

Donald Trump in 2017:

False or Misleading Facts, Defective Thought Process, Misconduct

Copyright 2017-2018 by Ronald B. Standler

No copyright claimed for quotations.

No copyright claimed for works of the U.S. Government.

Table of Contents

Before the Election in November 2016

Trump's Delusion about Obama's Birthplace
Trump says he is "smart"
Narcissism

Examples after 20 Jan 2017

21 Jan 2017: Exaggerated Size of Inaugural Crowd
23 Jan 2017: Fictitious Voter Fraud
2 Feb 2017: Kellyanne Conway's "Bowling Green Massacre"
6 Feb 2017: speech at CENTCOM
7 Feb 2017: erroneous murder rate
9 Feb 2017: Kellyanne Conway's alleged ethics violation
13 Feb 2017: Michael Flynn resigns
Sessions' contacts with Russian ambassador
14 Feb 2017: Errors in Executive Orders at WH website
16 Feb 2017: Trump's press conference
24 Feb 2017: Trump attacks journalists
27 Feb 2017: Trump blames Obama for Protests
28 Feb 2017: Trump speaks to Congress
2 Mar 2017: Pence & Pruitt used private e-mail
4 Mar 2017: Trump alleges Obama wiretapped Trump Tower
17 Mar 2017: Trump falsely claims Germany owes money to the USA
22 Mar 2017: *Time* magazine interview
30 Mar 2017: Flynn demands immunity, later pleads guilty
16 April 2017: Trump's income tax returns
April 2017: U.S.S. Vinson & North Korea policy
28 April 2017: Should South Korea pay for THAAD?
Trump wants to seize Iraq's oil
27 April 2017: Trump surprised at difficulty
9 May 2017: Trump fires FBI Director
11 May 2017: *The Economist* interviews Trump
15 May 2017: Trump disclosed classified information
16 May 2017: Breaking Point for Republicans in Congress
27 June 2017: forged *Time* magazine cover at Trump's golf courses
June to August 2017: More False Facts from Trump
Sep to Oct 2017: More False Facts from Trump
16-25 Oct: debacle over condolence call to widow
4 Oct 2017: Did Tillerson call Trump a "Moron"?
11 Oct 2017: Trump wants to license news media
24 Oct 2017: Senator Flake criticizes Trump
24 Nov 2017: Trump not TIME magazine person of the year
21-31 Dec 2017: end of 2017

Themes

Trump's low approval by voters
Trump, Islamic Terrorism, & Travel Ban
Trump's 2015-2016 tweets on Islamic terrorism
Trump's 2017 tweets on Islamic terrorism
Trump's promises to ban Muslims from travel to the USA
Trump's first Executive Order on immigration to the USA

Trump's second Executive Order on immigration to the USA
Trump's third Executive Order on immigration to the USA
Trump's Rude & Obnoxious Remarks
 feud with Morning Joe hosts
 pejorative labels for mass murderers
 Senator Bob Corker
 "You're fired!" & Resignations
 Allegations of Sexual Misconduct
Trump's Broken Promises to Voters
 1. Wall along U.S./Mexico border
 2. Trump promised to "drain the swamp"
 3. Trump's Attempts to Ban Muslim Terrorists

Russia's Interference in 2016 U.S. Election
 Congress votes for more sanctions on Russia
Trump's deals in Russia

Conclusion
 Removal of Trump from Presidency
 Bills in U.S. House of Representatives on removal of Trump
 Bibliography on Trump Unfit to be President

Introduction

This webpage documents some of the false statements by U.S. President Donald Trump and the exposure of the Truth by journalists at respected news organizations, such as *The Washington Post*, the Associated Press, and *The New York Times*. Some of these false statements by Trump might euphemistically be described as exaggerations, but I believe these false statements show either (1) Trump's disdain for learning the Truth or (2) a narcissistic character flaw that leads Trump to delusions about how many people support him or boasts about his excellent performance.

Trump himself, together with Trump's supporters, have a delusional opinion that the liberal newsmedia (e.g., *The New York Times*) are "dishonest", and are *not* reporting major events. As my citations below show, many of Trump's false statements contradict facts reported by authoritative U.S. Government websites. This is *not* some alleged conspiracy by liberal journalists against Trump.

In writing this essay, I hope to explain to students how Trump's defective thought process created a crisis in the U.S. Government. I document details — with many citations — that I hope will assist future historians in understanding the turmoil in 2017.

I also include some instances of alleged misconduct in this essay, to show Trump's unfitness to be president.

I avoid mentioning Trump's policies, some of which may be unconstitutional or ill-conceived, even harmful to the interests of the USA. Disagreements about policy are disputable or controversial, a matter of subjective opinion. On the other hand, Trump's false statements of fact have been shown by journalists to be objectively *false*. (I have discussed Trump's [Islamic terrorism](#) policies, because there is factual evidence that Trump's Executive Orders on Muslims traveling to the USA would *not* have prevented any of the lethal Islamic terror attacks in the USA.)

Before the Election in Nov 2016

Trump's Delusion about Obama's Birthplace

In the best-known pre-election bizarre behavior by Trump, Trump claimed that Obama was born in Kenya, and therefore *not* eligible to be president of the USA.

In June 2008, Obama's campaign released his short-form birth certificate, which legally proved that he was born in Hawaii. [LA Times](#).

As early as 17 March 2011, Trump was publicly expressing his opinion that Obama was not born in the USA. See, e.g., [CNN](#).

On 27 April 2011, Obama attempted to end the controversy by publicly posting at the White House website a copy of his long-form birth certificate issued by Hawaii. [White House](#); [NY Times](#); [Washington Post](#). Trump immediately took credit for forcing Obama to release his long-form birth certificate. [NY Times](#).

But Trump continued to believe that Obama was born outside of the USA until about 15 Sep 2016. Trump's spokesman said on 15 Sep that Trump now believed Obama was born in the USA, and Trump himself said the same thing at his new hotel in Washington DC on 16 Sep 2016. [NY Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [NY Times](#). Note that Trump himself did *not* admit his error, and Trump did not apologize to Obama. [Washington Post](#).

And when Trump abandoned his claim that Obama was born in Kenya, Trump espoused a new falsehood that Hillary Clinton began the controversy over whether Obama was born in the USA! [Washington Post](#); [NY Times](#).

This example displays Trump's inability to engage in critical thinking and reject false statements. This is a failure of Trump's education.

It is an axiom of propaganda that a false statement that is repeated often will convince some people it is true. In February 2011, [Politico](#) cites an opinion poll that half of Republicans believe Obama was *not* born in the USA.

On 28 Nov 2017, the [New York Times](#) reported that Trump had resumed questioning Obama's birth certificate in private conversations: "In recent months, [advisers] say, Mr. Trump has used closed-door conversations to question the authenticity of President Barack Obama's birth certificate." One wonders why Trump would now resume his delusions about Obama born in Kenya, 14 months after Trump accepted the Truth that Obama was born in Hawaii. The issue of where Obama was born is surely irrelevant in 2017. In 2017, the issue is Trump's mental fitness to be president of the USA.

Trump says he is "smart"

Trump attended college for only four years: two years of college at Fordham University and two final years of college at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business. Trump's highest educational credential is a bachelor's degree in economics.

That makes Trump's academic credentials inferior to Bill and Hillary Clinton (Yale Law School graduates), Obama (Harvard Law School graduate), and George W. Bush (MBA from Harvard Business School).

Despite Trump's ordinary academic credentials, Trump often boasts about how smart he is. See, e.g.,

1. "A transcript of Donald Trump's meeting with The Washington Post editorial board," [Washington Post](#), 21 Mar 2016. ("... I went to a great school, I was a good student and all. I am an intelligent person. My uncle, I would say my uncle was one of the brilliant people. He was at MIT for 35 years. As a great scientist and engineer, actually more than anything else. Dr. John Trump, a great guy. I'm an intelligent person. I understand what is going on.")
2. Jeremy W. Peters, "Donald Trump's Appeal? G.O.P. Is Puzzled, but His Fans Aren't," [NY Times](#), 17 July 2015. (" 'I'm really smart,' he boasted in Phoenix last weekend before rattling off his résumé highlights. 'Went to the Wharton School of Finance. Even then, a long time ago, like the hardest, or one of the hardest, schools to get into.' ")
3. Jenna Johnson & Jose A. DelReal, "25 quotes capturing Donald Trump's final pitch to South Carolina," [Washington Post](#), 19 Feb 2016. (Trump: "I went to the Wharton School of Finance, the best school in the world... You've got to be really smart to get in, okay?")
4. On 21 Jan 2017, in a speech at the CIA headquarters, Trump said: "... I'm a person that very strongly believes in academics. In fact, every time I say I had an uncle who was a great professor at MIT for 35 years who did a fantastic job in so many different ways, academically — was an academic genius — and then they say, is Donald Trump an intellectual? Trust me, I'm like a smart persona." [White House](#).
5. On 10 October 2017, in the context of a dispute with his Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, Trump wanted to compare their IQ test scores. (See [below](#).) Chris Cillizza at [CNN](#) listed 21 times that Trump mentioned his intelligence during the years March 2013 to Jan 2017. See also [Washington Post](#).
6. On 25 October 2015, a journalist asked Trump if he should be more civil. Trump's strange reply: "Well, I think the press makes me more uncivil than I am. You know, people don't understand I went to an Ivy League college, I was a nice student, I did very well, I'm a very intelligent person." [White House](#). Even if Trump were intelligent (he is *not* intelligent), that would *not* make him civil — Trump made an irrelevant response to the question. Some of Trump's uncivil behavior is chronicled [below](#).

These boasts are particularly hollow, given Trump's defective thought process that involves either false "facts" or *no* facts, as documented in this essay.

Trump is correct that it is difficult for stupid people to be admitted to prestigious private universities (e.g., Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Brown, University of Pennsylvania, etc.). But it is snobbish for Trump to boast of having attended the University of Pennsylvania. There are students who are smart enough to be admitted to a prestigious private university, but do *not* have a wealthy parent who can afford to pay the expensive tuition at a private university, and so those smart students go to a less expensive state university. Other smart students may choose to attend a state university that has a research program in some specialized academic area that interests the student.

Academic degrees are really important for young people who are beginning their professional career. But for a person who has been practicing a profession for more than ten years, what really matters is a person's record of publications in scholarly journals, authorship of books, patents naming them as inventors, and other evidence of original intellectual accomplishment. In that context, note that Trump's most famous book, *The Art of the Deal*, was co-authored (ghostwritten?) by Tony Schwartz.

Finally, if a person is really intelligent and knowledgeable, it will be obvious from their accomplishments and reputation. There is *no* need for anyone to boast of their intelligence.

Narcissism

On 4 August 2016, Dr. Krauthammer — a board-certified psychiatrist, a graduate of Harvard Medical School, and a political commentator for *The Washington Post* — warned Americans about a character flaw in Donald Trump, who was then the Republican candidate for U.S. President.

.... [Trump's] governing rule in life is to strike back when attacked, disrespected or even slighted. To understand Trump, you have to grasp the General Theory: He judges every action, every pronouncement, every person by a single criterion — whether or not it/he is “nice” to Trump.

....

Of course we all try to protect our own dignity and command respect. But Trump's hypersensitivity and unedited, untempered Pavlovian responses are, shall we say, unusual in both ferocity and predictability.

This is beyond narcissism. I used to think Trump was an 11-year-old, an undeveloped schoolyard bully. I was off by about 10 years. His needs are more primitive, an infantile hunger for approval and praise, a craving that can never be satisfied. He lives in a cocoon of solipsism where the world outside himself has value — indeed exists — only insofar as it sustains and inflates him.

Most politicians seek approval. But Trump lives for the adoration. He doesn't even try

to hide it, boasting incessantly about his crowds, his standing ovations, his TV ratings, his poll numbers, his primary victories. The latter are most prized because they offer empirical evidence of how loved and admired he is.

Charles Krauthammer, "Donald Trump and the fitness threshold," [Washington Post](#), 4 August 2016.

Krauthammer's opinion was reprinted in many newspapers, including [Chicago Tribune](#); [Philadelphia Inquirer](#); [Portland Oregonian](#).

Krauthammer clearly explained *why* Trump is obsessed with making false statements to show the huge number of people who support Trump.

A retired physician writing in *The Globe & Mail* began an article by saying:

The consensus as to Donald Trump's psychiatric issues is nearly unanimous. "Textbook narcissistic personality disorder," according to clinical psychologist Ben Michaelis, quoted in *Vanity Fair*. He is just one of many who have reached the same conclusion.

Gabor Maté, "Donald Trump, narcissism and diagnosis as political sport," [Globe & Mail](#), 14 Oct 2016, updated 20 Jan 2017.

Blowhard

If you do not like the "narcissistic" label for Trump, perhaps you will prefer what [The Guardian](#) newspaper in England said: "It is hard to imagine anyone more different from the cerebral, discreet 'no drama' Obama, 55, than the blowhard, rabble-rousing 70-year-old Trump, who pushed the notion that [Obama] was actually born in Kenya."

On 4 November 2017, the author of a new book by Mark Updegrave, titled *The Last Republicans*, released some quotations from his book. In May 2016, the elder Bush told Updegrave about Trump:

"I don't like him. I don't know much about him, but I know he's a blowhard. And I'm not too excited about him being a leader."

George H.W. Bush, quoted by Mark Updegrave.

The elder Bush voted for Hillary Clinton, while George W. Bush voted for "none of the above".

The White House press office retaliated with a message to CNN that criticized George W. Bush for the war in Iraq, which the White House called "one of the greatest foreign policy mistakes in American history." But George W. Bush's mistaken war in Iraq is irrelevant to whether Trump is a blowhard.

See: [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#).

My comment is that, according to [opinion polls](#) in October 2017, approximately 40% of people in the USA approve of what Trump is doing as president. To those supporters of Trump, it must be a shock that he is a "blowhard". But I think few Trump supporters read

either *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*. Or maybe the news is not the revelation that Trump is a blowhard, but rather that a gentleman like George H.W. Bush would disparage the character of the president. Technically, Bush only disparaged a *candidate* for president in May 2016, when he made the "blowhard" remark.

Trump's narcissistic personality causes him to boast incessantly, making Trump what is commonly called a "blowhard".

APA Rule

The American Psychiatric Association has a rule that prohibits psychiatrists from publicly diagnosing people who they have not personally interviewed. And if a psychiatrist has personally interviewed a patient, then physician-patient confidentiality prohibits the psychiatrist from disclosing the diagnosis, unless the patient consents. See, e.g., [NY Times](#). But the issue is not so simple. Physician-patient and psychotherapist-patient confidentiality has an exception for warning people who might be physically harmed by a patient. See, e.g., *Tarasoff v. Regents of University of California*, 551 P.2d 334 (Calif. 1976). Obviously, a president's decisions can harm many more people than one homicidal patient. The public statements of a candidate for high political office may contain adequate information for a psychiatrist or psychologist to credibly observe character flaws in the candidate's public persona. In this Internet era, one can find not only a transcript of statements, but also video that shows clues in facial expression and tone of voice.

On 25 July 2017, the American Psychoanalytic Association reiterated that psychiatrists could offer commentary on public figures. [APA](#). Note that the American Psychiatric Association's rule that prohibits such commentary is still in place.

On 6 August 2016 during a campaign speech in Windham, New Hampshire, Trump fired a barrage of accusations that Hillary Clinton has mental problems:

- “She took a little short-circuit in the brain, she has problems.”
- “Unstable Hillary, she lacks the judgment, temperament and moral character to lead this country.”
- “She is a totally unhinged person. She's unbalanced.”

[Politico](#); [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#); [NBC News](#).

These statements by Trump arguably make the mental health of *both* candidates a legitimate political issue.

Examples of Bizarre Behavior

Exaggerated Size of Inaugural Crowd

At the inaugural ceremonies on 20 Jan 2017, journalists noted that the size of the Trump's

crowd was much smaller than presidential inaugurations in the recent past. There are three facts that support this conclusion:

1. Photographs of the crowd. *The New York Times* reports that Trump's crowd was about 1/3 the size of Obama's crowd in 2009.
2. Number of riders on the Washington, DC subway system (i.e., Metro). (There is a lack of parking in downtown Washington, so most people park at a suburban Metro station and take a train to downtown Washington.) At 11:00 on Obama's inauguration in 2009 there were 513,000 trips, compared with 193,000 at the same time for Trump's inauguration.
3. The [Associated Press](#) reported: "Hotels across the District of Columbia reported vacancies, a rarity for an event as large as a presidential inauguration."

See, e.g., [Washington Post](#); [NY Times](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 21 Jan 2017, the morning after Trump's inauguration, Trump went to the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency to give a speech to mollify the intelligence community. Here is part of what Trump said:

And the reason you're my first stop is that, as you know, I have a running war with the media. They are among the most dishonest human beings on Earth. (Laughter and applause.) And they sort of made it sound like I had a feud with the intelligence community. And I just want to let you know, the reason you're the number-one stop is exactly the opposite — exactly. And they understand that, too.

And I was explaining about the numbers. We did a thing yesterday at the speech. Did everybody like the speech? (Applause.) I've been given good reviews. But we had a massive field of people. You saw them. Packed. I get up this morning, I turn on one of the networks, and they show an empty field. I say, wait a minute, I made a speech. I looked out, the field was — it looked like a million, million and a half people. They showed a field where there were practically nobody standing there. And they said, Donald Trump did not draw well. I said, it was almost raining, the rain should have scared them away, but God looked down and he said, we're not going to let it rain on your speech.

In fact, when I first started, I said, oh, no. The first line, I got hit by a couple of drops. And I said, oh, this is too bad, but we'll go right through it. But the truth is that it stopped immediately. It was amazing. And then it became really sunny. And then I walked off and it poured right after I left. It poured. But, you know, we have something that's amazing because we had — it looked — honestly, it looked like a million and a half people. Whatever it was, it was. But it went all the way back to the Washington Monument. And I turn on — and by mistake I get this network, and it showed an empty field. And it said we drew 250,000 people. Now, that's not bad, but it's a lie. We had 250,000 people literally around — you know, in the little bowl that we constructed. That was 250,000 people. The rest of the 20-block area, all the way back to the Washington Monument, was packed. So we caught them, and we caught them in a beauty. And I think they're going to pay a big price.

"Remarks by President Trump and Vice President Pence at CIA Headquarters," [White House](#), 21 Jan 2017.

The Washington Post reported:

What Trump delivered Saturday [21 Jan] was a campaign-style, stream-of-consciousness airing of grievances — at the Senate for delaying confirmation of his nominees; at critics for questioning whether he is smart and vigorous; and at journalists, whom he called “the most dishonest human beings on earth” and accused of lying about the size of his inauguration crowd.

Trump claimed falsely that the crowd for his swearing-in stretched down the National Mall to the Washington Monument and totaled more than 1 million people. It did not. Trump accused television networks of showing “an empty field” and reporting that he drew just 250,000 people to witness Friday’s ceremony.

“It looked like a million, a million and a half people,” Trump said, falsely claiming that his crowd “went all the way back to the Washington Monument.”

During his 2009 inaugural address, President Obama’s crowd extended that far, and photos from that day show a crowd clearly much larger than the one that showed up for Trump.

....

Trump also misrepresented what happened to the weather during his swearing in. He said he felt a few drops of rain as he started delivering his address, but then, “God looked down and, and he said we’re not going to let it rain on your speech. . . . The truth is it stopped immediately.”

Light rain continued to fall through the first few minutes of the speech — and VIP’s at the dais took out ponchos, including former president George W. Bush — and then quit. Trump said there was a downpour right after he finished, which did not occur.

Speaking from the lobby of CIA headquarters in Langley, before a wall of stars honoring intelligence officers who died in service, Trump declared, “I have a running war with the media. They are among the most dishonest human beings on earth, right?”

....

“That was one of the more disconcerting speeches I’ve seen,” said a senior U.S. intelligence official who was not present for the Trump speech but watched it by video. “He could have kept it very simple and said, ‘I’m here to build some bridges.’ But he spent 10 seconds on that and the rest was on the crowd size,” the official said, referring to Trump’s repeated complaints that the media had undercounted the turnout for his inauguration.

Philip Rucker, John Wagner & Greg Miller, "Trump, in CIA visit, attacks media for coverage of his inaugural crowds," [Washington Post](#), 16:38 EST, 21 Jan 2017.

Later on 21 January 2017, *The Washington Post* reported:

Trump claimed that the crowd for his swearing-in stretched down the Mall to the Washington Monument. It did not. Trump accused television networks of showing “an empty field” and reporting that he drew just 250,000 people to witness Friday’s [20 Jan] ceremony.

“It looked like a million, a million and a half people,” Trump said. “It’s a lie. We caught [the media]. We caught them in a beauty.”

Philip Rucker, John Wagner & Greg Miller, "Trump wages war against the media as demonstrators protest his presidency," [Washington Post](#), 20:26 EST, 21 Jan 2017.

The above-quoted 20:26 article in *The Washington Post* also reports factually wrong statements by Trump's press secretary, Sean Spicer, in his first briefing to journalists at the White House. The [Washington Post](#) later criticized Spicer's wrong statements. I am ignoring Spicer's problems, in order to focus on Trump.

The Associated Press reported on Trump's misstatements:

TRUMP: "I made a speech. I looked out. The field was — it looked like a million, a million and a half people."

The president went on to say that one network "said we drew 250,000 people. Now that's not bad. But it's a lie." He then claimed that were 250,000 right by the stage and the "rest of the, you know, 20-block area, all the way back to the Washington Monument was packed."

"So we caught them," said Trump. "And we caught them in a beauty. And I think they're going to pay a big price."

THE FACTS: Trump is wrong. Photos of the National Mall from his inauguration make clear that the crowd did not extend to the Washington Monument. Large swaths of empty space are visible on the Mall.

Thin crowds and partially empty bleachers also dotted the inaugural parade route. Hotels across the District of Columbia reported vacancies, a rarity for an event as large as a presidential inauguration.

And ridership on the Washington's Metro system didn't match that of recent inaugurations.

Jonathan Lemire & Jill Colvin, "FACT CHECK: Trump overstates crowd size at inaugural," [Associated Press](#), 20:40 EST, 21 Jan 2017.

On 22 January 2017, Kellyanne Conway, Counselor to President Trump, appeared on NBC's Meet the Press. She famously claimed that Trump's press secretary had "alternative facts" that showed large attendance at Trump's inauguration. NBC's host, Chuck Todd, retorted: "Look, alternative facts are not facts. They're falsehoods." [NBC News](#)(transcript); [Washington Post](#).

What's wrong?

1. Trump exaggerated the size of his crowd by a factor of six (i.e., 250,000 estimated vs. 1,500,000 according to Trump). Trump simply invented false numbers to enhance his stature.
2. Trump threatened journalists: "... they're going to pay a big price."
3. Trump alleged God stopped the rain during Trump's speech, which implies that God chose to neither inconvenience nor disrespect Trump.
4. The CIA headquarters was the wrong venue to boast about the size of the crowd at Trump's inauguration. Additionally, Trump should *not* be boasting anywhere about the size of the crowd at his inauguration.
5. One hopes that this is the last time we will hear euphemisms about "alternative facts" from the Trump's White House staff. Trump and his staff need to distinguish between delusions and facts.

The number of people attending the women's protest of Trump in Washington DC on 21 January 2017 was approximately twice the number who attended Trump's inauguration on 20 January. [Associated Press](#)(11:30 on 22 Jan); [Washington Post](#); [CBC](#); [CBS News](#). This fact would surely anger Trump.

In an interview with [ABC News](#) on 25 January, Trump characterized his 21 January speech at CIA headquarters as "a total home run". Trump said: "In terms of a total audience including television and everything else that you have we had supposedly the biggest crowd in history. They say I had the biggest crowd in the history of inaugural speeches." Trump later asserted: "... we had the biggest audience in the history of inaugural speeches."

Trump now appears to be combining the people who were physically present at the inauguration with the people who watched the inauguration on television. But this slight-of-hand does *not* rescue Trump from his continuing false statement. The Nielsen ratings show that Obama's 2009 inauguration had 7 million more television viewers than Trump's inauguration. And the Nielsen ratings show that Reagan's 1981 inauguration had 11 million more television viewers than Trump's inauguration. [WSJ](#); [Bloomberg](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#). These Nielsen ratings were reported on 21 Jan, but four days later Trump continued to spew false statements.

The [Washington Post](#) commented on Trump's interview with ABC News: "[The lengthy interview] revealed a man who is obsessed with his own popularity and eager to provide evidence of his likability, even if that information doesn't match reality." The *Post* also said: "The interview revealed just how preoccupied Trump is with two variables that are gumming up his claim of being widely beloved: Losing the popular vote to Clinton and hosting an inauguration crowd that was smaller than in previous years."

On 27 January 2017 another problem was revealed with Trump's interview with ABC News. Trump claimed that during Obama's 10 January farewell speech in Chicago, "two people were shot and killed". Trump used that "fact" to justify possibly sending federal agents to

Chicago to stop the violence caused by gangs of black people. But the [Chicago Tribune](#) and the [Associated Press](#) reported that there were *no* fatal shootings in Chicago on 10 Jan, and *no* shootings during Obama's speech. I comment that normally people proceed from facts to opinions, but Trump creates an opinion first, then invents fictitious "facts" to support his opinion.

On 6 March 2017, the National Park Service released official photographs of Trump's inauguration, which definitely show that more people attended Obama's inaugural than attended Trump's inaugural. [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#). By the time journalists received the photographs under a Freedom of Information Act request, Trump had made many more false statements, and the number of people attending Trump's inaugural was old news. Nonetheless, for the record, Trump lied about the number of people who attended his inaugural.

Fictitious Voter Fraud

No reasonable person doubts that Donald Trump is the president of the USA. But on 23 January 2017, the third full day of his presidency, Trump alleged — without any supporting evidence — that he lost the popular vote because of between 3 million and 5 million illegal immigrants voted for Hillary Clinton. See, e.g.,

- "Without evidence, Trump tells lawmakers 3 million to 5 million illegal ballots cost him the popular vote," [Washington Post](#), 20:05 EST, 23 Jan 2017.
- "Trump Repeats Lie About Popular Vote in Meeting With Lawmakers," [NY Times](#), 23 Jan 2017.
- "The Latest: Trump repeats unproven claim of illegal votes," [Associated Press](#), 21:05 EST, 23 Jan 2017.
- "Trump wrongly tells congressional leaders that millions of 'illegals' cost him the popular vote," [LA Times](#), 21:12 EST, 23 Jan 2017.
- "What Happens When a President Can't Handle Bad News?," [NBC News](#), 08:42 EST, 24 Jan 2017.

Not only is the popular vote irrelevant to who wins the presidency, but also Trump is still stuck back on 8 November 2016, more than two months ago. Apparently, Trump is not satisfied at having decisively won the presidency, he also wants to win the popular vote. And Trump is willing to invent fictitious numbers to win the popular vote that his ego craves.

Trump began his false claims of voter fraud on 27 Nov 2016

Trump's unsupported claims of voter fraud is a repeat of an old falsehood by Trump, that "millions" of fraudulent votes were cast for Clinton. On 27 Nov 2016 at 12:30, Trump

[tweeted](#): "In addition to winning the Electoral College in a landslide, I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally". Four hours later on 27 Nov 2016 at 16:31, Trump [tweeted](#): "Serious voter fraud in Virginia, New Hampshire and California — so why isn't the media reporting on this? Serious bias — big problem!" Trump's baseless claims were exposed as false by *The Washington Post* and [Politico](#) on 27 November 2016. Trump is a slow learner, when he continues to make the same mistake two months later.

24 Jan 2017: more allegations of voter fraud

On 24 Jan 2017, the White House Press Secretary had another ignominious performance that degraded his credibility, when he tried to justify Trump's claim of millions of illegal immigrants voting for Clinton. Professional journalists quickly debunked the White House claims of voter fraud:

- "Recidivism Watch: Spicer uses repeatedly debunked citations for Trump's voter fraud claims," [Washington Post](#), 14:33 EST, 24 Jan 2017.
- "White House says Trump's false claim of voter fraud is his 'long-standing belief'," [Washington Post](#), 18:48 EST, 24 Jan 2017.
- "FACT CHECK: Miscues on voter fraud and election results," [Associated Press](#), 18:53 EST, 24 Jan 2017.
- "Trump Won't Back Down From His Voting Fraud Lie. Here Are the Facts." [NY Times](#), 24 Jan 2017.
- "President Trump's first seven days of false claims, inaccurate statements and exaggerations," [Washington Post](#), 03:00 EST, 27 Jan 2017.

An article in *The Washington Post* explained *why* Trumps wants to win the popular vote: Trump's focus on numbers is a holdover from his decades as a marketer and businessman, when he would toss around figures for his personal wealth or the value of his buildings or the ratings of his television shows as validations of the power of his brand.

"It's a combination of ego and a successful track record of always marketing everything he's done in his business as 'the biggest,' 'the best,' 'the superlative,' " [Ari] Fleischer [, a White House press secretary under President George W. Bush,] said. "It's just ingrained in him."

Philip Rucker & Sean Sullivan, "White House says Trump's false claim of voter fraud is his 'long-standing belief'," [Washington Post](#), 18:48 EST, 24 Jan 2017.

The reason it is "ingrained" in Trump to use superlatives about himself is that Trump is narcissistic.

5 Feb 2017: interview with Bill O'Reilly

Bill O'Reilly of Fox News interviewed Trump. Here is a transcript of part of that interview, which was broadcast on 5 Feb 2017:

O'Reilly: Is there any validity to the criticism of you that you say things you can't back up factually, and as the president, if you say, for example, that there are 3 million illegal aliens who voted and then you don't have the data to back it up, some people are gonna say that it's irresponsible for a president to say that. Is there any validity to that?

Trump: Many people have come out and said I'm right. You know that.

O'Reilly: I know, but you've gotta have *data* to back that up.

Trump: Let me just tell you. And it doesn't have to do with the vote, although that's the end result. It has to do with the registration. And when you look at the registration and you see dead people that have voted, when you see people that are registered in two states that voted in two states, when you see other things, when you see illegals, people that are not citizens, and they're on the registration rolls. Look, Bill, we can be babies, but you take a look at the registration, you have illegals, you have dead people, you have this. It's really a bad situation. It's really bad.

O'Reilly: So you think you're gonna be proven correct in that statement?

Trump: Well, I think I already have. A lot of people have come out and said that I am correct.

O'Reilly: But the data has to show that 3 million illegals voted.

Trump: Forget that. Forget all of that. Just take a look at the registration, and we're gonna do it, and I'm gonna set up a commission, to be headed by Vice President Mike Pence, and we're gonna look at it very, very carefully.

"Donald Trump Super Bowl interview transcript with Fox News' Bill O'Reilly," [sbnation](#), 16:05 EST, 5 Feb 2017.

Callum Borchers, writing in the [Washington Post](#), suggests that when Trump said "forget that" about his past claims that 3 million illegal immigrants voted for Hillary Clinton, Trump is attempting to abandon his past claims. Trump's focus on 5 Feb 2017 seems to be on removing from lists of registered voters dead people, illegal immigrants, and people who have moved.

But on 10 Feb 2017, Trump again mentioned voter fraud, see the following paragraphs.

10 Feb 2017: more allegations of voter fraud

On 10 February 2017, Trump *again* alleged voter fraud as the reason he lost the popular vote. *Again* Trump made unsupported allegations, with *no* evidence. The occasion was a meeting between Trump and senators from both parties to discuss Trump's nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court. Kelly Ayotte — an attorney and a former U.S. Senator from New Hampshire who lost her re-election bid in Nov 2016 — is shepherding Trump's nominee

through the confirmation process. Ayotte's presence in the meeting may have inspired Trump to go off on an irrelevant diatribe about Trump losing the popular vote. Politico reported:

The president claimed that he and Ayotte both would have been victorious in the Granite State [NH] if not for the “thousands” of people who were “brought in on buses” from neighboring Massachusetts to “illegally” vote in New Hampshire.

According to one participant who described the meeting, “an uncomfortable silence” momentarily overtook the room.

Hillary Clinton narrowly won New Hampshire’s four electoral votes over Trump by nearly 3,000 votes. Ayotte’s margin of defeat was even slimmer: 743 votes.

....

Just days after taking office last month, Trump tweeted a claim that as many as 3 million to 5 million people voted illegally in the November election, enough to account for his popular vote deficit. He has not followed through on his vow to oversee a federal voter-fraud investigation.

Republicans and Democrats who oversee elections at the state level have repeatedly said there is little evidence of fraud and no need for such an investigation.

Eli Stokols, "Trump brings up vote fraud again, this time in meeting with senators," [Politico](#), 14:35 EST, updated 17:30 EST, 10 Feb 2017.

Not to quibble, but Clinton had 2732 more votes than Trump in New Hampshire. The New Hampshire state government only reports results by county, not a total for the entire state, so I rely on the total at [WMUR](#).

The Washington Post quoted the Politico article and then observed:

By the way, busing in thousands of people is harder than it seems. A charter bus holds about 55 people. So that’s 50 buses that would have had to make the trip into New Hampshire to hand Clinton the victory. If you’ve got any photos of that caravan, please do share.

It’s all nonsense. It’s all rationalization and insecurity. Trump lost the popular vote and he lost in New Hampshire, and that’s too bad but he’s still the president and the election was 94 days ago, but here we are still talking about it. It couldn’t be less important — except for what it tells us to expect about other times Trump might see his winning streak interrupted.

Philip Bump, "Once again, Trump claims that just enough fraud cost him an electoral victory," [Washington Post](#), 18:20 EST, 10 Feb 2017.

On 10 Feb 2017, the Attorney General of New Hampshire denied that there had been significant voter fraud in the Nov 2016 election: "We have seen no evidence of large-scale voter fraud whatsoever, and none has been brought to our attention." [WMUR](#). See also [Union-Leader](#) in New Hampshire.

On 12 February, Bernie Sanders — U.S. Senator from Vermont who was defeated by Hillary

Clinton in the 2016 Democratic primary elections — was interviewed on the NBC television program "Meet the Press":

SENATOR BERNIE SANDERS: Well, I say two things, right now we are in a pivotal moment in American history. We have a president who is delusional in many respects, a pathological liar, somebody who is trying to divide us up.

[Meet the Press host] CHUCK TODD: Those are strong words.

SENATOR BERNIE SANDERS: Those are strong words.

CHUCK TODD: Can you work with a pathological liar?

SENATOR BERNIE SANDERS: Well, it makes life very difficult, not just for me. And I don't mean, you know, I know it sounds, it is very harsh. But I think that's the truth. When somebody goes before you and the American people, say, "Three to five million people voted illegally in the last election," nobody believes that. There is not the scintilla of evidence.

What would you call that remark? It's a lie. It's a delusion.
"Meet The Press 02-12-17," [NBC News](#), 11:42 EST, 12 Feb 2017.

Trump and his White House staff should stop talking about alleged voter fraud that denied Trump a win of the popular vote. Instead, on 12 Feb 2017, the White House sent Stephen Miller, a senior policy adviser, to the Sunday morning talk shows on television to defend Trump's claims of voter fraud. The [Washington Post](#) awarded Miller "bushels of Pinocchios" for his uncredible performance. On 13 February, the [Associated Press](#) reported Miller "peddled discredited theories about voter fraud during a round of TV appearances Sunday".

What Trump's attorneys said in Dec 2016 is irrelevant to Trump's allegations

Some journalists and commentators have said that Trump's claims of voter fraud contradict statements by Trump's attorneys in early December 2016. In early December 2016 there were challenges to the election in courts in Michigan and Pennsylvania. During those legal challenges, attorneys for Trump argued that there was *no* evidence of voting fraud. [Washington Post](#)(5 Dec 2016); editorial in [New York Times](#)(5 Dec 2016); [The Hill](#)(25 Jan 2017). But Trump is alleging — with *no* credible evidence — voter fraud in California, Virginia, and New Hampshire. What Trump's attorneys said about elections in Michigan and Pennsylvania is *not* relevant to Trump's unsupported allegations of voting fraud in California, Virginia, and New Hampshire.

11 May 2017: Presidential Commission

On 11 May 2017, Trump signed an Executive Order that established Trump's "Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity" to investigate Trump's delusion that at least three million illegal votes were cast in the November 2016 election that Trump won.

[White House](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#).

It is not known why Trump waited until 11 May 2017 to create this commission.

At night on 3 January 2018, Trump disbanded this commission, which had met only twice. [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [New York Times](#).

Kellyanne Conway's "Bowling Green Massacre"

Kellyanne Conway operated a political opinion poll company, was Trump's campaign manager after 19 Aug 2016, and is currently a counselor to Trump in the White House. Above, I briefly mentioned her alleging on 22 January 2017 during NBC's Meet the Press that the White House had "alternative facts" to support Spicer's claims about large attendance at Trump's inauguration.

Twice on 29 Jan 2017, and more prominently on 2 February 2017, Ms. Conway referred to the nonexistent "Bowling Green Massacre" to support Trump's Executive Order that temporarily banned people from seven Muslim-majority nations (Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen) from entering the USA.

On 3 February, *The Washington Post* reported:

Kellyanne Conway has taken "[alternative facts](#)" to a new level.

During a Thursday [2 Feb] interview with MSNBC's Chris Matthews, the counselor to the president defended President Trump's travel ban related to seven majority-Muslim countries. At one point, Conway made a reference to two Iraqi refugees whom she described as the masterminds behind "the Bowling Green massacre."

"Most people don't know that because it didn't get covered," Conway said.

The Bowling Green massacre didn't get covered because it didn't happen. There has never been a terrorist attack in Bowling Green, Ky., carried out by Iraqi refugees or anyone else.

It appeared initially that Conway was referring to two Iraqi citizens living in Bowling Green who were arrested in 2011 and eventually sentenced to federal prison for attempting to send weapons and money to al-Qaeda in Iraq for the purpose of killing U.S. soldiers, according to a [statement](#) from the Justice Department.

....

The arrests in Bowling Green were indeed covered, contrary to what Conway initially said. A Lexis search of major papers turned up about 90 news stories. That's not counting TV coverage, as in the ABC news story she attached to her [tweet](#) [on 3 Feb].

....

Conway also reiterated claims from Trump that his refugee policy is similar to “what President Obama did in 2011 when he banned visas for refugees from Iraq for six months.” Conway said it was “brand new information” to people that Obama enacted a “six-month ban on the Iraqi refugee program.”

As The Washington Post [reported](#) [on 29 Jan 2017], that was not the case. Obama administration officials told The Post that there was never a point when Iraqi resettlement was stopped or banned. In the aftermath of the arrests of the two Iraqis living in Kentucky, the Obama administration imposed more extensive background checks on Iraqi refugees, and the new screening procedures created a dramatic slowdown in visa approvals.

Samantha Schmidt & Lindsey Bever, "Kellyanne Conway cites 'Bowling Green massacre' that never happened to defend travel ban," [Washington Post](#), 3 Feb 2017.

See also [NY Times](#).

It is important to understand that the two emigrants from Iraq were put in prison for attacking U.S. soldiers *in Iraq* and for sending support to terrorists in Iraq. There were *no* allegations that they planned attacks in the USA.

By 6 February 2017, two additional instances of Kellyanne Conway referring to the "Bowling Green Massacre" have been uncovered by journalists:

1. On 29 Jan 2017, Ms. Conway referred to the nonexistent Massacre in an [interview](#) with *Cosmopolitan* magazine.
2. On 29 Jan 2017, Ms. Conway referred to the nonexistent Massacre in an interview with TMZ, as reported by The [Daily Beast](#).
See the update at the end of a 3 Feb [Washington Post](#) news article.

Kellyanne Conway excused her false assertion about the nonexistent Massacre by saying she "misspoke one word". Everyone occasionally speaks the wrong word, so her excuse sounds good. But her excuse does *not* withstand critical scrutiny:

1. She referred to the nonexistent Massacre in at least *three* interviews. It appears that she really believed the Bowling Green Massacre actually occurred. See the 6 February article in The [Washington Post](#).
2. On 2 Feb she said: “Most people don’t know that because it didn’t get covered.” The lack of coverage by journalists of an alleged Massacre in the USA is a strong hint that the Massacre did *not* occur.
3. As [MSNBC](#) pointed out, replacing the word "Massacre" with "terrorist" in Conway's 2 Feb statement creates an awkward sentence: the Iraqi criminals “were the masterminds behind the Bowling Green terrorists”. Conway's "misspoke one word" excuse does *not* fit the facts.

I conclude that Conway's excuse contains implausible — perhaps false — statements.

On 4 February, the [Associated Press](#) included the Bowling Green Massacre in its news article titled: "AP FACT CHECK: A week's supply of baloney".

Trump's presidential administration has a big problem. Trump himself has very little credibility. And both Spicer and Conway are rapidly losing their credibility. The problem is that Trump has a tenuous relationship with facts and information, so Trump is probably blind to the ignominious performance of Spicer and Conway.

Spicer mentions wrong city in his irrelevant explanation

On 29 Jan 2017, and twice on 30 Jan 2017, Trump's press secretary, Sean Spicer, had mentioned an Islamic terrorist attack on Atlanta. There was a terrorist attack in Atlanta in 1996, but the perpetrator was a Christian anti-abortion zealot who was born in the USA. Spicer later clarified that he should have said Orlando instead of Atlanta. [Daily Beast](#)(8 Feb); [CNN](#)(8 Feb); [ABC News](#)(9 Feb); [Washington Post](#)(9 Feb). But replacing Atlanta with Orlando does *not* fix Spicer's problem. Spicer cited Islamic terror attacks in ~~Atlanta~~ Orlando, San Bernardino, and Boston to justify Trump's ban on immigration from seven Muslim-majority nations. The perpetrator in Orlando was born in the USA and *not* an immigrant. One of the perpetrators in San Bernardino was born in the USA, the other was born in Pakistan. The two perpetrators in Boston were born in North Caucasus or Kyrgyzstan, although the two identified as Chechen. *None* of these five perpetrators were from the seven Muslim-majority nations from which immigration to the USA is banned by Trump. So Trump's ban would *not* have prevented the Islamic terror attacks in Orlando, San Bernardino, and Boston. Spicer's mention of terror attacks Orlando, San Bernardino, and Boston is irrelevant to Trump's ban on immigration from seven Muslim-majority nations.

The White House seems to have forgotten about the 11 Sep 2001 Islamic terror attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, which killed approximately 3000 people. Most of those Islamic terrorists were from Saudi Arabia, which is *not* amongst the seven Muslim-majority nations in Trump's travel ban. So Trump's ban also would *not* have prevented the 11 Sep 2001 attacks.

I conclude that neither Kellyanne Conway nor Sean Spicer have a solid grasp of the facts regarding Islamic terrorism, one of the major problems that Trump intends to solve.

6 Feb 2017: Speech at CENTCOM

Are journalists intentionally suppressing reports of Islamic terror attacks?

On 6 February 2017, Trump went to the U.S. Central Command headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa and gave a speech to the military personnel there. The speech contained one surprising paragraph:

We're up against an enemy that celebrates death and totally worships destruction — you've seen that. ISIS is on a campaign of genocide, committing atrocities across the world. Radical Islamic terrorists are determined to strike our homeland as they did on

9/11; as they did from Boston to Orlando, to San Bernardino. And all across Europe, you've seen what happened in Paris and Nice. All over Europe it's happening. It's gotten to a point where it's not even being reported and, in many cases, the very, very dishonest press doesn't want to report it. They have their reasons and you understand that.

Donald Trump, "Remarks by President Trump to Coalition Representatives and Senior U.S. Commanders," [White House](#), 6 Feb 2017. Retrieved at 02:37 EST on 7 Feb 2017.

Trump made three points that jump out at the reader:

1. "It's gotten to a point where it's not even being reported" Trump says journalists are *no* longer reporting Islamic terrorist attacks.
2. "... and, in many cases, the very, very dishonest press doesn't want to report it." Trump says journalists are not only "very dishonest", but also *do not want* to report terrorist attacks.
3. "They have their reasons and you understand that." Trump implies that journalists are supporting the Islamic terrorists.

The Washington Post promptly reported:

Speaking to the U.S. Central Command on Monday [6 Feb], President Trump went off his prepared remarks to make a truly stunning claim: The media was intentionally covering up reports of terrorist attacks.

....

It's certainly true that not every terrorist attack receives broad coverage in the national media. Last spring, the [Los Angeles Times](#) set out to log every single terrorist attack in the month of April, counting 180 attacks that killed 858 people. Not every one of those attacks made your local nightly newscast. But filtering what to cover is very different than suppressing information.

....

With his comments on Monday, Trump implied that the media is complicit in making terrorists successful. It's part of a recent pattern of suggesting that others are standing in the way of his terrorism-fighting efforts, which includes [disparaging](#) a federal judge who halted his immigration executive order.

....

Update: In a press availability on Air Force One, Spicer tried to soften Trump's comment. Terror attacks had been "under reported," not "unreported." Spicer said the White House would at some point release examples of this "under-reporting."

Update: The list is out, according to CNN. It does not seem to fit Trump's original description.

Philip Bump, "President Trump is now speculating that the media is covering up terrorist attacks," [Washington Post](#), 14:55 EST, 6 Feb 2017.

The New York Times reported:

Mr. Trump initially did not provide examples of a news media conspiracy to underplay terrorist attacks, and his comments appeared to ignore the vast amount of reporting on violence committed by the Islamic State and its supporters in the Middle East, Europe and the United States. Later Monday night, the White House released a list of what it said were 78 attacks from September 2014 to December 2016 that were carried out or inspired by the Islamic State. The White House said that "most have not received the media attention they deserved."

The list included the major attacks in Paris; Brussels; San Bernardino, Calif.; and Orlando, Fla., that dominated the news for weeks. Other attacks overseas, lesser known to Americans, received extensive local coverage, like a shooting in Zvornik, Bosnia, in April 2015 in which one police officer was killed and two others were wounded.

The president's speech was the second time in recent weeks that he has used an appearance before national security personnel — usually apolitical settings in which the focus is on strategy and sacrifice — to discredit journalists and exult in his election victory.

....

The president's comments on Monday were reminiscent of his claim during a visit last month to the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency in Langley, Va., that the news media had fabricated his feud with the intelligence community. Those remarks came only days after he likened American intelligence officials to Nazis, after several weeks in which he had denigrated their work.

Julie Hirschfeld Davis, "Trump Says Journalists 'Have Their Reasons' to Play Down Terror Threat," [NY Times](#), 6 Feb 2017.

At 20:59 EST on 6 February, *The Washington Post* reported the following about Trump's speech:

News organizations have reported extensively about terrorist attacks around the world, including the two in France mentioned by the president. Trump did not offer a single example of an attack that had gone unreported to support his accusation.

Philip Rucker, "'If something happens': Trump points his finger in case of a terrorist attack," [Washington Post](#) 20:59 EST, 6 Feb 2017.

At 21:25 EST, *The Washington Post* reported on the list of 78 terrorist attacks that the White House asserts were "under-reported".

The White House on Monday night released a list of 78 terrorist attacks in response to an assertion earlier in the day by President Trump that the "very dishonest press" often doesn't report on them.

The list, which includes domestic and overseas incidents, starts in September 2014. It includes some very heavily covered news events, including last year's attack at the

Pulse nightclub in Orlando and the series of attacks in Paris in 2015.

But the White House asserted that most of incidents on the list were under-covered by Western media sources.

....

White House spokesman Sean Spicer later told reporters that Trump believes attacks are not “unreported” but “underreported.”

“He felt members of the media don’t always cover some of those events to the extent that other events might get covered,” Spicer told reporters traveling on Air Force One.

Later Monday, White House spokeswoman Lindsay Walters said that “the real point here is that these terrorists attacks are so pervasive at this point that they do not spark the wall-to-wall coverage they once did.”

John Wagner & Philip Rucker, "Here are the 78 terrorist attacks the White House says were largely underreported," [Washington Post](#), 21:25 EST, 6 Feb 2017.

The 21:25 *Post* article quotes the entire list supplied by the White House. My review of the White House list shows two different groups of terrorist attacks that were allegedly underreported by journalists:

- A. Attacks in which either zero, one, or two people died. Further, these attacks are often in far-away nations of little interest to most Americans. Those are good reasons to give minimal reporting in U.S. news media of those minor Islamic terrorist attacks.
- B. Major attacks in the USA and Western Europe that were well-reported by journalists, e.g.,
 1. PARIS, FRANCE in January 2015 (5 dead at kosher supermarket)
 2. COPENHAGEN, DENMARK in Feb 2015
 3. GARLAND, TX, USA in May 2015
 4. PARIS, FRANCE in November 2015 (129 dead)
 5. SAN BERNADINO [sic], CA, USA in December 2015 (14 dead)
 6. PARIS, FRANCE in January 2016 (no casualties; attacker killed)
 7. MARSEILLES, FRANCE in January 2016 (one Jewish teacher wounded)
 8. BRUSSELS, BELGIUM in March 2016 (31 dead)
 9. ORLANDO, FL, USA in June 2016 (49 dead)
 10. MAGNANVILLE, FRANCE in June 2016 (policeman and his wife killed)
 11. NICE, FRANCE in July 2016 (84 dead)
 12. WURZBURG, GERMANY in July 2016 (4 wounded on train)
 13. ANSBACH, GERMANY in July 2016 (15 wounded at music festival)
 14. NORMANDY, FRANCE in July 2016 (one Catholic priest murdered)
 15. CHALEROI [sic], BELGIUM in August 2016 (two policewomen wounded)
 16. PARIS, FRANCE in September 2016 (VBIED failed to detonate at Notre Dame Cathedral)
 17. ST. CLOUD, MN, USA in September 2016 (10 wounded at shopping mall)
 18. NEW YORK, NY; SEASIDE PARK AND ELIZABETH, NJ, USA in September

2016 (31 wounded)

19. COLUMBUS, OH, USA in November 2016 (14 wounded)

20. BERLIN, GERMANY in December 2016 (12 killed)

(The description in parenthesis is either condensed or modified from the White House's list.)

The 20 incidents listed above were well-reported by Reuters, the Associated Press, major newspapers (e.g., *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Telegraph* in London England), as well as newspapers near the location of each attack. I *know* this to be true, because I chronicled each of these Islamic terror attacks in my [essays](#) on Syria and Iraq, with citations (i.e., links) to news articles by journalists. So the White House list has at least 25% false entries (20/78). I say "at least" because some of the terrorists attacks that I ignored in my essays may also have been well-covered by journalists.

At 21:44 EST on 6 February, *The Washington Post* listed the first 25 terror attacks in the White House's list of 78 attacks, with one link to news coverage in the USA for each of those 25 attacks. The *Post* suggested:

Spicer, at least, was smart enough to understand that this was an opportunity to get the media to run with a lengthy list of terror attacks that, he hoped, would reinforce Trump's broader message that terror attacks were a constant threat that demanded a strong response. [The point] was to turn Trump's baffling remarks into an opportunity to make a broader point in service to Trump's policies.

The *Post* also observed:

But the [White House's] list does includes stories that no person in his or her right mind could consider undercovered. The bombing in New York City. The attacks in Paris on cafes and the Bataclan theater. The shooting in San Bernardino, Calif. (misspelled on the White House list). The bombing at the airport in Brussels. The shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando. These stories received wall-to-wall coverage, and deservedly so.

Philip Bump, "The White House released a list of 'under covered' terror attacks it would like you to look at," [Washington Post](#), 21:44 EST, 6 Feb 2017.

At 20:07 EST on 7 February, after a review of the White House list of 78 attacks by "by Associated Press reporters on four continents", the Associated Press blasted the White House.

A White House list of what it calls underreported terrorist attacks did not support President Donald Trump's claim that the media are downplaying a "genocide" carried out by the Islamic State group. But it did shine new light on the difficulty in defining the scope, source and motives behind the violence carried out in the name of radical Islam.

A close review of the 78 attacks listed by the White House shows almost all the attacks were reported by the news media and that many were widely covered by local and international outlets.

....

[The White House list of 78 attacks] also pays little heed to the scores of terror acts that have plagued nations like Syria and Iraq that are close to the Islamic State's

caliphate and under near-daily siege.

....

The inclusion of some of the attacks in the United States defies credulity.

Among those on the White House's list are a deadly rampage in San Bernardino, California, in 2015 in which 14 people were killed and 21 injured, and the June 2016 nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida, which left 49 dead, the biggest mass shooting in the nation's history. Both of those attacks received blanket news coverage for days, and all of the attacks in the U.S. received at least some attention by the American media.

....

Across Europe, attacks are increasingly being attributed to the flow of refugees across the continent — and it's hard to find a single attack, large or small, that didn't generate global coverage.

....

The White House list did not include any attacks in Iraq, Syria or Yemen, where civilians are targeted almost daily by militant attacks. Many of those attacks are covered by the media, despite the often-perilous conditions involved in reporting those stories.

Vivian Salama & Jonathan Lemire, "Trump's list of underreported terror doesn't back up claim," [Associated Press](#), 20:07 EST, 7 Feb 2017.

Final version at [AP](#) on 8 Feb.

On the night of 7 February 2017, Kellyanne Conway appeared on a CNN program and admitted that the White House list of 78 underreported Islamic terror attacks included some attacks that were widely reported. The [Washington Post](#) published a transcript of the interview with Conway.

What's wrong?

- Trump said journalists are *no* longer reporting Islamic terrorist attacks. Trump offered *no* example of an Islamic terrorist attack that was *not* reported by journalists. This is another baseless claim by Trump. The Truth is that journalists *are* continuing to report Islamic terrorist attacks, including the December 2016 attack in Berlin, which is the most recent example on the White House list of 76 attacks that were allegedly under-reported.
- Trump's press secretary, Spicer, twisted Trump's words to say that journalists are "under-reporting" Islamic terrorist attacks. But the list supplied by the White House of 76 attacks includes at least 20 attacks with extensive coverage by journalists. The White House's own list of attacks do *not* support the claims by either Trump or Spicer.

- Trump said journalists are "very dishonest". But journalists have a much better track record of mentioning facts than Trump.
- Trump alleged journalists *do not want* to report terrorist attacks. Trump offered *no* evidence to support his outrageous claim. Even if it were true that journalists do not want to report terrorist attacks, journalists *are* reporting terrorist attacks.
- Trump implied that journalists are supporting the Islamic terrorists. As usual, Trump offers *no* evidence to support his defaming an entire profession.
- Trump's and Spicer's factual errors — and Kellyanne Conway's earlier fictitious "Bowling Green Massacre" — are *not* errors on some obscure topic. Immigration was one of the principal themes of Trump's presidential campaign, with his promises to build a wall along the Mexican border, deport illegal immigrants, and exclude Islamic terrorists from the USA. So these factual errors on Islamic terrorism should be embarrassing for Trump.

Ironically, there is *one* set of examples in which journalists are failing to cover Islamic terrorist attacks. ISIL terrorists are killing a few people each day in Baghdad Iraq, but journalists stopped reporting these routine attacks long ago. Only the major terrorist attacks in the vicinity of Baghdad (e.g., more than 10 dead) are reported. Trump and his staff in the White House are apparently too ignorant of world news to know about this defect in reporting of terrorist attacks.

7 Feb 2017: erroneous murder rate in USA

On 7 February 2017, Trump met at the White House with a national group of county sheriffs. One paragraph of Trump's remarks contain blatant false statements about the national murder rate in the USA:

And yet the murder rate in our country is the highest it's been in 47 years, right? Did you know that? Forty-seven years. I used to use that — I'd say that in a speech and everybody was surprised, because the press doesn't tell it like it is. It wasn't to their advantage to say that. But the murder rate is the highest it's been in, I guess, from 45 to 47 years. And you would think that you would be invited here, and you would think that you people would be able to solve — had you — if you ran Chicago, you would solve that nightmare, I tell you. I'll bet everybody in that room, especially Carolyn, right, would raise their hand. Because to allow — I mean, literally — hundreds of shootings a month, it's worse than some of the places that we read about in the Middle East, where you have wars going on. It's so sad. Chicago has become so sad a situation.

Trump, "Remarks by President Trump in Roundtable with County Sheriffs," [White House](#), 09:49 EST, 7 Feb 2018.

Facts from FBI on Murder Rate in USA

It is *not* difficult to prove that Trump is again spewing false statements. The Federal Bureau

of Investigation reports national crime statistics in the USA.

Trump said the USA has the highest murder rate in 47 years. From 2015, the most recent year with complete FBI data, 47 years ago is 1968.

The most recent FBI data is for the year 2015, when the murder rate was 4.9 murders per 100,000 people/year. The table of data in the FBI's 2015 Report goes back to the year 1996, when the murder rate was 7.4 murders per 100,000 people/year. During the 20 years from 1996 through 2015, there were 14 years with higher murder rates than the year 2015. See [FBI](#).

The [1996 Report](#) by the FBI says at page 14: "... the national murder rate in 1996 was 7.4 per 100,000 inhabitants, the lowest since 1985." That means the 10 years from 1986 through 1995, had higher murder rates than 1996.

So Trump is not just wrong about the highest murder rate in 47 years — the murder rate in 2015 is *lower* than 24 of the past 30 years. The highest murder rate in the USA was in the year 1980, when the murder rate was 10.2 murders per 100,000 people/year.

Another U.S. Department of Justice [publication](#) lists the murder rates from 1950 to 2005. Each of the 40 years from 1966 to 2005 had at least 5.5 murders per 100,000 people/year, *all* higher than the murder rate in 2015.

Comments by Journalists on Trump's erroneous murder rate

The Washington Post wrote:

The country's murder rate is not the highest it's been in 47 years. It is almost at its lowest point, actually, according to the FBI, which gathers statistics every year from police departments around the country.

....

Trump made the same claim on the campaign trail on a number of occasions. Some suggested that he may have been confusing the one-year increase in the murder rate with the actual murder rate. In 2015, the murder rate rose 11 percent, which was the largest one-year increase in 50 years. But the rate itself, 4.9 homicides per 100,000 residents, remains far below the levels of the 1970s and 1980s.

Tom Jackman, "Trump makes false statement about U.S. murder rate to sheriffs' group," [Washington Post](#), 13:26 EST, 7 Feb 2017.

Is Trump really confusing (A) the large 10.8% *annual increase* in the murder rate from 2014 to 2015 with (B) the relatively low *value* of the murder rate? *If* Trump understood calculus, then he would distinguish between the value of a function and its derivative.

See also [Chicago Tribune](#); [Associated Press](#) ("AP FACT CHECK: Trump botches murder rate").

On 7 Feb 2017, Jake Tapper of CNN interviewed Kellyanne Conway. Mr. Tapper said:
... what I'm getting at here is, there's a larger campaign being waged by President Trump and by the White House to undermine the credibility of everybody in the news media except for certain supportive outlets.

For instance, earlier today, President Trump made a quote about the murder rate being at the highest level it's ever been in 47 years. He said that, and then he said, nobody in the media reports on that. There's a reason that nobody in the media reports on that: It's not true. The murder rate is not at the highest rate it's been in 47 years. It spiked a little, it went up a little, but it's still much, much lower — it's 4.9 people per 100,000. That's dwarfed by the murder rates in the 1990s and before that in the 1980s. Facts are stubborn things. And to say that we're not reporting something that happens not to be true, therefore we're not to be trusted, that's a problem.

[Conway's response to Tapper's paragraph was to change the subject. Apparently, Conway has *no* response to Trump's error.]

Callum Borchers, "Kellyanne Conway vs. Jake Tapper, annotated," [Washington Post](#), 09:16 EST, 8 Feb 2017.

On 11 February 2017, the Associated Press summarized six false statements by Trump, including the nonreporting of Islamic terrorist attacks and the highest murder rate in 47 years.

It was a week of sound and fury from President Donald Trump, the commander in tweets. A look at how some of his statements fit with the facts:

....

"AP FACT CHECK: IMPROV WEEK AT THE WHITE HOUSE," [Associated Press](#), 08:58 EST, 11 Feb 2017.

My comment on the Associated Press fact check: It is an embarrassment to the USA, when the president displays such an amateurish and incompetent grasp of facts regarding issues that are important to him.

Trump made same error before the Nov 2016 election

In response to assertions by some journalists that Trump had made the same error during the presidential campaign, I searched Google News on 8 Feb 2017. Here is what I found:

- On 12 July 2016, Trump [tweeted](#): "Crime is out of control, and rapidly getting worse. Look what is going on in Chicago and our inner cities. Not good!". Criticized by [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#).
- On 13 July 2016, Trump gave a speech in Indiana, where he said: "Look at Chicago, look at what's going on. Since President Obama became president, almost 5,000 killings in Chicago and nobody talks about it. We're going to start talking about it." But [WLS](#) television in Chicago said there had been only 3500 murders in Chicago

while Obama was president.

- On 21 July 2016, the [Washington Post](#) said "Trump does accurately cite some recent increases in homicides, but he also appears to cherry-pick data, draw broad conclusions from limited information and, at times, simply misstate things."
- On 26 Sep 2016, the FBI released crime statistics for the year 2015. Major newspapers reported these new statistics. See, e.g., [NY Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Chicago Tribune](#); [Los Angeles Times](#); [Miami Herald](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).
- On 11 October 2016 in Panama City Beach, Florida, Trump declared: "You look at the crime and you wonder why. And by the way, do you know, it was just announced that murder is the highest it's been in our country in 45 years?" [News-Herald](#); [The Guardian](#).
- On 12 October 2016 in Lakeland, Florida, Trump declared: "We have the highest murder rate in this country in 45 years. More people are being murdered now than being murdered in 45 years." [The Guardian](#).
- On 26 Oct 2016, Trump said at a campaign rally in Charlotte, North Carolina: "You know the murder rate in the United States, I don't know if you know this because the press never talks about it, is the highest it's been, think of this, in 45 years." [C-SPAN](#); [Washington Post](#) (Trump "continued to falsely assert that the national murder rate is the highest it has been in 45 years."); [FactCheck.org](#).
- On 29 Oct 2016, Trump said at a campaign rally in Phoenix, Arizona: "The murder rate in the United States, it's the worst. The highest it's been in 45 years." [KNXV](#).

What's wrong?

- Trump is grossly wrong about the murder rate in the USA.
- Trump's 7 Feb 2017 falsehood is *not* the first time he has made this grossly false statement about the murder rate in the USA. Trump has been making false claims about the murder rate since mid-October 2016. And Trump is *not* learning from his mistakes, despite criticism by journalists.
- Trump lied when he said on 7 Feb: "the press doesn't tell it like it is." Journalists correctly reported the FBI crime statistics. It is Trump — *not* journalists — who has a chronic problem with correctly stating facts.
- On 7 Feb 2017, Trump made a strange statement that the Chicago police department "allow[s] ... hundreds of shootings a month". The police do *not* "allow" crimes. Crimes occur and then police investigate and try to arrest the perpetrators.

Kellyanne Conway's alleged ethics violation

On 2 Feb 2017, the Nordstrom chain of department stores announced it would no longer sell Ivanka Trump's line of shoes and clothing, because of poor sales. [Washington Post](#); [NY Times](#).

On 8 Feb at 07:51 PST, President Trump responded by criticizing Nordstrom on [twitter](#) for treating his daughter "unfairly". Later on 8 Feb, Trump retweeted his 07:51 message from his official account as President of the USA, @POTUS. [NY Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Crain's NY](#).

Commentators suggested that Trump's response — especially on @POTUS — sent a message that the power of the White House would descend upon those who reduce the Trump family income. But the issue is more complicated. Liberal opponents of the president were urging boycotts of Ivanka's merchandise, which is a political attack on the president's daughter. Liberals were attacking the president through his daughter. Trump *may* be correct that this is "unfair" treatment of Ivanka. But using the @POTUS account to respond is probably wrong.

The above three paragraphs are prologue to what Kellyanne Conway did on 9 Feb that caused even a Republican congressman to criticize her.

On the morning of 9 Feb, Kellyanne Conway spoke from White House press briefing room to a television audience on the "Fox & Friends" program. I have been unable to find a verbatim transcript of what Conway said, but the following news articles mention part of what Conway said.

"I do find it ironic that you've got some executives all over the internet bragging about what they've done to her and her line, and yet they're using the most prominent woman in Donald Trump's...she's his daughter...and they're using her who has been a champion for women empowerment, women in the workplace to get to him," Conway said.

"Go buy Ivanka's stuff," Conway added, saying that consumers can buy Ivanka's products online.

"Kellyanne Conway on Ivanka Trump's Fashion Line: 'Go Buy It Today!'," [Fox News](#), 10:19 EST, 9 Feb 2017.

The New York Times reported what Conway said.

"Go buy Ivanka's stuff is what I would say," Ms. Conway, whose title is counselor to the president, said in an interview with [Fox News](#). "I'm going to give a free commercial here: Go buy it today everybody, you can find it online."

Richard Perez-Pena & Rachel Abrams, "Kellyanne Conway Promotes Ivanka Trump Brand, Raising Ethics Concerns," [NY Times](#), 9 Feb 2017.

Later, Fox News posted a one-paragraph partial quotation from Conway:

At the end of an interview with "Fox & Friends," [\[video\]](#) Conway lamented Ivanka Trump's treatment in the business world and said: "Go buy Ivanka's stuff ... It's a wonderful line, I own some of it. ... I'm going to give a free commercial here. Go buy it today, everybody. You can find it online."

Jennifer G. Hickey, "White House taking bipartisan heat for Ivanka-Nordstrom comments," [Fox News](#), about 17:00 EST, 9 Feb 2017.

The Washington Post reported that Conway said on television:

“I’m going to give a free commercial here. Go buy it today, everybody. You can find it online.”

On 9 Feb 2017, White House press secretary tersely said that Conway had been “counseled” about her apparent violation of a federal regulation, 5 CFR 2635.702. In an indication of the seriousness of this matter, the chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Oversight Committee, Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah), sent a letter to the to the Office of Government Ethics (OGE) that labeled Conway’s advertisement “unacceptable.” Because Trump (Conway's manager) has an obvious conflict of interest in this matter, Chaffetz asked the OGE to recommend a punishment for Conway. [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Politico](#).

On 13 Feb 2017, the head of the OGE wrote to the White House Deputy Counsel and said: “Under the present circumstances, there is strong reason to believe that Ms. Conway has violated the Standards of Conduct and that disciplinary action is warranted.” [Washington Post](#).

On 9 March 2017, the head of the OGE publicly criticized the White House for failing to discipline Kellyanne Conway. [Washington Post](#).

My comment is that Donald Trump has difficulty separating the role of president from supporting his daughter's business. Ms. Conway did worse, by openly and deliberately advertising Ivanka's products from the White House.

Conway's lower profile

After Conway's disaster with "alternative facts", the "Bowling Green massacre", and asserting that Flynn had voluntarily resigned (when, in fact, Trump asked Flynn to resign), Conway began to develop a reputation as an unreliable source of facts. [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#). On 15 Feb 2017, Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski stopped inviting Conway on their MSNBC cable television program, because of Conway's lack of credibility. [Mediaite](#); [Washington Post](#). See also 22 Feb report in [Washington Post](#).

