

After endorsing neofascist rally in DC

Trump signals continuation of election coup at White House appearance

Barry Grey
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President Donald Trump ended his nine-day silence on Friday with a White House event touting his “Warp Speed” program and claiming credit for recent progress in certifying a coronavirus vaccine. The event was an attempt to downplay the exponential increase in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations and the rising death toll in the US, and to reaffirm his administration’s opposition to a lockdown.

It was also clearly meant to signal a continuation of his historically unprecedented and unconstitutional effort to overturn the results of the presidential election and establish a personalist dictatorship.

Shortly before beginning his Rose Garden remarks Friday afternoon, Trump tweeted support for far-right and fascist forces that are planning to rally Saturday in Washington, D.C. in support of his refusal to concede the election to Joe Biden and his effort to remain in power by nullifying Biden’s clear victory in both the popular and Electoral College votes.

“Heartwarming to see all of the tremendous support out there,” Trump wrote, “especially the organic Rallies that are springing up all over the Country, including a big one in DC. I may even try to stop by and say hello. The Election was Rigged, from Dominion all the way up & down!”

In the course of his Rose Garden remarks Friday, Trump referred to the next administration, saying, “Who knows which administration it will be? Time will tell.”

The “organic” rallies to which Trump referred have to date been small gatherings of militia and other far-right elements at the capitol buildings of critical states that flipped from Trump to Biden on November 3, including Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Arizona and Georgia, all of whose results are being contested by the Trump campaign.

By suggesting he might show up at the D.C. rally, Trump was clearly hoping to increase the turnout. Several pro-Trump rallies are planned, to be held around Freedom Plaza. At least one left-wing antifascist rally is also planned for nearby.

Armed fascist groups such as the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers are promoting the pro-Trump demonstrations. Women for America First is holding a rally that, it claims, will be addressed by Republican Representative-elect Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, an open supporter of the fascist conspiracy theory QAnon. Also slated to speak is former Trump counterterrorism adviser Sebastian Gorka, who has ties to anti-Semitic groups in Hungary.

Others promoting the rallies include Infowars founder and far-right provocateur Alex Jones, Proud Boys Chairman Enrique Tarrio, self-described “American nationalist” Nicholas Fuentes, Jack Posobiec, who promoted the “Pizzagate” conspiracy theory during the 2016 elections, and Scott Presler, a pro-Trump supporter of the anti-Muslim group ACT for America.

Trump is well aware that his frontal assault on democratic rights is broadly unpopular and any attempt to block Biden from becoming president will provoke explosive opposition from working people and youth, including a good number of his own voters. That is why he is inciting the fascistic forces he has cultivated and packing the Pentagon with far-right loyalists.

On Monday, he fired his defense secretary, Mark Esper, who opposed his plan last June to mobilize active-duty troops to put down nationwide demonstrations against police killings. He replaced Esper with a Special Forces veteran, Christopher Miller, naming him “acting” secretary of defense, and installed open Islamophobes and fascists in top positions at the Pentagon. Among them is retired general and Fox News commentator Anthony Tata, who referred to Obama as a “terrorist leader” and a Muslim.

The Rose Garden event also allowed Trump to bring to the platform his vice president Mike Pence, who chairs the White House Coronavirus Task Force. Pence has kept largely out of sight since the networks called the election for Biden last Saturday and Trump intensified his election coup. Friday’s event was designed to present the image of a White

House united in the battle to overturn the election.

It may also have been aimed at shoring up support within the Republican Party. Beginning with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, the Republican Party overall has backed the false claims of voting irregularities and the frivolous legal suits, designed to delay vote certifications in critical states and create a pretext for Republican-controlled state legislatures to override the vote outcomes and select their own pro-Trump slates of electors.

On Friday, the *Wall Street Journal*, citing unnamed White House sources, reported that, at a meeting on Wednesday, Trump asked about the chances of getting Republican-led legislatures in Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania to seek to impose their own, pro-Trump electors.

The *Wall Street Journal* wrote:

One potential strategy discussed by the president's legal team would be attempting to get court orders to delay vote certification in critical states, potentially positioning Republican-controlled state legislatures to appoint pro-Trump electors who would swing the Electoral College in the president's favor, according to people familiar with the discussions.

The *Washington Post's* lead editorial warned of such an effort by Republicans in Michigan, where Biden's margin is 148,000, or 2.6 percent.

There are indications of some distancing from Trump by Senate Republicans who continue to support his attack on the election outcome. This is under conditions where one court after another has thrown out the Republican suits, Biden's majority in the popular vote has surpassed five million, and his margin of victory in the contested states has held steady.

On Friday morning, NBC News joined Fox and the Associated Press in calling Arizona for Biden, who maintains a lead of over 11,000 votes. It was also reported that the Trump campaign withdrew its suit in that state.

Later on Friday, Georgia, with its 16 electoral votes, was called for Biden, giving him a total of 306 electoral votes, the same total won by Trump and declared a "landslide" in 2016.

In addition, Trump's own Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on Thursday distributed a statement by a group of federal, state and local officials declaring that the election "was the most secure in American history" and that "there is no evidence" any voting systems were compromised.

The statement, indirectly taking a swipe at Trump, added,

"While we know there are many unfounded claims and opportunities for misinformation about the process of our elections, we can assure you we have the utmost confidence in the security and integrity of our elections, and you should too."

That statement, distributed by the DHS's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, followed a tweet by Trump repeating a false report that the Dominion voting machine system "deleted 2.7 million Trump votes nationwide."

Under these conditions, a number of prominent Senate Republicans have urged Trump to allow the Biden transition team access to intelligence briefings from which it is currently blocked due to the refusal of the General Services Administration, headed by a Trump appointee, to certify Biden as the apparent winner of the election.

For their part, Biden and the Democrats continue to downplay the seriousness of the attack on democratic rights being carried out by Trump, largely presenting it as a "temper tantrum" by a sore loser. They say nothing about Trump's incitement of fascists, including the plot exposed in September to kidnap and kill Michigan's Democratic governor. New information has revealed that the pro-Trump militia plotters were planning to storm the state legislature and livestream their execution of the lawmakers.

The Democrats are far more fearful of an eruption of social and political opposition from below to an attempted overthrow of the Constitution than they are of a fascistic dictatorship. Their cowardly and duplicitous posture is indicated by Biden's choice to head his transition team, long-time Democratic operative Ron Klain.

Klain, then a top aide to Al Gore, oversaw the Gore campaign's recount effort in Florida in the 2000 election. That ended in the theft of Florida and therefore the election as a whole and the awarding by the Supreme Court of the White House to the loser of the popular vote, George W. Bush. Klain opposed any popular mobilization against the stealing of the election and supported the capitulation of Gore and the Democratic Party after the Supreme Court halted vote counting in Florida.



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