

As Trump assembles dictatorial regime, Biden offers “smoothest” transition

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As President-elect Donald Trump assembles, with extreme rapidity, a cabinet of fascists and loyalists, President Joe Biden welcomed the aspiring dictator to the White House Wednesday and promised his full cooperation in the transition to the new government.

In a staggering statement, Biden offered to do “everything we can to make sure you’re accommodated, have what you need.” Trump responded, “I appreciate very much a transition that’s so smooth, it’ll be as smooth as you can get.” Biden called Trump “Donald,” and Trump called him “Joe.”

Only a month ago, Biden acknowledged Trump was a fascist. In his speech at the Democratic National Convention in August, Biden warned that Trump would “be a dictator on day one.” Now, he opened the White House to his successor, initiated a handshake for the press photographers to capture and congratulated Trump on his electoral success.

If further proof was needed of the cowardice, duplicity and political bankruptcy of the Democratic Party, this was it. Biden remains president for more two months. There are innumerable actions he could take to undermine the actions of a Trump presidency, which is preparing a massive assault on millions of immigrants and the democratic rights of the population. Instead, the Democrats are pledging their cooperation.

The public photo-op was followed by a closed-door, two-hour meeting, at which Biden and Trump primarily discussed foreign policy, according to subsequent press accounts, including the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, the US-backed Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza and wider war moves in the Middle East, focused on Iran.

After the meeting, Trump confirmed the discussions on Ukraine and the Middle East. It is likely that the two presidents also discussed the US war build-up against China, where Biden has focused on the strengthening of US military ties with Japan, South Korea, Australia and India, its principal allies in the region, while continuing to shift US military assets to the Pacific. Trump’s initial nominations

for national security positions have been a slew of anti-China hawks, including Senator Marco Rubio for Secretary of State, Representative Michael Waltz for National Security Advisor, Representative Elise Stefanik for UN Ambassador, and Fox News pundit Pete Hegseth for Secretary of Defense.

The Hegseth appointment is particularly remarkable, since the former Iraq and Afghanistan combat veteran was only a major in the Army Reserves and has spent the last decade as a host on the weekend “Fox & Friends” program.

The nomination came as the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Trump is considering a draft executive order to establish a “warrior board” of retired senior military commanders “with the power to review three- and four-star officers and to recommend removals of any deemed unfit for leadership.” In effect, this would be an instrument to purge the military of officers deemed insufficiently loyal to Trump who might repeat the objections of General Mark Milley and other top officers to Trump’s demands in 2020 to deploy the Army on the streets against the American people.

Even as the Trump-Biden meeting at the White House was going on, the Trump transition office announced his most provocative nomination yet: the selection of Republican Representative Matt Gaetz to become US Attorney General, the top law enforcement official in the federal government. The 42-year-old Florida congressman is a close associate of the fascist Steve Bannon and one of the most fervent supporters of Trump in the House Republican caucus.

On Tuesday, in advance of the Gaetz nomination, Bannon declared in relation to the Justice Department, “the hunted are about to become the hunters.”

Gaetz is one of the House Republicans most closely identified with the violent assault on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, when a mob summoned by Trump sought to block the congressional certification of his defeat by Biden in the 2020 election. Gaetz helped charter buses to Washington for the rally addressed by Trump. He has been vocal in defending the fascist thugs who attacked the Capitol and in advocating Trump pardon them as soon as he takes office.

If he assumes control of the Department of Justice, Gaetz would become the point man in a campaign to prosecute a wide range of Trump's political targets. This would include not only prominent Democrats, like Biden, former Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Vice President Kamala Harris, but also students protesting the Gaza genocide, socialists, and all those who seek to oppose Trump's threatened onslaught against immigrants and the democratic rights of the working class.

The nomination of Gaetz coincided with other developments cementing the control of official Washington by Trump and his fascist cohorts. Most corporate media outlets announced Wednesday that the Republican Party would maintain its control of the House of Representatives, after two contested races in Arizona and California were declared for the Republican incumbents. This means that Trump and the Republicans will control the White House, the US Senate, the House of Representatives and the Supreme Court, where a six-three ultra-right majority ruled last summer that Trump has absolute immunity for any action he takes as president, no matter how illegal, unconstitutional or corrupt.

Trump is seeking a further expansion of his authority by demanding that the newly elected Senate Majority Leader, John Thune of South Dakota, agree to unlimited adjournments at the president's request, during which time Trump would be able to fill cabinet posts with "recess appointments" that would not have to clear a vote in the Senate.

This would violate the constitutional requirement that the upper house give its "advice and consent" for nominations to high-level executive and judicial posts, effectively giving Trump the ability to rule by decree. Aides are also discussing ways to give Trump the ability to impose massive social cuts proposed by Elon Musk as part of the "Department of Government Efficiency," without any congressional approval.

While Trump's drive to amass executive power in his hands is unprecedented, the posture of Biden and the Democrats is equally staggering. Whether it is senility in the case of the president or cowardice and duplicity for his congressional counterparts, the Democrats refuse to lift a finger to oppose the fascist takeover of the government.

As for the "left" wing of the Democratic Party, Senator Bernie Sanders has said nothing about Trump's initial appointments and the Trump-Biden lovefest at the White House. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has begun a "listening" tour to speak to Bronx constituents who voted for her and Trump on November 5.

The abject collaboration of the Democrats conforms to a historical pattern extending now for over a quarter-century.

Step by step, as American democracy has crumbled and the Republican Party has come forward as the instrument of the most ruthless and anti-democratic sections of the ruling class, the Democratic Party has blocked any effort to fight back.

When the US Supreme Court intervened for the first time to sanction the theft of the 2000 presidential election, Democrat Al Gore bowed down to the decision to shut down vote counting in Florida. When Democrats regained control of Congress in 2006, it was newly elected House Speaker Nancy Pelosi who blocked any effort to impeach George W. Bush for his illegal war in Iraq or his establishment of secret CIA torture prisons. When Barack Obama was elected president in 2008, he blocked any prosecution of the torturers, continued Bush's illegal wars, and expanded the death-dealing powers of the presidency by authorizing drone-missile assassinations around the world, including of American citizens.

When Trump first won election to the presidency in 2016, Obama welcomed him to the White House and declared the election an "intramural scrimmage" between two sides on the same team. Trump, of course, took no such approach when he lost the 2020 election by 7 million votes, instead seeking to overturn the result through a violent coup.

Now Biden has repeated Obama's welcome to Trump, under conditions in which virtually every leading Democrat has acknowledged that Trump's intentions are to establish an authoritarian dictatorship.

This record of spineless capitulation and outright collaboration demonstrates, as the *World Socialist Web Site* has consistently warned, that there is no constituency for the defense of democracy within the American ruling elite. All the political representatives of the super-rich accept that they must engage in violent repression to suppress the mounting social conflicts within the United States and prevent any challenge from the working class to a social system entirely dominated by a capitalist oligarchy.



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