Trump floats proposal to cancel 2020 elections

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On Sunday, Donald Trump re-tweeted a post by the arch-reactionary evangelical preacher and prominent Trump confidant Jerry Falwell, Jr. calling for the president to extend his term from the constitutionally mandated four years to six.

Referring to the Democratic Party-led effort to label Trump a Russian collaborator, the tweet read: "Trump should have 2 yrs added to his 1st term as pay back for time stolen by this corrupt failed coup."

By re-tweeting this proposal, Trump is, in effect, threatening to cancel the 2020 elections and declare himself above the law. Article II of the US Constitution states that the president "shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years."

Trump's action is a direct threat to abrogate the Constitution. Bourgeois politics has degenerated to such a degree that political and legal norms considered fundamental since the American Revolution are now challenged by presidential tweet.

Trump's Republican backers claim that Trump was only joking. But canceling elections is not something about which presidents joke. The president is the most powerful person in the world and his every word is closely followed in the US and internationally. Politicians, businessmen and decision makers around the world parse even seemingly mundane statements or off-the-cuff remarks for their deeper significance.

Trump's re-tweet of a prominent, politically active evangelical preacher is not a joke. It is a signal sent deliberately to both supporters and opponents, who will understand that Trump is serious and that he is prepared to pursue anticonstitutional methods to stay in power. It is part of an increasingly dictatorial pattern that Trump and his fascist advisers have long planned.

While accepting an award at a ceremony in April along with military leaders, Trump said, "This is really beautiful. This will find a permanent place, at least for six years, in the Oval Office."

In 2018, Trump told Chinese President Xi Jinping that it was "great" that Xi was now "president for life," adding, "Maybe we'll have to give it a shot someday." In the lead-up to the 2016 election, Trump repeatedly threatened to disregard the election results if Democrat Hillary Clinton proved victorious. In response to a debate question asking whether he would accept a losing result, he said, "I will tell you at the time. I'll keep you in suspense."

It was Trump's current attorney, former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani, who proposed canceling the November 2001 mayoral election in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, arguing that semi-dictatorial methods were needed despite the fact that he was legally termed out.

Trump's presidency has included many similar authoritarian trial balloons. He positioned soldiers behind him during his inaugural address, planned to hold a military demonstration in Washington DC, and implemented a ban on travel from several Muslim countries.

He has established a network of internment camps, proposed the death penalty for drug dealers, praised neo-Nazis as "good people," called for ending due process for immigrants, said that his supporters were justified in using violence against his detractors, deployed the army on domestic soil, separated immigrant children from their parents, and declared a national emergency to appropriate funds for the construction of a border wall.

In this context, the response of the Democratic Party is equally chilling.

In an article titled "Pelosi Warns Democrats: Stay in the Center or Trump May Contest Election Results," the *New York Times* published an interview with Democratic Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, citing her "concern that Mr. Trump would not give up power voluntarily if he lost re-election by a slim margin next

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year."

In the interview, which was conducted before Trump's tweet, Pelosi said in reference to the 2018 midterm elections: "If we win by four seats, by a thousand votes each, he's not going to respect the election. He would poison the public mind. He would challenge each of the races; he would say you can't seat these people. We had to win. Imagine if we hadn't won—oh, don't even imagine. So, as we go forward, we have to have the same approach."

In response to brazen threats to violate the constitution, the Democrats' strategy is to "own the center-left, own the mainstream," Pelosi told the *Times*. Instead of condemning Trump's proposal to extend his term or warning him of the serious criminal implications of canceling a presidential election, Pelosi instructs Democrats to "not engage in some of the other exuberances in our party," making clear that the party will not allow any social reform.

This comes from a party that has won a plurality of the popular vote in all but one of the last eight presidential elections, yet failed to contest the stolen election of 2000, in which the Supreme Court wrote that Americans do not have the right to vote for president. Pelosi's statement is an acknowledgment that the Democrats believe there are circumstances where they would have to accept the cancellation of an election. Were Trump to follow through on his threat, the most Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer would do is promise to file a lawsuit!

The Democrats' fecklessness in the face of Trump's threat to cancel a presidential election contrasts with the ferocity of their claims that Trump has facilitated Russia's use of $100,000 to "interfere" in the last one.

Pelosi's interview exposes the anti-Russia campaign as disingenuous and absurd. If Trump were colluding with Russia, wouldn't his threat to refuse to accept election results be proof that Vladimir Putin is "undermining our democracy?" And doesn't Trump's threat alone constitute a violation of his oath to "protect and defend" Article II of the Constitution—an impeachable act?

The Democrats are combining absolute indifference to critical issues of democratic rights with support for major aspects of Trump's policy agenda. On Monday, the *New York Times* published an editorial board statement titled, "Give Trump his Border Money." The Democrats are collaborating with Trump on a new infrastructure program and lending support to his efforts to overthrow the government of Venezuela and impose tariffs on China.

They are motivated above all by fear of social opposition from the working class, manifested most starkly in growing support for socialism. The Democrats dare not challenge Trump by raising the social, economic and democratic grievances of the broad masses of people because they believe this might trigger widespread strikes and protests challenging the profits of Wall Street and US imperialism's plans for military aggression and world domination.

A serious warning must be made. Trump's tweet and Pelosi's interview only scratch the surface of the antidemocratic and dictatorial measures being discussed behind closed doors at the White House, the Pentagon, Langley and Fort Meade.

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