

Can This Be Happening in America?



Former FBI Director, James Comey (Photo by Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

by Conrad Black

We have familiar experience of the phenomenon of what are clearly intolerable circumstances being tolerated if they worsened only gradually. Everyone has looked back on a grueling experience and thought that it could not have been endured had the individual known how unpleasant it would become. No matter how familiar anyone may be with the horrors of the Nazi regime, it remains to us inconceivable that the culture of Beethoven and Goethe could have committed such crimes.

The United States has now reached the point where the sequence of outrageous and unconstitutional measures that have occurred in the last six years would have been inconceivable six years ago.

It's unimaginable that anyone who has ever been nominated for president by a serious American political party could be an intelligence asset for a foreign power. We now know that there has never been one scintilla of evidence remotely hinting that Donald Trump was guilty of any such offense, or that he had any inappropriate relations or even a particular regard for the government of Russia. Yet for over two years it was endlessly bandied about that Trump had been "groomed" by Russian agents like the Manchurian Candidate to debase the presidency of the United States into boot-licking subordination to the national interest of Russia. The former directors of the National and Central Intelligence Agencies, James Clapper and John Brennan, solemnly told national audiences that Trump was a Russian intelligence agent and was guilty of treason in favor of the Russians.

Both these senior officials on occasion allegedly lied to Congress but were never prosecuted. Former FBI Director James Comey, who improperly removed government property from his office, improperly leaked confidential information to the media, improperly presumed to decide that Hillary Clinton should not be prosecuted for destroying 33,000 emails that were under subpoena from Congress, signed a false affidavit in support of a FISA warrant to conduct illegal telephone intercepts on the Trump campaign, and supported the pretense that the infamous Steele dossier, which he knew to be a pastiche of lies and defamations, was authentic intelligence, indicating the guilt of Trump of unlawful collusion with the Russian government. The ranking Democrat on the House intelligence committee, Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), and other Democrats repeated *ad nauseam* that they had conclusive evidence of Trump's guilt. They lied. The inspector general of the Justice Department recorded 17 separate instances of improper official behavior. There has been no prosecution of any of this.

In all of pre-Trump U.S. history, there had been two

impeachment trials of presidents: Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1998. Neither of them should have occurred and both failed, but in the last four years Trump was impeached twice, once for a telephone conversation with the president of Ukraine in which he asked if the Biden family and particularly the current president's son Hunter Biden had committed illegalities in Ukraine. He did not direct the verdict; he did not ask for any incrimination of the Bidens. This was a completely inadequate pretext for impeaching a president and yet he was impeached, and on one count 49 senators including a former Republican presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, did vote Trump guilty, though he was, of course, acquitted. And at the end of his term, he was impeached again for having allegedly fomented an insurrection even though the FBI director had already testified that there was no evidence that Trump or his campaign organization or his administration were connected in any way to the trespass and the vandalism that occurred at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and Trump requested and offered extra security, but this was declined by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Washington mayor Muriel Bowser.

The various comprehensive accumulations of evidence about the behavior of Hunter Biden incite the strong inference that he has committed a number of illegalities and that the president repeatedly lied to the public about his own connections to his son's activities. There is no evidence that U.S. official conduct was altered in respect of Ukraine, China, or other countries, in consideration for bribes paid to the Biden family. But there seems to be no doubt the current president and his family were engaged in improper activity that not only allegedly involves substantial lawbreaking by family members but also seems to have been [suppressed](#) rather than investigated by the FBI. The allegation that the FBI seems to have suggested to Facebook that the allegations against Hunter Biden were likely Russian disinformation and requested that they not publicize them would have been unthinkable six years ago. But it seems to have been assimilated by the American

political community as a perfectly normal and acceptable occurrence.

It seems clear that in the 2020 presidential election, where Trump could have prevailed in the Electoral College if 50,000 votes had flipped in Pennsylvania and any two of Arizona, Georgia, and Wisconsin, that millions of ballots potentially passed through hands that could not be identified. All of this occurred in swing states where rules were changed ostensibly to facilitate voting during the pandemic. But in the case of a number of states, contrary to the Constitution, these changes were determined not by the state legislatures but by executive branches or state judiciaries. In every one of the 19 lawsuits launched to attack these questionable changes to voting and vote counting rules, the judiciary, including in the case of the Texas attorney general's action against the swing states and supported by 18 other state attorneys general, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear any of these cases on their merits; they were disallowed for technical reasons, some of those quite spurious.

Now we have had, on the complaint of federal archivists, the intrusion and occupation for nine hours of the former president's home on a warrant alleging just cause to believe that crimes have been committed involving the improper removal and retention of classified information. Trump had been collaborating with the archivists, possessed the power to act as he pleased with classified material when he was president, and this isn't a classified material case anyway. He didn't pack any of this himself as he left the White House, has not mislaid or misused any of this material, and 19 months have gone by since he left office. It's a document-handling case. There's no conceivable justification for such a sensational invasion in the absence of any plausible claim of significant wrongdoing—except that it's a political tainting job against the former president, and the Presidential Records Act isn't a criminal statute. This is just the Democrats transmuting a

grumpy librarian's complaint into the insinuation that the former president committed unimaginable crimes.

A disastrous and shaming flight from Afghanistan is described by President Joe Biden as "a triumphant success." Dr. Anthony Fauci retires with dignity after doing terrible damage to the country with his nonsense about shutting schools, "droplets," the ups and downs of masking, the "abolition of handshakes"—almost all of it now thoroughly discredited.

Six years ago, no one could have imagined that these outrages would have occurred, much less that they would be accepted by a bedraggled, degraded, demoralized America, its federal government in the hands of lawless and authoritarian myth-makers, applauded by the complicit national political media. Can this be America?

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