

As Clinton escalates war threats, Sanders begins campaigning for Democratic nominee

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Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders will carry out his first official activity as a drum major in the Hillary Clinton marching band Monday, when he takes part in Labor Day events in Lebanon, New Hampshire in support of the Democratic presidential nominee. It will be Sanders' first campaign appearance on behalf of Clinton since his dismal "unity rally," also in New Hampshire, on July 12.

According to the press release issued by the Clinton campaign, "Sanders will discuss Hillary Clinton's plan to building [sic] an economy that works for everyone, not just those at the top, and Donald Trump's plan, which would benefit himself and other millionaires and billionaires."

Sanders' campaign appearance for Clinton comes as the Democratic Party is seeking to transform the elections into a mandate for war and aggression. In a speech to the American Legion on Wednesday, Clinton threatened to respond militarily to accusations of Russian cyberwar and hacking, pledged to carry out a nuclear posture review as her first act as president and called for an increase in military spending to ensure US domination of the world. (See, "Clinton's 'American Exceptionalism' speech: A bipartisan policy of militarism and war")

Sanders has maintained a complete silence on these war plans, which is in line with his role throughout the Democratic Party primary. He kept the issue of war largely out of the campaign, and when he spoke on foreign policy it was generally to endorse the Obama administration's escalation of war in the Middle East, its drone assassination program and its threats against Russia.

The web site of Our Revolution, the vehicle set up by the Sanders campaign to continue to channel opposition behind the Democratic Party after his endorsement of

Clinton, initially made no mention of foreign policy at all. A section has recently been added which, while including various gestures toward antiwar sentiment, insists: "We should protect America, defend our interests and values, embrace our commitments to defend freedom and support human rights, and be relentless in combatting terrorists who would do us harm."

In other words, this "revolution" fully supports the propaganda justifications for American military aggression all over the world, from the "war on terror" to "human rights" imperialism.

Sanders' appearance for Clinton also follows a week that put to the test Sanders' claims that his supporters can carry forward a "political revolution" by working within the Democratic Party to elect "progressive" Democratic candidates.

Our Revolution's campaign to support various local Democrats throughout the country fell flat on its first effort. Sanders-backed challenger Tim Canova was defeated in the Democratic primary for the south Florida congressional seat held by Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz, who won renomination with 57 percent of the vote. Schultz resigned her position as chairman of the Democratic National Committee last month after the release of emails showing the DNC had intervened in the primary contest on behalf of Clinton, despite its official posture of neutrality.

Our Revolution tried to make the best of the results of Tuesday's primaries in Arizona and Florida, claiming in an email message "a tremendous night for our political revolution. Out of the five progressive primary campaigns we supported, three were victorious." Two of the three, however, were incumbent Democratic Party officeholders, a further demonstration of

Sanders' integration with the Democratic Party establishment.

The email message reiterated the perspective that “as Bernie said, our job is to transform the Democratic Party and this country.” It claimed that the Canova campaign, while unsuccessful, had pushed Debbie Wasserman Schultz to shift her position “on a number of important issues, including fracking.”

In actual practice, however, the Canova-Schultz contest, in a heavily Jewish district centered on Ft. Lauderdale, devolved into a vulgar competition between the two candidates on who could best posture as a defender of Israel. Canova initially entered the race attacking Schultz ferociously from the right for her public support of the Iran nuclear deal, which he said endangered Israel's security.

He repeated the charge during an August debate, only to have Schultz attack him for supporting “disarmament” in the Middle East, which she claimed would apply to Israel as well as Iran and the Arab states.

The email from Our Revolution also declared, referring to Schultz, that “because of the challenge we gave her, you can expect a more fair and impartial Democratic National Committee in the next presidential primary.”

This underscores the real purpose of the Sanders campaign from its inception: to foster illusions in the Democratic Party and block any movement against it. Sanders sought to capture youth and working people who are moving to the left, and to divert them back within the blind alley of the oldest US capitalist party.

It is noteworthy that while endorsing Canova, and helping raise an estimated \$3 million for his campaign, Sanders held back from actually going to south Florida and making a public appeal to voters there to defeat the incumbent representative, who was endorsed by Hillary Clinton, President Obama, Vice President Biden and a host of other top Democrats. It was a tacit message to the Democratic Party establishment that there are lines Sanders agrees not to cross.

Only days after the primary, Sanders sent out a message to his database of small contributors, some four million people, appealing to them to send money to four Democratic candidates in close contests for US Senate seats, in New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Nevada.

He claimed, “The Democratic Party passed an extremely progressive agenda at the convention. Our job is to make sure that platform is implemented. That will not happen without Democratic control of the Senate.” A spokeswoman for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee gushed in response, “We are excited to have Senator Sanders' help and support as we work to win back the majority.”

The big lie about the supposedly progressive Democratic platform was the basis of Sanders' endorsement of Clinton in July. This platform, however, for all its small-bore pledges of modest improvements in domestic policy, is a full-throated defense of American imperialism, declaring that the United States must have the most powerful military apparatus in the world.

Sanders attracted the support of millions of youth and workers because of his claim to be a “democratic socialist” and his denunciations of economic inequality and the political influence of “the billionaire class.” But he never voiced the slightest opposition to a foreign policy based on the defense of the worldwide interests of that billionaire class.

The ignominious fate of the Sanders campaign is a demonstration of the political fact that there can be no struggle against Wall Street at home without an open repudiation of American imperialism abroad, and the struggle to build an international movement of the working class against imperialist war, based on a socialist program.



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