

# Donald Trump's Twenty Biggest Follies

The biggest folly of all is to enter politics when one is inexperienced and incompetent

By [Prof Rodrigue Tremblay](#)

Region: [USA](#)

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American President [Donald Trump](#) has done a lot of unheard-of things since his 2016 election, most of them have been controversial and some have been utterly scandalous. The latest one to date was his shutting down of part of the U.S. government for 35 long days, on a whim, with the intention of bullying the newly elected Democratic majority of the House of Representatives. However, this time he hit a wall—a democratic wall—as House Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#) called his bluff and defeated him at his own game.

But the list of Trump's [ineptitudes](#) is very long, and we tend to forget previous ones as the next one hits the headlines. For the record, here are 20 among his more damning ones.

1. Donald Trump has been accused of having cheated to get elected

Many suspect that the rise of Donald Trump to the U.S. presidency has been tainted by fraud. This was made clearer on August 21, 2018, when his campaign manager, Paul Manafort, was convicted on eight felony counts, in a Virginia courtroom.

The confessions made by Mr. Trump's former lawyer, Michael Cohen, who has pleaded guilty to eight [felony charges](#) in a New York courtroom, are possibly even more damaging. Mr. Cohen, Trump's enabler and "fixer", also confessed under oath that he had openly violated U.S. campaign laws, with the coordination and under the direction of Mr. Trump, besides having arranged [illicit payments](#) to two women to keep them silent on damaging revelations about Mr. Trump, with the explicit purpose of influencing the results of the November 2016 American presidential election. Cohen has also confessed that he paid a company to [rig online polls](#) with the purpose of influencing the electorate, at "*the direction of and for the sole benefit of*" Donald Trump.

2. Donald Trump has surrounded himself with ideologues and incompetent yes-men and he runs a disorganized administration

The background: When hotel and casino mogul Donald Trump entered politics, he had no experience in public office or in government. This is not an insurmountable liability if such a person can surround himself with knowledgeable and experienced people. In Donald Trump's case, he did exactly the reverse. He did not tolerate for very long competent people around him and he ended up attracting only people with no reputation to lose but who could flatter his clinical [narcissism](#).



Indeed, Donald Trump has fired or forced to resign experienced and competent people (Exxon President Rex Tillerson, General James Mattis, general H.R. McMaster, economist Gary Cohn, etc.) who were ready to serve their country but who were not ready to swear allegiance to a mafia-like boss. Because Donald Trump was on the lookout for people who would only work for himself and could contribute to his aggrandizement, he finally succeeded in attracting clones of himself, essentially sycophants of the likes of Stephen Miller, Jared Kushner, John Bolton, Mike Pompeo, Peter Navarro, etc.

Thereafter, he has run a government mired in chaos, dysfunction, improvisation and irresponsibility, even boasting that he trusted his “[guts](#)” above everything else, while shamelessly pursuing his own private interests, political and financial, in making important public policies. As a result, Donald Trump has made a travesty of the American presidency. — This is not how a democratic government ought to function. It must exhibit competence, trust, inspire confidence, show integrity and honesty, and be devoted to the pursuit of the common good.

According to an author who has served in Trump’s White House and who has witnessed first-hand the chaos, the disorganization and the daily intrigues in and around the Oval Office, the current U.S. President has surrounded himself with a [team of vipers](#). In the final analysis, it may be New York Times renowned economist Paul Krugman who best summarized the situation when he branded the Trump administration as a [team of morons](#), under the direction of an undignified, unprepared and incompetent president.

3. Donald Trump’s relations with other politicians, journalists, personalities and some foreign leaders have been marred by insults, lies and threats

The list of persons and places that a boorish Donald Trump has insulted verbally or on Twitter, since taking office, is very long. Indeed, he is a champion in the art of insultery to the point of childishness, sometimes using crude and offensive language. As of last December, the New York Times has estimated that he has insulted some [551](#) politicians, journalists, personalities, heads of state and places. He does not seem to have any decency or restraint in dealing with people. And ironically, when someone throws an insult at him, he makes a terrible fuss about it.

