

Trump Apparently Has a List of Things He Loves About Adolf Hitler

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Tori Otten/

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Donald Trump's former chief of staff, John Kelly, says the former president used to praise lots of things about Hitler.

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Donald Trump has never been shy about expressing his affection for dictators. And now that stance has become even clearer, with his former chief of staff alleging that Trump once said Adolf Hitler “did some good things.”

In his new book, *The Return of Great Powers*, which comes out Tuesday, reporter Jim Sciutto interviews several of Trump's former advisers. All of them stressed that Trump regularly lavished praise on authoritarian leaders around the world, calling Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán “fantastic,” Chinese President Xi Jinping “brilliant,” and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un an “OK guy.”

Horrifyingly, Trump also said, “Well, but Hitler did some good things,” according to John Kelly, who served as White House chief of staff from 2017 to 2019.

“I said, ‘Well, what?’ And he said, ‘Well, [Hitler] rebuilt the economy.’ But what did he do with that rebuilt economy? He turned it against his own people and against the world. And I said, ‘Sir, you can never say anything good about the guy. Nothing,’” Kelly told Sciutto. “I mean, Mussolini was a great guy in comparison.”

Kelly said that Trump also praised Hitler for achieving complete loyalty from senior Nazi officials—and Trump expected similar fealty from the retired generals he brought onto his Cabinet.

“He would ask about the loyalty issues and about how, when I pointed out to him the German generals as a group were not loyal to him, and in fact tried to assassinate him a few times, and he didn't know that,” Kelly said. “He truly believed, when he brought us generals in, that we would be loyal—that we would do anything he wanted us to do.”

Kelly suggested that Trump's infatuation with dictators was due to his perception of himself. “That's who he is,” Kelly told Sciutto. “He was shocked that he didn't have dictatorial-type powers to send U.S. forces places

or to move money around within the budget. And he looked at Putin and Xi and that nutcase in North Korea as people who were like him in terms of being a tough guy.”

“He’s not a tough guy by any means, but in fact quite the opposite,” Kelly said. “But that’s how he envisions himself.”

If Trump was disappointed he couldn’t be a dictator during his first term in office, he’s clearly setting himself up to change that should he be reelected in November. Although he has joked about only acting like a dictator on “day one” of a potential second term, Trump and his allies are already bragging about their plans should they retake the White House.

As *The New Republic*’s Matt Ford summarized, “Trumpworld is scheming to install ideological loyalists throughout the federal government, purge the civil service of any dissenters, centralize all power in the executive branch, and unleash the Justice Department on Trump’s perceived political enemies with sham prosecutions.”

Trump has also seemingly embraced the authoritarian label on the campaign trail. He has repeatedly paraphrased Hitler’s rhetoric in campaign speeches, and on Friday, he hosted Orbán at Mar-a-Lago.

“There’s nobody that’s better, smarter, or a better leader than Viktor Orbán,” Trump said. “He’s the boss, and he’s a great leader, fantastic leader. In Europe and around the world, they respect him.”