

The Dangers of Donald Trump, From Those Who Know Him

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Opinion

By [The Editorial Board](#) The editorial board is a group of opinion journalists whose views are informed by expertise, research, debate and certain longstanding [values](#). It is separate from the newsroom

In any election, it's hard to know whose word to trust. And in a polarized country, many Americans distrust any information that comes from the other side of the political divide. That's why the criticism of Donald Trump by those who served with him in the White House and by members of his own party is so striking. Dozens of people who know him well, including the 91 listed here, have raised alarms about his character and fitness for office — his family and friends, world leaders and business associates, his fellow conservatives and his political appointees — even though they had nothing to gain from doing so. Some have even spoken out at the expense of their own careers or political interests.

The New York Times editorial board has made its case that Mr. Trump is unfit to lead. But the strongest case against him may come from his own people. For those Americans who are still tempted to return him to the presidency or to not vote in November, it is worth considering the assessment of Mr. Trump by those who have seen him up close.

Administration insiders

He will always put his own interests and gratifying his own ego ahead ...”

Bill
Barr Bill Barr

“He will always put his own interests and gratifying his own ego ahead of everything else, including the country's interest. There's no question about it.”

Bill Barr was attorney general from 2019 to 2020. He held the same position under George H.W. Bush.

Source: [CBS](#), June 18, 2023

He was extremely vulnerable to manipulation.”

Fiona
Hill Fiona Hill

“He was extremely vulnerable to manipulation. And that became a problem for him as a president. And what I mean by that is, he had a very fragile ego, and he was very susceptible to flattery, as well as taking massive offense, as we all saw, to any kind of criticism.”

Fiona Hill, a national intelligence officer under George W. Bush and Barack Obama, was the Trump administration’s top Russia and Europe adviser.

Source: [PBS](#), Oct. 8, 2021

... he was getting input from people who were calling him up, I don’t know who ...”

Anthony
Fauci Anthony Fauci

“It was clear that he was getting input from people who were calling him up, I don’t know who, people he knew from business, saying, ‘Hey, I heard about this drug, isn’t it great?’ or, ‘Boy, this convalescent plasma is really phenomenal.’”

Anthony Fauci was director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and helped lead the Covid response.

Source: [The New York Times](#), Jan. 24, 2021

... undermined American democracy baselessly ...”

Thomas
P. Bossert Thomas P. Bossert

“This is beyond wrong and illegal. It’s un-American. The president undermined American democracy baselessly for months. As a result, he’s culpable for this siege, and an utter disgrace.”

Tom Bossert was the homeland security adviser.

Source: [Twitter](#), Jan. 6, 2021

He doesn’t take responsibility for the bad news ...”

David
Lapan David Lapan

“It’s Fauci’s fault. It’s China’s fault. It’s Obama’s fault. It’s always someone else, somewhere else. He doesn’t want to hear the bad news. He doesn’t take responsibility for the bad news and wants to gloss over it and change the subject.”

David Lapan was the deputy assistant secretary for media operations and the press secretary for the Department of Homeland Security.

Source: "I Alone Can Fix It" by Carol Leonnig and Philip Rucker, 2021

... says a whole lot more about him than it will ever say about Asian Americans."

Elaine

Chao Elaine Chao

"When I was young, some people deliberately misspelled or mispronounced my name. Asian Americans have worked hard to change that experience for the next generation. He doesn't seem to understand that, which says a whole lot more about him than it will ever say about Asian Americans."

Elaine Chao was the first Asian American woman appointed to the cabinet, as secretary of labor under George W. Bush. Mr. Trump appointed her secretary of transportation.

Source: [Politico](#), Jan. 25, 2023

... equality and freedom can never be equated with white supremacists ..."

Gary

Cohn Gary Cohn

"Citizens standing up for equality and freedom can never be equated with white supremacists, neo-Nazis and the K.K.K. I believe this administration can and must do better in consistently and unequivocally condemning these groups and do everything we can to heal the deep divisions that exist in our communities."

Gary Cohn was the chief economic adviser from 2017 to 2018.

Source: [Financial Times](#), Aug. 24, 2017

His behavior had grown increasingly erratic and unnerving."

Betsy

DeVos Betsy DeVos

"It was about public service rising above self. The president had lost sight of that. It was also unclear to me if the president was actually in the mental place to continue to serve as the commander in chief of the most powerful military in the world. His behavior had grown increasingly erratic and unnerving."

Betsy DeVos was the education secretary from 2017 to 2021.

Source: "Hostages No More" by Betsy DeVos, 2022

The F.B.I. is under attack by the president of the United States."

