

Trump appeals to Democratic establishment and attacks the left

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The sound of Trump supporters chanting “Send her back!” echoed across the country and around the world yesterday as the president repeated his attack on four Democratic congresswomen, including Ilhan Omar, against whom the chant was directed.

The use of this language at the rally in North Carolina underscores the danger posed by the president’s fascist strategy. Trump and his supporters are declaring their support for the removal from office and deportation of Omar, a Somali-born US citizen, for criticizing the administration. In the context of growing right-wing violence in the US and worldwide, Trump is inciting his supporters to attack her.

But just minutes before, Trump thanked the majority of House Democrats for voting against an impeachment resolution. “I just heard that the United States House of Representatives has overwhelmingly voted to kill ... the resolution, how stupid is that, on impeachment,” Trump said. “I want to thank those Democrats because many of them voted for us,” he added as the crowd cheered loudly.

After touting his tax cuts for the rich, the rising stock market and the expansion of military funding, Trump added:

“The leading voices of the Democrat Party are left-wing extremists who stand against everything our nation stands for, but again I have to tell you, this vote was so big I have to thank many of the Democrats. No, no, I really do, I respect it, I really do. That [impeachment vote] was a slaughter. Many of the people who voted for us were Democrats, and I want to thank them because they did the right thing for our country.”

In political and legal terms, the House Democrats’ 137-95 vote against impeachment is effectively an endorsement of Trump’s policies.

Trump’s praise for the Democratic Party was not mere bluster—he chose his words carefully according to a deliberate political strategy. In the theater of American

bourgeois politics, every word and movement is a signal to political allies and opponents.

He is appealing to the wealthy politicians and power brokers who comprise the Democratic Party establishment and who, like Trump, also oppose the influence of self-described “socialist” candidates like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib, and intend to make no concessions to their calls even for modest reform.

While Democrats passed a resolution denouncing Trump’s “racism,” behind the scenes they are actively working with his administration to slash social spending and increase funding for the military.

On Wednesday, Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer spoke at length to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, with all parties announcing they were “close” to a two-year budget deal that would raise the debt ceiling and increase funding for the armed forces. After the discussion with Pelosi, Mnuchin declared he has a “clear understanding” with the California Democrat.

Both sides, Mnuchin said, “agreed there will be offsets”—in other words, cuts to social spending. In a *Politico* article headlined, “Democrats not willing to totally snub ‘deplorable’ Trump,” Virginia Democrat Don Beyer said, “I do think we can compartmentalize, absolutely. And I suspect that he can too. We’re going to continue to speak out. But he’s also still president for the next year and a half and we want to get legislation done.” Last week, House Democrats voted overwhelmingly to provide \$733 billion in military spending for fiscal year 2020, the highest figure in history.

The Democratic Party is a party of reaction, based on an alliance of the military-intelligence apparatus, Wall Street, and the affluent, identity-obsessed upper middle class.

Its differences with Trump have always been tactical in character. The Democrats’ chief concern is that Trump is undermining the key strategic imperatives of American

imperialism—particularly in relation to Russia—and that his unpredictable and erratic behavior will destabilize domestic politics, stoke popular opposition, and further endanger their foreign policy goals. When it comes to cutting taxes, lowering interest rates and increasing military spending, the Democrats and Trump agree. Both support Trump's oft-repeated threat that "America will never be a socialist country."

It was Pelosi herself who brought renewed attention to the four congresswomen last week when she denigrated "their public whatever and their Twitter world" in an interview with the *New York Times*. Democratic staffers then leaked poll numbers showing the four congresswomen are very unpopular among Republican voters. The written notes Trump used at his White House press conference this week included the line: "Now they even call Nancy Pelosi a racist."

Trump and the Democratic Party are concerned about figures like Omar and Ocasio-Cortez not because of what the congresswomen themselves want or are capable of. In the case of the four congresswomen, each is a committed supporter of the Democratic establishment who has loyally toed the leadership's line. But the fact that they were elected to Congress reveals a groundswell of social opposition to capitalism from below.

The political establishment fears the tens of millions of workers and young people who are interested in socialism but have not yet abandoned illusions in reforming the Democratic Party. The ruling class, aware that any large-scale outbreak of the class struggle would crash the inflated markets, regards working class opposition to inequality as a ticking time bomb, waiting to explode.

Both factions of the ruling class will use the 2020 elections to contain social opposition and divert it behind their reactionary aims.

Trump is appealing to fascist elements, scapegoating immigrants for the social crisis in America, vilifying the Democrats as socialists, and building an extra-parliamentary movement to crush opposition with force if needed.

The Democrats have rolled out two dozen candidates, few of them representing more than an "identity" to be enlisted into their electoral coalition next November. All the candidates are making "left" noises about guaranteeing health care for all, taxing the rich and using the proceeds to fund social reforms. If elected, they will do none of these things.

The same sorry act plays out over and over. The "progressive" candidates will tack left during the

primaries to resuscitate illusions among disaffected voters, arguing that this time the party can be pressured to the left. In the end, the nomination process spits out a right-wing candidate like Bill or Hillary Clinton, John Kerry or Michael Dukakis.

One thing is certain in 2020: the "progressive" candidates, undercut by the party elites and without receiving any concessions on program, will either abandon all proposals of social reform or humiliate themselves by demanding their supporters "unite" behind a right-wing nominee.

Groups like the Democratic Socialists of America play a critical role in this process. While posing as "independent socialists," the DSA has already indicated it will endorse whatever right-wing Democrat the party nominates—a year-and-a-half before the election!

In a May interview with the *New York Times*, *Jacobin* editor and leading DSA figure Bhaskar Sunkara declared that a Joe Biden presidency "would be great" if a progressive candidate does not win the primary, he said:

"I think the mentality has to be to call for people to vote for Joe Biden, especially in swing states." It is necessary "to avoid a third-party candidacy"—that is, to break from the Democratic Party—on the basis of the "strategic knowledge and commitment to getting rid of Trump."

Sunkara blurted out his lines before the primary debate performance had even started, and he forgot to read the stage directions, which called for rolling over, but with more tact and feigned defiance so as to better convince his audience.

The DSA can politely discuss its faux-socialism with smug *New York Times* columnists, career politicians in the backrooms of Congress, and affluent professors attending "left" conferences on generous per diems.

The Socialist Equality Party is opposing fascism and the threat of dictatorship by fighting for genuine, revolutionary socialist consciousness in the factories, warehouses and working class neighborhoods and among students and working class youth.



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