

# The Trump-Mamdani love fest

By Gary Fouse

Like most people, I was very anxious to see what would happen yesterday at the White House meeting between President Trump

and New York City Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani. Would it turn into an ugly scene as had happened between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, when they argued in full view of the press and cameras? In his victory speech last



week in New York, Mamdani was in full-blown attack mode, referring to Trump as a fascist, as well as implying that the feds (ICE) would have to get through “all of us to get to some of us”. Trump, for his part, had called Mamdani a communist.

So, while their actual meeting went on behind closed doors, their joint press conference afterward was all hugs and smiles. Both stressed their desire to work together to make New York a better place, especially in the area of affordability. After making their statements, it was opened up for reporters’ questions. Both swatted away hard questions about their past rhetoric about each other and tried to keep the discussion on a positive and hopeful note. On one occasion, a reporter asked two questions, one to Trump and the other to Mamdani, asking for his reaction to the recent ugly pro-Palestinian demonstration in front of a synagogue in New York. I was eager to hear Mamdani’s response, but after Trump answered the unrelated question directed to him, he called on

the next reporter, effectively leaving the mayor-elect off the hook.

I must grudgingly give Mamdani credit for the way he handled himself. In spite of his young age, he was polished and knew how to swerve around uncomfortable issues like his harsh words about Trump. He is clearly a very intelligent individual, even if his ideas for New York are not only outrageous but will prove to be unworkable (i.e, assigning non-police personnel to respond to mental health disturbances without police presence and creating government-run grocery stores). The question I have is just how much Trump and Mamdani can find common ground for cooperation in making things better in New York, not only in terms of affordability, but in terms of reducing crime and making New York safer. And of course, there is that big question of what happens when ICE rounds up illegal aliens in the city. Trump's position is that while the NYPD does not have the responsibility to enforce federal immigration laws, it is expected and demanded that the city will not interfere with federal agents enforcing federal law. Trump clearly has the law on his side here since any conflict between federal law and the practices of New York or any other city, federal law rules. In addition, NYPD still has the responsibility of maintaining order on the streets, and that includes responding when federal agents are being attacked-as happened recently in Chicago, with the Chicago PD late in coming to their aid. Mamdani, for his part, considers New York a sanctuary city and opposes ICE's efforts, as do many other Democrat mayors. (Mamdani is a Democratic Socialist).

Trump feels he can make deals with anyone, friend or foe. That apparently includes Mamdani. Personally, I am skeptical in this case. Whatever you want to call Mamdani, a radical, an extremist, a socialist, a communist, an anti-Semite, he is also a committed ideologue. As a Muslim, he fully supports the Palestinian cause. He is a supporter of the Boycott, Divest, and Sanctions movement against Israel (BDF), and embraces

“from the river to the sea.....”, which calls for the total destruction of the Jewish state. He has also refused to condemn Hamas. Being the smooth talker that he is, he will deny charges of anti-Semitism. He said at the end of the press conference that he wanted to make New York safer for all citizens and condemned all hate including anti-Semitism. In the closing days of his campaign, he met with a group of Jewish leaders. Many in the Jewish community questioned the wisdom of their leaders meeting with Mamdani.

The issue of Mamdani's faith was not raised by reporters, and I would prefer not to raise it here, but I must. If, after this meeting, some are wondering about whether Mamdani will continue to cater to his base, that base includes some questionable characters in the New York Muslim community. Chief among them is New York imam Siraj Wahhaj, an unindicted co-conspirator in the 1993 plot to blow up New York. He testified in defense of the trial of the ringleader of that group, the so-called “Blind Sheikh”, Omar Abdel Rahman. For his part, Wahhaj has referred to America as a filthy garbage can and has called for an Islamic takeover of our country. Mamdani met with him at his mosque during his campaign. In February 2011, Wahhaj spoke in Yorba Linda, California, with another fire-breathing imam from Oakland, Amir Abdel Malik Ali. I participated and spoke at a protest outside the venue of that event, which was organized by the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), which has long been accused of being an arm of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The point I am leading up to here is that Mamdani is an ideologue, not just when it comes to his socialist ideas, but also when it comes to Israel and the Jewish issue in New York City, home to the world's largest Jewish community outside of Israel. The recent demonstration in front of a New York synagogue and physical attacks against Jews in recent years, which have escalated since October 7, 2023, clearly prove that Jews in New York are not safe, and that with Mamdani's

ascension to mayor, their situation will only become worse in my view. What seems to be missing in the media discussion of this White House meeting is that in spite of Trump's negotiating skills, he is dealing with an ideologue here. Mamdani denies it, but I believe he holds anti-Semitic views, and I believe that his Islamic faith is a big part of that. Ultimately, he will not betray his base. In my opinion, the honeymoon will be very brief.