

Speaking truth to power

Published: January 12, 2026, 8:51 pm

I decided to call Donald Trump a fascist when I was on BBC Radio 5 Live this morning.

That was a conscious, preordained choice.

I did so because, in my opinion, Trump is trying to create either a technocratic autocracy or a white, male, Christian in name only (Chino) theocracy in the USA, which he intends to export through the medium of economic warfare to the rest of the world, destroying liberal democracy in the process.

Although he very clearly could not say it, I got the impression that Nicky Campbell had sympathy with my view. A comment that he made on the inappropriateness of the attacks that Trump has made on countries in the global South made it clear that he does understand that there is a form of economic warfare being conducted by Trump. That is about as good a comment as I could hope for from a BBC presenter.

The question I am asking, though, is whether I was right to go all out with this accusation of Trump being a fascist (which I am sure he is), or whether a softer line would have been appropriate?

Ross Clark of The Spectator could not hide the fact that Trump is not a friend, but then tried to frame what is happening within a conventional understanding of politics and economics, making a ridiculous swipe at Joe Biden when doing so.

A BBC economics correspondent also suggested that there was some economic logic to what Trump was doing, because other countries did impose tariffs on the USA. However, given that the charges being imposed by the USA do not relate to tariffs in other countries, this comment made no sense. Trump's charges are calculated on the basis of trade deficits, not tariff rates.

I have to, therefore, stand back and ask the question as to whether, when I have the opportunity to speak truth to what represents power in this country, should I speak as I think appropriate, as I did on this occasion? If we are, as I think, facing a corporate fascist regime in the USA, with what Trump is doing undoubtedly fitting the technical

definition of such a structure, was I right to say this when no one else might do so?

Unfortunately, because of the prior commitment, I did not hear what Adam Bienkov of Byline Times had to say after I left the programme at 9:30, but I hope he reinforced my point.

It is vital that we now present narratives that make it clear just how great the threat that we face is, whilst making it clear that we should not be confused by what Trump is doing, as some who contributed to the programme suggested we should be, because what we are actually facing is a deliberately coordinated assault on democracy and the lifestyles that go with it across the world, to which the rest of the world must react, which was the point I sought to make.

What does anyone else think? Did I get this right or wrong?

You can listen to what I had to say on the Programme by [listening to it on BBC Sounds](#). If it is more convenient, this clip covers what I said:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=nx3jp-186f80c-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a