

Hillary Clinton and the “Spirit of 9/12”

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Hillary Clinton, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, responded to Sunday’s mass killing in Orlando, Florida by cynically and ominously invoking the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon.

Just one day after 29-year-old Omar Mateen carried out the worst mass killing by a single gunman in American history, opening fire in a gay nightclub and killing 49 people and wounding 53 others, Clinton delivered a speech in which she appealed for a return to the “spirit of 9/12.”

“I remember how it felt on the day after 9/11. I’ll bet you do as well,” Clinton remarked. “Americans from every walk of life rallied together with a sense of common purpose on September the 12th. And in the days and weeks and months that followed we had each other’s backs.”

Clinton wasted no time in invoking the fight against terrorism, even as details emerged of the complex ideological and political factors—embedded in the crisis of American society—that drove the homicidal actions of Mateen.

What does Clinton really mean by the “spirit of 9/12”?

The “spirit of 9/12” means the invasion of Afghanistan, launched less than a month after the September 11 attacks, with the backing of both Democrats and Republicans. That war, now well into its fifteenth year and with no end in sight, has claimed the lives of more than 26,000 Afghan civilians and 2,300 American soldiers.

This was soon followed in 2003 by the launching of an illegal war for regime change in Iraq, based on lies about WMDs and Saddam Hussein’s connection to 9/11, resulting in the deaths of approximately one million Iraqis, more than 4,400 US soldiers and the destruction of an entire society. Hillary Clinton, then a Senator from New York, voted “with conviction” to authorize the war.

The “spirit of 9/12” means the wholesale assault on democratic rights, including the passage of the draconian Patriot Act, military tribunals, detention without charge

and the establishment of the notorious prison camp at Guantanamo Bay.

Under the framework of the “war on terror,” the powers of the police-state apparatus have been vastly expanded, including the illegal and unconstitutional domestic spying by the NSA revealed by Edward Snowden. As New York Senator and then Secretary of State under Obama, Clinton supported all these antidemocratic measures and fully participated in the persecution of Snowden for courageously revealing the criminal actions of the government.

Or perhaps Clinton is referring to the adoption of torture as an instrument of policy? Just yesterday, documents obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request by the ACLU documented the methods utilized by the CIA against prisoners, including forced nudity, the clothing of one detainee in “a handcrafted diaper secured by duct tape,” holding prisoners in “cold conditions with minimal food or sleep,” the horrific practice of waterboarding, and the infliction of torture on one prisoner that was so severe it killed him.

The Obama administration has shielded the torturers, opposed their prosecution, and sought, to the best of its ability, to prevent the American people from learning the full truth of what the government has done.

Following in the same “spirit,” President Barack Obama has dramatically expanded the scope of American military operations since taking the reins from Bush in 2008, expanding drone warfare and a policy of targeted assassination, including of American citizens.

All told, Obama has overseen military operations and airstrikes in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen and Somalia. It was Clinton, then secretary of state, who pushed for the war in Libya that resulted in the lynch mob murder of Muammar Gadhafi and the shattering of that country into multiple warring factions.

Clinton now invokes the “spirit of 9/12” not only to justify and sanctify the crimes that have been carried out with her support, but to set the stage for the future wars and military operations being planned should she win the

election in November.

Perhaps most importantly, the “spirit of 9/12” is aimed at covering up the basic reality of life in the United States and internationally: the division of society into two classes—the corporate and financial elite, which has increased its wealth enormously over the past 15 years—and the working class, burdened by declining wages, high unemployment and the continual attack on social programs.

During the Democratic primaries, tens of millions of workers and young people supported Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, a self-proclaimed democratic socialist who campaigned against the “billionaire class.” Even with Sanders winding down his campaign and preparing to throw his support behind Clinton, the preferred candidate of Wall Street, the question of social inequality remains on the minds of millions. Clinton, and the political establishment for which she speaks, wants to change the subject.

Clinton’s reference to a “common purpose” is a fraud. There is no common purpose. There are the aims and purposes of the ruling class, backed by the full repressive power of the state. And there are the aims and purposes of the masses of workers and youth, seeking to defend their rights and striving for a society based on social equality.

Whoever is elected in November—whether it is Clinton, the Republican Donald Trump or some other candidate—the stage is set for a massive intensification of war abroad and the war on the working class at home.

The presidential election campaign of the Socialist Equality Party is aimed at educating workers and youth throughout the country and internationally and building a political leadership to oppose the capitalist system and all its political representatives.



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