

As Obama endorses Clinton, Sanders signals readiness to back campaign

Patrick Martin
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Two days after losing the California primary, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders arrived in Washington, DC for meetings with President Barack Obama and other Democratic Party leaders to discuss how he will fold up his campaign and support the Democratic presidential nominee, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Obama followed up his meeting with Sanders by releasing an online video announcing his full-fledged, formal endorsement of Clinton as the Democratic presidential candidate. “I don't think there's ever been someone so qualified to hold this office,” he said, going on to cite Clinton's role in key administration military decisions such as ordering the raid by Navy SEALs that killed Osama bin Laden.

The video was recorded on Tuesday, even before the polls had closed in New Jersey, California and four other states on the next-to-last day of primary voting. Asked about the timing, White House spokesman Josh Earnest pointed out that the Associated Press and other media had declared Clinton the “presumptive nominee” on Monday, based on a survey of superdelegates.

This underscores the cynically orchestrated character of the AP announcement, worked out in consultation with the White House and top Democratic Party officials who wanted to declare Clinton the winner and the contest over as quickly as possible, regardless of the millions who were to vote the following day.

After meeting with Obama at the White House for an hour, Sanders spoke to the media, reading out a three-page type-written statement in which he did not explicitly endorse Clinton, but made it clear that he would no longer challenge her for the nomination.

“I spoke briefly to Sec. Clinton on Tuesday night, and I congratulated her on her very strong campaign,” he said. “I look forward to meeting with her in the near future to see how we can work together to defeat Donald Trump and create a government that represents all of us and not

just the one-percent.”

Sanders continued to Capitol Hill for meetings with Senator Harry Reid, the retiring Democratic leader in the Senate, and Senator Charles Schumer, who is expected to succeed Reid in January. Sanders did not speak to the press after meeting with the two Senate leaders, proceeding on a meeting with Vice President Joe Biden.

This pilgrimage to Washington shatters Sanders' claims to be leading an insurgency against the domination of right-wing, pro-corporate politics in the United States. While winning the support of millions of youth and working people on the basis of his attacks on the “millionaires and billionaires” and his calls for a “political revolution,” Sanders has worked for decades as a loyal ally of the Democratic Party establishment.

From the outset, his campaign has been driven by the political aim of preempting growing social opposition and anti-capitalist sentiment, containing it and channeling it back into the dead end of the Democratic Party. He is now preparing to openly pursue this underlying agenda by agreeing to hustle votes for Clinton, the candidate of Wall Street and the military/intelligence agencies.

The inherent contradiction between Sanders' populist phrases and his bid for the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party, one of the two main political instruments of the “millionaires and billionaires,” was underscored by his remarks as he left the White House. He declared that he would do everything possible “to oppose the drift which currently exists toward an oligarchic form of society, where a handful of billionaires exercise enormous power over our political, economic and media life.”

Neither Sanders nor any of the assembled representatives of the corporate-controlled media took note of the irony of pledging to fight oligarchy on the steps of the White House, the symbol and power center of the oligarchy, after an hour-long closed-door meeting

with Obama, the commander-in-chief who serves that oligarchy.

No one on the planet has done more to boost the American oligarchy over the past eight years than President Obama: bailing out Wall Street at the expense of working people; slashing wages for autoworkers to spur record profits for GM, Ford and Fiat-Chrysler; shifting the cost of health care benefits from corporations to workers in the guise of health care “reform”; and waging war around the world to defend the global interests of American capitalism.

From the very beginning of his campaign, Sanders has refused to criticize the policies of the Obama administration. He has condemned the domination of American political and economic life by the billionaires without mentioning that Obama is the billionaires’ servant. On foreign policy, Sanders has been virtually silent on the countless atrocities perpetrated by the war machine that Obama commands, from drone-missile assassinations to the bombing of Libya and Syria and ongoing military violence in Iraq and Afghanistan.

What began Thursday with Sanders’ meeting with Obama is a choreographed operation to deliver as many Sanders supporters as possible to the Democratic Party campaign to elect Clinton as Obama’s successor, along with Democratic candidates for the Senate, House of Representatives and state and local offices.

Key Sanders supporters have already begun declaring their support for Clinton as the Democratic nominee, beginning with Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon, Sanders’ lone Senate endorser, along with Representative Raul Grijalva, head of the House Progressive Caucus, and the liberal lobbying groups Move-On.org and Democracy for America.

Sanders, despite his longtime posturing as an “independent,” has fully integrated himself into the Democratic Party and has presented his campaign as the best option for promoting and building the Democratic Party at every level.

His claim that he will continue his campaign right up to the Democratic convention in Philadelphia at the end of July is not, contrary to the media presentation, an act of defiance of Clinton and the Democratic establishment. It is the form chosen by Sanders for propagating illusions among his own supporters that the Democratic Party can be made responsive to the left-wing sentiments among young people and working people.

Sanders will use whatever meaningless concessions are granted—if any—on the party platform, rules for future

presidential nomination campaigns and the choice of vice president as a further argument to his supporters to stick with the Democratic Party. This is the most bankrupt and dangerous of perspectives, since it leaves the working class politically subordinated to one of the two parties of corporate America and unprepared for the even more right-wing and militaristic policies that will follow the November election, regardless of whether Clinton or the presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump emerges victorious.

As his statement in front of the White House made clear, Sanders will become a major spokesman of the “anybody but Trump” campaign, which will be the axis of efforts by the Democratic Party and all of the organizations in its orbit, including the unions and pseudo-left groups like the International Socialist Organization and Socialist Alternative, to portray Hillary Clinton as the lesser evil.

In practice, the right-wing politics of Obama and Clinton, for which Sanders will become an apologist, have helped fuel whatever popular support the fascistic billionaire has been able to obtain. As Obama put in his video endorsement of Clinton, her campaign will “build upon the progress we’ve made” under the Obama administration.

For the vast majority of the working class, however, living standards and social conditions are worse today than when Obama took office. A *Wall Street Journal*/NBC poll this week found that among voters who said they were still feeling “a lot” of effects from the 2008 Wall Street crash and the recession that followed, 56 percent favored Trump and only 26 percent favored Clinton.



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