Trump Discourse Emboldens Hatred

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Fifty dead at the hands of a New Zealand terrorist and what have we learned? Words do indeed matter. While expressing condolences, President Donald Trump once again failed to address the underlying cause of the violence. The largest proportion of these kinds of killings are committed by white nationalists, not Muslims and immigrants. Yet the President insisted Friday that “white nationalism is not a rising threat”—despite the report that the gunman behind the two mosque shootings wrote in a manifesto that he supported President Trump "as a symbol of renewed white identity and common purpose."

The question remains: Why won’t Trump denounce white supremacy? His anemic—arguably calculated—rhetorical response to the tragedy in New Zealand offers another example of what I have written in several op-eds. While Trump may not be the direct cause of what happened, his anti-immigrant discourse incites division and fear. This in turn enables, emboldens and empowers hatred—a hatred that inevitably leads to violence. Trump is at least in part responsible.

Moreover, historians will write that those who refuse to stand up and hold Trump accountable for his racist rhetoric, including many Republicans in Congress, are complicit.

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