Trump’s coup d’état election

Joseph Kishore, David North
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The United States presidential campaign is being transformed into a coup d’état by Donald Trump, who has declared that he will not accept the results of any vote that goes against him.

At a White House press conference Wednesday evening, Trump was asked whether he would “commit here today for a peaceful transfer of power after the election.” He replied: “We’re going to have to see what happens. You know, I have been complaining very strongly about the ballots. And the ballots are a disaster.”

When his questioner persisted, Trump said, “You’ll have a very peaceful trans—there won’t be a transfer frankly. There will be a continuation.”

Trump’s determination to rapidly appoint a new Supreme Court justice to fill the seat left by Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s death is a critical element of the unfolding criminal conspiracy. Trump intends to stack the Supreme Court with lackeys who will rubber stamp his repudiation of the election results. “I think this [the election] will end up in the Supreme Court, and I think it’s very important that we have nine justices,” Trump said at the news conference.

That the preparations for an overthrow of the Constitution are well advanced is now widely acknowledged. A column published Wednesday in the *Atlantic*, headlined “The Election that Could Break America,” outlines what it called a nightmare scenario for November 3, involving the mobilization of right-wing vigilantes and the seizure of uncounted ballots. The *Atlantic* references discussions within the White House over how to overturn the election results if they go against Trump:

> According to sources in the Republican Party at the state and national levels, the Trump campaign is discussing contingency plans to bypass election results and appoint loyal electors in battleground states where Republicans hold the legislative majority. With a justification based on claims of rampant fraud, Trump would ask state legislators to set aside the popular vote and exercise their power to choose a slate of electors directly.

In doing so, Trump would be acting on the basis of Justice Antonin Scalia’s argument in *Bush v. Gore* 20 years ago, when the Supreme Court intervened to shut down vote-counting in Florida and hand the election to Bush.

Trump is not running an election campaign. He is setting into motion a plot to establish a presidential dictatorship. This is a continuation of the entire conspiracy initiated with his June 1 speech threatening to invoke the Insurrection Act and deploy the military against domestic protests.

There is a staggering contrast between the ruthlessness with which Trump and his co-conspirators are implementing their plans and the fecklessness and cowardice of the Democratic Party and its presidential candidate, Joe Biden. Even as Trump is planning to stack the Supreme Court to facilitate his illegal seizure of power, the Democrats have declared that there is nothing that can be done to stop Trump’s appointment of another justice before the November election.

After Republican Senator Mitt Romney announced Tuesday that he would support Trump's filling of the Ginsburg vacancy, the Democrats abandoned their “resistance” strategy, such as it was, of finding four Republicans who would break with Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and oppose a confirmation vote.

Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer has declared that “all options are on the table,” but only after the Supreme Court nominee is confirmed, and then only if the Democrats win control of both the Senate and the White House. But the Supreme Court pick is central to Trump’s strategy of maintaining his position in the White House.

On Tuesday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who proclaimed that her quiver was “full of arrows,” reached

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an agreement with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin to extend funding for the federal government until after the election, removing the threat of a government shutdown in response to Trump's effort to push through his Supreme Court nomination.

With this craven capitulation, the Democrats are not only giving up a seat on the Supreme Court, they are going a long way toward surrendering to Trump's coup.

Adam Schiff, the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, said on Wednesday that Trump is seeking "to discredit the votes of millions, stack the Supreme Court to disenfranchise millions and perpetuate himself in office," warning that this is "how you see democracies end."

Schiff's only response, in addition to blaming "foreign assistance" for Trump's actions, was to propose legislation to restrain future presidents. He expressed the hope that voters would "turn out in such massive numbers that there's a landslide repudiation of Trump and Trumpism."

The Constitution does not require that a presidential candidate receive a landslide to unseat the incumbent. Schiff's statement amounts to a declaration that the Democrats will capitulate to Trump if Biden secures anything less than an overwhelming victory.

Elissa Slotkin, one of the House Democrats closest to the intelligence agencies, stated yesterday that Trump is attempting to carry out a coup d'état, and implied that he was acting with high level support. "The President can't successfully refuse to accept the results of the election without a number of very high officials aiding him," she tweeted.

But her response was merely to appeal to the military, stating that she has been seeking assurance from Pentagon officials that they would ensure a transfer of power if Trump refuses to concede. "To the attorney general, secretary of defense, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and secretary of homeland security," she said, "history is coming for you, and you will have to make a choice."

The pathetic response of the Democratic Party and its presidential candidate to Trump's conspiracy is determined, above all, by its fear that any call for resistance would trigger a mass movement from below that would get out of control and threaten the capitalist oligarchy.

The Democrats fear such a development more than anything. Their entire focus over the past four years has been to divert popular opposition to Trump behind the conflicts within the ruling class over foreign policy, centered on the demand for more aggressive action against Russia.

To subordinate the fight against Trump to the Democratic Party can lead only to a political catastrophe.

Workers must recognize that American democracy is collapsing. The language of Trump is the language of fascism, dictatorship and civil war. The Democrats, meanwhile, are providing Trump with the ability to carry out his coup d'état, and if they were to come to power, they would implement the same basic class policy.

Beneath the political crisis in the United States, what is unfolding is a massive confrontation between the corporate and financial aristocracy, which controls both political parties, and the working class. Trump's coup plotting is entirely bound up with the ruling class policy of "herd immunity"--the drive to force workers to continue working and reopen schools amidst the expanding pandemic, and the utilization of the pandemic to orchestrate a massive redistribution of wealth to the rich.

For the working class, the fight against the pandemic, the massive social crisis, the unending wave of police violence and the threat of dictatorship is entirely bound up with the fight for socialism.

The critical issue now is the development of a mass movement of the working class. The logic of the rapidly developing crisis poses before working people the need to prepare for a political general strike. Popular organizations, controlled by working people, should be established in order to prepare resistance to Trump's criminal conspiracy.

The growing wave of strikes, protests and demonstrations—including those sparked by the whitewashing yesterday of the police murder of Breonna Taylor in Louisville—must coalesce into a general strike, demanding Trump's removal from office.

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