

# Elections 2016: Continuity of US Imperial Militarism Under the Two Party System

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*Extension of Iran sanctions, contact with Taiwan and the Trump appointments of Flynn and Mattis signals more war and genocide*

Three important decisions by the political wing of the United States capitalist system reveals that the drive towards “permanent imperialist war” will continue under the administration of President-elect Donald Trump.

These decisions are the unanimous vote by the U.S. Senate during a lame-duck session to allow the extension of sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran by at least another decade or more.

In addition, the nominations by Trump of two military hawks, Retired Generals Michael T. Flynn and James “Mad Dog” Mattis, whose views on military matters suggests the maintenance and even widening of interventions and occupations against the peoples of the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Latin American and other geo-political regions.

Also a telephone conversation between the President-elect and the President of Taiwan Tsai Ing-wen was a calculated attempt to provoke the People’s Republic of China (PRC) which does not officially recognize the island of Formosa as an independent state. The U.S. has maintained diplomatic relations with the PRC since January 1979 leading up to the visit of Deng Xiaoping, the-then paramount leader of the Chinese Communist Party and the government.

## **Iran Nuclear Deal Endangered by Outgoing and Incoming Administrations**

With specific reference to the U.S.-Iranian relations, the nuclear deal which was signed in July 2015 was supposedly designed to change the level of dialogue and cooperation between the Islamic Republic and western states in both Europe and North America. The apparent violation of the spirit and letter of the agreement will only serve to deepen mistrust and renew a heightened degree of strained relations.

Officially labeled The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is an international agreement on the use of nuclear technology by Iran reached in Vienna on July 14, 2015 between Tehran, the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council—China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States—plus Germany), and the European Union (EU). The agreement was considered an historic accomplishment in attempts to repair the broken relations between Washington and Tehran spawned by the Iranian Revolution of 1979 which overthrew the regime of the Shah who had been utilized and propped-up by successive American governments since the 1953 coup against former

secular nationalist Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddegh.

Under the JCPOA deal, Iran agreed to dispose of its stockpile of medium-enriched uranium, to reduce the stored low-enriched uranium by 98 percent, and to curtail by approximately two-thirds the number of its gas centrifuges for 13 years. Concomitantly over the following 15 years, Iran would only enrich uranium up to 3.67 percent.

Under the arrangements Iran agreed not to construct heavy-water facilities for the designated time period. Uranium-enrichment would be limited to one facility using first-generation centrifuges for a decade. Other facilities are scheduled to be converted to avoid proliferation risks. Monitoring and verification of compliance is to be conducted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This ostensible independent agency, IAEA, which reports directly to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and General Assembly (UNGA) has access to all Iranian nuclear facilities under the deal. Consequently in return for verification of these commitments, the Iranian government would receive relief from U.S., EU, and UNSC nuclear-related economic sanctions.

The vote by the U.S. Senate on December 1 extending the ability of any president to maintain sanctions for another ten years has enflamed many within Iran. The New York Times in reporting of this 99-0 vote said: "While the Obama administration said the vote would not change anything, the extension of the sanctions authorization will give President-elect Donald J. Trump an easy opportunity to shatter the accord if he wishes. Vice President-elect Mike Pence said during the campaign that the deal would be ripped up, though Mr. Trump, in interviews with The New York Times earlier this year, suggested that he would try to renegotiate the terms, not destroy it." (Dec. 1)

### **Trump's Nominees for National Security Advisor and Pentagon Chief are Staunch Militarists**

Retired Lieutenant- General Michael T. Flynn who has been nominated by Trump as White House National Security Advisor condemned the Iran deal in an interview after its signing. Although the deal was never ratified by the U.S. Congress, it went into effect through executive decisions by President Barack Obama, who hailed the agreement as a success.

