

Republican governor threatens violence if Hillary Clinton is elected

Nick Barrickman
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On Saturday, Republican Governor Matthew Bevin of Kentucky made a threat of violence if Democratic Party presidential nominee Hillary Clinton is elected in November. In an apocalyptic screed at the socially conservative Value Voters Summit in Washington, D.C., Bevin urged an audience of conservative activists to “fight ideologically, mentally, spiritually, economically, so that we don’t have to do it physically. But that may, in fact, be the case.”

“Do you think it’s possible, if Hillary Clinton were to win the election, do you think it’s possible that we’ll be able to survive, that we’d ever be able to recover as a nation?” Bevin asked rhetorically. “I do think it would be possible, but at what price? The roots of the tree of liberty are watered by what? The blood of who? The tyrants, to be sure, but who else? The patriots,” Bevin declared, paraphrasing the famous Thomas Jefferson quote. “Whose blood will be shed? It may be that of those in this room. It might be that of our children and grandchildren.”

Continuing, the Republican governor appealed to an array of religion-based social prejudices, stating, “Look at the atrocity of abortion, so many have remained silent. It’s a slippery slope. First we’re killing children, then it’s ‘don’t ask, don’t tell.’ Now it’s this gender-bending, don’t ask, don’t be a bigot, don’t be unreasonable, don’t be unenlightened, heaven forbid.”

Bevin’s comments follow in the wake of a number of statements made by prominent Republican officials during the presidential elections hinting at violence. Speaking of a future President Hillary Clinton before an audience in North Carolina a month ago, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump stated, “If she gets to pick her judges, nothing you can do folks ... Although the Second Amendment [gun-owning] people—maybe there is, I don’t know.”

Amid a media backlash over the obvious suggestion that only Clinton’s assassination could prevent her appointing judges after she entered the White House, Trump’s campaign released a statement declaring that the comment regarding the Second Amendment right to bear arms was simply a reference to voting.

Right-wing violence has been a regular occurrence throughout the 2016 elections. In March, two protesters were physically assaulted by audience members at a Trump campaign rally in Louisville, Kentucky. News cameras captured one protester, an African American woman, repeatedly hit and called racial slurs by audience members after Trump had stopped his speech to demand that security remove her.

Bevin, who was elected last year as Kentucky’s governor, succeeding Democrat Steve Beshear, is one of the highest-ranking Republican officials to make such threats. The increasingly strident invocations of bloodshed and violence are aimed at whipping up and channeling the anger of deeply disoriented social layers and lay the groundwork for a fascistic movement, whatever the outcome of the November election.

The principal target is not Clinton and the Democrats, who are right-wing representatives of the ruling class, but the working class. It is part of the assault on democratic rights as a whole, as the corporate and financial elite prepares to meet social opposition with repression.

After the Kentucky Governor’s statements received harsh rebuking from local Democratic Party officials, his administration claimed that the “blood of tyrants” comment and others were references to military service. “Today we have thousands of men and women in uniform fighting for us overseas, and they need our full backing,” Bevin said. “We cannot be complacent about the determination of radical Islamic extremists to

destroy our freedoms.”

On the face it, such a “clarification” is nonsensical. Bevin was clearly talking about physical resistance to the policies of a future Clinton administration. As for his reference to ISIS, one of the key planks of the Clinton campaign is to extend and deepen the US military’s operations in the Middle East and beyond.

Bevin, a former US Army captain and businessman, began his political career in 2014, challenging Senator Mitch McConnell, the leader of the Republicans in the US Senate, from the right, as the candidate of the so-called Tea Party. After a landslide defeat in the primary, he switched his focus to the 2015 gubernatorial race.

In September 2015, Bevin offered full-throated support to Kim Davis, the clerk of Rowan County, Kentucky, who went to jail rather than obey a federal court order to issue marriage licenses for same-sex couples. Upon entering the governor’s office last December, Bevin issued an executive order which allowed state law clerks to have their signatures kept off of marriage licenses “to ensure that the sincerely held religious beliefs of all Kentuckians are honored.”



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