

My fear is that fear will prevail

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As [Politico reports in the USA](#) this morning:

Donald Trump has not been exonerated for his “unprecedented criminal effort” to subvert the 2020 election and cling to power after he lost to Joe Biden.

That’s the message special counsel Jack Smith delivered [in his final report](#), which laid out evidence Smith said would have resulted in Trump’s conviction at trial. Trump is only off the hook, the special counsel wrote, because he won back the White House in 2024, forcing the Justice Department to shut down the historic prosecution.

Do I believe this - because I know the US Republicans will not? Yes, I do.

Do I believe Trump should still be prosecuted? Yes, I do. There will be the chance in four years' time unless Trump excuses himself - which would be unprecedented.

And do I think the world should take note? Of course, I do. This man is not just a felon (as he can rightly be described); he can also be fairly considered to be the person behind a coup attempt in the USA, the consequences of which he only avoided by getting re-elected as President using the funds of far-right oligarchs who have the intention of completing the job of destroying democracy, which he very clearly began.

Anyone dealing with him has to know that.

Relationships of trust, such as they might be, have to take this fact into account.

And when, considering the role of the USA as a defender of the Western world and its democracies (as it has liked to style itself), the fact that the man now in charge of its forces does not actually believe in democracy has to be acknowledged.

Many of us have long had our doubts about the claims made by US politicians on a great many issues, considering the place to be so dysfunctional when viewed from afar that anything they said was very obviously in conflict with the reality of the lives lived by so many Americans. And yet, deep down, I also thought they believed the stories

they told themselves, however unlikely their actions made that seem. Now, I cannot do that. Trump is, in this sense, honest: he does not pretend to be governing for the sake of anyone but himself, which is precisely what he will do.

The real question is, however, the 'so what?' one. What difference does knowing all this really make because it is Trump who is now in office? American justice has failed. The constitution has failed to protect the country from one of the biggest threats it has ever faced. A man wholly unfit to lead the country is in charge. There is nothing anyone there, or as relevant, outside the US can do about it.

And yet there is. We could have leaders who make it clear that they know what Trump is.

We could have politicians who could deliver the Hugh Grant speech from 'Love Actually'.

We could have combined action to challenge the worst of what he will do, from a trade war to deportation, to the persecution of minorities and more.

We could say that this is not the way the world should be.

We could have politicians who say that, but will we when so many are already queuing up to imitate Trump's actions, as Farage and Badenoch are certainly trying to do here in the UK, with Starmer and Lammy already looking hopelessly discombobulated by everything about his election?

My fear is that fear will prevail, that right will not be done, words will not be said, and that harm will happen in plain sight and go uncommented on by those with the power to speak but who will choose not to do so. I would like to be wrong. Let's see what happens.