Here are only a few examples:

Donald Trump insulted his Democratic presidential adversary, Hillary Clinton, by calling her “crooked” and “shrill”. Trump, who found a way to avoid being drafted in the army to go to Vietnam, declared the late Senator John McCain “not being a hero” because he had been captured, even though the latter spent five years in a Vietnamese jail as an American

combat man.

Donald Trump has insulted scores of personalities. He has lashed out at famous actress Meryl Streep, calling her an “overrated actress”. He called NBA football player [Lebron James](#) “stupid” and he has repeated that insult to many other persons.



Trump has called the President of North Korea Kim Jong-un “short and fat”. He called [Canada’s Prime Minister](#) Justin Trudeau “very dishonest and weak”. He insulted German Chancellor Angela Merkel by saying that she “was ruining Germany” and that “the German people will throw her out”. During a visit to France, Trump found a way to insult his host, French President Emmanuel Macron, saying that it was “very insulting” for him (Macron) to suggest that Europe should have a European army, etc.

Donald Trump has even found a way to insult the population of an entire continent. In January 2018, he branded African nations as “shithole countries”! Need we say more?

4. Donald Trump has violated time and again the Free Press Guarantee enshrined in the U.S. Constitution

*Amendment I. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.* [The U.S. Constitution]

Trump has often violated the Free Press Guarantee in the U.S. Constitution by lying constantly to journalists, by abusing them with false accusations and by encouraging distrust and even hatred of professional journalists, and by constantly disregarding veracity. More generally speaking, Donald Trump, as an individual, does not know nor understand history and the way a democratic government functions under a constitution, and his incoherent statements on these topics are a fair reflection of such ignorance and [disability](#).

Through his statements and by his behavior, Donald Trump resembles more and more Turkey’s *de facto* dictator Recep [Erdoğan](#). He has stirred up violence against journalists, because they do not think like him or do not praise him enough.

Trump does not seem to have any decency and any limits when his personal interests are at stake. According to his [biographers](#), that is what he has done [all his life](#).

5. In 2017, Trump bombed Syria on false flag information

As a show of force, Donald Trump launched a bombing attack against the country of [Syria](#), on Friday morning, April 7, 2017, under the spurious pretext that the inhabitants of a Syrian town had been the victims of a chemical attack. All this, not only in the absence of proof but also after there were numerous indications that such an attack was a [false flag operation](#) that had been staged by U.S.-backed Islamist rebels to embarrass the Syrian government, to

blame Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, to manipulate the American president and to hoodwink the American public.



Nevertheless, thinking only about his own persona and wanting a PR show as a “strong man”, Trump launched an illegal military attack against the sovereign country of Syria, under false pretenses, just as George W. Bush had done in 2003 against the country of [Iraq](#). —In Washington DC, under the influence of money and neo-conservatives in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy, « *plus ça change, plus c’est pareil* »!

6. Trump has stirred more hatred and created more problems in the Middle East, especially in Syria, in Palestine and in Yemen

US President Donald Trump, flanked by Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (L), delivers remarks after a wreath-laying at the Yad Vashem holocaust memorial in Jerusalem on 23 May, 2017



By acquiescing to demands from his Zionist campaign donors, especially casino mogul [Sheldon Adelson](#), to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and to cancel the Iran nuclear deal, Donald Trump has fulfilled his main campaign promises to them. For Trump, U.S. foreign policies seem to be for sale to the highest campaign bidders, whatever the consequences.

And, to make sure that this would be the case, Trump designated Jared Kushner, his son-in-law and a fervent Zionist, to frame American foreign policy in the Middle East, in association with neocon John Bolton. It is no wonder that the Middle East is a daily human tragedy, with refugees fleeing in droves to Europe.

More generally, it can be said that the *U.S. government under Donald Trump, as it was also the case under George W. Bush and previous American presidents since WWII, has an unchecked hubristic complex, and thinks it has a god-given [right to meddle](#) in other sovereign countries’ domestic affairs.*

7. Trump may have compromised himself and his office by being complicit with foreign governments

In pursuing his own private financial interests, even while in government, Donald Trump has been accused of soliciting favors from [foreign governments](#).

The entire issue of complicity of conspiracy with foreign governments will most likely be front-page news when the report by the special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation is made public.