Kellyanne Conway graduated from Washington Trinity University, a small Catholic college for women, in 1989. On 12 Feb 2017, the president of Trinity criticized Conway's false statements: Conway “has played a large role in facilitating the manipulation of facts.... [Conway's] advocacy on Trump's behalf is often at variance with the truth. Ms. Conway has been part of a team that thinks nothing of shaping and spreading a skein of lies as a means to secure power.” [Trinity](#). On 17 Feb, the [Washington Post](#) said Conway retorted that she and her husband had given \$50,000 to Trinity, implying that should have purchased silence from the president of the university.

**Michael Flynn resigns as
National Security Adviser**

The scandal began with an opinion column by David Ignatius in *The Washington Post*, part of which said:

Retired Lt. Gen. Michael T. Flynn, Trump's choice for national security adviser, cultivates close Russian contacts. He has appeared on Russia Today and received a speaking fee from the cable network, which was described in last week's unclassified intelligence briefing on Russian hacking as "the Kremlin's principal international propaganda outlet."

According to a senior U.S. government official, Flynn phoned Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak several times on Dec. 29, the day the Obama administration announced the expulsion of 35 Russian officials as well as other measures in retaliation for the hacking. What did Flynn say, and did it undercut the U.S. sanctions? The Logan Act (though never enforced) bars U.S. citizens from correspondence intending to influence a foreign government about "disputes" with the United States. Was its spirit violated? The Trump campaign didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

....

UPDATE: The Trump transition team did not respond Thursday [12 Jan] night to a request for comment. But two team members called with information Friday [13 Jan] morning. A first Trump official confirmed that Flynn had spoken with Kislyak by phone, but said the calls were before sanctions were announced and didn't cover that topic. This official later added that Flynn's initial call was to express condolences to Kislyak after the terrorist killing of the Russian ambassador to Ankara Dec. 19, and that Flynn made a second call Dec. 28 to express condolences for the shoot-down of a Russian plane carrying a choir to Syria. In that second call, Flynn also discussed plans for a Trump-Putin conversation sometime after the inauguration. In addition, a second Trump official said the Dec. 28 call included an invitation from Kislyak for a Trump administration official to visit Kazakhstan for a conference in late January.

David Ignatius, "Why did Obama dawdle on Russia's hacking?," [Washington Post](#), 12 Jan 2017.

On 15 Jan 2017, Vice-President Pence denied that Flynn had spoken with the Russian ambassador about sanctions. Pence's denial was based on what Flynn had told Pence. [CNN](#); [CBS News](#)(transcript); [Politico](#).

On Thursday, 9 February 2017, *The Washington Post* reported that Flynn had discussed sanctions in December with the Russian ambassador.

The scandal simmered until 13 Feb 2017, when *The Washington Post* reported that officials from the Obama government had informed Trump's White House counsel on 26 Jan 2017 that Flynn had lied about his conversations with the Russian ambassador.

The acting attorney general [Sally Yates] informed the Trump White House late last month that she believed Michael Flynn had misled senior administration officials about the nature of his communications with the Russian ambassador to the United States, and warned that the national security adviser was potentially vulnerable to Russian blackmail, current and former U.S. officials said.

The message, delivered by Sally Q. Yates and a senior career national security official to the White House counsel, was prompted by concerns that Flynn, when asked about his calls and texts with the Russian diplomat, had told VicePresident-elect Mike Pence and others that he had not discussed the Obama administration sanctions on Russia for its interference in the 2016 election, the officials said. It is unclear what the White House counsel, Donald McGahn, did with the information.

....

In the waning days of the Obama administration, James R. Clapper Jr., who was the director of national intelligence, and John Brennan, the CIA director at the time, shared Yates's concerns and concurred with her recommendation to inform the Trump White House. They feared that "Flynn had put himself in a compromising position" and thought that Pence had a right to know that he had been misled, according to one of the officials, who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters.

....

After the sanctions were rolled out [on 29 Dec 2016], the Obama administration braced itself for the Russian retaliation. To the surprise of many U.S. officials, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced on Dec. 30 that there would be no response. Trump praised the [Russian] decision on [Twitter](#).

Intelligence analysts began to search for clues that could help explain Putin's move. The search turned up Kislyak's communications, which the FBI routinely monitors, and the phone call in question with Flynn, a retired Army lieutenant general with years of intelligence experience.

Adam Entous, Ellen Nakashima, & Philip Rucker, "Justice Department warned White House that Flynn could be vulnerable to Russian blackmail, officials say," [Washington Post](#), updated 23:17 EST on 13 Feb 2017. [Link to Twitter added by Standler.]

To make the following text of this complicated event more coherent, I am putting most of the citations after 13 Feb 2017 in a [Bibliography](#).

Hours before Flynn resigned, Kellyanne Conway told journalists that Trump continued to have "full confidence" in Flynn. Sometime around 21:00 or 22:00 EST on 13 Feb 2017, Flynn gave his letter of resignation to Trump. Initial reports were that Flynn had voluntarily resigned, but Spicer said on the afternoon of 14 Feb that Trump had asked Flynn to resign. Flynn held the national security adviser job for only 24 days. Flynn was out because he had lied to Pence, *not* because he discussed sanctions with the Russian ambassador.

The controversy over Flynn does *not* end on 14 Feb 2017, the day after Flynn resigned. There are still unanswered questions:

1. Did Trump ask Flynn to discuss sanctions with the Russian ambassador?
2. Trump was allegedly aware of the Flynn scandal for "weeks" before 13 Feb, probably

on 26 Jan.

A. *Why* did Trump continue Flynn as national security adviser?

B. *Why* did Trump wait until 9 Feb to inform Pence? Pence appears to have first learned of Flynn's false statements to Pence by reading *The Washington Post* on 9 Feb.

3. On 10 Feb 2017, Trump told journalists that he did *not* know about the 9 Feb *Washington Post* report on Flynn's conversations with the Russian ambassador: "I don't know about that. I haven't seen it. What report is that? I haven't seen that. I'll look into that." (See, e.g., [Washington Post](#); [The Hill](#)) Did Trump misinform journalists on 10 Feb?

For these and more unanswered questions, see: [National Public Radio](#); [Washington Post](#).

On 14 February 2017, Spicer clearly explained why Trump had dismissed Flynn:

The evolving and eroding level of trust as a result of this situation and a series of other questionable instances is what led the President to ask for General Flynn's resignation.

.... Whether or not [Flynn] actually misled the Vice President was the issue, and that was ultimately what led to the President asking for and accepting the resignation of General Flynn. That's it, pure and simple. It was a matter of trust.

Sean Spicer, "Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sean Spicer, 2/14/2017, #12," [White House](#), begins 13:15 EST, 14 Feb 2017.

On 15 February 2017, Trump held a joint press conference with Benjamin Netanyahu.

Astoundingly, Trump contradicted what Spicer had said on 14 Feb about the dismissal of Flynn.

Michael Flynn, General Flynn is a wonderful man. I think he's been treated very, very unfairly by the media — as I call it, the fake media, in many cases. And I think it's really a sad thing that he was treated so badly. I think, in addition to that, from intelligence — papers are being leaked, things are being leaked. It's criminal actions, criminal act, and it's been going on for a long time — before me. But now it's really going on, and people are trying to cover up for a terrible loss that the Democrats had under Hillary Clinton.

I think it's very, very unfair what's happened to General Flynn, the way he was treated, and the documents and papers that were illegally — I stress that — illegally leaked.

Very, very unfair.

Donald Trump, "Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel in Joint Press Conference," [White House](#), begins 12:15 EST, 15 Feb 2017.

My comment is that "unfair" is a *conclusion* that needs facts to justify the conclusion. Trump, as usual, offers *no* facts. Trump's remark about Clinton's loss in the election is totally irrelevant. Trump may be correct about illegal leaks, *but* the leaks were allegedly necessary because Flynn was dishonest about his conversations with the Russian ambassador. Spicer was explaining rational reasons, while Trump seems to be talking about his emotions.

On 16 February 2017, Trump held a press conference, at which the following was said.

QUESTION: Did you fire Mike Flynn?

THE PRESIDENT: Mike Flynn is a fine person, and I asked for his resignation. He respectfully gave it. He is a man who — there was a certain amount of information given to Vice President Pence, who is with us today. And I was not happy with the way that information was given.

He didn't have to do that, because what he did wasn't wrong, what he did in terms of the information he saw. What was wrong was the way that other people, including yourselves in this room, were given that information, because that was classified information that was given illegally. That's the real problem. And you can talk all you want about Russia, which was all a fake news, fabricated deal to try and make up for the loss of the Democrats, and the press plays right into it.

Donald Trump, "Remarks by President Trump in Press Conference," [White House](#), begins 12:55 EST, 16 Feb 2017.

My comment is that Trump should have stopped talking after he said "I asked for [Flynn's] resignation." Instead of saying that Flynn's false statement to Pence was wrong, Trump said it was wrong for journalists to be given classified information. Then Trump rambled into an irrelevant remark about "loss of the Democrats". This little vignette shows a seriously disordered thought process by Trump. Later in the 16 Feb briefing, Trump did admit: "But [Flynn] did something wrong with respect to the Vice President, and I thought that was not acceptable."

On 16 February 2017, the furor in Congress and the news media about Flynn began to subside.

When Flynn resigned at night on 13 Feb, the White House was ready with a list of three candidates for the job of national security adviser. [NY Times](#). But the leading candidate, retired Admiral Harward, rejected the job offer on 16 Feb. [Financial Times](#); [Washington Post](#).

Bibliography of Relationship Between Russia and Trump's Associates, Including Flynn

Bibliography in chronological order:

- Julie Hirschfeld Davis, Christopher Drew, Nicholas Fandos, & Jeremy W. Peters, "Trump National Security Adviser Called Russian Envoy Day Before Sanctions Were Imposed," [NY Times](#), 13 Jan 2017.
- Michael S. Schmidt, Matthew Rosenberg, Adam Goldman, & Matt Apuzzo, "Intercepted Russian Communications Part of Inquiry Into Trump Associates," [NY Times](#), 19 Jan 2017. (FBI investigation of Trump's former campaign chairman Paul Manafort and two other Trump campaign advisers. The *Times* does not mention

Michael Flynn.)

- Matthew Rosenberg & Matt Apuzzo, "Flynn Is Said to Have Talked to Russians About Sanctions Before Trump Took Office," [NY Times](#), 9 Feb 2017.
- Ken Thomas & Julie Pace, "Democrats seek investigation into national security adviser," [Associated Press](#), 18:52 EST, 10 Feb 2017.
- Julie Pace, Eric Tucker, & Jill Colvin, "Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn resigns," [Associated Press](#), 01:15 EST, 14 Feb 2017. ("In 2015, Flynn was paid to attend a gala dinner for Russia Today, a Kremlin-backed television station, and sat next to Russian President Vladimir Putin during the event.")
- Philip Bump, "The fall of Michael Flynn: A timeline," [Washington Post](#), 10:02 EST, 14 Feb 2017. ("Jan. 26: Acting Attorney General Sally Yates informs White House counsel Don McGahn that Flynn was lying about the nature of his calls with Kislyak and that this made him vulnerable to blackmail by Russia.")
- Greg Sargent, "In a remarkable interview, Kellyanne Conway's spin about Mike Flynn crashes and burns," [Washington Post](#), 10:04 EST, 14 Feb 2017.
- Ashley Parker & Jenna Johnson, "After Flynn's resignation, Trump says the 'real story' is 'illegal leaks'," [Washington Post](#), 11:12 EST on 14 Feb 2017. (Trump [tweet](#): "The real story here is why are there so many illegal leaks coming out of Washington? Will these leaks be happening as I deal on N.Korea etc?")
- Greg Miller & Philip Rucker, "Michael Flynn resigns as national security adviser," [Washington Post](#), 11:37 EST, 14 Feb 2017.
- Sean Spicer, "Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sean Spicer, 2/14/2017, #12," [White House](#), begins 13:15 EST, 14 Feb 2017. ("We've been reviewing and evaluating this issue with respect to General Flynn on a daily basis for a few weeks, trying to ascertain the truth." "The evolving and eroding level of trust as a result of this situation and a series of other questionable instances is what led the President to ask for General Flynn's resignation.")
- Stephen Braun & Robert Burns, "Flynn, fired once by a president, now removed by another," [Associated Press](#), 14:09 EST, 14 Feb 2017.
- Abby Phillip, Ellen Nakashima, & Jenna Johnson, "Pence did not learn that Flynn misled him on Russia until last week," [Washington Post](#), updated 16:59 EST, 14 Feb 2017.
- Robert Costa and Ashley Parker, "Pence remains above the fray, but is he outside the inner circle?" [Washington Post](#), 21:10 EST, 14 Feb 2017. ("The question that legislators are trying to figure out, a Republican said, is if the vice president — like most everyone else — is simply a victim to a rash and erratic president, or if he is deliberately being shut out by senior White House advisers.")

- Michael S. Schmidt, Mark Mazzetti, & Matt Apuzzo, "Trump Campaign Aides Had Repeated Contacts With Russian Intelligence," [NY Times](#), about 22:00 EST, 14 Feb 2017. (FBI examined at least four of Trump's campaign aides.)
- Julie Pace & Vivian Salama, "Trump knew Flynn misled WH weeks before ouster: officials," [Associated Press](#), 22:57 EST, 14 Feb 2017.
- Eileen Sullivan, "Investigations into Russia to continue after Flynn's exit," [Associated Press](#), 03:20 EST, 15 Feb 2017.
- Aaron Blake, "5 times Donald Trump's team denied contact with Russia," [Washington Post](#), 09:08 EST, 15 Feb 2017. (More false statements from Trump and his cronies.)
- James Hohmann, "The Daily 202: It's bigger than Flynn. New Russia revelations widen Trump's credibility gap." [Washington Post](#), 10:27 EST, 15 Feb 2017.
- Julie Pace, "Trump slams intel officials, media over Flynn and Russia," [Associated Press](#), 15:57 EST, 15 Feb 2017.
- Ashley Parker, "Trump says Flynn was treated unfairly, a day after Spicer said he was fired because of a lack of trust," [Washington Post](#), 16:47 EST, 15 Feb 2017. (At 07:19 PST on 15 Feb, Trump [tweeted](#): "Information is being illegally given to the failing @nytimes & @washingtonpost by the intelligence community (NSA and FBI?).Just like Russia")
- Deb Riechmann, "Michael Flynn's security clearance suspended pending review," [Associated Press](#), 16:57 EST, 15 Feb 2017.
- Pamela Brown, Jim Sciutto, & Evan Perez, "Trump aides were in constant touch with senior Russian officials during campaign," [CNN](#), updated 22:37 EST, 15 Feb 2017. ("High-level advisers [e.g., then-campaign chairman Paul Manafort and then-adviser Michael Flynn] close to then-presidential nominee Donald Trump were in constant communication during the campaign with Russians known to US intelligence, multiple current and former intelligence, law enforcement and administration officials tell CNN.")
- Sari Horwitz & Adam Entous, "Flynn in FBI interview denied discussing sanctions with Russian ambassador," [Washington Post](#), 16:37 EST, 16 Feb 2017. (False statements to the FBI are a felony.)
- Michael Birnbaum & Ashley Parker, "In Brussels, Pence says he 'fully supported' ouster of Mike Flynn," [Washington Post](#), 11:06 EST, 20 Feb 2017. ("Pence pushed for Flynn's ouster after learning from The Washington Post that the national security adviser had been captured on tape speaking to Russian Ambassador to the U.S. Sergei Kislyak on the topic of sanctions.")

- Stephen Braun & Chad Day, "Former Trump Aide Flynn Says Lobbying May Have Helped Turkey," [Associated Press](#), 20:09 EST, 8 March 2017. (On 7 March 2017, Flynn retroactively registered as a foreign agent for work that he did for Turkey during August through November 2016.)
- Julie Pace, "Ex-adviser's ties to Russia, Trump campaign draw scrutiny," [Associated Press](#), 09:04 EST, 10 Mar 2017. ("For months, President Donald Trump and his advisers have tried to distance themselves from Carter Page, a little-known investment banker who briefly served as a foreign policy adviser on the Republican's presidential campaign.")
- Rosalind S. Helderman & Tom Hamburger, "Trump adviser Flynn paid by multiple Russia-related entities, new records show," [Washington Post](#), 19:05 EDT, 16 March 2017.
- Stephen Braun & Chad Day, "Documents detail Flynn payments from Russian interests," [Associated Press](#), 20:23 EDT, 16 March 2017. ("Former national security adviser Michael Flynn was paid more than \$67,000 by Russian companies before the presidential election, according to documents released Thursday [16 Mar] by a Democratic congressman.")
- Jeff Horwitz & Chad Day, "AP Exclusive: Manafort Had Plan To Benefit Putin Government," [Associated Press](#), 08:15 EDT, 22 Mar 2017. ("President Donald Trump's former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, secretly worked for a Russian billionaire to advance the interests of Russian President Vladimir Putin a decade ago [as early as June 2005] and proposed an ambitious political strategy to undermine anti-Russian opposition across former Soviet republics, The Associated Press has learned. The work appears to contradict assertions by the Trump administration and Manafort himself that he never worked for Russian interests. Manafort pitched the plans to Russian aluminum magnate Oleg Deripaska, a close Putin ally with whom Manafort eventually signed a \$10 million annual contract beginning in 2006, according to interviews with several people familiar with payments to Manafort and business records obtained by the AP. Manafort and Deripaska maintained a business relationship until at least 2009, according to one person familiar with the work.")
- Ellen Nakashima, Devlin Barrett, & Adam Entous, "FBI obtained FISA warrant to monitor Trump adviser Carter Page," [Washington Post](#), 19:11 EDT, 11 April 2017. ("The FBI obtained a secret court order last summer to monitor the communications of an adviser to presidential candidate Donald Trump, part of an investigation into possible links between Russia and the campaign, law enforcement and other U.S. officials said.")
- Karoun Demirjian, "Flynn probably broke the law by failing to disclose foreign payments, House Oversight leaders say," [Washington Post](#), 16:51 EDT, 25 April 2017. ("[House Oversight Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) and the panel's ranking Democrat, Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (D-Md.)] said they believe Flynn neither received permission nor fully disclosed income he earned for a speaking engagement in Russia and lobbying activities on behalf of Turkey when he applied to renew his

security clearance." "Chaffetz and Cummings stressed Tuesday [25 April] that as a former military officer, Flynn would have needed special permission for his December 2015 appearance at a gala sponsored by RT, the Russian-government-funded television station, for which he was paid \$45,000. For his work lobbying on behalf of the Turkish government, he was paid more than \$500,000.")

- "Flynn May Have Broken Law by Not Disclosing Russia Dealings, Lawmakers Say," [NY Times](#), 25 April 2017.
- Ned Parker, Jonathan Landay, & Warren Strobel, "Exclusive: Trump campaign had at least 18 undisclosed contacts with Russians — sources," [Reuters](#), 07:19 EDT, 18 May 2017. ("Michael Flynn and other advisers to Donald Trump's campaign were in contact with Russian officials and others with Kremlin ties in at least 18 calls and emails during the last seven months of the 2016 presidential race [April through October 2016], current and former U.S. officials familiar with the exchanges told Reuters.")

My comments: I am not concerned with Flynn's alleged violation of the Logan Act, unless he undercut the Obama administration. There are examples of private citizens who conducted beneficial diplomacy (e.g., Bill Richardson and Bill Clinton traveled to North Korea to retrieve U.S. citizens who had been arrested there). Because there have been *no* prosecutions under the Logan Act in its more than 200 year history, the Logan Act ought to be either repealed as an unnecessary statute, or amended with a more specific statute that requires interference with the president's foreign policy.

Trump is angry about the leaks of confidential information to journalists. Personally, I am opposed to leaks of confidential information, as the information belongs to the U.S. Government, and the leaker does *not* have legal authority to disclose it to unauthorized people. That having been said, leaks to journalists have been useful in exposing corruption, malfeasance, and false statements by government officials. However, the end does not justify the means. Unfortunately, the legitimate need for secrecy in military and diplomatic work obscures dishonest conduct. Congress needs to carefully amend statutes about confidential or secret information, to permit disclosure that exposes false statements by government officials, corruption, and other substantial matters that impede the functioning of a democracy.

A narcissistic person refuses to admit fault for his error. Instead, a narcissistic person blames unfair treatment by other people. In Trump's case, he blames "dishonest media" (now "fake media") and Trump also blames leaks by the intelligence community. Trump's statements are wrong.

I am very uncomfortable with several of Trump's advisers (and Rex Tillerson, Trump's secretary of state) having a previous cozy relationship with the Russian government. Russia has a long history of atrocious conduct, from Stalin's genocide of the Kulaks to Putin's annexation of Crimea. Recently,

1. On 14 Feb 2017, it was revealed that Russia had deployed cruise missiles in violation

of a 1987 treaty. (See, e.g., [Associated Press](#); [NY Times](#); [Reuters](#).)

2. On 28 February 2017, Russia cast its *seventh* veto in the United Nations Security Council that prevented sanctions on — or prosecution of — Syrians for violations of international law. The United Nations is unable to refer Syria to the International Criminal Court for investigation and prosecution of war crimes because of Russia's protection of Assad the Barrel Bomber.
3. On 15 March 2017, the U.S. Justice Department announced an indictment against two Russian government espionage agents and two Russian hackers for stealing data from the Yahoo online service in 2014. (See [below](#).)
4. On 24 April 2017, it was revealed that Russia is supplying weapons to the Taliban in Afghanistan, for the Taliban's fight against the U.S. Military. [Washington Post](#).

Clearly, Russia should *not* be amongst our friends. The debacle over Flynn should encourage Congress and the Justice Department to investigate the relationships between Trump's advisers and Russia.

This news story began with false statements by Flynn regarding his conversations with the Russian ambassador in late December 2016. By the night of 14 Feb 2017, about 24 hours after Flynn resigned, journalists began to focus on the relationship between Trump's other advisers and Russia. One consequence is that it will be increasingly difficult for Trump to remove sanctions on Russia that were imposed by Obama. See, e.g., the [Reuters](#) article about Trump's cooling his bromance with Putin, and the [Associated Press](#) article that says Trump has, "at least temporarily", abandoned his plans to make a deal with the Russian government.

For a discussion of Trump's contacts with Russians, see [below](#).

On 30 March 2017, General Flynn demanded immunity from criminal prosecution in exchange for his testimony to the government, as described [below](#).

Sessions met with Russian Ambassador

On 1 March 2017, it was disclosed that Jeff Sessions — then a U.S. Senator and a foreign policy adviser to candidate Trump; now U.S. Attorney General — met privately with the Russian Ambassador in July and 8 September 2016. But at his 10 January 2017 confirmation hearings, Sessions denied having "communications with the Russians." [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#).

On the morning of 2 March 2017, Sessions denials were already "falling apart". Worse, Sessions may have committed perjury in his confirmation hearings. [Washington Post](#). On the afternoon of 2 March 2017, Sessions agreed to recuse himself from any Justice Department investigation of the 2016 presidential campaign, including Russian interference in that campaign. [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [NY Times](#).

Some of the news articles cited in the previous paragraph mention that Sessions was the *only* member of the Senate Armed Services Committee to have contact with the Russian ambassador. That raises the unanswered question of *why* the Russian ambassador wanted to meet with Sessions.

My comment is that the Sessions' scandal is a repeat of the Flynn debacle, except that Sessions' denial of contacts with Russians was made under oath during his confirmation hearings in the U.S. Senate.

On 24 May 2017, the Department of Justice announced that Sessions had omitted meetings with foreign government officials in his 2016 application for a security clearance. [CNN](#); [Washington Post](#).

On 21 July 2017, the [Washington Post](#) reported that "Russia's ambassador to Washington told his superiors in Moscow that he discussed campaign-related matters, including policy issues important to Moscow, with Jeff Sessions during the 2016 presidential race, contrary to public assertions by the embattled attorney general, according to current and former U.S. officials."

Erroneous Documents at White House Website

On 14 February 2017, *USA Today* noticed that Trump's Executive Orders at the White House website differed from the official version in the Federal Register, which is published by the National Archives.

The White House has posted inaccurate texts of President Trump's own executive orders on the White House website, raising further questions about how thorough the Trump administration has been in drafting some of his most controversial actions.

A USA TODAY review of presidential documents found at least five cases where the version posted on the White House website doesn't match the official version sent to the Federal Register. The differences include minor grammatical changes, missing words and paragraph renumbering — but also two cases where the original text referred to inaccurate or non-existent provisions of law.

By law, the Federal Register version is the legally controlling language. But it can often take several days for the order to be published, meaning that the public must often rely on what the White House puts out — and that's sometimes inaccurate.

....

The White House did not respond to a request for comment Monday [13 Feb]. It's unclear whether the press office somehow released out-of-date copies of executive orders, or whether the president signed new orders correcting mistakes before they were sent to the Federal Register.

Gregory Korte, "White House posts wrong versions of Trump's orders on its website,"

[USA Today](#), 11:49 EST, updated 16:55 EST, 14 Feb 2017.

The errors in the White House website were generally ignored by journalists, but two mainstream media did quote the *USA Today* article: [The Hill](#); [Washington Post](#).

The *USA Today* article on 14 Feb identified two discrepancies involving citation of statutes:

1. In the 27 Jan 2017 Executive Order 13769 that bans entrance to the USA by foreign nationals from certain nations, the [White House](#) version at §8(a) cited 8 U.S.C. §1222, while the [Federal Register](#) version cites 8 U.S.C. §1202. Section 1202 "requires that all individuals seeking a nonimmigrant visa undergo an in-person interview, subject to specific statutory exceptions", while the erroneous Section 1222 requires a physical and mental examination. The Federal Register version was published 5 days after Trump signed the Order.
2. In Executive Order 13770 that creates an ethics pledge for appointees in the executive branch of the U.S. Government, the [White House](#) version at §2(r) cited "section 207 of title 28" of the U.S. Code, while the [Federal Register](#) version correctly cites "section 207 of title 18". Title 28 does *not* have a section 207.

These errors in documents at the White House website show sloppy proofreading by lawyers in the White House. Worse, when I checked on the night of 17 Feb — 3 days after *USA Today* exposed the errors — the White House had still *not* corrected its erroneous documents.

The *USA Today* article specifically mentions three other discrepancies.

16 Feb 2017: Trump press conference

On the early afternoon of 16 Feb 2017, Trump gave a press conference at the White House. Here are some paragraphs quoted from the official White House transcript.

I'm making this presentation directly to the American people with the media present, which is an honor to have you this morning, because many of our nation's reporters and folks will not tell you the truth and will not treat the wonderful people of our country with the respect that they deserve. And I hope going forward we can be a little bit different, and maybe get along a little bit better, if that's possible. Maybe it's not, and that's okay too.

Unfortunately, much of the media in Washington, D.C., along with New York, Los Angeles, in particular, speaks not for the people but for the special interests and for those profiting off a very, very obviously broken system. The press has become so dishonest that if we don't talk about it, we are doing a tremendous disservice to the American people — tremendous disservice. We have to talk about it to find out what's going on, because the press honestly is out of control. The level of dishonesty is out of control.

I ran for President to represent the citizens of our country. I am here to change the broken system so it serves their families and their communities well. I am talking, and

really talking, on this very entrenched power structure, and what we're doing is we're talking about the power structure, we're talking about its entrenchment. As a result, the media is going through what they have to go through to oftentimes distort — not all the time — and some of the media is fantastic, I have to say; they're honest and fantastic. But much of it is not — the distortion. And we'll talk about it, and you'll be able to ask me questions about it.

But we're not going to let it happen, because I'm here again to take my message straight to the people. As you know, our administration inherited many problems across government and across the economy. To be honest, I inherited a mess — it's a mess — at home and abroad. A mess. Jobs are pouring out of the country. You see what's going on with all of the companies leaving our country, going to Mexico and other places — low-pay, low-wages. Mass instability overseas, no matter where you look. The Middle East, a disaster. North Korea — we'll take care of it, folks. We're going to take care of it all. I just want to let you know I inherited a mess.

....

I'm here following through on what I pledged to do. That's all I'm doing. I put it out before the American people. Got 306 Electoral College votes. I wasn't supposed to get 222. They said there's no way to get 222; 230 is impossible. Two hundred and seventy, which you need, that was laughable. We got 306 because people came out and voted like they've never seen before. So that's the way it goes. I guess it was the biggest Electoral College win since Ronald Reagan.

....

I turn on the TV, open the newspapers, and I see stories of chaos. Chaos! Yet, it is the exact opposite. This administration is running like a fine-tuned machine, despite the fact that I can't get my Cabinet approved, and they're outstanding people.

....

QUESTION: Very simply, you said today that you had the biggest electoral margins since Ronald Reagan with 304 or 306 electoral votes. In fact, President Obama got 365 in 2008.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm talking about Republican. Yes.

QUESTION: President Obama, 332. George H.W. Bush, 426 when he won as President. So why should Americans trust —

THE PRESIDENT: Well, no, I was told — I was given that information. I don't know. I was just given. We had a very, very big margin.

QUESTION: I guess my question is, why should Americans trust you when you have accused the information they receive of being fake when you're providing information that's fake?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't know. I was given that information. I was given — actually, I've seen that information around. But it was a very substantial victory. Do you agree with that?

QUESTION: You're the President.

....

THE PRESIDENT: But I am having a good time. Tomorrow they will say, Donald Trump rants and raves at the press. I'm not ranting and raving. I'm just telling you, you're dishonest people. But — but I'm not ranting and raving. I love this. I'm having a good time doing it. But tomorrow the headlines are going to be: Donald Trump Rants and Raves. I'm not ranting and raving.

Donald Trump, "Remarks by President Trump in Press Conference," [White House](#), begins 12:55 EST, 16 Feb 2017. Retrieved at 19:48 EST on 16 Feb 2017.

In reading this transcript, I am astounded by the level of Trump's hostility toward journalists, who he called "dishonest" *four times* in the one press conference. Trump mentioned the phrase "fake news" *seven times* in the one press conference. I think journalists are doing a good job exposing false statements by Trump, which exposure obviously irritates him.

During this press conference, Trump mentioned he received 306 electoral votes, which he characterized as the "biggest Electoral College win since Ronald Reagan." But, according to the U.S. Government [Archives](#), Trump's claim is false for *six* reasons:

1. George H.W. Bush received 426 electoral votes in 1988.
2. Bill Clinton received 370 electoral votes in 1992.
3. Bill Clinton received 379 electoral votes in 1996.
4. Barack Obama received 365 electoral votes in 2008.
5. Barack Obama received 332 electoral votes in 2012.
6. Trump actually received 304 electoral votes, because two electors pledged to Trump voted for someone else.

Note that when a journalist in the press conference disputed Trump's false statement, Trump did *not* admit his error, but twice said "I was given that information." Additionally, it is inappropriate for Trump to continue boasting about his election victory. Trump's false statement on 16 Feb about his "biggest Electoral College win since Ronald Reagan" is perhaps an example of his narcissistic need to have a larger inaugural crowd and to have won the popular vote.

Another thing that caught my eye was Trump mentioned Hillary Clinton by name 11 times (including twice as "Hillary") during the 16 Feb 2017 press conference. The election was on 8 Nov 2016, 100 days ago. Trump decisively defeated Clinton. Trump needs to stop campaigning against Hillary Clinton. (Jennifer Rubin, writing in the [Washington Post](#), says the choice now is between Trump and Pence.)

There is much more that is wrong with Trump's assertions on 16 Feb. See, e.g.:

- Glenn Kessler & Michelle Ye Hee Lee, "Fact-checking President Trump's news conference," [Washington Post](#), 17:57 EST, 16 Feb 2017. (15 false statements by Trump)
- Philip Rucker, "In an erratic performance, President Trump shows his supporters who's boss," [Washington Post](#), 18:31 EST, 16 Feb 2017. (" 'I'm not ranting and raving,' President Trump insisted ... [in a] tempest of a news conference in which he did just that. The president's erratic showing seemed to leave much of official Washington alarmed and aghast and may not have convinced doubters that he can govern smoothly.")
- Julie Pace, "Trump raps 'criminal' leaks, 'dishonest' media, 'bad' judges," [Associated Press](#), 19:32 EST, 16 Feb 2017. (Trump's "answers were often unwieldy, almost stream of consciousness, and some of his responses were startlingly strange.")
- Ashley Parker & John Wagner, "Trump claims he 'inherited a mess' at sprawling, grievance-filled news conference," [Washington Post](#), 19:43 EST, 16 Feb 2017. ("President Trump aired his grievances against the news media, the intelligence community and his detractors in a sprawling, stream-of-consciousness news conference....")
- Jonathan Lemire, "Trump, in Unprecedented Fashion For a President, Rips Press," [Associated Press](#), 20:54 EST, 16 Feb 2017.
- Maryalice Parks, Riley Beggin, & Ryan Struyk, "Trump press conference fact-check: What the president got wrong and right," [ABC News](#), 21:14 EST, 16 Feb 2017. ("Below are more than a dozen [actually 15] false, questionable or misleading claims Trump made over the course of the 75-minute press conference....")
- Michael D. Shear, Maggie Haberman, & Glenn Thrush, "Trump, Aggrieved and Sometimes Gregarious, Stands Up for Himself," [NY Times](#), 16 Feb 2017. (Trump "offered a disjointed and emotional performance in which he appeared to release pent-up anger and suspicion about the 'dishonest media,' Democrats, intelligence officials, 'criminal' leakers, Hillary Clinton, environmentalists and judges.")
- Nicholas Fandos, "Trump Calls Press 'Dishonest,' Then Utters Falsehoods of His Own," [NY Times](#), 16 Feb 2017.
- "FactChecking Trump's News Conference," [FactCheck.org](#), 16 Feb 2017.

- "Australian PM says Trump wasting his time criticising media," [Reuters](#), 01:11 EST, 17 Feb 2017. Also see: "Donald Trump wasting his time complaining about media coverage, Malcolm Turnbull says," [Australian Broadcasting](#), 17 Feb 2017.
- Lynn Sweet, "Trump Twitter Friday: 'Fake media not happy'," [Chicago Sun-Times](#), 07:19 CST, 17 Feb 2017. (Described Trump's press conference as "rambling, stream-of-consciousness, error-laden, grievance-filled".)
- Jim Drinkard & Calvin Woodward, "AP FACT CHECK: The audacity of hype," [Associated Press](#), 09:49 EST, 18 Feb 2017.

Again, Trump displays a tenuous grasp of facts on issues that are important to him.

Why is Trump giving one of his campaign-style speeches during a White House press conference? I have seen no explanation that makes sense.

17 Feb 2017

On 17 Feb 2017, *The Washington Post* explained why Trump's attacks on journalists can succeed amongst Trump's supporters.

If [Trump's] supporters don't actually read a report, such as the one the [New York] Times ran Wednesday [15 Feb], then Trump doesn't have to respond to it, really. He can respond to a version of his own invention, and his backers will be none the wiser. Callum Borchers, "Here's why Trump's attacks on 'fake news' succeed," [Washington Post](#), 12:39 EST, 17 Feb 2017.

I agree with what Mr. Borchers said in the previous paragraph. Trump's supporters will *not* notice when Trump mentions erroneous so-called "facts". And those who agree with Trump's prejudices and slogans, are likely to believe that criticism of Trump by the mainstream media is evidence of liberal bias by the "dishonest" media. In this way, a combination of ignorance of facts plus a lack of critical thinking skills makes Trump's supporters vulnerable to Trump's demagoguery.

On the afternoon of 17 Feb 2017, Trump further escalated his attacks on journalists:

The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!

Donald Trump, [tweet](#), 16:48 EST, 17 Feb 2017.

My comment is surprise that Trump omits *The Washington Post* from his enemies list. *The Post* has been shredding Trump — exposing Trump's false statements and Trump's emotions. Apparently, Trump does *not* read *The Washington Post*.

Also on 17 Feb 2017, John McCain — the Republican candidate for U.S. president in 2008 and currently chairman of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee — gave a speech at the Security Conference in Munich, in which McCain condemned Trump (without mentioning Trump's name):

[Those who survived World War II] would be alarmed by the growing inability, and

even unwillingness, to separate truth from lies.

John McCain, "Remarks by SASC Chairman John McCain at the 2017 Munich Security Conference," [U.S. Senate](#), 17 Feb 2017.

For interpretation of McCain's 17 Feb remarks, see, e.g.: [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 18 February 2017, Senator John McCain criticized Trump's tweet (quoted above) about journalists being the "enemy of the American people". McCain retorted: "That's how dictators get started. when you look at history, the first thing that dictators do is shut down the press." [NBC News](#); [Washington Post](#); [NBC News](#)(transcript).

On 20 February 2017, Howard Kurtz, writing in [Fox News](#) condemned Trump's tweet about the media being the "enemy of the American people". Kurtz said: "But even for a president who regularly breaks the rules, there are lines he shouldn't cross — as he did with this tweet on Saturday: [quoting tweet] The media are not the enemy. That has sinister connotations."

18 Feb 2017: campaign rally

On 18 February 2017, Trump held a campaign rally in an airplane hanger at the Melbourne, Florida airport. [Fox News](#); [NY Times](#). The [Washington Post](#) found Trump made 13 false statements in his speech.

In his 18 Feb speech, Trump tersely referred to "You look at what's happening last night [17 Feb] in Sweden." Trump's vague remark baffled people in Sweden, because nothing spectacular happened in Sweden on 17 Feb, neither a terrorist attack nor a big crime. [Reuters](#); [The Guardian](#); [The Telegraph](#); [BBC](#). Amongst the ridicule of Trump is a [tweet](#) with a parody of an IKEA instruction page for Trump's wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. (The parody was copied from a 31 Jan webpage by [Der Postillion](#) in Germany.)

On 19 February, Trump attempted to clarify with a [tweet](#): "My statement as to what's happening in Sweden was in reference to a story that was broadcast on @FoxNews concerning immigrants & Sweden." But a broadcast on Fox News cable television in the USA is *not* something that happened in Sweden "last night". Further, the Fox News program blamed immigrants in Sweden for an alleged increase in crime. But there is actually a decrease in crime in Sweden. It appears that Fox News — Trump's favorite television news channel — is broadcasting fake news. [Washington Post](#); [NY Times](#).

On 20 February, Trump clarified with another [tweet](#): "Give the public a break — The FAKE NEWS media is trying to say that large scale immigration in Sweden is working out just beautifully. NOT!" Two days earlier, Trump falsely said something bad happened in Sweden on the night of 17 Feb. Trump appears to be trying to shift the focus from his erroneous "fact" to a discussion of Swedish immigration policy. But Swedish immigration policy is a matter for the Swedes to decide. Instead of making a fool of himself with false references to Sweden, Trump should work on reducing the homicide rate in Chicago.

On 25 February 2017, the [Associated Press](#) disclosed that a Fox News channel program had

featured an interview with a "Swedish defense and national security advisor" who was unknown to the Swedish Defense Ministry or Swedish Foreign Office. Again, it appears that Fox News — Trump's favorite television news channel — is broadcasting fake news.

24 Feb 2017: Trump attacks journalists

On 23 February 2017, [CNN](#) reported that the White House Chief of Staff, Reince Priebus, asked the FBI to deny a 14 Feb report by *The New York Times* that Trump's campaign staff contacted Russian agents. The FBI refused the political request. See also [Associated Press](#)(23Feb); [Associated Press](#)(24Feb).

After CNN and other news organizations reported this news, Trump was outraged at the embarrassing leak from the FBI. At about 07:30 EST on 24 Feb 2017, Trump [tweeted](#) and [tweeted](#): “The FBI is totally unable to stop the national security "leakers" that have permeated our government for a long time. They can't even find the leakers within the FBI itself. Classified information is being given to media that could have a devastating effect on U.S. FIND NOW”

Chris Cillizza, writing in *The Washington Post*, says the real issue is the content of the leaks, *not* that leaks occur. And if Trump is concerned about allegedly criminal leaks, how about being concerned that Priebus contacted the FBI about an ongoing criminal investigation?

More reporting and commentary by Greg Sargent at *The Washington Post*.

On 24 February 2017, Trump addressed the Conservative Political Action Conference. Here is part of what Trump said about journalists:

And I want you all to know that we are fighting the fake news. It's fake — phony, fake. (Applause.) A few days ago, I called the fake news “the enemy of the people” — and they are. They are the enemy of the people. Because they have no sources, they just make them up when there are none. I saw one story recently where they said nine people have confirmed. There are no nine people. I don't believe there was one or two people. Nine people. And I said, give me a break. Because I know the people. I know who they talked to. There were no nine people. But they say, nine people, and somebody reads it and they think, oh, nine people. They have nine sources. They make up sources.

They are very dishonest people. In fact, in covering my comments, the dishonest media did not explain that I called the fake news the enemy of the people — the fake news. They dropped off the word “fake.” And all of the sudden, the story became, the media is the enemy. They take the word “fake” out, and now I'm saying, oh, no, this is no good. But that's the way they are. So I'm not against the media. I'm not against the press. I don't mind bad stories if I deserve them. And I tell you, I love good stories, but we won't — (laughter) — I don't get too many of them.

But I am only against the fake news media or press — fake, fake. They have to leave that word. I'm against the people that make up stories and make up sources. They

shouldn't be allowed to use sources unless they use somebody's name. Let their name be put out there. Let their name be put out. (Applause.) A source says that Donald Trump is a horrible, horrible human being. Let them say it to my face. (Applause.) Let there be no more sources.

....

And many of these groups are part of the large media corporations that have their own agenda, and it's not your agenda, and it's not the country's agenda. It's their own agenda. They have a professional obligation as members of the press to report honestly. But as you saw throughout the entire campaign, and even now, the fake news doesn't tell the truth. Doesn't tell the truth.

Donald Trump, "Remarks by President Trump at the Conservative Political Action Conference," [White House](#), 24 Feb 2017.

The [Washington Post](#) found 13 erroneous statements in Trump's speech, including Trump's remark about nine anonymous sources cited in one news article. The [Associated Press](#) discussed 4 errors in Trump's speech. On 25 February, the Associated Press issued a news article titled "Trump and His overdrawn apocalypse". That AP article was not available at their archival BigStory website, but is available at The [NY Times](#) and The [Washington Post](#).

President Trump's demand that journalists stop using anonymous sources is a blatant violation of the First Amendment. Government should *not* tell journalists how to do their job. Ironically, only hours before Trump condemned anonymous sources, the [Associated Press](#) reported that White House staff members were talking to journalists on condition of anonymity.

Not noticed by commentators were *two* uses of an anonymous source by Trump himself in his 24 Feb speech:

1. "Jim [no last name]" formerly visited Paris, France every summer. But 4 or 5 years ago, Jim stopped traveling to Paris, because of Islamic terrorism. Jim said: "Paris is no longer Paris."
2. the unnamed head of a pipeline company ("the gentleman — never met him, don't even know the name of his company") who spent "hundreds of millions of dollars" on consultants who were supposed to get government approval for a new pipeline, but the "bloodsucker consultants" failed.

At night on 24 Feb, the [Washington Post](#) reported that after the FBI refused to dispute the 14 Feb *New York Times* article about Russian contact with Trump's campaign staff, the White House then asked "senior members of the intelligence community and Congress" to dispute the news. In short, the White House attempted to use U.S. Government agencies as a public-relations tool to cover-up alleged misconduct by Trump's campaign staff. On 25 February, the [Washington Post](#) reported that commentators see similarities with Nixon's attempted cover-up of the burglary at the Watergate.

White House Retaliates Against Journalists

In an astounding development, on 24 Feb 2017, the White House refused to allow journalists from *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, CNN, and Politico to attend a press briefing by Spicer. Spicer called his presentation a "press gaggle", but that does *not* justify excluding major news media, while allowing some smaller conservative media (e.g., Breitbart and *Washington Times*) to attend. Spicer held his gaggle in his office — perhaps to justify limiting the number of journalists — but the larger White House press room was available at the time of his gaggle. The Associated Press, *Time* magazine, and *USA Today* refused to attend, in protest of the exclusion of their colleagues. The executive editor of *The New York Times* said: “Nothing like this has ever happened at the White House in our long history of covering multiple administrations of different parties.” CNN criticized the White House: “Apparently this is how they retaliate when you report facts they don't like. We'll keep reporting regardless.” [Washington Post](#); [NY Times](#); [CNN](#); [Associated Press](#); [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#).

On 11 October 2017, Trump proposed licensing journalists, as described [below](#).

Trump blames Obama for Protests

On 21 February 2017, Trump tweeted:

The so-called angry crowds in home districts of some Republicans are actually, in numerous cases, planned out by liberal activists. Sad!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:23 PST, 21 Feb 2017.

In an exclusive interview with the "Fox & Friends" television program on 27 February 2017, Trump specifically blamed Obama for protests at town hall meetings with Republicans from the U.S. Congress:

"I think that President Obama is behind it because his people are certainly behind it, and some of the leaks possibly come from that group," Trump said.

The president said he understands what's going on, since he is attempting to undo much of the legislation Obama implemented. [Trump] also said these protests will likely continue because "it's politics."

"I'm not really surprised because I understand the way the world works," Trump said. "'It's Politics': Trump Says Obama Is Behind Protests and 'Possibly' the Leaks," [Fox News](#), 08:20 EST, 28 Feb 2017.

A later Fox News webpage said:

President Trump said in an exclusive interview Tuesday that he believes former President Barack Obama and his top aides are behind the protests and leaks that have tormented the new administration — and he doesn't expect it to stop anytime soon.

Trump, during an interview with "Fox & Friends," blamed Obama acolytes and the ex-president himself for the organized demonstrations that have sprung up nationwide

since the Nov. 8 election, and also for the politically embarrassing leaks that have hindered Trump's messaging.

"I think that President Obama's behind it because his people are certainly behind it," Trump said. "And some of the leaks possibly come from that group, you know, some of the leaks — which are very serious leaks, because they're very bad in terms of national security."

Trump didn't provide evidence to support the charge.

....

"But I also understand that's politics," Trump said. "And in terms of him being behind things, that's politics. And it will probably continue."

He added: "I'm not really surprised because I understand the way the world works. It's politics. I mean I'm changing things that he's wanted to do."

Cody Derespina, "Trump: Obama and former aides behind protests, leaks," [Fox News](#), 28 Feb 2017.

On the night of 27 Feb, Fox News released video of part of their interview, which was broadcast on CNN. *The Washington Post* reported Trump said:

"I think that President Obama is behind it because his people certainly are behind it," Trump said. "In terms of him being behind things, that's politics. It will probably continue."

....

"I think he is behind it," Trump said. "I also think it's politics. That's the way it is." Philip Rucker, "Trump says Obama is helping to organize protests against his presidency," [Washington Post](#), first posted at 22:59 EST, 27 Feb 2017, updated 07:05 on 28 Feb.

The [Associated Press](#) also reported on the Fox interview with Trump.

Finally, *The Washington Post* posted a transcript of the entire interview with Fox & Friends. In the relevant part of the interview, one of the three Fox & Friends hosts, Brian Kilmeade, first suggested Obama's organization was behind some of the protests against Trump.

KILMEADE: All right, can we talk about President Obama?

You said you personally get along with him. You guys were going at each other for three, four, maybe eight years. It turns out his organization seems to be doing a lot of the organizing for some of the protests that a lot of these Republicans are seeing around the country and against you.

TRUMP: Right.

KILMEADE: Do you believe President Obama is behind it?

And if he is, is that a violation of the — the so-called unsaid president's code?

TRUMP: No, I think he is behind it. I also think it's politics. That's the way it is. And look, I have a very thick skin.

KILMEADE: But Bush was never — Bush wasn't going after Clinton. And Clinton wasn't going after Bush.

TRUMP: Well, you never know what's exactly happening behind the scenes. You know, you're probably right or possibly right. But you never know.

No, I think that President Obama is behind it, because his people are certainly behind it. And some of the leaks possibly come from that group, you know, some of the leaks, which are really very serious leaks, because they're very bad...

KILMEADE: Right.

TRUMP: — in terms of national security.

But I also understand that's politics. And in terms of him being behind things, that's politics. And it will probably continue.

KILMEADE: Does he just — does that disappoint you?

This — don't you think that that goes beyond what we usually do in this country?

TRUMP: I don't want to use the word disappoint. I'm not really surprised because I understand the way the world works. It's politics. I mean I'm changing things that he's wanted to do. I mean we're much tougher in terms of getting the bad guys out.

You know, people don't realize, he deported a lot of people, but we're focused on the bad people. But we're focused on the bad people.

We're focused on the drug lords and the gang members. We're focused on a very, very bad group that are in this country that we're getting out rapidly. He was much less focused on that.

Chris Cillizza, "President Trump's friendly 'Fox and Friends' interview went exactly how you think it would," [Washington Post](#), 11:10 EST, 28 Feb 2017.

To see if there is any factual basis for Kilmeade's and Trump's view that Obama is organizing protests against Trump, I searched Google News for the query `Obama protests Trump` during the date range from 20 Jan 2017 to 26 Feb 2017. Here is some of what I found:

- On 30 Jan 2017, Obama responded to Trump's Executive Order that banned entry from seven-Muslim majority nations by supporting nationwide protests. A spokesman for Obama said: "President Obama is heartened by the level of engagement taking place in communities around the country." Obama himself was on vacation. [Washington Post](#); [NY Times](#); [NBC News](#).

- On 14 February 2017, [CNN](#) reported Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) claimed protesters were paid by well-funded liberal groups "to bully and intimidate" Republicans in Congress. But Chaffetz's claims of paid protesters are unsubstantiated. Also, CNN listed some of the liberal organizations who were "working to help with grassroots organizing around GOP town halls": Organizing For Action, the SEIU, MoveOn.org , the Center for American Progress, and a new group called Indivisible.
- On 17 February 2017, the [New York Times](#) reports: "[MoveOn.org](#) is mobilizing members to attend town-hall-style meetings across the country" and "[Organizing for Action](#), the political nonprofit group that grew out of former President Barack Obama's election campaign, has created a 'Recess Toolkit' with suggestions on how to effectively ask questions at the events."
- On 19 February 2017, [Breitbart](#), a right-wing news organization, reported that the successor to Obama's presidential campaign organization, Organizing for Action, is attempting to "disrupt Trump's agenda".
- On 24 February 2017, [Politico](#) reported there was *no* evidence that anti-Trump protesters were being paid by liberal groups.

On 27 February 2017, [PolitiFact](#) found *no* evidence of paid protesters at Republican town hall meetings.

My conclusion is that groups of liberal Democrats *may* be organizing some protests against Republicans. But these protests are energetic because the protesters genuinely believe Trump's policies are wrong. Obama surely agrees with the liberals who are protesting Trump's policies, but there is *no* evidence that Obama is personally involved in organizing protests.

My comment is that it is a fact that some U.S. citizens are angry about Trump's policies or Trump's behavior. But instead of simply recognizing that *all* politicians are criticized by some citizens, Trump sees a nefarious organization by Obama and his henchmen to criticize Trump. Once again, Trump offers *no* evidence to support his inflammatory claim. One wonders if Trump is developing paranoia.

I am surprised that Trump did *not* blame Hillary Clinton.

On 16-17 February 2017, the [New York Times](#) and then the [Washington Post](#) reported that Trump had asked the Justice Department to investigate some of Trump's opponents. During Trump's 16 Feb press conference, discussed [above](#), Trump said "I've actually called the Justice Department to look into the leaks. Those are criminal leaks."

My comment is that Trump is just one step away from asking the Justice Department and/or Internal Revenue Service to investigate organizations and people who are criticizing Trump.

28 Feb 2017: Trump speaks to Congress

The transcript of Trump's first speech to Congress is posted at the [White House](#).

As usual, Trump's speech contains factual errors. The [Associated Press](#) found 8 errors. The [Washington Post](#) found 13 errors. The [New York Times](#) found approximately ten facts that were at least misleading. [PolitiFact](#) found at least 8 errors or misleading statements by Trump.

Pence & Pruitt Used Private E-Mail to conduct state business

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Republicans — quite properly in my opinion — excoriated Hillary Clinton for using her private e-mail server for official business while she was U.S. Secretary of State. She was subsequently unable to produce copies of *all* of her e-mails, thereby failing to preserve public records and raising questions about the content of the missing e-mails.

But in late February and early March 2017, it was revealed that two prominent Republicans in Trump's administration had used a private e-mail account to conduct official business when they were previously in state government:

1. Scott Pruitt, Trump's Environmental Protection Agency administrator, used a private Apple e-mail account for state business when he was Attorney General of Oklahoma. Worse, he told the U.S. Senate during his confirmation hearings that he *only* used an official state e-mail account for state business. [KOKH](#)(17 Feb); [KOKH](#)(24 Feb); [Associated Press](#)(27 Feb); [Washington Post](#)(2 Mar).
2. Mike Pence, Trump's Vice President, used an AOL e-mail account for state business when he was governor of Indiana. [Indianapolis Star](#)(2 Mar); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#). The [Indianapolis Star](#) and [Associated Press](#) reported that Pence attempted to keep his AOL e-mails private. Pence's attorneys delivered 13 boxes of AOL e-mails to the Indiana government on 2 March 2017, in a belated attempt to deliver public records after Pence resigned as governor on 9 Jan 2017. [Indianapolis Star](#).
3. On 26 May 2017, Pence had still not delivered to the state of Indiana *all* of his e-mails as governor of Indiana. The e-mails that Pence had delivered were printed on paper, to avoid being searched on a computer. [Indianapolis Star](#).

My comment is that these two Republicans are hypocrites for criticizing Hillary Clinton for her unlawful use of private e-mail for official government business. Using a private e-mail server shows politicians are clueless about computer security, as well as avoiding preserving public records of their communications.

Both Pence and Pruitt attended law school, where they learned to defend misconduct, instead

of admit the facts and apologize. In my opinion, their explaining differences and distinctions between Hillary Clinton's conduct and their conduct only serves to show they are unable to understand their misconduct. Regardless of whether state law permitted state executives to use private e-mail, and regardless of the contents of their state e-mails, it was at least bad practice for Pence and Pruitt to send official state e-mails from a private e-mail account.

On 4 August 2017 — after seven months of delay (stonewalling) — Pence finally gave the AOL e-mails to the Indiana government. [Associated Press](#); [Indianapolis Star](#).

On 25 September 2017, the [New York Times](#) reported that at least *six* White House staff members (including Jared Kushner and Stephen K. Bannon) had used private e-mail accounts for official business. My comment is that this is incredible hypocrisy given the way Republicans criticized Hillary Clinton for using a private e-mail server when she was Secretary of State. See also [Politico](#).

Pence disrespects scientific equipment

On 6 July 2017, Pence visited Kennedy Space Center and was given a tour. He came to a spacecraft that had a prominent sign saying "Critical Space Flight Hardware" with red letters warning "DO NOT TOUCH". So what does Pence — who has *no* understanding of either science or technology — do? He puts the palm of his hand on the metal panel immediately below the DO NOT TOUCH sign. A photographer for [Reuters](#) made a photograph of Pence violating the warning sign.

The [Washington Post](#) treated this story as a joke. People who skipped the difficult classes in physics, mathematics, electrical engineering, etc. in college can never understand the damage they can do by touching scientific instruments. For example, touching the gate terminal of a MOSFET transistor can expose the transistor to electrostatic discharge that can destroy the transistor. Salt from perspiration can corrode some metals. Pence made a serious transgression which ought to be considered an act of vandalism, as well as disrespect of the work of scientists and engineers.

Trump alleges Obama wiretapped Trump Tower

On 4 March 2017, Trump alleged that President Obama wiretapped the telephones at Trump Tower in New York City in October 2016. Trump's allegations came in a series of four Tweets:

1. [tweet](#) at 06:35 EST: "Terrible! Just found out that Obama had my "wires tapped" in Trump Tower just before the victory. Nothing found. This is McCarthyism!"
2. [tweet](#) at 06:49 EST: "Is it legal for a sitting President to be "wire tapping" a race for president prior to an election? Turned down by court earlier. A NEW LOW!"
3. [tweet](#) at 06:52 EST: "I'd bet a good lawyer could make a great case out of the fact that

President Obama was tapping my phones in October, just prior to Election!”

4. [tweet](#) at 07:02 EST: “How low has President Obama gone to tapp [sic] my phones during the very sacred election process. This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!”

As usual, Trump offered absolutely *no* evidence to support his inflammatory claim. Obama's spokesman replied: "... neither President Obama nor any White House official ever ordered surveillance on any U.S. citizen...." [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [NY Times](#); [CNN](#).

Trump does *not* understand wiretap law. Only a judge can issue a warrant authorizing a wiretap. The president can *not* authorize a wiretap. So Trump's series of four tweets not only insults Obama, but also displays Trump's ignorance of law.

Back in October 2016, it was known that Russians had hacked into computers at the Democratic National Committee and also hacked into the personal e-mail account of Podesta, Hillary Clinton's campaign manager. The stolen e-mails were publicly displayed on WikiLeaks. (See [below](#).) Because Trump benefited from the public disclosure of stolen e-mails, there could have been legitimate questions about whether Trump was communicating with Russians about the criminal hacking. But at 15:55 EST on 4 March 2017, The [Washington Post](#) reported: "Senior U.S. officials with knowledge of the wide-ranging federal investigation into Russian interference in the election said Saturday that there had been no wiretap of Trump." And on 5 March 2017, James Clapper — Obama's Director of National Intelligence — appeared on the NBC television program [Meet the Press](#) and denied any wiretap of Trump.

In my opinion, Trump's tweets appear to be more paranoia by Trump. And Trump's accusations without any supporting facts — and without any citations to sources — again show defects in Trump's thought process.

Astoundingly, on 5 March 2017, the White House asked Congress to investigate Obama for allegedly wiretapping Trump in 2016. [White House](#); [Washington Post](#); [NY Times](#); [Associated Press](#).

White House staff — *not* Trump — finally managed to cite some news articles in support of Trump's inflammatory claims. But The [Washington Post](#) explained why the White House citations were either *not* credible or irrelevant.

Apparently, the White House intends to divert attention away from contacts between Trump's advisers and Russians. But it was a stupid gambit by Trump, because:

1. If Trump's allegations are false (the likely outcome), then it was an abuse of presidential power to demand that Congress investigate a person without any credible evidence of misconduct by that person. More importantly, this *may* be Trump's first impeachable offense.
2. If Trump or his associates were wiretapped, then an investigation of the wiretapping may expose criminal activity by Trump or his associates, which could be an

impeachable offense.

McCain

On 12 March 2017, U.S. Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, put the Obama wiretapping dispute into its proper perspective during an interview on CNN's "State of the Union" television program.

JAKE TAPPER [host]: [Trump] tweeted that President Obama had wiretapped him at Trump Tower during the campaign. If there's no proof for what the president said — and we know that the FBI director has said it is not true, and the former director of national intelligence has said it's not true — should President Trump take back his charge and apologize to President Obama and to the American people?

JOHN McCAIN: Well, look, President Trump has to provide the American people, not just the Intelligence Committee, but the American people, with evidence that his predecessor, former president of the United States, was guilty of breaking the law, because our director of national intelligence, General Clapper, testified that there was absolutely no truth to that allegation.

So, I think the president has one of two choices, either retract or to provide the information that the American people deserve, because, if his predecessor violated the law, President Obama violated the law, we have got a serious issue here, to say the least.

TAPPER: But there's no one I have heard who has any information relating to the FBI or intelligence, including Vice President Pence, Sean Spicer, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who has said that they know of any information that backs this up. Do you have any reason to think that this charge is true?

McCAIN: I have no reason to believe that the charge is true.

But I also believe that the president of the United States could clear this up in a minute. All he has to do is pick up the phone, call the director of the CIA, director of national intelligence, and say, OK, what happened?

Because they certainly should know whether the former president of the United States was wiretapping Trump Tower.

....

But I do believe that, on an issue such as this, accusing a former president of the United States of doing something which is not only illegal, but just unheard of, then that requires corroboration. And I will let the American people be the judge.

But this is serious stuff, Jake, because it under — if true, or the allegation is left out there, it undermines the confidence the American people have in the entire way that the government does business.

"Transcript: 'State of the Union'," [CNN](#), 12 March 2017.

McCain made two points here. First, the burden of proof is always on the accuser, so it was *not* proper for Trump to accuse Obama of illegal wiretapping — without Trump also presenting credible evidence to support his claim. Second, there are easier ways of resolving Trump's accusation than having Congressional committees investigate Obama. For more about the response of Congress, see [The Washington Post](#).

**Kellyanne Conway believes
microwave ovens take photographs
and *not* her job to provide evidence**

Trump is in deep trouble with his unfounded accusation that Obama wiretapped Trump Tower. So Kellyanne Conway dug the hole deeper for Trump. In an interview with the *Bergen County Record*, a newspaper in New Jersey, Conway alleged Obama's surveillance of Trump went beyond telephones.

... Conway ... suggested that the alleged monitoring of activities at Trump's campaign headquarters at Trump Tower in Manhattan may have involved far more than wiretapping.

“What I can say is there are many ways to surveil each other,” Conway said as the Trump presidency marked its 50th day in office during the weekend. “You can surveil someone through their phones, certainly through their television sets — any number of ways.”

Conway went on to say that the monitoring could be done with “microwaves that turn into cameras,” adding: “We know this is a fact of modern life.”

Conway did not offer any evidence to back up her claim. But her remarks are significant — and potentially explosive — because they come amid a request by the House Intelligence Committee for the White House to turn over any evidence by today [13 Mar] that the phones at Trump Tower were tapped as part of what the president claims to be a secret plot by the Obama administration to monitor his campaign.

....

The strategy of dueling inquiries [in the House and Senate] — along with Conway's suggestion of even broader surveillance by the Obama administration besides wiretapping — certainly complicates any investigation that involves Russia. But it may also confuse the issue.

Mike Kelly, "Kellyanne Conway alludes to even wider surveillance of Trump campaign," [Bergen County Record](#), 12 Mar 2017. (accessed at 06:50 EDT on 13 Mar)

My comment is that I want to see Conway disassemble a microwave oven and show us the photodiode array — or other image sensor — that enables a microwave oven to become a camera. And Conway — as a self-appointed expert on electronic surveillance — needs to explain, using electrical engineering technical terms, how surveillance data are transmitted

from a microwave oven. To be clear, not only is there *no* image sensor in a microwave oven, but also there is *no* way to transmit data from a microwave oven. Conway is babbling more pseudo-facts, in a continuation of her "Bowling Green Massacre" assault on the Truth.

On the morning of 13 March 2017, Kellyanne Conway appeared on CNN's "New Day" program, where she actually said: "I'm not in the job of having evidence. That's what investigations are for." (See also [CNN](#).)

The [Washington Post](#) retorted: "You *are* in the business of having evidence, Ms. Conway. You are a representative of the president of the United States, and your business is presenting accurate information to the American people on his behalf."

White House press secretary attempts to explain Trump's delusion

On the afternoon of 13 March, the White House press secretary made a hypertechnical defense of Trump's delusion about Obama wiretapping Trump Tower.

QUESTION: Does he have an obligation, as Senator McCain said, to clear this up?

MR. SPICER: And I think if you look at the President's tweet, he said very clearly "wiretapping" in quotes. There's been substantial discussion in several reports that Bret Baier from Fox on March 3rd talked about evidence of wiretapping. There's been reports in The New York Times and the BBC and other outlets about other aspects of surveillance that have occurred.

....

QUESTION: The question I wanted — when should Americans trust the President? Should they trust the President — is it phony or real when he says that President Obama was wiretapping him?

MR. SPICER: Well, again, let's get back. I think there's two things that are important about what he said. I think recognizing that it's — he doesn't really think that President Obama went up and tapped his phone personally.

QUESTION: What does he think?

MR. SPICER: But I think there's no question that the Obama administration, that there were actions about surveillance and other activities that occurred in the 2016 election. That is a widely reported activity that occurred back then. The President used the word "wiretap" to mean, broadly, surveillance and other activities during that. And that is, again, something — it is interesting how many news outlets reported that this activity was taking place during the 2016 election cycle, and now we're wondering where the proof is. It is many of the same outlets in this room that talked about the activities that were going on back then.

....

QUESTION: You said when he meant wiretapping — said it — he meant surveillance. That's not what he said.

MR. SPICER: He literally had it in quotes.

QUESTION: So you're interpreting the tweet for us, it sounds like.

MR. SPICER: No, in some cases I'll ask him, what did the quotes mean, and he'll say —

QUESTION: Did you ask about this tweet?

MR. SPICER: I did.

QUESTION: And what did he say?

MR. SPICER: He said they were in quotes, I was referring to surveillance overall. It's something that had been referred to in other reports.

"Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sean Spicer, 3/13/2017, #22," [White House](#), 13 March 2017.

Spicer attempted to twist Trump's words to now mean something different than what Trump plainly said in his four tweets on 4 March that are quoted [above](#).

Obama is a lawyer and former politician who does *not* know how to install a wiretap. The only reasonable interpretation of Trump's tweets is that Obama ordered someone else to install wiretap(s) in Trump Tower. *If* any wiretap existed, then it *may* have been pursuant to a judicial order.

"Surveillance" is a broader word than "wiretap". Trump should have used the correct word. It is *not* plausible that it took Trump 9 days to decide he used the wrong word. Spicer's assertion that Trump put quotation marks around "wiretap" is only true in two of four instances in Trump's 4 March tweets.

The [Washington Post](#) said Spicer was rewriting the meaning of Trump's tweets: "The unavoidable conclusion is this: Spicer knows that no evidence of actual wiretapping is coming, so his best shot to vindicate Trump is to claim that 'wire tapping' could mean something else."

[CNN](#) said: "White House press secretary Sean Spicer said Trump wasn't referring to wiretapping when he tweeted about wiretapping."

The [New York Times](#) said: "The unusual and shifting explanations from Mr. Spicer and Ms. Conway reflected the contortions that members of Mr. Trump's inner circle have employed to explain the president's explosive accusation, which he has yet to address personally."

Trump's government misses deadline

to provide evidence

On Saturday, 11 March 2017, the [Associated Press](#) reported that the Intelligence Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives asked the White House to provide any evidence that Trump's telephone was tapped during the election. The due date for the evidence is Monday, 13 March.

On the evening of 13 March 2017, the Justice Department missed the deadline for providing evidence of Obama wiretapping Trump Tower. The House Intelligence Committee gave the Justice Department a revised deadline of 20 March. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#).

The House Intelligence Committee is *not* the only Congressional committee to demand evidence of Obama wiretapping Trump Tower. Senator Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.Car.) — who chairs the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security — requested the Justice Department and the FBI provide copies of any warrants or court orders related to the alleged wiretapping. On 14 March, [Alan He](#) of CBS News reported that Graham was angry that his request for evidence was ignored.