Andrew

McCabe Andrew McCabe

“The F.B.I. has always been the nemesis of criminals. Today, the F.B.I. is under attack by the president of the United States. The president assails the F.B.I. because he resents or fears the bureau’s independence, its fairness, its professionalism, its competence and, above all, its values.”

Andrew McCabe, a Republican, began his F.B.I. career in 1996 and served as Mr. Trump’s acting director of the agency.

Source: “The Threat” by Andrew McCabe, 2019

A person who admires autocrats and murderous dictators.”

John
Kelly John Kelly

“A person who admires autocrats and murderous dictators. A person that has nothing but contempt for our democratic institutions, our Constitution and the rule of law.”

John Kelly was the secretary of homeland security in 2017 and then Mr. Trump’s chief of staff.

Source: [CNN](#), Oct. 2, 2023

Sometimes it’s just better to steer clear of him.”

Anthony
Scaramucci Anthony Scaramucci

“You hang around Donald Trump long enough, you learn a couple of things. One of them is: Sometimes it’s just better to steer clear of him.”

Anthony Scaramucci was the White House communications director for 11 days in 2017.

Source: “Trump, the Blue-Collar President” by Anthony Scaramucci, 2018

... I do regard him as a threat to democracy ...”

Mark
Esper Mark Esper

“And yes, I do regard him as a threat to democracy, democracy as we know it, our institutions, our political culture, all those things that make America great and have defined us as, you know, the oldest democracy on this planet.”

Mark Esper, a Persian Gulf war veteran, was the secretary of the Army from 2017 to 2019 and the secretary of defense from 2019 to 2020.

Source: [CNN](#), Jan. 6, 2024

Trump's temperament wasn't rational ...”

Cassidy

Hutchinson Cassidy Hutchinson

“Trump's temperament wasn't rational, but neither was it unfamiliar to me. His outbursts shed light on how his volcanic temper and egotism had lit the match that set his followers' torches ablaze.”

Cassidy Hutchinson was an aide to Mr. Trump's chief of staff Mark Meadows.

Source: “Enough” by Cassidy Hutchinson, 2023

... doesn't know the difference between the truth and a lie ...”

Dan

Coats Dan Coats

“To him, a lie is not a lie. It's just what he thinks. He doesn't know the difference between the truth and a lie.”

Dan Coats, a former senator from Indiana, was the director of national intelligence.

Source: “Rage” by Bob Woodward, 2020

... he tries to divide us.”

James

Mattis James Mattis

“Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people — does not even pretend to try. Instead he tries to divide us.”

James Mattis, a retired four-star Marine Corps general, was the secretary of defense.

Source: [Personal statement](#), June 3, 2020

... loyalty was mostly a one-way street.”

Cliff

Sims Cliff Sims

“He hadn't lifted a finger for countless loyal aides before me, and I'm sure he wouldn't for countless loyal aides to come. It was well known that in Trump world, loyalty was mostly a one-way street.”

Cliff Sims was an aide in the White House communications office.

Source: “Team of Vipers” by Cliff Sims, 2019

... I think he's a terrible human being.”

Mick
Mulvaney Mick Mulvaney

“ Yes, I am supporting Donald Trump, but I’m doing so despite the fact that I think he’s a terrible human being.”

Mick Mulvaney, a former representative from South Carolina, held various roles, including acting chief of staff to the president.

Source: [Public forum](#), Nov. 2, 2016

... caused direct harm ...”

Deborah
Birx Deborah Birx

“Trump’s public cheerleading for hydroxychloroquine blurred important distinctions in some cases and caused direct harm in others. An Arizona man, having heard the president’s message on television, took a product that contained a form of hydroxychloroquine and died.”

Deborah Birx was the White House coronavirus response coordinator.

Source: “Silent Invasion” by Deborah Birx, 2022

... very little understanding of what it means to be in the military ...”

Richard
Spencer Richard Spencer

“The president has very little understanding of what it means to be in the military, to fight ethically or to be governed by a uniform set of rules and practices.”

Richard V. Spencer, a Marine Corps aviator, was the secretary of the Navy from 2017 to 2019.

Source: [The Washington Post](#), Nov. 27, 2019

... the most reckless and deadly piece of information I have ever heard.”

Rick
Bright Rick Bright

“This is a deadly pandemic. This is a deadly virus. The messaging that President Trump gave to America and the world when he left the hospital about there is no need to be afraid of this virus is probably the most reckless and deadly piece of information I have ever heard.”

Rick Bright, an expert in vaccine development, was the director of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority.

