

From the President's Desk

A demagogue's dark vision of America puts us all at risk

If it was a board game, it would be labeled “Trump-opoly,” bearing the subtitle of “How to Destroy a Democracy in 10 Easy Lessons.”

But, as the first 100 days of the second Trump presidency has taught us, the only game being played is a disastrous dismantling of our precious system of government by a would-be “king” bent on consolidating his power at the expense of our constitutionally-protected rights and freedoms. His most recent time in the Oval Office has been marked by power grabs, strong-arm tactics, and chaotic attempts to upend the Constitution’s system of checks and balances.

Ironically, the 100th day of his presidency occurred one day before the annual celebration of Law Day. Traditionally, May 1 is a national day set aside to celebrate the rule of law and to cultivate a greater understanding of the legal system, providing an opportunity for those of all ages to see how the law and the legal process protect our liberties and contribute to the freedoms that we share.

But the 2025 version of Law Day was unlike any other, principally due to a president who has displayed a blatant disregard for due process of law through massive arrests of immigrants, the cancellations of student visas, and his defiance of a Supreme Court order to free an innocent man imprisoned without cause.

History has long taught us that democracies are not destroyed in a single blow, but instead are taken apart in incremental steps, invariably by leaders who present themselves as saviors while subtly eroding the very institutions that uphold freedom and justice.

Today, we face such peril. President Donald J. Trump, through a persistent and calculated abuse of power, has demonstrated a pattern of conduct that not only undermines our governmental order but warrants the most serious constitutional remedy: impeachment.

To understand the full scope of the threat that Trump poses, one need only examine his 10-part blueprint for democratic decay, tactics he has employed throughout his two presidencies and continues to normalize in American political life. By reviewing these 10 lessons – and the legal and democratic principles they trample – we may come to the same conclusion that the fictional newscaster in the 1976 movie “Network” so memorably shouted, “I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take it anymore.”

Lesson One: Divide and Conquer

Trump built his political career on stoking division. He employed inflammatory rhetoric, promoted conspiracy theories, and encouraged violence – culminating in the January



6 insurrection that resulted in seven deaths, hundreds of injuries, and more than \$30 million in damage to the Capitol. His objective was not unity but domination. This toxic polarization sows distrust in elections, delegitimizes dissent, and invites civil unrest. Encouraging an attempted coup alone satisfies the constitutional standard of “high Crimes and Misdemeanors.” In March 2025, he signed an executive order, purporting to take personal control over federal elections by declaring that American citizens would have to produce a passport or other citizenship document to register to vote. His continued drive to undermine elections, not surprisingly, comes just in time for the 2026 midterms when voters get their first chance to weigh in on the tenor of his presidency.

Lesson Two: Stack the Courts

The Trump administration reshaped the federal judiciary with ideological appointees, many of whom had records of extreme partisanship. While it is a

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president's prerogative to nominate justices and judges, Trump's strategy was arguably more than political – it was protective. The goal: secure a judiciary that might shield him from legal accountability. The alarming idea that a president might be immune from prosecution is now circulating with disturbing frequency. Such manipulation of judicial power is antithetical to the rule of law and must be recognized for what it is: a long-term effort to place the presidency above the law.

Lesson Three: Cater to the Billionaire Class

While ordinary Americans struggled during a global pandemic and resulting economic upheaval, Trump's policies overwhelmingly favored billionaires, many of whom bankrolled his return to the Oval Office by making hefty campaign contributions. He slashed corporate taxes, deregulated critical industries, and provided sweetheart deals to donors and allies. This concentration of wealth and influence not only deepens inequality but also undermines democratic accountability. History has demonstrated that plutocracy thrives where democracy recedes.

Lesson Four: Politicize the Military

Our armed forces exist to protect the country and to preserve the Constitution, not to serve a single man's ambitions. Trump's efforts to install loyalists in top defense positions and his flirtation with using the military to suppress civil protests betray democratic norms. These actions reflect a broader authoritarian impulse to turn the state's coercive power inward – against its own people. The future of his embattled Secretary of Defense, a former weekend Fox News host with no experience leading a department as large as the Pentagon, is hanging by a thread after he shared military attack plans on his private phone with his wife,

brother, and personal lawyer. In recent days, the National Security Adviser and his deputy were chased from their posts after they came under scrutiny for using a commercial messaging app to share sensitive information about planned U.S. airstrikes in Yemen.

Lesson Five: Suppress the Press

Trump's campaign to delegitimize the press as "the enemy of the people" was no mere media strategy – it was an assault on the First Amendment. He has stripped press credentials, blocked access, and threatened journalists with legal action. His actions have sent chills across newsrooms, causing such papers as The Washington Post and The Los Angeles Times to pull back on candidate endorsements and to neuter their opinion pages. In a free society, the press serves as a check on power. Silencing that check is a textbook move from the autocrat's playbook.

