

Democratic Party floats proposal for a palace coup

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On Wednesday, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman addressed an open letter to a group of generals, deep state operatives and a corporate executive in President Trump's cabinet, effectively calling on them to organize a palace coup.

The recipients of Friedman's letter, code-named "Calling On a Few Good Men," are three generals—Secretary of Defense James Mattis, National Security Adviser H. R. McMaster and Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly—along with CIA Director Mike Pompeo and the former oil tycoon and current Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.

Using the language of a political toady, Friedman's column begins: "Dear Sirs, I am writing you today as the five adults with the most integrity in the Trump administration. Mattis, McMaster and Kelly, you all served our nation as generals in battle. Pompeo, you graduated first in your class at West Point and served as a cavalry officer."

He continues, "I am writing you directly because I believe you are the last 'few good men' who can stand up" to Trump. Referring to the impeachment of Richard Nixon, Friedman declares, "The last time our country faced such a cancer on the presidency, the Republican Party's leadership stood up and put country before party to get to the truth." But today's Republican Party has "declared moral bankruptcy" and "abdicated its responsibility."

Combining flattery with self-abasement, he continues, "I ask those of you who honored our country as military officers how you would have reacted if your commanding officer had charged his predecessor with a high crime that violated his constitutional oath... Would you military men have simply said, 'Sorry, I just do artillery' or 'I'm just staying in my lane?' Knowing some of you, I'd like to think not."

Friedman reveals the completely reactionary character of the opposition of the Democratic Party to the Trump administration. Trump and his band of fascists, generals and billionaires have provoked the hatred of tens of millions in the US who oppose the administration's attacks on democratic rights, its police state persecution of immigrants, and its appeals to chauvinism, racism and militarism. But the opposition of Friedman and the Democratic Party on whose behalf he speaks has nothing to do with these democratic sentiments.

Friedman gives voice to tendencies in and around the Democratic Party that are prepared, in pursuit of their McCarthyite-style demonization of Russia, to welcome a palace coup that would impose a military/intelligence/corporate junta on the American people. The wealthy and corrupt social layers for whom the millionaire columnist speaks are motivated by two primary concerns.

First, that Trump is threatening US imperialist interests around the world by backing away from the Obama administration's war-mongering policies toward Russia, and at the same time undermining the image of the US internationally with his overt lying and bullying of Washington's allies. He makes this clear in his column, pointing to discussions in the United Arab Emirates and polls in Germany showing declining support for the US, and warning that "the world is watching."

He cites US imperialist strategist Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, who warns that without an urgent course correction, the US could find itself "not with America first, but with America alone."

The second major concern is that Trump is stoking popular discontent at home that could spiral out of

control and threaten the entire economic and political system. Far from appealing to the broad popular opposition to Trump that began to erupt in the days after his inauguration, the Democratic Party is fixated on avoiding at all costs the emergence of a movement of the working masses. That is why it appeals to the military/intelligence apparatus and the corporate aristocracy in its struggle with the faction of the ruling class represented by Trump.

The war between the two is a war of liars between two deeply reactionary factions of the same capitalist elite. The Trump camp seeks to pursue a different approach in the drive of US imperialism for global hegemony—putting off for now war plans against Russia in order to focus US aggression first on China.

Both factions would drag the people of the United States and the world into a third world war, with the prospect of nuclear annihilation. And there is no difference between the two on the need to escalate the war against the working class.

Those opposed to Trump's policies of anti-immigrant racism, the destruction of social programs and war must reject the efforts of the Democrats to corral popular anti-Trump sentiment behind their own program of war and social reaction. What is necessary, and what is being fought for by the Socialist Equality Party and the *World Socialist Web Site*, is the development of a working class opposition based on a socialist program to put an end to capitalism and imperialism.



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