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**Trump's Election is a Crisis like No Other,
Not Only for the U.S. But For the World**

By Andrew Coyne

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Nothing mattered, in the end. Not the probable dementia, the unfathomable ignorance, the emotional incontinence; not, certainly, the shambling, hate-filled campaign, or the ludicrously unworkable anti-policies.

The candidate out on bail in four jurisdictions, the convicted fraud artist, the adjudicated rapist and serial sexual predator, the habitual bankrupt, the stooge of Vladimir Putin, the man who tried to overturn the last election and all of his creepy retinue of crooks, ideologues and lunatics: Americans took a long look at all this and said, yes please.

There is no sense in understating the depth of the disaster. This is a crisis like no other in our lifetimes. The government of the United States has been delivered into the hands of a gangster, whose sole purpose in running, besides staying out of jail, is to seek revenge on his enemies. The damage Donald Trump and his nihilist cronies can do – to America, but also to its democratic allies, and to the peace and security of the world – is incalculable. We are living in the time of Nero.

The first six months will be a time of maximum peril. NATO must from this moment be considered effectively obsolete, without the American security guarantee that has always been its bedrock. We may see new incursions by Russia into Europe – the poor Ukrainians are probably done for, but now it is the Baltics and the Poles who must worry – before the Europeans have time to organize an alternative. China may also accelerate its Taiwanese ambitions.

At home, Mr. Trump will be moving swiftly to consolidate his power. Some of this will be institutional – the replacement of tens of thousands of career civil servants with Trumpian loyalists. But some of it will be ... atmospheric.

At some point someone – a company whose chief executive has displeased him, a media critic who has gotten under his skin – will find themselves the subject of unwanted attention from the Trump administration. It might not be so crude as a police arrest. It might just be a little regulatory matter, a tax audit, something like that. They will seek the protection of the courts, and find it is not there.

The judges are also Trump loyalists, perhaps, or too scared to confront him. Or they might issue a ruling, and find it has no effect – that the administration has called the

basic bluff of liberal democracy: the idea that, in the crunch, people in power agree to be bound by the law, and by its instruments the courts, the same as everyone else. Then everyone will take their cue. Executives will line up to court him. Media organizations, the large ones anyway, will find reasons to be cheerful.

Of course, in reality things will start to fall apart fairly quickly. The huge across-the-board tariffs he imposes will tank the world economy. The massive deficits, fueled by his ill-judged tax policies – he won't replace the income tax, as he promised, but will fill it with holes – and monetized, at his direction, by the Federal Reserve, will ignite a new round of inflation.

Most of all, the insane project of deporting 12 million undocumented immigrants – finding them, rounding them up and detaining them in hundreds of internment camps around the country, probably for years, before doing so – will consume his administration. But by then it will be too late.

We should not count upon the majority of Americans coming to their senses in any event. They were not able to see Mr. Trump for what he was before: why should that change? Would they not, rather, be further coarsened by the experience of seeing their neighbours dragged off by the police, or the military, further steeled to the necessity of doing “tough things” to “restore order?”

Some won't, of course. But they will find in time that the democratic levers they might once have pulled to demand change are no longer attached to anything. There are still elections, but the rules have been altered: there are certain obstacles, certain disadvantages if you are not with the party of power. It will seem easier at first to try to change things from within. Then it will be easier not to change things.

All of this will wash over Canada in various ways – some predictable, like the flood of refugees seeking escape from the camps; some less so, like the coarsening of our own politics, the debasement of morals and norms by politicians who have discovered there is no political price to be paid for it. And who will have the backing of their patron in Washington.

All my life I have been an admirer of the United States and its people. But I am frightened of it now, and I am even more frightened of them.

Foreign Affairs

How the World Can Deal With Trump Advice for Leaders Facing the Potential Return of “America First”

By Malcolm Turnbull

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In this year of major elections around the world, none is more consequential than that in the United States on the first Tuesday in November. Polling suggests Donald Trump will enter the White House again in January 2025. If he does, he will return to office perhaps no wiser but certainly more experienced and more convinced than ever of his own exceptional genius. More ominously, he will be determined to rectify in his second term what he insists was the major failing of his first: that both his own advisers and Washington officialdom got in his way.

Like most people, [Trump](#) is often wrong. Unlike most people, however, he is never in doubt. A powerful narcissistic self-belief has given him the strength to defy not just his many enemies but even reality itself. For four years, he has denied the outcome of the 2020 election and persuaded most of his party, and millions of Americans, to agree with him. There has never been such an effective and relentless gaslighter.

As president, he sought to surround himself with people who told him what he wanted to hear. When they stopped doing so, they were quickly sent packing. If Trump returns to the Oval Office, his instinct to crush critics and stack the executive branch with yes men will likely get even stronger. He will characterize his domestic critics as political opponents if they are Democrats and as traitors if they are Republicans. Trump will feel as invincible in his triumph as a Roman emperor, but he won't have a slave by his side whispering, “Remember, you are mortal.”

Other leaders, especially those of countries that are close U.S. allies, have an opportunity and a responsibility to speak to Trump with a blunt but respectful candor that few of his advisers will be able to offer him. My own experience with Trump, when I was prime minister of Australia, is that he may not like strength and directness from other leaders, but after his rage subsides, he respects them for it. Around the world, leaders are once again fretting about how they can flatter Trump and avoid his wrath. But that pliant approach is not just the wrong strategy; it is the last thing the [United States](#) needs.

A NEW NORMAL

After Trump became president in 2017, most leaders around the world found themselves laboring under two incorrect assumptions. The first was that Trump's wild rhetoric on the campaign trail would be abandoned there. The office and its responsibilities, some leaders believed, would constrain him. In November 2016, a few weeks after Trump's surprising victory, the leaders of many of the world's largest economies met in Lima at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit. It was [Barack Obama](#)'s last summit as U.S. president, but it was Trump who overshadowed the whole APEC conference. By way of reassurance, many quoted former New York Governor Mario Cuomo's remark: "You campaign in poetry. You govern in prose." The line was repeated so often that a frustrated President Michelle Bachelet of Chile observed wryly that she had not seen many signs of poetry in the campaign that had just ended.

Many leaders expected that Trump would become more typically "presidential" once he entered the White House. That was certainly the view held by Chinese President [Xi Jinping](#). He told me at the APEC summit that he was relaxed about the new U.S. president. Xi thought Trump's campaign rhetoric would have no bearing on how he would govern, and most significantly, the Chinese president believed the U.S. system would not allow Trump to act in a way that undermined the American national interest. And that was generally the consensus view: the institutions of government would keep Trump grounded in a conventional, administrative reality. His colorful campaign would be followed by business, more or less, as usual.

Trump in office was, if anything, wilder and more erratic than he had been on the campaign trail. Four extraordinary years finished with him encouraging a mob to storm the U.S. Capitol in a brazen attempt to overthrow the constitutional transfer of power to the new president. If Trump returns to the White House in 2025, only the willfully deluded could imagine that a second Trump administration would be less volatile and alarming than the first.

DON'T GIVE IN

The second misapprehension world leaders held was that the right way to deal with Trump was how Benjamin Disraeli, the nineteenth-century British prime minister, advised people to deal with royalty: to use flattery and "lay it on with a trowel." Of course, men like Trump invite sycophancy. They use their power and caprice to encourage others to tell them what they want to hear. But this is precisely the wrong way to deal with Trump, or any other bully. Whether in the Oval Office or on the playground, giving in to bullies encourages more bullying. The only way to win the respect of people such as Trump is to stand up to them.

