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USA

U.S. Supreme Court Decision Makes the President a Virtual King

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A U.S. Supreme Court decision last week has fundamentally changed the American political system, stopped lower court cases against former president Donald Trump, and raised the prospect that if he is reelected to a second term, he will have dictatorial powers. All of this as President Joe Biden, 81, seems to be declining physically and mentally and, since a calamitous debate performance, is falling in the polls. At the moment, things are grim.

The United States Supreme Court, in a six to three decision, ruled on July 1 that U.S. presidents enjoy immunity in their official acts, complete immunity in their core presidential duties and presumptive immunity in other official acts. Exactly what constitutes unofficial or personal acts is left open to interpretation by the courts in the future. Justice Sonia Sotomayor in a powerful and passionate dissenting opinion wrote:

Today's decision to grant former Presidents criminal immunity reshapes the institution of the Presidency. It makes a mockery of the principle, foundational to our Constitution and system of Government, that no man is above the law... The President of the United States is the most powerful person in the country, and possibly the world... When he uses his official powers in any way, under the majority's reasoning, he now will be insulated from criminal prosecution... Orders the Navy's Seal Team 6 to assassinate a political rival? Immune. Organizes a military coup to hold onto power? Immune. Takes a bribe in exchange for a pardon? Immune. Immune, immune, immune.

She concluded her statement, "the President is now a king above the law."

It was Trump who brought the case to the court claiming immunity from indictments brought against him for his role in the January 6, 2021 insurrection and attempted coup. The decision means that both that case and another case against Trump for mishandling official documents will be delayed until after the presidential election, since their will have to be hearings in both cases about what can be considered official acts or unofficial acts.

Trump, who had always claimed "absolute immunity," praised the court's decision calling it a "big win for the Constitution," and he immediately demanded that all court cases against him be closed. The judge in the documents case has already paused proceedings.

The Court's decision came shortly after Biden's disastrous performance in the first presidential candidates' debate with Trump on June 27, a debacle that caused panic in the Democratic Party. Since then Trump has gained in the polls while several Democratic congressional representatives have called on Biden to step down. But while party leaders, donors, and advisors hold meetings, they have not been able to come to a decision about replacing Biden with another presidential candidate. Though as of now (July 7) Biden has said he is staying in the race.

The Progressive Caucus and the Squad, which stand on the left of the Democratic Party, have kept quiet about Biden and the question of replacing him, fearing retribution. Then too the Squad was recently weakened by the defeat of Jamaal Bowman in his bid for reelection to the House.

The Democratic Socialist of America issued a statement saying, "Tell the Democratic Party leadership that Biden must step aside!" which echoed many mainstream and progressive publications, but the socialist left has no weight in

these matters.

If the Democratic Party quickly replaces Biden with another candidate at the party's national convention in Chicago from August 19 to 22 there is still a chance that Trump could be stopped. Maybe.

With summer here, some people on vacation and 130 million sweltering under extreme and dangerous heat caused by global warming the beaches are full, the streets are quiet, and the movements have for the moment subsided. At the moment things look very bleak.

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