Source: [CNN](#), Oct. 8, 2020

Literally everything I've tried to do on cutting drug costs, you have killed it.”

Alex

Azar Alex Azar

Alex Azar was the secretary of health and human services.

Source: “I Alone Can Fix It” by Carol Leonnig and Philip Rucker, 2021

... played to Trump’s ego and insecurities with flattery.”

H.R.

McMaster H.R. McMaster

“Putin, a ruthless former K.G.B. operator, played to Trump’s ego and insecurities with flattery.”

H.R. McMaster, a retired lieutenant general in the Army, was the national security adviser from 2017 to 2018.

Source: “At War With Ourselves” by H.R. McMaster, 2024

... flashbacks to my earlier career as a prosecutor against the Mob.”

James

Comey James Comey

“As I found myself thrust into the Trump orbit, I once again was having flashbacks to my earlier career as a prosecutor against the Mob. The silent circle of assent. The boss in complete control. The loyalty oaths. ... The lying about all things, large and small, in service to some code of loyalty that put the organization above morality and above the truth.”

James Comey was the head of the F.B.I.

Source: “A Higher Loyalty” by James Comey, 2018

The turnover suggested instability and disorganization to our adversaries ...”

Mike

Pompeo Mike Pompeo

“The revolving door of leaders in the top national security jobs was not helpful. ... We were always working with new colleagues. The turnover suggested instability and disorganization to our adversaries as well as our friends.”

Mike Pompeo was the director of the C.I.A. and the secretary of state.

Source: “Never Give an Inch” by Mike Pompeo, 2023

... renders coherent foreign policy almost unattainable.”

John
Bolton John Bolton

“In no arena of American affairs has the Trump aberration been more destructive than in national security. His short attention span (except on matters of personal advantage) renders coherent foreign policy almost unattainable.”

John Bolton was the national security adviser from 2018 to 2019.

Source: “The Room Where It Happened” by John Bolton, 2020

He is wholly unfit to be in office.”

Alyssa
Farah Griffin Alyssa Farah Griffin

Alyssa Farah Griffin was the press secretary for Vice President Mike Pence and later a communications director for Mr. Trump.

Source: [People](#), Aug. 4, 2022

... a huge violation of your most important oath ...”

Marc
Short Marc Short

“Ultimately asking the vice president to sort of put aside the Constitution is a huge violation of your most important oath to the American people, to protect and defend the Constitution.”

Marc Short was the chief of staff for Mr. Pence.

Source: [CNN](#), Sept. 1, 2023

He has built up a DNA of defensiveness.”

Sean
Spicer Sean Spicer

“I think that he constantly feels under attack, and he feels the need to justify his position, either on an issue or position or how he came to achieve something. He has built up a DNA of defensiveness. ”

Sean Spicer, a former chief strategist for the Republican National Committee, was the White House press secretary in 2017.

Source: “The Trump White House” by Ronald Kessler, 2018

You are using the military to create fear in the minds of the people ...”

Mark
Milley Mark Milley

“You are using the military to create fear in the minds of the people — and we are trying to protect the American people. I cannot stand idly by and participate in that attack, verbally or otherwise, on the American people. ”

Mark Milley, a retired U.S. Army general, was the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 2019 to 2023.

Source: [The New Yorker](#), Aug. 8, 2022, from Milley’s draft resignation letter to Mr. Trump, dated June 8, 2020

... Anyone that puts themselves over the Constitution should never be president ...”

Mike
Pence Mike Pence

“I believe anyone that puts themselves over the Constitution should never be president of the United States and anyone who asks someone else to put them over the Constitution should never be president of the United States again.”

Mike Pence, a former congressman and governor of Indiana, was the vice president from 2017 to 2021.

Source: [Mr. Pence’s 2024 campaign announcement speech](#), June 7, 2023

... not consistent with our national security objectives.”

Rex
Tillerson Rex Tillerson

“There were multiple occasions where, in my view, the actions the president wanted to take were not consistent with our national security objectives. ... His understanding of global events, his understanding of global history, his understanding of U.S. history was really limited.”

Rex Tillerson, a former chief executive of Exxon Mobil, was the secretary of state from 2017 to 2018.

Source: [Foreign Policy](#), Jan. 11, 2021

Trump relentlessly ... puts forth claims that simply are not true.”

Ty
Cobb Ty Cobb

Ty Cobb was a White House lawyer.

Source: [CNN](#), Sept. 27, 2023

The root of the problem is the president's amorality ..."

