

## Donald Trump says he is not a dictator. Isn't he?

From deploying the national guard to targeting news channels and schools, the US president's actions are anything from typical of a democratic leader

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Speaking in the Oval Office this week, Donald Trump had something he wanted to clarify. "I'm not a dictator. I don't like a dictator," the president said.

Yet his comments came weeks after he deployed armed soldiers and Humvee-style military vehicles to patrol the streets of Washington, claiming, despite all available evidence, that the use of the national guard was necessary to control crime. [...]

He has threatened Democrats with prosecution, and demanded that former president Barack Obama be investigated for treason. Trump has done all this as his family has ostensibly earned millions of dollars from his presidency.

None of these things are typical for a democratic leader. So ... is Trump a dictator?

10 "Yes, of course," said Kim Lane Scheppele, a professor of sociology at Princeton University who spent years researching autocracies including Hungary and Russia. Scheppele said she had been wavering on using the term "dictatorship" until recently, but said: "If I was hesitating before, it's this mobilization of the national guard and the indication that he plans to overtake resistance by force that now means we're in it."

15 Trump, emboldened by a Republican party that appears willing to let their leader do whatever he wants, is now threatening to send troops to Democratic-run cities including Chicago, Baltimore, San Francisco and New York City, prompting outcry and accusations of abuse of power. Scheppele said: "He's really planning a military, repressive force, to go out into the streets of the places that are most likely to resist his dictatorship and to just put down the whole thing by force." [...]

25 Just this week, a giant banner was draped over the Department of Labor building, showing Trump glaring out over Washington DC above the slogan "American workers first". On his birthday, which coincided with the 250th anniversary of the formation of the US army, he held a military parade in the capital, and was reportedly furious that the troops did not look "menacing" enough.

Trump has said he is not a dictator, but claimed last week: "A lot of people are saying: 'Maybe we'd like a dictator.'" It's not clear who he was referring to, but he continued the theme on Tuesday.

30 Steven Levitsky, author and political scientist, reiterated that he does not believe Trump is a dictator in the truest sense, but added: "Dictators everywhere, first of all, claim that they're not dictators. And second of all, somewhat contradictorily, claim that the people want a dictator. Those are classic dictator lines."

35 The US has expressed interest in authoritarianism before. At the height of his fame, a third of Americans tuned into the radio broadcasts of Charles Coughlin, a Catholic priest whose antisemitic broadcasts praised the likes of Benito Mussolini. Jim Crow laws were allowed to enforce racial segregation into the 1960s, while senator Joseph McCarthy was allowed to persecute alleged communists during the so-called Red Scare. [...]

40 There is, Levitsky said, a “non-zero chance” that Trump could use emergency powers – as he has in justifying immigration measures and tariffs – to subvert the constitution, potentially undermining elections. [...]

## WRITTEN COMPREHENSION – UNDERSTAND THE TEXT PRECISELY

### OBJECTIVE => MAKE THE BEST SUMMARY

#### 1. UNDERSTAND AND ENRICH YOUR VOCABULARY

*Below is a list of words picked out from the text: find at least one synonym in English for each of them. If you don't know the meaning of a word, use the context to figure it out:*

“deploying” (lead paragraph):

“targeting” (lead paragraph):

“prosecution” (l.6):

“demanded” (l.6):

“ostensibly” (l.8):

“earned” (l.8):

“wavering” (l.12):

“to overtake” (l.13):

“emboldened” (l.15):

“troops” (l.16):

“outcry” (l.17):

“draped” (l.21):

“glaring” (l.22):

“reportedly” (l.24):

“tuned in(to)” (l.34):

“persecute” (l.37):

“subvert” (l.39):

“undermining” (l.40):

#### 2. PRACTICE YOUR REPHRASING SKILLS

*Reformulate the following sentence from the text, focusing on the meaning of the underlined expression:*

“the US president’s actions are **anything from** typical of a democratic leader”

### 3. ENRICH YOUR GENERAL KNOWLEDGE (HOMEWORK EXERCISE)

Here is a list of specific elements from the text that need additional research in order to fully understand them. At home, look for a simple definition for each of them:

“the Oval Office” (l.1):

“the Department of Labor” (l.21):

“Benito Mussolini” (l.35):

“Jim Crow laws” (l.35):

“Red Scare” (l.37):

### 4. GRAMMAR – REVIEW THE BASICS

Vous avez étudié les chapitres concernant **la détermination, les articles Ø, a / an et the en anglais**. Faites les exercices suivants pour vérifier l’acquisition des connaissances.

#### A. Dénombrable ou indénombrable ?

Voici une liste de mots tirés du texte. Classifiez les dans le tableau suivant selon que ce sont des noms **dénombrables** ou **indénombrables**.

“dictator” (title)

“news” (Lead paragraph)

“evidence” l.4

“prosecution” l.6

“treason” l.7

“presidency” l.8

“sociology” l.10

“autocracies” l.11

“indication” l.13

“outcry” l.17

“scientist” l.29

“authoritarianism” l.33

“fame” l.33

“powers” l.38

Nom dénombrable	Nom indénombrable

## B. The ou Ø ?

- Expliquez pourquoi :
  - l.24 : « a lot of Ø people are saying ‘Maybe we’d like a dictator’ »
  - MAIS: l.31 : « ..., claim that the people want a dictator »
  
- Expliquez pourquoi :
  - l.11 : « autocracies like Ø Hungary and Russia »
  - MAIS: “The United States has expressed...”