

The Truth about Trump

by Ronald Rump

Everybody knows that the former President of the United States, Donald Trump, is a criminal, a persistent liar, a repeated loser and bankrupted entrepreneur, a pathological narcissist, and a serious threat to the American democracy. That makes him totally unfit for the U.S. presidency.

It should be obvious to everybody that of all the former Presidents, “Donald Trump is the worst president America has ever had”, as the *Atlantic* rightly wrote (January 19, 2021). Although Trump boasts himself to be the greatest, the richest, the best, the most intelligent, the most stable genius, he cannot but be conceived as the worst of all U.S. presidents so far. He was the first president to be impeached twice by the US Congress. Although it is the first and foremost duty of a U.S. President to uphold and defend the American Constitution, Trump was the first president to violate his oath of office by actually undermining the Constitution while attempting to jeopardize the peaceful office transition to President Biden who had clearly defeated Trump. Trump also was the first president in U.S. history who, having been defeated for a second term in office, never conceded to the winner, did not attend his successor’s inauguration, and persistently claimed that the election was stolen from him (the “big lie”) – despite the fact that the 2020 election “was the most secure in American history” (so the official judgment by the Election Coordinating Council). Even Trump’s own director of Cyber Security, Christopher Krebs, affirmed that the election was safe, having found no evidence for substantial election fraud that would have changed the outcome of the election. By conspiring to subvert the 2020 election results and to obstruct the official proceedings to elect a new president, Trump committed a crime worse than that perpetrated by Richard Nixon who, after all, avoided impeachment by resigning from office.

Trump is well-known to have subordinated national-security interests to his private needs and wants. Trump has been an admirer of authoritarian autocrats such as Russia’s Vladimir Putin, Turkey’s Tayyip Erdogan, Hungarian’s Victor Orban, China’s Xi Jinping, or North Korea’s Kim Jong Un. Although he always considered himself the “greatest deal-maker”, Trump completely failed to extract from these despots any substantial concessions. Instead, they always got the better of him. Kim Jong Un continued to pursue his nuclear program, Putin is well-known for his low opinion of Trump and built up his forces that eventually attacked Ukraine, while Trump never ceased to admire and praise Putin. Trump’s effort to squeeze the Ukrainian president Zelenskyj to get dirt on his presidential opponent Joe Biden – the cause of his first impeachment – was one of the best-documented instances of corruption that characterized his entire foreign policy. Trump also negotiated a disastrous deal (the Doha agreement of February 29, 2020) with the Afghan Taliban in which he agreed to a complete withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan by 2021, which Trump, when Biden followed through with the deal, was quick to blame his successor for it.

The verdict of Trump having been the worst U.S. President ever is further substantiated by his mishandling of the Covid crisis. According to his own admissions, Trump – in statements recorded by Watergate journalist Bob Woodward – was told, and had recognized, the imminent danger of the virus while officially downplaying it in public. He admitted that the Corona virus was “more deadly than even your strenuous flues”, but then went on to compare it with an ordinary flu that would soon go away. In an interview with Bob Woodward, Trump conceded, “I wanted to always play it down, because I didn’t want to create a panic.” What Trump actually created was an environment in which the Covid crisis was not taken seriously as it should have been. 58.000 American had already died of the virus while Trump ignored its danger while actively violating and berating public-health measures that were pursued in several U.S. states. Eventually, at least 400.000 Americans died from the virus by the time Trump left office. To the chagrin of his experts, Trump suggested to inject disinfectant into a person infected with the corona virus or “hit the body with a tremendous – whether it’s ultraviolet or just a very powerful –

light ... supposing you brought the light inside the body, which you can do either through the skin or some other way ...”

It is likely that Trump would never have become the 45th President of the United States were it not for the assistance which Russian cyber activities gave to the Trump election campaign. Vladimir Putin had been known for supporting right-wing movements in several Western countries in order to subvert democratic processes and institutions. In her book “Cyberwar: How Russian Hackers and Trolls Helped Elect a President”, author Kathleen Jamieson documented how Russian cyberattacks helped elect Trump to become the 45th President of the United States by tipping the swing states in his favor, although Trump lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by a substantial margin of 3 million votes. Trump was accused of conspiring with Russians regarding this election interference, but repeatedly called this a “hoax”. While the Mueller report, which investigated the Russian interference into the 2016 presidential election, concluded that there was not enough evidence to prove that Trump conspired with the Russian government, it did conclude that such interference occurred “in sweeping and systematic fashion” and was welcomed by the Trump campaign. The report also identified numerous links between Trump associates and Russian officials and spies. The Mueller report also concluded that the Russian interference “deserves the attention of every American”.