Miles

Taylor Miles Taylor

"The root of the problem is the president's amorality. Anyone who works with him knows he is not moored to any discernible first principles that guide his decision making."

Miles Taylor was an official in the Department of Homeland Security from 2017 to 2019 and the author of the "Anonymous" guest essay.

Source: [The New York Times](#), Sept. 5, 2018, from Mr. Taylor's then-anonymous essay

Do you think Trump wants a guy to win after him?"

Steve

Bannon Steve Bannon

"Trump doesn't give a shit. He's not looking to nurture. He's not looking to mentor guys. ... Do you think Trump wants a guy to win after him?"

Steve Bannon, an influential figure in far-right politics, was the White House chief strategist in 2017.

Source: "Insurgency" by Jeremy Peters, 2022

... He's saying some crazy shit."

Don

McGahn Don McGahn

"I have a real fucking problem. ... I don't want to speak out of school, but he's saying some crazy shit."

Don McGahn was the White House counsel.

Source: "Donald Trump v. the United States" by Michael S. Schmidt, 2020

... They are loyal to no one."

Stephanie

Grisham Stephanie Grisham

"The plain truth is that most of the Trump family dismisses and cuts people from their lives on a whim. They demand total loyalty, but they are loyal to no one. I don't blame them, to be honest."

Stephanie Grisham was the communications director and press secretary for Mr. Trump and later the chief of staff for Melania Trump.

Source: "I'll Take Your Questions Now" by Stephanie Grisham, 2021

The Trumps & Trump Inc.

You can't trust him."

Maryanne

Trump Barry Maryanne Trump Barry

Maryanne Trump Barry, Mr. Trump's eldest sister, was a federal judge.

Source: [The Washington Post](#), Aug. 22, 2020, from secret recordings made by Mary Trump in 2018 and 2019

... a cheat, a liar, a fraud, a bully ..."

Michael

Cohen Michael Cohen

"I bore witness to the real man, in strip clubs, shady business meetings and in the unguarded moments when he revealed who he really was: a cheat, a liar, a fraud, a bully, a racist, a predator, a con man."

Michael Cohen was Mr. Trump's attorney, fixer and confidant from about 2006 to 2018.

Source: "Disloyal: A Memoir" by Michael Cohen, 2020

'I wanna do what I wanna do' ... "

Fred

Trump III Fred Trump III

"I'm not sure I can sum up his early days in a single slogan, but I think I can do it in two: 'I wanna do what I wanna do' and also 'That's not fair.'"

Fred Trump III is Donald Trump's nephew.

Source: "All in the Family" by Fred Trump III, 2024

Trump does not have the temperament ..."

Kwame

Jackson Kwame Jackson

"Trump does not have the temperament to deal with the sensitivities and diplomacy required on the world stage with volatile regimes in Iran, North Korea and the threat of ISIS."

Kwame Jackson was a contestant on the first season of “The Apprentice.”

Source: [Joint public statement](#), April 15, 2016

He pushed me up against the wall ...”

Jill

Harth Jill Harth

“He pushed me up against the wall, and had his hands all over me and tried to get up my dress again ... and I had to physically say: ‘What are you doing? Stop it.’”

Jill Harth's allegations stem from an encounter she had with Mr. Trump while collaborating on a pin-up competition in the early 1990s.

Source: [The Guardian](#), Jul. 19, 2016

...actually a racist.”

Omarosa

Manigault Newman Omarosa Manigault Newman

“It had finally sunk in that the person I thought I’d known so well for so long was actually a racist.”

Omarosa Manigault Newman was a contestant on “The Apprentice” and a White House aide to Donald Trump.

Source: “Unhinged” by Omarosa Manigault Newman, 2018

Honest work was never demanded of him ...”

Mary

L. Trump Mary L. Trump

“Donald has, in some sense, always been institutionalized, shielded from his limitations or his need to succeed on his own in the world. Honest work was never demanded of him, and no matter how badly he failed, he was rewarded in ways that are almost unfathomable.”

Mary Trump is Mr. Trump’s niece.

Source: “Too Much and Never Enough” by Mary L. Trump, 2020

... the competition reality show set about an American fraud ...”

Bill

Pruitt Bill Pruitt

“By carefully misleading viewers about Trump — his wealth, his stature, his character and his intent — the competition reality show set about an American fraud that would balloon beyond its creators’ wildest imaginations.”

Bill Pruitt was a producer on the first two seasons of "The Apprentice."

Source: [Slate](#), May 30, 2024

... the hint of menace beneath the surface ...”

