

Trump continues far-right appeals as details of Michigan plot emerge

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In the days since Michigan authorities and federal prosecutors announced the arrest of 13 people in a plot to kidnap and murder Michigan Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer, President Donald Trump and his inner circle have intensified their appeals to the fascist right.

While the plot was centered in Michigan, new information has surfaced making clear the plotters were involved in a far broader and ongoing national conspiracy. The criminal complaint filed last Thursday explained that the Michigan conspirators engaged in a plan to “take violent action against multiple state governments.”

The conspirators clearly felt they were acting with the support of the White House. Even after the plot was revealed, Trump denounced Whitmer for “complaining” and “crying” about the threat to kidnap and kill her. On Saturday, Trump impersonated Mussolini by giving a speech from the White House balcony in which he ranted to a small audience about the imminent danger that the country will be taken over by “socialists” and “communists.”

In a clear signal to his far-right supporters, the Trump campaign this weekend announced that the president’s son, Eric Trump, will give a rally at a gun shop in New Hudson, Michigan, a few miles from Milford and Waterford Townships, where two of the 13 fascist plotters were arrested. The campaign also announced that Vice President Pence will attend a rally Wednesday in Grand Rapids, Michigan, another center of militia activity.

It was in Grand Rapids where two of the Michigan conspirators, Michael and William Null, appeared at an anti-lockdown protest this summer and were photographed alongside Barry County Sheriff Dar Leaf, a leader of the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace

Officers Association (CSPOA), a fascist network of police founded by prominent Trump supporter and former Maricopa, Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio. Leaf was named CSPOA’s “Sheriff of the Year” in 2016.

Leaf declared on Thursday that the plotters may have just been planning a “citizens’ arrest” of Whitmer, making clear he thought their actions were justified. Leaf had previously refused to enforce restrictions on businesses mandated by state regulations.

Mike Shirkey, Republican majority leader of the Michigan State Senate, reportedly walked up to the gallery of the state legislature in April to greet the fascists—including at least one of the men arrested last week—who had brought their assault rifles inside the building to threaten legislators.

Isolated media reports from earlier this year also raise many questions about the role of Trump campaign officials and big money donors in supporting the anti-lockdown protests that served as a means for the militia conspirators to plan their putsch.

Three groups that provided funding for the anti-lockdown protests, the Michigan Conservative Coalition, the Michigan Freedom Fund and the Convention of States Project, have close ties to leading Trump backers, including MCC founder Meshawn Maddock, an advisor to Trump’s campaign and a leader of the group “Women for Trump.”

Greg McNeilly, a longtime advisor to the billionaire DeVos family, leads the Michigan Freedom Fund. Betsy DeVos is Trump’s Education Secretary. Her brother, Erik Prince, is the former CEO of the mercenary firm Blackwater (now known as Xe) and a close collaborator with former Trump advisor Steven Bannon and Trump’s sons, Eric and Don Jr. The Convention of States Project is funded by the billionaire Mercer family. It has close ties to leading

Trump immigration official Ken Cuccinelli and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson, and is led by Eric O’Keefe, a close advisor to the Koch family.

More details are also emerging about the connections of the arrested conspirators with other militia groups across the country. One of the militiamen, Barry Croft, was a prominent member of the fascist Three Percenters and Patriot Movement. National Public Radio referred to him as “a visible figure” who “made waves as an unknown who tried to streamline national leadership of the Three Percent” and aimed to obtain “a senior role in the movement,” based on interviews with anonymous militia leaders.

Two of the conspirators, Daniel Harris and Joseph Morrison, were in the Marine Corps—Harris from 2014 to 2019 and Morrison in the reserves from 2015 until last Thursday, the day of his arraignment. Harris was deployed at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, a known center of fascist cell activity.

The more that details emerge as to the seriousness of the conspiracy, the more noticeable are the media’s and Democratic Party’s efforts to downplay the plot.

At a public event Saturday in Pennsylvania, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden vaguely referenced the possibility of “chicanery” in the November 3 election. In an indication of how sensitive ruling circles are to bringing attention to Trump’s conspiracy, Biden was forced to walk back his comments hours later, saying he only meant to stress that he would respect the outcome if he lost. Biden said voters “should not pay attention” to Trump’s threats to “influence and scare people from voting.”

In an interview yesterday with Governor Whitmer, CBS’s Margaret Brennan implied that Whitmer herself was to blame for provoking the fascist plot: “Governor, these are your constituents. How do you, in your state, unify things? I know you’re talking about the president and rhetoric, but what do you do to deal with this?” Whitmer responded by saying she wanted to work with all Michiganders, even those who oppose her.

The relative silence of the media and the Democratic Party stands in stark contrast to the howls of indignation from the Democratic Party establishment over the baseless claim that Russia stole the 2016 election for Trump with a few thousand dollars worth of Facebook ads. In advancing the interests of the

military-intelligence apparatus, the Democrats are ruthless. But when it comes to safeguarding the most basic democratic rights, the Democrats are terrified of doing anything that will spark broader social opposition.

With the election just over three weeks away, Trump is pressing ahead with his own conspiracies to remain in power regardless of the outcome of the vote. He is counting on support from Wall Street, which backs his policy of “herd immunity,” along with fascistic forces within the police, immigration and military-intelligence apparatus. Trump calculates, moreover, that the Democratic Party is so terrified of opposition in the working class that it will accept a Trump coup rather than risk a social explosion.

But even if the Democrats, with the support of the military and intelligence agencies, prevent Trump from staying in power after the election, this will not alter the basic trajectory of American politics.

Whatever the outcome of the November election crisis, the tendencies revealed in recent weeks will only intensify. If Trump is defeated, his supporters will believe their candidate was “stabbed in the back,” justifying a further turn to the right. Armed militias will be normalized as a new element in the American political landscape.

The working class cannot wait passively for events to unfold. It must intervene into this crisis with its own program. The fight against the Trump administration and the resort of the ruling class to dictatorship and fascistic conspiracies must be countered through the development of an independent movement of the working class for socialism.



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