But that defiance brings with it great risks. Almost all world leaders hope to have a good, or at least cordial, relationship with the United States. And they know that if they have a

falling out with the U.S. president, there is no guarantee that their own people, let alone their own media, would take their side. This is particularly so in countries where a right-wing, so-called conservative media generally support Trump and his style of politics. Trump's biggest echo chamber in the United States is the Fox News network, owned by Rupert Murdoch, who also controls extensive media assets in Australia and the United Kingdom.

When Trump became president, I had been prime minister of Australia for nearly 18 months. I had never done business with him but knew a lot of people who had, and more important, I had dealt with many men like Trump—including big, dominating billionaires and media barons such as Conrad Black, Jimmy Goldsmith, Bob Maxwell, Murdoch, and Kerry Packer. So when my collision with Trump came, I was shaken but not surprised. In 2016, I had reached an agreement with Obama that a number of asylum seekers who had sought to enter [Australia](#) irregularly by boat could be settled in the United States, subject to the usual security vetting. Australia had learned over the years that the only way to stop human smuggling was to ensure that nobody who came unlawfully by boat could settle in our country. This policy had been strictly applied under Liberal Prime Minister John Howard, who held the office from 1996 to 2007, but was modified under his Labor successors Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard. The result was a dramatic increase in human smuggling. When Rudd returned as prime minister for a few months, in late 2013, he tried to reinstate the Howard-era policies, and as a consequence, several thousand asylum seekers were intercepted and detained in Papua New Guinea and Nauru.

The Liberals returned to government in October 2013 under Tony Abbott, whom I replaced as prime minister in September 2015. Our governments and all those that succeeded us have followed a strict zero-tolerance approach to human smuggling. And it has worked. But there were still the asylum seekers who had been diverted to Papua New Guinea and Nauru. If they were brought to Australia, I feared, the flow of boats would start up again. So the deal with Obama was a practical and humane solution. In return, Australia had agreed to accept some very difficult immigration cases for the United States.

From the moment Trump was elected, my government sought assurances that the deal would be honored, and we had every indication it would be. But then, just before a scheduled call with the president a few days after his inauguration, Vice President Mike Pence called Julie Bishop, Australia's foreign minister, and Michael Flynn, Trump's national security adviser, called his counterpart in my office, Justin Bassi, to say that under no circumstances should I raise this issue on the call because Trump would not honor the agreement we had entered into with his predecessor.

I did raise the issue. On the call, I told Trump that Australia expected the United States to

stick to its word. Trump was furious, raging that the deal was a terrible one, that it would kill him politically, that Obama had been a fool to do it. It was daunting to be yelled at by the president of the United States, but I stood my ground. By the end of the call, Trump had, with great reluctance, agreed to go along with it. He ended by telling me it was the most unpleasant call he had had that day. A call to Putin, on the other hand, had been pleasant by comparison, he said.

Trump made it clear that he was proceeding with the deal unhappily. But he also accepted, as I had suggested, that he could honor the deal his predecessor had made without endorsing it as a good one. Details of the call were leaked in Washington, eventually with a transcript, all designed to show that Trump went along with the deal with reluctance.

There was enormous anxiety in Canberra about how this would play out. Would he actually honor the deal? As it turned out, he did. Would this row adversely affect other aspects of the relationship? And most important, would Trump bear a grudge? We met again in May 2017, only four months later, and by this time, he was joking with me and our wives about the refugee deal, complaining that he had agreed to it but in the way he might have about paying too much for a building. I was “a tough negotiator,” he told his wife, Melania Trump. “Just like you, Donald,” she replied.

A combination of character and circumstance allowed the relationship between Trump and me, as leaders, to get off on the right foot. By standing my ground, arguing my case, and not backing down, I had not only persuaded him to stick to the deal I had made with Obama but also won his respect.

MAKE THE CASE

Most presidents and prime ministers delegate considerable authority, formally and informally, to their advisers and officials. Meetings with foreign leaders are negotiated well in advance by ambassadors and officials. The outcome of the meeting is as scripted as the talking points.