Gwenda

Blair Gwenda Blair

“It is this combination — the hint of menace beneath the surface added to what appears to be an unpolished immediacy — that millions of listeners take as evidence of Trump’s authenticity and spontaneity.”

Gwenda Blair wrote a biography of the Trump family that was published in 2000.

Source: [The Guardian](#), Nov. 11, 2016

Our job was to make him look legitimate ...”

Jonathon

Braun Jonathon Braun

“Our job was to make him look legitimate, to make him look like there was something behind it, even though we pretty much all knew that there wasn’t — but that was our job.”

Jonathon Braun worked on the first six seasons of “The Apprentice.”

Source: [The New York Times](#), Sept. 14, 2024

If you disagreed with Donald, he put you out of his inner circle.”

Randal

Pinkett Randal Pinkett

“If you disagreed with Donald, he put you out of his inner circle. He didn't invite in differing perspectives. He invited affirming perspectives — yes-men, yes-women, ‘Yes, Donald.’”

Randal Pinkett worked for Mr. Trump for a year after winning the fourth season of “The Apprentice.”

Source: “Apprentice in Wonderland” by Ramin Setoodeh, 2024

Republican politicians

He is a coward.”

Dick

Cheney Dick Cheney

“In our nation’s 246-year-history, there has never been an individual who is a greater threat to our republic than Donald Trump. He tried to steal the last election using lies and violence to keep himself in power, after the voters had rejected him. He is a coward. A real man wouldn’t lie to his supporters. He lost his election, and he lost big.”

Dick Cheney was the vice president of the United States from 2001 to 2009.

Source: [Video statement](#), Aug. 4, 2022

This man is a pathological liar.”

Ted

Cruz Ted Cruz

“This man is a pathological liar. He doesn’t know the difference between truth and lies. He lies practically every word that comes out of his mouth, and in a pattern that I think is straight out of a psychology textbook, his response is to accuse everybody else of lying.”

Ted Cruz, a senator from Texas since 2013, was a presidential candidate in 2016.

Source: [Statement at campaign event](#), May 3, 2016

He's a race-baiting, xenophobic, religious bigot.”

Lindsey

Graham Lindsey Graham

“He’s a race-baiting, xenophobic, religious bigot. He doesn’t represent my party. He doesn’t represent the values that the men and women who wear the uniform are fighting for.”

Lindsey Graham has been a senator from South Carolina since 2003.

Source: [CNN](#), Dec. 8, 2015

There is nothing ‘conservative’ about Donald Trump.”

Adam

Kinzinger Adam Kinzinger

“There is nothing ‘conservative’ about Donald Trump. Conservatives believe in the Constitution, not a ‘man’s’ ego.”

Adam Kinzinger was a representative from Illinois from 2011 to 2023.

Source: [Post on X](#), Aug. 4, 2024

The cheapest S.O.B. I've ever met in my life.”

Chris

Christie Chris Christie

“The cheapest S.O.B. I've ever met in my life. ... What Donald Trump is good at is spending other people's money.”

Chris Christie was the governor of New Jersey from 2010 to 2018. He ran for president in 2016 and 2024.

Source: [Politico](#), June 27, 2023

He's not loyal.”

Justin

Amash Justin Amash

“These guys have all convinced themselves that to be successful and keep their jobs, they need to stand by Trump. ... But Trump won't stand with them as soon as he doesn't need them. He's not loyal. They're very loyal to Trump, but the second he thinks it's to his advantage to throw someone under the bus, he'll be happy to do it.”

Justin Amash was a representative from Michigan from 2011 to 2021.

Source: “American Carnage” by Tim Alberta, 2019

He sought a coup by misleading people with lies.”

Arnold

Schwarzenegger Arnold Schwarzenegger

“I do believe that we must be aware of the dire consequences of selfishness and cynicism. President Trump sought to overturn the results of an election. And of a fair election. He sought a coup by misleading people with lies.”

Arnold Schwarzenegger was the governor of California from 2003 to 2011. He hosted “Celebrity Apprentice” in 2017.

Source: [Video statement](#), Jan. 10, 2021

... Power, revenge and retribution is his real motivation ...”

Denver

Riggleman Denver Riggleman

“I’ve seen with my own eyes how Trump’s thirst for power, revenge and retribution is his real motivation, and that’s why I cannot stand by while he tries to destroy our country.”

Denver Riggleman was a representative from Virginia from 2019 to 2021.

Source: [The Washington Post](#), Aug. 4, 2024, from a statement released by the Harris campaign

Reckless, outrageous and undignified behavior ...”

