

would not hesitate to act outside the law, carrying out edicts and leaving people to somehow seek redress in the wake of his illegally repressive actions; it is also likely that Trump would summon “cyber-mobs” as part of his repertoire.

Moreover, Trump has promised an extremely reckless and dangerous foreign policy, aimed at making a qualitative leap in U.S. dominance in the world. Counseling people to hold back now, no matter how well-meaning the intentions in doing so, could literally end up putting at risk the continued existence of the world as we know it.

In short, should we hold back now it will almost certainly become immeasurably more difficult to fight back once Trump-Pence are in power and using the vast state power at their disposal to implement their program. The path of holding back, of waiting and seeing, of calculating odds is littered with corpses. Far better to fight as hard as we can now, however difficult the circumstances, fostering an ethos and framework of resistance as we go for victory and going all out in a telescoped period of time for what is indeed our best shot.

There are, of course, no guarantees of victory for people who have right on their side. The only guarantee that has ever existed is that if you *don't* fight for justice you will certainly not get it.

Let us fight.

January 1, 2017

FAQ's On Stopping Trump-Pence

How could Trump-Pence actually be prevented from ruling?

By the intersection of two things: first, massive protest and resistance from tens of millions of ordinary people, daring and determined to actually prevent this fascist regime from taking over and implementing its program, beginning more or less immediately and growing to a crescendo in the next few weeks, and through that creating “a crisis of rule”; and second, coupled with this, attempts by different factions in the established power structure that have real differences with Trump-Pence to solve the crisis by preventing them from taking the reins of power.

These protests could be something with the character of the protests against police murder over the past few years, or the Occupy protests before that—but larger by several orders of magnitude and even more determined. Such protests would have to have the effect of figuratively “stopping society in its tracks” and would raise real questions as to whether people very broadly would recognize the *legitimacy* of such a regime to even rule in basic ways and enforce its edicts.

The “not normal” character of Trump-Pence—the radical changes they embody in *how* people are to be ruled in this country (in short, the *fascist* ethos and measures they campaigned on) and in regard to U.S. international policy—have not only created tremendous anguish and anger among many millions of ordinary people, but among ruling factions which have up to now nevertheless chosen to go along with this. But should there be a political eruption “from below,” their concerns over Trump would combine with immediate questions as to whether their basic stability and perhaps even the entire system would be endangered by continuing to stick with Trump-Pence.

As that dynamic developed, scandals that up to now have been covered up could erupt, or be treated in a different way so as to raise fundamental constitutional issues, and ways would be found to prevent the coming to power of Trump-Pence.

Has anything like that ever really happened?

Yes, it has. In the early 1970s, in the U.S., Spiro Agnew, the vice-president, and then Richard Nixon, the president, were both forced to resign. The Nixon-Agnew regime, though having fairly decisively won the 1972 election, had alienated tens of millions from the very system itself and had also undertaken highly repressive, extraordinary and unconstitutional measures to settle conflicts within the ruling circles. Nixon was forced out, and Gerald Ford—who had *not* been elected as either president or vice-president—ascended to power.

There are more recent examples as well, from other countries. As 2011 dawned, President Hosni Mubarak had ruled Egypt for decades and seemed to be immovably implanted in power. But Mubarak was forced to leave office and actually arrested after being confronted by massive demonstrations that braved very severe repression, focused in the main square in Cairo, along with opposition from all sectors of society manifesting in different ways. From the time of the first demonstrations to the removal of Mubarak took less than a month. There is also the current situation in South Korea in which massive demonstrations against the legally elected president have resulted in her impeachment and suspension from office in a period of a few months. There are in fact more than a few examples from the past several decades in which mass demonstrations from below have created or exacerbated splits and divisions among ruling elites and led to constitutionally extraordinary changes in government. In the cases cited here, each of the presidents removed had actually received not only majorities of the popular vote but, in the case of Nixon for instance, a true “landslide” victory.

No two societies or periods of time, of course, are exactly alike, and history is not made by analogy—but there are nonetheless underlying dynamics common to these societies that make it possible to learn lessons.

Why do you think we can get millions or, as the mission and plan for this state, tens of millions of people to do this, in such a short period of time?

Because Trump-Pence in fact would NOT be “normal”—because they are in fact *fascist* and their attacks on immigrants, Muslims, women, Black people, the press, the sciences, the rule of law itself are so odious to the basic values of tens of millions and their threats to the

policy and a president who, as candidate, has already promised to ignore the Geneva Conventions on war crimes; etc. etc.—that to accede to this regime’s ascension to power would so violate those principles as to render them meaningless. In short, there is a greater good at stake that demands extraordinary action.

