

Biden ads against Trump: Blame China for impact of coronavirus, not the ruling class

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Over the past several days, presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden and his supporters have released campaign ads that seek to outdo President Trump in blaming the coronavirus crisis on China. The ads attack Trump for “rolling over” to Chinese President Xi and covering up his government’s supposed responsibility for allowing the virus to spread to the United States and other countries.

According to this concocted narrative, the main culprit for the massive social and economic disaster brought on by the coronavirus is China, not the American oligarchy, which did nothing to prepare for the pandemic and has utilized it to hand trillions of dollars to itself.

With these ads, Biden lines up behind Trump’s anti-China witch-hunt, meant to divert attention from the indifference of his administration to the health and lives of American workers, and project mounting social anger outward against an external enemy. Biden merely seeks to turn the chauvinist and war-mongering agitation against Trump himself.

An ad released in battleground states on Friday begins by stating: “As I speak, China is censoring research on COVID-19, making it harder for the rest of us to beat the virus. President Trump is not doing enough about it. The uncomfortable truth is that Donald Trump left America exposed and vulnerable to this pandemic. He ignored the warnings of health experts and intelligence agencies and put his trust in China’s leaders instead. And now, we’re all paying the price.”

Biden continues. “When I’m president, I will put the CDC officials back in China and insist that the Chinese keep their commitment rather than trusting Beijing with the health and safety of the American people. And I will demand an international independent investigation into the circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak and China’s response.” This is accompanied by a clip of an Asian medical technician at work, an appeal to anti-Asian racism.

This video was followed on Saturday by arguably an even more hysterical ad sponsored by American Bridge, a Democratic super PAC. It features a clip of Biden telling

China on February 25: “We are going to need to be in your country. You have to be open, you have to be clear.”

The narrator then says: “But Trump rolled over for the Chinese. He took their word for it.”

The ad continues: “Trump never got a CDC team on the ground in China. And the travel ban he brags about? Trump let in 40,000 travelers from China into America after he signed it. Not exactly air tight.” The ad concludes with a shot of Trump holding a joint press conference with Xi.

What is one to conclude from this? That tens of millions of Americans are out of work and tens of thousands are already dead because Trump is a patsy of the Chinese Communist Party regime. Biden, in contrast, will take on the Chinese in earnest, presumably by military means if necessary.

What this twisted and poisonous narrative ignores are the real reasons for Trump’s neglect of the coronavirus threat throughout February and early March. Trump was at that time downplaying the virus because he, along with the entire political, corporate and media establishment, was focused on the threat of the outbreak to the financial markets and the fortunes of the corporate-financial elites.

The ruling class was working out how it would use the worsening health crisis to push through an unprecedented bailout of Wall Street and big business.

Biden has no principled differences with Trump’s refusal to organize a serious effort to save lives and stop the pandemic. He and his fellow Democrats gave virtually unanimous support to the bailout passed last month, and Biden has endorsed the subsequent drive to reopen the economy and force workers back to work without any real protection from the virus, even as infections and deaths continue to rise at record or near-record rates.

Biden was vice president in an administration that for eight years did nothing to seriously prepare for a pandemic, despite multiple warnings from public health and medical experts of the inevitable outbreak of a virus that could spread across the world and claim millions of lives.

Instead, he helped funnel trillions of dollars to Wall Street following the 2008 financial crash and increase military

spending to carry out wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen.

Biden's endorsement of the back-to-work drive was followed this past week by groveling endorsements from Bernie Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Elizabeth Warren. The role of Sanders and company, who were joined in endorsing Biden by Obama on Tuesday, is to lend a "progressive" gloss to Biden and promote the illusion that he can be pressured to the left.

But the anti-Chinese ads have already exposed the fraud of such claims. In fact, the line-up of the nominal "left" of the Democratic Party behind Biden is part of a coordinated campaign to fashion a "national unity" coalition headed by Biden and spanning the spectrum of official bourgeois politics.

Spurred on by the acute social, economic and political crisis of American capitalism sparked by the outbreak of the virus, but already rapidly developing prior to the pandemic, broad sections of the political and corporate establishment consider Trump too discredited and unstable to handle a major social explosion within the US, and not sufficiently competent or reliable to defend US imperialist interests internationally.

The dominant theme of the endorsement statements of Sanders and Warren as well as Obama is the need for "unity" in the face of the coronavirus crisis. Warren, in her statement, declared, "In this moment of crisis, it's more important than ever that the next president restores Americans' faith in good, effective government."

Obama said, "Right now, we need Americans of good will to unite in a great awakening ... we need Americans of all political stripes to get involved in our politics and our public life like never before."

The *New York Times'* leading columnist Thomas Friedman laid out the playbook in an April 7 commentary headlined, "US Will Need Biden National Unity Cabinet." He called on Biden to name a prospective cabinet in advance of the election that would span "Democrats on the Bernie Sanders left to Republicans on the Mitt Romney right." He warned, "The societal stress is going to be enormous as people fully absorb their lost savings, businesses and jobs, while defaults mount and worker rehiring happens much slower than the layoffs did ... If handled on a partisan basis, those issues will rip our country apart."

This theme was echoed in an April 16 *Washington Post* editorial titled, "The anti-Trump coalition is forming. The left and right must join." The editorial concluded by invoking the two central themes of a Biden national unity government: militarism and austerity.

The editorial stated: "Those who care about a strong national defense should worry that he [Trump] has severed

ties with close allies and cozied up to foreign strongmen who mean the United States harm. Anyone who has ever worried about the national debt should be horrified at his lack of interest in fixing the government's finances."

Right-wing Republican operatives including George Conway (husband of Trump aide Kellyanne Conway), Steve Schmidt (John McCain's campaign manager in 2008), Michael Gerson (speechwriter for George W. Bush) and Max Boot (neo-conservative member of the Project for an American Century and advocate of the 2003 invasion of Iraq), published similar columns this past week.

The concerns driving the project of assembling a right-wing bipartisan government headed by Biden are made clear in a commentary published last week by Bloomberg, headlined "This Pandemic Will Lead to Social Revolutions."

The author, Andreas Kluth, debunks the official slogans of "unity" in the face of the pandemic and writes: "In particular, COVID-19 exacerbates preexisting conditions of inequality wherever it arrives. Before long, it will cause social turmoil, up to and including uprisings and revolutions." Noting the surge in mass strikes and protests internationally since 2017, he writes: "In time, these passions could become new populist or radical movements, intent on sweeping aside whatever *ancient regime* they define as the enemy."

That the semi-senile near-octogenarian Biden is the choice to head off a revolutionary challenge by the working class is itself an expression of the depths of the political crisis facing the ruling class. But the working class must be warned: the capitalist class is making its counterrevolutionary preparations.

The working class must make its own conscious preparations, beginning with a resolute break with the Democratic Party and the building of a politically independent mass revolutionary socialist movement. This is the program being advanced by the candidates of the Socialist Equality Party, Joseph Kishore for president and Norissa Santa Cruz for vice president.



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