

New York Times op-ed by anonymous Trump official gives implicit support for palace coup

By Eric London
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On Wednesday afternoon, the *New York Times* took the unprecedented step of publishing an anonymous opinion piece by a “senior official” within the Trump administration titled “I Am Part of the Resistance Inside the Trump Administration.”

In the op-ed, the unnamed official, who by definition is either a cabinet member or a leading aide to Trump, acknowledges a previously unknown level of palace intrigue aimed ultimately at removing Trump from office.

The author notes that “many of the senior officials in [Trump’s] own administration are working diligently from within to frustrate parts of his agenda and his worst inclinations.” He or she admits that cabinet members have discussed plotting to remove Trump without initiating the congressional impeachment process.

“Given the instability many witnessed,” the op-ed reads, “there were early whispers within the cabinet of invoking the 25th Amendment, which would start a complex process for removing the president. But no one wanted to precipitate a constitutional crisis. So we will do what we can to steer the administration in the right direction until—one way or another—it’s over.”

This last phrase—“one way or another”—is a green light for Trump’s ouster from within the White House itself.

The machinations of high-level government officials, acting with the support of substantial sections of the corporate and military-intelligence apparatus, have nothing to do with the hostility that broad masses of working people harbor against the Trump administration for its wars and its attacks on social programs, immigrants and democratic rights.

The op-ed explicitly states the right-wing character of the ruling class “resistance” to Trump: “To be clear,” it

explains, “ours is not the popular ‘resistance’ of the left. We want the administration to succeed and think that many of its policies have already made America safer and more prosperous.”

The senior official references Trump’s corporate tax cuts, its policies of corporate deregulation, and its massive military expenditures as examples of the “bright spots” of the administration.

No reference is made in the op-ed to the administration’s forced separation of thousands of immigrant parents from their children, of its support for the Saudi dictatorship and its criminal war in Yemen, or of Trump’s appointment of far-right judges to staff the federal courts. Instead, it appeals for a more aggressive foreign policy aimed against Washington’s two chief global competitors, Russia and China, the latter through its North Korean ally.

“Take foreign policy,” the op-ed states. “In public and in private, President Trump shows a preference for autocrats and dictators, such as President Vladimir Putin of Russia and North Korea’s leader, Kim Jong-un, and displays little genuine appreciation for the ties that bind us to allied, like-minded nations.”

The opinion piece concludes by calling for “all Americans” to heed the words of the late Senator John McCain, whom the author calls “a lodestar for restoring honor to public life and our national dialogue.” The commentary adds, “Mr. Trump may fear such honorable men, but we should revere them.”

The op-ed is the latest in a coordinated series of events in recent days dating from John McCain’s death on August 25, which was followed by a week-long official mourning period featuring eulogies by war-mongers and corporate hacks from the Democratic and Republican parties.

Before the flags could be raised back to full-mast, the

corporate media began publishing revelations from a forthcoming book by *Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward detailing how leading Trump officials have been waging a civil war within the White House to control the conduct of the administration.

Among the revelations included in Woodward's book are claims that Defense Secretary James Mattis referred to Trump as a "5th or 6th grader" on questions of foreign policy, and that Chief of Staff John Kelly referred to Trump as an "idiot." Woodward writes that the former director of the National Economic Council, Gary Cohn, would remove documents from Trump's desk to prevent him from enacting trade restrictions against Mexico, Canada and South Korea.

"I stole it off his desk," Cohn apparently told a White House staffer. "I wouldn't let him see it. He's never going to see that document. Got to protect the country."

Trump reportedly also called Attorney General Jeff Sessions "mentally retarded" and a "dumb southerner."

Though these revelations are striking for what they reveal about the depth of the crisis within the ruling elite, this choreographed campaign by powerful sections of the ruling class has a definite, three-fold purpose.

First, it is an effort to strengthen anti-Trump tendencies within his own cabinet and facilitate what powerful sections of the ruling class view as the "best outcome" of the current crisis: neutralizing Trump's impulsiveness without allowing the divisions to "spill into the streets," as former CIA Director John Brennan worried on a recent episode of HBO's *Real Time with Bill Maher*.

Second, the campaign is a signal to those sections of the corporate elite and the military-intelligence agencies still backing Trump to reassure them that any move against him will produce an even further shift to the right in terms of military spending and corporate tax cuts and deregulation.

Third, it is an attempt to lay the foundation in popular consciousness for an intensified move to either oust Trump from office or force him to cave to their political demands with nauseating references to "national unity," "patriotism," and "putting country first."

Trump responded to the *Times* op-ed with a one-word tweet: "TREASON?"

White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee

Sanders referred to the op-ed author as "pathetic," "reckless," "and selfish," and encouraged that person to resign.

Trump told a gathering of sheriffs yesterday that the op-ed in the "failing *New York Times*" is "a disgrace" and was authored by "some anonymous source within the administration, probably who is failing, and probably here for all the wrong reasons."

The *Times*' role in the campaign exposes the newspaper, which is closely allied with the Democratic Party, as nothing more than a megaphone for reactionary forces within the state that support Trump's right-wing social policies but demand a less isolationist geopolitical strategy.

The *Times*' former executive editor, Howell Raines, appeared on MSNBC last night to praise the paper for taking the "unprecedented step" of publishing an anonymous op-ed. The US is living through a "time of crisis," Raines explained, which requires that the paper take "new approaches" to intervening in the political process.

The working class stands to gain nothing by supporting either right-wing faction of the ruling elite. As the fight within the ruling elite intensifies, opposition is growing among masses of workers—including teachers in Washington state, UPS workers, steelworkers, autoworkers and Amazon workers—to decades of bipartisan attacks on wages, working conditions, benefits and the social rights of the working class as a whole. It is to this emerging force that workers and youth must look for a genuine socialist opposition to Trump and his deep state critics.

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