

Biden launches reelection campaign with fraudulent claim to defend democracy against Trump

Barry Grey**5 January 2024**

President Joe Biden officially launched his reelection campaign on Friday, one day before the third anniversary of the January 6, 2021 fascistic coup spearheaded by then-President Donald Trump. His speech made clear that the 2024 elections are unfolding under conditions of unprecedented political crisis in the US, the center of world imperialism.

Biden chose both the date and location for his initial campaign speech—Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, in the Philadelphia suburbs, near the historic American Revolutionary War winter encampment at Valley Forge—in order to frame his reelection campaign as a choice between democracy and dictatorship.

While lashing Trump as a candidate with no program except revenge and retribution, who cares nothing for the American people, Biden said nothing about the record of his own administration, which has overseen the continued attack on working class living standards and social rights that has prevailed under every Democratic and Republican president for half a century.

Biden's presentation of Trump as the spearhead of a far-right drive for authoritarian rule was certainly true, but his attempt to present himself and the Democratic Party as defenders of democracy was utterly fraudulent.

Biden declared: "Democracy is on the ballot. Freedom is on the ballot. Democracy means the freedom to speak your mind... to bring about peaceful change."

He added, "Today, I make this sacred pledge to you. The defense, protection and preservation of American democracy will remain as it has been the central cause of my presidency."

In fact, the "central cause" of Biden's presidency has been the expansion of imperialist war. Even as he spoke, his secretary of state, Antony Blinken, was on his way to the Middle East to coordinate the ongoing US/Israeli genocide in Gaza and the expansion of the war into Lebanon, Yemen and Iran.

In the face of mass protests in the US and around the world against the war of annihilation in Gaza, and polls showing that nearly three-fourths of young people in the US oppose Biden's Gaza policy, the Democratic Party is working hand in glove with the Republicans to suppress pro-Palestinian protests on college campuses, purge college administrations, as at Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania, and ban student groups opposing the genocide—on the basis of the lie that anti-Zionism is antisemitism.

Washington is simultaneously escalating its proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, despite the growing risk of a nuclear conflict. In a bid to obtain Republican support for an additional \$61.4 billion for arms to Ukraine, Biden is offering to effectively abolish the democratic right of migrants to claim asylum and adopt Trump's fascistic policy of mass deportations and detentions.

In an attempt to substantiate his bogus claims to be defending democracy, Biden presented a potted version of the events of January 6, 2021. He described the scene as the mob summoned by Trump invaded the Capitol, seeking to disrupt Congress' certification of Biden's victory. They attacked police and sought to take Vice President Mike Pence and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi hostage. Meanwhile, Biden said, "Trump retreated to the White House... watched from the Oval Office... and did nothing."

Biden was silent, however, about his own actions and those of his fellow Democrats. In the first place, the events of January 6 were the outcome of a months-long and open conspiracy headed up by Trump to mobilize fascist militia forces behind an attempt to overturn the election in the event he lost. The Democratic Party did nothing to oppose this conspiracy.

It is, moreover, a matter of record that on January 6, Biden said nothing for hours as the mob ransacked the Capitol and hunted for Pence, Pelosi and other officials. He only broke his silence to make a pathetic plea for Trump, the author of the coup, to issue a statement calling it off. There was no

attempt to mobilize popular opposition to stop the insurrection.

Nor did Biden note in his speech the broad support of Republican lawmakers for the coup. In the early morning hours of January 7, after the insurrectionists had been cleared from the Capitol—despite the refusal for hours of pro-Trump military officers to sanction the dispatch of the D.C. National Guard—139 House Republicans, a substantial majority of the GOP conference, voted to oppose certification of the Electoral College vote. They were joined by eight Republican senators.

Biden's silence on the role of the majority of the Republican Party leadership as well as high-ranking figures in the military, the Justice Department and the judiciary in backing the coup is a continuation of the Democrats' efforts to conceal from the American people the scale of the conspiracy and the broad support in the corporate ruling elite and the state apparatus for dictatorship.

Biden himself began the whitewash in the immediate aftermath of January 6, calling for “unity” with his Republican “colleagues” and declaring his support for a “strong Republican Party.” This was continued with the House January 6 Committee’s depiction of a “one-man coup” involving only Trump and a small circle of co-conspirators.

This was, and remains, the deliberate policy of Biden and the Democratic Party, whose overriding priority is the prosecution of the war against Russia and the implementation of the genocidal “Final Solution” of the “Palestinian Problem.” These are, in turn, initial fronts in a global war being waged by US imperialism and its NATO allies to redivide the world. The prosecution of this policy requires the support of at least a section of the Republican Party, notwithstanding that party’s transformation into an openly fascist organization.

This is why, in his January 5 speech, Biden indicted Trump personally, but presented him as an outlier and his MAGA base as a fringe faction of the Republican Party. In the course of his denunciations of Trump, Biden attributed January 6 and the GOP front-runner’s dictatorial policies to his “lies” and “appetites,” as though the breakdown of bourgeois democratic forms of rule and turn to police-state methods could be simply the result of one man’s personality traits.

Biden appealed to “Democrats, independents, mainstream Republicans” to “honor the sacred cause of democracy” by voting for him in November. And he directly linked this supposed defense of democracy to the foreign policy and military aims of US imperialism.

Toward the end of his speech, he reiterated the role of US imperialism as the arbiter of world affairs, declaring,

“We’re the greatest nation on the face of the earth... And there’s no country in the world better positioned to lead the world than America.”

As the *World Socialist Web Site* has explained in its New Year statement, the adoption of genocide as state policy and prosecution of a policy of global war, including active preparations to deploy nuclear weapons, are manifestations of an unprecedented crisis of US and world capitalism that takes the form of a descent into barbarism. This includes the growth of fascist and far-right forces and their incorporation into the political establishment not only in the US, but internationally.

Alongside the fundamental and insoluble capitalist contradiction between world economy and the outmoded nation-state system, the root cause of the drive to dictatorship is the ever more brutal and explosive growth of social inequality. The chasm between the super-rich and the working class has only grown under Biden.

With US billionaires now controlling \$5.2 trillion in wealth, and the top 10 percent of the US population owning two-thirds of the total wealth, while the bottom half owns only 2.6 percent, the maintenance of democratic forms is unsustainable. The breakdown of democratic forms and growth of political violence is the product of these historical and social processes, not the twisted mind of Donald Trump.

Capitalism in the US and around the world means oligarchic rule. There is no democratic faction of the ruling class. Whatever their tactical differences, whether openly fascist or nominally “mainstream,” the parties of capital are in fundamental agreement over imperialist war, plunder, mass death and the establishment of authoritarian rule to impose these horrors on the working class.

What flows from this is the impossibility of halting the drive to nuclear world war and fascist dictatorship outside of the mass, independent political mobilization of the working class in the US and internationally to expropriate the capitalist class and establish workers’ democracy and socialism.



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