

Under attack, billionaire George Soros plans to redouble his efforts

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George Soros, the billionaire investor and liberal donor, sat in his hotel suite on Lake Zurich last week, lamenting the turning point that most of the world has accomplished in recent years: "Everything that could go wrong went wrong." [19659002] His favorite presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, lost to President Donald Trump, whose "America First" platform runs counter to the globalism Soros embraces. Trump, he said, "is willing to destroy the world". The European Union, which once hoped Soros would be so successful that it could end its charitable work in the region, is struggling with the imminent loss of Britain and an increase in anti-immigration sentiment. And Soros himself emerged as a political target in the elections from Hungary to California, where his donations were used as a club against the causes he supports.

The 87-year-old survivor of the Holocaust, who has poured much of his fortune in promoting liberal values around the world, is now facing a wave of nationalist sentiment that is washing up the issues he has supported.

But rather than withdraw from public life in his twilight years, Soros decided to push even harder for his program, he told the Washington Post in a rare interview

"The bigger the danger, the more great is the threat, the more I feel committed to facing it," said Soros on Thursday. Wearing an open-necked shirt, he spoke animatedly for an hour, sitting at a table in his suite after an appearance at a Human Rights Watch conference.

Confronting with brick walls

Soros's desire to remain in the fray arrives as he faces the renewed defamation by a large group of opponents that includes actress Roseanne Barr and president Russian Vladimir Putin. He was accused of being an omnipotent puppeteer, a Nazi sympathizer and the person who controls the Democratic Party.

Recognizes that attacks can mitigate its impact.

"It makes it very difficult for me to speak effectively because it can be taken out of context and used against me," said Soros.

For all the billions of dollars at his disposal, Soros is also forced to deal with the limits of his political influence in the United States. He acknowledged that he did not see the upcoming Trump elections. "Apparently, I was living in my own bubble," he said

Soros, who plans to spend at least \$ 1

5 million in the 2018 races, has already faced some stopping jokes in this cycle. His request to replace several district attorneys in California with challengers trying to change the criminal justice system was largely unsuccessful in Tuesday's election. "We came across a brick wall in California," he said.

Soros said he was certain in his assessment of Trump, who describes him as a "narcissist" who "considers himself all-powerful."

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Jasper Juinen / Bloomberg

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(Jasper Juinen / Bloomberg)

But he does not seem determined on the strategy to defeat him, he disapproves of a campaign by of Liberal billionaire colleague Tom Steyer to push the president to indictment, saying he will support this effort only if the Democrats reconquer Congress this year and get Republican support.

Soros, who said he wants to avoid divide the party, also refused to choose among the favorites among the emerging crops of democratic presidential contests of 2020

rs. But there is a potential candidate who said he hopes can not nod: Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York

He blames Gillibrand for pushing the resignation of former Senator Al Franken "that I admire", said Soros, "in order to improve his chances. "

Franken resigned in January after a number of women claimed to have touched them inappropriately. Gillibrand was a lead voice that prompted his fellow Democrats to resign.

He declined to comment

39. Beginning of this year, Patrick Gaspard, the former political director of the White House of Obama who now runs the Foundations of the Soros company, asked billionaire how he saw the role of the organization in a time when much of Soros's work is under siege

"This is the moment we have been built," Soros replied, according to Gaspard

Hungarian Soros, who became one of the richest people in the world. World managing speculative funds and betting on currency exchange, has given billions of dollars to groups that promote human rights, democracy and liberal causes.

Its Open Society Foundations in New York now spend \$ 940 million a year in 100 countries, promoting values such as freedom of speech and free elections, according to the group. In the United States, the Open Society spends \$ 150 million a year to fund groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union and Planned Parenthood.

For a time, Soros was the largest private donor in Russia, funding initiatives as an anti-program, according to the foundations. Two years ago, Putin's government effectively banished the Soros group from the distribution of funds in the country, calling it "undesirable" and "a threat to the foundations of the constitutional system".

Last week, Putin suggested that Soros' spending around the world resembles the kind of political interference that US intelligence officials attribute to Russia.

"He intervenes in things all over the world," Putin told Austrian television. "But the State Department will tell you that it has nothing to do with this, that this is Mr. Soros's personal affair."

Elsewhere in Europe, Soros has also been attacked. This year, Viktor Orban, the right-wing prime minister of Hungary, won re-election after accusing Soros of wanting to flood Europe with Muslim immigrants. Orban said one of his first efforts would be to approve a "Stop Soros" bill, aimed at repressing organizations he considers to be against his program.