On 15 March 2017, Devin Nunes (R-Calif.), the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee told [CNN](#): "If you're going to take Trump's tweets literally on wiretapping, then 'clearly the President was wrong'."

On the night of 15 March 2017, Trump appeared on Tucker Carlson's program on the Fox News cable television channel. I can not find a transcript of what Trump said, but I did find the following quotations:

President Trump discussed his tweeted accusation that President Obama ordered "wires" at Trump Tower tapped during last year's presidential campaign in an exclusive interview with Fox News' "Tucker Carlson Tonight" Wednesday [15 March].

Trump told host Tucker Carlson that the administration "will be submitting things" to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence "very soon." The president added that he "will be, perhaps speaking about this next week" and predicted that "you're going to find some very interesting items coming to the forefront over the next 2 weeks."

When asked by Carlson why he tweeted about the alleged phone tap before producing evidence, Trump said his definition of wiretapping "covers a lot of different things."

"That really covers surveillance and many other things," he said. "Nobody ever talks about the fact that [the words 'wires tapped'] was in quotes [in the tweet], but that's a very important thing."

"Trump says he will submit evidence of wiretapping to House committee 'very soon'," [Fox News](#), 15 March 2017.

My comment is that 11 days after Trump's inflammatory 4 March tweets, Trump is only promising evidence sometime in the next two weeks. Trump *should* have disclosed his evidence when he accused Obama of wiretapping Trump Tower.

On 16 March 2017, two senior members of the Senate Intelligence Committee — chairman Richard Burr (R-N.Car.) and vice-chairman Mark Warner (D-Va.) — issued a one-sentence statement that said: "Based on the information available to us, we see no indications that Trump Tower was the subject of surveillance by any element of the United States government either before or after Election Day 2016." [Warner](#) and [Burr](#).

My comment is that Trump *should* have had his evidence ready when he made his inflammatory tweets on 4 March. And the White House staff *should* have begun assembling evidence when the tweets became public. Remember, on 5 March the White House *asked* Congress to investigate this wiretapping, so the White House should be cooperating with the investigation that the White House requested, instead of missing deadlines. The 13 March missed deadline is 9 days after Trump tweeted and there is still *no* evidence to support Trump's tweets, which are almost certainly based on Trump's delusions.

Incidentally, the Justice Department has a dilemma: it must submit evidence to support Trump's assertions, but evidence does *not* exist for Trump's delusions. One wonders how long it will take the Justice Department to admit there is zero evidence for Trump's delusion about Obama wiretapping Trump Tower.

In my opinion, Trump has begun an era in which the highest levels of the U.S. Government operate on delusions without facts. And that is just fine with the people who elected Trump. Operating on delusions is supposed to "make america great again", according to Trump's campaign slogan.

On 14 March, *The Washington Post* clearly explained what is happening.

The White House's reactions to Trump's evidence-free claims — be it [Obama wiretapping Trump Tower] or the one about millions of illegal votes in 2016 — is to call for investigations. That has the triple benefit of putting the onus on someone else to look into it, to buy some time and hope people forget that the president is making such wild allegations, and, in this case, to give themselves an excuse to clam up. The White House initially said it wouldn't comment on Trump's wiretapping claim while it was being investigated and then it said it couldn't provide evidence because of separation of powers — another [claim](#) that strained credulity.

But that also puts Republicans such as Nunes and Graham in the position of having to account for these claims — and calling on Trump and his team to put up or shut up. By pushing the administration to produce evidence — or else — they are effectively putting the ball back in the executive branch's court. The subtext: You can't just make these claims and then ask us to deal with the fallout.

Aaron Blake, "Republicans are threatening to expose Trump as the emperor with no clothes," [Washington Post](#), 14:37 EDT, 14 Mar 2017.

Prof. Lawrence Douglas at Amherst College in Massachusetts wrote in *The Guardian* newspaper in Manchester, England:

Incredibly, Trump has never had to pay a political price for his malign speech, shameless evasions and legion lies. To the contrary. By treating words as potent and weightless — potent, as tools to skewer opponents; and weightless, without lasting consequence — he greased his way to a spectacular political rise.

....

.... But Trump is a stubborn or dull pupil. In refusing to utter a word of regret, much less apology, he is sticking to his tried and true script. Apologies are recognitions of mistake and Trump by his own lights commits none.

Lawrence Douglas, "Donald Trump's disregard for words — and truth — is finally catching up with him," [The Guardian](#), 18 March 2017.

Perhaps an explanation for why Trump can *not* recognize his mistakes is that Trump is narcissistic.

17 March 2017: Trump meets with Dr. Merkel

On 17 March 2017, Trump met with German Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel at the White House. At a joint press conference, Trump actually blurted out: "As far as wiretapping, I guess, by this past administration, at least we have something in common perhaps." [White House](#).

Three leading newspapers in the USA remarked:

1. The [Washington Post](#) said: "Merkel did not respond to Trump's attempt at a joke."
2. The [NY Times](#) said: "Ms. Merkel did a barely perceptible double take, busying herself by shuffling her notes. She smiled thinly and said nothing, as if she had resolved not to get drawn into Mr. Trump's political dramas."
3. The [Los Angeles Times](#) said: "President Trump refused Friday to back off his unsubstantiated accusation that President Obama ordered surveillance of him, instead dismissing questions about it by cracking a joke that revived one of the most troublesome diplomatic episodes of Obama's tenure."

I think this was a bad thing for Trump to say for three reasons:

1. It reminded Dr. Merkel of an unpleasant experience when the U.S. National Security Agency probably wiretapped her cell phone during 2010-2013. [Washington Post](#); [NY Times](#); [The Telegraph](#); [Deutsche Welle](#).
2. Trump used the probable wiretapping of Dr. Merkel to validate the unproven wiretapping of Trump Tower. In other words, Trump took Dr. Merkel's state visit and twisted it to validate Trump's personal delusion of being wiretapped.
3. Trump portrayed Obama as the enemy of both Dr. Merkel and Trump, which is a strange position for a U.S. president to take in discussions with the leader of a foreign government.

On the morning of 18 March 2017, the [Associated Press](#) reported: "President Donald Trump

defiantly refused to back down from his explosive claim that Barack Obama wiretapped his phones,"

**16-17 March 2017:
White House says United Kingdom wiretapped Trump
More “fake news” from Fox News**

Sadly, there is *more* to this story. Andrew Napolitano — a retired judge on a state trial court in New Jersey and a legal commentator on the Fox News cable television channel since 1998 — [alleged](#) on 14 March 2017 that Obama asked the United Kingdom Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) to wiretap Trump. Trump's press secretary, Sean Spicer, repeated the allegations in a [White House](#) press conference on 16 March. The U.K. government was outraged. The White House promised *not* to repeat the allegations again. [The Telegraph](#)(16Mar); [Financial Times](#)(17Mar); [BBC](#)(17Mar); [Reuters](#).

But then on 17 March, during the press conference with Dr. Merkel, Trump said: “All we did was quote a certain very talented legal mind who was the one responsible for saying that on television. I didn’t make an opinion on it. That was a statement made by a very talented lawyer on Fox. And so you shouldn’t be talking to me, you should be talking to Fox, okay?” [White House](#). The U.K. government was again outraged that Trump had repeated a discredited (i.e., fake) news story that alleged the GCHQ wiretapped Trump for Obama. [The Telegraph](#); [The Guardian](#); [Reuters](#).

On 17 March, Shepard Smith of Fox News repudiated Napolitano's false allegation: “Fox News cannot confirm Judge Napolitano’s commentary,” the anchor Shepard Smith said on air. “Fox News knows of no evidence of any kind that the now president of the United States was surveilled at any time, any way. Full stop.” Peter Baker & Steven Erlanger, "Trump Offers No Apology for Claim on British Spying," [NY Times](#), 17 Mar 2017. See also [Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#).

On 20 March 2017, it was reported that Fox News cable television had indefinitely suspended Napolitano from appearing on its programs. [Los Angeles Times](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 29 March 2017, Napolitano returned to Fox News cable television programs. Napolitano immediately reiterated his 14 March claim that GCHQ wiretapped Trump Tower and Napolitano asserted that his three anonymous sources continued to believe their claim. [Washington Post](#); [Los Angeles Times](#).

On 1 April 2017 — four weeks after Trump's famous four tweets — there is still *no* credible evidence for Trump's claims that Obama wiretapped Trump Tower. Trump's delusion about wiretapping has greatly diminished Trump's reputation and grieved the U.K. government.

Trump has *no* evidence

On Friday, 17 March, the Justice Department provided a report to the House Intelligence Committee. On Sunday, 19 March, Devin Nunes (R-Calif), chairman of the House

Intelligence Committee, appeared on "Fox News Sunday" and spoke about the evidence. I am unable to find a transcript of the program, but here is a quotation from an article by Fox News:

The chairman of the House intelligence committee told "Fox News Sunday" that phones at President Donald Trump's campaign headquarters in midtown Manhattan were never tapped during last year's election campaign, contrary to Trump's earlier, unsubstantiated assertion.

"Was there a physical wiretap of Trump Tower? No, there never was," Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif., said. "The information we received Friday continues to lead us in that direction."

Nunes added: "There was no FISA warrant I am aware of to tap Trump Tower." FISA stands for the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which requires investigators to seek a warrant from a secret court to wiretap a foreign suspect.

"House intel committee chairman: 'There never was' Trump tower wiretap," [Fox News](#), 19 March 2017.

That is a strong statement by a senior member of Trump's political party. Plainly, the wiretap of Trump Tower *never happened*. But the real problem is just beginning. The USA has a president who makes inflammatory assertions with absolutely *no* evidence to support his assertion. This is a defective thought process. It appears that Trump can *not* distinguish between facts and his delusions.

On Monday, 20 March 2017, the director of the FBI and the director of the National Security Agency testified before the House Intelligence Committee about (1) continuing investigation of possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russian hackers before the Nov 2016 election and (2) Trump's baseless claims that Obama wiretapped Trump Tower.

The Associated Press reported:

In a bruising five-hour session, the FBI director [James Comey] also knocked down Trump's claim that his predecessor had wiretapped his New York skyscraper, an assertion that has distracted White House officials and frustrated fellow Republicans who acknowledge they've seen no evidence to support it.

....

Comey for the first time put himself publicly at odds with the president by contradicting a series of recent tweets from Trump that asserted his phones had been ordered tapped by President Barack Obama during the campaign.

"With respect to the president's tweets about alleged wiretapping directed at him by the prior administration, I have no information that supports those tweets, and we have looked carefully inside the FBI," Comey said. The same was true, he added, of the Justice Department.

....

The FBI director was the latest government official to reject Trump's claims, made without any evidence, that Obama had wiretapped Trump Tower during the campaign. Rep. Nunes [chairman of the House Intelligence Committee] rejected them earlier in the hearing.

Eric Tucker & Eileen Sullivan, "Comey: FBI probing Trump-Russia links, wiretap claims bogus," [Associated Press](#), 17:24 EDT, 20 Mar 2017.

The Washington Post published a transcript of Comey's entire testimony, where the following was said about Trump's claim that Obama wiretapped Trump Tower.

SCHIFF'S OPENING STATEMENT: We have also reviewed whether there is any evidence to support President Trump's claim that he was wiretapped by President Obama in Trump Tower and found no evidence whatsoever to support that slanderous accusation. And we hope that Director Comey can now put that matter permanently to rest.

....

QUESTION BY SCHIFF: Director Comey, was the president's statement that Obama had his wires tapped in Trump Tower a true statement?

COMEY: With respect to the president's tweets about alleged wiretapping directed at him by the prior administration, I have no information that supports those tweets and we have looked carefully inside the FBI. The Department of Justice has asked me to share with you that the answer is the same for the Department of Justice and all its components. The department has no information that supports those tweets.

....

SCHIFF: So President Obama could not unilaterally order a wiretap of anyone?

COMEY: No president could.

....

SCHIFF: Now, the British allies — our British allies have called the president's suggestion that they wiretapped him for Obama nonsense and utterly ridiculous. Would you agree?

ROGERS [director of the National Security Agency]: Yes, sir.

SCHIFF: Does it do damage to our relationship with one of our closest intelligence partners for the president to make a baseless claim that the British participated in a conspiracy against him?

ROGERS: I think it clearly frustrates a key ally of ours.

"Full transcript: FBI Director James Comey testifies on Russian interference in 2016 election," [Washington Post](#), 20 Mar 2017.

Later on 20 March 2017, the Associated Press's White House correspondent wrote:
Taken together, the disclosures in Monday's [20 Mar] lengthy House intelligence committee hearing amounted to an extraordinary undercutting of a president, whose headline-grabbing accusations and Twitter-friendly attacks crumbled quickly under the weight of sworn congressional testimony from some of the nation's top security officials.

....

... Monday's hearings left the White House scrambling for cover, though there was little to be found. In one particularly eyebrow-raising moment, Spicer resorted to claiming one associate, Paul Manafort, had a "very limited role" in the 2016 election. In fact, Manafort was hired in March [2016] as Trump's convention manager and promoted to campaign chairman in May. Spicer also described foreign policy adviser Michael Flynn as simply a "volunteer." Flynn traveled frequently with the president, delivered a high-profile speech at the Republican National Convention and served as his first National Security Adviser. Both Manafort and Flynn were fired by Trump after revelations about their connections to Russia.

Julie Pace, "Analysis: Reality catching up with Trump on Russia," [Associated Press](#), 20:30 EDT, 20 Mar 2017.

The Washington Post explained:

James B. Comey — the FBI director whom Trump celebrated on the campaign trail as a gutsy and honorable “Crooked Hillary” truth-teller — testified under oath Monday [20 Mar] what many Americans had already assumed: Trump had falsely accused his predecessor of wiretapping his headquarters during last year’s campaign.

Trump did not merely allege that former president Barack Obama ordered surveillance on Trump Tower, of course. He asserted it as fact, and then reasserted it, and then insisted that forthcoming evidence would prove him right.

....

For Trump, Comey’s testimony punctuates what has been a troubling first two months as president. His approval ratings, which were historically low at his inauguration, have fallen even further. [Gallup’s](#) tracking poll as of Sunday [19 Mar] showed that just 39 percent of Americans approve of Trump’s job performance, with 55 percent disapproving.

The Comey episode threatens to damage Trump’s credibility not only with voters, but also with lawmakers of his own party whose support he needs to pass the health-care bill this week in the House, the first legislative project of his presidency.

....

As always in Trump world, where the guiding ethos is winning at any cost, the worst sin is conceding defeat.

Philip Rucker & Ashley Parker, "President Trump faces his hardest truth: He was wrong,"

[Washington Post](#), 18:23 EDT, 20 Mar 2017.

I disagree when *The Post* says Trump's accusing Obama of wiretapping Trump Tower "threatens to damage Trump's credibility". In my opinion, Trump already has *zero* credibility, so there is nothing remaining to damage. The real issue here is when will Congress act to remove Trump from the presidency.

On 21 March 2017, *The Washington Post* explained about the total lack of accountability for Trump's false statements.

The simple fact is that short of impeachment, which is used extremely sparingly and rightly so, there is a relative pittance of punitive measures for a president like Trump who is willing to say things that just aren't true. Shame has long been the tool of choice in politics. As in: A president says something that fact-checkers rule is totally false. The president, concerned — even if he won't acknowledge it — about how he is perceived by the political class, either apologizes for the remark or just stops saying it. Like the political class or hate them, that shaming was a way of regulating political rhetoric.

Trump is not interested in the opinions of the political class. In fact, he likes the idea of sticking it to those people and believes it is fundamental to his political brand. Which it is!

No modern president has taken advantage of that fact in ways that Trump has. He simply creates his own reality — often through tweets to his 26.8 million followers [on twitter] — and then ignores any attempts to hold him accountable to the facts. Because shame doesn't work on him, there's almost nothing to be done to change his behavior.

Trump is a president unlike any we have ever seen before. His willingness to stretch the bounds of truth — and then be unapologetic about doing so — is something we've not seen on a regular basis in the White House before now. Trump understands that the punitive consequences for continuing to insist that he was wiretapped are relatively minimal. And so he will keep doing it.

Chris Cillizza, "Donald Trump keeps getting things wrong. And there's not much we can do about it." [Washington Post](#), 14:35 EDT, 21 Mar 2017.

My opinion is that Cillizza has an interesting analysis. However, I am not as pessimistic as Cillizza. Trump's false allegation that Obama wiretapped Trump Tower is just one of *many* instances where Trump made a false statement and then failed to apologize for his mistake. During the two months ending on 21 March 2017, this essay has accumulated 10 sections that chronicle at least one false statement by Trump. I say "at least" for two reasons:

1. In some sections of this essay, I chronicle in one section one speech by Trump, although that one speech might contain ten false statements.
2. In other sections of this essay, I chronicle in one section one false statement that Trump made on multiple occasions.

Trump has shown a persistent pattern of making conclusions that are based on falsehoods or delusions, which shows his consistent disregard for Truth.

Educated people recognize a difference between Truth and Falsity. It is *not* an acceptable thought process to base opinions on either delusions or false "facts". At some point, I hope that Congress declares that the U.S. president must use real facts, *not* delusions. One way of making such a declaration would be to impeach Trump and then remove him from the presidency. I agree with Cillizza that impeachment should be "used extremely sparingly", but a president like Trump is apparently unprecedented in U.S. history.

20 Mar 2017: Trump's tweets

But hours before the testimony before the House Intelligence Committee on 20 March, Trump unleashed three more tweets:

The Democrats made up and pushed the Russian story as an excuse for running a terrible campaign. Big advantage in Electoral College & lost!
[twitter](#) at 06:49 EDT on 20 March 2017.

The real story that Congress, the FBI and all others should be looking into is the leaking of Classified information. Must find leaker now!
[twitter](#) at 07:02 EDT on 20 March 2017.

What about all of the contact with the Clinton campaign and the Russians? Also, is it true that the DNC would not let the FBI in to look?
[twitter](#) at 09:14 EDT on 20 March 2017.

In the first tweet quoted above, Trump still does *not* believe that Russian hacker(s) stole documents from the Democrat's presidential campaign, despite the fact that the FBI, CIA, and NSA agreed in a 6 Jan 2017 report that there was Russian involvement, and despite the fact that, on 29 Dec 2016, Obama sanctioned Russia in response to Russian hacking of Democrats. (See [below](#).)

In the second tweet quoted above, Trump attempts to divert attention from the focus of the Congressional investigation. But remember that on 5 March 2017, the White House *asked* Congress to investigate Obama's wiretapping of Trump Tower.

In the third tweet quoted above, it is not clear what Trump means when he refers to alleged contact between "the Clinton campaign and the Russians".

The FBI Director began five-hours of testimony before the House Intelligence Committee at 10:30 EDT on 20 March. ([AP](#).) Astoundingly, Trump continued to tweet during those hearings.

The NSA and FBI tell Congress that Russia did not influence electoral process.
[twitter](#) at 12:42 EDT on 20 March 2017.

FBI Director Comey: fmr. DNI Clapper "right" to say no evidence of collusion between Russia and Trump Campaign.

[twitter](#) at 15:11 EDT on 20 March 2017.

In the 12:42 tweet, the polite thing to say is that Trump mischaracterized the testimony of the FBI director, while the Truth is that Trump lied again. The FBI director actually said his investigation was continuing, and he made no public conclusions. Further, any effect on the elections is outside the scope of the FBI investigation into possible collusion between Russians and Trump's campaign.

At 10:48, Comey and Rodgers did say "they have no evidence or intelligence that Russian cyber actors changed vote tallies in key states [e.g., Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Florida, North Carolina, Ohio] during last year's presidential election." (AP). But changing vote tallies is only one of many ways to "influence electoral process". I am also concerned about the effect of disclosing Clinton's private campaign e-mails on the opinion of voters about who is the better candidate.

The [Washington Post](#) reported that when Comey was asked at the hearing about Trump's 12:42 tweet, Comey replied: "It certainly wasn't our intention to say that today."

The Washington Post article cited in the previous paragraph explained that Trump's 15:11 tweet referred to Comey's testimony about a 6 Jan 2017 report, there was no evidence of collusion in that report. *The Post* then says: "Former director of national intelligence James Clapper later issued a statement saying it was 'in the best interest of all Americans' to investigate possible Trump-Russia ties." *The Post* concluded: "The president's tweets throughout the day were misleading, inaccurate or simply false."

The [Associated Press](#) also reported a fact-check of Trump's tweets on 20 March. During the hearing, Comey disputed Trump's 12:42 tweet: "We've offered no opinion, have no view, have no information on potential impact because it's never something that we looked at." In Trump's 15:11 tweet, Trump omitted that there could be evidence found after Clapper resigned on 20 Jan 2017. Neither Comey nor Rodgers would comment on the continuing investigation.

Nunes is *not* neutral

Devin Nunes, as chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, is supposed to lead a neutral, fact-finding investigation into the relationship between Russia and both Trump and his advisers. But on 22 March 2017, Nunes abandoned any pretense of neutrality when, he went to the White House to brief Trump of the progress of the committee's investigation of Trump and Trump's advisers. The briefing itself was bad enough, but Nunes also made a public statement that Trump, and/or some of Trump's advisers, *may* have been "incidentally" surveilled during their conversations with agents of foreign governments. After the briefing by Nunes, Trump said that he felt "somewhat vindicated" by the information. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#)(AP); [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#).

For more on Trump's feelings of vindication, see Spicer's remarks in his 23 March [press briefing](#).

On 23 March, Nunes privately apologized to Democrats on the House Intelligence Committee. [Associated Press](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [NY Times](#).

On 24 March, Paul Waldman, writing in [The Washington Post](#), clearly explained the problems with Nunes' subservience to Trump.

Why did Nunes, a Republican, decide his role was to support the Republican president? Before Nunes began his 14-year career in the U.S. House of Representatives, Nunes was a dairy farmer. [Associated Press](#). Nunes never attended law school, which is a basic credential for conducting a forensic investigation. Nunes is apparently unaware of ethical standards forbidding the appearance of a conflict of interest.

In my opinion, Nunes' personal disclosure to Trump — who is a subject of the investigation — destroyed the integrity, independence, and objectivity of the investigation. At this point, Congress needs to create a special commission to handle the investigations in a professional and independent way. I envision appointing a law professor or retired prosecutor to be an independent counsel, leading the investigation of the relationship between Russia and the Trump campaign.

On 27 March 2017, various Democrats (e.g., Nancy Pelosi and Adam Schiff) called on Nunes to recuse himself as chairman of the House Intelligence Committee's investigation of the relationship between Russia and the Trump campaign. [NY Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Los Angeles Times](#).

On 28 March 2017, Nunes refused to relinquish leadership of the investigation by his Committee. [Associated Press](#); [NY Times](#).

On 6 April 2017, owing to complaints to the House Ethics Committee, Nunes temporarily relinquished the chairmanship of the House Intelligence Committee's investigation of the relationship between Russia and the Trump campaign. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#).

More Allegations by Trump

On 5 April 2017, in an interview with the [New York Times](#), Trump alleged that Obama's National Security Adviser, Susan Rice, "may have committed a crime by seeking to learn the identities of Trump associates swept up in surveillance of foreign officials by United States spy agencies". *The Times* notes that "Mr. Trump gave no evidence to support his claim".

On 11 April 2017, [CNN](#) reported: "After a review of the same intelligence reports brought to light by House Intelligence Chairman Devin Nunes, both Republican and Democratic lawmakers and aides have so far found no evidence that Obama administration officials did anything unusual or illegal, multiple sources in both parties tell CNN. Their private assessment contradicts President Donald Trump's allegations that former Obama national security adviser Susan Rice broke the law by requesting the 'unmasking' of US individuals' identities."

Trump falsely claims Germany owes money to the U.S.

The U.S. taxpayer has been subsidizing the military defense of Western Europe since the end of World War II. That was proper until about the 1960s, because Europe had the cost of reconstruction after a terrible war.

For a long time, Trump has been saying that the European members of NATO do not pay enough for their military defense. (See, e.g., [Washington Post](#) on 21 Mar 2016, [Washington Post](#)(fact-check) on 30 Mar 2016; and [NY Times](#)(Trump-interview), [NY Times](#)(allies react), [Washington Post](#), all on 21 July 2016) While I think Trump is correct about that, Trump's abrasive statements about NATO are reprehensible. And then Trump began to falsely claim that the European nations *owed* the USA for past U.S. contributions to European military defense.

That political issue leaped out during the press conference of Trump and Dr. Merkel (the chancellor of Germany) on 17 March 2017:

.... I reiterated to Chancellor Merkel my strong support for NATO, as well as the need for our NATO allies to pay their fair share for the cost of defense. Many nations owe vast sums of money from past years, and it is very unfair to the United States. These nations must pay what they owe.

During our meeting, I thanked Chancellor Merkel for the German government's commitment to increase defense spending and work toward contributing at least 2 percent of GDP.

"Joint Press Conference with President Trump and German Chancellor Merkel," [White House](#), 17 March 2017.

Trump reiterated his opinion that Germany owed money to the U.S. Government in two tweets on 18 March 2017 that should be combined.

Despite what you have heard from the FAKE NEWS, I had a GREAT meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Nevertheless, Germany owes.....
[tweet](#), 09:15 EDT, 18 Mar 2017.

...vast sums of money to NATO & the United States must be paid more for the powerful, and very expensive, defense it provides to Germany!
[tweet](#), 09:23 EDT, 18 Mar 2017.

Once again, Trump is spewing false "facts". In 2014, NATO members agreed to spend at least 2% of their gross domestic product on military defense, sometime before the year 2024. Currently, Germany spends 1.23% of GDP on defense, while the USA voluntarily spends more than 3% of GDP on defense. But there is *no* legally binding agreement that says underspending nations owe money to either NATO or the U.S. Government. Western Europe *never agreed* to reimburse the U.S. Government for the cost of the U.S. military defense of Europe. After Dr. Merkel's visit, the German Defense Minister publicly criticized Trump for saying Germany owed money to the USA. See, e.g., [Washington Post](#)(18 Mar);

[Washington Post](#)(19Mar); [NY Times](#)(18Mar); [Associated Press](#)(18Mar); [Deutsche Welle](#)(19Mar); [The Guardian/Reuters](#)(19Mar).

Trump apparently has the delusion that, because the U.S. Government voluntarily exceeded the minimum defense spending, the other NATO nations must reimburse the USA for the excessive spending. Trump's delusion is not only *fictitious*, but also really lousy international diplomacy.

22 March 2017: *Time* magazine interview

On 22 March 2017, Michael Scherer of *Time* magazine interviewed Donald Trump about Trump's repeated false statements. A [transcript](#) of the interview is posted at the *Time* website. Scherer's article, titled "Can President Trump Handle the Truth?", is posted at [Time](#).

On 23 March, Glenn Kessler and Michelle Ye Hee Lee of *The Washington Post* published a fact-check of the interview that disclosed 14 false statements by Trump. *The Post* concluded: "Trump consistently astounds us with his inability to acknowledge that he repeatedly gets facts wrong and consistently misleads the American public with inaccurate, dubious claims. He earns Four Pinocchios for this interview."

On 24 March, Jill Colvin of the [Associated Press](#) wrote: "Since the early days of his campaign, the president has developed a pattern: Make an outrageous claim. Dig in as the criticism rolls. And wait until, eventually, something emerges that can be spun as vindication of the earlier claim."

Most people would be careful in an interview about their false statements to avoid making more false statements. But *not* Trump.

On 21 March 2017, the [Wall Street Journal](#) published an editorial with the title: "A President's Credibility Trump's falsehoods are eroding public trust, at home and abroad."

Prof. Lawrence Douglas at Amherst College in Massachusetts wrote commentary in *The Guardian* newspaper in Manchester, England about this *Time* Interview. Because fair-use in copyright law permits only short quotations, I am quoting only three of Prof. Douglas' six points about Trumpspeak:

Donald Trump's elastic connection to reality was richly on display in his [interview](#) with *Time* magazine, published on Thursday [23 Mar]. Much of what the president said was unsurprising — that is, to those who have spent the past two months radically recalibrating their standards of what counts as presidential speech.

Devoted to the topic of "truth and falsehoods", the interview gave the president a chance to substantiate or explain his most offensive deformations of the factual record — that Muslims danced in the streets of the New Jersey as the Twin Towers crumbled, that 3 million undocumented aliens threw the popular vote in Hillary Clinton's favor, that Ted Cruz's father trucked with Lee Harvey Oswald, and that Barack Obama tapped the phone of then candidate Trump.

Predictably, the president offered nothing in the way of substantiation or contrition. Instead, he overwhelmed his interviewer with such a profusion of misstatements, half-truths, dodges and red herrings that one grows dizzy trying to untangle it all.

....

1. In Trumpspeak, a speaker can never be accused of lying if he's simply repeating the statements of others; it is the responsibility of those who make original claims to check for the accuracy and truthfulness of their assertions, not the person who repeats them — even if that person happens to be the most powerful person and speaker on the planet.

....

3. [Trump:] *"Sweden. I make a statement, everyone goes crazy. The next day they have a massive riot, and death, and problems."*

In Trumpspeak, truth is not factual, it's imagistic.... Truthful statements do not necessarily offer an accurate account of events in the world. They provide an approximation or exaggeration of something that might, in theory, have occurred. Whether a terror attack in Sweden ever took place on the night named by the president is irrelevant. Nor should we care that the riot was not massive and there was no death. Close and maybe are good enough.

....

5. [Trump:] *"The country believes me."*

In Trumpspeak, belief is a signal of truth. If his supporters believe him, then what Trump is saying must be true. Conversely, if his detractors disbelieve him, this too is evidence that what he is saying must be true. In Trumpspeak, detractors claim Trump is a liar because they are his detractors; and in calling Trump a liar, they in fact are lying. Lawrence Douglas, "Donald Trump's dizzying Time magazine interview was 'Trumpspeak' on display," [The Guardian](#), 24 March 2017.

In Prof. Douglas' first point, the original source has a responsibility to check for accuracy. Where Trump runs off the rails is that Trump asserts so-called "facts" from sources *without* citing those sources. By failing to cite a source, Trump himself vouches for the accuracy of the "facts" that Trump asserted. When the "facts" are exposed as falsehoods, Trump then blames the original source that Trump did *not* cite.

In Prof. Douglas' third point, Trump is describing Trump's alternative reality, a reality that Trump himself believes is (or should be) true. But Trump's alternative reality is merely Trump's delusion. It is *really scary* to have the U.S. Government led by a man with a tenuous grasp of reality.

In Prof. Douglas' fifth point, it may be that Trump and his supporters share a common set of prejudices, so Trump's delusions are also a good fit with his supporters' distorted view of reality. In other cases, unsophisticated supporters may simply trust the president to speak the

Truth.

Flynn demands immunity from criminal prosecution

[Above](#), I discussed the resignation of Michael Flynn, Trump's first national security adviser, as well as some of the allegations about Flynn's contacts with Russians.

Flynn has a problem. If Flynn makes false statements to the FBI, Flynn could be charged with a felony. If Flynn gives false testimony to Congressional committees that are investigating, then Flynn could be charged with perjury. But if Flynn testifies truthfully, he apparently believes he could be charged with at least one crime.

So on 30 March 2017, Flynn demanded immunity from criminal prosecution in exchange for his truthful testimony to government investigators. Flynn's attorney issued a statement to journalists that said: "No reasonable person, who has the benefit of advice from counsel, would submit to questioning in such a highly politicized, witch hunt environment without assurances against unfair prosecution." [Wall Street Journal](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [NY Times](#).

Ironically, on 25 September 2016, Flynn told the NBC television program, Meet the Press, in the context of the FBI investigation of Hillary Clinton's private e-mail server while she was U.S. Secretary of State: "I mean, five people around [Hillary Clinton] have had, have been given immunity, to include her former Chief of Staff. When you are given immunity, that means that you have probably committed a crime." [NBC News](#)(transcript); [video](#).

As an attorney, let me be clear. Asking for immunity is *not* an admission of guilt. It could be that the witness fears a "highly politicized" prosecution that is unfair. It could be that a witness fears spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on legal fees in the political inquiry.

Donald Trump — who has an opinion on everything — said on Twitter:

Mike Flynn should ask for immunity in that this is a witch hunt (excuse for big election loss), by media & Dems, of historic proportion!

Donald Trump, [twitter](#), 07:04 EDT, 31 Mar 2017.

It is not clear whether Trump was advising Flynn, Congress, or the Justice Department. The [Associated Press](#) reported: "The president is not supposed to direct ongoing investigations."

On 31 March 2017, the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee rejected Flynn's request for immunity, because his request was premature. [NBC News](#); [Associated Press](#); [The Hill](#).

On 18 May 2017, Flynn had *not* responded to a 10 May subpoena for documents for an investigation by the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee. [Associated Press](#).

On 22 May 2017, Flynn claimed he had a legal right under the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to refuse to provide documents under a subpoena. [Washington Post](#). Flynn is

wrong. The Fifth Amendment gives him the right to refuse to testify, but production of documents is *not* testimony.

On 10 November 2017, journalists reported that in December 2016 Turkey had offered Flynn \$15 million dollars to return Fethullah Gulen from Pennsylvania to Turkey. Gulen is a Muslim cleric who has vexed Erdogan, the current ruler of Turkey. Flynn's attorney denied these scandalous allegations. [Wall Street Journal](#); [NBC News](#).

1 Dec 2017: Flynn pleads guilty

On 1 December 2017, Flynn pled guilty to lying to the FBI about conversations with the Russian ambassador *and* Flynn agreed to cooperate with the special counsel, Robert Mueller. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).

On 2 Dec 2017, Trump tweeted about why he fired Flynn.

I had to fire General Flynn because he lied to the Vice President and the FBI. He has pled guilty to those lies. It is a shame because his actions during the transition were lawful. There was nothing to hide!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 12:14 EST, 2 Dec 2017.

Some commentators suggested that Trump was now admitting that — at the time Trump fired Flynn — Trump knew that Flynn had lied to the FBI. If on 13 Feb 2017 Trump had knowledge that Flynn lied to the FBI, then Trump's asking FBI director Comey on 14 Feb to be lenient with Flynn is more clearly obstruction of justice, a felony. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#)(16:31); [Washington Post](#)(21:50); [New York Times](#); [CNN](#). In my opinion, there is another interpretation of Trump's careless tweet. On 13 Feb 2017, Trump knew that Flynn had lied to Pence. On 1 Dec 2017, Trump knew that Flynn had lied to the FBI. Trump's careless tweet combines what Trump knew on two different dates. Nevertheless — despite what Trump said about Flynn's actions being "lawful" — Flynn may have committed crime(s) during the transition, when Flynn conducted foreign policy and undercut the Obama administration. Later, Trump's personal lawyer admitted he wrote the "sloppy" tweet that Trump sent. [ABC News](#) and some of the articles cited above. My comment is that it is sad that Trump can not afford competent legal counsel. But Trump sent the tweet, which means that Trump adopted that tweet and Trump is responsible for that tweet.

On 3 December, *The Washington Post* reported:

President Trump's personal lawyer [John Dowd] said on Sunday [3 Dec] that the president knew in late January that then-national security adviser Michael Flynn had probably given FBI agents the same inaccurate account he provided to Vice President Pence about a call with the Russian ambassador.

....

Dowd confirmed Sunday that he had drafted the tweet for Trump and acknowledged that it was sloppily worded. He said it was inaccurate to say the president was told that Flynn had lied to the FBI. Dowd said Sunday that Trump knew only what acting attorney general Sally Yates had told the White House counsel: that Flynn's accounts

to the agents interviewing him were the same as those Flynn gave Pence, and “that the [Justice] Department was not accusing him of lying.”

....

But several legal experts said the tweet, and some of Dowd’s comments about what the president may have known, could increase the president’s legal exposure. If Trump knew that Flynn might not have been accurate with the FBI, it could provide motivation for any alleged effort to obstruct justice,

....

Dowd told The Post that Trump knew generally that Flynn’s account to the FBI and Pence were similar because of a conversation with [White House counsel Donald] McGahn on or about Jan. 26. Dowd said McGahn relayed what he had learned from Yates.

Carol D. Leonnig, John Wagner, & Ellen Nakashima, "Trump lawyer says president knew Flynn had given FBI the same account he gave to vice president," [Washington Post](#), 23:12 EST, 3 Dec 2017.

The Washington Post reported that Trump knew on 26 Jan 2017 that Flynn had told Pence and the FBI the same thing. In February 2017, Trump knew Flynn had lied to Pence. Therefore, Trump should have known that Flynn lied to the FBI, which is a felony. Then the day after Trump fired Flynn, Trump asked the FBI director to abandon the investigation of Flynn, which — in my opinion — was obstruction of justice by Trump.

Trump's Income Tax Returns

On 15 April 2017 — the day that income taxes are due in the USA, except that it was a Saturday — there were protest demonstrations in many cities of the USA about federal income taxes. Many protesters demanded that Trump make public his income tax returns. [Associated Press](#).

On 16 April 2017 at 09:07 EDT, Trump [tweeted](#): “I did what was an almost an impossible thing to do for a Republican — easily won the Electoral College! Now Tax Returns are brought up again?”

On 16 April 2017 at 09:13 EDT, Trump [tweeted](#): “Someone should look into who paid for the small organized rallies yesterday. The election is over!”

See news articles: [Washington Post](#); [San Francisco Chronicle](#)(AP); [NY Times](#). On 17 April, Jennifer Rubin, the conservative columnist for *The Washington Post*, [criticized](#) Trump's refusal to disclose his income tax returns.

There is a widespread perception in the USA amongst middle-class people that wealthy people (e.g., Trump) do *not* pay their fair share of income taxes. The only way for wealthy

people to defend themselves from this accusation is to publicly release their tax returns and let independent accountants review them. Every presidential candidate, and every president, beginning with Nixon in 1973, has publicly released his tax returns — except Trump. With Trump, people also want to look for business relationships (e.g., with Russians) that could be potential conflicts of interest.

Trump is wrong that disclosure of tax returns is only an issue during political campaigns. Presidents are also expected to disclose their tax returns each year, to see if they have income from improper sources (e.g., bribes) or conflicts of interest. Furthermore, Trump's position is fallacious that, because he won the election, therefore no one cares about his tax returns. Trump won because voters hated Hillary Clinton more than they hated Trump, or maybe Trump won because voters wanted a wall along the Mexican border more than they liked Hillary's continued illegal immigration.

Trump inappropriately impugned the character of protesters when Trump suggested that they were paid to criticize him. When Trump is accused of hiding evidence (i.e., failing to release his tax returns), instead of responding to the accusation, Trump changes the subject and criticizes his accusers. This is propaganda by Trump and unworthy of the U.S. President.

U.S.S. Vinson and inconsistent U.S. policy on North Korea

The facts, quotations, and my commentary on Trump's clumsy and inconsistent attempts to solve the North Korean problem have been moved to a separate essay at www.rbs0.com/nkorea.pdf

Should South Korea pay for THAAD?

On 27 April 2017, Trump suddenly requested that the South Koreans pay US\$ 1 billion to reimburse the U.S. for the cost of the U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) battery that will soon be operational. [Reuters](#); [NY Times](#).

As one would expect, the South Koreans are upset that they suddenly are asked to pay a billion dollars for THAAD, when they never agreed to pay for THAAD when they approved the installation in July 2016. [Yonhap](#); [JoongAng](#); [Reuters](#); [Hankyoreh](#); [Associated Press](#)(28Apr); [NY Times](#)(28Apr); [Korea Herald](#)(30Apr editorial).

In the 27 April 2017 Reuters interview with Trump:

[Trump:] "On the THAAD system, it's about a billion dollars. I said, 'Why are we paying? Why are we paying a billion dollars? We're protecting. Why are we paying a billion dollars?' So I informed South Korea it would be appropriate if they paid. Nobody's going to do that. Why are we paying a billion dollars? It's a billion dollar system. It's phenomenal. It's the most incredible equipment you've ever seen — shoots missiles right out of the sky. And it protects them and I want to protect them. We're going to protect them. But they should pay for that, and they understand that."

"Highlights of Reuters interview with Trump," [Reuters](#), 07:26 EDT, 28 April 2017.

Trump does *not* make a mistake just once. In a 28 April interview with *The Washington Times*, Trump reiterated his billion dollar demand.

President Trump pushed back Friday [28 April] against South Korea's objections to paying for a U.S.-deployed missile defense system, insisting that it's "appropriate" for Seoul to shoulder the \$1 billion cost.

"Why should we pay for it?" Mr. Trump said in an exclusive interview with *The Washington Times*. "It's a phenomenal protective system, best in the world by far, and that's meant to protect South Korea. So I respectfully say that I think it would be appropriate if they paid for it."

The U.S. military is deploying the missile shield as a defense against North Korea. The South Korean defense ministry said it has no plans to pay for the system, and South Korea's leading presidential candidate Friday called Mr. Trump's demand an "impossible option."

Dave Boyer, "EXCLUSIVE: Trump demands South Korea pay for new U.S.-deployed missile system," [Washington Times](#), 28 April 2017.

On 30 April 2017, General McMaster, Trump's national security adviser, called his counterpart in South Korea. Early reports from the South Korean presidential mansion said Trump would *not* try to collect the billion dollars. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#). But later on 30 April, General McMaster clarified:

CHRIS WALLACE [FOX NEWS ANCHOR]: President Trump, ..., said this week that South Korea should pay for the missile defense system that we have installed there, the THAAD system, \$1 billion. There is a report today that you called your South Korean counterpart and said, no, the old agreement was that we the United States pay that billion dollars and we're going to stick by that. Is that true?

MCMASTER: Well, the last thing I would ever do is contradict the president of the United States, you know? But — and that's not what it was. In fact, what I told our South Korean counterpart is until any renegotiation that the deal is in place. We'll adhere to our word.

But what the president has asked us to do is to look across all of our alliances and to have appropriate burden-sharing, responsibility-sharing. We are looking at that with a great ally, South Korea. We're looking at that with NATO.

And what you've seen because of the president's leadership, more and more nations are contributing more to our collective defense.

WALLACE: So, the question of who pays the billion dollars is still up in the air?

MCMASTER: The question of what is the relationship on THAAD, on our defense relationship going forward, will be renegotiated as it's going to be with all of our allies. Because what the president has said is, he will prioritize American citizens' security and interests. And to do that, we need strong alliances. But also to do that

effectively, and a way that is sustainable economically, we need everybody to pay their fair share.

"Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster on foreign policy; Sen. Schumer on President Trump's first 100 days," [Fox News](#), 30 April 2017.

The Yonhap news agency in South Korea reported what General McMaster said on Fox News: "The United States will renegotiate the terms of the THAAD missile defense system's deployment to South Korea, and until then, will stick to the existing deal that commits the U.S. to pay for the system, National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster said Sunday [30 April]." [Yonhap](#).

On 1 May 2017, [Yonhap](#) reported that the South Korean Ministry of National Defense will refuse to renegotiate the cost of THAAD. See also [Korea Herald](#) on 4 May.

The THAAD protects approximately 30,000 U.S. Military personnel in South Korea, as well as protects at least tens of millions of South Koreans. Also the USA *owns* and operates THAAD in South Korea, and in other foreign nations, so this is *not* a sale to South Korea. In July 2016, Obama and the now impeached South Korean president agreed that the U.S. would install THAAD on land supplied by South Korea, and there was *no* mention that South Korea would pay for the cost of THAAD. (See, e.g., [NY Times](#).) The allocation of costs is specified in a written Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) that was negotiated and approved in 1966. Also, in 2014 South Korea began paying the USA part of the costs (about 40% in 2014) of maintaining the U.S. Military presence in South Korea.

China strongly opposes operation of THAAD in South Korea, because the THAAD radars could conduct espionage on Chinese missiles. Accordingly, China put economic sanctions on South Korea, to encourage the South Koreans to expel THAAD. On 3 May 2017, [JongAng](#) newspaper estimates the Chinese sanctions could cost South Korean firms US\$ 7.5 billion during 2017.

On 7 June 2017, the new president of South Korea "suspended the deployment" of the THAAD system in South Korea. While none of the existing equipment will be removed, *no* new THAAD equipment will be added. [Yonhap](#); [Chosun Ilbo](#); [CNN](#).

The successful test of an North Korean ICBM on the night of 28 July jolted the president of South Korea into ordering deployment of more THAAD anti-ballistic missiles in South Korea. [Yonhap](#); [Reuters](#); [Korea Herald](#); [Korea Times](#).

On 7 September 2017, four additional THAAD missile launchers were installed in South Korea. Each of the six launchers now deployed can fire 8 anti-ballistic missiles. [Yonhap](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

Beginning in March 2017, China put economic sanctions on South Korea to force South Korea to remove the THAAD system. In one example, the South Korean Lotte chain of grocery stores in China was forced to close in March 2017, but continue paying a "skeleton staff" of Chinese employees. In September 2017, Lotte had enough and began seeking a buyer for its grocery stores in China. In another example, the number of Chinese tourists in South Korea is half of the number during the same months in 2016, which reduced tourist

income to South Korea by about US\$ 5 billion/7 months. [Reuters](#); [CNBC](#). I find it ironic that China will put painful economic sanctions on South Korean businesses, but China resists putting economic sanctions on North Korea. Note that the South Koreans are only allowing the U.S. Military to use some land for a THAAD missile defense system, while the North Koreans are developing nuclear weapons and ICBMs. So the better the behavior, the stronger the economic sanctions by China, in a perverse reversal of logic.

Trump did something similar on 17 March 2017, when he falsely claimed that Germany owed money to the USA for the cost of NATO defense. (See [above](#).) Trump's demand for more money — in contradiction of a written agreement — is the kind of stunt that the North Korean government does.

Incidentally, Trump has — for at least six years — insisted that foreign nations pay more of the cost of U.S. Military defense. Here is part of a paragraph from an April 2011 interview with Trump:

And then we defend South Korea? Listen, George. And then we send the — the great aircraft carrier, George Washington, and destroyers to defend South Korea. They don't pay us? They don't pay us for it. We send all these ships, hundreds of millions of dollars to protect South Korea from North Korea. We have thou— you know, we have what? 20,000-25,000 soldiers over there. They don't even pay us for this. What are we doing? What are we thinking? What are we thinking?

George Stephanopoulos, "Donald Trump Interview: Transcript Part Two," [ABC News](#), 19 April 2011.

Trump Wants to Seize Iraq's Oil

The U.S. Military invaded Iraq in March 2003, to stop Saddam Hussein from developing weapons of mass destruction (which weapons were never found and were probably a fictional boast by Hussein). The U.S. Military departed from Iraq in December 2011, after having wasted more than US\$ 1 trillion. Donald Trump proposed to have Iraq "reimburse" the USA for the cost of this war, by the U.S. seizing Iraq's oil. But seizing Iraq's oil would be a gross violation of the sovereignty of Iraq.

Note that Iraq did *not* request either the U.S. Military invasion, the removal of Saddam Hussein, or plunging Iraq into anarchy for years. Iraq is adamant that they will *not* voluntarily reimburse the USA for the cost of the U.S. invasion. So Trump's plan would involve a forcible taking of Iraqi oil, probably with armed resistance by the Iraqi army, Shiite militias, and remnants of ISIL. The fight to take Iraq's oil would be an additional cost for the USA, and might cost the USA more than the oil is worth.

Below are some quotations about Trump's plan and why it is a very bad idea.

On 8 Sep 2016, NBC News reported:

At Wednesday [7 Sep] night's Commander-In-Chief Forum, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump said that the United States should "take the oil" out of Iraq,

an idea he's expressed before for that war-torn country and other conflict zones.

....

"We go in, we spent \$3 trillion. We lose thousands and thousands of lives, and then look, what happens is we get nothing. You know, it used to be the victor belong the spoils," Trump told NBC News' Matt Lauer. "Now, there was no victor there, believe me. There was no victory. But I always said, take the oil."

His challenger, Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton, criticized Trump Thursday [8 Sep] morning, saying the United States "does not invade other countries to plunder and pillage."

....

David Mack, scholar with the Middle East Institute and former ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, said the idea smacks of "colonialism and imperialism." "They are not about to stand for a foreign power coming in and seizing their resources and keeping them," he added. "When I heard this last night, it took my breath away."

Leigh Ann Caldwell, "Trump Said 'Take the Oil' From Iraq. Can He?," [NBC News](#), 15:57 ET, 8 Sep 2016.

Emily Meierding, a professor at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., wrote a commentary in the [Washington Post](#) that explains why taking Iraq's oil would create more problems than it would solve.

On 21 Jan 2017, the morning after Trump's inauguration, Trump went to the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency to give a speech to mollify the intelligence community. Here is part of what Trump said:

When I was young — and I think we're all sort of young. When I was young, we were always winning things in this country. We'd win with trade. We'd win with wars. At a certain age, I remember hearing from one of my instructors, "The United States has never lost a war." And then, after that, it's like we haven't won anything. We don't win anymore. The old expression, "to the victor belong the spoils" — you remember. I always used to say, keep the oil. I wasn't a fan of Iraq. I didn't want to go into Iraq. But I will tell you, when we were in, we got out wrong. And I always said, in addition to that, keep the oil. Now, I said it for economic reasons. But if you think about it, Mike, if we kept the oil you probably wouldn't have ISIS because that's where they made their money in the first place. So we should have kept the oil. But okay.

(Laughter.) Maybe you'll have another chance. But the fact is, should have kept the oil.

"Remarks by President Trump and Vice President Pence at CIA Headquarters," [White House](#), 21 Jan 2017.

Trump's stupid idea appears to have died on 20 February 2017, when the U.S. Secretary of Defense announced that the U.S. will *not* seize Iraq's oil. *The New York Times* reported:

Before arriving in Baghdad, Mr. Mattis was asked by reporters about Mr. Trump's remarks during a visit to C.I.A. headquarters last month that the United States should have "kept" Iraq's oil after the American-led invasion, and might still have a chance to

do so.

“We’re not in Iraq to seize anybody’s oil,” Mr. Mattis said during a stop in Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates.

Helene Cooper, "Jim Mattis to Baghdad: ‘We’re Not in Iraq to Seize Anybody’s Oil’," [New York Times](#), 20 Feb 2017.

Mattis's declaration was also reported by the [Washington Post](#) and [Reuters](#).

27 April 2017: Trump surprised at difficulty

In the 27 April 2017 Reuters interview with Trump:

He misses driving, feels as if he is in a cocoon, and is surprised how hard his new job is.

....

"I loved my previous life. I had so many things going," Trump told Reuters in an interview. "This is more work than in my previous life. I thought it would be easier."

A wealthy businessman from New York, Trump assumed public office for the first time when he entered the White House on Jan. 20 after he defeated former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in an upset.

Stephen J. Adler, Jeff Mason, & Steve Holland, "Exclusive: Trump says he thought being president would be easier than his old life," [Reuters](#), 13:02 EDT, 29 April 2017.

During the 2016 presidential campaign, one of the big concerns amongst opponents of Trump was that Trump had *no* experience as either a mayor, governor, or legislator. And Trump's statements showed that he was ignorant of international politics.

Anyone who reads a newspaper like *The Washington Post* or *The New York Times* knows of the many problems facing the USA, as well as many complicated international problems (e.g., North Korea, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria,). Being the U.S. President must be one of the most difficult jobs on the planet.

That Trump is surprised how difficult it is to be President tells us that Trump is unqualified to be President.

The [Washington Post](#) — repeated by [The Independent](#) newspaper in England — said: "One group that probably wasn't surprised that Trump wasn't prepared? The majority of Americans. At no point over the course of the 2016 campaign did a majority of Americans think that Trump was qualified for the job of the presidency."

So why did americans elect Trump? Apparently, the democrats nominated the most hated woman in america.

As more evidence of Trump's ignorance, on 1-2 May 2017, [CNN](#) and [New York Times](#) both criticized Trump's ignorance of history that was on display in Trump's public statements.

Trump's total lack of experience in government, and Trump's ignorance of both law and foreign policy, might be less of a concern *if* Trump had surrounded himself with professionals (e.g., university professors, former government officials) with relevant experience and knowledge. On 10 May 2017, James Hohmann, writing in the [Washington Post](#) said: "Donald Trump has surrounded himself with sycophants and amateurs who are either unwilling or unable to tell him no." Instead of appointing an experienced diplomat as Secretary of State, Trump appointed the former CEO of Exxon-Mobil. A much better choice would have been a professor of international relations — someone like Henry Kissinger, Madeline Albright, or Condoleezza Rice.

Back in January 2017, I predicted [below](#) that sometime Trump would be resign as president, after being frustrated by Congress and the Judiciary, as well as angered by incessant criticism. By the end of April 2017, Trump appears to *no* longer enjoy being president.

On 17 May 2017, Trump gave the commencement speech at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. Here is part of what he told the graduating students:

Look at the way I've been treated lately — (laughter) — especially by the media. No politician in history — and I say this with great surety — has been treated worse or more unfairly. You can't let them get you down. You can't let the critics and the naysayers get in the way of your dreams. (Applause.) I guess that's why I — thank you. I guess that's why we won.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump at United States Coast Guard Academy Commencement Ceremony," [White House](#), 17 May 2017.

My comment is that the graduating students worked hard for four years, and then Mr. Blowhard comes up from Washington and whines about how unfairly he is being treated. If Trump wants to whine, he should stay in Washington and whine there, instead of inflicting his whine on innocent cadets. And Trump won the election not because he was qualified to be president, but because the democrats nominated the most hated woman in america.

9 May 2017: Trump fires FBI Director

In 2013, President Obama nominated James Comey to be Director of the FBI for a ten-year term. The long term was intended to make the FBI independent of the executive branch of government. It is expected that Comey would serve the full term. Although a president can terminate the employment of the Director of the FBI, that has happened only once in U.S. history — in 1993 when Bill Clinton dismissed William Sessions.

On 3 May 2017, the Director of the FBI, James Comey, testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee about his 2016 investigation of Hillary Clinton's private e-mail server when she was U.S. Secretary of State and also his current investigation of contacts between Trump's staff and Russian government officials. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

Journalists reported that Comey had misstated some facts in his testimony. [ProPublica](#)(22:38 8May); [Washington Post](#)(11:42 9May).

On 9 May, the FBI sent a letter to the Chairman of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee that corrected the errors in Comey's 3 May testimony. [Associated Press](#); [New York Times](#).

Coincidentally, on 9 May 2017 Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein completed a memorandum that concluded that Comey's public statements about the FBI investigation of Hillary Clinton violated Justice Department policy. Rosenstein said about Comey's 5 July 2016 public disclosure: "[Comey] ignored another longstanding principle: we do not hold press conferences to release derogatory information about the subject of a declined criminal investigation." [Washington Post](#)(19:49 9May).

As I read Rosenstein's memo, I am struck by the absence of citations to FBI policy manuals and the absence of citations to the Code of Federal Regulations. I agree with what Aaron Blake of *The Washington Post* reiterated: "the case against Comey seems to have been hastily cobbled together with a bunch of easily plucked media quotes and op-eds from former Justice Department officials." Furthermore, Rosenstein never explicitly said in his memorandum that Comey's employment should be terminated. Lawyers are taught to clearly say what they want in complaints and motions to courts. The lack of a clear statement by Rosenstein may indicate his memo was hastily written.

On 9 May 2017 at about 17:00 EDT, Trump suddenly and unexpectedly terminated the employment of James Comey. [White House](#); [Washington Post](#)(21:34 9May); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#)(23:30 9May).

The Washington Post published a [timeline](#) of events that led to the termination of Comey's employment. That timeline is very helpful in understanding what happened with Comey. [PolitiFact](#) also published a historical summary.

The Washington Post also published copies of [documents](#) from Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein and Attorney General Sessions that recommend the dismissal of Comey, plus Trump's letter to Comey.

Comey may have made mistakes about his public disclosures about Hillary Clinton — and Comey's public disclosures (especially on 28 Oct 2016) could have affected the presidential election. But those mistakes by Comey were amply discussed in 2016 and there is *no* new information on 9 May 2017. The fact that Comey made mistakes does *not* automatically imply that his employment should be terminated. Obama continued to employ Comey. Furthermore, Comey's mistakes did *not* prevent Trump from retaining Comey in January 2017. It appears pretextual to terminate Comey six months after Comey's 28 Oct 2016 public disclosure about reopening the criminal investigation of Hillary Clinton.

On 9 May, [CNN](#) reported that a federal grand jury has, "in recent weeks", issued subpoenas to associates of Michael Flynn, which indicates that the FBI's investigation of Trump's associates is intensifying. This *may* be the real reason why Trump fired Comey: to hinder the FBI investigation of Trump's associates.

Evolving Reasons Why Trump Terminated Comey

What is of real concern on the night of 9 May 2017 is that Trump's dismissal of Comey may end the current impartial, nonpartisan FBI investigation of contacts between Trump's staff and Russian government officials.

On the evening of 8 May, Trump tweeted:

The Russia-Trump collusion story is a total hoax, when will this taxpayer funded charade end?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 18:46 EDT, 8 May 2016.

Trump's tweet in the previous paragraph publicly displays his continuing annoyance with the FBI investigation of Trump's associates.

After Comey was fired by Trump, Jennifer Rubin, a conservative columnist for *The Washington Post* asked rhetorically:

Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein laid out a convincing case as to why Comey acted improperly and unfairly to Clinton last July. However, Trump thought Comey should have prosecuted her, so why would Trump now object that Comey had been unfair to his nemesis?

Jennifer Rubin, "The one thing we know for sure about Comey's firing," [Washington Post](#), 19:01, 9 May 2017.

The New York Times reported:

The dismissal ended the long-deteriorating relationship of Mr. Trump and Mr. Comey, who repeatedly collided publicly and privately. For Mr. Trump, a president who puts a premium on loyalty, Mr. Comey represented an independent and unpredictable director with enormous power to disrupt his administration.

Michael D. Shear & Matt Apuzzo, "F.B.I. Director James Comey Is Fired by Trump," [New York Times](#), 9 May 2017. (Retrieved at 23:12 EDT on 9 May.)

The Washington Post reported:

President Trump's sudden removal of James B. Comey as director of the FBI sparked immediate fears among legislators and others that the bureau's probe into possible collusion between the Kremlin and the Trump campaign might be upended now that Trump himself can handpick its new supervisor.

The investigation is still in its infancy, but the probe's sensitive subject matter has already created a political quagmire for the Justice Department. Attorney General Jeff Sessions recused himself from the case in March after it was revealed that he had spoken twice with Russia's ambassador to the United States and not disclosed that during his confirmation hearing.

The matter is now overseen by Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein — the man who authored the three-page rationale for removing Comey from the bureau because of his handling of the Hillary Clinton email investigation.

On Tuesday [9 May], legislators on both sides of the aisle [see [WaPo](#)] called for an independent body to investigate.

....

Rosenstein also was critical of Comey's decision to reveal in late October [2016] that the investigation [of Hillary Clinton] had resumed [but] that criticism was somewhat curious, because in October, when Sessions was a Trump campaign surrogate, he praised Comey for doing what was necessary. "He had an absolute duty, in my opinion, 11 days or not, to come forward with the new information that he has and let the American people know that, too," Sessions said then on [Fox Business Network](#). Ellen Nakashima & Matt Zapposky, "Comey's removal sparks fears about future of Russia probe," [Washington Post](#), 23:34, 9 May 2017. [Two links added by Standler.]

Additionally, at 10:24 EDT on 10 May, James Hohmann at the [Washington Post](#) posted a collection of comments from 5 Republican senators who were critical of Trump. Later in Hohmann's long webpage, there are quotations from many Democrats in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives. Also, *The New York Times* posted its collection of terse quotations from Senators and Representatives.

Around midnight on 9 May, *Politico* reported:

[Trump] had grown enraged by the Russia investigation, two advisers said, frustrated by his inability to control the mushrooming narrative around Russia. He repeatedly asked aides why the Russia investigation wouldn't disappear and demanded they speak out for him. He would sometimes scream at television clips about the probe, one adviser said.

....

By ousting the FBI director investigating his campaign and associates, Trump may have added more fuel to the fire he is furiously trying to contain — and he was quickly criticized by a chorus of Republicans and Democrats. "The timing of this firing was very troubling," said Sen. Ben Sasse, a Nebraska Republican.

Trump had grown angry with the Russia investigation — particularly Comey admitting in front of the Senate that the FBI was investigating his campaign — and that the FBI director wouldn't support his claims that President Barack Obama had tapped [Trump's] phones in Trump Tower.

....

In his letter dismissing Comey, Trump said the FBI director had given him three private assurances that he wasn't under investigation. The White House declined to say when those conversations happened — or why Comey would volunteer such information. It is not the first time Trump has publicly commented on an ongoing investigation — typically a no-no for presidents. He said earlier this month that Comey had done Clinton a favor by letting her off easy.

Josh Dawsey, "Behind Comey's firing: An enraged Trump, fuming about Russia," [Politico](#),

00:02 EDT, 10 May 2017.

On 10 May, *The New York Times* reported that Comey privately told Congress that he had recently met with Rosenstein to request "a significant increase in resources for the bureau's investigation into Russia's interference in the presidential election". But a spokesman for the Justice Department called reports of Comey's request "totally false". [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). These reports give the appearance that Comey was fired because Comey wanted to expand the investigation of Trump's connections with Russia.

At 13:39 EDT on 10 May, McClatchy newspapers reported:

Attorney General Jeff Sessions and his new deputy, Rod Rosenstein, arrived at the White House Monday [8 May] with a message for President Donald Trump: They had serious concerns about the embattled FBI Director James Comey.

Trump listened to what they had to say in a hastily scheduled meeting and then asked for them to put their reasons in writing.

Rosenstein wrote a scathing three-page memo entitled "Restoring Public Confidence in the FBI" about Comey's botched handling of the high-profile investigation into Hillary Clinton's emails. That memo was delivered to the White House Tuesday [9 May].

Hours later, Trump had made his decision: He fired Comey in a terse letter that didn't mention the Clinton investigation.

....

The account of Trump's meeting with Sessions and Rosenstein, which has not been reported previously, was offered by officials familiar with the situation who were not authorized to speak publicly. A White House spokeswoman later confirmed the details.

....

But White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump has been considering firing Comey since [Trump] was elected in November in part because he went around the chain of command in the Clinton investigation and failed to stop FBI leaks.

....

The shocking firing came days after Comey asked his new boss, Rosenstein, for additional money and personnel for the bureau's investigation into Russia's interference in the presidential election.

"All I know is that I'm told that as soon as Rosenstein arrived there was a request for additional resources for the investigation, and a few days afterwards he was sacked," Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill. "I have a general conclusion: I think that the Comey operation was breathing down the neck of the Trump campaign and their operatives, and this was

an effort to slow down the investigation.”
Anita Kumar, "Trump asked for Comey memo after Oval Office meeting," [McClatchy](#), 13:39, 10 May 2017.

While Kumar at McClatchy is correct that Trump's letter to Comey does *not* mention the Clinton investigation, Trump does attach the memoranda from Rosenstein and Sessions, and Trump explicitly says "I have accepted their recommendation...." So Trump indirectly mentions the Clinton investigation via the Rosenstein memorandum.

On 10 May, the deputy White House press spokesperson, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, [asserted](#): "most importantly, the rank and file of the FBI had lost confidence in their director." [Politico](#) explained why that alleged reason for terminating Comey was wrong. And the current acting FBI director, Andrew McCabe, testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee: "I can tell you also that Director Comey enjoyed broad support within the FBI and still does until this day. We have a diversity of opinions about many things, but I can confidently tell you that the majority — the vast majority of FBI employees enjoyed a deep and positive connection to Director Comey." (See transcript at [Washington Post](#).)

Late at night on 10 May 2017, *The Washington Post* reported:

Trump had long questioned Comey's loyalty and judgment, and was infuriated by what he viewed as the director's lack of action in recent weeks on leaks from within the federal government. By last weekend [6-7 May], he had made up his mind: Comey had to go.

....

Back at work Monday [8 May] morning in Washington, Trump told Vice President Pence and several senior aides — Reince Priebus, Stephen K. Bannon and Donald McGahn, among others — that he was ready to move on Comey. First, though, he wanted to talk with Attorney General Jeff Sessions, his trusted confidant, and Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein, to whom Comey reported directly. Trump summoned the two of them to the White House for a meeting, according to a person close to the White House.

The president already had decided to fire Comey, according to this person. But in the meeting, several White House officials said Trump gave Sessions and Rosenstein a directive: to explain in writing the case against Comey. [¶] The pair quickly fulfilled the boss's orders, and the next day [9 May] Trump fired Comey

Rosenstein threatened to resign after the narrative emerging from the White House on Tuesday [9 May] evening cast him as a prime mover of the decision to fire Comey and that the president acted only on his recommendation, said the person close to the White House, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

....

Trump was angry that Comey would not support his baseless claim that President

Barack Obama had his campaign offices wiretapped. Trump was frustrated when Comey revealed in Senate testimony the breadth of the counterintelligence investigation into Russia's effort to sway the 2016 U.S. presidential election. And he fumed that Comey was giving too much attention to the Russia probe and not enough to investigating leaks to journalists.

....

In his Tuesday [9 May] letter dismissing Comey, Trump wrote: "I greatly appreciate you informing me, on three separate occasions, that I am not under investigation." People familiar with the matter said that statement is not accurate, although they would not say how it was inaccurate. FBI officials declined to comment on the statement, and a White House official refused to discuss conversations between Trump and Comey. Philip Rucker, Ashley Parker, Sari Horwitz, & Robert Costa, "Inside Trump's anger and impatience — and his sudden decision to fire Comey," [Washington Post](#), 23:14, 10 May 2017.

The above *Post* article explains why the Rosenstein memorandum was hastily written and is *not* a carefully crafted product. Also, note that Trump included a false and self-serving statement about himself in his letter that terminated Comey's employment — the statement about Comey assuring Trump three times that Trump was *not* under investigation. It is perhaps more evidence of Trump's narcissistic character flaw that Trump would use a termination letter to praise himself.

At 03:00 on 11 May, Michelle Ye Hee Lee at the [Washington Post](#) collects numerous quotations from Trump in 2016. She shows that Trump was critical of Comey in July 2016, because Trump wanted to see Hillary Clinton charged with a crime, while Comey recommended *no* prosecution of Hillary Clinton, an issue which Rosenstein now says was solely for the Attorney General to decide. On 28 October 2016, Comey disclosed to Congress that he was reopening the criminal investigation of Hillary Clinton. Ms. Lee writes: "This time, Trump and Sessions agreed with Comey's decision. Seven months later, both men would blame Comey for this decision and use it to justify his dismissal." Ms. Lee found the Trump and Sessions were inconsistent in their opinion of Comey in Oct/Nov 2016 and May 2017. To say it another way, the alleged reasons why Comey was fired in May 2017 include behavior that both Trump and Sessions praised in Oct/Nov 2016.

