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In White House meeting, Brazil's Lula and Biden promote fraudulent “democratic alliance”

On Friday, Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of the Workers Party (PT) embarked on the first diplomatic trip of his newly inaugurated government to the United States, holding a meeting with US President Joe Biden, of the Democratic Party, in the White House.



Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva with US President Joe Biden at the White House on Friday (Ricardo Stuckert/PR) [Photo: Ricardo Stuckert/PR]

The visit was promoted as a sign of strengthening relations between Brazil and the United States. Both presidents have portrayed themselves as confronting attempts by far-right opponents to subvert the institutional order in their respective countries—in Lula's case, former fascistic President Jair Bolsonaro, and in Biden's, Republican President Donald Trump—and in defending an environmental and democratic global agenda.

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Initiating the portion of the meeting open to the media, Biden said that democratic institutions in both countries have been “very much tested” and “put in jeopardy.” But in both the United States and Brazil, “democracy has prevailed,” he stated.

Claiming to have a fundamental political agreement with the Brazilian leader, Biden drew the conclusion: “I believe we have to continue to stand up for democracy and democratic values that form the core of our strength. Not just in our hemisphere but around the world.”

Lula, in turn, said he saw their meeting as a way of “repositioning Brazil in the new world geopolitics, because Brazil isolated itself for four years.” In addition, he hailed Biden for having recognized the Brazilian elections and for his “posture in defense of democracy.”

The PT leader defined the commitments he sought in partnership with the US as the following: first, “to never more allow there to be a new chapter of the Capitol invasion” as on January 6, 2021, in Washington, and “what happened in Brazil with the invasion” of the government headquarters in Brasilia on January 8, 2023. Next, he said, was an agreement to fight inequality, racism and climate change.

Lula’s quest for a “geopolitical repositioning” of Brazil in relation to the United States, as well as his promotion of Biden as a defender of democracy, equality and the environment attest to the complete bankruptcy of himself and his Workers Party as “left-wing” forces.

The Brazilian president bowed to Washington in issuing a joint statement condemning Russia for its “violation of the territorial integrity” of Ukraine. While presenting pathetic plans to form a “peace club” among global leaders, in practice Lula is engaged in covering up the criminal role played by the main promoters of the new world war: US imperialism and its incumbent leader.

It was notable that the White House failed to follow the usual protocol of presenting the two heads of state at a joint press conference after their meeting in the Oval Office. In all likelihood, the US administration did not want to risk the airing of any differences on the Ukraine war under conditions in which Washington is preparing to escalate its direct intervention against nuclear-armed Russia behind the backs of the American people.

Shamefully covering up the criminal role historically played by American imperialism in Brazil and Latin America, Lula declared that “the United States represents much in its historical, political, economic and commercial relationship with Brazil.” The fact that Biden sees Brazil and Latin America as critical territory for the escalating US confrontations with Russia and China is also complacently ignored by Lula.

These “bilateral” efforts were critically supported by the pseudo-left organizations in both countries. To help the PT in Brazil and the Democratic Party in the US present their counterrevolutionary policies as a “progressive agenda” is the essential role played by these reactionary upper-middle class forces.

Among the few representatives sent by the PT administration in its diplomatic mission to the US was the Minister of Racial Equality Anielle Franco, sister of the murdered councilwoman Marielle Franco of the pseudo-left Socialism and Freedom Party (PSOL).

Introducing her political goals on the trip, Franco declared, “[My] presence denotes and brings centrality to the racial agenda in this government and the efforts we will make to combat racism in Brazil.” Attesting to the PT government’s aim to replicate the systematic use of identity politics by the Democratic Party to suppress the class struggle, the minister affirmed: “What the US can give us as a reference are their reparation policies and the valorization of the Afro-American history and memory.”

With the same goals, Lula’s diplomatic agenda included meetings with representatives of the pseudo-left wing of the Democratic Party and the AFL-CIO union bureaucracy. Visiting the Brazilian president were Senator Bernie Sanders and members of Congress like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, connected to the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). While helping Lula provide a “left” veneer for his diplomatic mission, these political forces are engaged at home in supporting the shipment of weapons to the war in Ukraine and the Biden administration’s brutal attacks against the American working class, such as the suppression of the railroad workers’ right to strike.

The claim that the spurious relations being developed by Lula’s government with US imperialism are a “necessary evil” in the face of the dictatorial threats in Brazil is yet another lie. The theory that US and European imperialism’s support would prevent a coup attempt by Bolsonaro was widely promoted by the PT and the pseudo-left during the Brazilian elections.

However, the Biden administration’s stated support did not prevent the months following the election from witnessing an even more violent escalation of coup attacks in Brazil. The January 8 fascist attack on government offices in Brasilia exposed how deeply the authoritarian conspiracies reach within the Brazilian state, and they remain on the march.

Meanwhile, Bolsonaro himself continues to operate freely in the United States, with Biden’s acquiescence, working to consolidate a fascistic movement in Brazil. In one of the far-right rallies he held in recent weeks in Orlando, Bolsonaro reaffirmed that the Brazilian elections were rigged, and declared that the PT government “won’t last long.”

Despite the joint efforts of Biden and Lula to present their alliance as a powerful force in defense of democracy, the fact is that the social and political roots of the fascist eruptions, both on January 6, 2021, in the US, and on January 8, 2023, in Brazil, remain alive and are growing.

The *World Socialist Web Site* wrote in its January 6, 2023, statement, “Two years on, the January 6 coup continues”:

Two years later, none of the social and political conditions that produced the coup have gone away. The existing institutions of the ruling class are breaking down under the impact of extreme social inequality, the consequences of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a deepening economic and financial crisis, and unending war that has now developed into a global conflict.

The threats to democracy can be answered neither by the Democrats in the US, nor by the PT in Brazil. As the WSWS has stressed, it requires the mobilization of the working class, unified throughout the US, Brazil and around the world, on the basis of opposition to the capitalist system that is the root of social inequality and dictatorship.

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