

Latin American leaders line up behind Biden and Trump in 2024 US election

Guilherme Ferreira
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In what will be one of the most important political events of 2024, this year's US presidential election is already sending shockwaves around the world. Those emerging as the chosen candidates of the capitalist bipartisan system will seek to further promote war and political reaction, both domestically and abroad.

The political developments in the US will have a particularly overwhelming impact on Latin America, the region historically regarded by US imperialism as its "backyard."

In recent weeks, Latin American leaders have begun to express their support for and align themselves with either the Democrat, Joe Biden, or the Republican, Donald Trump.

The Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), held at the end of February, marked a new stage in the alliance between Trump's increasingly fascist Republican base and the Latin American extreme right. After last year's conference featured the Brazilian ex-president Jair Bolsonaro, who subsequently led a January 8, 2023 coup attempt in Brasilia that mirrored Trump's January 6, 2021 fascist insurrection, this year's CPAC was addressed by the fascist presidents of Argentina, Javier Milei, and El Salvador, Nayib Bukele.

In his speech, Milei said it was a "beautiful day to make the left shake" and defended his "shock therapy" economic measures in Argentina which are leading to record levels of inflation and poverty. In a quick meeting with Trump in which Milei personally declared support for his candidacy, the former US president told Milei to "Make Argentina Great Again."

Crying out against "globalism"—a swear word which lumps together socialism, identity politics, defense of the environment, and the alleged elevation of "global institutions" and NGOs over the national states—Bukele declared: "I'm here to tell you that in El Salvador it is already dead." Claiming that the current conditions in the US resemble those leading up to the bloody US-backed counterinsurgency war that began in the 1970s, killing over 100,000 in El Salvador, he warned that Trump cannot repeat the "same mistake we made" in relation to left-wing groups. If elected, he should immediately launch a brutal repression against any form of opposition, just as Bukele is doing today in El Salvador.

Bolsonaro, who was prevented from attending the CPAC conference after his passport was seized in connection with

investigations of his attempted coup, was represented there by his son. Eduardo Bolsonaro denounced alleged political persecution and abuses by the Brazilian justice system against his father and his allies. A spokesman for the Brazilian far right, Eduardo is the Latin American representative of Steve Bannon's 'The Movement' and of the 'Madrid Forum,' created in 2021 to bring together the Latin American, Portuguese, and Spanish far right and to oppose the supposedly "left-wing" São Paulo Forum.

In contrast, Brazilian president Lula da Silva, a leading figure of the "Pink Tide" bourgeois nationalist governments in Latin America and a co-founder of the São Paulo Forum, along with Fidel Castro [deceased], has jumped forward to defend the reelection of "Genocide Joe" Biden. In an interview with the *É Notícia* TV show last week, Lula reviewed the good relations between a series of Brazilian and American presidents, concluding: "I have a good relationship with Biden. And I hope Biden wins the election."

Since coming to power in January of last year, the Lula government has advanced the claim that it is necessary to reform the multilateral organizations of world geopolitics and to advance blocs of the so-called Global South, such as BRICS, as part of the construction of a "multipolar world." This does not imply, however, any confrontation with the imperialist powers. It represents an attempt to better position Brazil on the chessboard of global politics, especially by making use of the country's resources and potential for the so-called "green economy" and energy transition.

Paying back the Biden administration for its speedy recognition of his electoral victory, challenged by Bolsonaro's claims of "electoral fraud," Lula chose Washington as the first destination on his international trips as president. In his February 2023 visit to the US, besides concluding agreements on environmental and other issues, Lula advocated a "democratic alliance" with Biden. He covered up for the US administration's warmongering and right-wing policies with fraudulent claims that the Democratic president is a global actor for peace and a champion of labor rights.

In his recent interview with *É Notícia*, Lula justified his support for Biden by stating: "I obviously think that Biden is more of a guarantee for the survival of the democratic regime in

the world and in the US.” Reinforcing his cynical claim that Biden fights for workers’ interests, Lula added: “I’ve seen Biden at factory gates. [His] speeches, from the inauguration until now, in defense of the world of labor, the agreement he made with us trying to establish a decent labor policy, that’s everything I want for the US, for Brazil, and for the world.”

The “Partnership for Workers’ Rights” launched by the Brazilian and US governments during the UN General Assembly in September of last year represented a further step in Lula’s subordination to the interests of US imperialism. The agreement seeks to establish a new framework for capitalist exploitation and the subordination of the working class to the bourgeois state, covered up with the claim that it helps “workers play a role in a sustainable, democratic, equitable and peaceful world.” Underscoring the role of the corporatist union bureaucracy in this pro-capitalist partnership, the statement affirms that “collaboration... with our trade union partners” is crucial for the pursuit of “urgent issues.”

Lula’s references to the war in Gaza during the interview also exposed his criminal attempt to whitewash the leading role of “Genocide Joe” and his administration in Israel’s mass slaughter of Palestinians. Answering the question of whether the end of the war depends on the end of US support to Benjamin Netanyahu’s Zionist government, Lula said: “I don’t know if Biden has today the same strength that the US once had over Israel... When a baby bird is born, it depends on its father putting food in its mouth. When it learns to flap its wings and fly, it doesn’t always obey.”

Ignoring Israel’s objective role as an imperialist enclave in the Middle East, armed to the hilt by Washington, Lula has attributed the conflict in Gaza and other wars around the world to the lack of “world governance.” For him, the solution to this and other problems, such as the climate crisis, would be to recover the role of the UN after the end of the Second World War, making it once again “a point of balance for world peace,” as he stated in the interview with *É Notícia*. Altering the veto power wielded by permanent members of the UN Security Council and adding Brazil to their number are part of Lula’s proposals for creating a “multipolar world” based on harmony with imperialism.

As the WSWS analyzed extensively in its New Year’s statement, the multiple crises the world is experiencing, including the collapse of democratic forms of rule, the threat of nuclear war, a still ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and extreme weather events, are manifestations of the objective contradictions of the capitalist economy based on private profit.

This process has brutal consequences in Latin America, one of the most unequal regions in the world. With a long history of dictatorships supported by both Democratic and Republican presidents, US imperialism, whether under Biden or Trump, will continue to support the growing suppression of democratic rights and the repression of struggles by the working class and youth in the region. Despite tactical differences on geopolitical

priorities, the objective conflict between the interests of American capitalism and the growing influence of China in Latin America is inexorably transforming the region into a battleground of a developing new world war.

These life and death issues for the global working class find no progressive answer within the arena of bourgeois politics, whether in the United States or in the so-called Global South. They demand the development of the perspective of a unified struggle of the international workers to overthrow capitalism and implement global socialism, which is being fought for by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI).

Fighting for this perspective, the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in the United States is running its candidates Joseph Kishore and Jerry White for president and vice president in the 2024 US election.

In the campaign launch video, presidential candidate Kishore explained, “The two likely candidates of the Democrats and Republicans, President Biden and former President Trump, represent two factions of the capitalist corporate-financial oligarchy.” If Trump “is not running so much for president, as he is for dictator,” Biden’s central program “is expanding war.”

Vice-presidential candidate Jerry White added: “Our election campaign...will be waged on the international arena, it will be waged in history, and it will be waged for Trotskyism—that is, genuine socialism.”

The program advanced by the SEP candidates represents the way forward for workers not only in the US, but everywhere in the world. This campaign is fighting to build the necessary bridge for a unified movement of workers in Latin America and their class brothers and sisters in the North. We call on workers and youth in Brazil and across the region to become actively involved in the SEP presidential campaign and to help build the international socialist movement.



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