

2001

Ahmad Shah Massoud, leader of the Northern Alliance, is assassinated in Afghanistan by two al-Qaeda assassins who claimed to be Arab journalists wanting an interview.

2009

The Dubai Metro, the first urban train network in the Arabian Peninsula, is ceremonially inaugurated.

2012

The Indian space agency puts into orbit its heaviest foreign satellite yet, in a streak of 21 consecutive successful **PSLV** launches.

2015

Elizabeth II became the longest reigning monarch of the United Kingdom.



Throughout 2017 and 2018, Iranians took to the streets in dozens of cities to protest corruption, bad governance, gender inequality, expensive foreign entanglements and even the regime itself.

hostage and lock them away in its notorious Evin prison, Iran's modern-day Chateau d'If fortress, with impunity.

Since Mr Trump withdrew from the nuclear deal in May last year and instigated his maximum pressure policy, Iran's economy is once again facing collapse. According to the International Monetary Fund, by the end of this year the economy will retract by a massive 6 per cent while inflation currently stands at 37.2 per cent. Meanwhile unemployment has crept back up to 12.2 per cent and looks set to rise.

To make matters worse, unlike the post-2012 period, when oil prices were between \$90 and \$100 a barrel, today the cost of crude hovers between \$50 and \$60. This is terrible for Iran, whose energy reserves fuel its economy. In short, the economic outlook is catastrophic.

Iran also faces significant in-

ternal discord. Throughout 2017 and 2018, Iranians took to the streets in dozens of cities to protest corruption, bad governance, gender inequality, expensive foreign entanglements and even the regime itself.

However, in order to truly exert maximum pressure, Mr Trump needs to find some kind of accord with China towards Iran. This should be a matter for discussion when US-Chinese trade talks resume next week. China recently signed a \$400 million investment deal in Iran's oil, gas, transport and petrochemical infrastructure. In return, Beijing receives steady supplies of oil paid for in its own currency. If Tehran loses this vital lifeline, it will have no choice but to make major concessions.

In the meantime, Washington needs to capitalise on growing European frustration with Iran. Europe is angered by Tehran's incremental breaches of the nuclear deal through additional levels of nuclear enrichment. Last week British Prime Minister Boris Johnson even called for a new nuclear deal, noting that there were "many defects" in the existing one. Mr Trump also needs to be patient; time is on his side but it is not on Tehran's.

If he really wants to get a better nuclear deal than his predecessor, Mr Trump needs to seek additional international support and stick to his guns. This will give him more leverage in future talks to make a deal actually worth signing.

Sherman did not quite grasp the extent to which the sanctions were working. With its coffers empty and on the verge of collapse, the regime would probably not have survived without a deal. But with it in place, all Tehran had to do was stop spinning a few centrifuges and all of a sudden, it was in from the cold and able to continue financing proxies and fermenting regional instability. It could also hold westerners

on those in power?



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New York Times.

The Trump presidency has gone through three phases in its three years.

The first was marked by uncertainty and incompetence. The second mainly reflected traditional Republican priorities like tax cuts and confirming conservative judges.

But in the third year, Mr Trump is unrestrained, newly confident and increasingly aggressive and transgressive. He is effectively daring everyone: "Stop me if you can."

While public support for impeachment has significantly increased, his base remains mostly loyal and unmoved, with only three Senate Republicans so far expressing concern about the president's actions. It is not clear what could possibly break that spell.

As Mr Trump notes, at present

House Democrats can impeach him but have no path for getting the Republican-controlled Senate to convict and remove him from office. And, while he looks increasingly vulnerable in next year's election, there's no guarantee he will lose.

Yet if this unprecedented behaviour is not punished and Mr Trump remains unchecked and unrebuked, any abuses of power will intensify, probably exponentially. Far worse, a new set of norms, expectations and precedents will have been established and effectively rewarded.

Misusing state authority to smear opponents, inviting foreign governments to interfere in US politics, blatantly gaming the system and severely eroding checks on presidential power will be hard to reverse. If there is no effective pushback, this is how future presidents will behave – simply because they can.

The Republican Party has completely succumbed, with next year's nominating convention carefully rigged to eliminate any hint of dissent. But broader American institutions are now buckling under the pressure.

What looms is not the victory of a noxious ideology. That would be bad enough.