8. Trump has befriended foreign dictators and despots while attacking allies and foreign democratic leaders

With his autocratic style of government, Donald Trump has been more at ease with foreign dictators than with democratic leaders. The list of [strongmen](#) and despots he has befriended and endorsed is long. Equally long is the list of [democratic leaders and countries](#) he has insulted and snubbed.

Trump has distanced himself from other democratic countries, in particular when [he abandoned the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal](#) and when he [pulled out of a global climate agreement](#).

9. Trump has extended huge tax reductions to corporations and rich individuals, who in turn bought stock shares and created a stock market bubble

Possibly the Trump administration's biggest economic and social blunder was the huge tax bonanza given to large corporations and super rich individuals, thus exacerbating income and wealth inequalities in the United States. Such large tax reductions are pushing the federal fiscal [deficit](#) above \$1 trillion a year, thus saddling future generations with a huge [public debt](#).

This is more surprising if one considers that during the 2016 political campaign, presidential candidate Donald Trump promised he would [eliminate the U.S. public debt in eight years](#). — In fact, Trump did just the reverse. As a result of Trump's fiscal policies, it is estimated that his administration will add \$8.3 trillion to the public debt during his first term. Meanwhile, the U.S. public debt will balloon to a total of \$25 trillion. There is a term for that and it is called fiscal irresponsibility and campaign promise cynicism.

In the year 2018, for example, the S&P 500 companies ([Qualcomm](#), [Apple](#), [Oracle](#), etc.) used their [Trump tax cut bonuses](#) to spend an estimated staggering \$770 billion to buy back their own shares, thus contributing to generating a stock market bubble. For CEOs, whose compensation is tied to the stock price because it makes the stock more valuable, this was the best of times, i.e. high salaries and lower taxes.

Many small investors, however, who bought at the top of the market, will be singled out to lose a lot of their savings when the stock market bubble bursts, while workers' real wages are still lingering.

10. Trump has implemented pro-cyclical economic policies that will worsen the next economic downturn and hurt the poorest Americans

Through large tax cuts and large increases in deficits and debt, the Trump administration has pursued a [pro-cyclical fiscal policy](#) at the top of the business cycle, when economic growth is positive and unemployment is low. In so doing, this is likely to reduce the federal

government's capability to fight the next recession.

With wise fiscal policy, the public budget deficit usually falls during economic upswings and rises during downswings of the economy. For short-term political considerations, the Trump administration has done the contrary. If the next recession is unusually severe, people will know whom to blame.

11. Donald Trump has bullied the Fed, thus endangering its independence and its credibility

Donald Trump has made disparaging and damaging [remarks](#) about the Fed and its Chairman, thus endangering the Fed's independence and credibility internationally. A central bank has no responsibility to cater to politicians' short-term political interests. Its sole responsibility is to stabilize the economy, smooth the business cycle, avoid financial bubbles and prevent inflation.

As mentioned above, the Trump administration has pursued a pro-cyclical fiscal policy, increasing deficits and the public debt at the top of the business cycle, besides feeding a stock market price bubble. Such a policy can temporarily stimulate economic growth, but at the expense of higher inflation and lower growth later on. Thereafter, the Fed was placed in a difficult position and it felt obligated to adopt a monetary policy of adjusting upward extraordinary low interest rates. Indeed, negative real interest rates, i.e. when market short-term interest rates are lower than inflation rates, can result in unviable investments and encourage risky speculation.

The Fed has embarked on a policy of slowly reducing its [bloated balance](#) sheet, a result of the financial crisis of 2008, when the central bank bought mortgage bonds from the banks (Fed's assets) and when it increased the banks' reserves (Fed's liabilities) to prevent the largest banks from failing. This means a gradual adjustment of short-term interest rates upward. What has been unusual was Trump's attempt to attack the independence of the Federal Reserve System and to undermine its reputation.

12. Trump's known numerous instances of sexual misconduct and legal entanglements thereof have been an albatross around his neck, which has impaired his credibility

There have been many instances when Donald Trump has publicly degraded women. There also have been numerous assertions of [sexual misconduct](#) made about Mr. Trump. Nobody expects a politician to be a saint. However, because the person in the White House used to be looked upon as a model for American youth, his character and his behavior count. Instead, Donald Trump has projected a personal image of depravation.

