

The Trump Coup to Come

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America's political authoritarianism comes in different, yet combined, mutually reinforcing forms. We have the neofascist authoritarianism of the white nationalist Republican Party, its [Great Dog-Wagging God](#) in the White House and his [cultish, white-Amerikaner base](#).

Donald Trump may well not leave the White House without a dangerous fight if he is bested in the Electoral College in November. In his book titled "[A Warning](#)," the senior Trump administration official known only as "Anonymous" cites a "worry for our republic ... if Trump is removed from office—by impeachment or a narrow defeat in the ballot box ... Trump will not exit quietly—or easily." The author continues: "It is why at many turns he suggests 'coups' are afoot and a 'civil war' is in the offing. He is already seeding the narrative for his followers – a narrative that could end tragically."

Indeed. An angry old white male Trumpist outside one of the president's recurrent hate rallies on Dec. 10 told a New York Times reporter that he'd respond to his hero's removal with "[my .357 Magnum](#)." One week later, another Caucasian in Arizona pointed to a pistol he was wearing and [told the Times](#) that he'd been "stockpiling weapons, in case Mr. Trump's re-election is not successful" and said that Trump's defeat would mean "a civil war."

The Trumpenvolk can probably keep their weapons holstered. Removal through impeachment is unlikely, given the fact that the Senate is held down by a Republican majority whose leaders are mocking constitutional checks and balances by working hand in glove with the president to craft a Senate trial certain to exonerate the truth-trashing Trump for his Ukrainegate transgression. So what if he [set the Founding Fathers' wigs on fire](#) and [violated federal law \(the Impoundment Control Act\)](#) by leveraging congressionally approved military funding to a U.S. ally in order to obtain dirt to use against a potential political rival? The game is rigged in the absurdly apportioned Senate, where superwhite and Republican Wyoming, home to 578,720 people, claims the same number of senators (two) as ethnically and racially diverse and Democratic California, home to 39 million.

Trump may win the 2020 election. If that happens, it would be due in no small part to another key form of American political authoritarianism—the centrist, corporate-financial and imperial neoliberalism fueling the Democratic Party and most of the corporate media. The "[inauthentic opposition](#)" Party of Fake Resistance's (PFR's) leading funders, operatives and media would rather lose to the evermore fascist, right-wing GOP than to the leftish Bernie Sanders wing of their own party. So what if only Sanders can mobilize the voters required to defeat Trump, the wannabe president for life?

Meanwhile, the media more closely aligned with Democrats does everything it can to ignore and demean the Sanders candidacy, failing to cover his rallies and dismissing his platform

and “electability.” The Democratic establishment and loyal media outlets refuse to respectfully transmit and take seriously his strong critique of American class inequality and plutocracy. Nor does it highlight his urgent calls for action to confront capitalogenic climate change before the planet is cooked beyond repair. The elite Democrats and their many media allies also smear Sanders’ popular call for single-payer health insurance, declaring it “too radical,” “too expensive” and—to use the [contemptuous language of Amy Klobuchar](#)—a “pipe dream” hopelessly untethered from the real world here on earth.

In the distorting hall of mirrors that is the corporate-managed, Democratic, center-left media and politics culture, single-payer isn’t [a great social-democratic victory](#) that would embed health care as a human right while dramatically reducing health care costs, improving ordinary Americans’ health and instilling new democratic space in the United States. No, “Medicare for All” is absurdly portrayed by mainstream Democratic politics and media as an overly expensive assault on the population’s existing health insurance plans. Never mind the [ridiculously inflated cost and woefully poor performance](#) of the U.S. health care system under the rule of private, for-profit corporations, with their giant and parasitic administrative and marketing costs.

The neoliberal, centrist, media-political order harps on Sanders’ age, even as it promotes right-leaning, 77-year-old bumbler Joe [“Corn Pop” Biden](#).

The supposedly liberal media recently has engaged in a [vicious effort to smear Sanders as a sexist](#) by spreading the story that he told Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren that her gender prevents her from winning the 2020 election. The claim came from Warren herself, via CNN, in a [cold-blooded move](#) to revive her flagging campaign by playing the sexism card.

The hit job was absurd on its face. Sanders deferred to Warren in 2015 and 2016, agreeing to run for president *only after Warren declined to pursue the Democratic nomination*. Sanders has [long advocated for women’s rights](#) and backed female candidates. He embraces the progressive Latina Congresswoman Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) as a prized ally and [campaign surrogate](#). AOC and two other progressive and feminist congresswomen of color, [Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib](#), are campaigning for Sanders.

“Liberal” CNN likely promoted Warren’s attack on Sanders with three purposes in mind: to drive viewer interest in the last televised and CNN-sponsored Democratic presidential debate before the Iowa caucus; to diminish Sanders’ appeal to female voters; and to widen divisions between and among progressive Democrats.

Just before the debate in Des Moines last week, CNN ran a story absurdly depicting Sanders as a misogynist. Then, during the debate, CNN moderator Abby Phillip threw [this loaded question](#) at him: “Sen. Sanders, CNN reported yesterday, and Sen. Warren confirmed in a statement [as if the episode wasn’t initiated by the Warren campaign] that in 2018 you told her that you did not believe a woman could win the election. Why did you say that?”

“Well, as a matter of fact, I didn’t say it,” Sanders said. “Anybody who knows me knows that it’s incomprehensible that I would think that a woman cannot be president of the United States. Go to YouTube. ... There’s a video of me 30 years ago talking about how a woman could become president of the United States.”

