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Notes from editor (not for publication):

Here it is, finally. This is really terrific! Just minor changes for grammar and style. I'd love to run it in next week's paper. Please let me know if you have any concerns with the edits. —All the best, Jeff

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

#####BEGIN HED#####

1 Imperialism 2.0

#####END HED#####

#####BEGIN SUBHED#####

2 It's crystal clear that Trump's legacy will not be as a
3 peacemaker, but as a warmonger and imperialist

#####END SUBHED#####

4 TEXT BODY:

#####BEGIN TEXT#####

5 REMEMBER when candidate Trump constantly promised an
6 "America First" policy in which the U.S. would pull back from
7 virtually all foreign entanglements, reduce foreign military
8 involvement, and prioritize domestic needs?

9 He said we would "[never send our finest into battle](#)
10 [unless necessary](#)" nor "[go abroad in search of enemies](#)." Rather,

11 he would always prioritize American interests and end “the
12 policy of intervention and chaos.”

13 “We will stop racing to topple foreign regimes that we
14 know nothing about, that we shouldn’t be involved with,” he
15 swore as president-elect in 2016.

16 After winning re-election, he said: “I’m not going to start
17 a war, I’m going to stop wars.” And in his inaugural address, he
18 vowed: “We will measure our success not only by the battles we
19 win but also by the wars that we end — and perhaps most
20 importantly, the wars we never get into” and said his proudest
21 legacy would be that of a “peacemaker and a unifier.”

22 Just a year later, it’s crystal clear what that legacy is going
23 to be: warmonger and imperialist. Promises made, promises
24 obliterated, like the 35 Venezuelan boats destroyed and the 115
25 civilians killed without due process at the behest of this wannabe
26 Nobel Peace Prize recipient.

27 In addition to those atrocities, Trump initiated hundreds
28 of other deadly bomb strikes on various countries, including a
29 port in Venezuela; on groups in Nigeria he claimed to be
30 committing “Christian genocide”; on nuclear facilities in Iran in
31 support of Israel’s war in Gaza; and on groups in Somalia, Syria,
32 Yemen, and Iraq who he claimed to be affiliated with ISIS.

33 * * *

34 AND, WHILE NOT involving direct U.S. military action,
35 Trump’s unconditional support of Israel’s brutal (many say
36 genocidal) response during the Gaza war — when strong
37 disapproval of its actions, such as by imposing strong sanctions,
38 might well have stopped or at least reduced its attacks — likely
39 contributed to the over 71,000 deaths and 170,000 injuries that
40 resulted.

41 And now, to top off this unsavory list of obviously non-
42 peaceful accomplishments, Trump has outdone himself (and
43 every other president in American history) by committing the
44 unmistakably warlike act of invading Venezuela’s sovereign
45 territory, bombing its capital and other sites.

46 In the action, the U.S. killed 40 people, including
47 civilians, and abducted Venezuela's elected president and his
48 wife to be tried on (literally) trumped-up drug- and weapons-
49 related conspiracy charges, and Trump declared that he will "run
50 the country" and that the U.S. will seize Venezuela's massive oil
51 reserves.

52 * * *

53 ARE THESE the acts befitting a self-styled "peacemaker"?
54 They're more like those of a would-be tinpot despot harkening
55 back to our country's most shameful imperialistic episodes,
56 including those involving both direct military interventions (e.g.,
57 Iraq, Panama, Grenada, Vietnam) and covert operations (e.g.,
58 Iran, Guatemala, Congo, Cuba, Indonesia, Chile, Nicaragua, and
59 many more).

60 But Trump's actions are really most like the Nazi
61 stormtroopers in the 1930s who marched into Czechoslovakia,
62 Poland, and eventually most of Europe, removed the elected
63 governments, abducted and imprisoned (or killed) their elected
64 officials, and ran their countries — all because Hitler thought
65 those countries were acting against the interests of Germany and
66 the so-called "Aryan race" by not dealing adequately with the
67 Jewish "problem."

68 The specific rationale and military technology may have
69 been different, but the general impulse and justification are the
70 same: If other nations don't conform with our leader's worldview,
71 no matter how deranged it may be, and won't bend to his will,
72 then it's perfectly OK, even necessary, to invade them and run
73 them as Trump sees fit — and, of course, take all their valuable
74 resources in the process.

75 * * *

76 PURE AND SIMPLE, Trump and his minions are violating
77 both American and international laws and norms and committing
78 egregious war crimes — or they would be war crimes if we were
79 actually at war with any of these countries.

80 But we're not, for two reasons: 1) Because none of them
81 have attacked us or, by any rational standard, behaved in an
82 aggressive manner toward us; and 2) Congress has neither
83 declared war nor authorized or approved any of Trump's actions.
84 In fact, Trump has never even attempted to obtain such
85 authorization or approval, and hardly even bothered to inform
86 key lawmakers of his prior intentions or subsequent actions.

87 And yet, the Republican-controlled Congress has not
88 taken a single step to stop or even question these illegal and
89 violent acts, much less to actually declare war or even a national
90 emergency that could possibly justify any of them.

91 Lacking any of the required Congressional authority to
92 legalize these actions, everything Trump has done amounts to
93 murder, kidnapping, theft, and fraud, on a massive scale and
94 without the slightest acknowledgement of the requirements of the
95 Constitution or due process of law.

96 * * *

97 SO IN A SIGNIFICANT WAY, the most criminal behavior
98 enabling all of this depravity is that of Congress for its failure to
99 do, or even attempt to do, anything to stop it.

100 If we are to retain our democratic system and our basic
101 American values, that do-nothing Congress must stand up and
102 start taking its role seriously as the co-equal branch of
103 government that makes the laws, determines policies, issues
104 funding, and imposes limits on extreme, illegal, and violent
105 actions of out-of-control presidents.

106 Otherwise, we'll continue to be subject to the whims
107 and impulses of someone who is clearly unable or unwilling to
108 control himself and will continue to start wars whenever and
109 wherever the urge hits him.

#####END TEXT#####

Bio/COATTAIL:

#####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL#####

110 **STEVEN GELLER** is retired from a four-decade career in
111 social services.

#####END BIO/COATTAIL#####

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

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