"I am painfully aware that I am against the ideas I support" Soros said of his critics all over the world.

2016 and Trump

In the United States, Soros was initially seen as an ally by the Republicans who shared his opposition to the communist dictators. He made modest donations to support the GOP over the years & # 39; 80 and & # 90; 90, according to the campaign's financial reports.

But he turned decisively against the Republicans after President George W. Bush invaded Iraq in 2003 on the basis of incorrect information on weapons of mass destruction. [19659002] Since then, his political expenses – a small part of the money he distributes every year – have made him one of the most reliable and generous donors of the Democratic Party.

In 2016, he paid at least \$ 25 million to mobilize Democratic voters in an attempt to support Clinton and other candidates on the left, a spokesman for Soros said.

In the last days of the White House run, Trump spoke in his closing television ad about sending a difficult message to "global special interests" that he wanted to control Washington, while the images of Soros and other leaders Financials that are Jews were flashing on the screen amid Clinton movies.

Soros, who describes himself as an agnostic Jew, said that he considered an announcement "a codified anti-Semitic message."

On election day, Soros reunited with friends to watch the returns on the Fifth Avenue duplex, overlooking the New York Central Park basin.

At the arrival of returns, "the party turned into a wake," said Anthony Romero, executive director of ACLU, who was one of the guests.

Soros said he had spent months studying what did not work in the elections. He said he concluded that while Clinton would make a "good president", it was not a good campaign. "She was too much like a schoolgirl," said Soros. "Talk to people ... instead of listening to them."

But he also said he diagnosed a bigger problem: the growing ease with which people's opinions can be manipulated. "It's much easier to destroy the trust than to build it," Soros said.

Soros has known Trump for years. Decades ago, the two men dined together several times on the Berkshire estate of a mutual friend, Soros said.

"I had no idea he had political ambitions, but I did not like his business behavior," he said.

At one point, he said, Trump asked him to be the main tenant in a new office building he was developing in New York.

"Name your price," Trump said, according to Soros. Soros said he refused because he was worried that being so closely associated with the developer, whose Atlantic City casinos were financially troubled at the time, would "damage my reputation".

The White House and Trump Organization did not respond to requests for comment.

Soros said that if the Democrats win in a "landslide" and create a bipartisan relationship with the moderate Republicans, as he expects, then he would prefer to impute Trump "because he is endangering the United States and the world." [19659002] But even then, there would be a cost, he said: "This would make [Vice President] Mike Pence the president, who is far more competent in representing the far right, whose views are in disagreement compared to Trump same."

Races, donations, challenge

In this cycle, Soros concentrated his political investments on the races of Congress and mobilized voters on the left. His biggest donation this year was \$ 5 million for Win Justice, a voter mobilization group focused on minorities, women and young voters in Florida, Michigan and Nevada.

He also continued to invest in district attorneys, saying that prosecutors are "the hub of the justice system" and the key to his efforts to reduce prison sentences. He sent \$ 1.45 million to a group that supported civil rights attorney Larry Krasner in his successful run for the Philadelphia district attorney last year. A spokesman said that Krasner has never met Soros or anyone in his organization.

Soros' recent efforts in California have not been so successful. Three of his California district attorney candidates have lost their primaries and a fourth deals with a run-off.

His financial support became a political problem in some of the campaigns. Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert, who defeated her challenger on Tuesday, said the city was "under attack" by the billionaire, "who brought his war against the forces of order" in Sacramento .

Soros' spending magnitude has made him a frequent target of critics on the right, suggesting that they secretly support movements that appear to be driven by their roots.

Jack Kingston, a Republican from Georgia who is a CNN commentator, suggested on Twitter in February that Soros and other activists, rather than students, were behind a protest in the wake of a shooting in a Florida school where a armed man killed 17 people.

A spokesman said that Soros had no involvement with the protest. in an interview that was simply raising the question of whether Soros was involved.

"Some names call for an emotional protest from the crowd of red meat, and certainly he is one of them on the right," Kingston said. "The left has their own: it has that kind of sin, that kind of myth about him, playing in the shadows, maybe it's wrong."

Last month, the name of Soros became viral again when Barr tweeted to be "a Nazi who turned his fellow Jews to be murdered in German concentration camps and stole their wealth."

Among those who retweettò was the eldest son of the president, Donald Trump Jr.

Soros, who said he used false documents at the age of 13 to survive Nazi occupation in Hungary , defines these statements as "total production", adding that they "bore me a lot"