This is far more tragic. The venerable foundations of the American republic are being shaken to their very core by nothing more than the petty and personal pursuit of power.

has reportedly extended that supposed impunity to subordinates by offering them pardons if they break the law at his behest, such as by seizing land to build his border wall with Mexico or shooting at migrants' legs, according to the

 **TOP 4 TWEETS**

01



Indian Air Force is a symbol of valor and courage. On Air Force Day, I salute our Air Force heroes and their families. Entire nation is proud of your dedication and commitment to safeguard our motherland.

@AmitShah

02



Someone please tell the Radical Left Mayor of Minneapolis that he can't price out Free Speech. Probably illegal! I stand strongly & proudly with the great Police Officers and Law Enforcement of Minneapolis and the Great State of Minnesota! See you Thursday Night!

@realDonaldTrump

03



Chris Collins shot to fame as the first member of Congress to endorse Donald Trump for president. His sudden fall from presidential cheerleader to admitted liar is a tale of money, family ties and murky ethics.

@nytimes

04



Today, the Trump Administration will argue to the Supreme Court that, in our country, it should be legal to fire someone because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This is wrong—and we must fight back. #RiseUpOct8

@KamalaHarris

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)



Wide Angle

The great and unmatched wisdom of world leaders



JOEL INDRUPATI

Within 24 hours, by Tuesday evening, there were over 122,150 comments on US President Donald Trump's Monday tweet.

"My great and unmatched wisdom" was how he referred to his own intellect in the tweet, while strongly reiterating how he would tackle Turkey, if Turkey goes against his wishes.

Modesty, we all know, has not always been a virtue for many political leaders. In fact, it is probably impossible for you to become a powerful leader if you are very modest.

If you shy away from praising yourself, and from showing yourself in good light, whether blatantly or subtly, it is unlikely that you would be recognised as a strong leader.

This topic spurred me to compile some nuggets of such leader-speak from political stages; to recall some interesting words and phrases - about themselves - from some contemporary world-leaders.

"I am an extremely stable genius," Donald Trump had once said during a press conference.

His tweet now ran something like this: "As I have stated strongly before, and just to reiterate, if Turkey does anything that I, in my great and unmatched wisdom, consider to be off limits, I will totally destroy and obliterate the Economy of Turkey (I've done before!)".

Some people, making comments on this tweet likened Trump's behaviour to that of the great Wizard of Oz's, from the movie, where the wizard addresses himself as 'the Great and Wonderful Wizard of Oz'.

Some others quoted Shelley's poem in which a vain king says, "My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings; Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!"

Recently, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson called himself "the model of restraint" while the parliament was noisily fighting over Brexit.

His implication that he can keep his head when all about him were losing theirs, and blaming it on him, would have made Rudyard Kipling proud; if, he was around.

Boris Johnson had even implied he was 'The Incredible Hulk', saying UK would emulate Bruce Banner, the mild-mannered Marvel scientist who transforms into the Hulk when angry.

"Hulk always escaped, no matter how tightly bound in he seemed to be - and that is the case for this country. We will come out on October 31 and we will get it done."

By this month-end, we shall know how incredible this hunk, I mean, Hulk will come out from the Brexit imbroglio.

When he was the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson had told reporters he would not run for Prime Minister. No one would vote for "a prat who gets stuck on a zip wire" he'd said referring to a time he got stuck.

The British Prime Minister had even called himself the 'son-in-law of India'. And not only because he was once married to Marina Wheeler, a half-Indian, the niece of the eminent Indian writer, the late Khushwant Singh.

It is perhaps also because he has now inducted into his cabinet, three Indian origin members – Priti Patel, Alok Sharma and Rishi Sunak.

While we are on the topic of India, we must not forget that Indian Prime Minister Modi had called himself 'chowkidar' (watchman), 'fakir' (religious ascetic), 'mazdoor no. 1' (first worker), 'pradhan sevak' (chief servant) of the country.

Russian President Vladimir Putin called himself a tough "jungle kid", hardened in street fights even before he went to school, in his biography.

Rodrigo Duterte likened himself to Hitler, when dealing with drug addicts and had stirred controversy for a while.

Angela Merkel did not call herself the 'Climate Chancellor', but willingly accepted it.

Trump, however, is unique. That is why France's Emmanuel Macron calls himself 'a maverick like Trump', and Brazil's Bolsonaro calls himself 'The Trump of South America'.

(The writer's twitter handle: @joelindrupati)