

Harris's concluding speech at DNC embraces agenda of global war

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The four days of the Democratic National Convention culminated Thursday with the acceptance speech by Vice President Kamala Harris as the Democratic Party's candidate for president.

As a whole, the convention consisted of an endless series of inane speeches, hosannahs to Harris that completely falsified her right-wing career as a prosecutor, declarations from billionaires that Harris would be a “president of joy” and constant invocations of the “historic” character of elevating a (multi-millionaire) African American and Asian American woman to the presidency.

The Democrats sought to substitute entertainment for policy, with a series of Hollywood and pop music celebrities embracing Harris. However, the real content of the policies they propose came through in the candidate's closing speech: an agenda of escalating global war.

Harris declared, “As commander-in-chief, I will ensure America always has the strongest, most lethal fighting force in the world.” As for whom this force will be fighting, Harris left little doubt, going on to refer to China, Russia, North Korea and Iran, the same countries that the Biden-Harris administration has targeted in a new document outlining American strategy for a future nuclear world war.

As in any major address by an American capitalist politician, Harris's acceptance speech was directed to two audiences. For Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus, the real base of the Democratic Party, Harris pledged to continue the militaristic foreign policy of the Biden administration to defend the global interests of the American financial aristocracy.

She was a safe pair of hands, she proclaimed, unlike the unreliable and self-interested Trump—a theme sounded on the convention's final day by a range of

right-wing speakers, from former Defense Secretary and CIA Director Leon Panetta, to a string of Republicans who are now endorsing Harris, to a trio of military-intelligence officials now holding seats as Democrats in the House of Representatives.

While Harris's brief reference to the suffering of the Palestinian population of Gaza was highlighted in media accounts—and will undoubtedly be hailed as a significant shift by the pseudo-left apologists for the Democratic Party—this came after she flatly reiterated an uncompromising pledge to provide unlimited US military aid to Israel: “I will always stand up for Israel's right to defend itself, and I will always ensure Israel has the ability to defend itself.”

In other words, more bombs and missiles to kill tens of thousands more in Gaza and potentially in the West Bank, Lebanon, Yemen, Iran and other countries in the region targeted by imperialism.

For the broader public, Harris made a series of demagogic promises about improving their living standards, strengthening the social safety net and defending democratic rights, like the right to abortion.

But it is impossible to combine the massive expenditure required by world war with the maintenance of social programs like Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps and Head Start. Sixty years ago, Democratic President Lyndon Johnson sought to combine “guns and butter” during the war in Vietnam, only to fall with a crash. A President Kamala Harris will not even try. Her promises of social improvement are cynical election rhetoric to be discarded on November 6, if not earlier.

Harris denounced Donald Trump as a threat to democracy and a criminal, but she made no mention of his high-level accomplices in the Republican Party or within the national security apparatus itself. She did not

refer to the remarks made by President Joe Biden, in his address Monday to the convention, warning that Trump would not accept the results of an election were he to lose on November 5. And she did not so much as hint at what the Biden-Harris administration would do in the event that Trump and the Republicans seek to hijack the elections, either through legal maneuvers inviting the intervention of an ultra-right Supreme Court or through direct incitement of political violence.

Instead, Trump was presented as nothing more than a bad individual, as Harris posed the question: “How he would use the immense powers of the presidency of the United States. Not to improve your life. Not to strengthen our national security. But to serve the only client he has ever had: Himself.”

Socialist Equality Party presidential candidate Joseph Kishore pointed out the connection between Harris’s militarist diatribe and her pleas for bipartisan unity to “move past the bitterness, cynicism, and divisive battles of the past. Not as members of any one party or faction, but as Americans.”

Kishore wrote: “Under conditions in which Trump and the Republican Party are plotting dictatorship, the appeal from Harris and the Democrats is for unity within the ruling class in defense of its common class interests, above all, the prosecution of war abroad, which requires an escalation of the war on the working class at home.”

Throughout the speech, Harris was at pains to use right-wing language that would reassure and appeal to sections of the Republican Party establishment. The crowd responded in kind, breaking out in chants of “USA, USA” whenever Harris paused for breath.

As a *Washington Post* columnist noted, “In many ways, it was a speech a Republican of years gone by could have delivered: heavy on crime-fighting, securing the border, promising an ‘opportunity society,’ keeping America’s military the ‘most lethal’ in the world and standing up to dictators, such as Russian President Vladimir Putin.”

Harris’s speech refuted all the lies peddled by the pseudo-left apologists for the Democratic Party, including Democratic Socialists of America member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who spoke at the convention, that a Harris administration would mark a turn to the left.

This is what gives Trump his opportunity to exploit

real social grievances and the deterioration of conditions of life for the majority of working people. He provides a scapegoat for these conditions—which are a product of the crisis of capitalism—through his racist demonization of immigrants. At the same time, his “solution” to the crisis, the use of police state violence on a massive scale, to round up and deport tens of millions of migrant workers and their families, represents a deadly danger to the democratic rights of the working class as a whole.

After the fascistic spectacle of last month’s Republican National Convention, Harris’s speech closing the Democratic National Convention spelled out the stark alternatives being offered to the American people by the corporate-controlled two-party system.

The Republicans under Donald Trump have developed into a fascistic party, committed to arresting and deporting tens of millions of immigrants while blaming them for the capitalist crisis. The Democratic Party would install a war-mad Harris administration to escalate the war against Russia in Ukraine, join with Israel in seeking to provoke war with Iran, and continue the massive military build-up against China in the Indo-Pacific. The differences are relative. Both parties represent the corporate and financial oligarchy that controls the entire political system.

The central issue in the 2024 election is the utter bankruptcy of the capitalist two-party system and the urgent need for the working class to advance an independent, socialist alternative to the corporate-controlled political parties.



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