

Twitter Thread by David Rothkopf



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For those who say that what has happened in the last week will permanently damage America's standing in the world, a short list of reasons why, bad as it was, it won't even make the top 30 things that have really harmed our standing.

1. A coup against our government led by our president
2. Support for the coup from the entire Republican Party
3. A major political party (see above) dedicated to dismantling democracy in the United States
4. A president impeached for encouraging the coup

5. A president impeached for trying to blackmail a US ally
6. A president who bullied & insulted our allies for 4 years
7. A president and party who have actively promoted racism and ethno-nationalism
8. A president & party who sought to shut our borders to people of color

9. Re: the preceding, a president & party who sought to block the entry of Afghan (& Iraqi) allies into the country
10. A president who helped deepen the global COVID crisis through selfishness, ignorance and corruption
11. US having the highest COVID death total in the world

12. A president cozying up to dictators worldwide
13. A president corruptly profiting from the presidency
14. A president who was a serial sex offender
15. A president who is a serial tax cheat

16. A president who serially obstructed justice
17. A president who was, at least, the pawn of a foreign enemy who he catered to at the expense of US national security and that of our allies
18. A president surrounded by a long list of corrupt, indicted, convicted cronies

19. A president who unilaterally and without cause pulled the US out of the Iran nuclear deal
20. A president who unilaterally and without cause pulled the US out of the Paris Climate Accords
21. A president who pulled the US out of key UN organizations

- 22. A president who turned his back on our Kurdish allies
- 23. A president who helped defend the murderers of a US journalist and pardoned war criminals (and whole host of other corrupt cronies including those who helped serve foreign enemies)
- 24. Another president who sat by inertly in the face of the abuses of the Syrian gov't
- 25. 2 presidents in a row who failed to close Guantanamo
- 26. 2 presidents in a row who have embraced the violation of the sovereignty of foreign nations via drone & other attacks
- 27. A president who violated int'l law via rendition programs and the opening of the prison in Guantanamo
- 28. A president who illegally invaded Iraq without justification causing the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocents
- 29. A president who embraced unilateralism
- 30. A president who invaded Afghanistan with the purpose of responding to Al Qaeda's 9/11 attack and then without justification or hope of success expanded the mission to nation building thus triggering a fruitless, costly 20 year conflict.

What happened in the past week was bad. We should seek to aid and give refuge to Afghan allies. We should use all the tools at our disposal to help ensure respect for human rights in Afghanistan. But getting out of that country & ending that war was actually the right thing to do.

We did it badly. We must learn from the error. But to suggest that the damage done to our international standing or our relationship with our allies is more grave than any of the other things listed above is preposterous.

To suggest that damage done will set us back more than did dropping a nuclear weapon on Japan, the fiasco in Vietnam, the assaults on the values we preach like Watergate or Iran-Contra, the support of the use of WMDs by the Iraqis against the Iranians...

...wars we have undertaken to serve major multinational corporate interests, conflicts we have failed to enter despite the fact that only we could lead the protection of peoples at risk and worse, the visible and continuing dysfunction of our government,...

...our mercurial views toward the international community, our failure to lead on major global issues like protecting the environment, our failure to invest in ourselves and maintaining our competitive edge against new rivals...

...to suggest this week's errors even approach those things (as some heavy-breathing critics have) just does not survive even the most cursory analysis. We mismanaged an event in pursuit of doing the right thing.

That is much better by any measure than doing the wrong thing efficiently (for which many of the current chorus of critics have sought praise in the past--see surges and other initiatives in Iraq and Afghanistan, etc.) What is more, the admin responded quickly.

Nearly 20,000 people have been evacuated, almost 15,000 in the past week alone. Errors were identified, acknowledged and have been fixed or are in the process of being addressed. That too is positive and sends a positive message to allies and the world.

For Trumpists to argue we have undermined our standing with allies given their leader's record is beyond ludicrous. For anyone to suggest this week's missteps were on a par with those of recent administrations is also absurd.

These facts won't stop the critics. Acknowledging errors but putting them in perspective won't suit their political agendas or biases. But facts are facts, history is history & anyone with a memory should understand where this past week fits in the story of recent US actions.