

# Gunman charged with attempted assassination of Trump: The political issues

Joseph Kishore  
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Information is still emerging about the incident at the White House Correspondents' Association event on Saturday night, but what is known so far indicates that Cole Tomas Allen, the shooter, was motivated by political opposition to the Trump administration.

According to a statement that he distributed prior to the incident, Allen, aged 31, was horrified by being implicated in the crimes of the Trump administration and sought to target senior Trump officials, though his attempt did not place any of these officials in direct danger. Allen was arraigned Monday on three felony counts, including one of attempted assassination of the president, which carries a life prison sentence.

Marxists oppose such attacks from a principled and political standpoint. Individual acts of violence do not advance the struggle against reaction. They substitute the acts of an isolated individual for the conscious political mobilization of the working masses. Regardless of the crimes of the intended target—and those of Trump are monumental—the overriding issue is the political consequences of such violence. Whatever the motive of the attacker, the result is to hand the government a pretext for expanding repression and the criminalization of opposition.

It is, however, necessary to point to the staggering hypocrisy and cowardice that has characterized the response from the media and political establishment. With its characteristic stupidity, the media treats the event as if it bears no relationship to the pervasive and systematic violence that saturates American life, promoted by the state and the ruling class, headed by a president who wallows in bloodcurdling rhetoric and conducts himself like a mob boss.

The response of political figures, in the US and internationally, follows the same script. Wrapped in the sanctimonious refrain that “there is no place for violence in politics,” officials issue moralistic platitudes while defending or presiding over governments whose policy is organized violence.

Certain responses are particularly nauseating. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared: “There is no place for violence, not against political leaders and not against anyone.” Coming from the head of a state waging a genocidal war in Gaza, this statement is an obscenity. More than 75,000

Palestinians have been killed in the genocide, by conservative estimates. Dozens of Hezbollah “political leaders” have been murdered in Lebanon by Israeli bombs, missiles and sabotage devices, even more in Iran.

French President Emmanuel Macron declared that “the armed attack ... is unacceptable,” adding, “I extend my full support to Donald Trump.” It would have been sufficient, from the standpoint of diplomatic convention, to express relief that no one was harmed. But “full support” is something else entirely. It is a political endorsement, offered to an administration that is in the midst of a criminal war of aggression in Iran and erecting police-state measures at home.

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi likewise declared, “Violence has no place in a democracy and must be unequivocally condemned,” while Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni echoed the same refrain: “No political hatred can find space in our democracies.” These homilies are offered by individuals who belong to the most reactionary, violent and fascistic political traditions.

In the US, House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries declared: “The violence and chaos in America must end.” Only two months ago, Jeffries responded to Trump's assassination of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, by declaring that Khamenei was a “bad actor,” and he would “not shed any tears” over his killing. That is, violence and murder are entirely legitimate when advancing the interests of American imperialism.

Other Democrats followed the same script. Most politically significant is the statement from Democratic Socialists of America member and New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, who declared that “political violence is absolutely unacceptable” and that he is “glad the President and guests at the White House Correspondents' Dinner are safe.” Bernie Sanders declared that “a functioning democracy relies on the premise that people can express their political views freely without fear of being attacked or assassinated,” adding, “Political violence is political cowardice.”

None of these figures made the elementary point that the Trump administration, and the officials that comprise it, is guilty of staggering and systematic violence and threats of political violence.

Consider the following selection of statements just from Trump:

- On Iran, April 2026: “A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again. I don’t want that to happen, but it probably will.” And in March: “If the Hormuz Strait is not immediately ‘Open for Business’ we will conclude our lovely ‘stay’ in Iran by blowing up and completely obliterating all of their Electric Generating Plants, Oil Wells and Kharg Island (and possibly all desalinization plants!)”

- On the Democrats and political opposition, April 2026: “Now with the death of Iran, the greatest enemy America has is the Radical Left, Highly Incompetent, Democrat Party!”

- On drug dealers, November 2022: “We’re going to be asking everyone who sells drugs, gets caught selling drugs, to receive the death penalty for their heinous acts.” And on shoplifters, September 2023: “Very simply, if you rob a store, you can fully expect to be shot as you are leaving that store. Shot!”

- On protesters against police violence, May 2020: “When the looting starts, the shooting starts.” And on police conduct, July 2017: “Please don’t be too nice.”

Countless statements of a similar character could be collected. One should add the explicit defense and justification of the murder of Renée Nicole Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis, and the glorification of brutality and violence against immigrant workers by fascists like Steven Miller.

As always, the cowardly and complicit response of the Democrats—incapable of saying anything true for fear of legitimizing popular opposition—only encourages Trump and the Republicans to go on the offensive. Party leaders seized on the incident to escalate incitement and repression—denouncing a “radicalized left,” portraying the event as the “inevitable result” of opposition to the regime, and demanding more police powers and expanded funding for the repressive apparatus.

In the immediate aftermath of the incident, Trump joined Republican allies in demanding that ABC “immediately fire” late-night host Jimmy Kimmel for jokes made before the WHCA dinner, using the episode to escalate the assault on free speech.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt gave this campaign its most explicit formulation. “This political violence stems from a systemic demonization of [Trump] and his supporters,” she declared on Monday, blaming “elected members of the Democrat party and even some in the media.”

Leavitt went further, insisting that those who “constantly, falsely, label the president as a fascist ... and compare him to Hitler ... are fueling this kind of violence” and denouncing what she called a “left-wing cult of hatred.” The aim is to declare political criticism a form of “violence” and to justify a violent crackdown.

In fact, the vast majority of acts of organized political violence in the United States has come from the right—from armed militia networks and far-right extremists. The past

decade has seen repeated, escalating right-wing violence: the mobilization of fascistic forces on January 6, 2021; high-profile attacks and assassination plots against public officials; and acts of individual violence carried out by far-right figures like Kyle Rittenhouse. For years, federal assessments and major research centers have identified far-right extremism as the principal source of deadly domestic terrorism and political violence in the country.

At the same time, if anything is “fueling” acts like that attributed to Cole Tomas Allen it is, above all, the criminality of the government itself, combined with a political structure that blocks any genuine avenue for the mass opposition of workers and youth to find expression. The deliberate suppression and diversion of popular anger by the Democratic Party and the trade union apparatus only deepens the sense of frustration and impotence, creating conditions in which desperate, ill-advised and destructive individual actions can emerge.

The way forward lies not in individual violence, but in the development of the class struggle, which opens the possibility of a far more conscious, collective and optimistic road: the independent mobilization of the working class against war, dictatorship and the capitalist order that produces them.

Settling accounts with Trump is not a matter of individual acts or the removal of one man. It is a struggle against the capitalist state and the ruling class interests it serves—war abroad, repression at home. The only force capable of stopping this descent into barbarism is the working class, acting consciously and independently, mobilizing its social power against the entire apparatus of militarism, dictatorship and oligarchic rule.



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