

Trump seizes on “Wuhan lab” lies in North Carolina speech

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Ex-president Donald Trump appeared as the keynote speaker of the state Republican Party convention in North Carolina Saturday night, embracing the lies against China that have dominated the American corporate media for the past two weeks.

The bulk of Trump’s meandering and interminable 90-minute speech consisted of disgusting self-glorification and the appeals to anti-immigrant bigotry, religious prejudice and American nationalism that have characterized all his appearances at campaign-style political rallies.

He saluted the police, the military and the border patrol, while denouncing the policies of the Biden administration from the standpoint of the extreme right. He combined this with praise for his own four years in the White House and denunciations of the 2020 elections as rigged because so many people relied on mail-in voting because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The *Wall Street Journal*, whose editorial page was largely aligned with the Trump administration and is politically hostile to Biden, nonetheless noted the extraordinary character of Trump’s remarks. It wrote in its coverage of the speech, “Never before in U.S. history has a former president returned to the campaign trail to claim that his election loss was fraudulent. But in his informal reemergence on the political scene before the GOP faithful at the North Carolina GOP convention in Greenville, Donald Trump did just that, insisting—falsely—that the 2020 race was stolen and corrupt.”

Trump also evinced a certain nervousness about the ongoing investigations into the Trump Organization being conducted by New York City and state prosecutors. They have subpoenaed massive amounts of business and tax records, and last week interrogated a top financial officer of the family-owned business,

which Trump now runs himself, after a four-year period when his two oldest sons were in charge.

None of this would deserve more than passing mention, if that. What was new in the speech was the political platform Trump has been provided by the corporate media and the Biden administration for a full-throated denunciation of China as the cause of both the pandemic and Trump’s own political misfortunes.

“The Democrats and the so-called experts are now finally admitting what I first said 13 months ago,” Trump gloated. “The evidence demonstrates that the virus originated in a Chinese government lab.”

He continued: “The time has come for America and the world to demand reparations and accountability from the Communist Party of China. We should all declare within one unified voice that China must pay. The United States should immediately take steps to phase in a firm 100 percent tariff on all goods made in China.”

With his right-wing audience giving him a standing ovation, Trump called for a minimum of \$10 trillion in reparations from China. At the same time, he noted that while his administration had done “an incredible job” in handling the coronavirus, his critics had been saying, “Look how well India’s doing. Well, India’s not doing too well now.”

Trump thus expressed sadistic glee over the mounting death toll in India, where the right-wing government of Narendra Modi is pursuing the same policy of profits over lives that Trump carried out in the White House—and which the Biden administration is continuing, albeit with different rhetoric and tone.

The former president made no mention of the 400,000 Americans who died of COVID-19 during his time in office. Instead, he praised himself for the rapid development of the vaccines—for which scientists, many

of them at government agencies he vilified, are responsible, not the ignoramus-in-chief, who was promoting quack remedies and bleach injections.

Significantly, Trump did not address the fact that self-identified Republicans, and particularly his own supporters, are reportedly the most resistant section of the American population to getting the vaccine. He praised himself for the delivery of the vaccine but did not tell his own supporters to get vaccinated, demonstrating that he has no more concern for the lives of Americans than for those of the people of India.

It is politically critical that Trump has been provided a new basis for political agitation by the embrace of anti-China slanders by the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and all the broadcast networks, as well as President Biden, who has ordered an investigation into the origins of COVID-19 conducted by the intelligence agencies.

Since Biden assigned this task to the CIA and similar outfits, which have no medical expertise but plenty of experience in frame-ups and provocations, rather than to the NIH and CDC, it is clear that the administration expects the intelligence community to produce a propaganda case for global sanctions against China.

In embracing what they all know is a conspiracy theory concocted by Chinese exiles and fascistic provocateurs like Steve Bannon, Trump's former campaign chairman and White House adviser, the US political establishment has given new political life to the widely discredited fabrications of Trump and his most deranged supporters.

After all, if Trump is proven correct, as he boasted at the North Carolina rally, in indicting Beijing for producing the "China virus" and the "Kung flu," shouldn't his other equally false claims be reconsidered? Why not revisit the question of the "stolen election," or even the presentation of the January 6 attack on Congress as a peaceful protest by Trump supporters, despite all the evidence to the contrary?

Trump concluded his remarks with a lengthy rehash of his claims about the 2020 elections, which he described as "the crime of the century." He praised the ongoing audit of Maricopa County, Arizona and efforts to force similar probes in Pennsylvania and Georgia, three of the five "battleground" states that decided the outcome in the Electoral College.

He declared that thousands of dead people and illegal immigrants had voted in the election and were responsible for his defeat and hailed the efforts of Republican-controlled state legislatures to enact provisions that will make it harder for poor and working-class voters to cast ballots. "We all know what happened with the election," he said. "And we can never, ever let that happen again."

Trump's appearance at the North Carolina dinner is to be followed by public rallies in support of Republican candidates he has endorsed in Ohio, Florida, Alabama and Texas over the next two months.



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