

My Call for Trump's Impeachment

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I think it's critically important to fully understand how offensive and damaging Trump's "shithole" [comment](#) was and how it further clinches the case for his impeachment.

I know that I'm going to get a lot of blowback for distributing this broadly and plenty of folks are going to think I'm overreacting, but I disagree. I think too many are *underreacting* and that there comes a time when people of conscience need to stand up and be counted. History is replete with examples of disasters when good people fail to act.

This is personal to me: I spent most of my childhood in the "shitholes" of Tanzania and Nicaragua; my sister has lived in the "shitholes" of Sudan, Mozambique and Zambia, and currently lives in Kenya; my parents have lived in the "shitholes" of the Philippines (where they were married in 1962 and served in the Peace Corps) and Ethiopia, and are now happily retired in Kenya; and I have many, many friends from "shithole" countries.

In the interests of time (and because I'm so upset by it), I'm going to focus on Trump's "shithole" comment and not rehash here all of the other elements of the case for his impeachment: the incessant lying, bullying, misogyny, narcissism, delusion, laziness, incompetence, ignorance and cruelty; his out-of-control tweeting (especially about starting a nuclear war); the conflicts of interest and self-enrichment; his attacks on the institutions that are the foundation of our democracy (an independent judiciary, free press, etc.); the way he's offended and alienated our allies, while empowering and emboldening our adversaries (especially China and Russia), etc., etc., etc. No wonder those closest to him (all Republicans) have [labeled](#) him a "moron", "dumb as shit", an "idiot", a "dope" and "a child".

Let me also be clear that I am not calling for his impeachment because I disagree with most of his policy agenda (if anything, on that front, from my perspective, Pence would be even worse). Nor do I quarrel with the view that we need to control immigration, weed out "bad hombres", and should generally favor letting in immigrants who are most likely to make the greatest contributions to our society.

I would welcome rational and logical counterarguments. This is too important a topic to not have an open and rational dialogue on both sides of the aisle.

What Trump said on Thursday, calling African countries "shitholes" (or "shithouses" – it doesn't matter), clinches the case for his impeachment, especially in light of his lack of contrition (he [reportedly](#) took a victory lap immediately afterward) and lifelong racism (see [Donald Trump's Racism: The Definitive List](#) and [Time to Say It: Trump Is a Racist](#); excerpt below). As a friend so eloquently said to me yesterday about Trump's comment: "As a human being I am saddened, as an American I am embarrassed, and as a Republican I wonder how much more can the GOP take."

Trump certainly delighted Nazis and white supremacists – here’s what David Duke [tweeted](#) yesterday:

Just as the most ardent Trump supporters were about to give up on him in despair -- he restores a lot of love in us by saying blunt but truthful things that no other President in our lifetime would dare say! NO DACA! NO COMPROMISE - NO Sh**thole America! Hail Trump!

In [addition](#):

Richard Spencer, the white nationalist leader, said on Friday that conservatives defending Mr. Trump on Fox News should stop saying it was about economics and legal systems, rather than race. “It’s obviously all about race, and to their credit, liberals point out the obvious,” he said.

The Daily Stormer, a neo-Nazi website, likewise welcomed Mr. Trump’s comments. “This is encouraging and refreshing, as it indicates Trump is more or less on the same page as us with regards to race and immigration,” the site said.

When Trump called African countries “shitholes” (and contrasted them with Norway), he was not, as some are claiming, simply pointing out the truth that these are poor areas, often with inadequate infrastructure and sanitation, and that immigrants from them might have a hard time adjusting to life in the United States. I think this argument is naïve/disingenuous in the extreme when one considers the totality of Trump’s words and deeds, not just as a candidate and as President, but over his entire life.

No, what I think Trump was saying – and what I am certain the vast majority of poor and/or non-white people on earth heard – is that they are inherently inferior and live in “[huts](#)” and “all have AIDS” because they are stupid, lazy and violent and, in general, lack character and initiative. (If you don’t think Trump, in his heart of hearts, truly believes these things, please call me, as I have a bridge in Brooklyn to sell you.) It would be hard to think of views that are more offensive and racist. (Plus he’s totally wrong on the facts, as usual: Republican pollster Frank Luntz [tweeted](#): “43% of immigrants from ‘shithole’ African countries have a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 33% of the overall American population. Nigerian-Americans, for instance, have a median household income well above the American average.”)

