Twitter Thread by Ezra Klein

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What we're seeing from Trump and his allies today is an autocratic attempt. It's not a competent one, and it probably won't be an effective one. But that's what it is. And far worse would follow if it succeeded.

> STOP THE COUNT!
>
> — Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) November 5, 2020

As @mashagessen explained in this interview, using Balint Magyar's framework, an autocratic attempt is "the first stage when autocracy is still reversible by electoral means." https://t.co/h6R6HvOHPu

The point is to make the regime's rule irreversible by electoral means, which is explicitly what Trump, et al, are trying right now.

"Then, at some point, there comes the autocratic breakthrough when you can no longer use electoral means to reverse that autocracy."

"Then autocratic consolidation, where it’s just consolidating ever more power and money, making it ever less possible to change."

There is an element of farce to Trump's tweets, his actions, his cronies. It makes it easy for many to discount what he's actually saying, and trying. https://t.co/GwC3KGbpkC

It's fitting for the internet era, when the worst ideas and figures come layered in irony.

> pic.twitter.com/CGVbqtLsis
>
> — Brian Beutler (@brianbeutler) November 5, 2020

But what we're seeing is the sitting President of the United States using the power of his office, his megaphone, and his supporters, to try to stop the votes against him from being counted. Not a drill, a joke, a hypothetical. It's happening.

It's good most elected Republicans, and much of Fox News, aren't going along. But we're not hearing a loud chorus of condemnation of Trump's behavior, either. There's still more cowardice than courage on the right. Passivity can easily become complicity.

Even engaging in this discourse feels like a trap. To take Trump's absurdities seriously is to give them power. To dismiss them as farce or cosplay is to deny the dangerous reality right before our eyes.

There are no good answers when the worst people hold power.

This is something @chrislhayes and I talked about, but one of the scariest parts of this election is that this would-be autocrat, who would absolutely burn the country's political institutions to the ground for his own satisfaction, almost got reelected. https://t.co/lib36cHX5s

I keep saying this, but the lesson of the Trump era is it absolutely can happen here. Maybe it won't, this time. But it can.