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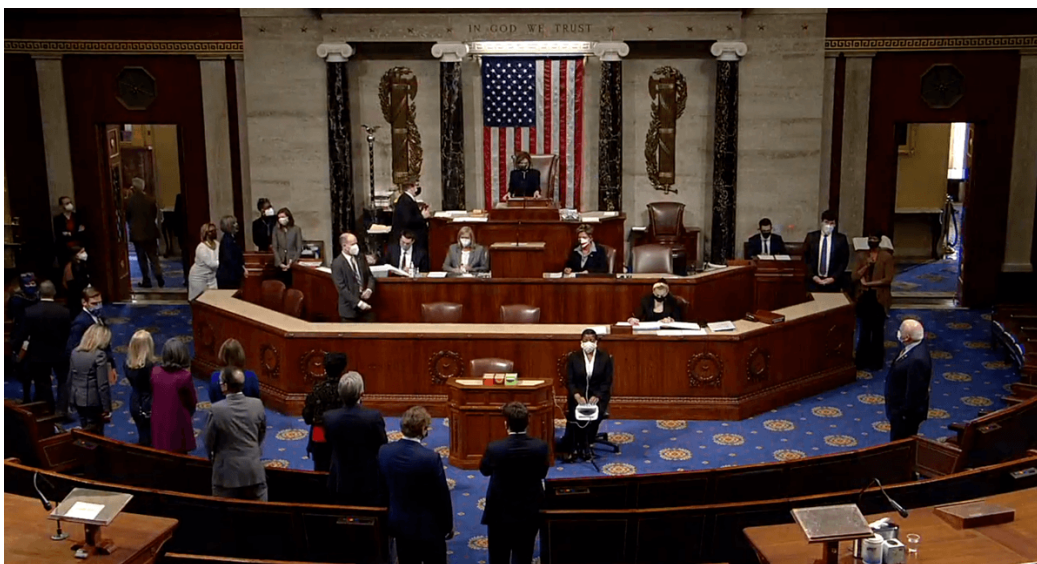
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On Non-Conviction, Empire, and U.S. Presidents



Photograph Source: United States House of Representatives – Public Domain

If the Nuremberg laws were applied, then every post-war American president would have been hanged.

-Noam Chomsky, 1990.

Of Course Trump Should Be Convicted

Donald Trump ought to be convicted by the U.S. Senate, of course: he instigated a mass proto-fascist physical assault on Congress in a last-ditch effort to stop it from certifying his clear defeat in the 2020 presidential election – and to provoke a pretext for martial law. Five people died. Many more could have perished. It was a despicable act driven by Trump's big fascist "stop the steal" lie. If the Senate can't take impeachment through conviction over that, what's the point of having an impeachment process?

There's no basis for the Trump "legal" team's claim that it is unconstitutional to impeach and convict a president after he has left office. The notion that the U.S. Founders wanted to give

presidents a blank check to do whatever they want after they are un-elected is absurd. The preponderant majority of constitutional scholars agree that Congress has the right to convict Trump after his presidency, a prerequisite for the elementarily decent task of banning the monster from holding federal office again.

Of Course He'll Walk

But just as obvious as the legitimacy and duty of a Trump conviction is the strong likelihood that the duty will not be met. Trump will walk. It takes a two-thirds tally in the upper body of Congress to convict. The votes aren't there in a Senate that is evenly divided between the two dominant imperialist parties even though Democratic Senators represent 41 million more people than Republican Senators (since the nation's anti-democratic 18th Century charter grants every U.S. state two Senators regardless of the states' wildly different population totals.)

It seemed briefly that conviction would reach the 66 of 100 Senate vote threshold, but that's over now. In the final week of the month in which he incited an insurrectionary fascist attack on the Capitol, the Republican party establishment reconnected with Trump. On Tuesday, January 26th, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), who earlier acknowledged that Trump's sparking of the assault was an impeachable offense, cynically voted to declare a second Trump impeachment trial unconstitutional since the 45th president is no longer in office (Malevolent Mitch cares not a whit about the counsel of constitutional experts). Two days later, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA), who said that Trump "bears responsibility" for the attack, traveled down to Mar a Lago to make amends with the disgraced fascist overlord. McCarthy still clings to the absurd notion that Biden didn't legitimately win the presidency.

It turns out that Trump and Trumpism's popularity is too strong with the Republifascist base for GOP leaders to jettison the malignant orange ex-president just for, ...you know, *trying to carry out a fascist coup*. All ten of the Republican House representatives who had the decency to vote for Trump's second impeachment are facing a storm of right-wing criticism in their home districts.

So, no, Trump won't be convicted in the U.S. Senate at least and may well be free to run again if he so chooses.

War and Other Crimes

This is of course pathetic and enraging. But it is unsurprising and there is a very real question about how upset it is appropriate to get about this. Because let's face it, what distinguishes the fascist pig Trump's crime is not its scale and lethality but rather the fact that it was directed at the holy American capitalist-oligarchic republic itself – "our" supposed "constitutional democracy" – and not at some other country and people on the wrong side of U.S. imperial guns and propaganda.

Let's review a number of crimes for which *no U.S. presidents were impeached, much less convicted*:

- + George W. Bush's prodigiously mass-murderous invasion and occupation of Iraq, based on abject Orwellian lies (Iraqi "weapons of mass destruction" and Saddam Hussein's supposed complicity in 9/11 along with the absurd claim of a desire to export democracy). This monumental imperialist transgression led to the premature death of more than a million people.

- + George W. Bush's torture, rendition, and assassination policies, left without prosecution by the Obama administration in the name of "looking forward, not backwards."