Aren’t we running the risk of making his supporters angry?

Yes. But you are not going to, nor should you want to, mollify fascists by laying low—again, this has been tried in the past with disastrous results. Right now, in the flush of victory, these people are already committing hate crimes—if you give them a veto power over your taking political action by the fear they strike in you, you have already given up. And the consequences of that are unacceptable.

But this is still a very difficult proposition and far from assured. Suppose we lose—won’t this demoralize people and discourage them from acting once the regime assumes power?

The assumption behind this question is that the circumstances will be more favorable later. Yet the experience with fascist or even authoritarian regimes does not provide comfort for that point of view. When Hitler became chancellor (with a plurality but not a majority of the votes, by the way), he had only two other Nazis in a cabinet of eleven people. Yet he moved quickly to peel off his opponents in and out of government, to eviscerate and then abolish civil liberties, and in relatively short order to consolidate what became an extremely repressive and powerful regime, which carried out extraordinary crimes against humanity. Experience today with the—again, legally elected—Erdoğan regime in Turkey would also argue that the likelihood is that effective opposition and resistance become more, not less, difficult as time goes on. These regimes administer shock after shock to keep any resistance off balance and intimidated, and peel away sources of opposition systematically and in a divide-and-conquer manner.

Trump for his part has promised and already shown that he is likely to move in very extreme ways, creating *faits accomplis* and “moving the goalposts” fairly quickly, and that he will also not be shy about using the extraordinary powers created by the 2001 “Patriot Act” and other repressive legislation and presidential orders; further, it is also prudent to assume, from what he has said and how he has behaved, that he

irresponsibility. Talk of making Trump a “one-term president,” or of building for the 2018 elections is foolishness. It discounts the damage that will be done to real people, in their billions, in the meantime. It further takes on faith that the already distorted and weighted procedures that gave Trump the presidency will still be in place—when there is nothing to suggest that Trump will not act further to cut down and cut off even those rights that do exist, and plenty to suggest that he will. Hopes in checks and balances in an era of virtually unbridled executive power and at a time when Trump himself will not only make at least one very decisive Supreme Court appointment and will be able to fill, very quickly, the 30% of the federal bench that now lies vacant is similarly vain.

It is the moral duty of us all to seriously confront the potential consequences of what this regime could do in power, and then to act accordingly.

Beyond that, there is this: waiting to see in similar situations has led to horrors. They have told you what they will do and they have begun to show you: why would you want to risk everything based on a hope that has no basis in the material world?

But some people have argued to me that we have to go along with the fact that Trump-Pence were legally elected and that it would be dangerous to overturn this.

First, had the shoe been on the other foot—had Trump-Pence won the popular vote by a convincing 2.8 million votes while losing the electoral college (which itself is a relic of slavery), had facts come to light suggesting extraordinary circumstances influencing the outcome of the elections, etc.—they would have not only been all over the courts demanding extraordinary remedial legal action, they would have already mounted major demonstrations in the capital, as well as doing other things—as they had in fact threatened to do. Second, the most important point in evaluating this particular question is this: should this regime take power, based on what they have already said and done, it would be such a breach of the most fundamental rights that people hold dear and essential to political life—freedom of speech, freedom of political expression and association and freedom of the press; the legal rights to social and political participation, along with the guarantee of safety from the state and due process of law for all nationalities and genders and religious faiths; along with a highly aggressive foreign

environment *and* to many countries are so very dangerous to humanity itself—there is an extraordinary depth to people’s anguish over the prospect of this regime, and an extraordinary breadth of the people who feel that way. While the demonstrations immediately following the elections (themselves unprecedented) have temporarily ebbed, the anguish and anger remain, finding expression in many different statements, including artistic ones, and in people’s felt and expressed desire to act and to protect those most vulnerable. These millions can be reached with a way to act that seems commensurate with the challenge of actually preventing this; the thousands in the initial actions can become organizers of organizers of organizers, and there can be rapid geometric growth—again, due to the extraordinary circumstances and the deep feelings of tens of millions.

How do you envision this happening?

