

Threats of “Capitol scenario” coup mount with approach of Brazil's general elections

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14 July 2022

Facing the prospect of defeat in October's general elections, Brazil's fascistic president Jair Bolsonaro, is escalating threats to pursue a course of action directly mirroring Donald Trump's January 6 Washington putsch.

Seconded by key members of his cabinet, such as the defense minister, Gen. Paulo Sérgio de Oliveira, Bolsonaro is stepping up his attacks on the Electoral Court (TSE) and Brazil's electronic voting system, fabricating claims that the elections will be rigged in favor of the frontrunner, former Workers Party (PT) president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

The political debate in Brazil is dominated by a universal recognition of the likelihood of some form of reenactment of the US Capitol invasion, that is a violent assault on the institution responsible for ballot certification – in this case, the Electoral Court – or other installations in the capital, Brasília.

References to a “Capitol scenario” have reportedly been made by Army officials describing the intelligence service's preparations for the elections. The Supreme Court (STF) members presiding over the TSE have also repeatedly warned about it. Last week, the TSE's last president and STF justice Edson Fachin declared to an audience at the Wilson Center that Brazil could see “an episode even more severe than the January 6 (storming) of the Capitol” as the election nears.

Most significantly, Bolsonaro himself, as well as his sons – a Senator, a federal deputy and a city councilor – have made repeated references to the January 6 putsch, which Bolsonaro supported.

Last Thursday, in his weekly live transmission, Bolsonaro declared to his fascistic followers: “You know how you should prepare, not for a new Capitol ... but we know what we have to do before the election.”

A week earlier, when asked by the daily *Estado de S. Paulo* about whether Bolsonaro would concede a defeat, Senator Flávio Bolsonaro declared that his family “cannot be responsible for what their supporters do” ahead of and in the aftermath of the elections. Flávio compared his father's attitude to that of Donald Trump, whom he claimed “had no interference, he didn't send anyone there (to invade the Capitol).” He continued: “People followed the problems in the American electoral system, got angry, and did what they did. There was no command from the president, and that will never

happen from President Bolsonaro.”

Significantly, Flávio's interview was published days after testimony by former White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson which, as reported by the *World Socialist Web Site*, “presented an account of Trump's efforts to personally direct the storming of the Capitol, murder his opponents, and establish himself as dictator.” This information was hardly news to Flávio Bolsonaro, whose brother, Eduardo, was directly summoned to Washington by Trump to participate as an international observer of his coup attempt.

At the same time, Defense Minister Oliveira is working to encroach upon the authority of the TSE in an unprecedented fashion. He declared in official statements and internal memos that “technical” issues raised by the Army's cybersecurity branch have been ignored by the TSE, but that the so-called concerns will not be disclosed in the presence of other bodies constitutionally tasked with overseeing the election, such as the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB). Such declarations are uniquely designed to give the armed forces a pretext to back Bolsonaro in claiming electoral fraud while freeing themselves of any accountability.

The driving force behind Bolsonaro's plans for a dictatorship is the raging crisis of world capitalism, in which war, inflation and an uncontrolled pandemic are coalescing and vastly expanding what was already the greatest level of social inequality since the beginning of the twentieth century. Not only in Brazil, but in every country, and particularly in the nerve center of the world imperialist order, the United States, social inequality and the drive to world war have reached levels incompatible with democratic forms of rule.

But as in the US, Bolsonaro's ability to enlist and prepare authorities and fascist foot soldiers for establishing a dictatorship in broad daylight is a function not of his political strength, but rather of the deception and cover-up by those who cast themselves as the opposition to his rule, chiefly the PT.

The PT-led coalition opposes Bolsonaro exclusively on the grounds that his sadistic disregard for the misery engulfing ever larger layers of Brazilian workers threatens the interests of Brazilian and international capital with the eruption of a mass revolt from below, such as those seen in neighboring Chile, Colombia and Ecuador, and now starkly in the revolutionary

crisis unfolding in Sri Lanka.

An essential feature of this electoral “opposition” is its tirelessly casting Bolsonaro’s election as lightning in a blue sky, the product merely of the mass spread of “fake news” through social media by a few conspirators in the months preceding the 2018 elections.

