

100 days to US presidential election

Democrats push war, Trump pushes dictatorship

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Sunday marked 100 days remaining until the US presidential election, with both capitalist parties in crisis and disarray, and both responding with renewed focus on their central and most reactionary priorities. In the case of the Democrats, this means imperialist war, particularly in Ukraine. In the case of the Republicans, it means doubling down on fascist threats of a Trump dictatorship.

Vice President Kamala Harris has locked down the support of the entire Democratic Party establishment since President Biden announced July 21 that he was withdrawing from the 2024 campaign. That declaration came less than a month before the Democratic National Convention, which opens August 19 in Chicago.

The last prominent Democrat to come across with an endorsement was Senator Bernie Sanders, speaking at a rally in Portland, Maine, on Saturday. His declaration came 24 hours after former President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle declared their support for Harris in a phone call staged for social media.

The newly launched Harris presidential campaign has proved an immediate financial success, raking in more than \$200 million in campaign contributions, much of it from big money donors, who had withheld contributions the previous month after Biden's disastrous performance in a June 27 presidential debate with Trump.

Both Senate and House Democrats claimed massive fundraising gains on the back of the media glorification of Harris and the manufactured "enthusiasm" among Democratic Party activists over the replacement of the 81-year-old Biden, whose candidacy was widely regarded as hopeless after his disastrous and senile performance during his debate with Trump last month.

The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee was raising a million dollars a day, its chair, Senator Gary Peters of Michigan, boasted. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee had its best day of the year during the first 24 hours after Biden's withdrawal,

raising nearly \$1 million.

Harris held a series of campaign appearances over the weekend, particularly aiming to cash in on the media glorification of her racial and gender identity. If elected, she would be the first female African American and the first Asian American in the White House. The Democratic candidate then turned over the public campaigning for several days to surrogates, while she and her top advisers met behind closed doors to discuss potential choices for vice president.

The real priorities of the Biden-Harris administration were put on display Monday when the Pentagon announced a further package of lethal aid for Ukraine, totaling \$1.7 billion, mainly missiles and ammunition for weapons systems already provided to Ukraine. This includes additional ammunition for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), a medium-range weapon that Ukraine has been using to hit targets deep inside Russia.

Some \$1.5 billion will come through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, providing funds to Ukraine to buy the weapons produced by American arms manufacturers. The remaining \$200 million will come directly from Pentagon stockpiles under Presidential Drawdown Authority, including "air defense interceptors; munitions for rocket systems and artillery; and anti-tank weapons."

Harris is a staunch supporter of the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine and has repeatedly attacked both Trump and his running mate, Senator J. D. Vance of Ohio, for their suggestions that the war was too expensive and could be resolved relatively quickly through personal diplomacy between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. The Republicans do not oppose imperialist war, in Ukraine or anywhere else, but would rather focus more directly on the US military build-up and provocations against Iran and China.

While the Democrats continue fueling a conflict which could ignite a nuclear World War III, Republican candidate

Donald Trump made another threat to establish a dictatorship, during a campaign appearance last Friday before a Christian fundamentalist group. He was speaking at the Believers Summit, held by the ultra-right Turning Point Action group in West Palm Beach, Florida, near Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate.

"Christians, get out and vote, just this time," Trump declared. "You won't have to do it anymore. Four more years, you know what, it will be fixed, it will be fine, you won't have to vote anymore, my beautiful Christians."

He repeated this not-so-subtle suggestion that 2024 might be the last US election, proclaiming, "I love you Christians. I'm a Christian. I love you, get out, you gotta get out and vote. In four years, you don't have to vote again, we'll have it fixed so good you're not going to have to vote."

Such threats should be taken both literally and seriously, coming from a candidate who has pledged to be a "dictator on day one" and who instigated the fascist assault on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, in an attempt to overturn the result of the last election. Neither Trump nor Vance has said he will respect the outcome of the 2024 vote unless it meets their standards for "fairness"—in other words, unless they win.

Earlier last week, a Republican state senator, warming up the crowd for a rally in Ohio for J.D. Vance, openly threatened violence, saying, "If we lose this one, it's going to take a civil war to save the country."

The Democratic Party responded to the increasingly fascist language of the Trump-Vance campaign with a press release claiming to be defending "freedom" and "democracy." A Harris campaign statement noted, "Our democracy is under assault by criminal Donald Trump: After the last election Trump lost, he sent a mob to overturn the results. This campaign, he has promised violence if he loses, the end of our elections if he wins, and the termination of the Constitution ..."

President Biden traveled to Austin, Texas, to make a speech on the 60th anniversary of the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which had been postponed after he contracted COVID-19 for the third time. In the course of this visit, he made another empty gesture against the threat of authoritarian rule, proposing a constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court's recent decision giving presidents absolute immunity for crimes committed while in office, as well as legislation to establish term limits and ethics rules for Supreme Court justices.

There is zero chance of the corporate-controlled US political system approving either measure, both of which Biden himself opposed until the Supreme Court decision on *Trump v. United States* July 1.

For all the warnings now issued by Harris and Biden about

Trump as a threat to democracy—only for electoral purposes—it is the Democratic Party that has made it possible for Trump to escape trial, conviction and imprisonment for his actions in seeking to overthrow the Constitution, and now for him to emerge as the Republican presidential nominee in an election in which the Democratic candidate, Harris, now claims to be an "underdog."

The entire policy of the Biden administration was based on reviving and strengthening the Republican Party after the debacle of Trump's final days in the White House, in order to obtain bipartisan support for the most important Democratic Priority: pursuing an aggressive imperialist foreign policy that triggered Russia's reactionary invasion of Ukraine, facilitates Israeli genocide in Gaza, and is paving the way for an even more terrible war against China.

While the corporate media obsesses over the results of opinion polls showing a narrowing of Trump's never large lead in the presidential race—he is either tied with or trailing Harris in critical "battleground" states like Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania—the basic political contours of the election have not changed.

The 2024 campaign remains a contest between the political standard-bearers of two right-wing, anti-working-class parties, which both defend American imperialism abroad and the brutal domination of finance capital at home.

Trump is a fascist, openly declaring his hostility to democracy, threatening to round up millions of immigrants, and incessantly denouncing socialism and communism. Harris is an imperialist warmonger, embracing Netanyahu, condemning anti-genocide protesters as "un-American," and pledging to continue Biden's foreign policy.



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