At 09:30 on 11 May, Aaron Blake at the [Washington Post](#) summarized three contradictory sets of explanations from the White House about why Comey was terminated. As with any set of contradictions, some of those reasons must be false.

On 11 May, Charles Krauthammer, writing in the [Washington Post](#), listed 5 "implausible" reasons given by the White House for the termination of Comey's employment. Krauthammer concludes: "These implausibilities were obvious within seconds of Comey's firing and the administration's immediate attempt to pin it all on the Rosenstein memo."

11 May 2017: Holt's interview of Trump

On 11 May 2017, news coverage of Trump's termination of Comey began to decline. Then NBC News had an exclusive interview of Trump, in which Trump contradicted the White House propaganda about reasons to dismiss Comey. Here is the part of the transcript of that interview, the part about terminating Comey's employment.

TRUMP: Look, [Comey is] a showboat. He's a grandstander.

The FBI has been in turmoil. You know that, I know that, everybody knows that.

You take a look at the FBI a year ago, it was in virtual turmoil — less than a year ago. It hasn't recovered from that.

HOLT: Monday [8 May] you met with the Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein.

TRUMP: Right.

HOLT: Did you ask for a recommendation?

TRUMP: What I did is, I was going to fire Comey. My decision. It was not —

HOLT: You had made the decision before they came into your office.

TRUMP: I was going to fire Comey. There's no good time to do it, by the way.

HOLT: Because in your letter, you said, "I accepted their recommendation."

TRUMP: Yeah, well, they also —

HOLT: So you had already made the decision.

TRUMP: Oh, I was going to fire regardless of recommendation.

TRUMP: They — [Rosenstein] made a recommendation. He's highly respected. Very good guy, very smart guy. And the Democrats like him. The Republicans like him.

He had made a recommendation. But regardless of recommendation, I was going to fire Comey knowing there was no good time to do it.

And in fact, when I decided to just do it, I said to myself — I said, you know, this Russia thing with Trump and Russia is a made-up story. It's an excuse by the Democrats for having lost an election that they should've won.

And the reason they should've won it is the electoral college is almost impossible for a Republican to win. It's very hard because you start off at such a disadvantage. So, everybody was thinking they should've won the election. This was an excuse for having lost an election.

HOLT: But were — are you angry with Mr. Comey because of his Russia investigation?

TRUMP: I just want somebody that's competent. I am a big fan of the FBI. I love the FBI.

Transcript posted by Tim Hanes, "President Trump's Full Interview With Lester Holt: Firing Of James Comey," [Real Clear Politics](#), 11 May 2017. [Minor editing by Standler.]

Also see: video without transcript at [NBC News](#), and partial transcript of interview (which I can not view) posted at [CNN](#).

Aaron Blake at *The Washington Post* commented on Trump's disclosure to Lester Holt of NBC News:

In one fell swoop in an NBC News interview, Trump totally contradicted his three top spokespeople [Sean Spicer, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, and Kellyanne Conway] and offered a polar-opposite version of events than they had provided, on nearly every important count.

After they had spent the past 45 hours emphasizing that this was a decision Trump arrived at after receiving a memo and recommendation from Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein, Trump just blurted out that he was going to fire Comey all along. Basically, he admitted the memo was a ruse and a political ploy.

And [Trump] even seemed to suggest he may have fired Comey [because](#) of the Russia investigation — which only makes his decision more controversial and runs counter to the suggestions of everyone who has spoken on his behalf in recent days.

....

Spicer's version of events [on the night of 9 May] is utterly obliterated by Trump's comments on Thursday [11 May]. With Sanders and Conway, you could make an argument that Trump was indeed, technically speaking, taking Rosenstein's recommendation and then acting.

....

After all, [Trump's] decision clearly had nothing to do with Rosenstein.

It's clear that the White House wanted to use Rosenstein's credibility, built up over three decades in law enforcement, to make this decision look apolitical. This made it seem like it wasn't just the president unilaterally firing the guy who was investigating his 2016 campaign's ties to Russia. This was actually a talking point and narrative that was intended to *protect* Trump.

But then Trump himself told us the truth.

Aaron Blake, "President Trump just decimated the White House's entire Comey narrative," [Washington Post](#), 14:45 updated at 20:45, 11 May 2017. [Blake's link to Rucker's [tweet](#)

replaced with a link to Rucker's subsequent article.]

Trump said he was "going to fire Comey regardless of recommendation." After Trump ordered Rosenstein and Sessions to write memoranda justifying terminating Comey, did Trump expect any other conclusion from those memoranda?

In the interview with Lester Holt, Trump denigrated Comey: "Look, he's a showboat. He's a grand-stander." I think those words apply more to Trump than to Comey. And Trump is kicking Comey after Trump ended Comey's career at the FBI. It was bad enough that Comey learned of the termination of his employment by watching television. Trump goes on to mention alleged "turmoil" at the FBI, but that contradicts Andrew McCabe's sworn testimony (cited above in the paragraph about Sarah Huckabee Sanders) that FBI agents liked Comey.

In the interview, Trump goes off on one of his irrelevant tangents when he said "the electoral college is almost impossible for a Republican to win." But that statement is *false*. If one looks at the years 1981-2016, a Republican was president for 20 years, and a Democrat was president for 16 years, so it is *not* "impossible for a Republican to win." If one adds Trump's victory, the recent statistics favoring Republicans is even stronger.

On the night of 11 May, *The Washington Post* recognized that Trump said he was thinking about the FBI investigation of Russian contacts by Trump associates when Trump decided to terminate Comey's employment.

President Trump on Thursday [11 May] said he was thinking of "this Russia thing with Trump" when he decided to fire FBI Director James B. Comey, who had been leading the counterintelligence investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 election.

Recounting his decision to dismiss Comey, Trump told NBC News, "In fact, when I decided to just do it, I said to myself, I said, 'You know, this Russia thing with Trump and Russia is a made up story, it's an excuse by the Democrats for having lost an election that they should have won.' "

Devlin Barrett & Philip Rucker, "Trump said he was thinking of Russia controversy when he decided to fire Comey," [Washington Post](#), 20:09, 11 May 2017.

It is *not* known why Trump would contradict the White House propaganda when the scandal was beginning to subside. Looking at Trump's alleged reasons to terminate Comey, the alleged "turmoil" at the FBI is factually wrong, and Trump had already decided to terminate Comey *before* the Rosenstein memo was written — which leaves interference with the FBI's investigation of Russian influence on the 2016 election as Trump's sole reason to terminate Comey.

11 May to 6 June 2017

On 11 May 2017, The [New York Times](#) reported that, in January, Trump had asked Comey to pledge loyalty to Trump, as a condition of Comey continuing his job as director of the FBI. On 13 May, Jeanine Pirro asked Trump, "Did you ask that question?" Trump replied: "No, no, I didn't. But I don't think it would be a bad question to ask. I think loyalty to the country, loyalty to the United States is important. You know, I mean, it depends on how you

define loyalty, number one. Number two, I don't know how that got there, because I didn't ask that question.” [Fox News](#); [Fox News](#)(different quotation).

My comment is that requiring personal loyalty is shockingly inappropriate. The relationship of the FBI director to president is *not* like a priest to the pope, or a subject to a king. Learned professionals should have loyalty to concepts like integrity, truth, honesty, ethics, etc. — but *not* loyalty to people. Trump's statement that "loyalty to the United States is important" is problematic, in that different people could interpret that in different ways. For example, Trump wanted to see Hillary Clinton prosecuted, while Obama did *not*. As another example, attorneys are generally loyal to their clients, but the attorney must refuse to commit a crime (e.g., fraud, offer perjured testimony) suggested by their client.

On 16 May 2017, the [New York Times](#) and [Washington Post](#) reported that on 14 February 2017 Trump asked Comey to end the investigation of Flynn. Trump told Comey: “I hope you can let this go.” That improper request by Trump *may* be obstruction of justice, an impeachable offense.

On 16 May 2017, some Republicans in Congress reached a breaking point with Trump, as mentioned [below](#).

On 17 May at 18:00 EDT, the Department of Justice suddenly and unexpectedly appointed a special counsel — Robert Mueller, who preceded Comey as FBI Director — to lead the investigation into Russian influence on the 2016 election. [DoJ](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Associated Press](#)(blog). In my opinion, this was a good decision, but it should have been done months ago.

On 18 May 2017 at 07:52 EDT, Trump [tweeted](#) “This is the single greatest witch hunt of a politician in American history!” Trump was referring to the continuing FBI investigation of Russian influence on the 2016 election, and the appointment of an independent special counsel on the previous evening. Once again, Trump shows his ignorance of history when he ignores:

1. the public anger at Gerald Ford for pardoning Richard Nixon.
2. the investigation of Bill Clinton over the Whitewater land investment that finally found Bill's relationship with Monica Lewinsky.
3. the investigation of Rep. Gary Condit for the murder of Chandra Levy in 2001.
4. Trump's series of fictitious assertions during 2011-2016 that Obama was born in Kenya.

Trump's boasting that he is the subject of the "single greatest witch hunt" is perhaps more evidence of his narcissistic character flaw, in which everything about Trump must be the biggest, greatest, or best.

On 19 May 2017, the [New York Times](#) reported that on 10 May Trump told Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov that “I just fired the head of the F.B.I. He was crazy, a real nut job. I faced great pressure because of Russia. That’s taken off.” See also [Associated Press](#). That is strong evidence that Trump *intended* to interfere with Comey's investigation, which would be obstruction of justice by Trump. Trump's childish, *ad hominem* attacks on people (e.g.,

"crazy, a real nut job") are described [below](#).

Trump fired Comey on Tuesday, 9 May. On 13 May, Trump said he would make a "fast decision" on selecting a new director of the FBI, probably before Friday, 19 May. [Washington Post](#); [Los Angeles Times](#). But on 6 June, Trump had still *not* selected a new FBI director. [Washington Post](#).

On 7 June at 07:44 EDT, Trump [tweeted](#) that he would nominate Christopher A. Wray as director of the FBI.

8 June 2017: Comey testimony

On the afternoon of 7 June 2017, Comey's prepared [remarks](#) in testimony before the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee on the morning of 8 June were published by leading newspapers, including: [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [The Telegraph](#).

There are three critically important issues in Comey's 8 June prepared statement:

1. On 14 Feb 2017, Trump privately told Comey to end the investigation of Flynn: "I hope you can see your way clear to letting this go, to letting Flynn go. He is a good guy. I hope you can let this go." That is clearly obstruction of justice by Trump.
2. On 27 Jan 2017, Trump asked Comey to pledge "loyalty" to Trump, in a private conversation in which Trump also asked if Comey wanted to continue to be director of the FBI. Trump actually said: "I need loyalty, I expect loyalty." Trump was interfering with the independence of the FBI when he demanded loyalty from Comey.
3. On 30 March 2017, Trump called Comey on the telephone and Trump "described the Russia investigation as 'a cloud' that was impairing his ability to act on behalf of the country. He asked what we could do to 'lift the cloud.'" On 11 April 2017, Trump followed up with a second telephone call to Comey, in which Trump again said "'the cloud' was getting in the way of his ability to do his job". These two telephone calls could be interpreted as attempts by Trump to interfere with an FBI investigation.

During the 14 Feb 2017 meeting, there were six participants plus Trump and "quite a few others" as observers in the room. At the end of the meeting, Trump told everyone except Comey to leave. The fact that Trump wanted to speak privately to Comey indicates that Trump *knew* he was going to make an inappropriate request of Comey.

Additionally, in Trump's 11 May interview with Holt, Trump said that he fired Comey because of the FBI investigation of Trump's associates connections to Russia. See also the 19 May *New York Times* article quoted above. During his oral testimony on 8 June, Comey said he believed he was fired because of the Russia investigation. That would be additional obstruction of justice by Trump.

On 10 May, Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the FBI had "lost confidence" in Comey (quoted above). During Trump's interview by Holt on 11 May, Trump said: "The FBI has been in turmoil." During his 8 June testimony, Comey responded to those false statements:

And although the law required no reason at all to fire an FBI director, the administration then chose to defame me and, more importantly, the FBI by saying that the organization was in disarray, that it was poorly led, that the workforce had lost confidence in its leader.

Those were lies, plain and simple, and I am so sorry that the FBI workforce had to hear them and I'm so sorry that the American people were told them.

James B. Comey, "Full Transcript and Video: James Comey's Testimony on Capitol Hill," [New York Times](#), 9 June 2017.

On 6 June 2017, the [Washington Post](#) published a news article with the headline "Trump, furious and frustrated, gears up to punch back at Comey testimony". The article says: "Alone in the White House in recent days, President Trump — frustrated and defiant — has been spoiling for a fight, according to his confidants and associates. He has chafed against the pleas for caution from his lawyers and political advisers, tweeting whatever he wants, whenever he wants."

Trump waited until the morning of 9 June to respond to Comey's testimony on the previous day.

Despite so many false statements and lies, total and complete vindication...and WOW, Comey is a leaker!

Donald Trump, [tweet](#), 06:10 EDT, 9 June 2017.

Trump claims "total and complete vindication", apparently from Comey testifying that Trump himself was *not* a subject of the FBI investigation. Trump has a very distorted view of Comey's testimony. (The [Washington Post](#) explained in detail why "the president is completely missing the point of Comey's testimony".) Trump's remark about Comey being a leaker is true — Comey gave a copy of his unclassified memo about the 14 Feb meeting with Trump to a professor at Columbia Law School, to pass on to *The New York Times*. After being unfairly dismissed from employment and then vilified by Trump, I believe Comey is entitled to defend himself.

On 14 June 2017, the [Washington Post](#) reported that the FBI began investigating Trump for obstruction of justice "days after" 9 May, when Trump terminated Comey's employment as director of the FBI. Note that Trump had been president for slightly more than three months when the FBI began investigating Trump for criminal acts.

That news seems to have terrified or angered Trump, who unleashed a series of four tweets on 15 June.

They made up a phony collusion with the Russians story, found zero proof, so now they go for obstruction of justice on the phony story. Nice

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:55 EDT, 15 June 2017.

As usual, Trump has his facts wrong. He is being investigated for obstruction of justice from Trump's interfering with FBI investigation(s). The FBI investigation of relationships between Russians and Trump's associates is confidential, so Trump does *not* know if there is evidence of misconduct.

You are witnessing the single greatest WITCH HUNT in American political history — led by some very bad and conflicted people!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:57 EDT, 15 June 2017.

Above, I quote Trump's 18 May 2017 tweet about "greatest witch hunt of a politician in American history!" and then I mention four possibly greater witch hunts. Anyway, the investigation of Trump is *not* a witch hunt, because there is real, credible evidence that Trump deliberately interfered with an FBI investigation.

Why is that Hillary Clintons family and Dems dealings with Russia are not looked at, but my non-dealings are?
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:43 EDT, 15 June 2017.

Instead of asking rhetorical questions on twitter, why not ask the Attorney General to re-open the investigation of Bill and Hillary Clinton?

Crooked H destroyed phones w/ hammer, 'bleached' emails, & had husband meet w/AG days before she was cleared— & they talk about obstruction?
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:56 EDT, 15 June 2017.

One of Trump's campaign promises during 2016 was to criminally prosecute "crooked H[illary]". His promise remains unfilled. There is *no* need for Trump to whine about Hillary being treated better than Trump, when Trump could ask his Attorney General to investigate both Hillary and Bill Clinton.

On 16 June, Trump continued to whine on twitter:
After 7 months of investigations & committee hearings about my "collusion with the Russians," nobody has been able to show any proof. Sad!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:53 EDT, 16 June 2017.

Again, the FBI investigation of relationships between Russians and Trump's associates is confidential, so Trump does *not* know if there is evidence of misconduct. Notice Trump's twist of the facts: his associates are being investigated for collusion, but Trump whines about "my collusion".

On 16 June, Trump continued to whine on twitter:
I am being investigated for firing the FBI Director by the man who told me to fire the FBI Director! Witch Hunt
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:07 EDT, 16 June 2017.
Retweeted from official [POTUS](#) account.

This is strange tweet, since Trump is now being investigated by Robert Mueller, the special counsel. My guess is that Trump is referring to Rosenstein's 9 May memorandum that allegedly justifies Trump's decision to terminate Comey. But remember that Trump told Lester Holt that Trump had already decided to terminate Comey when Trump asked Rosenstein to write that memorandum. This tweet shows Trump has *no* understanding of the facts in his case. See [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#).

Trump's Hoax about Recording Comey

On 12 May 2017, Trump threatened Comey with the possible existence of tape recordings of their conversations.

James Comey better hope that there are no "tapes" of our conversations before he starts leaking to the press!

Donald J. Trump, [twitter](#), 08:26 EDT, 12 May 2017.

On 22 June 2017, Trump admitted that he had *no* recordings of his conversations with Comey.

With all of the recently reported electronic surveillance, intercepts, unmasking and illegal leaking of information, I have no idea...

Donald J. Trump, [twitter](#), 12:54 EDT, 22 June 2017.

...whether there are "tapes" or recordings of my conversations with James Comey, but I did not make, and do not have, any such recordings.

Donald J. Trump, [twitter](#), 12:55 EDT, 22 June 2017.

Then Trump congratulated himself on his hoax about tape recordings that allegedly forced Comey to tell the truth in his testimony before the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee on 8 June.

EARHARDT: ... you said you didn't tape James Comey. Do you want to explain that? Why did you want him to believe that you possibly did that?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, I didn't tape him. You never know what's happening when you see that the Obama administration, and perhaps longer than that, was doing all of unmasking and surveillance and you read all about it. And I've been reading about it for the last couple of months about the seriousness of the — and horrible situation with surveillance all over the place. And you've been hearing the word unmasking, a word you probably never heard before. So you never know what's out there.

But I didn't tape. And I don't have any tape and I didn't tape. But when he found out that I, you know, that there may be tapes out there, whether it's governmental tapes or anything else, and who knows, I think his story may have changed. I mean you'll have to take a look at that, because then he has to tell what actually took place at the events.

And my story didn't change. My story was always a straight story. My story was always the truth. But you'll have to determine for yourself whether or not his story changed. But I did not tape.

EARHARDT: So it was a smart way to make sure he stayed honest in those hearings?

TRUMP: Well, it wasn't — it wasn't very stupid, I can tell you that. He was — he did admit that what I said was right. And if you look further back, before he heard about

that, I think maybe he wasn't admitting that.

So you'll have to do a little investigative reporting to determine that. But I don't think it will be that hard.

Donald J. Trump, transcript of interview with Ainsley Earhardt on Fox News channel, "Trump congratulates himself for influencing Comey's testimony with White House tapes ruse," [Washington Post](#), 10:20 EDT, 23 June 2017.

There are some quotations from the interview at [Fox News](#).

I have four comments on Trump's hoax about tape recordings of conversations with Comey:

1. The president of the USA publicly admitted that he engaged in a hoax in order to influence testimony before a Congressional committee, and then Trump boasts about his hoax. But boasting about his hoax, exposes Trump as an untrustworthy person who perpetrates hoaxes to mislead, deceive, influence, or manipulate people.
2. Trump — while congratulating himself on his successful hoax — admits that Comey told the Truth during his Senate testimony. But Comey's testimony gave strong factual support to a criminal charge of Trump obstructing justice, a felony and an impeachable offense.
3. Trump's 22 June tweet refers to "recently reported electronic surveillance" and in the interview Trump refers to "... You never know what's happening when you see that the Obama administration, and perhaps longer than that, was doing all of unmasking and surveillance...." As chronicled [above](#), Obama's alleged surveillance of Trump was a delusion by Trump, without any factual evidence.
4. In the interview, Trump piously says there is a "... horrible situation with surveillance all over the place." But Trump himself on 12 May engaged in a hoax about secret recordings of conversations with Comey.

10 July 2017: Trump's defamatory tweet about Comey

Comey wrote seven memoranda about his conversations with Trump. Four of those memoranda were classified. Comey gave one of the unclassified memos to a friend to pass on to *The New York Times*. On 9 July 2017, [The Hill](#) reported this information, along with the real news that, while Comey considered the memos to be his personal property, the FBI now considers the memos to be government documents. On 10 July, the [Fox&Friends](#) program on the Fox News cable channel distorted the news, to falsely indicate that Comey had publicly disclosed top secret information. In fact, *none* of Comey's seven memos contained top secret information, and certainly not the memo that Comey disclosed. Trump used the false information from Fox News as the basis for his [tweet](#): "James Comey leaked CLASSIFIED INFORMATION to the media. That is so illegal!"

Journalists immediately revealed the false facts in Trump's defamatory tweet about Comey. [Washington Post](#); [Los Angeles Times](#); [NBC News](#); [FactCheck.org](#).

My comment is that, once again, Trump relied on an unreliable news source, so Trump repeated false "facts". Comey did *not* leak classified information and Comey did *not* engage in illegal conduct. Further, Trump continues to defame Comey, who Trump fired two months ago, on 9 May.

19 July 2017: Trump's rant about Sessions

On 19 July 2017, during an interview by *The New York Times*, Trump suddenly digressed into an angry rant: Trump said he would never have appointed Sessions as Attorney General if he knew that Sessions would recuse himself from the Russia investigation.

[partial transcript](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#).

I have three comments:

1. Most importantly, Trump is now obsessed with the Russia investigation. That means Trump is *not* focused on solving the problem in North Korea, *not* fulfilling his promises to voters, and *not* doing other presidential tasks.
2. Trump fails to understand that a lawyer (e.g., Sessions) is *required* by the rules of professional responsibility to recuse himself when he has a conflict of interest, has privileged information from an opponent, or otherwise can not be fair/impartial. Surely, the many lawyers surrounding Trump have explained recusal to Trump, so Trump's failure to understand indicates Trump lacks an appreciation of ethics. Instead, Trump wants an Attorney General who will protect Trump from investigations by the FBI.
3. As explained [above](#) — and on 2 March at [Washington Post](#) and again on 20 July at [The Hill](#) — the FBI is investigating possible contacts between the Trump campaign in 2016 and the Russian government. Because Sessions was part of the Trump campaign, and because the Attorney General supervises the FBI, Sessions had to recuse himself, to avoid supervising the FBI investigation of himself.

On 20 July 2017, Aaron Blake at the [Washington Post](#) wrote an analysis with the headline: "Trump has now attacked basically everyone in charge of the Russia investigation". Blake wrote: "But perhaps the biggest takeaway here is that Trump has now repeatedly attacked the people tasked with overseeing federal law enforcement's Russia probe. Five people have had a leading role in that regard, and Trump has now attacked all of them." Obviously, it is *not* wise for Trump to attack people who are investigating him.

I wonder how much longer Trump will be president, before he resigns in frustration. Trump is clearly unhappy as president.

There is another problematic aspect to Trump's 19 July interview with *The New York Times*: Asked if Mr. Mueller's investigation would cross a red line if it expanded to look at his family's finances beyond any relationship to Russia, Mr. Trump said, "I would say yes." He would not say what he would do about it. "I think that's a violation. Look,

this is about Russia.”

Peter Baker, Michael S. Schmidt, & Maggie Haberman, "Citing Recusal, Trump Says He Wouldn't Have Hired Sessions," [New York Times](#), 19 July 2017.

But on 20 July, Mueller may already be investigating Trump's finances. [Bloomberg](#); [Washington Post](#). This could lead to Trump firing Mueller. That could lead to a second obstruction of justice charge in Trump's eventual impeachment.

On 21 July 2017, the [Washington Post](#) reported: “Trump has asked his advisers about his power to pardon aides, family members and even himself in connection with the probe”. My initial reaction was that was too bizarre to include here, but then on the morning of 22 July, Trump [tweeted](#): “While all agree the U. S. President has the complete power to pardon, why think of that when only crime so far is LEAKS against us. FAKE NEWS”

By mentioning pardons, Trump seems to confirm the article in *The Washington Post*. As usual, Trump has his facts wrong when he asserts that the only crime is leaks from government officials. The leaks contain allegations of serious crimes by Trump's associates. Again, Trump is obsessed with the FBI investigation of his campaign. Also note the "so far" in Trump's tweet, which foreshadows future revelations of crimes by Trump's associates.

On 22 July 2017, Laurence H. Tribe, Richard Painter, and Norman Eisen wrote an opinion in the [Washington Post](#) that explains why Trump can *not* pardon himself. But this legal conclusion is *not* absolutely certain, because no U.S. president has attempted to pardon himself.

On the morning of 25 July, Trump [tweeted](#) another public attack on his Attorney General: “Attorney General Jeff Sessions has taken a VERY weak position on Hillary Clinton crimes (where are E-mails & DNC server) & Intel leakers!”

The [Washington Post](#) editorial board commented that Trump's tweet was "implying that a politically inspired reinvestigation might help the attorney general keep his job. It is disgusting."

On 25 July, Trump again criticized Sessions in an interview with the [Wall Street Journal](#); [Wall Street Journal](#)(video); [Wall Street Journal](#)(editorial). The full transcript was published by [Politico](#).

In a press conference on 25 July, Trump said: “... but I am disappointed in the Attorney General. He should not have recused himself almost immediately after he took office. I think it's unfair to the presidency.” [White House](#).

Trump says the recusal of Sessions was "unfair" to Trump. Trump fails to understand that the purpose of the Department of Justice is to enforce the law, *not* to protect the president from criminal investigations.

On 27 July 2017, Republicans on the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee began to protect Sessions and Mueller from being fired by Trump. The [Washington Post](#) reported "Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa) said Wednesday [26 July] that

his panel would not confirm a new attorney general to replace Sessions this year." Then Senator Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) said he would draft a bill to protect Mueller from termination.

Conclusion to Trump terminating Comey

Initially, the White House said Comey was terminated because Comey made mistakes with the investigation of Hillary Clinton's private e-mail server in 2016. But it is *not* plausible that Trump would terminate Comey because Comey was unfair to Hillary Clinton. Journalists quickly revealed that Trump decided to terminate Comey — because Comey would not support Trump's baseless claims of wiretapping by Obama, because Comey was not stopping leaks that embarrassed Trump, and perhaps also because Comey was intensifying his current investigation of contacts with Russians by Trump's associates (especially Flynn). Trump's actual reasons are inappropriate, because they interfere with the integrity and independence of the FBI, and — *if* Trump intended to interfere with the investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 election — may be obstruction of justice. Then Trump ordered Rosenstein and Sessions to create memoranda that would justify terminating Comey. In short, Trump abused his power as president, which *may* be an impeachable offense. And *again* Trump and his cronies failed to tell the Truth.

In my opinion, there are similarities in Trump's decision to launch cruise missiles at one of Syrian president's Assad's airfields on 7 April 2017 (see my [essay](#)) and Trump's decision to terminate Comey's employment. Both decisions were sudden, impulsive, and contradicted Trump's prior public positions. This is *not* the kind of person who we want as commander-in-chief of the U.S. Military, with the decision to use nuclear weapons.

11 May 2017: *The Economist* interviews Trump

The Economist, a respected weekly newsmagazine published in England, interviewed Trump on 4 May 2017, but first published the transcript on 11 May. As you would expect, Trump makes more false claims in the interview.

Trump: ... you understand the expression “prime the pump”?

Economist: Yes.

Trump: We have to prime the pump.

Economist: It's very Keynesian.

Trump: We're the highest-taxed nation in the world. Have you heard that expression before, for this particular type of an event?

Economist: Priming the pump?

Trump: Yeah, have you heard it?

Economist: Yes.

Trump: Have you heard that expression used before? Because I haven't heard it. I mean, I just ... I came up with it a couple of days ago and I thought it was good. It's what you have to do.

"Transcript: Interview with Donald Trump," [The Economist](#), 11 May 2017.

Water pumps have existed since the early 1800s, and that is where the expression "prime the pump" began. That expression began to be commonly used by economists in the early 1930s, before Trump was born. When Trump claims he invented the expression "a couple of days ago", Trump displays an appalling ignorance of not only economic policy, but also the English-language. This should be especially embarrassing for Trump, who boasts of his bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business.

The Washington Post pounced on Trump:

President Trump thinks he invented a term "a couple of days ago" that he has been using for months and that economists have for more than a century, and it wasn't even the least accurate thing he said in his latest interview.

Now, everyone is understandably laughing at Trump's history of the phrase "priming the pump." That, of course, is the long-standing idea that the government should fight recessions by cutting taxes and increasing spending. It really entered the lexicon in the 1930s — that's the [first time](#) *The Economist* used the term — but it goes back to at least 1916 [citing journalist William Hard, then concluding: "The phrase has since been used so much that it has become a cliché."]. Trump, though, has some alternative facts. "Have you heard that expression used before?" he asked *The Economist*, before explaining that "I haven't heard it ... I came up with it a couple of days ago and I thought it was good." This is puzzling. First off, Trump's question doesn't make any sense on its own terms. How could they have heard of it if he just came up with it? And second, how could he think he just coined it when he used the very words "priming the pump" back in [March](#) [2017] and [December](#) [2016]?

Matt O'Brien, "Trump can't stop saying things that aren't true," [Washington Post](#), 12 May 2017.

One interpretation is this error is another appearance of Trump's narcissistic character flaw, in which he takes credit for anything good. Some of the articles cited below also expose other errors by Trump in the interview with *The Economist*:

- "Who coined 'prime the pump'? Definitely not Donald Trump," [CNN Money](#), 11 May 2017.
- "Trump says he invented an 84-year-old phrase. But, why?," [Washington Post](#), 11 May 2017.
- "Merriam-Webster reminds President Trump that he didn't invent 'prime the pump'," [Los Angeles Times](#), 14:39 PDT, 11 May 2017. (The Times does not cite Webster's dictionary [tweet](#) that says: "The phrase 'priming the pump' dates to the early 19th

century.”)

- "AP FACT CHECK: No, Trump didn't invent 'prime the pump'," [Associated Press](#), 11 May 2017.
- "Priming the Pump: The Economic Metaphor Trump ‘Came Up With’," [New York Times](#), 11 May 2017.
- "Donald Trump flunks 'pump priming' economics test with The Economist," [Australian Financial Review](#), 12 May 2017.
- "AP FACT CHECK: Trump adrift on tax rates, Canada, econ lingo" [Associated Press](#), 12 May 2017.
- "Trump just took credit for something China did in 2014," [Washington Post](#), 12 May 2017.

15 May 2017: Trump disclosed classified information

On 10 May 2017, the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, and the Russian Ambassador to the USA, Sergey Kislyak, met with Trump at the White House. See, e.g., [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#). (The meeting with Russians was the day after Trump terminated the Director of the FBI, in what was an unfortunate coincidence for Trump. Subsequently, it appears that Trump may have fired Comey to interfere with Comey's investigation of Russian influence on the 2016 election.)

On the evening of 15 May 2017, *The Washington Post* revealed that Trump had disclosed highly classified information to the Russians at the 10 May meeting.

President Trump revealed highly classified information to the Russian foreign minister and ambassador in a White House meeting last week, according to current and former U.S. officials, who said Trump’s disclosures jeopardized a critical source of intelligence on the Islamic State.

The information the president relayed had been provided by a U.S. partner through an intelligence-sharing arrangement considered so sensitive that details have been withheld from allies and tightly restricted even within the U.S. government, officials said.

The partner had not given the United States permission to share the material with Russia, and officials said Trump’s decision to do so endangers cooperation from an ally that has access to the inner workings of the Islamic State.

....

.... It was during that [10 May] meeting [with Lavrov and Kislyak], officials said, that Trump went off script and began describing details of an Islamic State terrorist [threat](#)

related to the use of laptop computers on aircraft.

....

In his [meeting](#) with Lavrov, Trump seemed to be boasting about his inside knowledge of the looming threat. “I get great intel. I have people brief me on great intel every day,” the president said, according to an official with knowledge of the exchange.

Trump went on to discuss aspects of the threat that the United States learned only through the espionage capabilities of a key partner. He did not reveal the specific intelligence-gathering method, but he described how the Islamic State was pursuing elements of a specific plot and how much harm such an attack could cause under varying circumstances. Most alarmingly, officials said, Trump revealed the city in the Islamic State’s territory where the U.S. intelligence partner detected the threat.

....

The identification of the location was seen as particularly problematic, officials said, because Russia could use that detail to help identify the U.S. ally or intelligence capability involved. Officials said the capability could be useful for other purposes, possibly providing intelligence on Russia’s presence in Syria. Moscow would be keenly interested in identifying that source and perhaps disrupting it.

....

At a more fundamental level, the information wasn’t the United States’ to provide to others. Under the rules of espionage, governments — and even individual agencies — are given significant control over whether and how the information they gather is disseminated, even after it has been shared. Violating that practice undercuts trust considered essential to sharing secrets. The officials declined to identify the ally but said it has previously voiced frustration with Washington’s inability to safeguard sensitive information related to Iraq and Syria.

Greg Miller & Greg Jaffe, "Trump revealed highly classified information to Russian foreign minister and ambassador," [Washington Press](#), 19:45 EDT, 15 May 2017.

The article in the *Post* was confirmed by [Reuters](#).

This disclosure of classified information should be especially embarrassing to Trump, because in 2016 Trump excoriated Hillary Clinton for storing classified e-mails on a private server in the basement of her home. It appears that both Clinton and Trump were reckless in handling classified information. The [New York Times](#) reported: "But there was never any indication that Mrs. Clinton exposed sensitive information from an ally or gave it to an adversary."

On 15 May, the White House responded to the article in *The Washington Post* by sending Trump's National Security Advisor, General McMaster, to tell journalists that the *Post* article was “false” and saying “I was in the room. It didn’t happen.” I looked at the White House website on 16 May at 10:30 and 17:06, but the White House did *not* post a copy of

McMaster's statement to journalists. Glenn Kessler at the [Washington Post](#) provided a critical analysis of McMaster's statements.

At 07:03 EDT of 16 May, Trump himself [tweeted](#): “As President I wanted to share with Russia (at an openly scheduled W.H. meeting) which I have the absolute right to do, facts pertaining....” And at 07:13 EDT, Trump finished his [tweet](#): “...to terrorism and airline flight safety. Humanitarian reasons, plus I want Russia to greatly step up their fight against ISIS & terrorism.”

As in the [Comey](#) firing, Trump himself contradicted the White House propaganda. [Washington Post](#). And, while Trump has the authority to release U.S. secrets, what Trump disclosed to Lavrov on 10 May was a secret from a foreign nation. That foreign nation is now probably reluctant to share more secrets with the USA. Note that Trump does *not* admit that the information he disclosed was top secret. Furthermore, the source of the secret information may be endangered by Trump's disclosure to Russia.

Breaking Point for Republicans in Congress

During January 2017 through early May 2017, the Republican majority in both the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate, as well as Republicans in the executive branch of the U.S. Government, refused to consider appointing an independent prosecutor to investigate the Russian influence on the 2016 election. And those Republicans in Congress ignored misconduct by Trump and his associates that is chronicled above.

But Trump's controversial dismissal of Comey on 9 May, followed on 15 May by the revelation that Trump had disclosed highly classified information to Lavrov, seemed to convince Republicans in Congress to do something about Trump. On 16 May 2017, Republicans in Congress began to demand documents from the White House and Justice Department about the dismissal of Comey. [Politico](#); [The Hill](#); [ABC News](#); [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#). Also on 16 May, it was disclosed that Trump had asked Comey in February to end the investigation of Flynn, which may be obstruction of justice by Trump.

I have organized this essay into sections, with one section for each distinct topic. But on 16 May 2017, public concern about the following three topics all merged into one overwhelming issue:

1. Trump's 9 May termination of [Comey](#),
2. Trump's disclosure of [classified](#) information to Russia, and
3. the [FBI investigation](#) of Russian influence on the 2016 presidential election.

On 1 August 2017, Erica Werner of the [Associated Press](#) observed "Senate Republicans are turning their backs on President Donald Trump. They're reasserting their independence, which looked sorely diminished in the aftermath of Trump's surprise election win. But after six months of controversies and historically low approval ratings, it's clear Trump isn't commanding the fear or respect he once did." The final version of this article was published on [2 Aug](#). Trump's low opinion poll ratings are mentioned in the [below](#).

On 27 July 2017, Congress overwhelmingly passed new sanctions on Russia, Iran, and North Korea, as described [below](#). On 2 August, Trump unhappily signed that bill. That act by Congress could be interpreted as Congress asserting its oversight of foreign policy, after decades of deferring to the president.

12 Aug 2017: Charlottesville, Virginia

On 12 August 2017, groups of white supremacists converged on Charlottesville, Virginia to protest the planned removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee, the leader of the confederate army in the civil war. Liberal counterprotesters arrived. A white supremacist from Ohio drove his car into a crowd of counterprotesters, injuring 19 people and killing one woman. [Washington Post](#); [Washington Post](#)(timeline); [New York Times](#).

What is important for this essay is Trump's reaction, in which Trump appeared to equate the white supremacists with the liberal counterprotesters:

But we're closely following the terrible events unfolding in Charlottesville, Virginia.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence, on many sides. On many sides. It's been going on for a long time in our country. Not Donald Trump, not Barack Obama. This has been going on for a long, long time.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump at Signing of the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act," [White House](#), 15:33 EDT, 12 August 2017.

On 15 August, at a press conference, Trump asserted that "both sides" were to blame. Trump undercut the carefully crafted White House's public relations (i.e., propaganda) campaign.

QUESTION: Mr. President, are you putting what you're calling the alt-left and white supremacists on the same moral plane?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not putting anybody on a moral plane. What I'm saying is this: You had a group on one side and you had a group on the other, and they came at each other with clubs — and it was vicious and it was horrible. And it was a horrible thing to watch.

But there is another side. There was a group on this side. You can call them the left — you just called them the left — that came violently attacking the other group. So you can say what you want, but that's the way it is.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) both sides, sir. You said there was hatred, there was violence on both sides. Are the —

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think there's blame on both sides. If you look at both sides — I think there's blame on both sides. And I have no doubt about it, and you don't have any doubt about it either.

And if you reported it accurately, you would say.

QUESTION: The neo-Nazis started this. They showed up in Charlottesville to protest

—

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me, excuse me. They didn't put themselves — and you had some very bad people in that group, but you also had people that were very fine people, on both sides. You had people in that group.

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me, excuse me. I saw the same pictures as you did.

You had people in that group that were there to protest the taking down of, to them, a very, very important statue and the renaming of a park from Robert E. Lee to another name.

QUESTION: George Washington and Robert E. Lee are not the same.

THE PRESIDENT: George Washington was a slave owner. Was George Washington a slave owner? So will George Washington now lose his status? Are we going to take down —

Excuse me, are we going to take down statues to George Washington? How about Thomas Jefferson? What do you think of Thomas Jefferson? You like him?

QUESTION: I do love Thomas Jefferson.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, good. Are we going to take down the statue? Because he was a major slave owner. Now, are we going to take down his statue?

So you know what, it's fine. You're changing history. You're changing culture. And you had people — and I'm not talking about the neo-Nazis and the white nationalists — because they should be condemned totally. But you had many people in that group other than neo-Nazis and white nationalists. Okay? And the press has treated them absolutely unfairly.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump on Infrastructure," [White House](#), 16:00 EDT, 15 August 2017.

On 17 August, Trump made a series of three tweets:

Sad to see the history and culture of our great country being ripped apart with the removal of our beautiful statues and monuments. You.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:07 EDT, 17 Aug 2017.

...can't change history, but you can learn from it. Robert E Lee, Stonewall Jackson — who's next, Washington, Jefferson? So foolish! Also...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:15 EDT, 17 Aug 2017.

...the beauty that is being taken out of our cities, towns and parks will be greatly missed and never able to be comparably replaced!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:21 EDT, 17 Aug 2017.

Trump has done many stupid things as president, and Trump has generally escaped significant criticism. But this time Trump was blasted by a storm of criticism. Much of the criticism was from business executives:

- On Monday morning, 14 August, Kenneth C. Frazier, the CEO of Merck, resigned from Trump's American Manufacturing Council. Trump retaliated by blaming Frazier for high drug prices in a [tweet](#).
- On Wednesday morning, 16 August, two groups of business leaders who advised Trump — the Strategy & Policy Forum and the Manufacturing Council — both voted to disband. Trump then retroactively abolished both groups, see his [tweet](#).
- On 17 August, the White House disbanded the Infrastructure Council that was created on 20 July.
- On Friday, 18 August, the entire President's Committee On the Arts and Humanities resigned in protest at Trump's alleged racism. The White House retaliated by saying the Committee would *not* be renewed for budgetary reasons.

See, e.g., [Washington Post](#)(14Aug); [Washington Post](#)(16Aug); [Washington Post](#)(17Aug); [Associated Press](#)(18Aug); [Washington Post](#)(18Aug)(AP). This repudiation of Trump by business leaders is especially significant, because — during the 2016 campaign — Trump boasted of his business success and his ability to work with business leaders to create jobs for Americans.

On 17 August 2017, James Murdoch — the chief executive at 21st Century Fox, the parent company of Fox News cable television channel, which is Trump's favorite news source — announced he will donate one million dollars to the Anti-Defamation League. Murdoch said: “But what we watched this last week in Charlottesville and the reaction to it by the President of the United States concern all of us as Americans and free people.” [New York Times](#).

Furthermore, politicians — including many Republicans — excoriated Trump. On 16 August, the [Washington Post](#) published a summary of terse quotations by politicians. See also, e.g., [Los Angeles Times](#); [CNN](#); [Reuters](#); [CNN](#)(17Aug). On 22 August, the [New York Times](#) published a list of Republicans who had rebuked Trump over Charlottesville, with terse quotations.

Bob Corker, the chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and a leading Republican in the Senate, publicly blasted Trump on 17 August 2017: “I do think there need to be some radical changes. The president has not yet ... been able to demonstrate the stability, nor some of the competence that he needs to demonstrate in order to be successful, and we need for him to be successful.” [The Hill](#); [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

One week after the violence in Charlottesville, the Associated Press summarized the effect on the Trump presidency.

President Donald Trump's racially fraught comments about a deadly neo-Nazi rally have thrust into the open some Republicans' deeply held doubts about his competency and temperament, in an extraordinary public airing of worries and grievances about a sitting president by his own party.

Behind the high-profile denunciations voiced this week by GOP senators once considered Trump allies, scores of other, influential Republicans began to express grave concerns about the state of the Trump presidency. In interviews with Associated Press reporters across nine states, 25 Republican politicians, party officials, advisers and donors expressed worries about whether Trump has the self-discipline and capability to govern successfully.

Eric Cantor, the former House majority leader from Virginia, said Republicans signaled this week that Trump's handling of the Charlottesville protests was "beyond just a distraction." "It was a turning point in terms of Republicans being able to say, we're not even going to get close to that," Cantor said.

Julie Pace & Bill Barrow, "GOP doubts and anxieties about Trump burst into the open," [Associated Press](#), 19 August 2017.

On 28 August 2017, the [Washington Post](#) reported that U.S. Secretary of Defense Mattis and U.S. Secretary of State Tillerson had publicly criticized Trump:

1. In an [interview](#) on 27 August, Tillerson actually said: "The president speaks for himself," when Tillerson was asked if Trump represented American values in Trump's comments on Charlottesville, Virginia. The [Associated Press](#) reported that Tillerson was "appearing to repudiate" Trump.
2. On 26 July 2017, Trump suddenly [tweeted](#) that he will ban transgender people from the U.S. Military. On 25 August, Trump issued an [memorandum](#) that banned transgender people from the U.S. Military. Mattis told a group of troops: "Our country right now, it's got problems we don't have in the military You just hold the line until our country gets back to understanding and respecting each other and showing it." [FaceBook](#).

Forged *Time* Magazine Cover at Trump's Golf Courses

On 27 June 2017, *The Washington Post* reported that at least five of Trump's golf courses were displaying on their wall a fake cover of *Time* magazine showing a large photograph of Trump with the caption: "DONALD TRUMP 'The Apprentice' is a television smash!" There is a "March 1, 2009" date on this forged cover.

A photograph of the forged magazine cover is shown at [twitter](#).

Bibliography of fake *Time* cover:

- David A. Fahrenthold, "A Time magazine with Trump on the cover hangs in his golf clubs. It's fake.," [Washington Post](#), 27 June 2017. ("There was no March 1, 2009, issue of Time magazine. And there was no issue at all in 2009 that had Trump on the cover.")
- Callum Borchers, "Why did Trump fake a Time cover? Look for a clue in the real ones.," [Washington Post](#), 27 June 2017. ("... Trump has appeared on 14 real Time covers. Why not just hang up one of those? Reality can't match Trump's fantasy, which probably explains the knockoff's place on his club's walls.") (has photo of forged cover)
- Kalhan Rosenblatt, "Time Asks Donald Trump's Golf Clubs to Remove Phony Magazine Cover," [NBC News](#), 11:25 EDT, 28 June 2017.
- Francisco Alvarado & David A. Fahrenthold, "At one Trump golf resort, fake Time magazine covers are taken off the wall," [Washington Post](#), 29 June 2017.

What's wrong with displaying a fake magazine cover?

Trump's organization — perhaps not Trump himself — is boasting about Trump's success as a television personality with a forged cover of a respected news magazine. This forgery seems to feed Trump's narcissistic character flaw of wanting public recognition. The forged cover is deceptive, in that it purports that in March 2009 Trump was so famous, he was recognized by *Time* magazine. And it is hypocritical for Trump to condemn "fake news" when his organization publicly displays a forged news magazine cover.

More False Facts from Trump

Trump did *not* sign more bills than other presidents.

On 19 June 2017, Congressman Devin Nunes claimed during an interview that "The news media hasn't covered this. But we have actually got more bills signed into law, more bills signed into law, this Congress working with this president, than any president previously before at this stage in the game." On 27 June, [PolitiFact](#) explained that Nunes was wrong.

On 21 June 2017, Trump was in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where he was campaigning for re-election. Trump boasted about the significance of the bills he signed into law. *The New York Times* reported:

[Trump] exaggerated his legislative accomplishments.

Mr. Trump has signed nearly 40 bills into law, but it's hard to argue, as he did, that any were "really big."

The 14 bills rolling back Obama-era rules did signal a significant shift in regulatory policy, but are not considered major pieces of legislation. Three others named federal buildings, four made symbolic gestures toward women and veterans, three appointed Smithsonian Institution regents, two set minor rules for federal employees, one affirmed NASA's mission, one improved weather forecasting, and one aided

Minnesota's bid for a world's fair in 2023.

In the same time period, President Franklin D. Roosevelt began public works projects in response to the Great Depression, Mr. Obama had enacted a stimulus package to counter the financial crisis, and President George W. Bush had signed major tax cuts. Linda Qiu, "In One Rally, 12 Inaccurate Claims From Trump," [New York Times](#), 22 June 2017.

On 17 July 2017, Trump was boasting in the White House about his accomplishments as president, when he made another factual error.

We've signed more bills — and I'm talking about through the legislature — than any President ever. For a while, Harry Truman had us, and now I think we have everybody, Mike [Pence, who introduced Trump]. I better say "think," otherwise they'll give me a Pinocchio — (laughter) — and I don't like those — I don't like Pinocchios. (Laughter.) Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump at Made in America Product Showcase," [White House](#), 15:54 EDT, 17 July 2017.

Three hours later, Glenn Kessler — the journalist at *The Washington Post* who awards Pinocchios — explained that Trump's claim was **false**.

But actually Trump has not even caught up to Truman's 100-day total [of 55 bills] — and he's fallen behind other recent presidents.

Trump has signed 42 bills so far in his first term. According to data compiled by [GovTrack](#), as of July 17, Jimmy Carter had signed 70 bills, George H.W. Bush had signed 55, and Bill Clinton had signed 50. So now Trump is behind three recent presidents, not to mention FDR, Truman and other earlier presidents.

Just counting bills does not measure the quality of the output — or whether it is meaningful. Barack Obama had signed 39 bills, but his legislation appears to have been substantial, totaling 1,957 pages, compared with 880 so far for Trump, according to GovTrack. Our colleague Philip Bump has [documented](#) that 60 percent of the bills signed by Trump [by 5 July] have been just one page long.

Glenn Kessler, "No, President Trump, you haven't signed more bills than any other president," [Washington Post](#), 18:50 EDT, 17 July 2017.

The New York Times reported:

At rallies, in speeches and on Twitter, Mr. Trump repeatedly boasts of the bills he has signed — 42 as of this week. He has said no president has “passed more legislation,” conceding once earlier this year that he trails Franklin D. Roosevelt, who he notes “had a major Depression to handle.”

On Monday [17 July], he went even further, claiming to have bested all of his predecessors in turning bills into law.

....

In fact, as he approaches six months in office on Thursday [20 July], Mr. Trump is slightly behind the lawmaking pace for the past six presidents, who as a group signed

an average of 43 bills during the same period. And an analysis of the bills Mr. Trump signed shows that about half were minor and inconsequential, passed by Congress with little debate. Among recent presidents, both the total number of bills he signed and the legislation's substance make Mr. Trump about average.

President Jimmy Carter signed 70 bills in the first six months, according to an analysis of bills signed by previous White House occupants. Bill Clinton signed 50. George W. Bush signed 20 bills into law. Barack Obama signed 39 bills during the period, including an \$800 billion stimulus program to confront an economic disaster, legislation to make it easier for women to sue for equal pay, a bill to give the Food and Drug Administration the authority to regulate tobacco and an expansion of the federal health insurance program for children.

Mr. Truman and Franklin Delano Roosevelt both had signed more bills into law by their 100-day mark than Mr. Trump did in almost twice that time. Truman had signed 55 bills and Roosevelt had signed 76 during their first 100 days.

....

But almost half the other bills Mr. Trump has signed into law are ceremonial or routine. The president includes in his count laws like the one to rename the federal courthouse in Nashville after Fred Thompson, the actor and former senator who died in 2015. Even the Republican leadership in the Senate does not count those kinds of bills when they tally their legislative achievements.

Michael D. Shear & Karen Yourish, "Trump Says He Has Signed More Bills Than Any President, Ever. He Hasn't." [New York Times](#), 17 July 2017.

On 20 July, [PolitiFact](#) evaluated Trump's claim and rated it false. Beginning with Eisenhower in 1953, six presidents have signed more bills than Trump during their first 178 days in office.

Trump boasted about signing more bills than any other president, perhaps because of his narcissistic character flaw that requires him to be the best, most productive, etc. On 17 July, Trump remembers he got Pinocchios, but he does *not* remember the correct facts that would help him avoid more criticism for false facts. Ironically, if Trump had correct facts, he would have less criticism, and he *might* make better decisions.

On the night of 22 August 2017, at a campaign rally in Phoenix Arizona, Trump said:

We got great legislation. You ever hear of these liars back there, where they say, but Trump hasn't gotten — I think we've gotten more in a short period of time, in this seven months, I think we've gotten more than anybody, including Harry Truman, who was number one, but they will tell you we've got none.

....

But I enjoy it, because we've made so much — I don't believe that any president — I don't believe that any president has accomplished as much as this president in the first six or seven months. I really don't believe it.

....

We've signed more than 50 pieces of legislation. They said we've signed none — none. We've signed 50;

Donald J. Trump, "President Trump Ranted For 77 Minutes in Phoenix. Here's What He Said," [Time](#), 23 August 2017.

Again, Trump falsely claims he has signed more legislation than any president, despite Trump's error being exposed by multiple journalists in June and July. See, e.g., [FactCheck.org](#)(23Aug); [Washington Post](#)(17July). It does *not* matter what Trump *believes* he has accomplished. What matters is the verifiable *facts* about his accomplishments. Trump does *not* identify who claimed Trump had signed "none", but Trump is probably imagining fake news, or perhaps Trump is confused by journalists who reported *no* significant legislation.

On 25 August, Trump tweeted more false facts about how productive he has been:
Few, if any, Administrations have done more in just 7 months than the Trump A. Bills passed, regulations killed, border, military, ISIS, SC!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:44 EDT, 25 August 2017.

As explained above, Trump has *not* signed more legislation than any other president. Trump's border wall is dormant.

20 July 2017: Trump's score

For the first two or three months of Trump's presidency, journalists fact checked every speech or tweet by Trump. But then journalists backed away from attempting to expose *every* false statement by Trump. Perhaps there were too many false statements by Trump and journalists were overwhelmed. Or perhaps it is *no* longer news that Trump routinely makes false factual statements.

On 20 July 2017, *The Washington Post* reported that Trump had made at least 836 "false or misleading claims" in the first six months of his presidency, an average of approximately 5 false or misleading claims per day. [Washington Post](#).

That total of false or misleading claims is from Trump's public speeches, tweets, etc. No doubt, Trump relies on more false facts in making decisions privately.

The Washington Post said:

[Trump is] the most fact-challenged politician that The Fact Checker [at *The Washington Post*] has ever encountered.

....

We decided to compile this [list](#) because the pace and volume of the president's

misstatements means that we cannot possibly keep up. This interactive [database](#) helps readers quickly search a claim after they hear it, because there's a good chance he has said it before. But the database also shows how repetitive Trump's claims are. Many politicians will drop a false claim after it has been deemed false. But Trump just repeats the same claim over and over.

....

Trump also has a disturbing habit of taking credit for events or business decisions that happened before he took the oath of office — or had even been elected. Some 30 times, he's touted that he secured business investments and job announcements that had been previously announced and could easily be found with a Google search. Nearly 20 times he's boasted that he achieved a reduction in the cost of Lockheed Martin F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, even though the price cut had been in the works before he was elected.

....

As president, Trump has already earned 20 Four-Pinocchio ratings — and a total of 152 Pinocchios. If he doesn't like his Pinocchios, there's a relatively simple solution: Stick to the facts.

Glenn Kessler, Michelle Ye Hee Lee, & Meg Kelly, "President Trump's first six months: The fact-check tally," [Washington Post](#), 03:00 EDT, 20 July 2017.

Fox News errs again, Trump parrots Fox

On 21 July 2017, Fox News posted an article on its website that included:

In a wide-ranging interview moderated by Fox News' Catherine Herridge, [General Tony] Thomas, who leads the Special Operations Command, said his team was "particularly close" to Baghdadi after the 2015 raid that killed ISIS oil minister Abu Sayyaf. That raid also netted his wife, who provided a wealth of actionable information.

"That was a very good lead. Unfortunately, it was leaked in a prominent national newspaper about a week later and that lead went dead," Thomas said. "The challenge we have [is] in terms of where and how our tactics and procedures are discussed openly. There's a great need to inform the American public about what we're up to. There's also great need to recognize things that will absolutely undercut our ability to do our job."

Thomas appeared to be referring to a New York Times report in June 2015 that detailed how American intelligence agencies had "extracted valuable information." Catherine Herridge & Pamela K. Browne, "ISIS broken, but leader slipped away due to leak, says key general," [Fox News](#), 21 July 2017.

Note that General Thomas did *not* identify the newspaper that spoiled the U.S. operation to

kill Baghdadi. It was Fox News that identified *The New York Times*.

On the morning of 22 July 2017, Fox & Friends program on the Fox News cable television channel blamed *The New York Times* for revealing classified information that allowed ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi to "sneak away under the cover of darkness". A Fox host specifically said:

the U.S. government "would have had al-Baghdadi based on the intelligence that we had except someone leaked information to the failing New York Times."

"New York Times Asks 'Fox & Friends' For Apology," [Associated Press](#), 21:18 EDT, 23 July 2017, quoting [Fox video](#).

Then Donald Trump tweeted:

The Failing New York Times foiled U.S. attempt to kill the single most wanted terrorist, Al-Baghdadi. Their sick agenda over National Security

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:45 EDT, 22 July 2017.

Obviously, *The Times* was not pleased to be accused as the organization that spoiled the U.S. operation to kill Baghdadi. On 23 July 2017, *The Times* sent a statement to Fox News that said in part:

The raid against Abu Sayyaf occurred on May 16, 2015 and was announced that day in an official [statement](#) by Defense Secretary Ash Carter.

....

Baghdadi would have known that Umm Sayyaf, Abu Sayyaf's wife, was being held, if not from his own communications network then from the Pentagon's announcement and news reports about that announcement. If the U.S. government wanted to keep the detention and likely interrogation of the wife secret, the Pentagon would not have publicly announced it.

The New York Times story you cite in your report was [published](#) on June 8 [2015], more than three weeks after the raid. The Times described the piece to the Pentagon before publication and they had no objections. No senior American official complained publicly about the story until now, more than two years later.

Statement by *The New York Times*, quoted by [Fox News](#), updated 23 July 2017.

On 23 July, *The New York Times* published a news article about Trump's accusation.

Mr. Trump's statement appeared to be based on a report by Fox News; he is known to be an avid viewer, and a version of the story was broadcast about 25 minutes before he posted. The report said that The Times had disclosed intelligence in an article on June 8, 2015, about an American military raid in Syria that led to the death of one of Mr. Baghdadi's key lieutenants, Abu Sayyaf, and the capture of his wife, who played an important role in the group.

....

But a review of the record shows that information made public in a Pentagon news release more than three weeks before the Times article, and extensively covered at the

time by numerous news media outlets, would have tipped off Mr. Baghdadi that the United States was questioning an important Islamic State operative who knew of his recent whereabouts and some of his methods of communication. Further, the information in the Times article on June 8 came from United States government officials who were aware that the details would be published.

A White House spokesman had no comment on Mr. Trump's tweet.

....

The account by General Thomas — who at the time of the raid was the head of the secretive Joint Special Operations Command, whose commandos target Islamic State leaders in Syria and Iraq — was imprecise in two aspects.

The Pentagon itself provided the confirmation on May 16, 2015, that Abu Sayyaf's wife had been captured.

And the Times account was published not a week later, but 23 days after the Pentagon statement.

That gap matters because Mr. Baghdadi is almost certain to have taken precautionary steps, such as changing his pattern of behavior, shifting his location and adopting new procedures for communicating with other Islamic State commanders, in the days after the May 16 raid and the capture of a close associate — that is, well before the publication of the Times article on June 8.

The Pentagon raised no objections with The Times before the article was published, and no senior American official had complained publicly about it until now. Some officials expressed hope at the time that some of the details in the article would sow fear in the ranks of the Islamic State by demonstrating that the United States could penetrate the group's secrecy.

....

Former Obama administration officials said there were a number of reasons the Pentagon announced the raid and the detention of Umm Sayyaf. The White House, they said, had to notify Congress under the War Powers Resolution about the operation, which was the first Special Operations raid against the Islamic State in Syria. Further, the mission was mounted from Iraq, so the Iraqis also needed to be informed.

As a matter of policy, they said, the United States also needed to tell the International Red Cross that it had a detainee.

Mr. Carter, they said, also believed the American people should be informed about the first attempt to go after a member of Mr. Baghdadi's inner circle. Nor did the Pentagon want to be accusing of capturing an important figure and covering it up.

Michael R. Gordon, "How Trump Got It Wrong in Saying The Times 'Foiled' Killing of ISIS

Leader," [New York Times](#), 23 July 2017.

On 23 July, *The New York Times* asked Fox & Friends to apologize for its “malicious and inaccurate segment”. *The Times* specifically asked for an “on-air apology and tweet.” [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#)(AP); [Politico](#).

Not only did Fox News fail to apologize for its errors on the Fox & Friends show, but also Fox mischaracterized the complaint by *The Times*. Fox retorted: “For all of their concern about accuracy, the New York Times didn't reach out to anyone at Fox News until Sunday afternoon for a story that ran Friday night.” (See Politico, cited in previous paragraph.) The story on Friday night was by Herridge & Browne, which had no errors *and* Herridge promptly posted an update from *The Times* that clarified some of the issues. *The Times* was complaining on Sunday afternoon about the Fox & Friends story on Saturday morning, 22 July, that inspired Trump's tweet.

On Monday morning, 24 July, the Fox & Friends show "corrected" their errors on Saturday by saying: “The Times described its 2015 reporting to the Pentagon before publication and they had no objections, and no senior American officials have ever complained publicly — until now.” (See update to [Politico](#).)

The Fox & Friends "correction" is reported in more detail by *The Washington Post*, which commented:

Anyone watching the segment [on Fox & Friends Weekend on 22 July] would have come away with the conclusion that the New York Times — alone and defiant in its anti-Americanness — had made a unilateral decision to prevent U.S. authorities from nabbing a terrorist.

....

[The treatment on Fox & Friends Weekend was a “a prosecutorial venture”.] With minimal facts and multiple omissions, the co-hosts flirted with tarring the New York Times as an enemy of the people, rather than a publication that was reporting out a story that some very in-the-know U.S. officials wanted to see in print.

Erik Wemple, "‘Fox & Friends’ issues ‘update’ on New York Times-ISIS flap. No apology." [Washington Post](#), 13:47 EDT, 24 July 2017.

On 24 July, the [New York Times](#) published another article about the errors and lack of apology from Fox & Friends.

Later on 24 July, the [Associated Press](#) reported on the continuing battle between Fox & Friends and *The Times*.

I have two comments. First, it is *not* clear that General Thomas was referring to *The New York Times* when he said "a prominent national newspaper". Second, Trump's erroneous and defamatory tweet has been forgotten in the continuing battle between Fox & Friends and *The New York Times*.

On 25 July, the [Washington Post](#) reported on the failure of Fox & Friends to apologize for

their erroneous commentary.

24-25 July: Trump's 29 false or misleading claims

On 26 July 2017, the [Washington Post](#) reported that "In a period of less than 26 hours — from 6:31 p.m. on July 24 to 8:09 p.m. on July 25 — President Trump made two fired-up speeches, held a news conference and tweeted with abandon, leaving a trail of misinformation in his wake." *The Post* listed 29 false or misleading claims by Trump during those 26 hours. The [New York Times](#) found 7 falsehoods in three events "in just a few hours" on 25 July.

Trump's speech to Boy Scouts

On 24 July 2017, Trump gave a highly partisan political speech to the Boy Scouts of America national jamboree. [White House](#). Parents of Boy Scouts, as well as the national leaders of the Boy Scouts, criticized the speech as inappropriate. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#). Chris Cillizza at [CNN](#) summarized "the 29 most cringe-worthy lines from Donald Trump's hyper-political speech to the Boy Scouts".

On 25 July, Trump gave an interview to *The Wall Street Journal* in which Trump boasted about his speech: "I got a call from the head of the Boy Scouts saying it was the greatest speech that was ever made to them, and they were very thankful." [Politico](#).

Such praise was implausible, given the fact that on 27 July the leader of the Boy Scouts had apologized for the "political rhetoric" in Trump's speech. [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#).

On 2 August, Aaron Blake of the [Washington Post](#) said Trump imagined the telephone call from the head of the Boy Scouts. Blake wrote: "a source for the Scouts said this [telephone call] doesn't appear to have happened at all. 'We are not aware of any call from national BSA leadership to the White House,' the source said."

On 2 August, the White House Press Secretary offered an explanation that Trump received praise in "direct conversations" with Boy Scout leaders at the Jamboree, but *not* telephone calls. [White House](#); [Politico](#).

There is a second recent incident where Trump falsely spoke of a telephone call that praised Trump. On 31 July, at a cabinet meeting, Trump said "And even the President of Mexico called me — they said their southern border, very few people are coming because they know they're not going to get through our border, which is the ultimate compliment." [White House](#).

The Mexican president denied that he called Trump. [The Telegraph](#)(AFP). On 2 August, the White House Press Secretary admitted that the President of Mexico did *not* call Trump, but "On Mexico, [Trump] was referencing the conversation that they had had at the G20 Summit, where they specifically talked about the issues that he referenced." [White House](#). Trump met Mexican president Nieto on 7 July on the sidelines of the G20 Summit. Contemporary reports by journalists do *not* mention Nieto praising Trump. See, e.g.:

[The Guardian](#); [Los Angeles Times](#). Not even the [White House](#) summary of the meeting mentions Nieto praising Trump.

If the Press Secretary is correct, then Trump can no longer distinguish between face-to-face conversations and telephone calls.

On 3 August 2017, CNN summarized why Trump's deception was important.

... this is a pattern of conduct with Trump. Throughout his candidacy — and his presidency — he has said things that are not provable, at best, and not true, at worst.

He saw Muslims celebrating on the rooftops in northern New Jersey on September 11, 2001. Evidence that President Barack Obama might not have been born in the United States had been brought to his attention. Three to 5 million people voted illegally in the 2016 election. His inauguration crowd was the largest ever recorded. Obama had wiretapped Trump Tower during the 2016 campaign.

And those are just the falsehoods that have drawn the most attention. The [Washington Post's](#) Fact-Checker counted 836 false or misleading claims in Trump's first six months in office, an average of more than four a day. The [New York Times'](#) "Trump's Lies" database shows that the President lied or made a false claim in each of his first 40 days in office.

Against all of that untruth, telling two fibs about phone calls seems minor. In both cases, Trump was exaggerating to the point of lying to make himself look good.

....

[The telephone calls from the Boy Scouts and Mexican president] matter because they reveal — or maybe re-reveal — that Trump views the truth as a very subjective thing. On matters small and large, he bends reality to fit how he wants it to be. The Boy Scouts DID love him and so he said the head of the group called him to tell him he was the best ever. Whether it actually happened or not is, to Trump, not all that important. It felt like it happened. He was telling the truth as he sees it.

... if Trump is willing to lie about something so minor as phone calls, what else is he willing to stretch — or break — the truth about?

That's why the deceptions revealed Wednesday [2 Aug] matter. And they (should) matter a lot.

Chris Cillizza, "Donald Trump just keeps lying," [CNN](#), 3 Aug 2017.

Trump did *not* refurbish nuclear weapons

On 9 August 2017, Trump tweeted:

My first order as President was to renovate and modernize our nuclear arsenal. It is now far stronger and more powerful than ever before....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:56 EDT, 9 Aug 2017.

The Truth is:

1. On 17 Nov 2010, Obama issued an 11-year plan to modernize the U.S. nuclear weapon programs. [White House](#). On 22 Jan 2015, the [Congressional Budget Office](#) tells us that Obama was planning to spend US\$ 348 billion over the next 10 years to modernize nuclear weapons and delivery systems. In January 2016, the [New York Times](#) said the U.S. Government might spend \$ one trillion over the next 30 years on modernizing its nuclear weapons.
2. Trump's [order](#) on nuclear weapons was issued on 27 January, and *The New York Times* says "Eight other memorandums and four executive orders ... preceded it. It was *not* Trump's first order.
3. Trump's order initiated a Nuclear Posture Review that is a routine, "legislatively mandated" task that produces a report on paper, *not* improvements to nuclear weapons. [Pentagon](#).
4. About five years will be required to renovate all of the approximately 4000 nuclear weapons in the U.S. arsenal. There is *no* way that Trump could have renovated the U.S. nuclear arsenal in just 6 months.

See, e.g.,: [New York Times](#); [PolitiFact](#); [FactCheck.org](#); [Associated Press](#).

22 August 2017: Trump's rant

On the night of 22 August 2017, Trump gave a campaign speech in Phoenix Arizona that was widely criticized as being rambling or a rant. As usual, Trump's unscripted speech was full of factual errors. See, e.g., [PolitiFact](#); [FactCheck.org](#); [Associated Press](#); [CNN](#); [Sky News](#) in U.K.; [USA Today](#).

