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USA - Debate

Capitol (United States): Attempted insurrection fails

- Debate -

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The attempted coup to overturn the election in the mass riots and invasion of the Capital Building to prevent Congress counting the Electoral College results, was prepared months in advance.

Before the November 3 election, Trump repeatedly whipped up his tens of millions of followers with the assertion that the only way he wouldn't be re-elected was because of massive electoral fraud.

When he lost the election, he immediately refused to acknowledge his defeat, claiming that, indeed, such electoral fraud had occurred and he was in fact re-elected.

His tens of millions of followers believed him. Polls showed 70 percent of Republican voters believed him.

By so doing he was threatening to use his mass backing to stage a coup to stay in power. He launched some 60 lawsuits, backed by the Republican Party leadership, to get the courts to throw out the votes in key states, which would have made him the winner.

The Republicans lost every such lawsuit, because they were backed only by vague assertions without any facts.

Then the Electoral College met on December 14, and ratified that Trump had lost by 306 to 232 votes.

In preparation for the December 14 meeting, Trump urged his white nationalist armed supporters, the fascist Proud Boys among them, to come to Washington.

Thousands rallied on the National Mall demanding the reversal of Biden's victory. There was a counter protest which police attacked with pepper spray and clubs, and arrested 33. The white nationalists also managed to stab four.

The stabbing occurred just after members of the Proud Boys tore a "Black Lives Matter" banner from one of the oldest Black churches in Washington, and burned it in the street.

Trump singled out the Proud Boys by name and told them to "stand down" for the present but "stand ready" for further action.

It was only after the December 14 vote that some Republican leaders acknowledged that Biden, not Trump, has been elected. Trump immediately denounced them, including Senate Republican Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, formerly one of his staunchest puppets, and called on his supporters to come to Washington on January 6 to stop the Congressional vote.

"Big protest in DC on January 6. Be there! Be wild!" Trump shouted.

The proposed mass mobilization was backed by a two-thirds majority of Republicans in the House and some in the Senate, who said they would vote on January 6 to overturn the election, an attempted legal coup.

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Tens of thousands of white nationalist supporters mobilized that morning near the White House. Trump addressed them. Part of what he said was:

"All of us here today do not want to see our election victory stolen by a bold and radical left Democrats which is what they are doing and stolen by the fake news media. That is what they have done and what they are doing.

"We will never give up. We will never concede. It doesn't happen. You don't concede when there's theft involved. Our country has had enough. We will not take it anymore, and that is what this is all about.

"And to use a favorite term that all of you people really came up with, we will stop the steal!"

After a long harangue attacking "fake news", Republicans who gave up on his coup attempt, etc. etc. he gave the order to his followers to march on the Capitol building and "be strong" because that was the only way "to take our country back."

Earlier, his disgraced personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, told the crowd, "Let's have a trial by combat!" at the Capitol, and Trump praised him.

"Stand up and fight!" Trump's son Don Jr. shouted as he threatened Republicans meeting in the Congress unwilling to overturn the election: "We're coming for you and we're going to have a good time doing it!"

The crowd marched off to the Capitol Building. With the backing of the tens of thousands of supporters in front of the building, some hundreds, perhaps about 1,000, of thugs pushed on barricades of the Capitol police until the police let them invade the Capitol steps and some scaled up to where they could invade the Congressional rooms and offices.

The world saw on TV as many Congress people had to be evacuated to safety while others remained barricaded in their offices. Offices were ransacked, files stolen, furniture smashed. Trump flags were everywhere. One large Confederate flag was seen. A shirt read "Camp Auschwitz."

One video showed the insurrectionists shouting at a cop to tell Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi that they were coming to get her. Others were seen as threatening Vice President Mike Pence for not using his position of chair at the Congressional count of the vote, shouting "we want Pence!"

Some cops were seen high-fiving protestors, taking selfies with them, and pointing out where certain offices of congress people were.

But there were attacks on other police, and an armed standoff at the door of the House. One policeman was killed by a member of the mob., and a policewoman shouting for help was almost crushed in a deliberate attack.

One Trump supporter was shot and killed by police as she attacked them.

But nothing was done for hours to remove the insurrectionists. The DC mayor tried to get the army to release the National Guard troops who were on standby but was refused, on orders from Trump according to some reports.

The world stood in amazement as the center of U.S. democracy, however decrepted it is, was occupied with nothing

being done to stop them, for hours.

When troops were finally brought in, they rounded up those inside, and politely escorted them out, releasing them without a single arrest.

As insurrectionists stormed the U.S. Capitol, hundreds of fervent Trump supporters gathered for local rallies around the country. In Los Angeles a Trump mob attacked a Black woman near City Hall.

The young woman, Berlinda Nibo, was walking home when she came upon the rally and started documenting it on her phone. "Dozens quickly surrounded her, demanding to know who she voted for and to take off her face mask.

"She was then brutally attacked by the group of white supremacists, who shoved her, pulled out her hair extensions and pepper-sprayed her in the eyes. The bearded man pictured holding her from behind [documented on her phone] was one of several witnesses who intervened to help Nibo escape the out-of-control mob," according to Democracy Now.

After the insurrectionists were removed from the Capitol, the Congress convened again. Even in the wake of the insurrection they helped foment with Trump, 139 Republican members of the House and ten in the Senate voted to overturn the election - voted for a coup, even if only symbolically as by then as they were outvoted.

The contrast between how this attempted coup was treated by the cops, the Army and the National Guard and what we saw in all the many attacks on the Black Lives Matter protests was noted by many commentators, and certainly was not lost on African Americans.

One of these was interviewed on Democracy Now the next day, Bree Newsom, an artist and antiracist activist. Following the 2015 massacre of eight African American members of a Black church by a white nationalist in Charleston, South Carolina, Bree scaled the 30-foot flagpole at the state Capitol and tore down the Confederate flag, seen on national TV.

She said, "One of the things we saw throughout the day yesterday [on social media] were people like myself, who have been present for various protests, mostly people of color, Black people, noting the obvious difference in terms of how police have a coordinated, overly militarized response to any kind of protest challenging racism in policing or racism in the government versus what we saw yesterday.

"And I think that is just another of these flashpoint moments in history that represents a culmination of everything that came before it, and it really shines a spotlight on everything that is fundamentally wrong. And one of those things is clearly policing."

One could only imagine how if Black Lives Matter protesters stormed the Capital after over a month saying they would they would have been treated. They would have been met with thousands of troops, tanks, machine guns.

Concerning the congresspersons who continued to vote for the coup, Bree Newsom said, "One of the things that was most striking to me yesterday - I was among the people who stayed into the wee hours of the morning watching how things played out at the Capital - was, you know, you would see congressperson after congressperson condemning the insurrectionist mob ...

"But there was still very little acknowledgement of the fact that the people who led the insurrection, the people who have incited these people to mob the Capitol, were sitting in the chamber, were still voicing their objection to the election.

"So, you know, this idea that we are somehow just going to reach across the aisle and shake hands and carry on as though we did not witness things play out as they did, as though the primary inciter of violence yesterday was not the president of the United States is just completely unrealistic. There's no way that can happen."

Ms. Newsom also made the key point: "The central issue here is white supremacy. And white supremacy was foundational to the establishment of this nation. The main thing I continue to say as an activist, this is the central conflict.

"It is baked into our institutions. It was baked into our Constitution at the founding. And that continues to be the case. It is the defining internal conflict of the nation. People in the military. In the police. In the government. It was elected officials who initiated the events that led to this riot."

To those so-called Marxists who never absorbed what Marx and Engels wrote about the English oppression of Ireland and of Irish workers, or what Lenin, Trotsky and the first Leninist years of the Communist International wrote and said about national oppression, and who claim that the only central contradiction in American capitalism is that that between the working class and the capitalists, we say Bree Newsom grasps reality better than you do, especially in this burning moment.

First Black slavery, and then the national oppression of Blacks beginning with the counter-revolution to the Civil War and Reconstruction soon after up to the present, has been central to how the U.S. capitalist class rules over the working class, by dividing white workers and Black workers (and other non-white workers as a consequence), preventing working class unity without which there can be no working class challenge to capitalist rule.

It was Lenin who first saw that Blacks are an oppressed nationality in the U.S. This became the position of the first years of the CI. It was Trotsky who brought this to the attention of the early Socialist Workers Party, together with C.L.R. James, which set it apart from the other socialists.

As W.E.B. Dubois wrote about Reconstruction and its overthrow, it is the "color line" that keeps the working class divided. He wrote that in 1934, when it was still true and remains true.

Whither Trump?

This sheds light on what's in store for Trump and Trumpism. Trump was able to tap into white fear and hatred of African Americans, Latinos, Muslims and more, and to present himself as their strongman savior. "Make America Great Again" always meant "Make America White Again."

White fear and hatred of Blacks reached boiling point this year as the major wave of Black Lives Matter mobilizations against police murders of Blacks and systematic, institutionalized racism, exploded.

White racists could not stand to see thousands of Black people, joined by young whites, taking control of the streets, mobilizing against white racism. they strongly supported Trump's leadership of the violent attacks on BLM by troops

and police throughout the country.

Seventy-five million Americans voted for Trump, over 45 percent of those who voted. How many sympathize with Trump's white supremacy? Sixty million? "Only" fifty million?

Trump succeeded in energizing these tens of millions and giving them legitimacy. He also mobilized them behind his stand that what is needed is a strong authoritarian state defending their perceived interests. While he didn't succeed in imposing a coup to establish such a regime this time, the threat remains.

These tens of millions are not going away. That are not demoralized at all. They still remain the voting base of the Republican Party. The Republicans may split, either by Trump driving his enemies out, or vice versa. In either case, Trump remains the cult leader of this base, at least for the next period.

These tens of millions will continue to fight and will remain a factor in U.S. politics. The openly fascists like the Proud Boys, Boogaloo, and other such groups will grow. The broader movement around Trump will move further to the right, and quite possibly will become an incipient fascist group spearheading the ruling class intention of at least dispersing the Black upsurge.

The Democrats seek to accomplish this through cooption, using demagogic promises and pro-Black rhetoric devoid of little action, under the cover of needing to make compromises with Republicans to "get things done."

There will be no turning back to the pre-Trump situation. For the next period Trumpism is here to stay, even if it is a minority movement of "only" tens of millions.

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