

Trump makes fascistic appeal to police and military at Minneapolis rally

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11 October 2019

US President Donald Trump held his first public rally after the initiation of impeachment proceedings by congressional Democrats, addressing a crowd of 20,000 Thursday night at the Target Center in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota.

He sought to combine his habitual fascistic rhetoric, fomenting hatred against immigrants and Muslims, with an appeal to antiwar sentiment, highlighting his decision earlier in the week to pull all US soldiers out of Syria as a step towards stopping “endless wars.”

However, he hinted at much greater wars to come, either against foreign countries like China or within the United States itself, boasting of his massive build-up of the US military machine, and telling the crowd, “We’re bringing the soldiers home. We may need them for something else.”

The rally was preceded by a politically motivated campaign of vilification against two local Democratic politicians: Representative Ilhan Omar, whose congressional district includes the Target Center; and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, who backed his police chief in forbidding local cops to appear at the campaign rally in uniform.

Omar, who is a Muslim immigrant from Somalia, and Frey, who is Jewish, were clearly targeted because of their race and religion as well as their party affiliation. The decision to hold a rally in Omar’s district was taken during the summer, after Trump had settled on a strategy of portraying four liberal representatives, all female and all of minority descent, as the face of his Democratic Party opposition.

In August the Israeli government barred entry to Omar and Rashida Tlaib, a Detroit-area Democratic congresswoman, because they wished to visit Tlaib’s grandmother and other Palestinians on the West Bank, rather than officials of the Netanyahu government. The exclusion was clearly engineered by Trump as part of his campaign against the group of four Democrats who became known as “the squad.”

In the course of his speech, Trump vilified Omar, as well as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, another of the four representatives, denouncing them as “socialists” and

“radical leftists.” He chided the crowd at Target Center for the election of Omar, who won her congressional race last November by a margin of 267,798 to 74,440, while predicting that he would carry the state of Minnesota in the 2020 presidential election.

The Minneapolis rally was the first of a series, the rest of which are linked to off-year election contests in four southern states. Trump will appear at a rally in Lake Charles, Louisiana, Friday night, ahead of Saturday’s first round gubernatorial election, in which right-wing Democratic incumbent John Bel Williams faces several Republican challengers. Later Trump will campaign for gubernatorial candidates in Mississippi and Kentucky, where the voting is on November 5.

The off-year contests, which also include elections for the entire Virginia state legislature, will be the first to test public opinion in the wake of the beginning of impeachment proceedings by the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives. The Trump White House and Republican Party officials are concerned over the possibility that political setbacks in states long dominated by the Republican Party could strengthen the impeachment drive.

While Trump laid more stress in Minneapolis on Republican voter turnout than at previous rallies, he was clearly still focused largely on the building of an extra-parliamentary movement based on direct appeals to the ranks of the police and military, anti-immigrant bigots and Christian fundamentalists.

In his warm-up appearance before his father took the stage, Eric Trump praised the police, saying, “We owe everything to you.” He led the crowd in a chant of “lock them up,” referring to former Vice President Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden, whom Trump has accused of corruption in business dealings in Ukraine and China.

Trump took the stage with a backdrop of dozens of police dressed in red “Cops for Trump” t-shirts, which they adopted after being barred from wearing dress uniforms at a partisan campaign rally. He made numerous appeals for police support throughout his interminable, meandering

address, which went on for some 90 minutes.

Trump aimed his vitriol at his usual targets, including the Democratic Party, the media, and the polls which show him losing badly in 2020 (including by double-digits in Minnesota). He made only passing reference to the decision of House Democrats to launch an impeachment inquiry, again defending his efforts to enlist Ukraine and China in digging up negative information on Biden and his son.

Overall, the speech was a fascistic rant. Trump portrayed himself in populist fashion as a tribune of the people, beleaguered by the Washington elite. He attacked the media and his bourgeois political opponents, treating the pro-corporate Democratic Party as though it was a hotbed of Bolshevism.

Trump clearly has decided to double down in his attacks on Joe and Hunter Biden, and particularly the son, a parasite who has cashed in on his father's prominence in the Obama administration, and before that in the Senate.

His vulgar and bullying rant served Trump's purpose of portraying himself as the opponent of the Washington establishment, doing battle on behalf of ordinary Americans. He made it clear that any campaign against Biden as the Democratic nominee would be based on portraying Biden's son as a criminal and his father as the enabler.

Trump's attack on Ilhan Omar as an "America-hating socialist" set a tone of anti-communism and anti-Muslim racism that permeated the entire speech. He claimed that if the Democrats won the 2020 elections, they would open the floodgates to immigrants and refugees who would swamp the country. He pointed out the large number of Somali refugees in Minneapolis, drawing boos from the crowd, and declared that local governments should be allowed to bar such an influx of outsiders.

In his gutter language and shameless, brazen lying, Trump shows himself to be a political criminal who is trying to whip up fascistic sentiments and build an ultra-right, authoritarian movement, regardless of electoral considerations and outcomes. He seeks to demonstrate to the financial aristocracy—of which he is a particularly depraved representative—that he will defend them against socialist ideas which are increasingly popular among working people and youth (although not, of course, in the leadership of the Democratic Party, contrary to Trump's claims).

Hence his appeal to the police and soldiers, as well as to the Border Patrol and other elements of the anti-immigrant Gestapo, which are all to be used as shock troops against an insurgent movement of the American working class, foreshadowed in the strikes by public school teachers and by autoworkers at General Motors.

Trump's main advantage is that his Democratic Party opponents are themselves a faction of the ruling elite, and

terrified of any popular movement from below. For that reason, the Democrats have confined their opposition to Trump entirely to backroom maneuvers, such as the tactics of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and House Intelligence Committee Chair Adam Schiff in the impeachment inquiry, with hearings held behind closed doors and private contacts with the military-intelligence apparatus.

Pelosi and Schiff are excluding any genuine democratic issue from the impeachment inquiry. They seek to rebuke Trump, or even oust him under certain circumstances, solely for the offenses he has committed against the CIA, the State Department and the Pentagon, not for his real crimes against immigrants, against democratic rights, against the working class as a whole.

In particular, the Democrats have allowed Trump to posture as an antiwar politician by mounting a hue and cry over his decision to pull the last US soldiers out of Syria, allowing Turkey to go forward with a military offensive against Syrian Kurdish forces, who were allied with the US military for the past four years in the conflict against ISIS.

Trump concluded his Minneapolis rally with a defense of his Syria policy, declaring that he was getting out of "endless wars" and admitting that the US government had spent \$8 trillion and killed "millions" of people across the Middle East, with the result that the region was worse off than before.

The transparent insincerity of his claims to empathy with the sacrifices of the soldiers was underscored by his declaration, "We may need them for something else." As an example of what Trump has in mind, on at least three occasions during the rally, when protesters sought to interrupt him, he gave orders to the police to remove them, which were carried out quickly. There were also multiple arrests outside the arena, as hundreds of anti-Trump demonstrators picketed the Target Center. In Trump's America, voicing opposition to the "commander-in-chief" is clearly meant to become a crime.



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