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## Trump threatens violence at Republican National Convention

By Patrick Martin

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Billionaire demagogue Donald Trump warned that there would be violence at the Republican National Convention if he fell short of a majority of delegates and was denied the party's nomination. "I think you'd have riots," he said on CNN's "New Day" program Wednesday morning.

"I'm representing... many, many millions of people, in many cases first-time voters," he said. "If you disenfranchise those people, and you say, 'I'm sorry, you're 100 votes short'... I think you'd have problems like you've never seen before. I think bad things would happen."

"I wouldn't lead it, but I think bad things would happen," he reiterated, adding, "After we win, I think a lot of feelings will be soothed."

Trump's statement marks a further development in the thuggish and fascistic character of his campaign. Last week the candidate was widely criticized for instigating violence against protesters at his campaign rallies.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell telephoned Trump on Tuesday, the day he swept four of five primaries—in Florida, Illinois, Missouri and North Carolina—to discuss the presidential

campaign. McConnell told reporters he had discussed the violence at Trump rallies and told the Republican frontrunner, “It might be a good idea to condemn that... no matter what the source.”

Instead, Trump is making thinly disguised threats of violence against the leadership of his own party, in the event it seeks to block his path to the nomination.

What Trump denounces as a political outrage, deserving a violent response, is nothing more than an established democratic procedure of party conventions.

“I think we’ll win before getting to the convention,” he said. “But I can tell you, if we didn’t and if we’re 20 votes short or if we’re 100 short and we’re at 1,100 and somebody else is at 500 or 400, because we’re way ahead of everybody, I don’t think you can say that we don’t get it automatically.”

Trump was responding to the possibility of a contested or open convention in which no candidate has the majority required for nomination. The Manhattan billionaire has a significant but not decisive lead, with 621 delegates, just over half the 1,237 needed.

Texas Senator Ted Cruz has 396 after winning eight states, and Ohio Governor John Kasich 138 after defeating Trump in the winner-take-all contest in his home state Tuesday. Nearly 200 more delegates were pledged to Senator Marco Rubio of Florida and other candidates who have suspended their campaigns. These are officially uncommitted.

The Trump campaign fears that Cruz will continue to accumulate delegates in contests in the western states and that Kasich will be competitive in the Midwest and Northeast, leaving the frontrunner well short of a majority when the Republican National Convention opens in Cleveland on July 18.

If all three candidates fail to reach the majority required for nomination on the first ballot, in subsequent ballots, according to party rules and previous political tradition, most of the delegates will be free to vote for any nominee, including an individual who did not run in the primaries.

For most of the history of the United States, contested conventions were the norm, and there were numerous occasions when a candidate entered the nominating convention with a sizeable lead but less than a majority, and the delegates ultimately selected someone else. The most famous such instance was in 1860, when the Republican convention passed over the frontrunner, New York Senator William Seward, who had a large lead in the first ballot, and gave a third-ballot victory to Abraham Lincoln.

It goes without saying that Lincoln, Seward and the other Republicans of that era, who led the struggle that destroyed chattel slavery in America, are as distant politically as they could be from Trump, Cruz and other defenders of the modern exploiters of wage slaves. But the example is nonetheless instructive.

There is widespread opposition in the Republican political establishment to nominating Trump, a mixture of concern that his racist diatribes will provoke mass opposition and hostility to his deviations from right-wing orthodoxy, such as his rejection of cuts in Social Security.

With a Cruz victory in the primaries unlikely, and a Kasich victory mathematically impossible, a contested convention is the only means of blocking Trump's nomination. In an editorial Wednesday, the *Wall Street Journal* hailed Kasich's defeat of Trump in Ohio for making a deadlocked convention possible and urged the formation of a Kasich-Rubio ticket as an alternative to Trump.

Former House Speaker John Boehner told a conference in Florida Wednesday that he favored a contested convention that would turn to the current Speaker, Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, as the Republican nominee. Ryan dismissed the possibility, but did not rule out accepting a draft.

There are also Republican figures discussing a third-party campaign against Trump and the presumptive Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton.

At the same time, none of the other remaining Republican presidential candidates have stated that they will not support Trump, two of those who have dropped out—Chris Christie and Ben Carson—have endorsed him, and the Republican National Committee has said that its policy is to back whomever is nominated.

On Monday, former New York Mayor Rudolf Giuliani indicated his support for Trump in an interview with a newspaper associated with billionaire Republican mega-donor Sheldon Adelson. Last month, when asked if he would back Trump as the nominee, Adelson said, "Trump is a businessman. I am a businessman. He employs a lot of people. I employed 50,000 people. Why not?"

For her part, the leading Democratic Party candidate Hillary Clinton has responded to the divisions in the Republican Party and the rise of Trump by shifting rhetorically to the right, seeking to position herself as the responsible representative of the ruling class and American imperialism.

At a rally held on Tuesday night, after she won the Democratic primaries in a number of states over Bernie Sanders, Clinton proclaimed in a thinly-veiled reference to Trump: "Our commander in chief has to be able to defend our country, not embarrass it, engage our