The palace coup impeachment

12 December 2019

On Tuesday, congressional Democrats published two articles of impeachment against US President Donald Trump, centering on claims that the president “compromised the national security of the United States.”

The fascist in the White House is being impeached not for ripping thousands of immigrant children from the hands of their parents, persecuting political dissidents Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning, or presiding over a global apparatus of extrajudicial murder. Rather, the impeachment is over Trump’s failure to pursue with sufficient vigor the conflict with Russia.

The document argues that the American president “betrayed the Nation” by delaying “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.”

This process is the first time—with the possible exception of the dark and murky events surrounding the assassination of John F. Kennedy—that the CIA and associated intelligence agencies have sought to remove a sitting president.

The impeachment drive and the anti-Russia campaign that predated it have involved an enormous intervention by the CIA and FBI in domestic politics. The impeachment inquiry was itself triggered by a CIA agent working at the White House, while a recently-released report shows that the FBI justified a wiretap of a former Trump aide by citing a Ukraine policy change in the Republican Party’s platform.

The antidemocratic impulses behind the impeachment drive were summed by the comments of the arch-warmonger Thomas Friedman, who wrote in the New York Times yesterday, “Generally speaking, I believe presidents should be elected and removed by the voters at the polls. But when I hear Trump defenders scream, ‘Impeachment subverts the will of the people,’ I say: ‘Really? What the hell do you think Trump was doing in Ukraine?’ He was subverting the will of the people by scheming to use our tax dollars to knock out his most feared opponent in the coming election—rather than trusting voters to do that.”

Friedman’s real complaint is not that Trump was subverting “the will of the people,” but that he was subverting what dominant factions of the intelligence agencies consider the geostrategic imperatives of the American ruling class.

For all the Democrats’ talk of “corruption,” “obstruction of justice,” “bribery,” and an “organized crime shakedown,” the real reasons for the impeachment stand starkly revealed as differences over how best to conduct the predatory policies of American imperialism.

Both the Trump presidency and the impeachment campaign of the Democrats are different manifestations of the deep and intractable crisis of American democracy. Trump has threatened to turn the impeachment struggle into a “civil war,” implying that he could appeal to his armed far-right supporters to defend him against what he has called a “deep-state coup.”

The Democrats’ campaign against “foreign meddling” that framed the impeachment drive has provided the framework for imposing domestic censorship measures, with the intelligence agencies and representatives of both parties recruiting Google, Facebook and Twitter to demote and delete left-wing, anti-war and socialist publications, pages, and groups.

But even as Trump and his Democratic opponents frantically denounce one another as traitors and demand each other’s prosecution, there has at the same time emerged a remarkable bipartisan unity on fundamental issues facing US imperialism.

This was made perfectly clear this week with the rapid-fire announcement by congressional Democrats of agreements on two landmark pieces of legislation:
The USMCA anti-China trade deal and the passage of the biggest military budget in US history.

The military budget, passed overwhelmingly by the House of Representatives yesterday, establishes a new branch of the US armed forces, the Space Force, while levelling sanctions against Russia, China, Turkey and North Korea.

“Wow! All of our priorities have made it into the final NDAA,” Trump gloated, noting in particular the removal of language preventing Pentagon funds being used for his immigration crackdown. Amid soaring social inequality, all factions of the American ruling elite are dedicated to war at abroad and attacks on democratic rights at home.

The political crisis in Washington is framed by the global eruption of the class struggle and the deepening crisis of US imperialism.

The past six months have seen an unprecedented eruption of the class struggle all over the world. Mass protests against inequality have broken out from Chile, to Puerto Rico, to Lebanon and Iraq. Autoworkers have gone on strike in Mexico and the United States, while much of the Paris Metro remains shut down amid a strike wave throughout France. A recent issue of *Time* magazine, entitled “How America’s Elites Lost Their Grip,” notes with concern the growing audience for socialism throughout the country.

Just as important is the series of setbacks for US imperialism’s efforts, in the wake of the dissolution of the USSR, to preserve its global hegemony through military violence.

In 2003, when the US invaded Iraq, the *World Socialist Web Site* noted, “Whatever the outcome of the initial stages of the conflict that has begun, American imperialism has a rendezvous with disaster. It cannot conquer the world. It cannot reimpose colonial shackles upon the masses of the Middle East. It will not find through the medium of war a viable solution to its internal maladies. Rather, the unforeseen difficulties and mounting resistance engendered by war will intensify all of the internal contradictions of American society.”

More than fifteen years later, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are universally seen as debacles. The US-backed regime change operations in Syria and Libya have produced nothing but bloodbaths. And the 2014 US-backed coup on Ukraine, which started as an effort to bring Ukraine into NATO, has not succeeded in its fundamental aims.

Within this context, *Foreign Affairs* noted that it is “not surprising” that “Ukraine is at the center of this storm.”

“Over the past quarter century,” all efforts by the United States to impose its hegemony on the “Eurasian continent have foundered on the shoals of Ukraine. For it is in Ukraine that the disconnect between triumphalist end-of-history delusions and the ongoing realities of great-power competition can be seen in its starkest form.”

But faced with this enormous series of setbacks and debacles, US imperialism is doubling down, replacing the “war on terror” with preparations for “great-power conflict.”

The intractable crises of American capitalism have generated deep conflicts within the ruling class. However, there are no democratic issues at stake in the factional conflict in Washington. Those who support the Democrats’ impeachment operation in the hope that removing Trump on these grounds can have some sort of progressive consequence are simply ignoring everything the Democrats and their CIA allies have done and said.

The fight against the Trump administration is inseparable from the struggle against the capitalist system and the war plots of both parties. It must be conducted completely independent of and in opposition to the Democratic Party.

The objective social basis for the fight against the Trump administration is the global eruption of the class struggle. The growing wave of strikes and protests by the working class, if united internationally and armed with a socialist perspective, is the means of opposing not only the Trump administration, but the capitalist system, of which it is the corrupt excrescence.

Andre Damon

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

http://www.wsws.org