

America's pro-Nazi president defends Charlottesville rampage

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In an event without precedent in American history, the president of the United States on Tuesday openly defended the neo-Nazi demonstrators who went on a violent and deadly rampage last weekend in Charlottesville, Virginia, while lashing out against anti-fascist counter-protesters.

"I think there's blame on both sides," Donald Trump repeated more than once in the course of an impromptu press conference at Trump Tower in Manhattan. Going further, he said there were "very fine people" among the fascists and that "not all of those people" at the rally were neo-Nazis or white supremacists "by any stretch."

Trump's comments Tuesday went beyond his statement Saturday, in which he blamed "many sides" for the violence that left 19 wounded and one anti-fascist protester, 32-year-old Heather Heyer, dead.

In response to shouted questions from reporters about his initial response to the fascist rampage, Trump repeatedly accused both sides of violence. "You had a group on one side that was bad and you had a group on the other side that was also very violent," he said. "No one wants to say that, but I'll say it right now: You had a group on the other side that came charging in without a permit and they were very, very violent."

As the exchanges continued, Trump's bias in favor of the fascists became more explicit. He twice cited Friday night's KKK-like torch parade through the campus as proof that many if not most of the "Unite the Right" demonstrators were simply seeking to peacefully protest the removal of a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee. In fact, they were shouting slogans such as "Jews will not replace us!"

By the end of the press conference, Trump was suggesting that the counter-protesters, whom he called the "alt-left," were the aggressors, because, unlike the

fascists, they did not have a permit. "But you had a lot of people in that group that were there to innocently protest and very legally protest," he said. "Because I don't know if you know, they had a permit. The other group didn't have a permit."

While Trump's comments were criticized by both Democratic and Republican politicians, they prompted lavish praise from former KKK leader David Duke, who tweeted: "Thank you President Trump for your honesty & courage to tell the truth about Charlottesville & condemn the leftist terrorists in BLM/Antifa [Black Lives Matter and anti-fascist anarchist groups]."

Trump's tirade on Tuesday has thrown the political system into deep crisis. The fact that the president is a Nazi and white supremacist sympathizer shatters the entire framework of the international political authority of the United States.

It will also have immense consequences for domestic stability. There is not a mass constituency for fascism and white supremacism in the United States. The Nazis and "alt-right" groups mobilized only a few hundred people as part of a national mobilization in Charlottesville. This compares to the protests of hundreds of thousands of people that followed Trump's inauguration.

The nervous response to Trump's press conference from the political elite, both Democrats and Republicans, is motivated primarily by fear of an explosion of opposition within the United States and internationally. Trump's critics within the ruling class have spent the past seven months covering over the social and political character of the administration, focusing all their efforts on appealing to the intelligence agencies and the military based on a demand for a more aggressive policy against Russia.

Under conditions of mounting geo-political

contradictions and intensifying economic crisis, the White House is facing multiple probes and possible indictments for alleged collusion with Russia and obstruction of justice. It is seeking to exploit political disorientation to build a far-right constituency outside of the established constitutional framework. Trump has brought fascists such as former *Breitbart News* head Stephen Bannon into the White House to direct this effort.

Even as Trump was supposedly bowing to demands for a condemnation of the KKK and neo-Nazis, he was continuing to appeal to the most right-wing, backward and disoriented social forces.

Over the past several days, he released a campaign ad for the 2020 election that denounces the media and the Democrats as Trump's "enemies" and features photos of individual reporters and news anchors; he told Fox News he was seriously considering pardoning former Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio, convicted of contempt of court for refusing to obey an order to stop illegally arresting Hispanics on suspicion of being "illegal" immigrants; and on Tuesday—three days after a fascist protester used his car as a weapon to kill an anti-fascist demonstrator—he tweeted and then deleted a post of a train labeled "Trump" plowing into a cartoon figure bearing the CNN logo.

Trump also broke off his golf vacation at his New Jersey resort to return to Washington for a day in order to stage the signing of a trade war measure against China—part of his "America First" promotion of economic nationalism.

All of this is aimed at creating a social and political framework for a violent attack on working-class opposition to the policies of the financial aristocracy of war and social counterrevolution.



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