

United States: Trump continues to undermine electoral system and create chaos

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Two weeks after the November 3 presidential election, Donald Trump continues to tell the country and world, “I won the election”. He insists it was not even close: “I won by millions of votes.”

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His cohorts, from his cabinet on down the line, declare support for their “leader”. They say the system is rigged and the Democrats “stole” the election.

Protests by Trump backers have even occurred in states such as California, where Trump lost by more than five million votes.

Trump’s aim is to undermine the constitutional system. He controls the state apparatus, including the armed forces. So far, all his chaotic actions have failed to stop the transition to a new Joe Biden Democratic presidency in two months.

Legal defeats

There have been some 30 lawsuits and the success rate is zero. However, Trump says these are not defeats.

His lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, gave a bizarre media conference on November 19, where he proclaimed “evidence” of Democratic Party fraud, but refused to show it.



Rudy Giuliani.

Attorney Sidney Powell also made extreme, baseless claims, about “communist Venezuela and

George Soros” supposedly interfering in the election. She also falsely claimed that: a supercomputer called Hammer hacked votes; that Trump won the election by “millions of votes”; and that voting software company Dominion Voting Systems altered the results.

Trump then sought support from Republican state legislators in Michigan to overturn the election result there. He lost the state by more than 157,000 votes. The national and Michigan Republican Party are demanding the results not be certified until a full audit of Wayne County is done, where the 80% African American city of Detroit is located.

Trump’s campaign seeks to disenfranchise Black voters. It is striking that mainly white counties in Michigan, Pennsylvania and other states that voted Democratic are not being pushed to conduct audits and voter disqualifications.

In a scathing order on November 21, Pennsylvania judge Matthew W Brann wrote that Trump’s campaign, which had asked him to effectively disenfranchise nearly seven million voters, should have come to court “armed with compelling legal arguments and factual proof of rampant corruption” in its efforts to essentially nullify the results of Pennsylvania’s election.

The Trump campaign, he wrote, provided only “strained legal arguments without merit, and speculative accusations” that were “unsupported by evidence”. He kicked out the lawsuit.

The next day, the Trump campaign appealed his order.

Democracy exposed

“Democracy” in the world’s most powerful country is based on a house of cards. Most people probably assume that, in elections, if a majority of people vote for a candidate, that person wins. It is a winner takes all system, except when electing the President.

This is why Trump can do what he is doing. Each state must approve electors for the winning party; then a month later they pick the winner. Along the way, from November 3 to December 14 (when electors meet to ratify the results) to January 20, anything can occur. Since the late 1800s, there has been a smooth transfer of power.

Trump sees the contradictions in the system, and is exploiting it by using the “big lie”. When he falsely says repeatedly, “I won”, his supporters believe him. It undermines the electoral system and democratic rule.

While legal scholars and establishment experts believe Trump will leave office on January 20, Trump does not agree.

It is about power, not law.

Everything Trump has done for four years has shattered past assumptions of what presidents should do.

The president is sworn to defend the country from foreign and domestic enemies. Trump calls Democrats “enemies” and has repeatedly demanded they be arrested, including Biden, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and former President Barack Obama.

Most dismiss his demands.

Biden's response

Meanwhile, Biden and the Democrats officially operate as though it is inevitable Biden will take office on January 20.

Biden, a corporate liberal, has made it clear he intends to act in the interests of Wall Street, even as he gives lip service to supporting the interests of labour and the working class.

So far, his early appointments to his government-in-waiting are gender and racially mixed moderates and right-of-centre politicians.

The more liberal and progressive wing of the Democratic Party have been shut out.

Indigenous, racial justice and climate activists staged an occupation outside the Democratic National Committee in Washington, DC, on November 19, calling on Biden to take immediate action on climate change and to approve the Green New Deal. Advocates are also calling for a Cabinet free of lobbyists and others with close industry ties.

A number of lawmakers spoke at the protest, including Missouri's Democratic Congressmember-elect Cori Bush, the state's first Black woman elected to Congress, and New York Democratic Congressmember Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement, who had few, if any, illusions before the elections, are urging followers to keep the pressure on city, state and federal governments (Republican and Democrat) to protect Black lives.

Black-led protests continued during the election campaign when cops shot and killed new victims. The uprising began under Trump and will continue under Biden.

What is unknown is how the ruling class will react if Trump attempts a self-described Constitutional coup.

Trump and his Attorney General William Barr claim the "Imperial Presidency" is what the Constitution states. Under this interpretation, any actions by the president cannot be declared illegal, because of his sworn declaration to fight all enemies, by any means he chooses.

Unions can respond

A sign that resistance is possible, however, is the decision taken on November 21 by the Vermont state union federation, at the state American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) convention.

A powerful resolution was adopted by delegates to defend democracy in the case of a "political coup". It states: "The Vermont AFL-CIO is empowered by the delegates at the 2020 state convention to call for a general strike of all working people in our state in the event that Donald Trump refuses to concede the office of President of the United States.

"The Vermont AFL-CIO will work with allies in the anti-racist, environmental justice, feminist, LGBTQ+, immigrant rights, and disability rights movements to protect our democracy, the Constitution, the law, and our nation's democratic traditions.

"The Vermont AFL-CIO will call on city and county governments to pledge to protect protesters defending democracy, and commit to not using police action or curfews to curtail these activities, and to use all available resources to stand up against any effort by the Trump administration to steal the presidential election.

"The Vermont AFL-CIO commits itself to the long-term goal of winning genuine democracy through the abolition of the Electoral College and two-party system, through the collective action of our affiliates and allied organisations."

Malik Miah, California

P.S.

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<https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/trump-continues-undermine-electoral-system-and-create-chaos>