

Following primary victory, Abdul El-Sayed backs US-NATO war against Russia

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9 August 2026

Less than a week after winning Michigan's Democratic Senate primary as an opponent of the Gaza genocide and the party establishment, Abdul El-Sayed used a series of Sunday television appearances to affirm his support for capitalism, the US-NATO war against Russia and the Democratic Party's imperialist program.

El-Sayed narrowly defeated Rep. Haley Stevens, a self-described "Zionist Democrat," in the August 4 primary. He won 48.5 percent of the vote to Stevens' 47.5 percent, a margin of fewer than 15,000 votes. Nearly 1.53 million ballots were cast, the largest turnout for a Michigan Senate or gubernatorial primary and nearly every presidential primary in the state since at least 1978.

The result expressed, in a distorted form, a broad movement to the left among workers and young people. Many voted for El-Sayed because of his stated opposition to the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza and his support for Medicare for All. His campaign was backed by the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), Sen. Bernie Sanders and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

El-Sayed prevailed despite being outspent by roughly 9 dollars to his 1. More than \$60 million in outside spending benefited Stevens, including some \$30 million from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and its affiliated super PAC.

Within days, however, El-Sayed moved to reassure the Democratic establishment and the ruling class that his "progressive" campaign posed no threat to US imperialism.

Appearing Sunday on NBC's *Meet the Press*, El-Sayed emphasized his agreement with Stevens. "I will tell you this, that all of us agree, our differences are far smaller than what we agree on." His victory, he said, provided an "opportunity for us to come together, to

mend fences, to build together the coalition that is going to defeat Mike Rogers in November and defeat Trumpism over the next two years."

Stevens had already embraced El-Sayed at a Michigan Democratic Party "unity breakfast" on Thursday. She posted a photograph of the two hugging beneath the words "One team Michigan," writing, "Now, it's time to come together to make sure we beat Mike Rogers and keep Michigan blue. Let's go win!"

The basis of this unity is the defense of American capitalism and its predatory interests around the world.

Asked about US military funding for Israel, El-Sayed said he currently opposed it but outlined conditions under which he would support it. "If we were in a scenario where there were equal rights to peace, dignity, and self-determination for the Palestinian people and Jewish Israeli people and they had come together to achieve that ultimate peace, and there were circumstances in which that was guaranteed, there would be a very, very different circumstance," he said.

Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy immediately interpreted the statement as an opening. "I think what you heard him say is that he will support funding to Israel, so long as Israel is on a path to live side by side with a Palestinian state."

El-Sayed then reiterated his support for the US-NATO proxy war against Russia in Ukraine. "When we're talking about taking on Putin and his violation of international law, I do believe we have a responsibility to uphold international law and, therefore, to support Ukraine in its efforts."

The invocation of "international law" is a fraud. Washington has spent decades invading, bombing and destabilizing countries from Iraq and Afghanistan to Libya, Syria and Yemen. The war in Ukraine was provoked by the relentless eastward expansion of

NATO and is being used by US and European imperialism to weaken and ultimately dismember Russia, regardless of the cost in Ukrainian and Russian lives.

El-Sayed coupled his support for imperialist war with a strident defense of the profit system. Asked where he differed with Sanders, he replied immediately, “Capitalism.”

“I’m a scientist and I believe in good, thoughtful, evidence-based solutions to problems,” El-Sayed said. “When it comes to the question of capitalism, allocating capital based on supply and demand at the level at which it’s supposed to work, where you have free entry and exit into markets, you know, I support that idea.”

He claimed that the United States does not live under capitalism but “corporatism,” because corporations use their wealth to buy politicians and secure favorable government policy. This absurd distinction presents monopoly, political corruption and social inequality as distortions of capitalism rather than the inevitable products of private ownership and the accumulation of profit.

El-Sayed also touted a post-primary phone call from Barack Obama, describing it as “a really warm and inspiring conversation.” He praised Obama for serving “with a level of class, a level of elegance that we can only pine for now.”

Obama’s supposed “elegance” covered over eight years of war and state violence. His administration expanded drone assassinations, orchestrated the CIA’s Operation Timber Sycamore to arm Islamist militias in Syria and provided billions of dollars in weapons to Israel as it repeatedly bombed Gaza. It backed the Egyptian military as it crushed the revolutionary movement that overthrew Hosni Mubarak and consolidated the dictatorship of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

El-Sayed also boasted during the primary that he had endorsed Kamala Harris in 2024. As vice president, Harris defended and enabled the Gaza genocide while the Biden administration supplied Israel with weapons and diplomatic protection. Her support, Obama’s advice and Stevens’ embrace expose the actual class and political content of the Democrats’ post-primary “unity.”

Ocasio-Cortez supplied the other side of this process Sunday on ABC’s *This Week*. She hailed El-Sayed’s

victory as part of “a time of renewal for the Democratic Party” and declared that the party was “unifying.”

Asked whether she remained a member of the DSA, Ocasio-Cortez said she belonged only to its New York City chapter, not the national organization. Host Jonathan Karl then listed several planks of the DSA’s national program, including defunding the Pentagon, closing overseas military bases, abolishing the police and prison system, granting amnesty to all immigrants, abolishing the Senate and placing the largest corporations and essential industries under public ownership.

“Are those positions you support?” Karl asked.

“No,” Ocasio-Cortez replied, before adding, “but I think that this is a free country.”

Her repudiation of the DSA platform and El-Sayed’s embrace of capitalism and imperialist war are not aberrations. They express the function of the DSA and the broader “progressive” wing of the Democratic Party. Their role is to capture the leftward movement of workers and young people, divert it into the Democratic Party and subordinate opposition to genocide, inequality and dictatorship to the electoral needs of a capitalist party of war.

The rapid exposure of El-Sayed’s “peace” campaign confirms that the Democratic Party cannot be pushed to the left. Workers and young people must break with the Democrats and build an independent socialist party of the working class, based on the international struggle against capitalism and imperialist war.



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