Early this week, the call for this campaign will hit with tremendous impact via ads in major news outlets, in print and online, co-ordinated with massive and burgeoning social media efforts. Spokespeople will be made available to media in a concerted effort to get the word out and to involve as diverse a group of initiators and other possible spokespeople as possible in doing that. And with this, plans will be announced to “bring DC to a halt” in the week before the scheduled inauguration. Shortly after that we envision the growth of demonstrations and other forms of protest—including especially non-violent direct action disrupting business as usual, occupying public spaces, assemblies and meetings in institutions and workplaces, strikes, etc.—in cities across the country. As people see that there are many who feel like they do and, more than that, are determined and acting to do something about what would almost certainly be a horrific regime, they will themselves become inspired and compelled to join in these. This would have to quickly spread and find ways to overcome resistance and obstacles; but once people are aroused and acting on their highest aspirations, tremendous creativity and resources can become unlocked and things can spread like wildfire. While this is far from assured, historical experience shows that there is a reasonable chance that in the face of extreme provocation from the ruling powers, people can act in extraordinary ways.

As this develops, we envision public spaces being occupied in major cities and millions travelling to DC to protest the inauguration in the days leading up to it (and the millions in the DC and Baltimore areas

who DID oppose Trump-Pence making resources and shelter available). This is a highly mobile and highly interknit society in which there is still relative freedom of movement and outlets for expression*; if such a thing could happen in a highly repressive and non-interlinked society like Egypt, it could certainly happen here.

As all this emerges and then comes to a head, we would expect that even further scandals around Trump would surface from various sources, that different sections of the population with different concerns would get drawn into this, and that the social will to stop Trump-Pence from ruling would emerge and the political/legal means to accomplish that would be found.

* Indeed, the prospect of the radical curtailment of those freedoms in a Trump-Pence regime is one thing that should impel people to act now.

How do I answer those who say that it's too early to say that Trump-Pence is for-sure fascist?

First, let's look at the case that is made in the mission and plan for this initiative:

More fundamental [than the illegitimate character of the electoral college] is *the illegitimacy of such a fascist regime*.

As many have noted, Hitler himself came to power through the process of elections and established legal procedures. We can see in retrospect the profound and terrible error of those who hoped it would blow over, who believed that Hitler would expose himself and fall from power on his own, who had faith that the "wise leaders" of the system would somehow intervene, or even those who confined their resistance to helping others survive until the regime would somehow fall on its own.

This is not an exaggerated comparison. Trump has made clear through his campaign and now in his appointments and behavior in its aftermath that he intends to radically attack the rights of immigrants, Muslims, Black people, women, gay and trans people, the disabled, and many others who have been historically oppressed in this society. He has made clear that he will pursue a geopolitical policy that will be very short on facts and long on aggression, threats of aggression, insane nuclear proliferation, torture and threats of torture, and continually going to the brink of war and no doubt beyond, and all while stoking the fires of xenophobia and

scapegoating. He has made clear that not only has he no respect for the freedom of the press and expression, but that he intends to attack it—both through threatened legal prosecution and suppression, and through unleashing his newly empowered and extremely toxic minions. As for academic freedom, the "watch list" is an early warning sign of what is in store. Trump and his top operatives, like Flynn, take lying to a new level, trampling on facts and even the very idea of objectivity and truth. He has already begun to seed the government with Christian fundamentalist theocrats and breathed new life into anti-Semitism. He has not only threatened to overturn Roe v. Wade and continued to hold out the threat of punishing women (and Pence's state, Indiana, prosecuted and actually imprisoned a woman for a miscarriage during his time as governor), but – using his "bully pulpit"—Trump has created an atmosphere around women that has further empowered rape culture and already damaged the lives and chances of every woman and girl in this country. His views, policies, and appointments on the environment will seriously and qualitatively exacerbate a situation that is already heading to disaster. He has, perhaps most egregiously of all, super-charged the notion that this is a "white man's country," in which the rights and existence of Black people and other people of color count for nothing and he has put proven white supremacists – people of the ilk of Bannon and Sessions – in positions of power to use that force of the state to directly back that belief up; while he has, at the same time, given impetus to every fascist, neo-Nazi and bigot to directly express themselves by violently going after people who are not white, male, Christian or straight. There will not only be no checks whatsoever on the white supremacy and vile racism that permeates the police departments and prison guards of this country, the very worst within them will be given carte blanche and encouragement from the highest offices of the land—as they have already. The days of white vigilanteism and, yes, lynch mobs – days that never really went away, as the terrible cases of Trayvon Martin and the Charleston massacre remind us—will now be back with a vengeance and, again, with encouragement from the highest offices of the land.

To treat such a regime as legitimate, to allow it to come to power, to do so when the historical precedents are so plentiful and fraught with lessons—this would be the height of moral and political