

## **Editorial: Trump's bad ideas, poorly executed**

February 2, 2017

Just under two weeks into the Trump era, we're struck not only by the damage the new president managed to inflict already, but that he has done it in response to threats that are small-to-nonexistent. Three examples:

- Immigration policy is in need of reform, but we no longer have hordes of Mexicans flowing over our southern border. Some studies find more undocumented Mexicans going back to Mexico than crossing over from there. Yet President Donald Trump picks a fight with one of our most important allies and threatens a trade war in order to keep a simple-minded campaign promise.

- There is next to no voter fraud credibly alleged -- no more than a handful of reports of anyone trying to vote twice or of unregistered individuals passing themselves off as someone else. Yet Trump has been trashing the reputations of state election officials and of American democracy itself for weeks, mostly because his ego is hurt by the fact that he lost the popular vote. Facing criticism for tweeting falsehoods, he uses his presidential powers to launch an "investigation" to prove the falsehoods true.

- Terrorists are a threat, but the number of foreign refugees who have committed terrorist acts in the U.S. is almost invisible. An analysis by Alex Nowrasteh of the libertarian Cato Institute puts the odds of an American being killed by a terrorist who came over as a refugee as one in 3.6 billion. Yet for this, Trump has slammed shut the Statue of Liberty's "golden door" with an executive order that disrupts the lives of innocent people and gives ammunition to real terrorists at home and abroad.

What should concern Americans most -- whether or not they supported Trump in November -- is that these are not just bad ideas. They are bad ideas poorly executed.

A more thoughtful president, with better advisers, would have met with Mexico's president before announcing plans to build a border wall and threats to start a trade war. That could have smoothed the path toward negotiations on border and trade issues, and avoided turning public opinion in Mexico against whatever Trump might propose.

A more open-minded president, with better advisers, would have acknowledged that unproven allegations of voting irregularities were undermining confidence in the democratic system. He would have put a bipartisan task force in charge of investigating allegations of vote fraud,

studying vulnerabilities of the voting system to outside interference and making recommendations for improvement.

A more experienced president, with better advisers, wouldn't have changed immigration policy without consulting with the Department of Justice as to its legality, with Congress about its political impact, with the Pentagon about its implication for the safety of troops stationed in Muslim countries, and with other governments and industries directly affected by the action. Trump did none of those things.

The chaos that has resulted, spreading fear and hurting America's reputation around the globe, didn't have to happen. Those of us who for months have warned about Trump's unfitness for the job are appalled, but not surprised.