

# THE TRUMP FILES

Gratis Sample Chapter 13

Jack Hassard

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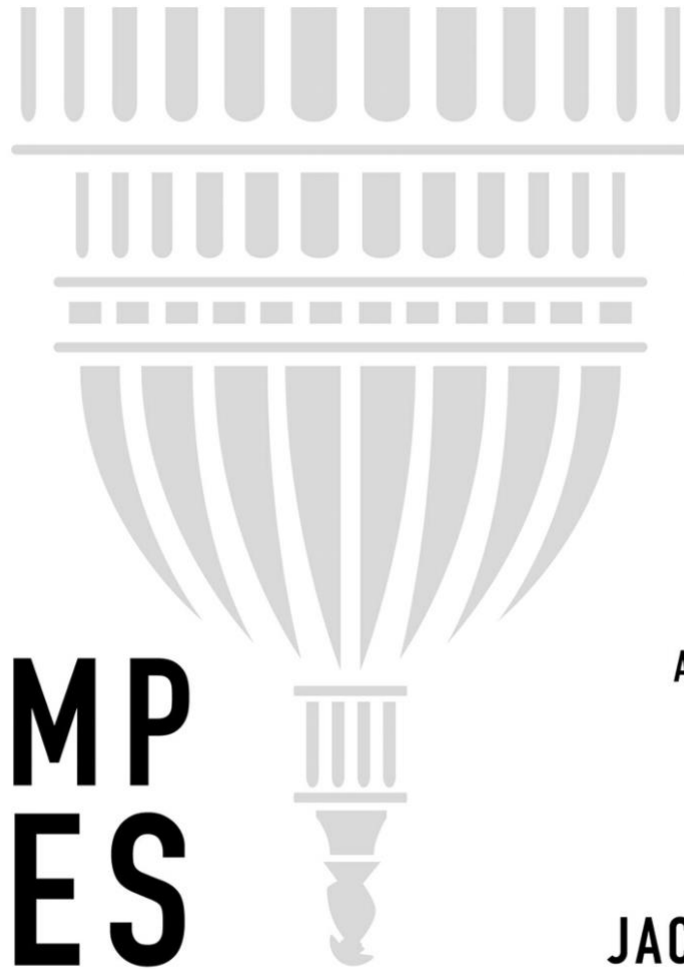
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AN ACCOUNT OF  
THE TRUMP  
ADMINISTRATION'S  
EFFECT ON AMERICAN  
DEMOCRACY,  
HUMAN RIGHTS,  
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JACK HASSARD

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Citizen Jack  
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## CHAPTER 13: POLITICAL VIOLENCE

### 13.1. BLOG POST, 5 NOVEMBER 2020: A BLUE WAVE WASHES OUT TRUMP

A blue wave occurred in the 2020 presidential election. However, it didn't happen as many people expected. For assorted reasons, Donald Trump created the blue wave because of his failed response to the COVID-19 pandemic. His failure to act decisively and use the science that was available to him created a fracture among the American people. Trump flaunted his superiority over scientific advice on TV, in the White House, and during his rallies, which according to some reports led to at least seven hundred deaths among people who attended. He refused to wear a mask. He continued to shake hands. Trump ignored the concept of social distancing. And, as Dr. Fauci predicted, Trump would get COVID-19. Trump used this to mock the country and highlight his disdain for truth and empathy.

But all this cost him the election. He claimed years ago that the election was going to be rigged. He told his crowds around the country that vote by mail would be fraudulent, and he thereby encouraged his followers not to use the mail-in vote. Citizens of the US knew they could vote by mail. And they did, and it helped elect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.

This situation is how the blue wave wiped out Trump's lead after Donald Trump thought he was the winner. While the early returns in key states showed that Trump was leading Joe Biden, fortunes changed overnight and over the next two days. The votes by people who had voted by

mail were not counted until the polls closed, and most of the people who voted by mail were Democrats. They voted for Joe Biden. In four states Trump's lead vanished as the blue wave washed out the edge that Trump had over Biden. Trump led at 11:00 p.m. as follows: Wisconsin by 4.1%, Michigan by 8.4%, Pennsylvania by 13.8%, and Georgia by 2.6%. With these results in, Trump announced that no more votes should be counted and that he should be announced the winner. That announcement didn't happen. He lacked that power to stop the vote, and he wasn't the one who called the election.

