

Bomb scares force evacuation of multiple state capitols amid MAGA death threats in Colorado and Maine

Barry Grey**3 January 2024**

The new year has begun in the US with fake bomb reports forcing the lockdown and evacuation of multiple state capitols. This takes place amid a wave of death threats from fascist Trump supporters against officials in Colorado and Maine, the two states that last month moved to bar the former president and leading Republican presidential candidate from the ballot on the grounds that his role in the January 6, 2021 insurrection in Washington D.C. made him ineligible to hold elected office under the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution.

That post-Civil War amendment, enacted in 1868, bars any person who took an oath to uphold the US Constitution and then engaged in insurrection against it from ever holding public office. It was directed against former officials of the Confederacy.

The fact that it is now being invoked to prevent the reelection of would-be dictator Trump by certain states, and rejected by others, underscores the historic and unprecedented character of the political crisis ripping apart the United States. What remains of American democracy is collapsing, its institutions and conventions having been rotted out by staggering levels of social inequality and the turn by the entire ruling class to a state policy of genocide, as in Gaza, and global war.

Capitol buildings, statehouse offices and other state government buildings were evacuated Wednesday morning in at least nine states, including Alaska, Connecticut, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi and Montana, after the state governments received emails claiming that the sender had hidden explosives inside the buildings. Most of the state buildings reopened shortly after having been closed, when state police using bomb-sniffing dogs searched the premises and found no sign of explosives.

In Michigan, however, the capitol remained closed the entire day as police canine teams searched the building. Lawmakers in Kentucky and Mississippi had already begun meeting in legislative sessions. A number of states received

the bomb threat but did not close, including Wyoming, where police concluded there was no security threat.

The bomb threats came after a wave of false reports of shootings at the homes of public officials in recent days. Three months ago, US Attorney General Merrick Garland said government workers had seen an “astounding” number of threats in recent months.

The bomb threats and evacuations also came less than two weeks before the first presidential nomination contest of the 2024 election cycle, the Iowa caucuses on January 15, and three days before the third anniversary of Trump’s attempted coup in 2021.

“It was a mass email sent to several (secretaries of state) and state offices across the country,” said Michon Lindstrom, a spokesperson for the Kentucky secretary of state’s office.

CNN reported that it had obtained a copy of the emailed threat, which showed government offices in at least 23 states listed as recipients. A Kentucky television station reported that the email received by the Kentucky secretary of state contained the subject line “Explosives inside of your State Capitol.” The email read: “I placed multiple explosives inside of your State Capitol. The explosives are well hidden inside and they will go off in a few hours. I will make sure you all end up dead.”

Gabriel Sterling, the chief operating officer for the Georgia secretary of state, said in an online post: “Starting 2024 with a bomb threat at the Georgia State Capitol.”

Sterling, a Republican, played a prominent role in publicly debunking Trump’s claims that he, not Biden, had won the closely contested presidential vote in Georgia in 2020. In December 2020, he publicly denounced threats of violence against state election workers instigated by Trump, warning, “Someone is going to get killed.”

A month later, Trump made his notorious hour-long phone call to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to demand that Raffensperger “find” a sufficient number of

votes to change the outcome in the state.

Challenges to Trump's ballot status have been filed in at least 32 states, and according to the "Lawfare" website 14 states have active lawsuits and more are expected to be filed. Oregon is expected to rule on the matter very soon.

The Colorado state Supreme Court and the Maine secretary of state have upheld suits or requests that Trump be denied a place on the state primary ballot, citing Section Three of the Fourteenth Amendment. Trump's lawyers have now appealed both decisions, which had been stayed by the two states, pending such legal appeals. This means that Trump's name will likely appear on the Republican primary ballot in Colorado and Maine, both of which are scheduled for the "Super Tuesday" raft of primaries on March 5.

Thus far, efforts to bar Trump from state primary ballots in Michigan, California and Wisconsin have been initially denied, and it is expected that the US Supreme Court will agree to hear appeals from the Trump camp to quash the ballot exclusion efforts.

However, the dispute has demonstrated that the 2024 election—assuming that it even takes place—will be deemed illegitimate by large sections of the population and further undermine any remnant of political stability in the US. A number of Republican state governments have threatened, should Trump be barred from the November ballot in some states, to retaliate by excluding the presumed Democratic candidate, Biden.

Within hours of the Colorado court's December 19 ruling to exclude Trump from the state's primary ballot, the justices and other state officials were barraged with death threats from Trump supporters, replete with home addresses and other personal details placed online.

"What do you call 7 justices from the Colorado Supreme Court at the bottom of the ocean?" a social media user wrote. "A good start."

"This ends when we kill these f---ers," a post on a pro-Trump internet forum stated.

The nonpartisan group Advance Democracy found that justices' home and office addresses, email addresses and phone numbers had been posted online. It said that online threats included references to hollow-point bullets, rifles, rope and bombs. The head of Advance Democracy told NBC News: "We are seeing significant violent language and threats being made against the Colorado justices and others perceived to be behind yesterday's Colorado Supreme Court ruling... Trump's statements, which have sought to delegitimize and politicize the actions of the courts, [are] serving as a key driver of the violent rhetoric."

A number of justices have been "swatted," i.e., victimized by provocateurs who called the police and made false reports of attacks on their homes in order to generate a major police

response.

Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold said she has received 64 death threats since the lawsuit to remove Trump from the ballot was filed by six Republican and unaffiliated voters in Colorado.

There is a similar situation in Maine. Secretary of State Shenna Bellows wrote in a December 30 Facebook post that since she issued her ruling on December 28 to exclude Trump from the Maine primary ballot, she and her staff had received "non-stop threatening communications."

She also reported that her home had been swatted over the New Year's holiday weekend and denounced the pro-Republican *Maine Wire* for "posting extraordinarily dehumanizing fake images of me." She added, "I know from my previous work that dehumanizing a person is the first step in paving the way for attacks and violence against them."

The electoral and legal disputes are only a pale reflection of the violent social conflicts and tensions that dominate American life, exacerbated by the absence of any democratic or progressive tendency within either of the two capitalist parties.

Trump's Republican Party is increasingly and openly fascistic, but Biden's Democratic Party is spearheading US imperialism's global war drive, including genocide in Gaza, preparations for war against Iran, escalating war against Russia via Washington's proxy Ukraine, and feverish preparations for war against China, in which the use of nuclear weapons is very much deemed an option.

The domestic side of this war policy is a massive attack on immigrants and a McCarthyite witch-hunt on college campuses to stamp out opposition to the genocide against the Palestinians, based on the vile lie that opposition to Zionism and its fascistic policies is antisemitism.

It is within this toxic political context that fascist MAGA Trump supporters are issuing death threats against Colorado Supreme Court justices and election officials, as well as Secretary of State Bellows and her subordinates in Maine.



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