Trump threatens “civil war” as Democrats escalate impeachment campaign

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President Donald Trump, in an implicit threat of violence against his political opponents, suggested late Sunday that the Democrats’ efforts to remove him from office could precipitate a “civil war.” This came as the Democrats escalated their impeachment drive, issuing a subpoena to Trump’s personal lawyer, Rudolph Giuliani, and lining up a series of administration officials for questioning by the House Intelligence Committee.

In a tweet, Trump quoted the statement of televangelist Robert Jeffress that “If the Democrats are successful in removing the president from office (which they will never be), it will cause a Civil War-like fracture in this Nation from which our Country will never heal.”

On Monday morning, Trump broached arresting Democratic Representative Adam Schiff, the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, and charging him with treason.

“Rep. Adam Schiff illegally made up a FAKE & terrible statement, pretended it to be mine as the most important part of my call to the Ukrainian President, and read it aloud to Congress and the American people,” Trump wrote on Twitter. “It bore NO relationship to what I said on the call. Arrest for Treason?”

By threatening a civil war, Trump is sending a clear message. He may not relinquish his office voluntarily if he is impeached by the Democratic-controlled House and convicted by the Republican-controlled Senate. The billionaire New York real estate speculator and reality TV personality is doing what he has always done when faced with a crisis, whether bankruptcy or political ruin—he is upping the ante.

Trump’s incendiary statements on Sunday and Monday followed his denunciation Saturday of four congresswomen from minority backgrounds—Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib and Ayanna Pressley—and two Jewish House committee chairs—Schiff and Jerrold Nadler—as “savages.” On Friday, Trump met with Wayne LaPierre, the chief executive of the National Rifle Association. According to the *New York Times*, Trump asked the far-right head of the NRA if he “could provide support for the president as he faces impeachment.”

The previous week, Trump gave a fascistic speech to the United Nations General Assembly, warning that “globalists” wanted to “replace” national identity and libeling “socialism and communism” for supposedly killing more than 100 million people.

The Democrats, for their part, intensified their efforts to bring the White House to heel.

On Monday, congressional Democrats issued a subpoena demanding that Rudolph Giuliani, Trump’s personal lawyer, and three of his associates produce communications and other records related to Ukraine.

The major US newspapers published new disclosures from unnamed sources within the administration. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that “Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was among the administration officials who listened in on the July 25 phone call between President Trump and Ukraine’s president.”

The *New York Times* reported, based on the statements of unnamed officials, that “President Trump pushed the Australian prime minister during a recent telephone call to help Attorney General William P. Barr gather information for a Justice Department inquiry that Mr. Trump hopes will discredit the Mueller investigation.”

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell confirmed Monday that the Senate will hold a trial, as required

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under the Constitution, should the House vote to impeach Trump, a distinct possibility.

"I would have no choice but to take it up," he told CNBC, adding, "How long you are on it is a different matter, but I would have no choice but to take it up based on a Senate rule on impeachment."

Trump's invocation of "civil war" and increasingly open appeals for violence testify to the breakdown of democratic forms of rule in the United States. Under the pressure of soaring social inequality, decades of war, and the enormous growth of the "national security" state, the political system created to mediate social conflicts in the United States through the constitutional order is coming apart at the seams.

In the conflict between Trump and his ruling class critics, there is no progressive or democratic side. The divisions within the state are motivated above all by foreign policy. In particular, dominant sections of the state, including Republicans as well as Democrats, are concerned that Trump has failed to take a sufficiently confrontational approach to Russia and that his nationalist geopolitics and personal political interests are cutting across the long-term interests of US imperialism.

The campaign of the Democrats is led by powerful sections of the intelligence agencies. It was instigated by a leak from a CIA agent in the White House. The move by the Democratic Party leadership toward impeachment came only after Democratic representatives with military and intelligence backgrounds declared their support for such an action.

The impeachment drive also followed the ouster of Trump's national security advisor, an arch-warmonger who had come into conflict with Giuliani. On Monday, the *Hill* reported that John Bolton had opposed Trump's call with the Ukrainian president.

While Trump threatens a "civil war" in which his fascistic supporters might be mobilized against his opponents within the state, what all factions of the ruling class fear above all is any genuine mobilization of the working population against Trump and the capitalist system of which he is a product.

It is for this reason that the Democrats have ruled out basing their impeachment inquiry on anything but Trump's efforts to solicit "foreign interference." The *New York Times*, outlining the scope of the Democrats' impeachment inquiry, declared Trump had the "absolute right" to pursue his chosen policies on "the environment, immigration, taxes, trade and other matters."

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