

Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren joins push for US escalation in Afghanistan

Bill Van Auken
6 July 2017

Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, a self-styled “progressive” Democrat, joined with Senate Armed Services Committee chairman John McCain and his right-wing pro-war ally Senator Lindsey Graham at a July 4 press conference in Kabul calling for the Trump administration to put forward a renewed war strategy for Afghanistan.

The bipartisan appeal, which was also joined by Democratic Senator Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island, came in anticipation of a more than 50 percent increase in US troop levels and the unveiling of more aggressive rules of engagement in the 16-year-old war.

McCain issued a bellicose demand for more a decisive US military intervention in the impoverished and war-ravaged south Asian nation, declaring, “None of us would say that we are on a course to success here in Afghanistan.”

“That needs to change, and quickly,” he said. “The strongest nation on Earth should be able to win this conflict.”

McCain advanced a strategy of military escalation aimed at bleeding the Taliban insurgency in order to force it to negotiate with the US-backed puppet government in Kabul. The Taliban “is not going to negotiate unless they are losing,” the Republican senator explained. “So we need to win and have the advantage on the battlefield and then enter into a serious negotiation to resolve this conflict.”

Warren followed up on these remarks by declaring, “We need a strategy in the United States that defines our role in Afghanistan, defines our objective, and explains how we can get from here to there.”

In an interview with the *Boston Globe*, Warren expanded on her remarks, stating, “A solution needs to have a military angle, but also an economic and diplomatic plan. It needs to involve domestic political

reconciliation, and it needs to be regional in nature.”

The Massachusetts senator posted online a number of photographs of herself with military officers and troops in Afghanistan.

Warren’s joining in a bipartisan push for an escalation of the US intervention in Afghanistan comes in the run-up to a presentation by the US defense secretary, Gen. James “Mad Dog” Mattis, of a proposed hike in US troop deployments there. The Pentagon is reportedly considering adding some 5,000 US soldiers to the nearly 9,000 already deployed in the country, although there are apparently some within the military advocating considerably greater numbers.

Additionally, the beefed-up US military force is to be employed more directly in the targeting of the Taliban insurgency with increased air strikes and “search and destroy” special forces operations, which will translate into another spike in already record-high civilian casualties. This is the “military angle” that Warren is backing.

Mattis has been granted full authority by Trump to determine the number of US troops that will be deployed in Afghanistan. Warren supported Mattis’ nomination, despite the general’s record in directing mass slaughter in Iraq and despite his appointment’s violation of rules barring recently retired generals from taking the civilian post of defense secretary.

Speaking at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium at the end of last month, Mattis criticized the Obama administration for withdrawing too many US troops too fast from Afghanistan.

According to the *Guardian*, Warren made clear that her demand that the Trump administration advance a new strategy stemmed from her concern that the public’s “patience in the US could run out” for the longest war in US imperialism’s history. Clearly, she

sees her role as providing a “progressive” cover for continuing and escalating the slaughter with hollow rhetoric about her belief in a “comprehensive, whole-of-government strategy.”

The *Boston Globe*’s report on Warren’s Afghanistan junket linked the trip to the anticipation that the senior Senator from Massachusetts will mount a presidential campaign in 2020, seeking to mobilize the so-called Sanders wing of the Democratic Party, while making clear to the ruling establishment her commitment to policies of war abroad and continued social counterrevolution at home.

Describing Warren’s new-found interest in the US military, the *Globe* reports, “While approaching the subject with studious zeal, she’s also rounding out her political resume in ways that further stoke speculation about a possible run for president in 2020.”

The *Globe* also reports that Warren has sought out “senior figures in the Democratic foreign policy and defense establishment” to advise her on military policy. The most prominent among them is Ashton Carter, who was defense secretary--and one of the most right-wing cabinet members--during the last two years of the Obama administration.

Carter was an unapologetic supporter of the criminal invasion of Iraq in 2003 and advocated “preventive” US invasions of North Korea and Iran. He also oversaw the escalating US interventions in Iraq and Syria, as well as the Pentagon’s support for the near genocidal Saudi-led war on the people of Yemen. An advocate of confrontation with Russia, he at one point proposed deployment of US ground-launched cruise missiles in Europe for a “pre-emptive” strike on Russia.

Underscoring Warren’s close relation to Carter, she earlier this year hired his former deputy chief of staff at the Pentagon, Sasha Baker, to serve as her national security adviser.

During the 2016 election campaign Warren withheld her support from Senator Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primaries, eventually endorsing and campaigning for Hillary Clinton, the favored candidate of both Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus, in the general election campaign. She has since been a prominent figure in the attempt to divert opposition to Trump behind the hysterical anti-Russia campaign waged by the Democrats and much of the media. The political aim underlying this campaign is to

shift the Trump administration toward a more aggressive military policy in Syria and against Russia generally.

With her recent visit to Kabul, Warren is working to burnish her credentials as a trustworthy political defender of US imperialist interests. As with Sanders, her support for US militarism and wars of aggression abroad give the lie to Warren’s phony “left” populist rhetoric, which serves merely as an instrument for corraling mass opposition to the policies of the Trump administration behind the dead end of the Democratic Party.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact