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Why Republicans Should Sack the President

Dear Republicans:

As one who voted for Eisenhower in 1956 and Nixon in 1972 and endorsed many policies of George H. W. Bush, I write to you in sorrow as well as alarm. You owe it to the Republican Party, the American people, and—indeed—all humanity, to help remove Donald Trump from the presidency without delay. The man is a danger to all living things. We have a record of his actions, many of which already set back the prospects of peace, prosperity, democracy, human rights, freedom, clean air and water, and truth. But the deepest threat lies in his erratic decision-making. No one can be sure what he will choose to do next—impelled by his own whims or those of advisers such as John Bolton or buddies at Fox News. The greater the embarrassments ensuing from the Mueller report and other investigations, the more likely he is to initiate a dangerous action, if only to muster his supposed base.

Republicans are not all-knowing. They must acknowledge their party's role in America's greatest foreign policy blunder—the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The war was conceived by a cabal close to President George W. Bush, but it was backed by most Republicans (and many Democrats afraid to challenge the public mood). Even today, a large majority of Republican voters still accept the rationale that Saddam Hussein possessed nuclear weapons that Bush aimed to destroy. It turned out that Donald Rumsfeld's "shock and awe" campaign sprang open a Pandora's Box of horrors that have ravaged the Middle East and wasted the region's and America's blood and treasure for nearly two decades.

The results have been far more destructive than the LBJ-Nixon Indochina wars, because the stakes are much higher than in Southeast Asia.

That Pandora's Box will explode if Americans fight Iran. Obsessed with Iran, President Trump and some advisers have sought to isolate and destroy its regime. Therefore the president withdrew the United States from the multilateral accord that turned back the clock on Iran's nuclear programs in exchange for trade that would help Iran raise living standards and rejoin the world. Tightened sanctions by the Trump administration now worsen conditions for most Iranians (though not its black-marketing elites). But if US sanctions have not destroyed Fidelismo in nearby Cuba, a speck in the Caribbean, they are unlikely to effect system change in one of the most powerful states in the erstwhile cradle of civilization.

Neither Americans nor Iranians think much about the positives in their long relationship dating from before World War I. But Americans still smart over the fifty-two US diplomats and citizens held hostage in Tehran for 444 days in 1979-1981. Iranians have even deeper reasons to see the United States as a dangerous foe—its role in destroying a nationalist Iranian government in 1953, in supporting the Shah's White Revolution for decades, in backing Iraq against Iran in the 1980s war, and—not least—the US guided missile cruiser that shot down an Iranian Airbus in 1988 killing 280 passengers. The cruiser, USS Vincennes, in 1988 stationed in the Persian Gulf to protect oil shipping channels, sometimes exchanged fire with smaller Iranian ships. Conditions were ripe then—as they are now—for a war-triggering accident or miscalculation.

The number of additional US troops sent to the Middle East in late May was only 1,500, but contingency planners have considered the dispatch of 120,000 troops to the Middle East to cope with an Iranian attack or acceleration of its nuclear programs. As commander-in-chief of the US armed forces, President Trump can order US forces into action without Congressional approval. He may be turning away from Bolton's hawkish slant toward Iran, but the president could spin that way again on a dime. Neither man is temperamentally or intellectually suited to lead the country into a still deeper Middle Eastern entanglement. Bolton is still unapologetic over his campaign to attack Iraq in 2003.

Neither is this president fit to decide whether and when to strike an adversary with US nuclear weapons. North Korea has tested missiles able to reach the United States, but if

Kim Jong Un also demonstrates an ability to place a nuclear warhead on an ICBM and detonate it, this could be a game changer. The president might be tempted to hit the North's launch facilities to ensure no such a weapon ever bursts over the United States. The ensuing war could suck in not just South Korea and Japan but also China and Russia.

Republicans, the Mueller report provides ample justification to find the president guilty of obstructing justice. Use this and related evidence to join Democrats in removing Trump from office before he brings on a global catastrophe that would imperil all humans including Republicans. The sooner you force the president's resignation, the less impact this action would exert on electoral politics. Trump's removal would risk Republicans' prospects in 2020, but the party still has moderate leaders who could compete effectively against the left-leaning candidates fielded by Democrats. Ousting a disgrace to the Republican Party would bolster its name and credibility in years to come.

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