

Biden addresses nation to warn of “chaos” and “violence” ahead of midterm elections

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Six days before the first national elections since Donald Trump’s coup attempt of January 6, 2021, US President Joe Biden addressed the nation in primetime to warn that the midterms may bring “chaos,” “violence” and “disunion.”

No president of the United States has addressed the nation with such warnings before. The fact that Biden could give a speech like this testifies to an extraordinary level of political crisis within the ruling elite. In his speech, Biden said that “democracy is at stake” in the upcoming elections and that “the institutions that have held us together as we’ve sought a more perfect union are also at stake.”

Biden began by citing last Friday’s violent assault by a far-right Trump supporter against Paul Pelosi, the husband of House Democratic Speaker Nancy Pelosi, at the couple’s home in San Francisco.

“The assailant tried to take Paul hostage,” Biden said. “He used a hammer to smash Paul’s skull. He said ‘Where’s Nancy, where’s Nancy,’ the very same words used by the mob when they stormed the Capitol on January 6.” Biden did not reference the fact that, earlier Wednesday, the *Washington Post* reported that US Capitol Police had access to a live feed of the attack but took no action to protect the Pelosi household, just as they took no action to protect the Capitol on January 6.

Politically incapable of using the word “fascism,” Biden spoke only in abstractions, referring to “dark forces” that are seeking to “dismantle democracy.” These “MAGA Republicans,” he said, aim to “subvert the electoral system itself. That means denying your right to vote and deciding whether your vote even counts. They’re starting now.”

Biden said this election was the first test of democracy since the events of January 6. “I wish I

could say the assault on democracy ended that day,” he said. “But I cannot.”

If only the president and the party controlling both houses of Congress had the power to do more than wish away the threat of fascism! He was in effect telling American voters, send more Democrats to Washington although they can do nothing about the danger of dictatorship.

Biden made no reference to any action aimed at suppressing the fascist gangs who are violating the right to vote today. He did not reference the fact that fascist vigilantes have appeared at polling places in Arizona to intimidate voters. He mentioned widespread threats of violence from the far right against election workers, but he did not call for any action to be taken against them. He never even referred to Trump by his name, speaking only of a “former president.”

Biden’s speech was riven with contradictions. This is the product of the Democratic Party’s desire to avoid saying anything that might (1) trigger the development of protests from below against the far-right threat or (2) undermine the “bipartisan unity” the Biden administration requires to prosecute US imperialism’s war against Russia in Ukraine.

He asserted that those who wish to disrupt the vote are a “tiny minority” of American society, yet he stated that they pose a massive threat to the entire country. He twice said that “MAGA Republicans” represent “only a minority of that party” but said that Republicans are running over 300 candidates for office who “question not only the legitimacy of past elections, but elections now and in the future.” He said, “We can’t take democracy for granted any longer” but professed blind confidence that “democracy will prevail.”

But most importantly, Biden’s speech presented a version of American “democracy” that has nothing to

do with the social reality confronting masses of people. To the extent that *this* is the presentation the Democrats make of the current state of American democracy, they will fail miserably to mobilize popular support for it. Polls showing the likelihood that Republicans will win the House testify to this danger.

“America is not a zero-sum society,” Biden said, adding that “America is big enough for everyone to succeed.” But three billionaires have as much wealth as the poorest 160 million people.

“We should leave no one behind,” Biden said, even though hundreds of thousands go homeless every night, a majority of the working class is a paycheck away from poverty and one million people have been left behind to die of COVID-19 so far in the US alone.

America is ruled by “the people,” Biden declared. In America “the aspirations of the many” prevail over “the power of the few.” It is not an “autocracy,” where “one interest” controls society. Who does he think he is kidding? There are two political parties, and both are controlled by Wall Street.

Biden’s concern about election fraud is real. But the truth of the matter is that polls show Republicans might win back the Congress even without committing fraud. The fact that this is even possible shows the Democratic Party has been totally incapable of mobilizing the population against the Republicans’ ongoing plot. Inflation is nearing 10 percent, the Federal Reserve is raising interest rates in order to slash real wages, and the Biden administration is working tirelessly with the trade union bureaucracies to prevent the outbreak of strikes and social struggles that might threaten corporate profits.

As for Biden’s claims to represent “democracy,” his administration and the Democratic Party-controlled Congress are preparing to override the democratic will of 120,000 railroad workers to block them from striking and threatening corporate profits.

The Democrats’ election strategy is aimed primarily at suppressing domestic division in order to present a false image of “national unity.” The Democrats view this as necessary to prosecute the war against Russia. Biden’s speech came less than a week after the House Progressive Caucus issued and then immediately rescinded an appeal for a negotiated settlement of the war in Ukraine. The outcome of the contest next week in America is far less important to Biden and the

Democratic establishment than that bloody conflict with Russia.

The only way to mobilize the population against the anti-democratic threat from Trump is to link the fight for democracy with the fight against imperialist war and defense of the living standards of the working class against the industrial dictatorship of corporate America.



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