

As Trump incites police, fascist attacks on social protests

Biden pledges to keep troops in the Middle East and maintain record military spending

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Entering the final stage of the presidential race, Democratic candidate Joe Biden is defining ever more clearly the right-wing character of his campaign. Since Labor Day, the traditional start of the fall campaign, he has focused on appeals for support from the military and national security establishment, along with economic nationalist demagoguery and pledges to prosecute “violent” left-wing protesters.

This is the response of the Democratic Party to the increasingly fascist and anticommunist character of Donald Trump's reelection campaign. At a campaign rally Thursday night outside of Saginaw, Michigan, Trump continued his incitement of police and vigilante violence against protesters, part of his drive to create a far-right, authoritarian movement.

“If Biden wins,” he declared, “China wins. If Biden wins, the mob wins. If Biden wins, the rioters, anarchists, arsonists and flag burners win.”

He reiterated his support for the targeted assassination by a police task force led by Federal Marshals of Michael Reinoehl, who was wanted for the killing of an armed pro-Trump vigilante in Portland, Oregon.

“And by the way,” Trump told the crowd, “the US Marshals went in to get the killer, and that was the end of that. They got the killer, they got the killer.”

Biden, his running mate and former prosecutor Kamala Harris, and the Democratic Party as a whole have remained silent on the state murder of Reinoehl as well as the murder of two unarmed anti-police violence protesters in Kenosha, Wisconsin by the fascist vigilante Kyle Rittenhouse. Trump has publicly defended the 17-year-old would-be cop, who fatally shot the Kenosha-area residents and was then allowed to walk through police lines while carrying an automatic rifle slung over his shoulder.

Both Biden and Trump made the pilgrimage to Shanksville, Pennsylvania on Friday, the 19th anniversary of 9/11, to demonstrate their support for the “war on terror,” the political framework for the vast escalation of US military violence in Afghanistan and the Middle East and the erection domestically of a police-state infrastructure. The frontal assault on democratic rights included the Department of Homeland Security with its ICE immigration Gestapo, the Northern Command, “black site” torture centers, mass illegal surveillance, indefinite detention without due process and the militarization of local police departments.

The previous day, Thursday, Biden told *Stars and Stripes* that as president he would keep US troops in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq indefinitely. He spoke the day after Gen. Frank McKenzie, commander of the US Central Command, announced that the US planned to cut the troop level in Iraq from 5,200 to 3,000 by the end of this month and reduce the number of troops in Afghanistan from 8,600 to 4,500 by November.

According to the military newspaper, “Biden said the conditions in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq are so complicated that he cannot promise full withdrawal of troops in the near future.”

It added that the Democratic candidate “said he does not foresee major reductions in the US defense budget as the military refocuses its attention to potential threats from ‘near-peer’ powers such as China and Russia.” The Pentagon budget has soared under Trump, with overwhelming support from congressional Democrats, to \$738 billion.

“In fact,” the article stated, “he [Biden] said defense spending could increase in a Biden administration.” It quoted the former vice president as saying, “I’ve met with a number of my advisers and some have suggested in

certain areas the budget is going to have to be increased.”

The article noted that Biden has “vowed” to better equip the National Guard, which is increasingly being deployed in cities across the country to assist local and state police in suppressing left-wing protests.

He went on to attack Trump for failing to confront Russia. The newspaper wrote: “The former vice president said the largest readiness issue facing the military is America’s strained relationship with NATO. ‘They’re worried as hell about our failure to confront Russia diplomatically or other ways...’”

On Wednesday, Biden conducted an interview with Jake Tapper of CNN in which he attacked Trump on national security grounds. Responding to a question about the revelation in the soon-to-be released book by Bob Woodward that Trump revealed to the *Washington Post* reporter the existence of a classified nuclear weapons system, Biden said, “He [Trump] seems to have no conception of what constitutes national security, no conception of anything other than, what can he do to promote himself?”

He then turned, as he has repeatedly over the past week, to the report published last week by *Atlantic* magazine that Trump referred to US troops killed and injured in war as “losers” and “suckers.” Biden has seized on the report to stress his own devotion to the military and his patriotic credentials. Trump “doesn’t understand duty, honor, service, country,” he said, adding, “Unrelated to my running, he should not be the commander-in-chief of the United States military.”

On Wednesday, Biden made his first appearance in Michigan of the fall campaign, delivering a right-wing speech before an audience of United Auto Workers bureaucrats at a union hall in the Detroit suburb of Warren. The speech combined economic nationalism with a glorification of the corrupt gangsters who control the UAW and are currently enforcing the drive by the government and the auto companies to compel autoworkers to pump out profits in unsafe factories infected with the coronavirus.

The main thrust of Biden’s remarks was to attack Trump for failing to carry out many of the economic nationalist measures he promised in 2016: stopping the offshoring of jobs, “bringing back” jobs to the United States, halting auto plant closings, and enforcing “buy American” provisions in federal contracting.

He pledged to impose a tax penalty on companies that send “American” jobs abroad and then sell the products to US consumers, while providing tax incentives for

companies that create jobs at home. The union officials who use nationalism to pit American workers against their class brothers and sisters around the world and subordinate them to the profit interests of “our” American companies enthusiastically received Biden’s call for economic warfare.

Biden also cited the audio tapes released by Woodward in which Trump admitted to lying to the American people in order to conceal the dangerous and lethal implications of the coronavirus outbreak. He was, however, silent on the fact that the Democratic leadership was also given intelligence briefings on the deadly character of the virus and said nothing for nearly two months, while Trump brushed off the danger and the virus implanted itself in the American population, setting the stage for hundreds of thousands of needless deaths.

This week’s further lurch to the right by the Biden campaign is a continuation of the course adopted following the two party conventions last month. Responding to the Republicans’ denunciations of protesters as terrorists and the attack on Biden as a front man for socialists and anarchists out to “destroy the suburbs” and the “American way of life,” the Democratic nominee used his first post-convention campaign appearance to denounce violent protesters as criminals and demand that they be prosecuted.

Speaking in Pittsburgh, Biden declared, “I want to make it absolutely clear. Rioting is not protesting. Looting is not protesting. It’s lawlessness, plain and simple. And those who do it should be prosecuted.” He went on to attack Trump for failing to halt the violence and instead “fanning the flames.”

This speech was then used as the basis for a massive ad campaign launched two days later promoting Biden’s law-and-order credentials.



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