

Harris admits Trump seeks dictatorial rule

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Former White House Chief of Staff John Kelly, a retired major general, described former President Donald Trump as a fascist, who praised Hitler and wanted “the kind of generals that Hitler had,” meaning officers who would be absolutely loyal to him personally and willing to follow orders to use their troops against his domestic opponents.

Kelly made his comments in interviews for a major story in *The Atlantic* magazine and then in a follow-up Wednesday with the *New York Times*. His remarks sparked widespread media coverage, vitriolic denunciations from the Trump presidential campaign and a brief but remarkable statement from Vice President Kamala Harris, his Democratic opponent in the November 5 election.

Harris emerged from her official residence at around 1:00 p.m. and made the connection between Kelly’s remarks and Trump’s statement last week that he would use the military to attack “the enemy within,” whom he described as the greatest threat to the US government. She continued:

And it is clear from John Kelly’s words that Donald Trump is someone who, I quote, “certainly falls into the general definition of ‘fascist,’” who, in fact, vowed to be a dictator on day one and vowed to use the military as his personal militia to carry out his personal and political vendettas.

Harris concluded: “So, the bottom line is this. We know what Donald Trump wants. He wants unchecked power. The question in 13 days will be: What do the American people want?”

This statement acknowledged that the Republican candidate for president is a fascist would-be dictator,

something which the Harris campaign has sought to avoid saying in the two months since her nomination. But it was entirely cowardly, making no call to action to stop Trump’s drive for dictatorship, only suggesting that the American people would be to blame should he win the election.

Harris gave no explanation as to how Trump was able to make a political comeback after the failure of his initial attempt at authoritarian rule, the January 6, 2021 coup attempt, when several thousand supporters, summoned by him to Washington, stormed the Capitol in an attempt to block congressional certification of his election defeat.

Trump is not an individual but the nominee of the Republican Party, a majority of whose congressional representatives have refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the election of Biden and Harris in 2020. But Harris made no mention of the Republican Party in her statement or its transformation into an openly fascist political organization, subordinated entirely to Trump.

There are two critical elements as the November 5 vote approaches. First is the increasing use of extra-parliamentary violence to shape political events, shown most openly on January 6, 2021, but now being prepared on a much broader and more systematic scale in advance of the 2024 election. Hundreds of threats have been made against election officials, with the likelihood that Election Day and the days thereafter will see armed attacks on those tabulating the results of the vote.

The conclusion of the voting will open up a period of intense political crisis. If Trump wins, he will set about immediately erecting a police-military dictatorship, beginning with massive repressive measures against immigrants, which he has already foreshadowed, pledging to round up and expel tens of millions of working people.

If Harris wins, there will be 11 weeks until her inauguration, during which Trump and the Republicans have prepared a barrage of legal and extralegal actions aimed at torpedoing what was once called the “peaceful transfer of power.” Republican-controlled state legislatures, the robed fascists in the US Supreme Court and the armed thugs of the militias that spearheaded January 6 will all be deployed.

The second critical factor is the passive accommodation of the Democratic Party to this mounting threat of dictatorship. This has been the policy of the Democrats since Biden entered the White House, declaring that his goal was the maintenance of a “strong Republican Party.”

In the aftermath of the failed coup of January 6, 2021, the Biden-Harris administration sought deliberately to revive the Republican Party in order to provide a bipartisan basis for an aggressive foreign policy, directed initially against Russia—instigating the war in Ukraine—but since expanding to the Middle East (Gaza, Lebanon and soon Iran), and ultimately aimed against China.

Harris’ campaign is itself based on an orientation to the Republicans, including a series of campaign appearances with Liz Cheney and repeated pledges that she would appoint a Republican to her cabinet.

Like Biden, Harris presents the threat of dictatorship as emanating solely from the personality of Donald Trump. But fascism doesn’t fall from the sky. The capitalist class only discards the historically developed forms of its class rule—the Constitution, formal democracy, the two-party system, etc.—and gambles on dictatorship when class tensions have reached the breaking point and it sees no other way out.

Some of the wealthiest billionaires, such as Elon Musk, are backing Trump’s bid for dictatorial power. Others—including, notably Bill Gates, who has just confirmed pumping \$50 million into pro-Harris political action committees—regard Trump’s aspirations as too risky, threatening to destabilize the US politically and undermine their class rule.

But these divisions within the ruling class, however deep, are of a tactical character. On the fundamental class questions, the defense of the colossal wealth of the financial aristocracy against masses of workers who produce it, and defense of the global interests of American imperialism against its foreign antagonists,

all sections of the corporate oligarchy are in agreement.

Regardless of the outcome of the election, the tendencies towards dictatorship and world war are not going to fade away. If Harris wins, the Republican Party will reject her legitimacy, Trump will function as a virtual president-in-exile, and the fascist right will control many states, including Texas and Florida, the second and third largest. And Harris’ warmongering and militarist policies will only strengthen the far right.

Trump will win tens of millions of votes even if he is defeated. This is not because there are tens of millions of people who want fascism and dictatorship. It is because the Democratic Party, the instrument of Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus, offers nothing to working people. This allows the Republicans to profit from the pent-up social discontent brought on by falling living standards, crumbling social services, and the mounting costs, financial and human, of imperialist war.

Throughout this period, the Socialist Equality Party and the *World Socialist Web Site* have been warning continuously of the inevitable consequences of the imperialist drive towards world war. We have explained that war abroad would be accompanied by war at home, against the democratic rights and living standards of the working class.

These warnings have been vindicated by events. Under these conditions, it is imperative that readers and supporters of the WSWS draw the necessary conclusions. Fascism cannot be opposed and democratic rights cannot be defended outside of the building of a political movement in the working class, based on a program that articulates its interests. It is time to come forward politically, and join and build the SEP as the spearhead of a mass revolutionary movement of the working class fighting for socialism.



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