Trump's rant in Phoenix mentioned the criticism of Trump's reaction to racist demonstrations in Charlottesville, Virginia on 12 August 2017, which I chronicled [above](#).

Margaret Sullivan, writing in the [Washington Post](#), says that when Trump is in trouble, "he finds an enemy and punches as hard as he can." Currently, Trump's enemy is the mainstream news media, who have exposed Trump's factual errors and lack of accomplishments.

Sep to Oct 2017: More False Facts from Trump

3 Sep 2017: Trump's Score

On 3 September 2017, Glenn Kessler at the [Washington Post](#) announced that "In 227 days, President Trump has made 1,114 false and misleading claims".

During September 2017, I spent most of my time working on my two essays about North Korea and Syria. As a result of focusing my limited time on those other two essays, I probably overlooked significant factual errors by Trump.

23 Sep 2017: Trump's imaginary Iranian missile test

On 23 September 2017, Trump falsely claimed that Iran had just test fired a ballistic missile. Iran just test-fired a Ballistic Missile capable of reaching Israel. They are also working with North Korea. Not much of an agreement we have!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:59 EDT, 23 Sep 2017.

But [PolitiFact](#) and the [Associated Press](#) said there was *no* recent Iranian missile launch. Further, the agreement with Iran prohibits Iran from developing nuclear weapons, but *not* from developing missiles. Trump apparently opposes the agreement with Iran without his having read the agreement.

27 Sep 2017: Trump's income tax "reform"

Trump has been promising to enact income tax reform. On 27 September 2017, Trump went to Indianapolis and gave a speech on that topic. The [Washington Post](#) reported: "President Trump's speech on the administration's still-somewhat-vague tax plan, delivered in Indianapolis on Sept. 27, was filled with many of his favorite, inaccurate claims." See also [New York Times](#); [CBS News](#); [FactCheck.org](#); [PolitiFact](#). So, my question to americans is 'do we obtain better legislation if it is based on lies and falsehoods?'

28 Sep 2017: Trump's Excuse for Not Repealing Obamacare

One of Trump's major campaign promises was to repeal Obamacare health insurance. After several embarrassing attempts to repeal Obamacare, Trump invented a totally fictitious explanation for why Republicans failed to repeal Obamacare. According to Trump, one Republican senator is "in the hospital" and can not vote for repeal. The [Washington Post](#) called Trump's explanation a "bizarre fantasy". The [Los Angeles Times](#) said: "Yet, more mystifying than Trump's false claim to have enough votes to repeal and replace Obamacare was his repeated talk of a hospitalized senator — even after Cochran's [the allegedly hospitalized senator's] office on Wednesday [27 Sep] circulated the senator's own tweet to the contrary." [PolitiFact](#) said "Trump wrongly blames 'hospitalized' senator for GOP health care collapse". Chris Cillizza at [CNN](#) explained why Trump continues to lie about repealing Obamacare: "Trump is obsessed with winning. Winners don't admit defeat." Once again, Trump is oblivious to facts, while Trump lives in his delusional world.

16 Oct 2017: Trump's slander about previous presidents Trump's insensitive remark to widow more false statements by Trump

On Monday, 16 October 2017, Trump praised himself for calling families of deceased military personnel, while Trump asserted that previous presidents did *not* call families. The initial topic was Trump had been publicly silent about the deaths of four U.S. Military personnel in Niger on 4 October. Notice that Trump changed the topic from his failure to console families of the U.S. personnel killed in Niger to Obama's alleged failures.

QUESTION: Why haven't we heard anything from you so far about the Soldiers that were killed in Niger? And what do you have to say about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I've written them personal letters. They've been sent, or they're going out tonight, but they were written during the weekend. I will, at some point during the period of time, call the parents and the families — because I have done that, traditionally. I felt very, very badly about that. I always feel badly. It's the toughest — the toughest calls I have to make are the calls where this happens, soldiers are killed. It's a very difficult thing. Now, it gets to a point where, you know, you make four or five of them in one day — it's a very, very tough day. For me, that's by far the toughest.

So, the traditional way — if you look at President Obama and other Presidents, most of them didn't make calls, a lot of them didn't make calls. I like to call when it's appropriate, when I think I'm able to do it. They have made the ultimate sacrifice.

So, generally, I would say that I like to call. I'm going to be calling them. I want a little time to pass. I'm going to be calling them. I have — as you know, since I've been President, I have.

But in addition, I actually wrote letters individually to the soldiers we're talking about, and they're going to be going out either today or tomorrow.

....

QUESTION: Earlier, you said that President Obama never called the families of fallen soldiers. How can you make that claim?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know if he did. No, no, no, I was told that he didn't often. And a lot of Presidents don't; they write letters. I do a combination of both. Sometimes — it's a very difficult thing to do, but I do a combination of both. President Obama I think probably did sometimes, and maybe sometimes he didn't. I don't know. That's what I was told. All I can do — all I can do is ask my generals. Other Presidents did not call. They'd write letters. And some Presidents didn't do anything. But I like the combination of — I like, when I can, the combination of a call and also a letter.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell in Joint Press Conference," [White House](#), 16 Oct 2017.

Trump's remark is easy to understand. Trump's narcissistic character requires him to be better than his competition. So, not only does Trump praise himself for calling families, but also Trump denigrates previous presidents for *not* calling families. Trump said: "if you look at President Obama and other Presidents, most of them didn't make calls, a lot of them didn't make calls."

But Trump's remark is worse than the previous paragraph implies. Trump has a false, delusional belief that previous presidents did *not* call families. [Washington Post](#)(16Oct); [Washington Post](#)(fact-check); [Washington Post](#)(17Oct); [New York Times](#); [Politico](#); [Associated Press](#); [ABC News](#); [NBC News](#); [PolitiFact](#). My comment is that Trump is a small man to slander previous presidents — and lie to the American people — about such a delicate topic as honoring fallen U.S. Military personnel.

Look at the second snippet quoted above. When challenged about his statement that Obama did not call families, Trump obscures the facts with a variety of responses:

1. Trump correctly says "I don't know if he did."
2. Trump says an anonymous person told him Obama often did not call.
3. Trump repeats his original assertion: "a lot of Presidents don't" call.
4. Trump guesses that "President Obama I think probably did sometimes, and maybe sometimes he didn't."
5. Trump correctly says "I don't know."
6. Trump repeats that an anonymous person gave him the information about Obama: "That's what I was told."
7. Trump repeats his original assertion: "Other Presidents did not call."
8. Trump blasts his nameless predecessors: "some Presidents didn't do anything."

Trump can be satisfied that at least one of his assertions is true. Note that, despite his admission that he does *not* know, Trump is still asserting that previous presidents did not call families.

The morning of the following day, 17 October 2017, Trump was interviewed by Brian Kilmeade on Fox News Radio. Fox News did *not* post a transcript at its website, but Politico reported:

“Now, as far as other representatives, I don’t know,” [Trump] continued. “I mean, you could ask General Kelly did he get a call from Obama. You could ask other people. I don’t know what Obama’s policy was. I write letters, and I also call.”

A White House official said Kelly didn’t receive a call from Obama after his son, 2nd Lt. Robert Kelly, died in Afghanistan in November 2010 when he stepped on a land mine.

Obama did, however, host a breakfast in May 2011 for Gold Star families. And Kelly and his wife attended and sat at the table of first lady Michelle Obama, a source familiar with the event said.

“President Obama engaged families of the fallen and wounded warriors throughout his presidency through calls, letters, visits to [Arlington Cemetery], visits to Walter Reed, visits to Dover, and regular meetings with Gold Star families at the White House and across the country,” a former White House official said.

....

Trump, however, said Tuesday [17 Oct] that he doesn't feel a need to clarify his remarks.

“There’s nothing to clarify,” he said, blaming CNN for first broaching the subject at his news conference. “This was, again, fake news CNN. I mean, they’re just a bunch of fakers.”

Nolan D. McCaskill, "Trump invokes death of John Kelly's son in furor over calls to fallen soldiers," [Politico](#), 12:36 EDT, 17 Oct 2017.

See also [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#).

My comment is that Trump was deplorable to exploit the personal grief of General Kelly. Although, Trump invited journalists to ask General Kelly, the three sources cited above (Politico, WaPo, CNN) say the White House refused to make General Kelly available to journalists. Whatever Kelly told Trump was private and Trump should *not* have leaked it to journalists. Trump's reference to "fake news" on CNN is not only factually wrong, but also irrelevant to Trump's repeated false statements.

On the night of 17 October, the [Washington Post](#) published a summary of Trump's debacle on this topic, with the headline: "Twelve days of silence, then a swipe at Obama: How Trump handled four dead soldiers".

So how does Trump console the pregnant widow of a dead soldier, as she was riding in a car to the airport to meet her husband's casket? Trump tells her: “He knew what he signed up for — but when it happens it hurts anyway.” [Miami Herald](#); [WPLG](#). I am not going to comment on Trump's insensitive remark.

Early on 18 October, the [Associated Press](#) "found relatives of two soldiers who died overseas during Trump's presidency who said they never received a call or a letter from him, as well as relatives of a third who did not get a call." The Associated Press discovery greatly weakens Trump's praise for himself.

Early on the morning of 18 October, Trump tweeted:

Democrat Congresswoman totally fabricated what I said to the wife of a soldier who died in action (and I have proof). Sad!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:25 EDT, 18 October 2017.

Frederica Wilson, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, was in the car with the widow and heard Trump's remarks on the speakerphone. Wilson was the person who told the *Miami Herald* and WPLG about Trump's remarks. After Trump's tweet, Wilson appeared on [CNN](#) and [MSNBC](#) to reiterate that she really heard Trump make the insensitive remark to the widow. Wilson added that Trump did *not* remember the name of the fallen soldier during the telephone call with the soldier's widow. See also [Miami Herald](#); [NBC News](#); [Washington Post](#).

Aaron Blake, writing in the [Washington Post](#), said: “The idea that Trump said this is — unfortunately — completely believable, given his track record of handling sensitive situations has ranged from awkward to offensive.”

In my opinion, Trump himself has *zero credibility*, as a result of his frequent false statements of fact. If Trump really has proof, he needs to disclose that proof immediately.

As this debacle unfolds, we need to remind ourselves how it happened. A journalist asked Trump a question about Trump's 12 days of silence about four dead U.S. Soldiers. In his reply to the journalist, Trump praised himself and slandered Obama, without providing any evidence about Obama's alleged conduct. Then Trump made an insensitive remark to the widow of one fallen soldier. Trump denied the remark, again without providing any evidence that Trump was truthful.

Wilson [tweeted](#) "I stand my account of the call with @realDonaldTrump and was not the only one who heard and was dismayed by his insensitive remarks."

Just before a meeting with members of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, Trump held a short opportunity for journalists.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what did you say to Sergeant Johnson's widow on the phone yesterday [17 Oct]?

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't say what that congresswoman said; didn't say it all. She knows it. And she now is not saying it. I did not say what she said, and I'd like her to make the statement again because I did not say what she said. I had a very nice conversation with the woman, with the wife who was — sounded like a lovely woman. Did not say what the congresswoman said, and most people aren't too surprised to hear that.

QUESTION: What was the (inaudible), Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Let her make her statement again and then you'll find out.

QUESTION: She is saying that you said this — the congresswoman.

THE PRESIDENT: Let her make her statement again and then you'll find out.
Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump in Meeting with the Senate Finance Committee," [White House](#), 11:34 EDT, 18 Oct 2017.

I think the "inaudible" word(s) in a question may have asked Trump about the "proof" that Trump mentioned in his early morning tweet on 18 Oct.

During the daily press briefing at the White House, Trump's spokeswoman appeared to admit that Trump had *no* "proof" about his version of the telephone call with the widow. Moreover, the spokeswoman seemed to confirm that Trump did not know the name of the deceased soldier.

QUESTION: Thanks, Sarah. Let's go to the President's tweet this morning, if we can. What proof does President Trump have when he says Congresswoman Wilson is not telling the truth? Are there recordings of his phone call with Myeshia Johnson?

MS. SANDERS: No, but there were several people in the room from the administration

that were on the call, including the Chief of Staff, General John Kelly.

....

QUESTION: And also, what do you say about [Representative Wilson's] comment that [Trump] did not know, and the wife, the widow, said that the President did not know his name? He kept saying, "Your guy, your guy."

MS. SANDERS: Just because the President said "your guy," I don't think that means that he doesn't know his name. As the President stated, the hardest job he has is making calls like that. I think it is appalling what the congresswoman has done and the way that she's politicized this issue, and the way that she is trying to make this about something that it isn't.

This was a President who loves our country very much, who has the greatest level of respect for men and women in the uniform, and wanted to call and offer condolences to the family. And I think to try to create something from that that the congresswoman is doing is, frankly, appalling and disgusting.

....

MS. SANDERS: General Kelly was present for the call and thought it was completely appropriate. He thought the call was respectful, and he thought that the President did the best job he could under those circumstances to offer condolences on behalf of the country.

....

QUESTION: Just to clarify your earlier answer, you're not denying that in some point in the conversation the President used the words, "it's what he signed up for"?

MS. SANDERS: I spoke specifically to the sentiment that was offered by the President. I didn't get into the details of a personal call because I don't find that to be that appropriate.

"Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders," [White House](#), begins 14:49 EDT, 18 Oct 2017.

See Aaron Blake's analysis in the [Washington Post](#).

The mother of the dead soldier was in the car when Trump called the widow. The mother confirmed to the [Washington Post](#) and [CNN](#) that Wilson's account of Trump's insensitive remark was correct. I conclude that the mother's confirmation — and Trump's lack of evidence for his version — establishes the fact that Wilson's version is correct.

Several politicians have urged Trump to stop making false statements. But if Trump stopped his false statements, then Trump would have zero achievements about which he can boast. Such boasting is necessary to feed his narcissistic character flaw. Trump's lack of empathy for families of fallen soldiers is also consistent with Trump's narcissism, which makes

everything about how it affects Trump.

On 19 October 2017, the [Associated Press](#) reported: "The Associated Press reached out to the families of all 43 people who have died in military service since Trump became president and made contact with about half the families. Of those who would address the question, relatives of nine said they had heard from Trump by phone or mail. Relatives of nine others said they haven't." That means Trump is contacting by phone or mail about half of relatives of fallen military personnel. Trump's boast that he calls *all* of the families is clearly false.

In a surprise on 19 October 2017, General Kelly appeared at a [White House](#) press briefing to defend Trump. General Kelly made several points:

1. General Kelly criticized Representative Wilson: "I was stunned when I came to work yesterday morning, and broken-hearted at what I saw a member of Congress doing. A member of Congress who listened in on a phone call from the President of the United States to a young wife," (Note that the previous day, Spokeswoman Sanders, quoted above, twice said Kelly listened to Trump's call to the widow.)
2. Kelly appeared to confirm that Trump had made the insensitive remark, when Kelly told Trump: "He knew what he was getting himself into, because he enlisted." Kelly suggested that Trump say this to the widow.
3. When General Kelly's son was killed in action in Afghanistan, Obama did *not* call the Kelly family. General Kelly said: "... I can tell you that President Obama, ..., did not call my family. That was not a criticism. That was just to simply say, I don't believe President Obama called. That's not a negative thing."
4. General Kelly advised Trump *not* to call families of deceased military personnel: "When I took this job and talked to President Trump about how to do it, my first recommendation was he not do it because it's not the phone call that parents, family members are looking forward to. And [Trump] said to me, what do I say? I said to him, sir, there's nothing you can do to lighten the burden on these families."
5. Kelly ended with a personal attack on Representative Wilson. In April 2015, Kelly attended "the dedication of the new FBI field office in Miami", where Wilson spoke. Kelly said:

And a congresswoman [Wilson] stood up, and in the long tradition of empty barrels making the most noise, stood up there and all of that and talked about how she was instrumental in getting the funding for that building, and how she took care of her constituents because she got the money, and she just called up President Obama, and on that phone call he gave the money — the \$20 million — to build the building. And she sat down, and we were stunned. Stunned that she had done it. Even for someone that is that empty a barrel, we were stunned.

See the discussion in the [New York Times](#) and the [Washington Post](#).

On the night of 19 October, the [Miami Herald](#) said General Kelly got his facts wrong about

Wilson. (See also the 20 Oct *Sun-Sentinel* video cited below.) Specifically, Wilson did *not* boast about getting funding for the building, in fact the building was funded *before* Wilson was first elected to Congress. Kelly was wrong about the \$20 million cost of the building, the actual cost was \$194 million. Wilson did briefly mention that she sponsored a bill to name the building after two deceased FBI agents. Wilson said that the bill passed quickly because of Congressional respect for the FBI. Wilson spent most of her 9-minute long speech in April 2015 praising the two dead FBI agents. Further, the [Washington Post](#) explained why there was nothing wrong with Wilson listening to Trump's call to the widow.

Later on 19 October, Trump tweeted:

The Fake News is going crazy with wacky Congresswoman Wilson(D), who was SECRETLY on a very personal call, and gave a total lie on content!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 22:53 EDT, 19 Oct 2017.

There is nothing "fake" about journalists' reports of Trump's false boasts about how he calls *all* families of fallen military personnel, about Trump's slander of Obama, and about Trump's insensitive remark to the widow. Wilson is *not* "wacky" — Trump's childish label for Wilson is an example of Trump's pejorative labels for his opponents that are chronicled [below](#). Wilson was *not* "SECRETLY" listening to a personal call, Wilson was in an automobile with the widow at the time of the call, and the call was on a speakerphone. Wilson's description of the content of Trump's call was confirmed by the widow, and apparently also confirmed by General Kelly. Trump has failed to disclose the "proof" that he mentioned in his tweet on the morning of 18 Oct. Trump is expanding his false statements about this incident.

In addition to Trump making more false statements, this incident shows that Trump does *not* know when to shut up and move on to other topics. Trump's narcissistic character flaw may require him to win every argument. Greg Sargent, writing in the [Washington Post](#), said: "... the White House could simply have let this die down or even apologized to the family and treated their feelings as more important than Trump's personal pique or political fortunes."

Trump and his White House staff (including General Kelly) can *not* attack the grieving widow, so they are attacking Representative Wilson, who is a Democrat. But, since Wilson has emerged as a family friend of the widow, and as a spokeswoman for the grieving widow, attacking Wilson is also in poor taste. Moreover, Wilson appears to be telling the Truth, unlike Trump.

On Thursday evening, 19 October, Wilson disputed Kelly's remarks in an interview with the [Miami Herald](#). On Friday morning, 20 October, Wilson appeared on [CNN](#) and defended herself from Kelly's and Trump's false statements about her. [Politico](#); [New York Times](#).

On mid-day Friday, 20 Oct, the [Sun-Sentinel](#) newspaper in Ft. Lauderdale found a video of Wilson's remarks at the dedication of an FBI building in 2015. Kelly's account of her remarks is *wrong*, and Wilson's factual account is correct. [CNN](#); [Associated Press](#); [PolitiFact](#)("We rate Kelly's statement False."); [Washington Post](#)(12:35); [Washington Post](#)(20:10).

After the *Sun-Sentinel* video was posted on the Internet, the White House held an 18-minute long press briefing, at which the following was said:

QUESTION: Sarah, the South Florida Sun Sentinel released a video of

Congresswoman Wilson's speech in 2015. In the speech, it doesn't appear that she referenced funding for the FBI building in South Florida. Does General Kelly still stand by the statement that he made yesterday [19 Oct] that he felt that she was grandstanding and that she was taking credit for funding?

MS. SANDERS: Absolutely. General Kelly said he was stunned that Representative Wilson made comments at a building dedication honoring slain FBI agents about her own actions in Congress, including lobbying former President Obama on legislation. As General Kelly pointed out, if you're able to make a sacred act like honoring American heroes all about yourself, you're an "empty barrel." If you don't understand that reference, I'll put it a little more simply. As we say in the South: All hat, no cattle.

QUESTION: Well, in fact, have you seen the speech?

MS. SANDERS: I have.

QUESTION: Then you know that most of it was heard effusively praising these FBI agents. And when she was talking about what she did in Congress, she was not talking about securing the \$20 million; she was talking about naming the building for these FBI agents who she then went on to effusively praise. And that was the bulk of the speech.

MS. SANDERS: She also mentioned that, and she also had quite a few comments that day that weren't part of that speech and weren't part of that video that were also witnessed by many people that were there.

QUESTION: like what?

MS. SANDERS: What General Kelly referenced yesterday.

QUESTION: Well, tell us specifically. Because if he's going —

MS. SANDERS: Exactly what he said: There was a lot of grandstanding. He was stunned that she had taken that opportunity to make it about herself.

QUESTION: Can he come out here and talk to us about this at some point so that he can get the facts straight?

MS. SANDERS: I think he addressed that pretty thoroughly yesterday.

QUESTION: No, he was wrong yesterday in talking about getting the money. The money was secured before she came into Congress.

MS. SANDERS: If you want to go after General Kelly, that's up to you. But I think that that — if you want to get into a debate with a four-star Marine general, I think that that's something highly inappropriate.

QUESTION: Well, shouldn't he have to come out here and get the facts straight? That

would be great if he could come out here and do it. That would be wonderful.

MS. SANDERS: [Takes a question on a different topic from another journalist.] "Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders," [White House](#), begins 14:18 EDT, 20 Oct 2017.

Sanders not only repeats Kelly's invective that called Wilson an "empty barrel", but also Sanders adds new invective that Wilson is "All hat, no cattle." The latter may be a reference to the large cowboy hats that Wilson often wears. Sanders' invective may continue the controversy, to the detriment of Trump and Kelly. Then Sanders alleges there is more to Wilson's speech that is *not* shown in the *Sun-Sentinel* video, but Sanders fails to offer the alleged missing evidence. Finally, Sanders says that because Kelly is a retired "four-star Marine general", journalists can *not* question Kelly's account of Wilson's speech — an outrageous assertion by Sanders. The refusal of Sanders to address the substance of the questions is why the White House has zero credibility. See commentary by journalists, e.g., [CNN](#); [Washington Post](#).

On 20 October, Wilson escalated the dispute by telling the [New York Times](#) that "The White House itself is full of white supremacists." At this point it is relevant to mention that Sgt. Johnson (the dead soldier), his widow, and Wilson are all black. *The New York Times* mentioned no evidence that supported Wilson's inflammatory claim.

On Saturday morning, 21 October, Trump tweeted:

I hope the Fake News Media keeps talking about Wacky Congresswoman Wilson in that she, as a representative, is killing the Democrat Party!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:07 EDT, 21 Oct 2017.

As I said above, Trump does *not* know when to shut up. Wilson has exposed Trump, Kelly, and Sanders as liars. This dispute is *not* about Democrats vs. Republicans. This dispute is about decency and telling the Truth, and in those respects the White House is sorely deficient. Wilson is *not* "wacky" — Trump's childish label for Wilson is an example of Trump's pejorative labels for his opponents that are chronicled [below](#). Trump's public feud with Wilson has elevated Wilson from an obscure Congresswoman from South Florida to a famous person who successfully exposed the false statements of the president of the USA.

On 21 October, the [Washington Post](#) published an interview with Wilson.

On Saturday, 21 October, Sgt. Johnson was buried in Florida, while Trump played golf at the club he owns in Virginia. [The Hill](#)(golf); [Washington Post](#)(funeral); [Sun-Sentinel](#)(funeral).

On 21 October, the [Associated Press](#) reported: "The Associated Press contacted relatives of more than 20 of the 43 people who died in military service since Trump took office in January. Relatives of at least 10 of the fallen said they did not get a call." That makes Trump's boast of calling everyone an "empty" boast, as he failed to call at least 23% (10/43) of the families.

On Sunday, 22 October 2017, Trump tweeted:

Wacky Congresswoman Wilson is the gift that keeps on giving for the Republican

Party, a disaster for Dems. You watch her in action & vote R!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:02 EDT, 22 Oct 2017.

Trump's tweets of 19, 21, and 22 Oct show that Trump does *not* know when to shut up and move on to other topics. On 21-22 October, Trump is trying to pretend that this dispute is between a Democrat and Republican. But history clearly shows that Wilson was objecting to Trump's insensitive remark to a grieving widow, which has nothing to do with partisan politics. Then Wilson objected to false statements and a mischaracterization of her as an "empty barrel" by Kelly.

On Monday morning, 23 October, the widow appeared on the ABC television network "Good Morning America" program, where the widow said:

“Yes the President, said that he knew what he signed up for, but it hurts anyway. And it made me cry cause I was very angry at the tone of his voice and how he said he couldn't remember my husband's name. The only way he remembered my husband's name is because he told me he had my husband's report in front of him and that's when he actually said 'La David'. I heard him stumblin' on trying to remember my husband's name and that's what hurt me the most,”

....

“Whatever Ms. Wilson said was not fabricated. What she said was 100 percent correct.”

"TRANSCRIPT: Widow of fallen soldier La David Johnson speaks out," [ABC News](#), 08:10 EDT, 23 Oct 2017.

See also: [New York Times](#); [ABC News](#); [Washington Post](#).

Then Trump, who has repeatedly lied about this topic and many other topics, responded with another tweet:

I had a very respectful conversation with the widow of Sgt. La David Johnson, and spoke his name from beginning, without hesitation!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:30 EDT, 23 Oct 2017.

Trump claims he "had a very respectful conversation with the widow", but the widow clearly said Trump's call "made me cry even worse." Trump's claim of not speaking the name of Sgt. Johnson is contradicted by both Wilson and the widow. The [Washington Post](#) summarizes: "The president of the United States effectively called a Gold Star widow a liar Monday morning — an entirely predictable but nonetheless striking moment in American political history. Far from producing proof of what he said being 'totally fabricated,' Trump's case has fallen apart thanks to those tasked with defending him."

There were *four* U.S. soldiers killed in Niger on 4 October. Trump called all four families. Only the family of Sgt. Johnson complained. The other three dead soldiers were all white, and members of the Army Special Forces. [Washington Post](#). That raises a question whether Trump used a different tone of voice when talking with Sgt. Johnson's widow, who is black.

The Washington Post noted that this incident has all of the hallmarks of a typical Trump

fight:

Trump's actions since [16 Oct] have followed a careful formula that he long ago devised for winning a skirmish and that has been described by senior White House advisers: Make it a fight, use controversy to elevate the message and never apologize.

The conflict bears all the hallmarks of a typical Trump rumble: over-broad boasts, inconsistent official accounts, tweeted name-calling, partisan attacks, aides ensnared in controversy and a steady effort to pin the blame for the whole hullabaloo on the news media.

Philip Rucker & Michael Scherer, "In sparring with a grieving widow, Trump follows his no-apology playbook," [Washington Post](#), 18:21 EDT, 23 Oct 2017.

Trump hates the mainstream news media because they expose Trump's delusions that support Trump's boasts. Journalists also expose Trump's other false statements.

On Tuesday, 24 October 2017, the White House press spokeswoman said that Sgt. Johnson's widow would receive *neither* an apology *nor* a second telephone call.

QUESTION: Sarah, thank you. One of the aspects of civil discourse is for people in the discussion to acknowledge when they've made misstatements. And there's a pattern in this White House and with the President that when they make misstatements, those are not corrected. For example, the Chief of Staff came out here at this podium and mischaracterized the speech by a congresswoman given at an FBI building dedication. Why won't the Chief of Staff or you, right now, acknowledge that that was a mischaracterization and correct the record?

MS. SANDERS: I don't believe that General Kelly mischaracterized. He gave his account of what took place. General Kelly and his family have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. I think he's led with honor and integrity. I think he's doing a great job of Chief of Staff, and I don't think he has anything to correct or apologize for.

QUESTION: Just to follow up on that, why wouldn't — even if President Trump meant to console the widow of Sergeant Johnson, why hasn't he or anyone from the White House apologized for how she took his call? She took his call as insensitive.

MS. SANDERS: Look, the President was making the point that his call was meant to be respectful, sympathetic, and the purpose was to offer condolences on behalf of the nation.

"Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders, 10/24/2017, #26," [White House](#), 24 Oct 2017.

The arrogance of the White House is clearly apparent. Trump apparently believes that it is *not* possible for Trump to make a mistake, and Trump's infallibility transfers to those surrounding him in the White House.

On 25 October 2017, Trump again asserted he had remembered Sgt. Johnson's name.

THE PRESIDENT: I can only say this: I was really nice to her. I respect her. I respect her family. I certainly respect La David, who — I, by the way, called La David right from the beginning. Just so you understand, they put a chart in front — "La David." It

says, La David Johnson.

So I called right from the beginning. There's no hesitation. One of the great memories of all time. There was no hesitation. I think she's a fantastic woman. I was extremely nice to her, extremely respectful.

"Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure," [White House](#), 25 Oct 2017.

It is *not* necessary for Trump to boast of his "great memory", because he had a chart on his desk with Sgt. Johnson's name, so there was nothing to remember.

**16-23 Oct 2017: conclusion to Trump's debacle about
calling families of deceased U.S. Military personnel**

I conclude that Trump lied when he said:

1. on 16 Oct 2017 that Obama and previous presidents had *not* called families
2. he had called *all* of the families of soldiers who died during his presidency
3. on 18 Oct 2017 that Representative Wilson "totally fabricated what I said to the wife of a soldier"
4. on 18 Oct 2017 that he had "proof" that Wilson "totally fabricated"
5. on 19 Oct 2017 that Wilson was "SECRETLY" listening to a "very personal call"
6. on 19 Oct 2017 that Wilson "gave a total lie on content"

Is Trump "making American great again" (his campaign slogan) by his string of six lies on one incident?

Notice Trump's position is very confrontational. On 18 Oct, Trump *could* have ended the controversy by publicly announcing: "I am sorry Sgt. Johnson's widow misunderstood my remarks. I apologize for upsetting her. I will endeavor to do better in the future." Instead, Trump called Wilson a liar (e.g., she "totally fabricated what I said", "total lie on content"), and Trump called Wilson "wacky" in three tweets. Trump's aggressive and confrontational character makes him unfit to be president.

Because Wilson has criticized Trump for not saying the name of Sgt. Johnson, let me say that I am not writing a script for a condolence call. I am writing a document to preserve evidence for historians. Sgt. Johnson, his widow, and his mother are not public figures, and they have not sought publicity. It is clearer to refer to them by their roles (e.g., widow) than by their name. Further, they are entitled to privacy.

I am sorry that the White House exploited General Kelly's emotion about his private grief. Kelly's press conference on 19 Oct was a disaster for Kelly, which may have permanently damaged Kelly's reputation for truthfulness, morality, and integrity.

Did Tillerson call Trump a "Moron"?

On 4 October 2017, [NBC News](#) reported that U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was

frustrated with Trump in July 2017. Specifically, in July Tillerson called Trump a "moron" and Tillerson threatened to resign as Secretary of State.

Later on 4 October, after the NBC News report, Tillerson had a rare press conference in which he denied threatening to resign. When a journalist asked Tillerson about his alleged "moron" remark, Tillerson replied: "I'm not going to deal with petty stuff like that."

[U.S. State Dept.](#)

This was big news on 4 October. See, e.g., [Washington Post](#); [Bloomberg](#); [Associated Press](#); [Politico](#); [CNN](#). CNN confirmed the "moron" remark.

Trump himself issued a series of tweets on this topic.

NBC news is #FakeNews and more dishonest than even CNN. They are a disgrace to good reporting. No wonder their news ratings are way down!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:47 EDT, 4 Oct 2017.

The @NBCNews story has just been totally refuted by Sec. Tillerson and @VP Pence. It is #FakeNews. They should issue an apology to AMERICA!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:18 EDT, 4 Oct 2017.

Rex Tillerson never threatened to resign. This is Fake News put out by @NBCNews. Low news and reporting standards. No verification from me.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:50 EDT, 5 Oct 2017.

This controversy seemed to end on 5 October. But apparently the "moron" remark festered in Trump's brain. On the morning of 10 October, Forbes magazine published an exclusive interview with Trump.

[Trump] counterpunches, in this case firing a shot at Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who reportedly called his boss a moron: "I think it's fake news, but if he did that, I guess we'll have to compare IQ tests. And I can tell you who is going to win."

Randall Lane, "Inside Trump's Head: An Exclusive Interview With the President, And The Single Theory That Explains Everything," [Forbes](#), 05:30 EDT, 10 Oct 2017.

Journalists reported this IQ score challenge. See, e.g., [Washington Post](#); [The Guardian](#); [New York Times](#).

My comment is that scores on an IQ test *may* be relevant to sorting children into above average and below average groups for school. And such scores may be relevant to sorting children into college preparatory vs. manual labor school groups around age 14 years. I say "may", because there are other relevant factors, such as creativity, diligence, and unusual knowledge (e.g., from voracious reading of nonfiction books). But Tillerson is 65 years old and Trump is 71 years old. Surely, Tillerson and Trump should be judged on their accomplishments, *not* on multiple-choice test scores. In this respect, Trump appears below average: his extemporaneous speech (and his tweets) often sound like a 9 year old child. Further, Trump engages in childish insults. (See [below](#).) As explained [above](#), Trump is obsessed with boasting about his education and how smart he is. Trump's concern about his IQ score is part of that obsession. When Trump *acts* like an angry child, no one should care about his IQ test score.

I think it is obvious that — assuming Tillerson actually said Trump was a "moron" — Tillerson did *not* intend his remark in the technical psychology sense that Trump's IQ was between 51 and 70. Instead, Tillerson used the word "moron" in its colloquial sense of meaning a stupid person. Indeed, Trump's inability to understand complex details of foreign policy or U.S. Government operations, and an inability to cite correct facts, marks Trump as stupider than previous U.S. presidents.

At the [White House](#) press briefing on 10 October, Trump's spokesperson lamely said that Trump had been joking about comparing IQ test scores with Tillerson. When a person is joking, that person typically laughs, or at least grins, at the end of the joke. There is *no* indication in the Forbes article that Trump was joking and Trump's words do *not* sound like a joke. The [Associated Press](#) characterized Trump's words as having "a distinct hint of malice." Moreover, Trump's words are consistent with his narcissistic obsession to be smarter than other people.

On 15 October 2017, Tillerson appeared on CNN's program "State of the Union" and Tillerson again refused to say whether he had called Trump a "moron".

CNN: Did you call Trump a moron?

Tillerson: I'm not gonna deal with that petty stuff. I'm not playing. These are the games of Washington. These are the destructive games of this town. They're not helpful to anyone. And so my position is: I'm not playing ... You want to make a game out of it? I'm not playing.

....

[NBC News reported:] "When asked again — with a reminder that a non-response might lead some to believe that he had indeed called the president a 'moron' — Tillerson pushed back at CNN's interviewer Jake Tapper."

Tillerson: I'm not dignifying the question with an answer, Jake. And I'm a little surprised you want to spend so much time on it.

CNN did *not* post a transcript of their interview, so I made an approximate reconstruction from partial quotations at [CNN](#); [NBC News](#).

I believe Tillerson is correct. The issue is *not* whether Tillerson called Trump a "moron". The issue should be Trump's behavior. In October 2017, I continue to believe that Trump is unfit to be president.

On 30 November 2017, the [New York Times](#) reported that General Kelly, the White House chief of staff, had developed a plan to replace Tillerson with Mike Pompeo, who is currently director of the CIA. My comment is that Tillerson is one of a few people in the Trump administration who want to solve the North Korean problem with diplomacy. The removal of Tillerson would push us closer to war with North Korea. Note this is only a *plan*, Trump has not yet approved the change. It is also possible that this alleged plan is fake news, intended to undermine Tillerson. U.S. Senator Bob Corker, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations committee, told the [Washington Post](#) "It's been evident to me that, for some time, somebody

has been seeking to undermine [Tillerson's] presence. I don't know who that is." On 1 December, the [Washington Post](#) confirmed *The Times* article with two anonymous sources. But later on 1 December, the [New York Times](#) reported that Trump [tweeted](#) that Tillerson would remain Secretary of State. My comment is that this confusion about Tillerson continuing as Secretary of State is not only harmful to Tillerson's reputation, but also shows the petty squabbles inside the White House by a bunch of amateurs.

Trump wants to license news media

Trump has a history of criticizing journalists, see [above](#). Back on 17 February 2017, Trump criticized the mainstream news media in very harsh terms:

The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:48 EDT, 17 Feb 2017.

Incidentally, the word "media" is plural, so Trump should have written "media are" and "they are". Trump cited five examples of allegedly "fake news media", which emphasizes that "media" is plural.

On 5 October, Trump proposed that the U.S. Congress investigate the news media:

Why Isn't the Senate Intel Committee looking into the Fake News Networks in OUR country to see why so much of our news is just made up — FAKE!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:59 EDT, 5 Oct 2017.

On 11 October 2017 at 05:59 EDT and revised at 07:23 EDT, [NBC News](#) published a news article that said, during a 20 July meeting, Trump wanted a "tenfold increase" in the number of U.S. nuclear weapons. NBC News also reported: "It was soon after the meeting broke up that officials who remained behind heard Tillerson say that Trump is a 'moron.'"

The point in this section of my essay is *not* whether Trump actually said he wanted a tenfold increase in the number of U.S. nuclear weapons. (Who can remember details of what was said in a meeting three months ago?) The point is Trump's response to the NBC News article.

On the morning of 11 October, Trump tweeted his denial of the NBC report:

Fake @NBCNews made up a story that I wanted a "tenfold" increase in our U.S. nuclear arsenal. Pure fiction, made up to demean. NBC = CNN!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:45 EDT, 11 Oct 2017.

Then Trump goes off the rails and considers government licensing of news media:

With all of the Fake News coming out of NBC and the Networks, at what point is it appropriate to challenge their License? Bad for country!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:55 EDT, 11 Oct 2017.

Trump told journalists in the White House:

QUESTION: Do you want to increase the nuclear arsenal?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: No, I never discussed increasing it. I want it in perfect shape. That was just fake news by NBC, which gives a lot of fake news, lately.

No, I never discuss — I think somebody said I want ten times the nuclear weapons that we have right now. Right now, we have so many nuclear weapons. I want them in perfect condition, perfect shape. That's the only thing I've ever discussed.

General Mattis put out a statement, or is putting out a statement, saying that that was fake news — that it was just mentioned that way. And it's, frankly, disgusting the way the press is able to write whatever they want to write. And people should look into it. Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada Before Bilateral Meeting," [White House](#), about 14:00 EDT, 11 October 2017.

On the night of 12 October, Trump again mentioned licensing news networks.

Network news has become so partisan, distorted and fake that licenses must be challenged and, if appropriate, revoked. Not fair to public!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 20:09 EDT, 12 Oct 2017.

Then Trump tweeted his revulsion at NBC News, in which the president of the USA tells people to "beware" of NBC News:

People are just now starting to find out how dishonest and disgusting (FakeNews) @NBCNews is. Viewers beware. May be worse than even @CNN!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 20:12 EDT, 12 Oct 2017.

Trump's proposal to suspend the license of NBC is absolutely outrageous, a blatant violation of "freedom of the press" in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. But note that Trump is ignorant of the details: the U.S. government licenses individual radio and television broadcast stations, but does *not* license networks. So NBC has *no* license that Trump can revoke.

I am concerned when any high government official tells Americans to "beware" of a particular news source. That is a negative endorsement of a commercial product.

The mainstream news media criticized Trump's proposal to revoke the license of NBC. See, e.g., [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Politico](#); [The Guardian](#).

Senator Flake criticizes Trump

On 4 September 2016, Trump tweeted:

The Great State of Arizona, where I just had a massive rally (amazing people), has a very weak and ineffective Senator, Jeff Flake. Sad!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19:05 EDT, 4 Sep 2016.

On 17 August 2017, Trump supported incumbent Senator Flake's opponent in next year's Republican primary election.

Great to see that Dr. Kelli Ward is running against Flake Jeff Flake, who is WEAK on borders, crime and a non-factor in Senate. He's toxic!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:56 EDT, 17 August 2017.

On 24 October 2017, U.S. Senator Jeff Flake, a Republican from Arizona, gave a speech on the floor of the Senate in which he announced his decision not to run for re-election, because of the direction of the Republican party under Trump. While Flake did *not* mention Trump by name, Flake's target was clear. Part of what Senator Flake said is quoted here:

Mr. President, I rise today to address a matter that has been very much on my mind. At a moment when it seems that our democracy is more defined by our discord and our dysfunction than by our own values and principles, let me begin by noting a somewhat obvious point that these offices that we hold are not ours indefinitely. We are not here simply to mark time. Sustained incumbency is certainly not the point of seeking office, and there are times when we must risk our careers in favor of our principles. Now is such a time.

It must also be said that I rise today with no small measure of regret — regret because of the state of our disunion, regret because of the disrepair and destructiveness of our politics, regret because of the indecency of our discourse, regret because of the coarseness of our leadership, regret for the compromise of our moral authority, and by “our,” I mean all of our complicity in this alarming and dangerous state of affairs.

It is time for our complicity and our accommodation of the unacceptable to end. In this century, a new phrase has entered the language to describe the accommodation of a new and undesirable order, that phrase being the “new normal.” But we must never adjust to the present coarseness of our national dialogue with the tone set at the top. We must never regard as normal the regular and casual undermining of our democratic norms and ideals. We must never meekly accept the daily sundering of our country, the personal attacks, the threats against principles, freedoms, and institutions, the flagrant disregard for truth and decency, the reckless provocations, most often for the pettiest and most personal reasons, reasons having nothing whatsoever to do with the fortunes of the people whom we have been elected to serve. None of these appalling features of our current politics should ever be regarded as normal. We must never allow ourselves to lapse into thinking that is just the way things are now. If we simply become inured to this condition, thinking that it is just politics as usual, then Heaven help us.

Without fear of the consequences and without consideration of the rules of what is politically safe or palatable, we must stop pretending that the degradation of our politics and the conduct of some in our executive branch are normal. They are not normal. Reckless, outrageous, and undignified behavior has become excused and countenanced as “telling it like it is” when it is actually just reckless, outrageous, and undignified.

....

It is often said that children are watching. Well, they are. And what are we going to do about that? When the next generation asks us “Why didn’t you do something? Why didn’t you speak up?” what are we going to say? Mr. President, I rise today to say

“enough.”

....

When we remain silent and fail to act when we know that silence and inaction are the wrong things to do because of political considerations, because we might make enemies, because we might alienate the base, because we might provoke a primary challenge, because ad infinitum, ad nauseam, when we succumb to those considerations in spite of what should be greater considerations and imperatives in defense of our institutions and our liberty, we dishonor our principles and forsake our obligations. Those things are far more important than politics.

I am aware that more politically savvy people than I will caution against such talk. I am aware that there is a segment of my party that believes anything short of complete and unquestioning loyalty to a President who belongs to my party is unacceptable and suspect. If I have been critical, it is not because I relish criticizing the behavior of the President of the United States. If I have been critical, it is because I believe it is my obligation to do so as a matter of duty of conscience.

The notion that one should stay silent as the norms and values that keep America strong are undermined and as the alliances and agreements that ensure the stability of the entire world are routinely threatened by the level of thought that goes into 140 characters, the notion that we should say or do nothing in the face of such mercurial behavior is ahistoric and, I believe, profoundly misguided.

....

But too often, we rush not to salvage principle but to forgive and excuse our failures so that we might accommodate them and go right on failing until the accommodation itself becomes our principle.

In that way and over time, we can justify almost any behavior and sacrifice any principle. I am afraid this is where we now find ourselves.

....

To that end, I am announcing today that my service in the Senate will conclude at the end of my term in early January 2019. It is clear, at this moment, that a traditional conservative who believes in limited government and free markets, who is devoted to free trade, who is pro-immigration has a narrower and narrower path to nomination in the Republican Party — the party that has so long defined itself by its belief in those things.

Jeff Flake, "Protecting Our Democracy," [163 Cong. Record S6735](#), 24 Oct 2017.

Another transcript is at the [Washington Post](#).

See reports by journalists, e.g., [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [CNN](#); [Associated Press](#); [Politico](#). As these journalists report, it is a major event when a U.S.

Senator criticizes the president from his own party.

Trump — and Bannon, editor of right-wing Breitbart News — had both been critical of Flake, and they were supporting Flake's opponent in the Republican primary election. The journalists cited in the previous paragraph said that opinion polls showed that Flake could win neither the Republican primary election nor the general election. When an [obnoxious](#) president like Trump runs a polite legislator like Senator Flake out of office, civility in the U.S. Congress is imperiled.

On the morning of 24 October 2017, U.S. Senator Bob Corker gave an interview to CNN that criticized Trump. Part of that interview is quoted [below](#).

Trump *not* TIME Magazine Person of the Year

Trump tweeted:

Time Magazine called to say that I was PROBABLY going to be named “Man (Person) of the Year,” like last year, but I would have to agree to an interview and a major photo shoot. I said probably is no good and took a pass. Thanks anyway!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:40 EST, 24 Nov 2017.

What is happening? Trump craves admiration, so it is not plausible that Trump would decline the honor of being TIME Magazine's person of the year. Three hours after Trump's tweet, TIME magazine clarified:

The President is incorrect about how we choose Person of the Year. TIME does not comment on our choice until publication, which is December 6.

TIME magazine, [tweet](#), 20:27 EST, 24 Nov 2017.

On 25 Nov 2017, NBC News reported:

Alan Murray, chief content officer at Time Inc., said there was "not a speck of truth" to the president's claims.

Rick Stengel, a former Time managing editor who left the publication to join the Obama administration State Department, said he thinks Trump fired off the tweet to preempt the fact that he wasn't selected. "I suspected that perhaps he knew he wasn't going to get it and he wanted to look like he was turning it down before he was turned down," Stengel told NBC News.

"Time Magazine disputes President Trump's 'Person of the Year' claims," [NBC News](#), 16:58 EST, 25 Nov 2017.

See news articles at: [Washington Post](#) on 24 Nov and [Washington Post](#) on 25 Nov.

In June 2017, *The Washington Post* discovered golf clubhouses owned by Trump were publicly displaying a forged TIME magazine cover showing Donald Trump in a favorable context, see [above](#).

Let me expand on Stengel's speculation that Trump believed he would *not* be TIME magazine's person of the year next month. Trump imagined a fictitious telephone call from TIME that declared Trump was "probably" the person of the year. Then Trump publicly said that he declined the honor, which explains why Trump will not be person of the year. The fictitious telephone call is entirely consistent with Trump's well-established reputation for imagining "facts" that he believes ought to be true.

21-31 December 2017

Trump's hypocrisy

In 2014, Trump criticized Obama for playing golf, but Trump also plays golf while he is president.

Can you believe that, with all of the problems and difficulties facing the U.S., President Obama spent the day playing golf. Worse than Carter
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 20:03 EST, 13 Oct 2014.

President Obama has a major meeting on the N.Y.C. Ebola outbreak, with people flying in from all over the country, but decided to play golf!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 23:54 EST, 23 Oct 2014.

Obama has admitted that he spends his mornings watching @ESPN. Then he plays golf, fundraises & grants amnesty to illegals.
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:03 EST, 16 Dec 2014.

In December 2015, Trump criticized Obama for flying in a Boeing 747 from Washington, DC to Hawaii for Christmas vacation. But Trump flew the same 747 to Florida for Christmas vacation on 22 Dec 2017.

President Obama spends so much time speaking of the so-called Carbon footprint, and yet he flies all the way to Hawaii on a massive old 747.
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 14:25 EST, 19 Dec 2015.

In 2013, Trump criticized Obama for taking a Christmas vacation away from Washington, DC, but Trump did exactly the same thing in December 2017.

Pres. Obama is about to embark on a 17 day vacation in his 'native' Hawaii, putting Secret Service away from families on Christmas. Aloha!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:07 EST, 19 Dec 2013.

See also [Newsweek](#).

[CNN](#) reported: "Trump's Friday [22 Dec] arrival to Mar-A-Lago will mark the 106th day Trump has visited one of his properties as President.... Trump, as of Friday, has spent over 80 days at one of his golf courses, according to CNN's count."

See also: [Wall Street Journal](#); [The Hill](#).

Trump's new presidential "challenge" coin

On 22 December 2017, *The Washington Post* reported on Trump's new presidential challenge coin, which he will give to people as a token of his appreciation for their service.

The presidential seal has been replaced by an eagle bearing President Trump's signature. The eagle's head faces right, not left, as on the seal. The 13 arrows representing the original states have disappeared. And the national motto, "E pluribus unum" — a Latin phrase that means "Out of many, one" — is gone.

Instead, both sides of the coin feature Trump's campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again."

The changes don't stop there. In addition to his signature, Trump's name appears three times on the coin, which is thicker than those made for past presidents. And forget the traditional subdued silver and copper: Trump's coin, a White House aide marveled, is "very gold."

The aide said the president, whose real estate properties are known for their gilded displays of wealth and status, was personally involved in redesigning the coin. Trump, who also had a hand in creating his famous red campaign hat, "wanted to weigh in on it," the aide said. "It's beautifully made."

The White House offered conflicting accounts of which funds were used to purchase the coins, with one aide saying they were paid for by the White House and a second aide later saying that the Republican National Committee is covering the expense. An RNC spokeswoman confirmed Friday [22 Dec] afternoon that the party is paying for the coins.

....

Some ethics experts questioned the unprecedented decision to include a campaign slogan on the coins, which are often distributed to members of the military.

"For the commander in chief to give a political token with a campaign slogan on it to military officers would violate the important principle of separating the military from politics, as well as diminishing the tradition of the coin," said Trevor Potter, a Republican former chairman of the Federal Election Commission.

....

Challenge coins got their start as military baubles bearing division insignia and presented by officers to troops for exemplary service. The moniker came from a tradition in which service members challenged one another to produce their coins.

Those who did not have one had to buy a round of drinks.

David Nakamura & Lisa Rein, "It's 'very gold': The presidential coin undergoes a Trumpian makeover," [Washington Post](#), 22 Dec 2017.

Even if this presidential coin is privately funded, there is still the ethical issue of giving military personnel a token with a political campaign slogan. And to see Trump's enormous ego, consider the ways that Trump's coin is more opulent — and less focused on the office of the president — than the coins of previous presidents:

- gold, instead of silver-copper alloy
- thicker coin
- Trump's name *three* times
- U.S. motto “E pluribus unum” is absent
- Trump's signature, instead of the presidential seal

Trump's false statements

One of Trump's defining features is his inability to cite correct facts. So it was appropriate on 24 December when [NBC News](#) published a list of Trump's nine "biggest whoppers of 2017".

28 Dec 2017 interview

On Thursday, 28 December 2017, was interviewed by Michael S. Schmidt of *The New York Times*:

SCHMIDT: You control the Justice Department. Should they reopen that email investigation?

TRUMP: What I've done is, I have absolute right to do what I want to do with the Justice Department. But for purposes of hopefully thinking I'm going to be treated fairly, I've stayed uninvolved with this particular matter.

....

TRUMP: I don't want to get into loyalty, but I will tell you that, I will say this: Holder protected President Obama. Totally protected him. When you look at the I.R.S. scandal, when you look at the guns for whatever, when you look at all of the tremendous, ah, real problems they had, not made-up problems like Russian collusion, these were *real* problems. When you look at the things that they did, and Holder protected the president. And I have great respect for that, I'll be honest, I have great respect for that.

....

TRUMP: But Michael, I know the details of taxes better than anybody. Better than the greatest C.P.A. I know the details of health care better than most, better than most. And if I didn't, I couldn't have talked all these people into doing ultimately only to be rejected.

....

"Excerpts From Trump's Interview With The Times," [New York Times](#), 28 December 2017.

Trump's arrogance is easy to see in this interview.

The [New York Times](#) found Trump made 10 factual errors in the half-hour interview. The [Washington Post](#) found 24 false or misleading statements by Trump.

Next

#####

Themes

Trump's Low Approval by Voters

When I was a physics student in 1970, I read a statistical analysis textbook that mentioned one could ask 100 people about the height of the Queen of Siam, then calculate an average and standard deviation. But then the textbook mentioned the problem is that Siam does *not* have a Queen. Since then I have not taken opinion polls seriously. <smile> There is *no* guarantee that the people polled will be well informed about Trump's performance. Let's be honest here — most people have neither the time nor the desire to spend hours each day reading *The Washington Post* or *The New York Times*. If some of the people polled are not well informed, then the poll has little significance.

Because professional politicians (e.g., members of the U.S. Congress) take opinion polls seriously, sustained low approval ratings for Trump might help persuade Congress to impeach and convict Trump.

A new president's approval rating in opinion polls typically starts at a relatively high value, perhaps expressing the hope of citizens. But then the president's approval rating slowly declines, as unpopular events occur. This initial high approval is often called a "honeymoon" by professional pollsters. But Trump is *not* a typical new president — he had *no* honeymoon. In early February 2009 the Gallup poll found a 64% approval rating for Obama, but in early February 2017 only a 40% approval rating for Trump. Trump's initial approval rating was not only the lowest of any president since 1953, but also Trump's initial approval rating was 21% less than the average for presidents in early February after their inauguration. [Gallup](#).

On the morning of 18 June 2017, Trump [tweeted](#) “The new Rasmussen Poll, one of the most accurate in the 2016 Election, just out with a Trump 50% Approval Rating. That's higher than O's #'s!” In fact, that Rasmussen Poll showed an anomalous result — a statistical outlier. Most opinion polls show Trump with an approximately 40% approval rating. Moreover, Obama's approval rating in a Rasmussen Poll in June 2009 was about 56%, which is significant greater than Trump's approval rating. Journalists pointed out the facts disagreed with Trump's assertions. [PolitiFact](#); [Los Angeles Times](#); [Time](#); [CBS News](#)(36% approval

rating on 20 June). Trump asserts false facts, in order to boast about his allegedly high approval amongst people.

One can find details of opinion polls at:

- [Real Clear Politics](#) summaries of polls
- [Gallup](#)
- [Pew Research Center](#)
- [Quinnipiac Univ.](#)

Here are some news articles — mostly from *The Washington Post* — on Trump's low approval in opinion polls during his presidency.

- Lydia Saad, "Trump Sets New Low Point for Inaugural Approval Rating," [Gallup](#), 23 Jan 2017. (45% approval rating: "Trump first elected president with initial sub-50% approval rating")
- Philip Bump, "Trump's initial approval ratings are setting new, unhappy records," [Washington Post](#), 25 Jan 2017. ("Trump's approval rating is lower than any prior new president.")
- John Sides, "How low can Donald Trump's approval rating go?," [Washington Post](#), 7 Feb 2017. ("Since his inauguration, Donald Trump's net approval rating — already at a historic low for an incoming president — has taken a further hit.")
- Aaron Blake, "Trump's approval rating just hit a new low. What if it doesn't really matter?," [Washington Post](#), 17 Feb 2017. (Trump's statement at a press conference "reveals something else about Trump: He isn't terribly concerned about being unpopular. All he truly feels the need to do is keep his base happy. And he's doing just fine on that count.")
- Philip Bump, "Trump's approval hits a new low of 36 percent — but that's not the bad news," [Washington Post](#), 27 March 2017. (Commenting on weekly average of Gallup polls: "... last week [Trump] hit a new low as well of 39 percent — after all the [daily] volatility is smoothed out. That's lower than Obama ever saw during any single week.")
- Dan Balz & Scott Clement, "Nearing 100 days, Trump's approval at record lows but his base is holding," [Washington Post](#), 23 April 2017.
- Aaron Blake, "More bad news for Trump: His poll numbers just hit a bunch of new lows," [Washington Post](#), 10 May 2017. (Quinnipiac poll shows 51% strongly disapprove of Trump, while only 25% strongly approve. Overall, Trump has a 36% job

approval rating.)

- "Gallup Daily: Trump Job Approval," [Gallup Poll](#), 23 May 2017. (Three-day average during 17-19 May finds 37% approve of Trump's performance, 56% disapprove.)
- Dana Blanton, "Fox News Poll: Trump approval down, voters support special counsel on Russia," [Fox News](#), 24 May; 2017. ("A new [May 21-23] Fox News Poll of registered voters nationwide finds 40 percent of voters approve of the job Trump is doing, down from 45 percent last month. Disapproval is up 5 points to 53 percent.")
- Madeline Conway, "Trump approval rating hits new low in Quinnipiac poll," [Politico](#), 14:05 EDT, 7 June 2017. ("President Donald Trump's approval rating hit another low in Quinnipiac University's poll, which found this week that 34 percent of voters approve of his job performance and 57 percent disapprove. The university's most recent poll, ..., also found that a large majority of respondents — 68 percent — believe that the president is 'not level-headed' (29 percent say he is). Even among members of his own party, this holds true: 64 percent of Republicans say Trump is not level-headed, while 32 percent think he is.")
- Philip Bump, "Strong approval of Trump is fading across a number of demographics," [Washington Post](#), 7 June 2017. (Quinnipiac poll shows "strong approval of the president's job performance" amongst white people without a college degree faded from 45% on 26 Jan to 35% on 7 June.)
- Tim Marcin, "Support For Donald Trump's Impeachment Is Way Higher Than His Latest Approval Rating," [Newsweek](#), 10:37 EDT, 3 July 2017. (Gallup poll has 37% approval for Trump. "A survey in recent weeks [9-11 June] from Public Policy Polling — a firm that does public surveys as well as polling for Democratic candidates — found that 47 percent of voters supported impeaching Trump.")
- Scott Clement & Dan Balz, "Poll finds Trump's standing weakened since springtime," [Washington Post](#), 16 July 2017. ("Approaching six months in office, Trump's overall approval rating [in a new [Washington Post-ABC News poll](#)] has dropped to 36 percent from 42 percent in April. His disapproval rating has risen five points to 58 percent.") See also: [ABC News](#) ("Americans give President Donald Trump the lowest six-month approval rating of any president in polls dating back 70 years, punctuated by questions about his competence on the world stage, his effectiveness, the GOP health care plan and Russia's role in the 2016 election."); [Politico](#) ("President Donald Trump has hit the lowest approval rating of any president during their first six months in office in 70 years, according to a new ABC News/Washington Post poll.")

Trump reacted to this opinion poll by [tweeting](#): "The ABC/Washington Post Poll, even though almost 40% is not bad at this time, was just about the most inaccurate poll around election time!"

I have three comments:

1. Note that Trump inflated his approval rating from the actual 36% to a delusional 40%.

2. History shows that Trump's approval ratings are the worst of any president in July of his first year, since polling began in 1950. [PolitiFact](#). That is really "bad" for Trump.
 3. Journalists criticized Trump's false statement that the Post/ABC poll was the "most inaccurate poll around election time!". History shows that the Post/ABC poll accurately predicted that Hillary would win the popular vote in November 2016. [Time](#); [Mediaite](#).
- On 11-13 August 2017, the [Gallup Poll](#) three-day average showed only a 34% approval for Trump, which is a new low for Trump. See also [Associated Press](#): "Donald Trump started as the most unpopular new president in the history of modern polling. After seven months, things have only gotten worse. Plunging into undesirably uncharted territory, Trump is setting records with his dismally low approval ratings, including the lowest mark ever for a president in his first year. In fact, with four months left in the year, Trump has already spent more time under 40 percent than any other first-year president."
 - Scott Clement & Kevin Uhrmacher, "Strong. Arrogant. Incompetent. Great. Americans have choice words for President Trump." [Washington Post](#), 27 Sep 2017. (A Washington Post-ABC News poll during 18-21 Sep 2017 found 7% of respondents, the third largest group, called Trump "incompetent or unqualified". The fourth largest group, 6% of respondents, called Trump "idiotic or ignorant". Seven of the top ten groups of words describing Trump were pejorative.)
 - On 27 September 2017, a Quinnipiac University opinion poll shows 56% of Americans believe Trump is "unfit" to be president, while only 42% believe Trump is fit to be president. [CBS News](#); [Washington Post](#).
 - On 11 October 2017, the [Associated Press](#) reported an Associated Press/NORC opinion poll during 28 Sep to 2 Oct that found "65 percent of Americans think Trump's comments have made the situation between the U.S. and North Korea worse, including 45 percent who think he's made the situation much worse. Only 8 percent think he's making the situation better."
 - On 29 October 2017, an opinion poll sponsored by [NBC News](#) and *The Wall Street Journal* showed "Donald Trump's job approval rating has declined to the lowest point of his presidency 38% of Americans say they approve of Trump's job performance — down five points since September — while 58% disapprove. Trump's job approval rating of 38% is the lowest in modern times for a president at this stage of his presidency."
 - On 5 November 2017, an opinion poll sponsored by *The Washington Post* and ABC News shows 37% of Americans approve of Trump's performance, while 59% disapprove. "... Trump has an approval rating demonstrably lower than any previous chief executive at this point in his presidency over seven decades of polling." "[Trump] is the only president dating back to Harry S. Truman whose approval rating at this point in his presidency is net negative — by 22 points. The next worst recorded

in that time was Bill Clinton, who had a net positive of 11 points by this time in his presidency." [Washington Post](#).

- On 7 December 2017, an opinion poll by [Pew Research Center](#) showed "32% of the public approves of the way Trump is handling his job as president". [CNN](#); [The Hill](#).
- On 19 December 2017, an opinion poll at [CNN](#) revealed "President Donald Trump's approval rating sank to a new low in CNN polling on Tuesday [19 Dec], earning the approval of just 35% of Americans It marks the worst approval rating in a December of any elected president's first year in the White House by a wide margin — and only the second time since the dawn of modern polling that a president's approval rating sank under 50% at this point."
-

Trump, Islamic Terrorism, & Travel Ban

Trump's 2015 tweets that mention "Islamic Terrorism"

A [search](#) of Twitter shows Trump made 5 tweets in 2015 that criticized President Obama for failing to say the phrase "Islamic terrorism (or terrorist)". Trump made 2 additional tweets in 2015 about Islamic terrorism. These tweets show Trump's policy on Islamic terrorism, so I am quoting them here.

I still haven't heard the WH say the words islamic terrorist. Call it what it is.
#Trump2016 can't happen fast enough.
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 18:30 ET, 14 Nov 2015.

Why won't President Obama use the term Islamic Terrorism? Isn't it now, after all of this time and so much death, about time!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 22:30 ET, 14 Nov 2015.

When will President Obama issue the words RADICAL ISLAMIC TERRORISM? He can't say it, and unless he will, the problem will not be solved!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:18 ET, 15 Nov 2015.

I didn't suggest a database — a reporter did. We must defeat Islamic terrorism & have surveillance, including a watch list, to protect America
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:51 ET, 20 Nov 2015.

Wonder if Obama will ever say RADICAL ISLAMIC TERRORIST?
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19:42 ET, 5 Dec 2015.

BIG NIGHT ON TWITTER TONIGHT. I WILL BE LIVE TWEETING PRESIDENT OBAMA'S SPEECH AT 7:50 P.M. (EASTERN). MUST TALK RADICAL

ISLAMIC TERRORISM!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19:27 ET, 6 Dec 2015.

Our country is facing a major threat from radical Islamic terrorism. We better get very smart, and very tough, FAST, before it is too late!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 21:56 ET, 8 Dec 2015.

Trump's 2016 tweets that mention "Islamic Terrorism"

Trump made more tweets in 2016 that mention "Islamic terrorism (or terrorist or terror)".

On 17 Jan 2016, Trump appeared to comment on an al-Qaeda terrorist attack at a hotel in the West African nation of Burkina Faso that killed at least 29 people. [CNN](#).

Far more killed than anticipated in radical Islamic terror attack yesterday. Get tough and smart U.S., or we won't have a country anymore!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:57 ET, 17 Jan 2016.

Trump's tweet of 17 January 2016, which says the USA will cease to exist if we do not stop Islamic terrorism, is hyperbole.

Appreciate the congrats for being right on radical Islamic terrorism, I don't want congrats, I want toughness & vigilance. We must be smart!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 12:43 ET, 12 June 2016.

Is President Obama going to finally mention the words radical Islamic terrorism? If he doesn't he should immediately resign in disgrace!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 13:58 ET, 12 June 2016.

I have been hitting Obama and Crooked Hillary hard on not using the term Radical Islamic Terror. Hillary just broke — said she would now use!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:59 ET, 13 June 2016.

Hillary Clinton actually said "radical Islamic terrorism" was equivalent to a phrase that she had been using (e.g., "radical jihadism"). [Washington Post](#) and [CNN](#).

In my speech on protecting America I spoke about a temporary ban, which includes suspending immigration from nations tied to Islamic terror.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:10 ET, 13 June 2016.

With Hillary and Obama, the terrorist attacks will only get worse. Politically correct fools, won't even call it what it is — RADICAL ISLAM!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:34 ET, 4 July 2016.

If elected POTUS — I will stop RADICAL ISLAMIC TERRORISM in this country!

In order to do this, we need to #DrainTheSwamp!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:52 ET, 20 Oct 2016.

Trump spewed propaganda on 20 Oct 2016: stopping Islamic terrorism has nothing to do with

getting lobbyists out of government (i.e., "drain the swamp").

Thank you Geneva, Ohio. If I am elected President, I am going to keep RADICAL ISLAMIC TERRORISTS OUT of our country! #MakeAmericaSafeAgain
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 21:47 ET, 27 Oct 2016.

Trump's Jan-May 2017 tweets that mention "Islamic Terrorism"

In 2017 Trump made only a few tweets that mention "Islamic terrorism (or terrorist or terror)".

A new radical Islamic terrorist has just attacked in Louvre Museum in Paris. Tourists were locked down. France on edge again. GET SMART U.S.
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:51 EST, 3 Feb 2017.

The threat from radical Islamic terrorism is very real, just look at what is happening in Europe and the Middle-East. Courts must act fast!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 11:49 EST, 6 Feb 2017.

My essay on Syria and Iraq for [May 2017](#) quotes and criticizes Trump's reaction to Islamic terror attacks in Manchester England on 22 May and in Egypt on 26 May. Trump's May 2017 statements are posted at the White House website, but did *not* mention "Islamic Terrorism".

Trump's Reaction to Islamic Terrorism on 3 June 2017

At night on 3 June 2017, three Islamic terrorists ran amok in London, England, killing 8 people. (See my essay on Syria for [June 2017](#).) The following morning, Trump tweeted:

We must stop being politically correct and get down to the business of security for our people. If we don't get smart it will only get worse
Donald Trump, [tweet](#), 07:19 EDT, 4 June 2017.

It is *not* clear who Trump is accusing of "being politically correct". On 4 June, the last time Trump himself used the phrase "Islamic terrorism" in a tweet was on [6 Feb 2017](#), when Trump said:

The threat from radical Islamic terrorism is very real, just look at what is happening in Europe and the Middle-East. Courts must act fast!
Since 6 Feb 2017, Trump has had many opportunities to use the phrase "Islamic terrorism", but he has avoided that phrase.

Following the Islamic terror attack in London England on the night of 3 June 2017, Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, explained to residents of London that they would be seeing more policemen — including armed policemen — on the streets of London.

