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By Patrick Martin
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Trump, Roger Stone call for violence and repression after Election Day

At a campaign rally and in a television interview, President Donald Trump reiterated his threats of police-military repression during and after the Nov. 3 election to maintain himself in power. He suggested again that he “deserved” a third term, for a total of 12 years in office, although that would violate the US Constitution.

His campaign speech Saturday night in Minden, Nevada, a small town outside of Reno, included a litany of insults and threats against his Democratic opponent, former Vice President Joe Biden, and a claim that he would defeat Biden in Nevada and nationally on Nov. 3.

“And then, after that, we’ll negotiate, right?” Trump said. “Because we’re probably—based on the way we were treated—we’re probably entitled to another four after that.” Trump has repeatedly suggested staying in office beyond the two-term limit set by the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution.



President Donald Trump speaks at a rally at Minden-Tahoe Airport in Minden, Nev., Saturday, Sept. 12, 2020. (AP Photo/Andrew Harnik)

Trump also claimed that he could not be defeated in the Nov. 3 election unless the vote was “rigged.” Opinion polls show him trailing Biden both nationally and in virtually every “battleground” state, including Nevada, although many polls show the race tightening.

The same day, Trump gave an interview to the “Justice with Jeanine” program on Fox News, hosted by Jeanine Pirro, in which he openly threatened violence against political opponents. Pirro asked, “Let’s say there are threats, they say that they’re going to threaten riots if they lose on Election Night, assuming we get a winner on Election Night. What are you going to do?”

Trump responded, “We’ll put them down very quickly if they do that,” adding, “We have the right to do that, we have the power to do that if we want.”

He then cited the Insurrection Act of 1807, which he had threatened to invoke in June against the mass protests against police violence that swept the United States after the police murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Referring to National Guard and other federal troops, he said, “We just send them in and we do it very easy. I mean it’s very easy. I’d rather not do that because there’s no reason for it, but if we had to, we’d do that and put it down within minutes, within minutes.”

Later in the same interview, he claimed that demonstrators against police violence were being paid for by rich liberals. This is an argument made in explicitly anti-Semitic terms by the fascistic QAnon group and the ultra-right *Breitbart News*, who portray liberal billionaire George Soros, a survivor of the Holocaust, as responsible for left-wing political activity in America.

Trump also defended the police assassination of Michael Reinhoehl, the anti-fascist protester from Portland gunned down Sept. 3 by police belonging to the federally-led Pacific Northwest Violent Offenders Task Force. He emphasized his personal role in ordering the killing of Reinhoehl, saying, “Two-and-a-half days went by and I put out when are you going to go get him? The US Marshals went in to get him.”

He continued, “The US Marshals killed him and I will tell you something, that’s the way it has to be. There has to be retribution when you have crime like this. There can’t be guys standing up that want to fight...”

Even more wide-ranging threats of violence came from Roger Stone, Trump's longtime political crony and adviser, whom Trump saved from the prospect of prison in July by commuting his sentence for lying to congressional committees and to Special Counsel Robert Mueller.

Stone appeared Sept. 10 on the "Infowars" program hosted by the fascist Alex Jones and said Trump was likely to lose the Nov. 3 election, although he claimed this would be the result of voting being "corrupted" through the use of mail ballots.

He then urged Trump to declare martial law, invoke the Insurrection Act, seize ballot boxes in states like Nevada where mail-in voting prevails, and arrest political opponents in both the media and the Democratic Party. According to an account by the watchdog group Media Matters, Stone said that Trump would have "the authority" to arrest Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Apple CEO Tim Cook, former defense secretary James Mattis and "the Clintons."

Stone cited a report in the online publication *Daily Beast* about planned protests against Trump if he claims falsely to have won the Nov. 3 vote. "If the Daily Beast is involved in provably seditious... acts," Stone said, their "entire staff can be taken into custody and their office shut down." He added, "They want to play war, this is war."

These fascist ravings must be taken seriously. Trump and his political hatchetmen are deeply unpopular, but they have one important advantage. Their nominal opposition in the Democratic Party represents the same class as Trump—Wall Street and the super-rich—and has no intention of conducting a serious struggle against a power grab by the ultra-right.

As the Socialist Equality Party warned in a statement published Sept. 9 by the *World Socialist Web Site*: "The campaign between Trump and Biden is pitting an administration that is making an increasingly open appeal to violence and police state repression against a Democratic Party campaign that, as always, offers no genuine alternative to the drive toward authoritarianism and war."

Trump does not have an electoral strategy, in the sense of seeking to win the support of a majority of those who vote in the Nov. 3 election, or even in states that could deliver him an Electoral College majority. Rather, he seeks to create such an atmosphere of chaos and crisis leading up to the election that he can assert a claim to rule, backed by the police, sections of the military and armed right-wing groups.

More broadly, as the Sept. 9 SEP statement says, “Trump is seeking to create conditions, regardless of the outcome on November 3, in which he will emerge as the leader of an extra-constitutional, right-wing movement.”

The threat of authoritarian rule in the United States cannot be fought through the Democratic Party and casting a vote for the ticket of Biden and Senator Kamala Harris. On the contrary, the Democrats represent merely an alternative route to the same destination. While Trump seeks police state rule, backed by armed bands of what he now calls “citizens’ militias,” the Democrats seek to subordinate political life to the CIA and the Pentagon, the reactionary instruments of American imperialism.

Throughout Trump’s four years in office, the Democrats have sought to divert all popular opposition to Trump into the blind alley of their right-wing anti-Russia campaign. This continues today, with Biden lambasting Trump for not confronting Russian President Vladimir Putin about alleged “bounties” paid by Moscow to the Taliban for killing American soldiers in Afghanistan, for which no evidence has been produced. Biden has followed this up with a declaration that if elected he will not pull US troops out of Afghanistan, Iraq or Syria.

Neither capitalist party, Democrats or Republicans, offers any solution to the crisis gripping American society, including the coronavirus pandemic, the resulting economic collapse and the ongoing rampage of police violence that takes a thousand lives a year.

The Socialist Equality Party candidates in 2020, Joseph Kishore for president and Norissa Santa Cruz for vice president, offer the only genuine alternative to the twin parties of big business. We urge workers and young people to contact our campaign and join the fight for socialism.

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