

Trump's 'go home' comments to harm Republicans

Members of the GOP must now must adopt or accommodate the US president's racial attitudes – or leave

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Donald Trump is determined to make 2020 the “send her back” election. That ugly taunt is shaping up to be the defining slogan of his campaign.

The US president has moved dramatically to solidify his position as the champion of white Christian Americans. Moreover, he is forcing many apprehensive Republicans to go beyond coded dogwhistles and embrace his openly strident white nationalism.

Mr Trump has looking for a target to replace his 2016 opponent, Hillary Clinton.

Last week, he found them in a squabble between House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and four newly elected Democratic congresswomen, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib and Ayanna Pressley.

Ms Pelosi dismissed challenges to her authority and the Democratic Party leadership by these young left-wing lawmakers. They in turn accused her of marginalising women of colour.

Mr Trump immediately smelled blood.

Despite being no fan of Ms Pelosi, Mr Trump insisted that she is not a racist, even though the young Democrats never directly accused her of that. He even seemed to be using her as a proxy for himself.

The four women are ideal targets for his politics of rage: they are stridently left wing, young, female, non-white, and, best of all for his purposes, in the cases of Ms Omar and Ms Tlaib, Muslim.

That places them far outside the normative American identity Mr Trump believes to be under attack. They typify the diverse new socie-



President Trump said that Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar and /

ty he hates and fears.

He unleashed a series of largely false Twitter attacks against them, even demanding they “go back” to “the countries” they came from, though only Ms Omar is an immigrant.

The age-old taunt of “go back” to “where you came from” is the quintessence of US intolerance.

Mr Trump's own Equal Opportunity Employment Commission

identifies this as an exemplary form of unlawful harassment based on national origin.

In the private sector, anyone saying this would be immediately sacked. It has been unacceptable for decades.

At a North Carolina rally on Thursday, the president denounced the congresswomen as “anti-American,” despite his own extraordinary history of denounc-

US should explore new frontier

RASHMEE LALL

Space, the final frontier, is having a bit of a moment. This year marks the 50th anniversary of man's first Moon landing. Accordingly, nostalgia for the Apollo 11 mission is everywhere – on TV, in newspapers and magazines, and in an immersive app that promises that “we can all take part in the famous mission”, via augmented reality.

Space is also featuring heavily in the pronouncements of politicians. From India to Britain and the US, space exploration is being used to convey ambition, adventurousness and heroism.

After the successful launch on Monday of Chandrayaan 2, India's most ambitious Moon mission ever, prime minister Narendra Modi tweeted that it illustrated “the determination of 130 crore (1.3 billion) Indians to scale new frontiers of science”.

Over in Britain, on the cusp of his elevation to the office of prime minister, Boris Johnson wrote a column comparing Brexit to the first Moon landing. “If they could use hand-knitted computer code to make a frictionless re-entry to Earth's atmosphere in 1969,” he said in reference to the relatively primitive technology available to the US at the time, “we can solve the problem of frictionless trade at the Northern Irish border... It is time this country recovered



Buzz Aldrin descends a ladder onto the lunar surface during the Apollo 11 mission.

some of its can-do spirit.”

And on July 4, US Independence Day, Donald Trump promised that his country would be “back on the Moon very soon”. He added that “some day soon, we will plant the American flag on Mars”.

There are numerous problems with both Mr Johnson and Mr Trump's assertions. Brexit is not

comparable to a Moon landing, in technical or political terms. As for Mr Trump's attempt to conjure up grand visions of 21st-century American space dominance, the two key questions that arise are “how” and “why?”

It is worth noting that the US rapidly scaled back funding for its space programme within a mere three years of its histor-

ic 1969 lunar triumph. Having demonstrated its technological prowess by beating the USSR to earth's closest cosmic neighbour, the US moved on to other Cold War priorities.

Fifty years on, the reasons remain valid. Space missions are enormously expensive. Most countries find it hard to justify the cost. Other than China,

India and the UAE, which are all achieving national firsts and exploring a number of practical and scientific possibilities with their missions, governments are not particularly keen to commit resources to launching human into space.

Accordingly, Japan's plans to explore the moon seem to hinge on Toyota, its largest carmaker?

President Donald Trump's pledge to put a man back on the Moon only looks to the past