

In speech at Democratic National Convention, Biden warns of second Trump coup

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US President Joe Biden's speech at the Democratic National Convention on Monday evening was a picture of unreality. The president's description of the results of his four years in office was delusional, and his portrayal of the social and economic situation today bore no relationship to the actual conditions facing the vast majority of the population.

Biden did make one statement that was of immense significance, however. He declared, toward the end of his remarks, that this election will be the first since Trump's attempted coup of January 6, 2021. "On that day," he said, "we almost lost everything about who we are as a country. And that threat, this is not hyperbole, that threat is still very much alive."

Biden stated:

Donald Trump says he will refuse to accept the election result if he loses again. Think about that. He's promising a bloodbath if he loses, in his words. And that he'll be a dictator on day one, in his own words.

As if to counter any skepticism from his audience, he added:

By the way, this sucker means it. No, I'm not joking. Think about it. Anybody else said that in the past, you'd think he was crazy, you'd think it was an exaggeration, but he means it.

One must assume that, as president of the United States, he was basing this remark on intelligence that he

has received as well as the public pronouncements of Trump himself.

There are several remarkable facts about the statement. First is the response, or non-response, at the convention itself. The president and leader of the Democratic Party stated that he believes the candidate of the Republican Party will not accept the results of the election, only two-and-a-half months away, and will stoke violence throughout the country if he loses.

One might expect that this would introduce a tone of seriousness to the proceedings. Nothing of the sort. Biden's statements have been passed by without comment, and the convention continued on Tuesday as if they were never uttered.

Second, virtually nothing has been said about them in the media. The news reports on Biden's speech in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and *Politico* did not even mention them. While not referring to the statements about Trump explicitly, *Times* columnist David Brooks castigated Biden for being "unsmiling" and "haranguing" rather than "ebullient and joyful." Brooks added, "Anger and indignation is not the spirit America is hungering for now."

Clearly, the ruling class does not want to discuss—or, more accurately, alert the population to—the fact that the elections are taking place under conditions of an escalating breakdown of the entire political structure of the United States.

Returning to Biden's speech itself, while warning that Trump was preparing violence during and following the election, Biden did not indicate that he would do anything about it. The only solution he proposed is to vote for Kamala Harris in the election—the results of which he had just stated Trump would not accept.

Biden did not point out the basic fact that, in contrast

to four years ago, he will be the president of the United States the day after the election, up to the inauguration. He did not indicate that he would use the powers of his office to ensure that no coup would succeed.

Both the response to Biden's statements and his own presentation express the political dynamic in the American presidential election. The danger posed by Trump and the Republican Party is very real. The former president has pledged, if he returns to power, to deploy the military throughout the country to round up immigrants and violently suppress popular opposition. He speaks for sections of the oligarchy that have broken with any semblance of constitutional forms of rule and are turning toward fascism and authoritarianism.

However, there is no significant constituency within the ruling class, including the Democratic Party, for the preservation of democratic forms of rule. For the past four years, the central priority of the Biden administration has been the escalation of war—first, the instigation of the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, which is entering a new and dangerous phase, and second, the imperialist-backed genocide in Gaza.

To prosecute this war, Biden has sought bipartisan agreement with the Republicans, beginning with his statement following the January 6 coup calling for a “strong” Republican Party. Indeed, even as he was warning about a second coup, Biden was careful to present it solely as a matter of Trump the individual, and not the Republican Party itself.

This is because the Democratic Party defends the same social interests and economic system as Trump and the Republicans. Whatever their differences, they are both parties of the corporate and financial oligarchy.

Contrary to the portrait of social reality presented by Biden in his remarks, under Biden's watch the real average earnings of workers have collapsed. His administration carried out the largest transfer of social resources to the financial oligarchy in US history, greater even than the 2008 financial crisis. US billionaire wealth, as of March 2024, was up 88 percent over the four years of the Biden-Harris administration. This record accounts for Trump's ability to capitalize on broad-based discontent that finds no expression within the political establishment.

In the resolution passed at its National Congress

earlier this month, the Socialist Equality Party wrote, “The fundamental objective causes of the turn of the ruling class toward fascism and dictatorship are: 1) the escalating global imperialist war; and 2) the extreme growth of social inequality.”

These very processes have been enormously strengthened over the four years of the Biden administration.

It would be the gravest error to think that democratic rights can be secured and dictatorship opposed through support for the Democratic Party. As the SEP resolution stated:

Even if Trump is defeated in the November election—and fails to carry out another coup d'état—the objective economic and social contradictions of American imperialism drive the ruling elites, with or without Trump, to dictatorship. Trumpism is a symptom of a systemic crisis that cannot be resolved democratically within the framework of capitalism.

The defense of democratic rights is inseparably connected to the mobilization of the working class in opposition to the corporate and financial oligarchy. This requires an absolute political break from the Democratic Party. It is not through the Democratic Party that fascism can be defeated, but in the fight against both parties and the capitalist profit system.



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