

Democrats release articles of impeachment against Trump on “national security” grounds

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On Tuesday, the Democratic leadership of the House of Representatives published two articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump, now the fourth president in US history to face formal articles of impeachment, following Andrew Johnson, Bill Clinton and Richard Nixon.

Unlike the impeachment proceedings against Nixon, who resigned in August of 1974 before a vote was taken in the House of Representatives, the impeachment of Trump does not involve any democratic issues. It is a conflict between two reactionary factions of the ruling class, centered on differences over foreign policy.

The articles of impeachment were announced at a press conference by Jerrold Nadler, the Democratic chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. The first article is for “abuse of power” and the second for “obstruction of Congress.” The impeachment resolution states that President Trump “abused the powers of the Presidency by ignoring and injuring national security and other vital national interests to obtain an improper personal political benefit.” It adds, “He has also betrayed the Nation by abusing his high office to enlist a foreign power in corrupting democratic elections.”

The Judiciary Committee is expected to vote by the end of the week to approve the charges, followed by a full vote in the House—which has a Democratic majority—by the end of the year.

The charges would then go to the Senate, which is controlled by the Republicans. In the Senate trial, a two-thirds majority would be required to convict Trump and remove him from office.

The Democrats have centered their opposition to Trump on the most reactionary basis possible—namely, the claim that by withholding military aid to Ukraine he undermined US “national security,” i.e., the interests of

American imperialism.

The articles of impeachment allege that by temporarily suspending “the release of \$391 million of United States taxpayer funds that Congress had appropriated...for the purpose of providing vital military security assistance to Ukraine to oppose Russian aggression,” Trump has “compromised the national security of the United States.”

Trump withheld the military aid and a White House meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, the impeachment resolution alleges, in order to pressure the Ukrainian government to announce an investigation into a company connected to Hunter Biden, the son of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden. In this way, the resolution argues, he sought to solicit “foreign interference in United States elections.”

This is the first “national security” impeachment. The charge that Trump “betrayed the Nation,” i.e., that he is a traitor, is a continuation of the anti-Russia campaign the Democrats have pursued since 2016, based on the absurd claim that Trump is an agent of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

At the fourteen-minute press conference announcing the articles of impeachment, congressional Democrats invoked “national security” seven times. They argued that the impeachment and removal of Trump from office was necessary prior to the 2020 elections because he would otherwise solicit foreign interference to rig the election in his favor, as he had supposedly done in 2016.

The Democrats have entirely excluded from the impeachment process the many crimes and violations of basic democratic rights carried out by the Trump administration, from the erection of concentration camps on the US-Mexico border to the elevation of fascistic forces into the highest levels of the state.

The campaign to remove Trump has been spearheaded

by dominant factions of the intelligence agencies, whose officials have repeatedly criticized Trump for what they see as an insufficiently aggressive policy toward Russia. The impeachment process was initiated by a CIA officer referred to as the “whistleblower,” who was the initial source for information on Trump’s July 25 telephone call with Ukrainian President Zelensky, the focal point of the impeachment charges.

The articles of impeachment are in line with the two weeks of open hearings before the House Intelligence Committee and the two days of hearings before the Judiciary Committee, which focused almost exclusively on policy differences over the US proxy conflict with Russia in Ukraine.

Former ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch declared that Ukraine was a “battleground for great power competition” between the United States and Russia and was in the midst of “a hot war for the control of territory.” Trump’s “corrupt behavior,” she said, “undermines the US...and widens the playing field for autocrats like President Putin.”

The impeachment proceedings follow the nearly two-year investigation by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, which was centered on bogus allegations that Trump’s election was the product not of the right-wing policies of the Democrats, but “foreign meddling” directed by Putin.

The Democrats’ anti-Russia campaign has been utilized to demand internet censorship and justify the vicious persecution of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who has been slanderously portrayed as an agent of the Kremlin.

The release of the articles of impeachment has once again made clear that the bitter factional struggle in Washington is motivated by differences within the ruling elite over foreign policy.

On fundamental class issues, the two parties are united. Trump’s signature domestic legislation, his sweeping reduction in the corporate tax rate, was prefigured by the Obama administration’s push for a corporate tax cut. Trump’s multitrillion-dollar bonanza for the rich evoked only token opposition from the Democrats, even though Trump had lost the popular vote by three million ballots and his inauguration had sparked mass protests across the country.

As a result of the 2017 tax bill, for the first time in US history the richest 400 Americans last year paid a lower tax rate than the bottom 50 percent of the population, according to research by Gabriel Zucman and Emmanuel Saez.

Trump’s crackdown on the border has been consistently financed and given de facto support by the Democrats. Under Trump, the US military budget has gone from \$619 billion in 2016 to \$738 billion in 2020, with the support of a large majority of Democrats in Congress.

This bipartisan record of reaction was significantly bolstered by the Democrats’ announcement, just minutes after the release of the articles of impeachment, of an agreement with Trump on the USMCA anti-China trade pact.

“NBC Nightly News” anchor Lester Holt reported that, with their agreement on Trump’s new US-Mexico-Canada trade bloc, the Democrats were “delivering the president a big victory,” while CNN called the agreement Trump’s “primary legislative accomplishment since Democrats took the House of Representatives last November.”

Compared to its predecessor NAFTA, the USMCA will increase the portion of a product that must be manufactured in North America to qualify for tariff exemptions. The new pact also includes a series of handouts to major corporations, including more aggressive patent protections for drug makers and the extension of the terms of copyright.

Tuesday’s developments confirm the assessment made by the *World Socialist Web Site* in its July 2017 statement, “Palace coup or class struggle: The political crisis in Washington and the strategy of the working class.”

The statement explained that the Democrats’ “differences with the Trump administration are centered primarily on issues of foreign policy... They are determined to prevent Trump from weakening the anti-Russia policy developed under Obama, which the Hillary Clinton campaign was dedicated to expanding.”

That statement argued that the working class must oppose Trump not through the mechanism of “palace coup,” as pursued by the Democrats, but through the class struggle. The subsequent two and a half years have only confirmed this assessment and underscored the urgent necessity for the working class to mobilize its strength to remove the Trump administration totally independently of, and in opposition to, the Democratic Party.



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