

Twitter restricts Trump threat of 'serious force' against protesters

Twitter has continued its policy of labeling – but not removing – rule-breaking tweets from President Donald Trump. The company restricted a Trump post promising “serious force” against a potential Washington, DC equivalent to Seattle’s Capitol Hill Occupied Protest zone.

“We’ve placed a public interest notice on this Tweet for violating our policy against abusive behavior, specifically, the presence of a threat of harm against an identifiable group,” writes Twitter’s safety team. The warning is posted above the tweet and appears if users try to retweet it. Following Twitter’s usual policy for world leaders whose tweets serve a “public interest,” however, it won’t be deleted.

There will never be an “Autonomous Zone” in Washington, D.C., as long as I’m your President. If they try they will be met with serious force!

– Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) June 23, 2020

This isn’t the first Trump tweet that’s been labeled for promoting violence or abuse. In late May, Twitter censured a tweet that said “when the looting starts, the shooting starts,” saying that it glorified violence. The platform has also labeled “potentially misleading” misinformation about mail-in voting and a manipulated video purporting to be a CNN broadcast. The labels have drawn Trump’s ire, and he issued an

executive order attacking “bias” on social media after the voting fact-check.

Restricted tweets can’t be liked or replied to, although they can be retweeted with a comment. Despite this, Trump’s huge social media following almost guarantees any tweet will be widely seen on Twitter. So the decision is largely symbolic, but it helps Twitter stake out a position of acknowledging and acting on Trump’s problematic social media posts – in contrast with Facebook, which has kept a largely hands-off approach but did remove a Trump ad for using Nazi imagery last week. A Facebook post with Trump’s “serious force” message has so far not been labeled or removed.

<https://www.theverge.com/2020/6/23/21300810/twitter-restrict-trump-serious-force-dc-autonomous-zone-policy>