By the morning of November 4, Wisconsin and Michigan flipped to Biden. At this time, Biden had secure leads in Nevada and Arizona, and if these four states stayed in the Biden column, he would win the presidency. As the day went on, Trump's lead in Pennsylvania and Georgia was slipping. On November 5, it appeared that Biden might win Pennsylvania and even Georgia. Trump began to claim that these elections were being stolen and demanded that all votes be recounted. They were, and in Georgia the votes were counted three times. By the evening of November 5, Trump's lead had evaporated in Georgia and nearly dried up in Pennsylvania. On November 6, Georgia and Pennsylvania flipped blue. On November 7, Joe Biden was declared the winner of the presidential race. The second blue wave pounded the shores around Mar-a-Lago.

### GEORGIA BLUE

Equally impressive as the defeat of Trump is what has happened in Georgia. Stacey Abrams has spent most of the last four years building a network of organizations that highlighted voter suppression and through this work registered hundreds of thousands of new voters. Many people believe that her organization Fair Fight was one of the reasons Georgia is now a blue state and Joe Biden won the state.

The blue wave came after the polls had closed. Mail-in ballots could not be processed until November 3, election day. It takes time to process paper ballots. Each state has its own procedures for processing mail-in ballots. Several people, usually three to four, are involved to

approve each absentee ballot. In Georgia this blue wave of votes took several days after the election to come to state election officials. Joe Biden overcame a big deficit and right now is leading Trump by more than 7,000 votes.

Jon Ossoff forced a runoff election for US Senate against incumbent David Perdue. Georgia requires that a candidate must get at least 50 percent of the vote. Right now, Perdue leads Ossoff 49.8% to 47.9%.

The blue wave also has gained momentum in the second senate election in Georgia. Since no one got more than 50 percent of the vote, a runoff between Democrat Raphael Warnock and Republican Kelly Loeffler will also take place. Warnock got 32.9% and Loeffler got 25.9% of the vote.<sup>439</sup>

This will be an unprecedented election. If the Democrats can win both races, the US Senate will be controlled by them because with a 50–50 Senate, Vice President-Elect Harris will be the deciding vote.

### **13.2. BLOG POST, 8 DECEMBER 2020: TRUMP'S ATTEMPTED COUP**

Donald Trump is engaged in a process to steal the 2020 election. And most of his party approves or remains silent. Senator Kelly Loeffler spoke to this issue in a recent debate. She is being challenged by Raphael Warnock in one of two US Senate races in Georgia. In a televised debate, she was asked if Donald Trump lost the election, yes or no? She said neither and told us that Donald Trump has every right to challenge the vote and to make sure every vote counts. Loeffler is a perfect example of how Trump gets away with his charade. In Georgia, each vote for president was counted three times. The outcome was the same. Joe Biden won by more than 8,000 votes.

Trump is using tactics that are typically used in authoritarian and dictatorial regimes. Anyone that opposes the “Trump regime” is an enemy and will be treated as such, as if a war had been declared.

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<sup>439</sup> Michelle Bocanegra, “Republican Loeffler, Democrat Warnock Head to Georgia Senate Runoff,” Politico, November 3, 2020, retrieved April 15, 2022, <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/11/03/georgia-senate-special-election-results-2020-433902>.

Last Saturday Trump called Georgia Governor Brian Kemp. Kemp has been a huge supporter of Trump. He led the way to open the Georgia economy well before other states because he thought it would please his boss in Washington. However, as soon as Kemp did so, Trump said he “strongly disagrees” with Kemp’s decision and went on to say it was too early to reopen the state. Trump made Kemp a laughingstock of governors in the media.

In a phone call<sup>440</sup> with Kemp on December 5, Trump asked Kemp to call the Georgia legislature together for a special meeting to get elected officials to change the vote and make him the winner. He thought by bringing the representatives of Georgia together, they could defy the will of the people. The will of the people was that sixteen electors will vote for Joe Biden because he won the election. Kemp turned the president down. Trump also asked Republicans in Michigan and Pennsylvania to do the same thing.