Londoners will see an increased police presence today and over the course of the next few days. No reason to be alarmed. One of the things the police and all of us need to do is make sure we're as safe as we possibly can be.

[BBC](#), 4 June 2017. [video](#).

Apparently without carefully reading the mayor's actual statement (which is quoted above), Trump fired off a tweet that criticized the mayor of London for something the mayor did *not* say.

At least 7 dead and 48 wounded in terror attack and Mayor of London says there is "no reason to be alarmed!"

Donald Trump, [tweet](#), 07:31 EDT, 4 June 2017.

Later on 4 June, Trump was publicly criticized for his ~~misleading~~ erroneous remark about the mayor of London. [PolitiFact](#); [BBC](#); [The Guardian](#); [The Telegraph](#) in London; [The Independent](#) in London; [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Los Angeles Times](#)(opinion).

A spokesman for the mayor responded to Trump:

The Mayor is busy working with the police, emergency services, and the government to coordinate the response to this horrific and cowardly terrorist attack and provide leadership and reassurance to Londoners and visitors to our city.

"He has more important things to do than respond to Donald Trump's ill-informed tweet that deliberately takes out of context his remarks urging Londoners not to be alarmed when they saw more police — including armed officers — on the streets.

"London's Mayor Says 'We Will Never Let These Cowards Win,' Slams Trump Retort," [NBC News](#), 22:00 EDT, 4 June 2017.

Instead of apologizing for his mistake, Trump fired off another tweet:

Pathetic excuse by London Mayor Sadiq Khan who had to think fast on his "no reason to be alarmed" statement. MSM is working hard to sell it!

Donald Trump, [tweet](#), 09:49 EDT, 5 June 2017. [MSM = mainstream media]

Trump's erroneous and confrontational remarks made the problem worse. Trump's childish attack on the mayor ought to embarrass citizens of the USA.

The mayor of London retaliated by suggesting that the U.K. government should cancel Trump's state visit to the U.K. that is scheduled in October 2017. [The Guardian](#); [The Telegraph](#).

Trump's July-Dec 2017 tweets that mention "Islamic Terrorism"

On 17 August 2017, Trump mentioned "Islamic Terrorism" in a tweet for the first time since 6 February 2017.

Study what General Pershing of the United States did to terrorists when caught. There was no more Radical Islamic Terror for 35 years!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 14:45 EDT, 17 August 2017.

Trump's obscure remark about General Pershing was explained by the [Washington Post](#). Pershing was stationed in the Philippines during 1899-1902, where he commanded troops who suppressed Islamic terrorists. In February 2016, Trump told a campaign rally that

Pershing had captured 50 Islamic terrorists, "dipped 50 bullets in pigs' blood", executed 49 of the terrorists, and sent the one remaining terrorist back to his people to tell what happened. A historian told *The Post* that there is *no* evidence that Pershing committed such an atrocity. See also [PolitiFact](#). This is what Trump would call "fake news".

The following day, 18 August, Trump again tweeted about Islamic terrorism.

Radical Islamic Terrorism must be stopped by whatever means necessary! The courts must give us back our protective rights. Have to be tough!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:06 EDT, 18 August 2017.

My essay on Syria for [Sep 2017](#) criticizes a tweet by Trump on 15 Sep 2017 regarding an Islamic bomb on a London subway train. There Trump did *not* mention "Islamic Terrorism".

On 20 October, Trump tweeted about crime in the United Kingdom.

Just out report: "United Kingdom crime rises 13% annually amid spread of Radical Islamic terror." Not good, we must keep America safe!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:31 EDT, 20 Oct 2017.

The United Kingdom agency that produced the [report](#) says there is *no* evidence that Islamic terrorism has increased crime rates in England and Wales for the year ending June 2017. The 13% increase is for *all* crimes, including robbery, harassment, shoplifting, motor vehicle theft, and arson. See also: [Washington Post](#); [CNN](#); [New York Times](#). So, Trump's tweet about Islamic terrorism contains a false fact. Note that the crime statistics are only for England and Wales, but Trump claimed the statistics were for the whole U.K., which includes Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The Guardian newspaper in Manchester, England reported:

As for Trump, he might like to reflect that the 629 homicides in England and Wales — population 53 million — in the past 12 months is somewhat below the 2016 death toll of 758 in the single US city of Chicago, population 2.7 million.

Alan Travis, "Was Donald Trump right to blame terrorism for rising UK crime figures?," [The Guardian](#), 20 Oct 2017.

Islamic terrorists in England killed 35 people in March, May, and June 2017, which is less than 6% of the total homicides in England and Wales in the year ending June 2017.

On 31 October 2017, an Islamic terrorist killed at least 8 people in New York City. Less than three hours after the attack, Donald Trump tweeted:

In NYC, looks like another attack by a very sick and deranged person. Law enforcement is following this closely. NOT IN THE U.S.A.!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:30 EDT, 31 Oct 2017.

My comment is that at the time that Trump made this tweet, there is *no* evidence that the perpetrator was "very sick and deranged". The suspect was an Islamic terrorist: he said "Allahu Akbar" after exiting the truck that he used to run over bicyclists and collide with a school bus. Also the suspect left a handwritten note in the truck that pledged allegiance to ISIL. Once again, Trump avoids using the phrase "Islamic terrorist" when that phrase is appropriate. More about Trumps outrageously inappropriate comments in the Saipov case is

below.

#####

Trump's Hypocrisy

What is wrong with Trump's tweets about Islamic terrorism?

1. In 2015 and 2016, Trump scolded Obama for failing to say the phrase "Islamic terrorism". I believe Trump is correct that we can not fight Islamic terrorism without saying the phrase "Islamic terrorism". But, after Trump became president on 20 Jan 2017, Trump himself less frequently said the phrase "Islamic terrorism". The [Washington Post](#) and [Los Angeles Times](#) commented after Trump gave a speech in Saudi Arabia in May 2017, without using the phrase "Islamic terrorism".
2. I searched Twitter for tweets by Trump up to a week after the day of each of four major Islamic terrorist attacks in the world during 2015-2016. Trump made several tweets on each of the four major attacks, but Trump failed to use the phrase "Islamic terrorism" in any of those tweets. I selected one tweet to quote here for each of the four major attacks. In contrast, Trump did use the phrase "Islamic terrorist" to refer to an insignificant attack on 3 Feb 2017.
 - A. On 13 Nov 2015, Islamic terrorists killed 130 people in Paris, France, but Trump's [tweet](#) ("President Obama said "ISIL continues to shrink" in an interview just hours before the horrible attack in Paris. He is just so bad! CHANGE.") mentioned neither "Islamic" nor "terrorism".
 - B. On 22 March 2016, Islamic terrorists killed 32 people at the Brussels airport and one subway station, but Trump's [tweet](#) ("Incompetent Hillary, despite the horrible attack in Brussels today, wants borders to be weak and open — and let the Muslims flow in. No way!") mentioned neither "Islamic" nor "terrorism".
 - C. On 12 June 2016, an Islamic terrorist murdered 49 people at a nightclub in Orlando, Florida, but Trump's [tweet](#) ("Reporting that Orlando killer shouted "Allah hu Akbar!" as he slaughtered clubgoers.") mentioned neither "Islamic" nor "terrorism".
 - D. On 14 July 2016, an Islamic terrorist killed 86 people during a Bastille Day celebration in Nice, France, but Trump's [tweet](#) ("Another horrific attack, this time in Nice, France. Many dead and injured. When will we learn? It is only getting worse.") mentioned neither "Islamic" nor "terrorism".
 - E. On 3 Feb 2017, an Islamic terrorist from Egypt was shot and wounded at the Louvre in Paris, France. There were zero deaths in this attack, but Trump did mention "Islamic terrorist" in his [tweet](#) about this insignificant attack.
 - F. On 20 April 2017, an Islamic terrorist shot at policemen in Paris, killing one policeman before police killed the terrorist. Trump's [tweet](#) ("Another terrorist

attack in Paris. The people of France will not take much more of this. Will have a big effect on presidential election!") failed to use the phrase "Islamic terrorism".

My conclusion is that Trump is a hypocrite to criticize Obama and Hillary Clinton for failing to use the phrase "Islamic terrorism", when Trump himself did *not* use that phrase in reference to four major terrorist attacks during 2015-2016, and Trump has not used the phrase frequently since becoming president on 20 Jan 2017.

Trump's Promises to Ban Muslims from traveling to the USA

One of the things that Trump promised to do during the 2016 presidential campaign was — at least temporarily — ban people from Muslim-majority nations from traveling to the USA.

For example, on 7 Dec 2015, Trump issued a press release that said:

Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on. According to Pew Research, among others, there is great hatred towards Americans by large segments of the Muslim population. Most recently, a poll from the Center for Security Policy released data showing "25% of those polled agreed that violence against Americans here in the United States is justified as a part of the global jihad" and 51% of those polled "agreed that Muslims in America should have the choice of being governed according to Shariah." Shariah authorizes such atrocities as murder against nonbelievers who won't convert, beheadings and more unthinkable acts that pose great harm to Americans, especially women.

Mr. Trump stated, "Without looking at the various polling data, it is obvious to anybody the hatred is beyond comprehension. Where this hatred comes from and why we will have to determine. Until we are able to determine and understand this problem and the dangerous threat it poses, our country cannot be the victims of the horrendous attacks by people that believe only in Jihad, and have no sense of reason or respect of human life. If I win the election for President, we are going to Make America Great Again."

Donald J. Trump, "Statement on Preventing Muslim Immigration," 7 Dec 2015. This statement was removed from Trump's campaign website sometime before 8 May 2017, probably because the statement was causing legal problems for Trump. Trump's statement is quoted in *International Refugee Assistance Project v. Trump*, __ F.3d __ (4th Cir. 25 May 2017).

On 22 March 2016, Trump blurted out his real policy of banning *all* Muslims:

Incompetent Hillary, despite the horrible attack in Brussels today, wants borders to be weak and open — and let the Muslims flow in. No way!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 22 March 2016.

On 27 March 2016, Trump arrogantly declared "I alone can solve" the Islamic terrorism

problem. But history will show that a half-year after becoming president, Trump had *not* banned Islamic terrorists from traveling to the USA.

Another radical Islamic attack, this time in Pakistan, targeting Christian women & children. At least 67 dead, 400 injured. I alone can solve
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:37 ET, 27 March 2016.

On 13 June 2016, Trump tweeted:

In my speech on protecting America I spoke about a temporary ban, which includes suspending immigration from nations tied to Islamic terror.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:10 EDT, 13 June 2016.

On 25 June 2016, Trump explained the essence of his policy:

We must suspend immigration from regions linked with terrorism until a proven vetting method is in place.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 22:37 EDT, 25 June 2016.

On 28 June 2016, Trump seems to call for a broad ban on Muslims from traveling to the USA, when Trump says "we must do everything possible".

We must do everything possible to keep this horrible terrorism outside the United States.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:10 EDT, 28 June 2016.

After the 2016 election, on 1 February 2017, Trump explained the purpose of banning some Muslims from travel to the USA:

Everybody is arguing whether or not it is a BAN. Call it what you want, it is about keeping bad people (with bad intentions) out of country!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:50 ET, 1 Feb 2017.

There are at least three versions of Trump's promise during the 2016 presidential campaign:

1. At least temporarily ban people from *all* Muslim-majority nations from traveling to the USA.
2. Banning travel to the USA from nations with active Islamic terrorism.
3. A few versions of Trump's promise mention temporarily banning travel to the USA from Muslim-majority nations until an effective vetting program (i.e., "extreme vetting") is established for applicants for visas to the USA.

Trump's inability to understand facts and details are probably responsible for the multiple versions of his campaign promise to stop Islamic terrorists from entering the USA.

Trump's First Attempt to Ban Muslim Terrorists from traveling to the USA

So it was no surprise when Trump issued Executive Order 13769 on 27 Jan 2017, with the title "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States".

One subsection of that Order says:

To temporarily reduce investigative burdens on relevant agencies during the review period described in subsection (a) of this section, to ensure the proper review and maximum utilization of available resources for the screening of foreign nationals, and to ensure that adequate standards are established to prevent infiltration by foreign terrorists or criminals, pursuant to section 212(f) of the [Immigration and Nationality Act] INA, 8 U.S.C. §1182(f), I hereby proclaim that the immigrant and nonimmigrant entry into the United States of aliens from countries referred to in section 217(a)(12) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. §1187(a)(12), would be detrimental to the interests of the United States, and I hereby suspend entry into the United States, as immigrants and nonimmigrants, of such persons for 90 days from the date of this order (excluding those foreign nationals traveling on diplomatic visas,)

Executive Order 13769, §3(c), [White House](#), 27 Jan 2017.

8 U.S.C. §1187(a)(12) gives special treatment to aliens who have been present "at any time" since 1 March 2011 in Iraq or Syria; any country designated by the U.S. Secretary of State as a state sponsor of terrorism (currently Iran, Syria, and Sudan); or other nations designated by the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security. The complete list of 7 banned nations is: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.

Another two subsection of Trump's Executive Order say:

§5(b) Upon the resumption of [U.S. Refugee Admissions Program] USRAP admissions, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, is further directed to make changes, to the extent permitted by law, to prioritize refugee claims made by individuals on the basis of religious-based persecution, provided that the religion of the individual is a minority religion in the individual's country of nationality. Where necessary and appropriate, the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security shall recommend legislation to the President that would assist with such prioritization.

§5(c) Pursuant to section 212(f) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1182(f), I hereby proclaim that the entry of nationals of Syria as refugees is detrimental to the interests of the United States and thus suspend any such entry until such time as I have determined that sufficient changes have been made to the [U.S. Refugee Admissions Program] USRAP to ensure that admission of Syrian refugees is consistent with the national interest.

Executive Order 13769, §5(b) and (c), 27 Jan 2017.

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump promised to ban travel to the USA from *all* Muslim-majority nations. But in his first Executive Order, travel is temporarily banned from only *seven* Muslim nations. Note that this list of seven banned nations is strikingly underinclusive — in fact, this Executive Order would have prevented *none* of the lethal Islamic terrorist attacks in the USA:

1. Section one of this Executive Order says its purpose is to prevent more terrorist attacks like 11 Sep 2001, when "19 foreign nationals who ... murder[ed] nearly 3,000 Americans." But those 19 foreigners were from Saudi Arabia (15 of 19), UAE (2 of 19), and two other nations that are *not* on Trump's list of banned nations, so this Executive Order would *not* have prevented the 11 Sep 2001 terrorist attacks.

2. On 16 July 2015, an Islamic terrorist killed 5 people in Chattanooga, Tennessee. This terrorist was born in Kuwait, his mother is from Kuwait and his father is from Palestine.
3. On 2 December 2015, two Islamic terrorists killed 14 people in San Bernardino, California. The male terrorist was born in the USA, the son of Muslim parents from Pakistan. His wife, the other terrorist, was a citizen of Pakistan, but she had also lived in Saudi Arabia.
4. On 12 June 2016, an Islamic terrorist killed 49 people at a nightclub in Orlando, Florida. This terrorist was born in the USA, the son of Muslim parents from Afghanistan.

Let me emphasize that **Trump's Executive Order would have prevented *none* of these four lethal Islamic terrorist attacks in the USA.** That fact strongly suggests that Trump's Executive Order is poorly designed and will be ineffective in preventing future Islamic terrorist attacks in the USA. Moreover, as federal judges have declared, Trump's Executive Order is probably unconstitutional.

To be effective at preventing Islamic terrorists from entering the USA, Trump needs to ban travel to the USA from Muslim-majority nations with active terrorism (e.g., Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine, Egypt, Tunisia, etc.). But such a broad ban would affect many innocent Muslims and only a few potential terrorists. And such a broad ban would be a foreign-policy disaster, because it would offend our so-called allies in the fight against Islamic terrorism.

I have little confidence that government bureaucrats can effectively vet applicants for visas and prevent all Islamic terrorists from entering the USA. It seems impossible to vet adult immigrants whose children will become Islamic terrorists more than 20 years in the future (e.g., San Bernardino and Orlando attacks). Instead of futilely vetting immigrants, we need to fight the *ideology* of Islamic terrorism.

Section 5(b) is objectionable in that it was apparently designed to give preference to Christian minorities in Muslim-majority nations, which is a form of religious discrimination.

One of the effects of this Executive Order was to prohibit the return to the USA of Muslims who either (1) had entered the USA under a valid visa or (2) were permanent residents of the USA — and who were temporarily outside the USA when the Executive Order was issued on 27 Jan 2017. The U.S. Government has few legal obligations to people in foreign nations, but once a foreigner has been admitted to live in the USA that foreigner has various U.S. legal rights, including due process of law.

Several federal trial courts enjoined enforcement of this Executive Order. The most prominent case was in Washington State, where a trial court judge issued a Temporary Restraining Order on 3 Feb 2017. *Washington v. Trump*, 2017 WL 462040 (WD Wash. 2017) The U.S. Department of Justice filed an emergency motion for a stay of the Temporary Restraining Order pending appeal. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit denied the stay in *Washington v. Trump*, 847 F.3d 1151 (per curiam) (9thCir. 9 Feb 2017).

One of the glaring legal problems with the injunctions is that the courts have enjoined the Government nationwide, although the plaintiff(s) in each case are in *one* state. This is a technical legal problem in equitable remedies, but a law professor's comments at the [Washington Post](#) website explain the legal issues well.

Trump's Reaction to Judges enjoining his travel ban

On 4 Feb 2017, Trump insulted the "so-called judge" who issued the preliminary injunction against Trump's Executive Order. An independent judiciary is part of the checks and balances in the U.S. Constitution. Trump personally signed a blatantly unconstitutional Executive Order that was poorly designed.

The opinion of this so-called judge, which essentially takes law-enforcement away from our country, is ridiculous and will be overturned!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:12 ET, 4 Feb 2017.

What is our country coming to when a judge can halt a Homeland Security travel ban and anyone, even with bad intentions, can come into U.S.?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:44 ET, 4 Feb 2017.

Trump probably wanted to say that hordes of Islamic terrorists are pouring into the USA, while liberal judges nominated by loathsome democrats enjoined enforcement of his Executive Order. But Trump was politically correct. Instead of "Islamic terrorists", Trump said "very bad and dangerous people".

Because the ban was lifted by a judge, many very bad and dangerous people may be pouring into our country. A terrible decision

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:44 ET, 4 Feb 2017.

Why does Trump say "bad people" instead of "Islamic terrorists"?

The judge opens up our country to potential terrorists and others that do not have our best interests at heart. Bad people are very happy!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19:48 ET, 4 Feb 2017.

On 5 Feb 2017, Trump blames a judge because an incompetent president issued a defective Executive Order.

Just cannot believe a judge would put our country in such peril. If something happens blame him and court system. People pouring in. Bad!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:39 ET, 5 Feb 2017.

I have instructed Homeland Security to check people coming into our country VERY CAREFULLY. The courts are making the job very difficult!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:42 ET, 5 Feb 2017.

On 8 Feb 2017, Trump boasted about a Politico opinion poll that showed people in the USA believed Trump's Executive Order "is one of Trump's most popular orders so far".

'Immigration Ban Is One Of Trump's Most Popular Orders So Far'

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 14:39 ET, 8 Feb 2017.

When I wrote this text on 25 June 2017, Politico had revised their article on the opinion poll to omit the part that Trump cited. Trump ignored a [Politico](#) article that said four other opinion polls "each show majorities opposed to the order and its various provisions."

Trump's Second Attempt to Ban Muslim Terrorists from traveling to the USA

On 6 March 2017, Trump issued Executive Order 13780, with the same title as the previous Executive Order on immigration: "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States". [White House](#), 6 March 2017.

There are several remarkable features of this second Executive Order (EO-2):

1. Sections 1(i) and 13 of the second Executive Order (EO-2) revoked Order 13769.
2. Section 2(c) of EO-2 omits Iraq from the seven banned nations in the first Executive Order. Furthermore, the six banned nations in the Second Executive Order are now explicitly identified in the text of the Order.
3. Section 3 of EO-2 cancels the ban on travel to the USA by aliens who had a valid U.S. visa on or before 27 Jan 2017, and also cancels the ban on travel to the USA by "any lawful permanent resident of the United States".
4. EO-2 omits the preference for religious minorities (e.g., Christians) in the first Executive Order. However, EO-2 bizarrely contains an irrelevant paragraph in §1(b)(iv) that defends the omitted preference.
5. EO-2 also omits the total ban on Syrian refugees in the first Executive Order.

The important sections of EO-2 are:

To temporarily reduce investigative burdens on relevant agencies during the review period described in subsection (a) of this section, to ensure the proper review and maximum utilization of available resources for the screening and vetting of foreign nationals, to ensure that adequate standards are established to prevent infiltration by foreign terrorists, and in light of the national security concerns referenced in section 1 of this order, I hereby proclaim, pursuant to sections 212(f) and 215(a) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1182(f) and 1185(a), that the unrestricted entry into the United States of nationals of Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen would be detrimental to the interests of the United States. I therefore direct that the entry into the United States of nationals of those six countries be suspended for 90 days from the effective date of this order, subject to the limitations, waivers, and exceptions set forth in sections 3 and 12 of this order.

"Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States", Executive Order 13780, §2(c), [82 Federal Register 13209](#), (6 March 2017).

Sections 6(a) and 6(b) say:

§6(a) The Secretary of State shall suspend travel of refugees into the United States under the USRAP, and the Secretary of Homeland Security shall suspend decisions on applications for refugee status, for 120 days after the effective date of this order, subject to waivers pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. During the 120-day period, the Secretary of State, in conjunction with the Secretary of Homeland Security and in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, shall review the USRAP application and adjudication processes to determine what additional procedures should be used to ensure that individuals seeking admission as refugees do not pose a threat to the security and welfare of the United States, and shall implement such additional procedures. The suspension described in this subsection shall not apply to refugee applicants who, before the effective date of this order, have been formally scheduled for transit by the Department of State. The Secretary of State shall resume travel of refugees into the United States under the USRAP 120 days after the effective date of this order, and the Secretary of Homeland Security shall resume making decisions on applications for refugee status only for stateless persons and nationals of countries for which the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Director of National Intelligence have jointly determined that the additional procedures implemented pursuant to this subsection are adequate to ensure the security and welfare of the United States.

§6(b) Pursuant to section 212(f) of the INA, I hereby proclaim that the entry of more than 50,000 refugees in fiscal year 2017 would be detrimental to the interests of the United States, and thus suspend any entries in excess of that number until such time as I determine that additional entries would be in the national interest.

Ibid., §§ 6(a) and 6(b).

[Above](#), I explained that Trump's first Executive Order would have prevented *none* of the four lethal Islamic terrorist attacks in the USA. My criticism of Trump's first Executive Order also applies to Trump's second Executive Order. In my opinion, it makes little sense to argue about the legality of this poorly designed second Executive Order that will be ineffective in preventing Islamic terrorists from entering the USA.

On 27 June 2017, Ishaan Tharoor wrote an analysis titled "Trump's travel ban still doesn't make any sense". [Washington Post](#). Tharoor asserts: "Not a single person has died in a terrorist attack on American soil carried out by a citizen from one of the six nations covered by the ban. Since the Refugee Act of 1980 set up a system for vetting refugees to the United States, no person accepted as a refugee has been implicated in a fatal terrorist attack." See also an analysis by Peter Bergen in the 5 June 2017 [Washington Post](#). On 29 June 2017, the [Washington Post](#) published an analysis by Philip Bump of "successful and attempted terrorist attacks linked to radical Islamic ideology" in the USA beginning August 1997. Bump concluded that: "Of the 24 attacks listed above, only two might have been prevented had the perpetrator been subject to the full travel ban Trump has proposed. No deaths would have been prevented."

On 16 March 2017, a federal trial judge in Maryland was the first to enjoin the Government from enforcing the second Executive Order. *International Refugee Assistance Project v. Trump*, ___ F.Supp.3d ___, 2017 WL 1018235 (D.Md. 2017), *aff'd in part*, ___ F.3d ___ (4thCir. 25 May 2017) (en banc). The Fourth Circuit held: "... we find that the reasonable

observer would likely conclude that EO-2's primary purpose is to exclude persons from the United States on the basis of their religious beliefs." The Fourth Circuit also held: "... the Government's asserted national security interest in enforcing Section 2(c) appears to be a post hoc, secondary justification for an executive action rooted in religious animus and intended to bar Muslims from this country."

5 June 2017: Trump's Stupid Tweets

Constitutional law is one of the most difficult areas of law. While lawyers in the U.S. Department of Justice were carefully crafting technical arguments for the validity of Trump's second Executive Order, Trump blasted a series of tweets that undercut some of those technical arguments.

On 3 June 2017, Trump audaciously asserted that the federal courts needed to allow Trump and his supporters to unconstitutionally discriminate against Muslims. Trump ignored that the perpetrators of Islamic terrorist attacks in the USA (or Western Europe) had *not* come from the six Muslim-majority nations mentioned in his second Executive Order.

We need to be smart, vigilant and tough. We need the courts to give us back our rights. We need the Travel Ban as an extra level of safety!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19:17 EDT, 3 June 2017.

U.S. Government lawyers were preparing to argue that the Executive Order is *not* an absolute *ban* on travel from six Muslim-majority nations, but instead is a temporary pause until the Government can do a more careful vetting of applicants for visas from those nations. But, on 5 June, Trump undercut the lawyers by saying his Executive Order was a *ban*.

People, the lawyers and the courts can call it whatever they want, but I am calling it what we need and what it is, a TRAVEL BAN!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:25 EDT, 5 June 2017.

Then Trump supported his first Executive Order, and criticized his improved second Executive Order. Trump ignored that he himself had approved and signed the "watered down, politically correct" second Executive Order.

The Justice Dept. should have stayed with the original Travel Ban, not the watered down, politically correct version they submitted to S.C.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:29 EDT, 5 June 2017.

Trump does *not* understand that the U.S. Supreme Court will only rule on whether Trump's second Executive Order is constitutional. The Court will *not* draft a "much tougher version". The Court will *not* issue advice on how to write a "much tougher version".

The Justice Dept. should ask for an expedited hearing of the watered down Travel Ban before the Supreme Court — & seek much tougher version!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:37 EDT, 5 June 2017.

Trump's statements are *not* clear whether he wants (1) an absolute ban on *all* Muslims entering the USA, or (2) more careful vetting of visa applicants from residents of some Muslim-majority nations. Then Trump criticizes the courts, which is *not* a prudent strategy.

In any event we are EXTREME VETTING people coming into the U.S. in order to

help keep our country safe. The courts are slow and political!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:44 EDT, 5 June 2017.

At night on 5 June, Trump failed to use the phrase "radical Islamic terrorist" and failed to say "Muslim-majority nations".

That's right, we need a TRAVEL BAN for certain DANGEROUS countries, not some politically correct term that won't help us protect our people!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 21:20 EDT, 5 June 2017.

Journalists immediately pounced on Trump's series of stupid tweets.

- Adam Liptak & Peter Baker, "Trump Promotes Original 'Travel Ban,' Eroding His Legal Case," [New York Times](#), 5 June 2017. ("In a series of Twitter posts Monday [5 June] that continued into the evening, Mr. Trump may have irretrievably undermined his lawyers' efforts to persuade the Supreme Court to reinstate his executive order limiting travel from six predominantly Muslim countries, according to legal experts.")
- Amber Phillips, "How Trump just completely undermined the legal argument for his travel ban, in 4 tweets," [Washington Post](#), 5 June 2017.
- Miriam Valverde, "Trump says it's a travel ban, despite what his own team says," [PolitiFact](#), 5 June 2017.
- Laurence H. Tribe [Harvard Law Professor], "Laurence Tribe: The true cluelessness of Trump's travel ban tweets," [CNN](#), 5 June 2017. ("In making this assertion [Trump admits he went along with the "watered-down" version of the ban, with its less obviously discriminatory cast and with its added due process protections, solely out of what he now claims was an ill-advised concession to "political correctness"], and in adding in another tweet he would like the court to render a quick decision that approves the original ban along with the cosmetically improved new version — the President not only betrays his complete failure to understand how the judicial process works but exposes the unchanged religious bigotry that underlies his order in either of its incarnations.")
- David G. Savage, "Trump undercuts his lawyers with tweets about travel ban," [Los Angeles Times](#), 5 June 2017.
- Noah Feldman, "Trump Tanks His Own Case at the Supreme Court," [Bloomberg](#), 5 June 2017.
- Dan Merica, "With more tweets on his travel ban, Trump continues to undercut his own aides," [CNN](#), updated 6 June 2017.
- Kalhan Rosenblatt, "Trump Tweets in Favor of 'Original' Travel Ban, Not the 'Watered Down Version'," [NBC News](#), 5 June 2017.

The U.S. Department of Justice asked the U.S. Supreme Court to overrule two cases:

1. *International Refugee Assistance Project v. Trump*, 857 F.3d 554 (4th Cir. 25 May 2017) (en banc).
2. *Hawaii v. Trump*, ___ F.Supp.3d ___, 2017 WL 1167383 (D Haw., 29 March 2017).

On 26 June 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court granted the Government's petition for a Writ Of Certiorari and scheduled oral arguments for sometime in October 2017. [Slip Opinion](#) (per curiam).

The U.S. Supreme Court also modified the lower court's injunctions, so that the Government could ban travel to the USA from six Muslim-majority nations, when the travelers are "foreign nationals who lack any bona fide relationship with a person or entity in the United States."

The U.S. Supreme Court explained:

Denying entry to such a foreign national does not burden any American party by reason of that party's relationship with the foreign national.

....

... the Government's interest in enforcing §2(c) [of EO-2], and the Executive's authority to do so, are undoubtedly at their peak when there is no tie between the foreign national and the United States.

....

In practical terms, this means that §2(c) may not be enforced against foreign nationals who have a credible claim of a bona fide relationship with a person or entity in the United States. All other foreign nationals are subject to the provisions of EO—2.

....

The facts of these cases illustrate the sort of relationship that qualifies. For individuals, a close familial relationship is required. A foreign national who wishes to enter the United States to live with or visit a family member, ..., clearly has such a relationship. As for entities, the relationship must be formal, documented, and formed in the ordinary course, rather than for the purpose of evading EO—2. The students from the designated countries who have been admitted to the University of Hawaii have such a relationship with an American entity. So too would a worker who accepted an offer of employment from an American company or a lecturer invited to address an American audience. Not so someone who enters into a relationship simply to avoid §2(c): For example, a nonprofit group devoted to immigration issues may not contact foreign nationals from the designated countries, add them to client lists, and then secure their entry by claiming injury from their exclusion.

Three Justices (Thomas, joined by Alito and Gorsuch) dissented from the modification of the injunction:

It would have been reasonable, perhaps, for the Court to have left the injunctions in place only as to respondents themselves. But the Court takes the additional step of keeping the injunctions in place with regard to an unidentified, unnamed group of foreign nationals abroad. No class has been certified, and neither party asks for the scope of relief that the Court today provides.

....

Moreover, I fear that the Court's remedy will prove unworkable. Today's compromise will burden executive officials with the task of deciding — on peril of contempt — whether individuals from the six affected nations who wish to enter the United States have a sufficient connection to a person or entity in this country.

(Thomas, J., dissenting in part).

The dissent also noted:

And I agree with the Court's implicit conclusion that the Government has made a strong showing that it is likely to succeed on the merits — that is, that the judgments below will be reversed.

(Thomas, J., dissenting in part).

In a terse two paragraphs at the end of its opinion, the U.S. Supreme Court considered the injunction against the Government enforcing two other subsections of EO-2: "§6(a) suspension of refugee admissions and the §6(b) refugee cap." The Court held those two subsections of EO-2 "may not be enforced against an individual seeking admission as a refugee who can credibly claim a bona fide relationship with a person or entity in the United States."

The Court's modification of the injunctions seem problematic to me. I do *not* see how a family relationship between a Muslim family in the USA and an applicant for a visa will prevent Islamic terrorists from entering the USA. And applicants for visas to study at a university in the USA might also be Islamic terrorists. The stated purpose of Trump's two Executive Orders was to provide for national security, but the Supreme Court's modification of the injunction has nothing to do with national security.

I am puzzled by the absence of any consideration of the allegedly unconstitutional discrimination against Muslims in the Supreme Court opinion. That absence of consideration of facts and law is expected in a decision to grant certiorari. But the absence concerns me when the court sua sponte decided to modify the injunction, so that Trump can prevent some Muslims from traveling to the USA. Before the Court modifies a remedy, it should first decide whether the remedy is constitutional and lawful.

Interestingly, the complicated issues about the constitutionality and legality of §2(c) of EO-2 appear to be moot. That section ordered a 90-day ban on travel from six specified nations, while the Government reviewed and established vetting procedures. EO-2 initially became effective on 16 March 2017. The 90 day ban then expired on 14 June 2017, arguably making the issue moot. The Government argues that two of the trial courts enjoined the Government

from reviewing the vetting procedures, so the 90-day period should begin running when that injunction is lifted. [White House](#). The Government has decided to begin enforcing the travel ban on 29 June 2017, so 90 days from then is 27 Sep. [State Dept](#). Apparently, the issues become moot weeks *before* the U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments in this case.

EO-1 is now forgotten (except by Trump, who liked it as recently as 5 June 2017), and EO-2 will be moot by the time the U.S. Supreme Court hears the case in October 2017. On 24 September 2017, Trump issued a [Proclamation](#) on immigration, which is an additional reason why EO-2 is now moot. On 25 September 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court canceled oral arguments on EO-2 that were scheduled for 10 October, and asked the parties to submit briefs with a 5 October deadline on whether the case about EO-2 was now moot. [SCOTUS](#).

Trump does *not* know grandparents are close relatives

After the 26 June U.S. Supreme Court ruling, the Trump administration defined “close familial relationship” to be a parent, spouse, fiancé, son or daughter, sibling, son-in-law or daughter-in-law in the USA. The new rules excluded grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. of people living in the USA. The new rules took effect at 20:00 EDT on 29 June 2017, which is 00:00 GMT on 30 June. [State Dept](#); [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#)(29June); [New York Times](#)(29June).

On 13 July 2017, a judge in a federal trial court in Hawaii ruled that the new rules were too restrictive. For example, the government must allow grandparents of people in the USA to travel to the USA. [Washington Post](#).

On 19 July 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court — in an emergency appeal during the Court's summer vacation — did *not* disturb the Hawaii court's decision that the government's definition of "close familial relationship" was too narrow. In practice, grandparents will now be allowed to travel to the USA. In all other aspects, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed Trump's immigration restrictions to be enforced, pending appeal of the Hawaii court's ruling to the Ninth Circuit. [slip opinion](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

My comment is that the U.S. Supreme Court's "close familial relationship" is irrelevant to keeping Islamic terrorists out of the USA. I conceive of an Islamic terrorist suspect being extradited from one of the six banned Muslim nations (e.g., Libya) and then his wife and son are allowed to travel to the USA.

On 10 October 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court dismissed the part of Trump's appeal of the Fourth Circuit case, *U.S. v. Int'l Refugee Assistance*, because Trump's Executive Order expired on 24 September, so “the appeal no longer presents a “live case or controversy.” ” [SCOTUS Blog](#); [Volokh Conspiracy](#)(blog); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#). The other part of Trump's appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court concerns a Ninth Circuit case, *U.S. v. Hawaii*, where the challenged portion of Trump's Executive Order expires on 24 October.

On 24 October 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court dismissed Trump's appeal of *Trump v. Hawaii*, because the case was moot. [New York Times](#); [SCOTUSblog](#). The Supreme Court has now avoided deciding anything on Trump's controversial 6 March immigration order. Dismissing

the appeal as moot means that the lower court decisions are vacated as moot.

List of six nations still underinclusive

[Above](#), I criticized Trump's first Executive Order for its underinclusive list of seven Muslim-majority nations. I suggested that the list of nations be expanded to include at least Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine, Egypt, and Tunisia. Trump's second Executive Order suffers from the same problem. I [cited](#) four news articles that say the list of six Muslim-majority nations in Trump's second Executive Order would *not* have prevented any deaths from Islamic terrorism in the USA.

On 19 July 2017, [Reuters](#) wrote about a report on worldwide terrorism prepared by the University of Maryland for the U.S. State Department. Reuters said: "Terrorist attacks took place in 104 countries in 2016, but the majority occurred in just five countries: Iraq, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and the Philippines. Three-quarters of all deaths from terrorist attacks took place in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Nigeria and Pakistan." Obviously, those nations should be added to the six nations in Trump's second Executive Order on travel to the USA from Muslim-majority nations.

24 Sep 2017: Trump's Proclamation

On 24 September 2017, Trump's administration noted that a few nations in the world had failed to meet U.S. Government standards for "information sharing with the United States regarding terrorism threats, enhancing travel document security, or improving their reporting of lost and stolen passports." Consequently, travel to the USA from 7 nations was banned: Chad, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Syria, Venezuela, and Yemen. Moreover, Somalia "presents special circumstances that warrant specific restrictions and security enhancements to protect the American people." [White House](#). More information on Trump's 24 Sep Proclamation can be found at [White House](#). [Proclamation](#).

As I said [above](#), a common-sense way to protect the USA from Islamic terrorism is to ban travel from nations that have active Islamic terrorism (e.g., Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine, Egypt, Tunisia, etc.). A more inclusive list of nations with Islamic terrorism is [above](#). But Trump's Proclamation — like Trump's two previous Executive Orders — would *not* have prevented any fatal attacks in the USA by Islamic terrorists. Trump continues to refuse to ban travel from most of the Muslim-majority nations with active terrorism.

Note that most of the Islamic terror attacks in Europe during Jan-Sep 2017 have been in France, England, and Belgium — although the perpetrators there were usually immigrants from Muslim-majority nations. Should we also ban travel to the USA from France, England, and Belgium? I think the answer is "no", but the question shows the futility of banning *everyone* from a specific nation because of a *few* Islamic terrorists in that nation.

On 17 October 2017, a federal judge in Hawaii blocked enforcement of Trump's Proclamation on immigration. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#). The judge ruled that Trump's Third Executive Order "suffers from precisely the same maladies as

its predecessor: it lacks sufficient findings that the entry of more than 150 million nationals from six specified countries would be 'detrimental to the interests of the United States.' ”

On 18 October 2017, a federal judge in Maryland temporarily enjoined the Trump administration from enforcing Trump's Proclamation. The judge held that Trump's own statements showed it was an unconstitutional ban on Muslims. [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#).

Trump's Third Attempt to Ban Muslim Terrorists from traveling to the USA

On 24 October 2017, Trump issued his Third Executive Order on immigration.

[Executive Order 13815](#) resumes refugee admissions, but with new restrictions on refugees from 11 unnamed nations. *The Washington Post* identified the 11 nations: "Egypt, Iran, Libya, South Sudan, Yemen, Sudan, Iraq, Mali, North Korea, Somalia, and Syria. All are majority-Muslim except for South Sudan and North Korea." [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#).

Federal trial courts in Maryland and Hawaii enjoined Trump's administration from enforcing his third Executive Order. But on 4 December 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Trump's administration could enforce his third Executive Order while litigation continued in lower courts. [SCOTUS](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#).

On 8 December 2017, judges for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit heard oral arguments in the case from Maryland. The judges questioned the attorneys from the U.S. Justice Department over Trump's tweets and campaign promises that showed a bias against Muslims. [Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 22 December 2017, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in Seattle ruled in the case from Hawaii that Trump had exceeded his lawful authority in his third Executive Order. The judges stayed their decision until after the U.S. Supreme Court rules on this issue. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).

Trump's Rude & Obnoxious Remarks

Trump's rude treatment of Malcolm Turnbull, Prime Minister of Australia

On 2 February 2017, *The Washington Post* reported on a telephone call on 28 January between Trump and Malcolm Turnbull, Prime Minister of Australia.

President Trump blasted Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull over a refugee agreement and boasted about the magnitude of his electoral college win, according to senior U.S. officials briefed on the Saturday [28 Jan] exchange. Then, 25 minutes into what was expected to be an hour-long call, Trump abruptly ended it.

At one point, Trump informed Turnbull that he had spoken with four other world leaders that day — including Russian President Vladimir Putin — and that “this was the worst call by far.”

Trump’s behavior suggests that he is capable of subjecting world leaders, including close allies, to a version of the vitriol he frequently employs against political adversaries and news organizations in speeches and on Twitter.

....

The characterizations provide insight into Trump’s temperament and approach to the diplomatic requirements of his job as the nation’s chief executive, a role in which he continues to employ both the uncompromising negotiating tactics he honed as a real estate developer and the bombastic style he exhibited as a reality television personality.

Greg Miller & Philip Rucker, “‘This was the worst call by far’: Trump badgered, bragged and abruptly ended phone call with Australian leader,” [Washington Post](#), 2 Feb 2017.

The New York Times reported:

A phone call between President Trump and the Australian prime minister is threatening to develop into a diplomatic rift between two stalwart allies after the two men exchanged harsh words over refugee policy, and Mr. Trump abruptly ended the call.

....

The flare-up — and conflicting characterizations of the call from Mr. Trump and Mr. Turnbull — threatened to do lasting damage to relations between the two countries and could drive Canberra closer to China, which has a robust trading relationship with Australia and is competing with Washington to become the dominant force in the Asia-Pacific region.

....

“I’ve seen that report,” Mr. Turnbull said of the [Washington Post](#) account, “and I’m not going to comment on the conversation, other than to say that in the course of the conversation, as you know and as was confirmed by the president’s official spokesman in the White House, the president assured me that he would continue with, honor the agreement we entered into with the Obama administration with respect to refugee resettlement.”

Pressed about Mr. Trump’s tone, and whether the president ended the call by hanging up, Mr. Turnbull refused to comment. “It’s better that these things, these conversations are conducted candidly, frankly, privately,” he said.

Glenn Thrush & Michelle Innis, “U.S.-Australia Rift Is Possible After Trump Ends Call With Prime Minister,” [New York Times](#), 2 Feb 2017.

Turnbull was a gentleman who refused to disclose his confidential conversation with Trump. Turnbull characterized the conversation as “very frank and forthright”.

[Australian Broadcasting.](#)

Afterwards, Trump tweeted that his conversation with Turnbull was "very civil" and contrary reports by journalists were "fake news":

Thank you to Prime Minister of Australia for telling the truth about our very civil conversation that FAKE NEWS media lied about. Very nice!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:34 ET, 3 Feb 2017.

On 3 August 2017, the [Washington Post](#) published a transcript of the 28 January telephone call from Trump to Turnbull. Toward the end, Trump actually said to Turnbull: "As far as I am concerned that is enough Malcom [sic]. I have had it. I have been making these calls all day and this is the most unpleasant call all day. Putin was a pleasant call. This is ridiculous."

Trump's tweet of 3 February contains at least three false statements: (1) Trump's conversation was *not* "very civil", (2) the journalists did *not* "lie", (3) and the journalists reports were accurate, *not* "FAKE NEWS".

Trump proclaims himself to be a master negotiator. But the transcript of his telephone call with Turnbull shows two glaring problems in this negotiation:

1. Trump, as usual, gets his facts wrong. Trump asserts 8 times that the agreement between Obama and Turnbull requires the USA to accept 2000 refugees from Australia. At one point, Turnbull says the number in the written agreement is 1250, *not* 2000, and the agreement only requires the USA to vet the refugees, *not* accept all of them.
2. The discussion should have been about immigration policy and vetting refugees. Instead, Trump makes it personal, showing his great concern with his image amongst his supporters in the USA. For example, Trump says: "This is going to kill me. I am the world's greatest person that does not want to let people into the country. And now I am agreeing to take 2,000 people and I agree I can vet them, but that puts me in a bad position. It makes me look so bad and I have only been here a week."

So, not only was Trump rude to Turnbull, but also Trump is *not* the master negotiator that he claimed to be.

Trump's pejorative appellations of his opponents

Trump has a habit of putting a pejorative label on his opponents (e.g., Lying Ted [Cruz], Crooked Hillary [Clinton], Crying Chuck [Schumer], etc.). Trump's tweets provide many examples of this rude, ad hominem attack by Trump.

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump labeled one his Republican opponents, U.S. Senator Ted Cruz from Texas. Beginning 20 Feb 2016 and ending on 3 May 2016, Trump sent a total of 26 tweets that mentioned either "Lying Ted" or "Lyin' Ted".

I will be on @foxandfriends at 8:30 A.M. Will be talking about lightweight Marco Rubio and lying Ted Cruz!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 27 Feb 2016.

Wow, Lyin' Ted Cruz really went wacko today. Made all sorts of crazy charges. Can't function under pressure — not very presidential. Sad!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 3 May 2016.

On 3 May 2016, Trump *falsely* said the father of Ted Cruz was associated with Lee Harvey Oswald, near the time that Oswald assassinated President John F. Kennedy.

On 22 April 2016, the [Miami Herald](#) had discredited the original story in the *National Enquirer*. [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [PolitiFact](#) (“Trump’s claim implausible at best and ridiculous at worst.”); [FactCheck.org](#). On 4 May 2016, the [Washington Post](#) gave Trump's claim a Four Pinocchios rating.

Most of Trump's targets are Democrats. Hillary Clinton became "Crooked Hillary". From 17 April 2016 to 25 July 2017, Trump had more than 100 tweets that mentioned "Crooked Hillary".

Crooked Hillary Clinton, perhaps the most dishonest person to have ever run for the presidency, is also one of the all time great enablers!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 29 April 2016.

This election is being rigged by the media pushing false and unsubstantiated charges, and outright lies, in order to elect Crooked Hillary!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15 Oct 2016.

More than eight months after Trump defeated Hillary, Trump was still calling his former opponent "Crooked Hillary":

My son Donald openly gave his e-mails to the media & authorities whereas Crooked Hillary Clinton deleted (& acid washed) her 33,000 e-mails!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 22 July 2017.

Trump Jr. publicly disclosed his e-mails about a 9 June 2016 meeting with Russians after *The New York Times* told Trump Jr. they would publish some of his e-mails.

On 16 October 2017, Trump again tweeted about "Crooked Hillary":

I was recently asked if Crooked Hillary Clinton is going to run in 2020? My answer was, "I hope so!"

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:12 EDT, 16 Oct 2017.

Chuck Schumer, leader of Democrats in the U.S. Senate, became "Cryin' Chuck":

I certainly hope the Democrats do not force Nancy P out. That would be very bad for the Republican Party — and please let Cryin' Chuck stay!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 22 June 2017.

On 24 July 2017, Adam Schiff, the ranking Democrat on the U.S. House of Representatives Intelligence Committee (which is investigating Trump's campaign relationship with Russians), became "Sleazy Schiff":

Sleazy Adam Schiff, the totally biased Congressman looking into "Russia," spends all of his time on television pushing the Dem loss excuse!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 24 July 2017.

On 25 October 2017, Tom Steyer announced he was spending ten million dollars of his personal money on advertisements urging the impeachment of Trump. [Forbes](#); [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#). Trump retaliated by calling Steyer "wacky and totally unhinged":

Wacky & totally unhinged Tom Steyer, who has been fighting me and my Make America Great Again agenda from beginning, never wins elections!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:58 EDT, 27 Oct 2017.

Notice that Trump provides *no* evidence that Steyer is mentally ill. Trump is simply using unproven allegations of mental illness as an insult.

Trump called Comey: "crazy, a real nut job"

On 19 May 2017, the [New York Times](#) reported that on 10 May Trump told Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov that "I just fired the head of the F.B.I. He was crazy, a real nut job. I faced great pressure because of Russia. That's taken off." See also [Associated Press](#).

Let me comment on Trump's denigrating Comey as "crazy, a real nut job". Trump's style of speaking includes childish *ad hominem* attacks and personal insults on his opponents. Trump's implication is that anyone who opposes Trump is mentally ill or Evil, which may be an expression of Trump's narcissistic character flaw. Linguists have noticed that Trump's extemporaneous speech has a very limited vocabulary, characteristic of a third-grade or fourth-grade pupil (i.e., 9 year old child). In August 2015, [Politico](#) observed that Trump "lives to diminish his foes by calling them 'losers,' 'total losers,' 'haters,' 'dumb,' 'idiots,' 'morons,' 'stupid,' 'dummy' and 'disgusting'." In March 2016, the [Washington Post](#) and [The Independent](#) reported on an academic paper that showed Trump's grammar and vocabulary was at a lower level than other politicians (except G.W. Bush's grammar was even lower than Trump's).

While childish speech and insults are *not* impeachable offenses, they limit the president's ability to form a consensus with educated people. The insults are also needlessly abrasive, and interfere with the president's ability to be a leader. In my opinion, Trump's childish speech and insults make him more unfit to be president than any crimes he may have committed.

Trump's attacks on Joe Scarborough & Mika Brzezinski

Since mid-2016, Trump has been attacking Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski — the two co-hosts of the MSNBC "Morning Joe" cable television program. Scarborough and Brzezinski have questioned Trump's mental stability and suggested that Trump is mentally unfit to be president. (See, e.g., [Legal Insurrection](#); [Washington Post](#).) It is the job of journalists and commentators to point out mistakes, failures, and other problems with the

U.S. Government.

Back on 22 August 2016, Trump accused Mika of being "off the wall, a neurotic and not very bright mess!"

Tried watching low-rated @Morning_Joe this morning, unwatchable! @morningmika is off the wall, a neurotic and not very bright mess!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:21 ET, 22 Aug 2016.

On 2 Sep 2016, Trump accused Mika of a "mental breakdown":

Just heard that crazy and very dumb @morningmika had a mental breakdown while talking about me on the low ratings @Morning_Joe. Joe a mess!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:28 ET, 2 Sep 2016.

On 3 June 2017, Trump tweeted:

I don't watch or do @Morning_Joe anymore. Small audience, low ratings! I hear Mika has gone wild with hate. Joe is Joe. They lost their way!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:05 EDT, 3 June 2017.

Then on the morning of 29 June 2017, Trump erupted with two obnoxious tweets:

I heard poorly rated @Morning_Joe speaks badly of me (don't watch anymore). Then how come low I.Q. Crazy Mika, along with Psycho Joe, came..

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:52 EDT, 29 June 2017.

...to Mar-a-Lago 3 nights in a row around New Year's Eve, and insisted on joining me. She was bleeding badly from a face-lift. I said no!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:58 EDT, 29 June 2017.

On 29 June 2017, several Republicans in the U.S. Senate promptly objected to Trump's rude remarks: Susan Collins of Maine, Lindsey O. Graham of South Carolina, Ben Sasse of Nebraska, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, and James Lankford of Oklahoma. (See bibliography below.)

The Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Paul D. Ryan, a Republican, said: "Obviously, I don't see that as an appropriate comment. What we're trying to do around here is improve the civility and tone of the debate, and [Trump's tweets] obviously does not do that." (See bibliography below.)

CNN senior media correspondent Brian Stelter [tweeted](#) a photograph of Mika Brzezinski at Mar-a-Lago on New Year's Eve 2016. There are *no* stitches on her face and she is *not* bleeding. That photograph suggests Trump has his facts *wrong* about Mika "bleeding badly from a face-lift". So Trump's 08:58 tweet on 29 June is both offensive and inaccurate. The [Boston Globe](#) published two photographs of Brzezinski at Mar-a-Lago under the headline: "This is what Mika Brzezinski actually looked like on New Year's Eve". The [Washington Post](#) reports a photograph shows Brzezinski "smiling broadly".

On the morning of 30 June 2017, *The Washington Post* published an opinion written by Brzezinski and Scarborough that said:

Mr. Trump claims that we asked to join him at Mar-a-Lago three nights in a row. That

is false. He also claimed that he refused to see us. That is laughable.

The president-elect invited us both to dinner on Dec. 30. Joe attended because Mika did not want to go. After listening to the president-elect talk about his foreign policy plans, Joe was asked by a disappointed Mr. Trump the next day if Mika could also visit Mar-a-Lago that night. She reluctantly agreed to go. After we arrived, the president-elect pulled us into his family's living quarters with his wife, Melania, where we had a pleasant conversation. We politely declined his repeated invitations to attend a New Year's Eve party, and we were back in our car within 15 minutes.

Mr. Trump also claims that Mika was "bleeding badly from a face-lift." That is also a lie.

....

.... And though it is no one's business, the president's petulant personal attack against yet another woman's looks compels us to report that Mika has never had a face-lift. Mika Brzezinski & Joe Scarborough, "Donald Trump is not well," [Washington Post](#), 05:10 EDT, 30 June 2017.

Brzezinski & Scarborough's opinion in *The Washington Post* also contained a new accusation about Trump's White House attempting to extort them:

This year, top White House staff members warned that the National Enquirer was planning to publish a negative article about us unless we begged the president to have the story spiked. We ignored their desperate pleas.

Ibid.

Then Trump tweeted:

Watched low rated @Morning_Joe for first time in long time. FAKE NEWS. He called me to stop a National Enquirer article. I said no! Bad show

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 05:55 EDT, 30 June 2017.

Notice that Trump is *no* longer asserting his false statement about Mika "bleeding badly from a face-lift." Instead, Trump had invented a new false statement about Scarborough calling Trump to stop a *National Enquirer* article. Scarborough replied to Trump, in which Scarborough denied calling Trump:

Yet another lie. I have texts from your top aides and phone records. Also, those records show I haven't spoken with you in many months.

Joe Scarborough, [tweet](#), 09:02 EDT, 30 June 2017.

Then Scarborough made a final tweet to Trump:

Why do you keep lying about things that are so easily disproven? What is wrong with you?

Joe Scarborough, [tweet](#). 09:03 EDT, 30 June 2017.

On 1 July 2017, Trump tweeted in the third consecutive day of Trump's feud:

Crazy Joe Scarborough and dumb as a rock Mika are not bad people, but their low rated show is dominated by their NBC bosses. Too bad!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:20 EDT, 1 July 2017.

Bibliography on 29-30 June 2017:

- Jenna Johnson, "Trump lashes out at 'Morning Joe' co-host Mika Brzezinski on Twitter," [Washington Post](#), 16:23 EDT, 29 June 2017.
- J. Freedom du Lac & Peter Holley, "'Mr. President, please grow up': Lawmakers slam Trump's 'vile' Mika Brzezinski tweets," [Washington Post](#), 16:47 EDT, 29 June 2017.
- Kelsey Tamborrino & Nolan D. McCaskill, "Republicans condemn Trump for crude tweets about 'Morning Joe' host," [Politico](#), 14:56 EDT, 29 June 2017.
- Brian Bennett, "'This has to stop.' Trump's tweets bashing 'Morning Joe' hosts draw the ire of Republican leaders," [Los Angeles Times](#), 16:10 PDT, 29 June 2017.
- Glenn Thrush & Maggie Haberman, "Trump Mocks Mika Brzezinski; Says She Was 'Bleeding Badly From a Face-Lift'," [New York Times](#), 29 June 2017.
- Laurie Kellman & Jonathan Lemire, "Trump gets it from all sides for trash-talking MSNBC hosts," [Associated Press](#), 29 June 2017.
- Jenna Johnson & Abby Phillip, "'It is really not normal': Both sides condemn Trump for vulgar tweet about TV host," [Washington Post](#), 21:16 EDT, 29 June 2017. ("[Trump's] words amounted to perhaps the most caustic insult that Trump has publicly hurled at another American since taking office, going beyond his usual name-calling and flame-throwing.")
- J. Freedom du Lac & Jenna Johnson, "Mika Brzezinski explains what President Trump's tweets reveal about him," [Washington Post](#), 11:57 EDT, 30 June 2017.
- Michael M. Grynbaum, "'Morning Joe' Hosts and Trump Bring National Enquirer Into Their Feud," [New York Times](#), 30 June 2017. ("... Mr. Scarborough told his viewers that the White House had urged him to seek Mr. Trump's forgiveness for critical coverage, lest The Enquirer, which is controlled by a Trump ally, run a story detailing his involvement with Ms. Brzezinski, who is now his fiancée.")
- Sam Clench, "Donald Trump keeps escalating his war with Mika Brzezinski," [news.com.au](#), 2 July 2017.

On 29 November 2017, Trump again tweeted about Joe Scarborough, with Trump suggesting that Joe was somehow responsible for a staff member's death:

So now that Matt Lauer is gone when will the Fake News practitioners at NBC be terminating the contract of Phil Griffin? And will they terminate low ratings Joe Scarborough based on the "unsolved mystery" that took place in Florida years ago? Investigate!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:14 EST, 29 November 2017.

The [Washington Post](#) explains that in July 2001, when Joe Scarborough was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, one of his staff members in his Florida office had a "cardiac arrhythmia secondary to valvular heart disease" that caused her to collapse, hit her head on a desk, and die from "acute subdural hematoma". There is *no* "unsolved mystery". Trump is relying on 16-year old conspiracy theories to call for the termination of Joe Scarborough's employment at MSNBC.

[PolitiFact](#) concluded that "Trump's claim rates Pants on Fire!". The [Associated Press](#) also concluded that the staffer's death was not a mystery.

On 30 November, Joe Scarborough cited anonymous Trump associates as saying in 2016 that Trump suffers from "early stages of dementia". [The Hill](#). In my opinion, *if* it is true that Trump has dementia, then Trump is definitely unfit to be president.

Trump slams CNN

On 2 July 2017 at 09:21 EDT, Trump [tweeted](#) a wrestling video showing Trump body slamming a character identified as CNN. Democrats in Congress were immediately aghast at Trump's use of violence against journalists. [Washington Post](#)(10:24); [Washington Post](#)(14:15); [Washington Post](#)(19:47); [Washington Post](#)(21:48); [New York Times](#); [CNN](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

I think the Democrats are overreacting. By the end of June 2017, every informed person in the USA already knows that Trump hates the mainstream news media. And it is also blatantly obvious that Trump himself is rude, obnoxious, abrasive, childish, So Trump's inappropriate tweet about CNN is a minor incident that is consistent with Trump's personality.

The real issue — which politicians in Congress are avoiding — is how to remove Trump from the presidency. (See [below](#).)

Other major issues — which are also being ignored — are Trump's failure to stop North Korea's development of nuclear weapons and ICBMs, Trump's failure to stop Islamic terrorists from traveling to the USA, Trump's failure to build the wall along the Mexican border, amongst many other broken campaign promises by Trump.

29 Nov 2017: Trump urges boycott of CNN

As Trump continued his petty feud with journalists at CNN, CNN announced it would not attend the White House Christmas party for journalists: "CNN will not be attending this year's White House Christmas party. In light of the President's continued attacks on freedom of the press and CNN, we do not feel it is appropriate to celebrate with him as his invited guests. We will send a White House reporting team to the event and report on it if news warrants." [Politico](#). Trump retaliated with a call for Americans to boycott CNN.

Great, and we should boycott Fake News CNN. Dealing with them is a total waste of time!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:49 EST, 29 Nov 2017.

Trump's "Great" refers to a sarcastic [tweet](#) by Sarah Sanders (Trump's spokeswoman) about CNN's decision not to attend Trump's holiday party for journalists. [Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#).

My concern is that the president of the USA should *not* be calling for boycotts of businesses in the USA. This is especially true of the news media, which are protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

9 Dec 2017: Trump attacks CNN again

On 8 December, CNN made a [mistake](#) in one of their news stories. *After* CNN corrected their mistake, Trump blasted CNN:

Fake News CNN made a vicious and purposeful mistake yesterday. They were caught red handed, just like lonely Brian Ross at ABC News (who should be immediately fired for his “mistake”). Watch to see if @CNN fires those responsible, or was it just gross incompetence?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:02 EST, 9 Dec 2017.

CNN'S slogan is CNN, THE MOST TRUSTED NAME IN NEWS. Everyone knows this is not true, that this could, in fact, be a fraud on the American Public. There are many outlets that are far more trusted than Fake News CNN. Their slogan should be CNN, THE LEAST TRUSTED NAME IN NEWS!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:21 EST, 9 Dec 2017.

Trump is wrong about the word "fraud". Trump admits "everyone knows" the CNN slogan is "not true", so there can be *no* fraud on the American people. Trump gives *no* evidence to support his claim that CNN made "a vicious and purposeful mistake". The [Washington Post](#) reported on Trump's attacks on CNN.

It is so sad that Trump's father wasted his money on tuition at expensive private colleges that Donald Trump attended, when Donald still misuses words and Donald is unable to make a convincing argument. Note that CNN — unlike Trump — corrected its mistake.

24 Dec 2017: Trump steps on CNN

On 23 December, a Trump supporter in Oregon posted an [tweet](#) showing the sole of Trump's shoe with a squashed bug labeled "CNN" and blood splatter. On 24 Dec, Trump himself retweeted the image. [Washington Post](#); [Newsweek](#).

9 Dec 2017: Trump demands *Washington Post* journalist be fired

On 9 December, a journalist at *The Washington Post* posted a photograph of empty seats at a Trump rally in Pensacola Florida and erroneously asserted the photo was during the rally. The journalist [apologized](#) for his mistake. Note that the journalist posted the photograph at his personal [Twitter](#) account, and **not** in *The Post*. The erroneous interpretation of the photo was available on Twitter for only about 20 minutes.

Trump demanded that *The Post* terminate the employment of the journalist.

.@daveweigel of the Washington Post just admitted that his picture was a FAKE (fraud?) showing an almost empty arena last night for my speech in Pensacola when, in fact, he knew the arena was packed (as shown also on T.V.). FAKE NEWS, he should be fired.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 18:14 EST, 9 Dec 2017.

Trump's assertion of "fraud" is wrong, because the journalist did *not* know the photograph was taken before Trump's rally began. Fraud requires that the perpetrator have actual knowledge of a false statement. If Trump is going to use legal words (e.g., fraud), then Trump should understand the definition of those words.

The [Washington Post](#) and the [New York Times](#) reported on the mistake. In my opinion, this was a minor mistake and *not* worth the anger that Trump displayed, especially since the error was promptly deleted and the journalist had already apologized.

On 10 December, Trump summarized his obsession with occasional errors by journalists, by calling them "a stain on America".

Very little discussion of all the purposely false and defamatory stories put out this week by the Fake News Media. They are out of control — correct reporting means nothing to them. Major lies written, then forced to be withdrawn after they are exposed...a stain on America!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:18 EST, 10 Dec 2017.

Ironically, Trump ignores that the number of his own factual errors, and the factual errors by the White House spokesperson, greatly exceed all of the errors by journalists. It is Trump and his cronies who are the real stain on America.

Anthony Scaramucci explodes

On 21 July 2017, Trump appointed Anthony Scaramucci to be the White House Director of Communications. White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer immediately resigned in protest.

On 26 July 2017, Ryan Lizza of *The New Yorker* [tweeted](#) that Scaramucci will have dinner at the White House with Trump and two other people.

On the night of 26 July 2017, an angry Scaramucci called Lizza and Scaramucci demanded to know the source of Lizza's information, which Scaramucci considered a "leak". During the telephone conversation with Lizza, Scaramucci used numerous profanities, expletives, and vulgar expressions. Excerpts of the conversation are available at [The New Yorker](#) and the [New York Times](#).

Several major news organizations reported Scaramucci's conversation with Lizza. [Washington Post](#)(17:56); [Associated Press](#); [CNN](#); [Washington Post](#)(21:44); [Washington Post](#)(28July).

On 27 July 2017, Priebus resigned as White House chief of staff, after Scaramucci told Lizza that "Reince is a fucking paranoid schizophrenic, a paranoiac." The resignation of Priebus is tersely described [below](#).

In a related story, on 26 July [Politico](#) used a Freedom of Information Act request to lawfully obtain Scaramucci's financial disclosure form from the Export-Import Bank. Scaramucci assumed White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus had leaked the financial disclosure form, so Scaramucci threatened to call the FBI to investigate the leak. Scaramucci called the alleged leak a "felony". [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

On 27 July, the [Associated Press](#) also obtained Scaramucci's financial disclosure form from the Export-Import Bank. Scaramucci owns more than US\$ 50 million in assets. My comment is that I am distrustful of politicians and government officials who are themselves extremely wealthy. But this essay is *not* the place to discuss the different values and different concerns between the wealthy and the middle-class.

Scaramucci has an anger management problem when he explodes about the publication of his publicly available financial disclosure form at the Export-Import Bank, and then explodes again about publication of being invited to dinner with Trump. Scaramucci's profanities, expletives, and vulgar expressions are a new low point for Trump's White House senior staff.

Scaramucci was fired on 31 July, after a mere ten-day tenure. See [below](#).

"Rocket Man" in North Korea

On 17 September 2017, Trump sarcastically referred to Kim Jong Un as "Rocket Man":
I spoke with President Moon of South Korea last night. Asked him how Rocket Man is doing. Long gas lines forming in North Korea. Too bad!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:53 EDT, 17 Sep 2017.

Taunting an angry, hostile nation that has nuclear weapons is *not* a mature, rational act. Trump's continuing invective and threats are making the North Korean problem worse, as explained in my separate essay on [North Korea](#), which has citations to the following quotations.

Astoundingly, Trump again called Kim "Rocket Man" in Trump's formal speech to the United Nations General Assembly on 19 September 2017.

In a speech in Birmingham, Alabama on the night of 22 September 2017, Trump called Kim "Little Rocketman".

In a late night tweet on 23 September 2017, Trump said:
Just heard Foreign Minister of North Korea speak at U.N. If he echoes thoughts of Little Rocket Man, they won't be around much longer!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 23:08 EDT, 23 Sep 2017.

On 1 October 2017, Trump tweeted:

I told Rex Tillerson, our wonderful Secretary of State, that he is wasting his time trying to negotiate with Little Rocket Man...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:30 EDT, 1 Oct 2017.

Being nice to Rocket Man hasn't worked in 25 years, why would it work now? Clinton failed, Bush failed, and Obama failed. I won't fail.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 15:01 EDT, 1 Oct 2017.

On 29 November 2017, Trump gave a speech on alleged "tax reform" in St. Charles, Missouri. Trump went off script and called Kim Jong Un "Lil' Rocket Man" and said "[Kim] is a sick puppy." [Politico](#); [Associated Press](#); [USA Today](#).

On 30 November 2017, Trump again insulted Kim:

The Chinese Envoy, who just returned from North Korea, seems to have had no impact on Little Rocket Man. Hard to believe his people, and the military, put up with living in such horrible conditions. Russia and China condemned the launch.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:25 EST, 30 Nov 2017.

Pejorative Labels for Mass Murderer

Islamic Terrorists

Donald Trump promptly tweeted about a terror attack on the London subway on 15 Sep 2017.

Another attack in London by a loser terrorist. These are sick and demented people who were in the sights of Scotland Yard. Must be proactive!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 06:42 EDT, 15 September 2017.

Trump simply chose a pejorative word, "loser", and applied it to terrorists. But not all terrorists are losers, some terrorists (e.g., the male terrorist in San Bernardino, California) have apparently been successful. Trump is wrong again when he asserts that all terrorists are "sick and demented". There is *no* evidence that the terrorist who perpetrated the 15 Sep attack on the London subway is mentally ill.