Jeff
Flake Jeff Flake

“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. And when such behavior emanates from the top of our government, it is something else. It is dangerous to a democracy.”

Jeff Flake was a senator from Arizona from 2013 to 2019.

Source: [Speech on the Senate floor](#), Oct. 24, 2017

The healing of the Republican Party cannot begin with Trump as president ...”

Geoff
Duncan Geoff Duncan

“The healing of the Republican Party cannot begin with Trump as president (and that’s aside from the untold damage that potentially awaits our country).”

Geoff Duncan was the lieutenant governor of Georgia from 2019 to 2023.

Source: [The Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), May 6, 2024

... taking advantage of the trust placed in him by his supporters ...”

John
Boehner John Boehner

“Trump incited that bloody insurrection for nothing more than selfish reasons, perpetuated by the bullshit he’d been shoveling since he lost a fair election the previous November. He claimed voter fraud without any evidence, and repeated those claims, taking advantage of the trust placed in him by his supporters and ultimately betraying that trust.”

John Boehner was the speaker of the House from 2011 to 2015.

Source: “On the House” by John Boehner, 2021

He is a con artist.”

Marco

Rubio Marco Rubio

“He is a con artist. ... He runs on this idea he is fighting for the little guy, but he has spent his entire career sticking it to the little guy — his entire career.”

Marco Rubio, a senator from Florida since 2011, was a presidential candidate in 2016.

Source: [Rally in Texas](#), Feb. 26, 2016

... a weakening of our shared American values ...”

John

Kasich John Kasich

“I saw Trump’s reckless entreaties as a weakening of our shared American values — even more so, a coarsening of our shared American values.”

John Kasich was the governor of Ohio from 2011 to 2019 and a presidential candidate in 2000 and 2016.

Source: “Two Paths” by John Kasich, 2017

I think he’s toxic for the Republican Party and for the country.”

Larry

Hogan Larry Hogan

“I think he’s toxic for the Republican Party and for the country.”

Larry Hogan was the governor of Maryland from 2015 to 2023.

Source: [CNN](#), May 16, 2021

He’s willing to significantly undermine them ...”

Bob

Corker Bob Corker

“We are conservatives, we are traditionalists, we are people that hold those things up, even though every institution needs oversight and can be improved. We believe that these institutions have helped make America great. Not him. He’s willing to significantly undermine them if it benefits him politically.”

Bob Corker was a senator from Tennessee until 2019 and chaired the Foreign Relations Committee.

Source: “American Carnage” by Tim Alberta, 2019

There has never been a greater betrayal by a president ...”

Liz

Cheney Liz Cheney

“The president could have immediately and forcefully intervened to stop the violence. He did not. There has never been a greater betrayal by a president of the United States of his office and his oath to the Constitution.”

Liz Cheney was a representative from Wyoming from 2017 to 2023 and the chair of the House Republican conference from 2019 to 2021.

Source: [Statement](#), Jan. 12, 2021

... an intensifying crescendo of conspiracy theories ...”

Mitch

McConnell Mitch McConnell

“Many politicians sometimes make overheated comments or use metaphors. ... That’s different from what we saw. This was an intensifying crescendo of conspiracy theories, orchestrated by an outgoing president who seemed determined to either overturn the voters’ decision or else torch our institutions on the way out.”

Mitch McConnell of Kentucky has been the leader of the Senate Republican conference since 2007.

Source: [Senate floor speech](#), Feb. 13, 2021

He should have immediately denounced the mob ...”

Kevin

McCarthy Kevin McCarthy

“The president bears responsibility for Wednesday’s attack on Congress by mob rioters. He should have immediately denounced the mob when he saw what was unfolding.”

Kevin McCarthy was the speaker of the House of Representatives in 2023 and served as a representative from California from 2007 to 2023.

Source: [Speech on the House floor](#), Jan. 13, 2021

... the most expensive and least effective way to do border security ...”

Will

Hurd Will Hurd

“Building a wall from sea to shining sea is the most expensive and least effective way to do border security.”

Will Hurd was a representative from Texas from 2015 to 2021. His district included 820 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border — more than any other.

Source: [CBS This Morning](#), Jan. 18, 2019

... not decency, not truth, not character, not integrity ...”

Bill

Weld Bill Weld

“I can’t think of a single demand that Donald Trump makes on himself — not decency, not truth, not character, not integrity, not consistency.”

Bill Weld was the governor of Massachusetts from 1991 to 1997 and a presidential candidate in 2020.

Source: [The Washington Post](#), Aug. 19, 2019

He tried to violently overthrow our government.”

