

US Political Crisis Just Entered More Dangerous Phase

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Global Research, November 20, 2020

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Today the political crisis in America may be entering an even more dangerous phase—a phase that I predicted was possible months ago. Today reportedly Trump has asked Republican state legislators in Michigan, where he lost the popular vote, to come to the White House. Trump no doubt wants them to select electors who will vote for him, not for the winner of the vote in Michigan, Biden.

The veil of Democracy in America is being ripped away from the body politic right before our eyes. Not only can the Electoral College thwart the popular vote for president; but there are even more nefarious ways for political elites to circumvent the Electoral College if they don't like it.

The electoral college is, of course, the means by which the popular vote for the president is prevented. Instead of Democracy's principle of 'one person, one vote', we have electors who are selected by their state legislatures who then cast their vote for president. That's the appearance. But it's even worse than that.

The timeline for the Electoral College to meet and cast their votes for president is December 8. Each state's vote in the Electoral College's must then be sent by December 14 to their state's governor, who must send that decision to Congress by December 23. Congress then confirms the president by January 6. That's the actual process how presidents are 'elected'.

The problem is that state legislatures select the electors who vote in the electoral college. But the electors they select don't necessarily have to vote for the candidate the majority of the people of their state vote for. The legislature can select electors, or direct the electors they already selected, to vote for a candidate who the people of the state didn't vote for. Court decisions prohibiting this are not clear cut, so it can be argued the legislatures can select the electors who can vote for whatever candidate they want. Even recent US Supreme Court decisions on this are ambiguous.

By calling Republican state legislatures from Michigan today to the White House—an act that in itself is intimidating, since Republican politicians know Trump can unseat them next primary—Trump is clearly attempting to 'convince' them to select, or order, electors to vote for him instead of Biden. If successful in Michigan, Trump will no doubt target another couple Republican majority state legislatures to do the same between now and December 14. Like Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Georgia are all Republican state majority legislatures. That's how he'll try to 'reverse' the electoral college vote in his favor, or at least he clearly now thinks he can or he wouldn't bother 'inviting' Republican state legislatures from Michigan to the White House. He's not doing so for any other obvious

reason.

Those who disagree with this analysis may say, 'even if he convinces Republican state legislators to select electors for him, the governors of those states will not send the vote of those 'reversed' electors to Congress on December 23'. So he won't get away with that maneuver.

But wait. Not so fast. Trump can then use that refusal of a governor to send Trump electors to Congress as an excuse to call in the US Supreme Court to decide the issue. Trump's lawyers will then argue to the Court there isn't a complete electoral college vote total to determine the outcome of the election if one or more governors don't send in the results. The Supreme Court would then likely 'pass the buck' and order the decision on the election referred to the US House of Representatives, per the US Constitution.

Here's where US Democracy is further revealed as the 'fig leaf' it is. In the House of Representatives the vote for president is done by one vote per state, not by total representatives. 435 Representatives don't vote if the election is thrown into the House, which has a majority of Democrat legislators. No. Each state in the House gets just one vote. All the states with a majority Republican state legislature get to cast one vote for president. With Republican politicians cowering everywhere, fearful of Trump's 70 million Republican voters, guess how they'll vote in the House?

And if Trump has more red state Republican majority legislatures—which he does—the majority of red states would out-vote blue states by a vote of around 27 or so to 23. Trump wins!

If this sounds incredible it is nevertheless arguably legal and politically possible. And we know Trump will go to any length over the next 60 days—regardless if it results in the destruction what's left of even the fig leaf of Democracy in America. Even if it leads to a political breakdown of the system or violence in the streets between Trump's supporters and the rest of the country's voters and citizenry (which Trump would no doubt like to see as well).

By calling Michigan state legislatures to the White House today it is clear this is the trajectory Trump now has in mind. We should all be forewarned! The fight to restore what's little left of American Democracy may just be beginning.

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*Dr. Rasmus's most recent book is 'The Scourge of Neoliberalism: US Economic Policy from Reagan to Trump', Clarity Press, January 2020. He blogs at <http://jackrasmus.com> and hosts the weekly radio show, *Alternative Visions*, on the Progressive Radio network. His twitter handle is @drjackrasmus. His website with downloadable podcasts, videos, reviews, and public talks is <http://kykloproductions.com>. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.*

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