

Bolsonaro rehearses fascist coup on Brazil's Independence Day

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President Jair Bolsonaro used September 7, Brazil's Independence Day, as the occasion for a dress rehearsal of a fascist coup to overthrow the civilian government and install a dictatorship in Brazil.

Bolsonaro publicly called for the national protests Tuesday as a “counter-coup” to an alleged plot organized by the Supreme Court (STF) to remove him from power, imprison him, and criminalize the far right in Brazil. Extolling his coup perspective, the fascist president declared a few days earlier that his destiny is to be “arrested, killed, or victorious.”

The demonstrations took place in different Brazilian cities and were systematically orchestrated by Bolsonaro's civilian and military advisers. Caravans financed by businessmen and far-right organizations brought groups of protesters from all parts of Brazil to the two main demonstrations held in the capital, Brasilia, and São Paulo.

In a choreographed spectacle, Bolsonaro flew by helicopter over the events in both cities before coming down to the platforms and speaking to demonstrators who held banners calling for the overthrow of the Supreme Court, for military intervention, and for the criminalization of communism.

In Brasília, where Bolsonaro spoke alongside his vice president, Gen. Hamilton Mourão, and his defense minister, Gen. Walter Braga Netto, he attacked STF Minister Alexandre de Moraes, who is conducting investigations of the organizers of the very same September 7 demonstrations which are increasingly pointing to Bolsonaro himself. He threatened a coup against the high court if the judge is not removed from office.

The president declared, “We cannot continue accepting that a specific person from the region of the three powers [i.e., Moraes] continues barbarizing our

population. We cannot accept more political arrests in our Brazil. Either the head of this power manages his own, or this power might suffer what we do not want.”

The attack was complemented at the rally in São Paulo, where Bolsonaro openly called for Moraes' removal and declared that given “any decision by Mr. Alexandre de Moraes, this president [himself] will no longer comply.” He concluded his speech by stating that “only God can take me out of [Brasilia]” and that “I tell these bastards: I will never be arrested!”

During the Brasilia rally, Bolsonaro also declared that he will preside next Wednesday over a meeting of the Council of the Republic, a consultative constitutional body that advises the Brazilian president on national security measures, including the imposition of a state of siege and suspending individual rights.

Although the seriousness of the statement was quickly dismissed by the media, which unanimously took comfort from declarations by Mourão and the congressional leaders that they had not been called for such a meeting, the mentioning of the Council of the Republic can only signify preparations by Bolsonaro for assuming dictatorial powers.

A significant episode preceded the demonstrations on Monday night in Brasilia, when caravans of Bolsonaro supporters broke through Military Police blockades and invaded the “Esplanada,” or the outdoor mall between the ministry buildings, claiming they would storm the STF the next day. Videos show that the police made no real attempt to stop them, nor did they carry out promised searches of the protesters, either in Brasilia or in São Paulo.

The protests themselves were called by prominent politicians connected to the state Military Police forces and by police commanders themselves, who directly called on their soldiers to join the demonstrations. A

survey by the Instituto Atlas Intelligence showed that 30 percent of the military police active duty officers were willing to participate in the protests.

Although demonstrators did not invade the STF, as they had threatened, it is very significant that the Supreme Court itself considered “calling on the Armed Forces to protect its headquarters, after the Military Police of the Federal District failed to contain the advance of pro-government demonstrators,” according to *Record* reporter Renato Souza.

The September 7 demonstrations represent a high point of a dictatorial turn advanced ever more frantically by Bolsonaro.

This process has included, in recent months, the unprecedented dismissal of the entire command of the Armed Forces on March 31, on the eve of the anniversary of the 1964 military coup; subsequent threats by military commanders against the COVID-19 parliamentary investigation, making it clear that they will not allow any investigation of members of the Armed Forces by the civilian power; and, in August, the vote on Bolsonaro’s “printed ballot” proposal, accompanied by a military parade, which demonstrated significant support within the state for Bolsonaro’s coup plans.

These events, and particularly the actions orchestrated by Bolsonaro and his clique for September 7, are explicitly inspired by Donald Trump’s January 6 coup attempt in the United States.

The weekend leading up to the protests saw the Brazilian edition of the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), which is headed in the country by the president’s son, Eduardo Bolsonaro. Eduardo directly participated in the preparations for the January 6 coup in Washington, just as Trump’s advisers are directly connected to the preparations of the fascistic plots in Brazil.

The Brazilian CPAC had the online participation of Donald Trump Jr., who in his speech explicitly compared the upcoming elections in Brazil with those recently held in the United States and stated that Brazilians will need to choose between “socialism and freedom” (that is, fascism) in what will be an unfair fight. Businessman Jason Miller, Trump’s former adviser, attended the Brazilian CPAC in person. He was detained by the Brazilian Federal Police on Tuesday at Brasilia’s airport as he was returning to the

United States. He was questioned in connection to the same inquiry on threats against democracy that is being attacked by Bolsonaro.

More fundamentally, what is driving the destruction of democratic forms of rule in Brazil, the United States and countries around the world is the profound crisis of the world capitalist system.

In the April 12 statement “57 years after the 1964 coup, Brazil again confronts specter of dictatorship,” the *World Socialist Web Site* described Bolsonaro’s dictatorial maneuvers in the context of the deep social crisis driven by the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil. We wrote: “[The current] grotesque levels of social inequality as well as the imposition of mass killings by COVID-19 are radically incompatible with democratic forms of government. These objective trends are behind the remarkable political events of the past week.”

These conditions have only grown worse in the past five months, and the threat of a coup has intensified.



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