Flynn stated in a discussion with his former colleague Jason Criss Howk that: "the U.S. and others were too anxious to get any deal. We gave up all our leverage. We had poor assumptions about what we would get and we were too ambitious to be successful. We got beat by a nation of expert negotiators who got everything they wanted and needed from the deal for only making promises of allowing future observations. People should read the deal; it's only an hour and a half read. It's poorly written and it's striking how poorly constructed it is — it feels like a high school paper. A large portion of it is the annex that releases pressure from a long list of state sponsors of terrorism, narcotics cartels, and illegal market owners. We are letting off some very ruthless people. Bottom line, it takes all restraints off of Iran to do as it pleases in the region and around the world." (Observer.com, Sept. 24, 2015)

Flynn co-authored a book with ultra-conservative foreign policy writer Michael Ledeen entitled "The Field of Fight: How We Can Win the War Against Radical Islam and Its Allies", published in July, where they advance a theory of an alliance of evil enemy nations and organizations extending from purportedly designated "terrorist" to leading nations. A review in the Washington Post on November 22 says: "That alliance is where Russia comes in.

Though Flynn has taken heat for traveling to Moscow last year and sitting beside Putin at a gala for the Kremlin-run news network RT, in 'The Field of Fight' he assails Russia and its autocratic ruler. Flynn brands Iran and Russia as leaders of an enemy alliance of nations, in league with anti-American forces, crime networks and terrorist groups. 'The Russians and Iranians have more in common than a shared enemy,' he writes. 'There is also a shared contempt for democracy and an agreement — by all the members of the enemy alliance — that dictatorship is a superior way to run a country, an empire, or a caliphate.' (For the record, other alliance members include North Korea, China, Syria, Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua and even Bolivia.)"

Yet another equally as hawkish Retired General James "Mad Dog" Mattis, who has been nominated as Secretary of Defense, is widely known for his open advocacy of military aggressiveness against those targeted as enemies by Washington. Mattis led expeditionary missions in both Iraq and Afghanistan where U.S. wars have raged for well over a decade resulting in the deaths and displacement of millions.

General Mattis famous quotations include: "Be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everybody you meet." He is also noted for saying that: "There are some people who think you have to hate them in order to shoot them. I don't think you do. It's just business..... There is nothing better than getting shot at and missed. It's really great." (CBS News, Dec. 2)

### **Response of China to the Taiwan Gesture and Other Acts of Hostility**

The government in Beijing has quickly challenged the apparent maintenance of hostilities towards its interests in the Asia-Pacific region. In recent weeks even prior to the phone conversation with the Taiwanese leader, Chinese fighter jets reportedly flew around Formosa on November 25 in what was said to have been a training mission. (NBC News, Dec. 6)

In a Xinhua news agency article written by Chin Shilei Washington is warned that: "U.S. strategy on the Asia-Pacific under whichever administration should not be contemplated to the detriment of the interests of other countries, and any miscalculation thereof could lead to regional instability. U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter, who is scheduled to step down in January, started Monday (Dec. 5) a tour in Asia that takes him to Japan and India. The tour, which seems to reassure America's Asia allies amid anxieties caused by Donald Trump's election, also brings a big question mark over the Trump administration's future policies on the Asia-Pacific. During U.S. President Barack Obama's nearly-eight-year tenure, Washington has shifted its foreign policy focus from the Mideast war quagmire to the Asia-Pacific, which many believe is aimed at containing a rising China." (Dec. 6)

The government in Beijing has filed a formal complaint with the U.S. emphasizing that a "one China" policy is the foundation of bilateral relations with Washington. In a statement Beijing's Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said: "We have noticed relevant reports and lodged solemn representation with the relevant side in the United States. I must point out that there is only one China in the world and Taiwan is an inseparable part of the Chinese territory ... The 'one China' principle is the political foundation of China-US relations. We urge the relevant side in the U.S. to adhere to the 'one China' policy, abide by the pledges in the three joint China-U.S. communiqués, and handle issues related to Taiwan carefully and properly to avoid causing unnecessary interference to the overall China-U.S. relationship."

These developments related to the soon to be departed Obama administration and the assumption of power by Trump on January 20 maintains the current international situation where war and hostile diplomacy by Washington directed against leading states and geopolitical regions will continue to characterizes the nature of modern day imperialism. Until U.S. militarism is reversed there can be no prospects for sustainable peace and security throughout the world.

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