

Federal agency lifts blockade on Biden transition, but Trump pledges to continue electoral coup

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On Monday evening, the administrator of the federal General Services Administration (GSA), Emily Murphy, formally acknowledged Joe Biden as the “apparent winner” of the presidential election, officially initiating the transition process from the administration of Donald Trump to that of his Democratic opponent.

Murphy sent a letter announcing the decision to the Biden transition team, and the GSA informed federal departments. In her letter, Murphy noted that the decision frees up more than \$7 million in federal funding for the transition team. It also requires Trump administration officials to begin meeting with the Biden team, and enables Biden to receive classified intelligence briefings.

The extraordinary delay in the GSA designation, normally a formality, but this time coming more than two weeks after the election was called, was the result of Trump’s effort to overturn the election results by discarding the ballots of millions of Biden voters. That unconstitutional election coup continues, despite the official beginning of the transition process.

Minutes after the news broke of Murphy’s letter, Trump posted a tweet claiming credit for the GSA move. At the same time, he reaffirmed his determination to continue his baseless lawsuits and attempts to block certification of Biden’s victory in key battleground states that he won in 2016 but lost this year. These include Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Georgia and Arizona.

Biden’s victory was decisive. He topped Trump in the popular vote by some six million ballots and piled up an Electoral College margin of 306 to 232, well above the required 270 electoral votes and equal to Trump’s Electoral College victory over Hillary Clinton in 2016.

Trump wrote: “Our case STRONGLY continues, we will keep up the good fight, and I believe we will prevail!”

“Nevertheless, in the best interest of our Country, I am recommending that Emily and her team do what needs to be done with regard to initial protocols, and have told my team to do the same.”

Murphy refuted Trump’s claim to having directed her to make her decision, writing, “I came to my decision independently, based on the law and available facts.”

In her letter, Murphy said she made her decision on Monday in light of “recent developments involving legal challenges and

certifications of election results.” She sent the letter within hours of the vote by the Michigan Board of State Canvassers to certify the official vote tallies of the state’s 83 counties, which gave the state and its 16 electoral votes to Biden by a margin of over 154,000 ballots.

This followed Friday’s official certification of Georgia, with its 16 electoral votes, for Biden. Pennsylvania, with 20 electoral votes, is expected to certify Biden’s win on Tuesday.

Trump’s setback in Michigan came despite an extraordinary and arguably illegal attempt to personally and directly suborn Republican state legislators and state and local election officials to overturn the election results or delay their certification, with the aim of allowing the Republican-led legislature to throw out the slate of Biden electors and chose its own slate of pro-Trump electors.

Last Tuesday, Trump telephoned the Republican co-chair of the Wayne County, Michigan election board after she and her fellow Republican on the four-member body reversed their earlier votes to deny certification of the vote total in the strongly Democratic county, making the pro-Biden vote official.

The next day, the two Republicans filed affidavits asking, without success, to once again reverse their votes to “no,” which would have blocked the certification.

On Friday, Trump summoned seven leading Republican state lawmakers to the White House, including the speaker of the House and the Senate majority leader, for closed-door discussions. Apparently, however, he did not succeed in convincing them to go along with his scheme to throw out the popular vote in Michigan.

Over the weekend, the Republican National Committee and the Michigan Republican Party called on the two Republican members of the Michigan Board of State Canvassers to refuse to certify the official results submitted by the state’s 83 counties. They demanded that the certification be delayed until December 7, one day before the deadline for confirming state electors ahead of the official December 14 Electoral College vote for president and vice president.

In Monday’s vote by the four-member panel, one Republican, Norm Shinkle, a Trump backer who publicly campaigned for the president’s reelection, refused to certify the election, abstaining on the motion to do so. Had the other Republican voted to abstain or reject the recommendations of the counties and state election

officials, the motion to certify would have failed. However, he voted to certify, noting that there was no legal basis for the panel to do otherwise, since its legal mandate was simply to ratify the official results submitted and certified by the counties.

