagging lawsuits, is his meritless but expensive litigations, in time and money, against author [Timothy O’Brien](#) for writing the book “*TrumpNation*”. After his suit was dismissed in court, because it was a direct attack on the First Amendment, Trump stated to the [Washington Post](#), “*I did it to make O’Brien’s life miserable, which I am happy about.*” Such is the *modus operandi* of a very sadistic and [malicious person](#) who does not hesitate to attack the free press and the right to free speech in a democracy.

4. Trump is a compulsive liar

Numerous public allegations have also made the public aware that Trump is obsessed with [sex](#) and [sex](#), [sex](#), and [sex again](#). He is also an alleged [sex harasser](#) who continually disparages women.

On Tuesday March 20, former Vice-President Joe Biden (1942-) did not mince his words, while speaking at an anti-sexual assault rally, telling students at the University of Miami what he thought of Donald Trump and the way the latter talks about women:

“If we were in high school, I’d take him [Donald Trump] behind the gym and beat the hell out of him”, for [disrespecting women](#).

It is well known now that Donald Trump is a [pathological liar](#) who seems to fear the truth like the pest. That is because Donald Trump is fundamentally [intellectually dishonest](#). That is probably the main reason [Trump’s lawyers](#) are adamant in not wanting their client to testify alone and under oath, in the special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation about his alleged electoral collusion with Russia.

Publicly, Trump pretends to be willing to be questioned under oath by special counsel Robert Mueller, [declaring](#): “*I’m looking forward to it, actually*”; “*I would do it under oath.*” This could be another example of a ‘*good cop-bad cop*’ charade by Trump, because he would never accept to be interviewed alone, without his lawyers, under oath, and he would likely blame his lawyers for another flip-flop of his own.

This is also the reason why Trump has held only one formal [press conference](#) since taking office—unlike its predecessors, who held one each month—in order to avoid being questioned by experienced journalists. He prefers partisan political rallies where no one can contradict him or steal his show.

5. Trump is a dangerous man to have control over nuclear arms

Even if it were possible to disprove half of what has been written about Trump’s eccentricities, his laughable theatrics, his twisted logic, and his [lies](#), Donald Trump would

still be a monster of a human being. We will never repeat often enough that he is a [dangerous](#) person to hold power, especially in a country like the United States, which is loaded with [nuclear arms](#). Trump is indeed an unstable and irresponsible person; he is a person with poor judgment, besides being erratic, reckless and [trigger-happy](#). He also employs constantly a bellicose tone in his relations with foreign leaders. This is a very bad combination for a head of state in today's complex world.

And to add to that image, Trump would like to return to a bygone era, when well-known totalitarian leaders favored big shows of force. Trump made it known to "[his generals](#)" that he wants a large-scale, multi million dollar "beautiful" and pompous [military parade](#), in his honor, in Washington D.C., on [Veterans Day](#), with thousands of soldiers in tight formation, marching down Pennsylvania Avenue, with planes and helicopters buzzing by the Washington Monument and with 70-ton Abrams tanks and Patriot missiles systems rolling down before the President's stand. Trump seems to have had this idea after attending the French military deployment of July 14th, last summer. It's a bit as if a childish Trump had seen a toy in the neighbor's yard and said, "*I want one too!*"

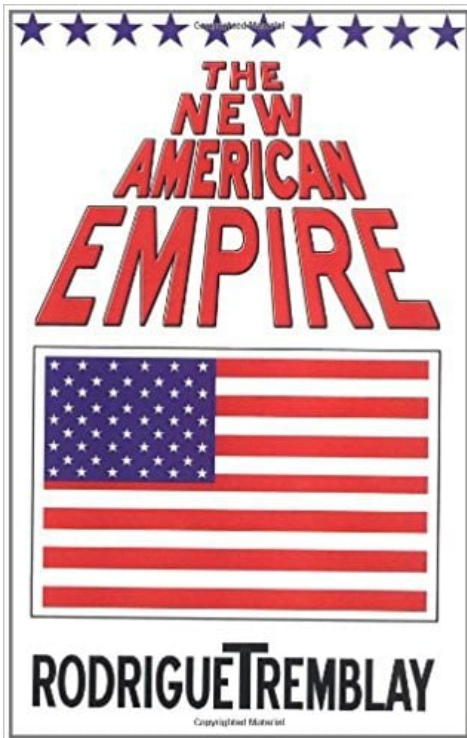
Such a powwow show would gratify Trump's infatuation with military toys he would like to play with. It would be quite an irony if the United States, which fought fascist Germany during World War II, itself adopted [fascist](#) trappings, three quarters of a century later.

Regarding nuclear arms, [Tom Collina](#), policy director of the anti-nuclear Ploughshares Fund, has noted that a recent [poll](#) indicates that 60 percent of Americans do not trust Trump with nuclear weapons. Consequently, he concluded: "*the public is right to distrust Trump with nuclear weapons, and we all need to speak up and oppose these new, dangerous policies.*" — I totally agree.

Trump has not only sociopathic tendencies, being insensitive and having no empathy for anybody else but himself; he could also be considered a would-be [genocidal](#) psychopath when he talks freely saying this is the "*calm before the storm*", that it (North Korea) "*will be met with fire, fury and frankly power the likes of which this world has never seen before*", even going as far as threatening to "[totally destroy North Korea](#)", a country of more than 25 million people! This is even more scandalous, considering that Donald Trump uttered that insane threat during a speech at the United Nations, an organization specifically created to avoid war.

Therefore, one cannot completely exclude some foul [acts of savagery](#) coming from the Trump administration in the coming months and years. The current disorganization in the Trump White House could lead to inhuman disasters, considering the instability of Trump's character and the lack of moral fortitude and vision on the part of the current Republican leadership in both the House and the U.S. Senate.

6. Trump can be expected to rely on "wag the dog" tricks to get out of trouble



It is indeed common practice for some American presidents to “[wag the dog](#)”, i.e. distract from domestic or personal domestic problems by provoking some conflicts abroad. On this score, since Trump’s domestic problems are presently piling up, with multiple lawsuits launched by women with whom he had sexual affairs in the past, with serious allegations that [foreign governments](#) were involved in his election, and with the looming Special Prosecutor’s report possibly raising an accusation of obstruction of justice against him, he could be expected to want to distract attention from his problems and to make dangerous, possibly catastrophic, policy decisions. Indeed, it is a *modus operandi* for him to attempt to deflect attention from his personal problems by creating problems elsewhere.

Note that Donald Trump is the first person to be elected president of the United States without any political or military experience. Recently, he has surrounded himself with sycophants who are immoral [torturers](#) and belligerent [advocates of regime change](#) in other countries. The summum of cynicism on his part—considering that he campaigned by repeating constantly that the Bush-Cheney 2003 war of aggression against Iraq was a disaster and a dumb decision—occurred on Thursday March 22, when he named one of the very architects of the Iraq War, in the person of the extremely bellicose [John Bolton](#), as his national security adviser. I think the United States of America has a big problem in having such a person as its president.

Conclusion

Keeping in mind what I wrote in the introduction and the rational motives that motivate his supporters to be behind him, it nevertheless remains that Donald Trump is an emperor with no clothes, and a reliance on [cognitive dissonance](#) on the part of his partisans cannot hide that simple fact.

Indeed, when all things are said and considered, it is impossible not to conclude that there is something fundamentally wrong with Donald Trump. Many [experts](#) and [observers](#) have warned the world that his state of mind is a danger to public safety. [The Republicans](#), in particular, who happen to control the U.S. Congress, have a great responsibility to reflect on and to act upon that information before some irreparable damage is done. If Trump were to

do something catastrophic in the coming weeks or months, economically or militarily, those [Republicans](#) in Congress will have to share personal and collective responsibility in the disaster.

More than one year ago, because of Trump's lack of seriousness and preparation, I [warned](#) that he was going to be "a threat to American [democracy](#) and an agent of chaos in the world". Unfortunately, every day seems to bring forth new proofs of that assessment.

Therefore, as time goes on, the case for Trump's impeachment is going to get stronger and stronger. His removal from office will become increasingly urgent and increasingly compelling. It's a safe bet that credible steps for his [impeachment](#) as U.S. President will be taken rapidly, if the Democratic Party regains control of the House of Representatives during this fall election—and possibly faster, if enough Republicans see the light before then.

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