In what way is Trump a criminal? A New York judge found Donald Trump, his sons and his family business guilty of fraud by inflating the value of his properties and other assets by billions of dollars on financial statements given to banks and insurers to secure favorable loans and secure lower insurance premiums. In September 2023 judge Engoron found the Trump company guilty of having committed fraud for years. The judge ordered the termination of Trump’s state business licenses and the dissolution of his companies. Examples of fraud include two of Trump’s residences: his apartment in Trump Tower the size and value of which was inflated as being three times as large and valuable as was actually the case; and his Mar-a-Lago residence which was inflated in value 20 times its actual worth. The penalty the Trump company has to pay to compensate for his continual fraud has yet to be decided but will probably amount to some 250 million Dollars.

Trump appears also guilty of 40 felony counts because of his mishandling of classified documents which he illegally took from the White House and stored at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida. Under the Presidential Records Act (PRA), presidential documents must be transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). When NARA became aware of missing classified documents, they sought to retrieve them from Trump. NARA got 15 boxes of documents in January 2022 which were presumed to be only a portion of the classified documents at Mar-a-Lago. In May 2022, a grand jury issued a subpoena for the remaining documents in Trump’s possession. Trump returned further documents, then assuring that he had no other classified documents in his possession. The FBI, however, later obtained evidence that Trump had intentionally moved classified documents to hide them not only from the FBI but also from his own lawyers who had assured the FBI that all classified documents had been returned. This led to a search by the FBI of the Mar-a-Lago residency on August 8, 2022 in which the FBI recovered numerous documents 300 of which turned out to be classified. In the United States, the retainment and mishandling of documents classified as confidential, secret or top secret, is a serious crime for which a defendant is to be penalized through fines, imprisonment, or both, depending on the seriousness of the crime.

In addition to the court trials already mentioned, there are currently at least three further trials against defendant Trump which are likely to prove him guilty of the most serious felonies: 1. A federal trial in Washington D.C. is trying him with regard to his attempts to overturn the 2020 election by conspiring to defraud the United States, to obstruct the Congress proceedings of confirming the newly-elected President, and to incite the January 6 attack on the Capitol. 2. The trial at the Fulton County Superior Court in the state of Georgia which is accusing Trump of leading a “criminal racketeering enterprise” in which he and other defendants knowingly and willfully joined a conspiracy to unlawfully change the outcome of the 2020 presidential election in Georgia. The charge involves pressuring state officials to “find missing votes” (Trump’s phone call to Raffensperger) and creating false electoral vote documents,

as well as the harassment and defamation of Fulton County election workers. Some co-defendants have already plead guilty regarding these conspiracy charges. 3. In another New York case, Trump has already been found guilty of sexual assault and defamation against Jean Carroll and will be due for another follow-up defamation trial.

As everybody knows by now, Donald Trump is a persistent, compulsive liar. Some think he is incapable of telling the truth about anything because his outlook on reality is always tainted by his self-centered egotism which compels him to assert only that which serves him best and lets him appear in a brilliant light. The *Washington Post* has tried to keep track of his many lies and counted more than 30,000 false or misleading claims during his time as President. Nearly half of these lies came during his final year as he was preparing for re-election. The long list of lies began with his claim that there was supposed to be a bigger crowd during his inauguration than was at Obama's inauguration – despite clear evidence to the contrary. The inauguration lie gave rise to the “alternative facts”-phrase coined by Kellyanne Conway, the then Counselor to the President with which she supported the false attendance numbers advanced by then Press Secretary Sean Spicer. One of his most deadly and consequential lies was his oft repeated claim that the corona virus would disappear “like a miracle” (see above) which resulted in a very high number of deaths that could have been prevented had the risk of the pandemic been accurately portrayed.

Perhaps his most often repeated lie – to this day – has been his claim that the 2020 presidential election had been “stolen” from him. Although more than 60 cases of alleged election fraud had been shown to be unfounded by courts all over the country, Trump kept propagating his “big lie” which eventually prompted his supporters to storm the Capitol. Immediately before storming the Capitol, Trump had re-asserted that false claim to his supporters many of whom were armed. They believed his lie, and Trump sent them off to the Capitol, instructing them: “If you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore.” Actually, Trump had begun his “big lie” long before the 2020 election when he claimed that whatever the outcome, that election would be a “fraud”, as he told Sean Hannity of Fox News months before voters actually went to the polls. According to the *Washington Post*, Trump averaged six false claims a day in his first year in office and 39 false claims a day in his final year. About half of his false claims were communicated at his campaign rallies or via his Twitter account.

