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You Can't Vote Out Fascism... You Have to Drive It From Power!

I've been noticing a increasing phenomena on MSNBC and other mainstream media outlets: as the Trump/Pence regime resorts to ever more outrageous behavior, the various pundits—when asked to explain this or that monstrous action or statement—just shake their heads and admit that they're simply *baffled* as to why anyone would do something so irrational, so clueless, so counterproductive, so cruel. There's an unspoken implication that the regime can't possibly understand what they're actually doing—which in turn suggests that this can't go on forever, that the whole thing will implode due to their painfully evident incompetence and/or thoughtlessness.

The first thing to point out is that the regime's words and actions, insane as they might appear to any rational human being, are not arbitrary, and they're not just bluster. *These guys mean exactly what they say.* From the very beginning, we've been told to take Trump's words "*seriously but not literally*", that he's just "*communicating with his base*", and that he'll be reined in by the "adults in the room", or maybe by our (increasingly mythical) "checks and balances". These lines of reasoning start from the premise that Trump is just another corrupt far-right politician, deploying exaggerated rhetoric merely to get attention, while in fact staying within the boundaries of agreed-upon norms of civilized behavior. If we've learned anything in the last year and a half, it's that *this regime has no shame, no scruples, and no limits.*

Fascist tendencies in right-wing politics are of course nothing new; it's just that they were usually (mildly) disguised by coded language and "dog whistles", allowing plausible

deniability for politicians and their racist, xenophobic followers. But this regime is different. They're not hiding it any more. This allows them to keep upping the ante. One consequence of this is that it leaves no middle ground: this is because *anything short of driving them from power essentially means acquiescence and acceptance*, and paves the ground for further atrocities.

The media's failure to recognize these obvious facts points to some glaring limitations of their blinkered world view: they can't understand, because they can't *let* themselves understand. If they did, they would have to grapple with two simple facts: first, that the country is headed inexorably into full-on fascism; and second, that a massive sustained public uprising is the *only* thing that could stop this nightmare.

I know, I know: the midterms are only four months away, the blue wave, take back the house, that's what we have to focus on. I'm sorry, but that's *bullshit*. There's five simple words that refute this course: *You can't vote out fascism*. While it's true that some of our commentariat are finally admitting that, hey, maybe these guys really *are* fascists, none of them can seem to make the mental leap to what that might imply as far as a viable strategy.

Look around, and ask yourself: what are these dirtbags willing to do to stay in power? The answer is obvious: *anything*. How did they achieve power in the first place? By *cheating*: gerrymandering, fraud, hacking, disenfranchisement, etc. Now they've been there for nearly two years. The Democrats won the 2016 election by three million votes, and look at where we are; do you *really* think 2018 is going to be any better? (And I won't get into how ineffective the Democratic leadership has been; that's a whole other can of worms.)

You know what a *ratchet* is, right? It's got teeth that only allow motion in one direction. Try to go the other way, and nothing happens. That's how fascist politics work. As long as everything is headed in the direction *they* want, they can keep up the pretense that *nothing has changed*, that this is still business as usual. But the minute that they start losing—in the courts, in the media, in elections, whatever—they pull out every trick in the book—and *nothing* is off limits.

We can see this everywhere: in the Supreme Court battle (Merrick Garland? *Never*. Gorsuch and Kavanaugh? *It would be unfair to delay confirmation for one instant*), the Muslim ban, immigration, the EPA, everywhere. Any battle they win, no matter how ugly and lethal the outcome, no matter how unpopular, it's *settled*, let's move on. Anything they lose? *That can't stand*.

Remember: *a ratchet only goes one way*.

While it's heartening to see a new level of dissent and protest, we can't lose sight of the fact that *fascists don't give a damn what you or the public thinks—or who or what they vote for.*

They will continue until we *force* them to stop. And that's not going to happen through normal channels.

So what can we do? How do we stop this nightmare? Is it even possible?

I don't want to sugarcoat it: it's not going to be easy, and there are no guarantees of success. *But it is possible.* Millions of people—almost certainly the majority of Americans—*hate* this and are *agonizing* over what this regime is doing to our country, the world and the planet itself.

Imagine if *all* of those people—*everyone*—took to the streets *and stayed there*, demanding that the regime be *removed from power*. What would happen? Nobody knows exactly, but there are a number of historical examples that we can give us a few hints. Although each uprising has its own particular circumstances, each shows us an instance where this strategy—where *an ever-growing number of people took to the streets and didn't go home*—has actually worked.

In Egypt in 2011, Hosni Mubarak, who had been in power for thirty years, was forced out in *less than a month* of mass protests, civil disobedience and general strikes. In South Korea in 2016, President Park was finally impeached and convicted when first hundreds of thousands, then *millions* of people took to the streets. And this year in Armenia, mass civil disobedience and a national strike forced out Serzh Sargsyan after a corrupt power grab.

What did these uprisings have in common? They were massive, diverse, nonviolent, sustained and determined. Each grew to become large enough that the powers-that-be were *forced* to respond to their demands. Obviously this is not a strategy of first resort; in more normal times, it would be difficult to rouse enough people to create this kind of a crisis. But these are *not* normal times. What this regime is doing is shaking people to their very core; we can see evidence of this in the massive protests, in huge outpourings of support for and donations to the ACLU, Planned Parenthood and other groups.

The disgust and outrage that people feel is real. Right now, most of it is being channeled towards the midterms. But let's face it: *the Democrats are not going to stop this.* The Democratic leadership has actively hobbled its progressive wing; its few principled congresspeople have been disparaged as mavericks and loose cannons, lacking “civility”. Impeachment—which should be a no-brainer given the monstrous crimes of the regime—is “off the table”. Sure, maybe we'd be better off with the Democrats in control of the

house and senate (unlikely as that may be). But even *that* wouldn't fix this—and if people's energy is channeled into paths that are almost certain to fail, it could lead to *disaster. This has simply gone too far.* The Democrats' inevitable strategy of “finding common ground”, of compromise and capitulation—when faced with *fascism* — is *unconscionable.*

Politicians will only do the right thing if they are forced to do the right thing. While we do have to acknowledge that nothing so far has been even *close* to what it will take, there is deep potential—but *if and only if* it is transformed and infused with a sober and honest understanding of the depth of what we are actually confronting *and* a real path to drive it out.

This is what the group [Refuse Fascism](#) is for. They are the *only* group that has raised the single unifying demand that *The Trump/Pence Regime Must Go!* I urge you to read their [call](#), to [join](#), to [donate](#), to talk to your friends, families and colleagues, to be one of thousands now, leading to tens and then hundreds of thousands, and finally *millions*, taking to the streets—and *staying there*—until the demand is met: *In the Name of Humanity, This Nightmare Must End: The Trump/Pence Regime Must Go!*

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