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The record of the World Socialist Web Site on Trump's coup attempt of January 6

On Sunday, the *Washington Post* published a three-part investigation of the January 6, 2021 insurrection detailing Trump's months-long plot to remain in power no matter the outcome of the 2020 election.



Right-wing insurrectionists loyal to Donald Trump storming the US Capitol in Washington on Jan. 6, 2021 [Credit: AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana, File]

The first part of the series, titled “Red Flags,” makes clear that the entire state apparatus was aware that Donald Trump was preparing a coup attempt in the days leading up to January 6.

The *Post* investigation explains that officials in the Department of Homeland Security were aware that January 6 would be a “mass casualty event” and told hospitals to prepare extra blood supplies to treat the injured. Networks of fascist paramilitaries set up staging grounds and made detailed plans to arrive at the Capitol. The *Post* reports that on January 2, DHS officials Donell Harvin and Mike Sena organized a call on increased threats of violence attended by hundreds of officials from DHS “fusion centers” across the country. “For the first time, from coast to coast, the centers were blinking red,” the *Post* reports. “The hour, date and location of concern was the same: 1 p.m., the U.S. Capitol, Jan. 6.”

High-ranking military officials feared that were the military to be deployed, Trump would appeal to rank-and-file soldiers and effectively split the army. The leadership of various departments of government told employees and staff to work from home due to the high chance of violence. Leaders of the Democratic Party conferred with the military and police in preparation for the day’s events.

The *Post* article makes clear that Trump’s plan almost succeeded in its goal of forestalling the certification of the Electoral College vote. It was organized by Hitler-lovers like Steven Bannon and Stephen Miller and orchestrated by the commander-in-chief from his Oval Office command center. The well-planned violence that erupted in the US Capitol on January 6 made Hitler’s Beer Hall Putsch appear like a provincial, improvised affair by comparison.

In a statement accompanying the publication of the investigation, *Post* Executive Editor Sally Buzbee wrote: “The violence that day was neither a spontaneous act nor an isolated event. ... The insurrection that took place on Jan. 6 at the United States Capitol was one of the most consequential moments in American history.”

But this is not how the Democratic Party and Democratic-aligned media presented January 6 in the lead-up to the putsch attempt. While Trump shouted his plans on television and activated his supporters with all-caps tweets saying, “JANUARY SIXTH, SEE YOU IN DC!” the Democratic Party-aligned press dismissed it all as mere bluster. In the days and weeks leading up to January 6, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and CNN chloroformed the population, echoing Biden’s December 15 assertion that the democratic order was “resilient, true and strong” and that all would be right if the population would “stay calm.”

Only one publication—the *World Socialist Web Site*—warned clearly and consistently about the existential danger posed by Trump’s plot and sought to mobilize the working class against the threat of dictatorship.

The warnings began months before January 6 but became more urgent and specific as Trump’s fascist strategy played out over the course of the election campaign and in the lead-up to Biden’s inauguration.

On June 1, 2020, when Donald Trump deployed military police to brutally clear Lafayette Square outside the White House, the WSWS wrote that “a turning point in American history has been reached. Trump’s efforts to establish a personal dictatorship on the basis of military rule is the product of a protracted crisis of American democracy, under the impact of extreme social inequality and endless war.”

During the September 29 presidential debate Trump ordered fascist Proud Boys to “stand back and stand by” for the US election and its aftermath. On October 1, the WSWS published a statement warning, “Trump’s political strategy is fairly obvious and can be summed up with the infamous phrase: ‘Cry “Havoc,” and let slip the dogs of war.’”

When Trump tested positive for COVID-19 and was airlifted to receive treatment at Walter Reed Hospital, the WSWS wrote, “Trump’s decision to return to the White House from the Walter Reed Medical Center Monday night was clearly motivated by deep concerns over the impact of his sickness on his position and political conspiracies.”

