

Seattle's "socialist" mayor silent on Venezuela attack while continuing to court business elite

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Seattle's self-styled "socialist" mayor, Katie Wilson, has remained silent on Saturday's attack on Venezuela by the Trump administration and the kidnapping of the country's president, Nicolas Maduro, and his wife Cilia Flores. Both the attack and the kidnapping are acts of war under US and international law. Wilson was inaugurated as mayor of Seattle on Friday, January 2 after being elected as part of the left shift among the working class in the US in response to the full-scale assault on democratic rights by the Trump administration.

In President Donald Trump's gloating speech following the abduction, he characterized the operation as a "warning" to "anyone who would threaten American sovereignty." He continued by threatening further deployments of the National Guard, saying, "They should do it with more cities."

The message is clear: Neither foreign leaders or American cities are safe from the drive by the Trump administration to assert hegemonic power of US business interests domestically and internationally. This was highlighted by the arrest and conviction of Milwaukee judge Hannah Dugan, whom ICE claims interfered with immigration agents, and who has now resigned as a result of the conviction.

American Secretary of War Pete Hegseth put it quite plainly: "America can project our will anywhere, anytime." This would certainly include Seattle's city hall.

It is thus all the more incredible that Wilson has said nothing about Trump's kidnapping of Maduro or the undeclared war against Venezuela more broadly. The attack on Saturday killed at least 100 people, a number that is continuing to grow. Since September, Trump

and Hegseth have ordered 30 strikes on fishing boats in the Caribbean that have killed at least 107 people, all of whom are most likely civilians.

Moreover, Trump has specifically called Wilson out for being a "very, very liberal/communist mayor," and threatened to shift this summer's World Cup football matches, some to be held in Seattle, to other locations.

There is also the not-so-small matter of principle. Genuine socialists oppose all acts of imperialist aggression, which has been upheld in the Marxist movement since the colonial wars of the 19th century. It is a recognition that such attacks on the working class in any part of the world is an attack on the entire world proletariat and must be opposed.

Instead, since her inauguration, Wilson has taken to Twitter/X to congratulate the local National Football League team on that day's win and has done numerous interviews with local news stations. The most immediate social issue she commented on was "Somali childcare providers who have experienced targeted harassment, and condemn the surveillance campaign promoted by extremist influencers," in a Twitter/X post. This was in response to the efforts of local right-wing media influencers to emulate Nick Shirley, who on December 26 posted a video in which he claimed to have exposed fraud in Minnesota-based Somali-run daycares.

That has since been used as an excuse by the Trump administration to flood the city with ICE agents, which culminated on Wednesday with the daylight murder of 37-year-old Renee Nicole Good, a poet, US citizen and mother of three.

Wilson's silence on Venezuela aligns with her broader political orientation to align herself with the

“left” wing of the Democratic Party, which has become clearer in her first days in office. In December, Wilson announced her selection of Brian Surratt to be her deputy mayor. Surratt was the head of Seattle’s Office of Economic Development from 2015 to 2017 and is the founder and head of Greater Seattle Partners. He is also the former vice president of Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc., and is well known in the business community as a deal-maker, most significantly the redevelopment deal with Jeff Bezos, then the CEO of Amazon, for the Climate Pledge Arena complex in Seattle Center.

Prior to her inauguration, Wilson made the decision to retain Seattle police chief Shon Barnes, who has been accused of maintaining a “siege mentality” within the police, and recently promoted a senior officer who had driven into protesters assembled on a sidewalk and covered up the harassment of a trans woman.

Downtown Seattle Association President Jon Scholes, a member of Wilson’s transition team, released a statement following the decision: “We commend Mayor-elect Wilson’s decision to retain Chief Shon Barnes, an early and important decision to further strengthen public safety in Seattle. Under his leadership, violent crime in the downtown core has decreased, and visible, on-the-ground presence of Seattle Police officers has increased.”

Wilson also exposed her political orientation in an interview with *Jacobin* magazine, a publication connected to the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), which functions as a faction within the Democratic Party. In the interview, she claimed that “there’s this opportunity for socialists or people coming from the progressive left who are coming into executive positions like mayorships to really show that we can govern.”

She then openly admitted she will not oppose the capitalist social order. “It’s tempting for me to use my mayoral platform to start a big conversation around socialism, but I don’t think that’s what I was elected to do.”

There are no doubt many among the 139,000 who voted for Wilson that thought that’s exactly what they were voting for. They mirror the 1.1 million who voted for New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani, a member of the DSA, who also ran as a socialist. Both almost immediately betrayed those aspirations, with Mamdani

meeting with Trump last month and declaring a “partnership” with the fascist and would-be dictator. Wilson said that she would be willing to follow suit.

Wilson’s political trajectory confirms what the *World Socialist Web Site* has long explained. Figures like Wilson represent sections of the upper middle class, not the working class. They promote the fiction that the interests of workers and youth can be advanced through the Democratic Party and through collaboration with the capitalist establishment.

The crises facing the working class in Seattle, including war, homelessness, spiraling rent, unaffordable health care, stagnant wages and so much more, cannot and will not be effectively addressed through silence, gentle criticism or coalition building with the wealthy. There must be a frontal assault on the wealth of the ruling elite, including those corporations centered in Seattle like Boeing, Amazon, Microsoft, Apple, Google, Starbucks and others. Their ill-gotten gains must be expropriated, through a struggle which must be led by the working class as part of a revolutionary program to overthrow capitalism and establish socialism.



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