

United States: What the Impeachment Process Shows About the Democratic Establishment's Politics

They left aside the major crimes Trump has committed against humanity worldwide

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There are two charges against Trump the Democrats in the House passed in their impeachment of the president. One is that he obstructed the impeachment investigation. The other is that he acted against the interests of the United States by withholding military aid to Ukraine in an attempt to have that country try to get dirt on Joe Biden, who is running to win the Democratic nomination for president.

Whenever capitalist politicians evoke the “national interests” of the U.S. concerning foreign policy they mean the interests of U.S. imperialism, not the interests of the majority of the population – the working and middle classes.

By focusing on the interests of U.S. imperialism, the Democratic establishment, has left aside the major crimes Trump has committed against humanity worldwide as well as the great majority of the U.S. population.

The scope of the impeachment charges in the House was controlled by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, the party establishment leader there. In the Senate, which will try Trump on these charges, the establishment is personified by Chuck Schumer, the Democratic minority leader.

Speaking about Pelosi's articles of impeachment, consumer advocate Ralph Nader said on a Democracy Now interview that they were “far too narrow and perilous.” He went on the talk about some of the impeachable offenses Trump has committed:

“He has destroyed, shredded and disabled the lifesaving injury [for workers] and disease reduction programs of the federal government – the Environment Protection Agency, the Occupation Safety and Health Administration protecting worker safety, the Product Safety Commission. He's basically closed down the Consumer Protection Bureau, protection from Wall Street and other financial crimes against ordinary people.... That is a critical impeachment offense ... the defiant refusal to faithfully execute the laws.”

He went on to list other offenses, including that Trump is a sexual predator. Remember the video of his vulgar boasting that he has the right to “grab women by the pussy” because he is rich and powerful.

“He's embroiled in all kinds of lawsuits by women who have sworn under oath that he's assaulted them and harassed them. Then you have the bigotry and racism. His policies come down very hard on minorities and the poor.

“Then you have his incitement of violence. [One example is his statement] that if he is impeached and removed, there will be riots in the streets.”

"So Pelosi has forfeited a huge opportunity not just to impeach Trump but to remove him. What's the point of impeaching him if you don't use the full arsenal of his impeachable offenses?"

Amy Goodman, who was interviewing Nader, pointed out Trump's pulling the U.S. out of the Paris climate accords.

"Well, he's done a lot worse," Nader said. "He's completely unleashed the fossil fuel industry, drilling in the Arctic, drilling in the offshore oceans. He's unleashed these massive greenhouse gasses...."

"This is a president who does not defend our country against a fossil fuel-unleashed a ravaging of nature, with massive droughts and massive floods and ocean currents beginning to change, melting glaciers and all kinds of critical assaults And that's not an impeachable offense? I mean, what's Congress up to here?"

On the same show, Congressman Al Green was also interviewed. He is an African American from Texas, who early in the Trump administration introduced articles of impeachment in the House that did contain a full range of offenses. He got scant support from other Democrats.

Green listed some of Trump's language inciting violence against Latinos, Muslims, LGBTQ people and others.

He also referred to the impeachment of president Andrew Johnson in 1868. Johnson was Abraham Lincoln's running mate, for vice president, in the 1864 presidential elections. Although he was pro-slavery, he did not support the South's war to separate from the U.S. When Lincoln was assassinated in 1865, Johnson, as vice president, became president.

As president, he backed the former slave owners in the defeated Confederacy in their racist campaign to suppress the freed slaves. He backed the infamous Black Codes to deprive them of civil liberties in those states, and opposed the 14th amendment to the Constitution which granted citizenship to the former slaves. His racist policies led him into conflict with the Radical Republicans who wanted to smash the Old South, and this led to his impeachment. He was acquitted in his trial in the Senate by one vote.

Green said, "Understanding that in 1868 Andrew Johnson was impeached for reasons rooted in bigotry, rooted in hate, rooted in racism, it was then I concluded if Andrew Johnson could be impeached ... for these reasons, this president [Trump] can be impeached for these reasons as well."

Before the rise of the Black movement in the 1950s and 1960s that challenged the Jim Crow system of segregation (apartheid in Africans) in the South, the Democratic Party solidly supported Jim Crow. In the vicissitudes of U.S. politics, the Democratic Party nationally broke with their Southern wing, and under great pressure from the Black liberation movement, both in the South and the rest of the country, passed laws in the mid-1960s backing the end of the Jim Crow system.

The Republicans moved in to capture the bulk of the white vote in the South. The Dixiecrats, as the Southern Democrats were known, became part of the new Republican Party. In all the presidential elections since, no Democratic candidate has won the majority of the white vote.

In 2016, Exit polls showed Trump won 58 percent of the white vote, which broke down to 63 percent among white men, and 53 percent of white women (approximately, polls have inadequacies).

Trump's open and virulent white racism makes him a white supremacist. That doesn't mean he is a member of one of the small fascist-minded white nationalist groups, but it does mean he gives them

cover. The result has been violent mass murders conducted by white nationalists against Blacks, Latinos, Muslims, Jews and others. The ideology of these groups also embraces misogyny, and attacks on women.

The refusal of the Democratic establishment to impeach Trump on his racism alone reflects their politics – as does their refusal to impeach him on the other issues Nader lists.

As the Republicans have moved to the far right, the establishment Democrats have also moved right in their wake, just not as far. This explains their refusal to take on Trump's policies head on and forcefully.

Another indication of their policies was that while the impeachment process was unfolding, they met in secret with the Republicans to come up with a common budget, which passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. Without going into all the ways this budget makes concessions to Trump, which are just becoming known, we do know that there was overwhelming bipartisan support to the military budget.

The spending on the military for the year is \$738 billion, a record amount, and \$22 billion greater than last year's. It sets up a new branch of the armed forces, a "Space Force." It includes more spending on nuclear weapons, to improve them, which sets off a new nuclear arms race.

The Democratic establishment, in the secret negotiations, also rejected some proposals by Congress people on the left flank of the party. One of these was a proposal to prohibit Trump from using any funds to launch an unauthorized war against Iran – which takes on new meaning with Trump's assassination of Iran's Major General, Qassim Suleiman that threatens a new war.

Another proposal that the Democratic establishment rejected would have prohibited U.S. military support for the Saudi Arabia-led war in Yemen. Another would have banned the sale of ground-to-air munitions to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The Democratic establishment's agreeing to this grotesque \$738 billion giveaway to the military underscores that the Democratic Party is just as much an imperialist party as the Republicans, and reveals its priorities, given the deteriorating economic situation of the lower half (at least) of the population.

To round out the picture, Democratic establishment spokespeople while expressing nervousness about a war with Iran, have approved of the assassination of Suleiman, in spite of it being a violation of international laws of war, a violation of Iraq's sovereignty, a violation of the U.S. Constitution as there has been no declaration of war against Iran – all of which are impeachable crimes. Trump's tweets go further, threatening Iran with all out destruction and mass killing of its people without Congressional approval, and destruction of its cultural sites – another violation of international law.

We'll see what the Democrats do as this new crisis unfolds. But don't expect the best.

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