Joe

Walsh Joe Walsh

“We cannot, we must not become so inured to Trump’s madness that we normalize what he’s done. He tried to violently overthrow our government.”

Joe Walsh, the host of a political radio show, was a representative from Illinois from 2011 to 2013.

Source: [The Daily Beast](#), Aug. 2, 2023

... We shouldn’t have listened to him.”

Nikki

Haley Nikki Haley

“He went down a path he shouldn’t have, and we shouldn’t have followed him, and we shouldn’t have listened to him. And we can’t let that ever happen again.”

Nikki Haley was the governor of South Carolina from 2011 to 2017, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations from 2017 to 2018 and a presidential candidate in 2024.

Source: [Politico](#), Jan. 12, 2021

... bitterness, combativeness and self-interest.”

Charlie

Baker Charlie Baker

“I know I should be surprised when I hear incendiary words like this from him, but I’m not. At so many times during these last several weeks, when the country needed compassion and leadership the most, it simply was nowhere to be found. Instead, we got bitterness, combativeness and self-interest.”

Charlie Baker was the governor of Massachusetts from 2015 to 2023.

Source: [News conference](#), June 1, 2020

Donald Trump is a phony, a fraud.”

Mitt

Romney Mitt Romney

“Here’s what I know: Donald Trump is a phony, a fraud. His promises are as worthless as a degree from Trump University. He’s playing the members of the American public for suckers: He gets a free ride to the White House, and all we get is a lousy hat.”

Mitt Romney, a senator from Utah, was the governor of Massachusetts from 2003 to 2007. He was the Republican Party’s nominee for president in 2012.

Source: [Speech at the University of Utah](#), March 3, 2016

... will spend the entire campaign whining about his legal troubles ...”

Chris

Sununu Chris Sununu

“And Mr. Trump, ever the narcissist, will spend the entire campaign whining about his legal troubles and bilking his supporters of their retirement savings to pay for his lawyers.”

Chris Sununu is the governor of New Hampshire.

Source: [The New York Times](#), Aug. 21, 2023

... requires the kind of character he just doesn’t have.”

Paul

Ryan Paul Ryan

“Character is too important to me. And it’s a job that requires the kind of character that he just doesn’t have.”

Paul Ryan was the speaker of the House of Representatives from 2015 to 2019.

Source: [Milken Institute Global Conference](#), May 6, 2024

Conservative voices

He built a wall of lies ...”

Charlie

Sykes Charlie Sykes

“He tried to overturn a fair and free election. He incited a mob to attack the Capitol. He built a wall of lies to incite his followers to try to disrupt the actions of Congress. If that is not a threat to American democracy, I don’t know what is.”

Charlie Sykes is a former radio talk show host and a former editor in chief of The Bulwark.

Source: [PBS](#), Aug. 6, 2024

If someone says something nice about him, they are our friend ...”

Henry

Kissinger Henry Kissinger

“The entire foreign policy is based on a single unstable individual’s reaction to perceptions of slights or flattery. If someone says something nice about him, they are our friend; if they say something unkind, if they don’t kiss the ring, they are our enemy.”

Henry Kissinger was the secretary of state from 1973 to 1977.

Source: “Siege” by Michael Wolff, 2019

He wasn’t motivated by what he didn’t know.”

Hugh

Hewitt Hugh Hewitt

Hugh Hewitt, an official in Ronald Reagan’s White House, is a conservative radio talk show host.

Source: “American Carnage” Tim Alberta, 2019

... corroded and corrupted American democracy ...”

J. Michael

Luttig J. Michael Luttig

“The former president sought to overturn an American election which he had lost fair and square. For four years, these claims by the former president and his Republican allies have corroded and corrupted American democracy and American elections. Vast, vast numbers of Americans, into the millions, today no longer believe in the elections in the United States of America.”

J. Michael Luttig was a federal judge from 1991 to 2006.

Source: [PBS](#), Aug. 14, 2023

This is not leadership our country needs.”

Bob

Vander Plaats Bob Vander Plaats

“Trump deserved to lose my endorsement. Matter of fact, I’ve never endorsed him. But he proved he was not worthy of the endorsement, of me, of the ministry and, by extension, the broader body. ...This is smoke and mirrors. This is not leadership our country needs.”

Bob Vander Plaats is an evangelical leader in Iowa.

Source: [“The Steve Deace Show”](#), Nov. 27, 2023

... We need a new standard-bearer.”

Erick

Erickson Erick Erickson

“I wanted to give the man a lot of latitude because I know he taps into some anger that even I share with the Republican Party, and a lot of us here do. But if our standard-bearer has to resort to that, we need a new standard-bearer.”