## COUP

In an article in *The Atlantic*, Zeynep Tufekci explains what’s going on with Trump and the Republican Party. She makes it clear but also says that most Americans won’t recognize or realize what is going on. At one point in her article, she said:

The US president is trying to steal the election, and, crucially, his party either tacitly approves or is pretending not to see it.

This is a particularly dangerous combination and makes it much more than just typical Trumpian bluster or norm shattering.<sup>441</sup>

According to Tufekci, there is only one word in English that can be used to identify and name what is going on. She says it powerfully with these remarks:

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<sup>440</sup> Amy Gardner, Colby Itkowitz, and Josh Dawsey, “Trump Calls Georgia Governor to Pressure Him for Help Overturning Biden’s Win in the State,” *Washington Post*, December 6, 2020, retrieved April 6, 2022, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-kemp-call-georgia/2020/12/05/fd8d677c-3721-11eb-8d38-6aea1adb3839\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-kemp-call-georgia/2020/12/05/fd8d677c-3721-11eb-8d38-6aea1adb3839_story.html).

<sup>441</sup> Zeynep Tufekci, “This Must Be Your First,” *The Atlantic*, December 8, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/12/trumps-farcical-inept-and-deadly-serious-coup-attempt/617309/>.



Trump is attempting to stage a *coup*, one that is embedded in a broader and ongoing power grab. And if that's hard to recognize, this might be your first.<sup>442</sup>

Although the coup that is identified here involves other states, lower and higher courts, the Supreme Court, a host of lawyers, and election officials, ground zero for the election of the century is the state of Georgia.

### GEORGIA SENATE RACES: AT RISK?

There are two senate elections that will be decided in a runoff election on January 5, 2021. Here are the stakes: If Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock win their respective campaigns against David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler, then the Democrats will hold the advantage in the US Senate. If the Democrats win both seats, then the Senate will be fifty Democratic and fifty Republican senators. In the case of a tie vote, all tie votes are decided by the vice president of the United States, who in this case is Kamala Harris, the Democratic vice president-elect.

Trump targeted Republican Governor Brian Kemp, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, and Election Chief Gabriel Sterling. His targeting has resulted in death threats to Secretary Raffensperger's family. Gabriel Sterling gave an emotional speech on the steps of the state capitol, saying that Trump and Senators Perdue and Loeffler must stop what they are doing before someone gets hurt or killed.<sup>443</sup>

Loeffler and Perdue have called for the resignation of Brad Raffensperger. All three of them are Republicans. The Senators have not backed off and still hold to their position that he should step down. Raffensperger has been clear that he will not resign. He shouldn't.

More than \$490 million has been spent on advertising for the two elections. Trump plans to return to the state and hold another of his rallies of lies. In the last rally that was to support Perdue and Loeffler's

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<sup>442</sup> Tufekci, "This Must Be Your First."

<sup>443</sup> Susan Fowler, "Someone's Going to Get Killed': Ga. Official Blasts GOP Silence on Election Threats," NPR, December 2, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/sections/biden-transition-updates/2020/12/01/940961602/someones-going-to-get-killed-ga-official-blasts-gop-silence-on-election-threats>.

races against Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock, respectively, Trump spent most of the time whining about how the election was stolen from him. Except now he's trying to steal it back. Is that possible? In Trump's world, it is.

### SAFE HARBOR

Safe Harbor Day, December 8, is the day when states can "lock" in their Electoral College votes. A *Forbes* article helps us understand the importance of this day. Alison Durkee, the author of the article, says that "under federal law, if states have finalized their election results and resolved 'any controversy or contest' involving the appointment of the electors by six days before the Electoral College meets, those results should be treated as 'conclusive' by Congress when lawmakers count the Electoral College votes and should not be challenged."<sup>444</sup>

Well, that day has come and almost gone. Although not set in stone, the results will be difficult to change. Joe Biden will be the next president.

### ELECTORS MEET

On December 12, electors in the fifty American states met and cast their Electoral College votes. State by state revealed the vote, and at the end of the day, Joe Biden received 306 votes and Donald Trump got 232 votes. Even at this time, very few Republicans in Congress have recognized Joe Biden as the next president.

Less than a month is left until the Georgia runoff election for two US Senate seats. Mail-in voting has begun in the state, and more than 1 million mail-in votes have been cast. Early voting begins next week and runs until the end of the month. Election day is January 5.

### CONGRESS COUNTS ELECTORAL VOTES

On January 6, lawmakers from the House and Senate will meet in the House Chamber, with the vice president presiding. Donald Trump

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<sup>444</sup> Alison Durkee, "The 'Safe Harbor' Deadline for Election Results Has Arrived: Here's What That Means for Trump's Lawsuits," *Forbes*, December 8, 2020, retrieved February 11, 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alisondurkee/2020/12/08/the-safe-harbor-deadline-for-election-results-has-arrived-what-that-means-for-trump-lawsuits/>.

asked Mike Pence to “act” in stopping the ratification of Joe Biden as the next president of the United States. According to some reports, Trump is confused as to why Pence can’t overturn the election results. Yet Trump’s attempt to overturn the election has now moved to Mar-a-Lago, where he is spending the holidays. His lead attorney, Rudy Giuliani, is with him, and together they will continue to plot a way to overthrow the election results.

I should also point out that in a recent White House meeting, which according to observers was a shouting match, Trump asked about Michael Flynn’s idea of using “military capabilities” to “rerun an election” in swing states.

The tide has turned. However, I heard someone on CNN say it’s not over until Joe Biden lifts his hand off the Bible.



*On January 6, 2021, a mob of 2,000–2,500 supporters of President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol Building in Washington, DC. Source: Tyler Merbler, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons.*

### **13.3. BLOG POST, 6 JANUARY 2021: INCITING INSURRECTION TO OVERTHROW THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT**

It’s been suggested to me that what happened on this day was an act of political violence.<sup>445</sup> Donald Trump caused a violent protest that has resulted in the storming of the US Capitol. Between 2,000 and

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<sup>445</sup> In an email from Dr. Charles Ault, emeritus professor, Lewis & Clark College, on May 31, 2021.

2,500 people storming the building have driven members of Congress and the vice president into hiding in the Capitol. The protestors, encouraged by Trump, have taken over the Capitol. It's dangerous. And looking at the scene, not only is it dangerous, but I was shocked to see how unprepared law enforcement was to deal this Trump protest and rally. Thousands of people have surrounded the US Capitol, and many have broken into the building and reached the House and Senate chambers.

The House and Senate convened in joint session today for the purpose of opening the 2020 presidential election votes submitted by each state. It's legal for legislators to object to any list of electors from any state. Republican members of Congress—more than one hundred in the House and thirteen in the Senate—have said they will oppose the electoral votes in some states. The members of Congress gathered in the House Chamber around noon on January 6. Envelopes from the states are opened in alphabetical order. If at least one House member and one Senate member raises an objection to a state's election results in writing, then lawmakers take this objection under consideration for two hours with the House and Senate debating separately. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) and Representative Paul Gosar (R-AZ) led the challenge against the Arizona electors. They each spoke, explaining why the votes from Arizona should be rejected. Eight senators and fifty representatives joined their objection to overturn the vote. While the chambers were debating separately, all hell broke loose outside the US Capitol.

I happened to be watching the debates on CNN and saw the beginning of the storming of the Capitol building.

I wrote at the time that protestors were breaking through windows and entering the Capitol. Police and protestors were engaged in violent actions around the buildings. One woman was shot in the chest inside the Capitol, putting her in critical condition. She later died.

Inside the House chamber, US Capitol Police drew guns on rioters outside the room. People had entered the Senate chamber, and one person was sitting at the House speaker's desk with his feet up on the

desk. Even though protestors have been cleared from the Senate floor and moved to the rotunda, the violence is unprecedented.

Viewing this insurrection is not only frightening, but it raises to a new level the gravity of Donald Trump and his Republican sycophants.<sup>446</sup>

A commentator made a critical point. Last summer, during a Black Lives Matter protest, law enforcement by the thousands were present. Today, right-wing protestors, who were mostly white people called to Washington by Donald Trump, faced little to no police presence compared to the Black Lives Matter protest in June 2020.

### **13.4. BLOG POST, 6 JANUARY 2021: A DATE THAT WILL LIVE IN INFAMY**

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 6, 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt at a joint session of Congress gave his famous “infamy” speech. On that date, President Roosevelt appealed to Americans’ patriotism. Roosevelt knew that most Americans did not want to be drawn into the war in Europe. Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor changed everything. He acted quickly and briefly told Americans about the attack. He said this will be “a date which will live in infamy.”

