

Capitol (United States): 'Post-Trump Systemic Disorder' we will continue to live in

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Hundreds of millions of viewers yesterday watched the live coverage of Air Force One, which took Donald Trump on his last flight as US president from the Joint Base Andrews military facility in Maryland to his massive Mar-a-Lago estate, his post-presidential permanent home in Florida. With the Frank Sinatra song 'My Way' in the background, news commentators declared the "end of an era" and a foreseeable back-to-normal politics. Trump, in his last speech, however, defiantly said to the handful of loyalists on the military airport tarmac and to the world watching that he ["will be back in some form"](#).

True to form, Trump proved he is not a normal president. He is [the first president for more than 150 years](#) of US history who defiantly ignored the customary practice of passing the torch to the incoming president personally by attending the swearing in. It is of course not surprising as he actually attempted to prevent the peaceful and respectful succession by leading an insurrection on 6 January as both the House and Senate were in session to certify Joe Biden's victory in November's presidential election. That violent storming of the US Capitol ended in five deaths and a deeply tarnished image of the US to the world. Arguably, it did nearly succeed in preventing a peaceful transition.

Apart from the most bizarre scenes of an empty Washington DC and the watchful presence of 25,000 national guards at the inauguration of the 46th president of the most powerful democracy on the planet, the world will not quickly go back to normal. A peaceful transition that relies on the military in such an overt way is certainly fragile at best. Like in most wars, the wars of the last four tumultuous Trump years, albeit none of which were military, there will be widespread Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). However, it will be a PTSD of a special-type: Post-Trump Systemic Disorder.

Post-Trump Systemic Disorder

In 2017, we published a briefing entitled [The Dangers of Trump](#) where we enumerated the policies that will cause huge political disruptions and impacts that will be felt well beyond the US borders. Trump may have departed the White House, however it will take a while before Trumpism will go away and the healing of the global political economy will take place.

1. Trump's politics took us sharply backwards on a range of global justice issues

Trump ended his presidency with the USA having the most horrendous figures on the runaway Covid-19 virus. On his last day, the total number of American lives that Covid-19 ended was 411,657 (and still rising). The grim figure is higher than [the lives claimed by all wars and terrorist attacks on US shores](#). Globally, dying from Covid-19 is far from over, in part because of criminal incompetence by governments. Led by the US, rich countries like the UK and elsewhere in Europe opted for a policy of vaccine nationalism rather than a policy for the creation of a ['people's vaccine'](#).

Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement emboldened trans-national corporations (TNCs) in

the extractives and other polluting industries to avoid the move towards a Just Transition from fossil fuels to low carbon energy sources. Despite overwhelming evidence and lived experiences of people that the dangers of climate catastrophe are no longer in the future but in the present, the climate denialism Trump unleashed, which echoed globally, accelerated environmental decline and rate of species extinction as laid out by the [2019 UN Report on Sustainable Development](#).

2. We still need to roll back hate speech

Trump's 'stand back and stand by' racist rhetoric has marked his entire presidency. Racism, bigotry, and the creation of alternative truths are now the norm in many right-wing government circles like that of Modi in India, Duterte in the Philippines, Erdogan in Turkey and elsewhere.

3. Far-right populism and the destruction of social contract

Trump may have gone, but Trumpism is still very much around. Trump said in his speech too that his departure from the White House is not the end, but rather a beginning. Some US analysts think that the far-right mob was Trump's recruitment test. The next election is not far away. Because of that the Democrats should deliver fast, otherwise Trumpism or even a more sophisticated version of it may sweep the Oval Office again. It is still to be seen if the US will even make it to the next election without major system-threatening explosions before-hand. This cannot be simply taken for granted.

Trump's kindred spirits in office in Brazil, Hungary, India, the Philippines, Slovenia and elsewhere might be feeling uncomfortable now. But unless the progressives in their countries are successful in their ongoing mobilising and organising efforts to topple these governments, far right populism will continue to mark global politics.

Although not entirely a product of Trumpism, governments' overdrive in attracting investments by modifying and loosening of environmental laws, exemption of big businesses from taxation and legislation, has thrown the social contract out of governance windows. Giving up public functions and turning over responsibilities to TNCs has reached a higher level. This has led not just to privatisation and commodification of many aspects of society but also to social conditions with very limited avenues existing for social transformation geared towards economic, social and environmental justice.

The US, spends almost [\\$1 trillion](#) (including the intelligence budget) on its war machine. On the other hand, it spends a fraction of this on public goods like healthcare and education, which shows the unacceptable level of social inequality at this time of the global pandemic.

Is Trump or Trumpism a political aberration?

Trump's loss of power is a blow to the far-right movement. However, the progressives in the US should not miss the direction in which the Republican Party is going. Trump was voted for, despite his incompetence and crimes, by over 74 million Americans. That was an additional 10.1 million votes than in the 2016 election. The 'project for now' for the world's progressives, however, is to stop a more capable proto-authoritarian president, who would be more dangerous, from winning office again.

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P.S.

- Global Justice Now. 21 January 2021:

<https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/blog/2021/jan/21/post-trump-systemic-disorder-we-will-continue-live>