# Ric Grenell On Anti-Democratic Leaders

**Highlights:**

* Ric Grenell has acted on Trump’s behalf while working with anti-democratic leaders and groups.
  + Grenell acted as Trump’s shadow secretary of state.
  + Grenell supported and met with Guatemalan election deniers.
  + Grenell met with several other leaders, using the meetings to denigrate the current administration.
  + Grenell’s meetings with authoritarian leaders have raised concern among national security officials.

## Grenell Has Acted On Trump’s Behalf While Working With Anti-Democratic Leaders And Groups

### Grenell Acted As Trump’s Shadow Secretary of State

**Grenell Remained In Regular Contact With Trump.** According to the Washington Post, “Grenell is in regular contact with the former president and his family, though it’s unclear when or if he’s acting on Trump’s directions. Earlier this year, Grenell attended a small, private funeral for Trump’s mother-in-law, according to other guests. Social media posts show several visits to Trump’s Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Fla., and his golf club in Bedminster, N.J.” [Washington Post, [3/28/24](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/28/richard-grenell-trump-envoy-serbia-guatemala/)]

**Trump Called Grenell “My Envoy.”** According to the Washington Post, “In an unusual statement by an ex-president, Trump gave one of Grenell’s recent foreign trips his blessing, calling him ‘My Envoy.’” [Washington Post, [3/28/24](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/28/richard-grenell-trump-envoy-serbia-guatemala/)]

**Washington Post: Grenell Has Acted As Trump’s “Shadow Secretary Of State” And Worked Against The Current Administration’s Policies.** According to the Washington Post, “Grenell’s intervention highlights the extraordinary role he has carved out in the three years since Trump left the White House. From Central America to Eastern Europe and beyond, Grenell has been acting as a kind of shadow secretary of state, meeting with far-right leaders and movements, pledging Trump’s support and, at times, working against the current administration’s policies.” [Washington Post, [3/28/24](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/28/richard-grenell-trump-envoy-serbia-guatemala/)]

### Grenell Supported And Met With Guatemalan Election Deniers

**Grenell Circulated Unproven Claims Of Election Fraud About Guatemala’s Presidential Election.** According to the Washington Post, “After an anti-corruption crusader unexpectedly won last year’s presidential election in Guatemala, democracy teetered on the edge in the Central American country. Amid law enforcement raids on election offices and threats of violence, the Biden Administration worked feverishly to lay the groundwork for a peaceful transfer of power […] That same day, Grenell blasted the moves as politically motivated and circulated unproven claims of election fraud made by the nation’s attorney general, who was previously restricted from visiting the United States after the State Department cited her for corruption and obstructing investigations.” [Washington Post, [3/28/24](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/28/richard-grenell-trump-envoy-serbia-guatemala/)]

* + **Supporters Of Presidential Candidate Sandra Torres, Who Lost The Election, Had Mobilized Against Incoming Guatemalan President Bernardo Arévalo.** According to the Washington Post, “In August, following a tumultuous presidential campaign in Guatemala, Bernardo Arévalo, a left-leaning academic, defeated Sandra Torres, a former first lady backed by the right-wing ruling class. U.S. officials then watched in alarm at what Arévalo described as a ‘slow-motion coup,’ driven by business and political elites opposed to his anti-graft platform. Guatemalan authorities seized ballot boxes on flimsy claims of voter fraud, tried to dissolve Arévelo’s party and opened a criminal investigation of him.” [Washington Post, [3/28/24](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/28/richard-grenell-trump-envoy-serbia-guatemala/)]
  + **The United States Responded Aggressively To Affirm Arévalo’s Victory.** According to the Washington Post, “Both Democrats and Republicans in Congress recognized Arévelo’s victory, as the European Union warned of ‘a grave threat to democracy’ in a country with a long history of corruption. The Biden administration responded aggressively, dispatching members of Congress and top diplomats. In December, the State Department restricted the visas of nearly 300 individuals in Guatemala, including 100 lawmakers, who it said were trying to undermine the rule of law.” [Washington Post, [3/28/24](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/28/richard-grenell-trump-envoy-serbia-guatemala/)]

