

US political establishment rallies behind Trump

By Patrick Martin
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Only hours after Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton called Republican candidate Donald Trump to concede the November 8 election, the political establishment of both corporate-controlled parties has embraced Trump as president-elect and buried any criticism of his fascistic appeals.

Clinton spelled out her capitulation in a speech Wednesday morning in which she said nothing about the deep economic distress that was the foundation of Trump's victory. Although acknowledging "our nation is more deeply divided than we thought," she was silent on the most fundamental division, the yawning economic gulf between the super-rich and the vast majority of working people.

"Donald Trump is going to be our president," she said. "We owe him an open mind and the chance to lead." She made no reference to where Trump threatens to "lead" America, with his incessant attacks on Muslims, immigrants and other minorities, his bullying towards other countries, and his manifest authoritarianism and contempt for democratic rights.

Clinton also said nothing about the fact that Trump actually lost the popular vote, where he continued to trail by about a quarter million votes, with most uncounted ballots in states like California, Colorado and Maryland, which voted for the Democrat.

President Obama appeared before the press an hour after Clinton, noting his planned meeting with his successor on Thursday, and declaring, "We are now all rooting for his success in uniting, and leading, this country."

"Everybody is sad when their side loses an election," Obama said. "But the day after, we have to remember that we're actually all on one team. This is an intramural scrimmage. We're not Democrats first, we're not Republicans first. We are Americans first.

We're patriots first."

This is more than just political boilerplate. It amounts to an admission that for all the vitriolic exchanges and mutual mudslinging of the bourgeois election campaign, the two parties of big business are "actually all on one team." They both defend the property, profits and strategic world position of corporate America, at the expense of the working class at home and abroad.

Two days before Obama appeared on the steps of the White House to salute the president-elect, he was denouncing Trump as a menace to the republic, a threat to democratic rights, someone who was "temperamentally unfit to be commander in chief" and would be a danger to mankind if put in charge of the US nuclear arsenal.

Now he declares, "We all want what's best for this country. That's what I heard in Mr. Trump's remarks last night. That's what I heard when I spoke to him directly. And I was heartened by that."

Obama likewise made no mention of Clinton's victory in the popular vote, or suggested that Trump should be cautious about wielding his alleged "mandate" because a majority of those who went to the polls voted against him.

For his part, Trump showed that his own denunciations of "crooked Hillary" were just as cynical as Obama's attacks on him. Announcing Clinton's concession phone call to his supporters at 3:30 a.m. Wednesday, he declared, "Hillary has worked very long and very hard over a long period of time and we owe her a major debt of gratitude for her service to our country." Only a few hours before, his supporters were chanting "lock her up" as they watched the election returns on a giant screen at the closing rally of the campaign.

House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, who had distanced himself from Trump during much of the campaign, praised the victorious candidate at a news conference Wednesday morning. “Donald Trump will lead a unified Republican government,” Ryan said.

The corporate-controlled media obediently plays its assigned role in the transition from the Obama to Trump, painting the president-elect in bright colors and covering up his racist and authoritarian tirades and threats against democratic rights.

The actual tally of the vote and available data from exit surveys demonstrates the widespread hostility to both presidential candidates.

Remarkably, 60 percent of voters had an unfavorable opinion of Trump, including 20 percent of those who voted for him, while 23 percent of Trump voters described him as unqualified and 29 percent said he was not honest and trustworthy. Clinton was seen as both more qualified and more dishonest, and viewed unfavorably by 54 percent of voters.

These figures demonstrate the dead end of the corporate-controlled two-party system, which gave voters the “choice” of the two most unpopular figures ever to run as candidates of the two major parties.

Trump will come to Washington in partnership with a Congress that is near-universally reviled, with only 9 percent of those voting having a favorable opinion of the institution. Nonetheless, within the confines of the two-party system, nearly every incumbent senator and representative won reelection on November 8.

While Democrats had expected to regain control of the Senate, where 24 Republican-held seats and only 10 Democratic seats were at stake, they fell far short. The Democrats gained only two seats in the Senate, leaving the Republican Party with a narrow 51-48 edge, pending a December runoff in Louisiana where the Republican candidate is heavily favored. Clinton proved a drag on “down-ballot” Democratic candidates, as not a single Democratic Senate hopeful won in a state carried by Trump.

Democratic challengers Tammy Duckworth in Illinois and Maggie Hassan in New Hampshire defeated incumbent Republicans, although Hassan’s margin of victory was barely 700 votes and is likely to be subject to recount. Two prominent former senators, Russ Feingold in Wisconsin and Evan Bayh in Indiana, lost their bids to return to office, and other Democratic

challengers lost close races in Pennsylvania, Missouri and North Carolina.

Democrat Catherine Cortez Masto won the Nevada seat vacated by retiring Democratic leader Harry Reid. Clinton narrowly defeated Trump in Nevada, and the Democrats took two Republican-held House seats, their only significant statewide sweep.

In the House of Representatives, Democrats gained seven seats, barely denting the massive Republican majority. Besides the two in Nevada, they gained House seats in New Hampshire, New Jersey, Illinois, Virginia, and three seats in Florida, but they lost two open seats in Florida. Several contests remain undecided in California, where ballots postmarked Election Day are still to be counted, but Democrats already control most of the 53 seats in the most populous US state.

In one high-profile race, liberal Democrat Zephyr Teachout, the most prominent Bernie Sanders supporter seeking an open House seat, lost her race in a Hudson Valley district in New York.

Of the 11 gubernatorial contests, Democrats won six, a net loss of one statehouse, ousting incumbent North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory, but losing governorships in both Vermont and New Hampshire. Republicans control 33 statehouses compared to only 17 for the Democrats.

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