

Conflicts within US ruling class intensify following Flynn guilty plea

Andre Damon
7 December 2017

Over the past week, the ferocious political conflict within the ruling class in the United States has entered a new stage. In the wake of the guilty plea by Trump's former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn on Friday, the media is again filled with discussions over possible methods for removing Trump from office.

On Monday, the *New York Times* ran an editorial, "Yes, the President Can Obstruct Justice," answering the claim by Trump's lawyer that the "president cannot obstruct justice because he is the chief law enforcement officer." Citing previous articles of impeachment drawn up against Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton, the *Times* argued that the precedent applies equally, if not more, to Trump.

The entire framework of the *Times*' argument against Trump revolves around the investigation, headed by Justice Department Special Counsel Robert Mueller, into alleged Russian involvement in the 2016 US election. In securing a guilty plea from Flynn, the Mueller probe is now targeted directly at Trump's inner circle, including his son-in-law Jared Kushner and his son Donald Trump Jr., as well as Trump himself.

In his reported call for then-FBI Director James Comey to drop the probe into Flynn earlier this year, the *Times* writes, Trump "tried to shut down an investigation into his own campaign's ties to the Russian government's efforts to swing the 2016 election in his favor."

The editorial echoes the language of Democratic Party Senator Diane Feinstein of California, who said in her Sunday appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press", "I think what we're beginning to see is the putting together of a case of obstruction of justice."

That Mueller is moving to develop a case against Trump was indicated by news this week that he has subpoenaed Trump's financial records with Deutsche

Bank, prompting speculation that he could force Trump to resign by threatening to prosecute him over his business dealings before he came to the White House.

Another possible avenue raised by Trump's critics within the political and media establishment is the use of the 25th Amendment of the US Constitution, which allows the cabinet to remove the president if he is so impaired that he is "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office."

Last week, conservative *Washington Post* columnist Jennifer Rubin reiterated her previous proposal to invoke the amendment, citing reports that Trump continues to believe that Obama was not born in the US, and that he has asserted that the voice in the "Access Hollywood" tape released during the 2016 elections was not his. If he believes such statements, Rubin wrote, it would be proof that he is "mentally and emotionally incapable of performing his duties (which require one to grasp and process reality) and it would be long past time for him to go."

It is evident that a significant faction of the ruling elite has concluded that Trump must go, in one form or another.

There is not, however, an ounce of democratic or progressive content to this campaign. The conflicts in Washington are conflicts within the ruling class, pitting the Trump administration—which is increasingly relying on far-right and fascistic forces—with powerful elements of the military and intelligence apparatus with which the Democratic Party is aligned.

Significantly, Democratic Congressman Al Green on Thursday moved a vote in the House of Representatives to bring articles of impeachment against Trump, which was overwhelmingly rejected by congressional Democrats and unanimously by Republicans. Unlike Mueller's investigation, Green's proposal was based

on the president's defense of white supremacists in Charlottesville and his re-tweeting of anti-Muslim videos previously posted by British fascists.

Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi made clear that the Democrats' votes against the measure reflected not their support for Trump, but their desire to wage their campaign on charges on Trump's "collusion" with Russia, saying that "those [i.e., Mueller's] inquiries should be allowed to continue."

Even as they have intensified their efforts to brand Trump a traitor and a Russian agent, the Democrats have avoided any opposition to his right-wing domestic policies. As Congress moves to pass Trump's tax bill—a handout to the financial elite that will set the stage for major cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid—the Democrats have done nothing to oppose its passage. They have held no hearings on its contents and called no demonstrations.

Rather, the Democrats' dispute with Trump is centered on their concern that his administration has undermined the fundamental foreign policy interests of US imperialism. The reality of the United States' geopolitical decline under Trump was made apparent by two recent events—the agreement between Russia and Egypt that allows Russia to station aircraft on Egyptian airbases, and the proclamation by German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel that the "protective" role played by the United States over Europe "is beginning to crumble."

The witch-hunt over allegations of sexual misconduct orchestrated by media outlets affiliated with the Democratic Party, particularly the *New York Times*, is part of this same process. It is an effort to mobilize sections of the upper-middle class behind the agenda of the financial elite and military-intelligence agencies based on a deeply anti-democratic and reactionary campaign. It is of a piece with the campaign over Russian "meddling," which has been utilized not only to go after Trump, but to lay the framework for a regime of Internet censorship and the suppression of domestic discontent.

The eruption of ferocious conflicts within the states is the expression, however, of a deeper disease, for which the ruling class has no solution. If Trump's ruling class critics were to succeed in removing him, it would not resolve the crisis of class rule that is engulfing the United States. It would place in power a government

even more firmly under the control of the military-intelligence apparatus, committed to continuing the offensive against the working class and escalating the military confrontation with Russia.

An altogether different conflict is developing, between the ruling class and the working class. Three billionaires now control more wealth than half of the population in the United States. The broad mass of the population is suffering from an escalating crisis—mass indebtedness, low-wage jobs, an expanding drug epidemic, and other manifestations of social distress. The financial system, inflated through an endless infusion of cash, is teetering on the edge of another collapse, on the scale of the 2008 Wall Street meltdown, with incalculable consequences.

Even as they furiously denounce each other, what all factions of the ruling class fear above all is that the crisis will prompt the political radicalization of the working class.

Workers and young people seeking to oppose the Trump administration must avoid the deeply diseased and reactionary Democratic Party like the plague.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote in its June 13 perspective, "Palace coup or class struggle: The political crisis in Washington and the strategy of the working class," the essential political conclusion that flows from the political situation in the US is that "the fight of the working class against Trump and all that he represents will raise ever more urgently the necessity of a political mass movement, independent of and opposed to both the Republicans and the Democrats, against the capitalist system and its state. This objective tendency of social development must be developed as a conscious strategy of working class struggle."

The Socialist Equality Party is fighting to build such a movement, based on the socialist program of expropriating the wealth of the financial oligarchy, the reorganization of society on a socialist and egalitarian basis. We call on all our readers to make the decision to join and build the SEP.



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact