

One week until Trump's return to the White House: The countdown begins

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In exactly one week, on January 20, Donald Trump—a felon and aspiring dictator—will be sworn in as the 47th president of the United States. The event will mark the calamitous nadir of American democracy. Four years after his attempt to overturn the results of the 2020 election, Trump's recitation of the presidential oath of office, pledging to “preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States,” will be the first lie of his second term.

The message of his Inaugural Address will be: “With charity for the rich and malice toward everyone else.”

Trump is preparing to unleash “a blizzard of executive orders” upon taking office, described by Republican Senator John Barrasso over the weekend as a campaign of “shock and awe.” These orders will focus on dismantling regulations, ordering the mass round-up of immigrants and accelerating the enrichment of the ruling elite.

Trump's appointees to top cabinet posts and government offices will begin appearing before Senate hearings this week. Among them are Kristi Noem, slated for homeland security secretary, whose track record as South Dakota governor includes advocating mass violence against migrants and deploying National Guard troops to Texas to police the US-Mexico border. She will oversee agencies such as the Border Patrol, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Secret Service.

Pam Bondi, Trump's nominee for attorney general, will begin her hearings on Wednesday along with Noem. A former Florida attorney general and corporate lobbyist, Bondi also served as one of Trump's personal lawyers and was a key promoter of the lies used to justify the January 6, 2021 coup attempt.

Her nomination embodies the administration's intention to use the “Justice Department” to oversee a massive assault on democratic rights, with the attack on immigrants serving as the spearhead. *Politico* reported yesterday, in an article titled “The US Military Debates

Possible Deployment on US Soil Under Trump,” on discussions within the military regarding Trump's plans to “deploy troops against what he deems domestic threats, including political enemies, dissenters and immigrants.”

For secretary of state, Trump has tapped Florida Senator Marco Rubio, an anti-Cuba fanatic who has long advocated economic and military conflict with China and Iran, while promoting regime-change operations across Latin America. His appointment signals a further escalation of US imperialism, with a renewed focus on destabilizing governments and expanding military violence. Vice President-elect JD Vance, meanwhile, vowed over the weekend that “all hell will break loose” if Hamas does not release hostages by Inauguration Day, promising to intensify the US-backed Israeli aggression in Gaza.

Others slated for hearings this week are billionaire hedge fund manager Scott Bessent as treasury secretary; climate change denier and CEO of Liberty Energy Chris Wright for energy secretary; and Lee Zeldin, who has promised to “roll back regulations that are forcing businesses to struggle,” as Environmental Protection Agency administrator.

Wright and Zeldin will take the reins of environmental policy as global warming-induced fires continue to ravage Los Angeles, the second largest metropolitan area in the United States. At least 24 are dead, millions have been poisoned with toxic smoke, tens of thousands have been displaced and over 12,000 structures have burned.

Among those whose confirmation hearings have yet to be scheduled is Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., the anti-vaccine advocate, nominated to lead the Department of Health and Human Services at a time when the world continues to grapple with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the emergence of new, even more deadly pathogens.

Five years after the onset of the pandemic, hospitals in Michigan and other states are reporting alarming levels of

severely ill patients. “Hospitals in Michigan have a lot of patients who are very, very sick with COVID,” Rachel Klamo, president of the Michigan Academy of Family Physicians, told the *Detroit Free Press*. Adding to the mounting public health crisis, the first human death in the US from H5N1 bird flu was recorded last week. Should this virus begin to spread among humans, it has the potential to spark a pandemic even deadlier than COVID-19.

The central target of the incoming Trump administration will be the working class. While not subject to congressional confirmation, Elon Musk, the world’s wealthiest individual, and Vivek Ramaswamy, the biotech billionaire, will occupy powerful positions within the new administration as the joint heads of the so-called “Department of Government Efficiency” (DOGE).

According to media reports over the weekend, Musk and Ramaswamy have already dispatched emissaries across more than a dozen federal agencies, including the Treasury Department, the Internal Revenue Service, Veterans Affairs, and Health and Human Services, to identify deep cuts targeting essential services such as healthcare.

Everything that has happened since November 5 confirms the *World Socialist Web Site*’s warning that the re-election of Trump marks a violent realignment of American politics with its underlying social reality—a society dominated by staggering inequality and ruled by massive corporations and an oligarchy of mega-millionaires and billionaires.

As the WSWS wrote in its New Year Statement:

The re-election of the would-be American Führer demonstrates that his initial victory in 2016, and for that matter the January 6, 2021 attempted coup d’etat, were not aberrations, but rather expressions of a fundamental realignment of politics, in the United States and throughout the world.

The past four years of the Biden administration have paved the way for this political debacle. The Democrats under Biden have been singularly focused on escalating global war, from the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine to the ongoing genocide in Gaza. This remains their defining orientation. Since Trump’s election, they have dropped all talk of the “existential threat to

democracy” or the “danger of fascism,” instead pledging “unity” and “collaboration” with the incoming regime.

The Democratic Party is committed to strangling any opposition to the policies of the ruling class, a role it shares with the trade union bureaucracy. This was exemplified by the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA), which issued a statement on Wednesday—after blocking a strike by dockworkers—praising Trump as “one of the best friends of working men and women in the United States.” The union apparatus functions as the enforcer of capital, and is moving rapidly to ingratiate itself with Trump and promote the fascist president as champion of the working class.

Meanwhile, the media has already begun its accommodation to Trump, a man who repeatedly denounced the press as the “enemy of the people.” His most extreme provocations—such as proposals to seize Greenland and the Panama Canal and to annex Canada—are now treated as legitimate components of the “political discourse.”

But for all the reckless threats and self-aggrandizing braggadocio, the Trump administration will be wracked by crisis.

The policies of social reaction at home and imperialist plunder abroad are the response of a ruling class to domestic and global contradictions for which American capitalism has no rational response. The fact that it is once again placing power in the hands of a twice-impeached con-man and convicted felon testifies to the political, not to mention moral, bankruptcy of the ruling class.

Trump’s demagogic populism will soon be exposed as a cynical fraud. While the media will continue to “normalize” Trump and the Democrats to prostrate themselves before the would-be American “Führer,” opposition to the government of oligarchs will develop within the working class. A massive intensification of the class struggle, within the United States and internationally, is on the agenda.



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