

Democratic condemnation of Trump's Iran deal exposes bipartisan conspiracy for war

Andre Damon
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There are moments that expose the fundamental character of the political system in the United States, that notwithstanding the daily infighting between the Democrats and Republicans, when it comes to the basic interests of American imperialism, the two parties of American capitalism are united.

The publication Thursday of the terms of the memorandum of understanding between the Trump administration and Iran is such a moment. It has triggered an outpouring of criticism from both the Democratic and Republican parties on the grounds that the war US President Donald Trump launched against Iran in February failed to secure American imperialism's objectives in dominating the Middle East.

Republican former Vice President Mike Pence called the deal "appeasement" this week and demanded that, short of a harsher settlement, "we should let our Armed Forces finish the job on our terms."

The Democrats joined the Republican condemnation of the agreement, criticizing it in much the same language. Senator Adam Schiff of California called it "a thorough capitulation," writing that "Iran gets sanctions relief... and a \$300 billion reconstruction fund." Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut called it "essentially a surrender to Iran." House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries declared that "Iran is stronger and America is less safe" as a result of the agreement.

The *New York Times*, in an editorial headlined "President Trump Lost This War," called the agreement "a humiliating comedown" and named Iran "the strategic winner of the four-month war."

Jacobin magazine, the semi-official publication of the Democratic Socialists of America, criticized Trump's deal with Iran in language indistinguishable from that of the Republicans and the Democratic leadership.

Jacobin's article, titled "Donald Trump Has Nothing to Show for His War With Iran," took the form of an interview with Andreas Krieg, a professor of "defense studies" at King's College London. The article states that Trump "has ended up in a weaker strategic position than when he started."

Krieg told the magazine the war had produced "tactical degradation but strategic regression." Iran, he noted, had not surrendered its enrichment program, its government had not collapsed and "its ability to close Hormuz has been proven rather than deterred." It offers neither a word of condemnation of the war itself nor any call to oppose it.

The Trump administration waged an illegal war of aggression against Iran, in violation of international law. The war opened with a series of assassinations, including Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and much of the country's military and political leadership. This act of murder and perfidy under cover of negotiations met with approval from both parties. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said at the time, "I will not shed a tear for Ali Khamenei," while Jeffries called Iran "a bad actor" that "must be aggressively confronted."

Throughout the war, the Democrats sought to stifle broad popular opposition to it through a series of meaningless procedural votes, intended to fail. In the massive demonstrations of millions of people under the banner of "No Kings," Democratic Party organizers worked to deliberately exclude any reference to the war.

But now that the war has failed to achieve Trump's objectives, the Democrats have found their voice, condemning his "capitulation" to Iran. This is the same party that spent the last year and a half presenting Trump as a colossus whose social and economic

policies could not be opposed because he had a “mandate” from the electorate.

In reality, the Democrats, who speak for the same ruling class as Trump, agree with broad sections of Trump’s domestic agenda. Whatever their rhetoric, they believe, together with Trump, that fundamental social programs must be slashed to fund the expansion of the military and the enrichment of the financial oligarchy.

It is in defense of the interests of American imperialism that they are intractable. During his first term, the Democrats chose to impeach Trump not over his assault on democratic rights, but, in 2019, for his insufficient commitment to war with Russia and his withholding of military aid to Ukraine.

Trump’s deal has settled nothing. It is a temporary retreat, and the war could erupt again at any moment. The logic of the Democrats’ position is that were Trump to resume bombing Iran, they would support it.

The Democratic response to the agreement makes clear that their claim to represent any sort of “progressive” opposition to the fascist Trump is a lie. They are ferocious defenders of American imperialism, and should they come to power, there would be no fundamental change in foreign policy.

A world separates the working class from these parties. From the first day of the war, the *World Socialist Web Site*, the organ of the International Committee of the Fourth International, defined the war by its social character, calling it “a criminal war of aggression by an imperialist power against an oppressed former colony, aimed at plundering its oil wealth and establishing control of the Persian Gulf.” The Socialist Equality Party declared in a statement that it “condemns this war unconditionally and calls on the working class of every country to oppose it,” insisting that “the main enemy is at home” and that American workers “have no interest in a war against the people of Iran.”

The war against Iran is the product of the crisis of American imperialism, which sees no escape from its impasse except war. Every American war since 1991—against Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and now Iran—has ended in failure, and each defeat has prepared the ground for the next. There is every reason to believe that the debacle in Iran, which has only deepened that crisis, will propel new wars.

But the war has also detonated a social crisis at home. It drove inflation to 4.2 percent in May, the highest in three years, gutting real wages and setting off a rebellion across American industry. Thousands of auto parts workers at Nexteer, Dana and Bridgewater have rejected one concession contract after another—the Dana local in Paris, Tennessee, voting one down by 288 to one—while 1,000 American Axle workers walked out on June 1 in their first strike in 18 years, 1,700 railroad workers across 11 states tore up a nine-year contract and nurses from Boston to Chicago voted to strike.

The movement is not confined to the United States. In Spain, 78,000 teachers in Valencia walked out this spring; Italy and Portugal have each been stopped by a nationwide general strike.

It is this growing eruption of social struggle, centered in the working class that has been made to pay for the war, that is the means to oppose the global offensive of American imperialism. The development of this movement requires a break with both capitalist parties and the building of the Socialist Equality Party, the United States section of the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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