Trump's setback in Michigan followed a scathing decision by a federal judge in Pennsylvania on Saturday dismissing a suit by the president's campaign seeking to disqualify the election there, in which Biden topped Trump by 73,000 votes. Trump's legal team has lost virtually all of the more than 34 suits it has filed in multiple states on the basis of fabricated claims of massive voting irregularities.

Judge Matthew Brann, a Republican member of the right-wing Federalist Society, wrote, "This Court has been presented with strained legal arguments without merit and speculative accusations, unpled in the operative complaint and unsupported by evidence."

In the wake of that ruling, a number of Republican lawmakers and politicians who had previously refused to oppose Trump's dictatorial power grab called on the president to concede the election, including former Republican Governor Chris Christie, Pennsylvania Senator Pat Toomey and House Republican Conference Chair Liz Cheney. On Monday, they were joined by Ohio Senator Rob Portman and Senator Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia.

Also on Monday, Stephen Schwarzman, the billionaire CEO of Blackstone Group, the world's biggest private equity firm, recognized Biden as president-elect and urged Trump to concede. Schwarzman served as an adviser to Trump on trade with China. On November 6, in a call with fellow CEOs, Schwarzman defended Trump's vow to challenge the election results.

In a statement provided to CNN, Schwarzman said: "The outcome is very certain today and the country should move on. Like many in the business community, I am ready to help President-elect Biden and his team as they confront the significant challenges of rebuilding our post-COVID economy."

Later on Monday, a letter was published over the signatures of 164 top business executives, including several major donors to the Republican Party, urging Trump to accept the election results and concede to Biden. Among the signatories were Mastercard Chief Executive Ajay Banga, Goldman Sachs Chairman and CEO David M. Solomon and Condé Nast CEO Roger Lynch.

The erosion of support for Trump within the corporate-financial oligarchy is driven by the fear that the theft of the election will provoke an explosion of popular opposition that could threaten the stability of the capitalist system. It is also a recognition that Biden is assembling a right-wing, militaristic administration that will aggressively defend the interests of big business both at home and abroad, while intensifying the attacks on the social conditions and democratic rights of the working class.

In another public letter, over 100 Republican former national security officials called on congressional Republicans to demand that Trump concede the election and allow the transition to begin. The letter focused on "risks to our national security" arising from Trump's discrediting of the election, but also spoke of his "dangerous" attempt to "prevent a vote by the Electoral College."

The signatories included a rogue's gallery of war criminals,

including former NSA and CIA Director Michael Hayden, former Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte and Trump's former National Security Adviser John Bolton.

That Trump has every intention, despite these developments, to remain in power and establish a presidential dictatorship was underscored by his appeal of Saturday's ruling in Pennsylvania to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia. On Monday, the appeals court granted an expedited review of the lower court ruling, possibly setting the stage for the outcome of the election to be decided by the US Supreme Court. With the addition of Trump's far-right nominee Amy Coney Barrett, which was not seriously contested by the Democrats, the Republican right has a 6-3 majority on the high court.

At the same time, Trump is preparing other, more violent options. He continues to incite fascist militia and vigilante groups, including those who were caught out last month plotting to kidnap and murder Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer. And he has carried out a purge and shakeup of the Pentagon top command, installing fascist-minded cronies who can be counted on to do his bidding.

It is more than eight weeks to January 20, Inauguration Day. Trump will continue to have at his disposal vast powers. As the *World Socialist Web Site* has warned, there are ominous signs that Trump is plotting with Israel and Saudi Arabia to launch a war against Iran during the transition period. This would not only be a war crime of massive dimensions, potentially killing millions, it could also provide the pretext for mobilizing military forces against opposition within the United States.

The working class must be alerted to the ongoing threat of dictatorship and understand that what has already occurred and what is continuing—the refusal of a sitting president to accept his defeat at the polls—represents the irreparable collapse of what remains of bourgeois democracy in the United States. It signifies the turn by major sections of the ruling financial oligarchy to fascism and dictatorship, which will continue and deepen whatever the immediate outcome of the current crisis.

This can be stopped only through the independent intervention of the working class in opposition to both parties and the capitalist system they defend. There can be no democracy today without socialism.



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