Today, January 6, the US Capitol was attacked by hundreds of American terrorists, right-wing hate groups, and individuals who thought they were patriotic in attacking the very center of the government of the United States. On this date, which will also live in infamy, the United States was attacked by violent right-wing men and women, who were acting on orders from the president of the United States. They were not patriots. They were violent criminals.

January 6 is one of the most important days in American history. This is the day when the Congress meets every four years to read formally the results of the Electoral College, leading to the inauguration of the next president. In future years, this day will be remembered as

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<sup>446</sup> Andrew Clyde, a Republican representative from Georgia, said the people who broke into the US Capitol on January 6 were docile as tourists and no insurrection occurred on that day. Other Republicans, including Mitch McConnell and Kevin McCarthy, are now downplaying the mob attack on the Capitol.

the only day in United States history when a violent insurrection and mob rule overtook the US Capitol.

It's now the responsibility of the members of Congress, who have come out of hiding from their secure locations, to resume the Electoral College session.

Beyond this night, it will also be the responsibility of Congress to investigate the president and determine whether Trump should be charged with inciting mob rule and a riot. Several laws should be considered in bringing Trump to trial.

Trump can be charged with rebellion and insurrection if he assisted or engaged in any actions against the authority of the United States. If found guilty, he would be fined or imprisoned for not more than ten years, and he would be incapable of holding any office under the United States.

A second crime that Trump might have committed is seditious (subversive) conspiracy. The law is if two or more persons in the United States conspire to overthrow or destroy by force the government of the United States or by force to seize, take, or possess any property of the United States, they shall each be fined or imprisoned not more than twenty years or both.

### **13.5. BLOG POST, 6 JANUARY 2021: TRUMP CAUSES VIOLENT INSURRECTION AND WATCHES IT ON TV**

This was one of the most frightening days I have witnessed during Donald Trump's presidency. The president of the United States caused a violent insurrection on the grounds of the Capitol. It is a stunning scene. Insurrectionists broke into Nancy Pelosi's office and were photographed sitting at the speaker's chair. One insurgent left a note on a manilla folder with the words, "We will not back down."

Trump has refused to step in and put out a message telling the rioters to cease and go home. Instead, he's asked them to be peaceful. Reports inform that the president was delighted while watching mobs of people attack police and storm the US Capitol in an attempt to capture congressional representatives, senators, and especially Vice President Mike Pence and Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

This was the day Congress was to certify the election of Joe Biden as president of the United States. Trump held a rally on Capitol grounds and encouraged mobs of right-wing hate groups, which were in the large crowd, to make sure that they take back the country. For weeks I read on social media that groups such as the Proud Boys and other hate groups would be in DC for the protest. They were coming to cause trouble and to stir others up. Other groups include Stop the Steal/Wild Protest, Women for America First, Eighty Percent Coalition, and Operation Occupy the Capitol. The chatter on the social media of these right-wing groups has come to fruition today. Members of these groups are only interested in inciting and participating in violence.

Donald Trump's words have stoked the flames of this violence, destructiveness, disorder, and turbulence.

What I am observing on live TV and social media is the nightmare of an authoritarian. I've described in this blog that Trump has been a dictator wannabe. It's not surprising that his term in office is ending with his hate-group followers storming the Capitol.

I believe that Mike Pence could assemble on Zoom a quorum of cabinet secretaries and enact the Twenty-Fifth Amendment. The amendment states that if the president becomes unable to do his job, the vice president becomes the president. The amendment makes it clear that if the president is unable to discharge his powers and duties, the vice president takes over.

But his behavior right now is outrageous and dangerous. In a video clip, he told the rioters just to go home. But he also repeated the unsubstantiated claim that he won the election. This is the fuel that he pours on to these hate groups.

### **13.6. BLOG POST, 14 FEBRUARY 2021: THE FRAGILITY OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY**

In March 1981, I was a passenger on a Soviet Aeroflot aircraft on a Washington, DC–Moscow route. A blizzard in Moscow diverted the plane to Leningrad, where we sat off the runway for two hours. Losing

patience, the pilot took off for Moscow, where we landed at the Sheremetyevo International Airport at about 2:00 p.m. local time. By 4:00 p.m. I was walking on Red Square, amazed by St. Basil's Cathedral; GUM, Moscow's largest department store; and the walls of the Kremlin. This was the first time I had been out of the country.

