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USA

Trump Bribes Voters, We Remember 9/11, and Soon the Midterm Election

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President Donald Trump convened the first-ever midterm Republican Convention in Dallas, Texas principally to celebrate himself and motivate his base for the coming November 3 national elections where control of both houses of Congress is in play. He told his followers to pretend that he's on the ballot and to vote for Republicans.

He told those in the stadium to raise their hands and led them in taking an oath, saying, "I pledge to the greatest president in the history of the United States that loves us so much he can't even breathe that I will go out [to vote] with my family, my friends, I will do it anyway — I don't care if I'm registered or not, I'm going to try and cheat like hell, like they do." As an inducement he pledged that if his candidates won, he would give every American \$5,000, a bribe of dubious legality that would cost one trillion dollars and is just as unlikely to be fulfilled as similar promises of cash he made on other occasions.

Trump organized the event because polls have found his popularity declining and Republicans fear losing the election and both houses of Congress. Voters have turned against Republicans because of opposition to the war on Iran, rising prices for gas, housing, health care, and food, the violent attack by Immigration and Customs Enforcement on immigrants and U.S. citizens, the construction of massive data centers, and now new concerns that the government isn't restraining the development of artificial intelligence (AI). Prominent AI researchers and industry executives say that AI could bring about the end of human life within a decade. Congress has taken no action on the AI threat.

The Republican midterm convention coincided with the nation's memorials of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Al-Qaeda's terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon near Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001, killing more than 3,000 people in both places. The victims ranged from businesspeople and military officials to workers of all sorts. As the commemorations took place, New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani released 170,000 pages of documents that revealed that federal and state government officials had urged people to go back to work in New York City even though the air was toxic, leading to the subsequent deaths of at least 9,000 people.

Some commentators reminded us that in response to the attack, U.S. president George W. Bush launched wars on Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, wars that lasted twenty and nine years respectively and that killed between 400,000 and 900,000 people. In his remarks at a memorial organized by the Defense Department, Trump suggested that the 9/11 attacks justified his war on Iran today.

At the time, the attack led the U.S. Congress to pass repressive legislation, such as the Patriot Act of 2001, the Homeland Security Act of 2002, and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) of 2008 which gave the government vastly increased power to spy on both citizens and foreigners alike. Those acts made it possible for the government to secretly collect the personal data of millions of American citizens who were never suspected of a crime.

So as Americans prepare to vote in the November 3 elections there is anxiety and fear. The U.S. war on Iran goes on and expands with the ever-present danger of it becoming a nuclear war. AI, experts say, could kill us all within a decade. And Trump has threatened to send U.S. troops and ICE agents to polling places, raising the question of his stealing the election or carrying out a coup. Many organizations are preparing to defend the election.

At the moment, as children go back to school, the country is quiet. There are no protests to speak of. But we are

approaching what could be an explosive moment.

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