Days later, Trump supporters were arrested for conspiring to kidnap and kill Democratic Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer. The WSWS wrote that the plot “removes all doubt as to what Donald Trump means when he refuses to commit to a ‘peaceful transition of power.’ The US president is clearly implicated by word and deed in a wide-ranging and violent plot to overturn the outcome of the November 3 election.”

Between the election and late December, the WSWS published many articles warning of Trump’s pseudo-legal strategy to invalidate votes and utilize the courts to postpone the transfer of power. Trump began to hone in on January 6. The WSWS wrote on December 28:

On January 6, Congress is scheduled to formally count the vote of the Electoral College, which Biden won 306 to 232, and certify his election as president of the United States. Trump has called for his Republican supporters in the House and Senate to derail this process, while summoning his far-right supporters to take to the streets of Washington the same day. “Big protest in DC on January 6th. Be there it will be wild!” he tweeted, raising the specter of violence.

On January 5, the WSWS warned that Democratic Party efforts to downplay preparations for a coup on January 6 were facilitating Trump’s putsch:

The message from the Democratic leadership is one of utter complacency. A top deputy to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, House Democratic Caucus leader Hakeem Jeffries, told a press conference Monday morning that he had not even read the transcript of Trump’s phone call with the Georgia election officials. Asked whether Trump had committed a crime for which he should be held accountable, Jeffries replied, “We are not looking backward. We are looking forward to the inauguration of Joe Biden on January 20.” The Democrats systematically downplay the seriousness of the threat to democratic rights represented by Trump’s continuing coup efforts and his incitement of fascist forces.

On the morning of January 6, the WSWS wrote that the certification of the Electoral College was not a mere legal technicality:

The United States Congress is meeting today to formally count the Electoral College votes in the 2020 presidential election. Under normal conditions, this process is a formality. Today’s vote, however, takes place under conditions of an active and ongoing effort by President Donald Trump to stage a coup d’état, nullify the results of the election and establish a presidential dictatorship.

On January 7, WSWS International Editorial Board Chairman David North wrote a statement titled “The Fascist Coup of January 6,” which stated:

The fascist insurrection in Washington D.C.—which resulted in the storming of the U.S. Congress, the panicked dispersal of terrified senators and members of the House, the delay of the official validation of Joseph Biden’s Electoral College majority, and even the

occupation of the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi—is a turning point in the political history of the United States.

The hoary glorifications of the invincibility and timelessness of American democracy have been totally exposed and discredited as a hollow political myth. The popular phrase “It Can’t Happen Here,” taken from the title of Sinclair Lewis’s justly famous fictional account of the rise of American fascism, has been decisively overtaken by events. Not only *can* a fascist coup happen here. It *has* happened here, on the afternoon of January 6, 2021.

The political record of the *World Socialist Web Site* in exposing and opposing Trump’s coup is unmatched. And in the face of censorship and readership suppression from state actor corporations like Google, Facebook and Twitter, the WSWS has spent the last 10 months exhaustively reporting on the bipartisan cover-up and fighting for the broadest possible understanding in the working class of the ongoing danger posed by Trump and his fascist advisors.

The “authoritative” press has already moved past the *Post* story, with barely a mention in the corporate media about the results of their investigation.

The *Wall Street Journal* allows Trump to spew his fascist lies about election fraud in its opinion pages, and on October 29, the *New York Times* even gave space to Senatorial coup-leader Josh Hawley to recoup his reputation in high society with a policy piece about supply chains, which the *Times* opinion editor said he “hope[s] that *Times* readers will find useful.” The pro-Democratic Party *Jacobin* magazine has played a similar role, publishing multiple articles downplaying the events of January 6. On January 26, it published an article mocking those who called the events of that month an insurrection: “Hyperbole flowed as the trail of tears grew to a tidal wave.” January 6 was nothing more than “a bizarre theater of the absurd.”

Meanwhile, Trump and his fascist advisors remain free to plot their next steps. The *World Socialist Web Site* will continue to expose their fascist plans and to mobilize the working class against the threat of dictatorship.

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