The USSR consisted of multiple Soviet republics, three of which I would eventually visit. But more importantly for this discussion, the USSR was a one-party state governed by the Communist Party. It was an illiberal one-party state founded by Lenin in 1917.<sup>447</sup>

The ruling party controlled everything from industry and jobs to the government. The only quality that was important was loyalty to the principles of the Communist Party. Keep in mind, however, that an illiberal state can exist with competing political parties. There are many examples of this in the world right now. Historian and author Anne Applebaum calls this type of governing "soft dictatorship." She identifies the following countries as examples of "soft dictatorship": Russia, the Philippines, Poland, and Hungary.

Loyalty was a key priority that Donald Trump expected from anyone working for him. Only seven days after he became president, Trump invited James Comey, director of the FBI, to a one-on-one dinner in the White House. Trump asked in a demanding manner for Comey's loyalty. Comey said that he could only be loyal to the Constitution. Trump was furious, and later in the spring, Comey was fired.<sup>448</sup>

During the time that I was directly involved with Russia, Ukraine, and Soviet Georgia, the one-party illiberal state gave way to forms of democratization. The first two times I was in Tbilisi, Georgia, for meetings with Georgian psychologists and educators, some of my colleagues from America were invited to the home of an artist by the name of Victor. His house was alive. The walls of his apartment were covered with copies of frescoes of his own art. There was intense energy in the room, and in this environment Americans and Georgians came together to bond and share ideas about life.

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<sup>447</sup> Applebaum, *Twilight of Democracy*.

<sup>448</sup> Schmidt, "Trump Demanded Loyalty."



During my visits to Tbilisi, I became close to the principal of a school and her family. Her son George was fifteen years old. He and I got along very well. He was the first fifteen-year-old to ask me about existential psychology and the unconscious mind. Over the next three years we spoke together at family dinners and explored a lot of topics. But one of his curiosities about America was surfing. Did my wife and I know anything about surfing? We did, in fact, and we shared what we knew.

When the first delegation of Soviet educators came to Atlanta for two weeks of meetings and conferences, they asked me if I would take them to the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Social Change. We spent the good part of a day at the center.

The experiences we had in Russia were collaborative in nature. We not only met in small groups within institutions and schools, we also were invited into Russian homes and apartments to enjoy more personal times with families.

Russian teacher Sergey Tolstikov explained that small group collaboration was not only possible between Americans and Russians but was essential. He wrote in an email that:

In fact, Global Thinking Project work created a new, unheard and unseen until then, international cooperation on a school level while giving the students and teachers of our countries a unique chance to work on serious global ecological problems at local levels.<sup>449</sup>

## A FLEDGING LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

The fledging liberal democracy that developed in Russia was an asset for the people who we worked with at schools, universities, and research institutes, as well as parents and students. From the late 1980s through the 1990s, hundreds of Americans and Russians visited each other's countries, working and living together in schools and homes.

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<sup>449</sup> Sergey Tolstikov (private English and Russian tutor, former teacher Moscow School 710, and editor at *Foreign Languages School Journal*), email interview with the author, September 13, 2021.

Yet we have to say that liberal democracy is fragile. Once Putin became president, the country began to slide back into a form of soft dictatorship. Russia is a multiparty state, but Putin has been able to gather elites and wealthy industrialists, a state media, and courts that carry out the government's wishes. Applebaum says that in countries with soft dictatorships (like Russia, Poland, etc.), sycophants understand their role, which is to defend the leaders, however great their corruption or dishonest their statements, and however disastrous their impact on ordinary people and institutions.<sup>450</sup>

### AMERICAN SOFT DICTATORSHIP

Donald Trump was on his way to establish a soft dictatorship in the United States. Soft dictators need to be able to control elections. They want to give the appearance of running a government that is "democratically" elected. Trump was unable to control the election, so his only recourse was to claim that it was stolen from him.

Interestingly, one of the tactics used by these would-be dictators is to rig elections. They rig elections by buying votes. They use fear and intimidation to force people to vote for them, as well as stealing and stuffing ballot boxes.