As the elections approach, the PT claims ever more insistently that neither the imperialist powers, nor Brazil’s capitalists, nor Bolsonaro’s congressional coalition, nor even the military for that matter, will support him for a second term, much less back him in a coup. In other words, the PT casts Brazil’s crumbling capitalist order as healthy and thriving and committed to democratic forms of rule and even reforms to fight poverty in the name of “boosting the internal market”.

This narrative is bolstered by a deliberate omission -- or even outright lies – in regard to the development of the capitalist crisis in the United States leading to the so-called “Capitol scenario” that has become the reference point for Bolsonaro’s coup plotting.

As the official narrative promoted by the Democratic Party in the United States and its international counterparts such as the PT goes, the January 6 assault on the Capitol by Trump-led fascists was nothing more than a desperate move by a bad loser, otherwise inconsequential. The US Democrats and the PT both act as if it is “business as usual” in face of the far-right threats. US President Joe Biden calls Trump’s co-conspirators “my Republican friends”, and Lula and the PT strike alliances with all those it previously called “Bolsonaro’s enablers”, beginning with Lula’s running mate, former São Paulo governor Geraldo Alckmin.

As a corollary, Lula declares that “there is no point in talking about the generals”, as the armed forces will “stay besides the people ... as they have been throughout important moments in history”. This in a country ruled for two decades by a fascist-military dictatorship following the general’s overthrow of Brazil’s elected president in 1964!

During a mass rally commemorating the Brazilian war of independence on July 2, Lula reached the point of calling upon his supporters to ignore the coup threat. He told the crowd, “Do not believe the terrorism from TV about a coup, because he [Bolsonaro] just wants to create confusion.”

In the face of the criminal complacency promoted by the PT, Brazilian workers must acquaint themselves with the real significance of the 18-month-old assault on Capitol Hill in Washington, and the implications of the references to these events by Bolsonaro and his sons.

Contrary to the narrative of Trump’s “isolation,” the evidence gathered so far by criminal investigations and congressional hearings, while far from exhaustive, points decisively to a far-reaching conspiracy at the highest levels of the state, including within the US military and the Supreme Court.

Trump’s plan counted on the House floor being seized by the

fascists, allowing the coercion of its members into returning the ballots to the states, where several legislatures controlled by the Republican party would overrule the electoral college votes previously submitted to the US Congress and declare Trump the winner.

The decision would be supported by a bogus ruling by the Supreme Court. Meanwhile, it has been revealed, that the US military’s Joint Chiefs of Staff delayed for three hours the deployment of the National Guard, providing the fascists with enough time to seize and potentially murder key targets such as Vice President Pence, effectively waiting to align themselves with Trump in case of success.

This conspiracy’s path to success counted upon the historical record of Trump’s nominal opponents, the Democrats. Led by Joe Biden, who pathetically asked Trump to call off his own coup, they would have no doubt agreed to the invalidation of the popular vote by the states, as they did in the face of far less threatening conditions in Florida in 2000, delivering the presidency to George W. Bush.

As with Trump’s coup attempt, Bolsonaro’s conspiracy to establish a dictatorship in Brazil through a “Capitol scenario” assault on constitutional bodies such as the Electoral Court goes far beyond the incitement of a mob. Most significantly, a no less cowardly and deceptive role is being played by the PT, which relies wholly upon Brazilian big business and imperialist governments to tip the scales in its favor against Bolsonaro.

To this end, Lula has traveled across Europe to lobby imperialist powers, sent senator Jaques Wagner to meet with US State Department officials and ambassadors, and is now spending day and night reassuring businessmen that his goal is to provide them with the stability and predictability necessary for profits.

The PT, aiming solely to reclaim its post as bulwark of Brazilian capitalism, fears a working class uprising against the far-right and capitalism itself infinitely more than it fears Bolsonaro or another military dictatorship.

The struggle against poverty, austerity, war and dictatorship requires a complete and conscious break with all of the political apologists for capitalist reaction, including the PT and its pseudo-left appendages such as the Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL). In order to achieve this crucial task, a Brazilian section of the International Committee of the Fourth International must be built as the new revolutionary leadership in the working class.



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