Fascist coup in Washington accelerates Spanish army's coup plotting

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Spain's conservative Popular Party (PP), the main opposition in parliament to the Socialist Party (PSOE)-Podemos government, is debating whether to come out publicly in defence of sections of the army and fascist Vox's coup plot conspiracy to impose a dictatorship.

It takes place after Trump's January 6 fascistic coup aimed at toppling the US government and overturning the results of the 2020 election and days before the inauguration on January 20. There are growing signs that far-right elements are planning a second coup attempt. At the same time, the entire political establishment spearheaded by the Democratic Party is engaged in a frenzied effort to cover up the high-level support for the insurrection within the Republican Party and the military-police apparatus.

Yesterday, three online newspapers reported about the PP's anticipated parliamentary questions to PSOE Defence Minister Margarita Robles. These questions apparently leaked from within the PP to the liberal pro-Podemos *Infolibre* and right-wing sites, *Vozpópuli* and *El Confidencial Digital*.

The PP's questions reproach Robles' January 6 speech for condemning the top retired officers who sent letters and a manifesto to King Felipe VI, appealing for him to back them against the PSOE-Podemos government. Some of these officers signed the 2018 pro-Franco manifesto and discussed shooting "26 million" leftist voters.

Robles tried to downplay the letters, stating that they came from an "insignificant minority" and "deserve the most absolute rejection." She was continuing the efforts of the PSOE-Podemos government, including deputy Prime Minister and Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias, to downplay the fascist coup threats.

In response, the PP drafted three questions to Robles last Monday, which implicitly endorsed the fascist officers. They have yet to be formally submitted in parliament. They are the following:

· What is the reason for the Minister of Defence to publicly question the right of retired military personnel, as full citizens that they are, to publicly express their point of view on any matter, within the margins of the laws?

· In the opinion of the Minister of Defence, what are the legal precepts that could have been violated by the retired officers when they publicly expressed their points of view?

· Does the Minister of Defence consider that retired officers should have their civil rights restricted as a result of their previous professional career?

The questions have been signed by the PP spokesman in the Defence Commission, former Major General of the Army Fernando Gutiérrez Díaz de Otazu, and another 12 PP lawmakers. Gutiérrez was one of a number of former top military officers who joined the PP and Vox in the 2018 and 2019 elections.

Normally, questions to be submitted in parliament are not leaked to the press, as the answers are more important than the questions. Nor would they merit special press coverage. However, after the January 6 coup in Washington and the far-right conspiracy in Spain code-named Operation Albatross to install a dictatorship under the guise of a PSOE-PP-Vox national unity government, they take on a different light. They also come days after retired Lieutenant General Emilio Pérez Alamán wrote to Robles, condemning her speech and demanding she "change the course" of the PSOE-Podemos government.

Clearly, mounting forces within the PP are preparing to align themselves with the fascist campaign for a "national unity" dictatorship and a fascist coup, amid rising working class opposition to the PSOE-Podemos government's "herd immunity" policy on the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the past two years, PP leader Pablo Casado has been shifting its policies to the right to compete with Vox,

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while at the same time attempting to nominally distance the PP from the fascists. Last October, the PP voted against Vox's no-confidence motion targeting the PSOE-Podemos government, and Casado made a criticism of Vox widely applauded by the bourgeois press. However, the PP also continued ruling with Vox's support in the regions of Madrid, Murcia and Andalusia.

In December, Casado condemned the fascist letters, calling them "unacceptable" and "reprehensible." Others within the PP refused to condemn the letters, however. PP leader in Madrid Isabel Díaz Ayuso, the PP's most visible representative after Casado, applauded them as "concerned citizens."

By submitting these questions in parliament, sections of the PP are putting Defence Minister Robles on record. This is significant because in Operation Albatross, the officer corps has reportedly chosen Robles as the figurehead of such a national unity government. The questions would force Robles to either publicly disavow the fascist generals' comments or she would be forced to back pedal her remarks, acknowledging her availability to be such figurehead.

Other candidates for such a role being openly discussed by the bourgeoisie include Josep Borrell, the current High Representative of the European Union; Nadia Calviño, Minister of Economy and widely regarded as the EU's person in the Spanish cabinet; and José Bono, former Minister of Defence. In the past weeks, Bono has been widely promoted in the press and on television.

Such are the advanced conspiracy plans reflecting mounting desperation and confusion within the top echelons of the government. According to *El Confidencial Digital*, Pedro Sánchez had to come out in defence of Robles during a cabinet meeting, saying her "loyalty is unquestionable."

On Wednesday, Podemos' Secretary of State for the 2030 Agenda, Ione Belarra, widely considered the party's number two leader after Pablo Iglesias, accused Robles on Twitter of being "the candidate of the right," accusing her of "aligning herself with the right and the [right-wing] extremists." "It's disappointing," she added.

The truth is that if Vox and the military, now joined with sections of the PP, are continuing the far-right conspiracy, it is precisely because of the bankrupt role of Podemos. They count on Podemos to downplay the fascist danger and to suppress the historically rooted opposition to fascism in the working class.

In December, Iglesias went on prime-time television to brazenly insist nothing important had been revealed in the fascist letters appealing to King Felipe VI. He said, "What these gentlemen say, at their age and already retired, in a chat with a few too many drinks, does not pose any threat." He aimed to dampen mounting outrage among workers and youth, notably on social media.

Iglesias' arguments have since been exposed as a fraud. *La Marea* leaked videos showing soldiers chanting and dancing to neo-Nazi songs while making the fascist salute, and *Público* leaked soldiers' fascistic WhatsApp chats. Iglesias has remained silent on these revelations.

Meanwhile, Vox party leader Santiago Abascal is openly defending Trump, denouncing Twitter's ban on the US president after his coup attempt. Today Abascal will meet in Barcelona to discuss "free speech" with US Republican operatives Grover Norquist and Ted Bromund of the Heritage Foundation think tank; far-right European Trump supporters like Giorgia Meloni of far-right Fratelli d'Italia and Matias Karlson of think tank Oikos; and far-right Chilean politician José Antonio Kas.

The rise of fascistic politics in the United States, the center of world imperialism, is powerfully impacting Europe, where the ruling elite is turning toward authoritarianism and dictatorship. The urgent political imperative is for the working class to intervene on its own programme and perspective.

This discussion will be at the centre of this weekend's online meeting on Sunday, January 17, 1:00 p.m., US EST with leading members of the Socialist Equality Party in the United States and Germany organised by the WSWS. They will speak on the world significance of the rise of fascism in America, its social and political origins, and the necessary strategy for the working class to fight back.

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