On 31 October 2017, Saipov, an Islamic terrorist, killed at least 8 people in New York City.

Less than three hours after the attack, Donald Trump tweeted:

In NYC, looks like another attack by a very sick and deranged person. Law enforcement is following this closely. NOT IN THE U.S.A.!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 17:30 EDT, 31 Oct 2017.

My comment is that at the time that Trump made this tweet, there is *no* evidence that the perpetrator was "very sick and deranged". The suspect was an Islamic terrorist: the suspect said "Allahu Akbar" after exiting the truck that he used to run over bicyclists and collide with a school bus. Also the suspect left a handwritten note in the truck that pledged allegiance to ISIL. Once again, Trump avoids using the phrase "Islamic terrorist" when that

label is appropriate.

Furthermore, Trump should avoid making comments about the defendant in criminal trials. A president's comments could prejudice the legal right of the defendant to a fair trial.

The following day, Trump twice called the Islamic terrorist an "animal" — meaning the terrorist is *not* human.

My administration is coordinating closely between federal and local officials to investigate the attack and to further investigate this animal who did the attacking. And updates will be provided as available.

....

.... And we want to get rid of chain migration. This man that came in — or whatever you want to call him — brought in, with him, [23] other people.

....

That was a horrible event, and we have to stop it, and we have to stop it cold. We also have to come up with punishment that's far quicker and far greater than the punishment these animals are getting right now. They'll go through court for years. And at the end, they'll be — who knows what happens.

We need quick justice and we need strong justice — much quicker and much stronger than we have right now. Because what we have right now is a joke and it's a laughingstock. And no wonder so much of this stuff takes place.

....

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you want the assailant from New York sent to Gitmo?

THE PRESIDENT: I would certainly consider that, yes.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump in Cabinet Meeting," [White House](#), noon, 1 Nov 2017.

I am astounded that the president of the USA would not only label Islamic terrorists as "animals", but also attack the U.S. judicial system as a "joke" and "laughingstock". Sending Saipov — a legal U.S. resident who is accused of committing a crime inside the USA — to a military tribunal at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba would be unprecedented. Trump inconsistently complains about the slowness of trials in civilian federal courts, but then Trump considers sending Saipov to the military tribunal at Guantanamo, which history shows is even slower than the civilian federal courts.

As Trump spirals downward in his ignorance of U.S. criminal law, Trump assumes — without a trial in open court — that Saipov is guilty, then Trump declares the punishment.

NYC terrorist was happy as he asked to hang ISIS flag in his hospital room. He killed 8 people, badly injured 12. SHOULD GET DEATH PENALTY!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 23:43 EDT, 1 Nov 2017.

On the morning of 2 Nov 2017 — about 20 hours after his error at the press briefing before a meeting in the White House — Trump recognized his error in considering sending Saipov to a military tribunal in Guantanamo.

Would love to send the NYC terrorist to Guantanamo but statistically that process takes much longer than going through the Federal system...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:50 EDT, 2 Nov 2017.

...There is also something appropriate about keeping him in the home of the horrible crime he committed. Should move fast. DEATH PENALTY!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:54 EDT, 2 Nov 2017.

Note that Trump ignores criminal jurisdiction statutes and well-established legal procedure in federal criminal cases. Those statutes and that procedure are the real reasons why Saipov should be tried in federal court in Manhattan. Instead, Trump considers only the speed of the trial, which gives Trump the correct answer for the wrong reason.

Trying a criminal defendant in the jurisdiction that was the scene of the crime makes sense, because the witnesses are located there. Also, the prosecutor and judge may wish to take jurors to the scene of the crime, so the jurors can better understand the location — something that is more convenient if the trial is near the crime scene. Sometimes a trial is moved to a different jurisdiction, to avoid the effects of pre-trial publicity on the jurors. But in Saipov's case the pre-trial publicity was nationwide, so moving the trial (e.g., to Buffalo, NY) has little advantage for Saipov.

Again the president of the USA recommends the punishment before the criminal trial has begun, something that is outrageously inappropriate. In demanding the death penalty for Saipov, Trump has flouted the legal presumption of innocence for criminal defendants, until the prosecution *proves* them guilty. I remember in 1970, during Charles Manson's trial in California state court, when President Nixon commented that Manson “was guilty, directly or indirectly, of eight murders without reason”. [New York Times](#). Manson's attorney moved for a mistrial, which motion was denied. Manson himself at his trial held up a newspaper with the headline "Manson guilty, Nixon says". It has taken Republicans 47 years to find another demagogue who makes inflammatory statements that excite the voters who support the president.

See Jennifer Rubin's editorial in the [Washington Post](#): "... one cannot ignore [Trump's] unwillingness to defend the Constitution, of which courts are a part, in blatant disregard of his oath. [Trump's] meek retreat this morning [2 Nov] underscores just how ignorant he is — and how willing to make irresponsible assertions."

On 3 November, Trump again called Saipov an "animal".

ISIS just claimed the Degenerate Animal who killed, and so badly wounded, the wonderful people on the West Side, was "their soldier."

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:03 EDT, 3 Nov 2017.

On the night of 1 October 2017, Stephen Paddock sat in a hotel room in Las Vegas on the 32nd floor and fired rifles at innocent people at a music concert across the street. He killed 58 people and wounded 527 people in the worst mass shooting in U.S. history. Paddock was a 64 year old wealthy retired accountant and retired apartment manager, with *no* criminal history.

On 2 October, in a formal [statement](#) from the White House, Trump said "It was an act of pure evil." Obviously, Paddock committed a major homicide, but it seems unnecessary for Trump to talk about "Evil", as if Satan himself was guiding Paddock. Trump goes on to mention God 6 times and quote the Christian Bible. Trump's statement becomes a Christian sermon.

On 3 October, as Trump departed from the White House for a trip to Puerto Rico and then on to Las Vegas, the Associated Press quoted Trump:

President Donald Trump on Tuesday [3 Oct] called the gunman who killed 59 people and wounded hundreds others at a music festival in Las Vegas a "very, very sick individual." Trump spoke to reporters as he departed for a trip to hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico. He called the gunman "demented" and said "we're looking into him very seriously."

Jonathan Lemire & Catherine Lucey, "Trump calls Las Vegas shooter 'sick' and 'demented man'," [Associated Press](#), 3 Oct 2017.

The Guardian newspaper in England gave the complete quotation by Trump:

[Paddock] was a sick man, a demented man. A lot of problems, I guess, and we're looking into him very very seriously. But we are dealing with a very very sick individual.

"Names of Las Vegas victims emerge as police reveal gun stockpile — as it happened," [The Guardian](#), 08:41 EDT, 3 Oct 2017.

On 4 October, after meeting with victims and physicians in one Las Vegas hospital, Trump said:

QUESTION: Any indication of a motive, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet, and we're looking. I can tell you, it's a very sick man. He was a very demented person. We haven't seen that yet, but you will know very soon if we find something. We're looking very, very hard.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump After Meeting with Patients and Medical Professionals," [White House](#), 4 Oct 2017.

On 3 October, when Trump proclaimed that Paddock was a "very, very sick individual", and "demented", there was *no* evidence publicly disclosed in Nevada that Paddock was mentally ill. Trump apparently invented these diagnoses of mental illness to make Paddock conform to Trump's beliefs about mass murderers. This is another example of Trump spewing fictitious "facts".

Trump has a habit of diagnosing mental illness in someone who Trump strongly disagrees. (See, e.g., Trump called Comey "crazy, a real nut job" on 10 May 2017; Trump's 29 June 2017 tweet calling Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski "Crazy Mika, along with Psycho

Joe"; on 22 September 2017 Trump called Kim Jong Un a "madman".) Such use of alleged mental illness as a pejorative label is childish.

Moreover, there is evidence that Paddock carefully planned his mass murder, which is evidence of premeditation by a sane criminal. On the other hand, *if* Paddock is unable to distinguish right from wrong, then he is *not* legally responsible for his actions. The president of the USA *should* be careful not to build a defense for mass murderers. In this case, Paddock committed suicide before police could arrest him, but in general the president should also avoid commenting on criminal cases before the trial and appeals are concluded.

5 Nov 2017: Devin Kelley

At 11:20 on Sunday, 5 November 2017, Devin Kelley walked into a Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas and began firing with an assault rifle. He killed 26 people and wounded approximately 20 other people, in the worst shooting in Texas history. Sutherland Springs is approximately 30 miles east of San Antonio, the nearest big city. [Express-Tribune](#); [KSAT](#); [Associated Press](#).

After Kelley assaulted his wife and her child in 2012, the U.S. Air Force gave Kelley a dishonorable discharge. In 2014, Kelley was convicted of misdemeanor animal cruelty for injuring a dog. That appears to be Kelley's entire criminal history.

At a press conference in Japan during Trump's trip to Asia, Trump said the following about this mass murder:

... I think that mental health is your problem here. This was a very — based on preliminary reports — very deranged individual. A lot of problems over a long period of time. We have a lot of mental health problems in our country, as do other countries.

But this isn't a guns situation. I mean, we could go into it, but it's a little bit soon to go into it. But, fortunately, somebody else had a gun that was shooting in the opposite direction, otherwise it would have been — as bad it was, it would have been much worse.

But this is a mental health problem at the highest level. It's a very, very sad event. These are great people, and a very, very sad event. But that's the way I view it. Thank you.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Abe of Japan in Joint Press Conference — Tokyo, Japan," [White House](#), 6 Nov 2017.

I have been reading news articles at the websites of the San Antonio *Express-News* newspaper, KSAT television in San Antonio, as well as the Associated Press. At the time of Trump's remarks about "very deranged individual" there was absolutely *no* indication by journalists that Devin Kelley had any mental illness. Even 15 hours after Trump's remarks about Kelley's alleged mental illness, there are still *no* credible reports by journalists of that alleged mental illness. There is *no* mention that Kelley had been either confined to a mental hospital or treated by a psychiatrist.

As documented in this essay, Trump has a long, well-established history of creating false "facts" to support his conclusions. *If* Trump has real facts, then he must mention a specific diagnosis of Kelley's mental illness *and* cite a credible source for that diagnosis. With Trump's vagueness, I conclude that Trump is again asserting his delusional beliefs as if they were real facts.

Trump blaming the attack on mental illness appears to be a way for Trump to avoid discussing the need for legal restrictions on sale of assault rifles, high-capacity magazines, etc.

On the evening of 6 November 2017, the [Associated Press](#) disputed Trump's allegation that Paddock and Kelley were both mentally ill. Kelley was apparently motivated to attack the church that was attended by his wife's mother, in a domestic dispute.

On 7 November, Trump was in South Korea, where he gave another press conference. Here is what Trump said about the massacre in Texas:

QUESTION [by Ali Vitali from NBC]: Thank you, Mr. President. You've talked about wanting to put extreme vetting on people trying to come into the United States, but I wonder if you would consider extreme vetting for people trying to buy a gun.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, you're bringing up a situation that probably shouldn't be discussed too much right now. We could let a little time go by, but it's okay. If you feel that that's an appropriate question, even though we're in the heart of South Korea, I will certainly answer your question.

If you did what you're suggesting, there would have been no difference three days ago, and you might not have had that very brave person who happened to have a gun or a rifle in his truck go out and shoot him, and hit him and neutralize him. And I can only say this: If he didn't have a gone, instead of having 26 dead, you would have had hundreds more dead. So that's the way I feel about it. Not going to help.

I mean, you look at the city with the strongest gun laws in our nation, is Chicago, and Chicago is a disaster. It's a total disaster. Just remember, if this man didn't have a gun or rifle, you'd be talking about a much worse situation in the great state of Texas.

Thank you.

Donald J. Trump, "Remarks by President Trump and President Moon of the Republic of Korea in Joint Press Conference — Seoul, Republic of Korea," [White House](#), 7 Nov 2017.

Once again, Trump has his facts wrong. There were approximately 60 people in the Church when Kelley appeared. [Express-Tribune](#). Kelley had already shot most of the parishioners *before* the armed citizen shot Kelley twice with a rifle, which caused Kelley to flee from the Church. So there is *no* way that Kelley could have killed "hundreds more". Sutherland Springs is a tiny town with only one church and one gasoline station, so there are *not* hundreds of people standing around on Sunday noon waiting for Kelley to shoot them.

Let me also criticize the journalist — probably a liberal ghoul — who asked the question about gun control *before* any of the victims of the attack had been buried. The question was also inappropriate because the press conference was in South Korea, where huge numbers of

people could die in a war with North Korea.

Greg Sargent, writing in the [Washington Post](#), called Trump's 7 Nov answer "disingenuous nonsense and bad-faith obfuscation."

Finally, Kelley was able to legally purchase his assault rifle and two pistols because the U.S. Air Force *failed* to enter Kelley's domestic violence conviction in the FBI database that is used for background checks of potential purchasers of firearms. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#)(6Nov); [White House](#)(7Nov). We *may* need more gun control laws, but it would be really nice if the U.S. Government would follow the existing laws. Notice that Trump ignores the failure of the U.S. Air Force.

At noon CST on 7 November, [KPRC](#) television in Houston, Texas reported that Kelley in June 2012 had "had been caught sneaking firearms onto Holloman Air Force base" and "'was attempting to carry out death threats' he had made on his military superiors." Kelley was confined to a civilian mental health facility, from which he escaped and was arrested by police in El Paso, Texas. On the afternoon of 7 November 2017, this is *only* report that Kelley was confined to a mental health facility. This single report does *not* validate Trump's assertion on 6 November that Kelley had "a lot of [mental health] problems over a long period of time."

Trump's exchange with Senator Corker

On 17 August 2017, Bob Corker — the chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and a leading Republican in the Senate — publicly blasted Trump: "I do think there need to be some radical changes. The president has not yet ... been able to demonstrate the stability, nor some of the competence that he needs to demonstrate in order to be successful, and we need for him to be successful." [The Hill](#); [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). The context for Corker's criticism is given [above](#). On 1 October 2017, Corker said "I stand by those comments" on 17 August. [NBC News](#).

On 26 September 2017, Corker announced he would *not* run for re-election in 2018. Trump had repeatedly encouraged Corker to run for re-election and Trump promised to endorse Corker. [Associated Press](#); [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#)(AP).

On 4 October 2017, Corker told journalists: "I think Secretary Tillerson, [Defense] Secretary [Jim] Mattis and [White House] Chief of Staff [John] Kelly are those people that help separate our country from chaos, and I support them very much." [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#). Note that Corker implied that Trump was chaotic.

On Sunday, 8 October 2017, Trump tweeted:

Senator Bob Corker "begged" me to endorse him for re-election in Tennessee. I said "NO" and he dropped out (said he could not win without...

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:59 EDT, 8 Oct 2017.

..my endorsement). He also wanted to be Secretary of State, I said "NO THANKS." He

is also largely responsible for the horrendous Iran Deal!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:09 EDT, 8 Oct 2017.

...Hence, I would fully expect Corker to be a negative voice and stand in the way of our great agenda. Didn't have the guts to run!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:13 EDT, 8 Oct 2017.

Senator Corker replied:

It's a shame the White House has become an adult day care center. Someone obviously missed their shift this morning.
Senator Bob Corker, [tweet](#), 11:13 EDT, 8 Oct 2017.

Trump made a weak reply to Corker:

Bob Corker gave us the Iran Deal, & that's about it. We need HealthCare, we need Tax Cuts/Reform, we need people that can get the job done!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 16:51 EDT, 8 Oct 2017.

On 8 October 2017, Corker called Jonathan Martin at the [New York Times](#) and gave a 25-minute interview. *The Times* reported that Corker said that Trump's "reckless threats toward other countries that could set the nation 'on the path to World War III.'" *The Times* quotes Corker: "I know for a fact that every single day at the White House, it's a situation of trying to contain [Trump]".

On 10 October, Trump hit harder:

The Failing @nytimes set Liddle' Bob Corker up by recording his conversation. Was made to sound a fool, and that's what I am dealing with!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:50 EDT, 10 Oct 2017.

Trump is delusional again when he said Corker "begged" Trump to endorse Corker for re-election. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [The Hill](#).

Once again, on 10 October, Trump is delusional with his alleged facts. The New York Times did *not* "set up" Corker — each party recorded the conversation with the consent of the other party. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).

Remember Trump's totally fictitious [claim](#) that Mika Brzezinski "was bleeding badly from a face-lift". Not only was Brzezinski *not* bleeding, but also she *never* had a face-lift. These examples show that when Trump is angry, he has delusions about facts.

It is also *not* true that Corker is "largely responsible for the horrendous Iran Deal". The credit for the Iran deal goes to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and his negotiators. And Corker voted against the Iran agreement in the U.S. Senate. [FactCheck.org](#); [Associated Press](#); [PolitiFact](#); [Washington Post](#).

Aside from Trump's false statements about Corker, Trump *needs* a good working relationship with Corker, in order to get Trump's legislative agenda through the U.S. Senate. It was politically stupid for Trump to alienate Corker.

On 9 October, James Hohmann wrote in the [Washington Post](#) that Trump's tweets about Corker show "five reasons why Trump has failed at governing":

1. "Trump is unserious about passing legislation. Nine months in, with unified control of the government, Republicans have failed to pass a single significant piece of legislation into law."
2. "Trump has alienated several Senate Republicans that he needs more than they need him. Since taking office, Trump has criticized Mitch McConnell, John McCain, Lindsey Graham, Jeff Flake, Lisa Murkowski, Dean Heller, Rand Paul and others by name."
3. "Trump cares more about showmanship than statesmanship."
4. "Trump still does not understand how government works."
5. "The president's credibility is shot in Washington."

I agree with Hohmann's conclusions about Trump. Let me expand on Hohmann's third point: Trump repeatedly makes a public display of exciting his base of supporters, even when Trump's position is offensive to U.S. Constitutional law (e.g., Trump's war with professional journalists, Trump's demand that professional football players stand during the playing of the U.S. national anthem).

On the morning of 24 October, Senator Corker gave an interview to Manu Raju of CNN, in which Corker was critical of Trump:

CORKER: ... because these things are provably untrue. I mean, they're just factually incorrect and people know the difference. So I don't know why he lowers himself to such a low, low standard and debases our country in the way that he does, but he does.

....

RAJU: Is the President of the United States a liar?

CORKER: The president has great difficulty with the truth. On many issues.

RAJU: Do you regret supporting him in the election?

CORKER: Uh, let's just put it this way: I would not do that again.

RAJU: You wouldn't support him again.

CORKER: No way. No way. I think that he's proven himself unable to rise to the occasion, I think many of us, me included, have tried to.... I've intervened, I've had a private dinner, I've been with him on multiple occasions to try to create some kind of aspirational... approach if you will, to the way that he conducts himself. But I don't think that that's possible and he's obviously not going to rise to the occasion as President.

RAJU: Do you think he's a role model to children in the United States?

CORKER: No.

RAJU: You don't.

CORKER: No. Absolutely not. But I think at the end of the day when his term is over, I think the debasing of our nation, the constant non truth-telling, just the name calling, I think the debasement of our nation will be what he'll be remembered most for, and that's regretful. And it affects young people. I mean, we have young people

who for the first time are watching a President stating absolute non-truths non-stop. Personalising things in the way that he does. And it's very sad for our nation.

.....

CORKER: And the shame of it is there are some really good people round him. And if he would stay out of their way and let them perform, people like Tillerson, Mattis and others, you know, we could really make progress on things that matter greatly to our country.

Billy Perrigo, "Bob Corker Did Everything But Call Trump a 'Liar.' Read His Full Interview," [Time](#), 24 Oct 2017.

CNN posted [video](#) of the entire interview.

See also: Chris Cillizza, "Bob Corker's 9 most devastating lines on Donald Trump in his CNN interview, ranked," [CNN](#), 24 Oct 2017.

Notice that Senator Corker says Trump will *not* "rise to the occasion as President". This means Trump will continue making false statements; continue his confrontational, obnoxious remarks; continue debasing the office of the president; and continue being unfit to be president. Given that Trump will *neither* learn *nor* improve his performance, the [Washington Post](#) said that Corker was building a case for removing Trump from office.

Senator Corker also appeared on the [ABC](#) television network program "Good Morning America", but I can not find a transcript or lengthy quotations from that appearance.

On 24 October 2017, Trump retaliated with a series of five tweets that criticized Senator Corker:

Bob Corker, who helped President O give us the bad Iran Deal & couldn't get elected dog catcher in Tennessee, is now fighting Tax Cuts....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:13 EDT, 24 Oct 2017.

...Corker dropped out of the race in Tennessee [sic] when I refused to endorse him, and now is only negative on anything Trump. Look at his record!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:20 EDT, 24 Oct 2017.

Senator Corker fired back:

Same untruths from an utterly untruthful president. #AlertTheDaycareStaff

Bob Corker, [tweet](#), 08:48 EDT, 24 Oct 2017.

Trump tweeted:

Isn't it sad that lightweight Senator Bob Corker, who couldn't get re-elected in the Great State of Tennessee, will now fight Tax Cuts plus!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:30 EDT, 24 Oct 2017.

Sen. Corker is the incompetent head of the Foreign Relations Committee, & look how poorly the U.S. has done. He doesn't have a clue as.....

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:13 EDT, 24 Oct 2017.

...the entire World WAS laughing and taking advantage of us. People like liddle' Bob

Corker have set the U.S. way back. Now we move forward!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 10:20 EDT, 24 Oct 2017.

In the 08:13 tweet, Trump says Corker could *not* "get elected dog catcher in Tennessee" when history shows Corker was mayor of Chattanooga during the years 2001-2005, before Corker was first elected to the U.S. Senate. Further, Corker did *not* help Obama "give us the bad Iran Deal". (See above, and also: [CNN](#); [Associated Press](#).) In the 08:20 tweet, Trump attempts to re-write history when Trump falsely says he "refused to endorse" Corker for re-election. Trump's tweets quoted above are more examples of Trump's inability to mention true facts. Trump also tosses invective (e.g., "lightweight" and "liddle") at Corker.

Notice that Trump does *not* attempt to refute Corker's criticism about the many false statements from Trump. Also, Trump does *not* attempt to refute Corker's criticism about Trump's "name calling". Most of Trump's tweets on 24 October seem to recycle Trump's rhetoric from 8-10 October.

On 14 November 2017, Corker convened hearings in the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee on whether the president should have the sole authority to launch nuclear weapons. Senator Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) said: "We are concerned that the president of the United States is so unstable, is so volatile, has a decision-making process that is so quixotic, that he might order a nuclear strike that is wildly out of step with U.S. interests." The Senators failed to reach a consensus at the hearing. [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#).

Senator Corker has great courage to publicly say what many politicians believe about Trump. The federal government is broken when the vast majority of politicians in the U.S. Congress pretend not to notice Trump's bizarre conduct.

Conclusion to Trump's obnoxious behavior

What's wrong with Trump's obnoxious tirades? When Trump is criticized, he lashes out with an irrational, ad hominem tirade. This is childish behavior by Trump. The real concern is that Trump might do this to the leader of another nation and create an unnecessary military or diplomatic crisis. Another concern is that Trump is a poor role model for children and adults in the USA. Certainly, Trump's rants diminish the office of the president, by his uncivil behavior.

Back in January 2017, when I drafted the conclusion of this essay, I wondered: "It is unknown how Trump will react to the incessant criticism [as president]. However, the criticism will surely affect Trump's narcissistic craving for strong majority admiration." By the end of June 2017, it was clear that, because Trump has neither the knowledge nor the experience to be president, he is accomplishing little and making problems worse. Trump's response is to criticize the news media for reporting his mistakes, failures, and character flaws. Trump's leadership style that was tolerable when he led a privately-owned company is now unacceptable when he is president of the USA.

"You're fired!" & Resignations

I have the impression that there is a higher turnover of personnel in Trump's administration than in most previous U.S. Presidents' administrations. Here is a list of departed persons:

1. Sally Yates, acting attorney general, fired on 30 Jan 2017 for refusing to defend Trump's first Executive Order on immigration. (On 6 March 2017, Trump himself revoked that flawed first Executive Order.)
2. Michael Flynn, national security adviser, resigned on 13 Feb 2017, [above](#).
3. Katie Walsh, White House deputy chief of staff, resigned on 30 March 2017. [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#).
4. Kathleen "K.T." McFarland, deputy national security adviser, removed on 9 April 2017, [Bloomberg](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#). On 19 May 2017, Trump nominated McFarland to be U.S. Ambassador to Singapore. [White House](#).
5. James Comey, director of FBI, fired on 9 May 2017, [above](#).
6. Michael Dubke, White House communications director, resigned on 18 May 2017, [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
7. Walter Shaub, director of the Office of Government Ethics, resigned on 6 July 2016. (See Bibliography, [below](#).)
8. Sean Spicer, Press Secretary, abruptly resigned on 21 July 2017, [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).
9. Michael Short, senior assistant press secretary, resigned on 25 July 2017. [Fox News](#).
10. Derek Harvey, member of the National Security Council, removed on 27 July 2017. [Washington Post](#); [Weekly Standard](#); [Reuters](#); [NBC News](#).
11. Reince Priebus, White House chief of staff, resigned on 27 July 2017. The resignation was publicly announced on 28 July at 16:49 EDT, when Trump [tweeted](#) that the Secretary of Homeland Security, John Kelly, would be the new White House chief of staff. Priebus, the former chairman of the Republican National Committee, had brought Katie Walsh, Sean Spicer, and Michael Short to the White House. Priebus — who represented the Republican establishment — was never accepted by Trump, who likes to upset the political establishment. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [CNN](#).
12. Anthony Scaramucci, White House communications director, fired on 31 July 2017. [Politico](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#). Scaramucci was hired on 21 July, and his ten-day tenure must be one of the shortest in White House history. Scaramucci distinguished himself with a string of profanities, expletives, and vulgar expressions on 26 July, see [above](#).
13. Ezra Cohen-Watnick, member of the National Security Council, removed on 2 August

2017. [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#).
14. Stephen Bannon, Trump's chief strategist, fired on 18 August 2017. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
 15. Andrew Hemming, White House "director of rapid response" to journalists, resigned on 24 August 2017. Hemming was formerly employed by the Republican National Committee and brought to the White House by Priebus. [Politico](#); [CNN](#).
 16. Sebastian Gorka, a White House counterterrorism adviser, resigned on 25 August 2017. [The Federalist](#); [CNN](#); [The Hill](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
 17. Keith Schiller, Trump's bodyguard and head of security at Trump Tower in New York City since 2004, announced in early September 2017 that he was quitting his job at the White House. Schiller had been a long-time confidant of Trump. Schiller allegedly quit because of the relatively low pay for government employees and because of disputes with the White House Chief of Staff, John Kelly. [CNN\(1Sep\)](#); [CBS News\(2Sep\)](#); [New York Times\(5Sep\)](#); [Bloomberg\(5Sep\)](#); [Washington Post\(9Oct\)](#).
 18. Chuck Rosenberg, acting head of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), resigned on 26 September 2017. The [New York Times](#) says Rosenberg was "disillusioned" with Trump. See also: [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#).
 19. Tom Price, Secretary of Health and Human Services, resigned on Friday, 29 Sep 2017. Price had been widely criticized for spending approximately \$52,000 for his travel aboard private, chartered airplanes, instead of flying coach class on commercial airliners. Including costs of private travel for his aides, the total spent was approximately \$400,000. Moreover, Price spent over \$500,000 for travel to Europe and Asia on U.S. Military aircraft. [Associated Press](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Politico\(21Sep\)](#); [Politico\(2Sep\)](#).
 20. Omarosa Manigault Newman, director of communications for the White House Office of Public Liaison, announced on 13 December that she would leave on 20 Jan 2018. She also functioned as Trump's principal adviser on African-American issues. [The Hill](#); [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#). [CNN](#) reported: "... according to a White House official, Manigault Newman has had no access to Trump for months and is considered to be a non-stop problem in the West Wing." On 14 Dec, [ABC News](#) reported that Omarosa Manigault said: "I have seen things [in the White House] that have made me uncomfortable."
 21. In the last week of December 2017, Trump terminated the service of all of the members of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS. Trump did *not* explain his decision. [Washington Blade\(28Dec\)](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
 - 22.

I want to avoid discussing policy matters, but it seems obvious that Trump has little respect for either expertise or experience, given his appointments and nominations. (See, e.g.,

[Washington Post](#).) It seems to be human nature to select friends and associates who have similar backgrounds and values. Because Trump has *neither* knowledge *nor* experience in government, Trump selects people with a similar lack of credentials. This creates two problems: (1) competent government employees are frustrated by incompetent managers, and (2) managers are in over their head, swamped by problems they can *not* solve. As a result, there is an exodus of both competent and incompetent government employees, and the high turnover in personnel leads to instability and delays.

Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

On 8 October 2016, *The Washington Post* published remarks by Trump in the year 2005, while Trump was videotaping a segment of the "Access Hollywood" television program. Trump was recorded in a conversation with host Billy Bush:

Trump: Yeah, that's her. With the gold. I better use some Tic Tacs just in case I start kissing her. You know, I'm automatically attracted to beautiful — I just start kissing them. It's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait. And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything.

Bush: Whatever you want.

Trump: Grab 'em by the pussy. You can do anything.

"Transcript: Donald Trump's Taped Comments About Women," [New York Times](#), 8 Oct 2016.

Publication of such a lewd and vulgar conversation would normally destroy a political candidate, but Trump was competing against Hillary Clinton, who was seen by many voters as untrustworthy, insincere, and dishonest.

Billy Bush was not so lucky as Trump. On 17 Oct 2016, NBC television fired Bush as co-host of the Today program. [NBC News](#).

Trump's reaction on 7 October 2016 to publication of the Access Hollywood videotape was to admit the validity of the videotape and apologize. Trump said: "I said it, I was wrong, and I apologize." See e.g., [New York Times](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post](#).

But in late November 2017, journalists reported Trump's unsupported assertion that the Access Hollywood videotape was not authentic. It appears that Trump not only engaged in scandalous conduct that was recorded on the Access Hollywood videotape, but also Trump now wants to deny the authenticity of this videotape. After having admitted the authenticity of the videotape in October 2016, Trump's denial in November 2017 appears to be another false statement by Trump. [New York Times](#)(25Nov); [New York Times](#)(28Nov); [Washington Post](#). On 3 Dec 2017, the [New York Times](#) published an op-ed by Billy Bush that confirms the authenticity of the videotape.

Several websites have posted a list of women who have accused Donald Trump of sexual misconduct. Trump denies these allegations.

- "A Running List Of The Women Who've Accused Donald Trump Of Sexual Misconduct," [Huffington Post](#), (21 women on 8 Dec 2017).
- "President Trump and accusations of sexual misconduct: The complete list," [Washington Post](#), (13 women on 22 Nov 2017).
- "Donald Trump's sexual assault allegations: The full list of women who have accused the President," [The Independent](#) in the U.K., (20 women on 4 Dec 2017).
- "The 19 Women Who Accused President Trump of Sexual Misconduct," [The Atlantic](#), (19 women on 7 Dec 2017).
- "Here's The List Of Women Who Accused Donald Trump Of Sexual Misconduct," [National Public Radio](#), (20 women on 6 Dec 2017).

In late November/early December 2017 there was a sudden change to *zero* tolerance for sexual harassment, as several politicians — John Conyers (D-Mich.), Al Franken (D-Minn.), and Trent Franks (R-Ariz.) — and journalists lost their employment because of allegations of sexual harassment.

On 11 December 2017, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) called on Trump to resign after approximately twenty women had accused Trump of sexual harassment. [CNN](#).

On 12 Dec, Trump responded to Gillibrand with a tweet:

Lightweight Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, a total flunky for Chuck Schumer and someone who would come to my office “begging” for campaign contributions not so long ago (and would do anything for them), is now in the ring fighting against Trump. Very disloyal to Bill & Crooked — USED!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:03 EST, 12 Dec 2017.

The [Washington Post](#) criticized Trump for his "sexually suggestive and demeaning" tweet. See also [New York Times](#); [Los Angeles Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Politico](#); [CNN](#). As Politico and the *Los Angeles Times* mentioned, four male U.S. Senators plus Gillibrand called on 11 Dec for Trump's resignation, but Trump attacked only Gillibrand. That choice by Trump makes him a bully.

Trump's tweet about Gillibrand "would come to my office" is at least misleading, because Trump suggests she came to his office multiple times. The [Washington Post](#) and [CNN](#) reported Gillibrand went to Trump's office only *one time*, in the year 2010. Trump's daughter, Ivanka, was present during the entire meeting.

On 12 December, Trump made a blatantly false claim that he had never met the women who had accused him of sexual misconduct.

Despite thousands of hours wasted and many millions of dollars spent, the Democrats have been unable to show any collusion with Russia — so now they are moving on to the false accusations and fabricated stories of women who I don't know and/or have never met. FAKE NEWS!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 07:10 EST, 12 Dec 2017.

This assertion by Trump is false because Summer Zervos, who accused Trump of sexual harassment, was a contestant on Trump's Apprentice television program. Another accuser is Natasha Stoyanoff, who interviewed Trump for an article in *People* magazine. And there are photographs of Trump with women who Trump now claims he never met. Trump's false assertion was refuted by numerous journalists. See, e.g., [TIME](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [The Hill](#); [People](#)(photo of Stoyanoff with Trump); [New York Daily News](#).

Trump's assertion that the sexual harassment allegations are "false accusations and fabricated stories" by Democrats is an example of Trump's paranoia. Trump offers *no* evidence of false or fabricated allegations, and Trump offers *no* evidence of a partisan attack by Democrats. As documented above, Trump has a well-established reputation for asserting false "facts" and having delusions.

On 12 December 2017, I wonder if sexual misconduct by Trump is an impeachable offense. There are at least two reasons why Trump can not be impeached for this misconduct. First, the acts occurred *before* Trump was elected president. Second, the acts did not occur during official government business. Ultimately, an impeachable offense is whatever the U.S. House of Representatives decides. Alternatively, the outrage over sexual harassment might force Trump to resign as president.

Trump's Broken Promises

In this section I do *not* discuss the wisdom or stupidity of Trump's promises. Instead, I document that Trump *failed* to deliver on major campaign promises to his supporters. First, I give a bibliography on Trump's broken promises in general, then I give a detailed discussion of Trump's failure to deliver on a few specific promises.

Bibliography on Trump's Broken Promises

- "Trump Promise Tracker," [Washington Post](#), (Continuing coverage of "progress of 60 pledges [Trump] made during his campaign".)
- "Tracking Trump's Agenda, Step by Step," [New York Times](#), (Continuing coverage of 9 major goals, plus reversal of 6 key Obama policies.)
- "The Trump-O-Meter: Tracking 102 promises made by Donald Trump," [PolitiFact](#), 17 Jan 2017. ([Continuing](#) coverage of 102 promises made by Trump.)
- "Trump's Promises," [CNN](#), (Continuing coverage of 21 promises.)
- "Hundreds Of Campaign Pledges. 10 Major Goals." [NBC News](#). (Continuing

Coverage.)

- "THE FIRST 100 DAYS: Tracking President Trump's campaign promises," [Los Angeles Times](#), 26 April 2017.

On 5 November, the [Washington Post](#) reported: "A majority of Americans [65%] say President Trump has not accomplished much during his first nine months in office and they have delivered a report card that is far harsher even than the tepid expectations they set for his tenure when he was sworn into office, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News survey."

1. Wall along U.S./Mexico border

Campaign Promises

One of the most prominent of Trump's campaign promises in 2016 was to build a wall along the entire U.S./Mexico border, *and* have the Mexicans pay for the wall.

On 5 March 2015, Trump tweeted:

Mexico's court system corrupt. I want nothing to do with Mexico other than to build an impenetrable WALL and stop them from ripping off U.S.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 5 March 2015.

On 16 June 2015, Trump announced he was running for U.S. president. His speech included: When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.

....

I would build a great wall, and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me, and I'll build them very inexpensively, I will build a great, great wall on our southern border.

And I will have Mexico pay for that wall. Mark my words.

Donald J. Trump, "Full text: Donald Trump announces a presidential bid," [Washington Post](#), 16 June 2015.

Then Trump tweeted:

Druggies, drug dealers, rapists and killers are coming across the southern border. When will the U.S. get smart and stop this travesty?

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 19 June 2015.

In response to a [Daily Mail](#) news article about two Mexicans drug smugglers climbing over the border fence near Nogales, Arizona, Trump tweeted:

We must build a great wall between Mexico and the United States!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 1 April 2016.

The dishonest media does not report that any money spent on building the Great Wall (for sake of speed), will be paid back by Mexico later!
Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 6 Jan 2017.

Trump as president

On 24 February 2017, Trump addressed the Conservative Political Action Conference. Here is what Trump said about his wall along the U.S./Mexico border.

THE PRESIDENT: We've defended other nations' borders while leaving ours wide open; anybody can come in.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: A wall!

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, we're going to build the wall, don't worry about it. We're building the wall. We're building the wall. In fact, it's going to start soon, way ahead of schedule, way ahead of schedule. (Applause.) Way, way, way ahead of schedule. It's going to start very soon. General Kelly, by the way, has done a fantastic job. Fantastic job he's done. (Applause.)

Donald Trump, "Remarks by President Trump at the Conservative Political Action Conference," [White House](#), 24 Feb 2017.

Trump was dishonest to say the wall was "way ahead of schedule". *None* of the wall had been built. Trump had not even put out bids for construction of short pieces of the wall, as demonstration projects. Furthermore, the U.S. Government does *not* own *all* of the land along the U.S./Mexico border, and Trump had not yet begun to purchase the necessary land.

The current Mexican president, Enrique Pena Nieto, repeatedly said that Mexico will *not* pay for a wall along the U.S. border. [Washington Post](#)(31 Aug 2016); [Los Angeles Times](#)(1 Sep 2016); [Los Angeles Times](#)(25 Jan 2017); [Washington Post](#)(26 Jan 2017).

While Trump often says that Mexico will pay for the wall, Trump almost never says *how* Mexico will pay. In one exception, on 27 Jan 2017, Trump proposed a 20% tax on imports from Mexico to pay for the wall. [Associated Press](#).

On 9 March 2017, Mitch McConnell, the leader of the Republican majority in the U.S. Senate, was asked whether Mexico would pay for the wall. McConnell tersely replied: "Uh, no." [Politico](#); [The Hill](#); [Washington Post](#).

There was a short-term funding bill negotiated in late April 2017, and passed by the U.S. Congress on 4 May 2017. Democrats removed Trump's request for \$1.4 billion to begin construction of the wall. Trump accepted that removal, in order to avoid a shutdown of the U.S. Government. [NBC News](#)(25April); [New York Times](#)(25April); [New York Times](#)(25April); [Washington Post](#)(4May).

On 23 April 2017, Trump tweeted:

Eventually, but at a later date so we can get started early, Mexico will be paying, in some form, for the badly needed border wall.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 23 April 2017.

On 25 April 2017, Paul Waldman wrote a commentary in the [Washington Post](#) — under the headline “Sorry, Trump voters, you got scammed. You’re never going to get your wall.” — that explained why the entire wall would never be built, although a total of 100 miles of wall might be built. (Copy at [Chicago Tribune](#).)

The effect of Trump's budget compromise on 25 April is to delay the start of construction of the wall until sometime *after* October 2017. Trump's decision ended the "way ahead of schedule" that Trump declared on 24 February 2017.

The U.S. Homeland Security department estimates the cost of constructing a wall along the entire U.S./Mexico border at \$21.6 billion. [Reuters](#). But Trump's *proposed* 2018 budget request contains only a mere \$1.6 billion for initial construction of the wall. [Bloomberg](#); [Reuters](#); [NPR](#). So even if Trump gets his wish, only 74 miles of wall will be constructed during 2018. The entire border has a length of 1933 miles.

On 7 July 2017, Trump again publicly disclosed his delusion that Mexico will reimburse the USA for the cost of building the wall along the Mexican border. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [Los Angeles Times](#).

On 13 July 2017, Trump told journalists that the USA did *not* need a wall along the *entire* border with Mexico. Trump now plans to build a wall along only "700 to 900 miles" (35% to 45%) of the approximately 2000 mile border. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Los Angeles Times](#). Note that Trump's promise of a wall along the *entire* border has now shrunk to a wall along 40% of the border, assuming that Congress will fund it. This wall will *not* happen in either 2017 or 2018, despite Trump's campaign promises, because funds are not in the budget.

On the night of 22 August 2017, Trump gave a campaign speech in Phoenix Arizona in which he threatened to shut down the U.S. Government if the Senate did not approve the \$1.6 billion that Trump had requested in his budget for building some of the wall. Trump proclaimed: “Now, the obstructionist Democrats would like us not to [build the wall]. But believe me, if we have to close down our government, we’re building that wall.” Trump's confrontational threat upset delicate negotiations in the Senate. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Reuters](#).

On 27 August 2017, Trump repeated his campaign promises about the wall:

With Mexico being one of the highest crime Nations in the world, we must have THE WALL. Mexico will pay for it through reimbursement/other.

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 09:44 EDT, 27 August 2017.

Mexico reiterated that it was *not* paying for the wall. [Politico](#); [CNN](#).

Prototypes of Wall in 2017

On 1 March 2017, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) found US\$ 20 million in funds appropriated by Congress for a different purpose, but which could be used to construct short prototypes of the wall. [Reuters](#); [CBS News](#).

In March 2017, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a request for proposals to construct prototypes of the wall. DHS specifically asked for proposals for a 30-foot (9-meter) high concrete wall, but also invited proposals for other kinds of barriers (e.g., a fence) along the Mexican border. [CNN](#)(specifications); [Reuters](#)(18Mar); [New York Times](#)(18Mar); [CNN](#)(30Mar). The deadline for proposals was extended to 4 April 2017. [San Diego Union Tribune](#).

A new obstacle appeared. Some construction firms who were bidding on the prototype wall received death threats. That prompted the firms to ask if the federal government would provide security at construction sites to avoid assault, battery, homicide, rioting, vandalism, sabotage, etc. The Associated Press reported: DHS "said the Border Patrol would respond as needed if there is a hostile attack, but companies were responsible for security. The government won't allow waivers from state gun laws or indemnify companies whose workers use deadly force." [Portland Press-Herald](#)(AP); [Houston Chronicle](#)(AP); [Washington Post](#).

On 27 June 2017, DHS Customs and Border Protection announced that they would fund four to eight proposals for the prototype wall near San Diego, with construction to be completed in September 2017. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Los Angeles Times](#).

On 18 July 2017, DHS was still reviewing the best proposals, before making a decision on which proposals to fund. The initial plan was to begin construction of prototypes in June, but DHS missed their own goal. [CNN](#).

On 27 July, construction of prototypes slipped to early November 2017, after two contractors objected to the bidding process. [Associated Press](#).

On 16 August 2017, journalists noticed that Trump had promised on 25 January 2017 to hire 5000 new Border Patrol officers. The [Los Angeles Times](#) notes that "seven months later, ... the number of Border Patrol officers has actually dropped by 220". See also: [CBS News](#).

On 31 August 2017, four bidders were chosen to begin construction of concrete prototype segments of the wall. Construction is expected to begin before 15 September 2017, and be finished before 15 October 2017. [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 26 September 2017, the [Associated Press](#) reported that construction began on eight prototype walls. Four prototypes are solid concrete and four prototypes are transparent walls.

On 26 September, Trump gave a speech in Alabama in which Trump mentioned numerous false or misleading "facts" about his border wall. The [Associated Press](#) summarized: "President Donald Trump's latest account of progress on his promised Mexico border wall was often misleading and sometimes flat wrong. Parts were true, but parts were not. He contradicted himself, and the overall sense he conveyed of construction steaming along simply doesn't fit the facts."

On 20 October 2017, the [Associated Press](#) reported the eight prototype segments of the wall are nearing completion.

On 26 October 2017, all of the prototype segments of the wall were complete. However, Congress has not yet appropriated money for construction of a real wall along the Mexican border. [San Diego Union-Tribune](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 22 December 2017, Congress passed a temporary funding bill for the U.S. Government and then Congress fled from Washington, DC for the Christmas holiday. There was *no* decision in December on funding Trump's wall along the Mexican border.

On Thursday, 28 December 2017, Trump announced his conditions for giving Democrats a renewal of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) statute that prevents deportation of children who are illegal immigrants. In an interview with *The New York Times*, Trump said:

TRUMP: And we can do on immigration, and DACA in particular, we can do something that's terrific through bipartisanship.

TRUMP: I'm just being practical. No, I don't think I'm changing. Look, I wouldn't do a DACA plan without a wall. Because we need it. We see the drugs pouring into the country, we need the wall.

I'm always moving. I'm moving in both directions. We have to get rid of chainlike immigration, we have to get rid of the chain. The chain is the last guy [Sayfullo Saipov] that killed ... the eight people [in New York City on 31 Oct].

"Excerpts From Trump's Interview With The Times," [New York Times](#), 28 December 2017.

Incidentally, the [New York Times](#) found Trump made 10 factual errors in the half-hour interview. The [Washington Post](#) found 24 false or misleading statements by Trump.

Once again, Trump's weak knowledge of facts prevents him from making a strong argument to end chain immigration into the USA. After the 31 Oct Islamic terror attack in New York City, there were two more Islamic terror attacks in the USA, both of which were by immigrants who legally entered the USA via chain migration. There was a subway bomber in New York City on 11 December and a terrorist in Harrisburg Pennsylvania who shot at policemen on 22 December.

Later in a tweet, Trump clarified his conditions:

The Democrats have been told, and fully understand, that there can be no DACA without the desperately needed WALL at the Southern Border and an END to the horrible Chain Migration & ridiculous Lottery System of Immigration etc. We must protect our Country at all cost!

Donald J. Trump, [tweet](#), 08:16 EST, 29 Dec 2017.

See also: [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#).

2. Trump promised to “drain the swamp”

During the political campaign in 2016, Trump promised to end corruption in the executive branch of government. Trump used the phrase "drain the swamp" to refer to this promise.

But in his first months as president, Trump hired former lobbyists, corporate lawyers, and consultants to do work that would affect their former clients. That is a blatant conflict of interest, and a form of corruption. Then Trump began issuing secret, undated, and unsigned waivers of ethics rules to some of his staff. A waiver means an unethical government employee can be paid by taxpayers to engage in a blatant conflict of interest, in violation of written government ethics rules. After a confrontation with the Office of Government Ethics, the White House publicly disclosed the ethics waivers on 31 May 2017.

Bibliography on Ethics Rules and Waivers

- "Executive Order: ETHICS COMMITMENTS BY EXECUTIVE BRANCH APPOINTEES," [White House](#), 28 Jan 2017. (Executive Order 13770 issued by Trump. Then Trump began issuing *wavers*, so unethical government employees could work in violation of this Executive Order.) Official version at [82 Federal Register 9333](#).
- "Trump ethics rules curtail lobbyists, while also loosening some Obama restrictions," [Washington Post](#), 28 Jan 2017.
- [Above](#) I chronicled Kellyanne Conway spoke from the White House press briefing room on 9 February 2017 and endorsed Ivanka Trump's line of shoes and clothing. The Office of Government Ethics recommended that Conway be punished, but the White House refused to punish Conway.
- Editorial Board, "Trump is issuing secret waivers to his own ethics rules. So much for draining the swamp." [Washington Post](#), 6 May 2017.
- Editorial Board, "The White House's Aversion to Ethical Scrutiny," [New York Times](#), 25 May 2017. ("It takes a serious commitment to incompetence and deception to spawn as many ethical and legal concerns as the Trump administration has in just four months. they've [stonewalled](#) efforts by the Office of Government Ethics to identify conflicts of interest in the administration.")
- "White House Backs Down on Keeping Ethics Waivers Secret," [New York Times](#), 26 May 2017.
- "White House relents in fight with ethics office over waiver disclosure," [Washington Post](#), 27 May 2017. (Trump administration agrees to "publicly post waivers given to appointees who have been exempted from aspects of federal ethics rules, including an executive order that Trump signed in January." This decision ends the secret waivers.)
- "Ethics Pledge Waivers Released by the White House," [White House](#), 31 May 2017.

(Some of these waivers include the clause: "May participate in communications and meetings involving former clients....")

- "White House Details Ethics Waivers for Ex-Lobbyists and Corporate Lawyers," [New York Times](#), 31 May 2017. (White House granted ethics waivers to at least 16 staff members, "more than five times the number granted in the first four months of the Obama administration".)
- "White House grants ethics waivers to 17 appointees, including four former lobbyists," [Washington Post](#), 31 May 2017. ("The rate at which the Trump White House has handed out waivers is far faster than that of the Obama administration, which issued [17 exemptions](#) for White House appointees over eight years.")
- "Ethics office will press White House on undated conflict-of-interest waivers," [Washington Post](#), 16:11 EDT, 2 June 2017. ("The Office of Government Ethics plans to press the White House to clarify when it issued a slew of ethics waivers giving its staffers permission to interact with their former employers or clients, an indication that the exemptions might not have been properly granted. Ten of the 14 waivers publicly disclosed this week by the White House are undated and unsigned, raising questions about when they were put in place. Particularly troubling, ethics experts said, was a blanket waiver allowing White House appointees to communicate with media organizations where they previously worked that was described as 'retroactive' — a maneuver that the ethics office said was not permitted.")
- "Federal ethics chief who clashed with White House announces he will step down," [Washington Post](#), 6 July 2017. (Walter M. Shaub Jr., director of the independent Office of Government Ethics, announced his resignation effective 19 July, "nearly six months before his term is scheduled to end." Shaub "said he felt that he had reached the limit of what he could achieve in this administration, within the current ethics framework.")
- "Government Ethics Chief Resigns, Casting Uncertainty Over Agency," [New York Times](#), 6 July 2017. (Mr. Shaub said in an interview: "O.G.E.'s recent experiences have made it clear that the ethics program needs to be strengthened.")
- Eric Lipton & Nicholas Fandos, "Departing Ethics Chief: U.S. Is 'Close to a Laughingstock'," [New York Times](#), 17 July 2017.
- On 2 September 2017, Trump nominated David Zatezalo to be an assistant secretary of Labor overseeing the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). Zatezalo is a former executive of a coal mining company that was repeatedly cited for violations of MSHA regulations. [White House](#); [Charleston Gazette-Mail](#); [Associated Press](#); [The Hill](#). Trump's clear intent in nominating Mr. Zatezalo is to weaken safety regulations, make mines more profitable for businessmen, and — incidentally — kill or injure more miners.

3. Trump's Attempts to Ban Muslim Terrorists

from traveling to the USA

One of Trump's [promises](#) during the 2016 presidential campaign was to — at least temporarily — ban people from Muslim-majority nations from traveling to the USA. Some versions of Trump's promise mention banning travel from nations with active Islamic terrorism. A few versions of Trump's promise mention temporarily banning travel from Muslim-majority nations until an effective vetting program is established for applicants for visas to the USA.

As discussed [above](#), on 27 Jan 2017 Trump issued an Executive Order that temporarily banned travel from seven Muslim-majority nations, but that list of seven banned nations is strikingly underinclusive. History shows that Trump's Executive Order would have prevented *none* of the lethal Islamic terrorist attacks in the USA. Trump's Executive Order was also probably unconstitutional for several reasons, which caused three federal courts to promptly enjoin enforcement of Trump's Executive Order.

On 6 March 2017, Trump [revoked](#) his first Executive Order and replaced it with a revised version that Trump himself criticized on 5 June 2017. Trump's second Executive Order contains a list of six banned nations, but this second Order would have prevented *none* of the lethal Islamic terrorist attacks in the USA.

On 24 September 2017, Trump issued a [proclamation](#) on immigration. On 24 October 2017, Trump issued a [third](#) Executive Order on immigration, this one focused on refugees.

I conclude that Trump has failed to establish an effective way of preventing Islamic terrorists from traveling to the USA.

#####

Russia's Interference with 2016 U.S. Election

This section chronicles the U.S. Government's investigation into hacking of Democratic party campaign e-mails and other influence on the 2016 presidential election. The FBI investigation also includes contacts between Russians and members of Trump's campaign staff.

During the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, Russia hacked into Democratic party e-mails and posted those private e-mails on the public WikiLeaks website. Here is a terse synopsis of what happened:

1. 22 July 2016: WikiLeaks website posts 19,252 e-mails stolen from the Democratic National Committee.
2. 7 Oct 2016: U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Department of Homeland Security say Russia hacked the e-mails at the Democratic National Committee: “The U.S. Intelligence Community (USIC) is confident that the Russian Government directed the recent compromises of e-mails from US persons and

institutions, including from US political organizations. These thefts and disclosures are intended to interfere with the U.S. election process.”

3. 7 Oct 2016: WikiLeaks begins to post thousands of e-mails stolen from the private Google mail account belonging to John Podesta, who was Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman.
4. 9 Dec 2016: CIA Report says Russia helped Trump defeat Hillary Clinton.
5. 29 Dec 2016: Obama issues new sanctions on Russia, to punish Russia for interfering with the U.S. presidential election.
6. 27 July 2017: Congress votes for more sanctions on Russia, as described [below](#).

Bibliography on Russia's Interference with 2016 Election

- Ellen Nakashima, "Russian government hackers penetrated DNC, stole opposition research on Trump," [Washington Post](#), 14 June 2016. ("Russian government hackers penetrated the computer network of the Democratic National Committee and gained access to the entire database of opposition research on GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump, according to committee officials and security experts who responded to the breach.")
- Tom Hamburger & Karen Tumulty, "WikiLeaks releases thousands of documents about Clinton and internal deliberations," [Washington Post](#), 22 July 2016.
- Aaron Blake, "Here are the latest, most damaging things in the DNC's leaked emails," [Washington Post](#), 25 July 2016.
- David E. Sanger & Eric Schmitt, "Spy Agency Consensus Grows That Russia Hacked D.N.C.," [New York Times](#), 27 July 2016.
- "Joint DHS and ODNI Election Security Statement," [dni.gov](#), 7 Oct 2016. (quoted above)
- Ellen Nakashima, "U.S. government officially accuses Russia of hacking campaign to interfere with elections," [Washington Post](#), 7 Oct 2016.
- David E. Sanger & Charlie Savage, "U.S. Says Russia Directed Hacks to Influence Elections," [New York Times](#), 7 Oct 2016.
- Amy Chozick, "John Podesta Says Russian Spies Hacked His Emails to Sway Election," [New York Times](#), 11 Oct 2016. ("In his first remarks since WikiLeaks began releasing thousands of his hacked emails, John D. Podesta, Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman, said Tuesday [11 Oct] that Russian intelligence officials intent on swaying the election to Donald J. Trump had been responsible for the illegal breach into his account.")

- Abby Phillip & John Wagner, "Hacked WikiLeaks emails show concerns about Clinton candidacy, email server," [Washington Post](#), 12 Oct 2016. ("WikiLeaks, the anti-secrecy organization, began releasing new messages last Friday [7 Oct] from the personal email account of Clinton's campaign chairman, John Podesta, and has promised to issue tens of thousands more.")
- Adam Entous, Ellen Nakashima, & Greg Miller, "Secret CIA assessment says Russia was trying to help Trump win White House," [Washington Post](#), 9 Dec 2016.
- Elise Viebeck, "Trump denies CIA report that Russia intervened to help him win election," [Washington Post](#), 11 Dec 2016.
- Eric Lipton, David E. Sanger, & Scott Shane, "The Perfect Weapon: How Russian Cyberpower Invaded the U.S.," [New York Times](#), 13 Dec 2016. ("An examination by The Times of the Russian operation — based on interviews with dozens of players targeted in the attack, intelligence officials who investigated it and Obama administration officials who deliberated over the best response — reveals a series of missed signals, slow responses and a continuing underestimation of the seriousness of the cyberattack.")
- Adam Entous & Ellen Nakashima, "FBI in agreement with CIA that Russia aimed to help Trump win White House," [Washington Post](#), 16 Dec 2016.
- Barack Obama, "Statement by the President on Actions in Response to Russian Malicious Cyber Activity and Harassment," [White House](#), 29 Dec 2016.
- David E. Sanger, "Obama Strikes Back at Russia for Election Hacking," [New York Times](#), 29 Dec 2016.
- John Wagner & Karoun Demirjian, "After Obama sanctions Russia, Trump says it's time 'to move on to bigger and better things'," [Washington Post](#), 29 Dec 2016. (Trump's casual reaction to Obama's sanctions.)
- "Background to "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections": The Analytic Process and Cyber Incident Attribution," [dni.gov](#), 6 Jan 2017. (unclassified version of report by The Central Intelligence Agency, The Federal Bureau of Investigation, and The National Security Agency)
- "Priebus says Democrats to blame for email hack, thinks Trump accepts intel findings," [Fox News](#), 8 Jan 2017.
- Kevin Robillard, "Priebus claims Trump accepts Russia's role in hack," [Politico](#), 8 Jan 2017.
- Dan Balz, "Russia is the slow burn of the Trump administration, and it's not going away," [Washington Post](#), 4 March 2017. ("The overarching issue is the attempt by a foreign government to disrupt an American election and thereby undermine confidence

in the world's leading democratic government. Just as important is answering the question of whether there was any collusion or cooperation between the Trump campaign and the Russians in attempting to undermine Clinton's campaign.")

- Andrew Blake, "Roger Stone, Trump confidant, acknowledges 'innocuous' Twitter conversation with DNC hackers," [Washington Times](#), 10 March 2017. ("Roger Stone, President Trump's former campaign advisor, ... [in August 2016 communicated with 'Guccifer 2.0,' a pseudonymous entity] involved in hacking the Democratic National Committee, [Stone] told *The Washington Times* Friday [10 Mar], but insisted the conversations were 'completely innocuous.'")
- Eileen Sullivan & Eric Tucker, "FBI probing possible links between Russia, Trump associates," [Associated Press](#), 16:16 EDT, 20 Mar 2017. (Director of FBI testified before House Intelligence Committee that FBI is continuing to investigate possible collusion between Russia and Trump campaign staff in 2016.)
- Ned Parker, Jonathan Landay, & Warren Strobel, "Exclusive: Trump campaign had at least 18 undisclosed contacts with Russians — sources," [Reuters](#), 07:19 EDT, 18 May 2017. ("Michael Flynn and other advisers to Donald Trump's campaign were in contact with Russian officials and others with Kremlin ties in at least 18 calls and emails during the last seven months of the 2016 presidential race [April through October 2016], current and former U.S. officials familiar with the exchanges told Reuters.")
- Gloria Borger, Pamela Brown, Jim Sciutto, Marshall Cohen, & Eric Lichtblau, "First on CNN: Russian officials bragged they could use Flynn to influence Trump, sources say," [CNN](#), updated 21:03 EDT, 19 May 2017. ("Russian officials bragged in conversations during the presidential campaign that they had cultivated a strong relationship with former Trump adviser retired Gen. Michael Flynn and believed they could use him to influence Donald Trump and his team, sources told CNN.")
- Greg Miller, "CIA director alerted FBI to pattern of contacts between Russian officials and Trump campaign associates," [Washington Post](#), 18:15 EDT, 23 May 2017. (Former CIA Director John Brennan testified before House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on 23 May. "Brennan said he became increasingly concerned that Trump associates were being manipulated by Russian intelligence services as part of a broader covert influence campaign that sought to disrupt the election and deliver the presidency to Donald Trump.")
- Matt Zapposky and Karoun Demirjian, "Homeland Security official: Russian government actors tried to hack election systems in 21 states," [Washington Post](#), 21 June 2017. ("People connected to the Russian government tried to hack election-related computer systems in 21 states, [Samuel Liles] a Department of Homeland Security official testified Wednesday [21 June, before the Senate Intelligence Committee].")
- Greg Miller, Ellen Nakashima, & Adam Entous, "Obama's secret struggle to punish Russia for Putin's election assault," [Washington Post](#), 24 June 2017. (*The Post* claims

that the CIA told Obama in August 2016 that the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, had personally ordered computer hacking to "defeat or at least damage the Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton, and help elect her opponent, Donald Trump.")

Bibliography on Russian interference with 2016 election is continued [below](#).

Trump Jr., Kushner, and Manafort met with Russians on 9 June 2016

- Jo Becker, Matt Apuzzo, & Adam Goldman, "Trump Team Met With Lawyer Linked to Kremlin During Campaign," [New York Times](#), 8 July 2017. (Donald Trump Jr., Kushner, and Manafort met on 9 June 2016 with a Russian lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, in "the first confirmed private meeting between a Russian national and members of Mr. Trump's inner circle during the campaign.")
- Jo Becker, Matt Apuzzo, & Adam Goldman, "Trump's Son Met With Russian Lawyer After Being Promised Damaging Information on Clinton," [New York Times](#), 9 July 2017. ("President Trump's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., was promised damaging information about Hillary Clinton before agreeing to meet with a Kremlin-connected Russian lawyer [Natalia Veselnitskaya] during the 2016 campaign, according to three advisers to the White House briefed on the meeting and two others with knowledge of it. The accounts of the meeting represent the first public indication that at least some in the [Trump] campaign were willing to accept Russian help.")
- Callum Borchers, "Donald Trump Jr.'s stunning admission to the New York Times," [Washington Post](#), 18:14 EDT, 9 July 2017. ("Trump Jr. confirmed that he went into the meeting expecting to receive information from the Russian lawyer that could hurt Clinton. That is a breathtaking admission.")
- Aaron Blake, "Donald Trump Jr. just contradicted a whole bunch of White House denials of Russian contacts," [Washington Post](#), 08:33 EDT, 10 July 2017. (Lists 8 different denials of contacts between Russia and the Trump campaign, all of which were contradicted yesterday by Trump Jr.)
- Chad Day & Nekesa Mumbi Moody, "Trump Jr: 'Had to listen' to Russian lawyer for Clinton info," [Associated Press](#), 13:40 EDT, 10 July 2017. (Confirms New York Times article of 9 July.)
- Matt Apuzzo, Jo Becker, Adam Goldman, & Maggie Haberman, "Trump Jr. Was Told in Email of Russian Effort to Aid Campaign," [New York Times](#), 10 July 2017. ("Before arranging a meeting with a Kremlin-connected Russian lawyer he believed would offer him compromising information about Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump Jr. was informed in an email that the material was part of a Russian government effort to aid his father's candidacy, according to three people with knowledge of the email. There is no evidence to suggest that the promised damaging information was related to Russian government computer hacking that led to the release of thousands of Democratic National Committee emails.")

On 11 July 2017, Trump Jr. posted copies on [Twitter](#) of his e-mails regarding the 9 June 2016 meeting.

- Jo Becker, Adam Goldman, & Matt Apuzzo, "Russian Dirt on Clinton? 'I Love It,' Donald Trump Jr. Said," [New York Times](#), 11 July 2017. ("But the email exchanges, ..., offer a detailed unspooling of how the meeting with the Kremlin-connected Russian lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, came about — and just how eager Donald Trump Jr. was to accept what he was explicitly told was the Russian government's help.")
- Instead of making a full and completely truthful disclosure at the beginning, Trump Jr. changed his story during 8-11 July and also added new significant facts.
 - "Donald Trump Jr.'s Two Different Explanations for Russian Meeting," [New York Times](#)(9July)
 - "The ever-changing Russia stories of the two Donald Trumps," [CNN](#)(10July)
 - "The 4 times Donald Trump Jr. has changed his story about meeting with a Russian lawyer," [Washington Post](#)(11July)
 - "Donald Trump's Team Keeps Changing Their Russia Stories," [Time](#)(11July)
 - "Donald Trump Jr's shifting explanations for Russia meeting are a problem," [news.com.au](#)(11July)
 - "Donald Trump Jr.'s Evolving Statements," [FactCheck.org](#)(13July)
 - "Fact-checking Donald Trump's comments about campaign meeting with Russian lawyer," [PolitiFact](#)(13July)
 - "'Lie after lie after lie': Fox News's Shepard Smith has a Cronkite moment on Russia," [Washington Post](#), 17:41 EDT, 14 July 2017. (Fox News channel anchor, Shepard Smith, about deception by the White House: "Why is it lie after lie after lie?")
 - "A timeline of the shifting accounts of Trump Tower meeting with Russian lawyer," [PolitiFact](#)(14July)
 - "The ever-changing story about Trump Jr.'s meeting — what we know," [CNN](#)(15July)

Note that Trump Jr. posted copies of the e-mails because *The New York Times* informed him that the *Times* was going to publish a news article about those e-mails.

- Desmond Butler & Chad Day, "Russian-American lobbyist joined Trump's son's meeting, too," [Associated Press](#), 14 July 2017. (First report that Rinat Akhmetshin also attended the June 2016 meeting with Veselnitskaya, Trump Jr., Kushner, and Manafort. "A prominent Russian-American lobbyist and former Soviet military officer attended a meeting with President Donald Trump's son, son-in-law and campaign chairman last year, the lobbyist said Friday [14 July], adding a new wrinkle to the Trump team's evolving explanations about the June 2016 session.")
- Ken Dilanian, Natasha Lebedeva, & Hallie Jackson, "Former Soviet Counterintelligence Officer at Meeting With Donald Trump Jr. and Russian Lawyer," [NBC News](#), 09:35 EDT, 14 July 2017.
- Rosalind S. Helderman & Tom Hamburger, "Russian American lobbyist was present at Trump Jr.'s meeting with Kremlin-connected lawyer," [Washington Post](#), 14 July 2017.

- Andrew Higgins & Andrew E. Kramer, "Soviet Veteran Who Met With Trump Jr. Is a Master of the Dark Arts," [New York Times](#), 15 July 2017. (Former Soviet army counterintelligence soldier also attended the meeting with Veselnitskaya, Trump Jr., Kushner, and Manafort.)
- Ashley Parker, Carol D. Leonnig, Philip Rucker, & Tom Hamburger, "Trump dictated son's misleading statement on meeting with Russian lawyer," [Washington Post](#), 19:46 EDT, 31 July 2017. (On 8 July "Trump personally dictated a statement in which Trump Jr. said that he and the Russian lawyer had 'primarily discussed a program about the adoption of Russian children' when they met in June 2016". This misleading statement was given by Trump Jr. to *The New York Times*.)
- Peter Baker, "Trump Was Involved in Drafting Son's Statement, Aide Confirms," [New York Times](#), 1 Aug 2017. (Confirms that Trump was personally involved in coverup of his son's meeting with Russians.)

More on Russia [below](#).