Lesson Six: Undermine Big Law and the Rule of Law

The legal profession, particularly major law firms, stood as one of the last bulwarks against Trump's excesses. In response, Trump publicly disparaged judges, attacked prosecutors, and intimidated attorneys general – especially those investigating his actions. He also has issued executive orders, seeking to punish law firms that provide legal representation to clients that the president views as political opponents. These tactics aim to discredit the institutions tasked with enforcing the law, a clear abuse of presidential power.

Lesson Seven: Weaponize Federal Funding

Threatening to withhold federal funding from universities that fail to conform to a specific political ideology is not governance – it's extortion. Whether targeting DEI programs or free

speech protections, Trump has sought to coerce educational institutions into submission. This is an authoritarian strategy, one that punishes intellectual independence and chills academic freedom. He also has gutted funding for national and international health agencies, thereby hampering research efforts and vaccination programs that help keep our communities safe from the spread of infectious diseases. Trump's foreign aid cuts have laid waste to the World Food Program and various refugee relief programs administered by the United Nations, cutting off lifelines to humanitarian agencies that provide aid to millions around the world.

Lesson Eight: Defy Court Orders

A constitutional republic depends on respect for judicial decisions. Trump has regularly challenged and outright ignored court rulings that constrained his political objectives. From immigration to election law, Trump's message is distressingly clear: laws are for others, not for him. This dangerous mindset corrodes public respect for the rule of law and promotes lawlessness from the top down. He has grossly abused and weaponized the president's emergency powers doctrine through the indiscriminate use of executive orders, much like a dictator would do in issuing edicts that have the force of law. This, tragically, was Hitler's most powerful weapon in his rise to power, converting Germany from a constitutional democracy to an autocracy – and himself from Chancellor to ruthless dictator – in the breathtaking span of 15 months.

Lesson Nine: Alienate Allies, Embrace Autocrats

Trump's foreign policy has often looked more like admiration for authoritarian leaders than promotion of democratic ideals. He has attacked the NATO alliance, alienated democratic allies,

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and praised autocrats like Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un. These moves weren't just diplomatic blunders – they were moral betrayals that signaled to the world that the United States might abandon its commitment to democratic governance and human rights.

Lesson Ten: Wreak Economic Havoc

Trump's erratic tariff policies – particularly against China, Canada, Mexico, and nations in the European Union – will cost American consumers and businesses billions of dollars and has led many economists to believe that it has set the stage for the next Great Recession. The stock market, while resilient in many respects, has experienced staggering volatility in the first 100 days of the second Trump presidency. The \$6 trillion loss in market value during his trade war stands as a reminder that impulsive economic nationalism has real consequences for American families and businesses. When he launched the unprecedented round of tariffs on April 2, Trump called it "Liberation Day," which turned out to be disturbingly prophetic in the sense that it liberated people from their savings, retirement accounts, stock values, and peace of mind.

The Constitutional Remedy: Impeachment

The U.S. Constitution defines impeachable offenses as "Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors." That language encompasses not just criminal acts, but abuses of power that threaten the integrity of our government. Trump's record reveals a persistent effort to amass power at the expense of democratic norms, judicial independence, and constitutional accountability.

Through fear and intimidation of the Republicans who now control both houses of Congress, Trump has effectively paralyzed the legislative body, negating its policy and law-making powers. If we – as a nation – are going to make enemies out of our friends, and friends out of our enemies, it would be best if those changes be directed by an independent Congress that represents a diverse cross-section of thinkers and not the irrational impulses of one man.

Impeachment is not a political punishment – it is a constitutional safeguard. When a president undermines democracy itself, removal from office is not only justified; it is necessary.

In fact, it should be considered a clarion call to all members of the legal profession, who have sworn an oath not to a party or a president, but to the Constitution and the rule of law,

reaffirming the need to stand together and to speak out. The duty is clear: to defend the institutions of democracy, especially when they are under threat from within.

These 10 lessons are not a guide – they are a warning. If we fail to hold our leaders accountable, we risk normalizing authoritarian behavior and permanently damaging our republic.

In recent weeks, millions of Americans across the nation have taken to the streets to voice their displeasure with Trump's authoritative actions. They have made their anger known at townhalls, rallies, and other public gatherings, urging like-minded citizens to swing into action by any means possible – letters, e-mails, text messages, billboards, bumper stickers, T-shirts, balloons, phone calls, and columns like this one.

As Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey recently said, "All Americans who love their country must come to its aid during this time of great need. We must fight everywhere and all at once."

Otherwise, history will judge whether we stood for democracy or remained silent as it was disbanded by a leader more focused on exacting revenge than building a bright future.

Best regards,
Jack Buchanan, President