Erick Erickson is a conservative radio talk show host.

Source: [RedState Gathering in Georgia](#), Aug. 8, 2015

Lying is Trump’s toxic superpower.”

Rich

Logis Rich Logis

“I finally stepped outside the MAGA echo chamber. I stopped listening to what Trump said and looked around with my own eyes, and I realized he had been lying about pretty much everything. Lying is Trump’s toxic superpower.”

Rich Logis was active in the MAGA movement from 2015 to 2022.

Source: [Democratic National Convention](#), Aug. 19, 2024

... a floundering, inarticulate jumble of gnawing insecurities ...”

George

Will George Will

“Trump is what he is, a floundering, inarticulate jumble of gnawing insecurities and not at all compensating vanities, which is pathetic.”

George Will, a conservative commentator and political analyst, has been a columnist at The Washington Post since 1974.

Source: [The Washington Post](#), May 9, 2018

Trump might be the greatest charlatan of them all.”

L. Brent

Bozell III L. Brent Bozell III

“The G.O.P. base is clearly disgusted and looking for new leadership. Enter Donald Trump, not just with policy prescriptions that challenge the cynical G.O.P. leadership but with an attitude of disdain for that leadership — precisely in line with the sentiment of the base. Many conservatives are relishing this, but ah, the rub. Trump might be the greatest charlatan of them all.”

Brent Bozell III is a conservative activist.

Source: [The National Review](#), Jan. 22, 2016

World leaders

... I can't understand how Donald Trump can be on the side of Putin.”

Volodymyr

Zelensky Volodymyr Zelensky

“Putin killed all the values which are — which we defend today. ... That's why I can't understand how Donald Trump can be on the side of Putin. So for me, it's something unbelievable.”

Volodymyr Zelensky is the president of Ukraine.

Source: [CNN](#), Feb. 26, 2024

A frightened dog barks louder.”

Kim

Jong-un Kim Jong-un

“Far from making remarks of any persuasive power that can be viewed to be helpful to defusing tension, he made unprecedented rude nonsense one has never heard from any of his predecessors. A frightened dog barks louder.”

Kim Jong-un is the supreme leader of North Korea.

Source: [The New York Times](#), Sept. 21, 2017, from an official statement

... stands for a great division in the country.”

Olaf

Scholz Olaf Scholz

“If all people are only against each other, then there cannot be a good future, and that is why the former president certainly stands for a great division in the country.”

Olaf Scholz is the chancellor of Germany.

Source: [Address at a primary school near Berlin](#), May 22, 2023

... If there is a second time, it won't be easy ...”

Justin

Trudeau Justin Trudeau

“It wasn't easy the first time, and if there is a second time, it won't be easy, either. ... There are clearly issues where I do not agree at all with Mr. Trump.”

Justin Trudeau is the prime minister of Canada.

Source: [Reuters](#), Jan. 16. 2024, from a discussion hosted by the Montreal Chamber of Commerce.

I deeply regret that President Trump has not conceded defeat ...”

Angela

Merkel Angela Merkel

“A basic rule of democracy is: After elections, there are winners and losers. ... I deeply regret that President Trump has not conceded defeat since November and again refused to do so yesterday. Doubts about the outcome of the election have been stoked and that set the atmosphere which made the events of the night possible.”

Angela Merkel is a former chancellor of Germany.

Source: [Politico](#), Jan. 7, 2021

Where has our role model for democracy gone?”

Kazuyoshi

Akaba Kazuyoshi Akaba

Kazuyoshi Akaba is a former member of Japan's cabinet.

Source: [CBS](#), Nov. 10, 2020, from a since-deleted tweet

... clearly a threat.”

Christine

Lagarde Christine Lagarde

“If we are to draw lessons from history, meaning the way he ran the first four years of his mandate, it’s clearly a threat.”

Christine Lagarde is the president of the European Central Bank.

Source: [Político](#), Jan. 11, 2024

... President Trump radiates insecurity.”

Kim

Darroch Kim Darroch

“For a man who has risen to the highest office on the planet, President Trump radiates insecurity.”

Kim Darroch is a former British ambassador to the United States.

Source: [The Daily Mail](#), June 22, 2017, from a leaked memo

He’s a show-off.”

Mauricio

Macri Mauricio Macri

“He’s a show-off. Very exhibitionist. ... A 9-to-5 performance.”

Mauricio Macri is a former president of Argentina who worked with Trump in business before entering politics.

Source: [Todo Noticias](#), October 2015