Empty Rhetoric—Words without Action Are Hollow

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My thoughts from today’s (Sunday) Dallas Morning News on why Senator Jeff Flake’s recent condemnation of President Trump’s post-election attack on the press is another example of empty rhetoric—words without action that therefore are hollow:

Following President Trump’s “off the rails” post-election news conference, Arizona Senator Jeff Flake went to the Senate floor to harshly condemn the President’s verbal assault on several reporters and his persistent attack on the press. While I applaud Flake and believe he is correct, sadly this is empty rhetoric—unless Flake is prepared to do something. He should call on—no, demand—his Republican colleagues to censure President Trump and say in no uncertain terms they will not do business with him (e.g., approve judicial nominees, act on his legislative agenda, etc.) until Trump apologizes to the reporters for his unprofessional and demeaning treatment of them.

Republicans also must require him to apologize to the various groups of people who he has attacked because of their racial, ethnic, and religious identity. In addition, they should insist that there will be no more business as usual until President Trump unequivocally denounces white nationalism, making explicit that he condemns and will never accept the support of racist and anti-Semitic groups (like the KKK, neo-Nazis and others of their ilk).

A colleague of mine went further: “Better would be for Flake to get at least one, possibly two, Senate colleagues (like Corker who is also leaving at the end of this session) to declare themselves Independents, caucus with the Democrats, take over the Senate for November and December, and arrange with Schumer to pass the bill that would protect Mueller.”

While a noble move, for political reasons I seriously doubt Flake will follow through—his threats notwithstanding. He may wish to seek the nomination for President and must therefore walk a tightrope, condemning Trump without alienating the Republican base.

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