13. Trump's penchant for abuse of power, and autocratic and demagogic government, could lead to a constitutional crisis

Even before his official inauguration on January 22, 2017, Donald Trump projected himself as a *de facto* American [would-be dictator](#) who has utter contempt for the sanctity of the [division of powers](#) (the system of *Checks and Balances*) inscribed in the U.S. Constitution (Article 1). His first instinct was to govern by decree, with as little congressional input as possible.

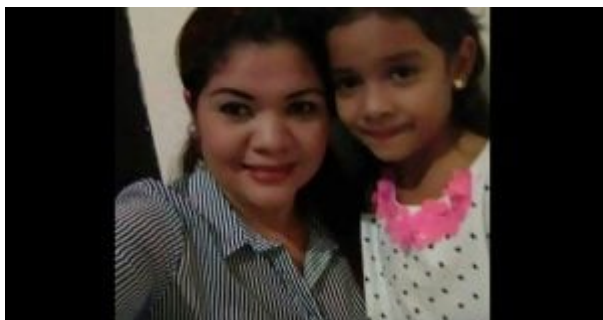
In the past, other American presidents have attempted to concentrate power in the Oval Office. One thinks of Andrew Johnson in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. They were all politicians who tried to stretch the U.S. Constitution in their favor. But none has strained American democratic institutions as Donald Trump has done. Trump seems to have a profound disrespect for American institutions.

14. Donald Trump has been a factor of division and of polarization in the United States

With his tactic of confrontation and through his incendiary speeches, his attacks ad hominem, his tantrums and his bullying tactics toward Congress and toward American celebrities, Donald Trump has [divided and polarized](#) the United States and widened divisions among the public like no other politician before. Indeed, it is a safe to say that with Donald Trump in the White House, the United States is more divided than ever.

15. Trump's inhumanity and lack of compassion towards immigrant children is appalling

Every country has the right to defend its borders against illegal immigration. Nowadays, human traffickers encourage fake refugees to bypass the legal immigration system. This is a problem in Europe but also in North America. But there are humane ways and inhuman ways to deal with such a problem.



On that score, the Trump administration has pursued a reprehensible [family separation policy](#) for children of immigrants who have entered the U.S. illegally. Maybe fake refugees should have their requests analyzed before being allowed to enter the country. But separating children from their parents is uncivilized.

Indeed, a majority of Americans have decried such a policy of establishing detention camps for children. In so doing, the Trump administration has demonstrated a frightening absence of moral probity and compassion.

Americans in general are more moral and ethical than the Trump administration and its family-separation policy. Various [polls](#) have shown that such a policy is unpopular, with about two-thirds of Americans opposing it.

Donald Trump has also played political games with the lives of the so called [DACA children](#), i.e. children who were allowed in the United States when they were at a very young age, after natural and political disasters in their countries (in Haiti and in some other countries), and who have since grown up and worked as Americans. Many of these children are now young adults who speak only English and have no memory of or connection to their country

of birth—but they have been threatened with deportation by the Trump administration.

There are about 800,000 young adults in that precarious situation. They are called [DREAMers](#) because of a proposed act, the DREAM Act, which would have provided a conditional pathway to U.S. citizenship or legal residency to a certain number of them, in order to allow them to go to college, to be employed and/or to serve in the military, while maintaining a good record. A large proportion of Americans, in fact 82 percent according to a CNN [poll](#), would support such a humanist approach to a very specific human problem.

However, on Saturday January 19, 2019, President Trump tried to [bargain](#) the fate of these young adults in exchange for \$5.7 billion, if the Democratically-controlled House of Representatives voted funds for his project of building a steel wall between the United States and Mexico. This is tantamount to placing narrow political interests above the fate of young people who find themselves in a very precarious situation.