Phillip then repeated the question. When Sanders denied that he’d ever said that a woman

could not win the election, she turned to Warren. “Sen. Warren,” Phillip said, “what did you think when Sen. Sanders told you a woman could not win the election?”

“I disagreed,” Warren said.

Hello? Sanders had just denied the charge, but Phillip simply repeated Warren’s accusation as if it was a fully acknowledged and irrefutable fact. Phillip didn’t bother to ask Warren if Sanders was telling the truth. How absurdly authoritarian was that?

In the post-game discussion of the debate, a CNN pundit mocked Sanders for denying “a *reported CNN story*.” The talking head was really saying that CNN can construct candidate realities and then evaluate candidates in accord with whether they accept that reality as undisputed fact. More authoritarian absurdity.

In the [Chicago Tribune the next day](#), the main takeaway from the debate was that Sanders and Warren tangled over gender. Sanders’ statements on and against extreme economic inequality, plutocracy, parasitic insurance and drug companies, and climate-/capital-led ecocide were sent down George Orwell’s memory hole in this coverage.

“Ordinary” Iowa voters could be heard on CNN, MSNBC and NPR talking about Sanders’ supposed gender and women problems. Establishment mission accomplished: Divide and rule in service to corporate power; provide distractions from the biggest issues of our (or any) time. As the leftist activist Mona Shaw of Iowa wrote me, “Medicare for All has been getting too much traction. The plutocrats have to change the subject.” Yes, and divide progressives.

One great unspoken irony is that the only leading Democratic presidential candidate with a [troubling track record on gender](#) is [Joe “Phonographs for the Poor” Biden](#). If Warren and CNN wanted to play the divide-and-rule sexism card against any Democratic contender, the [corporate imperialist Biden](#) would have been the proper target, not Sanders. But, of course, Warren is not fighting to steal voters from Biden but rather from her “fellow progressive” Sanders—and CNN is in league with corporate centrists, not leftist radicals like Sanders.

Probably nobody enjoyed the episode more than the hapless Biden, who came off in the debate like an elderly retiree ready for a nap.

We can expect more vicious centrist smearing of Sanders by the Democratic establishment and its media in the next three weeks. Its elite operatives, backers and allies are horrified that Sanders might break through Biden’s black voter [“firewall”](#) in South Carolina if the Vermont senator can win Iowa and New Hampshire—a [“nightmare scenario”](#) for Joe Biden and the rest of the Democratic presidential field.”

So what if Sanders is the Democrats’ best chance to energize disaffected and disadvantaged sectors of the electorate that need to be rallied to defeat Trump? The Democratic Party isn’t primarily about winning elections, much less social justice, democracy and environmental sanity. It’s [mainly about serving corporate sponsors](#) who don’t want even a mildly progressive populist like Sanders in the White House. Even Elizabeth “capitalist in my bones” Warren (who [stood up and clapped](#) when Trump ordered Congress to pledge that the U.S. would “never be a socialist country” during his last State of the Union address) is absurdly considered too left for many, if not most, Wall Street Democrats.

No less of a corporate-neoliberal Democratic icon than Barack Obama has made it clear that

the Democrats' most electable candidate must be stopped. [As Politico's Ryan Lizza reported](#) in November, the officially neutral Obama indicated that he would speak up to block Sanders. "Back when Sanders seemed like more of a threat than he does now," Lizza wrote, "Obama said privately that if Bernie were running away with the nomination, Obama would speak up to stop him." A "close Obama friend" told Lizza that "Bernie's not a Democrat."

If Sanders somehow gets past all the slime and other centrist obstacles to secure the nomination, make no mistake: Many big, traditionally Democratic funders and operatives could sit out the general election and possibly even actively back Trump.

Meanwhile, the Democratic establishment—which [opened the stable door to the tangerine hate "genius"](#) and gets ironically whitewashed by his relentless awfulness—certainly loves it that the left-most presidential candidates, Sanders and Warren (polling No. 1 and 2 in Iowa, respectively) will be tied down in the futile, GOP-negated Senate impeachment process while the top two Wall Street darlings, right-wing Democrats Biden and Pete Buttigieg, are free to run around Iowa and New Hampshire in the final weeks leading up to the nation's first presidential caucus (Iowa) and primary (New Hampshire).

If I were Sanders, I'd walk out of the impeachment trial and resume campaigning in Iowa and New Hampshire if Republicans block witnesses and new evidence. If it means the loss of his Senate position, so be it. The notion of Sanders being put under impeachment house arrest and kept off the campaign trail to sit mute while the white nationalist party makes a mockery of the Constitution and the rule of law is truly nauseating.

I can hardly blame tens of millions of Americans for going into voting booths for their fleeting moment to mark ballots and try to evict the wannabe fascist strongman Trump. Still, bearing in mind the real possibility that Trump will refuse to honor an election that doesn't go his way, my advice is that those tens of millions take to the streets to overthrow the Trump-Pence regime and then confront the deeper system of class rule that has spawned the white-nationalist Republican Party, the center-right PFR (the Democrats) and the sick synergistic game these "two wings of the same bird of prey" (Upton Sinclair, 1904) play on behalf of the nation's unelected and overlapping dictatorships of money, empire, white supremacy, patriarchy and environmental ruin.

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