

Democrats' anti-Russia hysteria prepares the ground for war

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Ever-wider layers of the American population hate the Trump administration. Significant protests have broken out over its attacks on democratic rights, its racist persecution of immigrants, and its frenzied assault on social programs, environmental regulations, art, culture and science. According to the most recent Gallup poll, conducted after the release of Trump's first budget outline, his approval rating has fallen to 37 percent, with 58 percent disapproving. No administration in recent American history has been so discredited and unpopular so soon after taking office.

But the Democratic Party has chosen to base its opposition to Trump not on any of the social and political issues vital to tens of millions of working people, but on another ground entirely: the claim that Trump is a puppet of Russia, who won the presidency as a result of the hacking of Democratic Party targets ordered by Vladimir Putin during the 2016 presidential election.

The violently anti-Russian axis of the Democratic Party's campaign against Trump was spelled out Monday at a hearing of the House Intelligence Committee, where FBI Director James Comey and NSA Director Michael Rogers gave their first public testimony on the claims of Russian hacking during the 2016 elections, and on Trump's counter-claim that the Obama administration illegally wiretapped his offices in Trump Tower during the campaign.

Comey and Rogers gave the anticipated rebuke to Trump's tweeted charges against Obama, declaring there was no information to substantiate his claims. But this occupied only a few minutes of the five-hour hearing, in which every Democratic representative voiced a variation on the theme that Trump's presidency is the product of a Russian plot to subvert American democracy and take over the government.

The tone was set by the lengthy opening statement of the ranking Democrat on the intelligence panel, Adam Schiff of California, who elaborated the Democratic Party "theory" of the 2016 elections, in which "a foreign adversarial power intervened in an effort to weaken our democracy and to influence the outcome for one candidate and against the other." He declared that the most important issue was "whether the Russians had the help of US citizens, including people associated with the Trump campaign."

Schiff quoted from a discredited 25-page report produced by a former British intelligence agent, alleging a deal in which the Russian government would supply documents damaging to Hillary Clinton "in exchange [according to Schiff] for a Trump administration policy that de-emphasizes Russia's invasion of Ukraine and instead focuses on criticizing NATO countries for not paying their fair share. Policies which even as recently as the President's meeting last week with Angela Merkel have now presently come to pass."

The Democratic Party's allegations recall the days when the notorious Senator Joe McCarthy declared that he carried in his briefcase the names of 205 "card-carrying members" of the American Communist Party. It is impossible to overstate how thoroughly fraudulent this anti-Russian campaign is. The neo-McCarthyites of the Democratic Party have not presented a shred of credible evidence to support any of their allegations. Not a single charge can withstand critical scrutiny. But the rhetoric is utterly unrestrained, with declarations being made over and over that the alleged Russian hacking during the 2016 election was an "act of war."

At one point during the hearing, FBI Director Comey repeated the claim made previously by US intelligence agencies that Putin had intervened in the US elections

out of *sheer hatred* for the Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, whom he blamed for Washington's support for anti-Putin demonstrations in Moscow in 2011, while Clinton was secretary of state. No evidence was presented to support this wild and stupid claim.

None of the assembled congressmen bothered to ask the FBI director to produce the evidence on which he based this "insight" into Putin's motives. How does Comey know what Putin actually thinks? In any case, if Putin is really the master strategist the American media make him out to be, is it likely that this Russian Machiavelli makes political decisions on the basis of "sheer hatred" or any other set of subjective emotions?

The whole purpose of the congressional hearings—Monday's was only the first in a series—has less to do with Trump than with the acceleration and intensification of the preparations for war with Russia. This was acknowledged in the opening remarks of the House Intelligence Committee chairman, Republican Representative Devin Nunes, who declared that whatever his disagreements with the Democrats, "one benefit" of the hearing was already clear. "It has focused wide attention on the pressing threats posed by the Russian autocrat" and set the stage "for stronger action against Russian belligerence."

The working class confronts a conflict between two vile and reactionary camps, which are arguing over the best and fastest path to war. The Democrats want Russia to be Target Number One. Trump, however, views China and Germany as the preferred targets in the new struggle for world domination.

This conflict between two criminal gangs is a war of liars: the lies of Trump vs. the lies of the Democrats. Both Trump and the Democrats represent and defend the interests of the Wall Street banks and the giant corporations, and are prepared to sacrifice the lives of millions of working people in new wars to defend the global dominance of American imperialism.

One fundamental political lesson must be drawn from the filthy proceedings in Washington. The fight of the working class against Trump must be developed entirely independently of and in opposition to the political cesspool known as the Democratic Party.

The working class must mobilize its strength on the basis of socialist and anti-imperialist policies against the ultra-right policies of the Trump administration:

defending immigrant workers, opposing budget cuts, denouncing the chauvinistic threats against Mexico, China or any other country that is targeted by the American ruling class. But this fight cannot and must not have anything to do with the Democratic Party, which seeks to pollute the mass opposition to Trump with its own filthy imperialist politics. In response to the Democrats and Republicans, we quote the words of Shakespeare's Mercutio: "A plague on both your houses."



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