16. Trump's promise to fight political corruption in Washington D.C. has been an empty promise

The promise that Donald Trump made while on the campaign trail to fight political corruption—to drain the Washington corruption swamp, as he said—has fallen flat. In fact, he has done anything but drain that swamp. Trump has been accused of having indulged in political corruption by accepting huge sums of money from lobbyists, thus placing himself in [conflicts of interest](#). Some observers have concluded that the Trump presidency is the [most corrupt in modern history](#).

His position on conflicts of interest since the beginning of his mandate has raised a lot of suspicion. He does not seem to be able to separate the affairs of the state from his personal affairs. Trump has surrounded himself with family members and he has appointed advisers who've been accused of conflicts of interest, many of whom have either been convicted or pleaded guilty, etc.

He has gone as far as giving the keys of the Pentagon to the [arms industry](#) in naming a Boeing executive as the acting secretary of the Department of Defense. —What he has done is to simply reorganize corruption to his own advantage.

17. Trump has ignored the problems related to global warming

The phenomenon of a warming planet may be the biggest challenge facing humanity in the future. It has been observed that summers are warmer and winters are colder, both in the Northern and Southern hemispheres.

Some believe that a slight increase in the [tilt of the Earth's axis](#) toward the Sun could play a role. Indeed, many people think that because of this increase the observed temperature changes can be caused by the Earth being closer to the Sun in summer and farther from the Sun in winter. Others place more emphasis on a rise in the level of the [gas CO2](#) and other [heat-trapping gases](#) in the atmosphere, creating a greenhouse effect, for the observed warming of the climate.

Whatever the causes or combination of causes, the Earth's warming and its consequences are undeniable. The year 2018 was [the Earth's fourth warmest](#) on record. Indeed, the world suffered last year from severe [heat waves](#) that killed people, from [extreme rain](#) that created

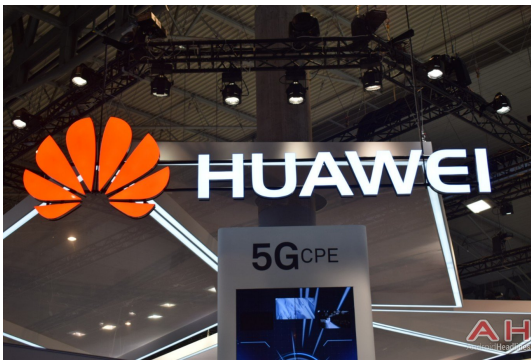


huge flooding, and from [drought](#) that destroyed crops.

Nevertheless, the Trump administration has been oblivious to the problem, and has even denied that the Earth's warming could be a problem. Rather than acting, the Trump administration has made matters worse by [reducing regulation](#) to control pollution and by making it [easier for companies to pollute](#).

A [new poll](#), however, reveals that Americans are increasingly worried about global warming. It is the children of today and of tomorrow who will pay for the [heedlessness](#) and irresponsibility of the Trump administration.

18. Trump has started a trade war and a new arms race, which could have negative consequences for global prosperity and for world peace



There is presently an intense technological competition around the [fifth-generation \(5G\) chipset](#), which is bound to influence the global smartphone industry, telecommunications and cellular networks in the future. Many governments, not the least the U.S. government, are worried that Chinese companies such as [Huawei](#) could dominate that next-generation technology.

The Trump administration fears that the Chinese advances in that field could make it possible for the Chinese government to spy on other countries. For example, it has imposed [restrictions and sanctions](#) on Huawei and barred that company and other Chinese companies from installing telecommunications equipment in the United States. The Chinese company has also been accused of “violating [American extraterritorial sanctions](#) against the country of Iran” and of “stealing trade secrets” from an American partner.

No country should be allowed to impose its domestic laws on other countries. When this is the case, we have to talk about [imperialism](#). However, a country has always the right to protect its own companies against industrial espionage.

In the final analysis, nobody can understand the rationale behind the trade war that the Trump administration has initiated against China without understanding the technological conflict that is going on.

Similarly, the Trump administration has launched a [new arms race](#) against Russia and China, both in space and in Europe, which could degenerate into a military conflict. It has also placed nuclear missiles in countries bordering Russia, a provocation, thus openly threatening Russia's security. If it were the reverse, the United States would surely object to having Russian nuclear missiles in a neighboring country. As a matter of fact, this was precisely the basis of the [Cuban missile crisis](#) of October 1962, under President John F. Kennedy. —If Nikita Khrushchev was wrong, in 1962, in provoking the United States, Donald Trump, in 2019, is wrong in provoking Russia.

