

Republican frontrunner Trump steps up attacks on demonstrators

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In the wake of a break-up of a campaign rally in Chicago Friday amidst mass protests, Donald Trump, the billionaire frontrunner for the Republican presidential nomination, has taken an increasingly hard line in denouncing protestors.

Speaking at a rally in Kansas City Saturday, Trump demanded that police arrest demonstrators, declaring, "I hope these guys get thrown into a jail," adding, "They'll never do it again. It'll destroy their record. They'll have to explain to mom and dad why they have a police record and why they can't get a job."

Police responded by attacking protesters, pepper spraying demonstrators in two separate incidents outside the rally and carrying out two arrests, including for "refusal to stay out of the street." Bystander footage showed police using four separate tanks of pepper spray in one of the incidents.

At a campaign rally Sunday in Illinois, police once again ejected protestors as Trump declared, "Get them out of here." He added, "You see where they place themselves? Right in front of the cameras. Disgusting." Security at the rally was tight, with not even umbrellas being allowed inside the venue.

Earlier on Sunday, Trump defended the actions of John McGraw, 78, who punched an African-American demonstrator at a rally in Fayetteville, North Carolina on Wednesday. "He obviously loves his country, and maybe he doesn't like seeing what's happening to the country." Asked whether he would pay McGraw's legal fees, the billionaire declared, "I've actually instructed my people to look into it, yes."

McGraw defended his actions in an interview last week, telling *Inside Edition*, "He deserved it... The next time we see him, we might have to kill him." While McGraw was only arrested the next day, his victim was immediately dragged to the ground by multiple police officers.

Trump sought to criminalize the actions of demonstrators, saying, "They're not protesters; I'm telling you, they're disrupters... they're professionals." He extended the blame to the Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders campaigns, saying, "It is Clinton and Sanders people who disrupted my rally in Chicago... Phony politicians!"

On Saturday, Trump posted a doctored video on his twitter page alleging that a demonstrator who ran onstage at his rally that day in Ohio was an ISIS supporter. "One of my people said, wow. They found his name, and it was probably ISIS or ISIS-related," Trump said.

Trump's comments have been met with hypocritical denunciations by the other candidates, as well as President Obama.

Senator Ted Cruz, the runner-up behind Trump, declared, "America is better than this. We don't have to tear each other apart... When you have a campaign that disrespects the voters, when you have a campaign that affirmatively encourages violence, when you have a campaign that is facing allegations of physical violence against members of the press, you create an environment that only encourages this sort of nasty discourse."

This is coming from a man who called for "carpet-bombing" the Middle East "into oblivion," adding, "I don't know if sand can glow in the dark, but we're going to find out!" Cruz, a fanatical Christian fundamentalist, called earlier this year for banning Muslim, but not Christian, refugees fleeing the US-backed Syrian civil war.

Democratic frontrunner Hilary Clinton responded to the string of violent incidents at Trump's rallies by declaring, "All of us, no matter what party we belong to or what views we hold, should not only say loudly and clearly that violence has no place in our politics, we should use our words and deeds to bring Americans together."

Clinton, as Obama's first secretary of state, played a

leading role in the US bombing and destabilization campaign in Libya, declaring after the death of President Muammar Gaddafi, who was sodomized with a bayonet by US-allied Islamist forces, “We came, we saw, he died.”

President Obama, who has personally authorized drone strikes in Pakistan and other countries that have killed thousands of bystanders, likewise denounced the “violent” character of Trump’s campaign.

In a speech at a Democratic fundraiser in Texas, Obama sought to pin the blame for the rise of Trump solely on the Republican Party, declaring, “What is happening in this primary is just a distillation of what’s been happening inside their party for more than a decade... So they can’t be surprised when somebody suddenly looks and says, you know what, I can do that even better. I can make stuff up better than that. I can be more outrageous than that.”

However, the Obama administration’s policies over the past seven years have helped fuel the reactionary political climate that has fostered Trump. He has expanded the reign of violence of American imperialism abroad, bombing numerous countries, including Libya, Syria, Somalia, Pakistan, Iraq and Yemen and carrying out destabilization operations in Ukraine, Honduras and Venezuela. He has authorized drone strikes that have killed at least four American citizens without trial and backed the deployment of militarized police in Ferguson and Baltimore.

These politicians, who universally defend murder by the US military in the name of furthering the geopolitical interests of the US corporate/financial oligarchy, claim to be shocked and aghast that this same violence has suddenly burst into the domestic political scene. The ability of the US political establishment to pair its murderous policies with mealy-mouthed appeals to democracy, pluralism, multiculturalism and diversity—Obama’s personal specialty—is becoming increasingly untenable.



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