Congress votes for more sanctions on Russia

- Karoun Demirjian, "Senate overwhelmingly passes new Russia and Iran sanctions," [Washington Post](#), 15 June 2017. (By a vote of 98 to 2, the U.S. Senate passed a bill that "includes new sanctions against Moscow over its continued involvement in the wars in Ukraine and Syria and for its alleged meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election." "Critically, the Russia language also included provisions codifying all existing sanctions against Russia and giving Congress the power to block the president if he tries to scale back existing ones.")
- On 25 July 2017, the House of Representative voted 419 to 3 to approve sanctions on Russia, Iran, and North Korea. The bill, H.R. 3364, codifies existing sanctions (e.g., by presidential Executive Order) and adds some new sanctions. Most importantly, the bill restricts the president from removing any sanctions on Russia, unless Congress agrees. On 27 July, the Senate approved the same bill by a vote of 98 to 2. [Congress](#); [New York Times](#)(25 July); [New York Times](#)(27July); [Washington Post](#); [Reuters](#).
- Russia did *not* wait for Trump to sign this bill. On 28 July, Russia retaliated by ordering the U.S. Government to reduce the number of U.S. diplomatic staff in Russia to 455, which is the number of Russian diplomatic staff in the USA after Obama expelled 35 Russians in December 2016. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#).
- On 30 July, Russian president Vladimir Putin said the U.S. Government would need to reduce its diplomatic staff in Russia by 755 people by 1 Sep 2017. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).
- On 2 August 2017, Trump signed H.R.3364 into law, after Trump said: "this legislation is significantly flawed." [White House](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#);

[New York Times](#). Later, the [White House](#) released a statement that boastfully concluded: "I built a truly great company worth many billions of dollars. That is a big part of the reason I was elected. As President, I can make far better deals with foreign countries than Congress." Excuse me, but the only deals that Trump has done since becoming president is to withdraw the USA from both the Trans-Pacific Partnership and from the Paris agreement on climate change.

More on Russia's Interference

- Carol D. Leonnig, Tom Hamburger, & Rosalind S. Helderman, "FBI conducted predawn raid of former Trump campaign chairman Manafort's home," [Washington Post](#), updated 19:15 EDT, 9 August 2017. (FBI executed search warrant on 26 July at home of Manafort in Alexandria, Virginia.)
- On Friday afternoon, 22 September 2017, the Department of Homeland Security notified 21 states that Russian hackers had attempted to penetrate computers used to store voter registration information. The [Associated Press](#) confirmed that Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin were targeted. See also [Washington Post](#).
- Adam Entous, Elizabeth Dwoskin, & Craig Timberg, "Obama tried to give Zuckerberg a wake-up call over fake news on Facebook," [Washington Post](#), 20:44 EDT, 24 Sep 2017. (Obama and Zuckerberg spoke on 19 Nov 2016. Facebook will submit to "Congress more than 3,000 politically themed advertisements that were bought by suspected Russian operatives.")
- On 4 October 2017, Richard Burr (R-N.C.) and Mark R. Warner (D-Va.) — the chairman and vice-chairman of the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee — held a press conference at which they announced a consensus that Russia interfered with the 2016 election in the USA, Russian interference would likely continue, and it was currently unknown whether Trump's campaign had colluded with Russians. Recently, the Committee has examined Russian purchases of advertisements on Facebook and Twitter, as well as "fake news" planted by Russian operatives. [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
- Elizabeth Dwoskin, Adam Entous, & Craig Timberg, "Google uncovers Russian-bought ads on YouTube, Gmail and other platforms," [Washington Post](#), 07:00 EDT, 9 Oct 2017. (Google "has found that tens of thousands of dollars were spent on ads by Russian agents who aimed to spread disinformation across Google's many products, which include YouTube, as well as advertising associated with Google search, Gmail, and the company's DoubleClick ad network....")
- On 27 October 2017, a grand jury indicted Paul Manafort — Trump's campaign manager during May-August 2016 — on charges of money laundering, making false statements to the FBI, failing to register as a foreign agent, and income tax evasion.

Manafort surrendered to the FBI on Monday morning, 30 October. These alleged crimes did *not* occur during Manafort's work on the Trump campaign.

[Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Washington Post\(FAQ\)](#).

- Also on 30 October, it was revealed that George Papadopoulos — a former foreign policy adviser to the Trump campaign, beginning in March 2016 — had been charged in July 2017 with making false statements to the FBI and Papadopoulos pled guilty earlier in October 2017. Papadopoulos met with Russian agents and *may* have colluded with Russian interference in the U.S. presidential election. At a minimum, Papadopoulos shows that Trump's denials of his campaign's contact with Russians are false. [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#).
- On 30 October, Trump and the White House attempted to deflect blame away from Trump. But the [Associated Press](#); [PolitiFact](#); [CNN](#) all exposed their false statements.
- Rosalind S. Helderman, Tom Hamburger, & Carol D. Leonnig, "At least nine people in Trump's orbit had contact with Russians during campaign and transition," [Washington Post](#), 5 Nov 2017.
- On 9 November 2017, the [Associated Press](#) reported they had "examined 36,210 tweets from Aug. 31, 2015, to Nov. 10, 2016, posted by 382 of the Russian accounts that Twitter shared with congressional investigators last week." The AP found that the Russian agents both defended Trump from bad news, and criticized Hillary Clinton.
- Carol D. Leonnig & Rosalind S. Helderman, "Donald Trump Jr. communicated with WikiLeaks during 2016 campaign," [Washington Post](#), 20:06 EST, 13 Nov 2017. ("President Trump's eldest son exchanged private messages with WikiLeaks during the presidential campaign at the same time the website was publishing hacked emails from Democratic officials, according to correspondence made public Monday [13 Nov].") See also [The Atlantic](#).
- On 13 November 2017, the prime minister of the United Kingdom accused the Russian government of meddling in U.K. elections, including spreading fake news stories. This revelation shows that allegations of Russian meddling in U.S. elections is *not* some delusion by democrats in the USA, but is part of an international pattern of misconduct by the Russian government. [Washington Post](#); [The Telegraph](#); [The Guardian](#).
-

My bibliography [above](#) for the Flynn debacle cites several news articles that mention contacts by Trump campaign staff with Russians.

This is a joke to Trump

Unauthorized entry into someone's computer is a crime. Publishing private e-mails found on someone's computer is arguably an invasion of privacy, as well as copyright infringement. Instead of condemning the Russian theft of e-mails from Hillary Clinton's campaign, on

27 July 2016 Trump asked Russia to find Hillary's missing State Department e-mails from her private server. [NY Times](#); [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#). Trump may have been joking, but computer crime that interferes with the U.S. presidential election is *not* a good subject for jokes, especially by the beneficiary of the disclosure of the e-mails.

Notice also that in December 2016, Trump did *not* believe that Russia had hacked the computers of the Democratic National Committee and Podesta's personal e-mail account. Trump has been astoundingly casual about this serious series of computer crimes by Russia.

Other Russian criminal hacking in USA

Vladimir Drinkman — a Russian hacker who stole more than 160 million credit card numbers during hacks of business computers in the USA — was arrested in the Netherlands on 28 June 2012. In February 2015, Vladimir was extradited to stand trial in Newark, NJ. [DoJ](#); [Star-Ledger](#). On 15 Sep 2015, Vladimir pled guilty to what the U.S. Department of Justice called the "Largest Known Data Breach Conspiracy Ever Prosecuted", which caused *more than* US\$ 300 million in losses to U.S. businesses. [DoJ](#). Three other Russian hackers in this gang evaded justice in the USA, simply by remaining inside Russia.

On 16 Sep 2015, Dmitriy Smilianets of Moscow pled guilty in a U.S. court to selling stolen information that was obtained by the Drinkman gang in the previous paragraph. Smilianets was arrested in the Netherlands on 28 June 2012 and was extradited to federal court in New Jersey on 7 Sep 2012. [DoJ](#).

On 29 Sep 2015, Dimitry Belorossoff — a Russian hacker who in 2011 developed the Citadel malware to invade bank accounts, to initiate unauthorized electronic transfers, and to steal credit card information — was sentenced to U.S. Prison. Dimitry was arrested in Spain. [DoJ](#).

On 25 Aug 2016, Roman Valerevich Seleznev — a Russian hacker who between October 2009 and October 2013 stole at least 1.7 million credit card numbers from point-of-sale computers in the USA — was found guilty by a jury in federal court in Seattle. The [DoJ](#) said: "Testimony at trial revealed that Seleznev's scheme caused 3,700 financial institutions more than \$169 million in losses." Seleznev was arrested in July 2014 in the Maldives. Roman Seleznev is the son of a member of the Russian Parliament. [Seattle Times](#).

On 21 Oct 2016, it was announced that Yevgeniy Aleksandrovich Nikulin had been arrested while on vacation in Prague, Czech Republic, on 5 October and charged in the USA with hacking computers at LinkedIn, Dropbox, and Formspring in 2012. [DoJ](#); [New York Times](#).

On 15 March 2017, the U.S. Justice Department announced an indictment against two Russian government espionage agents and two Russian hackers for stealing data from the Yahoo online service in 2014. [DoJ](#); [Washington Post](#); [New York Times](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). Karim Baratov, one of the hackers, was arrested at his home in Canada on 14 March. [Toronto Star](#); [Hamilton Spectator](#); [Globe&Mail](#); [CBC](#). There is *no* connection between the Yahoo hack and the alleged Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, except to show that the Russian government was sponsoring hacking

into computers in the USA.

These hacking incidents also show that Russia is *no* friend of the USA, and show Trump is poorly informed when he wants better relations with Russia. In my view, wanting better relations with Russia is like wanting better relations with a Mexican drug cartel.

Trump's Deals with Russians

In January 2017, when I began this essay, there were rumors in the news media of Trump's (and his business associates') relationships with Russians. So I began collecting citations to news articles on this topic. By September 2017, there was still *no* public disclosure of any illegal conduct by Trump or his associates, so I lost interest in this section of this essay. However, I am leaving my collection of citations as a resource for historians and students.

Trump's Denials

Several times, Trump has publicly denied he had any contact with Russians and denied any business deals in Russia. See, e.g.,

1. On 27 July 2016, Trump was asked whether Russians were trying to help Trump win the election. Trump responded: "I mean I have nothing to do with Russia. I don't have any jobs in Russia. I'm all over the world but we're not involved in Russia. But I have nothing to do with Russia, nothing to do, I never met Putin, I have nothing to do with Russia whatsoever." [CBS Miami](#); [CBS News](#).
2. On 10 Nov 2016, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, and Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, both told journalists that there were contacts between Trump's campaign and the Russian government. Hope Hicks, Trump's campaign spokeswoman, immediately denied such contacts: "It never happened. There was no communication between the campaign and any foreign entity during the campaign." [Associated Press](#); [NBC News](#)(AP).
3. On 11 Jan 2017 at 07:31 EST, Trump [tweeted](#): "Russia has never tried to use leverage over me. I HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH RUSSIA — NO DEALS, NO LOANS, NO NOTHING!"
4. At a press conference on 11 January 2017, Jim Acosta of CNN asked Trump: "Can you stand here today, once and for all, and say that no one connected to you or your campaign had any contact with Russia leading up to or during the presidential campaign?" But Trump did *not* answer during the press conference. After the press conference, Cecilia Vega of ABC News and Acosta of CNN chased Trump, and Vega asked the question again. Then Trump said: "No." See tweets by [Acosta](#) and [Vega](#). This encounter is reported in several places, see, e.g., [Columbia Journalism Review](#)(11Jan); [ABC News](#)(14Feb); [Washington Post](#)(15Feb); [Washington Post](#)(10July).

5. On 7 Feb 2017, Trump [tweeted](#): “I don't know Putin, have no deals in Russia, and the haters are going crazy —”
6. 16 Feb 2017 press conference at [White House](#), Trump said: “And I can tell you, speaking for myself, I own nothing in Russia. I have no loans in Russia. I don't have any deals in Russia. I have nothing to do with Russia. I told you, I have no deals there. I have no anything. I have nothing to do with Russia. To the best of my knowledge, no person that I deal with does.”
7. On 11 May 2017, during an interview with Lester Holt of NBC News, Trump said: “I have no investments in Russia, none whatsoever. I don't have property in Russia — a lot of people thought I owned office buildings in Moscow. I don't have property in Russia. ... I'm in total compliance in every way.” [RCP](#).
- 8.

On 5 March 2017, I looked at Trump's campaign website in an attempt to find more denials of contacts with Russians, but all of the press releases prior to 1 Jan 2017 had been deleted from that website.

On 10 July 2017, Aaron Blake at the [Washington Post](#) cited 7 times that associates of Trump had denied there were any contacts between Russians and Trump's campaign staff.

Trump's Actual Dealings with Russians

We do *not* know if Trump has deals in Russia, because Trump — unlike other presidential candidates in modern history — refuses to publicly release his federal income tax returns.

It *may* be true that Trump currently has no deals in Russia. But Trump did profit from his Miss Universe pageant in Moscow in 2013, and Russians have purchased real estate from Trump in the USA. During the past 30 years, Trump has attempted to do deals in Russia, as the following paragraphs show.

On 17 June 2016, *The Washington Post* reported:

Trump's relationship with Putin and his warm views toward Russia, which began in the 1980s when the country was still part of the Soviet Union, have emerged as one of the more curious aspects of his presidential campaign.

The overwhelming consensus among American political and national security leaders has held that Putin is a pariah who disregards human rights and has violated international norms in seeking to regain influence and territory in the former Soviet bloc. In 2012, one year before Trump brought his beauty pageant to Moscow, then-Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney called Russia the United States' top geopolitical threat — an assessment that has only gained currency since then.

Trump has conveyed a different view, informed in part through his business ambitions. Since the 1980s, Trump and his family members have made numerous trips to Moscow

in search of business opportunities, and they have relied on Russian investors to buy their properties around the world.

“Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section of a lot of our assets,” Trump’s son, Donald Jr., told a real estate conference in 2008, according to an account posted on the website of eTurboNews, a trade publication. “We see a lot of money pouring in from Russia.”

Tom Hamburger, Rosalind S. Helderman, & Michael Birnbaum, "Inside Trump’s financial ties to Russia and his unusual flattery of Vladimir Putin," [Washington Post](#), 17 June 2016.

On 25 July 2016, Prof. Daniel Drezner, writing in *The Washington Post*, said:

... as [Spoiler Alerts](#) discussed last month, “I’m beginning to wonder if [Trump’s] motivation to win now is less about making America great again and more about avoiding yet another Trump bankruptcy.” Cozying up to Russia and Russian money would certainly be one way of bolstering his finances. And one wonders if the reason that Trump won’t release his tax returns is because it would expose Trump’s reliance on foreign money to prop up his companies.

Daniel W. Drezner, "Is Donald Trump a Putin patsy? What to make of allegations that Putin is assisting Donald Trump's campaign." [Washington Post](#), 25 July 2016.

On 27 July 2016, *The Washington Post* reported:

“I have nothing to with Russia. I have nothing to do with Russia — for anything.”

Donald Trump, news conference, July 27, 2016

In a news conference responding to evidence suggesting Russian agencies hacked the email accounts of the Democratic National Committee, the GOP presidential nominee insisted that he had no business dealings in Russia — with one single exception.

As he put it: “What do I have to do with Russia? You know the closest I came to Russia, I bought a house a number of years ago in Palm Beach, Florida. Palm Beach is a very expensive place. There was a man who went bankrupt and I bought the house for \$40 million and I sold it to a Russian for \$100 million including brokerage commissions. So I sold it. So I bought it for 40, I sold it for 100 to a Russian. That was a number of years ago. I guess probably I sell condos to Russians, okay?”

....

Trump’s remarks are artfully deceiving. He says he had nothing to do with Russia, pointing only to a Florida real estate sale. It may be possible that he has no current investments in Russia, but not for lack of trying.

The evidence is clear, from his own words and those of his associates, that he has been eager to business in Russia. One of his sons traveled six times in 18 months trying to do deals — and [said](#) [in Sep 2008] “[...] Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section of a lot of our assets [;]” The Trump Organization’s general counsel also confirmed that the company has looked at deals in Russia.

Glenn Kessler, "Fact Checker: Trump's claim that 'I have nothing to do with Russia'," [Washington Post](#), 27 July 2016.

On 28 July 2016, NBC News reported:

Donald Trump on Wednesday [27 July] said that he doesn't know and has never met Russian leader Vladimir Putin, [contradicting](#) many of his own claims during the campaign that he has a good relationship with the Russian strongman.

MSNBC's Thomas Roberts interviewed Trump about his relationship with Putin back in 2013 in Moscow, when Roberts served as the co-host for a show that was a joint production of NBC Entertainment and the Trump Organization.

"Do you have a relationship with Vladimir Putin? A conversational relationship or anything that you feel you have sway or influence over his government?" Roberts asked.

The real estate mogul responded in the affirmative. "I do have a relationship and I can tell you that he's very interested in what we're doing here today," Trump said at the time. "He's probably very interested in what ... I am saying today, and I'm sure he's going to be seeing it in some form."

....

"Trump and Putin Tried to Meet in Moscow Three Years Ago: Source," [NBC News](#), 28 July 2016.

On 30 July 2016, [The Guardian](#) published a long article, titled "Donald Trump and Russia: a web that grows more tangled all the time", about Trump's — and his associates' — relationships with Russians.

On 15 August 2016, *Time* magazine reported:

... as major banks in America stopped lending him money following his many bankruptcies, the Trump organization was forced to seek financing from non-traditional institutions. Several had direct ties to Russian financial interests in ways that have raised eyebrows. What's more, several of Trump's senior advisors have business ties to Russia or its satellite politicians.

Jeff Nesbit, "Donald Trump's Many, Many, Many, Many Ties to Russia," [Time](#), 2 Aug 2016, updated 15 Aug 2016.

On 10 November 2016, the Associated Press reported on contacts between the Russian government and Trump's campaign:

Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told The Associated Press in an interview in New York that Russian experts had contacts with people in both the Trump and Clinton campaigns. He said such contacts are "quite natural, quite normal."

"And our experts, our specialists on the U.S., on international affairs ... Of course they are constantly speaking to their counterparts here, including those from Mr. Trump's group," Peskov said.

....

Earlier, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov was quoted as telling the Interfax news agency that "there were contacts" with influential people in Trump's circle. "I don't say that all of them, but a whole array of them supported contacts with Russian representatives."

....

The U.S. government believes Putin might have interfered in the presidential election. The intelligence community has concluded that Russia was responsible for hacking into the emails of the Democratic National Committee and Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta and gave them to WikiLeaks, which released them. Some embarrassed and damaged the Clinton campaign.

Jim Heintz & Matthew Lee, "Russia eyes better ties with Trump; says contacts underway," [Associated Press](#), 19:07 EST, 10 Nov 2016.

On 10 November 2016, *The Washington Post* reported the same news about contacts between the Russian government and Trump's campaign:

Russian government officials conferred with members of Donald Trump's campaign team, a senior Russian diplomat said Thursday, a disclosure that could reopen scrutiny of the Kremlin's role in the president-elect's bitter race against Hillary Clinton.

The statement came from Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, who said in an interview with the Interfax news agency that "there were contacts" with the Trump team. "Obviously, we know most of the people from his entourage," Ryabkov said.

"We have just begun to consider ways of building dialogue with the future Donald Trump administration and channels we will be using for those purposes," Ryabkov was quoted as saying.

Ryabkov provided no further details, and his remarks drew a swift denial from Trump spokeswoman Hope Hicks, who said the campaign had "no contact with Russian officials" before Tuesday's [8 Nov] election.

....

Speaking to Bloomberg News, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said staffers at the Russian Embassy in Washington met with members of Trump's campaign — meetings she described as "normal practice." Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton's campaign refused similar requests for meetings, Zakharova told the agency.

David Filipov and Andrew Roth, "Moscow had contacts with Trump team during campaign, Russian diplomat says," [Washington Post](#), 10 Nov 2016.

See also [NY Times](#), 10 Nov 2016.

My comment is that the Russian government says it wants a better relationship with the U.S. Government, and an end to U.S. sanctions. Given that Russian goal, it is very unlikely that Ryabkov and Peskov would make a false statement about contacts with the Trump campaign, when it was easily foreseeable that public disclosure of Russian contacts would damage president-elect Trump.

On 11 Jan 2017, *The Washington Post* summarized Trump's 30 years of business dealings in Russia:

.... But a look at Trump's record since the 1980s shows that he and his family long have been interested in trying to do business there. The connection became a matter of curiosity during the 2016 presidential race. A Russian official was quoted saying his government had been in contact with Trump's campaign, and the candidate repeatedly praised Russian President Vladimir Putin while urging the country's leaders to hack into his opponent's emails.

The connections go back 30 years. Trump first visited Moscow in 1987 in an effort to make real estate deals.

.....

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told the Interfax news agency that his country had "contacts" with Trump's campaign. "Obviously, we know most of the people from his entourage," Ryabkov [said](#). The campaign denied such talks.

Ryabkov did not say who Russia talked to. Trump's former campaign manager Paul Manafort managed an investment fund for a Putin ally, and he was cited in a corruption probe in Ukraine, where investigators were looking into illegal payments from a pro-Russian party that had hired Manafort when he was a political consultant. Manafort denied wrongdoing and said that he had not received improper payments. He also said he had nothing to do with weakening of the Republican Party platform language that suggested U.S. military support for Ukraine.

Michael Kranish, "Trump says he has 'nothing to do with Russia.' The past 30 years show otherwise." [Washington Post](#), 11 Jan 2017.

On 16 Jan 2017, *The New York Times* reported:

Mr. Trump repeatedly sought business in Russia as far back as 1987, when he traveled there to explore building a hotel. He applied for his trademark in the country as early as 1996. And his children and associates have appeared in Moscow over and over in search of joint ventures, meeting with developers and government officials.

During a trip in 2006, Mr. Sater and two of Mr. Trump's children, Donald Jr. and Ivanka, stayed at the historic Hotel National Moscow opposite the Kremlin, connecting with potential partners over the course of several days.

As recently as 2013, Mr. Trump himself was in Moscow. He had sold Russian real estate developers the right to host his Miss Universe pageant that year, and he used the visit as a chance to discuss development deals, writing on Twitter at the time: "TRUMP TOWER-MOSCOW is next."

As the Russian market opened up in the post-Soviet era, Mr. Trump and his partners pursued Russians who were newly flush with cash to buy apartments in Trump Towers in New York and Florida, sales that he boasted about in a 2014 interview. "I know the Russians better than anybody," Mr. Trump told Michael D'Antonio, a Trump [biographer](#) who shared unpublished interview transcripts with The New York Times.

....

Donald Trump Jr. became a regular presence in Russia. Speaking at a 2008 Manhattan real estate conference, he confessed to fears of doing business in Russia, saying there is "an issue of 'Will I ever see my money back out of that deal or can I actually trust the person I am doing the deal with?'" according to coverage of his remarks in eTurboNews.

But he told the Manhattan audience that "I really prefer Moscow over all cities in the world" and that he had visited Russia a half-dozen times in 18 months.

In 2011, he was still at it. "Heading to the airport to go to Moscow for business," he tweeted that year.

Mr. Trump himself was back in Moscow in 2013, attending the Miss Universe pageant, which he owned with NBC.

Megan Twohey & Steve Eder, "For Trump, Three Decades of Chasing Deals in Russia," [NY Times](#), 16 Jan 2017.

On 22 Feb 2017, [PolitiFact](#) reported on Trump's possible ties to Russia. PolitiFact explicitly notes that some of the information is from anonymous sources, which can *not* be confirmed. This PolitiFact article is too long to quote here, so I am linking to it.

On 3 March 2017, [The Washington Post](#) mentioned 10 people in Trump's campaign, advisers, or appointees who had/have a known or possible relationship with either the Russian ambassador to the USA, Russian government, or Russian businesses. Trump's Attorney General, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Commerce are three of the ten. *The Post* explicitly says: "none of the relationships above are intended to show misbehavior by those involved."

On 4 March 2017, [The Washington Post](#) reported:

It is unclear why the White House has consistently denied contacts with Russian officials if the meetings that took place were innocuous.

As a result, the confirmations of the encounters have trickled out through a series of news stories that have proved increasingly damaging to the Trump administration, with some Trump associates appearing to shift their accounts over time.

Rosalind S. Helderman, "Despite early denials, growing list of Trump camp contacts with Russians haunts White House," [Washington Post](#) 4 March 2017.

o5 March 2017, Jennifer Rubin, the conservative columnist for [The Washington Post](#), wrote:

... news [reports](#) have suggested, as a TIME story did, that “as major banks in America stopped lending him money following his many bankruptcies, the Trump organization was forced to seek financing from non-traditional institutions. Several had direct ties to Russian financial interests in ways that have raised eyebrows.” (Trump denies he has any ties to Russia. “I can tell you, speaking for myself, I own nothing in Russia. I have no loans in Russia. I don’t have any deals in Russia,” he said recently, leaving open the possibility that he and/or his sons have ties to Russians operating outside of Russia.) Jennifer Rubin, "Trump: Bonkers, paranoid or trapped?," [Washington Post](#), 5 March 2017.

On 3 April 2017, *The Washington Post* disclosed:

The United Arab Emirates arranged a secret meeting in [The Seychelles on 11] January [2017] between Blackwater founder Erik Prince and a Russian close to President Vladimir Putin as part of an apparent effort to establish a back-channel line of communication between Moscow and President-elect Donald Trump, according to U.S., European and Arab officials.

....

Though Prince had no formal role with the Trump campaign or transition team, he presented himself as an unofficial envoy for Trump to high-ranking Emiratis involved in setting up his meeting with the Putin confidant, according to the officials, who did not identify the Russian.

....

The Seychelles encounter, which one official said spanned two days, adds to an expanding web of connections between Russia and Americans with ties to Trump — contacts that the White House has been reluctant to acknowledge or explain until they have been exposed by news organizations.

Adam Entous, Greg Miller, Kevin Sieff, & Karen DeYoung, "Blackwater founder held secret Seychelles meeting to establish Trump-Putin back channel," [Washington Post](#), 16:29 EDT, 3 Apr 2017.

[NBC News](#) confirmed the meeting in the Seychelles and added: “According to intelligence reports filed at the time, no Trump transition people were directly involved and it is unclear if the meeting was undertaken on behalf of Trump’s people or was a UAE initiative, the [anonymous U.S. intelligence] official said.”

On 12 May 2017, the White House released an 8 March 2017 one-page [letter](#) to Trump from two of Trump’s attorneys that stated they had reviewed 10 years of Trump’s income tax returns and concluded that Trump had *no* income from Russia, with some exceptions. That is a backhanded way of saying Trump had *more* than US\$ 100 million in income from Russia. *The New York Times* reported the exceptions were:

1. \$95 million paid by a Russian billionaire for a Trump-owned estate in Florida,
2. \$12.2 million in payments in connection with holding the Miss Universe pageant in Moscow in 2013,
3. undisclosed payments over 10 years from Russians for hotel rooms, rounds of

golf or Trump-licensed products, like wine, ties or mattresses.

....

[The letter] leaves other questions unanswered, including whether Mr. Trump or his firms received Russian income or loans from entities registered elsewhere or whether he derived income from Russian-linked partnerships that file their own returns.

“This is an artfully written letter, covering a limited time period,” said David Cay Johnston, an expert on taxes and a former New York Times reporter who has written extensively about Mr. Trump. “Much of what we need to know about Trump and Russian money — and that includes money from Kazakhstan, Turkey and other places where Russian oligarchs operate — involves transactions prior to 10 years ago.”

....

Some tax-law experts questioned key parts of the letter, including how the lawyers defined “Russian” sources and lenders. Major companies in Russia frequently use subsidiaries in other jurisdictions, like Cyprus, the Netherlands or the British Virgin Islands, to conduct overseas business. Moreover, it was unclear what the lawyers meant by asserting that the tax returns did not “reflect” any income from Russian sources.

Mark Landler & Eric Lipton, "Trump Lawyers Say He Had No Russian Income or Debt, With Some Exceptions," [New York Times](#), 12 May 2017.

The Washington Post reported:

Daniel Shaviro, a tax-law expert at New York University, said that without additional information on Trump’s tax returns and income, the letter from the lawyers is “meaningless garbage.”

....

[Shaviro] said the fact that the White House would release such a letter with no verification “makes me more suspicious, not less, of the president’s financial ties.”

....

Critics have raised questions about whether Russians have funneled money through Trump or his projects into the United States. The letter is less clear about whether Trump has borrowed or received any money from Russian sources. It says his tax returns do not reflect any “debt” to Russian lenders, but, depending on the type of debt, it would not necessarily be listed on a tax return.

....

Trump and his aides have been promising for several days that they would send a certified letter from Trump’s attorneys to [U.S. Senator] Graham showing that the

president has no business ties with Russia. "Certified" refers to the class of mail used to send the document, but does not offer any outside assurance that the contents of the document are accurate.

Rosalind S. Helderman and Damian Paletta, "Trump lawyers outline president's Russian income but provide no documents," [Washington Post](#), 12 May 2017.

See also [Wall Street Journal](#); [Reuters](#); [Associated Press](#); [Washington Post](#)(AP).

On 8-11 July 2017, it was disclosed that Donald Trump, Jr. — along with Kushner and Manafort — attended a meeting with Russians on 9 June 2016 at Trump Tower in New York City. Trump Jr. was initially promised damaging information on Hillary Clinton from the Russian government, but the meeting is claimed to be mostly about Americans adopting Russian orphans. See bibliography [above](#). Before July 2017, Trump and his associates vehemently [denied](#) that anyone working on Trump's presidential campaign had met Russians during the campaign, but this June 2016 meeting makes those denials *false*.

In late August 2017, it was revealed that during Sept 2015 to Jan 2016, while Trump was campaigning for president of the USA, Trump was also secretly pursuing building Trump Tower in Moscow. [Washington Post](#)(27Aug); [New York Times](#). In connection with that secret business deal, Trump Organization executive vice president Michael Cohen contacted Russian government officials. [New York Times](#)(see final 2 paragraphs); [Washington Post](#). The proposed deal collapsed when the Russian government failed to give approval. These contacts with Russians supposedly show that Trump was less than honest in denying contacts with Russians. And *if* Trump Tower in Moscow had been constructed, then Trump would have a massive conflict of interest when dealing with Russia as president.

On 20 September 2017, the [Washington Post](#) reported that on 7 July 2016 Manafort offered to give a wealthy Russian businessman "private briefings" on Trump's campaign to be president. There is *no* evidence that briefings actually occurred.

On 2 October 2017, the [Washington Post](#) reported two more previously unknown contacts between the Trump 2016 campaign and Russia. *The Post* said: "The documents also underscore the Trump company's long-standing interest in doing business in Moscow."

My bibliography [above](#) for the Flynn debacle cites several news articles that mention contacts by Trump campaign staff with Russians.

Conclusion to Trump's Deals in Russia

Before the Russian hacking of Democrats became public in July 2016, Trump boasted of his business connections in Russia. But after the Russian hacking, Trump began to minimize or deny his past connections to Russia. This change gives the appearance that Trump desires to cover-up his past connections with Russia.

Conclusion

There are three ways that Trump misuses facts:

1. Apparently, Trump decides on his opinion, then creates fictitious "facts" to support his opinion. When one ignores Trump's fictitious "facts", Trump's assertions have *no* factual basis. That makes Trump's opinions based on fantasy or delusions.
2. Sometimes Trump relies on "facts" asserted by an unreliable source, usually by a guest or anonymous source on the Fox News channel. Repeating false facts shows a lack of critical thinking by Trump, and a failure to have his staff check the alleged facts before the president repeats those false facts.
3. Additionally, Trump creates fictitious "facts" to boast about strong majority admiration for him, which some psychiatrists have suggested is a narcissistic character flaw.

Each of these three misuses of facts is a defect in Trump's thought process.

Worse, months after journalists have exposed the errors in Trump's so-called "facts". Trump continues to cite the same discredited "facts". Trump's refusal to learn from his mistakes shows his disdain for the Truth.

Furthermore, I presented above examples of Trump making an inflammatory accusation without citing any facts (not even citing fictitious "facts"), and without citing any sources. At colleges with decent academic standards, students are required to write term papers with footnotes and a bibliography, to teach the students how to think like an educated person. Assertions without reasons are worthless.

Trump repeatedly asserted that journalists are failing to report important news (e.g., voting fraud, Islamic terror attacks, high murder rate in the USA). Worse, Trump repeatedly characterized journalists as "dishonest" and providers of "fake news". Trump's war with the news media is not only unbecoming to the president, but also gives journalists incentive to expose Trump's factual errors.

In my opinion, it is incredibly dangerous to have a president of the USA — in charge of a powerful military with a large arsenal of nuclear weapons — who has a defective thought process.

I believe Trump is unfit to be president, because he can not distinguish between delusions and facts. Trump should be impeached and removed from office. But that probably will not happen until 2019, after an election in which Democrats might become the majority party in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment

The U.S. Constitution specifies only two requirements for the U.S. president: he must be born in the USA and he must be at least 35 years old. We need an Amendment to the Constitution to also specify that any candidate for president or vice-president have served either at least six years in the U.S. Senate, at least four years in the U.S. House of

Representatives, *or* at least one full term as governor of any state in the USA. That requirement would have several benefits:

1. give candidates either experience at the highest levels of the U.S. Government, or experience as a governor working with a legislature.
2. develop a track record that will clearly expose candidates who are unable to work successfully in government.
3. expose candidates who have a character flaw, personality disorder, or some other condition that makes them unfit to be president.

Note that *all* of the U.S. presidents between 1961 and 2016 pass this proposed test. It is *not* an unusual test.

Reform Electoral College

Additionally, Congress should consider replacing the Electoral College with direct popular vote. The Electoral College gives too much weight to states with a small population (e.g., Wyoming, Vermont). The real reason, of course, is Hillary Clinton won the popular vote in 2016.

On the other hand, perhaps a better solution is to return the Electoral College to its original purpose: voters would elect local Electors, and the Electors alone would decide who would become president and vice-president. In the 2016 election, voters in the USA had access to abundant information about Trump's narcissistic character flaw, Trump's inability to cite facts, and Trump's absolute lack of experience in government — but voters elected Trump anyway. What does that say about voters? In my opinion, Trump's victory says voters were either poorly informed or lacked critical thinking skills. That conclusion makes the direct popular vote an unreliable way of choosing a president.

Removal of Trump from Presidency

There are three possible ways to remove a U.S. president from office:

1. **Impeachment** by U.S. House of Representatives and conviction by U.S. Senate. (U.S. Constitution, Article I, §3, clause 6)
2. **Declaration of Inability** (U.S. Constitution, 25th Amendment, §4) by either:
 - A. the Vice-President and a majority of the Cabinet members
 - B. "or of such other body as Congress may by law provide".
3. **Resignation** by the president.

Of the three ways, I think resignation is the most likely for Trump. After a year or two, Trump may become frustrated with Congress and the Judiciary blocking his programs. At

some point, Trump might resign and return to being a real-estate mogul.

Moreover, Trump will surely become tired of relentless criticism by journalists, commentators, politicians, and opinion leaders. Trump has never before worked in a government, where criticism from someone is routine. This is also Trump's highest profile job in his 70 year life. For both reasons, Trump is experiencing high levels of stress from criticism in the year 2017.

Back in January 2017, when I drafted the conclusion of this essay, I wondered: “It is unknown how Trump will react to the incessant criticism. However, the criticism will surely affect Trump's narcissistic craving for strong majority admiration.” By July 2017 it was clear that Trump was failing as president. Trump's response was to criticize the news media for reporting his mistakes, failures, and character flaws. Trump's leadership style that was tolerable when he led a privately-owned company is now unacceptable when he is president of the USA.

Bills in U.S. House of Representatives on removal of Trump

A bibliography [below](#) contains news articles, quotations from authors of these bills, and results of votes.

6 April 2017: Raskin

On 6 April 2017, Jamie Raskin — a former law professor at American University in Washington, DC and now a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Maryland — filed [H.R. 1987](#) to form a commission of 8 physicians and 2 former government officials to examine Trump's fitness to be president, under the 25th Amendment.

12 July 2017: Sherman

On 12 July 2017, Brad Sherman — Democrat from the San Fernando Valley, California — filed the first articles of impeachment in the U.S. House of Representatives, [House Resolution 438](#). Sherman alleged that Trump's firing of Comey obstructed justice.

18 Aug 2017: Lofgren

On 18 August 2017, Zoe Lofgren — a liberal Democrat from San Jose California — filed [House Resolution 497](#) that “urges the Vice President and the Cabinet to quickly secure the services of medical and psychiatric professionals to examine the President....”

11 Oct 2017: Green

On 11 October 2017, Al Green — a Democrat from Houston, Texas — announced articles of impeachment in the U.S. House of Representatives. In a speech on the House floor, Mr. Green asserted the following grounds for impeachment:

- I. Trump has "produced a demonstrable record of inciting white supremacy, sexism, bigotry, hatred, xenophobia, race-baiting, and racism by demeaning, defaming, disrespecting, and disparaging women and certain minorities."
- II. "Trump ... did betray his trust as President and bring shame and dishonor to the office of the Presidency by associating the majesty and dignity of the Presidency with causes rooted in White supremacy, bigotry, racism, anti-Semitism, White nationalism, and neo-Nazism"
- III. "Trump ... did engage in perfidy by making the widely reported claim that 3 to 5 million people voted illegally in the 2016 Presidential election and, further, expending tax dollars to establish a commission to investigate his claim"
- IV. "Trump ... did betray his trust as President, bringing shame and dishonor to the office of the Presidency by encouraging law enforcement officials to violate the constitutional rights of suspects in their custody and control"

Al Green, "Notice Of Intention To Offer Resolution Raising A Question Of The Privileges Of The House," 163 *Congressional Record* at H7928-30 (11 Oct 2017).

After reading his draft articles of impeachment on the House floor, Mr. Green did *not* offer his draft bill. 163 *Congressional Record* at H7935. On the night of 1 December 2017, Mr. Green still had *not* submitted his bill for consideration. [House](#).

15 Nov 2017: Cohen

On 15 November 2017, Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.) introduced his articles of impeachment — with co-sponsors Al Green (D-Tex.), and four other Democrats. Cohen gave a lengthy and detailed recitation of five grounds for impeachment, a small part of which is quoted here:

I. OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE

Trump ... has prevented, obstructed, and impeded the administration of justice, and has to that end engaged personally, and through his subordinates and agents, in a course of conduct or scheme designed to delay, impede an investigation, and to conceal information sought by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the course of its investigation into Russian interference with the 2016 United States Presidential election, including any possible collusion between Russia and Donald J. Trump's campaign.

The means used to implement this course of conduct or scheme included one or more of the following acts:

....

In all of this, Donald J. Trump has obstructed the administration of justice. In so doing he has undermined the integrity of his office, brought disrepute on the Presidency, and betrayed his trust as President in a manner subversive of constitutional government, to the great prejudice of the cause of law and justice and to the manifest injury of the people of the United States.

Wherefore Donald J. Trump, by such conduct, warrants impeachment and trial, and removal from office.

II. **VIOLATION OF THE FOREIGN EMOLUMENTS CLAUSE** (Article I, Section 9 Of The United States Constitution)

In his conduct while President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, in violation of his constitutional oath to faithfully execute the office of President of the United States and, to the best of his ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, as well as his constitutional obligation to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, accepted, without the consent of Congress emoluments from foreign states in the following manner:

- Donald J. Trump refused to divest, place into a blind trust, or otherwise give up his ownership interest in his worldwide business holdings since becoming President.
- Donald J. Trump refused to release his tax returns, with the intent to conceal the exact nature of his holdings from Congress and the American people.
- Donald J. Trump acknowledged, through his personal attorney, that his businesses receive funds and make a profit from payments by foreign governments, and would continue to do so while serving as President.

....

In all of this, Donald J. Trump has undermined the integrity of his office, brought disrepute on the Presidency, and betrayed his trust as President in a manner subversive of constitutional government, against the cause of law and justice and to the manifest injury of the people of the United States.

Wherefore Donald J. Trump, by such conduct, warrants impeachment and trial, and removal from office.

III. **VIOLATION OF THE DOMESTIC EMOLUMENTS CLAUSE** (Article II, Section 1 Of The United States Constitution)

In his conduct while President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, in violation of his constitutional oath to faithfully execute the office of President of

the United States and, to the best of his ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, as well as his constitutional obligation to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, accepted, emoluments from the United States in the following manner:

- Donald J. Trump refused to divest, place into a blind trust, or otherwise give up his ownership interest in his worldwide business holdings since becoming President.
- Donald J. Trump refused to release his tax returns, with the intent to conceal the exact nature of his holdings from Congress and the American people.
- Donald J. Trump has an ownership interest in the Mar-a-Lago Club in Palm Beach, Florida.
- Donald J. Trump has an ownership interest in the Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, New Jersey.
- Since becoming President, Donald J. Trump has visited Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida, at least seven times, and has visited the Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, New Jersey, at least five times.
-

By accepting emoluments from the United States in the form of payments for goods and/or services at businesses in which Donald J. Trump has an ownership interest, Donald J. Trump violated article II, section 1 of the U.S. Constitution.

In all of this, Donald J. Trump has undermined the integrity of his office, brought disrepute on the Presidency, and betrayed his trust as President in a manner subversive of constitutional government, against the cause of law and justice and to the manifest injury of the people of the United States.

Wherefore Donald J. Trump, by such conduct, warrants impeachment and trial, and removal from office.

IV. ABUSE OF POWER — UNDERMINING THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY AND THE RULE OF LAW

In his conduct while President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, in violation of his constitutional oath to faithfully execute the office of the President of the United States and, to the best of his ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, as well as his constitutional obligation to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, has engaged in activities that undermine the independence of the Federal judiciary.

- [citing examples of Trump's public criticism of 2 federal judges: James Robart and Gonzalo P. Curiel]

- On August 25, 2017, before Joe Arpaio had been sentenced, or his conviction had been appealed, and without consulting the Justice Department, Donald J. Trump pardoned Joe Arpaio for his commission of criminal contempt of court.

In all of this, Donald J. Trump has sought to undermine the independence of the Federal judiciary and the rule of law, repeatedly attempted to upset the careful constitutional balance of power between the judicial and executive branches. By pardoning Joe Arpaio's willful violation of a Federal court order, Donald J. Trump has offered encouragement to others to disobey Federal court orders with which Donald J. Trump may disagree. He has brought disrepute on the Presidency, and has acted in a manner subversive of constitutional government, to the great prejudice of the cause of law and justice and to the manifest injury of the people of the United States.

Wherefore Donald J. Trump, by such conduct, warrants impeachment and trial, and removal from office.

V. UNDERMINING FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

In his conduct while President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, in violation of his constitutional oath to faithfully execute the office of the President of the United States and, to the best of his ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, as well as his constitutional obligation to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, has engaged in activities that undermine the freedom of the press guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution.

- Donald J. Trump repeatedly called press organizations "fake news" including, on February 15, 2017, when he tweeted, "The fake news media is going crazy with their conspiracy theories and blind hatred. @MSNBC & @CNN are unwatchable. @foxandfriends is great!".
- On February 17, 2017, Donald J. Trump tweeted, "The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!".
- Donald J. Trump has repeatedly attacked members of the press, including as a candidate on August 7, 2015, when he commented about Fox News Channel anchor and Presidential debate moderator Megyn Kelly saying, "you could see there was blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her whatever".
- On June 29, 2017, Donald J. Trump tweeted, "I heard poorly rated Morning Joe speaks badly of me (don't watch anymore). Then how come low I.Q. Crazy Mika, along with Psycho Joe, came to Mar-a-Lago 3 nights in a row around New Year's Eve, and insisted on joining me. She was badly bleeding from a face-lift. I said no!".

- On July 2, 2017, Donald J. Trump tweeted “#FraudNewsCNN#FNN” and circulated a video of him violently wrestling a man covered by a CNN logo, which, according to the Reporters Committee on Freedom of the Press, was a “threat of physical violence against journalists ... [and] beneath the office of the presidency”.
- On May 10, 2017, Donald J. Trump’s White House barred American reporters from witnessing his meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Russian Ambassador to the United States Sergey Kislyak in the Oval Office, but allowed a Russian photographer to document the meeting.
- In January 2017, Donald J. Trump’s transition team considered a plan to relocate the press corps from the White House press room to the White House Conference Center near Lafayette Square or to space in the Old Executive Office Building.
- In June 2017, Donald J. Trump’s administration prohibited video recordings of White House press briefings.
- On October 11, 2017, Donald J. Trump tweeted, “Fake @NBC News made up story that I wanted a ‘tenfold’ increase in our U.S. nuclear arsenal. Pure fiction, made up to demean. NBC=CNN!” and “With all of the Fake News coming out of NBC and the Networks at what point is it appropriate to challenge their License? Bad for country!”.
- On October 11, 2017, Donald J. Trump also tweeted, “Network news has become so partisan, distorted and fake that licenses must be challenged and, if appropriate, revoked. Not fair to public!”.
- On October 11, 2017, Donald J. Trump told reporters in the Oval Office, “It is frankly disgusting the way the press is able to write whatever they want to write, and people should look into it.”.

In all of this, Donald J. Trump has sought to undermine the freedom of the press guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution, brought disrepute on the Presidency, and has acted in a manner subversive of constitutional government, to the great prejudice of the cause of law and justice and to the manifest injury of the people of the United States.

Wherefore Donald J. Trump, by such conduct, warrants impeachment and trial, and removal from office.

Steven Cohen, "Impeaching Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, of high crimes and misdemeanors," [House Resolution 621](#), 15 Nov 2017.

6 Dec 2017: Green

Around noon on Wednesday, 6 December 2017, Al Green posted a second draft of his articles of impeachment at his website. I have copied the following text from the official version at the Library of Congress website. I inserted a bulleted list of Green's supporting facts.

Resolved, That Donald John Trump, President of the United States is unfit to be President and is impeached for high misdemeanors, and that the following articles of impeachment be exhibited to the Senate:

Articles of Impeachment exhibited by the House of Representatives of the United States, in the name of itself and of the people of the United States, against Donald John Trump, President of the United States, in maintenance and support of its impeachment against him for high misdemeanors committed as President constituting harm to American society to the manifest injury of the people of the United States:

ARTICLE I

In his capacity as President of the United States, unmindful of the high duties of his high office and the dignity and proprieties thereof, and of the harmony and courtesies necessary for stability within the society of the United States, Donald John Trump has with his statements done more than insult individuals and groups of Americans, he has harmed the society of the United States, brought shame and dishonor to the office of President of the United States, sowing discord among the people of the United States by associating the majesty and dignity of the presidency with causes rooted in white supremacy, bigotry, racism, anti-Semitism, white nationalism, or neo-Nazism on one or more of the following occasions:

- On August 15, 2017, Donald John Trump made a widely published statement characterizing a group of anti-Semites, bigots, racists, white nationalists, and Ku Klux Klansmen who rallied in Charlottesville, Virginia, as “very fine people”.
- On August [October?] 7, 2017, hate groups returned to Charlottesville, Virginia, at the statue of Robert E. Lee, the Confederate general, chanting “You will not replace us!” Since this event on October 7, the President has made many widely published statements about many things including, the National Football League, but has not made one widely published statement condemning the hate groups for returning to the place where an innocent person lost her life at the hands of hate.
- On November 29, 2017, Donald John Trump shared 3 videos posted by a leader of a British political party considered by many to be an extremist group.

In all of this, the aforementioned Donald John Trump, by his statements, unmindful of the high duties of his high office and the dignities and proprieties thereof, and of the harmony, respect, and courtesies necessary for stability within the society of the United States, has undermined the integrity of his office, has sown discord among the people of the United States, has brought disrepute, contempt, ridicule and disgrace on the Presidency, has acted in a manner antithetical to the cause of a just society, has betrayed his trust as President to the manifest injury of the people of the United States,

and committed a high misdemeanor in office.

Therefore, Donald John Trump by causing such harm to the society of the United States is unfit to be President and warrants impeachment, trial, and removal from office.

ARTICLE II

In his capacity as President of the United States, unmindful of the high duties of his high office, of the dignity and proprieties thereof, and of the harmony, and respect necessary for stability within the society of the United States, Donald John Trump has with his statements done more than simply insult individuals and groups of Americans, he has harmed the American society by publicly casting contempt on individuals and groups, inciting hate and hostility, sowing discord among the people of the United States, on the basis of race, national origin, religion, gender, and sexual orientation, on one or more of the following occasions:

- On January 27, 2017, Donald John Trump issued Executive Order 13769 providing for a partial shutdown of immigration from mainly Muslim countries, to fulfill a campaign promise that read as follows: “DONALD J. TRUMP STATEMENT ON PREVENTING MUSLIM IMMIGRATION (New York, NY) December 7th, 2015—Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s representatives can figure out what’s going on”, thereby casting contempt upon Muslims, inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States on the basis of religion.
- On July 26, 2017, Donald John Trump made a public statement substantially as follows: “After consultation with my Generals and military experts, please be advised that the United States Government will not accept or allow Transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military. Our military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail”, and thereby casting contempt on transgender individuals, inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States on the basis of gender.
- On September 23, 2017, Donald John Trump made a public statement substantially as follows: “Wouldn’t you love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, to say, ‘Get that son of a b-i-t-c-h off the field right now, out, he’s fired? He’s fired!’” thereby casting contempt on professional football players who engaged in constitutionally protected protests pertaining to allegations of police misconduct with regard to racial minorities, as well as casting contempt on the professional players’ mothers by calling the mothers “b-i-t-c-h-e-s”, effectively calling these mothers dogs, thereby inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States on the basis of race and gender.

- On September 30, 2017, Donald John Trump made a public statement substantially as follows: “They want everything to be done for them when it should be a community effort”, in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria thereby casting contempt on Puerto Rican citizens of the United States, inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States based on national origin and race.
- On October 3, 2017, Donald John Trump made a public statement substantially as follows: “I hate to tell you, Puerto Rico, but you’ve thrown our budget a little out of whack because we spent a lot of money on Puerto Rico, that’s fine, we’ve saved a lot of lives”, but Donald John Trump did not make similar comments about Texas or Florida in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey or Hurricane Irma, treating the Puerto Rican citizens of the United States disparately, thereby casting contempt on Puerto Ricans, inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States based on national origin and race.
- On October 19, 2017, Donald John Trump made a public statement substantially as follows: “The Fake News is going crazy with wacky Congresswoman Wilson (D), who was SECRETLY on a very personal call, and gave a total lie on content!”, thereby casting contempt on an African-American Member of Congress, inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States based on gender and race.
- On October 21, 2017, Donald John Trump made a public statement substantially as follows: “I hope the Fake News Media keeps talking about Wacky Congresswoman Wilson in that she, as a representative, is killing the Democrat Party!” thereby casting contempt on an African-American female Member of Congress, inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States based on gender and race.
- On October 22, 2017, Donald John Trump made a public statement substantially as follows: “Wacky Congresswoman Wilson is the gift that keeps on giving for the Republican Party, a disaster for Dems. You watch her in action & vote R!” thereby casting contempt on an African-American female Member of Congress inciting hate and hostility, and sowing discord among the people of the United States based on gender and race.

In all of this, the aforementioned Donald John Trump has, by his statements, brought the high office of President of the United States in contempt, ridicule, disgrace and disrepute, has sown discord among the people of the United States, has demonstrated that he is unfit to be President and has betrayed his trust as President of the United States to the manifest injury of the people of the United States, and has committed a high misdemeanor in office.

Therefore, Donald John Trump, by causing such harm to the society of the United States, is unfit to be President, warrants impeachment, trial, and removal from office. Al Green, "Impeaching Donald John Trump, President of the United States, of high misdemeanors," [House Resolution 646](#), 6 Dec 2017. (posted on Internet morning of 8 Dec

2017)

Bibliography on Removal of Trump

- Jenna Portnoy, "Is Trump unfit to serve? This congressman has a bill for that." [Washington Post](#), 12 May 2017. (Jamie Raskin's bill.)
- Patricia Mazzei, "Miami lawmaker was first Republican to suggest Trump could be impeached," [Miami Herald](#), 16:20 EDT, 17 May 2017. (Rep. Carlos Curbelo of Florida became the first Republican in Congress to publicly suggest the impeachment of Trump, *if* it is true that Trump told Comey to end the investigation of Flynn.)
- Cristina Marcos, "First Republicans talk possibility of impeachment for Trump," [The Hill](#), updated 15:38 EDT, 17 May 2017. (Rep. Justin Amash of Michigan became the second Republican in Congress to publicly say, *if* it is true that Trump told Comey to end the investigation of Flynn, then Trump should be impeached.)
- John Bowden, "More Dems sign onto bill to impeach Trump," [The Hill](#), 1 July 2017. (Bill proposed by Rep. Jamie Raskin on 6 April 2017, now has 25 [co-sponsors](#).) See also [NBC News](#)(3July).
- On 12 July 2017, Brad Sherman filed the first impeachment article against Trump. [Washington Post](#); [The Hill](#).

Sherman's statement at his House website said:

Every day Democrats, Republicans, and the entire world are shocked by the latest example of America's amateur President. Ignorance accompanied by a refusal to learn. Lack of impulse control, accompanied by a refusal to have his staff control his impulses. We're no longer surprised by any action, no matter how far below the dignity of the office — and no matter how dangerous to the country.

But the Constitution does not provide for the removal of a President for impulsive, ignorant incompetence. It does provide for the removal of a President for High Crimes and Misdemeanors.

Brad Sherman, "Congressman Sherman Introduces Article of Impeachment: Obstruction of Justice," [House](#), 12 July 2017.

Sherman's statement at his House website concluded:

.... I am introducing Articles of Impeachment to begin a long process to protect our country from abuse of power, obstruction of justice, and impulsive, ignorant incompetence.

Ibid.

- On 18 August 2017, Zoe Lofgren, a liberal democrat from San Jose California, introduced a draft Resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives that called on Trump to get a psychiatric examination. [Mercury-News](#); [The Hill](#). Lofgren told *The*

Mercury-News that her bill “probably will not pass, but it will stimulate a conversation”.

Part of Lofgren's statement at her House website said:

Does the President suffer from early stage dementia? Has the stress of office aggravated a mental illness crippling impulse control? Has emotional disorder so impaired the President that he is unable to discharge his duties? Is the President mentally and emotionally stable?

Today, U.S. Representative Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.) introduced a resolution that urges the Vice President and Cabinet to have the President examined by medical and psychiatric professionals to assist them in determining whether the President is unfit and unable to fulfill his Constitutional duties. Section 4 of the 25th Amendment of the United States Constitution outlines this obligation.

Zoe Lofgren, "Lofgren introduces resolution urging Vice President and Cabinet to fulfill duties under 25th Amendment," [House](#), 18 August 2017.

- On 11 October 2017, Al Green read his draft bill that called for the impeachment of Trump.

Part of Al Green's statement at his House website said:

Today, I rise to use the constitutionally prescribed political process of impeachment to speak truth to the most powerful man on earth, the President of the United States of America.

I do so knowing that the public has been led to believe that a President must commit a crime to be impeached, which is not true. If any President persisted with the lie that “Hitler was right,” he would be, and should be, impeached not for a crime, but for betraying his trust as President.

I do so knowing that many, of my contemporaries will criticize my actions. Some will castigate me, others may desire to do something more dastardly with hopes of suppressing all embers of courage that might inflame others to speak truth to power or the powerful.

Ultimately, to again quote Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I will do that which is “neither safe, nor politic, nor popular.” I will do that which is right and let others do what they may and allow history to judge us all.”

Al Green, "Congressman Al Green's Statement on Impeachment," [House](#), 11 Oct 2017.

Note that Mr. Green cites *no* authority to support his assertion that a president can be impeached for "betraying his trust as President". Mr. Green's final paragraph is self-serving praise for himself. The Democratic party leadership in the House wants to wait for the results of the FBI investigation before considering impeachment.

[Washington Post](#); [The Hill](#); [Politico](#).

- On 15 November 2017, Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.) — joined by Al Green (D-Tex.) and four other Democrats — introduced one set of five articles of impeachment. [The Hill](#);

[Politico](#); [Associated Press](#). Cohen's press release said in part:

The time has come to make clear to the American people and to this President that his train of injuries to our Constitution must be brought to an end through impeachment. I believe there is evidence that he attempted to obstruct an investigation into Russia's interference with the U.S. presidential election and links between between Russia and the Trump campaign, most notably the firing of FBI Director James Comey. The president's blatant refusal to separate himself from his businesses has led to clear instances of conflict of interest that appear to violate both the domestic and foreign emoluments clauses. And his attacks on 'so-called' judges and 'fake news' have undermined public confidence in the judiciary and the press. It's time for Congress to take action to stop this reckless and harmful behavior by removing Mr. Trump from office and to defend and uphold the Constitution of the United States.

Steve Cohen, "Members Introduce Articles of Impeachment," [House](#), 15 Nov 2017.

- On 6 December 2017 at 13:34 EST, Al Green (D-Tex.) forced a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives on his two articles of impeachment. The vote was 364 to 58, in favor of refusing to consider his articles. A total of 58 Democrats — 31% of the Democrats who voted on this issue — voted for Green's articles of impeachment. Another 4 Democrats voted "present", the equivalent of abstaining. [Washington Post](#); [Politico](#); [Associated Press](#). My comment is that, because Mr. Green released his draft articles of impeachment just one hour before the vote, few members of the House had read the articles on which they voted.

In my opinion, Raskin's bill is the best of these bills. Sherman's bill is very narrow, with only one ground for impeachment. Lofgren herself recognizes that her draft Resolution has zero chance of passing. In my opinion, at least part of Green's proposal does *not* meet the Constitutional grounds for impeachment. Cohen's bill is carefully crafted and should receive hearings in the House Judiciary Committee, but will be blocked by the Republican majority. The refusal of the Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee to schedule hearings on any of these bills is consistent with the purely partisan refusal of the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2016 to schedule hearings on the confirmation of Obama's appointee to the U.S. Supreme Court, which I documented [here](#).

Bibliography on Trump Unfit

The following politicians, mental health professionals, and commentators have suggested that Trump is unfit to be president:

- David L. Brooks, "No, Not Trump, Not Ever," [NY Times](#), 18 Mar 2016. ("Trump is perhaps the most dishonest person to run for high office in our lifetimes. All politicians stretch the truth, but Trump has a steady obliviousness to accuracy.")
- Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Lee of Singapore in Joint Press Conference," [White House](#), 2 Aug 2016. ("Yes, I think the Republican

nominee [Trump] is unfit to serve as President. I said so last week, and he keeps on proving it. ..., the fact that he doesn't appear to have basic knowledge around critical issues in Europe, in the Middle East, in Asia, means that he's woefully unprepared to do this job. And this is not just my opinion. I think what's been interesting is the repeated denunciations of his statements by leading Republicans, including the Speaker of the House and the Senate Majority Leader, and prominent Republicans like John McCain.”)

- Callum Borchers, "The latest media obsession: 'Could there be something ... neurologically wrong' with Donald Trump?," [Washington Post](#), 3 August 2016.
- Charles Krauthammer, "Donald Trump and the fitness threshold," [Washington Post](#), 4 August 2016. (Quoted [above](#).)
- 50 former Republican National Security Officials, "A Letter From G.O.P. National Security Officials Opposing Donald Trump," [NY Times](#), 8 Aug 2016. ("In our judgment, Mr. Trump has none of these critical qualities. He is unable or unwilling to separate truth from falsehood. He lacks self-control and acts impetuously. He cannot tolerate personal criticism.")
- David L. Brooks, "The View From Trump Tower," [NY Times](#), 11 Nov 2016. ("... [Trump's] main problem is going to be his own attention span, ignorance and incompetence. [Trump] will probably resign or be impeached within a year.”)
- David L. Brooks, "The Internal Invasion," [NY Times](#), 20 Jan 2017. ("We've never had a major national leader as professionally unprepared, intellectually ill informed, morally compromised and temperamentally unfit as [Trump].”)
- Jennifer Rubin, "Trump's emotional tailspin was predictable," [Washington Post](#), 24 Jan 2017. ("That reality — the rotten poll numbers, the low turnout at his inauguration, the massive turnout at worldwide protests, his widely panned appearance at the CIA and his press secretary Sean Spicer's disastrous debut with the White House press corps on Saturday [21 Jan] — seems to have thrown the narcissistic ex-mogul into an emotional tailspin. The obsession with replaying the election and concocting a phony excuse for losing the popular vote reminds us that despite mockery for constant lying, Trump cannot help himself. He lies because reality won't conform to his narcissistic view of the world.”)
- Rachel Hosie, "'Malignant Narcissism': Donald Trump displays classic traits of mental illness, claim psychologists," [The Independent](#) in U.K., 30 Jan 2017.
- "Rep. Maxine Waters: Trump's actions 'leading himself' to impeachment," [CNN](#), 6 Feb 2017.
- Kathleen Parker, "Trump's two-year presidency," [Washington Post](#), 20:03 EST, 10 Feb 2017.
- Lance Dodes, Joseph Schachter, & 33 other mental health professionals, Letter,

"Mental Health Professionals Warn About Trump," [NY Times](#), 13 Feb 2017. ("Mr. Trump's speech and actions demonstrate an inability to tolerate views different from his own, leading to rage reactions. We believe that the grave emotional instability indicated by Mr. Trump's speech and actions makes him incapable of serving safely as president.")

- E.J. Dionne, Jr., "Admit it: Trump is unfit to serve," [Washington Post](#), 19:30 EST, 15 Feb 2017. ("Senators such as John McCain and Lindsey Graham seem to know it is only a matter of time before the GOP will have to confront Trump's unfitness.")
- Cristina Marcos, "Kentucky Dem lawmaker questions Trump's mental health," [The Hill](#), 22 Feb 2017. ("Trump is 'totally unfit for the office he serves in,' [Rep. John] Yarmuth (D-KY) said in remarks to a local NAACP chapter.... 'He is, in my opinion, a dangerous president. I'm not sure of his mental state, but I know that he doesn't portray someone who is in control of his faculties,' Yarmuth said in comments first highlighted by [CNN](#).")
- Jacquie Slater, "Mental Health Professionals call for Trump to be removed from office," [WTNH](#), 20 April 2017. (Conference of approximately two dozen mental health professionals at Yale School of Medicine. Dr. John Gartner: "Worse than just being a liar or a narcissist, in addition [Trump] is paranoid, delusional and grandiose thinking and he proved that to the country the first day he was President.") Also see [The Independent](#).
- George F. Will, "Trump has a dangerous disability," [Washington Post](#), 19:36 EDT, 3 May 2017. ("It is urgent for Americans to think and speak clearly about President Trump's inability to do either. This seems to be not a mere disinclination but a disability. It is not merely the result of intellectual sloth but of an untrained mind bereft of information and married to stratospheric self-confidence." "... it is up to the public to quarantine this presidency by insistently communicating to its elected representatives a steady, rational fear of this man whose combination of impulsivity and credulity render him uniquely unfit to take the nation into a military conflict.")
- Klaus Brinkbäumer, editorial, "It's Time to Get Rid of Donald Trump," [Der Spiegel](#), 19 May 2017. ("Donald Trump is not fit to be president of the United States. He does not possess the requisite intellect and does not understand the significance of the office he holds nor the tasks associated with it. He doesn't read. He doesn't bother to peruse important files and intelligence reports and knows little about the issues that he has identified as his priorities. His decisions are capricious and they are delivered in the form of tyrannical decrees. As has been demonstrated hundreds of times, he is a liar, a racist and a cheat. And one of the media's tasks is to continue telling things as they are: Trump has to be removed from the White House. Quickly. He is a danger to the world.")
- Paul Ryan, the leader of the Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives, on 8 June 2017 explained why Trump had repeatedly made serious mistakes with the FBI Director, Comey: "The president's new at this. He's new to government, and so he probably wasn't steeped in the long-running protocols that establish the relationships

between DOJ, FBI and White Houses. He's just new to this. I'm not saying it's an acceptable excuse. It's just my observation." [Washington Post](#); [NBC News](#); [The Hill](#).

- On 16 August 2017, Tony Schwartz — the ghostwriter or co-author of Trump's famous book, *The Art of the Deal* — predicted that Trump would resign before the end of 2017. [Tweet](#): “The circle is closing at blinding speed. Trump is going to resign and declare victory before Mueller and congress leave him no choice.” [Tweet](#): “Trump's presidency is effectively over. Would be amazed if he survives till end of the year. More likely resigns by fall, if not sooner.” See also: [CNN](#); [Time](#).
- Bob Corker, the chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and a leading Republican in the Senate, publicly blasted Trump on 17 August 2017: “I do think there need to be some radical changes. The president has not yet ... been able to demonstrate the stability, nor some of the competence that he needs to demonstrate in order to be successful, and we need for him to be successful.” [The Hill](#); [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). On 1 October 2017, Corker said "I stand by those comments" on 17 August. [NBC News](#).
- Alexander Burns & Jonathan Martin, "McConnell, in Private, Doubts if Trump Can Save Presidency," [New York Times](#), 22 Aug 2017. ("Mr. McConnell has fumed over Mr. Trump's regular threats against fellow Republicans and criticism of Senate rules, and questioned Mr. Trump's understanding of the presidency in a public speech. Mr. McConnell has made sharper comments in private, describing Mr. Trump as entirely unwilling to learn the basics of governing.")
- Rachel Chason, "James Clapper questions Trump's fitness, worries about his access to nuclear codes," [Washington Post](#), 04:51 EDT, 23 Aug 2017. (Former Director of National Intelligence under Obama says: “I really question [Trump's] ability to be — his fitness to be — in this office.”) Also see: [CNN](#).
- John McCain, op-ed, "John McCain: It's time Congress returns to regular order," [Washington Post](#), 20:21 EDT, 31 August 2017. (Calling Trump "a president who has no experience of public office, is often poorly informed and can be impulsive in his speech and conduct.")
- On 12 October 2017, Congresswoman Maxine Waters — a Democrat from Los Angeles, California — said on CNBC that Trump was "unstable" and should be impeached. [YouTube](#)(video); [RCP](#)(video); [The Hill](#).
- Jeannie Suk Gersen, "How Anti-Trump Psychiatrists Are Mobilizing Behind the Twenty-Fifth Amendment," [New Yorker](#), 16 Oct 2017. (The group of mental-health professionals, “called Duty to Warn, claims that Donald Trump ‘suffers from an incurable malignant narcissism that makes him incapable of carrying out his presidential duties and poses a danger to the nation.’ ”)
- On 24 October 2017, U.S. Senator Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) criticized Trump, see quotation [above](#). Then U.S. Senator Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) criticized Trump, see

quotation [above](#).

- Maggie Haberman, Glenn Thrush, & Peter Baker, "Inside Trump's Hour-By-Hour Battle For Self-Preservation," [New York Times](#), 9 Dec 2017. (Quoting Nancy Pelosi, leader of the Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives: "The bigger problem, the thing people need to understand, is that he was utterly unprepared for this. It would be like you or me going into a room and being asked to perform brain surgery. When you have a lack of knowledge as great as his, it can be bewildering.")

The statements of commentators and politicians cited above show that voters in the U.S. had ample information before the election in 2016 that Trump was unfit to be president. During 2017, only a few politicians had the courage to publicly condemn Trump's bizarre behavior as president.

This document is at <http://www.rbs0.com/trump.pdf>
created 22 January 2017, revised 3 Jan 2018

Return to my [personal homepage](#).