19. Donald Trump gambled with the fate of humanity with his decision to unilaterally cancel the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty

When Donald Trump announced, in October 2018 and when this was officially confirmed on Friday, February 1, 2019 that, without consultation with European allies, his administration is unilaterally withdrawing from the [Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty \(INF Treaty\)](#), he opened a huge Pandora Box from which a lot of human misery could come out. That important treaty was first signed in December 1987 by Republican President Ronald Reagan and Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev. One of its objectives was to make sure that Europe would not become the theater of a disastrous nuclear war. But Trump does not care: “Après moi le déluge”.

That reckless decision has been called [Trump’s Nuclear Folly](#) as it indicates that allies don’t count for the Trump administration. It seems that Trump and his neocon advisors want a war with Russia. First, they place nuclear missiles in countries bordering Russia; then they get out of a nuclear treaty to prevent a nuclear war in Europe. Pitiful!

20. The biggest folly of all is to enter politics when one is inexperienced and incompetent

The list of Donald Trump’s very close associates and aides who have worked with him and who have declared him to be a “[man-child](#)”, a “moron” or an “idiot”, and to be unfit to be U.S. president, is very long. This is most unusual and most relevant.



The first person to call Donald Trump a “moron” was the former president of Exxon and Trump’s Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. Indeed, [NBC News](#) reported that Mr. Tillerson made the devastating comment after a meeting at the Pentagon, on July 20, 2017, with other members of Trump’s national security team and Cabinet officials.

Then followed a string of similar disparaging assessments of Trump’s character and capabilities. Veteran journalist Bob Woodward, in his 2018 [book](#) “*Fear: Trump in the White House*”, has documented the chaos and disrepute that Donald Trump brought into the American White House: His own first chief of staff Reince Priebus called him an “idiot”. Trump’s second chief of staff, General John Kelly, has also called him “an idiot”, and he added that he was “unhinged”! —Mind you, these are experienced people who worked with Donald Trump on a daily basis. Now it is reported that Trump has chosen his son-in-law, [Jared Kushner](#), to be his *de facto* chief of staff, thus turning the White House into an exclusively family enterprise.



Also, Defense Secretary General James Mattis has declared that Donald Trump had the understanding of “a fifth- or sixth-grader”. Such a severe assessment coming from a retired United States Marine Corps general, who served in the Persian Gulf War, the War in Afghanistan, and the Iraq War. Such an evaluation cannot be brushed aside.

Another noteworthy [book](#), by Michael Wolff, entitled “*Fire and Fury*”, disclosed other negative assessments of Mr. Trump by his close associates. For example, it reveals that Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has also called Trump an “idiot”; that former national security adviser, general H.R. McMaster, has referred to the president as a “dope”; and that Trump’s former economic adviser Gary Cohn has said that Donald Trump is “*dumb as s\*\**”!

A former FBI counterintelligence officer who now lectures at Yale University, Ms Asha Rangappa *has* concluded, in [a piece](#) for *Politico*, that Mr. Trump cannot distinguish [fact from fiction](#). For a head of state, this is a huge liability!

On his part, former FBI Director James Comey, a man who has seen a lot, went one step further and he has said that Mr. Trump has the character of a “[Mob boss](#)”.

— Does one not get the picture!

## Conclusion

Let us remind ourselves of the fact that Donald Trump is the only post WWII American president who has never been able to rally 50 percent or more of the American people behind him. Not only was he elected in 2016 with some 3,000,000 fewer votes than his main opponent, Hillary Clinton, but his approval ratings have always been below 50 percent, ranging between 34 and 44 percent.

Trump’s basic [unpopularity](#) has been undeniable and persistent, to the point of making him an [illegitimate](#) president. And there are profound reasons for that, as outlined above.

That may also be why a 57 percent majority of Americans do not want Donald Trump to run for re-election in 2020, according to a 2019 [January poll](#). —They seem to have had enough!

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