

Trump's refusal to concede sets the stage for post-election crisis

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It appears that Democratic Party candidate Joe Biden is on the verge of winning enough states to be elected president of the United States. Media outlets announced during the day that he had won in Michigan and Wisconsin, and he appears likely to win in Nevada and Arizona, where he is currently leading. This would put him at the 270 electoral vote threshold, even if he does not win Pennsylvania, North Carolina or Georgia. In these three states, Trump is currently leading, but his lead is shrinking as mail-in ballots are counted.

However, what Biden had once described as his “worst nightmare”—that Trump would not accept his defeat at the polls—may, in fact, be unfolding.

In an extraordinary speech at the White House early Wednesday morning, Trump proclaimed himself the winner. “Frankly we did win this election,” he said. “So we’ll be going to the US Supreme Court. We want all voting to stop.” By an end to “voting,” Trump means a halt to the continued counting of mail-in ballots that were legally submitted.

Trump doubled down yesterday, declaring victory in a series of states that are still contested. “We have claimed, for Electoral Vote purposes, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (which won’t allow legal observers), the State of Georgia, and the State of North Carolina, each one of which has a BIG Trump lead,” he wrote. “Additionally, we hereby claim the State of Michigan if, in fact, there was a large number of secretly dumped ballots has been widely reported!”

The Trump campaign has already filed lawsuits in Georgia, Michigan and Pennsylvania to stop the counting of ballots and is demanding a recount in Wisconsin, which could take weeks to complete. He is hoping that legal challenges will end up in the Supreme Court, which now includes his most recent nominee, Amy Coney Barrett, rammed through without serious opposition from the Democratic Party only weeks ago. In the event of contested results, Republican state legislatures in states like Michigan could nominate their own pro-Trump electors.

Trump’s effort to challenge the results of the election is

being accompanied by the mobilization of far-right forces. On Wednesday night, hundreds of Trump supporters, some armed with long guns, attempted to force their way into a vote-counting facility in Arizona.

The “Stop the Count” protests organized at Michigan election offices Wednesday afternoon are only a small indication of what is being planned. More demonstrations aimed at stopping the counting of ballots are planned today in Georgia, Pennsylvania and Michigan, and pro-Trump demonstrators are expected in Arizona as well.

Whether or not he succeeds in the short term in staving off defeat—through a combination of legal challenges, right-wing protest demonstrations, threats and actual use of violence—Donald Trump, and the anti-constitutional fascistic movement whose growth he has been sponsoring, is not going to disappear from the political scene.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* has repeatedly warned since his attempted coup d'état last June, Trump’s political strategy has never been limited to purely electoral calculations. During the past three months, he has been campaigning more for the role of *Führer* than merely president. That fascistic campaign has not ended.

Even if the final vote tally goes against him, Trump and the movement developing around him will continue to play a major role in American politics. In a perceptive editorial published Wednesday, the British *Financial Times* wrote that Trump’s intention in declaring victory and challenging the counting of ballots “was not just to prejudge the result but to taint a President Biden (if the Democrat is elected as such) as illegitimate. He may yet succeed.”

The FT continued: “In a day of precious few certainties, all that can be said for sure is that America is not done with Mr. Trump (or perhaps it is the other way around). An election that seemed set to purge him from public life as a one-term aberration has given him a lasting and central role in it. Even if he cannot continue as president, he will become the voice of Republican opposition.”

Trump’s aggressive response to the election has been facilitated by the narrowness of Biden’s margin of victory,

and that is assuming that the final vote totals give the former vice president the necessary 270 electoral votes.

Given the disastrous conditions that presently exist in the United States, the fact that Biden has barely managed to crawl across the finish line is in itself a devastating indictment of the campaign conducted by the Democratic Party. Not only is Biden's own margin of victory (again, assuming that the present trend continues) paper thin, the Democrats' nationwide performance is pathetic. They failed to make any headway in the senatorial elections and actually lost seats in the House of Representatives.

Even with a death toll of nearly 250,000 as a result of the Trump administration's homicidal implementation of its "herd immunity" policy and unemployment rates at levels not seen since the Great Depression, the Biden campaign was so ineffectual that Trump was able to garner more than 68 million votes. One can only conclude that were it not for the pandemic, Trump would have won the election easily, and perhaps in a landslide.

The Democratic Party, a party of Wall Street, the intelligence agencies and the military, was organically incapable of appealing to the social interests of the working class. In relation to the pandemic, the Democrats proposed nothing outside of a national mask mandate to either stop the virus or deal with mass unemployment and poverty. In states like Wisconsin, which is currently an epicenter of the pandemic, Biden was able to increase his percentage of the vote only marginally compared to Clinton in 2016.

Far from seeking to expose Trump's demagogic and the fraudulent character of his claim to represent the working class, the Democratic Party doubled down on its relentless promotion of race as the central and defining issue in American society. It did everything it could to encourage the empirically false and politically reactionary narrative that maligned the "white working class" as Trump's natural and blindly devoted constituency.

Moreover, Biden, in the final weeks of the campaign, chose not to make an issue of Trump's close association with and open encouragement of fascist violence against Democratic Party officials, including Governor Whitmer of Michigan.

While Trump is doing everything he can to remain in power and incite fascist violence, Biden is responding with bromides and soporifics. In remarks delivered on Wednesday afternoon, Biden said that it was necessary to "put the harsh rhetoric of the campaign behind us, to lower the temperature." He added, "To make progress, we have to stop treating our opponents as enemies."

Biden's comments make clear how the Democrats will approach the political conflict in the coming weeks. Everything will be done to block mass popular opposition to

Trump's conspiracies. The Democrats want to prevent the emergence of opposition to Trump from threatening the interests of Wall Street and American imperialism.

If Biden does come to power in January, the Democrats will oversee a right-wing administration of austerity and militarism. They will immediately seek a political alliance with sections of the Republican Party and adapt themselves to the far right. A Biden administration will create the best conditions for the further growth of a far-right, fascistic movement, whether led by Trump or someone else.

In this situation, the most dangerous of all political attitudes is that of complacency. To believe that the political situation will return to "normal" is as realistic as the Biblical dream that "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid [young goat]."

Far from having settled the crisis, the election and its outcome are a warning. American democracy is in its death throes. The malignant social ulcers developing on the basis of staggering levels of inequality will not heal miraculously.

The danger that confronts the working class is a form of American authoritarianism, involving the military and police, portraying themselves as the defenders of "order," in collaboration with fascistic elements.

This real political threat can be defeated, but this requires the development of a mass socialist movement of the working class, absolutely independent of the Democratic Party and its political agents.

The political analysis and program developed and advanced by the Socialist Equality Party throughout the 2020 election campaign have been proven correct. We urge supporters of our campaign and readers of the *World Socialist Web Site* to draw the essential political lessons of the events of the past year and make the decision to join and build the Socialist Equality Party.



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