

Trump Outlines Right-Wing Program of Extreme Nationalism at Cincinnati Rally

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In a rally in Cincinnati, Ohio on Thursday night, US President-elect Donald Trump outlined the right-wing program of extreme “America First” nationalism of the incoming administration.

The Cincinnati speech was unlike any delivered by a president or president-elect in US history. It was a combination of blatant contradictions, exaggerations, wild hyperbole, empty demagoguery and praise for himself as the man who would fix all the problems facing the country. It combined threats against political enemies with pledges to work with anyone and everyone to overcome gridlock and restore American jobs.

While couched in rhetoric about protecting the “American worker,” Trump’s policy proposals centered on massive tax cuts to corporations and deregulation, combined with increasing the size of the military, expanding police powers and sharply curtailing immigration. During the rally Trump also announced that his choice for secretary of defense is retired general James “Mad Dog” Mattis.

Trump’s remarks were clearly shaped and likely written by Trump’s chief strategist, Stephen Bannon, the former head of Breitbart News who has ties to fascist organizations. Bannon has called for the formation of a new “movement”—a term Trump repeated throughout his remarks—based on economic nationalism and opposition to “globalists.”

A major theme was the need to “unify” the nation in opposition to Washington politicians who have subordinated “American interests” to foreign powers. “There is a lot of talk about how we are becoming a globalized world,” Trump said, “but the relationships people value in this country are local... There is no global anthem, no global currency, no certificate of global citizenship. We pledge allegiance to one flag, and that is the American flag.”

“From now on it is going to be America First,” Trump added. “We are going to put ourselves first... Our goal is to strengthen the bonds between citizens, to restore our sense of membership in a shared national community.”

As was the case during his campaign for president, Trump made a demagogic appeal to social anger over declining wages and social inequality. “Our government has failed to protect the interests of the American worker,” he said. “A shrinking workforce and flat wages are not going to be the new normal.”

There is a vast chasm between this empty populist rhetoric and the personnel that Trump has selected to populate his government. The speech followed a series of cabinet picks, including billionaire asset strippers, Wall Street bankers, and dedicated opponents of

financial and corporate regulations, public education and Medicare and Medicaid, to lead the Treasury, Commerce, Education and Health and Human Services departments.

For all his talk of national “unity,” a Trump administration will be one of brutal class war. Trump’s “action plan” is centered on freeing corporations from any restraints on profit-making and exploitation. “Right now we punish companies for doing business in America,” he said. To bring back jobs, the new administration would “massively lower taxes, and make America the best place in the world to hire, to invest, to grow, to create and to expand.”

He added that he would “eliminate every single wasteful regulation that undermines the ability of our workers and our companies to compete with companies from foreign lands.”

Trump touted the deal with Carrier to continue production at its Indianapolis factory, which Carrier’s parent company, United Technologies Corp. (UTC), planned to shut by 2019 and shift production to Mexico. Carrier will retain only 800 of the 1,400 production workers at the plant, and the deal also sanctions the closure of the UTC factory in Huntington, Indiana, which will wipe out the jobs of another 700 workers.

In discussions late last month, Trump told UTC CEO Gregory Hayes that his plans to slash corporate taxes and gut labor, health and safety and environmental regulations would prove far more profitable for the company than the \$65 million in annual savings it would gain from shifting production overseas. In exchange for the deal, Carrier was given another \$7 million in state tax cuts and other subsidies. It is also likely that UTC, a major defense contractor, was promised even larger contracts under a Trump presidency.

Trump reiterated his proposal for major infrastructure projects, a plan that would be a boondoggle for corporations and essentially hand over public infrastructure to private companies. These measures, combined with greater restrictions on trade, would “usher in a new industrial revolution.”

Trump combined his program of tax cuts and deregulation with a call for sharp restrictions on immigration. “We will restore the sovereignty of the United States,” he said. “We will construct a great wall at the border” and “liberate our communities from the epidemic of gang violence and drugs pouring into our nation.”

Trump said little on foreign policy, except to criticize the \$6 trillion spent on wars in the Middle East. He also said the US should “stop looking to topple regimes and overthrow governments” and instead focus on “rebuilding our country.” Under a Trump administration, he asserted, the US “will seek shared interests wherever possible and pursue a new era of peace, understanding and good will.”

In fact, Trump’s “America First” nationalism will be accompanied by a massive escalation of military violence. In his speech, Trump pledged a “national effort to build our badly depleted military” and called for a major campaign to “destroy ISIS.”

More significant is the selection of Mattis as secretary of defense. Mattis is a fanatic anti-Islamic militarist who played a significant role in the US invasion of Afghanistan and led the brutal 2004 assault on Falluja, Iraq. Speaking of his experiences in Afghanistan, Mattis said in 2005 that “it’s a hell of a lot of fun to shoot them.”

While leading US Central Command under Obama from 2010 to 2013, Mattis was critical of

the White House for not waging war aggressively enough in the Middle East and for being too conciliatory toward Iran.

In an indication of the dominance of the military in a Trump administration, Mattis would be the first ranking general to be defense secretary since George Marshall in 1950–51. Federal law stipulates that generals must be retired for seven years before leading the Pentagon, but Mattis is expected to get a waiver from Congress. He has the support of Senate Republicans, including Senator John McCain, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Mattis will work closely with Trump's national security advisor, another retired general, Michael Flynn.

The unions and the Democratic Party have praised Trump, echoing his economic nationalism and echoing the lie that the billionaire real estate mogul, who will head up the most right-wing government in history, is a champion of the working class.

US Senator Joe Donnelly (Democrat-Indiana) said he hoped to work with Trump to "build on momentum created by your agreement with United Technologies" and adopt a federal "outsourcing" proposal that would "deny and claw back certain tax benefits to companies that move jobs offshore." Directing his comment at Trump, he added, "I strongly encourage you to make it clear that efforts to ship jobs offshore to chase cheap wages will be addressed head on by the Trump Administration. I stand ready to assist in any way possible."

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