

After the conventions, Democrats attack Trump from the right

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In the aftermath of the Republican and Democratic conventions, the US presidential election campaign has taken an extraordinary turn, bringing into the open a major crisis of the entire political system.

The Democratic Party, the Clinton campaign, the Obama White House and much of the media have launched a ferocious attack on the fascistic Republican candidate Donald Trump. The character of the anti-Trump campaign, however, is itself right-wing and militaristic.

The Republican convention in Cleveland marked the emergence at the very pinnacle of American bourgeois politics of a rabidly anti-immigrant, chauvinist and authoritarian tendency that seeks to exploit the grievances of social layers devastated by the breakdown of American and world capitalism and the reactionary policies of the entire political establishment.

Both big business parties are responsible for fostering a reactionary political culture. The Republicans, in particular, have long cultivated a neo-fascistic element, utilizing talk radio, Fox News and other sections of the media and building up formations such as the Tea Party to shift the political spectrum ever further to the right.

Now, however, there are serious concerns within the ruling elite over the implications of a Trump presidency. There are fears that a Trump administration would be so reckless and incite such a degree of popular opposition as to call into question the stability of the entire political system.

At the same time, Trump's stated positions on foreign policy—particularly his reservations concerning Washington's neo-colonial wars in the Middle East, his questioning of the US-dominated NATO alliance, and his friendly gestures toward Russian President Vladimir Putin—are deemed so out of line with the bipartisan

foreign policy consensus as to be simply unacceptable.

Under these conditions, the Democratic Party sees an opportunity to reassert its historical role as the premier party of American imperialism and politically legitimize a highly militaristic—and deeply unpopular—foreign policy.

Last week's Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia was dominated by the promotion of racial and gender politics as the political means for rallying the party's upper-middle class base behind a program of militarism and war.

In the midst of a convention overwhelmingly featuring black, women and gay speakers, the Clinton campaign and sections of the media, led by the *New York Times*, launched a neo-McCarthyite campaign on the basis of entirely unsubstantiated charges that the Russian government hacked into the Democratic National Committee's Internet server, stole emails revealing efforts by pro-Clinton officials to undermine the primary campaign of her rival Bernie Sanders, and fed them to WikiLeaks in order to tilt the November vote toward Moscow's supposedly favored candidate, Trump.

The final night of the convention featured an appearance by Khizr and Ghazala Khan, the parents of a Muslim-American Army officer killed in Iraq in 2004, who denounced Trump for his racist attacks on Muslims. When Trump responded with an anti-Muslim slur against the couple, the Democrats and much of the media launched a ferocious barrage against the Republican candidate, branding him as unpatriotic, hostile to the US military, and “unfit” to be the commander-in-chief of American imperialism.

The crude quid-pro-quo on the basis of which the promoters of identity politics are lining up behind the Democrats' war policy was summed up in the post-

convention announcement that new Navy war vessels would be named after former civil rights activist and long-time congressman John Lewis and the gay San Francisco Board of Supervisors member who was assassinated in 1978, Harvey Milk.

Coming out of the convention, the Clinton campaign is touting its support from billionaires such as Michael Bloomberg, Mark Cuban and Warren Buffett, from disaffected Republican officials, and from the military-intelligence establishment. Hence the array of 25 retired generals and admirals on the Democratic convention stage the night Clinton accepted the party's presidential nomination.

The most recent declaration came from Paul Wolfowitz, deputy defense secretary under George W. Bush and one of the leading plotters of the Iraq war, who denounced Trump and said he would probably vote for Clinton.

On Tuesday, Obama expanded on the theme of Trump's lack of deference for the military in an unprecedented attack on the Republican candidate as "unfit" and "unqualified." His statements were particularly remarkable for the occasion: a joint White House appearance with the visiting prime minister of Singapore, an official diplomatic function normally off-limits to US domestic politics.

Pointing to "repeated denunciations" of Trump's statements by top Republicans, particularly for his attack on the Khan family, Obama said, "The question, I think, they have to ask themselves is, if they are repeatedly having to say in very strong terms that what he has said is unacceptable, why are you still endorsing him? What does this say about your party that this is your standard bearer?"

The *New York Times* published an editorial Tuesday, no doubt coordinated with the White House, demanding that "spineless Republicans" withdraw their endorsements of Trump after his attack on the Khan family and remarks on Ukraine and Crimea that "reinforced suspicions that he is sympathetic toward Vladimir Putin, Russia's authoritarian, anti-Western president."

The Obama administration and the Democrats are not waiting for the November election to escalate military action in the Middle East and ratchet up the confrontation with Russia. The decision to open up a new front in the US war nominally being waged against

ISIS had already been made when Obama spoke at the convention, but he said nothing to the American people. On Monday, however, the US launched air strikes on the Libyan city of Sirte, in what the Pentagon called an extensive and open-ended campaign.

And on Tuesday, the State Department said it was investigating charges that Syrian government forces used chemical weapons against US-proxy forces in Aleppo, a possible pretext for escalating Washington's war for regime-change against the Russian-backed government in Damascus.

The subject of war has been deliberately covered up in the 2016 election campaign. This was the particular responsibility of Clinton's main challenger, the self-styled "socialist" Bernie Sanders, who confined himself to occasionally criticizing Clinton's vote for the Iraq War 14 years ago while supporting the ongoing and equally criminal war policies of the Obama administration in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen and Libya, and its preparations for war against Russia and China.

The Socialist Equality Party is the only party that is fighting to mobilize the working class in the United States and internationally against imperialist war and the growing threat of a new world war. Our campaign in the 2016 elections, running Jerry White for president and Niles Niemuth for vice president, is based on the perspective that the international working class will play the leading role in the struggle against war—a struggle that must be based on the fight to put an end to capitalism, the root cause of war, and establish workers' governments and socialism. We urge all readers of the *World Socialist Web Site* to join and build this campaign.



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