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Trump White House declares it will not cooperate with impeachment inquiry

The Trump White House declared Tuesday evening that it will not cooperate with the US House of Representatives and the impeachment inquiry launched by the Democratic Party leadership. The move marks a major escalation of the political war in Washington.

A letter signed by White House Counsel Pat Cipollone claims that the inquiry is a violation of “due process” and the US Constitution. “In order to fulfill his duties to the American people, the Constitution, the Executive Branch, and all future occupants of the Office of the presidency, President Trump and his administration cannot participate in your partisan and unconstitutional inquiry under these circumstances,” it states.

The letter warns that the White House will not provide testimony or documents demanded by the congressional inquiry established to investigate Trump’s July 25 telephone discussion with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Earlier in the day, the Trump administration ordered Gordon Sondland, the US ambassador to the European Union, not to appear for a scheduled interview with the House inquiry. Following that announcement, Trump denounced the inquiry as “a totally compromised kangaroo court.”

Trump’s defiance of Congress has a distinctly dictatorial character. In essence, he is declaring that his White House recognizes no legal restraints on the power of the presidency. His extraordinary assertion of unchecked power is being accompanied by efforts to mobilize his right-wing base. On Thursday, Trump will hold a rally in front of police officers in Minneapolis, Minnesota, which he has framed as a campaign against the “far left” mayor of the city.

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Trump's defiance of Congress—which he seeks to legitimize by portraying himself as the victim of a conspiracy—is facilitated by the methods being employed by the Democrats. Their fight against Trump is devoid of any democratic or progressive content. The argument being made by the Democrats and their supporters in the media is that Trump's policies and actions have undermined the strategic interests of American imperialism. They are pitching their arguments not to the working class and youth, but to those sections of the ruling class, the military-intelligence apparatus and even sections of the Republican Party that oppose Trump's divergence from the global geopolitical priorities and agenda of Central Intelligence Agency.

The dynamic behind the impeachment campaign was revealed by the denunciations from Democratic and Republican politicians and the media of Trump's decision Monday to pull US troops out of Syria.

The *New York Times*, which speaks for the Democratic Party and the intelligence agencies, launched a bitter attack on the move. In its lead article on Tuesday, "When 'Get Out' Is a President's National Security Strategy," the *Times*' David Sanger wrote that the withdrawal shows that Trump "is once again pursuing a national security strategy at odds with the official position of his government," and which "his own senior advisors have warned would risk new chaos throughout the region."

Trump, Sanger complained, "is demonstrating that in his pursuit of ending America's 'endless wars,' no American troop presence abroad is too small to escape his desire to terminate it." He continued, "But if there is a Trump doctrine around the world after 32 months of chaotic policymaking, it may have been expressed in its purest form when the president vented on Twitter on Monday morning: 'Time for us to get out.'"

For the *Times*, it is not the endless wars in the Middle East, which have resulted in the deaths of more than one million people, that are "chaotic," but the "precipitous withdrawal" of US troops from Syria, where the military and the CIA have been engaged in a regime-change operation for the past eight years.

The conflict within the state is a conflict between two sections of the ruling elite, in which there is no progressive or democratic side. The Democrats represent sections of the military and intelligence apparatus that have lost confidence in Trump's ability to manage the affairs of the ruling class, abroad and at home. The conflicts over foreign policy are exacerbated by growing signs of a renewed economic recession.

The Democrats are determined above all to isolate their opposition to Trump from the social and political concerns that are fueling the anger of the masses.

For this reason, they are strictly limiting the impeachment inquiry to the issues relating to the Ukraine phone call. Leadership of the investigation has been turned over to the House Intelligence Committee, most closely connected with the spy agencies. There are to be no public hearings, with everything confined behind closed doors.

The operation of the Democratic Party is aimed at connecting the fight against Trump with support for the intelligence agencies and US military operations. This guarantees a reactionary outcome no matter what the result of the impeachment process.

If it succeeds, it will bring to power a government that is, if anything, even more beholden to the military and the CIA and committed to an escalation of war in the Middle East and against Russia. If it fails, it will strengthen Trump and call into question whether he can be removed at all. To the extent that opposition is channeled behind the Democrats, it will allow Trump to cloak his reactionary policies behind the absurd pretense of opposition to war and defense of democratic rights.

The working class cannot allow itself to be directed behind either faction of the ruling class. No outcome to the conflict as it presently exists can lead to anything other than war and dictatorship.

The only legitimate basis for a fight against Trump is the development of the class struggle.

In its statement published more than two years ago, “**Palace Coup or Class Struggle: The political crisis in Washington and the strategy of the working class,**” the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote that, alongside the conflict within the ruling elite, “an altogether different conflict is developing—between the ruling class and the working class, the broad mass of the population, which is suffering various forms of social distress and is completely excluded from political life... The decades-long suppression of the class struggle by the trade union bureaucracy, the Democratic Party and the affluent sponsors of various forms of identity politics is coming to an end.”

This prognosis has proven to be correct. Last year saw the eruption of teachers’ strikes in the US, in many cases independently of and in opposition to the trade unions. These walkouts were part of a wave of working class struggles internationally. Now, with the strike by nearly 50,000 GM autoworkers, the class struggle has expanded to one of the most important sections of the industrial working class.

The urgent task is to develop within the working class a revolutionary leadership, conscious that a resolution to the great issues confronting workers throughout the world—extreme social inequality; the unrelenting attack on jobs, wages and benefits; the danger of world war; the turn by the ruling class toward authoritarian forms of rule—requires a fight against the capitalist system.

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