**Grenell Met With Guatemalan Election Deniers**

**Grenell Met With Liga Pro Patria, A Right-Wing Group Who Tried To Block Guatemala’s Presidential Inauguration.** According to the Washington Post, “Grenell was in Guatemala City by Jan. 11, four days before Arévalo’s inauguration. He met that evening with leaders of a right-wing group, Liga Pro Patria, which had recently tried to block Arévalo’s inauguration in court. Among the activists in a photo of the meeting posted online was Steve Hecht, a political website editor in the group, who said in an interview that Liga Pro Patria invited Grenell to Guatemala to seek the backing of a powerful messenger allied with a former U.S. president.” [Washington Post, [3/28/24](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/28/richard-grenell-trump-envoy-serbia-guatemala/)]

**Grenell Met With Outgoing Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei, Who Was** **Barred From Entering The United States Involved With Significant Corruption.** According to the Washington Post, “The next day, Grenell ate lunch with outgoing president Alejandro Giammattei, whom he called ‘a great U.S. ally’ on Instagram four days before the State Department barred the former head of state from entering the United States due to ‘involvement in significant corruption.’ (Giammattei has denied any wrongdoing.) The president’s press agency released a photo of his handshake with ‘my friend, diplomat Richard Grenell.’” [Washington Post, [3/28/24](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/28/richard-grenell-trump-envoy-serbia-guatemala/)]

### Grenell Met With Several Other Leaders, Using The Meetings To Denigrate The Current Administration

**Grenell Partied With Russia-Connected Authoritarian-Leaning Serbian Finance Minister.** According to the Washington Post, “At times, that affinity has brought him close to officials tied to the Kremlin. Grenell partied at a cabaret club in Belgrade in 2021 with Serbia’s finance minister, a close ally of President Aleksandar Vucic, who has faced scrutiny in the United States for his authoritarian leanings and connections to Russia.” [Washington Post, [3/28/24](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/28/richard-grenell-trump-envoy-serbia-guatemala/)]

**Grenell Offered To Set Up A Meeting Between Trump And Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.** According to the Washington Post, “In the fall of 2023, Sweden’s drive to enter NATO was being held up by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whose erosion of civil liberties and ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin had badly strained his ties to the United States. In Congress, some key lawmakers were demanding a commitment from Turkey before ratifying the sale of $20 billion in U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets. Amid those tense negotiations, Grenell, a fierce critic of NATO and the Biden administration’s foreign policies, made a startling offer: a meeting between Trump and Erdogan, who was coming to New York City for the United Nations General Assembly, according to the two people close to the former president.” [Washington Post, [3/28/24](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/28/richard-grenell-trump-envoy-serbia-guatemala/)]

**Grenell Used The Meetings To Denigrate Biden**

**Grenell Used Meetings With Authoritarian Leaders To Denigrate Biden.** According to the Washington Post, “On his repeated trips to Kosovo and Serbia, he has used his stature in the region to boost Trump’s allies, to denigrate Biden’s efforts at negotiating a new peace deal, and to push for private developments. In Serbia, Grenell is often greeted as a quasi-official, reflecting a perception that he speaks for Trump and could play an important role in a future administration. ‘He is undoubtedly Serbia’s friend,’ Serbia’s ambassador to Washington, Marko Duric, said in an interview last year. ‘He was while he had the official post, and has remained so today. Everyone in Serbia appreciates that very much.’” [Washington Post, [3/28/24](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/28/richard-grenell-trump-envoy-serbia-guatemala/)]

### Grenell’s Meetings With Authoritarian Leaders Have Raised Concern Among National Security Officials

**Grenell’s Meetings With Authoritarian Leaders Have Raised Concern Among National Security Officials.** According to the Washington Post, “It’s unusual for a former diplomatic official to continue meeting with foreign leaders and promoting the agenda of a presidential candidate on the world stage. Grenell’s globe-trotting has sparked deep concern among career national security officials and diplomats, who warn that he emboldens bad actors and jeopardizes U.S. interests in service of Trump’s personal agenda. In the process, Grenell is openly charting a foreign policy road map for a Republican presidential nominee who has found common cause with authoritarian leaders and threatened to blow up partnerships with democratic allies.” [Washington Post, [3/28/24](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/28/richard-grenell-trump-envoy-serbia-guatemala/)]