Donald Trump used a slightly different strategy, with the outcome being the same as if the United States had already become a soft dictatorship. First, he claimed that the election would be rigged in favor of his opponent. He then claimed the other side rigged local elections by stealing ballots or manipulating electronic voting computers to change votes away from him and to his competitor, Joe Biden. He also went around the country claiming that he won the election with his Big Lie. The Big Lie was gross propaganda claiming that the election was stolen, and Trump and his minions pushed it with the phrase "Stop the Steal."

### TRUMP'S THOUSANDS

With ease, Trump brought thousands of Americans to Washington, DC, on January 6, 2021, the day Congress would be carrying out its duty

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<sup>450</sup> Tolstikov interview.

to read the results of each state's Electoral College results. The results had been certified a month earlier by each state. Trump insisted that Vice President Mike Pence could change the outcome by sending the results back to each state and ordering the states to change the votes.

This is not farfetched. Recall that Trump called Brad Raffensperger, Georgia's secretary of state, to ask him to find enough votes to change the outcome of the election. By this time, the state of Georgia had counted the presidential vote three times. There was no difference in the results after each count. Now the Fulton County district attorney has opened a criminal case investigating whether Trump broke any election laws in Georgia.

I would not define Trump's move to a dictatorship as soft. He incited an insurrection of hundreds of right-wing individuals who stormed the US Capitol eager to find and kill anyone who was part of the government that was denying Trump the presidency. They came within inches of capturing legislators and were close to the vice president and his family. The mob had constructed a noose and were going to hang Mike Pence. They were also looking for Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. They wanted to kill her.

Indeed, a man from Georgia was arrested who texted friends and relatives, "Thinking about heading over to Pelosi (C—'s) speech and putting a bullet in her noggin on live TV." He added, "I'm gonna run that Pelosi over while she chews on her gums....Dead B— Walking."<sup>451</sup> He's facing federal charges. He missed the rally because of truck problems but was in a DC hotel, where he was arrested after a friend of his forwarded screenshots of his messages to the FBI. They tracked him to a Holiday Inn close to the Capitol. He was sentenced to 28 months in prison.

## DEMOCRACIES ARE FRAGILE

The United States came the closest it has come to having its Capitol overrun by insurgents. Two previous events come to mind: the War of

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<sup>451</sup> Ryan King, "Man Who Threatened to Shoot Pelosi in the Head Sentenced to 28 Months in Prison," *Washington Examiner*, December 15, 2021, retrieved April 6, 2022, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/man-who-threatened-to-shoot-pelosi-in-the-head-sentenced-to-28-months-in-prison>.

1812, in which the British burned the Capitol, and the Civil War, when the Confederate Army came close to capturing Washington, DC.

Donald Trump was impeached for a second time because he incited people to attack the United States government, of which he was president. He did nothing to stop the attack. This has been documented by phone calls and text notes of people who overheard a call between Donald Trump and Kevin McCarthy, leader of the Republican minority in the House. The impeachment trial proved the democratic manager's case that Trump incited a mob to attack the Capitol with the intent of securing the halls of Congress and preventing the final certification of Joe Biden as president-elect.

Donald Trump came close to carrying out his wish to overthrow the will and vote of the people by using strongarm dictatorial tactics. Trump had his army of right-wing mobsters, many of whom have been arrested and will face the federal justice system.

Trump lost. He was, in my mind, convicted and found guilty by 57 percent of the Senate. And in the end, millions of American voters will agree that Trump is guilty of insurrection and sedition and will never hold a public office again.

But we need to face some facts. Two-thirds of elected members of the Republican caucus of the US Congress have not accepted that Joe Biden won the election. They still believe the election was stolen from Donald Trump. And now members of Congress are using conspiracy theories to explain the nature of the assault on the Capitol, further weakening the Congress's ability to seek the truth about the near overthrow of the government. Even now, there are reports that some white supremacists are planning to blow up the Capitol on the night when Joe Biden gives the presidential State of the Union address. Democracies are fragile.