But it’s worse than this because it’s also clear that his view on shitholes isn’t limited to Africa. For example, what does he think of the descendants of people from those “shitholes” who are the majority of the population in places like the Bronx, Brooklyn, Chicago and Puerto Rico? What must our fellow citizens from those communities be thinking right now? (We don’t have to guess – just turn on the news or open your browser and listen to their anger and hurt.)

But the even greater damage Trump has inflicted on all of us with his noxious comment is that now every person and country in the world that isn’t lily white is wondering what he thinks of them. Is all of South America, with its mixed-race population, a shithole? What about India? China? Vietnam? Egypt? Turkey? Bulgaria? Greece? Portugal?

The reason Trump must be impeached is that he just effectively *declared war* against 37% of the American people and more than 80% of the world’s people who aren’t white (if you think this is too strong of a statement, read these articles for a sense of the reaction to Trump’s comment:

[From Norway to Haiti, Trump's Comments Stir Fresh Outrage, 'Don't Feed the Troll': Much of the World Reacts in Anger at Trump's Insult, and 'Here is what my #shithole looks like:' African countries and Haiti react to Trump's remark\).](#)

From this day forward, every day that this man remains our leader is a day that pretty much every non-white person on earth (and every sensible white person as well) will rightly wonder what is the matter with us, thinking: “OK, we sort of understand why a minority of you might have voted for him – you weren’t happy with the status quo, wanted to shake things up, and didn’t like Hillary. But now you’ve seen for nearly a year how this self-declared “like, really smart...very stable genius” is tearing America apart internally and tearing it down externally, demonstrating repeatedly that he’s completely unfit for office. And now this?! What are you waiting for? Throw him out!”

Every day Trump increases his stain on this great nation, diminishes the critically important “soft power” we have in the world that has taken decades, even centuries, to build, and tears at the fabric of who we are as Americans, how we view ourselves, and how the world perceives us: a shining city on a hill, a melting pot, a place of refuge and opportunity, a nation built by immigrants (like Trump’s grandfather), governed by a Constitution that protects *every* citizen, regardless of their wealth, religion or color of their skin. Is there any right-minded American who doesn’t believe in these ideals?

Roughly 40% of Americans share my view that Trump should be impeached. At the other end of the spectrum, maybe 25% are his die-hard fans who will support him no matter what. So my appeal is to the roughly one-third of Americans in between: I understand why you voted for him and why, despite the increasing reservations you’re probably having about him, you may like many of the things he’s done since taking office.

But what he said on Thursday is the antithesis of who we are. And it wasn’t a mistake – it reflected the rotten core of who he is and what he stands for.

So stop dithering (“Well, the economy and stock market are strong, he’s doing some good things, he’s just a straight talker, or didn’t mean it, or will change...”).

Stop engaging in false equivalencies (“Pence would be just as bad” or “The Democrats would be worse”).

Stop being prudent (“I agree with you, Whitney, but don’t want to speak out and risk angering my clients/colleagues/friends/family”).

All of us need to get very loud in calling for his ouster.

But let’s be realistic: I don’t think he will ever resign, nor is there anything that would cause a Republican-controlled Congress to impeach him. Therefore, the only route to his removal is for Democrats to take control of both the Senate and the House in less than 10 months – that’s where we need to focus our efforts.

Thanks for reading this.

Appendix

For additional reading, see:

1) A summary of Trump's lifetime of racism (from [Time to Say It: Trump Is a Racist](#)):

...the definition of a racist — the textbook definition, [as Paul Ryan might say](#) — is someone who treats some people better than others because of their race. Trump fits that definition many times over:

- Trump's real-estate company was sued twice by the federal government in the 1970s for discouraging the renting of apartments to African-Americans and [preferring white tenants, such as "Jews and executives."](#)
- In 1989, Trump took out ads in New York newspapers urging the death penalty for five black and Latino teenagers accused of raping a white woman in Central Park; he [continued to argue that they were guilty](#) as late as October 2016, more than 10 years after DNA evidence had exonerated them.
- He spent years claiming that the nation's first black president was born not in the United States but in Africa, an outright lie that Trump still has not acknowledged as such.
- He began his 2016 presidential campaign by [disparaging Mexican immigrants as criminals and "rapists."](#)
- He has [retweeted white nationalists](#) without apology.
- He [frequently criticizes](#) prominent African-Americans for being unpatriotic, ungrateful and disrespectful.
- He called some of those who marched alongside white supremacists in Charlottesville last August "very fine people."
- He is quick to highlight crimes committed by dark-skinned people, sometimes [exaggerating or lying](#) about it ([such as](#) a claim about growing crime from "radical Islamic terror" in Britain). He is very slow to decry hate crimes committed against dark-skinned people ([such as](#) the murder of an Indian man in Kansas last year).

