

Is Trump Worse Than Nixon? (by Bill Woods for StreetVibes)

"Is Trump worse than Nixon?" Seeing this headline in a recent news magazine made me think about Trump's place in U.S. history and how he stacks up with the forty-four Presidents who preceded him. For instance, how does Trump compare to Andrew Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Bill Clinton, three Presidents who were impeached or resigned to avoid impeachment.

As someone who once taught American history, I felt knowledgeable enough to take on this subject. Nevertheless, I soon found the task rather pointless. Although this country has survived its share of Presidents who were mediocre, incompetent, or not quite up to the job, the nation has never experienced the damage to the Office or to public life in general that four years of Donald Trump in the White House have produced. Quite simply, all Presidents prior to Trump upheld the Constitution and the system of representative democracy, and they accepted the results of Presidential elections even if they brought them defeat.



Comparing Trump to Nixon, Andrew Johnson, and Bill Clinton seems like juxtaposing a serial killer with three people with parking violations. After all, Clinton's impeachment was based on lying to a Grand Jury about having a sexual relationship with a West Wing employee. Vice President Andrew Johnson was impeached when he became President after Lincoln's assassination, because he opposed the Reconstruction legislation proposed by the Republican majority in Congress at the conclusion of the Civil War. Nixon's crime was his denial of any knowledge about the Watergate break-in and its cover-up that were finally revealed by tapes of the President's conversations. None of these actions come close to Trump's trampling on our longstanding system of government and the Constitution itself, and his many nefarious efforts to reject legitimate election results in order to stay in power.

Thus, the initial question ("Is Trump worse than Nixon?") should be answered with a resounding "yes!" Should there be consequences in order to protect representative democracy from more efforts to undermine or overthrow it? "Yes" would again seem to be the obvious answer.

One major consequence, the second impeachment of Donald Trump, was recently approved by the House of Representatives, and his trial in the Senate is scheduled to begin on February 8th. The disturbing factor, however, is the reluctance of many Republican Senators to even consider the evidence in the forthcoming trial. Loyalty to Trump, even after his two month effort to overturn the election, bodes badly for the democratic process.

If the elected representatives of one of the two major political parties cannot put the preservation of representative democracy and the Constitution ahead of partisan politics, then

this country is in a dangerous place. After all, these reluctant Republican Senators experienced the assault on the Capitol incited by the President on January 6th. If they can now characterize this event as an example of free speech that somehow got out of hand, then they are in a sense saying that an attempted coup is ok if it keeps their party in power.

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Congresswoman Liz Cheney and nine other Republicans in the House did vote for impeachment, and there will be a handful of Republican Senators who will vote to convict the former President. We can only hope for the good of this country and for the soul of the GOP that more Republican Senators will end up in this camp. Since Senator Rob Portman of Cincinnati has announced he will not seek reelection in 2022, he may be open to casting a vote for Trump's conviction. Contact him at - 312 Walnut Street, room 3425, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202, and (513) 684-3265.