The Trump White House did not work like that. Trump was the only decision-maker. Staff could advise him however they pleased, but most didn't last long anyway. The only word that mattered was Trump's, and he did not like being scripted—in any event, he rarely read from the script. He was the dealmaker, so he wanted to do the deal, on the spot, in the room.

In my experience with Trump, this meant that ambassadors and foreign ministers, no matter how capable, could offer much less assistance or influence. The key relationship lay between Trump and the foreign leader.

This practice poses both a challenge and an opportunity for foreign leaders trying to gain traction in the White House. It means that their ambassadors are less influential. On the other hand, if it is possible to persuade Trump that it is in his interest to change course, he will. But to do that, a foreign leader has to win Trump's respect and make a strong case.

I observed such a scenario when I handled another difficult issue that threatened ties between Canberra and Washington during Trump's first term: trade. In March 2018, Trump announced he was going to impose tariffs on steel and aluminum imports of 25 percent and ten percent, respectively. Not only was Trump keen on these tariffs, but so were some of his key advisers, including Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Trade

Trump's views on trade were simplistic. But they were strongly held. He viewed a trade deficit as evidence that the United States was losing and a trade surplus as a sign it was winning. He gave Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe a hard time on the U.S. trade deficit with Japan, as he did other allied leaders, but his greatest anxiety was the huge trade deficit with China.

I had two arguments for Trump on tariffs, and he listened to both, despite resistance from his key trade officials. First, Australia exported a modest quantity of steel to the West Coast of the United States only because the cost of shipping steel, almost all for roofing, across the Pacific was less than half the cost of shipping it to California from steel makers in the Midwest and on the East Coast. A 25 percent tariff on Australian steel would not make U.S. steel more competitive on the West Coast; it would simply raise the price of steel roofs. We went through the numbers several times. He knew the building industry, and he knew the product, and he listened more attentively than usual.

Second, I said that if Trump's argument for tariffs was to correct trade terms with other countries that were not fair and reciprocal, why should he impose any tariff on Australian exports? Australia and the United States had maintained a free trade agreement for years. The United States also enjoyed a large trade surplus with Australia. "No tariffs and no quotas," I said to him. "In fact, it cannot get any better. And a massive \$25 billion surplus in your favor. Truth be told, you have the best possible trade deal ever with Australia."

If the United States imposed tariffs or an import quota on Australia, with whom it had the best possible trade deal, it would be seen as doing so simply because it could. "People will be able to say," I told Trump, that "the Aussies give you the best possible deal and they still get a quota. So this is not about fair and reciprocal trade at all." We had several direct discussions on the tariff question, both in person and on the phone. I wrote a pithy letter to Trump summarizing our arguments, which Matt

Pottinger, one of his key national security advisers, helpfully read to him. He listened and he changed his mind because he was persuaded that it was in his interest to do so.

SPEAKING TRUTH TO TRUMP

The caricature of Trump as a one-dimensional, irrational monster is so entrenched that many forget that he can be, when it suits him, intelligently transactional. Like most bullies, he will bend others to his will when he can, and when he cannot, he will try to make a deal. But to get to the deal-making stage, Trump's counterparts have to stand up to the bullying first.

Foreign leaders who need to get business done with Trump should be able to do so, but they will need to deal with him directly and persuade him why their proposal is a good deal for him. Leave the sentimental stuff about alliances and friendship for the press conferences. Trump's question is always, "What's in it for me?" His calculus is both political and commercial, but it is very focused. That should be no surprise—"America first" is his explicit slogan.

A Trump returned to the White House, convinced of his own genius, and with the evidence of an election win to prove it, will be surrounded by more yes men and sycophants than ever. In that environment, who will be prepared to tell him what he doesn't want to hear?

The leaders of the countries that are the United States' friends and allies will be among the very few who can speak truthfully to Trump. He can shout at them, embarrass them, even threaten them. But he cannot fire them. Their character, courage, and candor may be the most important aid they can render to the United States in a second age of Trump.

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