2) Nick Kristof with a beautiful, powerful, scathing op ed. [Mr. Trump, Meet a Hero Whom You Maligned](#). Excerpt:

Who better embodies our nation's values? A politician with a history of racist comments who took five deferments to escape military duty in the Vietnam War, including one for heel spurs? Or a heroic Ghanaian immigrant and soldier who dies in a fire while rescuing others?

Most of us recognize that immigration is complex and that we cannot throw open our borders, but also that newcomers enrich us. That is true not only of Norwegians but also of penniless refugees

from impoverished, war-torn countries, such as my father — a Polish-Armenian fleeing Eastern Europe, whose first purchase in the U.S. was a Sunday New York Times to teach himself English.

Trump once showed a willingness to be big-hearted to immigrants who break the rules: He married Melania, a Slovenian who came to the U.S. on a visitor visa and then earned money as a model before she was authorized to work, according to an investigation by The Associated Press.

If only Trump could show a similar compassion to unauthorized immigrants who don't look like Melania. In particular, his decision to send Salvadorans back, in the face of murderous gang violence in that country, and his rejection of a bipartisan deal to protect DACA "Dreamers," simply seem cruel.

3) A friend read an early version of this essay and replied:

In response to My Call for Trump's Impeachment (posted at: www.tilsonfunds.com/Trumpimpeachment.pdf), a friend, a lifelong Republican from Oklahoma, just emailed me this:

I read your rant with a heavy heart. How could this have happened? How could we as a country elect a man who has brought nothing but shame and embarrassment to our country, to the Republican party and to me. I'm a Republican, but in no way can I support this man. He has no moral compass. He lacks character, judgment, values and compassion.

You're right. He needs to be stopped. The Dems do need to take the House and Senate in 2018. Impeachment must start in the House. I would urge my representatives and senators to vote for it although I doubt they would. Too many Trump supporters in this part of the world.

4) Anther friend replied:

Thank you for this email. What you said needs to be said.

I must say that this topic is close to my heart.

My father, now 81 years old, is from Cuba. At the beginning of the Revolution, as a twenty-something, he escaped the island, leaving his two siblings and his parents behind. He ended up in Puerto Rico with a few dollars in his pocket. He never finished college, so I guess that makes him a "poor, uneducated immigrant from a shithole country"? Well, that poor, uneducated immigrant from a shithole country is my hero.

With his grit, common sense, and hard work, my dad managed to build a successful retail business from scratch that lasted more than 25 years. His determination and dedication, along with his unconditional love, helped send me to a private school and to college, where I earned two master's degrees, including an MBA from an Ivy-League school.

My wife's story is no different. My father-in-law spent time in a labor camp in Cuba, due to the fact that he was not a Communist. When my wife was 17 years old they came to the U.S. as refugees. They had no money and spoke no English. To make ends meet and support his family, my father-in-law had a number of odd jobs, including cleaning bathrooms and driving a truck. My father-in-law, another poor, uneducated immigrant from a shithole country managed to put his daughter—my wife—through college.

When my wife came to the U.S. as a teenager she spoke no English, and she suddenly found herself in a new country, with a different culture, and with no friends. But she was happy to be in this country, not because things would be given to her, but because in the U.S., unlike in Cuba, she could accomplish something if she worked hard.

My wife sometimes tells me stories of her growing up in Cuba. Her stories always put things into perspective for me. When she was going to high school, it was mandatory for all students to work the fields for a number of hours each day. Could you imagine your 16-year old daughter gathering potatoes for hours on end in the scorching Caribbean heat?

My wife is now a dentist and she owns her own practice, employing a dozen people. She is the most determined, hard-working, and tenacious person I've ever met. And that tenacity comes together with a compassionate, humble, loving, and caring nature that is a product of her upbringing. My wife, another immigrant from a shithole country, is also my hero.

We have a 17-month-old daughter and a baby on the way. Every day is a constant worry for me of what the future of this country will bring for them. When I'm feeling down, like today, I remind myself of the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." And that gives me hope.

Sorry for the long rant. I read your email and I saw an opportunity to get this off my chest.

Be well, my friend.