- + John F. Kennedy's failed invasion of Cuba, prelude to a missile confrontation he drove to the point of near global thermonuclear war.

- + Lyndon Baines Johnson's 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic, leading to at least 3000 Dominican deaths, in support of right-wing [Third World fascist](#) business and military rule.

- + Lyndon Baines Johnson's infamous Gulf of Tonkin lie, justifying his drastic escalation of the U.S. "crucifixion of Southeast Asia," Noam Chomsky's useful description of the so-called Vietnam War. The crucifixion, initiated under John Fitzgerald Kennedy and continuing through the presidency of Gerald Ford, killed as many 5 million Southeast Asians.

- + Richard Nixon's bombing and invasion of Cambodia, leading to millions of deaths, one among many disgraceful Nixon acts in the Vietnam-Laos-Cambodia crucifixion.

- + Nixon's wiretapping and murder of New Left antiwar and radical Left activists.

- + Nixon's sponsorship of a deadly Third World fascist coup in Chile on September 11, 1973.

- + Gerald Ford's approval and greenlighting of Indonesia's 1975 invasion of East Timor, starting off an occupation that killed 200 000 people, a third of the island's population.

- + Jimmy Carter's sponsorship of extreme Islamist terrorism to defeat an exemplary pro-Soviet regime in Afghanistan, a disastrous strategy that has led to mass death and misery within and beyond that country.

- + Ronald Reagan's funding, training, and equipping of Third World fascist regimes and death squads that killed hundreds of thousands of Central American peasants, workers, intellectuals, and activists.

- + George H. W. Bush's mass-murderous war on Iraq, which concluded with the infamous "Highway of Death," when U.S. warplanes risked mid-air collisions in the frenzy to slaughter tens of thousands of surrendering Iraqi troops. Mafia Don Daddy Bush reflected on how the one-sided racist-imperialist "turkey shoot" called Operation Desert Storm established the principle that "what we say goes" in the post-Soviet era.

- + Bill Clinton's economic sanctions on Iraq, which killed at least one million Iraqis, including at least half a million children.

- + Bill Clinton's murderous bombing of a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan.

- + Bill Clinton's bombing of Serbia, causing hundreds of deaths.
- + Barack Obama's support of a right-wing Third World fascist coup in Honduras, installing a regime that has killed and tortured untold thousands of civilians and activists.
- + Barack Obama's record-setting drone assassination campaign, including the murder of U.S. citizens and their children.
- + Barack Obama's many deadly bombings in Afghanistan, including the slaughter (absurdly blamed by Obama and his Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on "Taliban grenades") of dozens of children in the village of Bola Boluk.
- + Barack Obama's sponsorship and organization of a right-wing neofascist coup in Ukraine in February of 2014.
- + Barack Obama's 2011 bombing of Libya, which helped ruin that country for at least a generation while spreading lethal chaos across North Africa.
- + Barack "Deporter-in-Chief" (and thereby top family-separator) Obama's war on domestic whistleblowers and his enlistment of the Department of Homeland Security in the repression and dismantlement of the Occupy Wall Street movement, an effort to confront the corporate and financial oligarchy – the unelected dictatorship of money that rules the U.S. regardless of which of the two capitalist parties hold nominal power.

I could go on, of course, reaching back into the numerous genocidal wars and attacks U.S. presidents waged on Indigenous North Americans, the mass-murderous U.S. invasion and dismemberment of Mexico (under the racist and expansionist president James Polk), the U.S. murder of hundreds of thousands of Filipinos in the late 19th and early 20th Century (under presidents William McKinley and his white nationalist imperialist successor Theodore Roosevelt), white-supremacist Woodrow Wilson's bombing of Veracruz and invasion of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and more.

Other Stuff for Which Trump has Not been Impeached

Think also of some of the crimes for which Trump was NOT impeached by the RussiaGate-obsessed House of Representatives: denying the existence of the single greatest menace currently facing humanity, anthropogenic (really capitalogenic) climate change, and doing everything he could to accelerate global warming and other forms of eco-cide; stealing children from asylum-seeking parents at the southern border; stealing taxpayer dollars to build sections of a hated and criminal border wall; using his presidency to feed the profits of his business empire; defying international asylum conventions; murdering the top military commander of Iran (and numerous associates) on Iraqi soil (without so much as notifying the Iraqi government in advance); failing to respond properly to a devastating hurricane in Puerto Rico and then mocking the island's pain; quasi-genocidally fanning and fueling a deadly pandemic across the nation – a virus that is likely to kill more than a million U.S. Americans before it is done.

Yes, the neofascist pig Donald “Go Back to Your Shithole Countries” Trump should be convicted and banned from holding public office ever again for waging a criminal war on the 2020 election – a war that culminated in the bloody Attack on the Capitol. But let’s not pretend that American presidents haven’t long gone unpunished for much more extensive crimes committed against masses of people in other countries. And let’s face it: the fascist monster Trump’s assault on the 2020 election was a sloppy and failed version of something right-wing forces have effectively accomplished with far greater body count and the help of U.S. presidents in Third World countries for many years: *a coup d’etat*. Trump tried in his own sick and incoherent way to give the United States a blown-back taste of its own medicine.

I’d like to see him locked up for the rest of his life. But he’d hardly be the only ex-POTUS who deserves to be serving hard time. It is disgusting that Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama walk free after all the murder and mayhem they’ve inflicted, chiefly though not exclusively abroad. Under [the Nuremburg principles](#), consistently applied, each one of these two-term imperial chieftains would have been sent to the gallows by now.

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Paul Street’s new book is [The Hollow Resistance: Obama, Trump, and Politics of Appeasement](#).