### **13.7. BLOG POST, 14 FEBRUARY 2021: TRUMP'S SECOND IMPEACHMENT TRIAL**

The US Senate voted today on the impeachment trial of former president Donald Trump. Fifty-seven senators voted guilty when asked for their vote. This was a historic rebuke. Fifty-seven percent of the elected senators

found Trump guilty. Keep in mind that the article of impeachment was a bipartisan effort in the House of Representatives. This was the most bipartisan support for impeachment in the history of the Senate.

Trump was only acquitted because the Senate requires 67 percent of Senators to vote guilty, which would have meant ten more Republicans were needed to find him guilty. But those Republicans hid behind a false wall. A wall that was invisible. It is constitutional to impeach a government official who is out of office. Donald Trump is a former government official. The Senate voted in the affirmative that the impeachment was constitutional. The trial could go forward. The Republicans hung their hat on this question, but they have risked their professional integrity by not voting on the evidence.

The evidence was overwhelming. The videos, text messages, timelines proven by time-stamped videos, and phone records formed a solid case proving Trump's guilt in inciting a riot on the US Capitol.

### WELL, KEVIN...

Just as Trump's phone call to the president of Ukraine in 2019 led to his first impeachment, his phone calls to senators while the attack was going on shows that Trump's state of mind was clear. He was supportive of the Capitol rioters. Kevin McCarthy, leader of the Republican minority in the House, called Trump to beg the president to call off the mob, knowing the rioters were Trump's supporters. Trump said to McCarthy, "Well, Kevin, I guess these people are more upset about the election than you are." The phone call was reduced to a shouting match. This, mind you, was just at the beginning of the assault on the nation's Capitol. Another Republican confirmed the exchange between Trump and McCarthy, Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler, (R-WA). Beutler said in an interview with CNN that Trump's mind was clear, that he either didn't care what was going on at the Capitol or he really wanted it to happen.

This and other testimony by a Republican representative and a Democratic senator proved that Trump had no intention of protecting any of the elected representatives of government. This was a dereliction of duty, which also meant that Trump supported the insurrection.

The forty-three Republicans who voted to clear Trump must wonder now what they did. Why did they vote to acquit when some had spoken publicly that Trump handled the Capitol insurrection? Others were in shock when listening to and watching the House Managers present their case, including harrowing video of the despicable assault on the Capitol. Yet these Republican senators refused to cast their vote on the basis on the evidence presented in the trial. They made a partisan decision to vote no. They were fearful of being attacked by Donald Trump. Some of them, I think, will simply run.

### GUILTY BY THE MILLIONS

Senator Mitch McConnell is the head of the Republican conference in the Senate. However, I believe he shed any form of leadership based on the speech he made to explain away his vote for acquittal. If you listen to the first half of McConnell's speech, you must scratch your head and wonder why this senator did not vote to find Trump guilty. He's using a legal argument to claim that the Constitution does not say ex-officials can be impeached. However, he is the one interpreting the Second Amendment. Many legal scholars would disagree with McConnell. They would claim that an ex-president is subject to impeachment and trial. An ex-president can be found guilty.<sup>452</sup>

So McConnell gave his Republican conference partisan cowards an excuse not to convict. Not on the evidence. No, on McConnell's interpretation. The problem here is that McConnell is not the supreme head of anything but a senator in the Senate minority.

I noted that Senators Ted Cruz (R-TX) and Josh Hawley (R-MO) voted to acquit. They led the insurrection in the Senate. They spoke in favor of Trump's Big Lie. To them, the election was stolen. And months after Trump was gone from DC, these two still spout the conspiracy of the "stolen election."

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<sup>452</sup> Cameron Peters, "Mitch McConnell's Speech Shows He's Willing to Condemn Trump—but Not When It Matters," *Vox*, February 13, 2021, retrieved April 6, 2022, <https://www.vox.com/2021/2/13/22282034/mitch-mcconnells-speech-trump-acquittal-impeachment>.

They gave concurrent speeches which indirectly added fuel to those getting ready to follow Trump's orders to attack the halls of Congress. They each supported the rioters. In fact, Senator Hawley, on his way into his senate office on the morning of January 6, 2021, gave a fist pump to the people gathering for the speeches by Trump and his sycophants. Later, those people would become part of the mob that attacked his office in the nation's capital. Calls for Senators Cruz and Hawley to resign were made. That didn't happen.

Trump may not have been convicted by the one-hundred-member US Senate, but he will be found guilty by more than 100 million Americans.