# Trump transition points to escalation of US militarism

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Multiple media reports that former New York City Republican Mayor Rudolph Giuliani is president-elect Donald Trump's top choice for secretary of state have provided further indication of the extreme right-wing and militarily bellicose character of the incoming US administration.

A senior Trump campaign official told the Associated Press Tuesday that Giuliani was the favorite for the post, while indicating that the equally right-wing and militaristic former US ambassador to the United Nations under the administration of George W. Bush, John Bolton, was also in the running.

The fact that these two—both adamant supporters of every US war over the past quarter century—are the front-runners for the top foreign policy position in the incoming Republican administration gives the lie to Trump's pretensions on the campaign trail that he was somehow opposed to recent US military interventions and "nation building."

Trump's phony claims that he had been against the Iraq war were meant to appeal to popular hostility to the endless US military interventions with which his Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton was so clearly identified. At the same time, however, he repeatedly advocated a major increase in US military spending and a modernization of Washington's nuclear arsenal.

His "America First" rhetoric and promotion of economic nationalism go hand-in-hand with a further escalation of a US campaign of global military aggression that has brought the planet ever closer to a third world war.

According to a report in the *Wall Street Journal*, the former New York mayor is openly pushing for his own appointment. Giuliani, the newspaper said, "suggested several times that he would be interested in the [secretary of state] post" during remarks delivered Monday to the *Wall Street Journal* CEO Council in Washington, a gathering billed as an "unparalleled opportunity for business leaders to learn the myriad implications of the biggest change in Washington in many years."

In his remarks, Giuliani insisted that the so-called war on ISIS would be the administration's first priority, making clear that the global "war on terror" that has been used to justify wars throughout the Middle East and Central Asia will continue. The former New York mayor, who has never tired of waving the bloody shirt of 9/11 to promote his own political and personal fortune and to obscure the rampant corruption that characterized his administration, is heavily invested in this policy, though he has played no role in its implementation.

Asked about Trump's demands for ripping up the nuclear deal with Iran, Giuliani replied, "You have to set priorities. So if the priority is, let's eliminate ISIS, maybe you put that off a little bit. And you get rid of ISIS and then get back to that." In other words, a new US war with Iran remains on the agenda of the incoming administration. During his run for the presidency in 2008, Giuliani said that the use of tactical nuclear weapons against Iran's nuclear program could not be taken "off the table."

And, while Trump has spoken in vague terms of a rapprochement with Russia—and was repeatedly denounced from the right by the Democrats as a puppet of Vladimir Putin—Giuliani sounded a more threatening tone toward Moscow, suggesting military confrontation as a means of shifting relations with Moscow.

"Russia thinks it's a military competitor, it really isn't," Giuliani said. "It's our unwillingness under Obama to even threaten the use of our military that makes Russia so powerful."

While Giuliani has no foreign policy experience whatsoever, he is a prominent Trump loyalist and a longtime proponent of police state methods of rule. During his tenure as mayor, he was identified with a repressive "stop and frisk" program—later ruled unconstitutional—that turned virtually every minority and working class youth in the city into a suspect and resulted in a series of egregious police murders of innocent victims like Amadou Diallo and Patrick Dorismond that he vehemently defended.

Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, he proposed

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that mayoral elections in New York be called off and that he be granted a new unelected term as the only man capable of confronting terrorism. More recently, he has suggested that the anti-Trump demonstrations that have swept the country should be met with police repression.

His apparent principal rival for the secretary of state post, John Bolton, is every bit as reactionary and a pathological supporter of unilateral US military aggression. Barely a year and a half ago, Bolton penned an opinion piece for the *New York Times* titled "To Stop Iran's Bomb, Bomb Iran." His prescription was for intensive bombing followed by "regime change."

Bolton rose to prominence in Republican circles after serving as a lawyer in the George W. Bush campaign's successful operation to steal the 2000 election by halting the vote count in Florida.

He was an advocate of a US war for regime change in Iraq at least since 1998. In 2002, he was the State Department's undersecretary for Arms Control and International Security, playing a key role in preparing the war of aggression against Iraq the following year by promoting the lies that Saddam Hussein was developing "weapons of mass destruction" and preparing to hand them over to Al Qaeda.

Bolton, described by one of his former colleagues at the State Department as "the quintessential kiss up, kick down kind of guy," was named ambassador to the United Nations in an August 2005 recess appointment by the Bush administration that was meant to serve as a deliberate provocation toward the UN, for which Bolton had repeatedly and publicly declared his contempt.

Both Giuliani and Bolton—like president-elect Trump—have defended the use of torture by the Pentagon and the CIA at Guantanamo, Bagram Air Base and black sites around the world.

The discussion of a possible appointment of either Giuliani or Bolton as the face of US foreign policy is every bit as revealing as the naming Sunday of the outright fascist Steve Bannon as Trump's chief White House strategist. While not indulging in the open politics of white supremacy and anti-Semitism that has characterized Bannon's stewardship of Breitbart News, these are unquestionably among the most reactionary and discredited figures in American politics.

When an appointment would be announced was far from clear late Tuesday, with reports of the Trump transition team in a state of utter disarray and beset by bitter internecine conflicts. Former Michigan Republican congressman Mike Rogers, who was brought in to advise Trump on national security and was thought to be a possible nominee for CIA director, has been pushed out of the transition process, following the earlier purge of New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, who was hastily replaced by vice president-elect Mike Pence as head of the overall transition operation.

The *Washington Post* reported Tuesday that the expulsion of Christie and his allies was carried out in apparent "retaliation for Christie's role as a US prosecutor in sending [Trump's son-in-law Jared] Kushner's father to prison" when he was a federal prosecutor.

Christie's ouster effectively placed the transition on hold as far as the Obama administration is concerned as the New Jersey governor was the signatory of a document establishing the framework for the process.

The chaos and divisions within the Trump camp were also spelled out in an about-face by a former Republican national security official, Eliot Cohen, who had previously led similar figures in denouncing Trump as unfit for the presidency. In an open letter published last week in the *American Interest*, he argued that a Trump presidency "may be better than we think," and that checks and balances and bureaucratic inertia would restrain the incoming administration.

In a tweet early Tuesday, Cohen wrote: "After exchange w Trump transition team, changed my recommendation: stay away. They're angry, arrogant, screaming 'you LOST!' Will be ugly."

This disarray within the Trump camp stands in stark contrast to the obsequious bowing of President Obama and leading Democrats, including purported "progressives" Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, to the billionaire president-elect. Under conditions of continuing nationwide protests, they have effectively renounced any opposition to what is shaping up to be the most right-wing administration in US history, brought to power against the expressed will of the majority of the electorate.

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