Twitter Thread by David Frum



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In February 1981, pro-Franco army officers attacked the Spanish Parliament hoping to halt Spain's evolution toward democracy and liberalism. 1/x

The coup was soon suppressed, in large part because of a miscalculation by the dying Franco regime. In 1975, the regime had restored the old Spanish monarchy, hoping to glamorize authoritarianism. Instead, King Juan Carlos opposed the coup - and most of the army obeyed. 2/x

Here's where the story gets interesting for our current purposes ...

The coup launched to thwart Spain's shift to democracy instead consolidated Spanish democracy. The next year, 1982, social democrats won the biggest landslide in Spanish electoral history. 3/x

The elected social democrats formed a government without a single minister connected to the old regime. State support of the Catholic church ended. Family law was modernized, minority language rights were protected. If Franco had opposed it - the new Spain wanted it. 4/x

The process was not instant. Not until 2019 would the state remove Franco's remains from the lavish tomb he built to himself. But the process was inexorable. The pro-Franco attempted coup guaranteed the total doom of Francoism in Spain. 5/x

The differences between the US in 2021 and Spain in 1981 are obviously huge. I'm not proposing an analogy at all. But what I do notice is that some on the pro-Trump side apparently fear that what happened to Francoists in Spain after 1981 could happen to them after 2021. 6/x

The day after pro-Trump insurrectionists invaded the capital, apparently with a plan to lynch the vice president of the United States, Tucker Carlson was on Fox News worried about the terrible risk of persecution of Trump supporters. 7/x
https://t.co/sJfQ5F3c6F

Similar concerns are being articulated by other hard-line and soft-line pro-Trump voices. They lament that real victims of the attempted violent overthrow of a US election will be ... those who sympathized with that attempted violent overthrow 8/x
https://t.co/ZfqGHkkG9x 8/x

> There's absolutely a new War on Terror being initiated -- it'd been lurking for awhile, but it's accelerating now for obvious reasons. This new one is aimed inward, domestically. It entails many of the same frameworks.
>
> They're saying it explicitly:https://t.co/TUkK0mmMxU pic.twitter.com/ygCLuTZe2C
>
> — Glenn Greenwald (@ggreenwald) January 8, 2021

Why, some of those who supported that attempted violent overthrow have already lost their book contracts and may have to republish instead with a less prestigious imprint! If that's not tyranny, what is? 9/x

But beneath the self-indulgent self-pity, these pro-Trump voices are saying something real and true. What was attempted on January 6 *is* discrediting in a democracy -and the disgrace will be shared to some measure not only by its participants, but by its sympathizers. 10/x

The discredit of Trumpism will not be unanimous, obviously - just as you can still find Francoists in Spain even today. But the balance of political and especially cultural power will shift. And Trumpists care even more about cultural power than about political power. 11/x

Trumpists often compare themselves to truly persecuted minorities: African Americans in the Jim Crow South, Jews under Nazism, Christians under communism. That's disgusting and also crazy. 12/x

But Trump's incitement of violence to overturn an election he lost - atop his horrifying mismanagement of the pandemic and the economic crisis in which so many Americans have suffered so much - will cast enduring, inescapable odium upon him and anything associated with him. 13/x

Trumpists already feel the chill of the thickening clouds of social disapproval. And the chill bites sharper because at some deep inner level, even the Trumpists must recognize - they deserve it. END

PS Spanish readers inform me that not all state support for the Catholic church was ended post-Franco. I stand corrected.