CIA Democrats enter the race: Seth Moulton announces bid for presidential nomination

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On Monday, Massachusetts Congressman Seth Moulton became the 19th candidate to publicly join the race for the 2020 Democratic Party presidential nomination. A right-wing "national security Democrat" representing Boston's northern suburbs, Moulton announced his candidacy on ABC's "Good Morning America" program, where he highlighted his four tours of duty in Iraq as a Marine officer and declared himself a "patriot" and "not a socialist."

Moulton, who sits on the House Armed Services Committee, has little prospect of becoming the first congressman to vault from the lower legislative chamber to the White House since James Garfield did it in 1880. The three-term congressman is unknown to voters outside of his district, where he is likely to face a challenge from within his own party just to hold his seat in the 2020 congressional election.

Even in neighboring New Hampshire, which hosts the second presidential primary on February 11, 2020, Moulton is an obscure figure. "I can honestly say I haven't heard of anyone even mentioning [his] name," one county Democratic official admitted to the *Boston Globe*.

Moulton himself concedes that he might not meet the minimum requirements for an invitation to participate in the first Democratic Party debates next summer, i.e., by June 12 of this year he may fail to register at least 1 percent support in either state or national polls, or receive campaign contributions from a total of 65,000 donors from 20 different states. "It's not the end of the world" Moulton said of being excluded from the debates. "[B]ut we would rather be on that stage than be off it."

Moulton's indifference to popular support is not accidental. He is a leading representative of a new breed of Democratic Party politicians who openly seek their constituencies in, and are drawn from, the ranks of the military-intelligence apparatus: what the *World Socialist Web Site* has termed the CIA Democrats.

Moulton heads the Serve America Political Action Committee (PAC), which since the 2018 elections has funneled millions of dollars in corporate funds to Democratic candidates with backgrounds in the spy agencies, the military or the State Department. The role of these "CIA Democrats" in the last election, as the WSWS explained, was to shift the Democratic Party as a whole even further to the right, place the balance of power in Congress in the hands of individuals directly linked to America's war machine, and make the Democratic Party the preferred party of the military-intelligence apparatus.

This was achieved to a remarkable degree. The WSWS concluded that 11 CIA Democrats were elected to Congress in 2018, each with backing from Moulton's Serve America. The same list of 11 can be found on the Serve America website, where pride of place is given to former CIA spy Abigail Spanberger of Virginia's 7th District, whose write-up there typifies the rest. "Following her love of country," Serve America boasts, "Abigail joined the CIA as an Operations Officer, where she traveled and lived abroad collecting intelligence, managing assets, and overseeing high-profile programs."

The expanded reach of the military-intelligence apparatus within the Democratic Party has had its effect. Over the past two years, the Democrats have attacked the Trump White House largely from the right, seizing on the unsubstantiated claims of the intelligence agencies of Russian intervention in the 2016 elections to promote a McCarthyite atmosphere of fear and warmongering. Since the release last week of the report by Special Counsel Robert Mueller rejecting the

allegations of the Democrats and leading media outlets such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and CNN of Trump collusion with the Russian government, the Democrats and the bulk of the media have intensified their anti-Russian campaign.

The effort to whip up a war fever against Russia is central to Moulton's run for president. He will seek to make the anti-Russian campaign, which has little popular support, the focus of the Democratic nominating process, while more generally promoting the military, which, he insists, must "dramatically increase [its] investment in autonomous, hypersonic, and cyber weapons."

Elsewhere Moulton has called for the formation of a "Pacific NATO" aimed at China, and has opposed withdrawal of US forces from Syria.

His positions on domestic policy are no less reactionary. He has trumpeted calls for major expenditures on "cyber security," a euphemism for cracking down on left-wing and anti-war political dissent on the internet. In his "Good Morning America" interview, he employed the lingo of the far-right to oppose his rivals' discussions of a single-payer health care system. "I'm not a socialist," he said. "So if I'm elected, I'm not going to force you off your private health care plan."

Moulton spelled out his right-wing militarist agenda in an interview with MSNBC's Rachel Maddow later Monday evening. "I can guarantee you this, Russia is interfering in this election today," Moulton baldly claimed, before adding, in a moment of unintended comedy, "They are probably watching this show."

Were Moulton able to establish the veracity of this allegation, he could expand the "proof" of Russian "meddling" from the purchase of a few thousand dollars worth of internet ads to... watching cable television.

He concluded this portion of the interview by asserting that "Russia attacked us in 2016, I guarantee you they will attack us in 2020." He compared these "attacks" to that of Imperial Japan on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001. Moulton's implication is unmistakable. He is demanding war against nuclear-armed Russia.

In the 12-minute interview, Maddow asked not a single question about jobs, poverty, hunger, health care, education, crumbling infrastructure, the environmental crisis or Trump's fascistic attacks on immigrants and democratic rights. Instead, she spent the first several minutes challenging Moulton over his failed bid to orchestrate the removal of Nancy Pelosi as speaker of the House of Representatives following the 2018 elections. This line of questioning was carried out entirely from the standpoint of identity politics, with the MSNBC host—who reportedly "earned" $20 million last year—criticizing Moulton for daring to challenge "the most powerful woman in American politics ever."

Moulton, clearly contrite, stressed that he had actually switched sides and voted for Pelosi when it became evident his efforts had failed, and highlighted the number of women among the Democrats he had helped propel into office in the congressional class of 2018, which he hailed as "the most historically diverse ever." He then shifted gears, absurdly bragging that "the toughest job I ever had to do in my life was take an incredibly diverse group of Americans" and command them in the Iraq War.

The Maddow-Moulton interview reveals both the intellectual bankruptcy of what passes for American political discourse and the link between militarism and capitalist ideology. Identity politics, the bread and butter of the Democratic Party, once postured as being vaguely left. It is now deployed by pro-imperialist scoundrels such as Maddow to consolidate a constituency for war within sections of the upper-middle class.