One of Trump's falsehoods relates to the U.S. economy. He claimed to have been responsible “for creating the greatest economy in U.S. history”. During his first three years in office, the annual growth rate averaged 2.5%, which was a mere 0.2% higher than during Obama's last three years in office (2,3%). In the early 1950s, the growth rate exceeded 10%. Even before the pandemic, Trump's economy was already faltering because of his trade wars, according to the *Washington Post* fact checkers. The U.S. economy had been more robust during the presidencies of D. Eisenhower, L.B. Johnson and B. Clinton. Trump often cited the rising value of the Dow Jones Industrial Average which did indeed continue to rise during his presidency, following up on a steady rise already during the Obama years. However, the Dow Jones experienced a severe crash during the covid crises, from which it did recover, however. Trump also managed to keep wages increasing. Here too, he could build on Obama's presidency during which wages steadily increased from 2008 to 2016. Trump also claimed that he passed the biggest tax cut in history. That, too, is inaccurate. While he did craft a big tax cut which benefitted the rich more than the middle class or the poor, the tax cut amounted to a mere 0.9% and was only the eighth-largest tax cut in 100 years – while the famous tax cut by President Reagan amounted to a substantial 2,9%.

One of Trump's most blatant lies was his claim that Mexico would pay for the wall he intended to build along the U.S.-Mexican border. This was certainly one of the more popular claims that got him elected as President in 2016. As one could expect, the Mexicans never paid for the wall. Did he build the wall? Trump succeeded in building a steel bollard wall along much of the border where there had previously been a fence only (only a mere 50 miles had no barrier previously). Even before the 2016 election, Trump insidiously claimed that President Obama was not born in the United States. That lie, which

Trump had peddled for five years, is probably the only one from which he retracted, when presented with Obama's Hawaiian birth certificate.

In what way is Trump a loser? In terms of his political ambitions, it is of course true that he won the American presidency in 2016 by securing the electoral votes. But even then Trump lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by a substantial margin, as has already been pointed out. During the mid-term election of 2018 Trump lost both chambers of Congress to the Democrats. Although the Republicans succeeded in regaining a marginal majority in the House of Representatives in 2020, they not only lost the Senate again but, above all, also lost the presidency to Joe Biden who handed a clear defeat to Donald Trump. Biden received 81 million of the popular vote, the most votes ever for any candidate in a U.S. presidential election, thereby outperforming Trump by 7 million votes.

Trump is a loser also in terms of his entrepreneurship. Six of his hotel and casino businesses had to declare bankruptcy between 1991 and 2009 due to their inability to meet required payments to the banks. However, it was only during the first bankruptcy filing (of the Trump Taj Mahal) that Trump's personal fortune was at stake: he had to sell many of his assets such as a yacht, an airline and his stakes in other businesses. Thereafter, Trump stopped guaranteeing company debts with his own wealth. He had learned from his first bankruptcy and henceforth made bankruptcies work for him rather than endangering him. Bankruptcies became a way for Trump to increase his personal wealth. "I do play with the bankruptcy laws – they're good for me", he is quoted as saying. The six bankruptcies which he filed concerned his Trump Taj Mahal Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City (bankruptcy declared in 1991) which he no longer owns, the Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City (1992) which is no longer in existence, the Plaza Hotel in New York City (1992) which Trump no longer owns, the Trump Castle Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City (1992) which he no longer owns, the Trump Hotel and Casino Resorts (2004) and the Trump Entertainment Resorts (2009) which he no longer owns. So while he has surely enriched himself by these bankruptcies (he never filed for personal bankruptcy!), they certainly do not testify to his good entrepreneurship.

Trump has often claimed to be a self-made millionaire, allegedly having received only a million dollars as loan from his father Fred Trump. That, too, is one of his big self-deceptive lies. As a 2018 investigation of the *New York Times* has conclusively proven, Donald Trump inherited, between ages 3 to 58, at least \$413 million from his father's business empire, using some fraudulent tax-dodging methods. The *Times* investigation (which was based on confidential tax returns and financial records) showed that Trump and his siblings had set up a sham corporation to disguise millions of dollars in gifts from their parents. Trump had helped formulate a strategy to undervalue his parents' real estate holdings by hundreds of millions of dollars on tax returns, sharply reducing the tax bill when those properties were transferred to him and his siblings. These maneuvers apparently met with little resistance from the Internal Revenue Service, the *Times* found out. According to the report, Fred Trump and his wife Mary transferred well over \$1 billion in wealth to their children, which could have produced a tax bill of some \$550 million under the 55 percent tax rate then imposed on gifts and inheritances. However, the Trumps paid only a total of \$52 million in taxes. Trump's lawyers have denied any allegation regarding fraud or tax evasion. However, the New York judge Engoron found Trump had committed fraud for years (see above). In any case, the *Times* report made it clear that Trump's finances were deeply intertwined with, and dependent on, his father's wealth. Trump nevertheless has continually perpetuated the myth of him being a self-made billionaire which he is not.

Donald Trump has repeatedly been diagnosed a pathological narcissist. According to Sander Thomaes, a developmental psychologist at Utrecht University specializing in narcissism, Trump is a "prototypical narcissist". Narcissists such as Trump have a grandiose self image, a very inflated ego, and are in continuous need for attention and approval. While they have a big urge to be admired, they lash out relentlessly and mercilessly, if that admiration is withdrawn or if they are being criticized. Narcissists often portray themselves as born leaders, and some people tend to follow them initially until finding out that narcissists have no good leadership qualities because they are always preoccupied with themselves and, hence, cannot fully focus on the tasks at hand. If things go wrong, they always blame others – as

Trump did after losing his presidential election (“You did not fight hard enough” he told Republicans). In a narcissistic person, delusions of grandiosity go hand in hand with potential vulnerability when things don’t go as expected. There is also a dire lack of empathy for others and a hypersensitivity to criticism as well as an admiration for those who appear more powerful or of higher status. According to Tony Schwarz, Trump’s ghost writer for “The Art of the Deal”, Trump would be capable of shooting someone “and not have a moment’s pang of conscience” because of him being a sociopath (see his interview with Ari Melber of MSNBC). While Trump labeled himself a “stable genius”, experts consider him neither stable nor a genius. Among his other weaknesses is his lack of historical acumen, his tendency to make decisions based on intuition rather than facts, his unwillingness or inability to listen to others, his carelessness with facts, his overreaction to criticism, and his disrespect for the law in general. No wonder that many experts consider Trump to be a pathological and malignant narcissist. Trump tends to repel people who are secure of their own identity, and to attract those who are less secure and feel undervalued. The latter are more likely to identify with Trump’s grandiose and aggressive aspects and in doing so cover up their own inabilities and vulnerabilities. In fact, Trump’s narcissism especially tends to attract people with narcissistic tendencies of their own. Overall, his extreme narcissism makes Trump unfit for the presidency. To be president (of the United States or of any big company) a leader must be able to listen to the counsel of advisers more competent than he himself. Despite these shortcomings, Trump could still regain the presidency thanks to those who fail to recognize the hollowness of his claims, lies and purported grandiosity.

But the danger of another presidential term comes not so much from Trump’s pathological state of mind as it could come from Trump’s willingness to sacrifice American democracy in order to advance his own authoritarian rule. In light of the 2020 lost election, Trump has called, in a post on *Truth Social*, “for the termination of alle rules, regulations, and articles, even those found in the Constitution”. Worse still, the “Project 2025”, initiated and supported by conservative Trump followers, intends to reshape the entire executive branch of the US federal government after Trump’s anticipated victory in the 2024 presidential election. Established in 2022, the Project 2025 aims at replacing existing federal civil service workers – which are considered as representing the “deep state” – by tens of thousands of conservatives. Project 2025 also aims at giving the US presidency unrestrained power, including his power to employ military forces for domestic purposes. Project 2025 aims at giving the US President full jurisdiction over the departments, including the FBI and the Justice Department which would be instructed to pursue Trump adversaries. In other words, Trump would actually do what he has repeatedly accused Biden of doing: to weaponize the Justice Department for his personal gain – which the Justice Department has repeatedly denied of having done so far. In June 2023, Trump said: “I will appoint a special prosecutor to go after the most corrupt president in the history of the United States of America, Joe Biden, and the entire Biden crime family”; and added: “I will totally obliterate the Deep State.” He also intends to prosecute anyone criticizing him. “If I happen to be president and I see somebody who’s doing well and beating me very badly, I say go down and indict them”, Trump is quoted as saying. It would behoove Americans well to take Trump at his word. Some critics believe that once Trump has gained office for a second term, he would not relinquish that office to a successor but would attempt to stay in power, as he has attempted once before in January 2021. That ambition would of course be motivated by Trump’s fear of being convicted and imprisoned, if not re-elected. An autocratic presidency would grant him power to dismiss the court cases, and he could prolong that presidency ad infinitum in order to avoid any future post-presidency prosecution.

One of the typical traits of a narcissist is to accuse others of what the narcissist is himself guilty of. When Trump, in a recent speech, echoed Adolf Hitler by comparing his political opponents to “vermin”, some critics called this fascist language and Trump a fascist. In turn, Trump called these critics “fascists”. Being a person of corruption and fraud, Trump never tires to accuse Joe Biden of the same. When Biden, speaking in Arizona in September 2023, warned that Trump’s MAGA movement could be a threat to democracy, Trump called Biden a “destroyer of democracy”. Again, Trump turned the tables and accused his opponent of what he himself was guilty of.

If Trump were re-elected President in 2024, chances are he would turn his second-term presidency into an autocracy and the U.S. democracy into a totalitarian regime. It could be the end of the United States as we have known it.